

# GX

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

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## THREAT NEUTRALIZED

THE TAKEDOWN  
OF BIN LADEN p.20

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## SEEDS OF STABILITY

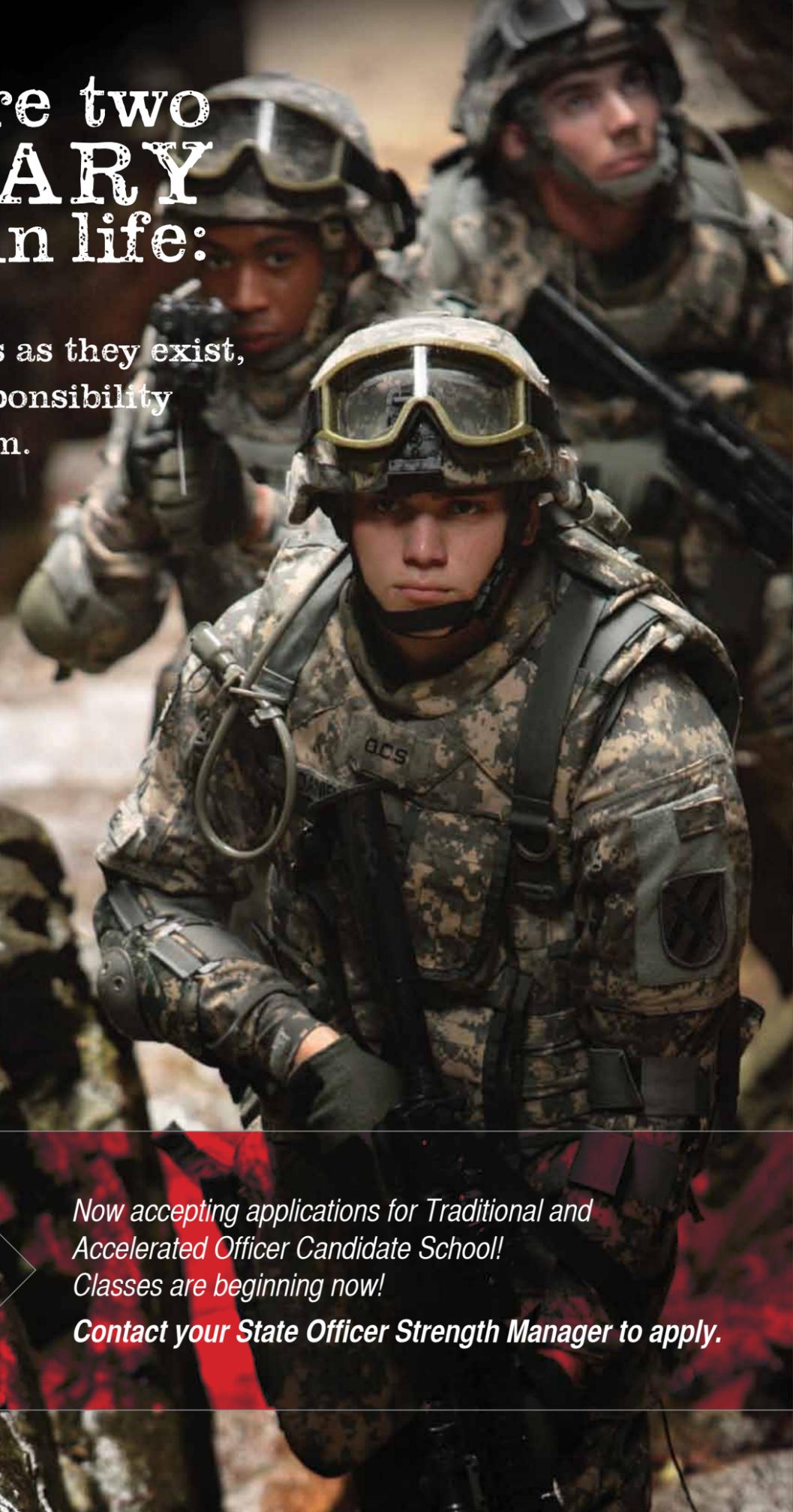
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
TEAMS LEAD AFGHANISTAN  
TO AUTONOMY p.58

# GLADIATORS

FIGHTERS COMPETE FOR COMBATIVES TITLE

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

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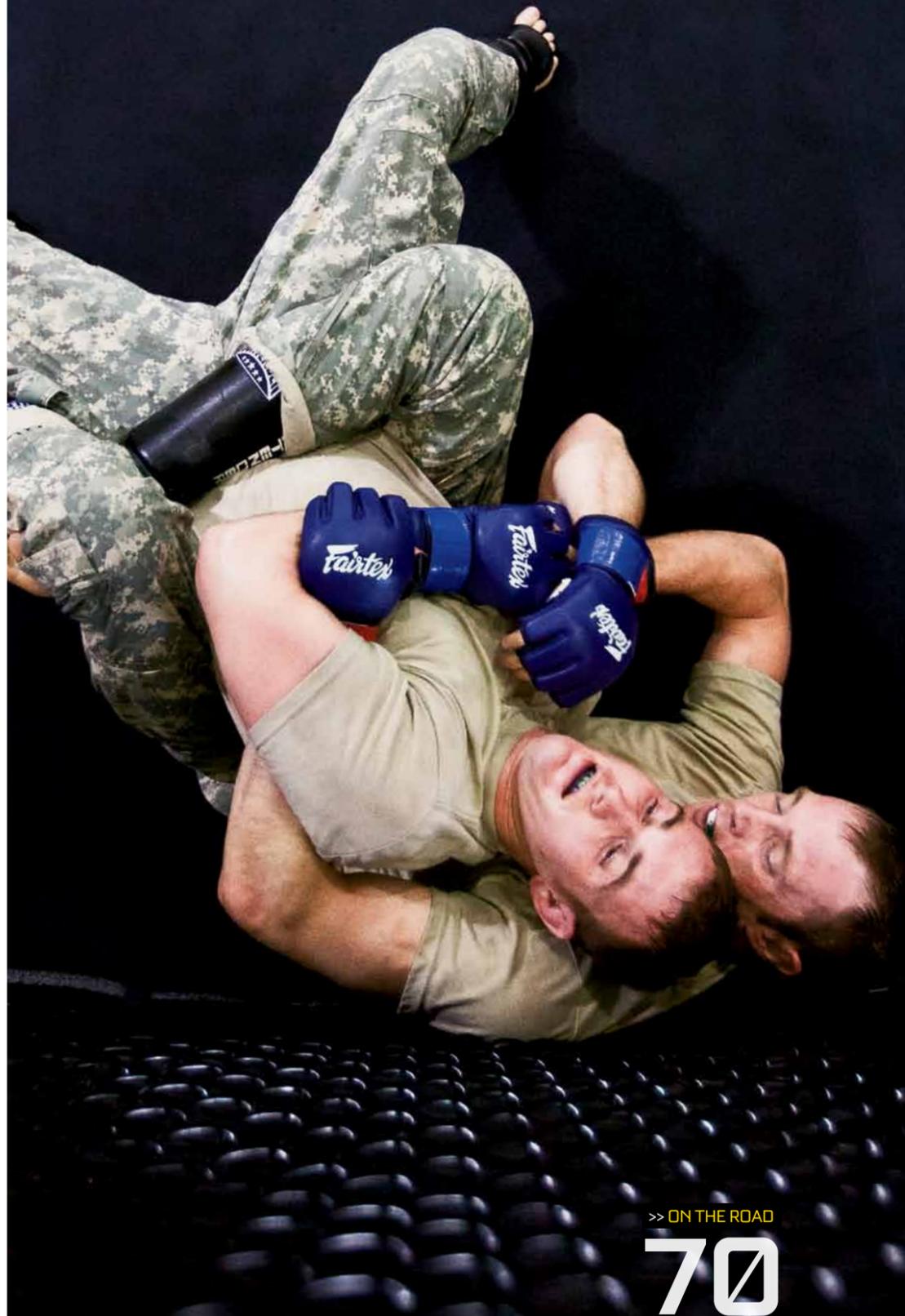
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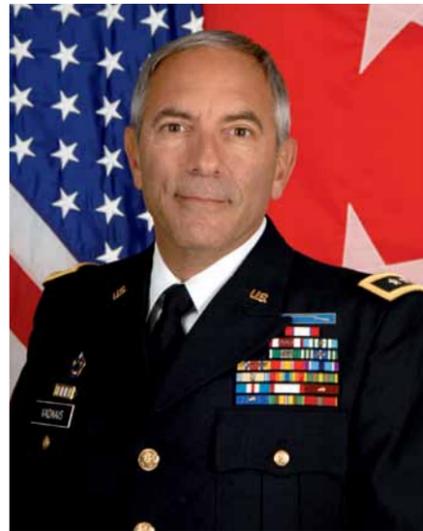
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## Soldiers,

It is with great pleasure that I address you on behalf of the Soldiers, Airmen and citizens of the great state of Michigan.

The cornerstone of my command philosophy is that the center of gravity for the National Guard is our people. We are in this together. We will face the inevitable challenges, create and exploit opportunities together. This is a WE operation; a team organization.

Citizen-Soldiers stand by as we have for the past 374 years, ready to do our nation's bidding. We are Americans answering the call to duty, to be part of something larger, because we believe the adage "freedom isn't free" and that the freedoms we so often take for granted are worth fighting for. We serve the citizens of our home states and the people of the United States.

Accordingly, our most urgent priority is to continue to provide security and defense of our homeland to include our critical

Homeland Security support in the wars on terrorism and drugs. We are at war, and making sure Soldiers and Airmen are ready is our single most important task.

The development of a strong and ready force begins the minute each Soldier and Airman raises his or her hand to protect our nation. The suicide rate among Soldiers has doubled in the last year alone. It takes the care and compassion of NCOs and officers to mitigate the risk of suicide within our ranks. Every Soldier is responsible for observing their battle buddy, and being a good listener and friend. I read a recent story of a Soldier who disarmed his roommate's weapon on the hunch that he was going to commit suicide. The hunch ultimately saved a Soldier's life.

Let's take care of each other so we can continue to keep the promises we made during our oaths of enlistment. One life lost is one too many.

Thank you and your families for the personal sacrifices you each make on a daily basis to ensure the freedoms of our nation.

Sincerely,

Major General Gregory J. Vadnais  
Adjutant General of Michigan

MICHIGAN NATIONAL GUARD

# WHAT DO WE NEED TO MAKE GX EVEN BETTER? YOU.

What do you like best about GX? Do you have an idea for a story, or even a whole new section? Take our online reader survey and let us know. After all, this is *your* magazine.

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“I feel that we [U.S. military] should always take the fight to the enemy under the conditions we set.”

» Kyle Hunter, former master sergeant, 20th Special Forces Group

The heart of National Guard service hasn't changed in nearly 375 years. Protect your family, your community and your country at any cost. Whether the fight is on Highway 100 in Fairview, TN, or Highway 1 in Kabul, Afghanistan, Guard service starts at home. You join your state's National Guard to safeguard your state. Though, when it comes to where that battle occurs, many understandably prefer abroad.

As we pulled together this issue of GX, from the exclusive interview with 36th ID Commander Major General Eddy Spurgin (p. 40) to the Utah Sappers spotting IEDs (p. 24), I kept thinking about this concept of taking the fight to the enemy, and what combat Vets have said to me over the eight years of GX.

One of my colleagues here in Nashville is Staff Sergeant Erik Yatuzis, OIF Vet of the 269th MP out of Murfreesboro, TN. It's guys like Yatuzis that keep GX honest and on track.

“We are sworn to protect and serve,” Yatuzis told me. “And keeping our families as far away from the conflict as possible falls into this. Our families did not sign up to deploy in a forward environment, we did! If we as Soldiers going 9,000 miles away for months on end allows our families to stay here safe, then we are doing our job.”

Master Sergeant William Shipman is a Vietnam Vet, two-time OEF Vet, Purple Heart recipient, and current member of the South Carolina National Guard's HHC, 218th MEB. As a South Carolina native, he's fiercely loyal and proud of his South Carolina service, “because of the heritage that South Carolina has, and it's the way I was raised.

“My wife and I both think it's better to fight them in their own backyard than our backyard,” Shipman shared.

Staff Sergeant Alex Purdue is part of Indiana's 3-19th ADT, and he is helping to build a future for Afghanistan. Winning hearts and minds to ultimately protect us all back stateside. And for Purdue, it's about protecting Indiana—the root of his service.

“This is my second deployment with the Indiana National Guard,” Purdue shared. “And, it makes me proud to be a part of a state that has such a relatively low population, but a large percentage of men and woman who choose to serve.”

In May, we all watched as the news spread of bin Laden's death. This was the culmination of over 10 years of service and sacrifice (p. 20). The U.S. military had truly taken the fight direct to the enemy.

We salute Navy SEAL Team 6. We salute all our service members whose direct and indirect roles contributed to this mission.

And, as you flip these pages, join me in saying a prayer of gratitude and protection for the brave men and women featured here, and at large, continuing the mission. These men and women, like you, were born and raised in our hometowns. With unfathomable courage and honor they have entered enemy territory to keep us safe.

Thank you!

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

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

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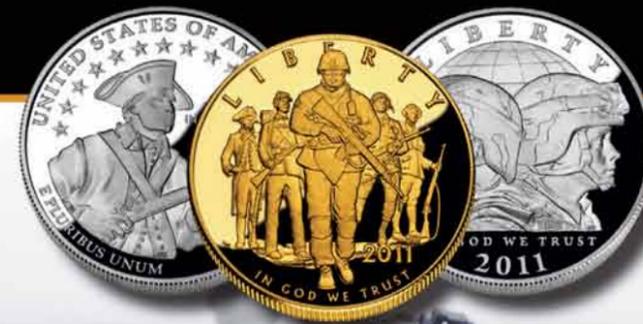
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## The 2/34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division Iowa National Guard

DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS OF EASTERN Afghanistan, just a stone's throw from the Pakistan border, sits COP Herrera, home to the men of A Company, 1/168th Infantry. No saluting, no PX, no Green Beans Coffee, no fancy chow hall, and we couldn't be happier about that. Don't get me wrong—we enjoy the nice things. But we have an excellent cook, good gym, AFN television and Internet. We don't mind doing our own laundry and cool showers—we know many have it worse.

A Company conducts joint patrols with many different factions of the Afghan National Security Forces in the small villages that surround COP Herrera. Platoon leader First Lieutenant Mark Lucas works hand in hand with Afghanistan Border Patrol (ABP) commanders.

Each platoon has its own area of operation. Mountains and extreme harsh terrain over a wide area always bring new challenges. Second platoon works joint patrols and missions over roughly 200 square kilometers. We're operating in a key area along the border that holds tactical significance for both the Coalition Forces and the enemy. The Mujahedeen won key battles against the Soviet Union in our area of operation. There's a lot of history in the Jaji district.

While PLs and PSGs conduct key leader engagements with village leaders and elders, squad leaders are busy discussing issues with the help of our Tajiman (interpreter) in street-level engagements.

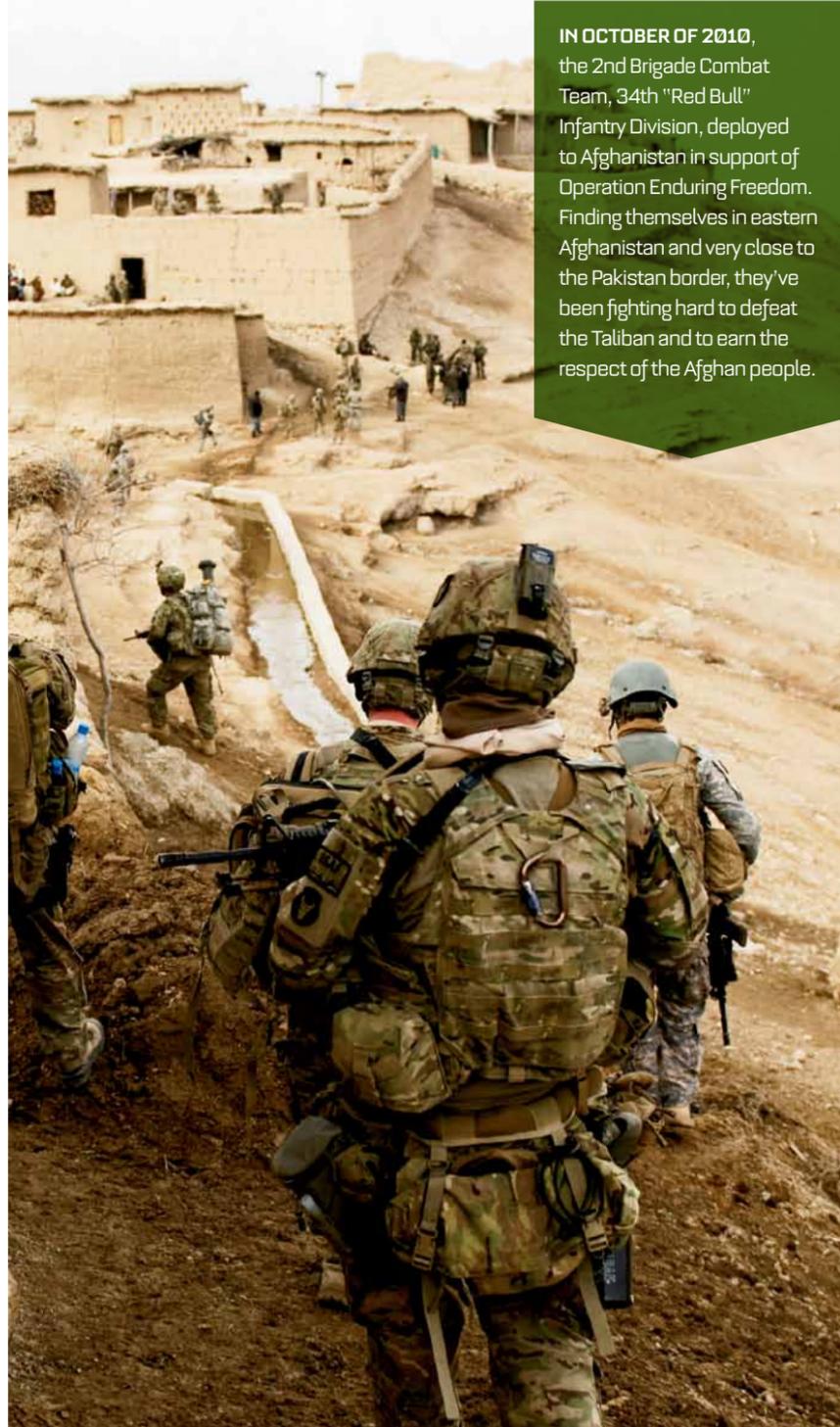
We've had time to settle in, and we now call COP Herrera home. We all know we have an important area of operation and we take it very seriously, but just like all infantrymen, we still find a little time for fun.

>> **Trevor J. Rude**  
PSG, 2nd Platoon  
A Company, 1/168th Infantry

I JOINED THE NATIONAL GUARD about five years ago after serving four years in the Marine Corps. I find myself once again in Afghanistan. However, I am not stationed in some rear area or on some large, comfortable Forward Operating Base (FOB) surrounded by the amenities that some of us that have served on Active Duty came to believe were linked with National Guard deployments.

On the contrary, C Company is stationed in Afghanistan Combat Outpost Rahman Khey1, which we affectionately call the ARK, in the

IN OCTOBER OF 2010, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division, deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Finding themselves in eastern Afghanistan and very close to the Pakistan border, they've been fighting hard to defeat the Taliban and to earn the respect of the Afghan people.



SSG SHALEE OUKUS, TASK FORCE RED BULL'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Paktia province of eastern Afghanistan. I'm surrounded by some of the best fighting men that I've ever served with. Stateside, these men are college students, business owners, teachers, craftsmen and a myriad of other occupations. However, they're as committed and duty-bound as any Active Duty infantry unit I've seen.

When C Company first arrived at the ARK, it was little more than a circle of HESCO barriers defended by a handful of other Guard Soldiers from Vermont. As tired and gritty as these Vermonters were after a long deployment, their morale was high. They carried out their final duty—to show us everything they had learned from their time at the ARK, which they did with attention to detail.

Within a month, using skills learned from stateside occupations, we've transformed a tiny outpost into something that can be of strategic use.

>> **SPC Nathan E. Eason**  
3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon  
C Company, 1/168th

THE CHILDREN GENERALLY like to gather around us when we dismount in a village. They're curious about our uniforms and weapons, and are constantly asking us for pens and pencils. It's a very different feeling being submerged in a country halfway around the world where the local culture and religious differences are complex and exciting. However, the local security forces such as the Afghan National Army and Afghanistan Uniformed Police make interacting with the



SSG RYAN MATSON, TASK FORCE RED BULL'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS

public much more comfortable. The local people are starting to realize that we're here to help them, and that we want to win their trust and confidence in order to rid the villages of insurgents and create a safer environment.

We're trying to stop the enemy forces between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our platoon has been ambushed once in the month since we've been here. Thank God no one was injured. It was a very chilling experience.

Every mission we go on, we prepare for the worst. It makes for a great day when we get back to the COP and everyone is still with us.

>> **SPC Trevor C. Daniels**  
A Company  
1/168th Infantry Regiment

THIS IS MY SECOND TOUR IN AFGHANISTAN, and I never figured I would hit the ground running so fast. I wear so many hats. Unfortunately, it's not the blue-and-white Yankee hat that I typically wear back home. Instead, it's the hat of a contracting officer, public affairs officer, mess officer, maintenance officer, second in command, company logistician and most importantly, combat arms Soldier.

As I stepped off the helicopter on Combat Outpost Zormat, I could see nothing but a cloud of dust kicking up from the helicopter blades. As the dust settled, I saw bright blue skies, huge mountains, triple-strand concertina wire, massive HESCO walls, and lots and lots of gravel. This is home for the next nine to 10 months.

Within four days of my arrival to COP Zormat, I somehow managed to walk away from a 107 mm rocket that landed 56 meters from where I was working. I walk with a new sense of realization. I am not invincible or perfect. I'm an average guy that works well under pressure and does his best. I live by the values and training instilled over the last 10 years of military service. For now, I will stop at nothing to make a difference here in Afghanistan.

>> **1LT Justin Schultz**  
2/34th BCT, Team Diesel  
Task Force 168



## » LAGHMAN PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

Iowa Soldier COL Benjamin J. Corell, Task Force Red Bulls commander, takes cover as a UH-60 Black Hawk lands upon a mountaintop in Laghman province, Afghanistan.

Photo by CPT Erick Saks



Boone, IA to Laghman province, Afghanistan: 7,051 miles



**>> CASS COUNTY,  
NORTH DAKOTA**

From right to left, SPC Eric Wiederholt, SPC Joshua Lanzdorf and SPC Randy Birchfield, all of the 815th Engineer Company, North Dakota National Guard, Detachment 2, based in Lisbon, ND, carry sandbags along a flood levee for placement in a flood barrier at a rural farmstead in Cass County, ND.

Photo courtesy of North Dakota Public Affairs

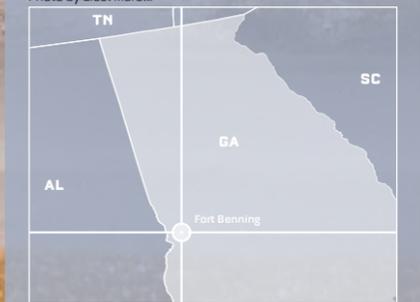




**>> FORT BENNING, GA**

Two Soldiers jump from a UH-60 Black Hawk during the 28th annual David E. Grange Best Ranger Competition, April 15-17, 2011.

Photo by Liesl Marelli





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**"IN THE MILITARY, PEOPLE THINK WE JUST DESTROY THINGS AND THAT WE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. BUT AS CITIZEN-SOLDIERS, WE DO CARE ABOUT THE AREAS WE LIVE IN."**

>> SFC KARRY SCHURKE,  
IOWA NATIONAL GUARD



PFC Justin Jackson of the Alabama Army National Guard's 1670th Transportation Company provides flood response security for residents of Concord, AL, May 9, 2011.

# Not Waiting for Disaster

## Swift Response to Severe Weather

Courtesy of Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Alabama National Guard Public Affairs



A Kentucky Guard member of the 2113th Transportation Company fills sandbags at the banks of the Ohio River in Smithland, KY, April 27.

**POPLAR BLUFF, MO** Within hours of being activated by Gov. Jay Nixon in April, the Missouri National Guard began flood relief operations in southeast Missouri.

The 400 Guard members conducted a number of missions, including sandbagging, levee monitoring, route reconnaissance, door-to-door safety visits, and supporting law enforcement and first responders.

"We are well prepared for flood relief operations and are proud to support our fellow Missourians in the southeast," said Major General Stephen L. Danner, adjutant general of the Missouri National Guard. "State emergency missions are a significant part of what the Guard does."

Among those responding were the Soldiers of the 880th Engineer Team (Haul) of Perryville. Team commander First Lieutenant Richard Branson said his Soldiers—who have the motto "You call, we haul"—were ready.

"The 880th is prepared to help those who need us and are affected by the large amount of rainfall and flooding," Branson said as the mission began.

**FRANKFORT, KY** The Kentucky National Guard deployed in April for flood relief efforts in western Kentucky.

"At the request of Gov. Steve Beshear, I've directed the mobilization of more than 80 Soldiers in support of the current flood situation," said Major General Edward W. Tonini, adjutant

general for Kentucky. "We are fully prepared to change these numbers as the mission requires."

"The National Guard is Kentucky's hometown defense force, and as such, we have a personal stake in this fight," said Tonini. "We have the experience and expertise to see this crisis through."

Fifty-one members of the 2113th Transportation Company out of Paducah serviced western Kentucky.

In addition, approximately 31 members of the 206th Engineers out of Owensboro erected water barriers and placed sandbags around the Kentucky Education Television building on the Henderson and Daviess County border. A sandbagging machine from the Wendell H. Ford Regional Training Center was provided to the 206th for the mission.

**ROBINSON MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER, AR** The Arkansas National Guard had approximately 170 Soldiers and Airmen assisting in Faulkner, Garland and Carroll counties, AR, after tornadoes and high winds hammered the state in April.

The Guard initially deployed 85 Soldiers and Airmen to support civil authorities with search operations, route clearance, security and traffic control in Vilonia, with the mission later growing to include the delivery of approximately 200 tarps to the Faulkner County community.

In Garland County, Soldiers worked in the vicinity of Hot Springs Village. They used heavy equipment to assist with route clearance. The

mission grew to include two backhoe loaders, a front-end loader, a bulldozer, a wrecker and four tractor-trailers to haul the equipment.

Twenty Soldiers assisted in the communities of Beaver and Holiday Island following an assessment with civil authorities. High water levels in nearby Beaver Lake reportedly resulted in the need to open floodgates to ease the potential for severe flooding in the area.

The lower-lying areas of the two communities were at high risk of flooding, which sparked the need for evacuation as a precautionary measure. The Guard was called to assist with the door-to-door notification in the affected area.

**SOUTHERN INDIANA** Support was also needed in Indiana, where the Indiana Guard had received a request from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security for sandbagging support due to flooding in Gibson, Knox and Daviess counties. More than 220 Indiana National Guard members reported for duty.

**MONTGOMERY, AL** After the April 27 tornadoes that ripped across much of the central and northern parts of Alabama, the National Guard was heavily engaged in assisting the residents of the affected areas, with more than 2,700 Soldiers and Airmen called to duty.

"Our Alabama National Guard is working tirelessly to provide security and assist with transportation and distribution of aid," said

Gov. Robert Bentley in a speech to a joint session of the Alabama Legislature, May 3. "I can tell you I have never been more proud to be an Alabamian.

"Since this tragedy, we have seen the true character of our state. Alabamians care about one another. We take care of each other."

This is what Alabama Guard members continue to do in the storm-ravaged areas—take care of fellow Alabamians.

The Guard continues to help the residents throughout the affected area recover from the devastating tornadoes by patrolling streets to prevent looting; providing power to critical infrastructure that is still without commercial electricity; distributing meals ready-to-eat, ice and water; and flying overhead to aid in search and recovery efforts.

Supporting civil authorities in times of disaster is a core competency of the National Guard, and the Alabama Guard will continue to work directly with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency to ensure the right personnel, equipment and resources are utilized to support each need, officials said.

**MEMPHIS, TN** Soldiers from the Tennessee Army National Guard's 1/278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, headquartered in Henderson, were called to state Active Duty to assist in disaster relief operations in and around Tiptonville.

Gov. Bill Haslam and Major General Max Haston, the adjutant general, toured flood-ravaged areas to assess the situation. The order to bring in National Guard Soldiers came after they viewed the affected areas.

With flooding expected to worsen, approximately 100 Soldiers were performing a variety of missions.

Seventy-six Guard members from the 278th ACR provided high-water vehicles to support the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Guard Soldiers of the 194th Engineer Brigade provided sandbagging trailers and operators to help protect the correctional facility near Tiptonville. More than 3,400 sandbags were filled.

Helicopter support out of Smyrna was provided by the Guard's Aviation Office and 30th Troop Command in transporting government officials to affected areas and providing reconnaissance of the flooded areas.

Units of 230th Sustainment Brigade, headquartered in Chattanooga, provided logisticians to evaluate state and commercial facilities used in evacuations. These facilities were used to receive and distribute materials, bottled water and food. **GX**

# THREAT NEUTRALIZED

## The Takedown of Osama bin Laden *By Jason Hall*

**SINCE SEPT. 11, 2001**, Americans have been waiting for justice for the terrorist attacks that forever changed our country. That justice seemed elusive until the evening of Sunday, May 1, 2011, when it was announced that U.S. forces had killed Osama bin Laden, who is considered the mastermind behind the attacks. The reports of bin Laden's death electrified the nation and sparked numerous outbursts of joy and celebration.

Though news reports have said that the mission that ultimately eliminated bin Laden began months ago, in reality the hunt for him began more than a decade ago, even before 9/11.

### ATTACKS IN THE '90S

Bin Laden, along with the al-Qaida terrorist organization he founded, first turned his sights to the United States when U.S. troops arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1990, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This action enraged bin Laden because he believed that the presence of the Americans defiled the Muslim holy land.

During the early and mid-1990s, several terrorist attacks, including the Feb. 26, 1993, truck-bomb attack at the World Trade Center in New York City, were suspected to be linked to bin Laden. But there wasn't enough evidence to proceed with any formal charges against him. This changed when bin Laden was indicted in November 1998 on 224 counts of murder for the two truck-bomb attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August of that year. That indictment, and the continued threat posed by bin Laden, led to his being added to the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list on June 7, 1999. On Oct. 12, 2000, terrorists linked to bin Laden attacked the USS *Cole* in Yemen, killing 17 sailors and wounding 39 others.

It was the devastating attacks on 9/11 that made bin Laden the most wanted criminal mastermind in the world. Three days after the attack, President George W. Bush stood on the rubble of the World Trade Center and exclaimed to firefighters and rescue workers, "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you! And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon!" Little did he realize that it would take almost a decade for Osama bin Laden to hear from us.

### ULTIMATUM IGNORED

On Sept. 21, 2001, the U.S. sent an ultimatum to the Taliban, the Islamic extremist organization that had taken political control of Afghanistan in 1996, to turn over bin Laden, who was living in that country at the time. The Taliban rejected the American ultimatum, and U.S. military forces, including the National Guard, began preparations to deploy to Afghanistan.

On Oct. 7, in a last-ditch attempt to avoid invasion, the Taliban proposed that bin Laden be tried in an Islamic court in Afghanistan. The U.S. rejected this, and later that day American and British forces executed bombing missions against Taliban and al-Qaida forces, beginning Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

The main military objective of OEF was to destroy terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. However, to President Bush and American citizens, the operation's emotionally charged goal was to find—and capture or kill—Osama bin Laden.

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The trail was cold until Dec. 1, 2001, when reports began coming in that bin Laden had been sighted in the mountainous region of Tora Bora, Afghanistan. Throughout December, allied forces systematically searched the complex of caves being used by bin Laden, the Taliban and al-Qaida. These forces included U.S. Special Forces and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) paramilitary operations officers, British SBS commandos, special forces operators of the German KSK, and hundreds of local Afghan tribal members.

