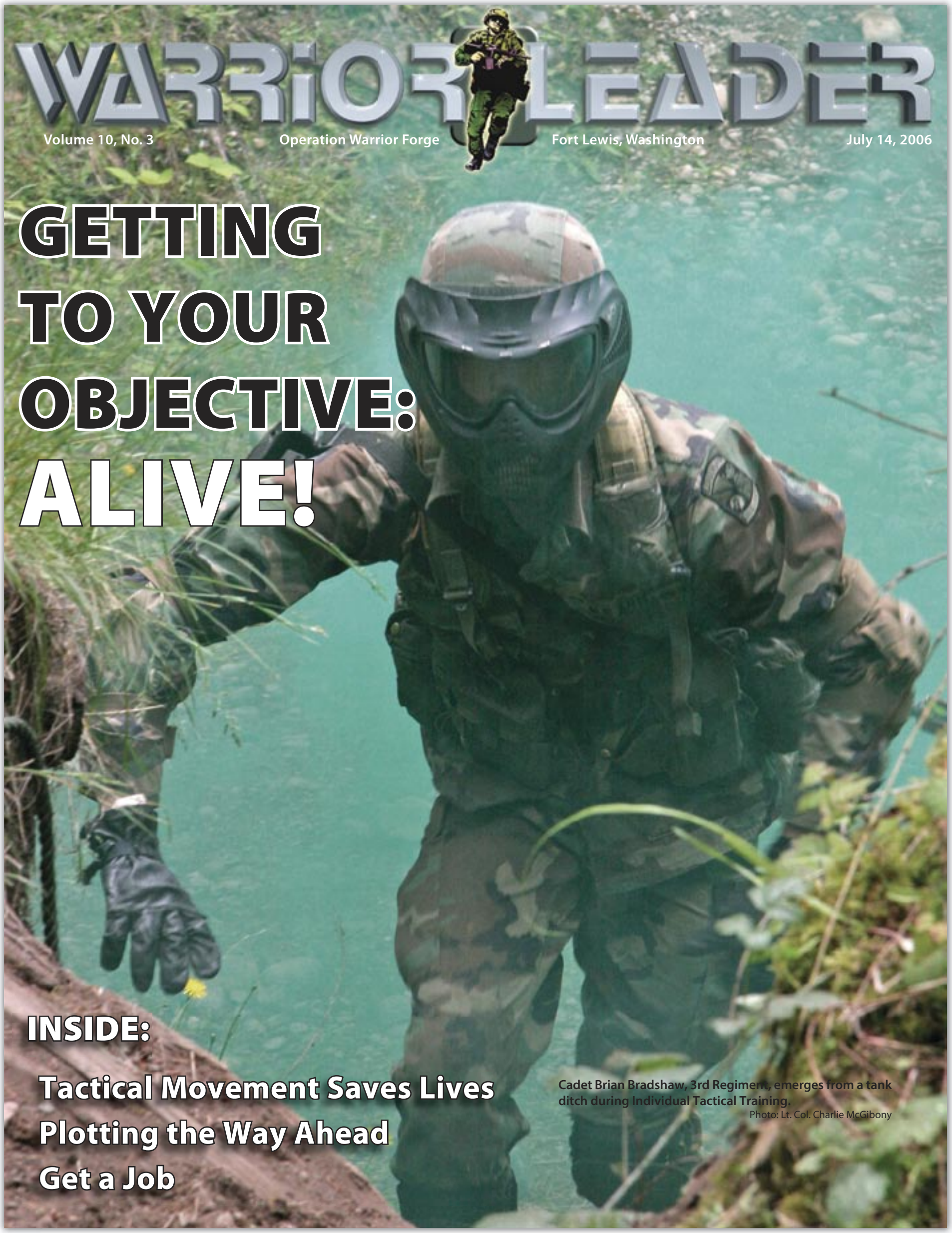
WARRIOR LEADER

Volume 10, No. 3 Operation Warrior Forge Fort Lewis, Washington July 14, 2006

GETTING TO YOUR OBJECTIVE: ALIVE!



