

LOSE 4 POUNDS IN 14 DAYS P. 94

MARCH/APRIL 2010  
VOL 7 :: ISSUE 2



>> ON THE ROAD

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FOR THE OLYMPICS

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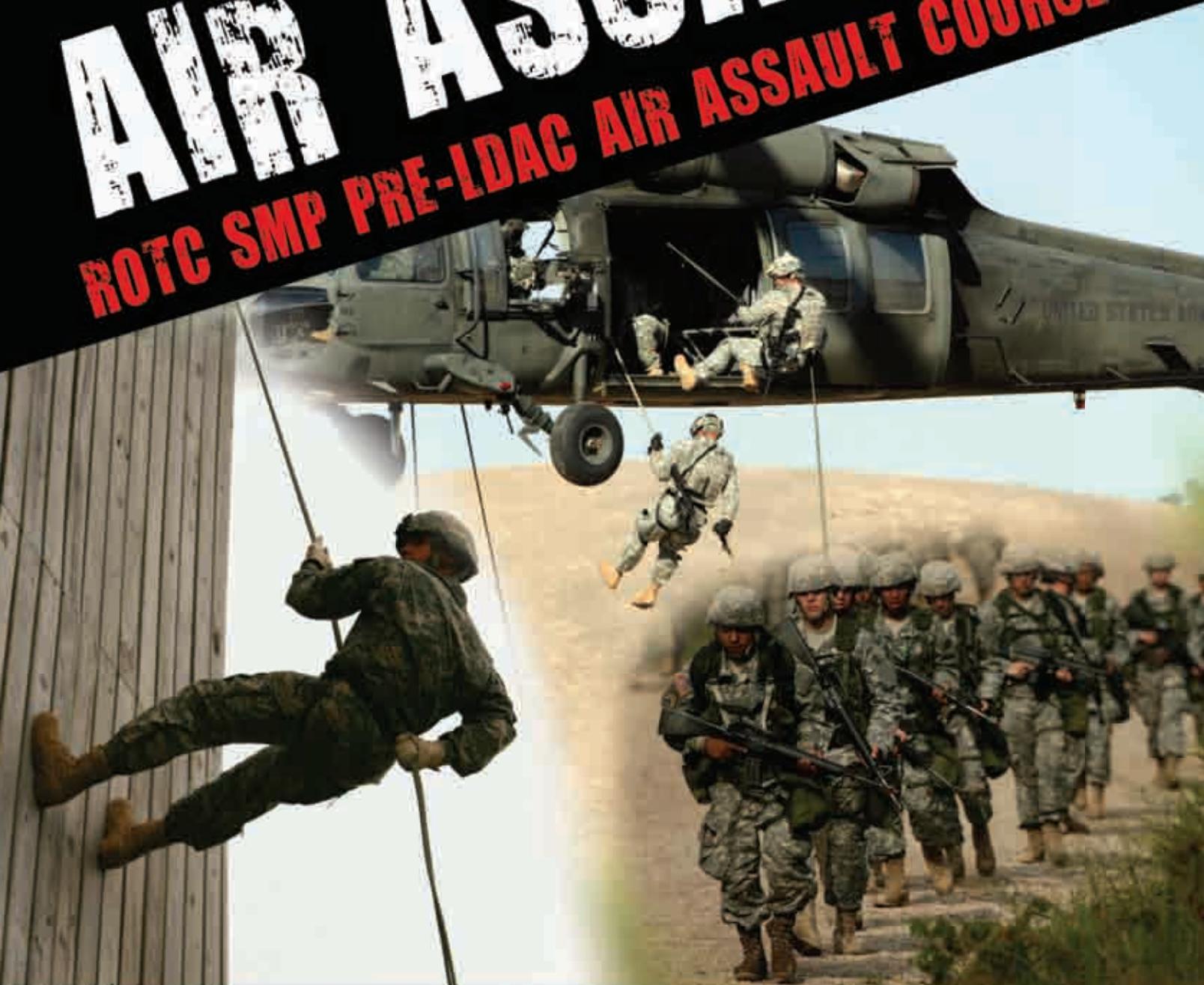
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NATIONAL  
**GUARD**

VOL 7 : ISSUE 2

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# Letter From Leadership

GOV. EDWARD G. RENDELL



## Honoring Your Sacrifice

### *Greetings,*

In response to more than seven years of overseas contingency operations and increased vigilance here at home, the roles and missions of the National Guard have expanded exponentially. Today, the Pennsylvania National Guard is one of the most deployed Guards in the nation, with more than 5,000 in our ranks in Iraq and Afghanistan, and at other strategic locations around the world.

This transition from a strategic reserve force to an operational force has come at great personal sacrifice.

Even with tremendous losses and the increase in global commitments, the Guard still plays a critical role here at home—from security to disaster response. To meet these missions, many Guard units are organized and trained to the highest levels in modern history and equipped with some of the most modern tools of war. It is, however, never about the equipment, the missions or the institution—rather, it is always about the people.

The men and women of the National Guard are some of the finest our nation has to offer. Nearly every day I am reminded of the tremendous service, dedication and sacrifice undertaken by Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. I am both humbled and honored to be part of this incredible team.

There are many titles I have as governor, but there is none that I am more proud of than commander in chief of the Pennsylvania National Guard. I salute our Guard members across our commonwealth and our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell".

Edward G. Rendell  
Governor, Pennsylvania

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# From the Editor

KEITH KAWASAKI

## We're Amping Things Up!

**We're into our seventh year of GX**, and it's time to step up our game. This year, you can expect to see GX team members hitting more states and more exercises than ever before. We're going to be down in the dirt, marching alongside you, sharing your story with the masses.

And, we're going to kick up the HOOAH. Meaning, more killer features like this issue's spotlight on snipers (p. 44)! In the coming months, expect us to jump headfirst into Fort Jackson to give an inside look at Basic Training, fly high with aviation in Colorado and follow more units than ever deep into Afghanistan and Iraq with exclusive photos, stories and video.

You might be wondering how we're going to support video with a magazine. Well, it'll all happen at the new [GXonline.com](http://GXonline.com). Check it out today. This is just phase one. We're amping that baby up with all sorts of exclusive extras from the road and from you, our readers. That's right, we're opening the floodgates. Do you have cool photos or video of Guard action? Send your photos and videos to:

Keith@GXonline.com

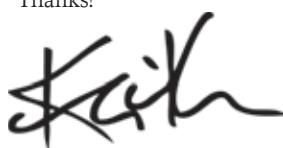
Or mail us a CD or DVD at:

Keith Kawasaki  
*GX: The Guard Experience*  
565 Marriott Dr., Suite 700  
Nashville, TN 37214

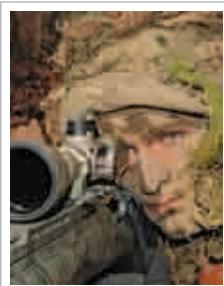
We're looking for video that declares why you serve in and support the National Guard. Please, no snoozy videos. Bring the thunder. Bring the hero stuff, for example, troops racing through the sky in a Black Hawk, handing out toys to kids or building schools in South America, or simply EOD having a field day lighting up the sky!

Please note, all videos will be screened for OPSEC and profanity. Keep it clean!

If you've got a story to tell, we're the team to make it happen. No story is too big or too small. From the small towns to the big cities, we know National Guard Soldiers are out there making a difference every day. Let us put the spotlight on our heroes. Thanks!



Keith Kawasaki, Editor-in-Chief  
Keith@GXonline.com



### ON THE COVER

COVER PHOTO BY  
1ST LT. BARRY EASON,  
ARKANSAS AIR  
NATIONAL GUARD



[www.GXonline.com](http://www.GXonline.com)

**MISSION:** To celebrate and support the Soldiers and families of the National Guard. To provide today's Army National Guard members with information for becoming a better Soldier and better citizen. To encourage and assist Guard Soldiers in maximizing the benefits of their military career as well as their personal and family goals.

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# Mailbag



Clint Wood,

The article that appeared in the Nov./Dec. issue of GX that covered the Best Warrior Competition was an awesome eight pages. Not only does your magazine cover all the deployments and Soldiers on those deployments, but it also covers the Soldiers who are truly at the top of their game back here at home. Most, if not all, of these Soldiers have deployed, and they are still giving it their all on a daily basis. Your magazine gives a very in-depth look at the five W's: who, what, when, where and why.

I can always count on getting the best information that's out there on Soldiers all over the world or back here at home. The photographs used are just as awesome—most of them tell a story in themselves.

Hats off to you and the whole team at GX for another outstanding issue.

**MSG John J. Schwartz**

Minnesota Army National Guard



Left to right: California State University, Long Beach, student and Army SGT Noel Rabina, CSULB President F. King Alexander, VetNet (student Veterans group) President Adam Renteria and Veterans University Director Army LTC (ret.) Pat O'Rourke

On Veterans Day, California State University, Long Beach, showcased its commitment to helping Veterans transition from military service to college, the workforce and civilian life during the inaugural open house of its new Veterans Center.

**Paul Browning**

California State University, Long Beach

Christian,

Here is a photo of some of our guys over in Iraq wearing the 2009 Dixie Thunder Run shirts. They are in the 155th BCT, Mississippi National Guard and enjoy reading your magazine. Thanks for all your help.

**SFC Tony Shackleford**

Mississippi Army National Guard



Send your photos  
and letters to  
[editor@GXonline.com](mailto:editor@GXonline.com).

# Letters From the Front



SPC Daniel Clark, a medic attached to Company C, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, talks with a local woman about her daughter's health, south of Baghdad, Dec. 12, 2009.

## 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team



**1LT Troy Smith**  
Company A, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team

**MY GRANDFATHER**, Frank Schroeder, was drafted into the Army for World War II. I have his old OD green duffel bag with his name (misspelled, of course). My grandma doesn't remember what his job was or anything about that time in his life.

When I enlisted, I received a duffel of my own. It was just a bag to some, but that humble green color and black stencil made me feel more pride than I've ever felt in my life. Even the smell ... we all know the smell.

I took more pride in receiving that bag at Basic Training than I did in receiving my commission. The bar means a lot to many people who earn it, and I don't take it for granted, but that OD green duffel is what ties me to my lineage. It symbolizes work, functionality, flexibility and the "Always Ready" mind-set. It made me feel closer to him.

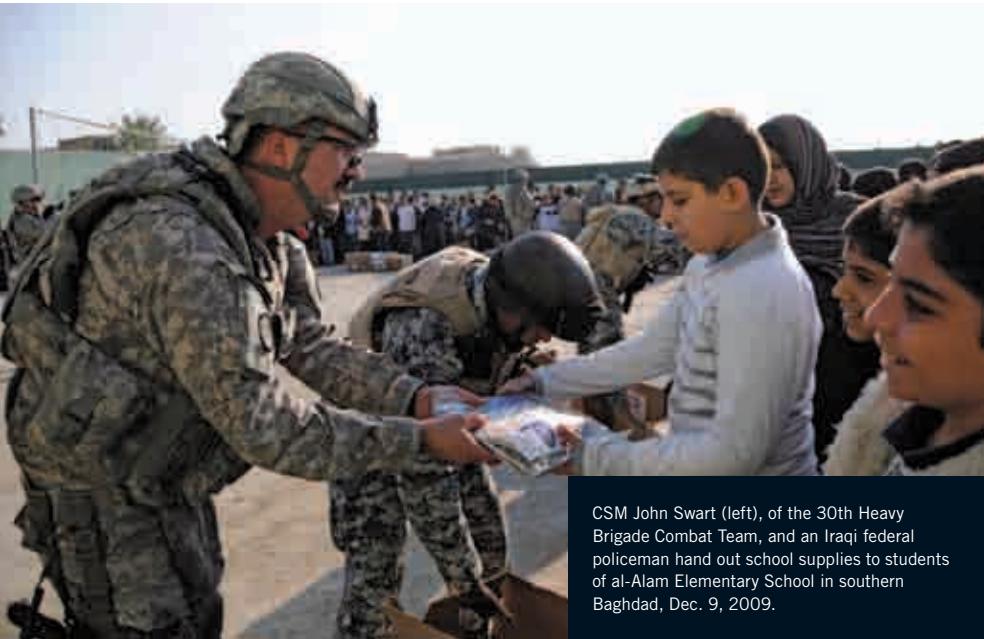
On Veterans Day, I thought about what he may have experienced and what we might have talked about. I thought about what he might have had in his bag, compared to what I had in mine. Odds are, some items would be extremely different. But some might be the same. The great thing is, he carried that bag for his country when it called on him, and that's what makes me proud to carry mine.



**SPC Abram Ferguson**  
Troop A, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team

**THE NOISE OF CRICKETS** is replaced with machine-gun fire from the test-fire pit. The hills have been flattened, and the trees are gone. We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto. That was my thought after stepping foot off the plane in Iraq.

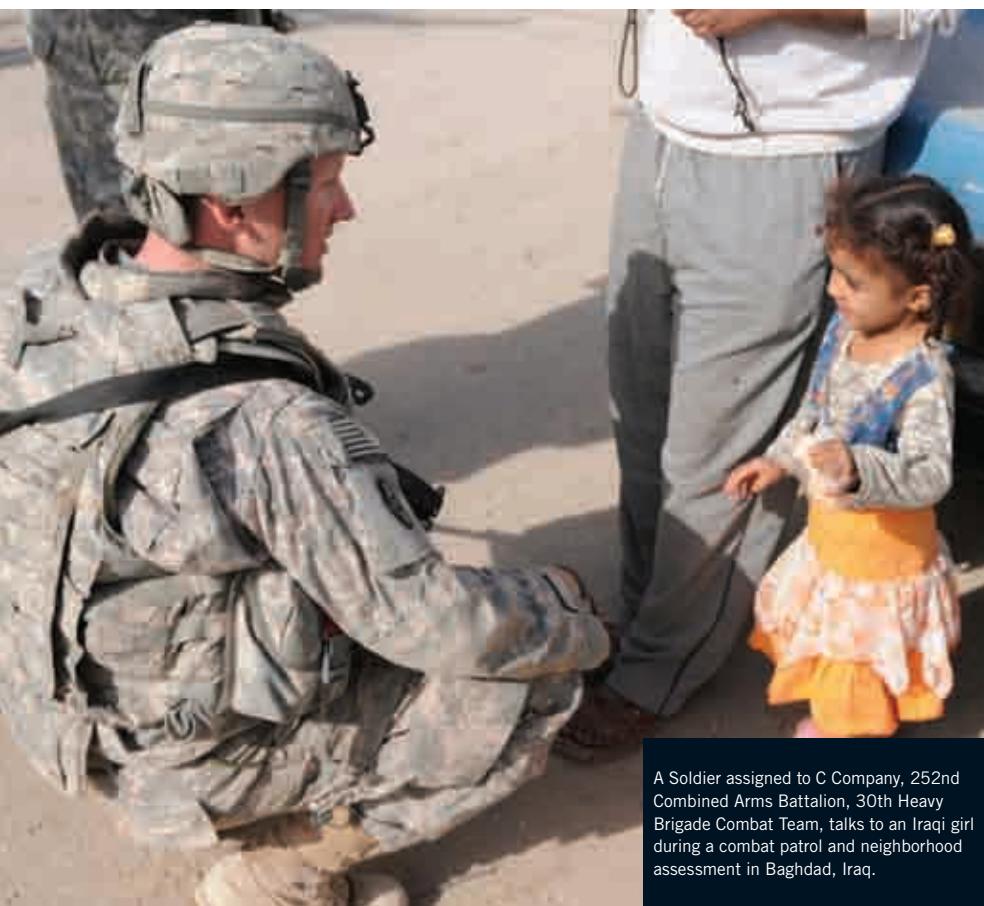
SGT MARY PHILLIPS



CSM John Swart (left), of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and an Iraqi federal policeman hand out school supplies to students of al-Alam Elementary School in southern Baghdad, Dec. 9, 2009.



SENIOR AIRMAN MICHAEL WYKES



A Soldier assigned to C Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, talks to an Iraqi girl during a combat patrol and neighborhood assessment in Baghdad, Iraq.



**SPC Justin M. Vance**  
Headquarters and  
Headquarters Battery,  
113th Fires Battalion,  
30th Heavy Brigade  
Combat Team

**MY EXPERIENCES** during this deployment will be some of the more memorable days in my life.

When I first came to the 113th Field Artillery Battalion, I didn't know anyone. I had to work with people I'd never met. It has been 11 months, and I've made some good friends.

I mainly work in the battalion's personnel department as the mail clerk. We work every day from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. On some nights, I stay up really late waiting for the mail to get here from our brigade.

Our biggest problem in the personnel department is getting everything finished on time and correctly. The main activity that helps is physical training—volleyball, basketball and other kinds of tournaments. They're always trying to keep us active and help us have fun in some way.

The heat was pretty intense when we first arrived, but it has tapered off. These days the mornings are cool, and sometimes downright cold, but we're coping well and counting the days until we leave.

Being downrange is very different from being at home in Charleston, WV. In America, many people have a "work hard, play hard" mentality. In Iraq, it's more like "work hard and live." As our trucks roll past people working in fields, children drop whatever they're doing and run to the truck, begging for clean water to drink. Some people back home don't know how good they have it.

My downtime in Iraq is filled with making it feel as much like home as possible. Being

on a schedule helps a lot. When I lay my head down at night, I know I'm a day closer to going home.

As an infantryman, I've done some exciting things here, from working with the Iraqi Army to searching for weapons caches.

This deployment has been good so far. My squadron has not lost a single Soldier. I believe this is because of good training and leadership. Hopefully, this will remain the same, and God will be with us until we go home.





## »NIGHT ASSAULT

### [ Khost, Afghanistan ]

Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, Indiana National Guard, provide 120 mm mortar fire support in battle to Soldiers from Company D, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division at Afghan Combat Outpost Chergotah located in the Terezayi district of Khost province, Afghanistan.

Distance from New Albany, IN, to Khost City, Afghanistan: 7,245 miles





## »BAND OF BROTHERS

[ Camp Shelby, MS ]

Soldiers from Regimental Higher Headquarters Troop, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard participate in training on Dec. 12, 2009, in preparation for a scheduled deployment to Iraq at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Hattiesburg, MS. This is the unit's second tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in five years.



Photo by SSG Russell Lee Klika, 278th ACR Public Affairs

Distance from Hattiesburg, MS, to Knoxville, TN: 446 miles





## » AFGHAN CO-OP

[ Kabul, Afghanistan ]

SGT Rob Feiser, an infantry scout assigned to the Kapisa-Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team, pulls security during a visit to a high school construction project in Abdul Manan in the Kapisa province of Afghanistan. Feiser was originally with the 1st Battalion, 158th Cavalry Regiment, Maryland National Guard.

Photo by SGT Teddy Wade



Distance from Annapolis, MD, to Kabul, Afghanistan: 6,918 miles





## »DEFENDING FREEDOM

### [ Cuba ]

Soldiers from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard pose for a group photo in front of the Camp America sign Aug. 20, 2009, at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Puerto Rico Army National Guard is here on a yearlong deployment as Joint Task Force Guantanamo's headquarters company.

Distance from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba: 606 miles

Photo by PFC Christopher Vann





**AFGHAN CONVOY**  
Maine Soldiers keep roads safe.



**DEDICATED SERVICE**  
Soldiers re-enlist in Iraq.



**USO HERO**  
New Yorker honored for service.



**INTO THE FIRE**  
Patriot Academy trains cadets.



**GUARD HISTORY**  
Soldier's experience at a glance.

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**"YESTERDAY, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GROUND WAR, IRAQ HAD THE FOURTH LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD. TODAY, THEY HAVE THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN IRAQ."**

>> GENERAL H. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF, 1991



## Gift of Sight

### SOLDIERS ASSIST IN IRAQI BABY'S EYE SURGERY

Story and photo by SPC Ruth McClary,

North Carolina Army National Guard | BAGHDAD, IRAQ

**S**oldiers, family members and friends have brought the gift of sight to an Iraqi baby born blind with congenital cataracts.

North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, were invited to a celebration Dec. 9, hosted by the family of Noor Hassam Oudah—known as “Baby Nourah”—in appreciation for setting up and covering expenses for the baby’s Nov. 15 eye surgery, three days after her first birthday.

Though Nourah’s condition was reversible with surgery, the operation was out of reach for a family living in Baghdad. The city’s hospitals lack the facilities and physicians to perform the procedure.

“I was very pleased to be able to do something for this family,” said First Lieutenant Jason Hickman, a platoon leader in Troop C. “I was relieved that everything fell into place, considering all the obstacles that we faced.”

Hickman said it was a perfect example of divine intervention. It happened on a dark road about five months ago when a convoy made a wrong turn and ended up in Zwaynat, a small village southwest of Baghdad.

Nourah was there visiting with her uncle, who informed Hickman of the baby’s plight.

“So there we were at a place we hadn’t intended on being,” Hickman said. “Wrong turn, perhaps, but that’s not how I see it. My interest and contacts with the Order of St. John, the wrong turn, her being there with her uncle instead of with her parents in Baghdad—no, not a coincidence.”

The Order of St. John, accredited by the United Nations, provides first

aid, healthcare and support services in more than 40 countries.

“I don’t believe in the traditional sense of the word ‘destiny,’ but I do believe that God puts people in certain places at certain times,” Hickman said. “All you have to do is look for the road signs. The signs were clear, so I sent some emails, and that’s how we arrived here.”

Once Nourah was diagnosed, Hickman emailed St. John’s Jerusalem Eye Hospital, the main provider of eye care in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Through contact with Ruth Ann Skaff, the U.S. executive director of the Priory of St. John’s, Hickman was referred to Dr. Mehyar of the Khalidi Medical Center in Amman, Jordan, where the procedure was performed. Hickman asked for

donations from fellow Soldiers and emailed his family. Family members and friends from the West Virginia communities of Greenville, Belmont and St. Mary’s were the main contributors of the \$5,000 needed to help Nourah.

“Lieutenant Hickman’s father passed away as we were working out all the details for Nourah,” said Staff Sergeant Travers Brake of Elkins, WV, who took over the campaign while Hickman was on emergency leave. “He asked for the guys in the platoon to give donations to Nourah in lieu of sending flowers. Now that’s special.”

Many emails and meetings followed, and led to the celebration. Nourah’s paternal grandfather, Oudah Ghardi Sultan al-Jubori, said she will have to wear glasses for five years—a small sacrifice for a lifetime of vision.

“We are very grateful to you,” Jubori said to Hickman and the other Soldiers. He recalled a time when Iraqis and U.S. Soldiers couldn’t sit and talk without wearing armored vest and helmets. “Now we are very close,” he said.

Since the operation, family members said Nourah crawls, grabs for things and follows hands, fingers and objects in front of her.

“The Lord may not push you around the board like a pawn, but every now and again he puts you where he wants you,” Hickman said. “We were supposed to end up in Zwaynat that night. It was just up to us what we were going to do when we got there.” **GX**



LT Jason Hickman holds Noor Hassam Oudah during a celebration in her honor, Dec. 9, 2009. The 1-year-old, known as “Baby Nourah,” was born blind with congenital cataracts. With help from their families and friends, North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers raised money for the operation she needed to gain her sight.



From left, SGT Debra Lukian, CPT Trish Barker, SSG Misty Seward and CWO Andrea Galatian, of the Army's 3/238th Medevac, C Company, became the company's first all-female crew just before Thanksgiving. They're serving in Iraq as part of Task Force Keystone.

# Female Medevac Crew Makes History

Story and photo by SGT Neil Gussman,

28th Combat Aviation Brigade /

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, IRAQ

**F**our Soldiers serving with the New Hampshire National Guard earned a special distinction when they became their company's first all-female medical evacuation crew.

In the three days before Thanksgiving, Captain Trish Barker, Chief Warrant Officer Andrea Galatian, Staff Sergeant Misty Seward and Sergeant Debra Lukian, of the Army's 3/238th Medevac, C Company, composed one of the on-alert crews for Task Force Keystone. Officials aren't sure how rare the all-female medevac crew is, but it's an event the company is proud of.

"There must have been another all-female medevac crew somewhere, but I haven't seen one," said Galatian, the crew's pilot.

"The odds are slim for such a crew to come up on rotation," said Major David Mattimore, commander of C Company, 3/238th Medevac, from Hampton, NH.

"It would not have been possible until one of our avionics sergeants became a crew chief," he said.

That crew chief is also the newest name on the flight roster: Lukian, 43, enlisted following 9/11. "I just barely made the age cutoff," she said.

Lukan trained as an avionics mechanic and just recently switched from the shop to flight crew. She deployed to Camp Speicher and Tikrit from 2005 to 2006 and served in the avionics field. She's happy to be on the flight rotation this time, she said.

"My family doesn't know I'm flying," she said.

"They worry a lot. But I suppose I'll have to tell them eventually."

In the civilian world, Lukian is a federal technician in avionics for the New Hampshire National Guard.

Seward, 30, agreed with Galatian on the uniqueness of the crew. "Same for me," she said. "Never flew with an all-girl crew."

In fact, with a total of nine deployments among them, and between eight and 12 years of service apiece, this still is a first-time experience for the entire crew, Barker, the operations officer, said.

Seward enlisted in 1998 and has served as a medic for 11 years. She has four years as a flight medic and seven on the ground. She deployed to Kuwait from 2001 to 2002 and to Baghdad from 2006 to 2007, both tours as a ground medic.

When she returns from her current tour, Seward will resume her job as a security officer at a level-one trauma clinic in Lansing, MI.

Galatian enlisted in 1997 and served five years as an administrative clerk before going to flight school in 2002. She has served seven years as a pilot, including a deployment to Bosnia in 2005.

As a civilian, Galatian is the business analyst for the real estate division of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Barker, 30, enlisted in 1999 as an aircraft fueller. She went to Officer Candidate School in 2003 and Flight School in 2004. She was deployed to Bosnia in 2005 as a medevac section leader.

When she returns from this deployment, she will resume her job as the state occupational health specialist for the Michigan Army National Guard.

"It may be months before this crew comes up in the rotation again," Mattimore said. "We have only nine female flight crew members, and everyone rotates to our remote bases, so the odds of them being back together again are low."

Still, the crew is happy to have had the experience. "I'm glad we got a chance to be first," Barker said, "even if it is just first for us." **GX**



A U.S. military cargo truck bypasses a charred vehicle destroyed by a roadside bomb while moving building materials to Forward Operating Base Leatherneck in Afghanistan's Helmand province. The Maine National Guard's 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion runs regular convoys to supply bases across southern Afghanistan.

## Maine Soldiers Support Base Expansion in Afghanistan

*Story and photo by SPC Elisebet Freeburg,  
Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan |*

**KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN**

**E**ARLIER IN 2009, troops from the Maine National Guard's 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion (CSSB) began supporting the first Afghan buildup by transporting equipment, supplies and building materials to numerous forward operating bases.

An element of Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan, the 286th CSSB ran regular convoys to Forward Operating Base Leatherneck in Afghanistan's Helmand Province in support of the Marines and westward expansion. With President Barack Obama's recent decision to send 30,000 more troops here, the unit's missions to Leatherneck were even more timely.

Anticipating growth, senior-level leaders of Joint Sustainment Command Afghanistan planned these missions based on strategic objectives of where U.S. forces should be, said Lieutenant Colonel Diane Dunn, 286th CSSB commander.

"Additional troops may not go west," she said. "But for troops who do go there, this will be important."

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, whose troops largely operate in Helmand, has said that

western Afghanistan is exactly where many additional service members will go.

Besides moving materials for tents, buildings and perimeter fortifications by military cargo trucks, troops under the 286th CSSB also provide convoy security using armored gun trucks called MRAP, or Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles. Convoys face multiple dangers from roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades, small-arms fire and vehicle-borne bombs. The security trucks roll through Afghan towns and cities while local traffic races in and around the convoy.

With the summer arrival of the 2nd Infantry Division's 5th Stryker Brigade, Dunn noticed a decline in roadside-bomb attacks on Highway 1, the country's main road from its second-largest city, Kandahar, to its largest and capital, Kabul.

"There was a time that [troops] knew when they left [the base], that they might very likely get hit," Dunn said.

The scarred route to Leatherneck bears both old and fresh gouges and holes from roadside bombs. The 286th CSSB convoys bypass the charred vehicles and rubble, driving off-road, often up inclines, through dirt and desert.

On any given day, the 286th CSSB could have more than 150 Soldiers on the road, Dunn said. The Leatherneck missions combine several

transportation companies under the 286th CSSB, including the 737th and the 154th. One company supplies the cargo trucks, while another provides the MRAPs. Over the past several months, these convoys have moved building and electrical materials needed to expand numerous forward operating bases, including Lagman, Spin Boldak, Tarin Kowt, Frontenac and Wolverine. The 286th CSSB also convoyed water and food to Forward Operating Base Dwyer in Helmand province when the Marines began operations there.

"We're making sure that stuff is out there where the warfighters are," Dunn said.

Maintenance is another aspect of frequent missions. When vehicles drive daily, they need constant upkeep to keep running.

"We all are contributing," said Sergeant Sean Tait, a 737th Transportation Company team leader. "Our Soldiers and local [employees] need their supplies, so we have a mission, and we all feel good about it."

While 286th CSSB Soldiers prepare to return to Maine early in 2010, they've begun a new undertaking—to help the 2nd Infantry Division's 5th Stryker Brigade protect population centers. As the Stryker Brigade moves to new locations closer to Afghan cities and towns, the 286th CSSB will convoy their equipment and supplies to the new locations. **GX**

## VICTORY MAP



# On-the-Job Training

Story and photo by SPC Ruth McClary, North Carolina Army National Guard / BAGHDAD, IRAQ

**SPORTING WORK GLOVES** and covered in engine grease, Specialist Jeremy Williams maneuvers an air wrench as he changes the tires on a H umvee at Camp Stryker, Dec. 11, 2009.

Changing tires is just the tip of the iceberg of responsibilities for Williams of the 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. He overhauls engines, installs fuel injector pumps and replaces brakes and transmissions since becoming a wheeled vehicle mechanic and arriving here last May after arriving in Iraq.

"He does his job, and he is one of the best Soldiers on the maintenance team," said maintenance supervisor Sergeant First Class Kevin Reynolds of Huntington, WV.

Williams, a native of Poca, WV, has learned how to maintain every type of military vehicle that rolls or is hauled into the A T roop motor pool. He and his co-workers are responsible for the upkeep of around 40 vehicles, ranging from Humvees to two-and-a-half-ton cargo trucks, and their work has been recognized and applauded by leaders in their military chain of command.

"We were recognized for having the best record for dead-lined vehicles," Williams said. "We send up a dead-line vehicle report—that's the report that tracks vehicles [out-of-service] for over 24 hours. Well, we never let one sit like that. We get them up and running within 24 hours."

Proud of their motor pool record, Williams and fellow Soldiers work well together setting standards that make their section stand out from the rest.

"We were the first to install 400-amp generators in our vehicles, which gives the vehicles more electrical power," Williams said. "The 200-amps makes the [navigation system] go down. The generators serve the same purpose on a military vehicle as an alternator on a car."

Adaptation has played a major role in Williams's success as a wheeled vehicle mechanic.

