Cadets, welcome to the new Eagle Battalion! When I say “new” that term has something to do with me, and a whole lot to do with each of you. Here’s why. In a way, an ROTC battalion is much like any college football team. As fall semester starts, every NCAA team across the nation is new and different. Coaches are the same, the stadium is the same, uniforms are unchanged—yet, the team that hits the field each Saturday this year is much different from the same squad that campaigned the previous year. The team is annually different because of the players: seniors graduate, underclassmen matriculate forward to assume new roles, and then a new crop of high school blue-chip athletes arrive to fill vacated roster spots. ROTC is much the same. Even if I had been here for the last few years, we would still be different this year because each one of you is either newly-arrived or have taken on new responsibilities. But of course I haven’t been here for the past few years, and thus some of the battalion’s “newness” also falls on my shoulders. Those of you who have been in the Eagle Battalion for a year or more undoubtedly have noticed that much has changed from days gone by. This doesn’t necessarily mean that we are any better than what we were; it only means that we are now different in many ways. All units are reflections of their commanders, and change is inevitable whenever a new officer takes command. Improving an organization is also one of the basic tenants of military leadership, and a big part of any leader’s job is to determine where your organization is now and where you want it to be in the future. You must then figure out how to get it there. On that last point, I think we’re now well on our way. So hold on tight—it’s going to be an exciting ride.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark W. Johnson assumed command of the UW-La Crosse Eagle Battalion in May 2008. Immediately prior to this assignment he was the executive officer of the 181st Infantry Brigade at Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin.

He received his commission from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1986. His assignments include: platoon leader, anti-armor platoon leader, and company executive officer, 2-15 Infantry, 3d Infantry Division, Germany; assistant battalion S-3, commander, D/3-327 Infantry, and commander, HHC/3-327 Infantry, 101st Airborne Division; aide-de-camp to the commanding general, 3d Medical Command; commander, 317th Military History Detachment; operations officer, 2d U.S. Army Recruiting Brigade; and executive officer, 1st Brigade, 70th Division. He has also served as an assistant professor of military science at the University of Wyoming and at Siena College in Loudonville, New York.

LTC Johnson’s military education includes the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Infantry Officer Advanced Course, and
**Nurse Summer Training Program**

Nurse Summer Training Program (NSTP) is a paid clinical elective that takes place between a student nurse's junior and senior year of college. This training can take place before or after the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) but is generally conducted afterward. The clinical site is an Army Hospital in the United States or in Germany. Some popular sites are Madigan Army Medical Center, Brooke Army Medical center, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and Tripler Army Medical Center.

When cadets apply for NSTP, they not only request a medical center but can request a certain department. Popular departments to be assigned to are Medical-Surgical, Intensive Care, Labor and Delivery, Surgery, and Urgency. Most of the cadets who requested a specific department were able to work in it. Many programs allowed spending time in other departments than the one assigned to, to gain experience and understand how the medical center operates.

After being assigned to a preceptor who is a current Army Nurse, cadets are introduced to their roles and duties. They practice clinical skills, are taught new procedures, and are supervised by their preceptor. Each cadet receives a standardized list of skills and attributes they should be demonstrating. Each cadet must complete a minimum of 120 hours of clinical time in a three week period. A cadet’s schedule is developed based on their preceptors work schedule. This may include working nights and weekends.

(Continued on page 3)
I attended Drill Cadet Leadership Training (DCLT) at Fort Jackson, South Carolina from 06June until 25July directly after graduating from the Leadership Development and Assessment Program (LDAC) at Fort Lewis, Washington. My position at DCLT was a platoon leader for basic training soldiers. I shadowed a Lieutenant, my commander (a Captain), and the various drill sergeants of the platoons. At the time that I arrived the soldiers that were there were about to graduate so I had the chance to accompany them on their 10-day field training exercise. While staying out in the woods with them I interacted as their operational force giving them variable scenarios as “the bad guy”. Before they graduated I also lead a brigade run with them. As the next cycle of new soldiers was coming in I wrote an OPORD (operations order) outlining some of the events and activities that the new soldiers would do on their field training exercise. It was a good experience for me to interact with basic training soldiers as well as seeing what an officer evaluation report looks like for the first time. The camaraderie that was built between the cadre and me was almost immediate and they were always there to answer any questions I had. I would recommend it to any cadet who is looking to get their feet wet with the types of things they will be doing as a future Army leader.

