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THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

>> GEAR

THE EYE OF THE STRYKERS

>> GX HERO

FOLLOWING THE WARRIOR SPIRIT

ROCKIE LYNNE HONORS THE TROOPS P. 102

>> SPORTS

DALE JR. FLEXES MUSCLE AT TALLADEGA

BEYOND BORDERS

BUILDING ALLIANCES THROUGH THE GUARD'S STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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>> SSG Stephanie McCurry, of the Illinois Army National Guard, is a three-time Veteran of the State Partnership Program.

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Letter From Leadership



Celebrating the National Guard

Dear Patriots,

Military, national, state and local leaders often ask me, “What makes the National Guard so special?”

Usually they ask the question in the context of our superior recruiting and retention rates, percentages of Soldiers and Airmen who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, response to domestic emergencies or one of our other important missions.

My response always focuses on our families. Truly, our Guard family is what makes the National Guard so special. This family is made up of Soldiers, Airmen, their families and friends, employers and all of the people who support us. Every “spoke” in our Guard family wheel plays a vital role in keeping this special domestic and international asset rolling.

One of the “spokes” I’m most appreciative of is the support of our Family Readiness Groups (FRGs), whose dedication to our National Guard family continues to promote the freedom we all enjoy today. Truly, FRGs working in concert with Soldiers, unit commanders, chaplain teams, retired Guard members, extended Guard families, community leaders and sponsors are making a tremendous difference.

Interestingly, the public is taking notice. Did you know that 70 percent of the Guard’s new recruits are joining our Guard family with no prior service experience? This number has changed drastically since the terrorist attacks on 9/11, when 70 percent of our new recruits were prior service.

Here’s another interesting fact: The 2008 fiscal year ended with the Army National Guard achieving 103 percent of its recruitment goal. The Air Guard finished the year achieving 126 percent of its goal, the highest percentage of any military component! Could these achievements have happened during wartime without the complete support of our Guard family? I don’t think so.

Since our National Guard’s first muster in 1636, we have remained the backbone of our nation’s defense because Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen place their love of freedom, their families, friends and community above their own personal needs, wants and desires. There is a sacrifice reminiscent of George Washington, the father of our country, who once wrote, “When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen.”

Like those of us who serve today, Washington had a wife, family, neighbors and others who felt what he did was important and supported him throughout his military career. Even through the darkest days of America’s war for independence, when many considered his Army doomed at Valley Forge, Washington and his men still believed freedom would defeat oppression, and it did!

We have faced similar times in Iraq, but freedom’s light is shining brightly in this formerly oppressed nation. Some say we can’t do the same in some parts of Afghanistan, but I believe as long as our National Guard Soldiers are there spreading freedom’s hope, the country can’t help but experience the same progress that has been realized in Iraq.

We are special because of our Guard family. Thank you families and friends, employers and all of you who support our Soldiers and Airmen as they continue to faithfully serve throughout our nation and overseas.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "St Stanhope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*MG Stanhope S. Spears,
The Adjutant General of the South Carolina National Guard*



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For more info, contact: CH (CPT) Paul Douglas (703-282-7106, paul.n.douglas@us.army.mil) or 2LT Kanika Haynes (703-607-5209, kanika.haynes@us.army.mil).

Who Do We Need?

(All Positions are Title 10 – AGR)

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To find out more about the exciting opportunities available with the Patriot Academy, log into GKO and then click on “National Guard Jobs”.

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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“We knew going in that the Stryker Brigade was going to be deploying. That’s why we signed up as combat engineers.”

>> PFC Michael Deal Sr., currently deployed to Iraq with his two sons

Freeport, PA, has long been the home of hard-core patriots. As part of the Depreciation Lands, it was given to Revolutionary War Veterans as compensation for their service and sacrifice.

Today, heroes still call Freeport home. And just as fiercely stand to defend it.

I’m a big fan of the Pennsylvania Guard’s quarterly mag, *Pennsylvania Guardians*. Just the other day, I found a story in there by SGT Douglas Roles about the Deals—a Freeport family deployed together, taking the fight to the enemy.

1LT Michael Deal Jr. was the first to step forward, signing up while still in high school. Michael Jr. took to heart the tragedies of 9/11 and joined the exceptional heroes who stood for all of us, declaring “never again.”

As his dad, Michael Sr., and brother, Johnathan, saw Michael Jr. reap the benefits of service, they reevaluated their own paths.

“I wanted a purpose-driven life,” Michael Sr. told *Guardians*. So, he left corporate life and signed up in 2007.

Johnathan was a student at Penn State and enlisted after one year, also in 2007. He wanted to deploy with his family.

All three are making a difference for the free world, deep in the sandbox, far from any comfort zones.

The Deal family enlistment makes a heck of a statement to the nation. It puts a proud face on the tireless dedication of our Soldiers in combat. They honor their country and community.

The Guard is packed with stories similar to this, traditions of service stemming back to the foundation of our nation. We at GX salute these heroes, their families and their communities.

Got a patriotic town? Tell me about it. Email me at Keith@GXonline.com. Send some pictures, too! You could be published in GX.

And for anyone looking for great footage of Pennsylvania heroes and many other high-speed Soldiers from across the states, keep an eye on the National Guard’s YouTube page: YouTube.com/nationalguard.



THE DEALS (L-R) 1LT Michael Deal Jr., PFC Michael Deal Sr. and PFC Johnathan Deal serve together in Iraq.

SGT DOUGLAS ROLES



ON THE COVER
SSG Stephanie McCurry of the Illinois Army National Guard has trained with Polish Soldiers in the State Partnership Program on three separate occasions.

PHOTO BY TERRY FARMER

Thanks!

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

Mailbag



HERE IS A PICTURE OF
CW2 DAVID A. PLOOG OF
SHELBYVILLE, IN, TAKING
CARE OF BUSINESS IN IRAQ
NIGHT-N-DAY!

LOVE,

-DAD, KATRINE, RYAN,
TUG, APRIL, MEADOW AND
GRAM!



Here is a picture from OBLC at Fort Sam Houston, TX. Pictured (L-R) is LT Weintraub, LT Soprey and LT White. This picture was taken at Officers Basic Leadership Course in April 2009. We were part of the Alpha Co. 187. We were practicing convoy ops. And trying to stay out of the sun whenever we could!

I read GX to hear about other Soldiers and how they are doing.

—LT Vijay Soprey

Dear GX,

I have been reading GX magazine for a while now. I am impressed with the style and grace used to support our troops. Bravo!

—Debby Polozeck

Correction: In GX6.1, the Recon photo picturing sniper training and titled “Teamwork” on pages 10–11, was taken by SGT Kenny Hatten, Camp Shelby Public Affairs, not First Army Public Affairs.

Letters from the Front



225th Engineer Brigade:

Building Lasting Friendships



MORE THAN 140 LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD engineer Soldiers are helping make history in Iraq. We are rebuilding a war-torn country not only with plywood, nails, concrete and steel—but also with heart. As the deadline has come and gone for coalition forces to leave major cities in Iraq, the mission is not over yet. With just a few months to go in our deployment, there's one more project for the 225th Engineer Brigade, Pineville, LA. It is to continue to build partnerships with Iraqi Soldiers to help them successfully take control of their country. So far, it has been a rewarding journey, and along the way, the 225th established deep ties with our Iraqi counterparts. Here are our "Letters from the Front."

>> LTC Patrick Simon

In my first week here in Iraq, I got to go out in the communities near our base camp. What I saw melted my heart because we came across small children in the neighborhoods and they were happy to see us. They were unusually friendly, and I noticed that many of them could pass for any kid in America. Many have blue eyes and fair hair. I was most surprised to see them dressed in a lot of Western clothes like you would see anywhere back home.

I know a lot of Soldiers are living and working in much harsher conditions than my unit. We are blessed to be a part of a much larger overall mission that we pray makes the lives of the Iraqi citizens better than when we arrived.

One day, I would love to come back as a tourist to a thriving and safe country of Iraq. Hopefully this will be a reality in the near future.

>> LTC Curtis Smith, Bossier City, LA

When I first heard I was deploying, I didn't know what to think or to expect. I work in the barrier yard escorting local nationals on Camp Liberty. This is a job I expected to do, but thankfully I have a unique opportunity to interact with Iraqis. On days when we have finished our work, we like to play dominoes—the American way and Iraqi way—card games, soccer, basketball and football (of course, they are much better at soccer than us!).

One of the local nationals, Muhammad, speaks seven languages. We speak daily about our families and the way things used to be under Saddam. He teaches me about their culture, and we talk about America. He particularly enjoys looking at my magazines and talking about American cars and trucks. Our differences melt away when we speak; what we have in common is actually more apparent. I expected the Iraqi people to be very different from myself; but once I got here and spent a little time with them, they became like a second family. I hope when I leave here, I will be able to say that I've done my part to show the Iraqis that we are here to help and we are doing our best. We are all over here for a good reason.

>> SPC Walter Gamill, Lafayette, LA



My family supported my decision to volunteer for our deployment to Iraq. I also have a wonderful girlfriend who is waiting on me back home. Her name is Fallon Tubbs. She wasn't very happy at first, but she also supports me and is always there for me.

In Iraq, I work as a Command Post of The Future (CPOF) operator. I also work with the Blue Force Tracker (BFT) system, a Radio Transmission Operator (RTO), and sometimes I get to fill in as the Battle NCO. I feel that our efforts are positively changing the lives of Iraqis and that I am helping with that effort.

>> **SPC Gary Hammond, Prospect, LA**

We arrived in Baghdad, Iraq, on Feb. 17, thankful to be out of Kuwait finally. Within the same week of our arrival, we were welcomed by a rocket attack impacting just on the other side of the lake, no more than 250 meters away. A sense of reality then set in, and I was able to accept my duties and go on with the mission.

My defining moment of the deployment so far would have to be my first route clearance mission. Seeing the city of Baghdad from the bulletproof glass really made me appreciate what I was doing. A few weeks later, I was selected for a two-week security and escort detail working out of two checkpoints. Working alongside the Iraqi people was an amazing experience that I can't wait to have again; it really changed my outlook on the entire operation. They are good, friendly people—something I did not expect.

I know I never could have made it this far were it not for the support of my family and friends. My parents, Patrick Custis and Kathy Baum, were skeptical about me enlisting, but it was something I felt I had to do, and they have supported me ever since. My grandfather, Tommy Robinette, is a Vietnam Veteran. He is especially proud of me, and I am thankful to have his support. A lot of people say they have the best of friends, but I know I do. My best friend, SPC Gary Hammond, is my battle buddy here. We've helped each other a lot during our time here. A large portion of my friends actually came on this deployment with me. It's not home, but they help.

We all miss home here, as anybody would. Especially considering that a large number of us are no more than 21 years old and the longest we have been away from home is Basic/AIT and hurricane relief. What I miss most would have to be my family and my girlfriend, Brittany Stephenson. But with programs such as Skype and Yahoo IM, they are always there and really know how to keep me going. Right now, I am still learning new things every day; and with six months left, I'm sure I will learn many more. All I'm trying to do now is better myself for my return home.

I hope that the others who will deploy after me, and the ones who have before me, have learned as many life lessons as I have from this experience of a lifetime, proudly serving with the 225 ENG BDE. BRAVOS LEAD THE WAY!

>> **SPC Ryan Custis, Pineville, LA**



This is my first deployment and the first time I am away from home for an extended time. The hardest part was leaving my wife, Lisa, and my two young daughters, Kylie Marie, my newborn baby, and Champain Nicole, 1 1/2 years old. Kylie was just 19 days old when I left. Initially, my wife had mixed feelings about me leaving home and her responsibility for the daily operations of the family. But now, she fully understands my mission here and supports me and my unit. Serving at the brigade level with high-ranking Soldiers has given me an experience like no other. I am proud to serve with a highly motivated unit such as the 225th Engineer Brigade.

>> **SPC Krider McCann**

» TEAM EFFORT

[**Sheik Hammad Village, Iraq**]

Soldiers from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment (Associators), 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard, along with support from the Iraqi Army, conduct a search in a field during a cordon and knock mission, in search of any possible weapons caches, near the town of Sheik Hammad Village, Iraq, April 10.

Photo by SGT Jacob H. Smith







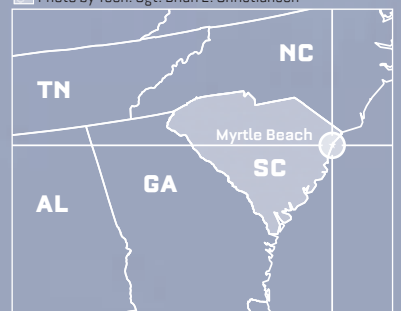


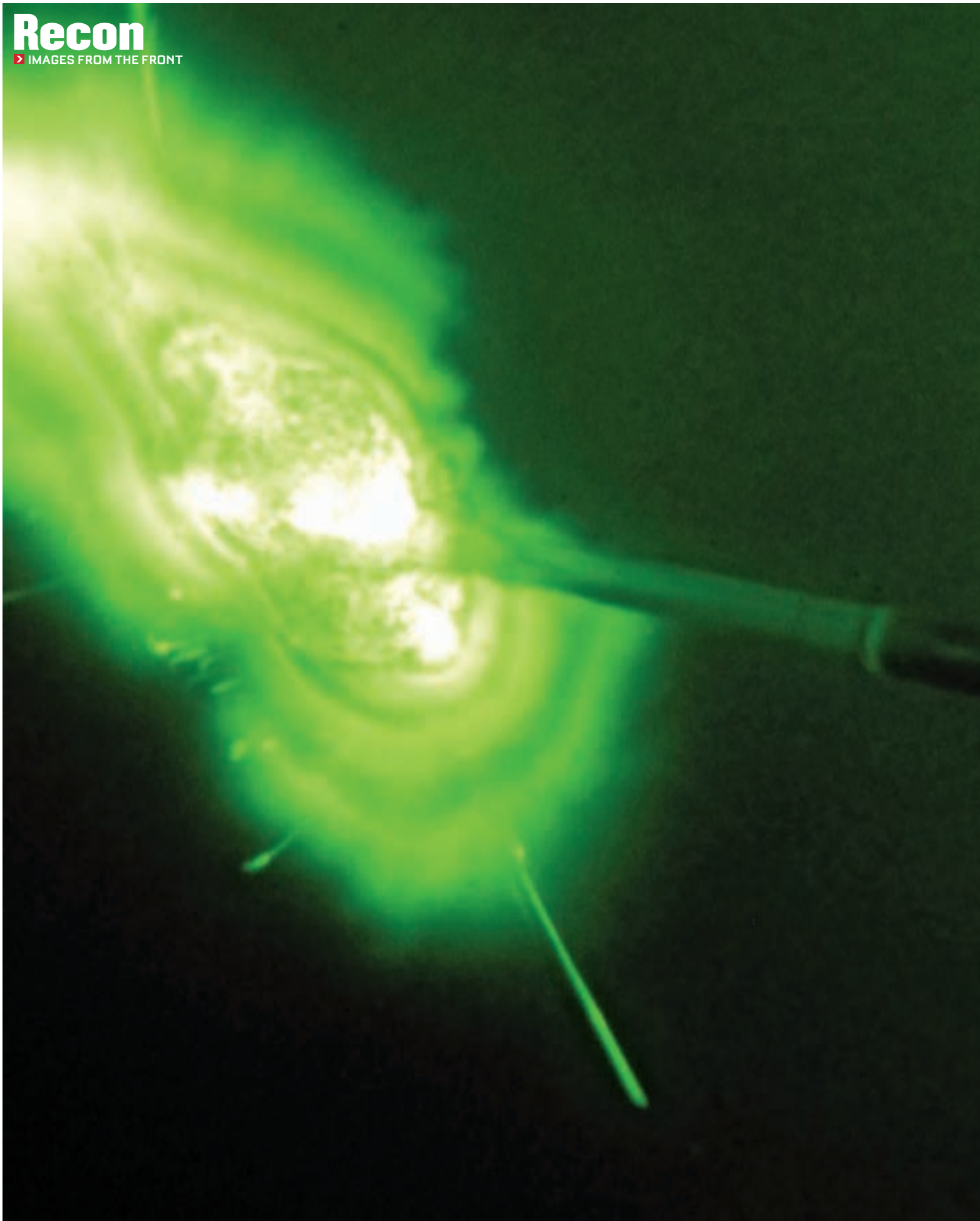
>> **HARDLY A DAY AT THE BEACH**

[**Myrtle Beach, SC**]

A UH-60 Black Hawk drops 600 gallons of water using a Bambi Bucket onto fires near Myrtle Beach, SC. Four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and crews from the North Carolina Army National Guard's C Company, 1st Aviation Assault Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment based in Salisbury, NC, have been deployed to use "Bambi Buckets," which are filled in nearby ponds and lakes to help extinguish the wildfires.

 Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian E. Christiansen





»» ELECTRIFYING

[Baghdad, Iraq]

Soldiers from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion "Arrowhead," 109th Field Artillery Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, fire a 155-mm illumination round from the M777A2 Howitzer at Joint Security Station Istaqal. "Patrols are out there watching the areas we put these illumination rounds in," said SFC Mike "Smoke" Hughes, a native of Danville, PA, and a cannon crewmember platoon sergeant assigned to B Battery.

Photo by SSG Russell Lee Kilia







» AMAZING TRACE

[Fort Hood, TX]

Soldiers with the 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard, light up the night during weapons training at Fort Hood, TX.

Photo by SSG Liesl Marelli, Colorado Army National Guard





FIGHTING THE TIDE
GX spends time with North Dakota Soldiers battling floods.

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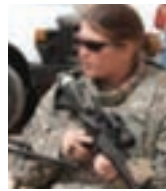
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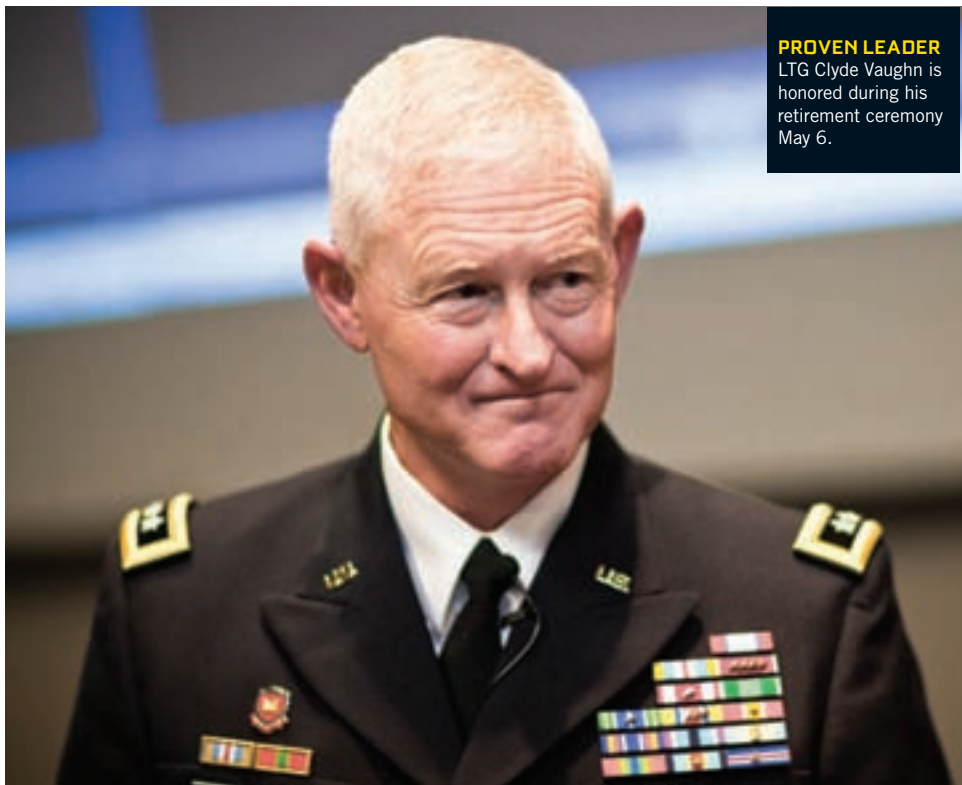


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Colorado Soldiers light up the night sky in Fort Hood, TX.

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“THE ONE (THING) I HAVE THE MOST PRIDE ABOUT, IS THAT WE ARE, AND WE HAVE, ANSWERED THE CALL FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAS COME OUR WAY.

>> LTG CLYDE VAUGHN



PROVEN LEADER
LTG Clyde Vaughn is honored during his retirement ceremony May 6.

Vaughn Retires After 40 Years in Army Guard

By SSG Jon Soucy | ARLINGTON, VA

THE PAST FOUR YEARS have brought many challenges and changes to the Army National Guard.

With record numbers of unit deployments, recruiting challenges and equipment issues, there are many differences between the Army

National Guard (ARNG) of today and that of four years ago.

And the person who implemented many of those changes and led the ARNG through many other challenges retired May 6.

LTG Clyde Vaughn, director of the ARNG, is closing a career that has spanned 40 years. A retirement ceremony was held in his honor on

May 6 with Air Force GEN Craig R. McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, as the host.

“Today is a bittersweet day,” said McKinley at the ceremony, noting that he and Vaughn worked side by side on many issues and adding that he still plans to call on Vaughn’s expertise and knowledge.

“(This is for) your staunch leadership of America’s Citizen-Soldiers,” said McKinley, as he presented the Minuteman Award to Vaughn. “It couldn’t be a more apropos statement.”

Vaughn is leaving an ARNG that is far different from when he enlisted in 1969.

For Vaughn, who started in the Missouri Army National Guard and attained the rank of sergeant before attending officer candidate school, one of the biggest changes to the Guard during his time as director has been the increase in the ARNG’s end strength.

“At the time I became the director, we were at the lowest end strength we had been for many years,” he said. “We changed the whole organization in terms of recruiting, and we changed the whole organization in terms of force structure. It really shocked a lot of people who didn’t think we were going to do this, but we did it.”

The result was record enlistments in the ARNG, which Vaughn attributes to the Guard Recruiting Assistant Program (G-RAP). Individual Soldiers volunteered to train as recruiting assistants and provide recruiting leads for their state. They were paid \$1,000 when their recruit signed up and another \$1,000 when the recruit shipped to Basic Training.

“We did this by taking advantage of a remarkable advantage we have—and that’s our Citizen-Soldiers in all the communities,” Vaughn said.

For Vaughn, once the number of recruits went up, it was time to reorganize the way in which

EVAN BAINES



THANK YOU, BOTH
Secretary of the Army Peter Geren honors both LTG Clyde Vaughn and his wife, Carol, and thanks them for their incredible contributions to the Army National Guard.

Soldiers were counted against end-strength numbers and to increase the Guard's readiness.

The success of G-RAP led to record enlistments, which pushed the end strength of the ARNG up to its congressionally authorized limit. However, many of those who were counted against end-strength numbers weren't fully qualified Soldiers yet or were waiting to ship to Basic or Advanced Training.

"The problem that we've had throughout the last 50 years is somebody swears in, but they may not ship for a year, but they count against our end strength," Vaughn said.

That led to the creation of the Recruit Force Pool, which is the ARNG's version of the Delayed Entry Program.

The program, which was recently authorized by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, is made up of Guard recruits who are more than four months away from shipping to their training.

Once they reach that four-month window, they then go through a Recruit Sustainment Program, which prepares them for Basic Training. At that point, they are counted toward the ARNG's end strength.

For Vaughn, the measure ensures a higher state of readiness within the units. "It translates to 40,000 more Soldiers in our ranks, not those who want to be Soldiers," he said.

Currently, Vaughn said, 91 percent of Soldiers in units within the ARNG are fully qualified, compared to 78 percent from just a few years ago. That change has led to less reliance on cross leveling units for deployment.

"In four years, we've worked it so that we have the most ready force of all time," he said.

A change in readiness levels called for a culture shift in the ARNG.

"We wanted to shift attention of all the folks we were recruiting that this is not about coming in and going to a drill and then going to summer training and then getting money for school,"

"THIS IS ABOUT BEING MOBILIZED AND GOING TO WAR IF THE NATION HAS ASKED YOU TO GO TO WAR. IT'S ABOUT BEING CITIZEN-SOLDIERS AND BEING WARRIORS, AND THAT'S WHAT WE PREACHED." >> LTG Clyde Vaughn

Vaughn said. "This is about being mobilized and going to war if the nation has asked you to go to war. It's about being Citizen-Soldiers and being warriors, and that's what we preached.

"That's a big change from the ARNG of 2005," Vaughn continued.

After a tremendous surge in mobilizations and a historic response to Hurricane Katrina, "it was hard to see how we could continue the effort without tremendous change in the Guard," he said. "Because we were not built or designed to continue that kind of effort. We were not the magnificent, ready force that we are today."

And the state of the ARNG today is what Vaughn sees as one of his biggest legacies.

"The one (thing) I have the most pride about, is that we are, and we have, answered the call for everything that has come our way," he said. "The way we were going in 2005, we would not have been able to do that, and that's why we had to reorganize and do things differently.

"We have changed the focus of one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer. No one for the last few years has joined this organization thinking they were not going to deploy."

And one of Vaughn's final projects as director is putting in place a system that helps make it easier for those who have answered the call to receive medical care for injuries suffered during deployments.

Called the Blast Tracker, it serves as a database for every Soldier involved in an explosion or other combat-related hazards.

"It's a great thing, because it doesn't matter if it's six months or 20 years, it's a record, and we can put them back on active duty or we can get them to the VA, no questions asked," said Vaughn, who added that the information included in the file is not medical information, but purely operational information.

There are still a few projects that Vaughn said he would have liked to accomplish before retiring. One of those is reorganizing the way Soldiers on medical hold are tracked and

accounted for, but that is something for the next director to finish up. "The groundwork is all there," he said. Though he said he is looking forward to retirement, there are a few things Vaughn said he'll miss about being in uniform.

"I will miss the people," he said. "We've had fun. You're always going to miss the people you've put so much time in with and been around so much. I will miss the institution; it's a great organization."

Vaughn said he has great plans for retirement. "I've always liked to develop programs, to take a thought and bring it to life." **GX**



FULLY EXTENDED
SGT Loren Counts, left, and fellow NDARNG Guard Soldier SGT Burton Atkinson team up to pump water from a levee that was leaking on Drain 27 in south Fargo, ND.

Fighting the Tide

GX TEAM SPENDS 20 HOURS WITH NORTH DAKOTA SOLDIERS BATTLING FLOODS

Story and photos by Clint Wood

Bright sunshine was streaming through the western windows at the Fargo Armed Forces Reserve Center in Fargo, ND, this chilly March afternoon.

SGT Amy Wieser-Willson of the North Dakota Army National Guard (NDARNG) public affairs office was briefing my videographer, Adam Livingston, and me. She was telling us about the NDARNG's missions for the Spring Flood 2009.

By the time we arrived on Friday, March 27, the flood was a week old and the Red River was swollen to nearly three times its normal size. It was expected to crest at 42 to 43 feet on Sunday.

The river, at 40.85 feet, had already broken the record of 40.1 feet set in 1897.

We weren't in this upstairs office for 10 minutes before she received a call on her cell phone.

Once she got off the phone, we sprung into action. We were told there was a breach on a levee that held back floodwaters and a Guard Rapid Response Team (RRT) was en route.

SSG Chris Lemke quipped that we may need hip waders. We shot back that we have them. Brand-new hip waders were in the car.

I couldn't wait to get to the scene. And so began an assignment that spanned one-and-a-half days or nearly 20 hours. We photographed NDARNG Soldiers executing several missions, including responding to this breach, patrolling levees and filling sandbags in the Fargodome parking lot.

This was early in this flood fight, though, and just a small piece of a large puzzle that included both Army and Air Guard members from ND, Minnesota and South Dakota. When we left,

more than 1,900 Soldiers and Airmen from six states were on duty.

Jason Isgrig of Fargo observed a Guard RRT respond at night to a breach in a levee near his house.

"The National Guard came flying in here like superheroes, truly like superheroes," he exclaimed. "Inside of 10 minutes, there were 25 dump trucks, oh goodness, an equal amount of Humvees it seemed, dozens of guys. These guys are amazing. They are absolute superheroes. We are so blessed to have them in our country. I'm speechless."

OUR FIRST MISSION

We arrived at the neighborhood where the levee was leaking about 20 minutes after leaving the center. As I walked in between two of the houses, it was a muddy mess. There were noticeable ruts from heavy equipment that moved the sandbags in order for the levee to be built.

My first step into this cold, black, slippery mud brought back memories of my night patrol with Marines in downtown Ramadi, Iraq—although this mud was a little harder because the ground was still somewhat frozen from the night before. I was greeted with the distinct sound of a Bobcat driven by a Soldier headed toward the site with

“THE NATIONAL GUARD CAME FLYING IN HERE LIKE SUPERHEROES.”

>> Jason Isgrig, Fargo, ND

a load of sandbags in its bucket. The sandbags were being offloaded by Soldiers from a flatbed semitruck trailer parked on the street.

Soldiers had already formed an assembly line with residents of all ages near the levee. The first thing I noticed was a large white gazebo nearly covered by the floodwaters.

My first thought was that this was the Red River. Actually it was Drain 27 or the Rose Creek Coulee that runs off into the Red River. A resident said this ditch was normally about 5 feet across. My estimate was about 200 yards that day.

The last Soldier in the line slammed the sandbag on the 10-foot high levee. The team had stopped the leaking.

“It was done at a very fast pace, and we got done pretty quickly,” SGT David Feldmann said.

While heading back to the car, I noticed a Soldier carrying a hose to the site. I immediately followed him to the levee. He was among three Soldiers of a water purification unit.

We watched them prepare two, 125-gallon-per-minute pumps to move the water forming a long stream near the levee back into the ditch.

“Once they started doing that, we could tell what we thought was just a little seepage turned out to be a three-house long stream,” noted SSG Moe Jasmann, team leader for the RRT.

SSG Chris Kringstad, supervisor of this water purification team, said this pumping operation didn’t compare to a site about 20 miles south of this neighborhood. He said he stood in waist-high water as a 600-gallon per minute pump sucked water out of a lift station.

This was the fourth day of flood duty for this U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist.

When I asked what missions like this make him feel like, he replied, “I’m doing my part, that’s what we’re here for.”

Kringstad joined the Guard to serve his country and “get a college education.”

“Now that I have, I’m really thankful for joining the Guard,” he noted. “I would recommend it to anybody.”

We left this site at about 6 p.m. and met two Soldiers executing a traffic control point (TCP) in downtown Fargo before our day ended. This was one of 462 TCPs in the Fargo area.

WAKING UP TO 12 DEGREES

The temperature at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday was a balmy 12 degrees.