With a positive attitude, he actually enjoys his new position, sometimes working 16- to 18-hour days as needed.

"Specialist Williams went above and beyond in his duties to make sure every vehicle was up



SPC Jeremy Williams of Poca, WV, climbs on top of a Humvee to check fluids during a preventive maintenance check at Camp Stryker, Iraq.

to standard and ready for a mission, even on his days off," Reynolds said.

Making a change in his life and adapting is what led to Williams' entry into the military.

After a brief brush with the law, Williams' mother suggested he join the National Guard and get his GED. Williams took her advice and has served in the West Virginia Army National Guard for more than three years now.

After this deployment, he plans to attend the Warrior Leadership Course, which helps junior leaders transition into a noncommissioned officer role. He credits the Guard with his growth and maturity, and plans to retire from the military.

"I joined the military to get some discipline in my life, and it has paid off," Williams said. "It gives me something to look forward to and keeps me out of trouble." **GX**

## IDAHO

Members of the Idaho National Guard have made several trips to Cambodia this year as part of the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program, and this week, Royal Cambodian Armed Forces personnel will visit Idaho for the first time.

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces delegation of 10 officers will be led by Major General Phat Vibolsophea. They will visit Gowen Field and the Idaho National Guard to become familiar with how they are organized and operate.

Idaho's new partnership with the Kingdom of Cambodia now provides the Idaho National Guard the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the interests and security of the U.S. and the Pacific region. The Idaho Guard formally entered into a partnership with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces on Aug. 4, 2009.

## NEW YORK

Thirty New York Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers spent a day and walked 10 miles, collecting 2,000 pounds of food for Western New York food pantries on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

Led by New York Army National Guard Sergeant Kevin Lange, a Depew resident and member of the 105th MP Company, the Heroes March Against Hunger marchers generated 13,000 pounds of food, including an 11,000-pound donation from the Wegmann's supermarket chain.

The 2,000 pounds picked up at sites across Buffalo was more than double what was collected last year.

The Soldiers finished up at Buffalo City Hall, where Mayor Byron Brown greeted them.

The 105th MP Co. helped by collecting nonperishable food items and delivered these items to thousands of Western New Yorkers who were affected by the snow and ice storm.

They also checked up on the elderly, assisted in cleanup efforts and removed hazardous trees throughout their community.

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Indiana National Guard COL David Wood, left, re-enlists SFC Jorge Camara-Falu Oct. 5, 2009, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

# Re-Enlisting Abroad

## SOLDIERS CONTINUE SERVICE IN GUARD

Story and photo by SSG Jeff Lowry, Task Force 38 Public Affairs / JOINT BASE BALAD, IRAQ

■ **MANY SOLDIERS' ENLISTMENT TIME** comes to an end while deployed. Some choose to continue their military career. With stimulating economic programs in place and the chance to make lasting memories, several Task Force 38 Soldiers recently re-enlisted.

"There's a bonus available to traditional National Guard Soldiers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait," said Indiana National Guard Staff Sergeant Lee Ann Hiser, Task Force 38 retention noncommissioned officer.

The National Guard bonus was a lump sum, tax-free payment of \$5,000 if a Soldier signed a six-year contract. Hiser also noted other benefits.

"They get to stay in the Guard—that's their bonus," she said. "That's the biggest thing."

According to Hiser, there are many other benefits to being a National Guard Soldier, including college tuition payments, student loan repayments, dental insurance, life insurance and medical insurance.

"Just having those benefits right now, those are a lot of pluses," Hiser said. "I don't see why you'd get out at a time like this, when people don't have jobs."

Indiana National Guard Staff Sergeant John Brattain, LaPorte, IN, and a Company D, 1st

**"IT MADE IT  
FEEL LIKE I WAS  
REALLY HERE, IN  
IRAQ, AND PART  
OF SOMETHING  
SPECIAL."**

>> SSG John Brattain, Indiana Army National Guard

### PATRIOTISM PAYS

Active Duty Soldiers serving outside the continental U.S. can re-enlist for six years and receive an extension bonus of \$5,000. And for Soldiers serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait, you can receive your bonus as a lump-sum payment.

Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment technical inspector, re-enlisted for future benefits and possible advancement. He has served more than 20 years in the military.

"I wanted to have longevity," said Brattain, who plans to submit his packet for warrant officer candidate school when he returns from his deployment.

His re-enlistment ceremony took place atop an aircraft shelter here, and he said he has fond memories of that event.

"It made it feel like I was really here, in Iraq, and part of something special," said Brattain, who was given the oath by his friend and fellow Soldier, Chief Warrant Officer Bill Leonard, Task Force 38's material manager.

"You could see the whole base up there—it's surreal," Brattain said.

Whether memorable moments or monetary gain, Soldiers had something to take home with them after their deployment. **GX**

# Connected Through Books

## READING PROGRAM UNITES DEPLOYED SOLDIERS WITH THEIR LOVED ONES

Story and photo by SPC Beth Gorenc, Task Force 38 Public Affairs | JOINT BASE BALAD, IRAQ

**W**hile Soldiers and families make many adjustments during deployments, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, the United Service Organization (USO) ensures that at least one treasured

routine remains: family reading time. Its United Through Reading program lets deployed Soldiers video-record themselves reading books out loud, and sends the DVD and book to the family back home for the child to enjoy.

"It's a positive way to stay connected while you're gone, and to let your children know you still care and haven't forgotten about them," said Specialist Sean White, a Task Force 38 paralegal and Stow, OH, resident.

Soldiers choose a book and record themselves reading it aloud in a private room. The USO mails the DVD and book home to the family.

White said he has been reading to his 3-year-old daughter, Addison, since she was in the womb, and he didn't want to stop just because he was halfway around the world.

"It's beneficial to read to children," he said. "Addison usually watches the DVD and then carries the book around with her."

Indiana Army National Guard Major Kevan Crawly uses the program not only to connect with his children, but also to help them keep track of when he'll be home.

This Task Force 38 medical operations officer reads to his daughters Eliza, 5, and Keira, 2, every week.

"I told my daughters I would be gone about 40 weeks," Crawly said. "With each book that comes, it gives them an idea of when I'm coming back and keeps them in their normal routine—as if I was there."

But Crawly said the program benefits more than his daughters—it's good for him, too.

"The whole experience of coming and picking out a book that they would enjoy is great," he said. "It's satisfying [to me] that I'm able to connect with them."

Crawly also uses the 15- to 20-minute recording time to update his children and family on current events and experiences in his life.

More than 1,500 packages containing books and videos were sent in August, said Jennifer Faux, a duty manager at the USO and program coordinator for United Through Reading.

"It's a blessing to reach so many people with the program," she said. "I'm happy [that it helps] put a little bit of joy in Soldiers' days. I'm moved by their appreciation [of it]."

Faux said that, because the program has been so successful at Balad, she hopes to expand it to other bases.

One Task Force 38 Soldier was so appreciative of the program that she not only read to her 3-year-old daughter Kennedy every week—she also volunteered to help run the program. Indiana Army National Guard Sergeant Chanel Reagan, human resources noncommissioned officer from Indianapolis, said she knows reading to Kennedy helps the little girl cope with the deployment.

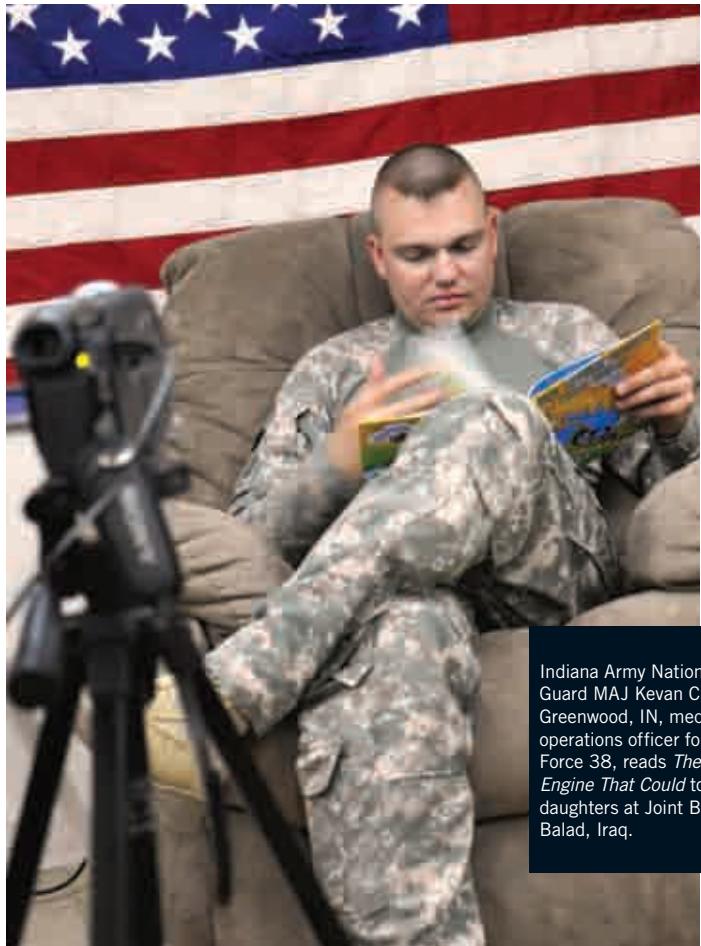
Reagan started volunteering to get the word out to other Soldiers.

"It's a nice way to bring families closer together even though there is such a big distance between them," Reagan said.

She also said that whenever her daughter asks about "mom," Reagan's parents play one of the recordings, and Kennedy contentedly watches.

"It gives me peace of mind that she's not going to forget me while I'm gone," Reagan said.

She added that the program is not only for young children. Soldiers can read, play games with or talk to any of their children, as well as spouses and friends. "You're showing them you still care and making good memories out of an inconvenient situation," Reagan said. **GX**



Indiana Army National Guard MAJ Kevan Crawly, Greenwood, IN, medical operations officer for Task Force 38, reads *The Little Engine That Could* to his daughters at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

### "THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE OF COMING AND PICKING OUT A BOOK THAT THEY WOULD ENJOY IS GREAT."

>> MAJ Kevan Crawly, Indiana Army National Guard





MG Gus L. Hargett served  
47 years in the Tennessee  
Army National Guard.

# Five Generations of Service

## TENNESSEE ADJUTANT GENERAL TALKS WITH GX UPON RETIREMENT

*Story by Clint Wood, photos by Evan Baines*

GX had the distinct privilege of chatting with the 74th adjutant general of the Tennessee National Guard, Major General Gus L. Hargett, upon his Dec. 30, 2009, retirement from the Guard.

From growing up in a typical American small town to his storied Guard career that has spanned more than 40 years, Hargett told us about his life.

When asked what aspect of his Guard life will leave the biggest impression, Hargett said, "The great Americans, the people who are willing to do everything for our state and country. [I'll especially] remember the families of the [Soldiers] who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country."

#### SALT OF THE EARTH

Hargett, a married father with four children and seven grandchildren, described the people of his hometown of Ripley, TN, population 7,000, as "salt of the earth. It's typical rural America."

When asked about his high school days there, he summed it up with, "Lots of fun. Lots of good-looking girls. [Plenty of] football and baseball."

Ripley is where Hargett's interest in the Guard began, inspired by his father, who rose to the rank of major in the Army National Guard and

Guard. They all attended Basic Combat Training together, and Hargett chose infantry.

His high scores on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) allowed him to attend the Personnel Administrative Specialist School at Fort Knox. This meant that once he returned to Ripley, he had to learn everything about operating an M1919 Browning .30 caliber machine gun by "on-the-job" training. His first unit was Company A, 3rd Battalion, 117th Infantry.

We wanted to know what he found most challenging about being a machine gunner. He replied, "Taking that machine gun [that weighed 31 pounds], running through the boonies of Fort Stewart, GA, and falling down in the pine needles among the snakes."

To add to this challenge, he said, once he had dug his foxhole and set up a firing position, the command would move them to another firing position and start the process all over.

#### RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

After four years as an enlisted Soldier, Hargett entered Officer Candidate School. He made second lieutenant in August 1966.

Originally, he hadn't intended to stay in the military. "I thought I was a six-year guy," he admitted. But his father's example served as an inspiration to become an officer, and also, Hargett knew that officers receive more pay than enlisted Soldiers.

#### THE ITALIAN JOB

Among many unique accomplishments, Hargett has the distinction of being the first National Guard officer to attend the resident NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. He considers this assignment one of the best of his

career. He was treated well by officers from all branches, and learned about NATO issues.

Observing the leadership styles of Guard generals early in his career helped him become a leader, he said. "I learned something from everyone of those assignments."

Hargett credits his tenure as the National Guard Bureau's Chief, Operations/Exercise Division during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm with his understanding of how to handle the Tennessee Guard's budget.

#### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The biggest challenge as adjutant general, according to Hargett, has been preparing the Guard for the future. But, the troops themselves were instrumental in his success. "It became easier for me because we've got great people," he



MG Gus L. Hargett (left) and his successor, BG Terry M. "Max" Haston, have served together for nearly 30 years.

served for 27 years. Hargett's fond memories of his dad's service include attending his father's drills in the fire hall, where the Soldiers used broomsticks for drill and ceremony, and the C-rations his dad would bring back from annual training every year.

"I always thought that stuff was pretty cool," Hargett said.

One of his most treasured memories is of his dad driving him to his grandparents' house so they could watch him while his dad was at drill. On the way, his dad would pick up his fellow Soldiers, and they'd ride in the back of his pickup truck.

#### BEGINNINGS

Three months after graduating from high school, Hargett and 10 classmates joined the

#### Beginning of a Legacy

Major General Gus Hargett enlisted in the Tennessee Army National Guard Aug. 31, 1962, serving as an enlisted infantry Soldier. Upon completion of Officer Candidate School (Tennessee Military Academy), he was commissioned as an infantry officer on Aug. 6, 1966.

Hargett has served on various staff and leadership assignments within the Tennessee Army National Guard and the National Guard Bureau, including assignments as the assistant adjutant general, Army; Chief, Mobilization Plans with the III US Corps; Chief, Plans Division Fifth U.S. Army; and Chief, Overseas Deployment Training, HQ, U.S. Army Europe; War College Fellowship, Ohio State, and served a six-year term as a member of Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee.

He has the distinction of being the first National Guard officer to attend the resident NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. In 2004, Hargett completed a two-year term as the Chairman of the Board, National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS). He currently serves as a member of the Department of Defense, Reserve Forces Policy Board.

#### Major awards and decorations

- \* Distinguished Service Medal
- \* Legion of Merit (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster)
- \* Meritorious Service Medal (with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters)
- \* Army Commendation Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster)
- \* Air Force Commendation Medal
- \* Army Achievement Medal
- \* Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (with 1 Silver Leaf Cluster)
- \* National Defense Service Medal
- \* Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with 1 Gold Hourglass Device)
- \* Army Service Ribbon
- \* Overseas Service Ribbon

said. "We've got Soldiers who have been everywhere and done everything, and who understand organization. They understand what we should look like. They have truly worked hard to position us for the future."

#### ARMED TO THE TEETH

Hargett has facilitated many successes during his eight-year tenure as adjutant general. He's pleased with the increase in educational benefits for Soldiers. He's glad that Gov. Phil Bredesen has supported employers of Guard members and provided benefits for those who are state employees. He's thrilled with the upgrading of Guard facilities across the state.

But most of all, he's proud of the Tennessee National Guard's overall readiness.

## "I VOLUNTEER SIR"

During the War of 1812, thousands of Tennesseans enlisted in response to then-Gov. Willie Blount's call for volunteers. Young Tennesseans still display this spirit, with more than 20,000 Tennessee Guard members deploying overseas since 9/11.

Hargett isn't surprised.

"Hey, we're the Volunteer State," he quipped. "There are other great Guard states out there, but if there's a better one, they'll have to convince me. Because I think ours is the best in America. We make end strength every year, and we've never failed to perform any mission, state or federal, that we've been asked to do."

The 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, headquartered in Knoxville, returns to Iraq in the spring of 2010. This unit also served there during 2004–2005. Their motto: "I Volunteer Sir."

"I think they'll do great," Hargett said. "I think they're well-led, well-equipped and fully prepared. They have all the right stuff to go back and do the mission. I would expect nothing less than excellence from them."

## FRONT TO BACK

With these deployments comes the opportunity for Hargett to show these brave Citizen-Soldiers support.

"The biggest thing for me is to be able to stand up in front of those guys and say, 'Hey, I got your back while you're gone,'" explained Hargett. "I'll take care of your families. We'll work with your employers. You're going to take care of the needs of our nation—we'll take care of your needs while you're gone."

"Then, when they get home, it's good to be able to look them in the eye and say, 'You fulfilled your commitment. I hope we fulfilled ours.'"

## NEW KIND OF WAR

Hargett knows the fight in Afghanistan will be different from the one in Iraq. "All you have to do is fly over the countryside and you can see the difference in the culture and the people," he said.

Winning the war there will be difficult, Hargett acknowledged, because unlike Iraqis, who are for the most part educated and have some infrastructure, Afghans lack education and the country needs to be rebuilt.

Comparing the two countries, Hargett said, "They're both in the Middle East. That's about all you can say."

## SOURCE OF PRIDE

When Hargett sees a Guard member's pride, it makes him proud, too.



## UPFRONT WITH MG HARGETT

**GX:** How do you feel when you hear the National Anthem?

**GH:** I tell this to my family and everybody. If you don't get that little tingle down your spine, you ought to check your hole card. Because there is something un-American about a guy who doesn't get that.

**GX:** What advice do you have for new recruits?

**GH:** Be prepared to be lucky. I say this to all of these guys. You get in the Guard, and you really don't know where your Guard career is going to take you. But it is just like life: If you prepare yourself with the proper education, the proper

attitude and work hard, and you are in the right place at the right time, you will benefit from all that.

**GX:** What Army values do you live by?

**GH:** Integrity and honesty. If you can't be honest with people, you can never be successful in life. Because if you lie, you've got to keep on lying.

**GX:** What is your leadership style?

**GH:** I want to be hands-on. I want to talk to Soldiers to learn their issues. They are the best source for [making improvements]. You would be surprised, if

Soldiers trust you, how much they will tell you. You will find out the good, the bad and the ugly.

**GX:** What is your advice to your successor, BG Terry M. "Max" Haston?

**GH:** That is an interesting one because I told him a couple things the other day. The most difficult thing for me is time management and figuring out what is important. Because everything is important to everybody. You're pulled in so many different directions. Understand what you don't know and concentrate on [that] as opposed to what you already know.

"Because then I know that we have done the right thing. We've prepared them, supported them, brought them home, and helped them reintegrate with their families and back into their jobs," he explained. "So for them to be proud is what makes me proud."

Hargett will remain closely involved with the National Guard as newly named president of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS). NGAUS provides the National Guard representation before Congress. He's a perfect fit for this role, with his many years of experience.

Guard members have NGAUS to thank for several of their benefits, including modern

equipment and TRICARE health insurance, he said. "It's because of NGAUS, along with [the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States] and the military coalition, that Guard members [have] these things."

Taking over Hargett's role with the Tennessee Guard is Brigadier General Terry M. "Max" Haston, whom Hargett has known for about 30 years. "He has been to all the right schools and has had all the right assignments," Hargett affirmed. "He has been groomed to be a general his whole life. He'll do well." Which allows Hargett to hand over the reins with peace of mind. **GX**



# Safety Stand-Down at Camp Ramadi

Story and photo by SSG Liesl Marelli, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery | CAMP RAMADI, IRAQ

**V**enturing throughout the greater Ramadi area and occasionally into remote areas of al Anbar province, they operate together frequently enough that a comfort level and personal bond has formed. The most important element is to understand each other's role.

They are two teams, civilian and military: the Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and its security team, known in military parlance as a "personnel security detail" (PSD). The PSD's mission: get the PRT safely to meetings so they can conduct business and return safely to Camp Ramadi. The PRT and their PSD, Colorado National Guard Soldiers of Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, 115th Fires Brigade, came together Dec. 11 for a safety "stand-down" to cross-train the civilian PRT members in some of the Soldiers' tactics, techniques and procedures to further enhance their working relationship and comfort levels.

The day kicked off with an initial introduction by Battery B commander Captain David Wilcox, who explained the different training stations or "lanes." They included how to egress from a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle through the top escape hatch, how to operate an M9 pistol and an M240 machine gun, how to apply a tourniquet and how to operate as a PSD.

Many PRT members said they had gone through similar training before, but they welcomed refresher training.

The training was geared around the many "what ifs" that could take place while out on a mission, said Wilcox. It was not a matter of creating subject matter experts in the field. Rather, the training gave the civilians a hands-on experience while allowing them to ask questions and learn more about those who serve as their protectors on missions.

However unlikely it might be that a civilian would have to operate the weaponry, according

to Specialist Casey Ferguson, who taught the machine gun class, "[The training] gave them a sense of security knowing that, if they had to operate the weapons, they could."

PRT members also learned to crawl out of the top hatch of an MRAP, climb down the vehicle and return safely to the ground.

"You don't want it to be your first time out of the hatch when things

are exploding," said PRT Senior Governance Advisor Joshua Rosenblum.

Al Anbar province has been quieter than it has been in years, but it's important to fight the feelings of complacency and always train for the worst, said Wilcox.

"It's useful to do hands-on training," said PRT Provincial Affairs Officer George Tietjen. "Anything to reinforce muscle memory that will be there in a stressful situation helps."

The final practical exercise consisted of Soldiers and PRT members switching roles, whereby the PRT became the security detail and the Soldiers the PSD.

"Many [PRT members] realized why we must perform our duties in a set manner and with formality while they are performing their missions," said PSD team leader Sergeant Thomas Sholtis.

While the PRT members acted as the PSD, instructors threw in random variables such as local nationals approaching the group, or a PRT member stopping to tie his shoe and getting left behind. The scenarios helped demonstrate why it's important to listen to the PSD so they can keep full control and provide protection during missions, said Sholtis.

"Everyone here appreciates the 157th for doing this for us, because you don't want to do things for the first time in an adverse situation," said Rosenblum. "We are grateful for the training and the security they provide [while on missions] because it would be impossible to do our job without them."

"This unit protects us when we go outside the wire. There is a feeling of appreciation for the work they do [from PRT members]. And, the training reinforces the appreciation of the skills involved in them providing security for us," said Tietjen. **GX**

# Setting the Standard

## ALABAMA'S COUNTERDRUG PROGRAM LEADS THE WAY

By Norman Arnold

**THE ALABAMA NATIONAL GUARD** has been selected as National Guard Bureau's winning nominee for the 19th Annual Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award. This marks the second consecutive year the Alabama Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) has won the prestigious award.

Colonel Roy Houlton, coordinator of the Alabama Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) office, and Senior Master Sergeant David Peterson, DDR administrator, accepted the award for the Alabama DDR Program in a recent ceremony at the Pentagon.

Rear Admiral C.S. Hunter, deputy director of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, called the Alabama DDRP "a model for other Department of Defense agencies to follow."

"The Alabama National Guard Counterdrug Program demonstrates how innovation and hard work can achieve an effective community drug awareness program," Hunter said.

The award was established in 1990 in an effort to promote a community drug awareness effort in the Department of Defense community. It is given in recognition of base, activity or agency programs and is not awarded to specific individuals.

The winning Alabama DDRP actively promoted the message "Drug-Free Starts With Me" to youth in Alabama. It also emphasized that the choice to be drug-free is the key to a promising future. The target audience for the program is 6th- to 8th-grade students, but it can also extend to younger and older students, parents and others in a community.

Red Ribbon Week is an exciting time for schools in Alabama. The Alabama DDRP sets the stage by purchasing and distributing 900,000 red ribbon stickers for public and private school students across the state. A special character, "Reddy Ribbon," appeared at programs across the state.

In one of the largest Red Ribbon events, "Reddy" danced and mingled with more than 1,200 elementary school students who gathered at Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery for a Red Ribbon Week kick-off program. During the remainder of the week, DDRP members visited



COL Roy Houlton, coordinator of the Alabama Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) office, and Sr. MSG David Peterson, DDR administrator, accepted the award for the Alabama DDR Program in a recent ceremony at the Pentagon.

six other Montgomery-area schools and delivered the drug-free message to 1,200 more elementary and middle-school students.

Thirty Alabama schoolteachers were trained to present another DDRP program, "Stay on Track." Alabama Army National Guard recruiters also trained in the DDRP program to implement the High School Drug Awareness and Prevention Program (HIDAP). The teachers and recruiters then became force multipliers for the small DDRP cadre.

The Stay on Track program was presented to 5,880 students in 20 schools. The HIDAP program went into 29 schools and reached 4,043 students during the school year. Another drug-free presentation, "Behind the Faces," was shown to more than 8,120 students at 20 schools.

After one HIDAP lesson, a 9th-grade girl asked the instructor if she could speak to the whole class. She tearfully told the story of drugs destroying other members of her family and how it was affecting her. She encouraged other students to think twice before making bad decisions about drugs.

The Alabama Guard's DDRP works closely with a number of drug task forces, agencies and coalitions across the state. They all emphasize that drug-free living opens doors of opportunity that enable individuals to experience positive victories in life. **GX**

## VICTORY MAP



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### OHIO

In early December, Serbian Minister of Defense Dragan Sutanovic led a delegation in Ohio as part of a partnership between the Serbian Armed Forces and the Ohio National Guard that started in 2006.

The Serbian delegation included Dusan Spasojevic, the state secretary in the ministry of defense, and the Serbian ambassador to the United States, Vladimir Petrovic.

The Ohio-Serbia relationship has developed under the National Guard's State Partnership Program. That program pairs military organizations from different countries with a state National Guard to familiarize, build relationships and learn from each other's strengths.

### WASHINGTON

The Defense Department has made progress in improving its response to the needs of sexual assault victims, but needs to do more, a special task force has determined.

The Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services turned its report over to Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates for review. The congressionally mandated report also called for the department to do more to address the spectrum of sexual assault prevention and response.

The first recommendation the task force made regarding the Defense Department's Sexual Awareness Prevention and Response Office was to elevate its oversight to the deputy secretary of defense until the program meets established institutional goals.

Among other recommendations are changing the budgeting process to overcome inconsistent funding among the services, strengthening the policy and oversight functions of the office, and conducting more rigorous oversight of military service training programs.

All of the task force's suggestions were based on the assessment of data collected from 60 sites around the world over 15 months. The task force spoke to more than 3,500 people, including Active Duty and

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SPC Michael Delgado, left, 1/65th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Platoon instructor, helps a Ugandan People's Defense Force student with basic Soldier skills during a scenario at the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa Counter-Terrorism Course Sept. 23. Delgado is a member of the Puerto Rico National Guard.

# Borinqueneers Open Doors to Peace and Security

Story and photo by MSG Ruby Zarzyczny / ENTEBBE, UGANDA

**B**orinqueneers" from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa opened the doors to its seventh Counter-Terrorism Course for the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) at the Kasenye Military Training center this summer.

The "Borinqueneer" Soldiers from the 1/65th Infantry Battalion of the Puerto Rico National Guard taught the 4-month class.

According to historical records, the men of the 1/65th came up with the nickname "Borinqueneer" during a long sea voyage while serving in the Korean War. It is a combination of the words Buccaneers and Borinquen, which is what the Tainos Indians called Puerto Rico

before the arrival of the Spaniards. This is not the first time the 1/65th has been deployed to Africa. They were first deployed to North Africa during WWII in 1943. A year later, they moved forward from Casablanca, Morocco, to Italy, and then France, where they joined the 3rd Battalion and defeated Germany's 34th Infantry Division's 107th Infantry Regiment.

About 66 years later, the 1/65th is once again deployed to Africa. This time, they are deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, to support the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa's mission to foster regional stability, build security capacity and forge relationships with our African partner nations.

In July, the 1/65th Infantry Battalion opened the doors to teach the counter-terrorism course for the first time in Africa. During the course, the instructors and assistant instructors from the UPDF will partner to share their knowledge and skills with the UPDF student Soldiers to help the UPDF develop counter-terrorism practices to increase peace and security in Uganda, said Sergeant First Class Heriberto Crespo, CJTF-HOA Counter-Terrorism Course noncommissioned officer in charge.

Before deploying, most of the instructors received additional training in Puerto Rico to become instructors. Some have experience mentoring Afghani Soldiers during the unit's previous deployment to Afghanistan.

"It's a great experience to be able to mentor the UPDF students by giving them the knowledge I have as an infantryman," said Specialist Jose Alicea, a 1st Platoon instructor. "It's a great feeling knowing you're able to help someone be more proficient at a job. I'm not only teaching them; I'm also learning from them as I see their progress."

The course is taught using UPDF equipment, supplies and weapons employed by the Soldiers to perform their duties. The instructors received additional training on the AK-47 rifle used during the course. Private Kamba Boaz, UPDF Soldier and 1st Platoon assistant instructor, works with the instructors and helps keep communication flowing during the classes.

"It's a very good opportunity for me, because I am learning more and have the opportunity to bring my skills to the training," Boaz said. "Working with the men from the 1/65th from Puerto Rico is the most wonderful thing. They are good friends. They are real professionals. Through our friendship, we are able to learn more from them, and they are able to learn more from us."

Before the students start learning counter-terrorism techniques, they will learn basic Soldier skills during the first eight weeks of

move as fast as the slowest Soldier, and the training platoons move forward at the same time."

The course is divided into four platoons of 40 students, each having four to five instructors and an assistant instructor. The training is progressing at a steady pace as the UPDF students are fast learners; some have already faced combat in the Congo, Crespo said. Despite the language barriers and slow supply lines, the students are motivated to learn.

"Both students and instructors face the challenge of English as a second language," Crespo said. "We all understand English, but we add different accents to the language. After about three weeks, we were able to understand each other's accents, and now we are sharing languages. Many of the students are learning our language, Spanish."

The instructors anticipate the MOUT training to start sometime in late October. The

## "WE TRAIN TO STANDARDS, NOT TO TIME. WE WILL TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS NEEDED UNTIL EACH STUDENT PERFORMS TO STANDARD."

>> SFC Heriberto Crespo CJTF-HOA Counter-Terrorism Course noncommissioned officer in charge

training. The skills include individual movement, map reading, land navigation, first aid, search techniques, improvised explosive devices recognition, HIV prevention and human rights. Once these skills are mastered, the students will progress to squad operations and learn to work as a team.

Each squad is made up of nine Soldiers. During this section of the training, they'll learn to move as a team to maneuver through danger areas and identify details as a group. Supervised by the instructors, the students practice these skills in training scenarios called training lanes.

Using the standard operating procedures, the students are evaluated to ensure they understand the basic skills before moving to the second phase of the course: Military Operation Urbanized Terrain training.