By Dec. 17, they were able to clear all of the caves, killing and capturing many Taliban and al-Qaida fighters. But, bin Laden escaped. U.S. forces continued to search the Tora Bora region for him throughout January 2002, but they grew to believe that bin Laden had slipped across the border into Pakistan.

Although the hunt continued, resources were increasingly diverted to the growing conflict with insurgent forces in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Whenever a potential lead was discovered, however, either bombing missions would be conducted on bin Laden's suspected location or Special Forces members would investigate. But they always came up empty. Every so often,



audio and video recordings, presumably of bin Laden, would surface, reigniting the search. But as the years passed, the U.S. began to despair that perhaps Tora Bora was the only opportunity it would get to capture or kill bin Laden.

The war raged on, and thousands of National Guard members would fight in Afghanistan, some for multiple deployments. The Guard continued the fight against the Taliban, al-Qaida and the onslaught of insurgents. Braving improvised explosive devices and insurgent ambushes, the men and women of the National Guard provided support in helping to stabilize Afghanistan.

The likelihood of ever finding bin Laden seemed to increasingly slip away. In December 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated that "it's been years" since there had been any credible information on bin Laden's location.

### JUSTICE AT LAST

That sentiment began to change in August 2010, when members of the National Security Administration (NSA) briefed President Barack Obama on a "possible lead" as to where bin Laden might be hiding.

The lead came from interrogations of detained al-Qaida members who identified a man believed to be a courier for bin Laden. In August 2010, U.S. officials learned that the courier was living in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In September, the CIA conducted a "set of assessments that led it to believe..." bin Laden was living in Abbottabad.

Knowing the CIA's belief, President Obama held a series of meetings of his National Security Council in March and April 2011 to develop



courses of action. On Friday, April 29, after considering two options, Obama decided not to bomb the compound, but rather to send in a team of Navy SEALs to try to confirm that they had found bin Laden.

On Sunday, May 1 (May 2 in Abbottabad), with President Obama's final order to proceed, the U.S. Navy's elite SEAL Team 6 boarded helicopters headed for Abbottabad. The raid lasted approximately 40 minutes. Upon entry into the main compound building, a firefight ensued. In the melee, three enemy adult males were killed, one of whom was Osama bin Laden. The SEAL team took custody of bin Laden's body so that DNA tests could be conducted to prove it was he, which they did. Osama bin Laden was buried at sea from a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. Great pains were taken to treat his body with respect and adhere to Islamic tradition.

Many hours later, the American people and the world would hear President Obama deliver the message everyone in the U.S. had been

waiting almost 10 years to hear: "Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al-Qaida, and a terrorist who's responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women and children." He added, "Justice has been done."

The Pakistani government had not been told of the raid, and was briefed on it by U.S. officials only after it had been concluded. Bin Laden's compound was in close proximity to the Pakistan military academy, which caused Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin to state that "the Pakistani army and intelligence have a lot of questions to answer."

### MISSION CONTINUES

In the wake of bin Laden's death, many Americans are calling on the U.S. military to leave Afghanistan. Though Osama bin Laden is now dead, the Global War on Terror is far

from over. The mission in Afghanistan is not yet complete, though National Guard members are working hard to get the job done. They are accomplishing this in a new and surprising way for a military force. Since 2008, the Guard has furnished Agricultural Development Teams (ADTs) to bring "an effective platform for enhanced dialogue, building confidence, sharing interests, and increasing cooperation amongst the disparate peoples and tribes of Afghanistan."

The ADTs provide educational tools to Afghani farmers on how to improve their crop growth in all seasons.

All of our men and women in uniform today are keeping the promise of another president who spoke to his fellow citizens after another unprovoked attack:

"No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dec. 8, 1941, in response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor a day earlier. **GX**



SFC RUSSELL KUNA

COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Guard Goes Green

## Iowa Spends the Day Cleaning the Environment

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor / CORNING, IOWA

**AS SUMMER KICKED INTO HIGH GEAR**, so did the Iowa National Guard. On Saturday, April 16, 50 warriors from the Recruit Sustainment Program took a break from their regular duties to clean parks and ponds in several communities. From 9 a.m. to around noon, they picked up trash, planted trees and performed any other task needed to help beautify specific areas in southwest Iowa.

This massive cleanup was part of a nationwide program called "Guard the Environment," in which National Guard Soldiers perform tasks to improve the environment. Last year, the Iowa National Guard concentrated its efforts in one park in Council Bluffs. This year, to have a more significant impact, the Soldiers were divided among four regions: Corning, Shenandoah, Clarinda and Carroll.

Sergeant First Class Karry Schurke, first sergeant for RSP headquarters, expressed confidence that this year would bring an even better result than last year.

"We did the Guard the Environment [event] last year in one location," said Schurke. "But we have unit members that are from all over

southwest Iowa. Last year, we basically had one impact in one area. This year we want to have a bigger impact."

### GETTING INVOLVED

As part of the Soldiers' efforts to have a larger impact, they got communities more involved. In previous years, the Iowa National Guard didn't advertise its community environmental work. This year, Schurke and others devoted time to promoting this event. They passed out fliers and spoke to the news media about how anyone in the community was welcome to assist with the event.

By doing this, Schurke aimed to attract civilian volunteers. The more help the Soldiers have with such efforts, the better the local parks and ponds look. Community involvement also increases awareness of the Guard's environmental efforts.

"In the military, people think we just destroy things and that we don't care about the environment. But as Citizen-Soldiers, we do care about the areas we live in. I think it's good for the communities to see that we do care. Us being out

there and showing our support for our community is a big plus," Schurke said.

"So this year to try and get more awareness, not just for Guard Soldiers, we put it in the paper that anyone in the community could come out and help. They could go along with Soldiers and help pick up."

The advertising quickly paid off as two Boy Scout troops volunteered to assist with the cleanup. They were just part of the many volunteers who teamed up alongside the National Guard to lend a hand.

Sergeant First Class John Stewart, an RSP instructor, stressed how important Guard the Environment events are for both the Soldiers and the community. Particularly with the younger warriors, these events instill good environmental habits that Soldiers will use outside of Guard the Environment events. And especially important, Stewart said, is that the events help build better relations between Soldiers and civilians.

"We are hoping to get a lot of the younger kids to come out and see that Soldiers don't just go out and fight," said Stewart. "But they also are citizens who help out with the environment." **GX**



RSP Warriors got the chance to plant trees, clean city parks and pick up trash in their communities on April 16.

COURTESY OF IOWA NATIONAL GUARD

# Education for All

## New Online System Eliminates Extra Hassle

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor / WASHINGTON, DC

**IF YOU'RE A NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIER** attending college, registering for classes and paying fees just got easier.

The Army National Guard is utilizing a new website called GoArmyEd.com. Calling itself the Army's Virtual Gateway to Education Anytime, Anywhere, this site allows Soldiers, Army Education Counselors and schools to conduct business in a central location, reducing confusion.

After transitioning to the new system in June 2011, the Army will start paying schools directly, ensuring that fees are paid in a timely manner. This lifts the burden off the student.

GoArmyEd.com allows the Army to better adhere to the Tuition Assistance (TA) program. It guarantees that the classes a Soldier registers for in the upcoming semester fall into the Soldier's degree plan, reducing the number of duplicated classes. The Army can also monitor a Soldier's GPA to guarantee that the Soldier is still eligible for TA.

GoArmyEd has not replaced the face-to-face support that Soldiers received from Army Education Counselors and on-post school advisors. Soldiers will still receive comprehensive support from a variety of sources when they use Tuition Assistance toward their approved degree plan. In addition to calling or visiting in person a local Army Education Center, Soldiers have multiple options for assistance, which can be found in the FAQs on the website.

Soldiers can access GoArmyEd.com 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They can register for college courses or on-duty classes and review their student records. Even during a deployment, Soldiers can receive advice from counselors, who will have full access to the students' information. **GX**



### Utah Trains With Ugandans

Members of the Utah National Guard's 197th Special Troops Company, along with Army parachute riggers, were in Soroti, Uganda, in April, training with Soldiers from the Ugandan People's Defense Forces in support of ATLAS DROP 11. ATLAS DROP, an annual joint aerial-delivery exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Africa, brings together U.S. service members with counterparts from the Ugandan People's Defense Forces, and is designed to enhance the readiness of both countries' resupply and logistical capabilities.

—STORY BY SFC BROCK JONES / PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY



### Kentucky ADT Helps Afghans Open Soybean Facility

The Baston Seed Company opened a new soybean processing facility in Bagram, Afghanistan, April 2. Local leaders from Panjshir and Parwan provinces, members of Nutrition Education International (NEI), and the Kentucky National Guard Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) attended the ceremony. The building will hold the soy processing equipment donated to the people of Afghanistan by NEI with help from the Kentucky Guard ADT. Baston will buy soybeans from Afghan farmers, and clean, dry and mill them into flour at the facility.

—STORY BY SPC JAMES WILTON / PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY



### Connecticut K-9 Unit Trains With Philippines Army

Soldiers and Airmen exchanged K-9 training methods with the Armed Force of the Philippines during Exercise Balikatan 2011, in April. Six U.S. military personnel worked with more than 30 members of the Philippine army, marines and air force working-dog teams. The U.S. team consists of three Airmen from the 36th Security Forces Squadron, Andersen Air Base, Guam, and three Guard members from the 928th Military Police, Connecticut Army National Guard. The main focus is to reinforce obedience skills, combat tracking and aggressive tactics.

—STORY & PHOTO BY MSG COHEN YOUNG



### New Mexico Takes Charge of Kosovo Mission

A new brigade of Army Soldiers, led by the 111th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) of the New Mexico National Guard, officially took over responsibility for Multinational Battle Group East (MNBGE) April 2. The 111th joined units from nine other nations for the NATO mission of maintaining a safe environment and freedom of movement for the Kosovo people. MNBGE's sector of responsibility includes the Administrative Boundary Line where NATO peacekeeping forces conduct patrols and engage with the people and institutions in Kosovo.

—STORY COURTESY OF NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD / PHOTO BY SPC EVAN LANE



### Army Unveils New Marksmanship Simulator

After successful initial fielding of the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000, a mobile "proof-of-principle" effort designed for the Army National Guard, Reserve and ROTC was unveiled for battle simulation. The idea was to mount a five-lane EST 2000 on a mobile, self-powered semitrailer and bring it to remote armories and readiness centers to support battle assembly training. The EST 2000 comes with an instructor/operator who ensures the system is set up properly, and transports it to its next location.

—STORY BY LTC JAY SMITH / PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY

# Task Force Duke

## Utah's 118th Sapper Company Delivers Security Through Counter-IED

Story and photos by SGT Derek Nelson, 17th Public Affairs Detachment / SALERNO, AFGHANISTAN

IN LATE AUGUST 2010, Soldiers of the 118th Sapper Company arrived at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Afghanistan. A mere 10 days and four missions later, they took the helm of Route Clearance Package (RCP) 37. Assigned to clear routes and counter the enemy's attempts to emplace improvised explosive devices in their area of operations, they had no idea what the next year of their lives would bring.

### COMBAT CHAPERONES

"Originally, the majority of our missions were escort and route clearance efforts to get combat logistic patrols out to different combat outposts," said First Lieutenant Ryan J. Becker, 1st Platoon leader. "In between those missions, we filled in our time with

company-level clearing missions to keep the routes safe."

Keeping busy is what the RCP 37 does, and they do it well. The unit doesn't look for downtime; instead, they turn their attention to the next mission and how they can do their jobs better.

"Our guys spend their time off working on mission-essential stuff; stuff that isn't necessarily route clearance, but is pre-emptive," said Sergeant Carter "MacGyver" Raby, a team leader with 1st Platoon. "Our guys do what they have to do, don't complain and get the job done."

In January, Task Force Rakkasan transferred authority of FOB Salerno to Task Force Duke. With the regime change came a mission shift for RCP.

"When Duke got in and got their feet on the ground, our primary focus became counter-

IED efforts," said Becker. "Some of these routes have been historically targeted by IEDs, and [Duke] wants to lock them down and shut down the IED activity."

### GRASSROOTS GROWN

The RCP takes several approaches to this mission. Constant patrols in the area help them to establish a presence. They interact with locals, work to educate them on IEDs and take a grassroots approach to countering the insurgency.

"Our mission set has really been focused on how we can provide the locals with a feeling that we're not going in there just to harass them," said Sergeant John "Izzy" Israelsen, a team leader with 1st Platoon. "We're deployed and we've got a job to do, but we want to make it as symbiotic as possible."

Israelsen attributes the unit's positive relationship with the locals to the unit's road-patching efforts and unique culvert-denial systems.

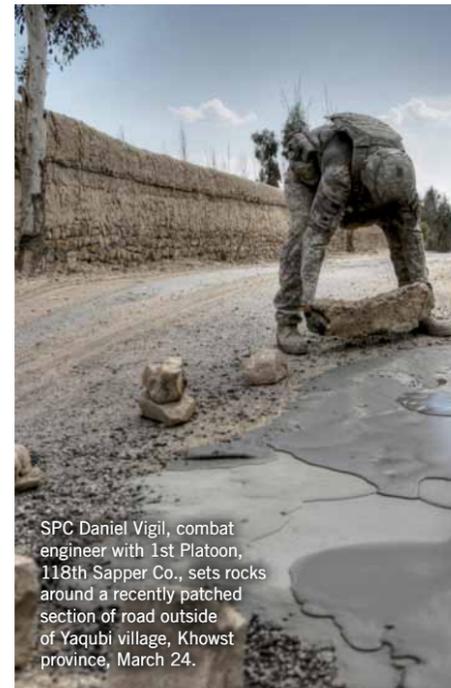
"They know that a huge blast in the road is caused by insurgent groups, and then they'll see it gets fixed and they'll know that the Americans fixed it," said Israelsen. "It's nice to know that they can roll over a road and not have their children bouncing around or pop a tire, because the Americans are doing their job."

Road patching is just one way RCP 37 denies the enemy the ability to place IEDs. Historically, insurgents will reuse blast holes, placing IEDs where ones have already blown up. The constant string of explosions wears down the roads and makes them nearly unusable.

The patch, called the "Dizzy" patch, helps to keep Americans safer on the roads while improving them for local drivers. Culvert-denial systems are another way the RCP works to deny the enemy while still working with the local community.

"The culvert-denial system has, over the last two months, become the primary mission for RCP 37," said Israelsen. Culvert-denial systems come in several shapes and sizes, all with the same intent: prevent access to culverts that insurgents could use as a hasty hiding place for an IED without preventing the flow of water for the local community.

"Culvert-denial systems deny insurgents access to the culverts, which have been one of the largest terrain features used in anti-Coalition attacks," said Raby. "If we deny their access to culverts, they are forced to put more effort into setting up their IEDs, which



SPC Daniel Vigil, combat engineer with 1st Platoon, 118th Sapper Co., sets rocks around a recently patched section of road outside of Yaqubi village, Khowst province, March 24.

gives them a better chance of being spotted by surveillance."

The systems can be as simple as a rebar grate over the end of a culvert. However, the most commonly used and perhaps the most interesting is the Salerno Box.

The Salerno Box is a large steel box, solid on two sides with rebar caging on the other two. It has an open bottom and a solid top. Atop the box sits a concrete lid, with sensors to monitor and prevent tampering.

"We have a local contractor who fabricates the boxes and the lids that go on them," said Becker. "The box is made in two sizes and then we attach the sensors."

The Salernos help keep troops safe and put money into the local economy, and the locals seem happy about them as well, according to the 118th Sapper Company.

"When we install the Salerno Boxes, we have locals in the trenches with us helping to dig holes," said Israelsen. "The locals tell us where they want the water to flow to irrigate their crops, so we take the extra time to use our people and equipment to help them. We listen to the locals because they're why we're here."

At a cubic meter in size, a Salerno is highly visible to anyone who would pass by—a fitting symbol to mark the impact the RCP 37 is having in their local area.

"You can see the difference," said Israelsen. "It's progress that you can see and touch." **GX**



### Soldiers Selected for Engagement Team

Four Wisconsin Army National Guard Soldiers have been selected for the Female Engagement Team, an all-female team supporting Army Special Combat forces by interacting with local women in combat zones. The four began several weeks of specialized training in May. Upon completion of training, they will deploy to Afghanistan as members of a cultural support team working with area villages. Their primary mission will be to interact with women and children to build rapport, foster relationships and establish trust.

—STORY COURTESY OF WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD / PHOTO BY SGT GRANT MATTHES

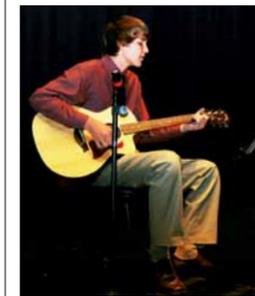


### Alabama Assists With Japan Relief Efforts

Soldiers of the 167th Theater Sustainment Command of the Alabama National Guard made a quick switch from participating in a routine training exercise at Camp Atterbury, IN, to being a part of a real-world event in various locations throughout the U.S.

The mission was to assist Department of Defense and U.S. military families living in specified areas of Japan in getting home. This precaution was taken due to the conditions in Japan after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

—STORY BY SPC KATIE DOWD / PHOTO BY AIRMAN PAUL LABBE



### Organization Honors Guard Children

"Our Military Kids," a national nonprofit organization, honored four children and a military family in a recent ceremony at the Navy Memorial. During the event, retired Marine Corps General Peter Pace—Our Military Kids advisory board member—spoke on the importance of the families during a deployment—especially the children.

"Our military families serve as well as anyone who has ever worn a uniform," Pace said. "And these military children have demonstrated amazing talent, resilience and strength."

—STORY & PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS PATRICK GORDON



### Defense Department Launches Sexual Assault Helpline

The Department of Defense recently launched its newest initiative to support victims of sexual assault. Using the DoD Safe Helpline, service members can "click, call or text" for victim support services for themselves or others. The free, anonymous and confidential resource can be accessed worldwide, 24 hours a day, every day, to connect with live sexual assault support professionals. In addition to improving victim care, secure and confidential access to Safe Helpline was developed to encourage victims to come forward when they might not otherwise.

—STORY COURTESY OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE / PHOTO BY SGT DARRON SALZER



### New York Shooter Will Compete in International Match

Eight Soldiers will take part in the South African National Defense Force 2011 Regional Combat Rifle Competition. The event pits Soldiers from around the world and Africa in friendly competition. New York National Guard members have been partnering with the South African National Defense Force since 2003 through the 63-nation National Guard State Partnership Program. A team of five New York Army National Guard Soldiers finished fifth in the annual South African National Military Skills Competition in November 2010.

—STORY & PHOTO BY SFC RAYMOND DRUMSTA



SGT Carter Raby, team leader with 1st Platoon, 118th Sapper Co., and SPC Jacob "Mancub" Mayne work to finish patching a road near Yaqubi village, Khowst province, March 24.

# Hi-Tech History

## Museum to Encompass Army's Legacy

By Christian Anderson / FORT BELVOIR, VA

**IMAGINE CROSSING THE** Delaware River with General George Washington, marching through the Ardennes with General George S. Patton and invading Afghanistan with General Tommy Franks. What if you could hear from the Soldiers who fought under these great leaders about their experiences in the United States Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve?

Soon, thanks to the Army Historical Foundation, the legacy of America's Soldiers will be told in the National Museum of the United States Army, courtesy of the United States Soldier.

### TOTAL PRESENTATION

Located outside of Washington, DC, at Fort Belvoir, VA, the 185,000-square-foot museum will honor the service and sacrifice of America's Soldiers and Veterans.

"We want to show Army life as a Soldier sees it and how they get the job done," said Jeb Bennett, the museum's director. "We are trying to make a museum that reaches out and grabs people, drawing them in so they learn about the history of the Army and our country."

The museum will tell the Army's story past and present, and make it accessible in one place.

"There's a lot of history that our Soldiers and Veterans generally don't even know," Bennett added. "We want to make it inviting and engaging so both the young and the old can get a lot out of it."

You would think it would be a challenge to tell the Army's 375-year history without exhausting the visitor, but the museum is using technology to keep the visitor engaged.

"There will be more than 40 audio-visual segments and interactions, featured in our main gallery, in addition to the artifacts," Bennett said. "We are going to use the Internet and smart-phone applications so people can learn more when they get home after visiting the museum."

### FALLING IN

The museum will feature major battles from the

You can support the **Army Historical Foundation** by making a donation at **ArmyHistory.org**.

American Revolutionary War, the Civil War and other conflicts, analyzing the way Soldiers fought, what they experienced and even how they lived.

"We want people to understand why Soldiers marched straight into devastating fire during the Civil War," Bennett added. "We want to show people how technology has changed warfare and tactics over the years."

There will also be exhibits that focus on current conflicts and beyond.

"We are working on exhibits for the Global War on Terror," Bennett said. "We are also working to tell the future of Soldiers, robotics and unmanned vehicles. So we are not only presenting history from the past, but we are also projecting into the future."

In addition to the main gallery, a 360-degree theater will immerse the visitor in the Soldiers' experience in various events. During the D-Day invasion scenario, you will see the beaches and fighting ahead of you, craft landing to the sides, and from the rear, battleships will fire overhead.

The museum is set to open June 14, 2015—the Army's 240th birthday—and admission will be free of charge. **GX**



NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
UNITED STATES  
ARMY

# States Respond to Texas Wildfires

Courtesy National Guard Bureau / ABILENE, TX

**IN APRIL, FOUR NATIONAL GUARD STATES** supported civil authorities battling more than 30 wildfires threatening lives and property in Texas.

Drought conditions led to at least 32 uncontrolled wildfires.

Under the direction of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander for Air Forces Northern at Tyndall Air Force Base, FL, four C-130 Hercules aircraft equipped with fire-fighting capabilities responded.

Texas National Guard Soldiers supported civilian authorities with personnel and four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, using buckets to drop water in multiple counties. The C-130s based their operations at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, TX. Two of the four aircraft were from the California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing, a third was from the Wyoming National Guard, 153rd AW, and a fourth was from North Carolina, 145th AW.

California and North Carolina also provided support aircraft.

The Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, or MAFFS, is a self-contained, reusable aerial firefighting system loaded into the cargo bay of a C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft, which effectively turns these airplanes into aerial firefighting tankers.

The system can discharge 3,000 gallons of water or fire retardant in less than five seconds, covering an area one-quarter of a mile long by 60 feet wide. Once the load is discharged, it can be refilled in less than 12 minutes.

Typically, the aircraft will spray along the leading edge of a fire in order to check its advance. The fire retardant has fertilizer mixed in, in order to promote regrowth in a burned area. **GX**

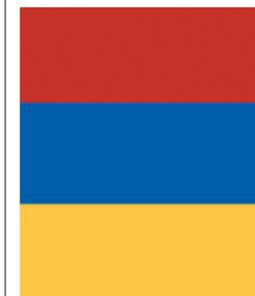
To watch videos of the Guard's response, visit [youtube.com/nationalguard](http://youtube.com/nationalguard).



## Alaska Deploys in Support of Mongolian Force

**Two Alaska Army National Guard members** recently deployed as U.S. liaisons in support of Mongolian Expeditionary Forces in Afghanistan. Major Scott Monson, 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, and Sergeant Major Richard Hildreth, recruiting and retention command, were selected as the next officer–noncommissioned officer team to deploy to Afghanistan in support of this mission. The team is the fourth rotation of its kind, with the first in 2009, and will act primarily as U.S. liaisons for the MEF, but will also be available as tactical advisors.

—STORY BY SSG KARIMA TURNER / PHOTO BY CPT AMY B. SLINKER



## Kansas Hosts Armenian Police

**A delegation of five police officials** from Armenian police departments met with Kansas City police March 9–12. The visit resulted from a collaborative partnership between Kansas law enforcement institutions, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Kansas National Guard's State Partnership Program. The goal is to assist Armenia in its effort to develop a community policing program and exchange ideas on law enforcement reform.

—STORY & PHOTO BY KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD



## Missouri Hosts Panamanians

**The Missouri National Guard State Partnership Program** recently welcomed members of the Panamanian Ministry of Public Safety and National Police to Jefferson City. The visit focused on the Missouri State Highway Patrol's professional standards and internal affairs investigations. Panamanian members representing the Ministry of Public Safety were Julissa Centeno, director of special projects; Leonard Paul, attorney; and Carlos Rios. Representing the Panamanian National Police were Licenciada Kauris Amador and Ileana Castillo.

—STORY & PHOTO BY NANCY LANE



## Philippine Leaders Visit Guam Guard

**The Guam National Guard recently hosted key leaders** of the Philippine military to share strategies on disaster preparedness. The Armed Forces of the Philippines Reserve Command and Retiree Affairs toured the Guam Army and Air Guard facilities, received a brief from Chuck Ada of Guam Homeland Security, and visited the National Weather Service in Tiyan during their three-day stay as part of the Guam National Guard's State Partnership Program. Philippine Soldiers also learned about the day-to-day lives of their neighbors.

—STORY & PHOTO BY GUAM NATIONAL GUARD



## Army's Sergeant Major Visits Guard Soldiers

**The 14th Sergeant Major of the Army, Raymond F. Chandler III,** recently met with National Guard Soldiers at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Chandler spoke to the pre-command course in the morning and the Soldiers in the afternoon. The Joint Assessment included Soldiers from 46 units, such as the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Arkansas), 560th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade (Georgia), a Stability Transition Team from New York, and Agricultural Development Teams from Indiana, Kentucky and Nebraska.

—STORY & PHOTO BY BATTLE COMMAND TRAINING CENTER–LEAVENWORTH

# Oregon Resilience

## State Takes New Approach to Support for Veterans

By Kim Lippert, Public Affairs Specialist, Oregon National Guard / MONMOUTH, OR

ON JULY 28, 2004, IN IRAQ, Master Sergeant Vince Jacques dangled upside down in a Humvee, his legs trapped under the dashboard. Miraculously, he survived the IED blast, but his injuries prevented him from returning to combat with his unit, the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry. He was sent home to recover.

Jacques said adjusting to life after the deployment was tough.

"I felt like we were just dumped off and had to fend for ourselves," said Jacques. "I spent three weeks looking for a doctor who could help a fellow Soldier who lost his arm in combat."

After the deployment, Jacques met with several fellow Soldiers to discuss how to help others with post-deployment adjustment. Within days, they met with Brigadier General Mike Caldwell, deputy director of state affairs for the Oregon Military Department, and Colonel Scott McCrae, who had lost his son in Iraq during the same deployment Jacques was on.



Members of the Oregon Army National Guard in front of the Oregon Military Academy in Monmouth, OR, March 16, after graduating from the Resilience Training Assistant Course.

act as traffic cops to direct Soldiers and Airmen to the right place," said McCrae.

The program now has regional area managers and other specialists ready to respond throughout Oregon with reintegration assets brought together through biannual summits. The program has some of the largest Veteran Career and Benefit fairs in the nation, Jacques said.

"We organize people from different places and pull them together to give everyone a common direction," said Don Weber, a regional area manager for Portland Metro and North Coast. The Reintegration Team also has a 24-hour hotline to help Veterans.

"We are, in effect, a highly networked help desk where we

"We can respond to any crisis in any area," Weber said.

### THE YELLOW ZONE

Another part of Oregon's reintegration process is the Yellow Ribbon Program, which offers Soldiers events where they learn about resources offered across the state.

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Thompson, a chaplain and deputy director of the state's Yellow Ribbon Program, said the program has a positive effect on all aspects of a Soldier's life.

"Oregon led the way when they established a Reintegration Team in 2005, as one of only two states in the nation who had a program like it," Thompson said. "We became

a model for the Yellow Ribbon Program throughout the nation," he said. "Oregon has mentored the rest of the nation on how to build the reintegration programs."

Yellow Ribbon Programs are now in all 50 states, and were mandated by the National Guard Bureau in 2010.

Thompson said he hopes the added focus on resilience, combined with Oregon's existing Reintegration Program, will help Soldiers develop the inner strength and character they need to transition from the battlefield to life at home.

"If we get resiliency going like we are hoping, it will give Soldiers internal strength to weather the deployment cycle," he said. **GX**

# APFT Gets Makeover

## Two Updated Fitness Assessments Replace the Old Routine

By Rob McIlvaine / FORT JACKSON, SC

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1980, the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) is being overhauled. It will be replaced by both the Army Physical Readiness Test (APRT) and the Army Combat Readiness Test (ACRT).

Over the next few months, the two tests will be conducted at eight installations as part of a pilot program, where standards will also be developed. The new tests could go Army-wide in October 2011, said Lieutenant General Mark P. Hertling, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Initial Military Training, at Fort Monroe, VA.

"Today's PT test does not adequately measure components of strength, endurance or mobility," Hertling said.

Hertling and Frank Palkoska, director of the Army's Physical Fitness School, began discussing the need for better physical fitness tests while together at West Point's department of physical education in the early 1980s. But it was the progression of sports science that led to development of the new APRT and ACRT.

"We needed to come up with a program for the incoming young Soldiers who were not as focused on health, fitness and nutrition," Hertling said.

### CHANGE OF PACE

The new training involves anaerobic exercise.

Used by athletes to promote strength, speed and power, and by body builders to build muscle mass, anaerobic exercise leads to greater performance in short-duration, high-intensity activities.

Aerobic exercise includes lower-intensity activities performed for longer periods of time.

The Army, said Hertling, has been on an ebb and flow of physical fitness training for the last 60 to 70 years.

"Every time prior to combat, our fitness regimen and fitness testing is very different to what we do after we've experienced combat. But right after Vietnam, some of the fitness mavens, like Ken Cooper, sold the military on aerobic training. But this isn't necessarily the way we do things in combat," Hertling said.

One of the initial concerns on changing the test, Hertling said, was anticipated comments

such as "Why are we changing? It's been good enough for 30 years."

"In fact, just the opposite is happening. Soldiers enjoy a challenge, and many have come up to me and said, 'Thank you for fighting for these changes,'" Hertling said.

### THE GREATEST GOOD

In order to develop these tests, Hertling asked Palkoska to look both inside and outside the Army for subject matter experts to help develop a test that is gender-neutral and age-specific.

"Also, we couldn't develop a test that required buying equipment," Hertling said. "All you need is a track and some graders to administer the test."

Following the APRT portion, participant Danica Foster, an instructor at the Army Physical Fitness School at Fort Jackson, had only one piece of advice: "Get in better shape."

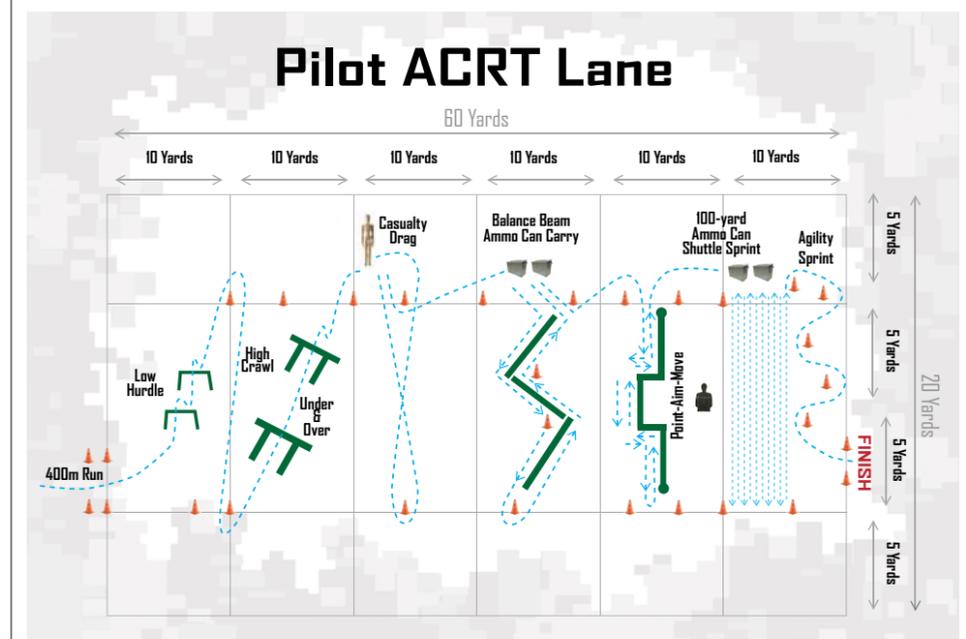
After taking the ACRT portion, Sergeant First Class Cornelius Trammell, also an instructor at the school, had one thought on his mind: "My quads are on fire," he said. "I consider myself in great shape and always do well in distance

running, but this was a challenge and made me breathe hard."