Our mission was to cover two Soldiers patrolling the coulee. Guard Soldiers in two-man teams walked every length of dikes in the Fargo area 24/7 during the mission.



COLD GRAB SPC Heather Roth of the NDARNG was among the Soldiers passing sandbags to fellow Soldiers and south Fargo, ND residents during a Rapid Response Team mission by the NDARNG for a breach in a levee in temperatures below 20 degrees.

En route, we stopped at a levee made of HESCO Barriers south of Fargo. By this time, everyone in the Fargo-Moorhead, MN area knew about the collapsible barriers. The media had really covered this story.

I would describe them as open boxes made of coated steel mesh framework, lined with a non-woven material and usually filled with sand.

This levee was among the more than 26 miles of HESCO barriers used for flood levees in the Fargo area. And this levee, made of two barriers on top of each other, was the “second line of defense” for the floodwaters—it was several feet back from the levee holding back the floodwaters.

I didn’t think I would see these barriers in the U.S. They were everywhere in Iraq and Kuwait. The Iraqi Army Soldiers used these barriers to make living quarters near Rawah, Iraq. The tops were covered with wood. The mesh framework made it easy to hang up their uniforms on hangers. SGT Brian Nelson, who deployed to Afghanistan, said his first thought was using these barriers for levees during the flood.

We left this site and met the Soldiers—Nelson was one of them—at a bridge that crossed the coulee.



LEVEE WALK Several Army and Air National Guard members walk en route to the Oak Grove Lutheran School in downtown Fargo, ND. They filled sandbags and placed them on a leaking levee once they reached the school.

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continued from page 23

Unlike most of the Soldiers assigned as levee walkers though, Nelson and SPC Tom Ollenburger drove to their assigned areas in a Humvee.

And they were going to be famous for this task. Several other media outlets arrived at the same time we did. One of these was a national news organization team of a videographer and a reporter.

The Soldiers were roommates at Minnesota State University in Moorhead and served in the same unit in a deployment to Afghanistan from 2006 to 2007.

On this chilly and sunny morning, they were about four hours into their 12-hour shift, which began at 5:30 a.m. They were activated the day before.

It took about a half hour to check three pumping sites along the coulee. After about a 10-minute break, they began another patrol.

Ollenburger said he joined the Guard shortly after high school for the educational benefits. He admitted he was nervous about joining the Guard, but he said it ended up changing his life in a positive way.

“Now, I’m really glad I did,” pointed out Ollenburger, who is majoring in biology. “The National Guard really takes care of you. Not only do they pay for school, but they give you money while you’re going to school each month.”

And the Guard does something else, especially with overseas deployments.

“I learned maturity, and I grew up a lot over there,” said Ollenburger of his deployment to Afghanistan.

The unit’s mission at the border near Afghanistan and Pakistan was manning observation points and assisting the Afghan National Army and Afghan national police with their security checks.

Nelson said the unit also executed school supply drops and Medical Civic Assistance Programs. Unlike those missions that assisted Afghans, this flood mission hit home for Ollenburger in a big way. His parents lived only a block away from a levee.

So naturally, he said, helping his fellow citizens felt “really awesome.”



ONE-TIME USE BASKET An ARNG Black Hawk helicopter places a one-ton sand basket on a levee near the Oak Grove Lutheran School in downtown Fargo.

By the way, he is deploying overseas with the same unit in November.

OBSERVING FLOOD FROM A BLACK HAWK

Our next mission was to photograph the flood from the air. We and several other media representatives rode in a Black Hawk helicopter on a tour of the flooded areas.

We arrived at the fighter base airfield operations center at 12:15 p.m., and it was announced on CNN at about 2 p.m. that the river had crested at 40.82 feet in Fargo.

Twenty-five minutes later, we were escorted to the flight line and the still helicopter. This would be the first time I rode in one of these helicopters with the doors closed since my deployment to Iraq. I racked up more than 30 rides in these choppers in Iraq, and the doors were always open.

For those of you who haven’t ridden in one of these birds, an intricate seat belt system straps you in. (There are five straps connected to one hub.)

Seven minutes later, the rotors began to turn and the familiar smell of jet fuel seeped into the interior. In seven more minutes, we taxied down the runway.

We lifted off three minutes later and were almost immediately greeted with the flood damage.

ADJUTANT GENERAL PRAISES COMMUNITY

Minutes after we landed, Livingston and I teamed up to interview MG David Sprynczynatyk, adjutant general for the ND NG. He and Gov. John Hoeven had viewed the damage in an earlier flight.

Sprynczynatyk said his observations included Soldiers and Airmen walking the dikes, and Guard trucks hauling sandbags and sand.

“The fact is, these people came from all across the state and neighboring states, too,” he noted. “And they came here literally in a minute’s notice to help us in this flood fight. Whatever we ask them, they carry it out; they do it, and they do it exceptionally well.

“They are all great patriots of this nation, and I’m so proud that I’m able to observe these young men and women of the National Guard of North Dakota and neighboring states,” he continued.

ND GOVERNOR PRAISES GUARD

I was able to get a quick interview with Hoeven after he did a stand-up interview with several media representatives in the center.

Hoeven said the Guard was not only an integral part of the flood fight, but also played a major role in a contingency plan for possible evacuations or transporting of citizens.

“We got them pretty busy,” he added. “We say our Guard is always there, and they show it over and over again. They’re absolutely the best.”

RAPID RESPONSE HITS GROUND RUNNING

Livingston called it a day after our helicopter ride. I returned to a staging area where the RRT that we covered on Friday was staged.

This auto dealership was among 11 staging areas. I was being shadowed, too, by a former *Brainerd Dispatch*, Brainerd, MN, coworker. John Hansen was majoring in mass communications at Minnesota State University. His shadowing assignment was for his photography class.

Jasmann told us that his team drove from Bismarck, ND, to Fargo the night before. He said the Soldiers left Bismarck around midnight and arrived in Fargo at zero-dark-thirty.

"We got here at 5:30 in the morning, and we just kind of hit the ground running," Jasmann said.

This was the first RRT activated. The team's equipment included a Humvee and a five-ton dump truck full of sandbags. Besides about 16 Soldiers, there were two civilian Bobcat drivers and a firefighter.

The Soldiers were from the 816th Engineer Company of Dickinson, ND, and the 818th Engineer Company of Williston, ND. Most of the Soldiers were either combat engineers or heavy equipment operators. He noted for Friday's mission, a city engineer assessed the leaking levee and directed the Soldiers.

Jasmann was impressed with his Soldiers' diligence and hard work.

"We were all dog tired. But you know, when we got there, everybody jumped in and did what they were told to do," he explained. "There was no complaining."

"WHATEVER WE ASK THEM, THEY CARRY IT OUT; THEY DO IT, AND THEY DO IT EXCEPTIONALLY WELL."

>> MG David Sprynczynatyk, adjutant general of North Dakota

Hansen and I witnessed one of these quick responses. Sort of, anyway. We heard "play-by-play" on the radio en route to the scene of a breach. We learned of this breach while waiting in the car outside the staging building. I was waiting there to take silhouette photographs of replacements for Jasmann's team getting off a bus at sunset. The time was 8:08 p.m.

Jasmann approached the car and told us that a RRT had been dispatched to a levee in north Fargo, ND. After turning around, we arrived at the scene from the south; by the time we got there at 8:40 p.m., the Guard's mission was winding down.

FIRST ON THE SCENE

Our original intention on Sunday was to collect Soldier testimonials at the center. That changed when I noticed several Soldiers leaving the center wearing rubber boots, carrying shovels and walking to a white Blue Bird bus.

I asked the first Soldier, a sergeant first class, where this group was going. He said it was a sandbagging mission to the Oak Grove Lutheran School in downtown Fargo.

I didn't know it at the time, but a levee there had failed early that morning. Two of the five school's buildings had taken on water.

He told me to run to the bus and ask for the officer in charge. I did this and was told of the mission. We raced to follow the bus.

Twenty minutes later, the bus stopped near a tall dirt levee where the Soldiers disembarked.

There were no other media in the vicinity. In the air was a Black Hawk helicopter airlifting a 1,000 pound sand basket. These baskets were massive reinforced plastic bags of sand and clay dirt stamped with "one-time use."

But once the Soldiers turned the corner of a street, television camera crews either had their cameras set up on tripods or began running to cover the action.

The Soldiers walked single file down a narrow sidewalk en route to the school. That is the last I saw them. They were placing sandbags behind a tall wall on the property.

At about the same time, another Black Hawk carrying a sand basket appeared. Seconds later, an entourage of Soldiers, including Sprynczynatyk and several ARNG public affairs Soldiers, arrived.

A spokeswoman told us at 12:34 p.m. that "the Army would be dropping the last sandbag." It was actually placed at 1:30 p.m. There were 11 of these sand baskets placed at this site. The sand baskets were first used during Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans area in 2005.

Livingston and I ended the mission by photographing Soldiers filling sandbags outside the FargoDome. At this time, there were more than 4.3 million sandbags filled. **GX**



SEE THE ACTION!
WATCH THE VIDEO AT
[YOUTUBE.COM/NATIONALGUARD.](https://www.youtube.com/nationalguard)

Artillery Unit Strikes Into History

Story and photo by CPT Ed Shank | CAMP TAJI, IRAQ

From a remote station just north of Baghdad, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 109th Field Artillery, marked its place in history March 29 with an earth-shaking, thunderous boom—firing their home battalion’s first artillery rounds in combat since WWII.

There was no ticker tape parade or champagne. Just the sound of cheers from a handful of artillerymen as they cleared their M777A Howitzer to fire again.

Battery B 1/109th, a 55th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division unit attached to the 1st Battalion, 108th Field Artillery, fired four illumination rounds that night from a recently completed fire base at Joint Security Station (JSS) Istiqlal in support of troopers from 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

“MORALE IS HIGH. WE’RE DOING A GOOD MISSION.”

>> SSG John Edwards, chief of section for Team Arrowhead

Although many of the battery’s Soldiers have deployed to the Middle East since 9/11, the new assignment marked the first time any of them had been given the opportunity to deploy as artillerymen.

“All the Soldiers are very motivated to be here, pulling the lanyard and doing an artillery mission,” said 1LT Jason S. Grentus, Team Arrowhead platoon leader. “It doesn’t matter if you’re active duty or a National Guard artillery Soldier—if you come here

as an artillery guy, odds are you aren’t going to be doing an artillery mission.

“We are very fortunate to be here doing an artillery mission—to be the pioneers for my battalion back home and the 108th [1st Battalion, 108th Field Artillery, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team].”

It was a less than month between when the unit was told of its new mission and when its guns were fired from the JSS.

In that time, a plan was created to build a fire base on an installation, to calibrate the cannons that would be used, and to move an entire platoon’s worth of men and equipment to the site.

“The coordination was definitely the biggest hurdle to overcome,” Grentus said.

Team Arrowhead had to pack up all equipment while simultaneously training with Battery B, 1/108th, to calibrate their weapons and train on the Excalibur 155 mm Precision Guided Extended Range Artillery Projectile.

“We can provide high explosives and illumination at night, and we also have Excalibur, which we can use for precise munitions,” Grentus said. “We have smoke munitions, too. So we come with an array of artillery pieces and artillery rounds.”

According to CSM Mervin M. Ripley, command sergeant major for the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment’s mission at Istiqlal is to partner with the Iraqi police and assist them using any enablers they have at their disposal.

The illumination rounds of March 29 were fired in direct support of coalition troops on the ground in their area of operations.

Although the accommodations at the JSS would be considered austere by almost anyone’s standards, SSG John Edwards, chief of section for Team Arrowhead, said the conditions aren’t surprising.

“It’s what we expected coming over to Iraq,” Edwards said. “The guys are getting used to it. Morale is high. We’re doing a good mission.”

Grentus agreed that his guys are motivated and said it’s partly due to being treated well by their active duty hosts.

“The way we’ve been received by the Cav has been outstanding,” he said. “They’ve really taken us under their wing.” **CX**



FIRE! Soldiers of Team Arrowhead fire high-explosive rounds in March at Camp Taji’s Fire Base Mayhem prior to departing for Joint Security Station Istiqlal during the battery’s M777A calibration.



AIR DEFENSE

Florida Soldiers carry a shoulder mounted Stinger missile launcher as they head to the firing lane at McGregor Range, NM.

Florida Guard Launches Into Home Defense Role

Story and photo by MAJ Deanna Bague | MCGREGOR RANGE, NM

▶ **ABOUT 200 FLORIDA** National Guard Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) Regiment, trained here for Operation Noble Eagle in which the unit will conduct military operations in support of homeland security.

“We’re going as part of Operation Noble Eagle in defense of the national capital region integrated air defense system,” said 1SG Robert Grimes, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3/265th ADA.

Prior to coming here, the Guard Soldiers conducted training at their home station for several months to prepare for the Avenger and Stinger live-fire exercises that took place here. “The unit focused on individual and collective tasks that honed their skills and helped them achieve the level of proficiency required for success,” Grimes said.

Grimes said the open terrain was a key in performing their culminating training event. In addition to the air assets here, Grimes said

the space provided the ability to track the target and improve their skill set. The Guard Soldiers successfully mimicked the procedures used in a real-world scenario to engage hostile aircraft.

SPC Chad Harter, a gunner assigned to 3/265th ADA, was as confident as his leadership in his ability to successfully fire the missiles.

“We’ve had a lot of training ... going through drills over and over again, so I’m pretty comfortable and I believe the rest of my unit is pretty comfortable with this exercise,” Harter said.

The Guard Soldiers were evaluated on their success in engaging targets and on the steps they took to fire the missiles.

“The steps are important because there are different states of alert, and we need to make sure we don’t get ahead of ourselves—and for safety precautions,” Harter said.

Soldiers said the training was so extensive that the procedures became second nature.

“We’ve trained so much that we know we’re definitely ready for this mission,” Harter said. **GX**

VICTORY MAP



KANSAS WWII Veterans were honored during a ceremony May 3 in Topeka, KS. Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, Mayor Bill Bunting and BG Deborah Rose, director, joint staff, Kansas National Guard, spoke during the ceremony. The 35th Division Band performed the national anthem and “America the Beautiful,” and a 190th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 performed a flyover. JROTC members from Highland Park, Shawnee Heights, Topeka High and Topeka West also took part in the ceremony.

KENTUCKY 1LT Joseph Sloan was selected for the 2009 Engineer Platoon Leader of the Year Award by the United States Army Engineer Corps. The award is given to the top Engineer Platoon Leader in the National Guard, Reserve and Active Army each year. Sloan served as platoon leader of Route Clearance Platoon 2, Bravo Company 201st Engineer Battalion during his OEF ‘08-’09 tour. His proficiency at troop leading procedures, equipment modifications and dedication to the health, welfare and well-being of his Soldiers earned him this prestigious honor.

OHIO Ohio Governor Ted Strickland announced May 13 that the Ohio National Guard has received \$8.5 million programmed for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The funding will modernize National Guard facilities and reduce energy costs for the state. These projects will save the National Guard approximately \$78,000 within the first year of completion, and provide energy savings of about 500,000 kilowatt-hours per year.

TEXAS The Texas National Guard signed a proclamation with the country of Chile on April 29 that linked the two in the Guard’s State Partnership Program. Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Gonzalo Garcia Pino, the Chilean undersecretary of war, signed the proclamation, citing mutual interests and long-term economic and military relationships.

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Do You Have What It Takes?

BECOME A MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SOLDIER IN THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Story and photos courtesy of NGB-ASM

The Military Intelligence lineage dates back to 1885 as the “Division of Military Information.” It was established as part of the Military Reservations Division, Miscellaneous Branch, of the adjutant general’s office, giving the U.S. Army a permanent intelligence organization for the first time. Military Intelligence has transformed from its humble beginnings to an essential component of today’s Army, including the Army National Guard (ARNG). Military Intelligence (MI) Soldiers within the Army National Guard have played a vital role in the defense of our country both at home and abroad, especially since 9/11.

The stringent qualifications and demanding training curriculum to become a qualified Military Intelligence professional can be discouraging for even the brave at heart. As challenging as it may be to obtain the distinction of being a qualified MI Soldier, the rewards and opportunities far outweigh the challenges. The training and experience MI Soldiers receive in the ARNG open doors that can extend far beyond the walls of the armories. The array of occupations within the MI career field provides Soldiers with skill sets that are highly sought after, even in the civilian sector.

The MI field provides opportunities for training and experience that involve collecting and analyzing data, repairing technical equipment, performing linguistic tasks, interrogations, counter-intelligence and more. Qualified Soldiers may have the opportunity to choose from 11 possible enlisted MI occupations within the ARNG. (The Guard also has commissioned and warrant officer MI



LOCAL AUTHORITY SGT Heidi Cristel, 341st Military Intelligence Battalion, Washington Army National Guard, hands out school supplies in Ghazni, Afghanistan.

opportunities.) Those occupations include:

35F	Intelligence Analyst
35G	Imagery Analyst
35H	Common Ground Station Operator
35L	Counter Intelligence Agent
35M	Human Intelligence Collector
35N	Signals Intelligence Analyst
35P	Cryptologic Communications Interceptor/Locator
35S	Signals Collector Analyst
35T	Military Intelligence Systems Maintainer/Integrator

Soldiers who become Linguists (a specialization under MOS 35M) receive their language training at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) more commonly referred to as simply “DLI.” The DLI is located at The Presidio of Monterey in Monterey, CA. It began its history in 1941 as a secret school to teach the Japanese language. Today, the DLI is one of the leading language institutes in America. Soldiers may qualify to learn languages like Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Korean, or Persian Farsi.

There are plenty of opportunities to serve as an MI Soldier in the ARNG with major MI units existing in at least 29 states from Florida to Hawaii and points in between. The 341st Military Intelligence Battalion located in Tacoma, WA, is one of the many great MI units in the Guard. SGT Heidi Cristel is assigned to the 341st. She began her Guard career as a Signal Corps Soldier, and later took advantage of the reclassification system to become a Military Intelligence professional working as a Korean Linguist. She has been assigned to the 341st MI Battalion for about eight years.

Cristel was asked about her experience as a Military Intelligence professional in the Guard. Here’s what she had to say:

What is it like being a Linguist?

SGT Cristel: Interesting. It is an emotionally and intellectually exhausting job, but worth the effort. I think Americans believe in service; some serve in the military, others serve their communities in different roles. I feel very fortunate that I can serve our country in this way. The people I work with are all bright; everyone speaks a foreign language, has a different intelligence

specialty, and most of our Soldiers are either in college or have degrees. The Soldiers in the 341st MI Battalion are without a doubt the greatest people with whom I've ever worked.

How do you like being a Linguist?

SGT Cristel: Working in the intelligence community is rewarding in that it allows you to bring timely, actionable information to the warfighter that saves lives and finds the enemy. In my personal and professional life, I have learned how to effectively communicate with those whom I come in contact with. I speak Korean, which really surprises most people. When we go to a Korean restaurant, the staff is always amazed—and I think they really appreciate an American knowing their language.

How did you like attending DLI?

SGT Cristel: It was the best, but most difficult training I have ever been through, but also the most rewarding. How many Soldiers get to learn an entire language in 16 months? Even four years later, I still have to remind myself that I speak another language.

Monterey is beautiful, and during off-time there is plenty to do to relax. Between backpacking in Big Sur, surfing in Pacific Grove, running on the beach each morning in Monterey and learning how to scuba dive, how could anyone get bored and not relax? I would recommend DLI to any Soldier who is considering going MI. Just about every Soldier in my unit who has already attended DLI would jump at the chance to go back.

How have your MI skills helped you in your civilian job?

SGT Cristel: Currently I work full time for the 341st MI BN (LING), Washington Army National Guard as the Training NCO. Having the Intelligence skills gave me an advantage in pursuing this job. I enjoy the work that I do and could not ask for better Soldiers to work with. MI is truly like a family. Many of our Soldiers have parlayed their training and experience into other government jobs in the intelligence or law enforcement communities. One Soldier was hired as a corporate headhunter due to his MOS alone. His boss said that his training was perfect

THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Soldiers can receive more information regarding Army National Guard MI opportunities by visiting the Low Density Recruiting (LDR) Program Web site at www.ldrprogram.com, or by calling the help desk, toll-free, at 1-800-684-4699. "Live" support is provided from 4:00 AM to 8:00 PM Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, for those who wish to speak to a representative directly.

for interviewing, public speaking, hiring, and sales. We become very good judges of people."

Is there anything else you would like to say about being an MI Soldier in the Guard?

SGT Cristel: Being an MI Soldier in the Guard allows opportunity to work with/for other government agencies and contractor corporations. While serving our country, we are still able to excel professionally.

Fortunately for our great Nation, there are many other Military Intelligence professionals like Cristel, who use the valuable training and experience they have received through the Guard to serve their neighbors, friends and family in communities across the United States. In addition to opportunities for people without prior military service to serve as MI Soldiers, opportunities exist for current ARNG Soldiers who do not already hold an MI Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to become MI qualified through the reclassification process just like Cristel. Soldiers who can meet the qualifications and desire reclassification into an MI MOS are highly encouraged to pursue this opportunity. **GX**



BRAINS AND BRAWN Low Level Voice Intercept teams comprised of 341st Military Intelligence Battalion Soldiers and active duty Navy Sailors. From left to right: PO2 Wright (U.S. Navy), SGT Scott Mandela (WAARNG), SFC Rob Armstrong (WAARNG), SF Liaison (Name Unknown), PO2 Green (U.S. Navy), PO2 U.S. Navy (Name Unknown).

VICTORY MAP



WEST VIRGINIA Adverse weather in West Virginia and Kentucky prompted the National Guard to help with relief efforts. West Virginia's governor declared a state of emergency for more than six counties after massive flooding. Guard members of the 111th Engineering Brigade helped in two of those counties where a steady rainfall combined with a recent thunderstorm caused mudslides and flooded homes and roads. The floods stranded citizens of these rural, southern West Virginia counties in their homes.

IRAQ Service members at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, can take college courses and complete exams necessary to receive certifications, thanks to a resourceful Washington Army National Guard Soldier with a need, some motivation and a few friends. The education center is a 10-seat computer lab with Internet access for education use only. The testing center offers an opportunity for service members to walk away from deployment with a better outlook for their future—whether they plan to stay in the military or move on to a civilian career.

The 28th Combat Aviation Brigade officially took control of aviation operations in Multi-National Division – South during a transfer-of-authority ceremony May 12 at Camp Adder. The 28th CAB, known as Task Force Keystone, is made up of mostly National Guard members from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Illinois, Connecticut, Indiana, Oregon and Montana.

MOROCCO More than 600 Moroccans from Taroudant and surrounding villages converged for humanitarian assistance being offered by the Utah National Guard and Moroccan Service members participating in Exercise AFRICAN LION 2009. Thirty-eight U.S. and 46 Moroccan military personnel and nine civilian medical professionals provided medical, dental and veterinarian care to the citizens. The Utah National Guard is a state partner to Morocco under the National Guard State Partnership Program.



ULTIMATE 4 X 4
Members of the Oregon National Guard's Counterdrug Support Program put their light-armored vehicle through its paces at the Rilea Training Site, in Warrenton, OR.

Oregon Counterdrug Team Trains With SWAT

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy, Oregon National Guard | WARRENTON, OR

Members of the Oregon National Guard's Counterdrug Support Program and the Salem Police's SWAT unit trained May 5 at the Rilea Training Site.

Oregon Guard Soldiers trained alongside Salem's tactical police unit, using the Oregon National Guard's two Light-Armored Vehicles or LAVs.

While Oregon Soldiers and Airmen went through initial and refresher vehicle driver's training, law enforcement officers from Salem trained on tactical procedures related to the arrest and apprehension of high-risk offenders. The four counterdrug trainees learned basic vehicle operations maintenance, and participated in some inter-agency training with members of the Salem SWAT team.

MSG Keith Moen, the Oregon National Guard counterdrug NCO, said the LAVs allow law enforcement access they might not otherwise have to high-risk offenders.

"A lot of law enforcement agencies cannot afford armored vehicles," Moen said. "We provide that service to them."

The all-weather, all-terrain vehicles, which cost the state \$630,000 each, protect occupants

from small-arms weapons with a thick metal shell. The two LAVs were delivered to Oregon in 1996 and have been used in more than 200 law enforcement-related missions.

The vehicle can carry up to eight occupants, in addition to a driver and a tactical commander. Once drivers understand the basic operations

"YOU KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE A BAD DAY WHEN THIS VEHICLE SHOWS UP ON YOUR PROPERTY."

>> Master Sgt. Chris Sewell

of the nearly 25-ton, eight-wheeled, armored vehicle, driving it is much like operating a large truck, Moen said.

Master Sgt. Chris Sewell, an intelligence analyst for the Counterdrug Support Program and vehicle tactical commander, said Rilea is the perfect place to conduct this training.

"The wide-open spaces, different types of terrain, and the MOUT site give us lots of opportunity to practice," Sewell said. "Rilea covers everything for us."

Sewell, an Oregon Airman, said the LAV acts as a force-multiplier, providing law enforcement with a very effective visual deterrent to high-risk individuals. While it looks like a tank, it's strictly a defensive vehicle, he said.

"It's there to provide protection and support to law enforcement," Sewell said. "But then again, it's very intimidating. You know it's going to be a bad day when this vehicle shows up on your property."

Sewell said there have been instances where dangerous suspects have simply given up as soon as the LAV moves onto their property, even with the SWAT members still inside.

"Law enforcement hasn't even exited the vehicle, and the bad guys are already giving up," Sewell said with a chuckle.

Sgt. Mike Johnson, Team Leader, and 16-year member of the Salem Police Department, said working closely with the Oregon National Guard has been rewarding.

"When it comes to the LAV and the crews that drive them, their motivation and professionalism is second to none," he said.

He adds that the ability for Oregon Soldiers and Airmen to train alongside local law enforcement officials is important to officers' safety.

"If we didn't have access to this equipment, we would be putting a lot of our guys at risk," Johnson said.

Moreover, the ongoing training has built a solid relationship between the agencies, Johnson said. Because training time is so valuable, every minute counts, he added.

"We understand each other's training regimen, so there's very little downtime," Johnson said.

Johnson can't help but highlight the added intimidation factor of having a military vehicle at their disposal.

"It brings an element of confidence to us, and a little bit of fear to those who are looking out their windows at us," he said. That's definitely an advantage to us, and we'll take any advantage we can."

In addition to law enforcement, the LAVs have also been used extensively for search and rescue. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, two LAVs were sent to New Orleans to assist with 9-1-1 emergency calls and rescue operations. **GX**

Virginia MPs Serve Above The Call of Duty in Iraq

By SSG Denis Gomez, Virginia National Guard / BASRA, IRAQ

► **VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD'S** Manassas-based 266th Military Police Company are going above and beyond their Police Transition Team (PTT) training mission in Basra, Iraq, to make a difference in the quality of life for the Iraqi police officers and the local community.

The 266th deployed to Iraq from Fort Dix, NJ, in early December 2008, with about 150 Soldiers. Training was conducted at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, until the company flew to Contingency Operating Base Basra, Camp Charlie, to conduct PTT operations in the northern section of the city of Basra.

The primary duties of all PTTs are to coach, train and mentor the Iraqi police (IP) and complete the Police Stations Monthly Reports. In late January 2009, the 266th conducted its first PTT mission.

In early February, the company joined its Iraqi Police partners from the Al-Maqil district in Basra on a humanitarian mission to a local school. After meeting with the school officials and discussing the needs of the school, the Iraqi police and Soldiers from the 266th were able to deliver backpacks and other school supplies to the children.

"The future of Basra is with the children; they will be here long after we are gone," said CPT Ryan Mallory from Manassas. "The children are most affected during this transition for Iraq. We must all work together for the good of the cause."

Members of the 266th also assisted Al Hartha police officers by demolishing and repairing a roof that enclosed a sleeping quarters for five Iraqi police. SSG Brian Brower, PTT chief, saw a need and was able to gather skilled Soldiers within the platoon to repair an inadequately constructed roof.

After a few hours, with the assistance of the IPs, the project was completed.

"It felt great to help them with this project," said SGT Ernest Spycher of Reston, VA. "So much of our time is spent training, it was good to do something that improves the quality of life for the IPs as well."

CPT Lefta of the IP was so impressed and grateful that he brought out his office desk, which was also in need of repairs. Members of the 266th have also assisted by conducting weapons

training and movement techniques. PTT chiefs SFC David Hunt and SSG Michelle Smith met at 3rd ERB to conduct training for 20 IPs on weapon safety and handling techniques.

"They were eager to learn and stayed focused during the training," said Smith of Henrico, VA.

"PTT is something more than just training," said Hunt, a resident of Richmond, VA. "It's a friendship and respect for the fellow man."

The IPs were highly motivated and enjoyed the training. In addition, bonds were made and

In mid-April, 1st Platoon, 2nd Squad, joined members of the Al Maqil Iraqi Police District Headquarters on a joint visit to the Imam Abbas school in the Al Maqil district of Basra in order to strengthen community relations and to enhance the public's perception of the Iraqi police.

LTC Sabah, station commander of the Al Maqil local police station, as well as other IP, were very enthusiastic about the school visit.

"I am very concerned about improving the community as a whole," Sabah said.

This is the third school visited by the team and the IP. Each visit strengthens the bond between the community and the IP. During the visit, the school received 25 desks, along with other school supplies, which the IP and several students quickly assembled.

The students were very eager to meet both the IP and the members of the U.S. military PTT.



BACK TO THE BASICS

SSG Michelle Smith of Henrico, VA, ensures that the training being taught is well received after every demonstration. Members of the 266th assisted Al Hartha police officers by conducting weapons training and movement techniques.

respect forged between both cultures. Members of 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, began their PTT mission in early February. The squad is responsible for Basra city's 4th ERB, consisting of more than 600 Iraqi police with varying levels of education, training and police experience.

"We are here to help the Iraqi police and the families of Basra," said 1LT Matthew Stuhr from Manassas.

Squad patrols focus on identifying the needs of 4th ERB checkpoints as well as the living conditions. Community policing is key to winning the hearts and minds of the local population.

Many of the students asked to take pictures with their guests. 1LT John Hinton, assistant PTT chief, told the children he was glad he was able to help and would be back soon.

The school administration expressed their gratitude to both the IP and members of the 266th Military Police Company. **GX**

►► **FOR MORE ABOUT THE MILITARY POLICE AND THEIR ROLE IN THE GUARD GO TO WWW.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers.**

Colorado 157th Rains Fire Down in Texas



DEADLY DUO SPC Ben Harbour (left) and SPC Josh Keadle (right) get their M240B medium machine gun ready for night fire at a Fort Hood range April 25, 2009.



