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New Sculpture Dedicated to Fallen Soldiers, Northern Iowa Today, Winter 2010

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The Fallen Soldier Memorial now sits in front of the University of Northern Iowa West Gym. The UNI ROTC program dedicated the new 4-by-4 foot, stainless steel sculpture in August.

The memorial's overall shape resembles a set of dog tags. A silhouette of U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Richard “Brian” Gienau is cut out of the middle. Gienau, a former cadet with the UNI ROTC, was killed in action while serving in Iraq in February 2005.

Messages are inscribed on both sides. One side recites Iowa's state motto, “Our liberties we prize and our rights we maintain,” with etches of the Campanile, fields of corn and Panther paw prints to symbolize the life and study of UNI students.

The other side contains the ROTC motto, “Leadership Excellence,” and includes the lamp of learning, knowledge and enlightenment: a sword and helmet, the tools of the military; the American flag; and boot prints of a soldier to symbolize service to country.

“We wanted to create a piece that would represent the American soldier and UNI alumni together,” stated sculptor and UNI alumnus Will Overstreet '05, who also is an active member of the Iowa National Guard. “Brian's death was the original inspiration for this project. We wanted to honor him specifically but knew we had a larger responsibility in front of us. It's a way of reminding others about the sacrifices made by service men and women.”

“It's remarkable to have such a magnificent sculpture on a college campus,” states Lt. Col. John Roadcap, head of UNI's Department of Military Sciences and ROTC. “It also allows students to reflect and see that we're a country still at war.”