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THE GUARD EXP

>> GEAR

**THE M107
SNIPER RIFLE**
THE GUARD'S
HEAVY HITTER

>> SPORTS

**DALE JR.
BLAZES
THROUGH
2009**

>> ON THE ROAD

**SHUTTER
SPEED**
SSG RUSSELL KLIKA'S
JOURNEY WITH
SPECIAL FORCES

>> GX HERO

TAKING A STAND

HOW VETERAN
DAVE LITTERAL
TURNS LIVES
AROUND WITH HIS
SELFLESS SERVICE
P. 102



BLOOD, SWEAT, AND NO FEAR

THE GUARD'S
FINEST FIGHT
IT OUT AT
THE BEST
WARRIOR
COMPETITION



EXPERTS



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Thank You For All You Do

Dear Soldiers,

Greetings from the Show-Me State. The Missouri National Guard and the citizens of Missouri join me in saying “thank you” for all you do.

The Citizen-Soldiers of the National Guard are the foundation of support for our nation, both in the Global War on Terrorism and in state emergency duty here at home.

As a member of the Missouri National Guard for nearly 30 years, I am acutely aware of the missions, accomplishments and challenges of membership in the National Guard. There is a delicate balance between your National Guard membership, your family duties and your responsibilities with your civilian employer. Each one of you adjusts that balance daily to be successful.

My personal experiences as a Guard Soldier deployed to Iraq give me an ability to recognize and adapt to the changes we all have had to face, particularly our families, co-workers, employers, neighbors, faith community and friends.

I could not have enjoyed such a diverse and successful military career without the support of my wife, Katie, my four children and our extended family

My hope is that every Citizen-Soldier in the National Guard has a similar support system they can rely upon. For those who lack that support system, we must ensure that we all step forward to fill in the gaps.

Together, we make it happen. It is an honor and a privilege to be a member of the National Guard family. One Guard, one mission.

Thank you for what you do.

BG Stephen L. Danner

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen L. Danner".

Adjutant General, Missouri National Guard

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Publisher: Mitch Powers
Founding Editor: Ed Brown
Editor-at-Large: Chris West

Editor-in-Chief: Keith Kawasaki
Design Director: Andrew Nixon

Deputy Editor: Christian Anderson
Contributing Editor: Camille Breland
Guard Advisor: Ken Weichert
Field Editor: Clint Wood
Senior Copy Editor: Julie Zeitlin

Contributing Writers: Jason Hall, Johanna Altland, Ken Weichert, Stephanie Weichert, SFC Ken Suratt, MAJ Elaine M. Gullotta, SFC Donnie Moseley, Dr. Martin Binks, Bob Haskell, Howard Krueger, SPC Richard Stowell, SSG Liesl Marelli, SGT Sheila Holifield
Contributing Illustrator: Dan Panosian
Contributing Editors: Emily McMackin, Jamie Roberts, Megan Pacella, Bill Hudgins
Contributing Art Director: Kerri Davis
Contributing Designers: Lynne Boyer, Ben Stewart

Mail: GX: The Guard Experience
c/o Iostudio, LLC
565 Marriott Dr., Suite 700
Nashville, TN 37214
V oice: (866) 596-4558
F ax: (615) 256-6860

Email Contacts:
EDITOR editor@GXonline.com
SUBSCRIPTIONS subscriptions@GXonline.com
GENERAL INFO info@GXonline.com

Editorial Inquiry and Submissions:
editor@GXonline.com or voice:
(866) 596-4558, fax: (615) 256.6860

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True Grit

Every time I see Russell, it's like he just stepped out of a dust storm. Most the time, he has. Staff Sergeant Russell Klika has volunteered for deployment three times since 2005, which brought him once to Afghanistan and twice to Iraq. Minus a few short runs training troops at Atterbury and shooting with the Guard's media crew, Russell's been in the desert redefining the art of combat photography. Just check out the photo gallery we've dropped into this issue (please check p. 70). Nobody else's talent is as recognizable in the Department of Defense.

I love this guy. Russell will fall off the grid for months, sometimes a year—then I get a call, and he's in our lobby—sun-baked skin, eyes darting like he's about to take off in a sprint. He's in perpetual motion, like a shark.

And Russell's got stories for days. There are plenty of stories circulating about him, too—mythologizing his hard-as-nails approach and bold initiative (jumping on any moving convoy racing toward the face of the enemy). One thing about Russell, though, is that he literally hates writing, so many of his stories go untold. Through relentless coaxing, we were able to score a few captions from the man. And, fortunately, each of his photos speaks volumes. You can feel the story in his shots. As he describes it, he's pulling out "souls."

In the five-plus years I've worked at this magazine, I've met plenty of true grit heroes like Russell—each intrepid characters fit for novels. One thing we hope to bring across in each issue is the men and women behind the mission, the real people who get the job done.

If you know a hero like this, deserving of some ink, drop me a line at Keith@GXonline.com. We'll make it happen.

Thanks!



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



ON THE COVER
SGT Ryan Brubaker of the Montana Army National Guard became the Guard's NCO of the Year at the Best Warrior Competition in June.

PHOTO BY CLINT WOOD

Mailbag



Hey, SGT Ken!

I want to thank you for all you have done for me! Warrior Fit Camp is really working! I feel great! You are one of the few people who really makes me feel like I can make it. I am so grateful to be a part of your fitness and nutrition program. It's crazy—I now wake up wanting to exercise and go to bed hoping I did enough! I miss the group already. Thank you for helping me find the Warrior within me. Good luck with everything, and I hope Warrior Fit Camp lives on!

With much respect,

PFC Raycine Jones, Tennessee Army National Guard



In late August, the first wave of more than 4,000 Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers from the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team began arriving at Fort Dix, NJ, to begin demobilization after serving our nation in Iraq.

Their return marks the end of a yearlong mobilization of the only Stryker brigade in the National Guard and more than six months of combat operations north of Baghdad.

The Stryker brigade served as part of Multi-National Division-Baghdad, operating north of the city in more than 800 square miles, including the areas of Abu Ghraib, Taji and Tarmiyah, where it conducted more than 800 combined operations with Iraqi Security Forces.

During the brigade's deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, it has captured seven brigade-level, high-value targets and 80 other targeted individuals, and completed more than \$22 million in essential service projects that helped rebuild communities north of Baghdad.

—By Kevin C. Cramsey, Information Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Letters from the Front



but I feel well-protected when I'm with them. And the best thing about the military is what a small world it is.

The other day we were rolling out on a mission, and the vehicle commander turns to me and says, "Do you know COL Porter from Colorado?" Of course I know who she is, and it turns out, she's his mom. Go figure! It was an immediate friendship, and that was literally at the start of our long mission together.

Since it's Ramadan and some of the interpreters are practicing Muslims, they fast. Mind you, it's Iraq, so it's hot! In the Guard, we always ensure our Soldiers are hydrated.

Sometimes situations occur and you find yourself dining with senior leaders of the Iraqi Army and other branches of service. This is the time when I'm forced to tap into my training for items like, "Note to self, don't cross your foot and show the sole of your foot to someone. Don't forget those key words like 'hello' and 'thank you.' And, most important, do a good job eating and drinking their food. Don't insult what they offer."

I'm a female and have yet to see an Iraqi woman. No one who serves the food, chai, fruit or dessert is female. So here I am, locked and loaded, dining with Iraqi men, American Soldiers and Marines, and my goal is to blend. To be one of them ... while walking around and taking photos of everything.

I feel so blessed to travel and photograph things going on in Iraq. In this area are places like Baharia, Fallujah, Karma, etc. I am based out of Ramadi (or Ar Ramadi officially). This used to be a really "hot" area, but has settled down a lot because of a ton of hard work American service members and Iraqis have put into making this a better place. It's quieter at nights, and compared to the stories from friends of mine who served here before, it sounds like I live in a different world than they did. I'm grateful for the changes.

Even though it's less dangerous, that doesn't mean it isn't dangerous. We are prepared for anything when we roll outside the wire. Lately, I have been working a lot with the Marines. They operate differently than Soldiers,



Imagine driving around Iraq, walking through cities, sitting through meetings all day and not getting to eat or drink anything. We are told to not eat or drink in front of the interpreters. Cultural sensitivities are very important out here. It's their country, and we want to show respect for them. So, if you want a quick sip of something or a bite of food, head back to the





Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle (MRAP) for a second, then go back to what you were doing.

In the evening when they break fast, I'm always excited. Iraqi food is delicious. It's a combination of many foods most Americans have had before like chicken, lamb, fish, rice, cucumber, basil, tomato, onion, flatbread, etc. The big difference is that you eat with your hands, and I have yet to see a napkin. I think of the table manners I was taught growing up and giggle to myself when I find myself wanting to reach for a napkin on my lap, but I have neither a napkin, nor am I seated while eating to even put the napkin on my lap—even if I wanted to.

There are spoons to scoop some things like a delicious tomato/okra sauce onto rice (my personal favorite!).



the Marines that I was the first woman at a particular place and the first to go on a mission with them. No one gives me a hard time, though. The Iraqis sometimes look at me a little longer to figure me out (or maybe size me up), but I'm locked and loaded and ready to rock if it comes to it. I'm an American

"THE IRAQIS SOMETIMES LOOK AT ME A LITTLE LONGER TO FIGURE ME OUT (OR MAYBE SIZE ME UP), BUT I'M LOCKED AND LOADED AND READY TO ROCK IF IT COMES TO IT." >> SSG Liesl Marelli



But you can also share soups with others. That's probably the one thing that I have the most difficulty with. I like my own food, my own plate, and none of that exists out here. I'm not a fan of eating with my hands—especially when I have been traveling all day

and just want to shower. But it's what's required, so, like all the other Soldiers who do this stuff, I just suck it up and deal with it.

After dinner is chai and fruit. I never know how much chai we'll end up drinking. It's like a shot of tea with the bottom of the cup layered in sugar. My palate can't identify much difference between regular tea and chai, except I put honey in my tea back home. Out here, we don't ask for anything other than what they give you. Chai is served with the layer of sugar already in it. Stir it, don't stir it—that's as much option as you have. You can pass on tea and, while putting your right hand to your heart, say "shukran" and shake your head. No reason to pass, though. The chai tastes good and, most important, it's good to accept what is offered.

Being a photojournalist/combat camera on these missions means I get to be around people who never interact with females in a work capacity. I have yet to see an Iraqi woman when I'm outside the wire. I was even told by one of

Soldier, and they have worked with us long enough to know that females are Soldiers, too—no more, no less. I shake hands with the high-ranking Iraqis like everyone else. The best part is so many love having their photos taken. Make them a CD of images, and you've made their day!

I have many more months before I return, and I'm eager to see what else Iraq has to offer. I was hesitant at first about working with the Marines, but they have been a blessing in disguise. I have to admit I was wrong about what I had thought about them before. I figured they were out here just tearing the province up, but really it's turned into a humanitarian mission out here. We are all working toward the overall objective—giving Iraq back to the people.

>> SSG Liesl Marelli, 3rd Battalion
157th Field Artillery
Colorado Army National Guard





» MAKING A DIFFERENCE

[Abu Asif, Iraq]

Iraqi children express excitement about gifts they received from 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, at Abu Asif, Iraq, June 25, 2009.

Photo by SPC Neil Stanfield





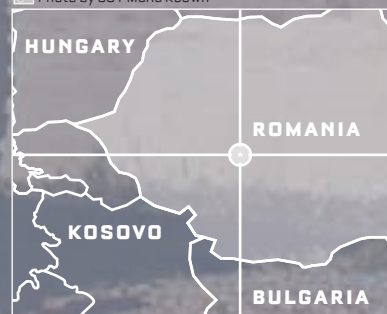


» SHOOT TO THRILL

[Romania]

SPC Lee T. Williams, a supply specialist for the 730th Quartermaster Company, fires a Degtyarov-Shpagin Kruphokalibny-Russian/Soviet 12.7 mm heavy machine gun at the firing range at Babadag Training Area, Romania. Tennessee Army National Guard Soldiers have been training side-by-side with Romanian Land Forces on a variety of Army Warrior Tasks and small-unit infantry tactics for their annual two-week training.

Photo by SGT Maria Keown





» COLD SHOT

[Sapporo, Japan]

A Soldier from the 1/149th Infantry Battalion, Kentucky Army National Guard, takes part in winter tactical training during the North Wind exercise in Sapporo, Japan.

Photo by 70th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Missouri Army National Guard





» HOT RUN

[**Afghanistan**]

An AH-64 Apache maneuvers into position to provide close air support to a platoon of Special Forces Soldiers.

Photo by SSG Russell Klika





For more photos by SSG Russell Klika, go to p. 70



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Colorado Soldiers earn combat patches.

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Missouri snipers go for a long shot.

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“LEAD ME, FOLLOW ME, OR GET OUT OF MY WAY.”

>> GEN GEORGE S. PATTON, JR.



Guard Captures ‘High-Value’ Terror Suspect in Baghdad

Courtesy of American Forces Press Service
BAGHDAD, IRAQ

U.S. FORCES APPREHENDED a wanted man suspected of being the leader of a bomb-making cell during a July 12 civil affairs mission west of Baghdad.

Civil affairs officers from C Troop, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron of the West Virginia Army National Guard, went to the man’s house July 12 to pay for damages to his front door caused during a previous attempt to capture the known criminal.

“The man attempted to flee through a field behind his house, but surrendered to pursuing C Troop Soldiers, who transferred him to Iraqi Army custody,” said Jason Chudy, a spokesman for the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

“His son yelled into the window when we arrived, and he squirted out the back door,” said SGT Christopher Cooper with C Troop. “It was great to capture a known terrorist.”

The suspected criminal admitted he is a member of an insurgency group. “Iraqi Soldiers had been searching for him for nearly a week,” Chudy said.

Soldiers transferred the man into the custody of the 17th Iraqi Army Division.

“He was listed ninth on the [battalion’s] Iraqi high-value target list, and there was a terrorist warrant for his arrest here in Iraq,” said 1LT Jason Hickman, a C Troop platoon leader.

The man is also one of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team’s “most wanted.” The 30th HBCT is the parent brigade to the 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, and is made up of National Guard Soldiers from North Carolina, West Virginia and Colorado. C Troop is based in Glen Jean, WV. **GX**



WINNING TEAM (L-R) SGT Christopher Cooper, SSG Travers Brake and 1LT Jason Hickman were instrumental in the capture of an Iraqi bomb cell leader July 12.

SPC RUTH MCCLARY, 30TH HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM PAO

“IT WAS GREAT TO CAPTURE A KNOWN TERRORIST.”

>> SGT Christopher Cooper, C Troop



AK FIRE A Soldier with the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team engages a target with an AK-47 during a marksmanship competition.

Old Hickory Soldiers Hone Skills

By SGT Mary Phillips | BAGHDAD, IRAQ

SOLDIERS OF COMPANY C, 230th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), hosted a Best Medic competition at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Aug. 28–30. Medics throughout the brigade were invited to the competition that doubled as their annual requirements for medical sustainment.

Participants included Soldiers of the 230th, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, and a Soldier from the Federal Police Transition Team, with Multi-National Corps–Iraq.

The course started with an Army Physical Fitness Test early in the morning. The participants' medical skills were tested at six stations with a written test and a night tactical scenario. The medics had 20 minutes at each station to focus on extracting a casualty from a vehicle, dealing with an advanced cardiac patient and evacuating a casualty.

Medics pushed themselves, mentally and physically, road marching between stations and carrying a 35-pound pack. They completed six miles by the end of the day.

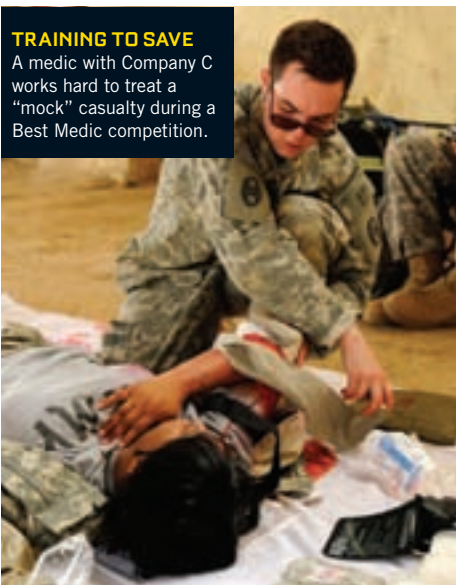
SGT Elise Heroux, of C Company, 230th BSB, said time management and maintaining her endurance level were the hardest parts of the competition.

During the event's first day, some of the medics quickly transitioned from the competition to a real-world situation after an improvised explosive device went off on a 230th BSB convoy near the base. All the medics involved quickly switched roles, taking care of Soldiers being brought into the aid station.

"We transitioned from walking a road march to seeing patients at our trauma station and vehicle station ... and all of a sudden, they had to transition to real people coming in with injuries," said Company C Commander MAJ James McCann. "It put everything on hold, and when they were done, they still continued with the road march and the rest of the stations that day."

Every medic who finished the competition received a certificate, and of the six Soldiers who placed, five of them were from Company C, 230th BSB.

"I'm pretty excited that our entire company finished," Heroux said. "It says a lot about our medics and what they're able to endure."



TRAINING TO SAVE A medic with Company C works hard to treat a "mock" casualty during a Best Medic competition.

"Old Hickory" Soldiers with the 30th HBCT and Iraqi federal police with the 1st Mechanized Brigade competed in a marksmanship competition Aug. 17, south of Baghdad.

Three teams—Team Hickory, the federal police Transition Team, and the 1st Mechanized Brigade team—containing five shooters each, went head to head using AK-47 assault rifles from varying distances and positions, including sitting, standing, kneeling and standing in the back of a pickup truck.

SSG Tony Bean, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th HBCT, scored 249 points, more than anyone else at the match. He had earlier predicted his top spot, despite the fact that he doesn't typically shoot an AK-47.

This was the first time that Bean and most of the other 30th Brigade Soldiers had ever fired the iconic rifle.

"I think it is great," Bean said. "It shows that these guys are open to learning new things, and teaching us some new things about their weapons."

All the Soldiers and federal police had a good time at the friendly competition, including SGT Jason Newman, of Company B, 30th Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Newman said. "I am thankful for the opportunity to shoot with the Iraqis, and I had a good time."

LTC Barry Hull, battalion commander for the 30th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, said part of his intent for this competition was to "break down the walls" between the American Soldiers and the federal police officers.

"A lot of the Soldiers who come over here don't interact with our Iraqi counterparts that much," Hull said. "But when you get rid of the misconceptions, they're just like us. They're here to do a mission, and they are doing the best they can."

Battalion CSM Bill Wyrick also thought that the competition helped the Soldiers and the Iraqi officers form a closer bond.

"There is a mutual respect there that wasn't there before," Wyrick said.

And when the tournament drew to a close, the Americans took first, but not by much. Team Hickory placed first with 1,146 points; the 1st Mechanized Brigade placed second with 1,109 points; and the training team came in third with 1,106 points.

A plan for a volleyball tournament between the groups is already in the works. **GX**



ENGAGING CHAT 1LT Matthew Mason (left) shares a light moment with Iraq Army 1st Lt. Munther Hassan Murabak during a key leader engagement meeting at an Iraqi Army station near Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah.

Solar Power to the People

U.S. AND IRAQI SOLDIERS TEAM UP FOR CLEAN WATER

Story and photo by SGT Jon Soles, Multi-National Division / BAGHDAD, IRAQ

Soldiers of the North Carolina Army National Guard are working with the Iraqi Army to help bring clean water to citizens here through the use of solar-powered water filters.

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, met with Iraqi Army officers near Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah Aug. 11 to discuss the placement of the filters.

“The Soldiers may be able to provide the water filters, but it’s up to the Iraqis to decide who takes responsibility for them,” said platoon leader 1LT Matthew Mason of Garner, NC. At the meeting with 1st Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division, it was decided that two shaykhs—one Sunni and one Shi’a—would be in charge of the water filters.

“This helps support the government of Iraq, and they will be an impartial distributor of water—people who won’t think of their own benefit, but of the greater good of the people,” Mason said. “[The meeting] went really well; we got a lot accomplished.

“It was a simple meeting, but the coordination of the water filter project was just another

“YOU FEEL LIKE YOU’RE ACCOMPLISHING SOMETHING...”

>> 1LT Matthew Mason on the Iraqi water filter team

building block in the U.S. relationship with the Iraqi Security Forces,” said Mason, an infantry officer.

“Personally, I know we have a good working relationship, and we share information and intelligence,” Mason said. “Like every relationship, it takes time and commitment.”

The Iraqi Army knows the area and is receiving support from the local population, according to Mason.

“They’re extremely proficient and know their area, and they’ve got a real lockdown on everything that goes on,” Mason said. “The people know they can trust the Iraqi Army.”

The water filter project is in the works, but the overall relationship with the Iraqi Army will continue to pay dividends in terms of future peace and stability.

“You feel like you’re accomplishing something, showing support for the Iraqi Army,” Mason said. **CX**

Sergeant Teaches Iraqis Public Affairs Skills

By SPC Ruth McClary / MAHMUDIYAH, IRAQ

SOLDIERS OF THE 17TH IRAQI ARMY DIVISION trained with a sergeant of 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team recently to establish a public affairs unit at the joint communications center in Mahmudiyah, south of Baghdad.

SGT Wayne Haley, the noncommissioned officer in charge of public affairs, taught a weeklong class at the 17th Division compound, focusing on writing skills, basic camera techniques and helping assess the unit's broadcasting equipment and skills.

"The class was set up to access their equipment and determine which individuals were able to meet the criteria of working in public affairs," said Haley of Beckley, WV. "The Iraqi military is taking a huge step forward with this class; it's not just about combat anymore."

The Soldiers received hands-on training with cameras and computer software programs, and were given writing and photography assignments. In the end, two Iraqi Army Soldiers completed the class—Sgt. Saad Salim Khashan and Maj. Daham Majid Mohammad. "Khashan had an untapped skill that was really phenomenal," Haley said.

Public affairs as a job is new to Iraqi Soldiers. Usually the division's Staff Maj. Gen. Ali Jassam Mohammad is responsible for conducting all matters of public affairs.

"During the class, I tried to teach them the job and techniques of how to address the general's [needs], so he would utilize them and all the work wouldn't fall on him," Haley said.

The Iraqi public affairs unit will also include a broadcasting element for the base's small station, which covers the city of Mahmudiyah. Three Iraqi civilians are now employed at the station.

SAME STATION, NEW INFORMATION

"When I first arrived at the station, they played nonstop music," Haley said. "Now they report local and national news. I had to get them thinking outside the box for new information by checking newspapers, Internet sites and tips from the public."

Eventually the radio station plans to extend its hours to 10 p.m. and sell advertising to sustain itself so it will not have to rely solely on the support of the Iraqi Army. Haley will be returning to Mahmudiyah in the coming weeks to train more Soldiers for the division's public affairs team.



CLICK Sgt. Saad Salim Khashan of the 17th Iraqi Army Division practiced photography during a public affairs class taught by a sergeant of the Army National Guard's 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, June 22.

The Army National Guard's 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, made up of about 4,000 Soldiers, operates in a nearly 2,000-square-mile area of Iraq. Known as the Old Hickory Brigade, it's made up mainly of North Carolina Soldiers, with one battalion from West Virginia and a company from the Colorado.

The brigade's operating area includes joint security stations, with Iraqi forces in southwestern Baghdad and the mainly agricultural areas southwest of the city. **GX**

Louisiana Engineers Smash Combat Milestones

By LTC Pat Simon, 225th Engineer Brigade / BAGHDAD, IRAQ

THE 225TH Engineer Brigade Command Security Team (CST) rumbled out on another mission July 15. This time, it was a late night run to Zafaraniya to check on force protection at the Joint Security Station there. A report blasted over the headphones: "Two [improvised explosive devices] found in vicinity of ..."

The IEDs were off the path of the 225th Ground Assault Convoy, but these Soldiers knew to stay sharp as threat conditions remained active. Five months into their deployment, the 225th's CST had achieved major milestones: More than 80 ground missions, 3,000 miles traveled, no equipment lost, and every Soldier

returned safe and sound. "That's the most rewarding part every time we return—knowing that I accomplished my mission by getting everyone back to Victory Base Complex safely," said SFC Chad McNeal, 225th CST noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

McNeal selected dozens of Soldiers from various backgrounds, like engineer surveyors, carpenters, truck drivers, equipment operators and medical staff, and turned them into top-notch security team members.

"Our aggressiveness obviously sets us apart," McNeal said. "We always have active turrets, an active convoy, and keep a defensive posture."

That aggressive posture was duly noted on the night move.

"Okay, pop open the hatch," SSG Tommy Allen said.

SGT Kyle Clark and SPC Ryan Custis jumped into 360-degree security positions. "Group of males at 3 o'clock," Clark yelled. "Got it," replied Custis as the security pair scouted for suspicious activity.

It is not just the convoy team that deserves credit for the success of the 225th CST. "I give great credit to the brigade intelligence team for excellent threat briefings before every mission," McNeal said.

"Their dedication to the mission at hand has greatly contributed to our success."

Cross-training on every position also keeps CST members focused, and camaraderie keeps morale up.

"They volunteered to join the CST," said 225th Engineer Brigade CSM Joe Major. "They eat together, do PT together and train together. They have bonded, and that makes the difference."

On this latest mission, the late night return ride was bumpy and dusty, but one thing was very clear: Another safe mission was in the books.

"It's a testament to our leadership," said Clark, who has been on nearly all of the security convoys. **GX**

FLAGS AND PATCHES Soldiers from the 157th prepare to receive their combat patch for their involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Colorado Soldiers Earn Combat Patch

Story and photos by SSG Liesl Marelli, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, 115th Fires Brigade
CAMP RAMADI, IRAQ

August 21 was a historic day for 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard, 115th Fires Brigade.

In a ceremony at the battalion's motor pool, Soldiers were presented with the 115th combat patch by brigade commander COL Richard Knowlton and brigade command SGM Kenton Franklin.

According to U.S. Army regulations, Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from March 19, 2003, to the present are authorized to wear a shoulder sleeve insignia for wartime service on their right arm to symbolize their deployment in the Central Command area of operations.

Knowlton removed his own combat patch and placed it on 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery

(FA) Commander LTC Al Morris' right arm. He then patched the battalion staff, special staff, battery commanders, first sergeants and the color guard.

Once presented with the shoulder sleeve insignia, the battery commanders and first sergeants went one-by-one patching their Soldiers' right arms.

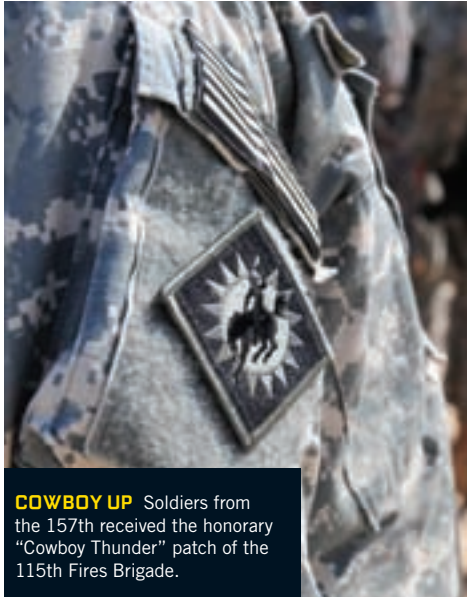
The Colorado Soldiers hit the ground running when they arrived in Iraq, performing a slew of missions in Ar Ramadi ranging from quick reaction force to personnel security detail (PSD) to operating towers and gates at Camp Ramadi. Each of the batteries assigned to 3-157 FA holds different areas of responsibility.

Battery B, 3-157 FA, conducts personal security detail missions for the Camp Ramadi-based Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT).

“Without the presence of a security detachment, the Provincial Reconstruction Team would not be able to perform its mission safely,” explains Air Force Tech. Sgt. Leonard Norris, an operations noncommissioned officer with the PRT.

Battery B is charged with maintaining tight security for members of the PRT, as well as those with whom they meet. The protection provided to the PRT by Battery B is essential to the success of their missions.

“If my [Soldiers] can provide that sense of comfort for [the PRT], then the team can concentrate more on their job at hand and not worry about the security piece,” said 1SG Rodolfo Reyes, Battery B first sergeant.

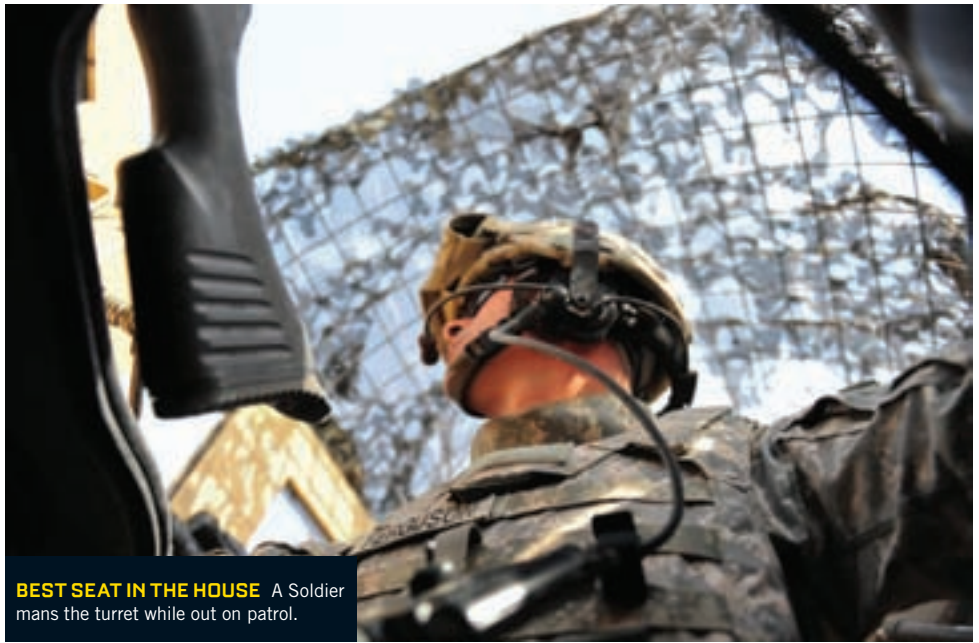


COWBOY UP Soldiers from the 157th received the honorary “Cowboy Thunder” patch of the 115th Fires Brigade.

