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EQUALITY & RESPECT

A TRIBUTE TO
AFRICAN-AMERICAN
SOLDIERS OF
YESTERDAY
AND TODAY

>> GX HERO

A CAMERA AND A RIFLE

CPL ROBERTO DI GIOVINE
Take a Patriotic journey with
an American Hero

ARNG SNIPERS

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HUNTERS
COMPETE IN
TOUGH
COMPETITION



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Letter From Leadership



Soldiers: Remember Employers, Education and Fitness

Every day men and women just like you choose to join and/or remain in our National Guard. That decision sets you apart from the norm and, in the words of President John F. Kennedy, “What you have chosen to do for your country is the great-

est contribution that any man could make.” Today, those words spoken by President Kennedy in 1961 at the U.S. Naval Academy still reflect our country’s view of the contributions and sacrifices made by each of you.

As I visit with our Warriors around the globe, I never cease to be amazed and impressed. The Citizen-Soldier is an awe-inspiring force not to be reckoned with now or in the past. Yes, the outward appearance of today’s modern Warrior may appear quite different than a rendition of the humble Minuteman, but don’t be fooled.

The same tenacity and volunteer spirit epitomized by each Minuteman in 1636 when he dropped his plow and picked up his musket to defend our fledgling nation is alive and well in each of you. Our National Guard is, and always has been, a volunteer force. Our nation is very lucky to have you. And, we need each of you to not only remain in the Guard, but also to share the Guard story with your friends and community.

“When you call out the Guard, you call out America.” I hear our chief make that statement on a regular basis. Our Guard members live and serve in more than 6,000 communities across America. When most of our citizens think of the military, they actually see the faces of their local Guard members. Your conduct, both in and out of uniform, has a tremendous impact on America.

Every day as I leave my residence and drive past Arlington National Cemetery, I am reminded of the men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice. The threats our Warriors face every day, both on and off the battlefield, are limitless; and one casualty is one too many. Given the hazardous duties our men and women perform, safety must always remain paramount. Never forget that safety practices are as important during your everyday activities as they are in the workplace or the war zone!

The weather is growing warmer, and summer will soon be upon us. I urge each of you to be vigilant. Wear appropriate safety gear whether riding your motorcycle or your personal watercraft. That safety belt or child restraint system in your family automobile can make a difference. Keep in mind: A fall from a bicycle seat can be as catastrophic as a fall from a ladder. All of you are important members of our Guard family, and we want you to be with us for as long as possible.

During a recent interview, I was asked what I talk to our Warriors about during my many visits. Certainly, there are numerous topics depending upon current events and subjects of concern, but the three I mention here are always on the list: employers, education and fitness.

Even though we are working with our elected officials to increase full-time manning in the Army National Guard, around 85 percent of our force remains part-time. These “traditional Guardsmen,” as they are often called, represent the bulk of our membership. They are employed by someone

other than their local Guard unit and their civilian occupations are as varied as our society is diverse.

During the last year, I have made it my priority to consistently remind each of you to take a moment and thank your employer. Even though federal laws mandate employer support to Guard members, most companies voluntarily support their employee’s participation in the Guard. While our members are performing their Guard duties, their absence from the workplace can create a huge burden on both their employers and coworkers. I urge each of you to visit the ESGR (Employer Support for Guard and Reserve) Web site (www.ESGR.org) and thank your employers for the support they provide.

When I mention education and the importance of “lifelong learning,” many Guard members tell me they intend to utilize their education benefits, but just can’t find the time. Even if traditional education must be placed on hold for the time being due to deployment or other commitments, I tell them to take a correspondence course or a Web-based program. If nothing else, find the time to read a good book.

Books are available in many formats from the traditional hardcover volume to books on tape or online. Soldiers often ask me what I have read lately or if I have any recommendations. If someone thinks their life has been turned upside down recently, I might suggest *Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail* by Malika Oufkir, a true story of survival in modern times. Two excellent books about the National Guard are *The Bedford Boys: One American Town’s Ultimate D-day Sacrifice* by Alex Kershaw and *The Fighting 69th: One Remarkable National Guard Unit’s Journey From Ground Zero to Baghdad* by Sean Michael Flynn.

We all need reminding that there is more to physical fitness than passing the Army Physical Fitness Test. It is about wellness and developing a habit of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. There are many resources available on the subject of fitness from Web sites to information at your local doctor’s office. An excellent resource can be found regularly right here in this magazine—and that’s the fitness section by SSG Ken (aka “SGT Ken”) and Stephanie Weichert.

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet SGT Ken and his wife while visiting GX headquarters in Nashville. SGT Ken is very passionate about fitness, and his regular feature in this magazine is designed to keep all of you motivated and in great physical condition. Fitness is a lifestyle, not just something you have to do in order to pass a semi-annual physical fitness test.

Remember, we are the Guard and, for the past 372 years, we have always been there, and we will continue to always be there when our community calls.

Be safe!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Hudson".

CSM David Ray Hudson
Senior Enlisted Leader to the Chief
National Guard Bureau

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Back in the Saddle

After standing at parade rest for a bit, we've finally dusted off our boots and are back in action. The downtime actually came as a blessing in disguise. We were able to pull together the strongest stories of the past few months and cram 'em into one very powerful issue.

For the past couple years, we've received countless photos from CPL Roberto Di Giovine. These photos always capture our Soldiers at their best—sweating through training and taking the fight to the enemy. This issue, we put the spotlight on CPL Di Giovine himself in our *GXHero* feature (see pg. 76). A genuine gentleman, brilliant artist and hard-core infantry machine all rolled into one giant Italian from South Carolina, this man is a personal hero of mine.

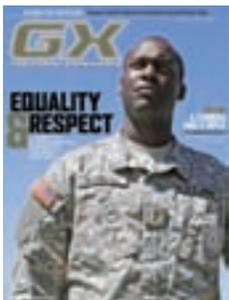
Additionally, we pay tribute to SPC Robert Sprenger (see pg. 26). SPC Sprenger received the Purple Heart for wounds he received serving our nation in combat. His mother, Vicky, has become a good friend of the *GX* team, and we are honored to share this story for her and her courageous family. It's stories like this that make us so psyched about our jobs.

Our main feature, like these others, has affected our team personally. This tribute to African-Americans in the Guard comes straight from the heart and mind of a truly amazing Soldier—1LT Ricardo Ferrell (see pg. 34). 1LT Ferrell, pictured on the cover as a 2LT prior to his deployment, is currently in Iraq where he and the Bad Voodoo Platoon have been engaging in direct combat with the enemy. I first met the lieutenant down at Camp Shelby and quickly became a huge fan. 1LT Ferrell is a strong believer in leading from the front. He always volunteers to be the first in any given situation. This style of leadership builds confidence in his men, as he wouldn't put them through anything he wouldn't take on headfirst. 1LT Ferrell leads the way again by delivering a fresh perspective on our military history. May God continue to bless our men and women in battle. You are the reason for this publication. You are the reason for our Freedom. We appreciate you. We support you.

And thank you!



Keith Kawasaki, Editor-in-Chief



ON THE COVER

2LT Ricardo Ferrell stands proud while at Camp Shelby, MS, prior to deployment in support of OIF. Now a first lieutenant, he penned our feature honoring African-Americans in the Guard. Photo by Keith Kawasaki

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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» STAYING VIGILANT

[Millington, TN]

1LT Jason Stockton and SGT Gregory Fields of the 45th Civil Support Team, TNARNG, take readings at the site of a simulated collapsed building during Vigilant Guard '08 at Millington, TN. The exercise was in response to a simulated earthquake along the New Madrid fault that devastated Memphis and several surrounding areas.

Photo by SSG Russell Klika









» SEA OF SOLDIERS

[Indianapolis, IN]

Indiana National Guard Soldiers prepare to say farewell to family and friends during a departure ceremony for the 76th Brigade Combat Team on Jan. 2, 2008, at Indianapolis' RCA Dome. This deployment represented the largest for the Indiana Guard since WWII, with Soldiers from about 30 Indiana communities headed to Iraq. Headquartered in Indianapolis, the brigade is commanded by COL Courtney Carr and CSM Gregory Rhoades.

Photo by SSG Russell Klika







» MAKING A DIFFERENCE

[Baghdad, Iraq]

SPC Leslie Goble (45th BCT, OKARNG) and Air Force Staff Sgt. Kory Grant sit with Iraqi children near the International Zone (IZ), Baghdad, Iraq, this past April. Troops living in the IZ visit this area to distribute humanitarian aid.

Photo by SGT Shawn Riley, 45th BCT





Season of Storms
Guard Soldiers respond to tornadoes, floods and an earthquake.

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Blizzard Rescue
AZARNG Soldiers rescue senators from a blizzard halfway around the world.

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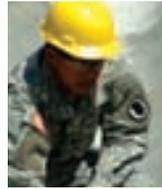
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From combat zones to beauty pageants, SGT Jill Stevens stands up for her country.

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SGT LEIGH ANN HESTER, KYARNG, IS THE FIRST FEMALE SOLDIER TO RECEIVE THE SILVER STAR SINCE WWII.

★★★★

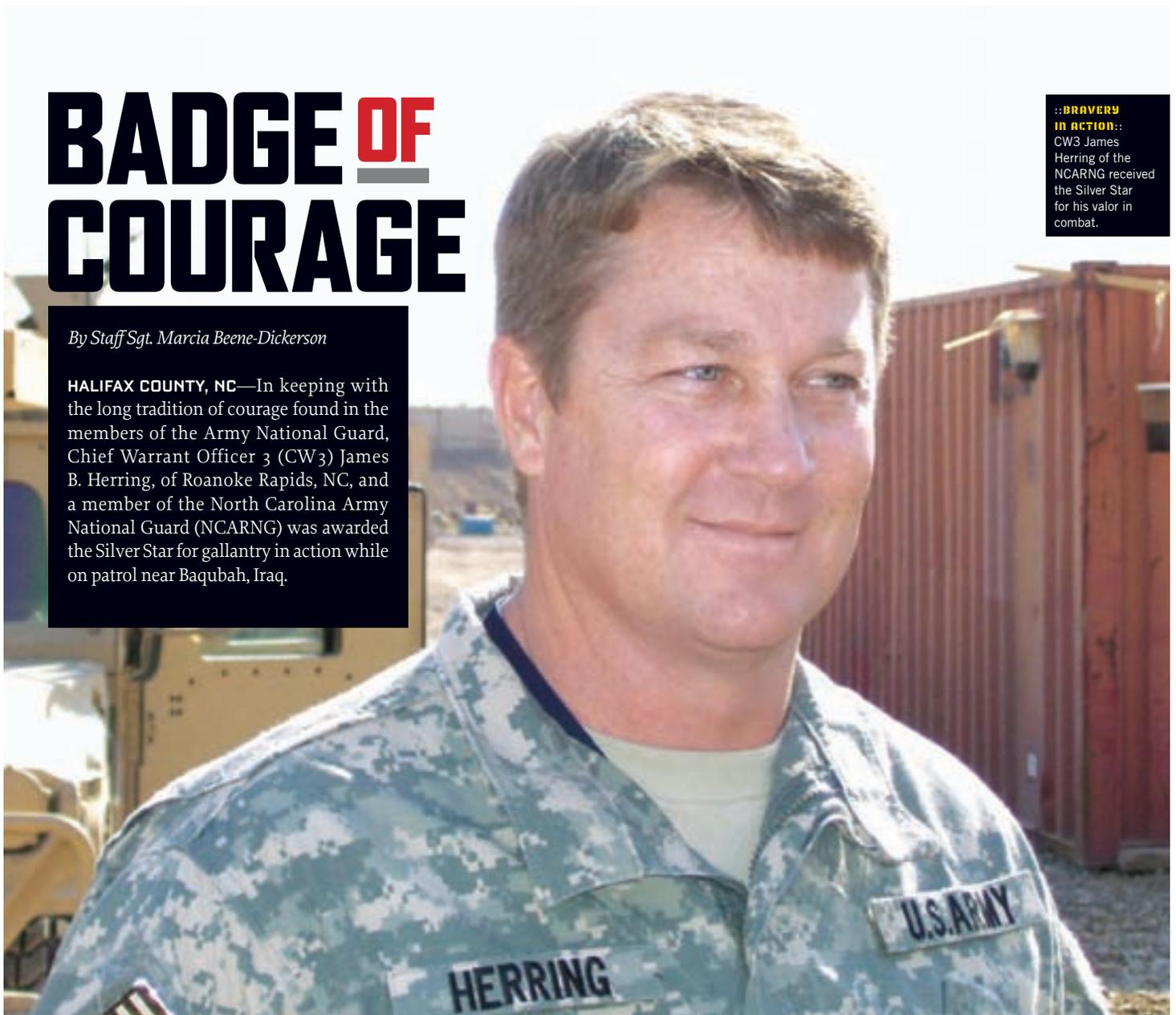
SPC JEREMY D. CRISP

BADGE OF COURAGE

By Staff Sgt. Marcia Beene-Dickerson

HALIFAX COUNTY, NC—In keeping with the long tradition of courage found in the members of the Army National Guard, Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3) James B. Herring, of Roanoke Rapids, NC, and a member of the North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action while on patrol near Baqubah, Iraq.

:: BRAVERY IN ACTION ::
CW3 James Herring of the NCARNG received the Silver Star for his valor in combat.



COURTESY OF THE NCARNG

As the Detachment Commander for Operational Detachment Alpha 2084, Special Operations Task Force–North, CW3 Herring and his unit were in the village of Tahrir on Dec. 23, 2006, searching for a Sunni-Arab insurgent cell responsible for numerous complex attacks against Coalition Forces.

A combined 23-man U.S.-Iraq force, the unit was ambushed by approximately 20 insurgents firing machine guns, rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). As the Ground Force Commander, CW3 Herring was in the lead vehicle of the five-vehicle patrol when the insurgents opened fire. He directed his driver to continue to move forward as his turret gunner, SGT Broughton Aragon, engaged and killed the insurgents.

As the vehicle continued to move forward, it was engaged again by more than 20 insurgents less than 30 feet away. The turret gunner engaged the insurgents; however, the vehicle was penetrated by enemy rounds, injuring the driver, SPC Stephen Haas. As the vehicle came to a stop, CW3 Herring observed other insurgents firing on his position from less than 50 meters. He realized his turret gunner, SGT Aragon, was facing the opposite direction, and he dismounted the vehicle and engaged the enemy forces with his rifle, killing two of the enemy machine gunners.



THE SILVER STAR IS AWARDED TO A PERSON WHO, WHILE SERVING IN ANY CAPACITY WITH THE ARMY, IS CITED FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION AGAINST AN ENEMY OF THE UNITED STATES, WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPS INVOLVING CONFLICT WITH AN OPPOSING FOREIGN FORCE, OR WHILE SERVING WITH FRIENDLY FOREIGN FORCES ENGAGED IN ARMED CONFLICT AGAINST AN OPPOSING ARMED FORCE IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES IS NOT A BELLIGERENT PARTY.

LEADING THE CHARGE

The fierceness of CW3 Herring's actions forced the other insurgents to abandon their positions and flee. CW3 Herring realized his driver was critically wounded, and with complete disregard for his own safety, he exited the vehicle a second time under heavy fire. He was knocked to the ground from the concussion of a RPG, and then he got up and continued to fire and move under the covering fire of his turret gunner. CW3 Herring removed SPC Haas from the driver's

seat and placed him in the rear seat of the vehicle, so he could continue to receive medical treatment from the unit's medic, SFC John Masson.

CW3 Herring jumped into the driver's seat, notified his higher headquarters of the situation, called for medical evacuation and maneuvered the vehicle out of the kill zone. Through the heavily damaged windshield, CW3 Herring led the combined ground assault force through the narrow side streets of Tahrir and back to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gabe.

As a result of his decisive and heroic actions, CW3 Herring turned the tide of the engagement against a well-prepared enemy, killing many and preventing other members of the combined force from being killed or wounded. His complete disregard for his own safety directly saved the other four Soldiers in his vehicle as well as the other members of his unit from injury or death.

HUMBLE ACCEPTANCE

Family and friends attended the ceremony honoring CW3 Herring in North Carolina where he was awarded the military's third-highest award for valor. With his Silver Star pinned to his chest, after his citation was read CW3 Herring humbly said: "I'm not a hero in my book; the guys that served with me are the heroes—they truly deserve to be recognized."

Though he served as the Detachment Commander for Operational Detachment Alpha 2084, Special Operations Task Force while in Iraq, in North Carolina, CW3 Herring is a member of the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, NCARNG. In his civilian job, he's a decorated law enforcement officer for the Chesterfield County, VA, police department.

CW3 Herring joins the ranks of other brave Soldiers of the Army National Guard who serve with honor and courage while defending their fellow Soldiers and their country. **GX**

Operation Security Blanket Recap

By SSG Brent Cobb, Coordinator of Operation Security Blanket Recruiting and Retention Command, SCARNG

FOUNTAIN INN, SC—Operation Security Blanket started when members of the 1/118th Infantry Brigade of South Carolina were serving in Afghanistan during



the winter of 2007. Soldiers witnessed children suffering in the cold with no winter clothing or blankets to keep them warm.

We sent out one e-mail about the Afghan children's needs, and it spread like wildfire across the United States! We had organizations contacting us asking what they could do to help. It was simply overwhelming!

The Fountain Inn Armory in South Carolina was overrun with blankets and clothing for children and adults. In November 2007, we sent our first shipment out, which consisted of 138 medium-sized boxes, all shipped via the U.S. Postal Service. Our second shipment went out in February 2008; it consisted of an additional 150 boxes, once again shipped via the U.S. Postal Service.

An organization in Kentucky sent 116 pallets of clothing, coats and blankets. These were shipped via Air Freight through scheduled airline services, which cost thousands of dollars. Twelve states have sent boxes to this great cause.

We were getting feedback from our Soldiers that they were receiving boxes daily for distribution to the Afghan orphanages and forgotten villagers! You could tell that this effort was gratifying to all the Soldiers, who saw huge smiles on children's faces when they received the coats and blankets. Their words of "thank you" brought smiles to our Soldier's faces and warmth to their hearts.

Operation Security Blanket will be passed on to the next FRG taking over responsibilities in June. Instruction on when and where to deliver items will be determined in June. We hope to keep this operation an ongoing project.

We want to thank all of you who helped with this past season's Operation Security Blanket project! **GX**





SEASON OF STORMS

▶ SOLDIERS SUPPORT COMMUNITIES DURING DISASTERS

BRIEFING

IN KENTUCKY, 139 Guard Soldiers with 32 Humvees, two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, one heavy equipment wrecker, one fuel tanker and a bus deployed to tornado-damaged areas.



© SPC MIKO HOLLORAN

The National Guard has been busy lately answering the call of its fellow citizens. Local communities are being reminded just how important the Guard is to their survival as tornadoes, floods and earthquakes keep our Soldiers on call. *By Christian Anderson*

FLOODS

By SSG Jim Greenhill, courtesy of the National Guard Bureau

NATIONAL GUARD Soldiers evacuated residents, provided shelter, supplied drinking water and executed other missions in states affected by flooding on March 20.

President Bush declared Missouri a major disaster. As part of the National Guard's support of civilian authorities tackling the aftermath of the floods, Citizen-Soldiers from the Missouri National Guard's 70th Troop Command assisted with recovery efforts in the communities of Marble Hill and Piedmont.

"We have been moving families and will remain on duty as long as local communities and the governor need us," said CPT Tammy Spicer, a Missouri Guard Public Affairs Director.

In Arkansas, the National Guard's Camp Robinson Institute Support Unit provided a 5,000-gallon tanker of fresh water to the community of Leslie after one of its main water lines collapsed, according to CPT Chris Heathscott, Public Affairs Officer.

Soldiers from the Arkansas Guard's 142nd Fire Brigade and the 217th Brigade Support Battalion opened the armory in Berryville for

emergency shelter, providing cots and blankets for up to 100 residents displaced by flooding.

TORNADOS

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith, courtesy of the National Guard Bureau

THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH, National

Guard units in Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee continued operations three days after an unseasonable string of winter thunderstorms and tornados charged through communities on Feb. 5.

In Kentucky, 139 Guard Soldiers with 32 Humvees, two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, one heavy equipment wrecker, one fuel tanker and a bus deployed to tornado-damaged areas.

The Kentucky Guard Soldiers provided emergency power for the Muhlenberg Water Company and operated a mobile command post in Muhlenberg County. Soldiers from the 307th Maintenance

continued on page 20

"Our Citizen-Soldiers have a long history of helping their fellow Kentuckians, and they stand ready to do so again."

>> Gov. Steve Beshear



VICTORY MAP

>> ARKANSAS

The Arkansas National Guard Youth Challenge program graduated 52 students Dec. 7, 2007, to recognize their completion of the 22-week residential program. Completion of the residential phase is followed by a 12-month mentorship program to assist the graduates in maintaining their current path to success. For information call: 1-800-814-8453.

>> INDIANA

Two Indiana National Guard maintenance shops at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center won first place and first runner-up in the Army's national maintenance excellence award. The Field Maintenance Shop 2, which placed first, and the Unit Training Equipment Site, the first runner-up, were awarded for the 2007 fiscal year. During the fiscal year, the FM 2 inspected, serviced or repaired 953 customer maintenance job orders and calibration transactions. The UTES serviced or repaired 786 maintenance job orders and performed 30 recovery missions on Camp Atterbury.

>> MASSACHUSETTS

PFC Karleen Murphy was recognized for outstanding achievement while attending BCT and AIT. PFC Murphy enlisted in the MAARNG at the age of 41. She exceeded her peers, was selected as Soldier of the Month and presented with the first Bulldog Leadership Award given at Fort Lee, VA. She earned an Army Achievement Medal (AAM) for her commitment to excellence. PFC Murphy received a second AAM in her second phase of training by achieving a 290 on her APFT.

>> NEW YORK

A National Geographic program that aired on April 27 was made with the help of the New York

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



TN Guard Soldiers remove debris from a road in Lafayette, TN, after a tornado ravaged the town in February.



::HELPING HAND:: Missouri National Guard's 70th Troop Command fords a crossing near Piedmont, MO, on March 19, while providing support to civilian authorities in the wake of Midwest storms.

© JOHN QUINN

continued from page 18

Company supported state and local law enforcement agencies at traffic control points.

In Arkansas, Guard Soldiers aided victims of a devastating tornado that touched down in Atkins. Arkansas National Guard troops from the 142nd Fires Brigade were called out late Feb. 5 and reported to disaster sites early on Feb. 6.

The Soldiers provided a 5,000-gallon water truck to Clinton, as well as two 500-gallon water trailers and a generator to the town of Mountain View. Guard aviation assets provided aerial reconnaissance for Gov. Mike Beebe and the state's Department of Emergency Management. Twenty-eight Guard Soldiers performed search-and-rescue missions in Atkins and aided with cleanup missions.

The Tennessee National Guard was operating five UH-60s in aerial assessment missions. In addition,

a hospital in Hartsville. Up to 150 Guard members were also tasked to support debris removal operations in Macon, Trousdale and Sumner counties.

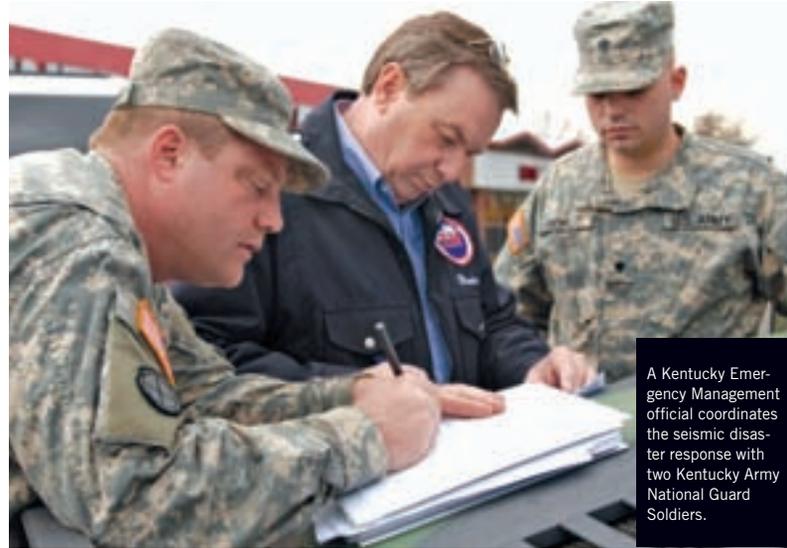
EARTHQUAKE

By David Altom, courtesy of the Kentucky Army National Guard

THE KENTUCKY Division of Emergency Management (KYEM) activated the State Emergency Operations Center in Frankfort on April 18 in response to the earthquake that woke Kentuckians throughout the state.

Thanks to a recent training exercise, Kentucky National Guard troops across the state are prepared to respond in the case of severe seismic damage.

