

GX[®]

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

>> ON THE ROAD

CLIMBING MT. WHITNEY

SGT KEN TACKLES
NORTH AMERICA'S
TALLEST SUMMIT
WITH SPECIAL
FORCES

>> SPORTS

DALE JR.'S
SMOKIN'
1ST SEASON
WITH THE
GUARD

>> GX HERO

CSM THOMAS SITER

A LEGEND
IN THE
MAKING
P. 76

>> GEAR

THE
ALL NEW
UH-72A
LAKOTA
HELICOPTER

Securing our Nation

AMERICA'S ORIGINAL
WARRIORS STAND READY





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VOL 5 :: ISSUE 9

FEATURES

Securing Our Nation 32

America's original Warriors stand ready.

>> **GUARD LEGACY**

The "First" Militia: The Florida Army National Guard 42

Shedding light on the Sunshine State's Guard history.

>> **ON THE ROAD**

Meet You at the Top 52

SGT Ken tackles North America's tallest summit with Special Forces.

Here Today, Ghana

Tomorrow 58

Guard travels to Ghana.

>> **GX HERO**

A Legend in the Making 76

The story of decorated CSM Thomas Siter.



>> SECURING OUR NATION

32



DEPARTMENTS

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP **6**

Gov. John Baldacci extends his appreciation for the Army National Guard.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR **8**

GX thanks Soldiers for continued support.

RECON **10**

See inspirational photos from Fort Stewart, Fort A.P. Hill and a Special Forces "Super Soldier."

INTEL **16**

A Soldier earns medal for saving Marines; Echo Co. makes a move; SD tackles a fall blizzard; TN receives the Guard's 20,000th HEMTT; CSM Hudson runs 10 miles for Fisher House.

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE **38**

Fraternal Order of Police signs statement of support; Ohio's recruiting soars to an all new high; and more.

HOME BASE **47**

A New Year survival plan, the value of education and how to weatherproof your retirement

FIGHTING SPIRIT **62**

>> **SPORTS**

A glance back at Dale Jr.'s first season with the Guard.

>> **FITNESS**

Fight winter weight gain.

>> **GEAR**

The new UH-72A Lakota Helicopter is ready to serve.

GUARD TALES **82**

CW4 Jolly Harper takes the fight to the enemy in Afghanistan.



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70



64



Letter From Leadership



"I appreciate your dedication to the mission of keeping this country safe and secure."

To the Soldiers: We Support You

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the citizens of Maine, I would like to extend my sincerest best wishes to all of our Army National Guard Soldiers! I appreciate your dedication to the mission of keeping this country safe and secure.

Maine has a long and proud history of service to the nation in times of peace and war. Members of our Armed Forces and the Maine National Guard contribute greatly to the general health and welfare of the state, and all citizens in Maine greatly appreciate and revere the service of our National Guard members.

To the Soldiers: Your family, friends and members of the community honor the sacrifices you have made throughout your careers. Please know that Maine and America support you—our military men and women, our heroes.

Thank you once again for all that you have sacrificed. I wish you and your families best wishes for all of your future endeavors.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Baldacci".

John Baldacci
Governor of Maine

AD

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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This is your magazine

As we kick into our sixth year of GX, it is our pledge to you that we will continue to cover as many states, units, individual Soldiers and families as possible. GX is your magazine. We are dedicated to showcasing you.

On that note, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the state and territory Public Affairs offices.

Many of you, I've worked with from the very beginning. Through your guidance and friendship, I've learned so much and continue to learn more every day. All this enhances the quality of this publication.

I thank you for your patience, your enthusiasm—and your speed! I know there's been more than a few occasions where you've saved our butts from deadlines. I send out my pleas for last-minute quotes or photos, and you always deliver. Guess that's just part of being in the Guard. You're always ready and always there! I know you all work tirelessly to keep the info and organization flowing. It is truly appreciated.

Please know that each of you can take ownership in this magazine, its mission and its success! With your continued partnership, 2009 will prove to be our best year yet.

Thank you!



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



ON THE COVER

A Citizen-Soldier stands ready to perform the National Guard's first mission: Protecting our nation.

PHOTO BY
CW4 O'NEIL WILLIAMS



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> ROCK AND ROLL

[Fort Stewart, GA]

A 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team M240B machine gunner lays down suppressive fire as his unit comes under attack during training at Fort Stewart.

Photo by MAJ Valerie Meadows



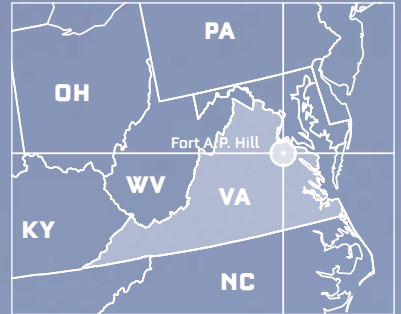


» BIG GUNS!

[Fort A.P. Hill, VA]

Soldiers from B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 110th Field Artillery Regiment fire the M102 105mm howitzer during the last live fire of the unit's guns at Fort A.P. Hill, VA, Nov. 1, 2008.

Photo by SSG Jon Soucy





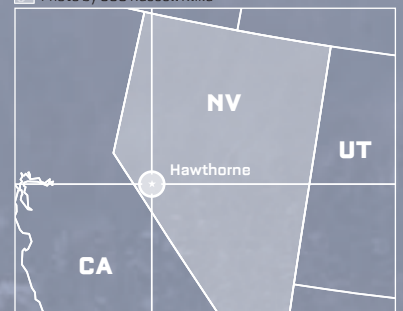


>> OVERDRIVE

[Hawthorne, NV]

A Soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces (Airborne) undergoes rigorous training at the U.S. Army Depot in Hawthorne, NV.

Photo by SSG Russell Klika





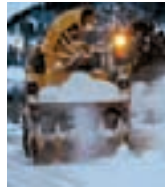
GRIDIRON HERO: Utah Soldier succeeds on and off the field.

18



ECHO MOVIN' OUT: Echo Company on the move, heading to Al Kut.

23



FALL BLIZZARD: South Dakota Guard clears way.

27



TENNESSEE'S NEW RIDE: The state receives 20,000th HEMTT.

30



10 MILES TO SERVICE: Guard runner raises \$13,000.

31

"LEADERSHIP IS INTANGIBLE, AND THEREFORE NO WEAPON EVER DESIGNED CAN REPLACE IT."

>> GEN Omar Bradley



Oklahoma Soldier Saves Marines, Receives Soldier's Medal

By SSG Claudia K. Bullard

ARDMORE, OK—Oklahoma Army National Guard SPC Beau Jordan received the Soldier's Medal in July for rescuing two Marines from a swiftly moving river in Afghanistan in 2007.

The Soldier's Medal is awarded for actions of heroism involving personal danger or risk but not actual conflict with an enemy.

Members of the U.S. military or friendly foreign nationals serving in any capacity with the U.S. Army may receive the medal.

Jordan said he "reacted instinctively" when Cpl. Joshua Kilzer and Cpl. Robert Stoeker, both of the 3rd Marine Division, entered the Alishang River, swollen from an earlier rainfall, while returning from a mission with the Afghan Army.

Jordan, a SAW gunner with the 1/180th Infantry Battalion, was waiting—along with Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Jeremy Hoyer—for the Marines to return.

Night had fallen and Jordan could see the Marines begin the

crossing by their red headlamps.

"I thought they were going to be fine," said 22-year-old Jordan, a certified scuba diver who spent his summers as a lifeguard.

When he realized his buddies were caught in the current, Jordan jumped in after them, pulling Kilzer to shore and then going back for Stoeker. Both Marines were in full combat gear. Jordan and the two Marines had been serving together for several months and had, according to Jordan, become very close.

"When I saw the first headlamp go under the water, I just jumped in," said Jordan. "I didn't have time to think about it. I didn't ever think I would rescue someone."

MG Harry M. Wyatt III, the adjutant general for the Oklahoma National Guard, presented the medal to Jordan, saying this is a "significant event in the life of a Soldier."

"Your family members, unit members and members of the Oklahoma National Guard are extremely proud of you," Wyatt said. "There just isn't enough recognition we can give for saving lives." **GX**



BY THE CREED SPC Beau Jordan wears the Soldier's Medal he received for rescuing two Marines from a river in Afghanistan.

"WHEN I SAW THE FIRST HEADLAMP GO UNDER THE WATER, I JUST JUMPED IN."

>> SPC Beau Jordan

DAVID MCNEESE



PINNING ON PRIDE
COL Thomas Blackstock, commander of the 265th Regional Support Group, pins the streamer for the Navy Presidential Unit Citation to the unit's guidon.

Georgia Unit Receives Navy Presidential Unit Citation

Story and Photo by SPC Adam Dean

► **METTER, GA**—Metter's 265th Regional Support Group became the first unit in Georgia Army National Guard history to be awarded a Navy Presidential Unit Citation during a ceremony at the Metter Armory, Nov. 1, 2008.

BG Maria Britt, commander, Georgia Army National Guard, called it a historic and momentous day in remarks to those assembled.

"It is a high honor for a unit to receive a Presidential Unit Citation," Britt said. "To put it in perspective, this unit award requires the same degree of heroism as individual awards such as

the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Force Cross and the Navy Cross."

The award, which can come in the form of an Army, Navy or Air Force Citation, is given to units of the U.S. Armed Forces for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy, Britt said. While other Georgia Guard units have received Presidential Unit Citations, the 265th is the first to receive a Navy version of the award.

As early as April 2002, the 265th, then an engineering group, was engaged in pre-war planning with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), said MAJ Reginald Cook, who served as company commander of the 265th from 1998

"IT WAS AN HONOR TO BE PART OF THE 1ST MEF."

>> MAJ Reginald Cook

until 2004. The unit as a whole was called into service in February 2003 and deployed to Kuwait with the 1st MEF the following month.

"It was an honor to be part of the 1st MEF," Cook said.

The group was tasked with conducting engineering command and control operations, and together with the 1st MEF, crossed the border into Iraq on March 24, 2003. The unit's first mission was to provide combat engineer support to British forces attempting to seize the port of Um Kasar, according to Cook.

Other missions included maintaining and improving more than 4,000 kilometers of key supply roads throughout Iraq, rebuilding and protecting Iraqi oil facilities, and carrying out numerous humanitarian assistance operations. In all, the 265th repaired two major electrical plants, four hospitals, three water facilities and more than 20 schools.

In addition to the 1st MEF, the 265th also worked closely with the 1st Naval Construction Regiment, a Guard unit from West Virginia, a unit from the Republic of Korea and British combat forces.

"The 265th Engineers' participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom illustrated the true joint and multinational nature of today's military operations around the world. They were able to maximize the strengths of many diverse organizations," said COL Thomas Blackstock, the unit's current commander.

SGT Tonnette Boyd, one of those who remain from the unit's 2003 deployment, said she is proud of her unit and what they did to earn this award. She said she looks back fondly on the bonds formed during that time, both within the unit and among other units.

"I feel like it's the best group I could have been with. When you're away from your real family, you learn how to build a new family. In Iraq, we all became a family," Boyd said. **GX**



FALL IN SGT Michael Green stands at attention as the award citation is read by Rob Flygare, Romney Stadium public-address announcer.

Gridiron Warrior

UTAH SOLDIER SUCCEEDS ON AND OFF FIELD

By Ashley Schiller

▶ **LOGAN, UT**—Obeying orders. Making split-second decisions. Perseverance. A physically demanding camp. Are we talking about football or serving in the military?

Both, actually. According to SGT Michael Green—offensive lineman for Utah State University (USU) and a member of the 19th Special Forces Group, Utah National Guard—the two have many similarities.

He would know. He served in Afghanistan for nine months during 2003–2004. This past November, in front of thousands of fans at halftime, the 6' 4", 300-pound offensive tackle was awarded the Army's Meritorious Service Medal for exceptional service during his deployment there.

Green went on to describe some of the other parallels he noticed between the football and the military. "Communication is huge in the military. You've got to communicate with other units as you coordinate efforts, just like you have to communicate here as you coordinate on the offensive line," Green said.

Both create a feeling of camaraderie among the men and require precise planning and intensity.

"You should play every play like it's life or death, which is the same as in the military," Green stated.

Although he faced some life-threatening situations in Afghanistan, Green was mostly away from the direct combat. He served as an analyst, receiving and processing reports from intelligence collectors on the ground and in the sky.

"I would read the reports and try to figure out what each one meant and what was going on," he said. "I'd plot them on a map or on a computer and then look for patterns, similarities or dissimilarities. It was taking all the pieces of the puzzle and putting them together. We had to find where the intelligence gaps were and then focus efforts to try to find out that information."



A FATHER'S PRIDE SGT Michael Green, left, is congratulated by his father, CWO Kelvin Green, who is also a member of the Utah National Guard.

His time in Afghanistan made Green more grateful for simple things such as paved roads, flushing toilets and comfortable beds.

"I also got a real good appreciation for soft Wonder Bread," Green said.

Despite the sacrifices, "serving in the military was worth it, just like playing football is worth it," he added.

And football is worth it whether he plays or not. Although Green has not yet played in a USU game, he fills an important role on the team as a scout player. He prepares the defense for the games by studying and then running the opposing team's plays.

He has dressed for several games over the past few years, thus fulfilling his childhood dream of running through the tunnel onto the field. Last fall's season-opener against University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) especially made an impact on him.

"YOU SHOULD PLAY EVERY PLAY LIKE IT'S LIFE OR DEATH, WHICH IS THE SAME AS IN THE MILITARY."

>> SGT Michael Green

"It was indescribable. The game brought a pretty big crowd. When you practice in the stadium, you don't realize how big it is. But when you go out in a game and you see all the people out there, you're like 'wow.' It's a whole different experience," Green said.

In addition to the friendships he's made, Green has helped the Aggies with his leadership—something that hasn't gone unnoticed by USU head coach Brent Guy.

"It's a unique situation to have a player who has served his country. Mike brings a different maturity that you normally don't have, and with that comes added leadership," Guy said.

Green is now nearly finished with his master's degree. His thesis focuses on government regulation, specifically the Federal Aviation Administration. A pilot himself, he's always had a passion for aviation.

Next stop: law school. And though he's applying all over the country, he'd prefer to stay in Utah. He would also like to one day run for public office. **GX**

LTJ-HANK MONTIRE

NCOs Leading the Way

GEREN RECOGNIZES TOP SOLDIERS

Story and Photo by C. Todd Lopez

► **WASHINGTON, DC**—The Army will recognize the value of its enlisted leaders at all levels of command as it observes “The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer” in 2009, Army Secretary Pete Geren said.

Geren made the announcement during his keynote address at the opening of the 2008 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition in October. “At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you’ll find a noncommissioned officer [NCO],” he said. “They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most important, they know their Soldiers.”

During the year, the Army will develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability and use of the NCO corps, the secretary said. These initiatives will showcase the NCO story to the Army and the American people, honor their sacrifices, and celebrate their contributions, past and present.

“Today’s NCO operates autonomously and always with confidence and competence,” he said. “Our NCOs are empowered and trusted like no other NCO in the world, and most advanced armies in the world today are going to school on our model.”

Geren noted that he came to the Pentagon late in the summer of 2001, and that he was in the building during the 9/11 attack.

“And for seven years, I’ve watched Soldiers go off to war, and watched their families stand with them,” he said. “I’ve been inspired by the service of our Soldiers, and humbled by the sacrifice of their families—spouses and kids, moms and dads. And it’s the privilege of a lifetime to work with and for Soldiers and Army families.”

The Army’s first priority, Geren said, are the loved ones in harm’s way.

“They are front of mind 24 hours a day, and we’re committed to meeting with urgency the ever-changing, life-and-death needs and demands of our Soldiers in Afghanistan and in

Iraq,” Geren said. “And not just meet their needs and meet the evolving threats, but anticipate and do everything we can to get ahead of the threat. These are moral duties of the highest order for our nation and our Army.”

The secretary also talked about an often-unseen portion of the military—those who deliver goods and services to the fighting force—the Army logisticians.

“We have 250,000 Soldiers in 80 countries, and we’ve been at war for seven years, with 140,000 Soldiers in theater today,” he said. “Nobody ever asks, ‘Who feeds those guys?’”

“Our logisticians are victims of their own success,” he continued. “Their work is so good



THE PRIVILEGE OF A LIFETIME Pete Geren, Secretary of the Army, recognizes NCOs after he announces 2009 as “The Year of the NCO.”

“TODAY, WE HAVE AN ARMY WHERE THE ONLY COLORS THAT MATTER ARE RED, WHITE AND BLUE.” >> Army Secretary Pete Geren

it is invisible—it’s a given. Wherever our Army goes, whatever our Soldiers need, whenever they need it, they get it—the miracle of Army logistics.”

Geren said the Army logistics community repairs more than 14,000 vehicles every year—a number equal to the number of yellow cabs in New York City. They also move more than 700,000 personnel in and out of theater, provide 750,000 meals in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq daily, and dispense enough fuel in the combat theater to fill up 750,000 cars.

“We talked much about the surge—15,000 more Soldiers in Iraq—but nobody ever mentioned that Army logisticians would serve 45,000 more meals each day, and ship 120,000 more gallons of water each day,” he said. **GX**

VICTORY
MAP



ALABAMA

The Alabama National Guard teamed with the Alabama Motorcycle Safety Program recently in an effort to better educate Soldiers who ride motorcycles. The Soldiers must participate in the Motorcycle Safety Foundation’s Basic Riders Course if they currently ride a motorcycle or if they intend to ride a motorcycle.

GUAM

About 30 Soldiers of the Guam Army National Guard returned home Nov. 19, after six months of being deployed to the Southern Philippines. They were in the Philippines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines.

INDIANA

130 Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 163rd Field Artillery and Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned from a nine-month deployment in Iraq Nov. 17. The Soldiers of Battery B conducted 75 combat logistics patrols and escorted some 2,500 supply vehicles more than 5,600 miles of travel.

LOUISIANA

Louisiana National Guard troops and Natchitoches Central High School held their second annual Spur Challenge Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Drill Meet in Melrose, LA, Oct. 11. High schools from throughout Louisiana and Texas came out to compete in armed drill teams, unarmed drilled teams, exhibition drill, inspections, color guard and physical training.

MARYLAND

Mr. James Rebolz, ESGR National Chairman, announced that the Honorable Gregory B. Cade, United States Fire Administrator, signed a Statement of Support for the National Guard and Reserve on Dec. 9, 2008. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) joins with thousands of America’s public and private employers in pledging:

*To fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA).

*To ensure their managers and supervisors

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

**VICTORY
MAP**



will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.

*To continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crises and in war.

NORTH DAKOTA

About 50 Soldiers from the Williston-based 818th Engineer Company have worked on border roadways in and around Nogales since June 1. Another 50 Soldiers from the 816th Engineer Company mustered along the border mid-November, about 230 miles to the west in Yuma, AZ. The North Dakota National Guard engineers are among the last National Guard Soldiers to work on the border for Operation Jump Start.

PENNSYLVANIA

Army National Guard members from across the state were recognized alongside their families at a Freedom Salute Ceremony in Johnstown. Soldiers from the unit were mobilized in Iraq from June 2007 until March. Some served in Ashraf, Iraq, and others were west of Baghdad on Operation Iraqi Freedom.

VERMONT

National Guard Soldiers from Vermont, Rhode Island and New York who are trained to detect chemical, biological and radiological hazards, teamed up for a two-day exercise to develop their skills and ability to work together. The members of New York's 2nd Civil Support Team (CST) and Vermont's 15th CST, as well as two members of Rhode Island's 13th CST, worked with the St. Johnsbury Fire Department on the Joint Collective Training Exercise.

WASHINGTON

Washington Army National Guard storefront locations throughout the state will serve as drop-off points for non-perishable canned food items that will ultimately go to local food banks. They're accepting donations through Jan. 1. According to Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), 1.2 million people went to food banks for help last year, and 40% of them were children.

PRESENT ARMS!
Soldiers in civvies are now authorized to salute during the National Anthem.



New Law Allows Salutes in Civvies

Courtesy of VA News

WASHINGTON, DC—Veterans and service members not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect in October.

“The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation’s Armed Forces,” said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation’s flag.”

The new provision improves upon a little-known change in federal law last year that authorized Veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag. But it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year’s provision also applied to service members while not in uniform.

Traditionally, members of the nation’s Veterans service organizations have rendered the hand salute during the national anthem and at events involving the American flag while wearing their organization’s official headgear.

The most recent change—authorizing hand salutes during the national anthem by Veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel—was sponsored by Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma, an Army Veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

The earlier provision authorizing hand salutes for Veterans and out-of-uniform service members during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008. **GX**

>> VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS NOT IN UNIFORM CAN NOW RENDER THE MILITARY-STYLE HAND SALUTE DURING THE PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

“THE MILITARY SALUTE IS A UNIQUE GESTURE OF RESPECT THAT MARKS THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED IN OUR NATION’S ARMED FORCES.” >> Dr. James B. Peake

PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS MOLLY A. BURGESS

Divided by Duty

DOCTORS SERVE PATIENTS
AT HOME AND ABROAD

By Karen Caffarini

Two days after Hurricane Gustav stormed through Louisiana, COL Stephen Ulrich, MD, was at a National Guard base in Columbus, OH, wearing camouflage and flooded with paperwork. As the state surgeon for the Ohio National Guard, he received a call-up to review the medical records of 1,500 Soldiers who would be helping with relief duties.

Meanwhile, about 55 miles east, the five other physicians in Dr. Ulrich's family practice were trying to conduct business as usual in their Zanesville and New Lexington, OH, offices. But first there was some scrambling to make sure Ulrich's patients were seen.

That wasn't a new challenge for this practice. Ulrich has been called away twice before—once for three months, once for six. He served as a flight surgeon in Balad, Iraq, flying with aircraft crews, doing clinical work and flight physicals, and being “just a regular doctor.”

Tours of duty can take a toll, not just on doctors going to the war zone, but also on those left behind. These groups must work together to adequately plan for the absence and notify insurers, affiliated hospitals and others.

This time, Ulrich spent only a few days in Columbus. As the Soldiers left for Louisiana, he was back in his office.

When the National Guard calls a physician to duty in the Middle East, it provides several months' notice to allow for

working out a plan for the practice, contacting patients and making arrangements, said MAJ Randall Short, a Guard spokesman.

ITHACA TO AFGHANISTAN

COL Joan Sullivan, MD, one of eight physicians in an obstetrics-gynecology practice in Ithaca, NY, is part of the New York Army National Guard's (NYARNG) Medical Support Company. Sullivan is on a one-year tour in Afghanistan as brigade surgeon, and she was previously in Iraq as a ranking officer, according to the NYARNG public affairs officer, Eric Durr.

Sullivan said that as soon as she learned of her pending deployment, she informed her partners, staff and patients. She said all were supportive, and no problems have arisen.

This is because the practice has figured out what steps are needed, said nurse practitioner Lorene Jump, who works with Sullivan in Ithaca. One key step is being supportive before, during and after deployment. “They will be the ones coming home to changes, not us,” she said.

The practice aims to contact Sullivan weekly, Jump said. “Sullivan has been gone quite a bit during the last seven years, but there wasn't one time it



SERVING WITH PRIDE Guard doctors often juggle their military and their personal practice obligations at the same time.

“At the end of the day, I can say I did my part when my country needed me.”

>> Col. Stephen Ulrich, MD

couldn't be handled. We saw more patients, but no one was hurt by it.”

