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The highest honor

Act of bravery gets Rose-Hulman Air Force ROTC cadet Gold Valor Honor

By Dale Long Special to The Tribune-Star 9 hrs ago



Photo courtesy Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology/Bryan Cantwell "I just did what was necessary at the time.": Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology senior Air Force ROTC cadet Michael Dudley recently earned the Gold Valor Award, honoring his outstanding voluntary act of self-sacrifice and personal bravery.

Bryan Cantwell



Michael Dudley doesn't see himself as a hero. However, that's what the senior Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology mechanical engineering student is considered by the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

The corps' Gold Valor Award – the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an Air Force ROTC cadet – recognized Dudley for his quick actions, act of self-sacrifice and personal bravery that saved the life of a fellow student last spring.

"I just did what was necessary at the time. This isn't an award that any cadet goes out of his way to earn," admitted Dudley. "I did what any Air Force cadet would have done under the circumstances."

Dudley noticed that a fellow Rose-Hulman student was in a life-threatening situation during an off-campus event. His immediate course of action resulted in a safe and secure conclusion of the situation. The other student has since left the institute.

"By his prompt actions and humanitarian regard for his fellow man, Cadet Dudley has reflected credit upon himself and the Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps," remarked Air Force ROTC Commander Col. Michael Sowa.

Dudley, from Waukegan, Illinois, is a four-year cadet who has risen to become a wing safety leader for the Air Force ROTC's unit. He is in charge of protection procedures and anti-terrorism precautions for cadets who are students at Rose-Hulman, Indiana State University, Ivy Tech Community College's Wabash Valley campus and nearby DePauw University.

Upon graduation and being commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Force, Dudley will apply his engineering and flying interests as a combat systems operator.

He will assist with navigation, electronic warfare, radio communications and weapons operations on flight missions.

"The summer after my senior year of high school, I took flying lessons, and I absolutely loved it," he said. "My goal is to fly C130s."

This past summer, Dudley applied his engineering skills as an intern at Major Tool & Machine, Inc. in Indianapolis. He has also worked in the machine shop on campus, assisting visiting high school students in completing hands-on projects in Rose-Hulman's Operation Catapult summer science and engineering exploration program. He also is president of the campus' Role Playing Club.

"I like making stuff, doing things that are fun and enjoying time with people," he said.

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