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THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

VOLUME TWO ISSUE SIX
DEC 2005

**ON THE ROAD WITH
TASK FORCE RAZORBACK**

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IN THE HISTORY OF THE GUARD

WOMEN IN THE GUARD

CHANGING ROLES IN THE
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LTG CLYDE VAUGHN

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GX: The Guard Experience Volume 2, ISSUE 6, DEC/JAN 2005/2006 is published bimonthly for \$21 per year by lostudio, LLC, 1625 Broadway, Third Floor, Nashville, TN 37203. Periodicals postage pending at Nashville, TN, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to GX: The Guard Experience, 1625 Broadway, Third Floor, Nashville, TN 37203.



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Fellow Soldiers,

Let me begin by offering to all of you my profound gratitude and respect for the professionalism, courage, commitment and selfless service you have shown this past year. FY05 was a year in which the ARNG performed at a historic and unprecedented pace. The ARNG provided 56% of the combat power to the War on Terror, with eight of the fifteen Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) coming from our ranks, along with their associated Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) units. This came at a critical time in Iraq, when that nation held its first free elections in decades, along with drafting a constitution. The Guard continues to carry the load in Afghanistan as well. The 53rd BCT has taken over the mission of training the Afghan National Army from the 76th BCT, which did a spectacular job. The Guard is also providing a large number of the Combat Arms (CA), CS and CSS capabilities for the continued fight against terrorism in that country as well.

On top of that, the Guard responded to the greatest natural disaster on American soil in 100 years. In seven days 50,000 Guard Soldiers and Airmen, from all fifty-four states and territories had descended upon the hurricane ravaged areas of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida. They had no sooner begun making great progress when they had to shift on the fly and respond to Hurricane Rita. All of this occurred and yet the ARNG still had the majority of its manpower available for Homeland Defense and state missions. The ARNG is ready, reliable and relevant, thanks to the hard work and dedication to the ideals of this country by great Soldiers like you.

I wanted to take this opportunity to talk a little about the future of the enlisted and NCO Corps within the Guard and what you can do to prepare yourself for that future. The ARNG will continue to transform. The biggest changes will be in the type of force structure we have and the dispersal of those units.

The Brigade Combat Teams will be the units that will provide the Combat Power. We will move from fifteen Enhanced Brigades to thirty-four Brigade Combat teams. These units will be smaller, quicker, and more lethal than the conventional Enhanced Brigades. The CS and CSS units will change as well, as the MP and Transportation fields, along with Intelligence and a few others, will grow. Others, such as Field Artillery will shrink. The BCTs will train on a six-year cycle, with years four–five being years of increased intensity in training. Year 6 will be the year that the unit will be available for deployment. This is not a guaranteed deployment, it means that the unit will be at the highest state of readiness. CS and CSS units, along with FA, Aviation and Engineers, will be trained and ready based on the missions the BCTs receive and how the combatant commander deems they need to be supported.

Okay, how does this affect you, the Soldier? First, you may have to reclassify to another MOS, which is nothing new to the Guard. What may be different, however, is that the structure of your units, especially the BCTs, may be spread out over several states. For most, this won't make any difference, but for some low density MOSs and some Senior NCO positions, this will offer a chance for you to compete for promotion in another state! That is why it is critical, and my number one priority, to ensure that the enlisted promotion regulation is simple, easy to understand and transparent if you cross state lines. NGB only writes the policy and regulations—the states must implement them. The Adjutants General of each state control the promotions within their states. The current system is a good system, but it is hard to understand. Many of the regulations and laws were



CSM John D Gipe

“It is a privilege and an honor to stand beside each and every one of you ”

put into place over 50 years ago. The Guard of today is not even the Guard of five, much less fifty years ago. While this system has worked well in peacetime, it doesn't work well during a time of mobilization with constant crossleveling, not only unit to unit, but state to state. The 42nd IN Division has over half of the fifty-four states and territories represented under its command. So the command must work through at least twenty-seven different promotion authorities

to promote Soldiers! The State CSMs, through my Advisory Council, are working to have this system in place by the

FY07 promotion cycle. That may seem like a long time, but I want to make sure that the system that is put in place is the best, simplest and easiest to understand system we can provide.

I am often asked, “What can I do to get promoted?” or “How do I become a CSM?” My answer is simply this: if you follow the basic tenets of being an NCO, the backbone of the greatest military force the world has ever known, you will be successful. They are: 1) always place the mission first, and 2) take care of your Soldiers and their families. In other words—selfless service. You can go a step further by doing the things the Army teaches you from the very first day of Basic Combat Training—live the Army Values and live by the Soldier's Creed. Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage are values you must epitomize every day. Be prepared personally as the Soldier's Creed dictates—be “disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my Warrior tasks and drills.” Live by these seven values and the Soldier's Creed. Think about what they say—what it means to you to be a Soldier and to serve your country—to be part of a team and a member of the Armed Forces of the greatest country on earth. Do these things and you will be successful. God bless you, your families and this nation—it is a privilege and an honor to stand beside each and every one of you—Citizens, Soldiers, Warriors, Patriots. Hooah!!!

CSM John D Gipe



ON THE COVER

Stockings are hung by the chimney with care, which means it's time again to gather with friends and family in celebration of the season. During this time, though, let us also celebrate those brave men and women who work so hard to provide us with the freedom to sit comfortably by the fireplace in the company of loved ones.

Photo by GettyImages/Photodisc

A Sincere Honor

2005 brought the Army National Guard to the center ring of attention, thrust into the spotlight by the gale force winds of an intense hurricane season, heavy deployments in OEF, OIF and operations worldwide. Yet, the Guard matched the destruction of the hurricanes with equally strong relief efforts, while simultaneously hunting insurgents, reconstructing the Middle East, enabling a peaceful election in Afghanistan, and securing the creation of a new Iraqi government and constitution - to name a few.

And after accomplishing all this, many of our Soldiers say they're not done. Hundreds have re-enlisted in combat theater. Hundreds, who have witnessed firsthand the good work our American Military is doing, have rededicated their lives to our country.

Yet, as we enter the holiday season, things can turn bittersweet. Many of our readers and members of our own staff are missing loved ones deployed in service. At the same time, many are reuniting with their Soldiers after lengthy separations, like the mighty 278th out of Tennessee, just in time for the holidays.

America and the Guard have been through a lot in 2005. And there's a lot to be thankful for. Amid our appreciation for the broad successes, let's not forget the everyday, "small town" stories sometimes missed under the big headlines. In this time of Thanksgiving, we at GX are additionally thankful for Soldiers like SSG Michael Lindsey (TXARNG), who earlier this year rallied support for a local girl with cardio myopathy. SSG Lindsey went above and beyond, ultimately facilitating a heart transplant for 16-year-old Kendra. We are thankful for soldiers like SPC Richard Cabeceiras (MAARNG), who, as he was driving down a Massachusetts highway this past summer, came upon a terrible car crash. SPC Cabeceiras kicked his training into high gear and saved the lives of everyone involved. We are thankful for the strength of the Guard family as represented by Cheryl Berardo, a Tennessee Guard wife who got up every morning and kept those home fires burning, enduring her husband's deployment, which ran almost two years. Cheryl triumphed in her role as a Family Readiness leader, tirelessly organizing events. She has spent countless hours supporting others while still being there for her own children. Cheryl's bravery and strength serves as remarkable example and inspiration for all Americans. Likewise, we are eternally thankful for every one of those kids who, in the face of antagonizing media and the terrorist agenda, walked into a Guard recruitment office this year, and dedicated their lives to protecting Freedom.

In this issue of GX, we feature women in the Guard and their remarkable service. No amount of text is enough to say 'thank you' to these Soldiers. Thousands of stories go untold. However, here you will hopefully find a few that capture sentiments of all. These women are our wives, our daughters, sisters, mothers, and even grandmothers safeguarding our homeland with an intense dedication and duty performance second to none.

And as we move forward into 2006, let's keep in our hearts those that have fallen, enabling us a new year of Freedom.

It has been a sincere honor to record the 369th chapter of Guard history and we're looking forward to the 370th. May God bless America, the fine Soldiers of the Army National Guard and all our Guard families.

The GX Team



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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	Ed Brown
EDITOR	Jason West
DEPARTMENTS EDITOR	Chris West
DESIGN DIRECTOR	Kenneth White
MANAGING EDITOR,	
GX NEWS AND LIFESTYLE	Keith Kawasaki
STAFF WRITERS	JC Johnson
	Kenneth White
	Andrew Nixon
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER	Raye Dene Berry
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS	Kathy R. Williams
	SFC Howard J. Holmes
	Alan Waller
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTORS	JC Johnson
	Andrew Nixon
LAYOUT ARTIST	Amanda M. Baines
	Rebecca Gervais
ONLINE ARTISTS	Amanda M. Baines
	Trace Scarborough
	Kevin Trulock
PREPRESS MANAGER	Dave Bevis
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Raye Dene Berry
PUBLISHER	Mitch Powers
ADVERTISING SALES	Alan Waller
Contact:	866-596-4558 x216
	alan@GXonline.com

Published by Iostudio, LLC.

Snail Mail: GX Magazine
c/o Iostudio, LLC
1625 Broadway, Third Floor
Nashville, TN 37203

Voice: 866-596-4558
Facsimile: 615-256-6860

Email Contacts:	
PUBLISHER	publisher@GXonline.com
EDITOR	editore@GXonline.com
SUBSCRIPTIONS	subscriptions@GXonline.com
ADVERTISING	advertising@GXonline.com
GENERAL INFO	info@GXonline.com

Editorial Inquiry and Submissions:
editor@GXonline.com or 866-596-4558 voice,
615.256.6860 fax.

No responsibility can be accepted for manuscripts or photographs, solicited or unsolicited. All postal submissions should be accompanied by an SASE.

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*Correction to Vol. 2.5: The photo of the wolf on pp. 5 and 54 was taken by Brian Dezurik.

Photo courtesy of Frontpage Publicity



To the Soldiers of the United States of America,

It is the time of year when, traditionally, loved ones come together to bask in the warmth of the holidays; a time to reapply the generosity that seems to get lost throughout the year amid our busy schedules and grueling deadlines. At Christmas, we are able to get away from our professional lives and focus on the importance of family and loved ones. At my home, Christmas means the joy of decorating the Christmas tree, hearing the squeals of delight on Christmas morning when Delaney and Emma see what Santa has brought, and this year we will have 6-month-old Ava's first Christmas. But for those who so generously serve in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and National Guard, there is no break from reality and responsibilities.

My heart goes out to each and every one of the U.S. soldiers who will spend the holidays away from their loved ones. For the mothers and wives serving, I give a special salute. As a mother of three, I realize this time of the year must be particularly difficult on those who are away from their children. In an ideal world,

we would all be at home with our families during the holidays.

I would like to personally commend and thank you on your dedication and commitment to our country. I believe my feelings of gratitude speak for all Americans.

Happy holidays and God bless you all.

Martina McBride

A WORD OF THANKS

This is just a note of thanks to all the young men and women of the National Guard who came to Louisiana to help in the aftermath of Katrina. They are a credit to our Country!!!

These troops served long hours, in extreme heat and humidity, with a cheerfulness that was unbelievable. Their friendliness, compassion and dedication was greatly appreciated by me and my family as we sat in line after line for relief and services.

I tried to thank each and every one of them that I came in contact with, but I don't feel that was enough. As a whole, they are to be commended, and I hope there is a way they will all be notified that their work here in Louisiana was greatly appreciated.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts!!!!

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Glover

PROUD GUARD MOM-TO-BE

I am a Guard Mom-to-Be. My oldest daughter has committed to signing with the Texas Army National Guard in December,

as soon as she turns 17. I am so very, very proud of her, and want everyone to know it! I also want to give thanks and a big "HOOAH!" to SGT Roland Hall, our local recruiter. His passion and enthusiasm for the Guard and for my daughter's future as an American Soldier have been and continue to be incredible, encouraging and inspirational.

I have devoured Volume 2 Issue 2 of your magazine, and look forward to many more as the proud mother of an American Soldier. Thank you for all the information, and for the chance to read about Guard members and their heroic service. It increases my pride in my daughter's life choice, and gives me the opportunity to have glimpses of the ways in which she will be able to serve her country and help others around the world.

Jess, I love you, and I'm so proud I could burst! GO GUARD!

Angella Hardin
Stephenville, TX

Thank you for writing us and for your service as a proud Guard mother. The importance of support from a Soldier's family cannot be understated. Our role is minor

compared with yours. We deeply appreciate your kind words and feel honored to have you among our readership.

AWARD TO HONOR WIFE

I was informed by another soldier that there is an award that can be given to your spouse by the US Government. He found it in your magazine and I am now trying to find it. I don't have much time at a computer, but I would like to know more about this award and how I would go about awarding my wife for the support I have received from her.

Thank you and God bless,

SPC Jason Goodijohn

The program you are looking for is called "Home Front Heroes", which you can find at <http://www.virtualarmory.com>. You will need a Virtual Armory login and then you can order an HFH package for your spouse. If you don't have a Virtual Armory login, you can easily get one from the home page. Best of luck and let us know if we can help any further.



PFC EARNS 48TH BCT'S 1ST COMBAT AWARDS SINCE WWII

By SPC Tracy J. Smith
48th Brigade Combat Team PAO
Courtesy of DVIDS

A Georgia Army National Guard unit deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 recently received its first combat awards since World War II.

The ceremony was filled with mixed emotions for the 48th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers as they gathered in the same location where they had previously held memorial services for fallen Soldiers from the unit.

Soldiers were awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge,

"Many of our Soldiers are not here with us," said LTC Steve McCorkle, commander of 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division. "We honor their memory today and will continue to have ceremonies like this so that we continue to award our soldiers who fight so bravely on the battlefield."

One Soldier, PFC Justin Hair, A Company, 1st Battalion, 121st Inf. Reg., made Georgia Army National Guard history by receiving three of the awards recognizing him as the first 48th BCT Soldier in 60 years to engage and eliminate the enemy in combat.

PFC Hair thwarted the deadly attempts of a suicide bomber to penetrate a security checkpoint with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device on June 13, 2005.

"PFC Hair engaged and killed the enemy before he actually detonated the device," explained Battalion CSM Cheyenne Fields of Albany, GA. "He was, unfortunately, injured in that attack and is receiving the Purple Heart as a result."

PFC Hair remains humble and does not speak of his actions. However, Fields and the battalion commander know the importance of recognizing Soldiers, when a job is done well.

"Although we could have easily given these awards to him at the company level, we wanted everyone to know that this one private, applying his basic soldiering skills, saved

many of my Soldiers' lives. He deserves to be rewarded and honored for that."

At least one of the Combat Infantryman Badges was given to a 48th BCT Soldier who had decades of experience under his belt.

Decorated with his second CIB, SGT Leroy Kirkpatrick, a Bradley gunner, knew this day would come.

"I walk among men who have faced their strongest fears and won."

- Chaplain (1LT) Jonathan Fisher,
2nd Bn., 121st Inf. Regt.

"Being in combat arms, things happen," said SGT Kirkpatrick, of Lawrenceville, GA. "I knew even before we got boots on the ground that I would get a second award."

A veteran of the Vietnam War, SGT Kirkpatrick is able to share his experience with his fellow Soldiers. "I've got a few tricks up my sleeve. I believe in getting the job done."

The occasion was perhaps best summed up by Chaplain (1LT) Jonathan Fisher, 2nd Bn., 121st Inf. Regt., in his opening remarks at the ceremony: "Courage takes many forms. I think there is no greater courage than to see Soldiers who know the dangers, who know what is under the road and yet go out anyway. You face it and you overcome it. I walk among men who have faced their strongest fears and won." **GX**



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ABOVE: A student at the Baghdad Airport Primary School in Baghdad, Iraq, tries on a Soldier's headgear during a visit by HIARNG and AKARNG Soldiers. Multinational Corps-Iraq photo

GOLD STAR FAMILIES LEAD RALLY TO SUPPORT TROOPS

By Petty Officer 3rd Class John R. Guardiano, USN, American Forces Press Service

Led by scores of Gold Star family members from throughout the United States, several hundred Americans today rallied on the National Mall in Washington, DC on Sept. 25th to support U.S. troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Their message was simple: "We support our troops," said rally organizer Kristinn Taylor. "We love them and we support their mission."

"We support our troops. We love them and we support their mission."
—Kristinn Taylor, rally organizer

"We know that what they are doing is just and noble," she added. "We remember what happened on Sept. 11. We know that it's because of the sacrifices that they are making day in and day out, night and day, that we have not had another terrorist attack on our soil."

"How could you not be here?" asked Ann Baish of McLean, VA, as she fought back tears. "They're our troops. And we need to stand by them and let them know over there how much we do support them... There are just so many Americans that are proud of our troops," she explained, "and we just came out because we want them to know it."

ABOVE: Students, who traveled from Staunton, VA to DC on Sept. 25, show their support for the troops and a banner they signed that will be sent to troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Photo by William Moss

In fact, rally participants were united in their belief that the media give too much attention to critics of the war, while deliberately downplaying the deep reservoir of public support that U.S. troops—and their mission—actually enjoy.

"Overall, Americans support our troops no matter what," said John Wroblewski, whose son, Marine Corps LT John Thomas Wroblewski, died in Ramadi, Iraq, April 6, 2004.

Yet, according to Debby Argel Bastion, "the news seems to, for some reason or other, sensationalize, I think, the very few people who really don't have an understanding of what's going on over there, and who oppose what we're doing" in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gold Star family members said that older, more experience service members are unfazed by the negative media coverage of Iraq and Afghanistan. "They're professionals, and they stay focused on the mission," Wroblewski explained. But according to Bastion, "for the younger troops that are over there and maybe struggling a little bit—maybe it's their first time over there. They need to know they have our support" **GX**

GUARD DELIVERS DONATED SCHOOL SUPPLIES

By Chawntain Sloan, USAF
Multinational Corps-Iraq

About 300 children at Baghdad Airport Primary School started the new school year off right on Sept. 11, 2005 thanks to Multinational Corps-Iraq soldiers at Camp Victory.

Soldiers from Company A and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, HIARNG; and Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, AKARNG, teamed up to provide the first through seventh grade children with school supplies like pens, pencils, paper and crayons.

Each child received their own personal care package courtesy of Operation Iraqi Children, a stateside nonprofit organization cofounded by actor Gary Sinise and author Laura Hillenbrand.

Operation Iraqi Children serves as a liaison, helping soldiers provide Iraqi schools in need with school supply kits compiled by children, church groups and other organizations in the United States.

Soldiers provide ongoing support not just to the school but to the village, said U.S. Army SFC Thomas Odoardi, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment civil affairs noncommissioned officer.

"We have developed a strong relationship with this village," said SFC Odoardi. "Our units patrol the village, and the civil affairs section has meetings with the mayor on a regular basis, so we have come to know a lot of the 2,800 residents by name. They recognize our soldiers as well."

The soldiers are currently assisting the village in building a day care center, remodeling the junior high school, upgrading electrical and water lines and installing a new perimeter security fence. **GX**

GEN PACE STEPS UP AS NEW CHAIRMAN

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

GEN Pace became the first Marine to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during an Armed Forces "hail ceremony" September 30th. He succeeds Air Force GEN Richard B. Myers, who swore him into office.

"We have a lot of work to do," GEN Pace said. "This moment in history is one where we have an enemy whose stated public intent is to destroy our way of life; 2.4 million American men and women in uniform say, 'Not on our watch.'"

Addressing the servicemembers attending and participating in the ceremonies, GEN Pace called upon them to continue the work done by those who went before them.

"Generations and generations of American fighting servicemen and women have sacrificed and died that we might have the

"We have a lot of work to do."

-GEN Peter Pace, new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

freedoms we enjoy today," he said. "And it is now our moment in history—you and I in uniform—to protect those freedoms for our children and our grandchildren; and protect them, we will."

GEN Pace thanked President Bush for his confidence in him and for his steadfast leadership and unwavering support of men and women in uniform. "Every single one of us in uniform knows that you are leading us and know that you are supporting us at the same time, and it makes a huge difference to each and every one of us," GEN Pace said.



ABOVE: GEN Peter Pace addresses the crowd at the Armed Forces Farewell Tribute and Armed Forces Hail ceremony at Fort Myer, VA, Sept. 30, 2005. DoD photo by Mamie Mae Burke.

President Bush called GEN Pace a brilliant thinker and an inspiring leader. "His life is the story of the American dream ... Pete Pace has impressed those around him with his bravery, his knowledge and his devotion to duty." **GX**

DEF VET LAUNCHES SITE SHOWCASING SOLDIER PHOTOGRAPHY

By Keith Kawasaki

Operation Enduring Freedom Veteran SPC Jean-Paul Borda (A Company, 3/116th VAARNG) has launched a new website, entitled Soldierfoto, which showcases the photography of American Soldiers.

Soldierfoto illustrates the life of our soldiers through the eyes of our soldiers, and if a picture is worth a thousand words, Soldierfoto is writing novels daily. The site features brilliantly colored portraits of Afghan children, American Soldiers at war, and touching shots of native Afghan citizens-turned-soldiers reclaiming freedom for their people.

Soldierfoto offers the opportunity for all members of the American military to submit

their work for display in the online gallery. These select photos are made available for personal and commercial purchase through the reseller program. Gallery owners are encouraged to contact Soldierfoto to show featured photography. Soldierfoto's premiere gallery took place in November at the Van Ditthavong Gallery in Dallas, TX.

