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Bulldogs bite into Ranger Challenge



Fresno cadets train hard to be in top form for annual event

Photo essay by
Master Sgt. Patrick Johnston
UC-Fresno Senior Military Instructor



Cadet Adam M. Van Dusen, who is ranked nationwide as the Number-One Army ROTC cadet of 2004, puts on his "War Face" as he endures the 10K Rucksack March.



It's not RiverDance, but rather the California State University - Fresno team as they learn to master one of the challenges on the Obstacle Course.

For the past several years, The Fresno State Ranger Challenge team has consistently been one of the best teams in the 14th Brigade. The members of this year's Bulldog Battalion team were Cadets Kurtis Douglas, Ryan Evans, Kaman Fan, Michael Larson, George Nishiguchi, Frank Palestini, Forrest Ryan, Adam Thomas, Adam van Dusen and Richard Wukmir.

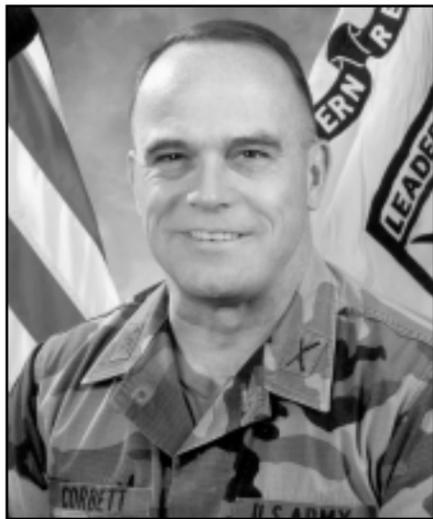
They started training early with (main photo) Road marches to the middle of nowhere, followed by (above, clockwise) rope climbing, cargo-net tower negotiation, One-Rope Bridge training and more. The team trained on campus, in nearby Woodward Park and at Fort Hunter Liggett, among other places. 14th Brigade Ranger Challenge fielded 21 teams.

Read about 10th Brigade's Ranger Challenge on Page 4

Last month, Michaela's mommy left for Baghdad. Michaela is my three-year-old daughter and "Mommy" is my wife, Maj. Laura Corbett, United States Army Reserve. Like tens of thousands of our fellow Active, Guard and Reserve Soldiers, she is now serving in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although I have been a soldier longer than 95 percent of the cadets in the Western Region have been alive, this is a new experience for me. Before now, I was the one who went away. Now, I am learning how hard it truly is balancing my own duties with caring for our children while providing support for my wife and her fellow Soldiers.

In addition to my new-found skills such as "soccer-momming," sorting laundry, packing lunches, and buying Valentines for my grade-schoolers, I have had lots of opportunities to ponder how much our Army has changed over the past 25 years. As our All-Volunteer Army developed over the past quarter century, the very fabric of Army culture has changed. As an example, there were 40 or so Soldiers in my very first platoon, when I was a newly-minted second lieutenant. Only about six or seven were married, and of those, four had their families with them. Now, more than half of every platoon in the Army is married, many of them to other Soldiers. The "Army Family" is now truly composed of "Army Families."

This has required us to develop systems of Soldier family support over the past 10 or 15 years. Army Family Team Building, the Army Family Advocacy Program, unit Family Readiness Groups ... the list goes on and on. This isn't about lists of acronyms, however, it's about taking care of the Army's Families. As part of our on-campus instruction, we integrate Army Family Team Building into the training we conduct for our senior program cadets. Additionally, we have dozens of our cadre members, both Active Army and contractors, deployed in support of operations in the Middle East. Hundreds of our cadets in both the Junior and Senior programs have friends and loved ones deployed. Even during peacetime, large numbers of our cadre serve in areas not supported by nearby mili-

**Col. Steven R. Corbett**

tary bases. These Soldiers, too, can be thought of as "deployed" within our own borders.

Many of us have seen the film or read the book, *We Were Soldiers*. I am fortunate to know Col. (Ret) Joe Marm who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in the Battle for Landing Zone X-Ray, which is depicted in the movie. Colonel Marm described Mel Gibson's version of the movies as "a love story ... the story of the love of Soldiers for one another and the story of those families who love Soldiers." I'm very proud to say that "families who love Soldiers," are much better supported by the Army and each other than those depicted in *We Were Soldiers*. For our Soldiers and their families today, the Army has developed significant support programs. Whether serving in the Active Army, National Guard or Army Reserve, our families can get help when they need it, a friendly voice when they need to hear one, and the very real comfort of sharing experiences and lessons with one another in a systematic, organized fashion.