August 9 was the battery’s first mission to the province’s Fuel Distribution Center.

“We were at the Ramadi Fuel Distribution Center to meet with the Director General of Oil Distribution, Abdul Ghani, about the current problems with fuel and oil distribution facing Al Anbar and to assess the progress of the FDC,” said Lance Cpl. Chase Niblett, of the Multi-National Force-West Civil Military Operations section.

The Anbar PRT consists of subject matter experts in an array of fields such as governance, economics, infrastructure, rule of law, public diplomacy and public affairs, project management and operations. Anbar PRT encompasses specialists from the departments of State, Defense and Justice, and U.S. Agency for International Development. Both uniformed service members and civilians serve on the PRT.



BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE A Soldier mans the turret while out on patrol.

While members of the Anbar PRT met with Ghani, the security detail maintained vigilance.

“Staying vigilant is paramount to the safety of any and all individuals [we protect], including civilians,” said SPC John Perea of the PSD. “[It] can and will help prevent or defuse a situation before it gets out of hand. If something does happen and it wasn’t preventable, it’s better to be ready to react than be caught off-guard.”

At the culmination of the meeting, Ghani invited the Soldiers to rotate in and enjoy some local Iraqi food.

“[The food] was amazing,” said SG T Jeff Daniels, a Soldier assigned to the PSD. “It’s probably one of the best dishes I’ve eaten in a long time.”

“I think [the Iraqis] look at sharing a meal as ‘sealing the deal,’ so to speak,” Niblett said.

“When we eat out in town, the Soldiers [on the PSD] normally get some Iraqi food, but I’ve never seen an Iraqi as motivated about getting the PSD team fed as I saw here.”

This mission, supported by Battery B, gave the Ramadi-based PRT an opportunity to continue building and strengthening their relationship with the local government, business leaders and elected officials.

According to the Anbar PRT, oil has not only changed the immediate lives of the people of Anbar; its potential will also have huge impacts in the future. The PRT is in place to assist and assess the progress of the oil distribution, among their many tasks.

“I’m happy knowing something is getting done for the Iraqis,” said Daniels. “We are here to help.” **GX**



PROUD TO SERVE These proud Colorado Soldiers handle missions ranging from quick reaction force to personnel security.

Hawaii Takes Training to the Next Level

Story and photos by PFC James. M. Wilton, 117th MPAD | CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

▶ HAWAII ARMY NATIONAL GUARD'S (HIARNG) B Company, 777th Aviation Support Battalion, traveled to Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) in May for the most advanced level of hands-on training available in their field.

The 777th's mission is to provide corps and intermediate-level aviation maintenance support for the HIARNG's helicopters.

"CCAD is the next level up of that maintenance support chain," said CWO Russell Bishop, Bravo Company's production control officer. "CCAD provides complete breakdown, repair, assembly and maintenance of the Army's entire helicopter force."

"Can you answer this question?" Bishop asked his Soldiers. "Right now, today, am I capable of doing my job to the fullest extent, giving the unit I am supporting a fully mission-capable aircraft? I hope the answer is yes. If it isn't, then this will be the beginning of your journey to becoming technically proficient."

The two weeks the 777th spent in Texas included hands-on instruction conducted on the factory floor. Each Soldier was teamed with a CCAD employee and placed in the shop area that corresponded to their military occupational specialty (MOS). Once there, the Soldier began working as a regular employee involved in every part of the process performed at that station. The training program was designed to provide the



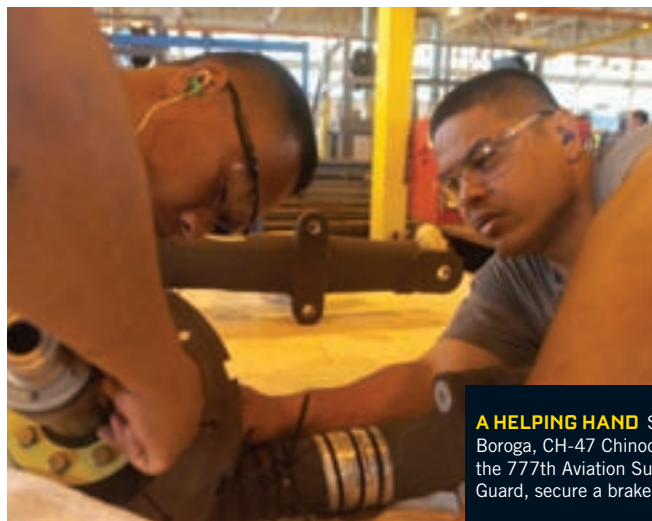
TOOLS OF THE TRADE SSG Jarrett Cummings, aircraft power train repair technician, attaches a safety wire to the main rotor head-unit of a UH-60 Black Hawk during the 777th's Annual Training mission.

Soldier with a self-driven learning environment, one that allowed each participant to discover every facet of the apparatus he was working on.

"You get out what you put into the program," said Mitchell R. Holmes, CCAD's Reserve Training Components training coordinator. "If you are

willing to learn, then the instructors are here to teach and will help you accomplish your goals."

"I was able to come in on the front end of tearing a UH-60 Black Hawk down completely," said PFC Thomas P. Spellman II, a Co. B Black Hawk helicopter repair technician, "and I have been able to touch everything in the aircraft, even things that,



A HELPING HAND SPC Phuc Huyhn and SGT Ignacio Boroga, CH-47 Chinook helicopter repair technicians with the 777th Aviation Support Battalion, Hawaii Army National Guard, secure a brake pad to the landing gear of a Chinook.

when we were in school, had already been torn down by the instructors and or were just training aids or model representations."

On average, about 50 Soldiers attend each CCAD training mission, which allows the coordinator to place each of them in an area that matches their area of expertise without overwhelming the factory floor with uniformed personnel. Some of the Soldiers' training is split into one week of hands-on training and one week of classroom instruction.

"We try to provide the Soldiers with every opportunity available to improve their skills and knowledge, including our on-site schoolhouse," Holmes said.

"Attending this training gave us a certain confidence level," Spellman said. "So when we went back to our unit and worked on the aircraft, we know what to look for and how the machine looks both inside and out. We can take that confidence and transfer it into our job. Then, it is transferred to those we are working around, and the entire mission becomes better because of it."

Annual Training is an opportunity for drill-status Soldiers to spend extended time with their fellow service members, both on the job and off.



SWITCH ON SPC Gabby Balicoco, aircraft electrician with the 777th Aviation Support Battalion, Hawaii Army National Guard, attaches a new loading ramp lowering switch to the control panel of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

"We are able to share this experience with each other and get to know people that I see only for two days a month. Now, I am here with them for two weeks, and I am learning who they truly are, learning about their families and really seeing them as person," Spellman said.

Soldiers proficient in their field, with the ability to adapt and learn, taking the initiative and not waiting for someone else to tell them what to do next—this is the Guard's new objective for training its Soldiers. Taking the chance on advanced training options, as the 777th did at CCAD, is one way for a unit to achieve this goal. **GX**

South Carolina National Guard Takes Control of New Mission

By CPT Tim W. Irvin, 218th MEB Public Affairs Officer | KANSAS CITY, MO

Try to imagine thousands of fans waiting in the Municipal Auditorium for the University of Missouri-Kansas City basketball game to begin. Down the street at the Bartle Convention Center, people have begun to arrive for the Kenny Chesney concert that will begin later. Families walk around the shops and restaurants at the Kansas City Power & Light District. It's a beautiful day.

High above the city, a small single-engine plane flies unnoticed. The plane slowly turns toward the convention center. Few people notice as it gets closer to the building. The pilot forces the tiny aircraft into a violent nose dive directly toward the structure. Some realize what is happening, but it is too late.

Just before the plane hits the building, it disappears in an intense blinding light and in an instant the convention center is blown away. A massive dark mushroom cloud slowly grows over the city. In a matter of seconds, the explosion claims more than 100,000 lives and decimates the city.

In the next few hours, more than 200,000 Kansas City citizens attempt to flee what's left of the city. As water and food become contaminated by the large amounts of radioactive dust, people begin to ransack local businesses. Curfews are imposed by local law enforcement in an attempt to control the looting. Hospitals are immediately overwhelmed by the streams of people needing medical care. Thousands of people are contaminated, and some are showing signs of radiation sickness. Local fire and rescue crews are stretched to the point of exhaustion. The city is in utter chaos.

Fortunately, this was just a training simulation that members of the Chemical, Biological, Nuclear, Radiological and High Explosive (CBRNE) Consequence Management Response Force, or CCMRF (pronounced "see-smurf"), went through at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

The Department of Defense created CCMRF to react to a terrorist or other man-made incident after the attack of 9/11. The 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB), from the South Carolina Army National Guard, is the lead unit on the ground when CCMRF is deployed. "This

is a great opportunity for the South Carolina National Guard. It is an honor to be chosen for such an elite mission," said MG Stanhope Spears, South Carolina National Guard adjutant general.

The 218th MEB assumed command of the CCMRF mission beginning Oct. 1, 2009, and has been tasked with the mission for the next few years. CCMRF is made up of Active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve units.



MASKED RESPONSE

A South Carolina Army National Guard Soldier wears his protective mask as he trains for the 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's new national consequence management response mission.

The team will deploy only on the order of the president, once requested by a governor, to help support state and local officials with a disaster, manmade or otherwise. Being part of this new force requires a shift in thinking and training for Soldiers who are used to taking charge. Federal military Soldiers must focus on the fact that they work in support of a civilian agency while operating within the U.S.

CCMRF is designed to deploy when they have been requested by a state's governor to aid local authorities during a disaster. Their mission is to provide support to local and state authorities. The 218th MEB will control more than a dozen Reserve and National Guard units throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. **GX**



WEST VIRGINIA Two childcare centers will be built on National Guard installations in West Virginia and Indiana in fiscal year 2010, according to Guard officials. The West Virginia Army National Guard was recently awarded \$4 million by the Department of the Army for the construction of a childcare center at its headquarters in Charleston, WV. The new center, which is scheduled to open late next year, will be able to accommodate up to 100 children and will include activity rooms, a reception area, an outdoor play yard and a separate area for sick children. A second center is planned for Camp Atterbury, IN, which is a main location for Guard troops training to go overseas. The 2006 Defense Authorization Act requires the Department of the Army to construct additional child development centers at Army installations across the country. Priority will be given to Active Duty military personnel, including those on Title 10 and Title 32 orders, followed by Department of Defense civilians and contractors.

INDIANA The Indiana Department of Education has accredited the military's first and only high school program for U.S. service members. The National Guard Patriot Academy located at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center is designed for qualified applicants from around the nation to enlist, complete basic training and earn their high school diplomas while receiving additional military training and giving back to the community. Dr. Tony Bennett, the Indiana (DOE) Superintendent of Public Instruction, said the accreditation marks a first for the state. The DOE ensures that schools meet the minimum standards in student performance, legal standards and school improvement planning through the accreditation process. The National Guard Patriot Academy enables students to receive college credits for some 12th-grade-level courses. Students who complete the program early are encouraged to enroll in college courses and prepare for College Level Examination Program tests, where they can earn additional college credits.

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TEAMWORK

Members of the Ohio National Guard's 200th RED HORSE and Serbian Armed Forces work together to renovate the Neven elementary school in Prokuplje, Serbia, Aug. 8, 2009.



FAIR TRADE Members of the Serbian Armed Forces trade patches with Ohio National Guard troops in a sign of friendship and cooperation while repairing the Mitropolit Mihailo primary school in Sokobanja, Aug. 11, 2009.

Ohio Guard Improves Serbian Schools

By SGT Sean Mathis, Ohio National Guard Public Affairs

Ohio National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, along with members of the Serbian Armed Forces, remodeled schools throughout Serbia from Aug. 15 to Sept. 1, 2009.

The Ohio Army National Guard's 1194th Engineer Company and the Ohio Air National Guard's 200th RED HORSE (Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers) helped to refurbish schools in Sokobanja, Lapovo and Prokuplje as part of the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program. The program supports the U.S. European

Command's military-to-military exchange program, which is designed to facilitate familiarization with the operations of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Ohio's partnership with Serbia began in September 2006.

"We are totally self-sustaining and worldwide deployable," said SSG Brock Mowry of the 200th. "We're here to teach them our techniques and learn their techniques and build international relationships."

The RED HORSE worked in conjunction with the Serbian Armed Forces on adding insulation and improving the façade of

the Neven elementary school in Prokuplje. "We're refinishing the school and installing a thermal barrier, increasing energy efficiency by 80 percent," Mowry said.

Pavlovic Dusanka, the Neven elementary school principal, said the school had problems with the façade, windows, roof and drains. The school accommodates 850 children from the city of Prokuplje and the surrounding villages, divided among three buildings.

"I'm very happy with the partnership with America," Dusanka said. "By this project, the school is widely publicized and it is an honor."

While the work on the outside walls at all three schools was to be completed by the U.S. military engineers, private civilian contractors repaired other areas of the school.

In Lapovo, the building's façade and paint were the priorities for the 1194th Engineer Company, but the additional task of repairing the clay tile roof was delegated to a contractor. Also, the school's septic tank was too small for the 200-plus-student body and became a

project for U.S. Navy Seabees, who remained beyond the initial Sept. 1 completion date, the day before school started.

Though the logistics of repairing the school can be difficult, the logistics of taking care of the Soldiers working on them was easier than predicted. Serbian civilians welcomed the U.S. Soldiers and Airmen with open arms. Locals brought gifts of food and drink—primarily watermelon and Turkish coffee.



COURTESY OF THE OHIO NATIONAL GUARD

Guam and Wyoming Push Training to the Max

By CPT Ken Ola

The Serbian Armed Forces welcomed the U.S. military members as well, trading patches and introducing them to key phrases of the Serbian language. Both the U.S. military members and the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF) interacted with the community as well, playing basketball on local courts and visiting local attractions at the invitation of the city mayor.

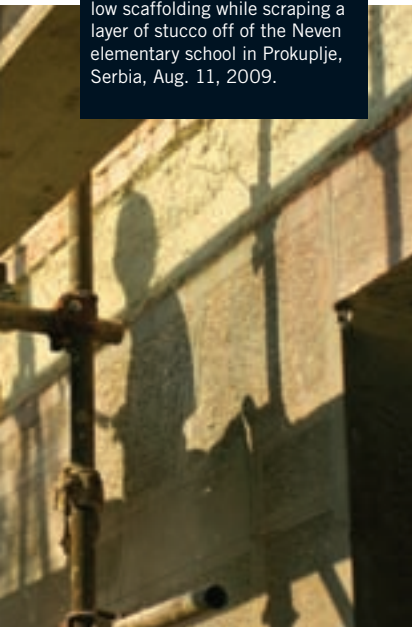
"We're not just building a kindergarten, we're making friendships—friends I'll have my whole life," said Petar Vesovic, a translator for the engineers working in Prokuplje.

Vesovic became involved with the Ohio National Guard's humanitarian project through UNICEF.

"I'm happy to help, and the people are happy to help," Vesovic said. "All the children who go here will know that Serbians and Americans are friends now." **GX**

PLASTER OF PROKUPLJE

Airman 1st Class Travis Seich of the Ohio National Guard's 200th RED HORSE sits atop a low scaffolding while scraping a layer of stucco off of the Neven elementary school in Prokuplje, Serbia, Aug. 11, 2009.



A WELL-ORGANIZED TERRORIST group planted chemical weapons at the Top O' the Mar, where emergency officials were meeting. Using a blister agent, the same terrorist group also attacked a U.S. Coast Guard medical ship that was carrying medical supplies such as Tamiflu to the island. Local law enforcement also found a terrorist cell at the Piti Gun Club maintaining an elaborate laboratory.

Of course, the above scenario was just make-believe, but it was designed to enhance training opportunities for the 94th Civil Support Team-Weapons of Mass Destruction (CST-WMD) from the Guam National Guard and the 84th CST-WMD of the Wyoming National Guard, which conducted a joint exercise in August.

The joint exercise, dubbed Ardent Ocean 94, was designed to enhance the response capabilities of both units in reacting to simultaneous operations in separate venues in support of a large-scale incident or multiple incident sites.

For the exercise, the 94th CST was alerted at about 10 p.m. to respond to a possible chemical attack at Top O' the Mar, where "emergency officials" were meeting.

Several hours later, the 84th CST was called up to respond to a suspected chemical attack on the medical ship docked at the U.S. Coast Guard Station. The ship was the USCGC *Sequoia*, which was used as the medical supply ship. Elements of the 94th CST also responded to support after the mission at Top O' the Mar was completed. Two-man teams performed multiple entries on the ship as well as conducted inspections of the surrounding pier.

Later on in the day members of both units responded to a call to help clear a suspected "terrorist cell" at the Piti Gun Club where an elaborate "laboratory" was also discovered.

The Emergency Response Training Institute and the 196th Training Brigade were also involved in setting up the scenarios and sites to make the training as realistic as possible.

The common mission of CSTs like the 94th and 84th involve support to civil authorities in responding to the deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

Among the goals of this exercise were to validate the standard civil support team tasks, as well as train on specific maritime tasks. The exercise also tested



FIRST RESPONDERS
CST Soldiers respond to a "threat" during Exercise Ardent Ocean.

COURTESY OF THE GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

the continued interoperability of the units with both federal and local civil authorities, as well as sister CSTs. The units also aimed to develop strike force operations procedures; develop a better understanding of limitations, restrictions and obstacles; and develop standard operating guidance on maritime operations.

"It was an overall success," said LTC Nicanor Legaspi, 94th CST-WMD commander, as he spoke on details about Exercise Ardent Ocean.

"One of the great things about this mission was that the two teams were able to work together and test the interoperability between the two," Legaspi said. "It was a true joint effort. In one scenario, we sent in our personnel with them and were able to execute the maritime mission."

According to Legaspi, CSTs normally operate individually and respond to alerts on their own. During this exercise, they were able to join forces and evaluate how they performed as a joint operation.

A joint exercise like this also provides Guard units from various states a chance to implement coordinating capabilities. The 84th was transported to and from Guam by a C-17 from the Mississippi Air National Guard. The unit brought their detection equipment, personal protective equipment and a total of seven vehicles, including a medical recovery vehicle and an analytical laboratory system.

Various federal and local agencies were also involved in the exercise, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Coast Guard, Centers for Disease Control, Guam Fire Department and the Guam Police Department, and support from the Navy. **GX**

Rocket Launchers

SOLDIERS CROSS-TRAIN WITH BULGARIANS

Story and photos by SFC Osvaldo Sanchez
NOVO SELO TRAINING AREA, BULGARIA

In today's modern, ever-changing battlefield, building military relationships is vital to coalition success in multi-national security operations across the globe. The Tennessee National Guard's 1/181st Field Artillery Battalion out of Chattanooga, TN, flew over the Atlantic Ocean this summer for combined training with members of the Bulgarian Land Forces. The 1/181st arrived in early August to conduct their annual training requirement, which is a two-week period to qualify on individual weapons and complete various Army Warrior Tasks. Performing these tasks and drills helps maintain their Soldier skills and readiness for upcoming deployments in support of overseas contingency operations.

About 200 Guard Soldiers participated in various training, including military operations on urban terrain, Humvee rollover exit procedures and Bulgarian weapons familiarization. They were shown how to fire AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers by host nation members of 1st Company of Yambol, Mechanized Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade, during a two-day class.

"I think it's great to cross-train with our NATO partner," said SGT Timothy L. Slenker, a native of Fayetteville, TN, and ammunitions resupply sergeant of Bravo Battery. "A lot of guys haven't had this opportunity."

"I like that big 'boo-yah' the captain gave me," said Slenker, referring to his platoon leader's reaction during the grenade launcher live fire. Slenker hit two out of three targets.

Another Soldier said he enjoyed the opportunity to train with the Bulgarians. "We fired their AKs and learned the basic working knowledge of using their weapons," said SSG Nathan Davis, an artillery section chief of the 1/181st. "It was a neat experience to train with them and teach them, and for us to learn from them, as well. We're very much alike."



IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE SPC Randall S. Wood, a radio and communications security repairer, fires a rocket-propelled grenade in Joint Task Force-East combined training Aug. 18 at a shooting range in Bulgaria.

Bulgarian Land Forces 2nd Lt. Ivan S. Ivanov, the instructor for RPG training, said, "Each one of the U.S. troops was very interested in the information and actively took part during the class, which provided better practical training. The U.S. Army is very disciplined and easy to work with because they followed directions I gave."

"I think combined training is very important for our experience," Ivanov continued. "It provides the opportunity to exchange skills and knowledge for both U.S. and Bulgarian troops."

Training is part of Joint Task Force-East, an innovative element conducted in Bulgaria and Romania that helps build military partnerships by providing a training exercise to learn from each other and improve their capabilities. JTF-E is a continuing effort by the U.S. and its partners in the region to improve interoperability and develop military relationships for security in the area. **GX**



FIRE AWAY LTC David E. Hurley fires a rocket-propelled grenade at a shooting range in Bulgaria.

Kosovo Bound

KENTUCKY AVIATION UNIT SECOND TO DEPLOY TO KOSOVO

Story and photos by Clint Wood | FRANKFORT, KY

MORE THAN 80 KENTUCKY Army National Guard Soldiers who are deploying to Kosovo for the second time in the history of the Kentucky National Guard were bid farewell in a ceremony in August at the Boone National Guard Center.

Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation, and Company C, 169th Medevac, and more than 100 family members filled the Army Aviation Support Facility Hangar for the ceremony on a hot and humid Kentucky afternoon.

MG Edward Tonini, the state's adjutant general, was among the invited guests.

Tonini told the audience, which included children waving small American flags, if it were not for the support of the Soldier's family, friends and loved ones, deployments like this would not be successful.

"I salute you," Tonini said, as he executed a hand salute, before giving the Soldiers and their families a round of applause.

He noted that the contingent's NATO peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (Kosovo Force, Rotation 12 or KFOR 12) is important because "keeping peace prevents war."

Company B's mission will be sling-loads, firefighting operations, troop transports, troop training like rappelling operations and VIP transport.

"The medevac company's basic mission is to save lives," said CPT Gabriel Spicer, company commander.

Both companies have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is the first time Company C will deploy as a medevac unit. Its



SPECIAL KISS 2LT Dante Steadmon kisses the cheek of his son, Dante, Jr., during the farewell ceremony.

first deployment was as a general support aviation unit.

CPT Mike Armstrong, commander of Company B, was deployed with the company to Iraq and has been home for almost two years.

He noted that half of his company is made up of Soldiers who were deployed to Iraq.

He said that family members of the Soldiers "are at ease" because this is a Kosovo deployment.

He added that any deployment with aviation assets—the group will fly UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters—is dangerous because of the mechanical aspect.

The two units will participate in further training at Camp Atterbury, IN, for several weeks before deploying to Kosovo. Aviation support units from other states, including South Carolina and Virginia, will join them.

These two units are providing all the aircraft for American troops for KFOR 12. The last time Kentucky National Guard troops deployed to Kosovo was 2004–2005, and they were honored. Company C, 206th Engineers, received a unit meritorious citation for its service there. **GX**



DADDY'S GIRL SSG Phillip Albers shares a moment with his daughter, Savannah, during the farewell ceremony.

VICTORY MAP



continued from page 27

GEORGIA The Georgia Bulldog NCAA football team wore a helmet patch to honor the Georgia-based 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during their game against South Carolina on Sept. 13. The 1-inch by 1.5-inch patch was a replica of the combat team's shoulder sleeve insignia. The 48th IBCT is composed of about 3,000 Georgians and is currently deployed in Afghanistan with the mission of training and mentoring the Afghan Army and police. The brigade, which is part of the Georgia National Guard, is headquartered out of Macon, with subordinate battalions based in Calhoun, Forsyth, Griffin, Savannah, Statesboro and Winder. Additional company-level units are from smaller towns throughout the state.

PENNSYLVANIA An electronic warfare association has named a 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team battalion as the Army unit to best make use of Electronic Warfare (EW) assets and training in the past year. The selection comes at a time when Soldiers in Iraq are relying on EW capabilities to defeat improvised explosive devices. The 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Plymouth Meeting, PA, is the recipient of the "Association of Old Crows Outstanding U.S. Army Electronic Warfare Unit for 2009" honor.

MONTANA Members of the 143rd Military Police Detachment of the Montana Army National Guard took a break from their law enforcement mission to assemble wheelchairs for Iraqi children on Aug. 9. Working with the Human Terrain Systems organization, the volunteers assembled wheelchairs bound for hospitals and orphanages in Sadr City, Iraq—which has been dealing with the realities of a years-long conflict. The Human Terrain System organization works with brigade-level commanders to bring an understanding of local social needs to bridge the gap of understanding for a culture or geographical area. Members of the military police unit and more than a dozen other volunteers spent the afternoon fulfilling one of those needs.

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WELL-OILED MACHINE

Members of the 628th Aviation Support Battalion conduct maintenance on a UH-60 Black Hawk.

Keeping 'Em Up in the Air

By SFC Jeffrey Mullett, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade | COB ADDER, IRAQ

AVIATION SOLDIERS strive to make sure AH-64 Apaches, UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks are prepared to take anything a war zone can offer.

“Our primary job is to perform all the scheduled maintenance on the CH-47, UH-60 and the AH-64,” said MAJ John Kilby, commander of Bravo Company, 628th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), from Rising Sun, MD.

“We handle the scheduled maintenance, but sometimes we get a call from one of the [Aviation Unit Maintenance Companies] asking if we can fix something, whether it’s because they don’t have the tools, parts or people qualified to do the work,” he explained.

The 628th ASB’s duties are not limited to maintenance.

“We help weigh aircraft and assist with accident investigations,” said SSG Douglas Kephart, a technical inspector in the Quality Assurance shop of the 628th ASB.

Kephart recalled one particular incident as an example of the unit’s other duties.

“Before we arrived in theater, we had a grass fire in Fort Sill,” he said. “The wind gets pretty bad. We were able to move a Chinook that was in the way, but we weren’t able to

move a Black Hawk that was parked there, and it was burned pretty bad.

“The heat had buckled some of the supports and sheet metal on the side of the aircraft,” Kephart continued, “[but] our shop can rebuild or repair most components on all three aircraft.”

The 628th consists of its main group from Fort Indiantown Gap, PA, Company C in York, PA, Detachment 1, Company B, of the 628th ASB, from West Trenton, NJ,

with Bravo Company, 351st ASB, attached out of Lowell, MI.

“The shop fixes aircraft components and fabricates hydraulic hoses, and we go in and make sure everything is being done according to the manual,” Kephart added. “The maintenance facility here consists of a machine shop, sheet metal shop, engine shop, a non-destructive testing shop (NDI), [propeller] and rotor shop, an armament shop for the AH-64 and the avionics shop.”

The Soldiers of Bravo Company, 351st ASB, who were attached to the 628th ASB have been drawing on the experience of their counterparts. Kephart has been with the 628th since 1993, he said, but many of the members of the 351st are new to the military.

“Most of us had very little experience,” said PFC Nick Gregaitus, a CH-47 mechanic from Lowell, MI. “Most of us just graduated from [Advanced Individual Training].”

As for Gregaitus, he will be trading rotor blades for wheels when he gets back. He will be using his experience working on Chinooks in Iraq to enhance his new job as a technician for the National Guard, working as a vehicle mechanic. “I got the job before I left,” he said. “I’ll get the best of both worlds for a while.”

So far, the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade aircraft have conducted more than 12,000 hours of air operations, carried 29,000 passengers to various locations in Iraq and Kuwait, and airlifted 1.3 million pounds of cargo.

Also, the medical Black Hawks have been conducting medical evacuation operations since December, including two major casualty airlift operations in aircraft serviced by Bravo Company. **GX**

“OUR PRIMARY JOB IS TO PERFORM ALL THE SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE ON THE CH-47, UH-60 AND THE AH-64.”

>> MAJ John Kilby

SGT MATHEW JONES, 28TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

PRECISE FIRE

SNIPERS HONE SKILLS DURING ANNUAL TRAINING

By Johnathan Lemmons, Missouri National Guard Public Affairs / FORT LEONARD WOOD, MO

Spending days silently in a concealed position is difficult for the mind and body to handle. Infantry snipers often operate behind enemy lines and must be able to function without the support most Soldiers are used to in a combat zone.

The life of these elite Soldiers is rarely as glamorous as Hollywood portrays.

“During this week of field training, these snipers have only slept seven or eight hours total,” SFC Brian Gustin said, “They have to be a certain type of Soldier to be a sniper. Physical and mental toughness is key to snipers’ ability to operate and survive.”