Throughout the time at the clinical site a cadet nurse will implement their leadership and nursing skills in the hospital setting. They will be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating nursing care. Clinical skills are monitored and evaluated by your preceptor based off the cadet clinical performance guidelines given at the beginning of the program. At the end of your 120 hours cadets receive a formal evaluation assessing a cadets potential to be a nurse and a leader.

NSTP is not all work. Many cadets spend their days off sightseeing and socializing with the other cadets assigned to their hospital. NSTP is a great opportunity to travel, gain real world experience and have fun doing it.
Thursday, 11 SEP 2008, over 60 Eagle Battalion ROTC cadets ventured out to lower Hixon forest to test their land navigation skills during the two hour Military Science lab. The previous week, cadets rappelled down Cowley Hall on the UW-L campus. This second week of classes, cadets get some exercise as they navigate a distance of 500 to over 2000 meters to find their points. For the land navigation practical exercise cadets were divided into teams based on M-S class and confidence level; third year M-S III students completed the course independently while second year M-S II students went in buddy team pairs. First year M-S I students went in larger groups with forth year ROTC students and cadre guiding them through the course. The main purpose of this training was to help prepare M-S III cadets for Warrior Forge 2009 and familiarize M-S I and II cadets with land navigation.

M-S III cadets will go to Ft. Lewis, WA during the summer of 2009 to complete a 32 day Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) necessary to become a future Army leader. Land navigation training is one of the skills that must be mastered early in the Warrior Forge cycle. The land navigation evaluation at LDAC consists of three portions totaling 100 points. The written examination is worth 20 percent, the day land navigation test is worth 50 percent, and the night land navigation is worth 30 percent. Each cadet must earn 70 percent on each test to pass this event. A passing score in land navigation is a Warrior Forge completion requirement. For this reason, land navigation is a major training focus for M-S III cadets in Eagle BN.

At Hixon forest, cadets were given less than one hour to navigate the course. Their goal was to find at least two out of four points. Cadets returned with sweat on their face and success on their score cards. M-S III CDT Scott Wolfe successfully found 4 out of 4 points with the furthest point 500 meters from his start point. Nearly all M-S III cadets found between 2-3 points in less than one hour which is a great accomplishment this early in the semester. M-S III CDT Sarah Hesse shared, “I know the land navigation course at Ft. McCoy is tough, so going out to Hixon was a good place to build our confidence.” Throughout the school year, Eagle BN cadets will continue to receive land navigation training on campus and at Ft. McCoy which will advance their skills and build further confidence.
The United States Army airborne school is located at Fort Benning, Georgia, and is operated by the 1/507 Parachute Infantry regiment. This past summer I was enrolled in class 35-08, which ran from 18 Jul - 08 Aug. The course consists of three phases, each phase lasting one week. The first phase is ground week. During ground week, students focus on building their individual skills by using a mock aircraft door, a thirty-four foot tower, and a lateral drift apparatus. To pass ground week, students must qualify on all three training aids and pass the physical fitness test. The second phase is tower week. Tower week is geared towards building the group and learning the mass exit technique. More training aids are used, and a few lucky students get to experience the 250 free tower. Those who pass tower week get to move on to the last phase, which is jump week.

During jump week, students make 5 jumps into Fryer drop zone. At least one of the jumps needs to be with combat equipment. On Friday of jump week, all students who successfully exit the aircraft 5 times graduate and get their silver wings.