"We train to standards, not to time," Crespo said. "We will take as much time as needed until each student performs to standard. We

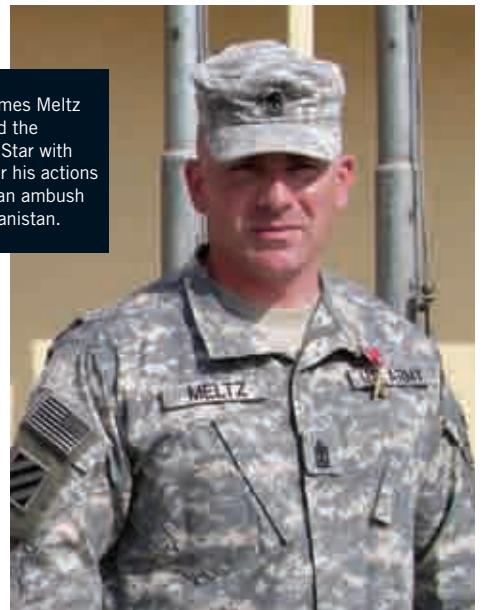
UPDF leaders have asked the CJTF-HOA to provide the students with realistic training. The 1/65th instructors have created a MOUT site to resemble an urban environment similar to a Ugandan village.

"Terrorists don't fight in the open with Soldiers," Crespo said. "They attack cities, hospitals, churches, schools, urban areas with innocent people. That's where terrorists attack. We will build a MOUT site resembling a city in Uganda and train the UPDF students to detect and respond to terrorist attacks."

These instructors from the 1/65th are the tip of the spear for their unit. The course is expected to finish later this year and will end with a graduation ceremony attended by UPDF and CJTF-HOA military leaders.

Successful completion of this course will open doors for similar training opportunities for the 1/65th with CJTF-HOA's African partners throughout the Horn of Africa, Crespo said. **GX**

1SG James Meltz received the Bronze Star with Valor for his actions during an ambush in Afghanistan.



## New York Soldier Honored by USO

*Story and photo courtesy of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs*

► NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD First Sergeant James Meltz, a New York State Trooper from Cropseyville, NY, received the USO of Metropolitan New York's prestigious George Van Cleave Military Leadership Award at the organization's Annual Armed Forces Gala & Gold Medal Dinner, on Dec. 9 in Manhattan.

Meltz, a member of the New York State Police Special Operations Response Team, has served in both Iraq and Afghanistan with 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry. He received the Bronze Star for Valor for his actions in Iraq in 2008 while serving as first sergeant of D Co., 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry.

After his company was ambushed, he rescued Soldiers from a burning Humvee, returned fire with a machine gun and then continually exposed himself to the enemy while he assisted the company commander in organizing a successful resistance and counterattack. Meltz served on Active Duty and in the Army Reserve before joining the New York Army National Guard in 2003.

This is the second year in a row in which the New York Army National Guard has represented the Army in receiving the prestigious award, which is presented to one member of each armed service annually.

In 2008, the award went to First Sergeant Troy Steward of Buffalo, a member of 2nd Battalion, 101st Cavalry, who also served in Afghanistan. **GX**



Texas Army National Guard infantrymen from 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry, conduct an assault during combat training with British troops in Southern England.

## 36th Infantry Division Trains with British Army Counterparts

Story and photos by MSG Brenda Benner,  
Texas Military Forces Public Affairs

SALISBURY PLAIN, ENGLAND

**TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS OF** the 36th Infantry Division (ID) were surprised to find themselves within a few miles from England's world-famous Stonehenge while training overseas. They could see the mysterious stones as they traveled across the rolling hills of the plateau to various British Army military sites for their training.

During late September and early October, approximately 100 members from the 144th and 142nd Infantry Battalions joined the British Territorial Army's 3rd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment (3RAR) for the second phase of Operation Glow Worm. Joining them were members of the 56th Special Troops Battalion and the 949th Battalion Support Brigade.

Just as the U.S. has its National Guard, the Territorial Army consists of Britain's reserve Soldiers. Members of the 3RAR, known as the Steelbacks, visited Texas during the intense August heat and trained with the 36th ID's troops at North Fort Hood and Camp Swift.

The Texas infantrymen attended numerous

weapons classes and live-fire ranges, conducted assaults in training villages, and viewed weapons of the past, present and future. Each day they became more familiar with the British Army's weapon of choice, the L85A2 rifle. They also learned the basics of mortars, archery, Molotov cocktails and setting up trip flares.

After completing their training rotations, they were privileged to experience English heritage and customs from within the sacred walls of the Tower of London and behind the gates of Buckingham Palace.

### MULTINATIONAL TRAINING

Numerous operations that include combined forces from many different countries are underway worldwide. Naturally, they possess different political ideals, command systems, strategies and weapons.

British Major Ged Murphy, the new training major for the Territorial Army's 3 RAR, said international training programs help iron out mission complexities, potential frictions and difficulties, which ultimately leads to earlier success for everyone involved.

"It's absolutely imperative that we do everything we can before we end up on operations

when things can go wrong and be dangerous," said Murphy. "It's important not only to train together, but that we actually understand each other. This is a fantastic opportunity for the U.S. and the United Kingdom [personnel] because they will inevitably find themselves working together."

Often, 36th ID Soldiers find themselves working with their foreign counterparts, whether in Texas or overseas. In the past five years alone, they have joined forces with militaries from Japan, Iraq, Honduras, Chile, Egypt and the Czech Republic, just to name a few.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Houston, who commands the 144th Infantry Battalion, emphasized that conducting overseas deployment training (ODT) following a unit's mobilization is the ideal time for effective training.

"That's when everyone's skill sets are finely honed from recent combat," said Houston. "This launches us into a phase of tactical training that will carry us forward to our next deployment. We need to continue these ODTs and partner more units together. Having a sister unit overseas maintains [multinational] relationships that will carry forward regardless of changes in a unit's leadership."

### URBAN OPERATIONS

One of the favorite training sites for the troops was Copehill Down, the site of a modernized urban assault village like none they had seen before. The numerous buildings varied in exterior and interior designs, creating all types of door, window, stairs and wall-mounted ladder entry points for the infantrymen to overcome. Beneath the streets, a maze of inactive sewer and drainage pipes added another unique challenge.

According to British Sergeant Major Chris Jewell, a senior permanent instructor for the 3RAR, approximately 130 British Soldiers joined the 36th ID troops for the urban assault.

One special high-tech building contained the sophisticated LLUST system, the Low Level Urban Street Trainer. With interactive walls and floors, the building tracks every move made in its interior.

"It knows when we are standing, kneeling or in the prone position by using the small electronic tags we put in our pockets and on our boot laces," said Specialist Don Barfield of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry. "Afterward, we watch the results on a big screen in a different building. It was very interesting, very high-speed."

## VICTORY MAP



continued from page 31

### EQUIPMENT EXHIBITS

While in Warminster at the Land Warfare Centre, the Soldiers visited the Infantry and Small Arms School Corps' comprehensive collection of 3,500 weapons from dozens of different countries. The remarkable assortment varied from small hand grenades and pistols to mines, mortars and enormous anti-tank guns.

Self-professed history buff Staff Sergeant Michael Watts, a recruiter from Team 8, Region 2, said the tour guide was a walking encyclopedia of weapons history.

"It was unbelievable, the amount and variety of everything," Watts said after completing his tour. "One of my favorites was a 14th-century Chinese-made rifle that had to be 10 feet long. I took two people to actually fire it."

The visiting Soldiers were also allowed to see the latest high-tech equipment being fielded by British troops. Items ranged from individual combat packs to large combat vehicles.

### A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE

Besides learning British Army training procedures, techniques and equipment, Soldiers also experienced historic English culture each and every day, whether at the training camp locations or while visiting the sights of London.

Their first hurdle was learning a new language. It's English, but vastly different from the dialect of the Lone Star State. The Texans learned vital words such as "ablutions" and "scoff"—which meant latrines and

Infantrymen from the 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, join their British Army counterparts for weapons classes during the second phase of Operation Glow Worm in Southern England.



Texas Army National Guard SGT Terry Adams, left, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry, watches British Sgt. Major Balbir Singh Nagra set up a training trip flare device during British weapons training in Southern England.

chow, respectively. A simple American "No problem, thank you" was known as "No dramas, cheers mate."

### EXPERIENCING ENGLISH CULTURE

Upon completion of their combat training, the Soldiers packed up and headed north to London for once-in-a-lifetime experiences at the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace. Dressed in their finest uniforms, American officers and senior noncommissioned officers attended a British Army Regimental dinner and viewed the jeweled crowns from Queen Elizabeth's coronation.

The following day, a select group of enlisted Infantrymen were honored with a behind-the-scenes tour of the Changing of the Queen's Guards from inside the gates of the palace. The Soldiers, dressed in their Class A uniforms, were

watched by thousands of spectators as they marched to and from Buckingham Palace.

After the prestigious ceremony, Sergeant Kyle Mallette of 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, said it would be an unforgettable day.

"There's so much history involved with everything they do," he said. "It was a special event and I learned a lot. Some of the things they wear on their uniforms are as old as our country. It was so cool ... I felt like a rock star." **GX**



Reserve Component victims of sexual assault and other military personnel.

Defense and military officials gathered at the Pentagon to discuss the top issues facing the Yellow Ribbon Program for reserve-component service members and their families during a two-day summit that concluded in December.

A congressionally mandated program, the Yellow Ribbon Program is designed to benefit National Guard and Reserve members and their families. Through five events—one pre-deployment, one for just families during deployment and three post-deployment events—service members and families are prepared for what to expect during a deployment and reintegration.

The events allow service members and their families to find resources to help them with financial planning, child and youth programs, and any issues they may be facing upon return from deployment.

Among the topics discussed at the summit were the Joint Travel Regulation and its impact on people such as girlfriends or fiancées, who support Service Members but don't qualify for travel compensation under the regulation to attend Yellow Ribbon events.

The Yellow Ribbon Program provides numerous Soldier and support functions in conjunction with reintegration and the Soldiers' return, said Army Colonel Gregg A. Bliss, division chief of the Army National Guard's Soldier and Family Support Services Division.

### UTAH

Shauna Rohbock, a sergeant in the Utah Army National Guard and a driver for one of the U.S. women's bobsled teams, won a gold medal in early December in Cesana, Italy, site of the 2006 Winter Olympics.

Rohbock teamed with Michelle Rzepka, and the pair dominated the field of 21 sleds by 0.34 seconds with a combined time of 1:56:09.

Rohbock's sledding resume on the Cesana track includes three silver medals, including the 2006 Olympic silver medal.

# Into the Fire

## NEW SOLDIERS IMMERSE IN TRAINING AT PATRIOT ACADEMY

By 1LT Kyle Key, Patriot Academy Public Affairs

CAMP ATTENBURY JOINT MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER, IN

**STUDENTS** from the National Guard Patriot Academy took a break from the books and embarked on their first field training exercise at the ranges.

The Patriot Academy offers a high school diploma program for any former student who left school without graduating, provided they also qualify to enlist in the Army National Guard. The school is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education.

The students join to get a second chance to receive their high school diplomas, become more proficient Soldiers and give back to the community.

"This was not your ordinary high school field trip," said Academy Commandant Colonel Perry W. Sarver Jr. "Our student-Soldiers have opportunities within the academic year to visit museums, and collegiate and professional sports events, but this weekend was a little reminder that they are also being trained to be the best Soldiers in the Army National Guard."

Students loaded up their gear and arrived at Camp Attenbury Oct. 16. From the garrison, students marched in full battle gear to the training range. After arriving, Student Platoon Sergeant Private First Class Ryan Grieger from Delta, CO, occupied the range and ordered his squad leaders to establish perimeter security while a reconnaissance team prepared to gather intelligence on the enemy.

The advance party began movement and arrived at an objective rally point where Private Brandon Deal and fellow squad members crawled through mud and dense vegetation

to determine the number of enemy personnel and their activity, as well as the number and types of weapons. Beyond the tree line, Patriot Academy Cadre posed as opposition forces armed with AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. Without detection, Deal carefully scribbled down a few notes and returned to the rally point with critical information for his leadership.

"I had to low-crawl through the forest floor covered in briars," Deal said. "I thought that was pretty fun. This is way more engaging than a regular high school field trip. I get to do a lot more. I get to have a sense of pride that I'm actually training and learning the skills that I need to defend my country."

Students executed missions throughout the entire field training exercise and were placed in leadership positions to test and sharpen their abilities. Company Commander Captain Steven Conway of Somerset, KY, said the training is

**"... I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW QUICKLY AND HOW EASILY MAKING BAD DECISIONS—OR NO DECISIONS—CAN GET YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES KILLED."**

>> SSG Wesley Colinger, Patriot Academy instructor



PVT Brandon Deal low-crawls to capture enemy information during a reconnaissance mission. Students from the Patriot Academy at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center were participating in a field training exercise at Camp Attenbury Joint Maneuver Training Center.

designed to make Soldiers dependent on their own abilities and interdependent on their team.

"As Soldiers progress through the Patriot Academy, they are given more responsibility to lead themselves with limited cadre supervision," Conway said. "The [field training exercise] is a good measuring event to see how much the Soldiers have grasped the military training we have provided up to this point at the Academy."

Private First Class Timothy Valley of Jacksonville, FL, said the training built upon their strengths and, more important, revealed where they needed improvement. "After the ruck march and the recon, we went through the improvised explosive device lane," Valley said. "Everything went successfully. Then we conducted raids."

Valley's demeanor changed from excited to distressed. "We had really good recon and our



PFC Ryan Grieger rehearses his plan on an improvised sand table at Patriot Academy.



Students from the Patriot Academy at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center execute near-and-far security so fellow students can cross the road safely during a training exercise at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center Oct. 16, 2009.

movement was good, but we had some problems getting into the building."

Students' and opposition forces' M4-style weapons were loaded with air canisters, ammo hoppers and paintballs, making the training more realistic. Cadre observed from above the shoot house building on a wooden walkway and advised as the students entered the kill zone.

"If you get hit, go down!" yelled Sergeant First Class Christopher Latham of Valdosta, GA. A burst came from the corner of the room. A student splattered with red paint hit the ground.

"Talk ... communicate with each other!" instructed Staff Sergeant Wesley Colinger of Harlan, KY. "What are you going to do ... what's next?"

Private Stephen Pruitt of Boiling Springs, SC, took action and kicked down an obstruction in the doorway.

"Keep security on the door behind you!" yelled a student. As he entered the next room, shots rang out. Opposing forces hit two more students. "I'm down!"

Every student had been hit with paintballs by the opposing forces (OPFOR).

"Everybody take a knee and take your masks off," said Colinger after the exercise. He praised the students for what they did correctly, and discussed areas that needed improvement for survival in close-quarters combat. According to statistics, there is a 70-percent casualty rate in military operations in urbanized terrain.

"[Explosive action] is really important," he said. "You stack up there [at the door], and you go! Come in there like you're the baddest man on the planet."

The area at the doorway is referred to as the "fatal funnel." As personnel stack up, it is the point where team members are most vulnerable to enemy fire. From there, it takes surprise, speed and explosive action to minimize casualties and successfully clear a building. Hesitation was not the only thing that hit the students as they breached the door.

"Paintballs are a good way to learn because there is no questioning if and where you got

shot," Colinger said. "I don't want y'all to hang your heads low. At the same time, I want you to understand how quickly and how easily making bad decisions—or no decisions—can get you and your buddies killed."

Private Wesley Beck from Fort Wayne, IN, said that learning to work as a team is a lesson that must be consistently taught. "Teamwork was the most important thing I took away from this [field training exercise]," he said. "Everything can be planned perfectly, but if it's not executed as a team, everything crumbles."

Students executed their own security plans, identified avenues of approach, placed riflemen on the perimeter and set up inactive claymore mines. During traffic control operations, the Patriot Academy students interacted with "host nationals," searched vehicles and processed detainees. Three different scenarios were presented to the students and were required to apply escalation of force procedures.

As dusk fell, Grieger gave instructions to personnel at the gate.

"Do not blow those claymores until you call it in!" said Grieger. "If you see a vehicle approaching, call it in."

Night patrols were about to begin, and students were preparing for contact with the OPFOR. "We're pulling security," Private Jonathan Kern of Martinsville, IN, said. "We've got teams out front, out back, up on the roof and guarding the doors. We're expecting to get hit tonight."

Kern and his patrol spread out in a wedge formation and began to patrol the area. OPFOR hid in the tree line and opened fire. The patrol returned fire.

"Get on line!" yelled Kern. "Right side, bound backward ... we got you covered!" The students bounded back and got behind cover while returning fire.

"We've been doing a lot of training this weekend that we've been rehearsing over the past three months," Grieger said. "We've been setting up traffic control points and conducting raids and recon missions, and the cadre is putting us out here to see how well we can execute. The training seems very realistic." **GX**

**THE PATRIOT ACADEMY** is located at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Camp Atterbury, IN, and features a main academic building with 21 classrooms, full gymnasium, library, conference rooms and three dormitories for up to 500 students. The current class of 47 students is scheduled to graduate in March 2010.

Recruiters nationwide are now accepting up to 250 male and female applicants for the 2010-2011 academic school year. Interested applicants should log onto [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com) for more information.

# Paying Soldiers Back

## RODNEY ATKINS SHOWS UNWAVERING SUPPORT TO SOLDIERS

Story and photo by Clint Wood

**C**ountry music superstar Rodney Atkins' countless performances for service members in the U.S. have included singing to Soldiers in their rooms at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC, and performing for former President George W. Bush several times.

So it should come as no surprise that he went above and beyond when he performed during one of the free Salute to the Troops concerts last August at Fort Campbell, KY.

While most entertainers left after performing, Atkins, whose last record, *If You're Going Through Hell*, was certified platinum and produced four consecutive No. 1 singles, stayed and visited with the Soldiers.

"I love getting to hang out with Soldiers," said the Knoxville, TN, native in a phone interview. Atkins has a wife, a son and two stepdaughters.

Atkins hasn't performed for Soldiers overseas yet, but he said it is something he would love to do, and he would try to bring his family.

In an exclusive interview, GX asked Atkins several other questions regarding performing for service members.

**GX:** What was it like performing at Fort Campbell?

**RA:** It was great, man. I love getting to hang out with the Soldiers. They told me that every act that has been here has come, played, got on their bus and left. And I went out there and drank a beer with them. We were just kind of hanging out. That's what it's about. It is about

Rodney Atkins, shown here performing at Sound and Speed in Nashville, at one time drove a delivery truck in Tennessee.



the Soldiers. It is about what they have done for me and my family.

**GX:** How has your appreciation for Soldiers changed since becoming a country music star?

**RA:** For me, unfortunately, growing up, military things were something that I knew was real but I wasn't around it. It was something I saw on TV and in the movies.

Now, being around these guys and meeting their families, it became pretty important for my son to know what they do and for him to meet them.

**GX:** How does it feel knowing that there are Guard Soldiers overseas right now listening to your music?

**RA:** It's awesome. I can't tell you what it means, to think they're cranking up *If You're Going Through Hell*. Even if it's a mere 15 minutes, that is very cool.

**GX:** What are your feelings on receiving emails from Soldiers?

**RA:** If you have a song and it makes some-

body want to go and look up how to get in touch with you, just to tell you how that song touched their lives, that is pretty cool. It's great that people want to reach out. I cherish every single story I get. When they send a really heartfelt email, it is pretty amazing.

**GX:** What does patriotism mean to you?

**RA:** Wow, patriotism is sort of, it is like family. It's loving and supporting what your country is built on. Even when things aren't going great, it's still feeling blessed and fortunate to be raising your kids here.

**GX:** If you were in the Guard, what job would you like to do?

**RA:** I don't even know what all jobs there are. Firing something. Anytime you can shoot a gun, I'll show up.

**GX:** What would you like to say to all those Guard Soldiers out there?

**RA:** From me and my family to you and yours, thank you for what you do. I just can't wait to see them all and have a big old party. **GX**

# Tennessee Twang

## COUPLE HONORS TROOPS THROUGH MUSIC

Intro by Christian Anderson

*Not since the days of Johnny Cash and June Carter has a couple shaken up the country music scene like Joey+Rory have after their debut on Country Music Television's reality series "Can You Duet." The Columbia, TN, natives have made an impression on listeners across the nation with their first album, The Life of a Song, and its hit single, "Cheater, Cheater." Rory, a Marine Veteran, and his wife, Joey, have performed twice for service members and look forward to supporting the men and women in uniform for many years to come. GX talked service, performing and touring with Joey+Rory while they were relaxing on their farm in Middle Tennessee.*



**GX:** How do you feel about all the men and women across the world protecting our country?

**Rory:** I think about them a lot. I wish we had the opportunity to play for them more. We have done two shows with Brooks & Dunn this summer at Fort Knox and Aberdeen. I am so proud of the men and women in the military.

**Joey:** My dad was in the Army and served during the Vietnam War. You don't think about how important their sacrifice is until you get older. When people sacrifice their freedom for others, it says a lot about who they are as an individual.

**GX:** Is country music more patriotic than other musical genres?

**Rory:** I think so. It just seems like it is really the heart of America talking to each other. Maybe country music is more conservative. I don't know, we are not very political. But I know the genre has a sweet spot for all the military.

**GX:** Do you admire each other's work?

**Joey:** I am such a fan of Rory's writing. Music was what really introduced me to Rory. I remember the first time I saw him perform 11 years ago. The kind of songs he wrote were the kind of songs I wanted to write. I am such a fan.



Joey+Rory performed for service members twice in 2009 with the hit act Brooks & Dunn. Rory was in the Marine Corps for eight years.

**Rory:** When I watch her sing, all I can think is what a great singer she is. We have such a strong respect for each other and we complement each other. She has a very unique and wonderful voice.

**GX:** Do you enjoy being out on the road?

**Joey:** Yes, our favorite part is that we are meeting new people, seeing new things and that we are together. Our least favorite part is that sometimes we can be away for quite a while. It can be tiring at times, but this is a chapter of our lives. An opportunity has been given to us, and we have to embrace it.

**GX:** What would you like to say to the men and women who are serving our country?

**Rory:** We want them to know how proud we are to be American and how proud we are of them. We are thrilled about their service, and we will be keeping them in our prayers. **GX**

# Giving It All

## TWO-TIME CIB WINNER DOESN'T FLINCH AT DEPLOYMENTS

By Clint Wood

**EVERY CITIZEN-SOLDIER HAS A STORY.** For Staff Sergeant Cesar Rodriguez, his story in the Guard includes several chapters of combat in some of the world's farthest corners.

A Virginia Army National Guard Soldier and career infantryman, Rodriguez was awarded a Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) and later a star for that badge for coming under fire during a second deployment.

But for Rodriguez, who earned his first CIB with the Active Duty Army's 82nd Airborne Division, 504th Infantry Regiment engaged in combat during Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1992, his real story is about more than his combat experience.

In the last seven years, Guatemalan native Rodriguez deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Afghanistan and Iraq because he loves America.

"I love this country," Rodriguez explained. "If they have to call me back again, I don't mind going back."

"What I do and what I have right now, I owe it to the military," continued Rodriguez, who is the supply noncommissioned officer for Army Strength Maintenance, National Guard Bureau. "I'm one of those guys who, wherever they need me, I'll be there."

The 47-year-old Rodriguez has been a Citizen-Soldier for the last 17 years. He earned his latest CIB while deployed with the Virginia Army National Guard's Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, in Afghanistan from 2004 to 2005.

He earned his CIB while part of a historic unit that had some of WWII's bravest Soldiers in its ranks.

Company C of the 116th Infantry Regiment was composed mostly of Soldiers from Bedford, VA, and was one of the first Allied units to hit Omaha Beach during the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944.

But instead of charging a beachhead in France, Rodriguez was in a Humvee that was fired on at a checkpoint at night. A rocket landed about 50 to 75 meters from the Humvee.

"Nobody got hit, but we could see the tracers on top of the trucks and hitting the trucks," he said.



SSG Cesar Rodriguez has been in the Guard for 17 years and has experienced several deployments.

### "I'M ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO, WHEREVER THEY NEED ME, I'LL BE THERE."

» SSG Cesar Rodriguez, Virginia Army National Guard

Rodriguez could have earned his third CIB in his next deployment to Iraq with the same unit. His company was responsible for escorting supply convoys from Forward Operating Base Speicher near Tikrit. "It was very stressful, but thank God, I'm alive," said Rodriguez, who returned from Iraq in 2008.

#### CHANGE OF MISSION IN PANAMA

The 504th Infantry Regiment's mission wasn't to participate in Operation Just Cause that deposed Panamanian leader, general and dictator Manuel Noriega. Instead, the 504th was training at a jungle school on the island at the time.

"We didn't see too much action like the other guys did," Rodriguez noted. "Nobody knows much about what really happened there."

Rodriguez admitted being in combat is not glamorous.

"I mean, everybody is scared," he said. "It was pretty hectic with noises. Yeah, I was scared. I would be a liar if I said no."

#### GUARD WAS TOO ENTICING

Rodriguez joined the Guard in 1992—about a year after being discharged from the Active Duty Army after a three-year tour.

He said he enjoyed being in the military too much to get out completely, and that is why he joined the Guard. He originally joined the Army because of the benefits.

"I couldn't stay away from the military, and I like being with the military guys," added Rodriguez, explaining why he joined the Guard.

#### 9/11: REASON TO SERVE

Rodriguez, who was sitting in a hospital's intensive care unit with his cousin on 9/11, said he was anxious to be involved in the Guard's response to the terrorists' attacks.

The first mission he volunteered for was airport security. Next, he volunteered for a deployment to Guantanamo Bay from 2002 through 2003 with another company from the same battalion.

He said the major challenges of this mission were the heat, humidity and long duty hours.

Two years later, in early 2005, he left for Afghanistan with Company C. This was the first time the company had deployed since WWII.

#### STAY FOCUSED

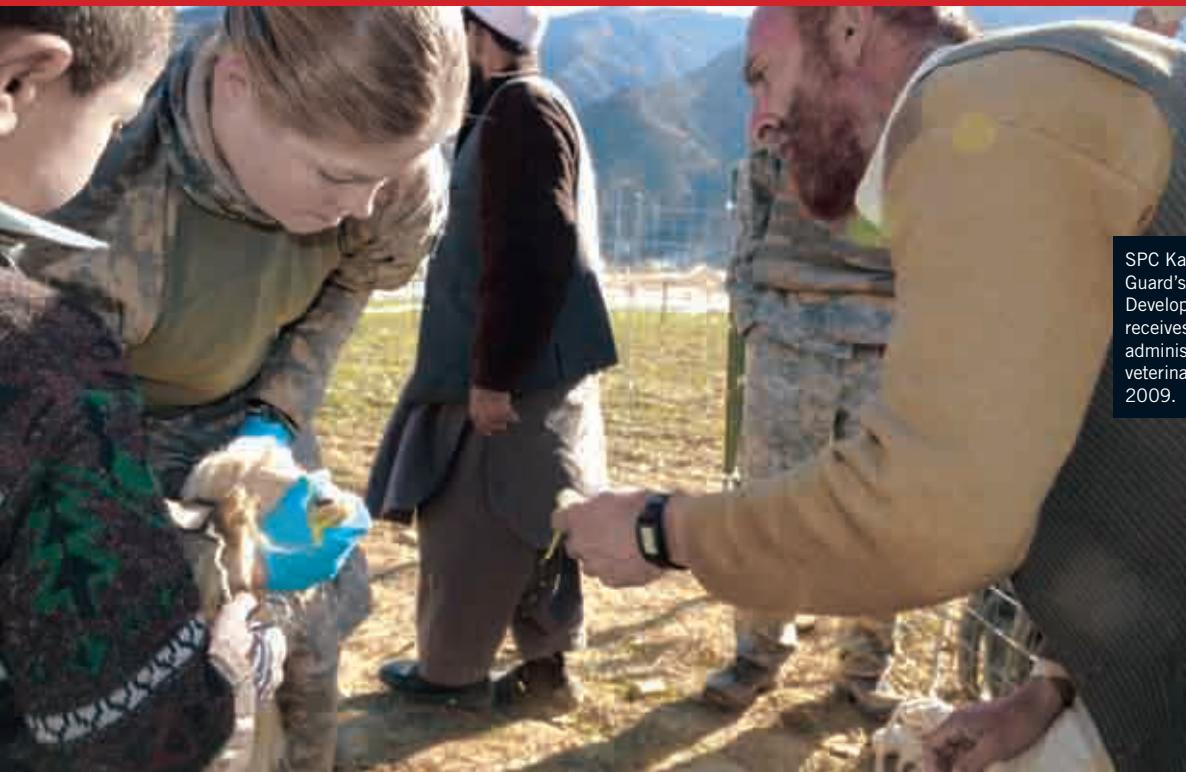
"Do what you are told to do, and you will do fine," Rodriguez said. "That will definitely help keep you alive on a deployment."

But with all this talk of deployments on the horizon, Rodriguez said he is not leaving the Guard anytime soon.

"I'm not getting out," he stated. "I'm staying until they kick me out." **GX**

#### COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE

» According to Army Regulation 600-8-22, Paragraph 2-6, 25 February, 1995, there are three requirements for award of the CIB. The Soldier must be an infantryman satisfactorily performing infantry duties, must be assigned to an infantry unit during such time as the unit is engaged in active ground combat, and must actively participate in such ground combat.



SPC Kathryn Tanson (left), California National Guard's 40th Infantry Division Agribusiness Development Team large animal specialist, receives assistance from a local Afghan with administering vaccines to a goat during a free veterinary clinic in Naray, Afghanistan, Dec. 17, 2009.

# California Soldiers Help Vaccinate Livestock in Naray

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Boisvert, Combined Joint Task Force – 82 Public Affairs  
KUNAR PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

**W**ithin eyesight of the Pakistani border, the California National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) conducted a veterinary civic action program (VETCAP) in Naray District, Dec. 16–17.

The ADT partnered with local leaders to administer vaccinations and vitamin treatment to 462 animals outside a small U.S. forward operating base in northern Kunar province.

More than 100 local farmers brought their livestock to the event to get treatment and information. The event was aimed at fostering a positive relationship between Coalition Forces, government leaders and the district people.

Sergeant Scott Flynn provided each animal a health assessment using an approved number-conditioning system to document and check the

animal's overall health before moving them to holding pens for vaccinations.

"We are here to vaccinate the villagers' animals against anthrax, rabies and eight-way clostridials," Flynn said. "This helps develop relationships. We are here to help and they see that."

The ADT teamed up with Afghan elders, military-aged men and children from the surrounding villages to help set up the holding pens, assist with the vaccinations and clean up the site when done. The mobile clinic allowed the ADT to train eight local Afghans on how to properly administer future vaccinations and assisted with corralling animals that tried to escape. Lieutenant Max Velte, ADT deputy commander, said this exercise was a collaborative partnership with local leaders and elders from the very beginning.

"We had a good mix of locals from the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, local vet techs and government leadership from Naray, and we were further supported by the Afghan Vet Association from Jalalabad. The partnership went great," Velte said.

Staff Sergeant Terry Lucas, ADT large animal technician, said the VETCAP was important for fostering positive relationships.

"I think this is great. They hold their animals to a pretty high standard," Lucas said. "This is the way to build relationships."

The process started early in the morning, and cow-by-cow and goat-by-goat, it continued well into the evening.

Hajji Shadifullah, Nari district line director for agriculture, said he likes working with the ADT because it benefits the people.

"I like to work with the Coalition Forces because they help us, and they help the people everywhere," Shadifullah said.