Ulrich told his patients he would be gone and let them know the measures he took to make sure their medical needs would be met. He also used email to keep in contact with his practice.

DESTINATION: WHEREVER THEY'RE NEEDED

But not every deployment is to the Middle East. Sullivan was called to New York's Ground Zero twice after the 9/11 attacks, and both she and Ulrich have responded to natural disaster relief. While the Guard's needs in those cases are brief, they're also immediate.

Ulrich knows he could be called again to serve in the Middle East. “At the end of the day, I can say I did my part when my country needed me, although my part was very small.” Sullivan said her years with the Guard have given her an experience of a lifetime. **GX**

American Medical News, Oct. 20, 2008. ©(2008) American Medical Association. All rights reserved.



Personal Delivery

INDIANA SOLDIER DELIVERS MESSAGE JUST IN TIME

By SSG Les Newport

▶ YETHRIB, IRAQ—SSG Ryan M. Phillips, a Martinsville, IN, resident, wanted to do one thing before he left Iraq. The Indiana Army National Guard Soldier got his way when an active duty unit, the 2/320th Field Artillery Regiment, got him and his supervisor, LTC John Silva, a ride on a civil military affairs mission to Yethrib, Iraq.

Family and friends of the Soldiers in Indiana had sent them gifts for the children of Iraq—school supplies, medical supplies and toys, including more than 300 soccer balls. Silva's daughter, Jessica, a seventh-grader at Center Grove Middle School North, coordinated dona-



ALL SMILES AND GIGGLES A young student receives a notebook from LTC John Silva during a civil military affairs mission at a school in Yethrib, Iraq.

tions from the school, the Center Grove Soccer Club and Center Grove Presbyterian Church.

Phillips and Silva could have just given the gifts to the 2/320th, but they wanted to give them in person. The opportunity came just in time as the two prepared to return from a yearlong deployment.

Phillips noted it was neat “to see their expression, to see what their daily lives are like. I want to better understand them,” he said. Phillips also wanted to let them know that there are people in America, especially in Indiana, who care about them.

Phillips worked closely with adult Iraqis every day at Joint Base Balad where the engineer had helped them establish locally owned businesses on the perimeter of the logistical installation. Phillips has come to know many of them as close friends.

“They have children, grandchildren and

“I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM THE KIDS: THEY SAY SHOKRAN (THANK YOU), TOO.”

>> LTC John Silva

< IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

SSG Ryan Phillips arrives at a school in Yethrib, Iraq to deliver school and recreation supplies.

babies on the way. Family is everything to them—the absolute most important thing to them,” said Phillips.

Phillips and Silva will return with the 76th Infantry Brigade in the next month, and like the rest of the brigade, they are ready to go home. But Phillips says he has probably learned more than he thought he would.

“Whenever you work closely with someone, get close to someone, I guess it takes some of the fears away, the fear of what's to come,” he remarked. “I hope they can get on their feet, and they can learn to co-exist. We've got issues in the U.S., but we get along for the most part. I think [the Iraqis are] starting to. I think they can do it, too.”

Silva says they probably wouldn't have gotten the opportunity if Hoosiers hadn't sent the gifts. “I can't thank them enough, all the churches and schools. And I have a message from the kids: They say Shokran [thank you], too.” **GX**



FUTBALL! LTC John Silva of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team presents a soccer ball to an Iraqi student during a visit to Yethrib, Iraq.

SSG RYAN PHILLIPS

Next Stop: Al Kut

ECHO COMPANY HITS THE ROAD *Story by SFC Clint Wood*

After spending most of my 16 months on the same base in Iraq—except for several missions to escort media representatives or cover stories about the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the 34th Infantry Division—I really can't fathom packing up and moving only a few months into a deployment over there.

But that is what the Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's Echo Company, 3rd Battalion, and 142nd Aviation are thinking about now. For those of you who haven't been following this series, *GX* is covering their deployment from start to finish—"start" being, deploying to Camp Striker, Iraq, in September for a 10-month tour.

I caught up with SFC Hadrian Dailey on a Monday afternoon via email for more details on this move. Dailey, who has more than 29 years of military service, is the company's safety non-commissioned officer and Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants section chief. He also assists his platoon sergeant, SFC Scott Mobus of the Missouri Army National Guard (MSARNG), with disseminating information to the Soldiers.

I also emailed 1SG Ryan Howell, the company's first sergeant, about this impending move. He told me the company would be moving to Al Kut. Once I heard this, I searched the Internet and learned more about this place, which is located southeast of Baghdad on the Tigris River.

More than likely, the company also will be stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Delta. So who better to go to for information on this FOB than the unit stationed there right

>> Echo Company is now under the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum NY. They are no longer under the Minnesota Army National Guard's 34th Combat Aviation Brigade.



FUELING RUN An Apache AH-64, the helicopters that Echo Company Soldiers refuel, hovers near Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) in Iraq. Photo courtesy of Echo Company.

now—the 41st Fires Brigade. According to the unit's Web site, FOB Delta Coalition Partners are Iraq, United States, El Salvador, Kazakhstan, Poland

and Romania. FOB Delta also was one of Saddam Hussein's Royal Air Force Bases and was used as his primary flight-training base.

CPT Clay Forbes of the 1/34 BCT's 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery, said he flew over

Al Kut while deployed to Iraq. "It is big, but I never saw any of the finer points of the base," Forbes said.

"We stayed in abandoned aircraft bunkers and ate at a small dining facility," Forbes said.

Howell said the company has to move because that's where the mission is. He said he thinks the company will have the same type of mission.

"We don't know until we arrive," he said.

When I asked what his Soldiers' reactions to this move are, he replied, "It's our job. The Soldiers are professionals."

Dailey stressed that most of the Soldiers would rather remain at Striker. "Things are fairly comfortable here, and everything else is, of course, an unknown," he explained.

As with everything that the Guard does, Dailey noted that the main goal of the move is: "Safety, safety, safety." **GX**

"Things are fairly comfortable here, and everything else is, of course, an unknown."

>> SFC Hadrian Dailey



MOVIN' OUT! 1SG David R. Thomas of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team leads Task Force Dragon Blade Soldiers onto a range on Oct. 21 as they prepare for a November signal mission to Afghanistan.



TIGHT SHOT A Soldier with the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team zeroes in on his target during a weapons qualification range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 21 in preparation for a November mission to Afghanistan to establish critical communications assets.

Ohio Guard Amps Up Communication in Afghanistan

By Story and Photo by SPC Kimberly Johnson

CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT—The Ohio Army National Guard's 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is making its presence felt in three key areas of Central Command: Kuwait, Iraq and now Afghanistan.

About 40 Soldiers from the brigade have been called in to set up Joint Node Network (JNN) communications in Afghanistan.

"It's a very important, high-priority mission," said COL Richard T. Curry, the brigade commander. "The Soldiers were selected because of their unique skill set and the training they have accomplished over the last year."

Currently, the infrastructure cannot support consistent, reliable communications in Afghanistan and hasn't for quite some time.

Weather and other environmental issues are also wreaking havoc with the systems presently in use.

"Right now, they are not able to call in medical support the way we do in other theaters," Curry said. "There is a communications gap up there. The biggest part of what we will be able to do is fill in that gap, and by doing that, I absolutely believe we will be able to save lives in that theater of operations."

The JNN system will provide the infrastructure for the entire Afghanistan theater with regular Internet, secure phones, secure Internet and voice teleconferencing capabilities, which has never been done before in Afghanistan.

"It comes down to the fact that the Army has a need. When there's a need, our Soldiers answer," said CPT Walter Work, the Task Force Dragon Blade commander. "We were called to serve and help out our fellow Soldiers who are hurting as far as communication assets go."

During three months of mobilization training at Fort Hood, TX, the signal Soldiers of the 37th exceeded the expectations of their instructors.

"We have proven ourselves," Work said. "The Soldiers we selected to go are the best of the best. We are honored and definitely taking our 'A' team to Afghanistan." **GX**

"THE SOLDIERS WE SELECTED TO GO ARE THE BEST OF THE BEST."

>> CPT Walter Work, Task Force Dragon Blade commander

Partnership for Peace

GUARD SOLDIERS PAIR UP FOR DEPLOYMENT



By SGT Lee Elder

► **HOHENFELS, GERMANY**—The pairing of the National Guard with former Warsaw Pact nations to train Afghanistan National Army Soldiers has been “a huge success” during its early stages, officials report.

The first group—a task force of Latvian Soldiers supplemented by members of the Michigan Army National Guard—debuted during the just-concluded Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) exercise. They will deploy together to Afghanistan in December.

“The partnering of these nations is really establishing this holistic approach to the Global War on Terror,” said MAJ Frank Buchheit, director of training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC). “There are so many countries that want to contribute, but don’t necessarily have the means to contribute entirely. Now, with this state partnership program, they have the ability to contribute.”

Buchheit said another group will be here next month. Soldiers from Hungary and the Ohio National Guard make up the second group. More could follow.

For more than a decade, states militias have partnered with former Warsaw Pact nations and breakaway Soviet republics. The partners have trained together both overseas and in the United States.

Units do the first level of their training at their home stations. They do their second phase at JMRC, and then do the final level in Afghanistan. These combined Partnership for Peace units do all three levels of training together.

“This is just an absolute huge step in the right direction to enable more nations to contribute in action that they support the GWOT,” Buchheit said. “There has been training in the past, but now they get the opportunity to contribute to the GWOT. It’s absolutely essential.”

The training at JMRC has evolved over the years, Buchheit said. It started out with five

situational training exercise lanes, but has expanded to cover the battalion staff. It now includes interaction with Afghanistan National Army members who are brought to Hohenfels primarily to receive training and, secondly, to provide realistic scenarios and vignettes, and to learn to be OMLTs.”

“The success rate of units that have completed the training is tremendous,” Buchheit said. “They are more likely to succeed in the Level 3 training.”

Buchheit credits the JMRC cadre members with this improvement. It has allowed the diverse units to experience more realistic training.

“You’ve got some squared-away officers and NCOs down there who aren’t content with the status quo,” Buchheit said. “They have taken the program to a couple of different echelons. We continue to improve the program each time.”

Buchheit said he believes the training will enhance partnerships between the states and former Warsaw Pact nations. The arrangement will serve only to heighten the battle against terrorists.

“We’re now spreading the spirit of cooperation farther across the breadth,” Buchheit said. “The more we do this, the better. I think it’s absolutely great.” **GX**

LOOKING FOR THE ENEMY A Latvian Soldier and an Afghan Soldier participate in Operational Mentor and Liaison Team training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels.

“The success rate of units that have completed the training is tremendous.”

>> MAJ Frank Buchheit





NEW PARTNERS
A delegation from the Oregon National Guard meets with key civic and military leaders in Bangladesh to discuss a collaborative partnership between Oregon and the South Asian country.

“This is the first formal relationship between any country and Oregon,” he said. “I think it’s very exciting for Oregon to establish a long-term relationship with a very strategic partner.”

Rees said the Oregon National Guard can benefit from Bangladesh’s skills and experience in peacekeeping operations with the United Nations.

“Bangladesh is the second-most prolific contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations,” he noted.

Bangladesh is an active member of the Global Peace Operations Initiative, organized by the U.S. Institute of Peace, which is chartered with promoting post-conflict stability and development throughout the world, as well as assisting with amicable resolution to international conflicts.

The country also is a member of the Group of 77 Nations, a loose United Nations coalition of developing nations designed to promote collective economic interests for its members and enhance joint negotiating capacity within the U.N.

The Bangladeshi military also has a formal school dedicated to training in peacekeeping operations. The Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training trains personnel on key areas of international peacekeeping.

“It is a very professional school, which gives us opportunities to train there and learn their skills,” Rees said.

Another important component to the partnership, Rees said, is Bangladesh’s experience with natural disasters. In particular, the Bangladeshi government is interested in Oregon’s emergency preparedness and response plan. “We can share information on these capabilities,” he added.

The Bangladeshi partnership comes out of a meeting early this year in Hawaii in which Navy Adm. Timothy J. Keating, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, LTG H Steven Blum, then chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Rees discussed a formal partnership between Oregon and Bangladesh.

“Admiral Keating’s vision of Bangladesh’s strategic role and location was instrumental as a catalyst for the partnership,” Rees said.

Officials in Oregon and Bangladesh are outlining key areas they will focus on over the next few years. Another Oregon delegation plans to visit Bangladesh early next year to discuss further details. **GX**

Oregon Guard Partners With Bangladesh

Story and Photo Courtesy of the Oregon National Guard

SALEM, OR—The Oregon National Guard has established a partnership with one of the most populous—and according to many at the State Department, one of the more strategically located—countries in South Asia.

A delegation from Oregon visited Bangladesh Oct. 25–30 to meet with military and civilian leaders to discuss a formal partnership.

“This is a chance for Oregon to reach out and share expertise in nation-building and to promote democracy and influence foreign policy,” said Air Force Brig. Gen. Bruce Prunk, Oregon’s assistant adjutant general for the Air National Guard.

Oregon’s partnership with Bangladesh stems from a national program launched by the National Guard Bureau and the U.S. State Department in the 1990s. The State Partnership Program was started to foster alliances between individual U.S. states and former Soviet countries, officials said.

Following formal State Department acceptance of the partnership, the Oregon National Guard began implementing a plan to make it a

reality. MG Raymond F. Rees, Oregon adjutant general, assigned the task to the Oregon Air Guard, since several Oregon Army National Guard units were already tasked with an upcoming deployment to Iraq.

Prunk said that besides building a civic and military partnership, Oregon Soldiers and Airmen can also help support the Bangladeshi government by assisting with disaster-relief preparedness and training.

While Oregon has had relationships with several countries in the past, including Bulgaria and Austria, the relationship between Oregon and Bangladesh is much more formalized, Prunk said.

“Bangladesh is the second-most prolific contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations.”

>> MG Raymond F. Rees, Oregon adjutant general



>> Check out how the Guard saves the day at home. Go to: GuardingAmerica.com.

SNOW BUSTER South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers move snow with a snowblower on Nov. 7 along Interstate 90 after the first blizzard of the season caused massive drifting over major roadways throughout western South Dakota.



Clearing the Way

SOUTH DAKOTA GUARD RESPONDS TO BLIZZARD

By MAJ Orson Ward

► **RAPID CITY, SD**—The South Dakota National Guard helped clear the way along Interstate 90 Nov. 7 in support of state emergency management agencies in the wake of the fall blizzard that hit western South Dakota.

Rapid City's Task Force 109 dispatched two snowblowers with crews to assist in the clearing of Interstate 90 from Rapid City westward toward Sturgis. Snow removal efforts by the Department of Transportation, along with the Guard, resulted in the interstate completely opening up after almost two days of being closed.

Two snowblowers with crews from the Guard's Task Force 114 from Sioux Falls were dispatched to support snow removal west along Interstate 90 toward Rapid City. Task Force 196, also from Sioux Falls, supported TF114 in providing transport of the snowblowers and two 10-ton recovery wreckers with crews to support the clearing of the interstate.

A National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicop-

ter and crew successfully conducted a medical evacuation of four civilians, three of whom require dialysis, from Wanblee, SD, to the Pine Ridge Hospital.

About 30 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard conducted operations in support of state emergency management agencies. South Dakota had more than 4,200 Guard members available to respond to state emergencies, natural disasters and homeland defense.



Army and Air National Guard leaders across the state prepared Soldiers and Airmen to respond to five possible missions that the Guard could have received from the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management in the days following the storm.

Guard officials prepared to respond to search and rescue missions, snow removal support, power restoration support, power generator equipment requests and aerial observation missions using the National Guard's rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.

National Guard support is based on the needs and requirements vetted through the Office of Emergency Management, which is the lead agency for all state emergency response. **GX**





MOVE OUT! Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the Norfolk-based Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery load Humvees on LCM 8 landing craft from the Fort Eustis-based 1098th Transportation Detachment.

Amphibious Landing

ARTILLERY SOLDIERS ASSAULT VIRGINIA BEACHES

By SSG A. J. Coyne

NORFOLK, VA—More than a dozen Hampton-based Virginia National Guard Soldiers loaded their Humvees onto Army ships and traveled across the Chesapeake Bay during a joint training exercise Nov. 2 with Fort Eustis Soldiers.

The Guard Soldiers, from Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery, traveled from Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk to Fort Monroe in Hampton, thanks to the Soldiers and Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) boats of the 1098th Transportation Detachment.

The hour-long trip was a chance to familiarize the Guard troops with the process of traveling

across the water, should the need arise following a natural or man-made disaster.

“Hampton Roads is surrounded by water,” explained CPT Fred Moore, commander of Headquarters Battery. “If the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel or Monitor-Merrimac Bridge-Tunnel is destroyed, we would have to find another way to get around. If we had a Category 5 hurricane, we wouldn’t have a bridge to use.”

The Soldiers of the battery spent most of their regular drill weekend at the State Military Reservation at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach. But Sunday morning, they traveled in a convoy to NAB Little Creek, where they assembled their Humvees near the water and waited for the ships to arrive.

After the LCMs pulled in, a safety briefing was given to all Soldiers, and the eight Humvees were loaded onto four boats. The convoy of ships pulled away from the shore and headed toward open water.

Within minutes, the Soldiers felt the wind pick up and the temperature drop as the Navy base faded from view. Soon the Chamberlin Hotel became visible through the haze, and the ships steamed toward the Fort Monroe marina. One by one, the boats pulled up to the shore and dropped their doors as the Humvees rolled out onto the sand.

“It’s great to get out with the 1098th and train with them,” Moore said. “We had a great time, and the more opportunities we get to train with the active duty, the better.”

From there, the Guard members drove the 7 miles back to their home armory while the LCMs headed up the James River to return to Fort Eustis.

“It was pretty high-speed training,” said SGT Richard Diver. “Any time I can get out on the water, it’s fun.

“We could really use these guys and their boats in the event of an emergency.” **GX**

“WE HAD A GREAT TIME AND THE MORE OPPORTUNITIES WE GET TO TRAIN WITH THE ACTIVE DUTY, THE BETTER.” >> CPT Fred Moore

IMA/COTTON FURYEAR

Missouri Gunslingers Train Up

Story and Photo by Gary Stevens

ST. LOUIS, MO—Missouri Army National Guard Soldiers of the 1035th Support Maintenance Company and the 1138th Transportation Company at Jefferson Barracks sharpened their skills at a recent drill with the Virtual Convoy Operations Trainer (VCOT).

The VCOT is a computer training simulator that familiarizes Soldiers with situations they may encounter in a convoy driving through hostile lands.

Shouts of “Contact left,” “Close your interval up” and “Improvised Explosive Device (IED) to the right!” rang out as the Soldiers played what looked like computer games.

“It was a pretty realistic environment,” said 1138th SGT Steven Clay, who has served in Iraq. “This is good for Soldiers who haven’t deployed as well as for Soldiers who have. The screen was realistic. There were a lot of roundabouts there. I’d like to see more training like this.”

The VCOT replicated a four-vehicle convoy. The simulated Humvees had steering wheels, accelerators, brakes, gearshifts and swivel gun stations. The simulated convoy had to negotiate hazards such as incoming gunfire from enemy insurgents, IEDs, mortar attacks and debris in the roads.

The Soldiers who were serving as “convoy commanders” on this exercise spoke about real-world examples from their time in Iraq. They discussed the importance of everyone understanding his or her job in the convoy and about having good situational awareness.



VIRTUALITY SHOW
SGT Jason Krewson, of Manchester, operates the “gun” in his “Humvee” on the Virtual Convoy Operations simulator.

Iraq or Afghanistan,” said 1138th SSG James McCullough, an Iraq veteran.

Good communication was stressed as a key for a successful convoy mission. Soldiers were encouraged to talk to each other a lot to make sure everyone knew what was going on around them at all times.

“Every time a group goes through the training, they do better the second time because they

signs to look for during a convoy run. According to McCullough, a large gathering on one street while no one is on the next street over and new shades or colors of concrete along a roadside wall are all red flags to watch for.

The drill reunited a driver-gunner team from Iraq. PFC Jaimee Seel and SGT James Sprous, both members of the 1035th, served together in Iraq. She was a convoy driver; he was a gunner.

“The virtual training is pretty close to the real thing,” Sprous said.

“It’s realistic, and it’s very helpful,” explained SGT David Taylor of the 1035th. “I almost felt like we needed a seat belt as we went around one roundabout.”

“The Soldiers were interested, and the virtual training really kept their attention,” said 1035th WO1 John Crochunis. He was the officer-in-charge of this event and responsible for making sure all the sophisticated computer equipment worked.

“We’ve heard only positive feedback,” Andrews said. “The VCOT is realistic enough to be interesting. It gives people a good idea of what to expect, and it shows the different scenarios of what could happen with a convoy on a deployment.” **GX**

“I almost felt like we needed a seat belt as we went around one roundabout.” >> SGT David Taylor

SSG Raymond Bates of the 1035th went through the VCOT training twice. “It gives people a better perspective of convoy operations and the planning that goes into them. It’s a chance to practice skills and learn the dos and don’ts. I hope we can do this again—it is important training.”

“It was pretty realistic, and it was especially good for people who haven’t been to

talk more,” said SFC Shannon Andrews of the 1035th Maintenance Company. Andrews was the VCOT NCO-in-charge of training for this event, and he was essential in bringing this trainer to St. Louis for the first time.

The scenario took about a half-hour to run through, followed by an after-action discussion about how things went and what people learned. Soldiers offered tips about warning



LET'S RIDE! The 20,000 HEMTT is delivered to Tennessee's adjutant general MG Gus Hargett from Oshkosh Defense's director of marketing Eddie Garcia.

Tennessee Gets a NEW RIDE

>> THE 20,000TH HEMTT COMES TO THE VOLUNTEER STATE

Story and Photo by SFC Randy Harris

SMYRNA, TN—The Tennessee Army National Guard's (TNARNG) 1/230th Air Cavalry Squadron received Oshkosh Corporation's 20,000th Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) in a ceremony Nov. 5.

Eddie Garcia, director of marketing for Oshkosh Defense, presented MG Gus Hargett, Tennessee's adjutant general, with a ceremonial photo commemorating this milestone event for the military supplier.

"We're very pleased with the outstanding relationship between Oshkosh, the Department of Defense and the Tennessee National Guard," Hargett said. "It's a privilege for me to accept this 20,000th HEMTT on behalf of the more than 10,700 Soldiers of the Tennessee Army National Guard. We will definitely put it to work real soon."

The HEMTT is known as the "ship of the desert" for its extreme mobility in all types of terrain and has served the U.S. Army and Army

National Guard since 1982. It provides transport capabilities for resupply of combat vehicles and weapons systems.

There are five basic configurations of the HEMTT series trucks: M977 cargo truck with Material Handling Crane (MHC), M978 2,500-gallon fuel tanker, M984 wrecker, M983 tractor, M1120 Load Handling System (LHS)

"The fielding of the 20,000th HEMTT is a momentous event," Garcia said. "This was a program started more than 20 years ago, when we began fielding the initial models of this highly successful family.

"The beneficiaries of this vehicle design, however, are the men and women who operate it on a daily basis, and we're proud to be present-

"IT'S A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO ACCEPT THIS 20,000TH HEMTT ON BEHALF OF THE MORE THAN 10,700 SOLDIERS OF THE TENNESSEE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD." >> MG Gus Hargett

and M985 cargo truck with MHC. This vehicle family is rapidly deployable and designed to operate in any climatic condition where military operations are expected to occur.

