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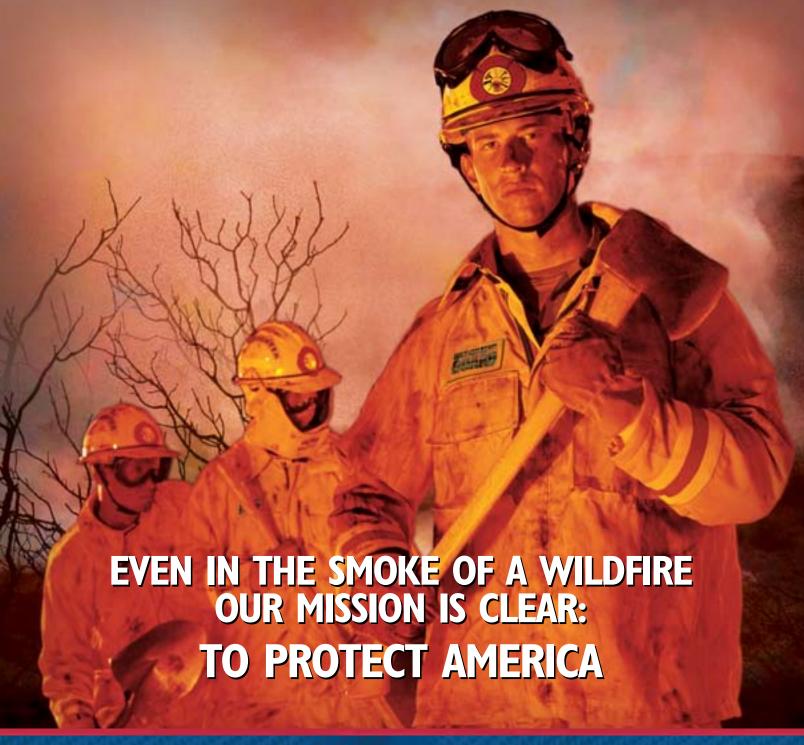
YOU CAN

Natural disasters do more than make headlines. They affect the lives of millions of Americans every year. And so does the National Guard. Whether it's a wildfire, tornado, hurricane or earthquake, the Guard is there. Always has been. And with the support of dedicated Americans, the Guard will always be the force America's communities count on.

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Letter from Leadership

Dear Soldiers,

As Chief of the National Guard Bureau LTG H Steven Blum is fond of saying, "When you call out the National Guard, you call out America."

Our Army and Air National Guard come from every walk of life. They are our sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbors. They are truly the essence of our great nation, drawn from city streets and country lanes, farmyards, factories and offices everywhere. No matter where they come from, or who they are, our National Guard are spirited, professional, courageous, dedicated, and patriotic.

I can think of few other callings that require such a broad range of talents and reflect such a broad range of attributes. It doesn't matter what their mission—a hurricane, a flood, an earthquake, or a battle in the War on Terror—our Guard members are in the midst of the action, making a positive difference for their communities and our nation. They are fighting for the cause of liberty and human decency abroad, and they are securing our homeland here in America. We are all immensely proud of them.

It is always hardest to find ways to say thank you to those we owe the most. The same is true of our military. As Winston Churchill said during World War II, "Never have so many owed so much to so few." In North Dakota, we've tried to show our appreciation with financial bonuses, tuition waivers and special benefits for our servicemen, servicewomen and their families. We were careful to include families because we recognize that they, too, make great sacrifices in the service of our nation, and we are grateful.

To further show our appreciation, we now proclaim the month of May as Military Appreciation Month, declaring our admiration and appreciation for what our men and women in uniform do for us every day all over the world. We call on our fellow citizens to reflect on the service and sacrifice of our military and to find tangible ways of saying thank you to them and their families.

I repeat as often as I get a chance the words of Father Denis Edward O'Brien, USMC. To paraphrase, it is not the journalist who safeguards our freedom of the press; it is not the college student who safeguards our freedom of speech; it is not the priest or rabbi or imam who safeguards our freedom to worship. It is every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, and Coast Guardsman, and every veteran who has donned the uniform and served our county. To all of you, we extend a heartfelt thank you.

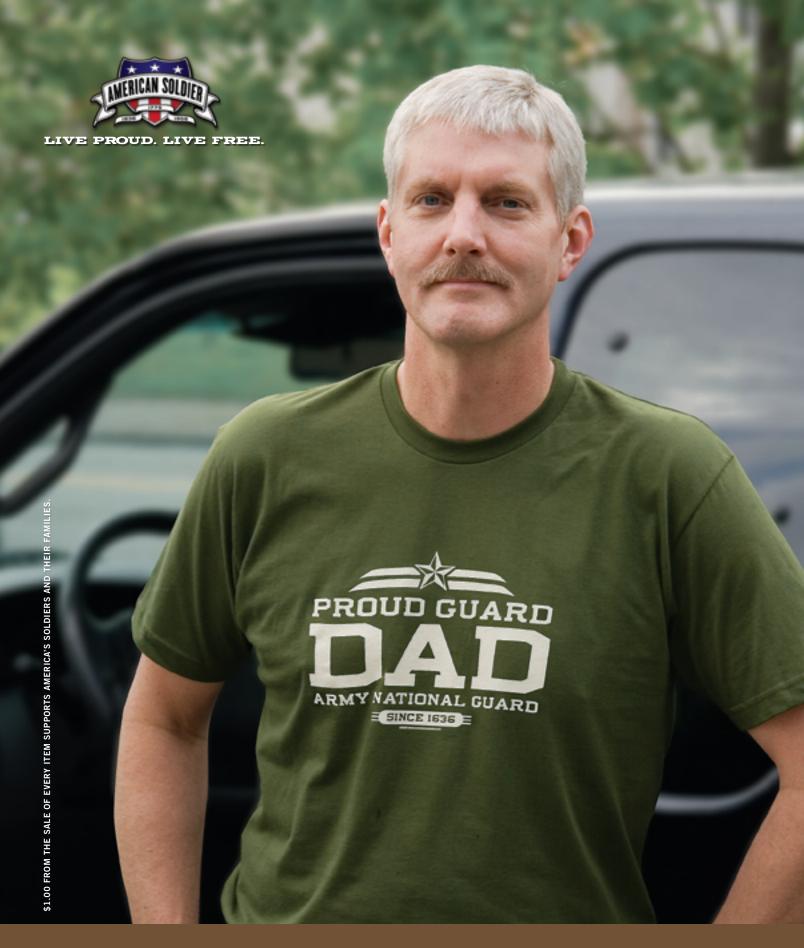
[Guard members] are fighting for the cause of liberty and human decency abroad, and they are securing our homeland here in America. We are all immensely proud of them.





John Hoeven Governor of North Dakota





WWW.AMERICANSOLDIER.COM

EXCLUSIVE GEAR FOR THE HERO IN ALL OF US

CELEBRATE FATHERS' DAY, JUNE 18, 2006





ON THE COVER

Infantryman, SGT Robert R. Anderson, says hello a local Iragi child in a village outside of Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, on March 12th, 2006. Anderson, 25, is a member of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment and a native of Gillespie, IL.

PHOTO BY CPL DANIEL J. REDDING 1ST MLG PAO

Job Security

This month's feature focuses on strong Guard Employers. We make a point of regularly shining the spotlight on these home front heroes because their support is critical to the well being of Guard Soldiers and their families.

Financial worries are a strong source of stress in anyone's life. Soldiers who have been pulled from their civilian jobs are likely to be even more concerned with the fiscal wellbeing of their families. If those concerns can be diminished by the strong support of their employers, then the Soldiers are better able to focus on accomplishing their missions safely and effectively.

By highlighting companies that have gone above and beyond the call to care for their Soldiers, we hope to accomplish several goals. First, we want to encourage Guard Soldiers to patronize these companies as a form of positive reinforcement. They take care of Soldiers; Soldiers take care of them.

Second, we want to encourage other employers to step up and do more for their Soldiers. Not every company can afford to offer the extended benefits or pay matching that large corporations can, but there are still plenty of ways they can encourage and support those who choose to serve. We hope the companies listed here, along with tips from ESGR, will serve as an example of what businesses can do to assist the Soldiers they employ.

Finally, we want to let Soldiers know there are companies that will honor and appreciate you. More and more, companies are recognizing Soldiers as well-trained, disciplined and loyal employees who can be a tremendous asset to any work environment. If your current employer does not give you the respect you have earned by wearing your country's uniform, someone else likely will. We're not suggesting you should abruptly quit your job, but if you feel like reconciling your civilian work and your choice to serve is harder than it should be, it might be worth looking around. Someone out there should be proud to offer you

Also in this issue, we highlight Memorial Day and the valiant stories of a few of those brave Soldiers who's sacrifice the holiday serves to honor. More and more, the general public considers Memorial Day to be just another three day weekend. In this time of great sacrifice by Soldiers and their families, it is important to remember the true meaning of the holiday. We encourage you to remind people, while they are enjoying the tremendous freedoms that have been bought by the sweat and blood of Soldiers, to pause and be grateful to the brave men and women who choose to serve their nation.

The GX Team



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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SOCKGATE

It all started so innocently. To us, a bunch of civilians, the START Fitness photos (in *GX* Volume 3 Issue 2 p73-74) looked great. The buff, six-time Soldier of the Year SGT Ken, intense, focused, leading his civilian clients toward health. But then, seemingly within hours of the issue hitting the street, it started: SOCKGATE. The emails flowed in, all asking the same question: "Why is super stud SGT Ken wearing multicolored socks in the APFU uniform? According to 670-1, only solid white socks should be worn in that uniform."

We were baffled. 670-1? We weren't sure what book we should be looking in, so we called SGT Ken to ask him. He offered no excuses. In a fit of patriotism, while working with his private clients, he had donned his American flag socks, clearly making himself, out of uniform. To say he was duly chagrined is a massive understatement. You'd have thought he'd run over our dog. He has assured us this will not happen again and that, as punishment, he assigned himself a number of push-ups that would kill our editorial staff.

We would like to sincerely thank all of those who not only read *GX* closely enough to notice the color of SGT Ken's socks, but who take the time to let us know when we have gotten something wrong. *GX* is your magazine and we are grateful that you help us to make it better.

Ed.

ROUGH RIDERS

When I read the teaser for Part 2 of the article on Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders "The Battle of San Juan Hill" in Mar/ Apr 2006 of *GX*, I said to myself, "Well, at last, someone is going to set the record straight, or are they?"

What I read was the same old story of glory and victory that has been passed down through history as written by The Press (who were out to sell newspapers), loyal supporters of TR and, or course, TR himself.

While there is no doubt that TR heroically lead several charges, and his personal heroism was never questioned, the article echoes the myth that his Rough Riders carried the battles in spite of the lackluster support of the Regulars. According to eyewitness accounts from well known individuals such as John J. "Black Jack" Pershing and the famous bounty hunter Tom Horn, as reported in Kareem Abdul-Jubbar and Alan Steinberg's 1996 Black Profiles in Courage, the inexperienced Rough Riders were saved repeatedly by the bravery and daring of the battle-tested Buffalo Soldiers who brought their years of Indian fighting to bear . . . African-American Regulars received eleven of the thirty-one Medals of Honor awarded to Army personnel during the conflict.

The article remains a nice piece for Soldiers to read and enjoy the exploits of one of our national heroes, despite the long overdue revelations of the past few decades

that African-American soldiers have played a critical role in every war our nation's military has fought.

Joe Christen MAJ (Ret.), US Army

THE PASSING OF A MENTOR

A friend of mine died the other day. He was a recently retired member of the New Mexico National Guard. His name was Lawrence (Larry) Lentz.

When I met Larry in 1991, I was a new member of the Guard and was figuring out how to fit in. Larry made me feel like I belonged and helped me become a valued member of the organization. I know there are many senior Soldiers, just like Larry, out there encouraging younger Soldiers to stay in the Guard, and we need even more. Larry allowed me to be a member of his family, his Guard family.

I am a better person for knowing Larry Lentz. And in his passing, I promise to strive to be the mentor he was to me for other Soldiers. The principles of the Guard family represent some of life's best virtues and best reasons for our younger Guard members to remain a part of the family at a time when their knowledge, skill and experience are needed by their country more than ever.

God bless you, Larry—I'll see you on the other side.

SSG Dick Dickerson, NMARNG





ILARNG SOLDIERS MIX OPS WITH COMPASSION

By CPL Daniel J. Redding, 1st Marine Logistics Group

CAMP TAQADDUM, IRAQ—Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, ILARNG performed a multi-faceted mission near Camp Taqaddum in mid-March, as they carried out weapons cache sweeps, investigated possible improvised explosive devices and conducted route clearance operations during the daylong operation.

Along the way, the unit took time to interact with the locals, stopping in local villages around the base.

The Soldiers' primary mission is to provide base security for the Marines and Sailors of the forward-deployed 1st Marine Logistics Group (MLG). The 4,200 joint-service members of 1st MLG are part of the 25,000 Marines, Airmen, Soldiers and Sailors

of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force's (MEF) forward deployed element.

The 1st MLG's mission is to provide sustained logistics support to 1st MEF and Iraqi security forces (ISF) operating in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. 1st MLG will also support the development of the ISF's logistic capabilities in order to enable independent ISF-led counter insurgency operations.

"During their mission, the Soldiers acquainted themselves with the routes in the area to ensure the safety of the roads for future convoys," said SSG Thomas D. Reif, convoy patrol leader.

At the end of the day, after conducting the route-clearing and terrain-association mission, the Soldiers stopped in two local towns to pass out stuffed animals, candy and toothbrushes to the Iraqi children.

The Soldiers were grateful it wasn't business as usual and that they could do something a little lighthearted.

"Whether it's handing out candy or searching for IEDs, the Soldiers are proud of what they are doing in Iraq," said SFC Timothy J. Atteberry, platoon sergeant.

"The individual, personal satisfaction of helping another human being really comes from these kinds of humanitarian-aid type missions," said SFC Atteberry, a native of Champagne, IL.

While the day ended with no weapons caches or IEDs discovered, it was ultimately a success for the Soldiers.

"As long as everybody gets back inside the wire safe (and) we put a few smiles on the faces around here . . . it's definitely a good day," said SPC Sean M. Seahausen.

ARIZONA GUARD MPS REFLECT ON DEPLOYMENT

By U.S. Army SPC Karl Johnson 363rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, IRAQ—A yearlong deployment to Iraq offers Soldiers both opportunities and challenges. For one Arizona National Guard Military Police unit, going home after a tough deployment provided them the opportunity to look back on the accomplishments, as well as the costs, of their deployment.

"I've seen the most violent parts of life and, at the same time, the greatest humanity ever," said rLT Jon Cope, 860th Military Police Company, reflecting on his year in Iraq.

The MPs spent the majority of their year working side-by-side with Iraqi police officers, training them in the techniques necessary to one day take over complete responsibility for securing the Iraqi streets. Their "beat" was the Abu Graib district of western Baghdad.

Success in the mission was by no means guaranteed. In fact, several of the MPs said they had their doubts as to whether the Iraqi police could be brought up from their meager beginnings to operate independent of Coalition Forces.

"When we first arrived in Iraq, the Iraqi policeman were wearing slippers and walking around with AK-47s," recalled 1LT Cope, a Phoenix, AZ-native.

Over the course of the next year, the 860th MPs worked tirelessly to reverse their initial impressions of the Iraqi forces. With hard work and dedication, the MPs were able to help transform an inexperienced group of men into a professional force ready for the challenges of autonomy.

"We definitely made a difference here," said SGT Chris Palmer, 860th MP Company. "From day one until we left, we could see with our own eyes their improvement."

"The Iraqi police that we worked with now do their jobs the right way without any help or supervision," SGT Palmer said. "I wish everyone back home could see the difference we've made."

When asked what major factor contributed to the unit's success, the MPs were quick to point out the willingness of their Iraqi counterparts to learn new things. "The Iraqi police in our area were very willing to learn, and they really want to make a difference in their country," said SGT Palmer.

The Soldiers from the 860th MP Company left Iraq Feb. 14 to begin the journey back home to the U.S. They leave behind the knowledge that they have made a positive and lasting effect on the country of Iraq and the police officers who patrol it.

"The friendships formed between the MPs

I've seen the most

violent parts of life

and, at the same

humanity ever

time, the greatest

-1LT Jon Cope, 860th MP Company

and their Iraqi counterparts will last a lifetime, but the strides made in Iraqi police development will last even longer," ILT Cope said.

"After a while working with them, we made friends with the Iraqi

policemen—and we really care about them," said rLT Cope. "If one of our [Iraqi police] was harmed, we took it like they were one of us."

The tragic loss of a Soldier is something every unit hopes to avoid, but when a U.S. or Iraqi police officer fell, the loss was felt on both sides. All of the MPs know they paid a heavy price to help ensure another country's freedom.

"I lost three close friends while I was here," said ILT Cope. "I've lost some hearing in both ears, and I deal with several other aches and pains every day, but I haven't lost time in life. I think all the time I've been here and everything I've done has been for a purpose."

Despite the many sacrifices made by the MP unit, much was accomplished in its year in Iraq. Along with the success the MPs experienced with the Iraqi police, they also helped to forge positive relationships with the Iraqi people.

"I can't tell you how many times our medics have treated families who needed medical care," said rLT Cope. "We also visited villages to check on the well-being of the local people."

With the donations supplied by a not-forprofit civilian organization, the MPs were able to deliver toys and supplies to Iraqi citizens in their area. The MPs said they felt that it was gestures like this that made a significant

difference in how the local Iraqi citizens responded to them.

Belief in each other and in their mission is what pulled the 860th through a challenging year in Iraq, they said, adding that they hope their accomplish-

ments will make the job of the units who follow them that much easier.

"We got the Iraqi police on their feet and headed in the right direction," explained SGT Palmer. "Ihope the people back home continue to give us a chance to do our job—and they, too, will start seeing the changes."

TIES THAT BIND 1LT Jon Cope, AZARNG, holds a little girl he called "Gypsy" in the village of Al Risallah, located near the Abu Ghraib districtof western Baghdad. 1LT Cope and his unit, the 860th Military Police Company from the AZARNG, spent a year in Iraq working to train Iraqi police officers and to forge a bond of trust with local citizens.



GX INTEL >>

A MESSAGE OF SUPPORT. SEND IT TO GX

By Keith Kawasaki

Do you want to send a message* of support to our Soldiers, or even just one Soldier in particular? Or, are you a Soldier and wish to send a message home? If you can answer "Yes" to either of these questions, we want to hear from you right away!

Record a message supporting our Soldiers or saying "Hi" to the folks back home either with audio, photo, or video equipment or just write a letter, then submit the message for posting on GXonline.com's Greetings page. We want to display as many of these as we can to help maintain a great morale among our Soldiers and families!

GX has built a *Greetings* page on GXonline. com specifically for support messages dedicated to our Army National Guard Soldiers and family members.

Help us fill this page with support messages from all 54 states and territories, as well as all deployed locations across the globe!

In your message, please state your name, where you are from, and if applicable, your Soldier's name and his or her unit. If you are a Soldier, please state your full name, rank, unit, state affiliation, and the location you are deployed to in your message.

If you're technically inclined, you can submit your audio, photo, video, and written messages to:

editor@gxonline.com

Or, you can just drop a tape, photo, or letter in the mail and send it to:

> **GX: The Guard Experience Support Messages** 1625 Broadway Third Floor Nashville. TN 37

*Messages may be edited for content or file size.

RECORD UTAH SOLDIERS HONORED



Department Battalion Chief Jeffrey Thomas credited CW3 Eyre with saving the life of the fire victim.

SGT Campbell, who resides in Eagle Mountain, was honored for providing first aid and assisting in the rescue of a trapped motorist on Interstate 80 in northwestern Nevada on Jan. 22.

According to SGT Campbell, one veteran senator told him the awards

HONOR MG Tarbet pins the UTARNG Utah Cross medal on SGT Campbell at the State Capitol.

By MAJ Hank McIntire, UTARNG

SALT LAKE CITY, UT—In a ceremony in the Senate chamber on Utah's Capitol Hill on Feb. 23, two Utah National Guard Soldiers received the Utah Cross award for separate acts of bravery.

CW3 Ryan D. Eyre, 211th Aviation Regiment, and SGT Scott R. Campbell, 640th Regional Training Institute, received the medals from Utah National Guard Adjutant General MG Brian Tarbet.

Utah Senate President John Valentine then presented the two Soldiers with a commendation certificate signed by him and Senators Mark Madsen and Patrice Arent, who represent the home districts of SGT Campbell and CW3 Eyre, respectively. The certificate read in part, "For distinguished performance of critical skills in a crisis situation."

The Utah Cross is awarded to Utah National Guard Soldiers or Airmen who distinguish themselves through heroism or other acts that are clearly above and beyond the call of duty.

CW3 Eyre, a Murray resident, received the award for his role in the rescue of an individual trapped in a burning house Dec. 20. Salt Lake Fire

PRIDE Utah Senate President John Valentine congratulates CW3 Ryan Eyre following the Utah Cross award ceremony.

ceremony was so moving for her that it was the first time she had ever been brought to tears in the chamber.

Utah Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., congratulated the award recipients and their families in his office shortly after the ceremony. "We appreciate your good service and your commitment to helping others. Well done," Huntsman told the Soldiers. Both Soldiers were surprised by all the public attention they received.

"I did what anybody else would do. I've been serving in the Guard for a long time," said CW3 Eyre. "You just make the obvious decision." SGT Campbell was equally modest in his reaction to the notoriety. "Anyone in my unit would do what I did," he said. "When you're a Soldier and you see a need, you stop and help. I love being a Soldier and serving my state and nation," added SGT Campbell.



FL GOV. RECOGNIZES SOLDIERS, FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD DAY

Courtesy of FL Governor's Office

TALLAHASSEE, FL-Governor Jeb Bush joined LT Governor Toni Jennings, MG Douglas Burnett, Florida Guard members, state officials and members of the community to celebrate Florida National Guard Day. The annual Florida National Guard Day brings troops from across Florida to Tallahassee to educate the public and government officials on the many roles and missions of the Florida Guard. At the event Gov. Bush introduced the newly minted Governor's Combat Coin, a commemorative coin honoring all Florida Guard members who have served in the War on Terror.

"I thank our men and women in uniform for their selfless service to Florida and the United

States," said Gov. Bush. "It is their willingness to make sacrifices in their own lives to answer the call to duty... that protects our liberties and keeps Floridians safe."

The Governor's Combat Coin will be awarded to the more than 9,000 Guard members who have been deployed overseas in the War on Terror or who have taken part in other special missions. Each service member will receive two of these coins. The first is for the service member to keep as a token of Florida's appreciation for his or her service. The second coin is for each service member to give as a token of appreciation to the person or organization that supported him or her the most during deployment.

Gov. Bush also awarded the first Combat Coins to three of Florida's outstanding Guard members: SGT Marlon Mendoza, SSG Jeffrey Stazzere and Senator Carey Baker.

SGT Marlon Mendoza, formerly a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army, joined the FLARNG at the end of his service in the Army. SGT Mendoza was deployed to Iraq to serve with convoy securities in the 3rd Battalion, 124th Infantry for 12 months. He has returned from Iraq and is currently assigned to the Recruiting and Retention battalion in Gainesville. As a Marine, he took part in Operation Deny Flight, in which his unit rescued an Air Force pilot who had been



RECOGNITION Florida Governor Jeb Bush recognizes the hard work and sacrifice of Guard members on Florida National Guard Day.

shot down behind enemy lines in Bosnia. Later, SGT Mendoza was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for rescuing three drowning people from an overturned vehicle in a watery ditch.