Cadet Brian Bradshaw, 3rd Regiment, emerges from a tank ditch during Individual Tactical Training.
Photo: Lt. Col. Charlie McGibony

INSIDE:

Tactical Movement Saves Lives
Plotting the Way Ahead
Get a Job

Taking an oath sets apart a rare, special tradition

By Col. Steven Corbett
Warrior Forge Commander

"I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion…"

One of the greatest joys in my job as the Warrior Forge Commander is administering the Oath of Office to commissionees at the Graduation Ceremonies. This summer, we will commission nearly 175 second lieutenants at Warrior Forge.

Many of these officers are attending LDAC for the second time. They returned home during their first endeavor, due to medical issues, injuries incurred during training, or due to difficulty in completing their training successfully.

Warrior Forge is hard. It needs to be, because as officers we are entrusted with the lives of the sons and daughters of America. There is no shame in leaving one year and coming back the next to become successful. In fact, these cadets/lieutenants have truly lived the Warrior Ethos – they Did Not Quit and they Did Not Accept Defeat. They overcame their challenges and returned to Fort Lewis in order to realize their dream of becoming a commissioned officer.

Corbett

I deeply appreciate the efforts of our families who travel thousands of miles to participate in the commissioning ceremonies at Fort Lewis. I always ask the commissionees in every regiment which family is winning the "farthest distance traveled" award. For the 1st Regiment's commissioning, there were family members from Puerto Rico, New York and even Japan, who traveled here in order to make a lieutenant's "special day" even more special.

Americans take very few oaths in their lives. There are very, very few things we do as Americans in which we publicly "swear to God" that we will fulfill our obligations. Marriage, citizenship, and enlistment into the Armed Forces are some of the very few events which are sealed by swearing, upon our honor, that we will fulfill our duties.

The oath of office taken as a commissioned officer is a special one. It does not make us superior to our Soldiers – it is the ultimate act of *subordination*. We are, in effect swearing to place our Nation, our Mission and our Soldiers above ourselves, at all times. It is my honor – my deep, personal honor – to administer this oath to the young men and women who successfully complete their mission and become a second lieutenant in America's Army.

I love my job.

Warrior Forge reinforcing the most basic Warrior Tasks

By Command Sergeant Major Victor Mercado
Western Region Command Sergeant Major

Our Army is not for leaders who think of field training as a necessary evil they must endure only for the length of an exercise; nor is it for leaders who see themselves merely as "support Soldiers," instead of Warriors with additional specialties.

Cadet Command identifies every cadet as a warfighter first. Warrior Forge leaders are doing an awesome job in ensuring that every cadet is trained to win their piece of the war. Every branch's mission is important, and the Warrior Creed requires that "I will always place the mission first."

For the past three years we have seen increasing emphasis and more numerous resources placed on the basic skills needed for a combat deployment. It is our mission as Warrior Forge trainers to train cadets in the Warrior tasks and drills, and to certify to our higher commanders that every commissioned cadet who is liable to deploy is ready to deploy, ready take charge and ready to save lives as the mission requires. The call to deploy can come at any time, and with very short notice.

Leaders at all levels must take advantage of every opportunity to focus every training event on fundamental Warrior Tasks, and take full advantage of time and facilities that are available. We must prioritize individual training requirements and accomplish what is most important. There is probably insufficient time to train every cadet and every team on every task, so that they are completely proficient in executing the task under all conditions. Warrior Forge top priorities for training includes field craft, mission-essential crew drills, physical fitness, combat lifesaving skills, marksmanship, and most importantly, leader assessment and development.

We must train our cadets to perform all missions in a field environment under all conditions. Leaders must know the key factors of field craft. Leaders must be capable of demonstrating and enforcing those standards, so that our Soldiers will be as effective at the end of the operation as they are at the beginning, no matter what conditions they work under. Field training is tough, rigorous training. Tasks must be executed in field conditions in order to build confidence. If the cadet or team can perform the task on a dark, rainy night, in MOPP 4, then they can probably perform it in combat.

Every team of cadets must master their critical combat drills. Whether your team is an infantry squad or an awards section in a personnel service battalion, every small team should have no more than five or six core tasks that all Soldiers know how to do instinctively and under all conditions.

Every cadet must become physically fit for combat. We must focus on the core physical capabilities that Soldiers must have to perform their mission under all conditions.

