Training America's Future Leaders: 2008 Military Leadership Academies

Cadet Stephen Jones told us that “a hero is every person who has ever worn a military uniform. They put their life on the line daily for the citizens of the USA. Heroes are those who die saving others.” Cadet Jones is one of more than 100 Cadets who attended the 8th Annual Freedom Alliance Military Leadership Academy this summer at Eastover Center in Spring Grove, Virginia, just a few miles from historic Jamestown, Yorktown and Williamsburg.

The Academy’s mission is to “Educate, Motivate and Inspire” young Americans with the core military leadership tenants of Courage, Selfless Service, Respect, Teamwork, Integrity, Dependability and Responsibility. High school students from all around the United States gathered to gain a greater understanding and respect for their country and the men and women who protect it and to learn valuable leadership techniques they can apply in their daily lives.

Cadets were taught courses in U.S. Military History, American Civics and Leadership Foundations and also visited military installations including Fort Eustis and Langley Air Force Base, where they were fortunate to have a first-ever guided tour of the Air Force’s newest fighter plane – the F-22 Raptor. While at Langley, Cadets had a special tour of the Training America’s Future Leaders: 2008 Military Leadership Academies

Laura Ingraham to Keynote Defender of Freedom Award Dinner

Long time Freedom Alliance friend and supporter Laura Ingraham will deliver the keynote address at the 2008 Freedom Alliance Defender of Freedom Award Dinner on Thursday, December 4, 2008 at the historic Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C.

A graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia Law School, Laura was a speechwriter in the Reagan Administration and served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and U.S. Court of Appeals Justice Ralph K. Winter.

In addition to hosting her daily syndicated radio show, “The Laura Ingraham Show,” she is a bestselling author of three books, including Power to the People and Shut Up and Sing. She is also a frequent column and television commentator on the FOX News Channel.

Freedom Alliance Founder and Honorary Chairman, LtCol Oliver North, USMC (Ret.) will present the Defender of Freedom Award at the December 4 dinner to an “individual, who in the face of adversity exemplifies faith, courage and fidelity to the Constitution and the principles of freedom.” The award

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NASA Langley Research Center, a leading hub of space innovation.

At Marine Corps Base Quantico our Cadets navigated the Night Integrated Training Environment (NITE) lab, where they negotiated a specialized obstacle course while wearing night vision goggles. At Fort Eustis in Virginia – a training ground for members of the Army – MLA Cadets tested their physical acumen at the Leadership Reaction Course, an obstacle course which includes 12 challenging events (six with water hazards) for leadership building.

Cadets like Vanessa Covarrubias and Christopher Hanson, who traveled from Texas to attend, joined their fellow Cadets by organizing a community service project: a car wash to benefit Freedom Alliance. They raised $1,000 for the Support Our Troops program and learned valuable lessons about “selfless service.” “I had never done any community service and it felt really good to know we were thanking our troops for everything they do,” Vanessa said. The Cadets used the $1,000 they raised to purchase goodies and then packed them in 21 “Gifts From Home” boxes. All of the Cadets wrote personal "thank you" notes to the troops, which were enclosed in the packages.

These young men and women also traveled to our Nation’s Capital to see first-hand the many memorials in honor of our brave Americans who have sacrificed their lives for our great nation. Cadets visited the World War II, Vietnam and Korean War Memorials, looking at names and images of men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

The Cadets expressed their appreciation for the unique opportunity: “I’d like to sincerely thank all the Freedom Alliance supporters for providing all of us the best skills to become a leader. The Academy is challenging, but with that challenge comes great reward,” said Cadet Oliver Offerdal.

“For anyone who doubts America’s future greatness, the Military Leadership Academy is a breath of fresh air. The leadership skills and training that these young Americans receive is first rate and leaves no doubt that America’s future is in capable hands and will equal our past,” said Freedom Alliance Founder and Honorary Chairman Lt.Col. Oliver North, USMC (Ret.).

For more information about the Military Leadership Academy, please contact Program Officer Pepper Ailor at (800) 475-6620 or visit www.freedomalliance.org.
America’s Next Generation Honors Our Troops: 2008 Freedom Alliance Interns

Each year, talented young college students join Freedom Alliance as interns to learn how a non-profit organization operates and to join our work in honor of our troops and their families. Freedom Alliance was fortunate to have a number of exceptional students this summer, including Will Hoffman and Kelly Ream, who worked in the Development Department. Will is a junior at Roanoke College in Roanoke, Virginia, where he is majoring in finance. Will knows what it takes to serve this country as his step-father, Guy Goodwin, is a retired Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard and his step-sister, Kristin, is an Air Force pilot. Kelly is a sophomore at the University of Virginia. “I greatly admire the work of Freedom Alliance and love the wonderful opportunity to participate in Freedom Alliance’s work, especially the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund,” said Kelly.

