



# The Eagle Times

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2011

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## Commander's Corner: Comments from the Secretary of Defense

**LTC Mark W. Johnson**

A few weeks ago, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made an address to the Corps of Cadets at West Point. His remarks are well worth reading by any cadet who is on the path of Officership in the United States Army, for he makes some interesting comments about the Army that today's cadets will someday lead. Here are the secretary's remarks:

It's a pleasure to be back here at West Point, although as I often say, it's always a pleasure to be away from Washington, D.C.

I want to take this last opportunity to share some thoughts with you, and through you to the Army as a whole, about the institution you will someday lead – the United States Army – and how it can better prepare itself, and in particular its leaders, for a complex and uncertain future. No doubt the Army's challenges are daunting and diverse – supporting families, caring for wounded warriors, dealing with post-traumatic stress, doing right by soldiers, strengthening the NCO corps, training and equipping for the future, and finding a way to pay for it all. Today, I'd like to

focus on three interrelated issues:

- The future of conflict, and the implications for the Army;
- How best to institutionalize the diverse capabilities that will be required; and
- The kinds of officers the Army will need for the 21st Century, and how the service must change to retain and empower those leaders.

When you receive your commission and walk off the parade field for the last time, you will join an Army that, more than any other part of America's military, is an institution transformed by war. The change has been wrenching for a service that a decade ago was essentially a garrison army, a smaller version of the Cold War force that faced down the Soviets in Europe and routed Saddam's divisions from Kuwait – a force mainly organized, trained, and equipped to defeat another large modern army.

The Army's ability to learn and adapt in recent years allowed us to pull Iraq back from the brink of chaos in 2007 and, over the past year, to roll back the Taliban from their strongholds in Afghanistan. As the Army's vice chief of staff, General Pete



Chiarelli, once said, it is important that the hard fought lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan are not merely "observed" but truly "learned" – incorporated into the service's DNA and institutional memory.

Which leads to the first major challenge I see facing the Army: How will it structure itself – how will it train and equip – for the extraordinarily diverse range of missions it will face in the future? There has been an overwhelming tendency of our defense bureaucracy to focus on preparing for future high-end conflicts – priorities often based, ironically, on what transpired in the last century – as opposed to the messy fights in Iraq and Afghanistan. But without succumbing to what I once called "next-war-itis," do think it important to think about what the Army will look like and must be able to do after large US combat units are substantially drawn

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down in Afghanistan – and what that means for young leaders entering the force.

We can't know with absolute certainty what the future of warfare will hold, but we do know it will be exceedingly complex, unpredictable, and – as they say in the staff colleges – “unstructured.” Just think about the range of security challenges we face right now beyond Iraq and Afghanistan: terrorism and terrorists in search of weapons of mass destruction, Iran, North Korea, military modernization programs in Russia and China, failed and failing states, revolution in the Middle East, cyber, piracy, proliferation, natural and man-made disasters, and more. And I must tell you, when it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never once gotten it right, from the Mayaguez to Grenada, Panama, Somalia, the Balkans, Haiti, Kuwait, Iraq, and more – we had no idea a year before any of these missions that we would be so engaged.

The need for heavy armor and firepower to survive, close with, and destroy the enemy will always be there, as veterans of Sadr City and Fallujah can no doubt attest. And one of the benefits of the drawdown in Iraq is the opportunity to conduct the kind of full-spectrum training – including mechanized combined arms exercises – that was neglected to meet the demands of the current wars. Looking ahead, though, in the competition for tight defense dollars within and between the services, the Army also must confront the reality that the most plausible, high-end scenarios for the U.S. military are primarily naval and air engagements – whether in Asia, the Persian Gulf, or elsewhere. The strategic rationale for swift-moving expeditionary forces, be they Army or Marines, airborne infantry or special operations, is self-evident given the likelihood of counterterrorism, rapid reaction, disaster response, or stability or security force assistance missions. But in my opinion, any

future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should “have his head examined,” as General MacArthur so delicately put it.

By no means am I suggesting that the U.S. Army will – or should – turn into a Victorian nation-building constabulary – designed to chase guerrillas, build schools, or sip tea. But as the prospects for another head-on clash of large mechanized land armies seem less likely, the Army will be increasingly challenged to justify the number, size, and cost of its heavy formations to those in the leadership of the Pentagon, and on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, who ultimately make policy and set budgets.

What we can expect in the future is that potential adversaries – be they terrorists, insurgents, militia groups, rogue states, or emerging powers – will seek to frustrate America's traditional advantages, in particular our ability to shoot, move and communicate with speed and precision. From the look of things, the Army will not repeat the mistakes of the past, where irregular warfare was shunted to the side after Vietnam. The odds of repeating another Afghanistan or Iraq – invading, pacifying, and administering a large third world country – may be low. But in what General Casey has called “an era of persistent conflict,” those unconventional capabilities will still be needed at various levels and in various locations. Most critically to prevent festering problems from growing into full-blown crises which require costly – and controversial – large scale American military intervention.

A second challenge that I believe faces today's and tomorrow's Army – your Army – is whether and how the Army can adapt its practices and culture to these strategic realities. From the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, our soldiers and junior- and mid-level leaders down range have been adjusting and

improvising to the complex and evolving challenges on the ground – in many cases using the Internet, especially tools of social media, to share tactical lessons learned in real time with their colleagues at the front or preparing to deploy back here in the United States.

As one would expect, it took some time for the bureaucracies here at home – an Army and a Defense Department structured primarily to prepare for war, not to wage war – to respond with remotely similar agility. But with inspired leadership and creative thinking the progress has been real. For example, the doctrine for the new Advise and Assist Brigades was developed and fielded in a couple of months, and over the past two years these reconfigured units have played a key role in the successful transition to full Iraqi security responsibility.

But the important question then is: how can the Army prepare, train, and retain officers with the necessary multifaceted experience to take on a broad range of missions and roles? Where there is not one, but many doctrines in play, often simultaneously. For example, given the ongoing and prospective requirements to train, equip and advise foreign armies and police, how do we institutionalize security force assistance into the Army's regular force structure, and make the related experience and skill set a career enhancing pursuit?

I hope you take some instruction and inspiration from the career of Russell Volckmann, Class of 1934. At the outbreak of World War II Volckmann was serving as a full-time embed in the Philippine army. After the Japanese invasion, Volckmann fought alongside his Philippine unit, and rather than surrender, he disappeared into the jungles and raised a guerrilla army of more than 22,000 men that fought the Japanese for the next three years.

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When the Japanese commander finally decided to surrender, he made the initial overtures not to General MacArthur, but to Volckmann, who went on after the war to help create the Green Berets. My point: if you chart a different path, there's no telling the impact you could have – on the Army, and on history.