SSG Jeffrey Stazzere joined the Florida Air Guard in 1997 as a Satellite, Wideband and Telemetry Specialist at Mac Dill Air Force Base in Tampa. In 2001, he was called to active duty and was deployed to Pakistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2004, SSG Stazzere was deployed back to Pakistan to again support Operation Enduring Freedom. After returning, he helped with Florida relief efforts following four hurricanes in 2004 and two hurricanes in 2005.

Senator Carey Baker joined the FLARNG in 1981 and continues to serve. From 2000 to 2004, he served in Florida's House of Representatives. During that time, he spent one year in Iraq serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom as a First Sergeant of a line infantry company. In 2004, Sen. Baker was elected to the Florida Senate. He is currently serving as both the Senator of Lake County and as a First Sergeant in the Guard.



NWTF OFFERS DISCOUNT TO SOLDIERS

Courtesy of The National Wild Turkey Federation

EDGEFIELD, SC—The National Wild Turkey Federation, a nonprofit hunting and conservation organization, is offering discounted annual memberships to active duty military service members.

The \$10 military membership includes the complete membership package—a one-year subscription to *Turkey Call* magazine (a full-color, bi-monthly publication) and *The Caller* (a quarterly publication featuring regional and national Federation news). A membership card and decal are also included. The offer is for current military servicemen and women.

"Our men and women in uniform understand the meaning of duty and honor and have sacrificed so much," said Rob Keck, NWTF CEO. "Every day they are asked to give even more. They are answering the call for our country and, so often, for conservation. This special membership is just a small thank you from everyone here at the NWTF."

For an additional \$5, military members may sign up as a Hunting Heritage Club member. Membership includes a Hunting Heritage Club decal, membership card and the new *Get in the Game* magazine, a bi-annual publication offering landowners the latest tips for managing property for wildlife and hunting. The NWTF also offers a discounted membership for students 18-23 years old.

www.nwtf.org (800) THE-NWTF

NJ SOLDIER HELPS

By SGT Waine D. Haley, 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Courtesy of DVIDS

SAMARRA, IRAQ—A member of the New Jersey National Guard, 1LT Peter Hegseth is now serving as the Assistant Civil Affairs Officer, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, known as the Iron Rakkasans of the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq.

As a Civil Affairs Officer stationed at Forward Operation Base Brassfield-Mora, he is able to assist both the Army and the local population of Samarra.

The Civil Affairs team is currently working with the leaders of Samarra on more than 30 different projects. The foremost projects are security, water treatment facilities, electric



substations, waste management and financial institutions.

With a background in banking and politics, 1LT Hegseth has an insight into many aspects of Civil Affairs. One of his many tasks is to evaluate the city's ability to sustain a financial institution. "There are no banks in Samarra," said 1LT Hegseth. "We are trying to evaluate if it's feasible to open one here. Security is a big issue with that, as with most things in Samarra."

During Hussein's era, there was a small bank and many city utilities, but all were underdeveloped. "Tikrit is where he (Hussein) is from, therefore Samarra was a second priority," 1LT Hegseth said. "It was left behind and ignored."

DIPLOMACY 1LT Peter Hegseth, 3/187th IR, meets with Manmood Kalaf Ahmed, Mayor of Samarra.

1LT Hegseth and the Civil Affairs team are trying to coach the leadership of Samarra on how to obtain the funding to bring the city up to proper standards. At this point, they are relying on Coalition Forces for this funding.

"We don't want a lot of U.S. money coming into the area. With this money comes inflated prices and more security issues. For us to think we can just give them money is oversimplifying the problem," said 1LT Hegseth.

1LT Hegseth and the Civil Affairs team are also trying to teach the leaders how to create the political bonds they will need when Coalition Forces pull out of the city.

"I majored in politics in college, so I've been very interested in how the government and politics work," 1LT Hegseth said. "Starting at the base level of the democratic institution has been a great learning experience."

"Government needs to provide security and basic services," 1LT Hegseth said. "I think once we can smooth out some of the grievances that warfare brings, we will start to see the much needed improvements that we are looking for."

By Nelia Schrum and Andricka Hammonds, American Forces Press Service

SAN ANTONIO, TX-When the 2006 San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo pulled up stakes Feb. 19, it left the wounded warriors recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center here and hospital staff with fond memories of Texas and cowboy hospitality.

Texas legend Willie Nelson and his family band treated the hospital to a concert in the Medical Mall Feb. 17, playing to a packed audience of staff and patients. Opening with his hit, "Whiskey River," Nelson sang signature ballads like "On the Road Again," "Crazy" and "Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to be Cowboys."

Nelson played for 90 minutes. Following his performance, he signed autographs and posed for pictures with patients and staff for another hour.

The Willie Nelson band played at BAMC in February 2005 performing 11 numbers. Nelson had to cut his performance for the 2005 Stock Show and Rodeo because he was suffering from laryngitis.

"I wanted to come back again and play for the Soldiers because I didn't feel I had performed at my best last year," Nelson said, adding his throat since has recovered.

WILLIE NELSON AND FRIENDS FNTFRTAI WOUNDED WARRIORS

Lynyrd Skynyrd, the southern rock band that made the song "Sweet Home Alabama" famous, invited the wounded warriors for a meet-and-greet prior to their rodeo performance Feb. 18, as did country music artist Clay Walker.

Cowboy, Luke Branquinho, who claimed the world champion steer wrestling title in 2004, made the rounds at BAMC visiting with patients.

Buck Taylor, an actor who starred in the hit series "Gunsmoke," stopped by BAMC in full western gear to visit patients in the Burn Center, Amputee Care Center and Occupational Therapy.

Taylor, an accomplished western artist, designed the cover of the San Antonio Stock



LEGENDARY SUPPORT Texas legend Willie Nelson and his family band treat a packed audience of staff and patients to a concert at Brooke Army Medical Center. Following his performance, Willie signed autographs and posed for pictures with patients and staff.

Show and Rodeo program. Miss Texas Rodeo, Beth Murphy, joined Taylor on his visit.

Bareback rider Chris Harris spent the morning of Feb. 11, before his rodeo performance, visiting inpatients at BAMC.

Other big-name groups including Big and Rich and the Charlie Daniels Band provided the Soldier and Family Assistance Center with rodeo and concert tickets.



When disaster strikes, the people of the United States count on the skilled personnel of the Army National Guard to help pull them through. Today it's a flood, tomorrow it could be a wildfire, earthquake, or tornado. Whether you want to pursue

a career as an engineer, pilot, mechanic, or even doctor, the Guard can help you get the education you need to perform at the highest levels — both in and outside the Guard. To learn more, contact us today, by phone or on the web.

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THE SCARNG STRATEGY FOR EMPOWERING YOUTH

By 1LT Roberto Di Giovine, Italian Army Reserve

SOUTH CAROLINA—1LT Robert Di Giovine is studying the dynamics of America's Citizen-Soldiers in an effort to pay tribute to them through his words and photography. As an Italian Army Reserve Soldier, 1LT Giovine's work offers a unique perspective of being on the outside looking in. The following story, submitted by 1LT Di Giovine, profiles South Carolina Army National Guard recruiter SSG Brent D. Cobb and the methodology behind his tremendous work within

South Carolina's high schools.

I was told SSG Brent D. Cobb is a good Soldier and a passionate man, so I decided to meet the guy. The opportunity arose at the J.L. Mann High School in January and later in February of this year. Here, I learned how important the application of passion and good concepts is when offering guidelines to young students. We live in a world of television "reality" shows where it's often hard to figure what is real and what is not. This is one of the biggest problems facing young

generations, and this is the environment where some good "army-style" advice can really make a difference in a young person's education and approach to life.

SSG Cobb asked the J.L. Mann students: "What do you want to do with your life? What kind of job do you want? What are you good at?"—all very simple questions, yet the "wake-up call" for the sleepy teenagers. The questions offer the opportunity to think about commitment, responsibility, tasks and goals—in a word: principles. SSG Cobb is a SCARNG recruiter, sure; but he is also a slap in the face for some kids who will soon realize the time for the playground is over. SSG Cobb offers these kids what the corporate world would call "career direction."

SSG Cobb has been involved in many school programs over the past four years of his recruiting tour. The majority of the programs are based on the "Career Direction Program" developed by Career Training Concepts, Inc. and the "You Can School Program" created by the Army National Guard. While talking with him about the initiatives, SSG Cobb explained how each program worked and what the intent is: "These programs are designed to inspire students and young people to take charge of their lives and motivate them to be productive citizens and tomorrow's leaders," said SSG Cobb.

The first program is Career Direction, and the purpose of the program is to provide a high quality, career-oriented workshop to senior high students, which will enable them, through the use of a validated interest inventory to make appropriate educational and career choices. It will also provide students tools and strategies to enhance their job-finding skills and provide guidance on making informed choices regarding alcohol, drugs and personal relationships.

The program is based on Maslow [and fellow psychologists] Erskine and Holland's theories and the hierarchy of human needs. It is a comprehensive, no-cost guidance program that has helped over three million high school students plan their futures. The Career Direction Program has many advantages to high schools, such as supporting and enhancing their own career development program; providing students with an organized approach for involving their parents; helping students use four key career components—Interest, Values, Abilities and Personality—and relating them to appropriate career choices; and offering factual, thought-provoking information on the issues of teen pregnancy, substance abuse

During the program the students take a 10–15 minute questionnaire that can be

easily self-scored. This has an extremely high correlation between the Career Direction Interest Inventory and other leading assessment instruments. After they complete the questionnaire, the students can immediately go online to the Careers and Occupation Guide to create a custom report based on their interest patterns. This program is a tool that schools can use for placing their students into the 16 career clusters developed by the U.S. Dept. of Education (these may vary from state to state).

The second program is the You Can School Program. This program is an award-winning, free public service offered by the Army National Guard. Delivered in classroom settings by certified presenters, the You Can program, divided into 30 dynamic presentations, makes effective use of video, music, and graphics, and introduces students to necessary life skills to let them know that they can have successful futures and accomplish great things.

The Life Betterment category includes presentations that give students practical tips and suggestions for developing life skills that they can use now and after graduation. The Discovery presentations help students understand the American identity and shows how Americans relate to the rest of the world. The Disaster Preparedness series shows students what they can do to stay safe during a disaster.

SCARNG's use of these two programs, as implemented by SSG Cobb, perfectly illustrates how passion and professionalism meet to create the ideal condition for a job well-done. SSG Cobb is an American Soldier with a daily mission: helping young Americans with the potential to develop their own skills and become our leaders of tomorrow. The Military is the best school of life, and the U.S. Army National Guard is the most interesting way to live life as a Citizen and as a



The highly motivational presentations help students believe that they can shape their futures—and make them want to do so. The goal is neither to tell students "everything there is to know" about a topic, nor give them a "broad-brush" understanding of the subject. Rather, the goal is to give them an essential skill or shift in their thinking, which helps them make wise decisions right now and throughout their lives.

The 30 presentations are grouped thematically around four main subject areas. The Health and Social Well-Being presentations provide clear explanations and down-to-earth suggestions for staying safe and healthy and learning how to get along with others.

LIFE TOOLS The Career Direction Program teaches students four key career components—Interest, Values, Abilities and Personality—and how to relate them to appropriate career choices

Soldier, staying close to the community while helping the Country.

To request any of these programs listed above, please contact your local Army National Guard representative or send a request for the Army National Guard to present a no-cost workshop.

For more info:

www.youcanschoolprogram.com

COURTESY OF ORARNG PAO

SPIRIT OF AMERICA ROCKS AGAIN



By Keith Kawasaki

The Spirit of America Tour, which brings the top names in music and entertain-

ment to military bases free of charge for service members and their families, is lining up their 'o6 schedule.

Slated for the summer so far are Jo Dee Messina, The Charlie Daniels Band, and many more. If you're looking for a great family-friendly outing this summer, The Spirit of America Tour will not disappoint.

www.spiritofamericatour.org



THOUSANDS MARCH FOR **BATAAN MEMORIAL**

By Monte Marlin, courtesy of Army News Service

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, NM—The 2006 17th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March was conducted March 26. The event drew nearly 3,900 service members and civilians. Marchers represented all 50 states as well as the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and Korea.

On April 9, 1942, approximately 75,000 Filipino and U.S. Soldiers were surrendered to Japanese forces. The prisoners were forced to march about 100 kilometers in the scorching heat of the Phillipines jungles to a prison camp. During the journey, thousands died.



FIRST FEMALE CREW CHIEF FOR 1042ND

Courtesy of ORARNG PAO

OREGON—At 30 years old, married with two children, you wouldn't think joining the military would be on Tracy Robison's radar screen. But then again, SGT Robison isn't your average woman. She wanted a challenge and a chance to serve, so shortly before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, she enlisted in the Oregon Army National Guard. It would turn out to be a life-changing decision, and she's been meeting new challenges ever since.

"I joined the Oregon National Guard

because I was at a point in my life where I wanted to challenge myself," SGT Robison said. "And my children were older so they could better deal with the initial separation. I didn't realize I would be deployed every other year, but I'm still

glad I can serve my country in any capacity."

SGT Robison was assigned to the 1042nd

SGT Robison was assigned to the 1042nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance), which

was sent to Afghanistan in July 2005. It would become her second deployment since joining the Oregon National Guard and her first overseas. Her primary duty was as a mechanic on the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, with additional duty as a supply sergeant. But SGT Robison had her sights set even higher: she wanted to become a crew chief. "Being a crew chief has been my goal since the last deployment. I never wanted to be stuck in the rear again," said SGT Robison.

A crew chief's duties include maintaining the aircraft, load and passenger security, fuel consumption calculation, airspace surveillance, clearing the aircraft of obstacles, and operating the hoist for missions in which a medic needs to be lowered to help a patient.

While in theater, SGT Robison was able to complete her flight hours to become a crew chief. With the help of her primary trainer, SSG Mark Carter, and almost three weeks of training in Jalalabad, SGT Robison now flies as the first female crew chief for the 1042nd Medical Company. "I feel damn proud to be the first female crew chief—but let me say that I have broken no barrier, because none really existed," said SGT Robison, while deployed in Afghanistan.

"I just happen to be the first female who was a mechanic, showed promise and progressed. I have done nothing that the males haven't done. My training is the same," she added.

An accomplishment SGT Robison is most proud of included helping the people of Afghanistan. "Knowing that they are happy that we are here makes all the difference," said SGT Robison. "We save lives—that's what MEDEVAC is all about."

Back home, SGT Robison's husband, SGT John Robison, who is a member of Joint Force Headquarters of the Oregon National Guard, took care of their two children: Ben, age 15, and Haley, age 12. No matter how successful and challenging her missions have been in Afghanistan, thoughts of her loved ones were never far from her mind.

"I've missed a lot of important events in my children's lives, and I will never get them

back. I don't regret joining though. I am doing something that makes me proud, and I hope that when my children grow up, they will look back and be proud of me, too," SGT Robison said.

In February, SGT Robison returned home safely from Afghanistan and has reunited with her husband and children.

children ... will be proud of me, too

-SGT Tracy Robison, ORARNG

and I hope that my

I am doing something

that makes me proud,

AT TIMES LIKE THIS IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THERE'S A STRONG NATIONAL GUARD IN YOUR COMMUNITY.



Natural disasters do more than make headlines. They affect the lives of millions of Americans every year. And so does the National Guard. Whether it's a wildfire, tornado, hurricane or earthquake, the Guard is there. Always has been. And with the support of dedicated Americans, the Guard will always be the force America's communities count on.

Can your community count on you to keep the Guard strong? Visit our web site today or call us. We'll give you lots of reasons why you should become a Citizen-Soldier.

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PENTAGON CHANNEL USES INNOVATION TO REACH ITS AUDIENCE

By MAJ Francisco G. Hamm, USAF Pentagon Channel

In late 2003, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld asked how he could communicate with all military service members at one time. What started out as a challenge to answer a simple question has emerged as a critical communications link that serves all military members, regardless of service, time or location. As a result of the Secretary's inquiry, the Department of Defense created and launched its original television channel—the Pentagon Channel—in May 2004.

The Pentagon Channel, celebrating its second year on the air this month, broadcasts military news and information for and about the 2.6 million members of the U.S. Armed Forces including Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve.

Although now available on base to the more than one million service members who live and work on 310 U.S. military bases, camps, armories and installations, the DoD Public Affairs Internal Communications team is working hard to make the Pentagon Channel available to the National Guard and Air Guard members who don't live on military bases.

"Making our service available to the National Guard and Air Guard is very important for us, especially now during heightened deployments," says Brian Natwick, Pentagon Channel General Manager. "Although geographic locations cause some challenges, we are leveraging technology to provide military news and information that is essential to our Guard community."

The military has been on the forefront of innovation in communications for decades and reaching its audience in innovative ways is a long standing tradition for the American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS), which carries the Pentagon Channel

In fact, in 1942, AFRTS played a monumental role in early radio with their Buddy Kits. "The military was instrumental in the development of the vinyl record," says Melvin Russell, Director of Broadcasting for AFRTS and the Pentagon Channel. "Originally made of shellac, the records wouldn't hold up in the field. Through its testing and develop-



ment, the military helped bring in the vinyl era. Millions of albums were produced and shipped out to the troops," explains Russell.

Being a communications leader in 1942 was as critical then as it is today. Which is why the Pentagon Channel utilizes every new technology available.

Service members and their families can watch the Pentagon Channel via streaming

I find the reports to be helpful, and it keeps me in touch with military operations and events.

-MAJ Robb Mattila, 682nd Engineer Battalion,

video 24 hours a day online at pentagonchannel.mil and download audio and video clips to their iPods to listen to the Pentagon Channel 'on the go,' as part of the Pentagon Channel's newest service, podcasting.

"I try to watch it one to two times a week to keep up with current news," says Army Major Robb Mattila, 682nd Engineer Battalion, Minnesota National Guard. "I find the reports to be helpful and it keeps me in touch with military operations and events."

In addition, more than 12 million domestic households can watch the Pentagon Channel on commercial satellite and cable systems nationwide. DISH Network, Verizon FiOS, AT&T/SBC, and divisions of Comcast, Time Warner, Cox, Charter, Mediacom, RCN, Armstrong, Midcontinent, Knology, GCI and a number of smaller cable companies and local access channels around the country carry the Pentagon Channel. The channel also reaches 700,000 service members overseas in 177 countries through AFRTS.

Domestically, the channel is distributed to military installations and armories for free. "I recommend any unit that can employ this channel to do so. It keeps us informed about a variety of changes and updates within all branches of service," says Air Force Technical Sergeant Adam Smith, 182nd Communications Flight, 182nd Airlift Wing, Peoria Air Guard.

Among the channel's programming are two flagship programs, RECON and Around the Services. RECON is a monthly half hour news magazine that tells stories from the perspective of military members, their



Serving Those Who Serve

Pentagon Channel Contacts:

NEWS: contact newsdesk at 703.428.0480 or newsdesk@pentagonchannel.mil

MILITARY DISTRIBUTION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

contact Michael Winneker at

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866.854.384 or email

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PROGRAMMING IDEAS: contact

Jim Langdon at **703.428.1999** or **James.Langdon@PentagonChannel.mil**

Check out the Pentagon Channel: www.pentagonchannel.mil

families, and people around the world whose lives have been touched by the work of men and women in uniform, notes Jim Langdon, Director of Broadcast Operations. "RECON tells the story behind the story," he explains.

Around the Services, a daily half-hour news show, features compelling stories from the unique perspective of military reporters. In addition to briefings, hearings and special events, the Pentagon Channel also features newscasts from Afghanistan, Iraq, Europe, Japan, and Korea.



The Pentagon Channel team consists of more than 50 people, including a select group of military journalists that you see on the air.

"It's like no other broadcast assignment I've had in the Army," says Army Staff Sergeant Jake Newman, Pentagon Channel reporter. "The mix of civilians with network experience and some of the best military broadcasters our Armed Forces have to offer really gives the opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and really fine-tune your skills as a broadcaster."

However, with a job like his, there are some challenges. "The biggest challenge," according to Newman is, "trying to figure out how I can make the next story better than the one I did. I want every product to be the absolute best it can be," he explains.

Most viewers who send in feedback find the channel very informative, especially during major events.

"This channel became very important when we were all watching last year during the BRAC hearings," says Air Force Master Sergeant Mary-Dale Amison, 131st Communications Flight, 131st Fighter Wing, Missouri National Guard.

As the Pentagon Channel continues to lead the way in cutting edge military programming and delivery, it is proud to be a part of the tradition that ensures all military members are kept informed, regardless of location.

Although shellac records have become nothing more than a relic today, the Pentagon Channel serves as a reminder of the innovation within the military that can come from a basic need to communicate.



DC SOLDIER AWARDED BRONZE STAR

By SSG Lorenzo Parnell Courtesy of DCARNG PAO

WASHINGTON, DC—As the DC National Guard deploys Soldiers in support of Operation Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom, we continue to show how well we are trained and ready for missions at home or abroad. Such is the case with ILT Yolonda Lee of the I40th Transportation Company. She was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for her leadership when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device struck her combat logistical patrol.

The attack occurred west of Tikrit, Iraq, on June 28, 2005, killing one and wounding two of her Soldiers. She made the decision to maneuver the gun trucks to perform a rescue of the trapped Soldiers and simultaneously conduct cordon and search operations, detaining two Iraqi insurgents. Her actions and leadership were key to minimizing injuries and also detaining two persons. The capture of persons suspected of triggering the attack was also instrumental in the company's recovery from its first fatality.

While deployed to Iraq, rLT Lee was assigned to the Minnesota National Guard. She was selected as the Officer in Charge for a 15-truck serial in the Ground Assault Convoy traveling over 590 miles to a Forward Operations Base (FOB). Assigned as Medium Truck Platoon Leader for Bravo Company of the 50th Main Support Battalion and 42nd Infantry Division, rLT Lee says she not only had to win the respect as a leader, but also had to gain the Soldiers' confidence. She was one of only two female Combat Logistical Patrol Officers in the battalion.

As her tour continued, ILT Lee's leadership was tested again on July12, 2005, when a patrol she was commanding was attacked by a suicide IED. She maintained her composure and returned the convoy to base with no injuries or equipment damage.

"My focus from the start was to learn as much as possible, being a good leader and bringing my Soldiers home safely," said ILT Lee. "It's an honor to receive such an award. I never thought in a thousand years I would receive such accolades."



155TH BCT SOLDIERS INITIATE **DIXIE THUNDER RUN**

By Keith Kawasaki

MISSISSIPPI—Gear up and get ready for the first annual Dixie Thunder Run motorcycle rally, benefiting our wounded Soldiers and families of fallen Soldiers, on June 10–12, 2006 spanning from Tupelo, MS to Meridian, MS.

The event is sponsored by Chunky River Harley Davidson and Deep South Cycles. You can register prior to the event at either of those locations. Registration for the Dixie Thunder Run will begin at 7 a.m., June 10th, at the Bancorp South Center in Tupelo, MS. The registration fee is \$20 and includes a tshirt or a baseball cap. Food and refreshments will be provided along the route. The ride will begin at approximately 8 a.m. Participants will proceed to the Chunky River Harley Davidson in Meridian, MS, where there will be an overnight stay.

On June 11th, participants will have lunch at Deep South Cycles in Hattiesburg, MS. Participants should make their own hotel arrangements for the overnight stay. At the completion of the ride on June 12th, a presentation ceremony will be conducted for the families and service members of the 155th Brigade Combat Team who were injured or

lost their lives in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III. All proceeds from this event will go directly to the Soldiers and their families.

The concept for the Dixie Thunder Run was developed during the deployment of the 155th BCT in Iraq by MSARNG Soldiers SSG Tony Shackleford, SFC Ray Bailey, and SGT David Bland. SSG Shackleford is a 17-year Guard Soldier, who, while in Iraq, served as personal security for GEN Augustus Collins, 155th BCT Brigade Commander. "We just wanted to do a bike rally to support the troops that were injured or lost their lives while in Iraq, and it just took off from there," SSG Shackleford told *GX*.

