



IMPACT

Inspiring Students to Pursue Lives of Purpose

JAG lawyer serves as advocate for soldiers



Travis Elms, a captain in the U.S. Army's JAG Corps, identified his passions in life while a student at Waynesburg University. Today, Elms plays a vital role as an advocate for U.S. soldiers. He has earned high regard from his peers and his superiors, recently earning the Army Achievement Medal.

Being labeled "the best JAG lawyer a commander could ask for on his team" is a complement that not all commanders freely give. It's one that Colonel Peter "Duke" DeLuca, 20th Engineer Brigade commander, said of Captain Travis Elms, a 2001 criminal justice administration and pre-law graduate of Waynesburg University and captain in the United States Army's Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps.

Colonel DeLuca isn't the only one who thinks highly of Captain Elms. Serving as the Army's 20th Engineer Brigade's legal expert, Elms was recently awarded the Army Achievement Medal. The medal is given to a member of the Armed Forces who "distinguishes him or herself by meritorious service or achievement."

Yet, talk to Elms, and he'll say he's just doing what he's called to do — combining his passions of law and service to his country to be an advocate

for soldiers.

Elms, who currently serves in Balad, Iraq, credits Waynesburg University and its professors for helping him recognize his passions.

"I would say most people are guided by a moral compass," Elms says. "I think that is one thing that all of us know we have and what also helps you stay true to goals and helps you do the right thing. Waynesburg does a great job of allowing students to follow the path they feel is right. Keeping an open mind led me to find what I was called to do."

For Elms, Dr. Dana Baer, associate professor of criminal justice and chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, was highly influential in Travis' young career path. Baer served as his professor and academic advisor.

"I relied upon her heavily, and it was apparent that she cared about her work and the criminal justice program," Elms says about Baer. "She took her passion and her skills and created a program that

met everyone's needs."

When asked about Elms, Baer uses the words "highly motivated," "disciplined," "dedicated," and "extremely responsible" to describe him. Baer was able to write a tremendous recommendation for Elms when he applied to law school, citing his dedication and discipline that is evident in his work, his studies, and his voluntary community service.

Upon graduation, Elms entered into law school at Ohio Northern University. After a 90-day internship with the U.S. Army during his time in law school, Elms became convinced of his calling.

"The internship peaked my interest and the chance to serve lined up with what my goals in life seemed to be," he says. "Going into the service was always something I knew I wanted to do. I always had a desire to serve, but I really didn't know how to make that happen. I knew I wanted an education, and I knew I wanted to practice law."

Elms graduated with his law degree

and passed the bar exam in 2004. After a brief stint with a law firm, he pursued his passion of serving his country by joining the Army in January 2005.

Deployed in July 2007, Elms' responsibility as a JAG lawyer includes offering free legal advice to soldiers and their families. He is involved with the prosecutions of soldiers that commit criminal acts and the protections of soldiers that are accused of committing these acts. He also trains soldiers on the rules of engagement.

With his values of hard work and integrity, Elms recently extended his service contract for another three years. In his successes, he continues to credit the values that were stressed at Waynesburg.

"Waynesburg University provided me with an emphasis on leadership and service — two skills anyone can use for the rest of their lives," Elms says.

Art Education major added to undergrad program offerings

Waynesburg University recently announced the addition of a new academic major. The Art Education major joins existing Art and Arts Administration majors within the fine arts curriculum and will be implemented for Spring 2008.

Susan Phillips, professor of art at Waynesburg University, said the need for the addition has existed for a few years.

"I knew there was a great deal

of interest," she said. "We have had prospective students inquire about this specific major for some time."

Phillips developed a proposal for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) after conducting a needs assessment survey. After this survey revealed a valid need for art teachers, the process to implement the major continued to move forward.

The PDE required a site visit before approval would be granted. The visit

took place in April of 2007. PDE looked at the Art Department, the Education Department, the general education requirements and other components influencing the decision.

PDE approved the new major in July. After the approval, Phillips continued to develop the plan for implementing the major. The plan was presented to Waynesburg University faculty during the December faculty meeting and was approved after a vote.



NEWS & NOTES

• Waynesburg University President **Timothy R. Thyreen** announced that two University vice presidents have received promotions. **Roy Barnhart** was promoted to Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration and **Robin King** has become Senior Vice President for Enrollment & University Relations.

• Renowned musicians **Mr. Joseph Hermann** and **Dr. David R. Holsinger** will serve as guest clinicians at the second annual Waynesburg University Conducting Symposium. The Symposium will be held Friday, Jan. 18 and Saturday, Jan. 19 in the Goodwin Performing Arts Center.

• Waynesburg University botany students recently planted knowledge in the minds of local middle school students with the comparison of trees and humans. The comparison, taught by the University students, provided the middle schoolers an understanding of how the functions of trees are like that of the human body. **David Fowler**, a middle level science teacher at Margaret Bell Miller Middle School, said the program provided the students with a more complete understanding of trees, their parts and function.

• Waynesburg University is a recipient of a Nursing Education Grant provided by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Foundation, receiving \$137,000 for scholarships in the nursing program. The amount marks the most the University has received for the nursing program in a single academic year. This is the fifth consecutive year the University has applied for and received the grant. From this grant, the University awarded scholarships to 35 nursing students in their sophomore, junior or senior year, as well as second-degree students.

• **Dr. Thomas West**, professor of politics at the University of Dallas, will present "Virtue and the American Founding" on Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008. West will serve as the inaugural Stover Scholar lecturer.