SPC Borda developed Soldierfoto while seeking an outlet for his own photography during his 12-month deployment in Afghanistan. SPC Borda joined the Army National Guard shortly after September 11, 2001 and was quickly deployed overseas. During his deployment, SPC Borda was

SOLDIERFOTO



awarded the Combat Infantry Badge.

Look for Soldierfoto to only expand in what it offers, as SPC Borda is a man of great ambition. **GX**

www.soldierfoto.com

Photo by SPC Jean-Paul Borda

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LEFT: Country artist Dierks Bentley greets the crowd while performing at Lackland AFB, TX on Sept. 29.

SPIRIT OF AMERICA TOUR ROCKS LACKLAND AFB

DIERKS BENTLEY AND CROSS CANADIAN RAGWEED PLAY FREE SHOW FOR MILITARY AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Story and photos by Keith Kawasaki

Over 6,000 servicemembers and their families put aside the stress of deployments, hurricanes, and everyday aggravation in exchange for a full night of music courtesy of the Spirit of America Tour, a non-profit military entertainment initiative lauded by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Never failing to deliver the heavyweights, the Tour brought country musician Dierks Bentley and southern rockers Cross Canadian Ragweed to Lackland Air Force Base, outside of San Antonio, TX on September 29th.

Dierks Bentley is the Grand Ole Opry's newest member (inducted in the beginning of October) and has earned his place in the Opry's company with hits like "What Was

I Thinking?" and the slick, driving rhythm of "Lot Of Leaving Left To Do." An intense mixture of Merle Haggard's "Working Man" ethic and George Strait's gilded country quality, Bentley's music comes across genuine and bold—like a modern-day Waylon Jennings.

Cross Canadian Ragweed, a Texas favorite, just rocks. Their energy is like some desert thunder. Their music is dark, loose, and unpredictable. You want to bang your head one minute and kick back with a cold one the next. Often jumping genres of country and rock, the band describes their sound simply as "American music."

After arriving around midday, the bands mixed with the young Airmen setting up the stage, never hesitating to shake a hand or

have a conversation. This kind of open-door interaction is one of the things that makes the Spirit of America Tour so remarkable. And the artists on the Tour are not the stand-offish, bodyguard types either. They know why they are there and who they are there for. They want to shake a Soldier's hand just as much as the Soldier wants to shake their's. This night in Lackland was no different. The Airmen setting up had just finished boot camp and they radiated an excitement that would fuel the entire night.

Robert Rosenthal and Cathy Gurley (Spirit of America Tour's founder and national liaison, respectively) were on-site, overseeing the product of their patriotic ambition. You could see their own excitement grow with that of the troops.

Rosenthal, a first lieutenant (retired) with the New York National Guard 101st Signal

"You've got to support the troops. No matter what."

-Cody Canada, Cross Canadian Ragweed



ABOVE: Cross Canadian Ragweed perform at Lackland AFB, TX on Sept. 29.





Battalion, formed the Spirit of America Tour after retiring from a successful career in entertainment law in California. He and Gurley, a prominent public relations persona in the country music industry, have put on over 60 of these free, volunteer-driven shows since the initiative began in 2002. One of the unique aspects of the Spirit of America Tour is that not only are servicemembers from every branch of the military invited, their families are invited, too. In fact, anyone with a military I.D. is welcome and all shows are free of charge.

After soundcheck, the bands were treated to dinner at the mess hall where they ate with the troops, signed autographs, and said "thank you" face-to-face for the sacrifice of military service.

"The reason I thank the military is I really do think about those guys a lot and appreciate what the military does; not just people that are serving overseas in combat situations right now, but just in general, people back here who sacrifice their time," stated Dierks Bentley in a recent *GX* interview. "The risk that you're putting yourself into joining the military, it's something that all of us ... should be very thankful for."

Seven o'clock was showtime and you could feel an enormous energy erupt from the crowd. These were no longer military servicemembers, organized and reserved. They were kids, enjoying one heck of a concert. The light in their eyes could've knocked you out. And deeper in the crowd, up on the field, babies danced in circles and moms and dads leaned back in lawn chairs, without a worry in their heads, under a warm Texas night.

"I am still amazed at how much the troops enjoy our shows," says Rosenthal. "It makes it all worthwhile."

"It makes an impact on those guys and it makes an impact on us," added Bentley. "You know... you go away from the gate thinking how you have a lot of respect for those guys, a lot of love for them. And also really thankful that they're doing that stuff. So kind of, in a way, you feel guilty that you're not."

Cross Canadian Ragweed closed the show, putting their all into an electrifying set. This band never misses an opportunity to play for servicemembers. Every year in January, they play the Air Force Academy in Colorado and pepper in as many shows around the country for military as they can. In fact, they don't even refer to it as "playing." For Cross Canadian Ragweed, performing for the military is "service."

"It's mandatory," frontman Cody Canada told *GX* in an October interview.

"That's what our service is; you know what I mean?" said Canada. "I know that it's not anywhere near what they do. But if we can provide our service to somebody, especially people who are keeping us free, why not do it?" **GX**



ABOVE: (l-r) Commander of the 37th Training Wing Lackland Air Force Base, TX, COL Mary Kay Hertog with country artist Dierks Bentley as he is presented with the Spirit of America Tour commemorative coin - a recognition given by the Tour's founder Robert Rosenthal, in appreciation of artist participation.

"It makes an impact on those guys and it makes an impact on us."

- Dierks Bentley, referring to performing for military audiences

YOU CAN READ THE FULL DIERKS BENTLEY AND CROSS CANADIAN RAGWEED INTERVIEWS AND CHECK OUT MORE PHOTOS FROM THE LACKLAND SHOW ONLINE AT:

www.gxonline.com



Check out where the Spirit of America Tour is headed next at:
www.spiritofamericatour.org

Check out Dierks Bentley online at:
www.dierks.com

Check out Cross Canadian Ragweed online at:
www.crosscanadianragweed.com

VETERANS IN NEED

GIVE BACK TO THOSE WHO SACRIFICED SO MUCH

By Andrew Nixon

Intended as a peaceful place for elderly veterans to live out their retirement years, the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) was anything but, once Hurricane Katrina ripped through Gulfport, MS. The residents and staff were safely evacuated, but had absolutely nothing to come home to as the entire facility was decimated. The more than 400 evacuees were instead transported to the only other AFRH facility, located in Washington, D.C., where they are trying to make a new home for themselves. As one would imagine, this is an extremely difficult task, especially since the average age of these new residents is 79. But, even more so, because the AFRH in D.C. had not anticipated providing for these unexpected guests, most of whom lost everything they had. Even after weathering the storms of world wars, some of these veterans were left by Katrina with only the clothes on their backs.

You can help make this situation more bearable for the victims by helping the AFRH provide for the care and well-being of these honorable men and women. They need everything from dentures and glasses to shoes and jackets, and it is only through the generous support of GX readers and other fellow Americans that these necessities can be provided. **EX**

For more information, email:
melodie.menke@afrh.gov
 or call:
202.730.3410




TO THE RESCUE

NDARNG RESPONDS TO SNOW STORM

By Keith Kawasaki
 Information courtesy of 2LT Dan Murphy,
 NDARNG Public Affairs

On October 5th, western North Dakota was slammed by the earliest snowstorm in state history, accumulating an average of 12 - 18", and reaching extremes of two feet. Just three days earlier, the temperature was 96 degrees.

Hundreds of travelers were caught off guard on the highways stretching the 90 miles from Dickinson to Bismarck throughout the afternoon and evening of October 5th.

Fortunately, as soon as the weather service predicted the snow early in the day, Governor John Hoeven was on the phone requesting North Dakota National Guard assistance.

★ BY THE NUMBERS ★

- One 44-passenger bus
- Three 20-ton trailers with bulldozers
- One 5-ton wrecker
- Two 2.5-ton trucks
- One HEMTT (Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck, an 8-wheel high clearance vehicle instrumental in navigating difficult terrain)

Ten North Dakota Guard Soldiers were activated to clear roads and assist highway patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation units. As the Soldiers cleared roads with bulldozers, they loaded stranded travelers onto buses headed to storm shelters. There were zero injuries and zero casualties

TOP RIGHT: SPC Ashley Tabor, Company A 164 EN BN, NDARNG, helps clear fallen trees. BOTTOM RIGHT: Members of Company A 164 Engineer Battalion, NDARNG, clean up after nearly 24" of snow fell in Dickinson, ND. Photos by SFC Brian Schmoker, NDARNG

reported during the storm, no doubt thanks to the quick response of Gov. Hoeven and the North Dakota National Guard.

On October 6th, 15 Soldiers were mobilized in Dickinson to clear trees and assist in restoring power to the area. It is reported that 50 - 70% of western North Dakota's trees are damaged from the storm.

1LT Donovan Blazek, North Dakota National Guard Engineer Brigade Assistant S-3, headed up the relief mission and summarized the Guard's strategy. "Our first priority was to clear emergency evacuation routes and immediate streets surrounding hospitals. The second priority, to clear drainage ditches of fallen trees [to prevent flooding]."

"North Dakota National Guard response to the severe storm that fell on western North Dakota is not only indicative of the commitment of our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen," said LTC Giselle Wilz, "but also our organization's ability to respond here at home while simultaneously supporting our federal mission." **EX**



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2-116TH SPC REFLECTS ON 486-DAY DEPLOYMENT

By SPC Chris Chesak, B Co., Task Force 2-116 Armor

The day we should fly out of Iraq, this unit will have been deployed, including training time, for 486 days. Of that total, 333 days were spent in theater.

By my own count, our platoon completed almost 400 patrols during that time and about another 200 'logistical package' missions to the local airbase. Driving in Humvees, a total of almost 18,000 miles of highways, roads, and alleys were patrolled by this platoon.

If each mission was four hours long, that would be 1,480 hours spent on patrol (but of course, the total number of hours spent actually working, including the logistical package missions, cleaning weapons, sitting in meetings, maintaining our Humvees, and preparing for patrols, is incalculable).

In between those missions, we also pulled 828 hours of guard duty, or the equivalent of 34.5 entire 24-hour days spent in guard towers and monitoring radios.

I also estimate that my squad alone handed out at least 300 toys and nearly 130 pounds of candy to Iraqi children.

The actual work was nothing to the burden of being so long and so far from our loved ones. We have 43 men in our platoon. That means in the past year and a half, roughly 64 of our own birthday parties were missed, 86 Fourth of July barbeques were one man short,

and 43 Christmases went without a brother, son, and/or father.

A former Marine and thus no stranger to deployments, SPC John Jolley celebrated his 25th birthday manning an observation post on a Kirkuk rooftop. It was his fifth birthday while deployed.

Three particularly poor saps, CPL Lyle Wing, SGT Warren Hurt, and I, missed the birth of a child. My first child was born last December, just about one hour before I boarded a transport plane to fly into Iraq.

One soldier was divorced while on leave back home. Another, SPC Dereck Birch, was engaged and a third, SPC Matthew Timmons, was both engaged and married during his two-week leave.

While I can lament all that we've missed back home, I have to also consider what I gained from this very long, very difficult year.

I have forged new, possibly lifelong friendships. Since finding one true friend is a rare and wonderful achievement, I consider this an accomplishment of great value.

I have a greater appreciation for everything you have at home. There will be a little more joy in my heart each time I flick a light switch and the light instantly comes on. And I will never flush another toilet without respect for

the consistently efficient U.S. plumbing that comes with it.

After witnessing two monumental elections here and the way the Iraqi people live, I have newfound respect for freedom. Not only is this for the capital 'F', Four-Freedom kind that we find in the Bill of Rights, but also the simple daily freedoms of sitting out at a restaurant patio sipping a beer or grabbing my keys, hopping into my car, and driving wherever the heck I want.

I have even greater respect and love for my wife. While my situation and living conditions were much more difficult than hers, it was she who had to raise a newborn baby virtually alone, take care of our home, start a new job, and, worst of all, bear the burden of terrible fears and incessant worrying that only the spouse of someone deployed in a combat zone can understand.

Most monumental of all though, I now more appreciate life itself. I will place my family on an even higher pedestal and will better let them know just how much I love them. And I will be thankful, each day, when my alarm clock goes off and I wake up in my own bed, looking forward to another mere eight-hour day of mere office work, another day in the company of my family, another day that I am home. **GX**

TOP LEFT: SGT Jeffery Renon, SPC Jeremy Beans, and SGT Michael Shriver

BELOW: SPC David Wilson keeps watch on the ground while CPL Christian Litzsinger mans the turret of a Humvee during one of their unit's final patrols of their year-long deployment. Photos courtesy of Task Force 2-116 Armor



SSG OFFERS PERSPECTIVE ON AFGHAN ELECTIONS



By SSG Leslee (Mark) Araujo
Logistics NCO, NEARNG

This past, September 11th at 17:00 hours, we had a formation and moment of silence in memory of the events of four years ago when the first plane hit in New York City. It was a very moving time, to say the least. This was accented by a phenomenon that occurred while were standing in formation, during that moment of silence. A strong, cool breeze blew into the courtyard of Camp Alamo, and the stars and

“If we had not come here ... the citizens would still have no hope.”

– SSG Leslee (Mark) Araujo

stripes came alive, waving proudly over this ground that was once a Taliban training base.

As I looked across the courtyard at the Canadian and French formations, and then at the faces of the Afghan Army officers who stood silently in formation, my resolve concerning our mission here was renewed. There are still so many of my fellow Americans that do not understand why we are here, and in Iraq. But, we are doing what must be done, not just for our own interests, but for the people of these two nations.

The elections here in Afghanistan are in a few days, and the people are so very excited to finally have a voice in who will lead their nation. They are so proud and truly believe that to vote is an honor and the only way their nation will ever prosper. The election posters with the candidates and their slogans are everywhere! If we had not come here and, with the assistance of our coalition partners, removed the Taliban regime, the citizens

would still have no hope. Their future would be one of oppression, heartache, and poverty, with little else to look forward to.

Our interpreter, Khalid Dost, is a beacon of optimism when speaking about what the elections will mean for his country. I wish all the cynics that the media give so much air time to would see and hear this young man talk about what this chance to vote means to Afghans. He tells me that the candidates talk now about the return of prosperity to this country. Hope for education, good roads, enough food, and a better life for the children of this war-torn land is also returning. They are dreaming again.

Khalid asked if Americans take voting as seriously as his people here in Afghanistan. Since so much is at stake, and this chance to vote came at such a high price to the Afghan people, it is seen as a truly valuable privilege. At that moment, maybe for the first time in any context, I envied the people of this nation.



TOP: An American flag flies at Camp Alamo, on September 11th. ABOVE: SSG Mark Araujo (right) with a soldier in the Afghan National Army at the Kabul Military Training Center.

Photos courtesy of SSG Mark Araujo

As the people of this war-weary land go to the polls on September 18, I am reminded of a famous quote that says, “Tyranny will prevail if good men do nothing.” God bless you all my dear friends and God bless America. **GX**

4 YEARS OF OEF

Four years ago, America launched its counterattack against terrorism, hammering terrorist targets in Afghanistan and ushering in Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War On Terror.

Four years later, the coalition in Afghanistan remains strong, representing a key front in the overall Global War On Terror. More than 21,000 members of Combined Forces Command Afghanistan—more than 17,900 U.S. servicemembers and more than 3,100 troops from 20 allied nations—conduct full-spectrum operations, from combat to humanitarian activities, to defeat terrorism and establish enduring security in the country.

For an in-depth look at the last four years in Afghanistan, visit:

www.defenselink.mil

and click on the OEF link





LEFT: LTG Thomas Metz, former commanding general of Multi-National Corps-Iraq. Photo courtesy of www.hood.army.mil

GUARD OPERATING AT RAMMING SPEED



By COL Randy Pullen
Courtesy of Army News Service

The former commanding general of Multi-National Corps-Iraq gave his assessment of the difference between the active and reserve-component Soldiers he commanded.

“There was no difference,” said LTG Thomas Metz as he spoke to more than 300 attendees at the Association of the United States Army’s Guard and Reserve Leadership Breakfast Oct. 3. “There is no difference.”

The III Corps commanding general had plenty of opportunities to see Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers in action in Iraq. About 39 percent of the American forces in MNC-I during Operation Iraqi Freedom II were from the reserve components. That percentage has risen to 43 percent in OIFIII.

LTG Metz used the analogy of an ancient oar-driven warship to describe the pace of operations for the Army today and the lack of difference between the components.

“We’re all at ramming speed,” he said. “If you look around at the others pulling on the oars, you can’t tell any difference in the guys on the other oars.”

LTG Metz explained that it would have been impossible to make up MNC-I without Reserve and Guard Soldiers and units. “You don’t fill out the joint commands without the reserve components,” he said.

Besides individual Citizen-Soldiers filling staff and other positions throughout the corps, there were also complete Reserve and Guard brigade-sized units in the corps, as well as smaller reserve component units that made up sizable percentages of active component brigade-sized units.

LTG Metz credited the successes of the reserve components to their understanding of the fundamentals. For example, he noted that the 30th BCT had served in Iraq without losing a single Soldier to an accident. He

attributed that to good leaders doing the right things to ensure safe practices were followed.

In his closing thoughts, LTG Metz said that the tough fight that the Army was now engaged in required that the Army be revamped. He said that the Army Force Generation Model was an absolute requirement and, although the model would not be easy for combat support and combat service support units, there was no other choice but for the model to be used.

“We have to fight as a team, together, and we are.”

— LTG Thomas Metz

Having come into the Army in the days of the draft, LTG Metz said that the all-volunteer Army was the way to go. He pointed out that today’s Army remains healthy because of the number of Soldiers who choose to stay with it.

Finally, he said it was necessary for the tremendous partnership between the active Soldier and the Citizen-Soldier to continue.

“We have to fight as a team, together,” LTG Metz said, “and we are.” **GX**

★ EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS IN THE FIELD ★

- The 185th Aviation Brigade (the Catfish Brigade) of the Mississippi Army National Guard was the first reserve component aviation brigade to deploy for combat since the Vietnam War.
- About one quarter of Fort Hood’s 504th Military Intelligence Brigade were Citizen-Soldiers.
- About half of the two Military Police brigades were Citizen-Soldiers.
- The 197th Field Artillery Brigade of the New Hampshire Army National Guard served as MPs in Iraq. The brigade’s mission was to secure everything from Baghdad to the south, to include the main supply route. The artillerymen also were given the mission to run the Joint Visitors Bureau, which meant that the safety of VIPs was entrusted to them. “They lost two Soldiers performing this duty,” LTG Metz said, “but no VIPs.”
- Ninety percent of the 13th Corps Support Command was from the reserve components. LTG Metz said that the 13th COSCOM was running 200 convoys a day to keep the corps supplied with all it needed, such as the 1,000,000 gallons of diesel fuel needed daily. “I am extremely proud of the COSCOM and that 90 percent of reserve component Soldiers who made it up.”
- The Civil Affairs Soldiers in the MNC-I were almost entirely from the Army Reserve. Metz said that the work of Civil Affairs was the road to success in Iraq and that the Civil Affairs Soldiers who worked for him were great.
- The Army Reserve’s 420th Engineer Brigade from Bryan, Texas, was another critical element in the corps’ make-up. “When the insurgents were dropping bridges, cutting our main supply line,” LTG Metz said, “the engineers went out and re-built them, despite being subjected to small arms fire, rockets and mortars. The 420th did its mission—day after day.”
- Three of the maneuver brigade combat teams were from the Army National Guard: Washington’s 81st Infantry Brigade, Arkansas’ 39th Infantry Brigade and North Carolina’s 30th Infantry Brigade. LTG Metz said that these were tough outfits that had been assigned tough jobs, which they had done well.



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CLEANING UP

Pass Christian, Mississippi

SPC James Meidl, a heavy equipment operator from the 890th Engineering Battalion, MSARNG, clears debris on roads left by Hurricane Katrina, in Pass Christian, Mississippi.

Photo by MSG James M. Bowman.
This photo appeared on army.mil.





RECON

A CRADLE OF DEMOCRACY

Baghdad, Iraq

Thanks to the efforts of the United States and the Army National Guard, an Iraqi woman raises her inked finger in celebration after voting in the constitutional referendum in Baghdad, Iraq.

Photo courtesy DVIDS/Combat Camera





RECON



SKILLED WATCHMAN

Nasiriya, Iraq

Spc. Mike Villareal, from B Company, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment, 56th Brigade Combat Team, patrols with his squad near Nasiriya, Iraq, July 17, 2005.

U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Suzanne M. Day





RECON



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

New Orleans, Louisiana

ARNG Warrant Officers Charles Woodward and Lance Brennan pilot a CH-47 Chinook assigned to the 131st Aviation Regiment of the GAARNG over areas of New Orleans flooded by Hurricane Katrina on 7 SEP, 2005.

Photo by Department of Defense





RECON

WOMEN IN THE GUARD

by Jason West

Like the Guard itself, women have been a critical part of the defense of our country since before we became a nation. Although the English Militia system only applied to men, there is ample evidence that women regularly participated in the defense of early American settlements both in support roles and by bearing arms.