Shadifullah said in an area where there are no cell phones or radios and few have electricity, farm animals are the only currency, and healthy animals mean increased wealth.

"We do not have any other companies that are working (here) and we have no money, so livestock is very important to the people," Shadifullah said.

The ADT's goal for the VET CAP was to help the local farmers increase the health of their herds, and ultimately the longevity and resale of the animals.

In addition to the vaccinations and training, villagers who attended received a small radio, extra medication for their animals to maintain the shots, and information written in Pashto to help stress the importance of proper medication for healthy animals.

The ADT is also planning future VETCAPs in the area to benefit the local population. **GX**



CSM Ceaser Hargrove briefs the participants of the 2009 Palmetto Best Warrior Team.



A Soldier sprints to the finish during the 3-mile buddy run.

# HOOAH Time!

## 2009 PALMETTO BEST WARRIOR TEAM COMPETITION

*Story and photos by SGT Roberto Di Giovine,  
Joint Forces Headquarters Public Affairs / COLUMBIA, SC*

**FOR SOME OF THE SOLDIERS** of the 4/118th Infantry Battalion, the first week of December was time to pull out their “grunt” courage and Warrior Spirit.

The Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition kicked off on Dec. 1, 2009, at McCrady Training Center, and ended after three days of extremely challenging events. This first year of the challenge was organized and directed by 4/118th Command Sergeant Major Ceaser Hargrove. An avid athlete himself, Hargrove presented the field of competitors with both a mentally and physically demanding competition.

The 2009 Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition, inspired by the more famous Best Ranger Competition, is a pilot program designed to test the format,

while setting the guidelines for future competitions. Thanks to a straightforward plan, and the watchful direction of the event's organizer, the race was a success.

Six teams entered the event from throughout the state. The teams came from Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Mullins, 1118th Forward Support Company from Summerville, C Company from Mt. Pleasant, and D Company out of Marion. The idea was to involve major elements of the 4/118th in order to promote teamwork, while encouraging a healthy rivalry between the battalion's companies.

“This is about team-building. Soldiers work together to accomplish a mission with one goal,” said Hargrove at the start of the race. “There is no room for individuals.”

By successfully completing the challenge, the 12 Soldiers who entered the Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition achieved Hargrove's goals.

As in any other challenge of this kind, to be successful at the Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition, mental and physical strength are equally important.

Some Soldiers participated in competition to challenge their minds or to have something to tell to their kids. Others used the event as an opportunity to enhance leadership skills.

“At 50 years old, I want to lead the way for the young Soldiers,” said Staff Sergeant Larry Gore, before starting the 16-mile road march. “No matter how challenging it can be, leaders need to be ready to step up and lead the way.”

On day one, the “Hard Day,” a 3-mile buddy run was conducted. Soldiers carried a rifle and wore the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) with load-bearing equipment. The day ended with the Army Physical Fitness Test, which consists of push-ups, sit-ups and a 2-mile run.

The second day, the “Soft Day,” began with a 5-mile buddy run in ACUs and running shoes. Once Soldiers finished with the run, they immediately moved to chin-up bars, where they did as many repetitions as they could.

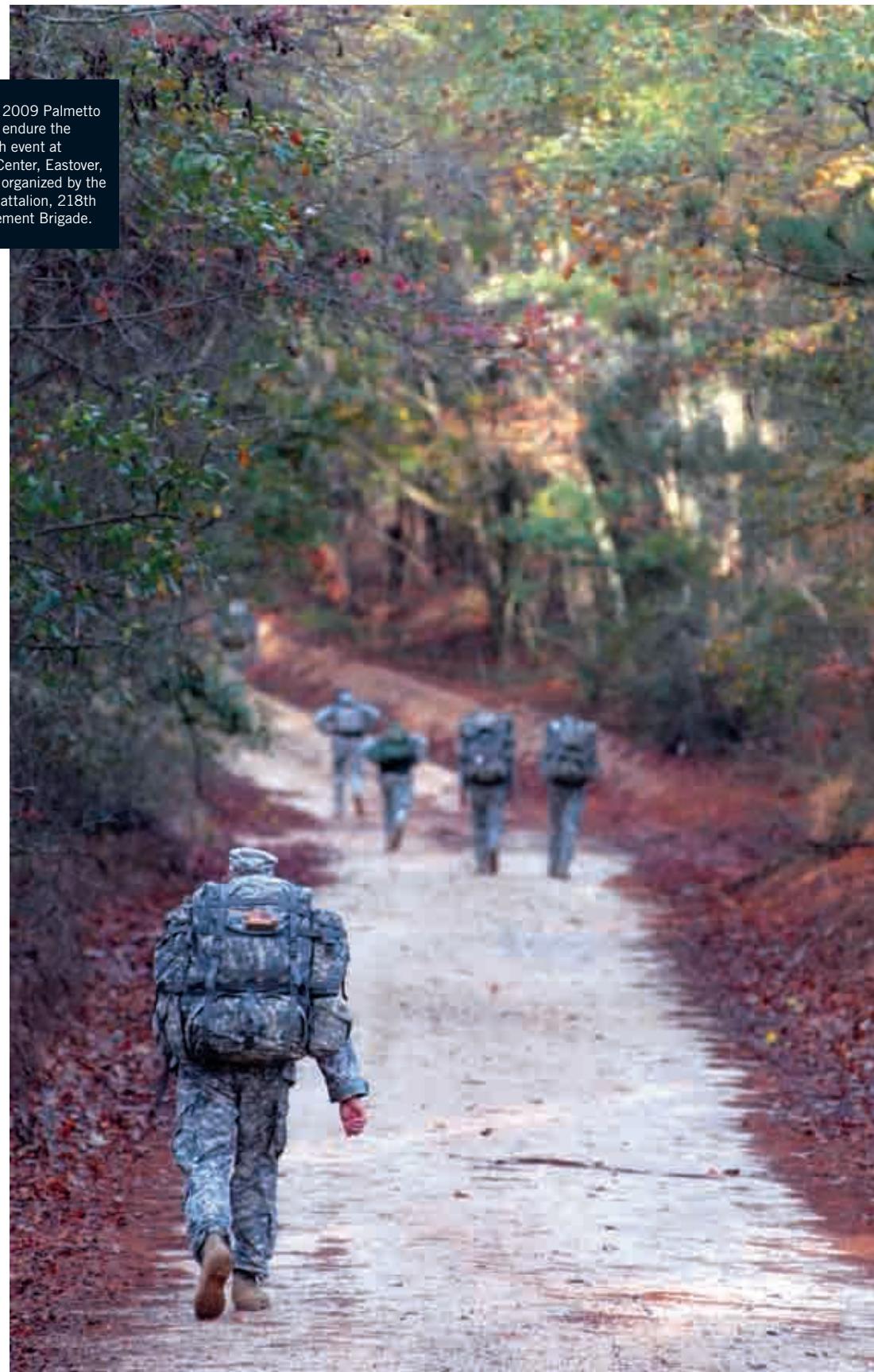
The third day presented the Soldiers with the longest event: a 16-mile road march carrying a 45-pound backpack.

Hargrove hopes to see the event reaching a larger group of participants in the future. He is planning to have a brigade-level event in

Participants of the 2009 Palmetto Best Warrior Team endure the 16-mile road march event at McCrady Training Center, Eastover, SC. The event was organized by the 4/118th Infantry Battalion, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

## Final results for the 2009 Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition:

- **First Place:** Team Delta: SGT Kevin Kirkpatrick and SPC James D. Gobeyn  
**Total points:** 523
- **Second Place:** Team HHC 1: SGT Maurice Leonard and SGT Royce M. McLester  
**Total points:** 476
- **Third Place:** Team FSC 1: SSG Larry Gore and SGT Johnny Stevenson  
**Total points:** 471
- **Fourth Place:** Team Charlie: SGT Ryan Vanhoy and SPC Michael Gardner  
**Total points:** 396
- **Fifth Place:** Team HHC 2: SSG Derrick Love and SGT Anthony Alexander  
**Total points:** 379
- **Sixth Place:** Team FSC 2: SPC Kevin Cobb and PVT Jamal Green  
**Total points:** 328



2010 and a South Carolina Army National Guard version of the competition in 2011.

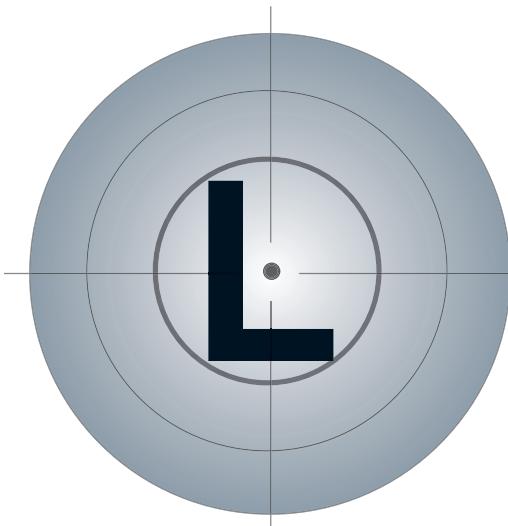
Regardless of the outcome of Hargrove's plans, the first installment of the Palmetto Best Warrior Team Competition has generated curiosity and inspired Soldiers to strive to be the best they can. The race has the potential to draw Soldiers from around the state to compete. **GX**

**STRIKING  
FEAR  
FROM  
AWAY  
FAR**

SSG Brandon House, Sniper Instructor at the Camp Joseph T. Robinson Sniper School in Arkansas, prepares to engage a target during a training exercise. Photo by 1st Lt. Barry Eason, Arkansas Air National Guard

# BECOMING A SNIPER

BY CLINT WOOD



LYING ON THE OPEN CARGO RAMP OF A CH-47 helicopter, about 300 feet above the ground, Sergeant James Vanveldhuizen peers through a scope mounted on an M107 .50 caliber sniper rifle. He squeezes the trigger, and billows of disrupted dust are followed by an ear-piercing blast on the ground more than 550 meters away.

Iowa Guard Soldier Vanveldhuizen was among 15 two-man sniper teams on a recent November afternoon vying to be

named the best of the best in the second annual Interservice Sniper Sustainment Exercise at Fort Chaffee, AR, Nov. 7–13. Sure, snipers have been glamorized in movies like *Sniper* and *The Shooter*, but these elite sharpshooters are engaged in some of the most dangerous missions and required to perform extremely difficult movements. Most can hit targets from more than 1,000 meters out and provide unmatched reconnaissance to ground commanders.

#### >>> MOST HUNTED

It's not for everyone. With this role comes the title of "most hunted Soldiers on today's modern battlefield." A sniper team can single-handedly strike fear in the enemy and devastate its morale with its long-range marksmanship skills.

Think back to the three SEALs who perched on top of a swaying ship and

neutralized three Somali pirates holding a U.S. citizen hostage in April 2009.

The task has come a long way from when sniper Timothy Murphy took out General Simon Fraser of the British army in the Battle of Saratoga during the Revolutionary War on Oct. 7, 1777. Murphy, a rifleman in Morgan's Kentucky Riflemen, reportedly engaged Fraser at a distance of about 500 yards using one of the famous long-barreled Kentucky rifles.

#### >>> THE BUCK STOPS HERE

To earn the title of a Guard sniper, Soldiers must graduate from a two-phase sniper school at the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center, Camp Joseph T. Robinson, AR. Each phase lasts two weeks.

There is a long list of prerequisites to get a slot in the school; first and foremost, Soldiers must be in the combat arms military occupational specialties (MOSs).

SSG Tim Kennedy, Texas Army National Guard, engages targets while training in the Nevada desert in 2009.







SPC Luke Roseen of the Montana Army National Guard fires an M107 .50 caliber sniper rifle during the Interservice Sniper Sustainment Exercise at Fort Chaffee, AR. SPC Jeremy Koopman of Iowa said he can feel the concussion from the muzzle brake.

## "IT'S TORTURE WAITING AND WAITING, AND THEN WATCHING EVERYTHING GO DOWN THROUGH A SCOPE AND NOT BEING THERE WITH THEM."

>> SSG Timothy Kennedy

### >>> NEVER ALONE

A sniper is never alone. He always has a spotter with him. The sniper and spotter can assume each other's roles as they are trained in both tasks.

A spotter tells the sniper his shot placement. One way he does this is observing the round's vapor trail through the spotting scope. A vapor trail is white and results from the change in air pressure at the back of the bullet. "He basically guides you on the target," Newman said.

Contrary to popular belief, Newman said the spotter is usually the senior member of the team because he is more accurate with judging the wind, distance and direction, and designating targets.

"The shooter has to concentrate on pulling the trigger and getting the sights aligned," Newman noted.

But these two have to communicate with each other very well. "They've got to be very close," said Newman. "They've got to know each other like best friends or brothers. You know his every reaction."

Newman compared this knowledge to when he was a Ranger participating in Close Quarter Battle drills. He knew instinctively his fellow Soldiers' next move.

Newman can tell if his sniper is "hyped up" by the tone of his voice. Sniper teams operate independently and rely on each other for protection.

Newman said this doesn't concern him.

"I am completely fine with that, and feel I can move with a little more stealth and flexibility than with a large element," he explained. "Sometimes you have to sacrifice security for speed, stealth and flexibility, which act as another form of security in itself."

House added that once his team got to their positions, training took over.

"You get your mind-set right," he said. "Your training starts to take over and, of course, you have to discipline yourself. You have to look at everything in a life-and-death position."

### >>> IRAQ STILL NEEDS SNIPERS

House said despite the decrease in attacks against American forces in Iraq, snipers are still needed because the insurgents are still active.

"There is still enemy activity all over the country," said House, who assumed the role of a sniper in his deployment to Iraq once his battalion commander learned he was an instructor at the school.

"We still need the eyes, the ears and the knowledge of snipers in Iraq no matter what is going on," he continued. "The snipers will be the ones who beat the insurgents by watching the roads, main intersections and outposts. If we can detect activity going on, we can do something about it. If we pull out our snipers and make them do FOB security, we are only beating ourselves."

### >>> OIF'S MOST FAMOUS GUARD SNIPER

First Lieutenant Michael J. McCarty of the Arkansas Army National Guard's Company C, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry, 39th Brigade Combat Team, is one of the most famous snipers of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

McCarty was awarded a Silver Star after leading 24 Soldiers against 75 heavily armed insurgents during the BCT's deployment to Baghdad, Iraq, in 2005. He single-handedly terminated several machine gunners taking aim on his men, as well as evacuated casualties. He and his Soldiers eliminated at least 30 insurgents.

Another Arkansas native, Marine Gunnery Sergeant Carlos H. Athcock, was credited with the longest shot by an American sniper for several years. He used an M2-Browning .50 caliber machine gun equipped with a telescopic sight to take out targets in Vietnam in 1967 from 2,286 meters (2,500 yards), or 1.42 miles.

Canadian Corporal Rob Furlong used a McMillan Tac-50 .50 BMG sniper rifle to bring off the longest-range confirmed sniper kill in history, when he shot a Taliban combatant at 2,430 meters (2,657 yards) during the 2002 campaign in Afghanistan.

### >>> HELICOPTER RAMP PROVING GROUND

Pilgrim said snipers could engage targets from the back of helicopters in Afghanistan.

"At least with the [Interservice Sniper Sustainment Exercise], they were exposed to that," he noted. "It proved to them, 'Hey, we can make those shots from this type of platform.'"

**"WE STILL NEED THE EYES, THE EARS AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF SNIPERS IN IRAQ NO MATTER WHAT IS GOING ON."**

>> SSG Brandon House



## LETHAL MEASURES SAVE LIVES

*Story by Clint Wood, photo by 1st Lt. Barry Eason, Arkansas Air National Guard*

On one of his missions while deployed to Iraq in 2005, Staff Sergeant Brandon House, a sniper school instructor at the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, AR, had to resort to lethal measures to stop a motorist from crashing into a checkpoint on a clear November night.

His team was manning a checkpoint in Baghdad during a major raid on suspected insurgents—"a few punks"—with alleged ties to the black market who were receiving financing from al-Qaeda in Iraq. This checkpoint was marked by large signs in Arabic stating "Do not enter," concertina wire and orange cones.

This checkpoint was important because no one was allowed in or out. "As soon as we got on site for the raid, my job was to set a Final Firing Line or basically a point of no return," House told *GX*. "If a person or a vehicle broke this line, my job was to stop them or it by any means necessary."

A white, four-door sedan driven by a man approached the checkpoint. House said he remembers the car having a somewhat dirty blue interior, and Xbox games were strewn in the interior. The ungroomed man had a "crusty beard," wore blue pajamas and said he lived near there and requested access.

"I moved to a position so I could talk to him along with my translator," House mentioned. "We actually talked for about five minutes about this and that, and I finally decided to call it quits and go back to my vehicle."

The motorist backed his car to the next intersection, about a block away. House walked back to his Humvee.

"As I was walking back, I could see him in the corner of my eye," House explained. "I never took my eye off of him, and he never turned his vehicle around. Nothing uncommon, but I sensed something in this."

House's senses were heightened when the motorist pressed the accelerator of his car several times—in other words, gunned the engine.

House said a motorist revving his engine like this doesn't necessarily mean he has bad intentions. Because this incident was late at night, it allowed House to hear the engine. Then the motorist sped toward the checkpoint.

"When I heard it, my training took over," House said. "I had heard of cars trying to run down checkpoints and things of that nature, so I was being cautious. I began to yell at him to stop."

House aimed his M21 7.62 mm sniper rifle equipped with a Leupold 4.5X-14X scope (the same used on the M107 .50 caliber sniper rifles) at the motorist, shined him with a flashlight mounted on his weapon and yelled.

The motorist didn't stop.

As they looked at each other, House fired a round at the ground by the sedan, which was speeding toward the checkpoint at about 300 yards away. He followed up with three rounds into the vehicle's grille and, finally, several rounds into the driver before the vehicle stopped.

"When it was all said and done, we found a lot of information on this guy," House said. "It's good he is gone."

When asked what his initial mind-set was when he had the motorist in his crosshair, he replied, "I hope I'm not going to be in trouble. After that, it was slow motion. It felt like it took hours for it to be over."

The motorist was an International Zone employee. Found in the car were maps of Baghdad with grid coordinates marked, and several bottles of beer and whiskey.

"My last line of defense was basically to kill or destroy whatever came my way," House reflected. "After he breached my Final Firing Line, that's exactly what I did, too. I still replay that day over and over all the time. I am not upset with what I did. I believe I saved lives that day, and if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't change a thing." **GX**



Snipers like SPC Luke Roseen of Iowa can spend hours looking through their rifle scopes waiting to engage targets. Each power of a rifle scope magnifies the human eyesight that many times.

Vanveldhuizen and his fellow snipers had 10 .50 caliber rounds to fire at four targets made of two sheets of plywood that resembled a small "enemy pickup." The white targets were seven feet wide and four-and-a-half feet high. The recommended area to hit the trucks was in the middle of them (this gave them their best chance to score a first-round hit).

Vanveldhuizen said there was a lot of turbulence and vibration firing from the Chinook.

"To try and cut down on [vibration], you lean into your weapon, against the strap, and it's a good time," he commented.

Once snipers like Vanveldhuizen had their "good times" firing from the ramp, it was their spotter's turn to send some rounds downrange. The spotter would lie down, sit or kneel on the ramp.

Snipers may be fearless, but they were safely hooked to the ramp. (See "Safety on the Ramp" sidebar for more details.)

MSG Brett Boatright, center, was kept busy overseeing snipers and their spotters engaging targets from the belly of a CH-47 Chinook flying over a Fort Chaffee, AR, range during the second annual Interservice Sniper Sustainment Exercise in November.



### >>> SAFETY ON THE RAMP

The sniper, spotter and observer were tethered to the helicopter by using vests like crew chiefs wear. The vest, made to withstand the weight, had a D-ring on its back. One end of nylon tubing was attached to the D-ring. The other end of the tubing with a D-ring was attached to the floor of the helicopter.

CLINT WOOD

The spotters were armed with the new semi-automatic M110 7.62 mm or M4 5.56 caliber weapon. They had 20 rounds to engage pop-up targets from about 200 meters away. These targets were 40 inches high and 20 inches wide.

### >>> MAKING ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Staff Sergeant Timothy Kennedy, a former Active Duty Green Beret sniper and the newest member of the Texas Army National Guard's Special Forces Company C, said that knowing he can support his fellow Green Berets from a long distance makes all the difference in the world. When asked why he wanted to be a sniper, Kennedy, who was en route to the United States Army Special Operations Command sniper competition, wrote in an email, "I was a door kicker for three years, and I wanted a change of pace. My first deployment to Iraq, the snipers got more [engagements] than the assault force did. So I wanted to make sure I was with them."

Kennedy said being a sniper creates many challenges, including spending days to weeks "living in a hole only to watch our brothers assault a target through a scope."

"It's torture waiting and waiting, and then watching everything go down through a scope and not being there with them."

That wasn't the case in a deployment to Afghanistan, when he was an Active Duty Green Beret. In fact, that engagement is one of his most memorable.

"I was in Afghanistan escorting a coalition Special Forces unit to their new [Forward Operating Base]," he described. "We got caught in an [Improvised Explosive Device/Rocket Propelled Grenade] initiated ambush that led into a gunfight that lasted 34 hours. I shot almost 400 rounds through my [SR25 semi-automatic sniper rifle] at target."

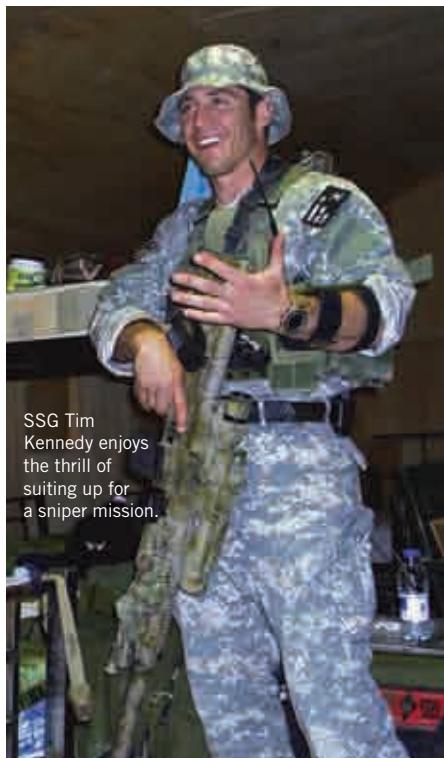
Kennedy neutralized 10 threats and wounded several other insurgents.

"I was honored to be with the guys I was with," Kennedy said. "Most of us got out unmarked."

### >>> HUNTER EQUALS SNIPER

Newman, who was hunting deer in southern Florida when GX spoke with him, said he became a sniper because he liked to hunt.

"They say you have to be a sharpshooter to hunt," said Newman, who joined the Guard in 2002. Before that, he served from 1999 until 2002 as an infantryman with the



The .50 caliber round officially entered service in 1921. The rounds are more than 5 inches long.

CLINT WOOD

## DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Only Soldiers with 11B or 19D MOSs in combat arms can qualify to become a sniper or 18X-Special Forces Enlistment Option.

**Prerequisites from Army Training Requirements and Resource Systems (ATRRS) include:**

- Students must be of Combat Arms MOS in the rank of private first class and above; however, only MOS 11B will be awarded the B4 Alternate Skills Identifier (ASI) upon graduation; per DA PAM 611-21, CH12, page 911, Table 12-2.
- Students must be on Active Duty, in the Reserve Component or in the National Guard.
- Must have a good performance record with no history of alcohol or drug abuse.
- Must be a volunteer and be recommended by their commander.
- Must be in excellent physical condition; able to obtain a 70 percent or better score in each event of the APFT for their age group.
- Must have corrected vision to 20/20.
- Must have a GT score of 100 or higher; non-waiverable.
- Must not have a record of disciplinary action.
- Must qualify expert with the M16A2 rifle (M4 carbine) within six months of course attendance.
- Must pass psychological evaluation (MMPI/CPI) conducted under the direction of a qualified psychologist.
- Must meet standards of AR 600-9 at the time of in-processing.

**NOTE:** If a non-11B MOS Soldier gets a slot in the class, he will still be a 19D upon graduation.

# The Bugler

► STRENGTH MAINTENANCE



## >> HERO ON CALL

Hero On Call (HOC) recently added four new operators to the team. With three enlisted Soldiers from Washington state and one from New Mexico, HOC will be tapping into new regions of the country and potentially have access to even more recruits than before.



The Bugler is a tool to help Soldiers in all aspects of recruiting. From the Recruiting NCOIC to the Recruiting Assistant (RA), all new information about the latest and greatest recruiting tools and programs can be found right here in each issue of GX.

*Info and images courtesy of NGB-ASM*

## >> NATIONAL GUARD VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

The National Guard Virtual Career Fair allows potential recruits the ability to learn about the Guard from the comfort of their own computer free of the hassles of travel, crowds or pressure of face-to-face meetings. It lets people go through a virtual online presentation of their possible career choices in the Guard. All they have to do is click the page, and they can explore all the National Guard has to offer. Things like:

- \* MONEY FOR COLLEGE
- \* LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
- \* CAREER TRAINING
- \* ADVENTURE AND EXCITEMENT
- \* HONOR, DUTY AND SERVICE
- \* CAMARADERIE AND TEAMWORK

For more on the National Guard Virtual Career Fair, go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/events/virtual](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/events/virtual).





ISTOCKPHOTO

#### >> PATH TO HONOR

The Path to Honor application within [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com) now offers an additional tool to assist recruiters with the accession process. Along with providing background-check information on potential applicants, Path to Honor now also allows recruiters to request required enlistment documents such as birth certificates, Social Security number verification, education verification and marriage certificates.

More information can be found through Recruiting and Retention NCOs at: [pth.nationalguard.com/rrportal/resources.php](http://pth.nationalguard.com/rrportal/resources.php).



#### >> NATIONALGUARD.COM

The [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com) Web site recently received a facelift, providing the National Guard with an updated and accurate recruiting tool. With an open design to encourage easy navigation, [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com) provides information to the user, so potential recruits don't have to chase down what they are looking for, allowing them to be more informed before they contact a recruiter.

#### HERE ARE SOME OF THE UPDATED FEATURES ON THE SITE:

- \* PAY CALCULATOR
- \* IMPROVED SEARCH ENGINE
- \* ADDITION OF PHOTO GALLERIES
- \* HIGH-DEFINITION VIDEOS



# Utah Tops Nation in Retention

Story and photos courtesy of NGB-ASM

### UTAH'S RECRUIT SUSTAINMENT PROGRAM (RSP)

is on fire. They're No. 1 overall in lowest Training Pipeline Losses (TPL). They're No. 3 in the nation. They were in the top five for most of 2009.

How are they doing it? Lieutenant Colonel William Dones, NGB-ASM-RSP Branch Chief, traveled to Salt Lake City to find out.

### BY DESIGN

Utah's low TPL is no fluke. The foundation for their success is a sound training plan and choosing the right people.

When the RSP came about, this state didn't hesitate to offer their best Recruiting and Retention Noncommissioned Officers (RRNCOs) to serve as RSP Site NCOs. That, in conjunction with top-down guidance, led to their Soldiers' success at Initial Entry Training (IET) and Advanced Individual Training (AIT).

Utah has begun training on a 120-day cycle. The first drill is the Red Phase, then two White Phases and finally a Blue Phase. This initiative has allowed them to seamlessly align with the Recruit Force Pool requirement.

With the exception of Soldiers in the Split Training Option (Green Phase), the longest period of time a Soldier will drill with their assigned RSP company is four months. Utah's forward-thinking plan allows for maximum use of time, while not duplicating training.

### STRIPES FOR SKILLS

The training conducted is focused on the Stripes for Skills program. Utah has realized that a key component of success at IET/AIT is mastering the tasks within that program. During their first and second drill, a Soldier is trained on all requirements under the program.

An additional benefit of this program is that it provides Soldiers with the greatest opportunity for promotion. On average, they promote three to five Soldiers at each of their RSP companies every month. A leading indicator of the direct link between Utah's training plan and their Soldiers'

success at IET and AIT is the number of honor graduates from those programs. In a recent three-month period, Utah had 38 honor graduates.

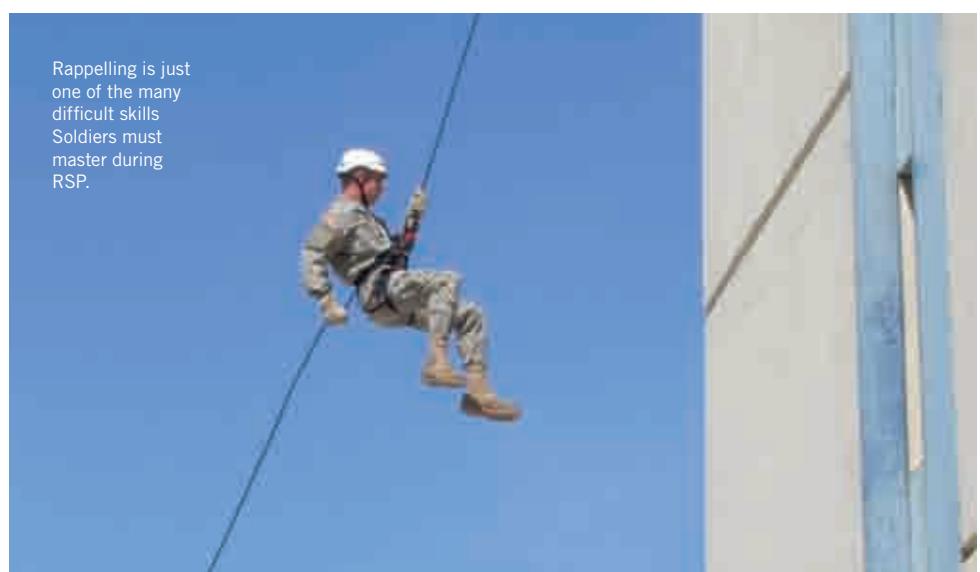
Utah has benefited from an incredible RSP cadre initiative. RSP cadre follows Soldiers through each phase of RSP training, allowing cadre to remain with individual RSP Soldiers for their entire RSP life cycle. This builds trust and

Corps (SMP/ROTC) Soldiers assigned to their respective units. Utah employs them in a unique way, by placing them as peer platoon leaders within the RSP. They're treated as officers to provide a training opportunity for the RSP Soldier, by teaching them to correctly address the officer corps. Not all SMP/ROTC Soldiers are afforded this opportunity. Only the best are chosen. Usually, a Basic Training honor graduate and a high Army Physical Fitness Test score are the standard for selection.

### NOT IN UTAH

"Enlist 'em and forget 'em"?

Not in Utah! The RRNCO is a key component of their success. Utah quickly realized that having an RRNCO involved and account-



Rappelling is just one of the many difficult skills Soldiers must master during RSP.

team cohesion, and allows cadre to truly get to know their Soldiers. In addition, the consistency created helps cadre more effectively teach, coach and mentor their Soldiers.

Utah uses their Green Phase Soldiers as team leaders and squad leaders. Serving as a peer leader is a competitive assignment that is viewed as an honor and a privilege. The leadership exposure for these young Soldiers will benefit them for their entire military career.

