

In Memoriam

On Thursday, Oct. 9, 2003, a memorial service was held on the APSU campus, and the American flag flew half-staff outside City Hall in Passaic, N.J., both in memory of 2ND LT. RICHARD TORRES ('02), 25, the first ROTC graduate from APSU killed in combat since the beginning of Austin Peay's ROTC program in 1971.

The son of Peruvian immigrants, Torres—an award-winning ROTC cadet—was killed in action in Iraq Oct. 6, 2003. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 20th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y. He had been a sergeant with the 326th Engineer Battalion at Fort Campbell before enrolling in APSU's ROTC program and becoming a Governors Guard.

In May 2002, with his entire family in attendance from New Jersey, Torres graduated from APSU with honors and a double major in history and political science. According to friends, he had offers with the FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department, but he wanted to remain in the military.

Lt. Col. Patrick O'Hara, professor of military science at APSU, described Torres as “truly an all-around outstanding young man.” In an e-mail sent to those close to Torres, O'Hara said, “He pos-

sessed all the attributes and qualities of a junior leader in the Army. He also ... lived his life by our Army values ... Quick with a witty joke but serious when required to get the mission done.

“Every day I saw him at work, I used to ask him, ‘What are you doing today, lieutenant?’ He would always reply, ‘I’m drivin’ on, Sir. I have a mission!’

That was truly his essence.”

During a second memorial held Dec. 4, the advanced course classroom in the ROTC Armory was dedicated to Torres.

Torres is survived by his wife, Linda, his parents, Julian and Dora Torres, and his brother, Stewart, all of Passaic, N.J.



Gen. John M. Keane, then Army Vice Chief of Staff, right, administered the oath to graduates of APSU's award-winning ROTC Program during the May 2002 Commencement. One cadet who swore to defend the constitution of the United States as a newly commissioned officer in the U.S. Army was 2nd Lt. Richard Torres, at left. On Oct. 9, 2003, Torres became the first ROTC graduate from APSU killed in combat since Austin Peay's ROTC Program began in 1971.