

THE THREAT AT HOME

p. 79

SURVIVAL SKILL

An expert's guide to building a shelter

p. 88

GET PROMOTED

Position yourself to rise in your civilian job

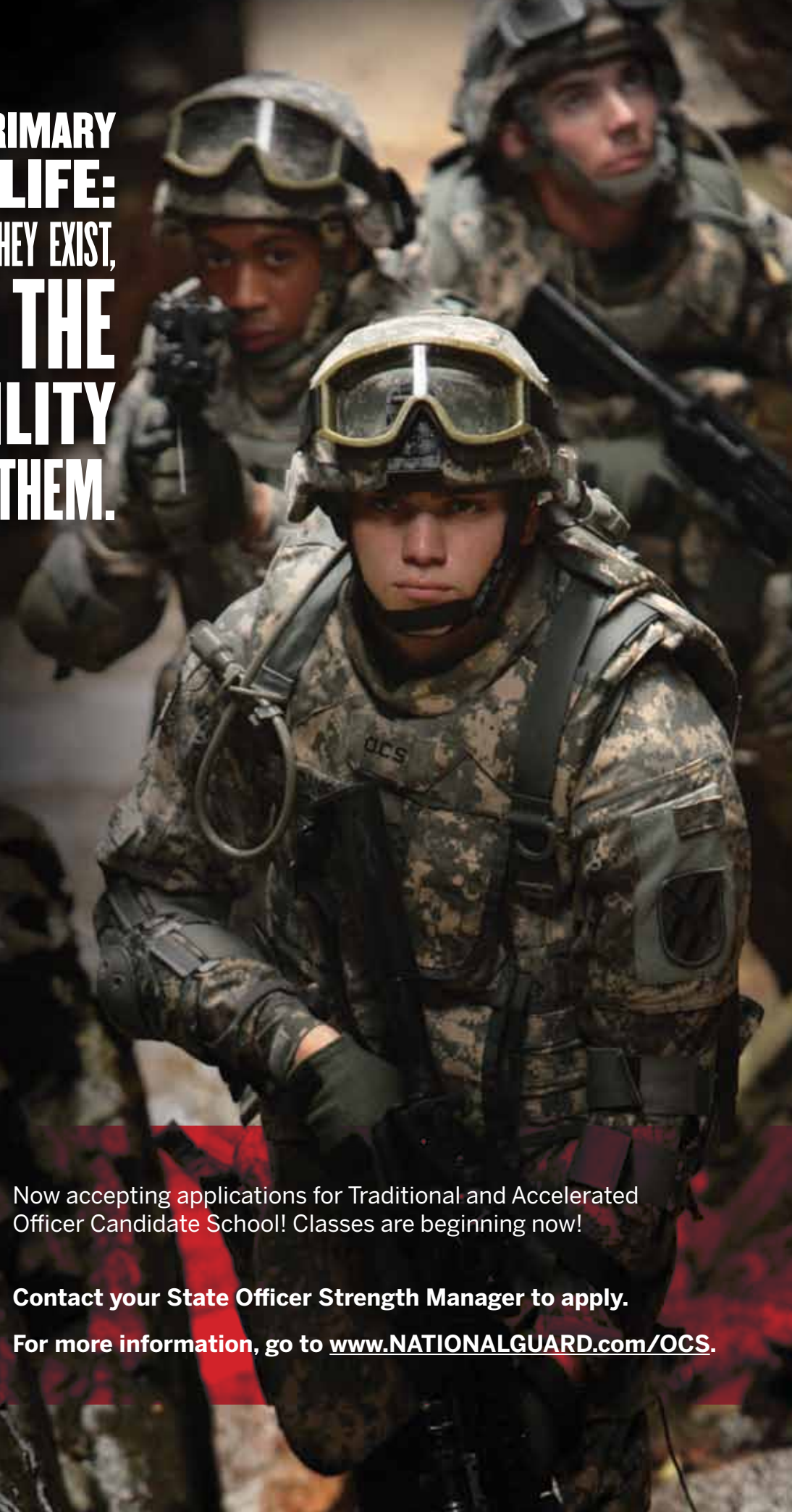
Who and what are the biggest dangers to homeland security?

p. 80

AMERICAN 'NINJA'

The Soldier who takes on TV's craziest obstacle courses

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FEATURES

MAY / JUNE 2012 | VOL 9, ISSUE 2



16



64



80



96

> COVER STORY

16 AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS THREAT?

Who will try to carry out the next terrorist attack on U.S. soil? The potential plotters are vast, and so are the methods of destruction. Homeland security experts weigh in on the perils. *By Susan Katz Keating*

> SPECIAL FEATURE

52 INSIDE THE PENTAGON

It began as a swamp, was designed over a weekend and is a world all its own. From the shape of the structure to a onetime "ghost," here are the origins and oddities of the DoD's home office.

By Brendan McNally

> LEGACY

56 DIXIE THUNDER

With a tradition reaching back more than 200 years, the Mississippi National Guard has never shied away from sacrifice, whether fighting valiantly in Gettysburg, defeating Santa Anna at Buena Vista, or protecting the defenseless after Katrina. *By Jason Hall*

> ON THE ROAD

64 FIRED UP

Today's Guard units must be able to adjust smoothly to mission changes because of the ever-evolving needs overseas. Exhibit A: South Carolina's 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry Regiment, whose Soldiers couldn't be more flexible — or focused.

By Mark Shimabukuro and Liesl Marelli

> STRENGTH

80 AMERICAN 'NINJA'

Take an obstacle course, crank up the difficulty, blend it with a circus, and bring in unconventional athletes to compete. What do you get? Ryan Stratis' obsession. *By James Sullivan*

> HERO

96 SPECIAL DELIVERIES

Organizing a dedicated team of volunteers in Louisiana who send care packages overseas, Annette Hall takes the meaning of community support to a new level for deployed Soldiers.

By Camille Breland

IN EVERY ISSUE

5 | LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

7 | LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

8 | MAILBAG

10 | RECON

106 | AAR: CSM (RET.) DAVID HUDSON



24

24 INTEL

GUARD NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Across the Midwest and South, states respond to deadly tornadoes; the White House honors Guard members; Soldiers pay tribute in the Bataan Death March; New York teams with the Girl Scouts; and more.

40 24/7

A PORTRAIT OF NONSTOP PUBLIC SERVICE
COL Brian Nesvik is right at home preserving Wyoming's natural beauty. *By Dan Alaimo*

43 FAMILY

EMPOWERING THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT

- 43 Resources for single parents
- 44 A reintegration checklist
- 45 Helping teens handle reintegration
- 46 Why you should go to a Yellow Ribbon event
- 47 Choosing the right student loan
- 48 Stay fit with your kids

49 DOWNRANGE

STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE

Ohio's 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team is partnering with the Afghan National Police. *By Christian Anderson*

73 STRENGTH

IMPROVING BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

- 74 Nine reasons to stay hydrated
- 75 Ways to optimize your idle time
- 76 How to boost your stamina
- 77 Advice on picking a running shoe
- 78 Change your attitude, change your life
- 79 Survival skills: Building a lean-to shelter

87 CAREERS

YOUR WORK, YOUR FUTURE

- 88 Improve your chances for promotion
- 89 Tips for resolving conflicts on the job
- 90 CSX, a Soldier-friendly employer
- 91 The appeal of running a franchise
- 92 How to become a chaplain
- 94 My specialty: Hazardous materials
- 95 Leadership lessons from a CSM

102 GEAR

ONE MEAN RIDE

The Oshkosh M-ATV combines the strong points of a Humvee and an MRAP.

COOLER KIT

Equipment upgrades to consider before you head downrange.



48



49



91



102



OUR STRENGTH COMES FROM OUR DIVERSITY. WE HAVE CAPITALIZED ON THE RICH CULTURES, ETHNICITIES, BELIEFS AND INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR FORCE."

Soldiers,

We are in the midst of significant changes as the Department of Defense restructures its forces to meet current and future threats. To ensure the National Guard remains relevant, we must continue to recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce that sustains our culture of quality.

Our strength comes from our diversity. We have capitalized on the rich cultures, ethnicities, beliefs and individual characteristics of our force. These attributes make for a more agile, innovative and effective Guard member.

In the National Guard, diversity is about inclusion, where everyone participates and contributes to ensure mission success. It's a force multiplier that defines our organization and further strengthens our esprit de corps. Understanding and appreciating what diversity and inclusion bring to our organizational culture serves as a strong foundation for our current and future success.

To that end, the National Guard Joint Diversity Executive Council has created a pocket-sized *Leader's Guide to Diversity*. It's a guide for Soldiers and Airmen at all levels to use throughout their career to enhance their understanding of diversity at the personal, team and organizational level.

The guide includes information on leadership competencies, requirements, key roles, success factors and many additional references. Take time to review this guide,



and look for ways to build a stronger and more diverse force. The guide is available for download at www.nationalguard.mil/diversity.pdf.

While serving as the National Guard Bureau Senior Enlisted Leader, I've had the opportunity to visit many Army and Air National Guard units across the country and have seen firsthand how supporting diversity practices and principles leads to strong organizations.

For 375 years, the National Guard has brought security to our communities and to America. As Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen we will continue to stand together as one team—unique in our differences but united in our strengths.

Sincerely,

Chief Master Sergeant Denise Jelinski-Hall
Senior Enlisted Leader, National Guard Bureau

MISSION? ACCOMPLISHED?

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GX

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

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

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Please be sure to include your full contact information and a description of how your submission meets the GX mission and target audience (all Army National Guard members and their families). All submitted work (photos, articles, video) becomes the property of GX upon submission.

Please note, submitted content is not guaranteed to be published in GX magazine.

There are several factors that determine what content is ultimately published. These include but are not limited to:

- > Time and space availability
- > Ability to change the existing editorial outline
- > Approval by the Army National Guard GX contract officer
- > Relevance to both the GX target audience and the GX mission

Due to the volume of submissions we receive, we cannot reply to every submission. However, we do receive, review and appreciate each submission. If your content meets the goals and requirements, we'll be in touch!

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LETTER from the EDITOR



ON THE COVER

The United States continually faces a legion of threats from a multitude of hidden enemies. This never-ending mystery is illustrated in our cover, which was designed by art director Laurel Petty, with assistance from photographer Evan Baines, graphic designer Dustin McNeal and model Lemmie Stone.

MISSION READY

One deploying unit exemplifies how the Guard embraces challenges and change

When I arrived at GX as managing editor last September, I thought I fully appreciated the sacrifices of Soldiers and their families. As someone who has several relatives who have served over the years, I thought I understood the commitment that was needed and the level of dedication required.

I had no idea.

In late February, I was given access to the Soldiers of South Carolina's 4th Battalion, 118th Regiment, for a story about how that unit was handling several mission changes (page 64). These infantry troops allowed me to tag along for a couple of days as they trained at Camp Shelby, MS, for their deployment to Kuwait. They let me ride with them, observe their drills, sit in on their meetings and bunk in their barracks. My experience was only a glimpse into that life, but it was an education I'll never forget.

I learned about the different paths that led the Soldiers there, the goals they have and the loved ones they left behind. I witnessed the unrelenting discipline that's required from them day after grinding day, minute by unglamorous minute. And I saw the bond they shared. Patriotism is a lofty word, but when one sees what that actually entails for Soldiers, the magnitude of that word hits home.

I'm grateful for that lesson, as well as for the opportunity to bring you stories that highlight the devotion demonstrated every day by Soldiers overseas and across the country. Here at GX, we never have to look far, because of another lesson I've learned since my arrival: In the Guard, there is greatness all around.

Of course, there are challenges too. While units like the 4-118th are defending U.S. interests abroad, other Guard elements and the Department of Homeland Security remain vigilant about protecting us here at home. Our cover story (page 16) addresses a question that homeland security officials confront every day and that affects all Guard Soldiers: Who, exactly, will try to attack us next, and what might the method be? Susan Katz Keating, a writer and author who specializes in national security and whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *American Legion* and *Soldier of Fortune*, examines the possibilities with help from several experts in the field.

I hope you enjoy these stories and much more in this edition. Thank you for reading, and see you next issue.

Thank you,

Mark Shimabukuro, Managing Editor

Mailbag

■ YOUR THOUGHTS, PHOTOS AND STORIES

GX asked a couple of Soldiers across the country to describe their Guard experiences. Here are their dispatches.

HIGH POINT

In March, I attended a specialized aviation school held at the High-altitude Army Aviation Training Site (HAATS) in Colorado. It's focused on teaching aviators how to operate helicopters in high-altitude and mountainous environments. The training is excellent, and the lessons learned will stay with me forever.

What made the week even better—I received my promotion orders. After our end-of-course check ride, the other members from my unit (1-230th ACS, TNARNG) and I landed two UH-60 Black Hawks on Stauffenberg Ridge at 10,650 feet above sea level and held a quick promotion ceremony. The scenery was beautiful, the circumstances were meaningful, and I'll never forget it. Nor will I forget the feeling of the 10 pounds of ice and



snow that my crew chiefs shoved down the back of my flight suit seconds after I was promoted.

—CPT DAVID R. SWAN

HOOSIER HELP

An Indiana National Guard Soldier shares his motivation for participating in the fourth annual Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers Food Drive.

As a child, my parents struggled to provide food for

their nine children. Although they worked extremely hard, it never seemed like it was enough. However, one memorable Saturday afternoon, they brought home an enormous amount of food—canned goods, meats, cereals and juices. It felt like we had won the lottery. I didn't realize at the time that my father and mother had visited a local church asking for food and clothes for their children. It must have been hard for my father, who was a very proud man.

The National Guard plays an important role in helping others. It's an organization that cares, not just for the Soldiers and their families, but for every single citizen as well. We believe when one person is suffering, then we all are. When people are suffering, we need to step up and help. I'm proud to be a small part of that.

—SFC LARRY D. BLACK

Have a comment about an article you've seen in **GX**? An experience from the field that you'd like to share? Or a photograph that's calling out for a wider audience? **GX** would love to hear from you.

Email all comments and photos to editor@GXonline.com.

INTERACT WITH US

Don't forget to join us on your favorite social media site:

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GIVE US FEEDBACK!

We want to know your thoughts about **GX**. What's your favorite section? How can we improve? Go online and complete our survey at GXonline.com/survey.

CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

The cover of our previous issue incorrectly described the National Guard members who had deployed to Iraq. More than 250,000 Guard Soldiers and Airmen deployed, not Soldiers alone. Also, on page 20 of our Iraq feature, part of a sentence was inadvertently deleted, leaving out the awards of Staff Sergeant Timothy Nein (the Distinguished Service Cross) and Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester (the Silver Star).

Our Downrange feature gave the wrong year the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade formed; the correct year is 1985. It's currently located at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, and its home station is the Edgewood Area of the Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. **GX** regrets the errors.

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The next step of your career starts at www.h2h.jobs.

A THANK-YOU FROM RASCAL FLATTS

"I can't [express enough] my appreciation and my heartfelt gratitude for what [Soldiers] do, and how they defend us and lay their lives on the line every single day. I only hope that they can come home quickly and safely . . . [My bandmates and I have] been overseas several different times, and you really don't know the cost of freedom until you stand on the battlegrounds over there. My thoughts and prayers are always with them, and I wish their families all the best."

—JAY DEMARCUS, RASCAL FLATTS





Recon

CAMP CROWDER, MO

Missouri National Guard Soldier and ROTC Cadet Andrew Cully leaps from the top of the rappel tower during air assault school on March 8. Cully earned the title of honor graduate for having the second-best performance of the school's 105 graduates.



PHOTO BY
MATTHEW J. WILSON



Recon

RAPID CITY, SD

A South Dakota Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter drops 600 gallons of water on a fire on March 9. The crew is assigned to the Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City.



PHOTO BY
MSG DON MATTHEWS



Recon

FAIRFIELD, UT

Soldiers from the 197th Special Troop Company (Airborne), Utah Army National Guard, conduct a High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) parachute jump over drop zone Global One on March 15.




PHOTO BY
SSG STEPHANY D. RICHARDS



IN SEARCH OF THE HIDDEN ENEMY

The mission to prevent terrorism on U.S. soil starts with al-Qaeda, but it doesn't end there. Homegrown terrorists, hostile nations and lone radicals present perils, too. And the methods of destruction are vast. Ask homeland security experts about the dangers, and you'll get a range of answers. But one thing is clear: **The hunt can never stop.**

BY SUSAN KATZ KEATING



hortly before last Christmas, a young Moroccan man approached a waiter at a Washington, DC, restaurant and asked a seemingly innocent question: “When are you the busiest?” The unsuspecting waiter answered, “Lunchtime.” The man made a mental note: When the time came, he would bomb the restaurant during the midday rush.

He soon changed his mind, though, and chose a more spectacular target: the U.S. Capitol building. On February 17, he strapped on a vest laden with hidden explosives and grabbed his weapon. He embarked on a mission intended to destroy the hallowed landmark and countless lives, including his own. But before he could get close to his target, the Moroccan—29-year-old Amine El Khalifi—was arrested. His suicide vest and MAC-10 automatic weapon were duds, rendered inert by his al-Qaeda confederates who actually were FBI agents.

America’s defense network dodged a bullet on that one. It caught one man. Still, the overall threat remains in force.

But who, exactly, is threatening us? How do they aim to attack? And what threatens us the most here at home, within our borders? A number of actors come to mind, but the primary “who” is clear, experts say. Most officials, including Sen. Susan Collins from the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, point to al-Qaeda or al-Qaeda-inspired adversaries. Experts also agree on the number of thwarted attacks (45 separate incidents between September 2001 and March 2012). The emerging “how” is harder to define. The search for answers significantly affects the National Guard, whose Soldiers and Airmen would be among the first responders to any attack.



Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, the chairmen of the post-attack 9/11 Commission, have said that the trend among terrorist organizations is toward smaller, more varied attacks. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and FBI Director Robert Mueller, meanwhile, have said that the greatest threat comes from cyberattack via Internet-based aggressors. Others worry about large-scale catastrophes such as bombings, attacks on the national

power grid or biological weapons.

“The truly concerning scenarios are when one type of attack is done in [concert] with another,” says Heritage Foundation national security expert James Carafano. “A cyberattack combined with a physical attack would be massively disruptive.”

A nightmare scenario, he says, is one where a bomb is detonated at the same time a power grid is disabled.

How, though, are we most vulnerable? In terms of likely scenarios against the homeland, it’s helpful to extrapolate from the findings of the 2008 Graham/Talent WMD Commission, also known as the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism. That panel issued a stark conclusion: By the end of 2013, it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used somewhere in the world.

The terrorist threat is no longer thousands of miles away from our borders, but lying in wait in our communities, requiring us to maintain a constant state of vigilance.

SCIENCE MEETS TERROR

According to the Graham/Talent findings, the likeliest attack would come from a bioweapon. Such weapons are extraordinarily lethal. "Smallpox. Tularemia. Ricin. Other 'Class A' agents. These are deadly substances," says Dr. Alan Zelicoff, director of the Institute for Biosecurity at the St. Louis University School of Public Health in Missouri. "They inflict horrific damage on the body, so that even those who survive the disease are left with lingering effects."

The substances also have a broad reach. "You're not just looking at the people who get hit by a pathogen," Zelicoff says. "The entire health community also would be brought into play. How quickly do you define the disease? Can you effectively isolate it? Do you have the capacity for an influx of patients? Do you have sufficient medication and vaccines?"

In 2001, during a scripted biosecurity attack exercise named Dark Winter, organizers found that a hypothetical smallpox attack would inflict mass casualties, create civil disorder and start a breakdown in essential institutions, among other effects. In addition, such insidious weapons are relatively easy to manufacture and disseminate. And a potential perpetrator would not have to be a Ph.D.-level scientist working in a state-of-the-art laboratory.

"Certain types of agents, such as anthrax, are available in nature," says Rutgers University bioterrorism expert Dr. Leonard Cole. "If you can get a hold of them and weaponize them, they can be quite effective. With minimal training, a person with a high school education in certain courses can make a bioweapon."

Anthrax is particularly attractive to terrorists, Cole says, because the spores are remarkably stable. "They can lie in the soil, viable, for more than 100 years."

And as we learned from the 2001 anthrax letter attacks, the substance is easy to disseminate. "All you have to do is put it in an envelope and mail it. The spores are so minuscule, they can leak out through an envelope and reach targets all along the path to the main target. You can't be as sure of hitting your target as when you throw a grenade, but if you disseminate a pathogenic strain, you can kill a lot of people."

HOMEGROWN HATRED

With so many threats hovering, the question remains: Who, specifically, is likeliest to carry them out? The 9/11-style infiltrator from abroad still remains a threat. But increasingly, Collins says, the perpetrator could be someone you went to school with. "Over the past two years, we have seen a sharp escalation in the number of homegrown terrorist plots," she says.

Collins' office cites chilling statistics. According to her reports, authorities arrested people who were involved in 21 of the homegrown-style terrorist plots from September 2001 through May 2009. Another 36 arrests were made in such plots from May 2009 through February 2012.

In June 2011, for instance, two men were arrested for

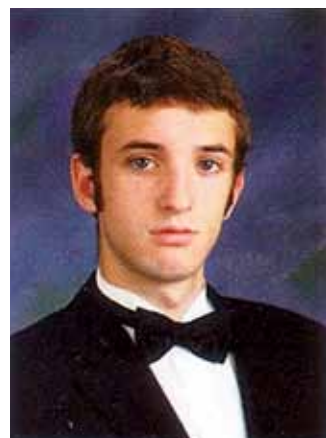
36

THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS MADE BY AUTHORITIES RELATED TO THWARTED TERRORIST ATTACKS FROM MAY 2009 TO FEBRUARY 2012.

That summer, Chesser converted to Islam.

Within weeks, Chesser's new religion took over his life. He quit his job at Blockbuster because the store rented videos featuring naked women, a violation of Islamic principles. He demanded that his family observe Islamic law at home, and he objected to his mother's relationship with her live-in partner, because that also violated his religion. By August, Chesser moved out of his mother's house. He later started classes at George Mason but soon dropped out.

Chesser began posting his thoughts on a radical Islamic blog. In the ensuing months, he married a Muslim woman from Uganda and started his own popular website "dedicated to those who give their lives for this religion." Chesser's fascination with radical Islam grew to the extent that in July 2010, he was arrested on three felony charges connected to terrorist activity, including the "South Park"



plotting to attack a military processing center in Seattle, WA. The following month, homegrown-style terrorists planned to assault a restaurant whose customers included a large number of service members stationed at Fort Hood, TX. And in September, a homegrown actor plotted to attack the U.S. Capitol and the Pentagon. Unfortunately for authorities, these lone-wolf actors are not always easy to spot before they strike.

Neither family nor friends expressed any reason to believe that in 2011, a 22-year-old Zachary Adam Chesser would be sentenced to 25 years in federal prison for terrorist activities.

Chesser is best known now as the American who threatened the creators of the "South Park" cartoon series because of an episode depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammad wearing a bear costume. However, while a student at Oakton High School in Fairfax, VA, Chesser seemed like an all-American kid. He was enrolled in the school's Gifted and Talented program and studied Japanese. He was active in sports and joined the break-dancing team. He graduated in 2008 and planned to attend nearby George Mason University.

The summer after he graduated from high school, Chesser worked at a Blockbuster video store and played on a local soccer team. The team was organized by a member of the Islamist political group Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Zachary Adam Chesser's chilling story depicts the new trend of radical terrorist groups choosing to recruit American citizens as a way to strengthen their ranks inside the U.S. border.



QUICK RESPONSE: THE GUARD'S ROLE IN HOMELAND DEFENSE

While the traditional Guard Soldier is capable of responding to almost any situation, the National Guard has created highly specialized units to deal with unconventional calamities, including attacks involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD). These units, which also respond to natural disasters, are trained to deal with virtually any threat.

Joint Force Headquarters State (JFHQ-State)
Coordinates Guard units for governors in States and Territories during emergencies; can act as a headquarters for national-level emergency operations.

Joint Task Force State (JTF-State)
Coordinates Guard units in support of civil authorities for specific incidents, and relays information between the JFHQ-State and field units.

Civil Support Team (CST)
Responds to suspected weapons of mass destruction (WMD) attacks and works with civilian responders in emergencies.

CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP)
Conducts casualty search and extraction, medical treatment, area decontamination, and fatality search and recovery.

National Guard Reaction Force (NGRF)
Provides security for Civil Support Teams and CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) teams during emergency response.

Expeditionary Medical Support (EMEDS)
Light and lean medical units that can respond rapidly in operations such as humanitarian relief, wartime contingencies and disaster response.

threats and attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist group.

After Chesser was imprisoned, Senate investigators aimed to understand how and why he became immersed in violent jihad. Staff members on the Homeland Security Committee corresponded with him at length, looking for answers. Chesser's reasons for advocating violence ("a desire to alleviate suffering ...") made little sense. But he sent a clear message when he wrote about waging jihad via the Internet: "It is simply the most dynamic and convenient form of media there is."

THE NEW BREEDING GROUND

Carafano notes that the Internet is an efficient way for terrorists to raise money. In 2011, RAND corporation analysts said that the average homegrown terrorism recruit is 27 years old, and fluent in computer and Internet use. Recruits and recruiters alike rely on blogs, Web pages, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a means of sending and receiving ideological messages or instructions.

For years, North Carolina resident Samir Khan ran websites and an Internet magazine, *Inspire*, openly supporting terrorism. One

article in the magazine was titled "I am proud to be a traitor to America." Another explained "How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom." Khan, a former American high school cheerleader and member of a glee club, cut a broad swath before he died. He reportedly was killed in an airstrike in Yemen in 2011.

Younger recruits are particularly vulnerable to Internet videos—something that has been exploited by jihadist leaders. In 2009, the Somali terror group al-Shabaab released a rap video entitled "Blow by Blow." The video, depicting a history of the mujahideen, has been viewed repeatedly on YouTube.

Officials have noted that YouTube and other Internet sites have enabled the streamlining of the recruiting and planning phases of terror operations. According to Assistant Secretary of Defense Garry Reid, who testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the issue, attacks that used to take years of planning now can be orchestrated in a matter of months. Such plans can be condensed "across multiple international boundaries and beyond the reach of any single law enforcement agency or military task force," Reid testified.

One set of videos depicting attacks on U.S. Army personnel and installations provided the grounds from which five Americans were recruited to join the Taliban in Pakistan. The men were arrested, but their case illuminated the specter of hostility toward U.S. military personnel. Potential aggressors are increasingly aiming to attack our military on American soil.

LONE JIHADISTS

Nidal Hasan, the Army psychiatrist who killed 13 people and wounded 29 others in shootings at Fort Hood, TX, in 2009, is the most notorious example. He is not alone. Khalifi, who was arrested for plotting to blow up the U.S. Capitol, originally planned to attack military officers within the United States. His first target was a Washington, DC, restaurant, as he believed military personnel from a nearby office building frequented it.

These types of attacks are not simply random acts of opportunity. In 2009, al-Qaeda issued orders for its operatives to kill American military personnel and their families. Operatives were told to find out where military families live and to look for ways to

attack them at home or work. On one Internet forum, a jihadist advised others to get the crew lists of deployed Navy ships and to note the locations of the Sailors' spouses and children.

Following the American takedown of Osama bin Laden last year, the Pentagon worried that families of the SEALs and Air Force special operatives would be targeted.

Other types of threats continue to loom. Border and maritime security also are high on the list. With so many possibilities, how do we address all of them effectively? Through a combination of vigilance and gumshoe detective work.

Old-fashioned sting operations, such as the one that caught Khalifi, still bring results. Last September, another undercover sting resulted in the arrest of a man charged with plotting to bomb the Pentagon and the U.S. Capitol. Rezwan Ferdous, 26, allegedly planned to hit his targets via remote-controlled aircraft equipped with plastic explosives.

But the undercover sting operations also take time, personnel and money. Agents spent months accumulating the evidence needed to find probable cause to arrest Khalifi, Ferdous and others.

Terror-watchers advocate backstopping the threat via a multipronged approach.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency is tackling the issue of people who remain in the United States on expired visas. While not everyone who stays past the deadline is a terrorist, some who are arrested for terrorism have been caught while on overstayed visas. Khalifi's tourist visa expired in 1999, more than 10 years before he was arrested. In January, ICE special agents arrested a Saudi national who threatened to blow up the White House and the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the United States. He, too, had violated the terms of his visa.

Still other agencies aim to prevent homegrown actors from going down the path to violence. In terms of homegrown terror, the buzzword is "deradicalization."



Both the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security have launched community-based programs designed to divert people from following Islamic jihad. The Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, DC, recommends using successful anti-gang methods as a model for outreach. The Los Angeles Gang Reduction Strategy in California is one framework that could be used to employ former jihadists to conduct outreach to vulnerable communities.

The homegrown or home-based jihadist, though, is but one of the myriad threats facing the homeland. One of the most serious dangers is one that goes largely unaddressed, according to the Heritage Foundation's Carafano. "We have not paid sufficient attention to state-sponsored terrorism," he says.

In October, for example, authorities arrested

U.S. government officials have stated that Hezbollah, a radical Islamist group based in Lebanon, is a growing concern to homeland security.

two men on suspicion of plotting to kill Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States. The attackers planned to bomb the ambassador in a public place in Washington, DC. In the aftermath of the arrests, information emerged that the plot was linked to the Iranian government.

According to the indictment, the conspirators were connected to the Qods Force, a special unit of the Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps.

"The threat from state-sponsored actors is so dangerous that we need to rewrite our counterterrorism strategy to incorporate that within our overall strategy," Carafano says.

The House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee recently cited rising concern over the militant organization Hezbollah. In March, Rep. Peter King, chairman of the committee, warned that there are hundreds—maybe even thousands—

of Hezbollah agents inside the United States capable of launching a terror attack if U.S.-Iran tensions continue to escalate. "The American intelligence community ... believes we are very much at risk for an attack by Iranian operatives, which would be Hezbollah, that is a terrorist-trained force in this country. It really is the 'A' team of international terrorism—far more sophisticated than al-Qaeda," King said on CNN's "Starting Point," adding that the group's operatives have been in the country for many years for the purpose of fundraising and recruiting.

Other terror threats stem from Mexican criminal cartels, which increasingly are taking on the qualities of terrorist organizations. They are so violent and so well organized that other terrorists have attempted to use them as contractors. Iranian agents who plotted to murder the Saudi ambassador to the United States agreed to pay a Mexican drug cartel \$1.5 million to assassinate their target by setting off a bomb at a public restaurant.

ELECTRICAL DESTRUCTION

Another little-known and emerging threat comes from electromagnetic pulse, or EMP—a burst of electromagnetic radiation.

"This is so obscure that almost no one outside a couple of Washington policy wonks even knows about it," says Eric Hannis, executive director of Etherton and Associates, a Northern Virginia-based defense consulting firm. "But it represents a glaring national Achilles' heel."

An EMP can occur naturally, in the form of sunspot activity, or be generated artificially. The likeliest source is a high-yield explosion, such as that from a nuclear device. "It can fry a transformer to the point where it can't be repaired," Hannis says. "It would have to be rebuilt from scratch. [EMP] could be used to disable our power and technology grids, potentially to devastating effect."

How devastating? "How much food do you have? It could plunge us back to the 18th

century," Hannis says. "Unless you have an old vehicle, your car won't work. Even if you could get to the store, the refrigerated food would not be [edible]. You couldn't use a phone. No computers. No communication."

The scenario echoes concerns from Panetta and Mueller, who have said that cyberattack—which would be covered under an EMP event—presents the greatest threat to national security.

In all the possible scenarios involving a terrorist attack, the National Guard would play a significant support role. Major General David Harris, director of the J-3/7 for the National Guard Bureau, whose duties include ensuring that the Guard is trained and ready to respond to homeland defense and security missions, says the Guard would not take the lead unless tasked to do so. But, he adds, "Our level of cooperation with the FBI and Department of Homeland Security is at an all-time high."