"This is what anaerobic training is all about," Hertling said. "It's like a boxer in the first and second round, just like in combat with all the stress and before you can relax and take in oxygen." **GX**



A Soldier high-steps over obstacles on the second leg of the new Army Combat Readiness Test.





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Words have always been the weapon of choice for politicians and diplomats, but now that Soldiers in places like Afghanistan and Iraq must build relationships with citizens, communication has taken on critical importance. Meanwhile, people worldwide are using social networking sites to convey all kinds of information—some of high importance to U.S. Armed Forces who might be stationed in the area, or who might be sent there.

Then there's the ongoing need for intelligence that stays one step ahead of the enemy, and relief missions like in Japan and Haiti, where the Guard plays a pivotal role.

All this calls for more Soldiers with language skills. Although the Army has trained linguists capable of working with intelligence and interpreting for top commanders, linguists with more moderate skills are in short supply and needed for everyday interactions in the field.

"Linguists are as important on a battlefield as any weapon, because to win the hearts and the minds of the people is to relate to them rather than to battle them. The most

effective way to do that is to communicate with them," said Chief Warrant Officer Three Stephen P. Puckett, the state command language program manager of the Georgia National Guard.

#### MORE IS MORE

"There's been a paradigm shift in the Army," he said. The new attitude is: "Instead of just having 10 people on the battlefield who speak a language really, really well, let's have a thousand who speak it OK."

Puckett draws a distinction between two types of Army linguists: tactical and strategic. "While there are many Soldiers that conduct interrogations or translation support to the war-fighter on the battlefield ... there are others that provide force protection and threat assessments remotely," he said.

Linguists come to the Guard in two corresponding ways. Some are formally trained at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, CA, the premier military language school in the country. Others are native speakers who are tested for proficiency.

Partly because of the cost involved in training and partly to identify more linguists

more quickly, the Guard is asking native speakers to come forward, said Lieutenant Colonel Bobby Graves, the state command language program manager for the Total Army Language Program for linguists in the Tennessee National Guard.

"The Army wants current, qualified and proficient linguists," he said. But from the standpoint of efficiency and cost savings, a native speaker is often more proficient because they've had more experience speaking the language. And it doesn't cost the Army anything to train them."

These people are in the Guard, but haven't registered for the program because a lack of awareness, or misinformation, he noted.

#### MONEY TALK

Like all linguists, they get paid a bonus for their language skills. How much depends on the language—some are more in demand than others—how the Soldier scores on the proficiency tests, and in some cases, how many languages they speak. The top pay for one language is \$400 a month, while multiple languages can bring up to \$1,000 a month, depending on the test scores, Graves said.

The Army publishes a list of languages and dialects eligible for the payment, ranked by demand. For example, five dialects of Arabic are ranked at the top, followed by four dialects of Chinese and French, and six languages of India. Others on the A-payment list include Japanese, Korean, two dialects of Persian, two dialects of Pushtu, Russian, Spanish, two Turkic languages and Urdu.

Bonus pay is always welcome, but Guard linguists mention other experiences that make the role rewarding. Among them: future career opportunities; travel; helping their fellow Guard Soldiers communicate with the people they are working with in the field, as well as military from other countries; and being recognized for a skill they have worked to develop. For those who combine their language skills with intelligence work, there is also the satisfaction of seeing information they've discovered help their unit, advance their mission and possibly save lives.

#### THE BIG PICTURE

If Guard linguists maintain and improve their language skills, at the end of their service, "they will have a skill that will serve them for the rest of their lives," said Colonel Danial D. Pick, commandant of the DLI.

CPT PETER SHINN

## PROFILE CHRISTINA YAMAUCHI



**Specialist Christina Yamauchi** of the 269th Military Police Company, Murfreesboro, TN, was born in Japan and came to the U.S. when she was 16. Her brother, Kenji Yamauchi, also is a Guard linguist. Both brought their language skills to the Guard as native speakers and passed the Defense Language Proficiency Test.

A highlight of Christina Yamauchi's service as a Guard linguist was the opportunity to go back to Japan in 2009 and take part in a joint exercise with Japanese troops called Orient Shield. She also was given time to visit family.

Yamauchi was involved translating between the Japanese defense task force and the American Guard. "This was a great start of a relationship between the Japanese defense task force and the U.S. Army and Guard. I witnessed the beginning of a friendship between both parties," she said.

Now both are helping Japan recover from the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters it experienced, and Yamauchi is watching this work with pride. She has volunteered to go and is waiting to be called. Her family is safe, she said, but "to be able to go to Japan and assist in any kind of humanitarian work would be very rewarding." She has also traveled to the Dominican Republic. When she is not on Guard duty, she works for the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Murfreesboro. "When I am not a Soldier, I am taking care of Soldiers," she noted.

"I'm definitely proud of being in the ... Guard, but even prouder to be able to offer a rare skill that not everybody possesses," Yamauchi said.



FIND OUT MORE: [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/linguist](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/linguist)

## DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

"The need for individuals who are multi-lingual, have cultural competencies and can communicate is increasingly valuable in business and academia, as well as in the government," he said.

Learning a language can be difficult and expensive, but the skill is perishable. If it isn't used, much of it disappears within months. There's a need for daily practice, known as "sustainment."

The Internet makes this easier. For example, the DLI website—[dliflc.edu](http://dliflc.edu)—offers a wealth of free training opportunities.

### THE LONG HAUL

DLI also offers mobile training teams, with intermediate and advanced face-to-face courses for the Guard.

"We train our students to look at language study as a lifelong learning endeavor. So we take it from the basic course here to sustainment long-term throughout their careers," Pick said.

The National Guard offers the respected Rosetta Stone program free over the Internet and has small language labs for units that have a higher percentage of linguists. Some of Tennessee's linguists have taken part in overseas deployment training, such as Yama Sakura in Japan, Cobra Gold in Thailand, and Operation Bright Star in the Middle East, he added.

The National Guard in Georgia has taken a big step forward, opening a Language Training Center at the Clay National Guard Center in Marietta, GA, last year. It is meant as a regional location to help Guard linguists maintain their skills.

"The Georgia Language Training Center was created as a response to language training shortages," Puckett said. "Other states have robust language training conditions and facilities, including Utah, California and Washington. There was very little representation on the East Coast, and therefore the idea took hold of creating a language training facility on the East Coast that could readily respond to the demand signal."

Major General Maria Britt, commanding general of the Georgia Army National Guard, said: "Our investment in the Georgia Language Training Center is one with strategic implications. The battlefields of today and those of tomorrow demand Soldiers who are both culturally aware and language-enabled. Language capabilities add value in terms of interoperability with our international partners, while making our Soldiers more survivable and effective. The Language Training Center is allowing us to transition our organizational culture from one that views language as a requirement to one that views language as an expectation." **GX**

When members of the Guard are sent to learn a language, most will go to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) Foreign Language Center in Monterey, CA, for an intensive course of 26 to 64 weeks.

To be admitted to the program, they must first take the Defense Language Aptitude Battery. How well they do will determine, first, whether they can get in, and second, the difficulty of the language they can study. There are 24 languages taught there, and two dialects of Arabic. Arabic is regarded as one of the most difficult languages, but also one of the most in demand by the Armed Forces.

There are 1,700 instructors—98 percent are native speakers—and the facility can accommodate 3,500 Soldiers. With some additional classes taken at other colleges, Soldiers can come out of the school with an associate degree.

The need for linguists in the National Guard is "significant and growing," said Colonel Danial D. Pick, commandant of DLI. "The National Guard is involved heavily in our operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and so in terms of the requirement for linguists to support counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, or building partnership capacity and working with our partners around the world, language and culture competency is critical to those missions."



DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

**Captain Matt Ryan** is commander of the HHT, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, in Buffalo, NY. He knows 16 languages, has degrees in Spanish and in Soviet studies, has an MBA, and has been to numerous countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait and Germany. He's also an intelligence officer who teaches at a high school.

This is no ordinary Soldier. Of his experience in the Guard, he said, "It's been a really fascinating time. That's the beauty of the Guard. You never know where you're going to be or what you're going to need to do when you are going out on deployment."

About his languages, he learned some in schools and others less formally. Knowing different languages

makes learning others in the same grouping easier, he said. At various times he has taught French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic and Italian. He also mentioned that he speaks Ukrainian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian and Portuguese. He stays proficient by thinking in a different language each day when he is not at work.

"Being a multi-language person has opened up so many doors and so many opportunities," Ryan observed. "I can't imagine there are young [people] joining the Guard who don't want to take advantage of language training if it becomes possible for them. It has been fantastic."

"I would encourage as many Guard Soldiers as possible to take advantage

of any training they can get in another language," he added.

Ryan's skills have enabled him to translate between people of different nationalities.

It's a challenge for the Guard to know which languages they'll need, especially with the long lead time needed to teach a language. "That changes so drastically, you cannot possibly prepare for it. You need to have a battery of linguists ready to go, and they need to be embedded with your combat forces," he said. "You have to be able to train people, and that's the difficulty. Today it might be Pushtu; tomorrow it might be Japanese."

### PROFILE MATT RYAN



### PROFILE SHARON MARTIN

**Sergeant Sharon Martin**, A Company, 221st Military Intelligence Battalion, Georgia

National Guard, is an Arabic speaker who has taken a refresher course at the new Language Training Center in that state. She had learned Arabic at DLI and has received training in the Iraqi dialect.

In Iraq, she worked with intelligence, but said, "As a linguist, I was often called upon to translate whatever needed to be translated. I typically worked translations of documents or prerecorded voice. I was what you call a "fobbit," meaning I never left the [forward operating base]. The intelligence cell I worked in directly supported the troops who went off-base on missions."

Indicating the need for Arabic linguists at the time, she said seven linguists were deployed with her unit, but only two spoke Arabic, "and I was the only one with the Iraqi dialect." The other linguists served in non-language positions, typically as intelligence analysts.

"I stayed proficient because I was working in my target language at all times. In fact, my language skills improved while I was deployed," Martin said.

As a linguist in intelligence, working on a team, it's often hard to tell when, as an individual, you are making a difference, she noted.

"We aren't just linguists in the Army," she said. "We're intelligence professionals. Often, your day can be filled with so many mundane tasks, it feels like you are making no

difference and it can be so frustrating. But then one day the puzzle pieces fit together, because all the work paid off." For example, when some documents she translated assisted in an analysis which led to the capture of a terrorist cell. But it was a team effort, she emphasized.

Back home, Martin stays proficient in the language by reading and listening to news in Arabic. "I also work as a contract linguist, so I'm constantly immersed in the language. You can't expect to stay proficient in your language if you never practice it. It takes discipline, commitment and a real love of the language. The Guard will empower you with the training you need to learn the language, but it's up to you to continually maintain your skills," she said.

SGT SHARON MARTIN, TOP: CAPT MATT RYAN



# To Iraq and Back

## COL Chris Fowler's Journey of Service

Story by Camille Breland // Photos by Melanie Connor

**GEORGE WASHINGTON**, the founding president of our nation, once said, "When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen."

This simple yet poignant phrase encompasses the heart of the National Guard—the Citizen-Soldier. Our Guard men and women simultaneously carry out the dual mission of protecting their state and nation. They are never at once only a Soldier or only a citizen.

It's not easy to rise through the ranks of the National Guard while maintaining a civilian career. Yet, Soldiers throughout history have done so, and Colonel Chris Fowler of the Washington National Guard is one outstanding

example. As commander of the 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and a top lieutenant with the Seattle Police Department, Fowler has spent his life serving others and finding the balance between Soldier and citizen.

### MISSION: COMMISSION

Fowler grew up in Seattle, WA, and attended the University of Washington for his bachelor's degree. Although his father had served on an aircraft carrier during the Korean War, he didn't know much about the military before enlisting in the Army. He joined through the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) and

participated in the university's ROTC program. He spent two years drilling and training in the ROTC before graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology and commissioning in the Active Duty Army as a lieutenant with an infantry unit.

After completing his Active Duty service, Fowler enlisted in the National Guard, where he's remained for 21 years. During that time, he's seen significant changes in the Guard. He said after Desert Storm, the Guard began transitioning from a strategic reserve to a professional force with skills crucial to combat success. By the time the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began in 2001, National Guard Soldiers had been trained to levels

18 years on the force

along with the anti-crime team assisted with more than **1,500 ARRESTS** in a single year

awarded the **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**, Seattle Police Department's highest honor



on a par with their Active Duty counterparts.

Fowler always knew he would make the National Guard part of his career. With the military's specific structure, he found that success was clearly defined. He followed the Guard's detailed steps, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel when he was tapped to lead his first deployment.

### IN COMMAND

Fowler took command of 720 Soldiers in the 1/161st Infantry Battalion as it deployed to Iraq in 2004–05. The battalion was part of 4,500 Soldiers in the Washington Army National Guard's 81st BCT, and the deployment became

the largest mobilization of the state's Guard troops since WWII. The battalion was attached to the 3rd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, in Baghdad, Iraq, as the area's land-owning unit.

The infantrymen were in charge of patrolling most of southern Baghdad and an area outside of the city limits. Throughout the 18-month deployment, the Soldiers helped the local government with security and projects around the city, assisted the civilian population with social and human services, and trained the Iraqi National Guard, which went on to become the Iraqi National Army. The work and environment were intense, Fowler said, but the Guard Soldiers

rose to the challenge and returned as experienced combat Veterans.

"It was very rewarding, on the one hand, working with the Iraqis and developing goals and projects," said Fowler, who served as the infantry battalion commander for the deployment. "But it was more rewarding to see these Guard Soldiers that we trained go over there and become combat Veterans [who were] as good as any combat Veterans the country has produced. I can't say enough about how good those Soldiers were in that environment for the year."

Fowler recalled how the Guard Soldiers' civilian career skills and experience greatly



635  
days deployed

on two tours,  
Operation Iraqi Freedom

- 2 BRONZE STARS
- 2 Meritorious Service Medals
- 2 Meritorious Unit Commendations
- 8 a Humanitarian Service Medal

helped in several missions and projects throughout the deployment. Soldiers with agricultural experience were paired up with farmers in rural Baghdad to teach efficient farming techniques. One Soldier, who had a doctoral degree in economics, assisted Army leaders in governance issues while another, who was a project manager in his civilian career, was placed in charge of the battalion's project finances.

"The training that [the Soldiers] received and the skills that the National Guard brings with their full-time jobs, coupled with their military occupational specialties, provided a unique capability that is different than what the Active Army could do back then," Fowler said.

#### A MAN OF ACTION

As commander, Fowler's role was to oversee operations for the battalion. But he wasn't sitting behind a desk. He traveled in and around Baghdad every day, checking on missions. Specialist Kristopher Murphy, Fowler's driver during the deployment, remembers him as a great commander who liked to be in the action and made an effort to visit every unit frequently.

"Any time calls came in that [a company was] engaged with combatants, Colonel Fowler was quick to respond and ... oversee what was going on," Murphy said. "He wanted to be there and make sure things were going right."

Fowler returned to Iraq in 2008–09, this time to Camp Ramadi, west of Baghdad.

This time, his battalion was in charge of securing and maintaining the camp headquarters for the Marine Corps. "Security was the most important priority," Fowler explained, "and we had to take some drastic steps right at the beginning to get the security to the level we thought appropriate."

The brigade's Guard training helped them effectively communicate and work with the Marines, as well as get up to speed on technologies and procedures that had changed since their last deployment.

#### "NEIGHBORS HELPING"

Amid videos and photos of Guard Soldiers in action, the Washington Army National Guard's website bears a significant phrase for its Citizen-Soldiers: "We are neighbors helping neighbors through a tradition of service." Fowler embodies this phrase, not only in his Guard role assisting the Evergreen State during natural disasters, emergencies and other missions, but also in his day-to-day civilian job as a police lieutenant.

After joining the National Guard, Fowler "bounced around" from job to job, unsure of his civilian career path. While he wasn't initially attracted to police work, a few of his family members urged him to begin the testing to become a police officer. After an extensive hiring process, which involved background checks, psychological evaluations and interviews, Fowler was accepted to the state police academy. He said his Guard training prepared him mentally and physically for police work.

"[In the Guard], you learn how to not get stressed out, you learn how to think systematically, and you learn how to pick up concepts fairly quickly, so those types of things helped," he recalled. "Having been [in] the military helped me get through the training for the police department because nothing was a culture shock."

After graduating from the academy, Seattle police officers are required to complete 3½ months of field training with a more experienced officer. They go on patrols with these training instructors, who are evaluating them throughout the entire process. It was during these initial patrols that Fowler realized he had found his calling. "[Police work] became not a job, but really a vocation," he shared.

#### REVVING UP

Over the next several years, Fowler ascended through the ranks and into more proactive, but risky, positions. After serving on patrol in a car and on a bike, Fowler joined the anti-crime team, part of the narcotics division. As a narcotics

detective, he conducted plainclothes and undercover missions in the city's war on drugs.

Fowler continued to receive promotions, eventually joining the department's unique Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team. While his SWAT missions were typically high-risk, Fowler said they weren't as "shoot 'em up" as characterized on TV.

"The SWAT team is, in many ways, like an infantry squad that has been in Afghanistan. They're at the top of their game, they're highly trained, their instincts are top-notch, and they have an attitude where they're not going to take anything from anybody," he explained.

For Fowler, that meant he was conducting hostage rescues, counterterrorism investigations and manhunts, in addition to serving risky search warrants to criminals. Since the SWAT team is a full-time department in Seattle, officers are frequently called upon for high-risk situations, like large protests, parades or political events.

Fowler was team leader of the SWAT team when he was called up for his first Iraq deployment. The Seattle Police Department was very supportive of his Guard duties, Fowler said, and he was able to return to his SWAT position when he came home. But while he was thousands of miles away in Iraq, Fowler's police peers showed how much his service meant to them by voting him Officer of the Year on the SWAT team.

"Of all the accolades, that was one of the best, because it was from the heart of the people that I work with," Fowler said.

After 5½ years on the SWAT team, he was promoted again. Now a lieutenant at the department, Fowler is in a role more supportive to the precinct's captain. Although he's now serving less on the streets and more in the office, Operations Chief Mike Sanford said the job is exactly where he was needed.

"[The administrative lieutenant] was a position with the greatest need for a skilled leader, and that's why he's there," Sanford said of Fowler. "I could not see anyone else as capable as Chris filling it."

#### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Fowler didn't join the National Guard to become a colonel or a general—he joined to serve—and any success he has received is a byproduct of performing his job well.

"Probably the greater success is gaining the respect of Soldiers and leaders underneath me who feel confident in my capabilities," he said. "As I gained responsibility, I also gained respect throughout the system."

Fowler's leadership, support and guidance transcend all rank levels. In Iraq, his Soldiers

**"UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, AND FIND THOSE PEOPLE WHO CAN TURN YOUR WEAKNESSES INTO STRENGTHS."**

— COL Chris Fowler,  
Washington Army National Guard

felt like they were part of a successful team, said Murphy. Company commanders and junior enlisted Soldiers were "pleased to be under his command," he said.

Fowler brings these characteristics to his police career, too. His coworkers and bosses agree: "People love working for Chris," Sanford said. "They love working for him because they know what he expects, they know what he wants, and they know that he'll support them in getting there."

#### IN THE BALANCE

So, how is he able to successfully juggle two careers plus be a great husband and a father of three? The key, he says, is communication. He encourages National Guard Soldiers to talk to their employers, Guard commanders and each other when establishing priorities, and to also be flexible when changes occur.

"Understand your own strengths and weaknesses, and find those people who can turn your weaknesses into strengths," he said.

The National Guard wants its Soldiers to succeed, he said, and the skills it provides Soldiers are invaluable in the work force. Soldiers know how to remain cool under pressure and analyze problems and find solutions, in addition to their strong leadership principles. During missions, Soldiers' civilian skills, coupled with Guard training, help them to more efficiently overcome challenges. **GX**

Do you know a Soldier who serves as a firefighter, law enforcement officer or medical professional? If so, email us at [editor@gxonline.com](mailto:editor@gxonline.com) today.

# The Arrowhead Report

By Christian Anderson

## GX Exclusive With 36th ID Commander MG Eddy Spurgin

**THE 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, Texas Army National Guard, has fought around the world to defend freedom. Based in Austin, TX, the unit carries on the spirit of their forebears, who valiantly fought Santa Anna's Mexican army at the Alamo.

Now, the 36th, also known as the "Arrowhead Division," is deployed to Iraq under Operation New Dawn, working to help the Iraqi Security Forces develop the skills necessary to preserve their new government. GX spoke with Major General Eddy M. Spurgin, commanding general of the 36th Infantry Division, who is stationed in Iraq, about the mission.



### Q&A

**GX:** How does the 36th's current mission in Iraq differ from previous deployments?

**ES:** On September 1, the mission in Iraq transitioned to Operation New Dawn. We're currently doing stability operations. We're no longer doing any unilateral combat or counterinsurgency operations. Those have pretty much been taken over by the Iraqi Security Forces. Our primary mission is to advise, train and assist the Iraqi Security Forces, which include their army, their police force, the Department of Border Enforcement and their ports of entry in southern Iraq.

**GX:** What challenges does the 36th face in dealing with the Iraqi Security Forces?

**ES:** The division has been training for this mission for nearly two years. We received quite a bit of advance notice that we were going to come to Iraq, to assume command and control of United States Division – South. We went through intensive training to prepare us for the mission. Part of that training was related to the culture here, which is very important for the success of our mission. As far as language barriers, we utilize interpreters quite a bit. We have to be

sensitive to the culture. Thanks to our pre-mobilization training and the help of the 1st Infantry Division, who we replaced, we had a lot of knowledge about the culture. There are some challenges, but overall, our Soldiers are well trained. We are communicating very well with the Iraqi Security Forces here.

**GX:** What was the relationship like between the 36th and the 1st Infantry Divisions?

**ES:** We had a very close relationship with the 1st ID. Prior to the 36th deploying, we rotated a handful of staff officers, about four or five at a time, to come over here for a month to work with them to learn the operational environment. The 36th worked, lived, slept and ate with the Soldiers from the 1st, and that helped prepare them for our mission. I would say it's a close friendship. They were crucial in setting us up for success when we got here.

**GX:** The lineage of the 36th dates back to WWI. Are your Soldiers proud of that?

**ES:** Yeah, we are really proud of that lineage. Our division then was made up of Guard Soldiers from Texas and Oklahoma, which is where we get our distinctive

arrowhead patch. The arrowhead shape comes from the American Indian culture from Oklahoma, and the "T" represents Texas. We are very proud of that and the fact that our division fought in WWII.

It was the first American division to arrive in Europe. We fought in the Italian Campaign, participated in an amphibious landing in the French Riviera, and fought in Germany until the end of the war.

I'm also proud of what this division has done since 9/11. We've deployed approximately 20,000 Texas Guard Soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan, and also to the Balkans—specifically, Bosnia and Kosovo. There are some great Citizen-Soldiers in our division. Some have deployed three or four times. That gives us quite a bit of experience. A number of Soldiers re-enlisted prior to this deployment, and a number of them will re-enlist while we're here. We have great Soldiers that utilize their civilian skill set to help us succeed in Iraq.

**GX:** How do your Soldiers feel about the upcoming drawdown?

**ES:** It's a huge mission, and they're very focused on getting the job done and getting it done right. There's

SGT THOMAS KAPPU, USO-S PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## HISTORY OF THE 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

**WWI** The 36th ID was originally activated in 1917 as the 15th Division and deployed to Europe in 1918, seeing intensive action in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. In late 1918, after a short but action-packed campaign, the Soldiers of the 15th returned home. The division was deactivated in June 1919.

**WWII** The 36th was reactivated on Nov. 25, 1940. It landed in North Africa on April 13, 1943, began training for its entry into WWII, and landed in Salerno on Sept. 9, 1943. Battling a heavily entrenched German army, the 36th fought inch by inch, eventually pushing battle-hardened Germans into the mainland of Italy. The 36th saw extensive action in Italy until March 12, 1944, when the unit was granted some well-earned R&R. On Aug. 15, the 36th was back on the front, making an amphibious assault in southern France. They continued to fight throughout the European campaign until Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945. The 36th returned to the United States after 400 days of combat in Europe and was deactivated on Dec. 15, 1945.

**POST-9/11** The "Arrowhead Division" has fought in the War on Terror since 9/11:

Enduring Mission 3, *Bosnia*; Operation Iraqi Freedom, *Iraq*; Operation Enduring Freedom, *Afghanistan*; Operation New Dawn, *Iraq*; Multinational Force and Observers, *Egypt*; KFOR 7, *Kosovo*

a tremendous amount of equipment to be moved out. In addition, we have the responsibility of closing American bases. There's a lot of work involved with closing a base—about 80–90 steps. After the advise, train and assist mission, the drawdown is the second major effort. It takes a tremendous amount of planning and execution. There has been a tremendous amount of sacrifice laid down by the United States, and also the government of Iraq and the Iraqi people. The United States has lost Soldiers over here. We've had 30,000 wounded. I think about all the families affected by all the years of combat.

**GX:** How do you think this deployment will be viewed 100 years from now?

**ES:** I hope people look back and see the National Guard as an operational force. We are no longer a strategic reserve. We've been called on many times to deploy and have been able to do that successfully. We were always capable of performing full-spectrum operations in Iraq or in Afghanistan. The Citizen-Soldiers really bring some special skills to the counterinsurgency and stability operations. We stepped forward and got the job done.

**GX:** Why are you proud to be a National Guard Soldier?

**ES:** The National Guard has been around since the 1600s, and the Citizen-Soldier is something special. They are patriotic and willing to put themselves in harm's way thousands of miles from home. They keep re-enlisting. I am proud that I have been able to serve with such a great team here. I'm honored to not only serve Texas in states of emergency, but to serve our country overseas.

**GX:** Did you have any idea when you took your

commission that one day you would be a two-star general leading an infantry division?

**ES:** No. When I was a kid, my grandmother had a 36th ID plate in her kitchen. I used to look at it but I had no idea what it meant. If [you'd have told me then] that one day I'd be leading that division, I would have told you that you were crazy. When I got older, I studied history and came to understand what our division did in WWII. I've been fortunate to work with some great people and great Soldiers that have helped me along the way. I had great support from my family, and that has been very important to me. It worked out, it's been a great run, and I'm very proud that I've been able to bring this division to Iraq. I have absolutely been blessed to get this opportunity.

**GX:** How do you feel about Gov. Rick Perry being so supportive of the Texas National Guard?

**ES:** He has been great to support us. He's been to Iraq and Afghanistan many times to visit the Texas Guard members. We were very fortunate to have him speak at our deployment ceremony. He has been a great supporter of the Texas Military Forces.

**GX:** Is there anything you'd like to say to the folks back home?

**ES:** From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank our families for their support. We couldn't accomplish what we were asked to do without it. They sacrifice a lot when their loved ones are deployed.

Their Soldiers in the 36th ID are doing a great job, and we look forward to reuniting with our families when we get back in the fall. I want to thank our Family Readiness Group, which does a good job of supporting our families while we're gone. I also want to thank our employers, who support our Soldiers and families while they're deployed to Iraq. **GX**



**MAJOR GENERAL  
EDDY M. SPURGIN**

Assumed duties as commander of the 36th Infantry Division in March 2009. Spurgin began his military service in 1980

after graduating from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in animal science. He attended the Field Artillery Officers Basic Course, the Field Artillery Cannon Battery Course, Reserve Component Tank Commanders Course, the Infantry Officers Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College, and the United States Army War College.

May 1980–Sept. 1980, **Student Officer**, Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, OK

Nov. 1980–Oct. 1981, **Assistant S3, HHT**, 1/124th Cavalry, Waco, TX

Nov. 1981–Aug. 1982, **Tactical Intelligence Officer**, HHC, 2/142nd Infantry, Plainview, TX

Aug. 1982–Jan. 1983, **Weapons Platoon Leader**, Company C, 2/142nd Infantry, Plainview, TX

Jan. 1983–Nov. 1984, **Platoon Leader**, Detachment 1, Troop B, 1/124th Cavalry, Clifton, TX

Nov. 1984–Sept. 1985, **Executive Officer**, Troop B, 1/124th Cavalry, Waco, TX

Sept. 1985–Sept. 1987, **Troop Commander**, Troop B, 1/124th Cavalry, Waco, TX

Sept. 1987–Jan. 1990, **Company Commander**, Company C, 2/142nd Infantry, Plainview, TX

Jan. 1990–Oct. 1990, **Company Commander, HHC**, 2/142nd Infantry, Amarillo, TX

Oct. 1990–Aug. 1993, **Battalion S3**, 2/142nd Infantry, Amarillo, TX

Sept. 1993–Aug. 1995, **Assistant G3**, 49th Armored Division, Austin, TX

Sept. 1995–July 1996, **Executive Officer**, 2/142nd Infantry, Lubbock, TX

Aug. 1996–July 1999, **Battalion Commander**, 2/142nd Infantry, Lubbock, TX

Aug. 1999–July 2001, **Assistant Chief of Staff, G3**, 49th Armored Division, Austin, TX

July 2001–Sept. 2004, **Brigade Commander**, 36th Brigade, 49th Armored Division, Houston, TX, and 72nd Brigade, 36th Infantry Division

Sept. 2004–Aug. 2005, **Commander**, 142nd Corps Security Detachment (III Corps ROC), Abilene, TX

Sept. 2005–April 2006, **Deputy Commander**, Texas Army National Guard

May 2006–March 2009, **Deputy Commander**, 36th Infantry Division, Austin, TX

March 2009–present, **Commanding General**, 36th Infantry Division, Austin, TX

# DIRECT SHIP

## New Program Saves Time and Money

By Christian Anderson

INTRODUCED TO THE NATIONAL GUARD in 2004, the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) has completely transformed the enlistment process for hundreds of thousands of recruits through a series of structured drill weekends. RSP provides recruits with the knowledge and strength to successfully tackle Basic Combat Training (BCT), saving the Guard money by effectively reducing pipeline losses. In May of 2010, the National Guard Bureau implemented the Direct Ship process to further reduce the cost of shipping recruits to BCT and allowing the RSP cadre to work smarter, not harder.

### CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLEMAN

Prior to Direct Ship, recruits traveled to the nearest Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) immediately before they shipped off to BCT, spending the night at a hotel, and then undergoing the final physical and legal screenings. Now with Direct Ship, the RSP cadre handle all of the screening that would be conducted at MEPS at the state Direct Ship site.

“The Direct Ship option is much more efficient for the National Guard because it saves travel time and money by cutting out trips to and from MEPS,” said Master Sergeant David Patteson, RSP NCO for the Virginia National Guard. “The recruits stay in the barracks at the Direct Ship site, and it gives us one more chance to conduct quality control. There will be no issues with their paperwork because we double-check it.”

Basically, the RSP cadre scrutinize and evaluate the recruit thoroughly one more time for good measure before they ship to BCT.

“Direct Ship gives us more control and flexibility of getting recruits to Basic Combat Training,” said Brian Lockhart, RSP Supervisor, Montana National Guard. “We are able to evaluate their weight and height, complete Blue Phase training and review their final records. Plus we give them a final counseling before they ship.”

“Direct Ship is the way of the future because it will be mandatory in the new Accession Process Redesign,” Lockhart added.

By the end of FY11, all 54 States and Territories will have the opportunity to use Direct Ship as part of the Accession Process Redesign. **CX**



### STATISTICS

Direct Ship was first introduced in April 2010 and was available for states to use starting in May of 2010. By October of 2010, 22 States and Territories had used Direct Ship, some experimentally, with just a few Soldiers. Five states fully embraced it and were shipping over 90 percent of their Soldiers via Direct Ship.

Since the Accession Process Redesign training began in November, there are now 41 states that have tried Direct Ship and nine states that use it almost exclusively.

