

The CADET

U.S. Army Cadet Command's quarterly magazine

Winter 2010 Vol. I Issue IV

Cover story

Cadet Command arrives at Fort Knox

Organization uncases colors as new
commanding general takes helm



Scholar

High achiever

Morehead State University's
Wesley Tudor top Cadet in nation

Athlete

Going the distance

A record number of Army ROTC teams
compete in the AUSA Army Ten-Miler

Leader

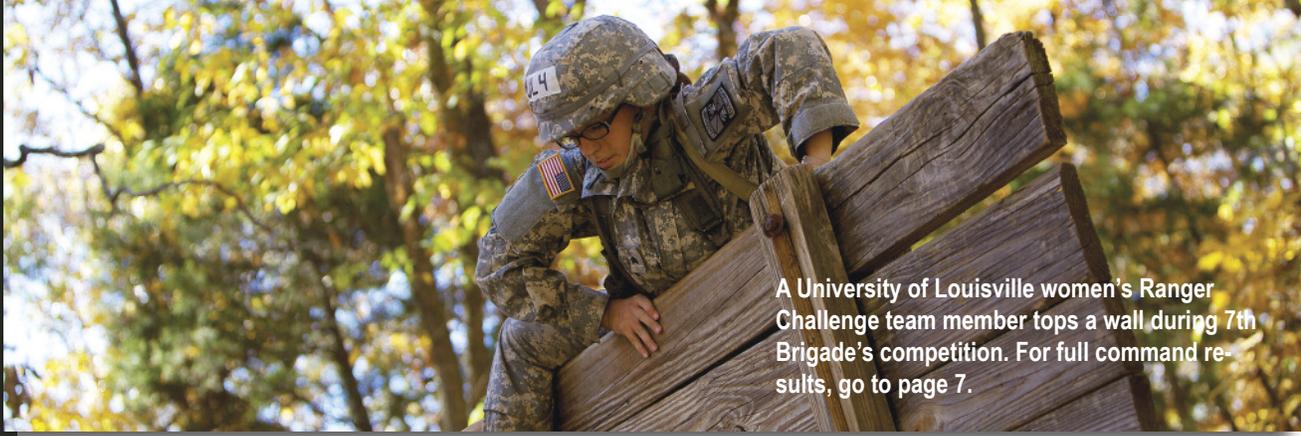
Pride of their community

Smith-Cotton High School's Junior ROTC program
takes on visible role in civic life of small town

Cadet Command news online at <http://CadetCommand.ArmyLive.DoDLive.mil>

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The color guard holds the U.S. Flag, Army Flag and Cadet Command colors on Brooks Field at Fort Knox, Ky., shortly after the uncasing ceremony Nov. 23. Photo by Forest Berkshire



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The Cadet

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Strong leaders make Army strong

Cadet Command plays pivotal role in forging future leaders



Despite recent changes in our headquarters, Cadet Command continues to ensure personal and professional growth for our future leaders of America's great Army. New opportunities are on the horizon for Cadet Command as Fort Knox forges onward, making room for our expanding footprint. Even in the wake of our current transition, Cadet Command will continue its excellence in executing the full spectrum of training and leader development to support the readiness and well-being of our Cadets, the units they will soon join as new lieutenants, and their families worldwide.

This command has a long and distinguished history of developing the next great generation of Army leaders. It is truly a privilege to be a part of the work we are doing here for our current and future Soldier-leaders. I am absolutely excited about taking the helm of this remarkable command and am looking forward to visiting the battalions and meeting our outstanding Cadets and cadre. From what I have seen and heard, there's no doubt, Cadet Command develops quality, well-rounded leaders our nation needs.

Our Army is in need of agile and adaptive leaders broad enough to handle the challenges of full spectrum operations in this era of persistent conflict. They must be creative and critical thinkers, they must be confident and competent communicators and they must be capable of operating with a comprehensive approach to meet these emerging challenges. These critical attributes will enable our leaders to contend with offensive, defensive and stability operations simultaneously. Cadets, we need you to be leaders who can integrate combined arms, integrate with host nation forces and be perceptive enough to discern changes in the operational environment to anticipate transitions.

We serve a great country alongside phenomenal brothers and sisters in arms serving on point in duty stations worldwide. Many of them share their stories of ambassadorship and personal courage on www.ArmyStrongStories.com. This new website is a fantastic tool for all Soldiers, veterans, Cadets, Army civilians and supporters to use as a platform to share the Army story. In fact, approximately 1,200 Cadets have already been using this website to share your adventures in CULP, the Cadet Command Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency program. CULP deploys Cadets to foreign countries to gain cultural and language immersion experience through humanitarian mission work or training with the host country's military. I look forward to learning more about each one of you through my future battalion visits and through ArmyStrongStories.com. Be sure to check out the site today and sign up to share your Army story.

Speaking of stories of which to boast, many Cadets competed in Ranger Challenge. Our Junior ROTC Cadets also competed in Raider Challenge. Your stories of perseverance are shared in a nice arrangement of photos and words in this month's issue of *The Cadet*. Your hard work is recognized, and we commend you for it.

With 2011 already upon us, some of you look forward to commissioning this month. I am proud of each one of you for continuing the fight as you managed the challenges of attaining a degree with the rigors of preparing to join the ranks of America's finest leaders. This is your chance to shine. We expect the best from each one of you as you continue to develop as leaders of character and excellence. As you drive on, train hard, be the best you can be, stay safe and remember that a leader's training never ends.

Train to lead.

Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald
Commanding General
U.S. Army Cadet Command

Around the command

News, notes and updates from across Cadet Command



Col. Eric Winkie receives 1st Brigade's colors from Col. Barry Price, deputy commanding officer of U.S. Army Cadet Command, at the Patton Museum on Fort Knox, Ky.

Winkie takes command of 1st Brigade

FORT KNOX, Ky. – Amid the continuing transition throughout Cadet Command, 1st Brigade welcomed a new commander in October.

Col. Eric Winkie replaced Col. David Hubner Sr. as the head of the brigade that oversees 11 senior and junior military colleges across the country and conducts the Leader's Training Course each summer.

Winkie previously was the deputy commander of 1st Brigade under Hubner, who took over as Cadet Command's chief of staff last month.

Winkie, an ROTC grad from the University of Iowa, said the brigade, which commissions roughly 500 second lieutenants a year, has a solid reputation that is built on exceeding standards, and he will lead it to continue bettering itself.

Hubner, meanwhile, said he will miss being in command and thanked brigade staff members for their efforts throughout his 15-month tenure. A 1983 commissionee from Appalachian State University, he said he looked forward to his new role with a "command to which I owe so much."

1st Brigade

8th Brigade

More opportunities available for Cadets looking to study abroad

Cadets interested in studying domestically or abroad this summer can begin applying for scholarships.

Project GO (Global Officers) has announced the availability of scholarships to be awarded for summer 2011.

Any Army ROTC Cadet interested in starting or enhancing their language studies may apply to participate in Project GO intensive summer language programs.

Though the programs are offered by a network of 20 universities nationwide, Cadets from other universities can be accepted and may include fully funded summer study abroad.

Participation in Project GO programs does not require

an additional service commitment



and can be done in addition to Cadet Command Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency program deployments. Participants can study abroad, earn university credits and qualify for language pay incentives.

For more information and to apply, visit www.rotcprojectgo.org.

Chairman of Joint Chiefs encourages Cadets to study leaders

Though he never expected he'd have a military career, the nation's highest-ranking military officer said Nov. 10, the people he has served with are the reason he stayed in the service. Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told ROTC cadets and midshipmen at UCLA that a career wasn't on his mind when he reported to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., in 1964.

"The reason I stayed was it became very quickly about the tremendous, tremendous people I met from the first day I showed up at Annapolis," Mullen said to the officer candidates. "You're joining a military of great young men and women that is the best we've ever had in our history, and I would argue it is the best force in the world, ever."

The chairman has served 46 years since arriv-

ing at Annapolis. He credits the people he has served with and the hankering to see the world with keeping him in the Navy.

