

**INTEGRITY, SERVICE, EXCELLENCE:** (right) Standing in formation, **Beau Brierre**, 12, salutes his comrade. "If I didn't have ROTC, then I wouldn't have had the same motivating force that carried into other fields. My life would be similar, but probably not as competitive," Brierre said.

**I'M A SURVIVOR:** (below) Teaming up with a female cadet from India at ICEP Singapore, **Denis Blaschke**, 12, sprints forward to finish the mile run - the last portion of their group PT competition. "Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. It's how you use each other's strength that make for an effective leader and an effective team... Another lesson that was reinforced was teamwork makes a dream work. When you are forced to be in groups, it is critical to act like one," Blaschke said.



photographer f. jeffries



photo courtesy of j. farese

## HEAR OUR ECHOES



"ROTC has impacted my life because it put me in a good place with a good group of friends. It'll help the kids coming in to get prepared for college and the military," **Jackson Clark**, 9, said.



"This program has made me a more productive person, helped me put up a professional front, and has helped me show people that I am more than just a kid," **Cole Martin**, 12, said.



"ROTC has changed my life more or less because... it has allowed me to focus on more things, as well as socialize better and interact with the community," **Chris Nixon**, 12, said.

# COMING HOME

## Wando ROTC program makes long journey from the U.S. to Singapore

By: Greyson Webb

**N**early 10,057 miles away from Mount Pleasant and surrounded by people from all edges of the world, **Mario Ciappa**, 12, felt more at home than ever. This past November, Ciappa made the trip to his home country of Singapore to attend a cadet officer leadership school alongside eight of his fellow ROTC cadets.

"I haven't gone back to Singapore in two years so it was extremely nice, especially since I got to see family while I was there," Ciappa said. "It was brief because we were cut on time... but I got to see my sister, my aunt, my uncle, and my cousin."

For the time the students were in Singapore, they worked alongside ROTC cadets from Britain, Australia, India, Brunei, and those from Singapore themselves.

"Talking to everyone from all these different countries was one of the best parts of this trip," Ciappa said. "I've been to other countries before but had never talked in depth with the actual kids my age from these different places."

Wando's ROTC program makes the trek to Singapore as part of an international cadet exchange program (ICEP), in which representatives from various countries attend to embody their country's ROTC program. While differing ages and ethnicities appeared to be an initial barrier amongst cadets, according to **Major John Faresse**,

chaperone of the trip, this drawback was soon to disappear after a few days.

"It's basically an opportunity for the kids to get together to exchange ideas, to exchange cultures, how they do things in their respective units and how they do things in their respective countries compared," Faresse said.

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The ICEP does not strictly maintain comparison between individual countries' programs, but rather focuses on how these diverse entities can work cohesively together.

"What they do is they break all the countries down into separate groups mixed," Faresse said. "It's not country versus country, but it's group versus group. Every group is represented by all the countries, so they're all individual, but still one."

Nonetheless, countries still had opportunities to represent their own ROTC programs and processes.

"It's not just Wando's training that's different, it's the training of the United States in general," ROTC cadet **Evita Parantak**, 11, said. "The ROTC for other countries varied, but there was a bigger outside of school base versus how we incorporate ROTC into Wando."

Wando's ROTC spend about two weeks in between the ICEP and exploring the historical landmarks of Singapore, whether it be kayaking down rivers or trying nasi lemak, a traditional Malaysian rice dish.

"I was pretty sad leaving," Ciappa said. "Not only was I leaving my homeland, but I also got to meet so many amazing people that leaving them was a whole different experience."

Through ROTC, Ciappa was given the opportunity to visit the place he considers closest to his heart and develop relationships with other cadets from all over the world. Ciappa is even planning on going to Sussex to visit British cadets he met while in Singapore.

"There's a lot of potential in international cooperation," Ciappa said. "We might have our differences, but from what I saw in Singapore between the nations, everyone was there together and I think that cooperation could provide a lot for the bigger picture in the world."



"By day three, everyone became really open with talking to each other no matter where you were coming from," **Mario Ciappa** said.



"A lot of these kids grow connections with one another and the country itself, making it always hard to leave," **John Faresse** said.



"[Singapore] was gorgeous; it was culturally diverse, it was something different and amazing," **Evita Parantak** said.