Sniper teams from the 1/138th Infantry Regiment operate differently from the unit’s riflemen. The Soldiers are not only elite sharpshooters, they are also the eyes and ears of the battalion commander.

“Snipers are critical to the operations of this battalion,” said LTC Kevin Fujimoto, battalion commander. “They are able to identify high-value targets and act accordingly. One example is they can identify a high priority target, like a mortar system being loaded into a ‘Bongo’ truck, and neutralize it from a distance if needed. At the very least, they can get a mobility kill on the vehicle, thereby limiting the enemy’s ability to move the system around the battlefield.”

Observation is a critical skill for the sniper. Officers depend on intelligence gathered by the snipers to make informed decisions about battlefield conditions.

“I set up a position at the Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) site to observe terrain features,” one sniper said. “I moved to three different locations on the site to get a clear picture of the area. I looked at the location of the buildings, trees and the road. I counted the number of windows and any other terrain feature I could see.”

WATCHING FROM COVER A


Missouri National Guard Soldier and sniper practices observation techniques while at Fort Leonard Wood, MO.

Snipers are also expected to be expert cartographers, capable of producing detailed maps of areas they have observed without the aid of notes.

“Snipers need to be able to accurately observe and report on battlefield conditions,” said Gustin. “They need to be very proficient on how they call back intel.”

The missions of snipers and scouts overlap in the area of intelligence gathering. The two groups work together to make sure commanders have the information they need.

“We don’t focus on setting up landing zones or analyzing routes for friendly troop movement,” another sniper said. “We are concerned with identifying high value targets, size and capability of opposing forces, and their location. We provide light impact reconnaissance and target reduction.” **GX**



“SNIPERS ARE CRITICAL TO THE OPERATIONS OF THIS BATTALION. THEY ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY HIGH VALUE TARGETS AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.”

>> LTC Kevin Fujimoto

**VICTORY
MAP**



continued from page 31

MISSOURI MG Stephen Danner and the Missouri National Guard hosted Safi Mohammed Hussein, Director of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock for Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province, during his visit to Missouri this week. Safi has worked closely with the Missouri National Guard's Agribusiness Development Teams, which have been in Nangarhar Province since late 2007. He visited the state at the invitation of Sen. Kit Bond of Missouri, who has been instrumental in developing and supporting the program from its inception.

VIRGINIA The All Guard Service Rifle Team won first place as High National Guard or Reserve Team and second overall in the Inter-Service Rifle Team Championship Match at the 48th annual Inter-Service Rifle Championships held July 21–28. More than 145 shooters from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Reserve and National Guard competed in the rifle championships. The All Guard Team was captained by SFC William Cary of the Nebraska Army National Guard, and Master Sgt. Gary Diefenderfer of the West Virginia Air National Guard, and coached by CWO Malcolm Hayes of the Alabama Army National Guard and Cpt. Jenkins of the West Virginia Air National Guard. The shooters were CWO Rick Tanner of the Texas Army National Guard, SSGs Charles Spiker of the Oregon Army National Guard, Richard Zolnowsky of the South Dakota Army National Guard, Tech. Sgt. Daniel Rodriguez of the Arizona Air National Guard, SGTs John Coggs of the Connecticut Army National Guard and Christopher Green of the Texas Army National Guard, SSGs Leigh Jenks III of the Virginia Air National Guard and Stuart Mackey of the Utah Air National Guard, SPCs Jeffrey Mendyka of the Connecticut Army National Guard and Cody Shields of the Ohio Army National Guard.

Obama, Gates Pledge Resolve

By John Kruzel | WASHINGTON, DC



I PLEDGE President Obama and Secretary Gates pledge American resolve during 9/11 remembrance ceremony at the Pentagon.

two towers were turned to ashes and dust, in a quiet field where a plane fell from the sky, and here where a single stone of this building is still blackened by the fires.”

The president called on Americans to renew their resolve against those who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks and who continue to plot against the U.S.

“In defense of our nation, we will never waiver,” he said. “In pursuit of al-Qaida and its extremist allies,

► PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA reflected on those who perished on 9/11, and said the anniversary is an opportunity to renew American resolve against those who perpetrated the attacks.

Obama was joined by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a 9/11 remembrance ceremony and wreath-laying at the Pentagon.

“We remember with reverence the lives we lost. We read their names. We press their photos to our hearts,” Obama said. “And on this day that marks their death, we recall the beauty and meaning of their lives, men and women and children of every color and every creed, from across our nation and from more than a hundred others.”

The crowd gathered at the 2-acre Pentagon Memorial was composed of families of the 184 victims killed when hijackers barreled American Airlines Flight 77 into the façade of the U.S. military’s top headquarters. In total, nearly 3,000 died in coordinated attacks at the Pentagon, in New York and aboard the hijacked United Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania.

“Eight Septembers have come and gone. Nearly 3,000 days have passed—almost one for each of those taken from us,” Obama said. “But no turning of the seasons can diminish the pain and the loss of that day; no passage of time and no dark skies can ever dull the meaning of this moment.

“So on this solemn day, at this sacred hour, once more we pause, once more we pray, as a nation and as a people—in city streets where our

we will never falter. Let us renew our commitment to all those who serve in our defense—our courageous men and women in uniform and their families, and all those who protect us here at home. Mindful that the work of protecting America is never finished, we will do everything in our power to keep America safe.”

The defense secretary said the anniversary is a time to honor the deceased and to speak to the survivors and loved ones whose lives are irrevocably changed on 9/11.

“Words are inadequate to remove the pain of that loss. In the lives of these patriots, we can find some solace,” Gates said. “Because they lived, and because of the great pinnacle of their sacrifice and because of the sacrifice of thousands more since that day, we remain a strong and free nation.”

Gates noted that the men and women killed in the attack on the Pentagon will continue to be honored by participants in the memorial’s docent program, which officially launched in September. The goal of program organizer Lisa Dolan, whose husband, Navy Capt. Robert E. Dolan, died in the attack, is to personalize the memorial for visitors so they can better understand the human impact of the 9/11 attacks.

Volunteer speakers, or docents, from the Pentagon—military members, civilian employees and contractors—will share firsthand accounts of the attacks at the memorial.

“She and other 9/11 family members have added something poignant and profound to this program,” Gates said of Dolan and the other volunteers. **CX**

COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE



SUPPORT FROM THE TOP
President Barack Obama pledges America's support to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Renews Commitment to Troops

By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service | WASHINGTON, DC

President Barack Obama recently saluted the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill during a ceremony at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.

Signed into law on June 20, 2008, the new GI Bill is a Department of Veteran Affairs-sponsored program that provides the most comprehensive educational benefit package for Veterans since the original GI Bill—the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944—was authorized toward the end of WWII.

Today’s new GI Bill, Obama said, was implemented “to renew our commitment to ensure that the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America get the opportunities that they have earned.”

Obama observed that his grandfather, who served under GEN George S. Patton during WWII, was a beneficiary of the original 1944–1956 GI Bill, which helped to produce a strong post-war economy, as well as the largest middle class in U.S. history. “By 1947,” Obama noted, “half of all Americans in college were military Veterans.

“The Post-9/11 GI Bill is just as important as the original,” Obama said, “as it also recognizes service members for their wartime service and represents an investment in our own country.”

Obama said the new program will provide today’s Veterans “... the skills and training they need to fill the jobs of tomorrow.

“EDUCATION IS THE CURRENCY THAT CAN PURCHASE SUCCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY.”

>> President Barack Obama

“Education is the currency that can purchase success in the 21st century,” he said, “and this is the opportunity that our troops have earned.”

With the Post-9/11 GI Bill, qualified Active Duty and Selected Reserve service members who

have served after Sept. 10, 2001, are eligible for 36 months of state-school educational benefits—the equivalent of four nine-month academic years. Benefits include tuition and fees that are paid directly to the school, a monthly living allowance paid to the participant, and a books and supplies stipend paid to the individual.

As of Aug. 1, qualified career service members have the option to transfer benefits to their spouses or children. Most service members who have at least six years of military service, are in the Armed Forces on or after Aug. 1, and agree to serve an additional four years qualify to transfer their benefits.

“We are including the family members who have sacrificed so much by allowing the transfer of unused benefits to family members,” Obama said. “And we are including those who pay the ultimate price by making this benefit available to the children of those who lost their life in service to their country.”

VETERANS AFFAIRS CARES

Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, who also spoke at the ceremony, exhorted Post-9/11 GI Bill participants to “... make it count; make it count for all of us. Make it count for our country.”

Shinseki observed that more than 1,100 private educational institutions have elected to participate in the supplemental Yellow Ribbon Program that permits eligible service members and Veterans to attend private colleges and universities whose costs exceed the highest in-state rates at public undergraduate institutions.

Under the Yellow Ribbon Program, the VA “... will match whatever is contributed by those private colleges and universities, up to 50 percent of those total costs,” Shinseki said. “We are grateful that so many schools have joined this effort, and we thank them for their support of our Veterans.”

Former Marine Staff Sgt. James Miller, an OIF Veteran who introduced Obama at the ceremony is taking Shinseki’s advice. Miller has enrolled as a full-time student at George Mason University under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. He is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in business communications.

“Thanks to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the young Veterans of the wars in the Middle East are united here,” Miller said. “We have come to gain new skills and to learn new subjects. We are here to pursue educational goals that will prepare us for success in our professional careers.” **GX**

Public Affairs, Public Performances

INDIANA SOLDIER PERFORMS FOR TROOPS

Story and photos by T.D. Jackson | CAMP ATTERBURY, IN

When MAJ Lisa Kopczynski gets ready for work, it only takes her a second to decide what to wear. She slides on her Army Combat Uniform, laces up her boots, and it's showtime.

In her house, however, "showtime" might mean something different than it does in other military homes. Because this Soldier is also a singer who can carry a tune just as well as she can a 40-pound rucksack.

"I have the best of both worlds," said Kopczynski, Camp Atterbury public affairs officer and lead singer of local rock group Bandwagon. The band performs throughout Indianapolis and neighboring communities. "That is probably the best way to describe it. I have a job in public affairs that I love doing; and in the band, it's the same thing because I have such a passion for singing."

Kopczynski, a Soldier with the Indiana Army National Guard, has been rocking and rolling almost nonstop since competing last year in Operation Rising Star, a military singing competition.

"It was really awesome from start to finish," Kopczynski said. "I was hoping to place in the top three or four. But when they gave me the big ol' check for \$500, I said, 'That'll do!'"

Kopczynski competed in Rising Star during her deployment to Iraq from 2007 to 2008 with Indiana's 76th Infantry Brigade. Toward the end of her tour, she flew to Fort Belvoir, VA, for the semifinals.

"The production of the show was really remarkable, as was meeting the other 11 contestants," Kopczynski said. "We weren't out to do anything but have a good time. It was an awesome way to cap off my deployment."

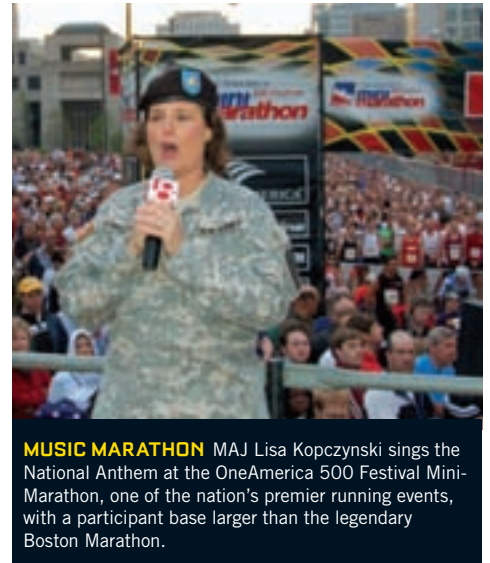
Since competing, Kopczynski has become somewhat of a star herself. From the world-renowned 500 Festival Mini-Marathon to the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing," the Indianapolis 500, Kopczynski has sung the National Anthem in 12 public appearances since 2008.

"Singing the National Anthem at any event is a great, great honor," Kopczynski said. "Performing it for anyone who understands what that song means to this country ... is a privilege."

Kopczynski said out of the 130-plus songs that she has performed, the National Anthem is the one she sings most.

"PERFORMING IT FOR ANYONE WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT [THE NATIONAL ANTHEM] MEANS TO THIS COUNTRY ... IS A PRIVILEGE."

>> MAJ Lisa Kopczynski, Indiana Army National Guard



MUSIC MARATHON MAJ Lisa Kopczynski sings the National Anthem at the OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini-Marathon, one of the nation's premier running events, with a participant base larger than the legendary Boston Marathon.

"People always remember [when I sing] the National Anthem," she said. "I know how important that song is to the state of Indiana and across the nation. It's one of my favorite songs to sing."

In fact, Kopczynski has gotten so many requests to sing the anthem, she decided to spread the wealth. With the help of Camp Atterbury leadership, Kopczynski and others re-formed the Camp Atterbury Singer's Bureau, a group of singers who will take on community requests to perform at local functions.

"I didn't want to be selfish," Kopczynski said. "I know there are others who would want the same opportunities that I've gotten. I want to give everyone the same chances to perform that I've had."

In addition to her singer's cap and her black Army beret, Kopczynski wears many other hats, including wife and mother of two. Her husband, Mike, and their daughters, Taylor and Kayla, have been instrumental in giving her the support she needs to keep living out her dreams.

"I have achieved more than I ever thought I would with my singing—especially over these last few years, with the [total] support of the Indiana National Guard," Kopczynski said. "My leadership's confidence in me has pushed me to the forefront and onto some of the largest stages—ones I could only ever dream possible."

"Most important, though, in everything I've done, my family has been there," she continued. "Without their support, I don't think I'd be where I am. I'm very happy where I am right now." **CX**



MAJOR EVENT MAJ Lisa Kopczynski, an Indiana National Guard Soldier at Camp Atterbury, sings the National Anthem at the largest single-day sporting event in the world: The Indy 500.

**PATRIOT
SPOTLIGHT**



CELLULAR SMILES Brittany and Robbie Bergquist, founders of Cell Phones for Soldiers, display hundreds of donated phones they received.

**TO VOLUNTEER, DONATE
OR LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
PROGRAM, VISIT
CellPhonesForSoldiers.com.**

“It’s not only great to receive the resources that you and your Soldiers need to increase morale, but it’s also great to be reminded that people back home do support you,” said CPT Quentin Carmichael III, a platoon trainer with the 101st Regional Training Institute.

One defining moment for both Brittany and Robbie happened at a Minnesota deployment ceremony in 2005. The siblings were handing out phone cards to Soldiers as they boarded buses. They both noticed a little girl crying outside the bus, looking at her father inside. The dad was crying, too, and he pressed his hand against

the window to connect with her one last time before leaving.

“I will never forget that feeling of realizing how lucky I was that I could get in the car with my family and drive home,” Robbie said. “I knew that these brave troops were going to keep us safe, but also how sad it was that their families would not be seeing them for months. I t was then that I really knew that we had to continue to help no matter what—because of the sacrifices that military members make every day.”

Though Brittany’s starting her freshman year of college and Robbie’s in his senior year of high school, the brother-sister duo doesn’t plan to stop anytime soon.

“I want to bring the Cell Phones for Soldiers recycling program to campuses throughout the country,” Brittany said. “As long as there are troops serving our country, Cell Phones for Soldiers will be there to help them stay in touch with their loved ones.” **GX**

**“IT’S ALSO
GREAT TO BE
REMINDED
THAT PEOPLE
BACK HOME DO
SUPPORT YOU.”**

>> CPT Quentin Carmichael III

Cell Phones for Soldiers

By Camille Breland

▶ WHAT STARTED AROUND A KITCHEN TABLE with \$21 from a piggy bank has now swelled to more than \$3 million, 500,000 phone cards and countless happy military families.

Brittany Bergquist and her brother Ronnie in Norwell, MA, founded Cell Phones for Soldiers in 2004, at the ages of just 13 and 12 respectively, after seeing a story on the news about a Soldier who had racked up a \$7,000 phone bill in Iraq—and couldn’t pay.

“My immediate question to my parents was, ‘Why should he be worried about paying his phone bill when he should just be worried about keeping himself safe?’” Brittany, now 18, shared.

And instead of letting the thought slip away, she acted on it. She took the small amount of money she and her brother had gathered to their local bank to open a savings account. The bank was so impressed and touched by their actions, it matched the deposit. The charity was born.

HOW IT WORKS

Cell Phones for Soldiers collects old, retired cell phones, recycles them for cash (about \$5 each) and uses the profits to buy phone cards.

“We’ve always had respect for military members,” Ronnie Bergquist explained. “Our grandfather was a Marine in the Korean War, and we grew up with stories about him and gained a

real appreciation for our Veterans. I think it’s the most noble thing a person can do.”

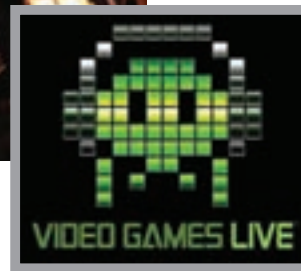
In fact, their cousin, a captain in the Massachusetts Army National Guard, handed out some of the first cards to troops when he was deployed for a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.



LONG DISTANCE CONNECTION Brittany and Robbie Bergquist of Norwell, MA, founded the charity Cell Phones for Soldiers to give deployed troops calling cards.

COURTESY OF BRITTANY AND ROBBIE BERGQUIST

MAN IN CHARGE Jack Wall, co-creator of Video Games Live, leads an orchestral piece to begin the event.



Video Games Live

NOT JUST FOR GAMERS ANYMORE

By SPC James Gaspar

When most people think about video games, they're not thinking about the background music. But the music is a significant part of the entertainment, and recently, people have started listening to the music on its own.

I had the fortunate experience of attending Video Games Live (VGL), a concert series featuring a symphony orchestra playing video-game music, and large screens displaying popular game images. The music is from games such as "Halo," "Metal Gear Solid," "Super Mario Brothers," "World of Warcraft" and "Guitar Hero," to name only a few. The show was critically acclaimed by the *Los Angeles Times*, and the associated CD, *Video Games Live*, rose to No. 10 on the Billboard chart.

This is not your dad's "bleeps and bloops" says Tommy Tallarico, co-creator of the series, which boasts an 80-piece orchestra, more than 50 choir members, rock guitars, special effects and a light show that would make Aerosmith proud.

The event includes numerous consoles featuring well-known games such as "Centipede"

and "Guitar Hero." Contests are held, the biggest being the "Guitar Hero" competition.

The music experience begins with an orchestral piece conducted by Jack Wall, co-creator of VGL. The symphony plays something that sounds like bleeps from the old video game "Pong." The music quickly transitions into a classical piece chronicling a short history of the most recognizable games.

After this opening, a surprise phone call from Solid Snake (from "Metal Gear Solid") introduces Tallarico, who hosts the show for the remainder of the evening.

I got to sit down with Tallarico and Wall and talk to them about everything from video games and music, to how supportive and proud they are of our troops.

SPC Gaspar: How did you get into playing video-game music?

Tallarico: My two greatest loves growing up were music and video games. I never thought I would be a video-game composer because that job didn't exist in the '70s and '80s.

Jack Wall: In 1993, I was a recording engineer in New York City. I met a woman who was a software designer, recording music for Capitol Records. I was interested in what she was doing

with software. At the time, I was playing this game "Myst" and I thought, "Wow—there's a real future in music for video games."

I married that girl, and she had connections in the software industry. So a few years later, I found myself conducting my first orchestral piece for "Myst 3." That was what pushed my career.

Gaspar: How did VGL come about?

Tallarico: We created VGL because I wanted to show the world how culturally significant and artistic video games have become. And it was important to me to create a show not just for gamers but for casual people as well—people who had never played a video game.

That's why we designed it the way we did—with synchronized lighting, massive video screens, special effects and a stage show production with interactive elements. I like to explain VGL as having all the power and emotion of an orchestra, the energy of a rock concert, cutting-edge visuals, technology and the fun that video games provide.

Gaspar: What is your favorite piece of video game music that you've created?

Tallarico: My favorite piece was for "Advent Rising," because I got a chance to use a 100-piece orchestra and a 100-piece choir, and I wrote something like an Italian opera.

Wall: "Splinter Cell." I worked on the second game called "Pandora Tomorrow." It was centered around taking out terrorists. I did all the cinematic music.

There's also a piece from "Myst 4," back in 2004. I was creating an Eastern European feel to the score, and I found this Polish folk band that I loved. I wrote a song for the band, flew to Poland, and we recorded it in a day.

Gaspar: Jack, you're doing a piece in the show with Blizzard and the "World of Warcraft." What is it like to conduct that piece of music?

Wall: It's some of the most challenging music I've ever conducted. I really like it because it's so unbelievably bombastic and intense. It denotes

“I WANTED TO SHOW THE WORLD HOW CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT AND ARTISTIC VIDEO GAMES HAVE BECOME.”

>> Tommy Tallarico, co-creator of Video Games Live

a glorious feel of what goes on in the story of the “World of Warcraft,” “Starcraft” and “Diablo.”

Gaspar: You play the music of “Halo”—do you play the game, as well?

Tallarico: I play all the games in the show. I have to play through everything to know the best scenes to use. But I don’t have a lot of time to play because I’m on the road or writing music, so I only get to play for an hour at a time.

Wall: I’m still on “Halo 3.” I haven’t finished yet.

Gaspar: Was it a big challenge to play the music of “Halo”?

Wall: Not really, because we’re really good friends with the composers. They’ve been really supportive. So any time they come up with new music, they give it to us.

Gaspar: Would you ever play “Halo” against a deployed Soldier?

Tallarico: No way! They would kick my butt and embarrass me!

Gaspar: What are some your favorite games to play?

Tallarico: I like the action-adventure style of games like “Metal Gear Solid” or “Tomb Raider.” Games with great storylines. I like a lot of the simplistic control games as well. “Guitar Hero” is a great example of simple controls—any one can pick it up and figure out how to play it.

Gaspar: Speaking of “Guitar Hero,” I heard you’re related to Steven Tyler of Aerosmith.

Tallarico: That’s true! His real name is Steven Tallarico. He’s my cousin. I always idealized him when I was growing up. He’s real proud that I’m doing VGL.

Gaspar: Besides making and performing video-game music, what are some of your hobbies?

Tallarico: I love baseball. I’m a big New York Yankees fan. I like watching and playing the game.

Gaspar: You’re both very supportive of our troops, and have made that known throughout your careers. Is there any piece of music in

the show that stands out with respect to the military?

Tallarico: Oh absolutely. One of the most emotional moments in the show for us is the “Medal of Honor” music. “Medal of Honor” is a great piece of music. It takes place in World War II.

For this project, instead of showing people shooting each other, I got together with the History Channel, and we created a nonviolent video. It uses real-life images from that time period—real people and real Soldiers—and shows what they went through. The video ends showing Arlington. It’s a really touching moment.

Just before this segment, I come out on stage and have all the military members and their families stand up and be recognized, and tell everyone that they are the real heroes.

Gaspar: Do you think there will ever be a USO show for VGL?

Tallarico: I would love nothing more than to do an overseas show—who do I talk to?! I think the reality is, many of our young Soldiers grew up on video games, and they know the themes to “Mario,” “Zelda,” “Tetris” and “Halo.”

Wall: We do a lot of shows overseas, so there’s no reason why we couldn’t do one. What an honor that would be. We would do it in a heartbeat.

Gaspar: In your opinion, how are the troops doing?

Tallarico: I’m a big believer in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. I hate that so many of our Soldiers have had to sacrifice, but I think in the end, it’s a necessary evil. We have to look at the bigger scale for the good of the world.

Wall: I just want to say that the troops are my heroes and we have so much respect and appreciation for what they do. **GX**



SPC James Gaspar poses with Tommy Tallarico, co-creator of Video Games Live.

SGT Ryan Brubaker,
NCO OF THE YEAR



BLOOD, SWEAT AND



SPC Guy Mellor,
SOLDIER OF THE YEAR



NO FEAR

The Guard's Finest Fight it Out at the Best Warrior Competition ★ By Clint Wood



CLINT WOOD, SCOTT MARKEWITZ

Best Warrior Competition

There is always one moment that tells the story. Case in point: SGT Daniel Boone III, a Delaware Army National Guard Soldier, jogged down a small hill at a Fort Benning, GA, rifle range. His head was down, and he was visibly exhausted. Between his eyes, there was a fresh wound and a thin stream of blood running down his nose.

Boone had just finished the stress shoot of the 2009 Best Warrior Competition, where 12 other Soldiers from across the U.S. vied to earn the Guard's title of NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year.

The stress shoot was one of the more grueling events in this competition, which was held on the fort's Warrior Training Center (WTC). It was two days of nearly nonstop action that tested the Soldiers' physical and mental toughness.

When the red Georgia dust had settled, two Soldiers from western states had tamed the competition.

Montana's SGT Ryan Brubaker won the NCO of the Year title, and Utah's SPC Guy Mellor won Soldier of the Year. This was the second time that a Montana Soldier won NCO of the Year and a Utah Soldier won Soldier of the Year.

SSG Michael Noyce Merino of Montana won the competition last year en route to being named the Department of the Army NCO of the Year. He was the first Guard Soldier to win this title since the competition's inception in 2002.

In total, 13 Soldiers competed in the Guard competition this year.

The honors were announced at the 38th annual conference of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States in Rochester, MN, Aug. 12.

But according to CSM Victor Angry, acting Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard, all competitors were winners. "I would go into theater with anybody out here," Angry said. "These guys are committed. This is the Warrior Ethos at its finest."



"Every last one of these Soldiers is strong—I'm impressed," he continued.

SGT Brubaker, who has been deployed to Iraq twice with the 10th Mountain Division, said he was surprised by his win.

"I was relieved because I put a lot of time and effort into training, and I'm extremely proud and excited to represent my unit," SGT Brubaker, who has been in the Guard for six months, told GX.

For SPC Mellor, who has been in the Guard for four years, it was beyond incredible.

"It was just awesome," he added. "I mean, it felt right, and it just felt like I earned it."

"I would definitely say the best Soldiers are the ones out there fighting for our freedom right now," SPC Mellor shared. "But it feels really good."

SGT Brubaker rocks like Stallone

At a little after 10 a.m. on the first day of the competition, I was lying on my stomach in a sandpit. I was photographing SGT Brubaker sighting down the eyepiece of a practice claymore mine (practice mines were used during the competition).

This is the same type of mine that Sylvester Stallone fired at the "bad guys" and created a huge, almost-nuclear explosion, complete with a mushroom cloud, in the 2008 *Rambo* movie. This was just a test in the more "boring" part of the competition. Others



TOTAL RUSH SGT Daniel Boone III runs from one firing position to the next during the stress shoot event.



AND THEY'RE OFF The competitors start the 12-mile foot *march en masse*.

“THESE GUYS ARE COMMITTED. THIS IS THE WARRIOR ETHOS AT ITS FINEST.”

>> CSM Victor Angry, Acting Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard

included dismantling and assembling rifles correctly, including an M4 carbine and M240B machine gun.

Let me clarify something.

Assembling a carbine correctly is challenging enough for Soldiers at a regular drill. Imagine doing this after an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) followed by a “dip in the pool.”

And it wasn't your normal APFT. These Warriors had to crank out as many push-ups and sit-ups as they could in two minutes, and run 2 miles as fast as possible.

For me at age 46, that would mean I would have to do 42 push-ups, 53 sit-ups and run the two-mile in 15 minutes, 54 seconds.

As for the pool—well, they were in the water, but that's where the familiarity ends. It was a three-part Combat Water Survival Test.

One test was the 3-meter drop.

The competitors, dressed in their Army Combat Uniforms (ACUs), boots and tactical vests, and carrying hard rubber M-16 rifles, walked slowly to the base of the high dive.

A winter patrol cap was placed on the ends of their rifles' muzzles.

“Using their weapons, they handed their soft caps and weapons to the grader waiting at the top of the diving board,” SSG Christopher Southern, an infantry instructor, told *GX*. They crawled to the top of the diving board and secured their weapons, and the grader placed the soft caps backward over their eyes to blindfold them. He secured them with two hands by the back of their necks and waistslines.

Then the grader asked, “Are you ready?” “Roger,” came the answer. Then the grader shoved them off the end.

SPC Jeffrey Deslauriers was smiling when he told *GX* these tests brought out his “infantry side.” For the last year and a half, Deslauriers, who is mountaineer- and javelin-qualified and a skydiver, was working in the administrative field on Active Duty Operational Support orders.

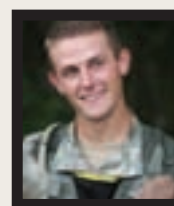
“It felt really good for me to come home again,” he said. “I'm one of those weird guys who really loves [pain].”

Warriors



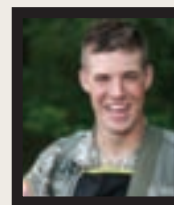
SGT Ryan Brubaker, Montana

MOS: 11B ★ **Time in Guard:** Six months ★ **Time in Active Duty Army and MOS:** Four years; 11B ★ **Civilian occupation:** College student majoring in forestry ★ **Hero:** My father, because he taught me so much in life and has always been there. ★ **Personal interests:** Volunteer high school wrestling coach, volunteer Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks bowhunter education instructor, spending time with family in the outdoors. ★ **Leadership motto:** Lead by example. Because when your Soldiers see you leading by example, they understand what right looks like. They understand what the standard is.



