

**AROUND THE WORLD
2007 IN REVIEW**
p.41

**CALIFORNIA GUARD
BATTLES WILDFIRES**

**STANDING WATCH SINCE 9-11
JTF EMPIRE SHIELD**

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TMG 100

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. . . and back again. As 2007 draws to a close, we look back at some of the highlights the men and women of the Guard have accomplished this year across the globe and right here at home.

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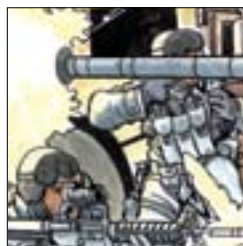
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LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

LTG Clyde A. Vaughan



Greetings to all of our Soldiers, civilians, and family members,

During times of peace and periods of relatively docile weather, the nation does not frequently think of the Army National Guard. Year 2007 has not been one of those quiet years. In May, Greensburg, KS, was leveled by a devastating tornado and the Kansas Army National Guard initiated search and rescue, power generation, logistical support, debris removal, and support to law enforcement. In August, the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis collapsed, and a local network of first responders helped in the rescue and recovery, including the Minnesota Army National Guard. In October, the state of California was hit with a deadly combination of high Santa Ana winds, low humidity and dry forestation, which resulted in raging wildfires scorching over 500,000 acres of land and destroying over 1,200 homes. With lessons learned from the Katrina disaster fresh in our minds, the nation responded to California's unique needs with a coordinated inter-agency response.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger called up 1,500 National Guard Soldiers, including approximately 200 Soldiers who were on Southwest border duty. Guard troops distributed supplies and provided security at San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium and DelMar Fairgrounds and Racetrack, where thousands of evacuated residents were taking shelter. Approximately 100 California National Guard medical personnel helped alleviate staffing shortfalls at the San Diego Veterans Center after numerous hospital staff members received evacuation orders. Whether the Army National Guard is responding to a hurricane, earthquake, wildfire, or man-made threat, the Guard proves time and time again to be the strength of the nation.

Far from the oceans, rivers and lakes that define our homeland, the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division (1/34th) spent over 22 months away from their families while serving the nation (16 months of boots on the ground in Iraq). While in Iraq, this brigade of approximately 4,000 Soldiers completed 107 reconstruction projects worth \$11 million, built 90 miles of roads in Dhi Qar, helped provide drinkable water and electricity, and, in general, did the nation proud. The 1/34th was largely Minnesotan with 2,600 troops from Minnesota, but the 1/34th also represented National Guard units from 38 states, as well as Soldiers from the Active Army and the Army Reserve—a true reflection of our One Force.

During the annual Association of the United States Army convention in October, GEN George Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, unveiled and articulated the importance of his four imperatives for a strong Army: Sustain, Prepare, Reset and Transform. What do these imperatives mean to the Army National Guard? Full-spectrum operational demands have stretched our human and materiel resources. With our current global operations and homeland commitments, we have to make time for training and prepare for contingencies. We have to increase our supply of effective and maintained equipment to keep up with the demand.

At the half-way mark for the fiscal year, we exceeded our 350,000-Soldier goal and continued to recruit and retain a quality force, ending the fiscal year with an end-strength of 352,707. I am immensely proud of our team and what we have accomplished. To Sustain our forces, we must continue to recruit men and women of superior quality and give them the training needed to transform them into the flexible and adaptive warriors who will succeed in the 21st century.

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To Prepare our fighting forces, we have outstanding training taking place throughout the world including a new urban training center in Muscatatuck, IN. The Muscatatuck training center has urban infrastructure with 68 major buildings including a school, hospital, dormitories, light industrial structures, single-family dwellings, a dining facility, and administrative buildings. The training area also has an underground utility tunnel system and over nine miles of roads and streets. In its first year of operation, the facilities at Muscatatuck were used by over 19,000 trainees from military, government and private agencies. This included National Guard troops, firefighters, police officers and other first responders. Over 13,000 Soldiers have been trained at Muscatatuck this year and by the end of 2008, the urban simulator will train an estimated 40,000 troops each year.

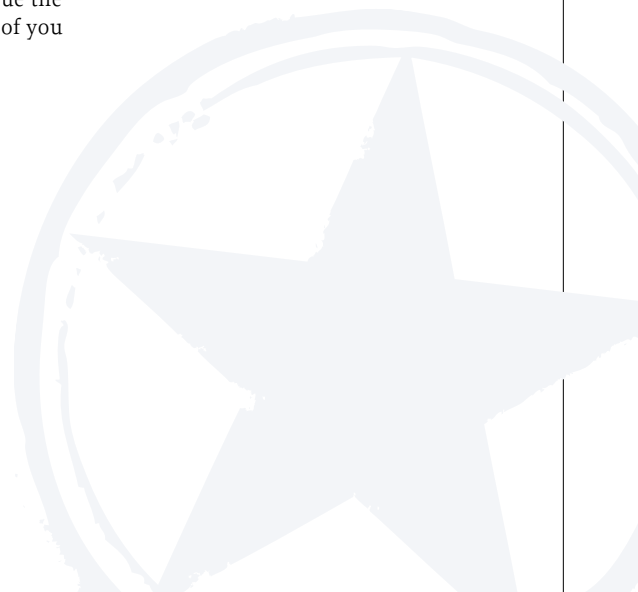
To Reset our units, we urgently need to repair or replace equipment that has been in service in a variety of hostile environments. We need to give our Soldiers and their families the time they require to restore and revitalize. Prior to 9/11, Army National Guard equipment was at a reasonable readiness level, but we definitely had room for improvement in the quantity and quality. Heavy mobilizations have taken a toll on equipment readiness. We have continued to make progress on getting our equipment levels up.

