Greetings to all of our alumni around the world. I hope that this Newsletter finds you safe, healthy, and happy.

Success Comes in Many Forms

What is the definition of success? Webster's dictionary defines success as “an event that accomplishes its intended purpose”. What determines an ROTC program's success? Do we have a successful program here at Minnesota State University, Mankato? I would argue an emphatic “yes”!

Our ROTC program was recently presented the “Most Improved Battalion” award by Cadet Command. There were several metrics taken into account in determining the winner. Overall increase in commission mission, average cadet Order of Merit Score (OMS – how they rank each cadet in Cadet Command), and overall retention rates were a few of the metrics used. The Most Improved Battalion Award is a definite indicator of success.

Making commission mission can be misleading. Even though we are making mission, are we producing a quality officer? Again, the answer is yes. For at least the last 3 years, our cadets have outperformed the Cadet Command average at LDAC (Leader Development & Assessment Course). Our cadets have proven to be better than their peers in areas of leadership, physical fitness, day & night land navigation, and rifle marksmanship. Our most recent commissioning class has a DMG (Distinguished Military Graduate) rate of 33%, well above the Cadet Command average. The DMG is awarded to cadets across the nation in the top 20% of their year group. We recently commissioned a future Army Doctor and will do so again this year. We are providing engineers, nurses, warfighters, and many others that will make a difference in the lives of many.

We produce officers for the Army (Active Duty, Guard, and Reserves). However you look at it, our program is indeed a success. Be an active part and help it to continue to be so. It is your program. Be proud of it!

STATE OF THE PROGRAM

Spring 2009 BY THE NUMBERS:

- Contracted MSI: 13 Cadets
- Contracted MS2: 8 Cadets
- Contracted MS3: 18 Cadets
- Contracted MS4: 9 Cadets
- Contracted MS5: 2 Cadets
- Contracted Completion Cadets: 2 Cadets
- Commissioned in December 2009: 8 Cadets
- Commissioned in May 2009: 5 Cadets
- LTC Cadets: 7
- LDAC Cadets: 16

Projection/Outlook: The Maverick Battalion is postured to meet its commissioning mission for 2009 and 2010.
Brigadier General Jeff Bertrang was promoted on February 7th in New Ulm, making him the second MSU ROTC commissioned officer to become a General Officer.

BG Bertrang was commissioned in 1985 into the Field Artillery. He joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1983 when he joined the 1/125 FA in New Ulm.

BG Bertrang commanded the 900-person task force 32 at St. Paul’s Republican National Convention that provided security and freed up police for more specialized tasks, such as controlling rioters. The task force was made up from several National Guard units and worked closely with State and local police as well as several local and national agencies.

BG Bertrang will serve as the Assistant Adjutant General for the Army, a critical role for the Minnesota National Guard. He will advise Major General Larry Shellito, the Adjutant General for the State of Minnesota, on the operations and readiness of the Army National Guard. MG Shellito said of BG Bertrang, He brings a depth of knowledge, not only from his various National Guard assignments but also his leadership role in his civilian career."

BG Jeff Bertrang is the Principal at Gibbon Fairfax Wintrop (GFW) High School. He was named the 2008 Southwest Division Minnesota High School Principal of the year.

CPT Sara Woods as she prepares for her first mission in Iraq

CPT Sara Woods as the Civil Affairs Team Chief attached to TF 1-63 Combined Arms Battalion in Iraq

MAJ Vanevery with Robert M. Honshul (a Death March Survivor), at the 20th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands, NM.

MAJ Johannsen at Al Taqqadum, Iraq
2LT Paul Bobich (08) is currently the Platoon Leader for the Automotive Platoon of 183rd Maintenance Company, 68th CSSB. His additional duties include USR Representative and Redeployment Reset Manager. He and his wife celebrated their first year of marriage this May and are looking forward to having a daughter within the next month.

2LT Adam Inglalbe (08) attended BOLC phase II at Ft Sill, and Signal BOLC Phase III at Fort Gordon, GA. He graduated 13Jan09 and mobilized with the National Guard in February 09 to deploy to Basra, Iraq. He married his wife Laura in June 2008.