SPC Guy Mellor, Utah

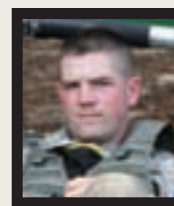
MOS: 13B ★ **Time in Guard:** Four years ★ **Civilian occupation:** College student ★ **In his iPod:** Country music ★ **Hero:** His father, who recently retired as a master sergeant in the Utah Army National Guard after 23 years of service. ★ **Personal interests:** Sports, outdoor activities, reading books and expanding his knowledge in every way.



SPC Michael Heath, West Virginia

MOS: 31B ★ **Time in Guard:** Two years ★ **Civilian occupation:** College student ★ **Hero:** My mother, because she has helped me through a lot of rough times. ★ **First**

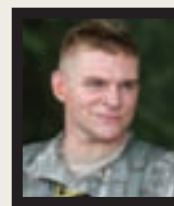
weapon fired: .22 cal. rifle ★ **Long-term goal:** Army psychotherapist.



SPC Jeffrey Deslauriers, Vermont

MOS: 11B ★ **Time in Guard:** 4.5 years ★ **Civilian occupation:** College student ★ **Leadership trait**

Resilience, because I adapt quickly to the ever-changing demands of a mission without becoming discouraged. ★ **Long-term goal:** Army translator.



SPC John Wiernasz, Wisconsin

MOS: 21B ★ **Time in Guard:** Two years ★ **Civilian occupation:** Commercial moving ★ **Short-term goal:** Score a 300 on APFT ★ **Long-term goal:** Become an officer and attend Air Assault and Airborne Schools.

continued on page 44



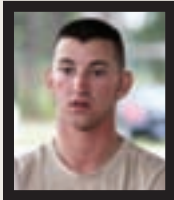
Warriors



SPC Adam Walsvik,
North Dakota

MOS: 21W ★ **Time in Guard:** 3.5 years ★ **Days spent on 2009 North Dakota Flood State Active Duty:** 28 days in Wahpeton, Lemoore and Jamestown ★ **Civilian occu-**

pation: Department of Transportation engineering technician ★ **First time he fired a weapon:** Basic Training.



SPC Corey Donaldson,
Louisiana

MOS: 21B ★ **Time in Guard:** One year ★ **What is the most challenging aspect of your MOS?** Handling explosives. There are no oops with those. ★ **Military weapons fred:**

Mark-19 Grenade Launcher, .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a boat, Squad Automatic Weapon. ★ **Long-term goal:** To advance through the ranks and retire as a sergeant major.



SSG Christopher Southern,
Arkansas

MOS: 11B ★ **Time in Guard:** Almost 11 years. ★ **Occupation:** Infantry instructor for Arkansas National Guard Regional Training Institute

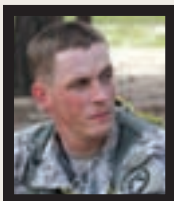
Hero: Anyone engaged in direct enemy contact—past, present or future. Because they are the ones who get things accomplished. ★ **First weapon fred (non-military):** .30.06 rifle ★ **Leadership trait:** Competence. I strive to know all aspects of my chosen profession.



SGT Daniel Boone III,
Delaware

MOS: 21N ★ **Time in Guard:** Nine years. ★ **Civilian occupation:** College student ★ **Personal interests:** Coaches football, wrestling and baseball. ★ **Long-term goal:**

Retire as a command chief warrant officer.



SSG Joseph Schools,
Maine

MOS: 31B ★ **Time in Guard:** Two years ★ **Time in Active Army and MOS:** Seven years; 21W ★ **Occupation:** Operations NCO and Detachment Readiness NCO

★ **Hero:** My father, because of the adversity he has faced. ★ **What's in his iPod:** ArmyStudyGuide.com.

continued on page 45



Could it be a video game?

A mystery event loomed in the schedule. No one knew what it was, but everyone was guessing.

I was really interested in this mystery event because this was something different from last year's competition. Come to find out, there were some other adjustments—including more obstacles and more urban challenges.

The mystery event came moments after the competitors sighted-in (zeroed) their carbines equipped with optical scopes (CCOs) at a range.

I noticed SPC Corey Donaldson of Louisiana looking downrange after firing. His chin was resting on his clasped hands. He looked lost in thought.

Kind of different for this Soldier who served a year as a watercraft operator off the shores of Kuwait. Firing weapons is nothing new to him. He has fired three weapons off the bow of a boat—a .50 caliber machine gun, a Mark-19 grenade launcher and a Squad Automatic Weapon. After the sighting-in session, SPC Donaldson and fellow competitors stood in a shady depression near the range awaiting their fate. As they fastened the chinstraps of their helmets and lifted their

35-pound rucksacks onto their backs, the grader broke the news and read off the standards.

Their rucksacks weren't filled with rocks or something silly like that. Items in them included an extra set of ACUs, three tan T-shirts, one shovel (trenching tool) with case, and one pair of running shoes.

It was a ruck run. The standards were that they had to wear their helmets and eye protection, and carry their carbines in both hands at all times—no slings were allowed.

One competitor asked the grader how far they had to go. "That is an unknown distance," the grader shot back immediately.

It turned out to be more than 2 miles, surprising SPC Mellor, who left the starting point in a sprint.

"The course kept going," Mellor said. "It kind of shocked me. I thought, 'Whoa, how are we going to do this?'"

SPC John Wiernasz, a former high school football player and discus thrower, said he wasn't expecting it to be longer than three miles, considering the upcoming road march.

Quick Q & A:

CSM Victor Angry,
Acting Command
Sergeant Major of the
Army National Guard

GX: If you'd done this competition, what would your best event have been?

VA: The road march. Especially with the night they had—full moon, 12 miles, perfect weather. Although I'm sure I would have come out like the majority of them—with busted-up feet!

SKED Stretcher



THIS HARD PLASTIC STRETCHER IS ABOUT 6 FEET LONG WITH FOUR WEB STRAPS SEVERAL INCHES APART. THE CASUALTY IS PLACED ON THE STRETCHER. EACH STRAP IS TIGHTENED SO THE STRETCHER'S SIDES FORM AROUND THE CASUALTY'S BODY.



GOING UP SSG Christopher Southern scales the ladder of the Inverted Rope Descent.

"But it was still a killer," noted the 25-year-old Wiernasz, who could still pass as a defensive lineman.

SPC Michael Heath, a military policeman from West Virginia, had proof of the event's intensity. "I had blisters the size of pancakes on the backs of my heels," he described.

Stressed out

After the ruck run, it was time for the stress shoot. In this timed event, the competitors fired at pop-up targets from varying distances and three different positions—standing,

I don't know if you would call watching your rifle's front sight post making crazy figure eights fun, though.

For SGT Brubaker, any time he is able to fire his weapon under stress like this, it's very important to him. This was his favorite event.

"I take it very personally based on our current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan," he explained. "Whenever I get the opportunity to train on that, I take full advantage of it."

Nice evening for a walk

As the competitors prepared for a 12-mile ruck march, they received a gift.

Sort of.

Waiting in an open shelter at one of the ranges, the grader told the exhausted Soldiers they wouldn't have to wear any head gear, including their Kevlar helmets or patrol caps, or their ACU blouses during the march. "It's like Christmas—but a lot hotter," joked the grader.

It was exactly 8 p.m. I didn't think the humidity was that bad, but then I remembered I wasn't wearing ACU trousers and combat boots and carrying 35 pounds on my back. The march began.

Looking at my photographs and the grimaces on some of the Warriors' faces, I would say even the early miles of the march were challenging.

SFC Gregory Swanson, SPC Mellor, SSG Dennis Boorman and SGT Brubaker launched into a sprint to pace the group. Boorman, one of the older and shorter competitors, served

"I HAD BLISTERS THE SIZE OF PANCAKES ON THE BACKS OF MY HEELS."

>> SPC Michael Heath

kneeling and lying on their stomachs (from the prone). They ran from position to position.

Some had just run the entire 2 miles-plus ruck run. By the time SGT James Bowles reached a table where he dropped his rucksack and put on Interceptor Body Armor, he looked as if he had just stepped out of a gas chamber. He has never shot less than a 38 on the rifle qualification range. Forty hits is the maximum and guarantees a Soldier the coveted Expert Badge, but scores of 37 and above are deemed expert.

Despite having to shoot at the targets with racing hearts and severely aching feet, SPC Heath said he thought the event was fun.

as a ruck commander during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Two miles down the road, the 32-year-old Swanson, Mellor and Brubaker were side-by-side and still jogging.

Brubaker said he and Mellor walked together for a while.

"After mile 10, he just took off," Brubaker laughed. "He definitely had a better stride than I had. I couldn't keep up with him.

"I told him, 'Hey, this is your thing. Go for it.'"

And Mellor did. He finished first in 2:40:36, followed by Brubaker, 2:46:35 and Swanson, 2:50:37.

Warriors



SGT James Bowles, Georgia

MOS: 11B ★ **Time in Guard:** Three years ★ **Time in active Army and MOS:** Four years; 11B ★ **Civilian occupation:** Elevator technician. ★ **What it was like firing the AT-4:**

It was loud and violent. **In his CD player:** Dropkick Murphy's "The Warrior's Code" ★ **Leadership trait:** Integrity. I feel like I always strive to do the right thing.



SFC Gregory Swanson, Indiana

MOS: 31E ★ **Time in Guard:** More than 14 years ★ **Civilian occupation:** Indiana Conservation officer ★ **On firing an M-16 rifle for the first time:** I was amazed by the

accuracy of the open sights. ★ **In his CD player:** Country music ★ **Leadership trait:** Set the example.



SSG Dennis Boorman, Utah

Occupation: Warrior Leader Course instructor ★ **Personal interests:** Family, mixed martial arts and any outdoor activities with his family. ★ **Long-term goal:**

Become a command sergeant major and retire in good health.



SPC Mellor said he started his first weeks of training two months before the competition, with two 5-mile ruck marches complete with a rubber duck and 35-pound rucksack. The next week, he beefed up the distance to 8 miles, and then worked his way up to 12 miles. Once he reached the 12-mile plateau, he decreased the distance. Two weeks before the competition, he did a 5-mile march.

SGT Brubaker ran most of the course. His technique was walking up the hills and then running down them. On the straight stretches, he would do a combination of running and walking.

"I tried to tell myself, 'OK, it's time to run it,' even if I was hurting or cramping," he explained. "I had to keep going."

SGT Brubaker trained for the event in the Montana mountains, at 5,000 to 6,000 feet. Like the mountain roads that seem to go forever, so did this day. By the time they limped across the march's finish line, the competitors had been up for 20 hours.

Best Warrior Competition

And it wasn't over yet. The competitors participated in several additional Warrior tasks and drills after the march, including administering an IV, and donning and clearing a protective mask. It is hard enough finding a fellow Soldier's vein in his arm during the day. Can you imagine doing this at night?

SGT Bowles had an advantage on this task, though. He administered eight IVs while in Afghanistan.

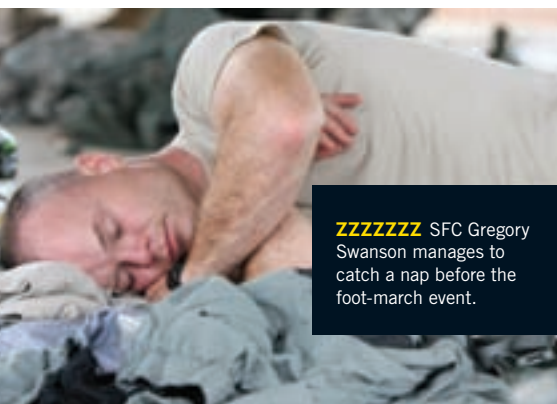
After nabbing at most two hours of sleep, the competitors hit the land navigation course at zero-dark-30. Here, they had to find five of six points in five hours.

"Grenade!"

Like a fool or just a good reporter (I would like to think the latter), I decided to run with the competitors in an "engaging" test the next morning at the McKenna Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site. Don't get me wrong, there is no way I could possibly feel the same way they did. Before I did this event, I couldn't help but notice many of the weary competitors were unshaven, and their boots and trousers were wet and covered with mud.

SGT Boone was sporting a quite prominent 5 o'clock shadow as he leaned up against one of the buildings almost in a trance.

The event had us sprinting from one firing position to the next over the course of about 150 meters. Stopping to photograph the Soldiers throwing dummy hand grenades probably didn't help my performance—I was spent. The Soldiers were prepared in their boots, ACUs, helmets and tactical vests with magazine pouches and two full quart canteens hanging from both their sides—I was in jeans, a T-shirt and street shoes.



ZZZZZZ SFC Gregory Swanson manages to catch a nap before the foot-march event.

FOCUS A Gatorade Focus drink is the perfect foreground for SSG Joseph Schools as he focuses on the next event.

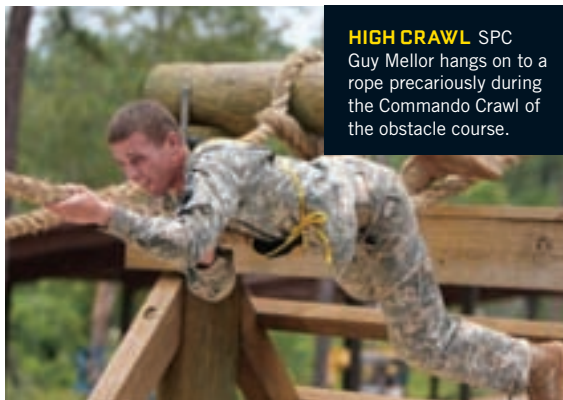
This wasn't their first event during this test. They started the test transporting a "casualty" to a casualty collection point (CCP). This casualty was dressed in ACUs and IBA with ballistic plates that weighed about 85 pounds.

I picked the dummy up by the IBA's neck and, sure enough, it was heavy—basically a life-size, deadweight doll.

The test started with the competitors carrying the dummy over their shoulders and down a flight of stairs. Once the Soldiers reached the dirt, they had to remove a rolled up SKED stretcher from its vinyl case (see sidebar on p. 44).

This stretcher reminded me of the plastic toboggans you can buy in stores if you live in states with snowy winters. Like these, this stretcher rolled up on its own. The competitors had to pin it down to the ground using both hands and, at the same time, slide the dummy onto it.

Once the dummy was secured on the stretcher, the Soldier could either place his hand behind his back and grab the tow-rope, or wrap the rope around his waist to drag the "casualty" to the CCP. Soldiers were scored on proper technique and time—and only some of them had enough strength left to sprint. But the CCP was just a stopping point in the



HIGH CRAWL SPC Guy Mellor hangs on to a rope precariously during the Commando Crawl of the obstacle course.



test. Once these Warriors reached it, they were handed M4 carbines. They jammed magazines loaded with 9mm paintball rounds into them and ran down a muddy hill. In front of them stood two wooden roofless structures, a few feet apart.

The structures had several connected rooms in a row. The Soldiers had to enter each room, sprint to a small platform and engage targets from there.

They had a split-second to determine if these targets were "bad guys" or "good guys." How about this for training? If they go down-range, they may have to make that decision. Is the person in my scope an insurgent or civilian?

The competitors were scored on successful "bad-guy" or hostile target hits, and received deductions for misses and "good-guy" target hits. Next up was the WTC's Obstacle Course.

Hanging by a rope

In the first obstacle, the Soldiers had to wrap their legs around a rope and slide down it in the Inverted Rope Descent.

But getting to the rope would challenge anyone. The competitors had to scale a wooden ladder where the rungs got farther apart as they went up. Once they reached the top, they walked on a platform, sat on the edge and began their descents—not wearing those popular Mechanix gloves that you see Soldiers wearing all the time in photographs. They were bare-handed, and the rope was thick.

I remember watching the lean SPC Donaldson scale this ladder like a monkey.

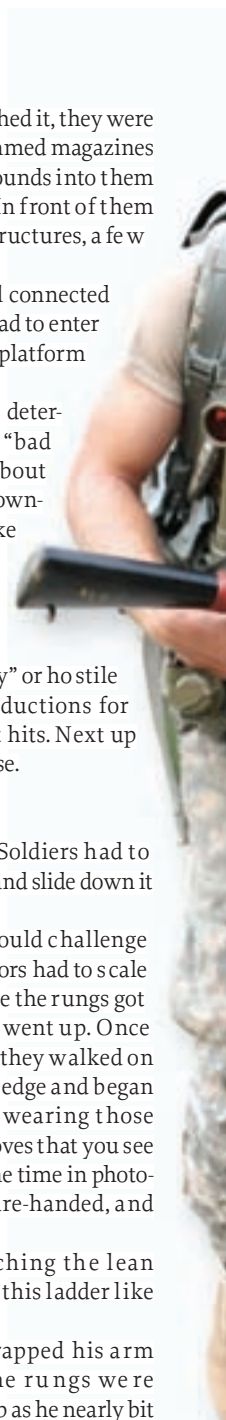
SSG Southern wrapped his arm around the pole the rungs were attached to, pulling himself up as he nearly bit his tongue during his exertion.

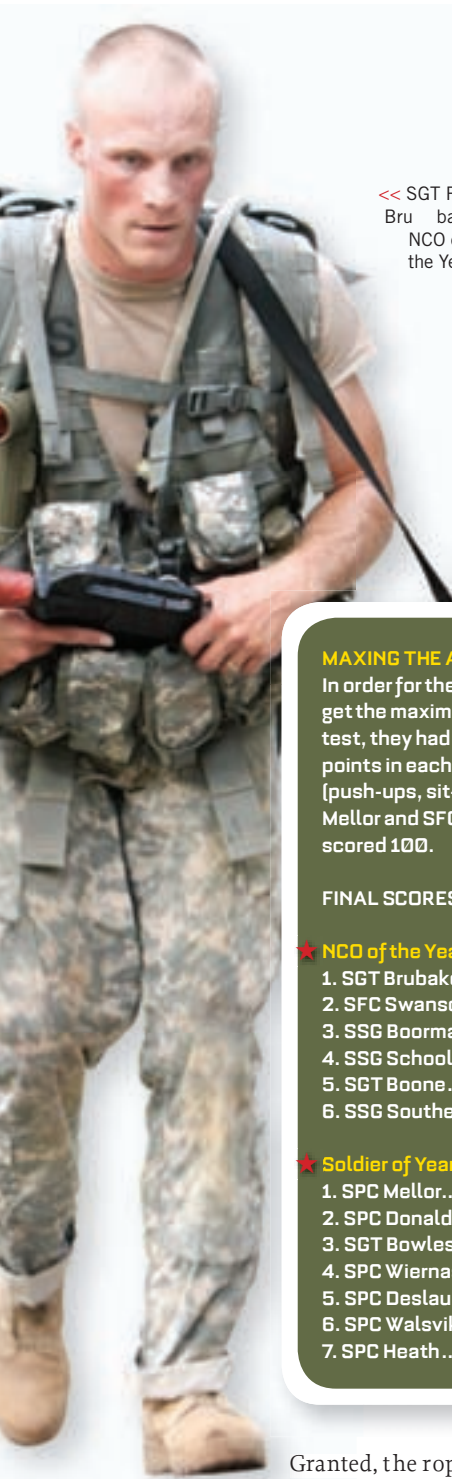
SSG Joseph Schools said this obstacle was the "scariest" for him.

"By the time you get to the top, you're wondering how you're going to get to the next rung," said the military police officer and combat Veteran.

After this obstacle, the Soldiers had to overcome 11 more, jogging to each one. They included tall monkey bars and the Commando Crawl.

The Commando Crawl required the competitors to descend a rope headfirst.





<< SGT Ryan Brubaker, NCO of the Year

IN CONTROL SFC Gregory Swanson, left, uses an arm bar move to control SSG Dennis Boorman during the Combatives competition.



MAXING THE APFT

In order for the competitors to get the maximum points in this test, they had to score 100 points in each of these events (push-ups, sit-ups, run). SPC Mellor and SFC Swanson each scored 100.

FINAL SCORES

★ **NCO of the Year**

- 1. SGT Brubaker 1,635
- 2. SFC Swanson..... 1,518
- 3. SSG Boorman..... 1,281
- 4. SSG Schools1,279
- 5. SGT Boone.....1,230
- 6. SSG Southern 935

★ **Soldier of Year**

- 1. SPC Mellor.....1,678
- 2. SPC Donaldson 1,512
- 3. SGT Bowles1,254
- 4. SPC Wiernasz1,226
- 5. SPC Deslauriers..... 1,005
- 6. SPC Walsvik..... 996
- 7. SPC Heath.....887

Choking to submission

The finale was Combatives. Or the military’s version of Ultimate Fighting Championships minus a cage, punching and blood.

The competitors fought Soldier against Soldier, NCO against NCO, in a double elimination tournament. Each bout lasted three minutes. Most fought in four bouts.

The competitors, wearing tennis shoes for the first time in more than 24 hours, limped into the tournament area. Two mats were placed on a concrete slab behind one of the Warrior Training Center buildings.

A match started with both competitors on their feet, similar to a high school wrestling match. The object was to take down the other Soldier and gain control using submission holds. But instead of pinning their opponents, they wanted to

basically “hurt” them and cause them to tap their body to tell them to stop (a tap-out).

In one of the funnier moments of the competition, SSG Boorman was paired against SFC Swanson. SSG Boorman was several inches shorter than SFC Swanson and quipped it was “David vs. Goliath” as they went toe-to-toe in the center of the mat.

In the Swanson vs. Southern bout, SFC Swanson yanked SSG Southern down to the mat in a few seconds by just pulling both of his arms. Southern failed several times in

attempting to get behind Swanson. Finally, Swanson, who had his head in Southern’s armpit pushing him down to the mat, got out of that hold and flipped his body to Southern’s side. Swanson applied a submission hold, and game over.

SPC Mellor kicked butt in this event. It helped that he had been a high school wrestler, placing third in the Utah High School state wrestling tournament his senior year.

SFC Swanson, who won the NCO class, was impressed with everyone’s skill. He is a defensive tactics instructor for Indiana.

All walks of life

When the road to the WTC was in my rearview mirror, I couldn’t help but think that I had just photographed and interviewed some of the most impressive Soldiers in the Guard.

These are Citizen-Soldiers, not full-time Soldiers who do not hing but t rain for a living. When not in uniform or overseas, SGT Bowles is an elevator technician. SGT Brubaker is a student majoring in forestry at the University of Montana. SPC Mellor is majoring in civil engineering at Utah Valley University. SPC Donaldson is employed in the industrial carpentry and surveying field. SSG Boorman, a father of four, is pursuing a bachelor’s degree. But when the 13 competitors drove down the road to the WTC and laced up their combat boots, they were the best of the best in the Army National Guard. Modern-day gladiators and Warriors.

Impressive. **GX**

To watch videos of the NCO of the Year and Soldier of the Year competitions, go to [YouTube.com/nationalguard](https://www.youtube.com/nationalguard).

Granted, the rope was just a few feet off the sand, but it still was challenging because it sagged from the Soldiers’ weight.

It had to have killed their hands. I have a photo of SPC Mellor doing this, and pieces of the rope are visible in the air.

SPC Wiernasz admitted that the obstacle course overwhelmed him.

“It just kicked my butt,” he commented. “I didn’t catch my breath for probably about 20 minutes.”

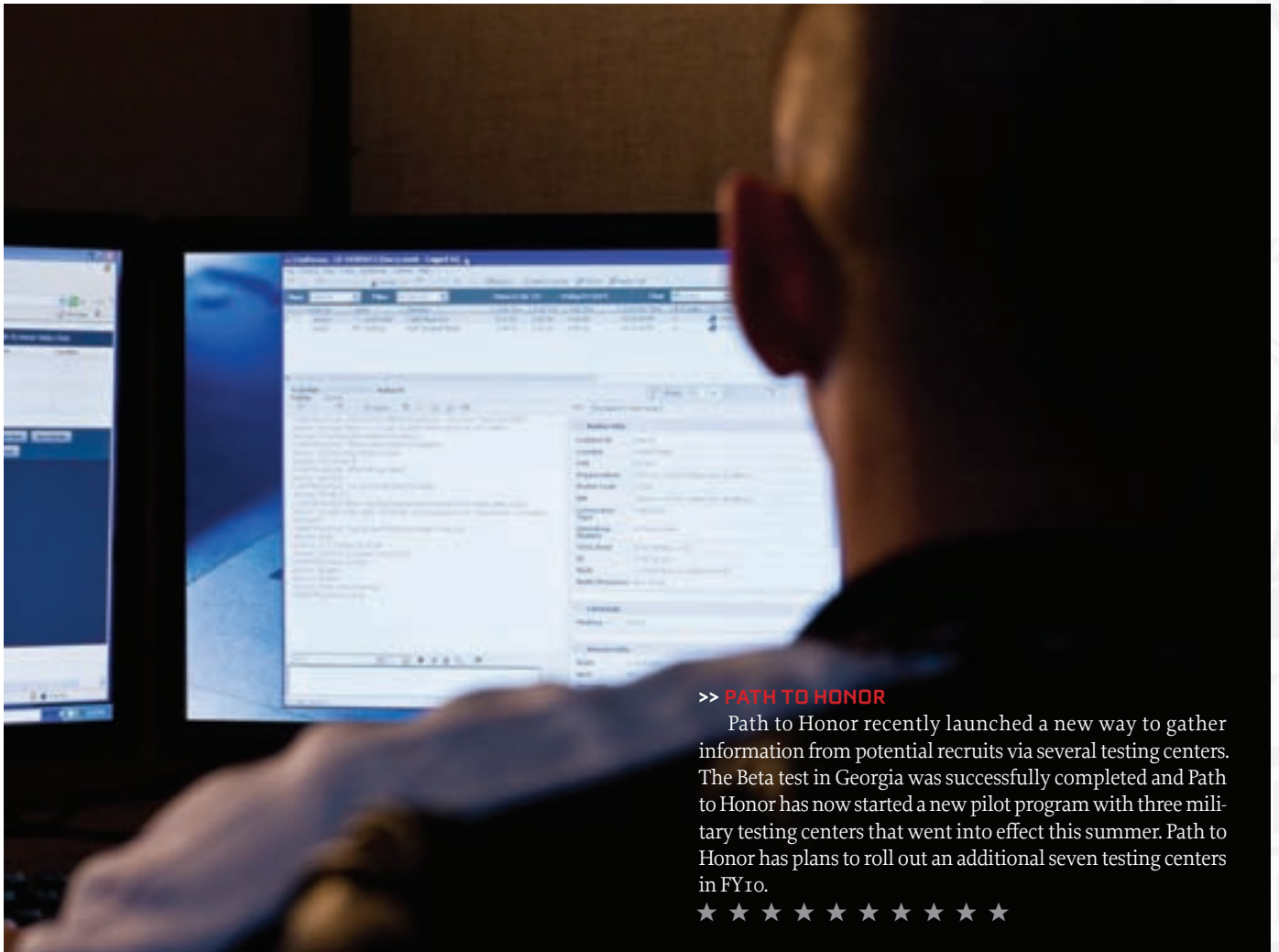
The Bugler

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE



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

Info and photos courtesy of NGB-ASM



>> PATH TO HONOR

Path to Honor recently launched a new way to gather information from potential recruits via several testing centers. The Beta test in Georgia was successfully completed and Path to Honor has now started a new pilot program with three military testing centers that went into effect this summer. Path to Honor has plans to roll out an additional seven testing centers in FY10.



Indiana's Band of Brothers

FATHER AND THREE SONS TO DEPLOY TOGETHER

Story and photos by SGT Sheila Holifield, 177th Armored Brigade Public Affairs, First Army Division East | CAMP SHELBY, MS

As Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment from Logansport, IN, prepare for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, one thing stands out among four Soldiers in the unit.

Not only are they all infantrymen, but for SSG Matthew Hill, a squad leader with the unit, SGT Timothy Hill, a team leader, and SPC Anthony Hill, a gunner, they are also brothers. They are deploying with another member of their family—their stepfather, SSG Richard Mark, also a squad leader with the unit.

The brothers and their stepfather will be mentoring Afghan police officers, and training them on various tactics and proper techniques and procedures.

“With our unit being all infantrymen, our mission is going to be a learning experience every day.”

>> SSG Matthew Hill

“This is my second deployment, and I am excited for the mission,” said Matthew, the oldest of the three brothers. “It will be good to get out and interact with the local population and do anything we can to help the Afghan police force out.”

During his deployment to Iraq in 2003, Matthew met Mark, who later became his stepfather.

“He is a very good guy, and we all look up to him a lot,” Matthew said. “He has been in the military more than 25 years and has done great things. Not only do we respect him as a stepfather, but he is also a great mentor to my brothers and me.”

For the two younger brothers, this will be their first deployment overseas. Timothy, who has been in the military for four years, knew he wanted to join after the tragic events of 9/11. He is looking forward to the experience this deployment will bring and is proud to be deploying with his family

THREE OF A KIND SSG Matthew Hill (left), SGT Timothy Hill (middle), and SPC Anthony Hill, all attached to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment, will be deploying together in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Anthony, the youngest of the three, joined the Indiana National Guard one year ago.

He said Matthew had been recruiting him for several years prior when he finally decided to take advantage of the great educational benefits the Guard offers.

He said he is also very excited about the deployment.

“It’s going to be an interesting experience,” Anthony said. “We all get along really well and



BROTHERS IN TRAINING During a battle drill at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Camp Shelby, MS, SPC Anthony Hill (left) and SSG Matthew Hill provide fire support for their brother, SGT Timothy Hill, who attempts to recover a fellow Soldier after being injured.



although we didn’t deploy with Matthew the first time, we still went through it with him. Now it is time to try a deployment from the other side.”

