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# AMERICA'S BEST

We Salute Our  
Heroes pg. 34

>> GX HERO

## AMERICAN WARRIOR

SSG EARL HEAVY RUNNER  
MENTORS THE YOUTH OF  
THE BLACKFEET TRIBE

>> INTEL

SPC VERONICA M. ALFARO  
ALASKA MEDIC'S  
GALLANTRY EARNS  
BRONZE STAR





# NATIONAL GUARD WARRIOR

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KID ROCK



— AÉRO FILM

VOL 5 :: ISSUE 4

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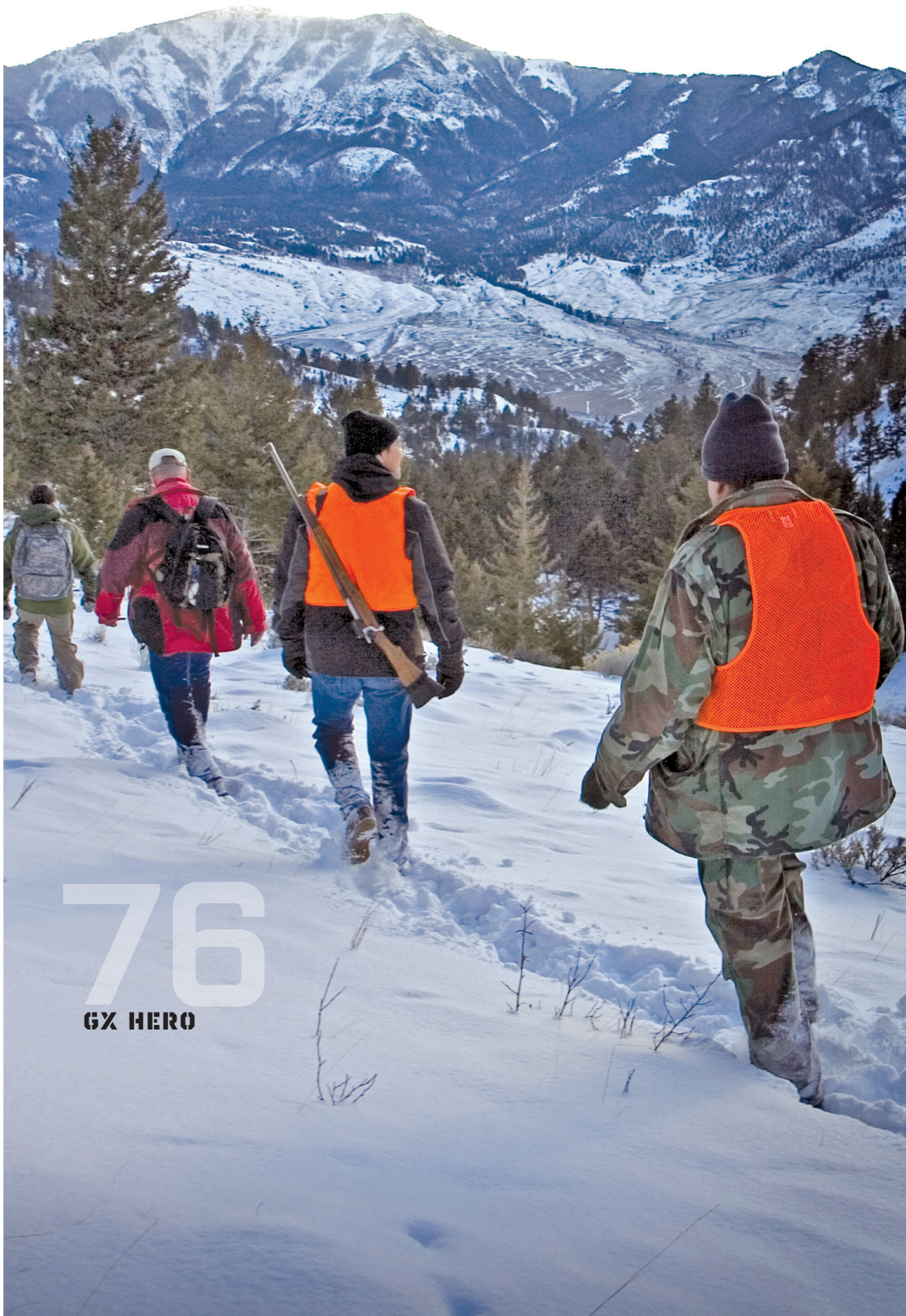
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GX: The Guard Experience (ISSN # 1559-9922) is published monthly by Iostudio, LLC, 1625 Broadway, Third Floor, Nashville, TN 37203-3138. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to: GX: The Guard Experience, 1625 Broadway, Third Floor, Nashville TN 37203-3138.

## ‘Americans Never Quit’



On behalf of all Texans and as the Commander in Chief of the Texas National Guard, I want to thank you for your service and dedication to our country.

**State militias have** always played a fundamental role in the protection and defense of our nation. Even from the earliest moments of this grand nation's birth, colonists formed a military unit to protect their society from tribal attacks and foreign invaders and later

to help win them independence in the American Revolution.

The National Guard has a proud history, a noble responsibility and a long list of sacrifices that empowered the writers of the Constitution to don this nation in vestments of freedom and the folds of the United States flag.

The principal author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, once said, “Every citizen should be a Soldier. This was the case with the Greeks and Romans, and must be that of every free state.”

And I believe that those men and women who served this country at the dawn of our nation's birth and those serving today in our battles overseas in the urban streets of Baghdad have taken this sentiment to heart.

In the last century, the National Guard has not only served our country at home, but it has also taken up arms to serve overseas in WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thousands of Guard Soldiers currently serve amidst the heat of the desert, cities and tribal villages in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I commend our Guards' battle-hardened bravery.

Often many of them rush headlong into a rain of bullets, jarring explosions and thick smoke billowing out from urban streets armed with the righteous cause to end terror. Daily their passion to preserve freedom emboldens them to enter the fray. Daily their faith that they are doing the right thing inspires them to not give up. And daily their love for country and her principles move them to risk their lives.

These are today's true patriots.

For as long as there are people who will satisfy their craving for power with the blood of the innocent, there must be warriors who will draw a line and simply tell them “no.”

As the governor of Texas, I am proud of the almost 14,000 Guard Soldiers from Texas who flew across the great waters of our world to serve the United States and combat global terrorism.

And I'm proud of those who serve not just with their boots on the ground but with their wings in the air. The Texas Air National

Guard continues to fly missions worldwide to keep our skies free. From transporting troops and supplies on humanitarian missions to flying combat missions against our nation's enemies, we are proud of our airmen.

With the recent enlistment of the 19,000th Texas Guard member, our state continues to boast the largest troop force in the United States.

And we know the valor of that force at home as well as overseas. Not only does the Texas National Guard patrol the Iraq-Iran border, but it also aids border security operations along our nation's Texas-Mexico border.

Our Guard is our first line of defense, even against natural disasters. It was the first line of defense against the wildfires that recently lit across our lands. During the 2006–2007 wildfires, Texas National Guard aviators fought the flames with might.

They were the first line of defense against the spring floods that tore at our towns, homes and crossways in northern and central Texas this past June. Helping to save lives, the Texas National Guard dispatched troops and vehicles to flood-stricken regions.

They were the first line of defense against the hurricanes that beat against our coastlines last September. And during the crisis of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Texas benefited from the 50,000 troops that flooded the Gulf States with their force and supplies. It was the largest domestic response mission in the history of the National Guard. And it was a proud moment for the Guard.

I am thankful for the service of every Guard Soldier in the nation, not just the ones Texas bred.

Truly your job is never done—either abroad defending the interests of our country or at home protecting life and property against all threats, including the arrows of Mother Nature.

But as Douglas MacArthur once said, “Americans never quit.” And nothing demonstrates that better than the vigor, valor and honor of the National Guard. Thank you for your service to Texas, and thank you for your service to our great nation. God bless our troops.

*Sincerely,*

Rick Perry  
Governor of Texas

# Dale Jr. and NATIONAL GUARD Team Up Together

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Dale Earnhardt Jr. National Guard Adult Big Logo Cap  
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Sizes M-XL Item CDJ840171-4 \$15.00 MSRP \$30.00  
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## Real Heroes

The word “hero” gets tossed around a lot. Superheroes. Sports heroes. Action heroes. And in my opinion, the real heroes—Soldiers, firefighters, police officers, EMTs—are those who battle and sacrifice to safeguard others.

Every month, we choose an individual to honor in our GXHero section. The unfortunate truth is we have only 12 issues per year, which leaves room for only 12 hero spotlights ... until now. This issue, we are including a full feature packed with many heroes, honored by you, our readers. After sending out press releases, emails and calls across the world, we’ve compiled this fitting tribute, “America’s Best” (see pg. 34).

Of course, we still have a GXHero this issue: SSG (ret.) Earl Heavy Runner—the War Chief (see pg. 76). Earl and I met in '05, along with his brother Keith, at a Great Falls reunion of the 1/163rd, MTARNG. Ever since, we had been planning to hunt together. The brothers had secured tickets to nab a buffalo, and we were good to go. So in January, I met them out in Gardiner, just outside Yellowstone National Park. The days spent with Earl and Keith were some of the best of my life and some of the most inspiring. Both men give all their hearts to their community and country.

And speaking of men who give to their country, this issue is the premiere of SFC Clint Wood as our full-time GX field reporter. A former Marine-turned Guard Soldier, Clint served with the legendary 1/34th BCT Red Bulls in the longest military deployment since WWII. Clint’s powerful photography and writing was featured throughout our “Running with the Bulls” deployment-long coverage. We are very honored to have this man on staff. He is a true gentleman, artist and battle-hardened Veteran.

Clint’s first assignment was to cover SGT Ken’s first Fit to Fight program at Camp Shelby in June. With Fit to Fight, SGT Ken is instructing his hard-core fitness program to deploying Soldiers, including Train the Trainer lessons. Read all about it in On The Road (see pg. 54).

We’ve got to keep Clint busy, so if you have some real Guard action going on, holler at him by emailing Clint.Wood@GXonline.com. Your event could end up in GX magazine.

‘Til next time, we keep you all in our hearts and prayers.



DUSTIN McNEAL

**:: ON THE HUNT ::** GX Hero SSG Earl Heavy Runner and I take in the view over the Montana mountains outside Gardiner, MT, in January.

Thanks!

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

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

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GX magazine is not an official publication of the Army National Guard. Rank designations for GX staff members are displayed out of our respect for our Citizen-Soldier employees. All military employees are traditional Guard members.



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**  
Send your questions or comments  
to [feedback@gxonline.com](mailto:feedback@gxonline.com)



## Just a note to say hello.

I see we have GX up and running again. Great stories as always. The Poland article on the SPP was good. I was there observing the training and spent some time with the Polish SMA. Of course, the story on Greely was well done also. The shattering glass picture was awesome. Keep up the good work!

**CSM David Ray Hudson**

Senior Enlisted Leader to the Chief National Guard Bureau



## Marcia,

Thanks so much for the article [on deployment] you had in the last issue of GX. [It] spelled out everything.

**Janice Crocker**

SFC (ret.) TNARNG

Family Assistance Specialist State Family Programs Office

## Mr. Kawasaki,

Hello, my name is Jackie Johnson, and I just wanted to write you on behalf of my husband, SGT David Johnson, of the 2/153rd IN 39th IBCT. My husband, as well as the rest of his unit, is currently serving his second tour in Iraq. On their first deployment, they were the largest National Guard unit to be sent into combat since the Korean War. I am extremely proud of my husband and miss him more and more with each day that passes. We have four beautiful boys ages 1, 2, 5 and 7. This deployment has been extremely hard on our family. I just wanted to thank you for giving me something to read that is not negative about OIF and other Guard families and Soldiers. My husband gets your magazine every month and he is not here to read it, so I do it for him ... LOL.

**Jackie T. Johnson**

## Keith,

Just wanted to pass along that I have heard around the watercooler that the new issue looks awesome. Again, you do a great job in telling the Guard story!

**1LT Dan Murphy**

North Dakota Army

National Guard



### ON THE COVER

Wyoming Army National Guard CW2 Nate Galloway hugs his youngest son one more time before deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on May 27, 2008.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICER CANDIDATE CHRISTIAN VENHUIZEN





## » PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

[Camp Grayling, MI]

MSG Vlad of the 19th Special Forces Group provides rear security as his team clears a stairway while testing a new laser collective combat advanced training system during annual training on Camp Grayling, June 16, 2008.

Photo by SPC Sam Beevers, U.S. Army



## » COMBAT ARMS

[ **Guantanamo Bay, Cuba** ]

Joint Task Force Guantanamo Soldiers have a wealth of experience and have served with numerous units in combat zones in their combined years of service.

Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Nat Moger









## > K9 RESCUE

[ **Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo** ]

Det-1 C Company 2-104th Air Ambulance, Tennessee Army National Guard, conducts K-9 rescue hoist training. A flight medic watches from the ground as a German shepherd and his handler are hoisted into a Black Hawk helicopter.

Photo by CW2 Timothy Belcher Jr.





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"Patriotism is not a frenzied burst of emotion, but rather the quiet and steady dedication of a lifetime."

>> ADLAI E. STEVENSON, U.S. STATESMAN



## AKARNG Soldier Earns Bronze Star With Valor

By Kalei Brooks

**CAMP DENALI, AK**—An Alaska Army National Guard (AKARNG) Soldier has earned the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. military for her actions in combat while deployed in Iraq.

SPC Veronica M. Alfaro, 23, distinguished herself through exceptional gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States on Jan. 15, earning the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, which identifies the award is a result of contact with the enemy. Originally from Modesto, CA, Alfaro is a combat medic and driver with Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion, AKARNG.

"Alfaro's bravery is a shining example to us all," said MG Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "I applaud her heroism in the midst of battle. We are grateful that the quick actions she took, as well as those of her fellow Soldiers, helped save lives on the battlefield."

On Jan. 15, Alfaro was serving as the driver of a light medium tacti-



Vice President Dick Cheney pins the Bronze Star Medal with Valor onto SPC Veronica Alfaro of the Alaska Army National Guard's Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion.

cal vehicle gun truck, which was escorting a convoy of third-country nationals on the main U.S. supply route from Baghdad to Balad, Iraq.

Just after midnight, according to the award citation, "The convoy was ambushed by enemy forces with well-aimed direct fire from four machine guns and numerous other small arms ... the terrain was relatively flat with lots of brush, blocking the view of the enemy positions."

She drove her vehicle into the line of enemy fire to protect the civilian drivers and allowed her



SPC Veronica Alfaro stands next to the light medium tactical vehicle gun truck she was driving on Jan. 15 in Iraq when her convoy was ambushed.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ALASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.





## VICTORY MAP

### >> IOWA

With the rain flooding the Midwest, a National Guard counterterrorism unit jumped in the water to help assess chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials mixed with floodwaters in the cities. Almost 6,000 National Guard members have assisted civil authorities since the beginning of June.

### >> LOUISIANA

The LAARNG State Aviation Command received two new UH-72A Lakotas, a light utility helicopter, in early July. With an unobstructed main cabin, the helicopter is reconfigurable to maximize mission flexibility for transport and includes a sliding side and rear clamshell doors.

### >> MONTANA

The Montana National Guard, cooperating with TriWest, started a pilot program to assist Guard members and their families with post-deployment stress. This program will allow the Soldiers and Airmen opportunities with TriWest mental health providers to discuss post-deployment stress issues.

### >> OHIO

The DHARNG and Army Reserve broke ground on the joint Armed Forces Reserve Center on the Defense Supply Center Columbus campus. A \$29 million building, the new facility will provide more than 150,000 square-feet of logistical and equipment storage, training and administrative space. The new building will house 900 Soldiers from six units.

### >> PENNSYLVANIA

Fort Indiantown Gap Training Center opened its doors to the public for guided tours of a rare butterfly colony located in the training facility. The center is home to the only viable colony of Regal Fritillary butterflies east of the Mississippi River.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



SPC Veronica Alfaro, center, stands with her truck crew members SPC Stephen Vrabel, left, and SGT Brandi Brenden.

gunner the ability to return fire on the enemy. Her vehicle came under intense fire and was hit several times by the enemy's machine guns.

When Alfaro received word that the driver was wounded in the third-country national's vehicle directly in front of hers, she instinctively grabbed a combat lifesaver bag and ran more than 50 yards through a hail of gunfire to reach him. Alfaro's truck crew, SGT Brandi Brenden and SPC Stephen Vrabel, both of Eagle River, saw enemy bullets kicking up dust around her feet and tracer rounds streaking past her head as she ran. Enemy fire was increasing, so she placed her body between the enemy and the civilian driver to shield him while she worked to assess his medical condition, which was ultimately fatal.

Radio communication indicated that there was another wounded in the convoy, so Alfaro took one of the gun trucks to treat the second

## "SPC ALFARO'S BRAVERY IS A SHINING EXAMPLE TO US ALL."

>> MG Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general, AK NG

wounded civilian. Her actions in treating the second third-country national saved the driver's life.

"SPC Alfaro's courage under fire is exceptional," said CPT Joshua Shrader, of Juneau, commander of the Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion. "She helps make this hostile environment a little safer through her actions and willing-

ness to help protect everyone around her."

"The gallant actions of SPC Alfaro are in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflect marked distinction upon herself, the Multi-National Corps Iraq, the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense," stated her award citation.

The Bronze Star is the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. Armed Forces when it is awarded for bravery. She was given the medal on March 19 in Iraq by Vice President Dick Cheney.

Alfaro was born in Modesto, CA. She officially joined the California Army National Guard in March 2005, and found out about the Alaska Army National Guard's deployment to Iraq during her 2007 annual training. She applied to transfer into the Alaska Army National Guard and volunteered for deployment. The unit returned to Alaska in mid-April 2008. **GX**



Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, who was recently recommended as the new chief of the National Guard Bureau, gives a thumbs-up from the cockpit.

TECH. SGT. MIKE R. SMITH

# Defense Secretary Nominates Next Guard Bureau Chief

*Air Force Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith, National Guard Bureau*

**WASHINGTON, DC**—Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates recommended Air Force Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley as the next chief of the National Guard Bureau and promotion to full general, and LTG H. Steven Blum as the next deputy commander for the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) during a Pentagon media briefing mid-July.

If nominated by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, McKinley would become the National Guard's first four-star general. Blum, the Guard's current chief, would become the first National Guard deputy commander of NORTHCOM, based in Colorado Springs, CO.

McKinley is currently director of the 106,000-member Air National Guard, a post he assumed in May 2006. Blum has been chief of the Guard Bureau since April 2003. Blum served as NORTHCOM's chief of staff for eight months before that.

"General McKinley is well qualified for this important and historic new assignment," Gates told Pentagon reporters. "He has held command positions at every level of the Air Force during his 34 years of military service."

Gates said the nomination for a fourth star for the National Guard Bureau chief is in keeping with the recommendations of the Commission on the Guard and Reserves and the fiscal year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

McKinley would serve as the principal advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on National Guard issues. The NDAA also establishes the Guard Bureau as a joint activity of the Department of Defense.

The law further stipulates that the deputy commander of NORTHCOM be a National Guard general unless the command's top officer is already a National Guard general.

"This is truly a historic and magnificent selection," Blum stated. "Craig will provide the leadership that will take the National Guard to the next level. He is a competent, caring and proven leader. Craig has and will continue to have my

complete confidence and full collaboration."  
 "The elevation of the National Guard chief to four stars recognizes the enhanced importance of the Guard to America's overall national defense," Gates said. "The elevation also recognizes the vital role the chief will have as a bridge between the state and federal components of our government and the active and reserve components of our military."

The Guard Bureau chief is the senior uniformed National Guard officer responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans affecting more than half a million Army and Air National Guard personnel, including civilian employees.

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

Blum's nomination as NORTHCOM's deputy commander is in keeping with the recommendations of the Commission on the Guard and Reserves, and the congressional requirement that the commander or deputy commander of NORTHCOM be a Guard officer.

"It reflects the critical role the Guard plays in our homeland defense, the unique experience and expertise a Guard officer of General Blum's caliber will bring to this position," Gates said.

Gates also called Blum's nomination as NORTHCOM deputy commander a "historic first," and he praised Blum's service as the Guard Bureau's chief.

"For more than five years, General Blum has been a dynamic and effective leader of America's National Guard community during a time of wrenching change for our Citizen-Soldiers," Gates said. "As chief, he has been a tireless advocate for America's Guardsmen and women to see that they receive the right training, equipment and support for the demanding range of missions the Guard has taken on since September 11th and will face in the years to come."

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the National Guard has transformed from a strategic reserve to an operational force, and Blum has been praised for his vision and leadership during the transformation. **GX**



**"The elevation of the National Guard chief to four stars recognizes the enhanced importance of the Guard to America's overall national defense."**

**>> Robert M. Gates, Defense Secretary**

R. D. WARD



## VICTORY MAP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

### >> NORTH CAROLINA/ VIRGINIA

North Carolina and Virginia Army National Guard Soldiers assisted producers in the filming of the sequel of "Transformers." The two states provided equipment and Soldiers through an agreement between the Department of Defense and DreamWorks Pictures.

### >> TENNESSEE

The Tennessee National Guard Counterdrug Task Force confiscated more than 357,500 illegal marijuana plants, totaling more than \$700 million in late June. The Task Force worked with Governor Phil Bredesen's Task Force on Marijuana Eradication.

### >> BAGHDAD, IRAQ

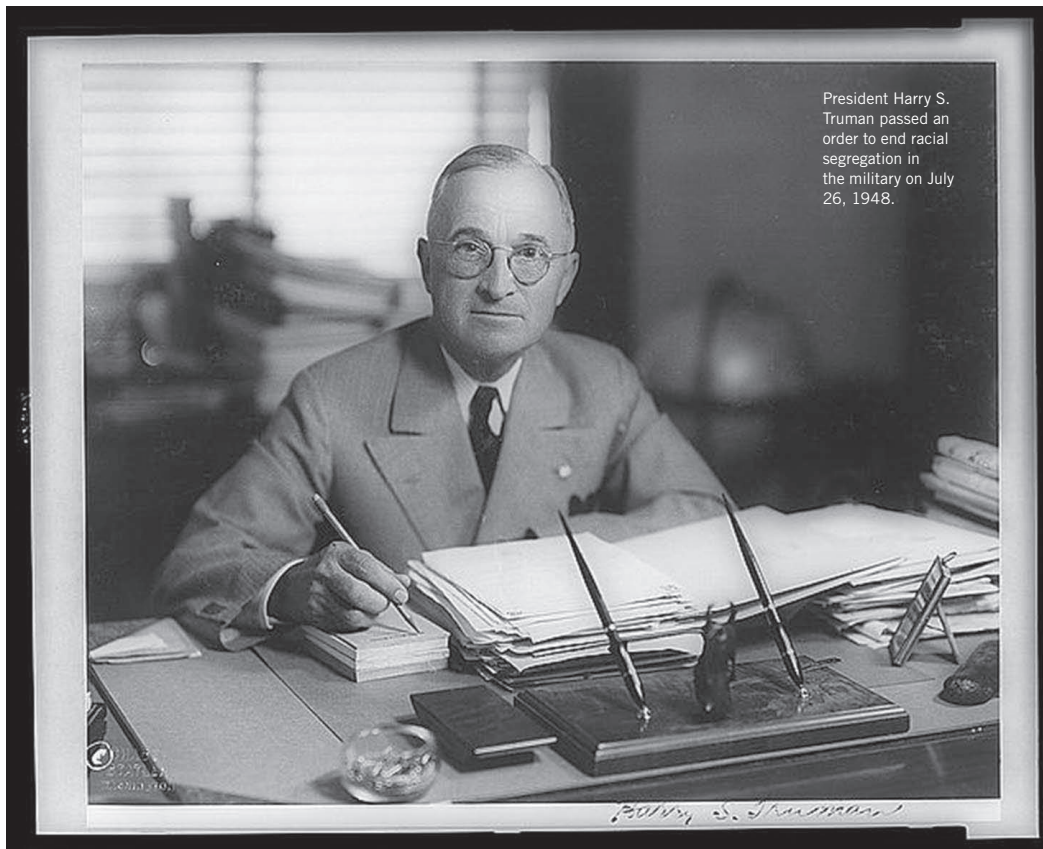
Soldiers of the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Arkansas National Guard were able to talk to their children on Father's Day via Webcams. More than a dozen of the Soldiers have children under one year old.