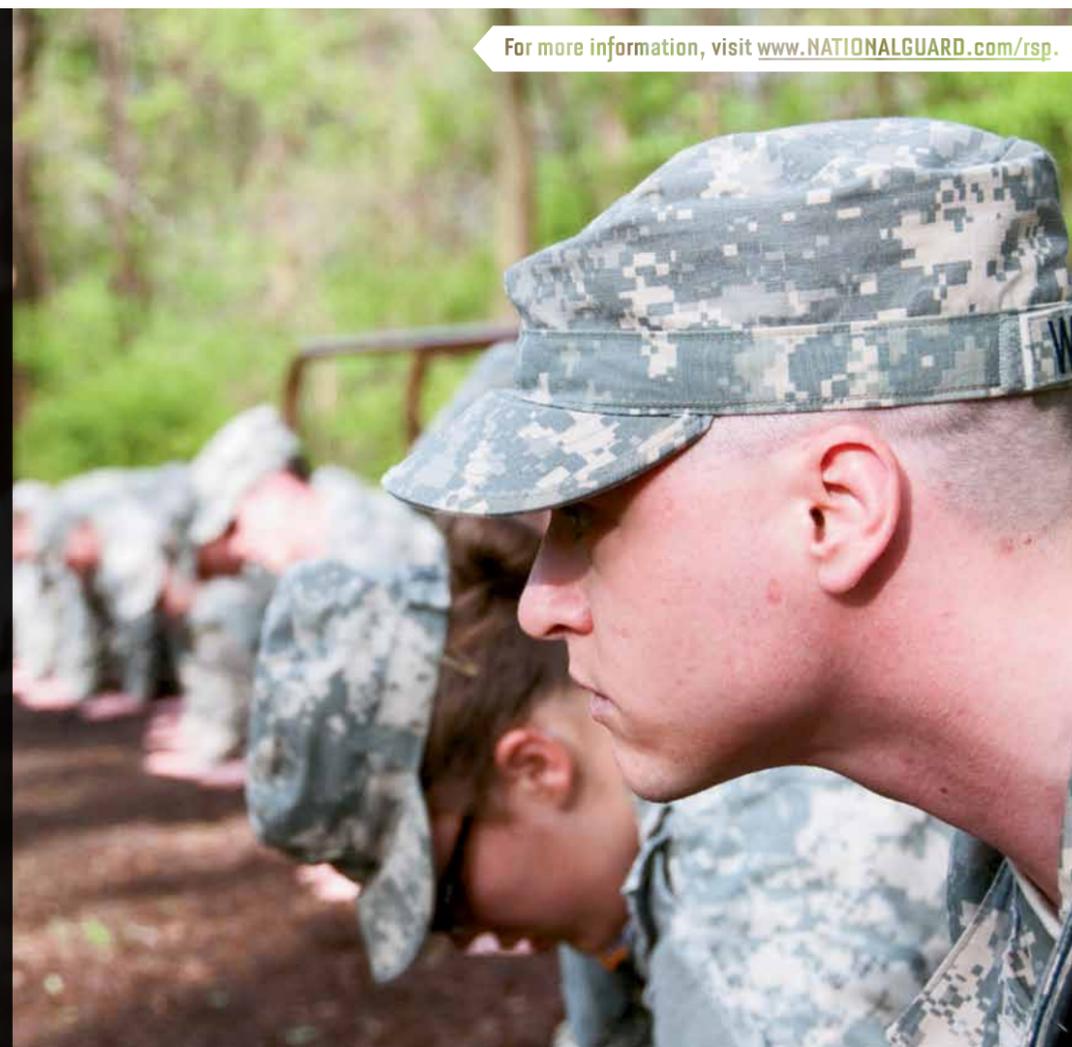
And the numbers continue to climb daily, as all 54 States and Territories will have attended the Accession Process Redesign training by the first week in September.

PHOTOS BY SPC PIANA, CLEARLY, OHIO NATIONAL GUARD

**“THE DIRECT SHIP OPTION IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD BECAUSE IT SAVES TRAVEL TIME AND MONEY BY CUTTING OUT TRIPS TO AND FROM MEPS.”**

— MSG David Patteson, RSP NCO, Virginia National Guard

For more information, visit [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/rsp](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/rsp).



### The 5 Myths of Direct Ship

<p><i>Soldiers must return to MEPS to ship to Initial Entry Training.</i></p>	<p><i>Our state does not have the assets or funding to implement Direct Ship.</i></p>	<p><i>States will use Direct Ship to send medically unfit Soldiers to train.</i></p>	<p><i>We cannot use Direct Ship because we "opted out" when it was introduced last year.</i></p>	<p><i>Soldiers who Direct Ship arrive at the training post without proper documentation and paperwork.</i></p>
<p><b>TRUTH</b> There is no DoD requirement for already-assessed Soldiers to return to MEPS for inspection prior to shipping to Initial Entry Training (IET). In fact, many Direct Ship sites have all the assets and capabilities to process the Soldiers to ship to training.</p>	<p><b>TRUTH</b> All tasks currently required to ship Soldiers from a MEPS site can be done by personnel at an RSP/Direct Ship site, with no additional cost to the state, and in most cases can actually save on funding and man-hours.</p>	<p><b>TRUTH</b> The inspection process remains the same, and there is no benefit for states to send Soldiers who are not qualified. So far, the statistics uphold that the success rate is equal to or exceeds that of Soldiers who processed through MEPS.</p>	<p><b>TRUTH</b> Any state or territory can use Direct Ship at any time.</p>	<p><b>TRUTH</b> The statistics indicate that the quality control rate for Soldiers' packets and paperwork is equal to that of Soldiers who processed through MEPS.</p>

# SPANISH ROOTS

## The Puerto Rico National Guard

# AMERICAN BOOTS

Most people know that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is part of the United States. However, few realize that thousands of citizens of this U.S. island have worn, and continue to wear, the uniform of the Army National Guard. Though the earliest roots of the militia in North America date to 1565 with the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine, FL, the militia presence on Puerto Rico predates that by almost 60 years.

The first settler of Puerto Rico was the renowned Spanish explorer Don Juan Ponce de León. Famous for his futile search for the Fountain of Youth, Ponce de León became the first governor of Puerto Rico on August 14, 1509, by royal decree of Spain's King Ferdinand. A later royal decree named Ponce de León as "Captain of Land and Sea" of the island. Since there were no Spanish Regular Army Soldiers available to him, Ponce de León began forming the Spanish settlers into a small military unit called the militia. Utilizing this Citizen-Soldier force, Ponce de León was able to subdue the indigenous inhabitants of the island during two conflicts known as the First and Second Indian Wars.

By Jason Hall

**BORIQUEN BORN**

Once the conquest of the entire island was achieved, Ponce de León continued to use his militia force to thwart the continued attacks on the settlement by other tribes from across the Caribbean. In response to this threat, Ponce de León organized the first official regiment of Puerto Rico: the Boriquen Regiment. The word “Boriquen” was an old indigenous word meaning “Puerto Rico.” Since he was the commander of this first regiment, today’s Puerto Rico National Guard has the distinct privilege and honor to claim Don Juan Ponce de León as its first commanding officer.

San Juan, Puerto Rico, would become a major port for Spanish ships sailing from Spain to Mexico. Therefore, in 1527 Spain began constructing several forts on the island, including La Fortaleza, El Castillo San Felipe del Morro, and El Castillo de San Cristóbal, and dispatched Regular Army Soldiers to garrison the fortifications, along with the local militia.

As other European nations’ interests spread across the Atlantic to North America, the strategically placed island of Puerto Rico became more and more attractive for capture. Multiple invasions were attempted by England, France and the Netherlands during the late 1500s and most of the 1600s. All of these invasions were repulsed by the Regular Army forces, reinforced by the militia.

**TIGHTER SHIP**

The organization of the militia of Puerto Rico would be greatly altered in 1759. During that year Marshal Alejandro O’Reilly, known as “The Father of the Militias,” reorganized the force and renamed it the “Milicias Disciplinadas,” or “Disciplined Militia.” Thanks to the efforts of Marshal O’Reilly, the Puerto Rico Militia underwent major retraining, which helped to sharpen the efficiency and prowess of the force. The transformed militia would see its fair share of combat during the latter part of the 1700s.

In 1779, while England fought to subdue its North American colonies during the American Revolutionary War, Spain decided to take advantage of the situation by invading the British colony of West Florida. The Puerto Rico Militia, as part of the Spanish Colonial Army in North America, participated in capturing Pensacola, as well as other British settlements including Baton Rouge, LA; St. Louis, MO; and Mobile, AL. Just under 20 years later, in 1797, the Soldiers of Puerto Rico were once again fighting the British during the Anglo-Spanish War. The value of

**MULTIPLE INVASIONS OF PUERTO RICO WERE ATTEMPTED DURING THE LATE 1500s AND MOST OF THE 1600s. ALL WERE REPULSED BY THE REGULAR ARMY FORCES, REINFORCED BY THE MILITIA.**

having them in the fight against England was so appreciated by the Spanish Crown that the Puerto Rico Militia was awarded Spain’s highest military commendation.

The 1800s remained relatively quiet for the Puerto Ricans until the latter half of the century. During this time, many citizens living in Spanish possessions abroad began demanding independence from Spain. In an effort to avoid having trained and armed citizens fight for their freedom, the Spanish government disbanded the Puerto Rico Militia in 1869. Up until this point, the militia had been comprised almost entirely of native Puerto Ricans. With the abolishment of the militia, a new military force emerged in Puerto Rico called the “Instituto de Voluntarios.” This new unit’s ranks were filled completely by Spaniards. This change in the makeup of Puerto Rico’s military would play a role in the forthcoming military action with the United States.

**SWEET VICTORY**

The Spanish-American War began in 1898, with most of the fighting occurring in Cuba and the Philippines. However, any Spanish possession was fair game for the American military. The U.S. viewed Puerto Rico with an envious eye due to the fact that the Caribbean island was well suited for use as a naval station. In addition, the island was abundant with the prized cash crop of sugar, a commodity that the United States lacked domestically. Thus, an American force invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, an action that would prove to be history-changing for the island.

The attack on Puerto Rico was made almost entirely by National Guard units from New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Since the militia had been disbanded, no Puerto Rican troops opposed the Americans. The only Spanish forces on the island were a few Regular Army troops and the small Instituto

de Voluntarios. In actuality, most of the native Puerto Ricans sympathized with the Americans, and many of them assisted the invaders by serving as interpreters and scouts. The war in Puerto Rico ended in less than a month when the Spanish signed a general armistice on August 12, thereby ceding Cuba, the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States.

**IN GOOD COMPANY**

Less than a year after becoming part of the United States, men of Puerto Rico began serving their new country as part of the first company of native Puerto Ricans in the American Colonial Army. Two years after that, in 1901, the U.S. Congress authorized the “Porto Rico Provisional Regiment of Infantry.”

As a couple of years passed by, several high-ranking leaders of Puerto Rico began discussing the creation of a National Guard of Puerto Rico. In 1906, this endeavor gained steam when it was approved by the governor and was met with great enthusiasm by the general public. Several units began to form in towns around the island, including one each in Yauco, Juana Díaz and Peñuelas, two in Ponce, and three in San Juan. The officers and men of each unit were required to furnish their own uniforms and equipment due to the lack of government funding. In fact, this new force was not authorized by the United States Congress, and therefore was short-lived.

To counter the actions of those attempting to form a National Guard, on May 27, 1908, the U.S. Congress reorganized the Porto Rico Provisional Regiment of Infantry as part of the U.S. Regular Army. The same provision that reorganized the regiment also dictated its location to be at Camp Las Casas in Saturce, near San Juan. This camp would serve as the primary training facility for the Puerto Rican Soldiers prior to, and during, WWI. The old



**Above:** American artillery units engaged the Spanish continually during their campaign across Puerto Rico.  
**Right:** LTC Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders posed for a picture at the top of San Juan Hill after defeating the Spanish forces occupying Puerto Rico.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

policy of segregation in the U.S. military was something new to the native Puerto Ricans. As such, they refused to designate themselves as either “white” or “black,” as required by military law at that time. This often caused some Puerto Ricans to be assigned erroneously to all-black regiments.

**OPENING SHOTS**

WWI broke out across Europe in 1914. Initially, the United States attempted to remain neutral and stay out of the war. Regardless of its claim of neutrality, the U.S. continued to assert its right to send supplies to Allied countries, especially Great Britain, and did not recognize Germany’s authority to attack such supply ships with U-boats. So when the German ship *Odenwald* attempted to leave San Juan and resupply German U-boats lurking in the Atlantic Ocean, members of the Porto Rico



**DURING THE KOREAN WAR, THE BORINQUEENERS CONDUCTED ONE OF THE FINAL BAYONET CHARGES IN U.S. ARMY HISTORY.**

One of the shining examples of the courage and bravery of the Borinqueneers was their tenacious assault on two enemy-controlled hills located just south of the Korean capital of Seoul. The three-day action began on January 31, 1951, with the regiment attacking the well-entrenched entire Chinese 149th Division. On the third and final day of the battle, the Borinqueneers fixed bayonets and conducted one of the final bayonet charges in U.S. Army history. The charge caused the Chinese troops to flee and desert their previously held positions. For this, and the rest of their service in Korea, the regiment earned the Presidential and Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Korean Presidential Unit Citations, the Greek Gold Medal for Bravery, four Distinguished Service Crosses, 124 Silver Stars and 606 Bronze Stars.

In the decades following the Korean War, the Puerto Rico National Guard went through several reorganizations. The most important change was the consolidation of the 65th, 295th and 296th regiments into the 92nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the brigade was reorganized as the 92nd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

DOMINIC D'ANDREA

Regiment stepped in to stop it. On March 21, 1915, as the *Odenwald* began forcing its way out of the harbor, Lieutenant Teófilo Marxuach fired a cannon from the "Santa Rosa Battery" located inside Fortress El Morro. The shot caused the *Odenwald* to halt, turn around and return to port, where her cargo was seized. Thus it was Marxuach, of the Porto Rico Regiment, who fired the first shots by the United States during WWI, even though the U.S. would not enter the war officially for almost another two years.

There were also other Puerto Ricans helping to make history at this time. On June 19, 1915, Luis R. Esteves became the first Hispanic and first Puerto Rican to graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY. An interesting historical side note is the fact that Esteves tutored a fellow classmate in Spanish, as a second language was a requirement to graduate. That fellow classmate would also go on to make history—his name was Dwight D. Eisenhower. Esteves would remain somewhat obscure until after WWI, when he would earn the name "Father of the Puerto Rican National Guard."

**BECOMING AMERICAN**

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act, which gave all Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. The purpose for this was clear: It was against federal law to draft non-citizens. The U.S. declared war on Germany a month after the passage of the Jones Act. Thousands of new U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico were quickly inducted into the U.S. Army. Luis Esteves was charged with overseeing the training of these new U.S. citizens into U.S. Soldiers. He opened three training camps and was about to open

a fourth when the war ended in 1918. In all, 20,000 Puerto Ricans trained in the camps run by Esteves.

The troops were placed in five newly created regiments of Puerto Rico: 295th, 296th, 373rd, 374th and 375th. Most of the regiments were sent to the continental U.S. in anticipation of deploying to Europe with the other American units. Unfortunately, due to the prejudices that existed at that time, few Puerto Ricans were sent to Europe, though those who did go served their country valiantly. The majority of the Puerto Ricans spent the duration of WWI in the Panama Canal Zone, guarding the canal and military installations located there.

Immediately following the conclusion of the war, Luis Esteves vigorously petitioned the governor of Puerto Rico, Arthur Yager, to form a Puerto Rico National Guard. Esteves told Yager that he was "convinced that Puerto Ricans make good Soldiers, as good as the best of any country in the world." Thanks to the untiring efforts of Esteves, the Puerto Rico National Guard was officially recognized by the U.S. Congress in 1919.

**PUERTO RICAN LEGEND**

The first adjutant general, John A. Wilson, put Esteves in charge of forming the new National Guard units. The first, for a short time called the "First Infantry Regiment," became the 65th Regiment, tracing its lineage to the old "Porto Rican Regiment," organized on June 2, 1920. Two years later, on December 26, 1922, the 295th Infantry Regiment was created. The third and final regiment, the 296th Infantry, was formed on March 1, 1936. Upon the death of Wilson, Luis Esteves became the adjutant

**The 65th Infantry Regiment: "The Borinqueneers"**

The 65th Infantry Regiment was organized in 1899, a year after the United States seized Puerto Rico from Spain. The nickname, "The Borinqueneers," honors a native Puerto Rican Indian tribe.

On Feb. 2, 1951, the 65th had been ordered to seize two hills and climaxed a three-day assault by fixing bayonets and launching straight into the Chinese 149th Division near Seoul, South Korea. The enemy troops fled.

Over the next three years, it participated in nine major campaigns and earned a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Republic of Korea Unit Citations.

Individual members earned four Distinguished Service Crosses and 124 Silver Stars.

Visitantes hispanohablantes ahora pueden encontrar informacion basica sobre La Guardia Nacional en [www.NATIONALGUARD.com](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com). Busque "fundamentos."

general of Puerto Rico in 1938, and remained such until his retirement on June 30, 1957.

In 1940, along with the entire National Guard of the United States, Puerto Rico's 295th, 296th and 65th regiments were called to federal service to provide a year of training and re-equipping in anticipation of America's possible entry into WWII. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, HI, on Dec. 7, 1941, the U.S. joined the Allied nations fighting Japan and Germany. By war's end, over 65,000 Puerto Rican Soldiers would fight both enemies during the war.

The 295th and 296th spent most of the conflict in the Pacific Theater, while the 65th Regiment first deployed to North Africa, from where, by April 1944, they had landed in Italy. The next stop for the regiment was Southern France as part of Operation Dragoon, and they fought along the Maritime Alps of Peira Cava. While fighting across France, the 65th Regiment's 3rd Battalion defeated the 107th Infantry Regiment of Germany's 34th Division. Of the 47 casualties suffered by the 65th, the first two were Private Sergio Sanchez-Sanchez and Sergeant Angel Martinez.

**CALERO CONQUERS**

The regiment produced many heroes, one of the most notable being Agustin Ramos Calero. While his company was engaged near Colmar, France, Calero single-handedly attacked a German squad, killing 10 and capturing 21 of the enemy, before being wounded himself. For his gallantry, Calero was awarded the Silver Star, along with 22 other medals and decorations, and earned the nickname "One-Man Army." Calero was the most decorated Hispanic-American Soldier of WWII.

Following Germany's capitulation, the regiment was sent to Mannheim, Germany, to provide a security force and support military government activities. When all was said and done, the 65th Regiment had fought in the battles of Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Central Europe and the Rhineland. The regiment left

Europe in 1945 and arrived home in Puerto Rico on November 9.

The Soldiers of Puerto Rico did not have long to rest after WWII. In a mere five years, they were once again sent overseas for combat, this time for the Korean War. On August 26, 1950, the 6,000 officers and men of the 65th Infantry Regiment sailed from Puerto Rico to Pusan, Korea. During the voyage, the unit adopted a new nickname, the "Borinqueneers." This new moniker was derived from combining the word "Buccaneer" and the word "Boriquen," first used by Ponce de León for his early militia. The Borinqueneers, as part of the Regular Army's 3rd Infantry Division, were among the first U.S. Soldiers to face the enemy in Korea.

**PAYING THE PRICE**

Since the beginning of the Global War on Terror, the men and women of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard have been serving on the frontlines in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the

globe. As in conflicts of the past, the price of freedom has been paid by this small Caribbean island. In January 2011, the bodies of Sergeant José M. Cintrón Rosado and Specialist José Delgado Arroyo arrived home. Both men were killed in Iraq by an improvised explosive device (IED) that was detonated close to their convoy. Major Paul Dahlen of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard stated, "Any loss is tragic and tough." In describing the impact the loss has on the Puerto Rican National Guard, Dahlen explains, "We're a pretty close group. We consider ourselves a family."

That family of Borinqueneers, known as the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, will continue to serve their citizens, and their country, wherever and whenever they are called. **CX**



▼ SPC Victor Manuel Gonzales (left), SPC Antonio Ortiz (center) and SPC Victor Mojica (right) in Iraq, May 2006.



SSG ENGES TEJEDA, 20TH MPAD

# The Career Connection

## EPAF Program Links Skilled Soldiers With Top Civilian Jobs

By Bryan Sullivan

**WHEN YOU COMBINE** a struggling U.S. economy working to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression with an extremely weak job market, you get the tough task of keeping Soldiers employed. Enter ... The Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces program (EPAF). This program is designed to tackle this daunting challenge through a set of innovative tools.

### THE EPAF'S MISSION IS SIMPLE.

National Guard members are trained, skilled and experienced; they are reliable and possess a great work ethic. Many employers realize this and want to hire them because they can hit the ground running. They bring strong capabilities to the work force. At the same time, the EPAF's Employer Partners offer real opportunity to our service members, their families and Veterans.

In April 2008, Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, launched the EPAF Initiative. Stultz's goal was to build a collaborative effort to sustain a viable operational Army Reserve that was capable of caring for Soldiers and their families, and providing employers with a no-cost link to highly skilled and talented Army Reserve Soldiers.

Approximately one year later, the Army National Guard began participating in the EPAF, providing employer access to their skilled work force as well. Currently, members from all Reserve components, their families and Veterans have access to the tools and benefits of this program.

### NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOB SEARCH SITE

The EPAF's state-of-the-art career portal (EmployerPartnership.org) went live on Veterans Day in 2010. The site's main objective is to arm job seekers and employers with useful and practical tools. Keyword searches help find positions for job seekers and potential candidates for employers.

"It's kind of like a Monster.com for the military," Lieutenant Colonel Matt Leonard,



**Who is eligible to receive the services of the EPAF?**

- >> National Guard Soldiers
- >> Reservists
- >> Family members
- >> Veterans

EPAF ultimately assists service members with their civilian careers. It makes sense because it also leads to better family support and increases Soldier and unit readiness.

strategic community officer, EPAF, explained.

This is no ordinary online job search site. The EPAF has custom-designed this portal with the military community's needs in mind. Thanks to its user-friendly layout and design, users find the portal simple to use and easy to navigate.

For example, the resume builder offers a military occupation translator and menus for entering military experience. This tailored program has been widely utilized and embraced by the military community. After only approximately 120 days, 12,000 members of the Reserve and Guard components, family members and Veterans have registered to take advantage of this dynamic new portal.

The website also contains links to other helpful resources. There are even summer jobs and internships that are easily accessible.

### ONE-ON-ONE GUIDANCE

One of the most effective resources the EPAF offers is the presence of a field force of Program Support Managers (PSMs). They offer that traditional one-on-one guidance that just can't be replaced by technology. Possessing military

and industry experience, PSMs deliver quality results for Soldiers and employers. The long-term relationships that PSMs build with the private sector are an invaluable asset to this program.

Take one Soldier who recently returned from the Middle East—Specialist Ellis Kehrer, Utah Army National Guard, learned that he had been laid off. He searched for employment for more than a year, but found nothing. However, his luck quickly changed after he met with PSM Chuck Rackham.

Rackham guided Kehrer through a resume-writing class. Afterward, Kehrer attended a job fair, and Rackham introduced him to his current employer—I.M. Flash Technologies.

"I had three interviews to secure the position," Kehrer explained. "PSM Rackham ... took the time to work with me to not only help me prepare my resume, but to prepare me for the interviewers and their questions. He even taught me how to tie a tie. I don't think I could have done it without his assistance and motivation."

### GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

Currently there are more than 1,500 employment partners, which include 95 of the 2010 Fortune 500 companies. And, due to the EPAF's strategic alliance with the Direct Employers Association, the portal accesses approximately 600,000 position listings, with career opportunities in nearly 90 percent of the nation's Fortune 500 companies.

EPAF's employer partners include not only large national firms such as General Electric, Boeing, Amazon, Microsoft and Wal-Mart, but also many smaller firms; local, state and federal agencies; and trade organizations. The private sector employers are now realizing more than ever the value that the military community brings to the workplace. **GX**

## EPAF SITE NAVIGATION

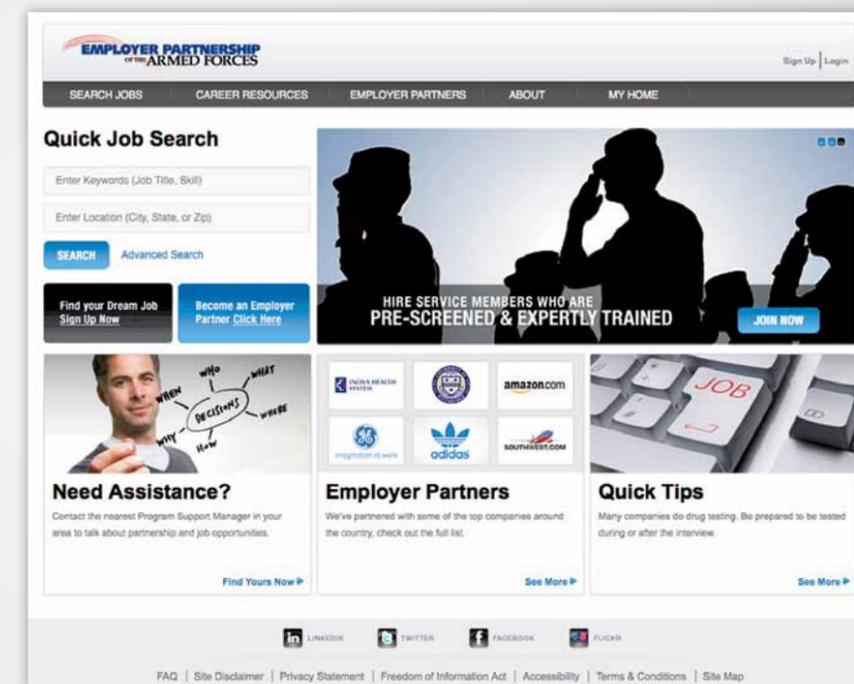
The EPAF encourages all service members, their families and Veterans to start taking advantage of the program.

Simply visit: [EmployerPartnership.org](http://EmployerPartnership.org) for step-by-step instructions.

Here is a glance of what you can expect:

- >> Select the dark gray "Find your Dream Job Sign Up Now" box.
- >> Select the account type (e.g., service member or dependent, etc.) and complete the short form on the next screen.
- >> A welcome email will be sent with instructions on what to do next.
- >> Your account will then be assigned to a PSM who will review your information and approve your account.

It's highly recommended that you build your resume in the system as soon as possible. This quickly allows employer partners to find you.



## EMPLOYER PARTNERS SAVE MONEY AND TIME

The EPAF program helps private sector companies and other organizations save money.

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Baldwin, Division Chief, Education, Employment and Incentives Division, said, "The EPAF is an intricate part of the overall wellness of our service members and their families. Linking our unemployed and underemployed service members with employers who are looking for highly skilled and dedicated members is the EPAF focus. Ultimately, the program is making our communities, our partners and the Guard stronger."

### The EPAF will save:

- >> Time, by finding the right employees
- >> Training costs
- >> Drug-screening costs
- >> Aptitude testing costs
- >> Time searching for employees who are reliable and have a strong work ethic

For more information, employers may contact: [HireNow@employerpartnership.org](mailto:HireNow@employerpartnership.org).

## JOB SEARCHES MADE SIMPLE

**SEARCHING FOR JOBS IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3.** Just type in a job title or skill, type your ZIP code and then select "Search." A list of all positions within a 25-mile radius of your ZIP code will appear. A dot to the left of the company name indicates that the company is one of the program's 1,500 signed

Employer Partners. Users may also view all jobs near their ZIP code by leaving the keyword field blank; or search for all jobs of a specific title/keyword by leaving the ZIP code field blank.

Users may narrow their search by checking one or more of the four boxes to the left of the search

button. For example, by selecting "EPAF Partner," users may search only the positions available with EPAF's partners. The search radius may also be expanded by using the "Jobs Within" pull-down menu. It's important to note that the "Date" column shows the date the job was posted; if a job is listed, it's still

unfilled, no matter how long ago it was posted. Jobs are also listed in order of keyword relevancy. They can be sorted via column headings. For example, clicking on the word "Distance" will re-sort the list with the closest at the top of the list. To view more about a position, simply select the job title.

## Soldiers gain direct access and guidance to jobs in the following areas:

- >> Healthcare
- >> Law Enforcement
- >> Public Safety
- >> Transportation & Logistics
- >> Information Technology
- >> Telecommunications
- >> Human Resources

For more information, service members may contact:

**GetHired@[employerpartnership.org](http://employerpartnership.org).**

# Fast Track to a Solid Future

## GAPI Helps Soldiers Find a Place in the Job Market

By Liisa Sullivan

Currently there are

**107**

**PARTICIPATING MOSSs,**

but the Department of Labor has allowed room for additional ones to be added over time.

**TOP MOSSs INCLUDE:**

Military police

Maintenance

Medical

(such as Healthcare Specialist)

Transportation

(such as Motor Transport Operator)

DoL says the projected number of job openings between 2008 and 2018 is

**50.9 MILLION**

[19.6 million of these jobs are expected to be in the short-term/on-the-job training category.]

**IN A SOMEWHAT BLEAK JOB MARKET,** a bright light shines on the Army National Guard. Why? The Guard has partnered with the Department of Labor (DoL) in coordination with Veterans Affairs offices to help Soldiers improve their job skills and establish a lifetime career—not just a job.

What is the Guard Apprenticeship Program Initiative (GAPI)? In a nutshell, it's an "earn while you learn" experience where service members learn new concepts and skills, and obtain national certification in more than 100 trades while earning solid wages.

While the program was first conceptualized in June 2009, a December 2010 signing ceremony attended by Colonel Diana Craun, chief of the Education, Incentives and Employment Division at the National Guard Bureau, and Office of Apprenticeship Administrator John V. Ladd, sealed the deal.

### A LITTLE BACKGROUND

GAPI's primary focus is designed to address employment needs, which will vary by state or territory. Currently, the program is being piloted in Maryland and Washington, DC, and is already getting some recognition, with four Soldiers enrolled.

"We chose these pilot locations due to leadership and resources in these areas," said Major Robert A. Lee, program manager at the National Guard Bureau.

Still in its pilot stage, GAPI is working to implement a national set of policies that will serve as an umbrella for all other states. It will take some time for each state to implement the program.

In turn, each state will tailor the program to fit its needs. The pilot program is expected to last at least one year, according to Cindy Koenig, senior program manager of GAPI.

The National Guideline Standards for GAPI were approved by DoL's Office of Apprenticeship

and are in accordance with Title 29 CFR Parts 29 and 30, reflecting requirements for Registered Apprenticeship programs and for Equal Employment Opportunity.

### SOLDIERS BENEFIT

While employers have long valued employees with skills learned in the military, Soldiers can now more easily translate these sought-after skills into civilian jobs.

In GAPI, Soldiers learn new concepts and skills, and receive national certification in one of more than 100 trades while earning money. Popular trade industries include mechanics, engineering and healthcare.

The specific requirements and credits awarded vary between each military occupational specialty (MOS) and its associated civilian apprenticeship program. The amount of time or experience a Soldier is credited with will be based on time of service, schools attended and other factors reviewed during an initial assessment.

"As an added benefit, Soldiers may also be able to take advantage of GI Bill education benefits as they continue to work through the apprenticeship program," Lee added.

GAPI also provides many long-term benefits for the Soldier. "On average, Soldiers who complete an apprentice program earn about \$54,000 a year, which is far and above the results of many other training interventions," Ladd said.

### EMPLOYERS BENEFIT

Soldiers are not the only ones excited about GAPI; employers are also looking forward to some concrete results.

"Employers have expressed concern over the lack of qualified candidates with the right skill set," Lee explained. "Now, when employers work with GAPI, they don't have to train the person. They're getting an employee who is already well trained and experienced. Additionally, we're drug-free,

used to executing orders and working under stress, so the employer is really getting a top-notch employee."

### HOW DO SOLDIERS AND EMPLOYERS GET INVOLVED?

Any member of the National Guard may enroll—whether serving in a part-time (M-day) status or as a full-time technician. The program is open to all.

Here is an example of how this will work: An employed or unemployed Guard member wants to know more about GAPI. They first contact their employment services representative or office. The employment representative then contacts GAPI team members to facilitate the implementation process.