"The timing of this morning's earthquake is remarkable," said MG Edward Tonini, Kentucky's Adjutant General, the day of the



A Kentucky Emergency Management official coordinates the seismic disaster response with two Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers.

our ability to communicate and cooperate with local authorities in responding to such an emergency."

"The Kentucky Guard has never been better poised to respond to an earthquake," Gov. Steve Beshear said. "I've seen the extent of their training and have the fullest confidence in their ability to do their job. Our Citizen-Soldiers have a long history of helping their fellow Kentuckians, and they stand ready to do so again."

Lori King, Kentucky's Earthquake Program Manager said, "We are extremely fortunate that nobody was injured, and only minor damages have been reported. This should be a wake-up call to remind us that earthquakes can and do occur at any time and are unpredictable. As with any disaster, we should be aware, be prepared, have a plan and have an emergency kit."

Several local and state catastrophic-planning workshops have been held in recent months. The Kentucky Earthquake Program's priorities are to maintain public awareness of earthquake risk as well as readiness among agencies.

The Kentucky National Guard conducted its seismic exercise during the first week of March. Based on a simulated 7.5 Richter-scale magnitude earthquake along the

"The Kentucky Guard has never been better poised to respond to an earthquake. I've seen the extent of their training and have the fullest confidence in their ability to do their job."

>> Gov. Steve Beshear

New Madrid fault, the simulation tested both Army and Air National Guard response capabilities. Overall direction was provided by the Kentucky National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters in Frankfort, deploying military police, medical, logistical, communications and special operations teams to 24 counties across the state. Kentucky Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from Frankfort and Air National Guard C-130 Hercules air transports from Louisville provided airlift support. **GX**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD / SFC MIRO HOLLORAN



A Red Cross volunteer provides lunch to a Tennessee Guard Soldier in Lafayette, TN. Guard units from across the state aided in the cleanup and rebuilding effort throughout Macon County.

24 Guard Soldiers were supporting civilian emergency response agencies with debris removal. Many were operating from a support base and civilian shelter at the Lafayette Armory.

Additional Tennessee Guard Soldiers were slated to supply emergency power for the Red Boiling Springs Water System and

quake. "Last month, the Kentucky National Guard conducted a highly successful five-day seismic exercise involving more than 300 troops from across the state. We tested all facets of a true seismic disaster, including the rapid airlift of emergency supplies, equipment and personnel to communities in western Kentucky. We also tested

4 Stars



NEW DEFENSE ACT ADDS NEW RANK, RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE NATIONAL GUARD

By Heather G. Allen and SPC Miko Holloran

WASHINGTON, DC—President George Bush signed the National Guard Empowerment Act as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on Jan. 28, which has raised the position of chief of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) from three to four stars.

What does this mean exactly? Here are the highlights of the NDAA:

> The chief is now the principal advisor on National Guard issues to the defense secretary through the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

> NGB now coordinates, on behalf of the Pentagon, with state adjutants general, federal agencies and combat commands. This involves negotiating personnel, budgets and operations.

> The number of flag officer positions in combat commands is increased to five, making the quota a total of 15 officers. This makes room for the Guard to receive top assignments, such as the deputy commander position of U.S. Northern Command.

> A bipartisan council of governors advises the defense secretary, the Department of Homeland Security and others on National Guard matters.

> The chief can now serve until age 68 instead of the previous age of 64.

> NGB is now a joint activity of the Department of Defense, as opposed to its previous designation as a joint bureau of the Army and the Air Force.

> Service members gain a 3.5 percent pay raise, and the act includes the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act to improve support for wounded service members and their

families, including providing more treatment closer to home.

> \$650 million is now authorized for miscellaneous equipment for the Army National Guard.

> The end strength of the Army National Guard is increased from 350,000 to 351,300.

A driving force behind many of the changes in the NDAA is the transformation of the National

As a four-star general officer, the chief of NGB will now be able to work one-on-one with the other four-star generals in the other branches of the military. This elevation of status will afford greater visibility of National Guard issues throughout all branches of the military.”

>> CSM David Hudson

Guard from a Cold War strategic reserve to today's operational reserve. GX spoke with CSM David Hudson, Senior Enlisted Advisor, NGB, to gain a little more perspective on this. Here's what he had to say:

“As a four-star general officer, the chief of NGB will now be able to work one-on-one with the other four-star generals in the other branches of the military. This

elevation of status will afford greater visibility of National Guard issues throughout all branches of the military.

“Another significant factor associated with the NDAA is that NGB is now identified as a joint activity. This affords National Guard officers serving in our joint headquarters credit for that joint duty. It is one step closer to making our officer cadre eligible to move into the highest levels of the military hierarchy.

“From the enlisted perspective, the senior enlisted leader for the National Guard Bureau will now serve at the four-star nominative level. This will afford the NGB senior enlisted advisor the ability and the opportunity to work directly with other four-star nominative senior enlisted personnel from our other military branches, again providing a more direct line of communication on National Guard specific issues.”

Additionally, we asked LTG Clyde A. Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard, what he thought about this momentous change. Here are his thoughts:

“The creation of a National Guard four-star general officer brings a lot of advantages to the table as an advocate for our Citizen-Soldiers. The new billet provides greater visibility for National Guard issues at the highest levels of the Department of Defense and ensures senior leaders are well advised regarding our unique capabilities as experts in homeland security missions.”

It will be exciting to see how this all shakes out throughout the coming years. Regardless, the Guard continues to stand strong in the national spotlight. **GX**



VICTORY MAP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. The program focused on July 7, 1944, when 4,000 Japanese soldiers launched the largest suicide charge of WWII against the New York National Guard's 105th Infantry Regiment during the fight for the Island of Saipan. The museum provided the production team with photographs and oral histories made by veterans of the 105th, and also put them in touch with survivors of the battle. The Island of Saipan, within bombing range of the very valuable target of Japan, was key to an American victory in the Pacific.

>> OREGON

Soldiers of the 41st Special Troops Battalion trained with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team on April 5 at Camp Withycombe. The SWAT team shared their hand-to-hand combat, room clearing and handling procedure training with the deploying unit. The 41st STB is scheduled to deploy to Iraq in 2009. Once they are in country, the 41st STB will take part in protection operations, civil support and security.

>> SOUTH DAKOTA

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation received orders to deploy for a 12-month tour in support of NATO's Kosovo Force (K-FOR). The 21 Soldiers who will deploy are pilots, flight medics, crew chiefs and flight operations specialists. The unit will provide medical evacuation support to units throughout Kosovo by responding with the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and onboard medical specialists.

>> TENNESSEE

Two Veterans of OIF have received recognition for the combat they experienced more than two years ago. SFC Samuel J. Randall III and SFC Stephen Kamppi served with the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



Sens. Chuck Hagel, Joe Biden and John Kerry stand with members of the AZARNG who came to their rescue when their helicopter had to land due to blizzard conditions.

To the Rescue

"The troops were terrific as always ... they couldn't have been more professional, more skilled or more committed to what they're doing there." >> Sen. John Kerry

ARIZONA GUARD RESCUES SENATORS STUCK IN BLIZZARD

By MAJ John Bozicevic, Arizona National Guard

MEHTAR LAM, AFGHANISTAN—When a helicopter carrying three senior U.S. senators was forced to make an emergency landing Feb. 23 due to a blizzard in the mountains of Afghanistan, Soldiers of the Arizona Army National Guard's (AZARNG) 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, responded to secure the site and evacuate Senators

John Kerry (D-MA), Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE).

The D Company platoon, led by 1LT Dennis Chamberlain of Gilbert, AZ, along with service members of Combined Joint Task Force-82, made the treacherous cross-country journey from Bagram Airfield to their rendezvous in less than an hour after receiving notice of the downed aircraft.

"The weather was our biggest adversary," 1LT Chamberlain told

GX. "We moved out slowly and methodically. If we had crashed or had a problem with our convoy, it would have delayed our response time even more. 'Slow is smooth and smooth is fast' is a saying in the infantry, and this mission was no different than any other."

1LT Chamberlain's men are no strangers to adversity. Since arriving in Afghanistan 11 months ago, the platoon has been in more than 100 enemy engagements, primarily in Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa Province, where they had just recently returned after conducting numerous missions.

The unit was just beginning to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere at Bagram when they received the order to move again. Initially, the Soldiers were unaware of the VIP status of the helicopter passengers.

SSG Chris Dempsey of Yuma, AZ, who was conducting inventories in the platoon office when the call came, was concerned about the pilots and crews.

"They had come to our aid so many times when we were pinned down by enemy fire," SSG Dempsey said. "Now it was time to return the favor."

When the platoon arrived at the site, one squad immediately convoyed the senators back to base, while the rest of the platoon endured the bitter winds, freezing rain and snow for more than 15 hours through the night. The Soldiers secured the helicopters and crews until relief could arrive the following day.

"The troops were terrific as always," Sen. Kerry said. "We were caught in a situation where the weather closed in on us really quick: It went blind pretty fast, and that's a tough terrain."

"They couldn't have been more professional, more skilled or more committed to what they're doing there," he continued. "We had a great talk

about their mission. It was a privilege to meet them, and all of us are determined to keep supporting the National Guard in the Senate the way they supported us in the mountains of Afghanistan."

Due to the weather and limited visibility, finding a route to the downed aircraft proved tough, but SSG William McClain of Peoria, AZ, led the way.

"With only a grid to go by, he led us," SSG Dempsey said. "As the snow fell to the point where you could barely see the vehicle in front of you, he stayed on course. When the road turned into no more than a trail, he plowed through. As other vehicles fell to the wayside, he kept going, and when the trail ended, he was the one who walked the rest of the way to the downed crews."

SSG McClain's perseverance and guidance paid off, resulting in another highly successful mission accomplished by D Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, Arizona National Guard. **GX**



Helicopters carrying Sens. John Kerry, Chuck Hagel, and Joe Biden land in the Afghanistan mountains during a severe snowstorm.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEN. JOHN KERRY'S OFFICE

Instant Information

PENTAGON CHANNEL'S PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

By LTC Francisco Hamm

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Pentagon Channel recently expanded its means of distribution by adding an FTP (File Transfer Protocol) site to its PentagonChannel.mil Web site.

THE PENTAGON CHANNEL FTP site consists of broadcast quality, MPEG-2, Dolby-Digital audio files available for download. Available programs include: "All Hands," "Army Newswatch," "Fit For Duty," "RECON," "The American Veteran," "The Grill Sergeants" and "Today's Air Force." Users can access the site through an FTP Web banner on the main page of the PentagonChannel.mil Web site.

"The Pentagon Channel has been attending PEG (public, educational, government) Channel conferences for the last three years," said Brian Natwick, general manager of the Pentagon Channel. "There is a real need for PEGs to obtain programming in this manner. We are pleased to offer them this service, which will assist us in getting our programming distributed as well as help them service their community."

Previously the only way to obtain broadcast quality programming from the Pentagon Channel was through an AMC-1 satellite feed.

"We are thrilled by the Pentagon Channel's creation of an FTP site for PEG access," said Elizabeth Beaty, Executive Director of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA). "Their appreciation for and response to the needs of NATOA members is a testament

to the Pentagon Channel's commitment to the distribution of quality community programming, and we applaud them for these efforts.

"This initiative is well-aligned with NATOA's mission to support and serve the communications interests and needs of local governments," Beaty continued, "and we congratulate the Pentagon Channel for being on the forefront of the electronic delivery of programming."

The site, which allows previews of the programming upon entering, requires an email address and password to download. Signing up is quick, easy and free to all interested parties. Users can also sign up for RSS feeds, making it possible to keep up with new show

"There is a real need for PEGs to obtain programming in this manner. We are pleased to offer them this service, which will assist us in getting our programming distributed as well as help them service their community."

>> Brian Natwick, general manager of the Pentagon Channel

uploads in an automated fashion. Each posted program is roughly 30 minutes long and does not contain a time stamp or crawl to avoid time-sensitive material.

The Pentagon Channel

About the Pentagon Channel

The Pentagon Channel, the Department of Defense's satellite television channel, broadcasts military news and information for and about the 2.6 million members of the U.S. Armed Forces—Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve. Broadcasting 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the Pentagon Channel helps ensure that U.S. forces remain the best informed in the world.

Today, the Pentagon Channel is available on base to more than 1.3 million service members who live and work on more than 355 military bases, camps and installations in the United States. The channel is also available to the 800,000 service members and their families serving overseas in 178 countries via the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS).

The Pentagon Channel reaches more than 13 million households through commercial distribution on satellite and cable systems nationwide. DISH Network, Verizon FiOS and divisions of Comcast, Time Warner, Cox, Charter, Mediacom, RCN, Armstrong, Midcontinent, Knology, GCI and a number of smaller cable companies and local access channels in communities around the country carry the Pentagon Channel.



VICTORY MAP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

2/278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Iraq in 2004 and 2005. Recently, each Soldier was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB).

>> UTAH

Utah Soldiers returned from northern Iraq on April 17. The 116th Engineer Company drove a quarter of a million miles, driving armored vehicles as a security shield around overland convoys across an area about the size of Pennsylvania. The unit also distributed thousands of dollars worth of humanitarian and educational supplies in two villages in northern Iraq last fall. As they landed in Salt Lake City, the two commercial jets with 140 Citizen-Soldiers were showered with water cannons.

>> WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Washington Nationals were greeted by the D.C. National Guard at the new Nationals' Park on March 30, the inaugural game of the stadium. Guard members unfurled two giant American flags over the field as the crowd of 41,888 fans jumped to their feet, clapping and cheering on the 100 Soldiers and Airmen. The Nationals beat the Atlanta Braves 3-2.

>> CAMP TAJI, IRAQ

The 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of the Louisiana National Guard arrived at Camp Taji April 16. The unit will take over responsibility for the battle space currently controlled by the Alabama National Guard's 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

Soldiers of 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (an ALARNG unit deployed in support of OIF) received cards and treats from Atlanta's Cub Scout Pack 236. They also sent a large "battle flag" belonging to Den 5. The boys mailed the flag in hopes of it being flown over Iraq, lowered and signed by the Soldiers of 1103rd and mailed back. **GX**

New Standards For Medical Data

By Bill Snethen

During the first Gulf War, patient care on the battlefield was documented on paper field medical cards that rarely accompanied the injured to the next level of care, let alone made it into the Soldier's permanent medical record. As a result, wounded Soldiers returned to the United States with undocumented injuries and care, causing them to have difficulty accessing their benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 1997, presidential and congressional mandates called for a medical tracking system and a lifelong electronic medical record (EMR) for all Soldiers. The result was the Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4), an electronic medical records program. Work on MC4 began in 1999 by integrating state-of-the-art hardware and software.

THE SYSTEM IN ACTION

The events of 9/11 created an immediate need for the MC4 system, and in 2003, it was rushed to the battlefield, giving providers the first opportunity to electronically document health care. Commanders began incorporating it into their units' laptops and onto handheld devices.

Today, units have moved past simply using the programs to enter data, as methods are being developed to simplify the data entry process. One example of a unit that is maximizing use of MC4 is Task Force (TF) 146 Multifunctional Medical Battalion (MMB).

INCOMPLETE RECORDS

When TF 146 arrived in Iraq in October 2006, the commanders discovered medical documentation was missing reports at the battalion's level I and II medical facilities. "Within our first month in Iraq, we discovered medical providers only entered approximately 50 percent of the medical care performed into MC4," said LTC Darlene McCurdy, TF 146 commander.

The incomplete and inaccurate

data seriously affected the quality of accurate medical data. LTC McCurdy and her chief of clinical operations, CPT Karen Sims, understood that it was imperative for providers to document all the care given to Soldiers so the battalion could successfully manage its medical resources.

One factor TF 146 discovered was that many medical providers in the units resisted using laptops to document treatments. Their argument was that electronic documentation took too much time—and this was time taken away from caring for patients.

To overcome the provider resistance, meetings were held at every location within the area of responsibility (AOR) to discuss the importance of electronically documenting the patient data.

"The face-to-face meetings proved to be very important, since it showed the providers and local commanders the importance of EMRs," LTC McCurdy said.

CHANGING THE PROCESS

As clinical operations team members examined the quality

of EMRs, they discovered the crux of the problem was that providers were not electronically capturing the majority of ancillary services administered, causing large information gaps in the amount of care MTFs provided. There was little doubt this needed to be changed.

As members of TF 146 met with providers at MTFs, they also examined the capabilities of the MC4 systems and monitored how the providers entered data. Once the observations and best methods were compiled, TF 146 prescribed standard operating procedures to the MTFs. This included documentation for outpatient care, a patient category list of the most frequent treatments throughout the AOR and guidance on the closure of EMRs.

"Through our efforts, we discovered TF 146 unleashed greater potential for the MC4 system in a deployed environment. We uncovered more efficient methods of using the system and added new tools, which in turn, improved our methods of reporting and tracking data," LTC McCurdy said.

The TF 146 communication section played a vital role in this process. They standardized the data as providers followed the new mandates and used the monitoring tool to eliminate discrepancies. The uniform information offered another benefit: improved medical surveillance data for the five area support medical company commanders.

The information populated databases, such as the Theater Medical Data Server and the Joint Medical Workstation, which gave commanders a more accurate view of needs and activities within the AOR. The daily and weekly roll-up reports offered the full picture, including complete patient, facility and provider data to

"The roll-up surveillance reports are where we really see the fruit of the battalion's efforts."

>> LTC Darlene McCurdy, on the benefits of a uniform medical data system.



make better-informed decisions.

"By having everyone enter the medical data in a uniform method, the surveillance reports improved dramatically," LTC McCurdy said. "The roll-up surveillance reports are where we really see the fruit of the battalion's efforts."

LTC McCurdy continued, "We can analyze trends for specific locations based on injuries and demographics. We can also report the number of U.S. Soldiers treated in our facilities compared to local Department of Defense employees and contractors as well as Iraqi citizens."

CALLING IN THE EXPERTS

As TF 146 initially embarked on the mission of quality control, the battalion commander realized that TF 146 needed some assistance. She turned to the resident experts—the deployed MC4 technical support team—who aided the brigade with the details of the programs within the MC4 systems.

MC4's technical support team traveled to every MTF with TF 146's clinical operations group to help address concerns from providers and commanders as well as handle problems with the MC4 systems

BRIEFING

THE EVENTS of 9/11 created an immediate need for the MC4 system, and in 2003, it was rushed to the battlefield, giving providers the first opportunity to electronically document health care. Commanders began incorporating it into their units' laptops and onto handheld devices.

and network. As the trainers traveled to the MTFs, they worked with the providers to create templates to ease the use of the system and to provide additional training.

TRYING OUT THE "WHAT IFS"

"TF 146 received training on the MC4 system before we deployed, and it set the foundation for our expectations of what the system was meant to do," LTC McCurdy said. "Our accomplishments were brought about by needs-based, on-the-job training."

If the task could be accomplished, then it was implemented throughout the battalion. "If a task did not work, we would contact MC4 support personnel to find a solution," LTC McCurdy said. "This is how we ensured every aspect of medical encounters was captured in an EMR."

"We viewed the MC4 support personnel as a valuable extension of the battalion," LTC McCurdy said. That is what has meant the most to us—the face-to-face support in the 'foxhole' with us."

SUCCESSFUL IMPROVEMENTS

There is no question that TF 146 was successful in its efforts to improve the use of MC4. "Ten months after we began the process to improve the quality of medical data collected, more than 90 percent of the patient information that originated from our medical facilities was captured within the MC4 system, and more than 80 percent of our patient visits were recorded in EMRs," LTC McCurdy said.

"The difference in how medical care is recorded hasn't reached the attention of the average Soldier yet," LTC McCurdy said. "I expect they'll notice the efforts made by medical providers to properly document electronic health records when they are applying for VA medical benefits years from now." **GX**

For more information about MC4, please visit: www.mc4.army.mil.



SOLEMNLY SWEAR: BG Margaret S. Washburn takes the oath of office, administered by MG R. Martin Umbarger.

Making History

INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD APPOINTS ITS FIRST FEMALE GO

By SPC William E. Henry, INARNG

THE NORMAL ATMOSPHERE of the Combined Support Maintenance Shop (CSMS) 1 was masked by the aroma of catered food and the sounds of the 38th Infantry Division (ID) Band Combo playing melodies over the chattering people congregated inside. A garrison American flag made a perfect stage backdrop for the event about to unfold.

It was there on Dec. 2 that COL Margaret S. Washburn was formally promoted in the presence of approximately 200 spectators to brigadier general, the first female general officer in the Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG).

This pivotal event in the history of the Indiana National Guard was addressed by the Indiana Adjutant General, MG R. Martin Umbarger, who spoke of the importance of this promotion and the significance of female Soldiers in the Indiana National Guard.

"This is historic, the first female general officer in the Indiana National Guard," he later added. "We would be combat ineffective without our female Soldiers."

BG Washburn, a resident of Westfield, IN, started her military career in 1978, when she was commissioned as a 2LT in the INARNG. Twenty-eight at the time, BG Washburn said that when she was first commissioned, she didn't think

she would ever be a general. "I wasn't sure if I'd ever make it past captain."

On being the first female general in the Indiana National Guard, she said, "I believe this opportunity is open to anyone who is qualified to compete for this position. The opportunity is there."

Now BG Washburn will be available for appointment to the upper echelons of the Indiana National Guard. Only a select number of positions for general officers are available in the Army National Guard.

BG Washburn has many years of command background, from company to brigade levels, and said she will use her established leadership skills to assist the

adjutant general in any position in which she may be placed, stating, "I will rely on my experience and knowledge to further his initiatives." **GX**

"I believe this opportunity is open to anyone who is qualified to compete for this position."

>> BG Margaret S. Washburn, on her historic appointment as general officer of the Indiana National Guard.

Man OF THE Moment

MINNESOTA SOLDIER
RECEIVES PURPLE HEART
IN HOMETOWN CEREMONY

Story and photos by Keith Kawasaki

SLEEPY EYE, MN—During a special “Thank You to the Troops” ceremony held in his small hometown of Sleepy Eye on Sept. 23, SPC Robert Sprenger received the Purple Heart for wounds sustained while serving with the 1/34th “Red Bull” Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On March 19, 2007, SPC Sprenger was a gunner on a combat logistics patrol, escorting essential supplies, headed southbound in Iraq out of Logistics Support Area (LSA) Anaconda toward LSA Adder. Along Military Supply Route (MSR) Tampa, SPC Sprenger’s vehicle was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), which both ignited and destroyed the vehicle.

Initially unable to escape, SPC Sprenger sustained second- and third-degree burns to his legs, right arm and face—over 35 percent of his body. Avoiding panic and with an iron will, SPC Sprenger managed to break himself free of the vehicle and was soon evacuated to Balad. From there, SPC Sprenger was quickly flown to Landstuhl Army Hospital in Germany, then on to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX.

Just recently, SPC Sprenger was able to return home to Sleepy



Eye after months of surgeries and therapy.

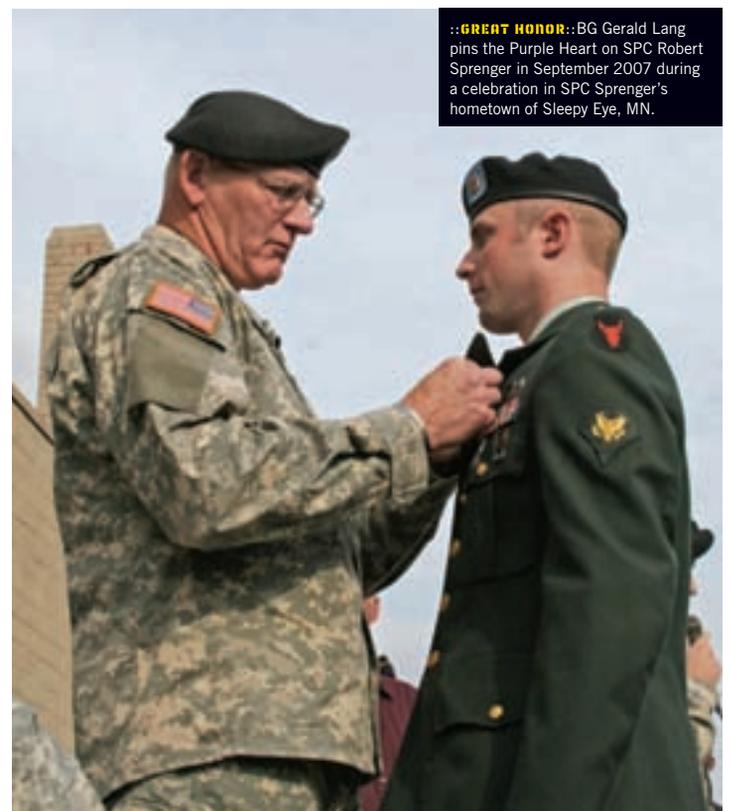
Sixteen other Red Bulls from Sleepy Eye deployed with SPC Sprenger for the historic 16-month mission—the longest deployment of any military force since WWII. All 17 heroes have returned home.