These programs, by and large, are run by volunteers and family members, in the true spirit of selflessness and commitment that we all try to personify as Soldiers. The families of America's Army represent the core values of our nation - selfless, dedicated, courageous, cooperative and proud of their individual Soldier and all Soldiers. They help one another through good times and bad. In my recently acquired duties as "Army Family Member," my respect for the wives, husbands, sons and daughters of our Soldiers has risen to new heights. They are my new outfit and I'm proud to serve among them.

As we go about the daily business of developing the next generation of Army leadership, keep in mind that many of the Soldiers within our ranks in Cadet Command are being called away from their current assignments to perform duties far from home in the Global War on Terrorism. These are members of our Army family and team who deserve and need our support as they embark upon temporary duties that place them much closer to harm than they would face here at home. As such, we should honor and respect their service.

Within Cadet Command, we currently have 39 such taskings - three people from Cadet Command headquarters, 19 from Eastern Region and another 17 from our own Western Region. Some will come back with combat decorations - Maj. Christopher R. Felchlin, who is our Region Inspector General, was just awarded the Bronze Star Medal - but all will come back with the pride of having served their nation and the cause of freedom. And they all will have earned our undying gratitude and respect.

We should also remain mindful of the void left each time one of these valuable players in our organization

**Command Sgt. Maj. Lewis Ferguson**

deploys on a TDY mission that may take months or as long as a year. It becomes our duty, then, to take up the slack and ensure that our vital mission keeps stride with the need of the Army for new officers. Each deployed Soldier also leaves behind a family who is part of our community and will rely upon us for a variety of their needs as well. Never let a single one of them go wanting for assistance, but rather include them in your AFTB, AFAP or FRG programs, well before it becomes necessary.

We live in troubled times, a point in history where the Army is once again walking point in a conflict that spans the planet. As always, we work and fight as a team and we get the job done right.

BYU cannon crew rocks the house

By Maj. Gregory A. Weisler
Recruiting Operations Officer

The Cougar Battalion at Brigham Young university in Salt Lake City, Utah, uses "George Q.," a World War II vintage M120 75 mm howitzer painted in BYU colors, to help build the school spirit throughout the year. Most notably, "George Q." is present at all BYU home football games and announces its presence forcefully after each BYU score. After every touchdown or field goal scored, the "Q" Cannon Crew do the appropriate number of pushups in front of the 50,000+ crowd, who count loudly to motivate them and the team. Each game, an "honorary cannon crew member" is chosen to fire the first round at the opening kick off and receives a free T-shirt from the BYU Army ROTC.

Standing in the back from left to right are Cadets Sonie Foster, Dave



Courtesy of BYU Army ROTC

Bell, Nate Gotsch, and 2nd Lt. Jason Cannon. Kneeling from left to right are Cadets Mike Gretz and Joshua Thyer and Capt. Eric Verhoef, Recruiting Operations Officer.

Cannon later deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and was wounded by an enemy improvised explosive device. He is now fully recovered and back on duty.

The cannon is named after George Q. Cannon - a prominent church leader during the era of Brigham Young.

Chicago ROTC grad takes top 2003 honors

By Lt. Col. Michael A. La Chance
University of Illinois - Chicago

The 2003 Raytheon Hughes Award has been presented to 2nd Lt. Timothy Vanderwalle who graduated from the University of Illinois - Chicago's ROTC program in 2002. He competed against 3,200 cadets from 270 Universities nationwide. This significant award is presented to the top nationally-ranked ROTC graduate of the previous year.

Vanderwalle was honored in a ceremony at the Pentagon and presented with a plaque by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, The Honorable Reginald J. Brown, and Raytheon Hughes executives. Vanderwalle was also given a personal tour of the Pentagon and a luncheon in his honor with Maj. Gen. Alan W. Thrasher, who is the commanding General of Cadet Command, and then-Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley.

Vanderwalle, who was born Aug. 28, 1980 in Elgin, Ill., earned this distinctive honor following his remarkable performance as an ROTC cadet.

After earning his high school diploma from Marmion Military Academy in Aurora, Ill. (where he graduated in the top 10 percent of the class), he went on to attain a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering with high honors from Illinois

Institute of Technology in Chicago (one of five University of Illinois-Chicago partnership schools), where he received the top award for excellence in mathematics, served as cadet battalion adjutant as a senior and served as a drill team captain for two years and graduated in the top five percent of his class with a cumulative grade point average of 3.97. Vanderwalle was cadet battalion commander while a senior and Ranger Challenge captain for two years.