A residual effect is that Green Phase Soldiers are very engaged and highly motivated. In addition, these peer leaders remain with their Soldiers through each phase of training, right along with the RSP cadre.

Many RSPs struggle with how to make the most of the Army National Guard Simultaneous Membership Program/Reserve Officers' Training

able for their enlisted RSP Soldiers would pay great dividends. Not only is the communication between the RRNCO and the RSP Soldier greatly improved, but the state's Inactive Duty Training (IDT) attendance rate is above 95 percent.

The RSP cadre development is administered by the RSP first sergeants. They work two levels down and are responsible for training and mentorship of their NCOs.

Turning RRNCOs into RSP cadre requires a hands-on and proactive approach. The new RRNCOs are required to shadow experienced RSP cadre for several months before they can lead a platoon. States looking to improve TPL numbers should implement a training plan that truly prepares their Soldiers for IET/AIT. Focus on tasks Soldiers will be trained on downrange at Basic Training. **GX**

Warriors practice patrolling techniques at a Guard facility in Utah, where teamwork and communication are key.



Serving as a peer leader is a competitive assignment that is viewed as an honor and a privilege.



# Help Your Boss Help You: Get With the CEI Program

By SGM Thomas Holley

**RESERVE WARRIOR**s in all components are familiar with Civilian Employer Information (CEI). However, very few can tell you exactly what it is. Or what it does. Do you know what CEI is, and what it obligates you to do on an annual basis?

Your annual obligation to report your CEI can be found in the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (RCCPDS), Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 7730.54 dated March 31, 2008.

This is the official DoD policy directing the reporting of CEI data. If you would like to read more about the Reserve Components CEI requirements and reporting procedures, please see ENCLOSURE 10 CEI TRANSACTION FILE, DD-2171. The Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) version states that all Reserve military services shall implement reporting requirements for employment-related information for each officer, warrant officer and enlisted person assigned to the Ready Reserve who is not serving in an Active Guard Reserve (AGR) status. All Selected Reserve members, excluding AGRs, shall annually update their CEI data.

You may be asking yourself why? The collection of CEI helps facilitate open communication between the DoD and the civilian employers of the Guard and Reserve service members. CEI informs the reservists and their employers of their rights, benefits and obligations.

The immediate goal is to increase the effectiveness of the DoD's employer outreach programs by identifying employers directly affected by DoD policies and mobilizations. More than 700,000 Reservists have mobilized in all components since Sept. 11, 2001, with an average of 124,000 on an Active Duty status daily. Understanding who

the employers are and the distinct balance of Reserve obligations and civilian employment will allow DoD to assess actual employer needs and identify possible programs to encourage employer support for Reserve participation.

A common problem with the CEI process is that Warriors do not understand their obligation for reporting CEI data annually or correctly. Ninety-two percent of all Reserve component service members have completed the CEI process at least one time during their careers. However, the average compliance rate hovers around 49 percent. This means that more than 51 percent of Reservists' employer needs could be unknown to the DoD.

The CEI process is simple and should only take five minutes to complete. Members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard should use the Defense Manpower Data Center's Guard and Reserve portal at [DMDC.osd.mil/guard-reserveportal](http://DMDC.osd.mil/guard-reserveportal).

We must never forget that employers help strengthen our country and allow our men and women in uniform to focus on their military mission at hand. The annual reporting of complete and accurate information will ensure that we communicate effectively with civilian employers, recognize outstanding support and increase awareness of Reserve obligations.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a DoD agency established in 1972. The mission of ESGR is to gain and maintain employer support for National Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflict through mediation. For additional ESGR information, you can visit the ESGR Web site at [ESGR.mil](http://ESGR.mil), or call them at (800) 336-4590. **GX**

*SGM Thomas Holley is the former Senior Enlisted Advisor at ESGR.*

**>> Have you updated your employer data in the CEI database? Did you know this is an annual requirement? Visit the site below and be a hero. It takes only five minutes: [DMDC.osd.mil/guard-reserveportal](http://DMDC.osd.mil/guard-reserveportal).**

**>> ESGR is a DoD agency that seeks to promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and resolving conflict through mediation.**

**>> Help your employer show off! Ask them to sign and display a Statement of Support showing that they do more than what the law requires to take care of you.**

**>> Go to [ESGR.org/patriot](http://ESGR.org/patriot) to nominate your supervisor for the Patriot Award.**

**>> Contact your local ESGR representative or [ESGR.mil](http://ESGR.mil) for more info.**

# WE ALL SERVE



Jim Ainsworth of Nevada ESGR and Mike Williams, Operations Vice President of Nevada based REMSA, with employees and U.S. Army National Guardsmen Specialist Tyler Teese, Sergeant Steve Park, Sergeant Kevin Basta, Sergeant Nich Hammond, and Specialist Mike Roen.

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD • ARMY RESERVE • NAVY RESERVE • MARINE RESERVE  
COAST GUARD RESERVE • AIR NATIONAL GUARD • AIR FORCE RESERVE**

We all serve. Whether serving our communities or our country, members of the National Guard and Reserve depend on their military units, families, and employers for support. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency that seeks to promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflict through mediation.



# Setup for Success

## SCHOOL PROGRAM GOES TO HEAD OF THE CLASS

By Scott J. Farrell

For the past 10 years, the YOU CAN School Program (YCSP) has been one of the Army National Guard's most popular educational outreach programs, introducing young adults around the country to essential life skills.

Building on the program's successes, the Strength Maintenance Division of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-ASM) recently updated the YCSP to be even more relevant, useful and engaging to today's students and educators.

### MODERN MAKEOVER

A public service offered to high schools and colleges at no cost, the YCSP has more than 30 presentations that can give young adults essential skills, shift their thinking and help them make wise decisions—now and throughout their lives.

Relaunched at the start of the 2009–2010 school year, the YCSP has a fresh look, new and updated presentations, and social media resources.

Based on market research with RRNCOs, educators and students, NGB-ASM updated widely used classroom presentations and added new presentations highly relevant to today's career-minded young adults. The new YCSP presentations cover resume writing and workplace skills. The updated presentations inform students about budgeting, study techniques, test-taking skills, health and nutrition, lifelong learning, and interviewing.

New to the YCSP curriculum are online learning modules that educators can assign as homework or a computer lab activity. Used as homework, the online modules reinforce what was presented in the classroom through interactive games and exercises as well as video scenarios. For those who have not participated in the program, the online modules offer a taste of what will be covered in the classroom. There are currently eight online presentations that correspond to the new and updated classroom modules.



**A Facebook page encourages students to share their successes and challenges, and to show support for the program and for the Guard.**

To keep students connected to the program and its motivational message outside the classroom, NGB-ASM built multiple social networking and new media components into the re-energized program.

As part of the program relaunch, the Guard launched a YCSP Facebook page encouraging students to share their successes and challenges, and to show support for the program and for the Guard.

The new interactive features include a trivia-challenge widget and mobile application. Downloaded from the program's Web site, the widget enables students to practice test-taking on their computer's desktop. The mobile application is a way for them to practice their test-taking skills on an iPod touch, iPhone or another mobile phone.

### RECRUITERS ON BOARD

Since the program relaunched in August with a redesigned Web site, NGB-ASM has received compliments from RRNCOs eager to use the new and updated YCSP presentations. The Web site has received a steady stream of program requests from educators.

"The YOU CAN School Program is a great resource," said Raymond Morgigno, principal at Pearl High School in Mississippi, where the Guard recently gave a study skills presentation.

"It broadens students' perspectives and helps them set their goals higher," confirmed Becky Rowan, a guidance counselor at the school.

Dr. Ray Davis, an education associate for career guidance in the Office of Career and Technology Education at the South Carolina Department of Education, is looking forward to reintroducing schools to the YCSP.

"The issues addressed by the YOU CAN School Program better enable our students to make a smooth transition into the workforce," Dr. Davis said.

RRNCOs can give the presentations in a number of classes, including history, English, physical education and business. The program is designed to help teachers meet state and national curriculum standards.

Sergeant First Class Mark Spencer, an RRNCO in the Connecticut Army National Guard, started using the revitalized program as soon as the school year started.

"The YOU CAN School Program is a wonderful opportunity for RRNCOs to connect with students who are interested in the Guard while providing a community service to our schools," he said. "The new presentations and features will help the Guard reach even more students with a motivational message."

To learn more about the YOU CAN School Program, visit YouCanSchoolProgram.com. **GX**

Check out the YOU CAN School Program on Facebook:  
[Facebook.com/YOUCANSchoolProgram](http://Facebook.com/YOUCANSchoolProgram).



# ROTC 101

THE START OF  
LEADERSHIP

By SFC Ken Suratt,  
Colorado Army National Guard

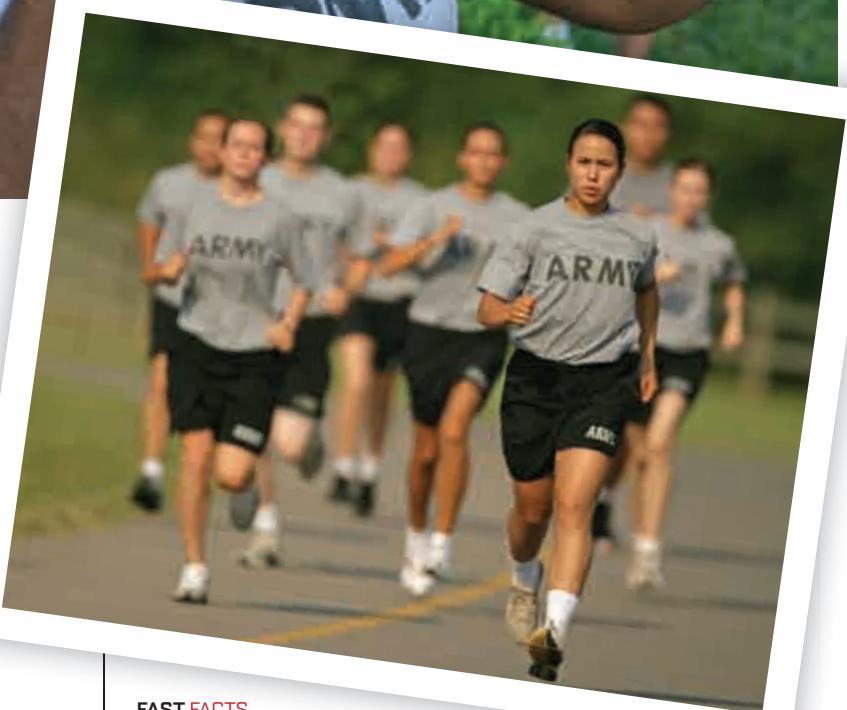
**ARMY ROTC (RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS)** is one of the best leadership courses in the country and is part of your college curriculum. During classes, leadership labs, physical training and field training exercises, you will learn what it takes to lead, motivate others and conduct missions in a leadership role. During your first year of ROTC, you will be exposed to the basic principles of Officership and the fundamentals of leadership.

The following is just a short list of what you will learn in your first year of ROTC (MS 101):

- Map-reading and land navigation skills
- Military customs and courtesies
- Tactics and operations
- Physical training and ranger challenge team
- Introduction to leadership

MS 101 consists of 1–2 hours of classroom instruction and 1–2 hours of leadership labs, where you will get hands-on experience in what you have learned and how to apply it during real-world military operations.

In upcoming issues of *GX*, we will look at each step of ROTC and the benefits you can receive as a Cadet at your local university



## FAST FACTS

- \* The Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) was born when President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Defense Act of 1916.
- \* Army ROTC has a total of 273 host programs, with more than 1,100 partnership and affiliate schools across the country.
- \* It produces approximately 60 percent of the Second Lieutenants who join the active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

For more on ROTC, go to  
[www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/lead-from-the-top/rotc](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/lead-from-the-top/rotc).

# Strength Maintenance

► RECRUITING AND RETENTION



Left to right: SSG Mario Cima, PVT Angel Perkins and PVT Andrew Forrester.

# G-RAP Achieves 100,000 Enlistments

**GUARD CELEBRATES RECRUITING PROGRAM** *By Fred McGhee II*

**THE NATIONAL GUARD** recently celebrated two significant milestones. First was its 373rd birthday. The Guard is the country's oldest component of the Armed Forces.

Second is the 100,000th enlistee to join through the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program, or G-RAP. To continue as an ever-ready vigilant institution, the National Guard needs to keep strength maintenance its top priority. To that end, the Guard launched the program in 2005.

Private Andrew Forrester had the honor of being the 100,000th enlistee courtesy of G-RAP.

Now he plans to take advantage of the program by recruiting others in his community.

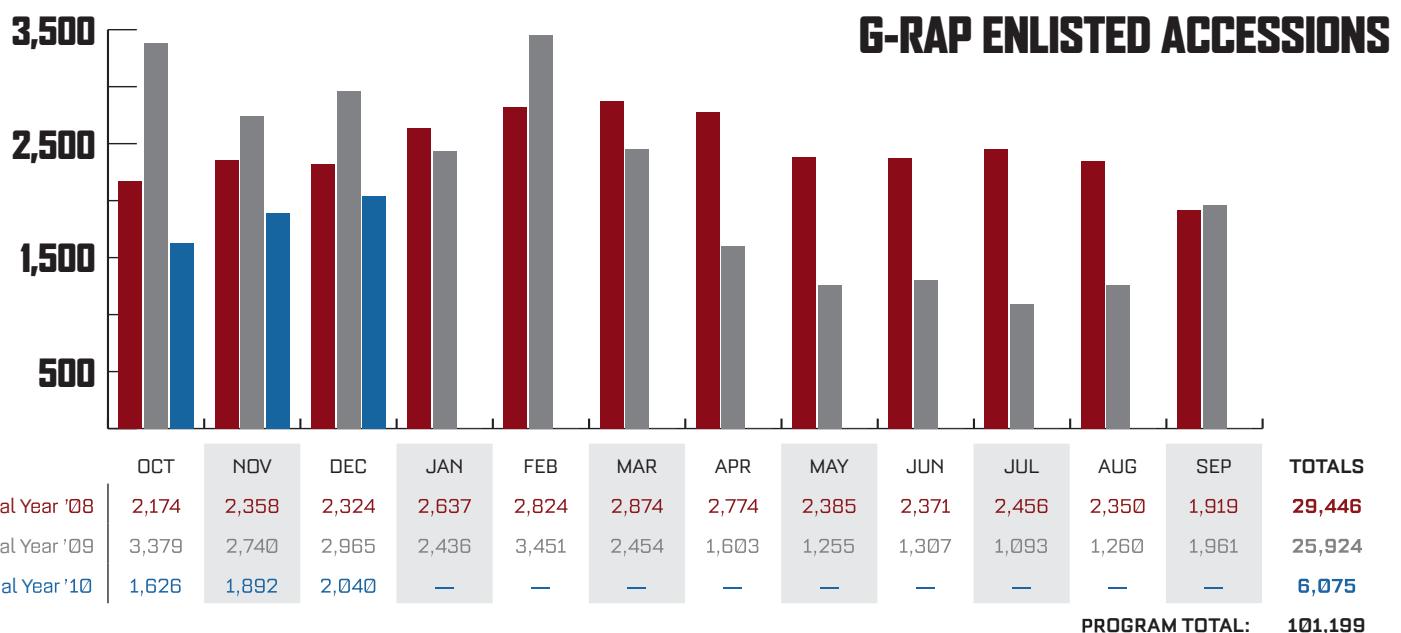
"G-RAP is a great program because I can explain to people looking for direction in life the awesome benefits the Guard has to offer," Forrester said.

Through G-RAP, Soldiers can earn money by referring potential recruits who later enlist in the Guard. As pillars of their respective communities, Soldiers know people with the unique qualities necessary to be a Guard officer or Soldier. This approach aids recruiters in keeping up with the ever-increasing demands

to fill the ranks while maintaining the Guard's high standards.

"G-RAP benefits the Guard in a major way because Soldiers know the type of person they want to train and serve with. They know what they are looking for, so the success rate of the people they refer is very high," said Staff Sergeant Mario Cima, recruiter for the Kentucky Army National Guard.

G-RAP has transformed the way the Guard recruits by focusing on cost-effective, community-based recruiting. AGR officers and members of the full-time recruiting force are ineligible.



# Strength Maintenance

## RECRUITING AND RETENTION



As a Recruiting Assistant, or RA, Soldiers can earn a tidy sum while they serve. When a recruit enlists and reports to Basic Training within 365 days, the RA can earn up to \$2,000.

Once enlistment is verified, the RA will receive a payment of \$1,000. An RA can earn an additional \$1,000 if the recruit ships to Basic Training within 365 days of the contract.

"I talk to Soldiers who may be struggling financially, and I tell them that they could earn money by talking up the Guard," said Sergeant Darla Collier, Chief 54 top recruiter of the year for Iowa Army National Guard. "G-RAP has changed the average Soldier's perspective. They see now

that they can benefit from this program also."

Collier credits G-RAP referrals for 90 percent of her enlistments. She says RAs can reach people in remote

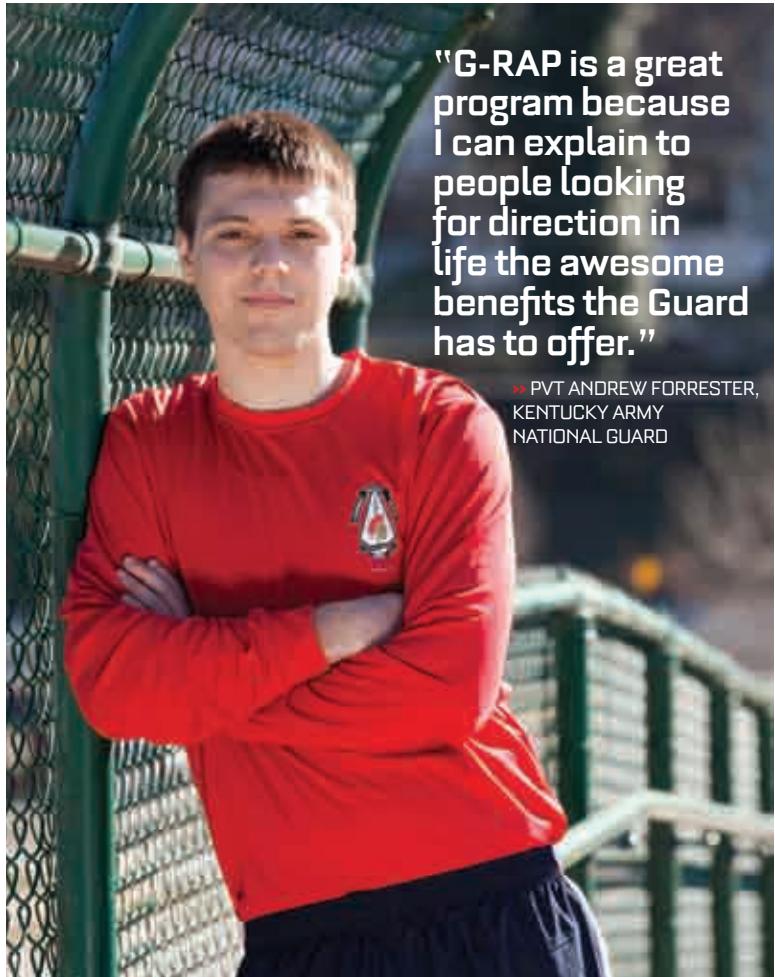
communities she may not have access to, "so by using the RA's networking, we can branch out to more people."

An RA can also earn up to \$2,000 for referring potential officers if the potential officer signs a Guard Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty (GRFD) contract or begins OCS phase 1 or WOCS resident phase 1. To be an RA, Soldiers can apply online at [GuardRecruitingAssistant.com](http://GuardRecruitingAssistant.com).

### SOME ARE, SOME AREN'T

Not every Soldier is cut out to be an RA.

Seasoned recruiters such as South Carolina National Guard's Sergeant James Foley, who



**"G-RAP is a great program because I can explain to people looking for direction in life the awesome benefits the Guard has to offer."**

» PVT ANDREW FORRESTER,  
KENTUCKY ARMY  
NATIONAL GUARD

attributes 43 of his 49 enlistments in 2009 to G-RAP, says that in order for RAs to be successful at recruiting they must first "believe in what they are doing and in what they are a part of."

"The best RAs are the ones willing to talk about the Guard with potential recruits," Cima said. "I had a young lady sign up as an RA in September, and she hit the ground running, bringing in referrals."

Cima is referring to Private Angel Perkins, 21, of the Kentucky Army National Guard. Perkins approached Cima about G-RAP after learning about the program at her enlistment.

Perkins, who is currently attending Basic Training at Fort Sill, OK, wanted to relay to others the benefits the Guard provides and the sense of pride in serving a higher purpose.

"I feel it's an honor to serve my country, so going out to events and encouraging others to serve is an honor as well." **gx**

3,500

2,500

1,500

500

## G-RAP NPS ENLISTED ACCESSIONS

	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	TOTALS
Fiscal Year '08	1,670	1,851	1,850	2,123	2,289	2,479	2,403	2,022	1,999	2,007	1,914	1,527	24,134
Fiscal Year '09	2,904	2,299	2,525	1,911	2,902	1,869	1,373	1,049	1,138	954	1,119	1,785	21,839
Fiscal Year '10	1,475	1,692	1,843	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,444
PROGRAM TOTAL:													81,290





# Advantages of a Master's Degree

By Johanna Altland, Grantham University

**PURSUING A MASTER'S DEGREE** is now easier than ever because of the options available to working adults. There are part-time, evening, weekend and online programs, so you can earn a salary while continuing your education.

While a master's degree may not be required for your chosen career, there are several compelling reasons to earn one.

## GREATER EARNING POTENTIAL

Statistics show that earning potential rises with each level of higher education. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fall 2009 average annual income for someone with an advanced degree (master's or professional degree) was \$69,472. Those with a bachelor's degree earned \$59,540. High school diploma-only workers earned \$32,292.

Over a 40-year career, the \$38,000 salary difference between the master's degree-holder and the high school diploma-holder is around \$1.5 million. In an article in *World Wide Learn*, most

graduate students said they obtained a master's degree to land a higher-paying job.

## INCREASED JOB COMPETITIVENESS

There was a time when a bachelor's degree would pretty much guarantee you a full-time job with a decent income. But in today's tough economic times, that's not necessarily the case. As employers scale back, hiring and job competitiveness increases. A master's degree could give you the edge over your competition.

A master's degree can also help you change careers by allowing you to pursue a new field of study.

A survey completed by QS, a leading global career and education network, found that "in some specialized areas where technical skills are particularly significant, the benefit of a master's degree can outweigh that of up to four years of work experience."

## LOWER RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Having a master's degree improves the likelihood of keeping your job during layoffs.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate in October 2009 climbed to 10.2 percent, the highest it has been since April 1983. But the unemployment rate among college graduates—4.6 percent—was less than half that number.

A master's degree requires time and money, but you'll get a return on that investment. Set your sights on the long-term rewards: greater earning potential, more career options and lower unemployment.



**A master's degree can outweigh up to four years of work experience.**

## IS AN MBA RIGHT FOR ME?

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is one of the most popular graduate degrees. According to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, nearly one in five students pursuing a master's degree is working toward an MBA.

An MBA, a graduate degree in business/commerce, is often thought of as a professional degree, meaning that it can help you enter or advance in a particular career field.

This program focuses on various aspects of business, including accounting, economics, marketing, human resources and management. Typically, MBA programs combine theoretical learning with applied learning (learning by doing) and are designed to help you grow professionally and personally. A great deal of emphasis is placed on strategic thinking and leadership skills.

How do you know if an MBA is right for you? If you answer "yes" to any of the questions below, it may be.

- **Do you have, or would you like to have, a career in management?**
- **Are you interested in starting your own business?**
- **Do you already own a business and need a credential to lend validity to what you do?**
- **Will an MBA benefit you at your current job or at the company you're interested in working for?**
- **Do you have a technical undergraduate degree and want to obtain a business qualification?**
- **Would you like to develop personal skills like communication, creativity, collaboration and cooperation?**

According to the Association of MBAs, career advancement is the No. 1 reason people choose an MBA program. If you don't see yourself becoming a manager or entrepreneur, it may not be the right fit for you.

There are many types of master's programs. You just need to have a clear idea of your career goals. For example, if you're in sales or information technology and you'd like an executive-level position in your organization, the MBA would be a good choice. If you're in the medical field and would like to become a hospital administrator, you may want to look into a Master of Healthcare Administration program. **GX**

**The National Guard can fund your higher education. To find out how, visit [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com).**



# USAA Opens Membership to Veterans

Courtesy of USAA

**SAN ANTONIO, TX**—More than 18 million U.S. military Veterans and their 17 million family members who are looking for competitive alternatives to their current insurance, banking and investment providers can now take advantage of USAA.

Citing steady growth in financial strength and operational capacity, USAA announced that, effective immediately, membership is now open to all Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who served honorably, regardless of length of service.

The change expands USAA's potential customer base by an estimated 35 million.

"We believe everyone who served honorably in the Armed Forces should be able to manage their financial well-being with USAA, a company committed to caring more about the unique needs of the military community than any other," said Major General (ret.) Joe Robles, USAA's president and CEO. "Today, USAA is stronger than at any time in our 87-year history, and we are thrilled to open our doors wider to offer the benefits of USAA membership to more military families than ever."

## STAYING POWER

USAA began as an officer-only association in 1922. It opened to enlisted personnel in 1996, and today serves 7.3 million current and former military members and their families. Throughout its history, the organization has played an important role in helping military families with financial security, providing them with insurance, investments, banking products, and financial planning and advice.

Operating without commissioned sales agents, the company has earned numerous customer service accolades, including winning *Business Week's* No. 1 Customer Service Champs award in 2007 and 2008. USAA is the only



**"... WE ARE THRILLED TO OPEN OUR DOORS WIDER TO OFFER THE BENEFITS OF USAA MEMBERSHIP TO MORE MILITARY FAMILIES THAN EVER."** » MG (RET.) JOE ROBLES, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF USAA

company to be ranked in the top-two each year since the list's inception in 2007.

More recently, through innovations such as the banking industry's first mobile check-deposit service—USAA Deposit@Mobile™—USAA is leveraging technology to enable its eligible customers to manage their finances anytime, from anywhere a mobile signal is available.

"Having served as an Army private and many ranks along the way to major general, it gives me great personal satisfaction to know that another 35 million former service members, their spouses and children now have access to all that USAA offers," Robles said.

*Who is eligible for USAA Property & Casualty Group membership?*

## 1. MILITARY PERSONNEL

All current members of the U.S. Armed Forces, Active Duty, Guard and Reserve, as well as those who retired or honorably separated in the past, regardless of dates or branch of service (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard). Cadets, midshipmen, and officer or warrant officer

candidates in government-sponsored programs leading to a commission.

## 2. FAMILY MEMBERS

Adult children, widow(er)s and un-remarried former spouses of USAA members.

Widow(er)s of officer and enlisted personnel who were killed in action while eligible.

Additionally, USAA life insurance, investment, retirement and deposit products are also available to members' extended families and others who are not eligible for USAA membership.

Today, with heightened concerns about the economy and the solvency of financial institutions, USAA is recognized for its conservative approach to financial management. In 2008, the company's net worth increased to \$14.6 billion, and USAA earned \$423 million in net income.

In addition, USAA's Property & Casualty Insurance Group maintains the highest ratings for financial strength from Standard & Poor's, A.M. Best and Moody's rating agencies, making USAA one of a small, elite group of companies to retain the highest possible ratings. More mid-year 2009 results are available on USAA.com. **GX**



# Tobacco Habits Are Nothing to Smile About

By MG (ret.) Patrick D. Sculley, D.D.S.

**D**id you start 2010 with a resolution to tackle a lifestyle change? If your resolution is tobacco cessation, congratulations, you have made a lifesaving commitment.

Most people are aware of smoking as a risk factor for many serious systemic conditions, including cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, low-birth-weight babies of smoking mothers and cancer. Despite the health risks associated with smoking, nearly 25 percent of adults and 35 percent of high school students in North America smoke. Some smokers have switched to smokeless tobacco, mistakenly thinking it is a safe substitute. Unfortunately, smokeless tobacco is also associated with negative health effects.

The oral cavity often reflects the negative impact of tobacco use, whether smoke or smokeless. Smoking causes the following threats to oral health: cancer, gum diseases and delayed healing. Most commonly, the oral cancer type is squamous cell carcinoma. Other findings associated with smoking are stained teeth, tartar buildup, bad breath and decreased taste. Destructive periodontal disease is a common finding among smokers.

Smokeless tobacco products are of two general types: chewing tobacco and snuff. Like moist snuff, chewing tobacco is placed between cheek and gum. All varieties of smokeless tobacco can cause harmful effects on the oral cavity, and a high percentage of daily smokeless tobacco users have an identifiable soft tissue lesion. Smokeless tobacco habits can result in the formation of a white patch in the area where the tobacco quid is held. This white patch, called leukoplakia, can be premalignant or even malignant.

Although nicotine itself is not associated with cancer, tobacco contains many other carcinogens.

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED

**4,000**

CHEMICALS AND GASES IN

SMOKING TOBACCO

AND

**3,000**

CHEMICALS IN

SMOKELESS TOBACCO

All tobacco products contain nicotine, which can result in dependence and addiction. Although nicotine itself is not associated with cancer, there are many other carcinogenic agents in tobacco products. It is estimated that there are 4,000 chemicals and gases in smoking tobacco and some 3,000 chemicals in smokeless tobacco.

Overcoming an addiction to nicotine may include cessation regimens that address the effects of withdrawal and provide social support to the "quitter." It has been shown that nicotine replacement therapy nearly doubles the success rate of cessation programs. Healthcare providers are encouraged to provide the 5 A's: ask about tobacco use, advise users to quit, assess the user's readiness to quit, assist motivated individuals with pharmacologic aids or referral, and arrange for follow-up services.

The Military Health System's Tobacco Free in the DoD Web page located at [HA.osd.mil/smokingcessation/default.cfm](http://HA.osd.mil/smokingcessation/default.cfm) has an array of resources designed to help tobacco users quit. Many smokers will require several attempts to "beat the habit," but successful tobacco cessation is truly something to smile about. **GX**

*About the Author:* Dr. Patrick Sculley's distinguished career includes serving in the positions of Deputy Surgeon of the Army, Chief of the Army Dental Corps, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) and Commanding General, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

#### According to the Centers for Disease Control:

- Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death.
- Cigarette smoking is responsible for about one in five deaths annually, or about 443,000 deaths per year.
- An estimated 49,000 tobacco-related deaths are the result of secondhand smoke exposure.



# We're Counting Down to the Launch!

**ARNG**

Strength from Within



**2010**

**ARNG**

Dental Bytes

**ARNG**

Get Out and Lighten Up

**ARNG**

Lighten Up

**ARNG**

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[www.decadeofhealth.com](http://www.decadeofhealth.com)

# EVER VIGILANT in the **EVERGREEN STATE**

WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

BY JASON HALL





SFC Puentes, assigned to B Company, 1/185th Armor, 81st Armor Brigade, uses binoculars to scan the perimeter from the M2 .50 caliber machine gun position atop his M2A2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) during a reconnaissance patrol near Balad, Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004.

