Graduation also means commissioning ceremonies for ROTC cadets

As we near graduation, many of our newest alums will take off after the ceremonies and parties for hometowns and vacations. Some will start new jobs, others will head for the beach. Still another group will begin careers as newly commissioned officers in the United States military, assigned to bases around the country, maybe across the globe.

RIT’s **Army** and **Air Force** ROTC units will each have formal commissioning ceremonies on Friday, May 22, just before convocation. We’ve all seen the young people in dress uniforms and fatigues. As part of University News covering CAST where the ROTC programs reside, I have been lucky enough to look in on their world a bit—but there is nothing like the voice of experience:

> In late April, the Air Force ROTC had a visit from **Lt. Col. Matthew Glover** (seated, right) and his wife, **Jamie** (seated, left). Both are graduates of the United States Air Force Academy and have served as officers, Lt. Col. Glover as a helicopter pilot in the special operations squadron and Jamie, as a physician. They were in town to attend the annual Air Force Ball where Lt. Col. Glover was the keynote speaker.

While on a transport mission in 2004 from Baghdad to Fallujah, Lt. Col. Glover’s helicopter and another were under heavy fire. The second helicopter was damaged, and Glover’s crew returned fire to protect comrades. For this rescue and courage under fire, he received the second of his Distinguished Flying Cross designations. Glover achieved his first Distinguished Flying Cross in 1999 for service in Serbia. He also served in Afghanistan.

Glover spoke eloquently about the Distinguished Flying Cross award; the lessons he learned were team and individual lessons. “Everyone has a role. The Air Force is a tight knit group, you never know who you will meet along the way,” he said. In preparing for service, the successful candidate listens and learns. They immerse themselves in the environment, are not quick to make judgments, first they make time to find the information needed, they come in with an open mind and are ready to learn, he said. “Positive attitude goes far.”

But, despite the heroic tale, the cadets preferred to talk about preparation for duty and what to expect after graduation. Jamie Glover was asked about what deployment is like for families left stateside. “Many of them were looking for the next steps,” she said. “They asked what the deployment was like for me. They may not be ready for a family now, but they were thinking ahead, too.”

As the stories of combat in distant places arise, some of the soldiers in those stories may be the same students who walked the RIT campus, participated in classes, sports and club activities. This makes ROTC commissioning ceremonies as big a deal as a walk across the stage for one’s diploma—well earned and better shared among friends and family. **Celebrate with the ROTC family: the Air Force event starts at 9 a.m. and the Army ceremony begins at 1 p.m. Both events are this Friday in Ingle Auditorium.**