He finished ROTC National Advanced Leadership Camp 2001 in the top third of the honors platoon and worked 10 to 20 hours a week as a junior and senior on campus, also volunteering time as a tutor at a local grade school. He completed Airborne school in summer of 2000.

Active in intramural sports, he headed several teams and was ranked first in accessions class as well as peer evaluations. His numerous awards as a cadet include the prestigious George C. Marshall Foundation Award, Dean's List all eight semesters, Distinguished Military Graduate from University of Illinois - Chicago, Fire Battalion Society of Achievement Member, Superior Cadet Award, Tawani Charitable Foundation Award, Special Forces Association Scholarship, Reserve Officers Association Award (2), USAA Spirit Award,



Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, The Honorable Reginald J. Brown, (left) stands with 2nd Lt. Timothy Vanderwalle, his father, Larry and mother, Patricia, holding the Raytheon-Hughes Award plaque.

he was invited to join Engineering Honors Society: Tau Beta Pi, and an award from the '02 MilBall.

He was commissioned in May, 2002, then worked on a committee as a camp lieutenant from June to August. Vanderwalle received a commander's coin for a job well-done.

He attended Engineering Officer Basic Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., in the fall of 2002 and currently serves as an Engineering Platoon Leader in the Republic of Korea. 

Arizona Wildcats take One and Two in Tucson

By Maj. Richard Garn
University of Arizona

Up at six a.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, the University of Arizona's Wildcat Battalion Group-One-Ability PT group is up and on the roads. Through a variety of workouts targeted toward the Army Physical Fitness Test and improving their running, they log up to eight miles in each 60-minute session.

But the hard work paid off, because eight members of the group recently competed and placed in the Tucson Marathon Relay, both in the Coed and Men's open divisions. The Coed team, appropriately named "It's all about the ladies," won not only first place in their respective division, but also first place of all 49 competing teams.

Led off by Cadet Paul Kahn on the 8.1-mile lead leg, they were in third place at the transition. Lauren Carmichael took the baton for the next 5.5-mile leg. At the transition, she had not only extended her lead on the coed competition, but had passed both men's relay runners as well. Now in first place, Cadet Barry Tucker, put in a solid performance on the first of the two 6.3-mile legs. He extended the lead to over six minutes before handing off to Linn Tsosie, the final team member. At the transition, the team members knew they had won, but Linn ran an extremely strong leg and crossed the finish for an outstanding team time of two hours, 56 minutes and two seconds.



Cadet Linn Tsosie pours on the coals to take the baton to the finish line and exceptional team timing.

The men's team, An Army of "Group One" and consisting of Joshua Thomas, Bryanson Sells, Jonathan Alexander and Patrick Murray, came out of the first transition in fourth place and succeeded in moving up into the second position by the end of the third leg. Pat Murray, on the final leg, crossed the finish line with an impressive finishing kick with a men's divisional first place finish and second overall open finish in 3:00:57.

The group is highly motivated and strongly encouraged to participate in local running events. Most have never competed before, but their successes throughout the fall running season have steadily increased their enjoyment of the sport and enhanced their training efforts.



A winning team is a happy team, as evidenced by the big grins and good cheer of the strong-running Arizona Wildcat Battalion's victorious cadets.

10th Brigade 2003 Ranger Challenge tests toughest cadets

Story and photos by Capt. Andrew Cempa
10th Brigade Operations Officer

The nine-cadet team gained a bit of pep as it rounded the curve in front of Forney Army Airfield along the troop trail and saw the lights and cadre that marked the 10-km forced-march finish point. It was dusk on a beautiful Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., October Saturday afternoon. The team looked forward to the last steps they would take in the final event of the Ranger Challenge competition.

A little more than 24 hours earlier, the team arrived at the 35th Engineer Brigade (Missouri National Guard) Armory and began the process of signing in to 10th Brigade, Western Region's annual ROTC Cadet Ranger Challenge. A total of 29 teams from 22 battalions of the brigade competed, representing the states of Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas and Oklahoma in what was by far the toughest, most demanding Cadet Ranger Challenge competition the Brigade has executed to date.

Tenth Brigade held the 2003 Annual Competition from Friday evening, Oct. 17, through Saturday evening at several sites on Fort Leonard Wood. The event is designed to challenge cadets in tough mental and physical competition, enhance leader development, develop team cohesion and foster a healthy sense of competition



Teamwork is the watchword in every event, including the One-Rope Bridge, so the winning teams have fine-tuned cooperation as much as they develop their individual skills.

among ROTC battalions while demonstrating the toughness and esprit de corps found in the ranks of the cadets that make up the future of the U.S. Army officer corps.