And the Guard is ready to act if needed. The force, he says, is "the best equipped and trained than at any time in our history."

Carafano says giving the Guard the proper support is essential. "I'm concerned about that," he says. "Do we have enough manpower there? Have we devoted enough resources to maintaining the Guard and Reserve?"

One of our biggest challenges overall is to remain focused. Zachary Chesser understood how to lull first responders into ignoring potential attacks. He pleaded guilty to the felony charge of soliciting violent Islamist extremists to desensitize law enforcement officers against bomb threats. Chesser encouraged extremists to place suspicious yet innocent packages in public places so that police would become used to dealing with false alarms. The idea was to lull them into being less vigilant, so that they would not respond in time to defuse the eventual genuine bomb.

"I worry about the things that slip through the cracks," Carafano says. "I worry about complacency." **GX**



THE "DUD" BOMBER

How an extremist almost pulled off arguably the worst terrorist attack in the U.S. since 9/11.

The sting against would-be suicide bomber Amine El Khalifi unfolded after an informant told the FBI that Khalifi wanted to attack the U.S. homeland. Agents introduced Khalifi to "Yusuf," an undercover officer. Khalifi enlisted Yusuf to help with his plan to blow up a Virginia office building where military personnel worked.

The plot expanded until Khalifi settled on attacking the U.S. Capitol.


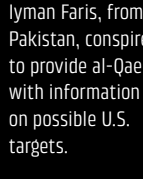
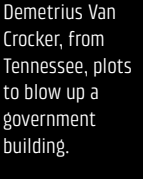
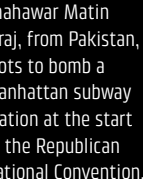
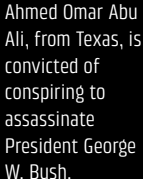

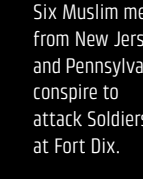

FBI agents monitored Khalifi as he bought cell phones, nails and items to use in yet another attack, against a military installation.

Khalifi and the undercover agents went to a West Virginia quarry to detonate a test device for the Capitol attack. Khalifi asked for more explosive power. He then set the date for his operation, which would also lead to his own suicide.

On the appointed day, agents drove Khalifi to his target. They gave him a dud weapon and phony explosives. Khalifi exited the vehicle, intending to launch his attack, but instead he was arrested.

A DECADE OF THREATS

In the years since the 9/11 attacks, investigators have thwarted dozens of plots against the U.S. Here is a sampling of cases where plotters were convicted.

2001	2003	2004	2004	2005	2006	2007	2010
							
Richard Reid, from England, hides explosives inside his boots and plans to blow up an airplane in flight over the Atlantic Ocean.	lyman Faris, from Pakistan, conspires to provide al-Qaeda with information on possible U.S. targets.	Demetrius Van Crocker, from Tennessee, plots to blow up a government building.	Shahawar Matin Siraj, from Pakistan, plots to bomb a Manhattan subway station at the start of the Republican National Convention.	Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, from Texas, is convicted of conspiring to assassinate President George W. Bush.	Six men from Florida are charged with plotting to blow up Chicago's Sears Tower. Five are later convicted.	Six Muslim men from New Jersey and Pennsylvania conspire to attack Soldiers at Fort Dix.	Faisal Shahzad, from Pakistan, drives a car bomb into Times Square.

Intel

- Minnesota Champions**
Combatives gets more intense **28**
- Remembering Bataan**
Pennsylvania troops pay tribute **30**
- White House Dinner**
President thanks Veterans in person **33**
- Rock 'n' Roll**
Gary Sinise sings for the troops **34**
- Big Thanks**
Wounded Warrior gets custom home **39**

NEWS & EVENTS IN THE GUARD



Rallying After Disaster

After tornadoes strike the Midwest and South, Soldiers come to the rescue of injured citizens and devastated towns

■ **KIAHSVILLE, WV** On the evening of March 2, Janet Lynn Porterfield, a Kiahsville, WV, resident, was glued to her television. She was watching a scene unfold—a tornado tearing through her state, leaving uprooted trees and demolished houses in its wake. Pretty soon, the sound of tornado winds weren't just coming from her TV; it was outside her window.

"I told my nephew to grab the kids, and I ran into the bedroom, pulled a mattress off the bed and pulled it over the top of us as we crouched underneath the stairs," Porterfield says.

The tornado hovered over her house for a minute. Porterfield and her family braced themselves for impact, but it passed. At first, it appeared that nothing had been damaged. But as Porterfield walked outside, she realized it was worse than she imagined. The tin roof had been

stripped from the house, and one of the bedroom walls had been carried away like feathers on the wind.

Porterfield wasn't the only citizen left shaken and helpless from the tornadoes that raged through at least 10 states in the Midwest and South starting on Feb. 28 and lasting until March 3. According to media reports, at least 39 people died, many more were wounded and entire towns were destroyed.

National Guard Soldiers were there to pick up the pieces.

On March 4, the number of Guard Soldiers assisting civilian authorities peaked at more than 800. The following day, 390 Guard members were providing presence patrols and traffic control points in Kentucky; more than 70 were distributing water and conducting presence patrols in Indiana; more than 100 were providing security



THE GUARD'S ROLE

Less than a week before the tornadoes hit, state

governors and Department of Defense leadership met in National Harbor, MD, at the 2012 Domestic Preparedness Workshop to further define the National Guard role in responding to emergencies and disasters.

This initiative, called the Unity of Effort, examines the roles and responsibilities of the Guard, Active Duty and Reserve, if they are all called upon for such situations.

"For governors, Unity of Effort is really about partnerships and maintaining a clear chain of command so we can best serve our citizens in times of crisis," says Dave Heineman, governor of Nebraska.

A primary outcome of the initiative is that it clarifies that a Guard officer will serve as a dual-status commander, maintaining command over both state forces—Guard elements—and federal military units that may also respond to an emergency or disaster within the states.

in Missouri; and more than 140 were removing debris after flooding in West Virginia. All four states had declared a state of emergency.

Civilian authorities in Indiana and Kentucky noted how fast the Guard had boots on the ground after the storms, and emergency managers attributed this to years of relationship-building.

"The deployment of the National Guard was one of the most timely deployments of Guard members I've ever seen," says Captain Scott Miller, a Kentucky state trooper.

After surveying the damage in a UH-60 Black Hawk, Kentucky Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson echoed this sentiment. "I've never seen anything as devastating as I saw today. I'm very proud of the Kentucky National Guard and how quickly they respond."

Thanks to the swift response of the National Guard, many lives were spared, including Porterfield's. The morning after the tornado hit, her nephew began the long hike out of the devastated valley with his wife and two children to seek help. Porterfield, suffering from arthritis, was unable to make the trek. She remained in her home without food, water or power.

It took two days of clearing trees from the road before Specialist Shaun Olds, a heavy equipment operator with the 821st Engineer Company, was able to drive a Humvee to Porterfield's house to pick her up and bring her to safety. "She was very excited when she saw the Humvee," Olds says. "She thanked us repeatedly, but we were just glad to see she was OK and in good spirits."

—Compiled from various news reports

Caring for Cambodia

Idaho teams with nation's army on medical mission

■ **KAMPOT PROVINCE, CAMBODIA** Idaho Army National Guard Soldiers from C Company, 145th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), assisted with medically treating more than 5,000 Cambodian citizens in a joint Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) during the Angkor Sentinel 2012 exercise March 13–23. Angkor Sentinel is an annual bilateral military exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF).

The MEDCAP included 16 U.S. Army medical personnel, 15 delegates from RCAF, 17 interpreters and a medical team from the Children's Surgical Center in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Through their combined efforts, thousands of Cambodians were provided medical care that is otherwise difficult for people in rural provinces there to receive. Men, women and children of all ages received medical care, dental care, and ophthalmic treatments and surgeries, as well as healthcare education.

The general medicine team saw the majority of patients, with common ailments ranging from minor wounds, musculo-skeletal issues, gastrointestinal issues and high blood pressure to diseases not commonly seen in the U.S., including typhoid and tuberculosis.

Major Heidi Munro, commander of C Company, 145th BSB, says this experience is unlike any training that could be replicated at home for her Soldiers. "Our training is usually focused on treating combat injuries. This is much more complex, because the Soldiers have to diagnose actual patients with different illnesses and diseases," she says. "I think what the Soldiers will take away from this experience is an appreciation for everything we have at home, especially healthcare."

Captain Andrew Schug of Idaho was enthusiastic about the mission. "It's definitely a rewarding experience," he says. "You hear stories about what it's going to be like, but it's not until you get a patient standing in front of you, blind in one eye with lymphoma, that you can really understand what we are doing here."

—SSG April Davis

A Safer School for Kabul

Georgia's Task Force Hydra contributes to project that protects female students in Afghanistan

CAMP PHOENIX, AFGHANISTAN

When Americans think of spring, they think of rain, flowers blooming and children getting excited about summer. In Afghanistan, a different sentiment stirs in March: that of children welcoming the start of the school year.

The 648th Task Force Hydra (Hydra), a Georgia Army National Guard unit, is the Kabul Base Cluster Command working with the city's political and religious leaders and the police to provide humanitarian assistance for quality-of-life projects that employ Afghan workers.

Darulaman, a community within Kabul, is home to a school that educates over 3,000 students grades 1-12. This school is one of

the seven projects Hydra oversees. The mission in March was to build a privacy wall that would provide protection for girls attending the school.

"In Afghanistan, boundary walls equal security and privacy, which afford a conducive learning environment for this community's youth," says Lieutenant Colonel Michael O. Hulsey, a Hydra leader. Along with checking on the progress of the wall, the teams brought over 400 bags of school supplies collected by Operation Outreach, a Soldier-run humanitarian organization, for the school's headmaster to share with the students.

"This was one of the best missions I've been on," says Lieutenant Colonel Robyn Blader, a member



of Hydra's staff judge advocate team. Blader shared with the girls that she is a lawyer and that education has been important in her life. "These kids are learning 15

different subjects in a bare classroom with only a blackboard and can only attend three hours a day. It's nice to be able to help them."

—CPT Jacqueline Wren

Searching for Water Resources

Engineering team works to strengthen water-well development project in Djibouti



CAMP LEMONNIER, DJIBOUTI The project is isolated, noisy and messy—but if successful could be beneficial to Naval Base Camp Lemonnier and local Djiboutians. Thanks to new equipment, the 257th Engineer Team drilled four water test wells in different locations at the base in March.

"The wells are part of a study to determine if pulling water from a beach aquifer is a viable option for removing Camp Lemonnier from the Djiboutian Fresh Water Aquifer and leaving that resource solely for the Djiboutians," says Captain Joseph Bzdok, 257th commander. The well development project directly supports Camp Lemonnier's initiative to identify alternative well locations and assist in development of camp infrastructure.

The team conducted a 24-hour constant rate test for future development and

testing of camp aquifer water tables. A constant rate test is a constant pumping of a well to determine what amount of water can be pumped out at a sustained rate for an indefinite amount of time.

"The pump test right now is pumping at 540 gallons per minute," Bzdok says. "If the lowering of the water table level of the static water level does not change significantly, we know it can sustain 540 gallons per minute."

The team is using this experience as on-the-job training to work out any kinks in the new equipment before using the machines out in the field. Despite the challenges and maintenance issues, Sergeant First Class Shane Banks says the team knows the wells and testing will "help support the success of the camp, and the health and missions of the [personnel] stationed at Camp Lemonnier."

—Senior Airman Lael Huss

Guard Director Tours Hawaii Facilities

HONOLULU, HI Lieutenant General William E. Ingram Jr., director of the Army National Guard, finished his first 100 days in his new post with a three-day tour of Guard facilities in Hawaii.

In meetings across the state at the conclusion of a two-week trip that also took him to South Korea and Guam, the general spoke about the future structure and missions of the Army National Guard, which he said is stronger than ever.

"We have been actively engaged in war efforts for the last 10 years; we are well-equipped and well-trained," Ingram says.

At a town hall meeting at Hawaii Army National Guard headquarters in Kalaheo, Soldiers voiced concerns about mission requirements and preparation, and maintaining an aging infrastructure.

Brigadier General Gary Hara, commander of the Hawaii Army National Guard, briefed Ingram on plans for upgrading the Guard facilities on Kalaheo, where it is using former Navy buildings.

During an informal dinner, Ingram held round-table discussions with senior officers and enlisted leaders. He also met with the staff of Joint Task Force—Homeland Defense, U.S. Army Pacific Command and the Joint Operations Center for the Hawaii Department of Defense.

At Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), Ingram met with Army Major General Stephen D. Tom, the first JPAC commander from a Reserve Component. Ingram toured the Central Identification Laboratory with Calvin Y. Shiroma, D.M.D., forensic odontologist, and was briefed on recovery techniques and efforts.

The final day of the visit included an aerial tour of military facilities on the island of Hawaii aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk, a walking tour of the Hawaii Air National Guard's F-22 Raptors and an admiral's barge tour of Pearl Harbor.

Ingram praised the Hawaii Guard's innovative program implementation, adding, "You all are in great shape, and that is largely due to the quality of your leaders."

—Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson



Young Soldiers Nearing Diplomas

MUSCATATUCK URBAN TRAINING CENTER, IN Three Alaska Soldiers are on track to receive their high school diplomas this summer. PFC Michael David Huff (left), PVT Tylor Dolfi (right) and PVT Evan Dancer, all 2010 graduates of the Alaska Military Youth Academy, subsequently enlisted in the Alaska Army National Guard. They then enrolled as cadets in the National Guard Patriot Academy at Muscatatuck, a pilot program of the Guard Bureau that gives qualified high school dropouts the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and receive college credit for certain courses.

—Story & photo by SSG Karima Turner



Missouri Teacher Becomes Student

KANSAS CITY, MO Having joined the Missouri National Guard, second-grade teacher and SPC Zachary Lutjen has become a student. Mr. L, as his students at Henry County R-II Elementary in Windsor call him, is being instructed at Fort Leonard Wood to become a horizontal construction engineer with the new 1135th Engineer Company (Route Clearance) in Richmond, MO. Before pursuing his military dream, Lutjen earned his teaching degree in 2009 from Central Missouri University. The kids are into his military life, he says: "I taught them how to march the first week of school."

—Story & photo by Jennifer Archdekin



Merit Skills Lessons for Scouts

CAMP GRAFTON, ND Three Boy Scout troops from Bismarck and Fargo received merit badge training in plumbing and household repairs at Camp Grafton in Devils Lake. Soldiers of the North Dakota National Guard's 164th Regional Training Institute offered hands-on training in soldering pipes, wiring houses and bathroom fixtures. The boys became familiar with tools ranging from blowtorches to table saws—and they learned it from kindred spirits. "The beliefs that the Guard and the Boy Scouts hold dear are the same," says Paul Zent, an assistant with Boy Scout Troop 11 of Bismarck.

—Story & photo by SPC Cassandra Simonton



Texas Tests Emergency Response

EL CAMPO, TX When the call about the terrorist incident came at 3:45 a.m., Soldiers from Austin-based Joint Task Force 71 sprang into action. Within two hours, they were assembled and ready to travel 200-plus miles to El Campo to confront a hazardous material attack, an explosion and partial hospital collapse, and a suspicious package. The scenario was simulated—but the quick response was real. The El Campo Memorial Hospital Exercise, a joint interagency training event, tested the alert and response capabilities of the Guard and civil partners including local first responders, city officials and state agencies.

—Story & photo by SPC Aaron Moreno



Job Help for Virginia Veterans

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA An employment assistance workshop held in tandem with a U.S. Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Hiring Our Heroes job fair aimed to give Veterans a "leg up" in a competitive market. The workshop of the Virginia Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was part of its continuing three-pronged plan: 1) Make employers aware of the value of hiring Veterans, 2) connect job seekers with vacancies and 3) train Veterans to get hired. Interview skills (including translating military skills into civilian terms), resume writing and using the H2Hjobs Web portal were among the lessons offered.

—Story & photo by Cotton Puryear

Minnesota Strikes Up Another Win

State finishes first again in team competition at combatives tournament

FORT BENNING, GA With six fighters in the championship finals and two in the consolation finals, Team Minnesota finished first overall in the National Guard combatives tournament. The Army National Guard Warrior Training Center hosted the fifth annual competition, with over 145 Guard members arriving from 20 different States and Territories.

Minnesota, last year's winner as well, took first overall with 465 points. Team Missouri was second, with 281 points. Team Guam, with 244 points, came in third—though it also should have won a prize for most miles traveled.

"Every year, these tournaments get harder," says First Lieutenant Chad Malmberg, Minnesota National Guard combatives coach (and Silver Star recipient). "You take guys that are not necessarily professional fighters or guys that don't have a whole lot of experience, but these are Soldiers who take that mentality that they bring to the battlefield, and [bring it] into the cage."

The combatives tournament consisted of standard grappling rounds, intermediate rounds with some striking, and the championship rounds with full kick and fist striking.

Even with limited resources and funding, numerous teams found a way to train through their own gyms and somehow travel to the competition. "The toughest battle was just getting here," says Master Sergeant Allen Blend, Guam National Guard combatives coach. "But the guys persevered, and overall we have placed first, second and third place, so they have done [really well]."

When Private First Class Aaron Johnson, Indiana Army National Guard, heard of the combatives tournament through a training buddy, he knew he had to attend. Johnson ended



up winning the lightweight class against Specialist Thomas Pfeiffer, Washington Army National Guard. Johnson has competed in nearly every type of fighting tournament—wrestling, Greco-Roman wrestling, jiu-jitsu and mixed martial arts leagues.

"It's pretty crazy putting grappling, Pancrase and then the final fight the last day," says Johnson. "It is definitely wear and tear on your body."

Even though teams were competing against each other, Johnson did not have a ringside coach and had to enlist a couple of team coaches for help. Major Andrew Heymann, Georgia Army National Guard, coached for Johnson in the intermediate round, and for the finals Johnson received the help of Guam National Guard coaches Blend

and Specialist Kenji Okiyama.

Another fighter, Staff Sergeant Kailey Carlson, Minnesota National Guard, had to battle it out in a three-person round-robin for featherweight starting in the intermediate round.

"I started doing jiu-jitsu about two years ago and then moved to train at the academy with Greg Nelson," Carlson says. "I almost primarily train with guys, but [rarely] someone my own size. So it was a nice experience to fight against guys who were closer to my weight."

Specialist Miles McDonald, Missouri Army National Guard, wrapped up featherweight with a rear chokehold submission against Sergeant Terry Hams, Alaska Army National Guard, in the final championship rounds.

The most congested weight

class was cruiserweight, 185 pounds, with 24 Guard members competing for the title. Even with his head bandaged, Captain Matthew Jukkala, Minnesota Army National Guard, took cruiserweight by submission against Cadet John Moser, Guam Army National Guard.

Hammer fist technical knockouts closed out light heavy-weight for champion Staff Sergeant Brian Friedrichs and heavyweight champion Sergeant First Class Braden Simonet, both from Team Minnesota.

"Overall it's a great tournament, and the numbers are growing," Blend said. "So it's just a matter of time before it kicks off to the next level. Thanks to the Warrior Training Center putting this together."

— 1LT Mike Thomson

PHOTO FROM GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD

Highway Flood Rescue

Missouri sergeant helps save stranded driver from rising waters



JEFFERSON CITY, MO Staff Sergeant Abe Faulkner of the Missouri Army National Guard was driving to work one morning in March when he noticed a vehicle stranded in high waters on the highway. Without hesitation, he went to investigate and offer assistance.

The driver, Cory Holtmeyer, had already called for help. His dad and uncle were the first people on the scene besides Faulkner. "They wanted to get out in the water to help him," Faulkner says. "I didn't want to put other people in harm's way by doing that."

Faulkner called 911 and went home to get his fishing boat. By the time he returned, the fire marshal and fire chief were there.

They put two volunteer firefighters on the boat, and when they reached Holtmeyer, they gave him a life vest and put a rope on him. Holtmeyer made it to the boat unharmed.

Faulkner says it was the quick decisions of himself and the emergency responders that were critical to saving Holtmeyer. "When I first showed up, I could see the truck's headlights," Faulkner says. "About an hour later, the water was already running in through the truck's open windows. The water rose more than six inches in less than an hour. I have had a couple people tell me that I kept a level head and did what had to be done."

—SGT Sarah E. Lupescu

Critical Timing

Ohio Soldiers apply recent training on defibrillator to revive victim of cardiac arrest

COLUMBUS, OH Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment, proved the effectiveness of their training and their Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED) when they saved a civilian contractor at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base who went into cardiac arrest in March.

Major Wayne Thomas, 1-137th administrative officer and a Dublin, OH, resident, reacted to shouts for help from the workers and found the contractor, who had been working on the unit's rooftop, without a pulse and not breathing. First Sergeant Jose Camacho of Lancaster, OH, and Staff Sergeant Neal Thompson of Columbus, OH, climbed to the roof to assist.

"When I got there, the guy was



purple, so we started chest compressions," Camacho says. Thompson and Camacho alternated with Thomas doing compressions. Thompson, formerly an AED instructor, called out for the AED and hooked it up to the contractor.

"The machine ... worked like clockwork," Camacho says. "He

had a heartbeat when we were done with him. If it wasn't for our efforts, I think he would have died. The machine really works."

After the contractor regained consciousness, he was life-flighted to Grant Medical Center in Columbus, where he was stabilized.

The 1-137th had just gone through a safety stand-down in February and had medics conduct an AED/CPR brief. The AED reduces the time it might take to receive lifesaving care at installations and readiness centers throughout Ohio.

—SSG Peter Kresge

PHOTOS FROM SGT SARAH E. LUPESCU; OHIO NATIONAL GUARD

A Race to Remember

In body and spirit, Pennsylvania troops pay tribute in the Bataan Memorial Death March

Colonel John Gronski met Lieutenant Colonel Mike McLaughlin several years ago, during Gronski's assignment as commander of the 28th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Gronski, who had recently been assigned from another brigade in the Pennsylvania National Guard, assumed his role just as the 2nd BCT began its training for the 2005 surge of U.S. troops to Iraq for the Global War on Terror. As the two men spent countless hours discussing and executing missions, they formed a bond.

"We became close friends," Gronski says. He thought the two of them could stay in touch after deployment. But that was not to be. On Jan. 5, 2006, McLaughlin and dozens of civilians were killed by a suicide bomber during a recruiting event for the Iraqi police department.

Six years later, Gronski, now a brigadier general and deputy adjutant general of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, still

thinks about McLaughlin and the 82 other Soldiers, Marines and Sailors who died during the unit's yearlong tour. Last fall, he decided he wanted to pay tribute to his friend by marching in his name at the 23rd Annual Bataan Memorial Death March in New Mexico. Although ultimately he couldn't make the event in late March, his goal and training attracted other participants from Pennsylvania who did. They were among the nearly 7,000 service members and civilians around the country who attended this year. As for Gronski, he held his own march back home.

The Bataan Memorial Death March, a 26.2-mile ruck march and race through the desert at White Sands Missile Range, commemorates the sacrifices made by service members during the infamous forced march in the Philippines during WWII, as well as honoring fallen troops everywhere. The race featured competitions among age groups and teams, and

some categories required participants to wear a 35-pound ruck.

"I think [it's] a great tribute to our fallen Warriors," Gronski says. "It takes a lot of physical and mental toughness for the average Soldier to put a 35-pound pack on their back and march such a long distance. [It's] something you have to immerse yourself in mentally and physically."

Last year, after Gronski began planning to attend, word started to circulate to his fellow Soldiers and Airmen on post, and some asked if they could join him in his training. With 39 Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers lost in the Global War on Terror, the state has more casualties from that war than any of the 53 other States and Territories. By Christmas, Gronski's Friday morning training sessions had grown to about 30 participants.

With 35 pounds or more on their backs, they traversed the area's slippery mountain roads, often barely able to see through the snow or freezing rain in the predawn hours. In western Pennsylvania, a separate group of Soldiers also began training for the march. Soon there were more than 50 participants from around the state.

Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Saracco, commander of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion, was among the first to join Gronski on his hikes. "There were snow blizzards when we first started preparing for it," he says. "You couldn't move forward if you didn't put your hand in front of your eyes. [We were] trying to walk through ... snow coming sideways. I mean, it was no joke—27 degrees, getting up at 4:30 in the morning and saying, 'It's time to go get my water and my ruck.'"

Of those who trained, nine ended up making the trip to New Mexico. Of those, three placed in the top 10—including first and third places—in the "military heavy" category. Although financial restraints prevented others from going, they were with the Bataan marchers in spirit and remembered their fallen comrades in another way: More than 50 of them conducted 28-mile marches in Erie and Fort Indiantown Gap.

Gronski is optimistic about similar endeavors in the future, whether in the state or at the march itself. "Just from the history of how this all developed," he says, "I think there's no question that we will do this over and over again for years to come."

—MAJ Ed Shank

A Diagnosis Made Just in Time

Pre-deployment exam plays key role in saving sergeant's life

SPRINGFIELD, IL The prospect of a deployment may have saved the life of Sergeant Kristina R. Melton. A member of the Illinois National Guard's 1344th Transportation Company in East St. Louis, Melton underwent a health examination as she prepared for a mobilization with the 1644th Transportation Company in Rock Falls. The exam found precancerous cells in her cervix.

"When the doctor told me I was going to miss the deployment, I was hurt," Melton says. "I was upset. I thought, 'Great, my husband is going to deploy without me again, and I am going to be stuck at home.'"

Her husband, Sergeant Chris Melton, also with the 1344th Transportation Company, planned to deploy with her by joining the 1644th, but he decided against it in light of the diagnosis. "It was a blessing in disguise," he says. "If Kristina wouldn't have been set to deploy, it would have been months before she would have had her checkup, and her medical condition could have gotten worse."

The Meltons have not let Kristina's situation control their future. They plan to have another child, followed by a hysterectomy for Kristina, who expects to remain with the Illinois Army National Guard until she retires. "I think it speaks a lot to her character and the kind of person she is," says Captain Matthew P. Wood, the 1344th's company commander.

Now Kristina hopes to spread the word about cervical cancer and women's health. "It can happen to them no matter what age they are," she says. "There are women out there that don't get their Pap smears done when they should, and they're missing out on stuff like this. If this isn't caught, then there's not a lot the doctors can do ... It can kill you if you go untreated."

—SGT Jesse Houk



Trauma Facility Earns Praise

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, AFGHANISTAN During a visit from CSM Thomas Capel, Connecticut National Guard Soldiers stationed at Craig Joint Theater Hospital candidly voiced the daily challenges they face and their pride in their work. Capel, the International Security Assistance Forces and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan senior enlisted adviser, visited Soldiers and patients at the Level 3 trauma facility. "You are on the frontline here," he told Soldiers from the 142nd Area Support Medical Company. He thanked them for their dedication to saving lives as the hospital's quick response emergency team.

—Story & photo by SGT Christopher Harper



Florida Officer's Leadership Honored

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL Florida CPT Benjamin Ruffner received the GEN Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award, given each year to six National Guard company-grade officers nationwide who live the values of duty, honor and country in their personal and professional lives. Ruffner, plans and operations officer for the Florida Guard's Logistics Directorate and commander of the 690th Military Police Company, is actively involved in several volunteer and professional organizations. Those include the Myron Rolle Youth Academy, which provides leadership training to economically and socially challenged youths.

—Story by SFC Blair Heusdens; photo from Debra Cox



Kansas Couple Deploys Together

CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT Two Kansas Army National Guard members are facing a dual challenge together: marriage and deployment. SFC Brian Dale, a Black Hawk helicopter maintenance platoon sergeant, D Company, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, and SSG Danielle Burke, a human resources specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-108th Aviation, were deployed soon after marrying last year. While they see each other daily and support each other, they must maintain their professionalism, and quality time together is rare. Still, "We know we have it better than most married Soldiers," Dale says.

—Story & photo by SPC Bradley Wancour



Hawaii Helping Juvenile Offenders

HONOLULU, HI In Hawaii, first-time juvenile-status offenders are given a chance at redemption through the Hawaii National Guard Counterdrug Program's Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA) program. The program is designed to give a second chance to young people who have committed offenses ranging from truancy to running away from home, or injurious behavior. Members of the Counterdrug Community Action team run monthly meetings for the offenders and their parents or guardians. If the families complete the two-session program, the juvenile offenders walk away with a clean slate.

—Story & photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Jackson



Tennessee Trains Ugandan Forces

VICENZA, ITALY Africa Deployment Assistance Partnership Teams (ADAPT) personnel from U.S. Army Africa and the Tennessee National Guard traveled to Uganda to conduct Phase I training for army and air force members of the Uganda People's Defense Force. ADAPT's classroom instruction and hands-on training approach covers deployment tasks including unit movement planning, hazardous material handling and compatibility, and movement control basics. Phase I teaches the host military how to prepare unit personnel, equipment and vehicles for airlift, and create a load plan for the transporting aircraft.

—Story by Mindy Anderson; photo from U.S. Army Africa



Giving Troubled Teens a Chance

Arizona's Project ChalleNGe helps at-risk youth find friendship, confidence and hope

QUEEN CREEK, AZ The boys yell "Challenge!" as they drop to do push-ups. They conduct the exercise with determination. The instructor shouts "Cadence!"

This may sound like something out of a military Basic Training scene in a movie, but it's actually a snapshot of an Arizona program called Project ChalleNGe, where teens from across the state come to find a new and better direction in life.

Located in Queen Creek, AZ, about 40 miles southeast of Phoenix, the program is hosted by the Arizona National Guard and operated by civilians, Veteran service members and Guard members, who provide coaching and mentorship.

"This is a program designed to take in at-risk youth and help them become productive members of society," says John Burk, senior executive officer for the Department of Military Affairs for Arizona and overseer of Project ChalleNGe.



"These kids come from all walks of life," adds Specialist Ian Carefoot, an instructor for Project ChalleNGe. "[They] just made some negative decisions." He says the program gives them the tools they need to be a positive part of society again.

The biannual, five-month residency course is not a school, but an academic social transition for teens who drop out of school and then decide to make a change. "The residency training in a

military-type environment provides a structured way [participants] can learn life and academic skills," says Burk. "After they leave the academy, we follow up with them by conducting a one-year mentorship to ensure the continued success of Project ChalleNGe."

The Guard members involved use the experience to further connect with their communities and engage with other troubled teens.

—SGT Lauren DeVita

Groundbreaking Promotion

Colonel becomes first Hispanic woman to reach rank of general in California

SACRAMENTO, CA Colonel Sylvia R. Crockett was promoted in March to the rank of brigadier general, becoming the first Hispanic female to attain the rank of general officer in the California

National Guard. She received the promotion from California Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. (pictured) in a ceremony at the state capitol in Sacramento.

"[For] her example of breaking

the glass ceiling, not only for Latinas but for women in general, I think she's a great role model," says state Sen. Lou Correa, who chairs the Senate's Veterans Affairs Committee.

Major General David S. Baldwin, the state's adjutant general, says Crockett's role will include taking over all of the strategic communications, "which includes the Public Affairs Directorate, our state legislation, working with our friends in the state Senate and Assembly, and of course working with our enormous California congressional delegation.

"She will be helping us set the chart and the way for the future in order to reshape the future force structure of the National Guard," he adds.

Crockett has served with

the California Guard since July 1982, when she joined the California Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing in Santa Clara County. After holding several critical positions in her Guard career, in 1999 Crockett was assigned as the executive officer for the California Military Department; in 2006 she took command of the 223rd Infantry Regiment (Combat Arms), making her the first woman to command that vital training element. Crockett later became the first woman to serve as the Military Department's director of plans and operations, and the first to serve as the Military Department's chief of staff.