2LT Whitney Peterson (08) is stationed at Camp Victory, Iraq part of the MNARNG.

1LT Nicolas Fougner (07) deployed to Iraq with the 9th EN from Schweinfurt Germany, under the 172nd BCT. His platoon is at FOB Echo, near the towns Diwaniyah and Najaf, attached to 1-2 IN. They conduct Route Clearance missions in the area, along with building a partnership with the 8th BN Iraqi Army in the area. Since graduating, he married, Nicole Fougner (Peterson on 26 APR 08. She is currently in Germany, and is his Company's FRG leader.

1LT Eric Lewanski (06) is currently the Platoon Leader for the Automotive Platoon of 183rd Maintenance Company, 68th CSSB. His additional duties include USR Representative and Redeployment Reset Manager. He and his wife celebrated their first year of marriage this May and are looking forward to having a daughter within the next month.

1LT Devanie (Viaene) Shaw (06) married 1LT Jonathan Shaw, an Armor officer in 2005. She has run into several former classmates in Iraq to include 1LT Phillip Kroll and 1LT Lisa Paradree. She plans to attend the residency, Nichole Fougner (Peterson on 26 APR 08. She is currently in Germany, and is his Company's FRG leader.

MAJ Bruce Bredlow(97) is transitioning from his position as the Director of the Army Center for Enhanced Performance headquartered at West Point to start ILE at Leavenworth this summer. Bruce and Heidi have three children , Tyler 10, Trey 6, and Trygg 3.

MAJ Heidi (Shellum) Bredlow (97) was commissioned in 97 into ADA after graduating from GAC. She was the first female to command a Short Range Air Defense (SHORAD) battery in the Army. After her command, she left military service and is currently serving as Senior Knowledge Manager for Battle Command Knowledge Systems (BCKS). She runs the Platoon Leader site that shares information between current, past, and former platoon leaders. She is also pursuing her PhD in Knowledge Management from Walden University.

MAJ Steven Hoglund (93) is the Current Executive Officer of the 172d Support Battalion, currently deployed to southern Iraq and based out of FOB Kalsu. He started that job on 1 May 2008 and soon will be moving to be the Brigade S4 for the 172D Infantry Brigade, based out of Grafenwoehr and Schweinfurt. The Bridge will consolidate in Grafenwoehr sometime after redeployment.

MAJ Brian Jacobson (96) is the 1/25 SBCT S6 at FOB Warhorse, Iraq. His Signal team continues to stay busy in Diyala conducting partnership with the Iraq Army and supporting thousands of soldiers and civilians with phone and data services. He occasionally shares a meal with fellow Maverick Alumni CPT Stock and CPT Jessica Schultz who are also part of the Arctic Wolves Team. Back at Fort Wainwright, His family has toughed out a record setting winter and is looking forward to a summer vacation at Mankato’s Lake Washington.

MAJ Stephen Johannsen (92) is currently acting as the 81st HBCT Liaison Officer to I MEF / MNF-W based out of Camp Fallujah, Iraq. MAJ Johannsen is serving his second tour in Iraq as part of the 81st HBCT, WA ARNG out of Washington State. The 81st is providing SECFOR companies and acting as camp commandants throughout MNF-W and MND-N. This is the 81st HBCT’s second tour in Iraq as well (2004-2005). MAJ Johannsen’s is the I/O Officer as part of the Fires and Effects Cell for the 81st HBCT. He served his first tour with the 116th CAV Bde out of Idaho in Northern Iraq during 2004-2005.

MAJ Victor Kelly (88) retired on the 30th of April 09 with 21 + years in service. He was commissioned 10 Jun 88 at (formerly) Mankato State ROTC. During his career, he served two tours in Southwest Asia (the first from Dec ’90 thru May ’91 in Operation Desert Shield / Desert Storm) and more recently being mobilized as a Military Transition Team (MITT) advisor to the Iraqi Army in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) from May ’05 thru Aug ’06.

