

9-1-2015

The Dual Life of the Scholar-Soldier

Morgan L. Sykes

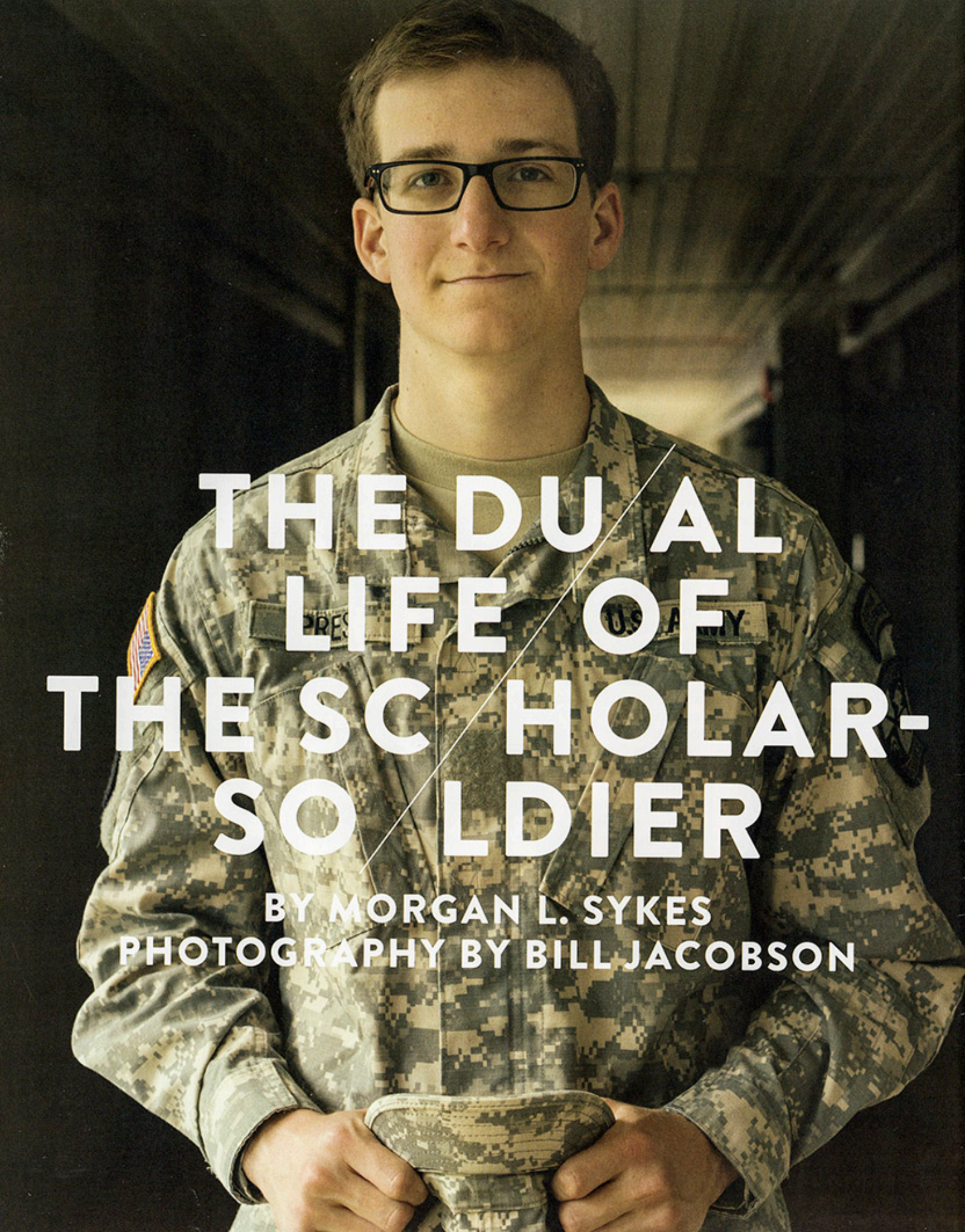
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Recommended Citation

Sykes, Morgan L. and Jacobson, Bill (2015) "The Dual Life of the Scholar-Soldier," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 58 : Iss. 2 , Article 20.
Available at: <http://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol58/iss2/20>

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A young man with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses is the central figure. He is wearing a US Army camouflage uniform. On his chest, a name tag reads 'PRES' and a 'U.S. ARMY' patch is visible. He is holding a camouflage beret with both hands in front of him. The background is a dark, industrial-looking interior with some structural elements.