—California Military Department
Public Affairs Office



President Honors Guard Members

8 Soldiers, Airmen among guests at White House dinner to recognize service in Iraq

WASHINGTON Eight National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were among 78 service members attending "A Nation's Gratitude" dinner hosted by President Barack Obama and the first lady in February.

"It's a great honor that eight outstanding members of the National Guard [six Army and two Air National Guard] will be representing our National Guard at the White House for this celebration of all we've accomplished during Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn as a National Guard, Reserve and Active Duty team," said General Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"Once again, it demonstrates the strength and experience that can be achieved when National Guard, Reserve and Active Component Soldiers and Airmen serve together on the battlefield. After more than 10 years of joint combat operations, it is almost impossible to tell the difference from one component to another."

The dinner was held "to express the nation's gratitude to, and recognize the significant contributions of, the men and women in uniform who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation New Dawn, and the families who supported them," the Defense Department reported.

"I am proud of every Guard member who has served on the battlefields around the world—and in the States and Territories where they live," McKinley said. "We must also remember this is a celebration of our families and employers. For without them standing beside us, giving all they had, it would not have been possible for the mission to be a success."

A panel of senior enlisted leaders from every branch of the Defense Department chose the 78



service members, who represent the 54 States and Territories and the District of Columbia.

"[The service members come] from diverse backgrounds, ranks and from all services, including Guard and Reserve," the Defense Department reported. "Most remain on Active Duty. These service members and family members represent more than a million Americans and their families who served and made personal sacrifices in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn."

Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Denise Jelinski-Hall, senior enlisted leader of the National Guard Bureau, was also invited. The Guard members invited in addition to Jelinski-Hall and McKinley: Army Specialist Janice Hernandez Flores, Guam National Guard; Army Sergeant Heather N. Wunderlich, Nebraska National Guard; Air Force Technical Sergeant Cristian Bennett, Wisconsin National Guard;

Army Staff Sergeant Benjamin N. Straubel, Maine National Guard; Army Sergeant First Class James Gaston Sr., Virgin Islands National Guard; Air Force Master Sergeant Kevin T. Bullivant, Utah National Guard; Army Captain Yolanda Lee, District of Columbia National Guard; Army Chief Warrant Officer Five Kevin Purtee, Texas National Guard.

The dinner is important to recognize not only service members, but also families, Jelinski-Hall said.

Command Sergeant Major Terrence Harris from Maine is extremely proud that one of his state's Guard members was selected. "Staff Sergeant Straubel is one of the finest noncommissioned officers—true American heroes—I have worked with over my 33-plus years of service, and is well-deserving of the honor of this dinner with the president and first lady," Harris said. "He is a very humble noncommissioned officer of the highest caliber and did what

he did in combat without regard for his personal well-being."

Straubel looked forward to representing the Maine National Guard.

"It is an incredible honor to be selected by the senior leadership to represent my fellow Maine National Guard Soldiers who served in Afghanistan and Iraq," he said. "My wife is humbled, but also very excited, to represent our family members who have made great sacrifices for their country during these operations."

The selection of eight Guard members recognizes the National Guard's integral role in all operations, Straubel said.

"Over the course of supporting conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army National Guard has played a pivotal role," Straubel said. "To have been a part of those missions and to have contributed to those success stories is something that we as Army National [Guard members] should take great pride in."

—Tech. Sgt. John Orrell

Talent for the Troops

Whether speaking or singing, star Gary Sinise spreads the word to support Wounded Warriors

Since 9/11, actor/musician Gary Sinise's own Lt. Dan Band has become a staple overseas, performing countless concerts to honor and support the troops. But his service doesn't stop there, as the Gary Sinise Foundation has become a successful nonprofit organization to support Wounded Warriors and first responders. We talked to the *Forrest Gump* and "CSI: NY" star to find out why he's so focused on supporting service members.

What inspires you to work with and support our service members? I have a long line of service members on both my wife's and my side of the family. I spent time in the 1980s with the Vietnam Veterans and felt a lot of compassion for what happened to them when they came home from war. After I did *Forrest Gump*, I got involved with the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. Then I started to visit our troops after 9/11 and I've been to so many bases around the world, I've lost count. The reason I do it is because every time I go, I meet so many incredible people that inspire me to do more for them. Because, after all, they are the ones providing our freedom for us. We can never take that for granted, and in this dangerous world we live in we have to do everything we can to keep this military strong.

What are the challenges you face in raising public awareness about what the military is doing overseas? I think that's where being a celebrity can become very valuable. We can sit down with someone who is interested in what we have to say, and they will



talk and write about it. We get to do interesting things and go to places the average American doesn't, like landing on an aircraft carrier or meeting troops in a war zone. One of the primary missions that I think I can fulfill is trying to explain what I see overseas and to try to help the average American understand why we should be so grateful. After all, they aren't required to do it; we don't have mandatory service like some countries. It's a volunteer service, and we are lucky that people want to do that kind of work. We owe them for their service.

Does it inspire you to see our service members still dedicated after a decade of deploying overseas? Yes, it absolutely does. I always recommend people to thank the troops when they see them in uniform. Just a simple

"thanks" will make a big difference in their day. They don't do it for the money; they are called to serve. Some stay in for a long time, and some stay in for a few years, but everyone that serves, we owe them a great deal of gratitude. I do try to show my support through the Gary Sinise Foundation, which is totally devoted to giving back to our military, first responders and their families. We can't expect the government to take care of our military because they can only give so much. It's good to know that we can try to pick up some of the slack. I think it's up to the average citizen to get involved with various organizations or create their own projects, and just do whatever they can to show our military that

Gary Sinise, center, performs with country music star Charlie Daniels, left, at a fundraiser for the troops at Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, in March.

we appreciate what they do for us.

Why is the military so successful in preserving our freedom and other people's freedom around the world? We have the best and most dedi-

cated military in the world. But they are stressed, and we have beaten up all of our hardware. Our tanks, our planes and our MRAPs, all of those things that we use overseas, have taken a beating. We are in a time where we should be preserving that stuff and building new equipment, but in fact we are actually cutting back. So it's important that we keep them strong and trained. We have the best group of people out there serving, and we have to keep our eye on the ball and keep our military strong.

—Christian Anderson

For more on the Gary Sinise Foundation, go to GarySiniseFoundation.org.

Northeast Summit

FORSCOM, state leaders discuss initiatives

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, MA General David R. Rodriguez, commanding general, U.S. Army Forces Command, conducted a Northeast Regional Adjutant General Conference at Hanscom Air Force Base in March. FORSCOM is the largest U.S. Army command and the pre-eminent provider of expeditionary, campaign-capable land forces to combatant commanders. Headquartered at Fort Bragg, GA, FORSCOM consists of more than 820,000 active Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers.

Major General Joseph C. Carter, the adjutant general of the Massachusetts National Guard, hosted the conference as the adjutants general from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and New York all attended.

The purpose of the conference was to open dialogue with each Northeast region National Guard adjutant general regarding information about Army/FORSCOM initiatives that involve the Army National Guard and gain an understanding of issues that impact training and readiness.

"The National Guard contribution to our national security is staggering," Rodriguez says. "My role as the FORSCOM commander is to leverage our capacity and do the best we can to provide for the collective security of our nation.

"We provide the latest update at the FORSCOM level, and the [adjutants general] then talk through their issues and concerns, so together we can come up with a better plan on how to effectively execute the national security strategy in the future."

Lieutenant General Mick Bednarek, First Army commanding general, also attended. "First Army's role for the Northeast region has become more important for the future than it has been in the past," he says. "The Northeast region has always been special due to a combination of geographic factors of Camp Edwards and Ethan Allen.

"We have to be smarter as we train for collective tasks for the long term to preserve the readiness of our National Guard formations in the future," Bednarek says.

—LTC James Sahady



California Unit Chills Out

BRIDGEPORT, CA Citizen-Soldiers trained as scouts and snipers from 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry, traded their Southern California vistas of palm trees for below-freezing snow flurries and the Sierra Nevada when they participated in the Operation Red Snow exercise in February. The unit joined forces with fellow California National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from the 9th and 95th Civil Support Teams (CSTs) and the 144th Fighter and 146th Airlift Wings to create a training exercise structured around the task of taking down a domestic terrorist group operating in northeastern California.

—Story & photo by Master Sgt. Paul Wade



Armenia-Kansas Partnership Grows

TOPEKA, KS Seyran Ohanyan, minister of defense for the Republic of Armenia, visited Kansas in March. The state has been partnered with Armenia since 2003 as part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program. During the visit, Ohanyan (far left) toured Kansas National Guard facilities and the state capitol. Kansas Adjutant General MG Lee Tafanelli hosted breakfast, where he and Ohanyan discussed partnership growth. Tafanelli says the visit was a great honor, stating, "We value this partnership, and this is a great opportunity to solidify relationships that we have built over the past nine years."

—Story by SPC Amber Stuckert; photo from Kansas National Guard



Atterbury Trains Canadian Warriors

EDINBURGH, IN In March, over 250 Canadian service members from 31st Canadian Brigade Group, Land Forces Central Area in Ontario, traveled by bus, helicopter and train for urban warfare training at Camp Atterbury and Muscatuck Urban Training Complex for Exercise Arrowhead Lightning 2012. Upon arrival, they began training with Muscatuck's Wolf Operations Battalion, using facilities including a live-fire shoot house and small, urban complexes. Along with training with Wolf Ops, the troops flew in Canadian Chinook helicopters alongside Black Hawk helicopters to transport troops to Muscatuck.

—Story & photo by SSG Matt Scotten



Unit Advises Afghan Police

GOR TEPA, AFGHANISTAN Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, conducted joint training with members of the Afghan National Police in March as part of their ongoing advise-and-assist mission in Afghanistan. After a period of instruction, the Afghans led a patrol with 1st Platoon near an outpost in Gor Tepe. The Afghan-led patrol provided great visibility for both the ANPs and Coalition Forces. These Afghan-led patrols are increasingly common as more responsibility is taken on by Afghan police.

—Story by SPC James Simpson; photo from 2LT Brian Smith



WWII Vet Gets Combat Medals

EMPORIA, VA CSM Dennis A. Green, the Virginia National Guard senior enlisted leader, presented long-overdue medals to WWII Veteran Mat Franklin Spence on March 16. Spence, 89, received the Bronze Star Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, a Combat Infantryman Badge, and a World War II Honorable Service Lapel Button. Spence served from May 10, 1943, to March 3, 1945, as a rifleman with K Company, 12th Infantry Regiment, with service in England, France and Belgium during WWII.

—Story & photo by SFC A.J. Coyne

Treats for the Troops

New York Soldier organizes delivery of Girl Scout cookies to brigade before deployment



CAMP SHELBY, MS It wasn't enough to feed an army, but it was enough to feed the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

In March, under their "Operation: Cookie" charity, the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, the council serving 40,000 Girl Scouts in the Long Island county, delivered 3,600 boxes of cookies to brigade Soldiers at Camp Shelby, MS, who were preparing to deploy overseas.

Sergeant First Class Walter Meshenberg organized the donation with his cousin Jonathan Chekin, who works for the Suffolk County Girl Scout Council. "Operation: Cookie" allows people to buy Girl Scout cookies for donation to members of the Armed Forces.

In addition to his other duties, Meshenberg, of Mastic Beach, NY, is the brigade's safety NCO. While deployed to Iraq with the New York Army National

Guard's 3-142nd Aviation Battalion in 2009, he worked to obtain special gear for the battalion's helicopter pilots and refuelers. He welcomed the cookie challenge. "I'm pretty good at special projects," he says, smiling.

Meshenberg began planning for the donation in mid-February. He took some good-natured teasing from some of his fellow Soldiers, who said he couldn't pull it off. "I said, 'Watch me,'" Meshenberg recalls.

The cookies, stacked nearly 6 feet high on three shrink-wrapped pallets, were delivered via tractor-trailer on Feb. 24, a Friday. "That ended up being one box per Soldier," Meshenberg says. "By Monday, we delivered most of the cookies to most of the Soldiers in the brigade."

Once they got over their disbelief, the Soldiers and units thanked him, he says.

—SFC Raymond Drumsta

Mentoring in Rwanda

Texas trains nation's defense forces and makes cultural connections

GOKA, RWANDA Armed with their passports, a few uniforms and basic necessities, Texas Army National Guard Staff Sergeants Fabian Alban and Jared Staggs flew to Goka, Rwanda, in February to mentor Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF) during the live-fire and field training portions of the peace support operations Soldiers skills training.

Part of Task Force Raptor, 3rd Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, Alban regarded the invitation from the RDF as a huge honor. "It feels good to be able to work with their instructors to help mentor young [troops]," he says. "The students were eager to learn and glad to have us there to help."

Working alongside the cadre, Staggs discovered he had some common ground with his counterparts. "They were very interested and asked me a lot of questions about my deployment to

Iraq," Staggs says. "They shared their experiences of some of their deployments within Africa. It was good to see that we had something in common, which I felt added to the experience and helped us work better together to mentor their [forces]."

At the end of the monthlong course, the Rwandan instructors successfully graduated over 100 troops. Although U.S. Army counterparts were not able to attend the ceremony, Alban appreciated the opportunity to help mentor. "I love sharing what I know. It's a good feeling to see [military members] executing tactics that you taught them," Alban says. "And likewise, every time you mentor someone, you're teaching yourself something new. This opportunity is no different. I have lots to take back home with me."

—SSG Malcolm McCleendon



The Art of Engineering

Wyoming project pays tribute to unsung Soldiers

CHEYENNE, WY Thousands of Army engineer Soldiers have faithfully served Wyoming and the nation, and the recently completed Engineer Wall recognizes them.

The wall, an art project in the Joint Forces Readiness Center in Cheyenne that pays tribute to engineers, was the vision of retired Command Sergeant Major Steve Walls. Several months ago, he presented the idea to the Wyoming Military Department arts board, which approved the tribute to engineer Soldiers of the Wyoming Army National Guard.

After a distinguished career in the Active Army and engineer regiment, with deployments that included Vietnam and Bosnia, Walls was hired as environmental special projects coordinator for the Wyoming Guard's environmental engineering division. He has been involved in a number of Army history projects.

The Engineer Wall, the second art wall completed in the new multimillion-dollar facility, contains donated pictures from Walls' personal collection, artwork purchased by the Military Department, and a display honoring de Fleury Medal recipients.

The de Fleury Medal was named after French engineer Francois Louis Teissedre de Fleury, who joined the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain in 1777. The engineer regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values he demonstrated.

Walls had noticed during a military department ball in 2004 that awards were given for personnel in artillery, aviation, armor and cavalry. Why not an award for engineers, he thought. "So in 2005, I took the lead and started calling contacts at the engineer school, and we got the first [set of] de Fleury Medals."

He designed the de Fleury display to contain the silver, bronze and steel medals surrounded by the award's history. A plaque lists each recipient's name, rank and year of the award. Twenty-five Soldiers and two civilians have been recognized, including nine inducted this year.

—LTC Samuel House



Alaska Patrols Afghan Skies

PARWAN PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN Alaska Guard Soldiers are gathering key reconnaissance intelligence for commanders by air. The Soldiers, in the role of aerial sensor operators, are using full-motion video sensors and working with pilots flying a King Air 300 to provide ground missions with information. The unit is Company B, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, and Neutralize-Afghanistan (ODIN-A). Commander LTC Paul Rogers says ODIN-A is the largest single aerial Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance unit ever deployed.

—Story & photo by SSG Jack Carlson III



North Dakota Families Learn, Bond

FARGO, ND Members of the North Dakota Patriot Guard, a support group, and Guard families, volunteers and military youth in that state attended two events in March designed to help families cope with the challenges of military service. The adjutant general's Symposium for Families and the North Dakota National Guard Youth Symposium were held over one weekend. The Symposium included presentations about staying calm amid conflict, leadership among family members and protecting identities online. At the Youth Symposium, military children learned about communication, leadership and conflict resolution.

—Story by North Dakota Public Affairs; photo from SGT Brett J. Miller



Unit Partners With El Salvador

MORAZAN, EL SALVADOR Five Soldiers from New Hampshire's C Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), participated in a subject matter expert exchange on mountain operations tactics and procedures in Morazan. They demonstrated basic fixed ropes installation and mountain casualty evacuation procedures with 20 members of El Salvador's new Mountain Commando Unit, which is expanding its mission capabilities to counter illicit drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. This visit begins an ongoing professional relationship between the two units.

—Story from the New Hampshire National Guard; photo from CPT Jose Mendez



Pennsylvania Awards New Medal

HARRISBURG, PA In February, the Pennsylvania National Guard awarded the first two recipients of its new Major Octavius V. Catto Medal for distinguished public service. Army National Guard 1SG Kevin Bittenbender was recognized for volunteering a modestly estimated 500 hours of his time for various organizations, including the U.S. Paralympics biathlon team, since 2005. The other recipient was Air National Guard Maj. Jonathan Bell, recently recognized as Chaplain of the Quarter for U.S. Central Command and nominated as the 2011 Air National Guard Chaplain of the Year for his service overseas.

—Story & photo by SGT Matt Jones



Honors for Warrant Officer

EASTOVER, SC CW05 (Ret.) Janice Ready was inducted into the Warrant Officer Hall of Fame in a ceremony at McCrady Training Center. MG Lester Eisner, South Carolina's deputy adjutant general, praised Ready's dedication. "Throughout her career, she showed leadership skills and concern for the Soldiers," he says. Ready, who enlisted in the Army in 1979, later joined the South Carolina National Guard. After becoming a staff sergeant, she joined the warrant officer corps. As command chief warrant officer, she led South Carolina to its highest-ever percentage of warrant officer manning.

—Story & photo by SGT Brad Mincey



Keeping the Peace

New Mexico trains at Atterbury for multinational force that monitors Egypt-Israel treaty

EDINBURGH, IN Thousands of service members and civilians train at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center every year to deploy in support of missions around the globe—typically to Afghanistan, Kosovo or the Horn of Africa. In early spring, over 400 New Mexico Guard members were there preparing for a different mission: to deploy in support of the Multinational Force & Observers (MFO), a force independent from the United Nations or NATO. The mission's objective is to monitor the implementation of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty and assist in ensuring that all best efforts are employed to prevent violations of that treaty.

The force of 12 contingents consists of Australia, Canada, Colombia, the Czech Republic, the Republic of the Fiji Islands, France, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, the United States and Uruguay. The U.S. provides the largest contingent.

The MFO dates back to President Jimmy Carter. When Egypt and Israel originally signed their peace treaty, a U.N. force oversaw enforcement of it. On March 26, 1979, the day the treaty was signed, President Carter wrote identical letters to both Egypt and Israel, promising various commitments to the region that would help maintain a multinational force should the U.N. fail to resume the responsibility past their mandate of July 1979. In July of that year, the U.N. withdrew

from the area. The MFO has been upholding Carter's promise ever since.

Lieutenant Colonel Miguel Aguilar, an Albuquerque, NM, native and commander of the 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry, that's deploying in support of MFO 56, says, "This mission is unique in that our Soldiers aren't really asked to do anything other than observe and report."

Aguilar says Camp Atterbury has done an exemplary job of preparing him and his Soldiers for a successful deployment. "Camp Atterbury is a fantastic place," Aguilar says. "The training has been great, we felt very welcome, and the training staff from the 205th Infantry Brigade has been very good about working with the unit that is currently [in Egypt] and ensuring that the training is specifically tailored to our unique mission."

Lieutenant Colonel Aaron West, commander, 1st Battalion, 290th Regiment, 205th Infantry Brigade, responsible for the MFO's mobilization training, likened the unit's training at Atterbury to a sports team's preseason games. "We can't duplicate what they will experience in Egypt, but we can most certainly replicate it," West says. "We have access to all the necessary training facilities, simulators and subject matter experts to allow them to prepare for the kinds of operations that are happening in that part of the world right now."

Trainers from the 205th Infantry Brigade, 1st Army East, have done everything they can to make sure that the preparation is as thorough as possible. Soldiers from the unit currently in theater on the MFO mission have even been flown to Camp Atterbury to brief Soldiers personally on what to expect when they get there. Corporal Chad Zollo, an Albuquerque, NM, native and fire team leader with B Company, 1st Battalion, 200th Infantry Regiment, says his training at Camp Atterbury has been excellent thus far.

"My squad is currently tasked with being the North Camp response team when we get there," he says, "so our training has been a little more rigorous and in-depth than I know some of the other squads have been doing. The wind will shift and suddenly expose mines, so we have been doing a lot of battle drills to help prepare ourselves."

Zollo adds that he felt extremely prepared by his training, but the opportunity to train with Soldiers from the unit currently in theater was possibly the most valuable part of his time at Atterbury. "We have gone through all the slide shows and all the classes over and over, trying to prepare ourselves," he says. But talking to subject matter experts from MFO 55, with recent real-world experience, "was extremely educational."

—SSG Matt Scotten

A Fresh Start

Georgia Soldier who was paralyzed in Afghanistan receives brand-new home

STATESBORO, GA Escorted by police sirens and flag-bearing motorcycles, Staff Sergeant Scott Millican pulled up to his new home on March 10. The Georgia National Guard Soldier was fighting back tears as he gazed on the number of supporters who turned out for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Homes for Our Troops, a nonprofit organization that builds homes for disabled Veterans, had built Millican a 2,600-square-foot, fully accessible home at no cost. It features roll-in showers and closets, lowered cabinets, roll-under counters and cook-top, and extra-wide doorways, among other amenities.

Almost two years ago in Ghazni, Afghanistan, Millican's vehicle rolled over a 250-pound, pressure-plated improvised explosive device. He sustained multiple fractures and was left paralyzed.

At the ceremony, retired Sergeant Major of the Army and president of Homes for Our Troops Kenneth O. Preston presented Millican with the keys to his new home. "This is a very special day," said Preston. "This home is designed to give back the daily independence and the freedom for Scott and for Veterans like Scott that are out there."

Congressman John Barrow also showed his support. "I wish we didn't



have to be here, but under the circumstances, there isn't any other place I'd rather be."

Despite his injuries, Millican still remains upbeat and positive, saying, "I'm just grateful to be here and grateful that people in America still care."

—SGT Robert Schaffner Jr.

Healthier Animals, Stronger Village

Agribusiness Development Team helps Afghan leaders teach locals about livestock care



ZABUL PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN

Employees of the Zabul Province Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) took the lead in organizing and executing a veterinary seminar and animal inoculation program in the Tarnak-Wa-Jaldak District of Zabul province.

"First of all, this event put the DAIL out front and shows them that they can plan, and that they can train the farmers of Afghanistan," says Lieutenant Colonel Ken D. DeGier, Zabul Agribusiness Development Team (ADT) agricultural section leader. "This particular event showed that the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan can do their job and do it well."

The event was planned by the local DAIL extension agent, who used his knowledge of the area to designate the

location and reach out to locals about the training and inoculations. On day one, the extension agent, veterinarian and village elders spent several hours conducting a class on livestock care, discussing common diseases and answering questions from the villagers. Day two of the veterinary seminar consisted primarily of inoculating more than 50 animals.

"We were welcomed into the village the first day, and Coalition Forces had very little interaction with the villagers, leaving the lead role to the DAIL employees," says Captain Jenna A. Carlson, who directs ADT activities in the Tarnak-Wa-Jaldak area. "This legitimized the efforts of the government and its local employees and was a key factor to success."

—1LT Davin Fischer

Wild at Heart

COL Brian Nesvik is right at home preserving Wyoming's natural beauty

by DAN ALAIMO

Colonel Brian Nesvik has three large responsibilities. In a state where wildlife is a huge part of the cultural and recreational heritage, he's the chief game warden of Wyoming and chief of the state's wildlife division. On top of that combination, which results in 60-hour workweeks, he's also the commander of the 115th Fires Brigade, Wyoming National Guard.

This is a life of constant service to the citizenry, to the state government, to wildlife and to the nation. It helps that his brigade office is across the street from his state office. And that his wife and three kids support his desire to serve the public.

Nesvik decided he wanted to be a game warden when he was 14, and he became a wildlife law enforcement technician in 1995. Quickly rising through the ranks, Nesvik was appointed to his current job last year and is one of only three people to hold the post in the last 40 years. "I am responsible for all of the game wardens, biologists, veterinarians and staff of the wildlife division."

While he once patrolled Wyoming's more remote areas, enforcing fish and game laws on horseback, today Nesvik's service is centered on the state capital of Cheyenne, and dealing with policy and personnel matters. The job is not as romantic as it once was, but is no less important.

But if it weren't for this leadership opportunity, Nesvik would want to work in the field. "That is probably the best job in the world, as far as I'm concerned," he says. "Being out in one of the prettiest states in the nation, with the kind of natural resources we have, with open spaces and wild lands—that's really a lot of fun and where I feel most at home."

The chief's job today is rewarding in a different way. "You can have a lot of influence on making sure that 10 to 30 years down the road, we will still have the same resources available to our kids and grandkids," he notes. "I spend a lot of my time dealing with the biggest and most contentious wildlife issues in the state." Some of these include the pending delisting of endangered species like grizzly bears and wolves, diseases that are communicable from wildlife to cattle, and heading up the bigger law enforcement investigations that sometimes involve commercial operations.

Nesvik finds ways to bring his two worlds together. A few years ago, while deployed in Kuwait, he conducted the Wyoming Hunter Education Course for Soldiers stationed at Camp Virginia who wanted the certification. On the last day of the course, he wore the red shirt and gold badge of a game warden on top of combat trousers and boots to symbolize the importance of the Citizen-Soldier. The mixing of uniforms essentially sums up Nesvik's dedication to serve the public.

"The mission of a fires brigade is to go out and blow things up, while the mission here is to conserve and protect wildlife. So that's a little bit different," he explains. "But our agency mission under game and fish is conserving wildlife while serving people. A large part of the military mission is serving people. So there is commonality in public service." **GX**

MILITARY:

Rank: O-6, colonel

Unit: 115th Fires Brigade

MOS: 13A, field artillery officer

Length of Service: 25 years

PUBLIC SERVICE:

Rank: chief game warden

Total Length of Service: 17 years

Current Unit: Wildlife Division for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department



2

DEPLOYMENTS
TO IRAQ

OVER
700

LAW ENFORCEMENT
CASES

Awards
and
Badges

Combat
Action Badge

Bronze Star Medal

Meritorious Service
Medal with 3 oak
leaf clusters

Iraqi Campaign
medal with two
campaign stars

WYOMING
OUTFITTERS
AND GUIDES
ASSOCIATION
2008 AGENCY
PERSON OF
THE YEAR

2008 WYOMING
GAME WARDEN'S
ASSOCIATION
OFFICER OF
THE YEAR

2007 SHIKAR
SAFARI WILDLIFE
ENFORCEMENT
OFFICER OF
THE YEAR

THEIR COMMITMENT KNOWS NO BOUNDS NEITHER SHOULD OURS

Our heroes in the Guard and Reserve return to the workforce with a strong work ethic, leadership and specialized skills. Consider the talents a member of the Guard or Reserve could bring to your organization. Whether serving our country or supporting those who do....

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Family

EMPOWERING THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT

Resources for Single Parents

Raising a child yourself while also managing finances, attending drill weekends and going on deployments is a tough juggling act. But if you're on your own, you're not alone. Many military-friendly programs offer help.

BY JULIE ZEITLIN

EDUCATION

Tutor.com for the Military
Enjoy free, 24/7, online tutoring and homework assistance for military children grades K-12. Help is available in more than 16 subjects.
📍 Tutor.com/military
☎ (800) 411-1970

Military Child Education Coalition
Discover quality educational opportunities, including programs, events and scholarships in a wide variety of subjects such as space, literature and the arts.
📍 MilitaryChild.org
☎ (254) 953-1923

ThanksUSA
Provides need-based scholarships to military children and spouses for college, technical and vocational schools.
📍 ThanksUSA.org
☎ (877) 849-8727

MONEY

VA Loan Guaranty Program
Through this program, it's possible to buy a home without a down payment. Applicants obtain the loan from a private lender, and the VA stands behind the loan.
📍 Benefits.va.gov/homeloans
☎ (888) 768-2132

Military OneSource
Get sound financial counseling with a professional consultant in your community, in person or by phone.
📍 MilitaryOneSource.mil
☎ (800) 342-9647

Red Cross
Receive funds for military-family emergencies such as food, temporary lodging, medical needs, money to avoid eviction or utility shut-off, and travel expenses to visit an injured loved one.
📍 RedCross.org
☎ (800) 733-2767

CHILDCARE

Operation Purple Camp
Offers children of deployed parents the chance to enjoy a week of summer camp for free. Along with having fun, kids gain tools that help them deal with deployment.
📍 MilitaryFamily.org
☎ (703) 931-6632

Military Kids Connect
Your children can share their ideas and experiences with their peers in this unique, online community of military children ages 6-17. The forums are monitored.
📍 MilitaryKidsConnect.org

NACCRRRA
Childcare needs vary greatly among single-parent Soldiers. This organization provides financial assistance for childcare that suits your unique situation.
📍 NACCRRRA.org
☎ (703) 341-4100

Our Military Kids
Get grants that pay for your children's favorite activities, such as club memberships and athletic programs.
📍 OurMilitaryKids.org
☎ (866) 691-6654

SUPPORT NETWORKS

National Guard Family Program
This organization facilitates communication between Guard families and the Guard, and provides free financial, household, emotional and health support services. The program operates on a state-by-state basis.
📍 JointServicesSupport.org/FPI/Default.aspx
(See website for state-specific phone numbers.)

The Real Warriors Campaign
Engage in the community, learn about religious and military services, develop relationships with other Guard family members, and gain tools for navigating the deployment process.
📍 RealWarriors.net
☎ (866) 966-1020

The Military Family Network
Find support and improve your well-being through connections with organizations in your community that provide excellent service for military families.
📍 eMilitary.org
☎ (412) 531-1970



PHOTO FROM SGT ERIKIA CLAYBORN

Guide to a Happy Homecoming

After a deployment, reaching your “new normal” happens not instantly, but in stages. You and your family will have to negotiate new roles, routines and responsibilities along the way. Here are some tips for everyone.

FOR THE SOLDIER

- ❑ **Take the initiative.** Educating and preparing yourself mentally for the change is the best first step. Ask questions about what to expect, and what resources, both military and civilian, are available.
- ❑ **Be prepared to handle some practical issues.** Communicate about return travel plans with family members, reactivate your cell phone, make any medical or dental appointments, and adjust your health insurance if needed.
- ❑ **Reconnect with your employer.** Meet with your supervisor to learn about any changes in your job description. Be aware of your re-employment rights.
- ❑ **Understand combat stress.** Learn about what it is, what the symptoms are, and what the signs are for needing help.
- ❑ **Cut yourself some slack.** Recognize that it will take time to feel comfortable back in the civilian world. Focus on taking care of yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- ❑ **Accept that things will have changed at home, and be willing to take things slow at first.** The entire family will have grown during the deployment. Give yourself and your family time and patience in settling into a “new normal.”

REUNION: THE FIRST FEW DAYS

The initial reunion can be a mixed bag, emotionally. It's supposed to be joyful, but high hopes and expectations can lead to disappointment. To minimize stress, try to communicate with each other before the return about how the Soldier wants to spend the first days and weeks back. For example, it's common for spouses to want to throw a party or plan a vacation — but, in fact, many Soldiers initially need lots of downtime — not excitement. Discuss openly and try to agree in advance how the family will spend this time.