The 20,000th HEMTT Fuel Tanker is adorned with a special brass recognition plate commemorating this milestone in Oshkosh Corp. production.

ing the 20,000th HEMTT to the hardworking Soldiers of the U.S. Army and the Tennessee National Guard."

The TNARNG has more than 310 Oshkosh-series vehicles currently in service, representing 100 percent of its allocation. More than 80 of these received over the past 24 months are new or refurbished. **GX**

10 Miles to Service

GUARD TEAM RAISES \$13K FOR MILITARY HOMES

By Camille Breland

Some people run to stay fit.
Some do it to relieve stress.
Others hope to build endurance.

▶ **WASHINGTON, DC**—For CSM David Hudson, his passion for running took on new life when he recently used it as a venue to show his support for military families. Hudson ran with Team 1636 during the Army Ten-Miler this year in Washington, DC. The race is the largest of its kind, with more than 18,800 participants from all over the world converging upon our nation's capital.

"As a leader, you need to be leading from the front. So you can't be telling anyone else to run, and then not go do it yourself," Hudson said.

For Hudson, this year's race wasn't just about running or making a good finish time. He and his training partner, four-legged friend Tucker the Dog, raised more than \$10,000 for the Fisher House foundation, a charity that builds and donates state-of-the-art homes for U.S. military and their families. Located on military bases and at Veterans Affairs medical centers, these homes can house up to 42 family members while their loved ones receive medical care.

Since its founding in 1990, the Fisher House has provided comfortable lodging for more than 110,000 families. According to FisherHouse.org, these houses have well-stocked community kitchens, a spacious dining area and living rooms with libraries and toys for children.

"Most people said they don't know what they would have done had [the Fisher House] not been in existence," remarked Jim Weiskopf, vice president of communications for the foundation. "You don't have an option. When a loved one's in the hospital, you've got to be there. You're going."

"When a loved one's in the hospital, you've got to be there. You're going."

>> Jim Weiskopf, the Fisher House foundation

Hudson understands this need, and the Army Ten-Miler was more than just about raising money for a charitable cause. Hudson visited



TEAM 1636 CSM David Hudson (front) sits with his teammates Clay Winn (left), MSG Wayne Morris (right) and Tucker the Dog before the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, DC.

multiple Fisher House houses and truly has a passion for the foundation's cause—something that's apparent to his friends and colleagues.

In fact, the online fund-raising coordinator for the foundation wishes Hudson could just be "cloned." "He has such great belief in the foundation that it was easy to convey that to other people who either didn't know about the foundation or had never contributed before," said Cathy Cabrey, who worked with Hudson on the project. "He truly supports the foundation's mission. Not just [with] talk—he walks the walk."

Hudson started running seriously in 2000. He has participated in the Ten-Miler the past few years, but this was the first year he decided to try his hand at fund-raising.

"All my friends are always sending me e-mails that they're raising money for this or that, so I said, 'Hey, we're gonna see if we can raise any

money for the Fisher House.' So I decided I would try this thing where you hit up all your friends for money," he joked.

Race participants start and finish at the Pentagon, while the historical course takes them past American treasures such as the Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington Monument and the Capitol.

However, the District of Columbia isn't the only place this race occurs. Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines in theater overseas mirrored the run in their own time. Twelve camps hosted Ten-Miler "shadow runs," with about 3,500 troops participating. Camp Victory in Iraq alone had about 1,250.

This year, Hudson's watch time was 93:24. But he'll run again next year. And the next. In fact, Hudson plans to run the Army Ten-Miler and show his support of the military and its family "as long as [he's] able." **GX**

Donate, volunteer or learn about the Fisher House at FisherHouse.org.

Want to run in next year's race? Sign up at ArmyTenMiler.com.

ALWAYS READY A Citizen-Soldier stands ready to perform the National Guard's first mission: Protecting our nation.



GW O'NEIL WILLIAMS

SECURING OUR

NATION

AMERICA'S ORIGINAL WARRIORS STAND READY

As a Guard Soldier, you know what it's like to be constantly prepared, waiting in the trenches, ready to react at any second. Whether you're on a convoy mission in Iraq or at home with your family, you're on guard. And nowhere else is this more important than here, at home. *By Camille Breland*

ter-ror-ism [ter-uh-riz-uhm] —noun

1. The use of violence and threats to intimidate or coerce, especially for political purposes.
2. The state of fear and submission produced by terrorism or terrorization.
3. A terroristic method of governing or of resisting a government.

>> From Dictionary.com

It may seem like a 'round-the-clock job to keep a nation safe—and it is—but America makes the protection of its citizens and its land an utmost priority, especially after the horrifying events of 9/11. After that day, President George W. Bush approved the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the lead federal agency for this mission. He said in an address to the nation a month after 9/11, “the government

of the United States has no more important mission than fighting terrorism overseas and securing the homeland from future terrorist attacks.”

Remember what it felt like in the days, weeks and months after 9/11? Our country was mourning, but we were mourning together. We were united. And we've since banded together to protect what our forefathers fought so hard to secure—freedom, liberty and justice.

As members of the Army National Guard, you're on the front lines of securing our nation every day. From our Soldiers fighting in the Global War on Terror, to those protecting our nation's borders and serving on missile defense at Fort Greely, AK, Army National Guard Soldiers across the world play a pivotal role in this monumental mission.

THE FACE OF TERROR

Homeland Security is defined by the DHS as “a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the U.S., reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.”

Terrorism is not a new threat. These acts of violence have been going on for decades all across the globe.

Remember the Oklahoma City bombings? How about the World Trade Center in '93 or *USS Cole* harbored in Yemen? Threats and acts of terror have shown their ugly face in the most peaceful of times.

And why? Radical terrorists despise the American way of life and our core foundation—freedom. Terrorists are defiantly against exactly what you, an Army National Guard Soldier, serve and fight for.

Since 2001, America has led the fight in the Global War on Terror. In an address in 2006 to the National Guard, President Bush stated about 9/11, “I made a decision that day—that America will not wait to be attacked again. And since that day, we've taken decisive action to protect our citizens against new dangers. We're hunting down the terrorists using every element of our national power—military, intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic and financial. We're clarifying the choice facing every nation: In this struggle between freedom and terror, every nation has responsibilities—and no one can remain neutral.”

“One weekend a month, two weeks a year” obviously doesn't truly depict the Guard's role; our Soldiers are on the front lines of a war that's in its seventh year. Through 2007, the Guard made up, on average, 28 percent of all U.S. forces deployed to

Iraq and Afghanistan, according to the Department of Defense.

But our Soldiers overseas aren't the only ones combating terrorism and keeping our nation safe. At home, Civil Support Teams nationwide are trained and ready to respond to threats of weapons of mass destruction at any moment; more than 200 ARNG Soldiers of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion stationed at Fort Greely are constantly ready to respond to an intercontinental ballistic missile attack; our troops guard and secure large-scale events like the political national conventions and the Olympics; they've assisted with airport security; and the list goes on. Plus, our Soldiers are constantly vigilant and aware of suspicious persons or situations.

One recent crowning achievement for the Guard was Operation Jump Start—a mission assigned by the president to secure and serve on our nation's border with Mexico.

OPERATION JUMP START

SOLDIERS WATCHING OUR SIX

One of the biggest threats to our nation and its security is simply access. Foreign countries to the north and south, and ports on either side, allow people and goods to enter America every day. In order for our nation to be secure, these points of entry must be monitored and regulated.

The U.S.-Mexico border has long been our Achilles' heel when it comes to access—from human and drug trafficking to illegal aliens crossing, the nearly 2,000-mile border was porous. According to a report released by the DHS, the number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States has jumped from 8.5 million in 2000 to 11.8 million in 2007, but it is leveling off.



MANY THANKS Secretary Michael Chertoff thanks Soldiers for their help in evacuating residents before Hurricane Gustav.



RAPID RESCUE
California Soldiers make a rescue at the U.S.-Mexico border.

+ CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff says every American citizen should be prepared for a crisis or disaster. Here are a few of his tips to help you and your family get ready:

- > GET ORGANIZED.** Have water, nonperishable food and any medications on hand and easily accessible. You need to be able to sustain yourself during an emergency.
- > CREATE A PLAN.** Go to Ready.gov for important information and tips on how to put a plan in place and make an emergency kit.
- > STAY VIGILANT.** Advise appropriate authorities when you see something suspicious. "Many times, what tips us off to a possible terrorism issue has been an alarm raised by a private citizen, and that's a very important part of our homeland security," Chertoff advised.

"THE CORE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IS TO DEFEND THE UNITED STATES FROM ATTACK UPON ITS TERRITORY AT HOME AND TO SECURE ITS INTERESTS ABROAD." >> The National Defense Strategy

Our government has long been battling this problem, and in 2006, President Bush announced a new strategy: Operation Jump Start (OJS). During the two-year mission, National Guard troops from all 50 states and four territories assisted the U.S. Customs and Border Protection service in securing the southern border.

More than 29,000 Soldiers and Airmen patrolled the border, monitored remote video surveillance points that cover about one-third of the border, and built roads and fences. According to LTC Almarah Belk, a Department of Defense (DoD) spokesperson, the Guard helped apprehend more than 179,000 illegal aliens, seize 1,116 vehicles, fly 984 sorties, and deliver 13,922 passengers and 1,193 tons of cargo.

"We became a force multiplier while Customs and Border Protection hired new agents, doubling their staff. In the border patrol's eyes, that was a huge plus," said BG Kevin Ellsworth, commander of Joint Task Force Vista for OJS.

One of the Guard's largest missions for OJS was building infrastructure to ease access around the border for agents and prevent illegal crossings. Engineering units constructed roads, erected lighting along the roads, built vehicle barriers and set up communications equipment to facilitate agent communication.

"There are roads that literally go from Mexico right into the United States, and those were major human and drug trafficking corridors," Ellsworth said.

OJS—deemed a success on all fronts—ended in July 2008, but security is ongoing. During the Guard's two-year presence, illegal entries decreased, crime dropped and turn-backs (people who return to Mexico after attempting to cross) increased. Guard units were also directly credited for numerous drug seizures and rescues.

"People were crossing out in the desert; some were in their last hours of life. Our Soldiers and Airmen gave them aid and stabilized them until Border Patrol could come in and extract them," Ellsworth recalled.

Ellsworth, who's now the director of Joint Staff for the California National Guard, said at their peak, 1,600 Soldiers from California alone were serving on the border. Over the mission's two years, more than 2,500 Soldiers and Airmen from California served.

These Soldiers served with pride. Morale during OJS was "outstanding" Ellsworth noted, and the Soldiers especially enjoyed working with the Border Patrol.

"The strength of the Guard is in the diversity of our force, and we do inter-agency joint operations exceptionally well. We pulled together the capabilities of Army, Air and those things that members of the Guard acquire through their civilian jobs or educational experiences. They got to use all of those," Ellsworth said about his Guard units.

But securing our borders hasn't stopped. Michael Chertoff, secretary of the DHS, said the department is continuing to add border patrol agents. So far, 500 feet of fencing has been built along the Mexico

RESPONDING AND DEFENDING

FACTS ABOUT THE NATIONAL GUARD

border; while for both borders they're deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), radar and sensors.

"That's going to give us much greater visibility to see who comes across both borders," Chertoff explained.

As for our ports, Chertoff said the United States now has radiation detectors at all major harbors and it's working to secure domestic radioactive material to ensure it doesn't become part of a dirty bomb.

Our nation is constantly improving its security measures because, as Chertoff noted, terrorists are relentlessly developing their tactics.

"We recognize that the enemy—the terrorists—also continue to improve," he said. "We have to continue to stay ahead of their evolution with our own improvements."

CIVIL SUPPORT

THE GUARD RESPONDS TO EMERGENCIES

Since 9/11, the USA Patriot Act was signed into law, giving more authority to law enforcement and intelligence agencies to search and track suspicious persons and activities.

But the more secure our nation becomes, the more we jeopardize our freedoms and privacy. Chertoff noted that this balance between security measures and our independence is one of the toughest aspects of the mission.

"We want to have good airline security, so we search people's bags and have them go through explosive detectors. At the same time, we don't want to make it so difficult that people don't fly, so that's why we don't, for example, ban carry-on luggage altogether," Chertoff explained.

In addition to our government creating the DHS, the Department of Defense established an assistant secretary of defense of homeland defense and set up the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), a four-star-operated command based at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, that controls the DoD homeland defense efforts and works in conjunction with defense support of civil authorities.

According to the command's mission statement, "U.S. NORTHCOM defends America's homeland—protecting our people, national power and freedom of action."

"[These government actions] really represented the first time that you had that high level of attention given to the civil support mission," stated Gary Cecchine, a

> The National Guard is currently engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and around the globe in more than 40 countries and areas, including Bosnia, Kosovo, the Sinai, the Horn of Africa and Guantanamo.

> More than 337,000 Guard Soldiers have been mobilized for federal (Title-10) duty for the Global War on Terror since 9/11; more than 431,000 have responded to domestic needs during the same period.

> The Army National Guard continues its domestic mission by fighting fires, responding to winter storms, conducting search and rescue missions, responding to unknown chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats and spills, and other missions supporting the states.

>> The Department of Defense

national security and defense researcher at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research and analysis institution.

As this framework was being put into place for a national emergency response system, it became apparent that the first feet on the ground in any disaster mission are those closest to it—local civilians, first responders and the National Guard.

"The idea is that if the state can't handle it, they look to other states in which the National Guard plays a huge role. If that's not sufficient, the federal government comes in and provides aid. Of the federal agencies, the DoD is really the last resort. We often say it's the caboose on the train," Cecchine told *GX*.

The largest and most recent domestic disaster response began on Aug. 29, 2005—Hurricane Katrina. About 58,000 Guard responders—more than three times as many troops as all other services combined—worked side-by-side with emergency responders to provide medical care for injured persons, evacuate residents, and secure and clean up New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

These Guard troops rescued more than 17,000 people and evacuated 70,000, prompting LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, to call the response the Guard's "finest hour."

But a more recent response came in December when the Alaska National Guard's Civil Support Team (see sidebar) responded to an unidentified white powder sent in a letter to Gov. Sarah Palin's office in Juneau. The Soldiers tested the powder and found it wasn't a threat before taking it back to Anchorage for further testing.

The Guard's Civil Support Teams (CSTs)—now found in every state and territory—are at the forefront of the Homeland Security mission.

"I carry a backpack with me everywhere I go—to the grocery, movies—and it's got all my gear in it in case we get called out," explained SPC Stephan Evans, a 23-year-old chemical operations specialist for Tennessee's CST. "We've got phones with us, because we're on-call 24/7."

The Tennessee CST was recently called upon for missions after Hurricanes Rita and Gustav and the presidential debate in Nashville.

"We work anywhere from 18- to 24-hour days during these missions,"



LOOKOUT A Soldier of the NC Army National Guard Task Force Scorpion watches the Mexican border for activity in the early morning hours.



DECONTAMINATE SGT Eddie Santiago (left), New York Army National Guard, washes down a casualty during a mass casualty exercise as two Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Explosion Emergency Response Force Package team members assist with the decontamination process.

THE GUARD'S CIVIL SUPPORT TEAMS

TAKING ON WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION 24/7

THE TEAMS: 55 Civil Support Teams in every state and territory (two in California); 22 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen on each team

THE MISSION: Assess WMD hazards, advise civil authorities and facilitate military support during emergencies and WMD incidents

THE WHEELS:

Command vehicle

Operations van

Unified Command Suite: Satellite communications vehicle used to contact technical experts and send situation reports to federal agencies

Analytical Laboratory System van: Analyzes chemical or biological hazards

RECENT OPERATIONS:

Hurricane Katrina

Superbowls since 1999

Space shuttle Columbia recovery

Domestic Olympic events

Election conventions

In 1998, President Bill Clinton announced his plan for every state and territory to have teams ready at any hour of the day to respond to threats of weapons of mass destruction. These Civil Support Teams (CSTs) are composed of 22 Army and Air National Guard members—seven officers and 15 enlisted—from each state. Each team is divided into six segments: command, operations, communications, administration/logistics, medical and survey.

These Soldiers and Airmen go through rigorous training of more than 600 hours by agencies such as FEMA, the Department of Energy, Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency to be able to identify chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards before they are evaluated and certified by the Secretary of Defense. During a threat, they also manage the need for and arrival of other state and federal military forces. Ready for action 24/7, the advanced CST troops can be ready to deploy within 90 minutes, while the full team can be mobilized within three hours.

—Information taken from National Guard Bureau, as of December 2008.

THE NATIONAL GUARD IS REALLY THE BACKBONE OF OUR DISASTER RESPONSE.”

>> Michael Chertoff, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security

said SSG Kevin York, 34, the team's NCO and a combat medic. "It's a nice feeling to know that you're helping these people out."

For Evans, being a member of the CST is more than just a job—it's a fulfilling duty.

"As part of the Civil Support Team, I really have a mission," he shared. "I'm here for a purpose. I could be called up at anytime and truly get out there and help somebody. It's a job with a meaning."

You, our Army National Guard Soldiers, keep our nation safe and secure. You're the ones patrolling Camp Anaconda in Iraq, deploying UAVs along the Texas-Mexico border, rescuing flood victims and guarding our citizens during historic events.

And thanks to you—plus our leaders and civilian authorities—we haven't had an attack on our nation since 9/11.

You serve willingly and with pride. And as we rest our heads at night, we can sleep more peacefully because the National Guard is always there, always there. **GX**



A COMMON CAUSE A U.S. Border Patrol officer shows his thanks to a group of Army National Guard Soldiers during Operation Jump Start.

Partners in Aviation

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION LEADERS TOUR 1109TH

By Scott J. Farrell

From the time he was a teenager, Steven Primett knew he wanted a technology career. When he was 18, he joined the Army and received training as a Huey helicopter crew chief and AH-1 Cobra mechanic.

After a two-year tour with the Army, he joined the Army National Guard (ARNG) as a Specialist (E-4) and a few months later started his full-time career with the ARNG.

Now retired from the ARNG after 32 years, having achieved the rank of state command sergeant major, Primett still utilizes his skills working as a civilian employee in the quality assurance shop of an elite aviation maintenance unit, the 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD).

“Getting the right technical education was key to my career success,” Primett said. “And I want the young people out there who are interested in aviation technology careers to know about the opportunities the Guard can offer them.”

Providing leadership for career technical education’s role in

workforce preparation, education and economic development, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEC) is committed to quality career technical education—making it an ideal collaborator for the ARNG’s Partners in Education program.

Administered by the National Guard Bureau’s Strength Maintenance Division (NGB-ASM), the Partners in Education program was established to connect educators and students across the U.S. with free ARNG educational resources. To support this mission, ARNG representatives from the Partners in Education program attend national educator conferences to provide information on the ARNG’s resources.

NASDCTEC held its annual fall meeting in Mystic, CT, Sept. 7–11, 2008, and Partners in Education was there to represent the ARNG.

One of the featured events at this year’s NASDCTEC fall meeting was a guided tour of the 1109th AVCRAD in Groton, CT. Sponsored by the Partners in Education program, the open house offered state and territory agency heads responsible for career technical education the opportunity to learn about the many



TECH TALK NASDCTEC fall meeting attendees pose for a picture in front of a AH-1 Cobra in Groton, CT.

educational opportunities available to members of the ARNG, from SAT study assistance to financial aid.

June S. Sanford, the State Director for Career and Technical Education for the Connecticut State Department of Education, is a NASDCTEC member who chaired the fall meeting. “The Connecticut State Department of Education has been partnering with the Guard for more than 10 years now, and the information and resources they provide to our members support our mission to promote quality career technical education.”

Guided by ARNG members who work full-time as part of the 1109th AVCRAD, NASDCTEC members toured the facility and learned about the AVCRAD mission, capabilities and equipment.

The 1109th AVCRAD is one of only four facilities of its type in the ARNG. Its day-to-day mission is to provide parts and maintenance to Army National Guard aviation facilities in 14 northeastern states and the District of Columbia.

Workers at the 1109th AVCRAD provide supply parts and intermediate maintenance support by rebuilding rotary aircraft engines, repairing rotary blades and providing avionics equipment support. The fourth-largest employer in the area,

the 1109th AVCRAD has more than 300 full-time and more than 200 part-time ARNG employees. They work in the 30 military occupational specialties available at the unit.

The tour focused on the types of technical jobs available in military maintenance facilities nationwide, and emphasized that students interested in technology careers are welcome to visit these facilities to learn more.

After returning to their home states, NASDCTEC members can contact their local ARNG representatives to learn more about local facilities. They are then able to pass along this valuable information to the educators with whom they work.

Dr. Rosanne T. White, Executive Director of the Technology Student Association, a student organization devoted to the needs of students interested in technology, took part in the tour. “The tour of the aviation facility was a highlight of this conference,” Dr. White said. “It was interesting to learn how many opportunities there are in the Guard for students interested in technology careers.” **GX**

For more information about the Partners in Education program, visit: PartnersInEducation.com.



WIRED Educators tour the 1109th AVCRAD to learn about many of the exciting technology careers in the ARNG.



LEARNING THE ROPES Recruit Sustainment Program Soldiers with Team 3, Company B, Recruiting and Retention Battalion use a rope to climb up a hill during day two of the RSP Warrior Challenge at Camp Lazarus, OH.

“I COULDN’T BE MORE PROUD OF AN ORGANIZATION THAN I AM TODAY.”

>> LTC Chip Tansill

Historic Recruiting Numbers for Ohio

By CPT Michelle Smith, Ohio National Guard

COLUMBUS, OH—The statistics are astounding, but the story behind the numbers, as Ohio makes recruiting and retention history, is more than just data for the future of the Ohio National Guard.

Both the Ohio Army and Air National Guard exceeded their enlistment goals for the 2008 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30. Both branches attribute their success to changes in the way they do business, as well as the unprecedented caliber of applicants waiting to join the ranks.

“We are extremely fortunate for the tremendous quality of Ohio citizens who want to be Soldiers and Airmen,” said MG Gregory L. Wayt, the Ohio adjutant general.

The Ohio Army National Guard had its second-highest recruiting

year ever, ending with 10,926 Soldiers, and the Air National Guard surpassed its goal for the first time in eight years, finishing with 112.3 percent of its authorized strength.

Another first occurred when all 10 of the companies in the Army Recruiting and Retention Command met their annual mission. “I couldn’t be more proud of an organization than I am today,” said LTC Chip Tansill, commander of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion. “It is unbelievable how extremely committed our recruiting force is to this organization.”

Tansill credits their success to the transformation of his recruiters into leaders by running one of the nation’s most successful Recruit Sustainment Programs (RSP). New Soldiers attend this training prior to shipping to Basic Combat Training. “If we bring these kids in and train them hard, they will stay,” he said.

MUD CRAWL A Recruit Sustainment Program Soldier with Team 2, Company D, Recruiting and Retention Battalion, pushes himself through a mud pit at the low crawl obstacle during day two of the RSP Warrior Challenge.



The national shipping goal for each RSP is 75 percent. Last year, Ohio had a ship rate of 92.37 percent, which is the country’s highest.

The Guard claims this method makes military service meaningful to new recruits and leads to success in another inventive program called the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program, or G-RAP. This program offers a monetary incentive for referring qualified applicants who join the Ohio National Guard. It has

paid more than \$5 million since its inception in 2005.