The men and women who aspire to become commissioned officers in the U.S. military must focus on leadership, Mullen said. He told the ROTC students to study leaders, to examine their styles and take what works for them. The military is involved in two wars and maintains guard around the world, he noted, and the only constant they will see upon entering the force is change.

The future officers will face tough decisions, and they must have good leadership ability to see them through, Mullen said. He urged the Cadets and midshipmen to keep their options

open and not burn any bridges.

A student asked about a "values disconnect" between the military and American society as a whole. Mullen replied that the military recruits from all across the United States.

"I'm not overly concerned about the values disconnect," he said, but added that he is concerned the American people are not connected in other ways. The military is less than 1 percent of the American population, he pointed out, and since the end of the Cold War, bases have been closed and avenues for a connection have dried up.

So the military has to do what it has always done, he said: take in 18- to 24-year-olds "and change lives and present opportunity."

Around the command

News, notes and updates from across Cadet Command

Atkins first female battalion commander at Washington



Then-junior Rachel Atkins (left) runs toward the finish of the 10k road march event at Ranger Challenge last year.

ST. LOUIS – Senior Rachel Atkins is making history at Washington University, having been named the Gateway Battalion's first-ever female battalion commander.

The position is the highest post a student Cadet can hold. Atkins was chosen based on a multitude of factors: peer reviews, her level of participation,

knowledge of the battalion, leadership potential and the national Cadet ranking earned during an extended evaluation given during a Cadet's junior year.

Atkins is responsible for the entire Gateway Battalion, which consists of students from Washington and Saint Louis universities, as well as nine other colleges in the St. Louis region. She said she has high hopes for the battalion and wishes to work closely with all of the Cadets under her command.

Being a Cadet battalion commander takes a lot of talent, time and dedication.

"I feel that everyone respects me just as much as they would a guy, except (for Cadets from) some of the schools we work with, but you just have to deal with (it on) a case-by-case basis," Atkins said. "You learn how to handle those kinds of issues as

a female in the military from the beginning. There's always going to be a little bit more adversity."

Atkins said her family's history in the military played a big part in her desire to join the Army. With the decision to join ROTC, she is satisfied that it is the right path for her.

3rd Brigade

"If I just went straight to enlist, I don't think I would have gotten half as much out of the military as I have this way, and I can't wait to get into it and work with people who didn't go to college or just to see different sides of the military," Atkins said.

After graduating, she plans on studying to enter the explosives ordnance disposal branch of the Army. That branch does not include many females, Atkins said, because of its heavy lifting requirement.

"I'm trying to bulk up right now," she said, joking. "We'll see where that goes."

Utica Cadets trade push-ups for cans in Veterans Day food drive

UTICA, N.Y. – Cadet Peter Dakurah estimated he'd done more than 120 push-ups – and his time at the Utica College Reserve Officers' Training Corps Veterans Day can drive wasn't yet half-finished.

For four hours Nov. 13, Cadets traded push-ups for food as students, faculty and community members brought cans and donations to help homeless veterans.

Cadet Jess Cofrancesco, who organized the event along with other Utica College ROTC members, said "since it was Veterans Day, we decided to work with the veterans' outreach program."

Dakurah said the event had a two-fold purpose: to collect the donations for the outreach program and to help him practice his push-ups for upcoming physical training.

Cofrancesco was able to think of a third goal: spreading awareness of the problem of homelessness and hunger among veterans.

2nd Brigade

Command conducting virtual jobs fair for Cadets considering Reserve component

FORT KNOX, Ky. – Cadet Command will host a government service and civilian employment virtual job fair Feb. 15-25 for Cadets who will serve in the Reserve component and for those who have not yet gone through the accessions process. The fair is designed to match a student's academic background with suitable government service or civilian employers who support Reserve component officer careers.

As the command works to connect civilian employers with Reserve Cadets, the expectation is that Reserve service may become a more preferable service option.

Cadets already accessed into the Reserve component will receive formal notification of the fair in January, along with an explanation of how to participate. The information will also be articulated through battalions to all other Cadets, who are encouraged to visit the Virtual Job Fair website once it is established.

Cadets should also ensure they are ready for the next steps by being prepared for an interview. Once a connection between a Cadet and an employer is made, obtaining the job is based on how fit the candidate is for employment.

Cadet Command's hosting of the fair stems from positive results of a business agency orientation conducted this past summer at the Leader

Development and Assessment Course. About 55 companies attended that event, which included such major businesses as Microsoft, Boeing, Raytheon, Amazon and USAA.

"What was apparent is that there is a strong desire by many of our national corporations to hire military talent, especially junior officers planning to serve in the Reserve Component," said Col. Paul Wood, Cadet Command's deputy commanding officer for operations. "In fact, Amazon set a goal to hire 250 junior officers."

He said military officers, whether serving on active duty or in the Reserve component, are sought-after employees because of leadership skills, professional demeanor, ability to communicate, reliability, problem-solving skills and health and fitness levels.

"For Cadets who prefer to remain in a geographical area choice, where they can pursue a successful career path in the Reserves or National Guard, this is a great opportunity to seek out lucrative government service or civilian company employment that will complement Reserve component service," Wood said. "The Virtual Job Fair is another step the command is taking to better serve the needs of all our Cadets, as well as our Army as a whole."

Headquarters

Going the distance

Record number of Cadets participate in Army Ten-Miler

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Providence College didn't win the ROTC team title in this fall's Army Ten-Miler. But Amberly Glitz didn't see her group's performance as a loss.

To her, the opportunity to compete with her fellow Cadets and build camaraderie was as much a victory as hoisting a trophy on the winners stand.

"It's important to come together as a team," said Glitz, a junior who spent the day prior to the Oct. 24 race touring the nation's capital with her teammates. "It's good to run with everyone who has the same goals you have."

A record 59 ROTC teams took part in the 26th annual Army Ten-Miler. In all, more than 400 Cadets and cadre ran the scenic course that started and ended at the Pentagon and wound through downtown Washington.

The race also saw the reigning ROTC champs, Virginia Tech, dethroned. The University of Kentucky, which finished fourth a year ago, won this year with an overall time of four hours, 12 minutes and four seconds.

Times were determined by adding the finishes of each team's top four members.

Minnesota State University took second at 4:13:31, and the University of Connecticut came in third at 4:15:35.

Only two individual ROTC runners, among the 30,000 total competitors from around the world, finished the course in less than an hour. Connecticut's Steven Pawlowski, who turned in the second-best ROTC individual time in 2009, crossed the finish in 57 minutes, 54 seconds.



Story by Steve Arel • U.S. Army Cadet Command

At a glance

The top 10 teams in this year's Army Ten-Miler. Times (hours: minutes: seconds) are the combined finishes of each team's top four runners.

University of Kentucky – 4:12:04
Minnesota State University – 4:13:31
University of Connecticut – 4:15:35
University of Texas-El Paso – 4:16:28
Cornell University – 4:18:19
Virginia Tech – 4:18:24
Michigan State University – 4:19:25
Kansas State University – 4:25:56
Akron University – 4:27:53
East Carolina University – 4:28:10



Opposite page, left, University of Connecticut Cadet Steven Pawlowski nears the finish line of the AUSA Army Ten-Miler. Pawlowski was the top overall finisher in the ROTC category. Opposite page, right, Clarkson University ROTC Cadet Cristopher Coveleski leads a group of runners toward the finish in front of the Pentagon. Photos by Steve Arel

Kentucky's Ahunuar Huerta posted a 59:24.

After last year's run – the first for Kentucky's formal running team – Cadets intensified their training, looking for improvement.

"We came in with first place on our mind, and that was it," said Ben Skaggs, a senior and the team's captain. "We wanted to represent our school well."

Skaggs attributed the team's success to the program's professor of military science, Lt. Col. Jason Cummins, who pushed to start the official running group two years ago. His guidance and motivation drove Cadets to hone their ability.

"He's the reason we do this, and we run for him," Skaggs said.

