

Father, son both alumni and, now, U.S. Army officers

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/29419/father-son-both-alumni-and-now-u-s-army-officers/>

It took some coordination, but Lt. Col. Mike Hert made it back from service in Africa to the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. It was an important trip; he couldn't miss the "once-in-a-lifetime" event – his son Christian's commissioning into the U.S. Army.

On the same campus where both earned their college degrees, Hert helped officially welcome his son, 2nd Lt. Christian Hert, into the U.S. Army as an officer on Sept. 12.

"The university drew me to town, and I have lived here since," Lt. Col. Hert said, shortly after his son's ceremony in a Kolf Sports Center classroom. "It has always been the cornerstone of our lives."

More than 50 guests, including members of the Hert family, UW Oshkosh's Military Science program and the campus-based Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), gathered to witness and applaud 2nd Lt. Hert's commissioning.

"I'm obviously honored," said Sgt. 1st Class Jason Vincent, who gave 2nd Lt. Hert his first symbolic salute – a tradition of the U.S. Army commissioning ceremony. "My wife is also an officer. I gave her her first salute. This is probably equally important to me and meaningful. I've known Chris and his father since he was 15. I'm extremely proud of him."

2nd Lt. Hert graduated from UW Oshkosh over the summer with a degree in Kinesiology.

Vincent said it was very rare to not only have a father and son participate in a commissioning together, but the opportunity to host the event at both soldiers' alma mater – and to have both men serve in the 32nd Red Arrow Infantry Brigade – made the Sept. 12 ceremony additionally special.

The [Army ROTC program at UW Oshkosh](#) is the result of a long-standing collaboration with a constellation of regional higher educational institutions and colleges. It began in 1968, producing its first officers in 1970. Three institutions – UW Oshkosh, Ripon College and St. Norbert -- developed a consortium in 1977, consolidating programs due to enrollment challenges. That consortium was dissolved in the fall 1983. In 1991, UW Oshkosh established partnership agreements with its partner schools along with Marion College, UW-Green Bay and Bellin College of Nursing. In 2004, Lawrence University also joined the partnership. Today, the six programs form the Fox Valley Senior ROTC Battalion headquartered in UW Oshkosh's Kolf Sports Center.

Lt. Col. Hert, who earned his degrees from UW Oshkosh in 1983 and 1985, returned from service in Africa only days before the commissioning. With approval, he was permitted to slightly shorten a debriefing in Mississippi to attend his son's commissioning at UW Oshkosh.

"I don't think we knew for positive until a couple of days ago," 2nd Lt. Hert said, noting the close-call it

would be if his father could participate in the ceremony.

The Hert family has a long and distinguished record of military service. With ancestors who served in World Wars I and II, Lt. Col. Hert kept his family's dedication to service going, enlisting with the Army in 1976. He has been deployed five times since Sept. 11, 2001.

While he plans his retirement, his son prepares to be stationed in Hawaii.

"I remember as a child going through these Kolf halls to work out with my dad," 2nd Lt. Hert said.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime moment," his father said.

Learn more:

- [UWO campus community gives back, globally](#) (May 2010)
- [UW Oshkosh Army ROTC Battalion](#)
- [UW Oshkosh Veterans Resource Center](#)