### >> BAGHDAD, IRAQ

Defense personnel assisted the Iraqi government with the transfer of 550 metric tons of Iraqi uranium ore to Canada. Named "Operation McCall," the cost of the transfer was \$70 million, part of which will be reimbursed to the United States by the government of Iraq.

### >> CAMP PHOENIX, AFGHANISTAN

Almost 20 NYARNG Soldiers re-enlisted on the Fourth of July. The Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix was able to enjoy summer picnic fare in the dining facility, complete with decorated cakes in celebration of the holiday.



President Harry S. Truman passed an order to end racial segregation in the military on July 26, 1948.

# The Colors of Our Soldiers, Courage

## 60 YEARS OF DIVERSITY

By SPC Miko Holloran

▶ **JULY 26, 1948**, marked the day when President Harry S. Truman took a step forward that would not only change his reputation, but would also rock America's military. On this historic day, he signed Executive Order 9981, which ended segregation in the military. On July 23, 2008, President George W. Bush signed a proclamation commemorating the 60th anniversary of Truman's bold act.

"Our nation has long drawn strength from the diversity of its

citizens," said the president. "Groups such as the Buffalo Soldiers, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Tuskegee Airmen and the 'Borinqueneers' [the only all-Hispanic unit in the Army] risked their lives while proudly wearing the uniform of the United States.

"By performing their missions with integrity and honor, they highlighted the power of liberty, helped open the door of opportunity and earned the respect and admiration of a grateful nation."

Thanks to President Truman's

bold decision, the Army National Guard is proud to still honor the executive order 60 years later. With the integration, the Army National Guard is now tighter than ever: Not even the color of your skin can overtake the color of the ACUs.

The National Guard Bureau is celebrating 60 years of integration by launching [www.ColorsThatMatter.com](http://www.ColorsThatMatter.com). Web surfers can read about President Truman's historic decision and the aftermath of the executive order. They can also learn more about today's Armed Forces and watch video testimonials from Soldiers. **GX**



"Our nation has long drawn strength from the diversity of its citizens." >> President Harry S. Truman



Experienced salvage diver SGT Lance Little (top) “attacks” SGT Roel Ramos during repeated pool “hits” by taking off his mask and removing his swimming fins.

# GUARD'S FIRST DIVE TEAM MAKES A SPLASH

By Master Sgt. Brenda Benner

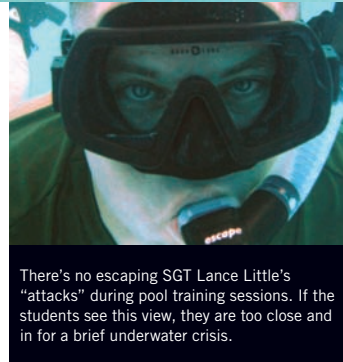
**CORPUS CHRISTI, TX**—One of several exceptionally motivated 36th Infantry Division Soldiers drives 900 miles to get harassed underwater during his drill weekends. Another Citizen-Soldier learned basic swimming strokes for several weeks, while yet another determined 43-year-old Soldier refuses to give up.

An elite group of T-Patchers (so called because of their unique division patch) from the newly formed Corpus Christi-based 627th Heavy Dive Team (HDT) is facing the unique challenge of being the Texas Army National Guard's first team of Army divers. The unit, which was officially flagged in June 2007, not only possesses the state's only National Guard divers, but also consists of the only Guard divers found nationwide.

The 627th HDT is actively searching for physically fit, academically minded male and female Soldiers who have the consistent dedication required to be an Army diver.

Currently, six new 627th HDT personnel are in their respective rotations through Phase II training at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) in Panama City Beach, FL. Although Phase II training is six months in duration, just getting into the class and past Phase I was an incredible feat all its own.

The Army Diver Phase I course, which ranges from two to three weeks, is taught at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. The course involves water survival skills and basic diving instruction, but first and foremost, Soldiers must pass the rigorous Diving Physical Fitness Test (DPFT). Events within the DPFT include an



There's no escaping SGT Lance Little's “attacks” during pool training sessions. If the students see this view, they are too close and in for a brief underwater crisis.

endurance swim, chin bar pull-ups and a few modifications to the normal running, push-ups and sit-ups associated with the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

It is during Phase II that Soldiers study human anatomy and physiology, underwater physics and dive medicine. They learn to operate underwater hydraulic tools such as chain saws, wrenches, grinders and impact drills. They also train with underwater explosives.

Each Soldier has a unique story of personal and professional triumphs.

CPT James Proctor, a resident of Broussard, LA, and commander of the 627th HDT, now in his fourth month of training at the NDSTC, admitted that Phase I of dive school was more demanding than any of his prior military courses.

“It’s a physical and mental challenge,” said Proctor. “It’s a gut check. If someone can make it through phase one, then there’s a high percentage passing rate through phase two.”

Joining Proctor as a fourth-month student is fellow 627th HDT



627th Heavy Dive Team members SGT Jon Dodge (left), 43, and PVT Daniel West, 19, perform grueling chin-ups as part of their Diving Physical Fitness Test preparation for their six-month dive training course.

member SPC Joseph Wieland of San Marcos. Both Soldiers anticipate graduating as Army divers in late summer. Four other unit members recently arrived at the NDSTC for their six-month training rotation.

The anchor of the new 627th HDT is 43-year-old SGT Lance Little, who earned his second-class diver and salvage diver qualifications as an active-duty Army diver during the 1980s. He’s been instrumental in developing the rigorous physical and academic training plan that prepares the prospective divers for their two diving qualification courses.

Little, now a 15-year veteran of the San Antonio Police Department, said there were fewer than 100 divers Army-wide when he was diving. Now the Texas Army National Guard has the unique opportunity to provide approximately 20 to

PHOTOS BY MSG BRENDA BENNER

25 of its own divers to the elite diving corps.

Once the unit has a group of qualified divers, Little will focus all of his energy on getting himself prepared for the rigors of first-class dive school next summer.

To ensure the new diver recruits maintain their composure underwater, Little prepares them with pool "hits," during which he grabs their masks and steals their swimming fins. There is no escape from this critical repetitive drill. During the "attack," they must remain calm

Some of our guys had to work their way into the unit."

One such Soldier is PVT Daniel West, 19, a cross-country runner and 2007 graduate of Angleton High School who began drilling with the 627th HDT in February. West, a combat engineer, plans to attend college to become a paramedic.

"I had to learn how to swim the sidestroke and the breaststroke from a local lifeguard in Angleton to train for my swim test," West admitted. "I had to be extra ready because I heard nearly 80 percent of the students

training with Little.

Dodge, who was in the Navy in the 1980s, tried out for its revered dive team while in his 20s but didn't make the cut for the timed running event.

"While here with the dive team, I didn't give up, and I was doing really well with all of the academics, so they let me continue my swimming and physical fitness training," said Dodge.

A few months later at Fort Leonard Wood, he became one of the many Phase I statistics, but Dodge

team of Soldiers who are more dedicated than most.

"I want the challenge of being uniquely different and being more competitive," said Ramos. "I want this before I'm too old and have to call it quits."

The fourth HDT member to recently begin Phase II training is Corpus Christi resident SPC Shaun Wheaton, originally from South Dakota. He said he's spent very little time in or around water until this past year.

"My advice is to avoid looking too far ahead at all of the obstacles," Wheaton said. "I've seen guys mentally quit before they physically quit. Our leadership has prepared us in every way possible. I feel all of us will pass ... and come out as certified Army divers. If we lock arms and stay together, we should be fine."

CPO Alexander Semmler, a diving instructor at Florida's NDSTC, who has trained nearly 30 Navy and Army divers so far, said the Texas Guard divers are constantly proving their professionalism.

"Honestly, if I lined them up against the active-duty students regarding pool performance and academics, I couldn't tell the difference," said Semmler.

According to Little, when the 627th is fully functional, its members could be responsible for port clearance and security, damage assessments, quality assurance and ship hull inspections.

"Working in an underwater environment is not for everyone," Little said emphatically. "It's dangerous and requires a certain degree of high motivation that some people don't have. It's a totally different world underwater. You must have initiative ... have lots of heart and really want this job. Having what it takes to earn that diver's badge is something very special."

Anyone seeking more information regarding the 627th HDT is encouraged to contact SGT Lance Little at lance.little@us.army.mil or at (210) 859-6190. **GX**



**Above Left:** 627th Heavy Dive Team members SGT Jon Dodge (left) and SPC Shaun Wheaton must perform well on several academic tests covering dive medicine, physics and combat engineer tasks to pass their six-month course at the Naval Dive and Salvage Training Center in Florida.



**Above Right:** Combat engineers SGT Roel Ramos (left) and SGT Jon Dodge, both 627th Heavy Dive Team members, must pass not only the Army Physical Fitness Test, but also the more demanding Diving Physical Fitness Test upon their arrival at dive school.

while holding their breath long enough to put their equipment back on and touch the deep end wall before surfacing.

"Every detail and situation of underwater missions must be planned for," Little emphasized. "For every hour underwater, there are about 10 hours of preparation. You don't want your brain to go to mush during a stressful situation if something goes wrong."

Proctor, a commercial diver for the past two years, performs construction work on oil rigs. He understands firsthand the physical rigors of underwater engineer work.

"We encourage people to visit us, to try out with the DPFT and the 500-yard swim," said Proctor. "If they can pass the swim, we'll let them train with us and improve. Then, once they pass the entire DPFT, we'll put them on our books.

## "FOR EVERY HOUR UNDERWATER, THERE ARE ABOUT 10 HOURS OF PREPARATION."

>> SGT Lance Little

don't make it past the phase one school at Fort Leonard Wood."

With a 500-meter swim event time of 9:49 and a 1-mile run of 9:42, West is now one of the fastest swimmers and runners in the unit.

The remarkable efforts of 43-year-old Corpus Christi firefighter and paramedic SGT Jon Dodge, of Refugio, are a testament to never giving up. He joined the TXARNG in October 2007, and began his preparatory dive school

doesn't know the word "quit."

"I'm now ready for the water-treading challenge," Dodge said confidently. "I'm also better at holding my breath a long time. I'm ready for my second chance."

SGT Roel Ramos, 34, drives 900 miles from Lubbock to push himself to the limit. Like Dodge, he attended Phase I of dive school for a second time. Ramos said he makes the daily sacrifice of working out because he wants to belong to a

SPC Davis McKenney, 488th Military Police Company, from Waterville, ME, prepares his machine gun prior to leaving on a security mission while training in South Dakota.



# Real Missions, Safer Conditions

**MAINE** SOLDIERS SOAK UP TRUE-LIFE TRAINING

Story and Photo by SSG Robert Pearce

► **BLACK HILLS, SD**—Two Maine Army National Guard units recently participated in the 24th annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The exercises provided relevant training opportunities in support of the War on Terror and Homeland Defense.

The 286th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) and the 488th Military Police (MP) Company were some of the 92 units from 27 states, along with professional

militaries from four foreign nations, participating in the 14-day exercise.

The 286th CSSB is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan in January 2009. SFC Mark Smith, Operations NCO for the 286th, says one of the reasons they are participating in Operation Golden Coyote, “is to establish the staff and control of a FOB (Forward Operating Base), which is what they will be doing in Kandahar, Afghanistan.”

“The intent was to come out here and be the FOB mayor and command,” Smith said. The units will also control at least three to four classes of supply and sustain all the tenants at FOB Redfern.

Units mobilizing to Iraq or Afghanistan must be trained and validated on different tasks before deploying. Previously, units would mobilize and train away from their home state for months before actually going overseas. Now, units

are getting validated on some tasks during their annual training periods or on drill weekends, allowing Soldiers to spend more time with families before deploying.

Such was the case with the 286th. While providing real-life support for more than 300 Soldiers from around the United States and Canada, the 286th CSSB had opportunities to train on different tasks and equipment. Soldiers were trained and validated on the use of Precision Lightweight GPS Receivers (PLGR), popularly known as “GPS Pluggers,” and navigated difficult terrain while mounted and dismounted.

At FOB Redfern, the 286th’s real-life missions included manning a dining facility, a vehicle, generator maintenance tent and a fuel point, to name a few. The 488th MP Company provided security and manned the entry control point.

## FAST FACTS:

### OPERATION GOLDEN

**COYOTE 2008** Training Exercise allows more than 4,000 service members to conduct combat support and combat service support missions.

The South Dakota National Guard with the cooperation of the National Forest Service and Custer State Park created Operation Golden Coyote in the mid-1980s.

Missions are conducted in local, urban areas and remote, wilderness sites throughout the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Ninety-two units from 27 states, along with professional militaries from four foreign nations, participated in the 14-day exercise.

Additionally, the MPs trained on vehicle convoys and reacted to an improvised explosive device (IED) while mounted. They also conducted Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) training. **GX**

SSG ROBERT PEARCE

# Guard Kick Starts Motorcycle Safety

By SGT Tresa L. Allemang, 199th Brigade Support Battalion Unit Public Affairs Representative

▶ **ALEXANDRIA, LA**—With gas prices skyrocketing, people are striving to find more efficient ways of travel; and for many, that more efficient way is a motorcycle. That's one reason Camp Beauregard in Pineville, LA, and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation teamed up to create their own course to make it easier for motorcyclists to complete the required training.

Soldiers and Department of Defense employees are required to

take a safety course before driving a motorcycle onto a military installation. Before this initiative, the only location to receive this certification was at Fort Polk, LA, and it was held only occasionally.

MAJ Dirk D. Erickson, of Alexandria, the state safety officer for the Louisiana National Guard, said he realized something needed to change and began researching what it would take to bring the course a little closer to home and to make it easier for Guard Soldiers to attend.

"We met with safety

managers at the National Guard Bureau to discuss this process, and it all started there," he said. "It takes a lot of dedication to ensure that something like this is seen all the way through."

After receiving approval from the National Guard Bureau, Carl D. Bennett, a rider coach trainer with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation in Jacksonville, FL, was brought in

Bennett said.

Bennett also said the Motorcycle Safety Foundation is supported by all of the major motorcycle manufacturers.

"About 20 manufacturers put in fees, and those yearly fees go to subsidize curriculum development for this course. After the training is tested and proven, it becomes available to the public through funding,

Just like golfers go to the driving range, motorcycle riders must also make a concerted effort to practice. >> Carl D. Bennett



**Above:** MSG Paul Schulz instructs the students of the National Guard's motorcycle safety course on parking their bikes so that they can discuss their practical exercise.

**Below:** MSG Paul Schulz, a member of the National Guard and student in the motorcycle safety course, takes his turn to be evaluated as a rider coach while he instructs students as they practice stopping and starting methods at a driving range in Pineville, LA.



PHOTO BY SGT TRESA L. ALLEMANG

to teach the course. Eleven members of the Louisiana National Guard were chosen to be rider coaches and had to complete the course themselves to qualify.

These new rider coaches will be authorized to teach the course and provide instruction and certification to those who complete it in the future.

Though this is the first program in the state and only the third program in the nation to get started through the Guard, LTC John B. Frost, a native of Pineville and the state safety manager, said there is talk of starting this on military installations throughout Louisiana because of the importance and demand.

"It was designed for the most experienced riders, as well as someone who has never even sat on a bike,"

which will allow states to use the curriculum for training and licensing," he explained.

Bennett also mentioned that the course has many other benefits. "In most states, if you show them your card, you may have to take a written test, but because you have completed the course, they will give you an endorsement for a motorcycle license, and some insurance companies will give a discount."

He said this course is important because motorcycle riding is not just something that a person does once and gets the hang of it right away. "It's a physical skill that takes continual practice. Just like golfers go to the driving range, motorcycle riders must also make a concerted effort to practice," Bennet added.

Classes are available to any military, retiree or Department of Defense employees. Contact LTC John B. Frost or SSG James L. Price at (318) 290-6410 for more information. **GX**



A front view of the Kampong Chhnang Friendship Clinic being prepared for the start of the Operation Pacific Angel MEDCAP.

medical personnel who were part of the Medical Civil Action Project (MEDCAP), “There were surgeons, dentists, optometrists, other doctors and nurses in that room,” he said.

The medical personnel saw patients of all ages at the temporary clinic. But as an ambulatory clinic, Perez said they mainly saw patients with gastrointestinal, respiratory and dermatology issues.

The number of people they saw escalated from day to day.

“On the first day, I thought, ‘Wow, this is the busiest I’ve ever been in my life,’” said LTC Perez. “I think I saw 80 people the first day. Part of that was because in the first couple of hours, I was shadowing and tagging along with a Royal Cambodian physician. ... Then, all of a sudden, there was

# Guam Guard Treats Cambodian Patients

By CPT Kenneth Ola and 2LT Leo Palomares

**KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE, CAMBODIA**—Three doctors from the Guam National Guard (GU NG) and a four-man team from the Guam Air National Guard 254th “Red Horse” Squadron deployed to Cambodia in support of Operation Pacific Angel (PA) 2008.

The overall mission, spearheaded by the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), was a joint humanitarian assistance operation consisting of medical, dental and engineering elements centralized in the Kampong Cham province northeast of the capital Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The GU NG members, along with Active Duty and Reserve components of the USAF, partnered with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and the Royal Thai Air Force to execute support for more than 64,000 residents of the region. Although a

“The number of people they saw escalated from day to day.”

>> LTC Chris Perez

small part of the bigger picture, the overall impact on the community was a priceless experience for the Guard members throughout their stay in Cambodia.

COL Michael Cruz, commander for the Guam Army National Guard



Cambodians from the Kampong Chhnang area wait to be seen by medical personnel from the Royal Cambodian Forces and U.S. MEDCAP team.

(GUARNG) Medical Command and lieutenant governor of the island, and LTC Chris Perez were the two physicians from the Army Guard. LTC Hoa Nguyen, medical officer for the Guam Air National Guard, also went with the group for this joint Medical Civil Assistance Program.

The Medical Civil Assistance Program started with a key briefing at the U.S. Embassy in the capital Phnom Penh. Perez said he was impressed with the high quality of

just a deluge of people.” After the first two hours, an NCO requested that the two doctors split up so they could help more people.

On the second day, Perez said he saw 138 patients, while on the third day he treated 293. “Our whole group of six physicians saw, I think, close to 1,000 [patients],” he said.

Perez said he would be interested in having the Guam Guard conduct a similar MEDCAP mission in the future. **GX**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LTC CHRIS PEREZ



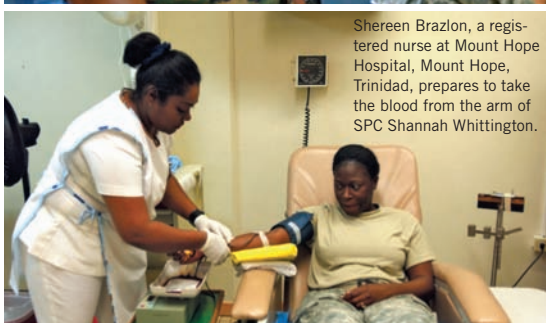
MAJ Kevin Pruitt gets a hug from 8-year-old Ariana Peters at Mount Hope Hospital, Trinidad.



Marine SSG David Means, MAJ Kevin Pruitt, 1LT Ulisses Taymes and SGT Wrensford Ault meet 8-year-old Ariana Peters and her mother, Bernadette Peters, at Mount Hope Hospital, Mount Hope, Trinidad, April 22.



Shereen Brazlon, a registered nurse at Mount Hope Hospital, Mount Hope, Trinidad, prepares to take the blood from the arm of SPC Shannah Whittington.



troops, who donate blood whenever they can in the United States.

“Anything that can help anyone out—I’m in for that—especially if a life depends on it,” said 1LT Ulisses Taymes, J2 Intelligence Officer from the 470th Military Intelligence Brigade.

Bernadette Peters, Ariana’s mother, said she was shocked when she saw that service members had come to donate blood to help her little girl. She thanked the ones she met and told them that her daughter now has honorary aunts and uncles.

Shereen Brazlon and the rest of the nurses at the blood center in the hospital also thanked them for donating their blood. But the greatest thanks the troops received was the big smile on Ariana’s face, which reminded them of their families back home.

“It is good to see how two countries can come together and save the life of a little girl,” said MAJ Kevin Pruitt, information officer team chief from 49th Theater Information Operations, Austin, TX.

“I just wanted to help the girl out,” said SPC Shannah Whittington, a Soldier from the 56th Signal Battalion, Fort Gordon, GA.

Whether they wanted to or not, the troops became heroes in the eyes of an 8-year-old just by raising their sleeves. **GX**

# The Gift of Life

SOLDIERS DONATE BLOOD TO SAVE GIRL

By SGT Ann Benson

➤ **MOUNT HOPE, TRINIDAD**—Ten U.S. service members from Operation Beyond the Horizon, a joint humanitarian exercise, rolled up their sleeves for a great cause. They donated blood to help save the life of 8-year-old Ariana Peters at Mount Hope Hospital recently.

The idea to donate blood started when SSG Eric Gillman from the 222nd Military Police Company was doing his daily online check of the local news in Trinidad. He saw a news article about Ariana, who was in need of O-positive blood.

The little girl needed a transfusion due to a blood disorder called Beta Thalassemia Intermedia, which reduced her blood count. BTI is an inherited blood disorder that diminishes the production of

hemoglobin in the blood.

Gillman, who is from Arkport, NY, showed the article to his chain of command and asked if there was something the Soldiers could do to help Ariana. The news story stated that attempts to get a supply through the blood banks in Trinidad had been unsuccessful. This fact rallied Gillman and other service members in the camp to have a blood drive and donate.

Those with O-positive blood quickly volunteered to donate.

“A girl’s life is at stake,” said SGT Wrensford Ault, 786th Quartermaster Battalion, Virgin Islands National Guard. “If I can help her, that is important. She might save my life one day. If I refused and everyone else refused, then she wouldn’t have a chance to live.”

## “It is good to see how two countries can come together and save the life of a little girl.”

➤ MAJ Kevin Pruitt



It was just a matter of coordinating with the Ministry of Health to find out if the troops could donate in Trinidad and where they could donate.

When it came time to donate, it was nothing new for most of the

PHOTOS BY SGT ANN BENSON

# WYOMING ARMY GUARD INTEL CRACKS GANG CODE

By Officer Candidate Christian Venhuizen, Public Affairs Specialist, Wyoming National Guard

**CHEYENNE, WY**—Wyoming may not seem like a hotspot for gang activity, so when gang-related crimes happen, there's a sense of disbelief that comes with it.

"For several years, we didn't see a whole lot [of criminal gang activity]," Cheyenne Police LT Mark Munari said, "but now it's increasing."

Munari said his department first dealt with Colorado gangs encroaching into Wyoming's borders about 10 years ago. That activity has picked up so much that the police sought help from the Wyoming National Guard.

## THE ANALYST

SSG Jessica Williams is an intelligence analyst for the 115th Fires Brigade, based in Cheyenne.

After graduating from the University of Wyoming, she went to work for the FBI at the National Gang Intelligence Center in Washington, D.C.

But Williams' love for the Cowboy State was so intense that she retained her status with the Wyoming unit, and in February 2008 was offered a yearlong tour with the Wyoming National Guard's Counterdrug Program. She took a leave of absence from the FBI and headed home, but she had no idea what she was up against.

The National Guard Counterdrug Program conducts a full spectrum campaign that bridges the gap between the Department of Defense and non-DoD institutions in the fight against illicit drugs and transnational threats to the homeland. The Counterdrug Program supports all levels of government,



**"If our community has a gang problem, the military bases will have gang membership."**

>> SSG Jessica Williams, WYARNG

including the DoD, law enforcement and community-based counterdrug operations. Its mission is to anticipate, prevent, deter and defeat those threats in order to enhance national security and protect American society.

"When I came into this position, it was fairly undefined," Williams said. "Anything that was drug-related at the police department, I could have been working on."