The official history of American women serving in the military begins with Margaret Corbin, nicknamed “Captain Molly,” in the Revolutionary War. When her husband, John Corbin, enlisted in the Continental Army, Margaret became a camp follower, traveling with the army, cooking for the soldiers and tending the wounded. On November 16, 1776, at the defense of Fort Mifflin (Manhattan), New York when her husband was killed, Margaret took over his duties, loading and firing one of only two cannons defending the fort until she was felled by enemy fire. On July 6, 1779, in recognition of her extraordinary heroism, the Continental Congress granted her a soldier’s pension. Margaret Corbin is buried at West Point.

Since this auspicious beginning, women have volunteered in ever increasing numbers to protect and serve their nation. In the Civil War, they staffed hospitals, transported supplies, and even acted as spies on both sides. In the Spanish-American War, 1,500 nurses served with the US Army. World War I saw the first women enlisting in the US military (in the Navy and Marines). During World War II, approximately 400,000 military females served stateside and overseas. Despite these impressive numbers, women were not granted permanent military status until the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 secured their positions in the Army, Army Reserve, Navy, Marines and Air Force.

The integration of women in the National Guard was more complicated. The Guard’s dual state and federal mission meant there was no clear central authority that had the power to permit women to join. In the early 1950s, some states began to appoint female nursing officers, but without federal recognition. Congress settled the issue in

July 1956 by passing Public Law 845 which authorized female officers in the National Guard. On January 21, 1957, 1LT Sylvia Marie St. Charles Law became the first woman to receive a federally recognized commission in the Army National Guard.

In the beginning, the vast majority of the positions open to Guard women were in the medical field and only to officers. It was not until 1967 that enlisted positions were made available to females in the National Guard. Over the following two decades, progressively more jobs became available to women, until by the time of Operation Desert Storm, women were piloting fighters and helicopters—roles which exposed them to direct enemy fire. ➤



SGT Jessamyn Sobecki-Engle quieted a riot of 100–200 Iraqis from the top of her Humvee without firing a single shot. She writes, "They were shocked to see an angry young female with brown hair and blue eyes yelling at them from behind a .50 cal."
Photo courtesy SGT Sobecki

Today, women serve at all levels in the Army National Guard, taking on roles that were unthinkable just a few decades ago. However, the question remains, what is a woman's Guard Experience? After more than 350 years as an exclusively male organization, have women been able to find a place serving their states and their nation in the Army National Guard?

GX Echo emails were sent to over 19,000 Guard Soldiers, asking women about their experience and asking men what they thought of the women they had served with.

GX echo

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO SERVE? HAS A FEMALE IN YOUR FAMILY SERVED IN THE PAST?

Responses to these two questions made it clear the choice to serve was often heavily influenced by a family history of service.

In general, the reasons given for choosing military service were not particularly surprising. *GX* conducted a year-long survey soliciting information about its readership, and these responses were more or less in line with the responses that had come in previously. The most common reasons given, by a wide margin, were training and money for education.

Some of the women were seeking very specific skills. When asked why she joined, SSG Cindy Lefore offered the most concise response, in only three words: "Diesel

Mechanic Training." WO1 Kodey Henderson had always wanted to fly. Through a study at Fort Rucker, she received PRK surgery which corrected her vision and was subsequently accepted into Warrant Officer Candidate School and flight school. Others were more interested in funding their college educations. Although she had good grades, PFC Heidi Seedorff found herself without scholarships or savings for college. Despite her mother's fear that she would, due to a stubborn streak, "die in the front leaning rest position" during basic, SPC Seedorff earned her benefits and has come to love the Guard.

Almost none of those who responded had a female family member who had served in any branch of the military. Over half had at least one male relative in the previous two generations who had served. SFC Patricia

The response was higher than for any previous feature. Hundreds of emails poured in expressing a wide variety of strongly held opinions.

The survey began with five straightforward questions for women: Why did you choose to serve? Has a female in your family served in the past? Do you have children, and if so, how does this impact your life as a Soldier? What are you most proud of about your service? How do you feel the Guard Experience is different for women? Follow up messages were sent to many of the respondents asking for more details about their stories. This article is a summarization of all of the responses sent to *GX*.

Kishman, while the first woman in her family to enlist, wasn't the last. "I recruited one of my nieces to the Guard and another niece joined the Army because of my influence, and that makes me very proud."

Service to the nation and its values was listed most often as a contributing factor for initially enlisting, but was the top reason given for re-enlisting. After serving for any length of time, these women came to appreciate and embrace the Army Values. Seeing the hard work required to preserve the freedoms Americans enjoy everyday seemed to create a desire to give back in some way. SPC Crystal Jones wrote, "I have a lot of debts to this great country and its forefathers, and serving in the military is the best way to pay them back." Many of the more recent recruits specifically cited the attacks of 9/11 as one of their reasons for joining. SPC Kimberly Hairston sent, "I took this attack... as a personal assault on my life, my family's life and our great nation's honor and security. I wanted to DO SOMETHING."

One reason for joining did emerge, almost as a subtext, in many of the messages which had not previously arisen. Quite a few of the women seemed to have found themselves in difficult or frightening circumstances without a clear exit. Few seemed to want to elaborate on the details of the troubles or how they found themselves adrift, but the theme was there nonetheless. [Out of respect for their privacy on these sensitive topics, names are withheld here.] They spoke of needing "to get away," of coming from "a family history with a cycle that needed to be broken" or of wanting a "real family." These women knew they needed and deserved support. They knew they needed to learn how to be strong. Turning to the military was almost an act of desperation for many of them. These same women offered some of the highest words of praise for life as a Guard Soldier. They spoke of finding themselves surrounded by people who wanted only to encourage and build them up. They said they had found strength deep within themselves. They all consider the Guard their family.

SGT Wendy Chang, CAARNG: "During my time in service I have seen women in the Guard as generals, Soldiers of the Year, recipients of specialized training, and warriors on the front lines of combat zones. I believe the Guard has opportunities for females to excel!"
Photo courtesy SGT Chang



Photo courtesy SGT Sobiecki

On 20 November 2004, SGT Sobecki was manning the M2 (.50 caliber machine gun) in the rear vehicle of a two-vehicle patrol on the east side of Baghdad. She describes what they encountered:

Approximately 100–200 Iraqi civilians began shouting and waving their fists in the air, occasionally throwing their shoes in our direction. They formed together into a large mob and began rioting... As the mob of angry Iraqis began making its way... towards our vehicle, CPT Stafford looked up at me and said, “Sobe, you better do something to stop that riot.” “Yes Sir!” I replied as I pointed my .50 cal in their direction. The Iraqi Police unsuccessfully tried to halt the efforts of the crowd. The mob pushed its way right through their lines. My fellow Soldiers stood poised next to our vehicles, weapons poised and ready for anything.

Thinking quickly... I knew what I had to do. Keeping one hand on the M2 pointed in the mob’s direction, I threw my other arm up at the crowd and began signaling to them to halt and get back while yelling at the top of my lungs. I don’t even remember exactly what I said. Except for the use of a few expletives, I know in one way or another I told them in yelling form to get back. What I saw next unfolded like the scene of a movie. The mob of Iraqis stopped in place and one by one, the

fists that had just been waving in the air began dropping. Looking at some of the Iraqis, I was able to see a surprised look in their eye and several jaws in the dropped position. I’m assuming they were shocked to see an angry young *female* with brown hair and blue eyes yelling and pointing at them from behind a .50 cal. The crowd immediately quieted down and began to disperse. Shocked at the sight we’d all just witnessed, CPT Stafford looked up at me and laughed as he said,

“Geez Sobe, that was good!” I smiled. I received many compliments later that day from my fellow Soldiers. I’d successfully stopped a riot without even firing a round. I knew I was highly skilled as a gunner, and if I had to I would’ve taken further action. But I honestly believe the fact that I’m a female really assisted me in stopping that riot that day.

SGT JESSAMYN PEARL SOBECKI-ENGLE
270TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY, CAARNG

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ABOUT YOUR SERVICE?

Guard Soldiers are proud of the work they do, and the women who responded are no exception. During her deployment to Afghanistan, SGT Jennifer Collins gained a greater understanding of the tremendous freedoms enjoyed by all Americans, and she took great pride in sharing these freedoms with others around the world. “Once I stepped foot in [Afghanistan] I realized how far women have come in America, and I felt excited about being a part of helping to liberate Afghan females.”

When most people think of Guard Soldiers serving, they picture either fighting natural disasters in the United States or working under fire overseas. However, for every Soldier in the field, there must be many more in support roles. SGT Rebecca Brun finds fulfillment in this type of work. “I am most proud that every day I get to serve and support the thousands of Soldiers

serving in theater today. Some Soldiers feel they have to have rounds flying over their heads in order to have done their part in the war on terrorism. However, not every Soldier can be there, and the ones who are there need our support back home.”

Many of the respondents were particularly proud of the examples they set. The perception that women do not belong in certain roles is crumbling quickly. It is still an unusual site to most Americans to see a woman in uniform, and these women found it rewarding to be part of changing that stereotype. When SPC Megan Dove takes her sons to school while wearing her BDUs, she enjoys “seeing that little boy or girl staring at you in awe because they can’t believe you are in the Army. Especially that little girl who thinks she’s not allowed to do ‘boy things.’ I’m showing her she can.”

Beyond the effects they have on the lives of others, several women expressed pride in the people that the Guard had helped them to become. 1LT Anne Maniscalco wrote, “The Guard has given me every opportunity to be the best person I can be, and I want to thank them for allowing [me] to serve this great nation.” Similarly, SSG Charlotte Curtis said she was most proud that, “I accomplished all that I set out to do and am still excelling. That as a female, I make my way on my own without relying on my gender, looks or others to get ahead.”

In the end, they were simply proud to be in the National Guard. SPC Collier summed up this sentiment: “I am just proud to wear the uniform. There is no job like serving your country.”

WHAT EFFECTS DO CHILDREN HAVE ON SERVICE?

Children can bring great joy into a parent's life. Few of life's experiences are more fulfilling, or more tiring. Guard service takes tremendous commitment and effort; and trying to balance the noble choice to serve and the equally honorable need to parent is difficult under the best of circumstances. When a Soldier finds herself functioning as a single parent, the situation can be overwhelming.

SSG Cindy Lefore is fortunate enough to have a husband, David Mitchell, who is incredibly supportive and proud of her choice to serve. He received the *GX Echo* email while his wife was deployed in New Orleans. He feels so strongly about his wife's work that he went well out of his way to give her a chance to respond. He added the following to his wife's response to *GX*'s question about how children had affected her service: "We as a family unit must be the ones to adapt to the [Guard] lifestyle. Every annual training or school is the family's drill. We practice functioning without the other parent around to help. Everyone's workload increases... [While deployed] my wife needs to feel assured and confident that all is well at home so she can focus on her mission."

Many Guard mothers are not as lucky as SSG Lefore and find themselves struggling to meet their obligations to their family and their nation. The women who took the time to write to *GX* seemed somewhat stoic about their situations, accepting their lives and drawing strength from their service, their family and the Guard. SPC Myra Bush wrote, "Being a [single] parent and a Soldier can be difficult at times... so there's always a conflict followed by a plan of resolution. Children deserve selfless service from their parents; however as Soldiers, we are not just serving to guard our nation. We are guarding the world and fighting for the freedom of all Americans, including our children... I know my children didn't ask to be in this situation, and it hurts to speak of mobilization, deployment and war. But we've become stronger, more united and supportive of each other."

SGT Leah Boyd spoke of the difficulty of at once being a strong independent woman and needing the help of her family: "As a single parent, it is extremely hard to imagine leaving my daughter for a deployment, knowing I must rely upon the support of my family to care for her. Balancing the necessity of independence and the need for reliance is

difficult, but it teaches the values of loyalty, duty, honor and courage."

Most of the mothers who wrote, particularly the single mothers, felt their child helped them focus on what is important, both at home and in the military. SSG Shannon Alvarez explained, "My love for my daughter makes me a better Soldier. I train harder and a lot smarter because of her... One day I hope my daughter will understand the sacrifices I've made and why... I shouldn't feel that I've done something wrong by serving in the military."

This last comment captures an underlying theme in letters received from almost all the single mothers. There was an almost defensive tone when they spoke of choosing to remain in the service. Since the choice to serve one's nation is an honorable one, this tone seems peculiar. PFC Heidi Seedorff finally expressed clearly and openly what these women must have been feeling, "I catch a lot of flack as a single mother for being in the military. 'What if I get sent overseas?' 'What if I get killed?' 'What am I thinking?' I'm thinking of my children's future. I'm fighting so they can continue to be free, speak their minds and grow up to be whatever they want to be. If I don't do that, who will? ... Maybe, just maybe, my two little girls will grow up to join the Guard that I love, and learn to love it the way I do. Maybe this will be something for my family to treasure and begin to pass on for generations to come."

Perhaps the two bravest things a woman can choose to do are serve her country and raise a child. Women who have the strength and determination to undertake both of these tasks, either of which can be overwhelming, should be lauded and supported by those around them. It is gratifying to note that many of these single mothers had received, without asking, generous support from the Soldiers with whom they serve.



ABOVE: SSG Cindy Lefore with husband, David, and daughter, Holly. RIGHT: SSG Lefore in a WWI cavalry uniform with "Bandit."



Photos courtesy SSG Lefore



THE REASONS FOR A STRONG NATIONAL GUARD ARE HARD TO PREDICT.

You don't know when, or even if, a natural disaster will strike your community. But you can be sure of the National Guard. In cities, towns and in rural communities, the Guard is trained, equipped and ready to serve whenever nature delivers a devastating punch.

A strong, successful Guard is built on dedication and courage. Have you got it? If you think so, visit us online or call us. Be one of the people your community can rely on at the worst of times.

Become a Citizen-Soldier.

Learn more about the Guard. Visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com



JOIN THE NATIONAL GUARD
The National Guard offers college and career training benefits. Go online to find out more.

HOW ARE THINGS DIFFERENT FOR WOMEN?

It would not be possible to discuss how the Guard experience is different for women without confronting the differences, both real and perceived, between men and women. The primary physiological reason given historically for keeping women out of military service was strength. There is no way around the simple fact that women on average possess less upper body strength than men. That is not to say that any given woman might not be stronger than a given man, but as a generalization it is accurate. How much strength affects a person's ability to function as a Soldier, on the other hand, would be almost impossible to quantify. So the question that follows is: are there attributes unique to women which would somehow compensate for this physical difference? Anecdotal evidence, at least, suggests there are.

SFC Ben Dolan, ARNG (a former Marine sniper),

trained the first woman (Senior Airman Jennifer Donaldson) to graduate from the only U.S. military sniper school open to women. At the time, he was asked what he thought of a woman sniper. He not only maintained that more women should be trained as snipers, he went on, "Frankly, women are better suited mentally for this job than most men... Women can shoot better, by and large, and they're easier to train because they don't have the inflated egos that a lot of men bring to these programs. Women will ask for help if they need it, and they will tell you what they think."

Most of the other biases against women serving are the traditional stereotypes, which unfortunately women in uniform still have to work to refute. PFC Jennifer Clark explained, "We have to show ourselves as not weak and weepy... Our hearts and courage grow stronger as we

learn our jobs, the same as the males, we just have to try harder because the military has been a male clubhouse we have had to break into."

2LT Maria Aguilar agreed, "Guard experience for women may seem tough at times, especially learning to be an officer... It's a stereotype that women are the weaker link. Yet that [myth] can be broken with the respect you earn from the men."

SSG Cynthia Elliott concisely summed up a frequently expressed feeling: "Coming into the service you feel compelled to keep up with the guys. You have to do better than them to even be considered equal." SPC Higgins also felt at times she had to overcome gender biases: "It is not hard to be in the military, but you do run into situations where things do not seem fair or equal... but I have learned to

**WO1 BRENDA J. PHILLIPS
KYARNG**

WO1 Phillips, a Desert Storm veteran, is a single mother and grandmother. She is raising her 17 year old son and her two grandchildren, ages seven months and five years. At age forty, she decided to attend OCS while simultaneously pursuing a bachelor's degree at KYSU in Social Work and Gerontology. After completing her training, she opted to become a Warrant Officer. She was informed by the Equal Employment Manager for the Guard that she was first female African-American Warrant Officer in the Kentucky National Guard. She wrote us of her experience in OCS.

"I started OCS with three other females from Kentucky... [By] the third drill, I was the only female and the oldest of my class. I considered quitting the program because I was the only female left, but I decided against it. My younger male classmates gave me lots of respect, even though I was the slowest and the last to complete a lot of challenges. They cheered me on to complete the tasks, and never allowed anyone from other states to disrespect me. Those younger guys in their twenties pumped me up, saying 'You are bad, Granny!' and 'I want to be like you.' At first I didn't like being called Granny—I thought they were being sarcastic. But 'Granny' became a motivator to me. I was very competitive with my younger male classmates, often nearly beating their scores in physical training. They sometimes asked how I did it. In the beginning, I dreaded being the only female, but I soon learned to enjoy my training. The guys always called me on the Fridays we met for training to make sure I had everything I needed and that I had a ride. I was very proud to graduate."

LEFT: WO1 Brenda Phillips (left) is being sworn into service.

Photo courtesy WO1 Phillips



SGT JENNIFER COLLINS FLARNG

SGT Collins is with Task Force 53rd out of St. Petersburg, Florida, currently deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan. She described a visit to a local school:

A couple of weeks ago, I and several other Soldiers convoyed to a town called Udeylhil, Afghanistan (right outside Camp Phoenix). Normally, being a female, you are not allowed outside the wire because of the visibility of being a female and the threat level for the upcoming elections. I normally get pulled to do visits, because I am a female, and I will have better interaction with the Afghan females.

As we approached the school, the children were separated by sexes. The group that I convoyed with had worked for the past week putting school supplies in backpacks. The male Soldiers started handing out the supplies to the boys. In a far corner, you could see two classes of females. They were quietly praying during our visit. My SECFOR Battalion Commander had asked me to remove my helmet and place my weapon to the side and give out the supplies to the girls. What a great idea he had. By removing my helmet, I had better interaction with the girls. When I first approached the girls, they had just finished praying and had their faces covered with veils.

keep my head up because I am a Soldier with a mission."

One Soldier, SPC Kimberly Hairston, who came to the Guard after raising seven children, seemed to have found a way to distance herself from any debate over her ability to serve based on her gender: "I do not have to be competitive with male Soldiers. I am not trying to be male, just a competent Soldier."

When SGT Wendy Chang found out she would be deploying to Iraq, she was concerned that her gender might be an issue. As a Human Intelligence collector, she was well aware that being a woman might make her job more difficult. "I wasn't so much concerned about how male Soldiers would respond, but how the Iraqis would... I found that in presenting myself professionally and confidently, the Iraqi men responded to me the same as they did to my male counterparts. In addition, having a woman on the team was helpful in putting Iraqi women at ease."



ABOVE: SSG Jennifer Collins handing out school supplies to Afghan children in Udeylhil.
Photo courtesy SSG Collins

I approached the first girl, and handed her gift to her. She slowly lowered her veil and exposed her face and gave me the biggest smile. I went through about forty girls, by the time I was done; maybe all but five uncovered their face for me. I was able to touch their ears and compliment them on their earrings. One little girl pulled off her veil and let me put on hair accessories for her.

I feel that we're teaching the children now that it's okay for women to vote, hold jobs and make a difference in their country. It won't happen overnight, it might take a generation before it happens, but we have to start with the children first.

The discussion about the role of women in the military has largely become academic. Regardless of the ongoing debate over MOS's, women are in combat. Since America's enemies are willing to attack anyone at any time, it was inevitable women would have to become combat capable to serve overseas in any capacity. Fortunately, women are proving themselves to be as adept in new skills as they are in all other areas of military life.

If the women who shared their stories are any indication, the Guard experience for females is at least as compelling as it is for males, if not more so. When they joined, they knew that in addition to the normal trials of service, they might also have to overcome gender bias. Still, they raised their hand and took the oath. They have gone beyond defying society's expectations of women to redefining them. Women have become, and will remain, a powerful and critical part of the Army National Guard.

If you are interested in giving your point of view for future *GX* features, go to the service and subscription section of www.gxonline.com, and sign up for "GX Intel In Your Mailbox." You will begin receiving *GX Echo* emails asking for your opinions. **GX**

VAUGHN'S VISION

IN HIS OWN WORDS



Recently, GX had the great honor to share some genuine quality time with the new Director of the Army National Guard, LTG Clyde A. Vaughn. The LTG very willingly shared much with GX about his vision for the Guard. In this first installment of a two-part series, we're pleased to introduce you to the new DARNG. We believe you'll come away, as did we, with the feeling that Guard leadership is in the experienced and capable hands of a caring and committed career Soldier.

ABOUT THE GUARD AND COMMUNITY STRENGTH

You know, some folks are just now figuring out how spread out the Guard is... all across America, I mean. I tell people, "If you want to know what America looks like, look at the Guard, that's who we are, America." And what makes the Guard so strong? Our communities.

We're the folks in the tire store, at the car dealership, the policeman, and the truck driver. We're your volunteer fire fighter or fire chief, your teacher, counselor and coach. When the Guard answers this Nation's Call to Duty, this is who goes, and our communities are behind us. ▶▶

Photo by Mitch Powers

PROUD YEARS OF SERVICE



LTG Vaughn is a career military member with service in both the active Army and Army National Guard. According to the LTG, he was influenced to join by his father, a career Guard member, and between them

they have over 65 years of Guard service. The LTG is married with two children and two grandchildren. His family is near him in Virginia and his son, a Marine captain, flies F18's as a naval aviator (with two floats) and is also a Top Gun instructor. When asked if he plans to encourage his son to join the Guard someday, the LTG laughs and says with great pride, "I never encouraged him to join the Marines, but I know he will always make the right choice. We have to be very proud of all in this great generation of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines."

