

20-year-old already a veteran driver thanks to family ties, B1



50¢

www.chippewa.com

MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2013

Se



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Jasper Arneberg crawls through mud with a rifle in hand during his Basic Cadet Training camp in summer 2012.

# HE'S NO. 1

## Arneberg top cadet at U.S. Air Force Academy

By **ELIZABETH DOHMS**  
elizabeth.dohms@lee.net

Jasper Arneberg once ate a rabbit's eye.

It wasn't because of a dare, or because he was forced to. Mostly, it was because he hadn't eaten in three days.

He was already in the woods with other freshman cadets from the U.S. Air Force Academy. They were camped out around the Academy in a simulated hostile territory with a goal to evade enemy capture.

They moved only at night and weren't given food until the fourth day. But like most activities in his freshman year at the Academy in Colorado Springs, the 19-year-old Chippewa Falls native took it in stride.

"Things that seem hard aren't always as hard as you think they'll be," Arneberg

said, "like going without food and patience." Not much got the best of Arneberg, who ranked first among nearly 1,000 fourth-class cadets at the USAFA on a scale that averages scores in athletics, military and academics.

"I was shocked," Arneberg said. "I was just happy that the hard work paid off; I'm motivated to keep trying hard." Arneberg's grade-point average sits at 3.98 after an aeronautical engineering course, two physics classes and two chemistry classes, among other advanced technology courses. The class that brought him down was boxing, a class Arneberg said he would never have taken if he wasn't required to. The highest scores in the class were awarded recruitments for the boxing team.

"It's extremely difficult to get an A," Arneberg said. "Ben



Jasper Arneberg poses with two of his professors after receiving a top student award for his Scholars Chemistry class.

got a C+." Ben is a recent USAFA graduate and Arneberg's older brother by four years.

"He's always been a hard worker," Arneberg said. "I've seen what he's been able to accomplish by working and studying so hard, so I've emulated that and competed with him, seeing if I can beat him." Ben majored in computer science at the Academy, but Arneberg chose to follow his father Tom's career choice by majoring in electrical engineering, adding that the transition from hardware to software engineering is easier.

"It gives me more options for the future," he said, adding that he would like to pursue a graduate degree, ideally at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. That would be part of his five-year commitment to the U.S. Air Force that's required of him upon entering his junior year.

But academics were only part of the equation.

On a regular day, Arneberg is woken at 5:15 a.m. with the rest of his squadron of about 25 freshmen and 75 upperclassmen, whose names, cadet ranks

See **CADET**, A3



# CADET

From A1

and majors must be memorized by the freshmen.

Before formation, the freshmen ensure their rooms are in perfect inspection order. Some cadets never sleep under their covers, including Arneberg, who drapes a sleeping bag over the top. Others just sleep on the floor.

The freshmen call out the minutes left until formation and march to breakfast, leaving the doors to their dorm rooms open until 8 p.m. Once on the terrazzo — a walkway between buildings — the freshmen run at all times, turning only at right angles. If headed to class, their backpacks are to be kept in their left hands, freeing up their right to salute passersby whom the freshmen must address by name and title.

At each meal, freshmen eat at attention, chins up and eyes on the plates. They can start to chew only when the fork is on the plate and their hands are in their laps.

"If you don't do it, they yell at you," Arneberg said. "If you (get yelled at) enough, they'll get mad at you and they'll punish the whole team (with push-ups and other exercises)." Between academic classes and military training, cadets spend the majority of their time exercising. Some cadets are engaged in intramural basketball and ultimate Frisbee against other squadrons.

Freshmen spend their afternoons in training sessions, perfecting their physique with pull-ups, sit-ups and recreational runs.

Eventually, the exercise and military training would culminate in a recognition ceremony that traditionally takes place in March.

"It's kind of a return to basic training; they tried to pack everything into 48 hours," Arneson said.

Those two days consist of extreme mental and physical stress as cadets are forced through repeti-

"The advantage of going to Chi-Hi compared to a smaller school is the opportunities, like the music department. Chi-Hi gave me a lot of opportunities to challenge myself in different ways, like being able to take college-level courses in high school."