PUSH 'EM OUT SPC Josh Keadle celebrates his 21st birthday April 25, 2009, at a Fort Hood range in Texas with his battery commander, CPT Ashkan Angha, making him do 21 push-ups while singing, "Happy Birthday."

Story and photos by SSG Liesl Marelli | FORT HOOD, TX

More than 60 Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard conducted day and night fire with the M240B Medium Machine Gun April 25, 2009.

The battalion, which conducted a large majority of its required weapons training at Fort Carson, CO, prior to moving to Fort Hood, only had a few Soldiers needing to qualify on the machine gun.

"All the weapons we train with, we are deploying with in theater," said SSG Clifford Fraipont, a resident of Fountain, CO, who was appointed the noncommissioned officer in charge at the range. "My main responsibility is accountability of all Soldiers at the range, ensuring they successfully complete the training safely." Wake-up time for Soldiers heading out to the range is typically early—around 4 a.m., and

they are expected to remain at the range until the last Soldier is done firing. This range was operational for approximately 17 hours.

Once the range is operational, the Soldiers were briefed, gathered their gear and were assigned firing lines. Although it's important for Soldiers to perform safe acts on the range, it's not all serious business for the entire 17 hours.

One Soldier at the range, SPC Josh Keadle of Thornton, CO, of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, was celebrating his 21st birthday.

He was among the Soldiers required to train with the machine gun. Since celebrating his birthday didn't allow for cake or a party, his commander decided to help him celebrate in another way.

"We had him do 21 push-ups while saying 'Happy Birthday' for each one performed," laughed CPT Ashkan Angha, his battery commander.

"It was terrific," Keadle said, sarcastically. "It's not as fun as being at home but it was the most memorable thing about my 21st here."

At the range, the Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery were conducting day and night fire and some select Soldiers had to qualify while others performed familiarization fire.

"The Soldiers selected to qualify on the machine gun will have that weapon assigned to them in Iraq, so we want them to have the highest proficiency with the weapon," Angha said.

Soldiers also benefited from the optics on the weapon system, which allowed the Soldiers to see the targets more clearly under the dark Texas night sky.

In groups of two, one gunner and one assistant gunner, the Soldiers approached the firing line, set up their gear, checked the sights and familiarized themselves with the targets that range control popped up, so they could identify them before they began firing—but this time in the dark.

Soldiers shot off five- to seven-round bursts; tracers illuminated the dark range.

Around midnight, they headed back to their barracks to unload their gear and catch some sleep before the next training iteration began the following day.

"Both the mobilization training and deployment requires sacrifices from our Soldiers and families," said Battalion Commander LTC Al Morris. "However, these sacrifices are essential for preparing our troops to deploy, conduct their required missions and all return home safely to their loved ones."

The battalion is scheduled to deploy to Iraq at the culmination of their training at Fort Hood this summer. **GX**

The Spirit of a Warrior

A MODERN SOLDIER CONNECTS WITH ANCIENT WARRIORS

By Marcia Beene Dickerson

▶ **THE WARRIOR SPIRIT** has existed since the beginning of time. As far back as historians and archeologists can research, people have been practicing the art of war.

This spirit is alive in the members of the Army National Guard, who fight to protect not only their home and family, but also the very idea of freedom itself.

SFC Terry Schappert, a Soldier in the National Guard, has found an interesting way to bring this idea to a wider audience.

Schappert's military occupational specialty (MOS) is 18D (a Special Forces medic), but his civilian job is acting. He has put these two seemingly diverse careers together in a series called "Warriors," which currently runs on the History Channel. In the show, Schappert travels to the locations of each culture and immerses himself in the weapons, tactics, battlefield strategies and, ultimately, the psyche of iconic Warrior groups.

Seventeen years ago, Schappert joined the ranks of the 82nd Airborne Division. He completed Ranger School and served in the Persian Gulf War. After 9/11, he joined the National Guard, became a Green Beret and has deployed all over the world for training and combat missions, serving in places such as Kosovo and Iraq.

GX recently had a chance to catch up with Schappert and asked him about the Warrior Spirit.

GX: After being out of the military for four years, what made you decide to join the National Guard?

TS: When 9/11 happened, I wanted to get back into the fight, so I joined the Guard. It allowed me to do my civilian job as well as contribute to protecting our nation.

GX: What inspired you to meld your acting career with your military career?



SWORD AND SHIELD Special Forces Soldier and host of "Warriors" Terry Schappert brandishes a Spartan sword and shield.

TS: I have a degree in anthropology, so I've studied many different cultures. The one thing I found fascinating was the idea of the Warrior Spirit. The Mayans, the Vikings, the Samurai, the Spartans, the medieval knights—even the barbarians who saw their Warriors as the center of their culture—each of these societies gave their Warriors great honor. Soldiers today are the direct descendants of those fearless people.

GX: On your show, you examine and use different weapons from the cultures you study. Which weapon, in your opinion, is the most lethal?

TS: Every weapon I worked with has great aspects, but by far the most ruthless ancient weapon is the Samurai sword. When two Samurai met, there was not a clanging of swords; instead, there were two to three moves, and the opponent was dead.

GX: Which culture or society has been the most "exotic" for you?

TS: The most exotic experience has been learning about the weapons and tactics of the Zulus in South Africa. In 1879, their leader, Shaka Zulu, led the tribe in a battle against a much larger British force, defeating them using mostly spears and shields.

GX: What is the biggest source of change between the era of ancient weapons and today's weapons?

TS: Gunpowder. With the invention of gunpowder, fighting changed tremendously.

GX: What's it like to fight with these weapons using ancient methods of Warriors?

TS: It's really an eye-opening experience. What we think of as archaic is really enlightening. For example, getting into the mindset of a Viking requires learning how to use several weapons while incorporating fighting methods practiced in boats lashed together and full of Warriors in open water. This mode of fighting is extremely difficult. It requires quick thinking and even quicker reactions. This is why the Vikings were so successful in conquering many lands over a massive geographical area.

GX: As an elite Warrior yourself, what message do you hope to get across to the National Guard audience as well as the general audience?

TS: I want National Guard Soldiers to come away with a sense of pride for what they do. There are no "part-time" Warriors—we are connected to the Warrior culture and share a commonality with the ancient Warrior Spirit. For the general audience, I want to convey the idea that almost all cultures have great Warriors who help protect their societies, and without a doubt the American military really are the good guys. **GX**



AT THE HELM Terry Schappert stands in the bow of a Viking longboat in Norway.

➤➤ **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VARIOUS WARRIOR CULTURES, VISIT HISTORY.COM/CONTENT/WARRIORS**

“If Not Me, Then Who?”

CHECKING IN WITH NCOY SSG MICHAEL NOYCE MERINO

By Camille Breland

▶ LAST TIME WE CHECKED IN with SSG Michael Noyce Merino, 2008–09 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, he talked about meeting former President George W. Bush, his heroes and how he defines Freedom. This time, he talks about the *Soldier's Creed*, his family and what the Army National Guard is teaching him.

GX: What is the most important lesson you have learned in the Guard?

NM: I have learned that the Guard is made up of not just Soldiers, but also of civilians, families and employers. It takes a different leadership style to lead Citizen-Soldiers.

I have been constantly impressed by the level of motivation Guard Soldiers display during drill and annual training. I think that it's the best of both worlds: maximum time with our families, while still maintaining proficiency and the opportunity to serve.



GUARD FORCE NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon talks with the Army's NCO of the Year SSG Michael Noyce Merino of the Montana Army National Guard before Gordon's race April 5 at the Texas Motor Speedway.

GX: When looking at your family, do you feel a calling to continue serving your country? Why?

NM: If not me, then who? There is a need, and if no one steps up to the plate, we fail. I will not fail the men and women who have answered the call throughout our nation's history so that Freedom could be kept alive until I came around. The treasure and responsibility that was handed me as an American citizen is sacred, and I will

pass it to the next generation in the same or better condition than I received it.

GX: What role do you think diversity plays in the performance and ability of Guard Soldiers to serve at home and overseas?

NM: One of the things I love about the Guard is that at any time, you could be working next to an English professor or a computer technician, a mechanic or an electrician. The vast diversity in skills and abilities that Citizen-Soldiers bring to the Guard is one of its best strengths. Overseas, especially in urban warfare, these skills become critical to war-fighting and stability operations.

GX: Which part of the *Soldier's Creed* do you most identify with?

NM: “I will never leave a fallen comrade.” We serve our country and do our duty, but as Soldiers we also serve each other. The trust that we have in one another to protect each other and to do everything in our power to ensure each other's survival is a bond rarely found anywhere. It transcends every difference in culture, religion or attitude. I know that my Soldiers will never abandon me on the battlefield, just as they know I will not abandon them. **GX**

Kansas ADT Arrives in Afghanistan

By SSG Adora Medina / JALALABAD AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN

An agribusiness development team (ADT) from the Kansas National Guard unfurled its colors in Afghanistan's Laghman province May 3 and began its work of jump-starting the agricultural economy. Before the unit arrived in northeastern Afghanistan, an ADT from Missouri was the only one operating in the Nuristan, Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman provinces, also known as the N2KL region. With additional assets, the teams will be able to focus on specific areas of development.

“Each area of Afghanistan has a unique set of agricultural challenges and advantages that require tailored approaches to resolve,” COL Eric Peck, commander of the Kansas ADT, said.

“The more focused we are on the strengths and challenges for a specific locality, the greater chance we have to succeed in improving the quantity, quality and safety of agricultural products for the consumers.”



UNFURLING THE FLAG A ceremony to mark the arrival of the Kansas Agribusiness Development Team takes place in the Mehtar Lam district of Afghanistan's Laghman province, May 3, 2009.

Guard Soldiers and Airmen—all volunteers for the duty—make up Peck's team, and they bring expertise from both military and civilian experience in infantry tactics, engineering, security operations and a variety of civilian skills. They've come from all over Kansas, Texas, and Washington to form what Peck called a truly cohesive melting pot of farmers and agribusiness professionals. “Our team is focused on four major agribusiness infrastructure areas—production, storage, processing and education—and we have projects and program proposals in those areas that we are discussing with our Afghan government, provincial reconstruction team and interagency partners,” Peck said.

As the Soldiers and Airmen settle into Afghanistan, they await the challenges ahead and look forward to paving the way for several rotations of teams to follow as they work to bolster the Afghan food market and aid in economic development. **GX**

CHIEF MASTER SGT. GONDA MONCADA, TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD / SGT. LUKE AHERTON

Almost Home

ECHO COMPANY SOLDIER REFLECTS ON IRAQ DEPLOYMENT

By Clint Wood

▣ **ABOUT TWO MONTHS OUT** from the redeployment of New York state's Echo Co, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, **GX** caught up with SGT Mark Lupiani of the unit. They were just about to return from Iraq.

GX: What have you learned on this deployment?

ML: I learned how to be a better leader. I can now look at my troops knowing they each have individual strengths and use them to the best of their abilities. Part of being a noncommissioned officer is identifying talent within your organization. I think that lesson will help me in my civilian life, no matter which path I may choose.

I have also learned that I can stare adversity in the face and walk away feeling confident and proud of my performance under pressure.

GX: What is the one thing that surprised you during this deployment?

ML: That's a tough question because I've been trained to expect all things during my military career. However, the coalition forces here in Iraq have surprised me the most. I did not realize before this deployment that I would be working with Soldiers and civilians from so many countries, such as Uganda, Romania, the U.K., Bosnia, Kosovo, El Salvador, etc.

The United States is an incredible country and it's nice to see how many people are appreciative of the work we've done across the world. I've spoken with individuals from Bosnia and Kosovo who still remember everything that we've done for them and they assure me if I was ever to visit those places I would be treated as a royal guest in their country. I now understand what it means to call somebody an "ally."

Additionally, when U.S. Soldiers are in Kuwait, tremendous efforts are made to keep us safe and I wish I could personally thank the Kuwaiti government for everything they have done for us over the years.



PAUSING IN AL KUT SGT Mark Lupiani of Echo Company pauses in front of a Humvee at Al Kut, Iraq.

GX: What are you going to tell your fellow Soldiers about deploying in a combat zone?

ML: I am going to tell them the truth. Being deployed in a combat zone is as difficult as you make it.

You must maintain mental focus throughout the deployment and constantly remind yourself that it is a temporary assignment, but a critical one. Do whatever it takes within the guidelines of your Army values to keep yourself safe and always aware of your surroundings.

Treat members of other nations with the upmost respect, because you are an ambassador of the United States. Be generous to them, patient and understanding of their needs, and they will treat you with the same respect.

Never objectify your enemy, literally or figuratively, and remember that other cultures may have very different practices, customs and norms. The vast majority of the citizens of other nations have the same feelings, needs, wants and desires you do, enemy or ally. Never forget that we are professionals—the best-trained, most sophisticated and most educated military in the world.

GX: What are you going to tell your replacements to ensure they have a safe and smooth deployment?

ML: When you are performing fueling operations, you must pay attention to what you are doing. NCOs will have the toughest job because

you cannot follow your Soldiers around on a daily basis and watch them every time they perform their duties. However, you are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they are meeting all safety regulations at all times.

GX: What has been the most challenging aspect of the deployment?

ML: The most challenging part has been being away from my family. Being Italian, I am very close with my family and see them on a regular basis. I miss my nieces and nephews dearly and I always keep them in my heart.

On my dog tags, I keep two good luck charms my fiancée, Amy, gave me before I left. I keep a couple of my father's coins in my pockets at all times.

I am not a religious person, but I believe having a positive attitude can help you focus more on your surroundings and the mission. This focus [could help] keep you safer than other Soldiers who might be so consumed by their emotions, they lose track of what they are doing.

I try to maintain contact with my family as much as possible and have been provided the tools by the military to do so. But they understand that calling home too much can have a negative impact on my ability to focus on the mission.

GX: What is the first thing you are going to do when you get home?

ML: The first thing I am going to do aside from greeting and visiting all of my family members is work on my car. I have a 2002 Nissan Maxima with a six-speed manual transmission, which I purchased in 2003. I have already given my fiancée Amy fair warning that I plan on upgrading the suspension, doing a little bodywork, brakes, exhaust, etc.

I am doing this because I feel that when Soldiers return home, they should look to a hobby or passion that they have had in the past as a means for reintegrating with society. Too often, Soldiers return home and want to relax and do nothing. I feel that excessive relaxation of one's routine can have a negative impact on their ability to blend back into a normal civilian life. In this way, one can develop their own method for bringing a sense of normalcy back to their lives.

Additionally, working at something positive can bring with it a sense of great accomplishment and deter Soldiers from abusing alcohol and drugs when returning home. **GX**

Rising Through the Guard Ranks



LEADING FROM THE FRONT MG Taluto spent much of his time in Iraq with the 278th Regimental Combat Team out in the field with his men.

MG JOSEPH TALUTO NOMINATED AS GUARD DIRECTOR

By Eric Durr | NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

MG Joseph Taluto, the adjutant general of New York, whose military career started as a private and included division command in Iraq, has been nominated for a third star and to serve as Director of the Army National Guard by President Barack Obama.

Taluto will replace LTG Clyde Vaughn, who is retiring after serving as the Director of the Army National Guard for the past four years.

New York Gov. David Paterson praised Taluto's selection for the job.

"Major General Joseph Taluto has been a dedicated officer in the New York National Guard for more than 40 years, and his selection not only reflects his great ability and tremendous leadership style, but the talent and expertise New York can offer to the rest of the nation," Paterson said. "I congratulate President Obama for his decision to nominate MG Taluto to serve as Director of the Army National Guard."

As adjutant general, Taluto made recruiting for the Army National Guard a priority, resulting in New York exceeding 100 percent strength for the first time in decades. He also emphasized family and Soldier support programs, directing the creation of a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program that has become a model for other states.

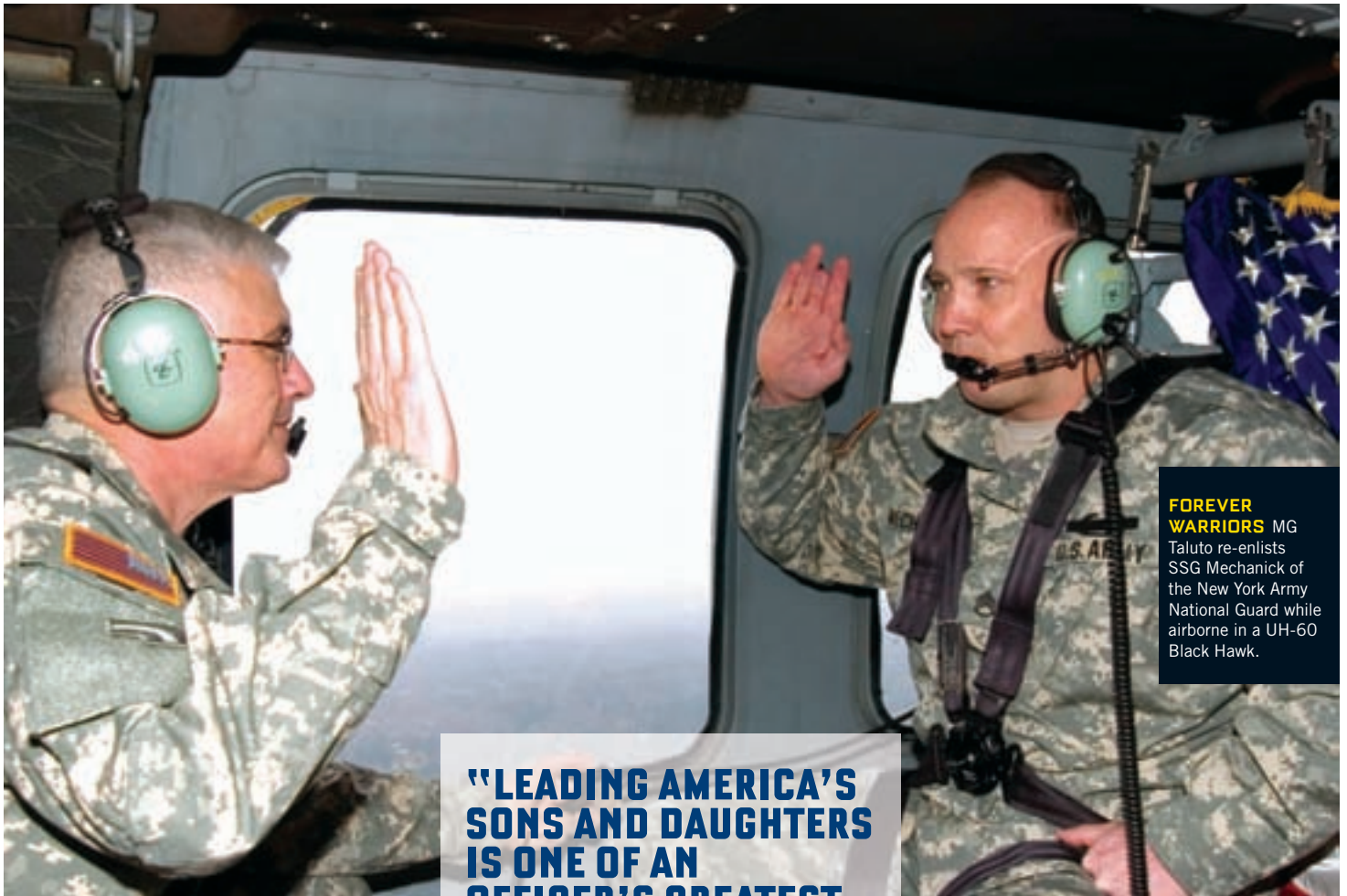
He also emphasized increased domestic response capabilities, lobbying for the creation of a second Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team in New York focused on New York City, and restructuring the New York National Guard's task force in the New York City area into a more capable and flexible force.

Taluto's nomination for the higher rank and the new job must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

"It is with a heavy heart that I leave New York State, but I am looking forward to taking on this challenging new assignment for the great Soldiers I serve," Taluto said.

"Leading America's sons and daughters is one of an officer's greatest responsibilities and one

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD



FOREVER WARRIORS MG Taluto re-enlists SSG Mechanick of the New York Army National Guard while airborne in a UH-60 Black Hawk.

“LEADING AMERICA’S SONS AND DAUGHTERS IS ONE OF AN OFFICER’S GREATEST RESPONSIBILITIES AND ONE OF MY GREATEST JOYS.”

>> MG Joseph Taluto

of my greatest joys. I look forward to doing all that I can to help our Soldiers and their families better serve their states and our great nation, but will miss the terrific men and women of the New York National Guard with whom I have served nearly all my life,” the general said. “I want to thank President Obama for the opportunity and Governor Paterson for the honor to have served New York State.”

The 61-year-old Taluto enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1965 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1968. His first assignment as an officer was in a Nike-Hercules missile battery, manned by the Army National Guard and assigned to protect New York City from air attack.

After that assignment Taluto transferred to the Armor Branch and held a variety of positions in the 1st Battalion, 210th Armor, including command positions in three companies while completing the Armor Officer Advanced Course.

After serving in operations officer assignments at several levels of command, he was assigned as Chief of Staff, Headquarters, Troop

Command, New York Army National Guard, with subsequent assignments as Chief of Staff, 42nd Infantry Division, Chief of Staff, State Area Command, Deputy Commander, 27th Infantry Brigade and Assistant Division Commander, 42nd Infantry Division.

As Chief of Staff of the 42nd Infantry Division, he played a key role in the New York National Guard’s deployment of almost 5,000 Soldiers to cope with a massive ice storm in northern New York in 1998. In 2001, he led the National Guard task force assigned to New York City in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

He took command of the 42nd Infantry Division in 2003 and in 2004 the division

headquarters and division support units mobilized to deploy to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In February 2005, Taluto and the 42nd Infantry Division took command of Multi-National Division-North Central, responsible for four provinces north of Baghdad. Known as Task Force Liberty, the force included the National Guard’s 116th Brigade Combat Team and 278th Regimental Combat Team, and the 1st and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams of the 3rd Infantry Division; 23,000 Soldiers in total.


After returning from Iraq Taluto was offered the job of adjutant general, responsible for the 17,000 men and women of the New York Army and Air National Guard by then-Gov. George Pataki. His appointment was reaffirmed by Gov. Eliot Spitzer and then Paterson after Spitzer left office.

Taluto’s son Jason serves as a sergeant in the New York Army National Guard and deployed to Iraq as part of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters when his father led the division. **GX**



“
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>> SSG STEPHANIE MCCURRY, OF THE
ILLINOIS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD, IS A THREE-TIME
VETERAN OF THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.



Beyond Borders

Building Alliances
through the Guard's State
Partnership Program

By Camille Breland



lights flashed. Hostages huddled together inside a building, feverishly waiting to be saved. Soldiers in “bomb suits” worked carefully outside—first detecting, then detonating, an improvised explosive device in a parked car.

These Soldiers—members of the Florida Army National Guard Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams—joined forces with Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, law enforcement, paramedics and firefighters to set up a mobile command post. They gathered

intelligence about the hostage situation, cleared the buildings, captured the “bad guys” and garnered intel from them.

Based on the 2004 Beslan massacre, when nearly 1,100 secondary-school students and teachers were taken hostage by 30 heavily armed terrorists in the small town of Beslan, Russia, this day’s training in January provided a comprehensive exercise for Florida’s regional antiterrorism task force.

But Floridians weren’t the only ones involved in the training exercise: Every move in the three-day event was carefully watched and studied by visitors from a foreign land—Guyana.

Citizens from this small country in South America have been making pilgrimages to the Sunshine State for three years now as part of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP).

Florida and Guyana are just one of the matchups within the SPP, and the terrorist training exercise was just one of the 24 events the Florida Guard has planned for this year with the country.

From noncommissioned officers to an adjutant general and the Suriname minister of defense, GX talked to several states about the mission, history and strength of their partnerships with other nations. Though each country’s geography, population, religion and language may differ, one thing is for sure: Each nation has a stronger global presence and is on a path to success because of the National Guard.

» ENSURING GLOBAL SECURITY POST-COLD WAR

The SPP’s roots date back to 1993—a year before the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Partnership for Peace was established.

At the end of the Cold War and with the fall of communism and the Soviet Union, the National Guard Bureau and other U.S. military leaders saw the need to establish relationships with the newly freed countries in Central and Eastern Europe. But they wanted these relationships to be different from the ambassadorial and diplomatic ones—they wanted these relationships to be personal.

And so began a series of matchups between the National Guard and military forces from countries like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. First approved by the National Guard Bureau and U.S. European Command, the partnerships were originally established to help the countries form an operable reserve military force, provide military support to civilian authorities and foster democracy.

But as the partnerships began to flourish, the National Guard quickly realized its exchange of information was extending beyond the military realm. The partner countries wanted to know how the U.S. handled agriculture, economic development, entrepreneurship and other areas of interest. What was the best way to cultivate new business? How did the U.S. support and sustain each town’s government and citizens?

As a result, the military-to-military exchanges inflated to civilian-to-military and eventually civilian-to-civilian partners, too. Today, there are full-scale partnerships between 61 countries and 50 U.S. states, three territories and Washington, DC. These partnerships are chosen based on similarities in population size, landmass, local economy and agriculture.

“[The SPP] is an opportunity for us to go and help a community and country,” commented CPT Kathleen Dirk of the South Dakota Army National Guard. “Guard Soldiers don’t do that just at home—we do that everywhere.”

SSG Travis Ray, a Louisiana National Guard engineer who has traveled to Belize twice, spoke of how the SPP creates a safer America. He said the partnerships create stronger bonds between Guard Soldiers and give them a better understanding of the National Guard’s role—at home and abroad.

“Without a doubt, the State Partnership Program makes our nation a much stronger and safer place to raise all of our families,” he added.

By building friendships with nations across the globe, the United States is assuring its security, one partner at a time.

Illinois – Poland:

FROM WARSAW PACT TO REPUBLIC



<p>POLAND Capital: Warsaw Official language: Polish Population: 38,130,300 Military: 150,000 in Land Forces, Navy, Air Forces and Special Forces</p>	<p>ILLINOIS Capital: Springfield Population: 12,852,500 Military: 13,200 in Army and Air National Guard</p>
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It's no surprise that Illinois was partnered with Poland: Chicago houses the world's second-largest Polish population in a city—the first being the country's capital of Warsaw. In fact, you can go blocks through Chicago and see nothing but Polish shops, restaurants and influences. Plus, the Illinois National Guard has several Polish interpreters.

Though Illinois Guard Soldiers have been involved with Polish troops since the SPP's inception, it was in 2003 that the relationship blossomed to include training exercises in support of the Global War on Terror. The entire time the Polish military had a large contingent in Iraq, Illinois National Guard Soldiers were there, helping them with logistics and communication, said MG William Enyart, Illinois' adjutant general.

"[Our partnership] has gone from a bare bones exchange to a full-fledged partnership," Enyart told GX.

» LOOKING PAST WARSAW

Poland has come a long way in the 18 years since the deterioration of arguably one of the most feared and divisive treaties of all time: the Warsaw Pact.

Signed in 1955 in Warsaw, the pact originally united Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union as communist allies. Germany joined one year later. It was the communists' response to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had been signed in 1949.

The citizens of Poland and most of the other European communist countries overthrew their governments by 1989, and the pact officially disbanded in 1991 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic). Poland quickly elected a new president in 1990 and went on to join NATO in 1999.

"The close relationship between the Poles and the Illinois National Guard has really been a great benefit to solidifying the peace of Eastern Europe," Enyart said. "The partnership has helped transition Poland from a Warsaw Pact country into the vibrant democracy they are today."

Since Illinois joined forces with the country, the Soldiers and citizens have positively influenced not only its military, but also sectors like youth leadership and emergency response.

In 2008, Soldiers from the 233rd Military Police Company in Springfield traveled to Poland to train their military in security checkpoints, and convoy and

cordon search operations. The realistic exercises took the Polish Soldiers through multiple wartime scenarios, and upon completion, the Illinois Guard members gave their feedback.

More recently, the Illinois Guard took several Soldiers and civilians from state agencies to Poland to assist in a counter-terrorism response group. Representatives from civil defense, fire and police departments, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) met with Polish leaders to help them establish an emergency response team and system.

SSG Stephanie McCurry, then a Chemical Operations Specialist, was one of the Illinois Soldiers who traveled to Poland in June 2008 as part of a trilateral exercise with the Czech Republic.

"We showed them our ideas of how we do our decontamination, go through the [decommissioning] mines—things like that," McCurry said. "It was incredible to work side by side with Polish Soldiers."

The small group of Soldiers camped in tents in a field outside Warsaw for most of the exercise, but did visit the city during a few free moments. They visited Old Town and perused museums. During a walking tour of the city, they learned about its architecture and history.

"A lot of people don't get a chance to go to Poland," McCurry mused. "For me to go there, train and get to know their people on a personal level—it was a great learning experience."

Enyart said the Illinois Guard helped train the Polish military to NATO standards and equipped them. They're currently helping the Poles build a noncommissioned officer corps and train for combat in Afghanistan.

But exchanges like these don't just help other countries, Enyart explained. They benefit U.S. troops as well.

"It's a great opportunity for our Soldiers, too, because they get exposed to a different culture, and they get to train with Soldiers who operate under a different regimen," Enyart remarked.



MISSION PREP Military Police from the Illinois Army National Guard train Soldiers in Poland.

SGT KASSIDY SNYDER

» CHALLENGING THE TROOPS

In February, Polish leaders visited Chicago to discuss the Youth ChalleNGe Program, a National Guard initiative that helps at-risk youth gain discipline and leadership skills, while offering an opportunity to earn their GED.

Franciszek Adamczyk, chairman of the Polish National Defense Committee and a former Polish senator, said the relationship with the Illinois National Guard has been a triumph.

“Our army has been able to cooperate with the U.S. Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan thanks to the Illinois National Guard,” he told *GX*. “[Guard Soldiers] taught our Soldiers how to fight in urban areas, and to interact with foreign civilians and other Soldiers. It’s a success story.”

“There’s a lot to be said for civilian-acquired skills,” Enyart shared. “When you bring those kinds of skills along with your military skills, that’s a tremendous multiplier in helping train and educate other people to what our culture, society and Army is about.” ■

South Dakota	SURINAME
Capital: Pierre	Capital: Paramaribo
Population: 796,200	Official language: Dutch
Military: 4,400 in Army and Air National Guard	Population: 492,800
	Military: 2,200 in the National Army (Air and Naval Wings and Military Police)

“Both South Dakotans and Surinamers are a bit intrigued with each other at this point in the relationship,” LTC Tracy Settle, director of South Dakota’s SPP, wrote in an email.

Although the South Dakota-Suriname partnership only began in 2006, the state and country have quickly taken to each other, fostering relationships in the military, economic, education, arts and medical communities. In 2008 alone, more than 400 South Dakotans participated in the program.