LTG Vaughn is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State College, Shippensburg University, and the Army War College. He was commissioned through the Missouri National Guard Officer Candidate School program in 1974 and consequently has served in a wide variety of command and staff positions as a traditional Guardsman and on active duty. He has served extensively in Central and South America on several deployed Task Forces. His General Officer assignments were as the Deputy Director of Operations, Readiness and Mobilization, and the Deputy Director of Military Support under the G3 of the United States Army; then, Deputy Director of the Army National Guard; and most recently, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for National Guard Matters.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

- Distinguished Service Medal
- Defense Superior Service Medal
- Legion of Merit (with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters)
- Meritorious Service Medal (with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters)
- Army Commendation Medal
- Army Achievement Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
- Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters)
- Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Silver Hourglass)
- Army Service Ribbon
- Army Staff Identification Badge

Some folks say this is the largest deployment of Guard members since World War II. I don't know about that – I had five family members in that war, back then they sent everybody – but I do know that America's communities are really proud of their Soldiers today. I hear it in towns just about everywhere I go. Someone will say, "Well, there may be people who don't necessarily support this [war] effort, but in this town they'd better because those are OUR Soldiers."

This is a unique characteristic of the Guard compared to all other branches of service. Some of the oldest units in the Army are Guard units and some of the oldest buildings in America are Guard armories (see sidebar, *Proud Hometown History*).

Look at how our communities support these Soldiers, too. They see them off, they stay in touch while they're gone and then they welcome them home. And that's a key right there, that they are welcomed home. Our Soldiers don't come back from assignment and then rotate out somewhere, when they come back, they come home.



ABOVE: LGT Vaughn shares his vision for the Army National Guard with *GX* magazine staff. Photo by Mitch Powers

FAR LEFT PHOTO: Courtesy US Army

“What are you talking about, ‘Can the Guard fight?’ They’re some of the toughest people in America. If you’re saying the Guard can’t fight, you’re saying America can’t fight.” — LTG Clyde A. Vaughn

ABOUT FIGHTING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

I have some really close active Army friends and I used to get a kick because every now and then, one of them would ask me, "Can the Guard fight?" And I'd say, "What are you talking about 'Can the Guard fight?' They're some of the toughest people in America. If you're saying the Guard can't fight, you're saying America can't fight."

Fighting for this country isn't just the privilege of a few. Some of the toughest people I've ever known sit on a barstool on Saturday night or in a church pew on Sunday morning in small towns all across our country. These are our Guard members, and when you get them riled up, you've really got a hold of something – you'd better watch out.

When you hook up the great value system of the United States Army with the power of these great Americans, you've got

our Army National Guard today. I can't tell you how proud I am to represent such a great organization.

Our challenge is going to be end strength and what we are seeing today is very encouraging. Our low was back in June and we've been on the upswing since. We couldn't expect to meet our year-end goal because we'd dug a pretty deep hole, but we've gained strength in July, August and September. And it looks like our upward trend is continuing.

Soon I will announce new programs to address this end strength challenge because we have to keep our presence up. It's one of our defining strengths that we're a decentralized force in communities all over America. To protect our hometowns and defend our country, we have to maintain a strong presence in as many communities as possible. And, to do that we're going to roll out some revolutionary new programs. [GX note: Stay

STRENGTH MAINTENANCE

tuned for the second part of this series to find out more...]

WHERE I SEE OUR "MARK ON THE WALL"

Today's engagement is a different kind of war and we're in it for the long haul. It may not always require the level of [involvement] as we currently have in Iraq but this won't be contained in Iraq either. We're organizing differently so we can get this over with over there, otherwise we'll be fighting here. I think our "Mark on the Wall" is a spectacular one, this is the strongest Army National Guard ever and our mark is the

an Army National Guard brigade plus the Balkans rotations in Kosovo and Bosnia are another Guard brigade. At one time, 10 of our 34 brigades were in action around the world.

While keeping these missions going, we still handled our constitutionally mandated state duties for Katrina and Rita swiftly and with tremendous success. The quick and extensive response to these catastrophes is hard to appreciate. But the confidence and experience gained by recent deployments made our Katrina response what it was – truly outstanding.

I believe this is one of the most outstanding generations of servicemen and women I've ever seen. There's plenty of

I believe this is one of the most outstanding generations of servicemen and women I've ever seen. There's plenty of evidence this is a "we" generation dedicated to service and sacrifice.

— LTG Clyde A. Vaughn

direct result of the quality of our units and the Soldiers we send into battle.

Do you realize that at one time, eight of the 17 brigades in combat in Iraq were Army Guard? Of the total 17, two were Marines, seven were active Army and eight were Guard. And let's not forget that the training for the Afghan National Army comes from

evidence this is a "we" generation dedicated to service and sacrifice. Many families and communities have made the ultimate sacrifice and we will not forget. We will honor their sacrifice by winning this fight, by staying strong in our communities, and by continuing to make our mark for future generations and the protection of all Americans. **GX**

PROUD HOMETOWN HISTORY

Of the thirty or so still-active U.S. military units that can trace lineage back to the Colonial Era, all but one are National Guard units.

The oldest units in America are four MAARNG units that were present at "First Muster" in Massachusetts in 1636. On December 13th, 1636, the Massachusetts colony organized three regiments (North, South and East Regiments) to provide protection against the Pequot Indian tribe.

The 1/181st Infantry and the 1/182nd Infantry carry the lineage of the North Regiment. The 1/101st Field Artillery



St. Francis Barracks in St. Augustine FL has served as headquarters for the Florida National Guard since 1907. Photo by Chris West

Regiment traces its roots to the South Regiment, and the 101st Engineer Battalion had its origins in the East Regiment.

One of the oldest buildings in America is the National Guard armory in St. Augustine, FL. See the "Guard Profile" in the Vol. 1 issue 5 of GX magazine for more on members of the FLARNG.

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FAST TRACK TO THE FUTURE

ROTC CADETS GET AHEAD WITH HELP FROM THE GUARD



ROTC cadets receive group field training on battle tactics and efficient navigation techniques.

Photos courtesy SFC Ken Suratt

By MAJ Mark South & SFC Ken Suratt

In August of 2001, on the campus of the University of Southern Indiana (USI), MAJ Mark Weaver and his staff of three INARNG members initiated a new pilot ROTC program. Unlike other ROTC programs, this was launched as a partnership between the U.S. Army Cadet Command (USACC), the National Guard Bureau (NGB), and the U.S. Army Reserve, and was to be fully staffed and run by Army National Guard personnel. Their mission was to create a viable ROTC program within five years, and commission seven lieutenants by May 2006. In May 2004, USI Army ROTC reached its goal, commissioning

seven lieutenants, and the program was an acknowledged success.

How did USI Army ROTC achieve its mission two years ahead of schedule? By relying heavily on its National Guard roots. An option known as "lateral entry" enabled the program to bring ARNG Soldiers into the program to be commissioned after two years. These Soldiers were all college juniors, which ensured they would commission and complete their bachelor degrees at the same time. As

Guard Soldiers, these cadets were part of the Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP), a program which allows participants to be simultaneously involved in ROTC on campus, and serve in the ARNG as officers-in-training. This allows them to take full advantage of the Guard's college benefits while receiving the stipend paid to ROTC cadets.

Now, celebrating its fifth year on campus, the USI ROTC staff is proud to have the majority of its cadets as members of SMP. In 2004, the NGB and USACC began allowing second-year cadets (college sophomores) to join the SMP. Previously open only to juniors and seniors, SMP unlocked benefits and possibilities that didn't previously exist

For more information go to:
www.armyrotc.com

for sophomores. Joining SMP allows college sophomores to come to ROTC, join the National Guard, and become officers, all without attending basic training*. It also allows an additional year as an officer-in-training with a line unit, which provides invaluable leadership experience. Because of the officer shortage in the National Guard, many SMP cadets are the only other officer in their companies besides the commander. This is a golden opportunity to learn and grow as an officer, gain wisdom from NCOs and become leaders even before being commissioned.

The SMP makes all of the Guard's college benefits available to cadets without requiring them to put their academic careers on hold to attend BCT and AIT.

Those Soldiers who came into the program through lateral entry aren't the only cadets in the USI program, nor is lateral entry the only option. Many cadets started the program as college juniors with no prior military experience. These cadets attend the Leaders Training Course at Ft Knox, KY after their junior year, and attend Warrior Forge at Ft



ABOVE: SSG Wannemueller demonstrates part of the obstacle course. BELOW: CDT Eric McDaniel briefs CDT Matt Beck during a squad lane exercise.

Lewis, WA after their senior year, where they are commissioned as lieutenants. For these alternate entry cadets, the SMP is simply invaluable, providing them with more exposure to the Army than they receive on campus.

For those college students who start ROTC as freshmen, the SMP provides a host of opportunities and choices. As long as they have sufficient college credit hours at the beginning of their sophomore year, cadets can solidify their intent to become an Army officer by enlisting with the Guard and contracting with ROTC. It makes all of the Guard's college

benefits available to cadets without requiring them to put their academic careers on hold to attend BCT and AIT. Depending on where ARNG units are located within their region, cadets have the opportunity to take an in-depth look at several different branches before making a decision at the start of their senior year. Most importantly, it increases the time a cadet has with a line unit as an officer-in-training. This experience provides a great opportunity for an established officer and NCO to mold the cadet into someone who will be an asset to any unit.

The goal of a ROTC cadet is clear: earn commission as a second lieutenant. For some of the ARNG Soldiers that are admitted via lateral entry, many hidden challenges exist in reaching this goal. Turning that frustrated energy into leadership energy is one of the key tasks of those teaching and running the program.

Establishing the USI Army ROTC program through the Army National Guard has yielded incredible results. Officers who graduated from USI's program are deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with several serving as line platoon leaders with the 1st Battalion, 163rd Field Artillery, INARNG. The program continues to attract students intent on becoming

officers in the U.S. Army from both Guard and civilian sectors.

With time and continued support of the Guard, USI's program will continue to grow, providing officers to the Army and leaders in business and community for years to come! **GX**



*According to Cadet Command, if a Cadet has MS 100 and 200 level courses or LTC (Leaders Training Course), this satisfies the BT (Basic Training) requirement. The National Guard Bureau set it up this way so a student can pursue his/her commission with zero education time lost, whereas your BT/AIT would require students to miss a semester or two of school.

BY THE NUMBERS

★ SMP MONTHLY BENEFITS ★

Montgomery GI Bill **\$297.00**

Montgomery GI Bill Kicker **\$350.00**

ROTC Stipend **\$500.00**

E-5 Drill Pay **\$234.00**

Total Monthly Earnings **\$1381.00**

Source: USI Army ROTC

YOUR RETIREMENT

Thrift Savings Plan

By MAJ Winfield Danielson, MAARNG Public Affairs

Whether you are a traditional Guard member, Active Guard Reserve or a government-service employee working for the National Guard, the Thrift Savings Plan allows you to save money tax-deferred.

What do you think about when you think about retirement? Freedom to focus on the things you really want to do? Hobbies? Home improvements? World travel?

Whatever thoughts came into your mind, chances are that working part-time at McDonald's to make ends meet wasn't one of them. But this is exactly what will happen if you don't plan ahead.

Retired Guard pay is a start, but relying on that and Social Security alone will likely still not be enough; some kind of additional savings will be necessary.

The good news for all of us Guard employees, traditional and full-time, is the

federal government has set up the Thrift Savings Plan to help us save toward our retirement goals. TSP offers the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private companies offer under "401(k)" plans.

Whether you are a traditional Guard member, Active Guard Reserve or a government-service employee working for the National Guard, the Thrift Savings Plan allows you to save money tax-deferred. In other words, the money you save is put into your savings account before you pay taxes on it. This means that you have more take-home pay than if you had saved that money from after-tax income.

Another benefit is that Thrift Savings Plan contributions come directly out of

your pay. Why is this a good thing? As a wise friend once told me, "You spend what you earn." As you advance in your career and make more money, you will likely find that somehow you still never seem to have any extra after the bills are paid.

Because Thrift Savings Plan contributions come out before your money is deposited into your bank account, you can't accidentally spend the savings portion of your budget. You pay yourself first, so to speak, and the chances are you won't miss it any more than you miss the other deductions already coming out of your pay, like your tax withholding, for example.

How much should you put into your Thrift Savings Plan? Most experts agree that you should be socking away 10 to 20 percent of your earnings. Currently, uniformed service members, including Guard members and reservists, can contribute up to 10 percent of their base military pay each period and may also contribute up to 100 percent of any military incentive or special pay.

More information on both the uniformed service and civil employee TSP programs can be found on the Thrift Savings Plan Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov>. To enroll, see your unit administrator or readiness NCO. **GX**



Photo by PictureQuest/Jupiter Images/andersen-ross

RECRUIT SUSTAINMENT PROGRAM

WARRIOR TIPS:

Using shoe polish on your boots not only makes them shine but helps to waterproof them.

The best way to get better at PT is to do more of it.

When in doubt, salute.

If you have to ask yourself if it's the right thing to do or not... it's probably not.

Be on time, at the right place and in the right uniform.

\$2000

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- YES NO HAVE YOU RECENTLY BEEN PROMOTED?
(HAND-CARRY A SIGNED AND DATED DA FORM 4187 TO BCT)
- YES NO HAS ANY OF YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION CHANGED?
(ADDRESS, PH NUMBER, INSURANCE BENEFICIARY, ETC.)

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO EITHER OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RSP COORDINATOR OR YOUR RECRUITER.

- YES NO DO YOU MEET HEIGHT AND WEIGHT STANDARDS?
- YES NO HAVE YOU PASSED THE ARMY PHYSICAL TRAINING ASSESSMENT?
- YES NO IS YOUR PAY CORRECT?
(RANK, NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS, BANK ACCOUNT, ETC)
- YES NO HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR ORDERS FOR ACTIVE DUTY TRAINING?
- YES NO HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR SHIPPERS COUNSELING AND BRIEFING?

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO EITHER OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS
PLEASE CONTACT YOUR RSP COORDINATOR OR YOUR RECRUITER

IN THEIR HOUR OF DIRE NEED

By Andrew Nixon

“This is the reason why I joined the National Guard.

I wasn't going to miss the chance to help.” The sentiments of SGT Foster Kennedy are echoed in the words and actions of the thousands of other members of the Army National Guard who have put their own lives on hold to aid the victims of the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast. The show of strength and support from the Guard has been overwhelming, especially on an individual level.

For instance, SGT Kennedy is trained as a vehicle mechanic for the Ohio National Guard, but has volunteered his time and energies to help wherever he can with tasks, such as loading and unloading helicopters with supplies; tasks that are not in his job description, but may help save someone's life. This show of unselfishness and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty is one of thousands of humanitarian efforts that exemplify the true nature of the National Guard.

Beginning with the cataclysmic landfall of Hurricane Katrina on August 29th, and continuing with Hurricane Rita's bombardment of the Texas coast, more than 48,000 ARNG Soldiers have lent their services across the Gulf Coast, from Alabama to Texas. Many Guard members are from the very states that the hurricanes devastated, their families displaced after their own homes were destroyed, but they still work tirelessly to help others put their lives back together. In the most massive domestic response by the National Guard to one of the worst natural disasters in history, Soldiers from Wyoming to New Mexico to Mississippi gave their all to help fellow Americans in a time of crisis and dire need.





Photo by SGT Richard Grimm

We, as a nation, watched from our living rooms as the horrors unfolded from New Orleans to Gulfport, and all of the small towns and communities in between. Watched as flood waters poured in and people scrambled to their rooftops in a last-ditch effort to survive. As video cameras panned the landscape from the disconnected safety of helicopters high above, we saw piles of matchsticks strewn amongst trees, covered by toy boats and cars like something on a Hollywood soundstage, only to realize

the reality of the situation. Some approached with trepidation, some with excitement, but none were completely prepared for what they would find. TSG Mike Tarbuck, a medical technician with the Wyoming National Guard, summed it up this way, "This was my first mission as an aerovac crew member and it was exciting for me. But then, the realization hits when you see a patient get on the plane with a plastic bag and you know that's all they have in the world."

Hurricane Katrina hit the coast at 7:00 AM on August 29. By 5:00 PM, MSARNG military police were leaving Camp Shelby, MS and heading toward the coastline. The convoy battled through downed trees, power lines, debris, and flood waters, all with the tail end of the storm still raging. "We chainsawed our way to the coast," said 1SG Brett Dupre. Normally an hour's journey, that night the trip to Gulfport took five hours, as the troops moved into the affected area without any knowledge of what lay ahead. All communi-

"SOME OF OUR TROOPS LOST EVERYTHING THEY HAD IN THE STORM, BUT FIRST THEY ARE HELPING [OTHERS] BEFORE THEY LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES."

— 1SG Brett Dupre, MSARNG

that those were no toys and the matchsticks were the scattered remains of people's homes, along with their shattered hopes and dreams.

Most of us watched these images in disbelief, filled with sympathy for the helpless victims on the television screen, but we still watched from a comfortable distance, in the safety of our living rooms hundreds of miles away. Safe distance was not an option, however, for those called to help sort through this nightmare. For all the men and women of the Guard who were called to action, their arrival was a rude awakening to

Many Soldiers have been a part of the efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, experience which helped them prepare for what they would encounter on the Gulf Coast. "Iraq was a man-made disaster. This is a natural disaster; and, from my perspective, that's one of the few differences between the two," said OHARNG SPC Ralph "Doc" Isabella. No matter the expectations or reservations, every Guard member readily rose to the challenge because it was his or her duty. Just as SGT Kennedy stated, "This is why I joined the National Guard."

cations had been wiped out, the Emergency Operations Centers were off the air, and at least one EOC, in Bay St. Louis, was even forced to evacuate. The MP's arrived to find a town in darkness and disarray, and even though much of it was underwater, they immediately began security patrols with members of the Alabama and Louisiana Guard. "People join the Guard because they want to help their fellow citizens," Dupre said. "Some of our troops lost everything they had in the storm, too, but first they are helping the people of the Gulf Coast before they look after themselves."



Photo by CW3 Robert Williams



ABOVE: Clean-up continues on Gulfport, MS beaches.
RIGHT: An ARNG medic bandages a survivor's wounds before infection sets in.
LEFT: Guard troops patrol the streets around the New Orleans Convention Center.



This is but one example of the courage and resolve typical of Guard members in the hours following Katrina's landfall. Less than 24 hours after Katrina hit, ALARNG troops were on the ground in the state's coastal region, rescuing and evacuating nearly 500 people. Within 48 hours, nearly 27,000 National Guard troops were in the region, conducting search and rescue missions, providing security, distributing food and water, and the list goes on and on. From Special Forces to vehicle mechanics, everyone was doing his or her part to help make a difference.

From North Dakota to Pennsylvania, Guard units from all over the country began arriving to the devastated region to lend a hand. Seventy-three men and women from the Wyoming National Guard came to Louisiana and Mississippi in two C-130's and four UH-60's, equipped with aeromedical evacuation supplies and mobile kitchens. In the first 24 hours after arrival, the Blackhawk crews rescued more than twenty people, and, in the three days that followed, C-130 crews airlifted more than 250 evacuees and 51 tons of cargo. Behind the scenes, the WYARNG helped prepare and load cargo and military personnel from at least three other states into transport planes. Wyoming troops also helped house and feed more than 3,500 relief workers, both military and civilian, in Gulfport.

Though the men and women of the Wyoming Guard were proud of their efforts, they still felt overwhelmed with sympathy

for those they were helping. As MSG Doug Rhodes put it, "I think one of the hardest facts is that at the end of my deployment, I will be returning to my house in Cheyenne, while thousands have nowhere to go."

For those people that did still have a place to call home, one of the primary tasks assigned to Guard units was to

provide them with security. All along the coast, armed Guard Soldiers manned street corners and patrolled neighborhoods in armored HUMVEE's in an effort to create an omnipresence and discourage lawlessness. As well-documented by the media, an outbreak of looting and violence had begun to sweep through many areas, especially in New Orleans. Once the armed presence of the National Guard arrived, though, things began to change.

One family in New Orleans had been holed up in their house for days following the storm, afraid to come outside after seeing looters take control of the streets. But, as soon as they saw Soldiers from the Texas and California Guards outside their window, they finally emerged. Voicing the feeling of many residents, the father said they were afraid until the National Guard arrived. "Now we know it's safe." Units set up 24-hour patrols throughout New Orleans' neighborhoods to keep things in check and the remaining residents safe and secure.