True to all great initiatives, this is another effort that snowballed from just a few good folks putting their heads together. So gear up and get down to Tupelo on June 10th. Let's rally up the support these folks deserve. And you can join in on the support, even if you don't ride. T-shirts can be ordered online at the Dixie Thunder Run Web site and can be purchased at any of the stops along the route of the rally.

www.dixiethunderrun.com

MISSOURI GUARD RESPONDS TO TORNADO

By MAJ David S. Kolarik, MOARNG

SPRINGFIELD, MO—The Missouri National Guard recently responded in the effort to aid tornado and severe weather victims after deadly weather canvassed a significant area of the Show-Me state.

March proved to be a deadly month for many Missourians as tornadoes and severe thunderstorms plagued much of the state, claiming 11 lives while destroying or damaging approximately 3,200 homes.

Missouri Governor Matt Blunt ordered the Missouri National Guard to activate in the event that they were needed to assist with storm recovery operations.

SFC Les Clancy, a recruiter with the Missouri National Guard and resident of one of the severely effected areas had a five-ton Army National Guard truck placed at his Recruiting storefront in Ozark with a sign that read "Neighbors helping Neighbors; Please help fill my truck for tornado relief."

"I'm not only a member of the Missouri National Guard, I'm also a resident of this community," said SFC Clancy.

Throughout the day, citizens stopped by the Recruiting storefront and dropped off their donations.

Later that afternoon, Jim and Trish Schmig of Ozark stopped in and asked SFC Clancy to drive the truck to the adjacent Wal-Mart Supercenter. The Schmigs offered to purchase enough non-perishable items to finish filling the five-ton truck.

The Schmig's and SFC Clancy began shopping and filled approximately 15 shopping carts full with gloves, detergent, bleach, water, coolers, aspirin, lights, and other goods for distribution at approved drop-off sites.

"You guys are doing a great thing. My wife and I truly felt the need to give back to this community and you're providing a perfect means to do so," Schmig said.

Several other donations were dropped off prior to SFC Clancy driving the truck to an



GOOD ATTITUDE SFC Les Clancy presents a citizen donating water a National Guard t-shirt for his contribution to the tornado relief effort.

approved collection site for distribution to the storm victims.

"We may not have been activated, yet you can bet as Citizen-Soldiers, we're always going to be there in support of our communities in a time of crisis," SFC Clancy said.



By MAJ Garth Scott, MTARNG

WASHINGTON, DC—For its outstanding efforts in Drug Demand Reduction (DDR), the Montana National Guard Counterdrug Program received the National Guard Award during the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) Leadership Forum at the Washington Convention Center on Feb. 16.

Army MG Randall Mosley, Montana's Adjutant General; Air Force LTC James Taflan, state Counterdrug coordinator; Army LT Carla Lott, DDR administrator; and Army CWO Keith Banning, a DDR pilot, accepted the award on behalf of the Montana Guard.

"This program is dedicated to reducing the use and abuse of illicit drugs and making communities safe, healthy places to live in

MONTANA RECOGNIZED FOR DDR EFFORTS

with cooperation from partners in the community," said retired Army MG Arthur Dean, chairman and CEO of CADCA.

Each year at its national forum, CADCA recognizes one outstanding National Guard DDR Program that makes significant contributions and gives support to CADCA or one of its many coalitions. Montana was selected this year from a number of impressive nominations, according to coalition officials.

Montana's program was nominated by Casey Molloy, Youth Connections Coalition, for its continued support to schools, community coalitions, law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations through prevention resources, drug education and leadership training.

"We are extremely honored that the Helena coalition has recognized the efforts of the Montana DDR Program in reaching both school children and parents across the state," said MG Mosley. "Fighting drugs is a team effort, involving leaders in all communities. The National Guard is proud to be a part of that effort."

Counterdrug Coordinator LTC James Taflan has been the head of Montana's Counterdrug program for almost nine years and has seen the program grow in popularity throughout the state.

"LT Lott and SSG Drenda Carlson are the backbone of the program," said LTC Taflan. "They spend countless hours preparing and developing anti-drug information that speaks to the heart of the youth and supporting hundreds of schools and coalitions throughout the state."

CADCA represents 5,000 community anti-drug coalitions nationwide. Nearly every National Guard DDR Program in the 54 states and territories works with CADCA or one of its coalitions. That team effort makes the most of the nation's resources in fighting drugs, said the CADCA chairman.

HIS PAGE AND NEXT) SPC BENJAMIN COSS

OPERATION NEW HORIZONS OHIO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD IN HONDURAS

By SPC Benjamin Cossel, OHARNG PAO

OHARNG Teaches Dangers of Drugs

LA CEIBA, HONDURAS—In his 14 years working with the Franklin County (Ohio) Sheriff's Department as the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Officer, 1SG Joseph Vince has visited plenty of schools; he just never expected to give his presentation in Central America.

Visiting the Brassavola Bi-Lingual School March 29, in La Ceiba as part of Operation New Horizons, ISG Vince, Chief Medical NCO with the OHARNG Medical Detachment, taught children in grades 7-11 the dangers of drugs and gangs.

Operation New Horizons is a joint training exercise between members of the U.S. and Honduran militaries with a side effect of bringing civil relief to citizens of the area.

"Dr. Almador [a local Honduran dentist] knew that I was a D.A.R.E. officer and asked me if I would make my presentation at a local school," said 1SG Vince.

Arriving at the location, ISG Vince was shown to an auditorium where more than 100 7th, 8th and 9th grade students awaited.

rSG Vince started the presentation by asking them where he was from in the United States. "Anyone know where Ohio is," asked rSG Vince. Then he asked the kids why people use drugs. The group of timid school children eked out a response about which rSG Vince slightly teased them. "Come on, you're a smart group of kids, I know you can do better than that!"

Eventually, the kids became more excited in the presentation and answered Vince's questions with more vigor as he asked them about narcotics like methamphetamines, cocaine and marijuana.

"What about gangs," asked ISG Vince, "What do you know about gangs?"

The notorious Mara Salvatrucha 13 or MS-13 as its better known has a presence in the area.

"In the States, gangs are also a big problem. Especially the MS-13, and they are every bit as vicious in the States as they are here."

rSG Vince then gave the students tips on how to stay away from drugs and reasons not to join gangs.



"I think all and all the presentation was well received," said rSG Vince. "If just one child is helped by what I said, then it's all been worth it."

Later that afternoon, ISG Vince gave the same ant-drug and anti-gang presentation to Ioth and IIth grade students.

Student Translators Aid OHARNG

Rendering aid to citizens that do not speak the same language as the doctors can prove a challenge. Compound that problem with various regional dialects and the mission, even for those doctors who speak "medical Spanish," becomes nearly impossible.

Enter the students of Saint Theresa Bi-Lingual School.

For two weeks, more than 70 students of STBS worked side-by-side Soldiers of the Ohio Army National Guard Medical Detachment assisting

doctors, screeners, dentists and pharmacists bringing much needed medical relief to the outlying villages of La Ceiba, Honduras. On JUST SAY NO Senior Medical NCO of the State of Ohio and Franklin County (Ohio) Sheriff's Deputy, 1SG Joseph Vince of the OHARNG Medical Detachment, speaks to 9th grader Annette during a counter-drug presentation Mar 29, at the Brassavola Bi-Lingual School in La Ceiba, Honduras.

March 31, those students were recognized during a ceremony at the school.

Dr. Wilmer Amadour is a dentist working in La Ceiba and one of the local co-coordinators with Operation New Horizons and Joint Task Force Bravo acts as a liaison with Operation New Horizons.

"When the medical teams came down,

coordination was made between JTF Bravo and a group of local administrators," explained Amadour. "rLT Gloria Urcina (Honduran Air Force), who is very well known in the community, contacted three bi-lingual schools to see

–17-year-old Diderico Mantoya

work with the

This has been such a

good opportunity to

Americans and the

people of Honduras.

if they could assist."

By Honduran law, all students must complete a certain amount of community

TEAMWORK St. Theresa Bi-Lingual School student, Diderico Mantoya, works with CPT Robert Strickland of the OHARNO Medical Detachment. Mantoya is one of more then 70 students of the school who assisted doctors and medics providing translating services.

service work before they can graduate. Acting commander of the medical detachment, COL Brett Call is one of the officers who spoke "medical Spanish."

"I think I know just about enough to get by," said COL Call who soon learned the varied regions of the area all had their own unique dialect.

"I would say something to a patient expecting them to do something," said COL Call, "and the patient would just look at me like I was crazy. Thank goodness my translator was right there to clear up the confusion."

"If we didn't have the students translating for us . . . " said COL Call as he glanced at his watch, "heck, it's one o'clock now and we've already seen 500 patients. Without the students, we would have been here for a much longer time."

As the Soldiers of the medical detachment prepare to return home, they couldn't leave without saying thank you to the students who aided their mission so essentially.



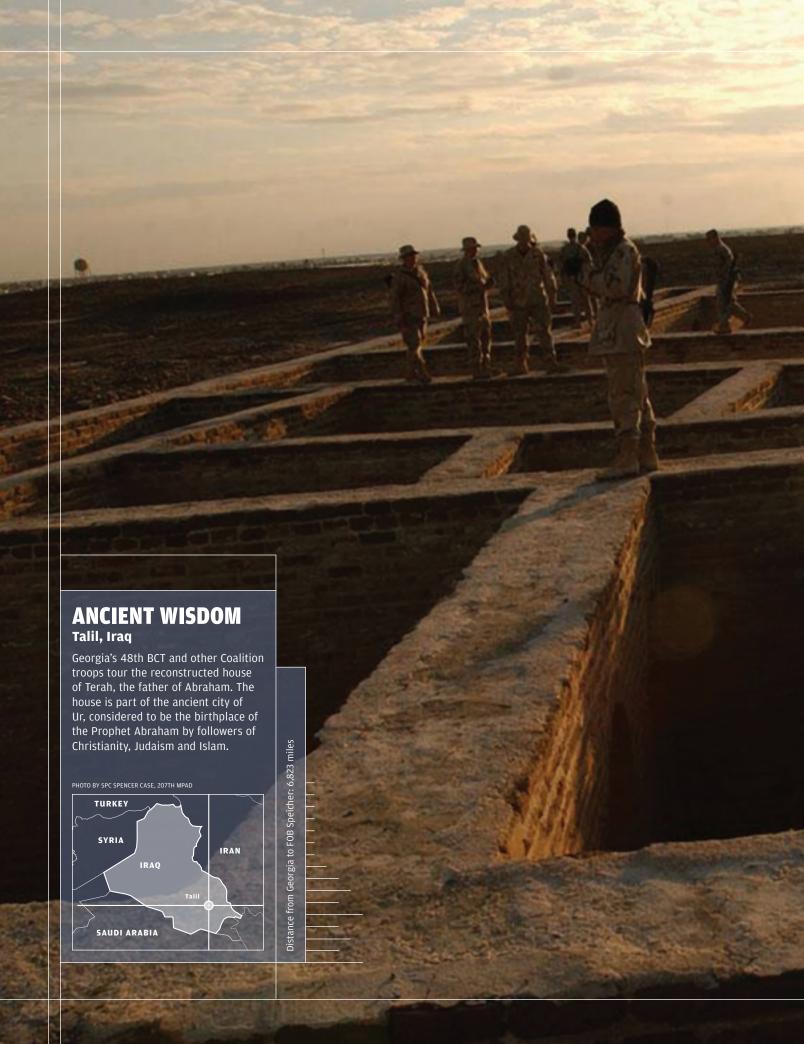
Gathering in a classroom at the school, LTC Stanley Jones read aloud a certificate individually prepared for the students.

"In recognition of your faithful service to the Ohio Army National Guard..." read LTC Jones to the students. The students were called up individually to rounds of applause.

"This has been such a good opportunity

to work with the Americans and the people of Honduras," said 17-year old Diderico Mantoya. "I'm going to miss them (the U. S. military) when they leave."

Check out the NY Guard's role in Operation New Horizons on page 52.



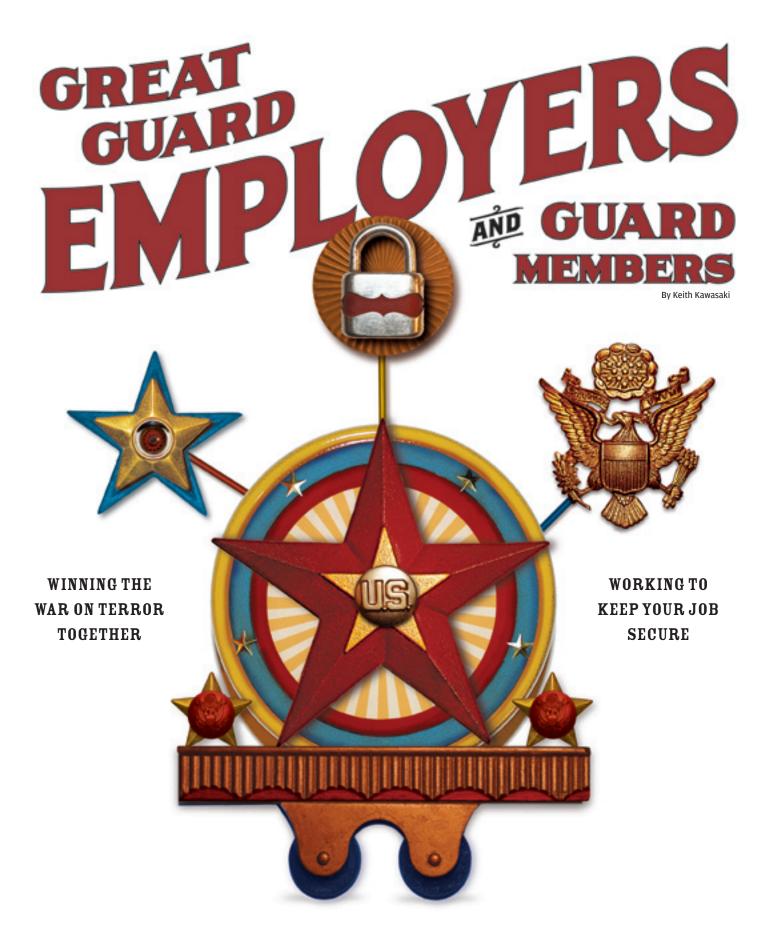












t's been said the Guard family is the backbone of the Soldier. True as this may be, there is an additional component necessary—the Guard employer. A great deal of our emotional and physical security stems directly from our financial foundation. No, money does not buy happiness, but it certainly helps, especially in the form of medical benefits and 401k.

One of the Soldier's greatest concerns is the stability of the home front while he or she is deployed. If our Soldiers can be confident they will have a job to come home to and, in a growing number of cases, receive a paycheck while deployed, our Soldiers can better focus on the mission and maintain a healthy morale.

This feature spotlighting Great Guard Employers has a bit of a split purpose. Yes, we want to congratulate these employers who have gone above and beyond in support of their employees who serve, providing an invaluable advantage to our forces engaged in the Global War on Terror. However, at the same time, we wish to inspire those employers who aren't quite sure how they can be proactive in their support and to enlighten interested parties on just why employer support is so very critical. We'll take a look at examples of corporate monoliths, mid-size organizations, and a few "Mom and Pop" folks—all able to offer significant financial and emotional support to our Soldiers and their family members, despite their size differences.

[TOYOTA] BENEFITS BY HIRING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY AND HAVE ATTAINED SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP ABILITIES WHILE ON MILITARY DUTY

-CHARLOTTE LASSOS, TOYOTA SPOKESWOMAN



TARGET CORPORATION

Target Corporation traces its roots back to the dawn of the 20th century as an offshoot of Dayton Dry Goods, which was founded in 1902 in Minneapolis, MN. The first Target store opened in 1962 in Roseville, MN, initiating the instantly recognizable bull's-eye logo and revolutionizing the discount department store. There are now over 1,400 Target stores in 47 states with over 300,000 employees.

In its massive pool of employees, Target counts a great number of Soldiers, Veterans, and military family members. With this in mind and heart, Target has taken a proactive approach to assist these employees, which has garnered Target a spot among the "Good Guys" list of the Reserve Officers Association. Target also signed a 5-Star Statement of Support for the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). The benefits and pay differential Target has enacted for activated Guard and Reserve significantly surpasses the legal requirements.

Spouses of military employees benefit with Target as well when employees participate in optional dependent coverage, which is continued through deployment if they choose. Target also permits employees to continue benefits provided through the 1986 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

In addition to impacting the individual wallets of our Soldiers, Target has enacted several programs geared to benefit the military family as whole.

"Target creates opportunities for our team members to reach out to deployed military personnel," said Lena Michaud, a spokesperson for Target, in a GX interview. "For example, this past year, Target team members were given the opportunity to create personal postcards for Soldiers overseas. These postcards were then delivered throughout the holiday season."

Perhaps the greatest program is Target's "United Through Reading" initiative that helps deployed service members stay connected to their young children through reading. "United Through Reading" videotapes Soldiers reading books to their children; the videotapes are then shipped to the Soldier's home. While the Soldier's child views the tape, a representative photographs or videotapes his or her reaction. This reaction photo or video is then shipped to the Soldier.

Lending a helping hand is nothing new to Target. In its earliest inception, founder George D. Dayton enacted a policy to distribute



MOVING FORWARD Don Esmond (LEFT), Toyota's senior vice president of automotive operations, stands with Patrick Stluka, the company's national labor relations manager—who nominated the company for the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award it won in 2005.

5% of income to worthy causes (officially instated in 1946). This policy is still in practice today; in addition to a growing list of other charitable programs. According to Target.com, Target volunteers donate more than 170,000 hours to over 6,500 communitybased projects.

"Target's support of U.S. veterans, reservists and active duty personnel is a reflection of our commitment to our team members. guests and the communities which we serve," said Michaud. "Our support also can be seen through our giving practices, both on a local and national level. We're proud of our record and committed to continued support." Visit Target online at www.Target.com

TOYOTA MOTOR COMPANY, LTD.

Information courtesy of Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service and America Supports You, and www.Toyota.co.jp

Kiichiro Toyoda created his first Aı prototype vehicle in 1935 in Japan. By 1937, Toyota Motor Company, Ltd. was established, and today reigns as one of the largest car manufacturers in the world.

Don Esmond, a Vietnam War hero, walked into the Toyota Motor Sales in Torrance, CA, in early 2004 and told the staff he wanted the company to develop a hiring program for Guard members and Reservists returning to civilian life from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The idea from Esmond, Toyota's senior vice president of automotive operations and a highly decorated Vietnam War veteran, turned into the Toyota and Lexus "Hire-a-Hero" program, launched in September 2004. Hirea-Hero worked so well that Patrick Stluka. Tovota's national labor relations manager, nominated the company for the 2005 Secretary of Defense Freedom Award, which the company won.

The award recognizes employers who go the extra mile to support their employees who serve the nation as Guard Soldiers or Reservists.

Stluka knows the needs of military people because he served in the Navv from 1970 to 1980 and then joined the Naval Reserve. He retired in 1993 while

serving as the command master chief of the San Bernardino U.S. Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center.

"The Hire-a-Hero program is a tool to make members of the military aware of job opportunities available at independently owned Toyota and Lexus dealerships," explained Toyota spokeswoman Charlotte Lassos. "The company benefits by hiring a diverse group of individuals who have typically demonstrated commitment and responsibility and have attained skills and leadership abilities while on military duty."

When Toyota-employed Guard members and Reservists are called to active duty, they keep their health care benefits, including medical, dental and vision; their life insurance continues; and they can continue their 401K contributions or make a

also can elect to keep their lease car or turn it in without earlyreturn penalty, and Toyota has designated an ombudsman

to assist Guard and Reserve employees and their families

while the employees fulfill their military obligation.

Esmond earned the Silver Star Medal for valor, the Distinguished Flying Cross, 45 Air Medals and a Purple Heart during the Vietnam War. He spent five years as a naval aviator and helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

The former Marine captain is a 1999 recipient of the Semper Fidelis Award and is director of the Semper Fidelis Foundation, which raises money and awards college scholarships to the deserving sons and daughters of U.S. Marines and the children of former Marines.

Lassos said that while the Iraq war heightened Esmond's and Toyota's appreciation of military servicemen and women, Toyota already had explored and implemented programs supporting the U.S. military before the war.

For example, she said, some Toyota associates have returned from active duty with stories about how fellow Reservists have lost their benefits or even their jobs. "That's something that will not happen at Toyota," Lassos noted. "The company makes up the difference in their Citizen-Soldier's pay, maintains their health care benefits and continues paying into their pension plan."

Toyota also has come to the aid of wounded service members with care packages when the troops return from fighting the war on terrorism. Toyota donated a 2004 Sienna Rampvan—a van modified to be driven by mobility-limited drivers and with room for up to three wheelchairs—to the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Visit Toyota online at www.Toyota.com



WALGREEN COMPANY

One of the nation's premiere neighborhood drugstores, Walgreens operated by the Walgreen Company, founded by Charles Walgreen, Sr. in 1901, has emerged from the humble beginnings of a 50 by 20 foot store in Chicago, IL, to now over 5,000 locations across 45 states and Puerto Rico, making it America's largest drugstore chain in sales. Despite being over 100 years old, the company remains actively relevant in the lives of the American people. So relevant in fact, that in January, for the second time in just seven months, Walgreen has increased its employee benefits for military service members. Walgreen has increased these benefits a whopping six times since 2002.

"We won't hesitate to do anything we can to make this time a little easier for our Soldiers and their families," said Walgreen Chairman and CEO Dave Bernauer in a Fourth of July greeting to all Walgreen employees. "The last thing I want them to worry about is money and healthcare. Pay and benefit continuation is the right thing to do, and I'm glad we've been a leader in expanding our policy."

In addition to the desire to meet the current needs of employees, Walgreen's dedication to our nation's military stems from a much deeper resolve.

"When I was a young man, just starting family life and my Walgreen career, the Vietnam war rocked the nation, especially my generation," Bernauer shared with *GX* in a recent interview. "I lost a very good friend in Vietnam and knew several others who gave their lives in the war. Memorial Day took on a new meaning for me in those years. To me, the saddest part remains the total

PROUD OF OUR SOLDIERS
Walgreen Chairman and
CEO Dave Bernauer.

misunderstanding and misdirected anger that faced Vietnam Vets when they returned to the U.S."

Bernauer's commitment to our Soldiers flows perfectly in line with Walgreen's tradition of support, as the company has been a long-time supporter of the USO and has even recently sent supply shipments to German hospitals serving our military.

Visit the Walgreen Company online at www.walgreens.com

XEROX CORPORATION

In 1937, Chester Carlson invented a little process called xerography, commonly known as photocopying. Carlson tried to pitch his idea to IBM and the U.S. Army Signal Corps, and was rejected by both. Almost a decade later, the Haloid Company decided to invest in Carlson's invention, later renaming itself the Xerox Corporation in 1961*. Today, Xerox is based out of Stamford, CT, and employs over 55,000 people across the globe.

"From a benefits perspective, Xerox's aim is to minimize the insecurity that may result from a sudden call to active duty and, in particular, to protect affected employees and their families from any significant short-term hardships," Kara Choquette, Manager of Corporate Public Relations for Xerox, told *GX*.

Xerox offers its military employees an income supplement for up to 18 months of active service, covering the difference between military and Xerox paychecks. Healthcare coverage is continued for the employees and their family members for 18 months. If the employee is deployed over 18 months, he or she can opt to continue coverage through COBRA for an additional 18 months. Another great aspect is that deployed employees can receive their would-be vacation time in the form of cash to help out with financial matters. And of course, you can find Xerox among ESGR's list of 5-Star supporters.