The Sept. 23 event celebrated the sacrifice and courage of these Citizen-Soldiers, as well as all who serve or have served from the town—which includes much of its population.

A WARM RECEPTION

Nick Mack, brother of returned Sleepy Eye Red Bull SGT Clint Michael Mack, is a former Marine sergeant who attended the event.

“I have a lot more in common



:: GREAT HONOR :: BG Gerald Lang pins the Purple Heart on SPC Robert Sprenger in September 2007 during a celebration in SPC Sprenger’s hometown of Sleepy Eye, MN.

“[Reintegration] has been good. Being back home here with [everyone’s] support has been good. I’m glad to be home.”

>> SPC Robert Sprenger, 1/34th “Red Bull” Brigade Combat Team



Citizens of Sleepy Eye gather to honor Soldiers and Veterans in September 2007, including SPC Robert Sprenger, who earned the Purple Heart while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“To be one of the few people to wear [the Purple Heart], it’s just amazing. It hasn’t quite hit me yet. It’s still a big deal, especially in the city of Sleepy Eye, too.”

>> SPC Robert Sprenger, 1/34th “Red Bull” Brigade Combat Team

A model military mother, Vicky Sprenger rallied support and prayers for her son and his fellow Red Bulls throughout the deployment. When her son was sent to Brooke Army Medical Center, she headed there immediately.

“You hurt when they hurt,” Vicky said. “But, it makes you a stronger person. As a mother, when you have to step up, you step up. We spent day after day, hour after hour together in a little room apartment for two-and-a-half months; and we never argued, and we had some wonderful moments together.”

“One thing you learn when you go to San Antonio, you just appreciate the military,” she continued. “It’s just so unbelievable. It’s amazing what they do for those Soldiers. We don’t do enough around here.”

“It’s amazing,” concluded SPC Sprenger, commenting on his new honor. “To be one of the few people to wear [the Purple Heart], it’s just amazing. It hasn’t quite hit me yet. It’s still a big deal, especially in the city of Sleepy Eye, too.”

To catch up on the Red Bulls’ deployment, check out the entire year of coverage from 2006 to 2007, available for download on www.GXonline.com. **GX**

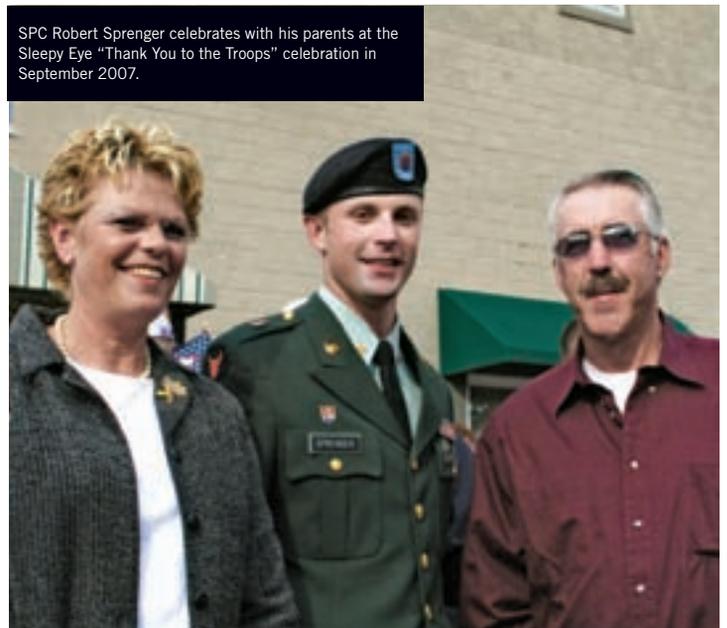
with him [SGT Clint Mack] now,” Nick Mack told *GX*. “Now, I can talk to him about VA stuff. His acronyms are a little different. But there’s a lot of carryover. He doesn’t even seem like he really skipped a beat. It really threw me for a loop when I came back. He doesn’t seem like he’s having much of a problem at all. [He and his fiancée] are getting married next month.

“I never got really much of a ‘thank you’ when I got back with the Marines,” Mack continued, commenting on the day’s ceremony. “The National Guard, these guys are part of the community. Having them serve and go away really put a ripple in Sleepy Eye, much more than that of the one’s and two’s of other branches. So, I’m coming here to join in on the Veterans stuff.”

Just about all of Sleepy Eye shut down for the ceremony; hundreds of civilians and Veterans packed outside the VFW hall located in the center of town. Yellow ribbons were tied to each lamppost in town; American Flags were staked up and down the sidewalk, with banners posted reading “We Support You” and “Thanks” painted with Red Bull logos.

“I’m pretty excited,” SPC Sprenger said. “It’s such a good turnout and the support has always been great. [Reintegration] has been good. Being back home here with [everyone’s] support has been good. I’m glad to be home. [My mom] has been there with me through everything. She flew down to San Antonio and was with me there for two months.”

SPC Robert Sprenger celebrates with his parents at the Sleepy Eye “Thank You to the Troops” celebration in September 2007.



IN REAL TIME

FOLLOWING THE BOWIE BRIGADE

By MAJ Craig Heathscott



:::FIREFIGHT::: Soldiers of the 39th IBCT simulate a firefight while training in Kuwait.

“This is some of the most realistic training I’ve ever seen in the Army.”

>> MSG Phillip Powers, combat veteran

CAMP SHELBY, MS—As they passed through the gates at Camp Shelby in January, the Soldiers of Arkansas’ 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) were immediately reminded of what lay in their future—a trip to Iraq. But before they could get there, the “Bowie Brigade” had to go through heavy training. Realistic training.

A TASTE OF REALISM

Designed to put Soldiers in the correct mind-set, Theater Immersion Training places them in an environment similar to Iraq or Afghanistan. At Camp Shelby, Soldiers live in Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), interact with real Iraqis, patrol and work in replica Iraqi villages or towns. The training is meant to be as close to the real thing as possible, including the sound of gunfire, thick smoke and Arabic chants.

“This is some of the most realistic training I’ve ever seen in the Army,” said MSG Phillip Powers, Observer Controller (OC) and combat veteran. “These Soldiers will leave here fully prepared to do their mission, do it well and come home safe.”

Even the community gets

involved: During the exercise, local college students, citizens and Iraqi nationals play the roles of Iraqi citizens.

“I’m supporting my family in Iraq,” said one Iraqi national, who requested anonymity. “By helping American Soldiers, I help my family in Iraq. We make this real for their training. We want to help the American Soldier because he or she is helping Iraq to be a better place.”

PREPARING FOR DEPLOYMENT

As training ended, members of the 39th looked back on what they had learned. In five months, the Soldiers had fired more than 3.4 million rounds of ammunition, trained more than 2,500 drivers, driven tens of thousands of miles

“WE’VE SAID ALL ALONG THAT THE ROAD HOME GOES THROUGH BAGHDAD, AND WE’VE ARRIVED.”

>> CPT Jerod Burns, ARARNG

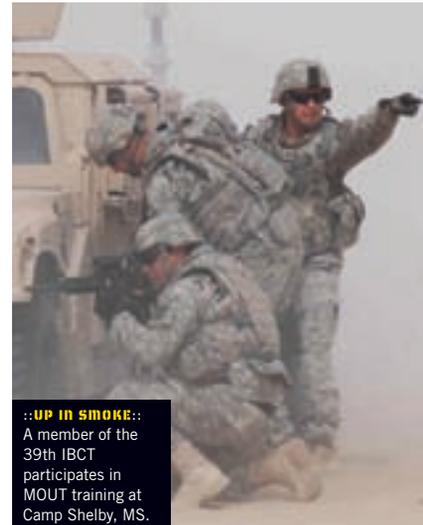
and gained an appreciation of the Arab culture.

At the mobilization ceremony, COL Kendall Penn, 39th brigade commander, told the audience: “Just a few months ago, these Soldiers were students, teachers, police officers, bankers, CEOs and a myriad of other occupations. Today, they stand before you as Soldiers—trained, professional forces, capable of carrying the fight to the enemy, defeating them and returning home victorious.”

Segments of Arkansas’ 39th IBCT then moved forward to Kuwait. The first portion of the brigade, known as the “advance team,” arrived in the country to ready facilities.

The rest of the troops flew from Mississippi into Kuwait, where they spent two weeks processing into the Central Command theater of operations.

The 39th Brigade’s movement to Kuwait and Iraq brings the number of Arkansas National Guard Soldiers deployed to approximately 3,150. Elements of the 871st Troop Command and the Headquarters Company of the 142nd Fire Brigade are also still in Iraq.



:::UP IN SMOKE::: A member of the 39th IBCT participates in MOUT training at Camp Shelby, MS.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

In Baghdad, the bright blue and red colors of Task Force Bowie marked the transition of authority between the 151st Regional Support Group and the 39th IBCT at Camp Victory. The shift ended the more than six months of training for the Arkansas Soldiers and one year of service in theater for their Massachusetts National Guard counterparts.

The mission is a dynamic, 24/7 operation focused on protecting the largest base camp in Iraq. It includes manning guard towers and entry control points, as well as controlling the outside battle space in order to defend the Victory Base Complex. Additionally, the mission involves Civil Military Operations, in which Soldiers work with local Iraqi citizens to improve quality of life.

As command of Camp Victory was transferred, COL Callahan noted: “I have no doubt [COL Penn and staff] will be successful in this

MAJ CRAIG HEATHSCOTT

[SOLDIER PROFILE]

Black Magic Men

2ND PLATOON, AKA "BAD VOODOO PLATOON," COMPANY B,
1/160TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, CALIFORNIA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Currently deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, **GX** interviewed platoon members during train up at Camp Shelby, MS.

NAME: CPL Anthony Vail

AGE: 22

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO JOIN THE GUARD?

I originally joined the Army Reserve. A bunch of my friends joined the Guard. They joined the infantry. That seemed more like something I wanted to do. I was in transportation. So, I transferred. I was always interested in the military. I wanted to go to college, too. I could do both [in the Guard].

WHAT LED YOU TO CHOOSE INFANTRY?

They're the guys always out there fighting. I wanted to be out there on the front lines, you know? This is where the exciting stuff is.

HAVE YOU BEEN DEPLOYED?

The unit I joined was already deployed. So, they had about 100 replacements go, and I was only there for about four months. I was in Iraq.

WHAT IS YOUR CIVILIAN JOB?

I was going to school. I worked in a brewery for the last six months.

Check out Bad Voodoo's new Web site at www.BadVoodooPlatoon.com for current news, photos and video.

mission just as my Soldiers made this a successful mission. We made a difference here, not only in defending the base, but in helping the Iraqi people rebuild a new Iraq."

As the ceremony started, COL Callahan joined his CSM in retiring the unit's Task Force Lexington colors in order to make way for the new flag to be hoisted at base headquarters. Immediately following the casing of colors, the commander of the Bowie Brigade was joined by his CSM as they pulled the cover off their flag—the "uncasing" of their colors.

With his Task Force Bowie flag waving above, COL Penn addressed the crowd: "We've done a lot of training and preparation in finally getting boots on the ground here at [Camp] Victory. COL Callahan and his team fell in on a very complex mission—multi-services and multi-functions at the largest base camp in Iraq. We hope to pick up where he left off, and at the same time, be able to strive for continued improvements."

Though the ceremony was brief, the emotion it brought to the Soldiers was evident. The feelings between the nearly 150 Soldiers

::SYMBOL OF SUPPORT::
The daughter of a member of the 39th IBCT salutes the Soldiers as they deploy for training and Iraq.



were clearly in contrast—one group relieved; another anxious.

As for the 39th, they are eager to put their training to good use and begin putting the mission behind them.

"We've said all along that the road home goes through Baghdad, and we've arrived," CPT Jerod Burns said. "We own this place now." **GX**



KEITH KAWASAKI



SOLDIER SERVES COUNTRY AS MISS UTAH

By Camille Breland

ALTHOUGH SGT JILL STEVENS was not crowned Miss America on Jan. 26, she has definitely brought new attention and appreciation for the National Guard by making it to the semi-finals.

The 24-year-old from Kaysville, Utah, a medic in the Utah Army National Guard (UTARNG) graduat-

ed at the top of her class in nursing school; is a winning marathon runner; and served her country for a year in Afghanistan. She also participated in TLC's "Miss America Reality Check," a reality show that put all Miss America contestants in one house. Hosted by Michael Urie, the show was the first of its kind.

SGT Stevens continues to fight for her country and for the attribute

she believes in most—self-confidence. And with her Miss Utah win, she has the opportunity teach others about self-esteem.

She talks to high school students about confidence, telling them they can accomplish anything.

"Seeing that spark light up in [the students'] eyes, that they can do it—it's priceless," she said.

But for SGT Stevens, making a

"THIS IS MY 'DEPLOYMENT.' I HAVE GOTTEN MY ORDERS, AND I HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO MAKE THE MOST OF MY SITUATION. THIS IS MY 'COMBAT ZONE'—DODGING 'BULLETS' OF EVERY JUDGMENT THROWN AT YOU. THIS IS WHERE SELF-BELIEF BECOMES MY ARMOR."

difference in people's lives reached a new level when she was deployed to Afghanistan in 2004–2005.

She flew in Black Hawk helicopters and provided medical support for missions, working in a medical clinic where she took care of Soldiers.

On her time off, she helped organize the Afghanistan Orphanage Project, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to build a 1,000-bed orphanage outside Kabul, Afghanistan.

RUNNING WITH PRIDE

SGT Stevens needed a morale boost of her own during what she calls one of her greatest experiences in Afghanistan.

She was running in the inaugural Afghanistan marathon, and though she had run marathons before, this course was one of the roughest. It lapped five times around the military base near a deactivated minefield.

After about the third lap, she started slowing down. While

SGT RICHARD GRIMM, SSGC



::DEPLOYMENT ADVENTURES: Top: SGT Jill Stevens completes a marathon in Afghanistan. Far Right: SGT Stevens takes a break in front of a Chinook. Bottom Right: SGT Stevens gets a laugh from a child in Afghanistan.



fatigue and burn set in, the reality of the situation pushed her through.

“Here I was—a woman, running through a minefield in a country where women are defiled,” she said. “Feelings of anger, frustration and guilt came over me as I thought of how these women are treated.

“Then feelings of pride came ... [I was] proud to be an American woman and even more proud to be an American Soldier helping to fight for these women and their worth.”

She finished the marathon first in the women’s division and seventh overall.

Though it was her slowest time, she didn’t give up. “Every step, the thought of those beautiful women pushed me to go harder and not give up,” she said. “I did it for them.”

Her other defining moment in Afghanistan occurred as she left the country for the final time.

As she boarded the aircraft and waved goodbye to her local friends in the villages, they all blew kisses

and made “I love you” signals that she had taught them.

She remembers trying to hold back tears and thinking, “Soldiers don’t cry, right?”

But she couldn’t keep them from flowing with what happened next.

As the aircraft took off, SGT Stevens’ commander whispered for her to look out at the Afghans—they were waving an American flag.

“There they were, these war-torn people waving an American flag in honor of what we did for them.

“I was not only proud to be a Soldier at that moment, but proud to be an American!” she said. “We’re making a difference over there!”

A NEW DEPLOYMENT

Back in the states, she finished nursing school at Southern Utah University on a leadership

scholarship and gave in to her friends’ and family’s persistence to try a pageant.

She admits she was cautious at first, but after learning more about the Miss America program, she realized how similar it was to the Army.

Both are about serving your country and standing up for what you believe in, she said.

“This is my ‘deployment,’ ” she said of her reign as Miss Utah. “I have gotten my orders, and I have been trained to make the most of my situation. This is my ‘combat zone’—dodging ‘bullets’ of every judgment thrown at you. This is where self-belief becomes my armor.”

While she was honored to participate in the Miss America pageant, it wasn’t her ultimate goal. When she finishes her duties as Miss Utah, she plans to become an officer and Flight Nurse for the Army National Guard and continue to make a difference in people’s lives.

“This life is your opportunity, your one chance to show what you are capable of—and I try to do that in all I do,” she said. **GX**



::HARD AT WORK:: SPC Adrian Delos Santos examines a concrete brow ditch for imperfections. The ditch will help to redirect water runoff. SPC Santos was working on the U.S./Mexican border in support of Operation Jump Start in April.



“We completed the task on ‘Russian Hill’ in three days—even with some Soldiers doing on-the-job-training.”

>> SSG Lester Delos Reyes, HIARNG

Securing the Border

▶ HAWAII ENGINEERS EXCEED GOALS DURING OPERATION JUMP START

By SPC Matthew H. Oda

MAUI, HI—More than 80 Soldiers from the Hawaii Army National Guard’s 230th Engineer Company helped support California’s Operation Jump Start (OJS) south-west border mission in April.

As part of the president’s Homeland Security initiative, OJS uses National Guard troops to support U.S. Customs and Border Patrol in their mission to prevent illegal crossing and drug trafficking across Mexican borders.

The Maui-headquartered engineer unit worked out of San Diego

and was attached to Task Force Steel Castle—the California National Guard’s engineering slice of OJS.

The Hawaii engineers, who have a detachment on Oahu, a platoon on Molokai, two Soldiers from the big island of Hawaii and one from Lanai, made the round-trip to San Diego aboard an Air Force C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft.

Engineering missions included retrofitting an existing fence, repositioning electrical boxes and making a drainage ditch.

“They modified the angle of the poles,” said SSG Jason Jacinto, the non-commissioned officer-in-

charge (NCOIC) of the fence and the electrical box project, “and [they also] put clips on webbed sheeting to reinforce the fence.”

“Each day, we tried to do about 30 fence lines, which equal about 300 feet a day,” said SPC Richard Galo, a retrofitting and supporting fence supervisor, and a seven-year Guard member from Maui. “It took us about four days to complete our project.

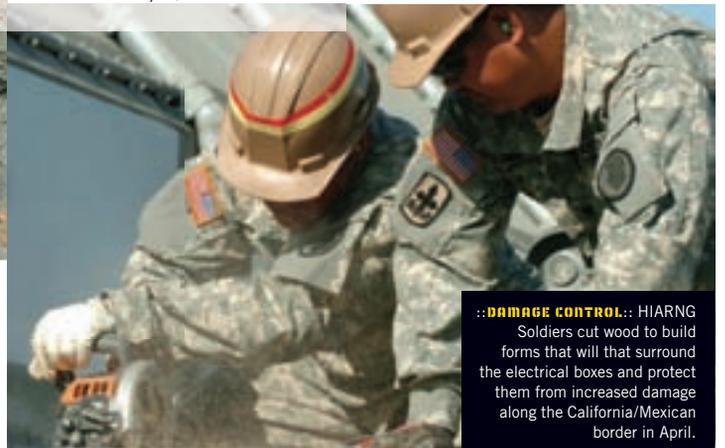
“The TF-Steel Castle personnel overseeing the project were im-

pressed with our productivity.”

“Our team also rebuilt the electrical boxes along the fence line,” said SSG Jacinto, a 15-year Guard veteran from Maui. “We raised the boxes a foot above ground to make them visible when the graders passed them. We also built concrete platforms around the boxes to protect them from damage. TF-Steel Castle expectations were about 20 platforms a day; instead, we did 28 of them while they were there and expect to do three more today.”

SSG Lester Delos Reyes, brow ditch project NCOIC, said, “My team made a brow ditch on one of the hills by digging a long ditch and coating it with concrete to redirect the water to a culvert instead of running down the hills and causing potential damage to the surrounding areas.

“We completed the task on ‘Russian Hill’ in three days [ahead of schedule]—even with some



::DAMAGE CONTROL:: HIARNG Soldiers cut wood to build forms that will surround the electrical boxes and protect them from increased damage along the California/Mexican border in April.

Soldiers doing on-the-job-training,” he continued. “Many of our new Soldiers are infantrymen retraining as engineers.”

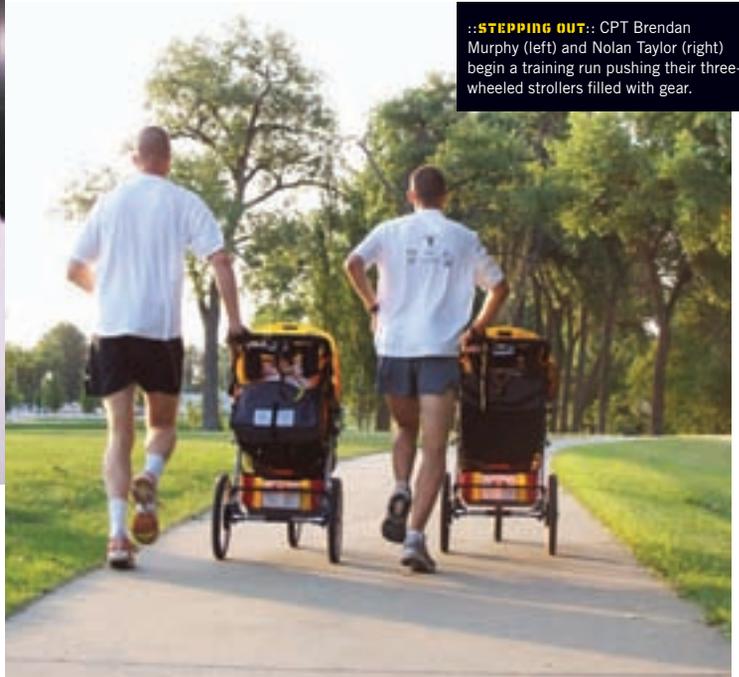
“The only obstacle the 230th faced was time—given more time, we could have accomplished more,” said 1SG Michael J. Lacno, a 22-year National Guard veteran from Maui. “Other than that, things ran very smoothly ... leaders took charge. Our TF-Steel Castle host provided the materials and equipment we needed to get the job done.” **GX**

PHOTOS BY SPC MATTHEW ODA

::MEN ON A MISSION:: CPT Brendan Murphy (right), SDARNG, and his friend Nolan Taylor (left) ran 429 miles in a 14-day trek across the state of South Dakota this past April.



::STEPPING OUT:: CPT Brendan Murphy (left) and Nolan Taylor (right) begin a training run pushing their three-wheeled strollers filled with gear.



Race for a Cure

SOUTH DAKOTA SOLDIER RUNS 429 MILES TO PROMOTE CANCER AWARENESS

By MAJ Orson Ward

RAPID CITY, SD—Chemo is harder: That's the motto of a South Dakota Army National Guard member and his friend, who are champions in the fight against cancer.

CPT Brendan Murphy of Rapid City, and his friend Nolan Taylor of Great Falls, MT, ran 429 miles across the state of South Dakota in 14 days in late April. The journey was an effort to build an understanding of cancer and help those who are affected by it.

“The idea is to create awareness at a grassroots level. There are some tremendously brave men and women fighting this battle, and they shouldn't have to do it alone.”

>> CPT Brendan Murphy, SDARNG

“The idea is to create awareness at a grassroots level,” CPT Murphy said, describing the purpose of the Chemo is Harder Cancer Research Run. “There are some tremendously brave men and women fighting this battle, and they shouldn't have to do it alone.”

Both CPT Murphy and Taylor are well aware of the sacrifices made by family and friends in this

fight. CPT Murphy recently lost his father to the disease, and his mother is a cancer survivor. Taylor's father was diagnosed with cancer last year and has endured surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

“Many of us have no idea just how difficult it really is,” CPT Murphy said.

By running and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, the men hope to

promote a positive outlook on life.

CPT Murphy, a mobilization and planning specialist for the South Dakota National Guard in Rapid City, said he and his friend began their journey on April 26 at Capitol, MT, and finished on May 9 at Ortonville, MN. They strived to average 31 miles a day during their run across the state.

The two friends remained completely self-sufficient during the run, pushing all of their supplies and equipment in two three-wheeled strollers.

The gear weighed 40 to 60 pounds and included clothing, shelter, cooking equipment, food, water, first-aid kits and communication devices.

CPT Murphy and Taylor have been training for the past year to prepare for the event, averaging up to 100 miles per week.

“The last several months of training really paid off,” CPT Murphy emphasized.

Interested in finding out more about the Chemo Is Harder Cancer Research Run and how it started? Visit the Web site: www.ChemoisHarder.com. **GX**

::BREAK TIME:: CPT Brendan Murphy takes a breather during a 20-mile training run in the snow this winter.



EQUALITY

AND

RESPECT

A tribute to
**AFRICAN-
AMERICANS**
of today and
yesterday in
the Guard

BY 1LT RICARDO FERRELL
1/160th Infantry Regiment,
California Army National Guard



I still consider myself young at 25, but as I get older, I'll shamefully admit that some of my primary education lessons are beginning to escape me. But with *GX's* tribute to African-Americans in the Guard, I decided to dig deep into the recesses of my brain and recall an important lesson I learned in grade school. It's a simple, yet profound lesson that forges a unique celebration for black history in 2008.