Eagle Battalion Record Highs!! Eagle Battalion has enrolled close to 100 cadets this year with 50% of those enrolled being contracted. A record high has been reached in Winona with fifteen cadets this year. Viterbo is also at a record high this year with 19 contracted cadets and many motivated freshmen. UW La Crosse is up to 29 contracted cadets. There are many eager freshmen—mainly due to Viterbo’s enrollment—ready to learn the ropes of leadership and numerous opportunities entitled to an Army officer. We are enthused to see that there are so many students willing to support their school and country with the current military situation encompassing our nation. We would like to thank everyone for all their support and contributions in making our battalion run smoothly!
CDT Hamilton

This summer I attended Northern Warfare Training (NWTC) at the Black Rapids Training Site, about three hours south of Fairbanks, AK. NWTC is a basic mountaineering course where soldiers learn how to fight in mountains, but the school in Alaska also specializes in cold weather warfare. In total there were 11 cadets and about 60 active duty soldiers, most of who are deploying to Afghanistan in a few months. Basic mountain skills of climbing steep hills and vertical walls requiring technical climbing skills were taught. We also learned how to navigate on steep terrain and build 1-rope bridges across small canyons. We learned how to ascend steep terrain where climbing is impossible and how to find natural anchors or build artificial ones. Rappelling and tying various harnesses was very important due to the safety risks involved. There was some classroom instruction on how to survive in extreme cold conditions before we headed out for 3 days of training on a glacier. Although it was summer, the temperature on the glacier was between 20 and 45 degrees the entire time. Here we learned how to hike safely on top of hundreds of feet of moving ice and how to avoid falling into crevices that can go nearly to the bottom. Snow overhangs on crevices are very dangerous, so while hiking we always were tied together in groups of four with about 50 feet of rope between people. In case someone happens to fall in a hole or crevice, the other 3 people should be able to slam their ice pick into the ice and get the crampon tips in to hold the person. We practiced this and building an ice anchor to have something sturdy to hold the person without the strain on our bodies. Once the anchor was in place we began the arduous process of slowly pulling the person up out of the hole. On our way back to the training site, we took a detour to a glacier-fed river where we practiced various techniques of crossing the river — none of which were meant to keep us dry or warm. The 33 degree water wasn’t painful until we had to cross waist deep. After this and another hour on the bus, having a warm shower was amazing. When graduation day came about 90% of the class graduated; a much higher percentage than they normally see. Once back in Fairbanks there wasn’t much to do but gawk at the $4.75 per gallon gas and walk the 3 miles to the movie theatre, so that’s what we did. Out of the 11 cadets, 10 of us graduated. The training was tough but we all learned a lot and definitely gained a lot confidence from being there. Trust me, if you found yourself hanging over a 100ft drop onto sharp rocks, only by a single rope harness which you tied to some trees, made out of 1” tubular webbing, you wouldn’t be able to help but feel a little more confident either.

“There was some classroom instruction on how to survive in extreme cold conditions before we headed out for 3 days of training on a glacier.”
The purpose of this lab was to instill confidence throughout the ROTC program and give the cadets an opportunity to overcome their fears.

On September 4th the UWL ROTC Eagle Battalion participated in its first Lab of the year, rappelling off a four story building. This year the Cadets got a unique opportunity to take part in some exciting training while getting to know their peers better. For many of the cadets this was their first time rappelling and because of that tensions ran high once atop Cowley Hall. One might ask. “What does rappelling off of a building have to do with ROTC and leadership in general?” The purpose of this lab was to instill confidence throughout the ROTC program and give the cadets an opportunity to overcome their fears. Overcoming this mental and physical obstacle is a step in the right direction down the path to becoming an Army Officer. The Battalion was broken down into squad size elements which consisted of 4 to 10 people. Once atop Cowley Hall the cadets rotated through various stations on their way to the rappel tower located on the eastern side of Cowley. The first station taught them how to properly tie a Swiss seat. The Swiss seat is a rope that is 6 to 7 feet long and when tied correctly around your hips provides a comfortable harness for you to hook into the main rappelling line. After a safety check to ensure all the seats were tied correctly the cadets proceeded to the bunny slope. The bunny slope is a gentle hill that will introduce the cadets to the commands they will be hearing while on the tower. Moving backwards the cadets shout, “Lane 1, ON RAPPEL!”, to which the cadet before them responds, “Lane 1, ON BELAY”. These basic commands will keep the cadet safe while on the tower. The belay’s job is to hold the main line at the base of the rappel tower and tighten down on it if a cadet loses their grip. After two more safety checks of their Swiss Seats, gloves, and karabiners the cadets bravely leaned over the edge of Cowley Hall, looked down from a height of 40 plus feet and took a step toward becoming a better leader.

