

GX[®]

THE GUARDIAN



>> INTEL

WYOMING SOLDIER RECEIVES BRONZE STAR

>> ON THE ROAD

LEAPFEST '08

PARATROOPERS TOUCH DOWN IN RHODE ISLAND

>> FITNESS

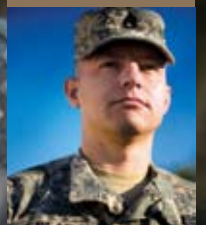
OPERATION AT CLOSE RANGE

BURN 600 CALORIES IN 60 MINUTES

BEST OF THE BEST

SSG Michael Noyce Merino is the Guard's and Army's Top NCO

>> GX HERO



FIGHTING FLAMES

SSG TROY SPEAR P. 78



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Partnerships in the Profession of Arms

A perfect day for airborne operations, more than 300 U.S. and international paratroopers—and a great crowd—witnessed the world’s oldest and largest international military static line parachute exercise and competition: LeapFest XXVI. It was a great competition again this year with more than 950 individual jumps, supported by three CH-47 Chinooks from the Pennsylvania and Connecticut Army National Guard.

LeapFest has become a premier multi-national, multi-component and multi-service airborne exercise and competition sponsored by the Rhode Island National Guard. Each year, foreign airborne teams from the SOUTHCOM and EUCOM AOR’s join Army, Navy and Air Force airborne teams in the training and competition. Active and National Guard Soldiers compete against each other, often having trained, served or deployed together during their careers.

LeapFest is truly a joint, combined and coalition event designed to not only demonstrate technical airborne skills through competition but also to emphasize professionalism, provide an opportunity for camaraderie and enhance international relationships. Many participants return multiple years for the experience of the event.

LeapFest XXVI, a Rhode Island National Guard event since 1982, has been the perfect venue to demonstrate the value of the National Guard as an operational and strategic partner within the Department of Defense. The international participants often come from countries that are involved with the State Partnership Program, further enhancing the military-to-military engagement that strengthens relations between nations.

In the end, LeapFest is not so much about the competition as it is about the networking between comrades in the profession of arms and the goodwill fostered between participants who don’t necessarily speak the same language or wear the same uniform, but recognize the value of friendship.

LeapFest is not the only major event supported by the Rhode Island National Guard.

The Rhode Island Air National Guard’s Annual Air Show at Quonset Point Air National Guard Base is a two-day venue for the public to observe aircraft demonstrations, see military equipment displays, enjoy midway activities, and meet and talk to military personnel.

LeapFest, as well as the Annual Air Show in Rhode Island, demonstrates the pride the National Guard has in its pivotal role and performance in the nation’s defense. The Guard is truly an operational force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert T. Bray', written over a light grey background.

*MG Robert T. Bray
Adjutant General of the Rhode Island Army National Guard*

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

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We Don't Mind Gettin' A Little Dirty

It's the sand in your eyes. It's the rain of sweat stinging your parched lips as you gasp for air and every muscle is strained to the brink of snapping. And it's fast becoming the Super Bowl for Guard Warriors nationwide.

Two years running, the Army National Guard Soldier/NCO of the Year competition serves as the annual impetus gut-checking battle. The fiercest competitors from across the states converge on Fort Benning, each foaming for that taste of triumph: to be named the best of the best. We threw our field man, SFC Clint Wood, into the heat to get the scoop straight from the Georgia mud (see pg. 34).

CSM John Gipe, senior enlisted leader for the Army National Guard, always gives us the lead and the inside scoop on the competition. We are truly thankful for Gipe's support and friendship. I first met him during last year's competition. True to the greatness of enlisted leaders, this man pours his heart into his service and gives his all to our Soldiers.

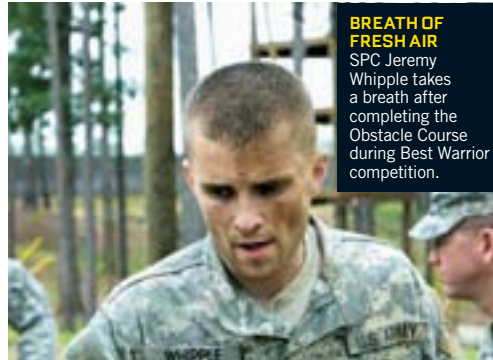
And get ready, because next issue, we showcase our mat-side coverage of the first-ever Army National Guard Combatives Competition. This, too, was spearheaded by Gipe, so naturally, it's chock-full of high-powered action. Clint was on site, covering every clock to the dome.

I'm still taking invitations for the Guard's most extreme exercises and events in '09. Our reporters get grumpy when they start gatherin' dust in the office, so drop me a line and we'll ship 'em out. We want to be in the dirt with your Soldiers. We want to be riding shotgun in a Humvee, sneaking along during a breach—heck, we'll even hoof it on a road march. If you want to really show off your state or unit, give them the GX spotlight. Email me at Keith@GXonline.com!

Thanks!



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



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
Send your questions or comments
to feedback@gxonline.com

Dear Editor,

GX is addressed to my husband, but I read it, too. The article "Defending the American Green" (GX 5.5) reminded me of when my husband worked at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Frankfort, KY.

In late summer, crickets would invade the building. He would get "hedge apples" from local trees and place them at outside doors, especially at the big hangar doors. Believe it or not, they kept the crickets out.

You can't get much "greener" than that!

Ann Rice

Wife of Harry Rice
Frankfort, KY



Marcia,

Your article looks great! You never cease to amaze me ... must be that teacher gene that we share that leads us onward and upward. Thank you so much for including the picture with COL Wong.

Well done! God bless!

Paula

Paula Sumrall
National Volunteer Coordinator
NGB-J1-FP



Dear GX,

My son was recently promoted while on active duty serving in Iraq.

His name is Maximilliano A. Rodriguez with [the] 50th Chemical Company from Somerset, NJ, [and] he was just promoted to SGT.

He is part of New Jersey's largest National Guard deployment. They were stationed in Fort Bliss, TX for final training prior to their transition into Kuwait, then Iraq.

Max is 20 years old and was in his third year of college studying Communications [at] William Paterson University prior to his deployment. Max is my only son and has two sisters, Amanda and Margo, and one nephew, Jaden, to whom he is an incredible uncle.

Thank you so much.

Linda Pagan

CORRECTION

In the "Riding Out the Storm" photo (GX 5.4), the unit and location were misidentified. The unit was 1st Battalion, 124 Infantry Regiment and the location was Melbourne, FL.



ON THE COVER

SSG Michael Noyce Merino, Montana Army National Guard, came out on top at this year's Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, VA.

Photo by
SFC Clint Wood



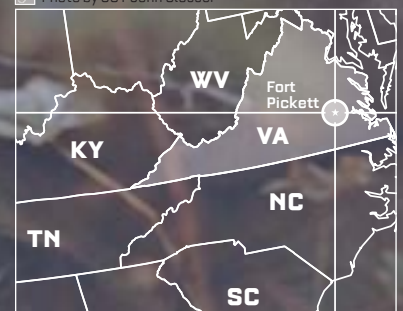


» BLAZE OF GLORY

[Fort Pickett, VA]

PFC William Garman fires a 50 caliber machine gun for an Expert Infantry Badge test during his annual training with C Co., 1st Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team at Fort Pickett, VA.

Photo by SGT John Glosser



» SMOKE SCREEN

[Tullahoma, TN]

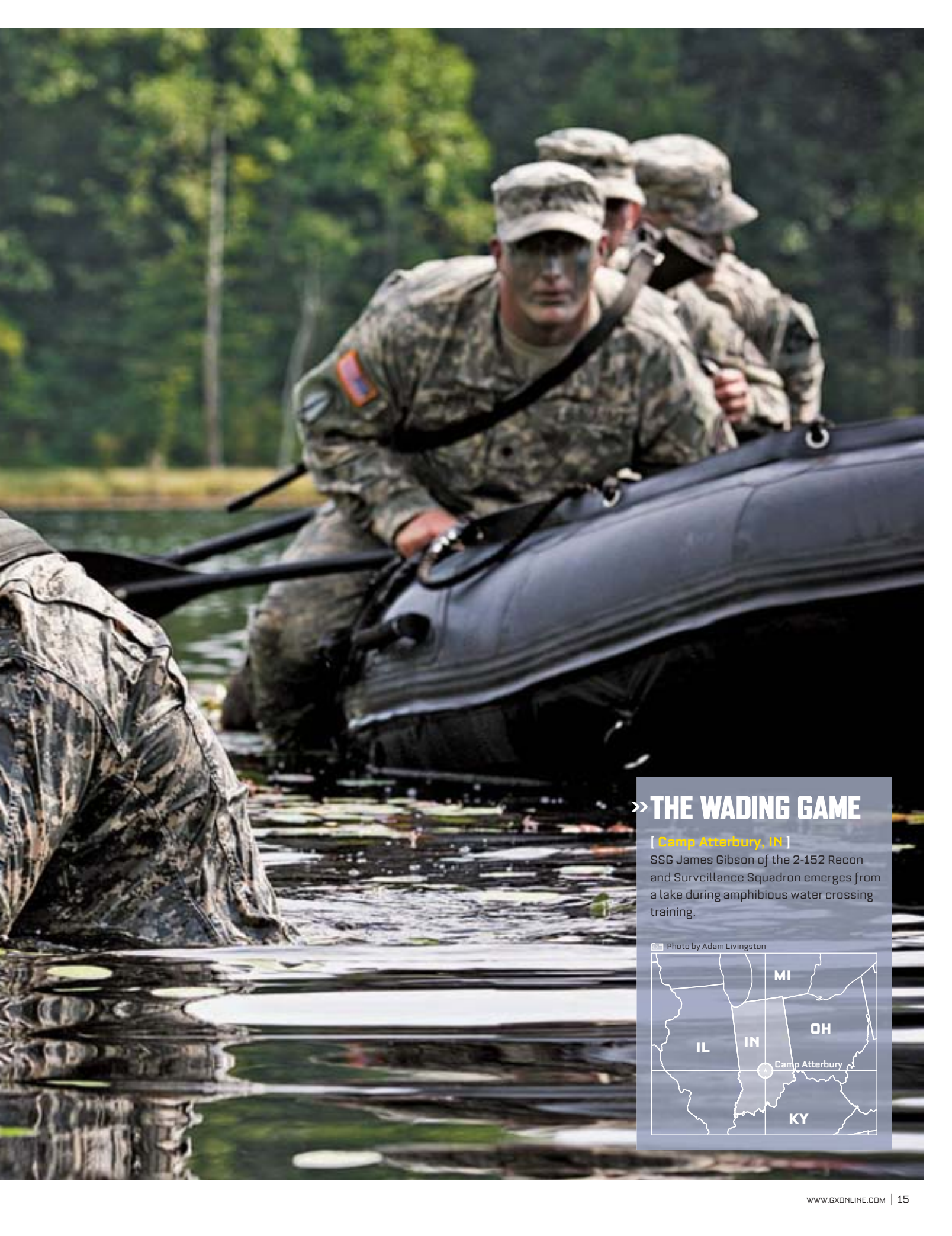
A Soldier from the 230th Signal Company of the Tennessee Army National Guard prepares to fire at targets during a live night-fire exercise. In the quiet town of Tullahoma, the calm night was transformed into what looked like a Hollywood movie set with smoke, tracers, flares and gunfire.

Photo by SSG Russell Klika, TNARNG









» THE WADING GAME

[[Camp Atterbury, IN](#)]

SSG James Gibson of the 2-152 Recon and Surveillance Squadron emerges from a lake during amphibious water crossing training.

Photo by Adam Livingston





HONOR: Twenty-five New York Soldiers receive awards in Afghanistan.

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"Courage is very important. Like a muscle, it is strengthened by use."

>> Ruth Gordon



Courage, Valor

WYOMING SOLDIER RECEIVES BRONZE STAR

By PVT T. Meredith Vincent

CASPER, WY—SPC Justin L. Pierce, from the 197th Public Affairs Detachment, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with valor device during an award ceremony held Sept. 19 at the Wyoming National Guard armory in Casper.

Pierce, who was a vehicle gunner while deployed in Iraq with the 1041st Engineer Company, was awarded the medal by BG Olin O. Oedekoven for pulling two Soldiers out of a burning truck.

Pierce was traveling in a convoy escorting third-country nationals in northern Iraq when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle. The explosion disabled the vehicle and trapped Pierce and his fellow passengers inside.

After escaping, Pierce went back inside and pulled the driver and truck commander to safety.

Pierce returned from deployment in October. He is currently an anthropology student at the University of Wyoming. **GX**

PROUD MOMENT
SPC Justin L. Pierce receives the Bronze Star Medal from BG Olin O. Oedekoven at the Wyoming National Guard armory in Casper, Sept. 19, 2008.



Pierce, who was a vehicle gunner while deployed in Iraq, was awarded the medal for pulling two Soldiers out of a burning truck.



New Chief

SENATE CONFIRMS MCKINLEY AS GUARD BUREAU CHIEF

By Air Force Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith

▶ **ARLINGTON, VA**—The Senate confirmed Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley to receive his fourth star and to serve as the 26th chief of the National Guard Bureau.

McKinley, the current director of the Air National Guard, will become the first four-star general in the nearly 372-year history of the National Guard. Nominated for the post in September by President Bush, McKinley will succeed Army

LTG H Steven Blum, whom the Senate also confirmed to become the first National Guard officer to serve as deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command. Blum has led the Guard Bureau since 2003.

As chief of the National Guard Bureau, McKinley will be the senior uniformed officer representing nearly 468,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. He will also serve as the principal advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard issues.

“I give all the credit for [this promotion] to the performance, friendships and relationships of [Blum],” McKinley said Sept. 22 at the National Guard Association of the United States conference in Baltimore. “LTG Blum has been a fantastic chief of the National Guard Bureau.”

LT. GEN. MCKINLEY WILL BE THE SENIOR UNIFORMED OFFICER REPRESENTING NEARLY 468,000 CITIZEN-SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates recommended McKinley for the new four-star position in July following the recommendations of the Commission on the Guard and Reserves and the fiscal 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. The act also established the Guard Bureau as a joint activity of the Defense Department.

“Lt. Gen. McKinley has earned this place in history,” Gates said during the NGAUS conference. “I trust he will continue to lead the Guard to new heights.”

A Florida National Guard member, McKinley has served as director of the 107,000-member Air National Guard since May 2006. Prior to that, he served as assistant deputy chief of staff for plans and programs at the Air Force headquarters. He is a command pilot with more than 34 years of military service.

The last Air Force general to serve as Guard Bureau chief was Lt. Gen. Russell C. Davis, who held the position from 1998 to 2002. **GX**

Lt. Gen. McKinley FAST FACTS

- ▶ Received his commission in 1974 as a distinguished graduate of the ROTC program at Southern Methodist University.
- ▶ Received his pilot wings from Moody Air Force Base, GA.
- ▶ Served as Commander, 1st Air Force, Air Combat Command, and Commander, Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command Region, Tyndall Air Force Base, FL.
- ▶ Is a command pilot with more than 4,000 hours, primarily in the T-38, F-106, F-16 and F-15. Additionally, Lt. Gen. McKinley has been pilot in command in the C-131 and C-130 Operational Support Airlift aircraft.
- ▶ Has a master’s degree in national security strategy, National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC.
- ▶ Is a 2004 graduate of the U.S.–Russia Security Program, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- ▶ Recently served as Director, Air National Guard.



NEARLY 230 INFANTRY SOLDIERS FROM NEW YORK'S 27TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM WERE MOBILIZED LAST SEPTEMBER AHEAD OF THE MAIN DEPLOYMENT OF NEW YORK'S 27TH FOR OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN.

A PAIR OF BRONZE STARS
1LT Christopher Culpepper and SPC Steven Bogardus are awarded the Bronze Star for service in Afghanistan.



MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL
SGT Elias Kougemitros is awarded the Meritorious Service Medal as his fellow Soldiers look on.

HONORED SERVICE

25 SOLDIERS RECEIVE MEDALS FOR SERVICE OVERSEAS

By LTC Paul Fanning

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – Twenty-five New York Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to a Security Force company of Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Phoenix received awards during a ceremony at Camp Phoenix in Kabul on Saturday, Sept. 20. The awards were presented as the Soldiers prepared to leave after a 10-month tour of duty.

1LT Christopher Culpepper from Salisbury, NY, and SPC Steven Bogardus from Heuvelton, NY, were awarded Bronze Star Medals for their service in training and improving Afghan National Security Forces. The Bronze Star Medal is awarded for bravery, acts of merit or meritorious service in a combat zone.

Sergeants Lloyd Barregar from Rome, Elias Kougemitros from Cortlandt Manor, Travis Smithers from Watertown and Steven

Campbell from Waterford, NY, all received Meritorious Service Medals for exceptional service. Six Army Commendation Medals and 13 Army Achievement Medals were also awarded.

The Army Commendation Medal is awarded for sustained meritorious service or achievement, while the Army Achievement Medal is awarded for honorable service or achievement.

Nearly 230 infantry Soldiers from New York's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were mobilized last September ahead of the main deployment of New York's 27th for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. An enlarged "SECFOR" team was built around Company A, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry from Geneseo, NY, with additional platoons coming from New York's Hudson Valley, Capital District and Adirondack North Country.

CJTF-Phoenix is part of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan with the mission to mentor and train the Afghan National Army and Police, and provide assistance to the government of Afghanistan and its people. The task force is comprised of nearly 9,500 service men and women from

all U.S. branches, coalition partners and civilian professionals distributed at almost 260 Forward Operating Bases and Combat Outposts throughout Afghanistan. Nearly 1,700 members of New York's 27th IBCT were mobilized for the mission. They came from communities across New York. **GX**



ARMY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL SPC Wanseoob Choi stands proud as he is awarded the Army Achievement Medal at Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan.

LTC PAUL FANNING

Support from the Top

DEFENSE SECRETARY GATES SALUTES THE GUARD

By Jim Garamone,
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, DC—Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates saluted the men and women of the National Guard during a speech in Baltimore Sept. 22.

Gates spoke at the 130th conference of the National Guard Association. He said the military could not perform its missions without the Guard.

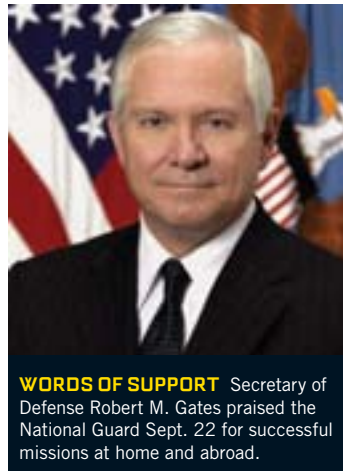
"Today the Guard is engaged in more than 40 countries around the world, in places such as Bosnia, Kosovo, the Sinai, the Horn of Africa and Guantanamo Bay," Gates said.

Since 9/11, more than 660,000 Citizen-Soldiers have mobilized—the largest mobilization since WWII, and the first extended mobilization of the reserve components since the founding of the all-volunteer force in 1973.

"Seven years ago, members of the New York National Guard were among the first to respond when the World Trade Center collapsed," Gates said. "Today, many of them are serving in Afghanistan—their unit has not been deployed in such numbers and for such extended time in over 60 years."

And the Guard is also serving in Iraq. "As you know, we recently celebrated the handover of Anbar province to Iraq," the secretary said. "Backing that effort were hundreds of Guard [members], such as Rhode Island's 169th Military Police Company." Tens of thousands more have served in Iraq since hostilities started in March 2003.

The Guard has the highest percentage of combat veterans serving in its ranks since WWII, and Gates promised that those who need care will receive it. "Behind winning the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, my No. 1 priority is providing our



Wounded Warriors with the care they have rightly earned and justly deserve," he said.

The unprecedented nomination of Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley for a fourth star and service as the next chief of the National Guard Bureau highlights the importance of this reserve formation, the secretary said. The appointment of current bureau chief, Army LTG H Steven Blum, as deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command positions him to be the next chief of that command, Gates said. If the next administration nominates him, he would be the first Guard Soldier to command a combatant command.

Beyond war, the Guard has been equally busy in the United States. More than 16,000 Guard Soldiers and Airmen responded when Hurricane Gustav threatened the Gulf Coast. "In one weekend alone, they evacuated more than 17,000 citizens from New Orleans and almost 600 special-needs patients," Gates said.

When floods hit the Midwest, the Illinois Guard repaired levees and sandbagged, the Indiana Guard protected water and sewage facilities, the Wisconsin Guard provided aerial damage assessments, and the Iowa Guard screened water reservoirs for poison and other toxins. Most recently, thousands of Guard members again mobilized to action in the wake of Hurricane Ike.

"The Guard stands ready to tackle such missions at home, as well as both its traditional and non-traditional missions abroad," the secretary said. "The department made a commitment several years ago to ensure that the Guard is fully manned, fully trained and fully equipped."

In the fiscal 2009 defense budget, the Guard's share is more than \$30 billion, an increase of \$1.2 billion from the previous year. "Spending on Guard equipment—critical because of its dual use for overseas

and homeland missions—is projected to be at \$32 billion over the next four fiscal years," he said.

"This level of resources for the Guard is unprecedented," Gates continued. "As a result, nearly 80 percent of Army National Guard equipment on hand will be fully modernized by the end of fiscal year 2013. For the first time ever, the Guard will receive the latest equipment provided to the active force—a change that is long overdue."

Another aspect of reserve-component service has been one of the secretary's priorities: mobilization. Stress on the force has mounted with repeated mobilizations.

"The mobilization policy I outlined in January of 2007 set a goal of one year mobilized to five years at home," he said. "We are not quite there yet on dwell time, but nearly three-quarters of mobilizations over the past nine months have been above the 1-to-4 ratio of mobilized-to-dwell time."

The secretary also capped mobilization time at 12 months for the reserve components and ended the 24-month lifetime limit for individuals. "We've shifted from a mobilization policy focused on individuals to one based on units," he said. "The aim was to minimize the practice of cobbling together personnel from different units to fill out a particular battalion or brigade. Those from a community or state who train together should deploy and fight together."

Gates acknowledged that adjusting to the new policy has presented some problems, particularly in the Army. But the Defense Department and the services have increased notification time for units, with a goal of 24 months, so that troops are better able to ensure employer and family affairs are in order before they deploy, he noted. **GX**

"For the first time ever, the Guard will receive the latest equipment provided to the active force—a change that is long overdue."

>> Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense



BANNER YET WAVES

A U.S. flag flies, covered in mud and debris, in front of the Cameron, LA, courthouse Sept. 15.

HURRICANES: The Guard Continues to Respond

By Capt. Nicholas J. Sabula,
Air Force News Agency

CAMERON, LA—A military response team arrived here Sept. 15 to begin cleanup operations in the wake of Hurricane Ike.

Members of the Louisiana Army National Guard's (LAARNG) 528th Engineer Battalion, 921st Engineer Company, from Winnsboro, arrived in Cameron Parish to begin the task of returning the community to a fully functioning status.

For the Guard members, this meant working among destroyed homes, broken gas lines and massive flooding that had not yet receded.

"We're here clearing roads, clearing trees and making things safe, so people can get in here and start their lives again," said 1LT Dennis Veach, the 921st Engineer Company executive officer. "The faster we get this cleaned up, the faster people can get back in here to get their lives back."

"Our primary mission is [to

operate] combat engineer heavy equipment: 5-ton dump trucks to front-end loaders to bulldozers," said CPT Christopher Spurlock, the company commander. "We want to open up the major routes to bring in food, water [and] MREs to people in need, so the parish can get back up on its feet and support itself."

This mission would not be an easy one.

"First thing we saw was water as far as you can see," said SGT Cody Hawthorne. "Our mission objective was to go as far as possible, so we took the front-end loader and pushed all the way to Cameron.

"There were trees and cows; we had to deal with a lot of wildlife—alligators, snakes—along the way," he said. "[There's] total destruction down here—water went straight through the trailers, cars underwater—it was terrible."

The first objective of the team was to clean out the parish courthouse, which is considered the center of government in the area. In order to get to that, the team would

have a long, hard road ahead of them. They had to deal with downed trees along the 30-mile route, many of them over 100 feet high.

"We made it to the courthouse," said SGT Damian Edwards. "In the process, we cleared trees off the road, and what they call ... mud patties—big chunks of mud with grass growing on top."

At the courthouse, the company discovered flooding in the building's basement and a welcoming committee of alligators and snakes. "We had a lot of cottonmouths attacking everything, including our loader," Hawthorne said.

Throughout the day, some of the local business owners were allowed to enter the area. Some of them stopped to see the devastation to their homes, which they hadn't seen since evacuating a week earlier.

"I had a man come in this morning; he was in tears and said his wife was up all night crying," Hawthorne said. "His house is just a stone's-throw [from the courthouse], and he wanted to come and check it out so

his wife would have something to remember. It was totally destroyed; his fifth house in four years."

Despite losing his home, the man helped the team pump water from the courthouse.

"I took some guys to the gas plant earlier. They had two gas leaks down there, and we got that stopped," Edwards said.

Spurlock explained that the Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) in the parishes request assistance through the Louisiana National Guard's Joint Operations Center, which flows information to brigades, where units are chosen for specific missions and sent to locations.

"Initially, when we come in with our recon elements—our engineering assessment teams—we determine ... what equipment is needed to remove the debris," Spurlock said.

