

NEWS

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Achieving a lofty goal Local cadet scores highest mark among Nova Scotians on specialized exam

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TRURO - As soon as Shawn Gillam-Wright finished his cadet examination, he knew he would stand out from other cadets writing the specialized test.

“I set my mind in November or December to be the best in Nova Scotia. I’m pretty happy,” said Shawn, regarding his 95.2 per cent average on the National Star Certification Exam (NSCE).

The test includes written material, knot-tying, map and compass training, teaching drills and fitness. The mark ensured the warrant officer of the 2928 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps of Truro first place out of about 100 cadets throughout the province. Shawn said the achievement came from balancing school and cadets and focusing on priorities.

“I knew I did really good. If you put your mind to it you can do it. Anybody can be a good cadet if you enjoy it.”

The Grade 11 student at Cobequid Educational Centre joined the army cadets four years ago after moving to Truro from Toronto.

“I didn’t know anybody and I like meeting new people, so I thought I’d try it.”

And he never regretted his decision.

“You learn how to do a lot of things on your own and you get opportunities you otherwise wouldn’t get,” said Shawn. For example, the teenager anticipates he’ll go overseas thanks to his achievements in the corps.

“I’m fairly certain I’ll go on an exchange program in England or Wales to train with their army cadets and compare the differences between them and us.”

And Shawn is not abandoning his army experience as he considers his future.

“It’s not etched in stone, but I’m considering the army. I’d also like to get into computer engineering and maybe own my own business on the side.”

Other local army cadets who placed within the top 10 exam marks were warrant officers Dustin Taylor (seventh; 87.5 per cent) and Jason Tucker (ninth; 85 per cent). Keri Moore, commanding officer of the 2928 corps, said it’s not surprising the young men did so well.

“Shawn is very determined. He sets goals and ultimately achieves them. He’s a hard worker not only as a cadet but in the community.”

Dustin also made a good impression, Moore said.

“He did well in his marksmanship courses ... he’s easy going and others look up to him.”

Regarding Jason, the commanding officer said, “it normally takes four years to get to this level. He was with sea cadets first and it helped ... he’s a hard worker.”

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