MAJ Phay Phrommony () is currently serving in Korea with 501st SBDE as the CSSAMO OIC. He transitioned into a new Functional Area as the Information System Management Officer (FA 53).

MAJ Thomas Saych (03) currently on Active Duty, serving in Iraq with the 326th ASG, an Army Reserve unit from Kansas City, KS. His unit is the Garrison Command for the Victory Base Complex (VBC), supervising all the Support Operations, Logistics, Facility Maintenance, and Construction for the 70,000 Soldiers and Civilian Contractors that are stationed here. He is assigned to the Garrison Directorate of Public Works (DPW), which is responsible for supervising all the Utilities, Facility Maintenance, and Construction.

He is looking forward to having leave the end of June and celebrating the 4th of July in Lakeville, MN, with his wife, Jennifer, and their three sons, Andrew (5), and twins Timothy and Joshua (2-1/2). He plans to return to his civilian job with the Minnesota State Patrol, and dining at “Outback Steakhouse” with MAJ Mike Lafontaine ’93, and MAJ Mark Weber ’93 (MAJ Weber recently moved back to the Twin Cities area).

MAJ Daniel Vaneyver (99) is the Detachment Commander for OPDET 9A10, 9th PSYOP BN (A) at Fort Bragg, en-route later this year (as most of Bragg) for Iraq. This last March 29th, he and 5 others from his battalion completed the 20th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range, NM., where he finished 106 out of 328 in the male military heavy division. His group sponsored Robert M. Honshul (in attached photo), a Death March Survivor, to his first ever trip to the reunion and march at White Sands, which inspired his group, keeping this warrior and hero company, listening to his story, and sharing their appreciation for his sacrifice and service. He is married to Heidi and has a daughter, London.

Gerald (Butch) Westman (85) is currently the owner and President of Westman Freightliner with locations in Mankato, Faribault, Fairmont, Marshall, and St. Cloud. His son, Luke is a 2LT in Ft. Stewart, GA.
LTC Peter D. Ford (84) graduated from GAC in 1984 and is an LTC in the US Army Reserves. He completed his tour in Baghdad where he worked at the US Embassy as the Director, Office of Hostage Affairs for the past 18 months. He found the job to be the most rewarding job (mission) of his professional career. Highs included the successful rescues of hostages and lows included hostages getting murdered. Throughout it all, LTC Ford remember how important it is to recover our one missing soldier from this war and the 12 other US citizens that are still missing. Even though in the last year, the U.S. discovered the remains of former hostages, it bringing “closure” to the families involved. One can only marvel at the dedication of our U.S. military; their dedication to duty and their outreach to the Iraq people is beyond reproach. He has been honored to serve with them during his tenure. After military reserve duty this summer, he will start next fall as a student attending the National Defense Intelligence College located at Bolling Airforce Base in Washington, DC. He looking forward to it and to reuniting with his family.

LTC Brian Pfarr is currently deployed with the 34th ID in Iraq

LTC Troy Soukup () is currently assigned as the FSCoord for the 1/34 HBCT out of Bloomington, MN and is attending the FA Officer’s Pre-command Course at Ft. Sill, OK.

LTC Jim Risgaard (86) was recently promoted to LTC with 27 years of service w/21 good years in the reserves and 12 years of AFS. He is awaiting his packet approval for a Call to Active Duty. His first 3 year assignments will be the ACE Chief w/the 66th MI Group in Wiesbaden Germany. He plans to travel with his wife Sandra, sons Cole(12), Soren(1) and daughter Brynn(4).

COL. Richard Kramer (86) will finish the Army War College in June of 09. His next assignment will be as the G-5, Surface Deployment & Distribution Command (SDDC) at Scott AFB, IL

COL Nancy (Frex) Grandy (86) and Tony Grandy (87) COL Grandy is completing Army War College and will be assigned Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon in June.

Doug Ahlvers (82) is currently Chief, Threat Branch, G-2, US Army Special Operations Command.
Cadet Thomas awaits his score from the night Land Navigation course.

