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Hometown News Release

CONTACT: Lt. Col. Richard Stackpole

OFFICE: 615.313.0662

richard.a.stackpole2.mil@mail.mil

Rutherford County's JROTC Hosts Annual Summer Camp

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – Rutherford County's JROTC program teamed up with the Tennessee Army National Guard to host the JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge at various locations throughout Murfreesboro from June 3-10.

CLC is a weeklong course designed to challenge students physically and mentally while incorporating JROTC principles and values.

High school sophomores, juniors, and seniors are provided a safe military setting to develop leadership, teamwork, and citizenship skills, while being engaged with peers in activities aimed at building confidence and discipline.

David Escobar, an upcoming senior at La Vergne High School and JROTC cadet, recently enlisted in the Tennessee Army National Guard as a health care specialist with plans to further his education and start a military career.

"The JROTC program has given me the chance to get out of my comfort zone and make connections," said Escobar.

Training included field survival skills, rafting, canoeing, rappelling, water survival, orienteering, rope bridging, and a Field Leadership Reaction Course. Cadets also received a tour of Middle Tennessee State University and a seminar on scholarship opportunities. Following that, there were intramural competitions in various sports, a flag retirement ceremony, and a pass in review graduation.

The men and women that help mentor the students consist of Senior ROTC Cadre from Middle Tennessee State University and Tennessee Army National Guard Soldiers. "I enjoy the opportunity to mentor and influence tomorrow's leaders," said Staff Sgt. Mistee Harris, Tennessee Army National Guard Recruiter.

Organized under the authority of the 1916 National Defense Act, the Rutherford County High School's Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program was first established in 1967 at Central High School. Since then, the program has expanded into eight area high schools with Rockvale High School opening in the 2019-2020 school year.



“We currently have 1,265 students enrolled and we expect that number to rise next semester,” said Lt. Col. Russell Rector, Senior Director for Rutherford County’s JROTC.

A JROTC cadet is under no obligation to join the military. The JROTC program is a credited course given during regular school hours that prepares students for life, not the military, such as developing winning habits, job interviewing, financial planning, test taking, and overcoming fears.

“The impact of this camp can be measured in the success stories of overcoming fear,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Merino, Senior Leader for the JROTC in Rutherford County. “Learning to make lifelong friendships and trust others by allowing them to help.

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Cadets with the Rutherford County JROTC program conduct water survival training during the Cadet Leadership Challenge on June 7 at Oakland High School. (Photo by Sgt. James Bolen)



Cadets with the Rutherford County JROTC program conduct team-building exercise where they must lower the helium stick using only their index fingers on June 7 at Oakland High School. (Photo by Sgt. James Bolen)



Cadets with the Rutherford County JROTC program conduct training where one must person give commands to their partner that is blindfolded and navigate them through an obstacle course on June 7 at Oakland High School. (Photo by Sgt. James Bolen)

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