Bronco Battalion welcomed their incoming freshman Cadets during fall welcome with great enthusiasm! They enjoyed two BBQs where the alumni cooked once for them and once for their parents. They participated in a multitude of events including rappelling from the high tower located right on campus and taking what was, in fact, some of the Cadets’ very first Army Physical Fitness Test.

All in all the week was a success! Upper classmen of the Bronco Battalion were there to help welcome the incoming freshmen into the proud and strong Bronco Battalion. As a program we are now the largest we have been in years, counting 205 cadets at the beginning of the semester! Our strength as a battalion will continue to grow as we fully encourage leadership and teamwork throughout this next academic year.

9/11 Vigil

WMU Bronco Battalion remembered the 9/11 tragedy a little differently. Coupling with local veterans and Air Force ROTC Cadets, a group of four stood at the flag poles on campus to honor those lost. Each cadet or veteran stood silently at parade rest in thirty minute shifts. Many pulled multiple shifts throughout the day to show their respect.

Students passed by watching the soldiers stand silently. Many stopped and offered thanks and appreciation or called out meaningful phrases such as “Thank you for your service!”, “Hooah!”, and “God bless America!” as they passed by.

Some students and employees thanked the service members in a more personal manner, offering coffee between shifts or taking pictures for the newspaper on campus. Bronco Battalion has done this memorial on main campus for years. This event starts at exactly 8:46 am on the morning of September 11th where at the start of the ceremony the flag is presented and raised at half-mast to the playing of Taps. The shifts of Cadets and veterans rotate until 5:00 pm. We look forward to honoring those before us.
Western Michigan University’s Army ROTC program began their biannual training event known as the Leadership Development Exercise (LDX). During this LDX, junior level cadets lead groups of 10-12 people in both physically and mentally challenging events. While completing the event cadets march around campus from 0530 to 1700 with 35 or more pounds on their backs.

On average groups usually travel about 12 miles while competing against the other groups. LDX is meant to facilitate teamwork amongst groups. It also develops leadership qualities allowing for cadets to use skills they have learned throughout the semester to complete obstacles throughout the day. Cadets in the Army ROTC program train daily to be better officers in the Army. This LDX experience gives them the opportunity to perform under high stress situations in a controlled environment.

Events of the weekend included a fitness activity, grenade assault course, an individual movement technique driven course while under paintball fire, casualty care and casualty evacuation, one-rope bridge, M 16 assembly and disassembly, marksmanship, and many other obstacles. Each groups or squad was required to complete each event. They were awarded points based on completion and efficiency.

As juniors, cadets are seen as non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and are in charge of executing the missions sent down to them. They work directly with the freshman and sophomores and teach and instruct them on the proper way to conduct themselves throughout the program. As seniors in the Army ROTC program, cadets plan and organize events for training purposes. They are seen as cadet officers and supervise and refine training instruction and plans.

Every semester cadets look forward to the events planned for them during the biannual LDX. These cadets wish to fulfill a military career after graduate and the training they receive here at Western Michigan University Bronco Battalion helps them succeed.
Veterans Day Blood Drive

by Mariah Sutton

Veterans Day is an important time to reflect and re-remember those that serve and have served our country. The American Red Cross is no stranger in showing its support to the men and women who serve our country every day. Each year on Veterans Day Bronco Battalion to show its support to the Red Cross as well as a way to remember all those soldiers out there fighting for our freedoms.

The goal for the blood drive was 32 pints, the battalion collected 38 pints proving that we not only give what's asked but then we give some more. The collections first go to ensuring that local needs are met, then they go to help a patient elsewhere. Every day, patients receive blood for a variety of conditions including life-threatening illnesses, blood disorders and traumas. These blood donations were critical to helping save patients’ lives.

Other Veterans Day Activities

by Mariah Sutton

On Tuesday, November 11th, our color guard participated in two events to honor veterans who have and currently are serving. The first event took place at the Pfizer Plant in Portage MI. The plant employs around 150 veterans from all services with 32 employees who have family currently serving. The event was kicked off by some remarks made by Commander Briggs, who then ordered the color guard to post the colors.

Short presentations were given by veterans support groups within the company, the site leader, as well as Blue Star Mothers, who work to support all American military veterans and those currently serving. The event ended with recognition of the individuals who served in each respective branch, the playing of taps, and retiring the colors. After the event, cake was served to all and a company veteran’s photo was taken outside by the American flag.