“The kids love what they are doing, so they bring their friends,” Tansill said. “Our mission is to produce readiness for the leaders in Ohio, and we are doing that by building strong communities within our ranks.” **GX**

Find out more about the Recruit Sustainment Program at 1-800-GO-GUARD.com/RSP.

SFC SAM BEAVERS

Fraternal Order of Police Back Soldiers

PRESIDENT SIGNS STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Story and Photo by SSG Michael J. Carden

WASHINGTON, DC—The National Fraternal Order of Police has formalized its support for the men and women who wear both the military uniform and that of their local law enforcement agencies.

“I don’t know of any other profession that has as many people in the National Guard and Reserve as law enforcement,” said Chuck Canterbury, president of the police organization. “It just seems like the two go hand in hand. I’d just like to apologize that we haven’t done this before.”

Canterbury signed his organization’s commitment to ensure job security as well as employee benefits for its police officers in the nation’s military reserve components and their families during war and peacetime. The organization understands the requirements and essential roles military volunteers hold in preserving national security, he said.

“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE PROTECTIONS AFFORDED TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVE ARE IN PLACE AND ARE ENFORCED.”

>> Chuck Canterbury

“So many of our members are in the Guard and Reserves, and we just wanted to show our support and make sure the people that are mobilized are remembered and taken care of,” Canterbury said. “Law enforcement and the military are both highly regarded by the national public, and it’s always good for these groups to speak in a united voice.”

Now that the National Fraternal Order of Police has formally affirmed support of its military members and the federal government, they want to challenge local chapters and lodges nationwide to make the same commitment, he said.

“The next step is to go out to our 2,200 lodges and chapters throughout the country and have them sign a show of support,” he said. “We’ve just done it at the national level, so now we’ve got to do it at the local levels, so they will know what we’re doing.”

The Fraternal Order of Police is more than 320,000 members strong and is the most affected among organizations working with the Defense Department’s National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, said Thomas F. Hall, assistant defense secretary for reserve affairs.

“This show of commitment is going to mean a lot throughout the country,” Hall said. “Service as a

police officer is very compatible with military service. With that, the support of organizations like the [Fraternal Order of Police], who understand the rules and the laws and go far beyond that, are critical.”

ESGR was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between reserve-component members and their civilian employers, and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee’s military commitment. It is the lead Defense Department organization for this mission. **GX**

For more information, visit esgr.org.



WE SUPPORT YOU Chuck Canterbury (front right), president of the National Fraternal Order of Police, signs his commitment of support to police officers who serve in the military during a ceremony Oct. 20, 2008, at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 1 in Washington, DC.

**TIM IS
A COLLEGE
FOOTBALL
STAR**



**RYAN IS
A MEMBER
OF THE U.S.
SNOWBOARD
TEAM**



**JILL IS
A MISS
AMERICA
BEAUTY
QUEEN**



**NIC IS A
CUSTOM
CAR
BUILDER**



**YOU
COULD
BE OUR
NEXT
STAR**

All four of these Citizen-Soldiers have appeared in National Guard magazine ads. Their faces and their stories have made the pages of Sports Illustrated, Vibe, Spin, ESPN, Seventeen and more. Now it's your turn.

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The “FIRST” Militia

The Florida Army National Guard

By Jason Hall

Though synonymous with fun-in-the-sun, Florida contains a rich heritage that includes the legacy of having the oldest militia in North America. The state of Florida began as a Spanish military province in 1565, as Spanish settlers traveled to the continent from their stronghold in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The headquarters for the Spanish forces, known as a presidio, was in the town of St. Augustine, the oldest permanent European settlement in North America. Protection of the town itself fell to the local citizenry of St. Augustine.

These Citizen-Soldiers were designated as a militia by the Spanish military commander, who made them responsible for defending the town while the Spanish Regulars were campaigning against the French intruders. Thus, it was the Spanish who brought the word “militia” to North America from Europe. The word “militia” comes from the Latin term “miles,” meaning “Soldier.” It is believed that the first muster of a militia force on the North American continent occurred on Sept. 16, 1565, in St. Augustine.

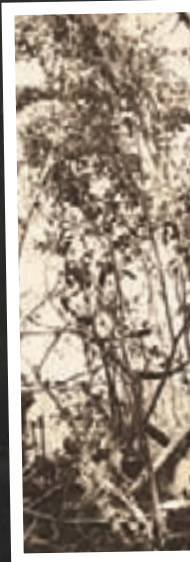
THE “FIRST” REAL MILITIA

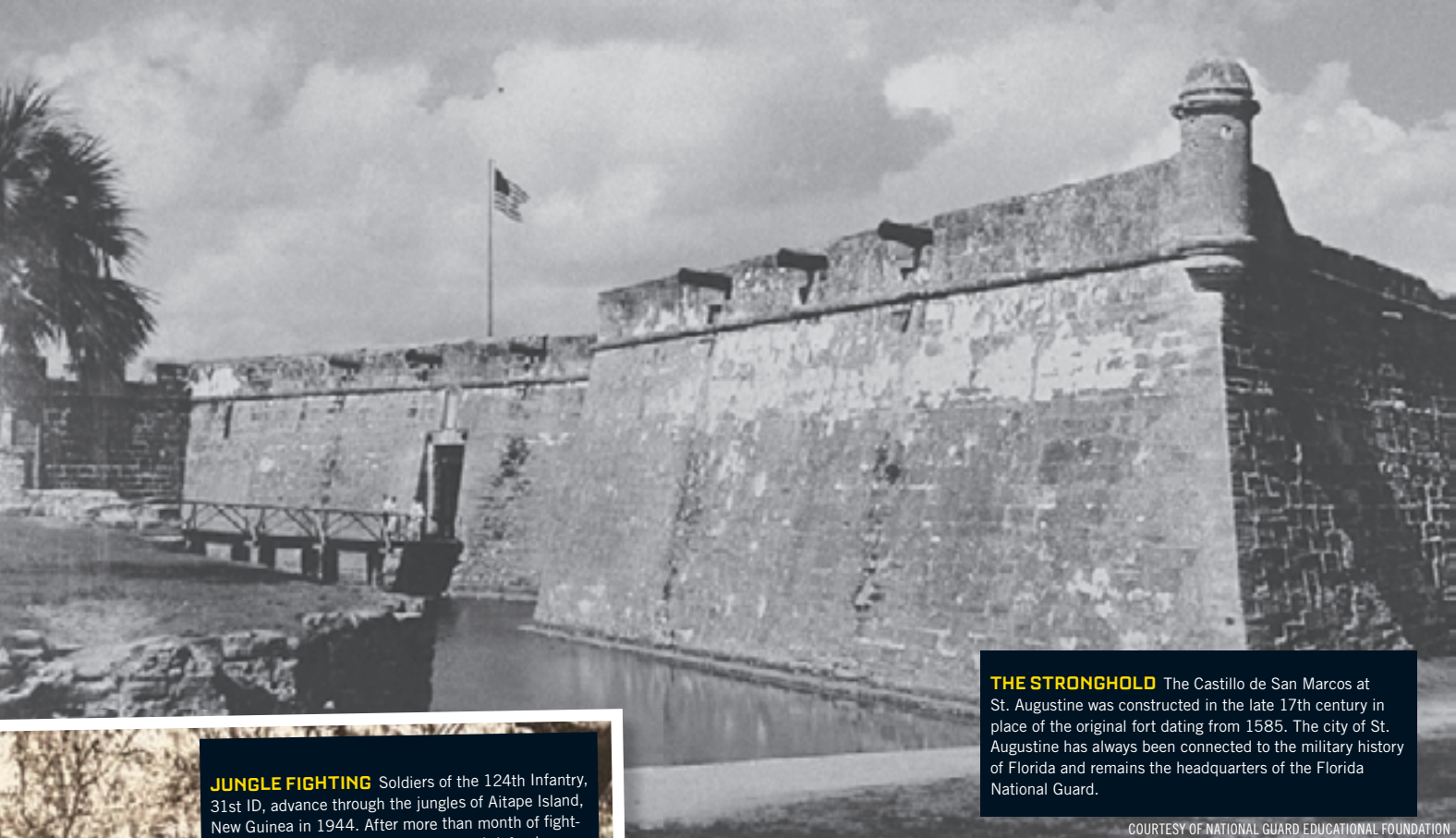
Some of you may be scratching your head saying, “Wait a minute, wasn’t the National Guard born in Salem, MA, in 1636?” Well, yes and no. The first official organization of militia regiments was on Dec. 13, 1636, in Massachusetts, with the First Muster of those regiments in the spring of 1637.

There had been earlier militia units in Massachusetts, and Florida had militia units since its first settlement in 1565. So, you could say that the Florida Army National Guard is more than 400 years old! However, we tend to start the clock on American institutions with the English settlement. Thus, the Spanish origins of the National Guard are relatively forgotten.

DEFENDING THE HOMELAND

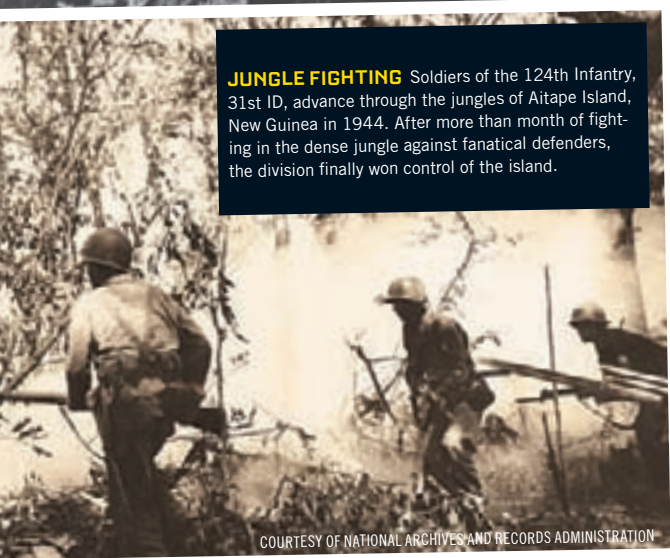
During this time period, different groups, including pirates, involved Florida militia in fending off several attacks. A British pirate flotilla, lead by Sir Francis Drake, attacked St. Augustine in 1586. The militia was unable to prevent Drake’s force from destroying the wooden Spanish fort and plundering the town. A little more than a decade later, in 1597, the militia was called upon to quell an Indian rebellion.





THE STRONGHOLD The Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine was constructed in the late 17th century in place of the original fort dating from 1585. The city of St. Augustine has always been connected to the military history of Florida and remains the headquarters of the Florida National Guard.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



JUNGLE FIGHTING Soldiers of the 124th Infantry, 31st ID, advance through the jungles of Aitape Island, New Guinea in 1944. After more than month of fighting in the dense jungle against fanatical defenders, the division finally won control of the island.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



“THE SPANISH ORIGINS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ARE RELATIVELY FORGOTTEN.”

FLORIDA AND THE REVOLUTION

The American Revolution, though started in Massachusetts, would touch all the way to Florida. During the war, the Castillo de San Marcos was manned by militia and used as a military prison, holding many American patriots who had been captured during the British seizure of Charleston, SC.

Many of the militia Soldiers serving the British crown had once served under Spanish rule. In 1779, as the war was turning against the British, matters were made worse when Spain declared war on England. The American Revolution formally ended with the signing of a second Treaty of Paris on Jan. 14, 1784. In this treaty, control of Florida was returned to Spain.

THROWING IN THE TOWEL

Florida had changed considerably since the last Spanish occupation. Many Spaniards had left the colony, and a large population of English loyalists fleeing the new United States had settled in Florida. Support from the mother country was slow to non-existent as Spain dealt with a decade of conflict during the Napoleonic Wars. Just prior to the outbreak of another war between the Americans and British in 1812, the population of Florida was almost completely English—either former loyalists or American settlers. These Anglo insurgents were gaining control, as the only way a

Even 100 years later, the primary concern for the Spanish forces in Florida was protection against future British attacks on St. Augustine. Following the 1668 attack by the English pirate, Robert Searle, the idea of using wooden forts was abandoned.

In October 1672, construction began on a masonry fortification that would become known as the Castillo de San Marcos. Over 300 years old, the Castillo is the oldest fort to survive in this country, and its image emblazons the State Headquarters patch of the Florida National Guard.

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!

The Castillo, manned by both Spanish regulars and militia, withstood several attacks and sieges over the years. One such attack occurred in November 1702, when British forces sailed from Charleston, SC, in an effort to capture St. Augustine. The British laid siege to the

city, causing the entire population of approximately 1,200 people to seek refuge in the Castillo. The militia Soldiers withstood two months of continuous assault.

The siege was lifted with the arrival of the Spanish fleet, which trapped the British, forcing them to burn their ships and march overland back to Charleston. Tensions between England and Spain remained, and, again, war came to Florida in 1739. As before, the British laid siege to St. Augustine and again the Spanish forces, including the local militia, were successful in resisting this attack.

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

In 1754, the Seven Years War, also known as the French and Indian War, broke out between England and France. This conflict was predominantly over control of Canada and the Northeastern English colonies. However, Spain allied itself with France, which would have dire consequences for its North American possessions.

Following the British victory of the French and Indian War, the Treaty of Paris of 1763 dictated that Spain would relinquish control of Florida to England. Thus, England became the dominating force in North America. Unfortunately for England, this dominance would prove to be fleeting.



ONE PIECE AT A TIME Florida National Guard Soldiers fill more than 1,000 sandbags at the Hancock County Public Works site in Waveland, MS.

citizen could legally own property or have certain rights was by serving in the militia.

Amid growing border disputes with the United States, and the Americanization of the population, Spain decided to throw in the towel and on July 10, 1821, officially ceded Florida to the U.S.

“I VOLUNTEER!”

As a U.S. territory, Florida was subject to the Militia Act of 1792, which required all able-bodied free males between the ages of 18 and 45 to be enrolled in the militia. However, the enrolled militia system was extremely problematic and would eventually be replaced by a completely volunteer militia system.

The Florida militia, now under American control, faced an opponent that England, Spain and the Americans had been fighting for hundreds of years: The Native Americans. Of the many conflicts between the Florida territorial militia and the Native Americans, the most famous was the Great Seminole War of 1835 to 1842. This war involved more than 60 percent of the entire U.S. Army, including thousands of Citizen-Soldiers from Florida and several other states.

Most of the deaths during this conflict were not combat-related, but from disease. Sporadic fights broke out all across the territory with massacres and atrocities being committed by both sides. Eventually, the war ended, with the Seminoles being moved to modern-day Oklahoma.

Florida became a state in 1845 and immediately sent a “Militia Report,” inflated with

fabricated muster numbers, to the U.S. Congress in hopes of receiving federal aid. The plan did not work, and the inflated numbers only irritated Congress a year later, when it declared war on Mexico and needed every militiaman to serve.

The militia Soldiers of the new state of Florida were not anxious to fight in another war. But when officially called for federal service, the men of the Florida militia reported for duty.

Though they did not see combat in the Mexican War, the Floridians gained new equipment and garnered extensive training that would prepare them for their next war, this time against their new brethren of the United States.

A COUNTRY DIVIDED

Many people don't know about the role that militiamen from Florida played in the American Civil War. Floridians were not only involved in battles to protect their state from Northern invaders, but also in battles across the country.

Though the deployment of Florida troops to fight in the Confederate Army in battles in other states was highly problematic, Florida was able to make an impact on the war effort. Many visitors to the battlefields at Gettysburg, PA, are often a little puzzled by a monument bearing the name “FLORIDA.” Few realize that there were, in fact, Florida regiments engaged in the most famous land battle of North America. The Florida monument features three gray granite monoliths and three stars, each representing one of the Florida regiments that fought in the

immortal action known as “Pickett's Charge” on July 3, 1863.

On Feb. 20, 1864, Florida militiamen were engaged in the largest battle ever to occur in the state. The Battle of Olustee was fought at Ocean Pond near Lake City. The battle was a disaster for the Union Army, which was repulsed by entrenched Confederate forces and retreated to Jacksonville.

The ratio of casualties to Soldiers engaged made Olustee the third-bloodiest battle in the Civil War. The renowned 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, made famous by the movie *Glory*, participated in the battle, as did other African-American units.

Following the Civil War, the militia of Florida was in complete disarray. The situation was steadily improving by the time the newly unified country declared war on Spain in 1898. The war would see the majority of its battles in the Caribbean.

Many Floridians were excited at the prospect of helping the population of Cuba and Puerto Rico gain its independence from Spain, as many had relatives in those two island nations. Sadly, no units of the Florida militia would see combat in the Spanish-American War. Instead they would watch countless militia units from other states come to Florida and train, and use their state as a jumping off point for the invasion of Cuba. The lack of deployment would cause a massive sense of resentment among members of the Florida militia.

STAFF SGT. BOB BARKO JR.

FROM PANCHO TO KAISER

In 1916, the Florida militia officially became the Florida National Guard. Not only was their name new, but so was their mission, as they could now officially be mobilized by the president of the United States for national emergencies.

As WWI raged in Europe, one such national emergency would help prepare the Florida Guard for its future role in the Great War. In response to the insurgent activities of Pancho Villa, on June 19, 1916, the 2nd Florida Infantry Regiment was mobilized for deployment to the Mexican Border. The 2nd Florida, along with the 1st Florida, patrolled the border between Texas and Mexico, receiving new equipment and critical training in the process. The training gained during the Mexican Border Mobilization would be put to the test when they faced the German Army in France upon America's entry into WWI.

Prior to going "over there," the Florida Guard units were reorganized into the new Army Regimental System. Regiments lost their state designations, such as the 2nd Florida regiment, which became the 124th Infantry Regiment.

Florida Guard members served in the 124th or as individuals attached to other regiments and divisions. Almost all of Florida's National Guard Soldiers were assigned to units of the 31st "Dixie" Division. More than half of the approximately 2,000 Florida Guard members mobilized for the war saw combat. Of the 2,000 deployed, 104 were killed, while another 100 were wounded.

FROM HURRICANES TO INMATES

Following WWI, during the 1920s, the Guard returned home to protect its citizens from the ravages of Mother Nature, as well as from themselves, at times.

One of the stranger and more interesting roles that members of the Florida National Guard participated in was protecting prison inmates from other inmates who were members of the mob. In addition, in 1924 at Duvall County Jail, the Guard Soldiers prevented local citizens from murdering a prisoner who was awaiting trial.

Besides dealing with security issues, the Florida Guard saw organizational changes and the implementation of new awards. In 1929, several new medals and awards were created, including the Florida Cross for brave or meritorious service, the Florida Service Medal recognizing long service, and the State Active Duty Medal.

ALL'S QUIET ... BUT NOT FOR LONG

Things were mostly quiet for the National Guard until 1940, when President Franklin Roosevelt instituted the nation's largest peacetime mobilization of the National Guard.

As in 1916, a war was now raging in Europe, and President Franklin wanted to give the Guard a year to re-equip and train for the inevitable entry of the United States into WWII. During this time the largest peacetime Army maneuvers, known as

the Louisiana Maneuvers, occurred in which the members of the 31st "Dixie" Division, which included Florida's 124th Infantry regiment, gained a reputation for "aggressiveness and organizational efficiency."

The "aggressiveness" gained during 1940 would prove to be invaluable when the Florida Guard members were once again embroiled in a world war.

During WWII, the 31st Division, including Florida's 124th Infantry Regiment, would help to liberate the Philippine Islands. The conquest of the southern-most Philippine island of Mindanao would be fought for over a month through dense jungles with few passable roads.

As it fought its way across the island, the 2nd Battalion of the 124th earned a Distinguished Unit

Though the National Guard is wrongly regarded as having no participation in the Vietnam War, Florida's 35th Surgical Hospital was mobilized and deployed to Vietnam. Members of the Florida Army National Guard would be mobilized for several global emergencies including the Berlin Crisis of 1961, assisting regular forces in the state during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and being on alert during the Middle East crisis of 1973.

PERSIAN MISSION

It was not until the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991 that Florida Guard members were deployed to combat as part of their intact units.

In addition to providing combat support, the Soldiers of Florida also conducted humanitarian missions. The members of the 108th Public Affairs



"AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA, FLORIDA GUARD SOLDIERS TRAVELED ACROSS THE STATE TO DELIVER 1,000 COTS TO THE LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD."

Citation for its gallant efforts. Countless other Florida National Guard members volunteered and were selected to serve in other regiments and divisions, both Guard and regular Army.

CONFLICT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

During the Korean War, the Florida National Guard was not deployed as intact units, but as in the past, individual Guard members volunteered to go to Korea as members of other units.

The only major unit to see combat in Korea was from the Florida Air National Guard, which would gain widespread recognition during the 1950s as the premier organization in the entire United States Air National Guard.

Detachment assisted in efforts to feed Kurdish refugees located in northern Iraq. The last Army National Guard unit to return home from active duty for service in Desert Storm was Florida's 119th Medical Company.

STANDING PROUD AND READY

On Sept. 11, 2001, an event occurred that would necessitate the return of the Florida National Guard to the Persian Gulf. As their comrades were fighting terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, Florida Guard members at home were protecting their citizens from another enemy: Mother Nature. In 2005, as they were cleaning up the damage to their own state from Hurricane Katrina, members of the Florida Guard traveled across the state to deliver 1,000 cots to the Louisiana National Guard.

One member of the Florida Army Guard serving in Iraq is SGT Luther Boyett of Company B, 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion. Boyett is somewhat unique, as he served in Vietnam and will turn 60 on July 4, 2009, while still serving in Iraq. "The National Guard really helped me stay in physical and mental shape," claims Boyett. He further states that, "I'm a firm believer that it's up to us older Soldiers to pass on our knowledge, our experience, to the younger Soldiers so they can survive the next combat zone."

The Florida National Guard has fought hundreds of battles since its founding in 1565, but in the words of Boyett, "Combat zones change, but Soldiers never change." **GX**



SPECIAL DELIVERY 2LT Ryan Swinford, with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment from the Florida Army National Guard, directs Iraqi police officers as they gather a delivery of ammunition in Tal Afar, Iraq.

To learn more about the Florida Army National Guard, go to **1-800-GO-GUARD.com/FL**

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Weatherproof Retirement

KEEPING YOUR SAVINGS
SAFE IN THE STORM

Courtesy of USAA

If your retirement accounts seemed battered over the last year, you're not alone. In the year prior to October 15, 2008, U.S. stocks plunged nearly 37 percent. If the current market ups and downs have you looking for the next dark cloud, these tips may help ease your mind.

Spread it around

Retirement portfolios that include a wide variety of investments tend to be much less volatile. Why? Because generally, the greater the variety, the greater the chance you'll own investments that rise when others fall. An appropriate mix of stock, bond and cash investments may be just the ticket.

Create a firm foundation

When the markets are at their roughest, it's comforting to know a portion of your portfolio is completely guaranteed against loss. A guaranteed savings annuity may be conservative, but it protects your money and builds through any market environment.

Keep your balance

Over time, portfolios tend to stray from their original mix. Consider, for example, an investor who put 30 percent of a portfolio in bonds and 70 percent in stocks. If bonds have a strong year while stocks lag, things may shift, leaving the investor with 35 percent in bonds and 65 percent in stocks. The solution? Once a year, put things back in order by considering the use of one or both of these techniques:

Shake up the mix

- 1) Sell the investments that have grown beyond your target allocation and buy more that have fallen below it.
- 2) Re-direct new money into lagging investments. If you're re-balancing non-retirement accounts, keep an eye on the tax implications.