Working with parish officials through the EOC, and once all major routes are clear and engineer assets are no longer needed, they give a closing report releasing the officials.

"We know they're getting back on their feet, and we'll return to our brigade," Spurlock said.

Though the damage was substantial, the cleanup team did find something that gave it a little extra energy to focus on the task at hand.

"We found the flag behind the courthouse," Spurlock said. "It was buried in some of the sludge. We just dug it out and put it up on a piece of rebar that we found. We just wanted to get Old Glory flying again."

With day one of cleanup operations complete, the team looked forward to more days of clearing roads and debris, so the people can begin the healing process.

"I try and think of a story when I go home and tell my wife about what I'm doing, but some of the stuff she just wouldn't believe," Hawthorne said. "But it does feel good to help people out." **GX**

SSGT BENNIE L. DAVIS III



KEEPING THE LEVEE STRONG

INARNG Guard Soldiers with the 113th Engineer Battalion place sandbags onto failing levees in Gary, IN.

Hoosier Soldiers Take on Ike

Story and Photos by
SGT Michael B. Krieg

GARY, IN—By Sunday afternoon, Sept. 14, the remnants of Hurricane Ike had dumped more than 10 inches of rain on northwestern Indiana, which caused lakes and tributaries from Lake Michigan to swell beyond capacity. As a result, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security called the Indiana National Guard.

During Operation Indiana Ike, more than 150 Guard Soldiers helped the hurricane-ravaged areas with security patrols, search and rescue missions and filling and placing sandbags.

“Stuff like this is pretty much why I joined the National Guard,” said SGT Travis Hackett of the 738th Medical Company, headquartered in Monticello. “It’s helping people out in their time of need. I’ve been to Iraq, and I thought I had done my duty there, but it’s assignments like this that [are] really important to me.”

Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, St. Joseph, Benton and Stark counties were hit hard, as was the Munster community, west of the Gary armory. Floodwaters had breached the banks of Little Calumet River, which runs through the middle of the town, and soon engulfed the entire community with three to four feet of water.

The high waters soon flooded the lower floors of the Munster Med-Inn,



TEAM EFFORT Indiana National Guard SSG Travis Hackett and a member of the Munster Fire Department carry a Munster Med-Inn patient from a flooded building.

a five-story nursing home, shutting down power and life support at the entire complex and forcing the evacuation of more than 150 patients to hospitals in dry areas.

“We have to get all of these people out of this flooded building and get them to higher ground,” said 1SG Steven Staley, a member of the Forward Support Company, 113th Engineer Battalion.

“The patients are pretty upset that they have to go through all of this, but they are relieved to see us here, pitching in with the local responders and getting the job done. That’s what we’re here for,” said Staley.

The medical facility staff praised the efforts of Indiana Guard Soldiers and fire department personnel, and other emergency responders who helped with the evacuation.

“These Soldiers have been working their tails off for the last six hours and into the night, taking residents down each floor. We have all been a team today, and it’s been wonderful,” said Kathy Riley, a licensed nurse practitioner at Munster Med-Inn. “We were so glad to see the uniforms that scared!” said Riley.

With no electricity to power the elevators, the residents were car-

ried carefully, one by one, down the dimly lit emergency exit stairwells to awaiting military vehicles and civilian ambulances.

SSG Jerrod Martin, Detachment 18, Recruiting and Retention, made several trips up and down the dark stairwell.

“This is definitely the best thing the National Guard could have done. We are a community-based organization, and it’s a reminder that we still have a state mission to do,” Martin said.

Bob Young, LaPorte County Highway Department superintendent, also praised the Indiana National Guard, who showed up in his county with a high-speed sandbagging machine. “The Guard is

“THIS IS DEFINITELY THE BEST THING THE NATIONAL GUARD COULD HAVE DONE.”

>>> SSG JERROD MARTIN, DETACHMENT 18, RECRUITING AND RETENTION

very instrumental in our efforts here,” Young said. “Before you guys showed up, we were just using shovels, and it was very time consuming. But with that four-station sandbagging machine you brought, and your knowledgeable Soldiers manning the controls, we can make 10 times as many bags and be way ahead of the game now.”

Other units assisting in Operation Indiana Ike with flood relief were Joint Force Headquarters, 1638th Transportation Company, 190th Transportation Company, 638th Aviation Support Battalion and Company B, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry. **GX**

National Convention Brings Guard to Denver



FORMATION Soldiers and Airmen of the Colorado, Georgia and Nebraska National Guard stand in formation to hear their assignments for the day.

By Tech. Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral,
Courtesy of NGB

DENVER, CO—National Guard troops from across the country descended on Denver in August to help support one of the largest events the city had ever seen.

While Denver hosted the Democratic National Convention (DNC), units from the Georgia, Nebraska, Utah and Wyoming National Guards met—some for the first time ever—to support the Colorado National Guard, along with state and local authorities.

“It’s an eclectic group,” said COL Tom Duffy, a task force commander from the Colorado Army National Guard (COARNG). “We all work together toward a common goal.”

“This is the kind of thing the Guard should be doing—working for the state, working for the homeland and the people around you—just being on call,” said

SPC Kelly Razor, of the Nebraska National Guard.

The primary mission of these Guard members was to support local, state and federal agencies. While Denver called out its law enforcement, emergency medical and fire personnel to support the DNC, the Guard focused its combined efforts to ensure the Soldiers and Airmen were ready to provide support if needed.

“This is one of the opportunities [where] we get to use our training,” said PFC Nic Mathis, of Colorado. “Opportunities like this to actually guard the nation are what I signed up to do.”

As with almost any National Guard mission, units were prepared to assist military and civilians alike if authorities called upon them, task force officials said. They explained that in a civil support capacity, Guard members are capable of providing medical and security support,

service actions. It makes me feel more confident in the people around me, that they’re competent in what they’re doing.”

Prior to setting up their equipment, the Guard Soldiers practiced donning and doffing their specialized personal protective gear, and setting up and moving any external equipment in order to ensure they were ready to respond to an event if called by authorities.

“We’ve all been certified to the same standard when it comes to these missions,” said SGT Patrick Dougherty of Georgia. “When we set this equipment up, it should be the same in Atlanta as it is in Denver as it is in Nebraska.”

The dynamic nature of the mission presented a number of unique opportunities for Guard members

“OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THIS, TO ACTUALLY GUARD THE NATION, ARE WHAT I SIGNED UP TO DO.”

>> PFC Nic Mathis, of Colorado

in addition to other specialties reserved for catastrophic events, such as site decontamination, personnel evacuation and medical triage.

“This is a great thing to experience and be a part of, knowing if something happens, you’re there to take care of [people],” said TSGT. Bonnie Atkinson of the Colorado Air National Guard.

But even when they’re not working with those authorities, they’re training for it.

“I love all the concurrent training,” said SPC James Taylor, a Nebraska Guard Soldier. “It’s good to see that we have more people integrating into it now—the joint

and civilians to work together, officials said, as well as for civilians to gain insight into military operations.

“With the United States’ involvement in war right now, I think we often think of Soldiers as always being in the middle of active duty, and that active duty always implies that they’re at war,” said Bette Matkowski, president of one of the facilities that Guard members are using as a temporary home station. “We tend to forget that we have people back here—right in the United States—who are helping to defend us, helping to keep us safe.” **GX**

TECH. SGT. WOLFRAM M. STUMPF



VIGILANT WATCH Minnesota National Guard Soldiers stand watch to assist police during a demonstration.

“This is a unique event, and the National Guard is doing what it always does, which is to be there to help civil authorities...”

>> BG Joseph Kelly, assistant adjutant general, MN NG

Conventional Assistance

ON GUARD IN MINNESOTA

By PVT Cassandra Monroe

ST. PAUL, MN—During the first day of the Republican National Convention (RNC), members of the Minnesota Army National Guard (MNARNG) were called upon to provide crowd control.

The St. Paul Police Department requested 150 MNARNG Soldiers to assist with crowd control in downtown St. Paul after demonstrators there became increasingly aggressive. The Soldiers assisting the St. Paul police came from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor, an MNARNG Battalion headquartered in Brainerd, MN. The Soldiers acted as part of Joint Task Force – Republican National Convention (JTF-RNC).

“Our main mission is to support local law enforcement,” said 1LT T. Zdon, an armor officer with the 1-194th.

The 1-194th Soldiers provided assistance in two key ways, Zdon said. “We provide a good number of forces used to support them, and we also provide a good military presence.”

The 1-194th also provided trained Soldiers who could assist with riot control procedures by using riot control tactics, as well as shields and batons, to keep crowds under control.

“We trained for a couple days, learning how each squad has an assigned task,” said SPC Ben Doran, an infantryman with the 1-194th. “We generally work together and support each other, using shields and batons to keep crowds back. We want to use the minimum amount of force necessary to complete the mission.”

The task force’s mission is to conduct operations in support of the United States Secret Service

and local law enforcement officials in order to ensure a safe and secure environment for the convention. A similar task force was provided for the Democratic National Convention.

The RNC is a National Special Security Event, which means it is of heightened national interest and requires a higher level of security than is ordinarily at the disposal of local law enforcement, said BG Joseph Kelly, JTF-RNC commander and assistant adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard.

In order to satisfy the security and support requirements of a National Special Security Event, authorities established a military joint task force, which includes approximately 1,600 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen from active duty, reserve and National Guard forces.

More than 400 members of

JTF-RNC are active-duty service members. They provide specialties ranging from explosive ordnance disposal and explosive detection dog teams to assist the U.S. Secret Service in ensuring the convention venues remain safe.

National Guard forces included about 1,200 Soldiers and Airmen from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Alaska. Those members conduct general security missions, provide aviation and logistics support, assist local law enforcement with traffic control, and provide a weapons of mass destruction response capability.

“This is a unique event, and the National Guard is doing what it always does, which is to be there to help civil authorities and back them up when there is an event that requires more capabilities than what they can handle,” Kelly said. **GX**

VICTORY MAP



ARIZONA

The 2-180th Field Artillery, the last artillery unit in the Arizona Army National Guard, was inactivated at a ceremony Sept. 13 in Phoenix. "The unit, which can trace its lineage back to 1919 and horse-drawn 75 mm guns, saw action throughout Europe during WWII and was most recently deployed in support of Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom," said SGT Ed Balaban, Arizona public affairs specialist.

ARKANSAS

Fifty Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the 142nd Fires Brigade were honored Sept. 7 during a Freedom Salute in recognition of their service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Providing precision-guided cannon, rocket and missile fire, the unit supported the Multi National Division-North. LTC (ret.) Stephen Gray, senior military and veteran's advisor to Congressman John Boozman served as the keynote speaker and commended the 142nd for being part of the Greatest Generation.

ILLINOIS

Approximately 140 Soldiers of the 135th Chemical Company deployed on Sept. 14 to Afghanistan. The unit will join the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, providing force protection at various 33rd IBCT bases and during convoy operations.

INDIANA

The Indiana National Guard hosted the "Cyclone Adventure," an annual recruiting event Sept. 6-7 at Camp Atterbury. This year, Cyclone Adventure included paintball room clearing operations, tower rappelling, weapons familiarizations and a leadership obstacle course.

KANSAS

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a proclamation on Sept. 15, naming the week of Sept. 14-20, 2008, as Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week. "I'm so proud of those Kansas businesses that get behind their National Guard or Reserve employees, who keep their job waiting for their return and offer ... support to them and their families," she said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Missions, Challenges and Stifling Heat

ECHO COMPANY IN KUWAIT AND IRAQ

By SFC Clint Wood

NASHVILLE, TN—The last time *GX* visited the New York Army National Guard's (NYARNG) Echo Company, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation in July, the Soldiers were undergoing their first month of mobilization training at Fort Sill, OK.

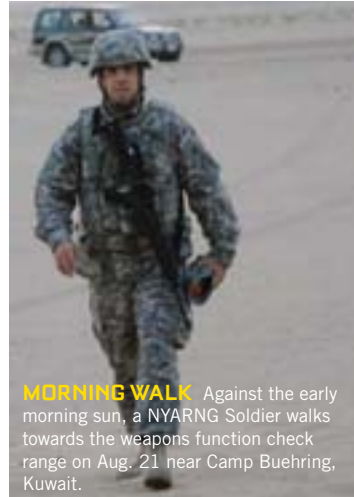
I was there when they were refueling UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters "hot" at a Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) and when they were undergoing night-vision goggle training while driving Humvees and light medium tactical vehicles (LMTVs).

The company, headquartered in Patchogue, Long Island, NY, with a detachment in Albany, has since deployed to Logistical Support Area Striker near Baghdad International Airport, Iraq. Its main mission is refueling Black Hawks and AH-64 Apache Helicopters.

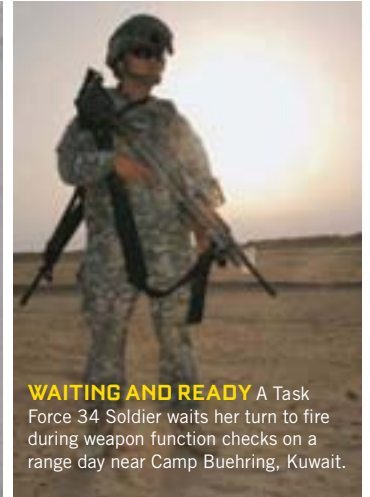
Echo Co. also supports a brigade-sized combat aviation unit—Task Force 34—which includes units from Minnesota, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia and Oklahoma.

This company is unique in the Guard for two reasons—one, it's new, just formed in 2006; and two, during 9/11, most of the Soldiers served in the Guard or as first responders. In the coming months, *GX* will follow them and tell their stories. You'll get to know these Soldiers and their families.

This month, I checked in with the company via email about their two weeks at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Their main mission there was zeroing their assigned weapons and participating in a live-fire exercise course. Of the many questions I asked, one was about the heat. SPC Turel McKinney told it like he saw it: "Hate it. For everyone who wants to



MORNING WALK Against the early morning sun, a NYARNG Soldier walks towards the weapons function check range on Aug. 21 near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



WAITING AND READY A Task Force 34 Soldier waits her turn to fire during weapon function checks on a range day near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

know back home, put your oven on broil and the hairdryer on full blast while drinking freshly made coffee and in 10 minutes open the oven."

The Soldiers

- SPC Sean Hall
- 1SG Ryan Howell Sr.
- SFC Kit O'Brien
- PFC Lillian Williams
- SGT Angela Granger

The 411

GX: How hot was Kuwait? What was your reaction to the heat?

Hall: Super hot.

Howell: Kuwait was very hot, approximately 115 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. But the humidity made it unbearable.

O'Brien: It was like Arizona, fairly hot.

Williams: Heat was bearable, 119 degrees Fahrenheit.

Granger: The heat of Oklahoma made it easier to get acclimated to Kuwait.

GX: What were your tasks in Kuwait?

McKinney: Zeroing my M4 rifle, supply ammunition and Class 1 (water, MREs) runs.

Howell: The company had to do a live-fire course and had to zero our night scopes.

Williams: Due to the amount of sand and heat, zeroing was a little uncomfortable.

GX: What have you done so far in Iraq?

McKinney: Worked in supply and assisted my supply sergeant.

Hall: Worked in the motor pool.

Howell: The company's mission is refueling, so that's a high priority.

O'Brien: Worked and bought a refrigerator.

Williams: Administrative work.

Granger: Refueled Black Hawks and Apaches, and drove Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) tankers.

GX: What has been the most challenging thing so far in Iraq?

McKinney: Waking up on time.

Hall: Time difference.

Howell: Getting back into the military mindset.

O'Brien: Difference in time; sandstorms.

Williams: Adjusting to my new environment, i.e., weather and culture.

Granger: Not talking to family. **GX**

SGT LYNETTE HOWE, 34TH CAB

The 'Avengers'

North Dakota Soldiers Fire Missiles, Machine Guns



LAUNCH! A Humvee equipped with the Avenger weapons system launches a Stinger missile in a training exercise.

By SGT S. Patrick McCollum

▶ **GRAND FORKS, ND**—Soldiers from the North Dakota Army National Guard's 1/188th Air Defense Artillery recently fired three dozen Stinger missiles during weekend training in Texas.

The operation helped Soldiers maintain proficiency with the unit's Avengers.

Mounted atop a Humvee, the Avenger weapon system includes a turret with a .50-caliber machine gun and two standard vehicle missile launchers, each holding four Stinger missiles. A two-person crew operates the system, which defends against helicopters and low-altitude fixed-wing aircraft.

For the exercise, 36 Soldiers rep-

resenting 18 assigned teams will allow each Soldier the opportunity to fire one missile. An additional nine Soldiers in the battery served in support roles during the training.

"This exercise allowed Soldiers to complete their training for full annual certification," said MAJ Robert Fugere, officer in charge of the 1/188th ADA Battalion. "It also

allowed Soldiers holding these [military occupational specialties] to actually do what they were trained to do. The past four years, we have been doing somewhat unrelated missions during deployments."

Members from the ADA have deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years. Soldiers' active-duty missions have included using the

"THIS EXERCISE OFFERED AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR HANDS-ON, REAL-WORLD TRAINING OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER."

» **MG DAVID A. SPRYNCZYNATYK, NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD ADJUTANT GENERAL**

Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment (RAID) system, a high-tech system used to protect forces; operating the Joint Land Attack Elevated Netting Sensor (JLENS), a tower that serves as an early warning and surveillance system; and serving as security forces.

"The ADA has had the opportunity to learn and use some of the military's most state-of-the-art equipment, but it is pertinent to maintain proficiency in the unit's core tasks, as well," said MG David A. Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general.

"This exercise offered an incredible opportunity for hands-on, real-world training of the highest caliber—something we always strive to provide our Soldiers." **GX**



GETTING IN GEAR
SPC Jasen MacDuffee readies a Shadow UAS for its next mission.

Unmanned Aircraft Cover the Battlefield

Story and photos by MSG Eric Reinhardt

▶ FOB KALSU, IRAQ—To hear an unmanned aerial vehicle take off is to wonder how it could be an effective surveillance tool. Its ripping, buzz-saw rasp seems like a dead giveaway to the enemy.

But just a few seconds after take-off, the Shadow Unmanned Aerial System is thousands of feet in the air, out of sight and earshot. At cruising altitude, it speedily delivers crisp images and video of the battlefield. It can even extend the range of radio communications by hundreds of miles, keeping commanders in touch with troops on the battlefield.

Those capabilities have made it an indispensable part of the battlefield commander's toolkit in Iraq, according to CPT Michael Goodwin, commander of Task Force (TF) 49's UAS unit, Quicksilver Troop, 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based at FOB Kalsu.

Goodwin assumed command of the company in July, when TF 49 took over as MND-C's Combat Aviation Brigade. A Black Hawk pilot by training, he headed TF 49's Air Movement Request cell for eight months before taking the reins of Quicksilver Troop.

His team of 40 Soldiers keeps its flock of 12 planes in the air around the clock, ready to zoom in on any part of the MND-C area of operations,

a region about the size of West Virginia.

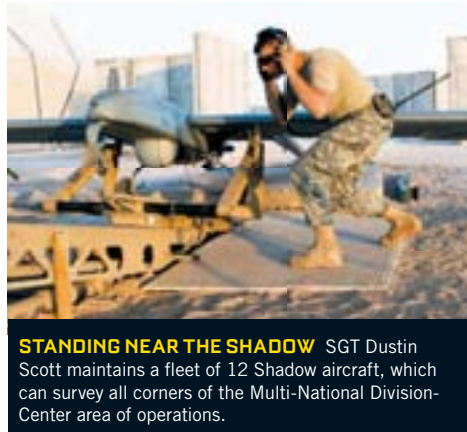
The tiny aircraft help patrol the highways to thwart improvised explosive device attacks, perform reconnaissance missions, link radio communications across the miles and give ground troops detailed views of their objectives.

The UAS operators launch the aircraft and fly them to points where operators at any of TF 49's forward sites can take the controls and guide them to specific missions.

At the forward sites, Goodwin explained, "Commanders and battle majors can literally go to the operator and say 'Hey, this has happened. I need to

"ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T INVOLVE FLYING THE AIRCRAFT IS OUR JOB."

>> SPC Ryan Groat, a UAS maintainer



STANDING NEAR THE SHADOW SGT Dustin Scott maintains a fleet of 12 Shadow aircraft, which can survey all corners of the Multi-National Division-Center area of operations.

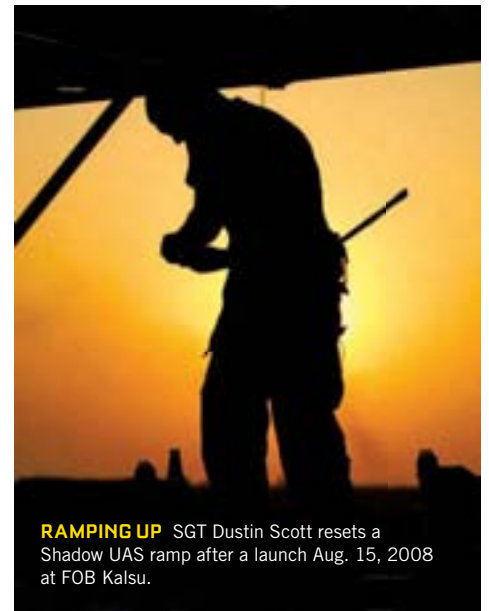
see this area,' and they can change the mission accordingly."

When the missions are complete, Quicksilver Troop recovers the aircraft to perform maintenance and get them ready for the next flight.

UAS Transition to Aviation Branch TF 49's operational control of the unit is part of the Army's recent emphasis on applying Aviation Branch standards to the UAS field, which is currently a military intelligence discipline.

The UAS Military Occupational Specialty 35K is slated to transition to 15W later this year, making its Soldiers part of the Army aviation community and eligible for flight badges.

"We have a lot of the same requirements as aviators," said UAS operator SPC Kevin Hedrick. "We work crew rest and flight endurance into



RAMPING UP SGT Dustin Scott resets a Shadow UAS ramp after a launch Aug. 15, 2008 at FOB Kalsu.

our operations, and we have to have regular physicals."

Quicksilver Troop's maintainers now perform scheduled and preventive maintenance on the aircraft, based on the same standards as aviation units.

"Anything that doesn't involve flying the aircraft is our job—launching, recovering, refueling and maintenance," SPC Ryan Groat, a UAS maintainer, said. "It can get a bit repetitive, but that's a good thing, in a way."

Aviation oversight has sharply reduced the number of aircraft accidents and mechanical problems, according to Goodwin. "It's what we do all the time for aviation," he said. "It's not that we're any smarter or anything like that, but that's our area of expertise—dealing with aircraft operations." **GX**



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

New Division Focuses on Soldiers' Well-Being

By SPC John Higgins, NGB

▶ **ARLINGTON, VA**—Soldiers and their families are the focus of a new division here at the Army National Guard Readiness Center (ARNGRC).

In May, the center's Soldier/Family Support Service Division (S/FSSD) began providing care and service for Soldiers to include suicide prevention, family support and transition back from active duty.

"There has never been another time in history when we have made so many resources available to care for all aspects of [the Soldiers'] well-being," said Ms. Erin Thede, chief of the S/FSSD. "We are dedicated to pursuing policy and resources that improve our care and services, so that no Soldier or family is left behind."

LTC Ashleah Betchel, chief of the Soldier Support Branch at the ARNGRC, added that the Soldier's care is everyone's responsibility. "This is a commander's issue, a leader's issue, a Soldier's issue, a family issue and a community issue," she said. "There is ownership across the board for everybody to make sure that we're taking care of the Soldiers in the right way. That's one of the reasons our division was formed ... to get the word out there."

Getting that word out is the responsibility of the officers and NCOs starting at the division level, including MSG Marshall Bradshaw, the ARNGRC Suicide Prevention Program Manager.

"If we were to hire a professional counselor at the state level ... you still couldn't get all the Soldiers in to see that counselor," said Bradshaw about the challenge of maintaining Soldiers' mental health and monitoring them for signs that they might want to harm themselves.

The second challenge for Bradshaw, the units and the Guard is how to disseminate information



SOLDIERS HELPING SOLDIERS Members of the new Soldier/Family Support Service Division, left to right: MSG Marshall Bradshaw; MAJ Quentin Collins; LTC Ashleah Betchel; and MAJ Andrew Bishop.

and take care of troops, who generally check in with their units only two days every month.

The solution to both problems comes from the communities in which Guard Soldiers live and work. Nonprofit organizations such as the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), religious organizations and even police and firefighter chaplains are prepared to assist the Guard.

Bradshaw devotes much of his time to giving enthusiastic groups outside the Guard, and the service members' immediate families, the tools they need to help.

"The organizations I've found want to help us, they just don't know how," Bradshaw said.

Assistance from the communities helps Guard Soldiers at home. However, a different method must be used during deployments, and a Unit Behavioral Advocate adds to the military's capacity to be mindful of Soldiers' mental health.

"This is a cultural shift from the highest levels," said MAJ Quentin Collins, a special operations Soldier, who is now a chaplain at the readiness center. "From the chief of staff all the way down to the regular

Soldier, we must understand that we are not just machines. 'Soldier first' is not just a concept—it's a reality."

The Unit Behavioral Advocate not only keeps an eye on mental health issues, he also assists with squad- and platoon-level training, which is performed in small groups on a regular basis rather than once or twice in a large group with one instructor for a whole company.