Four more interns worked with the Military Leadership Academy (MLA). Tim Strickler, a senior at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., was an MLA Instructor in 2007 as well as 2008 and has been a valuable member of the Freedom Alliance team. Tim plans to enroll in the Marine Officer Candidate School after graduating in May, 2009.

A senior at the University of San Diego, Amanda Berlinski is in the NROTC Program, where her goal is to be a Marine Corps pilot. This was her second year as an MLA Instructor.

MLA Instructor Ryan Curry.

MLA Instructor Amanda Berlinski.

MLA Instructor Justin Thomas and his family were among many forced to move from their native Louisiana to Texas when Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Justin, who attended the 2007 MLA as a Cadet, is a sophomore at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. After a visit to the National Museum of the Marine Corps with the 2007 Academy, Justin set a goal to join the United States Marine Corps, saying, “The legacy of such distinguished Marines inspired me to pursue the same distinction.”

MLA Instructor Tim Strickler with two Cadets.

MLA Instructor Justin Thomas leads Cadets during the Confidence Course.

Freedom Alliance is proud to have had these exemplary young men and women with us for the summer. They, too, share the desire to honor our men and women in uniform and we thank them for their tireless energy and invaluable help.

"AWARD DINNER"
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recipient will be revealed at the dinner. Past award recipients include U.N. Ambassador John Bolton, General Tommy Franks and Sean Hannity, among others.

The Defender of Freedom Dinner is part of the annual Freedom Alliance Army-Navy Weekend (see Page 8). Tickets for the Defender of Freedom Award Dinner are $250 and may be purchased by contacting Kelly Travis at Freedom Alliance: (800) 475-6620.
During the last year, Freedom Alliance has held “Troop Appreciation” luncheons and dinners, “Military Family Fun” and other special events for more than 3,000 troops and their families. Most of the troops we honor and thank at these events are combat-wounded troops who have returned from the battlefield.

Troop Appreciation Dinners at military bases have been held all across the country, including AS FAR AWAY AS HAWAII AND ALASKA! Locations also included Bethesda Naval Medical Center in Maryland; McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey; Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio; Naval Medical Center San Diego; Fort Riley in Kansas; Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii; Fort Bragg in North Carolina; Naval Support Activity – Panama City, Florida; Fort Richardson and Fort Wainwright in Alaska and many others.

The locations may change but our mission never will – to honor our troops who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. Support from our generous donors helped provide funding for Freedom Alliance to host more than 70 events since January 2007, including Troop Appreciation Events, GameTime sports outings and provide more than $500,000 in grants to almost 700 deserving troops.

The Freedom Alliance Support Our Troops program is a vehicle in constant motion. Some of the recent activities include:

Fort Riley, Kansas

On May 27, Freedom Alliance hosted a Troop Appreciation Dinner for 48 soldiers and their families from Fort Riley, Kansas. These dinners are a special occasion for our servicemen and women, providing a delicious meal at a first class restaurant and a relaxing evening to spend with their families and friends. Just a month after our dinner at Fort Riley, a devastating tornado ripped through Chapman, Kansas, where many of Fort Riley’s soldiers live. Two men, SPC Patrick and SGT Simei lost their homes in the tornadoes and Freedom Alliance was again there to help our wounded warriors by providing Support Our Troops grants to each of them, which they used to help get some necessities lost in the storm.

Fort Knox, Kentucky

Forty-seven soldiers and their families enjoyed a hearty steak at Ruth’s Chris Steak House in Louisville, Kentucky on July 6 courtesy of Freedom Alliance. These brave warriors had just returned from Iraq in November after a fifteen month deployment. Said SPC Danielle, “This was really awesome. I think the soldiers really appreciated this. I certainly did. Events like these are great morale builders.”

Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii

Wounded troops from Tripler Army Medical Center and their families – an amazing 500 guests in all – enjoyed our Troop Appreciation Luau at the Marriott Ihilani Resort on June 21. As troops and their families arrived they were greeted by Freedom Alliance President Tom Kilgannon and were given “Support Our Troops” hats and fresh flower leis to capture the feeling of a true luau. In addition to a terrific dinner, the evening included hula and fire dancers, a live band and other traditional Hawaiian entertainment. Following the festivities, Freedom Alliance was presented with certificates of appreciation by LTC Harry Xenitelis.

Fort Wainwright and Fort Richardson, Alaska

Freedom Alliance President Tom Kilgannon traveled to the “Land of the Midnight Sun” to show the troops stationed in Alaska that the rest of the country has not forgotten their service and sacrifice for our country. “(It was) a wonderful evening and meal. Thanks a million. It’s nice to know we are not forgotten,” said SFC Walter.

More than 100 soldiers and their families attended the two dinners, which were held at Pike’s Landing in Fairbanks on June 25 and Sullivan’s Steakhouse in Anchorage on June 26. I am really thankful for Freedom Alliance’s help and what they’ve done for our troops,” said SPC Christopher.

Fort Lewis, Washington

On June 24 at the Ruth’s Chris Steak House in Seattle, 50 soldiers and their families attended the Fort Lewis Troop Appreciation Dinner. This is the second year in a row Freedom Alliance has made it to Washington to honor these brave men and women in the upper Northwest. The troops also enjoyed a visit from Kirby Wilbur, a local radio celebrity. “Thank you so much for this event. It is rare I can spend time with my wife and relax. For this brief time, the world and all my troubles melted away,” said SSG Christopher.
Remembering Our Heroes

Army Staff Sergeant Scott had third degree burns over 40 percent of his body and is recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas. He was injured on his third tour of Iraq when his vehicle hit two anti-tank mines. He also served in Afghanistan and is the recipient of two Bronze Stars. He is married with three children ranging in age from ten to sixteen.

Army Specialist Jedidiah was equally grateful to get a breather from treatment for his Traumatic Brain Injury suffered in an RPG attack on the truck he was driving during his third tour in Iraq. He is married with four children ranging from six months to six years.

Army Sergeant Josh is a double amputee as a result of injuries he sustained on this second tour of duty in Iraq when his vehicle hit an IED. He is married and has a two-year-old daughter. SGT Josh is originally from Panama City, so the weekend was a special homecoming for him.

American Heroes Vacation

From July 7-12, Freedom Alliance treated three wounded troops and their families (22 people total) to a week-long “American Heroes Vacation” in Panama City, Florida. The injured servicemen and their families stayed at the Bay Point Marriott Golf Resort and Spa and spent the week golfing, swimming and dining to their heart’s content. The soldiers enjoyed an entire day of deep sea fishing on a premier yacht where they caught red snapper, shark and other fish.

Freedom Alliance bids “Good Bye” and “Thank You” with a Troop Appreciation BBQ at the Dallas – Fort Worth International Airport.

The Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport is one of the major portals for troops being deployed to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. On July 22, Freedom Alliance provided encouragement and great Texas Bar-B-Que at the USO airport facility for our troops being deployed to the frontlines. More than 250 soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen feasted on the Bar-B-Que buffet for lunch and dinner as they headed out to fight the War on Terror.

There were a lot of tears and smiles on the faces of these three heroes, who have sacrificed greatly while protecting and defending our freedom, as they were treated to a much-needed rest and relaxation with their families. A Chaplain who was there and knew Army Sergeant Josh said of the American hero: “I've known Josh since his first welcome home. He's not one to smile very much. I've never seen him smile as much as he did today. It truly was a blessing to see.” As one of the wives said, “Up to this point, the focus has been on recovery. This vacation is an opportunity for us to reconnect as a family.”
Fort Sill Family Day

Located in Lawton, Oklahoma, Fort Sill, which houses the U.S. Army Field Artillery, is also home to the Reynolds Army Community Hospital. By hosting a Family Fun Day, Freedom Alliance got soldiers and their families out of the hospital to enjoy the beautiful scenery around Fort Sill, which is designated as a National Historic Landmark. This Freedom Alliance Troop Appreciation event at Lake Letra provided food, fun and entertainment for the whole family, including sack races, face painting, kayaking, piñatas and dunking booths, where enlisted men had a chance to dunk their commanding officers! The children enjoyed the day with their fathers, who normally spend much of their time in the Army Hospital at Fort Sill. As Freedom Alliance staffers were returning home through the Oklahoma City Airport, they distributed many pre-paid international phone cards to soldiers there.