To Transform our Army National Guard into a superior 21st century fighting force, we will balance the force while providing a long-term rotation capability. Part of this redefinition involves restructuring the force into a capabilities-based Army, an expeditionary force with a full-spectrum skill-set of competencies. Increasing Military Police, Transportation, Engineer, and Chemical units is key to force rebalancing. The Guard has transformed over 1,500 operating force units to modular designs. At the current pace, the Guard will successfully convert more than 1,300 additional units to the modular designs by the end of FY08.

We wish you the best in the New Year and thank you, your families, and your employers for your outstanding service. Your patriotism and devotion to duty enable us to continue the tradition of being always ready, always there for the nation. I thank each and every one of you for the job you do every day.



Clyde A. Vaughn
Lieutenant General, GS
Director, Army National Guard





ON THE COVER

Santa is getting all Hooah this Christmas, trading in the traditional reindeer and sleigh for a C-130 and HALO jump to reach troops overseas.

ILLUSTRATION BY SGT DAVID LEE TUCKER, 111TH AVIATION BATTALION, FLARNG

Message from the artist:
My strength as an artist hasn't really helped me grow much as an infantryman, but I am grateful for this opportunity to use my talents and abilities in art to support the Army National Guard and its members. Merry Christmas and God bless!
 -SGT David L. Tucker

Adios to '07

We've closed another year in GX! While we're already working on content for year five, we've got to say our good-byes to year four. I get tired of snoozey retrospect articles, though. So, to keep it as high speed as possible, we roped back SFC Toby Nunn. SFC Nunn wrote our amped up look at Guard gear in GX 4.7 (August issue) while deployed in Iraq. Though still deployed, SFC Nunn took time out of his hectic schedule with the California Army National Guard's 1/160th Infantry to write our year in review feature (p. 40). This trip down memory lane focuses on just a few of the Guard's missions during 2007. Unfortunately, any time you work on a story like this, folks are going to get left out. Our best hope is that this relays the global reach and global strength of the Guard. If you're looking for additional stories, I'd encourage you to go to www.GXonline.com/Past_Issues. You can download every issue of GX ever!

Meanwhile in On the Road (p. 62), Chris West takes a trip up to my home state of New York for a whirlwind tour of Task Force (TF) Empire Shield. TF Empire Shield has been on the streets and in the subways of the New York Metropolitan area since 9/11, providing a security presence. I owe a personal "thank you" to the men and women, both Guard and police, on this particular mission. My big brother Dan rides the PATH train from Hoboken into Manhattan every day. I truly appreciate your on-going service. I rest a little easier knowing that our Soldiers and NYPD are out there, working together and keeping an eye on the situation.

One final note, on behalf of all of us at GX, I want to wish all the Soldiers and their families a very Merry Christmas. For those deployed, know that we're thinking about you and praying for you everyday.

Thanks,

Keith Kawasaki



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

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We want to hear from you!
Send your questions or comments to:
feedback@GXonline.com

Dear Heather,
Heather, I can only tell you how pleased we are to work with you and the folks at GX. Our Soldiers and Airmen and their stories are so important to us, and we always appreciate the interest you show.

Best to you all,
Susan Hawyer, IN NG PAO

Dear GX,
The new battalion over us is green as green. I was sitting in the chow hall the other day, just off mission, no shower yet, and realized there were all these new faces around us. We are the "old" guys here.

They all looked like they were fresh out of a box, new M4s, uniforms not yet faded by the sun or torn by conflict. They were smiling and looked happy to be here. "We were like that," I told the guys sitting with me, breaking a long silence. They knew what I meant. It happened over night—our hair a little longer, our weapons looking awful with chipped paint.

I suddenly felt as if we had a secret, something that even if we sat them all down they would never know. No one could. Our fists had been clenched so long, our knuckles were white. Those feelings flooded my mind that night and I thought, "I have grown tired of the bombs and the blasts."

Then, one day we turned a corner and there she was, this little girl. She couldn't have been more than three years old. She wore a pink outfit filthy with dirt. Her hair was black and matted back in two little ponytails. She ran up to the road close to the trucks and began to blow kisses. She jumped,

as if when she did the kisses would be able to reach us. Repeatedly she jumped and smiled. It was then I found purpose. I would fight this war . . . so she would never have to. In the end, I finally get it.