The experience of running last year's race was pivotal, he said. Kentucky runners approached the race with a strategy: follow each other through the pack at the start, stay together and pace each other for the first four miles and then hit their own individual strides the rest of the way.

In fact, Skaggs said the scenic views and cheering crowds along the route were welcome distractions.

"You're so occupied with that ... it felt much shorter," he said.

At the start, the sea of participants squeezed together nearly a quarter-mile deep offered a display of patriotism and American pride. The Golden Knights parachuted in as "God Bless the USA" blared in the background. One runner had two small flags taped to extend from his shoulders. Another wore a shirt saying, "We run for those who didn't return." And one female spectator stood atop a guardrail overlooking the runners and waved a large flag from a staff as she cheered them on.

The reasons those in the race compete is as diverse as the runners themselves.

Some run for personal pride. Some run for a cause. Some run for bragging rights.

Eric Johnson, of Kansas State University, ran because he wanted to get himself in better shape and be alongside people with whom he's forming lifelong bonds – his fellow Cadets.

"I wouldn't trade this for anything," Johnson said of his first Ten-Miler experience. "This might be an individual sport, but the Army isn't."

Morehead Cadet tops in nation

Wesley Tudor had a plan and a goal when he showed up as a freshman at Morehead State University.

Less than four years later, he finds himself the top ROTC Cadet in the nation and on track to become an officer in one of the most difficult Army branches to enter.

"It was a lot of hard work," Tudor said after learning he was atop the Order of Merit List, the ranking of senior Cadets across the nation. While the numbers fluctuate annually, this year there were 5,348 Cadets ranked.

The OML illustrates a Cadet's well-rounded success throughout their career in ROTC. Rankings factor in results of the Army Physical Fitness Test, grade point average and performance at the ROTC Leadership Development and Assessment Course all Cadets attend between their junior and senior years, among other quantifiable factors based on numbers and scores.

Tudor credited much of his extracurricular activities as putting him over the top. Besides maintaining a 4.0 GPA, he excelled at leadership in his battalion, on his campus and in the local community.

"You ask anyone on campus, and they know who Cadet Wesley Tudor is," said Maj. Robert Mason, the professor of military science at Morehead.

Throughout his four years, Tudor has held a part-time job at Advance Auto Parts to make ends meet financially. During his freshman year, he was vice president of the school's economics club and involved in community and campus intramural sports.

His sophomore year he attended Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga., served as the risk management chair for his fraternity, Pi Kappa Phi, traveled to Panama with the ROTC Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency program and stayed involved in intramurals. His junior year, along with staying active in the intramurals on campus and in the community, he took on the role of treasurer for his fraternity and attended the National Ethics of America Conference in West Point, N.Y.

This year, his senior year, he also took on the role of Cadet battalion

commander at Morehead.

"You have to do a lot and have some serious time-management skills" to keep up such a schedule, Tudor said.

All that hard work paid off, though, when the OML was announced this fall and Tudor earned his first choice for his branching assignment: finance.

Though the finance branch doesn't get as much attention as many of the combat arms branches, such as infantry and armor, the branch is nearly impossible to attain.

While the numbers fluctuate annually based on the Army's needs, the branching assignments to the Finance Corps are routinely the fewest. In Fiscal 2011, only 41 slots are available to the 2,935 Cadets slated to receive commissions as second lieutenants in the active duty Army.

"It's unbelievably hard," Tudor said of getting the branch assignment.

But he knew, before he even enrolled as an accounting major, finance was the branch he wanted. Tudor researched the field and knew how the odds were against him. The only way he was going to make it, he felt, was to be in the top 10 percent nationally on the OML, ensuring him his top choice in branch assignment.

He had a goal. He made his plan. He stuck to it.

And this fall, he got his branch.

Tudor credits his prior military service as instilling in him the discipline and character it took to persevere through his four-year plan.

Before attending Morehead, Tudor served four years active duty as an enlisted Soldier with the 101st Airborne as a mechanic with the 584th Maintenance Co. While with the 101st, he deployed twice, from November 2003 to February 2004, where he was promoted from private to pri-



Morehead State University Cadet Wesley Tudor was tops on the Order of Merit List this year. Photo by Timothy Holbrook

continued on page 20

PUT TO THE TEST

Brigades conduct annual Ranger Challenge competitions



A rundown of Ranger Challenge winners from across the command

1ST BRIGADE

Norwich University Team 1

2ND BRIGADE

Overall: Penn State

Division results:

Weekend 1

Rudder-1: Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Merrill-1: Siena College

Darby-2: University of Vermont

Weekend 2

Rudder-2: University of Maine

Merrill-2: Penn State

Darby-2: Worcester Polytechnic Institute

3RD BRIGADE

Marseilles Training Area, Ill.

Overall winner: Wheaton College

Female winner: Olivet Nazarene University

Camp Riley, Minn.

Overall winner: Univ. of North Dakota A Team

Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Overall winner: Truman State A Team

Female winner: Washington University

Camp Dodge, Iowa

Overall winner: Iowa State A Team

Female winner: Northern Iowa

Fort McCoy, Wis.

Overall winner: Wisconsin-Madison

Female winner: Wisconsin-Madison

4TH BRIGADE

Overall winner: University of Maryland

Black Division: Loyola

Gold Division: University of Maryland

5TH BRIGADE

Geographical Group 1 (Flagstaff, Ariz.)

Male Division: Northern Arizona University

Co-ed Division: Northern Arizona

Female Division: Arizona State

Geographical Group 2 (Camp Williams, Utah)

Co-ed Division: Brigham Young University

Geographical Group 3 (Camp Gruber, Okla.)

Male Division: Cameron University

Co-ed Division: Cameron University

Female Division: Central Oklahoma

Geographical Group 4 (Camp Bullis, Texas)

Male Division: Texas Tech University

Co-ed Division: University of Texas-Austin

Female Division: University of Houston

Geographical Group 5 (Camp Bullis, Texas)

Male Division: Saint Mary's University

Co-ed Division: University of Texas-San Antonio

Female Division: University of Texas-Corpus Christi

Geographical Group 6 (Camp McGregor, N.M.)

Male Division: New Mexico State University

Co-ed Division: University of New Mexico

Female Division: University of New Mexico

6TH BRIGADE

Green Tier: University of North Florida

Blue Tier: University of Tampa

White Tier: University of Georgia

Red Tier: Florida State University

7TH BRIGADE

Combined Division: Michigan State

Female Division: University of Louisville

8TH BRIGADE

Task Force Rainer (Camp Rilea, Ore.): Univ. of Hawaii

Task Force Big Sky (Greenough, Mont.): Gonzaga

Steven Ho, a senior from Vanderbilt University, transports a simulated injured Soldier during a first aid station at 7th Brigade's Ranger Challenge competition. Photo by Forrest Berkshire.



Task Force Pacific Northwest (Camp Adair, Ore.):

Central Washington University

Task Force Aggie (Stead ANG Training Area, Nev.):

Nevada-Reno

Task Force Aztec Warrior (Camp Pendleton, Calif.):

San Diego State University

Task Force Mustang (Camp San Luis Obispo, Calif.):

California Poly University-San Luis Obispo



Cadet Command brigade commanders stand with their brigade flags Nov. 23 as part of the color guard carrying the uncased Cadet Command colors at Fort Knox, Ky. Photo by Forest Berkshire

Command unfurls colors at new Kentucky home

By Steve Arel

U.S. Army Cadet Command

FORT KNOX, Ky. – The last grains of sand fell through U.S. Army Cadet Command’s BRAC hourglass last month as the organization unfurled its flag and officially staked the colors at a new Kentucky home.

The Nov. 23 event at Brooks Field marked the culmination of a transition from Fort Monroe, Va., set in motion five years ago by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. That body directed the latest round of military asset shuffling, including the move of Accessions Command to Fort Knox and the Armor Center from Knox to Fort Benning, Ga.

Calling Cadet Command a pivotal piece in the development of the Army’s future leaders, Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commander of Accessions Command and Fort Knox, described the organization’s arrival as historic.

