Another Fall Semester comes to an end with finals week less than a week away and winter break following directly after. Although cliché, the semester has certainly seemed to fly by fast. When I first started out as the Battalion Commander of the “All For One” Battalion, I was confident of our leadership’s abilities and hopeful of the opportunities and training that was ahead of us. Looking back, I feel that the Battalion leadership has accomplished the mission and intent that was given to them in August: to train and prepare Xavier Army ROTC Cadets for LDAC, and prepare them to be future officers in the United States Army.

While it is certain that we all still have much developing to do while on our way to becoming officers, I feel that everyone has learned a lot and has made great steps towards commissioning as an officer. As an officer you must always continue to learn and develop your skills, and in a sense you are always striving to increase your goals, so your training never officially ends. Our Battalion has gone through extensive training and classes on leadership and basic soldiering skills, and everyone is eager to learn and continue developing. The Cadets of Xavier Army ROTC are well on track to becoming officers.

We have all put forth numerous hours of training, waking up early for Physical Training (PT), Labs, and classes. We have all had to juggle our academics, ROTC, and our personal lives. Despite the rough commitment and dedication that it takes to be an ROTC Cadet, I feel that all of our Cadets have performed exceptionally well, and the new Cadets in the Battalion have done a fantastic job adjusting to the life of a Cadet. I cannot say it has been easy, but I can say it has all been worth it. When I talk to the Cadets in the Battalion and watch them during training, I can see that they are developing into strong leaders that will soon be leading our nation. As this semester comes to a close, I hope that everyone has learned a lot and can look back on our experiences with pride.
close, Spring Semester will follow right behind it, and I have all the confidence in the world that the Cadets in this Battalion will continue to improve and develop their leadership skills, and that when we arrive at Camp Atterbury next spring for our Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX), I am convinced that our Cadets will be ready to perform at the highest levels.

c/LTC James E. Boyd
Battalion Commander
“All For One” Battalion
Xavier University Army ROTC
Another 16 weeks has flashed by and the All For One Battalion has once again surpassed my highest expectations. It seems like just last week the Freshman were drawing their new equipment and figuring out how to lace up their boots, now they are seasoned Cadet veterans with FTXs, labs, swim training and a Dining In under the belts. Good thing we do not believe in leaving white space on the calendar here in All For One land.

Congratulations and a good job pat on the back to this semester’s chain of command. CDT Boyd did a good job in leading the battalion through our paces. He certainly had ample help from his XO and S3, CDTs Harper and Oxendine as well as the company commanders CDTs Hague, Martin and Quinn. Along with the staff and the MSIII key leaders things went fairly smoothly despite my attempts to inject as much chaos as possible. Next semester’s leadership has big shoes to fill for sure.

More than a few high points this semester to mention. We must give a collective well done to the Cadets for performing superbly on their Fall Army Physical Fitness Test. Across the board our scores are up and higher than ever. The MSIII class has thrown down a strong performance with 6 Cadets scoring above 300 points, way to go CDTs Durian, Leugers, Osborn, Thorne, Weigel and Zidar. The MSIIIs are not far behind and our Freshmen have all succeeded as well.

Albeit a tad bit chilly for the MSIIIs sleeping out in the woods, but overall it was a beautiful weekend. The Cadets rappelled, qualified with rifles, ran through obstacles and found their way through the woods in day and night. Many achieved personal triumphs over fears. Congrats to CDT Louis for making off the rappel tower. I do not think I have ever seen a Cadet shake as much as he did as he went over the side, but he did it and conquered the tower. Also way to go for CDT Zekan, who on her 4th try made it up and over the 30 foot high Jacobs Ladder obstacle. I did not think she would ever let go of her death grip on that log but she did. Many more examples of fear conquering and personal accomplishment sprung from the 4 days at Camp Atterbury and I know the Cadets cannot wait to go back in the Spring.

As I write this last fall newsletter Commander’s column I cannot help but reflect back on my 3 years here so far and know how lucky I am to be serving as Muskie 6. Cindy and I wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season and encourage everyone to take some time to enjoy your family and friends.

All For One!
Ranger Challenge 2011
By Cadet Michael Nelson

As the dog days of summer approached, the Ranger Challenge team was hard at work back at Xavier, arriving a week before school started to train and prepare for the long and enduring challenge they were to face. The year started off with a lot of excitement and anticipation with the arrival of the All for One Battalion’s newest Cadre and Ranger Challenge coach, Captain Barham. This year the team would be made up of Seniors: Charlie Eiser (Captain), Jordan Marks, and David Harper, Juniors: Alexis Thorne, Conrad Leugers, Elijah Durian, Bobby Weigel, Kyle Osborn, and Nick Sagorsky, and finally Sophomores Keith Topper and Michael Nelson.