**THE DUAL
LIFE OF
THE SCHOLAR-
SOLDIER**

**BY MORGAN L. SYKES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL JACOBSON**



Andrew Schwartz '16 is ruck marching. The mid-May temperature in Greenville is close to cracking triple digits, and hazy wiggles of heat rise from the asphalt of his neighborhood's deserted streets. It would appear that the scorch of early summer has driven everybody inside. Not Schwartz. In the wet blanket of South Carolina's high noon heat, the Furman senior, lean and athletic from years of high school wrestling, is shouldering a 40-pound rucksack—attired in long sleeve fatigues, a helmet, and lace-up boots—for a brisk march along the trails behind his home.

It's actually Schwartz's second training exercise of the day. Before the ruck march, he donned a long undershirt to make himself sweat even more and went for a run. "I'm getting ready," he says. "I'm acclimatizing myself to the weather. We'll be carrying a lot of gear, and Fort Knox is very hot. By training myself now, it will be easier then."

Schwartz is preparing to head to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for the Cadet Leadership Course (CLC), also known as Camp, to have his physical fitness, leadership skills, critical thinking, and applied ethical decision-making tested in what is billed by the Army's Public Affairs department as the "capstone summer training event." He will be one among thousands of other Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) cadets nationwide—young people who are inhabiting the twin roles of college student and future military officer with the goal of graduating not just with a degree, but also as a

second lieutenant in the United States Army.

Nationally this year, 35,000 young people have chosen this dual existence through enrollment in ROTC. About 55 of these cadets are from Furman's ROTC program. And while their constant negotiation between two worlds and two identities may most obviously manifest in their schedules—filled as they are with academic and ROTC commitments—what becomes clear after speaking with cadets like Schwartz is how much more complex the daily duality of the scholar-soldier really is.

Of course, one of the first questions when approaching ROTC, especially to the uninitiated, is a basic one: Why?

For certain young people, the primary draw is the staggering financial assistance the Army offers that may make the difference in having access to a quality college education. (At Furman, when a student is awarded an Army tuition scholarship, the university provides his or her room and board.) For some, it is the continuation of a family heritage, either out of a direct desire to perpetuate what may be perceived as a lineage, or derivative from an admiration for a parent or relative who served. And for others, the prospect of a job immediately out of college is an alluring security in an economic climate that can promise little to even the college educated.

But while a job for ROTC cadets is definite, what and where it will exactly be is not. These are young people who are submitting to the needs of an institution that is subject to unpredictable forces on a global scale. This, in itself, creates an interesting caveat to those who may be drawn to ROTC strictly for financial reasons: It is not a scholarship program that simply supplies tuition money. There is reciprocity.

Once commissioned as second lieutenants, graduates must go wherever and do whatever the Army deems necessary. These cadets know that by signing up, they face a mandatory service obligation of eight years, whether their significant other would prefer a more rooted existence or if they suddenly experience a desire to spend six months backpacking through Europe. Which is why many of the most successful and motivated cadets perceive their involvement in ROTC as something far greater than a pathway through college. These are young people compelled by the virtue of service.

Colonel **Michael Pasquarett, MA '78** has a unique perspective on the sense of civic duty embodied in Paladin Detachment cadets. Pasquarett has had a distinguished career in the Army, and as the former head of ROTC at Furman he was crucial to revitalizing and increasing enrollment in the program in the 1970s. Though he has moved on from being part of the cadre at Furman, he has remained involved by developing a program known as "How Washington Works: The Furman Model," which is a hands-on way for cadets to interact with significant political and military figures in Washington, D.C. Pasquarett feels the kids that land at Furman are "really service-oriented. They feel [it's] kind of an obligation that they have to do something for the country, for the nation, for their fellow man."