“For over 70 years, the world’s finest armor and cavalry leaders were trained here,” he told a crowd of about 150 people. “Today marks the arrival of Cadet Command and the finest officer training in the world. ... Cadet Command develops and shapes tomorrow’s leaders. It is a critical, distinct and strategic

command in our Army.”

Elements of Cadet Command, which oversees Army ROTC and Junior ROTC nationwide and annually produces 60 percent of all of the branch’s officers, have operated at Fort Knox even before the agency’s 1986 inception. The command’s 1st Brigade, which includes senior and military junior colleges across the country and operates the Leader’s Training Course each summer for prospective Cadets, and 7th Brigade, which comprises programs in Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, already are based on the post.

Headquarters staff began relocating to Kentucky nearly two years ago. Only a few dozen of the command’s nearly 360 total employees remain in Virginia.

Cadet Command held a departure ceremony Oct. 1 at Fort Monroe, which is slated to close next fall.

Until Nov. 23 the colors had been wound tight around a wooden staff, encased in a plain, olive green cloth sheath. The flag – emblazoned with the command’s patch on a silky yellow-orange background – had been sealed by then-commander Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell and Command Sgt. Maj. Hershel Turner, Cadet Command’s top enlisted Soldier.

So with Bartell now serving overseas, November’s official arrival of Cadet Command also heralded the arrival of a new commander, Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald. Incidentally, the two swapped positions, with Bartell replacing McDonald as the director, J-3, for U.S. forces in Iraq.

McDonald looked on from the Brooks Field reviewing stand as Turner and the interim commander, Col. Barrye Price, uncased the flag as the commanders and sergeants major from each of Cadet Command’s eight brigades stood in formation behind them. It was a simple proceeding, taking about a minute to free the colors from their cloaked state.

McDonald then flanked Freakley as they walked onto the field to the flag. Turner passed the colors to Freakley, who handed them to McDonald, installing him as the new Cadet Command commander. McDonald then returned the staff to Turner.

McDonald, an ROTC grad from the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, is a 30-year veteran. He has held a variety of leadership positions with units around the world, including Italy, Canada, Germany, Bosnia and, of course, the United States.

Heading Cadet Command is McDonald’s first



Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald takes the Cadet Command colors from U.S. Army Accessions Command Commander Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley at McDonald's assumption of command ceremony. Photo by Forrest Berkshire

assignment in Kentucky. As the organization's ninth commander, he said he felt "privileged" to return to the organization where he got his start and welcomed the opportunity to develop the Army's future leaders.

"This is an opportunity to pay back what I received over the years," said McDonald, who also is a former Junior ROTC Cadet. "New beginnings foster tremendous opportunities for change and growth. That's what I see today as we complete this transition. I absolutely can't wait to do this."

Three former Cadet Command commanders attended the ceremony. They were retired Maj. Gen. Robert Wagner, who helped start the

command and led it through its first four years of existence; his successor, retired Maj. Gen. Wallace Arnold; and retired Maj. Gen. Alan Thrasher, the organization's sixth commanding general.

Cadets on the senior and junior ROTC levels also played key roles in the event.

Students with the University of Louisville served as color bearers and recited the Cadet and Soldier's creeds. Cadets with Fort Knox High School were ushers, and Aaron Heard, a student with the program, delivered the Junior ROTC Cadet Creed.

Radcliff Mayor Sheila Enyart, who attended the ceremony, leaves office at year's end. The

BRAC transition has unfolded through much of her tenure.

She called the uncasing an exciting moment, one she – like many in the neighboring communities – initially fretted with the pending departure of the Armor Center.

"To have all these young people train here is a blessing to us," Enyart said of the Cadet Command's summer mission that attracts some 1,400 prospective Cadets to Fort Knox. "Having everything (arriving) lets you know the Army is still going on at Fort Knox. We were concerned at first because you never know what the transition will bring. It's all for the betterment of our community."



New commander has deep roots

By Steve Arel

U.S. Army Cadet Command

One look at the three uniform-clad JROTC instructors, and Mark McDonald was inspired.

The reason eluded him. All he knew was he wanted to be like them – had to be like them. And he hadn't even put on the uniform.

It was, after all, the first day of class. The first day of class of his high school career.

Almost four decades later, the desire to wear the Soldier's uniform and serve his country still drives McDonald. Over that span, he has gone from the lowest ranks of the JROTC program to the senior levels of the U.S. Army.

And today, as a major general and the new commander of Cadet Command, McDonald is back leading the organization that led him to a lifetime of success personally and professionally.

"I knew that whatever produced three men like that was what I wanted to be a part of," he said. "I jumped in the ROTC arena, and I haven't looked back since."

McDonald became Cadet Command's ninth commander Nov. 23. His tenure, still in its infancy, is already significant.

McDonald is the first general to head the organization at its new Fort Knox, Ky., home, a move from Fort Monroe, Va., mandated by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. He's also the first Cadet Command commanding general with a JROTC background.

Sitting for an interview shortly after his assumption of command to talk about his life, his philosophies and his vision, the 52-year-old Chattanooga, Tenn., native said the foundation for his success began in high school.

"It showed me a direction, and I followed it," McDonald said.

That direction was toward service in the Army. Initially, McDonald planned to enlist, being able to enter as a private first class because of his junior experience.

But he saw opportunity by going to college instead and settled on attending the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, where he majored in

what the responsibilities would be after I commissioned."

Not to mention that McDonald also needed the certainty of a job. Just before contracting, he married his then-fiancé, Connie, a fellow college student.

"If you can imagine two college students trying to scratch out a living, it was pretty important to graduate and get that job," McDonald said.

He and Connie have been married for 32 years. They have two adult children, both of whom live in Tennessee – one in Knoxville and one in Nashville – and a granddaughter. The couple owns a log home perched atop the scenic Cumberland Plateau halfway between the two cities.

Most of McDonald's time, of course, will be spent at Fort Knox. And as a newcomer to Cadet Command, he has spent much of his first few weeks simply learning the organization's functionality and other intricacies. He got a head start several weeks prior to taking command when he spent time with his predecessor,

Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell.

The two met in Iraq while McDonald was still serving as the director, J-3, for U.S. forces. It was a chance for McDonald to learn about the complexities of Cadet Command – an organization spread across every state in the nation, two territories, Europe and Asia.

McDonald said those discussions, as well as a brief meeting in late November with three other former Cadet Command commanders, proved valuable in giving him an understanding of the organization and some of the challenges it faces.



Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commander of U.S. Army Accessions Command, waits for Cadet Command Command Sgt. Maj. Hershel Turner to pass the colors before passing them to Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald at McDonald's assumption of command ceremony Nov. 23 at Fort Knox, Ky. Photo by Forrest Berkshire

business administration. Once there, he joined the Army ROTC unit.

"The same thing I saw in the NCOs in my high school program, I saw in the NCOs and young officers in the college program," McDonald said.

Senior ROTC further molded McDonald, giving him purpose. He contracted after his sophomore year.

"It gave me impetus to continue my studies and get serious about it," he said. "I knew I was going to be an officer. I started thinking about what that meant, what I was going to do and

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Final reflections

Outgoing commander says ROTC on the right path, but work isn't finished

Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell, former commander of U.S. Army Cadet Command, speaks about his tenure shortly before his relinquishment of command Oct. 1. Photo by Jeremy O'Bryan

By Steve Arel

U.S. Army Cadet Command

FORT MONROE, Va. – He might not have been a time traveler, but Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell lived his tenure in 2035.

At least, subconsciously.

The reason: The focus of U.S. Army Cadet Command's commanding general has been developing a solid corps of ROTC Cadets who, 25 years from now, will form the contingent of colonels and generals leading the force.

"The fact is if we get it wrong, we're stuck with that for the next 25 years," Bartell said. "I'm looking at what the Army is going to need in 2035 and bringing that back to today and (finding) the kinds of men and women we have coming into our Army today who will be the right senior leaders for our Army in 25 years. ... Because it takes 25 years to grow them, you have to start with the right stuff."