"The only way you can really encourage that kind of care is with that team concept. The idea is that you are a family, and families do hurt," Collins said. "It's the battle buddy concept taken a step forward."

Those changes cover Soldiers during pre- and post-deployment in most cases. However, some Soldiers may require even more care should they be injured during a mission. For them, the Guard has created a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU), whose sole focus is to transition Soldiers back to a unit, a civilian job or both.

This allows them to receive more specific care with assistance from a caseworker who monitors the Soldier's progress more closely, and a doctor who sees that Soldiers receive more individual care. **GX**

MINNESOTA

The St. Paul Police Department called upon Soldiers of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor, on Sept. 1, to assist police in maintaining order during a demonstration. The demonstrators were protesting during the first day of the Republican National Convention.

NEW YORK

The New York Army National Guard State Aviation Office teamed up with the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency to run a counterdrug education program at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base Aug. 20–21. During classroom instruction, officers were taught marijuana horticulture and cultivation trends, and also learned how to recognize and spot concealed plants from the air.

NORTH DAKOTA

MAJ Michael A. Holly of Mandan, ND, recently began a two-year position in the African country of Ghana. Holly is serving as the bilateral affairs officer for the State Partnership Program. His office will be at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

OHIO

After Hurricane Gustav left Louisiana, Ohio National Guard Soldiers rushed to Alexandria, LA, to assist in recovery efforts. MG Gregory L. Wayt, adjutant general of the Ohio National Guard, visited the 1,000 Ohio Guard Soldiers with MG Matthew L. Kambic, assistant adjutant general, on Sept. 7.

WISCONSIN

As many as 3,500 Soldiers of the 32nd Infantry Brigade Combat team will deploy for an active-duty mission in Iraq, making this the largest operational deployment of Wisconsin National Guard forces since WWII.

AFGHANISTAN

The Soldiers of Camp Phoenix remembered the victims of 9/11 during a ceremony on Sept. 11. The ceremony began with sounding of a siren from the Camp Phoenix fire truck at 5:16 local time to match the time in New York City when the first plane struck the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m., ET.

Back from Afghanistan

OHIO MILITARY POLICE UNIT TALKS

By SGT Jessica Duncan

CAMP ATTERBURY, IN—The National Guard's 838th Military Police Company, headquartered in Youngstown, OH, returned from Afghanistan in September after a nine-month deployment in theater. After completing demobilization training at Camp Atterbury, the Soldiers left for Ohio.

1SG Jonathan L. Williams of the 838th said he was relieved that all 175 Soldiers came back from the mission.

"My only mission in life is to make sure that Soldiers are taken care of and that those that I mobilize with come back with me," he said. "The Soldiers did an excellent job."

The MP Company had several different missions while deployed. Each assignment was important to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and had its own place and importance to the overall mission.

One of these missions was to escort a construction company to the forward operating bases (FOB) to assist with building the dining facility and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center.

Other assignments included cell/guard detainee operations, and law and order/customs missions. The MPs maintained order on the



QUICK STUDY SPC James E. Hoover of the 838th Military Police Company of Canal Fulton, OH, works with a local youth on his English homework in Parwan Province.

base, in addition to checking bags for contraband.

SSG David K. Heil, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge, said the MPs specifically supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team on anything that pertained to law and order. Heil said they assisted the entire province of Task Force Bayonet, which included Nangarhar, Kanor and Lagmman.

"The 173rd treated us outstandingly," said Heil, who also was the desk sergeant at the FOB in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. "They were great in supporting the National



COMMON GROUND SSG John L. Brickman, Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Force squad leader for Parwan Province, and SPC James E. Hoover develop a rapport with Afghan youth in Parwan Province.

Guard units that came through."

Another mission for the MP Company included assisting the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) on Bagram Air Base in Parwan Province. The PRT is a security team for captains and commanders who speak to the government about rebuilding roads and schools, and about funding to help educate women.



OVERVIEW SSG John L. Brickman, Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Force squad leader for Parwan Province, performs duties as convoy commander near Bagram Airfield.

SPC Erin M. Bell, convoy driver for the 838th, said not everyone got to participate in this mission, but fortunately she was one of the lucky ones.

She said only seven percent of the airfield was able to participate in this mission, earning them the nickname "Sevens Club."

"I was able to experience how the kids and the females live ... it was a very humbling experience," Bell said.

The Sevens Club also visited an Austrian hospital in western Parwan every month. The mission usually lasted three to five days, and during this assignment Bell handed out school supplies at an all-girls' school while the doctors they had escorted performed medical assessments in the clinics.

Her most memorable assignment was a four-day mission to Bamiyan. "It was amazing out there," she said. "[There were] carvings of Buddha in the actual mountains."

For Bell, the deployment was worth the sacrifice.

"At the end, it is worth every single tear, every drop of sweat, every laugh. You remember everything, and you always go back [home] with good memories." **GX**

"At the end, it is worth every single tear, every drop of sweat, every laugh. You remember everything and you always go back [home] with good memories."

>> SPC Erin M. Bell

PHOTO: DANIEL FRANGEL



THE GRIND INARNG SSG Larry Hammons, a heavy equipment repairer, grinds a weld on a M-916 truck at the Unit Training Equipment Site at Camp Atterbury in April. The UTES won first runner-up in the Army's national maintenance excellence award for fiscal year 2007.

Sparks Fly

GUARD MAINTENANCE SHOP BEST IN ARMY

By SSG Jeff Lowry, INARNG

▶ **EDINBURGH, IN**—The song says it all: The Army goes rolling along.

Two INARNG maintenance shops at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center keep Army units rolling along. Field Maintenance Shop 2 and Unit Training Equipment Site recently won first place and first runner-up respectively in the Army's national maintenance excellence award.

To the chief warrant officers who manage the shops, it is the Soldiers below and above them who made it happen. "They work hard, and they deserve [the award]," said CW4 Linda Clayburn of her Soldiers. Clayburn is the FMS 2 supervisor.

CW3 James Black, the UTES supervisor, credited his Soldiers' dedication and his superiors' support. "Our success here at the UTES can be attributed to LTC [Randy] Read and his support staff," Black

said. Read oversees all maintenance shops throughout the state. "I'm proud of the people I got," Black said. "I have some of the best maintenance technicians in the state."

Other than rolling vehicles, the Soldiers repair weapons and radios too. "Anything the unit has, like special equipment, we support," Clayburn said. Having a variety

of equipment on which to work is an obstacle the mechanics overcome by working as a team.

"Everybody works together; we're all family here," said SSG Daniel Thomas, a wheeled mechanic at FMS 2. "If I know something another Soldier doesn't, he can come to me, or if I don't know something, I can go to others."

It's much the same way at the UTES, according to Black, who trains his Soldiers to perform other jobs besides the ones they're assigned to do. "If this was a union shop, I'd be stuck," Black said. The UTES was hit hard by deployments,

with 30 of its 51 Soldiers overseas. The same is true of the FMS, with 10 of its 23 Soldiers deployed. "We still met our mission; that's our job, and that's what we'll do," Clayburn said.

In the last fiscal year, for which FMS 2 won its award, the shop inspected, serviced or repaired 953 customer maintenance job orders and calibration transactions. It also performed 29 recovery missions on Indiana highways and on Camp Atterbury.

In addition, the shop assists units training and based at Camp Atterbury with maintenance support beyond a unit's capabilities. This support extends to all branches of the military.

FMS 2 is available, on average, 48 weekends out of the year, with maintenance assistance ranging from technical advice and performing non-mission-capable repairs. "We're your first place to go for maintenance when you're training on post," Clayburn said.

While the FMS is like a local shop, the UTES is like a rental car store that loans, maintains and repairs unit equipment. In fiscal year 2007, the UTES serviced or repaired 786 maintenance jobs orders, and performed 30 recovery missions on Camp Atterbury. Both shops also helped with mobilized and deploying units, and units coming back from overseas.

The Soldiers were proud of the awards the shops received. "I can't believe it," said SGT Daniel Rendon, an FMS 2 surface maintenance mechanic. "It shouldn't blow my mind, because I know how good we are."

Rendon has more than 16 years of maintenance experience and has worked at the FMS 2 for 11 years. "It's real good; I'm quite pleased," said SSG Larry Hammons, a UTES heavy equipment repairer. "It's a great reflection of the people at this shop," he said.

The FMS and UTES, two award-winning shops, keep the Army rolling along. **GX**



HAMMERING AWAY INARNG SGT Daniel Rendon, left, and SPC Richard Fulk flatten a Humvee oil pan flange at Field Maintenance Shop 2 at Camp Atterbury in April. The Camp Atterbury shop took the Army's national maintenance excellence first-place award for fiscal year 2007.

SSG JEFF LOWRY

From North Dakota to Ghana

INSTRUCTORS SHARE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GHANA'S ARMED FORCES

By SGT Amy Willson

CAMP GILBERT C. GRAFTON, DEVILS LAKE, ND—Two instructors from the North Dakota Army National Guard's (NDARNG) 164th Regional Training Institute (RTI) recently returned to the state after spending a week in the African country of Ghana.

SFCs Bradley Kitzmann, of Leeds, ND, and Ron Hosman, of Devils Lake, ND, left Aug. 16 to share experiences and techniques in instructing engineers. They provided workshops on the Total Army

"THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF GHANA IS ENGLISH, SO THE LANGUAGE BARRIER WAS NOT THERE."

>> SFC Bradley Kitzmann

Instructor Training Course and on small-group instruction. The men also worked with Ghana Armed Forces members as they practiced

presenting lessons.

"Together, these elements gave them the same tools we use as instructors," said Kitzmann, the



GHANA VISIT MG David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general, and CPT Kyle Bakken, NDANG, visit with children in Ghana, Africa, during a June 2008 State Partnership Program trip sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense. Ghana has been the NDNG's State Partnership Program partner since 2004.

assistant branch chief for the combat engineer section at the RTI.

The mission was part of the Department of Defense-sponsored State Partnership Program. The program aligns states with partner countries to encourage the development of economic, political and military ties.

Through the program, North Dakota developed a professional relationship with Ghana in 2004. The partnership strengthens each year as Soldiers and civilians alike participate in joint missions both here and abroad.

"It was an excellent experience," Kitzmann said of the State Partnership Program mission. "The official language of Ghana is English, so the language barrier was not there. The people of Ghana are very pleasant to work with and the civilian populous is friendly. I would strongly encourage others to also share the same experiences I had."

Kitzmann teaches the RTI job-skill and leadership courses to bridge crewmen and combat engineers from across the United States who serve in the ARNG, Reserves and active forces. **GX**

COURTESY OF THE NDARNG



TO HIS HEALTH LAARNG members of Troop B, 2nd Squadron, 108th Cavalry, pose with Cameron Bayley, the youngest spur holder in their troop. From left: 1SG Tim D. McKnight, SGT Jesse G. Kennedy, SFC Roy Nugent, SSG Jason Doughty and 1LT Tom H. Mesloh.

SPC QUALAN M. JEFFERSON

Louisiana National Guard Soldiers Cheer Young Patient

CAVALRY SPURS ONLY FOR THE BEST OF THE BEST

By SPC Qualan M. Jefferson

NEW ORLEANS, LA—Troopers from the 2nd Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment, 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Shreveport, LA, gave a young child one of the Cavalry's most prized possessions—a set of spurs.

The spurs were given to Cameron Bayley, a 4-year-old from Mandeville, LA, suffering from a disease called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS). HLHS is a rare congenital heart defect in which the left side of the heart is severely underdeveloped.

Spurs are awarded to those deemed the best of the best in the U.S. Cavalry. Every year during annual training, Soldiers are offered



PICTURE OF SUCCESS
COL Gerald Heinle poses for a photograph next to a helicopter during the Vietnam War.

Last Vietnam Vet Pilot Retires From North Dakota Guard

Courtesy of the North Dakota National Guard

BISMARCK, ND—The last serving North Dakota Army National Guard (NDARNG) Soldier who flew combat missions in the Vietnam War has retired. On Aug. 29, the Guard honored COL Gerald Heinle of Bismarck for his 35 years of military service. Gov. John Hoeven attended the event to show his appreciation as well.



LIFETIME OF SERVICE COL Gerald Heinle, the last Vietnam veteran pilot in the NDARNG, retired Aug. 29 after 35 years of service.

the opportunity to earn their spurs during a Spur Ride. During the course of the ride, spur candidates are subjected to different challenges that test their initiative, military expertise and stamina.

"It's hard to earn your spurs during a Spur Ride," said SGT Jesse G. Kennedy of Bossier City. "I gave [Cameron] mine because he's a little boy and going through all he's been through—he deserves a set of spurs."

Cameron had surgery at Children's Hospital of New Orleans right before Hurricane Gustav, which prevented the Bayley family from evacuating.

"When he was born, the doctors gave us only two options: take him home, and he will die, or let them begin a series of surgeries to correct it," said Tracy Bayley, Cameron's mother.

This was Cameron's third surgery since birth. He will have more as he enters adolescence and adulthood.

"It was fantastic having the [Guard] here. Cameron was having a bad day until [they] showed up. The Soldiers helped cheer him up and were here with us throughout the storm," said Bayley.

Troop B, 2nd Squadron, is assigned to District 2, where the Children's Hospital of New Orleans is located. They are located in New Orleans to help facilitate citizens' safe return after evacuating the city in advance of Hurricane Gustav. **GX**

Others in history who have received the Flying Cross, the fifth-highest Army decoration, include Orville and Wilbur Wright, Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh. Heinle is the only serving member of the North Dakota Guard to hold such honors.

"COL Heinle's record speaks for itself," said MG David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general. "He has been a top-notch Soldier since the day he enlisted in the military, piloting helicopters during intense combat missions, rising through the ranks of the North Dakota National Guard, serving in many key assignments. His experience in aviation has benefited all of us."

After serving two-and-a-half years in the Army, Heinle got out, but needed to go on a waiting list to get into the National Guard. It finally happened in April 1976, and he began working full time for the Guard less than two years later.

In the decades of service that followed, he would choose to leave the warrant officer corps (as a CW3) in order to become a second lieutenant, pursuing the alternate officer route in order to have more opportunities for advancement. He moved on to command the 142nd Medical Detachment Air Ambulance and the 1-112th Aviation Battalion, and he became the state aviation officer in 2001.

"One of the highlights was becoming commander as a major over the old 142nd Medical Detachment Air Ambulance," Heinle said, reflecting on his career.

"Taking that over was really one of my goals when I got my commission."

Only a handful of Vietnam veterans remain in the NDARNG. **GX**

COURTESY OF COL HEINLE

A Quest for Adventure

VIRGINIA WARRIORS FIND THRILLS IN 'ADRENALINE-BOOSTING' PROGRAM

By SGT Andrew H. Owen

OHIOPILE, PA—A company of Virginia Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers were bussed to Pennsylvania in September to participate in an Army pilot program known as Warrior Adventure Quest (WAQ). The program is designed to curb high-risk behavior in redeploying Soldiers by giving them an outlet through high-adventure outdoor activities such as skydiving, paintball, rock climbing, mountain biking and skiing.

Soldiers of C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, based in Leesburg and Manassas, VA, were the second unit to participate in the program on Sept. 13, in Ohiopile, PA. The program was first tested in Vicenza, Italy, by Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry.

After the long trip from Virginia to Pennsylvania, the infantrymen arrived at Wilderness Voyageurs, a white-water rafting tour company. There they changed out of their Army Combat Uniforms and into Army Physical Fitness Uniforms, got a safety briefing and were sent

down the Youghiogheny River in the provided rafts.

Meeting the rapids head-on, many Soldiers were tossed from the rafts into the rough waters. The Soldiers quickly paddled their way over to the ejected crew members and recovered them with ease. According to SPC James Anderson, 1st Platoon, the teamwork was so strong that Soldiers from other boats were recovering lost men from other teams.

After many adrenaline-boosting hours of fun, the Soldiers returned to Wilderness Voyageurs' base of operations to conduct a Battlemind After Actions Review (AAR) in accordance with WAQ guidelines. The Battlemind AAR is a debriefing session designed to help mitigate the cumulative effects of sustained operations, to mentally prepare the team to reintegrate, and to help Soldiers begin focused training for the next requirement.

The concept was developed by behavioral health professionals in the Army's Battlemind program based on recommendations from an Integrated Process Team that included health professionals in

the offices of the Surgeon General, Combat Readiness & Safety Center, National Guard, Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Installation Management Command Chaplain and the Army Reserve component.

During the AAR, Soldiers were asked to discuss the day's events and point out the connections between the activities and the everyday missions of being deployed in combat.

Many Soldiers of 1st Platoon said that the main similarity they observed was the amount of teamwork involved.

"There were numerous times I almost fell out of the raft, but my buddy reached out and grabbed me ... Not only was he focused on the mission, but he was focused on my well being," said SSG Bennie Jost, platoon sergeant of 1st Platoon.

As a testament to the unit's strong sense of teamwork, PFC James Self said, "We flipped our boat in the first five minutes. We never

flipped it again because we built a good team quickly and learned from our mistakes."

"This weekend's event was a great success, not just by its conduction but also by its demonstrated linkage to Battlemind," said SGM Tammy Coon, senior enlisted advisor for the Soldier and Community Recreation Directorate. "The day's events were enjoyed by all and provided a viable avenue for high-adrenaline activities."

The experience provided the Soldiers an opportunity to identify both strengths and shortcomings in themselves and others, and to learn to capitalize on strengths and minimize shortcomings.

According to SSG Joshua Gowdie, if it's known that an individual cannot shoot very well, you don't make them a sharpshooter. Instead you utilize them in the areas where they're strong.

This weekend marked the first time the WAQ program was tested on ARNG Soldiers. The Soldiers of the 116th met the challenge with great enthusiasm.

"It gives Soldiers a controlled release," Gowdie said.

"The combination high-adrenaline team-building activity with Battlemind training and small group discussion has a lot of potential to help combat units achieve a smoother reintegration," said CPT Arthur Moore, commander of C Company.

According to official reports, at least 186 Soldiers have died in accidents within one year of returning from combat—168 of them within the first six months. Sixty percent of the fatalities are sergeants or below, and the overwhelming majority involve high-speed activities, alcohol, or both.

The WAQ program plans to cycle 80,000 Army Soldiers through the program over the next 12 months. If the program can reduce those statistics, it will truly have accomplished its mission. **GX**

"THE DAY'S EVENTS WERE ENJOYED BY ALL AND PROVIDED A VIABLE AVENUE FOR HIGH-ADRENALINE ACTIVITIES."

>> SGM Tammy Coon



HOLD ON! Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, VAARNG, travel down the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania during Warrior Adventure Quest.

SGT ANDREW H. OWEN

From USO to the AMERICAN DREAM

PATTY LOVELESS TALKS SOLDIERS AND PATRIOTISM

By Christian Anderson

Her voice is clear and sweet, and if you listen to her songs at just the right time, you might think angels were singing to you. There is no doubt in my mind that the Soldiers who listened to her sing during the holidays one year felt the same way I did.

► **NASHVILLE, TN**—Patty Loveless traveled with Randy Travis to visit troops on a USO Tour to Alaska in 1988. Participating in the USO Tour over Christmas was a no-brainer for Loveless, who has a special place in her heart for the troops. Soldiers often get lonely when they're away from home over the holidays, especially during Christmas.

"My brother, John, had served in the Army," Loveless said. "So it was something I couldn't say no to."

When making her decision to go, Loveless didn't realize how much of an impact this trip would have on her life.

"It was just amazing to me" she exclaimed. "Randy, of course, was so popular at the time, and he and I hung together a little bit, but for the most part, I was going around with my band."

"Some of the hangars we played in, I couldn't believe how huge they were," Loveless added.

But interacting with the Soldiers really gave Loveless an appreciation for their sacrifices and service, making the trip a memorable experience for her.

"We did some Christmas songs and you could just see it in their eyes," Loveless said. "Those guys there, it tore my heart out that they hadn't seen [their] family and it

gave me an idea of what they went through.

"I am very emotional and it really pulled at my heart's strings" Loveless added. "I wanted to hug every one of them. I actually wanted to take them all back home with me."

Loveless got started in the music business back in Kentucky when she was a young girl and was heavily influenced by two of her older siblings, Dottie and Roger, who helped her kick off her music career.

"I would just like to tell [the Soldiers] I say a silent prayer for them every night."

>> Patty Loveless



"Dottie was an amazing singer, and she did a lot of old Patsy Cline, [and] Brenda Lee," Loveless said. "She loved singing with my brother, Roger, who actually managed me for about five years at the beginning of my recording career."

"[They] used to have a singing team together, and I was very much influenced by them, and inspired to want to do this," Loveless added.

Roger and Dottie had so much of an influence on Loveless that she and her husband, Emory, decided to produce a tribute album to them using some of the old country classics of the 1950s and 1960s.

"Emory and I got to talking and he mentioned to me that we should do a record that maybe possibly

Roger and Dottie, if they'd had the opportunity, would have recorded," Loveless said. "I said, 'You, know, that's a cool idea, to make a record that they would appreciate.' And now we have *Sleepless Nights*."

The relationship between Loveless and her husband is very deep, and they work together on much of her work, providing an interesting dynamic to her music.

"Emory and I were married in 1989, but we have been together since 1986," Loveless explained. "He and I are together a lot more these days because I used to be on the road so much."

Loveless has spent a little less time on the road and more time at home with Emory as the years have passed, partly due to the stress of touring.

"The road always takes you away to where sometimes you get to missing each other," Loveless adds. "That makes it a little easier to work together."

Now that she's at home more, Loveless cherishes the fact that she and her husband have the opportunity to spend time together and work on music.

"The fact is that he and I are always working together. Whether it's around the house or in the studio, we are always doing things together," Loveless reveals. "I am just so thankful and am so fortunate that I get to work with him."

Putting out new albums and having the opportunity to work with loved ones is keeping Loveless busy, but she still has a special place in her heart for all of the troops out there.

"I would just like to tell them I say a silent prayer for them every night," Loveless said. "I want to thank them for giving of themselves so much and trying to protect this beautiful country of ours." **GX**

For more on Patty Loveless, go to www.PattyLoveless.com.

*Intro by Keith Kawasaki
Photos by SFC Clint Wood*

BEST OF THE **SSG MICHAEL NOYCE MERINO** IS THE GUARD'S AND ARMY'S TOP NCO BEST

It's one thing to be the best in the state and it's darn impressive to be the best in the Army National Guard. But, to be officially recognized as the best in the entire Department of the Army, well, that's just crazy—like Chuck Norris-in-his-prime crazy. And, Montana Guard's SSG Michael Noyce Merino just pulled it off.



The Guard's Warrior Training Center (WTC) at Fort Benning, GA, hosts the Guard's Best Warrior Competition. This is where the top dogs of the Guard battle it out for the coveted title of Army National Guard Soldier of the Year and Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year. Winners move on to the Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, VA, facing off against top Soldiers from across the Army, including Reserves.

For the past two years, the WTC has made every effort to ensure that the winners of the Guard's competition emerge as nothing short of fierce fighting machines, thanks to WTC pushing competitors to their mind-bending, muscle-straining limits. Insiders tell *GX* that it may even be harder than the Department of the Army contest.

It's no wonder that a Guard NCO took the big show and, on Oct. 6 at the Association of the United States Army's annual bash in D.C., was named the NCO of the Year. Noyce Merino handles it all with remarkable modesty.

"I was totally shocked to hear my name," he told us. "I almost fell off my chair. I just about passed out up there. It was really crazy."

"This is a direct reflection of the goodness of what the National Guard and Army Reserve provides for the Army," shared Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston in an exclusive *GX* interview regarding Noyce Merino's win. "It's the civilian-acquired skills, the education, that our Soldiers, our Citizen-Soldiers, bring to the fight every day that makes us who we are."

"What this competition does is promote self-development and self-study for our young Soldiers and NCOs," Preston added. "Soldiers and NCOs competing in these competitions study doctrine and become experts in their professions. I'm very proud of what these warriors have accomplished during the competition and during their careers."

Back in August, we kicked SFC Clint Wood down to Benning to catch the Guard competition.

Let's take a look at the challenges Noyce Merino overcame to rock the Army world.

POWERING THROUGH

SURVIVING AND CONQUERING THE GUARD'S BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

By SFC Clint Wood

I was standing in the WTC Obstacle Course at Fort Benning, GA, on a cloudy, humid mid-August morning, after photographing 13 of the best Soldiers in the Army National Guard as they tested their skills on nine obstacles.

It was a competition between the regional winners of Soldier of the Year (SOY) and NCO of the Year (NCOY), part of the second-annual Best Warrior competition. This physically and mentally stressful contest lasted about 48 hours and determined the winner of the ARNG's coveted SOY and NCOY awards. Originally, there were 14 competitors—seven

SOYs and seven NCOYs—but one was unable to attend.

I decided to start by concentrating on the first obstacle, "The Tough One." Each competitor had to climb a 14-foot high rope and touch the top beam. A thin Guard member with no rank or unit patches on his Army combat uniform (ACU)—and splotches of red Georgia mud all the way up to his right knee—approached the obstacle with a noticeable limp. He was practically dragging his left leg.

The wounded Soldier was SPC Jeremy Whipple of Utah's Company E, 1st Attack Helicopter Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment,

and he'd injured the leg earlier that day during the 12-mile road march. He said it didn't bother him; he simply pushed off most of the events on his right foot.