The 10th Brigade commander emphasized the need to truly challenge the cadets and make them reach for success by developing, planning and executing an event that would take every cadet team to the limits of mental and physical endurance, while reducing risk to an acceptable level. This was a key change from the past, when the brigade executed all of the individual tasks in a collective environment, within a fairly relaxed timetable. The intent this year was to add the stressors of time compression, little rest, night navigation and patrolling over difficult terrain, better time management and more team interac-



The Hand-Grenade Assault Course replicates similar activities these same cadets will encounter during Warrior Forge.

tion. The Operations staff, consisting of Operations NCOs Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone Middleton and retired Sgt. 1st Class Keith Schoonmaker, in concert with Sgt. 1st Class Israel Gonzalez (the Brigade Logistics NCO) rose to the challenge; they developed and resourced a plan that met the commander's intent and then some, as later reported by many cadets and battalion cadre. As an example, last year's winning time on the 10-km was 56 minutes; this year, using the same course, the winning time was 80 minutes. Battalions, supported by volunteer cadre from within the brigade, volunteered to execute each of the five major events under overall command and control of the brigade.

The result was a schedule of events that included very limited rest opportunities or anything more than "tactical pauses," allowing only for transportation between event sites. The events included Written Land Navigation and Patrolling exams (hosted by the University of Missouri-Rolla and Washington University, respectively) administered earlier in the week before the competition; a night reconnaissance patrol (Washington University) geared toward stressing the teams mentally and physically; an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) administered by the Fort Leonard Wood NCO Academy Drill Sergeant School cadre; then a round-robin series of events including a One-Rope Bridge crossing (hosted by the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville), the Army Hand Grenade Assault Course (hosted by Southwest Missouri State University) and an Orienteering course (hosted by the University of Missouri-Rolla) held at the Maneuver Support

Center and Fort Leonard Wood Officer Basic Course Land Navigation site. The culminating event was the 10-km forced march (hosted by Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville).

Throughout the competition, cadets commented on the rigorous pace and the lack of rest or "down time." It was obvious these cadets were being tested to the limits of their mental and physical capacity. Informal interviews with cadets during brief lulls in the action found that they were impressed with the competition's toughness and requirement for close teamwork to enable the units to complete the tasks. Many young cadets, competing for the first time, were very surprised that they actually could push themselves that far, for that long. Veteran cadets compared past competitions and commented that this was the way to do it; similar in many respects to the annual Best Ranger competition held each year at Fort Benning, Ga.

In the final analysis, the University of Missouri-Columbia 'Tiger' Battalion took top honors with a combined total score of 737.34 points



Knowing the ropes means knowing the knots, too, so cadets are well instructed in the intricacies of fastening cables together.

out of a possible 1000. First runner-up honors went to the Southwest Missouri State University 'Bears' with a score 677.57, followed closely by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 'Fighting Illini' with 674.02 points.

Individual event honors were earned as follows: The University of Missouri-Columbia won the APFT event with an average of 297.38 (not using the extended scale). The University of Central Arkansas took the Patrolling event with

See "Challenge," on Page 5

Kansas State hosts Gen. Myers

By Lt. Col. Arthur DeGroat
PMS, Kansas State University

Manhattan, Kan. - General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff and Alumni of Kansas State University returned to his alma mater on Oct. 17 to address the 130 Army and Air Force cadets currently enrolled there. Myers' message to these future officers was clear - the nation needs their leadership among the ranks of our military forces fighting the global war on terrorism. "Never underestimate the influence and contribution that you can personally make," he told them.

The cadets were able to ask the Chairman candid questions about the war, women in combat and what he thought the cadets should focus on before commissioning. Army Cadet Scott Allen said, "Through our personal conversation during his visit, I found he has an amazingly genuine concern for the development of cadets - given the overwhelming commitments he has in leading our nation's military during war."

Following his 35-minute talk to the cadets, Myers spoke at the University Foundation Trustee's dinner where he commended the growth and accomplishments of the Army and Air Force programs at Kansas State.

"I felt very proud to represent the Wildcat Battalion when General Myers asked me to stand up and be recognized by some 600 distinguished guests at this important event," said the Professor of Military Science, Lt. Col. Art DeGroat. "We have worked very hard - cadre and cadets together - to rebuild our program to a standard of excellence and to have the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize this effort was motivating," he said.

Before departing, Myers gave the cadet bat-



Cadet Scott Allen, the KSU cadet battalion commander, presents Gen. Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with a rendering of the Kansas State Wildcat Battalion logo.