SGM Tad Auker of the South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG), who served as the operations sergeant major in Suriname, has seen their relationship flourish since its inception.

“We really use the term ‘partnership,’” he said. “It wasn’t just a word thrown at [the program]. It was really an attempt to be a good neighbor, and establish partnerships and relationships with the people of Suriname.”

» ESTABLISHING A NATION

Suriname is named after its original inhabitants—the Surinen. By the 16th century, English and Dutch peoples and their slaves settled the land and set up plantations for agricultural goods like rice, bananas and sugar. After the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the Dutch prevailed with control of Suriname in exchange for New Amsterdam (now New York). The Netherlands remained in control of Suriname until 1975, when it was granted independence. The country



BUILDING BONDS Suriname delegation takes a break with the South Dakota National Guard Civil Support Team during Beyond the Horizon 2008.

appointed a president and prime minister, but continued to receive financial aid from Denmark. For the next several years, Suriname went through tough economic times, with a high percentage of its citizens unemployed. Military leaders refused to relinquish control and civil unrest flourished, culminating in the execution of 15 civilians in 1982.

But the country overcame its hardships, built a new constitution and held public elections in the late 1980s, working steadily to build economic and political strength. Its military is steadily swelling and, with the Guard’s help, Suriname is modeling its soldier structure to operate as efficiently as possible.

» THE BACKBONE OF THE GUARD

Like several other countries in the SPP, the Surinamese army is hoping to build a noncommissioned officer (NCO) corps, and they’ve turned to the South Dakota Army National Guard for help. Leaders from the Surinamese army met with Soldiers from the Regional Training Institute to discuss implementing an NCO corps—something Auker calls the “backbone of the Army and Guard.”

“One of the things that always shocks [foreign military leaders] is the number of young people that we have and the NCOs who handle significant responsibility,” Auker commented. “And that’s in large part due to the professional way we grow Soldiers in our organization.”

For South Dakota and Suriname, the best kind of NCO training came outside of the classroom. As part of humanitarian exercise Beyond the Horizon, SDARNG Soldiers traveled to Suriname from March through September in 2008 to assist in engineering, construction and healthcare missions. Though not officially part of the SPP, the exercise solidified the bond between the partners—Soldiers and citizens.

“For the Surinamese to see us in action, see us working together to get engineering projects accomplished and work out the details of living in a foreign country on a base camp—that’s beneficial in and of itself,” said Auker, who worked in Suriname during the mission. “Just by being there and operating, they get to observe us. That’s the best part of having our Soldiers on the ground there.”

COURTESY OF SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD

GX also spoke with Suriname’s minister of defense, Ivan Fernald, about the benefits of the partnership, which he calls a “catalyst” for his country’s development.

“Beyond the Horizon was a project that has helped us a lot,” Fernald said. “It is one of the projects that the [Surinamese] people saw and enjoyed.”

Another huge advantage for Suriname is being able to avoid the same blunders that the United States made in its own development as a country, Auker added.

“We can give them advice—I made this mistake, don’t make that mistake—or sit down at a mixer and learn in an hour what would normally take four years of business experience,” he asserted.

Fernald agrees.

“We have challenges, and the partnership provides opportunities to learn from each other, like the way we are dealing with obstacles,” Fernald replied. “We don’t have to reinvent the wheel—we can learn from it and modify it because we don’t have the same exact environment.

“Now that we have the partnership experience, it encourages us to talk and think about setting up a reserve force or National Guard of Suriname,” he continued. “I like the way [the South Dakota Soldiers] perform tasks—not just professionally, but the attitudes they express when performing.” ■

Florida – Guyana: RAYS OF THE SUNSHINE STATE	
GUYANA	Capital: Georgetown Official language: English Population: 858,900 Military: 206,000 available for Defence Force (Ground Forces, Coast Guard and Air Corps)
FLORIDA	Capital: Tallahassee Population: 18,328,300 Military: 12,000 in Army and Air National Guard

Established in 2006, the Florida-Guyana partnership fully encompasses all areas of the exchanges: military-to-military, civilian-to-military and civilian-to-civilian (see sidebar, next page).

CPT Patrick Heffernan, director of Florida’s SPP, is in charge of scheduling the missions between the countries. For 2009, Heffernan planned 24 exchanges, including youth services, crime prevention, emergency response and antiterrorism events.

“The idea [of the SPP] is that we’re able to foster long-term relationships not only with the Guard, but also with the civilian populace around us in different state organizations and entities,” he said.

» CLAIMING INDEPENDENCE

The French, English and Dutch first inhabited the Republic of Guyana, with the English eventually taking control during the Napoleonic wars in the early 1800s.

By 1928, Guyana, then referred to as British Guiana, officially became a crown colony—under the rule of a governor appointed by the

English monarchy. It remained so until 1953, when it was granted home rule, but stayed under England’s ultimate control.

Activists founded the country’s first political party, the Progressive People’s Party, in 1950 and elected a chief minister in 1953. But England feared the political views of the new administration and reclaimed its government within months of the election. It wasn’t until 1966 that Guyana claimed its full independence.

With landmass the size of Idaho, Guyana’s rich tropical forest covers nearly 80 percent of its territory, the borders of which are being disputed with neighbors Venezuela and Suriname. In 2005—the same year as Hurricane Katrina—Guyana saw the worst rains and massive flooding in more than a century, which spotlighted the country’s need for an effective emergency and disaster relief plan.

“WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MAKES OUR NATION A MUCH STRONGER AND SAFER PLACE TO RAISE ALL OF OUR FAMILIES.”

» SSG TRAVIS RAY, LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

» A TWO-WAY STREET

Responding to floods and other disasters is just one of the areas in which the Florida National Guard (FL NG) has been working with and training Guyanese personnel.

During the visit in January, four of Guyana’s senior law enforcement officials traveled to Florida for the orientation and three-day regional antiterrorism task force exercise. Besides witnessing the in-depth hostage training, the Guyanese also rode alongside Florida police officers as they patrolled the city and responded to calls.

Heffernan emphatically told of how the ideas and knowledge during the SPP missions doesn’t just come from Florida.

“It’s not a one-way situation,” Heffernan declared. “It’s definitely a two-way street. It’s an exchange.”

Another successful area of interest for the partnership has been youth services and crime prevention, he added. The FL NG has a thriving Youth ChalleNGe Program (YCP)—one of the largest in the nation. Visitors from several countries have met with Florida’s YCP directors to learn how to establish a similar program to combat crime among youth.

“We’re able to use [our YCP] as a template when we bring visitors up from the different countries,” Heffernan explained. “They’re able to tour the Youth ChalleNGe facilities, get a briefing from the director, and when they go home, they can set that up.”

What’s next?

“The future is absolutely limitless if you think about the different types of things we discuss—border security, drug control, crime prevention, youth services—it’s a full spectrum,” he said. “These are all things that the Florida National Guard works with on a daily basis and is able to share with our partner nations—and vice versa.” ■



When it comes to a community pulling together for a cause, there isn't a better example than the citizens and Soldiers of North Carolina helping the people of Moldova. In 2008 alone, dentists from North Carolina administered free treatment to Moldovan children, teams led by the North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) served alongside Moldovan doctors to give free Hepatitis A vaccines for orphans, boarding school residents and flood victims, and North Carolina residents donated 12 hearing devices and other equipment to a special education school in the country.

NCARNG engineers have built a medical clinic for an orphanage, which was dedicated in the name of North Carolina, and put in wells to provide water to Moldovan communities.

"Being a Citizen-Soldier, we bring not only military experience to the table, but also experience in so many facets of employment, government, infrastructure, architects, dentists, doctors and so on," said COL Jeff Brotherton, an NCARNG Soldier who has been involved with Moldova since the mid-1990s. "Our Soldiers have dual skill sets, and that's what makes us such a force multiplier as we build partner capacity with other nations. We add a dimension that other forces can't match."

>> "BACK IN THE USSR"

Moldova was known as the Principality of Moldavia from 1359 until 1812, then becoming part of the Russian Empire. In 1940, the country and other nations were formed into the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic. After WWII, the country remained under the Soviet Union until it gained independence in 1991.

Largely considered the poorest country in Europe, Moldova lacks not only proper healthcare and education, but also basic necessities like food.

In addition to its own missions, the National Guard sets up contacts for civilians so that they can serve and help Moldovans in their areas of expertise.

"We help facilitate numerous humanitarian and assistance events from citizens who do things out of the goodness of their heart," Brotherton said.

>> GETTING PERSONAL

One of these citizens is Ray West. For him, taking an interest in Moldova was about more than just helping a country—it was about the individual lives that he could affect.

On a trip to Moldova in 2005, West, along with North Carolina National Guard members, visited a school for disabled children outside the capital of Chisinau. There, he met 15-year-old Natalia Bolea, a young girl so disfigured from burns that she couldn't even fully close her eyes.

West was so touched by what he saw in Moldova that he quit his regular job and founded the Moldova World Children's Fund. And Bolea wasn't forgotten: In December 2008, she and her translator, Reghina Laburina, were brought to Greenville, NC, for a series of six corrective surgeries—all at no cost to Bolea or her family.

GX corresponded with Laburina and Bolea via email during Bolea's rehabilitation.

When Bolea heard she was going to receive medical help, "she was the happiest person in the world," Laburina wrote. "At that moment, she started living with hope."

Bolea thanks the National Guard Soldiers, whom she calls "brave," and has high hopes for the future of her country and the world.

"I wish that one day my country will be a place for everyone—even children with disabilities like me," Bolea said to Laburina. "I want peace and friendship for all countries."

>> FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

The National Guard's State Partnership Program is about helping other nations, building friends and security—something GEN Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, accented on a visit to a European Security Studies class in Germany. He acknowledged the safety the partnerships provide, especially in preparing for disasters and emergencies.

"We are living in complex and challenging times," he said on Feb. 5. "You start by preventing the things that can go wrong, and you start preventing by meeting and sharing ideas with people."

National Guard Soldiers teach, train and help people—much like what they do at home. Soldiers have followed their foreign counterparts from farmlands into war zones in Iraq to assist with peacekeeping operations. They're there every step of the way, like a true partner. **GX**

3 Types of Partnerships

The State Partnership Program consists of three types of relationships: military-to-military, civilian-to-military and civilian-to-civilian.

Mil-to-mil concentrates on training and exchanging ideas with the partner countries on NATO standards, responding to disasters, and establishing a noncommissioned officer force and eventually a reserve force similar to the National Guard.

Civ-to-mil exchanges focus on emergency response and government forces like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Civ-to-civ training delves into education, business, economics, healthcare, tourism and similar industries, fostering relationships to further the country's economy and gross domestic product.



THE PARTNERS

- Alabama + Romania
- Alaska + Mongolia
- Arizona + Kazakhstan
- Arkansas + Guatemala
- California + Ukraine
- California + Nigeria
- Colorado + Jordan
- Colorado + Slovenia
- Connecticut + Uruguay
- Delaware + Trinidad-Tobago
- District of Columbia + Jamaica
- Florida + Venezuela
- Florida + Guyana
- Florida + Eastern Caribbean Islands
- Georgia + Georgia
- Hawaii-Guam + Philippines
- Hawaii + Indonesia
- Idaho + Cambodia
- Illinois + Poland
- Indiana + Slovakia
- Kansas + Armenia
- Kentucky + Ecuador
- Louisiana + Belize
- Louisiana + Uzbekistan
- Maine + Montenegro
- Maryland + Estonia
- Maryland + Bosnia
- Massachusetts + Paraguay
- Michigan + Latvia
- Minnesota + Croatia
- Mississippi + Bolivia
- Missouri + Panama
- Montana + Kyrgyzstan
- Nevada + Turkmenistan
- New Hampshire + El Salvador
- New Jersey + Albania
- New Mexico + Costa Rica
- New York + South Africa
- North Carolina + Moldova
- North Carolina + Botswana
- North Dakota + Ghana
- Ohio + Hungary
- Ohio + Serbia
- Oklahoma + Azerbaijan
- Oregon + Bangladesh
- Pennsylvania + Lithuania
- Puerto Rico + Honduras
- Puerto Rico + Dominican Republic
- Rhode Island + Bahamas
- South Dakota + Suriname
- Tennessee + Bulgaria
- Texas-Nebraska + Czech Republic
- Texas + Chile
- Utah + Morocco
- Vermont + Macedonia
- Vermont + Senegal
- Virginia + Tajikistan
- Washington + Thailand
- West Virginia + Peru
- Wisconsin + Nicaragua
- Wyoming + Tunisia

Louisiana Graduates Two Belizean Officers

By SGT Tresa L. Allemang

Two Belizean Defense Force (BDF) Soldiers graduated from the accelerated Officer Candidate School at Fort McClellan in Anniston, AL, in March, as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP).

Louisiana adopted Belize as its "sister" country in 1996.

A ceremony held at the post chapel recognized Jamie L. Lord and Timothy B. Eljio from Belize, as two of more than 100 Soldiers from around the nation able to meet the demands of the rigorous course.

The eight-week course prepares military leaders both physically and mentally. The graduates conducted a 10-mile foot march, troop-leading procedures, a leadership reaction course and combat water survival training. They honed their skills in infantry squad tactics, operations, military intelligence, tactics, call-for-fire and communicative skills.

Before attending the accelerated course, the BDF Soldiers completed the Louisiana Army National Guard's Warrior Leader Course and Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course at Camp Cook in Ball, LA. This was to help prepare them for U.S. Army traditions and skills such as marching, saluting, and drill and ceremony, as their primary military training was provided by the British Army.

The state partners actively participate in a host of engagement activities ranging from bilateral familiarization to training exercise opportunities, fellowship-style internships, civic leader visits and medical assistance. To date, this partnership has given Eljio, Lord and three other Belizean Soldiers the opportunity to train as leaders with American Soldiers. **GX**



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS Doug Friez, a project advisor with the State Partnership Program, presents a soccer ball to a teacher at a school in Ghana, Africa. Friez was in the country to conduct a Disaster Management Workshop.

The Bugler

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE



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

Info and photos courtesy of NGB-ASM



>> HERO ON CALL: NEW RECRUIT

Hero on Call (HOC) has incorporated a new Soldier to further aid potential recruits with questions about enlisting in the Guard. Adding an officer to the team, HOC is now a fully rounded recruiting tool and can provide advice to recruits who are interested in becoming an officer. 2LT Kevin Carroll, MOS 25L and an ENG Officer, can provide information and advice on OCS, officer training and the responsibilities that accompany being an officer in the Guard. He can be accessed through normal channels. Connect to HOC by clicking on "Talk to a Soldier" at www.NATIONALGUARD.com.



>> PATH TO HONOR

Path to Honor has deployed an upgrade to the Web portal for recruiter use. This tool was designed to give recruiters a sense of recruits' potential ASVAB scores and what MOS they are best suited for in advance. This PTH Educational Assessment tool allows the recruits to take a "practice" test on the Web without having to go to a recruiter's office and use the recruiter's laptop. This provides recruiters more time out in the field and less time behind the computer. For more info on Path to Honor, recruiters can log in at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/rrportal.





>> HIGH SCHOOL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

The Guard is teaming up with the NFL to bring high school football players a skill-honing, character-building five-day camp. High School Player Development (HSPD) is an intense, weeklong camp aimed at incoming high school seniors, juniors and sophomores with the hopes of not only improving their on-the-field play, but also boosting their off-field character. Over the five-day course, coaches will work with players on:

- * Building character (ethics and values, attitude and teamwork)
- * Preparing for success in school and life after school
- * Time-management skills (Each player will receive a student planner.)
- * Offense position skills
- * Defense position skills

>> For more on the HSPD go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/nfl.

>> SOCIAL NETWORKS

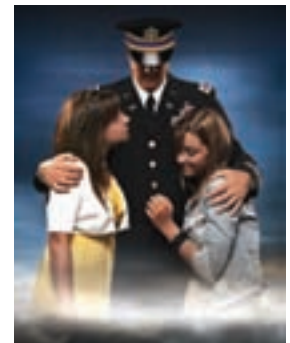
Interaction on the Army National Guard's pages at Facebook, MySpace and YouTube is steadily on the rise. The pages now include blogs and video testimonials from all types of Soldiers, like SGT Nic Ashby's column on building the new Guard car. Send your announcements, photos and events to SocialNetworks@nationalguard.com for posting. To get connected, go to:

- * MySpace.com/mynationalguard
- * YouTube.com/nationalguard
- * Facebook.com/nationalguard



>> THE PRICE OF PEACE

From writing a song on some notebook paper to starring in a music video, Alyssa and Cassy Gaddis have been on a wild but successful run as their song, "The Price of Peace," has been embraced by the Army National Guard. Inspired by events while attending deployment ceremonies with her father, CW5 Jim Gaddis, Command Chief Warrant Officer of the Illinois Army National Guard, Alyssa wrote a song in hopes of lifting the spirits of families of deployed Soldiers. To watch "The Price of Peace" and learn more about the Gaddis Girls go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/PriceofPeace.



Behold the Gauntlet

AIR ASSAULT'S INFAMOUS O COURSE

Story and photos by SFC Ken Suratt

AIR ASSAULT SCHOOL is often referred to as the toughest 10 days in the Guard, and Soldiers who make it through the training can attest to this.

But there is a particular task at Air Assault that stymies everyone but the toughest Soldiers: the "O Course," or obstacle course.

The O Course is designed to assess a student's physical stamina, mental toughness and ability to perform at heights without displaying fear or distress.

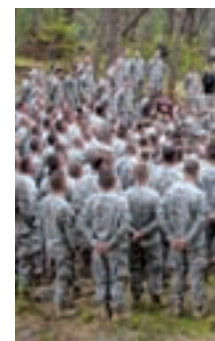
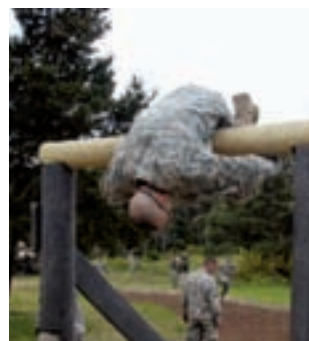
Passing the course is a prerequisite for enrollment in Air Assault School, and it ensures the student will not be a safety risk to themselves, instructors or other students during the school's tough and demanding training events. **GX**

O Course 4-1-1:

- Students receive a briefing on all obstacles before beginning.
- Course consists of nine obstacles.
- Students must successfully negotiate all obstacles.
- Students who fail an obstacle will be given a five-minute break and a second attempt; failing the second attempt makes the Soldier a "no-go" for that obstacle.
- A student must successfully negotiate two "mandatory" obstacles—the "Tough One" and the "Confidence Climb." Failure on either of these obstacles will result in immediate dismissal from the Air Assault School.
- A student may not miss more than one "Non-Mandatory" obstacle.
- Immediately after the O Course, students must complete the 2-mile run in 18 minutes or less, in ACUs and running shoes, regardless of age or gender.



If you have questions or comments, please contact SFC Ken Suratt at Kenneth.suratt@us.army.mil.







THE LANGUAGE CENTER

The Language Center can boast that, in more than 30 years, not a single Warrior has been discharged from BT due to poor English skills.

“What makes the Language Center unique is the fact that we are the only English resident school in the Guard,” said 1SG Luis Cora, the Language Center’s first sergeant. “There is one resident English school within the Department of Defense, and that’s only for Active Duty and Reserve Soldiers.”

Since its founding in 1976, the Language Center has been the gateway to BT for thousands of Puerto Rican recruits.

“The philosophy and mind-set here has changed,” Cora said. “We went from deciding whether a Soldier was capable of being in our Guard, to establishing that if they make it through our doors, we will make them capable.”

The Warriors’ combined experience in RSP and language training gives them a head start in military life. “For years, we were doing two missions at once—running the Language Center and the Transition Company,” Cora said. “But now, Recruiting and Retention Command is responsible for the Recruit Sustainment Program, and we are the ones dealing with the Language Center. Our main focus here is to teach English communication skills; however, our secondary mission is to transform the Warriors and help them adapt to the military way of life.”

The experience of military life is exemplified by the presence of drill sergeants at the school. According to Cora, the drill sergeants help get the Soldiers accustomed to the military environment.

“It’s one thing to be able to speak efficiently in your second language, and another to do it under pressure,” Cora explained. “The drill sergeants add that flavor to our training. For years, this was the only

Breaking Down Barriers

RSP AND ENGLISH SKILLS GET PUERTO RICO READY

Story and photos courtesy of NGB-ASM

Making the transition to military life can be challenging.

But thanks to the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) of the Puerto Rico National Guard, Warriors are equipped with skills that increase their confidence and ability to meet the challenges of Basic Training (BT).

The RSP in Puerto Rico falls under the leadership of LTC Ricardo Alonso and SGM Donald Gonzalez.

“Be Your Best’ and ‘Be All You Can Be’ were the slogans of the past when it came to joining the military, but basically, you were thrown into

the unknown,” observed Alonso, RRC Commander. “Our RSP facilitates the transition from citizen to Soldier and prepares you for future success in your military career. We offer a rich experience that brings people into our way of life. And our way of life gives our Warriors many opportunities.”

For starters, instead of going directly to their unit of assignment, each new Warrior reports directly to the RSP following their enlistment, and does not report to their unit until they’ve completed Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and are qualified for their military occupational specialty (MOS).

For the unit, this multi-phased training eliminates the distraction of having non-MOS-Q unit members affect a unit’s readiness posture. For Soldiers, it eliminates the frustration of being untrained.

Specific training may vary for each new Citizen-Soldier. Due to its rich history of multilingualism, the RSP Warriors of Puerto Rico may need English-language training to understand the instructions they’ll receive at BT and AIT.

Recruits may be enrolled in the Puerto Rico National Guard English Language Center (Language Center), where they’ll receive full-immersion English training for 10–24 weeks.

“It’s one thing to be able to speak efficiently in your second language, and another to do it under pressure.”

>> 1SG Luis Cora, Puerto Rico National Guard English Language Center



National Guard institution with active duty-qualified drill instructors. Now they have them in many states, but we were the pioneers.”

The drill sergeants of the Language Center pull double duty by providing support on the drill weekend for the RSP. In the RSP, Warriors receive training in basic military skills including marching, weapons assembly and disassembly, basic Warrior leader tasks, Army Values and physical fitness

conditioning, to name a few. English training focuses on familiarization with the terminology, the Army discipline and increasing physical fitness and confidence.

FULL SERVICE SUPPORT

Along with addressing language concerns, the Puerto Rico RSP shows consideration in other forms of Warrior Outreach.

“I’m developing workshops aimed at the prevention of training pipeline losses (TPL),” stated Gonzalez. “Accountability and communication are key to combating this. Also, once a potential TPL Warrior is recognized, our recruiters are instrumental in bringing them back.

“We also have Family Outreach,” he continued. “The families are brought in and exposed to what

their Warriors are going through at the Language Center, and celebrate their achievements with them at the Battle Handoff Ceremony.”

Concurrently, the new Citizen-Soldiers learn from each other. At any given drill, you will find men and women between the ages of 18 and 35 exchanging experiences and serving as inspiration to those who have also volunteered to serve their nation and the community in the Puerto Rico National Guard.

STANDING ON CEREMONY

The highlight of each drill comes with the Battle Handoff Ceremony, in which AIT graduates are recognized for their attainment of this important step in their career in front of their unit commander, first sergeant, families and fellow RSP members.

A pivotal moment in the ceremony is when the Citizen-Soldiers share their experiences and the key to their success with the audience. Topping the list are the Recruit Sustainment Program and the Language Center. **GX**



To view video testimonials of RSP warriors, go to [YouTube.com/nationalguard](https://www.youtube.com/nationalguard).



Avoid Problems Before They Happen

A How-to for Guard Soldiers

By MAJ Elaine M. Gullotta

PFC Tim Custer of the Army National Guard (ARNG) remembered his briefing about Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). But he wasn't thinking about mobilizing then. Besides, he thought the law applied only to large businesses, not the small family-run supply store that he managed.

WHEN HIS UNIT WAS ALERTED, he knew his employer wouldn't like it, so he didn't tell him until two weeks before he was deployed. His employer was mad—not only because he was leaving, but because there was no time to hire a replacement.

Reserve personnel must notify their employers in advance of their deployment. To assist, ESGR posted a sample Deployment Notification Letter and Military Leave of Absence Form on Esgr.mil under the resources section.

“If we could eliminate just one of these misunderstandings, the number of cases reported to ESGR would be significantly reduced.”

>> Curtis Bell, Director Ombudsman,
National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR)

When Custer returned from mobilization he didn't even try to get his job back. He was out of work for a long time.

LT Joel Jackson saw the layoffs happening in his trucking company and figured it was just a matter of time before it happened to him, too.

To avoid a layoff, he volunteered to deploy with a unit that was going to Iraq, thinking he would be safe for a year and that his company would have to rehire him once he got back.

Upon return, he learned that the law was not on his side. He felt betrayed and confused, and blamed ESGR for not helping him.

THE ABC'S OF ESGR

Although the names used above are fictional, both of these scenarios are examples of typical cases reported to ESGR.

“If we could eliminate just one of these misunderstandings, the number of cases reported to ESGR would be significantly reduced,” said Curtis Bell, Director Ombudsman, National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR).

The Notification Letter is also a tool to start the communication process between Soldiers and their civilian employers. Typically, it's a lack of open communication that leads to late notifications and increased friction.

“The employer may become angry that the member is leaving, but waiting to tell them only makes things worse,” Bell said. “By starting the process early and providing timely written notification, the military member can reduce the chances of problems.”

Service members are not protected against economic problems.

If a company conducts layoffs, closes a branch or goes bankrupt, service members may lose their job as a result. Conversely, employers may not base their decision to lay off an employee based on the employee's association with the military.

WIN-WIN SCENARIOS

Service members must consider the impact on their employer when volunteering for military duty. Eventually the Soldier will return to their civilian job and should therefore strive

to maintain a positive relationship with their employer.

A Department of Defense (DoD) organization based in Washington, DC, NCESGR encourages military members to create “win-win situations.”

Service members should consider their employers a strategic partner who supports their efforts to serve our nation. One effective way to involve them is to encourage them to sign an “Statement of Support.”

Another way would be to link the company's Web site to ESGR's site. This would provide management with access to resources and help ensure compliance with the law. **GX**

ESGR Mission

The mission of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees. ESGR does so by recognizing outstanding employer support, increasing awareness of USERRA and by resolving conflict through mediation.

Civilian Employment Information

When was the last time you updated your employer data in the CEI Data base? Did you know this is now an annual requirement for all National Guard members (excluding AGRs)? Help ESGR help you. Update at the following site; it takes only five minutes: dmdc.osd.mil/appj/esgr/loginAction.do

For more info about ESGR or USERRA, visit Esgr.mil or call (800) 336-4590.

WE ALL SERVE




JAMES SHELBS, VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF NORTH CAROLINA BASED INCOOR CORPORATION WITH EMPLOYEES, U.S. AIR FORCE NATIONAL GUARD TECHNICAL SERGEANT SHANE TRAMMELL AND U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD SERGEANT RYAN GARRETT.

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

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





"I may not know something about everything, and I will probably never know everything about something, but I'm capable of learning anything."

>> PFC Jessica Duplantis, 18

I'M READY PFC Jessica Duplantis will attend Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, in August before heading to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA, to study Arabic.

Facing a Challenge

LOUISIANA TEEN FINDS LIFE PATH IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

By Camille Breland

On a whim, 16-year-old Jessica Duplantis made a life-changing decision. She was in a class with the Youth ChalleNGe Program in Carville, LA, when her teacher asked the students who was interested in joining the National Guard.

But since she wasn't 17 yet, Jessica couldn't enlist.

I was so bummed that I couldn't raise my hand [to show] that I wanted to join the Guard. I didn't realize it until that moment that, wow, this is what I really want," she told GX during an interview.

Jessica's impulse became a reality on Jan. 9, 2009, when she enlisted in the Louisiana Army National Guard. Getting to that point was a result of several experiences throughout her life.

SELFLESS SERVICE

Jessica has been volunteering and serving others since she was a young girl. With parents who are missionaries, she was raised in a culture where "it's better to give than to receive."

"Ever since Jessica was very little, she's had such a compassion at heart for service," Jessica's mom, Ann Ricks, shared. "She was always wanting to help the homeless, and when 9/11 happened, it really had a great impact on her. She began watching what was going on in the world. Then with Katrina and the war in Iraq, all of these things brought her vision to the military and to what they actually do to help us."

Homeschooled since the 6th grade, Jessica wanted to get a different experience to earn her high school diploma. She surfed the Internet for ways to earn her GED, eventually stumbling onto the Youth ChalleNGe Program (YCP) Web site.

Intrigued, Jessica applied to a program near her hometown of Covington, LA. By going through the YCP, she would not only earn her GED, she'd gain the self-discipline, leadership and life skills essential for her future.

"In the beginning, it was hard," Jessica remembered about the program. "It pushed my physical limitations. But I overcame it."

Her mentor at YCP, and eventual Guard recruiter, SSG Michael Davila, remembers meeting Jessica for the first time.

"My initial impression of her was that she was the type of person that if she put her mind to something, it didn't matter what anybody said," he told GX. "If she was determined, she would reach her goal and nobody would stop her."

"The two things that really stood out for me about Jessica were her self-discipline and her thirst for knowledge," he continued. "She's a perfectionist. If she does something wrong—even with marching—she'll keep working until she gets it to her satisfaction."

ALL ABOUT THE ATTITUDE

Jessica admits to holding herself to very high standards, and that's what makes her a great Soldier. She studies, prepares and trains for any assignment like it's her last. In fact, she had already memorized the *Soldier's Creed*, the motto every Soldier lives by, before her first Guard meeting.

So it's no surprise she graduated third in her YCP class, earned her GED and blew the Guard's entrance exam out of the water. Out of 100 points,

Jessica scored a 91 on the test, making her eligible for almost any occupation in the Guard. Within the hour of finding out the great news, "Sergeant Navilo came running and said, 'Duplantis, have you seen your score?'" she recalled.

"Yes, sergeant."

"We're gonna sit down and talk."

Davila explained that for Jessica, in the Guard, "the sky's the limit." After carefully considering her options, Jessica decided to become a human intelligence collector, which requires learning a second language.

To determine what language she'd pursue, Jessica had to take another test—the Defense Language Aptitude Battery. Again, she scored in the top percentile and chose to learn Arabic, one of the most difficult languages offered in the Guard.

Jessica fully realized this decision while looking at a friend's book in Arabic.

"I started looking at [the book], and it read backward, and I thought, 'Oh my goodness! I'm going to be learning this!'" she recalled. "It may look like a bunch of squiggles and dots right now, but I'm going to understand. It's empowering and intimidating."