Put your investments on autopilot

Consider investing in target funds. These mutual funds allocate assets toward a future retirement date, automatically reallocating the portfolio as it draws nearer to the target date of the fund. The less time you have before retirement, the more conservative the investment choices become—a process that helps simplify decision making and provides ongoing diversification, which may help reduce risk.

Focus on the horizon

Those who are prone to motion sickness are often advised to focus on a distant point—advice that works well for retirement investors. Checking your portfolio too often will make you feel every one of the market's bounces. Instead, monitor your portfolio quarterly or annually, staying focused on the future. **GX**

In the year prior to October 15, 2008, U.S. stocks plunged nearly 37 percent.



New Year Survival Plan

By Judith S. Harris, BSN, MA, CHES

Take a deep breath. It's time to introduce some sanity into one of the busiest times of the year.

Despite our best efforts and intentions to simplify, we may not have actually developed a New Year survival plan to maintain a healthy equilibrium. Even though we may all know how to make healthy food choices and are aware that we must continue daily physical activity programs, we also should have a plan to combat the holiday stress that triggers overeating and under-exercising.

A National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) holiday weight gain study found that volunteers who maintained a healthy weight added less than a pound during the holidays, whereas overweight volunteers were more likely to gain five pounds or more.

The study found that two factors influence weight management over the holidays: level of hunger and level of activity. Those volunteers who reported more physical activity and less hunger had less holiday weight gain, and those who reported less activity and more hunger gained more weight.

The study concluded that holiday weight gain is risky because the additional weight is not lost during the course of the year, and may even increase during the next holiday season, resulting in significant cumulative weight gain over time.

According to Jack A. Yanovski, M.D., Ph.D., the study's principal investigator and head of NICHD's Unit on Growth and Obesity, "Promotion of weight stability during the fall and winter months may prove useful as a strategy to prevent age-related weight gain in the United States."



LAWRENCE WOUTON/GETTY IMAGES

We're Counting Down to the Launch!

What if there were some *small, fun steps* you could implement with family and friends that would lend a *fresh, festive approach to caring for your body* in the new year? Here are some suggestions:

>> Make moderation your eating mantra.

- Eat small, regular meals throughout the day, even if you are "saving the calories" for a party. This will combat the temptation to overeat later.
- Keep a bag of healthy snacks in the car or at the office to stave off hunger before or after a shopping trip. This will help you resist the urge to fill up on fast food, and wait until a healthier alternative is available.
- Be a party sampler—select goodies with care and savor each one.
- Remember to rate your plate at buffets and sit-downs—a sliver, not a slab, will keep weight gain in check. Test your healthy-portion knowledge at hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion.
- Eliminate alcoholic and sugary beverages. Did you know that the average alcoholic beverage contains 150-200 calories a glass, and even one drink could seriously impair safe driving?

>> De-stress yourself.

- Learn to say no. Make a list, establish limits and don't overextend yourself.
- Take a 30-minute nap, or institute 30 minutes of quiet time for everyone in your household on hectic days.
- Drink plenty of water. Winter weather can bring on dehydration and drain energy.
- Put on some soothing, quiet music and fully experience the aroma and taste of an herbal tea or seasonal citrus fruit.
- Spend 15 minutes a day with your pet—playing, walking or brushing.

>> Stick to your fitness plan.

- Keep your date with physical activity. Maintain at least 15 minutes of your usual exercise routine. If necessary, make sessions shorter or choose an alternative to fill the gap.
- Gather up as many family members or visitors as possible and sing favorite songs as you walk. Organize a neighborhood group to pick up litter and debris in the area. Buy or make big red bows to hang on everyone's mailboxes as you go.
- Take the kids on a walking tour of a historic site in your town.
- Work out or exercise with one friend or family member and play catch-up. Healthy time spent together is a learning experience and spirit-lifter for all.
- Keep a daily activity log or journal. That may be enough to keep you on track.

It's important to make activities fun and refreshing. For more information related to weight management and lifestyle changes, please visit DecadeOfHealth.com. **GX**

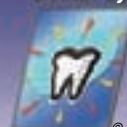


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Understanding the Value of Education

By Johanna Altland

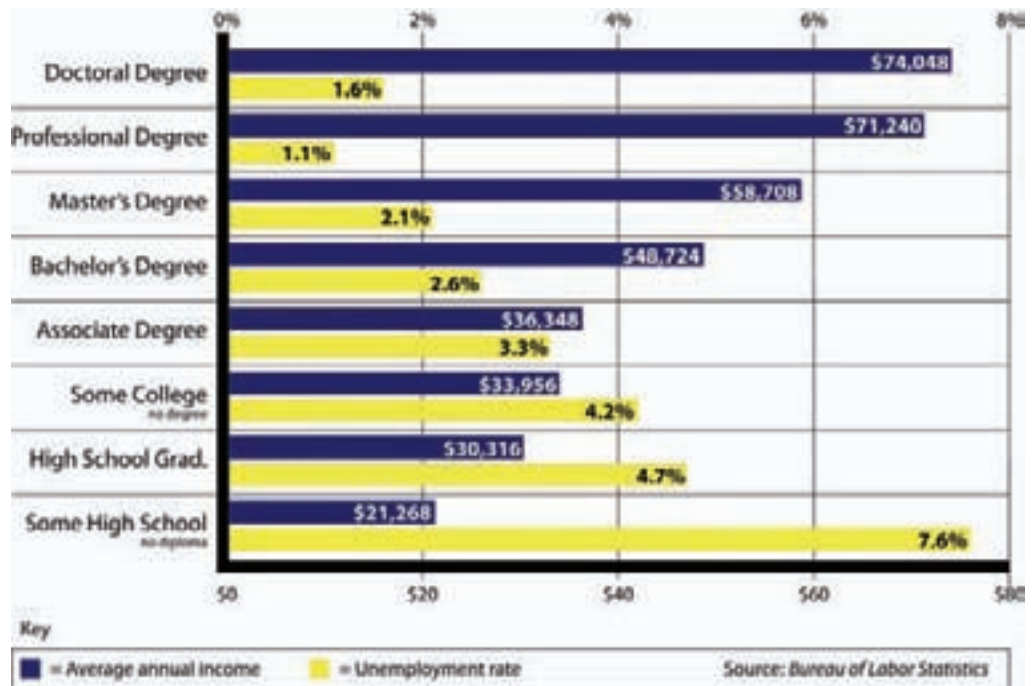
Have you been thinking about earning an undergraduate or graduate degree, but are nervous about the time it will take and the expense? The decision you make to enroll or not to enroll at a university could have a big impact on your future.

Yes, going to school while working full time and meeting the needs of your family is a huge responsibility, but the rewards of furthering your education will be worth it.

The amount of education it takes to succeed in today's business environment has increased dramatically compared to just five or 10 years ago. A high school education no longer guarantees you a "living wage." Now, an advanced degree and ongoing career training are the best ways to increase your earning potential and job security.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2006 average annual income for someone with a bachelor's degree was \$48,724. The income for those with a master's degree was \$58,708. Those with a high school diploma earned \$30,316 on average. If you do the math, those with master's degrees will earn almost \$30,000 more per year on average than a high school graduate. If you multiply that over a 40-year career, you could potentially make \$1.2 million more in your lifetime. **GX**

EARNINGS AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATION LEVEL



It's clear that the benefits of obtaining an undergraduate or graduate degree are very rewarding: Better pay * More opportunity for advancement * Lower unemployment * Personal satisfaction

By continuing your education, you're giving yourself the opportunity to learn new skills and information that you can apply to your life and career. You may be able to put a price tag on a degree, but the value of an education is priceless.

Dos and Don'ts of Email Etiquette

By Joanna Atland

Whether you're sending an email to your college professor or to your director at work, it's important to understand the nuances of communicating electronically.

Many view email as a more relaxed form of communication, which may be true if you are sending messages to family and friends, but email in a collegiate or professional environment should be a more formal communication, similar to a business letter. Let's take a look at some tips for proper email etiquette:

Compose opening greetings.

In a business environment, it's considered impolite to address someone by their first name unless they indicate that it's all right to do so. Sending an email shouldn't be any different. Address people that you don't know as Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr.

Write relevant subject lines.

It's important to ensure that your subject line relates to your message. Doing so will ensure that your message will be read and not added to your junk folder. For example, a message with the subject line "good stuff" will most likely be deleted as junk mail, as opposed to a message with the subject "monthly summary report."

Consider the tone of the message.

Because you're communicating electronically instead of face-to-face, it's very easy for someone to misinterpret the tone of your email. Dictionary.com defines tone as "the quality of something (an act or a piece of writing) that reveals the attitudes and presuppositions of the author."

Avoid sounding rude and demanding and focus on being polite and friendly.

Be sure to include the words "please" and "thank you" when appropriate. Also, in the world of electronic communication, writing in all caps is the same as yelling. Most of us find this impolite and annoying.



It's important to keep your messages concise, polite and professional. A general rule of thumb is to send out the type of email that you would like to receive.

Get to the point.

When drafting your message, keep it brief and focused on the subject at hand. Include all of the relevant information and leave out the long, flowery copy. Use bold text to emphasize key points and important dates. Paragraphs shouldn't be more than six lines long. This will make your message easier to read and comprehend.

Be timely with responses.

Generally, it's acceptable to respond to email messages within one business day. Don't put off responding to someone's inquiry for days because they'll be likely to email you again, further clogging your inbox. Along the same lines, don't jump to attention every time your email alert pops up. This will distract you and decrease your productivity.

Avoid graphical backgrounds.

While the background in your message may display nicely on your computer, it may not translate as well to the receiver's computer. Remember,

everyone's email program is set up differently. There's nothing more frustrating than responding to an email that has a graphic and having the background distort the text and add additional spaces.

Don't spam.

Email correspondence that guarantees you good luck if you forward it to six other people has no business in a professional or collegiate environment. If you have a joke or chain letter that you want to give to a particular co-worker, send it to their personal email account. Many companies monitor their employees' email and it can be a strike against you if you are using your work account for personal correspondence.

Review your message before sending.

Be sure to spell-check your message before you send it, but keep in mind that spell-check doesn't catch everything. It's important to reread your message for proper use of grammar and content. Be on the lookout for homonyms, which are words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings, like: here/hear, ad/add, and their/there/they're.

Wait to complete the "to" address.

How many of us have tried to add an attachment to a message and accidentally clicked on the send button? Instead of inadvertently sending an incomplete message, wait until you have proofread the message and it's ready to go before adding in your recipient's email address.

Communicating by email is much more convenient than tracking someone down by phone, and it allows you to keep an electronic record of events, particularly for an important project. However, it's important to keep your messages concise, polite and professional. A general rule of thumb is to send out the type of email that you would like to receive. **GX**

Story and photos by SSG Ken Weichert and participating Guard Soldiers

**MEET
YOU
AT
THE**

TOP

A SPECIAL FORCES SOLDIER ENJOYS THE VIEW AFTER CLIMBING MT. WHITNEY ON A TRAINING MISSION.

YOU COULDN'T PLAN A BETTER MISSION. ON AUG. 9, 2008, I HELPED LEAD A TEAM OF SEVEN SPECIAL FORCES MEMBERS, TWO MASTER CLIMBERS AND ONE TOP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT WHITNEY, THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN IN THE CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES.

CLIMBING MOUNT WHITNEY ISN'T NEW FOR ME. I'VE LED A TEAM TO THE TOP EVERY YEAR FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS. WHAT'S NEW IS THAT THIS TIME, I LED THE TOUGHEST OF THE TOUGH.

-SGT KEN

IT WAS LIKE A CAPTURE THE FLAG EXERCISE. OUR GROUP OF 11 WAS SPLIT INTO TWO TEAMS—ONE THAT WOULD HIKE, ONE THAT WOULD CLIMB. OUR TRAILS WOULD WRAP AROUND OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND WE'D MEET AT THE 14,497-FOOT SUMMIT.

THE HIKING TEAM HAD LESS DIFFICULT TERRAIN, BUT THEIR ROUTE WAS MORE THAN TWICE AS LONG AS THE CLIMBING TEAM. THE CLIMBING TEAM WOULD FACE SOME PITCHES THAT WERE 5.7 AND 5.8 ON THE YOSEMITE DECIMAL SYSTEM.

OUR OBJECTIVES: CONSTRUCTING A GREAT STORY FOR GX, TEAM BONDING AND EXTREME ADVENTURE. I WAS FIRED UP FOR THE MISSION!

FOLLOWING ARE OUR TALES FROM THE TRAILS OF MOUNT WHITNEY.

Two Days Before the Mission

Ammo has been with the team for a year. He transferred to the Guard from Active Duty, where he served with 5th Special Forces Group and has over three deployments to Iraq. Ammo and the team describe the events leading up to our climb:

AMMO

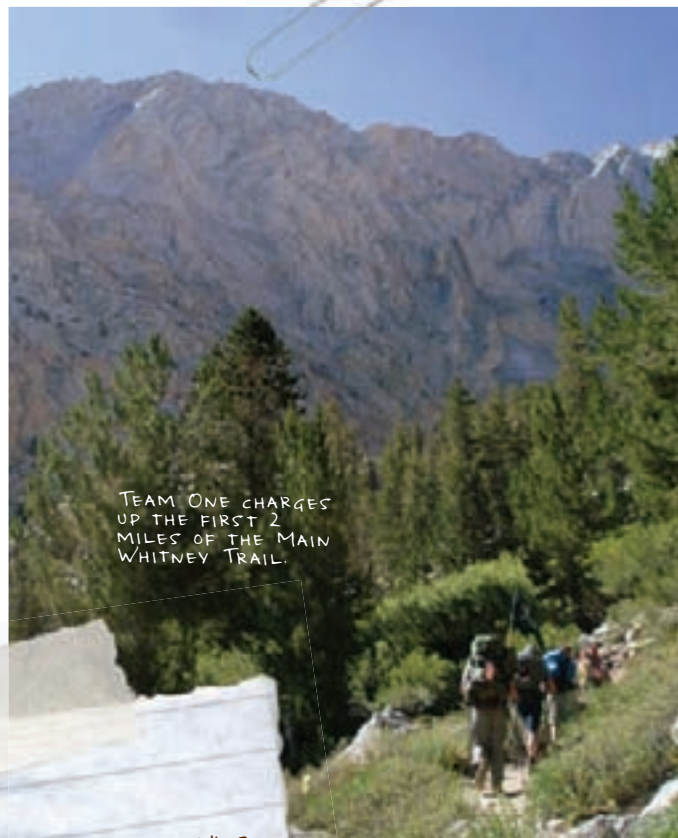
I'm traveling to California. I make it to the airport on time for an 1100 hours departure from New York. I eventually end up in Bakersfield, CA, with several other team members. We gathered around the baggage claim area to catch up on life since the last time we saw each other. It was then that I found out that everyone else is taking a medicine called Diamox to help ease the effects of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). The recommended timeline was two to three days prior to climbing, but since we're not actually going up for another day and a half, I'm thinking, I should be okay. Thankfully, Vlad has extra medicine and shares.

The next morning, as everybody was gearing up for our climb, Chief took a moment to write in his journal. Chief, one of the original Mountain Team Soldiers, was on ODA 955, and served as weapons sergeant and then its intelligence sergeant during Operation Iraqi Freedom. When they returned, he attended the Special Forces Warrant Officer Course and took command of ODA 9225 in 2007.

One Day Before the Mission

CHIEF

Plates and utensils clink in a small, greasy spoon breakfast joint in Bakersfield. The team arrived the night before. And with the jet lag from operating on Ohio time, the group is not very talkative. With hot



The Teams

To protect the identity of the Special Forces Soldiers, we are using aliases.

Team One | Main Trail Hiking Team

"Chief" – Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 9225 commander

"Doc" – Medical sergeant

"Surfer Dude" – Engineer

"Ammo" – Assistant weapons sergeant

"SGT Ken" – Mission coordinator

"Jeneane" – START Fitness instructor, the only civilian on this expedition

Team Two | East Face Climbing Team

"Vlad" – ODA 9225 team sergeant

"Witty" – Information sergeant

"Action" – Senior weapons sergeant

"Mountain Ninja" – Instructor from Army Mountain Warfare School (AMWS)

"Mountain Lion" – Instructor from AMWS

breakfast in their stomachs, they hit the road to begin a three-hour drive to the small town of Lone Pine, CA. Before this mission, no one on the team had heard of it.

The highway, stretching from Bakersfield to Lone Pine, is mostly desert scenery, spanning part of the Mojave and gradually ascending into the Sierra Mountains. The peaks of the Sierras appear to be a thousand miles away until in the blink of an eye, you're right in the middle of them... the foothills and peaks very quickly become menacing

ridgelines and towering cliffs. The team pulls into the hotel around 1500 hours and quickly meets face-to-face with SSG Ken Weichert, aka SGT Ken. We unpack and regroup at 1800 hours to go over the mission details.

We'll split into two main teams, each with a different route to the summit. SGT Ken and I will lead Team One using the main trail to work toward the summit. Our plan is to hike from the Trail Head to Trail Camp from an altitude of 8,360 to 12,002 feet on the first day. Vlad and Mountain Ninja will lead Team Two, the technical team, using the East Face to work their way to the summit. Their plan is to scramble over rough terrain to camp at Iceberg Lake on the first day. Team One has the longest distance in miles, and Team Two has the most difficult route.

On Day Two of the climb, both groups would break camp at the same hour and meet at the summit of the tallest point in the continental United States, Mount Whitney.

SGT KEN

I provided a hiking timetable for Team One in my original Operations Order (OPORD) based on my previous hikes on the main trail. Team Two planned their timetable on our camp and summit times. I passed out high-powered two-way radios, two for each team. I briefed them all on using a Bear Canister (a hard-sided container that keeps smells and food away from bears) and the need to clean out our vehicles before beginning the climb. Lastly, I passed out trail and camping permits, and instructed them to fasten them to their backpacks.

Team One, Day One

CHIEF

As day breaks, the team is already in motion. After hot chow, they make the 13-mile drive to the Mount Whitney Portal. Lone Pine is at an elevation of roughly 3,000 feet, while the portal is 8,360 feet. As soon as the team steps out, the difference in the air pressure is noticeable. With everyone eager to begin, we start the grueling ascent.

SGT KEN

I led Team One up the first two miles at a fast rate, forcing our bodies to adjust to the steep grade and high altitude. At the two-mile mark, we took 10 minutes to stretch our calves and thighs.

CHIEF

The effects of altitude are comparable to “ruck” marching with a protective mask on. It takes a lot of energy to suck in air, but it still doesn't feel like you are getting enough oxygen. As you expend more energy trying to breathe, your heart beats faster until the point that even walking feels like you are running a sprint. Doc, a graduate of summer Mountain Warfare School, whose training is a step away from a physician assistant, keeps a watchful eye on the group and responds quickly to those suffering AMS. He is trained in everything from internal medicine to trauma, sniffles to gunshot wounds. So, during the climb, he would provide the crucial and vital medical support.

AMS is not fatal; however, it can be so debilitating that one might not be able to make it to the top and be forced to descend. Symptoms include dizziness, severe headache, vision anomalies, nausea, vomiting and cramps. With one or two of us starting to yield to the thinning air, I slow down the pace, and the uphill march presses on slowly but surely.

After a few hours, we break through the trees and are surrounded by walls and staircases of stone. By this point, the sun begins to go past the ridgeline just as Team One reaches the Trail Camp at 12,002 feet. Trying to stay ahead of nightfall, we set up camp, purify water and hunker down away from the gust-

ing wind to force-feed ourselves a dehydrated meal and catch some rest. “Almost there,” I said aloud.

I look at my watch. 6 p.m. Just as I reach for the radio, Vlad scratches through the speaker. “This is Team Two. We are set into our camp.” I respond, “Roger ... see ya tomorrow at the top.”

The night is miserably cold. Team One tries to shelter down in their tents as much as possible, but the howling winds and the cold stone beneath the tents make getting warm impossible. With the Diamox having a side effect of frequent trips to the latrine, the cycle of trips into the darkness makes sleep difficult. At this point, some are hoping that a few minutes of actual sleep will be enough to keep the altitude monster off their backs long enough to see the summit.

SGT KEN

Mount Whitney has always been challenging. In past Whitney climbs, I physically trained at least three months out with hiking, trail running, stair climbing and weight training, most of the time while wearing a tight-fitting weight vest. This time, I trained only for two weeks on a Stair-master with some weight training and body resistance exercises and no weight vest. I should have trained a bit more effectively. I was breathing heavy on every trail and relying heavily on my hiking poles.

Also, I did not get much sleep the night before. I felt the effects of the high altitude by the time we got to Trail Camp. The Special Forces medic told me to increase my water consumption, elevate my feet and get some rest. He is correct. The more sleep I get tonight, the more I'll acclimate to the altitude.

Team One, Day Two

SGT KEN

Frigid, rough winds at Trail Camp stripped us of sleep last night. Half of Team One was a bit nauseated by the time we got to 13,000 feet; however, nobody wanted to turn back. Teamed with several members of 19th Special Forces and a couple of instructors from the Army National Guard Mountain Warfare School, I feel more secure mountaineering now than ever before. After the medic checked us out, we continued our ascent up the 97 Switchbacks to the next waypoint. Next stop, Trail Crest at 13,600 feet!

Ammo is one of the Soldiers coming down with AMS. His journal picks up the next morning, after a night of waiting for the sun to come up.

ODA 9225 Records Check

Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 9225 derives its lineage from previous mountain teams. ODA 955 was the original Company B Mountain Team. In 2003, it was deactivated. In 2005, members of the ODAs were merged to form a new team and in 2006 deployed to Iraq. Upon its return, the new team was established as ODA 9225.

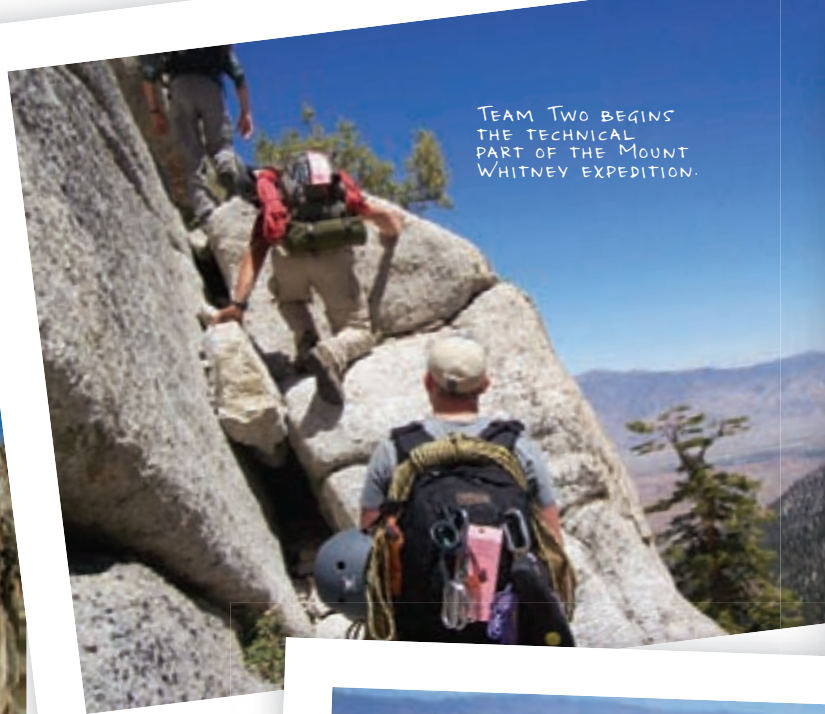
Vlad, who served on the original Mountain Team, has an impressive military career. He was asked to stand up a new team just before their trip to Iraq. As the team sergeant, he laid the foundation for the team as it is today. He's a Veteran of the 1988 Olympic Security Detail in Korea, Desert Shield/ Storm, Kosovo and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He's a graduate of both the summer and winter Army Mountain Warfare Schools, and he has climbed Mount Rainier and Mount Kilimanjaro.