Mercado

Every cadet should be a trained combat lifesaver. All cadets must be confident that they can keep their buddies alive using the equipment within the platoon, until higher echelon medics can arrive and evacuation can take place, regardless of how many combat lifesaver bags are in the team, section or platoon. Each cadet needs to be confident that if wounded, she or he will be kept alive by their buddy and that they can keep their buddies alive.

Every cadet must strive to become an expert marksman with their personal weapon. Cadets do not get to spend as much time at ranges, gunneries and on simulators as they would like to improve proficiency, but opportunity training can make all the difference. For instance, by putting a cadet with the weapon on the floor and using a tool as simple as a washer or dime, a sergeant can coach, reinforce and raise the standard of the most basic of marksmanship skills.

The Warrior Forge Team is doing an outstanding job assessing and developing future leaders for the challenges that come with deployment and war. It all comes down to reinforcing the basics: field craft, mission-essential crew drills, physical fitness, combat lifesaving skills and marksmanship.

Cadets, take the time to master these warfighter skills to the best of your abilities.

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Photo: Al Zdarsky

Cadet Christopher Rogness, 1st Regiment, receives his Bar of Gold after graduating from Warrior Forge. Rogness is the first Soldier to receive a commission through the Active Duty Green To Gold Program.

Green To Gold launches its first enlisted Soldier into officer ranks

By Bob Rosenburgh
Warrior Forge Public Affairs

Of the 28 new lieutenants who commissioned when the 1st Regiment graduated on July 5, one stands as a unique example for others to emulate. Second Lt. Christopher Rogness, University of North Dakota, is the first-ever Warrior Forge commissionee from the new Active Duty Green To Gold program. He said that without the program, he doubts he'd have been able to become an officer at all.

The program allows soldiers who already have an associates degree to be paid by the military to go to school full time.

"This program allows Soldiers on active duty to be released from their unit," Rogness explained, "go to the school of their choice, enter into ROTC, complete their degree just as a normal cadet would, and then be commissioned."

Standard Green To Gold programs pay tuition and assist with other school costs, but they require a Soldier to first leave the Army and then enter college as a civilian, paying a monthly stipend based on their college years.

For then-Sergeant Rogness, however, that presented a problem: How to support his wife and two young boys.

"I wouldn't have been able to go through the process if it were just a scholarship option," he said. "Without the income, allowances, and medical plan, I wouldn't have been able to support my family."

The Soldiers who are selected for the Active Duty Option – only 100 were selected in 2005 – are assigned to the Active Student Detachment at Fort Jackson, S.C., but then assigned to duty at the school of their choice. They are paid a normal salary, at whatever rank they have achieved, for up to 24 months while they go back to school.

For Rogness, there was also a certain amount of evolution needed to get the procedures lined up right with the new policy for Active Duty Green To Gold, such has being placed into his enlisted branch prior to commissioning.

"The accessions process was sped up a little, in this case," Rogness said.

Once commissioned, he needed to be scheduled for the appropriate follow-on training, such as the Basic Officer Leadership Course II and Officer Basic Course. Rogness, who was an enlisted Signals Intelligence Analyst, branched Military Intelligence. He was already trained in a second language at the Defense Language Institute.

Rogness said he takes pride in being a pioneer of sorts as the first Warrior Forge commissionee of the new program.

"I feel sort of unique," he said, "especially at the school, because I was the only cadet there in my situation." He said he wasn't even aware of the program until he was reviewing information about Green To Gold and found the Active Duty option listed. "It really worked out well."

Photo: Al Zdarsky

Warrior Forge hones tactical training package

Photo: Al Zdarsky

By Sgt. Major Shawn Goins
Tactics Sgt. Major

The tactical committee is an integral part of Warrior Forge and encompasses the three committees that instruct cadets about tactics: Individual Tactical Training Committee, Squad Situational Training Exercise (STX) Committee and the Patrolling STX Committee. Each committee creates a foundation for the next so that cadets build upon the tactics, techniques and procedures learned from one sub-committee to the next.

On Day 11 and Day 13 of the Regimental Training Cycle, the cadets are taught and trained at ITT, learning at the individual level how to operate tactically. Those skills are put to the test on Day 17 when the cadets begin Squad STX, and continue to grow and improve until Day 21, at which time the regiment transitions from the Squad STX lanes to Patrolling STX which ends on Day 26.