SGT Floyd Whiting, 2nd Platoon, 1041st Engineer Company

Dear GX,
Thank you. The video ("Citizen/Soldier," by 3 Doors Down) rocks! I am trying to get it downloaded at home so I can put it on my iPod and jump drive to use in school presentations. Thanks a lot for all the help you give to the recruiting effort.

SFC Morris Persson, MTARNG R&R NCO

December's T-shirt Giveaway Winner:
SSG Floyd Whiting





RECON >>>



100-YARD STARE

Camp Atterbury, IN

SGT Erica Winkel of the 371st Sustainment Brigade, HHC, Special Troops Battalion, OHARNG, takes aim around an obstacle during the individual movement techniques (IMT) course on a three-week pre-mobilization train-up at Camp Atterbury, IN.

Photo by SSG Russell Lee Klika



TAKING A MOMENT

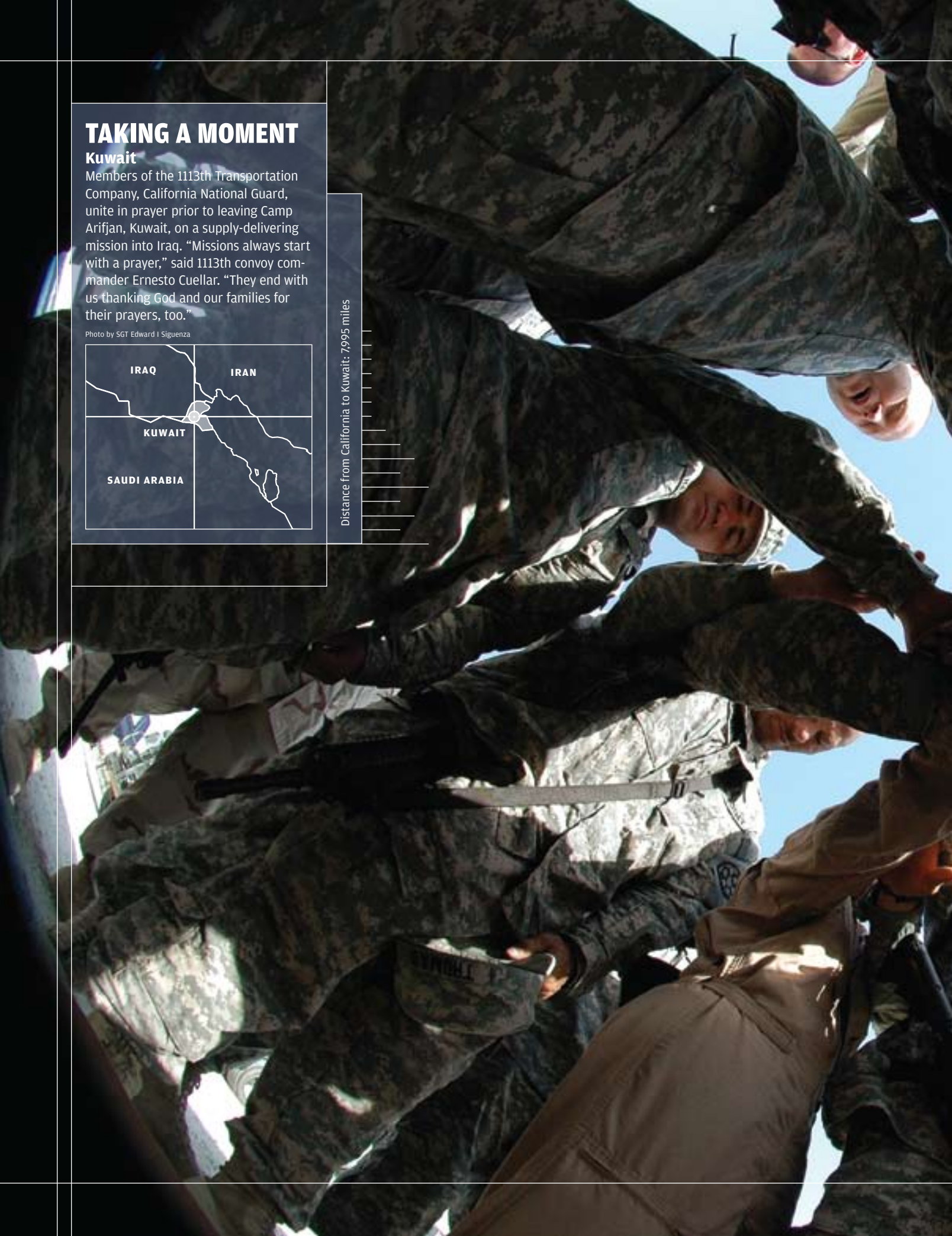
Kuwait

Members of the 1113th Transportation Company, California National Guard, unite in prayer prior to leaving Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, on a supply-delivering mission into Iraq. "Missions always start with a prayer," said 1113th convoy commander Ernesto Cuellar. "They end with us thanking God and our families for their prayers, too."