Indeed, the Army has always needed entrepreneurial leaders with a broad perspective and a diverse range of skills. As President Kennedy put it, speaking on these grounds half a century ago, "your military responsibilities will require a versatility and an adaptability never before required in war or in peace." And for an era of full spectrum conflict, when we confront security dilemmas that Kennedy called "new in intensity, ancient in origin," America can succeed only with leaders who are themselves full-spectrum in their thinking. The military will not be able to train or educate you to have all the right answers – as you might find in a manual – but you should look for those experiences and pursuits in your career that will help you at least ask the right questions.

Maxwell Taylor, class of '22, was an Asia foreign area specialist in the 1930s before becoming the famed commander of the 101st airborne, superintendent of West Point, and later Army Chief of Staff and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He once observed of his fellow academy grads that, "the goats of my acquaintance who have leapfrogged their classmates are men who continue their intellectual growth after graduation."

So in addition to the essential troop command and staff assignments, you should look for opportunities that in the past were off the beaten path, if not a career dead end – and the institutional Army should not only tolerate, but encourage you in the effort. Such opportunities might include further study at grad school, teaching at this or another-first rate university, spending time at a think tank, being a congressional fellow, working in a different government agency, or

becoming a foreign area specialist. On that last note, I would encourage you to become a master of other languages and cultures, a priority of mine since taking this post. A pilot program begun in 2008 to incentivize ROTC cadets to learn foreign languages has grown from a couple dozen participants to some 1,800 today.



Above: Secretary Gates

It is incumbent on the Army to promote – in every sense of the word – these choices and experiences for its next generation of leaders – the junior- and mid-grade officers in Army ranks who represent the most battle-tested group in its history. More so, in fact, than many of the superiors they might report to. The U.S. military has always distinguished itself from other countries by the degree of trust and responsibility placed on its small unit leaders. But Iraq and Afghanistan – called the "captains' wars" – have taken this trend to a new level, where officers of lower and lower rank were put in the position of making decisions of higher and higher degrees of consequence and complexity. Officers now poised to take what they've learned to shape the institution to which they've given so much – as some are now doing as your instructors here at West Point. The diversity of experiences and essential adaptability of this generation

are crucial to dealing the complexity of conflict in this century.

Which brings me to the third and greatest challenge facing your Army, and frankly, my main worry. How can the Army can break-up the institutional concrete, its bureaucratic rigidity in its assignments and promotion processes, in order to retain, challenge, and inspire its best, brightest, and most-battled tested young officers to lead the service in the future? After the major Afghan troop deployments end in 2014, how do we keep you and those 5 or 10 years older than you in our Army? This is something I've discussed many times with the current service leadership and with General Dempsey, the TRADOC commander, before recommending him to the President as the next Army Chief of Staff.

The context for this discussion is that the institutional Army, for the better part of the past decade has understandably, and appropriately, been consumed by "force generation" – manning units for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan in response to the orders of America's civilian leadership. I will never forget one of my first decisions as Secretary of Defense in early 2007, which was to extend Army combat tours from 12 to 15 months, including for units that had spent less than a year at home. This was perhaps my most difficult decision over the past four years because I knew the hardship this would place on those who had already borne so much for this country.

But the alternative was a disaster for our country and for Iraq. And the Army did as ordered and much more. One result is that you will be joining a force that has been decisively engaged for nearly a decade. And while it is resilient, it is also stressed and tired.

The effect of the Army's necessary focus on preparing and manning units for Iraq or Afghanistan has provided younger officers, especially those in high demand combat and support specialties,

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little opportunity to do more than catch their breath and then get ready for the next deployment.

And on top of the repeat deployments, there is the garrison mindset and personnel bureaucracy that awaits them back home – often cited as primary factors causing promising officers to leave the Army just as they are best positioned to have a positive impact on the institution. Consider that, in theater, junior leaders are given extraordinary opportunities to be innovative, take risks, and be responsible and recognized for the consequences. The opposite is too often true in the rear-echelon headquarters and stateside bureaucracies in which so many of our mid-level officers are warehoused. Men and women in the prime of their professional lives, who may have been responsible for the lives of scores or hundreds of troops, or millions of dollars in assistance, or engaging in reconciling warring tribes, they may find themselves in a cube all day re-formatting power point slides, preparing quarterly training briefs, or assigned an ever expanding array of clerical duties. The consequences of this terrify me.

Furthermore, the creation and increasing number of autonomous Brigade Combat Teams, the substantive growth of other agencies, headquarters and support bureaucracies, and simply meeting the needs of a bigger Army at war have created a voracious demand for mid-level staff officers. The result of meeting these shortfalls has been essentially automatic promotion for elevation to Major and Lieutenant Colonel. A few years ago a brigade commander in Baghdad – Colonel, now Brigadier General, J.B. Burton – wrote a memo reflecting on the feedback he was getting from some of his officers about the factors that influenced them to stay in or leave. They talked about finding respite from the deployment treadmill, getting an opportunity to start or re-acquaint themselves with their families, to develop themselves intellectually through graduate education or other nonconventional assignments.

One of the chief complaints was that the personnel system was, "Numb to individual performance and [had] begun to see every officer as equal."

One thing I have learned from decades of leading large public organizations is that it is important to really focus on the top 20 percent of your people and, though it may be politically incorrect to say so, the bottom 20 percent as well. The former to elevate and give more responsibility and opportunity, the latter to transition out, albeit with consideration and respect for the service they have rendered. Failure to do this risks frustrating, demoralizing and ultimately losing the leaders we will most need for the future.

The promotion rates have started to decrease and, as a matter of course, will decrease further as overseas deployments wind down. I've tried to do my small part to alleviate this situation by ordering the military to pare down the size and number of its headquarters along with reducing the number of general and admirals by nearly 100 – and twice as many civilian executives. One hoped for effect of these reforms is to reduce the number of personal staff and support positions, and in turn alleviate somewhat the demand on the military services to produce the field grade officers to fill those billets. This is an effort I've encouraged the services to continue, including the Army, in the years ahead.

A more merit-based, more individualized approach to officer evaluations could also do much to combat the risk-averse, zero-defect culture that can take over any large, hierarchical organization. One that too often incentivizes officers to keep their head down, avoid making waves, or disagree with superiors. The Army has been fortunate throughout its history to have officers who, at critical times, exercise respectful, principled dissent. Men like General George

Marshall, who rose to high rank and greatness even as he told blunt truths to

superiors ranging from Blackjack Pershing to Franklin D. Roosevelt. But no doubt that takes courage, and entails real risk, especially given the current system. In an article for *Military Review* following his tenure as a corps commander in Iraq, General Chiarelli suggested that, while the opinions of an officer's superiors should hold the most sway, it's time that the Army's officer evaluations also consider input from peers and, yes, subordinates – in my view the people hardest to fool by posturing, B.S. and flattery. And as two Iraq veterans, then-Lieutenant Colonels John Nagl and Paul Yingling, wrote in a professional journal some years ago, "the best way to change the organizational culture of the Army is to change the pathways for professional advancement within the officer corps. The army will become more adaptive only when being adaptive offers the surest path to promotion."