Leadership Development and Assessment Camp

This summer UWL Assessment Course (LDAC) sent 11 cadets from University of Wisconsin Lacrosse, Viterbo, and Winona State University to Ft. Lewis, WA to participate in the Leadership Development Assessment (LDAC) with approximately 5,000 other cadets around the nation. LDAC encompasses all military science courses that cadets have enrolled in thus far, as well as applies basic ROTC fundamentals that the cadets have learned since their freshman year. “It was like condensing 3 years of ROTC into 33days,” describes WSU Cadet Andrea Schultz.
Once arriving to LDAC cadets spent the first 15 days doing Battle Rifle Marksmanship, Field Leaders Reaction Course, Individual Movement Techniques, US weapons introduction, Branch Orientation, First Aid, and garrison leadership position duty. After those 15 days the cadets journeyed out into the country of “Palomas,” where they had to learn about this different cultures’ customs, courtesies, rules of engagement, language, and much more to successfully complete the next 10 days of tactical operation assignments. The cadets spent four days completing the squad tactical exercises involving squad sized battle drills across the country of Palomas. They then moved to a Forward Operating Base to learn basic principles for operations and received hot chow and a cot to sleep on (upgrade from sleeping on the ground). Next, they moved onto combined squad sized patrolling for the last four days including rides in a UH50 helicopter, and a Stryker armored vehicle. Ending the 10 days of sleeping and working in the field the cadets’ road marched a 10 kilometers back to the barracks where they were welcomed with hot chow and hot showers. Excited to almost be finished with LDAC, cadets were given back cell phone privileges, coffee shop visits, and their personal bags which had been stored all month long. Cadets then participated in confidence courses including the slide for life and zodiac training up until graduation day. Once on the parade grounds for graduation, cadets were reunited with friends and families and shipped out to SEATAC for their flights to follow on training or back home.
On the night on September 10, 2008, the UW-La Crosse College Republicans showed their patriotism when they wanted to place 3,000 US Flags around the 9/11 Memorial on campus. But when they asked for help in this task, we answered their call. A grand total of 19 cadets, most of the underclassmen volunteered their time into the dwindling light, to help place over 3,000 US flags around the 9/11 Memorial.

“I am more than happy to give my time to help with this memorial” said Cadet William Thomson, a MS-III Cadet attending UW-La Crosse. “The memorial was in the shape of a half circle that engulfed the green-space that it was in. So when students were walking to class they could definitely take notice. Cadets had the opportunity to ask CPT Beattie about her experiences as an Army nurse. CPT Beattie offered advice and answers to the many questions asked of her from MS I to MS IV nursing majors. CPT Beattie was also helpful with planning for future internships and courses. CPT Beattie took time to meet with all (about 25) of the nursing cadets, including a Saturday morning visit to Winona for convenience of Winona University nursing cadets. We look forward to another visit with CPT Beattie during the 2009 spring semester.
For about a month and a half, something was missing from Eagle BN. A commanding presence always there to help, SFC Eisch was dearly missed! We are happy he has returned now and some still wonder where and what he was up to in his absence. To these wonderers I will first say it was definitely not a vacation! you SFC Eisch was a competitor in the US Army during the 2008 Best Warrior competition at Fort Lee, VA.