Jessica, now of private first class rank, will attend Basic Training in August at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, then head to her job training in Arizona, and finally to the Defense Language Institute in California. Is she fully prepared? Probably. Is she ready? Absolutely.

"Attitude is the window through which you view life," Jessica mused. "If you have a bad one, life is never going to meet your expectations. If you have a good attitude and keep an open mind, you're going to get a lot out of life."

Spoken like a true Soldier. **GX**



The Power of the Humvee

SCHOOL PROGRAM REVS UP FOR RECRUITING

By Natalya Minkovsky

DID YOU KNOW that Arnold Schwarzenegger was the first civilian to own a Hummer H1, the off-road vehicle modeled on the military's high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV)? Since 1992, when the governor of California—then an actor starring in *Terminator 2*—purchased the vehicle, the Hummer's popularity has grown, and there are now three models on the road.

But the original HMMWV, also known as a Humvee, stands out from its civilian counterpart with unique features you will not see at any car dealership. Ballistics protection? Check. Sixty-inch deep water fording? Check. Blackout lighting mode? Check.

The Humvee's "wow factor" is what inspired SFC Dwayne Barker of the Indiana Army National Guard to start bringing the vehicle to schools. "Here in Indiana, Humvees are one of the coolest things these kids have ever seen," he said. And it opened doors with educators as well. After SFC Barker started bringing the vehicle to automotive technology classes, other teachers began to ask what additional technology and innovation the Guard had to offer their students.

"I'm sure there were other recruiters across the nation doing the same thing," SFC Barker said. "As recruiters, we have to be original and come up with new ways to interact with the students. With a lunchroom setup you don't get the same kind of one-on-one as you do in a classroom."

SFC Barker continued, "The Humvee has been sitting around in motor pools for years, so it was a no-cost way to get students excited and motivated. Once you've been in their classroom and built a rapport, the next time you're at the school you're not a stranger to the students anymore."

SFC Barker shared his successes with other recruiters on his team, including SFC Lloyd Bowers, who is now the School Programs Manager at the Strength Maintenance Division of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-ASM).

"Being in a place where I could influence a program that would benefit recruiters, building a program around the Humvee seemed like the

"The HUMVEE School Program gets students excited about real-world opportunities."

>> Debby Jarrell,
Highland Springs Technical Center instructor

perfect fit," SFC Bowers said. "It's not reinventing the wheel. Pretty much every Soldier has used the vehicle. A standardized program enhances what recruiters are already doing, and makes it easier for them to wrap their arms around this tool to which they all have access."



SFC Gregory Spiker (left) and SFC Juan Valdez present the HUMVEE School Program to automotive technology students during the video shoot at the Highland Springs Technical Center.

That is how the HUMVEE School Program, which launched in April, was born. From automotive engineering to vehicle maintenance, the program exposes students at vocational-technical schools, schools with automotive classes and junior/technical colleges to the many career paths offered.

For students interested in vehicle maintenance careers, learning about Humvee history and technology is a unique learning experience. The program also provides students in the National

Automotive Technicians Education Foundation's (NATEF) certification program with hands-on experience in areas including suspension and steering, engine performance, brakes and preventive maintenance.

A recruiter can present the HUMVEE School Program to up to 40 students, with one or more educators in attendance. The length of the presentation can be tailored to the school; NGB-ASM developed lesson plans that cover 45 minutes, 90 minutes and two hours.

Developed with the M998 series HMMWV as the baseline, the program offers recruiters the tools they need to bring a Humvee to a school, demonstrate the vehicle's innovation and technology, and involve the students in hands-on preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS). Classroom materials include a 15-minute video about the vehicle, lesson plans, student manuals, PMCS checklist and certificate of completion.

Also included on the DVD recruiters can order from Mission Zone are a variety of bonus materials for promoting the program to educators, including a preview video, one-page lesson overview, flyer and posters. There is also a program Web site with videos, Flash presentations and downloads.

While developing the program, the Guard shot a promotional video in the automotive technology classroom of Highland Springs Technical Center in Highland Springs, VA. Since the video depicts recruiters presenting the program to a group of students, by participating in the video shoot, the school got a sneak peek at the program. The educators at the tech center, including the instructors, school counselor and principal, watched the filming and liked what they saw.

"The HUMVEE School Program gets students excited about real-world opportunities," said Debby Jarrell, a Highland Springs Technical Center instructor who watched recruiters from the Virginia National Guard present the program during the video shoot.

"It's a really nice way for the students to get engaged, and the teacher can step back and watch other people present a program," said Brad Beazley, career and technical education specialist for Henrico County Public Schools. "It benefits the teacher as well as the students."

For more information about the HUMVEE School Program visit HumveeSchoolProgram.com. **GX**



Loans Decoded

YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT STUDENT LOAN

By Elizabeth Millard, Courtesy of USAA

If you're like most students, you won't get through college without some loans. When you apply for financial aid from your school, you basically have two loan options: government or private. This guide offers a brief glimpse at their benefits, drawbacks and payback options. For greater detail, get in touch with your college's financial aid office.

	Federal Stafford Loans	GOVERNMENT	State Loans	PRIVATE
Benefits	<p>Everyone is eligible.</p> <p>No one checks your credit history.</p> <p>Congress sets the interest rate. In 2007, it was 6.8 percent. A new federal law will cut that interest rate in half to 3.4 percent over the next four years.</p> <p>Depending on your family's income, the government may pay the interest while you are in school and during the six-month period after you leave school. To get an idea if your family's income is low enough to qualify, use the calculator at FAFSA4caster.ed.gov. This tool can also help you gather income information needed to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA.</p> <p>You won't need someone like a parent or grandparent to cosign.</p>		<p>You don't have to attend a state school to qualify.</p>	<p>Banks or credit unions may offer them.</p> <p>You can use the funds for whatever education needs you have, including transportation, housing or purchasing a computer.</p> <p>You get the money quickly, sometimes within a few days.</p> <p>Loan limits vary, but often max out at \$100,000 and could be higher with a credit-worthy cosigner, like a parent or grandparent.</p> <p>There are no application deadlines, so the loans can be requested at any time.</p>
Drawbacks	<p>Congress sets a limit on the amount of money you can borrow in each year of school. The limits, which are the lowest when you are a freshman, increase each year. They are \$3,500 for freshmen, \$4,500 for sophomores and \$5,500 for both juniors and seniors.</p> <p>Loan money can be used for tuition, books and dorm room costs—but not your personal credit card bill.</p>		<p>Not every state offers these loans.</p> <p>The names of the loans may vary from state to state, so they may be hard to research.</p>	<p>There are some shady private lenders, so do the extra research to make sure the company has a good reputation.</p> <p>Your interest rate varies based on your credit score.</p>
Repaying Them	<p>You get six months after leaving school before you have to start paying back the loans.</p> <p>You have between 10 and 30 years to pay them back, depending on how much you owe.</p>		<p>Similar to federal payback standards, including a grace period.</p> <p>Tip: Applying for state loans is often done through your school. Information on state money is usually included in your financial aid package. Ask your student loan or financial aid officer for information, or visit your state's higher education Web site. (Google to find it for your state.)</p>	<p>You can't refinance or combine your private and government loans into one loan with one payment. Government loans are combined, or consolidated, separately from private loans, which means you'll have at least two loan bills.</p> <p>You can't put off the payback of some loans, so you'll make payments while you're still in school. If you attend graduate school or don't have a job, you may be granted deferment or a temporary stop in repaying the loans.</p> <p>It pays to be on time. Private loans have repayment incentives, such as signing up to have your payments automatically deducted from an account. This can shave up to one-half of a percentage point off the interest you have to pay on a loan.</p>

Things to Remember

- 1. Public before private.** Because they offer fixed interest rates and better repayment terms, accept all federal loans before considering private loans.
- 2. Ask your bank.** If you have a relationship with your local bank or credit union, ask for loan advice there, even if it doesn't offer student loans. It often can offer a list of reputable lenders.
- 3. Look for free ways to pay.** Before borrowing, go to sites like CollegeBoard.com and FinAid.org to look for scholarships and grants that you don't have to pay back. Another option is programs that offer grants in exchange for service, such as AmeriCorps or Teach for America.

What's My Payment? Here's an idea of what you'll pay each month for 10 years with the 2007 6.8 percent interest rate for federal loans.

Loan	Your monthly payment after you graduate	Total interest you'll pay after you graduate
\$10,000	\$115	\$3,810
\$20,000	\$230	\$7,619
\$30,000	\$345	\$11,429
\$40,000	\$460	\$15,239
\$50,000	\$575	\$19,048
\$100,000	\$1,511	\$38,096



Learn CPR For Life

**YOU JUST MIGHT NEED
TO USE IT SOME DAY**

*Courtesy of ARNG Decade of Health,
American Heart Association Alliance Team*

**"By learning CPR, you
are taking care of
yourself and your family.
The more you practice,
the more honed your
skills will be in a real
emergency."**

>> Michael Sayre, M.D., American Heart Association's
Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee

Assigned to help fight fires in northwest California, members of the California National Guard's Task Force Shovel are faced with life-threatening situations on a regular basis.

For three of its members, the skills that prepared them for their military missions made them heroes in an unlikely location: the parking lot of a rest stop.

SGT Hector Delgadillo and SSG Derrick Boutte, both members of the 185th Quartermaster Battalion, and SSG Robert Zehender, a member of the 1072nd Transportation Company, were headed to the 115th Regional Support Group Headquarters when they made a brief stop at a rest area in Maxwell, CA.

As they were leaving, they noticed an elderly woman frantically trying to open the driver's door of a parked truck. Her 72-year-old husband was sitting in the driver's seat, his head slumped back and his face purple.

The three Soldiers intervened—they immediately removed the man from his truck, placed him on the ground and assessed his condition. Then the man's pulse stopped, and the Soldiers began performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

"It was a very emotional experience for all of us, seeing this man struggle, and his wife standing by in anguish and so helpless," Zehender said. "We knew that we had a job to do—this man's life was on the line."

An emergency like this can happen at any time—in a parking lot, during a bike ride or while dropping off the kids for an after-school activity.

THE STATISTICS

Every year, Emergency Medical Service treats about 300,000 victims of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). More than 92 percent of people who suffer SCA outside the hospital will die from it.

Without immediate CPR, the chance of surviving out-of-hospital SCA drops 7 percent to 10 percent for each minute that passes without defibrillation. Unfortunately, less than one third of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest victims receive bystander CPR.

There is a great need for more CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) training. Seventy percent of bystanders who respond to a cardiac emergency have either never received CPR and AED training or their training was more than five years ago, according to a 2008 American Heart Association survey. To keep skills current, training should occur at least every two years, the association says.

"By learning CPR, you are taking care of yourself and your family with just a small time commitment," said Michael Sayre, M.D., chair-elect of the American Heart Association's Emergency Cardiovascular Care Committee. "The more you practice, the more honed your skills will be in a real emergency. We want people to keep their CPR skills current and see learning and practicing CPR as critical health maintenance."

HEART OF THE MATTER

The ARNG's Decade of Health program has established an alliance with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association to create a culture of wellness for all Americans. A key focal point of this year's Ready and Resilient Campaign is CPR training.

"There was no doubt in any of our minds that our efforts made a difference in saving this gentleman's life," Zehender said. **GX**

To learn more about the ARNG Ready and Resilient Campaign, visit DecadeOfHealth.com.

2009

ARNG Ready & Resilient!



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DECADE OF HEALTH



From Military To MBA

HOW SOLDIER SKILLS CAN SPELL SUCCESS IN BUSINESS SCHOOL *Courtesy of NGB-ASM*

Soldiers are often told that their military experience will help them down the road in the business world. The question many Soldiers have is “How?”

Leading an infantry platoon and a corporate team to hit the next quarter’s goal are more similar than you think.

Solving problems is a big part of the graduate management curriculum. You’ll:

- Learn how to analyze business situations and suggest actions based on that analysis.
- Develop business skills that will help you understand the settings in which you’ll eventually work.

In turn, the team management skills you gain in the military will help you better implement actions and coordinate the work of others—in the classroom, and, eventually, on the job.

The ability to tactically deploy personnel gives you an edge when tackling the multitude of team-based MBA class projects.

What your peers say about the value of military skills in the classroom:

Joseph Mrozinski, U.S. Army, says he used his leadership skills much more than he expected to when getting his MBA.

“You know who’s good at what ... quantitative, marketing ... and you see what people’s strengths are. It’s like being a stagecoach driver who knows where to position each of his horses. You have to keep the project on track and you do so by utilizing people’s strengths and weaknesses appropriately.”

“Military people are given a lot of responsibility at a young age and know how to make decisions under stress,” Andrew Glaze, U.S. Army said. “[So] when it comes to group work in an MBA program, people appreciate what military personnel bring to the table. I help to organize and allocate responsibility. I can think linearly and organize my time.”

Project management comes pretty naturally to most military officers with a few years and

assignments under their belt, according to Chris Baxley, U.S. Army.

“Working in groups is a big part of the business school experience. If you can make major contributions in getting your team from start to successful finish on a project, then you can really set yourself apart in a positive way.”

Why business schools like candidates with military experience:

Call it the *quid pro quo* factor. You get something valuable from a quality MBA program—a set of fundamental business skills that will help you advance up the ranks or transition to a civilian career. And you give something valuable back—the strong leadership ability that’s needed to succeed in the business world and that can’t be learned from a textbook.

Students in the team-driven MBA educational environment often learn as much from each other as they do from their coursework. Schools know that students in need of leadership training can learn valuable lessons from you that the business school curriculum alone can’t provide them.

While pursuing his MBA, Rob Etheridge, U.S. Army, landed several assistantships—one of which allowed him to teach undergraduate management labs as well as participate in research projects for several large companies.

“I was chosen to be a team leader for my current assistantship partly due to my military career. The faculty members who asked me to take on these positions all mentioned my leadership skills and goal-oriented work ethic as reasons for choosing me.”

Quality business schools are measured, in part, by the caliber of their students. Quality students attract job recruiters who like the strong leadership ability and experience that graduates with military backgrounds offer.

Active recruitment activities help schools attract more quality students to their programs.

Holand Lujan, U.S. Army, says his experience is what companies actively recruiting junior military officers are looking for, more than business expertise.

“They want an individual [who] will lead their company to long-term profits by motivating others to excel during times they might otherwise fail.”

Combining that leadership ability with an MBA gives you a real advantage, he adds. “Companies realize that an officer who is willing to work toward an MBA truly has the desire to work and excel in corporate America.”

What do other military personnel say about why the MBA curriculum is a great fit with your military skills?

Visit Mba.com/operationMBA to find out. Read their profiles and get comprehensive information about how to build on your military experience for career success. **GX**

“Military people are given a lot of responsibility at a young age and know how to make decisions under stress. [So] when it comes to an MBA program, people appreciate what military personnel bring to the table.”

>> Andrew Glaze, U.S. Army



Grantham
UNIVERSITY

The Next Generation GI Bill

By Johanna Altland, Grantham University

The official launch of the much heralded Post 9/11 GI Bill is quickly approaching on Aug. 1, 2009. Officially called the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, this bill is designed to provide educational assistance to service members who've served on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Many view this bill as the next generation of the current Montgomery GI Bill that first began in 1944 as the GI Bill of Rights.

The new Post 9/11 GI Bill will pay tuition and fees, not to exceed the maximum in-state undergraduate tuition and fees at a public institution of higher learning in the state where your school is located; a monthly housing allowance for those who qualify; a books and supplies stipend, not to exceed

\$1,000 per year, for those who qualify; and a one-time rural benefit of \$500 for those who qualify. Like the Montgomery GI Bill, eligible service members will generally receive up to 36 months of benefits.

If you have a combined total of 90 days of service on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or if you've been discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days of service, you are entitled to the new benefits. If you are a former service member, you must have an honorable discharge to be eligible.

If you are eligible for more than one GI Bill benefit when the post 9/11 GI Bill goes into effect, the Veterans Administration (VA) requires that you choose one benefit over the other. In many cases, this decision, once made, cannot be reversed. Because of this, there are a few things that you should consider before electing the Post 9/11 GI Bill over your other options:

Active Duty

Length of Service	Percentage of Maximum Amount
≥ 36 Months	100%
≥ 30 Continuous Days Active Duty or Service-Connected Disability Discharge	100%
30 – 36 Months	90%
24 – 30 Months	80%
18 – 24 Months	70%
12 – 18 Months	60%
6 – 12 Months	50%
90 Days – 6 Months	40%

Reservists

Length of Service	Percentage of Maximum Amount
≥ 36 Cumulative Months	100%
≥ 30 Continuous Days Active Duty or Service-Connected Disability Discharge	100%
≥ 30 Cumulative Months	90%
≥ 24 Cumulative Months	80%
≥ 18 Cumulative Months	70%
≥ 12 Cumulative Months	60%
≥ 6 Cumulative Months	50%
90 Aggregate Days	40%

So, let's say that you live in Hawaii, are eligible for 100 percent of the benefits, and are enrolled in an undergraduate program at a university in your state. Your school charges \$300 per credit hour and \$600 in fees per term, and you plan to take 15 credit hours this term. Your total tuition will be \$4,500. Per the maximum allowances for your state, the VA will pay your school \$3,720 for that term's tuition (multiply the number of credit hours by the maximum VA will pay), so you'll have to pay \$1,674 out-of-pocket in tuition costs. VA will also pay your school the \$600 in fees you were charged because it doesn't exceed the maximum fees payable by term for your state, which is \$1,163.70.

It is possible to avoid out-of-pocket costs by choosing a school whose tuition rates align with the maximum amount payable for the school's state. However, if you attend a college or university with a lower per credit hour tuition rate, you will not receive a check for the difference between your school's tuition costs and the maximum amount payable by the VA. In addition, some states do not charge Veterans tuition if they attend a state university, so if you are attending a school in that state, the Post 9/11 GI Bill will not cover any tuition expenses.

As you can see, there are a lot of variables to consider before choosing one benefit over



another. Generally, if you expect to have higher tuition expenses or if you plan to attend school in a state that charges Veterans little to no tuition, it may make the most sense to stick with the Montgomery GI Bill. The Web site, GI Bill 2008 (www.GIBill2008.org), has created a benefits calculator that can help you determine if the Post 9/11 GI Bill is the right choice. Your education

service officer or a VA representative can also provide guidance on which benefit will best meet your needs. Because your decision is irrevocable, it is important to do your research and have a good grasp of your short- and long-term educational goals before making your decision.

For more information and to view a comprehensive list of FAQs, visit: www.GIBill.va.gov. **GX**

Quick Comparison Chart

	Montgomery GI Bill	Post 9/11 GI Bill
Payment Rate for Full-time	Maximum of \$1,321 per month; paid to student	Rate based on in-state undergraduate tuition & fees charged at the most expensive public institution of higher learning in the state in which you are enrolled; paid to school
Eligibility	Active-duty service after 6/30/85 with honorable discharge	Active-duty service since 9/11/01 with an honorable discharge
Stipends	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing stipend equal to BAH for E-5 with dependents*; uses ZIP code of college or university Book and supplies stipend up to \$1,000 per year**
Months of Entitlement	36 months	36 months
Expiration	10 years from release from active duty	15 years from release from active duty
Transferability	Limited	Yes—details to be determined
Training Types	Institution of Higher Learning; Distance Education; Non-College Degree; DJT & Apprenticeship; Flight Training; Correspondence; Licensing & Certification; National Testing Program; Entrepreneurship Training; Accelerated Payment; Co-op Training; Work-Study Program	Institution of Higher Learning; Distance Education; Licensing & Certification—limited to one test; Work-Study Program—if part of a degree program
\$600 Buy-up	Paid at applicable rates	Not included

*If you are on active duty, training at half time or less, or are enrolled in distance learning programs, you do not qualify. **If you are on active duty, you do not qualify.

NEW MEXICO: FIERCE LOYALTY

THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT BREEDS AN ARMY OF HEROES *By Jason Hall*

The history of the New Mexico Army National Guard dates back more than 400 years. Some would argue that the New Mexico National Guard predates the birth of the Guard itself—Dec. 13, 1636. The 1636 date marks the formation of the first militia regiments in the English colony of Massachusetts.

Since we trace our official heritage in this country from the English settlements, the Spanish militia origins of the National Guard are often

forgotten. But New Mexico was writing its militia's history long before English settlers even laid eyes on Massachusetts.

BIENVENIDOS NUEVO MEXICO

On April 30, 1598, Juan de Oñate's expedition crossed the Rio Grande river—the present-day border between Mexico and the United States—to establish the colony of Nuevo Mexico. As there were no Spanish regular Soldiers in the expedition, and none assigned to the new settlement, the colonists themselves raised a militia for the protection of their new home.

The militia units remained small until the early 18th century, when the population of Nuevo

Mexico began to grow rapidly. The militia, or “milicia” as it was known, was composed of Citizen-Soldiers called Vecinos. The prime responsibility of the leader—or Maestre de Campo—was to prepare his men to respond to the governor's call for militia Soldiers.

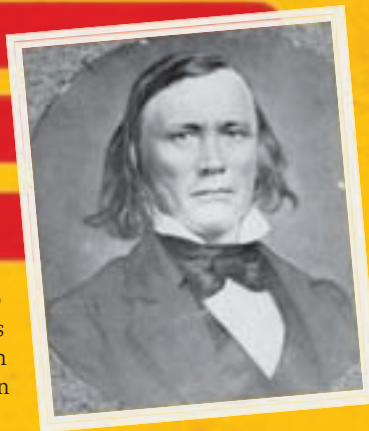
UNITED STATES TAKES CHARGE

The Spanish system of militia survived in the colony for more than two centuries, until American interest in the land began to increase.

In 1846, during the Mexican-American War, U.S. Army GEN Stephen W. Kearny marched into New Mexico and claimed the “conquered” territory for the U.S.

GEN Kearny instituted several laws, known as the Kearny Code, which established the new territorial militia.

As with other Spanish areas of the country annexed by the U.S., many of the Soldiers of the new territorial militia had been members of the Spanish militia. The territorial government officially sanctioned the militia in 1851. At that time, it created the position of adjutant general and placed the militia under GEN Kearny's command.



FACE OF DETERMINATION

Famed fighter, Army scout and western explorer COL Christopher “Kit” Carson commanded the 1st New Mexico Cavalry during the Civil War. The 1st Cavalry and the 1st New Mexico Infantry were the state's first permanent Guard units.

CIVIL WAR ACTIVITY

With the growing number of settlers from the eastern U.S., dealing with native tribes became an increasingly larger issue. Just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the Indian

agent for northern New Mexico was Kit Carson, who would make a name for himself during the Indian Wars.

In April 1861, when the Civil War began, Carson resigned his post and joined the militia

force known as the New Mexico Volunteers. Carson quickly rose through the ranks, becoming Colonel of Volunteers.

Following the Civil War, COL Carson would use his wartime experience to earn fame and notoriety pacifying the Apaches in New Mexico.

During the Civil War, New Mexico provided four infantry regiments to fight on the side of the Union. Its neighbor, Texas, had seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America.

Confederate forces in Texas began planning an invasion of New Mexico to claim the land for the Confederacy. One of the major battles in the Western Theater of the war took place in New Mexico. During March 26–28, 1862, the Battle of Glorieta Pass raged as Texas forces attacked and attempted to push U.S. Army forces, which contained New Mexico militia units, out of New Mexico.

Though the Texans were successful in driving the Union force down and out of the Pass, they were compelled to retreat when their supply train was destroyed by a combined force of New Mexico militiamen and U.S. Regulars.

★★★ ON JULY 1, 1898, THE ROUGH RIDERS CHARGED UP SAN JUAN HILL UNDER HEAVY ENEMY FIRE. ★★★

The Confederates eventually withdrew from the territory, their dreams of attaining New Mexico dashed completely. Thus, many historians agree that Glorieta Pass was the Confederates’ “high water mark” in the West.

During the remainder of the war, the New Mexico militia spent much of their time dealing with native tribes, including the Navajo.

In 1885, the militia numbered approximately 1,500. Over time, however, the territorial government began relying less on militia Soldiers and more on local law enforcement. This shift resulted in a rapid decrease in the number of Soldiers. By 1895, there were only 500 members of the newly named New Mexico National Guard.

ROUGH AND TOUGH

In 1898, the New Mexico National Guard would see a rush of new recruits in response to America declaring war on Spain.

New Mexico Guard members would become part of one of the most famous Army units of the Spanish-American War: Theodore Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders.”

Roosevelt, himself a former National Guard member from New York, conceived the idea of creating a cavalry regiment consisting of one New Mexico cavalry squadron, two troops from Arizona and several businessmen from New York City. This odd assortment of individuals became known as the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry.

On July 1, 1898, the men of the Rough Riders charged—without their horses—up San Juan Hill, Cuba, under heavy enemy fire. New Mexico’s Troops E and G were among the first to reach the crest of the hill. Their victory there led directly to the Spanish capitulation two weeks later.

The proud heritage of these New Mexico Guard Soldiers is perpetuated in today’s 200th Infantry, New Mexico Army National Guard.

NEW MEXICO GAINS STATEHOOD

The U.S. Congress admitted New Mexico as the 47th state on Jan. 6, 1912. A mere four years later, the new American citizens of the state were called upon to defend their nation and state against a southern intruder, Pancho Villa.

The incursions into the U.S. by Villa and his men caused the first major mobilization of the entire National Guard.

In addition to patrolling their own border, the New Mexico Guard played host to thousands of U.S. Soldiers from around the country, who used their state as a staging and training area. The training and experience gained there would prove extremely important in the next call-up of the Guard.

NEW MEXICO ENTERS WWI

With the entry of the U.S. into WWI, the National Guard was once again mobilized. New Mexico’s 1st Infantry Regiment was assigned to the newly formed 40th Infantry Division. When it arrived in France, the individual units of the division were parceled off and served in combat supporting other divisions.

New Mexico also provided an artillery battery that was assigned to the 41st Division, becoming part of the 146th Field Artillery Regiment, seeing combat during the campaigns of Champagne-Marne, Alsne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne.

During the post-war years, the state’s Guard units experienced major reform and redesignations. The New Mexico Guard was reorganized into three units: the 111th Cavalry Regiment, the 120th Engineers and Battery A, 158th Field Artillery.



STEADY, AIM, FIRE! During WWI, the 1st Infantry was assigned to the 40th Division, while Battery A was assigned to the 146th Field Artillery, 41st Division.



MOBILE ARTILLERY A gun section from Battery A, 1st New Mexico Field Artillery, cross a river near Camp Bliss, TX, during the Mexican border crisis. In WWI, the battery fought in three campaigns in France.

Guard Legacy

In 1940, during the largest peacetime mobilization of the National Guard, the 111th was redesignated as the 200th Coast Artillery. The 200th, along with the other New Mexico Guard units, responded to the president's mobilization to train for one year in preparation for possible U.S. involvement in the growing conflict in Europe and Asia.

HARD TIMES AND HEROISM IN WWII

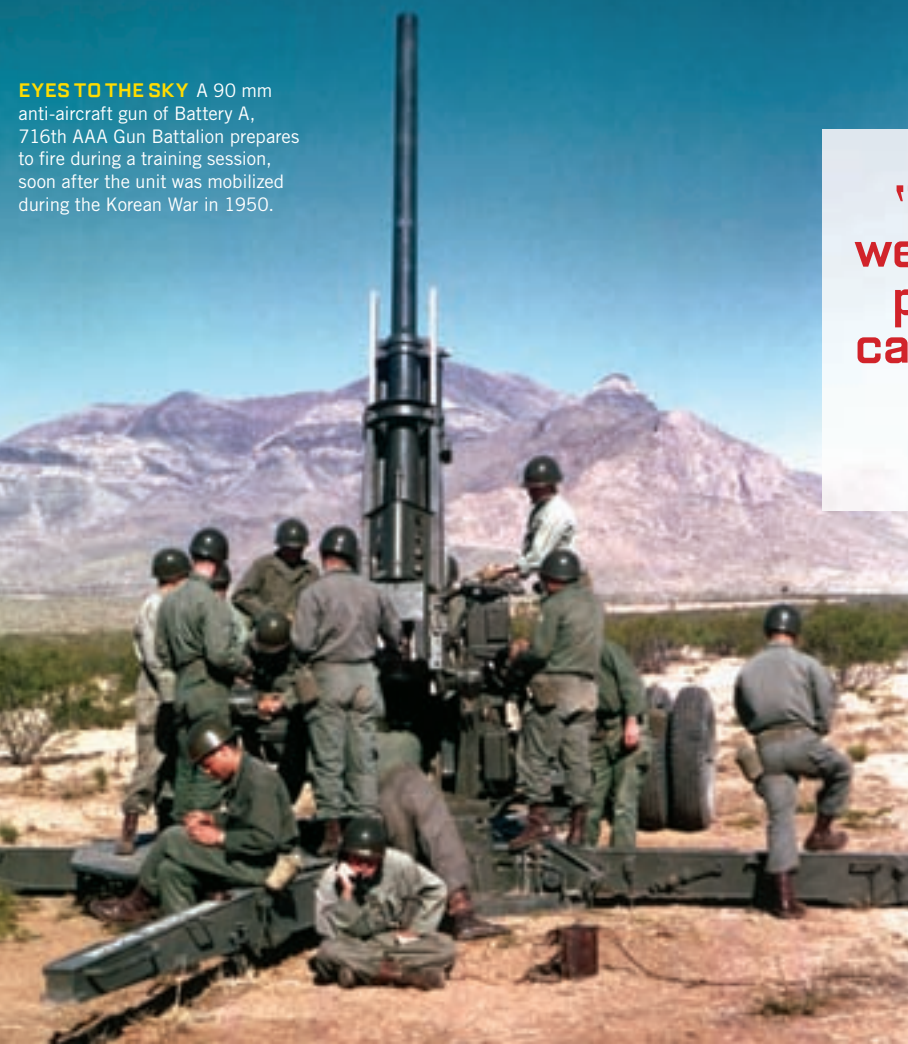
The 200th Coast Artillery was sent to the Philippines in August 1941 to augment regular Army forces there.

At about 3 a.m. on Dec. 8—Dec. 7 in Hawaii—the Soldiers of the 200th heard over the radio that the Japanese had just attacked Pearl Harbor, inflicting heavy casualties. The men of New Mexico did not have to wait long for the war to envelop them, as Japanese bombers and fighters appeared overhead at approximately 12:30 p.m. that same day.

The Japanese strafed and bombed Clark Field, while the 1,800 men of the 200th Coast Artillery returned fire. In the process of firing the first shots in defense of the Philippines, the 200th shot down five planes, but suffered a number of casualties.