(left) Cadet Micah Rue presents Myers with a T-shirt emblazoned, "Command Respect" and the school's logo as Cadet Mike Bethea looks on. Myers is an alumnus of KSU and returned to the campus to observe the current ROTC program and address the new generation of Wildcat cadets.

alion commander 16 of his purple CJCS coins to award to the cadets that are working hard and supporting the cadet chain-of-command. "When Cadet Allen asked me whom he should give the coins to - I told him that it was his decision and responsibility to award them as the General directed,"

DeGroat said. Allen presented the prized coins on the following day to the most deserving cadets in the battalion, serving as a reminder of this historic visit by the nation's senior military leader. 

"Challenge," from Page 4

a score of 86.67 of 100 possible points. Wentworth Military Academy out-navigated the field with a score of 140 of 150 possible points to take honors in Orienteering. Western Illinois University won the Hand Grenade Assault course with a team score of 48.20 out of 100 possible points. Truman State University out-bridged the field in the One-Rope Bridge event with 55 of 100 points while Southwest Missouri State University out-paced its sister battalions in the 10-km forced-march, scoring 68.75 points out of a possible 150 points.

The major lesson learned was that the change to a continuous, compressed format in the the scoring matrixes published in Cadet Command Pamphlet 350-3, Cadet Ranger Challenge does not account for the increase in mental and physical fatigue. This resulted in relatively low scores on most events. The brigade will adjust the scoring matrixes to reflect the increased difficulty level. One sug-



As with the rest of Ranger Challenge, the 10-km Road March proved to be a test for every cadet's endurance and stamina, especially since it was done carrying field gear and weapons.

gestion was to score every time-based event on "par time" in which the fastest overall performance earns the maximum score and every slower time is awarded points as a percentage of

the fastest score.

The event would not have been a success without the stellar support from many agencies and organizations across Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. The post provided the vast majority of all resources including; logistics, training areas and land, transportation, equipment loan and medical coverage at both troop medical clinics and the Gen. Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital. Special kudos go to the Fort Leonard Wood NCO Academy's Drill Sergeant School cadre for the continued support of the program by executing the APFT. The Missouri National Guard provided six combat medics and three field ambulances, the use of the 35th Engineer Brigade Armory for team billeting as well cadre barracks in the Reserve Components Division footprint.

The 10th Brigade 2003 Annual Cadet Ranger Challenge success has set the stage for an even better event next year.

Golden Eagle Battalion holds Eagle Strike FTX

By Maj. James Drago
Univ. of Southern Mississippi

The University of Southern Mississippi Army ROTC Eagle Strike field training exercise was conducted Oct. 9 to 11 at Camp Shelby, Miss. The focus of this FTX was to immerse third year ROTC cadets in a training environment similar to the Warrior Forge exercise conducted at Fort Lewis, Wash., in the summer between a cadet's third and fourth year of ROTC. By exposing the cadets to training which is modeled after their Warrior Forge requirements, the training cadre at USM identified areas where the cadets need more training. It also took some of the mystery out of the camp experience and, hopefully, allays some of the cadets' fears.

Upon arriving, cadets, many for the first time, moved into open-bay barracks and operated as cadets in a completely military environment. They were taught basic aspects of barracks life such as military-style bed making and how to keep their personal area squared away. In addition, they were assigned duties as Charge of Quarters (CQ) and fire guard. They were also given the operational orders for the activities the next day, on the evening of the first day, and were required to develop a plan for execution of that order. On Saturday, after an early wake-up,



Live-fire with their primary weapons against silhouette targets gave cadets a taste of what the M-16 is capable of doing.

cadets were trained on the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST), which helped them learn how to zero and fire an M-16 rifle. They also participated in both night and day land navigation training in the scenic woods of southern Mississippi. Sunday saw an even earlier wake up, preparation for clearing the post by cleaning the barracks and stowing personal equipment and was then followed by a truly challenging event, live fire of an M-16 rifle.

Overall, the exercise was a great success, in the opinion of both cadets and cadre. The training was realistic and focused on skills they will need for the challenges they will face at Warrior Forge next summer. One of the most useful aspects of this

training is that it was largely planned and conducted by the fourth year cadets who attended National Advanced Leadership Camp last year and therefore have a lot of valuable knowledge to share. These cadets were placed in key positions to model both leader and follower skills. The last, but not least, component of the weekend was fun, an element which is also built into every training event to the extent possible.



Maj. Greg Hargett



The Engagement Skills Trainer was used during FTX Eagle Strike to help teach cadets rifle marksmanship with the M-16.