Vlad said this about his unit: "The mountain team was shut down for about three years. The training and support from the Vermont guys is how we've been able to stand the team back up so quickly. They've gone out of their way to get mountain-mission-capable in such a short amount of time. We owe a lot to MAJ Pelletier, MSG Benore and SSG Powell for helping us make this happen."





THERE ARE 97 SWITCHBACKS ON TEAM ONE'S TRAIL.



TEAM TWO BEGINS THE TECHNICAL PART OF THE MOUNT WHITNEY EXPEDITION.

We continue up the trail with several of us physically ill. We head to the portion of the trail called 97 Switchbacks.

-AMMO

AMMO

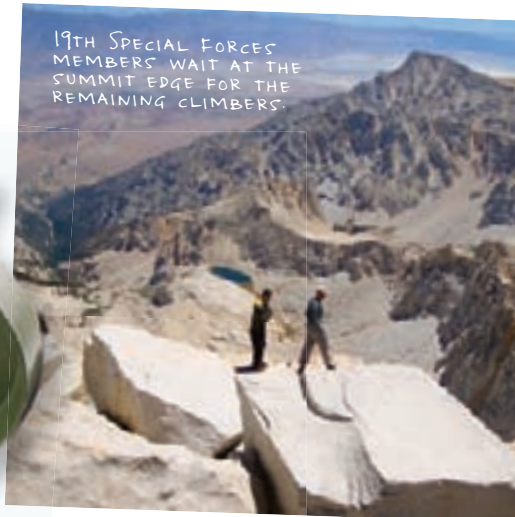
4 a.m. finally rolled around, and we started to get ready to head up the famous 97 Switchbacks of the Mount Whitney trail. We pack the gear needed for the summit and leave some behind in the tent, put our headlamps on and start walking around 5 a.m. I force down a protein bar and drink more water with hope of suppressing the AMS. As we begin to climb, I can feel my nausea leaving, but the headache is still there. While not happy that I don't feel well, I'm glad to hear that there are a couple of others who also don't feel 100 percent. Knowing that others were hurting and still pushing on motivated me to continue hiking up the trail toward the summit.

We continue up the trail with several of us physically ill. We head to the portion of the trail called 97 Switchbacks. As we continue to climb, we take breaks, hydrate and slow our pace to try to curtail the effects of AMS. As soon as the sun showed itself to us, we reached Trail Crest. From the crest, we continued on our way to the summit.

SQT KEN

We lost radio communication with Team Two while on the 97 Switchbacks. Chief felt confident that between the leadership and the technical expertise on their team, they would be just fine. Seeing the summit ahead seemed to motivate everyone on our team! However, the altitude prevented us from hiking any faster. As I glanced behind us, our tents 500 feet below looked like little buttons sitting on rocks.

Once we made it to the Trail Crest at 13,600 feet, I told everyone that the remaining ascent was less aggressive. We regained communication with Team Two on the final approach to the summit.



19TH SPECIAL FORCES MEMBERS WAIT AT THE SUMMIT EDGE FOR THE REMAINING CLIMBERS.



CHIEF

We saw the roof of a small shelter as we made our final approach to the summit. The team erupted with excitement! "Almost there!" we all shouted.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the mountain...

Team Two, Day Two

VLAD

The approach to the technical side, the mountaineers' route, was a pretty steady upward grade that was exhausting. Later that night we froze our tails off. For the technical climb team, we divided into two-man and three-man rope teams. Mountain Lion and I climbed a traversing route around the East buttress spanning 16 pitches (sections of the climb shorter than the length of the rope).

CHIEF

The call comes over the radio that Vlad and Mountain Lion are only two pitches (roughly 200 feet) down from the summit. Some of the members of Team One are still feeling the intense effects of the altitude at 14,497 feet. Doc makes the decision that it's best to send four back down the main trail to the camp to alleviate their AMS and get a head start on

LAURA YOUNG/ISTOCKPHOTO



TEAM TWO GETS TECHNICAL ON THE EAST FACE OF MOUNT WHITNEY.



packing the extra gear at Trail Camp below. Team One starts heading back to the camp, leaving SGT Ken, the lead group of Team Two and me awaiting the arrival of the last two climbers.

CHIEF

Mountain Lion breaks into view with the remaining team members sitting on the stone buttresses cheering their comrades on. After a few more rope lengths, the last two have arrived at the top. The mission has been an outstanding success!

After Action Review

MOUNTAIN NINJA

Got a 6:30 a.m. start this morning, cold temps, led T-Dac and L.A.J. on the East Buttress of Mount Whitney (12 pitches), quite possibly the single-most classic technical alpine rock-climb of its grade in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Long and challenging, yet well within their ability levels. Great day, beautiful weather and good quality rock! The guys did really well, super-fit with great attitudes. For Soldiers relatively

new to technical climbing to complete a steep climb over 1,000 feet high at extreme altitude on a big mountain range is certainly a testament to how strong and well-rounded these guys are. Such an exciting event to be a part of!

JENEANE

I could not have predicted how difficult this hike would be. It was not the 14,497 feet I feared, but the pressure of being the only female civilian on a hike with a Special Forces team. I realized I was not just with any men, but men with specific roles and strengths handpicked for one team.

The higher we climbed and the more tired we became, the more we bonded and trusted each other. Even though my body grew weaker as we climbed higher, my mental being became stronger. The motivation from the team was amazing!

A couple of us were experiencing altitude sickness as we reached the summit, yet we were all smiling from ear to ear! I realized that these Special Forces guys must remain tough in any situation they experience. They have more heart than I ever imagined. I felt that they always had my back, and that feeling made the hike seem easier and more achievable.

You guys are amazing! Thank you SGT Ken and to everyone on the team! I had an unforgettable experience! **GX**

SGT KEN

AS I WRITE THESE WORDS, MORE THAN A MONTH HAS PASSED SINCE I RETURNED FROM MOUNT WHITNEY. A COUPLE OF TIMES A DAY, MY THOUGHTS GO BACK TO MY FANTASTIC EXPERIENCES ON THOSE GRUELING TRAILS, SHARED WITH SOME OF THE FINEST SOLDIERS THAT THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD HAS TO OFFER.

IT WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL MISSION! WE WERE INJURY-FREE, AND, MOST OF ALL, WE ALL HAD A GREAT TIME!

DURING THE TEAM DINNER BEFORE GOING OUR SEPARATE WAYS, I REALIZED THAT THIS MISSION WAS MORE THAN JUST A TEAM-BONDING EXPERIENCE FOR THE MILITARY MEN THAT ACCOMPANIED ME. MOUNT WHITNEY WAS A STEPPING-STONE FOR GREATER THINGS TO COME. THE NEXT TIME THAT ODA 9225 IS AT AN ALTITUDE AS EXTREME, THE MISSION WILL BE REAL AND THEY WILL BE READY!



For information about planning a Mount Whitney expedition, contact SGT Ken at sgtken@gxonline.com.
* Members of the 19th SF ODA 9225 and the VTARNG Mountain Warfare School contributed to this story. Journal compilation by Heather G. Allen and SSG Ken Weichert.



Here Today, Ghana

North Dakotans Travel to Ghana to Build on Mutual Strengths

Story and Photos by SGT Amy Wieser Willson



Awet spring snow fell Saturday, May 10, as we left North Dakota for Ghana, our partner country in the National Guard's State Partnership program. The next day, we arrived half a world away, the air draped before us like a still-damp towel pulled from a hot dryer.

Rush-hour traffic in Fargo, North Dakota's largest city, does little to rival the roads we traveled on here. Cars drive bumper-to-bum-

per, mirror-to-mirror, and drivers know if they need to turn, they should just do so, and cars will somehow part to clear a narrow path.

Women sell maize on busy street corners, while farmers in North Dakota wait patiently for weather suitable to planting corn.

Americans visit shopping malls, but one-stop shopping in Ghana means walking down a crowded street where, over the distance of several blocks, a person can purchase an iron, shoes, food, luggage, clothing



REACHING OUT North Dakota National Guard Adjutant General MG David Sprynczynatyk (left) and Command Chief Master Sgt. Bradley Childs, 119th Wing command chief, North Dakota Air National Guard, visit with children in Ghana.

STARTING WITH THIS ONE STRONG, shared value, it's easy to begin to see the additional qualities that make North Dakota and Ghana a great match in the State Partnership Program. Sponsored by the Department of Defense, the program pairs states and nations that can mutually benefit from not only their similarities, but also their differences.

North Dakota's partnership with Ghana began in 2004. Since then, numerous workshops and exchanges have taken place, such as a medical operations exercise, aviation maintenance sessions, a post-traumatic stress workshop, engineer instructor exchanges, disaster management workshops and flight safety workshops.

Lt. Gen. Joseph Boateng Danquah, chief of the Ghana Armed Forces, visited North Dakota in April 2007. The following month, MG David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota's adjutant general, traveled to Ghana, where he was welcomed by the Honorable Pamela Bridgewater, U.S. Ambassador to Ghana. He also met with the Ghanaian minister of defense, the Honorable Dr. Kwame Addo-Kufour, and toured training sites and facilities. Ambassador Bridgewater later traveled to North Dakota to meet with key state leaders in education, agriculture, public health, commerce and the National Guard in October 2007.

Sprynczynatyk recently returned to Ghana to discuss future Partnership Program priorities with Ghana military officials. During this trip, he also discussed the partnership

Tomorrow

or cleaning products. Vendors dodge cars, pedestrians and other sellers as they bring in vast amounts of goods seemingly fixed to their heads. Despite the jostling by the crowds, not one lost their wares—some even carried theirs on pallets.

After looking a little closer at the apparent paradox, an astute observer begins to see similarities between this country and ours. Flags fly from cars with patriotic bumper stickers. People proudly wear the national colors.

Outside of the United States, it seems rare to see a citizenry as patriotic as Americans—

especially North Dakotans, who make great efforts to show their support for service members. North Dakota's National Guard has deployed 4,300 Soldiers and Airmen for the Global War on Terror, and more than 800 are on alert for mobilization. The state makes it clear that the sacrifices made by the Soldiers and their families do not go unobserved.

Swap out red, white and blue for red, yellow and green, and you have Ghana. National pride is prominent in this Western African country, which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary of independence.



GROUP SHOT
Participants in the Public Affairs Workshop in Accra, Ghana, pause for a group photo.

with General William “Kip” Ward, AFRICOM commander, at AFRICOM headquarters in Germany, and took part in Shared Accord, including observing medical humanitarian assistance exercises with U.S. Armed Forces—including seven Guard members from North Dakota—and working with elements of the 6th Battalion, Ghana Army, on assisting local villages in enhancing Ghana’s security.

Sprynczynatyk has called the partnership a productive mission that will continue to produce widespread, positive results. He has been impressed with the level of engagement and commented that, in addition to the variety of exchanges and workshops Soldiers and

decrease violence. While on these missions, it’s important for them to be able to tell their story and to share what they’re doing with those across Ghana so that understanding and open communication prevails, and support strengthens.

To help tell the National Guard’s story, especially during deployments, we develop a cadre of unit public affairs representatives, or UPARs, in North Dakota. No prior experience in writing, photography or communications is needed—just an interest in the additional duty. We provide fundamental guidelines in public affairs to combat engineers, medics, pilots, mechanics and everyone in between.

more. On the first day, nearly three-dozen people filled the room at Burma Camp in Accra. There was a naval officer, a few civilian public relations employees, some infantrymen, an officer schooled in clinical psychology and many others with various skills. A dozen more joined us throughout the four-day workshop.

A lively discussion followed the first segment of the workshop—an overview of the importance of public affairs—and I knew without doubt that this was an intrigued, hard-working group of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and civilians.

The workshop progressed from there, as we shared our knowledge and experiences in public affairs. At the same time, we learned more about how they had been “doing business” and about cultural norms.

Research prior to our trip revealed the status of Ghana’s Freedom of Information Bill (still pending passage), newspaper ownership (some public, some private, some solely political), percent of Internet users (as of 2006, almost 610,000 in a population of 22.9 million) and number of televisions and radios in use (1.9 million and 12.5 million respectively).

We learned some of the language variances to prevent misunderstandings (a “fullstop” is a period in a sentence, “inverted commas” are quotation marks and a “solicitor” would be consulted on media law issues rather than a “lawyer”), and we familiarized ourselves with the military—its people, their roles and the available equipment.

Years of research will never offer what first-hand experience does.

BY BEING ON-SITE, providing information and leading discussions, we learned the

National pride is prominent in this Western African country, where people recently celebrated their 50th anniversary of independence.

Airmen have taken part in, he has had the opportunity to promote democratization and to reinforce the importance of civilian control of the military.

ON OUR TRIP, North Dakota National Guard Public Affairs Officer 1LT Dan Murphy and I sought to provide a workshop on public affairs for members of Ghana’s Army, Air Force and Navy. Like North Dakota, Ghana’s military has seen frequent deployments.

As peacekeepers, Ghana’s Armed Forces move into volatile areas, such as Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to help

Through the UPAR program, we have seen families read stories in their local newspapers and be put at ease that their deployed Soldier is doing well. We’ve seen increased awareness and support in communities after learning in more detail what their hometown unit is doing. We also have noticed better morale, as Soldiers receive recognition for the good work they are doing. We want our Ghanaian counterparts to be able to achieve these same kinds of improvements.

We began our mission armed with boxes of workbooks, CDs, newspapers, magazines, PowerPoint presentations, video clips and

intricacies of how the Ghana Armed Forces functions.

The force of about 10,000 deploys often, but finds a disconnect in information engagement with the communities in which they live and serve. We shared our experiences with information engagement based on our deployment experience. We brought research on international public relations and United Nations peacekeeping media engagement studies. We encouraged them.

Others have done the same in various fields. In June, a trained engineer instructor from Ghana traveled to Camp Grafton Training Center, near Devils Lake, ND. SGT Jonathan Ahinakwah Owusu expressed interest in seeing how the North Dakota Guard members provided classroom and hands-on instruction to engineers from across the United States. Eight months prior, SFC David Webber, with the North Dakota National Guard's 164th Regional Training Institute, had traveled to Ghana and observed how they offered instruction. Webber also provided the Ghanaians with a wider breadth of information, as well as insight into a greater variety of delivery methods.

At the same time, two Ghanaian Airmen also were in North Dakota, exchanging ideas and participating in mission activities with the 112th Aviation Battalion. The partnership continues to strengthen as service members from both countries exchange ideas, methods and information on medical assistance, disaster management, pre-deployment operations, education, commerce and so much more.

More than Soldiers and Airmen benefit from the experience. Besides sharing their knowledge and experience with each other, groups outside of the military have, and will continue to, benefit.

Military to Civilian, or Mil2Civ, programs focus on the National Guard integrating federal and state missions, such as natural disaster response, with activities conducted in either partner's country.

The U.S. African Contingency Operations and Assistance Program, or ACOTA, seeks to improve Ghana's ability to fight terrorism, promote stability, mitigate crises and support African humanitarian aid efforts. ACOTA exercises blend Ghanaian and North Dakotan soldiers, as well as service members from other cooperative nations.

The Guard Exchange, or GUARDEX, program integrates each partner's service members in the other partner's exercises. Similarly, Exercise Participant couples Ghanaian and North Dakotan Soldiers to work and learn together.

The public affairs workshop we provided falls under the Military to Military, or

Mil2Mil, Program, which sends traveling contact teams to the partner country to provide and exchange information on specific military topics.

No matter the program category, topic focus or partner location, each form of contact has ended with extremely positive results and an expressed desire for continuing to share experiences and resources.

WE KNOW THIS PARTNERSHIP is making a difference. Sure, there's plenty of anecdotal information, but there also are many anonymous critiques that strongly support the program's continuance.

On the anecdotal side, I can personally cite the enthusiastic discussions we participated in and the many questions we answered. I can

viding the workshop to others or providing a more advanced public affairs workshop as an opportunity to further build skill sets.

"The workshop is a very useful one," one participant wrote. "I have really benefited a lot from it and hope command [will], from time to time, organize such programs for the troops."

Another wrote, "This is a very good course, and I recommend that the Ghana Armed Forces Directorate of Public Relations organize more of these lessons in collaboration with the North Dakota National Guard."

"The course has [provided insight and has been] very beneficial. If participants read more and build on what has been [discussed, they] will do very good jobs as unit public [affairs] representatives," offered another.



SHARING KNOWLEDGE 1LT Dan Murphy, North Dakota Public Affairs, discusses elements of a news story with 1st Lt. F. K. Agyeman and Capt. L. A. Ayorigo, who serve in the Ghana Army.

tell you how, on the last day of the workshop, we handed out scenario cards, assigned role players and separated UPARs. We stepped into the humid morning heat to see if we could apply the principles of public affairs.

The enthusiasm level rivaled anything I've seen from Americans. The UPARs questioned, took careful notes and moved on to question others. The other participants slid perfectly into their assigned roles, acting sick, grateful, angry and proud. Some spoke quietly while others delivered loud words accompanied by dramatic hand gestures.

For more concrete results, we have a stack of workshop evaluations filled out thoroughly and carefully by the participants. Some expressed excitement about using our materials to share their knowledge with others. Many insisted we return and provide a longer event—two weeks, three weeks, even a month-long workshop. Several suggested pro-

The partnership has been strong, and plans for the next fiscal year are already being made to further strengthen our ties.

Although snow freezes one partner while the sun burns the other, and our cultural differences span more than 6,200 miles, we clearly are partners. Partners with the same eagerness to improve. Partners with the same passion for the military. Partners with the same strong, unfaltering sense of patriotism.

These similarities are our greatest strengths. By enhancing these qualities, we can anticipate great changes through our joint efforts and by impacting the people of multiple countries—not just our own.

As former First Lady Barbara Bush said, "If human beings are perceived as potentials, rather than problems, as possessing strengths instead of weaknesses, as unlimited rather than dull and unresponsive, then they thrive and grow to their capabilities." **GX**

Fighting Spirit

▶ SHARP AND STRONG





I Can't Drive 55

Dale Jr. speeds down the track during the Ford 400 at the Homestead-Miami Speedway.

SPORTS

GX glances back over Dale Jr.'s fantastic inaugural season with the Guard.

64

FITNESS

Build balance and isometric fitness in Operation Hold for Effect.

70

GEAR

New Guard chopper ready for service.

74



TALKING SHOP Dale Jr. and teammate Jeff Gordon catch up before the start of the Ford 400 in Miami, FL.

Season to Remember

DALE JR. RACKS UP CAREER BESTS IN INAUGURAL SEASON

*Intro by SFC Clint Wood,
story courtesy of Hendrick Motorsports*

DALE EARNHARDT JR.'S 2008 NASCAR NEXTEL Sprint Cup inaugural season with Hendrick Motorsports is comparable to an Army National Guard Soldier being promoted to sergeant, qualifying expert with his M16 rifle and earning an Army Commendation Medal in a year's time.

Earnhardt, driver of the No. 88 National Guard/AMP Energy Chevrolet, posted one of his

best seasons in nine full years of competition. This year, he scored one win (at Michigan International Speedway in June), 10 top-five finishes and 16 top-10s. He averaged a starting spot of 10.3—the best of his career—and led 896 laps, which are the most laps he's led since 2004 (1,133 laps led).

This season also marked the third time that Earnhardt had made the Chase for the Sprint Cup—he also qualified in 2004 and 2006.

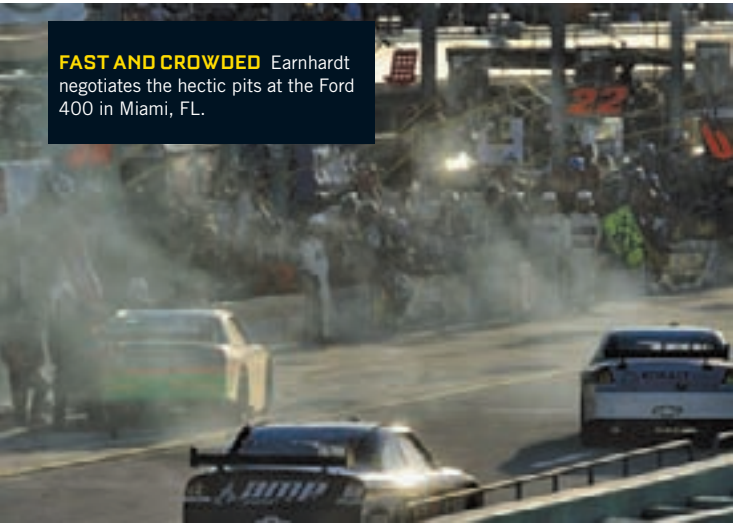
"I just want to thank everybody at Hendrick

for all they did this year," said Earnhardt of his first season. "I am proud to be with this team, and I really appreciate it. I am looking forward to next year. Congratulations on every success they have had this year. I was happy to be a part of the team. It is a pleasure being here—I can't wait until next year."

A broken part late in the NASCAR Sprint Cup race finale, the Ford 400, at Homestead Speedway Sunday, Nov. 16, in Miami, FL might have cost Earnhardt a solid finish, though. The No. 88 team

COURTESY OF HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

FAST AND CROWDED Earnhardt negotiates the hectic pits at the Ford 400 in Miami, FL.



Fast Facts

One victory (Michigan International Speedway)

10 top-five finishes

16 top-10 finishes

Average starting spot of **10.3** (career best)

Led 896 laps (the most since 2004—1,133)

Scale Model of Michigan International Speedway

finished 41st and his team took 12th in the championship standings.

"The rotors moved around and broke the caliper," Earnhardt said. "There are bearings inside it. I don't think the caliper broke first because I didn't have any vibrations. I am just surprised, because when the rotor burns up, it burns pretty bad.

"That's tough, man. We were running good. Especially right there, we had gotten some things fixed that we needed to, to move forward a little bit. I wish we could have finished because we worked real hard and this is the last race of the year."

Earnhardt and his team opened the 400-mile event on a positive note, climbing from their 22nd starting spot to the top 20 within the first few laps. Like many other teams, the No. 88 struggled to find the right setup throughout the majority of the day. Crew chief Tony Eury Jr. tried to fine-tune the National Guard/AMP Energy Chevy with a handful of modifications.

On Lap 206, Eury heard the words he had been hoping for all day. Earnhardt radioed to the crew that the No. 88 National Guard/AMP Energy was "racy." Running 17th, the 34-year-old driver made his way through the field. By Lap 211, he was 12th, and 23 laps later he cracked into the top 10.

But Earnhardt's forward march was halted on Lap 245. Then, he radioed to his crew that he believed something broke on the No. 88 machine, and he had to pit. Eury hoped it



SITTIN' PRETTY Earnhardt enjoyed a successful 2008 season and looks to crank it up for 2009.

"It is a pleasure being here. I can't wait until next year."

>> Dale Earnhardt Jr.

was a tire going down and instructed the crewmembers to bolt on four fresh tires. When Earnhardt returned to the track, he notified Eury and the crew that there still was something wrong so he brought his No. 88 Chevy back to pit road. Eury told Earnhardt to take the National

Guard/AMP Energy Chevrolet to the garage, where the team discovered a broken wheel bearing was the issue.

Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson finished 15th and captured his third straight Cup title.

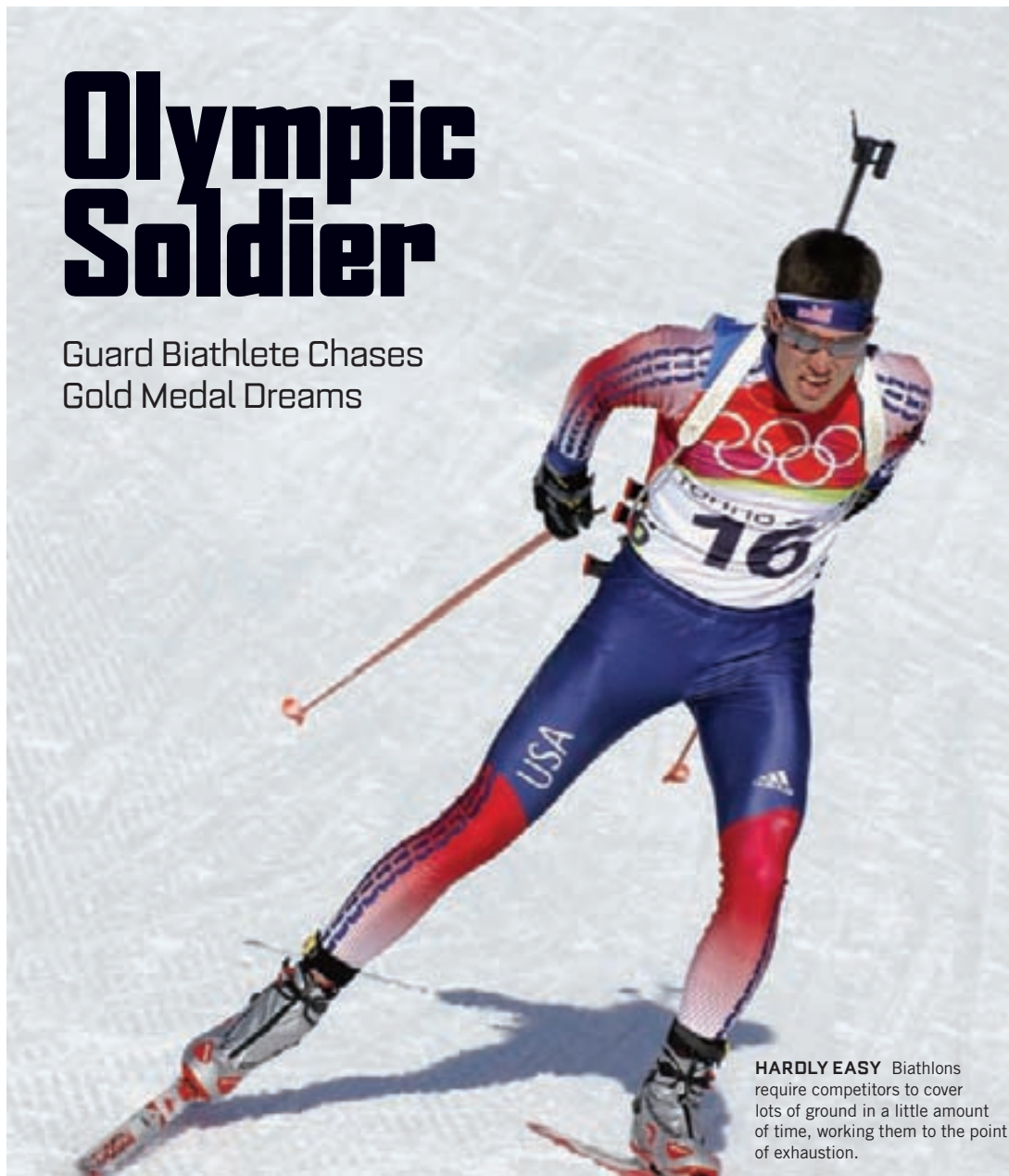
Earnhardt has less than 90 days to rest and prepare for the Daytona 500, the season opener and "the Superbowl!" of NASCAR racing, on Feb. 15. **CX**



For more on Dale Earnhardt Jr., go to 1-800-GO-GUARD.com/guardracing/dalejr.php

Olympic Soldier

Guard Biathlete Chases Gold Medal Dreams



HARDLY EASY Biathlons require competitors to cover lots of ground in a little amount of time, working them to the point of exhaustion.



“Walking into the Stadio Olimpico for the Opening Ceremony in front of 35,000 screaming spectators and 2 billion television viewers was electrifying.”

>> SPC Brian Olsen, Minnesota National Guard

By Christian Anderson

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING and competitive shooting are two drastically different sports.

Cross-country skiing requires strength, stamina and the dedication to not give up when things get tough. Competitive shooting requires hawk-like vision, a steady touch and tremendous amounts of patience.

Combine these two sports and you have biathlon—quite possibly one of the world’s toughest sports.

For SPC Brian Olsen, a Minnesota National Guard Human Resources Specialist (42A), the adrenaline is certainly there when he straps on his skis and slings a rifle over his shoulder. You see, Olsen is a member of the National Guard Outstanding Athlete Program biathlon team, and he lives to ski and shoot. Ever since his first competition, at the urging of a friend, Olsen has been immersed in the sport.

THE ORDER OF THINGS

Competitors ski a predetermined distance, ranging from 6 to 20 kilometers, and compete solo or as part of a relay team.

The beginning is much like a running race. Speed and stamina are key, and if competitors push too hard too soon, they may blow their chances of winning.

At the end of the loop, they enter the rifle range, where they shoot at five falling targets the size of a silver dollar or compact disc at 50 meters. Once they’ve used five rounds and hopefully hit all the targets, the racer must sling the rifle over his or her shoulder and ski another loop, returning either to the range for more shooting or to the finish line.

This experience can be very intense, and racers often speak of how the adrenaline drives them to push their bodies to the limit.

NATIONAL GUARD BIATHLON

"I had skied for many years and was just recently becoming competitive," Olsen said. "I love skiing, but after combining it with shooting, I could never race without a rifle again.

"The first time I shot a firearm, it was a biathlon rifle in April 1999," Olsen explained. "The mental focus and skill that shooting requires is just such at odds with the physical demands of skiing, and I've been a biathlete ever since."

TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

A world-class competitor by age 25, Olsen initially joined the Guard to take his game to an even higher level. Competing in biathlon requires money for training, travel and everyday living expenses, and it can be hard for working professionals and college kids to make it all work. And even harder to take their game to a higher level.

"I enlisted in the Minnesota Army National Guard in January 2007," Olsen said. "The culminating moment was on the way to the Munich, Germany airport from a World Cup in Austria.

"I'd raced well, but realized that I was being held back from reaching my potential since I didn't have the funding and support that my European competitors had. The National Guard was the answer to that problem," he added.

Besides being highly competitive, Olsen remains drawn to biathlon for the energy at the races. Competing in biathlon leaves Olsen with a wonderful feeling of comfort, accomplishment and, most of all, success.

The key to having a great race is to ski well and shoot well on the same day, which can be difficult at times. The races, which vary in length, tax the competitors' cardiovascular skills to the max, and then they have to enter a transition, relax for a few seconds, hit their targets and continue skiing.



COLLECTING GOLD SPC Olsen places first in both the 15- and the 20-kilometer biathlon race during the South American Military Championships in August 2008. 1LT Sam Morse, left, finished second.

Olsen and the other athletes use an incredible amount of mental strength to keep focused and stave off distraction. If they get too excited, many things can go wrong, like missing their targets.

"The exhilaration of having a great race is what keeps me competing in biathlon," Olsen said. "At the finish line, even if you have had a great race, there is always something you could have done better."

A FEAT OF OLYMPIC PROPORTIONS

This addiction has taken Olsen to many incredible places around the world, including Turin, Italy, for the 2006 Winter Olympics. Just to make the squad was an honor Olsen will never forget, but to compete with the world's finest athletes for a shot at a medal proved to be the most amazing experience of Olsen's life.

"Walking into the Stadio Olimpico for the Opening Ceremony in front of 35,000 screaming spectators and 2 billion television viewers was electrifying," Olsen explained. "Representing my country and all that we stand for gave me great pride, and it was something I took very seriously.

"Watching my teammates ski to a completely unexpected, best-ever ninth place in the relay was

the perfect culmination to so much hard work and personal sacrifice," he added. "As the youngest member of the team, I was learning every day from the veterans, with the expectation that it would help me in the future."

Although he initially joined the Guard to advance his biathlon career, Olsen loves being a Soldier and relishes the opportunities it has provided him. Olsen notices how his two passions—the military and sports—have blended into each other, making him a more well-rounded person.

"Being a biathlete and a Soldier require a number of the same skills," Olsen said. "Biathlon taught me how to stay organized, to plan and to motivate myself. My military experience has given me extra discipline,

the ability to relate better with all types of people and the perspective that I can overcome anything."

Olsen looks forward to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and plans on continuing both careers for as long as he can.

"It's weird that I originally enlisted in the National Guard for a very specific reason: to fund my Olympic dream," Olsen explained. "But now I find myself wanting to remain in the Guard simply because I've enjoyed every aspect of it, and I intend to seek a commission as a second lieutenant in the next year or two.

"Being a Soldier is as much a part of me now as being an Olympic athlete is. Both give a person an incredible feeling of direction and confidence." **GX**

TYPICAL BIATHLETE TRAINING DAY

- 0500:** Wake up, breakfast, planning
- 0600:** Warm-up training, stretching, dryfiring
- 0700:** Mental training and technique video
- 0730:** Shooting—usually 50 to 200 rounds
- 0900:** Morning training (physical)—anything from roller-skating to cycling, 2 to 4 hours
- 1200:** Lunch, review training
- 1300:** Sleep, relax
- 1630:** Afternoon training (physical)—usually about 2 hours
- 1830:** Dinner
- 1930:** Planning, relaxing
- 2000:** Go to sleep

Eye of the Panther

CEO John Barnes Talks Wheldon, the off-season and the Guard

By Christian Anderson

DAN WHELDON'S NO. 4 NATIONAL GUARD CAR is part of a very successful and prestigious team. Panther Racing exemplifies success and has been acknowledged as one of the most successful racing teams in the Indy Racing League (IRL).

None of this success could have been possible without John Barnes, the acting CEO and co-owner of Panther Racing. A man who has built a solid reputation in the IRL, Barnes has always loved the sport since the first time he heard an Indy car run. Barnes has worked his way up the ranks of one of Indy's most successful teams.

Barnes' entry into auto racing started when he was a teen chasing car parts for Vatis Racing. His cool demeanor and knack for leadership led him to the Panther helm, and since then he has steered the team to 28 victories and three championships.

GX caught up with Barnes at the season's end, between preparing Panther Racing for the 2009 season and working with various organizations, including the Best Buddies of Indiana—a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

“ SINCE THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS BECOME A PART OF OUR TEAM, THE SOLDIERS WE HAVE MET MADE US WORK HARDER. WHAT THEY SACRIFICE FOR US EVERY DAY MAKES US WORK HARDER.”

MAN AT THE HELM John Barnes, CEO and co-owner of Panther Racing, calls the shots when it comes to the No. 4 National Guard Indy car.

BENITO SANTOS

Q&A

GX: What's your favorite part of being the CEO and co-owner of Panther Racing?

JB: The competition. I find a lot of comfort in competition. To get to the race and prepare for the race is a thrill! I miss it already!

GX: Are you excited to have Dan Wheldon as a driver again?

JB: Dan and Panther go way back to 2002. He exemplifies everything our team stands for. He gives 110 percent every time and is a "never say die" guy. The first day he tested the car at Indy, we spent two hours on the phone talking about how well the test went and how the car handled.

GX: How do you feel to have the Guard joining you for the 2009 season?

JB: Since the National Guard has become a part of our team, the Soldiers we have met made us work harder. What they sacrifice for us every day makes us work harder. The freedoms that they give up to protect our country, we appreciate. Everybody in the stands and the fans all know that, and they appreciate the Soldiers.

GX: What is the off-season like at Panther Racing?

JB: We never quit here and when the season is over, we focus on the next season. We start doing wind tunnel work, evaluate our equipment and everything around the shop that needs attention.

GX: Would you like to give a shout out to the troops?

JB: We understand the hardships they go through and it is such an honor to be associated with them. I hope we can represent them well, and in the next year, we can honor them with a win. The Soldiers are in our prayers and we hope they stay safe. **GX**

Keep pace with Guard Indy racing at
1-800-GO-GUARD.com/guardracing.



CALLING THE SHOTS
John Barnes uses his radio headset to keep in constant communication with Dan Wheldon during every race.



SURVEYING THE FIELD
John Barnes and others take a moment to check out the track before every race.



GAME PLAN John Barnes and the Panther crew go over the No. 4 Guard Indy car's strategy before a race.

OPERATION HOLD FOR EFFECT

Balance and Isometric Fitness

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert



Get ready for the 20-minute home workout!

Q: How can I lose weight and get in better shape?

A: You have to change your mind about the way you approach fitness. Allow me to explain. We were in the gym, and I happened to overhear two women talking. As they alternated between bicep curls and bent-over rows, they discussed how to lose their troublesome parts.

I would venture to say that 99 percent of the population has these stubborn parts. We store it in our bellies, thighs, arms and rears. You, like most everyone else, gain it where you are genetically predisposed to carry it. Many people we talk to think that doing lots of sit-ups or leg lifts will do the trick. This will help you strengthen the area, but it won't help you lose the fat. What you will have is tight muscles under a layer of fat.

In order to really lose the fat, you need to add a full-body weight training program and cardiovascular exercise to your weekly routines. Consistency is the key. First, you need to figure out where you can fit in 20-60 minutes of you-time, three to five days a week. It's going to take commitment.

If you are just beginning, start with one or two days a week. Take the slow climb to a healthier you. If you are already working out, step up the program and add on an additional day to your weekly calendar. Your new mantra is "consistency."

HOOAH!
Stephanie



PLAYBOOK NOTES:

- Get plenty of sleep to be well-rested for your new workout plan.
- Drink water consistently all day long.
- Add weekly workouts to your schedule.
- Add cardiovascular exercise to your routine. Generally speaking, "cardio" helps you lose fat, and weight training helps you tone muscle.



Determination is the wake-up call to the human will.”

—Tony Robbins

WARM-UP PHASE

Start out by foam rolling tight muscles and follow it up with a light stretch. Next, take a five-minute walk or climb on a cardio machine and pedal, climb, walk or row for 5–10 minutes. These shouldn't

be intense exercises as you are warming up your body and getting all of your muscles, ligaments and tendons ready for more stress than is usually placed on them during the day. Now, you are ready.

MUSCLE TARGET PHASE:

PLANK HOLD



Plank Hold

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS:

abdominals (core)

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS:

back and shoulders

START: Assume a push-up position with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders. Bend your elbows and balance your body on your forearms. Your back should be straight and your abs and rear end should be tight. You should look slightly forward in order to keep your head in a neutral position. Breathe naturally.

ACTION: Maintain posture until your goal is reached.

Basic: Hold posture for 20 seconds.

Intermediate: Hold posture for 30–45 seconds.

Advanced: Hold posture for 60–90 seconds.

Alternate Version: Lift one leg approximately 6 inches off of the ground. Keep your body flat as you lift your leg. Hold the posture for 30–60 seconds. Rest alternate legs, if needed, and hold for an additional 30–60 seconds.



BY THE NUMBERS

1. PLANK HOLD



2. RUSSIAN TWIST



3. QUADRUPED EXTENSION



4. LUNGES



5. JUMP-UPS



6. PUSH-UP WITH ISOMETRIC HOLD



7. SHOULDER PUSH-UP



RUSSIAN TWIST



Russian Twist

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS: abdominals and sides of midsection

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS: hip flexors

START: Sit down on a mat with your legs slightly bent at the knees. Put your hands together, draw your navel in and lean back 45 degrees.

ACTION: Twist at your torso to one side and alternate to the other side. If you feel discomfort in your back,

do not lean back quite as far. Exhale each time your elbow touches the mat. Continue until your goal is reached. Twisting once in both directions is one repetition.

Basic: Perform 15–20 repetitions.

Intermediate: Perform 30 repetitions.

Advanced: Perform 50 repetitions.

Extreme: Lift your feet slightly off the ground while performing 50 repetitions.

QUADRUPED EXTENSION



Quadruped Extension

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS: abdominals (core)

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS: back and shoulders

START: Balance your body on the ground with your hands and knees.

ACTION: Draw your navel in and flex the muscles in your rear end as you extend one arm and the opposite leg. Exhale as you extend out, and inhale as you return to the start position. Alternate sides. Continue

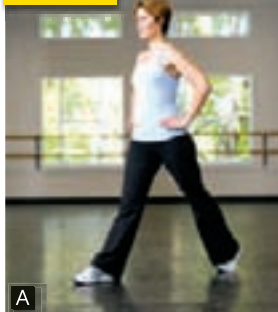
until your goal is reached. Maintain a neutral spine.

Basic: Lift one limb at a time. For example, lift one leg, hold and set it down. Lift the opposite arm, hold and set it down. Alternate 8–10 times.

Intermediate: Lift one arm and the opposite leg simultaneously. Alternate 10 times and hold the “up” position for 5–10 seconds each.

Advanced: Follow the intermediate directions for the exercise and hold 15–20 seconds each.

LUNGES



Lunges

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS: thighs

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS: rear end and calves

START: Place one leg in front and the other straight behind you with your toes pointing forward. Your upper body should maintain an upright position with your shoulders lined up over your hips. Maintain your balance in the center, not leaning over the front leg. Position your arms at your sides.

ACTION: Lower your body by bending both legs at the knees until your forward leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the

start position. Continue with the same leg until your goal is reached. Switch legs and repeat. Do not let your forward knee bend beyond your toe line.

Basic: Perform 10 repetitions per leg.

Intermediate: Perform 15–20 repetitions per leg.

Advanced: Perform 20–25 repetitions. Hold the “down” position for 5–10 seconds on the last repetition.

Challenge: Perform 30–50 repetitions. Hold the “down” position for 20 seconds on the last repetition. Perform 10–20 pulsing lunges by raising your body 2–4 inches only during each repetition.

JUMP-UPS



Jump-ups

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS: thighs and cardio

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS: rear end and calves

START: Stand in front of a step or platform that is 6–18 inches off the ground with feet shoulder-width apart and pointed forward.

ACTION: Draw the navel in and jump up and land on top of the platform. Keep the toes pointed forward and knees slightly bent and aligned

over the toes. Make sure the knees do not buckle in before jumping or upon landing. Step off the box and repeat. Jump onto the platform as soon as your feet reach the ground for optimal cardio effect.

Basic: Jump up and down 10 times.

Intermediate: Jump up and down 20 times.

Advanced: Jump up and down 30–40 times.

Extreme: Jump up and down for 60–90 seconds continuously.

“In the end it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

—Abraham Lincoln

PUSH-UP WITH ISOMETRIC HOLD



A



B

Push-up with Isometric Hold

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS:
arms and chest

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS:
back and core

START: Assume a push-up position with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders and your fingers pointed forward. *Option:* You may balance your body on hand weights in order to alleviate wrist strain. Your back should be straight and your abs and rear end should be tight. Elongate your neck and look slightly forward in order to keep your head in a neutral position. Depend-

ing on your level of fitness, balance on your knees or your feet.

ACTION: Lower your body by bending your elbows and hold the position a few inches from the ground. Return to the start position when your goal is reached. Repeat. **Basic:** Perform 3–5 repetitions, holding the “down” position for a few seconds each.

Intermediate: Perform 8–10 repetitions, holding the “down” position for 5 seconds each.

Advanced: Perform 15–20 repetitions, holding the “down” position for 10 seconds each.

COOL-DOWN PHASE

It is just as important to cool your body down as it is to warm your body up. So get back on the cardio machine and row, walk or climb for another 7–10 minutes. You should slow down the pace during the last few minutes until your heart rate begins to return to normal. Cap off your workout by foam rolling and stretching, focusing on the muscles that you just worked.

Equipment Needed:

Step or Platform

Add this workout to your routine at least once a week. It should take 10–20 minutes to complete, depending what fitness level you choose. We recommend performing the exercises one right after the other, with little or no break in between. If you have more time, try repeating the program two or three times to burn more calories.

STAMINA STOPWATCH

1 full set = approximately 10–20 minutes (depending on fitness level)

SSG KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT



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

For more health and fitness information, go to 1-800-GO-GUARD.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.

SHOULDER PUSH-UP



A



B

Shoulder Push-up

PRIMARY MUSCLE GROUPS:
shoulders

SECONDARY MUSCLE GROUPS:
upper back and arms

START: Place your feet in a wide stance, with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders and arms extended. Point your rear end up and position your head between your arms. Your back should be straight and your abs and rear end should be tight. In order to prevent a potential

shoulder overload, shift the weight of your body onto your legs.

ACTION: Bend your elbows while lowering your shoulders and body toward your hands until your nose is within inches of the ground. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached.

Basic: Perform 5–8 repetitions.

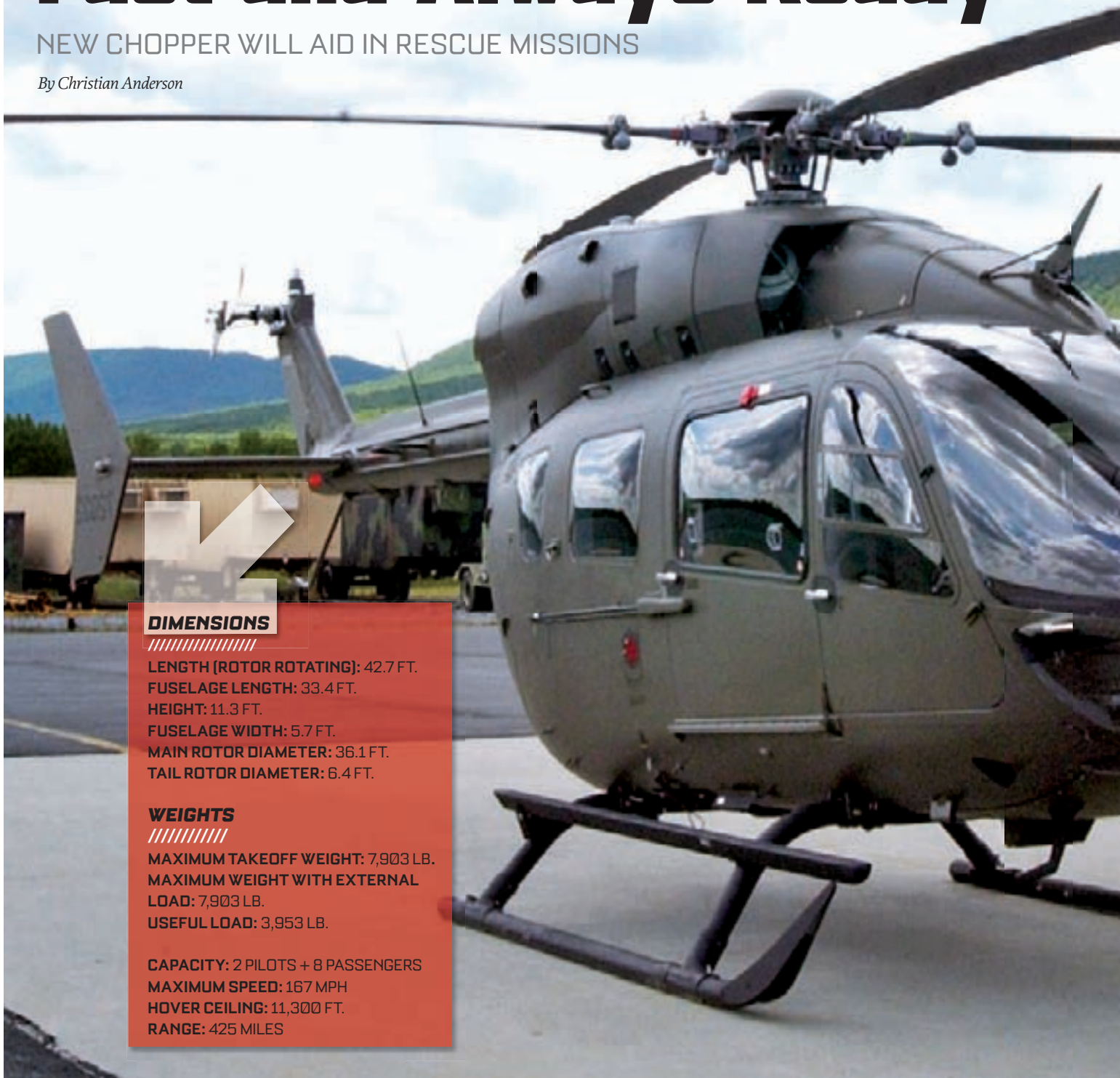
Intermediate: Perform 10–15 repetitions.