FOR THE SPOUSE

- ❑ **Take care of basic home repairs before the Soldier's return so there's no to-do list waiting for them.** Fix leaky faucets. Weather-seal doors and windows. Hire someone if necessary. If the Soldier took a phone on the deployment, make sure it's activated before the travel day, so it will work as soon as they're back in the U.S.
- ❑ **Educate yourself about what your spouse may be going through.** Learn about reunion, reintegration and combat stress issues from the Guard as well as articles and books. The Internet has an abundance of helpful websites and resources.
- ❑ **Get plenty of rest prior to the reunion.** It will help you be ready and maintain the right perspective.
- ❑ **Plan ahead for one-on-one time with your Soldier.** Line up someone to watch your children. Reunion as a family is important, but so is time alone as a couple.
- ❑ **Consider your budget and how your Soldier's pay will change upon return.** Some expenses will stop, and others — like gas, auto insurance, cell phone and groceries — may increase.
- ❑ **Focus on the positive, and don't expect everything to happen at once.** Communication and patience are the keys to successful reintegration.

PREPARING THE KIDS

- ❑ **Talk with your children in age-appropriate ways about the upcoming changes.** Encourage them to be involved in the reunion plans. Listen to and acknowledge their fears and concerns.
- ❑ **With infants, go slowly.** Babies may not remember the Soldier. Have the Soldier talk softly and frequently so the baby gets used to their voice. Have the Soldier nearby when the spouse dresses, feeds or plays with the baby, so that the baby gets used to this new adult.
- ❑ **Be sure the Soldier plays with younger kids, toddlers and babies.** The sooner the Soldier can get them to laugh, the sooner they'll be friends.
- ❑ **Decide in advance how many days you want the kids to take off from school.** Check with the school to see if it's an excused absence.
- ❑ **Spend plenty of time together as a couple.** Children are more comfortable with a parent when they know their parents' relationship is strong.

TRY A YELLOW RIBBON EVENT

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program helps National Guard members and their families achieve and maintain well-being throughout the deployment cycle. For more information about the program, turn to p. 46.



ONE TEENAGER'S STORY

Kayleigh Gilbert, a 16-year-old from Anchorage, AK, experienced the deployment-reintegration cycle with her father, Lieutenant Colonel Joel Gilbert of the 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska National Guard. Kayleigh was excited to have her dad back but aware of the emotional complexities of the situation.

“My mom has worked in Family Programs, so she's had lots of experience with this,” Kayleigh says. “She said it would take a while for my dad to catch up on his sleep when he got back, so I knew I'd have to be patient with him.” Another adjustment she had to make was allowing him to take back his parental authority. “I was used to just getting permission from my mom to do things. I had to get used to also asking my dad's permission. That took patience, too.”

Although reintegration was difficult at times, talking about it helped. “I had a lot of support,” Kayleigh recalls. “Sometimes I talked to my mom, but I also had a school counselor who understood what I was going through.” Family Programs was also an enormous asset to her. “There was a program that prepared us for the reintegration. It was really cool because I got to meet a lot of other kids my age who understood what I was going through. It was wonderful for me.”

Teens and Reintegration

The range of emotions they experience when a Soldier returns can lead to significant changes in behavior. Here's how to help them cope.

BY RACHEL GLADSTONE

Reintegration can be the most challenging part of the deployment cycle, because the family dynamic, having already changed once, must shift again to make room for the returning Soldier. Although everyone in the family has to deal with a host of feelings that come with reintegration, it's often teenagers who have the hardest time making sense of what they're feeling and thinking.

The more parents understand what their teen may be going through at this time—and the more understanding they are about it—the more quickly the teen may adjust.

So why does the typical teenager react to reintegration so differently from their parents or younger siblings? Jessica Borelli, assistant professor of psychology at Pomona College in Claremont, CA, and director of Military Spouses Standing Together, says that the return of a Soldier stirs a wide range of emotions that many teens are not yet prepared to process.

“It's normal for people to feel ambivalent toward the Soldier who's returning,” says Borelli. “They might feel anger toward that person for having been gone, but there's also appreciation, love, excitement and happiness there, and the feelings can get all mixed up,” she says. “By and large, adults are better than teenagers at being able to identify and articulate these feelings.”

Also, a teenager's developmental changes occur much more quickly than those of a younger child. “The difference between being 13 and being 14, for instance, is huge,” she explains. “What's important to them now can be different than before their parent deployed, and

the kinds of things they're capable of thinking and feeling are different.”

WHAT TO EXPECT

It's common for teenagers to desire autonomy from their parents, so they may stay away from home more often or otherwise try to shut their parents out. “Seeking independence from the parents is normal and healthy,” Borelli explains. “It's best to let teens handle reintegration the way they're comfortable handling it. If that means leaving the house during family get-togethers, for example, or getting angry and shutting the parent out a little, that's OK. It might take time for the teen to trust the returning parent again, and that's OK, too.”

But sometimes, the teen is not OK. Signs of this may include significant changes in behavior such as altered sleep patterns, under- or overeating, becoming more aggressive verbally or physically, abusing substances, or becoming promiscuous. If parents notice these indicators, they should step in and encourage the teen to talk about their resentments or fears.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Parents should strive to keep the doors of communication open. One way to accomplish this is to create as much family time as possible. Make this welcoming by planning activities that might interest the teenager, like bowling or board games. This helps the teen feel like a part of the unit while lessening the pressure to talk. Remember, it's important to respect teenagers' boundaries but still remain open and available for them.

Make Deployment Easier

Deployment is a challenge. That's why, in 2008, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs created the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. It helps organize weekend events that support National Guard Soldiers and their families throughout the deployment process, from pre-deployment through reintegration. Last year, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program worked with each of the Reserve Components to hold 2,151 events throughout the country, 929 of which were specific to the Army National Guard. Here's why you should participate. **BY STEPHANIE INMAN**



Glenn Welling,
Executive Director,
Yellow Ribbon
Reintegration Program

1 IT'S FREE Many military families have financial limitations. Weekend trips are a luxury some can't afford. Thankfully, attending a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event doesn't cost a cent. The Soldier is placed on orders, and family members are reimbursed for all expenses, including travel and accommodations. Also, events are held in every State and Territory, so participants don't have to travel far.

With the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, the term "family members" doesn't just mean a spouse or children. "Not every National Guard Soldier is married with 2.4 kids," says Glenn Welling, executive director of the Yellow Ribbon Program. "Soldiers can choose who can participate in the Yellow Ribbon events. You can bring your mom, dad, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, brother, sister, et cetera."

2 RELEVANT CONTENT

Every stage of the deployment cycle is unique, so Yellow Ribbon Reintegration events are held at key points throughout, with the information at each event pertinent to that phase. A pre-deployment event will be different from one focused on reintegration. Participants learn skills that will assist them throughout the deployment, such as stress management and effective communication.

Welling stresses that attending an event and absorbing the concepts can help the Soldier and family be more successful in handling the deployment.

"Yes, there are challenges, but that's why we are doing this," he explains. "It's about expectation management and understanding that everyone is going to change. You have to know that change is going to come and what it's going to entail, and understand where the road bumps may occur. Then you are prepared, and it allows for the vast majority of the changes to be positive."

3 HELPFUL RESOURCES

Since the National Guard is a Reserve force, many Soldiers aren't fully aware of the benefits available once they're placed on Active Duty. Yellow Ribbon events educate Soldiers and families on these benefits, which include TRICARE, free childcare and discounted YMCA memberships. The program also provides participants with better knowledge of helpful resources, like ESGR and Heroes to Hired. These two organizations help Soldiers find jobs and educate them about their employee rights.

"We are putting a lot of focus in the employment area," Welling says. "Let's face it—you can't integrate successfully if you don't have a job."

4 EXPERT SPEAKERS

"One thing that can help ensure a successful and engaging event, particularly for family members, is the quality of the presentations," Welling says. "So we went out and recruited 33 professional facilitators—speakers of the highest caliber and quality." The cadre includes experts who can speak on a variety of topics such as family readiness, communication skills and reintegration. This guarantees that the presentations will be not only entertaining but informative.

5 NET-WORKING

When a Soldier deploys, family members can feel isolated because they often don't live near a base. Enduring a deployment is easier with the right support system, which these events help foster.

"When I deployed, my kids were the only ones in their schools who had a deployed parent," says Welling, who serves as a command master chief in the Navy Reserve. "My wife was the only one in our peer group going through that. That story gets told all over the country." Attending a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event allows families to develop relationships with others going through similar experiences.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT STUDENT LOAN

A guide to government-funded options when you absolutely need to borrow

BY JOHANNA ALTLAND, GRANTHAM UNIVERSITY



Starting college is an exciting time. You'll gain new knowledge, new experiences and new ... debt? Maybe. The average total debt for a graduating student last year was nearly \$20,000.

As a Citizen-Soldier, you have several tuition assistance options that can make your education more affordable: the Tuition Assistance program, VA benefits, and grants and scholarships, which do not have to be paid back. But sometimes, these options don't cover enough financial ground, and you need to consider a student loan.

If that's the case, look into lower-interest federal student aid loans. They may be your best option, financially. Here are some good choices.

DIRECT LOANS

There are two types: Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan and Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. (See the chart to learn about their differences.) Both are awarded and funded

through the Department of Education. They typically have significantly lower interest rates than private loans and come with an option to delay payments under certain conditions. Students must be enrolled in college at least half-time and complete entrance counseling.

DIRECT PLUS LOANS

Available for parents who want to take out a loan to help cover the costs of their dependent children's education and for students who are pursuing a graduate or professional degree. This is not a need-based loan; the applicant must have an acceptable credit history to qualify. The interest rate is 7.9 percent, and the loan origination fee is 4 percent. Interest will begin accumulating when the loan is issued, and students must begin monthly payments immediately, unless granted a deferment.

The upside of applying for loans is that by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)—an application that

determines the amount of financial aid you are eligible for—you will also be applying for grants:

PELL GRANT This is available for qualifying undergraduate students. The amount awarded is calculated using a preset formula and information submitted on the FAFSA. Students can receive up to \$5,550. It does not need to be paid back.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN SERVICE GRANT PROGRAM Like the Pell Grant, this grant does not need to be repaid. It is available for students who do not qualify for a Pell Grant and had a parent or guardian pass away as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Students must have been younger than 24 or enrolled in college part time at the time of the death. The amount awarded is equal to the maximum benefit of the Pell Grant, which is \$5,550. The award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

	DIRECT SUBSIDIZED STAFFORD	DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED STAFFORD
Need-Based?	Yes	No
Loan Origination Fee*	1%	1%
Interest Rates*	3.4% undergraduate students; 6.8% graduate students	6.8% undergraduate and graduate students
Repayment Window	10–25 years depending on terms	10–25 years depending on terms
Interest	Government pays interest during school year, for the first six months after you leave school, and when other conditions are met; student pays interest all other times	Student is responsible for all interest accrued from the time the loan is issued until it's paid off

*Rates as of April 13.

For more information on these loans and grants, and to get started on the FAFSA, visit: StudentAid.ed.gov and Fafsa.ed.gov.



\$

RE-ENLISTMENT REWARDS

One bright spot for Soldiers who have to take out student loans is the National Guard's Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP), which can pay up to \$50,000 for eligible Soldiers with a 6- to 8-year re-enlistment.

For SLRP eligibility requirements and details, go to: www.NATIONALGUARD.com/benefits/money-for-college.

For information about the Yellow Ribbon Program, visit YellowRibbon.mil or call (866) 504-7092.



Stay Fit With Your Kids

Making exercise a priority can be challenging because of work, family and Guard responsibilities. But there are activities you can do with your child that don't take much time, can be done almost anywhere, and, best of all, are simple and fun. The benefits for you are numerous. But you'll also be showing your child the importance of avoiding a sedentary lifestyle, and you'll strengthen the bond between you. BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

TAKE A STROLL. Walking is one of the easiest ways to exercise, because you can do it virtually anywhere, any time. Its many benefits include boosting your metabolism, raising your heart rate, and helping prevent osteoporosis by strengthening bones and joints. Plus, you don't have to buy any special equipment—just a pair of decent shoes. If you have an infant, put him in a stroller and take him with you. If your children are older, walk with them to a playmate's house or to the park instead of driving. Even if you have only a few minutes, a brisk walk can do wonders for everyone.

HAVE A BALL. Whether it's a basketball, football, baseball or any ball, play some sports with your child. A game of catch or basketball can work up a sweat and improve your child's hand-eye coordination and athleticism. As an added bonus, playing sports together builds a sense of teamwork between you, which improves communication.

PLAY A GAME. An easy way to be active and have fun with your child is to play tag or hide-and-seek. These games get kids' hearts pumping and give them a chance to burn off excess energy. And since they don't require any equipment, you can head right out the front door for a quick game.

ENJOY NATURE. Use your surroundings and natural environment to entertain your kids while you explore. Taking a hike, walking through a park, visiting a zoo or aquarium, and even touring a historic site are all excellent ways to ensure children get exercise. Just walking through a zoo can burn several hundred calories in as little as two hours. Check your local tourism council for options, and you're bound to find endless possibilities.

HIT THE FLOOR. There are plenty of exercises you can do at home that don't require any equipment. Push-ups, sit-ups, lunges and stretching can all be performed anywhere in your house. Make it a game with your child to see who can do more reps of an exercise. And don't be afraid to pop in your favorite exercise DVD. Whether it's yoga or an aerobics program, children often gravitate toward visually based activities, so they might enjoy tackling the program with you.

GET SOME WHEELS. Hop on a bike or strap on a pair of rollerblades. These two forms of exercise are a great way to burn calories in a short period of time and will allow you and your child to cover a lot more ground than if you were walking or running. Just remember to wear helmets.

**KEEP
KIDS
MOVING**

17%

of Americans
ages 2–19 are
overweight or
obese.

Since 1980,
obesity among
children and
adolescents has
almost tripled.

Obese children
are more likely to
have high blood
pressure, high
cholesterol and
type 2 diabetes —
risk factors for
cardiovascular
disease.

Obese children
are more likely
to become
obese adults
than are
physically fit
kids.

The Centers for
Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
recommends your
child get as much as
60 minutes of
physical exercise
every day.

Statistics from the Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention

Downrange

■ STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE

The Battling Buckeyes

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

Ohio's 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) traces its lineage to the 37th Infantry Division (ID), which was organized in WWI. The 37th ID was nicknamed the "Buckeye" division and was sent to fight the Germans in 1918. The 37th ID saw combat at Meuse-Argonne in France and Ypres in Belgium before the war's end.

The 37th was reactivated on the dawn of WWII and shipped to the Fiji Islands to train. Seeing heavy combat in the Northern Solomons and the Battle of Luzon, the 37th proved to be one of the most successful divisions fighting in the Pacific.

Restructured in 2007 as an infantry brigade combat team, the 37th IBCT carries on the tradition of the 37th ID by the many battle streamers earned with blood and sweat during the 20th century. The 37th IBCT has deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Kosovo. Currently, the 37th is comprised of four battalions from Ohio and two from Michigan. They also have Soldiers from the Washington Army National Guard for this deployment.



Current Operations

Deployed to:
Camp Mike Spann, Afghanistan, and 11 other camps across northern Afghanistan

Mission:
The 37th is a security force assistance brigade to advise, assist and partner with the Afghan National Police (ANP), which is made up of the border police, the uniform police and the civil order police.

HISTORY OF THE INSIGNIA



The 37th Infantry Division became known as the "Buckeye" Division because it was comprised almost exclusively of Ohioans during WWI. The patch was adapted from Ohio's state flag and features a bright red circle on a circular background. The patch has been nicknamed the "fried egg patch" over the years.

Home Base:

The 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Ohio National Guard, is headquartered in Columbus, OH.

7,004 miles | Columbus, OH, to Camp Mike Spann, Afghanistan

Since arriving in Afghanistan in February 2012, the 37th IBCT has reached the following milestones:

175+ | security patrols with the ANP

250+ | hours advising the ANP

1,500+ | miles of high-way and road patrolled

Fighting for Freedom

THE AFGHAN WAY

Brigade Commander Colonel James Perry talks about operating with the Afghan National Police, staying in front of military change and college football rivalries *By Christian Anderson*



“ WE REALLY HAVE A GOOD BLEND, AND I'M VERY PROUD OF THE 37TH BRIGADE MIX OF THE NEW SOLDIER AND THE VETERAN SOLDIER.”
COL James Perry

COLONEL JAMES PERRY

- > Assumed duties as commander of the 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, one of the four major subordinate commands of the 38th "Cyclone" Infantry Division, in August 2009.
- > Commissioned as second lieutenant in 1986 through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the University of Toledo.
- > Holds an associate degree in criminology, and bachelor's and master's degrees in strategic studies.
- > He is a graduate of the Military Police Officer Basic Course, the Armor Officer Advanced Course, the M1 Tank Commanders Course, the Combined Arms Services Staff School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

What is the 37th's mission for this deployment? We're a security force assistance brigade, and our job is to partner with the Afghan National Police [ANP], which is made up of the border police, the uniform police and the civil order police. So, in essence, we are an assist-and-advise team to the three pillars of the ANP.

Are there any challenges, such as language barriers, that make your relationship with the ANP challenging during day-to-day operations? We're fully outfitted with language assistants, so the language barrier is pretty much overcome by that. Our Soldiers really embraced the culture training and basic language skills that we received before deploying. They take the opportunity to interface with their partners ... and understand each other's cultures, so I haven't seen any cultural issues. Actually, I think that because of our understanding and training ahead of time, it's worked out well.

Does the ANP's experience impress you? It's amazing to watch the ANP operate, and again, I say the border police, the uniform police and the civil order police. They're willing. They're skilled. What they lack is just the understanding of a better way to do it, and I think that's what our advisors are there doing. Actually, they're further along than I ever expected them to be.

What are the challenges of commanding a brigade in a combat zone? Well, I've been doing it for 30 years, and the system that the U.S. Army has built is pretty

amazing. They give you the right staff, and as long as everybody has got a single-focused mission like we do here, and as long as you're pushing the right buttons and relying on the good people, the system is designed to work.



Your Soldiers' last deployment was to Iraq and Kuwait in 2008. Are they proud to be deployed again? I think that they think they can make a difference, even if it's only six or nine months' worth of difference. But maybe, just maybe, they made a difference in [someone's] life or, in this case, the national police's ability to provide security for their people. So, yeah, they are proud.

What would a typical day, if there is such a thing, look like for your Soldiers right now? The only thing I can tell you is our mission consumes the Soldiers' almost every waking hour. They are long days—17 or 18 hours a day of work is the norm. And we're traveling across northern Afghanistan, but everybody is working toward the same objective and that is to be able to provide our service to the ANP, and the machine keeps all that going.

Do you feel a lot of pride wearing the 37th's patch in Afghanistan? We're very proud of the 37th Division's heritage, lineage and honors. I'm looking at my brigade's colors now with all of the campaign streamers that that division went through, and I'm very proud to be sitting here. It reminds me that we

are continuing that history. I'll be glad when I can hang that OEF streamer up there as part of that history and lineage.

Is there a rivalry between the Soldiers who root for Ohio State and those who root for Michigan? If you know anything about the Michigan and Ohio State football rivalry, it's a pretty big deal. The Michigan Wolverines won the last one, so they have bragging rights right now. I'll leave you to guess who I root for ... I have to walk that middle.

Has your military education prepared you for this deployment by giving you the tools you need to succeed in Afghanistan? The Army Education System for our NCOs and our officers is top-notch—world-class. I wish I could go back in time and understand how important it was, because every time I was entering those educational institutions, it was just going to prepare me for the job I was about to get, and if I had only known to pay attention to the parts I would actually use, it would have served me better. So, yes, the Army education—I can't say enough about it.

Do you get to interact with the indigenous population at all? When we're out there with the police, and we're always trying to put the police in front. There is interaction while the American Soldier stands there, and becomes friends and comrades with our Afghan National Security Force partners. Giving confidence to the Security Force—the police—in interacting is really our bread and butter, if that makes sense.

With the primary mission of advising and assisting the ANP, the 37th is working hard to ensure it is properly trained to protect the government and citizens of Afghanistan.

What are the differences between the culture in Afghanistan and the culture in the States that challenge you? The Afghan border police have really reached out to us and are beginning to train their female officers with our female trainers. We have some females that are trained in engaging females, but they're trying to get them to be the future that they can be. Maybe one day they can be in charge of commands within the border police. The

ANP seem to be trying to, and I think it starts from the top. They're trying to be an inclusive organization, especially when it comes to female officers.

Do you see a lot of camaraderie in the National Guard, as in more experienced Soldiers helping younger ones become better? We're a good mix. We've got a lot of former Active Duty leaders and NCOs. We've got a lot of Veterans with multiple deployments over the last 10 years. And then we have that influx of new Soldiers. We really have a good blend, and I'm very proud of the 37th Brigade mix of the new Soldier and the Veteran Soldier.

How are you and your Soldiers staying at the front and continuing to make sure that the Guard is an operational force? If you know anything about the Michigan Guard and the Ohio Guard, they're top leaders when it comes to their ability to get out in front of the changes. And they've done a good job of staying ahead—from Basic Training to keeping people in boots with a very low turnover. I'm very proud to belong. **GX**

AWARDS AND BADGES

- 5 Meritorious Service Medals
- 3 Army Commendation Medals
- The Kosovo Campaign Medal
- Parachutist Badge

COMMANDS

- Commanding Officer, 37th Infantry Brigade (Rear)
- Commanding Officer, PTAE-Ohio
- Director of Joint Training and Exercises, JFHQ-Ohio
- Liaison Officer for Multi-national Brigade-East, HQ/NATO, Kosovo
- Operations Officer, Multi-national Brigade-East, Kosovo
- Commanding Officer, 1-107th Armor Battalion
- Logistics Officer, 37th Armored Brigade

INSIDE THE PENTAGON

FIVE FLOORS ABOVE GROUND AND TWO FLOORS BELOW, WITH 17.5 MILES OF CORRIDORS, 131 STAIRWAYS, 19 ESCALATORS AND 4,200 CLOCKS

CONTAINS A SHOPPING MALL, DRY CLEANERS, BOOKSTORE, DRUGSTORE AND FOOD COURT WITH A MCDONALD'S, KFC, TACO BELL, PANDA EXPRESS, DUNKIN' DONUTS AND STARBUCKS

6.5 MILLION SQUARE FEET: TWICE THE SIZE OF THE CHICAGO MERCHANDISE MART (THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMMERCIAL BUILDING) AND THREE TIMES THE FLOOR SPACE OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

23,000 MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL WORK HERE EACH DAY

HOME TO ITS OWN POLICE FORCE AND FIRE DEPARTMENT

200,000 CALLS COME IN OVER 10,000 MILES OF TELEPHONE CABLE WITHIN THE BUILDING

It began as a swamp, was designed over a weekend and is a world all its own. The origin and oddities of the DoD's home office.

BY BRENDAN MCNALLY

Popular movies and TV shows often depict the Pentagon as the "nerve center" of the military, where high-level, special operations are run. But the truth is, most of that pulse-pounding, thriller stuff, when it does happen, originates somewhere else — usually from one of the unified command headquarters overseas. Even so, the Pentagon is always there, embedded deep inside the military world, dictating policy.

Most of what happens within the Pentagon's five rings is administration, oversight, planning and policymaking. It's where the decisions are made about the weapons you use, the training you get, the promotions you earn and the deployments you mobilize for. It's where civilians, such as the secretaries of the Armed Forces, who ultimately call the shots, inform the key military leaders of their missions. And where those leaders, in turn, tell the civilians what they need to get the job done, what works and what doesn't.

And now, it's also the office of General Craig McKinley, National Guard Bureau chief, after that position was elevated to the Joint Chiefs of Staff earlier this year.

How well do you know this sprawling complex, its history and its halls? Read on.

BLUEPRINT FOR A FORTRESS

In the 1930s, there was a particularly nasty piece of swampland across the Potomac from Washington, DC, known as Hell's Bottom. It was a shantytown, scattered with pawnshops and brickyards. A terrible stench came from the dump nearby. For a while, Hell's Bottom had been home to Hoover Field, possibly the most hazardous airport in the country. The government had also used the land to farm marijuana to conduct rope research for the U.S. Navy. Despite its proximity to the nation's capital, no one considered Hell's Bottom prime real estate.

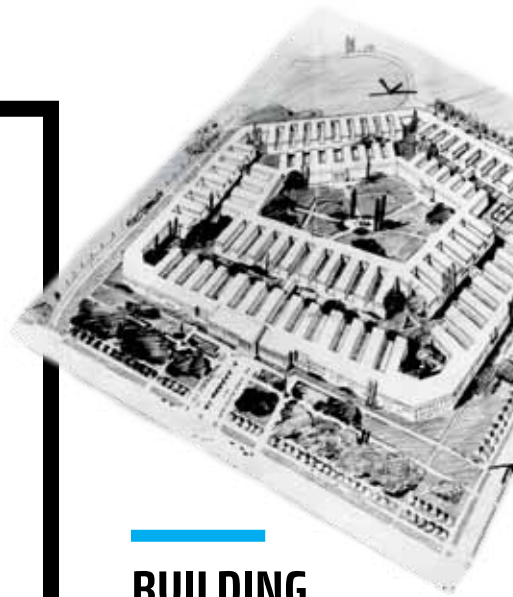
That changed in July 1941. War had been raging overseas for nearly two years, and even though the United States wasn't in the fight yet, that seemed imminent. For more than 20 years, the War Department's offices were spread among nearly two dozen buildings in Washington, Maryland and Virginia. A large new headquarters had just been built in Foggy Bottom, but no sooner had it opened than it was declared inadequate. Brigadier General Brehon Somervell, head of the Army's construction division, told Congress that the military needed 4 million square feet of office space for the new headquarters, to accommodate 40,000 office workers. They would also need several million square feet for corridors, bathrooms and cafeterias, and parking spaces for about 10,000 automobiles. This was enough space to make the proposed structure the largest office building in the world. Since that kind of acreage wasn't available in Washington, DC, Hell's Bottom was picked as the site.

Somervell had five days to present a design to Congress.

He commissioned architect George Edwin Bergstrom on a Friday afternoon and told him to have a design ready by 9:00 Monday morning. Bergstrom and his team knew they wouldn't be designing a tall building. They couldn't block the view of the Capitol from Arlington National Cemetery, and tall buildings required steel, which was in high demand to make weapons at the time.

No one actually knows whose idea it was that the Pentagon should take the shape that it did. But when Bergstrom's design team went to work that weekend, the designs they toyed with all seemed to involve five-sided structures. They considered having spoke-like wings pointing toward the center courtyard-hub. What they ultimately settled on was five concentric rings of offices, separated by 30-foot-wide spaces acting as "light wells" and connected by side-passages. (Those rings are labeled A, the innermost circle, through E, the outermost, except in the basement, which houses rings F and G. The E-ring offices are the only ones with outside views.) Instead of having elevator shafts, the floors would be connected by wide concrete ramps. The office bays would have walls that did not reach the ceiling, to allow natural, free-flowing air ventilation—a design that would be rendered largely unworkable with the advent of air conditioning in the 1960s. Each of the building's five exterior sides would be 92 feet long and 77 feet tall. Everything would be simple and constructed from reinforced concrete, except for the exterior facades, which would be made of Indiana limestone.

Somervell liked Bergstrom's design. And so did Congress, the secretary of war and the president. A month and a half later, on Sept. 11, 1941, ground was broken.



BUILDING THE PENTAGON

The Army officer chosen to manage construction was a colonel named Leslie Groves. Though he knew it would be one of the biggest and most important construction jobs in U.S. history, he wasn't pleased to be assigned it, fearing it would keep him from getting what he really wanted: a combat assignment. To keep Groves motivated, his superiors promised he'd get to fight overseas if he did a good job.

Building the Pentagon was a massive and complicated undertaking, but Groves performed brilliantly, completing the project in only 16 months. During that time, work went on day and night, with as many as 10,000 men working on the building in three shifts. Over 5.5 million cubic yards of earth were moved onto the site, and 680,000 tons of sand were dredged up from the Potomac River bottom to help make 435,000 cubic yards of concrete.

By the time it was completed, Groves had been promoted to brigadier general. But when he asked for his combat command, he was told he couldn't be spared, and that there was a bigger and even more important job he was needed on called the Manhattan Project. Groves agreed to the new job, took the oath, and then learned he was now in charge of building something called the atomic bomb.

FEDERAL CHAIN OF COMMAND

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT

THE PENTAGON

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
(Secretary of Defense)

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
(Secretary of the Army)

THE READINESS CENTER

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
(Guard Chief, Army and Air Directors)

STATE CAPITOL

STATE ADJUTANT GENERAL
(State Headquarters)

ANYTOWN, USA

SOLDIER



The Day Everything Changed

For its first 60 years, the Pentagon was regarded with a certain flippancy, even nicknamed the "five-sided funny farm."

But that ended on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, 60 years to the day after its groundbreaking, when a hijacked American Airlines passenger jet was flown into the building, killing 189 people, including 125 civilian and military personnel in the Pentagon. Ironically, the part of the building that the aircraft slammed into, the Heliport Entrance Facade, was the only part that had been fortified. The Pentagon Reconstruction Program had started three years earlier, and the Heliport Entrance Facade was the first section to be worked on. Normally there would

have been 4,500 people working in that section, but instead there were only 800 inside. Also, even though the impact of the aircraft damaged the building enough to partially collapse it, the walls had recently been reinforced with steel beams and, as a result, held together long enough for hundreds of people to escape.

Reconstruction began almost immediately. Within a year, everything in that section was back up and running, including the addition of a chapel and meditation center honoring the lives of the victims.

During all the wars and conflicts, and the attacks of 9/11, the Pentagon has remained an integral part of the U.S. military. It's home to the headquarters of the Department

of Defense and its civilian chief, the secretary of defense and his organization, the office of the secretary of defense. The civilian secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force also have their offices in the Pentagon, as do the military commanders of the three branches, along with their staffs.

Like a well-oiled engine, the Pentagon continues to operate around the clock, 365 days a year, keeping the American military machine up and running. And like many of the historic buildings and monuments located across the Potomac River in Washington, DC, the Pentagon has become one of our nation's most important and sentimental structures to date, reminding us that our nation is strong and resilient.

SECRET RENDEZVOUS?

At the center of the Pentagon's five-sided, concentric rings is a 5-acre courtyard where people go to get fresh air, relax, read and socialize. At the courtyard's center stands a one-story structure that became an object of mythology during the Cold War, sometimes referred to as "Ground Zero."

People called it that because they suspected the Soviet Union had nuclear missiles permanently aimed at that spot. Apparently the Russians did in fact keep a close eye on it with their spy satellites, and, seeing so many high-level military officers entering and leaving the building, may have surmised it was the entrance to some secret command-and-control bunker.

In reality, it was a hot dog stand.



THE GUARD CHIEF'S NEW SEAT

From the day the Pentagon opened in 1942, the National Guard has had a consistent presence there. However, earlier this year, when National Guard Bureau Chief General Craig R. McKinley was granted a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Guard changed forever.

According to some Guard historians, the recent elevation of McKinley's position to the Joint Chiefs represents one of

the most profound changes in the Guard's status since the establishment of the Militia Act in 1908. But mostly, it reaffirms that the Guard is an equal part of the military and is vital to our nation's existence.

With McKinley at the Pentagon, the National Guard will have a voice at the military's most prominent roundtable on important matters domestic and foreign.



DIXIE THUNDER

With a tradition reaching back more than 200 years, the Soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard have never shied away from sacrifice, whether fighting valiantly in Gettysburg, defeating Santa Anna at Buena Vista, or protecting the defenseless after Katrina.

BY JASON HALL

From the days of the Mississippi Rifle in the 1840s to the age of multimillion-dollar M1 Abrams tanks and Apache helicopters today, the Soldiers of the Mississippi Army National Guard have stood tall

protecting American citizens from enemies foreign and domestic. The state's Soldiers, known as the "Mississippi Rifles," marched into the 21st century with strong ties to their earlier counterparts, who secured that famous title for them on the fields of Buena Vista during the U.S.-Mexican War.