In addition, in the lobby of Xerox's corporate headquarters, you find a framed

American Flag that was flown over Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, on July 4, 2003. The flag was a gift from OEF Veteran TSG Henry Smalls, a Connecticut Air National Guard member and Xerox employee.

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE Kathleen Norman

used the time given by Xerox's Social Service Leave to help the National Military Family

Association with fundraising.

"Most branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, when they are deployed overseas during a conflict, fly flags to honor folks back home. I requested the flag to be flown on the Fourth of July in honor of Xerox," said TSG Smalls during his presentation of the flag.

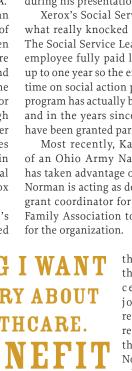
Xerox's Social Service Leave program is what really knocked our socks off, though. The Social Service Leave program grants an employee fully paid leave with benefits for up to one year so the employee can work full-time on social action projects. This generous program has actually been around since 1971, and in the years since, over 460 employees have been granted participation.

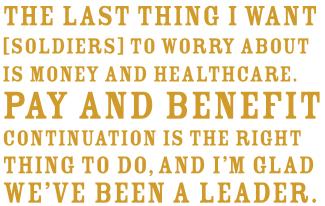
Most recently, Kathleen Norman, wife of an Ohio Army National Guard Soldier, has taken advantage of Social Service Leave. Norman is acting as development writer and grant coordinator for the National Military Family Association to assist in fundraising for the organization.

"The public sees the military family at the tearful deployment ceremony and the joyful homecoming reunion, but few people realize what happens to them in between," said Norman in a Xerox press release. "That is where the NMFA and where I want to make a difference."

"Wikipedia contributors (2006).

Chester Carlson. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 16:27, March 23, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chester_Carlson&oldid=44476376.





-DAVE BERNAUER, WALGREENS CHAIRMAN AND CEO



TRAPP FAMILY LODGE

Most everyone has seen the 1965 film *The Sound of Music* and even knows a song or two by heart. But did you know the family in the film, the von Trapps, own a lodge in Vermont? In fact, the lodge has been there since 1950 and remains owned and operated by the von Trapp family today. A 2,700-acre resort resting on the beautiful mountains of Stowe, VT, the Trapp Family Lodge employs approximately 250 people (150 full-time) and offers year-round skiing, hiking, tennis, snowshoeing, maple sugaring, swimming, and even private villas available for purchase.

The famous family fled from Nazi-occupied Austria in 1938 and embarked on a concert tour as the Trapp Family Singers. In 1939 the von Trapps immigrated to Merion, PA, and then later Stowe, VT, drawn to the town because of its similarity to the Austrian landscape. Today, under the direction of Johannes Von Trapp, the lodge is thriving. The lodge was named by Condé Nast readers as one of

On a more emotional level, the company newsletter posts the addresses of deployed employees so coworkers can send postcards or care packages.

"A lot of these initiatives come from the employees themselves," said Kiernan. "We're a pretty close-knit community here."

"I know that the National Guard plays an important role in Vermont, and we have numerous staff members here that are members of the National Guard," Hans van Wees, General Manager of the Trapp Family Lodge, told GX. "We greatly support them and their families, serving our state and our country. We also look forward to the two people who are on assignment right now to return safely and come back to work to us and come back to their families—one is deployed in Iraq at the moment and one is deployed in Vermont. We look forward to welcoming them back."

Visit the Trapp Family Lodge online at www.trappfamily.com

A LOT OF THESE INITIATIVES COME FROM THE EMPLOYEES THEMSELVES.

-KATHI KIERNAN, HR DIRECTOR, TRAPP FAMILY LODGE

the "Top 50 Ski Resorts in North America."

The success of the American Dream and Hollywood-fame clearly hasn't gone to the heads of the von Trapp family, because the lodge remains a grounded, down-to-earth organization that truly cares for its employees.

"We just do what anybody would do," Kathi Kiernan, Human Resources Director for the Trapp Family Lodge, told GX, in a matter-of-fact tone shared by most of the patriotic organizations we interviewed. For these folks, the idea of not being supportive is appalling, despite any inconveniences it may place on the day-to-day operation.

The efforts of the Trapp Family Lodge led the company to join the ranks of ESGR's 5-Star supporters. One effort was the brilliantly simple task of calling in a representative of the Guard to discuss what its role should be from a supervisory level, providing guidance on the how's and why's of great employer support.

"In terms of our 401k, those sorts of things, any earnings on what they had invested has been continuing right along. And we have an employee stock option plan," said Kiernan. "When [Soldiers] come back, they would be reinstated, and we would calculate what earnings they would have missed in the time they were gone."

BIRMINGHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION—DAVIS CENTER

The Birmingham Board of Education in Birmingham, AL, has the daunting responsibility of caring for and educating the many young children of the southern city. Still, board members manage to save time and energy to care for a Soldier on the other side of the world—MSG Virginia A.E. Thomas, a 13-year employee of the board.

"They're supplementing my income because I was losing so much money on active duty. I'm so thankful to John Lewis who spearheaded that process," MSG Thomas said in an ESGR release. "[My] extended family—mom, grandmom, and uncle—depend on me for their care."

And this isn't the first time. MSG Thomas' current mission in Qatar, assigned to the 721st Adjutant General Postal Company to run the postal finance and operations center, is the Soldier's second deployment. The first was in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

"My coworkers, Carol Lewis, Ginger Hamilton, Lucy Silva, Deidre Murray, Craig Funderburg, and Francis White send me emails and care packages regularly," MSG Thomas shared.

Find out more about the Birmingham Board of Education; visit www.birmingham.k12.mi.us
Courtesy of SMSG Darenda Rogers, ESGR Forward Team, DVIDS



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

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

www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com



John Marie 1800 Charles Co. Marie 1800 Charles Charles



MOXEY VETERINARY HOSPITAL

The Moxey practice, though just seven employees strong, exhibits a great deal of skill, tending to horses, snakes, birds, and everything in between. They also display a great deal of military pride. Dr. Lance Moxey started the hospital in Sheridan, WY, over 30 years ago, after retiring from Army Special Forces as an E-5 and a tour in Panama. Dr. Moxey's three sonss all graduated from the Naval Academy—two are now Marine officers and one is a Navy pilot. Most relevant here, though, is Sandy Eisenman, a long-time Moxey employee and a Guard wife, who finds the bulk of her support stemming from her coworkers as her husband David Eisenman, an E-7 with the Wyoming Army National Guard, is deployed to Iraq.

"Lance is very supportive of the mission. But it's not just Lance: it's the whole team," explained Sandy Eisenman to *GX*. "When you're with a small company for 15 years, it becomes a family."

Dr. Moxey granted Eisenman ample paid time off whenever she needed it, allowing her to spend time with her husband prior to his deployment.

"I would do it for any military person. It's a way to give them a little support," Dr. Moxey told *GX*. "We do what just seems right to do."

Moxey Veterinary Hospital counts itself proud among ESGR's 5-Star Supporting employers.

You can contact Moxey Veterinary Hospital at (307) 672-5533.

DELTA DUCK HUNTS

Down on the Delta in Tunica, MS, you will find Delta Duck Hunts. Operated by David Melton for the past II years, Delta Duck Hunts offers guided and unguided waterfowl hunting on thousands of acres running along the Mississippi and Coldwater Rivers.

Though Delta Duck Hunts does not have military personnel currently on its staff of seven, three service members have been employed previously. These service members were never deployed, though they were granted freedom to serve without any threat to job security or pay. No matter how much time the employees needed for training, even weeks at a time, Melton made the employees feel wholly supported.

"Anything I can do to help them, I would. Whatever they needed to do," Melton told *GX*. "I would consider us friends, besides employers."

Delta Duck Hunts is listed among ESGR's 5-Star Supporters for the state of Mississippi.

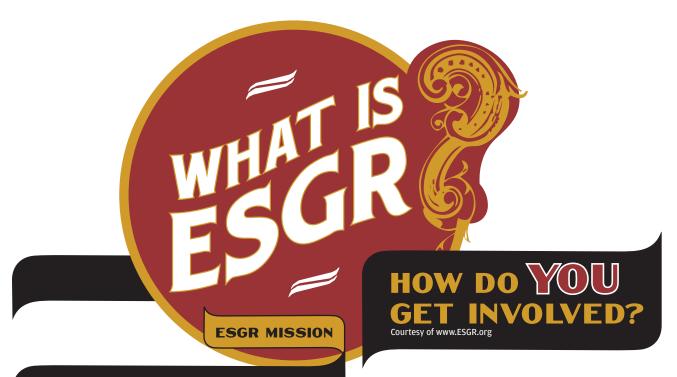
Visit Delta Duck Hunts online at www.deltaduckhunts.com



I WOULD DO IT FOR ANY MILITARY PERSON. WE DO WHAT JUST SEEMS RIGHT TO DO.

-DR. LANCE MOXEY, MOXEY VETERINARY HOSPITAL

little bit of help from home can go a long way in the life of a Soldier and his or her family. It's important for employers and civilians to take a hard look at the resources they have and see where they can give back to the folks who give their lives for our Freedom. *GX* salutes the fine companies spotlighted in this feature, as well as all employers who have signed an ESGR Statement of Support. *GX* also salutes those folks who just do what they can when they can. Every single act of support, no matter how small, adds up when joined by others. Support can spread like wildfire. All you have to do is light the match.



GAIN AND MAINTAIN ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE.

www.esgr.org

mployer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment.

Today ESGR operates through a network of hundreds of volunteers throughout the nation and Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Europe.

THE FOCUS OF ESGR IS FOUR-FOLD

- >>> Promote an understanding of Guard and Reserve service.
- >>> Enlist support of employers in development of human resource policies and practices that support and encourage employee participation in Guard and Reserve programs.
- >>> Disseminate information to improve knowledge of, and voluntary compliance with, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) among Reserve component leaders, members, and their employers.
- >>> Sustain willingness of employers to support their employees called to military service for the Global War on Terrorism over potentially longer periods of time and greater frequency.

AS AN EMPLOYER, WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- >> Recognize your "Citizen Soldiers" by thanking them for their service in person and in writing.
- >>> If your Guard or Reserve employees are activated, remember the families back home. Make it a point to check in on the military member's family with an occasional phone call to make sure everything is "OK." Establish a key individual or group of coworkers to liaison directly with the family.
- >> Send care packages to your activated Guard and Reserve employees. Items need not be expensive. Notes of encouragement are always appreciated, as are small items that remind them of home.
- >>> Another way to maintain contact is to send care packages and cards to the family members of activated employees during holidays—as they are likely missing their military member. Make sure spouses of married military members are invited to holiday parties and company picnics.
- >>> When activated employees return home after serving, hold a "welcome home" celebration. Celebrations don't have to be costly. Even buying donuts for the staff to "welcome back the troops" will let Guard and Reserve members know you care.
- >>> Make sure your policies concerning Guard and Reserve employees are clearly explained in your employee handbook. If your company can afford it, consider offering additional benefits to activated military employees, such as differential pay (pay that makes up the difference between civilian salary and military salary) or extended insurance benefits.
- Remain flexible and patient when scheduling your Guard and Reserve employees. While federal law requires employers to give military members time off for duty (including training, military schools, weekend drill and deployments), a flexible employer with a positive attitude can make all the difference.

Employers have long realized that hiring and supporting out Guard members is a great investment. They are quality, well-trained employees with great loyalty. Most employers can't hire enough of them. -Bob Hollingsworth, Executive Director, National Committee for ESGR

Home Front Heroes

As a Soldier you have received ribbons, medals and awards in recognition of your service to your country. The friends, family and employers who have supported you receive no such recognition. The only personal acknowledgement they are given comes from you.

The Home Front Heroes program, free to all Guard Soldiers, has been established so that you can show your appreciation, and that of your commanders and your country, to those individuals who have been key in supporting your decision to serve. Through the Home Front Heroes Web site, you can submit the names of these Home Front Heroes so they will receive some small portion of the thanks and respect they so richly deserve.

Nominated Heroes receive personalized letters from National Guard leadership, a Home Front Heroes bumper sticker and an engraved lapel pin.

Any serving Guard Solider may complete a Home Front Heroes nomination by going to www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/homefrontheroes and clicking on the login link in the middle of the home page. Once you have logged into the system, choose the appropriate link from the left-hand navigation to nominate a spouse, family member, employer, volunteer or ambassador.





STEP ONE

Get online and go to www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/ homefrontheroes and click on the login link in the center of the page.





STEP TWO

Once you have logged in, click on which type of hero you would like to nominate: Parent, Family Member, Employer, Volunteer, or Ambassador.





Proceed through the remaining screens and follow the instructions to complete the nomination process.



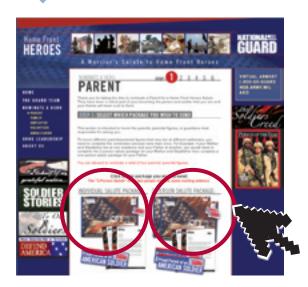






STEP THREE

Decide whether you would like an Individual Salute Package or a Two-Person Package.



NOMINATE YOUR HERO TODAY!

Choose a Parent, Family Member, Employer, Volunteer, or Ambassador to be recognized for their efforts.

www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/ homefrontheroes



Each 2-Person Salute Package Includes

- **★** Custom Designed Presentation Envelopes
- ★ Personalized Letter from National Guard Leadership
- ★ Personalized Letter from Army Leadership
- ★ 2 Home Front Heroes Bumper Stickers
- ★ 2 Engraved Lapel Pins (not shown to scale)

Each Individual Salute Package Includes

- **★** Custom Designed Presentation Envelopes
- ★ Personalized Letter from National Guard Leadership
- ★ Personalized Letter from Army Leadership
- ★ Home Front Heroes Bumper Sticker
- ★ Engraved Lapel Pin (not shown to scale)



Special Forces take over ADRL

by Nicole Wellman

Drag runs and laser guns? It may seem like an unlikely combo, but when the Army National Guard teamed up with the American Drag Racing League, the result was anything but a drag.

Over 7,000 drag racing fans crowded the South Georgia Motorsports Park to kick off the 2006 ADRL season, but fast cars weren't the only thing that caught their attention. The Army National Guard Special Forces Mobile Event System had racing fans lined up to get in on some action of their own.

The Special Forces Mobile Event System is one of 15 systems the Army National Guard uses as a promotional tool for generating recruiting leads. The Special Forces version is the newest and most high tech, simulating a Special Forces mission in Iraq. The interactive video game features a three-screen laser shot system and actual M-16 automatic rifles.

Five players work as a team to complete the mission. First stop is the mission briefing room, complete with audio/visual effects, maps, and ammo cans. Participants are briefed on the mission and then move into another room to execute. One player acts as the humvee driver and the other four use laser-operated M-16s. The whole experience takes about five minutes, but the special effects make it pretty intense.

Sixteen-year-old Corey Fearnside of Tallahassee, Florida, was impressed with the video game. "You have real guns, which

is so cool. And the big screen makes it more realistic" said Fearnside.

Even the Special Forces trailer looks impressive. The setup measures 60 feet by 40 feet. Television screens constantly play videos about serving in the Army National Guard and keep people entertained while they are waiting in line. Digital pictures called eShots are taken in front of the trailer. Participants can later retrieve their photos online. A five-member Mobile Event Team staffs the system and helps promote the National Guard. Local Georgia Army National Guard recruiters were also on hand to support the Mobile Event Team, promote the Guard, and prospect new recruits.

SSG Mark Jefferson, a recruiter in the Georgia Army National Guard, had the oppor-

tunity to talk to some of the participants about their experience. "They loved it. The younger crowd was comparing it to PlayStation games and the older crowd was like, 'yeah, I did that in the desert' "said SSG Jefferson.

The ADRL and the race fans were supportive of the Army National Guard's presence at the race. Some fans even took home some Guard gear.

Local recruiters gave out National Guard basketballs, frisbees, and t-shirts throughout the day. SSG Jefferson was pleased with the response the event drew from the community. "Everyone was so appreciative of the Guard. All day long, people were thanking us for serving" said SSG Jefferson.

Over 200 people passed through the Special Forces Mobile Event System, even though a rain delay postponed the race until the following day. The 2nd Annual ADRL SpeedTech Winter Drags were hosted in Valdosta, Georgia, February 17-19.

NEW LEADS SSG Don Cuervo, a recruiter in the Georgia Army National Guard, helps participants fill out lead cards before entering the simulator.



RECRUIT SUSTAINMENT PROGRAM

WARRIOR TIPS:

Wear your uniform with PRIDE, always look your best.

The best way to get better at Physical Fitness Training is to perform the stretches and exercises DAILY and CORRECTLY.

If the standard is 50%, make yours 100% and you won't FAIL.

A key to success is TEAMWORK, remember you're part of a TEAM.

> CADRE CORNER

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP

- > Know yourself and seek self improvement
- > Be technically & tactically proficient
- > Make sound and timely decisions
- > Set the example
- > Build the Team



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

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

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

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

The National Guard Can Change Your Life

By SGT Tiffany Schroeder 136 Quarter Master Battalion, NDARNG

Are you a teenager in high school still trying to figure out what you want to do with the rest of your life? Maybe you're trying to figure out a way to pay for college or just looking for some extra cash for those weekend dates. Are you a college student getting ready to graduate and figuring out how you're going to pay off all those loans? Maybe you're a person in your 20's or 30's just looking for a change and some excitement in your life. Whatever category you fit into, the Army National Guard may be right for your future—it was for me and I will tell you why!

Picture this: a junior attending Cavalier High School sitting in Mr. Dietrich's chemistry class. The door opens and in walks a clean-cut, in-shape, middle-aged man who says he is a recruiter for the North Dakota Army National Guard. What was my first thought? Here we go again; here's someone the school brought in trying to change our lives and make us good people. If only I would have known how SFC Greg Kaiser would change my life. By the time he walked out that door, I was ready to go to Basic Training that minute! Sign me up!

That night, I went home and talked to my parents. As understanding and supportive as they are, the Guard was not high on my mom's list. As every parent does, mine worried about whether I was making the right choice and how that choice could affect my future. Yes, I got [an elistment] bonus; and yes, [the Guard]

Therefore, after hours of talking with my parents, they reluctantly signed the papers to let their 17-year-old daughter join the North Dakota National Guard. The summer before my senior year of high school, I boarded a plane headed to Fort Sill, OK, to start Basic Combat Training. All I can say is, wow! To this day, I can remember the first night I spent there. I can remember the friends I made, and learning to rely on them to help me through the hard times.

The training was great. You not only learn how to shoot

a M-16A2 rifle and the proper technique for throwing a live hand grenade, but you also learn team work, first aid, and how to protect yourself in case of a chemical attack. The training you learn in the military can be put to good use in the civilian world as well.

After nine weeks of hard work and perseverance, I graduated and came back to Cavalier, ND, to finish my senior year. I remember how great I felt and how I knew I was special. I had pride in myself and finally felt that I belonged to something great. Anyone who is in the service knows exactly what I am talking about; it really cannot be put into words.

After going through more training the following summer in Fort Lee, VA, I headed to Devils Lake, ND, to start my first year at



SUCCESS STORY SGT Tiffany Schroeder, NDARNG stands as an example of the positive impact the Guard can have on its members.

We left for Fort Lewis, WA, to train and prepare for deployment. The unit spent approximately two months in Washington and then returned home. The experience was one I would not pass up for anything. I met many great people whom I am still friends with today.

I went back to college and graduated with an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts but continued to miss the military environment. I started working full-time with different organizations within the National Guard family and now plan to make the National

I had pride in myself and finally felt that I belonged to something great. Anyone who is in the service knows exactly what I am talking about; it really cannot be put into words.

would help me pay for my college, but what if their baby girl got the call to defend her country? What would happen to her when she left for training? Would she be taken care of while she was gone? The answer is "yes." There is always a chance that Soldiers may be called to war, but we are trained to deal with that. We are trained in how to protect ourselves. When we put on that uniform that says U.S. Army on the left pocket, we agree to help protect the country and people we love.

Lake Region State College. I was pretty sure I wanted to be a law enforcement officer; but like any other young adult, I was not certain.

During my second semester, I received a call from SFC Guy Daby, the Training/Readiness NCO for the 134th Quartermaster Detachment, located in Cavalier, ND, asking if I wanted to volunteer to be mobilized/activated with the 132nd Quartermaster Company. After a bit of thinking, I said yes; after all, isn't that what we are trained to do?

Guard a full-time, 20-year career! I found my place in the world, helping Soldiers who, at a moment's notice, are willing to answer the call to keep our nation free and safe. That is something to be proud of.

No matter what a person chooses to do in life, there will always be good times and hard times. The Guard is no different. At the end of the day though, Soldiers know they will still be needed and admired today, tomorrow, and forever.

Jackson Hewitt Guard Hero Program

Courtesy of Jackson Hewitt

Jackson Hewitt Tax Service®, the nation's second largest tax preparation service and "The Tax Service of NASCAR," announces a one-of-a-kind contest encouraging people across the U.S. to nominate a loved one, friend or neighbor for the Jackson Hewitt National Guard "Heroes of the Year" award. Through the campaign, one National Guard Soldier will be selected for the chance of a lifetime—the opportunity to have his or her image featured on the car that NASCAR driver Greg Biffle will drive at a 2007 NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series Race, and attend the race with their family to watch the momentous occasion in person. In addition to spotlighting Soldiers,



campaign is part of our ongoing relationship with the National Guard and our commitment to supporting all of the many men and women in all

heroes may be nominated for their support of the Guard's overall mission, support of a unit and its members and/or actions that

Jackson Hewitt is thrilled to have this opportunity to show-case some of America's outstanding National Guard heroes and to give people around the country the chance to play a role in . . . honoring a Soldier. -Michael Lister, President and CEO Jackson Hewitt

the campaign also recognizes families and employers who have shown exceptional support for, and service to, the core mission and values of the Guard.

"Jackson Hewitt is thrilled to have this opportunity to showcase some of America's outstanding National Guard heroes and to give people around the country the chance to play a role in nominating and honoring a Soldier," said Michael Lister, President and Chief Executive Officer for Jackson Hewitt Tax

branches of service who provide service to our country."

Candidates can be nominated online by going to www.SupporttheGuard.com. Individuals, families and employers will be selected for monthly spotlights on the site with a photo and commentary on what makes them true heroes. A grand prize in each category (Hero, Family and Employer) will be awarded. In each case, those nominated will be judged on service to their community, their

support of the values of the National Guard and the unique ways they have enhanced their lives and the lives of those around them through their connection to the Guard.

Individual hero nominations can include a description of why and how the person exemplifies the ideal of a Citizen-Soldier—a person who sets the example in and out of uniform. Family

enhance the efforts of the Guard within their community. Finally, because there are many workplaces that go above and beyond in their support, there is an opportunity to highlight an employer that actively works to provide support to National Guard employees or Guard families within the community, through donations or contributions, community support, outreach programs or encouraging employee involvement. Grand prize winners will be provided a VIP trip to the 2007 NASCAR NEXTEL race where the Jackson Hewitt National Guard "Heroes of the Year" car will race, featuring the image of the selected National Guard Hero.

At the end of the year, one National Guard "Heroes of the Year" Soldier will be chosen from the monthly heroes and from ongoing submissions and will have his or her face painted on Greg Biffle's Jackson Hewitt/National Guard No. 16 Ford Fusion car for a 2007 NASCAR NEXTEL Cup Series

www.supporttheguard.com



SOME GAVE ALL



For over 125 years, Americans have taken time in the month of May to remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our nation. The tradition began before the end of the Civil War, when women's groups in the South began decorating the grave sites of fallen Confederate Soldiers. In the years that followed, communities in both the North and South held both spontaneous and organized events to honor the massive number of men lost during the Civil War.