She realized the challenge as she drove through the streets of Cheyenne, passing more than the

occasional gang graffiti. When Williams spoke to her civilian law enforcement supervisors about anti-gang efforts, she knew she had found her niche.

"I saw a gap, a need here," she said of the lack of a specified gang intelligence office at the police department. "So, I really jumped on it."

Williams gleans her starting points from information the officers pick up on the streets. She uses popular info-sharing sites like MySpace to put names and faces to the local gangs. With her sole focus on gang activity, Williams connects with other agencies around Wyoming and neighboring Colorado. With their help, she's compiled an ever-growing list of gangs and gang members.

With the information, she's helped officers and prosecutors build cases against that criminal element. She's also helped brief civilian law enforcement and military commanders on what to look for, how to identify gang members and how far-reaching the problem really is.

## FIGHTING GANGS ON THE FRONTLINES

While her uniform is civilian, Williams is still a Soldier on orders. Her job means she'll be among the first to learn of a military member in the area who is suspected of affiliating with a gang.

Once she realizes the suspected gang member is a service member, she lets the police department know she is backing off the case, and then informs the appropriate military command. Williams said it has happened only once or twice, "and that's a tough issue when I see that Soldier's name come up. There are ethical issues with what you do. There's always the safety and concern of your Soldiers."

"The military is just another slice of society," she said. "If our community has a gang problem, the military bases will have gang membership."

Her assignment has piqued the interest of military law enforcement. She said the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations has requested to join in the anti-gang training.

While Williams' unit is preparing for the possibility of a deployment to Kuwait in 2009, she still wants to continue to help the state unravel the growing network of criminal gang activity. To continue fighting crime and serving her country, she's looking into ways she can help the department if she goes overseas. **GX**

**Editor's Note:** For security purposes, GX magazine has chosen not to include any pictures of the sources for this story.

**A 2005 REPORT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CITES THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST 21,500 GANGS WITH MORE THAN 731,000 ACTIVE MEMBERS IN THE UNITED STATES.**

# DoGtag BRINGS GUARD IN A NEW LIGHT FOR RECRUITS

By Christian Anderson

**ROCK 'N' ROLL** isn't exactly one of the core values of the National Guard, but one Soldier is embracing this high-energy music and using it to help educate high school and college students about opportunities in the National Guard. SGT Charles Bart of the 135th Army National Guard band in Springfield, MO, is the drummer and band manager of DoGtag and believes the sky's the limit for the group.

DoGtag is a unique name for a rock band, but Bart, who got started with DoGtag while on active duty, is quick to point out the name is fitting and proper for a group of Soldiers playing rockin' music.

"We were putting together rock ensemble concerts for high school students, and I saw a great response from the students," Bart said. "At first, I didn't like the name DoGtag, but after presenting it to several other people in the music business, they loved it, so it stuck."

DoGtag's main mission is to represent the diversity of the Guard and attract recruits, and the catchy name breaks down some of the barriers today's youth can have about Soldiers.

"It's great for recruiters because it potentially puts them in front of 500 to 1,000 high school or college students, and it helps break down

some barriers between students and recruiters," Bart said.

"Sometimes students are intimidated by people in uniform, but once we get in there and put on the concert, it eliminates the misconception about the military, and the students let loose and enjoy the show."

But DoGtag isn't just about rock 'n' roll: The members of the band try to offer guidance to students after their performance is over.

"We go into the school, play for about 45 minutes, and then we talk to the students about the National

Guard and what can be offered to them if they consider the Guard," Bart added. "The students are surprised to see that we can let loose and rock, so after the show, it is easier to talk with them about their opportunities in the Guard."

Bart tries to keep the set updated with current songs, but he was quick to point out that some of the classic rock songs are always a crowd favorite.

"Sweet Home Alabama" seems to be the most popular song we play

by far," Bart explained. "No matter where we go, no matter the age of the crowd, people just love to hear us play that song."

Although the lineup has changed over the three years DoGtag has been together, Bart feels his current group is packed with talent. SFC Roger Kirchner plays electric guitars, SPC Tommy Bieker is on bass, WO1 Laura Fairchild is the group's vocalist and SSG Chris Johnsons is the band's sound engineer.

**"I SEE US DRUMMING UP SUPPORT AND RECRUITS TO ENLIST INTO THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND TO BE THE HOTTEST ROCK BAND OUT THERE!"**

>> SGT Charles Bart



"We change the lineup often due to deployments and people moving on to other projects," Bart explained. "I try to represent the Guard equally through all races and sexes, and I try to show the diversity of the National Guard through this group."

Bart has big aspirations for DoGtag and wants to see how far the band can go.

"I see us drumming up support and recruits to enlist into the Army National Guard and to be the hottest rock band out there!" Bart said.

What about MTV and VH1? Bart believes that one day that could be a possibility, and after *GX* listened to some of their tracks, we agree.

"Hopefully, one day we will come up with our own original songs and eventually be on MTV," Bart added. "We love to give the audience a high-impact, high-volume, electrifying show, and until then, that's what we will keep on doing!" Visit the band at [www.dogtagmusic.com](http://www.dogtagmusic.com). **GX**

# SEE YOU AT THE MOVIES

## THE NATIONAL GUARD AS ACTION HEROES

By Staff Sgt. Marcia Beene Dickerson

▶ **THE NATIONAL GUARD** has partnered with Samsung Mobile Fresh Films to sponsor teens who are interested in making movies. During the summer, teens from around the country came together to take part in the 5th annual competition.

Samsung Mobile Fresh Films chose three categories for this year's films: Action Hero, Uncommon Comedies and Big Life Drama. Appropriately, the National Guard is supporting the "Action Hero" category.

Within the Action Hero slot, the teens, ages 14–19, were given three scenarios: "Aftershock," shot on location in St. Louis, "The Long Way Out," filmed in Boston, and "Surviving Emily," shot in Portland, OR.

### EVERYDAY HEROES

"Our idea for the 'Action Hero' category was that everyday people can be heroes, and who better to demonstrate that than the Soldiers of the National Guard?" said Alana Bardauskis, publicist for Dreaming Tree Films, the producers of Samsung Mobile Fresh Films.

"National Guard Soldiers live in the communities they serve. They are everyday heroes who swoop in and rescue communities when disaster strikes, so who better to advise these young filmmakers on how to bring out the everyday hero in their Action Hero films than the National Guard?" Bardauskis continued.

COL Michael Jones, National Guard Bureau's Chief of Strength Maintenance, backed up Bardauskis' observations saying that although the National Guard has been in service for almost 370 years, "Our most important work is serving and aiding our local communities in times of floods, hurricanes, torna-



### CELEBRITY JUDGES FOR SAMSUNG MOBILE FRESH FILMS ARE:

- Actor **Sean Astin** (*The Lord of the Rings, Rudy & The Goonies*)
- Emmy award-winning actor **Tom Skerritt** (*Brothers & Sisters, Alien*)  
Director **Elare Kilner** (*How to Deal, The Wedding Date*)
- Academy Award-winning director & USC professor **Mark Harris** (*Into the Arms of Strangers, The Long Way Home & The Redwoods*)
- Director **Joe Nussbaum** (*George Lucas in Love, Sidney White*)

does, wildfires and other natural disasters. So we know a thing or two about action heroes."

### LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION AND ADVICE

Not only is the National Guard sponsoring the events, but Soldiers are also serving as leads, extras and advisors. "Having Soldiers work as leads and extras adds value to the films because the production is enhanced with authenticity both

behind the scenes and on-camera," Bardauskis says.

"The advisors help the teens create a more authentic 'picture.' [A] stronger connection to real people and real things, such as the way a Soldier stands or the way a Soldier reacts in an emergency, creates a stronger bond with the audiences."

When the call went out across the nation for a chance to take part in the event, Dreaming Tree Films received the most reaction to the Action Hero film from teens.

"Action movies are challenging films to make in general, let alone in seven days, but we were excited to learn so many teens nationwide were up for the challenge," Bardauskis stated.

### COMING TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

Production and editing have now wrapped up on the films, and Samsung Mobile Fresh Films will premiere each one online at [www.Fresh-Films.com](http://www.Fresh-Films.com). The Drama films debuted the week of July 31–August 6; the Action Hero films premiered 7–13 August, and Uncommon Comedies premiered 14–20 August.

The top-ranked film in each category will progress to the final round of voting. The winner is



scheduled to be announced during the Viewer's Choice Week, Aug. 21–27. The teen film crew responsible for America's favorite film will be honored with their first Hollywood premiere.

Samsung Mobile Fresh Film's main objective is to give teens a chance to experience the entire process of making a film. From initial production to filming to editing, the team of filmmakers will also be tasked with marketing their movies.

Before the teens return to their homes, they will receive marketing kits that include posters, stickers and postcards. Additionally, they will have online blogs to plug their films and to foster interest in their hometowns. The marketing experience is part of the process of filmmaking, so the more they promote their movies, the more votes they'll generate online.

"We're interested in harnessing teens' creativity," Bardauskis added. This "harnessing" of creativity includes various outlets. For example, the T-shirt the teen crews wore during production was designed by a young artist, and the soundtracks chosen for the films were submitted by budding teen musicians.

### HOLLYWOOD BOUND

The film that's selected will premiere in Hollywood at the American Film Institute's (AFI) festival. The teens who worked on the film will spend three days in California, attend the AFI's Film Festival the night of their film's debut, receive a laptop computer and a Samsung mobile phone.

Not only will the teens' film premiere at the festival, but the nation will see true Action Heroes—the everyday Heroes of the National Guard. **GX**

# AN ULTIMATE FIGHTER

## Inside the Octagon with Kenny Florian

By Christian Anderson

► Most great success stories do not begin with defeat, but for Kenny Florian, a loss ultimately thrust him into the spotlight, granting him success and fame.

Florian is a professional Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) fighter from Westwood, MA, and has made a career testing his strength and will inside the octagon, a ring surrounded by fencing that can be very intimidating.

July 7, 2004, is a date that changed Florian's destiny forever. With only three fights under his belt, he was scheduled to fight Drew Fickett, one of the top Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighters in the world.

Although Florian lost by decision, Dana White, president of the UFC, thought differently. After the fight, Florian was asked to appear on a television show called "The Ultimate Fighter." Fighters from across the country would compete for a six-figure UFC contract, and the show quickly became a huge success.

"When I got onto 'The Ultimate Fighter,' that was really my first experience with MMA," Florian says.

He ended up fighting in the final fight of the show, and although he lost, his popularity soared as millions of viewers admired his courage and determination.

Florian wasn't always a highly skilled fighter, and it was not until college that he started to seriously train in MMA, beginning with Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ).

"I saw my first UFC fight when I was attending Boston College," Florian explains. "I saw Royce Gracie beating all these monsters. He was out there beating other styles and other masters.

"I was a huge Bruce Lee and

martial arts movie fan," the fighter admits. "So, finally I just decided to go for it. Life is short, so I might as well do what I love."

Florian trained in BJJ and MMA for several years, which led him to the fight with Drew Fickett. MMA is basically an advanced form of fighting that uses multiple systems, including stand-up fighting such as Muay Thai, wrestling and

tionist. I train six days a week, two to three times a day."

At the end of the day, the ultimate fighter is just a humble guy who loves and appreciates what he does.

"Originally, I did not get into MMA to become famous; I did it because I loved it," he



**"LIFE IS SHORT, SO I MIGHT AS WELL DO WHAT I LOVE DOING."**

>> Kenny Florian

>> **Private Lessons:** Kenny Florian conducted private seminars with Special Forces in Afghanistan

submission moves.

Being a professional fighter is much like being a Soldier in that it takes dedication, discipline and commitment to succeed.

"I take little to no time off; I'm training year-round," Florian says. "I have a full-time strength and conditioning coach and a nutri-

said. "I feel blessed that I've had the opportunity to fight on TV and to influence other people's lives in a positive manner."

There's one thing Florian cares about outside his career: He is a huge supporter of the military and has been on a United States

Organizations (USO) tour to visit Soldiers in Afghanistan.

"I was in Afghanistan and got a chance to do some seminars out there and work with the Soldiers," he explains. "I got to meet with the Soldiers and train with [them] a few different times. I did private seminars with the Special Forces."

MMA and the Guard have a lot in common since all Soldiers

have to learn combatives, a form of martial arts that prepares a Soldier for combat. The Guard teaches all Soldiers combatives so they will be prepared to defend themselves if they are attacked.

Florian remarked that the Soldiers were very enthusiastic and eager to learn.

"It's amazing how much they know about the sport," he adds. "No doubt the military has some of the most knowledgeable and passionate fans out there."

The trip played a big role in keeping him motivated to continue training hard and keep fighting, according to Florian.

"My trip inspired me, and I think about it every single day when I get up to train," he says. "It was an unbelievable experience, and I have great admiration for what they are doing.

"I just have an incredibly deep admiration and respect for all the Soldiers all over the world who are protecting us every day, keeping us safe," he affirms. "I'm a fan of the military, and I just want to thank them." **GX**



**From left:** Tennessee Helping Hearts pageant winners Paige Wilson, Shay Salmon, Amanda Britt and Summer Salmon attended the America Supports You Salute to Our Military Men and Women concert May 16, 2008, in the Pentagon's center courtyard.

# TN Teens Reach Out

By Camille Breland

**TODAY'S TEENAGERS** have a wide variety of choices when it comes to how to spend their free time—movies, video games, the Internet—but for a few Tennessee teens, serving their community and country is at the top of their list.

Amanda Britt, 18, Shay Salmon, 16 and Paige Wilson, 11, all volunteer for Tennessee Helping Hearts, a program benefiting Tennessee military members, police and firefighters. The girls recently participated in the program's pageant, which raised money for local Soldiers.

"It's exciting to know that all of the troops know we support them," said Britt, runner-up of the pageant. Britt joined the Regular Army and went through Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, SC, this summer. She plans to attend Advanced Individual Training at Fort Rucker, AL, for her MOS—electrical missile system repair.

"I love being around Veterans and people who are serving at the

moment," she remarked. "It makes me feel like I want to be one of them."

Tennessee Helping Hearts was founded in August 2006 by one woman and has since grown to about 25 regular volunteers throughout Sevierville, TN. Though these dedicated civilians range in age from 5 to 57, they come together as one for a common cause: to give back to the service members who have given so much to them.

Some recent projects the organization has assisted with include building a wheelchair ramp for a disabled Soldier, hosting military fund-raisers, collecting food baskets and flowers for Soldiers' families and sending Christmas care packages to our troops overseas.

But one ongoing service experience particularly stands out in the volunteers' minds.

When Helping Hearts founder and president Teresa Miller learned of a Vietnam Veteran who had lost everything during Hurricane Katrina, she knew it was time to

take action. She met the Veteran, John Spears, in a store in Sevierville, and after thanking him for his service, she offered Helping Hearts' assistance.

Since then, the volunteers have cleaned out his garage, built shelves, hung pictures and helped

**"It's exciting to know that all of the troops know we support them."**

>> Amanda Britt, 18

with landscaping. They're currently building a ramp for easier access in and out of his house, and plan to add windows and a door to his basement soon.

"He just could not believe that an organization cared about him and was willing to go over there and help him," Miller remarked. In fact, when local media recently interviewed him, Spears said he felt like he had "won one of those game shows!"

Helping Hearts provides a unique way for civilians to get involved in their community and give back to military members.

Shay Salmon, queen runner-up in the organization's pageant, said volunteering has opened her eyes to the military's instrumental and heroic role as our nation's defenders.

"I used to not know about the Army or how much they did for us," she said. "I have so much respect for them now knowing what they've given up and how much they've done to help."

Helping Hearts was one of 38 grassroots organizations featured at the 4th Annual America Supports You Salute to Our Military Men and Women at the Pentagon. The group took its pageant winners to Washington, DC, in May, where the girls met members of the military and toured our nation's capital. The group is going back in September to meet with their Congressmen, take a private tour of the Pentagon, participate in a Public Laying of the Wreath at Arlington National Cemetery and visit Walter Reed Hospital.

Salmon said spending time at the Pentagon was an awesome experience, and she was surprised

to learn that people knew about Helping Hearts. "I didn't know that since we're from Tennessee ..." she said trailing off. "But a lot of people do know about us, and that was pretty cool."

The latest project the girls helped with was the Military, Police and Firefighters Benefit Ball August 9, in Gatlinburg, TN. **GX**

To learn more about Tennessee Helping Hearts and its volunteers, visit [www.TNHelpingHearts.org](http://www.TNHelpingHearts.org).

PHOTO BY SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY

# USO Canteen Allows Fans to Beat the Heat

By Christian Anderson

▶ **EACH YEAR AT THE** country music association (CMA) music festival in Nashville, Tenn., fans can count on two things: There will be four days of high-octane performances by country music's biggest artists, and Nashville will be burning hot.

This summer, the USO partnered with the CMA to bring 90 wounded Soldiers and their family members to the festival in Nashville June 5–8.

The USO has become quite the beacon of hospitality for troops stationed overseas, but this nonprofit

**THE USO WAS  
FOUNDED IN 1941  
BY FRANKLIN D.  
ROOSEVELT AND  
HAS BEEN TAKING ENTERTAINERS  
AND ATHLETES TO VISIT SOLDIERS  
DURING CONFLICTS AND IN  
PEACETIME FOR 67 YEARS.**

organization has been making an effort to assist Soldiers at home as well. Enabled by the charitable efforts of corporations and individual sponsors, the USO was founded in 1941 by Franklin D. Roosevelt and has been taking entertainers and athletes to visit Soldiers during conflict and in peacetime for 67 years.

The CMA Music Festival began originally as Fan Fair and has become a staple of Nashville, allowing country music fans all over the world to converge on Music City to listen to their favorite artists for four days and nights. Labeled as the “crown jewel of country music festivals” by *USA Today*, this event is a must-see for anyone who is a serious country music fan.

So, with thousands of fans and



SGT Dan Ulman of Fort Campbell, KY, sits on the steps of the USO Mobile Canteen parked at the 2008 CMA Music Festival in Nashville, TN.

90 Soldiers enjoying the venues, the USO wanted to introduce something new to the event: the USO Mobile Canteen.

The USO Mobile Canteen was available in the CMA Festival Fun Zone for Soldiers and civilians to take a break from the heat—which proved to be popular.

The canteen had two couches, a giant flat screen television, an Xbox for the kids, a laptop with wireless Internet and, last but not least, a strong AC system—pretty much everything a Soldier needs to dust off his boots and relax for a while.

Outside the mobile canteen, visitors were given the opportunity to write to Soldiers in the “Messages from the Homefront” program by signing a giant poster

of Kellie Pickler. By the time *GX* arrived, the poster was covered with thousands of words of encouragement. It will be displayed in USO centers across the globe.

*GX* spent some time with SGT Dan Ulman of Fort Campbell, KY, in the air-conditioned canteen. Through his various travels, Ulman has relied on the USO more than once and appreciates everything they do for the men and women in uniform.

“I was stuck in Honolulu, HI, and went to the USO center where they provided me a courtesy phone, some cookies and Kool-Aid, and I got to watch a movie,” Ulman said. “It makes it easier for Soldiers while they are traveling alone, and that is very important.”

Sometimes traveling Soldiers can be stuck in airports for hours on end, and Ulman said the services the USO provides to them are “invaluable.”



SGT Dan Ulman of Fort Campbell, KY, signs his name and writes a message of encouragement to service members on a poster displayed outside the USO Mobile Canteen parked at the 2008 CMA Music Festival.

Ulman remarked that the St. Louis and Honolulu airport USO centers were among his favorites he has seen so far. **GX**

NATIONAL GUARD   
**WARRIOR**  
DALE EARNHARDT, JR.® | KID ROCK



# KID ROCK JAMS FOR GUARD WARRIORS

By Camille Breland

Though he may not be as clean-cut, soft-spoken or tactful as his Hollywood counterparts, Kid Rock is real. He says what he thinks and writes what he feels. So when he wanted to show his support and gratitude for the military, he turned to what he knows best: his music.

The rock star from Detroit teamed up with the Army National Guard to produce a song and music video titled "Warrior." The video was filmed at Los Alamitos Military Base in Long Beach, CA, in May. Men and women of the National Guard guest star, while National Guard NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., makes an appearance.

The video, directed by Academy Award-winner James Mangold (*Walk the Line*, *3:10 to Yuma*), is

slated to air during previews at cinemas nationwide beginning August 29. "Warrior" will be available for download at [www.NationalGuardWarrior.com](http://www.NationalGuardWarrior.com) on August 15.

Soon after the video shoot was completed, fans and Soldiers voiced their thanks for Kid Rock's military support.

"The video shoot rocked, and Kid was the best 'host' anyone could ask for," wrote a fan on Kid Rock's Web site. "I lost my voice about halfway



The Kid rocks out with Soldiers on the "Warrior" set at Los Alamitos Military Base in Long Beach, CA in May.



"THE VIDEO SHOOT ROCKED, AND KID WAS THE BEST 'HOST' ANYONE COULD ASK FOR. I LOST MY VOICE ABOUT HALF WAY THROUGH, BUT IT WAS WORTH IT."

for a United Service Organization (USO) tour last Christmas. Rock, along with actor/comedian Robin Williams, seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, comedian Lewis Black and Miss USA Rachel Smith visited troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, performing and uplifting morale during the holidays.

"I'm so proud to be here in Afghanistan for some of the finest American men and women like you," Kid Rock told troops at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan during the Christmastime performance.

Kid Rock has produced 11 albums since 1990, and his latest album, *Rock N Roll Jesus* (2007), debuted No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart. **GX**



A Soldier gets a close-up during the video shoot for Kid Rock's new song "Warrior."



Soldiers snap a quick shot of Kid Rock as he hangs out between video takes.

through, but it was worth it."

One Soldier and extra gave a shout-out to Kid after the video wrapped.

"Trust me, all of us Soldiers appreciate all you do," the Soldier wrote on [www.kidrock.com](http://www.kidrock.com). "It really shows true respect when a rocker like you takes the time to hang with us."

"Warrior" isn't the first time Kid Rock has reached out to the military; he teamed up with other celebrities

SSG RUSSELL LEE MUKWA

# AMERICA'S BEST



WE SALUTE OUR HEROES  
by Camille Breland and SPC Miko Holloran  
Photos courtesy of GX readers

American author and painter Henry Miller said, “The ordinary man is involved in action; the hero acts.” As Army National Guard Soldiers, you have acted. You have chosen to serve your state and country in times of peace and in times of war. GX salutes you, our nation’s heroes. You are the reason we continue to be safe. You are the reason we can overcome the worst of natural disasters. Your service ensures our Freedom. Recently, we asked you, our readers, to tell us about your heroes.

*Here’s what you had to say ...*



Wyoming Army National Guard CW2 Nate Galloway hugs his youngest son one more time before deploying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on May 27, 2008.

OFFICER CANDIDATE CHRISTIAN VENNHUIZEN



My husband, **1LT Garrett Mair**, along with all of the other Soldiers, are heroes because they are giving their all in hopes that it will have a lasting impact for good on those they are serving. >> Amy Mair

**SSG Mike Mills (retired)** is my husband, the father of our two children, a gift and my hero. On June 14, 2005, while serving with the Minnesota Army National Guard as an 88M, Mike was blown from a HETT by an IED. He received deep tissue burns



and second- and third- degree burns over 31 percent of his body. Between the hospital and rehab in Texas, we were separated from our family for a

year. We went through so much that Mike vowed he would do as much as he could to help other service members cope with returning home. He has such a positive outlook and doesn't stop trying. He's gone to three different schools to talk to kids about his challenges and how he faced them, [to] let them know there is nothing you can't do, and that one person can make a difference. He has—just ask anyone who's met him!

>> Suki Mills

My son, SPC Christopher D. Kocienda, is my hero. I'm proud not only because he's my son, but he's also the "Man in the Hour Glass." I admire his courage and the day-to-day endurance of being a Soldier in Iraq. God bless all of [the Soldiers] and Godspeed coming home. SPC Kocienda is part of the Fighting 69th in Baghdad guarding the "Highway to Hell."