Individual Tactical Training

The ITT Committee provides cadets refresher training in basic leader planning – and training to perform as members of a fire team, as fire team leaders, as squad leaders, and to clear a room and knock out a bunker using individual movement techniques while crossing over, through and around obstacles. Platoons rotate through training stations, spending about 60 minutes at each station, allowing 10 minutes for movement to the next station. The assault course stations are completed in succession, culminating with the 300-meter 1st Lt. Nainoa Hoe Assault Course.

Following an initial orientation, safety briefing and demonstration, training occurs at six stations as follows:

Station One: Link Up Operations
Station Two: Actions on the objective: key tasks, special teams, SALUTE and ACE reports, consolidation and reorganization, processing enemy prisoners of war
Station Three: Squad orders process: Troop Leading Procedures using the TACSOP, Warning Order and Squad Order
Station Four: Individual movement techniques and knock out a bunker
Station Five: Fire team: fire and maneuver over a 100-meter assault course, clear a room
Station Six: Fire team: maneuver over the 300-

Photo: Sgt. Joe Siemandel

Photo: 2nd Lt. Jeremy Gumeringer

meter 1st Lt. Nainoa Hoe Assault Course, clear a room at objective

Squad STX

Squad STX is comprised of a plethora of activities. The committee itself has three distinct teams. Team Wolverine and Team Grizzly have "lane walkers," who walk the lanes while cadet squads traverse obstacles, evaluating cadet potential. Team Night Hawk, which is new to Squad STX this year, has the cadets for a full day prior to them being evaluated on any lane. During this time cadets are instructed on how to occupy a patrol base and on the activities that must take place inside a patrol base once it has been established. This is what is known as priorities of work. Team Night Hawk stays out with the cadets each night through day four continuing to build on the previous nights' training, also adding more priorities of work each night. The skills that Team Night Hawk teaches the cadets over those four nights are extremely helpful to the cadets when they transition from Squad STX to Patrolling.

Squad STX is the first time cadets are fully immersed in a high-stress, tactical environment. There is minimal classroom instruction, and they are required to walk several hours each day while carrying rucksacks and are constantly under the tactical evaluator's microscope. They experience conditions unlike any most cadets have encountered – bad weather, mosquitoes, swamps, and thick, wooded terrain. The cadet leaves this environment knowing more about who he or she is and how to cope with the stressors of battle.

The cadets go through a transition phase through which they learn their role as a leader and what leadership style they will develop to influence their team or squad to accomplish the assigned tasks and mission. They learn how to develop individuals and build teams – while being evaluated in tactical scenarios based on real world situations. Cadets learn how to take constructive criticism and apply it to follow-on missions. Squad STX facilitates the overall professional development of the cadet and enables them to return to their respective programs and share their experience with new MS-III cadets.

Patrolling STX

At Patrolling STX, the cadets are tested on all of the skills learned from the previous two sub-committees; they are also taught additional tactical skills necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of each and every cadet – excelling in a leadership position.

Patrolling is a simulation of real combat scenarios – it is the culminating event at Warrior Forge.

Before Patrolling STX, the cadets had only operated as a squad; now they operate as a member of a section. Patrolling is the culminating event for the cadets because here they get to show both their individual skills learned at ITT and their squad skills learned at Squad STX. At Patrolling the cadets learn the last part of tactics, which is how to operate in a much larger group when they are placed into two sections and execute tactical missions along with real-world type, variable missions. Patrolling places a tremendous amount of pressure and an enormous amount of stress on the cadets in order to evaluate their readiness to successfully lead Soldiers. Cadets are pushed to their limits physically, mentally and emotionally while operating at the section level. Patrolling gives the Warrior Forge cadet an opportunity to show their leadership potential while learning what it takes to become an Army officer.

Upon completion of Patrolling the cadets leave from this committee with a sense of accomplishment and pride. They also leave with the confidence to go back to their respective institutions of higher learning across America, knowing that they are one step closer to attaining their goal of being commissioned as a second lieutenant. This grants them the privilege to lead America's most precious commodity: the men and women who make up the United States Army.