Cadet Stadther crosses rolling logs while Cadets Ring and Probst lend a hand.

Cadets Dhaliwahl and Partridge take a break from squad STX lanes.

Cadet French briefs his squad of MS III’s from several squads during STX lanes.

Cadet Dhaliwahl shoots an azimuth during the day Land Navigation course event.

MS I and MS II cadets from MSU wait to run the Camp Ripley obstacle course.
New Cadre Biography

MAJ Michael Murray joined our staff in March of 2009. He commissioned in 1993 from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. His is an Engineer Officer with over 21 years of service in the Minnesota National Guard. He held several leadership and staff positions to include Equipment Platoon Leader, Sapper Platoon Leader, Assault and Obstacle Platoon Leader, Company XO, Engineer Company Commander, Battalion S-1, and State Family Assistance Officer. MAJ Murray served with 2-136 Combined Arms Battalion as the Task Force Engineer as part of the 1/34th BCT deployment to Iraq. He is currently assigned to TSU Camp Ripley in Little Falls, Minnesota in the Minnesota Army National Guard. He is married and lives in Shakopee, MN with his wife Nicole and their son Liam (5) He will be serving as the Battalion Executive Officer during MAJ Gerald Bohl’s / CPT Wood’s deployment.
One 90-minute firefight.
Nine Green Berets.
Nine medals for valor.

It happened last summer in Baghdad when a detachment from the 10th Special Forces Group from Fort Carson, Colo., was hunting militiamen near Baghdad’s Sadr City slum.

"We got a tip of 20 to 25 guys in a house with a weapons cache," said Capt. Sean McCaffery who was one of dozens of 10th Group Soldiers honored in a ceremony Wednesday at Fort Carson.

"When we went to enter the house, all hell broke loose."

McCaffery was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Valor for what he did as bullets whizzed around him.

His entire unit, 10th Group’s 3rd Battalion was honored with the Army’s Valorous Unit Award for their collective actions that helped turned the tide in Iraq during the 2007 surge that sent thousands of Soldiers to Baghdad.

In Iraq, Fort Carson’s Green Berets trained elite Iraqi troops while conducting pinpoint night raids on insurgency leaders.

Lt. Col. Patrick Roberson, 3rd Battalion commander, said by building up Iraqis while dismantling the insurgency, the unit changed the course of the war.

"It was not looking good for the home team," Roberson said. "It was the height of the surge and the experts said it couldn’t be won."

"We can take a good deal of credit."

But it wasn't easy.

As McCaffery approached the house that June night, every window erupted with automatic weapons fire. Three stories worth.

Interpreters, a crucial link between the Green Berets and the Iraqis who accompanied them on the mission, ran in fear.

The Green Berets and the Iraqis opened up with their weapons at knife-fighting range, just feet from the house, as insurgent grenades rained down from the windows.

Green Berets are funny about medals. While many in the Army covet the honors for gallantry and valor, the self-proclaimed "quiet professionals" of their special forces prefer anonymity if not all-out secrecy.

"I'm not a hero," 1st Sgt. Robert Flournoy said after he was presented with the Army Commendation Medal for Valor.

Last May, Flournoy pulled two comrades from the flaming wreckage of a Humvee that had been bombed.

"The intense heat from the vehicle was causing ammunition in that vehicle to detonate," an Army citation for Flournoy’s medal says, noting he disregarded his safety to save two lives.

That willingness to risk everything was seen again as insurgents blazed away with AK-47s at McCaffery's troops.

The captain knew he had to pull his Soldiers back. But with the interpreters long gone, he had no way to communicate his intentions to the Iraqi troops.

McCaffery organized his Green Berets.

McCaffery, Staff Sgt. Brent Bulbuk and Master Sgt. Shawn Dishman split up, running from Iraqi soldier to Iraqi soldier and ordering them away from the house ahead of an air strike.

Dishman and Bulbuk also got Bronze Star Medals for Valor.