Choosing to participate on the Ranger Challenge team is not a decision to be taken lightly, given the fact that the team does a Ranger workout or WOD, (workout of the day), before going to battalion PT. They also trained every Tuesday and Thursday in exercises ranging from ruck running, to one rope bridge, to land navigation. As the day of the competition came closer, anticipation grew, almost as much as Elijah Durian’s biceps due to the rigorous cross-fit workouts implemented by Captain Barham.

It was a clear, crisp, sunny day when the Rangers awoke to meet their destiny on Oct 14, 2011, the day set for the competition. They knew that it wasn’t going to be easy, but they were ready for anything coming their way. What they didn’t know was how long the challenge would be. It was said to range anywhere from ten to sixteen miles and they would have to “hump” all of it with a 35 pound ruck sack on their back. The “D4 outlaws,” led by David Harper, made up Alpha team in the nine person squad, followed by the “44 Bulldogs” of Bravo team led by Jordan Marks. Their task was simple, complete all missions and recon the enemy. As they rucked up and moved out their legs were fresh, and the team seemed to be moving well. Upon completing the one rope bridge, their second mission, the team noticed that they had caught up to another team, Middle Tennessee State. Upon passing the team the Xavier Rangers realized that all nine members of the MTSU team were Cadet Nelson’s long lost cousins. After passing the team, the Rangers began rucking up a big hill when out of nowhere an American soldier ran out in the street in front of them. Then, from wherever in the bushes about two hundred meters in front of them, they heard gunfire and watched as the soldier was shot. They knew that this was the work of none other than the KIM forces, the insurgents that the Rangers were supposed to recon. As the approached the wounded soldier Conrad Leugers, A.K.A “Savage beast,” yelled, “Just lemme’ at em! You don’t mess with a Cali boy!” After calming Cadet Leugers down the Rangers realized that the wounded soldier needed immediate medical attention, and immediately David Harper lifted the soldier up and carried him the remaining two and a half miles to the next checkpoint.

After a quick rest the Rangers were continuing and rolling through mission after mission when they came upon their greatest challenge yet, the trail of tears. Lying in front of them were two 5-gallon water jugs, a box of ammo, and two separate ammo crates that they would have to carry for the next two miles. With sweat dripping from their brows they trudged onward remembering the sweat, blood, and time they put into training for this moment. As they arrived at the next checkpoint they set the equipment down and moved on, only to find another challenge, to push a broken down Humvee up a hill, but once again no challenge was too great for them, and they completed it successfully. By this time the bold warriors were starting to cramp and the sun was getting lower in the sky. After a couple more missions they reached the home stretch, three miles of Georgia red clay separated them and the finish line where bananas, Gatorade, and the famed brownies of Captain Barham’s wife awaited them.

I remember rucking this last stretch wondering if I would make it to the end. We had already gone ten plus miles and I wasn’t sure how much longer I could go, when out of nowhere a C-130 flew overhead and I was almost positive I saw the outline of Nick Sagorsky about to jump from the plane. With this newfound motivation, the Rangers ran to the finish on pure adrenaline and heart, and as they crossed it and looked at each other utterly exhausted, the unspoken words that were heard through each other’s eyes were well worth it.
As a freshman MSI cadet, the dining-in event seemed like a distant concern in the beginning of the semester. However, before we knew it, the night had arrived. After hours upon hours of fretting about our handsome green uniforms, we finally found ourselves at the elegant Student Union ballroom at Northern Kentucky University. The event began with a social hour to enjoy the company of our fellow cadets and Cadre, as well as take a picture with our class.

As the dinner began, the advice from many upperclassmen to, “do nothing before anyone else does,” resonated in my mind. The mess opened with the posting of the colors and the singing of the National Anthem. An introduction and then several toasts, all made by cadets, followed. Then, the dreaded grog ceremony began.

Each class added their own grog ingredient to represent their class. Among these were Dr. Pepper, Alphabet Soup, a lovely-looking brown stew left over from last year’s grog, and Salsa Verde were added – very appropriately, in a toilet bowl in the middle of the room. The concoction was then tested by a lucky MSI cadet, and CDT Cooper lived up to his nickname after sampling it. Seeing this, every cadet sat up a little straighter.

Dinner began and throughout, cadets called each other out to drink from the grog for various violations of the mess (such as uniform violations or improper etiquette) or other questionable actions throughout the semester. Dinner was delicious, but the grog’s presence gave an uneasy aura in the ballroom – all in good fun.