Overall, GAPI helps Soldiers to address employment needs as they learn a new trade or earn certification in a field where they've frequently had a combination of military or civilian on-the-job or "at home" experience, but lack the certification. In other cases, a Soldier selects a trade of interest and starts the program with a "Trade 101" fundamental curriculum and completes the program as a certified professional.

Here is how an electrician apprenticeship program might work:

Classroom and on-the-job training are combined over a four-year period, and the program is designed to provide the apprentice with the necessary theory and practical training to bear the status of electrician. During those four years, the

On average, Soldiers who complete an apprentice program earn about **\$54,000 a year,** which is far and above the results of many other training interventions.

student must attend a total of 604 hours of classroom training. Apprentices are also required to have 2,000 hours of documented on-the-job training.

Those who satisfactorily complete the requirements will be certified by the Apprenticeship and Training Committee. This committee sponsors, supervises and regulates the program. At the end of the training, the apprentice receives a Certificate of Completion from the DoL, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.

### DOUBLE DUTY

"It's really like having a dual career," Lee explained.

To get the word out, GAPI has devised a multifaceted marketing plan. Traditional print advertising is part of that plan, but so is social media, a website (currently under development) and good old grassroots marketing.

As the program develops, GAPI is relying a great deal on word-of-mouth. Representatives will also attend drill weekends and other National Guard-related events.

Employers who wish to become an apprentice sponsor simply need to register with the DoL. Additionally, the GAPI office will work with all interested employers to help them navigate the paperwork, process and communicate all the sponsorship benefits to them.

"We really want to drum up interest in GAPI," Lee added. "In the end, it all comes down to making life better for the Soldier; we know this program can do that." **GX**



SSG JOSEPH HERBERT, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

From left: Ken Lemberg, Sr. Trainer—Office of Apprenticeship; Franchella Kendall, Div. Chief of National Standards; MAJ Robert Lee, GAPI Program Manager; COL Diana Craun, Div. Chief of Education, Employment & Incentives; and John Ladd, Administrator of the Office of Apprenticeship, at the signing ceremony for GAPI in December 2010.

### FAST-GROWING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

While the top-10 fastest-growing civilian careers may not necessarily coincide with the employment needs for each territory and state, there are many sectors within the top 10 that do offer apprenticeship programs—for example, computer/IT and healthcare fields. GAPI and DoL hope to facilitate apprenticeships within these fields.

### WHY GAPI?

Some people ask about the difference between GAPI versus a civilian training program. "The differences are clear," says Cindy Koenig, senior program manager of GAPI. "Soldiers who choose to enroll in GAPI will save time and make more money. Civilian training programs provide lower wages and take more time. On average, GAPI will save them approximately 50 to 75 percent in time."

### WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR?

The DoL's mission is "to foster, promote and develop the welfare of wage earners, job seekers and retirees in the U.S.; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights." Specifically, the Office of Apprenticeship helps to ensure and facilitate the vitality and integrity of the Registered Apprenticeship system, in its concern for the welfare of the apprentices and for helping employer sponsors meet their work force and training needs.

### WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS?

It is a Cabinet-level department responsible for providing healthcare, benefits and burial services to America's Veterans. It is authorized to administer a variety of benefit programs designed to facilitate the adjustment of returning Veterans to civilian life.

# When the Weather Heats Up, Keep Your Electric Bill Down

By J.J. Montanaro

**I'M NO HVAC EXPERT, BUT I** sure do like the idea of saving money on utility bills. That's money that could be used to increase what's going into your IRA or retirement plan, build an emergency fund or many other things.

My task today is to talk air conditioning (AC). While I'm not an expert, I certainly do have a well-running computer, and one only needs to type "save money on AC" to find a load of resources. So, that's what I did, and we're off.

As I took in all the available information, I began to see a pattern. First, 60–70 percent of your electric bill during the hot summer months is the result of your AC. Second, you could spend nothing at all, a little, or a lot to impact the bottom line represented by your monthly utility bill. So, that's the framework I'll use as I look for ways for you to free up funds that you can use to provide a benefit that lasts well beyond the summer heat.



## SPEND NOTHING

There are a number of steps you can take to save money. First, make sure you're not sending your thermostat bad information. If heat producers like lamps or direct sunlight make the brains of your AC unit think it's hotter than it is, that's a bad thing. So, placement matters.

You also want to time your use of big heat producers like the oven and dryer to reduce the load on your AC. Try air-drying your clothes or using the dryer at night, and cooking at night and microwaving during the day to reduce your AC costs. Or you can use my favorite—the crock-pot.

The hotter your house or apartment, the harder your AC works. With that in mind, don't forget to close your curtains or pull the blinds during the day. Talk about an easy way to ease the burden on your AC unit. Speaking of which, you want to make sure your condenser—the unit located outside—is free of debris or tall grass. That alone could save as much as 10 percent on electricity.

When it comes right down to it, your AC is all about feeling comfortable. So whether it's taking that big comforter off your bed, or wearing shorts and flip-flops instead of jeans and socks, you can ensure you feel comfortable and spend less on cooling. And if your mom was like mine, remember she was right as she yelled, "Shut that door, we are not cooling the neighborhood."

## SPEND A LOT

To this point, we've covered small steps that, when taken together, could have a big impact without a lot of financial pain. However, to cure your AC ills, you may have to spend more—maybe a lot more. It may be that you don't have enough insulation or your system needs an overhaul or to be replaced. If that's the case, you need help beyond what this article can provide, so find a qualified, licensed and bonded contractor and don't limit yourself to one bid—shop around. EnergyStar.gov is a great resource to answer questions about how to find the right contractor or how much insulation you should have. The time is now to start thinking cool ... cool savings.



## SPEND A LITTLE

Unfortunately, some fixes may require an outlay of cash to reap some savings on your electricity bill. One surefire way to ensure your AC is not being over-worked is to regularly check your filters and replace them on a regular basis. Depending on the filter, this could be as often as every 30 days. A clean filter means an AC unit that doesn't have to work as hard to pump that cool air through your home.

Speaking of reducing the strain on your AC, one way to do that and save lots of cash is to run it only when you need it. If you're in a small apartment, set the thermostat at 85 degrees while you're gone and make it comfortable when you get home. If you're in a house, consider a programmable thermostat. For less than \$50 you can pick one up and cool your house while you're home, but let it heat up a bit while everyone is gone. The folks at Energy Star estimate this alone will save you around \$180 per year.

To get the most out of your AC unit, you need to give it a little tender loving care—drawing on my Army days, a little Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services. Consider a yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system to make sure your AC is running at peak efficiency.

Another way to take the load off your AC unit is to install ceiling fans. The airflow they provide can help cool you off and allow you to bump up your thermostat settings. Finally, for the small price of some caulk and maybe some new window and door seals, you can make sure the cool air stays in while keeping the hot air out.

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

## Guard Program Celebrates 100,000th Graduate

Story and photo by SGT Darron Salzer, National Guard Bureau

**MILITARY LEADERS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND CELEBRITIES** recently gathered for the National Guard Youth Foundation's 2011 ChalleNGe Champions Gala.

This year, the gala celebrated the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program's 100,000th graduate.

"I am proud to be representing 100,000 other cadets, each of us with our own story of how we turned our lives around," said Tori Walston, the 100,000th graduate. "Thanks to the program, [all] of us were given a second chance ... and a brighter future."

### SUPPORT FOR THE YOUTH

"When you think of the National Guard, you don't think educator—you think warfighter," said Gail Dady, president of the National Guard Youth Foundation. "But when you think about it, [no one] is better [equipped] than the National Guard to create such a successful program."

"The Guard is committed to communities in every ZIP code in our nation," Dady said, "and nothing is more important to our communities, our families or our nation than our youth."



Air Force Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, gives every cadet a coin at the 2011 ChalleNGe Champions Gala in Washington, DC, March 1, 2011. This year the program celebrated its 100,000th graduate.

She added that Guard members' honor, courage and integrity serve as positive examples to the cadets who have often known only bad examples.

"The program gave me a lot of discipline, structure and confidence in myself," Walston said, "as well as taught me how to believe in myself and to work as [part of] a team."

"The Youth ChalleNGe [program] is changing lives and communities for the better and strengthening our nation," Dady said, "and the Youth Foundation is very honored to partner with the Guard in achieving this."

Louisiana Sen. Mary Landrieu said that without the help of the National Guard and its leadership, the Youth ChalleNGe program would not be able to achieve the things it has done to date or have been so successful.

"Having 100,000 [cadets] graduate is a tremendous milestone," said Air Force General Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, "and thank you for allowing the National Guard and the National Guard Youth Foundation to do these great things."

### HAPPY DAZE

Walston said teamwork was one of the most important things she learned while in the program, "because you're not always going to like everybody, and it's good to learn how to deal with [differences]."

She said the program is "full of [lessons] about important life skills that you can use in the real world."

Walston said the experience has taken a while to set in, "and I'm still in kind of a daze about it, but it has been really awesome. I think this is a great program, and if you're a kid, and you're not in school, you should definitely sign up."

Walston said that for the future, she plans to continue her education and eventually hopes to obtain a doctorate in psychology. **GX**



## Youth Challenge Program Success

**60%** of 2009 ChalleNGe graduates received their high school diploma or GED.

**50%** joined the work force.

**14%** joined the military.

**28%** continued their education.

Program participants have donated well over **5 million hours** of community service during the program's 16-year duration.

Programs have awarded graduates nearly **50,000** academic credentials since 1993.

For more information, visit [www.ngyf.org](http://www.ngyf.org) or email [info@ngyf.org](mailto:info@ngyf.org).

# Can You Hear Me NOW?

## Take Precautions to Save Your Ears

By Judith Harris, CHE, and Ann Stark, Health Correspondent



**NASCAR DRIVER JEFF GORDON**, The Who's Peter Dinklage and 50 percent of the Soldiers seen at in-theater clinics during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have one thing in common: hearing loss. For Soldiers the probable causes are the same: close exposure to very loud noise (improvised explosive devices, weapons firing, other explosions) or head injury.

Like race car drivers and rock stars who don't realize their hearing is damaged until they get off the track or exit the stage, Soldiers may not realize it until they get away from the conflict zone. There are two types of hearing loss caused by loud noise. The first is conductive, in which the impact of the noise blast damages the bones in the inner ear. This type of loss can usually be repaired surgically. One kind of conductive hearing loss is a blown-out eardrum, which will often heal on its own. The second type, sensorineural, involves damage to the nerves in the inner ear, or damage to nerves deeper in the brain that are involved with hearing, and is usually not repairable. Tinnitus, or ringing in the ear, can sometimes occur from nerve injury.

Hearing loss is the number one diagnosis in both war zones, and the second most common injury is to the eye(s). Why do they occur so frequently? Two of the major reasons are the nature of today's battlefield and the effects of ear and eye protection—combat earplugs and goggles/visors—on Soldiers' ability to hear and see clearly. Simply stated, they often don't wear them. Giving in to the temptation to forgo earplugs or earmuffs while experiencing the roar of the engines or thumping of the bass, or to shrug off eye protection in the field, may seem like a convenient choice now, but it could seriously diminish audio and visual enjoyment for years to come.

### THE MILITARY SERVICES ARE CONDUCTING VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNS TO ENCOURAGE HEARING CONSERVATION AND EYE PROTECTION.

amount of damage to the eye. About 85 percent of TBIs involve visual impairment.

The military services are conducting vigorous campaigns to encourage hearing conservation and eye protection. In a combat zone or in combat training, using the protective devices provided by the services is essential. They include combat earplugs, noise-blocking earmuffs (when appropriate), helmets with visors, safety goggles, and optical inserts for masks, as appropriate. In addition, Soldiers should never wear contact lenses during hazardous duty. Away from the combat environment, service members, families and civilians can all take precautions to protect these valuable senses to ensure that they last a lifetime. For more information about the U.S. Army's Hearing Program or the Tri-Service Vision Conservation and Readiness Program, visit [usaphc.amedd.army.mil](http://usaphc.amedd.army.mil). **GX**

More eye injuries have occurred during OEF and OIF than in any U.S. conflict since the Civil War. Sixteen percent of casualties from all military services have sustained injury to their eyes, ranging from distorted vision to total blindness. In addition to traumatic brain injury (TBI), eye injuries are caused by flying shrapnel, bomb fragments and debris; chemical and biohazard exposure; and laser flashes. Eye damage often goes unrecognized or untreated until more obvious and life-threatening injuries are stabilized, and this delay frequently increases the

### A FEW HELPFUL TIPS:

#### HEARING

- If available, wear protection—earplugs or earmuffs.
- Place maximum distance between yourself and the noise.
- Put hands over your ears until the noise diminishes or stops.
- Give it a rest: Limit volume and exposure time.
- Close windows and doors.
- Seek medical help immediately for sudden hearing loss.

#### VISION

- Wear appropriate protection—safety goggles/shields at work, home and play.
- Assess potentially hazardous situations, such as flying debris and exposures to chemicals and radiation (welding, laser, etc.).
- Use eye safety guards on machinery or tools as needed.
- Protect children from chemicals, sharp objects and age-inappropriate toys.
- Use sunglasses that filter out 99 to 100 percent of ultraviolet rays.
- Seek medical attention for vision changes and eye injury.

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# EXPERTS [ ] NEEDED

BETTER PAY  
HIGHER GRADE  
BE A LEADER

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# Seeds of Stability

**AGRIBUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT  
TEAMS LEAD  
AFGHANISTAN  
TO AUTONOMY**

By SGT John Crosby,  
Indiana Joint Forces Headquarters  
Public Affairs Office

**M**ore than 85 percent of Afghanistan's population relies on agriculture to earn a living, but years of conflict, drought and an increase in food prices have left the country in crisis. The once-flourishing farm-state now has an estimated 6 million people suffering from chronic hunger. Their farming practices are decades behind the rest of the world, and reminiscent of early-20th-century United States.

More efficient and self-sustaining farming practices could help stabilize the region, presenting a different face to counterinsurgency efforts. The call for Soldiers with farming skills—"Soldier-Farmers"—echoed throughout the ranks of the National Guard.

Enter the Agribusiness Development Team (ADT). Created in 2009 and comprised solely of U.S. National Guard members, ADTs couple with Afghan farmers, agricultural universities and government officials to impart agricultural knowledge and techniques practiced and refined by Americans since colonial days.

#### OLD-SCHOOL SKILLS

Many Afghan farmers still break their ground with a shovel and hand-sow their seed. Others have oxen and a turning plow. Some have tractors. But overall, farming methods are still very basic.

"Think of the U.S. back in the 1930s or '40s. [It's] very rudimentary hard labor," said Lieutenant Colonel Howard Schauer, ADT mission coordinator. "A lot of the rural farmers have no electricity whatsoever. They've turned to burning wood for heat and cooking. Deforestation has left 10 to 12 percent of the wood they once had in Afghanistan. Many have no running water—they have to go to the well. The past 30 years of war have torn up the agricultural environment."

About 40 years ago, Afghan agriculture was booming. Fertile soil and the moun-

tainous climate allowed for bounties of dried fruits and nuts, as well as wheat, barley, corn, rice, potatoes and cotton. Major exports included pistachios, almonds, grapes, melons, apricots, cherries, figs, mulberries and pomegranates. At one time, Afghanistan was the fourth largest exporter of raisins, producing an estimated 20 percent of the world's supply.

However, decades of war devastated the country's agricultural sector. Soviet troops helped destroy the Afghan economic infrastructure during their occupation from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Fruit orchards were leveled to eliminate Afghan Northern Alliance sniper threats. Unexploded ordnance and other waste were dumped into reservoirs and dams, ruining irrigation systems and water supplies. Then, in the 1990s, civil

war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance further ruined the land, and, after record cold temperatures and drought in 2000, the country was left in a food crisis.

"When you have food insecurity, starvation and instability, you have an environment for civil unrest," said Schauer. "A lot of the time, the people who would cause issues were the ones who weren't receiving their basic social needs."

The military saw the civilian farming expertise of certain National Guard Soldiers as a solution. In early 2008, the governor of Missouri volunteered his state to take the lead in the ADT initiative. Fourteen states would follow.

#### UNUSUAL PROPOSITION

"The ADT is not a standard military formation," said Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn,

CPT PETER SHINN



Dr. Hamdy Oushy, forage and rangeland specialist for the Afghanistan Water, Agriculture and Technology Transfer Project, gives a presentation to the commanders of several ADTs at the Shishem Bagh Research Station.

a leader in the initiative. "We don't have a military occupational skill that calls for a hydrologist or pest management specialist or agriculture market team. By and large, most of these skill sets are not found in the military. The National Guard, both Army and Air, is a good fit for the ADT mission for this reason. There are many of us who work as farmers or ranchers in our civilian jobs."

Many ADTs were formed in farm-belt states across the Midwest. Missouri, Texas, Nebraska and Indiana were among the first to commit to the mission.

"Probably 90 percent of our recruiting area





**Above:** SGT Jason Stevens, of 40th Infantry Division, helps gather sheep for medical treatment in the Chowkay District of Konar province, Afghanistan. **Left:** A Soldier with the 734th ADT, Iowa National Guard, speaks with Afghan boys while out on a mission.

is farmland,” said Major General R. Martin Umbarger, the adjutant general of Indiana. Umbarger is a farmer himself. “It stands to reason that we’re going to have a lot of folks with some sort of agricultural background serving in the National Guard. Other states sourcing the ADTs have similar stories.”

Umbarger committed five years to the ADT mission, keeping Indiana engaged in Afghanistan until 2012.

“This mission is high-profile,” said Umbarger. “It represents what we are working toward in Afghanistan: a country that can provide for itself. That kind of capability helps create stability—the safe and secure environment they need ... to take the reins.”

#### ANATOMY OF AN ADT

ADTs have three main components. The first, a security platoon, consists of roughly 35 troops, including a medic and a forward observer. This standard meets the Afghanistan theater security requirement for mounted combat patrols and allows the unit to operate independently without relying on other units for security. Second, a staff section of approximately 12 troops makes up a command and administration group. Third, roughly 15 agricultural experts make up the body of the ADT.

Each ADT partners with one or more Afghan provinces, providing expertise to farmers, universities, local government and local agribusinesses. “Because we are not a traditional unit, we rely heavily on building a relationship with the provincial director of agriculture, the provincial governor and sub-governor,” said Schauer. “We’re helping them stand on their own two feet so that they can make decisions for themselves.”

Early on, said Colonel Brian Copes, who commanded Indiana’s first ADT in February 2009, “We went outside the wire four to five times a week learning the environment. We needed to understand the soil, the climate, the quality of the crops and the farming practices. We were very much explorers, gathering information while we built relationships.”

The ADTs built demonstration farms on forward operating bases and local government facilities. Afghan farmers began to allow the ADTs to work their crops and showcase their methods during harvest. The ADTs taught these new practices through hands-on training, as well as classes on food safety and conservation practices. Community projects included

## SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

**THE MISSIONS OF THE 3/19TH ADT**—my unit—have been to help the local populace around the Khost province in Afghanistan improve their agricultural methods. The goal is for them to become self-reliant and learn to trust the government to help them.

Our first mission was to the district of Jaji Maidan. A small group of us went. We traveled by helicopter, since we’ve had a hard time getting there on the ground. Traveling by air is definitely nicer than by car, because we get more time on the ground with the people.

We were tagging along with the Provincial Reconstruction Team, with whom we’ve built a partnership. When we arrived, First Lieutenant Bart Lomont, the only Airman on the team, took part in the meeting while the rest of us pulled security outside the building.

This district was one of the nicer ones I’ve been to. It seemed that the people of Jaji Maidan took a little bit more pride in their district than some others in the area. Most of the people we meet on the



missions seem to want to help their country and their people.

When the Key Lead Engagement was over, we headed back to the pickup zone, and the helicopters took us back to Salerno.

Our unit includes an agriculture (AG) team that works with the local government officials, targets the areas that need help and gets the missions ready. The security force (SECFOR) is responsible for our overall protection. We also have a headquarters team, which takes care of other mission planning, logistics, supplies, etc.

From the very beginning, the structure of the ADT was different—especially for the AG team. The rank on the AG team can be anywhere from a specialist to a colonel, and they all work together. During the train-up, the AG team worked the

ammo pad for Yano Range in Fort Knox, KY. I’m sure that’s the first time that a major, lieutenant colonel and captain have all worked the ammo pad together.

Business is very different in Afghanistan. Things move slowly, and the quality of work and product is not the same as in the United States. So you have to alter your expectations.

My view on the war is that progress is being made. It’s slow, but that’s to be expected, since this country has been at war for so many years. Every day we meet people who love their country and want it back the way it was before the Soviets. There are several areas that are developing very well, and others that are still under insurgents’ power.

Since the last time I was here in 2004–2005, I have seen vast improvement. It’s hard to understand how difficult a mission it is to help a government become self-sufficient unless you actually get on ground yourself and see what you’re working with.

I hope Afghanistan becomes a safe place in the future, because I would very much like to come back to visit on a vacation someday.

—SSG Alexander Purdue, 3-19th ADT, Indiana National Guard

COURTESY OF THE IOWA NATIONAL GUARD

SGT COREY DOLEBURG



The 1st 178th Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard delivers humanitarian aid to the village of Garmunay in Laghman province. **Below:** 1LT Brandon Burton (left) and SSG Erik Singaas of Tennessee's Task Force Warrior ADT provide agricultural training to Afghans from Parwan and Kapisa provinces.

## ADT SPECIALISTS

- **Veterinarians** share livestock and animal care skills
- **Agonomists**, or soil scientists, work with farmers to identify what's in their soil and the nutrients required to grow healthy crops
- **Horticulturalists** pass on expertise for growing fruit-bearing trees
- **Irrigation specialists** teach better water management and more economic ways to use water
- **Pest management specialists** help farmers identify the cycles of different pests and how they impact crops
- **Range management specialists** help with the development of range grasses and show how to manage grazing pastures
- **Agribusiness experts** with specialties in finance, marketing, advertising and education share their knowledge with farming communities



## 11 farm-belt states

have deployed more than **17,000 ADTs** to help revitalize Afghanistan's agribusiness sector

Currently there are **nine states** working in **15 provinces** across Afghanistan

## 5,500

**Afghans have been educated** in better agricultural practices, and more than

## 1,650

**faculty and students have been trained** by ADTs at Afghan agricultural universities and high schools

**More than \$30 million** has been invested into **agribusiness development projects** in Afghanistan

## JOBS CREATED BY ADTS

- **Workers** to harvest crops
- **Companies** to package farmers' products
- **Transportation companies** to move the product to market
- **Trade officials** to export product internationally

## ONGOING PROJECTS

- Reservoir and dam reconstruction projects
- Erecting wind generators
- Greenhouse projects

1LT LORY STEVENS, SPC JASON DORSEY, ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

local workers rebuilding dams, improving supply routes and providing electricity through wind-powered generators. Hundreds of projects have been completed. Hundreds more are ongoing.

### SIGNS OF SUCCESS

Currently, ADTs are moving away from dealing directly with local farmers, instead using U.S. civilians and Afghans as intermediaries—extension agents who work at the provincial and district level for the Afghan agriculture government ministries. These agents become subject matter experts in myriad farming skills and are trained in teaching. They in turn pass that knowledge to the farmers.

“Imparting that knowledge and building that capacity in the agricultural extension agents, high schools and universities will have a lasting and enduring impact long after the Coalition Forces have left,” said Copes. “That knowledge will stay there long after we are gone. Knowledge is something the Taliban cannot take away.”

Copes used the example of building a \$30,000 greenhouse for an Afghan farmer. “A \$30,000 greenhouse is not sustainable or reproducible for the average farmer. So, I challenged one of my agricultural experts ... to construct a simple greenhouse for \$57 out of readily available materials like rebar and large sheets of plastic. Now we have a solution that is reproducible with local materials, within the discretionary income of a local farmer. The true value of a greenhouse is the knowledge aspect.”

### POSITIVE IMPACT

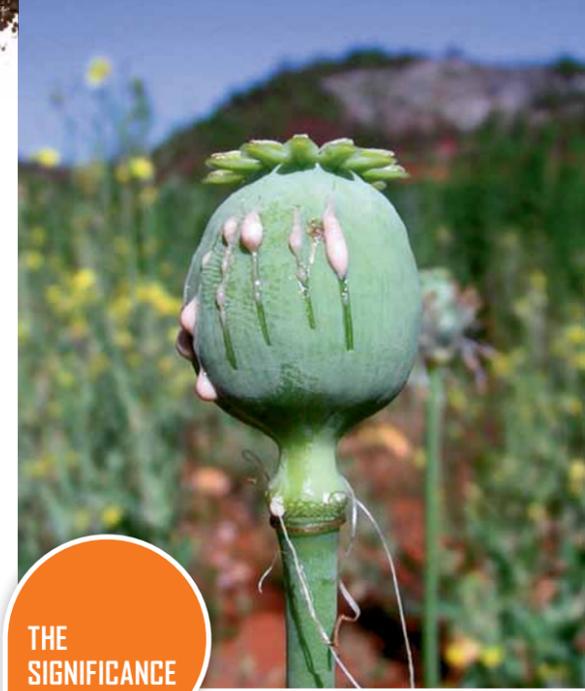
It will take decades to measure the impact of the ADTs. As techniques are passed onto future generations, and orchards planted today grow to maturity, and the infrastructures of irrigation and electricity continue to build, the successes will continue to unfold.

As relationships between the ADTs and Afghan people grow, one thing has become clear to the Guard members: Their presence is appreciated.

“We’ve gotten calls from the locals warning us when there are threats in the area,” said Schauer. “They see an ally in us. During the nine to 10 months on the ground, you see the small wins. You see that you’ve left a village or district or geographical area in a better state, and people are providing for themselves. When ... your following team sends you pictures during the next harvest, and you see that the families [and animals] are better off, [and] their social standing has increased, that’s what it’s all about. It’s indescribable.”

Schauer said the ADT mission is scheduled through 2012, with plans to extend it into 2014. And the knowledge and experience gained from this mission can be extended to other troubled areas throughout the globe.

“This is a model that can be tweaked a little bit and exported to other commands to help other cultures and people,” said Schauer. “But for now, our focus is on the Afghan people.” **GX**



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POPPY

**AFGHANISTAN'S POPPY FIELDS** have long been a source of quick income for impoverished farmers, and the ADTs will not interfere with these crops.

“We didn’t want ... to eradicate poppy, then turn around and tell that same farmer to grow a different crop so he’d be ‘better off,’” said Lieutenant Colonel Howard Schauer, ADT mission coordinator. “We wanted to start in areas where there was little or no poppy so that we could help teach the farmers ... how to improve techniques already in place.”

The idea is that by teaching farmers to farm more efficiently and improve their livelihoods, others will follow the example. The growth of poppy has been in steady decline in the southeastern region of Afghanistan, the main geographical focus of the ADTs.

According to a UNODC report released in 2008, “Strong leadership by some governors has discouraged farmers from planting opium through campaigns against its cultivation, peer pressure and the promotion of alternative development. The most impressive result is in Nangarhar; from being Afghanistan’s second highest opium producing province in 2007, this year, it is opium-free.”

Although some farmers have resumed growing opium in that region since then, the numbers are still well below the national average.

“Until the agricultural sector can support legitimate crops such as wheat and fruits, the Taliban will continue to prey upon disaffected, out-of-work youth and push the production of poppy,” said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. “Poppy production provides little return to the farmers; pomegranates will earn a farmer five times that of poppy on the open market, almonds will earn seven, and grapes will earn eight times as much.”

# BACK ON THE HUNT

## Tracking Drugs in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Story and photos by Fred McGhee II

**IT WAS THE CRACK OF DAWN**, and I was speeding down a backcountry road in the rear of a Humvee. I was in awe of the landscape ahead. It was both beautiful and haunting. The mountains were draped in fog so dense the sun's rays were diffused, creating a golden glow.

I was part of a parade of law enforcement vehicles that included two National Guard Humvees, four state police cruisers and three county sheriff trucks towing ATVs on the ground. Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters patrolled the area from above.

We were making a beeline to an area known to have illegal marijuana grows. Subtle, no—effective, yes. It sends a message to illegal growers about how serious law enforcement agencies are about drug trafficking and growing.



In Carter County, rappel teams were used to extract marijuana plants from hazardous terrain.

If you read my counterdrug article in the last issue of *GX*, you've probably already guessed that this was another National Guard counterdrug mission. This time, I was in Eastern Kentucky in the forests of the Cumberland Plateau, part of the Appalachian region.

Appalachia has always been a place of mystery for me. It's an area steeped in legend. Roaring hills and thick forest populated by simple, hardworking folk tolling away in coal mines or lumber camps. Appalachia is also home of some of the nation's worst poverty. Here in Breathitt County, KY, more than 33 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. That's why some members of the community resort to growing marijuana—to subsidize their income.

## DAY ONE

Our base of operations was in London, KY, a small town of fewer than 6,000 people. I met up with members of the counterdrug team at the morning mission briefing. The Kentucky Counterdrug Program has a staff of roughly 30 Soldiers during eradication season. They perform more than 300 eradication missions around the state each year.

Counterdrug Soldiers had spent weeks compiling intelligence gathered from the GRTs (Ground Reconnaissance Teams) and ARTs (Air Reconnaissance Teams) about the location of possible illegal grows in nearby counties. GRTs are Guard Soldiers highly trained in rural and urban reconnaissance. They use video and photographs to document suspected illicit drug activity. The information they collect is used not only to convict illegal growers, but also to pinpoint where the grows are located.

Eastern Kentucky contains some of the largest stretches of contiguous forest in the United States, so the Soldiers planned to use National Guard and local law enforcement rappel teams with Black Hawks to extract marijuana plants from the tougher terrain. Growers in the area have become smarter over the years, using

the forest to their advantage, concealing their illegal grows under the canopy.

Once the briefing was over, it was time to make our way to the Black Hawks. That day's mission was a joint operation with local law enforcement agencies and the National Guard. Two rappel teams and five ground teams were taking part in the mission. I got a chance to talk with some of the pilots while waiting for the rappel teams to finish strapping up and test their equipment. Soon enough, we were on our way to an illegal growth site. We located the plants using coordinates marked earlier by the ARTs using GPS (Global Positioning Satellite).

## QUICK DROP

It's impressive to watch rappel teams in action. They can remove plants from small growth sites, roughly 20–30 plants, in a fraction of the time it would take a ground team. The thick underbrush of the region makes it almost impossible to cover more than one or two sites a day by foot. Rappel teams can cover three to five sites in an hour.

While the methods used to access illegal grows have advanced over the years, the biggest challenge for Kentucky's Counterdrug Program has been the attitudes of the people of the rural communities.

"In the early '90s, people in the rural areas were against us," said Colonel Stephen R. Hogan, head of Kentucky's Counterdrug Program. "They saw us as the enemy. But in the last 10 years, we've seen a greater clarity of thought about the harmful effects of illegal drugs by members of those same communities."

After spending several hours in the Black Hawk watching the rappel teams and getting what I thought were some pretty good shots of them in action, I had what many might call a "moment of truth." First, let me preface this by saying that I'm deathly afraid of heights, so being in an aircraft in the first place is an accomplishment for me. I was more than content to photograph the rappel teams from my seat next to the window, securely harnessed in. But as we were hovering over a growth site and the rappel team was getting set to descend, one of the line operators motioned for me to unfasten my safety belts and come over to the door for a better

shot. I figured, what the heck, you only live once, and I may never get the opportunity to do something like this again. (I couldn't have been more wrong, but more on that later.)

So there I was, literally hanging out of a Black Hawk, shooting members of the rappel team as they descended into a growth site. It was a thrilling moment to wrap up the day's mission. We headed back to base with about 35–40 marijuana plants.

## STUCK IN TRAFFICK

Opponents of the Counterdrug Program would argue that spending this much manpower and resources to fight illegal marijuana growth is overkill. They view the use of marijuana as a victimless crime. What they fail to realize is the effect drug trafficking has on the community.

What you're left with is deteriorating communities where good people are held hostage in their own neighborhoods as crime becomes more prevalent. "The drug problem in the commonwealth is a social epidemic," said Hogan. "We have to gain the support and trust of the community base, and force the cultivators and drug culture to operate in a more difficult environment."