Several years ago, it caused something of a stir when we brought General Petraeus back from Iraq to chair a promotion board, to make sure that those colonels who had distinguished themselves in war – including those who advised Iraqi and Afghan forces – got due consideration for elevation to brigadier general. And since then, due to statutory changes and cultural shifts, officers who don't have cookie-cutter backgrounds, who may not have punched all the traditional tickets, have more of an opportunity to reach higher rank. But the tendency of any big bureaucracy is to revert to business as usual at the first opportunity – and for the military, that opportunity is, if not peacetime, then the unwinding of sustained combat.

There have been a variety of suggestions and ideas put on the table in various venues and publications to give officers – after their initial platoon, company or battalion-level tours – greater voice in their assignments and flexibility

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to develop themselves personally and professionally in a way that enhances their career and promotion prospects. For example, instead of being assigned to new positions every two or three years, officers would be able to apply for job openings in a competitive system more akin to what happens in large organizations in the private sector. The former commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Lieutenant General David Barno, class of '76, has written that, "in a smaller professional force competing for talent with the Googles of the world," reforming this system is a "must do" for the Army to keep its best and brightest leaders.

Having said that, when all is said and done, this is the United States Army. It's not Apple. It's not General Electric. And it's not the Red Cross. Taking that oath and accepting that commission means doing what you are told and going where you are needed. And as practical matter, one cannot manage tens of thousands of officers based on "What color is your parachute?" But just as the Army has reset and reformed itself when it comes to doctrine, equipment, and training, it must use the eventual slackening of overseas deployments as an opportunity to attack the institutional and bureaucratic constipation of Big Army, and re-think the way it deals

with the outstanding young leaders in its lower- and middle-ranks.

I have spent the last few minutes addressing some of the real challenges facing the Army, and discussed some of the frustrations experienced by bright young leaders working in any large bureaucracy. But I would like to close by telling you why I believe you made the right choice, and indeed are fortunate, to have chosen this path. Because beyond the hardship, heart-break, and the sacrifice – and they are very real – there is another side to military service. You have an extraordinary opportunity – not just to protect the lives of your fellow soldiers, but for missions and decisions that may change the course of history. You will be challenged to go outside your comfort zone and take a risk in every sense of the word. To expand what you thought you were capable of doing when it comes to leadership, friendship, responsibility, agility, selflessness, and above all, courage. And you will be doing all of this at an age when many of your peers are reading spreadsheets and making photocopies.

One of my favorite quotes from the Revolutionary War era is from a letter Abigail Adams wrote to her son, John Quincy Adams. She wrote him, "these are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life or [in] the repose of

a pacific station that great characters are formed. ...great necessities call out great virtues."

I typically use that quote in commencement addresses encouraging public service at civilian universities, but those words apply most of all to you, on whose brave and broad young shoulders this era's "great necessities" will be borne. Each of you – with your talents, your intelligence, your record of accomplishments – could have chosen something easier or safer and of course better-paid. But you took on the mantle of duty, honor and country; you passed down the Long Gray Line of men and women who have walked these halls and strode these grounds before you – more than 80 of whom have fallen in battle since 9/11. For that, you have the profound gratitude and eternal admiration of the American people.

As some of you have heard me say before, you need to know that I feel personally responsible for each and every one of you, as if you were my own sons and daughters, for as long as I am Secretary of Defense that will remain true. My only prayer is that you serve with honor and return home safely. I personally thank you for your service from the bottom of my heart, I bid you farewell and ask God to bless every one of you.

## Followership

**MSG Heise**

At the beginning of the Fall Semester, during the Fall Leadership Workshop, I introduced the MSIIIs to the idea of Followership. We discussed how Followership + Leadership = Officership, and have spent the last six months building the followership attitude. Consider the impact of Followership on a leader's effectiveness....



Why should Soldiers follow you? What about you warrants their loyalty and commitment? Are you the leader who inspires mediocre Soldiers to achieve what is normally beyond their abilities, or are you the leader who compels Soldiers to do only what you tell them to do, and nothing more...? Because you are in charge, your Soldiers will follow your orders. The real question is whether they will try their hardest to exceed your expectations, or do only what you specifically order them to do...

The most effectively led Soldiers do not even realize they are being led – they are

*inspired* to achieve. The hallmark of great officers is their ability to inspire others, so it naturally follows that a leader should never have to rely on their rank to accomplish any mission.

How do we become inspirational leaders? What tools do we need? If you ask this question of your fellow Cadets, I am sure you would receive the "no-brainer" answers like: be technically and tactically proficient, have good military bearing and presence, possess good communication skills – spoken and written--

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and be loyal and committed. You might receive a few other answers, but these would be the most common.

I submit to you that inspirational leaders must be caring leaders who have internalized the concept of Followership. No one becomes an effective leader who has not learned first to follow. Not follow in the way that Soldiers “obey” the orders of their leaders, but follows in a manner that ensures the success of the leader. Followership is the steadfast commitment to doing your very best to ensure the success of your leader and your team.

Followership is not a physical act – it is an attitude. It is the intrinsic desire to see

those around you succeed without regard to yourself. It is the commitment to doing your very best in all situations to contribute to the success of the team.

Easy to say – but how do you actually obtain the skills necessary to employ followership? It begins with a commitment to become the best Soldier you can become and truly caring about the Soldiers and leaders around you. You must develop technical and tactical proficiency, you must possess excellent military bearing and presence, you are well spoken and well written, and you are loyal to the Army, your organization, and your leaders. If you don’t take every opportunity

and well written, and you are loyal to the Army, your organization, and your leaders. If you don’t take every opportunity to build these skills, you will not be in a position to exercise followership because you will lack the expertise to ensure your unit and leader’s success.

We spend a lot of time and effort developing the attitude of followership because it is critical for the success of the Army. When you have acquired the necessary skills and adopted the right attitude, you will become a leader who inspires others to follow you with the same enthusiasm you demonstrate.

Followership +Leadership =Officership

# Center for the Intrepid

### *CDT Whitney Mitten c/BC*

Center for the Intrepid (CFI) is a world-class, state-of-the-art outpatient physical rehabilitation facility for wounded warriors. The CFI building, located at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas opened on January 29, 2007. It is a non-profit organization that was built

*Below:* The Gait Lab tests different terrain with the new prosthetic on the soldier.



thanks to donations from more than 600,000 Americans. There are also two

21-suite Fisher Houses next door, which allow a soldier’s family members to stay nearby during the transition from the hospital to rehab treatment.