"I don't remember the bullets skipping around me," McCaffery said.

"I just remember running around and grabbing Iraqis."

At the ceremony, 10th Group Commander Col. Darsie Rodgers said insurgents in Iraq haven't given up. But maybe they should.

"Those insurgents will fail because the United States of America has men like you," he told the Green Berets.

The medals handed out Wednesday are just a small sampling of what the 10th Group’s Soldiers have earned during six years in Iraq. All but a few of those medals have been given quietly, away from the public eye.

McCaffery wishes the Iraqis who were beside him that day could have been honored Wednesday.

"Those guys were amazing to work with for nine months," he said.
Contingency Operating Base Basra, Iraq – Eighty-six Soldiers and civilians stationed here joined efforts with Minnesota National Guard Soldiers in Brainerd, Minn., to participate in the 12th Annual Bataan Memorial March May 10.

The Bataan Memorial March is an annual event to honor veterans who were victims of the original Bataan Death March, a war crime in which 78,000 individuals were forced to march over 55 miles from the Bataan Peninsula to be held as prisoners of war at Camp O’Donnell following the surrender of Allied Forces in the Philippines in 1942.

Along the harsh journey, troops were beaten at random, denied food and water for days at a time and executed if they became weak and fell out of the march. As a result of the cruel treatment by the Japanese, who had not counted on transporting such a large number of POWs, nearly 20,000 individuals lost their lives.

The proud organizers of the event, the 1st Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment from Brainerd, Minn., hold a deep connection to the veterans of the Bataan Death March. In 1941, Soldiers from the Brainerd Army National Guard’s 194th Tank Battalion deployed to the Philippines and were attacked on the Bataan Peninsula by the Japanese. Those heroes fought for five months in sustained combat and experienced first-hand the atrocities of the Bataan Death March. Those who survived then suffered in POW camps for three years.

Soldiers from the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division and 10th Mountain Division stationed in here showed their respect to fallen heroes and surviving veterans of the Death March by competing in 10 and 20-mile races in both light and heavy divisions.

Maj. Thomas Sutton, 10th Mountain Division Soldier and winner of the 20-mile light division race, was one of the more than 80 Soldiers who marched on in the sand and sun to participate in the event.

"This was a great opportunity," said Sutton. "I just wanted to finish! But I went slow and kept a steady pace, and everything worked out.”

Winners of the Bataan Memorial March, COB Basra are: Lt. Col. Christopher Tatarka, 20-mile Heavy Division; Maj. Thomas Sutton, 20-mile Light Division; Maj. Gerald Bohl (MNSU ROTC Cadre), 10-mile Heavy Division; 1st Lt. Eric Lewanski (MNSU ROTC Alumni) and 1st Lt. Matthew Rose, 10-mile Light Division.

Story forwarded by MAJ Bohl, MNSU Cadre currently serving in Iraq with the 34th ID

MNSU ROTC Program Receives Most Improved Battalion Award

The ROTC Program at MNSU was recently recognized for being the Most Improved Battalion. The criteria for the Order of Merit list for the recognition are: The Degree of improvement in the battalion’s average accessions board OMS from the previous fiscal year, the degree improvement of the battalion’s average commission mission accomplishment rate from the previous mission set, the degree of improvement in the battalion’s cadet percentages who earned “best qualified” at the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) from the previous year, the degree of improvement the battalion’s commissioning/retention rates from the previous fiscal year, the degree of improvement the battalion’s commissioning/retention rates of scholarship cadets from the previous fiscal year, and the degree of improvement in the battalion’s percentage of non-medical waivers among contracted cadets.

The award included a $2,500 prize. Since many of the benchmarks for this award show the efforts and dedication of the cadets, LTC Cooper felt the best way to recognize these efforts was to improve the cadet lounge. The Battalion purchased a 42 inch LCD TV and a foosball table for the cadets to enjoy. Many of the cadets take advantage of having a spot on campus where they can relax and get together with their fellow cadets and challenge each other to a game of foosball or play some X-box between classes.