**W**hen speaking of Washington, most people think you are talking about Washington, DC. Often, the state of Washington is an afterthought. But the state of Washington holds an important place in American history and the legacy of the Army National Guard.



### **WASHINGTON TERRITORY**

The area that comprises modern-day Washington was part of the larger Washington Territory that was ceded to the U.S. by Great Britain in 1846. Eight years later, in 1854, the Washington Territorial Militia was formed, but mostly in name only. Not until the outbreak of the Civil War did the territory's militia contain actual troops. The regular U.S. Army Soldiers who had been stationed at forts and outposts across the Washington territory were recalled to fight the Confederate forces in the east. In order to garrison the forts and outposts evacuated by the regular Soldiers to thwart any possible Native American attacks, the First Washington Territorial Volunteer Regiment was formed. Recruiting for the new regiment began in October 1861, with volunteers coming from within the territory as well as from California.

Four companies of the regiment had been mustered by May 1862, and by December 1862, a total of 10 companies had been raised. The Californian members of the regiment mustered in the military post on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco, CA. This is the Alcatraz Island that would later be home to the famed federal prison. The Washingtonians mustered in at Fort Vancouver and Fort Steilacoom, WA. The men of the regiment were stationed throughout the territories of Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Their duties included protecting settlers, miners and travelers along the roads leading from the east. Though they never participated in any large-scale battles, the men of the First Washington were involved in small skirmishes against the Shoshone, Snake and other Native American tribes. With the end of the Civil War in April 1865, the units of the regiment were slowly mustered out of service, with the last doing so in December 1865.

### **TRIBAL UNREST**

The end of the Civil War did not end the threat posed by certain Native American tribes. Though dormant for almost 10 years, the territorial militia was once again called up, and new units were formed. Among the first units to organize were the "Walla Walla Guards" and "The Columbia Mounted Infantry." As time went on, other units in the Walla Walla area emerged, such as the "Dayton Grays" and the "Grant Guards." These units combined to form what became known as the First Regiment of the National Guard of Washington.

# Guard Legacy



## COMPANY C, THE "TACOMA GUARD,"

1st Washington prepares to leave for Camp Black Diamond for 16 days of field training in 1891. There was no federal pay or allowance for food, so the Soldiers paid all of their own expenses.

The territorial government purchased weapons and equipment for its fledgling National Guard, but these items were predominantly obsolete gear disposed of by the regular U.S. Army. Due to the lack of sufficient equipment and the fact that too few companies had been raised, the territorial governor refused to formally recognize the regiment.

In other parts of the territory, separate from Walla Walla, concerned citizens formed organized militia companies. The capital city of Olympia had the "Capital Guards," and other new units included the "Seattle Rifles," "Tacoma Rifles" and "Queen City Guards." These units helped to swell the number of companies enough to allow the governor to formally recognize the First Regiment of the National Guard of Washington. An interesting side note is that Washington is one of the few states to have called its militia "National Guard" prior to statehood.

The first known Biennial Report of the Washington National Guard appeared in 1884, submitted by Adjutant General Russell G. O'Brien to Territorial Governor Watson C. Squire. Another first for the territory occurred on Aug. 20, 1885, with the first "camp of instruction" for the Washington Guard held at Chambers Prairie near Olympia.

## MARTIAL LAW

Just a year after this initial encampment the Guard was called out in response to civil unrest, a role not unfamiliar to the modern National Guard. The citizens of Tacoma had been harassing local Chinese laborers for years, and the situation boiled over on Feb. 7, 1886, when they gave notice to the Chinese that they were being evicted to San Francisco. The local sheriff attempted to keep the peace, but was unable to control the mob of citizens attacking the Chinese inhabitants. The sheriff telegraphed Gov. Squire, who, in turn, declared martial law and mobilized the "Seattle Rifles" to maintain law and order.

## WASHINGTON ADMITTED AS A STATE

Three years later, in 1889, the Guard was once again called upon, this time to prevent looting during the great fires in Spokane, Vancouver and

Sprague. The Guard members also responded to labor conflicts in King County, Aberdeen and Illwaco.

As 1889 drew to a close, the Washington Territory became the state of Washington, when it was admitted to the Union as the 42nd state on Nov. 11, 1889. Named after George Washington, it remains the only state named after a U.S. president.

In 1898, the Soldiers of the Washington National Guard would be called upon to defend the American Flag, just nine years after their star had been added to the Flag. A brief war was declared on Spain, with the president calling for more than 125,000 volunteers. The Washington National Guard, thanks to the recruitment of eager new troops, formed the 1st Washington Infantry Regiment.

The regiment was mustered into federal service and transported by ship to San Francisco, where they joined other U.S. forces traveling to Manila in the Philippines. Though the war was over by the time they arrived, the end of the Spanish-American War had created a tense situation in the Philippines between the local citizens and the occupying American forces. The tensions erupted into open conflict known as the Philippine Insurrection of 1899. The 1st Washington Infantry Regiment participated in more than two dozen battles during the Philippine Insurrection and, on Oct. 31, 1899, the regiment was mustered out of federal service.

## NEW ARMORIES

The Washington National Guard was allowed to decline in the years following the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection. It was not until Adjutant General James A. Drain, later president of the National Rifle Association, submitted his Biennial Report of 1905-1906 that the needs of the Guard were thoroughly addressed. The major item in Drain's report was the desperate need for the construction of new armories. The first built were the armories in Seattle and Spokane, quickly followed by the completion of the Tacoma Armory in 1909.

In the years preceding WWI, the American Lake area in the vicinity of the present-day Camp Murray became the site for annual training.

During the pre-war years, a unique and brief chapter of the Washington National Guard was written. In 1911, the Naval Militia of Washington was authorized, reporting to the state's adjutant general. Three units were formed in Seattle, Tacoma and Grays Harbor. The U.S. Navy was not enthusiastic about the creation of this Naval Militia and reluctantly supplied vessels that were obsolete and in woeful disrepair. With the creation of the Fleet Reserve Program in 1916, the Naval Militia was dissolved.

The men of the Washington National Guard would obtain new equipment, modern weapons and critical training during the mobilization of the entire National Guard in response to the threat posed by Pancho Villa in 1916. This experience would prove invaluable as the Guard was soon to be deployed overseas once more. Following the declaration of war against Germany on April 6, 1917, the United States entered WWI.

As American men, anxious to join the war effort, flooded regular Army recruiting offices, the Guard initiated a recruiting campaign of its own. One such recruiting station in Washington displayed a sign emblazoned with the words "General Pershing says all young men should be encouraged to join a unit either of the National Guard or of the Organized Reserves. The most appropriate place for such first service is in the National Guard."



## THE 20TH DIVISION

The National Guard of Washington was joined by that of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Wyoming to form the 20th Division. However, the division, along with the entire U.S. Army, was caught up in a time of major changes and reorganization.

On July 18, 1917, the 20th was redesignated as the 41st Division. In October 1918, another 20th Division was organized. However, this was a Regular Army and National Army (Reserve) division, and though intended to deploy to France, it was never sent overseas and ultimately disbanded in February 1919 at Camp Sevier, SC.

The Washington men in the 41st Division set sail for France on Dec. 13, 1917. Various units of the division saw action in France, and 61 Washington Guard Soldiers were killed in action or died of wounds.

The Armistice ending WWI was signed at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, "the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month" of 1918. By the end of 1919, all Washington National Guard Soldiers had returned home and were demobilized at Camp Lewis, the same post where they had been mobilized just two years earlier.

During the early 1920s, the Washington National Guard placed greater emphasis on coastal defense, and manned coast artillery installations at Fort Worden, Fort Casey and Fort Flagler. A revived emphasis on armory construction saw Everett, Walla Walla and Aberdeen build new facilities.

In 1926, the "State Military Reservation at American Lake" was officially redesignated as Camp Murray. The new headquarters was "ideally located, 3 miles from Camp Lewis, 11 miles from Tacoma, 20 miles from Olympia, and available by car, bus, railroad and street car."

In the wake of WWI, the Guard went through a period of change, restructuring and reorganization. The 81st Brigade, containing the 161st and 163rd Infantry regiments, was assigned to Washington as part of the 41st Division. The headquarters for the brigade changed six times in 12 years, rotating around the state depending on the city of residence of the brigade commander.

## Washington is one of the few states to have called its militia "National Guard" prior to statehood.



During the 1930s, the brigade obtained a unit communications system fabricated by the Spokane Radio Company and gained distinction by later recommending its adoption by the entire U.S. Army.

## LUMBER MILL STRIKES

Though undergoing transition, the Guard was ever ready to respond to crises both at the national and state level. As the state's entire Guard was training at Camp Murray in June 1935, the governor called them up to maintain order amid violence and property damage arising from lumber mill strikes. The 161st Infantry was placed in trucks and transported to Tacoma, quickly setting up headquarters in the Winthrop Hotel. By employing "tact and diplomacy," the Guard members were able to retain order for six weeks in Tacoma, Aberdeen, Everett and Longview, until the strikes subsided.

War again broke out in Europe in 1939, and most Americans knew that it was only a matter of time before they would be embroiled in WWII. One man who knew this all too well was President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who on Sept. 16, 1940, mobilized all National Guard units for one year of federal service. The mobilization was meant to provide a year of training, reorganization and re-equipping of the Guard in anticipation of possible deployments overseas in the event the U.S. entered the war.

On Sept. 23, 1940, the men of the Washington National Guard again were rolled into the 41st Division and began their year of training.

In the spring of 1941, they were ordered to Fort Hunter Liggett in California, where the units were split off from the division and scattered up and down the California coast, manning coastal defenses. This was the disposition of the division on the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, when the world changed for the men of Washington.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, HI, the 41st Division was ordered to Fort Dix, NJ, and from there, it deployed to Australia, arriving in May 1942.

The Washingtonians' first meal in Australia near Melbourne, cooked by Aussie Militia, was a mutton stew and coffee in two 50-gallon oil drums. Bread was hauled like cordwood on an open flatbed truck. After unloading the truck, it was reloaded with camp garbage.

# Guard Legacy



MAJ MIKE AKE of the Washington Army National Guard poses with several children at the Meymaneh Orphanage in Afghanistan in 2008.

## CULTURE CLASH

The Americans were not as appreciative of the meal as the Australians had hoped. The Aussies found the Yanks too fussy. In July 1942, in conjunction with the Australian forces, the men of the 41st trained in island and jungle warfare.

The first unit of the division to see combat was the 163rd Infantry on April 2, 1943. Other divisional units would join in the fray as the year went on.

On April 22, 1944, the division landed at Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, in New Guinea. The 41st relieved the 32nd "Red Arrow" Division, comprised of the National Guards of Michigan and Wisconsin, which had been fighting a vicious battle against the Japanese.

The 41st took up where the 32nd had left off, and continued the push against the entrenched Japanese forces. During its fighting in New Guinea, the 41st would earn the nickname the "Jungleers."

Following the success in New Guinea, the Jungleers began an "island hopping" campaign on their way to liberating the Philippines. The first objective was the island of Biak, due to the strategically placed airfields located there. Allied tacticians had envisioned that taking the island would be accomplished in a week's time. Little did they know that the Japanese garrison on the island numbered more than 11,000 and were well entrenched in the caves all over the island.

When the 41st landed on Biak on May 27, 1944, they were met with no resistance at all. The Japanese did not fire on the advancing Americans in an effort to draw them into their predetermined kill zones. The feint worked initially, and the men of the 41st found themselves in their toughest fight of the war. Washington men were involved in fierce fighting involving overrunning dozens of machine-gun nests, log bunkers and even a naval gun.

Fighting in and through the intricate underground cave system, after almost three months, the island was declared secured. Three months was a far cry from the predicted weeklong operation.

The 41st continued to fight its way toward the main island of Japan. It was preparing for the eventual invasion of the main island, when word came that Japan had surrendered due to two atomic bombs being dropped, one on Hiroshima and the other on Nagasaki.

General MacArthur directed the 41st Division to occupy the Kure-Hiroshima area.

The Soldiers were worried about the reception they might receive from the Japanese citizens of this area.

But no incidents occurred, as most of the local citizens avoided the Americans. Those Japanese who did engage with the Americans were very polite. The Japanese police along the highways faced away from the "Jungleers"; this was not an insult, but was considered honor and respect.

## ABOUT FACE

The men of the 41st, instead of fighting the Japanese as they had for the past three years, were now engaged in repairing bridges, roads, water supply lines and electrical systems.

With the end of the war, as with the end of WWI, the Washingtonians returned home victorious. The Guard saw many changes after the war. Prior to WWII, the 41st Division was made up of Soldiers from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. Under the post-war reorganization, only Oregon and Washington provided personnel for the 41st Division.

Now that they were finished fighting a human foe, a constant enemy of the Guard again reared its ugly head: Mother Nature. Portions of the Washington Guard were called up for flood relief in June 1948, covering the Ellensburg area, Woodland, Okanogan County, Clark County and other areas.

The specter of combat arose again in 1950, with the start of the Korean War. On July 22, 1950, approximately 12 units of the Washington National Guard were ordered to federal service. Though none of these units were

deployed to Korea, many individual Washington Soldiers volunteered to serve in Korea as part of other units.

The same was true for the Vietnam War—though no Washington units were sent, many of its Guard Soldiers volunteered to go and fight with other regular Army units.

During the Vietnam War, in the mid-1960s, the 41st Division was disbanded. The 81st Brigade, made up strictly of Washington units, was now the largest and primary fighting force for the state. Renamed the 81st Armor Brigade (Separate), today known as the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, the brigade was headquartered in Seattle. Harking back to the days of the “Seattle Rifles,” the brigade borrows part of the name of that early militia unit for its present-day moniker that appears on their distinctive unit insignia: “Washington Rifles.”

## MOUNT ST. HELENS UNLEASHES

The brigade responded to several natural disasters in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, it trained at the Yakima Training Center in the eastern part of the state. However, this training routine was dramatically changed in 1980 with a catastrophic natural disaster.

On the morning of May 18, 1980, the long dormant volcano, Mount St. Helens, awoke in a ferocious explosion of flame and ash. The Washington Guard quickly joined “a massive combined effort to save lives, house and feed their neighbors, and minister to broken bodies and broken hearts.”

One of the first Guard members to realize the magnitude of the situation was Chief Warrant Officer Harold R. Kolb. Kolb had served three years in Vietnam flying Huey helicopters and had been in the Washington Army National Guard, again flying Hueys, for five years before the eruption. Kolb had reported to Yakima the day prior.

“We had started our annual training the day before,” he said. “Somebody noticed a huge black cloud on the horizon. Suddenly we got the word that we had 10 minutes to go get equipment together and prepare to shift our operations to the Mount St. Helens area.”

Kolb was in one of very few helicopters able to take off amid the massive amount of ash falling from the sky. He recalls, “Although we flew max ‘VNE’ (Velocity Not To Exceed) airspeed, we had to physically reach out of the cockpit while we were flying to wipe the ash off the windshield.” Kolb spent the next two weeks flying at least three rescue and recovery missions every day. Volcanoes were not the only menaces of nature that the men and women of the Washington National Guard had to contend



**COL RONALD M. KAPRAL AND CSM ROBERT J. SWEENEY**, the commander and command sergeant major of the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, roll up the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team's colors during a traditional casing of the colors ceremony July 13, 2009, on Camp Ramadi, Iraq. Unit colors are cased for protection when traveling overseas.

with. The “Thanksgiving Day Floods” of 1990 saw the Guard respond to aid their neighbors. In Eastern Washington, nearly 2,300 personnel of the 81st Brigade fought massive forest fires known as “Firestorm ’94.”

## STORM AND SHIELD

Human foes would also cause the Washington Guard to deploy overseas once again. It deployed as part of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990–91, as well as participating in the NATO peacekeeping mission, Operation Joint Guard, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The turmoil in the Middle East would again require the service of the men and women of Washington’s Guard units, this time following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Washington’s Soldiers were deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, deployed to Iraq, saw its first combat since WWII. The 81st Brigade, primarily Washington Soldiers, also contained units from California, reminiscent of the days during the Civil War when the Washington Territorial Volunteer Regiment was comprised of Soldiers from those two states.

The 81st deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom first from March 2004 to March 2005 and then again from August 2008 to

August 2009. The men and women of the 81st have participated in missions including convoy security, force protection and base operations. In between the deployments to Iraq, the 81st responded to the December 2007 floods in southwest Washington.

On July 13, 2009, a ceremony was held at Camp Ramadi, where Colonel Ronald M. Kapral and Command Sergeant Major Robert J. Sweeney of the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team rolled up the colors of the brigade for the last time, signaling their return to the U.S. During this ceremony that marked the conclusion of the Brigade’s nine months of service in Iraq, Marine Major General Richard T. Tryon, commanding general of Multi-National Force-West, stated, “I want to publicly tip my hat to you, the command team and all the Soldiers who contributed to this mission.”

Tryon ended his remarks with a statement that sums up the entire legacy of the Washington Army National Guard’s history: “Every Soldier of this unit is a shining example of all that is good in this military and all that is good in our country.” **GX**



**SOLDIERS OF THE 81ST INFANTRY BRIGADE** arrive in South Korea to take part in the Team Spirit '92 exercises with other U.N. military forces.

SPC Thomas LaFramboise has been serving as a military police officer for seven years and a highway patrolman since Sept. 11, 2009.

# Enforcing Freedom

SOLDIER SERVES AS MP, HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

By Christian Anderson

## ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2009,

eight years to the day this great nation was attacked on its home soil, a group of fresh graduates of the South Dakota Highway Patrol Recruit Academy stood at attention, swearing to protect their state and country, officially enlisting them in the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

For Specialist Thomas LaFramboise, this was the second time he had sworn to defend America's freedom, and he wouldn't have it any other way. As a Soldier in the South Dakota Army National Guard, LaFramboise has been serving as a Military Police (MP) Officer with the 235th MP Company since May 2003.

Funny thing is, if you had asked LaFramboise when he was a teenager what he would be doing when he grew up, it would have had nothing to do with the military.

"Growing up, I was totally against the military," LaFramboise said. "I wanted nothing to do with it. But at about the age of 20, I refocused my life, so to speak, and it was the right approach to join."

### BUDGING PATRIOTISM

The National Guard appealed to LaFramboise because he could serve his country and his state. But most important, he would not be required to

move away from his home for several years. The trick was getting his family on board with his plans, but once he explained why he wanted to serve, they were all in 100 percent.

"The Guard was a stepping-stone for me to pursue a career in law enforcement, and that is why I chose the military police," he said.

LaFramboise realized, though, that there is a little speed bump called Basic Combat Training to overcome before officially becoming a Soldier.

### REALITY CHECK

LaFramboise remembers how gut-wrenching the first days of Basic Training were as he left his civilian life and stepped off the bus.

"I was looking forward to going to Basic, because the unit I enlisted into was already deployed on a stateside mission, so I couldn't wait to join the unit," LaFramboise said. "The drill sergeants did their job and they did it well, so needless to say, I was ready to get it over with and become a Soldier."

The first few days of Basic were especially tough for LaFramboise, because he had gotten married right before he shipped. But like the other recruits, he quickly got the routine down and the weeks began to pass quickly.

"You look back on your experiences at Basic Training and notice the transformation,"

LaFramboise said. "My wife certainly noticed a transformation for the better."

"Getting smoked can be brutal, but it only makes you stronger," he added. "Everything the drill sergeants do is for you, to make you a better Soldier."

The real challenge for LaFramboise came when he went to Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to become an MP. Long days and nights required all of his attention and energy, as he learned everything from how to restrain individuals to how to conduct search-and-seizures and even how to run traffic checkpoints.

"It was stressful at times learning to become an MP," LaFramboise admitted. "You learn how to handle pressure in all sorts of situations that you might need to face as an MP."

LaFramboise soon found himself graduating from AIT and walking through the front doors of his MP unit. He was a little overconfident at first, but was soon humbled by the older Soldiers in his unit.

"I met all these Soldiers who had tons of knowledge—more knowledge than Basic and AIT could ever teach you," LaFramboise said.

"So my best advice for any Soldiers fresh from their training is to find officers and NCOs who have spent some time in the Guard and pick their brains."

As LaFramboise settled in with his Guard unit, he really became motivated to serve in the civilian law enforcement field. But his country had greater plans for him, which resulted in a 15-month deployment to Afghanistan from October 2006 until January 2008, which included mobilization and demobilization.

### THE AFGHAN EXPERIENCE

"When you hop the bird to go over to Afghanistan, you start to realize things are about to get very real," LaFramboise said. "It never really hit me until we landed in Afghanistan and I thought, 'OK, here we go.'"

Like all first-timers on a deployment, LaFramboise did not really know what to expect, but he stayed focused and followed his superiors, many of whom were Veterans.

"You get a little tense, not knowing what to expect, but then you get a routine established and you build on your confidence and settle into a nice pace," he said.

The 235th had a variety of missions while in Afghanistan, which helped keep the Soldiers fresh and focused on the task at hand. During the first four months of the deployment, the 235th conducted convoy security. The next four months were prison security, and in the last four months, they ran base security.

"It was a stressful and difficult, but the camaraderie between the platoon made it a great experience," LaFramboise said. "My squad was a very close family."

As days turned to weeks and weeks turned to months, LaFramboise soon found himself on a plane ride home to South Dakota. He couldn't believe how fast the time went by, working hard every day to accomplish his missions.

"It was an overwhelming experience to come off that bird in South Dakota," LaFramboise said. "To see my wife and kids again, it was very emotional. There is no way to describe the feelings when you come back home and see your family."

### DOUBLE THE BADGE, DOUBLE THE FUN

The next step in his life was to become a civilian law enforcement officer. He had tried before, but it was not until after his deployment to Afghanistan that he made serious progress.

Before going to Basic, he actually began the testing process with the South Dakota Highway Patrol, but wanted to get Basic and AIT out of the way first, so he would not have to take an extended leave of absence from his civilian job.

So when he came back from Basic and AIT, he started the process again. But becoming a patrolman wasn't in the cards yet for LaFramboise.

"After I got out of training, I tested again, but then Hurricane Katrina hit, so I told the

Highway Patrol I was going to withdraw my application so I could volunteer to go to the disaster recovery," LaFramboise explained. "Well, I was never called up, but I received my orders to deploy.

"So after I got back from Afghanistan, I started the retesting, the interviewing process and the paperwork all over again for the third time," he said. "It was a lengthy process, but I am happy with the career choice I made. No regrets whatsoever!"

LaFramboise was ecstatic to finally join the ranks of his fellow patrolmen in 2009. He acknowledged that without his Guard training, the nine-month Highway Patrol Academy would have been much tougher.

"The Guard sets you up for success," he said. "I can honestly say I could not have graduated from patrol academy without the experience and strength I have received in the National Guard."

factor. "Although I got to learn how to drive a Humvee at AIT, which was really cool, I got my own patrol car when I graduated from the Academy, so that was pretty amazing," LaFramboise said.

"The Highway Patrol had our cars lined up for us after our graduation, so our families could sit in them and see all the gear," he said. He was also issued an M16 and a shotgun to keep in his car, both of which he was already proficient with because of his Guard service.

### FOLLOWING THEIR FOOTSTEPS

LaFramboise wakes up every day grateful that he can serve his community, state and country, and above all else, uphold the tradition that millions of men and women set before him.

"Men and women before me have fought and died for our country, and they have given

## "I STRONGLY BELIEVE IN OUR COUNTRY AND I STRONGLY BELIEVE IN OUR STATE—AND THOSE ARE TWO THINGS I AM READY TO LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR SHOULD IT COME TO THAT."

*—SPC Thomas LaFramboise*

Half of his recruit class at the Highway Patrol Academy had served in the Guard or Reserves. "We all bonded and helped push people who had never served before," he explained. "We would give them advice on how to shine their boots, make their beds and other skills that made their experience as painless as possible."

The recruits with no military background quickly learned to look to their peers, like LaFramboise, for help.

"We already understood how things work like rank structure, discipline and toughness," he added. "Therefore, we became a great asset to other recruits because we could help them through the hard times."

### TWO HATS, ONE MISSION

After settling into his new career as a South Dakota Highway Patrolman, LaFramboise noticed the similarities and differences in his two careers.

"The two professions themselves are very similar, but the paperwork and the legal systems are different," he said. "For instance, a routine search-and-seizure is a little bit more difficult on the civilian side since we have to be kinder and not so direct as we are with other Soldiers."

"Some days the military side is a lot easier, and other days the civilian side is a lot easier," LaFramboise joked.

He also noted that he gets to operate some pretty cool equipment—although the Highway Patrol beat the Guard out by a hair in the cool

weather, so I am proud to stand next to them and fight for freedom as well," he exclaimed. "I strongly believe in our country and I strongly believe in our state—and those are two things I am ready to lay down my life for should it come to that."

"In law enforcement, you are always in the public eye," he added. "So you always have to be on and ready, enforcing the law and setting a good example for others. You have to live by the Golden Rule."

He is reminded how much he loves his profession every time he sees the stars and stripes or hears the National Anthem.

"When I see the flag waving in the wind or hear the National Anthem, I can't help but think how much I love my country and how proud I am to serve," he professed.

But he also serves for something else: his family. With a wife and five children at home, being called up to serve can be tough.

"My wife supports me every time I say 'I have to go,' so that is comforting and is so amazing," LaFramboise exclaimed. "She loves my uniforms, both of them, and doesn't care which one I have on, she is simply proud of me."

Not to mention the kids sometimes think he is Wyatt Earp when he comes home at night.

"My kids love my Guard uniform, and they really love to play with my handcuffs," he laughed. "Ultimately, I serve so that, hopefully, they won't have to." **GX**

# On the Road

► DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD

SGT Courtney Zablocki flies  
downhill during a luge practice  
run in Lake Placid, NY, in  
October 2009.



# Downhill GUARD ATHLETES RACE FOR THE OLYMPICS Battle

STORY AND  
PHOTOS  
BY CLINT  
WOOD

*She grabbed the handlebars. The stillness of the night was shattered by a piercing screech as the spikes on her leather gloves made contact with the bars. The spikes help ensure the quickest start possible, as does upper body strength—a quality luge athletes possess in abundance.*

# It

was a chilly mid-October New York evening at the Olympic Sports Complex in Lake Placid, NY. I was a few meters from the start of the luge track, where the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics bobsled and luge events were held. I was covering the qualifying events for the 2010 Winter Olympics—specifically, to chat with and photograph five of the sports' hopefuls. But these weren't just any ordinary athletes—they were also Army National Guard Soldiers from the National Guard Outstanding Athletes Program (OAP).

## **SOLDIER, LUGER**

Sergeant Courtney Zablocki was competing in luge, considered to be the Olympics' most dangerous sport. When I caught up with her, she was at the start, ready to push off, seconds away from speeds of more than 80 mph on a tiny sled.

Zablocki pushed off and used her hands to paddle down the first few meters of the icy slope. Less than a minute later, and after withstanding a G-force that made her 140-pound body feel like 700 pounds, she crossed the finish line.

This was one of the prep runs in the competition for placement on the fall 2009 World Cup Team—and possibly the Olympics.

### **GETTING A GRIP**

Athletes' hands play a major role in luge—namely, at the start, when grip strength on the bars provides most of the momentum.

"There's no other time to actually pick up speed," Zablocki explained. "You have to generate it yourself at the start or manipulate the pressure of the curves to get down."

Luge athletes also need good back and core strength.

By age 4, Zablocki was already competing in gymnastics. She went on to compete in swimming and diving, soccer, volleyball and "some basketball."

"I did everything, you name it," she declared. "I was always playing a sport."

When she was 11, she attended a luge clinic at Lake Placid. Before her first run, she recalled, "I said 'OK, I don't think so.' Because it was a little scary."

But she was there for a week.

"I said 'OK, let's give it a shot—here we go.' And I went down. Sure enough, I loved it. I fell in love with luge because it's like a roller coaster that you're in control of."

The sport has controlled her ever since. By age 21, she finished 13th at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Park City, UT. She finished fourth in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, despite missing several months nursing a back injury. That fourth-place is the highest U.S. luge finish in the Olympics to date.

### **LIFE AFTER LUGE**

After the Torino Olympics, at age 25, she joined the Guard, partly for the college tuition assistance. "I wanted to [have a solid] life and career after the sport," she explained. "The National Guard gives me [that] opportunity." She has an associate degree in informational technology networking and intends to study small business management as well.

I asked Zablocki how she did in Basic Combat Training (BCT). She told me sleep deprivation was her biggest obstacle. "Other than that," she mused, "I think I handled everything well, physically."

She revealed that competing in luge after BCT and Advanced Individual Training was very taxing. "I didn't have the best year [in luge], but I pushed through and learned a lot about myself," she continued.



## "I FELL IN LOVE WITH LUGE BECAUSE IT'S LIKE A ROLLER COASTER THAT YOU'RE IN CONTROL OF."

» SGT COURTNEY ZABLOCKI,  
COLORADO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

A year later, she suffered a herniated disc in her neck and missed most of the season.

But these days, other than a hand injury, things are looking good.

"I'm feeling awesome, and that's how every athlete wants to feel when they're starting a season."

The hand problem was trigger-finger, a swollen part of the tendon at the base of the finger. Zablocki explained that a sheath around the tendon stops gliding, and it "basically gets locked."

Untreated, a patient may not be able to fully straighten the finger.

She said the condition made it painful to use her hands, which lugers must be able to do, especially for the push-off.

### LEARNING CURVES

As a human resources specialist in the Guard, Zablocki has to memorize Army regulations. As a luge athlete, she has to memorize every twist and turn of whatever track she's riding.

"If, for example, you said, 'Describe the track at Lillehammer, Norway,' I could tell you exactly which direction the curves go in and what I need to do in each curve to get down," she explained.

One reason they must memorize the course is because they can't see very well. They can see the sides of the track and several feet beyond, but not what's directly in front of them.

"You're trying to prepare for what's way ahead of you," she said. "Because when you're doing a movement, the timing of it all comes together at the end of the curve rather than in the beginning."

Luge wasn't the only game in town at Lake Placid.

GX also caught up with a few of the National Guard's top bobsledding Soldiers—Sergeants Mike Kohn, Shauna Rohbock and Jeremy White. The last time we visited with this trio was in November 2008, at an America's Cup International Race at Park City, UT.

Kohn, a Virginia Guard infantryman, was steering two-man and four-man bobsled teams. Rohbock, a Utah Guard human resources specialist, was piloting her two-man bobsled. White, a pusher for a bobsled team, was recovering from an injury.

### HELLO, BYE

Rohbock was named to the 2009–2010 World Cup Team on Oct. 24. She earned a

SGT Courtney Zablocki paddles her luge down the Lake Placid track with her spiked gloves in October 2009.



## "YOU'VE GOT TO BE ON YOUR GAME EVERY SINGLE DAY."

>> SGT JEREMY WHITE, COLORADO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

bye onto the team thanks to her 2008–2009 season's World Championship Silver Medal and a Gold Medal at a World Cup race in Whistler, British Columbia.

She spent the fall recovering from a hamstring injury suffered in August 2009. "Finally I feel like I'm starting to get back, but it has been a long road," Rohbock said. "As an athlete you have to let your body recover because if you go back too soon, you can just get more and more injured. But to wait and let your body heal is frustrating, because you just want to keep going."