In Long Beach, MS, TNARNG troops patrolled the streets not only to deter looting, but also to restrict access to severely damaged areas, many of which were declared biohazard zones. "Before we arrived, things were a bit out of hand," said TNARNG SGT Kerry Parker. "But, things have settled down a bit now." They also visited those houses that were still standing to check for survivors and identify those they found. Amazingly, those residents that still remained provided Soldiers with food

BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL GUARD TROOPS DEPLOYED **OVER 48,000**

AVERAGE DAILY SEARCH & RESCUE MISSIONS **OVER 300**

POUNDS OF ICE DISTRIBUTED **OVER 50,000,000**

GALLONS OF WATER DISTRIBUTED **OVER 7,000,000**

MEALS DISTRIBUTED **OVER 10,000,000**



ERNEST N. MORIAL
CONVENTION CENTER NEW ORLEANS

Photo by SGT Richard Grimm



Photo by CW3 Robert Williams

LEFT: A member of TXARNG helps evacuees onto a UH-1 outside the New Orleans Convention Center. BELOW: NCARNG SSG Janise Steward guards a Wal-Mart in Hammond, LA to deter looters. Three hundred NC National Guardsmen were called to help with relief efforts. RIGHT: Members of 1-19th SF, UTARNG ferry up a flooded street in New Orleans on a search and rescue mission. BELOW RIGHT: A stop sign remains barely visible in the extreme flood waters.

and water on a regular basis, even though they had lost everything. Added SGT Parker, "You can't ask for better people than the ones who are here."

As thousands of men and women worked tirelessly to clean up in the wake of Katrina, a new threat was churning out in the Gulf of

Mexico: Rita. Just when things were looking up for the coast, Hurricane Rita slammed ashore on the Louisiana-Texas border, causing further destruction in Louisiana and wreaking new havoc in Texas. Several Guard units were pulled out of Louisiana and, within two days, outfitted and redeployed to help with efforts in Texas. "When Rita showed up, we moved to Texas so we could help our own people," said TXARNG BG Eddy Spurin of the more than 3,500 troops under his command that continued their tireless humanitarian efforts. Rita wasn't nearly as powerful as Katrina, but still caused wide-spread devastation that required the aid of the National Guard.

The job of a Soldier is never easy, but doing something worthwhile rarely ever is. It is, however, a Soldier's job to rise to the occasion and set aside personal fears, reservations, and limitations to accomplish the task at hand. For members of the Army National Guard who have helped in the hurricane relief effort, this has never been more true. At the drop of a hat, tens of thousands of men and women put their lives on hold, and left their jobs and families

behind, to help save the lives of countless strangers. They have worked around the clock, under extreme duress, giving everything they had to help fellow Americans survive one of the worst natural disasters

As the victims begin to pick up the pieces of their lives in the storms' aftermath, think of them in their struggles, remember those who lost their lives, and pay tribute to the brave and selfless efforts of the men and

"I WANT TO WAKE UP AND KNOW THAT I'M GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

— SPC Sara Gordo, AZARNG

women of the Army National Guard—as well as all of those who volunteered their

time and services—who gave so much of themselves to help those in need. And, as the clean-up and reconstruction continues, look to the silver lining in this horrible tragedy and see a true example of this country at its best: Americans coming together to help one another. **GX**

in our nation's history; and, they did it all in stride. "I love it when you're in a situation that's not the friendliest, but you make things work anyway," said SPC Sara Gordo, a combat medic from Arizona. "I want to wake up and not know what's going to happen, but know that I'm going to make a difference. [That] we're actually where we need to be; in the field, helping."



Photo by CW3 Robert Williams

VICTORY MAP

PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE



OHIO

Ohio continues to aid residents on the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast as the state on Sept. 25 deployed some 1,200 Guardsmen to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Rita.

MISSOURI

Since May of this year, Soldiers from around the U.S. have been training against Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) in Missouri at Ft. Leonard Wood. During the four-day course, trainers cover extensive material concerning the most up-to-date IED information. Most of the information the trainers receive is directly from Soldiers currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SSG Dion Rowan, along with his unit B Btry, 1/172nd Field Artillery, NHARNG was deployed in January 2004 to Iraq. They were stationed at Camp Bucca, a POW camp south of Basra, as MPs. They all returned from Iraq in February 2005. In September, the unit deployed to Louisiana to assist in security missions after Hurricane Katrina. After two weeks, they were again deployed to NH to help victims of severe flash flooding.

TEXAS

TXARNG is able to respond with an effective force that has made its end-strength mission for the 5th year in a row. TXARNG's end-strength number had reached 16,900 soldiers at the end of Fiscal Year 2005 on September 30.

National Guard Bureau had set the end-strength goal for Texas in 2005 at 16,876. "Texas made its mission this year and that is huge," said LTG Blum.

The Texas Army National Guard has approximately 190 recruiters in the state of Texas and prides itself on high ethical standards.

MISSOURI

In response to the 2175th Military Police Company's continued distinguished service, the Missouri Army National Guard unit was honored with the Presidential Unit Citation Award Sept. 26.

TENNESSEE

After spending more than a year in Iraq flying UH60 Blackhawk helicopters in combat and combat support missions, 78 soldiers of Troop N and Troop T, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment returned home.

DELAWARE

SPC Bernice Hudson of the 261st Signal Brigade re-enlisted recently for a total of six years. SPC Hudson has been a member of the 261st since '98 and prior to joining the DEARNG, she was a member of the MDARNNG for seven years. She is currently serving as the Recruiting and Retention Specialist for the 261st Signal Brigade and helping the DEARNG recruit and retain quality Soldiers.

NORTH CAROLINA

NC Governor Mike Easley presents law Senate Bill 725, "N.C. National Guard Tuition Assistance Program Changes". The bill increases the academic year tuition cap from \$2,000 to the highest charged tuition at a state university or community college, which is currently estimated at \$4,500. All NC Guardsmen are eligible for this \$4,500 in assistance and can apply for remaining funds to cover the cost of required course books and materials.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Oct. 15th, fifteen U.S. businesses received this year's Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for exceptional support of their employees in the Guard or Reserve. The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, manages the award process.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Fisher House organization uses more than a million frequent flyer miles per week in distributing free round-trip airline tickets to families of war-wounded service-members being treated in military and Veterans Affairs medical facilities across the country



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IRAQ

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers are answering their nation's call to "stay Army" by ending Fiscal Year 2005 with more than 4,000 re-enlistments. In return for their continued service, they're also earning a combined total of more than \$42 million in tax-free re-enlistment bonuses.

IRAQ

On September 23, nineteen Soldiers of the 365th Engineers were presented commander's coins and a certificate for their various contributions in support of the 116th Brigade Combat Team.

IRAQ

On Sept. 17, Soldiers from 2nd BN, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT, patrolling in Baghdad found one of the largest caches of the month after locals told them about a field of buried weapons.

The unit uncovered the cache, then expanded the search and found two more stockpiles of weapons and ammunition in the same area. The two caches contained 63 RPG rounds, 23 RPG motors, 904 RPG fuses and primers, 33 rockets, 35 mortar rounds, two mortar firing tubes, 80 mortar fuses, and five crates of TNT. One terror suspect was captured at the site and taken into custody for questioning.

IRAQ

On October 8, 87 Soldiers from the 116th BCT's Task Force 2-116 Armor were recognized for combat achievement at an outdoor awards ceremony held at Forward Operating Base Warrior.

IRAQ

In late August, through quick and decisive action, B Company, 1st Battalion, 115th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, MDARNG diverted a car bomb from its intended target and saved many lives. The company's 1st Platoon were conducting a mounted patrol when they noticed a suspicious vehicle driving through the town of Saba Al Bor. B Co. runs patrols in the area around the clock and has become very familiar with the residents and traffic patterns.

IRAQ

On Sept. 24, acting on reliable intelligence and information provided by concerned citizens, Multi-National Forces captured two senior al Qaeda in Iraq terrorists during raids in Baghdad.

IRAQ

Iraqi police and coalition forces detained 14 individuals suspected to be linked to Islamic terrorist group Ansar Al-Sunnah in Kirkuk Sept. 23.

The Ansar Al-Sunnah organization has claimed responsibility for many of the area's terrorist acts against Iraqi civilians and Iraqi and coalition security forces, including suicide bomb and improvised explosive device attacks.

IRAQ

Georgia National Guard's 48th Brigade Combat Team assisted Iraqi security forces in securing the polling sites in southwest Baghdad on Oct. 15th, as Iraqis voted for their first draft Constitution.

IRAQ

Five E ("Echo") Troop, 163rd Cavalry Soldiers attached to the 116th Brigade Combat Team's Task Force 2-116 Armor re-enlisted at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq on October 3rd at a special ceremony.

IRAQ

More than 1,200 students at three Baghdad schools received kits filled with school supplies on Sept. 25th. A joint effort by U.S. soldiers from Scout Platoon, Company B and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment and 322nd Civil Affairs Brigade, Hawaii Army National Guard, provided the primary- through high school-aged children with the school supplies.

PAKISTAN

The first relief supplies (almost 90,000 pounds of food, water, medicine, and blankets) from the U.S. arrived on a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III transport jet less than 48 hours after the devastating earthquake that left thousands dead and thousands more injured.

AFGHANISTAN

On Oct. 7, four Soldiers from the Camp Blanding-based 211th Regional Training Institute deployed to Afghanistan re-enlisted into the Florida Army National Guard during a ceremony on the top of Gharib Ghar Mountain near Kabul.

The Holidays for Families with Deployed Soldiers

By Kathy R. Williams

I had no interest in buying a Christmas tree that year. After all, my husband—my best friend and the father of my children—was deployed to a war zone during 2003.

I felt like hiding in a closet, going to sleep, and waking up the day after Christmas. I couldn't physically or mentally retrieve the holiday decorations from the attic. That was my husband's job, and he was thousands of miles away in Afghanistan.

Our neighborhood was brimming with holiday cheer, but not one wreath adorned our doors—not one strand of lights or one little tree. Not even our manger scene was displayed in our home. There would be no holiday in our house this year.

However, on a cold and rainy December morning as the children were getting ready for school, our youngest child shuffled over to me, tugged on my clothes, looked up to me with tears in his eyes, and asked, "Mommy, are we going to have Christmas this year, since Daddy's gone?" Our youngest child, sent to ask the question on behalf of all three children, had instantly jolted me back to reality. He had brought matters into perspective. I had been self-absorbed in pity since my husband was deployed. I needed to do whatever it took to get our holiday started.

Ask for Help

Always the helper, it was difficult for me to ask for help. I did ask for help that day, however, after the monumental question from our youngest child. I called my brothers, my sister and her husband, and our neighbors. No one turned us down.

My family drove into town that weekend, took us to a tree lot, and helped us pick out a Christmas tree. We loaded it on the van and brought it to our home. It was a small, meager tree, not typical of what we usually chose, but it was a Christmas tree.

My brothers climbed up to the attic and pulled down our most important holiday treasures. We carefully opened the manger scene box. The kids unpacked the figurines to see who had been beheaded in the attic that year. All the pieces were intact. It seemed to be a sign that everything was going to be okay.

My family helped us put up our tree, string the lights, and decorate it. As we took out the ornaments, one by one, the

kids became increasingly excited. We remembered the years when specific ornaments were made or chosen for our tree. There were ornaments with the kids' photographs and the years scribbled on them, salt dough ornaments we made and painted in 2001, brass ornaments their grandparents had given them every Christmas since they were born, and the children's baby booties. There were hundreds of silk poinsettias and baby's breath stems we laid on the branches of our tree—a family tradition. As we decorated the tree, the time was filled with, "remember when's," laughter, carols, and the retelling of our happiest holiday stories. I started feeling a little excited, too. Although we didn't put out any of the outdoor Christmas lights or light the luminaries that year, it was official: Christmas had come to our house.

Keep Family Traditions

Plan to keep your family traditions alive while your Soldier is deployed. This is especially important for families with children. Having a family member gone from the household is stressful and may be confusing for your children, but it can also be especially stressful for them to feel as though they are missing the holidays because a parent is deployed. Although it may seem arduous to go pick out a tree or pull out holiday decorations, you need to keep select family traditions intact, whenever possible.

If you are a friend or an extended family member of a Soldier, ask the Soldier's immediate family what you can do to help during the holidays. I would have paid a king's ransom, if I had it, to have someone watch our young children for me to go holiday shopping. Offer whatever you can to help the family of a deployed Soldier: babysitting services, grocery gift cards for the holidays, help retrieving and unpacking decorations, loading up a tree, or cooking a holiday dish. We had two neighbors invite our children over to make Christmas cookies, giving me time to wrap presents for the children. My sister cooked the turkey and brought it to our traditional Christmas Eve dinner. My niece brought a ham; my brothers brought the sodas and pies. Christmas had come to our home.



Picturequest/Comstock

Family Readiness Groups

Families of deployed ARNG Soldiers find themselves abruptly living military lives in a civilian world. The Family Readiness Group at your Soldier's unit can help. Made up of Soldiers' families, many groups have developed sub-groups and support systems among the spouses with children. At our Soldier's unit, regular support meetings for the families were scheduled. Ask your group coordinator what type of help and support exists within your unit.

Our Family Readiness Group also arranged a videoconference in November during the unit's deployment. This was a unique opportunity for families to interact and talk with deployed Soldiers. Check with your Family Readiness Group to see if similar opportunities are available.

For any need during your loved one's deployment, contact your Family Readiness Group or Family Support Center. They are eager get you the help you need, no matter what the challenges.

Churches, Synagogues, Pastors

Local churches and synagogues may be an excellent place to turn for help during the holidays. Many offer financial help, counseling, and/or child support for families of deployed Soldiers. Contact your local church or synagogue for additional information. **GX**

Communication

However sad, stressed, or unenthusiastic you may feel around the holiday season, your deployed loved one probably feels the same—times ten. Since Soldiers don't have the comfort of home, friends, and family during the holidays, loneliness and stress is magnified for them. Talk to your Soldier through the mail, phone, or email. Tell them how much everyone misses them and let your children express the same. Ask how they are feeling and ask what you can do to make their holiday happier. Try to determine if they seem unusually sad, depressed, or angry. Ask what you can do to help. They may just want to talk. Or they may need additional support.

Chaplain Support

If your loved one seems depressed, encourage them to go talk with a Chaplain. Chaplains accompany most battalions and can offer emotional support, especially around the holiday season. These Chaplains are trained to help Soldiers cope with the stress and loneliness that often accompanies deployments.

Free Shipping Supplies

The U.S. Postal Service offers military families a free package of packing materials, including 10 boxes, 10 customs forms with envelopes, a roll of Priority Mail tape, and 10 "Mili-Pac" shipping envelopes specifically printed for military mailing addresses. By calling a toll-free number, you can request these no-cost shipping materials. To order this special kit, call 800-610-8734. When prompted, select your language option, and then press "1" again when prompted. Once you reach an operator, ask for *Care Kit '04*. The Postal Service will ship it to you by Priority Mail, delivered in two to three days. Although the packing materials are free, you must still pay normal postage costs when you ship your packages.

Make sure that you check with the Postal Service for a list of approved items to ship overseas. There are restrictions in some countries on the type of products that you can send.



Holiday Support for Deployed Soldiers

Plan

During our Soldier's deployment, we planned to ensure that he had the happiest holiday possible while overseas. What family traditions do you have that say "holiday"? Make a list of the important holiday traditions or items to send your Soldier. Ask your Soldier if there is anything they would like to have sent to them during the holidays. Okay, you can't ship yourself, but you can ship a little piece of yourself to them. Maybe it isn't Christmas without Aunt Bea's sweet pickles or their favorite holiday song. Or maybe candy canes say "holiday" to them. Whether it's a holiday CD or a favorite Christmas treasure, find out what will bring a smile to your Soldier's face and send it to them.

Send Letters and Packages Early

One key point to remember: overseas mail and package deliveries during the holiday season will be delayed. Be sure to plan early mailing and shipping dates for sending letters and packages overseas. The U.S. Postal Service typically posts zone deadlines for mailing items overseas during the holidays.

He shared the tree with his three "hooch" mates. As packages arrived from family and friends for these Soldiers, they arranged them around their Christmas tree.

Think Festive

November is prime time to prepare and send goodies to your loved ones for the December holidays. As soon as we could find Christmas merchandise in the stores, we started making small purchases to make our Soldier's tent a festive "home-away-from-home" during the holiday season. Last Christmas, we purchased a small Christmas tree with a strand of fifty lights. He shared the tree with his three "hooch" mates—the other Soldiers living with him in his tent. We bought and sent small ornaments and candy canes so that they could decorate their tree. We bought presents, wrapped them,

By Kathy R. Williams

and shipped them. As packages arrived from family and friends for these Soldiers, they arranged them around their Christmas tree.

Photographs

Most Soldiers love photographs of their families, friends, and loved ones back home. If you plan on having your children or yourself "formally" photographed for your loved one, do so as soon as you can. Many portrait studios have delayed turnaround times near the holiday season. Additionally, you can include photographs of daily life, home routines, sporting events, family pets, friends, etc. Give your children disposable cameras or a digital camera to capture daily family-life moments. Photos always seem to be welcome in a deployed Soldier's life. Soldiers can display photos in their tents or tuck away a small photo in their helmets or ACU pockets.

If your loved one has access to a DVD, VHS, or digital movie player, you can record home movies especially for your deployed Soldier. Find out what mediums are available for them to view before recording and sending, of course. >>



from family can help Soldiers through their toughest times.

Best of all, when Soldiers feel lonely and miss their family, they can read a letter multiple times to help them feel closer to their families. Make sure that you date your letters since mail delivery can be irregular overseas.

Gigantic Christmas Stocking

We purchased a gigantic, red and green Christmas stocking at a local dollar-type store. Our Soldier said that it was awesome. We filled the stocking with candy, gum, prepackaged food goodies, wrapped presents, artwork drawn by the kids, notes, photos, and letters. Our Soldier said he must have been very, very good that year!

Holiday Hats

Many Soldiers enjoy the fun of a holiday hat while deployed. At Bagram Air Base, every Soldier who had a holiday hat wore them throughout Christmas Day in 2003. They also had a makeshift holiday parade Christmas Day on Disney Drive, the main street on base. The hats that were sent by family and friends added a festive touch to their day.

Baby Booties

Okay, let's get back to the baby booties. This has been one of our favorite Christmas-tree traditions since our children were newborns. If your Soldier has children, particularly any babies, consider sending a baby bootie or a tiny baby shoe to tie on their holiday tree or simply to tuck away in a drawer. We have numerous sets of our children's baby booties and christening shoes on our Christmas tree. It's always fun to look at these tiny booties; the kids love imagining what it was like to have feet so small. Deployed Moms and Dads can cherish a tiny bootie as a reminder of their babies back home.

Electric Blanket

I wish I could take credit for this great idea. Now, don't go flooding your Soldiers with electric blankets.

Find out if your Soldier could actually use one before buying and sending it. One of the best presents our Soldier said he received during his entire deployment was from my sister and her husband—a light blue, twin size, electric blanket. I think that made him happier than just about anything he received for Christmas. Not only did he enjoy this in his "home" quarters, but he also

Talking Photo Frame

One great item we found to send our Soldier was a "talking" photo frame. For \$5 to \$30, you can purchase one of these frames at a local electronics or department store, record a voice message, and include a photograph—or two—in the frame. We recorded, "We love you, Daddy!" for our Soldier and included two photos: the last family photo taken before he was deployed and a photo of just my husband and me, taken at the beach the summer before he left.

Letter and Cards

Your Soldier is going to be homesick during the holidays. For most Soldiers, nothing beats getting a letter when they are

in a war zone. Letters are an inexpensive mode of communication that give Soldiers a tangible connection to his/her loved ones. This is especially important during the holidays, when families and Soldiers miss each other the most. A letter or note can be taken out and read over and over.

Encourage your children to write about something positive and uplifting. Writing about negative circumstances often adds burden and stress to deployed parents, especially when they cannot control circumstances or solve problems because of their deployments. Simply writing to your Soldier and telling them what they mean to you and how much you miss them is what most Soldiers want to read. Positive affirmations

loved this item when he traveled out to the FOBs during the winter months. Most of the tents he stayed in at the FOBs had limited power outlets, but, when he could, he would plug in his electric blanket and stay warm at night. When you can see your breath in your tent in the morning, you know it's chilly. The electric blanket took the edge off.

Homemade Holiday Goodies

Although the Postal Service doesn't encourage mailing perishable goodies, we baked homemade cookies, brownies, and muffins during the holidays (as well as his entire nine-month deployment to Afghanistan.) We tested the shipping schedules to see when our Soldier got packages. When we discovered that he sometimes received packages within five days, homemade goodies became an option. However, the closer you get to the holiday, the longer it takes for packages to arrive. Our children would bake up their holiday finest, wrap them in plastic wrap surrounded by foil and bubble wrap, give the packages sticky little kisses, and gingerly place them in a shoe box to mail to Dad. If you go this route for holiday goodies, make sure you send some non-perishables in your shipment along with the perishables. Homemade peanut brittle and other homemade, holiday candies have extended shelf lives and can typically endure the journey to an overseas country.

Our Soldier frequently asked for coffee during his deployment. At Christmas, we sent him a wide selection of gourmet coffees in addition to his favorite everyday coffee. He said he would eat a muffin with a hot cup of coffee in the morning, and it would remind him of home.

Holiday Greeting Cards

There are numerous stores that offer services where you can have a photo scanned and printed with a message for a greeting card. We made our cards on our family computer, since we had a program and the know-how to produce it. We chose a family photo taken from the beach the previous summer which included everyone along with our Soldier. That Christmas, we sent out our family cards with the group photo; an important tradition that we kept during the deployment.

Favorite Holiday Memories

Spouses, children, parents, and loved ones can all participate in this holiday cheer idea. Compile stories in a letter or jot down stories on index cards describing your

favorite holiday memories that include the Soldier. In the stories, include as many positive holiday memories as possible. If you use index cards, jot down one story or memory per card. If your deployed loved one is your spouse and you have children, try to include at least one holiday memory when it was just the two or you.

