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For immediate release

NROTC Southern University Conducts 8th Annual Dronet Challenge

Baton Rouge, LA – Southern University Naval ROTC conducted the 8th annual Dronet Challenge on October 11th 2014 in honor of 1st Lieutenant Brandon Dronet, USMC.

1st Lieutenant Brandon Dronet was a graduate of Louisiana State University and earned his commission as a Marine Corps Officer through the Southern University Naval ROTC program. In February 2006, 1st Lt. Dronet died tragically in a helicopter crash above the Gulf of Aden in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Each year, the Naval ROTC Battalion hosts an athletic challenge to remember their fallen comrade.

As is tradition, several Navy and Marine Corps units from the local area joined NROTC Southern University in the challenge. The Southern University Army ROTC, The LSU Air Force ROTC and Army ROTC, and the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class all sent teams to compete. Also in attendance was the family of 1st Lt. Dronet. The day began with a wreath laying ceremony, remembering the ultimate sacrifice that 1st Lt. Dronet made for his country. “One of the things our Armed Forces value is honoring those who came before us, and that’s what the Dronet Challenge is all about”, said Capt. Andrew Kettner, USMC.

Cadets, Midshipman, and Officer Candidates faced off in athletic events including, push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, a 2 mile endurance course, tug of war, the Marine combat fitness test, a water jug relay, a fireman’s carry relay, and a stretcher carry relay. “Even though they were all competing against each other, it was remarkable to see the Cadets and Midshipman cheering on other teams”, said CDR Tremayne Criner, the Executive Officer of Southern University Naval ROTC. “There was a deep sense of camaraderie between the units, and that is more important than winning any athletic event.”

Once the final scores were tallied, Southern University Naval ROTC took first place, LSU Air Force ROTC took second place, and the Marine PLC candidates took third place. Taps was then played for an exhausted and somber audience. For fallen heroes like Lt Dronet, their memory is honored in the places they lived, by the people they touched, and by military units like this NROTC, whose existence was made better by him having served here. We were privileged to have the opportunity to pay respect to his memory.