ROTC, Pasquarett believes, provides a channel for young people at Furman to apply their abilities and gifts toward protecting and promoting their country and other citizens. Pasquarett raises a fascinating point about the four cadets with whom I spoke: "Those kids you've talked about are going to be successful, no matter what they do in life. The thing that is interesting to me is why do these people who are going to be successful in life seek the military as their first choice."



SPIRITUAL SEEKING

Andrew Schwartz (in a purple shirt near the fireplace) meets with a religious group each week to discuss questions of faith.

At 21 years old, Andrew Schwartz, a health science major, is introspective, self-aware, articulate, and exudes a contagious calm. He is a self-proclaimed “pretty individualistic person” who is passionate about cooking—preferring, he says, to always work with local ingredients that are in season. Deciding to pursue a military career, however, didn’t require much deliberation for Schwartz. Such a path, he says, “seemed very natural” and was even “in his blood.”

Schwartz grew up with a father who was a colonel in the Army, but what impressed him from a young age did not stem from son-for-father awe, but rather from observing his father’s selflessness in caring for the soldiers under him.

“That’s what attracted me, the responsibility you have to take care of people. If you’re in the military, you have to have a sense of taking care of people because from day one, as a lieutenant, as an officer, you’re in charge of people, but what that means is you’re taking care of them.”

Schwartz remembers how his father “would always talk about taking care of his ‘boys,’ or taking care of their spouses or families.” His father “wanted to make sure they had everything they needed, that they weren’t going without,” whether that was something material or otherwise.

Inspired though not pressured by his father, Schwartz saw an

opportunity to apply his altruistic nature and achieve his “ultimate goal of helping people improve themselves” by undertaking a health-care path in the military. Initially, he was under the impression that a military academy, such as West Point or The Citadel, was the place for him. But after visiting these campuses, Schwartz had doubts about the high level of assimilation at these institutions, which did not fit his vision for the diverse education he craved. Nor was it encouraging of Schwartz’s own treasured individuality. “I can fit into a mold, but I really do have a lot of unique things about me. After doing some digging, I found out that it was more ROTC I wanted.”

Encouraged by his father’s memories of speaking at a commissioning ceremony at Furman before he was born, Schwartz came to check out the university and was hooked. The program “seemed like the kind of place that would allow for the unique things about me, but to still pursue, academically, health sciences.”

Family, it turns out, is a common theme among ROTC cadets. All four of the young men I spoke with identify relationships with their family as being one of the most important parts of their lives. They are linked by a sense of respect and admiration for their parents, and they spoke of close ties among their siblings. Also, all four cadets come from a military background, with at least one parent who served, though sometimes the lineage stretches back a generation or two. Colonel Pasquarett pointed out that these cadets



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SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

Schwartz, at home with his girlfriend Sarah Jordan Holcombe '14, during one of the many nights when he indulges his culinary pursuits.

"come from families that care about them," which contributes to their "caring about others," helping to lead them into service.

William Ballard '15, who commissioned as a second lieutenant a day before his graduation in May, is careful to assert, however, that despite his family's illustrious military background, he chose ROTC and the Army "for himself." In fact, his parents made "it very clear that they do not expect us to go into the Army. If anything, they sort of pushed back a little against it because of how eager I was."

The 23-year-old history major is tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular, with a rumbling laugh and easy smile. Naturally assertive without being overbearing, Ballard has a profound nerdy streak for all things pertaining to Viking history, the subject on which he wrote his senior thesis. There is, for example, etymology he is eager to share about his name: "William comes from the Germanic 'Wilhelm,' meaning the will to protect, or one who resolutely protects. It is kind of a hint. I like the sense of purpose of being able to keep people safe."

And yet there are details in Ballard's story that echo Schwartz's. "I joined," he says, "because growing up, my dad was my hero."

His father, **Christopher Ballard '84**, is a brigadier general and has had a remarkable decades-long career in the military, including a deployment to Iraq and two to Afghanistan. Currently, the elder Ballard is serving as the deputy assistant chief of staff for the United

States Forces Korea in the Republic of Korea. It was General Ballard who swore in his son at his commissioning ceremony this past May.