In the mid-17th century, Sir Isaac Newton discovered that the perception of color relates to how light bends across a visual continuum, which he dubbed a spectrum. As light bends at different degrees along this spectrum, the human eye perceives three primary colors: red, blue and yellow. As these colors combine and further reflect across the spectrum in the appropriate percentages, more colors are created.

Most notably, Newton found that where the spectrum stopped allowing light to pass through, the eye interpreted the color as white. Conversely, where the spectrum was most tolerant of light passing through, allowing for the absorption of all colors into one location, the eye interpreted the color as black. (If I'm right or wrong here in my memory of science, you can thank or blame North Carolina public schools.)

I haven't thought of Newton's lesson since about the fourth or fifth grade, so why recall it now? Probably because my unit is from the great state of California, a vast melting pot that continually brings people from all walks of life together. It's amazing that so much diversity unites my platoon. We are a family with loads of cultural perspective brought to one table.

::DOWNTIME:: 1LT Ricardo Ferrell celebrates Christmas 2007 in Iraq.



SGT JEAN-PAUL BORDA



THE ONE PREDICTABLE THING ABOUT A DISASTER.

Whether it be hurricanes or wildfires, earthquakes or a terrorist attack, one thing will always remain the same – the people of our nation count on the Army National Guard in times of crisis. Well-equipped and quick to respond, the sight of our Soldiers has given

comfort, time and again, to those in desperate need. You, too, can join the men and women with the skills and courage to take on the toughest of challenges. Find out more by visiting our web site today.

www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com



YOU CAN

Join the National Guard
visit us at
www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com

When all 34 members of my platoon, the Bad Voodoo Platoon (2nd Platoon, B Company, 1/160th Infantry), are photographed, we actually look like children of the same mother, except that some of us chose to stay on the beach and absorb sunlight longer than others.

We are united by a decision to serve. We are one body. We are American Soldiers. We are Infantrymen. We are the California Army National Guard. And I guess we, as a body, are “black” (at least, in relation to Newton’s theory of the illusion of color).

I know. That’s a pretty bold statement to make, perhaps even a stretch and kind of cheesy. I’m sure that if I rewound time at least 50 years or more, I would be hard-pressed to find an African-American Soldier who would agree with me.

Needless to say, the history of African-American Soldiers in the U.S. Army has been one of struggle. The treatment they received in the older Army mirrored the treatment of most African-Americans during those years.

But I don’t want this to be a story that overshadows the reason to celebrate the Army’s history and the contributions of fine Americans serving their country. I only ask that you allow me, with Newton’s help, to alter a common perception.

A long legacy of service

The Army has had African-American Soldiers fighting for the nation since the Civil War.

In 1862, the Louisiana Guard, composed of organizations of free blacks, had African-American Soldiers in its ranks who fought for the Union.

By the end of the Civil War, some 180,000 African-Americans fought on the Union’s behalf. Because entrenched racial attitudes made it difficult for military leaders to embrace the idea of recruiting black Soldiers, black war contributions were completely volunteer.

But as the United States began fighting in WWI and WWII, the Army counted black Soldiers among its ranks. No big deal, really, but we remember it because our Army confronted the behemoths of racism and discrimination prevalent at the time.

The black Soldier was there with his white counterparts, fighting for something bigger than himself. Both races were doing the same thing, but neither side could see it. Between



THE HIGHEST-RANKING AFRICAN-AMERICAN OFFICER IN ANY COMPONENT OF THE ARMY WAS COL CHARLES YOUNG. COL YOUNG RODE A HORSE FROM OHIO TO WASHINGTON, D.C., TO PROVE HE WAS PHYSICALLY ABLE TO CONTINUE HIS DUTIES. IN 1918, HE WAS REINSTATED INTO ACTIVE SERVICE AND ASSIGNED TO A TRAINING INSTALLATION AT FORT GRANT, IL, WHERE HE TRAINED SOLDIERS.

1915 and 1920, blacks in the active component and the National Guard totaled roughly 20,000 Soldiers, which comprised about 2 percent of all servicemen. In 1916, this number included only three commissioned officers.

MAJ (then 1LT) Vertner W. Tandy was the first black officer in the New York National Guard. MAJ James Walker was the first commanding officer for the District of Columbia National Guard. The highest-ranking black officer in any component of the Army was COL Charles Young.

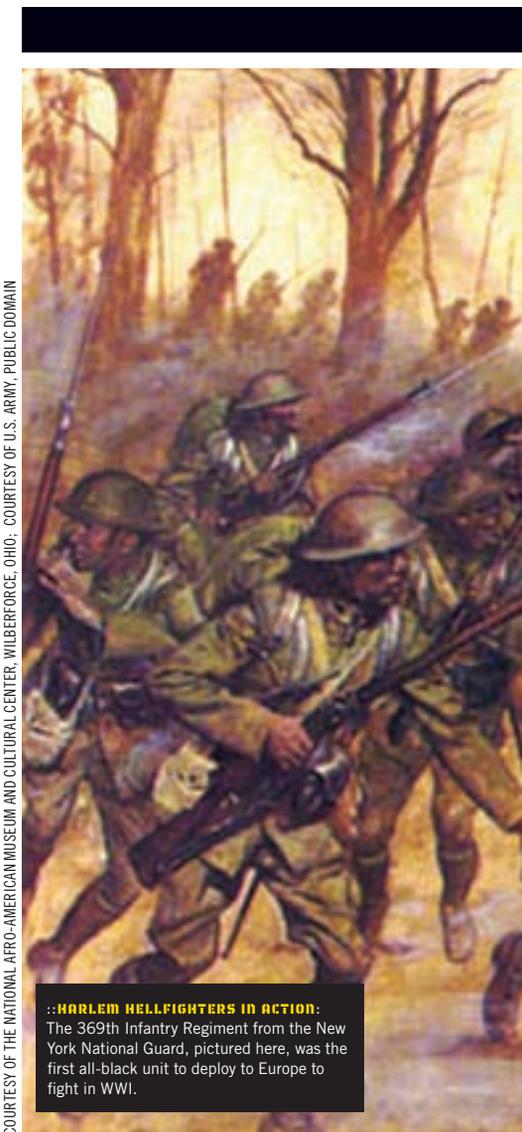
In 1917, COL Young was forced to retire because he was deemed unfit for duty. Despite suffering from high blood pressure and

Bright’s disease (a kidney affliction now known as nephritis), COL Young rode a horse from Ohio to Washington, D.C., to prove he was physically able to continue his duties.

In 1918, he was reinstated into active service and assigned to a training installation at Fort Grant, IL, where he trained black Soldiers. His unit would become one of many all-black units.

Actually, the term “black” fits only when limited to an ethnic description of Soldiers in the unit. Newton’s spectrum requires much more difference in one location to create the illusion of black.

Since I am biased toward Newton’s spectrum, I think a confined unit of one demographic falls short of what Newton thought of as “black,” even though it had all African-American Soldiers in it.



..HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS IN ACTION: The 369th Infantry Regiment from the New York National Guard, pictured here, was the first all-black unit to deploy to Europe to fight in WWI.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL AFRO-AMERICAN MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER, WILBERFORCE, OHIO; COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY, PUBLIC DOMAIN

Achieving equality

I suppose I could continue recounting a history of notable African-American units, such as the 369th Infantry Regiment from the New York National Guard, which became the first all-black unit to deploy to Europe for WWI.

But in doing so, I would only be portraying the valiant struggle of blacks for equality in the Army, at the expense of showcasing the unification of Soldiers today. I am thankful for every African-American predecessor who endured those injustices.

But today what it means to be “black” would be lost if I separated the plight of one group and compared and contrasted its history with that of another group. There is only

one history for the Army and the National Guard. It has just taken many different authors to write its pages.

To be Newton’s black means being tolerant enough to allow multitudes of differences to unite at one location. This, in turn, means finding other values over which to unite.

Bad Voodoo has a Canadian platoon sergeant and three squad leaders of different backgrounds: Mexican, Scottish and Filipino. And we include a force of Soldiers with roots from around the world. I stand at the end of this rainbow, an African-American infantry platoon leader. We’re all here in Iraq, however, as Americans. We are Newton’s black unit.

The Bad Voodoo Platoon has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since June 2007. Our mobilization began in early March 2007, and we will not return

home until sometime in late spring or early summer. We didn’t have to fight to get this deployment like the 369th Infantry had to in 1917.

Over here, we face an enemy who sees a uniform and makes only one association based on that. The enemy does not prescribe



I AM THANKFUL FOR EVERY AFRICAN-AMERICAN PREDECESSOR WHO ENDURED THOSE INJUSTICES. BUT TODAY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “BLACK” WOULD BE LOST IF I SEPARATED THE PLIGHT OF ONE GROUP AND COMPARED AND CONTRASTED ITS HISTORY WITH THAT OF ANOTHER GROUP.



::UNITED:: Bad Voodoo Soldiers come together to prepare for a common mission—protecting Freedom.

tiers of treatment for us based on our individual ethnicities. Each one of my fellow Soldiers has the same opportunity to stand beside brothers-in-arms and face his foe—and that's what it's all about.

The black Soldiers of the early 20th century would be pleased to know that their dreams were eventually realized. Bad Voodoo, some 90 years later, is the result of their efforts.

Two of the most important goals that African-American Soldiers fought for were equality and respect—equality in the fight for their country and respect for volunteering for that fight. Their diligence, perseverance and desire to overcome adversity reflect

what is expected of all Soldiers, regardless of background.

We try to remember their struggles and pick up the battle where they left off. The difference nowadays is we know that fellow Americans, regardless of color or background, are not the enemy.

Coming together

Where did our black unit come from? Vietnam, Mexico, Nigeria, Scotland, China, the Philippines, the Caribbean islands, Canada and the United

States. And God bless America and California for providing the location where all of these differences come together.

But as far as Bad Voodoo is concerned, bless the infantry for bringing together Newton's black Warriors. Many Soldiers of any color bear witness to the trials and tribulations endured on Sand Hill at Fort Benning, GA, where rigor has never discriminated.

Black Soldiers of old, who sought freedom from discrimination, volunteered and trained as infantrymen, though they would often be moved to combat service support roles due to their lesser status. Bad Voodoo has one African-American infantryman, as

SGT JEAN-PAUL BORDA



ON THE FRONT LINES:
This African-American Soldier, deployed to Afghanistan with the 218th BCT, stands proud and stands ready.

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE OF ARMY DEMOGRAPHICS, AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD BREAK DOWN LIKE THIS:

→ TOTAL FORCE:
13.7%

→ OFFICER CORPS:
9%
OF TOTAL FORCE

→ MALE OFFICERS:
APPROXIMATELY
88.6%
OF THE CORPS

→ AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE OFFICERS:
APPROXIMATELY
7%

opposed to the older black infantry units during the early 20th century.

More than 90 percent of black male officers serve in combat support and combat service support MOSs. Of the roughly 10 percent who serve in combat arms, 60 percent serve in the field artillery, 20 percent in the corps of engineers, approximately 10 percent in armor and approximately 3 percent in air defense artillery and aviation. The final 3 percent serve in the infantry, the Army's largest branch.

In a nutshell, black male officers make up less than 1 percent of the infantry, the



SSG Paul Ritchie and SFC Arron Garris stand in their ghillie suits after a grueling stalking course.

*Inside the world
of the sniper* By CPT Tim W. Irvin

Masters of

Stealth



::MOVING OUT:: SSG Paul Ritchie and SFC Arron Garris exit a Black Hawk after firing in the aerial portion of the competition.

I've pretty much seen all the standard "Soldier" movies. I've seen *We Were Soldiers* at least six times, and the complete *Band of Brothers* series and *Black Hawk Down* well over 10 times each. Based on fact, these movies do a good job of showing what combat is like and are true to the techniques and equipment that Soldiers used. Unfortunately, many times movies are the only impression people have of Soldiers and what they do. For example, most sniper movies don't tell the whole story of what it takes to be a sniper. To be honest, I knew very little about what it took myself. So, when *GX* was invited to cover the 7th annual International Sniper Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise at Fort Benning, GA, I was stoked.

I wasn't sure what to expect from the competition, but neither did most of the snipers competing. The Sniper School at Fort Benning hosts the competition every year and the school instructors keep each event under wraps until the competition. Getting information about any events beforehand was not just difficult; it was downright impossible.

"We have a vague idea of the courses of fire in the competition, but are not told what we are actually doing until we are in the holding area right before the match begins," said SSG Jay Pedro of the Arkansas National Guard. "This prevents teams from pre-planning and gaining advantages over other competitors. It also shows how quickly competitors can react in stressful situations." Being able to react quickly to changes in combat is a skill that

could save a sniper's life. Normally, snipers are deployed in two-man teams, and due to their need for stealth, they don't have a security force that moves with them. This makes the relationship between the sniper and the spotter about more than just being able to work together—they depend on each other for their lives.

The Competition

Preparing to go head-to-head with some of the best snipers in the world, 32 snipers made final checks on their gear at a weeklong sniper competition at Fort Benning. Contestants have come to Fort Benning from all over the world—there are teams from the Guard, Active Army and Air Force, as well as international teams from Sweden, Great Britain, Canada and Ireland.

The National Guard teams did more than hold their own. The team from the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center (NG-MTC) placed second and a team from the Warrior Training Center (WTC) at Fort Benning placed fifth.

Based at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, AR, the NGMTU center is home to the only sniper school in the National Guard. The team consisted of two of the school's instructors, SSG Jay Pedro and SSG Randy Schnell. This year was the second time the two snipers competed as a team in the competition. In 2005, they took first place.

Located at Fort Benning, WTC conducts air assault, pre-ranger, pathfinder and

master gunnery courses for Guard and active Soldiers year-round. SSG Paul Ritchie and SFC Arron Garris, pre-ranger instructors who have trained many Soldiers during their time at Fort Benning, represented WTC.

"The competition helps snipers learn ways to become more efficient in their jobs," said SSG Pedro, who has been a sniper instructor for more than four years.

Snipers are exposed to different match scenarios during the training exercise. Not only do they only receive top-notch training, they are also exposed to new techniques, which may save their lives overseas.

"As soon as teams are done with a match, they critique themselves and learn what they need to do to prevent themselves from potentially making the same mistakes in real-world missions," SSG Pedro said.

SSG Schnell agreed that the competition is a great training tool for all teams.

"Anyone who has the chance should definitely compete," SSG Schnell said. "A lot of guys have only been to sniper school. They have a pretty limited view of what sniper training should be because they have never done anything beyond school training. When snipers go to this competition, they have a better test of their skills and abilities and learn how to train for different missions."

Shooters have a chance to build friendships and share information with each other while gaining knowledge about their job.

"The teams help each other out by exchanging tactics, techniques and procedures,"

SSG Schnell said. “The sniper community is relatively small, so most likely you will see and work with the competitors again.”

Shooting the Big One

The Barrett M107 .50 caliber sniper rifle is an impressive weapon both in sight and performance, but it can be tough to master. The snipers got to show their skills with the M107. Some found it a little tricky.

“Targets are set over 1,200 meters away,” SSG Pedro said. “You have to notice the target, estimate the range, then try to dial it in and send two shots into the target. The flight time of the bullet is almost two seconds. By the time the first round hits, and you correct and get back up for a second shot, the target is already going down. It’s pretty tricky stuff.”

Aerial Shoot

Firing the mammoth rifle was only the beginning of the trials the shooters would face. Firing from a hovering Black Hawk is not just something you see on the big screen. These guys actually do it and do it well. But, why would a sniper ever need to do this?

“You may be supporting a raid-type mission with a ground forces moving in to secure an area,” SSG Jason Pedro explained. “We can then engage any vehicles or personnel trying to leave the area.”

But it’s not an easy task.

“There are so many variables with the helicopter moving ... how steady the pilot can hold the helicopter, for example,” SSG Pedro said. “Vibration is what kills you on the aerial shoot.”

Being a Sniper

Most light infantry battalions have three two-man sniper teams who serve two basic functions. Their main mission is to take out the enemy and instill fear in many others, both from long distances. The secondary mission is reconnaissance. Snipers are able to report back on an enemy’s strength and movement. They act as their commander’s forward eyes and ears. The second function has become as critical as the first because information on the battlefield is invaluable to a commander.

Snipers are definitely a rare breed of Soldier. It takes a special person to make a good sniper. FM 23-10, the Army’s sniper training field manual, makes no bones about the primary purpose. “The sniper must be able to calmly and deliberately kill targets that may not pose an immediate threat to him. The sniper must not be susceptible to emotions such as anxiety or remorse.”

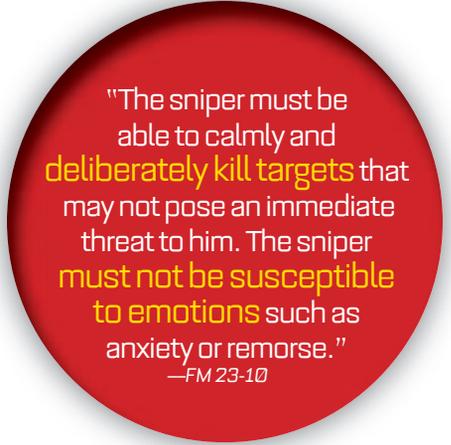
Yet, a sniper’s job isn’t nearly as exciting as Hollywood would like people to believe.

A sniper is more likely to have to take out a crew-served gunner to slow an enemy’s rate of fire. The odds of a sniper having some enemy officer in his sights are pretty slim.

The term “sniper” dates back to 1824 and means “sharpshooter.” The verb “snipe” originated in the 1770s among Soldiers in British India and means: “to shoot from a hidden place.” In reference to snipe hunting, it refers to a game bird known for being extremely difficult to hunt. Those who were skilled at the hunting of this bird were dubbed “snipers.”

For most people, the word “sniper” conjures troubling images of a lone gunman, invisible and on the hunt. And while Guard snipers are indeed elite shooters who are skilled at stealthy operations, there is a lot more to it than hiding in the woods and pulling the trigger.

“We use a ballistic program on a PDA (personal digital assistant),” SSG Pedro said. “We



“The sniper must be able to calmly and deliberately kill targets that may not pose an immediate threat to him. The sniper must not be susceptible to emotions such as anxiety or remorse.”

—FM 23-10

type in all the atmospheric conditions, the ballistic coefficient of the bullet, the muzzle velocity, and then the computer spits out what we need to dial on the gun, and then you should hit your target.”

When a sniper finally takes a shot, there are countless variables to consider before squeezing the trigger—wind speed, wind direction, range, target movement, temperature and barometric pressure, just to name a few. The work that goes into getting a good position to take a shot is immense. That’s why snipers work in pairs.

The Team

A sniper team consists of a sniper and a spotter. The two-man team offers many advantages over the deployment of a lone sniper in the field. The spotter carries his own special scope that’s much more powerful than the one on a sniper rifle. The spotter uses his scope to help the sniper observe the objective and set

up the shot. The two Soldiers work together to get to the objective safely and discreetly, and then set up a position. Here’s the general process:

Once the shot is taken, the spotter watches the shot to help the sniper readjust his aim or position in the unlikely event that he misses his target. The way the spotter watches the shot is incredible. Apparently high velocity, long-range rounds, like the kind snipers use, leave a vapor trail as they fly through the air. The spotter can track the shot by watching for that vapor trail or trace. I got to see this firsthand.

At first, I thought the guys were messing with me, like in a snipe hunt. But then I saw it—the vapor trail. It looks like heat waves that rise from hot pavement. You can see straight through it, but it distorts your view. They told me it is created by the bullet’s shock wave as it travels at supersonic speeds. The wave compresses the air along the leading edge of a bullet, causing vapor in the air to momentarily condense and become visible.

To the spotter, the trace looks like a rapidly moving V-shaped vortex in the air following the bullet’s path. Through close observation and lots of practice, spotters can use trace to judge the bullet’s trajectory and make corrections before a follow-up shot. Watching the trace and the bullet’s impact, or “splash,” are the primary ways the spotter assists the sniper in calling the shot.

Another important job of the spotter is to protect the team from close-range attacks. For this task, the spotter usually shoulders an automatic assault rifle like an M-4 or M-16. If the team gets caught in a close-range ambush, a sniper rifle is not the best weapon for fighting their way out.

The relationship between a sniper and his spotter is important. First and foremost, the two depend on each other for survival. Sniper teams work in the no-man’s-land between or behind battle lines. They often have little or no support from their unit.

Being the shooter in a sniper team is sort of a sniper apprenticeship. The spotter is the team leader, who communicates with command to build the mission. In the field, he has the final word in deciding the route, hide position, rendezvous point and escape routes. The shooter learns from his spotter in the field and then eventually gets his own team to lead.

These highly skilled marksmen are often perceived as lone assassins racking up “confirmed kills.” In reality, true snipers are far more concerned with the number of lives they save than with the ones they take.

Good training is essential to provide a sniper with the skills needed to perform well.

Military sniper training aims to teach a high degree of proficiency in camouflage and concealment, stalking and observation, as well as precision marksmanship under various operational conditions. Trainees typically shoot thousands of rounds over a number of weeks while learning these core skills.

To the naked eye, a 6-foot man standing 700 meters away in front of a tree line is little more than a figment of a Soldier's imagination. Killing that man with the first shot from a high-powered rifle is the ultimate test for these specialized Soldiers.

The Sniper Mission

Typical sniper missions include reconnaissance and surveillance, counter-sniper, killing enemy commanders, selecting targets of opportunity and even anti-materiel tasks (destruction of military equipment), which often require the use of larger caliber rifles such as the .50 cal.

Snipers are volunteers accepted for sniper training on the basis of their aptitude as perceived by their commanders. Military snipers may be trained as Forward Air Controllers (FACs) to direct military air strikes, Forward Observers (FOs) or Mortar Fire Controllers (MFCs).

Depending on their mission, snipers have to occupy a position for a long period of time with little or no movement. They have to fight fatigue and muscle stiffness. Also, urination and defecation into a bag or another container may become necessary. These factors alone contradict much of the glamour portrayed in popular films.

Because snipers are masters of stealth, they are perfectly suited to sneak behind enemy lines to provide command with information about the enemy's size, strength and location.

When the mission calls for it, snipers can also dismantle and dishearten the enemy with a few well-placed rifle shots. Instead of engaging the entire enemy force like traditional infantry, snipers concentrate their efforts on hunting key targets—officers, pilots, technicians and communications specialists. With deadly shots that kill without warning, snipers break both the enemy's will and ability to fight. When there is no specific objective, snipers will look for targets of

opportunity. By tracking enemy movements, they wait patiently for the unsuspecting enemies to present the opportunity for a perfect shot. An officer taking a break to smoke a cigarette, a pilot flight-checking his helicopter, an armed guard on patrol—these are all targets of opportunity.

Snipers are also utilized in support roles. These support roles can be an over-watch position or a blocking action. When a sniper is in an over-watch position, he sets up in a concealed

force. What's amazing about snipers is that they're capable of force multiplication without ever directly engaging the enemy.

Sniper Gear

Because of the nature of their missions, snipers travel with very little gear, patiently moving under the cover of night.

"One shot, one kill" is the sniper motto. Accomplishing this would be impossible without the specially modified rifles used by snipers in the field. A sniper rifle such as the M-21 in the hands of a highly trained sniper

can be a deadly weapon from more than a mile away. One sniper in the competition used an M-21: "It's basically a M-14 with match-grade upgrades [like] hollowing out the wood, fiberglass-seated receiver, different trigger mechanisms and optics," he said.

Sniper rifles are generally bolt-action rifles. That means the sniper must load

and chamber each round he fires. Once he has fired, he has to clear the shell casing and load another round. Though they are more difficult to operate and have a much slower rate of fire, bolt-action rifles are preferred



IN THE FIELD: Top Left: SSG Paul Ritchie moves under cover during the stalking portion of the competition. Top Right: SFC Arron Garris talks to SSG Paul Ritchie via his headset as they engage targets from their hide. Bottom Right: SSG Randy Schnell takes aim at an "insurgent" from his hide. Bottom Left: SSG Jay Pedro and SSG Randy Schnell move to their next event during the competition.

place that gives him a clear view of the battle space. There he can support the assault force by taking out enemy forces that are endangering the advancing platoon. In a blocking action, snipers set up to help secure a position controlled by their platoon. They may set up on a roof and help ground forces defend their position.

Additionally, snipers often destroy material targets. A sniper may shoot generators, radios, transmitters, or fuel and water supplies. Putting a .50 caliber round in the engine block of a helicopter or transport is just as effective as putting one in the man who drives them. Snipers are what military strategists refer to as force multipliers, which are individuals or small teams that, through the use of special tactics, can do the damage of a much larger

because they have fewer moving parts than automatics.