The CFI serves military personnel who have been disabled in combat operations or in the normal performance of their duties, combat and non-combat related. It is staffed by active duty Army medical personnel, Department of the Army civilians, contract providers, and nine full-time Department of Veteran’s Affairs employees. There are physical therapists, occupational therapists, behavior medicine services, orthopedic doctors, and doctors in kinesiology at the CFI.

The building is a four-story 65,000-square-foot facility which includes clinical, research, and administrative space; a gait lab (see below); a computer assisted rehabilitation environment; a pool; an indoor running track; a two story climbing wall; and a prosthetic fabrication lab.

Thanks to the CFI, service members with severe extremity injuries and am-

putations have the opportunity to maximize their ability to live and work productively.



*Above:* Flowrider integrates balance, core strength training, and excitement into the rehabilitation process.

# Armed Forces and Its Concerns Over Dietary Supplements

**CDT Jorge P. Valdivieso III c/A CO XO**

Members of the armed forces are prohibited from the use of controlled substances, and smoking is actively discouraged. What might be next on the military's list of forbidden materials for America's troops?

One possible target: dietary supplements used by many weight lifters (and younger men) to increase muscle mass.

What is so special about these supplements? Why do people seem so interested in taking them? Why do people take protein or amino acid supplements? Athletes take them to build muscle, while dieters take them to spare their bodies' protein while losing weight. Also, people take individual including mixtures of two or more amino acids, or products that combine amino acids with other nutrients, creatine, etc. All of these varieties of supplements pose danger to the internal body of a user.

First, protein supplements are less well digested than protein-rich food, and cost more than food, too. When used as a replacement for such food, they are often dangerous and can cause unintentional harm to the body. For example, the "liquid protein" diet, which was advocated a few years ago for weight loss, caused deaths to many users.

Second, amino acid supplements (like protein supplements) are also unnecessary. The body is designed to handle whole proteins best. Once a person has ingested food and the digestion process has taken effect, the body collects the nutrients using a rigorous process: the body breaks them into manageable pieces (dipeptides and tripeptides), then splits these, a few at a time, simultaneously absorbing them into the blood. This bit-by-bit absorption is ideal, because groups of chemically similar amino acids compete for the carriers that absorb them into the blood.

However, an excess of one amino acid can overwork a carrier, and temporarily prevent the absorption of another similar amino acid. If carriers are tied up dealing with an overdose of one or a few amino acids, some other needed amino acids may pass through the body unabsorbed. The result is a deficiency. Thus, we see that the human body is meant to live without encountering highly concentrated amino acids in the unbalanced arrangements found in supplements, and therefore lacks equipment with which to handle them.



Why should the military be concerned? Some military health experts say there is evidence that even the legal over-the-counter forms of such supplements can cause heart palpitations, loss of consciousness and death among troops, particularly those in desert climates like Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, Col. Erin Edgar, a physician who commanded the 28th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad in 2006 and 2007, said his unit handled 2,332 cases of soldiers complaining of palpitations. Interestingly, twenty percent of those soldiers reported using either prescription psychotropic drugs or performance-enhancing supplements.

Although Col. Edgar is aware of the military's implementation of restricting the use of supplements, he is not prepared to advocate a ban on the products. Nevertheless, he did call for removing them

from military base stores. "I just think we shouldn't create the perception of D.O.D. endorsement," he told participants at a conference on military health research. His view, however, did not go over well with some in the audience. For example, a former Army captain, Charles R. Gatlin, argued that banning the supplements at base stores would hurt morale without necessarily safeguarding troops who already in harm's way. "All that deployed guys can do in their spare time is eat, read and pump iron," said Gatlin. "Smoking, drinking and using supplements may not be very healthy, but neither is a 90-minute firefight."

Overall, supplements pose danger to users' bodies and need to have limitations, especially to America's soldiers. Soldiers need to be able to function effectively, being able to maintain a healthy lifestyle without certain side effects (i.e., ones caused by what they ingest). Col. Edgar states that the problem with supplements is that they often contain substances that can make users susceptible to heat stroke. Many of the products sold today include stimulants, such as caffeine or ephedrine, that increase metabolism but also raise the heart rate and blood pressure — not necessarily helpful bodily effects for troops in combat or a hot climate.

Again, anyone can find the "special" ingredients of supplements in regular daily food. However, if a person does take supplements, they should consult their doctor prior to use, and keep the use of the product to a minimum. In this way, all people, including America's troops, striving to reach their fitness goals will be able to do so in a much safer manner.

#### *Reference:*

*New Concerns Over Dietary Supplements, by James Dao, New York Times (World), written Sept. 6, 2009.*

# Talon Platoon

**CDT Paul Wanta c/aS-3**

*What is Talon Platoon?*

Talon Platoon is a program in the Eagle Battalion that provides additional training opportunities for cadets. We train cadets for competitions such as the Ranger Buddy Competition, Ranger Challenge, and more. Most importantly, we aim to increase cadets' level of physical fitness as well as their knowledge of soldier skills.

*Who may participate?*

Any cadet in "good standing" may participate. Essentially, this means that as long as you are not on academic probation, failing the APFT, or in trouble for misconduct, then you may participate in any of the training we do. We will put together an Order of Merit List (OML) when we decide who will receive a slot to participate in competitions. While the APFT score will be heavily weighted when computing the OML, meeting your class goal is not a prerequisite for participation.

*What activities does Talon Platoon do?*

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we meet for physical training. That training consists

of running, ruck marching, swimming, obstacle courses, upper and lower body conditioning, and more. Our goal is to push you harder and faster than you are normally pushed. That being said, this training is not for the weak of heart. When you commit to participate in Talon Platoon, we expect you to give 100 percent.



Above: Cadets at Ranger Challenge 2010

We have already had one afternoon of weapons training at the La Crosse Rifle Club and we expect to have more of these in the future. At this event cadets had the opportunity to fire an M9, an M16, and even got to shoot clay pigeons with a 12-

gauge shotgun.

*What is new with Talon Platoon?*

After spring break, Warrior PT will begin on Mondays and Wednesdays. All MS-3s and cadets going to summer training are required to attend Warrior PT. MSG Heise is in charge of planning this training, but he and I will work in conjunction as much as possible to ensure that all cadets have the best opportunities to get in shape physically and mentally.

We have officially begun training cadets for the Ranger Buddy Competition, which takes place on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Since April 2<sup>nd</sup> is in the middle of this year's CFTX, we are only able to send MS 1's and 2's. We have 6 slots, and have 6 cadets that have committed to train Monday through Friday in order to prepare for the competition.

If you would like to be on the Talon Platoon email list so that you receive information about where and when we are training, email CDT Wanta at [wanta.paul@uwlax.edu](mailto:wanta.paul@uwlax.edu), if you have not done so already.