As he relinquished command in October, Bartell reflected on his nearly two years at the helm of Army ROTC, the organization where he got his military start. The 1977 University of Michigan commissionee is now in Iraq, serving as the director, J-3, of U.S. Forces.

Bartell said he believes the quality of Cadets being produced by Cadet Command programs nation-

wide is unparalleled. Having interacted with scores of them while traveling the country, he described them as a generation steeped with talent.

"What I see out there are thousands of incredibly talented men and women who have potential to be quality officers," Bartell said. "The lieutenants we're producing today are as high a quality as our Army has ever seen."

While quality might be there, the general admits the physical makeup isn't yet. So he led a push to more to ensure the officer corps specifically looks like the Army and America. That has meant significant efforts to attract, for example, more African Americans and Hispanics to the program and evaluating the location of some Army ROTC units to ensure battalions are positioned in areas that provide the command as a whole with a diverse mix of prospects.

And as part of that strategy, Bartell urged recruiters to employ more "precision," trying to close the gap between minority women and minority-men who join.

"Are we where we need to be?" he asked. "Not yet,

but we're making huge strides. We're moving in the right direction."

To preach the value of ROTC and to illustrate the success of Cadet Command's leadership development program, Bartell regularly traveled the country speaking to prospective students, parents and other influential people. He figures he made more than 150 trips since November 2008, the most he

Bartell urged recruiters to employ more "precision," trying to close the gap between minority women and minority men who join.

has traveled in any job during his 33-year career.

Despite spending so much time on the road, Bartell said he'll miss it. What he'll miss most is talking about "our treasure," the men and women in the program who want to be the future leaders of the Army.

"All I wanted to do was fine tune that a little bit and continue us on a pathway of enduring greatness," Bartell said. "We're certainly on that path."

Cadet Command NCO takes on Army's best

By **Forrest Berkshire**

U.S. Army Cadet Command

He was trying to politely fend off two Afghan National security soldiers while making sure his squad was maintaining security when the first gunshots rang out.

Immediately, the polling station the squad was guarding broke into pandemonium. Frightened villagers shouted and ran aimlessly for cover. The Afghan guards started brandishing their weapons. Green-tinted smoke rolled in to obscure their vision.

But in just seconds, Staff Sgt. Russell Kojo formed up his squad and raced into the adjoining village, led by an Afghan national, to clear the houses and seek out and detain the hostiles.

As Kojo's squad's boots splashed through the mud, flash-bang grenades and other explosions detonated between the village buildings. They pulled up briefly at the edge of the door to the first building, got set and breached the entrance.

Nothing inside. The shouts of "all clear" wafted from the open windows.

On to the next building, as more explosions rocked the air around them.

Again, nothing.

On to the third. A heartbeat after they entered, the sounds of a scuffle and barking commands of "get down" broke out for a few long seconds. Shortly afterward, the squad emerged, a man dressed in an Afghan tunic with his hands bound behind his back in tow.

That scenario was one faced by hundreds of Soldiers over the past nine years of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. But on this day, the Soldiers were at Fort Lee, Va., competing in the Army's Best Warrior competition.

Fighting off insurgents attacking an Afghan polling station, treating injured Soldiers and facing tough questions from the Army's top enlisted Soldier were just a few of the hardships Kojo – the Cadet Command, Accessions Command and Training and Doctrine Command NCO of the Year – and 11 other noncommissioned officers from across the force faced in their quest for the title of best NCO in the Army.

Throughout the five-day event, the Soldiers' physicality and knowledge were tested. The first two days mostly centered on their mental prowess, including an NCO board review by top NCOs in the Army, including Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston, a written exam and essay.

The last three days tested the Soldiers mentally and physically,

with a battery of stations including the simulated attack on the polling station, leading a squad through an Afghan village while coming under fire, evaluating and treating casualties from an improvised explosive device, searching and detaining high-value targets and a shoot-and-move range.

It was the last two days, and the immersive nature of the events, that impressed Kojo, even to the smallest of details such as having live chickens running around the simulated village and the Hollywood-quality make-up job on simulated casualties, complete



with amputations.

"This is awesome," the cadre member from the University of California-Berkeley said. "They make things as realistic as possible."

The details and intensity served to ramp up the adrenaline and put the contestants in a real-world frame of mind.

"Everything they've done is very accurate to what we see when deployed," said Kojo, who before taking on his role as a training NCO at his university served three deployments with the 3rd Ranger Battalion.

"It really made me go through situations I've been in."

Kojo had come out on top in three previous NCO competitions, at the Cadet Command, Accessions Command and TRADOC levels. Ultimately, he did not win the final Army-level competition.

But just making it to that level showed remarkable success, Preston told the competitors at the awards banquet, held Oct. 25 in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the annual conference of the Association of the United States Army, where the winner among the 12 NCOs and the winner among the 12 lower-ranking Soldiers level were announced.

At the Soldier-of-the-Year level, Sgt. Sherri Jo Gallagher, who serves in the Army Marksmanship Unit and, like Kojo, won the Accessions and TRADOC competitions, was named the winner.

"There are commanders and first sergeants out there who would literally give up body parts to have any of these 24 warriors in their unit," Preston said.

Staff Sgt. Russell Kojo sights downrange during the marksmanship portion of the Army Best Warrior competition in October.
Photo by Forrest Berkshire





Cadet 1st Lt. Edward Lockley looks toward a fellow Cadet standing to answer a question about the importance of wearing the JROTC uniform. Lockley is one of the student leaders in the program that began last year at Options Public Charter School in Washington, D.C.

Growing strong

Junior ROTC in midst of massive expansion

One of the class options this year at the aptly named Options Public Charter School is JROTC. Administrators pushed to institute the program at the Washington, D.C., school — a vocational center specifically for troubled students — seeing it as a natural complement to the structure and discipline they’re trying to instill.

Some 43 schools across the country opened Army JROTC programs this fall as part of an expansion that eventually will put 2,000 programs — up from 1,600 — under the umbrella of U.S. Army Cadet Command, which oversees battalions at the high school and collegiate levels. In places like Washington, the goal of educational leadership is to capitalize on the

program’s proven record of transforming mediocre students into good ones and good students into great ones.

The new schools — a mix of institutions in locales with varied attributes and challenges — also represent a significant change in the way programs are being funded. No longer are they simply OK’d on desire. Approvals are based on need.

“The intent is to go to high schools where a JROTC program will make a difference,” said Col. John Vanderbleek, director of Army JROTC. “The goal is to position students for success after high school.”

Interest in establishing new programs has been strongest in the Southeast, which already is home to the greatest concentration of JROTC units in the country. While not ruling out new programs in that region — several were started there this year — decision-makers want the benefits of JROTC to be as widespread as possible.

Cadet Command in spring 2009 established an order of merit list that awards nominees a score that accounts for various factors. Among them: graduation and dropout rates, school demographics, the local economy, the makeup of the community the school serves and its loca-

tion within the United States.

That’s not to say only struggling schools with troubled students are most likely to land a program. Strong-performing schools with students who still need direction and development stand a viable chance as well, Vanderbleek said.

The demand from schools wanting JROTC programs remains strong. Though a handful of programs are approved each year as others dissolve for various reasons, there is still a waiting list of 220 schools. Some have been waiting as long as six years.

While a school might be deep on the order of merit list, it is possible to move up quickly. Cadet Command officials routinely talk with prospective programs, and some candidates bow out because of waning desire or lack of money in their district.

While federal funds cover much of each program’s costs — supplies, half of instructors’ salaries and uniforms — school districts must foot the other half of the instructors’ pay and most extracurricular activities like field trips and competitions.

Cadet Command will add another 43 JROTC programs next school year as well, on its way to 1,910 nationwide by 2020 — a number advo-

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cated by Congress. Funding, of course, will dictate the pace at which Cadet Command accelerates to that goal.