"Seeing him, seeing the kind of dedication he has for his job, the level of selflessness he exudes when he does his job," says Will, "I always kind of understood that my dad was doing something special. I fell in love with the life, fell in love with what it means to be a soldier."

That awareness of what exactly it means to be a soldier was especially reinforced after 9/11, which happened when Ballard was in elementary school and the family was stationed in Kansas. He remembers his mother being glued to the television in disbelief, which is a memory shared by many people around the world. However, Ballard recalls that for his family the events of 9/11 made him realize an important distinction: When atrocities are committed or natural disasters strike, "a civilian sees it and is horrified, wants to help people, like 'What do we do?' Military families see it and say, 'Where are we going now?'"

For Ballard, it was a direct opportunity to be of service and to provide protection to the population that satisfies what he identifies as "a sense of purpose and direction."

He is quick to acknowledge that while the pragmatic benefits of "steady pay, housing, a pretty solid career" are perks, the priority for him as a young man of faith is what God wants him to do, and "what I can do that is actually important, that actually brings



EQUIPOISE

Joey White balances his course load and a love of lacrosse with 10 to 15 hours of ROTC commitments each week.

something to the world that isn't just making money."

Conversations with peers—especially classmates who were also contemplating graduating from Furman last spring—have shown Ballard a contrast between his emphasis on purpose and what motivates them. "I have friends who are great guys, who say they want to be a lawyer. And when I ask why, they say, so I can get a good paycheck quick. And I'm like, that's it? For me, that definitely would not be enough. For me, I want more. I want something that feels like I am contributing something."

For some cadets, a sense of purpose emerges more gradually, and ROTC often brings out something that they did not know about themselves or only vaguely suspected. **Joey White '16** was attracted to ROTC for the scholarship initially. White is a 21-year-old economics major who, as an "outdoors person," prefers to spend his scarce free time mountain biking, hiking, or playing lacrosse. A strawberry blond with freckles and alert dark eyes, White projects affability, charm, empathy, and a self-deprecating sense of humor, which makes sense when he reveals that he is the third of nine children and the oldest son of the bunch.

White's parents and two older sisters were in ROTC when they were in college, and like Schwartz and Ballard, he prioritizes his relationships with his family. White identifies his "biggest motivation" as being a son and brother that they can be proud of, someone his younger brothers can "look up to."

When it came to White's personal decision to pursue ROTC, he says that the scholarship money was "a huge factor, and that's probably the main reason I did it to begin with. But to stay with it, I think the reason I'm still here, is I do want to serve my country, as cliché as that may sound."

White identifies a turning point where service went from abstract concept to something he realized he could do and wanted to do. During his sophomore year, he was one of a handful of cadets chosen for a Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency (CULP) program. The Army bills CULP as an experience that includes "humanitarian service, host nation military-to-military contact, and education on the social, cultural, and historical aspects of [a] country." White was sent to Latvia. There, he immersed in joint operation training between American, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, British, and German forces.

"A big issue when different countries are deployed together is adjusting to the way each runs a mission or communicates," White says. "When I was in Latvia, I really got to see the big picture of the military and how important every part can be. For example, while the infantryman fights, the quartermaster supplies, and whether you're in the fight or outside [it], every job is equally important." White says the experience helped solidify what at first wasn't clear

to him about ROTC. "I knew what I was getting into, but I didn't really know. CULP helped me understand the vastness of our forces, and I really felt the value of serving."