Photo by SGT Edward I Siguenza

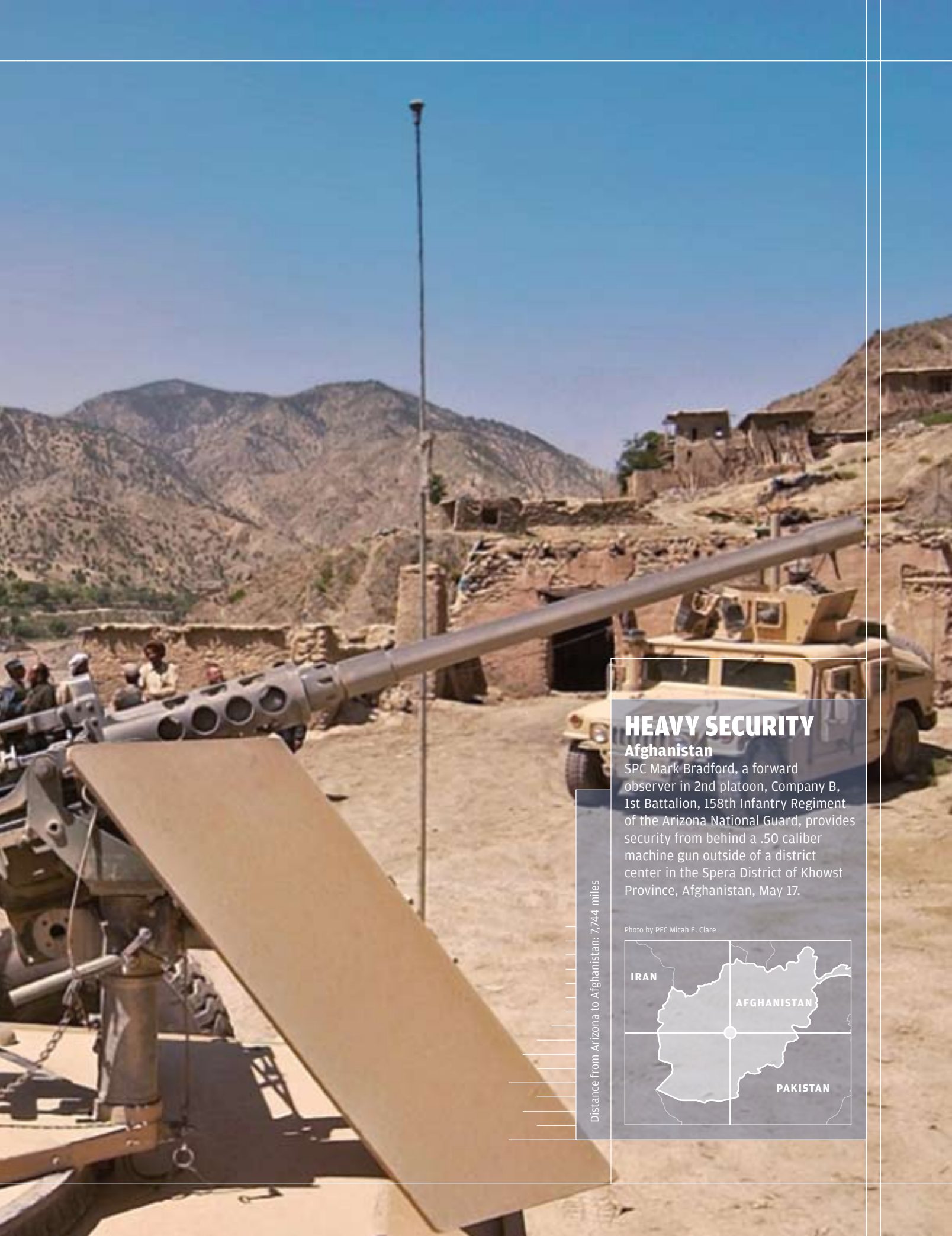


Distance from California to Kuwait: 7,995 miles









HEAVY SECURITY Afghanistan

SPC Mark Bradford, a forward observer in 2nd platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment of the Arizona National Guard, provides security from behind a .50 caliber machine gun outside of a district center in the Spera District of Khowst Province, Afghanistan, May 17.

Photo by PFC Micah E. Clare



Distance from Arizona to Afghanistan: 7,744 miles





WOUNDED BIRD

Columbus, OH

SSG James M. Thrasher, a UH-60 Black Hawk crewmember assigned to the OHARNG's A Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment, assists Columbus police and fire department officials Oct. 31, 2007, during the extraction of a downed Columbus Police Department helicopter.

Photo by SSG Kimberly D. Snow



CALIFORNIA GUARD FIGHTS WILDFIRES RAGING IN ITS OWN BACKYARD



ABLAZE Wildfires rage across Southern California in late October, 2007.