While all three brothers are excited about their deployment, they know it will be stressful at times.

“With our unit being all infantrymen, our mission is going to be a learning experience every day,” Matthew said.

“The Observer/Controller Trainers gave us a great deal of advice and our unit has done what’s necessary to get qualified for the police mentor training mission,” he added.

Even though the mission will be an adjustment for Matthew, he’ll be making the adjustments with his brothers.

“As the oldest brother, I want to be their watchful eye through it all, and it may not always happen that way,” Matthew said.

The brothers will not endure the stress of deployment alone; their mother, who will be without her husband and three sons, will have to adjust, too.

“She is a strong woman and has been very supportive of our military careers,” Matthew said. “I think she finds relief in the fact we are all deploying together.”

All the Hill brothers joined the military at different times and for different reasons, but they all love what they do and are ready for this next stage in their lives. **GX**



A FEAST OF THANKS

KENTUCKY GUARD RECOGNIZES EDUCATORS WITH A BANQUET

By Joe Brummett, Education Liaison Program Representative

The 2/75th Recruiting and Retention Battalion of the Kentucky Army National Guard (KYARNG), along with several other states, was recently selected by the Strength Maintenance Division of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-ASM) to participate in the initial kickoff of the new Service of Choice Educators' Banquet Program (EBP). The KYARNG has already coordinated several banquets across the state. To include a wide cross-section of Kentucky school districts, the KYARNG has held banquets in Hazard, Lexington, Louisville, Florence and Owensboro.

The EBP is another tool in a stream of innovative educational outreach initiatives recently unveiled by NGB to support recruiting and retention efforts. Designed primarily as a way to thank educators for their support, the banquets offer much more than that, according to MAJ Tammy Hurst, 2/75th RR Battalion Commander. "The banquets provide a wonderful opportunity to engage our educators in a warm and friendly environment," he said. "We are very serious about 'educating the educator' because they are the influencers in our schools and communities."

The EBP empowers recruiters and Education Liaison Program representatives to build and strengthen relationships with educators outside the traditional school environment. Educator

banquets also create a forum where teachers and administrators can learn more about the Guard. More importantly, the banquets are an opportunity for recruiters to get critical feedback from educators about what schools need and how the Guard can support them.

Recently at the Summit Country Club in Owensboro, KY, nearly 50 educators from multiple school districts enjoyed a meal and informative presentation about the Guard. Attendees included superintendents, guidance counselors, teachers, principals and a judge executive. Event coordinators included Area 8 Team Leader SFC Daren Bowen, Area 8 NCOIC 1SG Brad Harlan and the Area 8 Recruiting and Retention team.

COL Ron Turner, KYARNG Chief of Staff, and MAJ Hurst also attended the event. Hurst spoke to educators about the wealth of opportunities in the KYARNG. She discussed why people join the Guard, local economic impact, educational benefits, free school programs, enlistment options and the Guard's commitment to Kentucky schools.

The importance of and commitment to students and educators was evidenced by the attendance of COL Turner, who was instrumental in establishing unprecedented educational partnerships as a former Recruiting and Retention Commander (RRC) for Kentucky. "What a fantastic venue for two world-class groups of people to come together with the same goal—helping students—in mind," Turner said. "The program is a terrific way to recognize the people who truly change lives every day ... our educators."

SFC Bowen, who led his team in organizing the Owensboro event, said, "We have always had a great working relationship with our schools, but the Educator Banquet Program helps us take that relationship to a new level. One-on-one time with educators puts the Guard in a league of its own and promotes the Guard as the Service of Choice."

"I would recommend this program to any RRNCO that wants to build relationships with their schools and communities. It's a great opportunity to take educator relationships to a higher level," Bowen continued.

According to MAJ Hurst, the multiple partnerships the KYARNG has formed with educational organizations at the state, regional and local level are critical to the Guard's success.

"We have partnerships with different educational organizations, from career and technical educators to college admission counselors to school administrators. We are engaging students through classroom programs and providing resource support to Kentucky educational organizations," Hurst said. "We are simply doing what the National Guard does best, and that is giving back to our communities, and supporting and encouraging educators who in turn guide our young people as they journey to become strong, contributing members of society."

The highlight of the evening was a moving presentation of the Honorary Guardsman Award to James Inman (LTC, United States Air Force Retired).

"LTC Inman has served his country honorably and is a strong advocate for serving our country," said SFC Bowen, who presented the award. "He has promoted the military to our young people for many years. He is an asset to not only his community, but to the Kentucky National Guard as well."

LTC Inman was impressed by the Owensboro banquet, saying, "One of the major problems I have seen and experienced during my 22 years of military service and 27 years of government service is the resistance of educators to allow military discussion in the schools. Seeing the education community respond so positively to the National Guard was inspiring to this old military mustang."

Jessica Grimsley-Mounts, an English teacher at Daviess County High School who attended the Owensboro banquet, said, "Having a Guard member in my classroom is important for my students. They respond well to people who 'tell it like it is.' The real-life connections are an invaluable asset to my classroom."

"Through the working relationships I've created with our area's National Guard recruiters, not only have my students learned and benefited, but I have also," Grimsley-Mounts affirmed. **GX**

For more info about Guard school programs, visit www.PartnersInEducation.com.

Awarding Supportive Employers

SFC Tana Payne was mobilized for most of 2008. Her employer, Dave King, a senior manager at the manufacturing facility where she worked, was supportive. *By: MAJ Elaine M. Gullotta*

“Dave sent me a funny card, babysat my dog while I was gone and arranged supplemental pay for me to make up what was not covered in my military salary,” SFC Payne said.

When Payne returned from mobilization, she got her job back and, shortly after, also received a scheduled promotion just as if she had never left. She was grateful and felt lucky to be employed by a company that “walked the talk” when it came to supporting military service. As a manager herself, Payne had seen the Statement of Support signed by the CEO, proudly displayed in the manufacturing facility, but more importantly she saw the memorandums he sent to all the other managers asking them to follow his example—to look for ways to be supportive of employees who were members of the Reserve forces. She wanted to publicly recognize both of them, so she spoke with her local Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) representative. She also visited the ESGR Web site (Esgr.mil) to start the process.

nominated for this award by their employees, rather they are selected by the local ESGR field committee based on the write-up that was done previously for the Patriot Award.

THE PRO PATRIA AWARD

The next award in the series is the Pro Patria Award. It is presented by the local ESGR committee and is the highest award that a local committee may bestow upon employers in their purview. To be eligible, an employer must have received a Patriot Award and an Above and Beyond Award, and must have signed a Statement of Support. It is presented to employers who demonstrate exceptional support for national defense by adopting personnel policies that make it easier for employees to participate in the National Guard and Reserve.

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FREEDOM AWARD

At the top of the list and the most prestigious award in the series is the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award. This award is designed to recognize

The ESGR award program is designed to recognize employers who are supportive of their employees’ participation in the National Guard and Reserve.

The ESGR award program is designed to recognize employers who are supportive of their employees’ participation in the National Guard and Reserve. All employer awards originate from nominations by individual Reserve component members. Depending on the degree of support, the level of recognition ranges from a simple certificate of appreciation prepared and presented by the employee, to the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award.

THE PATRIOT AWARD

The most frequently presented award is the Patriot Award. This certificate is intended for an immediate supervisor. All members of the National Guard and Reserve are eligible to nominate their employer for the Patriot Award through the ESGR Web site. The certificate can be provided to the service member to present himself or herself, or it can be presented to the employer by the local ESGR committee.

THE ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD

The next award in the series is the Above and Beyond Award. ESGR presents this award for support that exceeds what is required by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Examples of above and beyond support include providing pay differential, childcare and continuation of benefits. Employers are not

unique support to National Guard and Reserve employees and is presented to a maximum of 15 employers. Thousands of employers are nominated each year during the open season, and selection is based upon the write-ups that paint pictures of employer-employee relationships that stand out most to the selection board. Nominations are accepted from individual troops, their spouses and family units. Once the final selection is announced, both the troop and the employer are invited to receive the award at a black-tie dinner ceremony held in Washington DC.

After learning more about the four types of employer awards available, SFC Payne immediately nominated her employer for the Patriot Award. She is also planning to nominate her employer for the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award during the open nomination season. “I plan to spend a lot of time on the write-up so I can really explain all that they did for me,” Payne said. “My husband is going to nominate them separately, too.”

To nominate your employer for the 2010 Secretary of Defense Freedom Award, visit the Web site at FreedomAward.mil from Nov. 2, 2009–Jan. 18, 2010. For additional assistance with employer-related questions, visit the ESGR Web site at Esgr.mil or call (800) 336-4590. **GX**

All names referenced in this story are based on historical data collected at NCESGR. No real individual names or scenarios were used.

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READY FOR A CHALLENGE
RSP Warriors from Iowa pose for a picture the day before they are scheduled to leave for Basic.

"T Minus 24"

IOWA WARRIORS PREPARE FOR BASIC TRAINING

Courtesy of NGB-ASM

The day before a Warrior leaves for Basic Training (BT) can be both exhilarating and frightening. Just as every new Army National Guard Soldier joins for a different reason, they also react differently to those final 24 hours before they "ship." As PVT Anita Wangerin notes, "Some of us are nervous, and some are ready to go and get the experience."

In Iowa, the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) staff want to ensure they have done everything they can to make the transition from civilian to military life as smooth as possible. Warriors from across the state report to the RSP Battalion Headquarters at Camp Dodge the day prior to "shipping."

The process is structured but relaxed, as RSP staff members interact with these Warriors throughout the day, providing briefings and completing administrative requirements. The goal is to ensure that the Warriors have all the necessary documentation to begin training, while reducing their concerns about BT or life back home while they're away. It's also an opportunity for them to interact with each other and talk about the experiences they're about to go through.

While significant issues are addressed, such as bank accounts, life insurance and completing requirements for a promotion, it's important that the Warriors also feel comfortable enough to ask questions about what to expect. On pre-ship day, the RSP staff has even helped Warriors who've gotten married within the last 72 hours and those still trying to contact college professors about course requirements. All of this can add additional stress to an already intense experience.

At the RSP Battalion Headquarters, every issue, concern and question is addressed. The RSP staff knows how important it is for these Warriors to focus on training when they arrive at BT.

PV2 Nathan Valentine said cadre asked if he was scared or had any questions. "There's no reason to be scared," he said. "We're just going to Basic Training." Valentine feels he was a calming influence on some of his fellow Warriors.

The highlight of the day is a visit from the adjutant general of the Iowa National Guard. BG Timothy Orr speaks with the Warriors at least once a week, but more often if his schedule allows. His message is always one of pride and gratitude that these young Iowans have chosen to serve. He acknowledges they are the future of the Iowa National Guard.

It's not every day an adjutant general gives a room full of Warriors the opportunity to ask

any question that comes to mind. However, Orr answers all their questions, which range from inquiries about full-time employment opportunities with the Guard to potential deployments.

By the end of the day, all of the Warriors' administrative screenings and briefings are complete, and they've had numerous opportunities to address any questions or concerns they may have had. This is the capstone of the pre-ship day process. From here, they are transported to the hotel, where they can link up with their families, have some quiet time or spend time with other Warriors heading to the same training post.

PFC Hilary Hamilton is an RSP Warrior from Cedar Falls. She went through the pre-ship day last year, and she returns again this year as she prepares to ship to Advanced Individual Training.

Hamilton feels the pre-ship process is very beneficial. "It was helpful knowing I was going with a bunch of other Warriors," she said. "When I went to Basic Training, there were three other females from Iowa I talked to on the trip to the training post. Even though we didn't end up in the same company, it was nice to travel with them."

"The mission of the RSP is to ensure our Warriors are physically fit, mentally prepared and administratively correct to go to training," said CPT Kristy Rose, RSP Battalion officer in charge.

"On that last day before they ship, we can address two of those tenets and correct any last-second issues," Rose added. "If a Warrior is concerned about how or when they will get paid because they recently changed banks, that Warrior is not mentally or administratively prepared.

"We want all Warriors to be successful at training, and we believe the best way to ensure that is to take care of any issues before they ship," Rose said.

According to the May 2009 End of Month Metrics Report published by the RSP branch of the National Guard Bureau (NGB), Iowa had an 87.29-percent ship rate. This percentage well exceeded the 80-percent standard that has been established by NGB, and it exceeded the national average of 84.06 percent. There is no doubt that this program has influenced Iowa's success in shipping new Soldiers to Basic. **GX**



FAST EXIT Cadets fast-rope out of a hovering UH-60 Black Hawk.

Strength Maintenance

► RECRUITING AND RETENTION



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

AIR ASSAULT OPERATION SETS RECORDS

Story by SFC Ken Suratt, Colorado National Guard

Photos by SGT Miranda Carter, National Guard Bureau

The summer of 2009 was the most successful and productive Air Assault School session yet initiated by the National Guard.

The Warrior Training Center (WTC) awarded 274 Cadets and Soldiers the coveted Air Assault Badge. Five schools were conducted from June through August: Two at Camp Rilea, OR, two at Fort Benning, GA, and one at Camp Edwards, MA.

With premier venues such as the Oregon RTI at Camp Rilea, which boasts the newest and largest rappelling tower of any Air Assault School and experienced WTC cadre, it was no surprise that all five schools recorded an 80-percent pass rate while keeping the injury rate to 2 percent.

The zero-day obstacle course and Phase II testing proved once again to be the most challenging part of the training.

"It's a compliment to all the Cadets who qualified," one WTC cadre commented. "They were all motivated and showed up ready to train. Cadets gained invaluable knowledge that they will have the rest of their careers."

"The program is really starting to take off," added COL Doug Still, the motivating force behind the National Guard Air Assault initiative. "These Air Assault Soldiers are taking what they have learned back to their universities and motivating others to try this kind of training." **GX**



PUSH OFF A Cadet prepares to rappel off a tower at Air Assault training.

>> PHASE III

Air Assault HARD WORK PAYS OFF

By SFC Ken Suratt, Colorado National Guard

Phase III of Air Assault School, known as the Rappelling Phase, is the pinnacle of training for students trying to attain their badge.

During Phase III testing, Air Assault students are required to:

- * Tie a Swiss Seat in 90 seconds or less with no deficiencies.
- * Execute a safe hook-up.
- * Demonstrate proper lock-in procedures.
- * Conduct ramp, skid and tower rappel.

Students are then required to conduct multiple rappels from the tower and are evaluated on three of them:

- * Rappel without equipment and execute three breaks.
- * Rappel with combat equipment and execute three breaks.
- * Rappel and execute a lock-in.

One last task:

At the conclusion of all rappels, students must complete a rugged 12-mile foot march with their complete packing list (35-45 lbs) in three hours or less. Upon finishing the foot march, every student undergoes an intense inspection where WTC Cadre inventories all uniforms and equipment. The students must have 100-percent accountability of their uniforms and equipment to be considered a "go" for Phase III and a graduate of Air Assault School.

Check out GX magazine this spring for FY 2010 Air Assault dates. Start getting ready now!



A Storyteller Tells Her Own

By Camille Breland

For as long as she can remember, SPC Rachel Sanzo, 20, knew what she wanted to do in life.

“Ever since I was young I wanted to be a journalist and work for a newspaper,” she shares. But what she didn’t know was how she would get there.

Growing up in New York, Rachel excelled in school—so much so that she’s now majoring in academic and professional writing at the State University of New York-Potsdam. In high school, she began thinking about college, wondering how she could afford tuition. Her mom, a master sergeant in the New York Army National Guard, told her about an opening in the public affairs office.

“[The National Guard] seemed like a good opportunity because it would give me experience for college before I even went to college,” she says.

TOUGH QUESTIONS SPC Rachel Sanzo, 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, interviews a Soldier at Fort Drum, NY, during the unit’s Annual Training in July 2008.

So she joined in 2007 and hit the ground running. Over the summer, she went to Trinidad, a Caribbean island, for her Annual Training (AT). There, she worked in journalism, covering stories about National Guard Soldiers and handled all publishing aspects including interviewing, photographing, writing and design layout.

“It gave me a lot of real-life experience and taught me how to work under a deadline,” she remarks. “I found that I work well under pressure.”

She honed that talent further when she and her team finished 12 pages of the base newsletter in the 14 days they were there. “We worked a lot, and late into the night!” she admits.



A DAY'S WORK

SPC Rachel Sanzo, New York Army National Guard, takes photos for an assignment.

She also learned about her writing style and technique—gaining invaluable knowledge for college. “I like writing feature articles and getting into people’s personalities and finding out why they do the things they do,” she says. “I like trying to make the normal, mundane stories seem more interesting.”

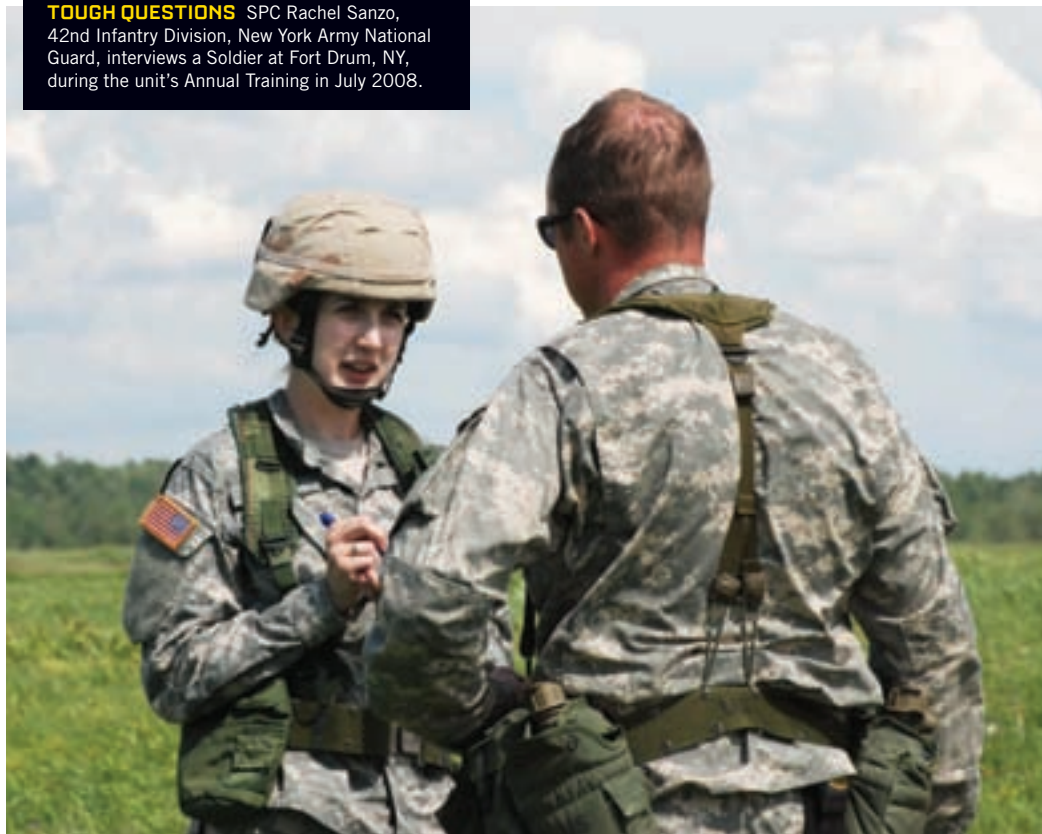
But the excitement didn’t end there. She was tasked to cover a story on National Guard Soldiers providing security at a New York City airport for a figure known worldwide—the Pope.

“It was such a cool opportunity—I made a scrapbook about it!”

Through her Guard training, Rachel received almost a year’s worth of college credit, but it’s the intangible benefits she’s most thankful for. She says that at school, her peers appreciate her experience and her friends are proud of her. “They’ve seen how much I’ve grown, and they know the National Guard did that for me.

“When I put on my uniform, I definitely feel proud of myself and the things that I’ve accomplished,” she continues. “With the Guard, I’ve been able to go out and experience the world. I’ve been able to travel to different countries and be a working journalist.

“It has paid off tenfold in the opportunities I’ve had so far, and I can’t even imagine what’s going to come next.” **GX**



COURTESY OF SPC RACHEL SANZO



7 REASONS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER ONLINE EDUCATION

Johanna Altland, Grantham University

With the growing popularity of distance education, online learning is a convenient option for those seeking to earn a college degree, brush up on a skill set or change careers.

According to "S taying the Course: Online Education in the U nited States," a 2008 report about the state of online education by The Sloan Consortium, enrollment in online courses reached 3.94 million in 2007, more than double the number since 2002.

Currently, online students make up more than 21 percent of students enrolled in higher education nationwide.

As a working adult, a stay-at-home parent or a Guard member, juggling your responsibilities can be time-consuming. Distance education lets the classroom come to you, at your convenience.

Below are a few of the reasons that you should consider earning your degree online.

1. Convenience

Adult students with families and career commitments are enrolling in online degree programs because they find it easier to balance work, family and school. You may not have time to sit in the classroom and listen to a lecture. With online learning, you can study and attend class when it's convenient for you.

2. Flexibility

Most online programs allow you to work at your own pace. You can spend more time studying without having to worry about keeping up with the professor or holding back the rest of the class. You can study first thing in the morning, on your lunch break or after you put your children to bed at night.

3. Affordability

Online courses can be more expensive than taking courses at your local

community college, but according to GetEducated.com, a national consumer advocacy group that researches, rates, ranks and verifies the credibility of online college and distance learning programs, it's possible to save thousands of dollars on a bachelor's degree and pay \$12,000 less than the national average for a master's degree by going to school online. In addition, you can save valuable time, money and wear and tear on your car by not traveling to and from campus. Gas costs and other expenses add up quickly.

4. Validity

Many have questioned the effectiveness of online learning and joked that students are just buying a degree. Ask any online student, and they'll tell you the courses are just as tough, if not tougher, than those taught in a traditional classroom. In fact, a 2009 study completed by the Department of Education found that students who took an online course performed better than those taking the same course through face-to-face instruction.

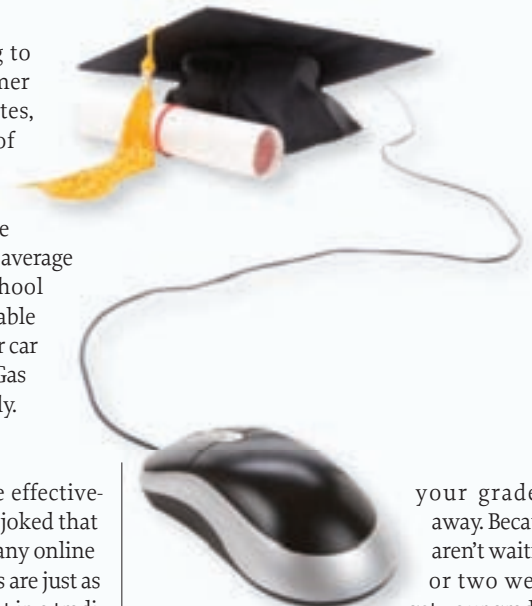
5. Open Communication

Communication and interaction in the world of online learning is not much different than what takes place in a traditional classroom setting. However, one distinction is that you aren't communicating face-to-face.

A majority of contact occurs via email and in course chat rooms. You have time to think about concepts and formulate your questions before asking them. Students also have the opportunity to work with other students, faculty and subject matter experts outside of their geographic location. Collaborating with people from different areas and levels of expertise enhances the education experience.

6. Immediate Results

Many distance learning programs have online testing, which allows you to complete an exam or assignment and receive



your grade right away. Because you aren't waiting one or two weeks to get your grade back, you're able to progress through your studies at a much faster rate and gain a better understanding of the subject matter that you need to focus on. At most distance learning institutions, you also have access to your account, classes, course material and grades 24/7.

7. No Limitations

With distance learning, there are no limitations on the size of the classrooms like there are in the traditional school setting. The classroom sizes of on-ground schools can't keep up with the growing number of college students, so distance learning has become a viable choice for many. Distance education also allows for a variety of course offerings because classes aren't restricted by time and location.

In today's economy, continuing education is more critical than ever because, despite the soaring unemployment rates, the demand for college graduates is still very strong. An advanced degree and ongoing career training are the best ways to increase earning potential and job security, and online learning provides you with a convenient, affordable format. **GX**

Post-9/11 GI Bill

The article "The Next Generation GI Bill" that ran in GX 6.5 laid out many of the pros and cons associated with choosing the Post-9/11 GI Bill versus sticking with the Montgomery GI Bill. However, some important information has come to light about Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility for those who served under Title 32 status or state Active Duty. At this time, Guard members activated under Title 32 or state Active Duty cannot count that time toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility. According to a press release issued by the National Guard Bureau in July, this concern will be addressed in the 2011 legislative agenda that will be presented to Congress. For more information and to view a comprehensive list of FAQs about the Post-9/11 GI Bill, visit GiBill.gov.



HOME AT LAST

CPT William Shackleford celebrated his return home with his daughter, Ali, and his wife, Juanita.

Bringing Balance to "Being Back"

By Dr. Martin Binks, Ph.D., ARNG Decade of Health Behavioral Health Contributor

Returning from deployment, catching up at work, reconnecting with friends and reuniting with family make it easy to put your needs last. Making up for lost time by giving too much to others is common, and maintaining balance can be difficult.

What is a balanced life?

This involves balancing time spent doing what you want to do with what you have to do in order to live a life that is both personally meaningful and fulfilling. Some areas to consider include:

1. Family vs. Personal: You may feel obligated to spend the majority of your time with your family

when you get home. It's important to realize that you also need time to pursue your personal interests outside the family.

2. Extraverted vs. Introverted: One person may feel fulfilled by group activities and be energized by a sense of camaraderie, whereas another may need more time spent in solitary pursuits.

3. Active vs. Passive: Recognize that while activities can be fulfilling, time spent being still is important, too. To sit quietly in thought, daydream or simply pause for 10 minutes and do

absolutely nothing can provide powerful nourishment for the mind and spirit while giving your body needed rest.

4. Expending Energy vs. Restoring Energy: Sometimes what you do with your free time (e.g. strenuous activity like mountain biking or a long run) can make you feel alive and invigorated. Other times, relaxing activities like yoga, quiet walks or meditation can make you feel similarly recharged.

5. Awake vs. Asleep: Sleep is essential to health and balance; however, many Americans suffer from chronic sleep deprivation. The right amount of sleep varies from person to person (about 6–8 hours). Pay attention to whether you feel rested and revitalized with the amount of sleep you are getting.

Balance is not just a matter of time spent in various activities. It involves prioritizing the value of how you spend that time and how well your needs are being met. Balance means allotting time for work, family, chores, sleep, exercise, a hobby, talking to friends or a significant other, and doing nothing.

How do I get back in balance?

Restoring balance involves a logical approach that allows you to implement corrective action:

1. Problem Solving: Clearly identify the root of the imbalance, brainstorm solutions, set clear goals and take action.

2. Communication and Support: Be aware of the impact your decisions have on those you care about and vice versa. Learn effective ways to communicate openly about what you need, hear what your loved ones need and generate solutions that will work for all.

Remember, when returning from deployment, demands on time may be by necessity quite imbalanced. However, in spite of less than ideal circumstances, a returning Soldier can settle back into a comfortable life by ensuring that all parts of a balanced life are present. By approaching re-entry as a growth opportunity and embracing it with positive action, pride in achievement and a sense of the greater purpose, hard times can still be good times (and balanced times). **GX**

For more on any of these topics visit: AfterDeployment.org

In the "Balancing Your Life" section, you'll have an opportunity to take a test, hear from experts and peers, and get exercises to help you learn skills to achieve and maintain balance in your life.

Equipment maintenance...critical.
Soldier maintenance...lifesaving.



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Deals on Wheels

6 Slippery Sales Strategies



By Howard Krueger, USAA

Even with the success of the “Cash for Clunkers” program, most car dealers still need to make sales. It

may be a buyer’s market, but that’s no reason to let your guard down in the showroom.

Experienced salespeople have one goal in mind: to put you in a new car today. And it’s their job to get as much profit out of every sale as possible. While most car salespeople are honest and forthright, others may be looking to take you for a ride.

So before you set foot on the lot, be aware of sales tactics that could bait you into paying hundreds or thousands more than you should.

The Four Square

The salesperson will put four numbers in front of you: the new vehicle price, your trade-in value, your down payment and the monthly payment. He’s looking for your “hot button.”

When you focus on one number (say, trade-in), he knows he can hook you by meeting your terms on that part of the deal. The problem is he’ll inflate the other three numbers to favor his agenda.

The Waiting Game

“Let me go talk to my manager and see what I can do,” the salesperson says.

After what seems like ages, she returns, ostensibly exhausted from negotiating on your behalf. “My boss is willing to come down—this is the



Foiling the Four Square Tactic

Dealers start with numbers already geared for maximum profit. They want to identify which factor matters most to you, so they can appear to “come down” to your terms.

best deal we’ve given anyone on this car,” she says. Don’t bite.

She’s betting that the longer you sit, the more anxious you’ll be to reach an agreement. It’s a classic technique.

The Turnover House

Sometimes, the sales manager will come talk to you himself. Now that you're talking to the boss, the thinking goes, you know you're getting the best possible deal. The truth is, the "boss" is a professional closer, brought in to win you over when the first string can't. It's not uncommon to go through three layers of salespeople before you reach the dealer's true best offer.

The Sympathy Play

"Hey, I need to make a little money on this deal, too," a salesperson will say, citing the struggling economy or, worse, four kids to feed. It's only fair for the dealer to make a reasonable profit, but don't be guilted into paying too much. Rest assured the dealer won't knowingly lose money just to earn your business.