The first large scale observation of Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, came on May 30, 1868. General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former Sailors and Soldiers, proclaimed in his General Order No.11:

The 30th day of May 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land. In this observance, no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

On that first Memorial Day, future President, then General, James Garfield gave a speech at Arlington Cemetery where 5,000 volunteers gathered to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate dead.

New York was the first state to officially recognize the holiday in 1873. Although all of the Northern states had recognized the date before the end of the century, it was not until after WWI—when observances began to commemorate those lost in all of America's wars—that most of the Southern states accepted the holiday. To this day, many Southern states maintain a separate holiday to commemorate the Confederate dead.

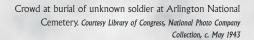
The officially recognized birthplace of Memorial Day is Waterloo, New York. Although this designation is not without debate, Waterloo was likely chosen because it first celebrated the holiday on May 5, 1866, and made it an annual, community-wide event. The close friendship of General John Murray, a resident of Waterloo, and General Logan did not hurt the town's claim to founding the holiday.

On June 28, 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Holidays Bill, which officially declared Memorial Day as a Federal holiday and changed its day of observation to the last Monday in May. In recent years, many have come to feel that by changing the date simply to create a three-day weekend has minimized awareness and observation of the true meaning of the holiday. In an effort to rectify this situation, the National Moment of Remembrance resolution was passed in December 2000. The act encourages "Americans everywhere to pause for one minute at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day, to remember and reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to provide freedom for all."

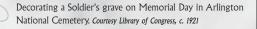


by Jason West













MEN OF HONOR

As a tribute to all who have given their lives in the service of our great nation, *GX* presents the remarkable stories of some of the many Guard Soldiers who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor.



VILLEGAS, YSMAEL R.

SSG, U.S. Army, Company F, 127th Infantry, 32nd ID Villa Verde Trail, Luzon, Philippines, 20 March 1945 Entered Service at Casa Blanca, CA Born in Casa Blanca, CA

CITATION: SSG Villegas was a squad leader when his unit, in a forward position, clashed with an enemy strongly entrenched in connected caves and foxholes on commanding ground. He moved boldly from man to man, in the face of bursting grenades and demolition charges, through heavy machine gun and rifle fire, to bolster the spirit of his comrades.

Inspired by his gallantry, his men pressed forward to the crest of the hill. Numerous enemy riflemen, refusing to flee, continued firing from their foxholes. SSG Villegas, with complete disregard for his own safety and the bullets that kicked up the dirt at his feet, charged an enemy position and firing at pointblank range, killed the Japanese in a foxhole. He rushed a second foxhole while bullets missed him by inches and killed one more of the enemy. In rapid succession, he charged a third, a fourth, a fifth foxhole-each time destroying



the enemy within. The fire against him increased in intensity, but he pressed onward to attack a sixth position.

As he neared his goal, he was hit and killed by enemy fire. Through his heroism and indomitable fighting spirit, SSG Villegas, at the cost of his life, inspired his men to a determined attack in which they swept the enemy from the field.

WEICHT, ELLIS R.

SGT, U.S. Army, Company F, 142d Infantry, 36th ID St. Hippolyte, France, 3 December 1944 Entered Service at Bedford, PA Born in Clearville, PA

CITATION: For commanding an assault squad in Company F's attack against the strategically important Alsatian town of St. Hippolyte on 3 December 1944. He aggressively led his men down a winding street, clearing the houses of opposition as he advanced.

Upon rounding a bend, the group was suddenly brought under the fire of two machine guns emplaced in the door and window of a house

100 yards distant. While his squad members took cover, SGT Weicht moved rapidly forward to a high rock wall and, fearlessly exposing himself to the enemy action, fired two clips of ammunition from his rifle. His fire proving ineffective, he entered a house opposite the enemy gun position, and firing from a window, killed the two hostile gunners. Continuing the attack, the advance was again halted when two 20mm guns opened fire on the company. An artillery observer ordered friendly troops to evacuate the area and then directed artillery fire upon the gun positions.

SGT Weicht remained in the shelled area and continued to fire on the hostile weapons. When the barrage lifted and the enemy soldiers attempted to remove their gun, he killed two crewmembers and forced the others to flee. SGT Weicht continued to lead his squad forward until he spotted a roadblock approximately 125 yards away. Moving to the second floor of a nearby house and firing from a window, he killed three and wounded several of the enemy. Instantly becoming a target for heavy and direct fire, he disregarded personal safety to continue his fire, with unusual effectiveness, until he was killed by a direct hit from an anti-tank gun.

O'BRIEN, WILLIAM J.

LTC, U.S. Army, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, 27th ID Saipan, Marianas Islands, 20 June through 7 July 1944 Entered Service at Troy, NY Born in Troy, NY

CITATION: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty at Saipan, Marianas Islands, from 20 June through 7 July 1944. When assault elements of his platoon were held up by intense enemy fire, LTC O'Brien ordered three tanks to precede the assault companies in an attempt to knock out the strong point.

Due to direct enemy fire, the tanks' turrets were closed, causing the tanks to lose direction and to fire into their own troops. LTC O'Brien, with complete disregard for his own safety, dashed into full view of the enemy and ran to the leader's tank, and pounded on the tank with his pistol butt to attract two of the tank's crew, and, mounting the tank fully exposed to enemy fire, LTC O'Brien personally directed the assault until the enemy strong point had been liquidated.

On 28 June 1944, while his platoon was attempting to take a bitterly defended high ridge in the vicinity of Donnay, LTC O'Brien arranged to capture the ridge by a double envelopment movement of two large combat battalions. LTC O'Brien crossed 1,200 yards of sniper-infested underbrush alone to arrive at a point where one of his platoons was being held up by the enemy. Leaving some men to contain the enemy, he personally led four men into a narrow ravine behind and killed, or drove off, all the Japanese manning that strong point. In this action,

he captured five machine guns and one 77mm fieldpiece. LTC O'Brien then organized the two platoons for night defense and, against repeated counterattacks, directed them. Meanwhile, he managed to hold ground.

In July 1944, his battalion and another battalion were attacked by an overwhelming enemy force estimated at between 3,000 and 5,000 Japanese. With bloody hand-to-hand fighting in progress everywhere, their forward positions were finally overrun by the sheer weight of the enemy numbers. With many casualties and ammunition running low, LTC O'Brien refused to leave the front lines. Striding up and down the lines, he fired at the enemy with a pistol in each hand, bolstering the spirits of the men and sustaining them in their heroic stand.

Even after he was seriously wounded, LTC O'Brien refused to be evacuated, and after his pistol ammunition was exhausted, he manned a .50 caliber machine gun mounted on a jeep and continued firing. When last seen alive, he was standing upright, firing into the Japanese hordes that were then enveloping him. Some time later, his body was found surrounded by the enemy he had killed. His valor was consistent with the highest traditions of the service.

REESE, JOHN N., JR.

PFC, U.S. ARMY, COMPANY B, 148TH INFANTRY, 37TH ID PACO RAILROAD STATION, MANILA, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS; 9 FEBRUARY 1945
ENTERED SERVICE AT PRYOR, OK
BORN IN MUSKOGEE, OK

CITATION: He was engaged in the attack on the Paco Railroad Station, which was strongly defended by 300 determined enemy soldiers with machine guns and rifles supported by several pillboxes, three 20mm guns, one 37-mm. gun and heavy mortars. While making a frontal assault across an open field, his platoon was halted 100 yards from the station by intense enemy fire. On his own initiative, he left the platoon accompanied by a comrade and continued forward to a house 60 yards from the objective. Although under constant enemy observation, the two men remained in this position for an hour, firing at targets of opportunity, killing more than 35 Japanese and wounding many more.

Moving closer to the station and discovering a group of Japanese replacements attempting to reach pillboxes, they opened heavy fire, killing more than 40 and stopping all subsequent attempts to man the emplacements. Enemy fire became more intense as they advanced to within 20 yards of the station. From that point, PFC Reese provided effective covering fire and courageously drew enemy fire to himself, while his companion killed seven Japanese and destroyed a 20mm gun and a heavy machine gun with hand grenades.

With their ammunition running low, the two men started to return to the American lines, alternately providing covering fire for each other as they withdrew. During this movement, PFC Reese was killed by enemy fire as he reloaded his rifle. The intrepid team, in two and a half hours of fierce fighting, killed more than 82 Japanese, completely disorganized their defense, and paved the way for complete defeat of the enemy at this strong point. By his gallant determination in the face of tremendous odds, aggressive fighting spirit, and extreme heroism at the cost of his life, PFC Reese materially aided the advance of our troops in Manila and provided a lasting inspiration to all those with whom he served.

SPEICHER, CLIFTON T.

CPL, U.S. ARMY, COMPANY F, 223D INFANTRY, 40TH ID NEAR MINARIGOL, KOREA, 14 JUNE 1952 ENTERED SERVICE AT GRAY, PA BORN ON 25 MARCH 1931 IN GRAY, PA

CITATION: CPL Speicher distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and indomitable courage above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. While participating in an assault to secure a key terrain feature, CPL Speicher's squad was pinned down

by withering small-arms mortar and machine gun fire. Although already wounded, he left the comparative safety of his position and made a daring charge against the machine gun emplacement.

Within ro yards of the goal, he was again wounded by small-arms fire but continued on, entered the bunker, killed two hostile soldiers with his rifle, a third with his bayonet, and silenced the machine gun. Inspired by this incredible display of valor, the men quickly moved up and completed the mission. Dazed and shaken, he walked to the foot of the hill where



he collapsed and died. CPL Speicher's consummate sacrifice and unflinching devotion to duty reflect lasting glory upon himself and uphold the noble traditions of the military service.

TURNER, WILLIAM B.

1LT, U.S. ARMY 105TH INFANTRY, 27TH DIVISION NEAR RONSSOY, FRANCE, 27 SEPTEMBER 1918 ENTERED SERVICE AT GARDEN CITY, NY BORN IN BOSTON, MA

CITATION: He led a small group of men to the attack, under terrific artillery and machine gun fire, after they had become separated from the rest of the company in the darkness. Single-handedly, he rushed an enemy machine gun, which had suddenly opened fire on his group and killed the crew with his pistol. He then pressed forward to another machine gun post 25 yards away and killed one gunner himself by the time the remainder of his detachment arrived and put the gun out of action.

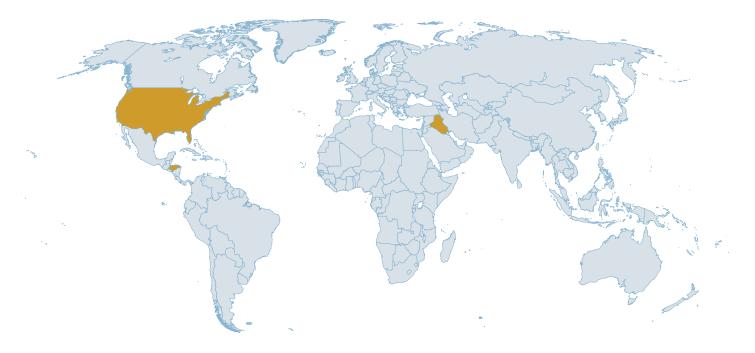
With the utmost bravery, he continued to lead his men over three lines of hostile trenches, cleaning up each, regardless of the fact that he had been wounded three times, and had killed several of the enemy in hand-to-hand encounters. After his pistol ammunition was exhausted, this gallant officer seized the rifle of a dead soldier, bayoneted several members of a machine gun crew, and shot another. Upon reaching the fourth line trench, which was his objective, ILT Turner captured it with the nine men remaining in his group and resisted a hostile counterattack until he was finally surrounded and killed.

Source material: www.army.mil/cmh-pq/moh1.htm

LOYALTY **DUTY** RESPECT **SERVICE HONOR INTEGRITY** COURAGE **SERVICE** LOYALTY **DUTY** RESPECT **SERVICE HONOR INTEGRITY** COURAGE **SERVICE** LOYALTY **DUTY** Sacrifice RESPECT **SERVICE HONOR INTEGRITY** COURAGE **SERVICE** LOYALTY **DUTY** RESPECT **SERVICE HONOR INTEGRITY** COURAGE **SERVICE** LOYALTY **DUTY** RESPECT REMEMBER THIS **SERVICE** Memorial Day **HONOR** MAY 30, 2006







VICTORY MAP

Sharing the good news from Guard units around the world.

Send your news to editor@gxonline.com.



UNITED STATES

ARKANSAS

SGT Tracy G. Austin and SGT Timothy S. Marino have been named the Arkansas Army National Guard's "best of the best" after an intense 2006 Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, AR, Mar. 16-19.

GEORGIA

After nearly a year in Iraq, about 100 Soldiers from the 48th Infantry Brigade of the Georgia National Guard returned home before dawn March 20th to cheers and tears from their families. The returning troops, from units across Georgia, make up the advance party for about 4,300 members of the 48th Brigade that arrived home between mid-April and mid-May.

INDIANA

Units assigned to the Indiana National Guard were called to State Active Duty to assist state and local emergency management agencies with flood operations in Southern Indiana in mid-March. Approximately 100 members of the Indiana National Guard were called to assist in these efforts. Members from the 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment headquartered in New Albany, Indiana, and from the 1st Battalion, 152nd Infantry Regiment headquartered in Jasper, Indiana were among those called to serve. These Citizen-Soldiers employed various military vehicles and equipment to assist in mobility and flooding efforts in afflicted areas, as well as provide personnel and equipment to fill, preposition, and employ sandbags.

NORTH DAKOTA

SGT Christopher E. Hanson, Company B, 142nd ECB was recently named 2006 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and SPC Jenilee Kessel, Headquarters Support Company was named 2006 Soldier of the Year for E-4 and below. Each award is the top honor for both the noncommissioned officer corps and enlisted corps within the North Dakota Army National Guard.

OREGON

More than 70 Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers of the 3670th Maintenance Company demobilized March 25, after serving 12 months in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 3670th Maintenance Company was mobilized in February 2005. The unit supported six different bases during their 12-month deployment, repairing, rebuilding, up-armoring, and maintaining Army vehicles used in combat. The unit also supported the infrastructure at each camp they occupied by repairing generators and electrical wiring.

The unit faced small arms fire on January 20 when an attack was made on the city and camp of Ar Ramadi, Iraq. The small arms attack on the maintenance position of the camp lasted more than one hour and resulted in an identified 5 enemy killed in action. Specialist Jaynie Cole and one other Soldier were wounded during the attack but were treated and returned to duty.

An Oregon Army National Guard helicopter crew found a man missing in the Banks, OR area March 17th and transported him to a hospital for medical care. The ORARNG launched a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to aid the Washington County Sheriff's office in the search for the man who was believed to have suffered a stroke. The Oregon Army National Guard supports dozens of search and rescue missions each year, proving to be a valuable resource to the state and the Pacific Northwest.

OR NG Youth ChalleNGe was honored in March for having the best post-residential mentorship program nationwide.

TENNESSEE

On April 8th, 48 Soldiers from the 269th Military Police Co. deployed to Gallatin after tornadoes ripped through the city. Within four hours of being alerted, Soldiers were posted at check points controlling access into damaged areas, patrolling, and enforcing a curfew. The Soldiers conducted 24-hour operations supporting the local police.

UTAH

SSG Wyatt Davis finished as the best of the best in the competition for The Utah National Guard's Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. The NCO of the Year competition combined tests of physical strength and endurance, with written and hands-on tests.

SPC James Carlson, UTARNG, was named Utah's 2006 Soldier of the Year. The Soldier of the Year competition combines series of tests, both physical and endurance tests, with written and hands-on tests.

A victim of nature's wrath has embraced the organization that aided her state in its time of need. New UTARNG recruit PVT Moniqueca Hamilton, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Military Intelligence Battalion, noticed that the military helped her state recover from the devastation created by Hurricane Katrina.

When Hurricane Katrina devastated her home city, PVT Hamilton was seven months pregnant, PVT Hamilton and her fiancé evacuated from New Orleans to Georgia where they signed up for assistance. They soon received a sponsor



Honduras

NEW HORIZONS 2006

More than 2,000 miles from home, 150 men and women from the New York National Guard are playing a key role in New Horizons 2006-Honduras.

New Horizons is a joint training exercise between the U.S. military and the Honduran government that ultimately strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Honduras. When New Horizons is completed, the Joint Task Force will have built a maternity clinic, four schools and provided free medical care at 14 different locations in and around the coastal city of La Ceiba.

The 3-142nd Aviation out of Albany, NY, is there with a fleet of three UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters.

"This is our third New Horizons rotation," said MAJ Mark Slusar, aviation detachment commander. "We came to Honduras in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch, we were in Nicaragua in 2002 and now here we are again."

"This (New Horizons) is great real-world training because you're actually doing a mission that affects peoples' lives," said SFC Todd Bouleris, UH-60 mechanic. "Being able to perform a wide variety of missions makes the Black Hawk an integral part of the Armed Forces."

For more on Operation New Horizons, check out page 24.

in and around the District of Columbia National Guard Armory.

Hundreds of members of Congress; federal, state and municipal officials; representatives from the White House: emergency planners; members of foreign governments and armed forces; and media representatives observed the Vital Guardian Exercise led by the National Guard Bureau and hosted by the D.C. National Guard.

The Vital Guardian Exercise demonstrated the National Guard is equipped and trained to respond to virtually every aspect of such a calamity.

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Army National Guard recognized two outstanding retired Guard members during its Hall of Honor ceremony on March 5 at the state Capitol building in Madison.

COL Arthur "Stir" Wagner, who joined the Guard in 1939, served in World War II and retired in 1974 as commander of the 264th Engineer Group. He was called to active duty with his battalion for the Berlin Crisis in 1961.



IRAQ

Coalition forces rescued three hostages held by terrorists in Iraq since November in an early morning raid late March. The hostages, Christian peace activists, have undergone screening and are anxious to be reunited with their families.

MAJ Dan Crouch (MOARNG and Army Corps of Engineers) along with other U.S. Army Corps of Engineer employees, traveled to two schools located in the northern Iraq province of Dohuk to deliver boxes loaded with pencils, paper, notebooks and other school supplies as well as candy. The supplies were donated by MAJ Crouch's civilian coworkers at the University of Missouri Health Care.

Muhammed Hila Hammad Ubaydi, aka Abu Ayman, in the al Mahmudiyah neighborhood in southern Baghdad March 7, during a major manhunt operation. Ayman was the former aide to the Chief of Staff of Intelligence during the Saddam Hussein regime. He was the leader of the Secret Islamic Army in the Northern Babil Province and is the prime suspect in the kidnapping of Italian journalist Guiliana Sgrena and for assassination attempts on Iraqi government and security forces officials. Abu Ayman is also the prime suspect in the kidnapping and killing of several hostages in Iraq, and for some of the most-lethal IED attacks on Coalition and Iragi Forces and on Iragi citizens since the fall of the regime.

Iraqi and Coalition Forces captured

On May 21st at 8 p.m. (EST), GX Editor, Jason West, and GX News Editor, Keith Kawasaki, will appear as guests on the internet radio talk show "Talking With Heroes." The editors will be discussing GX's "Running With The Bulls" coverage of the 1/34th Red Bull Division.

Check out the broadcast at: www.talkingwithheroes.com

family in Utah and traveled the 2,000 miles by bus to their new home here.

PVT Hamilton feels the birth of her baby and the move to Utah have given her a second chance.

"I was looking around to see what would be the best for my son and me, and the Utah Guard-from everything I learned-would be the best thing for us," she said.

VIRGINIA

Grantham University, specializing in educating working adults, announced it is offering Military Severely Injured Scholarships in 2006 to service members. Any service member in any branch of the United States Military who has received a "Rating Decision" memo of 60% disability or higher from the VA and has been retired or medically discharged from active military duty as a result of being wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom is eligible for the scholarship program. The four-year scholarship program provides tuition and fees to pursue any Grantham University degree program. The estimated value of a bachelor's degree is \$28,000 with an additional value of approximately \$11,000 for a master's degree. For more information, visit: www.grantham.edu

In 120° weather, the UH-60L Black Hawk, used by the 3/142 NYARNG, can lift a 9,000 pound Humvee and carry it 70 miles.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

In late March, U.S. Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) received a certificate of appreciation from Oregon National Guard Adjutant General Fred Rees in recognition of his continued support of the Oregon National Guard, its brave members and their families. In addition to supporting legislation to ensure our troops have the equipment necessary to safely execute their mission. Walden has also cosponsored legislation improving benefits for Guard and Reserve personnel, families and retirees.

National Guard units with critical capabilities deployed to the site of a simulated detonation of a nuclear bomb in an American city on April 4. More than 460 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from nine states and the nation's capital took part in the Vital Guardian Exercise

CW5 Ronald G. Bieker, who was a member of the Guard for 38 years and was a driving force behind establishing non-commissioned officer training courses at the Wisconsin Military Academy. CW5 Bieker served 29 years in key administrative roles at the academy before accepting a position at the state headquarters in Madison.

WYOMING

The Wyoming Army National Guard exceeded its recruiting mission this year after only five months. The goal of 1,665 Soldiers, assigned in October 2005 by the National Guard Bureau, was exceeded in February when Wyoming's force grew to 1,670 Soldiers. Command further plans to exceed the goal by at least 30 more Soldiers by September 30th, the end of the Fiscal Year.

Story and Photos by Chris West

Every time I visit the 1/34th, they are looking better and better. Already a formidable fighting force, the training they've completed in recent months has further welded them into a tightly knit unit that is ready to face whatever challenges await them in Iraq.

However, before they could move on to that mission, they had one final test to face: the JRTC. The Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Fort Polk, LA, is widely considered to be some of the most difficult and best training a Soldier can go through in preparation for overseas operations. The motto here is: "We would rather that their worst day be here at JRTC, not in Baghdad." That is just what they deliver. Not just one bad day, but a whole series of them. The challenges are a constant 24/7 barrage of trouble that requires a sustained high-speed operational tempo.

The day I arrived at JRTC was known as D-Day: the first day of operations in the simulated Iraqi territory of "Talatha." It started calmly enough. There had been some mortars lobbed into one of the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) early that morning, and the radio traffic indicated that the Opposing Force (OPFOR) was already active, setting simulated roadside bombs and ambushes—but in our corner of the world, things seemed relatively quiet.

"Relative" is the key word here. There is a constant roar of military traffic as convoys set out on missions. Humvees, Bradley Armored Vehicles and Apache helicopters were constantly coming and going, kicking up clouds of dust that stuck to your teeth and covered everything with a fine powder.

Minutes after dismounting at FOB Comfort, the base for the 125th Battalion, I was whisked off to accompany a patrol on a security escort of a civilian convoy. The sun was going down and the mission was only supposed to last a couple of hours. No big deal. That is, until the delays started.

First, there was confusion over which routes would be safe. Then, last-minute route changes, delays with the civilians, and a general level of confusion and then, "hurry up and wait." We were losing daylight with each passing second, and the troops were getting more and more anxious. The stream of radio reports that we listened to did nothing to allay our concerns. Even though everyone knew this was an exercise, hearing a constantly escalating litany of attacks, casualty reports, and frantic activity ratcheted up the tension level. Every so often, a patrol would roll back in. Inevitably, their expressions were somber, the disgust evident in every line of their face. The yellow flashing lights that indicated that their vehicles had been shot up told the tale of what had happened.



Welcome to JRTC
The worst day; The best training



You see, there's a real problem here. The Opposing Force (OPFOR) has been at JRTC for some time now. They are four companies of very bad men known as the 509th. Of course, the Soldiers often precede any reference to these "gentlemen" with a rather profane expletive. It's never just "the OPFOR"; it's always "the %\$#& OPFOR." I soon found out why. These guys are good, they know the territory, they don't play by the rules and their fire is insanely accurate. From the reports we were getting over the radio, they were in the process of tearing the I/34th a new one. Seven men out of the game . . . two vehicles down . . . an entire patrol knocked out . . . it sounded bad. Again, all of this is pretend, but you have to understand the level of immersion that the JRTC creates.