"I did almost all of the courses in one direction rather than alternating sides, so I was doing all of the jumping off my right foot," Whipple explained to me.

Whipple told me he "fell out" of the road march because of his injury, and that was the first time he'd fallen out of anything. By the 3-mile mark, he was already turning his foot to walk on the inside of it.

"I assume that's got to hurt my chances, so I'm definitely disappointed with that," he said. "I feel I've done pretty well in everything else though."

I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was beating himself up for not being able to complete the road march in the allotted time. Heck, I thought it was outstanding that Whipple, an aviation refueler in the Guard, gutted it out during the obstacle course and the remaining two physical events that day—combatives and Urban Operations. Later, I learned that by the end of that day, Whipple was in a lot of pain.

"I did my best to keep going, but got to the point that I couldn't walk normally, let alone run," he admitted.



DOWN TO THE WIRE

SSG Joseph Weidlich takes a quick second to review the Commando Crawl event before sticking his face in the Georgia sand to properly execute the event.

**BEST
WARRIOR
COMPETITION**

REGION 1 CONTENDERS



SPC Joel M. Cadett of Coventry, CT, has been in the Guard for about three years as a signal support specialist. He has a Master Fitness Badge award, is Airborne qualified, Air Assault qualified and ranked No. 2 on the Order of Merit for Ranger School. He works with his father supporting the family construction business and is a full-time student at Manchester College.



SSG Joseph Weidlich of Cobleskill, NY, serves as the supply sergeant with the 206th Military Police Company. He has been in the Guard for three years. He is a former Navy and Marine veteran. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in biology.

Thing is, Whipple's mettle paid off. He won the competition and was named the Soldier of the Year at the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States' (EANGUS) 37th annual conference in Savannah, GA. SSG Michael Noyce Merino of Montana's Troop B, 1st Squadron, 163rd Cavalry Regiment, won NCOY. These two Guard members represent the entire ARNG—more than 323,000 enlisted men and women.

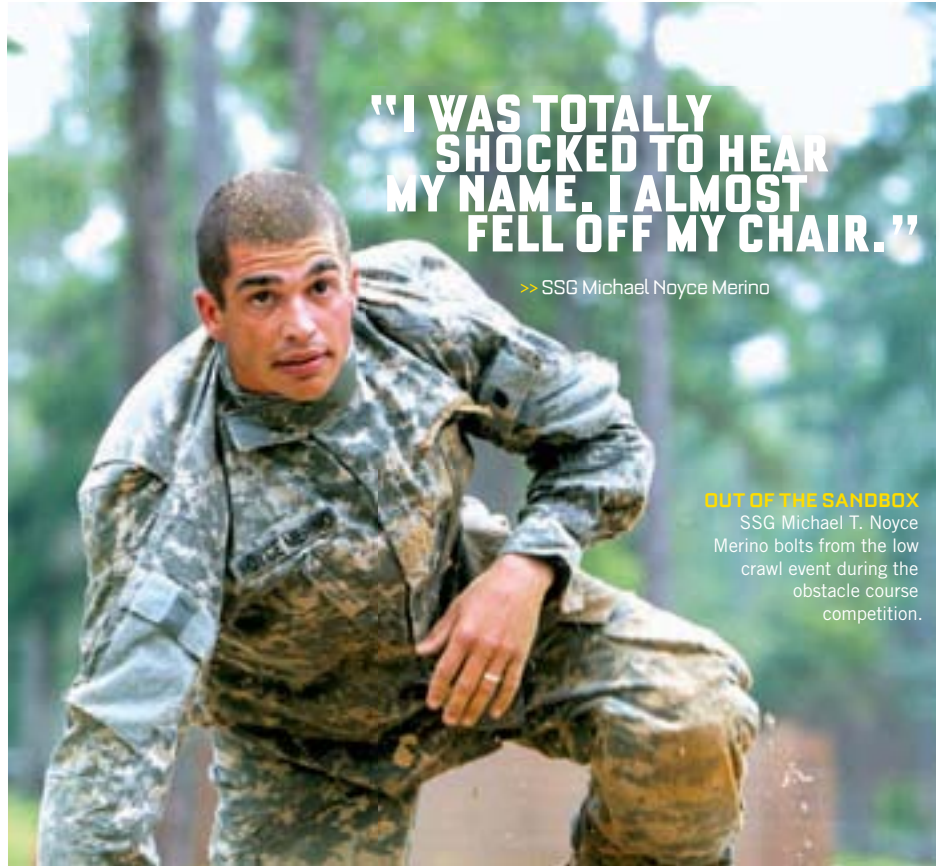
Whipple said he had to be the most surprised person in the room when the winners were announced. He'd assumed falling out of the road march subtracted an insurmountable number of points.

He made it to the 8-mile mark before time ran out. The competitor who finished the march first collected 100 points. Each competitor after that lost five points. In other words, the second-place finisher could score only 95 points and so on.

When I asked Whipple why he thought he won, he replied, "To be honest, I don't know." He thought it might have been his performances in the stress fire shooting competition, the 50-question written test and the board competition. His consistency also could have played a part. He didn't have a bad event. And here's one more possibility—Whipple refuses to give up at anything.

Several weeks after his foot injury, Whipple still had not received a diagnosis. Possibilities included a stress fracture or a sprain on the underside of his foot. "It took a couple weeks to actually walk on it without pain," he said.

Noyce Merino, a former active-duty Army Soldier who has been in the Guard for only a year, listed several factors in his NCOY honor.



"I WAS TOTALLY SHOCKED TO HEAR MY NAME. I ALMOST FELL OFF MY CHAIR."

>> SSG Michael Noyce Merino

OUT OF THE SANDBOX

SSG Michael T. Noyce Merino bolts from the low crawl event during the obstacle course competition.

These included extensive research on the competition using the Internet; "pelting" last year's Region 6 winner with questions; using the land navigation course at Fort Harrison, MT; and studying for the boards with several hundred index cards.

Noyce Merino harbored an especially strong desire to win because it concerned the Army and his unit—two important things in his life.

Runner-up for SOY was SPC Joel Cadett from Connecticut's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment. Florida's SGT Douglas Bishop, C Troop, 1st Squadron, 153rd Cavalry Regiment was the NCOY runner-up.

Whipple and Noyce Merino went on to compete in the Department of the Army 2008 NCOY and SOY Best Warrior competition Sept. 28–Oct. 3 at Fort Lee, VA. They competed directly with 13 major Army commands.

Whipple brought his five years of experience in the Guard and intense patriotism to this competition. Noyce Merino brought six years as an active-duty Army infantryman.

Among the competitors in the Guard contest, Whipple wasn't the only one gutting out an injury. SGT Zoltan Szabo, 46, a former 82nd Airborne Division Soldier now with Indiana's 713th Engineer Company, 81st Troop Command, was nursing a rib problem he suffered in combatives more than two weeks before the competition. He reactivated this injury when he fell on one of the obstacles.

"Under the conditions, I feel I did great," said Szabo after the day's events.

Szabo has been in the Guard for four and a half years after being honorably discharged from the 82nd Airborne in 1984. Between the 82nd and the Guard, Szabo worked as a salesman.

His twice-a-day workouts over the past seven months, in preparation for this event, were impressive. He would get off work around 1:30 a.m. and run 3 to 5 miles, do some pull-ups, push-ups and sit-ups, and repeat the routine around 10:30 a.m. While deployed to Iraq, he was doing 23 pull-ups, too. For this training, he said he would start

**BEST
WARRIOR
COMPETITION**

REGION 2 CONTENDER



SSG Han H. Wang of Mechanicsburg, PA, has been in the Guard for more than three years. He served in the active-duty Army for more than four years. He is a Small Group Leader for

Warriors Leader Course at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA. He is Ranger, Jump Master and Airborne qualified.



ON TARGET Before the Urban Operations competition, SPC Daril Fannin was among the competitors getting a good sight picture with his M-16 rifle during a class on how to enter and clear a room.

with 15 on his first set, then do 12 his second set and decrease by two each set.

“You have to tell yourself you’re going to do it because it is important,” said Szabo of his self-enforced exercise regimen.

THE HARD MARCH

By the time I arrived at the WTC, the Soldiers had already competed in seven events. The opening five-event Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) included a 5-mile run, the first 2 miles of which were counted as a normal APFT 2-mile run. Next came a combat water survival test (CWST), then a five-hour Night and Day Land Navigation Course that preceded the obstacle course.

SSG Joseph Weidlich of New York’s 206th Military Police Company, a former Marine rifleman and administrative clerk, said the APFT’s 5-mile run “bright and early in the morning,” combined with the road march, made it a challenging day.

Weidlich, who had deployed to Iraq as a Navy Reserve construction electrician, described the two days of the competition.

“[From] around 03[00] on Monday morning ... we were on the go all day,” he explained. “We had the forced march yesterday evening. I stopped around a quarter till two, and we got back up at 3:30, so [that was] a good two-

hour rest after all that.”

SGT Sean Walters of Arkansas’ Battery A, 1st Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery, a Guard Soldier for the last four years, had a vivid description of the road march, which he noted was the most mentally exhausting event for him.

“[It’s] because you’ve already been up all day and the road march starts at 2300,” remarked

Walters, who was battling a cold. “You’ve got to go the entire way just trying to get to [a] place where you can rest two hours ... and do a land nav course. And five hours on the land nav—that was one of the most stressful things for me. You had three hours for the 12 miles, but it was just the competition that ensued between individuals trying to get there first and get the maximum number of points. It placed so much on us, just trying to truck along and get in there in about two and a half hours.”

Everyone agreed with Walters that this road march was the toughest event. This is also the first year it was this long. Last year, it was “only” 10 miles. The reason for the change was to ensure that the finish line of the road march was also the start point of the land navigation course, explained 1SG Doug Conway of the WTC’s Bravo Company. Each company was tasked with managing a specific number of events.

I also should mention that the competitors had a standard packing list for their rucksacks that made them weigh a whopping 30 pounds, plus they carried their rifles and two full canteens on their LBE (Load Bearing Equipment).

“It is a good route,” Conway said. “It was a lot of uphill—very good route.”

I decided to learn even more about this infamous road march. I thought who better to ask than CSM Thomas Siter, the man behind

BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

★★★ ★★★★★

REGION 3 CONTENDERS



SPC Daril R. Fannin of Winchester, TN, has been in the Guard for three years. He is a medic attached to the Regimental Fires Squadron for Tennessee’s 278th Cavalry Regiment. He is currently pursuing a degree in medicine.



SGT Douglas P. Bishop of Tallahassee, FL, has been in the Guard for three years. He served four years in the active-duty Army. He is the Fire Direction Center Chief. He is Javelin Gunner/Javelin Instructor qualified.

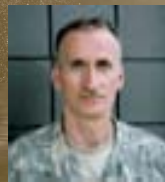


REGION 4 CONTENDERS



SPC Richard M. Codd of Greenwood, IN, has been in the Army for almost four years, most of which he spent on active duty deployed in Iraq and as an Operation Warrior Trainer

(OWT) at Camp Atterbury. He is Air Assault qualified and a Squad Designated Marksman (SDM).



SGT Zoltan L. Szabo of Kouts, IN, has been in the Guard for more than four years. He served in the 82nd Airborne Division from 1980-84. He is a combat engineer and has earned

the Expert Infantryman Badge. He is a fuel truck driver.

REGION 5 CONTENDERS



SGT Sean Walters of Bentonville, AR, has been in the Guard for four years and serves as a reconnaissance sergeant. He has an associate degree in Criminal Justice.



SSG Omar Vela of Round Rock, TX, has been in the Guard for more than a year. He served in the active-duty Army for six years and is Ranger, Airborne, Jumpmaster and

Survive, Evade Resist, Escape (SERE) qualified. He is an infantry instructor.

WTC's intensity and one of the founders of the competition. Siter is also the former WTC Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

Though he didn't have as big of a part in this competition as he did last year, he wasn't surprised that this road march challenged the competitors. A former Army Ranger, Siter said that in most competitions, including Best Ranger, the road march is one of the toughest events.

"That's where the field starts to separate. During and after the foot march, competitors seem to see the wizard," said Siter, who went on terminal leave June 20 after more than 20 years in the military. "Whether it's the tick on their back, the miles, the mental games that the road march plays on an individual—that's usually the make it or break it event," he added.

This road march proved extra rough because the competitors' ACUs were still damp from the CWST earlier in the day, when one of the tasks was jumping off the high dive blindfolded.

"[S]oaking wet gear, decent amount of weight—it was a good challenge!" declared Noyce Merino, who works as a morning shift manager for UPS.

SFC Jennifer Butler, an 18-year Soldier from Utah's 4th Battalion, 640th Regiment (RTI)—and the only female in the competition—noted that the end of the march tasked her mentally. And at only 5'11", the obstacle course was a little tougher.

"It was probably about 70-percent uphill. It takes a toll on you," said SPC Richard Codd, of Indiana's Directorate Plans Training Mobilization Security Small Arms Readiness Group. "And then right after it, a little bit of sleep deprivation always helps," added Codd with just a bit of sarcasm.

SPC Daril Fannin of Tennessee's Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Field Artillery Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), noted that the course was the toughest "12-miler" he had ever done. Fannin is a medic, attached to the 278th ACR's Regimental Fires Squadron and has been in the Guard for almost three years.

Cadett, who's training for Ranger school, added that of the eight road marches he has done, this was the hardest. "Even at the end, it was uphill," Cadett said. "So we were just kind of laughing at the guy who made up the course. It was fun. I enjoyed it."

A similar note echoed from SSG Omar J. Vela, of Texas' Company C, 1st Battalion, 136th Regiment and a former Ranger, who actually seemed to enjoy the competition.



STUMP JUMP SGT Douglas Bishop pauses before jumping from one stump to another in the Island Hopper event.



BREATH OF FRESH AIR SPC Jeremy Whipple takes a breath after completing the Obstacle Course competition.

“Nothing has really crushed me; everything’s been good,” chirped Vela, 31, who joined the Guard for adventure and to challenge himself. He compared the competition to the Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP). RIP is a four-week course held at Fort Benning for sergeants and below. Upon graduation, the Soldiers will be assigned to one of the three Ranger Battalions, the 75th Regimental Headquarters or the newly formed Ranger Special Troops Battalion (RSTB).

He admitted that the jumping events in the obstacle course took a toll on him, and by the end he was out of energy. “I had no bounce left,” he said. When asked how he kept himself motivated, he shot back, “one foot over the other.” Vela also was living a verse in the Ranger Creed: “100 percent and then some.”

The 22-year-old Walters, who started flying airplanes at age 12 and has nearly 600 hours flying fixed-wing aircraft, said the event that concerned him was the CWST.

“I’m not a fish at all,” he said. “So water survival that first day really scared me quite a bit.”

The participants ended the day by competing in Combatives, Urban Operations, taking a 50-question written examination and reciting the NCO or Soldier’s Creed from memory while standing at attention before several senior NCOs.

The Combatives included 30-second bouts of pugil sticks and boxing. Urban Operations had the competitors, armed with 9-mm simunitions (paintball rounds shot from M-16 rifles), enter a building with two rooms. Each

room had two stationary scaled-silhouette targets with three balloons on each—two on the chest and one on the head. To score, they had to hit all balloons in the correct order and not expose themselves to “enemy fire” for more than three seconds.

PASSING THE TORCH

Whipple, an independent consultant for computer networks, said this is the first time a Soldier from his unit competed, and it was a

huge learning experience.

“I know [my unit is] looking at possibly trying to make more of an effort ... to get Soldiers prepared for this so we can make a run at [it] every year,” he said.

Noyce Merino agreed. “They should try and do everything they can to get to this place,” he said.

Walters, who was recently promoted to sergeant and is a fixed base operator at an airport, says one thing he’ll take back to his Soldiers is being able to help them learn to stay motivated at any task.

“I can teach [them] how to push on when your feet start hurting, [and to] keep on going whenever you think you have given it your all,” he said.

Conway said he’s going to tour the All Army competition this year for even more ideas for next year’s Best Warrior event. Events at the All Army competition include M-4-rifle zeroing and qualification, a day and night urban warfare orienteering course and a “mystery event.”

I think Siter has the best advice for Guard Soldiers, though, no matter what they do in their military career.

“Whenever you’ve reached that point where you think it is good enough, you probably need to move out and do something different because nothing should ever be good enough,” he stated. Spoken like a true Guard Warrior. **GX**

BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION

REGION 6 CONTENDERS



Wyoming.

SPC Eli F. Lilley of Laramie, WY, has been in the Guard for two years as fire support specialist. He is currently pursuing a degree in Agricultural Business from the University of



is Airborne and Sniper qualified. He is also a supervisor for UPS.

SSG Michael T. Noyce Merino of Butte, MT, has been in the Guard for only a year as an infantryman. He served six years in the active-duty Army. He

REGION 7 CONTENDERS



SPC Jeremy C. Whipple of Court Draper, UT, has been in the Guard for five years. He is an aviation fueller. His long-term goals include creating a worldwide travel company.



1 and Instructor qualified.

SFC Jennifer Butler of Saratoga Springs, UT, has been in the Guard for 18 years. She is an intelligence analyst course manager. She is Combat Lifesaver qualified, Combatives Level

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Head of the Class

SOLDIER GETS HIS GOLDEN BARS THROUGH THE ROTC

By Christian Anderson

He walks into the classroom, takes a seat and waits for the professor to begin the lecture. This student is about to graduate from college, and with that comes all of the questions soon-to-be college grads have: Will I get a job? How will I pay my student loans? Will I be able to hack it out in the real world? One thing this student has on his side is tons of real-world experience, thanks to the Army National Guard (ARNG).

In fact, SSG Bill Kinnard, 30, doesn't worry much about his future since enrolling in the Army ROTC/SMP (Simultaneous Membership Program) program at Tennessee Tech University. Coupled with his 11 years of Guard experience, he'll be more than prepared to handle leading Soldiers in the Guard. Kinnard chose the ROTC/SMP program over the regular ROTC because it would allow him to stay in the Guard and utilize his previous experience as a Citizen-Soldier.

Enlisting in the Guard in November 1997, the Baxter, TN, native had his eyes on college from the start.

"Actually, when I first joined, it was mainly to help pay for college," Kinnard said. "But when I got into Basic Training, it just kind of stuck [with] me, and I really enjoyed it."

Deploying to Iraq from 2004 to 2005, Kinnard, a 96B—Intelligence Analyst—gained a great deal of experience and learned a lot about being a Soldier.

"In my field, I actually got to see the big picture of what was going on, and it was very interesting," Kinnard said. "While I was overseas, I saw some things that [made me think that] ... as an officer, I could probably make a [bigger] difference.

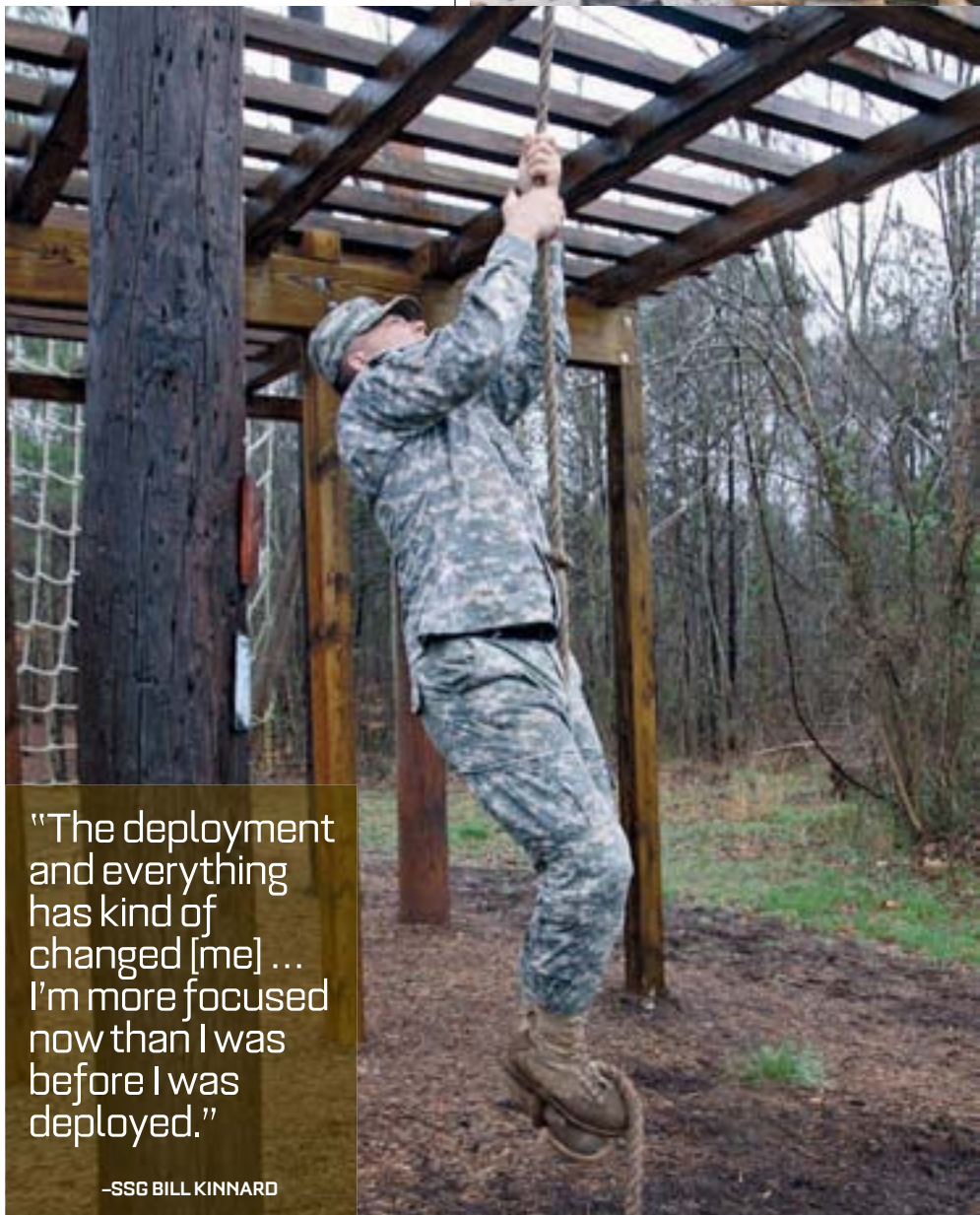
"Instead of being the person doing the work, I could be the person overseeing [things] and making sure it was done right."

So after returning to the States at the end of his deployment, Kinnard enrolled in the ROTC at the urging of several of his officers, particularly MAJ James Reed. Reed, currently the scholarship and enrollment officer at Tennessee Tech University, deployed with Kinnard and got to see his leadership qualities and outstanding

service firsthand.

"The fact that I could go to some extra schools, like Airborne School, was a plus," Kinnard said.

After settling into college, Kinnard began to focus on the task at hand. He studied engineering—specifically, mechanical industrial technology—while waiting a semester before



"The deployment and everything has kind of changed [me] ... I'm more focused now than I was before I was deployed."

—SSG BILL KINNARD



“Being in the Guard helps [make you] a better cadet because you’re actually getting some training in addition to what you are reading from a book.”

—SSG BILL KINNARD

Two key qualities of leadership that Kinnard has learned from his ROTC cadre, including Reed, are integrity and respect.

“Those are the two main things that I focus on,” Kinnard said. “If you’ve got integrity, you can make everything work.”

As a cadet in the ROTC and a full-time engineering student, Kinnard sometimes finds life a little hectic, but he credits the Guard for instilling discipline and ensuring he is squared away at everything he does.

“You just have to use good time management, and I got that from the military,” Kinnard said. “The deployment and everything has kind of changed [me] ... I’m more focused now than I was before I was deployed.”

Kinnard feels positive about his decision to enroll in the ROTC/SMP option and continue his service in the Guard, recognizing that the training keeps him focused and ready to serve.

“Being in the Guard helps [make you] a better cadet because you’re actually getting some training in addition to what you are reading from a book,” Kinnard explained. “When I go train with my unit, I’m actually



LEADING BY EXAMPLE SSG Bill Kinnard uses his previous experience in the Guard to help train ROTC Cadets at Tennessee Tech University.

said. “[During] my junior year, a lot of those guys asked me about ideas for when we were doing training and stuff, on things that they could do to improve.”

Kinnard offered help and advice to his fellow cadets, but it did take some getting used to.

“My first semester in the ROTC program, it took a little adjusting because [of] going from being a staff sergeant, and being in control of a small section of people, back to ... being a private again,” he said. “It took a little bit for that transition. But once I got through that, yeah, it’s been a great experience.”

Although Kinnard has more than a decade of military experience, he looks up to his ROTC cadre, especially Reed, for guidance on how to become a leader.

“I’ve got ties with MAJ Reed all the way back to when I first joined the National Guard 10 years ago,” Kinnard said. “He kind of took me under his wing a little bit because I started out as a radio operator in his section, and he just always tried to direct me on the right path as far as what I needed to do to get promoted.”

getting some hands-on experience.”

In addition to learning dedication and discipline in the Guard, Kinnard realized early on there is no room in it for selfish Soldiers.

“The world’s a big place, and sometimes you have to sacrifice to help other people,” Kinnard observed. “That’s why all the [Soldiers] are doing it. They realize there’s a sacrifice that needs to be made.”

Kinnard didn’t think twice when he signed on the dotted line, and cherishes his experience and service—helping people and making a difference—on a daily basis.

