

Fellow Alumni and Friends of Army ROTC,

On behalf of the NMSU Army ROTC Recognition Dinner Organizing Committee, I want to take a moment to thank all of those who, by attending and/or donating, made the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Army ROTC Alumni Recognition Dinner a terrific success. The Cadets and MS Department staff also pass on their sincere appreciation for a memorable evening. From the moment the United Military Women of the Southwest Honor Guard posted the colors to our farewell to Honor Company member LTC (R) Francis Conway, who passed in April 2011, ninety-six of us shared an evening of remembrance, joy, honor and fellowship that epitomized what it is to be part of the NMSU Army ROTC family.

For those who could not attend, I hope this letter helps convey the spirit of that evening. To those in attendance, may this serve to keep the memories fresh and lasting longer.

Before I go on, let me take care of something I left out at the end of the evening. During the dinner, I felt like the preverbal duck, paddling vigorously under the water, while trying to look composed. As a result, I did overlook saying thanks. Soñ .

This is not a one person operation. My thanks to Kirk McCarter, my sounding board, logic checker and chair of the Honor Company nomination committee; Floyd Adams, chief medallion scribe; LTC Andrew Taylor and the MS Department staff for not locking the door when they see me coming and their ðan doqattitude; the Cadet support team headed by OIC Cadet Mallery and NCOIC Cadet Lesieur, including the Cadet photographers and the detail cadets; to Eva Hernandez and Jacquie Porter of Alumni Relations, who tracked reservations and the money; Cosette Atherton, Conference Services and the NMSU Golf Club for a wonderful facility, and last, but definitely not least, to Elaine Sasnow and the staff at Dickerson's Catering for a great meal. Well done to all. (I feel better now.)

Be sure to mark Feb 8 and 9, 2013 on your calendar. These are the dates of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual NMSU Army ROTC Recognition Dinner/Weekend. The Army ROTC Alumni Chapter has three objectives for the weekend. First, to celebrate 110 years of Army ROTC at NMSU. Second, to honor the Cadets of the Class of 2013. Third, to recognize those whose financial support over the last 20 years has meant so much to the Corps of Cadets.

The Recognition Weekend activities will kick-off with a Beans, Brats and Beer+(Battling Bastards of Bataan) social for alumni and donors on Friday evening, 8 February, 2013. Saturday will be alumni reunion events. An opportunity for alumni to catch-up with classmates, revisit the campus and see the local sites prior to the Recognition Dinner on Saturday evening February 9, 2013.

The Recognition Dinner will begin with a tribute to the early years of the ROTC program. The Alumni Chapter will honor selected Army ROTC alumni from the classes of 1903 thru 1950. This will be followed by a presentation from the Cadets of the Class of 2013. As we are taken on their journey from freshman Cadets to graduating seniors, we will gain an appreciation for the challenges and training faced by the Cadets of today.

After the Class of 2013's presentation, the Professor of Military Science and the Alumni Chapter will recognize each member of the Class of 2013. We will wish them the best as they begin their life's work and welcome each as a life-long member of the NMSU Army ROTC family.

The final event of the evening is a salute to the hundreds of alumni and friends of NMSU Army ROTC whose support is responsible for the significant growth in the financial resources available to the Corps of Cadets. Be it scholarships, training equipment, furnishings for the dorm or the ATV, their financial support has and will continue to be crucial to maintaining a quality educational experience for the Corps of Cadets.

This will be a special celebration of the NMSU Army ROTC program and worthy of your support and attendance. What alumni and friends have done for the Corps is extremely important and is making a difference. Looking forward to seeing you, February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Remember Bataan, Always+

Gary R. Cataldo 70

## Program Summary - NMSU AROTC Recognition Dinner - February 11, 2012

The evening began with the posting of the colors by the United Military Women of the Southwest Honor Guard



LTC (R) Gary Cataldo and Capt.(R) Carol Gaines, USMC, President, United Military Women of the Southwest introducing the Honor Guard Flag Detail: (l-r) Kay Alley, USAF; Rita Duncan, USAF, CPO (R) Karen Woods, USN; Fela Ware, USA/NG. Harriet Pinnock, WAC

After the Honor Guard was dismissed, four WWII veterans and their Cadet escorts were called forward. The lady veterans were presented flowers. The gentlemen were surprised when the veterans were asked to stand, the escorts for the gentlemen posted in front and upon the command, PRESENT. They were given a warm embrace by their young lady escorts. I failed to ask if there were any other WWII veterans in the audience. One WWII veteran, Col (R) Jack Ancker, pointed out that while he forgave my oversight, he is owed one hug, payable at the 2013 Recognition Dinner.