Advanced: Perform 20–30 repetitions.

Fast and Always Ready

NEW CHOPPER WILL AID IN RESCUE MISSIONS

By Christian Anderson



DIMENSIONS

LENGTH (ROTOR ROTATING): 42.7 FT.
FUSELAGE LENGTH: 33.4 FT.
HEIGHT: 11.3 FT.
FUSELAGE WIDTH: 5.7 FT.
MAIN ROTOR DIAMETER: 36.1 FT.
TAIL ROTOR DIAMETER: 6.4 FT.

WEIGHTS

MAXIMUM TAKEOFF WEIGHT: 7,903 LB.
MAXIMUM WEIGHT WITH EXTERNAL
LOAD: 7,903 LB.
USEFUL LOAD: 3,953 LB.

CAPACITY: 2 PILOTS + 8 PASSENGERS
MAXIMUM SPEED: 167 MPH
HOVER CEILING: 11,300 FT.
RANGE: 425 MILES



MISSION READY The new UH-72A Lakota light utility helicopter sits on the tarmac at the National Guard's Eastern Aviation Training Site at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA.

PFC COLTM HELLER

The Guard has a new chopper in town that's destined for greatness and success—the Lakota. This bird is like nothing our Soldiers have ever used before and exemplifies the greatness of the Guard through its magnificent technology, engineering and aerodynamics.

But this chopper won't be hunting enemy tanks or scanning the horizon for fortifications; it will be rescuing Americans in times of need and ensuring our safety at home. The helicopter has been slated to protect America in missions that could affect any of us in a moment's notice: hurricanes, tornadoes, mudslides, fires and other disasters.

HONORING WARRIORS

The introduction of the UH-72A Lakota proved another historic day between the U.S. military and Native Americans. The Army has a long tradition of naming its choppers after warriors, and the Lakota is no exception.



The Lakota Tribe, part of the Sioux nation, are a proud tribe with a rich history in the central plains of America. In fact, the name "Lakota," which means "the allies," is just a different pronunciation of the "Dakota" tribe. These Warriors spent their days hunting buffalo on horseback and living off the natural resources of their region—now Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota.

The Lakota is Guard technology at its finest—a new breed of utility chopper that fulfills our Soldiers' need for an updated, multi-mission Light Utility Helicopter (LUH).

The Lakota was selected in 2006 for its outstanding performance, reasonable price tag, and toughness and reliability.

The Lakota helicopter has something that other choppers don't: a reconfigurable main cabin. The new cabin layout makes the Lakota flexible and able to accommodate a multitude of missions. With room for eight passengers, the chopper can move a large group of people, including two stretchers for injured passengers.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

The Guard has focused tremendously on the Lakota because it is designed to meet the challenges of a variety of missions, which the Guard excels at: counterdrug, search and

rescue, disaster response, homeland security and more. Although the Lakota won't be sporting a pair of 50-cals or the latest air-to-ground missile system, it will be very capable of swooping down in treacherous weather to pick up hurricane victims or rescuing stranded hunters in Alaska. The Lakota will embody the spirit of the Guard Warrior: always ready to lend a helping hand. **GX**

Guard Choppers with Native American Names

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| AH-64 Apache Gunship | UH-1 Iroquois |
| CH-47 Chinook | OH-58 Kiowa Warrior |
| UH-60 Black Hawk | OH-6 Cayuse |

GX Hero

CSM THOMAS SITER



TRIED AND TRUE

CSM Thomas Siter has about 300 static-line jumps.

Legend

IN THE MAKING

The Journey of Decorated Command Sergeant Major Thomas Siter



Impressed.

That's how I felt after my nearly hour-long interview with this month's *GX* hero, CSM Thomas Siter, who has earned so many qualification badges, they almost reach the top of his left shoulder on his Army Combat Uniform (ACU). Not least, the coveted Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB).

By SFC Clint Wood

Photos courtesy of CSM Thomas Siter



PARADE REST While at the WTC, Siter embraced the concepts of discipline and excellence, which is evident in the way his Soldiers carry themselves, even in formation.

Siter retired as the Army National Guard's (ARNG) Warrior Training Center's Command Sergeant Major on Aug. 31, 2008. This concluded an ARNG and active duty Army career that spanned 22 years. He's not leaving the WTC though—he's the executive officer there.

"I retired because opportunities came up that I just couldn't pass by," Siter explained. "Positions where I'd still be supporting the Guard and the Soldiers. So it was a win-win situation."

It's surely to everyone's benefit. I believe Siter has faithfully lived the Army's 11 principles of leadership, which include know yourself, seek improvement and set the example.

He really took the last one to heart. Case in point: last year's Best Warriors competition, where he stayed with the competitors the entire time—about 48 hours.

"I normally like to do all the physical events with the Soldiers," he said. "These guys will tell you that I do the 5-mile runs with Pre-Rangers, and the 12-mile foot marches with Air Assault."

CSM John Gipe, who met Siter in 2004, expounded on Siter's selfless service. "He works constantly. He doesn't back down from the physical training aspect. He went on every single road march that his

Soldiers went on. He didn't have to do that. But that's the way he is. His sense of duty and commitment are just phenomenal."

Siter, a career infantryman, also spent several years as an Army Ranger and still lives the Ranger Creed. "Even today I wake up and do PT," he said. "I say to myself, 'I'm still a Ranger.'"

"He went on every single road march that his Soldiers went on. He didn't have to do that. But that's the way he is."

>> CSM JOHN GIPE

"You can't help but be impressed by him," Gipe noted. "Physically, he is a pretty big guy, and when he has his uniform on, he's all tabbed out."

But Siter is humble. "I've just been very fortunate to work with the best leaders, Soldiers and Rangers. They coached, taught and mentored me, and carried me in their rucksack," he emphasized. "It's not vice versa."

Leading the Way

Siter and MAJ Jamison Kirby were instrumental in the WTC becoming a reality in 2003.

Siter's first assignment as a sergeant first class in the summer of 1999 was noncommissioned officer in charge of creating the ARNG Pre-Ranger Course—the present WTC. He was assigned to the 4th Ranger Training Battalion. At the time, the site was an old, dilapidated motor pool. But Kirby had a vision of "great things to come."

They began making improvements. "[When] we weren't teaching,

we were either painting, mowing, weed eating or clearing,” Siter described.

The only course being taught there at the time was a Pre-Ranger school, and the classroom furniture was hand-me-downs. “We even dumpster dove,” he quipped. “In ’03, it was very slim pickings.”

Siter became the facility’s commandant in October 2004, and soon obtained funds for construction of the WTC. He played a major role in the concept and design of most of the apparatuses, including the rappel tower and obstacle course. He stresses that the center has more apparatuses than similar training areas, and that to his knowledge, its rappel tower is one-of-a-kind.

Siter was usually the first to test the new equipment.

Since 2004, Camp Butler, home of the WTC, has also seen improvements. It received \$6 million worth of construction and its mission has grown from one program to seven.

“Whatever [Siter] envisioned for that facility, he was determined to make it happen,” stated Gipe. “He wouldn’t give up [if] somebody said no. He kept plugging away. He’s that adamant about ensuring that Soldiers are properly trained.”

“It was nothing I did,” Siter stressed. “It’s been the outstanding support of National Guard Bureau and leadership here on Fort Benning that has been amazing. I don’t know of any other installation that truly embraces the One-Army concept like Fort Benning.”

He added that the active-component leadership fully embraced any initiative he presented. “They take care of Guard Soldiers. It’s the One Soldier concept right here on Fort Benning.” He stressed that this is because of the performance of Guard Soldiers serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Siter’s resident and mobile training teams have trained more than 9,000 Soldiers. He’s proud of his instructors. “All the facilities here are great—phenomenal, amazing—but without the NCOs that make it happen, this would be nothing but infrastructure,” he said. “I mean, those guys are really the heart and soul of the Warrior Training Center.”

Nothing But the Best

Soldiers who intend to be instructors at the WTC must be highly motivated and physically fit.

“We can’t fix motivation,” Siter said, “and being physically fit is a way of life. Either the guy is doing it as an M-day Soldier or he’s not, and if he isn’t, he certainly isn’t going to [start] doing it here.”

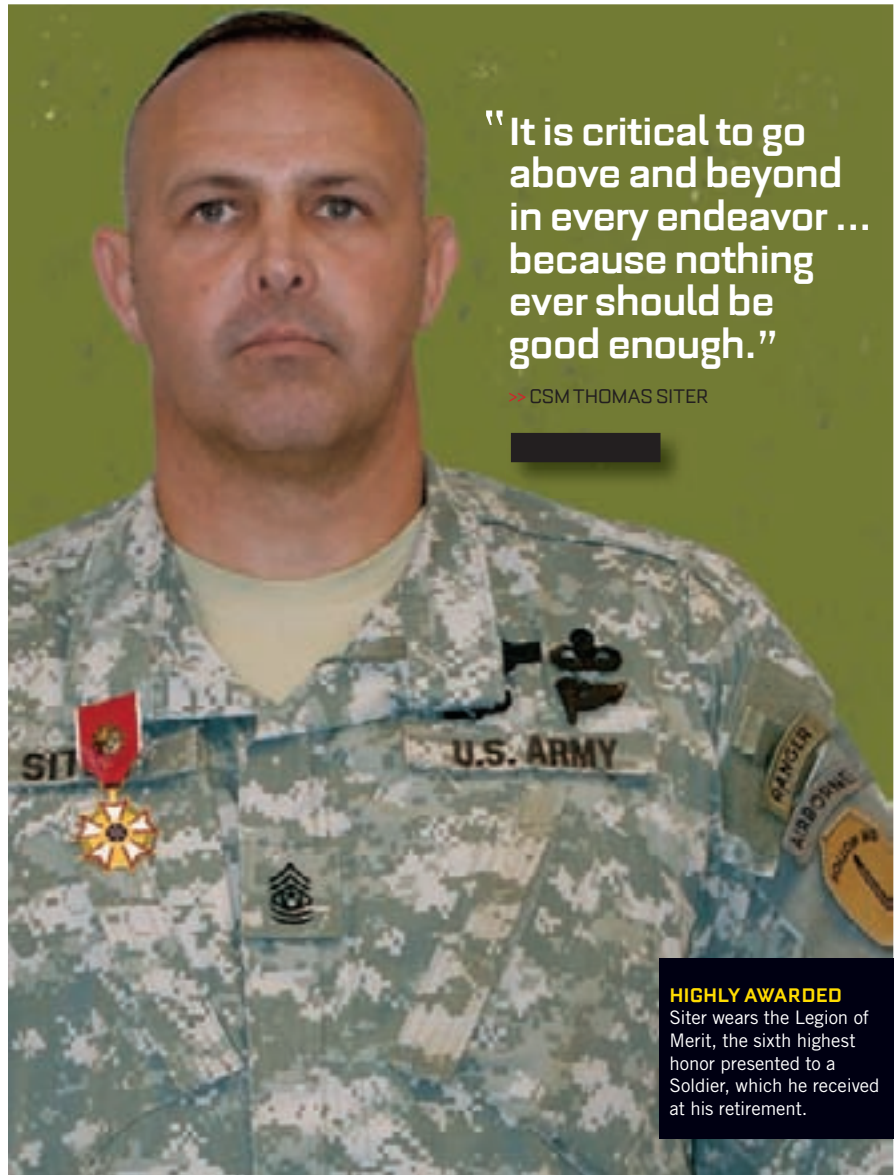
Siter expects a lot out of his NCOs, including that they take initiative on and off duty. This applies to everything they do, from qualifying with

their weapons to taking their Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). He says they should score a minimum 70 percent on the test.

“That’s still not good enough [though],” he emphasizes. “It is critical [that] we go above and beyond in every endeavor. Whenever you’ve reached that point where you think [a perfect 300 score] is good enough, you probably need to move out and do something different, because nothing ever should be good enough.”

Personal Legacy

When I asked Siter what he thought Soldiers would remember about him, he replied, “I’m sure they’ve got a multitude of things to say about me [laughs]. But I would hope that the first thing that comes to mind is, ‘He truly cared about Soldiers.’”



“It is critical to go above and beyond in every endeavor ... because nothing ever should be good enough.”

CSM THOMAS SITER

HIGHLY AWARDED
Siter wears the Legion of Merit, the sixth highest honor presented to a Soldier, which he received at his retirement.



RETIREMENT CEREMONY

CSM Thomas Siter retired as the Warrior Training Center's command sergeant major Aug. 31.

"I wanted to be at the tip of the spear, be with Soldiers, train them day in and day out my entire career."

>> CSM THOMAS SITER

I asked him to describe himself as a leader. "I firmly believe that at any and all cost ... the mission should be executed to the highest standards," he said. "In doing that, I've always done everything humanly possible to put Soldiers and their families right at the top of that as well. I think that an effective leader can juggle both."

Siter pointed out that discipline also is a factor in taking care of Soldiers.

"I'm not just a good cop, a high-fiver," he explained. "If I need to kick their butt, I'm all about that, too. I'm all about a very disciplined organization, and the rewards that come out of that are just amazing."

Siter not only demands the highest standards from his Soldiers but from himself, too. "If I can't set the example—be the example—then I'm going to move out."

Man on a Mission

Siter said he joined the ARNG because he saw opportunities to raise public awareness of, and opinion about, the Guard.

Even though it's a part-time endeavor, and Guard Soldiers have full-time civilian occupations, "They do everything humanly possible to be equal to their active duty counterpart. It's difficult, very difficult," he said. "They're juggling priorities.

"I wanted to be part of that; I wanted to try to help in every way that I could," he added.

Siter joined the 53rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the Florida Army National Guard (FLARNG). A Florida native, he said this decision allowed him to visit family members he hadn't seen in several years.

"From there, the relationship with the Guard just grew. I met superb leadership and Soldiers, and more and more I wanted to be part of the solution," he said.

Baseball Mitts to Ranger Tabs

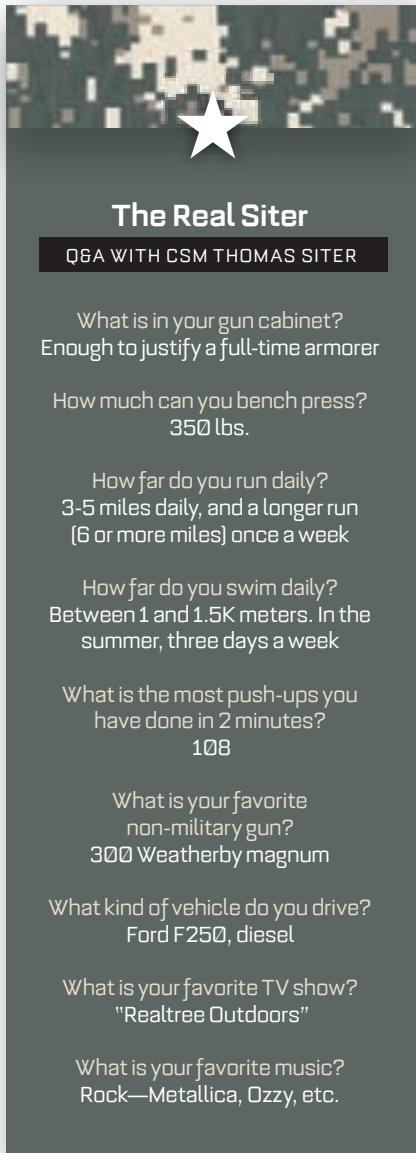
As a child, Siter wanted to grow up to be a professional baseball player. "I loved hitting the ball more than anything," he remembers.

Then, in his freshman year in high school, he started playing football as a starting linebacker. In his senior year, an interception almost changed his life when another player fell on his foot.

He explained that this hit totally pushed his foot completely outside. "There was a small piece of skin that was literally holding my foot on my leg," he described.

His ankle was surgically reconstructed and Siter was determined not to let this injury stop him. "I could have ... let that overwhelm me, but I didn't," he said. "I'm not going to be a 50-year-old wearing a letter jacket talking about what could have been, should have been."

But the injury did end any chance of a college football or baseball



The Real Siter

Q&A WITH CSM THOMAS SITER

What is in your gun cabinet?
Enough to justify a full-time armorer

How much can you bench press?
350 lbs.

How far do you run daily?
3-5 miles daily, and a longer run
(6 or more miles) once a week

How far do you swim daily?
Between 1 and 1.5K meters. In the
summer, three days a week

What is the most push-ups you
have done in 2 minutes?
108

What is your favorite
non-military gun?
300 Weatherby magnum

What kind of vehicle do you drive?
Ford F250, diesel

What is your favorite TV show?
"Realtree Outdoors"

What is your favorite music?
Rock—Metallica, Ozzy, etc.

career. "I wasn't happy about that ... it kind of mentally beat me, that I wasn't able to perform," he said.

"Then I just had some wild hair: Why don't I join the Army?" he recalls.

He was told at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) that he couldn't join because of the injury. But after more than seven attempts, he was accepted in 1986.

He'd always wanted to be a Ranger. "I really wanted to be part of the special ops and the Army offered that ... with the Ranger position," he said.

He knew other military services offered elite forces. "But I think what a Ranger stood for is what I really wanted to be," said Siter, who became a Ranger in 1988.

Attending the eight-week Ranger School was the most pivotal point in his career. But merely graduating wasn't the reason.

"It was what I got out of it," he explained. "The detailed planning. It was what I learned from my Ranger buddies to my left and to my right that really made the biggest [impact]."

Siter was determined to live up to the Ranger standard daily, in order to honor the Rangers who fought before him—including the D-Day Invasion during WWII.

"I wasn't going to allow my subordinates and [fellow] Soldiers to question whether or not I was a Ranger," he said. "I wanted them to know by my actions, not because I wore a [Ranger Tab]."

Siter's other badges include the Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB), the Master Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Pathfinder Badge, Master Recruiting Badge, the Retention Badge and the German Parachutist Badges.

He earned his CIB in Afghanistan in 2003. He spent his time there as an advisor for the Afghan National Army's Combat Leader Course.

As a Master Rated Parachutist, Siter has about 300 static-line jumps. When I asked what his first jump was like, he explained that it didn't bother him, because he had confidence in his instructors, training and equipment.

Attending the U.S. Army Jumpmaster School at an early age gave him more confidence in jumping, and he hopes every Soldier takes this advice to heart.

"It is not the graduation piece," he explained. "Graduation is the easiest part of any school. Being a Ranger is about what you do after you graduate."

He went on to say that a unit's intention in sending Soldiers to schools is for that Soldier to bring back the information they learn and share it with their fellow Soldiers.

"I tried to keep that in the forefront of my mind every time somebody sent me to school," he shared. "I knew there was something that I owed back. It was an investment."

A Soldier's Soldier

From early on, Siter, who was promoted to sergeant major in March 2005, wanted to "invest" in the Army NCO Corps. "I always wanted to be a sergeant major," he stated.

As a junior enlisted Soldier, he was asked to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS).

"I didn't want that," he said. "I wanted to be the most senior noncommissioned officer in the Army. I wanted to be at the tip of the spear, be with Soldiers, train them day in and day out my entire career."

"I didn't want to be in a position where I started removing myself from that level. And really, that's been the biggest thrill of my career ... day in and day out, I'm with Soldiers."

Family Values

When he leaves the WTC each day, Siter always tries to make himself available for his family—his wife, two sons and two daughters. "I try to [remember] that it's time for the family," he said.

But, he owned up that softball—either as a player or as the coach for the fort's team—does squash this priority sometimes. In fact, he said the only downside in his military career has been the struggle to prioritize.

"Sometimes being in the Army National Guard overshadowed everything else,

and there have been times that softball overshadowed family," he conceded.

But his wife of 22 years is very understanding of him being in the military.

"She has just been amazing, and doesn't complain, and has always been there when I needed a kick in the shorts," he explained.

"She has kept me out of trouble. Kept me focused," he continued. "She is the spiritual leader in our family. I couldn't have picked a better Ranger buddy to spend the rest of my life with."

And the ARNG and Army couldn't have had a more outstanding leader for the last 22 years.

"It wasn't about me," he insists. "It's about them. It's about the mission. It's about their families. [It's] certainly not about Tom Siter. Nothing that we achieved here is about Tom Siter." **GX**

>> For more information on Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) and Contingency Operations for Active Duty Operational Support (CO-ADOS) positions at the WTC call or log onto benning.army.mil/wtc/.

ROLLING THUNDER

WASHINGTON, DC, MEMORIAL DAY 2008—HALF A MILLION MOTORCYCLISTS REV THEIR ENGINES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE 21ST ANNUAL "ROLLING THUNDER" RIDE. A POPULAR MEMORIAL DAY STAPLE, ROLLING THUNDER'S OBJECTIVE IS TO HONOR THE AMERICAN SERVICE MEMBERS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION.



THE PATRIOT CHOPPER AND MG NUTTALL PROVED TO BE A PERFECT MATCH FOR EACH OTHER, SINCE HE HAS LED THE CHARGE TO PROVIDE MOTORCYCLE SAFETY FOR NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. WITH HIM ATOP THE CHOPPER, NUTTALL PROVED TO THE SOLDIERS IN ATTENDANCE THAT YOU CAN RIDE A COOL MOTORCYCLE AND STILL BE SAFE.

RIDERS LINED UP IN FRONT OF THE PENTAGON AS THEY MADE THEIR PATRIOTIC JOURNEY TO THE NATIONAL MALL. THE RIDE'S LEADER, MG JAMES NUTTALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD, CHOSE THE FAMED NATIONAL GUARD PATRIOT CHOPPER—FEATURED ON THE "AMERICAN CHOPPER" TV SHOW—AS HIS WHEELS FOR THE DAY.

WITH 300 HORSEPOWER UNDERNEATH HIM, NUTTALL LEAD THE LONG TRAIN OF HALF A MILLION MOTORCYCLISTS ACROSS MEMORIAL BRIDGE AND TO THE NATIONAL MALL, BRINGING HONOR NOT ONLY TO ALL SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION, BUT TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.



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