The roots of the Mississippi Guard began with preventing a new republic from splitting away from the United States, only to see its own state leave the Union during the Civil War. With their very own Jefferson Davis leading them as president of the Confederate States of America, the men of Mississippi contributed heavily to the Confederate cause, fighting from Shiloh to



Gettysburg and beyond. Nearly 60 years later, the Mississippi Guard was called on by the president for WWI and, later, WWII.

The Mississippi National Guard has also produced state and national leaders such as G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, whom every Veteran has to thank for the Montgomery GI Bill. In addition to fighting overseas in all modern conflicts, Mississippians have served at home during countless state missions, ranging from civil rights actions in the 1960s to natural disaster responses. While juggling missions to Afghanistan and Iraq, the Mississippi National Guard provided desperately needed supplies, muscle and—most important—hope to its citizens in the devastating wake of Hurricane Katrina. In the face of any enemy—man or nature—the Mississippi Army National Guard will forever persevere and will always stay true to their famous battle cry, "Stand fast!"

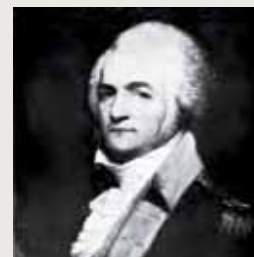
THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD'S PATCH WAS ADOPTED ON AUGUST 30, 1960. THE MAGNOLIA BLOSSOM IS THE STATE FLOWER, AND NEPTUNE'S TRIDENT IS SYMBOLIC OF THE GREAT MISSISSIPPI RIVER—NEPTUNE IS KNOWN IN MYTHOLOGY AS THE "FATHER OF WATERS." THE LIGHT BLUE BACKGROUND IS THE COLOR FOR INFANTRY.



THE UNIVERSITY GRAYS

Founded in 1848, the University of Mississippi—more affectionately known as Ole Miss—temporarily shut its doors in 1861 when 131 of its 135 students enlisted in Company A of the 11th Mississippi Infantry Regiment to fight in the Civil War. Fate did not look kindly on Company A, also known as the "University Grays." On July 3, 1863, they found themselves in the thick of "Pickett's Charge" and penetrated Union lines farther than any other Confederate unit—all the way to Bryan's Barn and the stone wall. This valiant effort incapacitated them, and they sustained the highest casualty rate at Gettysburg: 100 percent, with 111 killed and the rest severely wounded.

HISTORY IN BRIEF



1798

On Sept. 8, the governor of the Territory of Mississippi, Winthrop Sargent, ordered the establishment of a territorial militia. Nine months later, the 1st Mississippi Regiment of Infantry was raised. Its lineage is carried on by today's 155th Infantry Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard. The 155th is the seventh-oldest infantry regiment in the U.S.

1806

The 1st Mississippi Regiment's first call to action was in response to Aaron Burr's attempt to

form his own republic. Burr had gained nationwide notoriety two years earlier, in 1804, when he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. The 1st Regiment pursued him through the Mississippi Territory and captured him on February 19, 1807. He was tried for treason and found not guilty.

1862

On April 6–7, the 6th Mississippi Infantry Regiment fought tenaciously in the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee. It lost 300 men out of its total force of 425. This would be the fourth-highest loss of any Southern regiment in a single battle during the Civil War.

1917

In September, the 1st Mississippi Regiment was reorganized as the 155th Infantry Regiment. During WWI, the 155th deployed

to France as part of the 39th "Delta" Division. In all, Mississippi sent two regiments of infantry, one regiment of field artillery, nine troops of cavalry and one company of engineers.



1940

President Franklin D. Roosevelt enacted the largest federal mobilization of the National Guard in history. When the U.S. joined the war in 1941, the Mississippi National Guard served in both the European and Pacific theaters. The 155th served with distinction in the 31st "Dixie" Division.

1950

During the Korean War, nearly 95 percent of the Mississippi National Guard—over 6,500 Soldiers—was mobilized for the conflict.

1962

President John F. Kennedy ordered the entire Mississippi National Guard for federal service from Sept. 30 to Oct. 9. This call-up was to ensure the safety of African-American students during the race integration of the University of Mississippi.

1990

During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the largest National Guard contingent in the country to mobilize was that of Mississippi. Fifty-seven Mississippi communities were represented in the

6,500 men and women of the 70 units that saw federal activation, with over 1,300 of them deployed to Saudi Arabia.



2005

With more than 3,000 of its members deployed overseas for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, the Mississippi Guard also faced an enemy at home. On Aug. 29, Hurricane Katrina smashed into the Gulf Coast. While fulfilling their overseas mission, the men and women of the Mississippi National Guard also helped their neighbors in the wake of this storm, which was the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA

How the "Mississippi Rifles" filled the gap in the U.S.-Mexican War's bloodiest clash

Date:

Feb. 23, 1847

Conflict:

U.S.-Mexican War

Who:

155th Infantry Regiment, Mexican Army

Where:

Near present-day Coahuila, Mexico

In 1836, Texas declared its independence, but Mexico still viewed it as a rebellious state and warned the United States that any move to annex Texas would be seen as an act of war. However, with President James K. Polk's idea of Manifest Destiny, America's westward expansion was aimed right at Texas.

The Mexican government claimed that the border between Texas and Mexico was the Nueces River, about 150 miles north of the Rio Grande. However, the U.S. believed that the border was the Rio Grande itself. President Polk ordered Major General Zachary Taylor to move his force south, to the banks of the Rio Grande. Taylor ignored demands from the Mexicans to withdraw his men, and on April 25, 1846, 2,000 Mexican cavalrymen attacked a U.S. patrol of 70 men, killing 16 American Soldiers. This became known as the Thornton Affair, named after the American commander of the patrol, Captain Seth Thornton.

On May 11, 1846, President Polk asked Congress for a declaration of war. Two days later, Congress declared war on Mexico.

From September 21–24, 1846, Taylor achieved victory at the Battle of Monterrey, defeating the Mexican army of Pedro de Ampudia. After the battle, most of Taylor's men were sent to the Gulf of Mexico to join in General Winfield Scott's thrust against Mexico City. This would effectively leave Taylor without a command. Sensing that President Polk was attempting to deprive him of any further

glory that would help him become president, Taylor ignored President Polk's order to stay in Monterrey and pushed deeper into Mexico. Taylor had General John Wool's division meet him in Saltillo, bringing Taylor's force to a total of approximately 11,000.

Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had returned home from exile in the summer of 1846 and quickly regained power. Upon the fall of Monterrey, Santa Anna had organized an army numbering nearly 20,000. When Scott instructed Taylor to transfer the bulk of his force to the Gulf, Santa Anna saw an opportunity and moved his army northward in an attempt to push Taylor out of Mexico. With the knowledge of Santa Anna's movements, Taylor redeployed his men about 19 miles south to Agua Nueva. Major Ben McCulloch's Texas Rangers were ordered to scout out the location of the approaching Mexican army. They found Santa Anna 60 miles to the south, and on Feb. 21, that caused Taylor to withdraw his force to a mountain pass 12 miles north of Agua Nueva known as Buena Vista. Santa Anna arrived at Agua Nueva with just over half of his original 20,000 men; the rest either had fallen out of ranks due to exhaustion or had outright deserted. On the morning of Feb. 23, Taylor's 4,750 men faced a Mexican force twice their size, and so began the bloodiest battle of the U.S.-Mexican War. Personally escorting Taylor into battle were the Mississippi Rifles, under the command of Colonel Jefferson Davis.

BATTLE BY THE NUMBERS

15,000+ 650

Soldiers fighting on both sides during the peak of the battle.

American casualties at Buena Vista—a staggering one-third of the 1,773 American casualties during the entire U.S.-Mexican War.

3,400+

Mexican casualties over the same 24-hour period.



MAJOR GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR

Born in 1784 in Barboursville, VA, Zachary Taylor had an illustrious 40-year military career. Serving in the War of 1812 and several conflicts with Native American tribes, Taylor was nicknamed "Old Rough and Ready." With the outbreak of the U.S.-Mexican War in 1846, Taylor's forces moved south and defeated larger Mexican forces at the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma and Buena Vista. Two years later, Taylor was elected the 12th president of the United States, but he died of natural causes just 16 months into his term.



GENERAL ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

Born in 1794 in Xalapa, Mexico, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna was elected president of Mexico in 1833. After Texas declared independence, Santa Anna marched his army to the Alamo on March 6, 1836, and killed its defenders. In retaliation, Sam Houston's ragtag army captured Santa Anna, and he was exiled to Cuba. He later returned from exile, was elected president of Mexico and invaded Texas. After losing the U.S.-Mexican War, he was again exiled to Cuba, but was eventually allowed back into Mexico. He died in Mexico City on June 21, 1876.

Decisive Moments at Buena Vista

➔ In the morning, Santa Anna ordered an all-out general assault on the American force. By midday, the Americans' main line had broken. Taylor quickly ordered forward his only reserves, the 1st Mississippi Infantry. As the "Mississippi Rifles" smashed into the Mexican flank, Jefferson Davis was wounded but continued to fight.

➔ Thanks to Davis' Mississippians, General John Wool was able to rally his regiments that had

been broken from the earlier Mexican attack. Utilizing the walls of a hacienda, and supported by an artillery battery and two regiments of dragoons, Wool was able to create a defensive position.

➔ The 3rd Indiana Infantry Regiment joined the "Mississippi Rifles" and formed an inverted V just in time to receive the next wave of Mexican attackers. Shouting "Stand fast, Mississippians!" Davis and his men held their ground

and pinned down 2,000 enemy troops.

➔ As Santa Anna was launching yet another frontal attack, Taylor ordered his men to counterattack. The audacity of the American charge caused Santa Anna's attack to falter. The coming of darkness, and a steady rainfall, brought the battle to a conclusion. The next day, Santa Anna claimed victory and then retreated, giving Taylor his greatest victory.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Major General Zachary Taylor found Jefferson Davis, his son-in-law, who had been removed from the field to tend to his wound. In recognition of Davis' courage and tenacity while in command of his "Mississippi Rifles," Taylor is reputed to have told him, "My daughter, sir, was a better judge of men than I was."

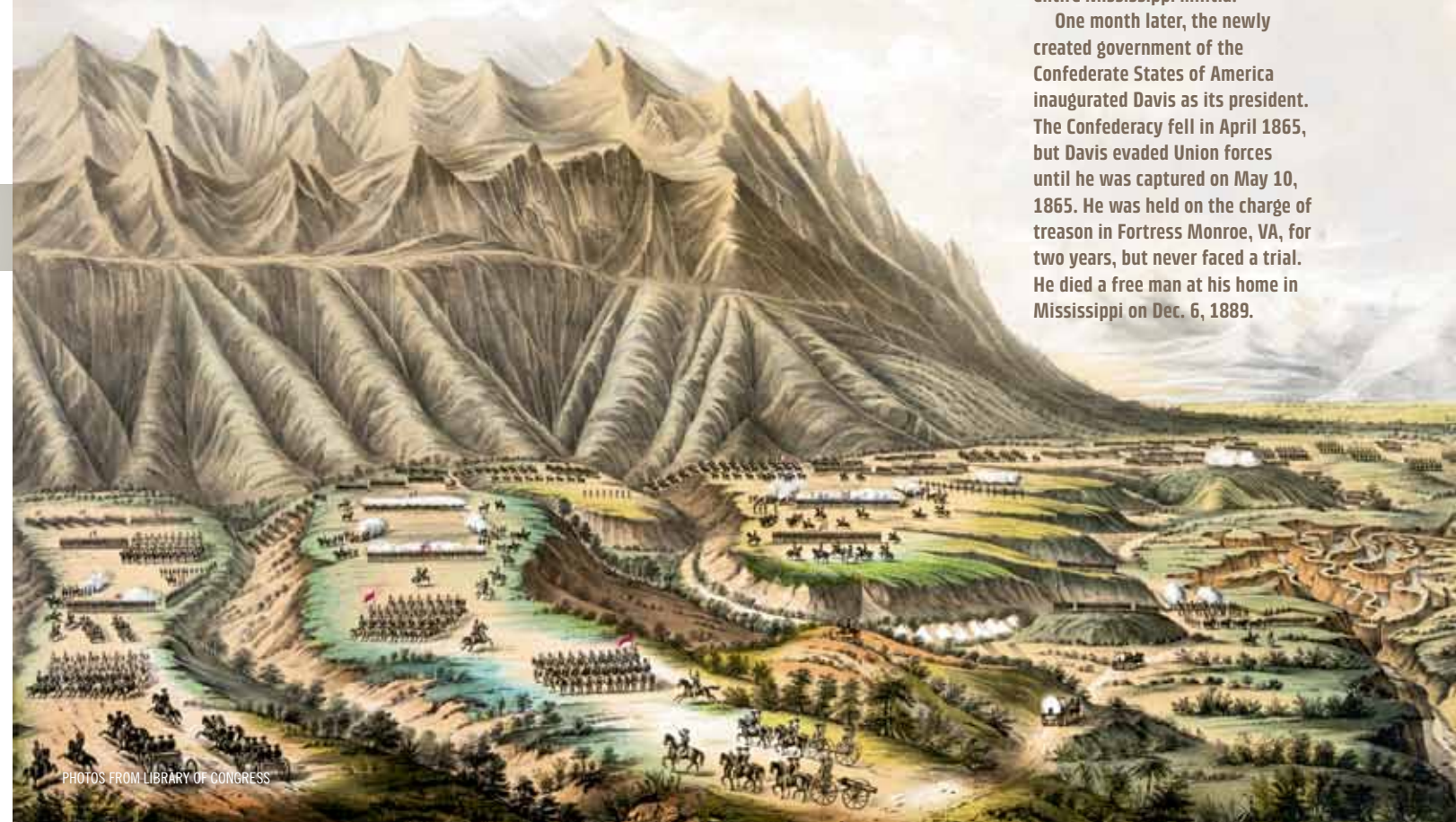
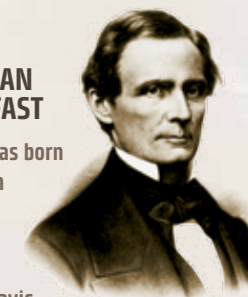
JEFFERSON DAVIS: THE MAN WHO STOOD FAST

Jefferson Davis was born in Fairview, KY, on June 3, 1808. His family moved to Mississippi when he was 4. Davis attended West Point, graduated in June 1828 and fought in the Black Hawk War of 1832. Davis' colonel, future president Zachary Taylor, was so impressed with Davis that he allowed him to marry his daughter, Sarah Taylor. She died of malaria three months later.

Davis was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1845 but resigned in 1846 to fight in the U.S.-Mexican War. Davis was made colonel of the 1st Mississippi Infantry Regiment, aka the "Mississippi Rifles."

Davis returned to Mississippi a war hero and was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1847. In January 1861, when Mississippi seceded from the Union, Davis was appointed major general in command of the entire Mississippi militia.

One month later, the newly created government of the Confederate States of America inaugurated Davis as its president. The Confederacy fell in April 1865, but Davis evaded Union forces until he was captured on May 10, 1865. He was held on the charge of treason in Fortress Monroe, VA, for two years, but never faced a trial. He died a free man at his home in Mississippi on Dec. 6, 1889.



THE MISSISSIPPI RIFLE

Officially known as the Model 1841 Rifled Musket, the "Mississippi Rifle" marked a turning point in U.S. military weaponry as the first government-issued rifled musket. Previous smoothbore muskets had an effective range of 50 yards; the range of rifled muskets exceeded 300. In the hands of a good marksman, the new rifled musket could reach targets of approximately 1,000 yards.

In addition to the rifling, the Model 1841 was also the first standard U.S. military long arm to have the new percussion lock system, an ignition system that replaced flintlock and eventually paved the way for self-contained cartridges. The 1st Mississippi Infantry Regiment was the only unit that carried the new Model 1841 in the entire American Army during the U.S.-Mexican War; hence it was nicknamed the "Mississippi Rifle."

'MR. VETERAN' AND THE GI BILL

GILLESPIE V. "SONNY" MONTGOMERY, AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS "MR. VETERAN," was born in Meridian, MS, on August 5, 1920. During WWII, he served in the 12th Armored Division as a lieutenant.

At the conclusion of the war, Montgomery returned home and joined the Mississippi National Guard. As a member of the 31st "Dixie" Division, he was mobilized for Active Duty during the Korean War. Once his Active service ended in 1952, he went on to serve for 10 years in the Mississippi state legislature. He remained in the Guard, and in 1962 helped write a new chapter in American history when he commanded a National Guard detachment given the task of ensuring the safety of Dr. Martin Luther King's "Freedom Ride" to Jackson, MS.

In 1966, Montgomery was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Over the next 30 years, his priority was always the plight of military service members, especially that of Veterans.

Undoubtedly, the most important piece of legislation he ever authored is the one that bears his name, the Montgomery GI Bill, which finally occurred in 1984. The main benefit gained by Veterans from this bill was new funding for education. Montgomery believed that the combination of previous military service and a college degree would make Veterans valuable assets for employers.

On November 10, 2005, six months before his death, Montgomery received our nation's highest civilian award when President George W. Bush presented him with the Medal of Freedom. Montgomery died on May 12, 2006, and was buried in Meridian.



MAJOR STATE UNITS



155th HEAVY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

Comprised of six subordinate units, the 155th is the largest unit in the Mississippi Army National Guard.



155th INFANTRY REGIMENT

As part of the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, this regiment gives the brigade its name. Tracing its lineage all the way to the first militia regiment of Mississippi, the 155th is the oldest unit currently in the Mississippi National Guard.



185th AVIATION BRIGADE

The 1/185th Aviation out of Tupelo and Jackson flies the UH-60 Black Hawk; Company B, 1/111th Aviation, from Meridian flies the CH-47 Chinook; Company C, 1/114th Aviation, from Jackson and 1/104th Cavalry from Tupelo fly the AH-64 Apache.



168th ENGINEER BRIGADE

A combat engineer brigade headquartered in Vicksburg, the 168th has two subordinate units, the 223rd and 890th Engineer Battalions. As of this writing, the 168th was deployed to Afghanistan.

19

THE 155TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM IS ONE OF 19 GUARD UNITS DISPLAYING BATTLE STREAMERS FROM THE WAR OF 1812, AND IS THE ONLY UNIT WEST OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS WITH THESE STREAMERS.



47th CIVIL SUPPORT TEAM

THE NATIONAL GUARD'S CIVIL SUPPORT TEAMS (CSTs) were born out of the national security needs of post-9/11 America. These full-time Guard units are unique in that they are trained, equipped and fully funded by the federal government, but remain under the control of each individual governor as a state asset.

Designed to rapidly deploy in case of emergency, the teams will act as the first military responders to the suspected site of a weapons of mass destruction attack. In addition, the units provide critical onsite

technical advice to commanders on the ground at an incident. Supplied with specially made multimillion-dollar equipment, team members identify suspicious agents and substances, assess consequences of civilian exposure to such substances, and develop a comprehensive response plan.

The Mississippi National Guard's 47th CST applied its skills after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010. Working with Task Force Vigilant Horizon, the Guard's designated

task force to deal with the spill, the 47th played a major role in supporting operations throughout the three-month-long disaster.

The 47th's duties included scouring the beaches, waters and air to determine what effects the spill was having on the environment and what risk to civilians the accident may have produced. This mission allowed team members to provide valuable service during the cleanup process and conduct real-world training for potential WMD attacks.

The 47th CST was part of the 1,600-strong Guard presence in the Gulf of Mexico supporting recovery efforts for Operation Deepwater Horizon. The 47th remained on duty for several months, until the water and air quality around the Gulf improved enough that the situation was deemed no longer a threat to people's physical health.



IN HIS NATIONAL GUARD LIFE, Sergeant Robert S. Pugh, known as Shane, was a medic in Company A, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, Mississippi Army National Guard. While the unit was serving in Iraq, on March 2, 2005, an

improvised explosive device (IED) detonated near the vehicle carrying Pugh and Sergeant Ellis Martin. Both Pugh and Martin were seriously injured in the blast. With a complete disregard for his own wounds, which he must have realized were mortal, Pugh began instructing other Soldiers on how to tend to Martin, who had shrapnel lodged in his stomach that was causing massive bleeding. "Though he was injured himself, another Soldier lay wounded next to him. Shane

directed a group of primarily engineers on what to do to stop that Soldier's bleeding enough to where he could be stabilized," stated Major General Harold Cross, former adjutant general of the Mississippi National Guard.

Pugh died that day in Iraq, helping to save the life of his fellow Mississippian. After a lengthy recovery, in June 2005, Martin returned home to his family, thanks to the selfless sacrifice of Pugh.

Pugh was posthumously awarded the Silver Star medal, as well as the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Mississippi Medal of Valor. "Shane Pugh deserves this award so much because he was on the battlefield as he lay mortally wounded, under fire, and helped another Soldier keep his life. Because of his actions, another Soldier lived to come back to this great country and enjoy the freedoms of America," said Cross. To ensure that Pugh's memory is not forgotten, the National Guard Readiness Center in Morton, MS, was renamed in his honor.

BEHIND THE BLUES

YOUR UNIFORM CONTAINS DETAILS THAT ARE RICH IN MEANING AND REFLECTIVE OF YOUR HONOR. FROM CAP TO "CORFAM," HERE'S A LITTLE HISTORY AND A FEW FACTS YOU MAY NOT KNOW.

THE WORD "UNIFORM" is derived from the Latin words "unus" (one) and "forma" (form). In addition to its original purpose of distinguishing friend from foe, the uniform is considered by many a badge of honor and has been a means of improving Soldier morale and esprit de corps. It's more than just a piece of clothing; it's what defines the Soldier and distinguishes their branch of service.

DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, the British Army of King George III turned out in red. George Washington chose blue for his Continental Army uniform in 1779. By 1832, sky blue pants were issued, as distinguished from the darker blue of the existing coat. This began the tradition of contrasting the colors of the coat and pants. Since then, blue has been the primary color of the Army Service Uniform.

AT ONE TIME, there were three different versions of the dress uniform, but now we have returned to just one. The current version was adopted as the official uniform on June 14, 2008, replacing the green Army Class A Uniform. It is authorized for wear all year long.

FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS, Soldiers have earned the honor of wearing the Army Service Uniform established by George Washington. And no matter what changes occur in the next 200, the uniform will continue to represent the values and courage of all American Soldiers.

SERVICE CAP

The earliest appearance of the service cap in the U.S. Army was in 1902, in dark blue. In 1928, the current version was developed. Soldiers often refer to it as "the bus driver cap." Only NCOs and commissioned officers wear it. The NCO version has a golden stripe on top of the cap band and the insignia within a metal circle, while the warrant and company-grade officers have a cap band with the branch-of-service color between two golden stripes and a larger insignia without the metal circle. Field-grade officers have oak leaf motifs on the visor. General officers' caps are similar, but with a cap band of oak leaf motifs. Soldiers sometimes refer to these motifs as "scrambled eggs."

SHOULDER STRAPS

Officers display their rank and branch on the shoulder strap, whereas enlisted Soldiers use this space to display their Distinctive Unit Insignia.

BRANCH INSIGNIA

Branch insignia refers to one of several military symbols that are worn on the Army Service Uniform to represent membership in a particular area of expertise. Army branch insignia is separate from Army qualification badges in that the latter require completion of a training course or school, whereas branch insignia is issued to Soldiers when they are assigned to a particular area or unit.

REGIMENTAL DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA (RDI)

This represents the Soldier's assigned branch. Only Soldiers who are trained in their assigned job are allowed to wear it.

PANT STRIPES

Officers and Soldiers in the grade of corporal and above will wear a gold braid on their slacks to indicate leadership roles.

LOW QUARTER OXFORD SHOES

Soldiers can wear shoes made of leather, poromeric or patent leather. Poromeric shoes are easier to maintain than the traditional leather. Soldiers refer to these shoes as "corfams," after the material developed by DuPont. Female officers may wear black service pumps.

SERVICE STRIPES

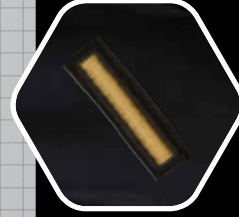
Worn only by NCOs. One Service Stripe is authorized for each three years of honorable Active service an NCO has with the Army National Guard. There is no limit to the number of stripes worn, but Service Stripes must not cover the chevrons.

OVERSEAS SERVICE BAR

Worn on the sleeve. One Overseas Service Bar is presented for every six months overseas in a combat zone.

SERVICE RIBBONS AND BADGES

The rack of awards and honors represents personal accomplishments as well as unit achievements (since wearing one's actual medals can be impractical). The array is often called the "fruit salad," and there is a specific order for the placement.





Soldiers from South Carolina's 4th Battalion, 118th Regiment, run through an IED simulation at Camp Shelby, MS, as it prepares for a deployment to Kuwait.

FIRE UP

Today's Guard units must be able to adapt quickly to mission changes because of the ever-evolving needs overseas. Exhibit A: South Carolina's 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry Regiment, whose Soldiers couldn't be more flexible — or focused.

BY MARK SHIMABUKURO AND LIESL MARELLI

At Gunnery Range 45 at Camp Shelby, MS, the uparmored Humvees carrying the crews of South Carolina's 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry Regiment, are rumbling out two at a time. During this exercise phase, called Table 3, the Soldiers of C Company are broken down into 16 three-person crews, consisting of a driver, a truck commander (TC) and a gunner. Each crew, accompanied by a trainer mentor, is identifying and firing on targets up to 1,000 meters away. It's only mid-morning on this overcast Wednesday in February, but the Soldiers have already been on the range for hours.

“Truck, 10 o’clock, 500 meters!” shouts one TC. The driver acknowledges, and the gunner aims.

“On the way!” the gunner says. The sounds of the M240 Bravo machine gun (and, later, the .50 cal M2, aka “Ma Deuce”) pierce the air and reverberate in the chest.

Among each three-member crew, precision is paramount. They must conduct checks to prevent weapons systems malfunctions, distinguish hostile trucks from friendly ones, make sure their cross talk is clear and, ultimately, put lead on target. During this phase, the evaluators in each Humvee give instructions for adjustments. “Keep the gun up and downrange” ... “Give me at least 15 to 20 rounds” ... “Make sure you aim at the base of the target” ... And, referring to the fire, “Once you hit [the target], start ‘walking it up.’”

For the fighters of C Company, adjusting fire is by now a way of life—and virtually a reflex. “It’s second nature,” says Specialist Drew Stallard. The 4-118th, attached to the New York-based 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team that was preparing for a spring deployment under Operation Enduring Freedom, has seen its mission change several times since 2010—twice in the past year. On more than one occasion, it appeared as if it wouldn’t deploy at all. But despite all the shifts in orders and a drawn-out mobilization, the Soldiers have moved past any initial frustrations, kept their focus on the cause and placed the mission first.

As service members everywhere know, change is a given from the moment you first put on a uniform, and “adapt and overcome” isn’t some platitude but a constant reality. But few Guard units experience the kind of adjustments that the 4-118th has faced. A closer look at C Company reveals the degree of dedication, Soldier by Soldier, that’s required in a modern-day deployment—to the mission and to each other. During a time of ever-changing conditions and needs in Asia and the Middle East, the 4-118th serves as an example of today’s National Guard at its strongest and most flexible.

“I think with any mission or any step in life, no matter where you are going, no matter what gets thrown at you, you need to be able to stop, analyze the situation, see how you can make it better, and go with it because if you get stuck in the mud, you aren’t going to help anyone. You’re not going to help your teammates or yourself,” says Private First Class Kate McGrath, one of four women embedded with the unit as part of a Female Engagement Team (FET) that will interact with local women and children.

“It’s human nature for people to be resistant to change,” says Captain Gene Hindman, the company commander. But “one thing that is fantastic about the military is it teaches you—based on your training, based on your leadership, based on the systems that have been put in place—that you have the tools to adapt.

“My Soldiers are adapting,” he adds. “They are resilient.” And they’ve been proving that for a while.



Soldiers of the 4-118th know that focus is critical, whether they’re identifying targets downrange or looking at the big picture of where their unit fits into the larger mission.

SINGULAR MINDSET

If the original orders for the 4-118th had stayed the same, Hindman wouldn’t be having his troops drill on Range 45 this week. He’d be leading them in a combat zone near the eastern border of Afghanistan. They prepared for that mission last fall in the Mojave Desert at the National Training Center (as chronicled in *GX* 8.4). But after returning from California, the news came that they had been “off-ramped”—the mission canceled completely. When the 4-118th first learned it wasn’t going, it seemed almost unimaginable to have worked so hard only to be told to stand down at that late stage. “Everyone’s hearts dropped,” McGrath says. “We thought, ‘What are we doing now?’” McGrath herself had endured a rigorous selection process to make it onto South Carolina’s first FET in history. More than 300 women applied for it; 30

were selected, but the numbers were reduced during mobilization.

Once Soldiers began adapting to that change, the unit received a new set of orders: Kuwait, deploying in part as a Mobile Response Force (MRF) and in a support role for camp command cells, which traditionally isn’t handled by infantry. The “murf” would serve as a strategically pre-positioned element that may provide neighboring countries support ranging from village stability to humanitarian relief and training assistance to combined direct action, according to an operations NCO with the special operations command. Just weeks before the unit was to mobilize to Camp Shelby, the unit was nearly off-ramped again. But ultimately, the mission remained intact.

The status of the 4-118th was part of a continually shifting picture for the 27th Infantry Combat Brigade, whose commander, Colonel Geoffrey

Slack, had to implement the plans that Army commanders formulated based on changing conditions on the ground. “I’ve never seen anything like it,” he says of the number of mission changes. The brigade, consisting of some 3,500 Soldiers who were deploying in three countries—Afghanistan, Kuwait and Bahrain—now encompasses seven other states in addition to New York and South Carolina: Kansas, Illinois, California, Florida, Wisconsin, Alabama and Michigan. Once deployed, each unit would come under the authority of the commanders in those regions.

The changes required quick adjustments for the First Army Division East trainers at Camp Shelby as well. They continually adapt their plans to ensure that all units, despite any shift, remain fully prepared to meet all contingencies across a full spectrum of operations. (See accompanying story on page 71.)



I THINK WITH ANY MISSION OR ANY STEP IN LIFE, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE GOING, NO MATTER WHAT GETS THROWN AT YOU, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO STOP, ANALYZE THE SITUATION, SEE HOW YOU CAN MAKE IT BETTER, AND GO WITH IT BECAUSE IF YOU GET STUCK IN THE MUD, YOU AREN’T GOING TO HELP ANYONE.”

PFC Kate McGrath
(below)





For Charlie Company, 4-118th, nicknamed the “Phantoms,” and every other unit in the brigade, a typical deployment would be stressful enough. Civilian careers get put on hold, educational plans are postponed, families face upheaval. But additional mission changes produce an even greater ripple effect in Soldiers’ professional and personal lives. Sergeant First Class Travis Rogers points out that several members of the company have babies, and some are coping with illnesses in the family or other hardships. But ultimately, Rogers says, they have to put those concerns to the side and adopt one mindset, because of the significance of the task at hand. “There’s the personal, and there’s what’s important,” he says.

First Lieutenant Chris Murray had to reschedule his wedding—twice—and he and his fiancée have had to keep their options open on where they’ll live, since his fiancée might relocate while he’s deployed. “We war-gamed our different possibilities,” he says. “We sat down and talked about different cities and places where we’d like to live. I said, ‘I’ll be there as soon as I can when I get back.’”

The wedding is now scheduled—penciled in—for April 2013 at the Citadel in Charleston, SC, Murray’s alma mater.

The way Soldiers handle adjustments makes a huge difference in how families will react, so staying positive is a must, Murray says. Sometimes, though, deciding how or when to tell family news presents challenges.