"I think the only thing a drug dealer is afraid of is a good citizen, and once those individuals come on our side we'll change circumstances dramatically here in the commonwealth."

Arrests due to counterdrug intelligence and missions are increasing, and the plant total has steadily decreased over the years. In 1992, the Kentucky Counterdrug Program confiscated more than a million marijuana plants. That number fell below 300,000 for 2010.

Back at base, I was afforded another rare opportunity. The guys in the rappel team offered me a chance to do a Special Patrol Insertion Extraction System (SPIES) extraction. I had no clue what they were referring to. Essentially, SPIES is being harnessed to a rope suspended below a helicopter. Of course, the rope is securely attached to the helicopter. SPIES is used to quickly drop people into an area or remove them from a location. I took them up on the offer, and honestly, it wasn't that bad. I was remarkably calm for a guy terrified of heights.

Then the pilot took the Black Hawk higher and higher. Even though I was a couple thousand feet in the air, I could still hear the guys



Kentucky Counterdrug has 30 full-time members working statewide in over 300 joint operations with state and local law enforcement agencies.

on the ground laughing at me. I survived.

We called it a day and agreed to meet the following morning at 5.

## DAY TWO

Just before sunrise, we were barreling down a back road, headed for Breathitt County in Eastern Kentucky. The Humvee we were in was about 35 years old. It wasn't a smooth ride.

We were part of a convoy of nine road vehicles and two helicopters making our way to a remote area deep in the hills where a suspected illegal growth site was located. It was a joint mission with the Kentucky State Police. The deeper we went into the foggy Appalachia hills, the more bewildered faces I saw. The locals aren't used to seeing a line of government vehicles and helicopters zip through their towns.

We arrived at the site. The terrain on the way to the plants was unforgiving with the poison oak, thorny brush and insects. Not to mention the sharpened fishhooks tied to nearly invisible fishing line hanging from the trees. Yes—it was a booby trap. The hooks were dipped in some type of poison and other undesirable matter. This was just one of the types of traps growers use to deter law enforcement officials. Burying sharpened spikes in the ground for intruders to step on is another favorite. There's also good old-fashioned gunfire. On a counterdrug mission, law enforcement and Guard Soldiers have to be prepared for anything and everything, much like an actual overseas mission.

"That kind of mission independence will translate well to service in Afghanistan," explained Hogan. "Plus, we're not the lead

agency. We're in a support role, working with indigenous authorities. It's similar to working with and trying to stand up the Afghan police or Afghan army."

Once we made it to the site, we found 25–30 mature marijuana plants. That was one of three sites we visited that day. The street value for the day's haul was well into the tens of thousands of dollars. With the mission over, we headed back to town for a quick debriefing before heading home.

One major thing I took away from this mission was an appreciation for the sacrifices Soldiers make—actions that never make the press. Each year, the National Guard Counterdrug Program partners with local, state and federal law enforcement authorities to remove billions of dollars' worth of drugs from our streets. That type of continuous effort deserves our thanks. **GX**

"I THINK THE ONLY THING A DRUG DEALER IS AFRAID OF IS A GOOD CITIZEN."  
— COL. Stephen R. Hogan

# GLADIATORS

**FIGHTERS COMPETE FOR  
COMBATIVES TITLE**

by STEPHANIE INMAN, news editor; photos by EVAN BAINES

# S



first lieutenant : John Bryant  
 age : 29  
 weight : 225 LBS.  
 experience : WRESTLING, BRAZILIAN JIUJITSU  
 forté : GRAPPLING  
 civilian job : PROJECT ENGINEER

**STAFF SERGEANT JOE GRANT OF THE ARIZONA** National Guard looked as if he just stepped out of a UFC ring. He was extremely muscular, with pale skin and a clean-shaven head.

His opponent, First Lieutenant John Bryant with the South Carolina National Guard, was fairly large but lacked the same menacing presence.

The two Soldiers were about to fight a bout in the preliminary rounds at the 2011 National Guard Combatives Tournament in Fort Benning, GA. They were there to test their grappling, striking and jiu-jitsu skills against other Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

Weighing in at 225 pounds, Bryant was at a slight disadvantage. Grant weighed 260 pounds.

### SIZE MATTERS

The tournament was broken into seven weight divisions. Bryant and Grant were in the heavyweight division, where competitors weighed 206 or more, with no upper limit. When Bryant, 29, signed up for the tour-

nament in 2010, he knew he'd have to face Soldiers nearly 20–30 pounds heavier.

"It's intimidating for anyone," Bryant said. "Any time you see someone that's outsizeing you, it's intimidating, because size does matter. But, I've sparred with guys much larger than I am and been very successful, so it's not something I'm afraid of.

"[In fact], I welcome the challenge," he continued. "I would much rather be the underdog and the smaller guy. I would rather go into [the fight] with nothing to lose."

Bryant trained diligently in the months prior to the tournament. Three days a week, he and his coach, Major Curtiss Robinson, were in the gym, with Bryant practicing throws, chokes and submissions. A wrestler since age 7, he excelled in grappling. Thanks to playing rugby three to four times a week with the Charleston Outlaw Club team, his stamina was high.

For one training session, Robinson and Bryant went to a martial arts school called Toe 2 Toe

Dojo. The purpose was to test Bryant's stamina. He was to fight four martial artists separately, back-to-back without a break. The first fighter weighed 350 pounds. Bryant beat them all.

"He was exhausted, and his lips were purple," said Robinson. "I asked, 'You have anything left?' and he said, 'I can still go.' I put the 350-pound guy back on him, and he beat him again. [Five] fights and no breaks. That's the kind of motivation that Bryant has."

Robinson developed a plan to utilize Bryant's stamina and grappling expertise in the tournament.

"Bryant's strategy will be just like an anaconda," Robinson explained. "He's going to get in and squeeze you, and get you in a position where you can't move. As your oxygen runs out, you will become vulnerable, and then he will be able to finish you," said Robinson.

### SATURDAY, DAY NO. 1

The tournament began on Saturday at 9 a.m.

The 91 participants were divided up by weight class. The competition process was double-elimination. If a competitor lost a bout, he'd end up in the "losers' bracket," where the highest he could place was 3rd. However, after two losses, a Soldier would be out of the tournament.

The tournament was held in the Santiago Field House, which looked like any regular high school gym. Basketball rims hung from the ceiling. Spectators sat on old, rusty brown bleachers. Four black-and-yellow mats covered the gym floor.

The spare surroundings reflected the raw nature of the tournament. The rules were simple. No flashy weapons. No fancy uniforms. It would be Soldiers in their ACUs employing the most basic form of fighting—one that had been around for ages—hand-to-hand combat. The event was established in 2007 to ensure that Guard Soldiers are always ready for battle. Any Soldier can compete—no prior training or experience is necessary.

"Combatives training provides the Soldier a means to deal with a combat situation without having to [use] lethal force," explained Major Robert Deaton, commander of the Warrior Training Center. "It's also a good form of [exercise]. Especially when you get to the intermediate and final rounds [of the tournament]. You have to be very physically fit to compete at that level."

The preliminary round allowed for grappling only—no striking or kicking. Bouts could last a maximum of six minutes, and a Soldier won either by a submission or by accumulating more points.

### BRYANT'S TRIUMPHS

Bryant breezed through his first few fights. Each bout lasted little more than a minute, and his confidence grew with every win. Eventually, he reached the last fight of the preliminary round. If he won, he would progress to the Pancrase (intermediate) round. At the Pancrase level, competitors could strike, though only with an open hand when striking the face.

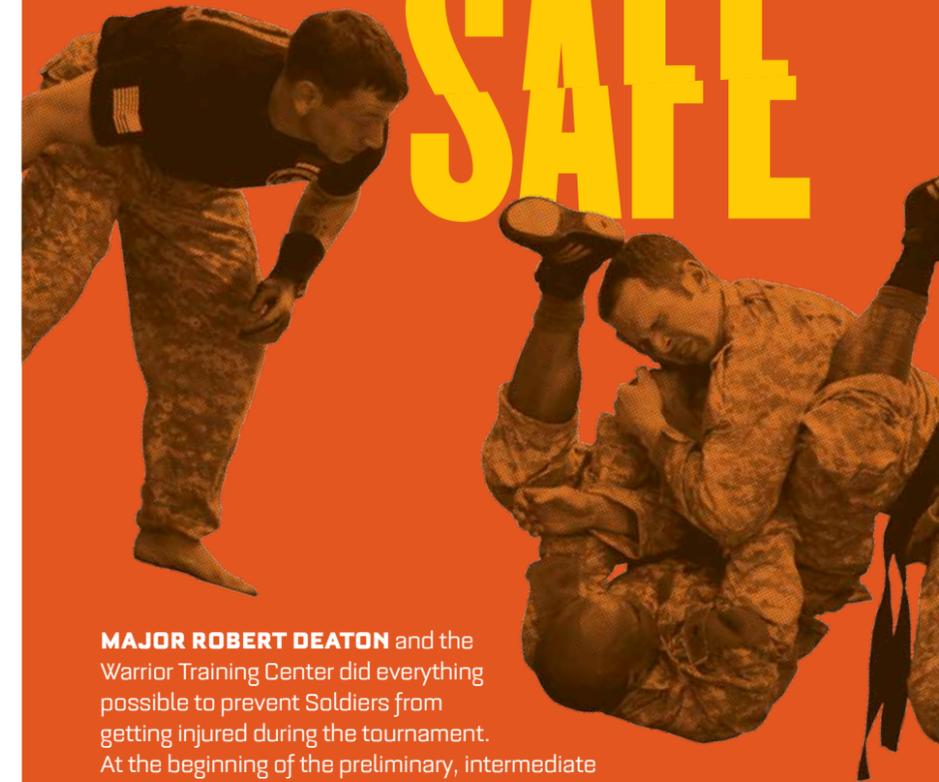
The only thing standing in Bryant's way was Grant. Grant was a good 35 pounds heavier than Bryant. Robinson massaged Bryant's shoulders to warm up his muscles.

The fighters walked to their respective corners on the mat. The ref called their names. Grant and Bryant met in the center, touched fists and immediately separated.

After a few moments, their bodies slammed together. Grant pulled Bryant to the ground, but Bryant twisted quickly and managed to prevent Grant from getting on

## PLAYING IT

# SAFE



**MAJOR ROBERT DEATON** and the Warrior Training Center did everything possible to prevent Soldiers from getting injured during the tournament.

At the beginning of the preliminary, intermediate and final rounds, the Soldiers were briefed on the rules and which moves were legal. Trained referees monitored closely during each bout and, at times, stopped a match before a competitor tapped out to avoid any injury. Medics were also present during the tournament in case of an emergency.

## RULES

### ROUND

# 1

#### PRELIMINARIES:

Only grappling techniques are allowed. No striking or kicking.

### ROUND

# 2

#### PANCRASE:

Open-handed strikes to the head are permitted. Striking to the body is also allowed.

### ROUND

# 3

#### FINALS:

Full contact. Competitors are allowed to strike the body and use closed-fist punches to the head.

top. Both fighters staggered to their feet, their shirts drenched with sweat.

They began moving around the mat, like predators circling prey. But it was unclear which was which. Grant had strength. But Bryant's grappling skills were superb.

Seconds ticked by. The audience stared. Suddenly, Bryant sprung from his standing position and flew at Grant. The two collided. The intensity reached a peak as they furiously grabbed at each other's necks, ACU collars and legs.

Bryant threw his weight and slammed Grant to the ground. Bryant passed by Grant's guard and gained side control. In one motion, Bryant shoved his chest into Grant's throat, cutting off his air supply. Grant was forced to tap out and end the bout.

Robinson jumped up and threw his hands in the air. Bryant approached his coach, smiling.



**“ I WELCOME THE CHALLENGE. I WOULD MUCH RATHER BE THE UNDERDOG AND THE SMALLER GUY. I WOULD RATHER GO INTO [THE FIGHT] WITH NOTHING TO LOSE.”** — 1LT John Bryant

### GOOD SPORTS

Off to the side, Grant sat on his knees for a while before struggling to his feet. His movements were slow, like he was carrying a heavy weight. Even though Grant and Bryant had spent the last six minutes wailing on each other, they shook hands. The aggression of the fight was gone.

“We had a good, old-fashioned wrestling match,” said Grant. “He didn't take any cheap shots. In the fight, he was on offense a lot, keeping me on defense, which was a good game plan. He was faster. Toward the end, I was thinking, ‘God, this is the longest six minutes of my life.’”

They laughed and joked about the match like old friends. Grant even referred to Bryant as his long lost brother.

Deaton noted that it's common for friendships to emerge during the competition, as the tournament is designed to facilitate this.

“Guys who go through similar experiences tend to build camaraderie even though they are competing against each other,” Deaton said. “Several of these individuals are repeat competitors, so they have seen each other at this tournament for three or four years in a row. They get to know each other. It helps the Guard keep that cohesiveness across the nation.”

After Bryant's match, Captain (Ret.) Phil Bryant, John's father, hurried down from the bleachers to congratulate his son. A community college professor, Phil drove from Bloomington, IN, to get a front-row seat at the tournament. He gave Bryant a pat on the back.

As an Army Ranger, Phil served in North

Saigon, Vietnam, with the 25th Division, 3rd Corps. Based on his own experiences, he understood that it's crucial for Soldiers to know hand-to-hand combat.

“Your ultimate weapon is your hands and body,” said Phil. “There were times in Vietnam when my weapons ceased to function. When [that happens] in a firefight, you would have to figure out how to continue fighting.”

Bryant agreed with his father. “If [Soldiers] have that [Combatives] experience, then they become more confident in combat situations. It's extremely beneficial to the Soldier.”

After the bout, the competition broke for lunch. Bryant returned to his seat, where he refueled with water and protein bars. The floor was rearranged for the Pancrase round.

This Pancrase round weeded out more competitors. Although disappointed, they stayed to cheer on those still in the game. The Soldier Bryant was set to fight had dropped out of the competition, which automatically placed Bryant in the finals.

As the activities came to a close on Saturday, the Soldiers were briefed and then released to enjoy the evening. Many headed to a local sports bar to watch the UFC fight between Jon “Bones” Jones and Mauricio “Shogun” Rua. After months of adhering to a carefully regimented diet, the Soldiers relaxed a little and ordered hot wings.

### SUNDAY, DAY NO. 2

On Sunday morning, the mats were gone. In their place was a single black cage. The final competitors were the only people in uniform—the rest of the Soldiers wore civilian clothes. The fighters began warming up. They stretched, practiced striking moves



➤ **Left:** Each Soldier has their own preparation method for the bouts. Some listen to music, while others mentally go over their strategy.

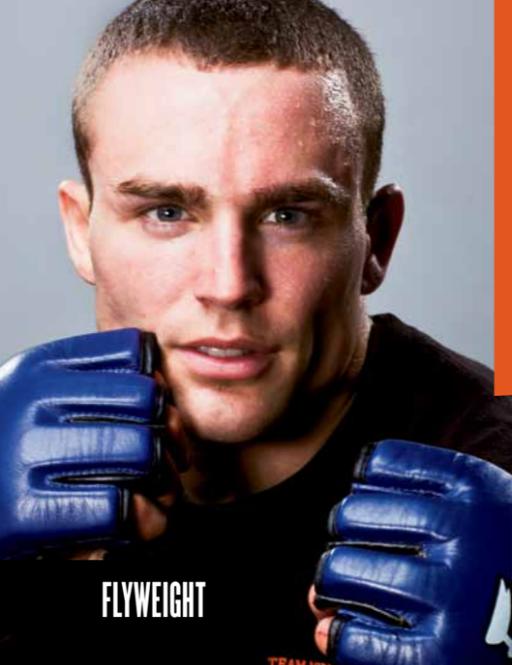
➤ **Clockwise from top:** The Army National Guard Combatives Tournament is a challenging endeavor. Although it's rare, some competitors receive broken bones and dislocated joints.

➤ A Soldier can win a bout either with a submission or by gaining more points.

➤ New Mexico National Guard SGT Hector Saillant (left) uses a knee bar to try and force his opponent to tap out.

➤ Two Soldiers compete in the final round of the tournament. Only in this round can Soldiers strike the face with a closed fist.





FLYWEIGHT

# COMBATIVES CHAMPIONS

class FLYWEIGHT  
male 125 lbs. and under  
female 131 lbs. and under  
winner SPC JACOB SCHOMMER, MN

class LIGHTWEIGHT  
male 140 lbs. and under  
female 147 lbs. and under  
winner SGT JOSH FRIDGEN, MN

class WELTERWEIGHT  
male 155 lbs. and under  
female 163 lbs. and under  
winner PV2 DALTON TOOMBS, MO

class MIDDLEWEIGHT  
male 170 lbs. and under  
female 179 lbs. and under  
winner SGT CODY LINCOLN, MN

class CRUISERWEIGHT  
male 185 lbs. and under  
female 194 lbs. and under  
winner SSG AUTONEIL MAGNY, IL

class LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT  
male 205 lbs. and under  
female 215 lbs. and under  
winner 1LT IVAN IOCHKOLOVSKY, IL

class HEAVYWEIGHT  
male 206 lbs. and above  
female 216 lbs. and above  
winner SSG BRADEN SIMONET, MN

> Right: SSG Braden Simonet, left, and 1LT John Bryant, right, just finished fighting in the final round of the heavyweight division.

and listened to last-minute pep talks from their coaches.

Bryant was one of the few competitors who appeared to be taking it easy during the warm-up. He sat alone, quietly.

One by one, the fighters entered the ring. The competitors in the losers' brackets were the first to compete, determining who would take home 3rd or 4th place in each division. The fights on Sunday were vastly different from those on Saturday. Each of the fighters had a hunger to win, making the bouts more intense.

The final fights were broken into three rounds, which allowed brief breaks for the competitors. The 3rd- and 4th-place trophies were handed out, and people waited for the next batch of fights, which would determine the champions. The heavyweight division was the last to compete.

As Bryant's turn in the ring approached, Grant wished him good luck. Bryant asked Grant to be the one to bring him water between rounds. This gesture was significant because only two people per competitor could enter the ring between rounds: the coach and a Soldier. Grant accepted the invitation, happy to help out his new friend. Finally, it was the heavyweights' turn.

### BARE-BONES BRAWL

Bryant's opponent, Staff Sergeant Braden Simonet of the Minnesota National Guard, stepped into the ring first. Simonet's physique was less muscular than most of the other fighters. However, his size was cause for alarm. He seemed solid, as if nothing could break through his defense.

Bryant entered the ring and took his position in the opposite corner. The ref stood in the

center and announced that this was the final fight of the day.

From the moment the bell rang, the two never let up. Bryant started, attempting to take Simonet down. This proved to be a significant challenge, as Simonet dealt blow after blow. Bryant never gave up, though, either attacking Simonet's legs or jumping at his head.

After many attempts, Bryant managed to bring Simonet to the ground. Bryant passed by Simonet's guard and got him in an arm bar. It looked like Bryant had won the match. But, just as Simonet began to tap out, the bell rang, and the round ended—with the match still on.

Both competitors were visibly exhausted, but neither wanted to give up. After a short break, they were back at it. This time, Simonet seemed to be gaining ground. After a few minutes of nail-biting suspense, Simonet, now clearly in control, delivered a few hard-hitting blows to Bryant's head. The ref stopped the fight. Simonet had won.

Once Bryant got up, the two stood arm in arm, both wobbly but smiling. Journalists yelled out, "How do you feel?" The answers: tired and sweaty.

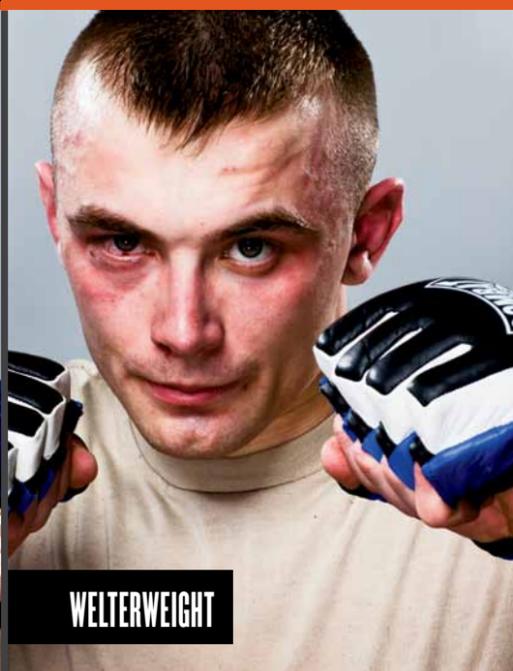
Reporters asked Bryant if he would return next year. "Absolutely," he replied.

He'll be in good company. Whereas the first Combatives competition four years ago drew about 25 Soldiers, this year, there were 91. The goal for next year is to break the 100 mark.

Deaton explained why Soldiers are so drawn to Combatives. "It's one of those things that individual Soldiers can do to improve themselves within the National Guard and build camaraderie as a unit. It instills the Warrior Ethos." **GX**



LIGHTWEIGHT



WELTERWEIGHT



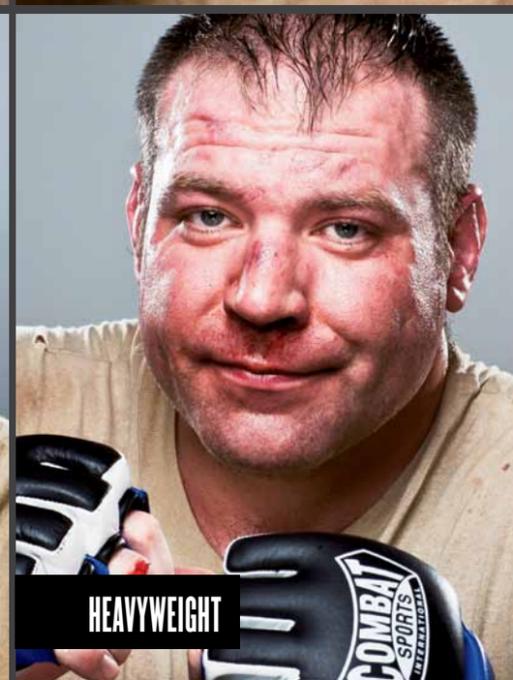
MIDDLEWEIGHT



CRUISERWEIGHT



LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT



HEAVYWEIGHT





In February, Soldiers from the 1/118th Infantry Regiment Combined Arms Battalion (CAB), 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina National Guard, traveled thousands of miles from their National Guard armories in South Carolina to the sandy, mountainous terrain of southern Saudi Arabia. Their mission was to occupy Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sumter and take part in the joint training exercise Friendship 2 with the 4th Armor Brigade Group, Southern Area Command, Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF). Although the Soldiers trained in a similar fashion, their cultures provided many opportunities for learning.

The bulk of the battalion and supporting units arrived at the FOB close to midnight and stood in formation between the connexes, listening to the FOB mayor brief them about the perimeter, latrines and off-limits female areas. After a cup of hot soup and snacks, Soldiers sorted through piles of green duffel bags and rucks, and carried their gear to the tent they would call home for the next two weeks. Even though the green nylon cots were familiar to many Soldiers, the big-top style, tan tents with wooden floors seemed unique in a U.S. Army FOB.

The next day, U.S. and Saudi Soldiers stood in a joint formation in front of a Bedouin-style tent with Persian rugs covering the sand during a ceremony to observe the commencement of the exercise. The flags of both nations were raised, and the Saudi army band played both national anthems.

“The fruits of this relationship began in 1991 when combined U.N. coalition-led Saudi Arabian and U.S. military forces successfully liberated Kuwait,” said Major General Paul Van Sickle, Chief, U.S. Military Training Mission – Saudi Arabia, during the commencement speech.

“One of the main points of the exercise was to show the RSLF how to conduct counterinsurgency and irregular warfare tactics, since they are now facing a similar problem,” said Lieutenant Colonel Robert Carruthers, commander of the 1/118th CAB. “A very important part was to show that the American Army and the Saudi army can work together and interoperate. We are talking on the same network and understanding how to work with each other.”

# Kicking Up Dust

**South Carolina Trains in the Middle East**

*By SGT Erica Knight, 108th Public Affairs Detachment*

## ROAD TESTED

Nine training areas contained three checkpoints prepared for the U.S. and Saudi troops. As convoys started down one of the lanes, they encountered an IED and were engaged by a two-man sniper team. Farther down the road, Soldiers passed through a police control point with a possible IED. As they neared the end of the lane, the platoon entered a village, where they searched for a person of interest and possible bomb-making materials. Each checkpoint had a Saudi and U.S. OC team who would evaluate the platoons.

"We were able to manipulate the scenarios a bit to get them to react to different circumstances and after, we gave an [after action review]," said Sergeant First Class Kelly Davis, an OC with the 3rd Battalion, 218th Leadership Brigade, Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Element.

Despite the long hours and dry heat, the Soldiers seemed right at home.

"We're doing our job—that's what we like to do," said Specialist Justin Pugh, B Company, 1/118th CAB. "Our job is to close with and [eliminate] the enemy. We're out here training to do that."

"It's really helped me get in the mindset of what a deployment might be like," said Specialist Michael Edmondson, A Company, 1/118th CAB.

"This looks very much like most areas in Afghanistan," said Carruthers. "It's an invaluable experience for these young Soldiers who've just enlisted and have not deployed yet, because they get to feel the heat and the dryness. They see what it's like—the sand, the dirt, the dust, driving across these roads; you can't simulate this in most of the training areas we go to in the United States."

## READY TO REACT

Although the purpose of this trip was a training mission, there were still real-world risks in traveling to this region. Because of that, Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) of the 1/118th CAB was tasked with providing security for the FOB and the training lanes.

Soldiers covered observation points surrounding the FOB, and multiple Humvees and Soldiers were available day and night as a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to respond to any suspicious activity around the FOB or on the training lanes, explained Sergeant First Class Bobby Terry, scout platoon leader.

The QRF also provided two Soldiers at the entry control point (ECP). The ECP was manned by Saudi and 1/118th CAB Soldiers 24 hours a day.

"This is real-world for us," said Terry. "We are not here to train. The guys take it seriously,

and their morale has been extremely high."

The 1/118th CAB Soldiers working at the ECP had great relationships with their Saudi counterparts.

"We [QRF] have probably had the most interaction with the Saudis from being with them at the ECP and on the lanes," said Staff Sergeant John LeBlanc Jr. "A lot of guys have traded patches with them. They've shared food with us and taught some of our guys a little Arabic. Most of them know a little English. We've really enjoyed interacting with them."

"Over half of the Soldiers of the 1/118th CAB are combat Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with extensive counter-insurgency experience," said Carruthers. "The exposure of the Saudi Soldiers to American Soldiers and units allowed them to see firsthand how we operate. They saw the strength of our NCO Corps in action, watched privates interact with officers, and observed the power of a disciplined, cohesive team working as one. While the training was important, the Saudis' observation of how the U.S. Army operates was perhaps the greatest teaching point."

During the closing ceremony, U.S. and Saudi Soldiers again stood side by side in a joint formation as both nations' flags were lowered and folded. **GX**



To learn more about National Guard Infantry Soldiers, go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/infantry](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/infantry).



## IN THEIR WORDS

### SPC BRITTANY MCCARTY

1263RD FORWARD SUPPORT COMPANY :: DRIVER

"Right after we got to the FOB, I was carrying some heavy boxes from the connex to the truck, and the Saudis told my section leader that they don't like to see females doing hard work. They were very respectful to me and would sometimes help me with something, but they didn't speak to me. They are very hardworking. They will do anything to get the job done. They were just as curious about us as we were about them. It was a great experience, and it makes me grateful for what we have."

### CSM LEON GILLIAM

1/118TH INFANTRY REGIMENT COMBINED ARMS BATTALION

"They served us chai before the meal in a separate tent. Everyone seemed to enjoy the fellowship. At dinner, they ate rice with their hands. They had spoons for us, but they wanted us to try to eat like them. So, we tried cupping the rice and pressing it in our palms to eat it. It was a unique experience, and we enjoyed trying."

*Clockwise from left:* A Soldier escorts a "suspected insurgent" during a security exercise. After several intense days of training, the U.S. Soldiers involved in Friendship 2 had a newfound respect for their Saudi counterparts. Soldiers from the Guard's 1/118th Infantry Regiment, Combined Arms Battalion, present arms to officially begin Friendship 2. The South Carolina and Saudi Soldiers worked as a team, resulting in a better understanding of how their allies operate.

## THE FRIENDSHIP MISSION

The first Friendship exercise was held in 2009, focusing on armored tactics relatable to Desert Storm. Strategies and tactics have changed significantly since Desert Storm, and the military has adapted in order to successfully engage its enemies. Because of current needs, the focus of the exercise shifted, and Soldiers from both countries trained on responding to improvised explosive devices, reacting to fire, and searching buildings and enemy prisoners of war.





# BLENDED IN

## Soldiers Imitate Terrain With New Uniform

By SSG Ashlee Lolkus, 2/34th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs, Iowa National Guard

**LOOK CLOSELY, OR YOU MIGHT MISS THEM.** National Guard Soldiers have been issued a new uniform, giving them even more leverage in battle.

MultiCam, also referred to as OCP (Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern), is the newest Army uniform phenomenon. Basically, for Soldiers oper-

ating in Afghanistan, MultiCam is an upgrade over the traditional ACU (Army Combat Uniform) UCP (Universal Camouflage Pattern). Not only did the pattern change, but the mechanics improved.

Of course, this isn't new information, since the uniforms have been in the news, and the hype started building in 2009. But now, after

a few months of use, units are proving how much the pattern has improved the camouflaging of Soldiers in Afghanistan.

### TRIAL AND ERROR-FREE

The 3,100 Soldier-strong Red Bulls of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, were among the first Guard units to receive this new pattern when they deployed to Afghanistan in the fall of 2010. Many Red Bulls who are Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom agree that the change of uniform pattern has made a difference in their operations.

Staff Sergeant Rory Madsen, an infantry squad leader based in Paktiya province with

Company D, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, knows all about the different patterns the Army has used in the past decade, since this is his second deployment to Afghanistan and he has multiple deployments to Iraq.

"I have had the privilege of being on four tours of duty during the time I have served, and with each tour, I have had a different type of uniform," Madsen said. "The new MultiCam uniform withstands the elements better than any uniform I have ever worn. [It] also seems much more tactical, with its unique ability to blend into its surroundings. It blends with the mud and sand in the area. It's a great design."

Staff Sergeant Brandon Donoho, an infantry squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, recalled a time back in December when his squad was in a potential ambush at around twilight in Paktiya province.

"They didn't hit any of us," Donoho said. "Be that poor marksmanship or OCP, that is up for debate. OCP is far superior to Universal [Camouflage] Pattern. It should be the new Army uniform across the board. When you stop moving, you literally disappear outside of 50 meters."

About 70 miles north of Paktiya, in Laghman province, Sergeant Eric Lindsey, infantry squad leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, said he and his men operate and often climb the mountains near Kalagush, where the OCP helps keep them camouflaged well.

"OCP is such a good camouflage pattern, that five minutes after the dismount [Soldiers] leave the vehicle patrol base, it's hard to spot them," he explained. "OCP has helped us on every dismounted mission we do because the pattern is hard to spot during the day and impossible to spot at night."

Sergeant Phillip Olson, a forward observer with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 113th Cavalry Regiment, based in Parwan province, offered an explanation as to why the pattern is so effective. He stated that the pattern was more organic and that the colors used occur in nearly every terrain in Afghanistan.

"Straight lines like you see in the UCP don't occur in nature," he explained. "The round spots in the OCP pattern blend into surroundings, and the randomness of those spots enhances the overall effectiveness of the pattern."

The MultiCam pattern has, for the most part, been a huge hit with the Red Bull Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan. Even though distance and terrain separate them, the Soldiers agree that the new OCP pattern for the Army combat uniform is more effective, keeping the Soldiers safer. **GX**

Working next to their Afghan counterparts, the Red Bulls have an edge over the digital-based uniforms that Afghan Soldiers wear.



### BATTLE DRESS UNIFORM (BDU)

Introduced in 1981, the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) used shades of green, brown, tan and black, and became the first camouflage since the Vietnam War.