The next event took place at the Arcadian Brewing Company next to the Mayors River Front Park. The event was supposed to take place outside at the memorial with Boomer present but the weather did not cooperate. Other color guards were present at the event to include the Marines, Kalamazoo County Police, and the Kalamazoo Civil Air Patrol. The Kalamazoo Pipe Band was included in the ceremony. The ceremony was commenced by Mr. Bob Hecken, who is a member of a local veteran’s organization.

Several other individuals from other veterans organizations spoke as well as members from the Veterans Administration (VA) who came to announce positive changes to the VA locations in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. This all lead up to Retired Naval Captain Constance Worline’s praise and thanks to the roughly 70 veterans at the event. The event ended when she retired the colors as the Kalamazoo Pipe Band played to officially end the ceremonies.

Winter Commissionees

by Cris Obreiter

Two Cadets official joined the ranks of officers as they commissioned on December 12th at Haworth College of Business in front of family and friends. The two commissionees were also welcomed into the military officer family by CPT Paul Ryan from the Military Officers Association of America who presented them with their first gold bars.

Retired First Sergeant Billy Clayton from the Military and Veterans Affairs Office at Western presented them with the Military Honors Cord. The cord will differentiate them from the other graduates as being military. Both commissionees will serve in the Michigan National Guard.

- 2LT Mary L. Connolly
  Field Artillery
  Michigan National Guard

- 2LT James R. McQueen
  Signal Corps
  Michigan National Guard
November 12th, 2014, Veterans Day Celebration in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Army ROTC Cadets from all around the city gathered for their weekly meeting. This was not the typical Tuesday Lab, this day was dedicated to the men and women of the uniformed services.

“Thank you for coming!” Cadet Kransberger says to the supportive crowd with a small wave of his hand reminiscent of Queen Elizabeth. The 60% chance of snow and the 37° weather were of little concern to Charlie Company as they completed the one mile long parade. “I haven’t felt my toes since 2010,” murmured Cadet Shoemaker from the front of the 40-man, three-rank formation.

The cold city wind blew the Colors, yet Cadets Coutourier, Plotzke, and Van- nete remained resilient as they held the Colors high, proud to lead the formation. As we waited for the ROTC vans to take us back to our assembly area, the aroma of hot soup and cold beer already filled our noses. Standing at the end of an amazing Veterans Day parade knowing it had taken a lot of planning and preparation. “Didn’t anyone read the OPORD!?” Cadet-Major Black exclaimed from the heated ROTC van.

The MSIs, MSIIs, and MSIIIs began to file into the parking lot on that dark evening. The acting First Sergeant made sure everyone was in the proper uniform and got everyone formed up with plenty of time to spare (as usual). An invigorating address followed as Cadet Black galvanized her company. Lieutenant Colonel Hains gave a swift, “thanks for coming” and with a “Right, FACE” the Cadets of Charlie Company began their route step to the corner of Michigan St. & Division Ave.

After a half mile walk we reached our new assembly area. As we lined up for the parade, we were surrounded by so many different uniforms, military and civilian, young and old, all in attendance to support our Armed Services on that holiday. Police officers were in full dress uniforms. The sound of the drums from a high school marching band could be heard from blocks away, and the sound of Cadet Black calling cadence could almost be heard through all of it. The American Legion Northeastern Post 459 of Grand Rapids invited all of the ROTC Cadets and cadre to join them for soup and sandwiches (oh yes, and beer) at the Legion Post following the parade.

The parade commenced and we marched the one mile south to the intersection of Fulton St. & Division Ave. We rolled through the streets past dozens of smiling and supportive faces. Veterans of all ages rendered a respectful salute to the Colors as we marched by. In return, Cadet Kransberger made sure to thank each and every person along the way. Half frozen, yet too exuberant to care, we reached Veterans Memorial Park and the parade dispersed. After one last playing of the National Anthem, the Cadets of Charlie Co. loaded the chalks back to the original assembly area. From there they walked 1/8 of a mile up the road to the smell of soup and sandwiches.