“I really enjoy knowing that has been ... a major part of my life,” Kinnard said. “The fact that I was able to do that for the country and for other people is good.”

Branching in the infantry, Kinnard will go to Fort Benning after graduation to complete his officer leadership training, and plans on returning to the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in the Tennessee ARNG. **GX**

For more on the ROTC, visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/Education/ROTC.php.

taking on the ROTC/SMP option.

“Within a month of coming home, I was in school,” Kinnard said. “I completed my first semester here just to get back in the swing of college, refocus and make the transition from being overseas to being home. I wanted to give myself some time to readjust.”

Once in the ROTC program, Kinnard enjoyed the camaraderie, but noticed he was already in a position of leadership with his fellow cadets. Being older than the other cadets and more experienced in the ways of a Warrior, he often found himself at the receiving end of questions concerning his experience in the Guard.

“Right off the bat they all came to me and were asking me questions about my deployment,” he

Guard Legacy

TRADITIONS OF SERVICE



ON PATROL National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment, Connecticut National Guard and Afghanistan National Army soldiers patrol a road outside of Forward Operating Base Kalagush, Afghanistan.

WAR PEACE

CONNECTICUT'S 300 YEARS OF PATRIOTIC SERVICE

By Jason Hall

THE CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD

was defending its homeland nearly 150 years before the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

The formation of militia regiments in Massachusetts on December 13, 1636, is regarded as the birth of the National Guard. However, small militia units had already existed there, as well as in their neighbor to the south, Connecticut. Mere months after the formation of Massachusetts units into regiments, militias of both Massachusetts and Connecticut were involved in the conflict that would start a war that would last over 200 years: the Indian Wars.

It was the constant attacks on the English settlers by the Pequot tribe that had led to the formation of the militia regiments and the urgent need for trained militia to counter the threat. The Pequot tribe was not a peaceful tribe like others the settlers had encountered. In fact, the word Pequot, when translated, means “destroyer,” and they intended to destroy the English insurgents coming into their territory. The largest action of the Pequot War occurred on May 26, 1637, when approximately 900 militia men from Massachusetts and Connecticut nearly annihilated the Pequot Tribe.

Following the Pequot War, the colony of Connecticut adopted measures to strengthen its militia force in the face of continued conflict with other local Native American tribes. In 1650, the Connecticut General Court enacted the militia system of Massachusetts known as the “Minuteman” concept, which called for a portion of the militia to remain in a constant state of readiness at all

times. The system was employed to counter an increasing number of attacks by Native Americans. The need for safety among the society necessitated growth of the militia, and by 1680 there were more than 2,500 members of the Connecticut militia.

The conflict with local tribes would soon involve another foreign power. In 1754, European conflict spilled over onto the North American continent. Great Britain was fighting the French for control of the area known as New France, today known as Canada. The British military employed the local militia forces in their efforts against the

ant colonel of the militia, and make a name for himself as a brave Soldier. One of the stories testifying to his bravery, honor and luck was when he was captured, tied to a stake and about to be burned until a French officer intervened.

Following the war, Putnam prospered as a farmer and tavern keeper. He was well liked and admired even beyond the boundaries of the colony of Connecticut. As dissatisfaction with the British crown spread through the colonies, Putnam joined the newly formed Sons of Liberty. He increasingly supported the growing appetite for rebellion against England.

siege to the British garrisoning the city. He was commissioned as colonel of a Connecticut regiment and brigadier of Connecticut militia.

The British, in an attempt to end the siege, decided to attack the entrenched American forces on Breed's Hill. During this battle, incorrectly called the Battle of “Bunker Hill,” Putnam was one of the two principal American commanders. As the British Regulars marched toward the Americans, it is believed that it was he who uttered to his men the immortal words, “Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!” In recognition of his gallantry, Congress appointed Israel Putnam as one of the original major generals of the Continental Army. Putnam is just one example of the great contribution that the Connecticut militia played in the American victory in the American War of Independence.



THE KING OF BATTLE First Regiment, Connecticut Heavy Artillery, photographed just prior to the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, was organized from elements of the 4th Connecticut Infantry in January 1862. Besides Chancellorsville, the unit fought at Gettysburg and the Petersburg campaign leading the end of the war in 1865.

French and their Native American allies. One such militiaman from Connecticut was 37-year-old Israel Putnam. Putnam joined the famed militia unit Roger's Rangers in 1755. He would rise to the rank of lieutenant

Shot Heard 'Round the World

With the “shot heard 'round the world” being fired at Lexington and Concord in April of 1775, Putnam rushed to Boston to join the gathering American militia forces laying

Defending During the 1800s

However, relations between England and the new United States of America would remain strained, and conflict would once again erupt in 1812. With the onset of the War of 1812, President James Madison called up the state militias. However, the majority of the citizens of New England states did not support the federal government's decision to declare war on England. Their reluctance was based on the fact that these states were heavily dependent on maritime trade with Great Britain, and a war with that country would have a serious negative economic impact for the region.

Though British ships were contesting American sovereignty on the high seas, Gov. John C. Smith of Connecticut decided to not adhere to President Madison's call for

militia troops. Connecticut would eventually supply militia Soldiers for federal service in 1814, but they were only to be used to protect Connecticut's coast following a British raid on New Haven. Gov. Smith's initial refusal to supply troops to President Madison illustrates the problematic relationship between state and federal control of militia forces, a debate that would not be resolved until 1916.

With the exception of their service during the Mexican War (1846–1848), things were relatively quiet for the Connecticut militia. But a national crisis that would determine the future of the young nation was smoldering and about to explode. The Civil War began on April 12, 1861, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. In the aftermath of the attack, President Abraham Lincoln called for the state militias to mobilize. Unlike the War of 1812, this time the Soldiers of Connecticut immediately answered the President's call to arms.

Thousands of brave men from Connecticut served proudly in the Union Army. Connecticut provided several infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments, and made notable contributions to the war effort. One such regiment is the 11th

Connecticut Infantry, led by COL Henry W. Kingsbury. During the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, our nation's single bloodiest day, Kingsbury's 11th Connecticut was given a difficult task: storm and capture the bridge across Antietam Creek. This bridge, now known as "Burnside's Bridge," is named after GEN Ambrose Burnside, whose ill-conceived plan was going to cost many Connecticut Yankees their lives.

The attack across Burnside's Bridge was an effort to collapse the right flank of the Confederate Army under the command of Robert E. Lee. The Georgia militia Soldiers defending the bridge had dug entrenchments along the high ground opposite the Union Soldiers on the other side of the creek. The Georgians had an excellent protected position to provide withering fire upon the unprotected members of the 11th as they attempted to cross the bridge. As the Connecticut men began to waver, Kingsbury rushed to the front and led his men forward. Kingsbury was hit by four Confederate bullets, with the final round hitting him in the stomach, which proved to be fatal. The 25-year-old Kingsbury was so well regarded that Burnside himself issued a proclamation honoring the

heroic efforts of this young Connecticut militia Soldier.

With the surrender of the Confederate Army at Appomattox in 1865, the men of the Connecticut militia returned home and enjoyed 33 years of peace. In April 1898, America went to war with Spain over control of Cuba, the Caribbean and the Philippine Islands. Within 60 days of the beginning of the Spanish-American War, Connecticut had mobilized over 3,000 militia Soldiers for federal service and immediately began to train to go to war. Due to the brief duration of the war, the Connecticut men were not able to reach the front in time to participate in the conflict.

Patriotic Service

Regardless of being unable to fight, the Soldiers, particularly those of the 1st Connecticut Volunteer regiment, viewed their service with pride. The members of Company K were upset when they heard that Theodore Roosevelt stated that "one of my Rough Riders is worth any three of the other volunteers." PVT George B. Thayer of Company K responded by saying that Roosevelt's Rough Riders were "lucky, that's all," and accused Roosevelt of "using strokes of good luck to disparage the others, who, through no fault of their

own, have missed the opportunity of their lives." Though they did not see combat, the Connecticut Soldiers, like thousands of their comrades in arms across the country, had answered the call due to a strong sense of patriotic duty and loyalty.

As time went on, there would be major changes in store for the Connecticut militia. In fact, its name was about to change. With the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916, all state militias were to be known as the National Guard. Another provision of the act was formal authority of the president of the United States to mobilize the National Guard for a national crisis. Fifteen days after passage, President Wilson used his new powers to mobilize the Guard in response to the threat of the insurgent Mexican rebel Pancho Villa.

Among the many National Guard units that responded to the president's call was the 2nd Connecticut Infantry Regiment. Of all the Guard units, the 2nd Connecticut had the longest train ride to the Mexican border, approximately 2,900 miles by rail. The 2nd spent over four months patrolling the border between Mexico and the United States. During their deployment they sharpened their logistical and combat skills, experience that would be extremely beneficial in the



ON GUARD SGT Matt Frieman of the 1/102 Infantry and Afghan police officers secure a road during a scheduled meeting between key leaders in the Kunar province of Afghanistan on Feb. 4, 2007.

The Connecticut Connection

By Jason Hall

My first interaction with the Connecticut Army National Guard was when I was Director of the National Guard Educational Foundation and attended the 2003 Annual Conference of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard in Toledo, OH. I had just finished giving a talk on the history of the Guard, including the Guard's role in activities following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. A friendly but upset lady approached me after I came down from the stage and sternly informed me that I failed to mention the Guard's role in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. I apologized, and this exchange with Mrs. Anthony Savino began a friendship that has endured to this day. Mrs. Savino was upset because her son, SFC Anthony V. Savino, Jr. had served in Afghanistan. Her initiative to come up to me and make me aware of my error paid off in the end for both the Savino family and the National Guard Memorial Museum in DC.

SGT Savino was a crew chief of a CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter of Connecticut's Detachment 1, Company G, 104th Aviation unit. This unit had served gallantly in Afghanistan, having logged more than 5,000 flight hours carrying troops and supplies in support of U.S. efforts to engage and destroy Taliban and Al Qaeda forces. In recognition of their exemplary service, Company G was named the National Guard Unit of the Year for 2003 by the Army Aviation Association. Savino's flight tunic is now part of the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom exhibit of the National Guard Memorial Museum located in Washington, DC. He has been redeployed to Iraq and is currently serving there. He and the other men and women of the Connecticut Army National Guard continue to serve their state and their country as they write new chapters of National Guard history. **GX**



A HEALING HAND CTARNG SSG John Imperato, team chief, Company B, 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, Task Force Liberty, dresses the wound of an Iraqi child. The unit passed out toys and food to the children of Al Sakur, a small displaced persons camp outside Tikrit.

coming months. In November, the men of the 2nd Connecticut returned home, only to be mobilized again three months later, in February 1917, to go "over there" to France to fight in WWI. Prior to deploying to Europe, the 2nd Connecticut was redesignated as the 102nd Infantry, Connecticut Army National Guard. The 102nd was assigned to the 26th "Yankee" Division and saw combat in six campaigns.

Combat Goes to the Dogs

One of the more famous members of the 102nd was actually a dog—Stubby. Stubby had wandered into the training camp of the 102nd and immediately became the "unofficial official" mascot of the regiment. The Soldiers decided to smuggle the dog to France with them. Stubby did his duty by raising the morale of his fellow comrades. He was injured by a German grenade during the battle of Schieprey.

Following their liberation, the women of Chateau Thierry made a blanket "uniform" for Stubby. It contained the flags of all the Allies and the numerous medals he had been awarded, including one personally from GEN Pershing. Today, his uniform is on display in the Hartford State Armory. Stubby became so famous that several New York hotels lifted their ban on animals so he could stay there. After the war, instead of fighting on battlefields, he fought on the gridiron as the

mascot of the Georgetown University football team. Charles Ayer Whipple, the artist to the capital in Washington, DC, painted Stubby's portrait in 1925. It currently hangs in the 102nd regimental museum in New Haven. Stubby passed away in 1926, and the *New York Times* ran a half-page obituary for the famous war dog. Stubby's remains were preserved and put on display in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

Connecticut's 'Winged Victory'

Between the end of WWI and the beginning of WWII, the Connecticut units would be transferred from the 26th Division and reassigned to the 43rd "Winged Victory" Division. The division was first activated in 1923, with headquarters placed in Hartford. There were two infantry brigades: the 85th located in Connecticut and the 86th in Vermont. The 85th Brigade included two regiments: the 102nd and 169th Infantries.

The 43rd Division participated in the assault on New Georgia, which was met with stiff resistance by the Japanese forces stationed there. The 43rd continued to participate in the "island hopping" campaigns in the Pacific, landing and capturing several strategic islands. During the assault on Luzon, under withering enemy fire, the Soldiers of the 43rd established a beachhead. From their foothold, the men of

the 43rd pushed forward and captured the island, and liberated its inhabitants from years of Japanese occupation. As in the past, the men of Connecticut helped to achieve victory for the United States and its allies.

The echo of the guns of WWII had barely faded when once again the Soldiers of Connecticut were called to war. On August 28, 1950, the 745th battalion marched through the streets of Norwich on their way to deploy to Korea. The citizens of the town all came out to see their loved ones off to war.

In the wake of the Korean War, the Connecticut National Guard saw many changes and reorganizations. Clouds of war loomed again on the horizon, though this time the Connecticut Guard would not be called upon. Though it was not mobilized or deployed to Vietnam, many of its Soldiers volunteered and saw combat in Vietnam.

It would not be until 1991 that the Connecticut National Guard would see a wholesale mobilization of its Soldiers. In the first Persian Gulf War, several units were deployed to the Gulf to participate in Operation Desert Storm. Connecticut's 142nd Medical Company and 143rd Military Police Company served with distinction. In just over 10 years, the men and women of the Connecticut National Guard would once again be back in the "sandbox." **GX**

For more on the Connecticut Guard, visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/CT.



Small Steps, Big Rewards

**BUILDING
GOOD HEALTH,
ONE CHOICE
AT A TIME**

By Cheryl Nash, Health Educator, BSN

Statistics confirm that Americans have a dependency on food that is leading to deadly consequences. In the last 25 years, the number of overweight and obese Americans has more than doubled in the adult population and more than tripled among young people.

In 2000, the total monetary cost of the obesity epidemic in the United States was about \$117 billion. Sadly, the human cost was and continues to be increased risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis-related disabilities and some cancers, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Eat less, move more and make healthy choices. How hard could it be? Yet, most of us just can't seem to do these three simple things consistently. There are many reasons for our inability to "stay on the wagon" where healthy eating is concerned. These excuses have enabled us to eat what we want, when we want and in the quantities that

we want, regardless of the havoc we are creating in our bodies.

What can we do to reverse the trend of obesity and its consequences?

The bottom line is that the calories we consume must be equal to or less than the calories we expend, or weight gain will occur. For most people, the "cure" for being overweight is two-fold: regular physical activity and healthy eating. Both of these lifestyle changes require self-discipline and a supportive environment.

Small steps can be the answer to walking a healthy path. For example, start by making healthy choices before opening the menu



The bottom line is that the calories we consume must be equal to or less than the calories we expend, or weight gain will occur.

at a favorite restaurant. Decide now to order a lean turkey sandwich on 100 percent whole wheat bread instead of a burger and fries for lunch. Choose now to reduce intake of

WEB RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
- Hooah 4 Health: www.Hooah4Health.com
- USDA /MyPyramid: www.MyPyramid.gov
- Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov

Healthy Steps

TRY THESE TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER BODY

- USE FAT-FREE OR SKIM MILK IN RECIPES, DRINKS AND CEREAL
- IF YOU CRAVE A DESSERT, HAVE JUST A TASTE OR A HALF-PORTION AT MOST
- ASK FOR A LOW-FAT SALAD DRESSING ON THE SIDE
- TRIM VISIBLE FAT FROM MEAT AND REMOVE SKIN FROM POULTRY
- TURN TV TIME INTO EXERCISE TIME
- USE THE STAIRS
- WALK A MESSAGE TO A CO-WORKER INSTEAD OF SENDING AN EMAIL OR PHONING

actually need every day? Consult the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the new U.S. Department of Agriculture food pyramid, and personalize it to fit your needs: www.MyPyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx.

The goal is to start caring for our bodies in a positive and proactive way by taking small, manageable steps toward better nutrition and greater activity each day. Bring your friends and family along for the walk on the path to healthier living.

Remember—each small step will result in cumulative positive changes in time and could contribute to a healthier, happier life. Forgive yourself if you occasionally wander off the path—you can find your way back and continue the journey if you want it bad enough. Strive toward the idea that healthful living is a habit that must be developed over time.

Step by step, you will feel less deprived and more in control of your life and health. **GX**

sugary beverages and replace them with water instead. Believe it or not, this small action could lead to a 5-pound weight loss and better oral health by the end of the year. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator at work or going for a short walk after dinner may not seem like a fitness regimen, but these activities do contribute to an overall healthy lifestyle, according to www.Hooh4Health.com.

Not sure how much food you

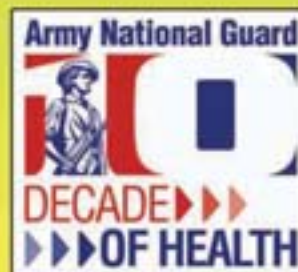
Boots Start Walkin' for Healthy Weight Management

ARNG Lighten Up!™



Always Ready, Always There...
Always Healthy.

www.decadeofhealth.com





Your Credit Score

A TICKET TO SAVINGS, OPPORTUNITY

Whether you know it or not, you're being watched. Every time you open a credit card account, pay a bill or finance a car, your every move is recorded. It's not "Big Brother"—it's the three sisters: three major credit-reporting agencies that keep track of your financial history. They collect years of information about you and boil it all down to a simple three-digit number. It's called your "credit score," and it plays a major role in your financial future.

By LTC Joseph Montanaro, CFPTM,
USAA Financial Planning Services

If you don't have a clue about what your credit score might be, it's time to take an interest. Others certainly do. Any time you apply to borrow money, lenders want to know how big a risk they're taking, and your credit score is one of the tools they use to find out. Whether you want to take out a mortgage or make installments on a new couch, your credit score will be checked. A high score tells the lender that you have a strong history of managing and paying off debts, which can help you get lower interest rates and more favorable financing terms. On the contrary, a low credit score could result in paying more interest, or could even disqualify you from borrowing altogether.

A low score has consequences outside of borrowing money, too. To a certain degree, some businesses see your credit score as an indication of your trustworthiness and responsibility. So it may affect your ability to get approved for a residential lease, get a good deal on insurance or even land a job outside the military.

WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

Now that you know your credit score is important, how can you tell if yours is helping or hurting you? The first step is to take a look at your current score using one of several available services.

You can review your credit report from each of the three big credit bureaus (Experian, TransUnion and Equifax) once per year for free at www.AnnualCreditReport.com, and for a small fee, they will give you your score. But as a military member, you don't have to pay. A relatively new offer from www.BrightScore.com allows active-duty service members to access their scores for free, and get a detailed credit report analysis and helpful counseling to improve their credit. BrightScore is a service of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), in partnership with the InCharge Institute of America.

The credit score scale runs from 300 to 850, with the average American's score falling in the upper 600s. Ideally, you'll want your score to be above 700, which will usually help you qualify for the best interest rates banks have to offer and clear



Building a solid history of managing your debts wisely is the most straightforward way to redeem yourself in the eyes of lenders.

you with any landlords or employers. A score below 620 may indicate that you've had problems managing credit in the past.

MISTAKES TO AVOID

What types of problems can damage your score? For starters, making late payments on bills is not a good way to build trust with lenders. And it's not just credit card bills that count. Missing a payment on your mortgage, car note or even your cell phone bill could cost you precious points and stain your credit history for up to seven years. One piece of good news, however, is that barely-late payments don't hurt you nearly as much as those that are 30

or 60 days past due. So don't panic if you forgot to put the check in the mail today.

Carrying too much debt in relation to your available credit can also negatively affect your credit score. For example, if you have several credit cards all with balances approaching your maximum credit limit, lenders take that as a bad sign that you may not be able to pay off your debts.

Similarly, having too many inquiries into your credit report in a short period of time can cause problems as well. That's because, in the eyes of the credit bureaus, taking out several loans or signing up for multiple credit cards at once says you're

DAVID JOYNER/ISTOCKPHOTO



The Cost of Bad Credit

How much does a low credit score really hurt you? When your bad credit results in paying higher interest rates, it could make a difference of hundreds of dollars per month!

Take a look at www.MyFICO.com, where you can learn all about your FICO score, the credit scoring system used by 90 percent of the country's largest banks. The site lists national averages for mortgage rates given to consumers based partially on their credit scores. Here's an example using figures reported on Feb. 22, 2008.

Let's say you're ready to buy a house and take out a fixed-rate 30-year mortgage of \$125,000. Having a good credit score (700-759) could qualify you for an interest rate of 6.121 percent. The monthly payments on the loan would be \$759.

But what if you had a poor credit score? Banks would see you as more of a credit risk and would balance that risk by offering you a higher interest rate. For someone with a credit score of 580-619, the average interest rate was 9.205. And the payments on the same \$125,000 loan would be \$1,024.

BOTTOM LINE: The lower credit score would cost you an extra \$265 per month. That's \$3,180 a year and \$95,400 over the life of the 30-year loan!

in financial trouble. If you're just shopping around for the best interest rate, however, you can rest easy even though various lenders may pull your credit report around the same time. As long as you don't open accounts with all of them, it will show up only as a single inquiry on your credit report.

BOOSTING YOUR CREDIT

Despite our best intentions, nobody's perfect. There are plenty of good people out there who have slipped up in the past and damaged their credit. If you're one of them, don't despair. You have opportunities to make it right again.

First of all, obtain a copy of your credit report to make sure you're not being penalized unfairly for a mistake you didn't make. As previously mentioned, you can get it through www.BrightScore.com or by visiting www.AnnualCreditReport.com.

Some industry experts estimate that as many as one in four credit reports contain errors that can damage your credit score. Maybe you closed out a loan that shows up as

still outstanding, or you were dinged for a late payment that was really just a clerical error by your credit card company. Whatever the problem, you can work with the company to resolve the situation and request that it send written confirmation to the credit bureaus. Doing so could raise your credit score overnight.

Even if you're the only one to blame for your poor credit score, you can still turn things around, but it may take more time. Building a solid history of managing your debts wisely is the most straightforward way to redeem yourself in the eyes of

lenders. So get serious about paying every bill on time. And when possible, pay more than the minimum required payment on the loan or credit card statement. The faster you eliminate those outstanding balances, the better off you'll be.

As you continue to make purchases, track your spending carefully to ensure you don't come close to maxing out your credit cards. As a rule of thumb, try not to exceed more than about 30 percent of your available credit line.

Finally, credit bureaus want to see that you know how to use the

right type of credit tools for the things you buy. In general, people who have a mix of account types—credit cards, mortgages, installment loans, etc.—usually have better credit scores than those who use only credit cards. So if you're thinking of putting a new car on plastic, you may be better off going with a traditional auto loan.

Ultimately, the importance of making smart financial decisions goes far beyond raising your credit score. Understanding and using credit wisely is one step toward a lifetime of financial security. **GX**



5 WAYS TO MAKE STUDYING FUN (and More Effective)

By Johanna Altland, Grantham University



Do you ever get bored using the same old study skills time and again? Not only can you become reluctant to hit the books, but your brain will lack the stimulation it needs to stay alert. Shake things up by incorporating some of these creative study tips.

[1] Make flash cards: Flash cards are a great way to memorize key terms, definitions and dates. As you review your flash cards, be sure to shuffle them into a different order each time. If there's a question you're struggling with, spend a few extra minutes reviewing the information in your textbook related to that subject.

[2] Leave quizzes around the house: Before a test, put a few key questions and answers on slips of paper and place them throughout your house. As you go about your daily routine and come across one, answer the question before continuing with what you were doing.

This is a great way to get your kids involved. They can fill out the slips and post them around the house for you. This will keep them occupied and provide you with a little extra study time.

[3] Make a "wikiHow" Web page: By creating a wikiHow page about a subject, you'll be reviewing and

studying it, while helping others learn about it, too. If you are not familiar with wikiHow, it's one of the world's largest online how-to manuals. Anyone can do it; check it out at www.wikiHow.com.

[4] Use mnemonic devices: Remember the trick you used in elementary school to remember the colors of the rainbow—mnemonic devices? They're a tried-and-true way to remember a list of items or formulas. Here are a few common examples:

ROY. G. BIV: Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet are the colors of the rainbow.

Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge: This sentence is one of the easiest ways to remember the treble clef lines in music: E, G, B, D and F.

Super Man Helps Every One: This sentence is commonly used to remember the Great Lakes. The first letter of each word corresponds with

the first letter in the names of each of the Great Lakes: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

[5] Teach it to someone else: Tutor a friend or family member in your subject. While this may take a little bit of extra time, it is a creative way to review the information you've already learned.

Because they can be time-consuming, it may not make sense to use these creative study methods all of the time. However, they're a great way to master a challenging subject and will keep your studying fresh and your brain energized. **GX**

AVOID COMMON GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES

As students, we all know that submitting papers and assignments that aren't grammatically correct isn't a good idea. But now that more of our communication is completed online, our grammar and writing has become increasingly unprofessional because of lax punctuation, use of slang and abbreviations. The assignments and term papers you submit to your professors say a lot about who you are as a stu-

dent. You could be diligent in studying and completing assignments, but if you turn in a paper full of spelling errors and improper grammar, your professor may get the perception that you don't care about your education.