By Chris West, Editor-at-Large

In mid-October, wildfires destroyed more than half a million acres of drought-stricken California real estate. The fires were, for a time, uncontrollable. More than 1 million people had to be quickly evacuated from their homes. The skill with which this unprecedented relocation was handled is a testament to the abilities of the emergency personnel who serve the state of California, as well as the Soldiers of the National Guard. The Guard was right there on the frontlines, doing everything

they could to save lives, rescue victims and ease the suffering of the evacuees.

From the first hours of the fires, the National Guard was on the scene. Soldiers serving on the border as part of Operation Jump Start were immediately mobilized to provide support for all responding agencies. These troops and their 2,500-plus brothers and sisters who also responded worked long hours providing security, transportation, and medical and aerial operations in Southern California.

When *GX* arrived on the scene, the situation was well in hand and the Soldiers lacked

nothing. As LTG H Steven Blum, National Guard Bureau Chief, said, "There is absolutely no skill, no capability, no piece of equipment that's in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, the horn of Africa or any place where the Guard is serving overseas that would be required and essential to the firefighting capabilities that are needed in California."

Not only were they well-equipped, but they were also obviously well-rehearsed for the mission. This may be the largest fire to strike California in some time, but it's hardly the first.

VICTORY MAP



UNITED STATES



38 00 N, 97 00 W (North America)
Capital: Washington, DC
Population: 301,139,947

ALABAMA

A homecoming ceremony for members of the ALARNG's 186th Engineer Company was held Oct. 13. Approximately 160 Soldiers were mobilized in support of OIF on July 9, 2006. While activated, unit members used heavy equipment to build roads, improve existing roads, construct defilades and

barriers, and perform other similar engineering tasks.

ALASKA

Soldiers serving for the past year with the 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry, started arriving at Camp Shelby on Oct. 3 to demobilize. They had served as security forces in Kuwait since Oct. 2006. The

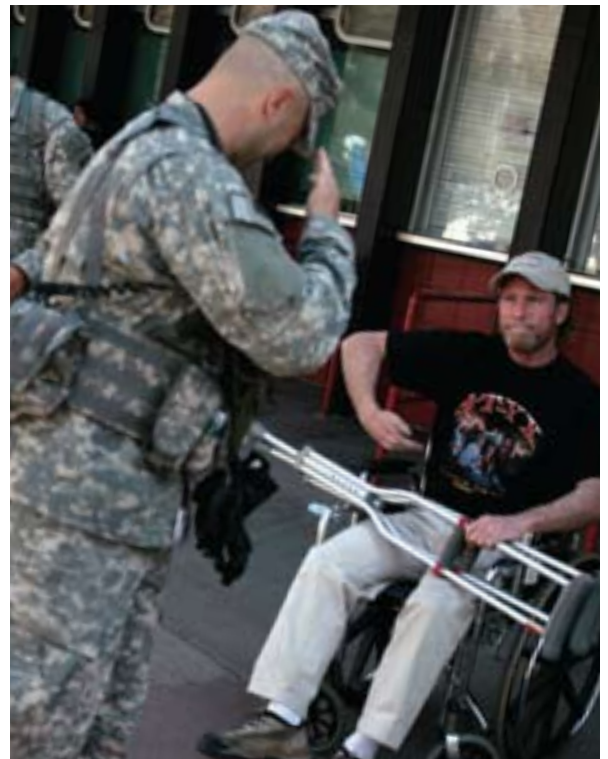
GX spoke with former Guard member Bill Payne, currently serving as chief of flight ops for the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. He had this to say about the Guard's assistance: "This is an established relationship. We have an ongoing agreement with the Guard. We train together, we know these guys well . . . so when the time comes, there are no problems."

CPT Michael Keehn, the officer in charge of several security and humanitarian operations, told us about troop morale. "We're working at a pretty brisk pace here. We are running two 12-hour shifts, so everyone is working hard. Morale is good. We have a lot of faith in what we are doing. After all, this is why we joined the Guard . . . you know, the save your neighbor, save the world type stuff."

1SG Gary Cooper grinned as he discussed the missions his Soldiers were running. "It's everything from guarding stacks of MREs to conducting security patrols. We are also providing medical support for illegal immigrants who have been injured in the fires while they were trying to cross. This is the perfect mission for my infantry guys . . . get out and sleep in the field for days at a time so we can help people? Oh, yeah! Cots? We're infantry, we don't need any cots."

CSM William Clark, the State Senior Enlisted Advisor, had an unmistakable look of pride as he told GX about the superb performance of the California National Guard. "I'm extremely pleased. The Guard did what the Guard has done for the past 300-plus years. Additionally, we had some great support by our leadership. Governor Schwarzenegger is a big proponent of the Guard. Both he and our AG, MG William Wade, really understand the needs of the Soldiers."

They all made it sound like just another day on the job. Save a few lives, protect some property, fight back the worst Mother Nature has to throw at you and be home in time for dinner. We at GX know better. When we see the pilots rolling off the flight line with a tired but proud swagger, their faces covered in smoke, soot and sweat, we know that's not just your average guy. That right there, my friend, is a genuine American hero. **GX**



QUICK AND IMMEDIATE (top) Fire line on the Witch fire in Poway area during the Southern California fires.