We entered American Legion Post. A cordial lady welcomed each Cadet with a hug as they walked through the door. Before us, were multiple tables of various homemade soups, plentiful desserts, and lots os sandwiches. The Post was congested with veterans from every war. I looked over to see a smile still on Cadet Kransberger’s face (which was still partly frozen that way from the parade). We took seats among the veterans and swapped stories. Cadet Walkington displayed her extraordinary gift of choral efficacy. She owned the karaoke stage.

With the soup warming our stomachs and the atmosphere warming our hearts we ended the night with one final and united singing of Lee Greenwood’s “God Bless the USA.”

We extended our gratitude and our goodbyes and piled into the ROTC van. We were on our way back home, but we were constantly reminded that day that some service men and women do not come back home. And it is their sacrifice which provides for our ability to have such amazing celebrations. Charlie Company honored veterans in a very special way this past Veterans Day. We Cadets and the members of American Legion Northeastern Post 459 will remember that Tuesday for many years to come.
Leadership Reaction Course—Bronco Athletics and Student Leaders

On August 12th, the Bronco Battalion hosted the Bronco Football Team at the Leaders Reaction Course at Fort Custer Training Area. Our Cadets served as the primary Lane mentors as they helped guide teams of football players through the challenging obstacles. The players and our Cadets definitely improved their teamwork and leadership skills. Coach Fleck was especially pleased and excited about the unique experiences. These experiences helped build the foundation for their highly successful season. We also hosted the Emerging Leaders from the Lee Honors College on August 28th and the Bronco Women's Basketball Team on September 12th. Athletic teams and student groups continue to enjoy the leadership and team development offered by experiences that the Leadership Reaction Course and we are making progress on building one on campus to better facilitate this unique and highly beneficial activity.

Veterans Day Dining In
by Cris Obreiter

On November 13th, our Cadets held their annual Veterans Day Lab. During the lab which was held in our Battalion Drill Hall, we fed over 75 veterans from around the Greater Kalamazoo Area. The chili was provided by the Blue Star Mothers Chapter Greater Kalamazoo Area Chapter and the Cadets grilled hamburgers in the snow.

The veterans enjoyed the atmosphere, traditions and comradery including our annual Grog Bowl Ceremony. To end the event all the veterans received a parting gift, donations from not only various departments around campus to include the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Haworth College of Business, Lee Honors College, Development and Alumni Relations Department, the Management Department, The Children's Place Learning Center and the Office of Sustainability.

The community also participated with as Goodrich Quality Theater Kalamazoo 10 donating concessions certificate. Decorations and drawings were provided for the veterans by Kalamazoo Public School, Heritage Christian School and WMU's The Children’s Learning Place children.

2015 Military Ball

Date: Saturday, 7 February 2015

Location: Radisson Plaza Hotel, 100 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo Michigan

Cost: $40 per person (parking and beverages not included)

For more information call 269-387-8120 or email Cris at cris.obreiter@wmich.edu
I can’t believe I’ve been here for 5 semesters already and although many things change, including a major transition in staff, the one thing that remains constant is the impressive performance by our Cadets and cadre. We are truly one of the very best ROTC programs in the country and during the Fall Semester we continued to shine. This summer for our current senior class, 30% earned overall leadership excellence ratings at the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC). Although this metric is being eliminated as we transition to the Cadet Leader Course, it is clearly an indicator of the extraordinarily high-level and high-quality of education and training in our program.

The true hallmark of our leadership development program is active engagement by our Cadets as they lead the Battalion, taking on responsibility, accomplishing missions and improving our organization. We all acknowledge that success breeds success and another clear indication of our program continuing to head in the right direction is our rising enrollment.

In Fall 2012, we had 134 Cadets in the program. This year we started with 205. In Grand Rapids, the second largest city in Michigan, our enrollment increased from 29 in Fall 2012 to 50 this fall. Our focus continues to be on leader and leadership development and really no single event highlights this more than our Fall Leader Development Exercise.

Perhaps the most remarkable improvement this year was our Battalion Tactical Operations Center featuring real-time tracking of squad movements, personnel stats, scoring updates and the exercise of mission command- using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative to empower agile and adaptive leaders.

On October 23rd we proudly recognized the accomplishments of one of our Alumni as we inducted COL James J. Love, Class of 1987, into the Wall of Fame. COL Love spoke to the Cadets about engaged leadership and provided great insights and advice for their future career.