It’s been a long road up to this point. SFC Eisch won many lead up competitions starting last spring. They started at state level and continued to work up. Each level was increasingly more demanding and required more training to prepare for. I recall talking to SFC Eisch when he started winning these contests and though he was somewhat reluctant to get into the realm with every win he gained more confidence and enjoyed it more.

When the semester started, the cadets quickly noticed his absence and were proud to learn one of our own was involved in such an event. His help was missed during training, especially the FTX. However, I know I speak for the MSIV class when I say we kept in mind what he taught us in the past, for example, running the ranges. During the short times we would see him we were eager to hear what he was doing. The Best Warrior Competition is among the top 12 soldiers and 12 NCOs in the Army. All competitors train 24/7 for months in advance to be up to the level necessary. Most that compete are active duty NCOs. SFC Eisch put in major hours at Fort McCoy, alongside another competitor SPC David O’Bray from Winona. Together they trained on everything Army related, from weapons systems to book knowledge. And before long it was time to compete!

The competition was a week long or a long week if you talk to SFC Eisch! Extremely hard physically and mentally it takes a heck of a soldier to even make it through. The tests are designed to emulate what our soldiers are up against in Iraq and Afghanistan and it is changed every year. It is meant to give them superior training to take back to their units and pass on. If you talk to any of those that attended they will say unanimously that it was a true honor to compete alongside other fine soldiers.

And then the dust settled. It was SPC O’Bray who took the award of Top Soldier of the Year. And our SFC Eisch was close behind in the standings but was proud of his teammate. He didn’t go home empty handed though; loads of prizes ranging from gift cards to high quality boots sweetened the deal.
In preparation for the competition, SFC Eisch focused on his physical fitness and mental abilities. He says this included a “more productive eating routine” of lean protein and vegetables and “exercising two to two and a half hours a day.” Once a week he took his sons to the YMCA for a family workout of swimming. While his sons were at school, he spent most of his time pouring over his Army handbooks and study guides to prepare for the oral and written exams, and presentation before a board of Non-Commissioned Officers. He also prepared by driving to Fort McCoy three times a week to train alongside soldiers that were being trained for Iraq and Afghanistan. He attributes those soldiers with “refreshing and honing my skills for the competition.”

The competition itself was held at Fort Lee, Virginia September 29-October 3, 2008 with twelve U.S. Army competitors, one of which was a female, traveling from Army stations as far as Okinawa, Japan with as close to home as La Crosse, Wisconsin represented by SFC Eisch. Over the course of the competition, the soldiers are asked to demonstrate their abilities to complete tasks most often needed in battle. SFC Eisch explained that the competition consisted of urban orienteering which is a form of land navigation, a physical fitness test, a written exam, weapons qualification, first-aid training, and an appearance before a board, modern Army Combatives, and a mystery event. The mystery event was a vehicular rollover simulation.

Although this event represents the best of the best soldiers of the Army, SFC Eisch says “winning the competition doesn’t mean we’re the best soldier, because the best soldier is probably on patrol in Iraq or Afghanistan.” With the competition over, SFC Eisch returned home without the top title, but did not leave empty handed. Among the prizes that he won for simply making it to the competition included a trophy he has on display in his living room, a new ruck-sack, free running shoes for a year, and a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The trip to Washington, D.C. gave the twelve competitors the opportunity to meet top U.S. officials such as the Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston and Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter Chiarelli, visiting various sites around Washington, D.C., and enjoying their time away from normal Army duties.

So how did SFC Eisch become a part of this competition in the first place? SFC Eisch never

*The Following article is a reprint of an article that showed up in Viterbo’s weekly newsletter.
intended to make it to the final competition. In fact, he never planned on competing at all. Major Hansen, another ROTC instructor at UW-La Crosse that works with SFC Eisch training cadets explains, “He was nominated by our brigade Sergeant Major to go and represent UW-La Crosse and Viterbo [ROTC].” Major Hansen had his doubts of how SFC Eisch would make it in the competition, too. “At first, he spent all his time teaching, and didn’t seem to find time to study for the competition.” SFC Eisch managed to exceed others expectations about the competition including his own.