When the Japanese invaded the island with land forces, the men of the 200th fought tenaciously, making the Japanese pay for every inch as the American and Filipino forces were pushed down the Bataan Peninsula to Corregidor.

EYES TO THE SKY A 90 mm anti-aircraft gun of Battery A, 716th AAA Gun Battalion prepares to fire during a training session, soon after the unit was mobilized during the Korean War in 1950.



REMOTE CONTROLLED BOMBER Members of the 200th Air Defense Artillery Detachment wheel out a Radio Controlled Aerial Target (RCAT) on the White Sands Firing Range, NM.

The situation was bleak for the Allied forces facing the Japanese onslaught. One young New Mexico Guard Soldier, Vicente Ojinaga, had no intention of surrendering. Prior to leaving for the Philippines, his father instructed him not to dishonor his flag, his people or his country. He was so opposed to surrendering that his comrades had to “dog pile” him to the ground to prevent him from attacking Japanese tanks with nothing more than his empty rifle and bayonet.

Suffering from illness, a lack of food and ammunition, all remaining American and Filipino forces still fighting on the Bataan Peninsula surrendered on April 9, 1942,

“There wasn’t a night that we didn’t get together to pray for our survival in the camps and the salvation of our souls.”

>> Vicente Ojinaga, on life for the 200th Coast Artillery as WWII Japanese POWs

with the fall of Corregidor. The men were force-marched to prisoner of war camps in what would become known as the “Bataan Death March.”

The men fortunate enough to survive the march endured a living hell under the cruel hand of their Japanese captors in the camps. Vicente Ojinaga was among them, and he recalled, “Many of us in those camps were Hispanics who knew each other ... There wasn’t a night that we didn’t get together to pray for our survival in the camps and the salvation of our souls.”

One of Ojinaga’s comrades was William “Bill” Overmier. He had been captured at Corregidor and was transported to the shipyards in Yokohama, Japan, to work as a slave-laborer. When the “small carrier” he had

worked on “from start to finish” was sunk by American bombers, he yelled out an enthusiastic “Yee-hah!”

The Guard members who had survived the Bataan Death March remained prisoners of war for the next three years, until they were liberated in 1945. Of the original 1,800 New Mexico Guard members sent to the Philippines, only half survived the battle, the march and atrocities suffered in the camps.

In 2002, the memory of all those who endured the long ordeal down the Bataan Peninsula was forever immortalized with the dedication of the Bataan Memorial Park in Albuquerque, NM.

BEYOND THE 200TH

The 200th Coast Artillery was by no means the only Guard unit from New Mexico to see combat in WWII.

The 120th Engineers was with the 45th Division on their triumphant march through Italy into Southern France, and across the Rhineland of Germany.

Also involved in the Italian Campaign was the 104th Anti-tank Battalion, which saw action with the 34th Division.

A testament to the ferocity of combat seen by the 104th is the fact that the men of the battalion were awarded eight Silver Star medals, three Legion of Merits, 60 Bronze Stars and 135 Purple Hearts; 30 of these were awarded posthumously.

HEMELCOMING FROM WWII

One of the most poignant U.S. homecomings after WWII was that of the 200th Coast Artillery.

On their way from Phoenix to Albuquerque, their train stopped at Gallup, NM. Soldiers healthy enough to disembark the train immediately dropped to their knees and “kissed New Mexico’s white sands.” They had survived the Japanese onslaught, the Bataan Death March and the deprivations of the camps.

They were now home, no longer Soldiers but citizens—the epitome of what it means to be a National Guard member.

KOREA AND VIETNAM

Unfortunately, the New Mexico Guard would not stay home long. The Korean War caused the activation of several of its units, including the 716th AAA Gun Battalion, the 726th and 394th Signal Radar Maintenance Unit. Though not deployed in intact units, many New Mexico Guard Soldiers served in other units in combat.

No New Mexico units were deployed to the combat zone during the Vietnam War. However, many volunteered for duty and served gallantly and proudly.

The 1960s saw turmoil at home and abroad. The New Mexico Guard was called upon by their governor several times to protect citizens and property.

The Guard was also called upon to ensure peace and order during the 1970 campus riots at the University of New Mexico. The role of the Guard as civil peacekeepers continued throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, including quelling a riot at Santa Fe State Penitentiary in February 1980.

DESTINATION: DESERT

During the last decade of the 20th century, the New Mexico National Guard would once again be called upon to face an enemy overseas.

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, units of the New Mexico National Guard deployed as intact units in a combat zone for the first time since WWII.

Unfortunately, this would be only the beginning of the National Guard’s presence in the Persian Gulf.

SERVICE IN THE 9/11 AFTERMATH

Though the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, seemed to take place a world away, members of the New Mexico Guard quickly responded to their state’s and nation’s call.

Men and women of the New Mexico Guard provided protection at airports and other vital and vulnerable locations across the state. With the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the members of the Guard would see service in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

RAPID FIRE 1SG Jason Riley of the New Mexico Army National Guard’s Combat Arms Training Company shifts his firing position to standing during training in the New Mexico National Guard’s gunfighter course near Albuquerque, NM, May 29, 2007.



NEW TECHNOLOGY, SAME GOAL

The Soldiers from New Mexico currently involved in the Global War on Terror have a deep connection to their predecessors who helped save the world from tyranny more than 60 years ago.

The 200th Coast Artillery is known today as the 200th Infantry, with members currently serving in Iraq.

However, technology has changed a bit since WWII. On March 20, 2009, while in Iraq, PFC Patrick O’Neil Jr. re-enlisted in the 200th Infantry. The person swearing him in was none other than his own father, CPT Patrick O’Neil Sr., who conducted the ceremony via a video teleconference from Santa Fe.

Following the administration of the oath, CPT O’Neil stated, “This was the proudest moment of my life!”

As the father represents the foundation of the Guard, the continuing commitment of the son exemplifies the honor and service of today’s and tomorrow’s New Mexico Army National Guard.

The state motto might be Land of Enchantment, but New Mexico has proven to be the Land of Heroes. **GX**

Information compiled by Christian Anderson

Distinguished Flying Cross

HELICOPTER HEROES



According to Army regulation 600-8-22, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity with the U.S. Army, distinguishes themselves by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.

The performance of the act of heroism must be evidenced by voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty. The extraordinary achievement must have resulted in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding that it clearly set the individual apart from their comrades or from other persons in similar circumstances.

Awards will be made only to recognize single acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement and will not be made in recognition of sustained operational activities against an armed enemy. **GX**



CW4 KEVIN PURTEE
CW2 ALLEN CRIST

June 30, 2007, Iraq—CW4 Kevin Purtee (left) and CW2 Allen Crist (right) of Company B, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation, Texas Army National Guard, were part of a four-Apache team assisting coalition forces searching for weapon caches and insurgents, and engaged the enemy when the ground troops sustained heavy fire.

After expending all their ordnance on the enemy, Purtee and Crist returned to base for more ammo when they heard that SPC Jeffrey Jamaledine, an active-duty Soldier, had suffered wounds to the face. When Purtee and Crist returned, Jamaledine was still waiting to be airlifted out of the firefight. So, Purtee and Crist turned their Apache into a makeshift medevac chopper.

They landed in a hostile area, despite heavy small-arms fire. Crist jumped out, loaded Jamaledine into the cockpit, harnessed himself to the aircraft's steps and crouched on the wing for the 10-minute flight to a nearby medical facility.

As soon as medical personnel removed Jamaledine from the Apache, Purtee and Crist returned to the fight. SPC Jamaledine survived his wounds, thanks to Purtee and Crist.

TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



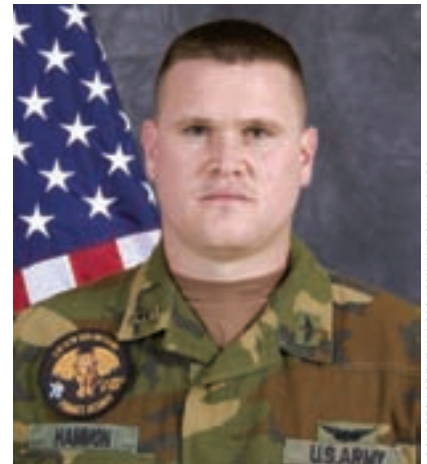
COURTESY OF THE FLORIDA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

CW2 ROBERT HAMMON

June 2, 2007, Iraq—For CW2 Robert Hammon of the Kansas Army National Guard, a routine flight to Balad Air Base turned crazy as his Black Hawk crossed a line of trees north of Baghdad. Immediately, the helicopter took heavy rifle fire and machine gun fire from three directions. Tracer rounds tore through the sky at the Black Hawk, damaging the chopper, especially the tail rotor.

Hammon immediately knew that he needed to put some space between his chopper and the enemy ground forces, so he looked for a landing zone while checking the status of his wounded bird.

Hammon wrestled the crippled helicopter away from the ambush site, crossed a major waterway and set the Black Hawk down without injuring the 10 crew members and passengers. Once all in the Black Hawk had been safely accounted for, Hammon had the crew burn any sensitive materials. Then they waited for relief.



COURTESY OF THE KANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

CW4 JOLLY HARPER

June 8, 2004, Afghanistan—CW4 Jolly Harper (right) and his co-pilot, gunner CW2 Eric C. Fox, were assisting elements of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit when Harper received word that the Marines were taking fire from the hills.

Harper made an aggressive 180-degree turn and engaged the enemy on the hilltops, letting loose a fury of fire from his 30 mm cannon and his 2.75-inch rockets, as the Florida Apache took heavy fire and even dodged a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).

Harper made multiple attacks on the enemy. He pursued and destroyed them as they retreated, reeling from his devastating firepower. Harper replenished his ammo and fuel, and again returned to the battlefield to engage the enemy one more time.

The Marines confirmed 27 enemy KIA and a handful of wounded, with “a large portion of these enemy KIAs being a direct result of the intense and accurate aerial fires” from Harper’s Apache during the engagement.

CW4 Jolly Harper received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) July 19, 2008, for risking his personal safety and providing cover for a U.S. Marine Corps convoy under ambush in Afghanistan in 2004.



COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

CW4 NOEL C. LARSON

March 25, 2008, Baghdad, Iraq—For CW4 Noel C. Larson and his crew of C Company, 1/140th Aviation, Washington Army National Guard, a night of flying reconnaissance and support missions for coalition forces during a sandstorm turned into a harrowing experience.

As the ground forces moved in to execute the raid, they began taking heavy enemy fire and several Soldiers were wounded. Medevac choppers were not able to move in to evacuate the wounded, so Larson offered his chopper as a temporary emergency medevac platform.

As the firefight raged below, Larson accomplished a skillful landing, despite poor visibility and enemy activity, avoiding buildings, poles and wires in the tight landing zone. He evacuated the three Soldiers to the forward operating base, and then he and his crew returned to their mission of providing reconnaissance and support for the ground forces.

On the Road

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD

At Close RANGE

**GX EMBEDS IN PRE-MOB TRAINING
AT FORT MCCLELLAN**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BEN WARDEN

CONTROLLED CHAOS

Alabama Guard Soldiers run to respond to an explosion during a MOUT exercise.

THE LOCALS JUMPED AND WAVED

with passion as the convoy of U.S. Humvees approached the village from a distance. As I cautiously took pictures from inside the village, I reminded myself that I was there to tell a story, not to become one myself.

A sudden rush of fear came over me while watching these locals jump up and down, caused solely by the AK-47s and RPG launchers dangling from their hips.

Was I about to witness an attack on U.S. troops?

The Humvee convoy grew and was rapidly approaching the village, kicking up dust and debris along the way. I began to see the turret gunners on top swing around and aim their very large weapons directly at our position. At this point, there was nothing I could do—no way of warning the convoy, no way of stopping the terrorists. There was only the chance to save my own skin.

Whatever was going to happen was going to be all over in about 15 seconds.

Just as the convoy came within 20 feet of the village, an armed local pulled an RPG launcher out of his long shirt and aimed it right at the first vehicle.

Nothing happened. The weapon must have misfired or jammed.

A split second later, a half-dozen other villagers pulled out concealed machine guns and grenades, and let the fast-moving convoy have it. The turret gunners swung left to right, searching out targets in the chaotic, dust-riddled area. The convoy moved fast and was gone in a matter of seconds.

Then, in a manner similar to that of an action-movie director who just saw one of his special effects fail, MAJ Tim Donahue ran onto the "set." "Aw, man. What happened to the RPG?"

**"AW, MAN.
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO THE RPG?
THAT'S
THE BEST
PART!"**

>> MAJ Tim Donahue, Commander, Task Force Viking

DRILL IMITATES LIFE

In the spirit of full journalistic disclosure, we were in Alabama, not Afghanistan. What I just described was part of the Alabama Army National Guard's (ALARNG) pre-mobilization (pre-mob) training at Fort McClellan in Anniston, AL.

With the help of a knowledgeable NCO, the mock RPG eventually fired. Tied to a long, 10-foot-high wire, the smoke and speed of the missile were impressive. It was one of many high-tech training tools I saw on the daylong tour of the training facility.

But let's rewind and start at the beginning.

GX colleague Marcia Dickerson and I were invited to attend the base's media day, where we would receive a briefing about the training and then go into the field to see it for ourselves.

The briefing was first thing in the morning. We had the chance to go on record and hear from those who were actually running the program. The gist of their briefing: Pre-mob training is something the Alabama Guard does right.

In the summer of 2007, the Pentagon decided that a one-year deployment for Guard Soldiers meant just that—one year. This now meant that a large portion of the mandatory training for all deploying units now falls under the supervision of their individual state. Thus the PTAE (Pre-mobilization Training Assistant Element) was born.

The PTAE in each state is responsible for ensuring that the assigned Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills that every Soldier must successfully execute prior to their deployment are trained to the First Army standard. Before the PTAE, these tasks were not trained until post-mobilization once a unit arrived at a Mobilization Training Center (MTC) like Camp Shelby, MS. Each task that is trained during a unit's pre-mob time, is one less task that they train during their post-mob time. The desired end state is that Soldiers get to spend more time at home before their actual deployment date to the MTC.

The Alabama PTAE, or Task Force Viking, works to include all pre-deployment training at one location. While there are currently only 32 Warrior Tasks, they are comprised of more than 200 individual tasks—and don't forget about the 12 additional squad-level Battle Drills.

According to Donahue, commander of Task Force Viking, "We tried to take the template that was given to us and say 'OK, here's what we're required to do; but what else can we do to help these units?' The training was the easy part, but the overall Soldier readiness process—that's the part that eats everybody's lunch. Those are the dental, legal and medical aspects of getting every Soldier ready to deploy. In addition to our training responsibilities, we have tried to be a one-stop shop—assisting a unit with whatever it takes to meet its deployment needs. The State Adjutant General and the decision makers at the Joint Forces



KEEPING US SAFE

CPT David Hawkins and MAJ Tim Donahue stand outside our Humvee.

Headquarters (JFHQ) have been very supportive of our mission, and their efforts have made our job much easier."

One of the main factors in ensuring the Soldiers will be ready is that each unit is assigned a TA (Training Assistor). The TAs have an encyclopedic knowledge of what a Soldier and a unit needs for deployment readiness, and they see the whole process through—all the way to the MTC. SGM Kevin Griffin of the PTAE stated, "TAs are an asset and a force multiplier for their assigned unit." Griffin made it clear that the job is extremely demanding and not for just anybody.

"We vet the TAs hard," Donahue said. "We have a hiring board that is very intense. We're looking for training-centered individuals to fill those roles—they should have combat experience, meet the Army's height and weight standards, and be physically fit. TAs contribute to the War on Terror overseas, and then come back and are still away from

"THEY'RE MAKING ANOTHER SACRIFICE TO MAKE SURE THESE GUYS ARE AS TRAINED AS THEY NEED TO BE."

>> MAJ Tim Donahue on Training Assistants



“Have you ever ridden in an uparmored Humvee?” someone asked me as I scrambled to get my camera and notebook prepared. “No, sir,” I said. “You seem like a fairly intelligent guy, so I’m not going to baby you on this,” the voice called out. “But that door there is over 400 pounds, so be careful if we stop on a hill. It can snap your leg in half.” The point was clearly made. For the rest of the day, I wasn’t as much concerned with the ammunitions and explosives going off all around me as I was with the door to the Humvee.

On the day we were at Fort McClellan, military police, transportation, medical, engineer and chemical companies and battalions were in training.

LIGHT MANEUVER OPERATIONS (LMO)

After a 15-minute Humvee ride, we arrived at Pelham Range to begin our tour of the training sites. Pelham Range is an auxiliary part of Fort McClellan where the Alabama Army National Guard and Task Force Viking conducts training. Its space is vast—nearly 22,000 acres of land, most of it forests, with the occasional dirt road and clearing.

Upon our arrival, we followed a squad conducting a dismounted presence patrol down a dirt path and came across a “local woman” trying to sell the Soldiers water out of a crudely built shack. As the squad leader walked a few feet past the woman’s shack, an explosion went off, followed by a cacophony of yelling and screaming. It was an ambush. The squad immediately started engaging an unseen enemy deep in the woods. As they slowly got closer, they found where the enemy was hiding—a wooden barrier about 50 feet from the road. The squad assaulted the stronghold and disarmed the insurgents inside.

Once we returned, we watched another squad getting ready for its mission by performing individual training—grenade throwing. Kneeling maybe 30 feet away from a small target, the Soldiers would cock their arms back and do their best to get as close to it as they could.

HUMVEE EGRESS ASSISTANCE TRAINER (HEAT)

The next stop on our training tour was part of the PTAE’s simulation training, but still equally as exciting. The Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) is an impressive, indoor training tool that is basically three-fourths of a Humvee mounted on a hydraulic system, which can rotate the vehicle 360 degrees.

The HEAT was developed partially in response to the overwhelming number of tragic stories involving Humvee accidents in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The main idea behind the training is that if anything goes wrong for Soldiers while in a Humvee, they won’t have to think about exiting—only reacting. We had the opportunity to watch two full HEAT exercises. Each time, four Soldiers entered the Humvee, and a PTAE operator controlled it, first by tilting the Humvee on each side at a 45-degree angle, then a 90-degree angle, with finally at least one complete rotation until it was stopped completely upside down.

The Soldiers yelled directions and communicated with each other, but it still took them a number of minutes to extricate themselves. In a scarier moment, one Soldier couldn’t initially get his door open and had to be helped through another door by a Soldier who was already out. I later learned that the operator had automatically locked that door, forcing the Soldier to remember their training and find an alternative exit.

ENGAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINING (EST)

Next door to the HEAT trainer is a collection of buildings dedicated to EST. I’d describe the EST scenarios as the world’s biggest video game system. In spaces comparable to a small movie theaters, a big projected screen is attached to a wide variety of weapons, from small arms to rocket launchers.

their families. This is yet another sacrifice they make, ensuring these Soldiers of the ALARNG are as trained as they possibly can be.”

Part of the PTAE’s job is to consolidate and shorten a unit’s training while not sacrificing the standard. Because there are more than 200 individual tasks, it takes a talented group and a well-planned program to do so.

The training is grouped into mission scenarios. Soldiers start at the individual level, and then they execute a one- or two-day mission at the squad level in order to become certified and validated in the required Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills.

“For example, our Light Maneuver Operations training lanes are all of your light infantry tasks grouped together,” Donahue said. “Units will perform these tasks over a two-day event. Then they’ll rotate into training on another group of tasks such as Mounted Combat Operations, which predominantly include all the Battle Drills that are associated with convoy operations. This is a three-day event, and it includes a large number of Soldiers getting licensed on an uparmored Humvee. Over this three-day period, they go through Battle Drill rehearsals and execute multiple scenarios over and over until their reactions become second nature.”

Before we went out for the day to see all of it for ourselves, CPT David Hawkins, PTAE Operations Officer, summed up what they’re tasked to do. “Anything we can do pre-mob to reduce the post-mob training time is the mandate by First Army,” CPT Hawkins said. “And we’ve significantly reduced the post-mob time for all Alabama units. But we have built onto that by adding various situational events and theater specific immersion training scenarios. We have also added uparmored Humvee driver’s training and foreign weapons familiarization, just to name a few.” The briefing ended soon after that, and we prepared to go into the field.



EXTRACTION ACTION
Alabama Army National Guard Soldiers successfully extract an "insurgent."

This training has more to do with the cerebral aspects of weapons training—aim and target acquisition being paramount—than rudimentary mechanical moves. That being said, we’re not talking Nintendo Zappers, but the weapons were exact replicas in size and weight to their real-world counterparts. I got the chance to fire both the .50 caliber machine gun and the MK19 grenade launcher. I could barely wield either of them and needed the help of the Training Assistor, who graciously assisted me.

MOUNTED COMBAT OPERATIONS (MCO)

At the beginning of this story, I was describing the convoy operations training. The Afghan village was constructed by Donahue and his men to create the “theater immersion” setting that came across as eerily authentic. We arrived shortly before the action began. It truly felt like the calm before the storm. In an almost strange silence, we walked through the village, talking to some of the “terrorists” who were hiding rocket launchers and other weapons. I even helped one hide his AK-47 under his clothing.

After about 10 minutes, the action started when the convoy appeared over the distance and— well, you know the rest.

URBAN OPERATIONS (UO)

Urban Operations is an urban combat training lane consisting of an actual life-size town, complete with buildings, a mosque and street vendors. I was told the situational template is similar to Al-Rashid, a real town South of Baghdad in the area affectionately dubbed the “Triangle of Death.”

This was our final stop on our tour and clearly the grand finale. Where most of the day had been spent snapping pictures from a safe distance, now we were thrust right into the middle of the town with the sounds of prayer from the mosque being heard in the background. There was a flurry of action all around us, with troops and bad guys engaging each other, firing blanks and paintball rounds.

The scene was real enough to elicit an especially visceral response from Marcia, an OIF Veteran (see sidebar). With the madness all around us, Donahue shuffled me through the town, helping me find the best position to get photos. At times, we were in a full sprint trying to get from one position to the next. It was the closest I’ve ever been to feeling like a combat reporter, and an experience I won’t soon forget.

READY AND ABLE

The trip wasn’t about me though; it was about the men and women of the ALARNG who readily accepted the mission to prepare their Soldiers for deployment to the best of their ability. It was easy to see from the short time we spent with Donahue, Hawkins and the rest of

“ANYTHING WE CAN DO PRE-MOB TO REDUCE THE POST-MOB TRAINING TIME IS THE MANDATE BY THE REGULAR ARMY. WE’VE REDUCED IT SIGNIFICANTLY.”

>> CPT David Hawkins

our escorts that they were proud of what they’ve accomplished and thrilled that we were there to tell their story.

On my final Humvee ride back to civilization, I looked out of the bulletproof window at the thick Alabama forest. I saw an older, official looking Soldier working diligently to carefully reposition one of the PTAE’s mock explosives used for the next squad that was getting ready to move out, and I found it representative of the whole trip. The care he showed in that one simple task was indicative of the care the PTAE took in preparing our troops for going overseas. **GX**

THE BAGHDAD EXPERIENCE IN ALABAMA

By Marcia Beene Dickerson,
OIF Veteran, '03

While all of the tasks on the lanes were realistic, the most accurate was the MOUT site, which was outfitted like an Iraqi neighborhood or village. When I dismounted the heavily armored M1165 (Humvee), I was immediately transported to "Iraq." As the call to prayers blared over the speakers, the hair stood up on my arm. Turning to Donahue, I

Ben and I, along with the cadre, watched as the Soldiers drove into the village to perform the first task—extracting a VIP from the village.

A squad of Soldiers jumped from the Humvees as the turret gunners covered them with .50 cal machine guns and proceeded into the "house" to grab the VIP. Just as they were nearing the building, a sniper began firing from a roof adjacent to the Soldiers. Using paintballs for effect, the sniper

squad took up positions and, through the thick, gray cloud hovering low on the street, began accounting for each other while watching for "insurgents."

1SG Earnest Fletcher of TF Viking and I watched the event unfold from behind a partial wall. He shouted, "So, what do you think?" My choked reply was, "This is really scary—it's what I imagine combat is like." As the Soldiers rounded up suspected insurgents, I walked to the back of

in the street, which made it feel very eerie. I moved closer to one of the buildings to get a better look, when the "tak-tak-tak" sound of automatic weapons began.

The Soldiers immediately reacted and began shouting directions. "Move, move, move!" screamed one sergeant. "Find the shooter, find the shooter," yelled another. Three Soldiers found cover inside a partially bombed house and stumbled upon the weapons cache. With their fellow squad members covering them, the Soldiers began removing the weapons—a few AK-47s and an RPG—from the building. They "destroyed" the weapons and rallied on their squad leader to do an after-action review (AAR).

After all the action, one of the squad leaders, SGT Roy Cuthkelvin, was preparing for his AAR. A former Marine, Cuthkelvin experienced the 1983 Marine Barracks bombing, so he understood the importance of this realistic training.

"I am extremely impressed," Cuthkelvin said. "This training is as good as or better than anything that I ever received with the Marines." Cuthkelvin was equally impressed with his fellow Soldiers, "These [Soldiers] hold full-time civilian jobs, and then come here and perform their military mission so well." Cuthkelvin has been in the National Guard for only two years, but he thinks the younger troops are "very knowledgeable," and they "share their [knowledge]."

Even though I was an observer, my natural reactions were that of a Soldier. The training was as realistic as any I have ever seen. As Ben, the cadre and I loaded into the Humvees to return to headquarters, Donahue asked, "So Marcia, what do you think?" I replied, "All you need are some goats roaming around!" **GX**



JOB WELL DONE
Alabama National Guard Soldiers bring up the rear after a successful MOUT extraction exercise.

yelled, "I haven't heard this since I was deployed. This place makes me want a weapon!"

With signs written in Arabic, people milling around in traditional Iraqi dress and market stalls selling CDs and DVDs, I fought the urge to go into "Soldier-mode." I had to remember I was a journalist covering training. But my situational awareness was on high alert. Standing in a "safe" position,

attempted to pin down the squad; however, the squad accomplished its mission with what seemed to be minimal "casualties."

Just as the squad returned to their vehicles, another squad began a presence patrol in the middle of the village. All seemed well until a large boom was heard (again, I had to fight my own innate reaction), and smoke poured into the street. Racing for cover, the

site, where a third squad was setting off on its "cordon search" mission looking for a suspected weapons cache.

Taking cover behind walls and burned out vehicles, the Soldiers moved, tactically covering each other. It was difficult to see because the smoke from the "bomb" was drifting into this part of the village. Unlike the other scenarios, there were no people



DECADES OF EXCELLENCE
The White Knights in 1959



Alabama Tradition

THE YESTERDAY AND TODAY OF MARION MILITARY INSTITUTE *By Ben Warden*

Nestled just south of the Okmulgee Forest in Marion, AL, Marion Military Institute (MMI) has origins dating back to the early 1840s.

THE PAST

In 1842, the Alabama Baptist Convention founded what would become Howard College, a small, private institution that would soon prove very useful to the region.

During the Civil War, the Confederacy used the campus chapel and Lovelace Hall dormitory as Breckenridge Military Hospital, treating soldiers.

In 1887, Howard College moved its campus from Marion to nearby Birmingham. Its sitting president, along with some of the faculty, remained behind and founded Marion Military Institute.

For years, MMI was a private preparatory school and in 1910 gained more national recognition by appointing U.S. President William H. Taft to its board of trustees. Following the outbreak of WWI, the Army ROTC program was introduced on campus in 1916. MMI later became an accredited junior college and in 1971 was made coeducational.

Another excellent course is the Service Academy Preparation Program, which is a year of thorough academic and physical preparation for students who wish to attend one of the service academies—West Point, Air Force Academy, Naval Academy, Merchant Marine Academy or Coast Guard Academy. Because affordability has been a priority for the college, it has created scholarships that dramatically reduce the costs of attending. Most importantly, MMI produces qualified military officers for the Army National Guard. Entering in the ROTC/Simultaneous Membership Program, these Cadets receive cutting-edge training to prepare them for

missions both at home and abroad. In 2009, MMI counted more than 70 cadets serving as members of the National Guard.

JUNIOR COLLEGE, SENIOR TRADITION

MMI has an impressive list of campus groups, each with a long and unique history.

Originating in 1963, Swamp Fox was named after Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion. He earned this nickname due to the bold adventures of his small and ill-equipped forces, which beleaguered the British along the Santee River during the war. The Swamp Fox stated goal is to “induct cadets of the highest character that exemplify Army

WHEN THE WAR ENDED, HOWARD COLLEGE MOVED ITS CAMPUS FROM MARION TO NEARBY BIRMINGHAM. THE TROOPS STAYED AND WERE REORGANIZED AS THE MARION MILITARY INSTITUTE.

COURTESY OF MMI



DIFFERENT CENTURY, SAME ATTITUDE
A Cadet Corps
photo from 1901



MODERN TIMES
Cadets train today at MMI



For more info on Marion Military Institute and its programs, go to MarionMilitary.edu.



U.S. Cadet Command has named MMI in its list of colleges experiencing the largest growth in Army ROTC enrollment in the past few years.

>> MMI conducts a training camp each summer to prepare prospective cadets for the Leader's Training Course at Ft. Knox, KY.

>> The 2008-2009 SAP class, the largest in MMI's academy prep program since WWII, achieved 77 appointments to U.S. service academies this spring. Nearly half of those appointments (37) were to the West Point class of 2013.

>> MMI is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and has a unique Honor and Respect education program.

Student-to-faculty ratio = 20:1

>> The 2008-2009 MMI wrestling team finished fourth out of 84 teams at the National Collegiate Wrestling Association (NCWA) national tournament, where six Marion wrestlers earned All-American status.

MMI Fast Facts

>> Historically, MMI was a private institution. In 2006, through an act of legislation, it became a member of the Alabama Community College System.

MMI has produced more than 200 generals and admirals for the U.S. Armed Forces.

>> MMI is one of five military junior colleges in the nation authorized to commission qualified cadets as officers in the U.S. Army after only two years of college.

>> MMI is consistently one of the top Army ROTC commissioning programs in the nation. Forty-two young men and women received their commission in 2008.

values, ranger work ethics and the pursuit of excellence."

Another group is the White Knights Precision Drill Team. Founded in 1950 to promote precision drill and discipline, and establish a union of brotherhood and trust among its members, the White Knights excel in military drilling.

Tryouts for the White Knights take place each semester. Prospective members must complete 21 days of ardent training in military drill techniques. If they pass, they'll be thrust onto the national stage at such events as the Sugar Bowl and the Indy 500.

SAME GOAL, DIFFERENT CENTURY

Along with their colorful history, rich traditions and renowned organizations, MMI has a mission—one that hasn't changed since the first cadets walked through its gates: training, training and more training.