**Jasper Arneberg**

tive exercises as dictated by their upperclassmen, who are often performing with them. "It's just constant repetition," Arneberg said. "Your body's under extreme stress, it's just cramped. You're doing jumping jacks, push-ups, pull-ups while getting yelled at. You don't stop until they tell you to stop," he said.

Arneberg relied on God and on others around him; the freshmen would often yell encouragement to one another.

"I just had to embrace the pain," he said. "I knew that it was a temporary circumstance."

Once the freshmen cadets finish the recognition ceremony, they officially become upperclassmen.

"That was the worst 48-hour period I've had in my life," Arneberg said. "After you're done with all the freshman training, then it's completely different; you're treated like a normal human being again."

Having the freedom to walk anywhere and to talk outside of his room became some of Arneberg's favorite memories. He said he plans to apply for a leadership position in the future, adding that it "will be a great opportunity."

"They want what's best for us," he said. "It's hard to see while it's happening to you, but you've learned discipline; you've learned to deal with the pain." Shaped by Boy Scouts as an Eagle Scout, Arneberg said

## Becoming a U.S. Air Force cadet

As graduates of the U.S. Air Force Academy, cadets walk away with a title of second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, a degree and a five-year commitment to the USAF.

They have undergone rigorous physical, mental and emotional stress, through basic training, recognition day and myriad other engagements to define them as leaders. But the hardest part of all four years might be just getting accepted. Generally, prospective cadets need to file the equivalent of a college application to a state representative or other authorized entity, who then determines whether to nominate the candidate.

The application to the Academy involves the nomination, as well as a fitness exam and medical evaluation, in addition to writing samples, personal interviews and other questionnaires. Once accepted, the cadets meet with other freshmen for Basic Cadet Training. Freshmen are referred to as fourth-class or fourth-degree cadets; seniors are named first-class cadets.

BCT lasts about six weeks as an introduction to military life. It's often referred to as "Beast" because of its demanding physical, emotional and mental tolls.

Cadets are assigned to one of 40 squadrons that each house about 25 freshmen and 75 upperclassmen. The education, which is valued at \$415,000 according to the USAFA, is completely covered, and cadets are entitled to a monthly stipend.

the Boy Scouts of America helped to develop character and leadership skills through camping trips and other activities that emphasized how to work well with others and how to lead peers, which he said is one of the hardest things to do.

"I'm seeing a lot of parallels between Boy Scouts and the Academy; everyone is the same age, and you either get appointed or you step up," he said. "It's difficult to enforce things among friends."

Boy Scouts advance through a ranking system, which taught Arneberg to set goals and work toward them.

"They taught me that hard work goes a long way."

### Challenged by Chi-Hi

In his graduation speech as one of Chi-Hi's 2012 valedictorians, Arneberg told his class to challenge themselves. He said what's more important than natural gifts is how they are used.

He was challenged by his math teacher, Mike Nerbovig, with whom he took an independent study.

"He gave me math challenge problems to work on, to look beyond math as procedural and how to do it

intuitively and smarter; I loved him as a teacher," Arneberg said.

Arneberg said that challenging students is one of the characteristics of Chi-Hi.

"It's a great public school, overall," he said. "The advantage of going to Chi-Hi compared to a smaller school is the opportunities, like the music department. Chi-Hi gave me a lot of opportunities to challenge myself in different ways, like being able to take college-level courses in high school," he added. "If I didn't have those opportunities, it would be a lot harder to learn at that level."

After his survival training this summer, Arneberg earned his wings by getting his fifth parachute jump.

He will be part of the "Wings of Blue" parachute team, which will enable him to stack his jump count to more than 500 over the next three years. The team awards spots to 25 of about 1,000 cadets.

He has headed back to school to begin his first year as an upperclassman.

"Thank you to my parents for being great role models and teaching me how to work hard and do the right thing," Arneberg said.