For me, I have many, happy holiday memories. I could probably remember something remarkable from each year. One of my favorite memories was the Christmas Eve that my husband proposed to me. He sent me on a scavenger hunt around my family home to eventually find and open the present with my engagement ring. I remember every sound, every scent, the tone of his voice as he proposed to me. Write those memories down for your Soldiers.

Another favorite memory was the

your holiday memories collection each year and read them as part of a holiday tradition.

Phone Calls

During the holidays, lack of communication can create undue worry and stress for children. If possible, schedule a phone call your Soldier.

While my husband was deployed with his unit to Afghanistan, we got a phone call on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day from him. Hearing his voice made the holiday better for us. However, we were not sure if he could call, and we were prepared not to hear from him. I waited to open my present from him until I talked with him on the phone. He wanted to be a part of a special holiday moment. If he couldn't see me open the present, at least he was going to hear it.

At Christmas, we sent him his favorite everyday coffee. He said he would eat a muffin with a hot cup of coffee in the morning, and it would remind him of home.

Christmas that we traveled to my family home when our first child was 14 months old. We had forgotten to bring a travel bed, and none were available in the household. So, we improvised with a large, paper towel box, cutting the sides away so that our toddler could see Mom and Dad as he went to sleep. The box sides were just high enough to keep him contained. We woke up on Christmas morning to see him climbing in and out of the box, over and over, perfecting his escapes as quietly as possible. We smile when we think about the makeshift manger we made for our child that Christmas.

I'm sure your memories are just as special to you as ours are to us. Pick your favorite memories and write them down. If you choose to use index cards and write one story per card, you can add cards as you have time to write them, compiling several to send in your holiday package. It's interesting to see what children write for these memory cards. They have a totally unique perspective on things.

Parents of deployed Soldiers can include an assortment of holiday memories for your grown child. You may want to ask friends and family to write down their favorite holiday memories that include their Soldier.

These memory letters and cards would be great to keep in your holiday storage after your Soldier returns. You can write cards for

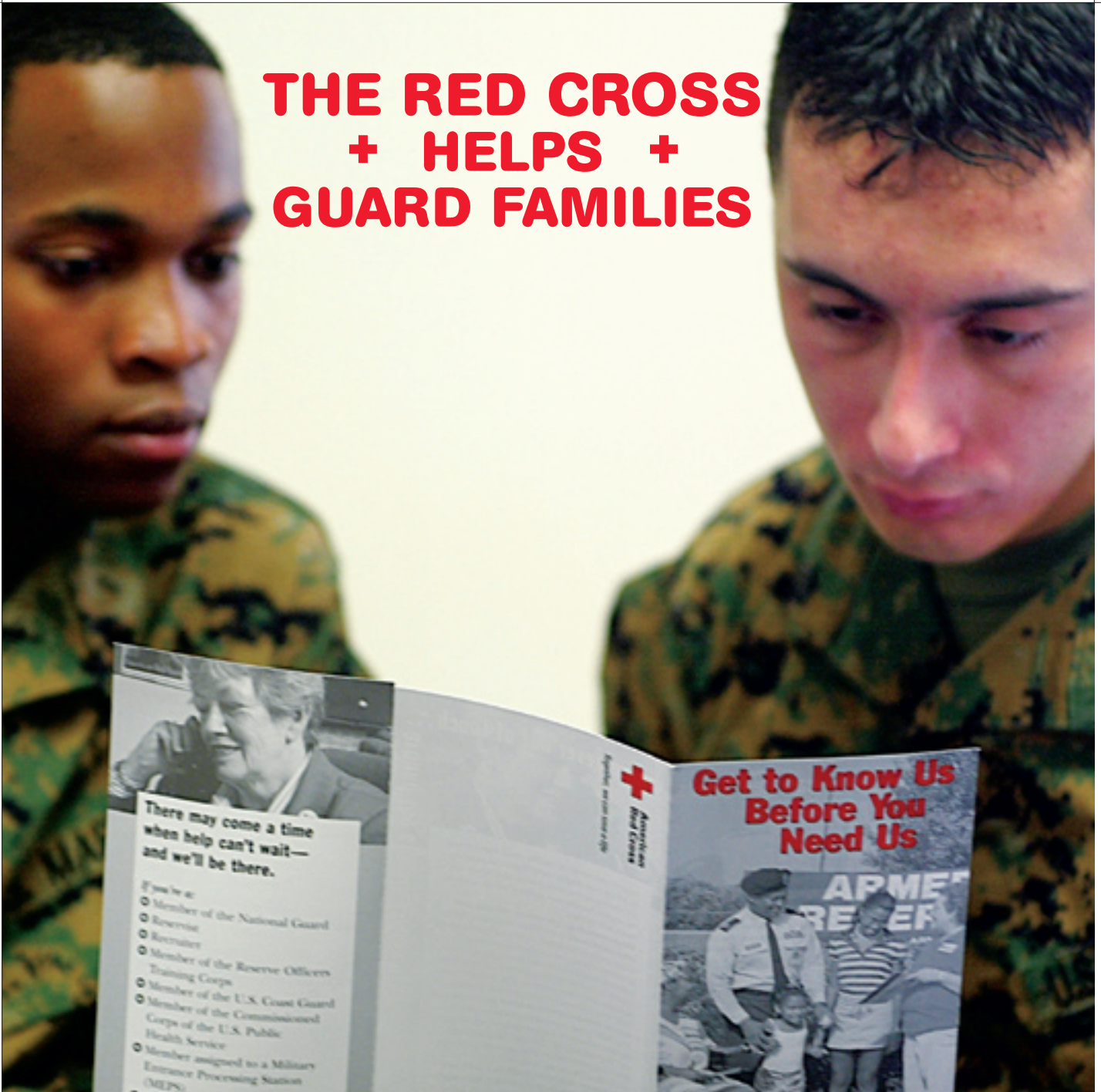
Currently, there are several programs that allow Soldiers to call home at no cost. Two such programs are www.CellphonesforSoldiers.com and www.OperationUplink.org. These nonprofit projects provide free calling cards for deployed Soldiers. Check their websites for details. Additionally, your Family Readiness Group can inform you if there are options available for free calls to/from Soldiers on military lines.

Remembering Others

As a family, we chose to send items to needy children in Afghanistan while my husband was deployed there. Select troops from his battalion were allowed to go on humanitarian missions in their spare time and give away school supplies, kites, and toys to children at base hospitals. Currently, there are numerous organizations that collect donations for children in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Becoming involved in a service-type project took our minds off just how deeply we missed our Soldier. And with him receiving supplies and giving them to the children, it took his mind off just how much he missed his home and family, especially during the holidays. **GX**

THE RED CROSS + HELPS + GUARD FAMILIES



By Keith Kawasaki

The Red Cross wants Guard members and their families to know they are there to help in emergency situations, beyond disaster relief.

Prior to 9/11, the Red Cross implemented the "Get To Know Us Program" specifically for Guard and Reserve Soldiers, knowing their roles would increase in the years ahead. A primary feature of the program is the large-scale assistance available to families when their loved ones are deployed. Guard and Reserve families are often less familiar

"We currently have staff deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, and wherever there is a great concentration of military members. The Red Cross recognizes the hardships servicemembers and their families experience..."

— Julie Burger, American Red Cross

FOR THE FAMILY

with long separations, and they are typically further from resources available to active duty families.

The Red Cross has a network of nearly 900 chapters throughout the country, developing valuable relationships with Family Readiness Groups. Through these relationships, the Red Cross connects mental health resources with families experiencing hardships from separation or casualty. These relationships also enable the Red Cross to provide families with other helpful discounted or free services like oil changes and hair cuts. A chapter's ability to assist really depends on the community.

"You know, each town is different," says Julie Burger of the Get to Know Us Program, referring to the variation in aid across the states. Burger serves on the National Board of Governors for the Red Cross.

"New York City would be different than, say, a small town in the state of Washington ... it truly is customized by the city, by the town, by the area, even," Burger adds.

The Red Cross is also an incredible resource for establishing emergency contact with a deployed family member. To educate

Guard Soldiers and families about this, the Red Cross has held over 800,000 briefings across the country. In addition, the Red Cross deploys staff with Guard units across the globe.

"We currently have staff deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, and wherever there is a great concentration of military members. The Red Cross recognizes the hardships servicemembers and their families experience due to long separations from their families, etc.," says Burger. "They actually live in the same conditions in which the servicemembers live."

During their most recent fiscal year (ended July 1, 2005), the Red Cross provided close to 800,000 emergency communications between military members and their families.

Financial hardships are assuaged through the Red Cross partnership with aid societies. In 2004, the Red Cross provided 5 million dollars to military families in need.

To find out how the Red Cross can help you and your family: "All [you] have to do is call the local Red Cross," says Burger. "There's always a phone number in all the telephone books." **EX**

LEFT: Servicemembers at a Red Cross Station learn about services offered by the American Red Cross.

Photo courtesy of the American Red Cross

BELOW: A NHARNG Soldier reunites with his family after a deployment in OIF.

U. S. Air Force photo by SSG Dawn Finnis

For more information, visit:

www.redcross.org





THE BATTLE OF COWPENS

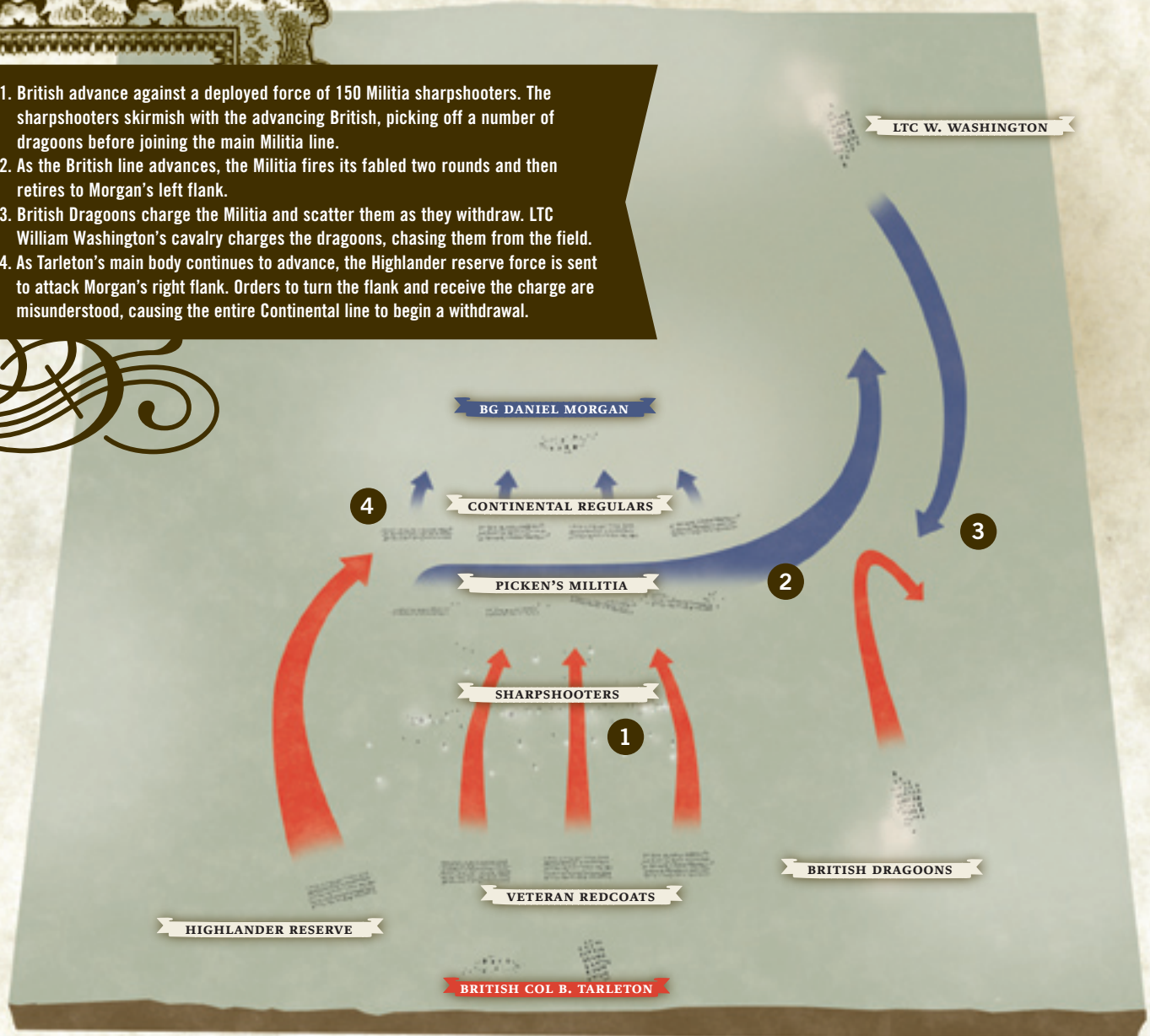


COWPENS, SOUTH CAROLINA

JANUARY 17, 1781

PHASE ONE THE BRITISH ATTACK

1. British advance against a deployed force of 150 Militia sharpshooters. The sharpshooters skirmish with the advancing British, picking off a number of dragoons before joining the main Militia line.
2. As the British line advances, the Militia fires its fabled two rounds and then retires to Morgan's left flank.
3. British Dragoons charge the Militia and scatter them as they withdraw. LTC William Washington's cavalry charges the dragoons, chasing them from the field.
4. As Tarleton's main body continues to advance, the Highlander reserve force is sent to attack Morgan's right flank. Orders to turn the flank and receive the charge are misunderstood, causing the entire Continental line to begin a withdrawal.



By Chris West

On a bitterly cold day in 1781, Brigadier General Daniel Morgan rallied the Citizen-Soldiers of the southern states, along with Continental regulars, and turned to give battle to the pursuing British Colonel Banastre Tarleton and his force of 1,100 combat-hardened redcoats. In doing so, Morgan pulled off one of the rarest of military feats—a successful double envelopment resulting in the annihilation of a superior enemy force.

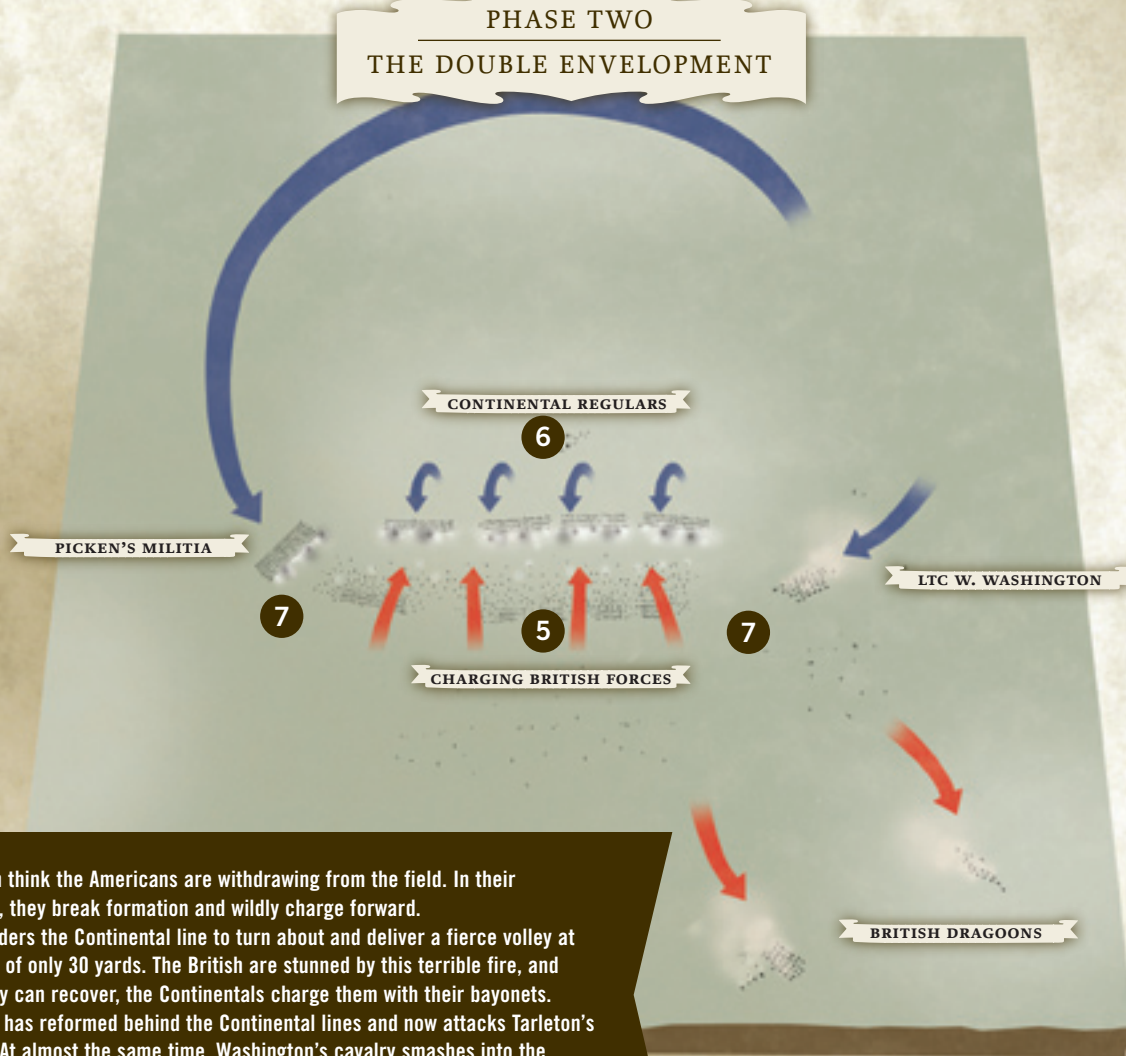
At the end of the day, twelve Americans lay dead with another sixty-one wounded, while the British Army was all but destroyed. Only 160 British escaped death or capture in this overwhelming American victory.

Several factors came into play to make this triumph possible. Tarleton had been ordered to pursue and destroy Morgan's command by General Cornwallis, and he drove his men hard in order to accomplish his mission. A forced march brought them to the field of battle tired and largely unprepared. Morgan, by contrast, carefully chose his ground, allowing his force to rest and plan the night before the battle.

Morgan's strategy was built around his knowledge of his enemy, as well as his own men. He knew of Tarleton's reputation as an aggressive, hard-charging commander, as well as the Militia's inability to stand against a disciplined bayonet charge. Taking these two factors into account, he deployed his force with the Militia in the

front and his Continental regulars to the rear, waiting up the slope of a hill. The Militia had instructions to fire two rounds and then retire to the left flank. Knowing full well they would break if asked to stand, he instead turned the weakness to his advantage. Morgan knew the withdrawing Militia would inflame Tarleton and draw the British in close. By the time the Militia had withdrawn, the enemy would be charging uphill into the waiting lines of the Continental regulars.

As with all plans, things went awry as soon as the enemy was met, but Morgan's brilliant command overcame all obstacles and gave the American Revolution a needed victory. Morgan's actions are studied to this day as a shining example of what superior tactics can accomplish on the battlefield.



5. The British think the Americans are withdrawing from the field. In their eagerness, they break formation and wildly charge forward.
6. Morgan orders the Continental line to turn about and deliver a fierce volley at a distance of only 30 yards. The British are stunned by this terrible fire, and before they can recover, the Continentals charge them with their bayonets.
7. The Militia has reformed behind the Continental lines and now attacks Tarleton's left flank. At almost the same time, Washington's cavalry smashes into the British right rear flank. This perfectly executed double envelopment causes the British to surrender en masse.

Sources: Combined Army Research Library, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; National Park Service; Wikipedia; *Battle of Cowpens; A Documented Narrative and Troop Movement Maps* by Edward C. Bearss

THE EVOLUTION OF A MILITARY MASTERPIECE

AR-15/M16/M4

by Chris West

“**L**ook Daddy, an Army gun!”
 Look Daddy, an Army gun!”
 exclaimed an overly excited
 6-year-old as he caught a
 glimpse of the Bushmaster Carbon 15 rifle
 the GX Team had brought to the gun range
 that day. The silhouette of the M16 family
 of weapons is so universally recognized that
 this young man, with barely a half-decade
 of experience under his belt, knows exactly
 what it is. This should be no surprise since
 the quality and reliability of the M16-type

predicting the victor was the total number of
 rounds fired. The more lead, the better.

This idea ran counter to the Army's
 long-held belief that long-distance, aimed
 fire was superior to the largely unaimed,
 but high-volume fire of automatic weapons.
 However, given the mobile nature of industrial
 warfare, this was simply no longer the case.
 This suggested that the infantry needed to
 increase its rate of fire. Additionally, the
 studies recommended that since ammunition
 would be consumed at a higher rate with an

Additionally, the studies suggested that since
 ammunition would be consumed at a higher rate
 with an automatic weapon, it might be a
 good idea to switch to a smaller,
 lighter round, allowing Soldiers to
 carry more ammo.

weapons have made them some of the most
 widespread infantry rifles in use today. As
 of this writing, over eight million weapons
 have been produced and placed into military
 service around the world.

As well known and extensively used as
 this rifle is, not many people remember the
 controversy that surrounded its approval as
 the U.S. Army's main service rifle.