Photo: Al Zdarsky

Kimberly and Megan Neu, or is it Megan and Kimberly ... share several common interests. Being cadets from Ohio State both attending Warrior Forge are just the beginning.

Sisters blaze twin trail through Warrior Forge

By Sgt. Joseph Siemandel
Warrior Forge Public Affairs

For some, the Army is rich with family tradition. Uncles and cousins, brothers and sisters, fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers … If you look hard enough you will probably find that someone you are related to served.

Two siblings from 5th Regiment are doing something more than following in a family members' footsteps – they're blazing separate trails together.

The Neu sisters, Kimberly and Megan, both attend the same college – Ohio State University – and both are part of the ROTC program there. And that's not were the similarities end.

Kimberly, who is in Alpha Company, 2nd Platoon, is the older of the two, at 22. She and her sister Megan, 21, Alpha Company, 3rd Platoon, are a lot alike. Aside from being in the same Company, both sisters have the goal of commissioning as second lieutenants in the Army, and into the same branch, the Medical Service Corps.

Both sisters are members of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority at Ohio State and they're both majoring in Health Sciences, specializing in Geriatrics and Gerontology.

"Mom never wanted to go to two different events, so I was always moved up one age group." Meghan says. "Plus for us, having competition with a sister pushed us even more to be better at what we do."

The two girls brought their competitiveness to Warrior Forge. And having other family members in the Army is a reason they both wanted to join.

Megan, the younger sister, will graduate in March 2008. She originally wanted to enlist in the Army National Guard before joining ROTC, but her father dissuaded her fearing she would get deployed.

Kimberly, who will graduate in June 2007, broke her foot and was unable to participate in Warrior Forge last summer.

"Everywhere I go in this country, I'm struck by the depth of gratitude and admiration that the American people have for those of you who serve the nation. We don't take freedom for granted, because we know that it came at a price. Many generations have served and sacrificed for our country, and we know the current generation of our military is upholding noble traditions with incredible bravery."

Vice President Dick Cheney,
visitingthe Navy in Norfolk, Virginia
July 7, 2006

Get a Army Job ...

Branch Orientation helps cadets set their sights on an Army career

By Sgt. Joseph Siemandel
Warrior Forge Public Affairs

Engineers, artillery specialists, tankers, infantry officers, and even medics all have, at some point in their careers, looked at the other branches to see if the grass was greener on the other side. Branch Orientation gives cadets a chance to venture through all the different Branches and talk with different representatives from each one, giving them a clearer big picture of the landscape they soon each hope to walk.

In the civilian world, Branch Orientations would look a lot like a job fair, in that these cadets are learning about – and will eventually apply for – a spot in one of the branches they choose from. Fitting a person into the right spots and having them perform well is crucial to the success of the Army. These cadets will gain information on the branch of their choice and whether or not they feel they want to branch something different.

Branch orientation gives cadets a chance to figure out just what they want to do with their military careers.

"It's actually really cool the way that this is all set up," said Cadet David Celski, 2nd Regiment, Central Washington University, participated in one of the three Branch Orientation days scheduled into Warrior Forge.

At the end of the day, Celski was still unable to decide which Branch to select, but now has better facts with which to work.

"I just hope that the cadets get a good sense of what is out there and not to decide too quickly on a job," said 1st Lt. Thomas Philips, Virginia Army National Guard, one of many cadre members providing information during Branch Orientation. "This is a great opportunity for these young men and women to learn firsthand about what is out there and available to them."

2nd Louie By Bob Rosenburgh

LOST: (More than just a popular TV show)

Photo: 2nd Lt. Joy Crowder

Finding Your Way Without a GPS

You can't spell ***lost*** *without* ***LT****.*

Hopefully these are not the words you hear when you get to your first unit. One of the many necessary skills possessed by a successful leader is to know where you are and where you are headed. This is one of the many challenges cadets face at Warrior Forge 2006 during Land Navigation.

The Army operates on the ground. That's a simple notion until you try navigating terrain.

"Land Navigation is a basic trait of confidence to be able to complete the mission or the task at hand," said Cadet Nathaniel Sapp, a 7th Regiment cadet form West Virginia University. "It is the basic root of leading from the front."