# Army ROTC Nursing Scrubs



**CDT Samuel Pankonen c/S-4**

ACU scrub tops have been a smart and recent addition to the ROTC nursing cadet's uniform. Nursing cadets who purchased an ACU scrub top are now allowed to wear their scrub top to their nursing lab on Thursdays. Previously, cadets had to wear the uniform of their university and then change into ACUs for ROTC lab. Mr. Lambert, a junior nursing cadet, came up with the idea of purchasing ACU scrub tops for wear during nursing labs. Wearing ACU scrub tops allows nurse cadets to be more efficient, and, most importantly, this distinctive apparel raises awareness of

Army nursing. Cadet Lambert believes "the ACU scrubs help raise awareness amongst Viterbo nursing students that there is more to the Army than fighting wars."

By raising awareness on campus, more nursing students become interested in serving. It may also be interesting to know that the ACU pattern was made to make soldiers blend in with their environment, but here in the university atmosphere the soldiers are standing out on campus as strong and caring leaders!



# The Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex

*CDT Katelyn Gies c/S-5*

A fairly new building has been built on the UW-La Crosse campus to honor our veterans from all branches: the Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex. This complex consists of 11.63 acres and has seating for 6,250 people. The football field is made of state-of-the-art synthetic turf. A 10-lane track surrounds the field, and there are new locker room spaces, a press box, concessions and restrooms within the complex. The Veterans Hall of Honor is also notably featured as part of the new stadium, perhaps the most important aspect.

Within this hall, many veterans from western Wisconsin are honored on sleek plaques on the Veterans Recognition Wall. A large flag dominates the main wall with the phrase, "Let us pledge never to forget". This serves as a reminder to all who visit to thank, remember, and honor all those who have served in the Armed Forces.

There are several displays with scenes of soldiers from various periods of time.

Along with this, there is a plan to incorporate interactive screens with which visitors may look up any Veteran from Wisconsin. In the center of the marble floor are the impressions of the boots of Sergeant Major Wayne Hertz that have seen three tours to Kuwait and Iraq. The most recent development is a new monument and mural called The Three Soldiers Memorial including a replica of the statue by that same name in Washington D.C. While only



*Above:* The memorial outside of the Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex represents each branch of the Armed Forces

the initial planning has begun, the new memorial will be a great addition to the Hall of Honor and commemorate the veterans of the Vietnam War.

ROTC cadets and other campus groups are encouraged to use the Veterans Hall of Honor for meetings and events. An annual event that is sponsored by the Veterans Hall of Honor Committee is the Freedom Fest. It will take place at UW-La Crosse and the La Crosse airport on June 19, 2011 and tickets range from \$29-\$149. All proceeds benefit veteran causes including the Veterans Hall of Honor and a statewide Veterans scholarship fund. If you would like more information on the Freedom Fest, please visit [www.freedomfestlacrosse.com](http://www.freedomfestlacrosse.com).

The Veterans Hall of Honor is a building that is alive—things are added and changed to continue to honor all veterans, past and present. This a memorial that every veteran can be proud of, so be sure to take the time and visit this wonderful monument we have on our very own campus.

# Physical Readiness Training

*CDT Jessica Morris c/aS-4*

Here at the Eagle Battalion, physical readiness training (PRT) is an important part of becoming an officer. It is part of our academic grade for our Military Science classes, and it's a large portion of the points in our accessions file. We take at least three Army physical fitness tests (APFTs) each semester, which means we take more APFTs than most Army units (who take an APFT once every six months normally). We also conduct mandatory PRT every Tuesday and Thursday during the week.

To keep the PRT sessions fun, interesting, and challenging, the MSIII cadets are in charge of making the plans according to their instructor's guidelines. Each session

is based on a different branch in the military including infantry, armor, aviation, and so on. Not every plan is perfect, but that's part of the learning process. It's good for the MSIIIs to think outside of the box and come up with innovative plans that both give the cadets a good work out and keep them engaged for fifty minutes at 0615 in the morning. This in itself can be a challenge!

The idea behind the plans isn't APFT focused. Cadets should receive a workout, but it's not just sit-ups, push-ups and running week after week. It's more in-depth and creative. Many may question the idea behind having mandatory PRT that isn't designed solely for cadets to perform well on the APFT. As we graduate and commis-

sion we will rarely ever lead our own PRT sessions as new lieutenants. This day could come though, and when it does it's a good time to show our subordinates what a good officer is made of and how we can lead a great innovative PRT session.

PRT is an important time to show that you're an officer who is educated and physically fit. These two things alone can make or break your first few months with a new unit. So keep that in mind whether you're the one making the plan or following it—always put forth your best effort!

# Mentorship and Coaching

**CDT Austin Wesley c/CSM**

Everyone has a role model, someone with admirable qualities. We have role models in the Eagle Battalion, but we call them coaches and mentors. Developing leadership skills is a fundamental aspect of ROTC. Without mentors and coaches to help develop these skills in younger cadets, the ROTC's program of leader development would not work as effectively as it does.

In the Eagle Battalion, freshman cadets are mentored by junior cadets and sophomore cadets are mentored by senior cadets. The mentor assigned to a freshman cadet will be the same throughout their ROTC career. Mentors help to develop underclassmen and are always there to answer questions, give advice, and just have a friend with more experience in ROTC. Mentors meet with their protégés

at least once a week, and are encouraged to get to know each other outside of ROTC events. This relationship helps to build the esprit de corps of the unit and to prepare underclassmen as they advance through the program.

Coaching is a key responsibility of senior cadets. Seniors are assigned a junior cadet to coach throughout the year. The seniors

are responsible for ensuring their assigned junior is ready for labs, PRT (Physical Readiness Training), and training exercises. The juniors can always ask their coach questions, seek advice, and use as a tutor for military science class or on lab subjects. As seniors, it is our duty to help prepare junior cadets for Warrior Forge this summer.

All of this coaching and mentoring is not exclusive to ROTC, but is also used in the active Army as well. Senior NCOs and officers need to mentor junior NCOs and officers to prepare them for any task that is asked of them. This process only works to better prepare individuals for whatever role they may have. Being able to share experiences will help others learn from mistakes and to further their education in the science of warfare and the art of leadership.



# Increasing ROTC Awareness in Winona, MN

**CDT Tanner McDaniel c/B CO XO**

To increase the awareness of the Eagle Battalion's B Company in Winona, the cadets at Winona State and St. Mary's University came up with some creative ideas to capture the public's eye. During freshman orientation Bravo Company brought a rock climbing wall to Winona State University and challenged students to make it to the top. Doing this allowed ROTC to look for students who are adventurous and have the ambition to try something new that may be physically and mentally challenging. Many students attempted the wall and started to ask about the military, officership and what it could do for them in college and later on for their career.