The Now-or-Never

"This deal is only good for today." Or "There's another buyer interested in this car." Whatever

the salesperson's story, some dealers rely on fear tactics to rush you into a sale. You know better.

The Free Extras

To sweeten the pot, your salesperson might throw in pinstriping, rust-proofing or fabric protection at no extra cost. Unbiased experts agree that these add-ons aren't worth much, despite what the dealer usually charges for them. Your best bet is to ignore them.

Being street-smart about sly sales techniques is one thing; sticking to your guns and actually getting a good deal is another.

So how can you tilt the odds in your favor?

The answer is simple: research. The Internet has helped level the playing field for consumers. And thanks to sites like Edmunds.com and member-based resources such as U SAA's Car-Buying Service, you can enter the dealership armed with more information than the salesperson himself. Not only can you research your preferred vehicle, and every available bell and

whistle, you can find out the dealer's invoice price (also known as dealer's cost) and uncover special incentives and rebates.

It's also smart to know the fair value of your trade-in (visit Kelly Blue Book at Kbb.com), and get a quote for insurance on the new vehicle and pre-approved for auto financing. Lining up these numbers in advance simplifies your negotiation in the sales office. Still, be sure to set aside plenty of time for your visit and avoid distractions while you're there.

An even simpler approach to consider is having the price negotiated for you before you set foot on the car lot. Taking advantage of car-buying programs that offer these special member prices and services can save you time, money and the hassle of negotiations.

With solid knowledge about what you want and how much it should cost, you'll know how to spot a good deal.

And all the slick salespeople in the world won't be able to change your mind. **EX**



Understanding the dialect of auto dealers can help you negotiate a lower price.

MSRP: Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price including destination fees. You can usually pay less. Does not include tax, title, license, dealer processing or any other miscellaneous fees.

Invoice: Often referred to as dealer cost, before rebates and incentives. Includes destination charge, optional equipment costs, dealer holdback and advertising costs.

Customer Rebate: A manufacturer incentive, usually in the form of cash or lower interest rates.

Manufacturer-to-Dealer Incentive: Extra money the automaker pays the dealer for selling certain cars. May be used to increase advertising, lower the prices or increase dealer's profitability.

Dealer Holdback: A bonus amount (usually 2-3 percent of MSRP) the manufacturer pays to the dealer for meeting sales and customer service goals, regardless of the actual sale price of the vehicle.

Carryover Allowance: A manufacturer-to-dealer incentive to clear out prior-year models.

LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOREVER

THE STORY OF THE NORTH DAKOTA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

By Jason Hall

Beginning in the 1850s, U.S. Regular Army Soldiers established outposts in the land that would become North Dakota. The U.S. Congress established the Dakota Territory in March 1861. However, with the outbreak of the Civil War in April of that year, almost all of the federal troops were pulled from the territory to reinforce those in the east facing the threat of invasion by Southern forces.

In December 1861, the territorial governor called for the raising of two volunteer militia cavalry companies. Though it took nearly two years to complete, Company A and Company B, First Dakota Cavalry, were formed and served during the Civil War from late 1862 to 1865. Though both companies never left the territory, they were engaged in military campaigns, known as the Sibley and Sully Expeditions, during the war.

CROSSING PARTY During the Philippine Insurrection, a unit known as “Young’s Scouts” was organized to patrol for the Army as it marched to capture the enemy capital. In May 1899, the Scouts charged a much larger force of insurgents and saved a burning bridge needed by the Army. For this and other heroic acts, a total of 15 Guard Soldiers, including seven from North Dakota, earned the Medal of Honor in the Philippines.



DAKOTA CONFLICT

In 1863, Union general Henry Sibley was ordered to attack the Dakota (Sioux) Native Americans in retaliation for their involvement in the hostilities of 1862. Sibley’s force, which included companies of militia cavalry, attacked and defeated the Native Americans in three battles. However, the tenacious fighting of several Native American Warriors succeeded in allowing many of their brethren to escape across the Missouri River to the western side.

With Sibley’s force stationed near present-day Bismarck, blocking the Native Americans, another Union force began to form south of the tribe. GEN Alfred Sully set out with his force from Sioux City, IA, and marched north. On Sept. 3, he attacked the Native Americans camped near White Stone Hill, ND, and destroyed the camp,

taking many prisoners in the process. Sibley and Sully would continue to engage the Dakota Sioux tribe throughout the Civil War.

Following the end of the Civil War into the early 1880s, there was not much military activity in the Dakota Territory. Due to the low population density of the area, along with “Indian Wars” in other states, the Regular Army was engaged elsewhere, and the territorial militia began to vanish. Thanks to the efforts of territorial Governor William Howard, the militia saw a rebirth during the early 1880s. In 1883, Company A, First Regiment, Dakota National Guard, was organized in Bismarck, of the Dakota Territory.

The Dakota National Guard would see dramatic increases in numbers as immigrants flooded into the territory from 1878–1890 during the “Great Dakota Boom.” By 1885, the Dakota Guard totaled more than 1,000 men.

DIVIDED THEY STAND

The territory’s National Guard would see a dramatic change in 1889, when the territory was split, creating two new states—North and South Dakota.

Due in part to the territory’s birth during the turmoil of the Civil War, the state borrowed a quote from the famous orator Daniel Webster as its new state motto: “Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

To preserve their liberty, the newly formed North Dakota state government authorized the formation of a National Guard force containing six infantry companies, two cavalry troops and one artillery battery.

Unfortunately, funds were not available to properly muster and train the new state National Guard units. Recruitment of Soldiers

to fill the units was extremely poor, and North Dakota found itself unprepared to answer the call to supply state units for a federal emergency. And just such a national military emergency was looming in the distance with the prospect of open conflict between the U.S. and Spain.

With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War of 1898, the state, though unprepared, acted quickly to fill President William McKinley's quota of volunteers. Eight companies of the 1st North Dakota Regiment were mobilized and were part of the first major overseas deployment of National Guard Soldiers.

Though they arrived in the Philippines after the conflict had been resolved, the North Dakotans remained near Manila as occupying forces. The Filipinos, who had helped the U.S. fight against the Spanish, now wanted independence and turned against the American troops stationed there, thus beginning the Philippine Insurrection of 1899.

During this insurrection, the men of the 1st North Dakota wrote National Guard history when 10 of its Soldiers received the Medal of Honor.

MEDALS FOR YOUNG'S SCOUTS

A civilian by the name of Henry Young formed an elite force of Guard Soldiers to conduct scouting and reconnaissance missions. Young's Scouts, as the unit became known, was comprised of 16 Soldiers from the 1st North Dakota Infantry, along with four men from the 2nd Oregon.

Young's Scouts ran into about 300 Filipino insurgents on May 13, 1899. Eleven of the Scouts charged the Filipinos and forced them to retreat. Henry Young was mortally wounded in the melee. Three days after this skirmish, the Scouts were looking for water when they discovered insurgents had set fire to a strategic bridge and the river below could not be forded.

In order to save it, 22 Scouts charged onto the burning bridge while coming under heavy enemy fire from more than 600 insurgents. The Scouts were successful in dousing the flames and saved the bridge.



**CPL FRANK
ANDERS**

CPL Frank Anders (seen here as a private in 1894) was one of the seven North Dakota Guard Soldiers to earn the Medal of Honor as a member of Young's Scouts in 1899. He stayed in the Guard after returning home, and by WWI, was a major serving in the Quartermaster Corps.

Following the rescue of the bridge, the Scouts became surrounded and cut off in a small village. They defended their positions tenaciously for several hours until they were finally relieved by other units.

All of the surviving members were presented the Medal of Honor for their heroic defense, as were four additional National Guard Soldiers from other states who were in supporting units. Of those Medal of Honor recipients, seven were from the 1st North Dakota and three from the 2nd Oregon.

The 1st North Dakota is perpetuated today by the 164th Engineer Group and the 141st Engineer Battalion, North Dakota Army

National Guard. From 1898 to the present, North Dakota remains the state with the second-highest number of National Guard Medal of Honor recipients.

THE GROUNDS OF GRAFTON

In only 10 years of being a state, the members of the North Dakota National Guard had created quite a reputation.

As the state's Guard grew, it needed a new place to call home. The Regular Army's Fort Totten Military Reservation was established on Jan. 11, 1876, by President Ulysses S. Grant. The base was located on more than 11,000 acres within the Devils Lake Indian Reservation.

In 1904, the federal government ceded approximately 1,500 acres to North Dakota to be utilized as a permanent home for the North Dakota National Guard. Originally known as the Rock Island Military Reservation, renamed Camp Gilbert C. Grafton in 1921, it remains today the "home of the North Dakota Army National Guard."

In June 1916, President Woodrow Wilson took only two weeks to use his new power to mobilize the Guard. The call-up to respond to the threat posed by Pancho Villa in Mexico caught every state off-guard, including North Dakota.

Though hastily mustered into service, the 1st North Dakota regiment set out for the Mexican border on July 11, 1916. The regiment contained 12 infantry companies, a machine gun company, a band and a medical detachment.

Though these units never saw action, they were subjected to grueling living conditions and vigorous training. It would prepare them for their next test.

While Guard Soldiers from every state had been training and patrolling along the Mexican border, WWI continued to rage in Europe. With America's entry into the war in 1917, all Guard units were once again mobilized.

Just 40 days after their return from the border, the men of the 1st North Dakota were filing into a training camp to prepare for their deployment to France. Of the nearly 3,700 Guard Soldiers from North Dakota sent "Over There,"

ISLAND HOPPERS In July 1945, just before the war in the Pacific finally ended, members of the 164th Infantry, Americal Division, supported by M-4 “Sherman” tanks, moved across Negros Island in the Southern Philippines.



2,051 were from the 1st Regiment while the rest came from the newly formed 2nd Regiment.

The training period prior to deployment saw a dizzying amount of reorganization. The North Dakota units were first assigned to the 13th Division, but two weeks later, they were reassigned to the 20th Division. In September, they were ordered to North Carolina to be a part of the 34th Division. But it didn't stop there, a few weeks later, they were once again reassigned, this time as part of the 41st Division.

WARRIORS IN THE WIND

With the arrival of the 164th in France, the changes in orders continued to come down on the men. Instead of fighting as one unit, the 41st Division was instead pillaged to provide replacements to other divisions. All of the privates in the 164th were immediately sent to serve in the Regular Army's 1st Division. A

Only a year after Germany invaded France in 1939, the U.S. prepared for its entry into WWII. As in WWI, the government wanted to give the Guard time and resources to train. The 1940 mobilization was the Guard's largest peacetime mobilization in the nation's history. Though called up in December 1940, the 164th did not enter federal service until February 1941.

As in the past war, the men of the 164th faced major reorganization. The 164th became one of the four regiments of the 34th Division, and was sent to Louisiana for a series of practice war games. The “Louisiana Maneuvers” would provide valuable training for the task ahead.

A new division was being formed called the Americal Division. The division was comprised of three regiments—Illinois' 132nd, Massachusetts' 182nd, and North Dakota's 164th. Originally sent to New Caledonia, the division's moniker “Americal” is a derivative of “America” and “New Caledonia.”

In October 1942, the Americal Division landed at Guadalcanal to reinforce the Marines battling the Japanese force there. The situation had become a stalemate, and the arrival of the Americal Division jump-started the American offensive. During this action, the 164th was the first U.S. Army unit to attack the enemy in WWII.

THE 164TH WAS THE FIRST UNIT TO TAKE OFFENSIVE ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY IN WWII.

In addition, the 2nd Regiment was disbanded, and all Guard regiments were forced to drop their state designations for a new three-digit numbering system. This change enraged the men of North Dakota the most, as they felt they would lose their sense of loyalty to their state and autonomy from the Regular Army units. The 1st Regiment was renamed the 164th Infantry Regiment, North Dakota National Guard, and the former members of the 2nd Regiment were absorbed into the 164th.

member of the 164th, Boyd Company, decried this action as “a demoralizing blow to everyone.”

Scattered to the wind to fight in other units, the men of the 164th Regiment suffered 278 casualties, of which 176 died in battle, 62 died of wounds and the remaining of disease. In addition to the death toll, nearly 650 North Dakotans suffered battle wounds during the war. Unfortunately, another foreign conflict would soon again engulf the U.S., and the North Dakota National Guard.



CLARK'S CROSS

In one of the Japanese attacks against the American forces defending Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, the 164th bore the brunt of the enemy's assaults, but managed to hold their ground.

During the fight, in the dark of night, CPL William Clark of Grand Forks, ND, crawled out to retrieve two damaged machine guns. Under intense enemy fire, Clark was able to repair one of the machine guns and help repel the enemy. For his actions, Clark received the Distinguished Service Cross.

With Guadalcanal secure, the men of the 164th participated in the Americal Division's "island-hopping" campaign against the Japanese forces. While their comrades were fighting in the Pacific, other North Dakota units were preparing to attack the Axis Powers in Europe. Two field artillery battalions, the 188th and 957th, landed at Utah Beach on June 11, five days after the initial beachhead landing.

The 188th was attached to the 82nd Airborne, and the 957th provided artillery support for the 9th Infantry Division. As they fought across Europe, including in the Battle of the Bulge, the two units would meet each other during the

HIGHWAY PATROL SPC Jacob Lindbo, left, and SPC Eric Gisvold of the 141st Engineer Battalion keep watch for suspicious activity, while fellow Soldiers conduct a route clearance outside Ad Dujayl, Iraq.

assault on the bridge at Remagen in March 1945. In addition, the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion, formerly part of the 188th Field Artillery, spent more than 500 days in combat fighting in Tunisia, Italy and Central Europe.

Following the surrender of Germany and Japan in 1945, a new type of war would soon emerge: The Cold War. However, there were some hot spots during the Cold War that involved the North Dakotans. In 1950,

the Korean War began and the 164th Infantry regiment, along with the 231st Engineer and 188th Field Artillery Battalions, were federally mobilized. During the Korean War, 26,000 North Dakota Guard Soldiers served—about 800 overseas.

Following the armistice that ended the Korean War, the North Dakota Army National Guard experienced a monumental change when all of its units were converted to engineer units.

HEATING UP FOR THE COLD WAR

The threat of open conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in late 1961 ignited with a crisis in Berlin, Germany. Aggressive moves by the Soviets, including the construction of the Berlin Wall, led to President John F. Kennedy mobilizing parts of the National Guard. During the Berlin Crisis, the 164th Engineer Battalion and the 818th Engineer Company served for 10 months on active duty.

Things soon became somewhat quiet for the North Dakota Guard, with the exception of the birth of new units in the coming years. In 1965, the Provisional Aviation Detachment was created, though it would be redesignated as the 142nd Medical Detachment (Air Ambulance) in 1971. Also in 1971, the 116th Public Affairs Detachment was created.

A high note for the state's National Guard was in 1984, when Company D, 141st Engineer Battalion, was awarded the Itschner Award for being the Guard's best engineer unit. Not to be outdone by their fellow North Dakotans, Company B, 141st would receive the Itschner Award in 1987. It's quite an achievement for one battalion to receive the award twice.

The 1990s saw several overseas deployments for the North Dakota Guard. In 1990, units that served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm included the 136th Quartermaster (QM) Battalion (PM) (Water Supply), including the 132nd and 134th QM Companies and the 131st and the 133rd QM Detachments, the 818th Medical Battalion, and the 191st Military Police Company. The 116th Public Affairs Detachment



**SGT SAMUEL
W. FLOBERG**

SGT Samuel W. Floberg, 188th Air Defense Artillery Security Forces, received the Bronze Star with "V" device for Valor, the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge in April 2007. His Purple Heart was from an incident on Nov. 23, 2006. While on a Vigilant Archer patrol, then-SPC Floberg received fire from three Rocket Propelled Grenades southwest of FOB Ghazni, Afghanistan. Floberg received the award for engaging the enemy while deployed in Afghanistan.

was reorganized into the 129th Public Affairs Detachment and federally mobilized in 1996 for service in Bosnia. The 129th returned home in 1997, the same year the North Dakota Army

in Kosovo repairing and constructing roadways.

POST 9/11

The new millennium would see the dawn of a new enemy for the Guard. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the North Dakota Guard was mobilized for Operation Noble Eagle, protecting citizens at home and their country by serving abroad in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

One such North Dakota Soldier, SSG Justin J. Lampert, who served in Iraq, exemplifies all that is good about the North Dakota Army National Guard. After defending Iraqi civilians from violent insurgents, he found himself under fire again, this time in the U.S.

While in Las Vegas, NV, in July 2007, Lampert subdued and disarmed a gunman who was firing at people at the New York New York Hotel and Casino, an action for which he was awarded the Soldier's Medal.

Service and self-sacrifice are obviously ingrained in Lampert's vocabulary. In April 2009, as floodwaters of the Red River near Fargo threatened civilian populations of North Dakota, Lampert again sprang into action. While stationed at Fort Benning, GA, on his own initiative he contacted the leadership of the North Dakota Guard and offered to help. Using personal leave, and paying for his own transportation, Lampert traveled from Georgia to Fargo, where he served as a member of a Quick Reaction Force.

Lampert and his fellow Guard Soldiers would provide quick response to breaks in dikes, construct and repair sandbag barriers, and

BLIZZARDS AND FLOODING IN 1997 LED TO THE LARGEST MOBILIZATION IN STATE HISTORY.

National Guard responded to state emergencies including blizzards and flooding, the largest Guard mobilization in North Dakota's history.

In 2000, approximately 150 Soldiers of Company B, 142nd Engineer Battalion served

conduct other actions necessary to protect both structures and civilians in harm's way.

Lampert's actions, protecting both his state and country, epitomize the spirit of North Dakota's Citizen-Soldiers. **GX**



The Bronze Star Medal

Compiled by Christian Anderson

According to U.S. Army Regulation 600-8-22, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded to any person who, while serving in any capacity in or with the Army of the United States after Dec. 6, 1941, distinguished himself or herself by heroic or meritorious achievement or service, not involving participation in aerial flight, in connection with military operations against an armed enemy; or while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. Awards may be made for acts of heroism, performed under circumstances described above, which are of lesser degree than required for the award of the Silver Star.



SPC Justin L. Pierce



OCTOBER 2007, IRAQ

WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD SPC JUSTIN L. PIERCE received the Bronze Star Medal with valor device for rescuing two Soldiers from a burning vehicle.

Pierce, a vehicle gunner with the 1041st Engineer Company, was traveling in a convoy escorting third-country nationals in northern Iraq. Midway through the trip, a roadside bomb exploded near the convoy, tearing Pierce's vehicle to shreds and trapping the passengers inside.

After freeing himself from the demolished vehicle, Pierce went to work freeing the driver and the truck commander from the burning vehicle and leading them to safety. **GX**

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD



SSG Ryan Klosterman



AUG. 7, 2003, DOWNTOWN BAGHDAD, IRAQ

IOWA NATIONAL GUARD SGT RYAN KLOSTERMAN and his platoon of the 186th Military Police Company were on a mission in downtown Baghdad when the lead vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED) and was incapacitated.

Klosterman exited his vehicle and ran to the damaged and burning vehicle, attempting to rescue those still trapped inside. Klosterman and a fellow Soldier removed a wounded Soldier from the vehicle and led him to the safety of a nearby building.

He removed his shirt and applied a tourniquet to the leg of the Soldier, preventing him from bleeding to death. He then ran upstairs and onto the roof of the building, saw an enemy with a weapon pointed at the Soldiers on the street and shot the enemy.

Due to the volume of fire being exchanged, the ambulance was unable to enter the area. Klosterman assisted in lifting the wounded Soldier onto a stretcher and ran him out of the building, where he and a medic placed the stretcher onto the hood of the unit's second vehicle.

Klosterman and several other Soldiers laid down fire, allowing the vehicle with the wounded Soldier to exit the area safely, and continued to do so until they were relieved by another American unit. **GX**

COURTESY OF THE IOWA NATIONAL GUARD



SPC Ashley Pullen



MARCH 20, 2005, BAGHDAD, IRAQ

KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD SPC ASHLEY PULLEN of the 617th Military Police Company was driving one of three Humvees providing security for a 30-vehicle convoy traveling in Iraq.

Suddenly, insurgents sprung a complex ambush and began pouring heavy fire from multiple directions, stopping the convoy in its tracks. Pullen's unit moved out from behind the convoy to flank the insurgents and

prevent them from escaping. Pullen's team began firing back.

Then she heard a call for help over the radio—there was an injured Soldier. She backed her Humvee into a better position, jumped out, and ran 90 meters through the line of fire toward the Soldier. She administered first aid and tried to calm him down. As she was treating him, another Soldier launched a shoulder-held rocket toward a nest of insurgents.

Although she was warned of the impending firing, Pullen couldn't move out of the way fast enough. She threw her small frame over the wounded Soldier to protect him from the blast, which threw her off the Soldier and onto her backside.

About 27 insurgents were killed during the fight, and six were injured. For her efforts, SPC Pullen was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" on June 16, 2005. **GX**

COURTESY OF THE KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

SHUTTER SPEED

SSG RUSSELL KLIKA'S JOURNEY WITH SPECIAL FORCES

*Intro by Keith Kawasaki
Captions by SSG Russell Klika*

Combat photographer SSG Russell Klika recently returned from eight months in Afghanistan with the 19th Group Special Forces. The core mission of the 19th Group was to train the Afghan National Army Commandos. Often traveling in teams of eight, these elite Warriors dug deep into the mountains of Afghanistan. With this photo feature, Klika takes us into the heart of the men and the soul of the country.



On the Road

DISPATCHES FROM THE FIELD



● This was taken at Torkham Gate on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. We were searching vehicles of people who were fleeing the fighting of the Swat offensive.

They desperately wanted to get out of the fighting and into Afghanistan. We were there to search the vehicles of fleeing refugees in an attempt to seize weapons and capture suspected terrorists fleeing the fighting in Pakistan and coming into Afghanistan.

This Special Forces Soldier was standing in front of a colorful "jingle truck."



● This is the famous Darulaman Palace in Kabul. The Russians occupied it when they were in Afghanistan.

Built in the 1920s, the palace was originally intended as a government building for King Amanullah Khan, but it has been torn apart by war and bloodshed for the past three decades, especially after the Russians left Afghanistan. The palace is amazing.



● Every time I see this photo, it reminds me of a mission I did in Iraq when I was on the 278th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Tennessee Army National Guard. This was outside of Bagram. We were in up-armored SUVs heading back to FOB Morehead. That morning, when we went through that area, the kids were shoveling snow. That is all they do; clean the streets of snow, rocks and debris. That morning, we saw this boy doing this, and that same evening, he was still there, working hard. It is a haunting image. Those kids, all they ever wanted was chocolate and gum, and here he was, breaking his back in nothing but a few layers of clothing.



● This is a vehicle search at the Torkham Gate during the Swat Valley offensive. The people put everything on top of [the buses]; sometimes they even put cars on top of them. They back up to a cliff and drive the car on top. The only colors you see in the Afghanistan landscape are browns and tans, so they paint their vehicles. They call them “jingle trucks.” One time, we even saw a monkey chained to the top, sitting next to people and chickens.



● This is an Afghan National Army Commando we rolled with during our stay in Afghanistan. Our primary mission was to train the Commandos in many different roles. This Commando had AK magazines and a Beretta M9 pistol strapped to his chest. I took this photo right before an Air Assault mission we took part in. The patches on his kit represent all the American Special Forces units he has been attached to. The Commandos take a lot of pride in whom they train and fight with. They want to be like us, and they take pride in that.

On the Road

SSG RUSSELL KLIKA

● You always see the kids running the stores. We would buy fruit from them, drink their soda and buy cigarettes from them. There were no name brands there. Everything was pretty much from Pakistan. We would exchange MREs for a bag of chips. The kids on that border were awesome. They weren't afraid of us; they would come right up. They carried slingshots and would shoot stuff at us. Kids being kids, you know?



● This girl's hair is dyed red like that from the henna they use for various religious and ceremonial reasons. Her hair was still wet when I saw her. She is actually riding on the back of her brother. Her eyes were amazing ... this little girl was absolutely beautiful. Basically, the kids take care of the kids in Afghanistan. Parental supervision is almost nonexistent. The kids were trying to get some candy and stuff from us. I kept getting closer and finally got a lucky shot. This was shot in the village of Qala-I-halim near forward operating base Gardiz.





● This is at the Ghazni Citadel, and while we were there, we conducted a re-enlist ceremony for several of our Special Forces Soldiers. The four Soldiers were excited to re-enlist, and they were adamant that I get a photo of them. They thought the Citadel was the perfect spot for the ceremony since there has been so much history here.



● We got reports of IEDs by the road up ahead, so we dismounted and took our bomb-sniffing dog with us. This is a combination of Afghan Commandos and American Special Forces searching for the IEDs. A local stopped us and told us of the explosives down the road. The locals were great. If there were IEDs, the locals, especially the kids, would tell us. These missions were unnerving. Any time you get out of the vehicle, you get nervous. I always rode in the back to take photos, so I never really was protected anyway. Being on foot was a little scary that day. We found them and blew them up in place. The mountains in the background are the Torah Bora.



● Talk about Western influence! This is a funny photo. Here are these big, bad Soldiers, armed to the teeth, and behind them is a weird looking bodybuilder poster with Arnold Schwarzenegger on it. We saw this during a supply run through Kabul.



● I had been wanting to capture this shot for quite some time. I wanted to get a Humvee in the background with some locals milling around in the foreground. This is from a humanitarian assistance and medical mission that we did. The Humvee is actually providing security, and the locals are walking by the graveyard, congregating to get free supplies and medical attention from the American Soldiers.

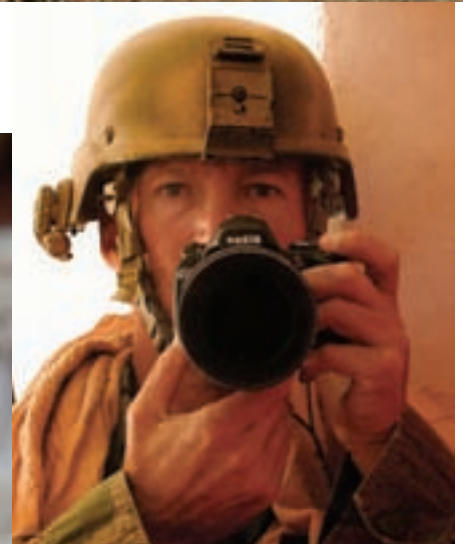


On the Road
SSG RUSSELL KLIKA

● This photo was shot at the Ghazni Citadel in Ghazni Province. The vehicle is descending from the top of the mountain and rolling through the town on a very rough road. We were on a combat recon patrol that day with the Commandos. The buildings in the picture were built by the British decades ago. To top that off, there were tons of Soviet weapons lying around. Tanks, artillery pieces, you name it, and it was there. It was unbelievable! I'm a history buff, and it was cool to be there. Over the years, there have been many battles here.



● This is my favorite portrait. This kid had nothing but hate in his eyes. Sabari was the town where I shot this. This was during a combat recon patrol with an active duty unit. The firebase kept getting bombed, so we went out to hunt the bad guys down. A squad with the 10th Mountain Division came out and walked with us. I have never been so scared in my life. The whole village had a look of hatred. We spent an hour and a half walking through the village and not one soul there talked to us. That was the only time that I really felt unsafe while in Afghanistan.



EDITOR'S NOTE: SSG Russell Klika has volunteered for deployment three times, taking him to Iraq twice and Afghanistan once. Here, he catches himself in action while on an operation.



◆ This Kabul woman is wearing the burka and carrying a child, and she is standing in the middle of the road begging. We were going out on a mission, and I was shooting on top of an MRAP. We were cruising by, and I saw her in the distance.



◆ The houses are stacked in Kabul. There are no roads up to them, just little paths that zigzag up the mountain. These houses kept on going up the mountain forever. All around Kabul, the houses are built like that.



Pathfinders

TRAINING TO BE THE **FIRST IN AND THE LAST OUT**

Story and photos by Bob Haskell

CPT JENNIFER SIMS decided it was time to learn how the other half lives. That's why she recently spent two intense weeks on Cape Cod, MA, training in one of the U.S. Army's most select infantry specialties. She became a Pathfinder.

Sims has been a Black Hawk helicopter pilot in the Georgia Army National Guard for about four years. She explained that she has worked with Pathfinders at Camp Merrill, home of the Army Ranger School's mountain training, near Dahlonega in northern Georgia, while flying students and instructors to remote landing zones and over drop zones for parachute jumps.

But she wanted to find out for herself what Pathfinders do. Now she knows. She earned the distinctive wing-and-torch Pathfinder Badge during a 14-day school at Camp Edwards on the western part of Cape Cod, MA, in mid-August.

Now, Sims and the 36 other graduates know how to set up a landing zone for the kinds of helicopters she flies and a drop zone for Airborne Soldiers, and the ways to sling load equipment and supplies for helicopter airlifts. She also has a better idea of what it means to go to a remote place first and make it possible for a lot of other Soldiers to follow her there.

"I wanted to see it from the ground perspective," said Sims, a couple of days before her class graduated on Aug. 21. "Believe me, it's a whole lot different from this end."

The Pathfinder was one of novelist James Fenimore Cooper's 19th-century *Leatherstocking Tales* that romanticized the adventure of the American frontier. Becoming a Pathfinder in the modern Army requires far more work than it does romance, even if it does call for a strong sense of adventure.