"If Congress is going to hold us to that level, they will have to come up with the money," Vanderbleek said. "The program gives students opportunities they wouldn't normally have. There aren't a lot of programs in schools focused on character and leader development."

Part of the allure to school district leadership desiring to bring in JROTC is demonstrated success of Cadets compared to the general pupil population, Vanderbleek said.

Cadets tend to be more focused. They make better grades. They're more respectful. They graduate at a higher rate.

"Districts realize the program is accomplishing the mission of making students better citizens," Vanderbleek said.

Options Public Charter School, a 4-year-old center that educates at-risk middle and high school students in one building, wanted a JROTC unit so badly that when its request wasn't approved for the 2009-10 year, the school ponied up some \$250,000 to get it going. Administrators recruited two instructors to lead the effort, and the money covered the full cost of their salaries, some uniforms, supplies and dummy weapons for the would-be drill team.

"You gotta start somewhere," said Patricia Conway, the school's guidance counselor and a retired sergeant major who pushed for the program's inception as a way to give students much-needed structure and discipline.

From the outside, Options resembles most any school. Sandwiched in a quiet east Washington neighborhood on a street lined with townhomes, the school, which sits on a small hill, is an inviting presence.

Walking into the main entrance, a metal detector, much like ones in airports, welcomes all those who enter. Even the students, who attend for a reason. Some are there because of tendencies to act out; others because they do more to seek attention than knowledge.

Conway, after 24 years in the Army, knows how military tutelage can shape and mold a person. Ninety students signed up to take the class as an elective this year.

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Keith Brown was the

first JROTC instructor hired at Options in July 2009. He admits the job has posed considerable hurdles. Not only has he tried to teach the basics, like how to wear the uniform, rank structure and good study habits. He does so amid constant interruptions and distractions.

Some students, during class, chat loudly with each other, seemingly oblivious to the lesson unfolding or to the instructor constantly calling their names to get their attention. Some students won't vacate their chairs to take part in mandatory weekly inspections. And many students – students not even in the class – wander in frequently from the hallway outside, just to take in what's happening in the class or to chat

difference, and that's rewarding."

Anuan Washington has attended Options since it opened. In his previous school, he had a knack for acting "inappropriately" with his teachers, talking to them as he would his buddies instead of showing them proper respect as adults.

So when the JROTC program started, Washington looked at it as a chance to do something different, to be part of something that could benefit him in the future. Today, as a junior who quickly became one of the bright spots in the Options unit, he's the Cadet battalion commander.

Trying to advocate the regimen of discipline and structure, Washington, who has overcome his behavioral issues, said he finds it frustrating as he deals with schoolmates who sometimes want to scuffle just to pick a fight and with those who simply don't care. It might be easy to give up, but he won't.

He compares the development of Options' unit to George Washington's chore of developing an Army from untrained personnel.

"We're dealing with untrained students," Anuan Washington said. "A lot of people think JROTC is a class to hang out. I'm trying to do my best to motivate some of them. I just want them



Retired Sgt. 1st Class Keith Brown asks Cadet Staff Sgt. Ashley Dobbs a question about her uniform during a weekly inspection in October at Options Public Charter School.

with friends before being shooed away. Eventually, the door has to be locked to keep the unwanted visitors out.

Despite it all, Brown remains patient. Beneath the obvious issues, he says, is potential. And he wants to expose it, showing students who don't realize their value what they can do.

In one recent class, where students playfully slapped each other and danced to music playing in their heads while Brown tried to teach, Brown stopped, pulled a chair next to them and shifted his focus from classroom instruction to life lesson. He asked how many of the half-dozen students expected to work to earn a living. All said they planned to.

Brown told them matter-of-factly that without a solid education, they probably would struggle to find viable employment.

"I see what we're doing here, and I'm not going to jump off the ship now," he said. "I think we can make it. I feel like we're making a

to do their best."

Progress is being made, many say. The school competed earlier this fall in its first drill competition at Howard University across town. Though the team didn't win, some of its members were recognized for their performance.

Other Cadets have been recognized, too, for their involvement in the community. And the battalion has begun reaching out to help others outside the confines of the school through volunteerism at a local food bank.

While it's all a start, Principal Robert Allen wants to see the program accelerate and expand to include middle school students.

"Imagine if we did that for some of our sixth-graders," he said. "Think of what that would do for the community at large. Children as a whole strive for structure – structure from home and school. A lot of these students don't have it at home. School

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Pride of the community

Smith-Cotton JROTC captures special place in small town's heart

New American flags – crisp and vibrantly colored – flutter in the breeze as they line the main street of downtown Sedalia, Mo., a signal of the patriotic pride among residents. It's a sign, many will tell you, of the pride they also have in one of the community's success stories:

The Army JROTC program at Smith-Cotton High School.

In less than a decade, the Tiger Battalion has become a life-changer to scores of impressionable students.

It has given them purpose. It has given them direction. It has given them hope.

"People see the value of discipline and the outcomes of this program," Sedalia Mayor Elaine Horn said. "They understand this is giving our youth something they didn't have. It is giving them a whole new life, giving them a chance to be somebody their families can be proud of."

More than 3,000 young men and women have graduated from the Smith-Cotton program since its inception in 2004, with current enrollment at 256 out of a student population of 1,310. It has brought three national championships and countless other awards to this town of 21,000 people, as well as recently having its first Cadet accepted to the prestigious United States Military Academy



at West Point.

That particularly is a point of satisfaction, considering many JROTC students come from households with their parents who never graduated high school, let alone attended college.

"I could do away with all of the awards, all of the championships, all of the trophies," said retired Lt. Col. Larry Cunningham, the senior Army instructor. "That stuff just pales in comparison to the success of these kids. Whatever that success is, whether it be academic or physical fitness or whatever, the success of the kids individually is what is most important."

Collectively, Cadets have amassed 11,010 service hours to the community since the inception of the program, volunteering to place flags on graves for Veterans Day, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, reading to elementary school children, providing color guards to various events and helping numerous charities raise money.

An important part of being in the program is making a difference outside the classroom.

Smith-Cotton High School attempted to get a JROTC program in 1995. Lack of funding and support made it a non-starter. In 2004, then-Principal Dr. Bill Nicely, a supportive school board and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Randall Woods,

Story and photos by John Wayne Liston • U.S. Army Cadet Command

a 21-year Army veteran, finally won approval.

Administrators looked to the program to usher in much-needed structure and discipline to the school. At the time, Smith-Cotton dealt with an array of behavioral issues and more than 100 fights a year.

Those numbers have since dropped drastically, as some credit JROTC with altering the educational climate.

“It has changed from a thug mentality, where the thugs try to run the school, to a place where the vast majority of kids are good kids and feel safe walking up and down the halls,” Assistant Principal Todd Fraley said. “It is more of a place of learning.”

Woods focused early on academics and service.

“I always believed no one can ever be successful in life by themselves, that everyone needs help or a push on the way,” he said. “The only reason this program is as successful as it is, is because of the students. They are outstanding young men and women. Kids at this age sometimes are all about ‘me, me, me,’ and what we did was get the word ‘me’ out of it and start using the word ‘we.’ We said how can we get out there and get these kids to donate their time to the public, and it was just an instant success ever since.”

Today, Cunningham and retired Staff Sgt. Thomas Bush join Woods. The three are credited as the driving factors in the program’s success.

“When I see kids who were getting all F’s, they are not dumb,” Principal Martin White said. “The reason they were getting all F’s was that they just weren’t connected. This program has connected students. Seeing a majority of students who fell through the cracks at a younger age and seeing them progress and feel good about themselves, that has been a sparkle in my eye.”

Success is nothing new for the Tiger Battalion. With 65 percent of its Cadets on the honor roll and an average ACT score three points higher than the school and state averages, there are no shortages of stories of academic rebirth.

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Opposite page, top, Cadet 2nd Lt. Nancy Medina and several Cadets from the Tiger Battalion practice their drill maneuvers for their unarmed team.