RESPECT GESTURE (bottom right) A California Guard Soldier on duty for the wildfires salutes a supporter.

WATER DROP (bottom left) A CAARNG Black Hawk helicopter, 1/140th Aviation, drops water on the Witch fire in California's Poway area.

SFC ROBERT PACK / CHRIS WEST

3rd Battalion consolidated Soldiers from more than 80 communities in the largest AKARNG mobilization since WWII.

ARKANSAS

After serving a year overseas with the responsibility of ensuring the security of Kuwaiti seaports, more than 300 ARARNG Soldiers returned home to

the members of the Fort Smith, Van Buren and Siloam Springs batteries of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Fires Brigade, touched down Oct. 8 and 9 to begin demobilizing.

MONTANA

On Oct. 19, 1SG Monte Herrin was awarded the Bronze Star for Meri-

torious Achievement while serving as a member of the 1/163rd Infantry Battalion, deployed to Iraq from Dec. 15, 2005, through Oct. 30, 2006. 1SG Herrin worked tirelessly, supervising shifts around the clock and in numerous recovery missions, to recover and repair combat vehicles damaged by enemy attacks. He came

under fire on many occasions while recovering vehicles.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The SDARNG Running Team captured first place in both the men's and women's National Guard divisions at the Army's Ten Miler on Oct. 7 in our nation's capital. The event, which



CAPTION (left) Spartan Soldiers extract a “detainee,” played by SSG Warren, from a cell during the Forced Cell Extraction exercise.

CAPTION (above) Spartan Soldiers line up, preparing to enter the cell block to extract an unruly detainee.

MN AND TN JOIN FORCES ... BEHIND BARS

Story and photos by CPT Darrin Haas

CAMP ALBERTSHOF, GERMANY—Footsteps echo through the corridor, then cease in an eerie silence. With precision, the Soldiers line up outside the cell as a detainee screams profanity and threatens their lives. All chances for reasoning with the detainee are gone; the Soldiers, members of a Forced Cell Extraction Team, enter the cell with a crash, regaining control of the detainee. The situation is over.

“The Spartans,” Task Force Bayonet’s Attack Company, 1st Platoon, 2/135th Infantry, Minnesota Army National Guard (MNARNG), hadn’t performed extractions before now. But, this celebrated combat unit is rigorously training, because they may be called upon to handle this dangerous job soon, as part of the Guard force for KFOR9.

Teaming up with Tennessee Army National Guard (TNARNG) Military Police (MP) Soldiers from Task Force Guardian, these two units comprise the team responsible for detention operations for Multi-National Task Force East. Working together, they have the difficult job of ensuring that detainees are safe, secure and treated humanely in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

“We are learning a lot of new skills that we normally don’t get during infantry training,” said SSG Jordan Mahieu, platoon sergeant for the Spartans. “We normally capture the detainee and turn them over to the MPs, never to see them again. Now we are getting to see the rest of the process, and it is more involved and dangerous than I thought,” he added.

The unit’s training consisted of learning numerous new skills, from unarmed self-defense and searching detainees, to how to conduct feeding procedures. SSG Johnny

Warren, the facility non-commissioned officer-in-charge from Task Force Guardian, said that everything done in a holding facility or prison is dangerous.

“Even simple things like escorting a detainee to the bathroom can be risky for the guard or detainee, and needs to be taken seriously.”

Most members of the unit are excited about the new skills they are learning. 2LT Eric Athman, the Spartan platoon leader commented, “We are excited to add new skill sets to our training. Now that we better understand how the detention and holding process works, it makes us better infantrymen, especially when detaining high-value targets.”

The Soldiers are benefiting from the joint training for other reasons. Traditionally, infantry Soldiers and MPs misunderstand each other. “Every time I was with MPs, it was when I was pulled over, so I never really cared for them. But now I understand their role and respect them for the job they do,” said SSG Jesse Wolbeck, a Spartan squad leader.

“Most Soldiers don’t realize how dangerous working with detainees can be,” SSG Warren said. “As a correctional officer from Tennessee, dealing with detainees and prisoners is very dangerous and stressful. You always have to be on your toes.”

The Soldiers are ready for the challenges that lie ahead in Kosovo. **GX**

VICTORY MAP >>>



featured 26,000 runners, is considered the largest 10-mile race in the U.S. and the second largest in the world. This race marked the 23rd year the Army has conducted the event.

WASHINGTON, DC

Seven brigades have been alerted as

replacement forces for OIF, and one for OEF, as announced Oct. 19. The alert for OIF involves ARNG brigades totaling about 18,000 troops. Two of these will replace active duty brigades conducting combat operations. Four will have a security mission and one will have detention ops. Conducting combat ops are the 30th BCT,

NCARNG, and the 56th BCT, PAARNG. The security brigades are: 56th BCT, TXARNG; 29th BCT, HIARNG; 81st BCT, WAARNG; and 45th Fires Brigade, OKARNG. The 50th BCT, NJARNG, will conduct detention ops. The first of these will not deploy until next summer, and many will not deploy until late 2008 or 2009.

