

ROTC Students Prepare at Calvin

Following graduation in 2012 from Calvin College, history major Ross Pursifull will head from stateside military training to possible overseas combat.

Pursifull, one of 15 students enrolled in Calvin's ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) program, says he and his fellow cadets realize that active duty looms, given the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Joining a wartime Army means no surprises," said Pursifull.

Fellow Calvin ROTC cadet Becca Flim, one of three women in the program, agrees that "anyone who either enlists or commissions should realize that they are most likely going to deploy to a combat situation."

ROTC students get free tuition, money for books, and a graduated living stipend. Commissioned as second lieutenants after graduation,

students normally complete four years in the Army, followed by a stint in the Individual Ready Reserve.

Though Pursifull's dad was a Calvin grad, he didn't push his son toward Calvin. After checking out several other Christian colleges with ROTC programs, Pursifull visited Calvin. The combination of academics, faith, proximity to Lake Michigan—and ROTC—sold Pursifull.

Some students come to Calvin because of ROTC. Others, such as Ben Byma, a sophomore from Lansing, Ill., learn about it later.

"I found out because a guy on my floor last year was in the program," he said. "I came to Calvin mostly because it was one of the few Christian colleges that had an accredited engineering program."

Byma joined ROTC after doing the paperwork and completing the physical require-



Calvin's ROTC students were part of an Army swearing-in ceremony in September 2008. Left to right are David Eberle, Olivia Wenzel, John Eske, Joel Kizer (a Grand Valley student), and Ross Pursifull.

ments to enter. "In high school I thought a lot about enlisting in the military, but decided it would be better to finish college first. Then when I came to Calvin, I found out you can do both at the same time through ROTC," said Byma.

Freshmen ROTC students take "Preparing for Success as an Army officer," and sopho-

mores take "The Role of an Officer." Advanced courses come during a student's junior and senior years.

"I have gotten to know a lot of great people," said Byma, "and have learned how to rely on them while they rely on me." ■

—Phil de Haan, Calvin College communications and marketing

He Gave His Life

Note: Because sharing the names in and location of this story would put many people at risk, we cannot give details. But the story illustrates the cost for some who have embraced Jesus as Savior.

"Bensemann," a university student in a country in which major religions often collide, had a friend from a wealthy family who gave his life to Christ and then gave his life for Christ.

This is how this story of modern-day martyrdom—the murder of a young man for his beliefs—happened.

Bensemann's brother-in-law sent him a copy of the *TODAY* devotional book-

let published by Back to God Ministries International. Bensemann found it to be "educative, expounding on how faith is integral to the Christian life." He decided to share *TODAY* with a fellow student.

That student was from a prominent wealthy family who was very opposed to the Christian faith. However, through *TODAY* and the work of the Holy Spirit, this young man decided to follow Christ. Because of the faithful gifts given to support the production and worldwide distribution of *TODAY*, this young man's life was transformed.

Others challenged him to give up his faith in Christ. "Why would you give up

your father's wealth for suffering and living as an infidel?" he was asked.

Bensemann reported that his friend replied, "There is no joy and satisfaction in wealth and temporary things of this world compared to the peace and satisfaction I found when I received forgiveness of sins and assurance of being a child of God."

He was killed for that testimony.

"There may be times when *TODAY* may seem unfruitful and unproductive from a human point of view," observed Bensemann, "but it is not so. Only heaven will reveal the impact for Christ." ■

—Back to God Ministries International