Press Release

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10th Mountain Division deputy commander, 10th CAB team, discuss leadership, Army career opportunities with Norwich University cadets

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- During a visit to Norwich University on Oct. 25, Col. Matthew Braman, 10th Mountain Division (LI) deputy commander for support, spoke candidly with senior cadets about leadership and career opportunities in the Army.

With more than 100 future junior officers for an audience, Braman, a Norwich Class of 1995 graduate, also made them an enticing pitch to join the Army’s alpine division in the North Country.

“This was an opportunity for me to recruit quality leaders for the 10th Mountain Division and to do that at an institution that got me to where I am today,” Braman said. “It was great to meet the Army’s future leaders and, hopefully, get some of them to join our division.”

He explained how the National Ski Patrol recruited the world’s best mountaineers and skiers to join the 10th Mountain Division in 1943. Their athleticism, combined with the military training at Camp Hale, Colorado, made them a combat-ready force when the Army needed them in the Italian campaign during World War II.

Braman said that today’s “Mountain Tough” Soldiers continue that legacy of excellence as it strives to bolster its ranks with competent leaders who stand ready to deploy in defense of the nation.

“Since the division was reactivated at Fort Drum in 1985, we have been the most deployed division in the Army,” he said. “Today, it serves as the only division that is forward deploying combat troops to a combat deployment. If you are looking to deploy and get that combat deployment in your first couple of years in, the only place to go is the 10th Mountain Division.”

He also spoke about training opportunities unique to Fort Drum, and its extensive training ranges and annual exercises. More than that, Braman said it is a place many continue to call home long after they retire from service.

“I can tell you it’s a great place to live and work,” he said. “It’s the most modern installation we have in the Army, and it’s a great place to be a leader.”

While talking about his own experience at Norwich University, Braman said that the time for cadets to make mistakes is in a learning environment where they can develop the character and values that will make them trusted and honorable leaders.

“It’s hard to believe that I was sitting where they are today 27 years ago, because it doesn’t seem that long ago,” Braman said. “I still can feel the excitement of the journey they are going to start. It’s an awesome feeling, and I hope I gave the cadets today a little insight into that experience they will have leading Soldiers in the Army.”

Cadet Peter Nguyen wants to commission as an aviation officer, and said he was interested in listening to Braman talk about his career.

“Because he is a Norwich grad, we connected with him almost instantly,” Nguyen said. “His presentation sort of put some ideas in my head about where I want to be as an officer. It was definitely motivating.”

Braman said that no one who flew to Norwich University on the two Black Hawks and Apache helicopter from Fort Drum were simply along for the ride. The 10th Combat Aviation Brigade command team, pilots, crew chiefs and support staff readily answered questions from the cadets as they toured the different aircraft. Cadets from the Ranger Challenge Team received cold load instruction on how to safely enter the helicopter, secure themselves and their gear, and then make a hasty exit.

“I’ve been in the Army for five years, and I know the cadets are going to outrank me one day. So, for me to be bringing some of what I know to them and help them train, this is something I love to do,” said Spc. Travis Baker, crew chief with A Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Watching from the sidelines, Chief Warrant 5 James VanMeter, Norwich University Class of 1997, decided to get in on the action. He led groups of cadets on how to conduct a combat-effective, three-step drop from a Black Hawk into a firing position.

“This is how you go into a landing zone that is unsecured and amass combat power, so you get your weapons systems online and effectively perform your mission,” he said. “It’s easy to get in the Black Hawk and it’s easy to get out. But when the engines are running and it’s loud and you can’t hear anything, that’s not the time to figure things out. The last thing you want to do, in a hostile environment, is not know how to get in and out of this helicopter and have an incident. So, if you can master things like this as a lieutenant, you will do very well.”

Braman said that the opportunity to inform and inspire future officers at Norwich University was rewarding for the division team.

“We had great support from the university to expose us to the entire Army population of cadets – almost 500 – so that we could all talk with them on a personal level about our experiences in the Army, and hopefully get them excited about serving,” Braman said. “The seniors I spoke with are going to be commissioning soon. But the freshman and sophomore cadets who potentially haven’t made that decision yet, having them talk with Soldiers at echelon – from the corporal and sergeant level to colonel and warrant officer levels – can be pretty powerful.”

Braman also met with the university president, commandant of cadets and commander of the U.S. Army ROTC Pioneer Battalion about future collaboration such as bringing cadets to Fort Drum for cadet troop leader training (CTLT), participating in the annual D-Series winter training event and other professional development opportunities.

“We were looking for ways we can conduct meaningful, direct engagements going forward,” Braman said. “If there’s a new officer about to join the Army who knows they are going to branch Military Police, we can see what opportunity there is to bring that person to Fort Drum and let them see what it’s like to be an MP at the lieutenant level for a day or two. We’re open to looking at possibilities to help cadets transition to the Army and set them up for success.”

Braman, a Black Hawk pilot and former commander of 2-10 Aviation Regiment (Task Force Knighthawk), said that the trip to Norwich University also allowed him to reconnect with the unit he once deployed with.

“Since I’ve been back at Fort Drum, this was my first opportunity to fly with the 10th CAB and to see how they operate and train,” he said. “Whenever I can spend time with the Soldiers in our division – whether it’s the infantry, sustainment or aviation brigades – is time well spent. But as an aviator, having the opportunity to fly with our 10th CAB is great. It’s impressive to see their professionalism, how detail-oriented they are, and their capabilities.”

To learn more about the 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum, visit [www.home.army.mil/drum](http://www.home.army.mil/drum). To see photos from the visit to Norwich University, visit [www.flickr.com/photos/drum10thmountain/albums/72177720303198054](http://www.flickr.com/photos/drum10thmountain/albums/72177720303198054).

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Photo captions:

01: Col. Matthew Braman, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum deputy commander for support, talks with senior cadets at Norwich University in Vermont about leadership and career opportunities in the Army during a visit Oct. 25. Braman, a Class of 1995 graduate, returned to his alma mater to promote the 10th Mountain Division as a possible career choice for future Army officers. Along with the 10th Combat Brigade Team command team, pilots, crew chiefs and support staff, the visiting contingent fielded questions from cadets and showcased Army aviation. (Photo by Sgt. Michael Wilson, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)

03: Chief Warrant 5 James VanMeter, Norwich University Class of 1997, shows a group of cadets how to be combat effective while exiting a Black Hawk. Col. Matthew Braman, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum deputy commander for support, and members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, visited Norwich University on Oct. 25 to talk with cadets about career opportunities and answer any questions they had about leadership, training, deployments and other topics. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

04: Col. Matthew Braman, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum deputy commander for support, talks about the capabilities of a Black Hawk helicopter with a cadet from Norwich University during a visit Oct. 25 to the Vermont campus. Braman, a Class of 1995 graduate, returned to his alma mater to promote the 10th Mountain Division as a possible career choice for future Army officers. Along with the 10th Combat Brigade Team command team, pilots, crew chiefs and support staff, the visiting contingent fielded questions from cadets and showcased Army aviation. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

05: Norwich University cadets learn about Army aviation from members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade during a visit to the Vermont campus Oct. 25. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)