There are semi-automatic sniper rifles, such as the M-21. If a sniper fires a bolt action, he will have to reload, and that movement could give him away. But the round flying out of the rifle could also give him away on the semi-automatic. In the end, it comes down to the personal preference of each sniper.

The Ghillie

If you've ever seen a sniper on the news or in a film, you have probably seen that unsettling, half-man, half-shrubbery appearance. This clever fashion is known as a ghillie suit. The purpose of the ghillie suit is to make a sniper disappear into his surroundings. The word "ghillie" is an old Scottish term for a

::MASTERS OF THE STALK:: SSG Paul Ritchie and SFC Arron Garris take aim during their stalking course.

special kind of game warden. Ghillies were tasked with protecting the game on their lord's lands. From time to time, the ghillies would stalk the game by hiding in the grass and lying perfectly still. They would wait for an unsuspecting deer to amble by and then leap out and grab it with their bare hands.

Ghillie suits are basically old military uniforms that snipers modify for their special purpose. The belly of the uniform is reinforced with heavy canvas to help pad a sniper's torso during hours of lying on his stomach. Camouflage netting attached to the uniform is used to attach shredded burlap and other frayed materials. Ghillie suits are usually painted to match the environment of the battlefield. Local elements like twigs, vines, and branches can be incorporated into the netting to further camouflage the ghillie suit.

Nothing in nature has perfectly straight lines, so equipment such as rifles and antennas often betray a sniper's positions. To counter this, snipers also make smaller ghillie suits for their rifles. Using the same principles of camouflage, snipers wrap their rifles in canvas and create sleeves that make them blend into the environment. Soldiers are trained to keep their eyes peeled for strange things in their surroundings that could represent a threat. The human form is one of the most recognizable shapes in nature. Snipers look for color and contour when trying to spot an enemy. Ghillie suits help the sniper break up his outline, hide straight lines in his gear and blend his color with the surroundings.

Using a 7.62mm round, snipers can shoot silently, as long as it's from more than 600 meters. A bullet leaves the rifle barrel faster than the speed of sound. The cracking sound it makes is a tiny sonic boom. Even if a target doesn't hear the rifle shot, he'll hear the bullet fly by. The drag created by wind resistance on a 7.62mm round as it travels through the air slows the bullet down to subsonic speeds at around 600 meters. At ranges of more than 600 meters, the bullet no longer makes that cracking sound. "If you're shooting at a target 800 or 1,000 meters out," SSG Pedro said, "you could be shooting at that person all day long, and they wouldn't even know they are being shot at."

Thru the Scope

Anywhere, anytime, snipers are ready to use their specialized skills to sneak into any situation. Through the use of close



To become a sniper, you must be a master in marksmanship, camouflage and field craft. All this goes into the art of stalking. Stalk training is a large portion of training at sniper school. It hones a sniper's stealthy movements. Snipers have to move slowly, patiently and methodically. If necessary, they will lie for hours in the same position to observe a target or avoid detection. A sniper doesn't measure his movement by miles or even meters; he measures his progress by feet and inches. To develop this ability, snipers have to pass perhaps one of the most challenging training exercises in the army—the stalk.

Stalk training usually takes place on an open grassy range. Students will start at one end of the range with two instructors at the other end in a tower with spotter scopes. Sniper students must stalk toward the instructors without being seen. To add to the challenge, the instructors have several Soldiers on the range called "walkers." The instructors use radios to communicate with the walkers and try to literally "walk" them onto the sniper.

Students must stalk from 1,000 meters out to within 300 meters of the instructors—all while avoiding detection by the instructors and the

walkers. Once in position, they take a shot using blanks. Taking the shot exposes the snipers, due to muzzle flash and, possibly, movement from the blast. After the first shot, the snipers must move to a second position and take another shot. To be sure that the snipers actually had the instructors in their crosshairs, the snipers must count the number of fingers or read a card the instructors are holding up. Stalking is a pass or fail exercise. If the sniper is spotted at any point, he fails. Too many failures, and the student washes out of sniper school.

During the competition, the snipers had to demonstrate their stalking skills in the same way as they did in sniper school. This was the first time I had seen snipers stalking in their full ghillies. I was allowed to walk up and down one of the boundary roads during the stalk and was told that the snipers were already on the range, but even with my high-powered lens I couldn't spot a single one. As I was walking and searching I heard someone whisper, "Hey Tim..." It was SSG Ritchie and SFC Garris. They were no less than 50 feet from me, yet I couldn't see them. They had to sit up before I saw them. All I could think was how vulnerable I felt. Good thing this was just a training exercise because I'd hate to be in their crosshairs.

reconnaissance and deadly long-range fire, they are the most feared Soldiers. If you're thinking of going to sniper school, you'd better be prepared to push yourself beyond any reasonable limits. The movies don't give these warriors half the credit they are due.

But Hollywood didn't do all bad. In the movie *Enemy at the Gates*, famed Russian sniper Vasily Zaitsev describes what it's like to have the enemy in your crosshairs. "He doesn't even know you exist. But at that moment, you are closer to him than anyone else on earth. You see his face through the sight.

You see whether he shaved that morning or not. You can see whether he's married by whether or not he has a wedding ring on. It's not like ... just firing at a distant shape, not just a uniform. It's a man's face." Snipers are patient, stealthy warriors who endure long hours in the field in all kinds of weather. They do it to protect their fellow Soldiers and defend our great nation.

Don't take their commitment to their craft and skills lightly. From what I saw at Fort Benning, the Guard has some of the best in the business. I'm damn glad they are on our side. **GX**

The Bugler

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE



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 monthly right here in GX.

Courtesy of NGB-ASM



>> NGB-ASM—CELEBRATION CHALLENGE

Some of the most successful recruiters earned the right to participate in Celebration Challenge, a training event held in Hawaii in November, December and January, with more than 261 recruiters. The event honored the recruiters' service and provided them with more training. The efforts of all recruiters are appreciated, as well as those of the recruiting commanders who contributed to the efforts of not only FY 2007 but also the individual achievements of the recruiters as well.



>> NEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS

New school programs are currently being developed by NGB-ASM. These School Entry Vehicles (SEVs) are innovative programs that will help recruiters access various education facilities, such as high schools, tech schools, colleges and universities. These creative programs will provide benefits to teachers, parents and students via NGB presentations. For example, the Heritage Outreach Program highlights the ARNG's involvement in four major campaigns: the War of 1812, the Civil War, WWI and WWII. Contact your state's marketing NCO to schedule the Heritage Outreach Coordinator.



>> ARMY SECRETARY PRAISES "ACTIVE FIRST"

Army Secretary Pete Geren is crediting "Active First" as an example of innovative initiatives that are helping maintain the force. More than 500 recruits have enlisted in the "Active First" program since Oct. 1. LTG Clyde A. Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard, said he has no doubt the program will live up to Geren's 1,600-recruit goal for FY 2008. Geren called the program a partnership that "shows our Army is truly one Army" and is helping the service keep its ranks filled with quality recruits.

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>> TRUE TESTIMONY FROM FORMER RSP CADRE

SPC James C. Neundorf, OHARNG, recently ended a tour as an RRNCO. He wanted to convey to other Soldiers something he thought few people had the honor of experiencing. “As a RRNCO, I trained RSP Soldiers. During AT, some time later, I saw Soldiers I had trained in RSP. I trained them then, and now I was training them before they left for war. It was an honor to serve at both ends. I helped turn citizens into Soldiers ... then I prepared them for battle.”



>> IT'S FOR REAL!

Josh Gambrel, an RA from Indiana, uses his past experiences before joining the Guard to reach out to individuals interested in what the Guard has to offer. “I’ve come so far from back then, it’s not even funny,” he says. This 22-year-old husband and father mentored seven people into the ARNG. The Guard has turned his life around, and now he enjoys helping others like his recruiter helped him.



>> FORWARD DEPLOYED CAREER COUNSELORS—THE "BEST OF THE BEST"

79Ts who are selected as Forward Deployed Career Counselors (FDCCs) are unique—they are the ARNG theater retention team in CENTCOM. Counselors are assigned to Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan where they provide retention and career support as well as conduct extensions and re-enlistments for Soldiers deployed for OIF and OEF. Currently there are eight FDCCs on a six-month rotation and located at strategic entry points into the theater for command and control. This program is proving to be very successful because retention is up, and Soldiers who re-enlist are allowed to receive their bonuses in theater, which makes them tax-free—and fully supported by leadership and NGB.

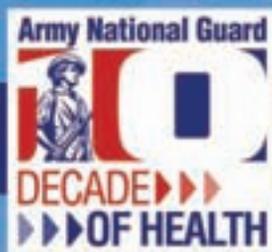


>> NEW RETENTION TOOL FOR OFFICERS WITH CRITICAL SKILLS

Until February 2008, there was no retention bonus for Basic Branch Officers (BBOs), Warrant Officers, Judge Advocate Corps Officers or Chaplains. Now, a new policy helps to retain these critical skills officers. The Critical Skills Reimbursement Bonus (CSR) is available to MTOE-deployable units with CW2s, basic branch captains, and JAG and Chaplain captains-majors. The policy is: WO=\$20,000 bonus with a 3-year contract, BBOs=\$20,000 with a 3-year contract, and JAGS and Chaplains=\$30,000 with a 3-year contract. This incentive program is a result of the new NDAA for 2008. The point of contact (POC) for this program is your state incentive manager.

Make Weight Management a Family Mission

This is a great time for all families to join the Decade of Health community at www.decadeofhealth.com during the 2008 launch of a healthy weight management campaign, ARNG Lighten Up!®



www.decadeofhealth.com

Always Ready, Always There...
Always Healthy.

**ARNG
Lighten Up!**



Photos courtesy U.S. Army



::A HANDSHAKE EARNED:: Gov. Mitch Daniels shakes the hand of Randal'lee Neeley during a meeting before the Indiana National Guard Hoosier Youth ChalleNGe Academy graduation ceremony.

“This is a very good program; it [has] helped me in so many ways,” Neeley said. “When you come to this program, you’ve got to want to change.” It was a change this young father said was crucial for him to get his life on track for his 1-year-old son, Marshall Ray Neeley.

With emotion, he said, “Ten years down the road, I can take him and show him the academy and say, ‘This is where Daddy got his life together for you.’”

Neeley, who received both the Academic Excellence and the Ironman Physical Fitness awards, said he was thankful the program was started and was appreciative of all the encouragement and guidance he received throughout the course.

Another cadet who benefited from the outstanding success of the program was Chris Slider of Indianapolis, who said he gained the willingness to push himself harder and beyond what he ever had before.

“One of the hardest things was being able to endure the extremes—the heat, the cold and the marches,” Slider said. “Doing the things no one wants to do, but you know you have to. It all came down to teamwork.”

“I’m absolutely glad I came to this program; it was the best decision of my life,” he added.

::OVERJOYED::
Cadet Deven Brown receives much-deserved hugs from family members after receiving his certificate of completion at the Indiana National Guard Hoosier Youth ChalleNGe Academy graduation ceremony.

Starting Anew

▶ FIRST CLASS GRADUATES FROM THE HOOSIER YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY

Story and photos by SPC William E. Henry, INARNG

TEENS FACE a variety of hardships in their young lives. Some face extreme pressures due to drugs, gangs, violence, trouble in the home or any other number of distractions, causing a lack of focus on scholastic accomplishments.

Where can young people turn when all hope is seemingly lost? Where can they look to receive guidance in accomplishing what is needed most?

This is the point where the Indiana National Guard Hoosier Youth ChalleNGe Academy raises its hand and answers those questions, giving Indiana teens an alternative opportunity to realign their sights on life-changing goals.

The academy has achieved its first successful objective, graduating a class of 35 teen cadets from 24 counties throughout the state. The ceremony was held at the Community Church of Greenwood on Dec. 8, 2007. All the participating

cadets volunteered for the 17-and-a-half-month quasi-military course that helped them achieve their high school diploma or equivalent.

Thirteen cadets even earned college credits through the academy’s partnership with Ivy Tech State College.

Three cadets, Deven Brown, Shawntay Dillard and Devon Hobbs, received scholarships to help further their college education.

I SAW THE BIGGEST CHANGE; HE WAS POLITE AND RESPECTFUL. THAT WAS JUST WONDERFUL. HE WAS TRANSFORMED FROM BEING A HIGH SCHOOL KID TO AN ADULT. I’M THANKFUL FOR THE STAFF AND THE GOVERNOR FOR SETTING UP THIS PROGRAM.”
—KELLY WALKER, CADET’S MOTHER

The course focuses on eight core components in three phases. These components center on academic excellence, life coping skills, job skills, community service, physical fitness, health and hygiene, leadership/followership and responsible citizenship.

These are values that 18-year-old cadet Randal’lee Neeley says helped him identify discipline skills and his own potential.

Slider’s mother, Kelly Walker, said she noticed the difference in her son’s demeanor during Thanksgiving when he returned home briefly on break.

“I saw the biggest change; he was polite and respectful,” she said. “That was just wonderful. He was transformed from being a high school kid to an adult. I’m thankful for the staff and the governor for setting up this program.”

LINK UP: FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW CAN GET INVOLVED IN THE INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD’S HYCA, PLEASE VISIT: WWW.NGYCP.ORG/STATE/IN. CANDIDATES MUST BE BETWEEN AGES 16 AND 18, NOT IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW, DRUG FREE, UNEMPLOYED AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS.

Both cadets mentioned have great plans for their futures and plan to further their careers in the military.

According to Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, keynote speaker for the ceremony, these outstanding cadets earmarked a page in history as the first class to graduate from the academy and lead the way for many more to follow.

"You are the pioneers; you are the trailblazers," Gov. Daniels proudly stated, who also said



this will be the first graduation in a long line of classes to come.

The director of the academy, COL (ret.) Wayne Hill, said he utilized his 38 years of military experience to aid in this program and help these teens succeed.

"It's amazing to see them from where they started to where they ended," said COL (ret.) Hill, of the progress of the cadets. "I couldn't be more proud of them. They made a lot of friends along the way."

COL (ret.) Hill said each cadet completed an average of 58 hours of community service projects for a total of 2,038 hours. The graduates worked on many types of projects, such as planting trees and more than 15,000 flower bulbs, working with children in nearby schools and cleaning up litter and debris from park trails.

At minimum wage, this group of cadets has given back almost \$12,000 in services to central Indiana areas.

Indiana was the 25th state to adopt this type of program, which is administered and managed by the National Guard Bureau.

The academy is free to those accepted to the campus, which is based outside Camp Atterbury in nearby Edinburgh, IN. **GX**



Hearts 'n' Habits

By Patrick D. Sculley, DDS, MG (USA Ret.)

By the time summer arrives, many good intentions of our New Year's resolutions become a distant memory! It is likely that we probably didn't stick with them long enough to turn them into habits (think how long it took to develop all those bad habits!). A habit is a behavior pattern that occurs almost unconsciously, after much repetition. That's why when we stop and add up all the calories we actually consume in a day, we are shocked.

It's often said, "You are what you eat." The same can be said for what you drink. That's a scary thought because many of our eating and drinking habits contribute to poor health. The all-too-common habit of sugary snacks washed down with sugary soft drinks and sports beverages can lead to tooth decay, contribute to gum disease and pile on the calories. Did you know that four 12-ounce cans of regular soda equal 620 calories? Drinking two to four sodas a day can cause a weight gain of a pound a week! You'd need to burn off 155 calories through exercise to compensate for each of those sodas.

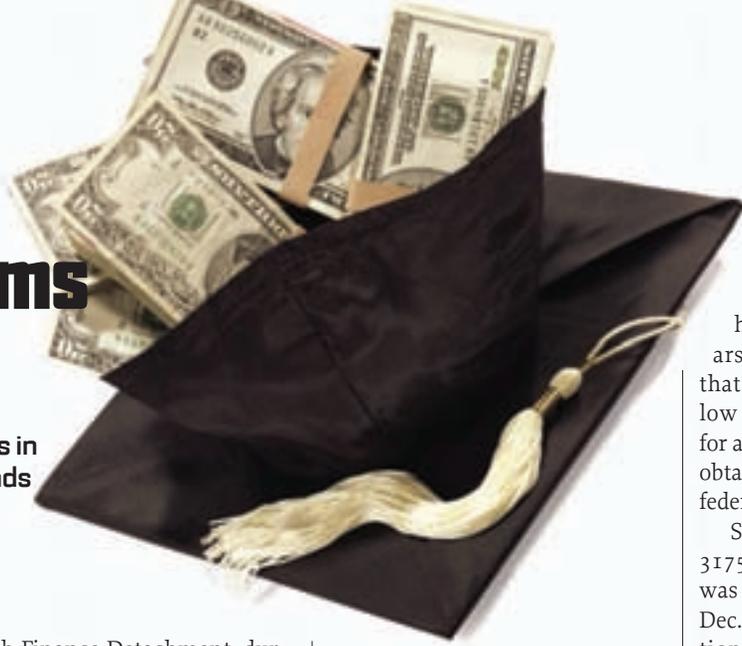
Substituting a café latte won't help—even a small latte may contain 125 calories. We also have the unfortunate habit of sizing up our beverages,

adding more calories and sugar content. To make matters worse, we tend to consume our usual amount of solid food each day no matter how many sodas we drink because the drinks don't make us feel full.

More than half of the adult U.S. population is considered overweight. There is an increased incidence of high cholesterol and high blood pressure (hypertension) in overweight people, and even in children under the age of 12. High cholesterol and hypertension are associated with heart disease and strokes, which are leading killers of Americans. This should give us all cause to think about the things we consume, including what we drink. We can commit to small changes and reconsider decisions to reach for a soda, latte or other sugary "pick-me-ups." Small changes reap big rewards over time.

Maintaining good health is all about good habits. Repeat those smart, healthy choices until you're doing them without thinking about it. It's up to you to recognize your temptations and devise a plan to limit your indulgence in fast foods and sugary beverages.

Now is a good time to revisit the great resolutions you made in January. Healthy choices plus healthy habits are the best gifts you can give yourself and your loved ones. **GX**



Making Dreams Come True

Scholarships awarded to Soldiers in AZ, MO, NM, MN and the Virgin Islands

By Johanna Altland, Grantham University
Photos courtesy of Grantham University

Over the last few weeks, Grantham University staff members have been busy traveling across the United States presenting scholarships to winners of the Grantham University and *GX: The Guard Experience* Army National Guard (ARNG) Scholarship Program.

In March 2007, Grantham University partnered with *GX* to offer a full scholarship to a member

159th Finance Detachment, during drill on Dec. 1. "I was so proud," SPC Lopez said after the presentation. "DeAnn made me feel so good, and my family was so proud of me."

SPC Lopez has served with the ARNG for five years and works in human resources for Pete King Construction Company in Phoenix, AZ. She juggles many responsibilities. "I am a full-time human

National Guard," WOI Burns said. He's pursuing a degree in business management and is well on his way to completing his first course. He plans to use his education to continue his professional development as a warrant officer.

"The scholarship to Grantham University was a blessing to me because I am the sole financial provider for my family," WOI Burns said. "My wife stays at home to raise our daughter, and because of this, I have always been limited financially from pursuing my undergraduate degree."

On Saturday, Dec. 1, SGT Russell Norris received his scholarship, which was presented by Johanna Altland, Grantham's Director of Communications, during drill for the 717th Brigade Support Battalion in Clovis, NM. "This is a chance for me to improve myself by gaining the knowledge needed to compete in today's world," SGT Norris said.

SGT Norris plans to earn a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a specialty in homeland security. In his scholarship essay, SGT Norris wrote that obtaining his degree will allow him to compete with others for a promotion and enable him to obtain the position he wants in the federal government.

SGT Scott Csanadi, with the 3175th Military Police Company, was presented his scholarship on Dec. 2, during his unit's combination drill, promotion and award ceremony in Mexico, MO. SGT Csanadi found out that he won the scholarship right after he was medi-

© PUNCHSTOCK



SPC Stephanie Lopez (center) with DeAnn Wandler of Grantham University and LT Justin Metcalf.

of the ARNG in each of the 54 U.S. states and territories. The scholarships have a combined value of \$1.8 million and cover tuition costs, required textbooks and software for an undergraduate or graduate degree at Grantham University.

For many of the scholarship recipients, the news that they had won the scholarship was met with a mixture of disbelief and excitement. SPC Stephanie Lopez, the ARNG winner from Arizona, said, "It was so neat. I was happy, and I had to keep telling myself it was true." DeAnn Wandler, Grantham University's director of admissions, presented SPC Lopez with her scholarship in front of her unit, the

resources employee, full-time student, full-time single parent and a full-time National Guard Soldier," SPC Lopez said. Above all, she strives to be a good example to her 9-year-old daughter by showing her that education is important, because it not only ensures success in a career, it also instills core concepts for personal development.

That same weekend, Wandler also presented a scholarship to WOI Michael Burns at the Arizona National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters on Dec. 2. "I felt very proud to receive such a great honor and hoped that I encouraged others to pursue their education to better their career in the Arizona Army



WOI Michael Burns with DeAnn Wandler of Grantham University.

cally evacuated back to the United States from an injury he received while deployed to Afghanistan. While in Afghanistan, he served with the Provincial Reconstruction



SGT Russell Norris with Johanna Altland of Grantham University.



SGT Csanadi during his deployment to Afghanistan.

Grantham's scholarship came at the right time in my life. I retired from the Guard last year after 27 years of service, and I'm planning on jump-starting my civilian career by pursuing a degree in criminal justice at Grantham."

>> CW3 (ret.) Kevin Monio, MNARNG



SGT Scott Csanadi with Tom Macon of Grantham University.

from Altland in front of the 1256th Medical Company. "Grantham's scholarship came at the right time in my life," CW3 Monio said. "I retired from the Guard last year after 27 years of service, and I'm planning on jump-starting my civilian career by pursuing a degree in criminal justice at Grantham."

CW3 Monio works as a lieutenant at a maximum security prison. Earning an undergraduate degree will help him achieve his goal of becoming a prison administrator. He also has two daughters in college, and his goal is to graduate before they do.

Another scholarship recipient, SGT Nakisha Joseph of the 651st GS Maintenance Company, the winner for the Virgin Islands, plans to fulfill

her lifelong goal of earning her master's degree. She lives by the motto: "Luck is when opportunity knocks, and you answer."

"After seeing the announcement

favorite thing about distance learning is that its flexibility allows her to create her own learning experience around her schedule. Currently, SGT Joseph works full-



SGT Nakisha Joseph (center) with State CSM Barry Fredericks and CSM Eugenie Santos.

about the scholarship program in GX, I said to myself that I had nothing to lose and a lot to gain by winning, so I completed the scholarship application," SGT Joseph said. Her

time for the Virgin Islands National Guard, but once she earns her master's degree, she hopes to start her own business.

There's no doubt that the ARNG Scholarship Program formed through a partnership between Grantham University and GX has changed the lives of Soldiers across the United States. "We are honored to partner with GX to offer this scholarship program," said Tom Macon, chairman of Grantham University. "Both Grantham and GX want to provide Soldiers who have given so much to this country the opportunity to earn an undergraduate or graduate degree without worrying about how to pay for it."

Congratulations to all of the winners, and welcome to Grantham University! **GX**



CW3 (ret.) Kevin Monio with Johanna Altland of Grantham University.

Team security force, where he witnessed firsthand the numerous construction projects financed by the United States, including paving roads, rebuilding schools and providing humanitarian supplies to villages. "With all the stress and frustration I had been experiencing since returning wounded from Afghanistan, it was refreshing to have some good news," SGT Csanadi said.

During the scholarship presentation by Tom Macon, chairman of Grantham University, SGT Csanadi committed to make the most of Grantham's full four-year scholarship, and his entire unit was called on to give its support. SGT Csanadi believes in the importance of lifelong learning and feels that education is critical to being successful in both the workforce and life. He's looking forward to working in the computer science field.

On Dec. 7, CW3 (ret.) Kevin Monio, Minnesota's scholarship winner, received his scholarship



MONEY MATTERS

▶ USAA ANSWERS YOUR FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Courtesy of USAA

The new Financial Readiness Digest features answers to real financial questions from military members and their families. The answers, which are provided by June Walbert, a Certified Financial Planner with USAA Financial Planning Services and a LTC in the U.S. Army Reserve, are also featured in her "Ask June" column on Military.com. To read more of "Ask June," visit www.military.com/finance/askjunearticles.

Q Help for Spouses of Deployed Service Members

At times, we military spouses are at a loss. Our Soldiers are deployed more often and for much longer periods of time. We can no longer raise our children and keep on top of our bills with only our Soldiers' income. Those of us who have both children and a job spend so much on child care that we would be better off staying at home. It is extremely hard to get a job when we are the only

ones who can take the kids to the doctor, school, etc. Most employers are understanding at first, but their patience often wears out quickly.