If something blows up here, it's not just a "simulated" explosion with a little smoke and a small bang. When an IED goes off, you can

A few mad minutes later, the JRTC referees, known as Observer/ Controllers (OC), stopped the action, assessed which Soldiers were still in the game, and did a very quick After Action Report (AAR) evaluating what went right and what went wrong. Mostly, things had gone wrong. In the end, there were only three Soldiers still in the fight. The rest of the convoy was out of action.

But the night wasn't over, not by a long shot. Except for brief pauses for "scoring" or safety called by the OC's, the action is never over at JRTC. Like Iraq, threats can come from any direction at any time. Just because the convoy was shot up, the mission wasn't over. The three remaining Soldiers had to provide first aid to the wounded, call for help, and maintain security on their vehicle. The game would not stop at any point, and another ambush was a very real possibility.

The next day, I expected to hear complaints from the Soldiers

Again, all of this is pretend, but you have to understand the level of immersion that the JRTC creates.

hear it for a mile. Every engagement is punctuated with explosions, smoke, and massive amounts of simulated small-arms fire. As we headed out, we could hear the enemy activity all around us. And the radio provided the details of the rest.

Things seemed to go fairly smooth for a while, but as we rolled through an Iraqi town, a large simulated IED explosion rocked the lead vehicle. We could see the pyrotechnics shooting into the air followed by the yellow flashing lights that indicated the point vehicle was out of action. A beat later, small arms fire began breaking up the night as the IED was followed up by a coordinated ambush. The &%\$# OPFOR! The team had been warned to expect ambushes from three to four man teams, but even with our limited visibility from the middle of the convoy, it was obvious there were quite a few more than that (as it turned out, the Soldiers were outnumbered almost three to one).

about bad intel, lack of ammunition, or other factors that led to their defeat. Instead, there was nothing of the sort. There was only a fierce determination to fix the problems, adjust their tactics, and get back out there. This attitude seemed to be the standard for the 1/34th, and despite a long series of very bad days, their performance quickly improved.

Two days later, the improvements became evident. A new police station was being opened, and all of the local Government VIPs, along with 1/34th Commander COL David Elicerio, would be in attendance. It was a sure bet that the OPFOR had plans for this little gathering, but the 1/34th was determined to make sure that this ceremony was going to go off without a hitch.

Bradley Armored Vehicles rolled in first, securing the primary entrances to the town and providing over-watch for everything that

Immersion

JRTC is a training environment like no other. It consists of a massive section of forested land set within Fort Polk. This area is known as "Talatha" and is designed to replicate, as far as possible, an Iraqi province. The landscape is the only thing that detracts from this illusion. With the exception of the heavy pine forest, this training area is Iraq—on a really bad day.

To carry this illusion as far as possible, the JRTC has set up over 18 urban areas ranging in size from four or five buildings to over 200 buildings. There are more than 1,000 role players inhabiting these towns and the surrounding country side. These individuals very convincingly imitate the Iraqi populace as civilians, government officials, police, friendly military forces, insurgents, foreign fighters, suicide bombers, local press, international press, and even non-governmental agencies such as the Red Crescent/Red Cross.

Each of these groups has received detailed training on how to act and react just like the real-world groups each portrays. They all have

family, tribal, political and religious affiliations that affect everything they do and say.

These are not just preprogrammed responses either; actual events are quickly incorporated into the scenarios. For example, on day one, COL David Elicerio (Commander 1/34th BCT) was grilled by the "local press" about his opinions on the ongoing "Cartoon War" that was causing so much unrest at the time. The Colonel had to be up to speed on the current issues even as he was leading his Brigade through an incredibly complex training scenario. If he had answered the questions in a confrontational manner, it could have quickly inflamed the populace of "Talatha" and made things much worse than they already were. However, his professional and respectful handling of these difficult and complex questions avoided this potential crisis.

To further create a sense of realism, the JRTC makes extensive use of native Iraqis who speak only (at least in the scenario) Arabic or Kurdish. Combined with Iraqi interpreters that must be employed by the Soldiers, they add yet another level of realism

and challenge for the training. Additionally, these interpreters provide invaluable insight into the culture and mindset of the Iraqis.

As if all of this weren't enough, there are yet more levels of realism folded in. Livestock wander around the villages, often getting in the way and sometimes blocking traffic. Cooking fires and simmering meals add to the sights and smells that make up village life. The role players actually live in these towns. This is their home along with all the sights, sounds and smells that come along with it. The illusion is very convincing.

Even with all of this, we've only scratched the surface. These details, while important for setting the stage, don't even touch on the level of reality created by the simulated combat operations, the OPFOR, and the missions the 1/34th were tasked with.



History of the Bulls PART 2

by MAJ Jack Johnson, MNARNG (retired)

BETWEEN WARS After World War One, the 34th was reorganized with National Guard members from Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. Upon federal recognition in 1924, command of the Division was given to Mathew Tinley of Iowa, who led the 34th for the next 16 years. The 1920's and 30's were especially hard for the 34th and the National Guard generally, as it struggled to cope with slim resources and restricted troop levels. The command went briefly in 1940 to George Leach of Minneapolis and then to Minnesota's Adjutant General, Ellard Walsh, who headed the division until August 1941.

MOBILIZATION AND PREPARATION FOR WORLD WAR TWO By the summer of 1940, war was raging in Europe and Japan had begun its intended conquest of Asia. No longer certain that the US could resist being drawn into another world war, Congress and the president authorized a draft and the mobilization of the entire National Guard for a year of "precautionary" training.

The nation-wide mobilization was completed in increments throughout the fall and winter of 1940-41. The Minnesota National Guard, which numbered 5,500 at the time, had 3,800 of its membership in the 34th Division. Its activation began officially on February 10, 1941, followed by several months of intensive training at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. The division made a good showing in the massive Louisiana Maneuvers of August and September 1941.

War came to the US when Japan abruptly attacked the American fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. All enlistments were immediately extended for the duration of the war. The division was hastily moved to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and reorganized from its old fashioned "square" configuration of four infantry regiments to the new, smaller "triangularized" configuration of three regimental combat teams.

The 34th had been chosen as the first division to be deployed overseas. Within five weeks of Pearl Harbor, the first elements of the division secretly shipped out for Belfast, Northern Ireland, aboard HMTS Straithard. When newspapers throughout Great Britain headlined that the first Yank had landed, they were talking about PVT Milburn H. Henke of Hutchinson, Minnesota, a member of the division's Co. B, 133rd Infantry Regiment, who was first off the boat.

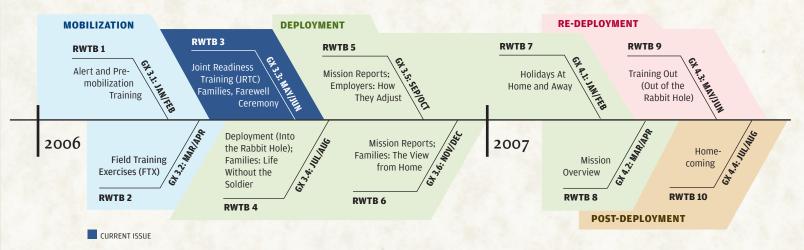
By the end of May 1942, the entire division was assembled for rigorous training in Ireland and Scotland. During this time, the elite First Ranger Battalion was formed under the command of one of the division's officers, CPT William Darby. Some 80 percent of the unit's volunteers were drawn from the 34th, and they soon became famous as "Darby's Rangers."

NEXT ISSUE: The Red Bulls: WWII in North Africa and Italy



FIRST ASHORE Private Milburn Henke of Hutchinson, MN waves to photographers as he walks ashore in Northern Ireland on February 8, 1942. Selected at random from the ranks by MG Russell P. Hartle, he was the first American Soldier to set foot on British soil during WW II.

GX Red Bulls Coverage



followed. Then, the rest of the security force started rolling in. In a matter of minutes, there were Soldiers everywhere. The troops quickly took control of the town by clearing buildings, setting shooters on the roofs, searching vehicles for explosives, and putting a solid perimeter around the entire area.

Before long, shots rang out. Trouble had arrived. This time, the Soldiers were ready. A 240 Bravo machine gun opened up on full auto. Several Soldiers quickly added their M-4's semi-auto fire to the noise. The 240 continued its suppressing fire as the troops advanced on the enemy position, darting from tree to tree, shooting as they went. It was all over very quickly. The attackers were forced to retreat, leaving two insurgents behind for questioning.

It was a sure thing now: the insurgents had come to play. The work of securing the town continued at an even more fevered pace. Once all the buildings were cleared and the area secured, The UH-60 Blackhawks arrived with the VIPs.

COL Elicerio along with the local Governor, Sheik, a large security contingent, and a lot of other serious-looking Iraqi men made a grand

this training was paying off.

The level of improvement was hammered home a few days later. The patrol I was with was ambushed (there is no such thing as a routine patrol at JRTC), and we were pinned down in a ditch by a group of very persistent snipers. I stayed behind with the command elements as the Infantry boys went out hunting. A few hours later, they rolled back in, sweaty and tired, but exhilarated with their success. They had run one of the OPFOR to ground and brought him back for questioning.

As we were sitting around waiting for the relief convoy to show up, the Soldiers began talking shop with the captured OPFOR "insurgent." It soon came out that the 1/34th had been running him all over the woods that afternoon, never giving him a moment's rest, ultimately forcing him to make the mistake that led to his capture. There was a lot of "trash talk" mixed in with this chatter, but you could clearly hear the professional respect that the 1/34th had earned that day.

Over the course of the week that I was embedded with the 1/34th, the improvement in their already high level of readiness was remarkable. They quickly went from reacting to the attacks of the OPFOR



entrance and proceeded to the new police station. One by one, they got up to make their speeches. The Colonel took his turn, and his speech went well until it was rudely interrupted by a sudden and massive gun battle on the perimeter of the town. Diplomats, Soldiers, Government officials, Iraqi citizens and members of the press scattered. The Governor and other Iraqi VIPs ducked into the mayor's office. COL Elicerio was hustled off to cover by his security detail, and most of the citizens simply disappeared.

The gun battle raged out of sight for a short time. Apache gunships screamed by doing treetop-level runs in order to add their simulated fire to the hell that the troops were laying down. It didn't last long, but from the volume of fire, someone somewhere was in a world of hurt.

The attack didn't make it past the perimeter security, and pretty soon the Colonel had rounded everyone up and finished the ceremony. Once the VIPs departed, the security cordon was slowly drawn back, making sure the troops were covered at all times. Despite the enemy attacks, the mission was a success. Clearly,

to aggressively controlling the battle and forcing their opponents on the defensive.

The small unit encounters that I witnessed are only a small representation of what goes on throughout JRTC. Ultimately, as LTC Kolb, the commander of the 125th told me, "It's all set up to physically exercise the system." By this, he means the entire system, all 4,000 plus men and women of the 1/34th, their equipment, communications systems, and every other aspect of the brigade structure. Everything has to work together, all at once, and at a pace that quickly reveals any areas that need improvement.

Without a doubt, JRTC is invaluable training for the 1/34th. It accomplishes its goal of giving the Soldiers their worst day in a safe environment while stressing the Brigade almost to the breaking point. The training was brutal, but well worth it. ILT Shawn Plankinton put it best as we tiredly sat over breakfast early one morning; "This is great, but they should have sent us to Iraq to train for JRTC."

RED BULLS FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

Seven families share their Guard experiences with GX



Story and Photos by Keith Kawasaki

Prior to the departure of the Red Bulls, I drove across the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, meeting with several families of Red Bulls' Soldiers. With the assistance of CPT Paul Rickert, UPAR of 1-125 STRIKE, seven Soldiers of the 1-125 and two from HHC 1/34th volunteered their loved ones to participate. The objective was to spotlight and pay tribute to the sacrifices and strength of the Guard Family.

Often, a Soldier's support system includes not only family, but also co-workers, religious leaders, and everyday townsfolk—those people who knew you as an obnoxious school child and troublesome teen, and now regard you as a Hero—the folks who line the sidewalk on Veterans' Day, who tie the yellow ribbons on every single tree in the town square, and who will hang the "Welcome Home" signs next year. And though we cannot spotlight all who show love and support to our Soldiers, we salute these citizens just the same. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has said so many times, America truly does support you.

GX will periodically feature these representative families, sharing their experience throughout deployment.

THE RICKERT FAMILY (De Pere and Appleton, WI)—Technically, this is not the first deployment for CPT Paul Rickert. The Captain was stationed at Fort Sam Houston, TX, after 9/11 for about six months. At the time, CPT Rickert's wife and two young children lived in Austin, TX, and have since moved to be closer to family in Wisconsin.

"As soon as we found out we were going to be going through this again, the way that we prepared ourselves when we moved up here was to be closer to family, to have more of our support group," said Lisa Rickert, the CPT's wife. "We kind of geared our lives to that whole scenario." Lisa actually has been able to connect with family readiness groups attached to the Wisconsin Guard, even though CPT Rickert is with Minnesota. "For me, the family readiness group is more like a safety net and an information center," said Lisa.

The Rickert family stands incredibly strong behind its Soldier, almost to a model degree. "I guess just because he's always wanted that," said Gini Rickert, CPT Rickert's mother, describing her feelings when her son enlisted in the Guard eight years ago. "And he has really enjoyed it. We support him, whatever he wants to do."

"Well, I married a military man, which is one thing I said I'd probably never do," said Lisa. "[He]'s definitely cut of

the right cloth to do this. He was able to get out last June and he decided to stay in. That, for me, reaffirms why he does what he does in my mind. He's a Soldier through and through. Every time he tries something else, he



still comes back to this THE RICKERTS (I-r) Hunter, Savannah, and Lisa

So I can stand behind him and feel good about it and proud of him."

"The biggest thing I can suggest is be prepared," Lisa advises Guard families. "Keeping everything together and in order is probably the best thing you can do. And making sure you keep yourself healthy and feeling well. As long as your Soldier knows that you have everything under control, then he can do his job."

THE UTPADEL FAMILY (Ellendale, MN)—SPC Kellen Utpadel is one of many IRR (Individual Ready Reserve)* Soldiers attached to the

1/34th. SPC Utpadel served just six months in Guard service, almost three years ago. A move to Texas and lack of an opening with an infantry unit led SPC Utpadel to switch to IRR. Now, recently married with two small children, the Utpadels live in Minnesota. And despite the media uproar with Soldiers surprised by the IRR clause, SPC Utpadel was not overly shocked. "I read the fine print; I knew there was a chance," SPC Utpadel told GX in late January.

"It didn't seem real until they started sending big packets of information," said Sheri Donovan, SPC Utpadel's mother. "We asked him how he felt; we didn't know how to feel. And, obviously, he met the woman of his dreams and was ready to settle down.



THE UTPADELS (I-r) Alison, Will,

It kind of threw a monkey wrench in his plans. However, it was never a question with him whether or not he was going to try to get out of it. He told us, 'I have a commitment I have to honor.' As a parent, I was 100% supportive."

The invaluable and generous support from Sheri, combined with the support from many other family members, has been tremendous for SPC Utpadel's wife, Alison, and two children, to the point that she hasn't had to rely on FRGs. "I have enough support here," said Alison. Sheri is also planning to become involved with some of the organizations offering support to the Soldiers as a whole.

"I have a friend; she's part of a group, Operation Minnesota Nice; these people from deployed families make care packages to send to Soldiers, and I think I may might try to join something like that."

Sheri continued to share some great advice for other Guard moms: "Cherish the time you can be with them . . . but I try to keep in the back of my mind: don't tell him this is going wrong and that is going wrong. Don't put extra burdens on his shoulders because he's got enough weight on there now. You can tell him you miss him, but don't dwell on it. Stay upbeat, even if you're not, then use your support people around you to vent."

^{*}According to GlobalSecurity.org, as part of the Army's Ready Reserve, the IRR involves individuals who have had training, served previously in the Active Component or the Selected Reserve, and may have some period of Military Service Obligation remaining. Soldiers called up have 30 days from the date the orders are issued to take care of personal business before reporting to mobilization. The IRR call-up does not impact retired Soldiers, contrary to several civilian media reports.



HOPE EVERS Fianceé of SGT Clint Michael Mack

THE MACK FAMILY (Sleepy Eye and Morris, MN)—David and Betty Mack have seen this sort of thing before. "We know what we're going to be looking at," said Betty. Their eldest son, Nick, is a Marine who deployed in 2000 and 2001 to Southwest Asia. When the USS Cole was hit in October of 2000 in Yemen, Nick was dangerously close by. Needless to say, David and Betty have

their concerns regarding their youngest son's deployment with the

SGT Clint Michael Mack is a political science student at the University of Minnesota at Morris and recently became engaged to fellow U of MN student Hope Evers. SGT Mack joined the Guard in early 2000 after spending time with his brother at a Marine camp in California. This experience, coupled significantly with the education benefits offered by the Guard, led SGT Mack to enlist. In 2005, he was sent on his first deployment, stationed in Italy for a peacekeeping mission for several months.

With three deployments under their belts, the Macks kind of have it figured out. They keep strong by relying on each other.

"I'm basically the worry person in our house. You know, everyone's

With her future husband deployed a third of the time they've been together, Hope reflected on how she's made the most of it. "It goes by faster than you think. Although it looks like the longest thing in the world when you look at it as a whole . . . [You] look at the good side, I guess, and don't dwell on the bad. I have time to be with my friends and focus on school and work and figure out what I'm going to do with my life. And absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Hope and SGT Mack have also bought web cams, which helps a little bit. "The first time, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm seeing him!' "

THE DOUTY FAMILY (Pipestone, MN and Jamestown, ND)—MAJ Robert Douty retired four years ago after serving initially eight years with active Army, followed by a 30-year career with the Minnesota Guard. And save a few minor deployments, in almost 40 years of service, the Major didn't see much action. Today, all three of his boys are in the thick of it.

SSGs Jeff and Joe Douty (Jeff is the oldest) are with HHC 1/34th and 1LT Brian Douty (the youngest) is with 1-125 STRIKE. Joe and Jeff are married with young children, living in Pipestone and Jamestown respectively. Brian has a girlfriend back home in Pipestone.

With this massive family deployment, the Doutys are holding it together just fine. The Doutys bear a matter-of-fact, unwavering

Basically, [you] take it day by day. You're going to have mixed emotions. You're going to cry some days, but especially if you have children, you've got to live for them. I just look at them and think, 'We have got to be proud of Daddy.' -Kristie Douty, wife of 1/34th SSG Jeff Douty

got one," said David, a welcoming, honest and hard-working man. While Betty, a quiet and seemingly cautious woman, is the rock. "Whenever we talk to him, we're positive," said Betty. "We tell him to be strong and confident."

The Macks own a ranch set apart from the town of Sleepy Eye, holding some of the most beautiful cattle and buffalo around. "This one, I want his head," said David proudly as he introduced me to a Goliath mountain of a buffalo, grunting great clouds of breath.

"But I don't talk about farming to him," David said of his communication with his son. "I want him to focus 100% on where he's at. I play it down. Just basically, 'kick __ where you're at.' You know, that's kind of my logic, because that's probably my job. We can talk about farming years down the road."

"And Clint's really done well," David continued. "He weaned us off him, so to speak—that's cattle terms, you know? [At college,] he hung around with his fiancée, which did us a favor, in a roundabout way. Now it really helps me."

"We miss him on weekends, though," Betty added quickly.

Hope and SGT Mack have been a couple for a year and a half. And although her grandfathers served in the military, this is really her first introduction to the service, let alone having a loved one absent for a

year. "I'm trying to learn acronyms and all this stuff," Hope laughed. "I'm like 'What was that again?"

The reality of SGT Mack's service has become more prevalent to Hope. "At first, it was one weekend a month, and it didn't really apply ... it's a lot different now. It's real now."

Two hours from the nearest readiness group, Hope finds her support from college friends. "But, I guess I don't talk about it too much," added Hope. character and are binding together to endure this deployment, both at home and away.

"Just because we have three sons in there serving in Iraq, it's not any different than anyone who has one son or daughter over there—just multiplies a little bit," said Robert. "We adjust just like everyone else has to."

"Joe has said that it helps that Jeff is right there. They sleep right beside each other. I know it makes me feel better, knowing that they'll watch out for each other," said Alison, wife of SSG Joe Douty. "And I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have family right close."

"We get through it together," added Laura Carrow, 1LT Brian Douty's girlfriend.

"I have my whole family around me within a 20-mile radius, so that's my support," said Kristie, wife of SSG Jeff Douty. "My mom is probably my biggest support."

"My boys grew up military-oriented. I've just kind of accepted things; I try not to listen to the news." said the Douty boys' mother, Meiko Douty. "I'm very proud of my sons."

"Really, I don't think we're getting a fair shake as far as the information flow," interjected Robert, regarding mass media coverage. "That's what's important about the magazines [GX] does, because you're

giving the perspective of the individual on the ground. I don't think the media really gives all the details to us. They constantly give us a body count. You know, you talk about something negative . . . We don't need to dwell on that. We need to talk about positive things."



THE DOUTYS Laura Carrow, Perdita, Alison, Meiko, and MAJ (ret.) Robert

This is the second deployment for the Douty boys. Jeff and Joe were deployed to England from August 2003 to March 2004, while Brian spent 2004 in Kosovo.

Having been through this before, Kristie offered these words of advice for Guard wives: "Basically, take it day by day. You're going to have mixed emotions.

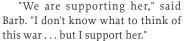
You're going to cry some days, but especially if you have children, you've got to live for them. They keep me going. I just look at them and think, 'We have got to be proud of Daddy.' "

"You know, I've actually had two people here in town, with sons who were old enough to join the Guard, call me to ask me if it was a good move," shared Robert. "And it's a tough call because of what's going on in Iraq, but I keep telling them, 'if Jeff, Joe and Brian weren't over there, who's going to do it for us?' "

THE NINOW FAMILY (Atwater, MN)—Pretty far out in the tiny town of Atwater and a bit of a stretch from the main

roads, you will find Dwayne and Barb Ninow, parents of seven children, two of which, 2LT Ryannaon Ninow and SGT Gaylon Ninow, are Soldiers in the Minnesota National Guard. 2LT Ninow is deployed with the Red Bulls.

2LT Ninow enlisted with the Guard largely for the education benefits, circumstances that initially inflicted guilt upon her mother because of their family's financial situation. However, 2LT Ninow later wrote in a letter to Barb saying that though she enlisted because of benefits, she's stayed in because of her dedication to her country and Freedom.



"When she told us about [the deployment], she took us to dinner," shared Barb. "There was this *big pause*. But I think we kind of knew. She graduated from Officer's training in May and she just *knew*."

THE NINOWS

Dwavne and Barb

The Ninows manage their conflicting feelings with the war effort and support for their daughter by relying on the strength of each other's personalities. "I guess I've always been positive," said Dwayne. "My wife is negative . . . You just got to be positive. There are no if's, and's, or but's about it."

"Between the two of us, we find a balance," interjects Barb. "It's funny. When you talk to her, she sounds okay, but you really wonder how okay she is," added Dwayne.

THE DOUVIER FAMILY (Sauk Rapids and Avon, MN)—Though this is 2LT Jesse James Douvier's second deployment, it's the first for his wife and two small children. 2LT Douvier was first deployed to Southwest Asia in the Persian Gulf War with the regular Army.

"He wasn't in the Guard when we got married," said Noelle, 2LT Douvier's wife. "So he joined about three years ago, and he asked me my thoughts. I'm fine with it. Yes, we miss him a lot, but we're doing okay. It's just part of our life."

Noelle is fortunate to have loving parents who travel from South Dakota frequently to the Douvier home in Sauk Rapids, offering



THE DOUVIERS (left) Noelle, Rian, and Gabe; (right) Judy and James

their support at all times. In addition, 2LT Douvier's parents, James and Judy, are supportive as well in nearby Avon, MN.