Maj. Greg Hargett

Nurse trainers visit AMEDD

By Capt. Cory B. Ramsey, RN, BSN
12th Brigade Nurse Counselor

Nurse Educators from Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi made a day trip to the Army's Medical Department (AMEDD), Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to learn about the Army Nurse Corps and the Army Medical Department.

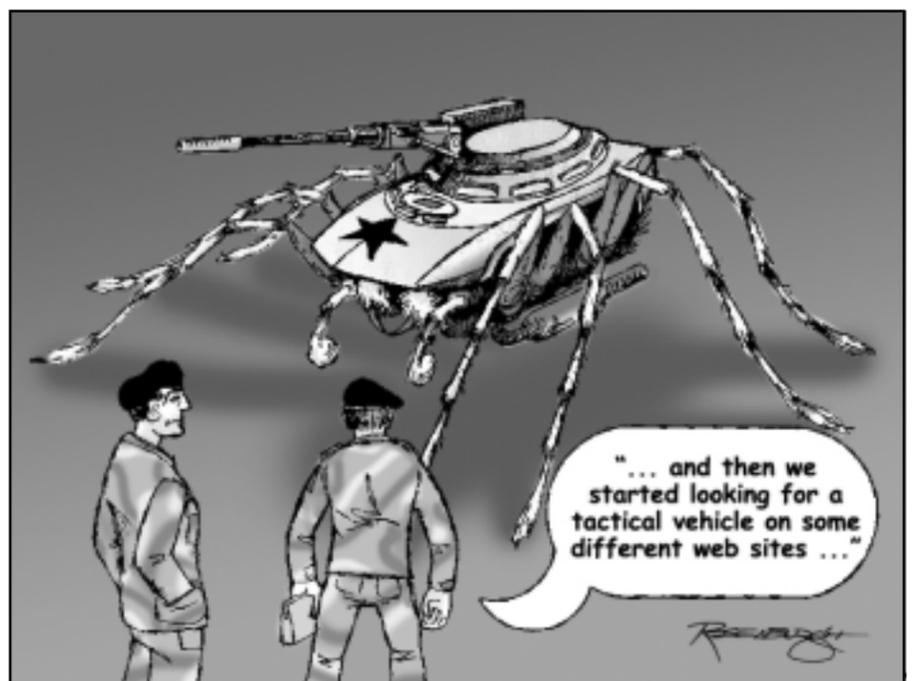
They were shown several aspects of military medicine, including a guided tour of the AMEDD Museum by retired Maj. Gen. Floyd Baker, MD; a luncheon at the Fort Sam Houston Officer's Club sponsored by the 12th "Apache" Brigade and a Code Simulation demonstration, hosted by the Brooke Army Medical Center's Nursing Education Department.



The nurse educators were also briefed about the Army Medical Department, Army ROTC, and opportunities available in the Army Nurse Corps. Accompanying the group were Cadet Heather Sherman, a senior nurse cadet, and the Battalion Recruiting operations Officer, Capt. Kurt Adams from Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, Texas.