Regardless of your college major or professional field, we all have to do some writing. Email correspondence, term papers and proposals require proper grammar and professionalism. Here are a few common writing errors you can easily avoid.

PREPOSITIONS

Don't end your sentence with a preposition. This isn't an official rule, but doing so is generally considered incorrect and sloppy. Prepositions link nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. Common prepositions include—but are not limited to—the following words: about, after, among, at, before, between, but, by, during, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, onto, out, since, through, throughout, till, to, toward, with, within and without.

Incorrect: Where is my dog at?

Correct: Where is my dog? Or:
My dog is where?

AVOID REPETITION

Try not to use the same word more than once in a sentence unless you are emphasizing something. For example, it is OK to say, "This slice of pie is delicious. I mean really, really delicious."

But, it is incorrect to say, "I have to go to the grocery store for milk, eggs, bread, fruit, chicken and etc." Etcetera means "and so forth." So, what you are really saying is, "I have to go to the grocery store for milk, eggs, bread, fruit, chicken, and and so forth." Awkward, isn't it?

Incorrect: What is my PIN number?

What you are really saying is: What is my Personal Identification Number number?

Correct: What is my PIN?

COMMA USE #1

It is incorrect to use a comma to combine two independent clauses; this is also known as a comma splice. Correcting a comma splice is simple and can be done in a few different ways:

Incorrect: I just climbed Mount Everest, it is really high.

Correct: I just climbed Mount Everest. It is really high.

Correct: I just climbed Mount Everest; it is really high.

Correct: I just climbed Mount Everest, and it is really high.

COMMA USE #2

Many people tend to omit a comma in a sentence after an introductory word or phrase, but this is incorrect.

Incorrect: After her interview Jane decided to stop for coffee.

Correct: After her interview, Jane decided to stop for coffee.

PUNCTUATION WITH QUOTATIONS

Punctuation can be used inside or outside of a quotation depending on whether or not it is part of the quotation.

Incorrect: Christine asked, "When are you going on vacation?"

Correct: Christine asked, "When are you going on vacation?"

The question mark belongs inside of the quotation marks because the quoted text itself was a question.

Incorrect: Did Christine say, "St. John's beaches are beautiful?"

Correct: Did Christine say, "St. John's beaches are beautiful?"

In this case, the question mark should be outside of the quotation marks because the quote itself is not a question.

ITS VERSUS IT'S

Knowing when to use "its" versus "it's" can be confusing. The easiest thing to remember is that "its" is a possessive pronoun, and "it's" is the conjunction for "it is."

Incorrect: Its my birthday tomorrow.

Correct: It's my birthday tomorrow.

Incorrect: A llama is known for it's ability to spit when it feels threatened.

Correct: A llama is known for its ability to spit when it feels threatened.

By following these few simple rules, you can make your papers and assignments stand out from the rest. **GX**



PHOTOALTO/LAURENCE MOUTON/GETTY IMAGES

LeapFest

CHUTES AND LEADERS

By SPC **Miko** Holloran


I had one question on my mind as I rolled out of bed: to eat or not to eat breakfast?

I mulled it over in my mind for a few minutes and then decided that I'd rather not taste my breakfast a second time around. After all, I was about to take my first flight in a CH-47, better known as the Chinook.

Yeah, I'll admit it. I was a little nervous. I've been in some intense Black Hawk rides. Some of my fondest memories of being in the Guard are in a Black Hawk, assisting the Border Patrol during Operation Jump Start in Arizona. But from what I hear, the Black Hawk is the Cadillac of the Army's helicopters; the Chinook is the reliable, rough and tough pickup truck that takes a licking and keeps on kicking. It certainly doesn't have the smooth ride of a Cadillac, but it gets the cargo there.

The afternoon before, SGT David "Oz" Osgood, a public affairs specialist with the Rhode Island state public affairs office (PAO), picked me up from the Warwick, RI, airport. I shared my worries about riding in the helicopter with him, and he assured me that I would be able to handle my stomach in the Chinook.

I'm now in North Kingston, RI. It's LeapFest 2008, a competition located on the University of Rhode Island's sod farm. Even though it has been going on for 26 years, this is the first time I've heard of this competition, and once I see how big it really is, I'm in awe.



THEY TRANSFORM
FROM LIFE-SIZE
G.I. JOES TO
OD-BLUE JELLYFISH,
FLOATING CASUALLY
BACK DOWN TO EARTH.



BROTHERS IN ARMS

National Guard Soldiers stand proud after completing their jumps.

PURE EXCITEMENT The jump teams wait as the aircraft takes off during LeapFest '08.



LEARNING THE ROPES

“Not a lot of people outside Rhode Island take the time to come check it out, or even realize that it’s going on,” she says. “So it’s funny when you hear the news promote it, and they say, ‘LeapFest will be held in Providence this year.’ It’s held here every year!” SGT Burmeister laughs and rolls her eyes.

SGT Burmeister turns around to introduce me to Lt. Col. Denis Riel, the Rhode Island state public affairs officer. He looks at me straight in the eyes and says, “So, Miko, which aircraft do you feel like going up on?”

Now, Riel towers over my measly 5 feet, 5 inches, and looks like he only works out when he’s breathing. He has the swagger of a seasoned, hard-boiled infantryman. His in-your-face presence immediately makes me feel as though I’m standing before a man who is three parts John Wayne and two extra scoops of GEN George S. Patton. Scenes from *To Hell and Back* run through my mind. I’m completely caught off guard.

But, then I remember that I’m on assignment, and politely say that he can put me in either helicopter; I just appreciate the chance to cover the story.

“Sounds good,” he says, his voice almost a deep rumble that places him in more of a battlefield than a parachute competition in my mind. “We’re getting you on the Chinook. Follow me.”

We pull off the road and park next to a big white trailer truck. On either side of the truck, there are two huge circus tents. Underneath the tents is a sea of camouflage. My eyes comfortably glance over the camouflage, until my gaze is interrupted with different colors and patterns. I blink my eyes, take another look and realize that it’s not just ACUs. It’s a mixture of

different greens, grays, browns and tans. There are patches I am familiar with, and others I recognize as being from outside the military. I can spot flags of Peru, Canada, Germany and the famous Union Jack. My high school history teacher would have been so proud.

Riel immediately hooks me up with the RI-ARNG Special Forces team. He gives me a pat on the back, and I have to maneuver myself so it doesn’t look like it sent me five inches forward.

“These are members of the Rhode Island National Guard. They’ll make sure you’re well taken care of,” he bellows out with a huge smile on his face. First, he introduces the jump team that I will be flying with. Riel tells me that these Rhode Island National Guard members are part of Special Operation Detachment-Global, a Special Forces unit that is currently deployed in support of Special Operations Command-South (SOCSOUTH). Then I am introduced and passed on to three jumpmasters—OC Philip Wagoner, SSG Dave Raymond and SSG Thomas Preston, Guard members of the 56th Troop Command of the RIARNG. They immediately begin to fill me in about everything LeapFest.

LAYING DOWN THE RULES

The scoring of the competition is pretty interesting. In the middle of the landing zone, a huge, bright orange “X” has been laid down, marking the target spot for the jumpers. Once the Soldiers exit the helicopter in air, they must carefully steer their parachutes as close as possible to the “X,” if not landing right on it. The timing is measured in seconds.

Quickly gathering their equipment and locating exactly how far they are from the target, the Soldiers must sprint toward the target. The time is then totaled for all team members to



DROP AND ROLL A Soldier physically preps for the LeapFest '08 competition in Rhode Island.



I'VE GOT YOUR BACK SSG Thomas Preston checks the parachute of a member of the United Kingdom's Territorial Army, the U.K.'s equivalent of the U.S.'s National Guard.

MIKO HOLLORANT/SSG GINA VAILE-NEELSON



determine their collective score. Individual times are recorded and kept for individual awards. There are 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards given to teams and individuals, American and international.

Soldiers compete for both team and individual awards. To compete for an individual award, each Soldier must complete three rounds of jumps.

The rules for the event are very strict as well. Any interference with another team's time creates the risk of a 300-second time penalty, or worse, an immediate disqualification.

Each team is comprised of five jumpers and one jumpmaster. Because each team on the plane can only consist of four jumpers, the fifth individual acts as an alternate. The alternates are not allowed on the aircraft if they are not jumping.

The Soldiers must exit the Chinook from 1,500 feet in the air, using only a static line parachute. The static line parachute is different from your average parachute in that it automatically deploys once you jump out of the plane. What surprised me is that all ranks are invited to participate. No Soldier was judged because of their rank or lack of experience; it's all completely about skill. The competition is also open to females. The most important qualification for the Soldiers is that each jumper must be military qualified and must have done at least 10 jumps with the same model of static line parachute.



STANDING, WAITING

SFC Sawyack, an active-duty Soldier, waits with his jump team until OC Wagoner gives the OK to jump.

I was also given a brief history lesson about the parachute competition. LeapFest is the largest continuously conducted military parachute competition in the world. Not only are all branches invited to participate, including the Reserves and National Guard, but all branches of any military in the world as well. Actually, the 2007 winner was the 68th Special Forces Brigade from Bulgaria. This year, teams from South and Central America, such as Peru and Nicaragua, and from all over Europe participated in LeapFest, showcasing their skills. At the end of each LeapFest, all foreign national participants receive the United States Parachutist Wings, the American military badge for parachutists.

THE CHINOOK EXPERIENCE

Before I can squeeze in a few more questions, it's go-time for us. Preston gives my camera bag a gentle tug to get my attention, folds my hands over a set of orange and green foam earplugs, and motions for me to move forward. With his long gait, I have to do a slight jog to catch up, trying not to lose the earplugs or shove them too far into my ears.

The Chinook's rotors are spinning, readying the helicopter for takeoff, and Preston stops and points behind me. The wind is so intense that I don't just turn around, I whip around to see the long line of jumpers coming toward us, and I attempt to take the picture. It was a perfect scene. The Soldiers followed Raymond and Wagoner in two flawless lines. It seemed as though everyone had decided to walk in slow motion, and it was like watching some type of action movie. But, the wind the Chinook creates is incredible, and the picture doesn't really come out right.

Earlier that morning, I had put up my short hair in a small ponytail, and had carefully

pinned any remaining short strands away so that my hair could stay in regulation. Now it appears as though I took a wrong turn on my way to LeapFest, landed in the 1980s, and ratted my hair so it stands straight up, a la someone from Mötley Crüe. Wonderful.

Before the Chinook's wind blew me away, Preston grabs my backpack again, motioning for me to jump onto the back ramp. He seats me in the first seat on the left, and hooks up my seat belt. Giving me a thumbs up, he pats me on the back and walks toward the front of the aircraft. The jumpers file in to the helicopter, and Wagoner clips himself onto a hook positioned to the right of my feet. How he can trust a belt about 5 feet long to keep him in the helicopter, I don't think I'll ever figure out.

I turn my head to the left and watch as the jumpers quickly merge into a single line to board, and immediately find their seats. I am totally feeding off their excitement and am so pumped for this experience. I start to imagine what kind of flight the Chinook is going to be. I begin to think about my dad. He's a pilot and would watch the weather channel every morning, telling me if it was a good day for flying or not. I start to go through his checklist in my head and brace myself for take off. Out of curiosity, I glance to my left and realize that we have probably been flying for about five minutes now. I think Wagoner realizes my surprise, because I'm pretty sure I caught him chuckling to himself. I mentally kick myself for losing a cool point.

After being in the air for a few more minutes, I notice that Wagoner either has a death wish or is just plain crazy; he is on his hands and knees, balancing himself on the sloped ramp, sticking his head out of the aircraft. Remember



ON SOLID GROUND

A Soldier catches his balance after landing from a parachute jump.

that 5-foot long belt? It looks just like one of those seat belts on a commercial airplane.

GO-TIME

Once Wagoner determines that it's finally time for the Soldiers to jump, he stands up and yells, "get ready," waving his arms around like an overenthusiastic flight attendant. (Side note: I send my apologies to Wagoner for being in the way of his safety harness. Every time he walks toward the jumpers, the belt yanks him back because it wraps around my ankles, giving him an inch or two less than he is probably used to.)

The jumpers respond to his every command and double-check the jumpers in front of them. Raymond assists the jumpers, pulling on their cords and shaking their gear to make sure it's secured. The last parachutist confirms that they are ready by giving the jumper in front of them a pat on the shoulder. Each jumper responds by passing the pat forward, until the first Soldier sounds off with, "All OK, jumpmaster," and gives Wagoner a high-five that says, "We're ready to roll."

Wagoner rushes to the ramp, leaning out again. Once he feels that the time is almost here, he points to a mark on the ramp, a stretch of duct tape, and the first parachutist moves up to the mark, with the others following closely behind.

A few moments later, Wagoner points to the first Soldier and screams, "GO!" In one fluid movement, the Soldiers fly off of the static line and rush off into the open air one after another. They transform from life-size G.I. Joes to OD-blue jellyfish, floating casually back down to earth. A Soldier that is part of the Chinook crew grabs the static line hooks, pulling them into the aircraft with the canopy bags flapping behind them.

Once the first team has left the helicopter and is clear from interfering with the next group, Wagoner prepares the next jump team in the same fashion. As the next team is standing and waiting for the next order, one of the Soldiers looks at me, and with a grin stretching from ear to ear, throws me the "rock on" hand sign and a scream of "Who!" comes from behind his pearly whites.

These Soldiers have completely blown my mind. Now, even though my father earned his jump wings in the Marine Corps, I think we really both agree with the old solid, safe idea of, "Why would you jump out of a perfectly good airplane?" Call me crazy, but it makes total sense to me.

The Soldiers who fill the Chinook cannot seem to get enough of jumping out of this "perfectly good" helicopter. Each team that approaches the duct tape line gives each other high fives or fist bumps, wishing each



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK Two Soldiers of the Canadian Army rest as they wait for their next turn to jump.

other good luck with the biggest smiles on their faces. You can almost feel their rush just reading their faces and standing next to them. The view, the wind and the "it's-so-loud-it's-almost-quiet" atmosphere—I could see where it would be a little exhilarating.

Needless to say, it's pretty intense in the Chinook. I can see Wagoner and Raymond checking and passing the teams out of the aircraft, but I can't really hear what is coming out of their mouths. The only thing I can hear is my own breathing, and possibly my heart beating really fast. Later, Wagoner and Raymond were nice enough to give me the rundown of the process of getting the jumpers out of the helicopter.

"Because I was in the role of the primary jumpmaster, when you saw me leaning out of the aircraft, I was doing the outside safety check. I needed to make sure that there is nothing that I can't fix to prevent something that

At the end of the day,
I decided that
LeapFest was, for
me, definitely very
"hooah, hooah."
OK, so you caught me.
It almost makes me want
to jump out of a perfectly
good airplane. Almost.

could potentially hurt any of the jumpers," he explains. "After I do my outside check and am assured that it is safe, I'll give each team a four-minute warning. That doesn't mean my check ends there. I am continuously on the lookout for the Soldiers.

"When we are about a minute away from the drop zone, I'll yell back to the jumpers, 'Get ready.' When I reach my 30-second reference point, it all goes so very quickly after that. I say, 'Next pass stand up' and tell them to 'Hook up,' indicating the appropriate time for the jumpers to latch themselves onto the static line. The jumpers immediately clip themselves on, and then I instruct them to 'Check static lines,' 'Check equipment,' then to 'Sound off.'"

"During his verbal commands," added Raymond, "I'm going through with each jumper, helping out by quickly running through with a last minute check, looking for anything that might cause a problem. These checks are really important, because we're dealing with lives here."

SAFETY FIRST

What really impressed me when I was back on the ground was that I noticed that Wagoner, Preston, Raymond and other jumpmasters immediately went under the jumpers' tent and began to meticulously inspect each Soldier's equipment and jumpsuit, even those that were not from their own jump team. They were helping out the Soldiers they were competing against.

That underlying theme really made me appreciate what exactly was going on. It wasn't about the glory; it wasn't about the bragging rights. This was actually a small group of people with the same talents, ideals and skills. My attempt to penetrate into this strong bond was futile; I feel as though I will never be able to fully understand the fierce camaraderie between these airborne Soldiers.

At the end of the day, I decided that LeapFest, for me, was definitely very "hooah, hooah." OK, so you caught me. It almost makes me want to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.

Almost.

In the end, it was an active-Army team based out of Fort Campbell, KY, that took home the championship this year. The Soldiers were part of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. Congratulations SGTs Justin Rondorf and Jeffery Inman, and SPCs Daniel Almodovar and Justin Greer. Word is, the last time an active-duty team took home the honors was in 1999.

Don't worry, I'm placing my friendly bets on the Army National Guard in 2009! No pressure, Soldiers. **GX**

Tennessee Raiders

Counterdrug Unit
Hunts Down the Enemy

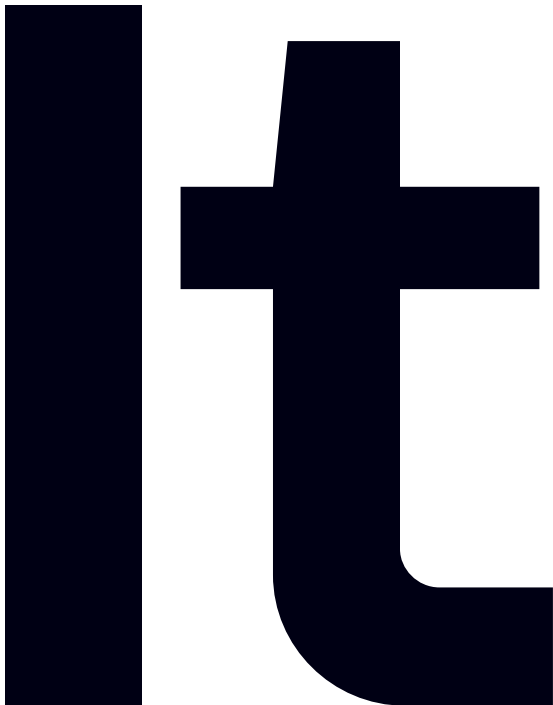
STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

KEEP FOCUS

A Guard Soldier hoists a bundle of confiscated marijuana plants in middle Tennessee. Soldiers must focus on the task at hand to avoid snakes and booby traps.



IN 2006, THE
UNIT RECOVERED
485,920
PLANTS
RANKING THIRD
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FOR MARIJUANA PLANT
CONFISCATION.



reminded me of a scene from a Vietnam War movie. We were surrounded by brush so thick it was hard to see 10 feet ahead, much less behind. A chopper was flying overhead, its rotors thumping, twirling the brush around us. Sweat rolled down my brow as we trudged through the dense forest. No one talked: We were keeping a vigilant eye out for one plant in particular: marijuana.

I jumped at the chance to tag along on a Tennessee Counterdrug ERAD (Eradication) mission, knowing that we would more than likely confiscate some illegal vegetation. Eager and with a grin on my face, I got up early and drove out to meet the ERAD Soldiers somewhere in Middle Tennessee. After the introductions, conversation turned to ticks, chiggers, snakes and booby traps ... My grin faded and a lump in my throat emerged.

Wait, booby traps? Ranging from Punji stick pits to piping primed with a shotgun shell, some growers resort to guerilla tactics to keep the law from catching their crops.

As I sat there waiting for the operation to kick off, I started to think about how comfortable the desk at my office is. Air conditioning, a cozy chair and a bottomless mug of coffee seemed pretty nice right now. Soon we were off driving down an old dirt road, and 30 minutes later, we pulled into an abandoned school—our rally point. As I got my camera and gear together, the ERAD Team unloaded their four-wheelers and put on their gear, which included two-way radios, handguns and machetes.

We mounted a few four-wheelers and away we went, speeding down a road sparsely inhabited with farmhouses. We looked like a bunch of renegades, but we were all business, especially when you saw the law enforcement agents and the chopper circling overhead. As we cut through some farmland, I started to realize how intense this mission could be.

These Soldiers do this day in and day out, but they always have to remain sharp so no one gets hurt.

We insert the forest still on the four-wheelers, and luckily having ridden four-wheelers all my life, I was able to relax and enjoy the ride. For those of you who haven't been on a four-wheeler, they are rugged and tough. With their low center of gravity, they can tackle terrain that would be impossible for conventional vehicles.

The officer on the lead four-wheeler was communicating with the chopper above, and he signaled us to stop and take to foot. As I looked through my camera lens, I kept reminding myself that this was the real thing, not some training exercise.

A WALK IN THE PARK

Man, it was hot! Here I was, walking through a Tennessee forest on a muggy August day. The chopper guided us by radio to a spot where it looked like marijuana was growing, and sure enough, there were about ten illegal plants coming out of the ground. These weren't plants the size of daisies either; these were as tall or taller than my six-foot frame and were clearly the result of an illegal grower's efforts.

Before I had time to ask a question, law enforcement agents were uprooting the plants and cutting them up. I could see professionalism in their movements and concentration in their eyes. Then we were on the move again to the next batch, which proved to be more impressive than the first. Located about 200 feet farther into the woods, this batch had chicken wire surrounding more than a dozen plants. I was in awe that this team, with helicopters and machetes, could find these marijuana patches in the middle of the woods, hours away from any major town or city.

We hit a third patch and the youngest member of the team, a SPC, got the privilege of carrying out all the plants. You might not think they weigh a lot, but 40 plants at six feet each isn't exactly easy to carry around thick brush. Even though he is the youngest on the team, the SPC speaks of the mission like a seasoned veteran.

"Sometimes we [find] a couple of patches, little plots where [they] plant corn," the Specialist said. "They will plant these plots using chicken wire and cut out the male plants so the female plants will take seed."

We loaded up the plants onto a four-wheeler and headed back to the school, the same way we came in. As we rounded up, the chopper pilots were already snacking on some lunch and sipping a cold drink, and the ground team was taking off their gear and trying to do the same. As they gathered around to chat, I was surprised that they weren't celebrating and high-fiving. But then I remembered this is the same group that has set a new standard in marijuana eradication and recently made one of the biggest confiscations ever.

KICKING BUTT AND TAKING PLANTS

In late June, the Tennessee National Guard Counterdrug Task Force confiscated 357,000 marijuana plants, totaling \$700 million. According to CPT David Roberts, public affairs officer for the Counterdrug Task Force, Tennessee is a prime place for growing marijuana.

"The Tennessee climate is perfect for marijuana," Roberts said. "The mild climate and rainfall patterns are ideal."

Special Agent Tim Wilson of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) explained that Tennessee is one of the "hot" states for growers, and the National Guard provides critical manpower and resources to Tennessee's counterdrug efforts. SA Wilson heads the DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication Suppression Program for Tennessee.

"Tennessee is an M-7 state, which means it produces a high volume of domestic marijuana," Wilson explained after the op was over. "There are three highway patrol helicopters and three National Guard helicopters, so the Guard is a valuable asset to the program."

Working with the Governor's Task Force, the Tennessee National Guard Counterdrug Task Force provides an invaluable

**"THE
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STREETS."**

>> Dale Hesketh

contribution to the team with both manpower and resources. Comprised of 87 Soldiers and Airmen, this team is very high-speed. Although they are spread out across the state, they make a big impact on all the illegal drug operations in the state. In 2006, the unit recovered 485,920 plants, ranking third in the nation for plant confiscation. But the unit focuses on more than just the number of plants they confiscate.”

Aussie Thaxter, a highway patrol officer who is part of the ground team, feels that no matter how small or large the bust, as long as it makes progress, it is successful.

“The best part of this mission is actually retrieving the marijuana,” Thaxter said. “I will take one plant or 100 plants... either way, I want to prevent them from hitting the streets.”

Dale Hesketh, who has been flying helicopters on these missions for the better part of 18 years, agrees.

“The important part of this mission is to know that we [kept] truckloads of dope off the streets,” Hesketh affirmed.

LENDING A HAND

The Counterdrug Task Force is available to assist non-drug related missions when requests are made through the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency or when directed by the National Guard Bureau. The Tennessee force participated in Operation Jumpstart with their OH-58 aircraft and took an LAV (Light Armored Vehicle) to the Gulf Coast to assist with recovery operations after Hurricane Katrina. The LAV, which is amphibious, can carry several people in its belly and proved invaluable to rescue efforts. According to one of its crew members, a Soldier with the Counterdrug Task Force, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was unlike anything he had ever seen.

“I had just gotten back from Iraq when I was sent down to New Orleans,” the SSG stated. “The destruction and devastation were far worse down there than in Iraq.”

BACK TO SCHOOL

Besides going out and eradicating

drugs, members of the Counterdrug Task Force go to school to educate others. But instead of sitting behind a desk, these Soldiers get in front of the classroom, conducting anti-drug programs and briefings across the state. Aiming their message at 6th through 8th graders, the Drug Demand Reduction Team has almost 40 members who show up to school in their ACUs and educate the middle school students about the dangers of drugs. As of September 30, the Drug Demand Reduction Team had reached more than 190,000 Tennesseans over the previous 12 months.

