

# ROTC cadet given award

## Waters receives Legion of Valor Bronze Cross award

By ERIC RINEER  
Staff writer

Despite receiving one of the top awards in the country for an Air Force ROTC cadet, Rich Waters likes to keep things modest.

Waters, a cadet wing commander for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Air Force ROTC, was recently given the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement award – the second highest award nationally – by the Chapel Hill ROTC headquarters in North Carolina.

"I think there were at least 50 other people who could have gotten the award instead of me," said Waters, a senior electrical engineering major.

The award, given annually to four cadets nationwide, requires a letter of recommendation from an Air Force officer.

Each of the 450 Air Force ROTC detachments selects one cadet to possibly win the award.

The Chapel Hill headquarters then considers each cadet's leadership qualities. Cadets also must be in the top 10 percent of their ROTC and university department classes.

Waters, who boasts a 3.9 GPA in the engineering college, said the award came to him as a surprise when his co-cadets and commanders presented it to

him at their weekly leadership class.

"I was totally flabbergasted when they announced it," he said. "I was pretty shocked and pretty proud, but then again, it's only a piece of metal."

That piece of metal, said Major Michael Turnipseed, is every cadet's dream come true.

The only medal higher, he said, requires a heroic act, such as saving another cadet's life.

Turnipseed said Waters deserved the Legion of Valor award.

"In the short time that I've known Mr. Waters, he takes his dedication to the military and the Air Force very seriously," he said.

Todd Bode, a cadet captain and senior business major, said giving Waters the award was a class act.

"He was kind of downplaying the award before," Bode said. "That's just typical of himself. He's appreciative of the award, but he knows there's more out there."

Waters, who eventually wants to become a pilot, wasn't always sure he would join the Air Force ROTC.

As a Millard North high school senior in Omaha, Waters applied for scholarships in each of the major military organizations.

Waters never counted on the Air Force being the one to give him a scholarship.

"I guess it was kind of luck that

everything fell into place like it did," he said.

Waters' work ethic and study habits at Millard North made it a bit easier for him to excel in his ROTC unit, he said.

Lifting weights with Millard North athletes, such as NU quarterback Eric Crouch, has helped him prepare for the ROTC's physical training demands, Waters said.

Physical fitness abilities are also taken into account by ROTC commanders before recommending a cadet for the Legion of Valor award.

Maybe the largest player in helping him receive the award, Waters said, was the field training that every cadet goes through during his or her sophomore years.

The field-training exercise lasts 4-5 weeks and includes drills and ceremonies. Cadets go through a confidence course and fire a 9-mm handgun during small-arms training.

"If you're willing to pay any price to achieve your goal, anybody can accomplish their goal," Waters said.

A big reason for Waters' winning the award, said Steve Ohlmeyer, a cadet lieutenant colonel and senior criminal justice major, was his unselfish attitude.

"He's reliable and dependable, and I trust him to get any job done," Ohlmeyer said.

# Officials say safe Gaza route to open soon

JERUSALEM (AP) – A safe passage route for Palestinian travel between Gaza and the West Bank was expected to open in a week, Palestinian and Israeli officials said Sunday.

The 27-mile passage, allowing thousands of Palestinians to visit each other, would be the most substantive result of the peace process revived last month by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Palestinian Civilian Affairs Minister Jamil Tarifi said Sunday that there was

only one minor detail – the location of liaison offices – to be resolved.

"The route will open on October 17," Tarifi told The Associated Press.

The spokesman for the Israeli army's coordinator of activities in the territories, Shlomo Dror, agreed that the passage could open as early as Sunday, saying the sides needed to work out "technical details."

The Palestinian Authority will publicize details on the application process for permits to use the route in coming days, Tarifi said.

The safe passage was outlined in the peace agreement signed last month between Israel and the Palestinians in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. That accord marked a resumption of the peace process after it was frozen for much of the three-year rule of Barak's predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu.

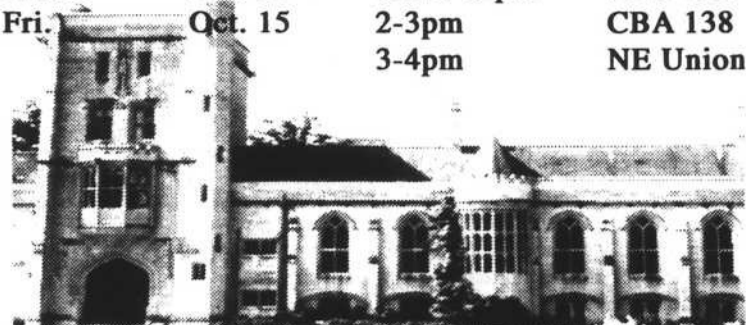
In a further sign the agreement was being implemented, the Israeli army has begun evacuating bases in the West Bank to prepare for the next withdrawal in November allowing the expansion of Palestinian self-rule.

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