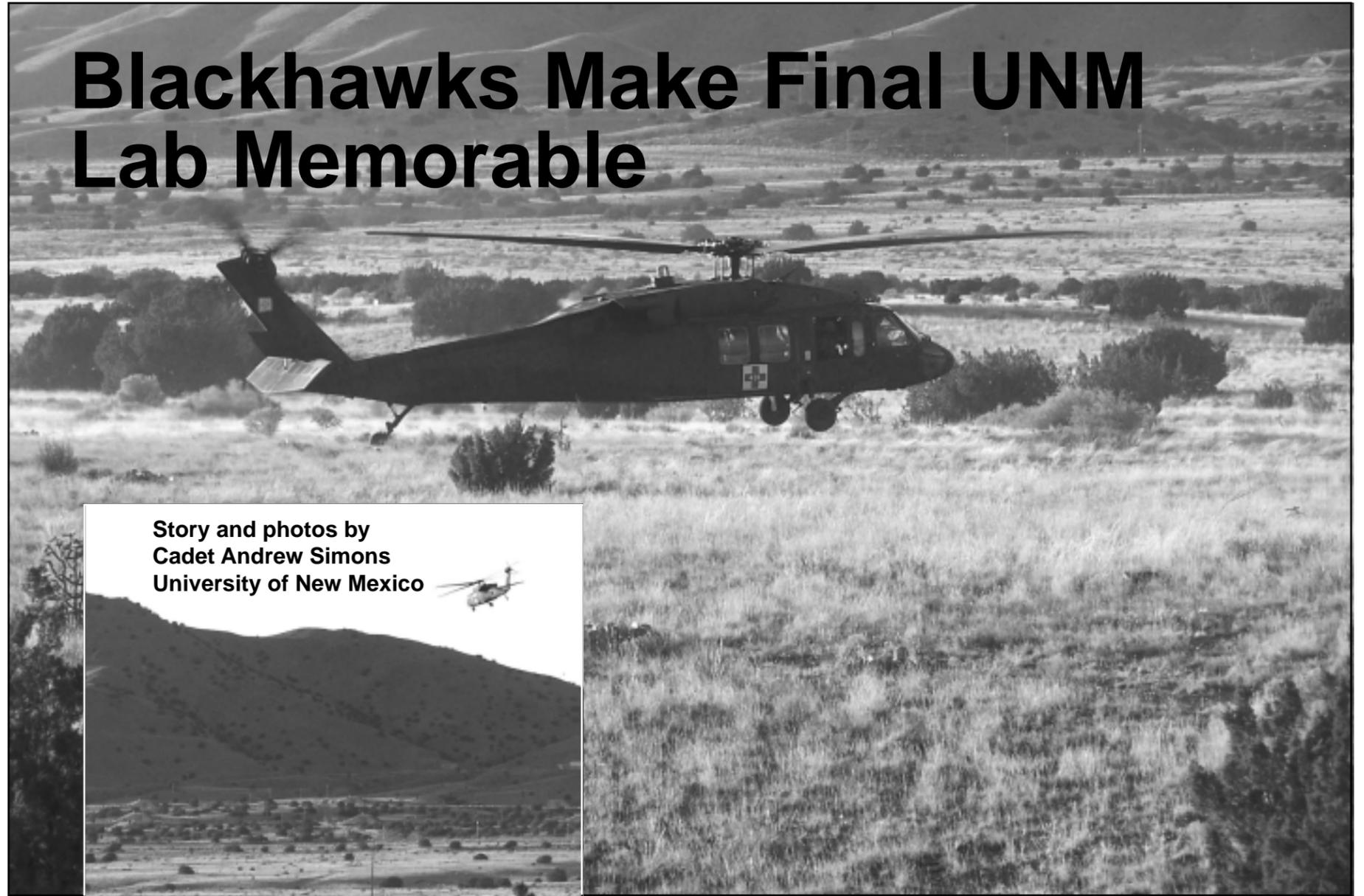
2nd Louie

By Bob Rosenburgh



Blackhawks Make Final UNM Lab Memorable

Story and photos by
Cadet Andrew Simons
University of New Mexico



On Dec. 4, the cadets of the University of New Mexico's Lobo Battalion finished out their fall semester with some outstanding training, conducting an airmobile operations lab where they gained real-world experience in a field environment. The New Mexico National Guard's 717th Medical Company provided air support by bringing in one of their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. With the help of the University of New Mexico's police department, they secured a portion of Johnson field, which is used by many students for recreational activities. All activity stopped as the people on Johnson field watched the Blackhawk land. Johnson Field was a great place to have the helicopter touch down because it gave the Army ROTC program exposure to the rest of the uni-

A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter of the New Mexico National Guard's 717th Medical Company (above) hovers in preparation to disembark UNM cadets. The Blackhawk then speeds away (left) as the Lobo Battalion prepares to conduct their FTX.



Lobo Battalion cadets secure their perimeter as they make plans to move out for the upcoming simulated assault on a hidden bunker to the front.

versity through this exercise.

Once the cadets had tactically boarded the helicopter, they flew to a landing zone on Kirtland Air Force Base to conduct the remainder of the lab. Upon touch down on the landing zone, the cadets tactically disembarked from the UH-60 and then prepared to knock out a bunker. This required knowledge learned from previous labs

such as movement techniques, land navigation and squad attack. Once the mission had been completed, the cadets re-boarded the UH-60 and returned to campus.

This was very good training for the cadets of the Lobo Battalion. It allowed them to take the knowledge from previous labs and use it in a real world environment. The UH-60 was an added bonus that made the lab even better. It was also a great recruiting tool, showing the rest of the University of New Mexico that the Army ROTC program is on campus and conducting exciting training.