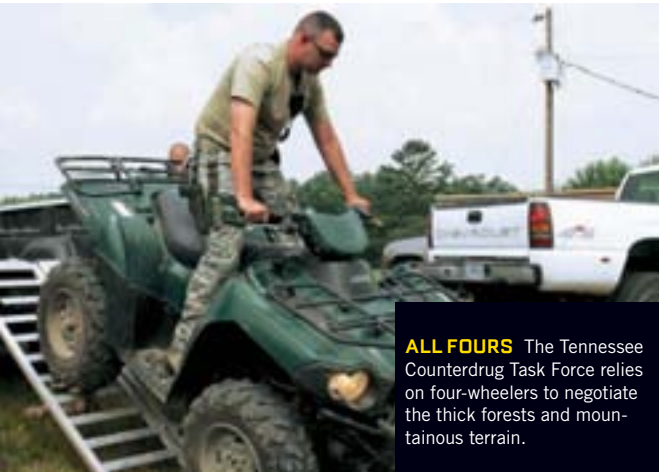
At the end of the day, as I got back to my car, I thought about what I had just witnessed. Guard Soldiers were out there, busting their butts to keep drugs off the streets. This is a tough mission, taxing the Soldiers physically and mentally, but it is necessary. We drove past a school, and I thought about how bright our young people’s future can be without drugs. Something Roberts had said earlier echoed in my head: “We do this to keep our children safe.” **GX**



LET'S CALL IT A DAY A Guard Soldier, a Highway Patrolman and an Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC) agent tie a bundle of confiscated marijuana to a four-wheeler.

NATIONAL ACCOLADES

Tennessee’s Drug Demand Reduction Team was selected best in the nation by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America in 2008 for their work with coalitions in the state. A counterdrug Soldier and Airman received a national marijuana eradication award from the Office of National Drug Control Policy for their support of the Governor’s Task Force on Marijuana Eradication. The Substance Abuse Testing Program also received national recognition for its work in 2008.



ALL FOURS The Tennessee Counterdrug Task Force relies on four-wheelers to negotiate the thick forests and mountainous terrain.



LIFT-OFF A Tennessee Highway Patrol Bell Jet Ranger takes off to perform a reconnaissance flight before a marijuana eradication mission in middle Tennessee.

Fighting Spirit

▶ SHARP AND STRONG





Around We Go

Dale Jr. leads the pack around a turn at the "Monster Mile" during the Dover 400 in Dover, DE.

SPORTS

Dale Jr.'s engine tuner goes under the No. 88's hood, a bull rider and Guard Soldier goes for eight seconds of glory, and more.

66

FITNESS

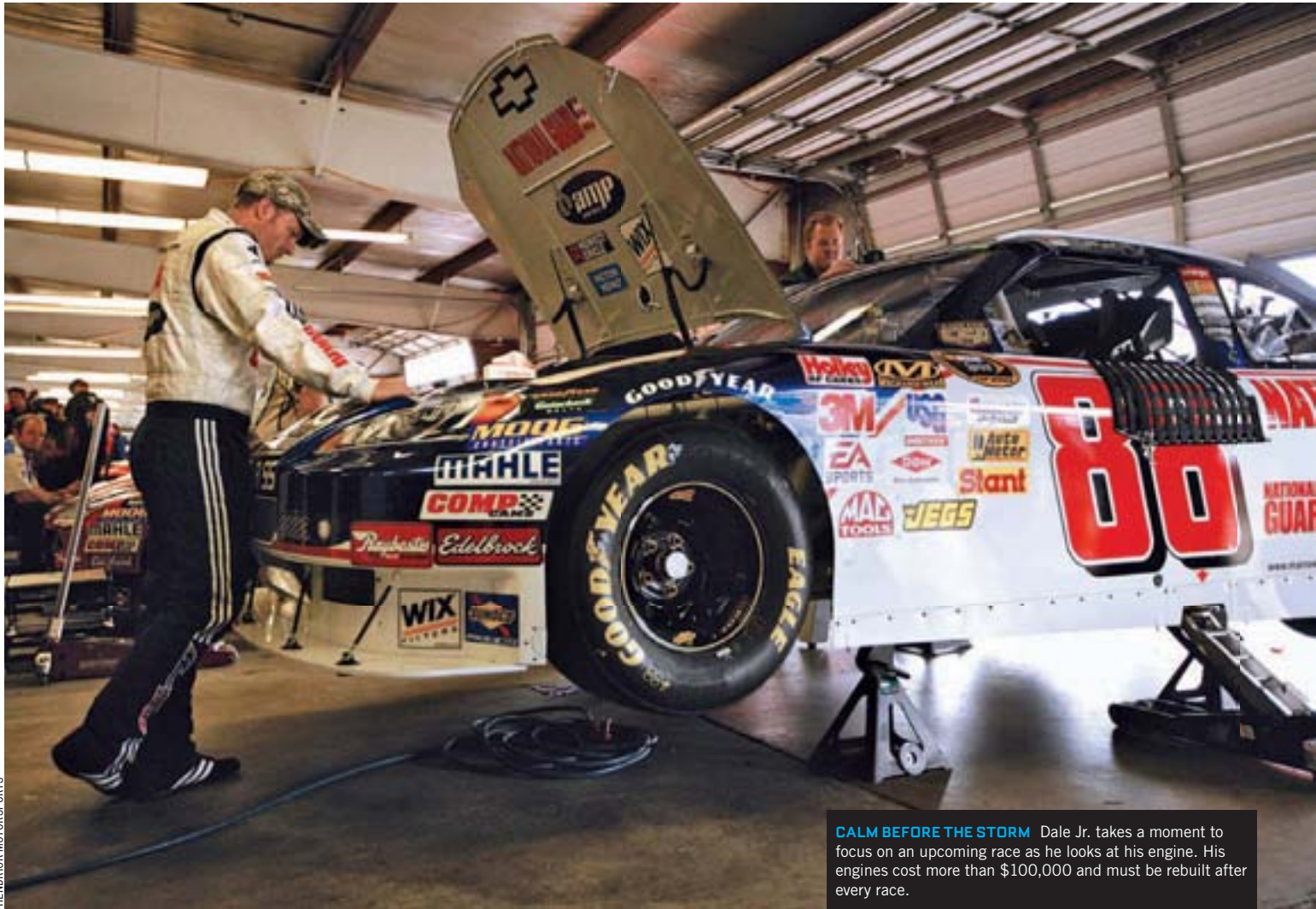
Fitness meets martial arts in Operation At Close Range.

72

GEAR

Go behind the scenes with the Stryker—the Guard's all-terrain vehicle.

76



HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

CALM BEFORE THE STORM Dale Jr. takes a moment to focus on an upcoming race as he looks at his engine. His engines cost more than \$100,000 and must be rebuilt after every race.

Fine Tuning

DALE JR.'S ENGINE TUNER REVEALS WHAT'S UNDER THE HOOD OF THE NO. 88 GUARD CAR

By SFC Clint Wood and Christian Anderson

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s No. 88 National Guard/Amp Chevrolet Impala is able to smoke other drivers on the track? Or how much horsepower its engine produces? Or, for that matter, how much one of these ear-splitting engines costs?

GX went to the best source for these and other questions—the Impala's engine tuner, Billy Davis. Davis is among the more than 500 employees that can be found working at the 70-plus acre Hendrick Motorsports complex on any given day of the week.

Check out Davis' answers to our Q&A:

GX: What's your role as an engine tuner for the No. 88 National Guard car?

BD: As the engine tuner, I am responsible for carburetor prep at the shop, and making sure the car is prepped for the race. At the track, I get the engine through NASCAR inspection and give it a pre-race check, making sure it is ready for the race. I watch the weather and track conditions and make any final tuning adjustments for the race.

GX: How did you get involved with Hendrick Motorsports?

BD: As a kid, I always wanted to be involved in racing in some way. I started washing parts in the engine teardown area in 2000 and slowly worked my way up from there.



It is an honor to represent the National Guard and give the Soldiers something to look forward to on race day.”

—BILLY DAVIS, engine tuner for Dale Jr.'s No. 88 race car.

GX: How much horsepower does Dale Jr.'s engine produce?

BD: The engine produces around 850 horsepower.

GX: Are there any restrictor plates or governors on the engine? How do NASCAR officials keep competition even between the Chevrolet, Ford, Dodge and Toyota cars?

BD: We run restrictor plates on two tracks, Daytona and Talladega. These plates reduce the engine to around 425 horsepower. NASCAR officials keep competition even by an engine inspection process each weekend. The engines have a cubic inch and compression ratio that each manufacturer must meet.

GX: How much do these engines cost? How many are there per team usually?

BD: [They] cost upwards of \$100,000. Usually each team has around three engines on hand on any given weekend.

GX: What are some of the main maintenance issues with these high-performance engines? Do they last as long as engines in regular cars?

BD: Our engines run around 700 miles a weekend, including all



OBJECTS ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR National Guard No. 88 racer Dale Earnhardt Jr. relies on his team's engine department and gauges like these to remain fast and steady on the racetrack.

HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

practices and the race. Then they are disassembled, inspected and rebuilt. Some components are replaced on each rebuild.

GX: How much oil do they use to operate? How many miles per gallon do they get?

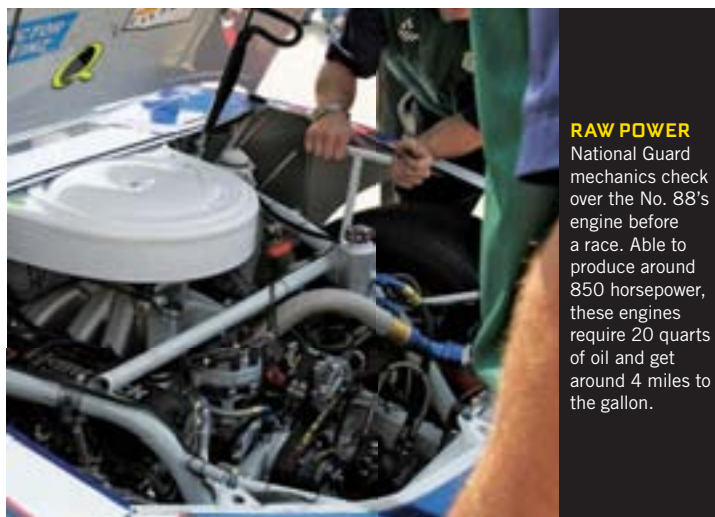
BD: The engine runs around 20 quarts of oil and consumes around two quarts [per] race. Depending on track and throttle time, they get around 4 miles per gallon.

GX: Does Hendrick Motorsports purchase the engine from a builder or do you build the engine yourselves?

BD: We get the engine block and cylinder head from General Motors racing... and all the prep, machining and assembly are done here at Hendrick Motorsports.

GX: Are there any weather or temperature conditions that hinder the engines from operating efficiently? What are the ideal conditions for the engine to put out peak power?

BD: The optimal conditions for engines to produce maximum



RAW POWER

National Guard mechanics check over the No. 88's engine before a race. Able to produce around 850 horsepower, these engines require 20 quarts of oil and get around 4 miles to the gallon.

HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

power are high barometric pressure, cool air temperatures and low humidity. We monitor weather conditions and adjust accordingly each weekend.

BD: 10,000 rpm.

GX: What is the maximum rpm the engine can run before it breaks down?

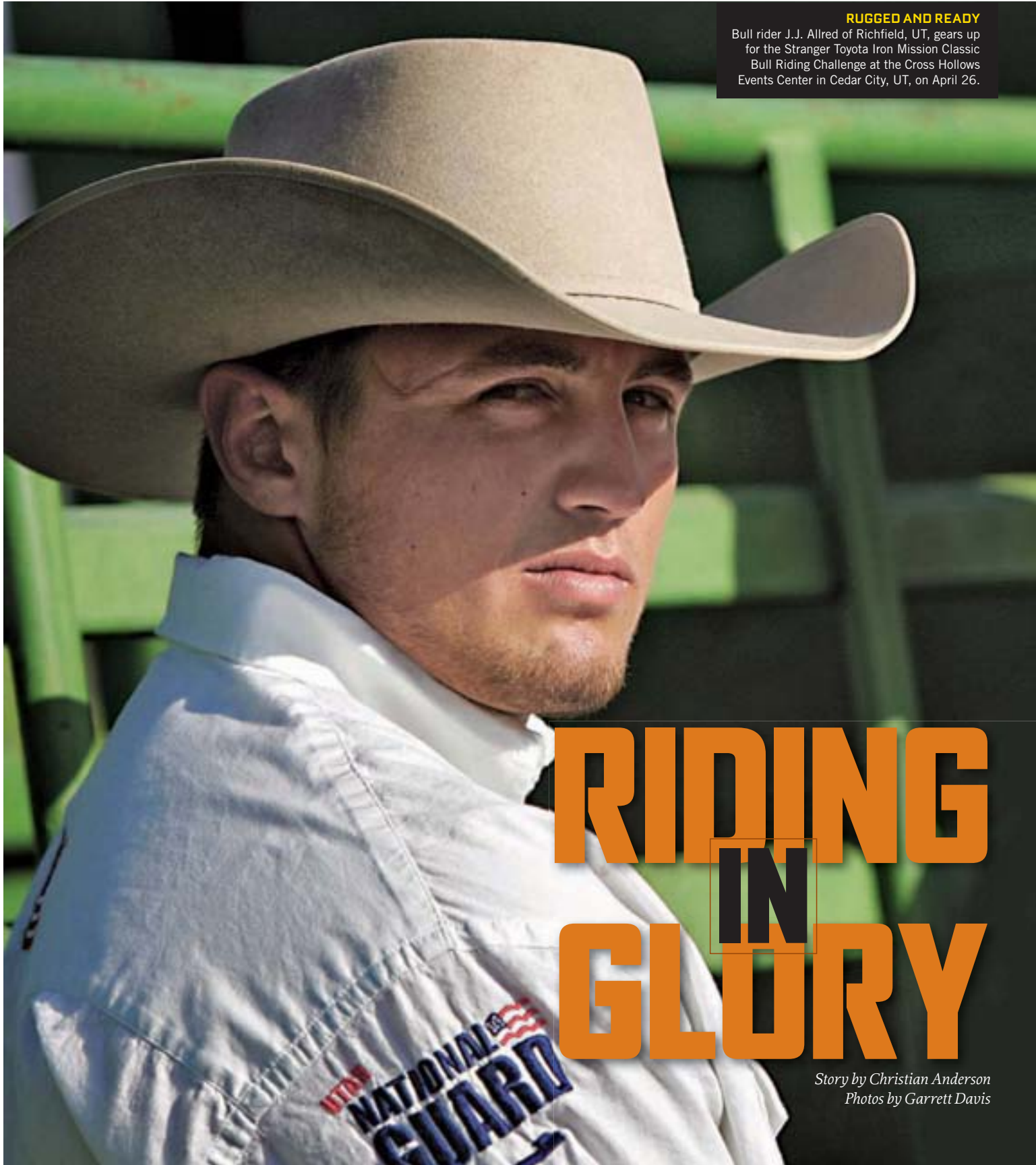
GX: What does it feel like to be representing the National Guard?

BD: It is an honor to represent the National Guard and give the Soldiers something to look forward to on race day. **GX**

Keep up with Dale Jr. at www.1-800-GO-GUARD/GuardRacing/DaleJr

RUGGED AND READY

Bull rider J.J. Allred of Richfield, UT, gears up for the Stranger Toyota Iron Mission Classic Bull Riding Challenge at the Cross Hollows Events Center in Cedar City, UT, on April 26.



RIDING IN GLORY

Story by Christian Anderson
Photos by Garrett Davis

Eight seconds.

All it takes is eight seconds of chaos, adrenaline and fear. But if you can manage to hold on, you will be rewarded with glory.

Originated in the late 1800s, bull riding tests the rider's strength as he hangs onto the bull with one arm. But it takes more than physical power to be successful in this dangerous sport: Bull riders must have courage and resolve to mount the back of an angry beast that can easily crush them. Bull riders and Soldiers are a lot alike in that both must swallow their fear and face the enemy.

ONE GUARD SOLDIER knows firsthand the adrenaline rush that comes from competing in bull riding. SGT James Allred, a Utah National Guard Soldier who competes for the Professional Cowboy Full Riding Association and the

Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, remembers his first ride 11 years ago.

"I had so much adrenaline pumping," said Allred, a 21B, or combat engineer. "I had ridden some pretty good yearling bulls, but my first

full grown bull was a great experience.

"I didn't ride for the full eight [seconds], but I stayed on long enough to really just get a start on the hunger," Allred continued. "I have been riding bulls for about 11 years now, and the adrenaline is still there as it was the first time I ever got on."

After riding for 11 years, Allred has learned that although experience and skill can help riders improve, without physical fitness, it's hard to be successful. They have to be lean and strong to keep the bull from shaking them off. Most riders, he describes, range from 130 to 160 pounds and anywhere from 5'6" to 6'0".

"Physical fitness is a big part of riding," Allred explained. "I have to work hard to maintain my fitness."

While some people wonder why an individual would jump out of a perfectly good airplane, others wonder why someone would jump onto a perfectly ruthless and raging bull. Answer: The



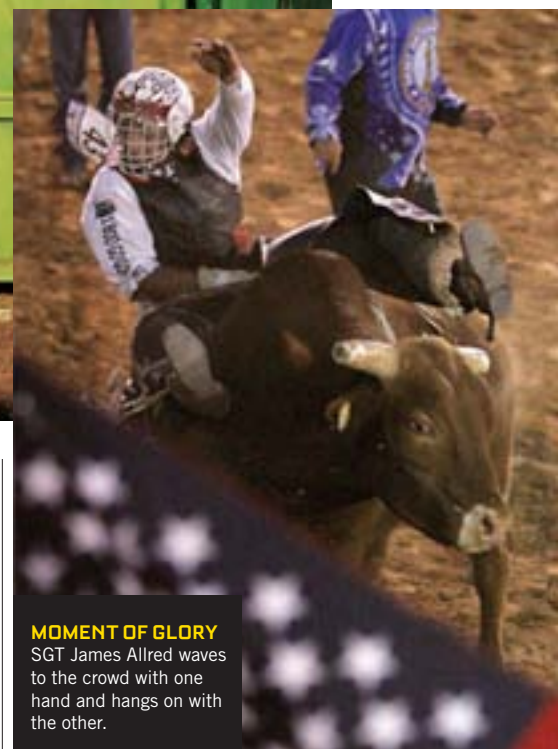
GEARING UP

Riders get ready for the upcoming events by wearing chaps and sometimes even helmets.



STRETCHING IT OUT

SGT James Allred stretches out before a ride. Many riders, including Allred, have previous injuries, so staying limber helps keep them less injury-prone.



MOMENT OF GLORY

SGT James Allred waves to the crowd with one hand and hangs on with the other.

thrill is incredible. But, without a mental edge, these riders wouldn't consider mounting the back of an 800-pound creature. Besides being physically fit, a rider must possess mental toughness.

"Bull riding is an 80 to 90 percent mental sport, and each time you get on you have to be mentally prepared," Allred said. "My mind actually clears, and all I think of is just ride jump for jump and don't second-guess the bull.

"Of course I am always striving for a 90-point ride," he added.

Allred has claimed his fair share of injuries, but that hasn't stopped him from competing. He says it's worth it, especially because he gets to represent the Army National Guard.

"I love being a part of such a great force, because it gives you something to be proud of," Allred said. "There's nothing more satisfying to me or pleasing than to fly the colors of our country."

Allred also described what the Guard and his patriotism mean to him when he hears the national anthem at a competition.

"I get in a zone and thank God for the opportunity I have to be in a country where we're free and can enjoy the beautiful events in life," Allred said. "I get very emotional."

For Allred, being a bull rider and a Soldier at the same time satisfies two childhood dreams, and he feels lucky to be able to pursue both at once.

"About the time I was 10, I wanted to be in the military," Allred said. "I had a good family friend in the Guard, so that was the branch I learned the most about and decided that was the branch for me. At the age of 17, my parents and I went down and I enlisted."

Today, Allred appreciates being a Soldier for many reasons: a sense of pride, money for college, and a generous health insurance policy—which has come in handy.

His pride magnifies tenfold when he gets out in the arena in front of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of fans.

"You're on top of the world, and I believe that's where the high levels of excitement and adrenaline really start to develop," Allred explained. "You can't let all the fans down, so you know you better step up and ride like it was your last. That way, it always feels like it is your first." **GX**



The Guillotine Choke

By SGT Michael Kerkhoff

Since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen have deployed. A year ago, a small group of Soldiers from the New Mexico Army National Guard, some of whom are CATC brothers, left for Afghanistan. I am proud to say, “Welcome home Warriors. For those who are currently fighting the good fight, returning home, or getting ready to deploy, CATC salutes you.”

Over the last several months, we have worked on attacks. If you go to your local mixed martial arts gym or jiu jitsu academy, they all have several submissions and counter moves to remember. This month, I want to focus on an escape from a very common submission attempt—the guillotine choke. Let’s roll!

▶ Got a question or comment about Combatives? We want to hear from you! Drop us a letter at Combatives@GXonline.com.

Guillotine Choke Escape

1. Your opponent catches you in the guillotine choke. First begin the escape by shrugging your shoulders in order to protect your neck or airway. If your posture, you endanger yourself by exposing your neck and helping your opponent sink in the choke. Instead of pulling away and posturing, push your weight forward and throw your inside arm over your opponent’s shoulder, driving your opposite shoulder into his neck.

2. As your opponent stretches his legs to finish the choke, cradle him by sitting back in a wide base. Once you’re sitting up with your opponent, shoot the arm over his shoulder as far down the center of his back as you can.

3. Immediately push your weight forward, pushing off on your toes, placing your head on the mat, driving your shoulder deep into your opponent’s neck. Further stack your opponent by staying on your toes, forcing your body weight downward on your opponent’s neck and head. This alone may cause your opponent to release the guillotine.

4. Create space by turning your hips out, away from your opponent. Place your outside hand or elbow on your opponent’s inner thigh to break his guard.

5. Once the guard is broken, bring your outside knee straight down to the mat. Once your knee is to the mat, keep the pressure by continuing to drive your shoulder into your opponent’s neck.

6. While maintaining pressure on your opponent’s neck, raise your hips and sit through, leading with your inside leg.

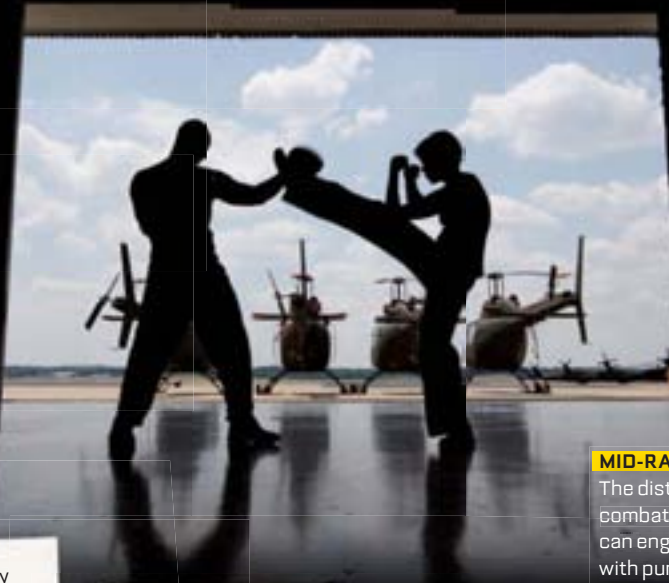
7. Finish with head control to set up a submission. **GX**



OPERATION AT CLOSE RANGE

Combative Fitness Training

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert



MID-RANGE TACTICS:

The distance between combatants where they can engage each other with punches or kicks.

My gums went completely numb after slugging back my third sugary shot of hot black tea. I was at an outdoor tea stand in Samarra, Iraq—similar to an outdoor American coffee shop—conversing with a local. The shopping center was particularly crowded on this blistering 125-degree afternoon. This was the kind of heat that gave new meaning to the phrase “boiling point.” My eyes stung from salty sweat streams pooling down in rivers from my helmet. Between the intense caffeine and sugar overdose, I had this false sense of Superman strength raging through my veins.

“Stay focused,” I thought to myself. This large Iraqi man in front of me was not my friend. Hassan was a 6-foot, 5-inch, 280-pound former Iraqi Republican Guard officer. Earlier that week, several unrelated townspeople indicated that he was acting as my friend in order to collect information about me to sell to the enemy. My intention in this meeting was to verify that this information was true.

After the usual flowery Arabic greeting, I began. “Hassan, we have been friends for several months now.”

Speaking in Arabic, he casually responded, “Yes.”

My stare narrowed and intensified as I continued, “There is a problem.”

The tone of our meeting changed. He looked bewildered. He was caught. For a brief moment, he seemed frozen in his seat. He managed to utter the words, in Arabic, “I don’t understand.” His voice was scratchy. I prayed silently that the Military Police squad leader in the alley would not miss the designated signal to come and rescue my translator and me from a potentially dangerous situation.

“The problem is that you are selling information about me to the enemy,” I declared. My finger was on the walkie-talkie resting on my lap, ready to give the cue.

As I glanced down, I noticed that Hassan’s knuckles were turning white from the force of clenching his fists. It was going to get physical, and with my martial arts training, he was going down. Under the table I tapped the walkie-talkie call button three times, cueing my cavalry to come charging out of the alley to my rescue. However, they struggled to reach us in the midst of the large crowd.

CRASH! In one move, all suspicion disappeared. The plastic tea-stand chairs went tumbling backward as Hassan lunged toward me. He wrapped his large hands around my neck and started to squeeze.