### DESERT BATTLE DRESS UNIFORM (DBDU)

Used during Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the six-color "chocolate chip" revolutionized desert camouflage for the U.S. military.

### DESERT CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORM (DCU)

Replacing the DBDU, this three-toned uniform, nicknamed "coffee stain," utilizes light tan, pale green and brown.

### UNIVERSAL CAMOUFLAGE PATTERN (UCP)

Introduced in 2005, the UCP utilizes gray, tan and sage-green colors to form a digital camouflage.

### OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM CAMOUFLAGE PATTERN (OCP)

Outperforming the UCP, the OCP is comprised of a series of colors and patterns that appear in environments around the world.

# Heavy Metal Machine

## Sevendust Rocks the Troops



For Atlanta-based heavy metal band Sevendust, performing in Iraq and Afghanistan has been a highlight of their career. The act's three USO tours have filled them with appreciation and respect for the service and sacrifice of U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen.

Whether it's to sign an autograph, hand out T-shirts or pose for photos, they enjoy meeting the troops after the shows as much as they like performing. It's their way of giving back.

GX chatted with lead singer Lajon Witherspoon about the band, its music and the Army National Guard.

Story by Christian Anderson  
Photos courtesy of Indegoot Entertainment

### SEVENDUST



**GX:** You said your 2008 visit to Afghanistan was the best thing that ever happened to you. What did you mean?

**LW:** To actually go over there, I really began to understand what they were going through. To stay in tents where the Soldiers were staying was real. It was a culture shock. I heard mortars going off. That's not something we were used to hearing. It changed my life and made me appreciate things a lot more.

**GX:** Can you tell us more about the acoustic set you played at Bagram Airbase?

**LW:** At first, I really wanted to do it electric. But it turned out really well. The energy was amazing. It felt like we had 6,000 amps in there!

**GX:** Do you guys have a pre-show ritual?

**LW:** Other than listening to a few different songs, we pray before every show. That's a ritual.

**GX:** I read that while you guys were overseas, you didn't leave the concerts until everyone had received an autograph, T-shirt or photo.

**LW:** Definitely. The whole reason we go is to support the troops. If they can take the time to

fight for our country, we can take the time for them.

**GX:** What was it like to shoot the breeze with Soldiers between shows?

**LW:** It was just like hanging out back home. We were kicking back, sharing photos and telling jokes. It was great!

**GX:** Was there a moment where things got really crazy and you guys had to hit the deck?

**LW:** Our time in Mosul was very intense. We heard shots at night. It was constant M16 and cannon tank fire. We felt safe, but the Soldiers were taking their jobs very seriously.

**GX:** Your album *Cold Day Memory* marks the return of your first lead guitarist, Clint Lowery.

**How does it feel to have the original band members back together?**

**LW:** It's the original sound. It's just great to have him back.

**GX:** What do you like most about your sound?

**LW:** That we have sound, not just a lot of screaming. We actually have thought behind it. We write the songs because they are the real deal. They mean something to us.

**GX:** The band has been together since about 1994. How has that time changed you as a person?

**LW:** I have grown up a lot. We became more professional. We got married, and I am a father of two. When you're a kid, you can't believe you're in a band and touring the world. Now we think more about the business side of music and our career.

**GX:** How do you guys pass time on the tour bus between shows?

**LW:** It depends. A lot of the guys like to work out. We have a gym in the dressing room. Today, things are moving pretty fast. After this interview, we have a few meetings, and then some meet-and-greets. By 6 p.m. I like to start warming up for the show, because we go on at 7:45. And then after the show, we have more meet-and-greets. So it gets pretty crazy.

**GX:** Is working out a regular thing for Sevendust?

**LW:** Oh, definitely. We all try to stay in shape. We lift weights and try to eat well—and try not to eat too much.

**GX:** How do you guys recharge after a long tour?

**LW:** We go home and spend time with our family.

I think we get less sleep at home than we do on tour, but it's beautiful to get that time with them.

**GX:** What was it like to play with Metallica?

**LW:** Think about it—good God, we got to play with Metallica! I was a nervous wreck the whole tour because of all of the pyro[technics] they were using. They were blowing stuff up all over the place.

**GX:** Did having children change your outlook on life?

**LW:** Oh yeah, especially having little girls. It's been an incredible experience. To bring them around the music is really cool. It's inspiring. I can't wait to get home.

**GX:** Why are you a musician?

**LW:** Because of my love and passion for music. Music is still magical to me. I love the way it moves people. It's so much bigger than I am.

**GX:** Is there anything you would like to say to the Soldiers?

**LW:** God bless you, ladies and gentlemen, and thank you so much for everything you do. You have definitely changed my life. **GX**

## MEET THE BAND

**Lajon Witherspoon**  
Lead vocals



**Clint Lowery**  
Lead guitar, backup vocals



**John Connolly**  
Rhythm guitar, backup vocals



**Vince Hornsby**  
Bass



**Morgan Rose**  
Drums, percussion, backup vocals





By Camille Breland \ Photos by Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp, North Dakota National Guard



## Inside North Dakota's Biathlon Team

Imagine you're doing any cardiovascular endurance sport. You're running, biking, skiing or something else at full capacity. Your heart rate is through the roof. Your breathing is as controlled as you can keep it, but still working overtime. Sweat is pouring down your forehead although it's freezing outside, and to make the situation even more intense, you're competing for the national championship.

Now, as you make a last push for power—stop. Lie on your stomach, control your heart rate and breathing, and shoot a circular target 1¾ inches in diameter from 50 meters away—not once, but five times.

Easier said than done, right? This is the basic concept for the sport of biathlon, the combination of two sports—historically, cross-country-style skiing and marksmanship. The biathletes' mental and physical toughness are unrivaled, and the skills they use for the sport directly correlate to capabilities needed on the battlefield. The National Guard sponsors biathlon teams comprised of Soldiers and Airmen, and today, 25 states have biathlon programs.

In 2010, for the first time in its history, the North Dakota Biathlon team walked away with top honors in all four events at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championship at Camp Ripley, MN. The team, comprised of nine Soldiers and Airmen, has come a long way since it actively began recruiting athletes and participating in competitions during the 2005–06 season, especially without having access to the resources or training sites common to other Northern states' teams.

In this special feature, GX takes a look inside the North Dakota National Guard Biathlon team, analyzing the fitness, nutrition and dedication it takes to become national leaders in one of the world's toughest sports.



**CPT ERIC NOROGRÉN**

Hometown: Duluth, MN

Age: 32

In the Guard: Predator pilot

Civilian side:  
Electricity utility engineer

Years on team: 2

Hooah-factor:  
Former member of the  
All Guard Biathlon team

## BIATHLON BASICS

The seven styles of biathlon competitions recognized worldwide are: individual, sprint, pursuit, mass start, relay, mixed relay and super sprint. National Guard-sponsored races, however, feature individual, sprint, relay and a military-style patrol event (see sidebar).

During an individual biathlon event, the biathletes start by skiing a 4K (2.5-mile) loop, and then head into the firing range. On the range, they remove their weapon and take five shots at a 1¾-inch target from a prone (lying on the stomach) position. They then ski another loop, and then return again to the range and fire another five shots at a 4½-inch target, this time from a standing position.

In every event, biathletes can immediately recognize a hit or miss on the firing range since the targets are mechanical or electronic. Marksmanship is extremely important in the individual biathlon competition: If a biathlete misses a target, a one-minute penalty is added to his finish time.

They continue the skiing and shooting pattern until they have shot four times and skied four times, and then end the race with a 4K sprint to the finish line. As in any race, the athlete with the shortest time wins, and top biathletes usually finish in about an hour.

Today, biathletes use a form of skiing called “skate skiing,” which differs slightly from traditional cross-country skiing. In cross-country skiing, athletes mimic a forward-walking motion in which their skis slightly grip the snow. But in skate skiing, athletes must constantly use their own energy and force to ski up hills and on level trails.

“It’s similar to hockey skating, where you have to actually push side to side to get momentum on the flat ground,” said Lieutenant Colonel David Skalicky, the team’s captain.

While the skiing aspect of the sport is definitely tough, with biathletes’ heart rates reaching up to 180 beats per minute, controlling their breathing and focusing on the firing range is what the biathletes said is the most difficult aspect.

“Not only is the sport tough for your conditioning and cardiovascular [condition], but it’s so mental. It actually feels like a big relief when I get off the range ... I can just relax and ski,” Skalicky shared.

As for shooting the targets, biathletes use

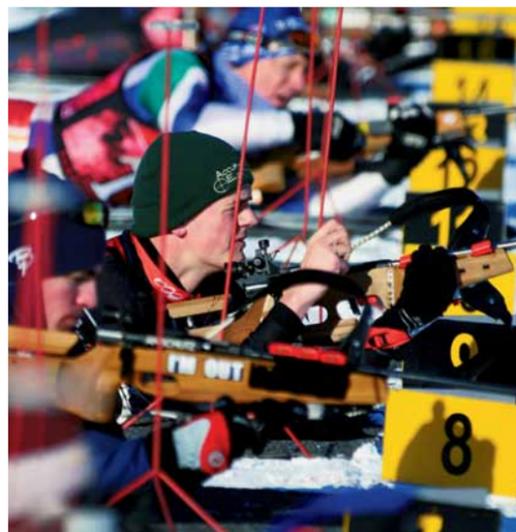
a special .22 caliber rifle with Fortner action and an open sight (see sidebar), from two firing positions: standing and prone. While standing, biathletes put their weapon between their first and second fingers, keeping their wrists and left elbow straight and tucked into their hipbone. To control their breathing and heart rate, biathletes inhale large breaths using their stomach muscles, causing their stomach to quickly protrude and recede. Breathing through the stomach helps athletes to slow and control their breaths, which means they are expending less energy on breathing—saving more power for skiing.

“The object is not to have the pressure from your blood pumping affect your aim,” Skalicky said. “You don’t want your weapon on muscle because muscle is soft, vibrates and is not a stable target.”

In the prone position, biathletes have the advantage of attaching a strap from the stock of their weapon to a shooting cuff on their non-trigger arm, creating a “tripod” effect and establishing a more stable firing platform, since more tension is placed on the rifle. So, biathletes are typically more consistent from this position.

## AGAINST THE ODDS

North Dakota’s biathlon program fluctuated for the first few years, sometimes struggling to recruit new members to the team. But by 2005, the program was re-energized as more Guard members became interested in the sport. At that time, only Second Lieutenant Blake Hillerson and Sergeant First Class Kent Pulst were on the team, but the following season, they recruited Specialist Jordan Becker and Specialist Brandon Pulst, Kent’s son. In 2007, Skalicky joined the team, creating a full roster of biathletes to compete in the sport’s seven types of competitions.



## SAVING SECONDS: FORTNER ACTION RIFLES

**TECHNOLOGY HAS AIDED BIATHLETES ON THE range.** Some teams now use rifles with a Fortner action, which automatically ejects the shell casing and reloads a new bullet into the chamber, all with the flick of a lever above the trigger. With a typical bolt action, biathletes would have to lift and rotate the bolt, pull it back, eject the shell, then push it forward and lock it before they could fire the weapon again. So, using a rifle with Fortner action translates into saving a few seconds on the firing range—which could mean the difference between first and second place.



**SFC KENT PULST**

Hometown: Penn, ND

Age: 50

In the Guard: 91X, Maintenance  
Sergeant for CBRNE Consequence  
Management Response Force

Years on team: 19

Hooah-factor:  
“He is the rock that has kept the  
sport alive in North Dakota.”

If there’s one thing that unites the North Dakota Biathlon team, it’s the fact that they all started on an even playing field as absolute beginners, albeit at different points in their Guard careers. The sport of biathlon was completely new for almost all of the members before they joined the National Guard. In fact, two of the Soldiers had never been on skis before they joined the biathlon team. But with the help of the veteran team members, new biathletes are able to quickly tackle the sport.

The team’s cohesion and helpful spirit also resonate in how they motivate each other during training weeks. While the winters in North Dakota usually keep snow on the ground well into April, the terrain of the land is more flat than surrounding states like Minnesota and Montana, making it more difficult for skiers to train on hills and mountains. Nonetheless, North Dakota’s team puts in long hours on their skis over cross-country trails they’ve groomed literally in their backyards. To stay on mission throughout the biathlon season, they keep each other motivated with emails and phone calls.

These men are dedicated to the sport, which not only helps them maintain their fitness and

rifle marksmanship skills, but also helps to pass the long, frigid winters. And it doesn’t hurt that they have fun while doing it.

## TRAINING YEAR-ROUND

The North Dakota biathletes train year-round to keep their endurance high and marksmanship skills sharp. Since they don’t always have access to a firing range, the athletes often conduct “dry fire” training two to three times per week, during which they concentrate on their body and rifle positions, breathing cadence and trigger squeeze. In fact, most of the dry fire practice focuses on everything leading up to viewing the target and pulling the trigger.

“You need to be very consistent in everything you do with the weapon: how you get it off your back, how you strap it to your arm, how you lie in your position. You can practice all that stuff without firing your weapon, and that’s what makes a good marksman,” Skalicky explained.

During the winter months, the biathletes try to skate ski or cross-country ski three times per week, focusing on either high-intensity interval training or longer skis at a moderate pace. On the other days, the men are strength training

# HISTORY OF BIATHLON IN THE GUARD

**THE SPORT OF BIATHLON** dates back to the late 1700s along the border of Norway and Sweden. Each country’s military enlisted troops to patrol the mountainous border, and during the winter the men used skis to navigate the snowy terrain. In 1767, the two countries’ patrol units hosted the first competition, consisting of skiing, shooting and military-specific tasks. It wasn’t until 1924, though, that the sport began to gain international recognition when it was demonstrated as a military patrol at the first Winter Olympic games in France.

U.S. Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division in Colorado participated in the first World Biathlon Championships in 1958, and the Army began training its Soldiers in the sport at Fort Richardson, AK. In 1973, the Active Army passed the biathlon mission along to the National Guard, and by 1975, teams from seven states competed in the first Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships.

Today, the National Guard is the only branch of the military to sponsor a biathlon program. The Guard trains its biathletes to compete on the highest international levels, acting as a major developmental program for the U.S. Olympic Biathlon team. In fact, at least one Guard biathlete has been a member of the U.S. Olympic team for the past 30 years, culminating at Vancouver last year when Vermont Guard Soldier Sergeant Jeremy Teela landed the U.S. Biathlon team’s top finish in the Olympics of all time with a 9th-place finish in the sprint 10-kilometer (6.2-mile) event.



CPT Eric Nordgren pushes off using his cross-country ski poles as he gains speed at the start of his relay circuit Jan. 15, at the Central Region Biathlon championships at Camp Ripley, near Little Falls, MN.

and continuing cardiovascular work. Becker, the team's coach, recommends the men do an "over distance" workout once per week of any cardiovascular exercise, such as skiing, running or cycling. The over distance workout is a cardiovascular exercise lasting more than an hour, but Becker says they usually push for three hours.

"The benefits of an over distance has really great long-term effects that stick with you longer than most workouts," Becker shared. "Your body becomes more efficient at processing its sugars."

The North Dakota biathletes love the challenge of an over distance workout. Skalicky finished his ninth and 10th marathons this spring, running the Boston Marathon in April and Fargo, ND, in May, and he's already planning his next 26.2-mile run. Kent Pulst regularly participates in 50K to 80K (that's 30 to 50 miles) cross-country skiing races throughout the region. All Guard team member Hillerson is constantly working out for multiple hours at a time, cross-country and skate skiing in the winter and going on several-hour bike rides and hikes during the summer. Sergeant Matt McKinney is dedicated to the CrossFit exercise program, sweating out its full-body routines on a daily basis.

In the off season, the men can be found mountain biking, running marathons, hiking and roller skiing, which uses a longer roller blade that simulates skate skiing. They also conduct more strength and weight training to try and "get up to that next level," Becker said.

As for their nutrition, Becker says the men stick to a healthy diet consisting of high-quality fats, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables. They need to consume significantly more calories than the average person, however, because they can burn up to 3,000 calories in one race.

"You can definitely tell the difference between who's eating right and who's not eating right on a particular day," Becker said. Therefore, it's crucial for the biathletes to remain consistent with their diet during training weeks and the week of a race. "You don't want to have that last 2-3K lap left and all of a sudden there's nothing left in the tank," he concluded.

Another important aspect of nutrition, Becker said, is "not only what you're eating, but when you're eating." It's important for biathletes to eat very soon after a race or hard training session to help their bodies begin to recover sooner.

### FRIENDSHIP THROUGH SPORT

While it may not be the most popular spectator sport in the United States, biathlon's international participation is on the upswing. It's the most watched sport on television in Europe and continues to be a sport that showcases basic military skills—endurance and marksmanship—on a global level.

In biathlon worldwide, the United States is largely the underdog. Since 1960, three countries, Norway, Sweden and Russia, have dominated the sport at the Olympics, capturing 22 out of the total 36 medals given in the competitions. But with Vermont Soldier Sergeant Jeremy Teela's 9th-place finish at last year's Olympics in the Men's 10K Sprint event, the U.S. Biathlon Team is gaining international recognition and setting its sights on the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

The National Guard's biathlon program continues to produce elite athletes who compete in the world's top-level competitions. Every year, the All Guard biathlon team travels to countries such as Italy, Spain, Argentina and Chile to compete in world championships and cups. The team also participates in the world's military championships at a different location each year, showcasing the skills of Guard Soldiers and promoting "friendship through sport."

"We have true friendships with the coaches and athletes from other countries," said Major

Andrew Parsons, the biathlon program coordinator for National Guard Bureau.

During these international competitions, biathletes from the All Guard team who have special skills, such as those in Special Forces or who speak another language, often conduct clinics and presentations for the foreign biathletes to showcase the National Guard's training and skill set.

"Overseas, there's a high level of competition because every country is sending their best skiers and racers," Becker noted.

The Guard runs two training and competition venues for the sport at Camp Ripley, MN, and Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, VT, and the Guard's top finishers at each year's championships are then eligible to join the Army's World Class Athlete Program and the U.S. Biathlon Association's national team.

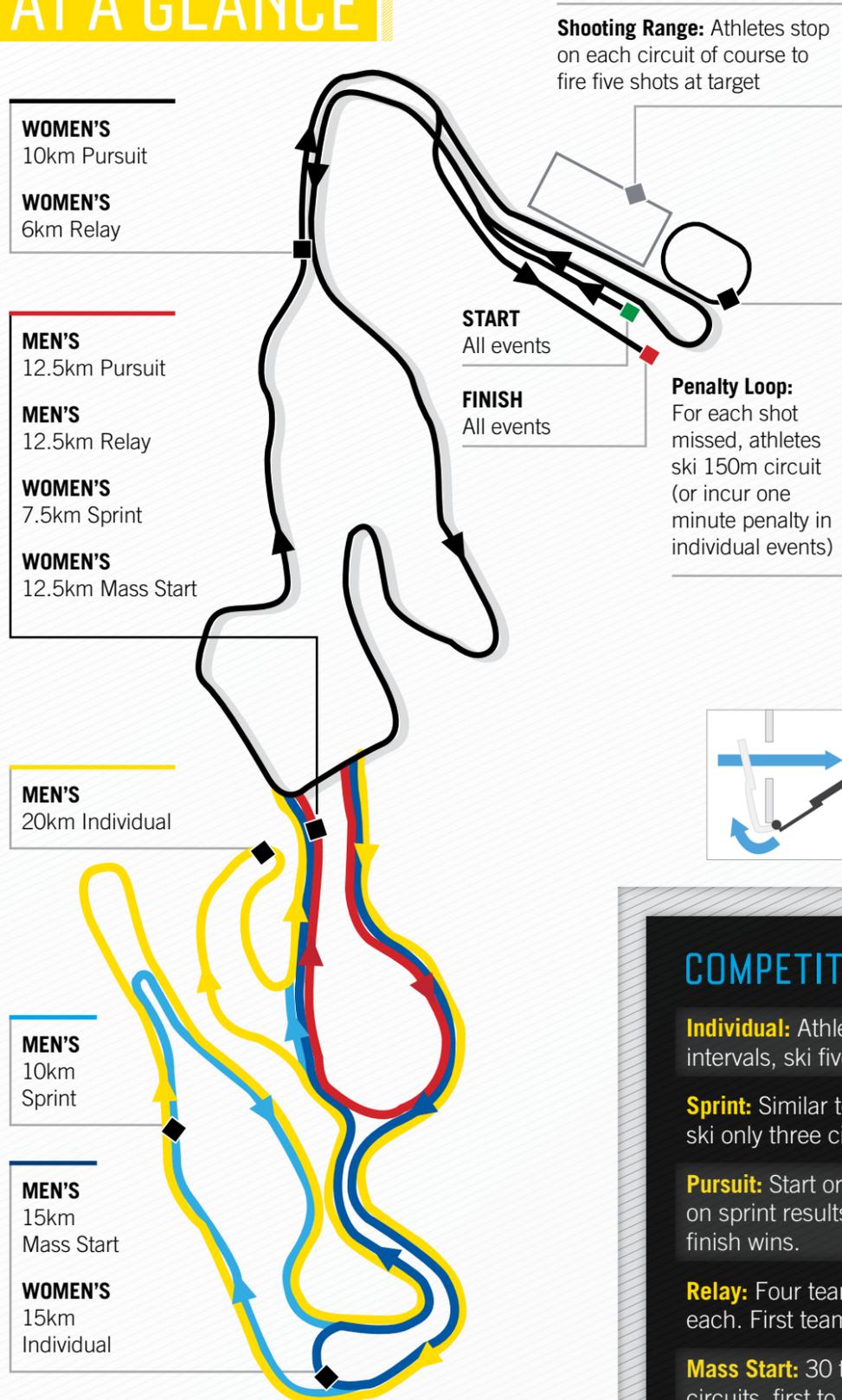
North Dakota's team placed third in this year's Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships, competing against 99 biathletes from 24 states. Hillerson and Captain Eric Nordgren made top finishes, allowing them to once again be part of the All Guard team.

The North Dakota team hopes to continue pushing its top athletes to the All Guard team, and eventually the U.S. National and Olympic teams. With their dedication, toughness and spirit, this biathlon team will be one to watch in the coming years. **GX**

## BIATHLON AT A GLANCE

- WOMEN'S** 10km Pursuit
- WOMEN'S** 6km Relay
- MEN'S** 12.5km Pursuit
- MEN'S** 12.5km Relay
- WOMEN'S** 7.5km Sprint
- WOMEN'S** 12.5km Mass Start

- MEN'S** 20km Individual
- MEN'S** 10km Sprint
- MEN'S** 15km Mass Start
- WOMEN'S** 15km Individual



**Shooting Range:** Athletes stop on each circuit of course to fire five shots at target

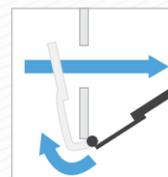
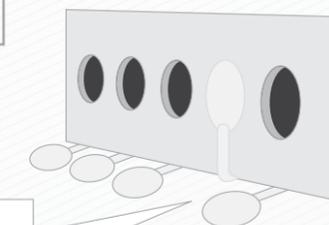
**START**  
All events

**FINISH**  
All events

**Penalty Loop:** For each shot missed, athletes ski 150m circuit (or incur one minute penalty in individual events)

### HIT OR MISS?

Biathlon targets are actually holes aligned horizontally on a piece of white metal with a black plate behind the holes. When a shooter hits one of the holes, the plate behind it sends an electronic pulse and causes a white flap to cover the hole, changing the color of the target from black to white in the case of a hit.



**TARGET:** Hit makes black plate fall away and white plate rise to cover hole

### COMPETITION FORMAT

**Individual:** Athletes start at 30-second intervals, ski five circuits. Fastest time wins.

**Sprint:** Similar to individual, but athletes ski only three circuits.

**Pursuit:** Start order and intervals based on sprint results. Five circuits, first to finish wins.

**Relay:** Four team members ski three circuits each. First team to finish wins.

**Mass Start:** 30 top-ranked athletes ski five circuits, first to finish wins.

**“EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE ANXIOUS TO MOVE FORWARD AND IMPROVE, ENJOYING THE PRESENT TIME IS IMPORTANT.”**

# Q&A

**WITH DALE JR.**

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor

*While racing is in Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s genes, the third-generation driver — son of the legendary Intimidator, Dale Earnhardt Sr., and himself a perennial NASCAR favorite — has some hard-earned wisdom that can be applied to any pursuit. He slowed down for just a few moments recently to chat with GX.*

**GX: What advice would you give an amateur race driver?**

**DJ:** The most important thing when you're young is to enjoy every level that you're at. People always say, "Don't give up on your dreams. Keep working hard." But that's the obvious stuff. What I would've done differently and what I would tell someone is that I didn't enjoy that stage as much as I should have. I was so

worried about getting to the next level that I didn't take in how enjoyable being a rookie was. Even though you are anxious to move forward and improve, I think enjoying the present time is important.

**GX: Was there something about being a rookie that you really enjoyed?**

**DJ:** Not necessarily being a rookie, but being in the lower ranks. I was racing around Myrtle Beach, SC, in late models on Saturday nights, and all the people I worked with were volunteers and friends. I just miss the innocence of that time. You are thinking all the time, "How can I go forward and get into the next level?" You don't take the opportunity to really enjoy those times. When you get older, you look back and miss them or realize how fortunate you were.

**GX: If you hadn't gone into racing, what do you think you would've done professionally instead?**

**DJ:** I don't know for sure. But I like music. Maybe I would've been in the business end of the music industry. I think being a music critic or working for a record label would be a lot of fun. But more than likely, it would be something in the automotive industry. I'd either be working at a dealership as a mechanic or I'd be at automotive sports. It's hard to say.

**GX: Do you play any instruments?**

**DJ:** I played the drums a little bit. I am not that good anymore. I haven't played in like six or seven years.

# Leaner. Faster. Stronger.

**SPC Zuniga Sheds 100 Lbs. and Scores 401 on His APFT** *By Liisa Sullivan*

## Fast Facts

- Age:** 27
- Born and raised:** Metairie, LA
- Joined the Guard:** Sept. 2002
- Deployed:** Afghanistan, 2003
- Height:** 5-foot-10
- Current weight:** 165 pounds
- Previous weight:** 265 pounds
- Greatest diet challenge:** Giving up sweets
- Marital status:** Single
- Hobby:** Racing cars
- Favorite possession:** Car—an Infiniti G37



**LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER SPECIALIST ALEJANDRO ZUNIGA** almost passed out when he heard the news. And with good reason: He had scored an amazing 401 points on his most recent Army Physical Fitness Test. Three hundred is a perfect score.

"I didn't think I could get to 400. I thought I had reached about 380 because I had gotten a 365 in the past. But when I heard 401, I thought, 'That can actually be done?' I didn't think it was possible," he said.

What makes this feat even more impressive is that just 18 months before the test, he had been 100 pounds heavier.

### A PERSONAL BATTLE

Zuniga had battled weight problems on and off since middle school, but it was not until one day about two years ago that he decided: This is it! He not only was battling his weight but also had diminished self-confidence, and his mental health was being taxed.

**AFTER GETTING IN SHAPE, "I JUST HAD SO MUCH MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE."**

the road less traveled and ate a salad — the first step to what would prove to be a life-changing maneuver. He started off walking, and within a few months he was running three miles a day. Before the test, he was running four miles a day, six days a week; doing 100 push-ups a day; and lifting

"I was depressed, and personal problems led me to indulge in beer drinking, fast-food eating and no exercising," he said. "I was tired of feeling helpless and of wearing a size 42 in my pants. I was tired of being tired. I really needed to turn a corner."

The change came on a Friday. He recalls that the weekend was approaching, a time when people typically think about "treating themselves." However, he took

weights for at least an hour a day.

"It's all about repetition," he said. "It's not about lifting really heavy weights for short periods of time. It's about lifting lighter weights for longer periods of time. Endurance and stamina is the key."

He also kept a journal and recorded what he could do better. He read motivating stories and watched YouTube videos about people who had overcome weight problems. In a word, he was driven.

"Arnold Schwarzenegger is a bit of a personal hero," he said of the former bodybuilding champ, movie action hero and governor of California. On the day of the test, Zuniga was confident that he would pass, but had no idea of what his mind and body were truly capable of achieving.

### PUT TO THE TEST

According to Zuniga, First Sergeant Jack Toney said he had never even heard of anyone coming close to a score like Zuniga's 401 in his 24 years of service. Zuniga completed 112 push-ups and 117 sit-ups and completed the two-mile run in 10:07. An unofficial extended scale is used once a Soldier passes the total event requirement for a perfect score. He was awarded one additional point for each push-up and sit-up, and six seconds off his time for the run.

### MADE TO MOTIVATE

Today, Zuniga wants to motivate others. He says that his motivation came from the attention he was getting from friends and family.

"Plus, I liked the way my new, loose pants felt; and I enjoyed having more energy to go out dancing. And I just had so much more self-confidence," he said.

Zuniga's future goals include helping others who are in need. "I want to be there for people who want to give up because I know what it feels like," he said.

He is awaiting security clearance to work for KBR (formerly Kellogg Brown & Root) — an American company with military contracts in Iraq — to work as a billeting technician. He has a one-year contract with an option to renew. He will be managing a building of about 25 apartments and working to ensure new recruits are comfortable and well accommodated.

Before what he refers to as a "life-changing event," Zuniga was in college, studying to be a radiologist, but now his career focus is fitness. He wants to help his fellow Soldiers get into better shape. He already has been doing it on the side, and now he wants to do it full time.

"This is who I am," Zuniga said. "I like watching people change and putting smiles on their faces. I want to be that 'go-to guy.'" **GX**

## The Army Physical Fitness Test

The three-pronged test consists of sit-ups, push-ups and running. Soldiers do as many sit-ups as they can in two minutes, then as many push-ups as they can in two minutes, and then run a timed two miles.

To achieve a perfect score of 300, a Soldier in the 27-31 age range must achieve the following:

- Sit-ups:** 83 (100 points)
- Push-ups:** 77 (100 points)
- Running:** 2 miles in 13 minutes (100 points)

### Zuniga achieved:

- Sit-ups:** 117 (134 points)
- Push-ups:** 112 (135 points)
- Running:** 2 miles in 10 minutes and 7 seconds (132 points)



## Why is it important for Soldiers to stay in shape?

Zuniga says Soldiers need to stay in shape because they never know when they will be called in for duty. Physical fitness is the number one thing you need when you deploy. "For instance, take a situation like Katrina," he said. "I remember working with a couple of guys when we were at Jackson's barracks, and they couldn't swim to the headquarters. Some guys had to stay behind. That's what I am talking about. You always have to be ready for the unexpected."

## Shape-up Advice

When asked what advice he would share with people who want to get in shape, he said, "Never give up; just keep going. Nothing is ever handed to you; you have to earn it. Start off slow, even it's only two or three push-ups at a time. Then try to do three more. Set goals. Start walking. Walk for about 20 minutes with an iPod. You have to have an iPod. Music motivates!" **In fact, Zuniga attributes about 45 percent of his motivation to music** — primarily hip-hop, some rhythm and blues and a little rock 'n' roll. His favorite artist is T.I.

# BUILT FOR BATTLE

## MSG John Nieves Discusses His Training

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor // Photos Courtesy of the Alaska National Guard



HAVE YOU EVER IMAGINED PULLING a 4-ton Humvee by yourself? Pretty difficult, right? Now imagine pulling a Humvee 100 feet in less than 90 seconds while sitting down. Impossible? Not for Master Sergeant John Nieves, who had to perform that task alongside many others in the Alaska Strongman of the North competition in November. Nieves, Recruiting and Retention Command, Alaska Army National Guard, competed against eight civilians at the Alaska Strongman. The only Soldier in the entire competition, Nieves proudly wore his ACUs and combat boots. This was Nieves' first Strongman competition, and he took second place. Nieves is already training for the next competition, where he hopes to win first place and receive the coveted pro card.

### Q&A

**GX:** Why did you become interested in competing?

**JN:** On base, they would have an annual, invitational power lifting competition. [It tested] how much you could dead lift and bench press. I barely won my first one in 2000, but after that, I would win by landslides. In 2009, I heard about the Strongman, and how these are some of the toughest guys in Alaska. It was just on a whim, but I thought I would give it a shot. My friends guessed that I would come in fifth or sixth place because it was my first time. But I came in second place. It was actually kind of humbling because I came in second place for the first time in 10 years. But right now I am already preparing for the next [Strongman competition]. It's going to be this summer.