This family support is critical

and much appreciated by 2LT Douvier. We are confident his words could be spoken by all who serve.

"If you've got to worry about two fronts, it's like fighting a twofront war," commented 2LT Douvier in a *GX* interview late January at Camp Shelby. "As long as everything is taken care of in the rear, you can focus on what your task is."

James and Judy are leaning on each other to maintain their own morale and are putting to use lessons learned from their son's first mobilization – mainly cutting down on the news.

"When Jesse was over in Saudi, that's all we did. It was like we couldn't get away from the TV," said Judy. "So we've had to back up from that. We're just going to hope for the best and wait to hear from Jesse."

THE EHRREICH FAMILY (St. Paul, MN)—SPC Robert Ehrreich and SPC Megan Ehrreich were wed last August; shortly after, Robert was mobilized with the Red Bulls. The two Minnesota Guard Soldiers met in high school, during which Robert joined the Guard. Megan enlisted two years later.

"My mom is a 15th descendent of John Rogers, who came over on the Mayflower," said Megan. "My dad is Liberian and Liberia has very strong ties with America. There's a lot of things that make me feel very patriotic about my life."

"It makes it easier that she's in the Guard," Robert told GX in January at Camp Shelby. "I definitely understand why he feels he needs to be there."

Megan is a combat medic with the Training Support Unit (TSU), though she is studying to become a JAG Officer. On top of studies and service, Megan also is a Veterans Affairs student worker. She finds staying continually busy works best for enduring the deployment, partly inspired by her husband. "He doesn't like lazy people," laughed Megan, and later added, "the more I get done now, the more time I'll have to spend with him when he comes home."

Four hours from her family readiness group, Megan is drawing support from Soldiers in her unit and Robert. Also, her mother lives close to the group and attends meetings in her place.



THE EHRREICHS SPC Megan Ehrreich, TSU, MNARNG

The Red Bulls mission is Robert's second deployment. In 2004, he was stationed in England. As part of TSU, Megan is technically non-deployable, though as a medic, there is still that possibility.

"[We]'re just hoping she doesn't get deployed when I get back—or I'll be going again," said Robert.

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS. COMMANDERS AND COMRADES SAY

Goodbye and Good Luck

TO MEMBERS OF THE 1/34TH AS THEY DEPART FOR IRAQ



LTG Russel Honoré Commander U.S. First Army

"This is indeed a pretty unique brigade. It is absolutely the best trained, best equipped, and most organized brigade we have trained in First Army. They represent America's finest. This is what you get from a great volunteer Army. This is what you get from a great Nation that respects its Soldiers and takes care of the Soldiers who take care of the families that take care of the Veterans. This Army grew from a very talented Army led by General Washington in 1776 and they laid the foundation for what made this Army what it is today, that can go anywhere anytime, day and night to protect this Nation. The Red Bulls! The Red Bulls! The Red Bulls! I think they're fit to fight, Governor."

REFLECTION Well-wishers take a moment of silence to say a small prayer of hope for the departing Soldiers.



COL David Elicerio Commander 1/34th BCT



"[T]o the families . . . know that we enjoy your support. For without you and the sacrifices you endure, this mission could not be done. It is because of your help, your letters, your kind support that these Soldiers are able to go forward. Red Bulls Soldiers of First Brigade today you truly are fit to fight. In six months, we have honed the edge of my sword sharp. You have proved that you are a lethal, mobile, agile force to be reckoned with. Through you, I am capable of wielding devastating combat power at a time and place of my choosing on the battlefield. Or, I am capable of offering the hand of civil military cooperation for the building of a better world. You inspired all and impressed all. You should go forward with confidence that you have everything this Army can provide to accomplish the terrific challenges ahead. And I don't say these things for comfort alone for I will be there with you. I will stand by you in times of turmoil and trouble. I will stand in front of you and lead you. For you great Soldiers of the First Brigade are mine. No commander before me, no commander after me will be more proud of his Soldiers, his warriors as I am today."





FINAL MOMENTS A 1/34th Soldier enjoys a moment with family prior to the departure ceremony.



RESOLVE The Bulls march in formation toward the grounds of the farewell ceremony, focused on the mission ahead.



MN Gov. Tim Pawlenty

"One of the best-selling books of all time is a book called *The Purpose Driven Life.* It's about the basic human desire of living a meaningful life. The Soldiers we're honoring here today are living an important and meaningful life. The Reverend Martin Luther King said, 'The measure of a person is not where they stand in times of comfort and privilege, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy.' We live in challenging times. Ease and comfort don't build the world we want to live in—that takes hard work. It takes guts. It takes persistence. It takes people who will raise their right hand and say, 'I'll serve.' We're here today to thank over 4,000 Soldiers and their families who've done just that. They are role models for selfless service, sacrifice, and they are our heroes. Too often today, we look at the wrong role models. We spend too much time focusing on rock stars and actors. We hear the word 'courage' describing somebody who might go out and make an edgy or provocative movie. And we give 'honors' to people like rap stars and rock stars. The real heroes with real bravery, real courage and real honor are the 4,000 men and women standing in front of us, and all the men and women who serve in the United States Military. These men and women are the Greatest Generation reborn."

Running With The Bulls: GX Down Range

GX Departments Editor Chris West is embedded within the 1/34th Red Bulls, who are deployed to Iraq in support of the Global War on Terror. To expose the "black hole" of transition into country and mission, Chris is keeping an online journal of his experience where he posts a diary of events and photos in theater.

Check out GX Down Range, visit:

www.gxonline.com/redbulls



Put Yourself on the Right Path

Johanna Altland Grantham University

Has anyone ever asked you: "What are your goals?" Were you able to list a few? Have they followed up with, "How are you going to accomplish those goals?"

Goals give us something to work towards, something to look forward to, and something to keep us motivated along the way. For many, earning a college degree is a lifelong goal, one that can be achieved with a lot of hard work, dedication and proper planning. Establishing a clear path toward achieving your dreams is one part of goal setting that is most often overlooked. As Yogi Berra put it, "You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

Creating an educational goal will allow you to focus on your degree program and use your time wisely. To help you begin, outlined below is the S.M.A.R.T. process for establishing goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

S.M.A.R.T. process for establishing goals

SPECIFIC Specific goals are clear, focused, concise and well-defined. A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal.

General: I want to get my degree.

Specific: I am going to get my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from XYZ University.

MEASURABLE To measure your success, you need to establish timelines, dates, dollar amounts, number of credits, etc. Measuring your progress enables you to stay on track and reach your target dates; as a result, you will experience the feeling of success that will drive you on to achieve your goal.

Immeasurable: I want to get my degree, someday.

Measurable: I am going to earn my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from XYZ University by the summer of 2008.

ATTAINABLE Ask yourself, "Is this goal important to me?" When you identify goals that are important to you, you begin to discover ways you can make them come true. You can accomplish almost any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a realistic time frame that allows you to carry out those steps.

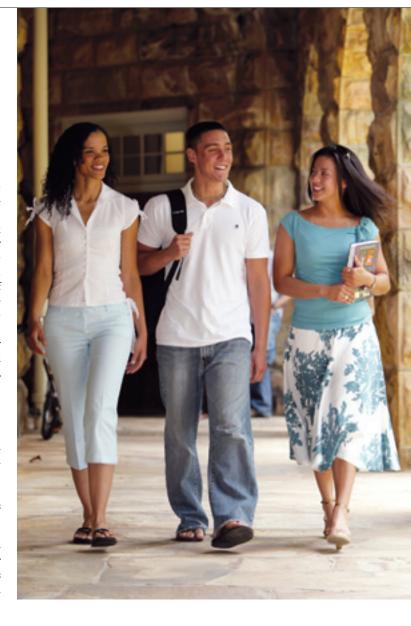
Not attainable: My mom wants me to get my degree by next summer.

Attainable: I am going to earn my degree in Business Administration from XYZ University.

REALISTIC A realistic goal is one that you are both willing and able to work toward.

Unrealistic: I want to get my degree next month.

Realistic: I will take three classes a semester, pass all of my exams and earn my degree in Business Administration from XYZ University by the summer of 2008.



TIMELY Set a time frame for your goal; your goal should have a starting point and an ending point.

Untimely: I want to get my degree in a few years.

Timely: I am going to start tomorrow by enrolling in three classes a semester at XYZ University and passing all of my exams to earn my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration by the summer of 2008.

FACTORS TO ENSURE SUCCESS:

✓ Your goals should be written down in positive terms.

√Your goals should be posted in a prominent place, so you can stay focused. Hang them by your desk or on the fridge.

√The goals need to be your own: what you want for yourself, not what others want for you.

 \checkmark Be flexible; your goals can and will change as your circumstances change.

Importance of Mental Fitness

Mental fitness is as important to the body as physical fitness. Possessing good mental health allows us to be creative, to use our mental abilities to the fullest extent, to make the most of opportunities and to fight stress. Practicing mental fitness daily will help you achieve and maintain a mentally healthy state. Follow the tips below and start on the path toward a healthier, happier you.

FOCUS ON ONE THING AT A TIME When you are taking a walk or spending time with friends, make the most of it. Turn off your cell phone and don't make mental to-do lists.

SET GOALS Setting goals and reaching them builds confidence and provides a sense of satisfaction. Start off small by making it a goal to call a friend each day or take a daily walk.

TREAT YOURSELF WELL Make time to do whatever it is you enjoy doing whether it is window shopping, playing baseball, or reading a book.

EXERCISE Regular activity improves your mental and physical well-being and reduces depression and anxiety. Join the gym, go for a daily run, or get involved in sports.

DAYDREAM Take a break from your worries and concerns. Close your eyes, relax, imagine yourself in a dream location, and then focus on the positive feelings your dream invokes.

COPE WITH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS Negative thoughts can occur at the most unlikely times. Instead of ignoring them, overtake them by distracting yourself, comforting yourself and thinking of positive things.

The person who gets the farthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The sure-thing boat never gets far from shore. -Dale Carnegie



Scholarship Opportunities

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION'S (AFCEA)

Distance Learning/Online Scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 will be awarded to fulltime students pursuing either a Bachelor of Science or Masters of Science degree by means of a distance-learning or an on-line program. The degree program must be affiliated with an accredited college or university in the United States. Candidates must be U.S. citizens currently enrolled full time. Acceptable majors for both undergraduate and graduate candidates will be limited to the following or related fields of electrical, chemical, systems or aerospace engineering; mathematics; physics; science or mathematics education; technology management; or computer science. Majors directly related to the support of U.S. intelligence enterprises or national security with relevance to the mission of AFCEA will also be eligible. Application deadline: June 1, 2006. For more information, visit www.afcea.org/scholarships.

THE ENLISTED ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES (EANGUS) CSM Virgil R. Williams Scholarship Program provides \$2,000 scholarships for EANGUS members, their spouses and dependents. Applicants must be enrolled as full-time students at a college, university, trade, or business school. Applications are due by July 1, 2006. For more information, visit www.eangus.org/downloads/scholarship_app.pdf.

THE JOSEPH P. AND HELEN T. CRIBBINS SCHOLARSHIP Program provides a \$2,000 scholarship based on academic merit and personal achievement. Enlisted Soldiers currently serving in the active Army, Army Reserve, or Army National Guard, or honorably discharged enlisted Soldiers from any component of the total Army are eligible to apply. Applicants must be accepted at an accredited college or university and be pursuing a degree in engineering or a related field, such as computer science. Applications are due July 1, 2006. For more information, visit www.ausa.org/webpub/DeptHome.nsf/byid/KCAT-6FCQ8S.

Understanding Family Readiness Groups

By Annette Brechon Kuyper Bravo 1/34 BTB Family Readiness Coordinator

Imagine my surprise when at the deployment ceremony for the I/34 BTB Bravo Company, it was announced that my husband Steve and I had "volunteered" to organize the Family Readiness Group (FRG) for the company. After looking over at my son Jared and seeing his sheepish grin, I realized he had conveniently forgotten to mention that he had signed me up to head the company FRG. I am not sure if the applause that followed was from appreciation or from other family members who were happy it was not them that had been "volunteered" for this endeavor. Little did I know then that leading a FRG would be just the thing I needed to keep me going during my son's deployment.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A FAMILY READINESS

GROUP? Paraphrasing DA Pamphlet 608-47, a FRG is "an organization of family members, volunteers, Soldiers and civilian employees belonging to a unit/organization who together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance and a network of communication among members, the chain of command, and community resources."

I had never heard of family groups who supported Soldiers, nor was I familiar with the military at all. I thought about the responsibility I was about to take on. What does it take to organize a FRG? What do I do to get started? Can I really make this work? As a full-time manager for Target Corporation, President of a local Toastmasters' club and a church volunteer, not to mention a wife and mother of another son at home, how could I fit one more commitment into my busy schedule? These thoughts continued to plague me as I signed up for a weekend of training offered by the Minnesota National Guard Family Program Network.

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING DO YOU NEED? The

training, led by Family Readiness Assistant Robyn Aiken of the Minnesota National Guard Family Program Network, taught the group of volunteer FRG leaders how essential a FRG is to Soldier morale and the cohesion of the families left behind. FRGs keep the families informed, provide social support and group activities, refer resources and services, and reduce Soldier and family stress. Knowing that their family has a support system, enables Soldiers to focus on the mission and provide peace of mind that their family is being taken care of while they are away.

During the training, we learned how to set up a FRG, the leadership qualities of successful FRG leaders, fundraising ideas, and how to handle conflicts within the group. We learned that the FRG is what we make of it and that it must be financially self-sufficient. I was able to network with other FRG leaders from across the state, and we shared ideas and resources. The group at the training ranged from Army wives whose spouses were coming home soon, to a couple who had lost their son to an illness contracted while he was deployed. Everyone was dedicated to the support of the National Guard Soldiers and their families. I left that training with the conviction that the 1/34 BTB Bravo Company was going to have the best FRG ever!

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED? It did not take long for me to get to work. With the help of my son, CPL Jared Kuyper, the company clerk, I put together a spreadsheet of the Bravo Company Soldiers and their families. It took several emails to finally have a comprehensive spreadsheet and compile an email distribution list.

My first challenge to overcome was to find a way to gather together families who were spread out all over Minnesota. We had family members from as far north as Fargo, North Dakota, to southern Minnesota. It seems that the Bravo Company was a group of Soldiers made up of several units who formed a new company. To overcome the distance problem, we held our meetings at three MN Family Assistance Centers and used teleconference technology. In March, we hope to utilize video conferencing to be able to see each other and feel more connected. At our meetings, we received an update on the Soldiers from their commander, CPT Donovan Neumann, and we discussed items such as fundraising efforts, care packages and ideas for social events.

A responsibility of the FRG is to provide resources for families when they need help. With the aid of the MNARNG Family Program Network and the Minnesota Family Care Initiative headed by First Lady Mary Pawlenty, I have been able find resources for maintenance work, babysitting, counseling and meal preparation. With the aid of CPT Neumann, I have been able to receive weekly communication to pass to the families as well as to connect with someone who can let me know if a Soldier needs help. His strong leadership and willingness to have open communication has enabled me to keep the families informed as the company completed their training in Mississippi.

You cannot run the FRG on your own. Ask family members to act as treasurers and call list volunteers, who can send thank-you notes, lead fundraising efforts, and contact organizations for donations. In our FRG, committees are currently working on some projects to begin to raise funds for our group and to plan social events. The funds we raise will be used to prepare care packages for our Soldiers, to plan a large welcome home party at the airport and to host a "reunion" party a month after they have returned home. As one spouse told me about her involvement in the FRG, "I was depressed, and this gave me renewed motivation to look outside myself and help other families and Soldiers."

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE? Anyone can participate in a FRG. If you are interested, contact your local National Guard Armory. They will put you in touch with the FRG leader in your area. In our FRG, we not only have family members with service personnel in our company, but we also have three other families who have service-members in the Navy and regular Army. Their FRG is not close, so they have joined ours. I have found that the need for a sympathetic ear and connection to others going through the same experience surpasses rank, branch and social barriers.

Being a FRG leader has allowed me to show my appreciation to the National Guard Soldiers and their families, as well as stay involved in my son's deployment experience. I continue to be in awe of their sacrifice, dedication and courage during this stressful time. Having a vibrant and successful FRG enables me, in a small way, to demonstrate my gratitude and immense respect to our Soldiers and their families.

For more information on FRGs and other great ways to get involved, check out the National Guard Bureau Family Program Online Community at

www.guardfamily.org

The Military Family Care Initiative

A MODEL PROGRAM OFFERING VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

By Keith Kawasaki

Launched in the spring of 2003, Minnesota's Military Family Care Initiative provides families of deployed Soldiers with an online resource where they can search for community organizations that provide volunteer assistance for everyday services (i.e. lawn service, housecleaning, babysitting, etc.). The key is that the program is so easy to use. Family members simply fill out a short online form tapped into a database of registered participating organizations. In return, they receive a list of area-specific services.

The Military Family Care Initiative has proven very successful, inspiring several states to create similar programs. Minnesota First Lady Mary Pawlenty is the director of the Military Family Care Initiative and recently shared her thoughts on its development and success.

GX: We checked out the site and were amazed at how easy it was to use.

FIRST LADY: Well it is. There's some beauty in its simplicity. And in addition, it's so effective. It's meeting a need and connecting families with the very folks who are wanting to provide help.

GX: How did the program develop?

FIRST LADY: In the spring of '03, the question was "How do we help military families?" There was this outpouring of affection. Throughout Minnesota, people would ask, "What can we do to help them?" So we had a brainstorming session with folks from the Minnesota National Guard and some volunteers and we really talked about what would make the most sense. And this is really what was born of that brainstorming.

The idea was we wanted to make sure that it was meeting a need, but would be simple and effective to use—and most importantly put the control in the hands of the family members. Rather than getting help when they don't need it, it's there when they do. As a volunteer, people want to do things and want to be helpful, but you want to channel volunteerism so its effective.

GX: How is the program managed? How is reliability maintained?

FIRST LADY: I think it's very important to continue to go through the list on a regular basis. We go through and we call—and 'we' is a team of two, myself and my assistant. She will routinely call and we send out emails. We ask ever-so politely, "You know, let us know for any reason if you've changed your mind." Or, if we find out from a family member, if they say, "We've contacted an organization a few times and we haven't received a response."

Then, we clean up the list and make sure it's fresh. We tell the family members, "If you can't find someone in your area, let me know." Then, I try to contact organizations in that area directly to get some sign-ups or I can do print media there or radio and get the word out, so we continue to serve in all areas that are needed.

GX: I understand you've been overseas a few times. Can you tell us a little bit about those experiences?

FIRST LADY: Yes, a couple of times! My spouse has been to Iraq. I have not been. But, I have been with him to Bosnia and Kosovo. The best summary I have for those trips is I was profoundly impacted by them. To be able to be in the place the Soldiers are serving gives you such a picture of what they are going through and an understanding of how removed they are from Minnesota. Both Bosnia and Kosovo were really powerful for me.

And then you have an opportunity to chat with the Soldiers about their families and really reach into the core of how much they miss them and how concerned they are for them. It underscores how important it is for all of us to support the families because when the Soldiers know the families are cared for, then the Soldiers can better focus on their mission.

My hat is off to the women, and certainly in some cases it's the men, who are left behind. Most often, it tends to be mom and mom's got to shoulder a great burden. And we just want to love on her and care for her and give her every best tool that we can.

GX: There are quite a few Minnesota military families who are newly pregnant. Is there anything you do for these folks in specific?

FIRST LADY: Wow, yeah. This is just something that we've done from the beginning—I just love this—periodically we will have a brunch on a Saturday for the moms of babies born to deployed Soldiers. It's wonderful. We don't have direct access to mailing lists so we go through the family readiness folks



www.governor.state.mn.us/FirstLady/

and try to get the word out. The other thing I do is I have a letter I do to the babies, welcoming them to the world and telling them how fabulous their folks are. That's been fun.

A HELPING HAND First Lady of Minnesota Mary Pawlenty holds the baby of a deploying Soldier at a National Guard deployment ceremony.

Celebrate Your Baby With MN's First Lady

Courtesy of the office of First Lady Mary Pawlenty

There is nothing quite so wonderful as the birth of a child. If you live in Minnesota and you are having a baby during your husband's deployment, First Lady Mary Pawlenty would like to know about it.

Please include your baby's name, birth date, the name of your husband's unit and where he is deployed. The First Lady would like to celebrate the arrival of your new baby with a special letter.

When there is a call to active duty, military families are asked to make many difficult adjustments. While your husband's deployment has not been easy, the First Lady hopes you find comfort in knowing he is doing one of the most important jobs on earth. Thank you for the personal sacrifices you have also made for our country.

Please share your wonderful news with the First Lady by emailing her at

firstlady.initiative@state.mn.us

Life in a Fishbowl The Army National Guard and GTMO

Story and photos by Chris West

Guantanamo Bay Naval Air Station (GTMO, pronounced Git-mo) is one of the highest profile duties a deployed Soldier of the Army National Guard can be assigned. Every action taken by the troops while on duty is watched and scrutinized by their superiors, the press and a myriad of other interested parties. Their work here is very much like living in a fishbowl. Everything they do is on display for the world to see.

Soldiers of the
California Army
National Guard are
currently assigned to
providing perimeter
security for Camp Delta
as well as other areas of
the base. According to their
accounts, the work can be
tedious at times, and there is a
constant feeling of being "under a
microscope." However, as SSG Strong
from Chino, CA, said, "I feel my presence
here is helping the Global War on Terror."

Seemingly the biggest problem faced by the deployed Soldiers, other than separation from their families, is the misconceptions that folks back home have about the nature of the work they do.

So, let's get this out in the open right away: GTMO is not—repeat—not, Abu Ghraib. The misconception that the two facilities are the same, or even similar, seems to be extremely widespread. Popular media, the average Joe on the street and even many supporters of the military all seem to share the idea that the problems at Abu Ghraib are common to all military detention facilities.

This perception is far from the truth, and a tour of GTMO should quickly dispel these myths. No detention facility in the world is scrutinized more closely than this one perched on the edge of the Cuban island. Cameras are everywhere, senior officers and NCOs supervise

the prisoners, ensures that incidents similar to those that took place in Iraq will not happen here.

GTMO simply will not allow that sort of misconduct.

This is a professionally run facility that prides itself on proper treatment of the detainees. As BG Gong (Deputy Commanding General at the time) told us, "Our goal here is the safe, secure and humane custody of the detainees. Any time

Senior leadership here at

WATCHFUL EYE A Marine patrols the yard, keeping an eye on the prisoners, while the rest of the world is watching

there is a complaint or deviation in procedure, we conduct a thorough investigation."

This humane custody means the detainees receive a level of care that many Americans do not receive. Most have a choice of what they eat each day, selecting from a menu of halal (permissible

under Islamic law) meals that are prepared at the same facilities that prepare the food eaten by the troops stationed here. The meals are nutritious and quite tasty. In fact, many of the detainees have gained significant amounts of weight since they were sent here.

Additionally, the level of healthcare received by the detainees is extremely high. Not only are they provided with skilled physicians, treatment at a state of the art surgical facility and regular checkups, but they also receive additional care for high cholesterol, early cancer screenings and regular physical therapy for any other injuries they might have.

Their religious beliefs are respected at all times. All detainees are provided with a copy of the Qur'an and other religious items they might need. Daily prayers, one of the pillars of Islam, are considered

The Guard forces, along with all of the services who have been called on, are doing a tremendous job . . . we could not accomplish this mission without their service. -MG HOOD, COMMANDING GENERAL

all interactions with detainees, and roving inspection teams ensure that the prisoners kept here are, at all times, treated with dignity and respect. This scrutiny, coupled with a constant stream of media, government inspectors, elected officials, Red Cross representatives and other nongovernmental agencies concerned with the welfare of

sacrosanct, and guards go out of their way to ensure that the detainees may attend to these duties without interruption. Arrows pointing the direction to Mecca can be found in all locations, allowing prayers to be performed properly at any time, in any place.