Rohbock said the two other USA team drivers named to the World Cup Team—Erin Pac and Bree Schaaf—are very competitive. She noted that Pac is in her fourth season as a driver. "She's pretty competitive in the push," she said. "I would like to be USA all year long, but if I drop to two,

I'm guessing she and I will probably go back and forth."

Pac earned a bronze medal in the World Cup at Whistler. Rohbock said she overheard a comment that Pac's win there was a good indicator Rohbock may earn a medal at the Olympics. By the time this issue goes to press, Rohbock will have competed in eight World Cup races—the latest in Igls, Austria.

### THE RUSH

Twenty-year bobsled veteran Kohn, 37, will retire after this season. When I asked him what he thinks he'll remember most, he replied, "The feeling I have on the track. The one minute on the hill for me is worth the 23 hours and 59 minutes of pain that you sometimes have to put up with."

Lake Placid is special to him. It was here that, at 18, he attended his first bobsled

camp and learned how to drive a bobsled. That same year—1991—he was the youngest competitor in the Olympic trials. "I didn't think I would be doing this that long, but it has been a great life," said the National Guard infantryman.

He was the brakeman for the four-man bobsled team that won a bronze medal in the 2002 Winter Olympics, and he later switched to driving duties. Since then, he has won multiple national championships and a World Cup Silver Medal, and has had many top-10 finishes.

### PRICEY RIDE

Driving one of these death-defying crates requires more than just holding onto the ropes and manipulating the turns. It costs money. Drivers have to buy their sleds, with the average price range being \$30,000 to \$50,000.



# On the Road

CURVE 5

SGT Mike Kohn pilots his two-man bobsled into turn six at Lake Placid.



**"LEARNING TO DRIVE IS TOUGH, BECAUSE MOST PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO RIDE IN THE BACK. THEY KNOW YOU ARE GOING TO CRASH."**

» SGT MIKE KOHN, VIRGINIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



"It's a very expensive sport," Kohn acknowledged. "I think it's the most expensive Olympic sport, after equestrian."

One way to cut costs is to share a bobsled with others, which Kohn has done.

"Learning to drive is tough, because most people don't want to ride in the back," Kohn explained. "They know you are going to crash. So [it makes sense] to pair up with someone who wants to be a driver, too. So you basically [learn and] crash with each other."

"That's always a lot of fun," he joked, "but you've got to learn somehow."

After retirement, Kohn, who holds a bachelor's degree in exercise physiology, hopes to become a bobsledding coach and an officer in the Guard.

## BEING PUSHY

White, an alternate pusher for a Team USA team, explained that the start-push is paramount in bobsledding.

"You've got to be on your game every single day," said the Colorado Guard aviation operations specialist. "You've got to train harder

than everybody else. Because the competition [between push athletes] is really high."

White, who's the first U.S. athlete to be ranked simultaneously in three sports—speed skating, skeleton and bobsled—added that training during the off-season is very important for push athletes. They normally work out twice a day, generally in intense weight-lifting sessions and sprinting drills. They also do at least an hour of stretching nightly.

"What you do in the off-season is going to propel you all the way through the competition season," he said.

White said the Lake Placid track is "one of the roughest" on the circuit. "The transitions are very sharp," he explained. "The turns are very fast. The G-forces bang you left to right. It's very traumatic to the body, and it can be a headache on some days."

So rough, in fact, that some bobsledders steer clear of competing here, Kohn said.

He compared it to how NASCAR racers feel about Darlington Raceway in South Carolina. Darlington's nicknames include "Too Tough to Tame" and "Lady in Black."

Rohbock, who at one time set the record at Lake Placid, took me down the run verbally,



**"TO ... LET YOUR BODY HEAL IS PRETTY FRUSTRATING BECAUSE YOU JUST WANT TO KEEP GOING."**

» SGT SHAUNA ROHBOCK, UTAH ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



SGT Courtney Zablocki pauses before her first run.



SGT Mike Kohn uses a jig to align the runners on his sled down to a millimeter.

## What leadership trait do you live by?

**SGT Shauna Rohbock:** As a driver, you have to be a leader. You have to have the discipline to go out there every day and do your warm-up. It's hard to do that when you see your brakeman train one day and then get one or two days off. You have to show your teammates the way it should be done.

**SGT Mike Kohn:** The key is that we should live by all of them.

**SGT Jeremy White:** I believe integrity really should be the foundation of representing the Guard. Even if you're not a Soldier, integrity helps set the tone for who you are and what you aspire to be. With integrity, you're not going to let anybody down. You're always going to do the right thing.

**SGT Courtney Zablocki:** Personal courage. Because it takes a lot of guts to be in a leadership role. There are days I want to sit down and say, 'I'm done training. I don't want to do this anymore, I'm tired.' It takes a lot of courage to get up and say, 'OK, maybe I'm not feeling the best today—and I may fail—but I have to try.' And you always surprise yourself."

curve by curve. Some of the more important strategies: attempting not to hit the walls between turns one and two; exiting turn three and purposely hitting the wall in order to set the sled up for its run into turn four; and feeling the right runner lift up on turn seven, forcing her to pull the bottom steering rope hard.

"And by the end [of the turn], you need to] release pressure so it can bring you back and suck you into the turn ... to get a nice cross-over into turn eight," she added.

She said she has crashed out of turn eight several times in her career.

Kohn added that turns five and six, nicknamed "Devil's Highway," whip the bobsledders back and forth. "It's pretty jarring on your neck and back," she said.

But all the G-forces, tough turns and devil's highways in the world can't keep these daring athletes from the track. On the contrary, it's all part of the fun. **GX**



### CLINT WOOD, FIELD EDITOR

The first time Clint Wood stepped in our office, we knew he was the real thing: a bona fide Warrior. Clint spent 22 months deployed with the 1/34th Red Bulls of the Minnesota National Guard. He has 18 years of service under his belt. Since he came on board in 2008, Clint has traveled around the country, capturing the story of the National Guard. For more on Clint's travels, go to [www.GXonline.com](http://www.GXonline.com).

For more on the National Guard's Outstanding Athletes, go to  
[www.NATIONALGUARD.com/  
guardevents/athletes](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardevents/athletes).





A Soldier jumps from a 34-foot tower at Mann Field, Fort Benning, GA, during training early in 2009.

# ONE BIG STEP

JUMPING OUT OF A PERFECTLY GOOD AIRPLANE

By SFC Brent Cobb, South Carolina Army National Guard



Airborne paratroopers fall from the sky after jumping from C-141 Starlifters.



Army Airborne School is nothing to joke about. It's three weeks of bone-grinding determination and intestinal fortitude. If your mind is weak, you will fail!

The day before in-processing, I drove to Fort Benning, GA, where the program is held. I arrived after dark and did what any NCO would do—did a quick once-over of the training area and found the building we were going to report into.

The next day, check-in was nuts. Personnel from all over the world and all branches of the military had come together to earn their Basic Parachutist Badge. This is one of the few military schools that's open to all branches of the Armed Forces, and everyone who might exit an aircraft in flight must complete three weeks of training here.

Day one: wake up and prepare to execute the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). No matter how old you are, you must complete the test in the 17- to 21-year-old age bracket. If you fail an event or don't complete the test for any reason, you go home. There's no retesting. Let's just say people gave it their all.

I remember thinking about all the training we'd received and wondering if the experience here would play out the way we trained for it.

It did.

#### MY FIRST JUMP

The first two weeks were a blur. We loaded the C-130 through the jet blast and the smell of JP8 fuel, up the loading ramp at the rear of the aircraft and into the cargo net seating. The ramp closed, and everyone was really quiet except the jumpmasters.

After a while, the side doors were opened, and the jumpmaster started the pre-jump checks and procedures. Then he turned to face us, and with a loud "10 MINUTES!" and a hand signal, countdown to exit began.

The checks: stand up, hook up, check equipment, standby and GO! The first jumper exited, then number two, then me. Shuffle, shuffle, pivot, step and kick, good tight body position, chin on chest and count slowly to four.

What a feeling, exiting an aircraft in flight! The jet blast from the plane was tremendous. The heat from the prop blast was intense, although it only lasted about two seconds. I saw my feet rotate in a circle and the gray paint of the aircraft's tail pass me. Three-thousand, four-thou—... and a sharp upward pull. The parachute was open.

I was airborne.

I checked my canopy and gained canopy control. The sound of the plane was drifting away, and everything felt surreal as I floated to the drop zone. Now was the time to prepare to land. I recalled the drill: pull a slip deep into your chest, balls of feet, calf muscle, thigh, buttock and push-up muscle. I landed. The training had paid off.

Any Soldier who has the opportunity to go to Airborne School should do so. If you train properly and pay attention, it will be a life-changing event.

#### GRADUATION

At graduation, I chose First Lieutenant Nick Corley to pin my wings. He was a young officer whom I had trained when he was a cadet in the ROTC program. When he pinned my wings, it was a special moment for both of us. I had helped him, and now he was supporting me.

The chaos of graduation day is exhilarating. If you're ever around Fort Benning on a Friday, go by the parade field and see for yourself. You won't be disappointed. **GX**

For more on Airborne School, go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com).

# THE WILD RIDE

## SHAVE TAILS AND THE "ORDER OF THE SPUR"

Story and photos by SSG Katrina Timmons, Alabama National Guard

Many units in the National Guard wear special insignia to signify their specialty or MOS. Aviators have flight suits, armor crewmen have their tanker suits and Military Police have their armband with a giant "MP" emblazoned on it. But nothing stands out more than the black Stetson of the Army National Guard Cavalry Soldier, which these Soldiers have been wearing since the Civil War. However, they don't go down to the PX and pick one up. They have to earn their Stetson and spurs through sweat, tears and maybe even a little blood.

**A**ccording to the 131st Cavalry Squadron's Command Sergeant Major Jay Stallings, all squadron-assigned personnel are authorized to wear the distinguished black Stetsons, but only squadron personnel who successfully complete the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry Spur Program are authorized to wear the U.S. Cavalry Spurs. Their spurs must be earned.

The 131st's Spur Program has been around for just over a year, beginning shortly after the unit's transformation from armor to cavalry in September 2008. But the 131st is laden in tradition, with a lineage that can be traced back to WWI. Adopting the traditions of the U.S. Cavalry was an honor for the Soldiers of the 131st.

"The program is very demanding," Stallings said. "It can be compared with the U.S. Army's Expert Infantry Badge Competition."

The mental and physical challenges associated with the program test each scout's leadership skills, tactical and technical proficiencies, and problem-solving strategies during high levels of stress and fatigue.

### THE SHAVE TAILS

"Until a troop earns his spurs, he is considered a 'Shave Tail,'" said 131st Executive Officer Major Tim Alexander. "The nickname originated when shaved-tail horses were issued to new troops assigned to cavalry units. The shaved tail represented a troop that needed extensive training." These troops were not allowed to wear their spurs until they had proved they could perform with their horse and saber.



SFC Lance Woodfin (right) dons a chrome-plated spur on SGT Kevin Tarpley's boot during a spur ceremony held at Fort Rucker, AL, in early October. The spur represents Tarpley's successful completion of the 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry's Spur Program.



**Clockwise from left:** 2LT Robert S. Tuberville (kneeling, facing away) and 2LT Umut Ural (standing over Soldier) help 2LT Michael A. Merring complete close to 100 push-ups, while members of the Spur Ride cadre SSG Eddie Johnson (far left) and SSG John J. Carden (far right) watch.

MSG William Green encourages 2LT Michael Merring to not miss a drop of dirt as he fills his sandbag to rim. Once the sandbag is full, Merring must add the weight to his 50-pound load and continue the Spur Ride.

SPC Adam Kelley of C Troop 1st Squadron, 131st Cavalry, assumes a hasty position while maneuvering through lanes reacting to direct and indirect fire. Kelley is participating in the 131st Spur Program at Fort Rucker, AL.



## **"YOU MUST COMPENSATE FOR EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL."**

>> SGT KEVIN TARPLEY, 2009 SHAVE TAIL

Developed by Stallings, the 131st Spur Program consists of four phases. Phase one is a set of individual prerequisites; phase two is a performance board; phase three is a spur ride; and phase four is an award ceremony. It takes one year to complete all four phases.

### **PASSING PHASES**

During phase one, each Shave Tail must qualify as either a sharpshooter or expert on his assigned weapon, pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) with a minimum score of 80 in each event and be in compliance with Army height and weight screening or body fat composition. But that is not all. Each Soldier must also coordinate and conduct a squad/platoon-level class on an assigned subject, plan and execute a training event to include an after action review, and demonstrate weapons proficiency with the M16A2 rifle and M9 pistol.

Hopeful Shave Tails must appear before a board of Spur committee members during the program's second phase. Each of them will be asked 30 questions about 131st Cavalry regimental history, reconnaissance tactics and Army Values. They must achieve a score of 70 percent or better, or they will be terminated from the program. Phase three is the Spur Ride, a grueling field-training exercise that tests the candidate's mental and physical endurance. The 131st conducted their first Spur Ride as a Cavalry unit at Fort Rucker, AL, in September.

During the ride, six common task stations were sprinkled throughout a land navigation course at Fort Rucker. The Shave Tails had to use their land navigation skills to find each tasking station on a map, then

maneuver through the woods with 50 pounds of gear on their backs in full battle-rattle. Each participant was given two opportunities to successfully complete each tasking station. If someone failed a task on the first try, he was instructed to fill a sandbag and add it to his 50-pound load. If he failed on the second try, he was terminated from the program.

All Shave Tails met up at the last tasking station for a leadership reaction course (LRC), followed by an 8-mile road march.

### **TEAM SPIRIT**

"You have to remember that you are part of a team," explained Shave Tail Sergeant Kevin Tarpley. "You must compensate for each other's strengths and weaknesses in order to be successful."

He added that it was a very difficult and exhausting experience.

Phase four is a Spur Ceremony. During the ceremony, the squadron commander and command sergeant major will spur all Shave Tails that successfully complete all three previous phases. Once they have earned their spurs, they are considered Spur Holders, and their names are entered into the Squadron "Order of the Spur." Only seven of the 50 who entered the program earned their spurs this past training year.

Specialist Adam Kelley, one of the seven to complete the program, said, "There is a sense of pride and honor that comes with being able to wear the spurs. It's just a question of how far are you willing to go to get them."

More than 100 troops have begun the 2010 Spur Program. **GX**

**Discover more about cavalry at  
[www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com).**

# Fighting Spirit

► SHARP AND STRONG

## Tailgatin'

Dale Jr. fends off a competitor at the Ford 400 at Homestead Miami Speedway Nov. 22, 2009.





#### SPORTS

GX interviews Lance McGrew, Dale Jr.'s crew chief, gets up close with the Guard's Rally Car, and takes a look at Guard triathletes.

88

#### FITNESS

SGT Ken helps you start the new year right.

94

#### GEAR

The OH-58D: Kiowa Warrior.

100

# Taking Over

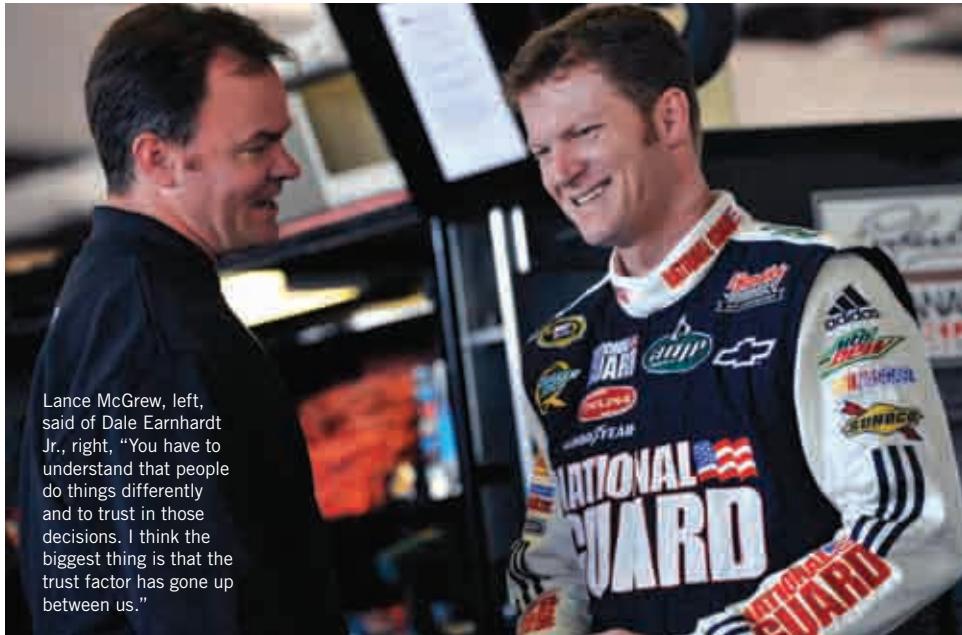
**DALE EARNHARDT JR.'S NEW CREW CHIEF DISCUSSES WAYS TO WIN AT DAYTONA 500**

By Clint Wood

**ON FEB. 14, 2010,** Dale Earnhardt Jr. makes his 11th Daytona 500 start at the Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach, FL, behind the wheel of the No. 88 National Guard/AMP Energy Chevrolet Impala SS.

For the first time, he'll be working full-time with crew chief Lance McGrew, the Louisiana

things—a really good-handling racecar. Daytona always comes down to handling and tire-wear issues. At the end of the race, you have to put yourself in position to win because it's a chess match. Guys get better and better at drafting with their car and understanding the things that it likes to do. It's difficult at the end



Lance McGrew, left, said of Dale Earnhardt Jr., right, "You have to understand that people do things differently and to trust in those decisions. I think the biggest thing is that the trust factor has gone up between us."

native who replaced Tony Eury Jr. last season. Dale Jr. finished last season ranked 25th.

In an exclusive interview with GX, McGrew, who joined Hendrick Motorsports in 1999, told us what it will take to tame the two-and-a-half-mile tri-oval Daytona Speedway, what he does when not wrenching Dale Jr.'s car, and more.

**GX:** How tough is it to win the Daytona 500?

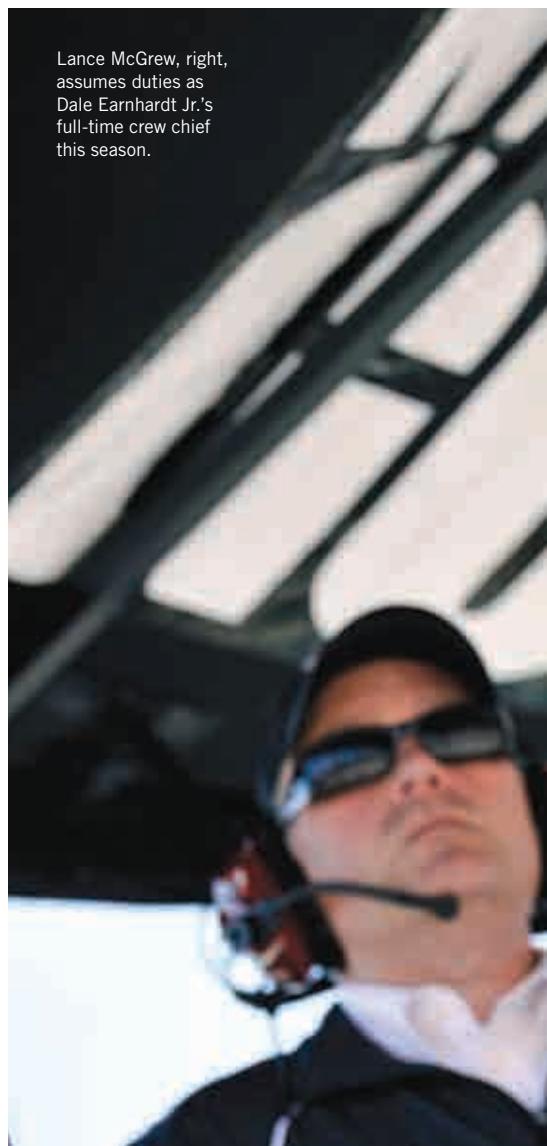
**LM:** It seems that the competition has gotten very close, and the cars are very comparable—team to team and company to company. That makes it harder. It still takes all the same

of the race, because people do crazy things and wrecks happen. Daytona is one of those tracks where you can pick up 26 positions in one lap, or you can lose 26.

**GX:** Is there strategy in the Daytona 500?

**LM:** I think there is some strategy. You can buy the "ride around in the back" theory and wait until the end of the race to run hard. That track is not notoriously hard on tires, so you can try a no-tire or two-tire pit stop. It's been won on fuel mileage, it's been won on tire strategy, and it's been won every way

Lance McGrew, right, assumes duties as Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s full-time crew chief this season.



imaginable. I don't think there is a guaranteed recipe for success there. It's a lot of hard work, a really good car and being at the right spot at the right time.

**GX:** How would you characterize your relationship with Dale Jr.?

**LM:** I think that it takes a little while to build a foundation when you start working with someone, especially when you are so used to doing things a certain way. You have to understand that people do things differently and to trust in those decisions. I think the biggest thing is that the trust factor has gone up between us. It's not because of a good run at the track—it's more about talking about philosophies about life in general, and each of us understanding where the other is coming from.



**AS A CREW CHIEF, Lance McGrew has posted victories in all three of NASCAR's major touring series: Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Truck. He has won races with drivers Brian Vickers, Jeff Gordon, Ricky Hendrick, Kyle Busch, Mark Martin and, most recently, Tony Stewart, Feb. 14, 2009, at Daytona Beach, FL.**

**GX:** What was it like winning your first NASCAR Sprint Cup race as a crew chief?

**LM:** It was cool, but the circumstances didn't let me enjoy it as much as I would have liked. It was the fall Talladega race in 2006 with Brian Vickers. I think we deserved to win the race, but it's unfortunate that our teammate [Jimmie Johnson] was involved in a wreck that we contributed to.

I believe we were fortunate to be the Hendrick team that did the tire test at Talladega earlier that year, and I think we brought a lot to the table as far as how our teammates ran based on the information we learned at the test. It was a solid win, but it did hurt knowing that we could have caused Jimmie a shot at the championship.

My first win as a crew chief was in the Nationwide Series. It was really cool because everything was so new. It was with Jeff Gordon at Homestead in 2000. Even though I had been in racing for seven years, I hadn't won one as a crew chief. That was pretty incredible.

**GX:** Your sister is in the Air Force. How special is it to you to be part of the National Guard team?

**LM:** I've always been unbelievably proud of the military and the individual contributions. My sister is stationed in Spokane, WA. She has done tours overseas multiple times. She went to Korea for a year, Kuwait a couple of times and Saudi Arabia a couple of times. She's a career military person. It's an unbelievable sacrifice and a service to your country. The fact that you would step up and commit your life

to it, it takes a special person to do that.

**GX:** What do you do on your days off?

**LM:** I like riding my dirt bike. I like going out on the boat. I like finding a quiet spot, listening to the water, going swimming and just hanging out. It's relaxing.

**GX:** What is your favorite thing to watch on TV?

**LM:** I like sitcoms—any of them. I like "Two and a Half Men." Anything a little racy and funny is good to me. I don't really get into any of the TV dramas. I like football. I watch both college football and NFL—the Saints and LSU are my teams.

**GX:** Are you a fan of any other kind of racing?

**LM:** All of it. It's ridiculous. I like F1 racing, and I love drag racing. I used to get out to the Charlotte drag strip, but they race when we're out of town. I've got some really good friends who are drag racers, and I like to hang out with them. **GX**

For more on Dale Jr., go to  
[www.NATIONALGUARD.com/dalejr](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/dalejr).

# Fighting Spirit

SHARP AND STRONG

>> SPORTS



The No. 54 National Guard Rally Car slides into a turn during a Rally Championship Series race at Steamboat Springs, CO.

**"We worked hard, raced hard and proudly represented the National Guard and everyday Americans."**

>> Mark Fox, National Guard Rally Racer

## High-Speed Logos

### RALLY RACERS TAKE GUARD IMAGE TO THE STREETS

By LTC Pete Derouin, Oregon Army National Guard

**RACECAR DRIVER MARK FOX** found a unique way to give something back to Army National Guard Soldiers: He covered his car with Guard logos.

As he drove around the country in the Rally Championship Series, countless young civilians everywhere discovered the National Guard.

"It hasn't been easy, but it has become a point of pride," said Fox, a former professional down-hill mountain bike racer. "We worked hard, raced hard and proudly represented the National Guard and everyday Americans."

#### HOT WHEELS

The Rally Championship Series has been described as the "hottest racing sport in the country." The cars race against the clock on closed-off sections of road over multiple days and hundreds of miles. Endurance of both man and machine are key, and even finishing a high percentage of races take a hyper-dedicated team.

In his first year, Fox and his co-driver, Jake Blattner, raced the No. 54 National Guard Rally car to seventh overall in the Open Production

Class championship points standings and the coveted Rally America Rookie of the Year Award. This award is reserved for the rookie who shows the most improvement and posts the highest year-end standings in the series. Blattner, a former professional snowboarder, was in his first season, too.

"The team would like to dedicate the season to all of the Soldiers who are driving, co-driving and literally riding shotgun on the truly tough and

**T**he goal in Rally is to accumulate the lowest elapsed driving time on a prescribed course. The course is on roads described as "forest roads" and includes everything from tarmac to very rugged forest.

In Rally, the team consists of a driver and a co-driver. The driver drives while the co-driver navigates, calling out a verbal road map to the driver through an intercom system, including severity of corners, jumps and hazards.

At speeds frequently more than 100 mph, a co-driver is a necessity. A team called the service crew, which functions as the "pit crew," supports the driver. They do everything from swapping tires to performing amazing repairs on cars that are being dealt the ultimate punishment on brutal roads.

These pit areas are accessible to fans and are always a popular attraction. Here, fans are able to spend time mingling with drivers and teams and often watch mechanics bring "mangled" cars back to life and back into the race during the brief pit times. **GX**

dangerous roads: those of Iraq and Afghanistan," Fox said. "Come home safe and Rally with us."

#### MOVING MOVIE

Fox's interest in the Guard grew after he attended a viewing party in his home state of Oregon for a documentary called *This Is War*, about an Oregon Army National Guard infantry battalion in Iraq. He shared his experience with his Rally team and decided to try to find a way to make a difference.

He contacted the Oregon National Guard and obtained permission to display the Guard logo on his car. "Because Rally racing embodies much of the spirit of the military—planning, teamwork, map reading—we felt it could represent the Guard's interests better than other vehicle sports," he said.

In Oregon, Guard Soldiers held a recruiting event in the pit areas during the event. In Maine, at the New England Forest Rally, Guard units from Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont sponsored the regional portion of the event dubbed the "Drive Your Future Rally" presented by the National Guard. The car was adorned with new

graphics that resulted in much discussion.

As the season progressed, the No. 54 car took on a new look with the hugely popular digital camouflage wrap. At about the same time, Fox purchased a new Rally car—a 2007 Subaru Impreza WRX STI previously owned by Ken Block. Block is a Rally racing champion who has achieved YouTube fame for his driving and sliding video entitled “Gymkana Practice.”

One reason Fox bought a new car was that his old car had several mechanical problems. It paid off immediately. In his first race, he placed fourth. He credited the car’s reliability, power and improved handling. The next race, which was in Colorado, resulted in a tie for third place. This was the first podium finish, first through third, for the team.

The season came to a close with another strong finish in Michigan at the final race of the season. The team finished fourth in the Open Production class, just 40 seconds behind the third-place team.

#### RALLY'S GREATS WERE ROOKIES

The Rookie of the Year trophy carries the names of some of Rally’s greats, including household names like Block and “Cowboy” Kenny Bartram. Bartram, the winningest freestyle motorcyclist in the world, consistently places in the top 10 of the premier Open Class Rally division.

Fox, or the “The Animal,” as he has become known to fans, said, “The Rookie of the Year award is a great honor. It’s an honor to be in the company of the past winners and also for the team to be acknowledged for the effort and work it took to compete in the series.”

“It was my primary goal to win the award starting the series,” he continued. “And looking back now, it feels great to be rewarded for the work and difficulties of the steep learning curve that accompanies a first championship season.” **GX**

CPT Alex Quintanilla, an automation officer in the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, races in the Peachtree 10K at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, in July.



## RUNNER TO THE CORPS

*Story and photos by SGT Matthew E. Jones, 28th CAB / CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, IRAQ*

■ **MANY SOLDIERS** find it difficult and inconvenient to conduct physical training in a field environment. Temperatures in Iraq can top out near 150 degrees, and running in a dust storm is no picnic.

Captain Alex Quintanilla, an automation officer in the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, doesn’t seem to mind. In fact, he began training for his first marathon while deployed to Iraq in 2005. He hasn’t stopped running since.

Quintanilla, 33, a resident of Burtonsville, MD, recently ran the Marine Corps Marathon at Al Asad, Iraq, as one of 309 runners. There were more than 21,000 runners participating in the Washington, DC, race, including his brother Edwin. In fact, one might say running runs in his family. His brothers Edwin, William and Wilbert ran with him last year in Washington, and they each finished the 26.2-mile race in less than four hours.

Quintanilla, who grew up in El Salvador and joined the Pennsylvania National Guard in 2001, said he always enjoyed running. Though running was always a passion, it wasn’t until his first deployment with the Guard’s 28th Signal Battalion in 2005 that he decided to train for his first marathon. “To train here, you have to get up early, about 5 a.m., to beat the heat,”

said Quintanilla, who runs five days each week when training. “I do one long run each week, starting with about 10 miles.”

In the beginning of his training, his short runs are about two to five miles. Toward the end of the training, which begins about four or five months before a marathon, his short-run days become quite long for anyone who isn’t practicing for a marathon, at around a dozen miles.

While deployed to COB Adder, Quintanilla has an extra incentive to run. Every Wednesday morning, many runners on base participate in the morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) 5K.

“I have been running in the weekly MWR 5K here at Tallil since we arrived in May, and I’ve placed either first or second place in my age category 18 times,” he said.

The roughly 3-mile race may not seem like much compared to the five marathons and two half-marathons he has participated in, but Quintanilla said he loves it just the same.

“I run because I like it, and because it makes me feel great and alive,” he said. “I run because it makes me feel like getting older is not so bad. I feel like I could accomplish almost anything.” **GX**

# Two Soldiers, Three Sports

**GUARD COUPLE TAKES STRENGTH TO THE LIMIT** *By Christian Anderson*

**M**ushers. Wrestlers. Runners. GX has covered Guard athletes of all kinds, nationwide. A special breed of Soldier, they're driven for excellence in both their civilian and military lives.

Few sports are more demanding or challenging than triathlon—an endurance event consisting of three sports: swimming, cycling and running.

GX recently caught up with triathletes Sergeant Roberto Di Giovine and Officer Candidate Holly Di Giovine of the South Carolina Army National Guard. Married for five years, these Greenville residents talked to us about their methods, motivation, diet, discipline—and how it feels to represent the Army National Guard.

**GX:** How did you get involved in triathlon?

**Holly:** For me, it was a practical matter. At 25, my running was already beating up my joints, and I thought the cross-training of triathlon would be a welcome change.