Children of service members recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center have a new recreation option thanks to the team effort of three nonprofit groups and a defense contractor. The Yellow Ribbon Fund dedicated a playground at Walter Reed’s Mologne House on Oct. 15. The facility

OCC GUARD BIKE NOW ON DISPLAY



Story and photo by Chris West, Editor-at-Large

On Sept. 27, 2007, at the National Guard Joint Readiness Center in Arlington, VA, the brand new National Guard custom chopper was rolled out for its first viewing by National Guard Soldiers.

Presented by MG James Nuttall, Deputy Director of the Army National Guard, the bike was ridden into the viewing area by Paul Teutul Sr. of Orange County Choppers. Paulie and Mikey Teutul, as well as three of the four Soldiers who helped design the bike, joined them for the big unveiling. The design was a big hit with the Soldiers and as soon as you see it, you'll know why.

The chopper is currently on display at the Readiness Center and will be shown to the general public for the first time in Jan. 2008 on Discovery Channel's "American Chopper." **GX**

AR HOSTS ANNUAL MARKSMANSHIP EVENTS



PRECISION A Winston P. Wilson shooter takes aim as he waits for the command to fire.

Story and photos by SGT Julia Spinnato, NGMTC PAO

CAMP ROBINSON, AR—The National Guard Marksmanship Training Center (NGMTC) at Camp Robinson, North Little Rock, AR, hosted more than 400 military marksmen for its 37th annual Winston P. Wilson (WPW) Marksmanship Training Exercise and 17th annual Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting (AFSAM) October 2–13.

These sustainment training exercises are held as extreme, task-driven training

exercises, designed to test and improve the capabilities of military units and individuals. The AFSAM training event was created to promote marksmanship training between U.S. military forces and allied nations. The WPW matches offer competitors a chance to share ideas and learn from the country's most experienced Guard members.

Training with other countries and states provides shooters with new ideas and different outlooks on marksmanship tactics. "Matches help build unit cohesion and morale within

the team," said Gunnery Sgt. Timothy Hamler, the staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the Marine Corps Rifle Team. "AFSAM gives us the ability to compete against other countries and implement ideas into our own marksmanship competitions."

Cpl Jim Bloom, a Royal Marine Commando recruit troop instructor specializing in weapons and tactics, agreed. "We are able to gain knowledge from other nations and more marksmanship experience, and then when we return to our unit we can pass on that information to improve shooting in general within the corps."

MSG George Mayer, a Delaware National Guard Soldier and 37-year participant of the WPW matches, said sharing information is the biggest benefit he sees from training with other states.

"Asking questions, watching how other states perform and finding out what they do to prepare—how they train and how they get the support they need—gives us an advantage and key information we can pass on to other Soldiers when we go back to our units," said MSG Mayer.

At these events, Soldiers train by competing in combat-oriented marksmanship matches geared toward situations they may face during real world missions. They pass the skills they learn on to other Soldiers when they return to their home units.

"At these competitions, you learn teamwork, reactionary courses of fire, the importance of having a good zero and communication between your teammates," MSG Mayer said. "The experience itself is something you can take back and share with other unit members."

Some of the foreign marksmanship training is different from that of the U.S. military. By competing in foreign matches, all participants are able to learn new skills.

"In the United Kingdom, we concentrate mainly on center of mass," said Cpl Bloom. "At AFSAM, some of the shooting is quicker and at closer ranges, which in current operation environments is more relevant than some of the stuff we do."

Because marksmanship is a perishable skill, teams prepare throughout the year for the WPW and AFSAM matches.

VICTORY MAP >>>

was constructed primarily for children staying at the residential facility.



AFGHANISTAN



33 00 N, 65 00 E (Southern Asia)
Capital: Kabul
Population: 31,899,923

An AZARNG Soldier assigned to Provincial Reconstruction Team Qalat has been accepted into the All-Army Rugby Training Camp program. SPC Christopher Eckerson will travel to Fort Benning, GA, in October to try out for the team. The Armed Forces Rugby Championship tournament takes place Oct. 23-28 at Camp Lejeune, NC.

SUPPORT OPERATION GLACIER WARRIOR

By SPC Miko Holloran

ARDNER, MT—Members of the Montana Army National Guard and members of the Blackfeet tribe will participate in a buffalo hunt for troubled teens during an Operation Glacier Warrior event. The event will be held January 11–13 in Gardner, MT.

GX's Keith Kawasaki and Dustin McNeal will be there.

“The kids will get a taste of the Native American culture, and learn some life lessons during this bonding and mentoring experience,” said Kawasaki.

SSG Earl Heavyrunner, a member of the 1st battalion, 163rd Infantry Division, and War Chief of the Blackfeet tribe, will be leading the hunt.