Settled back home from the competition, SFC Eisch is working on getting back to his normal routine which includes teaching at the UW-La Crosse ROTC, which trains UW-La Crosse and Viterbo University cadets as potential future U.S. Army Officers. SFC says, “My life is an organizational nightmare right now, but in the long run it makes me a better dad and a better leader.” Currently, the ROTC program has thirty-six Viterbo students enrolled in the program, the largest number of cadets from Viterbo that has ever been in the program. You may recognize these students walking around campus dressed in their Army uniforms and hauling their book bags to class. Jared Emmart, a Senior Business student at Viterbo from Stoughton, WI and ROTC cadet, shares his thoughts on why he believes SFC Eisch is so successful at what he does. “SFC Eisch is a self-driven motivational, powerhouse soldier that cannot run out of gas.” He can be often be found teaching cadets how to navigate their way around a forest with only a map, protractor, and compass. Land Navigation is his favorite teaching subject in the Army. “I have always had a knack for finding things, always have. The spirit of detail and the spirit of me being by myself. Trusting my pace, my compass, and my gut instinct. It’s hard to fight a battle if you can’t get there.”

In addition to his teaching position, he is a full-time dad. Between preparing for the competition and raising his two sons as a single divorced parent, Isaac and Joey who are ten and five years old, SFC Eisch was relieved to have the understanding of his colleagues who gave him the fall 2008 semester off. He says, “I’m thankful for the chain of command for their support with me and the kids during that time.”

SFC Eisch is now making his own paper airplane. His dog, Minnie, who weighs about four pounds, sits impatiently at his feet. SFC Eisch says with a laugh, “my dog is from another planet,” referring to her squashed in face. Isaac and Joey begin throwing the airplanes at one another and SFC Eisch allows them their fun. His long-term goals are to eventually retire from the Army, and enjoy time with his family. “I want to be a wrestling coach for Isaac and Joey. I want to win fishing tournament someday, and buy a bass boat.” For now, the most important thing in his life is getting back on routine and raising his boys after the life-changing competition. He plans to resume his teaching position with ROTC in the Spring Semester instructing sophomore cadets. SFC Eisch releases his paper airplane and says, “I will always carry the experience of the competition with me. I wouldn’t change any of it for the world.”
On the 23rd of October the branches for the commissioning class of 2009 were released. The following seniors were not only ranked against their classmates but as well as the rest of the nation. They were ranked on the basis of GPA, LDAC performance, On-campus performance, as well as extra curricular activities. The branch assignments for the commissionies are as follows:

CDT Njoya Chomilo – Aviation, Active Duty
CDT Corey McCaigue- Infantry, Active Duty
CDT Travis Cyphers- Field Artillery, Active Duty
CDT Holly Cuhel - Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Danielle Kessler- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Theresa Schreiber- Adjutant General, Army Reserve
CDT Karla Shultz- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Andrea Shultz- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Holly Cuhel - Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Danielle Kessler- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Theresa Schreiber- Adjutant General, Army Reserve
CDT Jeremy Mollinger- Infantry, National Guard
CDT Jared Emmart- Engineer, Army Reserve
CDT Matthew Johnson- Engineer, National Guard
CDT Theresa Schreiber- Adjutant General, Army Reserve

The Results Are In!

CDT Travis Cyphers- Field Artillery, Active Duty
CDT Holly Cuhel - Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Danielle Kessler- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Karla Shultz- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Andrea Shultz- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Travis Cyphers- Field Artillery, Active Duty
CDT Holly Cuhel - Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Danielle Kessler- Nurse Corps, Active Duty
CDT Theresa Schreiber- Adjutant General, Army Reserve
CDT Jeremy Mollinger- Infantry, National Guard
CDT Jared Emmart- Engineer, Army Reserve
CDT Matthew Johnson- Engineer, National Guard

The next big step in their commissioned journey to their first unit will be discovered around the spring time when their first duty stations are released.

2008-2009 MS-IV Class