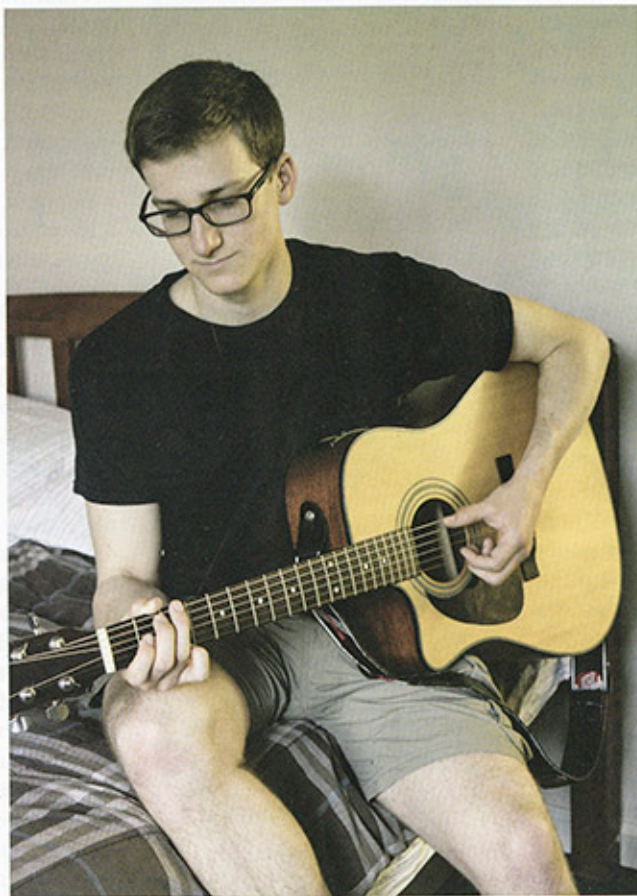
White estimates that his involvement in ROTC requires 10 to 15 hours of commitment, depending on the week. He and the other cadets show up for physical training (PT) sessions at the hour of 6 a.m. three times a week, working out for approximately two hours with kettle bells, runs, and high-intensity exercises designed to overhaul their fitness to the Army's demanding standards. Additionally, they meet three other times a week for classes in leadership, as well as labs—all of which emphasize critical thinking and ethics.

Besides that, White says that "every once in a while, we will do weekend trips." An overnight to Clark's Hill, a nature preserve near the Georgia border, is a recent example, where the cadets conducted room clearing and force-on-force exercises within a simulated village. Also, White says, "[ROTC] offers us a lot of volunteer opportunities. We just did the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," he notes, an event where men wear heels and walk to raise awareness about sexual violence against women. Overall, White says, ROTC is "close to being

on a sports team," though year-round. "It's a commitment."

Since ROTC is a mentored yet cadet-led program, students like White are given greater leadership roles and increasing responsibility as they progress. Which means they have to become expert time managers. "Being so busy, right now affects two days from now," he observes. The balance, however, is part of the reward, as this past year White also has noticed how being "in charge of other cadets" pushed him to "be able to be assertive and composed."

Inhabiting such leadership roles at tender ages—all with high levels of accountability while mentoring younger cadets—has, according to White, changed his expectations not just of the program but also of himself. He says that "this year is the first year I've really noticed a difference between myself and other college students."



DOWN TIME

When Matthew Press isn't studying Chinese, or planning his next airplane jump, he practices guitar. "You feel the power of it as it makes music," he says. "You feel connected to the songs."

While every successful college student has to manage his or her time and make choices about priorities, White and the other cadets have to balance both the stress and responsibility of being a student along with what the Army is already demanding of them to mold them into top-tier leaders. They go to their regular classes after the workouts that begin while it is still dark outside. They have to check in regularly with the younger cadets they mentor while managing schedules packed with their own academic commitments.

Speaking to these men, it becomes clear that, while at first glance it seems they are shifting constantly between two selves—Joey White, cadet, and Joey White, student—the duality is more of a balance than a binary. These young men embody the scholar-soldier whether they are in civilian clothes as regular college students or the uniform of aspiring officers. One informs the other, and one balances the other. Of course, when they wake up and move through their daily existence as both, sustaining that overall equipoise requires a strong sense of self and character. This is, in other words, far removed from a Joe College experience.