I THINK THE IMPORTANT THING FROM THIS WHOLE EXPERIENCE AND SHIFT IN MISSION IS THE FACT THAT IT HAS ONLY SERVED TO ENHANCE THE UNIT COHESION, BECAUSE THE DIFFICULTIES IN HAVING A CHANGE OF MISSION AND THE UNKNOWN HELP US REINFORCE OUR ‘TRIBE’ AND FAMILY MENTALITY.”

SPC Nathan Otto

When McGrath found out the Afghanistan mission was off, she was conflicted about what to do. She eventually decided it would be best to be patient and not to inform her parents immediately. “I just waited to see if something else was going to happen so I didn’t have to put them through that again,” she says. “Luckily, Kuwait came around.”

ONE BIG FAMILY

Thursday is another long day at Range 45. For this phase, spread over three days, the unit has been awakening before dawn and doesn’t finish until close to or after midnight. Like other units in the brigade, the 4-118th must complete an extensive list of required training tasks, from weapons to vehicle rollover egress trainer to counter-IED scenarios. All training consists of lectures followed by hands-on training.

For the gunnery, the 4-118th has been following the trainers’ “crawl-walk-run” progression. On Tuesday, C Company went through the exercise without live fire. Wednesday, it drilled with live fire, and on this day, each crew is being tested in a daytime and nighttime qualification session.

When they’re not prepping to go out, maintaining the equipment or reviewing their performance, the Soldiers spend downtime in different ways. Some catch a nap on the ground. Some hang out by the ammo shack, motor pool area or vehicle staging area. Some even test one another with questions. “What is the maximum effective range of a 249?” Specialist Robert Meyer III, a gunner in Murray’s truck, was asked by his peers.

“It keeps your mind sharp even when you’re tired, which we have been,” Murray says of the quizzing. At breakfast, they say, they worked on speaking commands, responding to them and using the proper terminology.

But right now, Murray needs to take his mind off things. So he props his iPhone on the front of his Humvee. Crew driver and Specialist Daniel Trimnal takes out some



Camaraderie is everything, so whether the troops are drilling or not, they make sure they’re in tune with one another. Left, SGT Dustin Hooks strums away some downtime. Above, from left, PFC Jacob Edwards, SGT Jeremy Doll, SGT Benjamin Stubbs and SPC Robert Meyer III (also at right) enjoy a break.

travel-size speakers, and, joined by Meyer, they all turn on a song and do the “Bernie dance,” mimicking the dead character from the 1989 hit movie *Weekend at Bernie’s*.

If change is a constant for this unit, so is laughter. Whether it’s joking about PT belts, life in the barracks, how to indoctrinate newcomers, or a Soldier’s soft spot for Taylor Swift songs, the troops know how to keep the mood light. But when a task needs to be completed, they’re all business. The Bernie dance ends when a combat trainer indicates that Murray’s team is up. The crewmembers don their gear, load into their Humvee and drive into the dark.

The character and chemistry of C Company would be evident to any observer. So would the unique individual personalities that make the unit what it is. There’s Trimnal, a computer whiz who could probably fight cyberterrorism from his laptop in his spare time; Specialist Alex Kim, a Citadel cadet who worked for a period as a firefighter and who chose infantry simply for the challenge of it; Sergeant Dean Algoood, a cut-up whose jokes cannot be printed in this publication but whose presence would be irreplaceable in any outfit; First Sergeant Eddie Guest, whose toughness rubs off on every Soldier; First Lieutenant Jack Larsen, the executive officer, who is Ranger qualified and as unflappable as they



THE HEROES BEHIND THE HEROES

Like the 4-118th, the Soldiers of the 170th Maintenance Company of Kansas recently joined the mission that was deploying to Kuwait as part of the 27th Brigade for Operation Enduring Freedom. And like their South Carolina peers, they're doing what's needed: stepping up and dialing in. But they are quick to shine a light on the people who make this all possible: their families.

Staff Sergeant Troy Rall, a utilities equipment repairman who works full time as a schoolteacher, credits his wife and children for making the transition seamless. "My family has been wonderful through the two deployments, and this is the third one. You talk about heroes," he says. "They are incredible."

Specialist Amanda McCauley-Davidson, a college student studying pre-med biology and physics, is ready for her second deployment — at Camp Shelby, she earned special praise from her commander for taking charge during a chaotic counter-IED exercise — though she does already miss her family. But her mom is behind her all the way. "[My mom is] my best friend and my biggest fan," she says. "She knows I'm doing good things."

For a young, single parent, a deployment comes with a heavy cost. Specialist Jessica Snodgrass (right), a motor transport operator, has a 5-year-old son who is having a hard time understanding why she isn't home. "The first week I was gone, I'd tell him I love him or miss him and he'd put the phone down," she says. But she's comforted by the fact that he's in good hands with her parents, who are caring for him. Snodgrass also draws strength from single parents in other units who are making deployment work. "If they can do it, I can do it," she says.

— Liesl Marelli



come; and McGrath, who at 5-foot-10 could stand shoulder to shoulder with most of the men and, in the words of Murray, "can out-ruck some of my Soldiers." And the standouts go on and on.

They come from all walks of life—they're project managers, analysts, college students, truck drivers—and they are all bound to one another in a way that only Soldiers can truly understand. Time and again, the Soldiers of C Company mention the same word, echoed by McGrath. "It really is a brotherhood," she says. And the mission changes only strengthened that.

"I think the important thing from this whole experience and shift in mission is the fact that it has only served to enhance the unit cohesion, because the difficulties in having a change of mission and the unknowns helps us reinforce our 'tribe' and family mentality," says Specialist Nathan Otto, yet another Citadel alum who serves as the company commander's driver and radio telephone oper-

ator. "Everyone was experiencing the same hardships—whether it be with their immediate family, kids, parents, work situations. So it was a good opportunity for us to really bond as we adjusted fire."

Building that sense of family is no accident.

SETTING THE TONE

Getting an entire unit to adapt requires effective leadership at every level. Brigade commander Slack uses "tribe" to emphasize that degree of closeness that's necessary within a unit—and even the 27th Brigade as a whole—and that message is deeply ingrained in the 4-118th. He also fully understands the level of commitment involved. As the commander of the 69th Infantry Battalion in New York who responded to Ground Zero on 9/11 and spent the next 264 days there, Slack knows all about mission changes and what they do to Soldiers' lives.

"It's never lost on me, because I'm a lifetime National [Guard member], how much sacrifice

the extended Soldier family, household by household, across all these states, commits to in order to be able to stand on a deployment," he says. Despite all the adjustments, he says the 4-118th Soldiers are now "as thick as thieves" with the rest of the brigade.

Hindman, the company commander, uses the word "tribe" as well, and has made sure that concept is embraced throughout the company, from his XO Larsen to the other lieutenants, to the NCOs. To Hindman, there's no doubt that he has an immediate family of 155 Soldiers. And they're all in it together, come what may.

Larsen says it also helped to just remind Soldiers why they joined the Guard in the first place. Murray says he tried to keep everyone motivated by stressing that Soldiers would learn from the experience, no matter what happened. "We took it as a 'regardless of whether we go here, somewhere else or nowhere at all, it's a good tool,'" he says.

Larsen adds that the work of the NCOs has been critical to the unit's adjustment, saying



they've set up the leadership for success. Rogers—the platoon sergeant who's jokingly known as Trimnal's "dad," in part because they share a physical resemblance and some mannerisms—says it's important for him and his peers to deal one-on-one with Soldiers to keep them focused and make sure they understand there's a job to do, whether it's leading or supporting. "Everyone can't be the tip of the spear," he says. "Everyone is equally important, even if it's not as glamorous."

HIGH GRADES

As the night turns colder, many members of the unit remain at the range, finishing up their qualification tests. Larsen, having already completed his, returns to the command post to work on scheduling for the next round of training. As he works, he takes calls on his cell phone about company matters. The ringtone is the theme music from the TV show "The Unit."

The scoring for tonight's tests is based on five criteria, each worth 100 points. Each crew gets two sets of scores, one for day, one for night: 500 is the highest score possible per session, 1,000 overall. A little after 10 p.m., all the results are reported as final, and a sergeant at the CP calls in to Camp Shelby administrators: 16 out of 16 crews qualified, 48 Soldiers

1LT Chris Murray (right, with 2LT Mark Smith, left, and SPC Daniel Trimnal) says the deployment offers a learning experience for everyone.

in all, he says over the phone. Range 45 is now closed.

All but one group finished over 900. Rogers' crew finished with a perfect 1,000. And Murray's crew nearly matched it.

"[The night before,] we had a little hiccup, but that goes to show you that you need something to go wrong to realize that you always need to check yourself," Meyer had said earlier in the night on the range. "You always run into something that will fight you, but we always pull through."

At the CP, Hindman, Guest, Algood, Murray and other leaders stop by to finish some paperwork, grab a cup of coffee, or just allow themselves a moment's celebration about the scores before turning to what's next. "That was phenomenal," Hindman says about the company's performance.

Around 1 a.m., Larsen begins to wrap up for the night. But before he heads to the barracks, he instructs one of the sergeants to wake him up in two hours. The unit will be heading out to another range by 5:45, but he still needs to tend to a few matters. Exhaustion is not an option, and right now he can't let himself be distracted by the fact that in the morning, his wife back home, who is three months pregnant, will be having an ultrasound. His focus needs to stay on the unit. After all, there's a job to do. **GX**

THE ART OF ADAPTING AT CAMP SHELBY

In March and April, there were some 7,000 Soldiers flowing into and out of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center. It's First Army's first choice when it comes to mobilizing and demobilizing Reserve Component brigade combat teams. Fully preparing those units involves an extensive collaboration among three distinct teams: an operations brigade, a training brigade and the facilities administrators at Camp Shelby. So when mission changes emerge, those teams must quickly adapt together right along with the deploying units themselves.

The ops brigade (177th Armored Brigade), led by Colonel Dale Kuehl (pronounced "Keel"), typically begins preparing for a unit about a year before it deploys. Kuehl works with the deploying element's commander to determine what the training needs are, when it will be deploying and other factors, and then devises a training plan, which gets refined continually as mobilization nears — and sometimes even after the unit arrives.

When the 27th Brigade's orders changed, its single mission turned into more than 20 missions, Kuehl says. "Each one of those has to be seen as a separate unit with its own training plan, with its own logistics."

The training schedule for each unit is diagrammed on an intricate color chart known as the "horse blanket" — try to imagine a calendar combined with the periodic table.

That plan is then given to the training brigade (158th Infantry Brigade) commanded by Colonel Christopher Forbes. His unit of experienced combat Veterans provides the actual training, from marksmanship to gunnery to first aid, adjusting the intensity of exercises based on a unit's capability.

"We try to pose [units] with problem sets that don't have cookie-cutter solutions," Forbes says. By the time they get done, "they should be able to handle multiple complex injects into an environment."

Kuehl and Forbes, who are under the command of First Army, Division East, have coordinated their efforts with each other and with camp commander Colonel Steve Parham, whose unit oversees all of the Soldiers' housing, feeding, equipment, medical care and other logistical needs. "The relationship among [us three] needs to be very, very close," Parham says. "And it works very well."

But the adjustments continue: Parham is retiring in May, and in April he transferred command to Colonel William (Brad) Smith. Expect the smoothest transition. Camp Shelby is built for change.

— Mark Shimabukuro



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Strength

■ IMPROVING BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

**JUST TRY
HANGING
WITH HIM**
p. 80

Bookworm. Ninety-eight-pound weakling. Marine biologist wannabe. That's who CPT Ryan Stratis used to be. Not any more. Today, he trains obsessively toward his goal of competing in and mastering the nearly impossible obstacle courses on the Japanese TV show "Sasuke" and its U.S. offshoot, "American Ninja Warrior." Virtually a sport all its own, this type of competition demands a rare combination of strength, agility and balance. What's involved in his workouts? Maybe the better question is: What isn't?

PHOTO BY
EVAN BAINES



9 REASONS TO STAY HYDRATED

Two new studies from the University of Connecticut's Human Performance Laboratory indicate that even mild dehydration—a loss of just 1.5 percent of the body's normal water volume—can have a significant impact on a person's mood, energy level and mental performance.

Drinking water can help you maintain a healthy weight. Replacing sugary soft drinks and juice with water not only saves calories but also jump-starts your metabolism.

The Cleveland Clinic found that a 2 percent loss in body weight due to sweat can diminish physical performance by up to 20 percent.

Just one hour of exercise can cause the body to lose a full quart of fluid, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Those participating in more strenuous sports can lose up to 3 quarts—especially during hot, humid weather.



BY AMY STUMPFL

Research shows that proper hydration can help prevent many medical conditions including migraines, kidney stones and hypertension.

Water helps keep skin looking younger by flushing out impurities and replenishing moisture.

The Institute of Medicine indicates that most men should drink about 3 liters (or 13 cups) of fluids each day; most women should drink about 2.2 liters (or 9 cups).

Water may not be enough for those who do more than an hour of intense exercise. Sports drinks contain electrolytes that can further replenish your body.

Drinking for two? Experts at the Mayo Clinic say that pregnant women should drink 2.3 liters (or 10 cups) of liquids daily. More water may be needed, depending on activity level and the weather. Those who are breast-feeding should consume 3.1 liters (or 13 cups).

Optimize Your Idle Time

Doing something productive during your free hours can make you a stronger Soldier

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

LET'S FACE IT: Everybody likes to kick back when they have some spare time. Watching a movie or your favorite TV show, playing video games or reading books can not only help pass the time, but also can do wonders for your stress level. But why not make better use of that time by improving your mind and body? We've listed a few activities that might help the idle hours fly by and give you a sense of achievement.



LEARN A LANGUAGE

There are thousands of languages spoken around the world. Why not learn one of them? Studies have shown that learning a second language not only keeps your brain sharp by improving cognitive function, but can also potentially slow down the development of diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia. There are countless language resources out there for you, from books to Web-based programs. One well-known option is Rosetta Stone, which guides you through the foreign language of your choice with audio and Internet exercises.



BREAK A SWEAT

Engaging in an exercise routine gives you something to look forward to when you're on the job and feeling stressed. Whether it's weight training or cardio, exercise works miracles for your psyche. Consider joining a soccer, baseball, basketball or flag football league. Also, one of the benefits of regular exercise is a deeper and more consistent sleep pattern, so if you stick to an exercise routine, chances are you won't spend nights restlessly staring at the ceiling.



TAKE AN ONLINE COURSE

Whether you're finishing an associate degree or pursuing your master's, there are countless opportunities for earning education credits online, which can be more convenient to your schedule than heading to a campus. Several large education facilitators, such as the University of Phoenix or DeVry University, allow you to take courses at a pace that suits your lifestyle. Also, many traditional universities allow for online course participation. Be sure to see if you're eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill, or scholarships or grants that are available to service members.



CLEAR YOUR MIND

A great way to spend some free time is to practice meditation or yoga. Whether you hope to gain serenity through meditation or to strengthen your body through yoga, both practices help you release stress and regain focus. In fact, according to a Department of Defense-sponsored study with the Marine Corps, there was a significant decrease in stress levels among Marines who practice meditation regularly.



KEEP A JOURNAL

Whether it's online or on paper, a journal will allow you to document your feelings and thoughts during everyday life, training and even your deployment. Although keeping a journal may seem unexciting, it's a great way for people to understand their emotions and gives them a chance to deal with stress and challenges as they come.



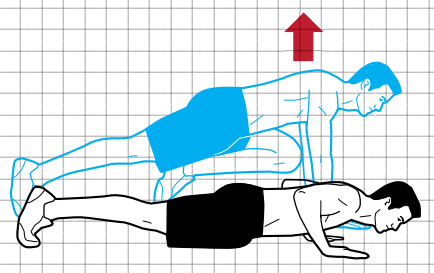
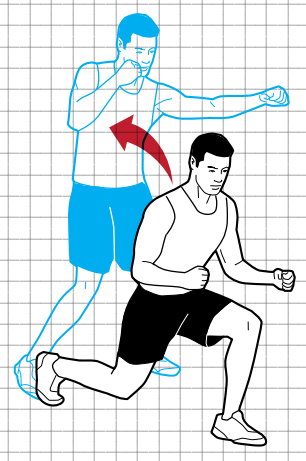
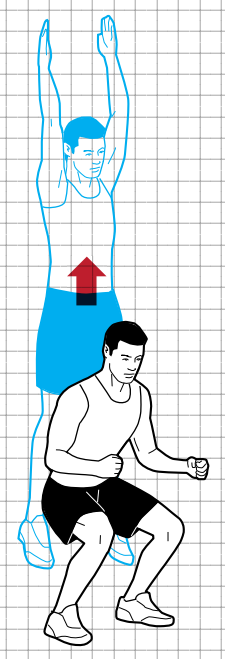
LEARN TO COOK

Not only can cooking be fun, but it's also a great way to eat healthier. Many restaurants pile on sugar, flour, butter and salt, which are fine in moderation but can be adverse to your health if overconsumed. When you're the chef, you can control how much of those ingredients goes into your meal. And don't forget to consider the amount of money you can save by eating at home instead of dining out.

Boost Your Stamina

BY DIANA SADTLER,
Certified Personal Trainer—NASM

You might be able to carry a 50-pound ruck, but if you can't haul it more than a couple of miles, what's the point? Endurance training prepares you for both long-term and short-term events by engaging multiple muscles at the same time. These challenging workouts will increase cardio health (heart and lungs), improve balance, build muscle and increase metabolism.



	JUMP-UP	FORWARD LUNGE With Crossover Punch	PUSH-UP With Mountain Climb
START POSITION	Stand with shoulders back, head up, eyes looking forward and knees slightly bent. Bring hands up to chest level, keeping elbows tucked into your waist.	Stand with shoulders back, head up and eyes looking forward. Place feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent. With both hands, make a fist and bring them up to chest level, keeping elbows tucked into your waist.	Place hands and toes on the ground in a push-up position. Place hands under shoulders. Look at the ground at all times, keeping your neck and spine in a straight line.
ACTION	Bend knees into a near-squat and jump while reaching hands over head as if to touch the sky. Come back to start position. "Sounds simple," you say? Just wait.	Lunge right leg forward, then return to start position pushing through your heel, not the ball of your foot. When back in start position, box punch side to side, rotating at the waist. Repeat with opposite leg.	Perform a push-up; then bring one knee at a time toward your chest, alternating legs, as if climbing a mountain.
CHALLENGE	When in the down motion of the jump, touch both hands to the ground before returning to start position.	When lunging, touch the ground with your back knee.	Perform multiple push-ups before starting mountain-climbing.

THE COMPLETE WORKOUT

JUMP-UP
20 reps

FORWARD LUNGE
10 to 15 reps (each leg)
One rep consists of one lunge and 20 box punches.

PUSH-UP
15 to 20 reps
One rep consists of one push-up and 20 mountain climbs.

RUN FIVE MINUTES
If you want a challenge, divide the five minutes by alternating between sprinting for one minute and jogging for one minute.

REST FIVE MINUTES, THEN DO THE ENTIRE WORKOUT TWO MORE TIMES.

SAFETY FIRST
Posture is critical with these exercises. As the intensity increases, you may have a tendency to round your shoulders, arch your back, or drop your chest and head slightly. Remember to engage your core for stability and better balance. When lunging, don't lean forward at the waist. Most important, keep in mind that it may take time to work up to a high-intensity workout, so be patient, and only do as much as you can. Progress each week by adding more reps and increasing the sets. And don't forget to warm up before and cool down after this workout. A few minutes of brisk walking or light jogging will work.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JASON LEE

Pick the Right Running Shoe

What you need to know about your foot and your gait before you buy

BY DIANA SADTLER,
Certified Personal Trainer—NASM



Whether you're a casual jogger or a marathoner, the proper running shoe can make the difference in achieving that extra mile, as well as help prevent shin splints, knee pain and other problems. Doctors and running experts recommend replacing running shoes every 300–500 miles. Don't make the mistake of buying a shoe only for its looks or because it's on sale. It needs to match the specific needs of your gait and foot type.

1. GET THE FACTS

Before you even enter a store, you must understand one important concept associated with running—pronation. It describes the rolling of the foot, from heel to toe, as your foot makes contact with the ground. There are three different types of pronation. Neutral pronation is when the shock from the ground's impact is distributed evenly throughout the foot. This is more common among athletes. Overpronation is when the inner part of the foot absorbs most of the shock, causing the push-off to occur on the large toes. Supination, or underpronation, is when the

shock is absorbed more on the outer part of the foot.

2. ANALYZE YOURSELF

The next step is figuring out which category applies to you. Visit a running specialty store where experts can analyze your gait and level of pronation, then help you find the right shoe. If that option isn't available, perform a self-assessment. Pick up your old running shoe and examine it thoroughly, looking at both the inner and outer part. Take notice on how the shoe is worn along the outer sole, the treaded part on the bottom of the shoe. Look at the wear along the inner sole as well,

and pay particular attention around the forefoot (from the ball of the foot to the tip). If the shoe is worn on the medial side (or inside), then you overpronate. If it's on the lateral side (or outside), then you underpronate. If the wear is evenly distributed across the forefoot, then you have a neutral pronation.

3. MAKE A SELECTION

After determining your level of pronation, you're ready to shop. The biggest factor to consider is the "last" of the shoe, which is the shape of the shoe and can be seen by looking at its bottom. See guide below.

NO MORE BLISTERS

Don't forget to wear the right socks when running. Choosing the wrong sock can increase the amount of friction and moisture, which often causes blisters. A current study by the Annals of Occupational Hygiene concluded that socks made of a blend of fabrics significantly reduced the presence of blisters. Select acrylic and polyester socks with moisture-wicking properties.

NEUTRAL PRONATORS
Purchase a shoe with a semi-curve last that provides a medium amount of control for your foot.

OVERPRONATORS
Look for a straight last that's a bit heavier and incorporates more support to the ankle.

UNDERPRONATORS
Pick a shoe with a curved last that's lightweight and allows for more foot movement.

Note: Allow enough room for wide feet and adequate heel support if you have narrow heels. The American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine (AAPSM) suggests "having a thumb's width in space between the end of the longest toe and the tip of the shoe." Make sure to walk around the store or ask if you can jog outside for a few minutes to ensure they're comfortable.

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INNER STRENGTH

It's all about your attitude

BY CHAPLAIN (MAJ) MARK D. PHILLIPS

Whether it's a failing relationship, financial strain or an unexpected traumatic event, life can be difficult. We all get knocked down from time to time. So how do we get up and keep going when the storms of life blow? It's our attitude that can empower us. Here are some dynamic principles to help build a life-changing outlook.

EMBRACE THE CHAOS

When we're confronted with life's obstacles, our whole world may become chaotic. It can be difficult to concentrate on even menial tasks. Logic may go out the window, and anxiety can dominate our day-to-day activities. However, disappointments in life are as common as successes. Accepting this fact enables us to establish realistic expectations about the future. It doesn't mean we shouldn't celebrate our victories, but it does help us maintain balance. Developing an attitude of acceptance can keep us from being overwhelmed by issues we can't control.

SEE THE FUTURE

I heard a wonderful truism many years ago: Never let a traumatic event set the precedent for your entire life. For instance, imagine your life is a timeline. If you're currently dealing with a difficult situation, you'll realize it's only one event among many. If you're like me, you've had setbacks in the past and can be sure that you'll have more in the future. There's an ancient axiom that can enlighten us during life's transitions. It states, "And it came to pass." Though you may not realize it at the moment, challenging circumstances do indeed pass in time.

CULTIVATE GROWTH

Often, we view things as difficult simply because the issue challenges us to get out of our comfort zone. For instance, when our safety is threatened, we can feel overwhelmed and become tempted to retreat into an old way of thinking and doing. This can easily be seen in relationship issues—especially how we communicate with each other. By developing a spirit of growth, the setbacks and challenges you encounter can become opportunities for personal, relational or spiritual growth.

REACH OUT

Asking for help when we're down certainly has merit. However, if we want to reach the pinnacle of resilience, it's best to try helping someone else during our trials. Author and humorist Leo Rosten commented, "The purpose of life is not to be happy, but to matter, to be productive, to be useful and to have it make some difference that you have lived at all." Reaching out to others in need enables us to fight self-centeredness and avoid our own "pity parties." No matter how dark our night

may be, others are suffering, too. When hard times come your way, make an effort to help someone else who's struggling. You will soon see the relevance of your own obstacles diminish.

NEVER QUIT

It's tempting to give up when circumstances become tough. We're all prone to take the path of least resistance. But, the "never quit" attitude says we're tenacious, persistent and steadfast. It has been said that the measure of a person's character is what it takes to make them quit. Michael Jordan once said, "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I have been entrusted to take the game-winning shot... and I missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that's precisely why I succeed."



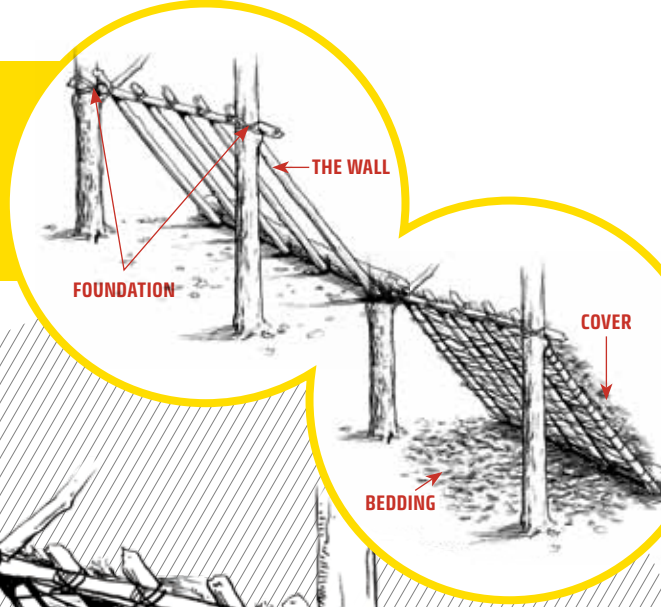
Chaplain (MAJ) Mark D. Phillips is the full-time support chaplain for the Tennessee Army National Guard and serves as the regimental chaplain for the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Knoxville, TN.

How to Build a Lean-to Shelter

BY SFC PATRICK WILLIAMS, COMBAT TRAINING UNIT, NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD

THINGS YOU'LL NEED

-  **A KNIFE/ SURVIVAL SAW**
-  **ROUGHLY 30 FEET OF LASHING** such as 550 parachute cord or vines
-  **FIND + GATHER**
- 2 upright trees about 6 feet apart
- 1 branch about 7 feet long and 1 inch in diameter
- 5 branches about 10 feet long and 1 inch in diameter



1 FOUNDATION

Identify two upright trees and take the 7-foot-long branch and tie it to the two trees at roughly waist height. If the trees have forked branches, you can rest the horizontal support branch in the forks instead.

2 THE WALL

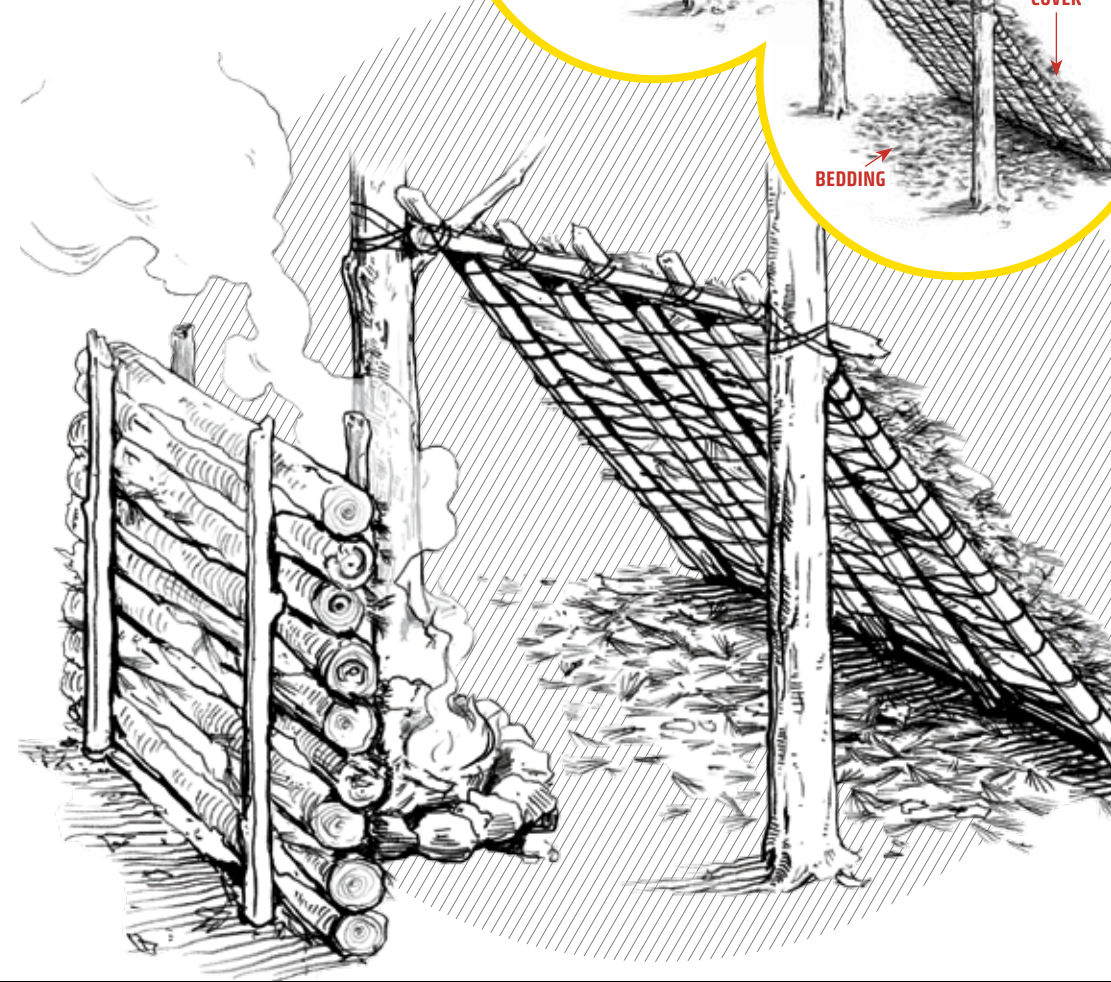
Take the 10-foot-long branches (a total of five) and tie each of the ends to the horizontal support branch. Secure the other ends to the ground with a log or rocks. The wall of your lean-to should always face into the wind.

3 COVER

Weave vines or saplings through the five branches to add strength. Cover your shelter with brush or leaves, starting from the bottom, similar to shingling on the roof of a house.

4 BEDDING

Place straw, leaves, pine needles or grass on the floor of the shelter. As much as 80 percent of your body heat can be lost to the ground, so it's important to insulate the floor, especially in colder environments.



HEATING YOUR SHELTER

If you anticipate spending more than one day at this shelter site, build a fire-reflective wall. It will help contain the heat from a fire inside your shelter. (Never build a fire directly underneath your shelter.) You can build the wall by finding wet (green) logs, 3 to 4 inches in diameter, and stacking them, one on top of the

other, until the top of the wall is at least 6 inches below the height of your shelter entrance. Your wall should be roughly the length of your shelter and no more than 3 feet from its entrance. Fasten two branches, 2 inches in diameter, to both sides of the wall to keep the logs from collapsing. Plug the gaps in your wall with mud, small

branches, grass and/or dirt. Avoid placing rocks on the inside of your wall. Some rocks are extremely porous and can trap water in wet environments. When porous rocks are heated, a chemical reaction can occur that causes the rocks to explode. Build the fire in the space between the wall and the shelter.

Take an obstacle course, crank up the difficulty, blend it with a circus, and bring in unconventional athletes to compete. What do you get? Ryan Stratis' obsession.