• **Rev. L. Bryant Parker** will serve as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Convocation speaker on Jan. 21. The convocation will be held at 11 a.m., in Alumni Hall. Parker will also give a guest lecture at 7:30 p.m., in the Goodwin Performing Arts Center.

• Classical guitarist **Petar Jankovic** will perform at the semester's first Performing Arts Series on Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. His concert in the Goodwin Performing Arts Center is open to the public. Admission is \$5 and Waynesburg students are admitted free of charge. In addition, Jankovic will offer a special masterclass for university music students earlier that day.

FieldTurf surface receives high praises

Preparation for the football season takes place long before the opening of training camp in August and even before spring ball in April. For teams around the country to complete their almost year-round practices, they need a surface to play on in all types of weather, especially in the Northeast.

There may be no surface more popular due to its durability and consistency than FieldTurf. Waynesburg University understood this and in the summer of 2006, it installed the latest FieldTurf Duraspine surface at John F. Wiley Stadium, which previously featured a natural grass playing surface.

The artificial surface played host to six games that season, the most since 2001, along with all the Yellow Jackets' football practices, both during training camp and throughout the season.

Since Waynesburg installed FieldTurf at Wiley Stadium, head coach Rick Shepas has showcased it to several teams around the area including Bethany (W.Va.) College, Fairmont State University, and even perennial Big East powerhouse West Virginia University.

In March of 2007, Shepas received a phone call from Mountaineers' then-head coach Rich Rodriguez asking permission



Photo by Gretchen Graham

to have some coaches and players look at the surface. Rodriguez, who knew Shepas from different coaching clinics, received word from FieldTurf about the new surface it completed for Waynesburg.

From there, Rodriguez brought pre-season All-American candidates and Heisman hopefuls Patrick White and Steve Slaton, along with speedy wide receiver Darius Reynaud and other players to Wiley Stadium. After running around the turf, the coaches and players said it was the best surface they had ever been around.

Following their time at Waynesburg, West Virginia installed its own FieldTurf Duraspine surface at Milan Puskar Stadium in Morgantown, W.Va.

In addition to the Mountaineers featuring a FieldTurf surface, BCS Top 10 programs such as The Ohio State University, University of Missouri and University of Hawaii have installed it on their varsity fields. Several more programs feature a FieldTurf surface facility to deal with the heavy use associated with practices, such as University of Georgia and University of Southern California.

Czerwien featured in *Sports Illustrated*

Waynesburg University senior defensive end Mike Czerwien has garnered national attention after his record-breaking season. Czerwien was featured in the "Faces in the Crowd" section in the December 10 issue of *Sports Illustrated*.

Czerwien is believed to be the first Yellow Jacket athlete featured in the national publication.

The senior set an NCAA all-division record with 53.5 career sacks this year, surpassing the previous mark of 49.0 set by Steven Wilson of King's (Pa.) in

Division III.

A native of Pittsburgh, Czerwien led all NCAA divisions this year with 23.0 sacks and 34.5 tackles for loss (TFL). The 23.0 sacks ranks as the fourth-highest single-season total in all NCAA divisions behind the record of 24.0, set by Baltimore Ravens' linebacker Terrell Suggs.

In his career, Czerwien compiled 273 career tackles (171 solo) with school records of 53.5 sacks and 87.0 TFL. He was a four-time, first-team all-conference selection and was named the Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) Most Valuable Player this season.

Czerwien also became the first D3football.com All-American in Waynesburg history, being selected to the first-team All-America squad. Freshman running back Robert Heller earned All-America honorable mention from D3football.com.

In addition, Czerwien was selected to the All-America teams by the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) and Associated Press (AP). He was selected to The Associated Press (AP) Little All-America second team, which honors players from NCAA Division

University serves medical mission

An opportunity to impact 250 people per day awaited the first medical mission team in the history of the University. The team left for Puerto Penasco, Mexico, the week before Christmas. The town is 60 miles south of the Arizona border. The team was led by Dr. Teresa Small, associate professor of nursing at Waynesburg University.

"I am very excited and blessed to have been asked by students to lead this trip," Small said. "I believe that we are here to help others, and nursing is in an extraordinary position to do this."

Kristina (Smith) Kark, a 2004 graduate of Waynesburg University and a house supervisor and ICU nurse at Monongalia General Hospital in Morgantown, W. Va., joined the mission trip members.

"When asked if I would be interested in going, I instantly thought it was a wonderful opportunity to serve a population that I don't get to care for every day," she said. "I will get to assist students and impact their educational experience while also expanding my own knowledge base by practicing my basic skills in a foreign country."

Kark said local citizens do not have access to affordable health care. In an attempt to alleviate this issue, the mission team assisted an all-volunteer clinic equivalent to the American Red Cross.

According to Kark, the clinic typically treats about 250 people per day.

Each patient left the clinic with anti-parasitic medicine, vitamins, soap and a toothbrush. The mission team was responsible for taking vital signs, assessing those signs and providing health education to each patient.

"There are many reasons to go on any mission trip," Kark said. "I have been blessed with the ability to further my education, and in doing so, can care for those who cannot care for themselves. Medical mission trips are an excellent way for those who have the necessary skills to help those less fortunate to get involved. The positive impact that we could be making may be life-changing. I want to be a part of that. Who wouldn't?"



II and III, along with the NAIA. In December, he helped lead the United States to a 37-19 victory over Mexico in the 2007 Aztec Bowl — the first player in school history to play in the game.