>> Alice Mary Gruninger



My hat, my love and my heart go to you all with deep gratitude for your service and commitment in keeping us safe. We need you! I send blessings to each and every one of you dear souls.

>> Goldie Hawn, Actress

I don't have just one hero. My heroes are all the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives for us and our great country in combat! They keep me going every day because while they were engaged in battle, people here at home had the security, peace and comfort many take advantage of every day.

>> SSG Ellis Reno, III, Minnesota Army National Guard Soldier

My hero is my boyfriend, SGT Adam Gehlhar. He is more than a hero. He's confident, selfless, brave, and he is finally home safe and sound!  
**Welcome home, 817th!**

>> Ashley Moen, HHD 231st BSB Admin



CWO Craig Linde and SGT Steve Larsen are my heroes. As Thomas Paine said, "Those who expect to reap the blessings of Freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

>> Jessica Linde



**Our Dad, SSG John Kuss, an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran, is our hero because he loves us and helps protect us and everyone else. He believes in helping people have Freedom.**

>> Caleb [age 13], Jared [age 11], MaKayla [age 8] and Isaac [age 4] Kuss



COURTESY OF SONY/BMG

I have to say, for starters, definitely my grandmother [is my hero] because she made me the woman I am today. And right up there with her is my military for sure. Without them, I wouldn't even have a chance to be who I am! They enable me to do what I love, and they keep us safe. We take so much for granted.

>> Kellie Pickler, Country music singer



Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is my one true hero. [And] Soldiers are all heroes, every last one of them. I've met everyone from Medal of Honor recipients to Wounded Warriors, and they all exemplify bravery and toughness. I mean, they're kids—we always forget that—who go out there and face danger, putting their lives on the line every single day. They throw on their battle rattle, get in the Humvee and just go. It's not easy, but they do it. Those kids are my heroes.

>> Charlie Daniels, Musician

**My dad was in the Marines, and I always looked up to his bravery and courage to fight for what he believed in, even if it meant risking his own life. I want to give a huge thanks to the brave and courageous men and women now serving our country.**

>> Amanda Kimmel, Reality TV star

My heroes are: Shelle Michaels, who is not only my friend, but [who also spends] endless hours supporting not only our troops, but their families as well.

SGT Megan Dockter, who is my daughter currently on deployment in Iraq. This is her second tour of duty, and both times she volunteered to go.

So when we look out our window and think of our freedom, we can think of our heroes who make a difference in this world, and we can thank them and smile.

>> Connie Gasmann





Our hero, Megan Dockter, has been deployed again. She is a great role model for young girls like us. She is with the North Dakota Army National Guard 191st MP Company.

>> Rebbekah (age 12) and Emmaleis (age 10) McPherron



When I think of the Fourth of July, I think about everything it takes to keep our country all that our forefathers intended it to be. The National Guard, as the name suggests, never stops guarding all that this nation holds so dear.

These men and women are truly my heroes.

While my family and countless others enjoyed our Fourth of July barbecues, the Guard was on duty, as always. We all need to remind ourselves of that and be grateful.

>> Jennie Garth, Actress



In my film and television career, I have had the opportunity to play many heroic characters. The inspiration for the parts I play has always been found in you—our nation's men and women in uniform, and the selfless contribution you make on a daily basis to keep our country safe and free and to provide the great gift of Freedom to others. I salute you, and I thank you.

>> Chuck Norris, Actor

My heroes are the female Soldiers of the North Dakota Army National Guard 1/188th ADA JLENS and SECFOR. I adopted them when they were deployed to Afghanistan in 2006-07. They inspired me to start the support group called Ladies of Liberty, which now rests in the care of the national support organization Soldiers' Angels, [www.SoldiersAngels.org](http://www.SoldiersAngels.org), and is the first national team to support deployed females specifically.

Another great hero is North Dakota Rep. Earl Pomeroy, who authored the 'Heroes Act' (Honoring Existing Retirement Obligations for Every Service Member), which recently became law. This act aims to ensure the families of the National Guard and Reserve Soldiers killed in action receive full survivor pension benefits. Rep. Pomeroy stands out across the nation and state in his support for the National Guard. His actions speak as loud as his words, as I have witnessed his attendance at every send-off and Freedom Salute for every North Dakota Army National Guard deployment.

>> Shelle Michaels, Soldiers' Angels National Communication Officer

As a senior NCO, my heroes are those who inspire me to be a better leader and man. Within the Guard, I am constantly finding heroes who help me refine who I am and what I hope to become. SFC Vincent Jaques and SFC Arron Harris, both of the Oregon National Guard, are two of these men—Jaques for his leadership and compassion and Harris for his drive and desire that keep the Guard Soldiers competitive with the Active component.

>> SFC Toby Nunn, California Army National Guard Soldier

**My hero is my son**, SGT David Barney. My son is my hero because he is true to his country, he is loyal to the military and the fight for Freedom, and he stands in honor of his fellow Soldiers and fallen friends. I'm very proud of him; he is the greatest son ever.

>> Lori Montgomery

# POINT. CLICK. MAKE IT PERSONAL.



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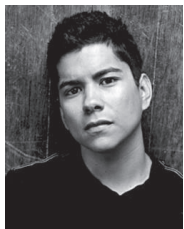






**Chief Nate Galloway**, who's currently deployed, stands on principle, never waivers from his faith in God or his country, and always places his family high on a pedestal. I would follow him into battle just as quickly as I would entrust him with the safety of my wife and children if I were to go without him.

>> Officer Candidate Christian Venhuizen, Wyoming Army National Guard Soldier



To me, a hero is someone who displays courage, honesty, bravery and selflessness. Their actions may be large or small, and may affect one ... or a million and one. They are not afraid of fighting for what they believe is right. The men and women serving all across the world for our country are truly my heroes.

I may play a hero on TV, staring danger in its face ... but these are the real heroes. I am grateful for the people out there risking their lives every day for the freedom of our country. Their actions, both large and small, are admirable and appreciated. To the National Guard—my thoughts and thanks.

>> Jeremy Valdez, Actor



**General Francis Marion.** Nearly a third of the battles fought in the American Revolution were fought here in South Carolina. If it weren't for the "Swamp Fox," we'd all be buying our tea from Cornwallis Inc.

>> MAJ Scott Bell, South Carolina Army National Guard Soldier



The July Fourth holiday is a good opportunity to pause and remember all of the people who work hard every day to keep our country safe. Thank you for your dedication, courage and integrity. You make our country great.

>> Jenna Fischer, Actress

My hero and role model is SFC Diana Huggins. Huggins is a hero to many



Soldiers who went through basic training at Fort Jackson, SC, not only because she was an amazing Soldier we could all emulate, but because she would go out of her way to

assist Soldiers having family issues or other difficulties. She gave good personal and career guidance to all Soldiers— [whether they were] in her platoon or not.

For me, she has been the rock that has helped me overcome the biggest obstacle I have ever faced in my life. On March 6, 2007, less than a year after graduating from my initial training and returning home, I was in a major car accident that left me hospitalized and in a wheelchair for many months. Huggins called within days of the accident to check on me and has continued to stay in contact to provide advice and support me through my recovery.

If there were ever a hero to me in life, it would definitely have to be her, because she has kept me going when I did not feel that I had any hope of a normal life left. I have a long road ahead with at least one more surgery, and I know that she will be there for me if I need her. If I could do one thing to thank her for her support, I would fly to Florida and give her a giant hug just so she could see the progress I have made in one year.

>> SPC Margaret Moonin, Alaska Army National Guard Soldier

My hero is my husband. He is a Soldier who has been deployed to Iraq twice since 2005. The first tour was for 16 months, and the second tour was for 12 months. He is an amazing man who would do anything for anyone, including putting his family's life on hold to defend this country and those who live in it. His heart is so giving and willing that he's often left with little for himself. I admire, respect and love him for who he is—an American Soldier!

>> Heather Bemis



Our hero is CW3 Ronald Lazenby, a member of the 142 MI serving at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. Husband, father of seven, grandfather of 18 and loved by all, he is our hero and friend. We are so proud of your examples. We love and miss you.

>> The Lazenby Family

All four of my grandparents have inspired me in ways they'll never know. Both my grandmothers are strong women with huge hearts. They always put others before themselves. And both my grandfathers are war heroes. They are both proud Veterans of WWII whose selflessness never ceases to amaze me. This is why my grandparents are my heroes.

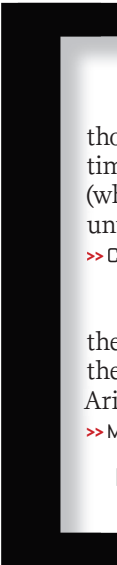
Thank you to the National Guard Soldiers for their service. You men and women make me proud to live in this country. Thank you for fighting for our freedoms! Best wishes to you and your families.

>>Amber Stevens, Actress



Our hero is Dad (who's currently serving in Afghanistan). We are very proud of him. He is using his super-powers to fight the bad guys in Afghanistan right now. We love him!

>>Grazi (mom), Russell (age 3), Todd (age 2) and Logan (age 1) Ostler



COL Pete Brooks is my hero even though I'm going back to Iraq for the second time in three years, and he gave my job to Jim (what does he know about graphic artistry?) until I get back, but I still love him!

>>CW3 Tripp Hutto

COL Pete Brooks gave me Tripp's job (what the heck do I know about graphic artistry?) for the next year. He also didn't send me back to Arizona this year.


>>MAJ Jim St. Clair

[ South Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers ]



My deepest appreciation to the National Guard Soldiers for their service all year round. It has been my greatest honor to travel overseas with the USO, and I salute the U.S. Soldiers.

>>Wilmer Valderrama, Actor

 SFC Gregory S. Bolton: The reason he is our family's hero is because he has never regretted serving his country. He has never complained about going to Iraq and never wanted to turn on America. He has stood strong for our country and the freedoms [to which] we are entitled. He never bragged about saving lives in Iraq, or the sorrow he felt about the loss of a good friend. He was there to work hard, support our president and keep morale up for those around him. **Gregory is truly our American Hero.** >>Annette Bolton



## MAARNG Soldiers on the Fast Track For Re-Enlistments

Story and Photos By SFC Clint Wood

### ARMY NATIONAL GUARD (ARNG)

Soldiers have re-enlisted in places as small as an armory in Appleton, MN, (population 2,871 at the 2000 census) and in places as far away as Iraq and Afghanistan.

For more than 50 Massachusetts Army National Guard (MAARNG) Soldiers, their July 6 re-enlistment ceremony took place minutes before 1,600-pound cars zoomed by at more than 200 miles per hour.

The ceremony for the Soldiers who planned to re-enlist from July to September was held on the start/fin-

ish line of the Watkins Glen International Speedway, home of the fourth annual Camping World Grand Prix IndyCar Series (IRL) 60-lap race that hosted some of the best open-wheel racers in the world, including Scott Dixon, a four-time winner this season.

The Soldiers formed a line on the

introduction stand as the Canadian and American National Anthems were sung. About 50 NYARNG Soldiers unfurled a 30-foot-by-60-foot American flag on turn 1 before the race.

Wickstrom said he thought the fans sitting in the front stretch grandstand appreciated the ceremo-



SPC Seyed Gharonyhashemy was among the MAARNG Soldiers re-enlisted by BG Steven Wickstrom.

“It is a great feeling to be in the greatest military.”

>> SSG Shirley Lambert, MAARNG

speedway as part of the pre-race festivities on the famous New York state track. BG Steven Wickstrom, deputy commander of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division, stood on the racer's introduction stand several feet in front of the rank to read the oath of enlistment. Fifty-four of these Soldiers also carried all U.S. state and territory flags to the start/finish line and lined up on each side of the

ny. "It's always a pleasure to re-enlist Soldiers," he noted.

He admitted it also is hard for people who don't serve in the Armed Forces to understand why Soldiers re-enlist.

But not for Brazilian Vitor Meira, driver of the IRL No. 4 National Guard car.

He said when he first was made aware of the ARNG, he knew little about it.





**Above:** MAARNG Soldiers SGT Stephanie Lehman and SFC Robert Sargent re-enlisted at Watkins Glen International Speedway July 6.

**Below:** National Guard Indy driver Vitor Meira circles the track at Watkins Glen on July 4, in a special ACU uniform to honor the Guard Soldiers re-enlisting that day.

**Previous page:** National Guard Soldiers display the colors during a mass re-enlistment ceremony at Watkins Glen on the Fourth of July.



"Soldiers re-enlisting proves that the Guard works," he said.

SSG John Chicklowski definitely keeps "coming back" to serve in a variety of Armed Services. He spent six years in the Navy, eight years in the Active Army, 14 years in the Army Reserve and about 10 years in the Guard.

He said this latest re-enlistment will give him 20 good years for his retirement. He is also switching his Military Occupational Specialty from an infantryman to a truck driver.

"I like learning different things all the time," said Chicklowski, a former golf pro and musician. "I

like the adventure."

For SSG Shirley Lambert, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003–2004, re-enlisting felt great.

"Actually it is fantastic," she said. "It is a great feeling to be in the greatest military."

Lambert, a correctional officer in Connecticut for the last seven years and a single parent while deployed, said she also feels good that she has a part in ensuring that her daughter will be able to enjoy her freedom.

Soldiers like these MAARNG Soldiers carry on a tradition that dates back 372 years. The Guard traces its roots to 1636, making it America's first armed forces. **GX**

# NYARNG Celebrate 4th By Re-Enlisting

LTC Paul Fanning, courtesy of DVIDS

**N**ew York Army National Guard (NYARNG) Soldiers stationed at Camp Phoenix Afghanistan marked the Fourth of July with a re-enlistment ceremony and a 5K run.

Almost 20 Soldiers were re-enlisted in the Army National Guard by

from England—the Colonial Army did."

Balfe praised his team for possessing the same spirit of 1776 that America's forebears displayed.

"We will fight for that independence from terror; and, in fact, we are engaged in that fight at this very moment," he said. "All of us here have heard and heeded a call to duty. Not every American responds



**Top:** 1st SGT James Meltz of Company D, 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry–Security Force Battalion for C-JTF Phoenix completes the 5K run.

**Right:** Liberty and Justice stand guard on the New York flag beside the state's coat of arms and motto "Excelsior," which expresses the idea of reaching toward higher goals.

COL Brian K. Balfe, commander of Combined Joint Task Force [C-JTF] Phoenix and the NYARNG's 27th Brigade Combat Team.

The day began with the run, with dozens of members of C-JTF Phoenix taking to the base track in two groups at 6:15 and 7 a.m.

The re-enlistment ceremony followed later, with Balfe addressing a formation composed of Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen.

"The Declaration of Independence could have remained just words on paper had it not been for the strength and will of the American people and its Army," Balfe said. "The Declaration of Independence did not make America independent

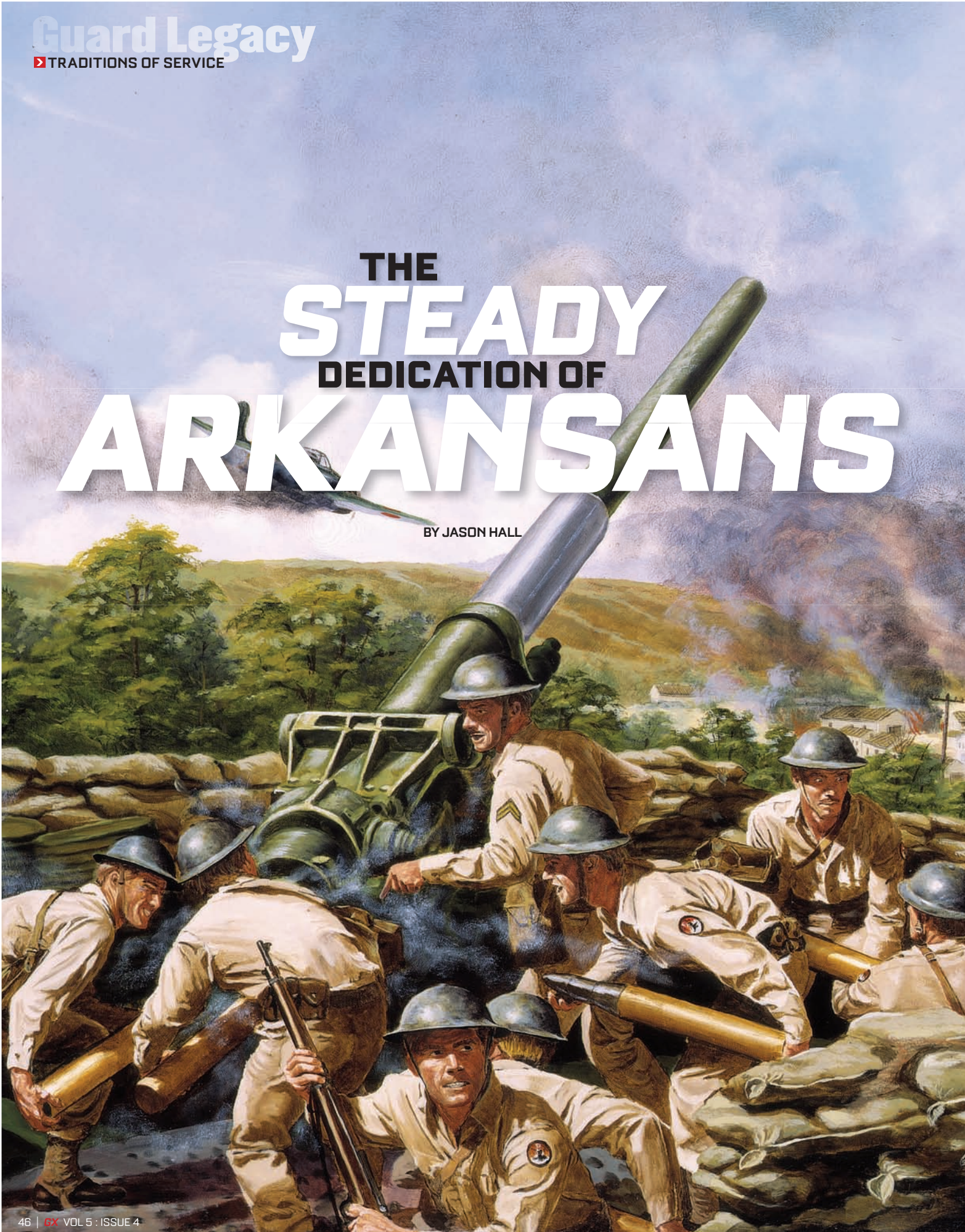


to this patriotic summons. The nation commends those who do."

For members of C-JTF Phoenix in Afghanistan, the Fourth of July was just another day in service to the nation. Soldiers enjoyed classic picnic fare in the Camp Phoenix dining facility, which included a patriotic display featuring the Statue of Liberty, Uncle Sam and decorated cakes. **GX**

# THE STEADY DEDICATION OF ARKANSANS

BY JASON HALL



COURTESY OF NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

**DEFENSE OF THE ALEUTIANS:**

Arkansas' 206th Coast Artillery Regiment (Anti-Aircraft), armed with obsolete 3" anti-aircraft guns and water-cooled .50 caliber machine guns, arrived on Dutch Harbor, the Aleutian Islands, on June 3, 1942.



Above: The 937th Field Artillery Battalion provides support to the 25th Infantry in Korea on Nov. 26, 1951.



# THE ARKANSAS NATIONAL GUARD'S MORE THAN 200 YEARS OF HISTORY BEGAN IN 1804. THE YEAR PRIOR, THE LAND NOW KNOWN AS ARKANSAS WAS PART OF THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE—THE TERRITORY BOUGHT BY THE UNITED STATES FROM NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

**F**ollowing the sale, the leaders of the Indiana Territory, which consisted of Arkansas as well as other future states, enacted a law requiring all free males to serve in the territorial militia. The Territory of Arkansas was organized on July 4, 1819, and the new territorial governor was given the power and responsibility to “be commander in chief of the militia of said territory.”

In March 1825, George Izard was appointed Arkansas' territorial governor. Izard, who served in the military during the War of 1812, took aggressive measures to raise the militia's efficiency and effectiveness. When the relocation of the Eastern Indian tribes necessitated their movement through Arkansas, Izard stated the need to “place the militia in a condition to afford immediate protection to our settlements, should any disorder attend the passage of these people.” Though the militia forces came close to engaging, no combat took place during these pre-statehood years.

The largest mobilization of the pre-state militia occurred as the territory was about to be admitted to the Union. The regular Army Soldiers located west of the Arkansas Territory were transferred to Florida to fight a conflict known as the “Seminole War.” While they were fighting, Governor Fulton sent six companies of Arkansas militia to Fort Towson in the Oklahoma Territory to fill the void created by their departure.

The primary benefit of militia musters was the social interaction. The musters gave the citizens the opportunity to meet with their neighbors, since they rarely interacted. During these early years, the musters mostly dealt with marching, practicing the manual of arms and competition shooting events.

Arkansas came into the Union as the 25th state on June 15, 1836. It was admitted as a slave state, and planters settled the land to cultivate cotton using slave labor, a fact that would have major consequences in a future war. During the first year of the new state's life, it assisted Americans in fighting for their independence in a land not yet part of the United States: Texas.

Led by Sam Houston, Texans fought the Mexican government for their independence from Oct. 2, 1835 to April 21, 1836. Arkansas sent troops and war materials in support, and there is evidence that Houston and his compatriots planned the war in a tavern in Washington, AR, in 1834.

Almost exactly 10 years after that war, Arkansas, along with the rest of the United States, was embroiled in another war against Mexico. When the Mexican War began in 1846, Arkansans from every social and economic level volunteered to serve in the militia. Twenty-two companies of cavalry and seven companies of infantry were raised. From these, an infantry battalion was formed, and 10 companies of cavalry were selected for service in the Arkansas Regiment of Mounted Volunteers. These Arkansans fought bravely, most notably during the Battle of Buena Vista.

## Civil Unrest

A brief rest period followed the Mexican War; however, the clouds of war soon began to gather again. The issues of slavery and states' rights were causing turmoil in the country. In 1860, there were 111,115 slaves in Arkansas, approximately 25 percent of the population. Though Arkansans identified themselves as Southerners, officially the state government made it known that it would not secede and would stay loyal to the Union. However, certain state leaders began preparations for secession, and their plans included using the militia.

In February 1861, Arkansas' militia took over the Little Rock Arsenal from U.S. Soldiers. After the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 troops from the "Militia of the several states" to put down the rebellion. The adjutant general of Arkansas responded with this on April 27:

*Sir: I am directed by his Excellency the governor to acknowledge the receipt for Special Orders, No. 106, from the War Department at Washington. That order is based on the presumption of the State of Arkansas being willing to furnish the quota of troops required of her for the Federal Army—a presumption entirely improbable, and, I can assure you, utterly impossible.*

*Further, I have to inform you that I had the honor on Tuesday night, April 23, 1861, at Fort Smith, to order the seizure of the person of Maj. R. C. Gatlin, Fifth Infantry, as prisoner of war, and who is now at large on parole of honor not to serve against the State of Arkansas or the Southern Confederacy.*

*I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant.*

**EDMUND BURGEVIN**

*Adjutant General of Arkansas*

Arkansas seceded from the Union on May 6, 1861, and joined the Confederate States of America.

Arkansas Soldiers fought in many of the Civil War's major engagements, including more than 700 battles on their own soil. Though most of these battles were small-scale skirmishes, a few large-scale battles of the war occurred in Arkansas.



**WEAPONS POSTURE:** SSG Justin Fisher of Hatfield, AR, provides weapons posture training to members of the Sons of Iraq. Fisher is a member of 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment of the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

The largest battle west of the Mississippi was fought at Pea Ridge, AR, in March 1862. Twenty-six thousand Soldiers participated in the Union-won battle, destroying the hope of Confederate occupation of Missouri.

There were several Arkansans of note during the Civil War; the most famous of them was Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne. Referred to as "The Stonewall Jackson of the West," Cleburne is considered one of the war's most brilliant Confederate division commanders. Though the Arkansans fought bravely and proudly, the Civil War ended with the defeat of the Confederacy, and Arkansas rejoined the Union on June 22, 1868.