Do you know of a legal and honest home-based job that is available, so I can be at home with my children? I am not looking for a "get rich quick" type of job, but I would like to be able to at least help with the bills and occasionally take my children out to eat. There are so many scams out there; I'd love to get your opinion on any good opportunities.

The hardest part of our lives is being without the love of our life, so it would be a win-win situation if we could make money from home to help our deployed spouses. During my husband's second deployment, I was the FRG (Family Readiness Group) leader and spent most of my time helping other families. Compared to his first deployment, the time seemed to go so much faster. Even though I wasn't getting paid, I was doing something that made a difference in my life and other families' lives. Thank you for listening, and any advice you offer will help not only mine but countless others' lives.

I'm a proud wife of an Army SGT, and a proud mother of a son who is a PFC and will be serving in Iraq at the same time as his father.

—Lori, Fort Hood, TX

A Thank you so very much for all that you have done and will continue to do! A husband and a son serving overseas ... it is hard for me to even imagine the strength and courage it takes you and so many others like you just to keep going during these difficult times. It's going to require creativity and a dose of patience, but you can figure out a way to add to the family's bottom line!

I checked in with our friends Tara Crooks and Star Hendersen at FieldProblems.com and ArmyWifeTalkRadio.com. They said working from home requires a lot of discipline and perseverance. And that it might take longer than you think to really get going. Please see their full article and several helpful links at www.fieldproblems.com/fparchives.shtml.

There are no perfect answers, but here are some more suggestions:

Start a day care. With so many spouses asking the same question, maybe there is an opportunity to provide the same help you need to others. You would be able to stay home with your kids while making a little money and offering your kindred spirits a cheaper price than they can get down the street.

Share the burden. Would it be possible to get together with several of your friends who are in a similar situation and essentially trade babysitting services with each other? Consider tapping into your FRG. This might provide a reliable schedule and allow all parties to gain employment outside the home to earn a little extra cash.

Ask for help. Maybe this is the perfect time to reach out to your immediate and extended family. Would it be possible for them to “rotate” to your house to help out with the kids? In many cases, family can provide the level of trust and caring you need. If you build a calendar, they can each offer a little time, which will add up to a lot of relief for you, at the right price!

Work from home. An increasing number of employers offer the flexibility of working from home. In many cases, this is an option to employees who have already proven themselves reliable and valuable.

My sister is a great example of making this work. She’s a stay-at-home mom who is very involved in everything that involves kids. Like you, she wanted to come up with a plan to add to the family’s coffers. After a couple of experiments, she landed on something that works for her. She attends trade shows, fairs, dogshows and conventions peddling comfy footwear. She has a blast, takes her kids with her when possible and makes a decent income.

Getting off the investing starting line

Like losing weight or going to the gym, once you decide to invest, you’ll find the time. Remember these five easy steps:

1. Speak the language. The more you learn about different types of investments, the less fear you’ll have about getting started.

2. Know what you’re working toward. Your goals will help you pick the right asset mix for you—among stocks, bonds and cash. It makes a difference whether you’re saving money for retirement or your first home.

3. Max out your savings plan. Automatically investing through your 401(k), 403(b) or TSP retirement plan is the fastest and easiest way to start investing. Take full advantage of these tax-deferred investments.

4. Stay diversified. Asset allocation and index funds are great places to keep the proper balance between stocks and bonds as you near retirement.

5. Go easy on individual stocks. Stocks may sound good, but limit the number you own unless you have plenty of time to research and monitor your holdings.

Again, I wish you the very best. Talk to your friends and family. Together you may be able to do a lot more than you can on your own! Good luck.

Survivor’s Benefit Plan vs. Life Insurance

Q I retired from the active duty Army in October. Do you recommend the Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP) for my spouse? I have to decide between SBP term and universal life insurance within the next month.

—Patrick, Newport News, VA

A Congratulations on your retirement, and thanks for your service! Retirement is quite a milestone and with it comes a big decision on how you protect your spouse and your family’s lifestyle. Should you participate in the Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP)? First, let me say that I think SBP is the deal of the century and that most service members should choose the maximum SBP coverage. The

protection that SBP provides is difficult and expensive to duplicate through life insurance coverage, and I personally think protection should be your main focus!

SBP typically protects your spouse (or children and others with financial interests) by continuing a portion of your retirement should you pass away. You can choose SBP coverage of up to 55 percent of your full retirement pay. The annual SBP cost of living adjustment makes the benefit hard to duplicate with life insurance. While a term life insurance policy might initially cost less than SBP, it is likely that the term policy would lapse (or cost substantially more) by the time your loved ones actually needed it. Because of a term policy’s expiration date, you really cannot effectively replace SBP with term insurance.

On the other hand, a permanent policy (universal or whole life) can do the trick, provided you continue to make the payments needed to keep the policy in force. This is a

suggestion only. A big concern with these products is that they are expensive, and it’s up to the member to ensure that he can continue to make the required premium payments—often much more difficult than he expects it to be. Remember: “Buy term and invest the difference.” Few people actually invest the difference and don’t have the savings they could have had with a permanent policy. Here, continuing to pay the high premiums equates to that “invest the difference” requirement, but how many can actually follow through with it?

It will typically cost substantially more than the SBP coverage it’s meant to replace. To give you a rough idea, an O-5 with 22 years of service would need more than \$600,000 of whole life insurance to provide approximately the same protection as SBP.

Here are some other important SBP features:

- * **The 6.5 percent premium is deducted from your retirement check on a pre-tax basis.**
- * **Premiums are discontinued after 30 years of payment and attainment of age 70 (effective October 2008).**
- * **Cost of SBP is shared between the service member and the government—again, making it difficult to duplicate.**

I almost always recommend SBP, but there are some situations when a closer look is advised before electing the coverage.

For example, if you are much younger than your spouse, and therefore anticipate outliving them, SBP may not be for you. If your spouse has a pension of his or her own or a serious medical condition that will likely negatively impact his or her life expectancy, SBP may not be needed; however, in most circumstances, the SBP decision is an easy one, so go for it! **GX**



One Family, Five Soldiers, One Deployment

By SSG Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

Cathy Hammack, a West Virginia National Guard family readiness assistant, ought to know a thing or two about her job: Five members of her family are serving in Iraq with the 11th Engineer Brigade.

Those serving are her husband, SGM Keith Hammack; her two sons, CPT Keith Hammack, Jr., and SPC Casey Hammack; her brother-in-law, SGT Roy Hammack; and her son-in-law, SGT Casey Phalen.

“Working with family programs helps me,” Hammack said. “It’s the only thing that keeps me sane. I have a good support network with my real family, my military family and my work family.”

You could say military service is a family value, but Hammack says the family has also reaped rewards. “The three oldest are benefiting from the Guard [college] tuition,” she said.

She married into the National Guard when she was 17. “It’s always

been a part of my life, my whole married life,” she said. “I’ve been married three-quarters of my life, so it’s always been there.”

The multiple deployments weren’t an accident. Some of the family volunteered when they heard others were going. “If I go, I want to go with dad,” SPC Casey Hammack told his mother. “I’m going to have to go eventually.”

Cathy Hammack was in Virginia in mid-November for joint family support assistance program training, which she said emphasized the resources available for National Guard families.

She said support for National Guard families in her home state starts at the top. MG Allen Tackett, West Virginia’s adjutant general, and his wife, Sallie Pat, make a point of reaching out to Guard members.

“They know everybody,” she said. “They know all the West Virginia troops. They get out there and meet them. He [MG Tackett] is behind family programs. It makes it easier on our Soldiers and our families to know that when they’re gone, they’re going to be taken care of from the top down in our state.”

In her job, Cathy Hammack says she sees Guard families who need financial assistance—who are

stressed because a family member is deployed for a second time. There are young children or those who face a family emergency. Her office offers help—and encouragement.

“We teach the families to be self-reliant and to take care of themselves,” she said.

Hammack’s five family members have been in Iraq since August 2007. The Eleanor-based 11th Engineer

Five members of Cathy Hammack’s family serve in Iraq with the 11th Engineer Brigade. They include her husband, SGM Keith Hammack (second from right); two sons, CPT Keith Hammack, Jr., (second from left) and SPC Casey Hammack (top); brother-in-law, SGT Roy Hammack (right); and son-in-law, SGT Casey Phalen (left).

never allowed to be in the same vehicle. They don’t let them go on the same missions usually. They’re not allowed to fly on the same plane, but with five of them they only had three planes from West Virginia [when they mobilized.]”

The Hammacks use email and Webcams to stay in touch. “The Webcam is nice,” Cathy said. “You can see their faces, and you can see their rooms—and the five boxes of stuff I sent them that are still unopened.”

Hammack’s daughter, Christina Phalen, isn’t deployed—but she hasn’t broken the family tradition. She’s a full-time staff sergeant in the Air National Guard.

Military service is a long-standing Hammack tradition. SGM

“I’M REALLY PROUD OF ALL OF THEM. WE’RE JUST PATRIOTIC PEOPLE. YOU’VE GOT TO HAVE A LOVE OF COUNTRY IN ORDER TO GO THROUGH THIS MANY DEPLOYMENTS. I COULDN’T DO THIS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF MY MILITARY FAMILY AND MY REGULAR FAMILY.” —CATHY HAMMACK

Brigade (Combat Engineers) is expected to be deployed for about a year.

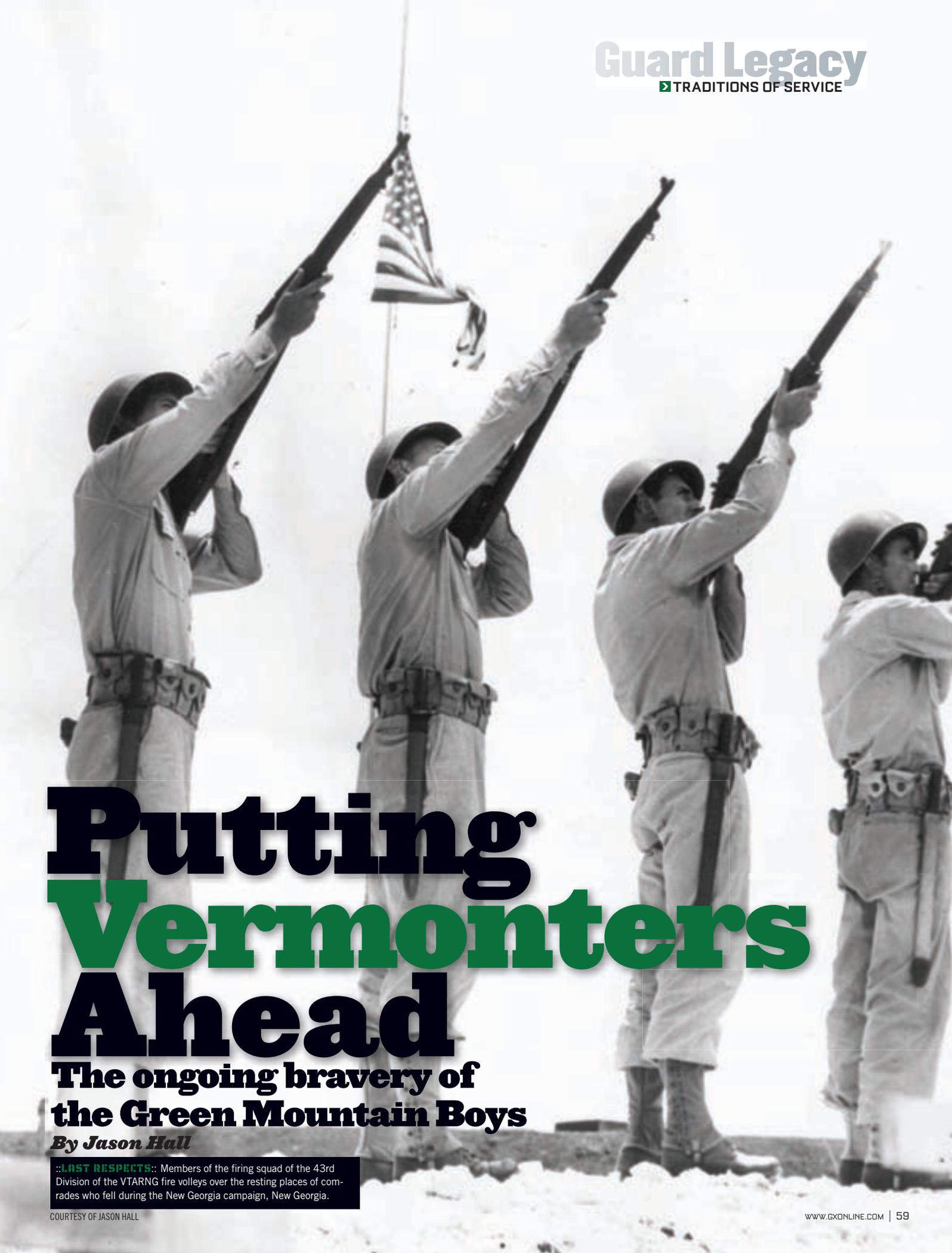
Perhaps counterintuitively, Cathy Hammack said she’s glad her family is together. “I feel safer with them all together,” she said. “They have their own family network over there.”

Besides, she said, commanders avoid exposing the five to danger at once. “They won’t let them stay in the same place,” she said. “They’re

Hammack’s father was in the Air Force and National Guard; Cathy Hammack’s father was in the Air Force.

“I’m really proud of all of them,” Hammack said. “We’re just patriotic people. You’ve got to have a love of country in order to go through this many deployments. I couldn’t do this without the support of my military family and my regular family.” **GX**

COURTESY OF CATHY HAMMACK



Putting Vermonters Ahead

**The ongoing bravery of
the Green Mountain Boys**

By Jason Hall

LAST RESPECTS: Members of the firing squad of the 43rd Division of the VTARNG fire volleys over the resting places of comrades who fell during the New Georgia campaign, New Georgia.

Growing up in New Hampshire, I always heard the joke, “God put the Connecticut River between Vermont and New Hampshire to keep the two states from killing one another.” Though meant to be funny, perhaps a more appropriate statement would be that God put Lake Champlain between New York and Vermont to minimize violence between the two states.

At one time or another, both New Hampshire and New York claimed the land between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River that we now know as the state of Vermont. And right from the beginning, the Vermont National Guard was involved.

A place in early American history

During the early 1700s, this contested area of land was known as the New Hampshire Grants, and settlers moved there with deeds from New Hampshire. The colonial government of New York, however, believed it owned the land and threatened to remove settlers with force if they did not make payment for the right to settle there.

On Oct. 24, 1764, the settlers formed the Bennington Militia to counter the threat of a New York insurgency. This unit, however, is better known as the Green Mountain Boys, taking their name from the French word, Vermont, which means “Green Mountain.” Led by Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain Boys protected the New York settlers as they continued to grow their own identity as Vermonters. The flag design used by the Green Mountain boys is still used today by the VTARNG.

With the outbreak of rebellion against Great Britain in 1775, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys turned their sights from fighting New Yorkers to fighting Redcoats. Only three weeks after the beginning of the American

“It appeared the British forces may get the upper hand when Vermont militia arrived and helped ensure American victory.”

Revolution, Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, with help from the Connecticut militia and CPT Benedict Arnold, captured New York’s Fort Ticonderoga.

Immediately upon the fall of the fort, the captured cannons were sent to George Washington’s forces, which were laying siege to British forces trapped in Boston. Thanks to the daring exploits of Ethan Allen’s militia force from Vermont, Washington was able to place the captured artillery on Dorchester Heights and force the British to give up Boston and evacuate the city, providing an early victory for the Americans. Today, members of the VTARNG are still called the Green Mountain Boys, despite the fact that women have been included since the mid-20th century.

In the spring of 1777, as part of his Saratoga Campaign, British GEN John Burgoyne sent a force to raid supplies through New York and the contested land of Vermont. Sent to intercept this force was John Stark and his New Hampshire Brigade of 1,500 militia men. The opposing forces met in the



Battle of Bennington, VT, though the actual battlefield is just across the border in Walloomsac, NY. The battle seesawed back and forth, and it appeared the British forces might get the upper hand until Vermont militia arrived and helped ensure American victory.

Later in 1777, the Vermont settlers decided to declare themselves a free, independent republic. When the American Revolution ended in 1781, there was constant squabbling between the Vermonters and the New York government until 1791, when Vermont was voted in as the 14th state of the United States.

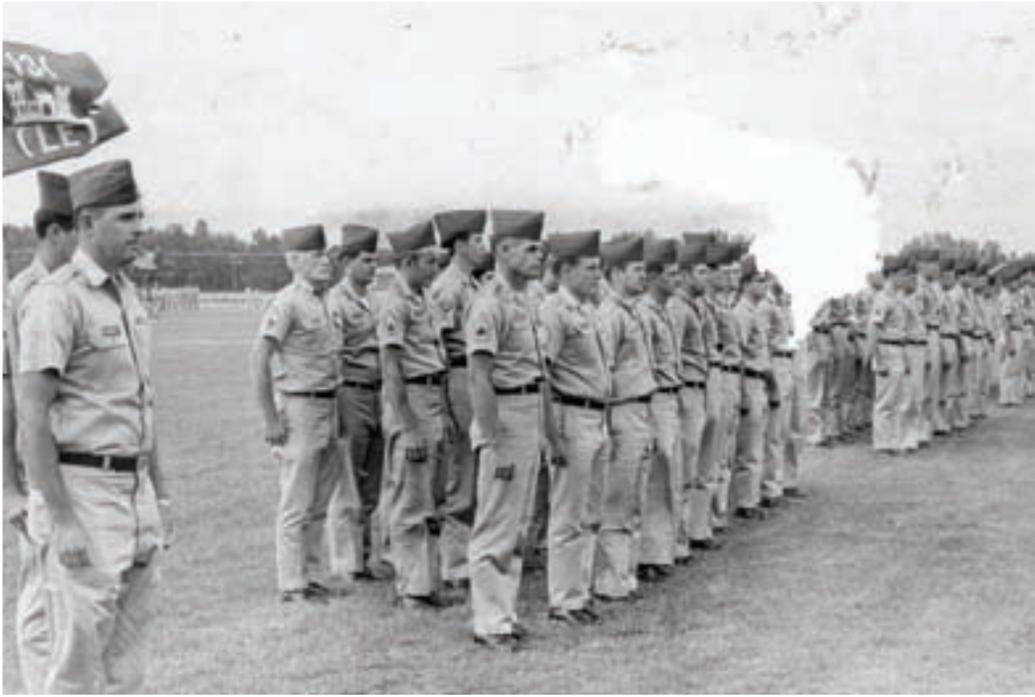
Civil War battles and the Spanish-American War

Following statehood, things were quiet for the Vermont militia until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. The Vermonters fought, from the first encounter at Bull Run to the end of the war at Appomattox Courthouse. Approximately 30,000 Vermont men fought for the Union, and it has been estimated that one in three were killed. These Vermonters helped turn the tide of war at the sleepy, then unknown, Pennsylvania town of Gettysburg. During the march to Gettysburg, Union GEN John Sedgwick said: “Put the Vermonters ahead and keep the column well closed up.” The general’s order is still alive and well today; it became, and still is, the official motto of the VTARNG.

On the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the 13th, 14th and 16th Vermont Infantry Regiments, part of the 2nd Vermont Brigade, helped to repulse the Confederate attack remembered as Pickett’s Charge. The Vermonters attacked the exposed right flank of the Confederates, causing the charge to collapse. This action turned not only the tide of the battle but also the tide of the war.

In response to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the 1st Regiment of the Vermont militia was mobilized on May 10, 1898, at Camp Olympia—which is presently Camp Johnson—in Colchester, VT. Olympia was the name of the flagship of Admiral George Dewey, himself a Vermonter. Admiral Dewey led the U.S. fleet to victory in the Battle of Manila.

COURTESY OF JASON HALL



To counter a possible attack by the Soviet Union in 1950, several VTARNG units were mobilized and deployed with the 43rd Division to Germany for two years of service. The VTARNG also served in federal service during the Berlin Crisis from 1961 to 1962. From May 1968 to September 1969 during Vietnam, Vermont's 131st Combat Engineers were mobilized to build 60 miles of road between Ban Me Thuot and Ninh Hoa, located near the Cambodian border.

Units of the VTARNG served during the Gulf War of 1990-1991, protecting the citizens of Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Vermont is the only state that selects its adjutant general by election of its state legislature. In 1997, Vermont made history when the Vermont General Assembly elected then-LTC Martha Rainville as the nation's first female adjutant general.

In January 1998, the VTARNG was called upon to help its own citizens when a massive ice storm hit Vermont and the entire Northeast. On Jan. 10, Gov. Howard Dean mobilized several Guard units, and that afternoon, some 450 Soldiers were hard at work helping neighbors, despite damage to their own homes. During the storm and its aftermath, these Guard Soldiers cleared roads, restored power and helped the state recover from the natural disaster. It is estimated that it would have taken a month longer to restore electricity without the help of these modern-day Green Mountain Boys.



VTARNG GETTING THE JOB DONE:

(opposite page) Vermont Soldiers get handshakes from a VIP.

(above) VTARNG Soldiers stand in formation.

(left) Labor leaders from the States, studying firsthand problems of Army supply, watch as a patrol from the 43rd Division moves out to flush some Japanese snipers who fired on the party east of Manila, Luzon.

20th-century action

In 1916, the VTARNG was mobilized and sent to the Mexican border to protect against possible insurgent raids by Pancho Villa. Following their service along the border, the modern Green Mountain Boys were mobilized and sent to France as part of the 26th "Yankee" Division during WWI. WWII would see the Vermont Guard members playing a crucial role in the Pacific Theater. This time the Vermonters were part of the 43rd "Winged Victory" Division.

Vermont's 172nd Infantry Regiment made amphibious landings on Luzon in the Philippines in January 1945. During operations on Luzon, the Vermonters were successful in driving Japanese forces from the Ipo Dam, preventing the enemy from destroying the dam and cutting off the supply of fresh water to Manila, the capital of the Philippines. In September 1945, the Vermonters, along with the rest of the 43rd Division, became one of the first American divisions to occupy Japan.

In the wake of the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, Soldiers of the VTARNG provided security forces at airports and patrolled along the Canadian border. The Vermonters have served in both Afghanistan and Iraq during OEF and OIF. As noted in the Guard Legacy column of the November 2007 issue of GX, the Soldiers of Vermont's 131st Engineers, while in Iraq, were part of a battalion led by the ARARNG, and together they cleared more than 1,200 roadside bombs.

The Green Mountain Boys today

The VTARNG has lost 10 of its Green Mountain Boys in the War on Terror. This number is a high percentage because the population of Vermont is only about 600,000. As they have over the years, the men and women of the VTARNG will continue to valiantly serve their fellow citizens of Vermont and the United States, as they keep alive their motto: "Put the Vermonters ahead and keep the column well closed up." **GX**

Fighting Spirit

➤ SHARP AND STRONG



Dale Earnhardt Jr. rests on the hood of his No. 88 National Guard car.



SPORTS

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Real Ultimate Fighters

ILLINOIS COMBATIVES TEAM GRABS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

By SGT April McLaren, JFHQ, PAO

FOR A GROUP that is not even a year old, the Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG) Combatives Team has already earned national recognition.

The team, which was first established in August 2007, placed in the only two national events they have participated in. In the most recent competition held November 16 and 17 at Fort Knox, KY, they earned second place overall, beaten only by Team Fort Benning.

Even though the team lacked a full roster by five Soldiers, they still traveled down to Fort Knox with only nine members. Regardless of the small number, they made their name known.

"The team made the best of its limited resources, advancing seven Soldiers into the semifinals and six into the finals," said SSG Nicholas Grant, team co-captain of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry in West Frankfort.

Five of the six finalists placed in the tournament, including SSG Grant who fought teammate SPC Adam Therruault of Company A, 33rd Brigade Support Training Battalion in Marseilles, for first place in the Welterweight division. Both Soldiers beat Fort Benning instructors as well as several others in the largest bracket of the tournament to get to that fight.

SSG Grant admitted SPC Therruault hit him a lot and hard, so SSG Grant worked him to the ground and won in the second round with a triangle choke. SSG Grant walked away with first in the class, while his Illinois teammate earned second. While two teammates fought each other, another Soldier had an opportunity to fight a drill sergeant from Fort Knox.

Ultimately, PFC Christopher Higerson of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry in West Frankfort, lost to a rear choke. He thanked SSG Grant for the opportunity to hit a drill sergeant.

While the experience of the Soldiers on the team varies, they have worked together in a short time to successfully develop a tight team.

ONE FIGHT AT A TIME

Co-captain MAJ Jeff Jiannoni of the 65th Troop Command Brigade in Springfield said the Soldiers take one fight at a time at the competitions.

"We know we have good fighters, but unlike the active duty units, we have had very little time

SEAL, who fell to Illinois' SGT Yuri Fomin of the Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery in Crestwood.