**GX:** Do you think the Guard helped prepare you for the competition?

**JN:** Yes. For some of the civilian competitors,

### The Alaska Strongman Events

#### 18-inch dead lift

A competitor lifts as much weight as he can from the ground to his chest.

#### Dumbbell Clean Press

A competitor lifts a 120-pound dumbbell for as many repetitions as he can in 60 seconds.

#### Truck Pull

A competitor demonstrates how fast he can pull a Humvee 100 feet while sitting down.

#### Front Hold

A competitor holds a 45-pound Olympic plate straight out above his chin for as long as possible.

#### Farmer's Walk

A competitor holds 250-pound dumbbells in each hand, walks 100 feet, then turns around and walks back in the fastest time possible.

## Preparation for the Competition

MSG John Nieves increased his workout regimen from **three to five days a week** to **six to 6½ days a week**. The first six days, Nieves trained **two hours a day**. On the seventh day, he swam. He combined weight lifting with cardio for his workouts. For instance, he would carry 100-pound dumbbells around the gym for 45 seconds and then increase the weight to 150 pounds and all the way up to 500 pounds. Then to break up the weight lifting, Nieves would do push-ups with someone sitting on his back.

### Biggest Challenge?

Food intake. To prepare for the competition, Nieves increased his calorie intake from 4,000–5,000 to 7,000–8,000 a day. He would eat breakfast, lunch and three dinners. His diet mainly consisted of chicken, asparagus and white rice. After about a month and a half, Nieves' weight jumped from 242 pounds to 272 pounds.

their mentality is "If I do good, I do good." I am just not used to that. For me, it's "I am going to win." The Soldier mentality takes over. If you are going to do it, you want to be number one. Next time, when you see an article come through, I am going to be in first place, not second.

**GX:** Did people treat you differently since you were a Soldier?

**JN:** I got treated like a celebrity at the event. In Anchorage, even though it's a town of 300,000 people, I had people shaking my hand and I didn't know who they were. I now have free memberships to three gyms. It was because I am a Soldier. Not all the guys got that.

**GX:** Why was it important to wear your ACUs in the competition?

**JN:** All the competitors were civilians. I wanted them to know that a Soldier was going to be in the competition. So I wore my ACUs and desert combat boots. I have deployed before, and I wanted to

symbolize that I was representing all the Soldiers in the military. It is mostly a civilian competition because most people in the military aren't allowed to weigh almost 300 pounds. We have daily jobs that we have to do all the time, and we don't have the same time as civilians do to prepare for competitions like this. I really wanted to show off that I was a Soldier.

**GX:** What are some of your goals for the future?

**JN:** Right now, it's to get my pro card. I want to win in the summer and get invited to Las Vegas to compete. There are probably about 30 or 40 competitors there.

**GX:** Do you have any plans beyond that?

**JN:** If I could get invited to go down there, that would be an accomplishment. I felt like I was a big guy for a Soldier, but I am not a big man for a Strongman competition. Those guys are big. **GX**



THE WORD **HOWITZER** CAN BE TRACED DIRECTLY BACK TO THE CATAPULT.

OGIVE WITH SELF REGISTRATION ASSEMBLY

# HIGHLY M119 A1 Howitzer EXPLOSIVE

By SGT Tom Hoy

**O**n battlefields all over the world, dating as far back as the 17th century, the foot Soldier on the frontline has longed for the sound of an artillery round headed toward the enemy. Artillery lifts his spirits because he knows it is decreasing the enemy's ability to do him and his buddies harm. Whether the incoming rounds are "softening up" a position that Soldier is about to enter or providing a "wall of hot steel" covering his movements, that Soldier knows who is the king of battle.

The key is to bring your big guns to bear on the enemy before he gets the chance to return the favor. Thankfully, Uncle Sam has a vast selection of tools in his toolbox to make sure we have the upper hand. From a mortar tube strapped to a Soldier's back to artillery pieces that require trains to move them, our arsenal is vast.

The maneuverability of an artillery piece is usually proportionate to the range at which it is effective. The smaller and lighter pieces take less time to move and can usually start putting rounds downrange before the bigger, more cumbersome ones.

The trade-off is that those light and maneuverable cannons don't have the range of their bigger brothers, so there is a much sought-after balance of maneuverability and effective range. And that brings us to the subject of this

writing: the M119 A1 howitzer, affectionately known by some users as the "one one niner." The M119 A1 is also sometimes referred to as the "105 howitzer" because of the 105-millimeter inside diameter of the cannon itself.

The word *howitzer* is originated from the Czech word *haufnice*, which can be traced directly to what we now know as a catapult. The original catapults were drawn by either horses or humans to and from the battlefield, and they launched their projectiles as far as a few hundred yards if the conditions were just right. The M119 A1 is most often deployed by one Humvee and can place accurate fire up to 12 miles away. How's that for some upgrades?

The M119 A1 weighs in at just over 4,000 pounds and is capable of dropping in on a parachute, slung under a variety of helicopters or towed behind a vehicle. Manned by a crew of seven Soldiers, the M119 A1 is listed as being capable of six rounds per minute, but some gun crews claim that number is low. Because of heat dissipation, the maximum recommended sustained fire is about three rounds per minute.

The M119 A1 fires many types of projectiles. H.E., or high explosive, rounds are the most common, but the M119 A1 also can turn night into day with illumination rounds. These rounds can be "fused," or set to deploy, at varying heights and/or ranges.

The variety of fuses that can be inserted into the nose of the projectile can be set to detonate at impact, after the impact or even at certain elevations. For safety, the fuses do not arm the projectile until it leaves the barrel. The centrifugal force of the round spinning down the rifled tube is the only thing that can activate the fuse.

The weapon itself is an amazingly intricate assembly of aluminum and forged and stainless steel, yet simple enough that it requires no electricity or fuel to operate.

Thanks to an ingenious orchestra of springs, levers and gearing, a Soldier can move the 1,500-pound barrel by simply turning the elevation mechanism with his wrist. This can be done in such slight amounts that the projectile's point of impact can be altered by several feet from more than 12 miles away. Many M119 A1 crews have shown the ability to consistently land rounds directly on a hard target, which is referred to as "putting steel on steel."

A battery of M119 A1s, whether dropped from the air or pulled in over rough terrain, can be set up and start supporting the mission within a half-hour. Wherever they land, draw a 24-mile circle around them and pick a spot inside it. If you want it lit up in the dark, blown up with high explosive or cooked with white phosphorus, the M119 A1 is ready to deliver. Now that's peace of mind to the Soldier with a rifle and a rucksack. **GX**



### FAST FACTS

LENGTH  
20.75 ft

WEIGHT  
4,270 lbs

RANGE  
8.7–12.1 miles

CREW  
7

SUSTAINED RATE OF FIRE  
3 rds/min.

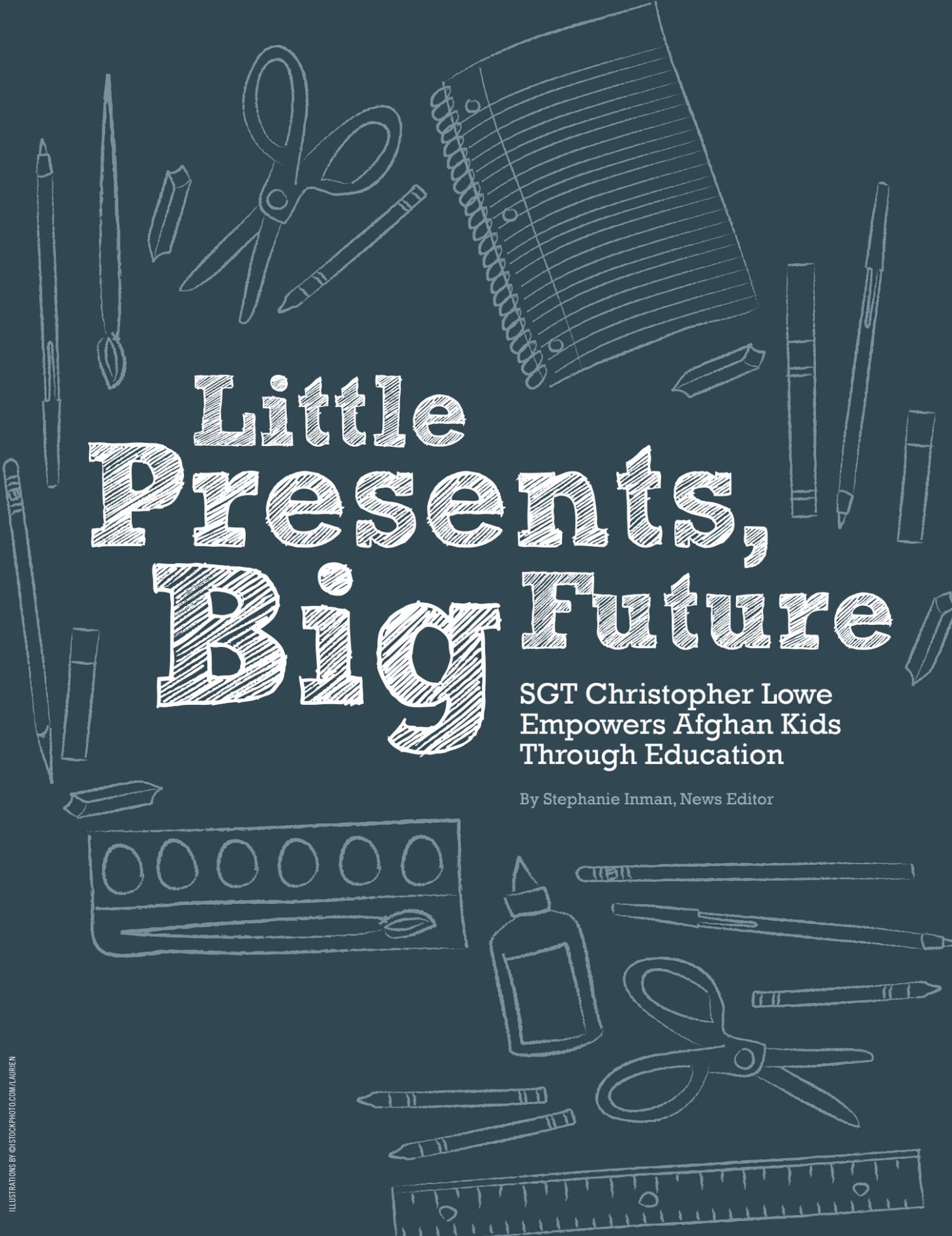
ENTERED SERVICE  
1989

**MISSION**  
To provide destructive, suppressive and protective fire-power in support of combined arms operations.



**AMMUNITION**  
The M119 A1/A2 fires all standard NATO 105 mm artillery ammunition, including the M1 High Explosive, M314 Illuminating, M60/M60A2 White Phosphorous (smoke). In addition, it fires the M913 and M760 extended range ammunitions.

SEE IT IN ACTION: [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/highlyexplosive](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/highlyexplosive)



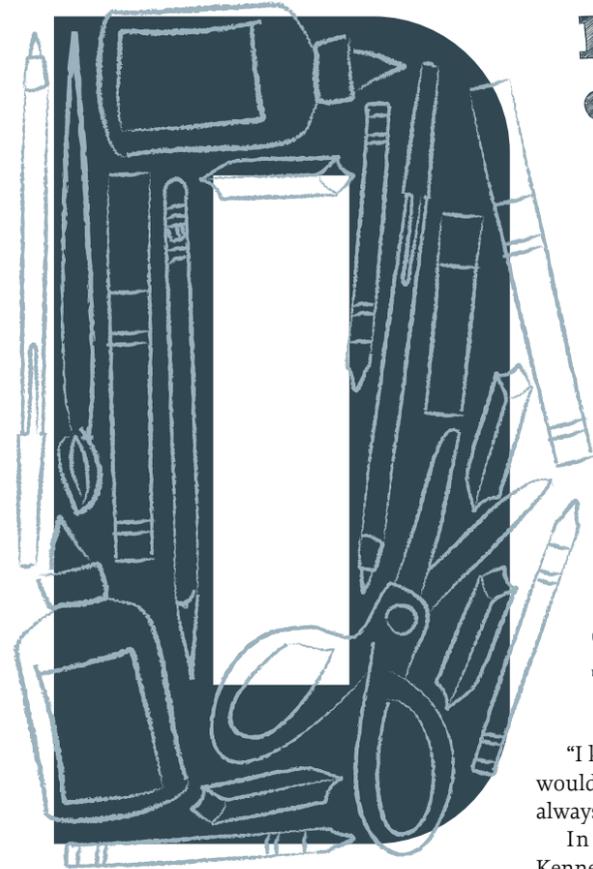
# Little Presents, Big Future

SGT Christopher Lowe  
Empowers Afghan Kids  
Through Education

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor

ADAM LIVINGSTON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/LAUREN



**Deep in the mountains of Afghanistan, a group of children swarmed around an armored Humvee full of U.S. Soldiers. Sergeant Christopher “Kit” Lowe of the 108th Cavalry Regiment sat in the turret. He had never experienced a scene like this before.**

“I knew from the time he was 12 what he would do,” said his mother, Sandi Lowe. “He always wanted to be a Soldier.”

In March 2009, while in college at Kennesaw State University, Lowe learned of his upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. He’d been hoping for this moment. “You want to get in the game,” said Lowe, comparing his anticipation of deployment to a baseball player sitting on the bench.

Though he’d known the Afghans were struggling, he was shocked when he saw it firsthand. “Their lives are primitive,” he shared. “It’s equivalent to our Depression [that began in the 1920s].”

Lowe soon learned the sector that suffers the most in Afghanistan is the children. Schools were located in cramped basements, where kids sat on concrete floors, and where temperatures could rise above 100 degrees or drop below freezing. Only the children of very wealthy parents could afford pens and paper—the rest had to remember the lectures.

But nothing could hinder the children’s desire to learn—not even the Taliban, who forbade them to attend school and tried to stop them with violent measures. The children were willing to risk their lives for an education.

Lowe’s compassion for the children and admiration of their courage would be stepping-stones to his future.

**ROOFTOP TERROR**

On August 7, 2009—about five months into his deployment—Lowe and his unit were on patrol in Kabul. The sun blazed down, and sweat poured off their faces. They were ordered to take a small, white house. Suddenly, gunfire from the surrounding mountains exploded around the Soldiers.

Lowe and some of the other Soldiers ran into the house for protection. Some headed for the roof. Lowe and others searched the premises. After a few moments, Lowe heard a scream from the roof, and he raced there to see what had happened. Captain Matt Freeman, a Marine and a friend of Lowe’s, had been shot and killed by a sniper. The unit’s medic was standing nearby, paralyzed with shock, which made him an easy target for the sniper.

As Lowe grabbed the medic and pulled him to safety, a bullet hit Lowe’s right leg. He was rescued by the Afghan National Army and medevaced to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He would later receive the Bronze Star with “V” device, three Purple Hearts and a long list of other honors for his heroism that day.

After nine months of surgeries to repair Lowe’s leg, he learned he would need to wear a brace for life.

Though it’s easy to become discouraged during long-term rehabilitation treatment, Lowe never gave up trying at Walter Reed. If anything, his time there provided him with more fuel to push forward. His attitude was



SGT Kit Lowe was awarded the Purple Heart for his gunshot wound in Afghanistan, which he then donated to his high school, Benedictine Military Academy.

reflected in a note he’d hung on his door, a message to visitors: “If you came here to feel sorry for me, just leave, because I will not quit.”

The hardest part about rehab for Lowe was that he wasn’t overseas with his unit. He valued loyalty greatly and hated that his comrades were fighting without him. But an opportunity soon arose that allowed him to help many of those closest to his heart—his fellow Soldiers overseas and the Afghan children.

**TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS**

While in Afghanistan, Lowe had befriended Air Force officer Senior Master Sergeant Rex Temple. Having had his own life-changing experiences with the Afghan children, Temple had been moved to action. He’d enlisted the help of his wife, Liisa Temple, a media professor at the University of South Florida.

Now, at Walter Reed, Lowe received a phone call from Liisa, who wanted to discuss a non-profit organization that she and her husband had created to benefit Afghan children. The outfit was called School Supplies for Afghan Children. With Rex overseas, and Liisa being a civilian, the organization needed a military member to act as a spokesman. The Temples felt Kit was the perfect person. He had witnessed firsthand the children’s struggles.

**“If you came here to feel sorry for me, just leave, because I will not quit.”**

—SGT Kit Lowe, in a note on his hospital room door



**ONE FOR THE BOOKS**

Once Lowe got the word out about the organization, people from across the country began sending items including notebooks, pens, pencils and paper.

Lowe gave 100 percent to his role in the organization. He flew around the country, introducing it to influential people such as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Lowe found it easy to go from swapping Basic Combat Training stories with privates to discussing issues with generals.

“This is something that doesn’t fall along political lines,” Lowe said. “It’s for the kids. The best way to defeat terrorism is to educate the people so that they have a wider view of the world, as opposed to the view



**“The best way to defeat terrorism is to educate the people so that they have a wider view of the world, as opposed to the view that’s offered to them by the Taliban.”**

— SGT Kit Lowe

that’s offered to them by the Taliban.”

At one event, in Washington, DC, Lowe met Greg Mortenson, author of best-selling book *Three Cups of Tea*, and co-founder of his own nonprofit organization. Mortenson gave Lowe one great word of advice: perseverance. “This is a difficult project to undertake, and it’s going to take time and lot of patience,” Mortenson told Lowe. “You just have to keep pushing through.”

“There are some days where you are just like, forget this,” admitted Lowe. “Like—I’m too young, or I have better things to do. Then you realize that’s the wrong attitude. It was nice to talk to [Mortenson], who was in the exact same situation.”

During the event in DC, Lowe also met Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The meeting was unplanned—Lowe saw Dr. Biden sitting a few rows ahead of him, and passed her a note before security could stop him.

“I thought the Secret Service was going to kill me,” he laughed.

That was Lowe’s spirit about the project. He took chances and went on adventures. Enthusiasm propelled him, and his passion was contagious. People who heard him speak were inspired to action. And no matter what was needed of him, from speaking at high schools to loading boxes in a van to shaking hands with generals, he did it.

#### SUPPLY OVERDRIVE

He even enlisted his hometown alma mater, Benedictine Military Academy in Savannah, GA, to host the first supply drive. A Catholic military high school, Benedictine had helped form Lowe’s character by instilling discipline, respect and sacrifice. The supply drive would be a way for Lowe to give back.

The event attracted local newspapers and TV stations, and kicked off with a ceremony in which Lowe donated one of his Purple Heart medals to the school. He handed the medal to principal Deborah Antosca onstage in the auditorium, and the audience erupted in cheers.

Today, along with attending Georgia Southern University, and coaching and playing lacrosse, Lowe continues to devote his time and energy to School Supplies for Afghan Children. He also is working on a plan to return to Afghanistan in the summer of 2011 to build or refurbish a school.

“I would like to stock it up with school supplies collected in the U.S., and take pictures to show [American] kids that, even at a young age, they are helping win the War on Terror,” Lowe explained. “A lot of kids, especially the younger ones, were born post-9/11, so they have grown up [knowing about] bad guys overseas. This is a tangible way for them to help.” **GX**



▶ **Left:** Kit enjoys spending time with his mentor and friend Senior Master Sgt. Rex Temple, who has provided him with inspiration to continue serving in the Guard. ▶ **Middle:** Kit is quick to tell you that although he wears the cavalryman’s Stetson hat, he is an artilleryman at heart. ▶ **Right:** While visiting his alma mater, Benedictine Military Academy, Kit had the distinct honor of sharing with young cadets his experiences as a Soldier in Afghanistan.

## The Boy Who Started It All

In Alisaya Valley, on his 2009 deployment to Afghanistan, Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Rex Temple encountered an 8-year-old Afghan boy wearing ragged clothes. The boy walked right up to Temple and blurted out, “Some people in my village support the Americans, but most of them support the Taliban out of fear.”

Temple was unsure of how to respond to such a blunt statement. So he replied, “I understand.”

Those words haunted Temple after he left the boy’s village. He wanted to empower the boy and his young Afghan friends against the Taliban, but was unsure of how.

Then he had an idea. He called his wife, Liisa, back home in Tampa, FL, and told her the story. He asked her to send a box of school supplies so Temple could pass them on to the children. Temple also shared the story on his blog at [AfghanistanMyLastTour.com](http://AfghanistanMyLastTour.com). Readers posted comments, asking how they could help. Pretty soon, people across the country were sponsoring drives to collect supplies. What began as one man trying to help a little boy turned into a powerful movement.



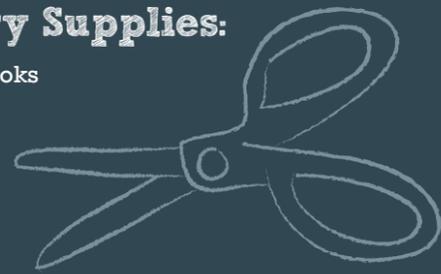
## Ways to Donate

You can help by recruiting a church, school, corporation or private organization to conduct their own school-supply drive. If interested, please write to: [trexinafghanistan@gmail.com](mailto:trexinafghanistan@gmail.com).

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS:** Make checks payable to The Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc. Include a note saying: “Afghan School Supplies Fund.” Mail checks to The Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, P.O. Box 2877, Tampa, FL 33602. Or donate online at [Foundation.hklaw.com/contributions/index.asp](http://Foundation.hklaw.com/contributions/index.asp).

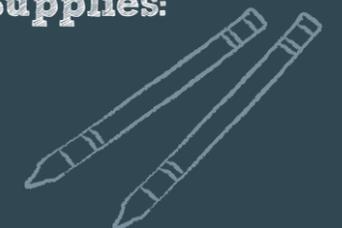
### Primary Supplies:

spiral notebooks  
pencils  
pens  
whiteboards  
markers  
erasers  
chalk



### Secondary Supplies:

coloring books  
crayons  
metric rulers  
pencil sharpeners  
children’s scissors  
construction paper



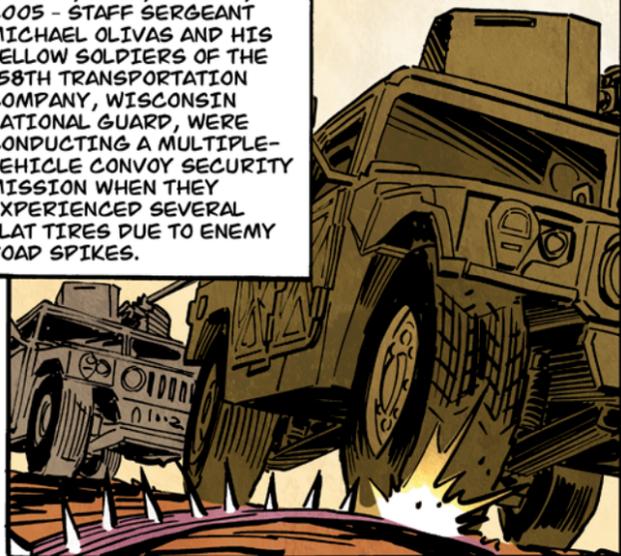
### SUPPLY DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:

**Tampa, FL:** SS American Victory Mariner’s Memorial and Museum ship, located behind the Florida Aquarium at Channelside. [Facebook.com/pages/Afghanistan-My-Last-Tour/195225755292](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Afghanistan-My-Last-Tour/195225755292)

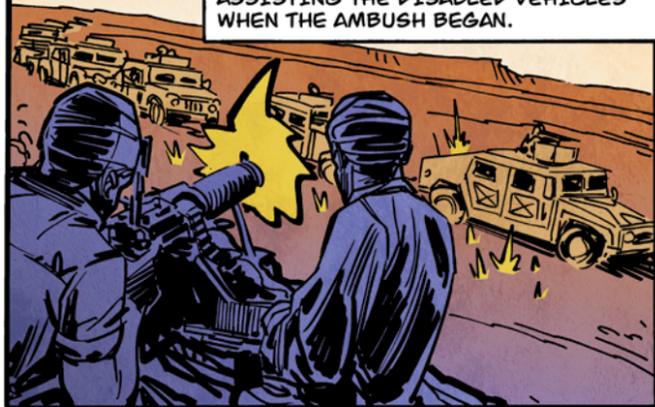
**Savannah, GA:** Colonial Quilts, 11710 Largo Drive. For more information, visit [ColonialQuilts.us/afghan.html](http://ColonialQuilts.us/afghan.html).

# DEVIL'S ALLEY!

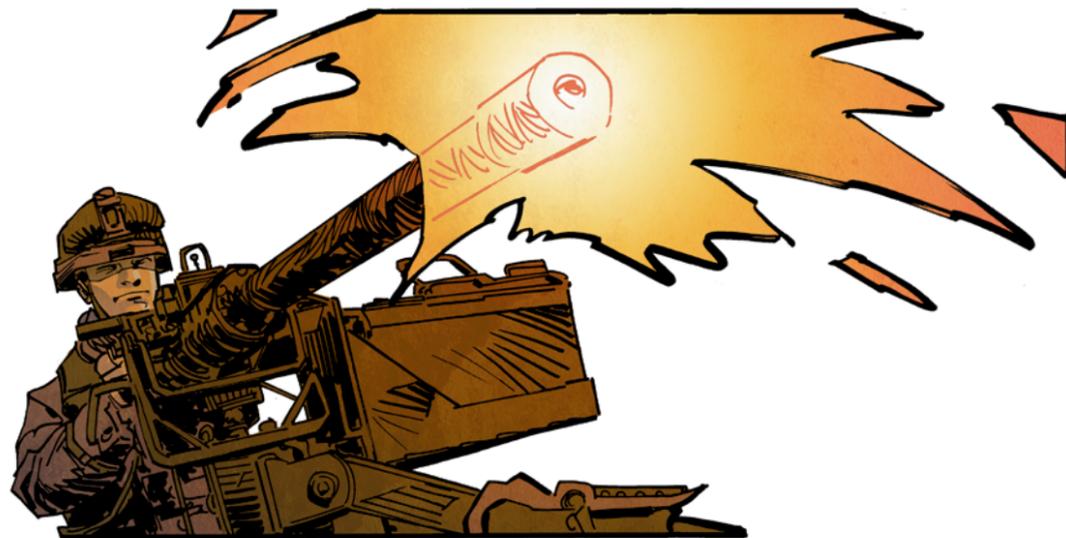
SAFWAN, IRAQ, JAN. 30, 2005 - STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL OLIVAS AND HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS OF THE 1158TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD, WERE CONDUCTING A MULTIPLE-VEHICLE CONVOY SECURITY MISSION WHEN THEY EXPERIENCED SEVERAL FLAT TIRES DUE TO ENEMY ROAD SPIKES.



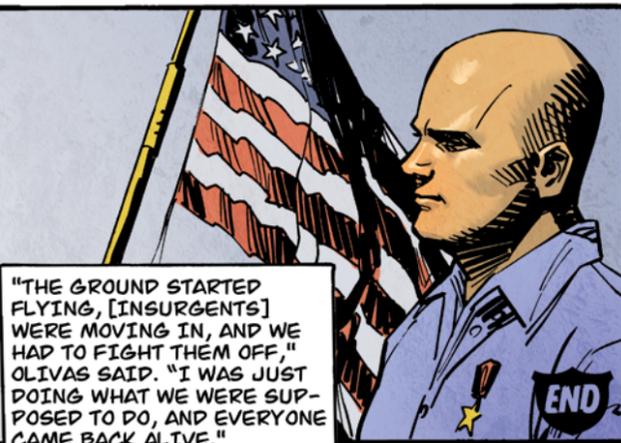
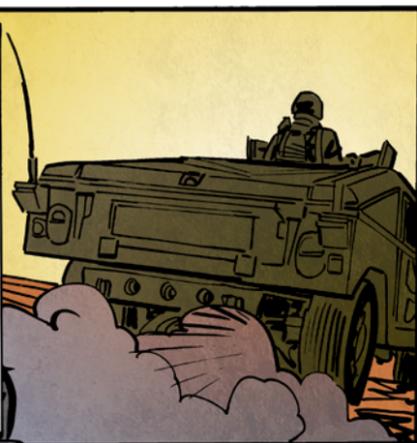
INSURGENTS WITH HEAVY MACHINE-GUN FIRE AND ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADES AMBUSHED THE CONVOY. OLIVAS FOUND HIMSELF ALONE IN THE HUMVEE SINCE HIS CREWMEMBERS, STAFF SERGEANT MIKE BENNETT AND SPECIALIST AARON INGHAM, WERE OUTSIDE THE GUN TRUCK, ASSISTING THE DISABLED VEHICLES WHEN THE AMBUSH BEGAN.



OLIVAS OVERCAME MALFUNCTIONS IN THE ROTATING TURRET AND WITH HIS M2 .50 CAL MACHINE GUN ENGAGED THE ENEMY, WHICH WAS ESTIMATED TO BE AS CLOSE AS 50 METERS FROM THE CONVOY.



OLIVAS CONTINUED TO LAY DOWN SUPPRESSIVE FIRE UNTIL THE ENEMY WAS ELIMINATED, ALLOWING OLIVAS' UNIT TO REGROUP AND EVACUATE THE AREA. STAFF SERGEANT OLIVAS WAS AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR WITH VALOR FOR HIS ACTIONS DURING THE AMBUSH ON SEPT. 14, 2010.



"THE GROUND STARTED FLYING, [INSURGENTS] WERE MOVING IN, AND WE HAD TO FIGHT THEM OFF," OLIVAS SAID. "I WAS JUST DOING WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO DO, AND EVERYONE CAME BACK ALIVE."



## NATIONAL GUARD

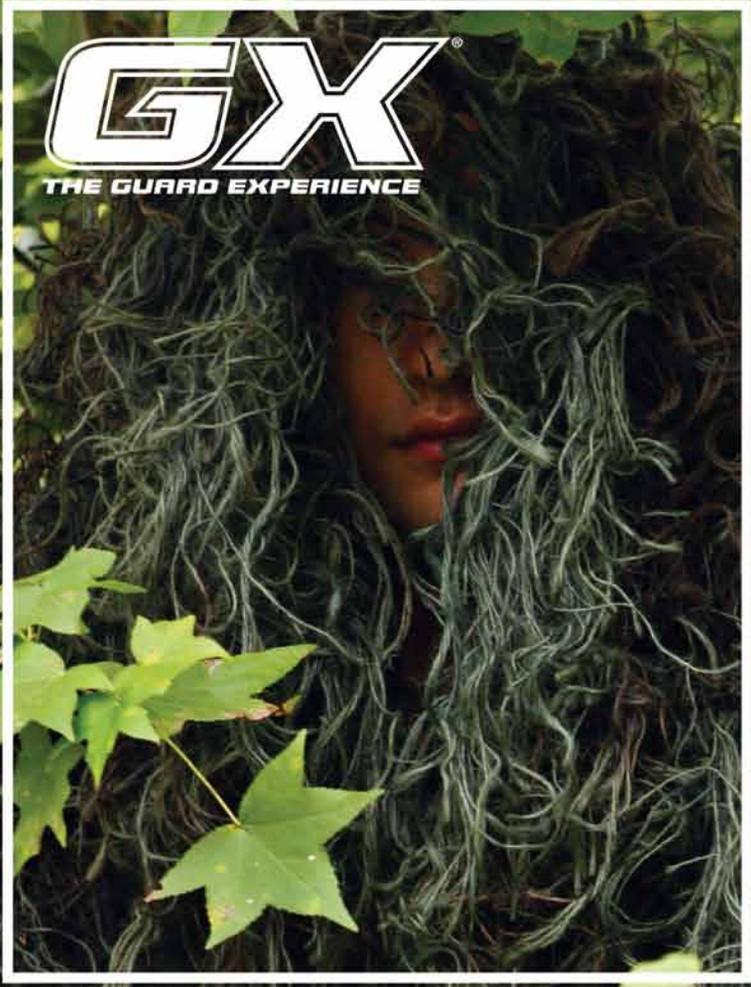
# THE GREEN BERETS

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