Instead of pulling his hands off of my neck, I reached my left hand up, grabbed his right hand tightly in its place and lunged backwards into a wide stance. “He is off-balance!” I thought. I immediately twisted my body counterclockwise at the hips, lifted my right arm in the air, struck downward and secured both of his arms in my right underarm. Loosening my grip on him for an instant, I stretched my right arm to my left and struck his face with my elbow. I stepped forward with my left leg, reached my right arm around the back of his neck under his chin and secured a chokehold on him by grabbing my right wrist with my left hand. Just like that, Hassan was in a chokehold at my side.

When the cavalry can’t make it in time, thank God for modern Combatives!

—SSG Ken Weichert



WARM-UP PHASE

Aerobics:

Examples: Running in place; side-straddle hops (jumping jacks); high steps/knees (5 minutes)

Stretching (5 minutes)

AEROBIC TARGET PHASE 1 UPPER BODY

Push-ups

Basic: 30 seconds

Intermediate: 60 seconds

Advanced: 90 seconds

1/2 Sit-ups, Crunches

Basic: 30 seconds

Intermediate: 60 seconds

Advanced: 90 seconds

PUNCH 1:

Front Punch, Jab

{ NOT PICTURED }

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Throw your lead fist straight at your target until the arm is fully extended. Your fist will rotate inward until the palm faces the ground. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. **Note:** This is a speed punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your back fist guarding your face.

Warning: Do not lock your elbow.

Basic: 20 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 50 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 100 punches (each arm)

PUNCH 2:

Straight (Back) Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Throw the back fist straight at your target until the arm is fully extended, crossing the body, rotating your back hip toward the front. Your back foot will twist outward, balancing on the ball of your foot. Your fist will rotate inward until the palm faces the ground. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. **Note:** This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

COMBO 1:

- Jab
- Straight Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Perform a jab and straight punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue the jab and straight punch combination for 30 seconds, then accelerate your jab and punch combination as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch.

PUNCH 3:

Hook Punch with back fist to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Shift your body weight to the rear, pivot your rear foot and torso, drop your rear fist in line with your target and swing your rear fist horizontally toward your target. Your rear arm will arc horizontally 90 degrees at your target, palm facing the body. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. **Note:** Hook punches can be thrown by either the lead or rear fist. A hook is usually aimed at the jaw, but it can also be used for body shots. This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

PUNCH 4:

Uppercut Punch with back fist to the jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Shift your body weight to the rear, pivot your rear foot and torso, drop your rear arm slightly, tighten the abdominals and throw your rear fist upward toward your target, fist facing the body. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. **Note:** Uppercuts cause more damage when thrown at close range. An uppercut is usually aimed at the jaw, but it can also be used for body shots. This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

Instructor's Note: Operation at Close Range is not intended as a self-defense training program. The purpose of this workout is to use mid- and close-range martial arts training techniques to help you reach target heart rate during your workout. We have posted some GX Fit Tips at the end of the program that will help you with equipment concerns and other important information. We advise you to exercise with extreme caution and work within your level of expertise. Enjoy your workout!

PUNCH 2: STRAIGHT (BACK) PUNCH



PUNCH 3: HOOK PUNCH WITH BACK FIST TO THE BODY



PUNCH 4: UPPER CUT PUNCH WITH BACK FIST TO THE JAW



KICK 1: KNEE KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY



KICK 2: SNAP KICK WITH FRONT LEG TO THE JAW



KICK 3: ROUNDHOUSE KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY OR JAW



KICK 4: FRONT KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY



COMBO 2:

- Jab, Jab
- Straight Punch
- Lead First Hook Punch
- Rear First Uppercut Punch
- Lead First Hook Punch
- Straight Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Perform the punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue Combo 2 for 60 seconds, then sprint with jabs and straight punches for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch.



AEROBIC TARGET PHASE 2 LOWER BODY

KICK 1:

Knee Kick with back leg to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Grab your opponent's rear neck or shoulders. Tighten your abdominals and thrust your back knee upward toward your target. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

KICK 2:

Snap Kick with front leg to the jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your forward knee up into the "chamber"; the ankle should be flexed downward. Snap your forward leg toward your target, kicking with your instep. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a speed kick.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

KICK 3:

Roundhouse Kick with back leg to the body or jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the "chamber"; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by

balancing on the ball of the foot and swing your rear leg in a semicircular motion, striking with the instep and shin. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.

- Basic:** 10 kicks (each leg)
- Intermediate:** 30 kicks (each leg)
- Advanced:** 60 kicks (each leg)

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.
ACTION: Perform the punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue Combo 3 for 60 seconds, then sprint with jabs and punches for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions, and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* The objective of this combination is to temporarily block the opponent’s vision with the straight punch while delivering the roundhouse kick.

GX

FIT TIPS

Choosing the right boxing gloves

The best advice for choosing boxing gloves is to try them on while wearing hand wraps.

Putting on hand wraps

Due to space restrictions, we could not fit hand wrap instructions in Operation at Close Range. There are many Web sites, like www.ringside.com, that explain step-by-step techniques for putting on hand wraps. We suggest that you use hand wraps for wrist and knuckle protection.

Safety concerns

Be certain to hold kicking shields while in a wide stance, with the shield against your body. *Warning:* Do not place either of your hands in front of your face.

Boxing glove care

I like to take four clean socks that I do not use anymore, pour some baby powder in two of them, roll them up, stick them into the third and fourth socks and tie the outer socks off at the ends. I wind up with two powder-filled sock snakes. After my kickboxing workouts, I stuff the sock snakes into each glove to keep them dry while stored in my gym bag. When I get home, I pull the sock snakes out and air the gloves out completely.

Get tons of tips about getting—and staying—fit at www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/fitness.

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.



“Obstacles are those frightful things you can see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

—Henry Ford

KICK 4:

Front Kick with back leg to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.
ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the “chamber”; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by balancing on the ball of the foot and thrust your rear leg forward at your target, striking with the ball of the foot. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.
Warning: Remember to curl your toes back with your kicking foot so that you will not hurt your toes.

- Basic:** 10 kicks (each leg)
- Intermediate:** 30 kicks (each leg)
- Advanced:** 60 kicks (each leg)

COMBO 3:

- Jab
- Straight Punch
- Roundhouse Kick, Back Leg

COOLDOWN PHASE

Stretching (5 minutes)

STAMINA STOPWATCH

1 full set = approximately 60 minutes

Equipment Needed:

- Boxing gloves
- Focus mitts
- Kicking shield



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.

CHRIS KISSLING

Ready to Strike

GUARD USES STRYKER TO HUNT DOWN THE ENEMY

By Christian Anderson

THE NATIONAL GUARD is set when it comes to tanks and armored vehicles. With the Abrams tank and Bradley fighting vehicles, the Guard's military muscle shocks our enemies even when it isn't flexed. One of the coolest additions to that muscle is the Stryker, an eight-wheeled armored combat vehicle that brings a swift punch to the enemy.

The first military vehicle to enter the service since the Abrams and Bradley in the 1980s, the Stryker fills the gap that these tracked vehicles could not. Introduced to the Guard in 2001, this all-wheel-drive vehicle can tackle all types of rugged terrain at speeds of up to 60 mph, with a maximum range of 312 miles.

The Stryker embodies a fierce Warrior spirit much like the men after whom it was named: SPC 4 Robert Stryker, who received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam, and PFC Stuart S. Stryker, who received the Medal of Honor in WWII. Stryker vehicles are able to operate both in urban and open terrain. They can transport infantry Soldiers quickly and efficiently to wherever they are needed, whenever they're needed.

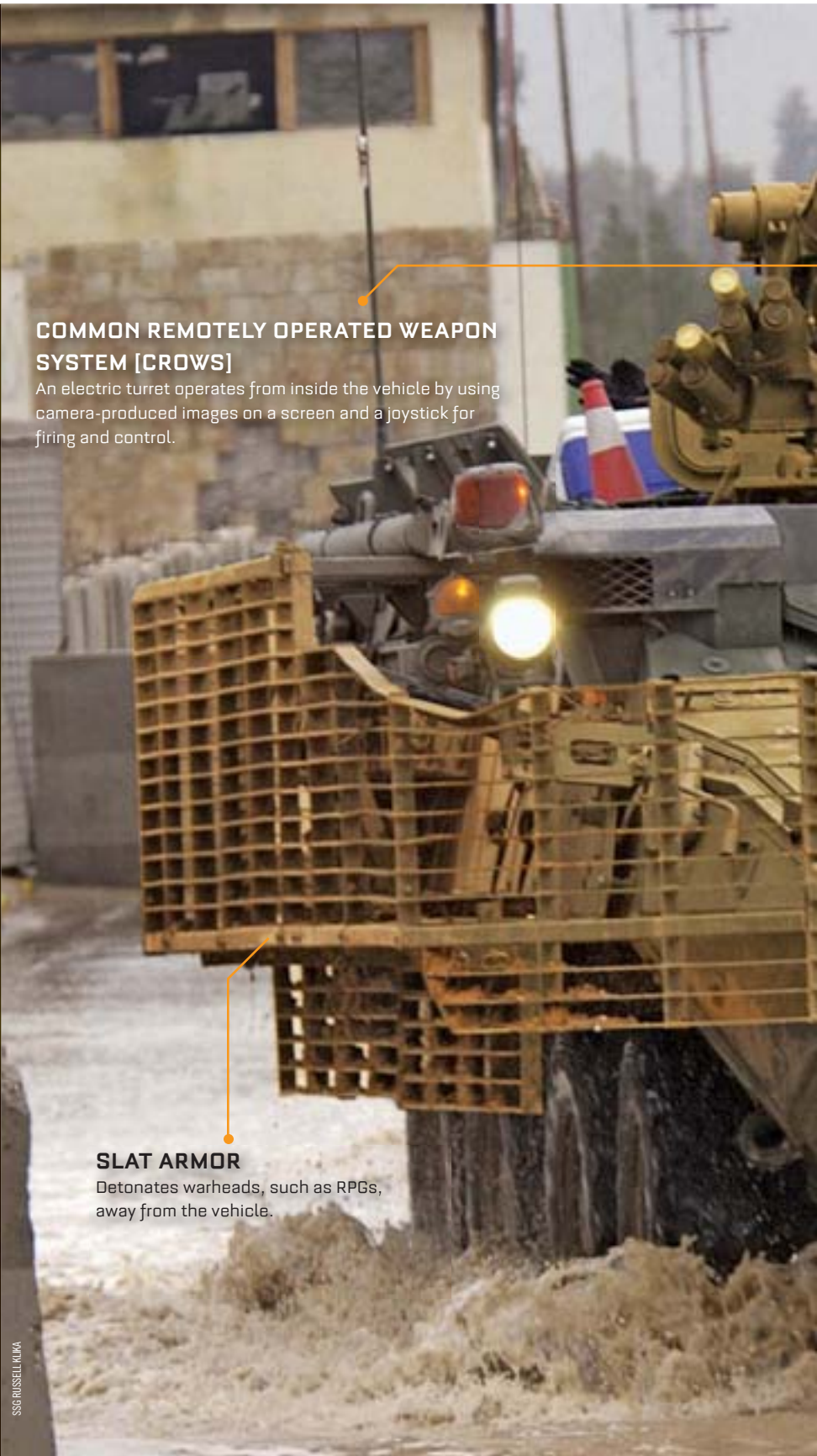
LETHAL AND VERSATILE

The Stryker is available in two configurations—as the Infantry Carrier vehicle (ICV) and the Mobile Gun System (MGS)—and the military will rely heavily on both in the future. The ICV can be armed either with an M2 .50 caliber machine gun, an MK19 40 mm grenade launcher or an MK240 7.62 mm machine gun, providing a nasty bite to any enemy in its sights. In addition to the powerful firepower of the Stryker, there are nine infantry Soldiers in the belly of the ICV, itching for a fight. The MGS is mounted with an M68A1E4 105 mm cannon on top and can use its 18 rounds to put a serious damper on an enemy's party in no time.

In addition to the 14.5 mm protective armor, both the Stryker ICV and MGS can be outfitted with slat armor, which looks like a cage, and is used to protect against rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs).

AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE

The Stryker is not only fast and capable to handle most terrain, but it is also easy to transport in a short period of time. A C-5 Galaxy can carry seven Strykers, while a C-17 Globemaster can carry four and a C-130 can carry a single Stryker. A Stryker can be on the ground taking the fight to the enemy anywhere, anytime, in a matter of days. **GX**



COMMON REMOTELY OPERATED WEAPON SYSTEM [CROWS]

An electric turret operates from inside the vehicle by using camera-produced images on a screen and a joystick for firing and control.

SLAT ARMOR

Detonates warheads, such as RPGs, away from the vehicle.

SSSG RUSSELL MILWA



.50 CAL MACHINE GUN

TANK COMMANDER



STRYKER SPECS

- CREW: 2 (DRIVER AND COMMANDER), PLUS 9 TROOPS FOR ICV; 3 (DRIVER, COMMANDER AND GUNNER) FOR MGS
- WEIGHT: 36,240 LBS (ICV); 41,300 LBS (MGS)
- ICV: 0.50 CALIBER M2 MACHINE GUN; MK19 40 MM GRENADE LAUNCHER OR MK240 7.62 MM MACHINE GUN; 4 X M6 SMOKE GRENADE LAUNCHERS
- MOBILE GUN SYSTEM: M68A1E4 105 MM CANNON; M2 0.50 CALIBER MACHINE GUN; 2 X M6 SMOKE GRENADE LAUNCHERS
- WEIGHT: 19 TONS
- SPEED: 60 MPH
- CRUISING RANGE: 300 MILES
- MANUFACTURER: GENERAL DYNAMICS LAND SYSTEMS





FIGHT FLAM

**SOLDIER
RISKS
HIS LIFE
TO SAVE
NEIGHBOR
FROM A
HOUSE FIRE**

*By Christian Anderson
Photos by Kristina Barker*

INGG ES



HELPING HIS NEIGHBOR

SSG Troy Spear (pictured with neighbor Ben Roose) received the South Dakota Ribbon of Valor during a July 10th ceremony for the heroism he displayed while rescuing Roose from his burning home in Summerset, SD, this summer.

It was after dinner when SSG Troy Spear picked up his 1-year-old son, Braydon, and walked over to the living room couch to relax and watch TV. Spear was tired, as he had just returned from a family trip, and nothing was more important to him than spending quality time with his young son and wife, Samantha.

Braydon loved his daddy's uniform, and it was easy for Spear to think about how, one day, his son might be a Soldier as well. But his thoughts were quickly interrupted when he smelled smoke coming through the open window.

Being in the Guard is a tremendous honor, and many individuals love the thrill of being able to help their country domestically and abroad. But like any profession, sometimes you want to take a day off and pursue your favorite hobby, whether it's jogging, working in the yard, playing golf or lying on the couch watching TV. As a Guard Soldier, this is a rare luxury because in the back of each Soldier's mind, he or she knows that his or her training and expertise might be needed in a crisis situation.

Spear, an automated logistical specialist (92A) with the 82nd Civil Support Team in Rapid City, SD, knows this well because his night of relaxing with his family was interrupted. Immediately after smelling smoke, he heard a fire alarm, went to his window and

saw smoke coming out of his neighbor's house. Spear, of Black Hawk, SD, reacted quickly to assist his neighbor, Ben Roose. He ran through the door, yelled for his wife, Samantha, to call 911 and headed to the fire.

"I threw on my boots, jumped off the back porch and ran to my neighbor's house," Spear said. "My first concern was to get in there, find him and make sure he was all right. I didn't even really think about it."

As Spear entered his neighbor's residence, he was shocked at how much smoke he encountered after opening the door. He was worried about Roose's safety, especially since he was an older man.

Spear found Roose and assisted him out of the house before attempting to put the flames out. Grabbing a garden hose, he sprayed water on Roose's residence, particularly the bathroom window where flames were leaping out. Spear kept this up until the fire department came, breaking only to assist Roose from his home to a safer area.



GUARD PROUD
SSG Troy Spear, a member of the 82nd Civil Support Team in Rapid City, relaxes at home with his wife, Samantha, and their sons Braydon, 2, and Brett, 3 weeks.

“Some of my military firefighter training from the past kicked in, and it helped make a difference,” Spear explained.

Spear is modest in taking responsibility for saving Roose’s life and most of his possessions, but the fact remains he did a great service. Had he not stymied the flames from the beginning, the fire department would have had a full fire to tackle. Instead, they encountered smoke and controlled flames.

“When the fire department got there a few minutes later, the fire was just smoldering,” Spear recalled. “They busted out the windows to let the smoke out. They didn’t have to spray anything, so they just went in to check and make sure the fire had not spread. It was pretty much out by the time they got there.”

Roose was able to salvage most of his belongings, including his beloved cat.

“His cat was in there. After the fire department got here, [an ambulance came and] took Ben to the hospital,” Spear added. “We told the firemen, and they found it hiding under the bed.”

After the fire department took control of the situation and Spear stepped back, he was able to regroup and take in what had just happened. As the adrenaline ebbed, Spear was no longer able to ignore the pain in his lungs from inhaling smoke. Spear and Roose were both taken to the hospital for smoke inhalation, a condition that can present serious problems if not treated immediately.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Web site, “Heat and smoke from fire can be more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs.”

Duty and selfless service are two of the Army’s seven values, and they were both present in abundance that hot July night. Just

“The nice thing about being in the Guard is that it has allowed me to serve in the military and be close to my hometown, my parents and my wife’s family.”

>> SSG Troy Spear

“I have seen other branches of service work in the community for [various] events, but nothing like what the National Guard is doing. I like it, and I plan on staying here until I retire.”

>> SSG Troy Spear



SSG STEIN LARSGAARD

STANDING TALL

SSG Troy Spear receives the South Dakota Medal of Valor from MG Steven Doohen during a ceremony on June 10, 2008, in Rapid City, SD. Spear was awarded the medal for his heroic actions during a neighbor’s house fire.

staying here until I retire.”

Spear was recognized for his bravery and honor at a ceremony on June 20, 2008, in Rapid City, where he was awarded the South Dakota Medal of Valor from MG Steven Doohen. Among those in attendance was Ben Roose, which made the ceremony that much more poignant for Spear.

“I was happy that I was able to help him as much as I could,”

Spear said. “I would do it again for anybody who was in that kind of trouble.”

Along with Roose, Spear’s mother and father were in attendance, both of whom had supported his decision to serve in the Guard.

“It was great that my parents were there ... they have been very supportive of my military career, no matter what branch I have been in,” Spear said. “The nice thing about being in the Guard is that it has allowed me to serve in the military and stay close to my hometown, my parents and my wife’s family.” **GX**

as Soldiers help keep our country safe, that evening one kept Roose safe.

It’s Soldiers like Spear who prove how important the National Guard is to our safety. And after serving in the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps, Spear is glad to have settled into the Guard. He enjoys the family and community associated with this branch.

“I have seen other branches of service work in the community for [various] events, but nothing like what the National Guard is doing,” Spears explained. “I like it, and I plan on

TRENCH WARFARE!

WORLD WAR I, 1918-ILT JAMES DOZIER, A GUARD SOLDIER OF SOUTH CAROLINA, ASSUMES COMMAND AFTER HIS CAPTAIN IS WOUNDED DURING AN ADVANCE AGAINST THE INFAMOUS HINDENBURG LINE: A GERMAN DEFENSIVE LINE SCATTERED WITH TRENCHES, MACHINE GUN NESTS, FORTIFICATIONS AND BARBED WIRE.



AFTER ADVANCING HIS MEN, DOZIER IS WOUNDED BUT RALLIES HIS MEN AND CONTINUES THE ADVANCE ON THE GERMAN POSITIONS. DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, DOZIER LEADS HIS MEN INTO ALMOST CERTAIN DEATH WITH NOTHING BUT A PISTOL TO DEFEND HIMSELF.



SUDDENLY, DOZIER AND HIS MEN ENCOUNTER A MACHINE GUN NEST. DOZIER AND ANOTHER SOLDIER MANEUVERED AROUND THE GERMAN POSITION, NEUTRALIZING IT WITH GRENADES. AS HIS TROOPS RUSHED TO BACK HIM UP, DOZIER WAS ATTACKING THE NEXT GERMAN INSTALLATION.



DOZIER AND THE OTHER SOLDIER ENCOUNTERED A DUGOUT FILLED WITH GERMANS, WHOM THEY TOOK PRISONER AND MARCHED BACK TO ALLIED LINES. IGNORING HIS WOUNDS THE ENTIRE TIME, DOZIER COLLAPSED UPON REGROUPING WITH HIS MEN.

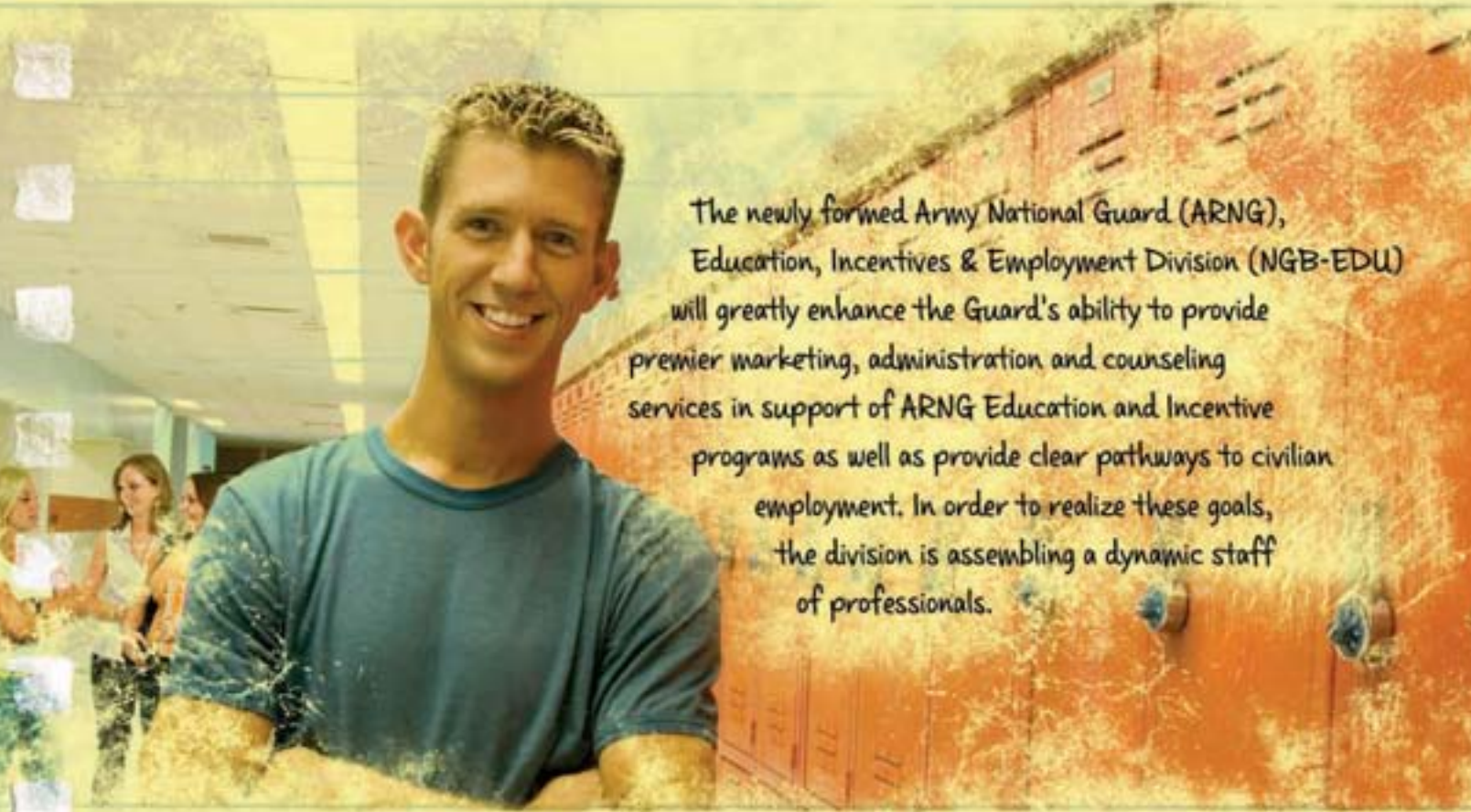
FOR HIS GALLANT LEADERSHIP AND COURAGEOUS ACTIONS AT THE HINDENBURG LINE, ILT DOZIER WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR. DOZIER CONTINUED TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY UNTIL HE RETIRED FROM HIS POSITION AS ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD IN 1959.



END

NEW ARNG EDUCATION DIVISION

STANDS UP!



The newly formed Army National Guard (ARNG), Education, Incentives & Employment Division (NGB-EDU) will greatly enhance the Guard's ability to provide premier marketing, administration and counseling services in support of ARNG Education and Incentive programs as well as provide clear pathways to civilian employment. In order to realize these goals, the division is assembling a dynamic staff of professionals.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this team and are an E5–E7 or O2–O4, visit the ARNG's Human Capital Management Division at Guard Knowledge Online, gko.ngb.army.mil and submit an application.

Duty locations include the ARNG Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia and the Professional Education Center in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Most new employees will be hired on a one-year conditional basis in an Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) status. AGR Tours may also be available.

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INTERESTED? CONTACT US!

LTC Diana Craun in VA | 703-607-9781 | diana.craun@us.army.mil

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