Air traffic control, medevac helicopter operations, sling-loading equipment and inspections, and establishing and operating helicopter landing zones and drop zones are the things that Pathfinders must know.

"I had no idea about all of the coordination and planning that goes into this," Sims said. "I didn't think that anything could be harder than flight school. This is much more intense because we have to absorb so much material so quickly."

Self-confidence and a strong sense of leadership are essential because, "Pathfinders control the operation; we're the first ones in and the last ones out," explained SSG Ben Raudszus during drop-zone training on a sweltering afternoon when Cape Cod seemed more like Cape Canaveral.

Raudszus was one of six instructors from the Army National Guard's Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, GA, who dished out the work, including 300 pages of reading, while conducting the course at Camp Edwards, where the Massachusetts Guard's Regional Training Institute hosted the training.

“PATHFINDERS HAVE TO BE SHARP. THEY’RE RESPONSIBLE FOR RUNNING A DROP ZONE OR LANDING ZONE. IF THEY HAVE A BAD DAY, A PIECE OF EQUIPMENT COULD GET DAMAGED OR SOLDIERS COULD GET HURT.”

>> SFC Jessie Parsons

The camp, run by the Massachusetts Army National Guard, occupies 15,000 of the 22,000-acre Massachusetts Military Reservation. The Pathfinder school and an Air Assault school that were run at the same time reflect the fact that Camp Edwards is reclaiming its status as the Northeast’s premier military training facility—especially for Reserve component personnel—now that some significant environmental issues have been resolved.

Today’s Pathfinders are descendants of the WWII paratroopers who were the first to jump into an area to set up and operate navigational aids for hundreds of paratroopers who would follow. The intent was to keep the transports on course and prevent the troops from being scattered all over the countryside. The disorganized airborne operations during invasions of North Africa and Sicily convinced the brass of the importance of sending a few people in first.

The practice didn’t always work. Pathfinders had little or no success designating drop zones before the D-Day invasion of France in June 1944, and most paratroopers did not land where they were supposed to, according to numerous accounts, including Stephen Ambrose’s book *D-Day*.

Still, that airborne operation was considered a success because airborne troops landed in so many places, giving the German High Command the impression that there were a lot more of them than there actually were. And the Army kept training Pathfinders.

Setting up landing zones and drop zones for helicopters is where the emphasis is today, because most troops and supplies are flown to remote areas on Black Hawks and Chinooks. Airborne has given way to Air Assault in most of today’s air mobile operations.



THERE HE IS! Pathfinder students at Camp Edwards, MA, direct an incoming Black Hawk to their drop zone.

“This is an important aspect of the Global War on Terrorism,” said SFC Jessie Parsons, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Pathfinder course at the Warrior Training Center. “Pathfinder is a critical need for air movement. You can’t get troops to most places in Afghanistan by ground. They have to be flown in. And they have to be resupplied by air”

“Most of the new students don’t know the amount of knowledge they must possess,” Parsons added. “That’s the biggest wake-up call for them. Pathfinders have to be sharp. They’re responsible for running a drop zone or landing zone. If they have a bad day, a piece of equipment could get damaged or Soldiers could get hurt.”

There was no shortage of sharp Army National Guard Soldiers among the 37 students who completed the school. Forty-two started, and the 88-percent completion rate was unusually high, Parsons explained.

Massachusetts SGT MacMasters stood out because he’s 52, he has a Combat Infantry Badge from Iraq, he’s the aquatics coordinator at Harvard University’s Blodgett Pool, and he swam the English Channel in 1994. It took him 12 hours and 10 minutes to swim the 21.5 miles from England to France. MacMasters also served 10 years in the Marine Corps, and he’s preparing for a tour in Afghanistan where he could make his bones as a Pathfinder.

CPL Brian Pastena, 26, would relish that opportunity. Like MacMasters, he’s an infantry Soldier in the Massachusetts Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 182nd Cavalry. He has already had one deployment to Iraq, and he’s anticipating a deployment to Afghanistan in a couple of years. Being a go-to guy for a Pathfinder mission would suit him just fine.

“I want to be the guy they come to when we’re overseas, to set up a helicopter landing zone or a drop zone,” Pastena said. “To be part of a Pathfinder team that does that would be really cool.” **GX**

Bob Haskell is a retired Army National Guard master sergeant and a freelance journalist in Falmouth, MA.



CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? Massachusetts National Guard CPL Brian Pastena signals a Black Hawk crew to drop its load over a drop zone at Camp Edwards, MA, during Pathfinder school in August.

MIRË MËNGJES, EMRI IM ËSHTË Z. STOWELL.

(ALBANIAN FOR
"GOOD MORNING,
MY NAME IS
MR. STOWELL.")



From Rifle to Ruler

SOLDIER TEACHES KOSOVAR CHILDREN

By SPC Richard Stowell

As Army National Guard Soldiers, we have opportunities to pursue civilian and military careers concurrently. I joined the Guard for precisely that reason—I love teaching, but I wanted to expand my skills and public service opportunities through the Guard.

When I was called up to deploy with California's 40th Infantry Division to Kosovo, I thought I would lose a year of my civilian career development. I was teaching high school math and teacher education courses at a Bay Area university before we shipped out to participate in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission.

One of the advantages of serving as a peacekeeper in Kosovo is to practice civilian skills within the framework of mission requirements.

As a Soldier and a teacher, I was able to combine two seemingly distinct skill sets on a visit to a school in the city of Gjilane in eastern Kosovo.

One of our maneuver elements, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, California National Guard, had invited me to Musa Zajmi, a primary school that they had adopted. We passed out textbooks and supplies, and Soldiers helped deliver an English lesson.

The brief time at Musa Zajmi brought back a flood of memories and the desire to get back into class—at the head of it. Having learned that I taught back in California, our host teacher invited me to deliver a math lesson at her school.

Musa Zajmi, named for a local WWII hero, is a cavernous building that smells like old textbooks and dust. The antiquity of the structure is contrasted by the energy and vitality of its staff and students. I arrived, as did the infantrymen before me, to cheers from the students.

BEING PREPARED

With the help of our unit interpreter and a math book written in Albanian, I prepared my



lesson on the *Teorema Pitagotras* (Pythagorean Theorem). The Guard instills the need for preparation in every task. The constant training we undergo as Soldiers reflects on the Guard's dedication to preparedness. Teaching math to at-risk youth in Oakland, CA, also underscored daily the need to be prepared. I used a five-step format analogous to the "crawl, walk, run" philosophy of Guard training.

The experience was exhilarating, yet nerve-racking. Dressed in my ACUs and carrying my issued weapon, I felt a little out of place, but the students were used to seeing KFOR Soldiers and put me at ease with their

» THE EIGHTH-GRADERS OVERWHELMINGLY ANSWERED THE QUESTION CORRECTLY, AND I LET THEM KNOW THE ITEM CAME FROM A 10TH-GRADE TEST THAT IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING IN THE U.S.

genuine desire to learn something new. I even impressed them a little with some recently acquired Albanian: *Mirë mëngjes, emri im është Z. Stowell.* (Good morning, my name is Mr. Stowell.)

A full day of teaching—six periods in all—was a pace I was used to back home. The demands of being a Soldier often pale in comparison to the energy needed to teach and manage classes all day. Again, my Guard experiences helped me out; adaptation and motivation kept me going until the end of the day.

The lessons went smoothly. Two teachers, a math instructor and their English teacher,

observed from the back of the class, helping translate when needed and assisting students with the guided practice activities.

POP QUIZ

The final phase of the lesson incorporated an ungraded test to see who was paying attention. It included a question that I selected from the California Standards Test, the state-wide standardized exam that nearly all public school children take every year.

The eighth-graders overwhelmingly answered the question correctly, and I let them know the item came from a 10th-grade test that is considered one of the most challenging in the U.S.

The staff and students seemed to love having us there—KFOR troops, particularly Americans, mean a lot to their community.

I have met several times since with their teachers to discuss instructional methods, theories and techniques. We're planning a follow-up visit, and one teacher is taking advantage of resources that I have provided her from California.

Being able to do what I love while serving on a military mission that promotes [America's] interests was a tremendous learning experience. It was a lot of fun, too.

The most important lesson I learned, though, was that teaching is a skill that can easily be lost. Through the Army National Guard, I've been able to maintain skills, improve others and learn new ones to help in my teaching.

I want to remain sharp, reflective and progressive. I am grateful to the staff at Musa Zajmi, and the Soldiers who keep Kosovo safe and secure, who gave me the opportunity to do so. **GX**

Fighting Spirit

▶ SHARP AND STRONG



Night Moves

Dale Jr. and his Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jeff Gordon jockey for position at the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

SPORTS

GX talks vacation spots with Dale Jr., recaps Jeff Gordon's inaugural year and talks with IndyCar veteran Doug Barnes.

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FITNESS

SGT Ken Hunts 4 Health.

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GEAR

The M107 Sniper Rifle: The Guard's Heavy Hitter

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For more on Dale Jr. and the No. 88 car, go to DaleJrGuardGarage.com



Land of Turquoise Waters

DALE JR. TALKS DOWNTIME AND MORE

By Clint Wood

Key West, FL, is known for its turquoise waters, awesome sport fishing, claiming the title of the diving capital of the world, and for being country singer Billy Currington's "second home."

It also is the place Dale Earnhardt, Jr., driver of the No. 88 AMP/National Guard Chevrolet, considers his favorite vacation spot.

"Everybody is just laid back, and the weather's always great," Dale Jr. told GX in an exclusive interview.

After checking the Internet for average temperatures during this October and November, I agree. They are 80.0 and 75.6 degrees.

Read below for GX's exclusive chat with Dale Jr.

GX: What is your favorite sport to watch besides racing?

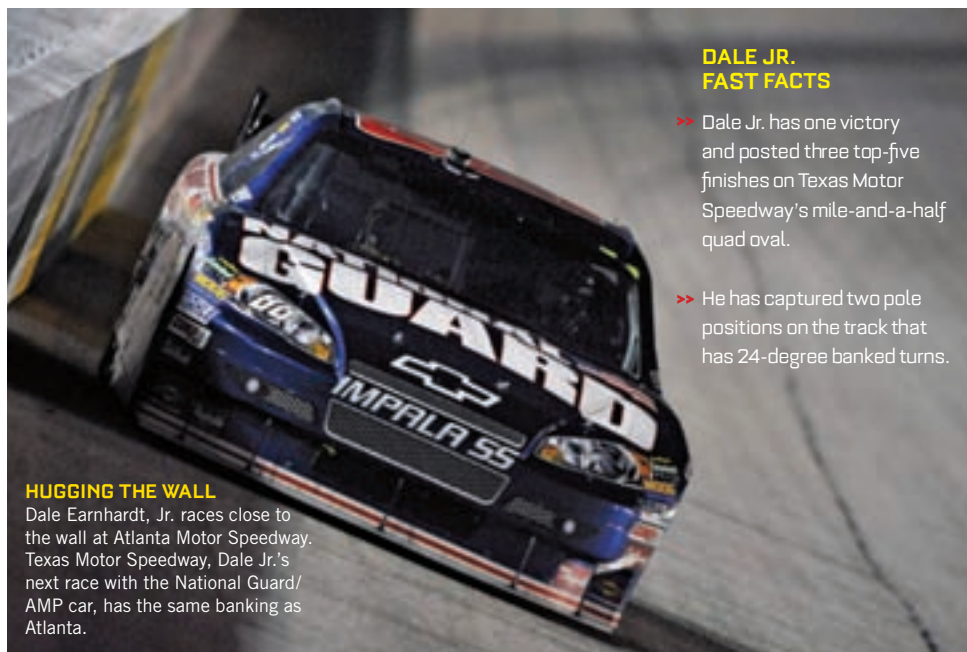
DJ: Football—the Washington Redskins.

GX: If you had the chance, who would you most like to meet?

DJ: Tom Hanks.

GX: How do you get the maximum airflow to the brakes?

DJ: We run air ducts to the brakes, and we build carbon fiber housings around the brake calipers and the rotors to route air directly into the rotor through the caliper. And all this is tested in wind tunnels to cool the brakes as best we can. **GX**



DALE JR. FAST FACTS

- Dale Jr. has one victory and posted three top-five finishes on Texas Motor Speedway's mile-and-a-half quad oval.
- He has captured two pole positions on the track that has 24-degree banked turns.

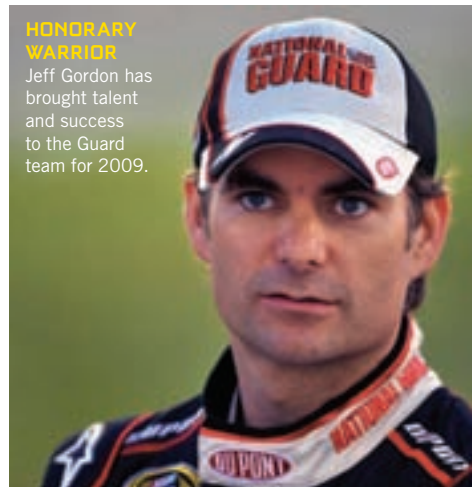
HUGGING THE WALL

Dale Earnhardt, Jr. races close to the wall at Atlanta Motor Speedway. Texas Motor Speedway, Dale Jr.'s next race with the National Guard/AMP car, has the same banking as Atlanta.

HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

HONORARY WARRIOR

Jeff Gordon has brought talent and success to the Guard team for 2009.



SPECIAL PROGRAM'S FINALE

GORDON ENDS GUARD SPONSORSHIP AT ONE OF HIS BETTER TRACKS

By Clint Wood

WHAT COULD BE A BETTER TRACK on the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series to host Jeff Gordon's season finale behind the wheel of the No. 24 Dupont/National Guard Chevrolet than Martinsville Speedway in October?

Of all the tracks this Series races on, this half-mile oval in Virginia is the shortest in distance and offers the best view of the action to the spectators in the stands or on the couch.

Martinsville also happens to be one of Gordon's better tracks. He has posted seven victories, including winning both races there in a single season—in April and October—in 2003 and 2005. To top it off, Gordon has grabbed 21 top-five finishes and captured seven pole positions at Martinsville.

His most recent tour around the "paperclip shaped" track was in March, when he finished fourth. **GX**

For more on Jeff, go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardracing/jeffgordon

Right Place, Right Time

GUARD TIRE CHANGER FIRST ON SCENE TO DOUSE FIRE

By Clint Wood

DOUG BARNES was at the right place at the right time.

This veteran crewmember for an IndyCar Series racing team, a left-front tire-changer for the No. 4 Panther Racing/National Guard car driven by Dan Wheldon, was one of the first on the scene to assist in extinguishing a fire in the cockpit of Tony Kanaan's car on pit road at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, July 26.

Footage of the accident clearly showed Barnes standing behind the pit wall using a fire extinguisher to spray the flames rising from the cockpit. He kept his hand on the trigger of the fire extinguisher as he climbed over the wall and walked up to the car. He was shaking the extinguisher's hose.

He aimed the extinguisher at the area where the fire started—where the fuel was poured into the car. The nozzle on the hose stuck open, and showered the car and Kanaan.

"You just kind of react," he commented. "You don't think about it. I just turned around and grabbed the thing, and away I went."

Members of other teams, including Team Penske and Target, also charged to the car carrying fire extinguishers and buckets of water.

Kanaan and his car were doused with water and chemicals. The driver suffered burns on his



WAITING FOR WHELDON

Doug Barnes, the left-front tire-changer for the No. 4 National Guard IndyCar Series car driven by Dan Wheldon, waits for Wheldon to make a pit stop during a recent race.

like he always does, watching the other teams work. Wheldon had just finished his pit stop.

"I just kind of noticed that the fuel was taking an awfully long time, and that's usually not good ... I've been around long enough to know when something's wrong down there,"

He said he could feel the heat of the fire. After the accident, he returned to concentrating on the race.

"It's in the back of your mind, thinking about it," he added. "I hope he's all right. You just go on with the rest of the day," he said.

"You don't think about it. I just turned around and grabbed the thing and away I went." >> Doug Barnes

thumb and face. This was his first pit stop of the race—and his first fire. The fuel ignited when it dripped on the engine's headers.

As he left his pit stall, the flames spread to the cockpit. He coasted down pit road. He said in news reports that he closed his eyes and held his breath.

SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT

Barnes, who has been with Panther Racing for 26 years, said he was looking down pit road

noted Barnes, who is the cousin of team owner John Barnes.

"And sure enough," Barnes continued, "as soon as he pulled over, I noticed something, and then I reacted—and just went for a fire [extinguisher]. And he just happened to stop right in front of us, so I was in the right place at the right time, I guess.

"Then there came the Penske guys," he continued. "We all try to help each other in that situation. We're all out there together."

CHECKING IN WITH DOUG BARNES

GX: What has it been like on the Guard team?

DB: It's good. They treat us good. We just try to make sure the car is running ... and be fan-friendly to all the people that come in ... make sure they enjoy their time around the car and everything. [We try to be] open to any questions they might have.

It's an honor to be with the National Guard. They represent a lot of people. We try to make sure we do the best for them, have a good showing and put it in victory lane. **GX**

For more on the National Guard IndyCar, go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardracing/irl.

Going into Battle

MAY WRAPS HIS HANDS BEFORE EACH RACE

Story and photos by Clint Wood / LEXINGTON, OH

I covered several AMA Superbike races while working as a motorsports reporter at a Minnesota daily newspaper for several years.

But after covering Geoff May, the No. 54 National Guard GSX-R 1000 Superbike pilot racing in the eighth round of the AMA Pro National Guard American Superbike Series at Mid-Ohio last summer, I learned something new.

He wraps both hands with bandages, much like a boxer before he steps into the ring. His fingers are exposed. He told me this prevents his hands from getting torn up after wrestling his 500-pound rocket through several turns.

As you learned in the *GX* 6.6 Sports section, May is barely hanging onto his Suzuki when he leans in and out of those turns.

I got an exclusive interview with May, who went on to finish eighth in that day's feature race. He finished eighth in season points with six top-five finishes, including three third-places.

GX: What has it been like racing for the Guard?

GM: It has been great. It has been a dream job for me. I've had more fun this year in my racing career than ever before, so I'm really excited. Hopefully things will keep going the way they are and I will be back again next year.

GX: How has the season been so far?

GM: It has been my first full year on full superbike, and we've had some moments of brilliance and we've had some really bad moments, where things didn't go the way we wanted. So I would have to say it has been a season of ups and downs so far. But, all in all, it has definitely been the most fun of any.

GX: What has it been like racing for Michael Jordan?

GM: It actually has kind of changed a little bit more since I'm racing for the Guard. There is a lot



READY, SET Geoff May, the No. 54 National Guard GSX-R 1000 Superbike pilot, pauses before the start of the second Superbike race at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

more focus on the Guard than Michael Jordan. For me, it's great that I can have a boss like him, who can provide us all the tools that we need and represent the Guard in a proper way. So we're not out there just fooling around. We've got all the tools of the trade and we're getting it done. **GX**

For more on the National Guard Superbike, go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/guardevents/superbike.

"It has been a dream job for me. I've had more fun this year in my racing career than ever before, so I'm really excited."

>> Geoff May



CORNER VISION Geoff May, the No. 54 National Guard GSX-R 1000 Superbike pilot, drags his knee leaning his 500-lb rocket into one of the 15 turns on the course.

OPERATION HUNTING 4 HEALTH

Total health starts here! By Ken and Stephanie Weichert

Top 10
Eating
Tips!
p. 94

Savory
Survival
Guide,
p. 95

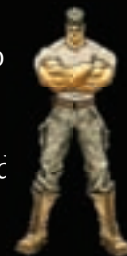
FOR YOUR
EYES ONLY

SGT Ken gets you
focused on your
health.



In addition to inquiries about exercise plans, we receive many more about how to lose weight. Because losing weight is a team effort between diet and exercise, we must address both issues in order to give you a complete weight loss guide.

In this issue, we wanted to provide you the tips you need for weight loss, coupled with real live success stories from readers who have changed their lives by changing their health through diet and exercise.



“I was excited to learn this morning that I lost more than 20 pounds in two months in SGT Ken’s and Stephanie’s program! Between their nutrition plan and workouts, I will soon be ready to ship to Basic Training! Hooah!!”

—PFC Lee Wilson, Tennessee Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program

Here is the deal—in order to make a difference, you will have to make a change.

People approach us all of the time about what they can do to get in shape. We can always tell where their level of motivation is by:

1. Their immediate response
2. How they utilize the information we provide them

For example, one individual who wanted to lose more than 100 pounds contacted us.

The problem was that he wasn’t willing to change his lifestyle to achieve his goal. We told him that his best bet was to modify his diet in stages.

He could first begin by cutting down on his overall daily volume of food and stop drinking soda.

We told him to couple these modifications with a 15- to 20-minute walk 2–3 times per week and a check-in with his doctor

Two weeks later, he told us that he hadn’t lost a single pound. We weren’t surprised when he disclosed the fact that he was unwilling to change his diet, and he hadn’t found the time for even a moderate amount of exercise.

Bottom line is, he hadn’t changed a thing about his lifestyle.

How much do you want better health?

Don’t get us wrong—this process can be difficult. It isn’t about a diet or a fad; it is about changing your life.

Ready to make the change? Here are tips to help you get started:

STEP 1 Be Resolute

STOP THINKING ABOUT IT AND START DOING. Start today! We are commonly told, “I will start my new plan on Monday.” What happens is that most

people that say that will splurge until Monday and may never even begin the new diet. Your diet should not be treated like a Mardi Gras celebration.

DEVISE A PLAN. In this issue, we included an excerpt from our “Savory Survival Guide.” In our excerpt, we share our personal meal plan from a

typical Monday. If you want the entire week, you can go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness.

WRITE IT DOWN. In addition to our routine meal plan, we like to write new healthy nutrition ideas on Post-it notes and place them on the refrigerator. It’s a great location for posting reminders to keep you on track!

STEP 2 Be Accountable

Calories add up when you sneak a little here and add a few there. For example, if you splurged on lunch, write it down so that you won’t add the

extra calories in for a snack or at dinner. Writing it down helps you with what we call “eating amnesia.” We all forget the snacks that we sneak in at times. Other snack or meal recording methods are to track your calories online or on a phone application. Many programs and applications are free of charge.

STEP 3 Be Thorough

When you look back through your food journal, watch for repetition of unhealthy foods or liquids. We use the term “junk food” for foods and liquids filled with sugar, saturated fats and preservatives. Some people crave sweets because they are using sugar instead of protein for the energy they need. As they get tired, they may consume a drink marked as an “energy drink” or eat snacks commonly used at Halloween festivities. This gives them an instant energy rush, but ultimately leaves them with less energy than they started with. Others grab potato chips instead of fruit or vegetables.

Those who eat junk food regularly claim that they are too busy to make something healthy or can’t afford it. With steps one and two above, you are more than likely to make the time to add healthy foods to your diet.

Those who claim they can’t afford healthy foods will potentially pay more in healthcare visits as their health is ruined through continued consumption of junk foods.

Our best food shopping advice is to purchase most of your items from the outer walls of the food store. Most food stores place fresh fruits, vegetables and natural foods against the outer walls. The inside lanes are where you might find most of the over-processed and lifeless foods that produce little enzyme activity and contain little or no fibrous material.

CASE STUDIES

CONFIDENTIAL

We met Alex (a Guard applicant) and Richard (a Guard Soldier) via email. Both of them wanted to lose weight and get in better physical condition.

We began their programs by calling them and talking through their dietary habits. We came up with a plan that included food guidelines and simple workouts. Over the course of five months, we followed their progress.

Instead of giving them a long list of changes, we first taught them the basics of healthy eating (Phase 1). As they became adjusted to their new diet strategy, we added personalized diet tips for making permanent changes (Phase 2).

When you set uncomplicated and realistic expectations for yourself, you’ll be much more likely to meet them. Going cold turkey on every bad eating habit at once isn’t likely to last.

* Follow the success of Alex and Richard on pages 92–93.

ALEX

BEFORE HUNTING 4 HEALTH:

OBJECTIVE: To join the Guard

OBSTACLE: Must lose weight to qualify

AGE: 22

GENDER: Male

WEIGHT AS OF MARCH 30, 2009: 306 lbs.

WORKOUT FREQUENCY: Three times per week

TYPICAL DAILY DIET:

9 a.m.: Wake up

9:30 a.m.: 20-oz. bottle of orange juice

10:15 a.m.: Two packs of instant strawberry oatmeal

1 p.m.: 20-oz. bottle of Gatorade

1:30 p.m.: Large bag of Cheez-Its or popcorn

6:30 p.m.: One or more of the following: Tacos with rice, deep fried tacos or hamburgers

OPERATION HUNTING 4 HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALEX:

PHASE 1

Basic diet improvements

Our first recommendation for Alex was to eat breakfast earlier than 9:30 a.m. We suggested that he consume plain oatmeal or steel-cut oats, add a bit of honey for sweet flavor, and occasionally add a small number of walnuts and raisins or fresh fruit. Plain oatmeal includes a larger particle size and more nutrient density. His instant strawberry oatmeal is loaded with sodium and sugar.

We suggested that Alex drink much more water and add in a variety of colorful vegetables (such as dark and leafy as well as red bell peppers, etc.) to his diet. We continued by telling him to cut out the fried foods and add lean meats to create a balanced diet. We also suggested that Alex look for healthful snack alternatives to Cheez-Its, such as fruit and vegetables. Finally, our initial advice to him included adding fiber to his diet.

PHASE 2

Personalized diet tips

- Add fruits and vegetables
- Cut out junk foods (fried foods, sweets and his instant strawberry flavored oatmeal)
- Eat less red meat
- Cut sodas and energy drinks (although it wasn't in his food diary, he admitted to drinking both regularly)
- Drink more water (approx. 128 ounces/one gallon per day; total varies by individual)
- Use workouts from *GX* magazine five times per week

APRIL 6, 2009

Alex writes:

Just wanted to give you an update on how everything was going. I have taken your advice very seriously. I have not touched a can of soda since I last talked to you. I have also not touched fast food since then either. I have lost eight pounds, and I am still going strong. Thank you so much!

AUG. 22, 2009

Alex writes:

I had a goal of losing at least 80 pounds. Stephanie showed me how to cut down on portions and how to improve my metabolism when I eat. I'm eating less and have become a lot smarter about what I eat. After a complete overhaul of my eating habits, SGT Ken sent me a very intense workout to follow. They've really helped me change my habits. Since March, I've lost 34 lbs. I'm sticking to my diet and making a better effort to get to the gym. Thank you so much, Weicherts! You are truly making me strong!

AFTER HUNTING 4 HEALTH:

WEIGHT AS OF AUG. 30, 2009: 272 lbs.

WEIGHT LOSS OVER FIVE MONTHS: 34 lbs.

CURRENT STATUS: His waistline is wasting away!

I was gaining weight before I started this program. In one month, I lost seven pounds and performed 10 more push-ups and sit-ups and shaved off a minute in the 2-mile run during the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). This program ROCKS!"

—PFC Trebor Brown, Tennessee Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program

RICHARD

BEFORE HUNTING 4 HEALTH:

OBJECTIVE: To lose weight and get in better physical condition

OBSTACLE: Limited amount of time

CAREER: Army National Guard Chaplain recruiter; attending seminary full-time

AGE: 32

GENDER: Male

WEIGHT AS OF APRIL 30, 2009: 213 lbs.

WORKOUT FREQUENCY: Three times per week

TYPICAL DAILY MENU:

7 a.m.: Wake up

7:30 a.m.: 1 cup of Cheerios, Corn Flakes or Life cereal and half a banana with milk or an egg

10 a.m.: Celery with 4 tablespoons of peanut butter, or a half-cup of mixed nuts, or a granola bar, or an apple

12 p.m.: Turkey sandwich with whole wheat bread, mayo, mustard, cheddar or mozzarella cheese and lettuce with yogurt or fruit (apple or tangerine)

3:00 p.m.: Mixed nuts or granola bar

5:30 p.m.: Minestrone soup or spaghetti and meatballs, nachos and ground beef, enchiladas, or Spanish rice or tacos

OPERATION HUNTING 4 HEALTH

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RICHARD:

PHASE 1

Basic diet improvements

Richard's diet didn't need a major overhaul. His diet simply needed some fine-tuning. His breakfast was good. We especially liked the protein from the egg and the insoluble fiber in the Cheerios. We suggested that Richard cut down on the amount and frequency of consumption of mixed nuts and peanut butter. Nuts in small portions can be good for your diet, but like most naturally high-fat items, they must be consumed in moderation.

We also suggested breaking up his lunch into smaller portions. For example, eat the sandwich and finish with the yogurt and fruit a couple of hours later. Dinner was the meal where we asked for significant changes. Most of the items on the dinner menu included red meat. This meant that Richard was

eating red meat nearly every day. We asked him to substitute the red meat with fish, turkey or chicken.

PHASE 2

Personalized diet tips

- Add fruits and vegetables to diet
- Cut out junk foods, such as fried foods
- Eat more fish and chicken
- Eat less red meat and substantially less saturated fats
- Use workouts from *GX* magazine five times per week

AUG. 22, 2009

Richard writes:

I have always been very busy with work and did not have a lot of time for fitness. As a result, I saw my health crumble a great deal. I came across www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness as I was searching the Internet for answers to my diet and fitness concerns. I emailed for help, and Ken and Stephanie Weichert immediately responded with fitness and diet information.

I went to work. After a month, I could feel the changes and, soon, I could see them. I was still very busy, but I didn't feel as stressed. My sleep got better, I was able to relax more, and I felt better about myself because I was looking better. It has been about five months now. I haven't reached my weight goal yet, but I've seen the results so far, and I know that there will be more to come.