The children of our troops enjoy the Support Our Troops dinners as much as their parents.

"Gifts From Home" For Our Troops on the Frontlines

“Yesterday everyone had crusty eyes, noses and a light dusting of dirt all over. You cannot believe how powdery it is, and it gets into the buildings and on everything. There is no running water in the buildings, so we rely on hand sanitizer,” wrote Marine Sgt. Maj. Maggie via email from Iraq. The “dusting” came from one of the many sand storms in Iraq that plague our troops – and the hand sanitizer she refers to is from a Freedom Alliance Gifts From Home care package. In the last several months, Freedom Alliance shipped several hundred large boxes of “Gifts from Home” care packages to our heroes on the frontlines.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

GIFTS FROM HOME

Freedom Alliance

They go to soldiers like SGT Jumil in Iraq, who sent us this thank you email: "I received your packages today. I was so excited. Thank you very much. You have no idea how much this means to me. SFC Bernal also received his and he’s also very grateful. You guys are so amazing. We, of course, shared some of the boxes with the other soldiers and they were so excited. I wish that you were there to see it. A single package can lift a soldier’s spirits and it lets us know we are not forgotten. You never forget and I greatly appreciate that. Stay safe and God Bless."

This year so far, we have shipped several thousand pounds of goodies in more than 130 packages, including hand-held games, toiletries, wet wipes, pre-paid international long distance calling cards, DVD movies, candy, magazines, books, non-perishable treats and so much more. Made possible with contributions from our supporters, the “Gifts From Home” let our brave servicemen and women know we honor and appreciate their sacrifices for our freedom and lets them enjoy some of the “comforts of home” while thousands of miles away.

Special Help For Our Combat-Wounded Heroes

Freedom Alliance is providing financial assistance to combat-wounded troops recovering in military hospitals across the country. During the last few months, we have provided grants to 73 wounded servicemen and women to assist them with expenses such as mortgage payments, child care, travel expenses and family visits. One such grant was given to Petty Officer First Class Patricia, being treated at Wilford Hall Medical Center (the largest Air Force medical facility in the world) at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. PO1 Patricia served in the U.S. Navy for 17 years, including three tours in the Persian Gulf. She was diagnosed with cancer, in connection with her service to our country. Freedom Alliance provided a grant to enable her to travel to San Antonio for treatment.

Freedom Alliance is proud to salute our troops.

The children of our troops enjoy the Support Our Troops dinners as much as their parents.

Land of the Free Because of the Brave
Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund Recipients: Past and Present

Sarah Sebring Learman, Ph.D.
“Your scholarship has helped my dream become a reality. This is something I know that would be very important to my father, who gave his life while serving his country in the United States Navy,” said Freedom Alliance Scholarship recipient Sarah Sebring Learman. “I am sure my father would be honored that his daughter is the recipient of your scholarship.”

In April 1983, when Sarah was just 10 months old, her father, Larry Sebring, was killed while on active duty with the United States Navy. He was serving as an air crew member aboard a Navy C-131 transport plane when it crashed on a routine logistics mission from NAS Jacksonville, Florida to NAS Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Sarah graduated in 2004 from Mary Washington University in Fredericksburg, Virginia, with a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Biology. A member of Chi Beta Honor Society, and the Alpha Sigma Phi Honor Society, Sarah was also a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars for three years. She earned an overall GPA of 3.5, and has since earned her Ph.D. in Cellular Biology from Virginia Tech University.

Sarah recently married Deric Learman, who also obtained his doctorate from Virginia Tech and is now an assistant professor at Harvard University.

Stanford Thompson
“My father always stressed the importance of hard work and consistent practice. I was fortunate enough to be able to study privately with musicians through the miltary.

Nathan R. Chapman Memorial Golf Tournament September 8-9
The Fourth Annual SFC Nathan R. Chapman Memorial Golf Tournament was held Tuesday, September 9, at Cimarron Hills Golf Club and Country Club in Georgetown, Texas. The tournament was organized by Will and Lynn Chapman, parents of SFC Nathan Chapman, who in 2002 became the first American soldier killed in the War on Terror. On September 8, a Fallen Heroes Commemoration ceremony was held for the Nathan Chapman Memorial with a tribute dinner and auction following the service. For the past three years, the Chapman’s have generously made Freedom Alliance the beneficiary of the tournament, donating more than $100,000 to the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund. Freedom Alliance is honored and grateful to be associated with the tournament. For more information, please visit www.nathanchapmanfund.org.