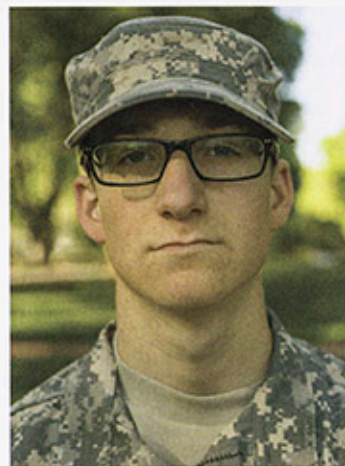
Matthew Press '16, a 20-year-old business major, acknowledges that. Though he never planned or expected to be a part of ROTC, he discovered it as a way to attend Furman and was able to “see all of the positives the Army can provide.” He feels that the program “builds you, tests you, and prepares you to be put in some difficult situations, whether that’s a battlefield or business.”

Press is reserved, humble, whip smart, curious, and adventure seeking. Besides his love of the outdoors and guitar playing—“You feel the power of the guitar as it makes music, you can feel connected to the songs,” he says—Press has a passion for Chinese culture and language. Like all of the other cadets, he is close to his family, in particular his father, who is retired from the Air Force. Press credits his father with helping him discover his love of “high adrenaline situations.” Over the years, they have gone scuba diving with sharks, backpacked in Alaska’s backcountry, and climbed a water tower when he was in high school to hang a sign asking a girl to prom.

This propensity is something that is suited to ROTC, where he had the opportunity to spend three weeks in Airborne School and “do a few jumps out of planes.” Press, who has light brown hair and wears rectangular glasses—a somehow fitting complement to his reserved, intellectual demeanor—says he is grateful that ROTC wasn’t a “strange idea” for him, which he feels is “something that stops a lot of people, the misconceptions.”



Joey White



Matthew Press

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What might these misconceptions be?

“Maybe that people in ROTC aren’t the smartest or that maybe you have to put in a lot more work” than it’s worth. Press is dismissive of these notions, especially since the scholarship has been so crucial to his being able to attend Furman. “If you have to wake up every other morning and do PT and a couple more laps, that’s not a big deal.”

Also, he has noticed that a lot of people seem to “think it’s all about following orders, that you’re always going to be told you’re wrong, which is sometimes true. [But] that’s a really small part compared to what you get out of it.” Press feels that many of the at-a-glance ideas of what ROTC is about would be shattered if more people “gave it a try” and went beyond the surface of ROTC.

All of the cadets acknowledge that they are sort of an X-factor on campus, a collective for which other students have only a shadowy awareness. Schwartz explains that, “a lot of people don’t understand what we do. We’re a big mystery...like you do strange things early in the morning and out in the woods.”

It can be easy, therefore, for college students who are not juggling such roles to apply inaccurate generalizations to ROTC. White says that unless he directly tells them, a lot of students don’t realize he is in ROTC. The news is commonly received with the remark that he “doesn’t seem like the type.”

What then is “the type?”

Schwartz, Ballard, White, and Press all have traits in common—coming from close-knit families, for instance—but attempts at generalizing them beyond some shared biographical details do a disservice to their profound individuality. In fact, it is their strong sense of self, and pride in being different, that is one of the marked, but often overlooked commonalities that equips these cadets to navigate a dual existence that challenges their convictions every day.

Each young man I spoke to expressed in his own words an awareness, and acceptance, of somehow being different. For Schwartz, it’s the realization that “I like to do things a lot of people don’t necessarily take the time to do. I think, in general, I’m not in line with the status quo. It’s accepting that I am different, not just saying I need to fit a mold.”

Ballard looks at it this way: “I think choosing who you are and being fine with who you are is probably one of the hardest things. One of the cool things about college is that you can finally be free.”

ROTC then, in an almost paradoxical way, seems to provide a path—through structure and discipline—for these young people with a calling

for service to feel “free” to embody that calling. It allows them to prioritize what is important to them personally.

For Furman cadets, many of these priorities are values—service, duty, patriotism—that may be anathema to the hedonistic impression some have of contemporary college culture. And what such priorities can ultimately mean is that certain aspects of the college student life that are not strictly academic must be sacrificed. As Press says, being in ROTC has “taught me that I’ve got to pick out what’s going to be worth my time.”