Nome JROTC is Cadet Command's newest and northernmost unit

By Cadet Megan Baker
Nome High School

Just south of the Arctic Circle is Nome, Alaska, a little town with a high school of about 170 students in a school building sharing grades seven through 12. There is not a whole lot to do there, but many kids are very interested in basketball, volleyball, wrestling and cross-country running. After school, there is sports practice - after practice is homework. That's an average day. Weekends consist of driving four and a half miles to the high school gym to watch the town's athletes compete with other teams from around the region. Those not interested in sports are somewhat of out of luck. There is not much else to do, but that all changed this year. It began when members of the Nome School Board discussed the possibility of instituting a JROTC program. Superintendent Stan Lujan immediately ran with the idea.

When the program started, the School Board decided 15 students needed to be interested in JROTC to fulfill its needs. They acquired enough money to start the program from members of the community, but still needed someone suitable to move to Nome to implement a JROTC program. It was nearing August and the students were told there might not be a JROTC program as planned. Everyone was shocked, but still very interested and eager to start something new. That's when Maj. (Ret.) Gary Grennon took the job. Little did he know, he had just accepted a job to teach 87 out of 170 kids self-discipline, respect, and leadership.

On the first day of school, everyone was talking about the new class, "JTCO something or other." Some were



Nome's first JROTC Staff - (first row, left to right) Cadets Brendon Tran, Andy Lean, Maj. (Ret.) John G. Grennon (SAI), Cadet Ian Alvanna-Stimpfle. (Second row) Cadets Alex Morgan, Heather Payenna, Sean Octuck, Megan Baker, Justina Alvis. (Third row) Cadets Jenna Schmidt, Shea Oliver and Nick Schmidt.



Cadet Kelly McDaniel (center) commands the Honor Guard, to his left is Cadet Kohren Green and to the right, Cadet Nick Schmidt.

even a little intimidated about a man coming into the school they attended for four years, wearing different kinds of uniforms and handing out push-ups to tardy students. The staff sergeants were appointed - most were very pleased to get a higher rank - but they had never heard of giving up your lunchtime to have a meeting. It was turning into more work than they thought it would be.

Next, was a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, attended by important people like Brig. Gen. Craig E. Campbell (the

state Adjutant General), Brig. Gen. Craig N. Christiansen (Commander of the Alaska Army Guard), Col. Dennis M. Kline (Brigade Commander), Lt. Col. Leon M. Bridges (1-297th Scout Battalion Commander), and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Arturo Ayala (Senior Army Instructor - Dimond HS). The American Legion donated money for new uniforms and Nome's first Color Guard performed at the ceremony in front of the whole school, parents, community members and all the officers that flew into the little town. Grennon told them not to be nervous.

The day after the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was the first time they marched in public. On Veteran's Day, JROTC marched from the town square to the Veteran's of Foreign Wars Post. Battalion Commander Andrew Lean, the Color Guard, and then the three companies led the march, 73 students in all.

Nome JROTC is now five months into this program and has already learned a lot. Yet, they want to learn so much more and do more as well. JROTC has evolved from being just another class for them - it's way more than that. It is something they do every day, wearing BDUs every



In the Color Guard at a basketball game are (left to right) Cadets Rie Ann Fullwood, Andy Lean, Clinton West and Sean Octuck.

Wednesday, with honor. They now understand the meaning of those push-ups and why they need to practice marching every week. Within the companies, they've grown a lot closer.

In addition to the four-person Color Guard, they added a 10-person Honor Guard. The Color Guard began with little knowledge about the commands - they now can do Colors Reverse and will be going to a big competition in Anchorage. It will be their first competition against 13 other Color Guard teams, all more experienced teams from around the state.

Although a new battalion, Nome HS is already being recognized for excellent progress. Four cadets, Heather Payenna, Nick Schmidt, Sean Octuck, and Kelly Wongittilin all received coins (solid silver) in recognition of their progress in the first semester. The coins were presented by the 1-297th Scout Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Mike Bridges, and the unit Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Tolan.

The Nome cadets all look forward to such upcoming events as the Military Ball, which is themed "America The Beautiful", and a Turkey Shoot. As mentioned, they will be sending eight cadets to Anchorage for the Color Guard Competition and hope to come home with lots of medals.

The Nome cadets speak well of their JROTC experience. Cadet Ahne Schield said "JROTC gives us a sense of pride to be involved in something so noble. When we wear our uniforms it gives us a sense of belonging."

Cadet Lean said "I am honored to be the commander of such an awesome battalion."

They are excited that JROTC was started in Nome. It has offered a lot of opportunities for them to reach their goals and they appreciate the efforts of all who have helped achieve this dream.



Nome High School's all JROTC cheerleaders are (left to right) Cadets Dana Booth, Ahne Schield, Abby Kremer, Katie Herzner and Jessica Ford.