The evening wrapped up with each class’ video skit. Each one was a treat to see and all were greatly entertaining.

Overall, the night was extremely enjoyable and wonderfully organized. It was an excellent end to the semester and a proud reminder of the extraordinary battalion of which we are all a part.

Every semester Xavier University's ROTC program holds a blood drive in honor of those serving in the military. This semester's blood drive was held on Tuesday, November 8, 2011 with the Armed Services Blood Program in the armory. A single donation to the ASBP can save up to three lives of the sick or injured troops and their families. Military members and their families depend on the donated blood products daily. Each donation could be utilized for a multitude of reasons such as a service member injured in action, a sick child, or a family member in need of surgery. The Armed Services Blood Program's mission is to provide quality blood products and services for all worldwide service members and their families in peace time and war. Their vision is to be a premium quality, cost effective blood system that provides blood products and services wherever and whenever they're needed.

The ASBP needs you, even if you are deferred from donating. The Veteran's Day Blood Drive had a great turnout. Over one hundred people came to the armory to donate and together we collected almost fifty pints of blood to donate to military services worldwide. Everyone from ROTC members, fellow Xavier students, and faculty came together. It is important to continue to encourage others to donate. The ASBP provides a direct connection to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and their military family members. Helping to spread the word ensures that all military community members have blood available to them anywhere they need and at anytime.

If you would like to get involved or donate, but were not able to during the Veteran's Day Blood Drive you can make an appointment to donate at one of the ASBP's blood donor centers, or organize your own blood drive with the Armed Services Blood Program. A blood drive can be scheduled for offices, neighborhoods, schools, church organizations or any other group. This can be done by contacting an ASBP blood donor center near your area. A complete list of blood donor centers can be found on the ASBP’s website – www.militaryblood.dod.mil.
For the first time, Xavier University decided to compete in the 10th annual Norwegian Road March. The Norwegian Road March is a re-enactment of a Norwegian boot camp tradition of an 18.6 mile race over trails that cover a variety of terrain, while dressed in military camouflage uniforms and carrying a minimum 25-pound rucksack. The Road March is offered by the University of Southern Indiana and its Division Advisor Dr. Nils Johansen, a retired Norwegian Artillery Officer, as a test for cadets, active service members and civilians. The purpose of the Road March is to demonstrate good faith and camaraderie. Cadets and soldiers who complete the road march in an allotted amount of time will be awarded a certificate and a bronze badge for finishing.

Fourteen Xavier cadets volunteered for this grueling 18.6 mile race; some of them carrying as much as 40-pound rucksacks. Because the race was scheduled for an 8 A.M. start, the cadets and cadre involved left the Xavier Campus at 1 A.M. to make the 5-hour drive on Saturday October 30th to Evansville, IN. Once they arrived, the cadets began their preparations with one goal in mind – to demonstrate the competitive drive that has made the Xavier “All for One” Battalion successful.

The race promptly started at 8:05 A.M with over 250 participants from all across the Midwest. While the race for many of the other participants took as long as four and half hours and shook their mental fortitude, all fourteen Xavier cadets successfully accomplished their goal for completing the grueling road march. But just completing the road march was not the overall goal for the Xavier cadets. Many distinguished themselves among some of the finest in the history of the race. MSIII Cadet Elijah Durian took home 1st overall with a record time of 2:54, shattering the record by more than twenty minutes. MSIV Cadet David Harper was a close 2nd place in 2:55, also wiping out the old course record. Xavier won the overall team award as the four-man team of MSIII Cadets Ryan Jefferds and Conrad Leugers and MSII Cadets Michael Nelson and Keith Topper broke the team record by more than twenty seven minutes.

Though the records, awards and accolades are important and made it worthwhile for the cadets attending, the true rewards for the Road March was the test of mental and physical prowess of those competing. It tested the resolve of each of the team members to see a mission through to its end. The maximum effort the individuals exerted could be seen as some collapsed meters after the finish line and by the blisters and sores that others sustained. Those successfully finishing the challenge were MSIII Cadets Ronald Grethel, Mike Hills, Ryan Jefferds, Conrad Leugers and Alexis Thorne MSII Cadets Andrew CIFuentes, Michael Nelson, Matthew Scharf and Keith Topper and Cadre Members Capt. Barham and Capt. Lunsford. At first all fourteen cadets probably asked themselves why they volunteered but shortly after returning home and recuperating from that grueling test many started making plans not only to attend again next year, but to try and break the records that their fellow cadets had set.
One weekend each semester the Xavier ROTC program sends its cadets to Camp Atterbury for field training exercises (FTX). The training is tough and cadets are pushed to their limits. At the end of training each cadet should come back with a sense of satisfaction for accomplishing new tasks and overcoming specific weaknesses or fears.