Tunnels to Towers Run/Walk September 28
The Firefighter Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Run/Walk will be held in New York City on Sunday, September 28. The event is held in memory of firefighter Stephen Siller, who was tragically killed trying to save victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In 2006, Freedom Alliance presented the Defender of Freedom Award, posthumously, to Stephen. The event, through the “Let Us Do Good Children’s Foundation,” has donated more than $130,000 to the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund. We thank Stephen’s family and especially his brother, Frank, and his team for their support and encourage those who can, to participate. For more information, please visit www.tunneltotowersrun.org.

Events

September 19 – The Fourth Annual Aerotek Golf Tournament, Red Hawk Golf Club in Temecula, CA. Freedom Alliance is grateful for Aerotek’s steadfast and generous support over the past four years. Contact Doug Poldrugo: (760) 458-7633.

September 20 – American Legion Pig Roast in Rutherford, NJ, Contact Joe Brennan: (201) 939-9895.

September 28 – Annual Charity Shoot at Island Creek Sporting Clays, Toronto, OH. www.islandcreeksc.com or (740) 282-5830.


October 4 – American Legion Memorial Golf Tournament, Two Oaks North Golf Club in Wautoma, WI. Contact Rusty Grimm (920) 787-7132 or rusty@twooaksgolf.com.

Join Oliver North, Newt Gingrich, Ed Meese and Tom Kilgannon for the 2009 FREEDOM CRUISE and CONFERENCE

Freedom Alliance Founder and Honorary Chairman LtCol Oliver North and Freedom Alliance President Tom Kilgannon will be joined by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former U.S. Attorney General Ed Meese for the 2009 Freedom Cruise and Conference June 12-22 on Holland America’s newest five star ship, the ms Eurodam, for the Gems of the Baltic Cruise.

The cruise will feature stimulating seminars on critical policy issues including: America’s national defense, constitutional principles, the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, globalization and the defense of American sovereignty, among others. Additional special guest speakers will be confirmed in the months ahead.

The Freedom Cruise will take you on a journey through some of Europe’s most beautiful and historic cities. Sailing from Copenhagen, Denmark, cruisers will visit Berlin and Kiel, Germany; Tallinn, Estonia; St. Petersburg, Russia; Helsinki, Finland; and Stockholm, Sweden before returning to Copenhagen. Special, guided port tours are available to explore the palaces, museums and rich imperial past of St. Petersburg – founded by Peter the Great; the medieval Old Town of Tallinn in Estonia and to witness the historic Brandenburg Gate, site of President Ronald Reagan’s famous “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall” speech.

During the ten-day deluxe cruise, there will be opportunities to dine, mix and mingle with leading conservative policymakers and other special cruise guests. Book your cruise reservation today by visiting www.freedomcruise.com. For more information, please contact Jennifer Pusatere, Freedom Alliance Director of Development, at (800) 475-6620.

Freedom Alliance Army-Navy Weekend

The Annual Freedom Alliance Army-Navy Weekend is scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, December 4 - 6, 2008 in Washington D.C. and Philadelphia. It is a great time to visit our Nation’s Capital while it is decked out with holiday decorations, including the National Christmas Tree near the Washington Monument. This all-inclusive weekend will “kick off” Thursday evening with the Defender of Freedom Award Dinner at the Mayflower Hotel with keynote speaker, Laura Ingraham, well-known national radio talk show, television host and bestselling author.

Friday’s festivities include policy seminars with Freedom Alliance Founder and Honorary Chairman Oliver North, Freedom Alliance President Tom Kilgannon and many others. Friday’s agenda also includes a tour through the Newseum (www.newseum.org), which recently opened the new “G-Men and Journalists” exhibit that highlights the FBI’s efforts to fight crime. There will also be a dinner at the Newseum’s rooftop dining room, where guests will enjoy unparalleled panoramic views of the U.S. Capitol and other historic sites.

Saturday morning, the group will travel to Philadelphia to enjoy the 109th Army-Navy Football game with Colonel North, Tom Kilgannon and Freedom Alliance friends and supporters, in skyboxes high above Lincoln Financial Field. For more information or to reserve your place, please contact Jennifer Pusatere, Freedom Alliance Director of Development, at (800) 475-6620.

Coming Soon!

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