2,977 Steps: The 9/11 Memorial Run

C/ Jones

The 11\textsuperscript{th} of September, 2001 is a day that will not be easily forgotten. On that day 2,977 people lost their lives, 3,051 children lost their parents, and our nation was shook to its very foundations. Det. 875 takes it upon themselves to commemorate the fallen on this day, not just with their hearts and minds, but with their bodies as well.

At 0800, 11 September 2015, the entire wing met at Lane Stadium. Here they proceeded to run the stairs of the East Stands, with each step climbed for the lives lost in the 9/11 attacks. It was a workout that put their bodies to the test. They would feel every one of those 2,977 steps for days following the exercise. The wing truly came together that day, every cadet pushing their wingmen onwards to honor and account for the lives lost.

After the workout, the wing was shown a video about one of the people who died at the World Trade Center. They sat in silence as the story of Welles Crowther was told. Despite being a civilian, Welles was the epitome of the Air Force core value “Service before Self”. He gave his life saving others when he himself had the chance to live. He was one of many people who exemplified true bravery and heroism that day and every cadet ran a step in his memory.

The wing walked away from the run feeling a mix of emotions, but the one thing they all felt was pride in what they had accomplished in the memory of those who were lost.
C/ Schmidt finished 3rd overall in the full marathon
C/ Thomas finished in the top 5 of his age group in the full marathon
C/ Jacobson and C/ Ragan finished top 5 of their age group in the half marathon
C/ Dyer finished top 5 in her age group for the 10k race

On the 17th of September, a group of cadets loaded into cargo vans and made the six hour trek to Ohio in order to show why Det. 875 is the best alive, and the biggest PT studs at the Air Force Marathon.

Cadets made it to Ohio Thursday night giving them a full day to relax, explore, and prepare before the big races on Saturday. The trip was headed by C/MacGibbon who planned out the schedule of events. This included a trip to the National Museum of the USAF at Wright-Patterson AFB, as well a look into the Presidential Aircraft Gallery. Perhaps what was almost better than going into the same airplane that JFK flew in was the carbo-load at the Spaghetti Warehouse later that evening.

The next day started dark and early with the cadets getting to the race location by 0530. Some cadets pushed it out in a motivating 10k race, others challenged themselves with their first half or full marathon, and a few were already well seasoned in the sport of long distance running. Even Col. Torrens who ran the full, Capt. McGan and Maj. Ward who ran the half, were out running with other motivators. Although the end of the race brought blisters, cramps, and even rain, the cadets of Det. 875 left satisfied knowing they could come together to celebrate the branch that will one day be home- the United States Air Force!

AFA Conference C/ Adams

On Monday September 14th, a group of ten Detachment 875 Cadets attended the Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition in National Harbor, Maryland. At the conference, an array of knowledgeable Air Force Officers and civilian leaders spoke on the pertinent issues faced by the United States Air Force and the aerospace sector as a whole.

Included were panels and speakers on Congress and National Security, the State of Cyberwar, Air Force Energy, and the Quest for a New Airpower Strategy among other guest speakers. Cadet Sherburne, who attended the conference, explained some of the major takeaways from this great learning experience: “People next in line of the chain-of-command need to make sure they are giving their people the best tools, the best training, and the best support they deserve whenever they put themselves out there in harms way. Networking is also crucial to bring different sub organizations together to share best practices and ideas. All leaders of the Air Force, even the Chief of Staff are still Airmen, and everyone gets treated with the same level of respect.”

This AFA Conference was a wonderful hands-on leadership and learning opportunity, as well as beneficial to hear from those who have been down the same track on which we as cadets plan to embark. It is evident that the speakers shared some valuable insight and information with those who attended, and that the conference as whole was a great learning environment to further the extent of knowledge concerning the future of air power.
Cadet Highlight: C/ Tull Flying T-38  

This summer C/Brandon Tull had the opportunity to get experience flying in a tactical aircraft. He along with two Air Force cadets from VMI were selected to participate in a program to shadow fighter pilots at Joint Base Langley-Eustis. His experience mirrored the process of becoming a pilot in the Air Force. After his selection, he went to the health center for an extensive health screening to see if he was fit to fly. As it turns out C/Tull was pushing the aircrafts height limitations with his 6’3” frame! He then spent the next several hours getting training pertaining to the T-38. This included information on the ejection system from the aircraft and some basic SERE skills. He was then fortunate enough to have the opportunity to utilize F-22 Raptor simulators that they have on base. These simulators are very expensive, but provide countless hours of flight training for these pilots. Not to mention, this is the closest anyone will get to flying the fighter unless selected to do so.

C/Tull’s time in the aircraft itself was brief but a great experience. In total he was able to takeoff twice totaling three hours of flight time. During his flights he was able to do a couple inversions as well as barrel rolls. During a portion of the flight, C/Tull was given the opportunity to take the controls and fly the T-38. One difficulty that C/Tull experienced was controlling and maintaining his breathing in the face of G turns. One of the takeaways that C/Tull will continue to utilize stems from this challenge. He says that he will look back on the experience and remember the mental and physical fortitude to maintain his breathing while in flight and use that as motivation in difficult times.

Aviation Wall of Fame  

On September 29th 2015, Detachment 875 honored Lt Gen Travis by inducting him to the Aviation Wall of Fame for his service to the Nation while in the United States Air Force. Despite the downpour and the flooding, the entire group of Cadets new to AFROTC managed to make their way to the Airport for this event ready to learn from the experiences of this great man, even if a little soggy. Robert Femoyer Service Squadron hosted the event led by Cadet Austin Leake, Cadet Andrew Vogel, and Cadet Michael D’Avella.

Lieutenant General Travis graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1976 in order to train as a pilot in the Air Force. He went on to fly F-4’s, but had still wanted to go to medical school and become a doctor. Eventually, he managed to accomplish that feat and he became one of the few flight physicians. Because of his expertise as a pilot and doctor, he was asked to work on helping pilots combat g-forces while flying, and he has been attributed with developing the g-suit for the F-22. He also went on to become the surgeon general of the Air Force.

Over the course of the ceremony, General Travis offered quite a bit of advice for the Cadets in attendance. He emphasized multiple times that they should never let others limit them. As a final thought, he told me that one doesn’t really know how important an institution is until you leave it, referencing how Virginia Tech prepared him for his successful career in the Air Force.