"We all knew that SGT Fomin's opponent was very good, and everyone in the gym would focus on him when he fought," MAJ Jiannoni said. "So when SGT Fomin subdued him with an arm bar, I think half the gym jumped out of their seats, and the other half fell down in shock."

SSG Grant also paid attention to the reaction of the crowd, especially when he saw a man wander by the mat after the fight.

"Has that Navy SEAL fought yet?" the man asked. "He's really good."

Then someone in the crowd yelled the answer to him: "He just got tapped by some National Guard guy."

After the fight, both MAJ Jiannoni and SSG Grant said SGT Fomin was calm and collected and simply sported a smile.



Competition is a great way to motivate Soldiers to train and provides the means to test our combatives techniques against fully resisting opponents."

>> SSG Nicholas Grant, team co-captain of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry in West Frankfort

to train together as a team," he said.

Most of the teammates have been through Modern Army Combatives Level 1 course, and the majority of the members train in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Judo or Mixed Martial Arts at civilian gyms.

Prior to the Fort Knox competition, the team went to Fort Benning, GA, in October, where they placed seventh overall in their first ever appearance at the All Army Combatives Tournament. The most talked about fight of the tournament was a fight between a favored-to-win U.S. Navy

TEST GROUND FOR BATTLE

Overall, SSG Grant said the team appreciates the recognition it has earned in a short amount of time while keeping focused on the reason behind this team.

"Competition is a great way to motivate Soldiers to train and provides the means to test our combatives techniques against fully resisting opponents," he said.

"However, everyone on the team and within the state's combatives program is very careful not to forget what we are really training for," he added. "We must understand that

competition has its limitations, and the primary focus of the combatives program must be on the battlefield."

While the ILARNG Combatives Team is nearly complete, it is always looking for qualified fill-ins, particularly in the lower weight classes, who have extensive combatives or outside submission experiences. The team also will hold tryouts next fall. **GX**

For more information on the team, contact SSG Grant at ngrant80@hotmail.com.

COURTESY OF SSG NICHOLAS GRANT

Home Run For Florida

HOW ONE SOLDIER STAYS IN SHAPE



SFC Derrick Dawson smacks the ball far enough to score a home run during a softball game May 1.



SFC Derrick Dawson goes up to bat for a softball game May 1.

By SPC Miko Holloran

SFC DERRICK DAWSON looks like the stereotypical Army National Guard recruiter: He's tall, in excellent shape and looks like he could easily hold his own in a boxing match.

How does he do it?

He follows a healthy diet, runs, lifts weights and plays softball. A native of Waycross, GA, SFC Dawson started playing the sport in 1994. By joining the Florida Army National Guard in 2001, he was able to turn one of his favorite hobbies

into something that would make him a great Soldier.

"Softball is the perfect sport for military members," SFC Dawson told *GX*. "Usually games are in the evening, so it doesn't interfere with your duty hours."

SFC Dawson is a player on two co-ed teams, and he's on a men's tournament traveling team. Playing for nine months out of the year and practicing for the other three months definitely keeps him in shape.

"Recruiters are required to maintain their proper weight and keep up with physical fitness, just like every other Soldier," SFC Dawson explained. "Because we are usually tasked with performing our own physical training, this is how I train."

A fan of the Boston Red Sox, SFC Dawson loves to play right field or center field. His favorite stadium to visit is Turner Field in Atlanta. In 2006, he made a great play that could rival one of J.D. Drew's.

"It was a game-saving catch in the outfield," SFC Dawson said. "I had to jump on the fence to catch it!"

This Soldier has also played ball with a sister service: the Navy.

SFC Dawson was a part of Team Nemesis, a Navy softball team

from Naval Air Station Mayport. He helped bring the team to the All-Military World Series twice in three years. He first participated in the series in 2003 at Walter Reed Medical Center and competed in the 2007 series at Patrick Air Base in Panama, FL.

With 75 teams from all branches across the country participating, Team Nemesis played in the Varsity B division. A part of the team from 2004 until 2007, SFC Dawson was mostly utilized as an outfielder.

According to SFC Dawson, those getting in shape should do so naturally and leave the quick fixes alone. He believes that all fitness should be pure and free of anything that could damage the body in the future.

"While I try to follow a good diet, I've never taken any type of performance enhancing vitamins or drugs," SFC Dawson said. "I just try to maintain a balanced diet and work the bad food off with regular running, lifting weights and playing softball."

But softball doesn't just keep SFC Dawson in shape. It also gives him a chance to display the Army values outside of the uniform.

"Softball teams use the Army values, just in a different environment," SFC Dawson said. "There is

loyalty, respect, integrity and personal courage in softball games. Softball definitely promotes teamwork and camaraderie." **GX**

"Softball teams use the Army values, just in a different environment... [it] definitely promotes teamwork."

>>SFC Derrick Dawson, FLARNG

A Race to Re-enlist

By Staff Sgt. Marcia Beene Dickerson
and Camille Breland

AS OUR NATION CELEBRATES another year of independence, Soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard (MAARNG) have the opportunity to pledge their commitment and service to our country by re-enlisting.

These dedicated warriors will pursue a 372-year tradition, the oldest component of the Armed Forces, as they take their vows during the Indy Racing League's (IRL) Fourth Annual Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, NY, on July 6. Soldiers and their family members will also cheer on the National Guard's Indy driver Vitor Meira as he races for a top finish.

Being a race car driver takes ambition, courage, inspiration and commitment. These same traits are found in Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers. Most Guard Soldiers commit themselves to a life of service, and the National Guard Bureau is giving these MAARNG Soldiers the opportunity to extend with a truly unique ceremony.

During the IRL's "Camping World Grand Prix at the Glen," MAARNG Soldiers who plan to re-enlist from July–September will do so on the infield before the race begins. The ARNG Color Guard will kick off the ceremony, followed by re-enlisting Soldiers carrying the American flag onto the field.

Soldiers are invited to bring one guest to the ceremony, which is dedicated to honoring the Guard. The IndyCar Series weekend returns to the legendary 3.4-mile road course for Fourth of July weekend.

The Guard traces its roots to 1636, making it America's first armed forces. Here also began the lineage of the MAARNG as the Massachusetts Bay Colony, organized to safeguard the citizens of the state. These Soldiers, dubbed "Minutemen" for being ready at a minute's notice, have since stood on the front lines for our nation throughout American history. Guard Soldiers have been present at every major conflict as well as at every natural disaster. Always ready, always there.

MICHAEL KRINKE



Fight to The Finish

HIGH-SPEED
INDY DRIVER
REPRESENTS
THE GUARD

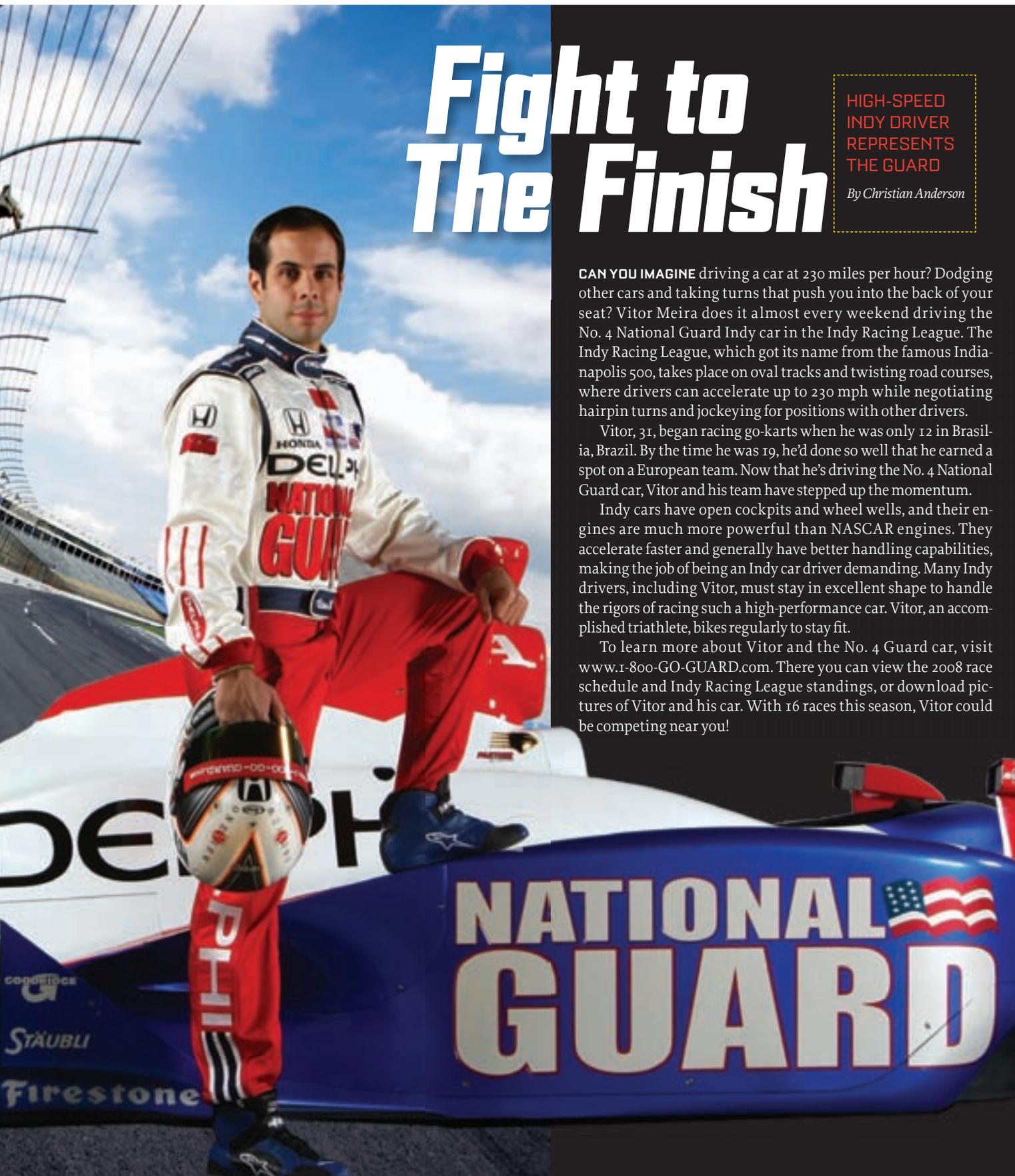
By Christian Anderson

CAN YOU IMAGINE driving a car at 230 miles per hour? Dodging other cars and taking turns that push you into the back of your seat? Vitor Meira does it almost every weekend driving the No. 4 National Guard Indy car in the Indy Racing League. The Indy Racing League, which got its name from the famous Indianapolis 500, takes place on oval tracks and twisting road courses, where drivers can accelerate up to 230 mph while negotiating hairpin turns and jockeying for positions with other drivers.

Vitor, 31, began racing go-karts when he was only 12 in Brasilia, Brazil. By the time he was 19, he'd done so well that he earned a spot on a European team. Now that he's driving the No. 4 National Guard car, Vitor and his team have stepped up the momentum.

Indy cars have open cockpits and wheel wells, and their engines are much more powerful than NASCAR engines. They accelerate faster and generally have better handling capabilities, making the job of being an Indy car driver demanding. Many Indy drivers, including Vitor, must stay in excellent shape to handle the rigors of racing such a high-performance car. Vitor, an accomplished triathlete, bikes regularly to stay fit.

To learn more about Vitor and the No. 4 Guard car, visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com. There you can view the 2008 race schedule and Indy Racing League standings, or download pictures of Vitor and his car. With 16 races this season, Vitor could be competing near you!



COURTESY OF PANTHER RACING

Dale Jr. Stays in the Chase

WITH HIS RECENT SWITCH to Hendrick Motorsports before the beginning of the 2008 racing season, Dale Earnhardt Jr. wasted no time securing his spot as one of NASCAR's most successful and popular drivers. At the helm of the No.88 National Guard car, Dale Jr. has had some impressive finishes, leaving fans wondering just how much he can improve by the year's end. Representing the Guard well, Dale Jr. starts out hard and finishes strong, bringing smiles to his fans and the Soldiers he represents. Check out Dale Jr.'s 2008 highlights and his answers to our Q&A below.

By Christian Anderson

Q&A

GX You've earned fame and fortune racing in NASCAR, but what do you value most in life?

DALE JR. My mom and family, my racing career and my happiness.

GX You began racing at age 17. After all you've seen and experienced in NASCAR, what advice do you have for young drivers like Landon Cassill?

DALE JR. It's hard for me to tell people how to do things or give advice to young guys. They have to be willing to understand, listen and respect people. I think Landon has a good enough head on his shoulders and, given time, he'll be fine on the track and he'll be winning races. In my eyes he's a good driver, but Landon needs to understand that it's up to him to make that happen. He has the skills; he just needs the confidence to go out and make things happen.

GX Growing up as the son of racing legend Dale Earnhardt, and then making your own footprint in the sport and gaining your own fans has brought you your share of fame. How do you stay grounded?

DALE JR. It's hard for me to conceptualize the fame because I'm just an ordinary guy. Popularity can't be mistaken for power. You have to stay grounded. I have my family to help me with that.

2008 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

1st: Budweiser Shootout
2nd: UAW Dodge 400
3rd: Kobalt Tools 500
4th: Dodge Challenger 500
4 **Top 5** finishes
8 **Top 10** finishes
Currently **3rd** in point standings with 1,556 points, only 134 behind Kyle Busch.



COURTESY OF HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS



FLEXING YOUR MENTAL MUSCLE

By SGT Michael Kerhoff

Let's start this month by being thankful for what we have. Like having inexperienced training partners whom we can take advantage of and try crazy new techniques on! Just kidding; we should be grateful for having battle buddies who are willing to train.

In the last issue, we covered some techniques to build a well-rounded program to strengthen the body. This month we'll focus on strengthening the mind. How many times have you heard that a fight is 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical? Think about it: How many steps are done when entering and clearing a room during MOUT? (1) Enter through the door quickly (2) clear my near corner (3) clear to the center of the room (4) dominate (5) communicate and (6) exit. To learn steps like these, we train repetitively until we can perform in an instinctive manner or with muscle memory.

But what happens when outside factors are thrown into the mix? A perfect example is when squads are engaged with paintballs and artillery simulators during an FTX. I wish our opponents wouldn't be able to run away or shoot anything out of their AK-47s, and we didn't have to deal with civilians on the battlefield, but unfortunately, these obstacles are realities of combat. So how do we deal with those distractions? It doesn't matter if you're preparing for an MMA fight, an FTX or getting ready for another combat patrol, ask yourself, "Do I have a combat mind-set?"

A longtime mentor of CATC, a SGM, once told me, "Have a plan to kill everyone you meet." At first, I had no idea what he was talking about, but during my deployment, it hit me. Taking on that mind-set was a way for him to keep his mind sharp and in combat mode. You have to figure out your own way of clearing your mind and focusing on a task, not just while preparing for it but also while performing it. Whether competing in a post-combatives tournament, conducting MOUT or just getting through the problems of everyday life, you must keep your mind sharp to succeed.

HOW TO EXECUTE THE SHOULDER LOCK



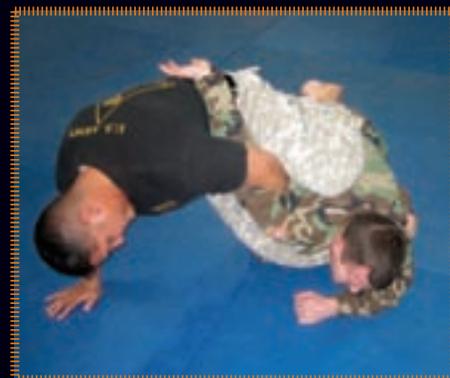
STEP 1 To set up this shoulder lock, I start from the closed guard position. I see that my opponent is either holding onto my waist or his hands are flat on the mat.



STEP 2 I choose an arm to trap by reaching around my opponent's arm, just above his elbow, and coming underneath to secure his opposite lapel with the hand I use to trap his arm.



STEP 3 With my opponent's arm trapped and still holding on to his lapel, I open my guard and push my hips out, draping my outside knee over my opponent's back.



STEP 4 To finish the lock, I lift my hips up, bringing the knee draped over my opponent's back over the shoulder toward his ear. This locks out my opponent's elbow and shoulder while putting pressure on those joints so that I get the tap.

BATTLE-READY TECHNIQUES

There are different philosophies on how to develop a combat mind-set. COL Jeff Cooper, founder of Arizona's Gunsite Academy, says, "The combat mind-set has nothing to do with your alertness level but more of a state of mind."

Whether you are sparring or conducting reflexive fire drill on the range, immerse yourself in your training. Rather than going through the motions, do your drills physically and mentally. Training your mind and body will help you build your "combat mind-set." Before a football game, some players slap each other's

helmets to get ready for the big game. We've all seen professional fighters do anything from punching themselves in the face to sitting alone in a dark room meditating before a fight. The same can be said for combat. I have seen everything from Soldiers saying a prayer to listening to some death metal music prior to rolling out on a mission.

The way I see it is: Do what you need to do to clear your mind and focus on the task in front of you. With a solid, sharp mind-set, you'll be able to calmly and rationally perform under pressure, especially during complicated situations. Let's roll! **GX**

START
FITNESS™

WORKOUT FOR TWO: SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert gear up for a workout at the National Guard Training Center in Smyrna, TN.

OPERATION TAKE TWO™

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert

Now that New Year's is long past and summer is right around the corner, families everywhere are gearing up for sun, sand and saltwater. To get ready for those family vacations, this issue we focus on a different type of regimen: the couple's workout. But don't worry singles—you can simply follow the modifications to maximize this workout and make it just as intense! By following these steps, we hope you're one step closer to giving your family (and yourself) the gift of a healthier you.



EVAN BAINES / ILLUSTRATION BY SEAMUS GALLAGHER, NICOLE SYLVESTER

WARM-UP PHASE

1. Aerobics (5 Minutes): Suggested exercises include running, biking or jump rope.

2. Hip crossovers (10 seconds on each side; alternate sides 10 times; one set)

- Lie face up on the floor on a gym mat with your legs together in a 90-degree angle, your feet on the floor and your arms held perpendicular to your sides.
- While keeping both legs together and your feet on the floor, lower your legs down to one side while maintaining a 90-degree angle.
- Switch sides.

Warning: Do not stretch beyond your comfort level.

3. Scorpion (10 seconds on each side; rotating 8-10 times; one set)

- Lie face down on the floor on a gym mat with your legs together and your arms held out perpendicular to your sides.
- From the starting position, lift your right foot up behind you, over and across your body, as if you are trying to touch your toe to your left hand.
- Allow your left hip to lift off the floor, but keep your palms and your left leg down on the mat. You should feel the stretch in the front of your right hip, along the sides of your torso and in the front of your right leg.
- Switch legs.

Warning: Do not stretch beyond your comfort level.

4. Crunches, hooking feet with partner (90 seconds; one set)

- Put your fingertips on the sides of your head and keep your navel tucked in without holding your breath.
- Keep your heels on the floor and lift your toes off of the ground.
- Hook your legs with your partner’s legs by flexing your foot underneath your partner’s calves.
- Your legs will form a 90-degree angle at your knees.
- Lift your chin up toward the sky without pulling on your neck and return to the starting position.
- Repeat.

Warning: Keep your lower back on the floor throughout the exercise.

5. Crunches, legs at a 90-degree angle with feet up and touching (90 seconds; one set)

- Maintain similar form to crunches.
- Elevate your legs, placing the bottoms of your feet together.
- Your legs will form a 90-degree angle at your knees.

6. Box, reach and touch (1 minute; one set)

- Lie in face up position and extend legs toward the sky.
- Reach toward the left side of your body with both hands, while your partner reaches toward the right, so your hands will touch.
- Switch.

Warning: It’s normal to experience some tightening in the front of your neck.

7. Superman and reach (1 minute; one set)

- Lie in a face down position, and lift your arms and legs off of the mat.
- Extend your arms forward.
- Bring your arms into a 90-degree angle while squeezing your shoulder blades together.



MUSCLE TARGET PHASE

8. Partner-assisted push-ups (1 minute of continuous push-ups; three sets each)

- Use a long towel wrapped around the abdomen of the person performing the push-up.
- While one person is in the push-up, the person holding the towel is in the squat, standing over and around the person performing the push-up.
- Working together, as the arms bend for the push-up, the standing person squats.
- The squatter using the towel assists the push-up performer only a little; enough to accomplish the goal.



9. Glute and ham raise, and lower with medicine ball (30 seconds; two sets each)

10. Alternating push-up and crawl race (1 minute)

11. Partner-assisted military press (1 minute; two sets each)

- The seated partner sits cross-legged on ground, and the standing partner places his or her right ankle against the seated partner. The seated partner uses the standing partner's leg for back support.
- The seated partner raises his or her hands into the air and makes a fist, interlocking hands with the standing partner.
- The standing partner places his or her hands over the fist, placing resistance on the seated partner throughout the exercise.

12. Wall hold and medicine ball pass (1 minute; two sets)

- Rest on your heels, switch places and repeat.

Warning: Do not allow your knees to cross over in front of your toes.

13. Repeat alternating push-up and crawl (1 minute)

14. Seesaw squats or alternating squats (1 minute; one set)

- One person is up while the other is down.

Warning: Do not bend more than 90 degrees at the knees.

15. Mirrored traveling lunges (3 minutes)

- Face each other while one person travels backward and the other forward.

Warning: Keep your body centered and never allow your forward knee to bend beyond your toes.



16. Tubing sprints (1 minute; two sets each)

- Run across the floor with a thick piece of tubing.
- Like the partner-assisted military press, make it difficult for your partner but not impossible.

17. Last Man Up jogging drill around the track (5 minutes)

- While jogging around the track, pass your partner.
- Continue to pass your partner until the goal is reached.



18. Leaping plyometric seesaw squats (90 seconds)

- Like standard seesaw squats, one partner jumps in the air as soon as the other lands in the squat position.
- One person is up while the other is down.

Warning: Do not bend more than 90 degrees at the knees.

“The best proof of love is trust.”
—Dr. Joyce Brothers

“The art of love is largely the art of persistence.”

—Albert Ellis



19. Partner-assisted pull-ups (1 minute; two sets each)

- Spot your partner by holding his or her ankles while he or she stands on your thighs.
- Repeat.

Warning: Stand in proper squat position while assisting your partner with pull-ups.

REPEAT

20. Last Man Up jogging drill around the track (5 minutes)

- While jogging around the track, pass your partner.
- Continue to pass your partner until the goal is reached.

21. Crunches, hooking feet (90 seconds)

22. Crunches, keeping legs at a 90-degree angle with feet up and touching (90 seconds; one set)

23. Box, reach and touch (1 minute; one set)

COOLDOWN PHASE

24. Partner-assisted seated straddle stretch (30 seconds; four sets each with feet touching and holding forearms)

25. Scorpion (10 seconds on each side; rotating 8-10 times; one set)

26. Hip crossovers (10 seconds on each side; alternate sides 10 times; one set)

We encourage you to send your questions or requests for additional information to askthetrainer@STARTfitness.com.



SSG KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, SSG Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, run 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.

CHRIS KISSLING

Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath. Strategic Army Training (START), LLC assumes no association with the United States Army or the Department of Defense. Copyright ©1998 START™. All Rights Reserved. Special thanks to the Smyrna, TN., National Guard Training Center.

Beat the **HEAT**

DUPONT'S NOMEX FIBER IS MORE THAN FIRE-RESISTANT—IT'S NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE

By Jason West

So the question for this month was:
Why Nomex?

For those of you who are not familiar with it, Nomex is an amazing fireproof fiber created by the clever folks at DuPont. It has been used for commercial applications for 40 years, but unless your job regularly brings you into contact with huge flames or massive amounts of heat, you've probably never heard of it. Recently, that's changed for Soldiers, as more and more Nomex products have become available for their use. Anything made from this fabric is generally referred to as "flame-retardant" or "heat-resistant." And this description, as we learned in the lab, is a dramatic understatement.

Another important attribute of Nomex is that it doesn't melt the way most synthetic fibers will when subjected to significant amounts of heat. This is important because—brace yourselves for this not-so-pretty picture—when a vehicle is hit by an Improvised Explosion Device (IED), the interior fills with flames and the temperature can flash to 800 degrees or above. This is what happened to one Soldier



TO COME

who, unfortunately, was wearing a “performance fabric” shirt—one of those cool sportswear shirts designed to draw moisture away from the skin—when the IED hit. The shirt melted, dramatically increasing the injury.

CAN NOMEX TAKE THE HEAT?

In our experience, it seems like pretty much any fabric will burn if enough heat is applied, and we wanted to know if Nomex could live up to the hype. For comparison purposes, we decided to test some standard synthetics like polypro, polyester, a few brands of performance fabrics and cotton. Now just to be clear, none of these products, other than Nomex, makes any claim to heat resistance, but we figured since these are the materials

smolder—even after we used an entire box of matches.

