

# "Brickie" Battalion gets its due rewards

by Rob Earnshaw

The cadets of Hobart High School's JROTC program, also known as the "Brickie" Battalion, were honored at the first annual spring awards banquet. The affair was held at Hobart's American Legion Post 54 and recognized cadets for their distinguished accomplishments in physical, military and academic categories.

"These cadets worked hard this year, it's a privilege to teach them and an honor to train them," said Lt. Col. Scott Buhmann, senior army instructor for the JROTC.

Hobart High School principal Dave Spitzer presented the academic awards. One of them, the "Principal's Award for Determination," is unique to the Hobart JROTC program and went to cadet Ruben Escoto. Senior Nicole Kuech won the award for "Top Academic Cadet of the Year."

One of the biggest honors of the evening was presented upon Steven Bateman. His peers voted the junior as the "Cadet of the Year." Bateman, who was also the evening's emcee, was honored but not overly surprised.

"From the beginning of the year I had confidence of all my peers," he said.

Bateman also credited the JROTC program with "making me a better person."

Student cadets honored included Kimberly Paterson, who was recognized for her role as the leader of the cadet battalion and Mitch Weidinger, who will be joining the ranks of the Indiana National Guard.

"He's proud to wear the uniform," said Capt. John Pitt of the Indiana National Guard, which helped sponsor the banquet.

Several cadets receiving awards were not in uniform. These cadets were in JROTC during first semester as freshman – and freshman can only be in JROTC for one semester. Buhmann mentioned how significant it was to the ceremony.

"It means that their impact was so great in one short semester six months ago that we're still giving them awards tonight," he said.

A surprise award not featured in the evening's script was given to JROTC army instructor 1st Sgt. Leo Marshall. Presenting Marshall with a pocket watch inscribed with the Army symbol were Capt. Pitt and Sgt. Dominick Naminski, also of the Indiana National Guard. Marshall, who served for 24 years before retiring last August, received a standing ovation from the audience.

Congratulating Marshall and mingling with the cadets following the ceremony was American Legion Post 54 vice commander and World War II veteran Bill Courtright. He explained how proud the Legion was to have donated its hall for



Cadet Steven Bateman holds his trophy as he poses with 1st Sgt. Leo Marshall and Lt. Col. Scott Buhmann. The Hobart High School JROTC recently held its first annual spring awards ceremony at American Legion Post 54.

the banquet.

"These cadets are possibly up and coming members of our services," he said.

The Indiana National Guard provided the awards, food and beverages for the banquet. Plaques won by the cadets will be inscribed with their names and be permanently displayed at the high school.

To contact Rob Earnshaw, send an email to [rob@greatlakesmarketing.net](mailto:rob@greatlakesmarketing.net).