It started in the late forties when the Army
 conducted a series of studies examining three
 million battlefield reports from WWII. They
 found that as war had become more mobile,
 Soldiers, as often as not, encountered each
 other by chance at short ranges. It was discov-
 ered that in these situations, the group that
 could put the most bullets in the air usually
 emerged victorious. The one reliable metric for

automatic weapon, switching to a smaller,
 lighter round would allow Soldiers to carry
 more ammo. The idea of a smaller round was
 opposed by the Pentagon due to a belief that
 it would have insufficient stopping power. As a
 result, the Army adopted the M14, essentially
 a fully automatic version of the M1 Garand
 chambered for the 7.62 mm round.

During the weapon competition that led to
 the selection of the M14, Eugene Stoner of
 the ArmaLite Company created the AR-10 as
 a candidate. It was chambered for the 7.62
 mm round, as were the other competitors.
 Where it departed was in its construction
 and appearance. Instead of steel-and-wood
 construction that had been standard on
 firearms up until then, the AR-10 was built
 with aircraft-grade aluminum receiver, a

steel/aluminum composite barrel and a plastic
 stock, resulting in a rifle two pounds lighter
 than the ten-pound M14.

In the late 50's, General Willard Wyman
 began a program to develop an infantry
 weapon based on the lighter 5.56 mm round.
 The AR-10 was resubmitted in a 5.56 mm
 version known as the AR-15. While other
 designs were submitted, there was never
 any real competition for the AR-15. It was
 shown that the AR-15's small size and light
 weight allowed it to be brought to bear much
 more quickly and fired more effectively than
 the M14. The AR-15 also proved to be more
 reliable than the M14, suffering fewer jams
 during prolonged fire.

Unfortunately, Army testing began before
 the rifle had been fully developed. Several
 barrels burst, and as a result, the program lost
 much of the support it had enjoyed. It looked
 very much as if the M14 and the 7.62 mm
 round would remain the Army's choice for the
 foreseeable future. In 1959, in response to
 financial pressure, the production rights were
 sold to Colt Firearms for a mere \$75,000.



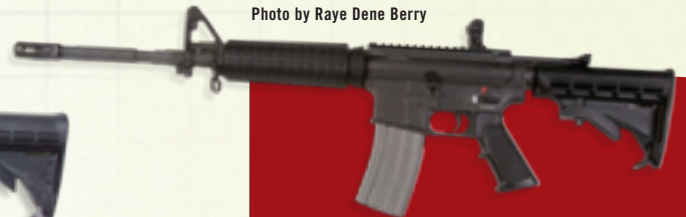
Photos by Raye Dene Berry



Colt M16A4
Photo by Colt Defense



Colt M4 Commando
Photo by Colt Defense



Bushmaster Carbon 15
Photo by Raye Dene Berry



The turning point for the AR-15 came in the early 60's when General Curtis LeMay, then serving as Vice Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, saw a demonstration of the AR-15 and immediately ordered 8,500 rifles for defense of Strategic Air Command bases. ARPA (later DARPA) also bought 1,000 rifles for use by South Vietnamese troops. American Special Forces working with the Vietnamese troops filed remarkable battlefield reports, pressing for its immediate adoption. It is widely believed that these reports were instrumental in motivating the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, to reconsider the AR-15.

The Secretary ordered a new study on the suitability of the M14 by the Army. The results came back quickly—the M14 was just fine. Suspecting the tests had been biased, the Army Inspector General was ordered to investigate. His report showed that the Army had shown undue favor to the M14.

That was the last straw for McNamara, and he ordered a halt to M14 production. The Army and Air Force began acquiring the AR-15 in larger and larger numbers, and though the Ordnance Corps continued to oppose the rifle, the ArmaLite AR-15 was officially adopted in 1964 under the designation "M16."

Early deployment of the weapon into the jungles of Vietnam did not go well. Soldiers had not been issued cleaning kits and had been told that, due to the rifle's "space-age" construction, cleaning was not required. The

rifles in the field began jamming so often that Soldiers referred to the M16 as a toy gun.

Cleaning kits were quickly produced and distributed along with a comic book demonstrating the proper maintenance techniques. The jamming problems promptly disappeared, but not the reputation. This changed slowly over time as the weapon proved itself superior for close combat in the jungles of Southeast Asia. By the end of the 60's, things had turned around, and Soldiers began claiming they would only trade their M16s for the XM177 (Colt Commando), a shorter carbine version of the same weapon.

Having achieved general acceptance by the Armed Forces, the M16 began to be improved and modified for specific duties. Many improvements and variations later resulted in the M4 Carbine—a shorter and lighter version of the M16—which is better suited for the close quarters combat our troops are currently experiencing in the Global War on Terror. The M4 was originally slated for Special Forces use, however, with the increased frequency of urban combat seen today, it has become the main weapon issued to front-line troops. Its small size and light weight make it perfect for use inside vehicles or in tight quarters.

While some controversy still exists over whether the 5.56 mm round has sufficient stopping power, the M16 and the M4 are universally acknowledged as two of the finest infantry weapons available today. **GX**

Bushmaster Carbon 15

The M16 and M4 are available throughout the United States in semi-automatic civilian versions that see extensive use in target shooting and hunting applications.

We were allowed to test Bushmaster's latest offering; the Bushmaster Carbon 15. This rifle is an M4-style weapon with a receiver made of "Carbon 15" composite material which is 40% lighter and stronger than an aluminum receiver. This material is completely impervious to moisture and corrosion and does not transfer heat. We fired this weapon until the heat waves coming off the barrel obscured our sight picture, but the receiver remained cool to the touch.

The rifle proved to be extremely maneuverable and easy to fire, allowing our shooters to quickly and accurately get rounds on target. Perceived recoil was a little heavier than a standard M4 due to the decreased weight, but it was very manageable and didn't seem to interfere with rapid follow-up shots.

The only complaint we had about this rifle is that after extended shooting, the heat escaping the bottom of the handguard made it difficult to hold with bare hands.

We enjoyed shooting this weapon and highly recommend it to anyone looking for an M4-style rifle. It is a very nice piece of work that is a pure pleasure to shoot.

Sources: Colt Firearms, GlobalSecurity.org, Wikipedia & the U.S. Army

AS THE NASCAR NEXTEL CUP SEASON DRAWS TO AN END,
THE GX TEAM WISHES THE BEST TO GREG BIFFLE AND THE
NO. 16 NATIONAL GUARD FORD TAURUS TEAM.

GO GET 'EM, GREG!

3RD PLACE - RICHMOND - 09/10/05
4TH PLACE - NEW HAMPSHIRE - 09/18/05
2ND PLACE - KANSAS - 10/09/05
3RD PLACE - CHARLOTTE - 10/15/05

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WWW.GUARDCAR.COM



TOP TEN EATING TIPS

By Stephanie Weichert



ABOVE: Stephanie and SGT Ken Weichert

As personal trainers (Ken is also a Master Fitness Trainer), one of the number one dietary questions we receive is ‘What should I eat?’ The question generally stems from the fact that the person asking has started a workout routine and is looking to make the complete lifestyle change to maximize results. Many people turn to various trends, including diet fad books and magazine articles featuring celebrities’ weight loss success stories using the latest fads. However, most of the people who ask us this question are tired and wary of fads and just want healthful advice. The question is really, “Where should I begin?”

If you are making a dramatic change or series of changes to your diet, we highly recommend paying a visit to your doctor. With that being said, the following are some healthful tips:

10 AVOID IMBIBING MONDAY–THURSDAY
(and don’t make up for lost time over the weekend). Keep a two-drink max.

9 DON’T EAT FRIED FOOD
Some of our clients are under the assumption that some foods are ALWAYS healthy anyway they are prepared. NOT SO!

8 CUT DOWN ON YOUR RED MEAT INTAKE
The findings, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (Vol. 293, No. 2: 172-182), indicate a link between eating red meat and colon cancer. The long-term project studied the amount of red meat eaten over a decade by a group of 149,000 adults between the ages of 50 and 74. The results indicate that the “people who ate the most red meat were 30%-40% more likely to develop cancer in the lower part of the colon, compared to people who ate the least.”¹

7 CUT BACK ON SUGAR DRINKS
or cut them out altogether while on the weight-loss path. Don’t forget that your drinks contain calories, too. Jamba Juice® and Starbucks® have more than a few drinks on their menu with over 500 calories, and some upwards of 680 calories!!! The amount of carbohydrates and sugars packed into these drinks acts like a nuclear sugar bomb on your blood sugar levels.

6 MAINTAIN PORTION CONTROL
Again, just because the protein in chicken is good for you, doesn’t mean you need to eat the entire chicken for dinner!²

5 STOP EATING AFTER 8PM
(unless you are pulling the night shift!) Your body goes into rest mode and doesn’t need the extra calories to sustain it. If you are craving a sugar snack, try having it during the day when you can still burn the extra calories.

4 GET ENOUGH SLEEP
Study after study shows that sleep deprivation may have a link to over eating and weight gain.³

SGT Ken Weichert, six-time Soldier of the Year and veteran of both Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, began the START Fitness™ program in 1997. Now partnered with his wife Stephanie, Strategic Director of START Fitness and a certified personal trainer, the Weicherts are conquering the fitness industry.



3 DRINK PLENTY OF WATER
Don’t substitute coffee, teas, soda or juice if you are thirsty during the day while maintaining a moderate or sedentary job. Side note: if you are out in the field or doing athletic activity, you will need to add salt to your water in order to hydrate your body.

2 ADD COLOR TO YOUR DISHES
Just because you are trying to lose weight doesn’t mean you need to dress your food down. Add splashes of color with vegetables like bell peppers, which also happen to be rich in vitamin C, beta carotene and fiber.⁴

1 VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE
Strive for a balanced diet including a daily dose of fiber!!!

For links to more articles, visit:

www.startfitness.com

Sources: ^{1,2} www.cancer.org ³ www.medicinenet.com ⁴ www.wholehealthmd.com

OPERATION LIVING FIT

Maximizing the Push-up Event PART 1 OF 3

Illustration by Seamas Gallagher



By SSG Ken Weichert

Stephanie and I would like to thank you all for the huge support for our START Fitness™ section in *GX* Magazine! Keep the emails coming. It is our intention to share our knowledge and training with as many Guard Soldiers and family members as we can. We all deserve to have a healthier lifestyle and are lucky that military fitness is second to none! If we use the training wisely, we can do anything!

Lately, Stephanie and I have been receiving a great deal of emails in which Soldiers ask how to get a better score in the fitness test. For many of you, a better score means more promotion points. In this issue, we start a three-part workout program to maximize the fitness test; Part 1: Maximizing the Push-up!

What I have done to perform better during the push-up event, while taking one of our START Fitness™ Tests or the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), is to conduct Push-up Interval Training every other day. I have noticed an increase of 10-20 repetitions in my overall APFT score, after performing Push-up Interval Training for 3-4 weeks. I have also noticed that by adding this training to my current exercise plan, my body fat percentage decreased nearly 2% in 12 weeks.



IMPROVE YOUR APFT

ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST

Here is how it works:

MONDAY

SET #1	SET #2	SET #3
Warm-up 10 MIN. (Mostly Aerobic)	Diamond-Grip Push-ups 35 SEC. Rest 35 SEC.	Diamond-Grip Push-ups 25 SEC. Rest 25 SEC.
Diamond-Grip Push-ups 45 SEC. Rest 45 SEC.	Normal-Grip Push-ups 35 SEC. Rest 35 SEC.	Normal-Grip Push-ups 25 SEC. Rest 25 SEC.
Normal-Grip Push-ups 45 SEC. Rest 45 SEC.	Wide-Grip Push-ups 35 SEC. Rest 35 SEC.	Wide-Grip Push-ups 25 SEC. Rest 25 SEC.
Wide-Grip Push-ups 45 SEC. Rest 45 SEC.	Crunches 1 MIN.	Crunches 1 MIN.
Crunches 1 MIN.		

TUESDAY Aerobics Day – No Push-ups

WEDNESDAY Repeat Monday Lesson Plan

THURSDAY Aerobics Day – No Push-ups

FRIDAY

SET #1	SET #2	SET #3
APFT Push-up Diagnostic Test 2 MIN. The best performance of Push-ups. "GO TO MUSCLE FAILURE!"	Modified APFT Push-up Diagnostic Test 1.5 MIN. The best performance of Push-ups	Modified APFT Push-up Diagnostic Test 1 MIN. The best performance of Push-ups
Crunches 2 MIN. Rest 2 MIN.	Crunches 2 MIN. Rest 2 MIN.	Crunches 2 MIN.

SATURDAY Rest – No Push-ups

SUNDAY Rest – No Push-ups

THEORY: The reason to begin each push-up set with Diamond-Grip is to maximize the use of your fast twitch muscles (your triceps). Push-ups are the only exercises that will help you perform better during the push-up event while taking the APFT. Weight training on a bench will get you stronger, however, it will NOT improve your ability to perform push-ups.

SUGGESTION: Remember to keep your rear-end muscles contracted during the push-up events to prevent unnecessary back strain. Keep your crunches simple while performing this routine. Raise your back up until your shoulder blades come off of the ground, then return to the start position each time. Be certain to eat 20-60 minutes after each exercise period for proper muscle recovery.

WARNING: The aerobic and off days of your weekly routine are also necessary for proper muscle recovery. Remember, always consult your physician before attempting any new fitness routine or diet.

Got a fitness question? Email SGT Ken™:
askthetrainer@startfitness.com

Guard Gift Guide

Whether you're deployed, a family member at home or just need gift ideas, we're here to help.

These suggestions should put a twinkle in your eye and a bounce in your step!

**MAKE YOUR LIST,
CHECK IT TWICE!**

- music**
- movies**
- goodies**
- gadgets**
- gear**

The best gifts will give deployed Soldiers a sense of normalcy while they're away from home. And if they're not deployed, these gifts will help them keep up with their favorite television programs despite their hectic schedules.

Give the Gift of TiVo®

TiVo gift subscriptions come in increments of three and 12 months as well as product lifetime subscriptions. You can also use the "TiVoToGo" feature for the TiVo Series2, which allows you to transfer shows to your PC or laptop. Added DVD-R functionality in some units also allows you to catalogue your favorite recordings so you never have to delete a thing.

www.tivo.com



The **TiVo® Series2™** is available this holiday season at its lowest price ever. The Series2 offers all the great features you've come to expect from TiVo. It also allows you to schedule recordings directly from the Internet. **\$49 (after mail-in rebate)**



The **Humax DVD Recorder** combines a TiVo Series2 Digital Video Recorder, a DVD recorder and a progressive scan DVD player. All this functionality means you can easily TiVo your favorite TV programs and movies, burn them to DVD and play them back, all within the same unit. **\$199 - 249 (after mail-in rebate)**

Elf Hint #1

Record your deployed Soldier's favorite TV shows and send the DVDs to her. This way, she can watch what you watch, so she'll feel more connected with what's going on back home.



"Nothing beats a recorded DVD of all your favorite TV shows with all the commercials. You almost forget where you are for a minute."

—SPC Jennifer Gabler, NHARNG

OUR FAVORITE TV SHOWS ON DVD

LOST



24



Arrested Development



The Simpsons



Family Guy



When your Soldier is a techno-geek, you have to help her keep up with the latest trends and the hottest gadgets. If she's been super-good this year, make her holiday truly bright by stuffing her stocking with a gift worth bragging about – something sleek and stylish her buddies will envy.



Sony PSP™

The Sony PlayStation® Portable (PSP) is designed for multiple applications—music, video, communication, and wireless networking, with games as its primary driver. The PSP brings an unparalleled gaming experience to a handheld platform, allowing users to enjoy 3D games, with high-quality, full-motion video, and HiFi stereo audio.

\$250

(DVDs and games start at around \$20)

www.playstation.com

NoiseBuster® ENC Earmuff

The NoiseBuster Earmuff cancels background noise so music can be enjoyed at safer volume levels. It provides excellent audio quality—comparable to that of a higher-priced, noise-canceling audio headphones currently on the market.

\$69

www.noisebuster.net



iPod® nano

Thinner than a standard #2 pencil and weighing only 1.5 ounces, iPod nano comes in two models (4GB, holding up to 1,000 songs and 2GB holding up to 500 songs). The nano features Apple's innovative Click Wheel to take it to the gym, in the car, traveling, or anywhere you go.

2GB model starts at \$199

www.apple.com



SANTA'S FAVORITE MOVIES

Sahara

The Polar Express



Star Wars Episode III:
Revenge of the Sith

Batman Begins



War of the
Worlds

Charlie And The
Chocolate Factory

Elf

Mr. and Mrs. Smith

Take a Trip to Elizabethtown

At a local premiere of *Elizabethtown*, not only did a few well-known celebs stop by, we were able to get a firsthand look at the soundtrack Director Cameron Crowe handpicked himself. This one goes on Santa's GOOD list!

Artists include Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Patty Griffin, Ryan Adams, I Nine and Elton John.



Cameron Crowe (left) met with fans and signed autographs at Grimey's, a local music store. We bought the CD at www.grimeys.com.



Patty Griffin



I Nine

Elf Hint #116

Give a gift certificate to iTunes® or another online music store: that way, your Soldier can download music whenever he wants, wherever he is.



MUSIC

Artists That Support the Military

- Cross Canadian Ragweed – *Garage*
- Martina McBride – *Timeless*
- Miranda Lambert – *Kerosene*
- Dierks Bentley – *Modern Day Drifter*
- Patty Loveless – *Dreamin' My Dreams*
- The Charlie Daniels Band – *Essential Super Hits*
- Ken Thomas*** – *Flags of our Fathers: a Soldier's Story*
- The Charlie Daniels Band – *Songs From The Longleaf Pines*
- George Strait – *Somewhere Down in Texas*
- Luke Stricklin*** – *American By God's Amazing Grace*



* SGT Keni Thomas served as a US Army Ranger and Luke Stricklin is an Arkansas National Guardsman.

“There is NOTHING that compares with getting mail.”
— SFC Marc Maynard, NYARNG

Goodies in the mail are something to look forward to. The comforts and tastes of home come in all shapes and sizes, whether homemade or store-bought. Pick things your Soldier might not be able to find while he is away, and be sure to ask him what sorts of things he has access to at his local exchange—only he can tell you what he truly needs!



Barista Aroma Solo™ Thermal Coffeemaker

The ultra-efficient, grab-and-go Starbucks Barista Aroma Solo brews coffee directly into a 16-fl-oz thermal tumbler and comes with a long-lasting mesh filter.
\$69



16 OZ. Pylones Thermal Bottle

This thermal bottle is a cool way to keep your coffee hot while you're on the go. Designed in France for Starbucks, each bottle is hand-painted for a fresh and unique look.
\$30

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Easy Gifts for Every Soldier

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- Kool-Aid or Powdered Gatorade
- Hand Sanitizer
- Bug Spray
- Easymac Macaroni and Cheese
- Lotion and Sunblock
- Chapstick
- Noodle Bowls
- Gum
- Flavored Coffee Creamers
- Chips and Salsa
- Favorite Sauces
- Spices



Starbucks® Christmas Blend & Decaf Christmas Blend

Starbucks Christmas Blend coffee is a rich, complex brew that captures the cheer and excitement of the holidays and serves as an ideal complement to sweet treats like gingerbread and pumpkin pie.

1lb. \$12

All of these items are available online at www.starbucks.com

“Snacks can’t replace a meal on days when the chow hall is horrible, but with spices and flavorings, bad chow meals can be made edible.”
— SPC Vincent Roettger, NJARNG



THE ONE PREDICTABLE THING ABOUT A DISASTER.

Whether it be hurricanes or wildfires, earthquakes or a terrorist attack, one thing will always remain the same – the people of our nation count on the Army National Guard in times of crisis. Well-equipped and quick to respond, the sight of our Soldiers has given

comfort, time and again, to those in desperate need. You, too, can join the men and women with the skills and courage to take on the toughest of challenges. Find out more by visiting our web site today.

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YOU CAN

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visit us at
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If your soldier is away, she probably just wants to feel closer to home. Just sending something homemade and personal can be enough to make her holiday. Sending things like family photos, letters and cards, homemade DVDs of family film footage make the holidays easier for deployed Soldiers.

Your family may also find photo web sites like shutterfly.com and snapfish.com very useful. Not only can you upload your favorite photos to share online, you can also make custom items like calendars and coffee mugs.

CHRISTMAS WISHES

Top Ten Requested Items From Soldiers in the Field

1. Gift Certificates
2. Phone cards
3. Sunglasses
4. Socks
5. Flashlights
6. Underwear
7. Books
8. Mom's cookies
9. Insulated Coffee Cups
10. Tupperware

Too Much of a Good Thing...

SPC Micheal Geary with the NYARNG knows what it's like to get too much of a good thing in the mail.

"We've been overseas since last November, and I hope never to see foot powder again. Somehow my friends and family mistakenly heard of a foot powder shortage, and every package I received for four months contained foot powder. A package with a magazine, gummy bears and foot powder. A package with stuffed animals to distribute to kids and foot powder. A package with pictures, home baked cookies and, you guessed it, foot powder!

"It got really weird. We accumulated more than 50 bottles of foot powder, and we couldn't give it to our buddies because the same thing was happening to them. We're still giving it away to Iraqi Army soldiers and others. I never want to see foot powder again!"