Opposite page, bottom, Cadet Sgt. 1st Class Richard Barnier perfects spinning his exhibition drill rifle during practice at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, Mo.

Right, Cadets from the armed drill team work in the hot Missouri sun as they prepare to defend the national championship.



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Ask school administrators and community leaders for an example of the program's success, and they point to Par'Ris Potts.

Potts made the most of his time with the Tiger Battalion and is now attending college at the University of Central Missouri, where he is a member of that school's senior ROTC program and plans to commission in the Army. But his career path wasn't always easily traveled.

In ninth grade, Potts joined the Smith-Cotton program and shortly thereafter had nine relatives die from various causes through the year. He struggled. He made some bad decisions. He didn't perform academically and got suspended.

"Sergeant Major called me over and talked to me real," Potts said. "It was the first time an adult male talked to me real in my life. I respected that. He told me he was going to kick me out. I teared up. I could only express how sorry I was. I didn't want to get kicked out, and he said 'You know, I see something good in you.'"

Potts capitalized on his second chance, excelling in his remaining years. His superior performance in the classroom and on the drill team earned him the rank of Cadet sergeant major. His drive and positive outlook also helped him win election as class president.

The way he sees it, Potts figures that without JROTC he might have fathered children while in high school, ended up with a career in a fast food restaurant or dealt drugs. Instead, he found focus and the way to a better life. Potts is applying for the Simultaneous Membership Program in which ROTC-contracted Cadets simultaneously serve as members of the United States Army Reserves and ROTC.

"I never even dreamed of college," he said. "I started getting praise from teachers and started seeing what being good and positive would do. ... JROTC motivated me. It gave me a reason to live."

A lot of Smith-Cotton Cadets speak of the instructors' vision, of them seeing something in them that they didn't see. That thought is echoed by their parents.

Earl Manuel graduated this spring from Smith-Cotton and is its first student to be accepted to

the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Before his high school career ended, Manuel's mother, Martha, figured he could just join the military. She never considered what a commission from West Point would mean for her son.

"Parents only see so much sometimes," she said. "It's the leadership from JROTC that will make him successful at West Point."

Cadets, staff and parents see the Tiger Battalion as a family. These days, that family is expanding beyond the school's boundaries.

Brittini Wilken, a student at Sacred Heart School, a private Catholic school in Sedalia, recently became the first student outside Smith-Cotton to join the battalion. She wanted a future in the military and thought JROTC would be a good place to start.



Cadet Command Sgt. Maj. Andrea Moore reads to Finley Harden, 4, and Skylar Harden, 6, during "Family Reading Night" at Skyline Elementary School in Sedalia, Mo. Cadets from the Tiger Battalion volunteer thousands of hours for various community service events throughout the year.

But Smith-Cotton was the only program in her area. So she asked Woods if she could join. Woods accepted her.

"I was expecting big tough military guys ready to chop your face off if you do something wrong," she said. "I feel like I'm a part of their family now. I would do anything for them."

It isn't just Cadets who have bonded. Parents have also developed tight friendships and pride in all the Cadets.

"You are as happy for the Cadet standing next to your son or daughter as you are for your own," Martha Manuel said. "You want the next person to succeed as bad as you want your own child to succeed."

Part of wanting each child to succeed is accepting everyone, even those with disabilities. Mallory

Graves worked hard during her time in the Tiger Battalion and overcame numerous difficulties related to Down syndrome. She now attends the University of Central Missouri, where she is part of THRIVE, a two-year program designed to help students with disabilities be successful in college and achieve an independent lifestyle.

JROTC proved to be a stepping stone.

Mallory did not let her disorder stand in her way. Though her disability makes it difficult for her to concentrate and stay focused, and makes it uncomfortable to march with military precision, her teammates helped her overcome. In fact, she was even on the school's color guard that ranked among the top 15 in the nation.

"I think I owe it to parents and her to treat her just like anyone else," Woods said. "Mallory is one of the most inspirational young ladies I've ever seen with the challenges she has in her life, but she never let those affect her at all. And the other Cadets wrapped their arms around her and helped her achieve her goals."

"I'm a firm believer that I don't care who you are. I think every kid can come up to your expectations, if you demand it. Don't lower your expectations, because you're cheating a kid."

Smith-Cotton expects a lot from its Cadets. Those Cadets have come to expect a lot from themselves, too.

They don't just want to succeed. They want to excel.

That drive has shone in the program's accomplishments on the national level. In November, the Tiger Battalion earned its third national championship

when it captured its second straight title in the mixed division of the National Raider Challenge. That followed a national drill team championship in May when the school won the challenge level's armed division.

A local businessman has even urged Sedalia officials to erect signs at the town's entrances declaring it "Home of the JROTC National Champions."

Despite the national victories, Smith-Cotton Cadets remain humbled.

"We don't care about being national champions, just the fact that we try our hardest and that we work as a team," Cadet Master Sgt. Mercedes Kuhns said. "If we didn't win, we would be just as happy with ourselves. We care about being a team. We care about being friends. We are a big family, and that's how our program is based."

National competition brings Junior ROTC units together



Junior ROTC Cadets competing at the Raider nationals near Molena, Ga., negotiate “the Crucible,” an off-road, timed running course that tests physical toughness and stamina.

Photo by Jeremy O’Bryan

By Jeremy O’Bryan

U.S. Army Cadet Command

MOLENA, Ga. – “C’mon, Grissom! C’mon, let’s go!”

A small band of some 40 Grissom High School parents tramped among the roadside weeds and red clay, looking uphill, waiting impatiently for their uniform-clad youngsters to come bounding down the Jeep trail out of the Georgia woods.

“Alright, alright, go get ‘em!”

This mantra was repeated constantly as more than 600 Army JROTC Cadets competed intensely Nov. 6-7 in the National Raider Challenge Championships, a competition that tests skill, strength and stamina across a set of outdoor adventure tasks.

The hundreds of students representing 53 teams from 32 high schools – from Michigan to Texas to Florida – descended on Gerald I. Lawhorn Scouting Base in central Georgia to cross streams, run courses and negotiate obstacles under the scrutiny of judges and the clock.

“Isn’t this great?” asked one Grissom mom, dressed like the others for the chilly fall day and clutching a camera.

Her question wasn’t just chit-chat. Stephanie Armstrong, like many parents whose children spend time in Army Junior ROTC programs around the country, is an evangelist for both the Army JROTC program and the world of Raider Challenge.

“What else would these kids be doing if they weren’t out here competing in this event?” asked

Armstrong, a Huntsville, Ala., resident who moved there so her boys could attend Grissom High. “What would they be doing if they weren’t practicing and working out for three hours every day preparing for this?”

The question seems to translate well across latitudes and population densities. The question implies the importance of JROTC and Raider Challenge in the lives of high school students, whether it’s asked in Huntsville, in the nation’s Midwest or in New York City.

Smith-Cotton High School, of Sedalia, Mo., finished first overall in the mixed division for the second year in a row, and Francis Lewis High School lugged two of the three 4-foot-high team trophies home to Fresh Meadows, N.Y., after winning both the male and female divisions. Francis Lewis has won in at least one Raider overall category every year since first competing in 2007.

“We’re modest, but we’re happy,” said retired Master Sgt. Peter Rompf, an Army instructor at Francis Lewis and the school’s Raider team coach.

“The male overall division was a nail-biter. I tell my Cadets that Raider is a ‘world of seconds,’ that every second counts.”

Raider teams are scored in five events: a physical fitness test comprised of push-ups and curl-ups in a given timeframe, a 5k team run, a cross-country hill run called the gauntlet, a cross-country rescue in which teams carry a dummy-laden litter over and under obstacles, and the building and crossing of a one-rope bridge.

At a glance

Winners of the National Raider Challenge were:

Male Division

Francis Lewis High School, Fresh Meadows, N.Y.
Richmond Hill High School, Richmond Hill, Ga.
Elbert County High School, Elberton, Ga.

Female Division

Francis Lewis High School, Fresh Meadows, N.Y.
Richmond Hill High School, Richmond Hill, Ga.
Grissom High School, Huntsville, Ala.