Land Navigation consists of two days and one night out in the field environment. Cadets receive class instruction on how to hold a compass, read a compass, use a map and protractor, verify their pace count on terrain and road, use attack points, how to convert a grid azimuth to a magnetic azimuth and vice-versa, and familiarize themselves with a terrain model of the course.

Each regiment starts off by setting up a patrol base near the Land Navigation site. This allows cadets to become accustomed to the various wonders Washington State has to offer such as: ants, numerous types of shrubbery, and of course mosquitoes, before heading out on the course. Cadets receive six 20-minute classes on proper navigation techniques to help them complete the course. This is a chance for cadets to refresh their orienteering skills and hopefully learn some new ones.

Once cadets have received a pencil, map, strip of paper with their grid coordinates, and plastic bag, they're given fifteen minutes in which to plot and verify all their points on their map. The cadets first must complete is the Night Land Navigation course. Cadets have three hours and thirty minutes to find at least three out of five points. While on the course, cadets must be wary of obstacles on the ground such as downed trees and ant hills – in the dark.

If a cadet fails to return any issued piece of equipment they will be rewarded with a negative spot report. This is a change from last year where cadets would automatically be failed for losing materials.

After completing the Night Land Navigation course cadets prepare for some much needed rest in their new woodland homes for the next day.

Day 2 of Land Navigation kicks off with a hearty breakfast before hitting the course. Cadets are quickly briefed on the Day Land Navigation course, emphasizing new boundaries. Before heading out on the course cadets must once again draw the same materials: pencil, map, strip of paper with grid coordinates, and plastic bag. Once the course begins cadets are given five hours to navigate their way around to find check points. In order to be considered a "go" for Day Land Navigation, cadets must find at least five out of eight points.

Photo: Al Zdarsky

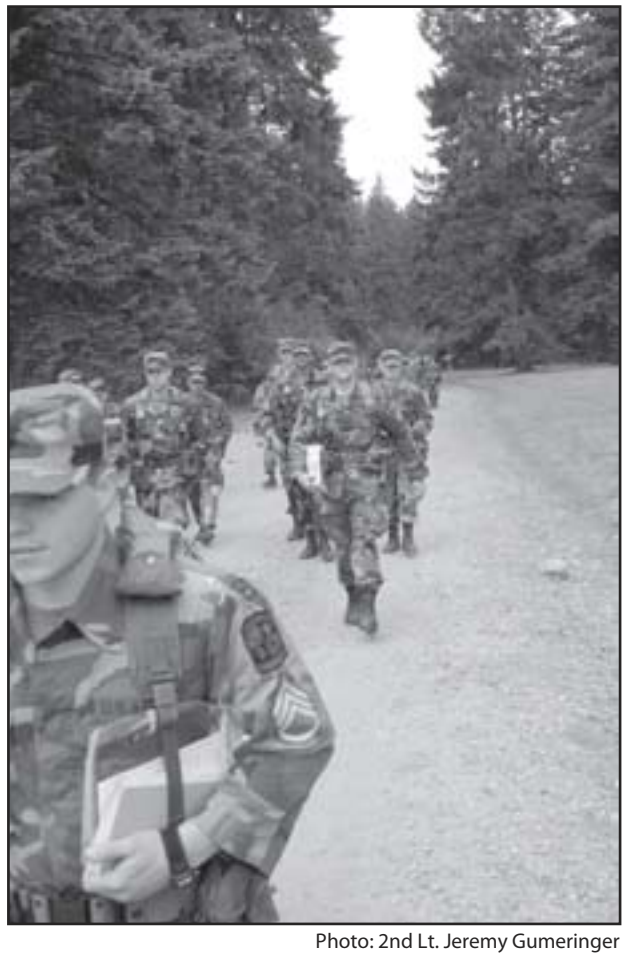

Photo: 2nd Lt. Jeremy Gumeringer

Photo: Al Zdarsky

Photo: Jeremy O'Bryan

Cadet Ross Lockwood, 3rd Regiment, from Norwich University, marches among a sea of his fellow cadets as they return from Patrolling STX. The last several hundred yards into the cadet cantonment area is known as the Victory March, and hundreds of supporters line the street to welcome the Regiment back from the field.