Ballard acknowledges that “it can get hard by the time you hit 21, and your buddies are like, hey, let’s have some drinks, and you have to say no, I can’t. I have to wake up at 5:30 and run a 5K.” Among his peers, Ballard says he realizes that he is “simply different than them.”

For Press, part of managing the dueling demands of his dual life is by not compromising his sense of professional purpose in either. As he says, “You have to act like an officer when you are doing the training, and act like an officer when you are representing the program in the civilian world.”

Although cadets find the necessary means to navigate between both the Army and civilian world, this exchange is obviously not required of non-ROTC students. Even with the program’s external work in the community, the perceived esotericism of ROTC persists. Press reduces part of the mystery to very simple terms: “It’s a mystery because people are scared. They just know they could be shot at, so nobody tries to learn about it.”

In perusing the Furman ROTC web page, there is a phrase that sticks out. The End-state of the Vision document reads that, “the Paladin Detachment commissions leaders with the character, intestinal fortitude, and educational foundation to lead the U.S. Army in an era of persistent conflict.”

War, and active combat, are not things these young men are ignorant about. Like the rest of the Millennial generation, Press, Schwartz, White, and Ballard have come of age in a post-9/11 world, one that has seen America involved in conflicts where soldiers are losing lives. Ballard, the history buff, remembers how 9/11 cast war’s reality into a jarring present tense. “As a child, I thought war was a past thing. It made you realize that war is not something that goes away.”

Almost as an antidote, he perceives his calling to be an officer as an opportunity to provide hope and protection to those who are vulnerable. It’s not surprising to him that those who aren’t



Will Ballard



Andrew Schwartz

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called to service don’t understand it.

Of the current population, those serving in the military, Ballard says, “make up less than one percent of the United States. That’s a pretty small number, responsible for the entirety of the U.S. against any threat. It’s not always going to be easy. There are challenges, there are trials, there are tribulations, both for the soldier and his family. The majority of people will never understand. That’s not a bad thing. That’s the way it is supposed to be. It wouldn’t be a service if everyone had to undergo these trials and challenges. That’s why we volunteer, and that’s why we serve.”

Surrender may be an incongruous word to apply to such driven young men, but their inability to predict the world that awaits them post-graduation, and the military’s needs within that context, require an acquiescence of ego and a surrender of control. Joey White admits that the uncertainty of where he will land after graduation is his biggest stress. “I don’t know what’s going to happen. I don’t know if I’m going to be active duty, or Reserve, or National Guard. It’s all a lottery.”

The lottery White is alluding to is the important OML, or Order of Merit List. The OML is essentially a compilation of differently weighted performance statistics—including GPA, involvement in extracurriculars within the program, and so on—that, when crunched together, determine each cadet’s post-graduate military placement via a fateful algorithm. It is at Fort Knox where that algorithm is calculated. As a result, it behooves cadets to work intensely to beef up their on-paper bona fides and physical assets before the lottery commences in their senior year.

Even this process comes with a caveat, though. Schwartz explains that although the first three years of ROTC are about building these credentials, “even if you’re really good, you don’t always get your top choice, because if that happened, you’d have all the really good guys in certain branches. In the end, it’s the Army’s choice.”

Ballard’s outlook characterizes how cadets must approach the future and also where their sense of service really counts. “In many ways, we are at the whim of the Army. Our goal is whatever the Army needs to get done. My goal is to serve well, as long as I can. It is not necessarily to reach a rank or hit a pay grade. I don’t particularly care. More important to me is: Do I enjoy my time in the service and am I of benefit to the soldiers that will be placed under me?”

Schwartz, who aspires to be a physical therapist in some capacity in the military, has done everything he possibly can to maximize his paper appeal. However, “it’s really the Army’s path



THRESHOLD

Will Ballard, who has a profound nerdy streak for Viking history, graduated in May. He is now at Fort Benning in Georgia.

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for me. I don't really know what the path looks like." For a young man who is intent on excelling, this exercise in letting go is "humbling"—an expected and understood part of the package, yet contrary to the extreme order he, and other cadets, must otherwise cultivate in their lives.