A few months later Bravo Company volunteered to run for Habitat for Humanity's 5K run the Spooky Sprint. Bravo Company cadets bested the run by completing this

feat while calling cadences the entire way, to not only keep its cadets motivated but to also motivate the crowd and other runners. The Bravo Company cadets showed that they are here to help promote various campus activities and donate its time and resources to help a greater cause.

Lately, a Bravo Company MS-VI cadet has designed a poster of various ROTC activities and drills they have been learning for the past semester. The posters depict the cadets reacting to enemy contact, initiating flanking movements and executing proper squad movement techniques. These are just a brief preview of the variety of different and unique activities cadets in ROTC



will learn over their college career. These activities help the cadets grow their leadership qualities and build their confidence. Bravo Company will keep volunteering and creating new activities in order to show the students at Saint Mary's and Winona State University what they are about and why they should ask themselves "is ROTC or the Military for

me?" The ROTC department is looking for individuals who have that drive, ambition, and the curiosity about the military. If an individual has those characteristics and proves him/herself in ROTC they are commissioned into one of the most respected professions and careers in the United States.

# Tracking Our Graduates

## CDT Jason Church c/BN XO

Cadets in the Eagle Battalion aspire to become officers in the United States Army. Throughout their college careers, cadets endure many stresses and situations not only in ROTC, but in their overall college life that help shape them into the leaders our country needs. The University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Viterbo University, Winona State University and Saint Mary's has produced many officers that now serve in the United States Army. These officers serve in many different units and branches within the Army. While serving the country, they also reflect the values and integrity of the institutions from which they received their diplomas.

This article takes a look at some of our most recent graduates who are on active duty. I will highlight their current rank and branch, and where they are currently stationed. As you will see, many of them are already deployed, some are have already been promoted, and some are halfway across the world.

Second Lieutenants Art Veloz, Jon Flancher, and Josh Spychalla are all branch detailed to infantry and will attend the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course (IBOLC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. In a recent interview with 2LT Veloz, he elaborated on lessons he has learned while at IBOLC: "Leaving to come to IBOLC was kind of intimidating because I would be with a lot of officers from universities around the country, but what I learned in the classroom and my experiences with my peers and faculty outside the classroom, my UW-L experience gave me a well-rounded perspective on life, physical fitness and developing great interpersonal relationships. I feel it put me ahead of

some of my peers in Ft. Benning as a well-rounded individual." As for future expectations for his soldiers, 2LT Veloz stated "I expect my soldiers to have that open mindedness in operating in today's combat zone where it's crucial for troops to think outside the box." 2LT Veloz is now roughly one and a half months into IBOLC. 2LT Flancher just completed IBOLC and reported to Ranger School on 28 February.



2LT Spychalla is currently serving as a Gold Bar recruiter for the Eagle Battalion along with 2LT John Staads, who is an Army Nurse.

Other recent commissioned officers include 2LT Scott Wolf and 2LT Holly Wolfe. 2LT Scott Wolfe serves as an Armor officer, and 2LT Holly Wolfe is currently serving as an Army Nurse in San Antonio Texas. 1LT Ian Morris is currently serving in Iraq near the city of Najaf; he is a cavalry officer, and just recently was selected to be a company executive officer after serving as a platoon leader. 2LT William Thompson is now in Hawaii as an officer in the Corps of Engineers. 2LT Holly Hanson

is currently stationed at Fort Gordon, Georgia and is an Army Nurse. 1LT Jared Emmart is another Army engineer, and currently is stationed at Fort Polk Louisiana as a platoon leader. 2LT Sarah Hesse is a Military Intelligence officer who completed her Basic Officer Leadership Course at Fort. Huachuca Arizona, was stationed in Fort Hood Texas, and is currently in Afghanistan. 1LT Travis Cyphers is a Field Artillery officer currently stationed at Fort Carson Colorado.

2LT Corey McCaigue is an Infantry Officer currently in Afghanistan with IRON Company, 3d Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment out of Vilsek Germany, he is a platoon leader. In a recent interview, 2LT McCaigue left the Eagle Battalion cadets with some words of advice in terms of working with your future soldiers. He described to me his interactions with his platoon sergeant and said "listen to your platoon sergeant they won't steer you the wrong way" and "Your men do not care what you know till they know you care about them"

While this is not all of the alumni from the Eagle Battalion, it is a great representation of those who are now serving our country. For those of us who are still cadets, we have something to look forward to upon our graduation. Already, our former leaders within the Eagle Battalion are leaders outside of ROTC in the Army. As we approach our own commissioning we often ponder our own futures. As we can see from those who have come before us, there is so much to come and so many places to see. There is no real limit to where the Army can take us.

# Night at the Brewery

**CDT Nathan West c/S-1**

Once a year, the Eagle Battalion gets together for a night of comedy and takes time to welcome incoming members and say farewell to outgoing comrades. This year the Dining In was held at the City Brewery Hospitality Center. The Cadet Battalion Commander, Miss Mitten was the President of the Mess, and the keynote speaker was Colonel David Chesser, the garrison commander at Ft. McCoy. One of the main roles at the Dining In is Mr. Vice. The comic and ring-leader of the evening, Mr. Vice must have a personality that is fun and engaging and he must prepare extensively for the duties of conducting the night's festivities. I think we can all agree that all of our past "Vice's" had these qualities. CDTs Vick and Wanta set the standard along with this year's Mr. Vice, CDT Jensen. Violations of the Mess warrant punishments. Some of this



Above: Cadre, Cadets and guests watching platoon skits

year's punishments include: talking to a Ken Barbie doll, speaking through a Curious George hand puppet, displaying Justin Bieber items, and running around the room either as an airplane or an animal. Probably the most humorous punishment of the night was CDT Decker having to stand up every couple of minutes

and proclaim, "I am Fabulous." Among the teased and taunted this year were Cadre and Cadets alike. As always MSG Heise was the center of the MS-III and MS-IV fun. Alpha Company Commander Cadet Bless was also penalized by many Points of Order which eventually left Mr. Bless with the Ken Barbie doll and for no apparent reason a stick-on mustache. Some seriousness was given to the event during both addresses from both of our speakers. Our Professor of Military Science, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, spoke briefly on the history and importance of the Dining In, and Colonel Chesser gave insights on his career and also added some laughs to the evening. At the conclusion of the Dining In, Eagle Battalion Cadets entertained the mess with skits. The future Dining Ins of Eagle Battalion will continue to bond the unit and serve as a time to sit back and enjoy the hard work put in by all.

# Spring Semester=Busy Semester!

**CDT Melissa Korish c/aS-5**

By this time the spring semester is well under way. The cadets of the Eagle Battalion have been busy running around attending various ROTC events. They have been participating in the everyday events such as PRT and weekly labs; in addition there are also the special events such as the Dining-In, which recently took place for the Eagle Battalion. However, we have barely even started getting into the good stuff for this semester. This semester is "crunch" time for the MS IIIs of the Eagle Battalion. It is up to them, with the help of the MS IVs, to absorb all of the knowledge they possibly can before taking off for Ft. Lewis to participate in LDAC this summer.