## The Militia Takes Sides

A newly governed Arkansas passed an act to organize the Arkansas militia on July 14, 1868. The first company raised in the state was an all-African-American unit in Van Buren. By October 1868, there were 37 companies comprised of almost 1,600 men—mostly African-American units.

While the militia was reforming, a threat was emerging in the southern states: the Ku Klux Klan. To counter this threat, Gov. Clayton Powell, a former brigadier general in

the Union Army, instituted martial law on Nov. 4, 1868. The militia forces attacked and overwhelmed the headquarters of the local KKK, arresting two men for murder. The militia would continue to battle with the KKK, making several arrests until martial law ended in March 1869. The militia would not be used again for another five years, when it was called upon to fight on both sides of a domestic conflict.

The Brooks-Baxter War of 1874 was between factions of the Republican Party over the disputed 1872 election for governor. The "war" pitted the old radical Republicans, who supported Elisha Baxter, against the new liberal Republicans, who supported Joseph Brooks.

After reviewing the election ballots, the general assembly declared Baxter the winner. Brooks immediately filed suit to have the results reversed, but it was not until April 12, 1874—more than a year since Baxter had taken office—that the election results were overturned. Baxter was not allowed representation at the hearing that overturned the elections. Thus, he considered them unlawful and did not give up his position. In response, Brooks mobilized a group of armed supporters and forcibly removed Baxter from the State House.

Both Brooks and Baxter called for militia support, and both sides were aided by militia forces. While the Brooks forces were in defensive positions around the State House, the Baxter forces surrounded them. Baxter established his headquarters in the Anthony House, a hotel one block from the State House. During the Brooks-Baxter War, several skirmishes resulted in multiple deaths and more than 100 injuries.

Finally, on May 15, President Ulysses S. Grant recognized Elisha Baxter as the duly elected governor, and ordered "all turbulent and disorderly persons to disperse and return to their home." By the next day, the Brooks forces had done just that.

## Late 1800s to Early 1900s

With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, several units of the Arkansas militia were raised. None of these units saw major combat; however, a total of 54 Arkansas volunteers died of malaria and typhoid fever during their service in Puerto Rico.

In 1916, the Arkansas militia became the Arkansas National Guard (AR NG), and during the Mexican



Border Mobilization of 1916, the Arkansas Guard gained precious experience and training that would help them fight the next war looming over the horizon. Even before the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, the 1st Regiment Arkansas National Guard had been mobilized. Later, in addition to the 1st Regiment, other Arkansas Guard units were mobilized, including the 1st Arkansas Ammunition Train, 1st Arkansas Ambulance Company and 1st Arkansas Field Hospital.

A total of 110 officers and 6,317 enlisted Soldiers arrived at Camp Beauregard, Alexandria, LA, and along with Guard units from Louisiana and Mississippi, were formed into the newly created 39th Division. Under this new structure, the 1st Regiment became the 153rd Infantry Regiment; the 2nd Regiment became the 142nd Field Artillery Regiment; and the 3rd Regiment was split between the 154th Infantry Regiment and 141st Machine Gun Battalion. But once the 39th arrived in France, the division was not allowed to fight as a unit. It was broken up, and individual units and personnel were used as replacements on the front lines.

In September 1940, several ARNG units answered the first large-scale peacetime mobilization of the Guard. This call would enable the Arkansans to train in preparation for their second trip to Europe to fight against Germany. With the entry of the United States in WWII on Dec. 7, 1941, the Arkansans were ready.

### Arkansas Goes "Over There"

The first Arkansas Guard unit to go "over there" was the 154th Observation Squadron, arriving in North Africa on Nov. 8, 1942.

The 154th flew combat missions from several airfields in North Africa, flying aircraft such as A-20s, P-38s, P-39s and P-51s. The 154th is credited with flying the first combat mission in a P-51 in the Mediterranean theater on April 9, 1943. In addition, the squadron earned a distinguished unit citation for its exemplary service in the raids on the Ploesti oil refineries in August 1944.

The 206th Coast Artillery Regiment (Anti-aircraft) arrived at Dutch Harbor, AK, on Aug. 16, 1941, prior to the Pearl Harbor attack. In June 1942, the 206th, armed with obsolete 3-inch anti-aircraft guns and old water-cooled .50 caliber machine guns, participated in the defense of Dutch Harbor against two attacks by carrier-based Japanese planes. Today, the proud heritage of the 206th Coast Artillery is carried on by the 206th Field Artillery Regiment.

In Europe, Arkansas' 936th and 937th independent artillery battalions saw extensive combat service as they hammered against the Third

turmoil at home. The U.S. District Court ordered the Little Rock school district to integrate on Sept. 3, 1957. On Sept. 23, 1957, under the protection of local police, eight African-American students entered Central High. A crowd of approximately 1,000 angry residents gathered outside the school. Due to fears of possible rioting and lack of confidence in the police to handle the situation, the African-American students were removed from the school. Though a force of 150 Guard Soldiers had been assembled and placed on five-minute notice to assist the police, they were never called upon.

### ON TRAINING THE SONS OF IRAQ FOR WEAPONS POSTURE:

"It's kind of like a friendship. It's a very positive working relationship, and we have a mutual respect for one another.

The important thing is that they are willing to learn, because they want to help their community."

—SSG Justin Fisher

Reich. The battalions participated in the landing in Naples, Italy, on Nov. 11, 1943, as well as the drive across the Rapido River, the liberation of Rome and the assault on Monte Cassino. The 937th then prepared for and participated in the amphibious assault on southern France. The 937th is credited with firing more than 200,000 rounds in combat.

The end of WWII in 1945 afforded the ARNG a brief respite. But five years later, the nation was again caught up in a foreign war, this time protecting democracy in Korea. The two battalions, some of which had served in WWII, were again put in harm's way.

For their service in the Korean War, both battalions were awarded battle streamers for the First U.N. Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; and Second Korean Winter, with the 937th receiving additional streamers for Korea, Summer-Fall 1952; Third Korean Winter; and Korea, Summer 1953.

### Molding the Modern-Day Guard

During the 1960s, the issue of race and equality again caused

Later that day, President Dwight Eisenhower federalized the entire ARNG. The next day, elements of the regular Army's 101st Division took up positions around Central High. The day after, a force consisting of 107 officers, 15 warrant officers and 1,184 enlisted men from the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 153rd Infantry, the 39th Military Police Company and Company D, 212th Signal Battalion, arrived on the scene. A few days later, the Arkansas units had taken over the responsibility of escorting the African-American students to and from the school and protecting them while inside. Thanks to their professionalism, the members of the ARNG were critical in maintaining peace during an emotionally charged situation.

The '60s, '70s and '80s saw the ARNG dealing with domestic issues involving natural disasters and protecting the civil rights of its citizens. Unfortunately, combat on foreign soil still lay in the path of the Arkansans. The Soldiers would be deployed overseas again in 1990 and 1991 as part of operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

One of the many Arkansas units

deployed was the 1122nd Transportation Company, which transported Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division during Operation Desert Storm. The 142nd Field Artillery provided fire support to the 1st Infantry Division and the United Kingdom's 1st Armored Division, firing 1,060 rounds. In addition to combat forces, Arkansas' 148th Medical Hospital deployed and provided general medical support to U.S. and coalition forces, with priority to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment. Several more units were mobilized and deployed, with more than 3,400 Arkansas Soldiers being called up—the second highest percentage of any state or territory.

### Arkansas Today

Ten years later, the chaos and turmoil of the Middle East was brought to our shores in the form of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As they have always done in the past, the men and women of the ARNG answered the call of their state and their country. The Arkansans have participated in operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Iraqi Freedom.

Approximately half of the state's National Guard personnel have been called to duty during the war in Iraq. Arkansans have been instrumental in training an Iraqi force, known as "The Sons of Iraq," in the Baghdad area. The Guard Soldiers are part of the 39th Infantry Brigade, nicknamed the Arkansas Brigade. Their commander, COL Kendall Penn, states their mission as, "Bottom line, we want the Iraqi citizens to own security of their country, and we're doing our part to ensure they have that opportunity."

On July 1, 2008, the 70 members of the 213th Area Support Medical Company returned home to Arkansas following their service in Iraq. Credited with being the highest volume area medical company in theater, the 213th treated more than 20,000 patients.

As the ARNG begins its third century of service, Americans and Arkansans alike can rest well knowing that these citizens will live up to their mission: "To provide professional personnel and ready units that are capable of responding to the needs of our nation, state and communities." **GX**

# In a Buyer's Market

Courtesy of USAA Financial Services Group

**REPORTS ON THE HOUSING MARKET** might have you fearful about your next home purchase. But now might be the perfect time for you to buy.

If you've heard the grim reports on the nightly news or read the headlines, you know the housing market's been in trouble.

The good news is the glut of homes for sale has kept prices down and consumers can find good mortgage rates.

"Continued concerns about the weaker economic growth and further declines in the housing market have kept mortgage rates low," says Frank Nothaft, Freddie Mac chief economist. For house hunters with good credit histories, stable incomes and money in the bank, it's a buyer's market.

**TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE NUMBERS.**

Examine your financial situation— income, debts and savings. Then, research costs in your dream neighborhood at [www.Realtor.com](http://www.Realtor.com) and [www.Zillow.com](http://www.Zillow.com). That will give you a sense of how much you'll have to borrow. If needed, start a monthly savings regimen.

**USE SAVINGS TO SLASH DEBT.**

Because potential lenders assess your debt-to-income ratio, eliminating debt puts you in the strongest financial position. A standard, conservative guideline is that your monthly mortgage payment shouldn't exceed 28 percent of your monthly household income, and your total debt payments shouldn't exceed 36 percent. If you have liquid assets that show you can cover six months' worth of home-related payments, those percentages can go up by as much as 50 to 60 percent, and ratio requirements vary among lenders.

Federal Housing Administration loans and loans backed by the Department of Veterans Affairs

allow for higher debt-to-income ratios. When your debt is manageable, begin to sock away money.

**ESTIMATE THE DOWN PAYMENT AND CLOSING COSTS.**

It's always good to think in advance about the figure you'll need to have on hand.



And keep in mind, the more you spend on that part of the purchase, the less cash you'll have to upgrade and decorate your new digs. Though all lenders do not require down payments of 20 percent, you'll probably have to come up with a minimum of 5 percent of the purchase price in cash. That's \$15,000 on a \$300,000 house. If you don't put 20 percent down, be prepared to pay other costs, such as at least two months' worth of principal, interest, taxes and insurance. You'll probably have to purchase private mortgage insurance, or PMI, to protect the lender if you can't make a future payment. It typically sets you back 0.5 to 1 percent of the entire loan amount annually. On a \$100,000 loan, you could be paying as much as \$1,000 a year, or \$83.33 per month—assuming a 1-percent PMI fee. Closing costs, such as title policies, recording fees and home inspections, run between 2 and 4 percent of the purchase price.

**SELECT THE BEST MORTGAGE FOR YOU.**

The most important factor in selecting a mortgage is how long you plan to stay in the home. "With today's low rates, it's smart to stick with a traditional, long-term, fixed-rate loan if you can," says Keith Gumbinger, vice president of mortgage information at HSH Associates. The savings between an adjustable interest rate and a 30-year fixed is negligible, say, a 0.33-percent break. Gumbinger points out, "Those few bucks might offset your cable or cell phone bill, but it's not that compelling."

**PULL YOUR CREDIT REPORT.**

Mistakes on your credit report can cause a lender to reject your application or ratchet up the interest rate you pay. You can get free copies of your reports from the three major credit bureaus—Equifax, Experian and TransUnion—at [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com). Look for accounts that aren't yours, debts you don't owe and negative marks, other than bankruptcy, that are older than seven years.

If you find an error, contact the bureau immediately. By law, the credit bureau has 30 days to investigate and respond.

**ORGANIZE YOUR PAPERWORK.**

Typically, lenders require at least

two years of tax returns and W-2s, two months of bank statements and statements for investment accounts. If you're self-employed, you may need a letter from your accountant to verify your income.

**START SHOPPING.**

Armed with your credit score, go online to research your market and ask for a rate quote. Be clear that you are not applying for a loan, so they don't request your FICO score. Multiple requests for your credit report can cause your score to free fall. The FICO scoring formula lumps all mortgage-related inquiries made within a specified period and counts them as one, so bunch your requests together in a short time frame.

**NEGOTIATE, NEGOTIATE.**

Once you've selected a lender, you'll be given a good-faith estimate of closing costs. Ask about each fee, and try to negotiate the ones that seem excessive. Some third-party fees for appraisers, lawyers or title search companies typically remain firm, but charges for courier services, administrative tasks or shipping fees might be negotiable, according to SmartMoney. In a buyer's market, there's plenty of room for trimming costs with the seller as well. That means you can ask the seller to pay part of the closing costs, or propose they pony up for a one-year home warranty to cover any repairs. Your real estate agent's fee may be negotiable as well. **GX**

**CREDIT SCORES CAN COST YOU**

Here's a look at what you should be prepared to pay, in addition to the loan amount, on a 30-year mortgage on a \$300,000 home.

A three-digit number, generally ranging from 500 to 850, a credit score can be purchased from each of the bureaus for around \$15. The one used by most mortgage lenders is the FICO score, generated by Minneapolis-based Fair Isaac Corp. The higher your score, the better. Take a look at the numbers, based on a home loan amount of \$300,000, according to [www.MyFICO.com](http://www.MyFICO.com).

30-YEAR FIXED MORTGAGE		
CREDIT SCORE	620 - 659	760 - 850
ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE	7.115%	5.799%
MONTHLY PAYMENT	\$2,019	\$1,760

Source: MyFICO.com; interest rates accurate as of Nov. 16, 2007

## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT: The Mind-Body Connection

Courtesy of Decade of Health

**A**re you one of the lucky ones? Are you able to keep your weight exactly where it needs to be? If not, don't feel lonely—most of us are not that lucky and struggle with maintaining a healthy weight every day. For many people, this struggle becomes a stressor that can affect work performance, family well-being and social interactions.

We all like to look our best and want the same for our spouse and children. Weight plays a huge role in what we think about ourselves. Not only can it impact self-confidence, it can also wreak havoc on health and wellness. We are all aware of the mind-body connection, and yet recognizing this relationship and its role in successful weight management is difficult for many people.

What goes on in our minds greatly affects our bodies and vice versa. Not being able to control weight can stress us out, and feeling stressed can cause us to eat too much or too little. Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension that occurs when we feel overwhelmed by a situation that seems unmanageable.

One family member with a weight issue can be a stressor for the entire family. Stress can trigger chemicals, making you crave food or lose your appetite. If you are stressed about your appearance, you can feel out of control and unable to take action—or it can motivate you to get started on a program to change. The real challenge is getting back in control and sticking with the program once you've started.

Physical activity, good nutrition and having a plan to succeed are necessary to achieve a healthy weight. But the trouble is, we want immediate results and getting to a healthy weight is a long-term project. The key to success is viewing your plan as a series of small steps, each one a victory and another building block to a lifelong healthy habit. **GX**

Here's a **weight-loss guide** that can offer a fun personal or family adventure:

- 1. Make the word "diet" a dirty word.** Each time someone uses that word, he or she must pay a penny to the diet jar.
- 2. Make "calories in = calories out" your mantra for weight maintenance and "calories in < calories out" the mantra for weight loss.** Calories burned in physical activity must equal or exceed calories eaten.
- 3. Learn moderation and portion control.** Don't give up foods you love entirely; decrease the amount and frequency of consumption and savor every bite slowly. Download the Portion Size Pitfalls gameboard from [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portionsizepitfalls.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/portionsizepitfalls.pdf) for a fun way to learn about sticking with the right portion sizes at home or when eating out.
- 4. Avoid habitual stops at the fast-food drive-through.** The temptation to supersize a meal and wash it down with a sugary drink is one of the most unhealthy eating behaviors.
- 5. MOVE!** Pick a physical activity that everyone in your family enjoys. As activity frequency and length of time increase, think of all the calories that you will burn. Record and track progress together.
- 6. Keep track of your mood and how it affects your eating and exercising habits.** Remember, it's a two-way street. The mind and body work together to create bad habits, and it takes them both to build and sustain healthy habits. When you've wrapped your mind firmly around the healthy weight habit, take the diet jar's pennies and do something fun! **GX**

# Rethink Your Drink.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, drinking two to four sodas a day can cause a weight gain of a pound a week!



**ARNG  
 Lighten Up!®**

Always Ready,  
 Always There...  
 Always  
 Healthy.





# Making Their Mark

## Grantham/GX scholarship winners destined for success

*Courtesy of Grantham University*

When Grantham University and GX partnered last year to offer a full four-year scholarship to an Army National Guard Soldier in each of the 50 states and four territories, we never imagined how difficult it would be to choose a winner for each state. All of the Soldiers had different reasons for applying, and all were equally deserving. While we wish that we could have given scholarships to everyone, we could choose only one per state.



**MSG (RET.) DEAN HASSELBRINK**, the winner from New Jersey, was awarded a scholarship for his dedication to giving back to his country. While working as a courier for FedEx in January 2003, his truck was forced into a telephone pole by a hit-and-run driver. He sustained a 200-stitch laceration to his forehead and a broken neck. “After this accident, I realized how brief life is,” Hasselbrink said. “I was determined to make an impact.” Following a few months of therapy, he returned to his job, but his heart

Although Hasselbrink had retired, he still qualified for and received a Grantham University scholarship.

wasn't in it. He volunteered for active duty with the New Jersey Army National Guard (NJARNG).

After 28 years of service in the NJARNG, Hasselbrink retired in June 2007 as the G2 noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC), Joint Force Headquarters. He also held the positions of State Security Manager and the Senior Anti-terrorism and Force Protection NCO.

After retiring, he began thinking about continuing his education. When he visited his education office, he discovered that most of his benefits would not be available once he left the Guard. “After 28 years of service, I was not ‘entitled’ [to an education], but I wasn't going to be deterred,” Hasselbrink said. So he decided to submit an online application for the Grantham University and GX ARNG Scholarship Program.

Hasselbrink chose to major in criminal justice because it is the civilian



**MSG (Ret.) Dean Hasselbrink**, the scholarship winner from New Jersey, was awarded a scholarship for his dedication to giving back to his country.

New Jersey WINNER



Virginia WINNER

**SPC Joseph Cormier, VAARNG**, is presented his scholarship.

field that most closely aligns with his military occupational specialty—military intelligence. Once he graduates with his bachelor's degree, he plans to use the knowledge and skills he obtained through the military and his education to serve in Homeland Security.



**WHEN SPC JOSEPH CORMIER**, the winner from Virginia, submitted an online application for a four-year scholarship, he never imagined he would actually win. When the call came in, he was both surprised and shocked.

He applied for the scholarship because he's always wanted to earn an undergraduate degree. “My mother was the only child out of five who graduated from high school,” Cormier said. “After working to support our family, she went back to school and earned an associate degree in business at the age of 40. I was so proud of her, and I want the same thing for myself.”

On Jan. 12, Cormier was presented with a scholarship at the 29th Army Band's Family Day. Adjutant General of the Virginia National Guard MG Robert B. Newman Jr. was in attendance to personally thank the 29th for their hard work and dedication during the 2007 holiday season. Newman also congratulated Cormier and thanked Grantham and GX for creating this opportunity for ARNG Soldiers nationwide.

Cormier has served with the Virginia Army National Guard (VAARNG) since 2000. In addition to being the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Specialist for the 29th, Cormier has been deployed for OIF with the 1173rd Transportation Co. and served with the 229th Chemical Co. Cormier plans to earn a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice to help him in his civilian job, where he is a deputy for the Roanoke County Sheriff's office.

“I believe that growing on an educational, professional and personal level will create an environment rich with opportunities to ensure a happy, successful life for me and for [my son].

>> *SFC David Colafati, CTARNG*

Connecticut  
WINNER



SFC David Colafati, pictured here in Afghanistan, is the scholarship winner for Connecticut.

★★★★

Following a yearlong tour to Afghanistan in April 2007, **SFC DAVID COLAFATI** of the Connecticut Army National Guard (CTARNG) decided he needed to move pursuing his education to the top of his priority list. For him, it was an easy decision to apply for the scholarship program. Colafati plans to major in criminal justice with a specialty in computer science, so he can secure a position with the local, state or federal level of law enforcement and/or the government.

Currently, he serves as an infantry platoon squad leader. He provides technical and tactical guidance to eight subordinates, and develops and implements training designed to complete his squad's and overall platoon's

mission. Colafati also works full time for the CTARNG with the Counterdrug Program as an Operations NCO.

Colafati's motivation is his 7-year-old son. While serving in Afghanistan, thoughts of his son kept him going each day. Now his son is keeping him motivated toward earning his degree. "I believe that growing on an educational, professional and personal level will create an environment rich with opportunities to ensure a happy, successful life for me and for him," said Colafati.

Each of our scholarship winners has a unique drive and motivation. They are truly a special group of Soldiers. Congratulations to all of the winners from the team at **GX** and Grantham University! **GX**

“Meeting the educational needs of the military community has been central to our mission. Service members make sacrifices each and every day for our country.”

>> *Johanna Altland, Director of Communications at Grantham University*

## Helping You Plan Your Future

By SGT April McLaren, IL NG Public Affairs Office

While skimming through **GX**, SSG Tyler Heleine was intrigued when he read that Grantham University had teamed up with **GX** magazine to offer a four-year scholarship to one National Guard Soldier per state in the United States.

His interest led him to Grantham University's Web site for more information about both the scholarship and the school. Within 10 minutes, Heleine of the 1544th Transportation Company in

Paris, IL, completed a 1,000-word essay explaining why he deserved the scholarship.

"It was easy for me because I know what my goals are and why I want to get an education," he said.

Heleine currently works in law enforcement and hopes to attain a college degree in that field. He began law enforcement studies at Lakeland College in Mattoon and plans to earn a bachelor's degree online in law enforcement from Grantham University.

Heleine said it was obvious to him that Grantham goes the extra mile for military personnel.

In 1951, Grantham University began offering certification courses to Veterans and continues to

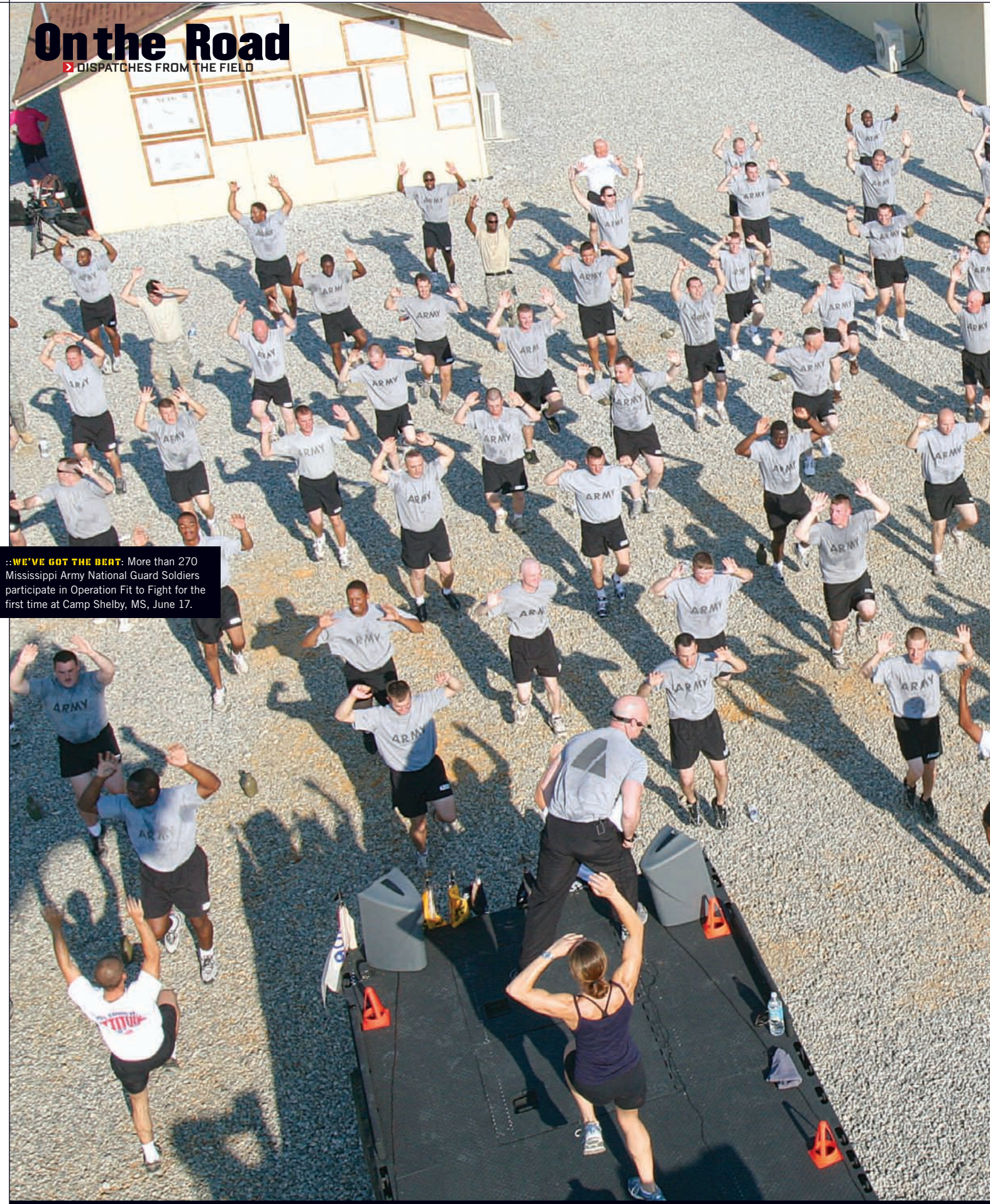
offer its services to members of the U.S. Armed Forces today.

