ROTC Thursday Drills

VFTH

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When an ROTC student graduates from WKU, his or her next stop after shaking Dr. Ransdell’s hand could very well be a war zone.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham shows us how hands-on training helps prepare them for battle.

Thursday afternoons are important to the success of WKU’s ROTC program. That’s when military science students simulate real life scenerios.

Just remember, the trainings are harmless and there’s no reason for anyone to be alarmed.

Between four and six o’clock on Thursday afternoons, a scene like this one is not unusual on WKU’s campus.

 “You’re going to see groups of cadets, squad sized elements, anywhere from five to nine people.”

They are even carrying weapons but if you look closely, it’s obvious they aren’t the real thing.

 “We’ve spray painted the ends of the weapons orange so if someone were to see it they wouldn’t be startled that someone has an assault weapon.”

These scenarios allow for third year military science students to be evaluated on how they react to different circumstances.

 “We tell them how to do it, show them how to do it, then let them do it hands on.”

Once the lab is complete, it’s back to the classroom to discuss what could have been done differently.

 “You happen to come across an IED or UXO, how are you going to react to that, to keep the public safe?”

It’s the type of situation these young men and women could soon be facing in real life.

 “Mere months later they could be leading their own formation in battle in Afghanistan or Iraq.”

Until that day comes, students must train in locations that are available.

 “We have to use the terrain WKU offers us, the grassy hills, the noles, some open areas, just to get cadets moving in formation.”

Formations they hope will not alarm the campus community.

 “We’ll do our best to keep it as low profile as possible.”

The ROTC always notifies WKU Police of the outdoor labs on Thursdays in case there are any questions. In the future, they plan to use signs to let everyone know the training exercises are underway in certain areas.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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