See the MMI Fast Facts sidebar for more about the success stories that this philosophy has produced. **6X**

On the Road

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD





CLEAR *THE* WAY!

**FIGHTING 69TH LEADS NEW YORK'S
ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE**

Story and photos by Clint Wood

What better way to see New York City for the first time than to walk 40-plus blocks down Fifth Avenue with an Army National Guard battalion leading the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade?

IT'S AN HISTORIC EVENT, AS THIS BATTALION HAS BEEN LEADING the parade—the world's largest St. Patrick's Day bash—as its honor guard since 1850. Its original mission was to squash possible riots by anti-immigrant groups.

Honestly, I had never heard of this regiment—the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard (NYARNG)—until GX Editor in Chief Keith Kawasaki assigned me the story.

A native New Yorker himself, Keith told me to check out the book *The Fighting 69th* by Sean Michael Flynn. It covers the regiment from Ground Zero to Baghdad.

MOST FEARED IN IRAQ

This regiment was one of the “most feared” in Taji, Iraq. Anyone who has traveled Route Irish in Iraq, the main thoroughfare from the Baghdad International Airport to the center of the city and the International Zone, can thank this unit for their safety.

The Fighting 69th patrolled this route, which became known as “Highway to Hell,” from February 2005 until August 2005. Their offensive posture curtailed roadside bombs and attacks on everyone who used the road, including journalists and Western diplomats. Their offense included searching houses and, basically, “taking the fight to the enemy.”

HISTORY LOOMS LARGE

I read most of the book while waiting six hours in the Nashville airport for my delayed flight to New York's La Guardia airport. I learned a lot about the unit's historic armory, so it was an honor climbing up its steps from Lexington Avenue later that night. The facility was massive.



The 69th Regiment Armory

- Cornerstone was laid in 1904, and the building was completed in 1906.
 - Administration building footprint is 63,000 square feet.
 - Drill hall footprint is 33,700 square feet.
 - This armory drew the attention of numerous professional architectural journals of the period.
 - There are four floors. The first floor includes the drill hall and offices; the second floor includes the memorial hall and balconies; the third floor had a hospital corps room and gymnasium; and the fourth floor housed the band and drum corps' quarters.
 - The former skylight extended the entire length of the drill shed and has a width of about 40 feet on each side of the center.
 - The large brick arch at the east end of the drill hall is the largest in the United States.
-

Among the many outstanding Soldiers I'd meet there were Flynn (a major in the Guard), LTC Charles Crosby (operations officer of the unit while in Iraq) and several other Soldiers. They all had great stories.

On the first floor were several mahogany display cases. Some were 12 feet tall. Their contents included photographs and memorabilia from WWI, WWII, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and 9/11.

The 9/11 display included a few of the candles that had been placed on the sidewalks outside the armory and several of the flyers with photos of lost loved ones that had been taped to the armory's walls.

Flynn spoke of these flyers in his book:

The concrete and the brick façade of the building had become an endless sea of white flyers, each featuring a photo of a smiling man, woman or child with the words “MISSING,” or “LAST SEEN” or “HELP” typed out in large font.

One of the items in the OIF display was a Desert Combat Uniform camouflage Kevlar helmet with a pair of goggles on top. SFC Michael Hudson, the battalion's supply sergeant, told me to look closely at the helmet. Some of the Kevlar was chipped off on its right side. Its story was that SPC Donald Leinfelder was wearing it while gunning on Route Irish in Iraq. A rocket-propelled grenade ricocheted off a Humvee and smacked into his head before exploding on the shoulder of the road. Leinfelder's helmet took most of the blast, and he suffered only the loss of part of an ear. Crosby called Leinfelder one of the “luckiest Soldiers alive.”

Located in the center of the armory's drill hall was a basketball court with an old scoreboard mounted on the wall. Hudson told me that the New York Knicks had played here.

The space had also been used by the art community as a civic center. The hall was hosting a trade show at the time of the 9/11 attacks. As Flynn wrote in his book, “... civilian workers were literally running in and out of the drill floor as they struggled to break down the trade show.” The next day, the hall had been transformed into a family bereavement center.

FORMATION 26TH STREET!

The next morning, I left my hotel room at 5:35 a.m. en route to the armory. When I arrived, I saw Soldiers in every direction.

SFC Norberto Carrasgrillo, the battalion's operations noncommissioned officer, was holding one of the several tall doors open and shouting to the Soldiers, “Let's go, formation, formation 26th street!”

TALE OF THE BOXWOOD SPRIG

My first mission was to participate in a toast of an Irish whiskey in the commander's room. Soldiers with the rank of master sergeant or first sergeant and above were invited.

Standing outside of an entrance near the commander's room, I met Alan Feuer, a *New York Times* reporter. 1SG Troy Haley, first sergeant for the battalion's headquarters and headquarters company, arrived and gave each Soldier a boxwood sprig. We were to wear it behind our U.S. Army nameplates during the parade.

Haley quizzed the Soldiers to see if they knew the tradition behind the boxwood sprig. When several admitted they didn't, Haley gave them a hard time. Finally, a second lieutenant said he knew the history—and that it was one of the most memorable incidents of the Civil War.

The Irish Brigade, commanded by GEN Thomas Francis Meagher, was preparing for battle at Marye's Heights. Meagher ordered his officers to present boxwood sprigs to each of their men in the ranks so they'd go into battle wearing a symbol of Irish green. The Soldiers placed the sprig on their hats before the assault.

THE TRADITIONAL TOAST

Among the guests of commander LTC John Andonie at the toast were 1LT William Besselman and a fellow officer of the Louisiana Army



"AH YES. THE FIGHTING 69TH"

Ever since Confederate GEN Robert E. Lee admirably nicknamed the 69th New York Infantry as the "Fighting 69th" at the Battle of Fredricksburg, the unit has worked hard to continue the legacy forged by their Civil War brethren.

National Guard's 256th Brigade Combat Team. The Fighting 69th's higher command in its deployment in support of OIF was the 256th or the "Louisiana Tigers" Brigade.

Ironically, the 69th and 256th were enemies in the Civil War. Reportedly, the 69th got its nickname as the "Fighting 69th" from Confederate GEN Robert E. Lee during the Battle of Fredericksburg, VA, in 1862.

Besselman and the fellow officer served with the 69th in Iraq. He also marched down Fifth Avenue upon his return from Iraq. "Mardi Gras has nothing to compare to this—the tradition of the brigade," he commented. Also among the guests was Hideki Mimura, chairperson of the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Motomachi Yokohama Committee. He was invited because the regiment will deploy to Japan for training later this year. Mimura told the group that he has been involved with the Tokyo St. Patrick's Day Parade for 18 years. Tokyo held its parade the week before New York City's.

"I always wanted to come to New York and see the parade," Mimura said. "It's so special to be here to meet the U.S. Army people who are going to lead the march."



EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE IN THE 69TH TODAY."

—1LT MIKE MONTESANO

MARCHING TO ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

At nearly 7 a.m., the Soldiers, led by Chaplain COL Edward Kane and Andonie, marched to St. Patrick's Cathedral, where a mass was held honoring the deceased members of the 69th Regiment. En route, business owners walked out of their shops, and several bystanders took photos.

I stayed near the front of the formation and was nearly run over twice by New York City motorcycle police executing roadblocks.

We arrived at the cathedral at about 7:20 a.m. The Soldiers were put at ease as they waited to enter. The honor guard stood near a crosswalk adjacent to the cathedral. The remainder of the formation was behind them down the street. I heard two women who were walking by comment on how good the Soldiers looked.

At 8 a.m., the Soldiers marched through the cathedral's front doors. Sitting in the front row were MG Joseph Taluto (adjutant general for the NY National Guard), New York Gov. David Paterson and Andonie. SSG Howard Bhoorasingh and SPC Sebastian McClendon, the Veteran Corps, 69th Regiment Inc., NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year, were honored, too. They were the first to walk up to the altar.

This was the final St. Patrick's Day Mass for His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan, the spiritual leader of the archdiocese of New York. He retired in April after nine years as the archbishop.

He thanked the Fighting 69th for their many accomplishments and read the names of the fallen 69th Soldiers from Operation Enduring Freedom.

Just before 10 a.m., the Irish national anthem and the national anthem were played. Besselman said his first Mass here "gave him chills" when he sat down in the pews.

PFC Saiquan Butts, a member of the unit's honor guard, was in awe—it was his first Mass there.

"I actually walked by there several times and always wanted to go in," he remarked.

The 69th has a WWI hero who was involved in Mass services—Father Francis P. Duffy. An ordained Catholic priest, Duffy served as the 69th's chaplain during WWI. He is the most highly decorated cleric in U.S. Army history.

Duffy folklore includes being on the frontlines hearing confessions and saying Mass. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest medal for valor given to a U.S. Army Soldier.

One Fighting 69th Soldier who had recently returned from Afghanistan, SFC Fernando Gonzalez, had attended a church in the Bronx—Our Savior Parish—that was built by Duffy. At age 9, Gonzalez wrote a history paper on this church.

"All the original guys from the 69th came from this neighborhood," he said.

GREEN COWBOY HATS & IRISH WOLFHOUNDS

The formation left the cathedral at 10:20 a.m. and marched to 44th Street, where the parade would begin. En route, the Soldiers turned their heads to the right at a 45-degree angle as they passed the Veterans Corps, 69th Regiment Inc., standing on the sidewalk. This movement to honor commanders or the colors is called "eyes right."

The streets were lined with parade-goers dressed in all types of green clothing, including green cowboy hats and shirts. Cheers and whistles for the Soldiers were heard on every block.

The 42nd Infantry Division band fell in with the formation at 44th Street. Two Irish wolfhounds led by Bhoorasingh and McClendon also fell in with the formation. It's a 69th tradition to have the NCO and Soldier of the Year lead these battalion mascots. One of the dogs, Tony, had marched in four of these parades.

Gonzalez hadn't marched in the parade since 2006. He was among the Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, so my knees hurt and my feet hurt," he admitted. "It was good though. It's always a good feeling to march in this parade."

1LT Mike Montesano, there on his first march, said, "You're looking at those who came before you and those who are going to come after you. It is hallowed ground."

FOR SOLDIERS ONLY

The Soldiers turned the corner of 86th Street, executed another eyes right movement for Taluto and several other general officers of the NYARNG, and continued down a subway station stairwell.



A TIME OF PRAYER Fighting 69th Soldiers pray during a special Mass held for them in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

History of the 69th

The 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment traces its heritage back to 1849, when the Second Irish Regiment of the New York State Militia organized. That regiment was combined with others to form the 69th Infantry Regiment, which became a part of the famous Civil War "Irish Brigade."

In WWI, the 69th was redesignated the 165th Infantry and fought as part of the 42nd Infantry Division, the "Rainbow Division," the second U.S. combat division to arrive in France with the American Expeditionary Force.

In WWII, the 69th mobilized with the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Division for service in the Pacific, invading the islands of Makin and Saipan, and fighting on Okinawa.

The Soldiers of the Fighting 69th sent the regiment's Second Color regimental green flag from the Civil War as a gift to the people of Ireland in 1963 as a recognition of the unit's Irish roots. The flag was presented by President John F. Kennedy on behalf of the regiment and hangs in Leinster House, the parliament building in Dublin. **GX**

As in years past, the 86th Street subway—reserved for Soldiers only on this day—would take them back to the armory for an awards ceremony and reception.

The conductor stated, “This train is for the troops only. Next stop: 28th Street.” I got on with the other Soldiers. Small shamrocks were taped on the windows, with “Inf” written in black marker on the top of the shamrock, and 6 and 9 written on the sides. We left the station at 12:27. The ride only took eight minutes, but some Soldiers still caught a nap. “The next and final stop will be 28th Street, all passengers please exit the train,” said the conductor as we neared the 28th Street Station.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The awards ceremony at the armory was extra special this year. Soldiers and families were honored during the 2009 homecoming celebration for Task Force Phoenix VII.

More than 300 Soldiers of the Fighting 69th volunteered for service in Afghanistan with the NYARNG’s 27th Brigade Combat Team and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

Taluto told the audience that Phoenix’s mission was to train and mentor the Afghan national army and police. He predicted that years from now, people would be talking about the history made by Fighting 69th Soldiers and OEF Veterans.

GEN Martin Dempsey, commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, followed Taluto.

Dempsey referenced a portrait of MG William “Wild Bill” Donovan, a former commander of the Fighting 69th during WWI and the first head of the Office of Strategic Services during WWII. Donovan, the first person to receive the four highest U.S. decorations, upheld the battalion’s motto, “Clear the Way,” Dempsey said.

And, he noted, this battalion has done that—at Ground Zero, in Iraq and now in Afghanistan.

He said enemies are concerned because they can’t understand why ARNG Soldiers volunteer for service.

Dempsey ended his speech by singing two verses of the Fighting 69th’s Regimental March “Garryowen.” The audience erupted in applause afterward.

Susan E. Rice, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, followed Dempsey, with a speech directed to the Afghanistan Veterans.

“There is a straight line from your service at Ground Zero to your service in Afghanistan,” she told the audience. “You served on behalf of those who [lost their lives] on 9/11. You served to protect our nation from those who would plot similar attacks in the future. And you served to build a new Afghanistan—one that will no longer be a safe haven for al-Qaida.”

She pointed out that the regiment today is composed of honorary Irish men and women of every race, creed, religion and color.

“Patriots in boots of every corner of the globe all standing together in an infantry unit here in the heart of Manhattan,” she noted.

And what better example of this than Gonzalez, who has been in the Guard for more than 20 years. He volunteered for both the Iraq and Afghanistan deployments.

“Ninety percent of the Soldiers going were my Soldiers,” said Gonzalez of the Afghanistan deployment. “After being their platoon sergeant, I didn’t think it was right that they went and I didn’t just because I went before.”

The ceremony concluded with the singing of the national anthem by international recording artist and award-winning songwriter Theresa Sareo. She told the audience that several years ago, she realized her mission in life was to visit troops at Walter Reed Army Hospital. One of her songs was called “Through a Soldier’s Eyes.”

After a traditional Irish lunch complete with corned beef and boiled red potatoes, Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band entertained the Soldiers and their families.

Sinise’s path to this performance was that once, while filming a scene for his television show, “CSI: NY,” he visited the armory. He and a few Soldiers discussed a possible performance.

Sinise, who plays bass in the band, said the group has traveled around the world and has played at 75 bases in the last five years.

He introduced bandmate and Vietnam Veteran Kimo Williams, whom he met in 1997 while the pair worked together on a play at the Steppenwolf Theatre. Once the two found out they were both musicians, they became friends and then started the band.

“Our mission was to support the troops by playing music,” Sinise said.

Williams had played for the Soldiers in Vietnam who were serving in the remote combat outposts.

CAN’T FIGHT FATE

Gonzalez feels the 69th is where he is supposed to be, and his goal is to retire as their command sergeant major. “Then I can retire happy,” he commented.

As Montesano said, “Everybody wants to be in the 69th today.”

I felt honored to spend that day with this regiment. **GX**



THANK YOU FOR THE BLESSING

MG Joseph Taluto, adjutant general of the New York National Guard, is greeted by His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan before the service at St. Patrick’s Cathedral.

Fighting Spirit

▶ SHARP AND STRONG





Rush Hour

Dale Jr. negotiates the No. 88 National Guard car through traffic during the Aaron's 449 at the Talladega Superspeedway April 26, 2009.

SPORTS

Dale Jr. and Jeff Gordon burn rubber in Victory Lane.

86

FITNESS

SGT Ken pumps you up in Operation Craving Competition, Part 2.

94

GEAR

The "Eye of the Strykers" gMAV

100



DRAFTIN' Racers crowd behind Dale Jr., the master of the draft.

Master the Draft

DALE JR. **STAYS STRONG** ON THE TRACK

By Christian Anderson

Dale Jr. has been redlining all spring, tackling each race with 100-percent effort and working hard for a top finish for the Guard. One key to his success is his exceptional drafting.

At the Talladega Superspeedway in late April, Dale Jr. reminded fans that he plans on staying up front as long as he is behind the wheel. He has a wonderful history at Talladega with five wins, eight top-five finishes and 11 top-10s in a total of 18 starts.

Looking at his record, you might think Dale Jr. was born to race at Talladega. In fact, Jr. sits just behind his father with 10 wins, and his teammate Jeff Gordon with six wins, as the three most winning drivers at the track.

Or it might be that the track is special to Dale Jr. in more ways than one. Being dubbed a Superspeedway isn't just some fancy marketing



SECONDS COUNT The No. 88's pit crew work hard to get Dale Jr. back into the fight as quickly as possible.

ploy: Talladega truly is the fastest track in NASCAR and the biggest with 2.66-miles of concrete to cover for each lap. Since cars often reach speeds of 200 miles per hour there, drafting is really the key to success. According to NASCAR.com, drafting is "the practice of two or more cars, while racing, to run nose-to-tail, almost touching. The lead car, by displacing the

air in front of it, creates a vacuum between its rear end and the nose of the following car, actually pulling the second car along with it."

Dale Jr. is known as an expert drafter, learning from one of the best—his father, Dale Sr. This technique takes patience and a cool hand, as the driver has to get within inches of the car's bumper in front of him, sometimes at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour, for drafting to be really effective. Dale Jr. ran a conservative race at Talladega, and his patience paid off as he finished second, powering through a last-lap crash involving Ryan Newman and Carl Edwards. Now, all Dale Jr. has to do is carry the momentum and use his drafting skills to keep up the good work through the summer. **GX**

For more info on Dale Jr. and to download his exclusive ringtones, go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/dalejr.

HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

TRUCK-DRIVING MAN

STEPSIDE PICKUP WAS GORDON'S FIRST RIDE *By Clint Wood*

HIS STORY LED EVERY newscast, and his photograph was plastered on nearly every sports section in daily newspapers April 6.

I'm talking about Jeff Gordon's victory in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series' Samsung 500 at Texas Motor Speedway on April 5 that snapped his 47-race winless streak. Gordon was wheeling the No. 24 DuPont/National Guard GED Plus Chevrolet.

How can you not remember seeing him in victory circle, wearing a white cowboy hat, holding the traditional six shooters in each hand pointed to the sky?

This was his first victory on the 1.5-mile track and the first win at the wheel of an Army National Guard special programs car.

"I've got to thank National Guard GED Plus, a great program," said Gordon in a Hendrick Motorsports press release.

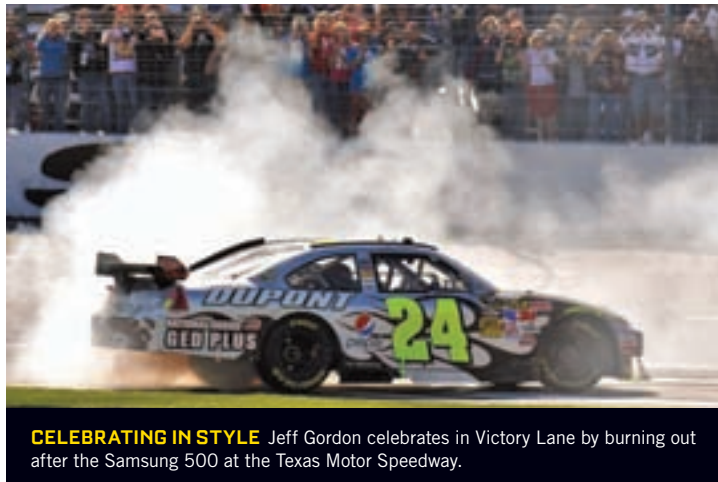
The GED Plus program gives individuals a second chance at pursuing a higher education.

GX nabbed an exclusive interview with Gordon before he clicked the toggle switch for the first time on his No. 24 National Guard/DuPont Chevy at Atlanta Motor Speedway on March 7-9.

Gordon is racing similar cars several times this season, most featuring Army National Guard special programs on the hood. The first program highlighted was the National Guard Youth Challenge program.

We asked Gordon about his first car, his love of NASCAR and much more.

GX: WHAT IS THE FIRST CAR YOU LEARNED TO DRIVE, AND WHO TAUGHT YOU?



CELEBRATING IN STYLE Jeff Gordon celebrates in Victory Lane by burning out after the Samsung 500 at the Texas Motor Speedway.

JG: I started racing when I was 5, and that was a Quarter Midget. My stepfather, John [Bickford], got me into it. It became a big family outing and sport for us every weekend after about the age of 7, and it's been going ever since.

But as far as a street car, I had a 1980 Chevy Stepside pickup truck that my stepdad and I fixed up. We were in Indiana, so it was covered in rust and not much of a truck. But we turned it into a nice vehicle.

Being on the road with my dad all the time, I just learned to drive that way. I had to learn how to drive a stick shift, but that didn't take me very long.

GX: WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO DRIVE, OFF THE TRACK?

JG: If I can, I take a fun car like the new Corvette I have to a race-track. I love that the most. Every once in a while, I get a chance to drive in New York City, and that's a lot of fun as well.

GX: WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST LIFE ACHIEVEMENT THUS FAR?

JG: I think being a dad is the

greatest achievement you can ever have. It's the most rewarding thing you'll ever do.

I would put that above anything I've ever done in racing—even though I've been very successful and very fortunate to do some great things. Nothing matches up to what it's like seeing your first child born. *[Editor's note: Gordon has won three Daytona 500s, four Brickyard, including the inaugural Brickyard 400, and four championships.]*

GX: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON HAVING THE NATIONAL GUARD AS A SPONSOR THIS SEASON?

JG: I'm really excited about it. They've been a great addition to the team. And the people are great to work with. Having them on the No. 88 car and seeing what they've done there has been a great introduction.

I think it really ties in to our fans. Obviously, [Dale Earnhardt] Junior has a different fan base than I have, but I think we both really have a connection with our fans.

And that connection can transfer over to the National Guard and be fantastic. With our sport being as

patriotic and all-American as it is, I think the sponsorship makes perfect sense. The National Guard has given a lot, and we're going to give back all we can to them.

GX: WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO ALL THE SOLDIERS OUT THERE WHO ARE PROTECTING AMERICA'S FREEDOM?

JG: It is an incredible commitment, what those men and women in the National Guard do for us and for our country.

Obviously, the Guard is about more than just protecting us. It also gives its Soldiers opportunities for tuition for school and job training.

The more I learn about the National Guard and what it has to offer, the more impressed I am. It makes me proud to represent them and to be an American. These men and women sacrifice so much for our freedom.

GX: OUTSIDE OF NASCAR, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORT?

JG: I like a lot of different sports. I love watching the X Games. I love other forms of motorsports, from Formula 1 to Supercross. I have a fantasy football league, and I love the NFL. I'm a big 49ers fan. I'm just a big, big sports fan in general.

GX: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT NASCAR?

JG: I love the competition. I love going out there and being the best that you can be as a team, and playing my role as a driver.

In order to be successful, you have to win races; you have to see checkered flags. You have to celebrate in Victory Lane with the 15 guys who surround you and make it all happen.

The fans and sponsors who support us—that's how we reward them for their support. Whether it's a single-race win or a big-race win like the Daytona 500, that's what we are all about. **GX**



PUSHING THE LIMITS

No. 4 National Guard Indycar driver Dan Wheldon takes a high G turn in the super fast Streets of St. Pete race.

A Match Made in History

THE MILITARY ROOTS OF THE INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY *By Ben Warden*

WWI and WWII had a major impact on open-wheel racing and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in general. Both conflicts required the Speedway to “step up” and help the American war effort, albeit in very different ways.

IN THIS STORY, *GX* explores this phenomenon, and how those wars transformed open-wheel racing into an American tradition. We’ll also look at how the associated patriotism continues today.

WORLD WAR I

In March 1917, Speedway officials were compelled to cancel the Indy 500 due to the U.S.’s entry into WWI. However, due to its large space and central location, the track itself became part of the war effort.

For the next two years (1917–1918), the grounds were home to two aviation maintenance

battalions. Nestled between military installations in Dayton, OH, and Rantoul, IL, the Speedway became a popular refueling station for cross-country-bound airplanes. The race returned in 1919.

WORLD WAR II

The everyday sacrifices Americans made during WWII were so vast and far-reaching, few of us can imagine them in 2009.

Rationing was the word of the era, and in addition to “Meatless Monday” and “Wheatless Wednesday,” automobile racing was suspended.

Gas and mechanical intellect were not things to waste during that time.

The 1942 Indianapolis 500 was scheduled to run on Saturday, May 30, 1942. It was to be the 30th annual running of the famous race.

The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 launched the U.S. into WWII, and days later, the 1942 Indy 500 was cancelled. Unlike in WWI, the grounds were not used for military purposes. The gates of the Speedway were locked, and the facility was abandoned and left in a state of disrepair.

There weren’t any races between 1942–1945.

But in 1945, the dilapidating piece of real estate was sold to local businessman Anton “Tony” Hulman. Allegedly, Hulman had a boyish enthusiasm for the Speedway and worked tirelessly to get it ready for the 1946 race. The track reopened for the 30th Indianapolis 500, held May 30, 1946.

Soldiers returning from overseas could now enjoy the Indy 500 in all its glory. For that, we

“PATRIOTISM IS EXPRESSED IN MANY WAYS. FOR SOME, IT IS SIMPLY A FEELING OF ENTHUSIASM AND EXCITEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONAL PRIDE. FOR OTHERS, IT INVOLVES ACTION.”

>> John Barnes, Owner, Panther Racing

can thank Hulman, who foresaw that down the road, beyond the global and economic hardships of the day, generations of people would want to gather every summer by the hundreds of thousands to enjoy “the greatest spectacle in racing.”

Hulman’s mission was accomplished, and his family has hosted every Indy 500 since.

HISTORY NOT FORGOTTEN

The 500-mile race in the Hulman Era (1946–present) has been linked with honoring the country. Maybe it’s because the race is held on Memorial Day weekend. But whatever the reason, the emphasis on the military pageantry and tradition has been well preserved.

Every 500 has a celebrated military presence. Major celebrities sing the “Star-Spangled Banner” and “God Bless America.” At the start of every race, countless red, white and blue balloons are released into the sky as military jets roar over the crowd.

The sport of racing and places like the Indianapolis Motor Speedway are testaments to America’s perseverance in tough times. In giving up the track for military use, and then restoring it after wartime neglect, citizens set aside their own needs for the greater good. **GX**



PHOTO OP A Soldier gets her picture with Dan Wheldon, driver of the No. 4 National Guard car.

Twisting the Wick

GUARD'S GEOFF MAY OFF TO GREAT START By Clint Wood

At 190 mph, the logo and number are hard to read. But as Geoff May hits the brakes on his Suzuki, you can see the No. 54 and the National Guard emblem loud and clear.

May is part of a new partnership with Michael Jordan Motorsports Suzuki and the Army National Guard. Since his retirement, Jordan, known for his fancy moves and incredible ability to shoot and dunk, has channeled his competitive nature to motorcycle racing—or more specifically, the fastest motorcycle road

racing on the planet: the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) Superbike Series.

Jordan, a six-time NBA Champion, chose May to pin the throttle of the No. 54 National Guard Jordan Suzuki GSXR-1000. “54” represents the U.S.’s 50 states and four territories.

And 28-year-old May, the 2003 Superbike Rookie of the Year who finished second in the 2008 AMA Superstock Championship, hasn’t rolled out of the throttle

GEOFF MAY FAST FACTS

Favorite movie: *On Any Sunday*, a 1971 film about motorcycle racing

Favorite NASCAR racer: Bill Elliott

Hobbies: Bass fishing, snowboarding, hiking, backpacking, running and bicycling

this season. As of mid-June, he was fifth in the AMA Pro National Guard American Superbike Series presented by Parts Unlimited.

GX chatted with May recently about his new role in racing.

BRIAN NELSON

EXTREME LEAN No. 54 National Guard Jordan Suzuki racer Geoff May puts his head down as he pins the throttle during a race.



Want more Superbikes? Visit
www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardevents/superbike.

Living Life an Eighth-Mile At a Time

NATIONAL GUARD KICKS OFF TITLE SPONSORSHIP OF ADRL

By Ben Warden

Based in O'Fallon, MO, the National Guard American Drag Racing League (ADRL) is the nation's premier sanctioning body for the sport of eighth-mile drag racing.

Now in its fifth year, the National Guard ADRL plays host to the country's top professional drag racers as they compete for one of auto racing's most prized rewards—the Minuteman—which is handed out to each event's class winner.

The five categories featured in the National Guard ADRL's all-professional show are Extreme Pro Stock, Pro Extreme Motorcycle, Extreme 10.5, Pro Nitrous and Pro Extreme, the quickest full-bodied class in all of drag racing.

In 2009, the National Guard ADRL tour schedule consists of 10 national events run nationwide.

The first ADRL event of the season was the fifth annual held at Houston's Raceway Park. In the Pro Extreme division, National Guard driver Joshua Hernandez qualified all the way into the third round, but was .14-tenths of a second short of final round. Speed-wise, he was third fastest of all 16 drivers. **GX**

Follow ADRL racing at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardracing.

'09

SCHEDULE

JULY 24-25: U.S. DRAGS II VIRGINIA
Virginia Motorsports Park
(Dinwiddie, VA)

AUGUST 7-8: GATEWAY DRAGS II
Gateway International Raceway
(Madison, IL)

AUGUST 21-22: OHIO DRAGS III
National Trail Raceway
(Hebron, OH)

SEPTEMBER 11-12: DRAGSTOCK VI
Rockingham Dragway
(Rockingham, NC)

OCTOBER 23-24: ADRL WORLD FINALS V
Texas Motorplex
(Ennis, TX)

GX: WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO REPRESENT THE GUARD SOLDIERS?

GM: It's great, man—it's unbelievable. It has given a lot more purpose to the racing than I've ever had. Before, I was representing a tire company or, with the [Michael] Jordan brand last year, shoes and clothing. So representing all the men and women out there in the National Guard, for me, it's hard to describe. I feel very proud and honored that I was chosen to be the guy to do it.

GX: WHAT IS IT LIKE RACING FOR MICHAEL JORDAN?

GM: It is really cool that he is involved in my sport, and he has a passion for it like I do. He got out there, did the track day and was hooked immediately. He fell in love with it. He grew this entire team in a matter of a few years.

So that's really cool to me—he has the same passion that I do. Yeah, he's an NBA legend and all that. He pretty much stays out of the workings of it, and he's there to support us. I think that is the best boss—he lets the team run itself. **GX**

Better Than TV:

July 31-Aug. 2
Heartland Park,
Topeka, KS

Aug. 14-16
Virginia International
Raceway, Alton, VA



1. As always, I have to be in the proper position before I am able to submit my opponent. Here, ACU has DCU in the mout. Notice that ACU has his knees high in DCU's armpits to prevent DCU from creating space to escape. While in the mout, ACU also tucks his feet under DCU and squeezes his knees together to further prevent DCU from creating space. DCU instinctively raises his arms to block his face and head from being struck. To execute the bent armbar, ACU is looking for DCU to raise his arms



How's Training Going?