AMERICAN 'NINJA'

STORY BY JAMES SULLIVAN + PHOTOS BY EVAN BAINES

Their job descriptions seem to epitomize the ordinary: shoe salesmen, gas station managers and accountants. But the toughest competitors on Japan's popular television show "Sasuke"—which is known in the United States as "Ninja Warrior"—are anything but average. They run complex obstacle courses so arduous that, after dozens of biannual competitions and thousands of contestants, the full set of rounds—a four-stage series—has been completed only four times.

Ever since he stumbled upon the show about five years ago, Captain Ryan Stratis of the Georgia National Guard has been thoroughly obsessed. "I was flipping channels one night at Signal School while at Fort Gordon," says Stratis, a 29-year-old Georgia native who works full time for the Guard as a safety officer. "Every night at midnight I had a group of guys watch it with me."

It wasn't long before Stratis began training for the sport, building on his military experience with obstacle courses and ruck runs—"all your typical military-related-type games." Over time, Stratis developed an individualized regimen geared toward the



sport, combining a basic body-weight workout with balance, agility, hand-strength exercises and sessions with professional stuntmen, parkour practitioners and other elite athletes.

After consistently improving his performances, he got onto "Sasuke" in Japan for the first time last year. "Sasuke" first aired in Japan in 1997, with 100 competitors from all backgrounds. Participants are tested for agility (log rolls, Tarzan jumps, rope ladders) and, in later rounds, upper-body strength and stamina (with ominous, self-explanatory obstacles such as the Curtain Cling and the Ultimate Cliffhanger). Last year, Stratis showed remarkable improvement: In tryouts, he was the only person to finish the semifinal course, and in the main event in Japan, he came tantalizingly close to completing the grueling third stage.

Earlier this year, he trained intensely and competed on the U.S. offshoot of the show, "American Ninja Warrior," which is produced by the NBC-owned cable network G4. The program will premiere in mid-May on both networks and will include an episode featuring Stratis. "It's going to be a fun year," he says.

Stratis is grateful that his commanding officer has given him sufficient time off to compete, allowing the athlete to attend events at Venice Beach in Southern California and even as far away as Japan. "I've been real lucky with them allowing me time off to support my interest," he says.

It was Laura Civiello, G4's senior vice president of development, who first brought "Sasuke" to American audiences. Stratis, she says, is a great example of the type of competitor the show is seeking. "He very proudly represents the National Guard," she says. "It made him a little unique, and we obviously paid attention. Plus, he has such heart. He cares so much about this."

“
HE VERY PROUDLY REPRESENTS THE NATIONAL GUARD. IT MADE HIM A LITTLE UNIQUE, AND WE OBVIOUSLY PAID ATTENTION. PLUS, HE HAS SUCH HEART. HE CARES SO MUCH ABOUT THIS.”

Laura Civiello,
G4's senior VP of
development

According to Civiello, that happens to a lot of emerging ninja warriors: "It sort of gets into their blood. They become fanatical. They build courses in their backyards. You get these weight-loss stories. Ryan, I think, is more toned than the first time we saw him. They become the all-stars that other newcomers look up to."

A 'NINJA' IN TRAINING

Stratis grew up in Albany, GA, a small town in the southwest corner of the state, about an hour south of Macon. Technically, his family lived outside of town in an unincorporated agricultural area called Putney, population 3,000. "It's not even on the map," he says. "We had to drive into Albany to go to the high school and the mall."

His mother worked on a nearby Marine Corps base, which is where Stratis got his first taste of military life when he ran an obstacle course. He was a high school bookworm who had a typical boyhood fantasy of becoming an astronaut and even thought about studying marine biology. As a self-professed "98-pound weakling," he began working summers on the base during high school, lifeguarding at the pool for the children of military families. Soon he joined the Junior ROTC at his high school.

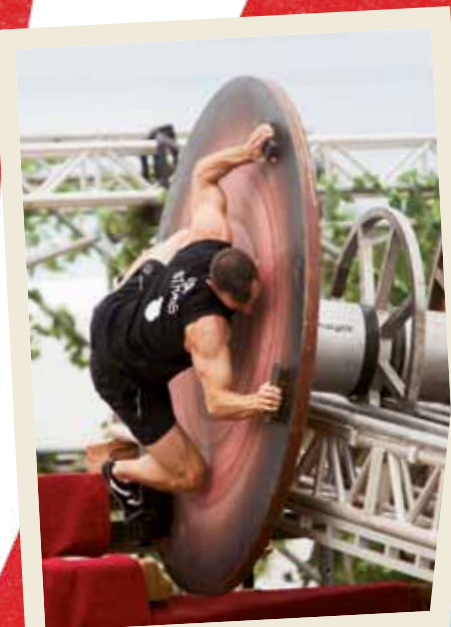
While working as a lifeguard, he was called on more than once to rescue swimmers struggling to stay afloat. "I had to save probably two or three kids who were out too far in the deep end," Stratis recalls. On one occasion he pulled an adult man from the water, after watching him take a dare from his buddies despite his obvious lack of confidence and swimming ability.

"It's definitely a surreal type of feeling to save a life," he says. "You pretty much just react ... The guy was embarrassed. You're taught that the person you save might be embarrassed, that they might not even say 'thank you.'"

SURREAL SPINOFF

"American Ninja Warrior" is an offshoot of "Sasuke," a wildly popular athletic challenge TV program that has aired a few times each year since 1997 on the Tokyo Broadcasting System. Contestants compete in grueling obstacle courses that test their strength, agility and stamina throughout four stages, all undertaken in a single weekend. The courses are designed to be nearly unbeatable.

After establishing an "American Ninja Warrior" competition that has sent groups of Americans to participate in Japan in recent seasons, the G4 network brought the four-stage course stateside as a part of their nationwide tour to find the next American Ninja Warrior. The event will air on both G4 and NBC in mid-May of this year.



FUELING THE BODY

For his diet and nutrition, Stratis cuts out all fast foods and soft drinks a few months before tryouts. "I try to avoid those anyway, but I'm guilty when it comes to getting something quick when I'm pressed for time at work." His meals at home are nothing fancy: lots of fruit, protein, yogurt and sandwiches. "I'm no professional athlete when it comes to managing my diet, and this is an area I can definitely improve upon."

Stratis manages to stay around 146 pounds, because lighter is typically better for the obstacles where body weight is a huge factor, such as the Ultimate Cliffhanger, the one he failed last year. Stratis feels a high water intake is also vital for keeping hydrated.



Today, Stratis gets plenty of good-natured grief from his peers for the fact that he's a certified safety officer who spends his free time training for a sport that puts him in one dangerous situation after another. By day, he travels around the state inspecting military job sites, tracking accidents and compiling composite risk management surveys. At night, at around 7:00—when the sticky Georgia air has begun to cool off—he often heads to the gym near his home outside Atlanta.

There, he joins friends with similar workouts—members of the city's network of professional stunt performers (some of whom have worked on productions including "The Walking Dead" series and the movie *X-Men: First Class*) and free-running enthusiasts, who practice an expressive form of parkour, the environmental obstacle-course discipline that uses body control to navigate city structures. (Parkour draws its name from *parcours du combattant*, the military obstacle course designed by the French physical educator Georges Hebert.) The stuntmen and free-runners have taught him a lot about jumping, tumbling and knowing how to land.

On occasion, Stratis also trains with world-class gymnast Elizabeth Davidovich, who encourages him to concentrate on intricate cartwheel and jump-rope routines. "You're moving, jumping and having to use your brain at the same time," he explains.

After taking a bronze medal in rhythmic gymnastics at the Maccabiah Games in Israel, Davidovich became a film stuntwoman based in Atlanta. She met Stratis on Facebook in discussions about extreme training, and she realized they have a similar work ethic. "Something he wrote demonstrated he was a man of action," she recalls.

When they started training together, Davidovich could see Stratis' potential and would use her experience to help him improve his training. Devising unique training methods together for "American Ninja Warrior" has proved to be mutually beneficial—and fun. "He loves the process as much as I do," she says.

And the workouts don't stop when he's at home. There, he focuses primarily on strength training—grip strength and pull-ups, for instance. Having dropped out in Japan during the Ultimate

HE'S A BEAST

Stratis can do 25 pull-ups in a row, although he prefers muscle-ups, which is basically a pull-up followed by a dip, on either a traditional pull-up bar or gymnastic rings. It takes plenty of strength to do pull-ups, or dips for that matter, but to combine the two exercises into one requires tremendous agility and balance. As of April, Stratis was up to 12 muscle-ups with good form and is working hard to increase that number. He can also hold the human flag for close to a minute, which is a testament to his strength, agility, flexibility and power-to-weight ratio.

"That's always been my goal—to perform better than I did last year, not focus on how other people do," says Stratis, who preferred individual sports such as wrestling and swimming in high school. "If you're looking at what they can do versus your own skill set, you're going to throw your game off."

Cliffhanger challenge—hanging by his fingertips from a series of ledges just a few centimeters wide—it's one area he has singled out for improvement. Whenever possible, he goes rock climbing at Stone Summit, billed as the biggest climbing gym in the country, which is built inside a gutted former three-story hotel.

Because he devotes nearly all his free time to his training, his friends call him the Bachelor Ninja. You'd think the girls would be into it, Stratis says with a laugh, "but no, not so much."

MAKING THE CUT

Until recently, getting accepted to compete on "American Ninja Warrior" meant sending the producers a highlight tape of the athletes in action. If selected, the footage was posted online, where fans of the show could vote on potential contestants. Stratis didn't make the cut his first few years. "I could never get enough votes," he recalls. "I didn't do anything eye-catching enough."

More recently, however, the producers have worked with a casting department that takes into consideration not only the tapes but also the biographies and backgrounds of each hopeful. Stratis' Guard service may have helped him get better recognition.

By now, he is well versed in telling his story and describing his personality. "On the casting worksheet, I always say I'm easy-going, I'm fairly likable, and I try not to rub anybody the wrong way," he says. "And I'm fairly determined when I have a goal. Everyone has their ups and downs, but I try to stay positive."

Some devoted fans have grumbled about the role casting has played on the show, with producers looking to tease out the drama among competitors and seeking backstories that will play well on TV. But Stratis says he understands the thinking.

"I don't mind the show-biz aspect," he says. "If TV has to fluff it up some, find some crazy characters and whatnot, that's fine with me. Overall, it's for entertainment purposes. If it wasn't for the fans, there would be no show, and I'd be doing this stuff in my backyard."

He does, however, suggest that the new process can exclude some worthy contenders. He has a few friends who are just as passionate as he is about "American Ninja Warrior" who have been "trying for years," he says, with no luck.

One of the things Stratis enjoys most about the competition is what makes it unusual in the world of modern sports: Almost invariably, the event ends without a clear-cut "winner." In essence, participants compete against themselves, trying to surpass their own previous best.



Stratis looks for training opportunities in unique environments like college campuses. Walls, steps, railings and buildings allow him to keep his training fresh and unique.



A NEVER-ENDING COURSE

When Ryan Stratis falls, he doesn't stay down for long. Dealing with losses is a part of his sport, and a fall during an obstacle called the Ultimate Cliffhanger knocked him out of the running on an earlier season of "Sasuke." But Stratis feeds off the challenge of rebounding, treating life's setbacks as merely part of a larger obstacle course.

Stratis responded to the fall by re-creating that obstacle with a series of ledges on the walls of his home (left). "Knowing how to accept the results and focus on improving upon the shortcomings is the best way to prepare for the next tryouts instead of dwelling on what went wrong," he says.

For Stratis, enjoyment comes from the process of competing and the experience, not the result. That attitude is especially important for any participant who appears on "Sasuke," where the courses are designed to be nearly unbeatable. Over the past 14 years, competitors have made it through all four stages of courses only four times out of some 2,700 attempts—a success rate of a little more than one-tenth of 1 percent.

While competing in Japan, Stratis was eliminated after losing his grip during the Ultimate Cliffhanger. Now he practices his own version of the exercise in his room daily.

In that regard, "Sasuke" and "American Ninja Warrior" have fostered a unique camaraderie among the competitors. "There's a bonding experience," Stratis says. "You go through a mutual suffering period," sometimes sharing space in what amounts to a small room. In Japan, despite the language barrier, he found that the players would "talk" with their hands and bodies, helping one another learn new techniques to use in certain challenges.

Though it's not apparent on the TV program, the "American Ninja Warrior" main event usually takes place within a 24-hour span, making the final two stages—difficult as they are to begin with—that much more stressful, with sleep deprivation often factoring into the mix.

"You start at 9 a.m.," Stratis says, "and the third stage might be at 1:00 in the morning the next day." In Japan last year, he communed with

some of the so-called Japanese All-Stars—a group of regular contestants who have amassed some of the most impressive records in the history of the event—as they waited for the next round.

"We were dozing off," he recalls. "It was a funny time." The lack of sleep and the fact that the game takes place in any weather—all those additional hurdles crank up the epic-ness of it," he says. "You're tired, and you're on a roller coaster of emotions. All that plays into the course."

Civiello, the network executive, says the idea of an "everyman" is critical to the show. "We have people of all backgrounds. People surprise you."

Mental discipline is just as important as physical, she adds. A competitor who does well one year often fails badly the next: "They lose focus for one moment, and they go out on a really easy obstacle. The course is unforgiving in that way. The course really is the central character—the bad guy, if you will."

As a proud member of the Georgia Army National Guard who is deeply committed to the competition he has grown to love, Ryan Stratis is unquestionably one of the good guys. **GX**

Careers

■ YOUR WORK, YOUR FUTURE

Easing Workplace Stress

From the difficult boss to demanding deadlines, tension can fill your day. But it doesn't have to. Try these tips to stay loose, clear your mind and lift your spirits.

BY ANITA WADHWANI

PUT YOURSELF FIRST

You've heard this before, but it's worth repeating. Getting enough sleep, choosing healthy foods, exercising regularly, and avoiding excessive alcohol and nicotine use can help lift your mood and increase your energy. "Take stress seriously. It can be toxic to your physical and mental health," says Dr. John Kennedy, a Los Angeles-based cardiologist who has studied the effects of stress on firefighters and first responders. "You can't control all the stressors in your workplace, but you can control how you respond to them."

FEEL THE BEAT

Music can be soothing. Listen to your iPod or music on your computer, if that's acceptable to your employer. But to really de-stress, try car karaoke, says Tina Shepherd, a New York-based workplace design consultant. Get behind the wheel during lunch and sing your favorite song along with the radio. And be loud. (Just make sure the windows are up.)

PLAY GAMES

Make the most of your breaks. Fresh air is always a good choice. But consider a game break instead. Challenge a co-worker to a paper airplane distance contest or wastebasket basketball. Having fun, says Shepherd, can be an amazing stress reliever.

REMEMBER TO BREATHE

It's actually easy to forget, says Kennedy. He suggests incorporating this simple, daily technique at the start of your workday: Close your eyes and take seven deep breaths. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, blowing out each breath for seven seconds. Try to empty your mind of everything but a mental picture of yourself accomplishing your goal for that day — completing that conference call, meeting your sales quota, giving that presentation. Now start your workday with calm and focus.

FENG SHUI YOUR WORKSPACE

You don't have to be a master of the ancient Chinese art of creating a harmonious environment to make your physical space a less stressful place. Throw out yesterday's coffee, clean up clutter and get organized so everything you need to do your job has its place.

Visual cues can be key to reducing stress at work, says Shepherd.

"Even if you can only take a moment to take out a picture of a loved one or your dog from your wallet, that can remind you to keep whatever the stress of the day is in perspective."



HOW TO CLIMB THE COMPANY LADDER

Looking for a promotion in your civilian job? Here's how to put yourself in the best position to move up.

Earning a promotion in the military is typically a straightforward process, based on factors like time served and training. But how do you make yourself stand out in the civilian workplace? Brad Parsons, a regional manager with Meadow Outdoor Advertising in Oregon who has more than 26 years of experience in his industry, knows what it takes. After high school, he served six years in the Marines before taking a job in the private sector. He worked his way up from operations to sales and, eventually, executive management. Here are his tips for advancing.

BY AMY STUMPFEL

TAKE TIME TO LISTEN—AND LEARN

In today's competitive job market, employees must build on existing skill sets and industry knowledge or be left behind. Be sure to look beyond your own department or job responsibilities for insight.

"Do your homework," Parsons says. "If you want to be promoted to a management position, find out what is required for that job. Talk with others in the company and learn from their experiences. A lot of business is just about asking good questions. Listening is more important than talking."

Parsons also stresses the value of a good support system. "In the military, there's a real sense of camaraderie—a feeling that you can count on others. Unfortunately, that's not always the case in the business world. People tend to think about themselves first. It's up to you to find people you admire and can learn from."

DON'T BE AFRAID TO START AT THE BOTTOM

As much as we all would like to start out in the corner office, there are no shortcuts when it comes to building a successful career. And according to Parsons, there's no substitute for hard work.

"You have to be willing to put your ego aside, start at the bottom and do the things that others are not willing to do," he says. "When I first got out of the military, I was worried about not having a college degree. But I realized that I have a lot of common sense, great people skills, and I can work harder than just about anyone."

Of course, hard work entails more than just long hours. Volunteer for everything—and go beyond what's expected. Each project or assignment is an opportunity to shine. If you approach your work with confidence and enthusiasm, your bosses will notice.

REMEMBER THAT HONOR AND INTEGRITY STILL COUNT

Many of life's most marketable skills are not found on a resume. Like many Soldiers, Parsons continues to draw on the values he gained through military service.

"[It] not only changed the way I look at the world, but the way I look at myself," he says. "I learned about leadership, accountability, honor and integrity, and I carry these values with me in the corporate world today. Not everyone shares those values, but I've found that people do notice them. I've gotten further on 'please' and 'thank you,' and just doing the right thing, than I ever would have imagined."

BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE

A promotion in the private sector can often be about whom you know or where you went to school. Don't get frustrated. Be patient as your employer gets to know you, and the unique strengths and abilities you bring to the table. It pays off.

"Flexibility is also important," Parsons says. "Over the last 26 years, I have uprooted my family to move to six different cities in three states. It's not easy, but with each move I gained valuable experience."

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU DEFINE SUCCESS

Although your career in the civilian workplace is sure to be rewarding, it's important to keep things in perspective.

"As you get older, your idea of success changes," Parsons says. "I'm still a very hard worker, and I'm passionate about what I do. But now it's more about spending time with my family and giving back through organizations such as United Cerebral Palsy than climbing the corporate ladder."

"Success isn't about what I have in my house or the driveway," he adds. "It's about having people respect me and how my children view me. Being the best for them makes me the best in every aspect of my life. I really believe that happiness is a choice, not a mood. Once you understand that, you'll be a success at work—and at home."

Office or Combat Zone?

If you have a civilian job, sooner or later you're probably going to encounter a conflict with a co-worker or—worse—your boss. For advice on what to do, *GX* spoke with Kim Hauer, an executive with Caterpillar, a Peoria, IL-based global construction equipment manufacturer that employs 125,000 people worldwide.

BY ANITA WADHWANI



Kim Hauer, chief HR officer and vice president with responsibility for the human services division at Caterpillar.

CATERPILLAR

What are some common causes of conflict in the workplace? Conflicts typically arise from differences in styles of leadership and in individuals' cultures. That can be due to true cultural differences or perceived cultural differences. More often than not, however, it is more of a lack of understanding of someone else's viewpoint.

What impact can workplace conflict have on a company? We see the impact in different ways. Often, it creates delays in meeting deadlines, or in the quality and speed of what a company does. Cost can be affected. Often, the greatest risk of a poorly managed conflict is missed opportunities—with our clients and customers, for example.

When faced with conflict, what should an employee do? It's very important that employees first make every attempt to deal with the situation on their own. I would encourage employees to do everything they can to reach out directly, to really think the situation through and attempt to work it out. But if your actions aren't getting the results that you need to do your job effectively, you should ask for help. Help can

be the immediate supervisor or the human resources department. Companies also have their own resources for issues like these, as we do at Caterpillar with our office of business practices hotline that people can use to report concerns. But it's important to think the problem through and try to make every effort to address it yourself, first. That's a growth opportunity for individuals.

What if the conflict is with your supervisor? I would encourage open communication and hope the problem can be resolved without any outside guidance.

However, if that approach doesn't work, I would highly encourage them to reach out immediately to human resources or other appropriate resources in their workplace—especially when the employee believes there has been a violation of any company policy.

Should employees ever try to ignore conflict in the workplace and just carry on? You should not ignore conflict, particularly if it's

causing interruptions in performance. Ignoring it doesn't solve the problem. Talking about the issues, and understanding the concerns and everyone's different perspectives, are really good ways to resolve any conflicts.

What's the best way to initiate a conversation about conflict in the workplace? I think it's key to start the conversation by identifying the core of the problem. Try to keep the emotion out of it—although I realize it can be emotional. Keep the focus on the facts, results and resolution that would be most effective. Stay calm, and state the known facts. That's the best way to make sure the conversation steers clear of emotion and accusations, and stays focused.

What happens when conflict in the workplace involves questions about legal issues? At Caterpillar, for example, legal issues are sometimes brought to the attention of our managers and supervisors. We coach our leaders that any time an employee complains of

an issue that has any legal underpinning, such as harassment, discrimination or retaliation, human resources and the professionals should be involved to make sure we've effectively reviewed the situation and addressed it appropriately.

What can National Guard members use from their training and military experience to help them address workplace conflict? Our company is focused on some core values: integrity, excellence, teamwork and commitment. As I considered this question, I thought that those values are reflective of what I believe is important in the National Guard as well. Demonstrating those values—respect for others, leadership and problem-solving skills—will certainly help anyone deal with problems in the workplace. It's also important to have a good understanding of the culture of your organization—for example, hierarchical versus an open sharing of ideas. Across all business cultures, however, teamwork is key. Keeping that perspective both from the Guard and business standpoints will ultimately not only help avoid conflicts, but create a successful workplace.

A Track Record of Loyalty

Railroad giant CSX stays true to its troops

BY JEFF WALTER

Throughout his 28-year military career, Command Sergeant Major Rick Campbell has met a lot of battle-tested Warriors. Regardless of their situation, he noticed that many of them were dealing with one common problem: Upon returning home from a deployment, they were left jobless and with no way to support their families.

After seeing this on multiple occasions, Campbell realized the value of having a supportive employer. Throughout many deployments, he didn't have to worry about his job security. CSX Corporation, his civilian employer and one of the nation's leading rail transportation suppliers, backed him every step of the way.

"[I was] taken care of financially," says Campbell, chief train dispatcher for CSX's Jacksonville, FL, division. "They made up the difference in pay between what I make as a manager and what I was being paid by the military. So I did not take a financial loss like a lot of folks." That allowed him to "concentrate on the job at hand: getting my men and women home. That's a huge thing."

His most recent deployment was to Iraq from 2008 to 2009 with the 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion. At the end of the deployment, he arrived in the U.S., turned on his phone and realized he had a voice mail waiting for him.

"I had a call from [human resources] welcoming me back and letting me know they were working toward a position for me in Jacksonville, and I didn't have anything to worry about as far as employment," he recalls. "I landed, and the first person I heard from was CSX."

In 2011, CSX received the Freedom Award, given by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) to companies that demonstrate outstanding support of Soldiers. One reason it received this award was its commitment to hiring service members. Jennifer Burnett, CSX assistant vice president of recruiting and staffing, is involved in all hiring processes there, including union and management hiring. Two of her team members, both Veterans, are dedicated to military and diversity sourcing. "They open the doors, build the relationships and help to find the candidates," Burnett says. In 2011, they held 92 military-related recruiting events.

In addition to in-person events designed to identify potential employees, CSX uses virtual events, com-



ABOUT CSX

Jacksonville, FL-based CSX provides rail-based transportation service in 23 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. CSX, which employs more than 29,900 workers, traces its roots to the 1827 chartering of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company. It has previously received Freedom, Patriot, Above & Beyond, and Pro Patria awards.

munity job boards and social media, including "supercharged" LinkedIn and Facebook pages.

"We have had a great deal of success in attracting, hiring and retaining folks from the military," says Burnett, who sees many similarities between the ideal qualities for the military and for railroad jobs, such as teamwork, a focus on safety and execution, a strong work ethic, and high integrity.

Campbell is grateful for CSX's commitment to putting Soldiers to work and retaining them. "I have about 515 Soldiers who work for me [in the Guard], so I'm very familiar with the trials and tribulations of Soldiers who come back home to no job or to a job that doesn't treat them very well," he says.

Another way CSX demonstrates its support for Soldiers is through its Military Affinity Group: networks of employees who help coordinate outreach programs for deployed Soldiers and their families. Activities include participation in national holidays honoring Veterans, free "Honor Flight" excursions to the WWII memorial in Washington, DC, and social events.

"They are doing a lot of things in the community for military members," Campbell says of the Military Affinity Group. As for CSX, the company behind such actions, he says, "It's nice to ... have somebody who treats you well."

Want to Own a Franchise?

Financial discounts and corporate support for service members can make them an appealing option for Soldiers BY EMILIE BAUM

It's 6 a.m., and Major Jay Early is briefing his team on its mission for the day. While the mission isn't nearly the same as what it was during his deployment to Iraq in 2005, Early is still using many of the skills he acquired through the Army National Guard.

As a franchise owner, he runs his own Chick-fil-A restaurant, the fast-food chain with over 1,500 locations in 39 states. A member of the 77th Brigade Combat Team of the Texas National Guard, Early sees his role as a franchise owner as the perfect alternative to a 9-to-5 civilian job. "I had always wanted to run my own business," he says. "Chick-fil-A provided me the structure and support I needed to make my dream a reality."

In today's challenging job market, running a franchise can be an attractive employment option for Veterans looking to start their own business. Some franchises offer discounted fees to Veterans who qualify. (Required capital can range from \$10,000 for a work-from-home business up to \$200,000 for a brick-and-mortar company, depending on the real estate.) There are risks to consider, just as with any business, but many franchises with established brand names make for more stable ventures and have greater capability of supporting Soldiers' military commitments. Plus, the types of businesses are vast and can fit with your background or MOS.

Veterans are often sought after by franchises because of their discipline, leadership and teamwork skills, and ability to follow a standard operating procedure. To encourage Veterans, the International Franchise Association developed the Veterans Transition Franchise Initiative, also known as VetFran. Since its inception in 2002, more than 400 franchise companies have joined the initiative, offering incentives for current and former service members and their spouses.

For Master Sergeant Dorothy Tissue, opening a franchise was a family decision. Tissue, a recruiter with the Michigan National Guard, balances her full-time Guard duties with running a Fresh Coat Painters franchise. Her husband, a retired Navy Veteran, and three sons, who are current or former members of the Michigan Guard, run the day-to-day business, while Tissue manages book-keeping and finances on evenings and weekends.



MSG Dorothy Tissue and her husband, Troy, are flanked by sons (from left) CDT Jonathon Sells, 2LT Shawn Sells and former SPC Jack Sells.

"Being able to step into an already established brand and business model helped to minimize initial costs typically associated with starting a new company," Tissue says. "A franchise [minimizes] a lot of the risk and challenges that new business owners experience." Fresh Coat Painters, a commercial and residential painting company, has an extensive application process before awarding a franchise. "Our military experience gave us the upper hand when applying," says Tissue. "The leadership skills and discipline taught by the Army National Guard helped prove that we were a valuable asset to the company."

Franchise parent companies know the challenges associated with running a business while fulfilling military obligations, and many have policies in place that support Soldiers and Reserve members called to Active Duty. When Tissue was sent to a National Guard training course during a busy week with her franchise, Fresh Coat sent additional resources to help.

For Lieutenant Colonel Jason Reckard, independent owner of a State Farm Insurance franchise in Ohio, the support provided by State Farm during two deployments helped ease his mind. "State Farm area managers enhanced their presence and assisted my employees when necessary, allowing me to focus on my military duties," says Reckard. "I never had to worry."

6

ISSUES TO WEIGH WHEN CONSIDERING A FRANCHISE

COSTS

Can you afford to buy this franchise? Can you make enough money to make the investment worth your time and energy? Make sure to take into consideration franchise fees, lawyers' fees, start-up expenses, inventory and supplies, and working capital.

DEMAND

Is there enough of it in your area for the franchiser's products or services?

COMPETITION

How much exists in the market? Do competitors offer the same products or services for the same or lower prices?

BRAND NAME

Does the franchise have a good reputation?

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

What kind is there, and how much of it does the company provide? Does the company have policies in place for military franchisees in the event of activation or deployment?

YOUR ABILITIES AND PREFERENCES

Do you have the technical skills or experience to manage the franchise? Are you passionate about the type of business?

LEARN MORE

VETFRAN.COM

Veteran franchising success stories, franchising FAQs and a directory of participating VetFran franchisers.

SBA.GOV

Information on small-business loans, including the "Patriot Express" loan offered to service members and their spouses.

MILITARYFRANCHISING.COM

Listings of military-friendly franchises as well as a self-assessment test.

The Path to Becoming a **CHAPLAIN**

Chaplains serve an important role in the National Guard. They're advisors, counselors and leaders. Ministering daily to Soldiers and families, they perform religious ceremonies, counsel during times of crisis and provide spiritual direction. If you're already an ordained minister, you can earn your commission within weeks, after completing **Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course**. Chaplains qualify for education loan repayments, officers' pay and other special officer benefits. **Chaplain candidates** may also qualify for scholarships and GI Bill assistance. BY RONNIE BROOKS

1

ELIGIBILITY

When you join the Guard as a **chaplain**, you'll come in as a commissioned officer. If you join prior to your ordination, you'll enter as a **chaplain candidate**. Either way, you'll need to meet basic officer requirements as well as your chaplain or chaplain candidate requirements.

SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICER GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Meet established medical and moral standards for commissioned officer appointment
- Be a U.S. citizen
- Have completed an accredited qualifying degree program
- Be at least 21 years old
- Be able to obtain secret security clearance

CHAPLAIN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Waivers may be considered, based on critical need of the applicant's faith group.

- You'll need to obtain an ecclesiastical endorsement from your faith group certifying that you:**
- Are less than 45 at the time of commissioning, without prior service. If you have at least three years Active federal service, or creditable Reserve service, you must be less than 47 at time of commissioning.
 - Are qualified spiritually, morally, intellectually and emotionally
 - Possess a bachelor's degree (minimum: 120 semester hours)
 - Possess an accredited master's degree (minimum: 72 semester hours; at least 36 hours in religion/theology or related subjects)
 - Are open to the observance and practice of different faiths by all military personnel and their family members

CHAPLAIN CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

You'll need to obtain an ecclesiastical approval from your faith group certifying that you:

- Are enrolled in or accepted into an accredited graduate program
- Are less than 39 at the time you receive your commission
- Are a full-time student working toward a graduate degree in theology (minimum: 72 hours)

2

TRAINING

You'll attend **Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course** (CH-BOLC) at Fort Jackson, SC. You'll learn military fundamentals and how to perform religious duties in a military environment. For chaplains, the course can be completed in one block (12 weeks and two days) or in several phases over a 24-month period. Chaplain candidates may complete the course over 36 months.

CH-BOLC CONSISTS OF FOUR SEGMENTS:

CHAPLAIN INITIAL MILITARY TRAINING

3 WEEKS + 4 DAYS

Resident course. Physical fitness, basic military (noncombatant) skills, military customs/courtesies, operations in field conditions and combat survival.

PHASE I

2 WEEKS

Basic skills, responsibilities, leadership, Army communication and correspondence.

PHASES II AND III

3 WEEKS + 3 DAYS (EACH)

Resident courses. Army-specific chaplain duties and application of civilian ministry skills to the National Guard environment.

3

ECCLESIASTICAL ENDORSEMENTS

Each denomination or body provides endorsement for chaplains. You must secure this before you can be considered for the chaplaincy.