I set out for my first triathlon in Lake Meade, outside Las Vegas, NV, and trained for nine months. I hired a swimming coach—those skills were nonexistent—and bought a new road bike. I lost 20 pounds.

The event was a great experience. You can never recapture the blissful ignorance of doing something for the first time.

**GX:** What are some of the rigors of competing as a triathlete?

**Roberto:** I must be honest—sometimes it is awful. I get up at 4 a.m. almost every day because I have to drive two hours to work at [the South Carolina National Guard's] Joint Force Headquarters. I fit my training in between a cup of coffee and leaving for work. Late night and lunchtime training are also part of my daily routine.

**Holly:** To me the hardest part is the mental commitment. After that, it's all about planning, commitment, consistency and injury prevention—all things I could write a column on.

**GX:** What keeps you doing triathlon?

**Holly:** The mental and physical benefits. It keeps me lean, strong and as balanced as you can be as an endurance athlete. It allows me to eat, on average, 1,000 calories more than the average female. The variety allows me to rest one part of my body while challenging another.

I was a "gym rat" in my 20s and still enjoy lifting weights, but it can't compare to the accomplishment I feel after each and every swim, cycling or running session.

I'm the first to admit that there are a lot of days that I just don't want to train, but remembering the ultimate goal motivates me.

**Roberto:** Sports is a metaphor for life. To succeed in a sport, one must engage in work, passion, time, pain and dedication. Similarly, in life, there are no shortcuts. Think about it. How can you be happy in your marriage if you don't put some "work" into it?

When you overcome the obstacles between yourself and happiness, the reward is amazing. You have become a better person.

**GX:** What is it like training with your husband?

**Holly:** Sharing the sport with Roby is a major bonus because his cycling background makes him a very dedicated athlete. Having him as a training partner comes in handy when the weather—or my mood—is bad.

Over the past two years, through Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training and a deployment, training for the same events—sometimes in separate countries—has kept our relationship strong. The positive effects of goal setting, planning and accomplishment can't help but overflow into the rest of our marriage.

**GX:** Do you plan on starting a triathlon team for South Carolina?

**Roberto:** Yes, we're working on the South Carolina National Guard triathlon and cycling team.

In 2010, we'll recruit athletes, develop projects and show the South Carolina National Guard that we can be a valuable asset to them.

**Holly:** A team would be a great way to emphasize more than just "passing a PT test." It would highlight the importance of incorporating a healthy lifestyle.

I think the word "triathlon" is scary to many people, even those who like to run. But a training team can help make it accessible. I would love to have a team with seasoned and novice athletes alike. To be able to help with that would feel like a huge contribution to my fellow Soldiers.

**GX:** What are your aspirations as a triathlete? Where do you hope the sport will take you?

**"Sports is a metaphor for life. To succeed in a sport, one must engage in work, passion, time, pain and dedication. Similarly, in life, there are no shortcuts."**

>> SGT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE



**Roberto:** The World Championship in Kona, HI, is my final goal. I want to qualify for Kona before I turn 40.

But results aren't everything. I feel good when I'm training, and that's the most important thing. And if I can motivate other Soldiers by setting the example, that's even better.

Recruiting new Soldiers is always in my head. I want young kids to see that the Guard is cool. No hot dogs on Sunday!

**Holly:** Ultimately, my goal is longevity. I get pumped up every time I get passed by a 50-year-old woman during the bike leg because I know that is going to be me in 20 years.

As for concrete goals, my ideal is to be able to achieve my 5K, half-marathon and APFT goals all in the same month because that would represent achieving balance across multiple disciplines. I'd also like to be able to do 15 perfect chin-ups.

I do see myself doing an Ironman event someday, but I want my distance to increase organically—as a result of long-term consistency and fitness.

**GX:** How have your roles as a triathlete and a Soldier intertwined? Does one make you better at the other?

**Roberto:** I became a better Soldier as I became a better triathlete. But the other way around is also true. An endurance sport like triathlon has two positive effects on an individual. Mentally,



it shapes the character of the person, making them stronger. Physically, well, it's obvious—a 5-mile run will help you get fit for combat. It's that simple.

**Holly:** I went to Basic Training two months after my 30th birthday and am confident I wouldn't have been as strong and capable as I was, had I gone fresh out of high school. My current speed, endurance, stamina, core strength and knowledge of proper stretching techniques and healthy nutrition helped me.

Commitment to the mission is a common thread. Whether it's a military mission, a challenging training session or a race, it's important to have a plan. Each piece matters—sleep, nutrition, flexibility, strength, proper intensity during the workout, etc. And when you don't experience the desired results, you do an after

Clockwise from left: Holly and Roberto prepare to start a half-marathon in Italy. Holly and Roberto finish strong in one of the Half-Ironman triathlons they completed in 2009. Holly and Roberto train throughout the year to prepare for triathlons, even in the winter.



action review and figure out what went well and what you can do better.

**GX:** When you compete, you represent the Army National Guard. How does it feel to know that people view you in a positive light at events?

**Roberto:** My goal is to promote the National Guard because I strongly believe that we American citizens have the duty and honor to be part of the defense of the nation. So I believe in the Citizen-Soldier.

When I race, I want everybody to see that National Guard Soldiers are one of the leading forces of one's community. Triathlon is how I display this.

**Holly:** Joining the Guard is one of the steps I'm most proud of in life. It's my goal to always represent my unit, state and country in a strong, positive light.

I also want to set an example for fellow Guard Soldiers, to encourage more of them to join in the lifestyle Roby and I enjoy. **GX**

**Read more about SGT Roberto Di Giovine in GX 5.2, available at [GXonline.com](http://GXonline.com).**



# OPERATION BACK TO BASICS (OPB2B)

**Two weight-loss workouts for home or the road** By Ken and Stephanie Weichert

SGT KEN,

At my APFT in 2007, I weighed in at 201 pounds and 49 percent body fat. I could barely squeeze out 10 push-ups and 15 sit-ups.

After Advanced Individual Training, it got worse. I took up smoking and ate too much. As my health sank, I was losing my desire to be a good Soldier.

Even so, my commander had hope for me. He thought I'd make a good leader if I could get it together, and encouraged me to apply for Officer Candidate School. I passed, but barely, because of my poor fitness. I knew I had to get better.

I turned to your column in GX. The advice helped me implement fitness into my daily life. I walked. Then ran. I weight-trained. I did your exercises as best I could.

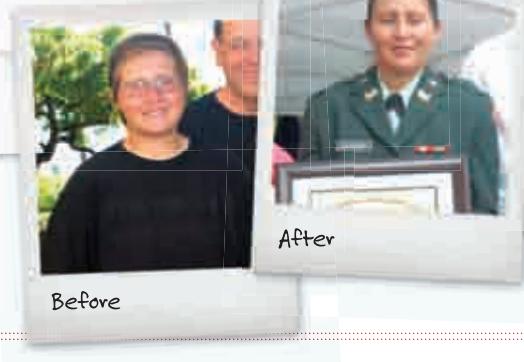
In March 2008, when I started Officer Candidate School, I weighed in at 169, 31 percent body fat. But I still needed to do more, in order to ship to phase one.

Thanks to your program, on my last APFT during OCS, I knocked out over 50 push-ups, over 70 sit-ups, and ran my 2-mile in 16 minutes flat. I went from being an overweight specialist to a second lieutenant who has a desire to lead by example. My cadre at OCS called me a motivation and an inspiring leader.

Because of your articles, I've improved my career, my health and my life. Thanks.

Respectfully,

**2LT Allison Gaydosh**  
New Jersey Army National Guard  
150th Engineering Company



After

Before

RECEIVED

DEAR 2LT GAYDOSH,

SENT

Your story is a superb testimony of how frequent fitness and a well-balanced diet can change an entire life for the better. You did not quit, and the results were that you advanced in your career and in your life overall. You are a great role model for your peers!

We are pairing up your story with a program called Operation Back to Basics. It includes the same exercise strategies that helped you lose body fat, and increase muscle strength and aerobic endurance. Each exercise includes step-by-step instructions followed by performance-level standards.

Beginners who have not worked out in a long time should follow the standards for "Basic." Advanced athletes might want to follow the standards marked "Advanced." There is also a category for people somewhere in the middle—"Intermediate." For those of you looking for an added challenge, we threw in a category called "Extreme."

Operation Back to Basics includes two different fitness programs. Neither requires equipment, and both can be performed anywhere. Best of all, completing one set of either of the two programs will take less than 20 minutes.

We have also included a Back to Basics fitness calendar. By following our workout calendar, you can lose over four pounds in 14 days. If you or your friends need a good meal plan, use our "Savory Survival Guide" from [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy).

Operation Back to Basics should keep you on track and help anyone else achieve the same successes. As my drill sergeant once said, "Total fitness takes more than a gym!"

Thanks for sharing your story with us. We recognize your unwavering courage and unlimited intestinal fortitude. We hope that your story moves others as much as it moved us!

**HOOAH!**  
SGT Ken



## PROGRAM 1

### WARM-UP PHASE

**1. Aerobics:** Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Straddle-Hops ("Jumping Jacks") or High Steps/Knees.

**2. Stretching:** Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

**“** Operation Pushing for Points made it possible for me to improve my APFT scores enormously—150 points overall. I was having problems passing the APFT before, now I pass it easily! Thank you, SGT Ken and Stephanie, for all that you do! Hooah!"

> **SPC Jose Ramirez, Florida Army National Guard**



\* EXTREME

### CORE TARGETING PHASE

#### 3. Vertical Leg Crunch

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface, arms straight and against the sides of your body, palms on the ground. Elevate your legs and align your feet and knees with your hips, feet flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes. *Note:* Keep a slight bend in your knees.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body, reaching your fingers toward your toes. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you reach upward, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

**Basic:** 1–15 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions



#### 4. Russian Twist

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**START:** Sit on the ground, knees bent at a 90-degree angle, and heels on the ground, and legs approximately 6 inches apart. Position your arms at chest level, elbows out and knuckles together. Relax your shoulders, maintain a neutral spine and lean back until your torso is at a 45-degree angle with the ground.

**ACTIONS:** Twist your torso at the trunk of your body to the left until your elbow reaches the ground, and twist your torso to the right until your elbow reaches the ground. Twist slow and continuously. Performing the actions on each side once is one repetition. Continue until goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you twist, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position. *Note:* If you experience discomfort in the lower back, stop and readjust the position.

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 31–50 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 40–50 repetitions, with legs elevated (each side)

**Note:** Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

## TRANSITION PHASE

### 5. Push-up

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals

**START:** Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until your upper arms become parallel with the ground. Return to the start position and repeat. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Male standards:

**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 21–40

repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** More than 80 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–6 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 7–20

repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–50 repetitions

**Extreme:** 51–80 repetitions, or 10–20 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



### 6. Prone Hold

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus, Obliques

**START:** Balance your body on your forearms, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, back and legs straight, chin tilted upward slightly.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold this position until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

**Basic:** 10–30 seconds

**Intermediate:** 31–60 seconds

**Advanced:** 61–120 seconds

**Extreme:** 121–180 seconds



### 7. Squat

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

**START:** Stand upright, feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward and hands at your sides.

**ACTIONS:** Lower your body by bending both knees until you reach 90 degrees of knee flexion with your hips moving backward as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over your heels or mid-foot. While you lower your body, raise your arms upward until level with your shoulders, palms facing inward. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position. Note: Do not let your knees bend beyond your toes.



**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

**Note:** Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

## AEROBIC CONDITIONING PHASE

### 8. Knee Thrust Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Assume a guard position by standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, right foot a half-step behind the left foot, fists clenched and level with your chin, both feet pointing slightly to your right, knees slightly bent and elbows tucked in at your sides.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominals and thrust your right knee upward toward your chest. Return to the guard position and continue until goal is reached. Switch leg positions and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you thrust, and inhale through your nose as you return to the guard position.



**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions (each leg)

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions (each leg)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each leg)

**Extreme:** 50–60 repetitions on a kicking shield or heavy bag (each leg)

**“** Before using the program I could only do 20 push-ups, 28 sit-ups and a 19:48 two-mile run time. After 30-days of using Pushing for Points I achieved 41 push-ups, 40 sit-ups and a two-mile run time of 16:58. I went from 200 pounds to 188. SGT Ken and Stephanie's fitness programs ROCK!”  
—SSG Joe LeChuga, California Army National Guard



### 9. Front Kick Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Assume a guard position.

**ACTION:** Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the "chamber"; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by balancing on the ball of the foot and thrust your rear leg forward at your target, striking with the ball of the foot. Return to the guard position

and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue

until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you kick, and inhale through your nose as you return to the guard position.

**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions (each leg)

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions (each leg)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each leg)

**Extreme:** 50–60 repetitions on a kicking shield or heavy bag (each leg)

## COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

## PROGRAM 2

### WARM-UP PHASE

**1. Aerobics:** Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Straddle-Hops ("Jumping Jacks") or High Steps/Knees.

**2. Stretching:** Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

### CORE TARGETING PHASE

#### 3. Flutter Kick

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface with your hands under or slightly outside your buttocks, palms down. Raise your feet 6–12 inches off the ground.

**ACTIONS:** The flutter kick drill is a four-count exercise where you raise your left leg to a 45-degree angle for position one, keeping your right leg stationary. Next, raise your right leg to a 45-degree angle while, at the same time, moving your left leg to the start position. Counts three and four are repetitions of the same movements. Performing all four movements once is one repetition. Continue until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions

**Note:** The lower your legs are positioned, the more back muscles you engage for this exercise. Keep your back flat against the floor with your arms supporting the sides of your body. If you experience discomfort in your lower back, raise your legs to a higher position.



#### 4. Box and Reach Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface, arms straight and against the sides of your body, palms on the ground. Elevate your legs, and align your feet and knees with your hips, feet flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes. Note: Keep a slight bend in your knees.

**ACTIONS:** The box and reach drill is a four-count exercise where you reach over the outside of your left thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, return to the start position, reach over the outside of your right thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, and return to the start position. Performing all four movements once is one repetition. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you reach, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 31–60 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 61–100 repetitions (each side)



### TRANSITION PHASE

#### 5. Modified Back Bend

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Gluteus Maximus

**START:** Lie down on the front side of your body on a soft, flat surface with arms bent 90 degrees at the elbows, elbows aligned with your shoulders, palms down and feet 12 inches apart.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your lower back muscles and slowly arch your lower back, raising your arms, chest and legs off the ground, holding for a few seconds at the highest point. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you arch, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions



## 6. T Push-up

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals, full body integrated

**START:** Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body by bending both elbows until the upper parts of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position. Maintain balance, rotate your torso counterclockwise, raise your left arm and point your fingers upward until your body forms a leaning "T." Return to the start position and repeat the actions, next rotating your torso clockwise and raising your right arm. Performing the actions on both sides once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you push up, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body. **Note:** Do not let your hips sag or arch upward.



Male standards:

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 21–40 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 41–60 repetitions, or 30–40 repetitions with a set of 5- to 15-pound dumbbells in each hand (each side)

Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–4 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 5–9 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 10–20 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 21–40 repetitions, or 10–20 repetitions with a set of 3- to 8-pound dumbbells in each hand (each side)

## 7. Lunge

**Primary Muscles Targeted:**

Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius, Hip Flexors



**START:** Start with your left leg on the ground straight in front of you with your left knee slightly bent. Place your right leg straight behind you, balancing on the ball of your right foot. Your upper body is upright with your hands on your hips.

**ACTIONS:** Lower your body, both knees bending until your forward leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Switch sides and continue. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body, and inhale

through your nose as you return to the start position. Warning: Do not let your forward knee bend beyond your toe line.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest (each side)

**Note:** Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

## AEROBIC CONDITIONING PHASE

### 8. Speed Skater Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius



**START:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and toes pointing forward, arms at your sides, elbows slightly bent and palms facing inward.

**ACTIONS:** Shifting your balance to your right, thrust your left leg to the left several inches, right leg following and crossing behind your body, left arm extending to the left, right elbow bending and hand moving to upper chest, left foot landing on the ground before the right. Land and balance your body on your left leg, arms level with your shoulders. Quickly, switch directions and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Performing the actions on each leg once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you land, and inhale through your nose as you switch directions.



**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest (each side)

**Note:** Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, set of kettlebells or dumbbells or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

### 9. Squat, Push-up and Vertical Jump Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

**START:** Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward, hands at your sides, and palms facing inward.

**“**I lost 15 pounds last month using SGT Ken and Stephanie's Savory Survival Guide and the tips in Operation Hunting for Health. I sleep better, feel more confident, have more energy, and my workouts are better than they have been in a long time. I recommend every Soldier and civilian to try their nutrition and fitness plans. They work!”

—SGT Tina Jones, New York Army National Guard

#### ACTIONS:

A. Squat until your knees bend 90 degrees and hips move back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet.

B. Reach downward with your arms and place your hands on the ground slightly in front of your feet.

C. Thrust your legs back to a “push-up” position, back and legs forming a straight line, arms straight and head facing forward. Lower your body by bending both elbows until your upper arms are parallel with the ground. Extend your arms and return to the start position.

D. Jump vertically as high as you can, arms extended overhead. As you land on the ground, go immediately to position #1 (squat). Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Male standards:

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions

**Advanced:** 31–50 repetitions

**Extreme:** 51–70 repetitions, or 30–40

repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–15 repetitions

**Advanced:** 16–30 repetitions

**Extreme:** 31–50 repetitions, or 15–25

repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



## COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

## STAMINA STOPWATCH

The Stamina Stopwatch includes the estimated time it will take to complete each set of the fitness program.

**Quick Fix:** 1 full set = approximately 20 minutes

**Fast and Furious:** 2 full sets = approximately 40 minutes

**Combat Ready:** 3 full sets = approximately 60 minutes

**Note:** The Warm-up and Cool-down Phases are performed only once.

#### Equipment needed:

- Basic, Intermediate, Advanced = none
- Extreme = see each exercise for equipment needs

#### NUTRITION ADVICE:

1. To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads, pastas, dairy products and sugar.
2. Check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise plan.
3. Want to read more diet advice? Go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy) and download our Savory Survival Guide.

## BACK TO BASICS

### WORKOUT SCHEDULE

#### MONDAY

Program One x 1–3 sets

#### TUESDAY

Running Long Distance 2–6 miles  
8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

**Note:** Download “8-min Abs” on [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness)

#### WEDNESDAY

Program Two x 1–3 sets

#### THURSDAY

Rest

#### FRIDAY

Running Interval Training x 2–4 miles

**Note:** Running Interval Training is running at moderate and fast speeds. Example: Run on a treadmill, track or well-known route. After a thorough warm-up, run at a moderate speed (jogging) for 30 seconds and sprint as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the remainder of your run. Or, if on a track, sprint the stretch and jog the curve.

8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

#### SATURDAY

Programs One and Two (combined) x 1–2 sets each

#### SUNDAY

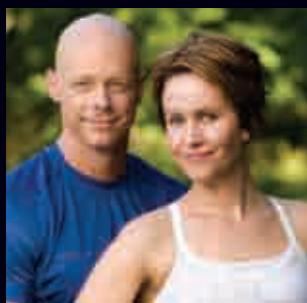
Rest

#### REMARKS:

**1.** Repeat 7-day schedule x 4 sets to complete the month.

**2.** Rest periods may be adjusted, as needed. However, be certain to include 1–2 rest days per week for rest and recovery. Never perform more than two consecutive rest days at any time.

**3.** Perform no fitness training 24–48 hours prior to a fitness test or competition.



KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the Year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors. Ken is currently a staff sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard.

Watch fitness videos and download workouts at

[www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness)  
or email [SGTKen@GXOnline.com](mailto:SGTKen@GXOnline.com).

# Fast and Deadly

OH-58D KIOWA WARRIOR





## YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE. DAY OR NIGHT, THE OH-58D KIOWA WARRIOR WILL FIND YOU.

By Christian Anderson

An improved version of the Vietnam-era OH-58, the Kiowa Warrior combines advanced technology with awesome firepower to give the National Guard a formidable platform. It fills the gap between the AH-64 Apache and UH-60 Black Hawk by operating in numerous roles—armed reconnaissance, scout attack and security and light attack.

Light, compact and fast, the Kiowa can fly in and out of any situation on a moment's notice.

### Power Punch

The Kiowa can be armed with several different types of weapons. With two pylons that allow for quick weaponry change, the Kiowa allows a pilot to select his choice of firepower quickly. HELLCLOUD missiles, Air-to-Air Stinger missiles, HYDRA 70 rockets and a .50 caliber machine gun are some of the tools that allow the Kiowa to get down and dirty with the bad guys.

### Night Vision

At first glance, the Kiowa looks like any other Guard chopper flying around. But if you look more closely, on top of the main rotor, you will see the bubble—it looks like a giant bowling ball. In reality, the bowling ball is a mast-mounted sight, which houses all of the craft's advanced optical equipment. The pilot has access to a thermal imaging system, a laser rangefinder and designator, an optical boresight system, low-light television and a cutting-edge navigation system. The navigation system can send coordinates to battlefield commanders digitally, keeping them in the loop every step of the way.

### Ready for Action

The Kiowa Warrior is designed for rapid deployment. Its unique build and simplicity allow it to fly long hours with minimal maintenance, which guarantees that Soldiers on the ground can count on support when they need it. This has been beneficial for Kiowa crews in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the harsh elements can wreak havoc on aircraft. **GX**

# GX Hero

► SPC JEREMY EASLEY

SPC Jeremy Easley and John Parker recount the events that brought them together this past May.



# RIGHT PLACE,

*Soldier stands ready to protect his community*

By Christian Anderson

Photos by Ken Knight

# RIGHT TIME

Louisiana Army National Guard Specialist Jeremy Easley had grown accustomed to hearing the hang gliders and other small aircraft take off from an airfield across from where he worked. As an employee of Franklinton Country Club in Franklinton, LA, he had learned to ignore the sounds coming from the airfield so he could focus on his duties in the maintenance shop.

On the morning of May 13, 2009, Easley looked out the window and saw something that would change his life forever. A motorized glider taking off in the distance began to sputter. Easley suspected the pilot might be in trouble. He was shocked at what he saw next.

The hang glider took a sudden nosedive, crashing violently to the ground 50 feet below.

The next few moments would define Easley's life as a civilian and a Soldier.

### CHOOSING TO SERVE

Ever since he was a little boy, Easley knew he wanted to serve his country and community. He always looked up to the men in uniform he saw as a child and knew one day he would have a uniform of his own. The Army National Guard was a logical choice, so in 2008, he headed for his local recruiter's office and started the process.

"[I wanted to help] the people of my hometown and home-state during hurricane season, as well as serve my country," Easley explained. "The National Guard was a perfect fit because I could serve, but I wouldn't be too far from my family if they needed me."

When he first told his parents he was enlisting, they were concerned. "They were against it, really," he recalled. "But they knew I had to make my own decisions. After a while, [the ideal] grew on them, and they became supportive of my choice."

He focused on preparing for Basic Training, believing that his family would become proud of him if he completed it. Once he got to Basic, the reality of Guard training soon set in and he learned to lean on others for support.

"I really enjoyed the sense of family that I experienced with the other Soldiers at Basic," Easley shared. "We learned to rely on each other in the

**"SOMEONE IS ALWAYS COMING UP TO ME AND SHAKING MY HAND, THANKING ME FOR WHAT I'M DOING FOR AMERICA."**

>> SPC Jeremy Easley

good times and the bad, and I believe that makes you a better Soldier—when you can admit you need help."

Easley enjoyed the challenge of Basic and was amazed at how much he learned. He mastered marksmanship, first aid techniques, the principles of land navigation and many other skills of an American Soldier

Every day was unique and interesting, and Easley was astounded at his transformation from a normal civilian to a tough Soldier. After 10 weeks of living as a grunt, Easley basked in the rays of success as he graduated from Basic Combat Training.

"I couldn't believe I was finally becoming a Soldier," Easley explained. "After all I'd been through, I made it, and to see my family out in the crowd made it even better. I was so proud!" Little did Easley know that very soon he would be forced to be a Soldier and save lives.

### MAY 13, 2009

After the hang glider hit the ground, Easley knew the passengers were probably injured, so he immediately dialed 911. Then he sprinted across the field to the scene.

"As I got closer, I could hear screaming. There was blood all over the cockpit, the ground and the hang glider," Easley attested. "I could see two men in the cockpit, and they both looked pretty bad."

When he went to the first man, John Parker, he noticed his ankle was broken and bleeding. To make matters worse, fuel from the engine was pouring all over them. Easley quickly worked his seatbelt loose, pulled him out of the cockpit and dragged him 30 yards across the ground to safety.

Rescuing the second passenger would not be as easy

"The other man [who chose to remain anonymous] was tangled up in his seatbelt, and there were wires all over him," Easley said. "He said he couldn't feel his legs, and he thought his back was broken. I got him untangled by cutting his seatbelt and some of the wires, and then pulled him out."

Easley took the second man to safety and began attending to both, but they instructed him to turn off the hang glider's ignition so the

Fate brought John Parker (left) and SPC Jeremy Easley (right) together when Parker's hang glider crashed in May 2009.



craft would not catch fire and explode. He went back to the cockpit, but failed to find the ignition switch. Realizing this, the two men yelled for him to remove the battery. Easley did so, which in turn stopped the engine.

But the nightmare was not over for Easley. It was obvious the two men were not doing well. Their legs appeared to be damaged, and the second one was complaining of severe back pain. Easley did everything he could to keep them comfortable with the limited resources he had. "They were coherent, but hurting pretty bad," Easley said. "They were very uncomfortable, but I couldn't move them any more because I didn't know the extent of their injuries and didn't want to hurt them further."

Hearing the sirens approach, Easley comforted the men by telling them that help was on the way. When the emergency medics arrived,

Easley enjoys putting on his uniform and serving his community, state and country.



they took the Citizen-Soldier's place helping the injured men, and a police officer asked for his account of the event.

"It was time for me to back off and allow the paramedics to do what they had to do," Easley admitted.

#### SECOND NATURE

Easley knew that, even before becoming a Soldier, he would have helped the men. But his training allowed him to aid them better. He said he never thought twice about assisting them because that was his role as a Guard Soldier. He believes this is why the Guard is so effective at protecting America and its citizens.

"On a moment's notice, [Citizen-Soldiers] put their civilian lives on hold to answer the call of people in need," he testified. "We are always there, ready to serve and protect no matter what."

Easley understands that being in the National Guard is a big commitment, but he welcomes and enjoys the responsibility. He also loves the feedback he gets from the community.

"Now that I'm in the Guard, I receive a lot of respect from everyone in my community" he said. "People look at Soldiers in uniform in a different light."

"Someone is always coming up to me and shaking my hand, thanking me for what I'm doing for America," he added.

Easley never gets tired of hearing people ask him about his service in the Guard, because he wants them to know that there are Soldiers out there willing to take care of them. He also never gets tired of kids' reactions when they see him in uniform.

"The best thing is the children," Easley explained. "They come up and ask me, 'Are you a Soldier?' I tell them, 'Yes, I am.'" **GX**

ON A MOMENT'S NOTICE, [CITIZEN-SOLDIERS] PUT THEIR CIVILIAN LIVES ON HOLD TO ANSWER THE CALL OF PEOPLE IN NEED. WE ARE ALWAYS THERE, READY TO SERVE AND PROTECT NO MATTER WHAT.

>> SPC Jeremy Easley

# WARRIOR'S RESPONSE

TAJI, IRAQ, JUNE 2004—SERGEANT MATTHEW ZEDWICK OF COMPANY B, 2ND BATTALION, 162ND INFANTRY, 41ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, OREGON NATIONAL GUARD, WAS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A HUMVEE, WHILE HIS UNIT PERFORMED A SECURITY PATROL NORTH OF BAGHDAD.

ZEDWICK'S HUMVEE WAS STRUCK BY A VEHICLE-BORNE IED...



A FIREFIGHT BROKE OUT AND ZEDWICK DISMOUNTED THE DESTROYED VEHICLE, PULLED HIS TRUCK COMMANDER TO SAFETY AND ATTEMPTED TO SUPPRESS THE ENEMY FIRE.



HE RETURNED TO THE WRECKAGE TO AID HIS GUNNER, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. ZEDWICK PROCEEDED TO RETRIEVE SENSITIVE ITEMS FROM THE VEHICLE AND THEN HEADED BACK TO WHERE HIS COMMANDER LAY, USING HIS OWN BODY TO SHIELD BULLETS FROM THE COMMANDER.



HE CONTINUED TO RETURN FIRE UNTIL A MEDEVAC HELICOPTER REACHED THE SCENE. SERGEANT MATTHEW ZEDWICK WAS AWARDED THE SILVER STAR FOR HIS GALLANTRY AND COURAGE UNDER FIRE.

END



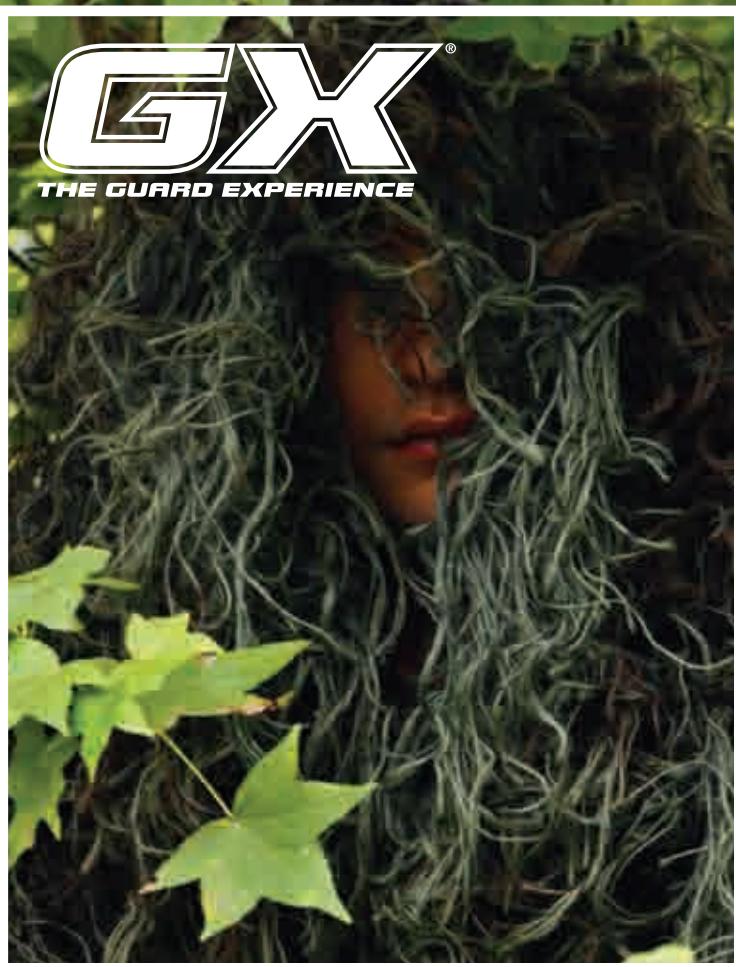
# EXPERTS NEEDED

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