I feel great. I feel like I'm in control of my body now. My mind even works better. Thank you, Ken and Stephanie, for all your support. I'm on your program for life.

AFTER HUNTING 4 HEALTH:

WEIGHT AS OF AUG. 30, 2009: 196 lbs.

WEIGHT LOSS OVER FIVE MONTHS: 17 lbs.

CURRENT STATUS:

- Eats smaller portions
- Eats more fish and chicken
- Eats less saturated fat
- Substitutes lean ground turkey for red meat
- Eats more fruits and vegetables
- Sleeps better
- Feels better, not consumed by stress

APFT IMPROVEMENTS: Increased 10 push-ups and sit-ups, ran two minutes faster in the 2-mile run



Top 10 Healthy Eating Tips

1. Stop focusing on what you can't have. Focus on what you can have. The idea is changing your relationship with food.
2. Eat five to six small meals daily instead of three large meals. This will stimulate your metabolism throughout the day.
3. Don't justify unhealthy eating with excuses. Example: Celebrating a friend's birthday with unhealthy foods or an abundance of alcohol is not an acceptable reason to cheat with your diet.
4. Don't spike up your calories with unhealthy drinks. What you add to your favorite coffee drink counts toward the bottom line of your daily allotment of calories. Calories from juices add up quickly as well. Drink water! Some of the benefits of drinking clean water are an increased metabolism, boosted energy levels and less water retention. Water also washes toxins out of your body.
5. Look for healthy snack or appetizer substitutions. Have a craving for something sweet? Try eating an apple. Replace breads and pastas with vegetables. Replace chips or French fries with fresh fruit for your side dish during lunch.
6. Eat insoluble fiber every day. Example: Plain oatmeal or steel-cut oats.
7. Try cutting "white foods" out of your diet. These include cake, ice cream, bread and pasta.
8. Drink one to two full glasses of water prior to eating your meal. This will trick your body into feeling full sooner.
9. When out at a restaurant, cut your portion in half right away (or more depending on the portion size). Have the remainder placed in a "to go" box.
10. Abstain from items like a daily cookie, alcoholic beverage, candy or soda. When you do make a diet change, understand that at first, your body will detoxify. You may go through withdrawals. Eventually, your body will no longer crave unhealthy items.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TRACK: *body weight or body fat?*

CALCULATING BODY FAT MEASUREMENTS is the best method for estimating weight loss. **Note:** When people tell us they want to lose weight, they usually mean they want to lose body fat.

Step 1: Calculate your body fat measurement.

Once you have properly determined your current body fat measurement, it's important to know the percentage you may need to reach to achieve a healthier standard of living.

There are many methods for determining body fat—a home body fat scale; skin fold calipers; measuring tape (Army standard); and hydrostatic weighing. Find the method that's best for you.

Step 2: Determine your ideal body fat percentage.

According to the American Council on Exercise (ACE), a certain amount of fat is essential to bodily functions. Body fat regulates body temperature, cushions and insulates organs and tissues, and is the main form of energy storage for the body.

The following table describes body fat ranges and their associated categories:

Women

Essential fat needed: 10–12%
Athletic range: 13–20%
Good fitness range: 21–24%
Acceptable range: 25–31%
Obese range: 32% and up

Men

Essential fat needed: 2–4%
Athletic range: 5–13%
Good fitness range: 14–17%
Acceptable range: 18–25%
Obese range: 26% and up

Note: For Army body fat measurement standards, refer to Army Regulation 600-9, Army Weight Control Program (prior and current service), or Army Regulation 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness (non-prior service).

“I started this program weighing 209 pounds. I now weigh 182 pounds in just two months! My APFT scores have improved a lot. I thoroughly enjoy this program! Hooah!”
 —PV2 Andrew Atwood, Tennessee Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program



Would you like to know what SGT Ken eats? Here's a sneak peek at his *Savory Survival Guide*.

Monday Meal Strategy

Breakfast

- Scrambled egg whites (2-3 eggs) with mushrooms, arugula, avocado (half), and 4 oz. of cooked chicken (skinless)
- Fresh fruit
- Hot tea (black), with a small amount of honey and soy milk
- Water (16 oz.)

Mid-morning snack

- Red bell pepper, sliced into strips, with half a cup of hummus
- Water (16 oz.)

Lunch

- Grilled salmon (4-6 oz.) over fresh spinach, walnuts, raisins and a small amount of light balsamic vinaigrette
- Water (16 oz.)

Pre-dinner snack

- Granola
- Fresh fruit
- Water (16 oz.)

Post-workout snack

- Whey protein (30 g.) smoothie with blueberries, banana, strawberries and soy milk (24 oz.)
- Water (16 oz.)

Dinner

- Boiled, baked or grilled chicken (6-7 oz.) over brown rice and steamed vegetables
- Water (16 oz.)

Note: Additional water is consumed between meals in order to meet a daily total of 128 oz.

Get the complete *Savory Survival Guide* at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness.

Watch fitness videos and download workouts at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness or email SGTken@GXonline.com.

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath.



EVAN BAINES

KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors. Ken is currently a staff sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard.

Mississippi MUSCLE

CAMP SHELBY HOSTS MASSIVE GUARD PT EVENT

~ Story and photos by Clint Wood ~

As an Army National Guard
Soldier, I'm "always ready."

Same goes for my civilian job. It was
short notice when I was sent down to
Camp Shelby. But I couldn't wait to go.

This event was going to be huge.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

GX's Ken Weichert leads calisthenics for more than 850 Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers at Camp Shelby, MS.



WARFACE A Soldier from the 155th BCT shows his high spirit during SGT Ken's fitness training at Camp Shelby, MS, on June 5, 2009.

THE EVENT was "Operation Stay the Course" on June 5 at Camp Shelby, MS. GX's Ken Weichert, aka Army National Guard Master Fitness Trainer SGT Ken, led one of the largest Army National Guard physical fitness training sessions on the camp's grassy parade field. I witnessed the session from the gunner's seat, or "hell hole," of a Huey helicopter hovering at treetop level.

More than 850 Soldiers from the Mississippi Army National Guard's 155th Brigade Combat Team participated on the camp's parade field in this follow-up program for Operation Fit to Fight (OPF2F). As some of you know, OPF2F is a comprehensive fitness and nutrition instructor-training program designed to prepare Soldiers for overseas deployments and to ready new Guard Warriors for the rigors of Basic Combat Training (BCT). Soldiers have to go from executing Side-Straddle-Hops (jumping jacks)

for 30 seconds in cadence to 20 seconds each of sprinting in place and the much-dreaded mountain climbs. The pre-deployment health and

"It was just motivating being out there with so many Soldiers."

—SGT David McGriff, two-time OPF2F participant

fitness program lasts more than 40 minutes, during which Weichert barks out commands like, "Failure to shout 'Hooah' at the right time could result in extra push-ups!"

More than 400 of the brigade's 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Soldiers were the first Guard Soldiers to train in OPF2F in June 2008 on one of the camp's forward operating bases. They did

the exercises on jagged rocks instead of grass to simulate the conditions they'd encounter at bases in Iraq.

I can tell you from experience, if we hadn't walked on those rocks to and from buildings and other living areas in Iraq, we would have slipped and slid in the gooey mud after the rains.

SGT David McGriff participated in both operations.

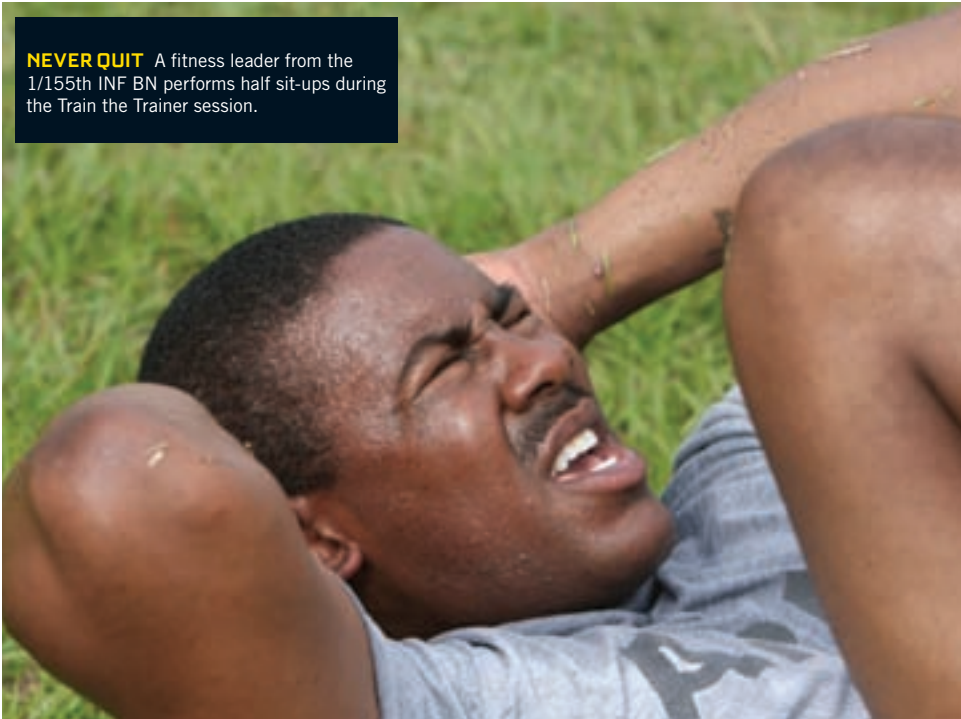
"It was just motivating being out there with so many Soldiers," he said. He was impressed with their determination to keep exercising despite pain and discomfort.

How intense can this routine be?

McGriff, who averages between 210 and 220 on his Army Physical Fitness Test, described the intensity as "amazing."

"We were at the point where we forgot about the time limits," he noted. "If you asked me

NEVER QUIT A fitness leader from the 1/155th INF BN performs half sit-ups during the Train the Trainer session.



BACK TO BASICS GX's Ken Weichert leads 52 Soldiers from the 155th BCT through fitness instructor training at Camp Shelby, MS, on June 5, 2009.



NO PAIN, NO GAIN Fitness leaders from the 1/155th INF BN perform elevated push-ups during the Train the Trainer session.

how long I thought we were out there, I wouldn't be able to tell you."

SGT Marlin Gattlin, whose lowest APFT score is 289, said there's always room for improvement in his physical fitness. An interesting statement coming from this gangly Soldier who could pass as a track sprinter, and can crank out 104 push-ups and 90 sit-ups.

"All PT I take as a challenge, even if I'm getting smoked," he admitted.

I don't think SFC Kenneth Coxy got "smoked" when it came to doing the upper body exercises of the session. His biceps were as large as my thighs.

But Coxy, the coordinator for the BCT commander's Personal Security Detachment and a sheriff's deputy, said the session was still "real intense" compared to his workouts. And one wasn't

enough. He and McGriff were among the more than 50 BCT Soldiers spending six hours earning the title as Fit to Fight trainers. To earn this title, the Warriors had to participate in a 30-minute Fit to Fight session on a grassy field. Soldiers driving by the field slowed down to watch.

The classroom instruction included combat fitness training, long- and short-distance running training and nutrition. **GX**

Watch testimonials from these high-speed Soldiers at: YouTube.com/nationalguard

Smoking the Younger Soldiers

While photographing the Train the Trainer session, I couldn't help but notice an older Soldier in the front row of the formation "kicking butt."

And the 42-year-old SSG Walter Mullins had good reason.

The former Navy Sailor said his personal goal is to stay fit.

"I want to stay in shape as long as I can," commented Mullins, who was told he qualified for the Navy's Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training after taking his first physical fitness test in boot camp. BUD/S is a prerequisite before SEAL training.

He described SGT Ken's exercise routine the same way he described SEAL training: "intense."

"My abs are still burning," he admitted.

Mullins, who paints semi-trucks for a living, joined the West Virginia Guard for his first time and



served from 1986 to 1988.

He rejoined the Mississippi Guard in 1996.

He has been deployed

once to Iraq from Dec. 7,

2003 until Jan. 5, 2005,

stationed four miles from Fallujah.

DEEP IMPACT SSGs Walter Mullins, left, and Annie Adam perform squats during the Train the Trainer session.

Smoking the Guys

SSG Annie Adam of the District of Columbia Guard didn't even break a sweat during the Train the Trainer session. She was definitely in shape.

When asked if she knew she was outperforming most of the male Soldiers in this class, the 24-year-old intelligence analyst smiled, "Yeah, that happens. It feels nice to get out there and show some people up, because I've worked really hard to get to [this] place."

She said fitness is very important to her. At home, she runs five to 10 miles a day, at least six days a week and works out at the gym two to three times a week. In this training environment, she runs three to six miles daily.

So what did she think of the battalion PT session? She said she was skeptical because of the size of the formation.

"But once I got out there, as soon as ... SGT Ken started his routine, I knew that I was going to be in for a pretty good PT session," she explained. **GX**

>> SGT Ken led the formation from a flatbed trailer. Here's his story.

From the Grassy Field

By Ken Weichert

AT 7 A.M., I could already feel the sweltering Mississippi summer heat rising from the moist, grassy field at Camp Shelby.

"Fall in!" shouted CSM Johnny Marlow. His piercing order sent a horde of several hundred screaming Soldiers running toward the flatbed truck stage. They stopped suddenly, leaping distance from the truck.

Marlow leaned over to me and said, "They're all yours."

When the troops were formed and ready, the high-energy exercise music came blasting through the speakers, signifying the start of the workout.

At first, some chuckled at this new style of military aerobic conditioning. But smiles turned to grimaces when the muscle-targeting phase kicked in.

Halfway into the lower-body session, some fell to their knees in complete exhaustion, and some tasted their breakfast a second time.

As the focus shifted to upper-body training, the entire battalion probably started to realize they would feel the effects of this program for days to come.

I held up a deck of oversized playing cards and announced, "Whatever card I draw, you drop and do that many push-ups, shout 'Hooah' on the last push-up, roll over and do double in crunches, shout 'Hooah' on the last crunch, and jump up and do jumping jacks until the next card! If you are up early, motivate somebody else! Do you get me?"

"HOOAH!" responded the Soldiers.

By the time the seventh card was drawn, muscle fatigue had quickly overwhelmed most of the mob.

"The louder you are, the fewer cards we play!" I shouted.

With my last statement, the crowd grew much louder, indicating a universal desire to establish a swift cease-fire.

"It's the type of training that prepares you for combat, Soldiers!" I shouted to what may have been the largest fitness formation in Guard history. "Are you gonna quit?"

"NEVER!" responded the Soldiers.

"Are you fired up?" I shouted.

"HOOAH!" responded the Soldiers.

Near the end of this 40-minute workout, I bellowed, "Hang on a few more minutes, Soldiers! Quitting is not an option! Do you get me?"

"HOOAH!" cheered the Soldiers.

Finally, with less than a minute remaining, I lifted my arms to attract their attention and began the final countdown: "10, 9, 8 (crowd joining in), 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1!"

"Ate ease!"

"You did it! How do you feel?"

The answer was a deafening applause that could no doubt be heard for miles. **GX**



A NEW CLASS OF LEADERS GX's Ken Weichert poses with 52 of the newest fitness instructors after the Train the Trainer session at Camp Shelby.



FOLLOW OUR LEAD GX's Ken Weichert and his fitness leadership team drive the massive formation through a series of push-ups.

THE **M107** SNIPER RIFLE

THE GUARD'S HEAVY HITTER

By Christian Anderson

**THE M107 CAN
FIRE 10 ROUNDS
IN 10 SECONDS.
THAT IS A WHOLE
LOT OF HURT
RAINING DOWN
ON THE ENEMY.**

PROTECTOR OF MEN

The M107 allows this Soldier to provide overwatch for his unit and precision covering fire, if needed.



NO, IT'S NOT A BIRD, it's not a plane, and it certainly isn't Superman. It is a .50 cal bullet coming from a sniper rifle on steroids: the M107 Barrett.

THE BIG BANG THEORY

Developed in the early 1980s, this weapon has revolutionized the art of sniper and counter sniper operations. The military wanted to offer frontline Soldiers the power and destruction of a .50 caliber bullet in a shoulder-fired platform and hence created the M107. The M2 Browning Machine Gun is a perfectly capable weapon, but way too cumbersome for a Soldier to carry around, especially in places like, oh, shall we say, Afghanistan? Enter the semi-automatic M107 Sniper Rifle, a weapon that has changed the craft of sniping forever.

Traditional weapons, such as bolt-action rifles and their more modern counterpart, semi-automatic rifles, have allowed snipers to engage targets out to only a certain distance, limiting their effectiveness in wide open terrain and urban areas. The 5.56 round is generally effective out to 600 yards, with the 7.62 round being effective out to 1,000 yards. For anything farther out, the Soldier must call in Air Support or Artillery, move closer to engage the enemy (easier said than done) or simply hunker down. Finally, thanks to the M107, the Soldier

has another option: Shoot at the enemy from a mile or more! Now, a Guard Soldier can use the M107 in the anti-personnel, anti-material and Explosive Ordnance Disposal modes, all at ranges in excess of 2,000 yards.

RAPID FIRE

One of the benefits of the M107 is that it can spew its awesome firepower much faster than bolt-action sniper rifles. With a traditional bolt-action rifle, the user has to reload a new shell after each shot manually, slowing target acquisition and possibly giving away their position with movement. With the M107, all the user has to do is pull the trigger, time after time. The M107 is so mechanically efficient that it can fire 10 rounds in 10 seconds. That is a whole lot of hurt raining down on the enemy in a short period of time.

PUT THROUGH THE RINGER

The M107 has earned many a Soldier's praise for its accuracy and firepower since its inception in 1982, and it has performed remarkably in combat. This weapon is built to perform in some of the most extreme climates in the world, and its durability is being proven right now. Countless M107s are being put to the test in Iraq and Afghanistan. **GX**



Front sight: .070 inch flip up (1.78 mm) wide post
Rear sight: .065 inch flip up (1.65 mm) aperture, 1,500 meter adjustable
Sight radius: 23.3 inches (59 cm)
Scope rail: 24 inches (61 cm) long

Caliber: .50 BMG
Barrel lengths: 29 inches (73.7 cm)
 20 inches (50.8 cm)
Barrel twist: Right, 1 in 15 inches (38 cm)
Weights: 30.9 lbs (14.0 kg) (with 29-inch barrel)
 29.7 lbs (13.5 kg) (with 20-inch barrel)
Length assembled: 57 inches (145 cm) (with 29-inch barrel)
 48 inches (122 cm) (with 20-inch barrel)

Features & accessories
 M1913-style steel optics rail, 27 MOA elevation
 10-round magazine
 Chrome chamber on 29-inch barrel
 Chrome chamber and bore on 20-inch barrel
 Dual barrel springs
 Pelican case
 Cleaning kit



A GOOD CAUSE
Dave Litteral has been selling hotdogs in the Nashville, TN, area to raise money for his foundation, the Veterans Restoration Project.



TAKING A STAND FOR VETERANS

How Vietnam Veteran **Dave Litteral** turns lives around with his selfless service *By Camille Breland | Photos by Clint Wood*



Dave Litteral was waiting patiently at the local Applebee's, carefully stirring his steamy coffee. The restaurant buzzed with a lunch-break energy, but nothing matched the passion that exuded from Dave—a humble man on a mission.

I was there to interview him about the Veterans Restoration Project, a charity he founded in 1995 after battling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for 26 years.

As the hostess led me to his booth near the back of the room, I immediately felt comforted by his gentle eyes and welcoming demeanor. Based on his modest appearance, I would have never known the incomprehensible trials and triumphs this Vietnam Veteran had encountered in his 60 years.

"I'm the least likely guy to do what I do," he quickly assured me as I took a seat across from him. But as I listened to him talk about his life and goals over the next couple of hours, I became more and more certain that he was mistaken. He is, in fact, the perfect man to do what he does—bringing hope to Veterans in need.

GOING TO WAR

Dave grew up near Nashville, TN, in a modest home. He liked to hunt, fish, play football and run track, and he loved gospel music—singing, playing and listening to its inspiring messages.

He was a senior in high school in 1968–69, during the height of the Vietnam War, and while most of his friends made plans to go to college or join the service, Dave decided to take a few months off after graduation to figure out what he wanted to do next.

On Dec. 1, 1969, politicians at the Selective Service National Headquarters drew Dave's birthday, Sept. 8, as the 184th lottery number to be drafted for the war. Shortly thereafter, he was attending boot camp at Fort Campbell, KY, and training as a stock control and accounting specialist. He touched ground in Vietnam only five months later, on May 11, 1970.

His original mission was to set up direct exchange facilities and assist in training South Vietnamese Soldiers in military procedures so they could continue fighting the North Vietnamese.



BACKTRACKS
Dave Litteral poses for a few snapshots during his 11-month tour in Vietnam.



When he finally read it, he understood why he had been suffering all this time.

“There was a list of 40 symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder,” he said. “I had every single one of them.”

Though Dave had always wanted to heal, his life didn’t begin to change until after he realized he had PTSD.

Through incessant prayer and the strength of his family and friends, Dave began to slowly overcome the anxiety, anger and hate toward himself and others that he had harbored for so long. He also found solace in helping other Veterans and sharing his story.

“I just started telling guys they didn’t have to live the way they were living—tormented,” Dave remarked. “It seems that I have to go through things before I can help other people.”

So, in 1995, he began his new mission: helping Veterans—of any war—in need. He founded the project and hasn’t looked back.

RESTORE AND RENEW

The Veterans Restoration Project consists of several programs that support our nation’s service members. Dave hosts a monthly support group where men and women can connect with other Vets.

But Dave ended up working other, more dangerous, missions. His best friend in country, Mack, was in charge of delivering for the Red Ball Express and asked Dave to ride shotgun with him on their assignments.

Their job was to transport high-priority requisitions to Soldiers in the field, even during the heat of battle. They were gone for long periods of time—sometimes days—without knowing exactly where they were going or what kind of scenes they would encounter when they arrived.

After eight months of the express, and 11 total in Vietnam, Dave returned home to a nation that less than favored what he had just spent almost a year doing.

Like many others, Dave had a hard time adjusting to life back in the States. He started drinking and spent the next few years intoxicated without understanding why. He held 20 jobs in a 15-year period, and assumed that was normal. He knew he was angry and depressed, but thought it was his nature.

His best friend Mack, who Dave said is “the only man besides my father that I knew would lay down his life for me,” called when he returned to the U.S., and Dave told him he never wanted to see him again. “I never stopped to ask myself why I did things like that,” he confessed. “I couldn’t trust anyone with authority at all. I couldn’t sleep until the sun came up.”

He lived like this for more than two decades, harming his relationships with family and friends and becoming physically and mentally worn out.

Dave began hearing voices and experiencing blackouts in the day—without alcohol or drugs.

He had hit rock bottom—and considered taking his own life.

A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Then one day, as he was browsing in a bookstore, he was compelled to pick up a book about Vietnam written by a Vet.



COURTESY OF DAVE LITTERAL

He also owns two camps for housing Veterans and their families. The first, Camp Hope, is a place for Veterans to live, paying affordable rent. At its height a few years ago, the camp was housing 10 men. The second, Camp Samaritan, is focused on homeless Veterans and those with addictions.

But with 2008's economic downturn, both camps closed indefinitely. Dave anticipates reopening the camps in the future, but needs significant funding before that can happen.

In trying to find a way to fund the camps, Dave was presented with an unexpected solution from a surprising visitor. Michael Burke, a 57-year-old Veteran who lived at Camp Hope, randomly showed up at his doorstep, thanked Dave for all he had done over the years, and out of the blue stated, "You're supposed to go into the hotdog business."

TAKING A STAND

After Dave made excuses for why he didn't want another project, especially one involving hotdogs, Michael finally conceded and left.

Yet Dave was intrigued by the idea, so he went to his computer and Googled "hotdog cart," and found loads of information about making money with them. So, that's what he did.

The Veterans Restoration Project bought two carts for the middle Tennessee area, with one Veteran working each. The Vet sets up the cart in front of a local business during lunch hours and shares information about the project. All proceeds from the carts go to the Vets' salaries and the Veterans Restoration Project.

"The carts can generate enough funds to give Veterans jobs and a good living," Dave said. "And ultimately, that's what changes lives."

Michael, who was medically discharged from the Army, works one cart at Tractor Supply stores outside Nashville. After battling depression and being kicked out of his home, Dave was the only person who would take him in.

"He's a good man," Michael said of Dave. "I've seen his wife and him do without to keep the utilities on [at the camps]. I give him all the adoration and respect that any Soldier can have."

In addition to the all-beef hotdogs that "pop when you bite into them," Dave's carts feature smoked Polish sausage, pulled pork sandwiches, drinks and all the fixins'.

"I love supporting our Veterans, and I love supporting people who do the same," one visitor noted after taking a bite. "I think it's a great program."

Dave plans to get 10 carts running in the Nashville area and then branch out to other cities in Tennessee. He would even like to see the project go nationwide.

"If you can take a guy who's not making any money and show him how to do something simple that he can make a living on, that's a whole lot better than nothing," Dave affirmed.

"WE ARE SINCERE AND TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES."

>> Dave Litteral, Vietnam Veteran

SAVING A LIFE

Through his outreach programs, the Veteran's Restoration Project has positively affected more than 5,000 men's and women's lives.

One of those is Nashville resident Jim Simms, a 63-year-old Vietnam Veteran. Jim served as a helicopter machine gunner for the Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1968-69, witnessing such battles as Hamburger Hill.

After his return to the U.S., he began drinking heavily. Though he maintained a family and success at his job as a hotel and resort manager, he struggled with depression and thoughts of suicide. "Every time I faced conflicts or even successes, I would go drink because I didn't think I deserved to be successful," Jim admitted.

It was during the lowest point in Jim's life that Dave called and got his attention.

TO DONATE OR FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE VETERANS RESTORATION PROJECT, VISIT
VeteransRestoration.com

"Thanks to Dave and his mission, I've been sober for 10 years, running a successful car business and married for 41 years," Jim proudly shared. "Without him, I'd be dead."

Now Jim is also involved in the project, sharing his story with Veterans and spreading the word that help is out there.

"It's not Wall Street—it's not a pretty thing—but dealing with what we do has never been attractive to anyone," Dave said. "A lot of people like the idea, but very few people want to get their hands dirty."

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Even though Dave overcame his bitterness about the war decades ago, he hadn't returned to the place where it all started—Fort Campbell—until this past August.

The day before our interview, Dave joined more than 4,000 Vietnam Veterans from across the country at the base for a long overdue "Welcome Home" ceremony. As civilians and today's Soldiers cheered them on, the Vets marched around the base, smiling and carrying flags.

"It was part of the healing process," Dave admitted. "It was great to have thanks from the [Soldiers and supporters] who were there."

Dave said he took a tour of his boot camp base, and couldn't believe some of the same compounds and facilities were still intact after 40 years. Though some of his wounds may never be completely healed, Dave finds peace in his missions. As for funding the Veterans Restoration Project, he hopes to get back to his roots in gospel music and host a gospel concert fund-raiser.

"Every day is a faith walk. [My family] never had a lot as far as material things, but we've always been provided for in some way," he confirmed.

As Dave continues to do whatever it takes to reach and help Veterans, from paying their cell phone bills to taking them to the hospital, he realizes he's helping himself, too.

"[Serving others] has made me well," he admitted. "Giving is always better than receiving. We are sincere and trying to make a difference in people's lives." **GX**

HOSTILE FIRE

YONCH'ON, KOREA, APRIL 19, 1951 - SGT MODESTO CARTAGENA, MEMBER OF COMPANY C, 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, PUERTO RICO NATIONAL GUARD, WAITS FOR HIS UNIT TO LAUNCH AN ASSAULT TO CAPTURE HILL 206, WHICH DOMINATED A CRITICAL ROAD JUNCTION.



THE COMPANY ASSAULTED THE SUMMIT, ENCOUNTERING STUBBORN RESISTANCE FROM AN ENTRENCHED AND FANATICALLY DETERMINED HOSTILE FORCE. CARTAGENA MOVED HIS SQUAD FORWARD, BUT, ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, THE GROUP WAS FORCED TO SEEK COVER FROM AN INTENSE AND ACCURATE VOLUME OF SMALL ARMS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE.

LOCATING THE HOSTILE EMPLACEMENTS THAT POSED THE GREATEST THREAT, CARTAGENA LEFT HIS POSITION, CHARGED DIRECTLY INTO THE ENEMY FIRE, AND HURLED A GRENADE AT THE FIRST EMPLACEMENT, DESTROYING IT.



ORDERING HIS SQUAD TO REMAIN UNDER COVER, HE SUCCESSFULLY ASSAULTED THE SECOND ENEMY POSITION. KNOCKED TO THE GROUND BY EXPLODING ENEMY GRENADES, CARTAGENA ASSAULTED THREE MORE TIMES. THE REMAINING HOSTILE EMPLACEMENTS CONCENTRATED FIRE ON HIM AND HE WAS WOUNDED.



THE EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM AND SELFLESS DEVOTION TO DUTY DISPLAYED BY SGT MODESTO CARTAGENA THROUGHOUT THIS ACTION ENABLED THE COMPANY TO SECURE ITS OBJECTIVE SUCCESSFULLY WITH A MINIMUM OF CASUALTIES. CARTAGENA WAS AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS FOR HIS ACTIONS.

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