This four day retreat in the woods provides a set of unique opportunities for each MS class. FTX is the first occasion the MSI class has to receive standardized Army field training. It is the first look MSI cadets have at the interesting aspects and exercises involved in Army field training, such as, rappelling, the M16 range, and obstacle courses. For the MSIs this should be a fun and exciting training weekend in which they get a good glance into what is required of them for the rest of their cadet career.

The MSII class, having attended fall and spring FTX their freshman year know exactly what to expect. FTX is their opportunity to receive some leadership responsibilities during paintball missions and garrison operations. MSIs have an opportunity to teach and instruct their fellow MSIs on the methods and techniques used for training exercises. They can also instruct the MSIs on what expectations they will have to meet. MSIs also have a chance to apply the skills and training they receive on campus to a real world application in training exercises at FTX. Practice in the four fundamentals in shooting during labs on campus can be applied to live shooting conducted on the M16 range at Camp Atterbury. The rappelling range requires cadets to rappel from a 40 foot structure using knots they tie themselves. This is good practice and experience for cadets that are given the opportunity to attend schools in the summer, such as, air-assault school and northern warfare school. Both will require cadets to be proficient in tying knots and rappelling.

Unfortunately, for MSIIIs, FTX is no longer a period of familiarization with tasks and exercises, but is a four day evaluation. Each MSIII will be evaluated on tasks throughout the weekend. Cadets will be assessed using a three-prong system in which they will exceed expectations (E), conduct satisfactory work (S), or fail to meet the standard (N). MSIIIs use knowledge learned throughout their time in ROTC to conduct all types of training. On day one cadets are asked to perform garrison duties and Field Leaders Reaction Course (FLRC) lanes. Garrison duties involve the responsibilities of preparing, executing, instructing cadets from the grade of platoon sergeant all the way up to captain. An FLRC lane allows MSIII cadets to lead a squad sized element on mini missions and assesses each cadet’s ability to work as a team member. On day two cadets are evaluated on their ability to find 5 of 8 points in day land navigation and 3 of 5 points during night land navigation. On day three MSIII cadets conduct STX lanes.

These are larger missions, in which each cadet is assigned as a squad leader and assessed on completing the designated mission. Finally, on day four, MSIIIs end their FTX training with an eleven-mile ruck march and the completion of the confidence course. FTX provides great preparation and practice for MSIIIs in their anticipated attendance at Warrior Forge this summer.

Although the main focus of FTX is to introduce and evaluate MSI, MSII, and MSIII cadets on the skills they will need for Warrior Forge, the MSIV cadets also receive valuable training. The MSIVs plan and prepare much of the training for FTX. This is good practice for the MSIVs as they prepare to commission as 2nd Lieutenants in the fall. FTX was a success, once again.

The “All For One”
Becoming a freshman at a new school and being surrounded by a bunch of people you do not know is a scary experience. Add the first day of ROTC into the same week you arrive to your new school, and it becomes a terrifying experience. Fortunately, after getting the first day out of the way I realized I had nothing to worry about. Everyone in ROTC was very welcoming and extremely helpful. No one expected you to know anything or get everything right the first time they showed you how to do it. Every time an upperclassman would run into you they would ask you how you were doing or if you needed any help. They always told you that if you needed anything at all, to just ask. It has only been a semester into my freshman year of college and the ROTC program but I absolutely love it.

ROTC is my family at college. Everyone looks out for each other and you start to make close bonds with the people in your class. I always know that if I need any help or if I’m having any type of problem I can ask one of my classmates, team leader, squad leader, mentor, instructor, or anyone else and they will take care of me in a heartbeat. ROTC has become my family here at Xavier and it is definitely my home away from home. If am I not at the Armory or doing something related to ROTC, I want to be. I love being around everyone in ROTC, I definitely feel like I am part of an elite group on campus and I like knowing that I have accomplished a lot more than most of my other classmates when my day is over. ROTC is more than a full time job. I am constantly thinking about what I need to do next for ROTC. That may sound like a burden, but isn’t because I love it. I am so glad I have ROTC to occupy my day. I have already learned so much from being involved in this program. Some skills it has already given me are better time management and planning skills.

Along with those, I can tell I am being molded into a more confident leader. ROTC is helping me grow into a strong, confident adult, and my family and friends can see that. Most people know me from seeing me in my uniform in class and around campus. ROTC is what clearly defines me at Xavier, and I am honored to represent this outstanding program.
The “All For One”

Photos