"Ever since then, meeting the educational needs of the military community has been central to our mission," said Johanna Altland, Director of Communications at Grantham University. "Service members make sacrifices each and every day for our country."

Along with his education, Heleine hasn't lost focus on his other career as an Illinois Army National Guard Soldier. He deployed with the Paris unit in December 2003, and he says his first love is the National Guard. **GX**

# On the Road

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD



**WE'VE GOT THE BEAT:** More than 270 Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers participate in Operation Fit to Fight for the first time at Camp Shelby, MS, June 17.



# OPERATION

★ MSARNG BATTALION PREPARES FOR DEPLOYMENT WITH EXTREME HEALTH AND FITNESS TRAINING ★

# FIT TO FIGHT

PHOTOS AND STORY BY SFC CLINT WOOD

★ OPERATION ★  
**FIT TO FIGHT**

S

Standing in a cherry picker 40 feet off the ground with my digital camera and looking down at the scene below me on Forward Operating Base (FOB)

Slayer June 17, I didn't realize that history was being made. I was more concerned with the right exposure and where to focus.

Below me were about 300 Mississippi Army National Guard members dressed in the Army Physical Fitness Uniform (APFU) executing stretching exercises seven ranks deep that extended as far as my eyes could see. These Soldiers of the 1/155th Infantry Battalion were preparing to be the first to participate in the high-intensity Operation Fit to Fight (OpF2F), a pre-deployment health and fitness program created by SSG Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, for GX and [www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/fitness](http://www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/fitness). The program is also designed to teach designated Soldiers how to train units.

Since I am a former Marine, Ken's method of motivating these Soldiers brought back memories of being a skinny 17-year-old in Marine Corps boot camp 27 years ago. If I closed my eyes, I swear I could hear Drill Instructor SSG Strickland "motivating" us on the PT field with colorful language at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego.

Ken's version included shouting, "Hooah means 'Yes,' and it also means 'I'm ready!' Failure to shout 'Hooah' at the right times could result in extra push-ups. Do you get me?"

As you've probably already figured out, this 26-minute training session wasn't your typical Army Physical Fitness Training (APFT) routine. Not only was it carried out on gravel with jagged edges on the largest state-owned training site in the nation, it also included high-steps, the much-hated mountain climbers, speed skate drills, push-ups and flutter kicks. And with a heat index approaching 100 degrees, the Soldiers' gray APFU T-shirts had turned black from sweat by the session's end.





**HOAH!** SSG Ken Weichert walks the ranks to motivate Soldiers like SSG William Maddox (left) during the Train the Trainer session.



“If somebody goes down, you’ve got to be able to go that extra mile.”

>> SGT Robert Krebs

In addition to Mississippi, two other states—Washington and Tennessee—are set to participate in the training this year, while more than 20 states have requested the program.

LTC Jeff Van, battalion commander and a builder from Atlanta, said he thought this training was a great opportunity for his battalion since it will be deploying to Iraq next year for the second time in less than three years.

“You can’t do the same ol’ thing over and over,” said LTC Van, the deputy S3 for the battalion during its first deployment to Iraq. “You’ve got to reach out and try something new every now and then. We’re really looking forward to it.”

After he participated in the training session, Van wrote, “SSG Ken’s program is innovative and ‘spot on’ for units deploying in support of OIF. The approach of continuous fitness training for a designated time period fits our high OPTEMPO battle rhythm. The new thought process of physical training is great. It is about time the military got us up-to-speed with the rest of the civilian populace.”

“It utilizes some fun techniques that are kind of out of the box,” CPT Jeremy Allen, commander of the battalion’s C Company (CO), said after the training session. “We’re used to doing some physical training that is really not all that exciting.”

He also said the response from the Soldiers has been overwhelming.

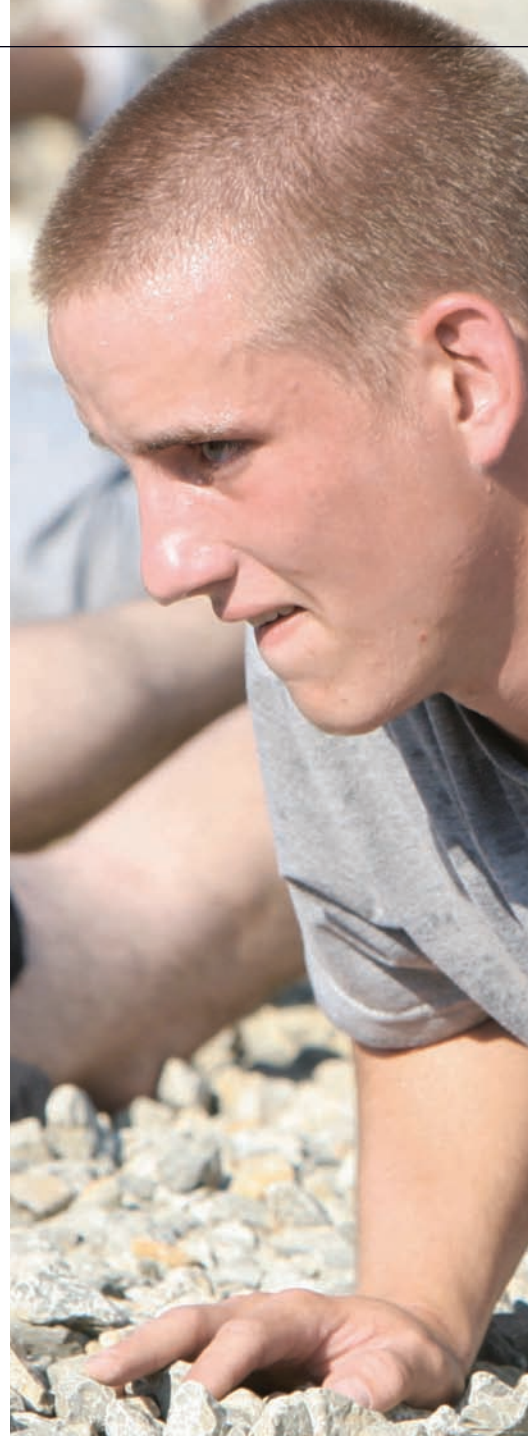
“This is really going to help their physical fitness,” he added.

#### HISTORY IS MADE

The formation was centered on a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) Palletized Load System (PLS) truck with a demountable “flattrack” cargo bed. SSG Ken and Bianca Buresh, one of his trainers, stood on the cargo bed about 6 feet off the ground.

They performed every exercise on this narrow platform, while Stephanie motivated the Soldiers at ground level.

Surrounding the formation were about 50 of the Unit Fitness Trainers (UFT) who were trained the day before by Ken, Stephanie and Bianca during the Train the Trainer session at William Carey University near Hattiesburg,



MS. These UFTs motivated their Soldiers by walking through the ranks encouraging them throughout the session.

SSG William Maddox, a Guard sniper and improvised explosive device (IED) instructor at the camp, enjoyed being in front of his Soldiers.

“Anytime I have the opportunity to be in front of my guys, it gives me a chance to lead by example, and I love that,” said Maddox, who has been in the Guard for more than 15 years. “It gives the guys a chance to get motivated and simply follow my way.”

Maddox, who has been deployed to Iraq twice, said this type of physical training was



**::PUSHING THE LIMIT:** Exercising on jagged gravel challenges SPC Paul Harrington and the Soldiers even more.

also good because Soldiers don't have to be exposed to possible dangers while training outside in Iraq.

"You can actually do this in your hooch with just three or four guys," he remarked. "Just make a little room, do a 25-minute session, and you will be [worn] out."

Maddox also said that this type of training could be done on any type of terrain. "Rocks, gravel, sand—it doesn't matter, you can still do it," he said.

CPT Christopher Cooksey, a former Marine and commander of the battalion's CO B, added that the training could also be done at squad level "as long as you have one motivated

NCO to fire up everybody else and keep them going."

Nine of his NCOs also were among the UFTs.

"We're going to make it a very important part of our training," he said.

He noted that being able to train in a company-sized formation like they did probably won't happen in Iraq.

But time will be set aside in Iraq for training like this for a small contingent of Soldiers to keep them in shape. He said Soldiers must stay in shape during deployments because of the unknown.

"Whether they are going to have to dis-

mount, run or move long distances," he said, "this is the best thing I've seen to keep them in shape."

SPC Jovi Prevot wrote in an email that he was amazed by the workout.

"I work out regularly, and I passed my APFT, but SSG Ken's workout was more rugged and all encompassing than any workout I have done before," he said. "We started with cardio and then moved on to work every muscle from neck to calves. It was very tiring, but after it was over, I wanted to do it again. Now I do Operation Fit to Fight nearly every day for my personal routine."

Van noted how important it is that his Soldiers are physically fit and prepared for anything.

"It is a young man's game," he said, noting that carrying today's armor and equipment can be tough for those who are out of shape, and during patrols and other operations, overweight Soldiers are not the norm.

"Even if you're doing your cordon and searches or actually doing the operations you've been given, there is no time to wait for that guy who's slow on his PT," Van said. "You can't wait for the 15-minute one-miler out there. It is of the utmost importance [for Soldiers] to be on their A-game mentally, operationally and physically."

## TRAIN THE TRAINER

More than 70 Guard members from across the state and selected recruiters and retention NCOs—the majority undergoing Annual Training (AT) on the FOB—arrived at Wilkes Dining Hall June 16 at William Carey University not knowing what to expect. All they knew was that they were going to be attending a six-hour Train the Trainer class.

The training sessions were similar to Tuesday's battalion-wide training session, but the last one was at midday with the heat index reaching 95 degrees.

SGT Michael Thomas wrote in an email, "I remember getting off the bus and thinking this is going to be boring. This SSG Ken guy is probably just going to show us a bunch of exercises we already know how to do, and this is going to be a waste of a day. Then, I see a stereo system being hooked up outside, and I'm

thinking, 'Well, at least I'll get to hear some music while I'm out here.'

"Then out of the building walks Stephanie and Bianca, and they are hollering and trying to get all of us pumped about what is forthcoming," Thomas said. "Now I'm starting to get a little nervous because, let's face it, I know I am not really fit to fight, although I should be."

The Soldiers filed into the classroom in an orderly fashion to start their day. Like any other military class, there were 10-minute breaks about every hour. But the Soldiers in the battalion were just happy to be away from the FOB, where they had spent the last several days. They slept in air-conditioned modified shipping container-like units that held 12 Soldiers. There was a shower tent, but I'm sure this way of life got a little old. The class included two 26-minute high intensity training sessions and several blocks of classroom instruction that included proper diet and nutrition.

Ken, who has served 15 years in the Guard and has been deployed overseas several times, opened the class by telling the group how he was temporarily paralyzed while playing high school football in Chicago in 1985.

After the second-string quarterback was injured, he went from being a defensive right end and the third-string quarterback to the starting quarterback. On a play only 14 yards from the end zone, he said he decided to run for the score instead of handing the ball off to his halfback, knowing he could impress the college scouts in attendance.

"I went for the corner post and dove in," he said.

One player tackled Ken around the legs and another player grabbed his face mask. "I went twirling around and my tailbone hit the ground, and I was paralyzed from the waist down for four weeks and four days," he said.

Ken said even when he was in college, he would still feel pain while standing.

During his freshman year of college, Ken joined the Active Duty Army as an intelligence assistant. But before being accepted, he had to sign an exception to policy letter. This was a special form that said that if he was discharged because of his injury, he could not receive disability benefits from the Army.

Ken said undergoing 11 weeks of Basic Combat Training (BCT) was the most "painful



**“It was the most intense workout I have ever done.”**

>> SGT Michael Thomas

experience” of his life.

But he credits the Army's emphasis on building strong core muscles during BCT with rebuilding the strength in his back.

Ken, now a Master Fitness Trainer, eventually created the F2F program to give back to the military what it had given to him.

The F2F program was designed to provide a safe, specialized health and fitness program to deploying service members to help them prevent combat-related injuries. Ken and Stephanie have also been instrumental in having the program recognized by civilian fitness credentialing agencies. The operation's goal is to reduce combat-related stress, raise morale within the units and increase the retention rate.

Ken said he first wrote this program in 1989 while stationed with 11 other Soldiers at a code interception site in Germany. The team worked three days on and three days off, and it needed a way to train together, he said.

Once he returned home, he noticed that the Soldiers who kept themselves in shape in Iraq weren't able to keep it up back in the

states.

"As soon as they got back, they got fat," he quipped.

Ken also informed the classes of an Army report stating that, in 2005, almost one third of 18-year-olds who applied for service in the Armed Forces were overweight. The share of applicants who were obese doubled to 6 percent from 1996 to 2005.

Also in 2003, 3,000 Soldiers were discharged because they were overweight, and thousands of others had been put on notice to lose weight or lose their commissions.

Ken also showed a slide during class of Army Regulation 611-201, which specifies that infantrymen are required to occasionally raise and carry a 160-pound person on their back. The regulation further states that infantrymen frequently walk, run, crawl and climb over varying terrain for a distance of up to 25 miles. It also requires infantrymen to do various other lifting tasks while carrying a minimum of 65 pounds evenly distributed over their entire body.

"You have to be able to carry another Soldier and all of his equipment at the same time for at least 25 meters; that is in your job description," Ken said.

For example, a Soldier carrying as much as 127 pounds of a basic fighting load (enough gear and ammunition for him to survive for a week in the field) could carry a fellow Soldier with this much weight or a little less.

Ken also told the class that 76 of the 350 Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) possess a code for heavy lifting.

SGT Robert Krebs, an infantryman/armored crewman who has been in the Guard for four

**OPERATION MOTIVATION:** SSG Clifton Coleman (left) receives some encouragement from Unit Fitness Trainer SSG Derick Booker during the battalion-wide training session.

years, noted that all the Soldiers in the unit should be physically fit, too.

"If we're all physically unfit, then it makes it harder on everybody to do his or her job, whether it's loading 10 tank rounds a minute or toting a heavier weapon than the other guys, you've got to be able to do it," he said. "If somebody goes down, you've got to go that extra mile. You've got to pick them up, and tote them off. And your body can handle more if you're physically fit when it comes down to it."

mechanic who has been in the Guard for almost six years, said the exercises were interesting and kept him motivated.

"I like the different exercises; they keep you very active," he said.

SFC Tim Lewis said he enjoyed this training, but wasn't prepared for what it entailed.

"I am the main PT trainer at our Gulfport Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP), and we're going to try and implement some of this on drill weekends," he wrote. "I may also be able use it in the future at a unit level."

ist who joined the Guard "to test my body to see if I could actually go through the physical training," said the most challenging part of the training was "trying to keep up with the pace."

"It is a very high-speed pace all the way through," he said.

For SSG Charlie Lewis, a light-wheeled mechanic with 21 years in the Guard, this "pace" will improve his physical fitness.

He said his personal goal now is to stay in shape and get his fellow Soldiers in shape. The class also taught him to train, stay hydrated and keep the mind-set of "never quit and never stop," he said.

Speaking of hydration, Ken dropped this bombshell during his diet and nutrition block of instruction: He told the students for every Coke or Pepsi they drink, it takes 27 glasses of water to wash out the acidity of one soda.

CPT Jeremy Allen thought the classes also gave him a firsthand look at the effectiveness of the new fitness-training techniques.

"Now we can better train our Soldiers on what to eat and what to do to stay in shape," he said. "It helped us learn how to do the training and how to conduct it properly, so our guys can get the most out of it. It is not enough to just know, it is [knowing] how to teach it. So we learned how to teach it effectively."

Allen added that he was glad he was able to lead his troops from the front as a trainer. This built his confidence in being able to do the exercises and assist in motivating his Soldiers.

"And they got a lot more out of training knowing that I knew what I was doing, so they keyed off of me and were able to push themselves a lot harder," he said.

Allen summed up this training the best. Naturally, his first goal in the deployment is to complete the battalion's mission. His second mission, he said, is to ensure that all of his Soldiers go home "as good if not better than when I got them over there."

"I owe that to their families and all their friends, and their physical fitness is a major part in their completion of their mission," he said. "So physical fitness is going to be an important part of our training between now and when we go overseas, so they are able to do their job and do what they've got to do to get home safely."

The trainers also received DVD-R reference materials and printed lessons. Check out Ken's fitness program online at [www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com](http://www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com). **GX**



**FIT TO FIGHT:** CPT Jeremy Allen executes a modified reverse back bend during the Train the Trainer session.

Minutes after this point of instruction, the Soldiers participated in their first training session with the sun blaring directly overhead.

"We started and bam, he threw us right into the lion's den," Thomas said. "It was the most intense workout I have ever done. It wasn't even two minutes in and I was sweating like I had just completed a 15-mile road march. Every part of my body was hurting, but after it was over, I was glad that my platoon sergeant had picked me to come to this training. This is exactly the type of workout that I need to get 'fit to fight' before our deployment comes around next year. Plus, it was great because when the whole battalion had to do the workout the next morning, I was in my platoon sergeant's face the whole time motivating him to keep going. I may pay for that later, though."

SPC Vincent Miller, a light-wheeled vehicle

For SGT Kelly Mullican, who said he has lifted weights five days a week for the last seven years and hardly ever gets sore muscles anymore, the Train the Trainer session changed that.

"I will definitely be adding this workout to my routine," he wrote. "This is a very good workout routine for anyone, and it's easy to conduct. With this program and the diet plan that Ken has provided, it is all anyone needs to stay fit."

"I think this is just what the military needs," he added. "Not only can anyone do it anywhere, but it doesn't require any weights."

By the time the class was over, most of the Soldiers probably weren't thinking too deeply about the program.

As Maddox lamented, "By the end of the day we were smoked. The only thing I wanted to do was come in and go to bed."

SPC Titus Johnson, a human resource special-

# Fighting Spirit

▶ SHARP AND STRONG



## SPORTS

Read our exclusive interview with Dale Jr.; Vitor races across the country in an ACU-style suit.

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## COMBATIVES

Learn how to use weapons of opportunity in combat.

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Try SGT Ken's Operation Rapid Response circuit training routine.

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## GEAR

Ravens, Predators & Reapers—Oh my! Learn about the Guard's Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

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DALE JR. RACES INTO TWILIGHT  
DURING THE LIFELOCK.COM 400 AT  
CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY ON JULY 12.

## DALE JR.'S Chase for The Cup

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

Dale Jr. has been eyeing a cup for most of the 2008 season and doesn't plan on losing focus anytime soon. But this isn't just any ordinary cup; this is the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, something all racers past and present dream about.

NASCAR has had a championship cup for some time, but in 2004 the system was revamped to keep it even more interesting. Now, the first 26 events where points are awarded determine which drivers will ultimately be eligible for the cup.

After the 26 races, 12 drivers qualify for the "Chase for the Cup" that consists of the final 10 races, and the winner is crowned the "Cup Series Champion."

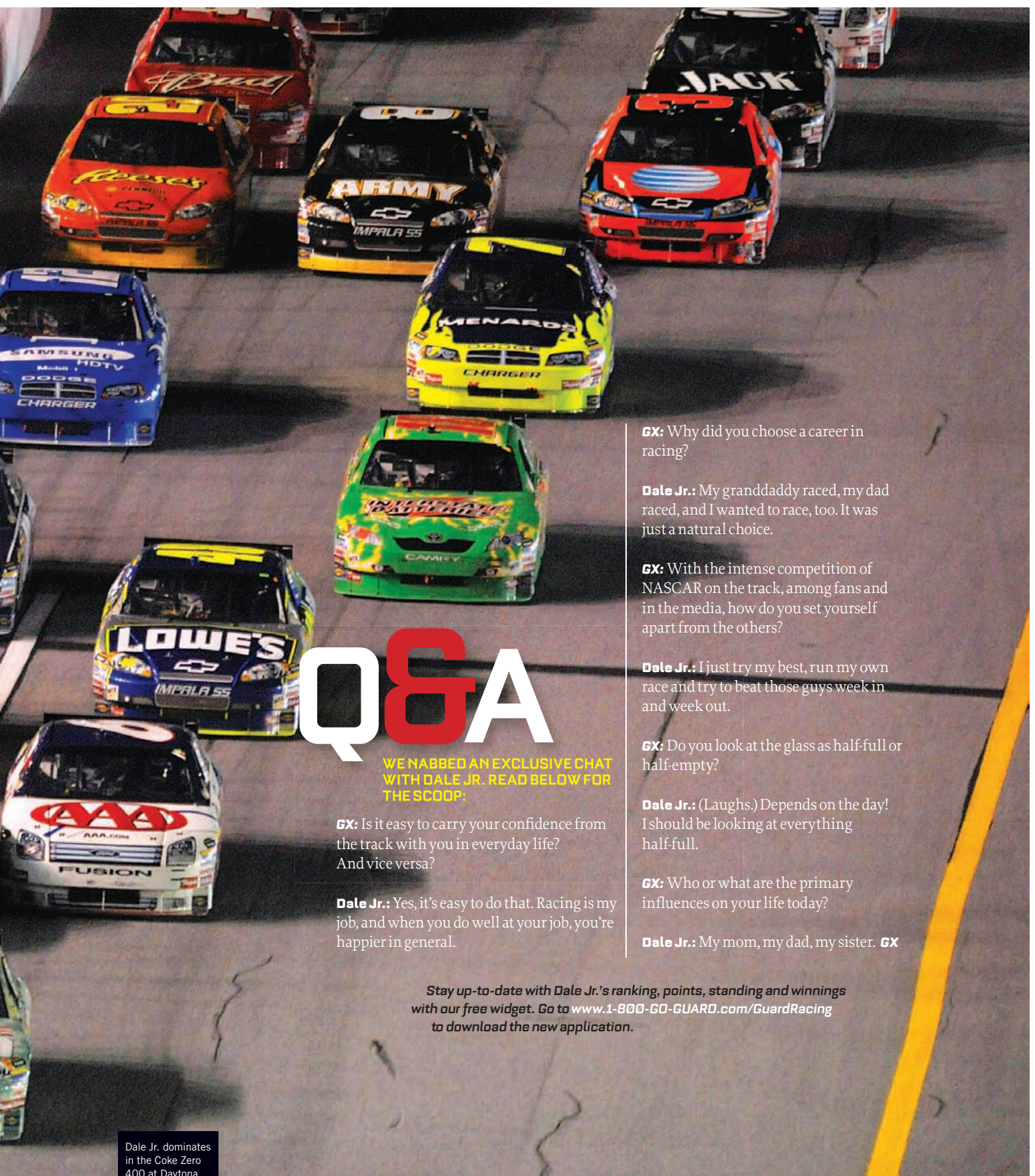
Points are awarded each race by aspects such as the finishing place of the driver, whether the driver led a lap and how many laps the driver led, which explains why Dale Jr. has moved up to second place after ranking third for most of the season.