The final disposition of these prisoners is a matter to be determined by the courts, but we can all rest assured that while they are being



expect to find at home. Troops may entertain themselves in their off hours by attending movies, participating in a wide variety of sports, going to the local mall, eating at one of the fine restaurants or watering holes, watching the many TV stations piped in to the island, or just kicking back and enjoying a pizza delivered to their door.

Of course, GTMO is a Caribbean island, and as a result, one of the most popular ways to pass the time around here is by enjoying the ocean. Several beautiful beaches provide the Soldiers access to some of the most unspoiled waters in the Atlantic.

For SGT McDaniels, SGT Epley and SSG

SACROSANCT A Qur'an is treated with care and respect, as are the other religious articles and practices of GITMO's Islamic population.

Bowman of the Tennessee Army National Guard, this access to warm, clear water makes their deploy-

detained by the U.S. Government, they are being treated with dignity and respect.

The Soldiers assigned to the Joint Task Force that secures this facility consist of service members from all branches of the U.S. military, including the Army National Guard. After they are mobilized, the Soldiers travel to Fort Lewis, WA, for two months of training in a simulated detention camp. The Soldiers are conditioned and trained in the performance of the specific duties they will be assigned at GTMO. This training ensures a high level of job performance as well as a strict adherence to the rules and regulations that govern this facility.

However, deployment to GTMO is not exactly the worst duty a Soldier can be assigned. Despite the tedium and distance from their families, working here has a few advantages. GTMO is essentially a small town with many of the amenities and small luxuries one would

ART OF NUTRITION
Detainees and staff
are provided with
expertly prepared
meals, including
healthy foods
like these artfully

~





CROW'S NEST Towers
like this dot the
horizon around the
prison, allowing
guards to have clear
and unhindered
views of the activities around them.

ment not only bearable, but often quite enjoyable. These three members of the 30th Finance Battalion are, like many Soldiers at GTMO, certified SCUBA divers. It is not uncommon for them to log several hours each week enjoying the unspoiled crystal clear world that waits just off shore. Life in a fishbowl does have a few advantages.

The Army National Guard plays an important role as part of the Joint Task Force that runs the detention facilities. They provide security and logistical support as well as help fulfill many of the other duties that are needed on a day-to-day basis.

These Soldiers can be proud of the job they do. Though it isn't particularly glamorous, they are playing an important role in the Global War on Terror by assisting with the safe, secure and humane custody of the detainees. MG Hood (current Commanding General) proudly stated that "The Guard forces, along with all of the services who have been called on, are doing a tremendous job. They are diligent in their duties, and we could not accomplish this mission without their service."





The Unlucky Season

Biffle dominates the speedways, but mishaps are keeping him from Victory Lane.

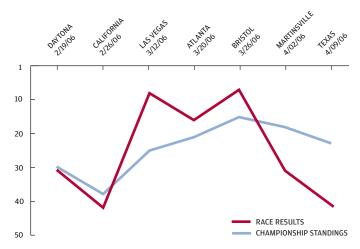
by Kenneth White

A top-ten finish in Las Vegas may have helped Greg Biffle and the #16 National Guard Ford Fusion get back on track for the championship this season, but the one thing Biffle didn't get from Vegas was luck. With only one other top-ten finish, it's hard to believe that he has led 23 percent of the total laps run this season—second place by that statistic.

The races so far have been both exciting and frustrating—a roller-coaster ride for the fans. Biffle has been racing in the top five for most of the season until the very end of each race. At Daytona, a flat tire sent him into the wall on the last turn of the race to finish 31st. In California, Biffle was in the lead for a record-setting 168 laps, until his engine gave out with only 27 laps to go. Atlanta was similar, where he ran in the top five all day until he blew a tire with 10 laps left. On the last lap, just as he was steaming his way back into the top ten, he ran out of gas and coasted across the finish in 16th. Each race has been a gut-wrenching experience.

The only exceptions to this pattern were Bristol and Martinsville, where Biffle—and the National Guard car fans—were fortunate enough to have the bad luck strike early in the race. In Bristol, Biffle took the lead right away and held it until he cut a tire on lap 57. While coming into the pits for new tires, he was given a drive-through penalty for speeding. By lap 60, he was in 42nd place and 3 laps down. He drove the car hard for an unprecedented comeback, finishing the race in 7th place. At Martinsville, a crash between Biffle and Jeff Burton sent the Guard car behind the wall. He was able to bring the repaired car back out after 88 laps and finish the race in 31st.

If you think the season has been bleak so far, don't worry too much. Last year's Nextel Cup Champion Tony Stewart, started much the same way. It wasn't until later in the season that luck caught up with him. Greg Biffle is holding his cards close—and racing his best—until it's his turn to be lucky.



THE SEASON SO FAR Greg Biffle's finishes have been disappointing, but do the numbers tell the real story?



GUARD CAR HIGHLIGHTS

- >>> Came back from 42nd place and 3 laps down to finish 7th place in Bristol.
- >>> Set the track record at California Speedway for most laps led—168.
- Dominated the field in California with lead times as high as 10.5 seconds. Only 14 cars could manage to stay on the lead lap with him.
- >>> Currently 2nd place in most laps led for the season.



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GET BEHIND THE WHEEL >>

It's a shame, you know. Man, so many times this year we've been like this. We've had a good car and we just can't complete it. We certainly don't have the luck going our way this year, but you know what—we can turn it around.

-Greg Biffle, driver of the #16 National Guard Ford Fusion



Have you ever thought about modeling for the National Guard but there was no way to get your foot in the door, even locally? Well how about a photo shoot which carries nation wide exposure?



Williams, at 615-267-7101 or send your email to robert.o.williams@tn.ngb.army.mil

Anglin for the Prize Mid-Season Update

By Kathy R. Williams, Through Our Lens Special NGB Correspondent

With half of the 2006 FLW Tour events behind them, National Guard pro bass angling team members Tim Klinger and Ramie Colson, Jr. are among the top 48 competitors of 206 professionals this season. Klinger, who is in 31st place, trails the point leader by 90 points with 433 points. Colson is in 38th place with 409 points. The top 48 pro anglers from the six-tour events will compete on Logan Martin Lake in Birmingham, Alabama, August 2–5, for the top prize of \$500,000, and a total purse of \$1.5 million at the Wal-Mart FLW Tour Championship.

Klinger, a western pro from Boulder City, Nevada, returned to the pro tour this season after a year hiatus. Klinger took home \$200,000 at the 2004 Wal-Mart Open on Beaver Lake by catching a final-round total of 10 bass weighing 24 pounds, 1 ounce. Klinger has placed in the top 10 in 15 of his fifty-four FLW Outdoors events.

Colson, from Cadiz, Kentucky, is fishing his second season as a professional. Colson has 18 top-10 finishes in the past 10 years. Colson finished in 11th place at the last FLW Tour tournament at Lake Pickwick, Alabama.

POISED FOR VICTORY At the mid-season mark, National Guard pro bass angling team members Tim Klinger (right) and Ramie Colson, Jr. (below) have landed themselves in the top 50 in the FLW points race.



Teammate Jonathan Newton of Rogersville, Alabama, is currently in 90th place with 317 points. Newton has 11 top-10 finishes in 82 FLW Outdoors events since 1995.

Derek Jones, a former commodities broker from Chicago, made his debut on the pro circuit this season as a National Guard team member. Jones finished second in the co-angler division points race on the FLW Tour last season, permitting him to fish this season as a pro. Last season, Jones finished in the top-10 twice, at Beaver Lake and Wheeler Lake. Jones is currently in 190th place among the pros with 111 points.

The FLW Tour travels to Rogers, Arkansas, on April $_{5}$ –8 for its fourth regular-season event at Beaver Lake.

Earlier this year, the National Guard signed a sponsorship agreement that will ensure visibility on all 10 of the FLW Outdoors tournament trails.

For more information about FLW Outdoors tournaments, visi

www.flwoutdoors.com





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START Fitness™

THE UGLY TRUTH ABOUT GYM WORKOUTS

By Stephanie Weichert



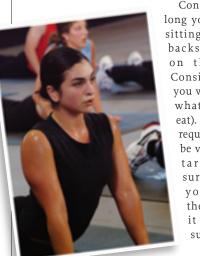
I have wanted to talk about the ugly truth about the gym for quite some time now. Yesterday was a prime example of why. Truth be told, nearly every trip to the gym for me is a good reason to talk about what is happening at the gym and why it needs to be addressed.

I was sitting on the stationary bicycle putting in one of my obligatory "cardio days," which generally consists of a 20- to 25-mile ride. It is ferociously boring, and it is all I can do to keep myself seated on that square foot of plastic. As a result of my insipid 3,600 seconds on

the bike (and you thought I live for the gym!), I have begun talking to people and have found that many people carry misperceptions of how to spend their precious moments at the gym. Here are two myths that I have relegated.

Myth #1-Showing up at the gym qualifies as a workout.

I used to train this guy (let's call him Bruce). I would give Bruce the ultimate kick-rear-end workout two times a week. Bruce always showed up on time, and Bruce always gave it 100%. Bruce seemed to be eating well, but *he* wasn't losing the weight! As his diligent trainer, this lack of weight loss used to boggle my mind. The problem wasn't the days Bruce was working out with me; it was the days he was coming to the gym on his own! I asked him what he did that week by himself, and more often than not, he would say 20 minutes on the treadmill. He would argue that 20 minutes was better than nothing. GIVE ME A BREAK, will you? His goal was to lose 30 lbs.! If you put your gym clothes on, got in your car, made it all the way to the gym, and actually began exercising, don't you think you could muster even just ten more minutes, maybe even twenty more minutes?



Consider how long you will be sitting on your backside later on that day. Consider what you will eat (or what you did eat). If your job requires you to be very sedentary, make sure to give your body the exercise it needs to sustain and

My example week

Monday >> 90 min of Bikram Yoga*

Tuesday>> 50-60 minutes of moderate to intense pedaling on a stationary indoor bike (I usually ride 20-25 miles), followed by 10 minutes of stretching

Wednesday >> ay of rest (I generally have meetings on Wednesdays)

Thursday >> 50-60 minutes of lifting weights and tubing drills, followed by 10 minutes of stretching

Friday >> 90 minutes of Bikram Yoga OR 50-60 minutes on the stationary bike and a 10-minute stretch

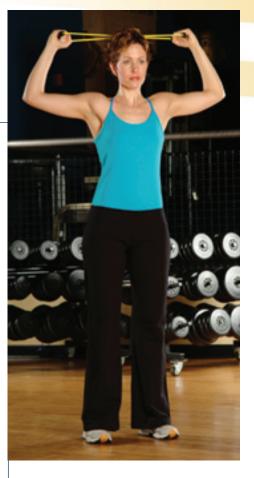
Saturday >> Day of rest (hanging out with my favorite SSG)

Sunday >> 50-60 minutes of lifting weights and tubing drills with 10-minute stretch

*More about Bikram Yoga at www.bikramyoga.com

to be in reasonably good health. The American Heart Association (see: www.justmove.org) has this to say about exercise: "If you want to exceed a moderate level of fitness, you need to exercise three or four times a week for 30 to 60 minutes at 50–80 percent of your maximum capacity."

Don't get me wrong: I am not saying 20 minutes of exercise is bad (if you are new to fitness or are really limited for time on that particular day); I am only saying that if you can do 20, you can probably do a little more.



Myth #2-You will lose belly fat by doing crunches.

So, yesterday while at the gym, I was talking to (let's call him Bill). Bill and I began to talk about his daily routine. His gym routine is a dream for sure. What I liked about his trip to the gym was that sitting in the sauna was considered part of the workout (see myth number one). His goal was to maintain optimal health for basketball. His workout consisted of 20 minutes (I will have to point you back to number one again) on the elliptical trainer, 15 minutes lifting weights for the same targeted muscle groups, 10 minutes in the sauna, and a few minutes in the pool followed up by sitting in the Jacuzzi. Are you jealous yet?

My point about his exercise routine is that everything he was doing was good, but he wasn't maximizing his time in the gym



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

I look at my week of diet and exercise like a menu at a restaurant: what I ate that day versus the amount of exercise I will be doing (input versus output). - Stephanie Weichert

effectively. It is what I call spot training. Unfortunately, no matter how many crunches you do, your belly fat will not melt away. What you might get is a really great eight pack underneath a layer of belly fat.

BILL'S WORKOUT

Cardio: 30–35 minutes total Elliptical Trainer: 20 minutes Swimming: 10–15 minutes (relaxed pace) Problem? The exercises have about a 10-minute rest in between, and the swimming pace is slow which is not considered working at 50-80% of his maximum ability.

Weights: 15 minutes total Cardio for legs Bench press for chest Crunches for abs ("so he won't hurt his back.") Problem? Bill is neglecting the rest of his body. Additionally, he thinks he will build leg muscle by maintaining a low to moderate level of cardiovascular exercise.

Be careful when your workout routine consists solely of a few specific exercises. You can lift your way into an imbalance in your body. Bill was right: strong abs will protect your back to some degree. However, if he isn't doing lower back exercises, the front and back sides of Bill aren't equally as strong, which can lead to problems down the road. Again, I am not saying a quick weight workout is bad. No, you don't have to work your entire body every time you go to the gym. But if you are doing only very specific muscle groups repetitively, then you might wind up with

some very strong parts and other weaker parts, which may lead to injury or pain.

I look at my week of diet and exercise like a menu at a restaurant: what I ate that day versus the amount of exercise I will be doing (input versus output). Then I look at the week to balance my workout days with rest days and adjust my eating accordingly. On any given week, I generally workout 4-5 times per week. I have just started adding in Bikram yoga for flexibility and strength in those muscle groups I don't normally target while at the gym. Warning statement: Beginners should be very careful when starting a new exercise routine because you are at the greatest

risk for injury should you push weak muscles and connective tissue past what they are capable of doing.

I vary from week to week. Sometimes I will lift weights 2-3 times per week and other weeks I will do more cardio. I try to keep my workouts and weeks slightly different so my body doesn't get used to the workouts and I stay challenged. During the winter, I focus on strength; and during the summer, I focus on my cardiovascular training. During the summer months, I will add swimming and SGT Ken's fitness class to my weekly routine.

askthetrainer@startfitness.com

NOTE:

We would like to thank those of you who emailed and telephoned us concerning what type of socks that should have been worn with the Improved Physical Fitness Uniform, START Fitness™ is a small business based in San Francisco that strives to assist people from all over the world to reach their fitness goals. Your comments are very important to us. Please continue to show our staff that you are reading every detail of our articles. Your comments help us to identify what we need to improve on and where we are meeting our goals. HOOAH!

-SSG Ken Weichert

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath.



Anheuser-Busch Extends Free Park Visits

By Paul X. Rutz, American Forces Press Service Courtesy of America Supports You

A national company's program offering free amusement park tickets to the nation's troops and their families has become so popular it will be extended another year.

Anheuser-Busch began the program, called "Here's to the Heroes," in February 2005. The company had planned to end it early this year, said Fred Jacobs, communications director for Anheuser-Busch adventure parks.

"We recognize this is a very difficult time, and we wanted to let (the troops) know our company appreciates their service, their commitment to the country," Jacobs said. "It just happens that one of the most meaningful things that we can give to service members is free admission to our parks. So it's lucky that we're in theme park business. It allows us to deliver something meaningful to families."

THRILL RIDE Soldiers ride "SheiKra," a roller coaster at Busch Gardens in Tampa Bay, FL, during the summer of 2005 The program is open to active duty service members, active members of the Reserve or National Guard, and includes up to three direct dependents for one complimentary admission per year. Participants can go online to fill out a form for free admission at www. heroesalute.com.

The amusement parks participating in the program include the following: "Sea World" parks in Orlando, San Diego and San Antonio; "Busch Gardens" parks in Tampa and Williamsburg; "Sesame Place" a children's play and water park near Philadelphia; "Adventure Island" water park in Tampa; and "Water Country USA" water park in Williamsburg.

Jacobs said over 900,000 people took advantage of the program in 2005, and awareness is growing. He expects a total of 2 million participants by this year's end.

"A lot of reservists are taking part in the program, which is great to see," he said. "We know [service in the reserves] requires a commitment that is serious and praiseworthy, and it was important to us to open up the program to them," he said, noting that reservists and National Guard troops often now deploy overseas alongside their active duty colleagues.

"Anheuser-Busch has a long history of supporting the troops," Jacobs said. The company has supported scholarship funds, parties for troops, and other projects. It is also a corporate member of "America Supports You," a Defense Department initiative facilitating grassroots and corporate support for America's troops and their families.

"We get probably something on the order of 300 or 400 e-mails, letters and calls on this each week, and some of those are really very touching," he said. "If anybody takes away from the experience that this company appreciates what he or she is doing, then we've kind of done our job."

www.herosalute.com www.americasupportsyou.mil





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A Simple, Heartfelt Thanks: 1LT (ret.) Anthony Puleo

By Keith Kawasaki





"Mr. Anthony Puleo is a true American Hero," declared SFC John A. Wilson, 42nd Infantry Division, NYARNG, in his *GX Hero* nomination of Puleo.

SFC Wilson's enthusiasm is easily recognizable in the story of rLT (ret., New York Army National Guard) Anthony Puleo—one man making a difference in the lives of many. Puleo provides a living example of what all of us *could* be doing in support of our service men and women.

Folks often proclaim, "Yes, I support our troops," but leave it at that, a mere proclamation. It's easy to let others take the proactive role and set yourself up as a fan cheering them on from in the stands. There are seemingly a ton of major support organizations

operating throughout the U.S., though there is a much greater number of people who are not involved in any of them. Funny thing is though, neither is Anthony Puleo.

Anthony Puleo's father fought in the first World War as a pilot in the 102nd Observation Squadron of the American Expeditionary Force—and as a first-generation Italian American.

"I learned much about service to country and integrity from him," said the Queens, NY-native in a recent *GX* interview. This parental inspiration led Puleo to serve his country as well, totaling 13 years. "Freedom isn't free. Someone must always stand guard."

"I joined the Guard to make a difference for the better," said Puleo. "I served in the infantry as an enlisted Soldier and as an officer. My favorite assignments were in the field with my platoon. I also served as Executive Officer and as acting Company Commander. At the time of my separation, I held the rank of 1st Lieutenant."

Back in 2004, a co-worker mentioned to Puleo, an employee of the New York Stock Exchange, that their son was serving in Iraq. Puleo decided to drop an email to the Soldier and subsequently mailed him a couple magazines. Soon after, Operation Iraq Pack was born.

Operation Iraq Pack sends care packages (boxes loaded with CDs, movies, toiletries, clothing, tools, snacks, etc.) to Soldiers deployed in the Global War on

Mr. Puleo has put aside all of his personal time and interests to manage this program, sometimes to the point of exhaustion. He is still up and running the program as fresh as day one.

-SFC John A. Wilson, 42nd ID, NYARG



Terror. Yet, contrary to how you may picture the Operation due to its impressive moniker, the initiative is a two-person effort based out of Puleo's garage. Puleo and his wife, Kathy, assemble the packages and mail them to a growing list of Soldiers.

"He is diligently forever seeking troops to send packages to in order to lift morale and ensure they know that they are being thought of, and appreciated, back home here in the United States," said SFC Wilson, who was mobilized and deployed to Iraq in support of OIF III June 2004 to November 2005. During deployment, SFC Wilson was a grateful recipient of an Operation Iraq Pack care package. "Mr. Puleo has put aside all of his personal time and interests to manage this program, sometimes to the point of exhaustion. He is still up and running the program, as fresh as day one, at this time."

Puleo would never talk about it that way, though. Puleo is an extremely modest man, who reluctantly accepted this recognition in *GX*. "I don't count the hours I spend doing this," said Puleo. "I do what it takes to get the job done."

"It was a rare opportunity where one person could make a difference," added Puleo. "As to why we send a care package? Simple, it is tangible and tasty! Obviously, the value of the effort is more than that of the items sent. It is a clear message of support from home in a difficult time."

Puleo's distribution numbers pale in comparison to the big-timers like Operation Gratitude and A Million Thanks. He does not have a web site or t-shirts or even corporate sponsors. However, Operation Iraq Pack is just as effective and just as important. What it all comes down to is that morale boost a Soldier receives when he or she gets the package in the mail. Even if Puleo were able to send one care package a month, that would still be remarkable because that is one Soldier a month knowing he's cared about and cared for. One more Soldier whose morale is a little better than before. Care packages are the physical embodiment of somebody's love for the recipient. It's just that Anthony and Kathy Puleo ship the love from a table in their garage.

"The efforts of Mr. Puleo have made life better for hundreds of Soldiers in the United States Army who are deployed in the theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan. I myself was a recipient of Mr. Puleo's Operation Iraq Pack and my entire unit recieving packages from him," shared SFC Wilson. "There were forty of us in my unit. [I]t was such an honor to have my unit receive care packages from an American Hero such as Mr. Puleo."



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A *GX Hero* can be a Soldier or a civilian. A *GX Hero* can be any age. The criteria is based on inspiration.

- ★ Do the efforts of your nominee stir a grand tide of patriotism in others?
- ★ Have their efforts changed people's lives for the better?
- ★ Does their story need to be told?

Our goal is to create the *GX* Hall of Heroes—a collection of proud and proactive Americans, serving to inspire us all.

Email: Editor@gxonline.com.
Please put "GX Hero" in the subject line.

BAGHDAD BLOWOUT



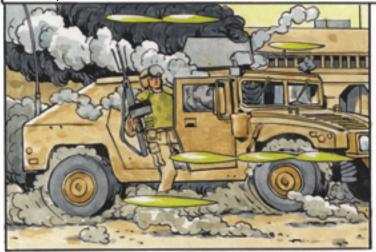
ON 20 NOVEMBER 2004, ILT MICHAEL MCCARTY AND HIS PLATOON WERE ACTING AS A QUICK REACTIONARY FORCE WHEN AN IRAGI POLICE STATION CAME UNDER ATTACK BY AN ESTIMATED 75 INSURGENTS. THEY RESPONDED AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY CAME UNDER SMALL ARMS AND RPG FIRE THEMSELVES.



A SUICIPE CAR BOMBER ATTEMPTED TO RAM THE CONVOY, DETONATING AND INJURING TWO TROOPERS. ILT MCCARTY EVACUATED THE WOUNDED AND RETURNED TO THE FIGHT, WHICH HAD INTENSIFIED AROUND THE POLICE STATION.



ILT MCCARTY'S OWN VEHICLE WAS STRUCK WITH AN RPG, INJURING TWO MORE OF HIS TROOPS. "HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST;" ILT MCCARTY PICKEP UP A WEAPON...



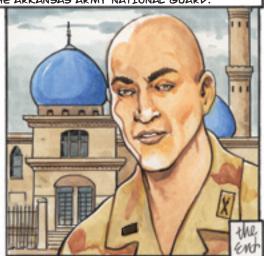
AND TOOK OUT A THREE-MAN MACHINE GUN NEST, SAVING THE LIVES OF MANY IN HIS PLATOON.



ILT MCCARTY REMAINED ON THE GROUND COORDINATING RESUPPLY, CASUALTY EXTRACTION, AND TARGET ACQUISITION. BY THE TIME THEY WERE FORCED TO BREAK CONTACT, AT LEAST 30 ENEMY LAY DEAD.

ILT MICHAEL MCCARTY'S BRAVERY AND LEAPERSHIP EARNEP HIM A SILVER STAR AND BROUGHT HONOR TO THE ARARNG'S 39TH BCT. TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY, THE ARKANSAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.







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