Cadet escorts (l-r) Cadet Joan Ferguson, Cadet Joshua Johnson, Cadet Sharrod Quillin, Cadet Polly Raley

Veterans (l-r) Mr. Richard Anderson, USA; Ms. Harriet Pinnock, WAC; Ms. Betty Somppi, WAAC; Mr. Jim Somppi, AAC/USAF

After dinner, LTC Taylor took the floor and each of the May and December commissioning Cadets described their most vivid memory of AROTC. Their remembrances ranged from summer camp, completing Air Assault School, serving as a platoon leader with an active duty unit, preparation for the Ranger Challenge competition and earning New Zealand jump wings. The Cadet experience I most related to had to do with a long run and losing one's lunch. Been there, done that.

The induction of the Honor Company Candidates imparted a unique mix of wisdom, insight, humor and humility to all present, especially Cadets.

BG Fox (R) attributed much of his success to the enlisted soldiers he lead. He then recognized Specialist Ben Manatt, son of James Manatt and a veteran of Afghanistan, as such a soldier.

Mr. Kunkel's observation that when the Regimental Commander offers you command of a Headquarters Troop, it is not really a request and certainly not career enhancing to express a preference for a line troop.

Mr. Ben Woods, LTC (R), USAF, expressed humility and with a sincere thank you reserved his remarks for his guest speaker presentation.

Mr. James Quirk, representing his brother, CSM John F. Quirk, made the simple, yet eloquent observation, "My brother's patience as a teacher is what defined him as a leader."

### Recognition Cadets and Honor Company - Class of 2012



#### Recognition Cadets

(L-r back) Barry Chavez, Justin Cross, Raymond Lazos, Wesley Mallery, Matthew Breyer, Luis Delgado, Michael Archuleta, Misael Rios

(L-r front) Jeremy Armijo, Kevin Macklin, Sharrod Quillin, Joan Ferguson, Amy Walton, Anthony Barcena, Kristopher Mills, Joshua Johnson

#### Honor Company . Class 2012

(L-r)

Distinguished Alumni BG (R) Jack R. Fox, Mr. Oscar BudqKunkel,

Distinguished Friend of the Corps LTC (R) Benjamin Woods, USAF

Major. John E. SargeqCragin Cadre Award CPO (R). James Quirk, USNR



Following the completion of the Honor Company inductions, I introduced our guest speaker, Mr. Benjamin Woods, LTC (R), USAF. Over the years our speakers have focused on leaving a thought or idea with the graduating Cadets. Mr. Woods accomplished that goal with a force and poignancy that I, for one, will not forget.

In words and pictures, in a quiet, measured tone, Ben introduced us to the personal stories of ten Aggies, killed in action during WWII. Ten young men of varied backgrounds, from homes in rural areas to large cities, serving in various components of the armed forces; all facing enemies in battles large and small, each falling well before their time; having in common one undeniable fact, it was their sacrifice which insured the survival of our way of life and secured the future for generations to come.

Having a few minutes before given flowers and hugs to the peers of those lost made their stories and the moment all the more profound. We are truly lucky that such men and women lived.

The evening concluded with a moment to recognize veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq and to bid farewell to Honor Company member LTC (R) Francis Conway, USA.

#### Afghanistan and Iraq veterans



(L-r) Major Lance Blount ; Major David Dykema,  
Cadet Wesley Mallery, SPC Benjamin Manatt

By my rather limited count, 77 graduates have served 17 tours in Afghanistan and 100 in Iraq, and I am sure this number is an undercount. Since 2001, young men and women have accepted the challenge and responsibility that comes with service as a cadet and an officer on active duty. They did so knowing full well what lay in store for them, but still, they answered the call. Their performance in a long and grueling struggle, a struggle that continues in Afghanistan as we speak, is proof the legacy of the Corps of Cadets and the U.S. Army is in good hands. To you and all those you represent, our deepest respect and thanks. May God watch over you and yours.



(l-r), LTC (R) Gary R. Cataldo,  
Mrs. Christine Conway

In April 2011, the Honor Company lost its third member, LTC Francis (Frank) Conway. LTC Conway was inducted into the Honor Company in 2008 as a Distinguished Friend of the Corps. Through the Reserve Officer Association and the Recognition Dinner, LTC Conway's support was unwavering. His passing came home to me as I was completing the seating chart. Over the years I was constantly reminded by Frank's friends that he suffered from an acute loss of hearing. Now Gary, make sure he is up front; Have you got him close? You know, he needs to be close to the front. Can we get him closer? As a result Frank and Christine usually had a front row seat. I will miss looking up and seeing Frank. He was a gentleman; He will be missed.

Farewell, travel safe and I hope to see you next year.