Elf Hint #47

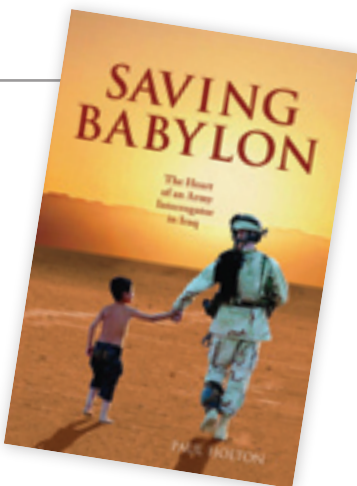
Soldiers want to phone home no matter the season. Through AAFES you can get a 550-Unit Phonecard online at <http://thor.aafes.com/scs> for only \$40.



Active Duty by SSG Jason Adams

Through email letters to friends and family back home, SSG Adams gives us the story of the fight for Iraqi Freedom from the firsthand perspective of an American Soldier in Iraq.

www.learnovation.com



Saving Babylon by Paul Holton

Saving Babylon is not the perspective of the all-too-frequently co-opted embedded reporter from the major media. This is the firsthand account of an Army interrogator who worked hand-in-hand with Iraqis at all levels in building a new nation.

www.savingbabylon.com



Oh and of course, if you're a Soldier serving abroad, you can't forget everyone back home. Part of feeling connected through the holidays is being able to give gifts to your family, even when you're away. Websites with international delivery can deliver Christmas cheer to your loved ones even though you're halfway around the world.

Military Collectibles by The Boyds Collection Ltd.®

Enjoy classic whimsy and fun in every collectible Boyds™ Bear. All products are available at Boyds Bear Country™ stores in Pigeon Forge (TN) and Gettysburg (PA), as well as Boyds dealers nationwide.

All of these items are available online at
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G.I. Bearsley (left)

A celebration of those who serve! This 4.5" cold-cast resin Army bear features an authentic uniform and features jointed arms to help him salute!
\$15

G.I. Bruin (center)

A tribute to America's brave Soldiers at home and abroad! This 10" plush bear with poly stuffing has poseable arms and legs and Boyds' trademark quality.
\$23

"McBruin...To Serve With Honor" (right)

This 5.25" cold-cast resin figurine shows McBruin in military issue desert uniform, with backpack and comm center in front of the American flag.
\$25



Your Soldier, Your Army: A Parents' Guide by Vicki Cody

Vicki Cody knows a thing or two about the Army. She's been an Army wife for 30 years (her husband is GEN Dick Cody, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army) and an Army mom for five years (both her sons, CPT Tyler Cody and CPT Clint Cody, serve in the 101st Airborne Division). She knows the strength a Soldier can gain from a supportive family, and her pride and love for her Soldiers comes through on every page.

From first-time deployment jitters to navigating Army acronyms, Vicki Cody packs a lifetime's worth of good advice into this brief book. It's a must-have for family members who want to know how to support their Soldiers.

Available free of charge while supplies last via a grant from Newell Rubbermaid. To order for individuals or groups, call AUSA at 1-800-336-4570, ext. 630.



Elf Hint #56

If you're a deployed Soldier, check out a few of these websites to send gifts to your family. All you need is a credit card and Internet access!

Amazon.com
RedEnvelope.com
AmericanSoldier.com
1800Flowers.com
Ebay.com
Shopping.Yahoo.com
SpecOpsBrand.com

"Letters and pictures of the kids or family really keep you in touch with home."

— SSG William Kenady, KYARNG



Give the gift of "tactical" and you can't go wrong. We've selected a few of our favorites below. From knives to boots to watches, nothin' says "happy holidays" like quality gear.



Made For Walking... and Walking...and Walking...

Any soldier will tell you: you can't have too many pairs of boots. For quality and comfort, **Belleville Desert Combat Boots** are an excellent choice. **\$108**

www.bellevilleshoe.com



Time On Your Side

If you've been extra-good this year, Santa might bring you a **Suunto X9i**. And honestly, if anyone could appreciate having a GPS right on his wrist, it would be Santa! **\$499**

www.suunto.com

TACTICAL TINSEL

For a surefire way to put a smile on your Soldier's face on Christmas morning, go with the knife: it's one gift that any man or woman in uniform can appreciate.

1. **CRKT M16-14D Desert Big Dog Knife** - \$99
www.crkt.com
2. **Benchmade 10520 Offsider™** - \$100
www.benchmade.com
3. **Buck® SBMF** - \$80
www.buckknives.com
4. **Desert KA-BAR Fighting/Utility Knife** - \$85
www.kabar.com
5. **Spyderco® Military Folder** - \$189
www.spyderco.com
6. **SOG® Trident TF2** - \$108
www.sogknives.com



Shed a Little Light on Things

The **Petzl® TacTikka Plus Head Lamp** with red filter holds a special place in most medics' hearts, but is widely useful, no matter your MOS.

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Elf Hint #67

One really awesome gift beats a ton of beef jerky.





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Task Force Razorback

Photos and text by Chris West



MOBILIZATION

On Monday, August 29th 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall, devastating the Gulf Coast with winds, rain and storm surge. An area of land stretching several hundred miles from New Orleans in the west to Mobile in the east, an area roughly equal in square miles to all of Great Britain, was almost wiped off the map.

The infrastructure of three states was knocked out all along the coast. There were no communications, no power, little food and almost no drinkable water. Sewers backed up and the

at 10AM, the Colonel received his orders. Six hours later, he was at Camp Robinson in Little Rock, organizing his Task Force for action.

Tuesday morning at 10AM COL Lively and CSM Calhoun led three vehicles south as an advance party, scouting the way for the main body that would soon follow. They stopped briefly in West Memphis to pick up a group of Military Police and proceeded to scout out the route. The further south they traveled, the worse the situation became. Fuel supplies in particular were almost impossible to come by. By the time they had reached the temporary HQ in Shelby, MS at 11:00PM Tuesday night, they were running on empty.

There was no power when they arrived and still no communications. Even though it was the middle of the night, the Colonel and his staff weren't done yet. Knowing that his engineers were close on his heels, he pushed south to reconnoiter the route. Working throughout the night, he returned to Shelby the next morning to find that there were still no communications and, as a result, no orders.

COL Lively comes off as a laid-back southern gentleman. As often as not, during a briefing he'll be leaned back in his chair with his feet on his desk and a toothpick sticking jauntily out of the corner of his mouth. Don't be fooled though, this informal manner hides an officer who knows how to get the job done. Speaking with one of his Sergeants who had been regular Army before joining the Guard, I was told, "It takes some

**AS THEY SAID, OVER AND OVER AGAIN:
"This is why I joined the Guard!"**



floodwaters quickly turned into a toxic sludge. A Category Four hurricane had made direct impact on American soil and carefully laid emergency plans were in tatters.

For several days, very little information was getting out of the area. The only possible communications were through satellites, and there were very few Sat-phones on hand. The only reports getting out on a regular basis were coming through the satellite uplinks of television trucks. The stories seemed to indicate that chaos reigned along the coast. There was a perception that, in one fell swoop, the entire populace had been reduced to the level of ravaging animals. It was bad, and the reports made it seem even worse.

That didn't matter to the Arkansas National Guard though, they were ready. Before the storm had even hit, they had begun making preparations to mobilize and lend a hand. SFC McConnell, the Supply Sergeant for Task Force Razorback, didn't know what they would find when the time came, so he prepared for the worst. When the orders came down, he had the team ready and supplied to operate for four days without resupply or outside support of any kind. Task Force Razorback, a group of Soldiers who had all volunteered for this job, set out into the chaos that had swallowed the coast.

COL Lively, the commander of Task Force Razorback, received a warning order letting him know that a mobilization was likely the Sunday before Katrina hit. The next day, Monday morning

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: A member of Task Force Razorback describes his experiences in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; Much of downtown Gulfport was levelled; Soldiers always seemed to have a smile and a good word to say, despite the long hours and harsh conditions

RIGHT: Handing out boxes of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat).





getting used to... these old boys are a lot more laid back than I'm used to." He then shook his head slightly and looked up with a smirk on his face. "But I'll tell you what... When we get to work, it gets done... fast. I've been amazed at what we've accomplished since we got here."

When the Colonel returned to Shelby and found out that there were still no orders, he'd had enough. There were people in need and he was going to do something about it. At 10AM on Wednesday morning, Task Force Razorback headed south into the devastation.

The Mississippi Guard had been hard at work cutting paths through the debris so help could arrive unhindered, but they were still surprised when the Colonel showed up on their doorstep ready to go to work.

Communications were still nonexistent, and once again, COL Lively took the initiative by sending his Soldiers out to see what could be done. His MPs began patrols and traffic control. His engineers fired up their heavy equipment and started digging Gulfport out from under the mountains of debris that had been homes and businesses only a few days before. Other Soldiers began food and water distribution and anyone left began going door-to-door, looking for people who needed help. Task Force Razorback, along with the Mississippi Guard, were on the scene and making a difference.

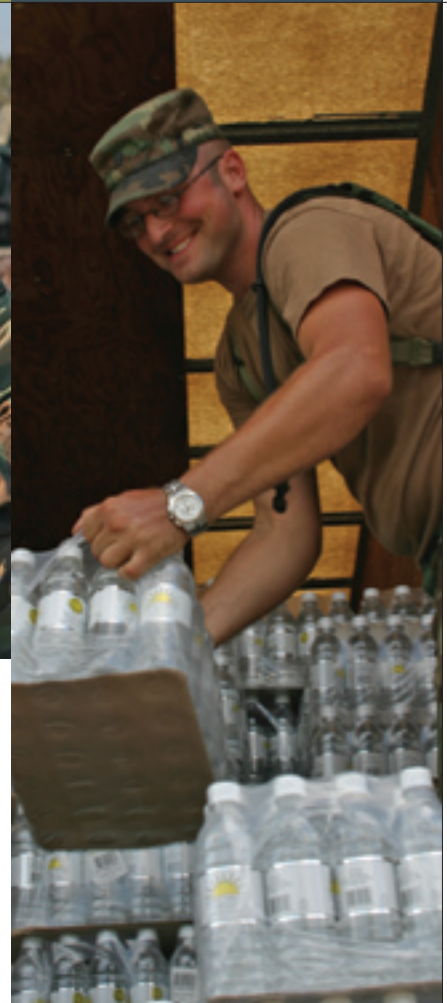
COL Lively's leadership and determination to help had gotten his troops to the front lines and into action with record speed. Through it all, his relaxed style kept his troops calm, confident and focused their immediate goals: providing relief for the citizens of the Gulf Coast.



GULFPORT, MS

Communicating the scope of the destruction these Soldiers faced has proven to be quite a challenge. It truly is beyond the ability of the human mind to encompass it all. Photographs can only capture a small fraction of this tragedy. They are a brief glimpse of one destroyed home or one flooded neighborhood. What you don't see, and what makes this so far beyond comprehension, are the miles and miles of devastation that surround that small snippet. You could set out at dawn and drive along the coast all day (assuming you have a good off-road vehicle) and see scene after scene of total annihilation. Entire blocks of houses scraped off their foundations by tons of water moving with irresistible force. Occasionally, you can see a roof or other fragment of a home at the end of a long trail of debris. It all looks so strange until it suddenly snaps into focus and you realize that the debris is someone's home that has been scattered into piles of garbage as it was dragged inland.

In other areas, the hydraulic damage of the storm surge had punched-out the bottom floor of a building, leaving the top floors seemingly untouched. It is as if some perverse giant has performed a magic trick and snatched the bottom floor, as if it were a tablecloth, out from under the rest of the house.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: SGT Lenora Robinson keeps traffic moving; SSG Gene Nolan and his newest recruit, Deuce. Deuce wandered into camp half dead, but soon recovered thanks to a steady diet of MRE leftovers; unloading fresh water at a distribution point.



It truly is beyond the ability of the human mind to encompass it all.

Adding to the surreal atmosphere are things you don't even notice until later. The quiet of the area is stifling. Those of you who have ever experienced a southern summer know that >>



TOP: SGT Daniel Gish, a medic with Task Force Razorback, watches his troops carefully for signs of heat exhaustion
 BOTTOM: SPC Austin Oliver patrols a devastated Gulfport neighborhood.

the songs of the crickets are a constant drone underneath everything. Mosquitoes on the coast are rumored to be so large and numerous they regularly carry off small animals and children. This part of the world is usually crawling with animal life. In the wake of Katrina though, nothing seemed to move. There are no crickets, no mosquitoes, very few birds or animal life of any kind. Other than the occasional cry of a seabird, an eerie silence has descended over the entire coastal region.

The thing you can never escape, that follows you everywhere is a subtle reek of rot, decay and sewage. It permeates everything. The air you breathe, the water coming from the spigot and the clothes you're wearing all carry that rank odor of an open sewer grate or an overfull dumpster on a hot day. If you have ever been to a landfill in the middle of summer, you know this smell. It is inescapable. You think you'll get used to it, but then you drive past some unseen decay and the stench reaches up and slaps you hard.

The devastation is just too much. Try talking to the men and women who have seen it. Watch the strain in their eyes as they recall what they have

tragedies we can all relate to. By grasping these small corners of the whole story, we can in some small way share in the pain—and in sharing, lessen it.

Among the Soldiers, the things that seem to most often weigh on their souls are the fragments of people's lives scattered throughout the debris and destruction. A tattered American flag defiantly hanging in the window of a destroyed home, a waterlogged wedding photograph set reverently atop the remains of a family's home, a child's beloved stuffed animal laying forgotten by the side of the road—these are the symbols that tear at the heart time and time again. They each represent a loss—a displaced life that will never be the same again.

RECOVERY

In the middle this nightmarish landscape, the best of human qualities still shone through. Civilization did not, as we had thought, collapse overnight. The looting and disorder that we heard so much about in New Orleans simply never happened here. (Of course, all the "You loot,

These acts of heroism were nowhere more evident than in our own Soldiers. One look at the devastation that had lashed this region and all thoughts of self seemed to disappear from their minds.



witnessed. Watch as they stumble over the words and try to communicate it to you. Inevitably, the attempt fails on some level. It's too big, too horrible for us to wrap our minds around.

But we have to find some way we can relate to this catastrophe, some way to grasp what has happened. Over and over again, you see people grabbing onto something on a more human scale: a lost dog, a child separated from her parents or the death of an elderly relative. These are

we shoot" signs may have had something to do with that.) Citizens throughout the region pulled together to rebuild their lives and their homes.

Faith-based groups rushed into the area and seemed to be making a difference on a local scale. Their revival tents housed displaced victims, and their church vans brought load after load of supplies into the area.

One gentleman, a former U.S. Marine named Brian Raines, loaded up his RV the day after



Katrina hit and drove down to see what he could do. Food trucks began arriving within a few days, but due to communications problems, the payment for the food was unavailable. Seeing this, Mr. Raines promptly opened his checkbook and paid for the entire delivery out of his own pocket. He was still there two weeks later, purchasing hot meals from local restaurants and handing them out for free to those in need.

Truly, men and women like these are what make our country great. Their willingness to give of themselves, whether it was time, money or personal safety, was overwhelming. There was no thought among these people for self-aggrandizement—only a dedication to making their neighbors lives a little better. When Mr. Raines was pressed for the reason he showed such generosity, he just shrugged and smiled, saying only, “I’m doing this for my troops. This is something my dad would have done.”



tains of debris, and within a matter of days had reopened all of the major traffic arteries in the area.

Transportation units ferried back and forth between Gulfport and Little Rock almost on a daily basis, making sure that Task Force Razorback had the supplies they needed. The drivers always seemed to be willing to do more, only stopping when safety regulations made them.



These Soldiers had asked, and in some cases begged, to be allowed to go, to be allowed to make a difference.

These acts of heroism and compassion were nowhere more evident than in our own Soldiers. One look at the devastation that had lashed this region, and all thoughts of self seemed to disappear from their minds.

They consistently worked 12- to 14-hour days in sweltering heat, rising well before dawn and collapsing into their bunks late at night. Assuming, of course, they had bunks. Soldiers with cots considered themselves lucky. Billeting was wherever you could find it. Soldiers often slept outside, sheltering under their vehicles since tents were in short supply in the early days of the recovery efforts.

Fatigue etched dark lines under their eyes as they struggled to prepare for each day of grueling work. For most, there were no easy days, no days off, no hot meals, no showers, no clean water that didn’t come from a bottle, and for a long time, no communications with home. There was only work and more work. “Just another day in the devastation” one Soldier drawled as he loaded into his Humvee for another day’s labor.

Even though the conditions they faced were arduous, there were no complaints to be heard. Soldiers, once they had glimpsed how bad the residents had it, simply focused on the task at hand: helping the citizens of Gulfport return to their lives.

This help took many forms. MP’s directed traffic, trying to ease the congestion caused by the legions of rescue workers as well as evacuated residents trying to get back to their homes. At night, they patrolled the streets, making sure the curfew was enforced and there was no looting or other criminal activity.

Engineers wielded chainsaws, axes and heavy machinery, clearing streets and cutting paths for rescue workers to do their jobs. They moved moun-

Medics worked the tent cities, ensuring the displaced residents received the medical attention that they needed. They also worked to educate them about health dangers posed by the very environment in which they were now living.

Other Soldiers manned the points of distribution, giving food, water and ice to the residents of the area. These points were so busy that one group reported handing out supplies to over two thousand vehicles in the course of a single day.

“THIS IS THE REASON I JOINED THE GUARD”

These men and women are all heroes, giving of themselves to help others in their time of need. They were risking their health and their lives to bring relief to the people of this region. Their sacrifice was not just personal; it was shared by their families as well. Each family packed up their loved one and sent them into the unknown, their smiles trying to hide their anxiety. For many days, those waiting at home knew nothing more than what the nightly news brought them—stories that seemed to confirm their worst fears. They endured, knowing that the risk was worth it. Their sons, daughters, husbands and wives had volunteered for this duty. These Soldiers had asked, and in some cases begged, to be allowed to go—to be allowed to make a difference.

Ultimately for the troops, that is what this effort was all about—making a difference. Even through their bone-deep exhaustion, you could see the pride they had in their work. They slept well at night knowing their efforts had helped. They woke up each day knowing their work would make a community’s life better. As they said, over and over again: “This is why I joined the Guard!” **GX**

TOP TO BOTTOM: A home was dragged inland by storm surge. The house’s foundation is pictured in the foreground; CPL Kenin Rowan checks in with HQ.



Special Thanks to:

GX would like to thank the following people and organizations for helping us in covering this story. Their efforts went above and beyond. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Arkansas National Guard:

Task Force Razorback: COL David Lively, MAJ Corey Seats, CSM Jerry Calhoun

Public Affairs: CPT Christine Munn, MSG Bob Barnett, SGT Mark Woodall

Equipment:

Clay Hillwig, Online Satellite Communications
www.123-satellite-phone.com

Cumberland Transit,
www.cumberlandtransit.com

Dr. Patty Wright, Vanderbilt Travel Clinic

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THE 369TH - HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS

by don /omax

THE 369TH, AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN REGIMENT OUT OF CAMP WHITMAN, NY SERVED GALLANTLY IN WORLD WAR I FRANCE, UNDER THE SHAMEFUL SEGREGATED CUSTOMS OF THE DAY. THE 369TH ENDURED 191 DAYS UNDER FIRE, ONE OF THE LONGEST TOURS OF THE WAR. ITS IMPRESSIVE RECORD INCLUDES THE REGIMENT BEING CITED 11 TIMES FOR BRAVERY. IN ADDITION 171 OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN RECEIVED THE CROIX DE GUERRE OR THE LEGION OF HONOR INDIVIDUALLY. THE GERMANS GAVE THEM THE NICKNAME "HELLFIGHTERS".



PERHAPS THE BEST EXAMPLE OF THE REGIMENT'S TENACIOUS NATURE INVOLVED SGT. HENRY JOHNSON. SGT. JOHNSON AND HIS FELLOW SOLDIER, NEEDHAM ROBERTS, WERE ON SENTRY DUTY ONE EVENING IN MAY, 1918 WHEN THEY WERE ATTACKED BY A PLATOON SIZE GERMAN FORCE LOOKING FOR A PRISONER FOR INTERROGATION.

SGT. JOHNSON EMPTIED HIS RIFLE AT THE ENEMY WHILE ROBERTS TOOK A SERIOUS WOUND DURING THE FIREFIGHT.



SUFFERING FROM MULTIPLE WOUNDS HIMSELF, JOHNSON CHARGED THE GROUP OF GERMAN SOLDIERS WHO WERE TRYING TO CARRY ROBERTS AWAY. JOHNSON SLASHED THE ENEMY WITH HIS BULO KNIFE KILLING AND WOUNDING SEVERAL.

WITH ROBERTS FEEDING JOHNSON GRENADES, THEY DROVE OFF THE BLOODY GERMAN PATROL BEFORE COLLAPSING.

SGT JOHNSON WAS HOSPITALIZED WITH 21 WOUNDS. HE WAS AWARDED THE CROIX DE GUERRE WITH GOLD PALM, FRANCE'S HIGHEST MILITARY HONOR. IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1997 THAT THE U.S. RECOGNIZED HIS HEROISM WITH A POSTHUMOUS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS. HE IS BURIED IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.



THE PROUD TRADITION OF THE 369TH IS CARRIED ON TODAY BY THE 369TH SUPPORT BATTALION, NYARNG.

If you or a soldier you know has been involved in an incident you think would make an exciting comic strip, please contact us—ideally with a final releaseable After Action Report. Your story might end up being illustrated and in the pages of GX.



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