Dale Jr. has pretty much finished every race in the top 10 and has a handful of top-five finishes as well. With his consistency and several key performances, he almost makes racing look easy. **GX**

*With his consistency and several key performances, Dale Jr. almost makes racing look easy.*

Photo courtesy of Hendrick Motorsports





# Q&A

WE NABBED AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH DALE JR. READ BELOW FOR THE SCOOP:

**GX:** Is it easy to carry your confidence from the track with you in everyday life? And vice versa?

**Dale Jr.:** Yes, it's easy to do that. Racing is my job, and when you do well at your job, you're happier in general.

**GX:** Why did you choose a career in racing?

**Dale Jr.:** My granddaddy raced, my dad raced, and I wanted to race, too. It was just a natural choice.

**GX:** With the intense competition of NASCAR on the track, among fans and in the media, how do you set yourself apart from the others?

**Dale Jr.:** I just try my best, run my own race and try to beat those guys week in and week out.

**GX:** Do you look at the glass as half-full or half-empty?

**Dale Jr.:** (Laughs.) Depends on the day! I should be looking at everything half-full.

**GX:** Who or what are the primary influences on your life today?

**Dale Jr.:** My mom, my dad, my sister. **GX**

Stay up-to-date with Dale Jr.'s ranking, points, standing and winnings with our free widget. Go to [www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/GuardRacing](http://www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/GuardRacing) to download the new application.

Dale Jr. dominates in the Coke Zero 400 at Daytona.



**ROAD WARRIORS:** Vitor Meira and Indy Lights drivers Dillon Battistini and Brent Sherman unveil their ACU camo firesuits Fourth of July weekend at Watkins Glen.

## DRESSED **FOR** SUCCESS

**Vitor Meira**, driver of the No.4 National Guard Indy car, decided to take his support of the Guard up a notch and wear a commemorative uniform for the race at Watkins Glen over the Fourth of July weekend. With an ACU-pattern driver's suit, Meira displayed his and the No. 4 National Guard car's team spirit. *By Christian Anderson*

COURTESY OF PANTHER RACING

**MEIRA KNOWS A THING OR TWO** about patriotism, as he dedicated his memorial weekend Indy Racing League (IRL) performance to the Soldiers of the National Guard.

With his ACU driver's suit, Meira set the tone for a wonderful July 4th race weekend at Watkins Glen. As persistent as he was patient, Meira made a move from his 10th place starting position all the way to first place halfway through the race. After an unfortunate crash, Meira was forced to call it a day, but he remained resilient and determined as ever to come back better and stronger.

Meira rebounded in the Firestone 200 the following weekend at the Nashville Superspeedway in Lebanon, TN, placing sixth after rain and severe weather cancelled the race. Due to the popularity of the ACU racing suit, Panther Racing and Meira decided to wear it once again, and the crowd loved it.

After starting in 15th place, Meira made a quick drive to get in the top 10, moving up two positions in the first lap, another two during the third lap, and into ninth place by the 12th lap. As rain showers moved over the course, Meira ended up in sixth place by the time the race was cancelled, moving him from 18th place to 15th in the Indy Racing League Standings. **GX**

Vitor Meira, driver of the No. 4 National Guard car, focuses on the race ahead as his crew prepares his car for the start at the Nashville Superspeedway.



**“WE’RE ALWAYS TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO BE FASTER THE NEXT WEEKEND.”**

-Vitor Meira

## > CHATTIN’ IT UP WITH VITOR

**GX:** Do you ever look back on your start in racing as a teenager and feel amazed at how you have come so far and achieved all of this success?

**VM:** All the time. I'm very lucky to do this for a living.

**GX:** Is it fun to travel around the country and the world doing what you love?

**VM:** It's great, but working with the people at Panther makes it even better. Plus, when you have the support of Delphi and the National

Guard, it helps us do our job the right way.

**GX:** How does physical fitness play into your racing performance? Do you still race in triathlons?

**VM:** The fitness aspect is huge in racing. I haven't raced in a triathlon recently, but I still work out for a few hours every day. I work with Tim Drudge from St. Vincent Sports Performance Center here in Indianapolis, and he's got me in the best shape of my life.

**GX:** Do you practice racing during the week?

**VM:** We really can't. I can practice only when

I'm with the team at the racetrack. But I work out every day to keep up physically with what I have to do on the weekends. We review race tapes, in-car camera film and those types of things. We're always trying to figure out a way to be faster the next weekend.

**GX:** What do you do to relax and take time for yourself?

**VM:** I play video games, hang around the house and spend time with my wife. I don't do anything crazy like some race car drivers. I watch "Family Guy" a lot, "Curb Your Enthusiasm" on HBO and lots of racing stuff. I play racing games on PlayStation 3. **GX**



1.

Here with an edged weapon, our stand-off distance is greater than it would be without one.

## Wielding Weapons of Opportunity

Story and photos by SGT Michael Kerkhoff

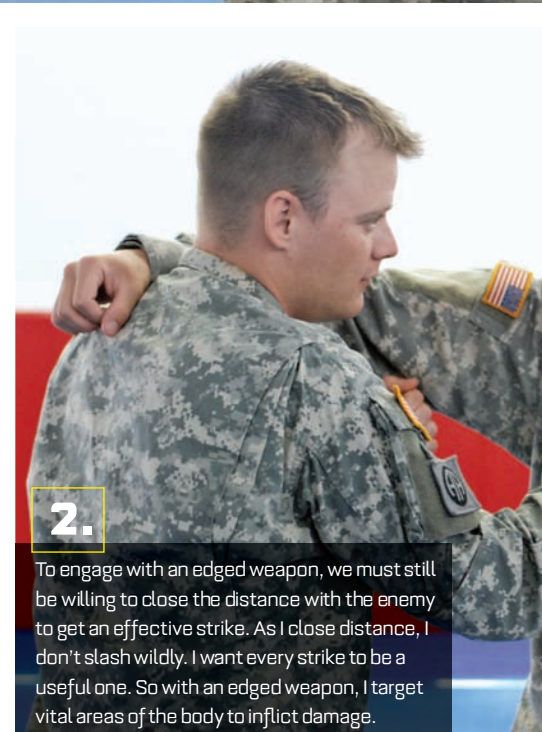
**WHEN TALKING COMBATIVES**, Soldiers most commonly think of Jiu Jitsu or Muay Thai kickboxing. What is the key to the word “combatives”? It’s combat.

Webster’s Dictionary defines combat as “physical conflict involving violence, generally between humans, usually as part of warfare. Combat may be armed or unarmed; it may take place under a certain set of rules or be unregulated.”

If we talk combatives, it’s not all about arm bars, chokes, kicks and punches. There are times in combat when you may need to resort to a weapon of opportunity. What I mean by this is in the event that your primary and secondary weapon systems go down, you still must carry on the fight.

A weapon of opportunity is exactly what it sounds like—pretty much anything you can get your hands on. A weapon of opportunity can be a knife, a bat or even a lead pipe.

How do I train to use a weapon of opportunity? Some of the guys we train with also train in kali (knife) or arnis (stick) fighting. Both styles have origins from the Philippines. Just because your gun goes down for one reason or another, the fight isn’t over. Let’s roll! **GX**



2.

To engage with an edged weapon, we must still be willing to close the distance with the enemy to get an effective strike. As I close distance, I don’t slash wildly. I want every strike to be a useful one. So with an edged weapon, I target vital areas of the body to inflict damage.

3.

Here, I have an enemy in the guard, and I trap him using the scarf technique. I bring the enemy in close using my hips. Next, I trap his arm across his body, securing the hold with a Gable Grip around his neck. My head is pressed firmly on his tricep.

4.

Next, I deploy my blade into a vital area of the body like the kidney.



5.

Another option is to attack my enemy's throat. I secure my enemy's arm around him by controlling him at the wrist, and then I deploy my blade underneath his neck, cutting the vital areas of the throat.



# OPERATION RAPID RESPONSE™ (OPRARE)

Part 2 of 3, Free Circuit Fitness Training

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert



**RECEIVED**

DEAR SSG KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT,

I really enjoyed meeting you both and feel fortunate to have been able to share some time with you while in Nashville. You both have a passion for what you do, and just being near you was truly motivational. You exude the enthusiasm and can-do attitude that makes you so good at what you do!

Ken, our brief workout session was very valuable as it reminded me that you don't have to spend hours in the gym to get the job done—thanks for making it happen. Your instructional technique was on-point, as would be expected of a professional of your caliber.

Thanks for all you two do!

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

CSM DAVID RAY HUDSON  
WORKS OUT WITH SSG KEN



“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing.”

— Abraham Lincoln

## WARM-UP PHASE

### 1. Aerobics (5 minutes)

**EXAMPLES:** Running in place; side-straddle hops (jumping jacks); high steps/knees

### 2. Stretching (5 Minutes)

## MUSCLE TARGET PHASE

### 3. Abdominal Leg Extensions

**START:** Sit on the edge of a sturdy flat bench with your hands slightly outside your hips, gripping the bench tightly. Extend your legs and flex your feet.

**ACTIONS:** Begin by bending your knees into a 90-degree angle. Slowly return to the start position.

**Warning:** Never lock your knees.

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–40 repetitions

#### ABDOMINAL LEG EXTENSIONS



### 4. Medicine Ball Bench Dips

**START:** Sit on the edge of a sturdy flat bench with your hands slightly behind your hips, gripping the bench tightly. With your legs together, place your heels on the ground and point your toes in the air.

Move your feet away from your hips. Position the medicine ball between your upper legs. Straighten your arms and keep a slight bend in your elbows.

**ACTIONS:** Slowly lower your body by bending both elbows into a 90-degree angle. Do not allow your elbows to bend away from your body. Slowly return to the start position.

**Warning:** Never lock your elbows.

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–40 repetitions

#### MEDICINE BALL BENCH DIPS



#### PUSH-UPS, FEET ELEVATED



### 5. Push-ups, Feet Elevated (with or without the Perfect Push-up)

**START:** Balance your body with your hands on the ground and your feet (or knees) on a bench or platform that is 6–16 inches off the ground, with your back forming a straight line. Tilt your chin up slightly and keep your feet together or up to 12 inches apart. Different arm positions engage different arm, chest and shoulder muscles. The closer together your hands are, the more triceps muscles you engage.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your core muscles tight, drop your body straight down by bending both elbows. Return to the start position.

**Warning:** Look slightly forward and do not let your head drop during the exercise. Maintain proper form and do not let your back sag. If using the Perfect Push-up, rotate your arms naturally.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

“Superset your program by taking little or no break between exercises.”

— SSG Ken Weichert

### 6. Step-ups with Kettle Bells or Dumbbells

**START:** Stand behind a bench or platform that is 12–16 inches off the ground. Place your left or right foot firmly on the step.

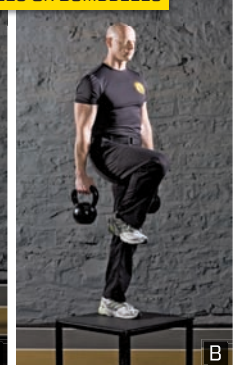
**ACTIONS:** Slowly transfer your weight to your left heel and step up onto the bench until your right knee bends at a 90-degree angle and becomes level with your hips. The opposite leg will never touch the bench. Slowly return to the start position. After completing your reps, switch legs.

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–40 repetitions

#### STEP-UPS WITH KETTLE BELLS OR DUMBBELLS



## 7. Jump Ups

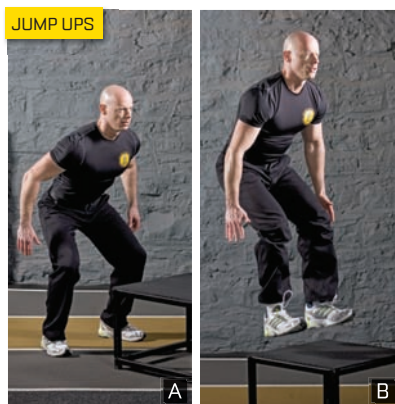
**START:** Stand behind a bench or platform that is 6–16 inches off the ground. Many fitness facilities have platforms for this activity. Make certain that the equipment is sturdy.

**ACTIONS:** First, stand on the platform and jump backward onto the ground, keeping your knees bent slightly. This helps your body get used to the actions. Be certain to land as softly as you can. Next, with your knees still slightly bent, jump back onto the platform as fast as you can.

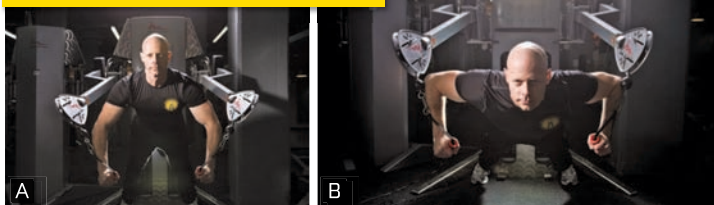
**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions



## FREE MOTION PUSH-UP OR REGULAR PUSH-UP



## 9. Free Motion Push-up or Regular Push-up

**START:** Lock the arms of the machine approximately 12 inches outside of your body (see No. 3) and level with your lower chest or upper abdomen (see No. 7), with the pins secured in the highest weight for stability. Facing the machine, balance your body with your feet on the ground hip-width apart, with your hands on the Free Motion grips and suspended 12–16 inches off the ground and your back forming a straight line. Tilt your chin up slightly and contract your core muscles.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your core muscles tight, slowly drop your body straight down by bending both elbows. Return to the start position.

**Warning:** Maintain a neutral spine and do not let your head or back sag.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

**Very Advanced:** Bring your hands close together while in the up position and widening your arms when lowering your body (Fly Push-up).

“Victory belongs to the most persevering.”  
—Napoleon Bonaparte

## SQUATS WITH A BARBELL OR DUMBBELLS



## 8. Squats with a Barbell or Dumbbells

**START:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart and your toes pointing forward. Place the barbell slightly above your shoulders at the bottom of your neck. You might want to use a pad on the barbell for comfort. If using dumbbells, raise them up to your shoulders in a military press position. Choose a weight based on the “Weight Training Body Basics” formula.

**ACTIONS:** Lower your body into a squat by bending both knees. Continue to bend until you reach a 90-degree angle, or you lose the natural arch in your back. Keep your body stable by contracting your rear end and leg muscles. Return to the start position by slowly standing up.

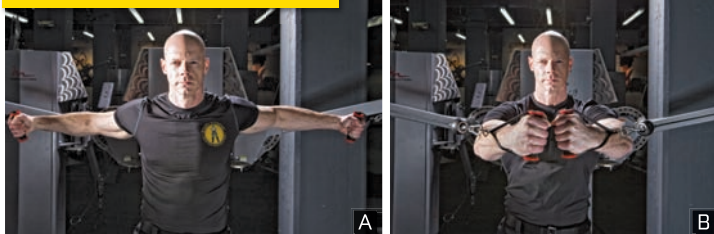
**Warning:** Do not lock your knees. Your knees should not exceed your toe line. To prevent this, point your tailbone back behind you while dropping toward the ground.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

## FREE MOTION OR CABLE CHEST FLY



## 10. Free Motion or Cable Chest Fly (wide to narrow)

**START:** Lock the arms of the machine approximately 20 inches outside of your body and level with your upper chest. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, your toes pointing forward and in the middle of the grips. Bend the knees and elbows slightly and hold the Free Motion grips with palms forward. Internally rotate your shoulders slightly, keeping your elbows level with your shoulders. If using dumbbells, raise them up to the same start position while lying flat on your back on a sturdy bench.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your core muscles tight and your back straight, slowly press the weight inward by bringing your fists together. Your arms will make a hugging motion. Do not let your elbows drop. Keep them level with your shoulders. Slowly return to the start position.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

## 11. Free Motion or Cable Military Press or Dumbbell Press

**START:** Lock the arms of the machine approximately 12 inches outside of your body (see No. 3) and close to the ground (see No. 10). Stand with your feet hip-width apart and your toes pointing forward. Hold the Free Motion grips slightly above the shoulders with elbows outward and palms facing forward. If using dumbbells, raise them up to the same start position.



“There are very few people that go out and dominate. If you’re not mentally prepared, you’re competing for second place.”

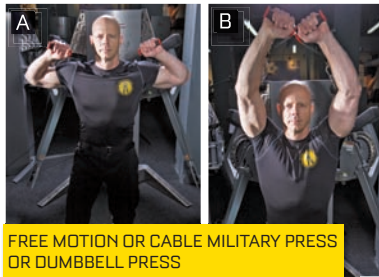
– Kevin VanDam

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your core muscles tight and your back straight, slowly press the weight overhead and your fists together until your arms are fully extended. Do not lock your elbows. Slowly return to the start position.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

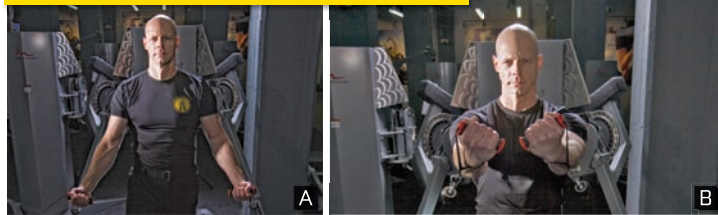
**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions



FREE MOTION OR CABLE MILITARY PRESS OR DUMBBELL PRESS

FREE MOTION OR CABLE SHOULDER FLY, LATERAL RAISE



## 12. Free Motion or Cable Shoulder Fly, Lateral Raise

**START:** Lock the arms of the machine approximately 12 inches outside your body (see No. 3) and close to the ground (see No. 10). Stand with your feet hip-width apart, your toes pointing forward and in the middle of the grips. Bend the knees and elbows slightly and hold the Free Motion grips with palms forward and your arms at your sides. If using dumbbells, hold them in the same start position.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your core muscles tight and your back straight, slowly press the weight upward and fists together until your arms are level with your shoulders. Slowly return to the start position.

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

## 13. Bicep Curls with Cables or Dumbbells

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–30 repetitions

## 14. Lat Pull Downs (with a cable and grips or straight bar)

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

## 15. Tricep Pull Downs (with a cable and rope or “V” or straight bar)

**Basic:** 1–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–10 repetitions

**Advanced:** 11–20 repetitions

### Stamina Stopwatch:

**Operation Rapid Response:** 1 full set = approximately 5–10 minutes

**Operation Double-Time:** 2 full sets = approximately 10–20 minutes

**Operation Max Load:** 3 full sets = approximately 15–30 minutes

**Note:** The warm-up and cooldown phases are performed only once.

### Weight Training Body Basics:

**Bulk Up:** Three sets of 4–6 repetitions each with heavy resistance

**Maintenance Drills:** Three sets of 8–12 repetitions each with medium resistance.

**Sculpt Down:** Three sets of 15–20 repetitions each with light to moderate resistance.

## COOLDOWN PHASE

### 16. Stretching (5 Minutes)

Total workout time is approximately 35, 45 or 55 minutes. Want more?

Go to <http://www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/fitness>

## WORKOUT WRAP-UP

From Army Field Manual (FM) 21-20, Physical Fitness Training, 30 September 1992, Chapter 7, Fitness Circuits

**Free Circuit:** In a free circuit, there is no set time for staying at each station, and no signal is given to move from one station to the next. Soldiers work at their own pace, doing a fixed number of repetitions at each station. Progress is measured by the time needed to complete a circuit. Because soldiers may do incomplete or fewer repetitions than called for to reduce this time, the quality and number of the repetitions done should be monitored. Aside from this, the free circuit requires little supervision.

**Fixed Circuit:** In a fixed circuit, a specific length of time is set for each station. The time is monitored with a stopwatch, and soldiers rotate through the stations on command.

**REFERENCE NOTE:** FM 3-22.20 Army Physical Readiness Training (December 2007) supersedes FM 21-20 Physical Fitness Training (Sept. 30, 1992).

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Kettle bells or dumbbells
- Medicine ball
- Free motion dual cable cross system or dumbbells



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

**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.

# UAVs

## The Military's Eyes in the Skies

If you're in Iraq or Afghanistan, that buzz you're hearing is not your imagination—it's one of our Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or UAVs. These "devices" are the military's "eyes in the skies." Not only do they give commanders situational awareness on the battlefield, but they serve as force multipliers, too. *By Staff Sgt. Marcia Beene Dickerson*

From hand-launched Ravens to remotely flown Predators and Reapers, the military has the ability to conduct recon missions as well as generate havoc in a combat zone.

Originally called "drones," these small aircraft were first developed in the 1980s by the Pentagon and CIA for reconnaissance missions. Honed through many hours of testing and redevelopment by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, the UAVs finally saw action in the

Balkans in 1995. They performed brilliantly and are now a must-have in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### The Little Brother: Backpack Ravens

There are several versions of UAVs. The least of these is the RQ-11 Raven, which is small enough to be carried by a Soldier in a backpack. Its main purpose is surveillance, but it's used for scouting and target acquisition, too.

A Raven carries two video cameras: one color and one two-color infrared for night ops. These eyes in the skies provide real-time up-to-the-minute intelligence of an area, building or anything else a commander needs to see.

When compared with its fellow UAVs, the Raven is tiny—weighing in at a "hefty" 4.5 pounds. It's so small that it can be launched by hand. Like the other UAVs in the family, it can be flown by remote control, or it can follow a preset GPS route. The flying range for the Raven is approximately 10–15 kilometers for about 80 minutes.

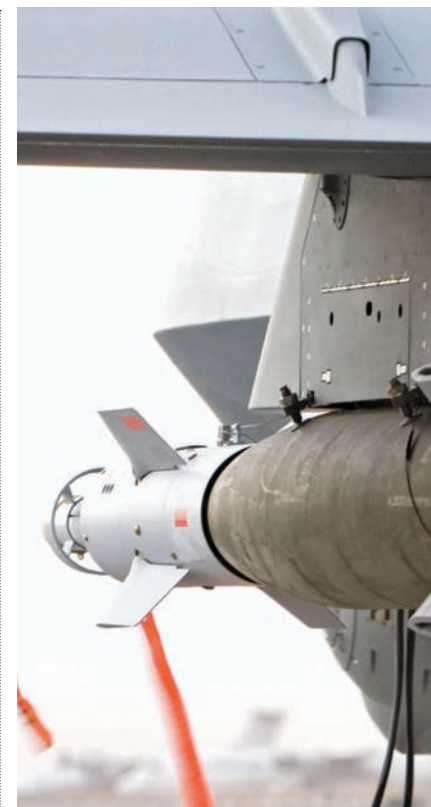
These miniature UAVs are tough—they're made of Kevlar, which helps them land without breaking too many parts and keeps them flying.

### The Big Brother: The MQ-1 and MQ-1A Predator

Like the predator in the Arnold Schwarzenegger film, the MQ-1 Predator can come out of nowhere and strike. Its primary mission is to conduct reconnaissance; however, it can do so while armed with two AGM-114 Hellfire missiles—one under each wing.

While the Raven is a sharp little guy, the Predator is the cool big brother. It is flown remotely by a pilot who "sees" what the Predator does through a nose camera. In addition to the pilot, the aircraft requires two sensor operators who monitor all of the systems on the UAV while in flight.

Just as the Raven proved itself in the Balkans in 1995, the Predator earned its wings there, too. Seeing



A RQ-11 Raven flies a reconnaissance mission.



COURTESY OF DEFENSE INDUSTRIES DAILY

When compared with its fellow UAVs, the Raven is tiny—weighing in at a "hefty" 4.5 pounds. It's so small that it can be launched by hand.



SGT Eric Hintermeyer launches the aircraft of a Raven system at Range B-16 on Fallon Naval Air Station during Vigilant Guard 2008.

the unlimited potential of the larger UAVs, the military decided to arm them in 2001.