This is another paradox not often understood about the military: For Schwartz, Ballard, White, and Press, there must be a dismantling of personal ego in pursuit of service. ROTC has groomed them for that paradox, however, with the mentorship, the opportunities for training abroad, and the emphasis on teamwork to consider themselves in a context much larger than their own preferences, perceptions, and needs.

"The Army and civilian world are very different," observes Press. "Doing ROTC has let me know that in the future there are a lot of uncertainties, but I can handle them. Whatever they are, I can make the most of them."

And what about that future?

In one world, Matthew Press pursues travel abroad, having found his niche in exploring China and learning Mandarin. He relishes the "time to reflect" and how travel "gets your brain working differently." He and his dad are planning their next big adventure.

Joey White interns as a data analyst for a pet food company,

earnestly endorsing the brand, and referees his little brothers' lacrosse games. He exulted with his whole extended family this past May as his older sister Kimmy, a former ROTC cadet herself, finally awoke from the coma she had been in for a year—a private struggle for a young man who defines himself as "lighthearted" and "very family oriented."

Andrew Schwartz attends his church group and goes to local farms to source the freshest ingredients for the elaborate dinners he cooks as a creative outlet and stress reliever. He tinkers with the stand-up desk he built for himself or goes on a walk by Furman's beautiful lake, watching the ducks and relishing fleeting stillness.

In the other world, the Army world, Will Ballard, who was just commissioned as a second lieutenant, is further toward experiencing what he describes as "the privilege" of "being able to lead some of the brightest and most amazing American sons and daughters." He is now totally immersed in training, attending the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course (IBOLC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. "I'm busy. Every day here is a new challenge. It's exciting."

For Press, White, and Schwartz, where Ballard is remains to come. But they also still have to get there.

After his training ruck march, Schwartz cools off in his family's kitchen, where he has spent so much time chopping ingredients and creating sauces. His time between two worlds, occupying student and soldier, will be ending in the fall, when the OML numbers are parsed and his, and his classmates', futures are decided.

What gives him peace is how right the walk along this path has felt up to now, despite not knowing exactly where it will lead. "So far, ROTC has let me be myself," he says, "and then put on the uniform and be a leader." ■

Morgan Sykes is a freelance writer based in Asheville, North Carolina. Her work has appeared on OxfordAmerican.org and in Arkansas Times.

THE FURMAN FACTOR

The Paladin ROTC

program has a legacy of producing distinguished officers in its modest 60-year history. It has produced 10 active National Guard and Reserve General officers (including General Ballard).

"It's amazing that a small school like Furman has produced so many [people] like this," says **Bill Mayville '76**. Mayville, who is now a successful businessman,

spent his time as a cadet under Colonel **Michael Pasquarett, MA '78**. Pasquarett has continued to influence Furman's ROTC today through the development of his program, "How Washington Works: The Furman Model." It is an immersive experience that aims to provide cadets with real-world knowledge of how the nation's capital functions, giving Furman cadets a valuable advantage.

Pasquarett says he was moved to do this when he saw that "the opportunities for West Point cadets

were so much greater than people in ROTC. I just wanted to give the people of ROTC, especially the Furman kids, kind of a leg up."

Pasquarett's efforts have been proven, and supported, by the conspicuous presence of Furman graduates in high places, including the Pentagon, the State Department, and Capitol Hill. "A lot of general officers in Washington that the students meet when they are here are Furman graduates. [Afterward] several of them would say

to me, 'Jeez, I wasn't that good when I was in college, was I?'"

What has distinguished Furman cadets of the past and today is the quality of the education, says Pasquarett. "A lot of people have always questioned, why do so many general officers come out of little old Furman? I think it's because you have a good selection of students coming there."

It is "the liberal arts education that is well rounded that they are getting at Furman" that makes the difference, Mayville agrees.

That's a sentiment echoed by current department chair of the military science program, Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Scrivens, who gives credit to the "fantastic resources and support" cadets can count on from both the Army and Furman.

Pasquarett says he is excited to continue his program for Furman cadets. "It makes me feel good that they are producing young people that can go off and do great things for the nation. I am very proud of these young people."