Mixed Division

Smith-Cotton High School, Sedalia, Mo.
Jenkins High School, Millen, Ga.
The King’s Academy, Woodstock, Ga.

Ultimate Raider, Male

Michael Kearney, Smith-Cotton High School, Sedalia, Ga.

Ultimate Raider, Female

Magdalena Janczak, Francis Lewis High School, Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

“Our male team didn’t get a good rope bridge time. But our commander rallied the team,” Rompf said. “They stayed focused, they didn’t fall apart.”

The team commander, Omar Hammouda, a senior with three years of Raider experience, is awaiting acceptance at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

With the largest Army JROTC program in the country – nearly 700 students are in the program – Francis Lewis was anything but modest executors of the ROTC craft. The female Raiders earned their win by sweeping all five events.

The wins brought to four the number of national titles Francis Lewis has won this calendar year. The school also captured two national drill team titles in May.

Taking trophies as the “Ultimate Raiders” in an individual competition Nov. 7 were Magdalena Janczak, from Francis Lewis, and

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is all they have.”

Martha Layne Collins High School opened this fall in thriving Shelby County, Ky. The school, named for the state’s first female governor, was built to offset overcrowding at nearby Shelby County High School.

As the school developed, Collins, an avid military supporter and believer in the impact of JROTC, advocated for a program to be part of the course offerings. But with Shelby County High home to a Marine Corps unit, Collins urged education leaders to pursue an Army program.

Initially, the school didn’t make Cadet Command’s cut, and the Shelby County Public Schools district planned to fund the program itself. Then Lt. Col. Keith Gramig, who retired this summer to start the program at Collins High School, made a case for federal funding, detailing the impact it could have in children coping with varied issues, and won approval.

In a little more than four months, the program has an enrollment of 70 Cadets, almost 10 percent of the high school’s overall student population. And Gramig anticipates that number increasing considerably next fall with his efforts to talk up JROTC, its curriculum, structure and activities to current eighth-graders.

Getting the program going has been laborious, Gramig said, but it’s showing students a new direction, getting them involved in community events and, most importantly, teaching them how to be better members of society.

The program already is paying dividends with the school, Gramig said. Teachers have told him students who now are part of JROTC are exhibiting higher grades, better behavior and more initiative.

“This program, for some of our kids, motivates them to be better than what they are now,” Gramig said. “A lot of them know they have areas for improvement, and they want to improve themselves.”

The interaction with impressionable students has inspired Gramig as well.

“I love these kids,” he said. “It’s more enjoyable than I thought it would be. I look forward to coming to see these kids every day. They’re a lot of fun to be around.”

That’s part of the appeal to many educational leaders and what keeps school districts’ demand for JROTC programs strong.

“The nation realizes how important JROTC is,” said Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell, the Cadet Command commander who oversaw much of the merit list development and expansion. “I wish we could do this for everybody. We’re trying to.”

vate first class, and again from October 2005 to October 2006, where he was a squad leader and made sergeant.

Tudor said he enjoyed serving as an enlisted Soldier and had never planned on becoming an officer.

“I wanted to retire as a sergeant major,” he said.

It was during his second deployment that some of the officers in the 101st informed him about the ROTC Green to Gold program and encouraged him to pursue his degree and a commission. The program allows enlisted Soldiers to earn their degree and a commission.

While Tudor credits his prior service for helping lay the foundation for his achievement, he said the environment at Morehead fostered excellence for the whole battalion. His class of seniors also boasted Cadets ranked 38th and 130th in the nation.

Two years ago, the battalion had the Cadet

He also interacted earlier this month with many of the professors and senior military instructors at the battalion level while attending a joint brigade conference in Atlanta.

McDonald’s goals for Cadet Command are much the same goals he had for himself entering the Army as a new officer – whatever job the Army afforded him, figure out what was needed to do the job and do it well. It’ll be no different with Cadet Command, he said.

The general’s vision will hinge on three principles:

- Accomplish the mission. In Cadet Command’s case, that entails commissioning high-quality officers and running the nation’s premier citizenship program in high schools.
- Take care of people. Set them up for success by educating them, training them and giving them the resources and opportunities to accomplish the mission.
- Maintain a mindset of being deployment-ready

Michael Kearney from Smith-Cotton.

“This is amazing,” said Janczak, a senior who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. “I finished fifth last year with an injury. I’ve been working toward this moment all year. Sweeping (the team events) makes this even better.”

Rompf said he watched an injured Janczak last year as she battled the climbing wall, the final obstacle in the Ultimate Raider competition.

“She was crying hysterically because her ankle wouldn’t let her get over the wall,” he said. “She was inconsolable. She started training hard right away for this 2010 event.”

ranked third on that year’s OML.

“Without those guys there to push and shove, I couldn’t have done it,” Tudor said. “These guys here are right with it. They know how to get there. The competition brings your game up.”

Mason, Morehead’s professor of military science, is in his first year at the school. But he said among all the high-achievers in the battalion, Tudor stood out right away.

“He immediately stood out to me and other leadership,” Mason said. “And the leaders of the university.”

Mason said Tudor’s leadership at the battalion this year will strengthen the battalion in the future.

“He’s a great mentor to all the younger Cadets,” Mason said. “I think he’s going to be a guy who comes in (to the Army) and leads.”

“When Cadet Command talks about the total person concept, Tudor is who they’re talking about.”

and helping people prepare for deployment.

In November, McDonald received a series of briefings from division chiefs regarding the makeup and state of the command. Based on those, he said he has no cause for concern.

“This organization is running pretty well, so it’s not one of those things where I believe my hair’s on fire,” he said.

Still, McDonald sees potential opportunities for building further efficiencies and effectiveness. So he’ll soon examine the command as a whole and devise a long-term strategy for mission success. That look will include scrutinizing the organization structure and battalion configuration.

McDonald said he’s uncertain whether his study will necessitate changes, but he will “certainly look into any possibilities.”

“The young lieutenants and captains out there, brought up through ROTC, OCS (Officer Candidate School) and West Point, are phenomenal,” he said. “They take on these duties we give them – downrange it’s just an awesome responsibility – and they make it look easy.”

In Huntsville, Bob Armstrong, Stephanie’s husband and a Grissom dad, said the teamwork, loyalty, physical conditioning and problem-solving skills that the competition instills “produces quality kids, mature beyond their years.”

Planning for the annual national event begins almost immediately after one is completed, said Justin Gates, competition director for Sports Network International, the company that puts on the event in conjunction with U.S. Army Cadet Command. The Georgia National Guard and Winder Barrow High School in nearby Winder, Ga., also helped plan events, prepare the courses for safe use and provide judges.

Cadet Spotlight

A quarterly look at some of ROTC's future leaders who are already making an impact on their campuses

Cadet Sarah Herrero is no stranger to the spotlight. A former member of the prestigious All-American Bowl band as a high school senior, the Texas Tech University sophomore is now trumpeting a new path: future Army leader.

Hometown

San Antonio

Major

Chemical engineering

Grade Point Average

Overall: 3.56

ROTC: 4.0

ROTC Activities

Ranger Challenge

Ranger Company

Other Activities

Crossen Drum and Bugle Corps Color Guard

Goin' Band from Raiderland Trumpet

Double T Fencing Club

Mathematical Association of America

Intramural indoor soccer

Honors College Undergraduate Research Fellow in chemistry

Desired Branch

Engineer

What motivates you to become an Army officer?

I have wanted to be in the Army since childhood. Joining ROTC to become an officer allows me to gain a college degree while pursuing this goal. The leadership aspect of being an officer appeals to me because it challenges me to be at the top of my game, so I can effectively lead others in the right direction.

Photo by
Michael Strong

LAST LOOK

Staff Sgt. Russell Kojo, an ROTC instructor at University of California - Berkeley, leads his squad through a simulated Afghan village and bazaar that involved clearing rooms of enemy insurgents during the Army Best Warrior competition. Photo by Forrest Berkshire