The Predator becomes the MQ-1A ("A" standing for "armed") when armed with the two Hellfire missiles. Known as "hunter/killers," these aircraft have the ability to fly into an area unnoticed, providing little warning of an attack.

At the start of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), Predators had logged approximately 36,000 flying hours; since then they have been logging twice that amount.

### A New Member of the Family: The RQ-1 Reaper

As with any piece of military equipment, the Predator is beginning to age. The military recently

(LEFT) SGT. TORIN GALLO



A Hellfire missile is loaded onto a RQ-1 Reaper.

COURTESY OF AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

introduced a new member of the UAV family—the MQ-9 Reaper.

The Reaper demonstrates the progression of design from the early Predators. When compared, it's an amazing "upgrade"—the Reaper can carry 14 Hellfire missiles or two 500-pound bombs and four missiles. In addition to its larger payload, the Reaper is faster and can fly higher than the Predator. According to General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, it is first a "persistent hunter/killer" that goes after time-sensitive targets, and serves an intelligence and reconnaissance mission second.

The Reaper's crew consists of one pilot and one sensor operator who control the UAV remotely by "seeing" the battlefield through a

camera attached to it. It can fly for more than 14 hours—much longer than the Predator—requiring two to three crews to man the lengthier missions.

**Battlefield Advantage**

With this family of UAVs, the military has an advantage on the battlefield like never before. From the Raven's ability to see "beyond the horizon" to the Predator's dual missions of weapons platform and reconnaissance to the Reaper's hunter/killer instincts, UAVs are giving commanders situational awareness as well as battlefield dominance. Like our Soldiers, the military's UAVs are part of the most highly technical and best warriors in the world. **GX**

**KNOWN AS "HUNTER/KILLERS," PREDATORS HAVE THE ABILITY TO FLY INTO AN AREA UNNOTICED, PROVIDING LITTLE WARNING OF AN ATTACK.**

**EYES IN THE SKIES**  
**Specs**

**RQ-11 Raven: General Characteristics Primary**  
**Function:** Situational awareness and direct target information  
**Power plant:** Electric motor, rechargeable lithium ion batteries  
**Wingspan:** 4.5 feet (1.37 meters)  
**Weight:** 4.2 pounds (1.9 kilograms)  
**Weight (ground control unit):** 17 pounds (7.7 kilograms)  
**Speed:** 30-60 mph (26-52 knots)  
**Range:** 8-12 km (4.9-7.45 miles)  
**Endurance:** 60-90 minutes  
**Operating altitude:** 150-500 feet air ground level (45-152 meters)  
**Payload:** High resolution, day/night camera and thermal imager  
**Date deployed:** 2004  
 Courtesy of [www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=10446/](http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=10446/)

**MQ-1/1A Predator: General Characteristics Primary**  
**Function:** Armed reconnaissance, airborne surveillance and target acquisition  
**Power plant:** Rotax 914F four-cylinder engine  
**Thrust:** 115 horsepower  
**Wingspan:** 48.7 feet (14.8 meters)  
**Length:** 27 feet (8.22 meters)  
**Height:** 6.9 feet (2.1 meters)  
**Weight:** 1,130 pounds (512 kilograms) empty  
**Maximum takeoff weight:** 2,250 pounds (1,020 kilograms)  
**Fuel capacity:** 665 pounds (100 gallons)  
**Payload:** 450 pounds (204 kilograms)  
**Speed:** Cruise speed around 84 mph (70 knots), up to 135 mph  
**Range:** Up to 400 nautical miles (454 miles)  
**Ceiling:** Up to 25,000 feet (7,620 meters)  
**Armament:** Two laser-guided AGM-114 Hellfire missiles  
**Crew (remote):** Two (pilot and sensor operator)  
**Initial operational capability:** March 2005  
 Courtesy of [www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=122](http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=122)

**RQ-1 Reaper: General Characteristics Primary**  
**Function:** Unmanned hunter/killer weapon system  
**Power plant:** Honeywell TPE331-10G0 turboprop engine  
**Thrust:** 900 shaft horsepower maximum  
**Wingspan:** 66 feet (20.1 meters)  
**Length:** 36 feet (11 meters)  
**Height:** 12.5 feet (3.8 meters)  
**Weight:** 4,900 pounds (2,223 kilograms) empty  
**Maximum takeoff weight:** 10,500 pounds (4,760 kilograms)  
**Fuel capacity:** 4,000 pounds (602 gallons)  
**Payload:** 3,750 pounds (1,701 kilograms)  
**Speed:** Cruise speed around 230 miles per hour (200 knots)  
**Range:** 3,682 miles (3,200 nautical miles)  
**Ceiling:** Up to 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)  
**Armament:** Combination of AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, GBU-12 Paveway II and GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions.  
**Crew (remote):** Two (pilot and sensor operator)  
**Initial operating capability:** 2008  
 Courtesy of [www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=6405](http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=6405)

Stats Courtesy of Air Force Special Operations Command, Public Affairs Office; 229 Cody Ave.; Hurlburt Field, Fla. 32544-5273; 850-884-5515; Air Combat Command, Public Affairs Office; 130 Andrews St., Suite 202; Langley AFB, VA 23665-1987; 757-764-5007

# American Warrior

Looking out over the Montana mountain valley, the air is crisp and clean. The snow is packed thick on the ground, stamped only with the footprints of elk, mule deer, coyotes and wolves. A golden eagle cuts across the sky. I'm standing at the base of Sheep Mountain with Blackfeet War Chief and Montana Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Earl Heavy Runner. This land was once the hunting grounds of his people.

by Keith Kawasaki + Photos by Dustin McNeal



**LAST SHOT** SSG Earl Heavy Runner takes one last look for buffalo in Gardiner, MT.

# BB

BASED OUT OF BROWNING, EARL AND HIS BROTHER KEITH (former Regular Army), along with a few other Blackfeet leaders, brought 10 troubled kids (ages 9–17) down to Gardiner. They call it Operation Glacier Warrior, an annual effort to aid their community. The first Glacier Warrior occurred the previous summer when they set up a camping retreat at Glacier Lake for Veterans suffering from PTSD. But in Gardiner, it's January and bitter cold. And the mission is a little different. Earl and the guys are taking 10 Blackfeet youth on a buffalo hunt.

More than 150 years ago, the Blackfeet hunted the buffalo far north into Canada and south through what is now Idaho and Wyoming. The Blackfeet were known as mighty hunters and vicious warriors. With the Treaty of 1855, the Blackfeet Indian Reservation was created, which consequently decreased the tribe's land. Today, the Blackfeet retain 1.5 million acres of their native ground in northern Montana. Through a government lottery, Earl secured hunting tickets for the season.

In an effort to teach tribal appreciation to the kids, the Blackfeet leaders, along with Operation Glacier Warrior president CSM Larry Irvine (of the Montana Guard's 1/163rd Infantry), brought them out here, just outside Yellowstone National Park. The actual hunt is just one of many items on the itinerary. There are also open discussions about education, careers and life outside of the reservation, as well as a tour of the geysers at Yellowstone, where pronghorn antelope, elk and buffalo roam in abundance.

"Yup, [we] like to get the youth out there. Talk to them about values, let them see different parts of Montana; let them see what life is all about," Keith explains. "One thing we're trying to do with the youth is bring in the Veterans to speak about the military experience. [Kids ask] 'Why did you join their military; what was the reason?' There are a lot of reasons. [For example], the lack of jobs—we're sitting at 60–70 percent unemployment on the reservation."



Today, Keith is focusing on the logistics of the trip and tending to the kids—wrangling them and feeding them. It's a seemingly exhaustive task that he does with pride and a great sense of humor. Elders like Medicine Man Tiny Man Heavy Runner teach the kids about Blackfeet tradition. He prays a prayer of protection while burning the sweet grass, inviting everyone to pull the smoke over them before the hunt. Edwin Sooney Little Plume distributes a piece of tobacco to each kid to bury in the ground, allowing them to give back to the land before taking from it. Craig Falcon, a former Marine, and Chi Chi White Man serve as scouts, riding on horseback ahead of the group in search of the buffalo. Earl is the guide. He knows these mountains well, and he's heavily armed with two .300 caliber rifles and several knives, including a mean-looking Gerber Buck Buster we brought him.

Earl doesn't say a lot. And when he does, it's thoughtful, very quiet and usually hilarious. He has got a slow glide to his walk and, easily surpassing 6 feet, he towers over most people. Thanks to a nasty IED hit, Earl's neck took a serious pummeling. The result, other than a pretty stiff neck, is perfect posture, which oddly adds to the noble air surrounding him.

As much as Earl loves Operation Glacier Warrior and helping the kids, when I ask him why he's here, he half-jokingly replies, "It's a great opportunity to shoot bison."



## In the Service

Back home on the reservation, Earl's day job is feeding the hungry. He distributes meals as the warehouse foreman. It's the job he took after returning from Iraq in 2005.

During his deployment, Earl led a platoon in Bravo company of the 1/163rd Infantry. A serious group, fueled with the pride and drive of true warriors, Bravo company brought the thunder on the enemy. More than 60 IEDs collided with the convoys of Earl's platoon as they powered through insurgent forces.

"The first time we were hit by an IED, [we were] doing traffic stops," Earl mentions. "There were Humvees—they passed about five minutes before we did. We always know where we're going to get hit



**OLD FRIENDS** SSG Earl Heavy Runner (left) and CSM Larry Irvine (right) enjoy some downtime while tracking an elk up Sheep Mountain. The two men shared two deployments (Bosnia and Afghanistan) in their military careers.



“To be a Warrior is one of the highlights of my entire life”

» SSG Earl Heavy Runner

because there’s always a pothole. We were driving through there, and we got hit. I think it was three 105 rounds—the biggest explosion I had ever heard. Put the Humvee on its side on two wheels. But we just drove on. Didn’t hurt the Humvee or nothin’ like that. They buried it too deep [laughs]. Everybody was fine. Just a little bit of hearing loss is all.”

A mostly Native American group, the Soldiers of Bravo company carried their traditions—the burning of the sweet grass for protection before a mission, for example—to the desert. And just like the legendary men who earned the Blackfeet their reputation as fierce fighters, these Soldiers were regarded in the same light by the tribe—as modern-day warriors protecting the homeland.

In a ceremony while on leave, Earl was named War Chief by the medicine man. If you’re unfamiliar with the term, the easiest way to describe the honor is to name a few from the past: Crazy Horse, Red Cloud and Geronimo. Unfamiliar with them? You could go the lazy route and Google their names. Or read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, easily one of the greatest books of all time. Either way, you’ll find that War Chiefs make Hollywood action heroes look like Smurfs. It’s all about courageously leading your men into battle to safeguard the homeland. Earl handles this title with great respect. And while he could pummel you with his bare hands, he’s also a very caring, selfless man. Earl’s mission in life is to help—and protect—his people.

Larry Irvine, who deployed to Bosnia and Iraq with Earl, meets us out here on Sheep Mountain in hopes of finding buffalo. It’s mid-afternoon, and we leave the kids back at the hotel with Earl’s brother Keith. Larry, Earl, Craig Falcon, *GX* photographer Dustin McNeal and I sneak away to try our luck way up on the mountain. Protestors had chased most of the buffalo away, but we manage to find the tracks of a lone bull elk. The CSM smokes us all, forging fast and strong ahead. Barely in more than jeans and a light jacket, the man is impervious to the cold.

As the sun starts to fall back behind the horizon and a bitter wind picks up, I grab a few moments to ask him his thoughts on the War Chief. No one has spent more time with Earl than Larry. Months on end in combat bring men together like brothers.

“I remember the very first time I met Earl,” Larry shares. “We were in the armory in Great Falls, and he had just come to us from Active Duty. That’s when we were changing from an armor and combat engineer company to an infantry company. [Earl] said, ‘To hell with the tankers.’ I was a platoon sergeant, and I said, ‘Well, I’m a tanker.’ And he said, ‘Yeah, to hell with

**THE CREW** The Blackfeet youth gather for a moment while enjoying their time on Operation Glacier Warrior.



the tankers.' I knew he was a dyed-in-the-wool infantryman then."

I can tell I jogged a lot of good Earl stories as Larry's eyes light up and he continues: "And back in NTC (National Training Center), [Earl] would say he was 'going native.' He'd sneak off and catch these guys, the OP-FOR bad guys, all by himself. They were whackin' everybody, and he'd sneak up by himself and kill 'em ... [Earl is] a good friend to have in combat—a real battle buddy. He's never gonna quit. He's always got your back. I've known him now for 12 years, and he never changes—you always know what you're gonna get."

"To be a Warrior is one of the highlights of my entire life so far," Earl says. "It's about the same, being a Soldier. Being in the military really makes a person grow up, makes them a stronger person."

At 41, Earl has experienced three major deployments. In 1991, he served in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia was in '02 and Iraq in '05.

"I first enlisted with the Guard in March of 1988," Earl explains. "I [spent] eight months in the Guard, then joined Active Duty for four years. After I got out of the Active Duty, I joined the California National Guard. I was there for about a year-and-a-half. Then I moved to Montana, and I've been in the Montana National Guard ever since."



**GIVING BACK**  
While on the hunt, Edwin Sooney Little Plume instructs the Blackfeet youth about giving back to the earth before they take from it.

Originally aiming to be a tanker (despite a joking distaste for tankers), Earl was quickly moved to infantry.

"I was going to be on an M-1 Abrams, and they found out I was colorblind so they said, 'Well, you can be a cook or go infantry,'" Earl says. "I didn't want to be a cook."

It was an easy choice for Earl, the son of a Marine Korean War Veteran. His father, Jesse, served six years, two of which were in Korea.

"My dad is my biggest hero. [He] taught us everything about the outdoors and hard work, how nature is. Like how we're trying to teach these kids today."

As we track the bull elk, Earl points out what to watch for and educates us on the habits of the animal. Just by looking at the impressions left in the snow, he knows what time it had passed through. Speaking of tracks, on day one out here, we found wolf tracks that had crossed over our own just moments before we doubled back. Wolf populations have been on a strong upswing in the northern states. You get a good gut check when you realize the actual size of a wolf paw, especially combined with the prints of a dozen or so other wolves.

Craig then shares his personal experience of being surrounded by a pack deep in the woods. He stayed very, very still as they circled him over and over. Eventually, they moved on. Of course, he had his rifle at the ready the whole time.

We made it only halfway up the mountain before we had to start our descent. Dustin and I make plans with Earl to finish it someday. When

**LEADING THE WAY**  
SSG Earl Heavy Runner guides the Blackfeet youth up the hills outside of Gardiner, MT, to look for the buffalo.



**A GREAT MAN**  
Keith Heavy Runner, brother of SSG Earl Heavy Runner.

the sun goes away, things get a little dangerous out here. Man doesn't really have the advantage, and it's time to get back to the hotel. Besides, my beef jerky supply is spent, and I'm starving.

As we walk to the truck, a great horned owl swoops into the pines next to us. This is without a doubt one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

## Back Home

Many of the Blackfeet children attending Operation Glacier Warrior come from broken and distressed homes. It's men like Earl who are making a difference. Much like he's a guide on this hunt, he's a guide in their lives. Being a mentor is something that just flows in Earl's blood.

"I'm in the process of becoming a medicine man," Earl shares.

One major component to becoming a Blackfeet medicine man is the Vision Quest. Earl will go atop a hill and fast for a few days. Then he'll wait for a vision that will become part of his medicine. Once he is a medicine man, the whole tribe will look to Earl for guidance.

Earl retired from the Guard this April. Today, he, Keith and Larry are planning the next Glacier Warrior event.

"He never thinks of himself," Keith says of his brother. "He's more worried about that little kid who doesn't have any Christmas presents."

In addition to taking care of the needs of the Blackfeet people, Earl is often called out to rescue them. The icy weather and mountainous landscape



often leaves folks stranded or in danger.

"In 2001, in the wilderness west of Browning, we did a search for a guy riding a motorcycle," Keith says. "[The man] was depressed and drunk, and he flipped down a mountain. It was a weeklong search. Earl was there on horseback. [Earl] is a very important part of this. He's right on top of it. Always willing to go."

"In 2002, in June, 4 feet of snow fell," Keith continues. "Earl assisted motorists out of the snow. He was out there 10-16 hours a day for a week. And earlier this year, we had a bus of tourists wreck. They had multiple injuries. Earl was there, assisting the people out of the wreck."

Forever answering the call of the people, Earl remains dedicated to supporting the Blackfeet, the National Guard and all our military Veterans. I have no doubt that someday we'll get back out there with Earl and take Sheep Mountain. We'll get that bull elk or even buffalo, and the original plan will be carried out—to get the animal and feed the needy at the reservation with hundreds of pounds of top-quality meat.

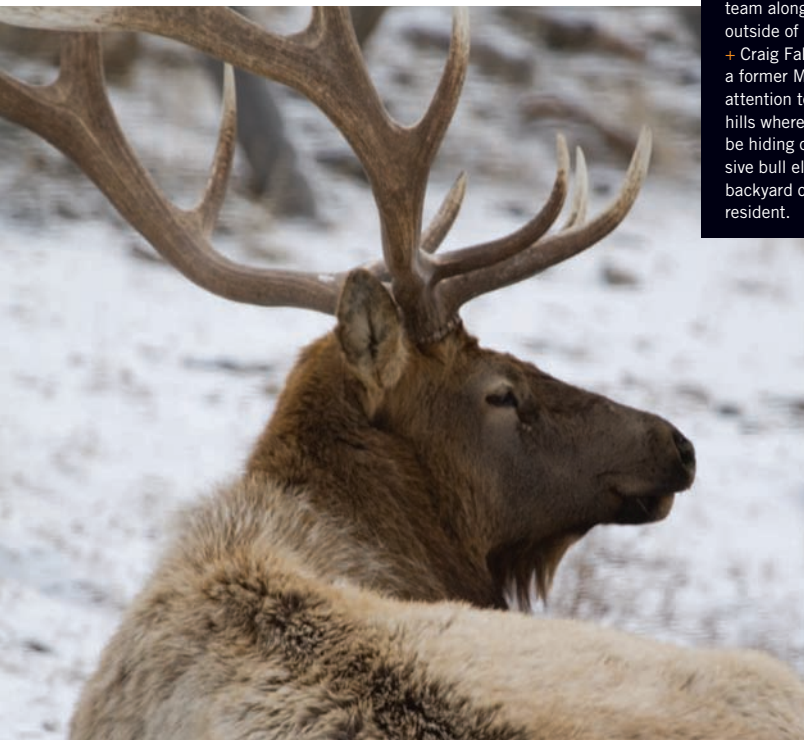
For more information or to volunteer for the next Operation Glacier Warrior, please contact CSM Larry Irvine at [dabranch@3rivers.net](mailto:dabranch@3rivers.net). **GX**

*"Earl is a good friend to have in combat—a real battle buddy."*

» CSM Larry Irvine

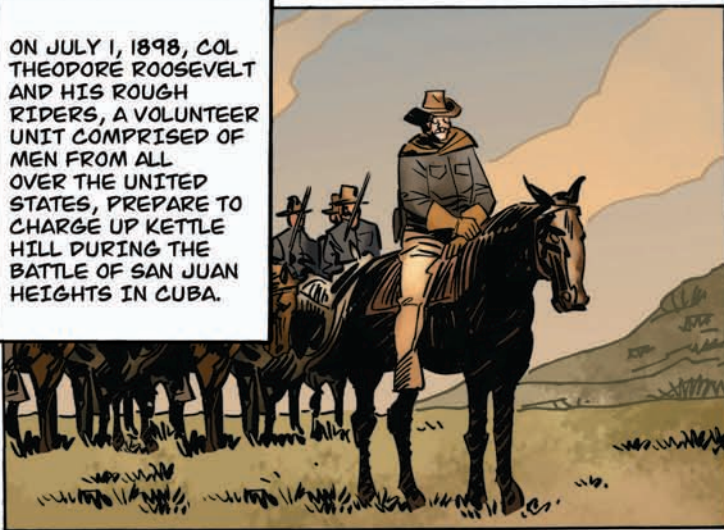


**Clockwise:** SSG Earl Heavy Runner displays one of his favorite rifles as the team gathers for the hunt. + Mule deer keep a keen eye on the team along the trails outside of Gardiner, MT. + Craig Falcon (center), a former Marine, directs attention to the distant hills where buffalo may be hiding out. + A massive bull elk rests in the backyard of a Gardiner resident.



# ROUGH RIDERS

ON JULY 1, 1898, COL THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND HIS ROUGH RIDERS, A VOLUNTEER UNIT COMPRISED OF MEN FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES, PREPARE TO CHARGE UP KETTLE HILL DURING THE BATTLE OF SAN JUAN HEIGHTS IN CUBA.



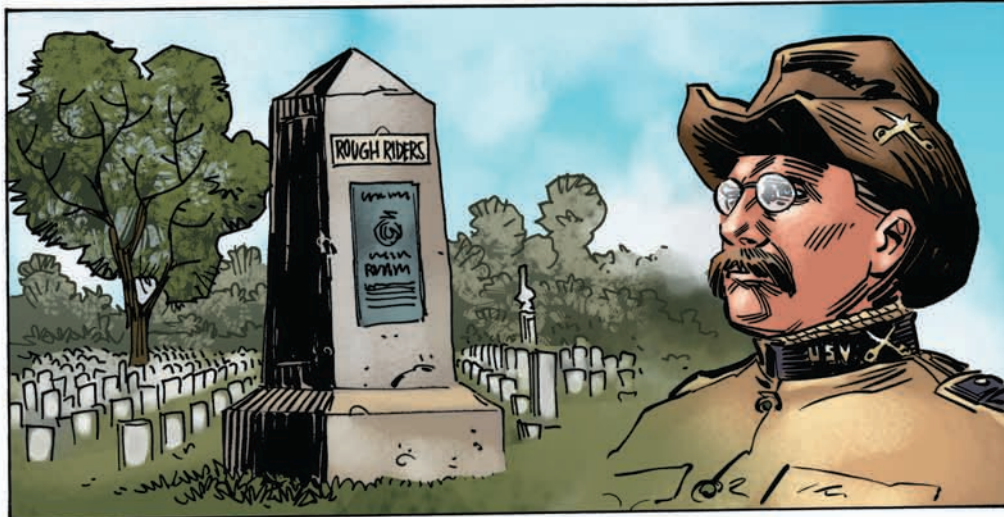
ROOSEVELT GALLANTLY LED HIS MEN UP KETTLE HILL, COMPLETELY EXPOSING HIMSELF TO ENEMY FIRE. THE ROUGH RIDERS HANDILY DEFEATED THE ENEMY AND WERE READY TO PICK ANOTHER FIGHT.



ROOSEVELT LOOKED TO THE ADJACENT SAN JUAN HILL, WHERE AMERICAN FORCES WERE STRUGGLING TO PUSH THE SPANISH SOLDIERS FROM A BLOCKHOUSE STRONGHOLD. ROOSEVELT DISMOUNTED HIS STEED AND LED A CHARGE OF FIVE MEN STRAIGHT TOWARD THE SPANISH STRONGHOLD, INSPIRING HUNDREDS OF OTHER SOLDIERS TO FOLLOW HIM.



IGNORING HIS OWN SAFETY, ROOSEVELT CRESTED THE HILL AND LED THE CHARGE INTO THE ENEMY TRENCHES WHERE HE DISPATCHED AN ENEMY SOLDIER WITH HIS REVOLVER, ALLOWING HIS MEN TO CONTINUE ON THE ASSAULT AND EVENTUALLY TURNING THE TIDE IN THE BATTLE FOR SAN JUAN HILL.



FOR HIS BOLD ACTIONS AND COURAGEOUS EFFORTS IN THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR ON KETTLE HILL AND SAN JUAN HILL, COL THEODORE ROOSEVELT WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR POSTHUMOUSLY ON JAN. 16, 2001, EARNING HIMSELF AND THE ROUGH RIDERS A PLACE IN HISTORY.

THE END

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BECAUSE THE ONLY COLORS THAT MATTER ARE RED, WHITE AND BLUE.