For chaplains, the endorsement states that:

- You are an ordained minister or member in good standing of your denomination
- You have completed a certain number of years of ministry experience
- The denomination approves of your serving as a military chaplain

For chaplain candidates, the ecclesiastical endorsement is a certification (Form DD2088) saying:

- You are pursuing the requirements for chaplaincy
- You are recognized as a member in good standing of your denomination

Without approval, you will not be commissioned or appointed to the chaplain candidate program.

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements vary (check with your denomination's endorsing body for details), but most require that you:

- Fill out required paperwork
- Provide documentation that you are enrolled in the seminary
- Be currently working toward ordination
- Meet with your endorser for an interview

After meeting with your endorser and completing all your denomination's requirements, the endorser will submit the approval to the chief of chaplains office. **Your recruiter will not submit your packet without your ecclesiastical approval being on record.**

SEMINARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

» The National Guard can make college, seminary or divinity school affordable. Check with your officer recruiter or state education services officer (ESO) for current assistance programs. Learn more at:

www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/chaplain-corps/chaplain-incentives-and-benefits

Learn more about serving as a National Guard chaplain at: www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/chaplain-corps



HANDLING HAZMAT

Civil Support Teams respond to situations involving toxic materials, so they must be ready to be hands-on when everyone else is hands-off. Sergeant First Class Alex Raber, a 25U Signal Support Systems Specialist with the 82nd CST in South Dakota, describes his job.

INTERVIEW BY CAMILLE BRELAND



➔ One of the first courses we attend is CSSC (Civil Support Skills Course). It's about two months long, and we earn our HAZMAT (hazardous materials) awareness, operations and technician certification, and learn different types of equipment. Everyone in the CST is required to take the course, which is basically a crash course on most of the equipment used for identifying chemicals and hazardous materials.

➔ Our role is to be able to walk into a situation and deal with any kind of chemical or hazardous materials. We must be able to identify the chemicals and know how to approach them. It's all about standing back as far as you can, realizing what the threat is, and then knowing how close you can get [to the materials] and what tools you need to mitigate the issue.

➔ We work directly with local fire departments, police, HAZMAT teams and medical services. That's our primary mission. We're there to assist the civilian authorities. When we show up to an incident, we don't take over. We're there to help them out in any way that they need.

➔ If an incident were to happen, our state would request the CST through all the proper military channels. They would notify our commander, and we would report to the CST building. At that point, we would deploy the team either as a whole unit or in sections, depending on what we're dealing with.

➔ We would deploy to the site of the incident and establish our footprint, which is in the cold zone: near the site, but far enough away from possible contamination. Next, we would set up our decontamination line and our operations center. At that point, we would start getting in our suits, go downrange, and begin to survey the area for any possible hazards.

➔ When dealing with radiation, we use our radiation monitors to get close enough to the source to identify it. You can only get so close to it, depending on the energy being emitted from the source. The devices are hand-held, and have a display and different detection probes on them to pick up different types of radiation. It also gives you readings of what the radiation is emitting.

➔ During a normal workweek, we report for PT first thing in the morning. We're allotted time for PT because being in the HAZMAT suit is pretty strenuous, and we pack a lot of equipment. We have a lot of specialized equipment in the unit, so maintenance of it can take hours — troubleshooting and ensuring that everything's working correctly.

➔ I work with another Soldier in the Unified Command Suite (UCS). We use it to make sure all the radio systems are up and working properly, and it's able to provide data and the Internet for everybody within the truck's footprint. The UCS is small, dark and kind of noisy. We have a computer server and radios used to support our team.

➔ Being in communications, we have to keep up with technology. Technology is always changing, so we have to stay current with the latest communications equipment.

Don't Be a Micromanager

That's the advice of a command sergeant major in Afghanistan who stresses the importance of empowering Soldiers so they can do their jobs

BY STEPHANIE INMAN



CSM John Smiley, who joined the Georgia National Guard in 1981, says that good planning is a critical part of leadership.

Since joining the Georgia National Guard roughly 30 years ago, Command Sergeant Major John Smiley has gained valuable knowledge in each position he has held. Those experiences are serving him well as the command sergeant major of the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, which has units currently deployed in and around Kabul, Afghanistan.

How would you describe your leadership style? I value a supportive leadership style. I empower NCOs [noncommissioned officers]. I give them a chance to do their job instead of doing it for them. I support these guys so they can get their mission done.

Why is it important to be supportive? I believe that everyone wants the chance to accomplish a mission. You should give [a Soldier] their mission and then let them do it. If they are going off course, then you redirect them. But you have to give them a chance to get their mission accomplished and not micromanage. No one wants to be told every little mistake that they make. I think everyone wants to

do a [good] job. No one wants to fail in the military or in life.

Do you remember your first time in a leadership role? I moved from an E-5 to an E-7 slot. I was a motor sergeant, and I had no idea how to lead Soldiers. But I quickly learned. It was either sink or swim.

What were some of the challenges you faced? Getting Soldiers to do a mission. When you are a motor sergeant or in any other leadership position, you have more work than you can do on your own. Therefore, you have to use leadership to get a job done. I lacked that skill. But after some time ... in that position, I quickly made myself better.

Do you remember an instance of poor leadership that showed you something to avoid? I always tell Soldiers that you can learn from all types of leadership. I have seen bad leaders, and I've learned from them. You learn a lesson from everyone. If you see someone get burned, you don't play with the fire.

What was one thing that you learned not to do based on poor leadership? I've seen several times where Soldiers weren't fed or didn't have a place to sleep at night. Good planning is crucial in the military. If you have 500 people and you don't think ahead, [it's costly]. I've seen instances where [leaders] didn't plan, so Soldiers suffered.

Is it ever difficult being a leader in a high-risk environment because, if you make a mistake or bad decision, it could be detrimental? Definitely. In an environment like this, you rely on your training and your experience to make the best decision you can. Is every decision going to be right? It should be, but no. For the most part, though, [every decision should be right] because you are trained for this moment.

Being in that type of environment, it seems you can't afford to make too many mistakes. You're right. In this environment or any envi-

ronment where you have Soldiers' lives at stake, you have to do the best you can, and ready your Soldiers for deployment. Before we [arrived in Afghanistan], our Soldiers had months and months of training. They didn't just hop on a bus and come over.

How does leadership in the military compare to leadership in the civilian world? [For both], it's all about an end result and a mission. Everybody has a mission. Everyone has a task at hand. However, [people] in the civilian sector may not have the same values that we hold, like our dedication. A lot of people would just quit a job, but you can't quit the military. Quitting is not an option. Therefore, it's similar—but not.

Did you learn any lessons from your parents? My father has always been the one to drive me forward. I started working with him when I was 13 years old, surveying land ... I learned lessons about dedication and [never giving] up. So every time I got promoted [in my career], he always asked me, "What's next?"



LADY *for* LIBERTY

Organizing a dedicated team of volunteers who send care packages overseas, Annette Hall takes Soldier support to another level.

BY CAMILLE BRELAND





“

BE SURE TO TELL ALL OF THESE LADIES I APPRECIATE THEM FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND SO DO MY TROOPS. I HAVE SAVED EVERY LETTER FROM THEM AND ALSO FROM THE KIDS IN THE SCHOOLS IN NEW ORLEANS AND METAIRIE. JUST MAKE SURE THEY KNOW THAT, AND THEIR EFFORTS DON'T GO UNNOTICED.”

SGT Jonathan Whitman, LAARNG



THE TYPICAL FRIDAY AFTERNOON LUNCHTIME

crowd is just beginning to saunter into the Southside Cafe in Slidell, LA, shortly before 11 a.m. In just 30 minutes, the Slidell community will show an outpouring of gratitude to celebrate the service of Sergeant Joe Betcher, a Louisiana Army National Guard Soldier who returned from a deployment to Kandahar, Afghanistan, in early February. But until then, there are tables to be patriotically decorated, American Flags to be hung and thank-you cards—which will be presented to Betcher—to be passed out for diners to sign.

Orchestrating all the action is a woman in a red button-down blouse and red high heels who works feverishly to set up tables with photos, posters, flags and memorabilia—all depicting the combat service of deployed Louisiana service men and women. She was the first to arrive, and later this afternoon, she'll be the last to leave. She's Annette Hall, founder of the local charity the Slidell Ladies for Liberty (SLFL or "the Ladies" for short). Together, the women will celebrate another one of their heroes. But they are heroes in their own right.

Over the past five years, the Ladies, a group of about 30 women (and a man or two every now and then), have "adopted" over 225 service members—and counting—who were deployed to combat zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The group sends care packages and letters of support throughout their deployments, ensuring that each one knows that the community of Slidell supports them and is thankful for their service. These women, young and old, from military families or not, volunteer countless hours every week to solicit donations for the care packages, pack and ship them, and host homecoming parties for their local troops.

The Ladies are a consummate example of community: They adopt any and every Soldier not only from Slidell, but also some troops from other Louisiana towns who don't have support from home while serving overseas. Through Annette's leadership, the group has swelled from the nine original members to its current size, providing a tangible way for businesses and citizens to give back to those who risk their lives in service to Louisiana and the United States.

For selflessly sharing their time, money and talent to keep our troops comforted, motivated and remembered, the Ladies were awarded a top civilian honor: the American Patriot Victory award.

IT STARTS WITH ONE

Before forming the Ladies, the nine founders were volunteering through their children's PTA. Once their children graduated from high school, they found themselves missing the service, activism and social experience of the PTA. While brainstorming ways to continue to give back to the community, one of them, Libby Guidry, mentioned that she was sending letters and care packages to her son-in-law, Sergeant Jonathan Whitman, a Louisiana Army National Guard Soldier deployed to Iraq. Whitman had told her that many of the young Soldiers in his unit never receive any mail from home.

Annette, a former Navy Sailor, immediately picked up on the idea. She invited the ladies over to her house for a "packing party," cooking the group lunch while the women assembled boxes to send to Whitman's unit. The Slidell Ladies for Liberty was born.

In 2007, the group shipped its first set of care packages. They were addressed to Whitman, a 91B wheeled vehicle mechanic who was stationed at Camp Liberty in Baghdad, Iraq. Soon, Whitman was receiving countless boxes at a time.

"I remember being gone three or four days out on a convoy, and when I got back, there was no room in the mail room for personnel because they had shipped so much stuff," Whitman recalls. He began sharing the goods with his unit—many of whom did not have the same support from home—and the shipments became the highlight of nearly every week during the yearlong deployment.

"It was exciting and something to look forward to," Whitman says of receiving the gifts. "And not to knock anyone else's packages, but these were really good care packages!"

Above: Annette Hall meets SGT Joe Betcher, a Soldier adopted by the Slidell Ladies for Liberty, for the first time during a luncheon at the Southside Cafe in Slidell, LA. **Opposite page:** Volunteers of all ages come to help with the care packages for Soldiers. Service members have sent the Ladies flags, plaques and photos to express their gratitude and appreciation.

The SLFL sends each adopted Soldier three packages per month. One package is dedicated to personal care items such as shampoo, soap, deodorant, body wash and Q-tips; a second package includes entertainment items like DVDs, magazines and books; and the third package—usually the Soldiers' favorite—is full of snacks.

Local businesses and Louisiana-based companies, such as Zapp's chips and Smoothie King, which is based in New Orleans, often donate items for the packages. Being only 40 miles away from the Big Easy, the Ladies also send Mardi Gras staples such as beads, light-up necklaces and king cakes during the celebratory month (usually February or March).

"We get so many letters from our Soldiers that say, 'I have this guy in my unit, and he has never gotten anything. Instead of sending stuff to me, would you send it to him?'" Hall says. "And of course, we don't stop sending to our Soldier; we just add the person in their unit that never gets anything."

Shipping three packages per month to dozens of troops takes considerable planning, time and funding. Each box costs \$13.45 to ship to Afghanistan. Though the price may not seem like a huge expense, the shipping costs quickly add up: The Ladies have spent about \$50,000 just on postage since 2007. In the beginning, those costs were often hard to cover with donations alone, so the Ladies or the owner of the Southside Cafe would write personal checks for the difference. However, as the organization grew in size and prominence, local businesses began chipping in.

A COMMUNITY AFFAIR

Hall makes one point crystal clear: The SLFL does not operate in a vacuum. It's successful and able to continue serving Soldiers because of the outpouring of support from the Slidell community and the entire state.

The Ladies meet the third Wednesday of every month to pack and ship boxes to the 20 to 40 adopted troops they have at any given time. For the first few years, the group was based out of Annette's home. She would move all the furniture out of her living room and set up tables for the boxes. However, when a local church learned about the program, it offered one of its buildings to serve as the group's shipping hub, even buying the Ladies tables and chairs for the packing process.

At the homecoming celebrations, each Soldier is presented with a gift basket including about \$400 worth of gift certificates for everything from oil changes to a dinner for two to massages to hotel stays—all of which are donated by local businesses. The Southside Cafe pays for each Soldier and their family's lunches, and a local bakery, Marguerite's, always donates a patriotic-themed cake for the event.

Government representatives from the Slidell mayor's office and the state's two senators' offices unfailingly attend the events, presenting each returning Soldier with a certificate of appreciation. The local chapter of the Knights of Columbus and other community members also attend to thank the returning service members.

While the Ladies sometimes personally know the troops they are



Debbie Miller, the aunt of SLFL Soldier SGT Patrick Oliver Williamson, helps pack boxes for Soldiers. Williamson was killed in Afghanistan on Oct. 27, 2008. The Ladies put a special sticker on every box in his memory.

adopting through friends and family, often they do not actually meet the service members until the homecoming celebrations. “A lot of times we don’t know them, and then to actually put your hands on them and hug them, and say, “We are so glad you’re back’—it’s just awesome,” Annette says.

The group has tapped local schools to get involved with the process, too. Classes color and decorate the boxes before they’re packed and write thank-you letters to the troops. Though the Soldiers love receiving handwritten letters from kids, Betcher was the first of them to write back—forever changing one child’s life.

Annette heard from a teacher at one of the schools about a young student who was struggling in school and emotionally distant when the class began writing letters to the adopted Soldiers. When Betcher responded to the child’s letter, he completely changed his attitude, proudly displaying his “Soldier letters” to all his classmates. “It’s amazing. It really made a difference in this little boy’s life,” Annette says.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE LADIES

Though the Ladies for Liberty are clearly a community effort, every group must still have a leader who bears the responsibility for keeping the wheels turning. Hall is truly ecstatic to assume that role. The “Queen of Everything,” as the group affectionately calls her (and she endorses!), Annette is bursting with passion and energy. “I say she’s one of those sassy Southern women who’ll tell you just what you need to do and

how to do it,” jokes Cindy French, a military wife and a member of the Ladies.

Whatever her leadership tactics are, they’re working. The Ladies have been able to continually expand the adoption program every year, adding more donations, items for the care packages and schools for pen pals.

During the entire hour-and-a-half homecoming ceremony for Betcher, Annette bounces from person to person, thanking them for attending, setting up the decorations and flags, keeping the presentations on schedule, and introducing Betcher to the Ladies. Instead of looking exhausted or relieved after the high-energy ceremony, Annette beams. She relishes knowing that another one of their Soldiers is home safely and that she has done her duty as a civilian—to thank and support him.

Hall admits she’s constantly brainstorming new tactics and ideas for how to improve the homecomings and adoption process. She’s extremely detail-oriented, thinking of even the smallest element to make the ceremony memorable. When a roast beef po’boy sandwich arrives for lunch, it’s garnished with a miniature American Flag toothpick. Annette makes sure she brings them in for homecomings to give to the waitresses to serve.

Hall’s patriotism is at the core of her sense of identity. Born and raised in Monterey, CA, she joined the Navy after graduating from



WE JUST RECEIVED A BUNCH OF PACKAGES! THANKS SO MUCH. WE GOT SOME NEW PRIVATES AS REPLACEMENTS FOR SOME GUYS WE SENT HOME ON LEAVE. A FEW OF THOSE BOXES, INCLUDING MINE, WENT TO THEM. (THEY JUST GOT HERE AND HAVE NOTHING, LOL!) YOU ALL HAVE BEEN SO AMAZING ON OUR DEPLOYMENT, AND WORDS CANNOT CONVEY OUR GRATITUDE.”

SGT Trevor Abney, LAARNG



high school, following in the footsteps of her father, a 30-year Navy Veteran. After serving four years, Annette left the Navy and went to work at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, where she met her husband, Commander (Ret.) Christopher James Hall. He had just served nine years in an all-male environment (four years at the Naval Academy, five years on ships). They started dating and just celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary.

“I was the first woman he had seen in seven years, so it wasn’t hard [to impress him] at all!” Annette exclaims. The couple moved to Slidell in 1990 when Christopher secured a position as an oceanographer at the John C. Stennis Space Center near the Louisiana-Mississippi state line. For the next 17 years, Annette volunteered through her children’s schools and kept the family functioning during her husband’s three one-year deployments.

As a former service member and military wife, Annette was acutely aware of the needs of deploying troops. However, when asked why she and the other Ladies commit so much time to the cause, she simply responds, “Because somebody needs to. We don’t want anyone to think that we don’t appreciate their sacrifices.”

That sentiment is echoed by several other Ladies. “Anything that we do is nothing compared to what they are doing over there,” Libby Guidry says.

‘IT REALLY MATTERS’

“May I have your attention, please? We want to welcome home Sergeant Joe Betcher, who just returned from Afghanistan,” Colonel (Ret.) Richard Dillon says, his voice carrying from a loudspeaker set up in a corner of the Southside Cafe. The entire restaurant cheers and applauds as Betcher walks along a line of smiling Slidellians to begin accepting his gifts and certificates.

Betcher, a 31B with the 2228th Military Police, spent a little less than a year on a combat outpost near Shurandam, helping to train the Afghan National Police and local civilian police forces. His unit lived in tents far from a main forward operating base, so it didn’t have access to a PX or other luxuries. Betcher was already on base when Annette contacted him via Facebook and explained the role of her group. Within a few weeks, he received his first batch of care packages.

“The packages started flooding in,” Betcher recalls. “It’s always good to get mail. It’s kind of like your birthday.” He placed most of the items,

The luncheons are a great way for the Soldiers, the Ladies for Liberty and the community to relax, enjoy good Southern food and get to know one another better.

like board games and extra toiletries, in the outpost’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent to share with Soldiers in the entire unit, who were extremely appreciative.

Betcher remembers when the Ladies sent a special treat—a king cake—to celebrate the Mardi Gras season. Since he was detached with a unit from Michigan, none of the Soldiers knew about the iced pastry and were hesitant to taste it. “When I cut it up, one of the guys ate a piece, and then it was gone in like 10 seconds,” Betcher says.

Of course, the items Betcher and Whitman received from the Ladies represented more than just snacks and shampoo—they were reminders of their home more than 7,800 miles away. Betcher was so grateful for the packages, he has offered to help the ladies pack in the future and plans to buy king cakes to send troops next year.

“It really matters,” Betcher says of the Ladies’ cause, adding that there’s only one word to describe what they do: “awesome.”

The Ladies for Liberty are filling a void many Soldiers face when they deploy. As one Soldier told Annette, “When I left, all my friends and family said they were going to be mailing me packages and letters, and your group was the only one who did it.”

Annette’s hope for the group is to continue expanding the program to reach all of Louisiana’s deployed military men and women. The Ladies are continually adding new volunteers, from young military wives to 75-year-old Gayle Hursey, a lifelong volunteer.

Gayle saw a local news report featuring one of the homecoming celebrations and later visited the Southside Cafe to find out how to get involved. A few days later, she met Hall for coffee and has been a member of the group ever since. She can’t drive, so one of the Ladies picks her up so she can attend the packing days and homecomings. Plus, the Ladies help her “check up” on her grandson, a Marine who is currently deployed. “[Annette] reads the Facebook posts for me and tells me what my grandson is saying!” Gayle says.

Together, Annette and the Ladies have ignited a passion for service in their community, uniting partners from local businesses, government officials and other citizens. As they write on their website, “We want every son and daughter of our nation to know unequivocally that their service and sacrifices will not go unnoticed.” Thanks to the Ladies, that sentiment is being delivered loud and clear—and the message is spreading. **GX**



GET INVOLVED!

The Slidell Ladies for Liberty operates solely on donations from businesses and citizens. Their greatest need is funding for shipping. Donate by mailing a check made payable to the “Slidell Ladies for Liberty”:

Slidell Ladies for Liberty
3090 Gause Blvd., #218
Slidell, LA 70461

SlidellLadiesForLiberty@gmail.com
SlidellLadiesForLiberty.com/donate

ONE MEAN RIDE

**THE OSHKOSH M-ATV
IS THE BIGGEST, BADDEST
VEHICLE YOU'LL DRIVE
DOWNRANGE.**

With battlefield vehicles, Soldiers sometimes need the speed and agility of a Humvee. Other times, they need the protection of the heavy-duty MRAP. And for certain missions, they need something in between. Enter the Oshkosh M-ATV, a highly mobile, high-protection, medium-sized tactical vehicle built to handle unforgiving terrain no matter what its configuration.

BY MARK KAKKURI

VERSATILITY

In its base configuration, the M-ATV is a maneuverable off-road vehicle with battle-tested armor that requires little operator maintenance and training. But based on Soldiers' needs, it can be upgraded with a larger windshield and a rear cargo access door, hood-steps and hand-holds. Additional upgrades can include improved spotlights and IR driving lights, larger exterior storage and HEED oxygen bottle mounts.

SUSPENSION

The heart of the M-ATV's capability is the Oshkosh TAK-4 independent suspension system. It enhances vehicle mobility, ride quality, off-road speeds and load-carrying capacity. The TAK-4 is less costly and easier to maintain than both the Humvee's and the MRAP's suspensions, and has been successfully used in a variety of other applications.

ARMOR

The vehicle is protected by Plasan armor, a carbon composite that is used on several U.S. military vehicles. Able to be built as body panels or added on as an upgrade, the armor is credited with saving countless lives. Mated to its V-shaped hull, the M-ATV can deflect an IED blast away from the cabin.

ENGINE

The M-ATV is powered by a state-of-the-art 7.2-liter inline-6 Caterpillar C7 turbo diesel engine generating 370 bhp. The engine allows the 27,500-pound vehicle to cruise at 65 miles per hour and travel 320 miles on a single tank of gas.

WEAPONRY

The vehicle can be outfitted with a variety of weapons systems, depending on the needs of the mission. A typical arrangement may consist of one 7.62 mm M240 machine gun, one 40 mm Mk 19 grenade launcher, one .50 cal M2 Browning heavy machine gun or even a TOW anti-tank missile launcher.

ADDITIONAL USES

The M-ATV can also serve as a tactical ambulance vehicle, with low litter load times, and can carry up to four ambulatory patients in a variety of configurations. As a Special Forces vehicle, the M-ATV can be equipped with a fifth seat that converts to a gunner stand and can offer more crew space. The M-ATV can serve as a multi-mission vehicle and cargo vehicle.



COOLER KIT

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

TACTICAL POCKETKNIFE

WHY YOU NEED IT: Tactical pocketknives are a dime a dozen, but several versions out there are worth every penny. The best ones are long enough to be practical, but still small enough to fit in your ACU pocket. The blades, generally 3 to 4 inches, are made of stainless steel and have a black physical vapor deposition (PVD) coating to prevent reflection.

WHY IT ROCKS: In general, good tactical knives have machined aluminum handles, a seatbelt/cord cutter, a carbide glass breaker and, of course, a sturdy blade.

SPECIALIZED PISTOL HOLSTER

WHY YOU NEED IT: Tactical holsters were developed due to a high demand from law enforcement and special operations forces needing a holster that is comfortable, secure and easy to use. Tactical holsters afford the user a quick draw and then lock securely when reholstered. The patented locking mechanism eliminates the fancy straps and snaps required to access other holsters.

WHY IT ROCKS: Tactical holsters have thigh-mount forms to fit your leg snugly, and the Y-harness leg straps won't hinder movement or bind.

When you mobilize, the military fully equips you to get the job done. But if you're looking to upgrade gear, these items—recommended by Soldiers who've been downrange—will make your deployment even more high-speed.

HEAVY-DUTY WOOL SOCKS

WHY YOU NEED IT: Nothing's worse than wet, soggy socks. Invest in high-quality, high-performance wool socks, and your feet will thank you for the duration of your deployment. Wool regulates temperature and manages moisture better than other materials.

WHY IT ROCKS: Most high-performance wool socks are cut more ergonomically than cotton socks, fitting snugly around your feet. Also, wool is antimicrobial, so they'll be less likely to develop an odor if you wear them for several days at a time.

TACTICAL ASSAULT GLOVES

WHY YOU NEED IT: Your hands are critical, so they need maximum protection. Not only do tactical assault gloves protect your hands and fingers, they're also durable enough to outlast whatever your deployment throws at you.

WHY IT ROCKS: Tactical gloves have micro vents in the fabric to increase breathability, carbon fiber knuckle plating to protect your knuckle joints, and unique surfacing on palms and fingers to allow for a secure grip.

BATTLE BELT

WHY YOU NEED IT: Battle belts help shed some of the weight from your plate carrier or improved outer tactical vest, redistributing it to your hips. This is a must-have for Soldiers who will be on their feet for extended periods patrolling or standing watch.

WHY IT ROCKS: The battle belt has plenty of padding to keep it from digging into your hips, plus four D-rings for harness and attachments.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE WATCH

WHY YOU NEED IT: Some would argue a watch isn't crucial for your survival out in the field, but adventurers and explorers often use high-performance watches for their special features, some of which can be lifesavers in extreme conditions.

WHY IT ROCKS: High-performance watches often have altimeter and barometric pressure gauges, a compass and a battery with a long life.

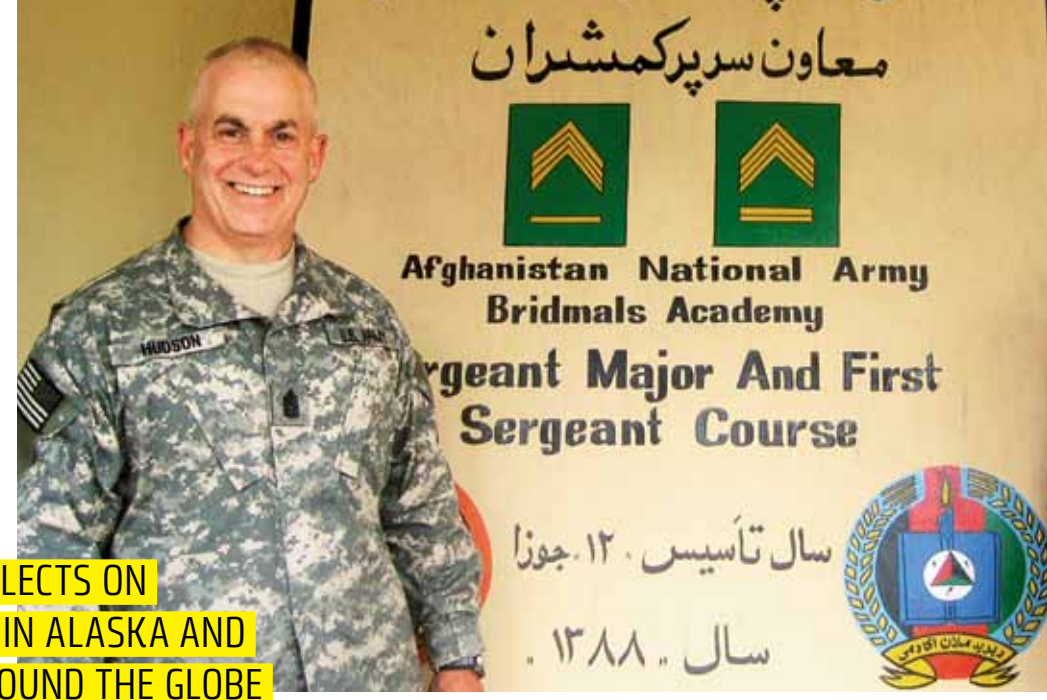
PHOTO BY EVAN BAINES

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DOING A WORLD OF GOOD

CSM (RET.) DAVID HUDSON REFLECTS ON SERVING AS A STATE TROOPER IN ALASKA AND REPRESENTING THE GUARD AROUND THE GLOBE

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON



CSM (Ret.) David Hudson has traveled to over 100 countries for the Guard, including Serbia, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

Command Sergeant Major (Ret.) David Hudson joined the Air Force in 1973 after high school. He ended up serving in the Air Force, the Air Force Reserve and finally, the Army National Guard. He also served as an Alaska state trooper, retiring in 2006 after 20 years on the beat. His stint as the senior enlisted leader for the National Guard Bureau from 2006 to 2010 put him at the forefront of Guard relations worldwide. In this *GX* exclusive, Hudson reflects on his 38-plus years of service.

What motivated you to enlist in the Air Force? My father had been a career Soldier and told me if I had to go to Vietnam, to go as an Air Force guy instead of an Army guy. One of the first things I had an interest in was flying helicopters. By the end of 1973, the Army was pretty much eliminating the warrant officer program for helicopter pilots, so I joined the Air Force.

What inspired you to become an Alaska state trooper? In 1983, I married my wife, Denise, and took a job as a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Nome, Alaska. I got to know the Alaska state troopers who lived there, and they encouraged me to apply to become an Alaska trooper.

What were some of the challenges of being a trooper in Alaska? During those 20 years, I did pretty much any facet of law enforcement that you could do, from being an instructor to working undercover narcotics to being a post commander. There were only 249 of us to cover 550,000 square miles of Alaska. We were alone and had to work hard and fast. Sometimes I would fly into villages in an airplane knowing that backup was a long way off.

What was your primary responsibility as senior enlisted leader at the National Guard Bureau? The most important responsibility was being able to provide the face of an enlisted leader to our political leaders and to the foreign leaders of our partner nations. I represented our men and women when I was having dinner with the president of Serbia, when I was working with the ministry of defense in Kyrgyzstan, and when I was talking with the sergeant major of the Afghan army. To be able to represent the 450,000 men and women of the Army and Air National Guard in the eyes of the rest of the world was pretty exciting.

What is the biggest challenge for the U.S. military in the 21st century? We've been in conflict for over 10 years now, and it has taken a toll on our financial and human resources. We've had the luxury of not having to worry about dollars and cents, and that's going to change. So the biggest challenge is to maintain qualified men and women in the Guard through the inevitable downsizing and economic reduction.

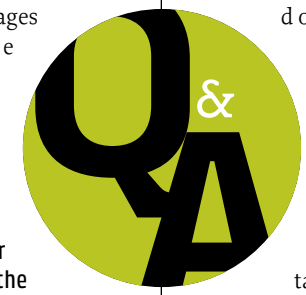
How will we continue to make progress in Afghanistan in light of the recent setbacks? People talk about winning a conflict, but I don't know if anyone has actually defined what winning means. If that means that Afghanistan will sustain some form of government, and protect themselves from internal and external threats, then that may occur. We've given them the tools to succeed, so where they go will truly be dependent upon the leadership of Afghanistan.

In regard to homeland security, what will be the biggest threat in 2012 and the years to come? I think we have to maintain

security of our borders. We also have to be prepared to respond to incidents such as Hurricane Katrina or 9/11 when they occur. The number one role of the National Guard is homeland security and homeland defense. That's why we have 54 States and Territories all run by governors and all having their own Guard units capable of responding to disasters within those states.

What's the most important lesson you've learned that you'd like to share with the Soldiers of the Army National Guard? It all comes down to the fact that you should be proud that you chose to serve your state and your nation. That puts you above many citizens in our nation that have never chosen to give such a great gift to their country.

Looking back on your service, what is your fondest memory? There are so many great moments and opportunities that were phenomenal. Having the good fortune of being able to represent the men and women of the National Guard in so many venues was huge. I got to do amazing things during my service. I went to every war zone we had and visited the troops overseas numerous times. I've been very lucky and blessed.



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