Next up was a brazing or soldering torch—the kind you use to join copper plumbing pipes. Surprisingly, just passing the flame quickly over the fabrics (for less than one second) caused only a reaction in the polypro, which curled quickly, but did not melt. Keeping the flame on for more than a second caused ignition, which resulted in a self-sustaining fire in all but the Nomex.

SURPRISING RESULTS

Here’s where things started to shock us: Figuring that Nomex doesn’t look like anything special, we decided that this 3-inch steady flame would create sparks—after all, we’re talking about actual fire here. After more than three seconds

removed. But despite suffering some serious blisters, nothing happened. The heat had dissipated almost instantly.

Our final test involved a heat gun, which, the manufacturer claims, produces 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit. It delivers heat but no flame. With an infrared thermometer, we set about seeing just where these fabrics would fail. At just over 200 degrees, the polypro began to shrivel, and by 240 degrees, it was a sticky liquid.

Performing slightly better were the polyester and performance fabrics, which shriveled just below 400 degrees and transformed into a flaming glue substance by 440 degrees. The surprise performer in this test was good old cotton. It began to brown after a few seconds at about 500 degrees, but even after several more seconds at up to 750 degrees, it just kind of charred to ash—no distortion, no flame. It just kept getting darker until it fell apart after almost 15 seconds at more than 500 degrees (spiking to 750).

LAST ONE STANDING

Once the other fabrics failed, only Nomex was left. It began to discolor a bit at around 500 degrees, but when we checked the fabric, we found only the dye had failed. The fabric was unchanged. After 90 seconds of heat blasts ranging from 700 to 750 degrees, the fabric had shriveled slightly and lost a little elasticity, but mostly remained intact. After expecting all of the fabrics to fail spectacularly, DuPont left us shocked at the durability and indestructible qualities of Nomex.

So, what does this mean to you? If you do anything that puts you near fire, or if you’re in an environment where you might be subjected to massive amounts of heat, take the proper precautions to protect yourself. Wrapping yourself in as much Nomex as possible should do the trick. Some of the gear can be a little pricey, but your safety is worth it. Nomex is as close to being heat indestructible as fabric gets! **GX**

After 90 seconds of heat blasts ranging from

700 to 750 degrees,
the fabric had shriveled slightly and lost a little elasticity, but mostly remained intact. After expecting all of the fabrics to fail spectacularly, DuPont left us shocked at the durability and indestructible qualities of Nomex.

Soldiers are likely to be wearing, it was worth seeing how they performed.

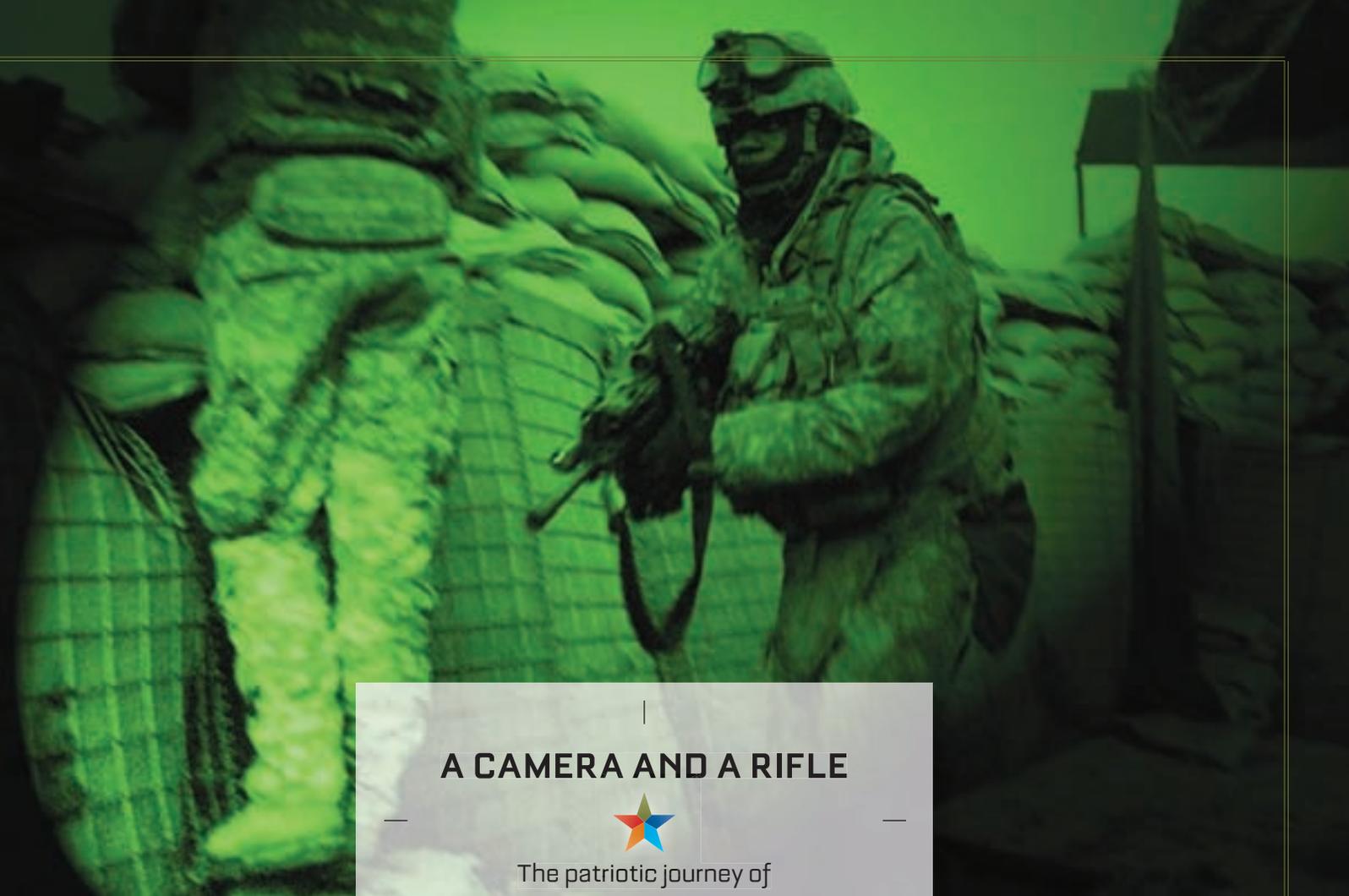
Our first test was about as simple as it gets: Cut a 2-inch square of the fabric and hold a match to it. The standard synthetics quickly ignited and transformed into a scalding liquid as they burned. The droplets carried enough heat to leave red marks on a tester’s exposed skin and even caused a secondary ignition when they dripped onto a discarded piece of fabric. The cotton fabric ignited and burned slowly, essentially leaving ash behind. The Nomex, however, wouldn’t so much as

in direct contact with the flame, the Nomex appeared to ignite. We removed the flame and suddenly there was no fire. We examined the fabric; it was discolored and slightly shriveled from the heat, but it still flexed and moved like before. So we reapplied the flame for more than 10 seconds. The fabric curled up a bit and, suddenly, it looked like flames were shooting out!

Again, we removed the flame and there was nothing. The fabric had curled enough to create an oxidation chamber for our fire. One of the testers stupidly picked up the Nomex right after the flame was



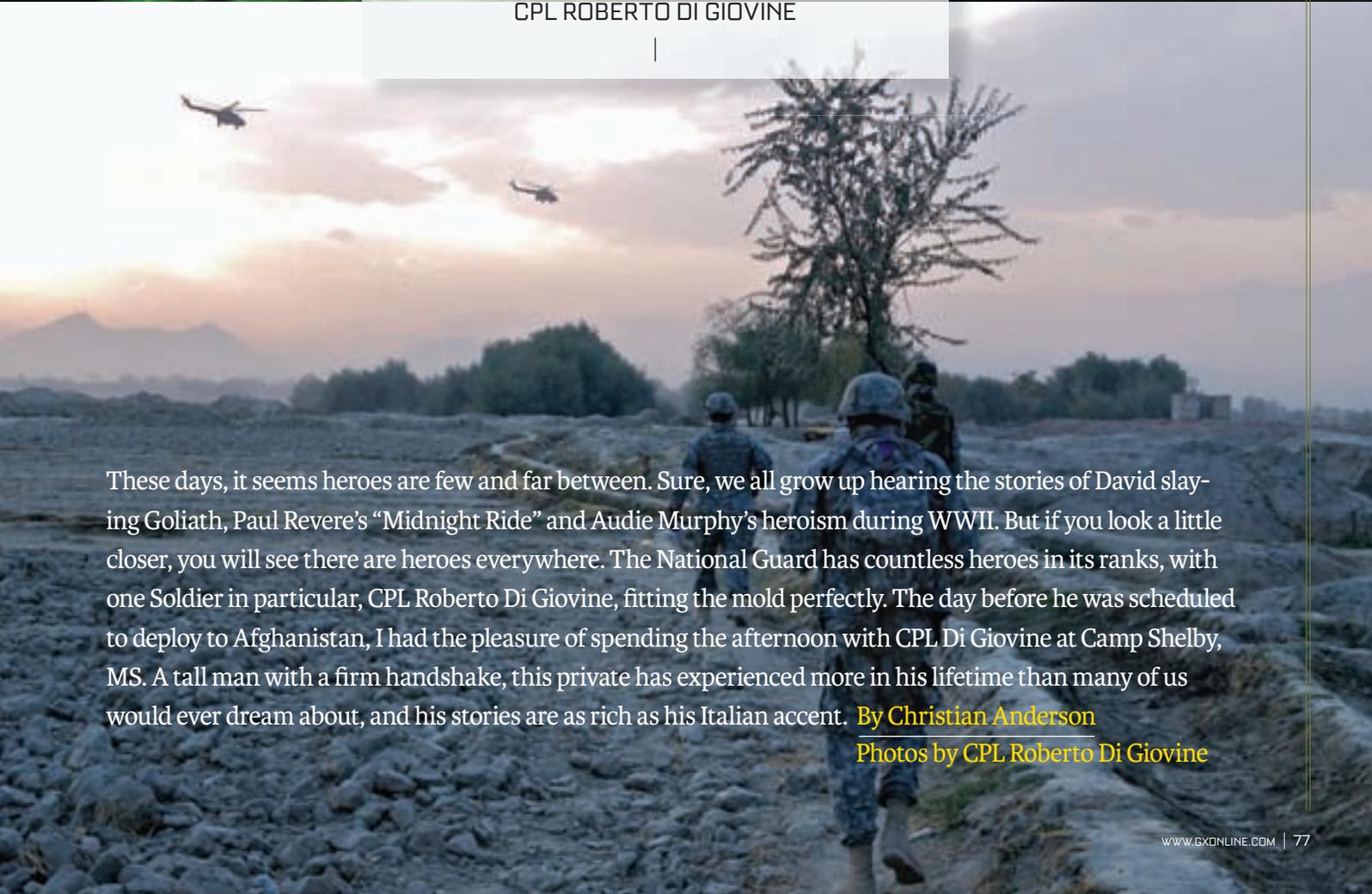
Self-portrait, HHC 1-118th SECFOR 218th ESB, civil affairs mission, Kabul, Afghanistan. **Next page above:** Soldier from the 218th maneuvers at night while engaging the enemy in Afghanistan. **Next page below:** Dismounted patrol, HHC 1-118TH 218TH ESB, in proximity of Camp Phoenix while clearing the fields south of the FOB in Kabul, Afghanistan.



A CAMERA AND A RIFLE



The patriotic journey of
CPL ROBERTO DI GIOVINE



These days, it seems heroes are few and far between. Sure, we all grow up hearing the stories of David slaying Goliath, Paul Revere's "Midnight Ride" and Audie Murphy's heroism during WWII. But if you look a little closer, you will see there are heroes everywhere. The National Guard has countless heroes in its ranks, with one Soldier in particular, CPL Roberto Di Giovine, fitting the mold perfectly. The day before he was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan, I had the pleasure of spending the afternoon with CPL Di Giovine at Camp Shelby, MS. A tall man with a firm handshake, this private has experienced more in his lifetime than many of us would ever dream about, and his stories are as rich as his Italian accent. **By Christian Anderson**

Photos by CPL Roberto Di Giovine

B

orn in Verona, Italy, on Jan. 27, 1973, CPL Di Giovine is the son of an artist.

“I literally grew up in my father’s photography studio,” CPL Di Giovine said. “It’s where I learned about art and principles like loyalty and honesty.”

While CPL Di Giovine’s father was a wonderful role model for morality, his grandfather, a strong man with a great sense of national pride, gave him his warrior spirit.

“He was a good, proud man,” the corporal said. “[My grandfather] liked life in Italy during Mussolini’s dictatorship, though at night, he helped Jewish prisoners escape from the train deporting to Germany in 1944. He was never a fascist; he never joined the party, even when all Italians did, but he loved the pride and the order that characterized the Italian lifestyle right before WWII. He was a really important figure in my life. [And] although he was a very proud Italian, he was the most humble man I ever met.”

finding that only officers of privileged families received the opportunity to fight for Italy.

LIFE THROUGH A LENS

CPL Di Giovine grabbed his camera and went to Bosnia, where a civil war was raging. While there, he experienced the gritty side of war. “I got shot at, but got lucky, and I made it back after two months of traveling up and down the country,” the corporal said. “The first thing I learned while in Bosnia is that there is a difference between war on television and war in reality. When you see something like that, it makes you realize how lucky you are. We are lucky ... we have a lot of stuff, a lot of money, and those people had nothing.”

CPL Di Giovine learned he could help change the world as a Soldier and a photographer, harnessing his warrior spirit as well as his humanitarian and artistic sides. After seeing extensive action through the lens of his camera for two months, CPL Di Giovine returned safely to Italy.

Back home, he took a job with a newspaper as a photographer, and as his skills grew, he began to work with magazines and

He raced in Greenville. Though he says he did not perform well, Rich Hincapie, brother of George Hincapie and creator of Hincapie Sportswear, offered CPL Di Giovine a job. “Apparently, he was surprised to see an Italian coming all the way to Greenville just for a race,” CPL Di Giovine laughed. “So, I took it.”

CPL Di Giovine began working with Hincapie to help train local aspiring cyclists and start a triathlon team sponsored by Hincapie Sportswear. During this time, he asked the Italian Officer Association to acquaint him with the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG), so he could train with the Guard Soldiers and eventually join their ranks.

“My thoughts were simple: The United States National Guard is the most important, powerful reserve outfit in the world,” he said.

After a few letters, he was invited to train with several units as a guest. CPL Di Giovine trained with the South Carolina 1-118th Infantry (Mech), 218th Brigade for 18 months, while building friendships and gathering material for a book he started putting together about being a Citizen-Soldier.

“My camera is my rifle and my enemy is indifference. I hope that with my photos and my service to this country, I can bring attention to the National Guard, its men and women, and its mission.” >> CPL Roberto Di Giovine, on his military service

ENTERING THE SERVICE

Following his father’s advice, CPL Di Giovine went to art school and joined the Italian Army in 1991 after graduating. Three months after enlisting, CPL Di Giovine attended OCS for the Mountain Troops, or “Alpini.” Established in the late 1800s, these special troops have had a rich heritage protecting the mountainous border from foreign invaders during the 20th century.

“I’ve always dreamed of becoming a Soldier,” CPL Di Giovine said. “So, I joined as a volunteer ahead of time and ultimately served almost two years. My father never liked my ‘Soldier’s soul.’ My grandfather, until the day he died, never excused me for leaving active duty in 1993.”

As a newly commissioned 2LT Assault Platoon Leader, then 2LT Di Giovine loved the thrill of leading men, many of whom were much older than he. But after completing his contract with the Italian Army, he left the military to pursue his dream of becoming a photographer. The young Soldier had volunteered to serve in the Gulf War, Somalia and then Bosnia, but had been denied service,

advertising agencies. Still a member of the Italian Army as a reserve officer, CPL Di Giovine was anxious to make a difference as a warrior and a photographer. Fed up with the Italian military, he attempted to join the French Foreign Legion and the U.S. Marines.

AMERICAN DREAMS

After his ideas ran into roadblocks, CPL Di Giovine started racing bicycles in 1997 and, by 1999, was a professional. In August 2001, he planned to race in the prestigious Michelin Classic in Greenville, SC, home to George Hincapie, Lance Armstrong’s right-hand man in the Tour de France. As the young man was preparing his trip, the attacks of 9/11 transpired. His friends who were supposed to race with him backed out, afraid to leave the country. CPL Di Giovine refused to let terrorists control his life by fear and left for America.

“I chose to stand against that,” CPL Di Giovine declared. “I was following my American Dream, and I was not letting the Americans stand alone.”

While working in Greenville and training with the SCARNG, CPL Di Giovine fell in love with a woman named Holly, and the couple planned to marry. But there was a catch—CPL Di Giovine was still an Italian citizen, making getting married in America a bit of a challenge.

But after some paperwork and two weddings—one in Italy and one in Holly’s home state of Missouri—CPL Di Giovine’s marriage was finally made official in February 2005.

According to CPL Di Giovine, his wife has helped make all of his success possible. “She is the most supportive person around me,” he said. “She’s very proud of me and that means everything. That makes going over there much easier for me.”

CPL Di Giovine joined the SCARNG in June 2006 and attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Benning, GA, in March 2007.

“I love my country and my army,” CPL Di Giovine said. “But I also know that my life now is here in the United States, and I owe this country all I am and all I have today.”

Since the corporal had previous military experience, he felt somewhat prepared



InCountry

A TRIBUTE TO THE 218TH BCT

The 218th Brigade Combat Team of the South Carolina Army National Guard is currently deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Here's a photo tribute to these fine Soldiers, courtesy of CPL Roberto Di Giovine.

for BCT, but still found the experience memorable. Going from an Italian officer to an American private could have been a harsh bump. But, like his grandfather, CPL Di Giovine is a humble man and handled it with great dignity, feeling tremendous pride in becoming an American Soldier.

"The drill sergeants did not have to break me down like other recruits," CPL Di Giovine said. "I had been broken down before and respected the system. Plus, I was 34 years old when I entered Basic, so I received a little respect."

He made sure not to remind anyone of his previous military experience. "I kept a low profile and did exactly what I was told while at Basic, so they treated me fairly and never singled me out," he said.



BACK INTO COMBAT

CPL Di Giovine graduated from Infantry School in late July 2007 and deployed to Afghanistan in late September 2007 after spending a month at Camp Shelby, MS.

The day before CPL Di Giovine was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan, he was enthusiastic about his upcoming tour. "I have been waiting for this for three years now," he said. "It has been a lot of work, but I feel very proud."

CPL Di Giovine holds no qualms about his duty either.

"I am going over there to eliminate terrorists," he declared. "As a Soldier and a photographer, I will fight and take pictures to protect the citizens of America. My cameras are coming with me. My camera is my rifle and my enemy is indifference. There is nothing more dangerous than a public opinion that is indifferent, lazy and not willing to fight efficiently the enemies of Freedom and Democracy."

"I hope that with my photos and my service to this country, I can bring attention to the National Guard, its men and women, and its mission."

CPL Di Giovine is cautious about being considered part of the media, though. "I am a Guard member—I am not the press," he said, emphatically. "I will coordinate with public affairs to tell the Soldiers' stories as well as to support my book. My pictures and words must help the team."

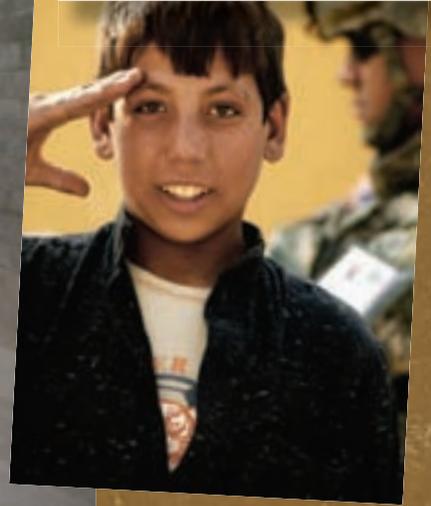
CPL Di Giovine is scheduled to return from Afghanistan May 5 and plans to enjoy some downtime in Greenville with his wife, Holly.

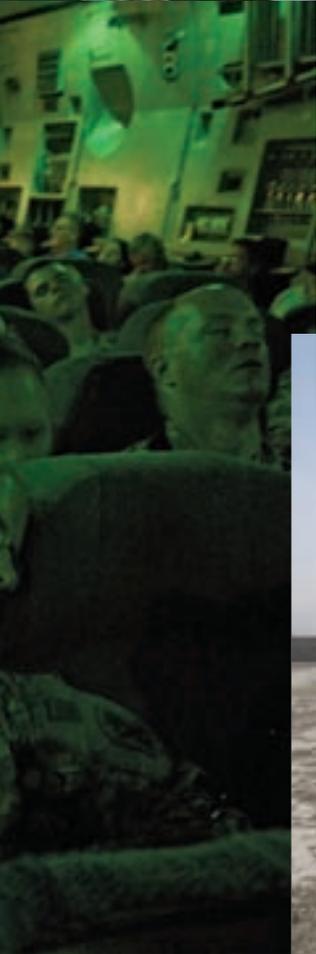
Once he returns to South Carolina, he plans to become a U.S. citizen, pursue an officer commission and work with the Recruit Sustainment Program to train young South Carolinians to serve their country. **EX**



InCountry

A TRIBUTE TO THE 218TH BCT





DETERMINED COURAGE



SILVESTRE S. HERRERA WAS BORN IN CAMARGO, CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO, AND DID NOT FIND OUT THAT HE WAS NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN UNTIL HE WAS DRAFTED IN 1944 AT THE AGE OF 27 AND WAS ALREADY MARRIED WITH THREE CHILDREN. HE SOON RECEIVED ANOTHER SURPRISE IN A DAY OF SURPRISES; THE MAN WHO RAISED HIM WAS NOT HIS FATHER BUT HIS UNCLE. HIS PARENTS HAD DIED OF FEVER, AND AT 18 MONTHS, HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE UNITED STATES BY HIS UNCLE FOR A BETTER LIFE.



AS A MEXICAN CITIZEN, HERRERA COULD NOT BE DRAFTED, BUT HE HAD STRONG PATRIOTIC FEELINGS FOR HIS ADOPTED COUNTRY AND JOINED THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD, COMPANY E, 142ND INFANTRY, 36TH DIVISION, LANDING IN EUROPE WITH THE FIRST AMERICAN UNIT DURING WWII.

MERTZWILLER, FRANCE, MARCH 15, 1945

WHILE MANEUVERING DOWN A ROAD, PFC HERRERA'S PLATOON CAME UNDER FIRE FROM A HEAVILY WOODED HILLSIDE. HIS FELLOW TROOPERS TOOK COVER ... BUT NOT PFC HERRERA. HE CHARGED THE NAZI MACHINE GUN NEST.



PFC HERRERA'S ONE-MAN ASSAULT RESULTED IN ENDING THE THREAT AND THE CAPTURE OF EIGHT GERMAN SOLDIERS.



PFC HERRERA'S PLATOON CONTINUED ITS MISSION BUT SHORTLY CAME UNDER FIRE AGAIN FROM A DUG-IN ENEMY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A MINEFIELD.

WITH HIS PLATOON AGAIN PINNED DOWN AND IN DANGER OF BEING WIPE OUT, PFC HERRERA CHARGED ACROSS THE MINEFIELD. HE DETONATED ONE MINE, SHREDDING HIS LEG BELOW THE KNEE.

PFC HERRERA CONTINUED ON ONE LEG, DRAWING FIRE AWAY FROM HIS BESIEGED PLATOON AND ONTO HIMSELF, UNTIL A SECOND MINE EXPLODED UNDER HIM, TEARING OFF HIS REMAINING LEG BELOW THE KNEE.



EVEN WITH BOTH LEGS BLOWN OFF AND BLEEDING PROFUSELY, PFC HERRERA CONTINUED TO FIRE ON THE ENEMY, PINNING THE GERMANS DOWN LONG ENOUGH FOR THE REST OF HIS PLATOON TO FLANK THE NAZIS AND NEUTRALIZE THE THREAT.

PFC SILVESTRE S. HERRERA WAS PRESENTED WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR BY PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN ON AUG. 23, 1945, AS A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION FROM HIS ADOPTED, BELOVED COUNTRY-THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. IN ADDITION, MEXICO PRESENTED HIM WITH ITS EQUIVALENT-THE "PREMIER MERITO MILITAR." PFC HERRERA WAS THE ONLY PERSON IN HISTORY AUTHORIZED TO WEAR BOTH MEDALS. HE PASSED AWAY ON NOV. 26, 2007, AT THE AGE OF 90.



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