In addition to weekly labs, there are also three major events that will take place

during late March and through the month of April. The first of the three, OPERATION EAGLE SENTINEL, will give the cadets the opportunity to lead squad-size elements through STX lanes in order for them to improve their leadership skills and become more confident in their abilities. Next up is CFTX, which will give the MS IIIs the chance to interact with cadets from other schools and will help to give them a



taste of what they will experience this summer. The final major operation that the Eagle Battalion will conduct this semester is OPERATION EAGLE FORGE, which will give the MS IIIs the chance to take on leadership roles in a section-size element, which is also something that they will experience this summer.

Even though this all may seem busy and demanding, these events will also prove to be very rewarding experiences as well. Yes, there may be a need for seriousness during this busy time, but there will also be plenty of time for fun and great memories along this way. We will also finish up this semester of excitement with the annual spring awards ceremony and spring social, both of which are sure to be a great time. So, even though this semester may be busy, it will also be an adventure.

# AIRBORNE!

**CDT Jonathon Bless c/A CO Commander**

To become a U.S. Army paratrooper, a soldier must endure a unique three-week course that challenges them both physically and mentally. The Basic Airborne Course teaches soldiers the techniques needed to parachute from an airplane and land safely, with the final test consisting of five non-assisted jumps from an airplane while in flight. After the final test, Airborne students receive a pair of coveted parachute wings that they can proudly and wear on their uniform.



*Above: Airborne Paratroopers*

This January, the Eagle Battalion ROTC sent two cadets to Airborne School in Fort Benning, Georgia. Not only did cadets Benjamin Ziegler and Amanda Dietzen become qualified parachutists, they also received a priceless opportunity to experience the Army firsthand. “It gave me a good idea what everyday life is like for privates,” said CDT Amanda Dietzen, talking about the same type of people she will be leading someday. “It was a good experience to actually get yelled at,” said CDT Benjamin Ziegler, “to be like a private.” For many cadets, having the oppor-

tunity to live with junior enlisted soldiers and experience their lives for three weeks gives them a better understanding of the troops they will someday be leading, and will help them better empathize with their subordinates when they become an officer.

The majority of soldiers who attend Airborne School are males from combat arms branches. Female airborne students are in the minority, thus enhancing the accomplishment of Miss Dietzen. “They kind of left us out,” said CDT Dietzen when asked about her minority status at Airborne School. She mentioned that they were often times not told when to show up for formation or what the training schedule was for the next day. “Our sergeant talked to us a lot about not walking around post alone or getting into relationships, but it wasn’t bad as long as you had your battle buddy with you,” she added.

Arguably the hardest part of Airborne School is mustering up the immense amount of personal courage required to hurl oneself out of a speeding aircraft 1,200 feet above the ground. “I’m pretty sure there were times when I questioned if I could do it,” replied CDT Dietzen when asked about the experience. The Basic Airborne Course is one of the best courses in the Army to develop confidence, courage, and mental tenacity. “You always have the option to quit,” said CDT Ziegler, “but you have to tell yourself ‘I’m not leaving without those wings!’”

Soldiers are recognized as being a more elite member of their unit upon completing the Basic Airborne Course. CDT Dietzen said the experience made her mentally strong and that “it’s neat to say you’ve jumped out of a plane five times.” CDT Ziegler said the course was “...cool

and people expect more of me now.” This, of course, is a good thing because now the two cadets’ ROTC peers look up to them and strive to meet the high standards they set for their ROTC battalion.

*Below: Airborne Parachute Wings*



*Below: 34 foot tower and 250 foot tower*



# You Are What You Eat

**CDT Elizabeth Foley c/Operations NCO**

“Eat healthy. Avoid processed foods. Don’t choose fried options. Make sure you have balance.” These are common words of advice on how to improve diet. Although these phrases have become cliché, they still hold truth. Would you fill a car with Kool-Aid and expect it to function properly? What we fuel our body affects the way it performs, and good nutrition can prevent rising health concerns such as obesity and heart disease. Army leaders should have a good understanding of nutrition to “lead by example” through healthy eating. For the most part, cadets are in a phase of discovering an eating pattern that works for them. Most leave mom and dad’s “home cookin’” and discover the freedom of eating what they want. This can be scary, exciting, or frustrating, depending on how much an individual enjoys grocery shopping, cooking, and planning meals. The most important aspect to remember is that YOU have control of what goes in; hopefully good choices are made.

First of all, our body operates somewhat like a machine. It must be fed to carry out duties and sustain its parts. For example, at PRT (Physical Readiness Training) the body exerts energy to do exercises and needs additional components to build structural cells (bone and muscle). Examples of the “grain” portion on the food pyramid include cereal, bread, and pasta. These carbohydrates are utilized for energy. Building blocks are also

essential. As many learn growing up, dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt) supply the body with calcium, which is necessary to maintain strong bones. Proteins (meat, nuts, beans) are essential for building muscle and generating new cells in the body. (This is why protein shakes are recommended after a workout to replenish and strengthen muscles recently exercised.) CDT Jonathon Bless (MS IV, Eagle Battalion) routinely eats eggs after a workout. By consuming this complete protein, his body can generate muscle mass. Consequently, his body is capable of cranking out more pushups and sit-ups than an average cadet.



The body has additional systems (immunity, metabolism, digestion, reproductive), which require vitamins and minerals found in vegetables and fruits. For example, in addition to an apple’s delicious and refreshing taste, it offers multiple benefits. It provides the body with B-complex vitamins to enhance metabolism (transfer of food into energy), vitamin C to prevent infectious disease, anti-oxidant

phyto-nutrients that help prevent cancer, and fiber to assist in digestion (prevent constipation). These foods certainly “keep the doctor away.”

Most cadets lead a busy lifestyle and sometimes eating healthy meals may seem impossible. Now that basic dietary explanation has been laid out, here are ideas for implementing healthy habits into a busy routine. First of all, remember that what you buy is what you eat. Make a list of food you need BEFORE you enter the grocery store—and stick with the list! Avoid “great” deals on cheap, unhealthy, quick food. Store your cupboard with healthy options to set yourself up for suc-

cess. When selecting bread, choose “whole wheat” and “multi-grain” over “white.” Why? Well, one slice of white bread contains 66 calories, 1.9 grams protein, and 0.6 grams fiber. A piece of whole-wheat bread has 69 calories, 3.6 grams protein, and 1.9 grams fiber. By providing more building blocks per calorie, it’s a better deal. An idea for meat: buy a large package of ground beef or chicken, cook it all, separate

it into serving-size bags, and store them in the freezer for individual use throughout a busy week. CDT Whitney Mitten (MS IV, Eagle Battalion) prepares food such as rice, meat, and soups in large portions on the weekend for quick meals during the week. This allows her to consume balanced meals amid an active week.