Story and photos by SGT Michael Kerkhoff

THIS MONTH we're going to stay with last month's theme: "Getting back to basics."

Remember: When training, it's very important that we do our drills correctly and not cut corners. This is going to help you recognize the opportunity to set up and use a particular submission, sweep or counter.

When drilling with your training partner, go slow to further build that muscle memory. When sparring with your training partner, remember to keep your egos in check. Neither of you has to go all out. Remember, Combatives is training for combat, not to show your partner that you can make his eyes bulge in a rear naked choke.

This month, we're going to look at the bent armbar from the mout. As with the straight armbar, a lot of Soldiers have problems executing this submission. So we'll look at some common mistakes made when using this submission. Let's roll! **GX**



up parallel to each other. This is ACU's sign to use the bent armbar from the mout.

2. While maintaining the mout position, ACU chooses an arm to attack. Once ACU chooses an arm, he puts 2 to 1 pressure on DCU. This means ACU uses both of his arms against one of DCU's arms. ACU places one hand on the elbow and one on the wrist of DCU using a thumbless grip.

3. In the next step, ACU uses his chest to help him push DCU's arm to the ground. A common mistake that inexperienced Soldiers make is trying to muscle DCU's arm down. In Jiu Jitsu, grappling leverage is used more often than muscle. So use your weight and gravity to your advantage.

4. Once DCU's arm is flat on the ground, ACU forms a figure-four, locking DCU's arm into position for submission. ACU still continues to use

5b. To finish the bent armbar from the mout, ACU keeps DCU and his arm very close to his own body. ACU ensures that DCU's knuckles are flat on the ground. Using DCU's hand like a paintbrush, he paints a stripe from the top of DCU's head down to his knee. As ACU paints, he uses his forearm to lift DCU's elbow for the submission.

6. When training on the bent armbar from the mout, be very careful and work slowly. There is a high probability of injury to the shoulder while executing this submission at combat speed. Train safe and smart.



4.



5a.

a thumbless grip throughout execution. Another key that is commonly missed is ACU's elbow in the crook of DCU's neck.

5a. If the elbow is not placed deep in DCU's neck, space is created, and DCU has the opportunity to fight off the submission.



5b.



6.

GET IN TOUCH WITH
SGT MICHAEL KERKHOFF AT
COMBATIVES@GXONLINE.COM.

OPERATION CRAVING COMPETITION

PART 2

Training the Tactical Athlete By Ken and Stephanie Weichert



TRAIN TO WIN IN 60-MINUTES!

[RECEIVED]

SGT Ken and Stephanie,

A Soldier at my Guard unit showed me your APFT improvement program, Operation Pushing for Points. I started the program two weeks ago and have seen great results. I am an SMP (Simultaneous Membership Program) ROTC Cadet in Florida. I am captain of the Ranger Challenge team. Our competitions against other colleges include physically demanding events like the obstacle course, a full APFT and a 10-kilometer forced road march with a heavy rucksack. Normally I can run all day, but with the extra weight bearing down on my back I feel like I can't keep up. Do you have a specific program that will help me build a lot of strength and stamina for the next season?

Best Regards,
Cadet Chad P.,
Florida Army National Guard

[SENT]

Dear Cadet Chad,

We just love to hear success stories from our readers. Keep up the great work! We have a two-part answer to your question. First, the best way to prepare for multiple events is to practice doing exactly what you will endure in the competition. If your day includes an obstacle course, APFT and a 10-kilometer rucksack march, then that is how you train. As your body gets conditioned to the level of stamina, continue to up the training a little.

I once participated in a 20-lap swimming race. Because I had been swimming miles each day alternating between sprints and stamina training, when it came to that race, I was more adequately prepared than the person who wound up getting second place.

Build up slowly on your endurance and then continue adding on to your workout until the events seem easy. For variety, try Craving Competition Part II. This workout will help you build strength, agility and stamina.

Secondly, add core training to your workout calendar. Like Craving Competition Part I, the workout is full-body, focusing on the core. As a reminder, your core is where all movement originates. A strong core is where you will get explosive power and speed. It will also help protect your back while you carry your rucksack.

Stretching and rest are just as critical to your training as your exercise plan. You can over-train. To win this competition, you need to build up slowly to the level of strength and stamina that you desire. Take two non-consecutive days off where you allow your body to recover. Lastly, make sure to stay well hydrated.

Good luck with your competitions next season, and let us know how you and your team do!

HOOAH!
SGT Ken and Stephanie



“I can run faster and farther because of the core training and cardio drills in your workouts. Keep up the great work! HOOAH!”
—SPC Lisa T., North Dakota Army National Guard

WARM-UP PHASE

Foam Rolling: Perform 3–6 minutes of foam rolling, or self-myofascial release techniques, in order to improve flexibility and sports performance, and to reduce potential injuries.

Aerobics: Perform 5–8 minutes of aerobic exercises, such as running in place, side-straddle hops, jumping jacks or high steps/knees.

Stretching: Perform 3–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

CORE TARGETING PHASE



SHOULDER BRIDGE

Equipment: Stability ball

START: Place your calves on top of a stability ball while your back is on the ground. Lift your rear end off the ground until your lower back and legs form a straight line. Keep your head, arms and shoulder blades on the ground.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominals tight, slowly roll the ball toward your rear end by contracting your hamstring muscles. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth while rolling the ball toward you, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

BASIC: 10–20 seconds, or 1–10 repetitions.
Note: Basic-level participants may rest their back on the ground between repetitions.
INTERMEDIATE: 21–40 seconds, or 11–20 repetitions
ADVANCED: 41–60 seconds, or 21–30 repetitions
EXTREME: 61–90 seconds, or 31–40 repetitions



ELEVATED PRONE KNEE THRUSTS

Equipment: Bench, platform or Bosu

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Elevate your legs by positioning your feet on a platform that is 12–24 inches off of the ground. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight and your arms straight, bend your left knee

and move it toward your chest until you reach 90 degrees of knee flexion. Return to the start position. Switch legs and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth while you thrust each knee, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

BASIC: 10–20 seconds
INTERMEDIATE: 21–40 seconds
ADVANCED: 41–60 seconds
EXTREME: 30–60 seconds while performing a push-up after each knee thrust.



TUCK AND PIKE

Equipment: Stability ball

START: Begin by balancing your body with your feet or lower shins on the stability ball and your hands on the ground. Tuck your knees in toward your chest.

ACTIONS: Lift your rear end upward by straightening your legs and engaging your abdominal muscles. *Advanced to extreme standards note:* Continue elevating your rear end until your back is perpendicular to the ground and aligned with your

arms. Hold for a few seconds. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth while elevating your rear end, and inhale through your nose while returning to the start position.

BASIC: 10–20 seconds, or 1–2 repetitions (no pike)
INTERMEDIATE: 21–40 seconds, or 3–6 repetitions (no pike)
ADVANCED: 30–45 seconds, or 7–12 repetitions
EXTREME: 46–60 seconds, or 13–20 repetitions



ELEVATED BACK BEND

Equipment: Stability ball

START: Balance your body on your lower abdomen on a stability ball, arms extended and aligned with your back, palms facing down, legs straight and feet 12 inches apart.

ACTIONS: Tighten your lower back muscles and pull

back your elbows until you form a slight arch in your lower back. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you arch your back, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

BASIC: 10–30 seconds, or 5–10 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 31–60 seconds, or 11–25 repetitions
ADVANCED: 61–90 seconds, or 26–50 repetitions
EXTREME: 91–120 seconds, or 51–75 repetitions

ASSISTED PULL-UPS

Equipment: Pull-up bar that is positioned approximately 3–4 feet from the ground

START: Sit underneath the pull-up bar. Grasp the bar with your hands, arms shoulder-width apart, palms facing upward. Tighten your abdominal muscles and elevate your hips until your back and legs form a straight line. Adjust your foot position until your chest is directly under the bar.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, pull your body toward the bar by bending both elbows. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you pull your body upward, and inhale through your nose while you return to the start position.

Female standards:

BASIC: 5–10 seconds, or 1–3 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 11–20 seconds, or 4–8 repetitions
ADVANCED: 21–40 seconds, or 9–15 repetitions
EXTREME: 41–60 seconds, or 16–24 repetitions

Male standards:

BASIC: 5–15 seconds, or 1–5 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 16–30 seconds, or 6–12 repetitions
ADVANCED: 31–60 seconds, or 13–25 repetitions
EXTREME: 61–90 seconds, or 26–40 repetitions



TRANSITION PHASE



BENCH DIP

Equipment: Bench, platform or Bosu

START: Sit on the edge of a sturdy flat bench with your hands slightly behind your hips, gripping the bench tightly. With your legs together and knees bent 90 degrees, place your heels on the ground and point your toes in the air. Straighten your elbows and move your hips slightly away from the bench.

ACTIONS: Slowly lower your body by bending both elbows 90 degrees. Point your elbows backward while lowering your body. Do not allow your elbows to point in or outward. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

BASIC: 5–10 repetitions (no weight)
INTERMEDIATE: 11–25 repetitions
ADVANCED: 26–50 repetitions
EXTREME: 20–30 repetitions with a medicine ball on your lap



CRAB CRAWL FORWARD

Equipment: None (Should be performed on soft surfaces)

START: Sit on the ground. Bend your legs 90 degrees at the knees, heels down, arms slightly behind you, palms on the ground and fingers pointing forward. Elevate your hips until your rear is 6-12 inches off of the ground.

ACTIONS: Walk your body forward, using your arms and legs, until you have reached your goal. Breathe naturally; in through your nose and out through your mouth.

BASIC: 30-60 seconds
INTERMEDIATE: 61-90 seconds
ADVANCED: 91-120 seconds
EXTREME: 3 minutes



CLEAN AND PRESS

Equipment: Barbell, plates and collars

START: Hold a barbell loaded with the desired amount of weight for high repetition. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and keep your shoulder blades retracted.

ACTIONS: Lower your body until you reach 90 degrees at the knees, with your hips moving back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet. Grasp the bar with an overhand grip slightly wider than your shoulders. *Note:* You should not lift any more than you can comfortably repeat with good form. Keep your head forward and back straight. Do not allow your knees to move forward past your toes or allow your back to arch. The bar should line up halfway between your toes and your heels. Place one foot behind you for support (if needed) and keep your abdominal muscles tight. In one explosive movement, draw the barbell up to your hips, then shoulders, dropping your elbows while bringing the weight up. Press the weight over your head. Return the weight to your clavicle and down to the tops of your legs by lifting your elbows and dropping the weight straight down. Return your back foot to a neutral stance. Repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you press the weight upward, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

BASIC: 5-10 repetitions (no barbell)
INTERMEDIATE: 8-15 repetitions (no overhead press)
ADVANCED: 10-15 repetitions (full clean and press)
EXTREME: 16-25 repetitions (full clean and press)

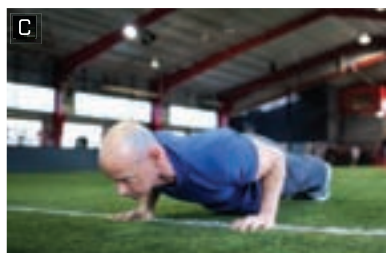


PUSH-UP WITH ABDUCTION

Equipment: None

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, open your legs simultaneously 15-20 inches and promptly return to the start position. Perform a push-up by bending both elbows until the upper parts of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position and repeat the sequence until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.



Female standards:
BASIC: 1-3 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 4-8 repetitions
ADVANCED: 9-15 repetitions
EXTREME: 16-25 repetitions

Male standards:
BASIC: 10-20 repetitions
INTERMEDIATE: 21-45 repetitions
ADVANCED: 46-65 repetitions
EXTREME: 66-90 repetitions

AEROBIC CONDITIONING



STAIR CLIMBING DRILL

Equipment: Stairs

START: Assume a "standing start position" by placing your toes behind the start line with one leg 12–18 inches behind you. Shift your weight on the front leg and bend your lead knee 90 degrees. Bend your trunk forward with your opposite arm in front and slightly elevated.

ACTIONS: Sprint up the stairs as fast as you can. Descend carefully. Repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

BASIC: 1–3 sets of stairs, or 8–24 steps
INTERMEDIATE: 4–8 sets of stairs, or 32–64 steps
ADVANCED: 9–15 sets of stairs, or 72–120 steps
EXTREME: 15–20 consecutive sets of stairs upward, or 120–160 steps



ADDUCTION AGILITY LADDER DRILL

Equipment: Agility ladder

START: Stand behind the first section of the agility ladder.

ACTIONS: With explosive movements, hop into the first section of the ladder with both feet. Quickly hop forward to the next section of the ladder, moving your feet to the outside of the ladder. Next, hop forward to the next section, moving your feet to the inside of the ladder. Repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

BASIC: 20–30 seconds
INTERMEDIATE: 31–60 seconds
ADVANCED: 61–90 seconds
EXTREME: 91–120 seconds



WEAVE DRILL

Equipment: Safety cones set approximately 3–4 feet apart and aligned in a straight column

START: Stand behind a column of cones.

ACTIONS: With explosive movements, run forward while weaving in and out of the cones. Repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

BASIC: 20–30 seconds
INTERMEDIATE: 31–60 seconds
ADVANCED: 61–90 seconds
EXTREME: 91–120 seconds

INTERVAL RUNNING DRILL (NOT PICTURED)

Equipment: None

START: Assume a "standing start position" by placing your toes behind the start line with one leg 12–18 inches behind you. Shift your weight on the front leg and bend your lead knee 90 degrees. Bend your trunk forward with opposite arm in front and slightly elevated.

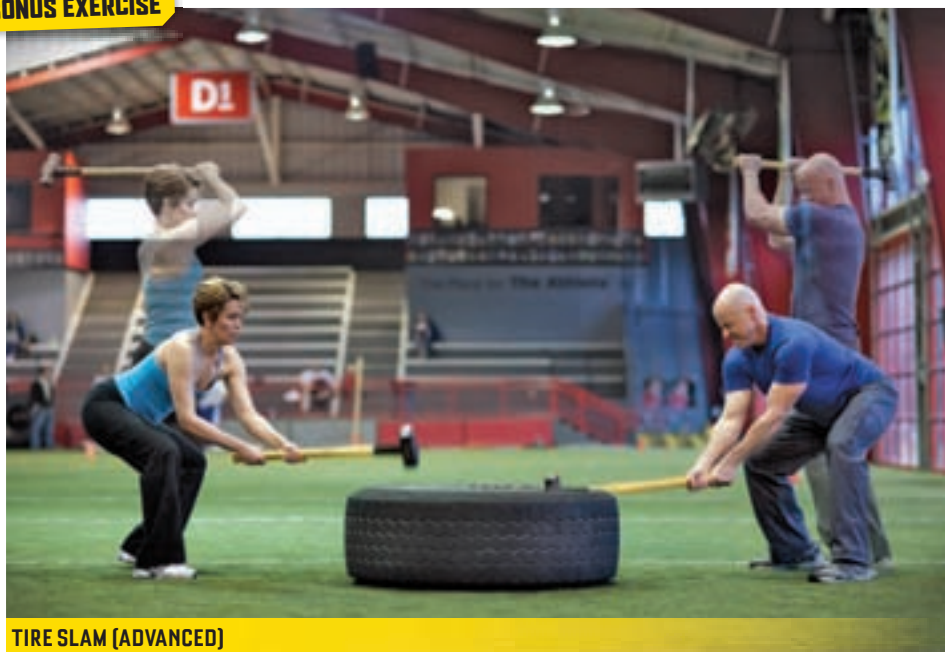
ACTIONS: Run at a moderate pace for several feet and sprint for several feet. Repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

BASIC: 1–2 minutes
INTERMEDIATE: 3–6 minutes
ADVANCED: 7–15 minutes
EXTREME: 16–25 minutes

“What I love the most about your workouts is that they tell me everything that I need to do for each day of the week!”

—PFC Gary S., Oregon Army National Guard

BONUS EXERCISE



TIRE SLAM (ADVANCED)

START: Place a large tire 12 inches in front of you and stand with a neutral spine, arms at your sides and feet shoulder-width apart. Grasp the handle of a sledgehammer.

ACTIONS: Hammer the side of the tire and return to the start position. Continue until your goal is

reached. Exhale through your mouth as you hammer the side of the tire, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position. **Warning:** If sharing a tire with another participant, take turns hammering the tire (one person strikes the tire at a time).

ADVANCED: 60–90 seconds

COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the warm-up exercises.

STAMINA STOPWATCH

Bronze Medal: 1 full set = approximately 45 minutes

Silver Medal: 2 full sets = approximately 60 minutes

Gold Medal: 3 full sets = approximately 75 minutes

Note: The warm-up and cool-down phases are performed only once.

Equipment:

1. Foam roller
2. Stability ball
3. Pull-up bar
4. Bench, platform or Bosu
5. Barbell, plates and collars
6. Stairs
7. Safety cones
8. Agility ladder
9. Large tire (if performing the Bonus Exercise)

Watch fitness videos and download workouts at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness or email sgtken@GXonline.com.

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath.

7-DAY SCHEDULE

MONDAY

•Operation Craving Competition

TUESDAY

•Running Long Distance 3–6 miles
•Marching 10 miles with a rucksack (alternate exercise)
•8-min Abs x 1–2 sets
Note: Download “8-min Abs” on www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness

WEDNESDAY

•Operation Craving Competition

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

•Running Interval Training x 2–4 miles
•8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

SATURDAY

•Operation Craving Competition
•Stair climbing drills x 45 minutes (alternate exercise)
•Marching 10 miles with a rucksack (alternate exercise)

SUNDAY

Rest

NUTRITION ADVICE:

1. To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads and pastas, dairy products and sugar.
2. Check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise plan.
3. Want to read more diet advice? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Healthy, and read Operation Diet Dissection.

REMARKS:

1. **Repeat** the 7-day schedule x 4 sets to complete the month.
2. **Rest** periods may be adjusted, as needed. However, be sure to include 1–2 rest days per week for rest and recovery.
3. **Perform** no fitness training 24–48 hours prior to a competition.



EVAN BAINES

KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors. Ken is currently a staff sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard.

The Eye of the Strykers

gMAV "FLYING BEER KEG" COMES TO THE PARTY

By Marcia Beene Dickerson

It's not a probe from "Star Trek" or a Twin Ion Engine (TIE) fighter from *Star Wars*, but the gasoline-powered

Micro Air Vehicle (gMAV) packs a lot in its small, round body—hence its nickname "The Flying Beer Keg."

The Pennsylvania's 56th Stryker Brigade is the first Army

National Guard unit to receive the XM156 Class I Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)—aka the gMAV—which will provide exceptional situational awareness in both

urban and open environments when the brigade hits the ground in Iraq later this year.

I SPY

The gMAV serves as a unit's or commander's "eyes," adding to situational awareness as it accomplishes reconnaissance missions. According to *Defense News*, the platform carries both still and



The gMAV serves as a unit's or commander's "eyes," adding to situational awareness.

FLYING HIGH

The gMAV can be stored in a Humvee or another vehicle, unlike many other UAVs that weigh hundreds of pounds.

video electro-optical and infrared cameras, providing key imagery and intelligence for surveillance and targeting operations.

Unlike other UAVs that fly like airplanes, the ability of the gMAV to take off like a helicopter and "hover and stare" makes it ideal for convoy protection, improvised explosive device (IED) detection and urban maneuvers.

FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEMS

The "keg" is the first of many drones planned for the modernization of the Future Combat Systems (FCS) program. Designed for portability and minimum setup requirements, the gMAV weighs only 40 pounds and can be deployed by two Soldiers in a matter of minutes.

So watch out—a "flying keg" may be coming to your part of the world soon. **GX**

COURTESY OF AAI CORPORATION/TEXTRON SYSTEMS

**gMAV
SYSTEM
FEATURES**

COMPONENTS:

One or two air vehicles, one ground station and support equipment

PAYLOADS:

Forward- and downward-looking Electro-Optical (EO) and Infrared imaging sensors;
Modular interchangeable sensor packages

AIR VEHICLE PERFORMANCE:

40 knot airspeed;
50 minutes endurance at 5,500 feet;
25 feet/second climb rate;
Takeoff and landing in 15 knot winds;
Flies in rain and 20-knot winds

PACKABILITY:

System weighs less than 40 lbs.;
Modular, Light Weight, Load Carrying Equipment (MOLLE) system packable;
Air vehicle weighs 18.5 lbs. fueled

(Courtesy of AAI Corporation/Textron Systems)



PIECE OF CAKE

The gMAV is very simple to fly and requires a control panel much like a video game control console.



Following the Warrior Spirit >

**ROCKIE LYNNE
HONORS THE TROOPS**

By Christian Anderson



As he sat on his Harley with the wind in his face, Rockie Lynne contemplated the road ahead of him. He had just spent an hour with a stranger, and in that brief amount of time, they had forged a lifetime friendship. He knew the next stop was going to be just as hard, if not harder. And then there would be six more stops after that.

But Rockie wasn't alone. He had 60 other riders with him for support, and they would all need each other to get through this painful, yet wonderful day to celebrate three fallen heroes.

In the most basic sense that is what the 2004 Tribute to the Troops ride was all about: Eight stops. Eight families. Eight fallen Soldiers. But in reality, it was so much more. The ride was to remind the families that their sacrifice would never be forgotten, and the riders were there to help them in anyway possible.

Small-Town Boy with Big Dreams

Rockie's journey began Nov. 14, 1964, in Iredell County, NC. Abandoned a few days after birth, he spent several years in an orphanage before he was adopted by a family of devout Baptists.

He learned growing up that hard work and determination was the only true way to get what you want in life. It wasn't until he was 7 years old that he finally had a guitar of his own; he used money saved from

mowing lawns to buy one from JC Penney. According to Rockie, this was the beginning of his life.

He spent his younger years feeding his desire for music in the high school jazz ensemble and eventually joined a band. His band played gigs here and there, but it seemed they weren't quite destined to make it big. Besides, Rockie was destined for something else.

The Warrior Drive

Often, young teenage boys will see a Soldier in uniform and decide immediately they want to be a Warrior as well. For Rockie, that Soldier was Johnny Harell. As a member of the Special Forces, Harell inspired a teenaged Rockie, who looked up to him as a role model. It wasn't so much that Harell was an elite Soldier, but it was the way he acted that impressed Rockie.

Rockie joined the Army immediately after high school graduation and embraced the transforming effect of Basic Combat Training. Sure, he thought it was hard, just like all the other recruits did, but he was learning the principles of determination, discipline and respect like never before.

By the time Rockie graduated Basic Combat Training, he was a completely different man and felt a confidence like never before. But it was the final advice from his drill sergeant—that if he could make



THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING

Rockie Lynne has met with every family from Minnesota that has lost a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine in Iraq or Afghanistan.

it through Basic, he could accomplish anything—that Rockie held onto throughout his life for continued motivation.

That motivation pushed him to become a member of the famous 82nd Airborne, a unit with a rich history dating back to the D-Day invasion during WWII. With their battle cry of “All the Way!” these paratroops pride themselves in being ready for anything and always following through to the mission’s end, a principle that Rockie holds on to today.

Following His Dreams

As Rockie’s service in the Army came to an end, he looked westward to pursue his passion of music. He drove his 1984 Toyota pickup, loaded with all his possessions, and steered toward Hollywood—the destination of many aspiring musicians in the early ’80s hoping to find fame. Using his G.I. Bill, Rockie enrolled at the Guitar Institute of Technology (G.I.T.), eventually finding a side of himself that he had never known before. He focused on his music and built friendships that shaped his perspective, eventually forging his sound into what it is today.

After spending time in Hollywood, Rockie bounced across the country for several years, making incredible friendships and honing his sound. Finally settling in Minnesota, he began to develop his fan base by performing across the Midwest and selling his albums.

We Have to Do Something

Rockie was watching TV one night when he saw something on the news that he’ll never forget. The report opened with a story about a traffic jam on I-35, and moved on to the scene of a robbery at a liquor store. The last headline was about a Minnesota Soldier killed in Iraq.

“It was the third story down!” Rockie exclaimed. “And I said, ‘Hold it! That’s not right!’”

Rockie called his friend Gregg Schmitt, and they agreed that they were going to do something to remind Minnesotans and Americans that Soldiers were fighting to protect their freedom.

“At the time we didn’t know what that was, but we were determined to do something,” Rockie added.

Rockie had this song, called “Home,” he played on stage every single night and dedicated to Soldiers that was popular with his fans.

“I had written that song for Juan from Natchez, MS, who died while we were in the Army,” Rockie said emotionally. “He died in my arms.”

Rockie and Gregg felt that they should make “Home” their theme song to unite everyone around their cause. John Murray couldn’t agree more. Murray, a professor at nearby Brown Institute, offered to help.

Rockie agreed, so Murray got together with some of his students and used “Home” as the theme music for the video, which featured portrait shots of the fallen Soldiers. “First thing we did is take that song and set it to a video,” Rockie explained. “Every time we would come to the chorus,

Q&A

With Rockie Lynne

LIFETIME HONOR Rockie Lynne accepts his Iron Mike award at Fort Bragg after performing in a concert for Soldiers. He received this award for his fierce dedication to the Soldiers and their families.



GX: Who is your hero?

RL: Any U.S. Soldier.

GX: What inspires you most?

RL: Helping people.

GX: Personal motto?

RL: Never give up.

That was the first of five Tribute to the Troops rides that Rockie and Gregg have led. Since the first ride with 45 motorcycles, the event has grown into a huge show of support—more than 300 motorcyclists participated in the 2008 ride. But with all the supporters, the cause still remains the same: to thank the families and let them know people care.

we would show those Soldiers who died and did not make it home. But the hardest part was when we called the families. We told them, ‘We want you to know that people care. We are not pro-war or anti-war; we just care and would like to come by and give you something.’”

The First of Many Rides

Rockie and the others involved in the first Tribute to the Troops ride were amazed at how the first ride turned out. The participation was incredible: More than 60 individuals on 45 motorcycles visiting the eight families in the Twin City Metro area (Minneapolis-St. Paul).

“We took them a flag in a case, and we hugged them,” Rockie said. “We went there and just hugged them. It was all these people going up to the families and telling them that they care. It was an unbelievable watershed of emotion.

“They thanked us, but we were there to thank them,” he continued.

Everyone, including Rockie, realized this was something much bigger than they had realized when planning the ride. It was a great success, but Rockie was determined to make the next one even better.

A Ride for Years to Come

An interesting thing happened to Rockie shortly after the first Tribute to the Troops ride that couldn’t have come at a better time: Rockie signed a major record contract with Universal South. All his dedication and perseverance had paid off, and he would have his chance to share his music with the world.

But instead of resting on his laurels and focusing on his stardom, Rockie put his energy into his music and the second Tribute to the Troops.

Rockie called Gregg and they enthusiastically talked about future rides, with hopes of adding a benefit concert to raise money for the troops and their families. Rockie decided that he would do whatever it took to support the cause.

“There have been 72 fallen Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines from Minnesota, and we have visited every single family,” Rockie shared. “It takes three days now, and we have done it in snow and in rain.”

The climax of the event now comes during the concert, which Rockie performs for the families, supporters and anyone else who wants to attend and give money to a good cause.

“At the end of the ride, there’s a concert, but before we start the concert, we ring a bell on stage and read each name of the fallen heroes from Minnesota,” Rockie explained.

The Definition of Success

Every year keeps getting better. Now, with Rockie’s support and fame, especially in the Midwest, the ride and concert have grown into something he could never have imagined years ago when he and Gregg were still planning the first ride.

In addition to thanking all the families of fallen Soldiers, the Tribute to the Troops ride now offers a scholarship to the children of the honored heroes.

“There are 33 kids left behind, so we established a 529 fund in each child’s name that will help send them to college,” Rockie enthusiastically told GX.

“Last year, we raised more than than \$100,000. The great thing about our cause is that every penny goes to the fund,” he said. **GX**



For more information about Rockie Lynne, visit www.rockielynne.com.

For more on the Tribute to the Troops, go to www.tributetothetroops.org.

FRONTAL ASSAULT



LANDRES-ET-ST. GEORGES, MEUSE-ARGONNE, FRANCE, OCT. 15, 1918- MAJ WILLIAM "WILD BILL" DONOVAN, COMMANDING OFFICER OF 1ST BATTALION, 165TH INFANTRY, FORMERLY THE 69TH REGIMENT OF THE NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD, IS ORDERED TO ATTACK A GERMAN STRONGHOLD. THE UNIT HAD PROVEN THEMSELVES IN COMBAT BEFORE, BUT THIS MISSION WOULD PUT THEM TO THE TEST LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

INITIATING THE ASSAULT, DONOVAN ROSE FROM THE TRENCHES TO ATTACK THE ENEMY, HIS MEN FOLLOWING IN ADMIRATION. DONOVAN AND HIS MEN MET HEAVY RESISTANCE, BUT TRUDGED ONWARD TOWARD THE GERMAN STRONGHOLD, DETERMINED TO ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION.



THE CHARGE WAS HALTED AND DONOVAN'S MEN USED ARTILLERY CRATERS FOR COVER AS THE GERMAN FIRE PROVED TOO STRONG. REMAINING IN THE OPEN AND COMPLETELY DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, DONOVAN ATTEMPTED TO ENCOURAGE HIS MEN AND REORGANIZE HIS DEPLETED PLATOONS, RALLYING HIS MEN, THE 165TH PUSHED AGAINST THE GERMANS AGAIN.



WOUNDED, DONOVAN REFUSED TO RETURN TO SAFETY AND CONTINUED TO LEAD HIS MEN FROM A BOMB CRATER, ORGANIZING ATTACKS AND PROBES INTO THE GERMAN DEFENSES. DESPITE HIS EFFORTS, THE GERMAN FIRE WAS TOO INTENSE AND DONOVAN'S MEN HAD TO WITHDRAW DUE TO HEAVY LOSSES.



FOR HIS GALLANT EFFORTS AND COMPLETE DETERMINATION TO PENETRATE THE GERMAN LINES, DONOVAN WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR AFTER THE ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED ON NOV. 11, 1918. DONOVAN ALSO RECEIVED THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS FOR LEADING AN ATTACK AGAINST ANOTHER GERMAN POSITION IN JULY 1918.

END

There are two **PRIMARY** choices in life:

Accept conditions as they exist,
or accept the responsibility
for changing them.



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