



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

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NU Women in Special Operations

When the U.S. Army lifted the Combat Exclusion Policy in January 2013, it opened the ranks of Special Operations. Norwich women were ready to jump in and make their mark.



Alison Lanz '10

As a high school student from upstate New York, **Alison Lanz '10** attended a girl scout camporee at Norwich one summer and Future Leader Camp the next year. Following those experiences Alison says, "I was hooked and had to attend Norwich."

Entering the Corps of Cadets in 2006, Alison soon discovered opportunities to develop her leadership skills. In her senior year she was selected as Regimental Commander, the third woman in Norwich history to achieve that rank.

Graduating with a degree in Criminal Justice, Alison was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. She served six years as an intelligence officer and was selected for the Army's Cultural Support Team, an elite group of female soldiers that served on the front lines with Army Special Forces and Navy Seals. Alison spent her last two years in the Army as a Counterintelligence Special Agent and Special Agent in Charge of a Counterintelligence field office overseeing special operations, counterespionage and international terrorism investigations. She received the Bronze Star medal for her meritorious service duty as a Cultural Support Team Leader in 2011.

"Norwich taught me how to make mistakes with grace and rely on others for advice and guidance when needed," she says. "I can't think of a better way to test your leadership skills before joining the military."



Today Alison is on the Global Security Team for JPMorgan Chase & Co., focusing on mitigating workplace violence

A native of Memphis, TN, **Rebekah "Rose" Bernheim '14** embraced the challenges of the Corps of Cadets and Army ROTC that came with training in Vermont. "The terrain and unforgiving weather, combined with our instructors' high expectations, resulted in exceptional—albeit

Rebekah “Rose” Bernheim ’14

demanding—training and honed the leadership skills I would need as an Army officer,” Rose says.

Rose also gravitated to the no-holds-barred women’s rugby team, where she was a standout player. She developed a relentless work ethic, a team-first mentality, and a strong sense of self. “The team encouraged women to play with the same ferocity as the men,” says Rose. “I was surrounded by strong, confident, and capable people who made me want to be the best version of myself on and off the pitch.”

It was that same level of determination that, in 2017, Rose became the tenth woman to complete Ranger School, the Army’s premier combat leadership course. “Norwich prepared me well for the mental and physical challenges I faced there. I was often reminded of trying times during my freshman year or exhausted moments on the rugby pitch. Those experiences inspired me to focus on the task at hand and support my fellow Ranger students.” During her nine-year Army career, Rose served at various organizational levels of leadership, meeting tactical and strategic requirements and garnering experience leading small unit teams. She is currently an operations officer in the US Army’s Special Operations Command.

Alison and Rose represent a proud group of soldiers and alumnae, and their numbers continue to grow. They exemplify resilience, leadership, and unwavering pride in their Norwich roots.

Records documenting the history of women at Norwich are available through the University Archives: <https://archives.norwich.edu>



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