*Continued on page 15.*

# Fort Jackson, South Carolina

*CDT Ellen Poeschel c/aS-1*

Located in the center of South Carolina, this military installation was born from a necessity to train soldiers for battle overseas during WWI. Once known as the Sixth National Cantonment and later on as Camp Jackson, now Fort Jackson today is one of the largest and most active military installations in the world. The initial site, which consisted of 1,200 acres, was donated by the citizens of Columbia to the federal government. Fort Jackson was established on June 2, 1917, and was named in honor of Major General Andrew Jackson who was also the seventh president of the United States. Fort Jackson was one of sixteen national cantonments constructed during the early 1900s to support the war effort. The primary focus of this establishment was to prepare and train men to fight in military campaigns overseas during WWI. Shortly after its establishment, construction began and progressed rapidly within a matter of months. Within the first month, the labor force reached twelve hundred and the

first two barracks were completed. Just two months later, the labor force swelled to ten thousand and trolley lines were constructed. By the third month, eight thousand draftees arrived to begin training for the war. The first military unit established at Fort Jackson was the 81<sup>st</sup> "Wildcat Division."

After WWI, Fort Jackson was inactivated and between 1925 and 1939 the grounds were used by the National Guard for training. In 1939 Fort Jackson was reactivated to become an infantry training center and construction began once again to support another war effort. More than 100 miles of roads were constructed, and each road was named after heroes of the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. During WWII, more than 500,000 men received training at Fort Jackson. Since the end of WWII, Fort Jackson has continued to expand and

adapt to ever changing demands of a more modern era and of modern warfare. Many of its original buildings have been renovated and new buildings reflect changing times and the advancement of technology. In June 1973 Fort Jackson was designated as a U.S. Army Training Center and has throughout the years received many awards for excellence.

*Below: The 321st Infantry Regiment- part of the 81st "Wildcat Division."*



## You Are What You Eat *Continued from page 15*

Do you struggle to meet Army height/weight standards? You may want to consider the following ideas. Weight control is pretty basic, really. The amount of energy (calories) you put in your body should be equivalent to the amount of calories used. Your body needs energy to sustain itself, process food, and carry out physical activity. While you're waiting for food to warm up in the microwave, don't just stand there! Do sit-ups and push-ups till the timer goes off. Not only does this increase muscle mass, it also boosts metabolism before eating your heated food. Choose whole fruits or fresh fruit smoothies over "fruit" juice. An apple provides fiber, minerals, and contains fewer calo-

ries per area in the stomach as opposed to apple juice. Juices tend to be very high in sugar content and serve as empty (meaningless) calories. Finally, eat a good, fulfilling breakfast. Not only does this prepare your brain to absorb information in class, it also eliminates excessive snacking and "pay back" meals later in the day.

Are you a snack fan? "Grazing" throughout the day is an effective eating pattern for some. However, it is important to ensure you maintain balanced and complete nutrition. Avoid carrying cash if you cannot resist temptation of potato chips and candy from vending machines. Instead, pack food from home. Beneficial snacks include: granola bars (with nuts/fruit)

rather than candy, single-serving bag of popcorn (fiber), yogurt (calcium and friendly bacteria), carrot sticks (vitamins and fiber), whole wheat bread w/peanut butter (combination=complete protein), and others. Also, remember to hydrate! If the taste of water is too boring, try using individual powder packs that add flavor. Drinking fluids throughout the day allows for optimal functioning as each cell in the body uses H<sub>2</sub>O to carry out processes.

You have the choice—with various foods and countless options at your disposal. But remember: you are what you eat!

# Unfit Soldier: Fallacy or Fact?

**CDT Andrew Prunty c/B CO Commander**

The American Armed Forces today is a high-quality force. But every now and then, one might hear a conversation concerning the military and how it only consists of individuals who could not get a job, did not graduate from high school, or had a dismal criminal record. Nothing could be further from the truth. A recent Pentagon report reveals that only about 25% of our nation's youth is qualified for service in the armed forces.

The Pentagon study states that 35% of Americans age 17-24 (more than 10.9 million) would not qualify to serve because of physical or medical issues. America is in the midst of an obesity crisis that is simultaneously affecting the military's ability to recruit quality soldiers.

Aside from strictly physical and medical

issues, there are many other factors that make many of our nation's youth ineligible: 18% are disqualified for illegal drug use, 9% unsuitable mental aptitude, 6% have too many dependents, and 5% have a criminal record. Although the services have the authority to waive some standards, that is not a common occurrence.

The requirements to enter the military are quite strenuous. High school diplomas or GEDs are mandatory, and officers must have a Bachelors Degree. Although not required, more than 15% of noncommissioned officers (NCOs) have earned an associates degree and a surprisingly large number have earned a masters or doctorate degree. In comparison to the general population, the military is a well-educated body of individuals.

Another fallacy is that individuals are sen-

tenced to military service by a judge as an alternative to a jail sentence. While this may have been true in the distant past, the military is not like this today – in fact, the Army prohibits it. Army Regulation 601-210 (Active and Reserve Components Enlistment Program) specifically addresses this issue saying that any, "...applicant who, as a condition for any civil conviction or adverse disposition or any other reason through a civil or criminal court, is ordered or subjected to a sentence that implies or imposes enlistment into the Armed Forces of the United States is not eligible for enlistment."

Today's professional and all-volunteer Army contains individuals of high caliber who meet the selective requirements for entry. As the Army continues to improve, the standards for the soldiers who serve will, hopefully, only get more selective.

# Don't be Sore, Thank the S-4

**CDT Kyle Stellflug c/S-2**

I first would like to say that this article is not pointed at any certain person or people; this is just giving a shout out to those have previously or presently taken on the responsibility of being the battalion S-4, the staff officer responsible for logistics and transportation.

As you all know, we conduct some large, complex operations during the spring semester. With large operations comes large, complicated logistic plans. While we always see the battalion commander, executive officers, and company commanders running the show, just remember there would be no show if there wasn't some dedicated person sitting in a supply room, alone, with nothing but mounds of gear staring back into their face. This posi-



tion is arguably the most important staff positions outside of the battalion commander. The S-4 gets you food, water, maintenance supplies, medical supplies,

and transportation needed for all operations.

As you can see the S-4 does some of the hardest work that is hardly ever seen; throw school in the mix, and this leaves the S-4 little time to juggle a personal life. With that being said, we all need gear, and it always seems as though instant gratification is necessary for impatient cadets. So just remember before going straight to the S-4 for your ever-so-important piece of rank, use your chain of command, and when you do get your gear or rank take in consideration the responsibilities the S-4 has and give him or her some appreciation.