“This is a traditional hunt for the Blackfeet tribe,” SSG Heavyrunner told GX in a recent interview.

“The teens will also go through a weapons safety course,” added the staff sergeant. “We’re going to show them not only how to properly shoot a weapon, but also how and why they should be extremely careful around a weapon.”

Operation Glacier Warrior is looking for donations for the trip. The money will go toward lodging, food and gas. **GX**

Donations can be mailed to:

**Operation Glacier Warrior
PO Box 2876
Browning, MT 59417**

“We train year-round,” said TSGT Christopher Ashley, a nondestructive tester for F-16 fighter planes in the New York Air National Guard. “Our team spends personal time practicing marksmanship fundamentals. When we teach other people, we also benefit because we go back to the basics. Basic skills have to be reinforced on a regular basis.”

“Training competitions such as this make you more confident in your ability to react without having to think about it,” said MSG Mayer. “Basic marksmanship skills become second nature. Once you have the basic marksmanship skills perfected, the precision speed becomes a lot easier to incorporate into your course of fire.”

Many unit commanders may not know the training value these matches offer. It is important they understand the opportunity Soldiers have by participating in the WPW or AFSAM.

“Commanders of units need to get involved because of the obligation to train or provide training to subordinates,” said Gunnery Sgt. Hamler. “Marksmen from all over the world can come to matches like WPW and AFSAM and gain the skills required to engage and destroy the enemy in a live two-way range.”

“The enemy combatant has never been killed by a softball, basketball or football,” he

continued, quoting his favorite saying. “The only ball that has killed a combatant is ball ammunition from a skilled marksman.” **GX**

EXPERTISE (upper right) SFC Gary Wallace, an All Guard Shooter from Missouri, chambers a round to prepare for a match during the Winston P. Wilson matches and Armed Forces Skill at Arms Meeting.

METICULOUS (bottom) Air and Army National Guard members score their targets during a rifle Excellence in Competition Match.



IRAQ



33 00 N, 44 00 E (Middle East)
Capital: Baghdad
Population: 27,499,638

The arrival of KYARNG members from the 138th Fires Brigade allows members of the 151st Field Artillery Brigade, SCARNG, to begin their trek back home. They conducted a transition of authority ceremony in front of the Multi-National Division – Baghdad headquarters on Oct. 5.

DISABLED VET FOUNDATION VISITS OR

Courtesy of the OR NG PAO

SALEM, OR—Emmy-nominated actor Jack Scalia visited Soldiers at the Oregon National Guard's Anderson Readiness Center in Salem, OR, Sept. 24. But, instead of arriving in a limousine, as is customary for most actors, he arrived on a road racing bicycle.

The visit came during the Oregon leg of Scalia's Seattle-to-San Diego bicycle trek aimed at raising awareness and funds for injured military Veterans and their families.

His riding companions included injured Iraqi Veteran, J.R. Martinez, former Oregon Soldier, Kerry Kingsley-Smith, and John Wordin, executive director of Operation American Spirit. The venture aims to raise \$50 million for severely injured military Veterans over the next few years.

According to the organization's Web site, www.OperationAmericanSpirit.org, donations will help injured military Veterans concentrate on their recovery efforts, and will ease financial burdens on their families. The organization aims to provide mentoring, recovery programs, job and trade assistance, and activities intended to improve morale.

Kingsley-Smith joined up with the group in Portland on Sept. 23, and planned to ride through Oregon. He said the ride is personal to him because of his friendship with fellow rider Martinez.

Kingsley-Smith and Martinez met in 2003 while they were both at the Army's burn treatment unit at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. Martinez, a former Soldier who was injured in the line of duty, had been burned over 40 percent of his body. Kingsley-Smith, an Army nurse working as a therapist at the burn unit, found inspiration in Martinez's recovery.

"He had to put up with me because I kept sending him in to talk to the other Veterans at the burn unit," Kingsley-Smith said.

When Kingsley-Smith found out about the ride on the local television news, he

jumped at the chance to be with his old friend Martinez, but also liked what Operation American Spirit was doing.

"I wanted to see the foundation reach their goal," said Kingsley-Smith, who planned to ride with the group toward southern Oregon before returning to his job in public health.

He added that though there are a lot of good stories about returning Veterans, most of the stories about military members have a strong political angle. Being a part of the bike ride was his way of raising awareness for a really good story, he said.

Scalia echoed Kingsley-Smith, saying that the organization's goals have nothing to do with politics or the government.

"This is about mom and apple pie," Scalia said. "The military members of this country have stood watch for us for so long, and now it's time for us to stand up and do what's right for them."

If you would like to contribute to Operation American Spirit or join in the journey to San Diego, visit the Web site. The Web site also contains blogs and news releases that are updated daily. **GX**

CYCLING GROUP (L-R) Kingsley-Smith, actor Scalia, Wordin and Martinez. The group plans to ride from Seattle to San Diego in order to raise funds and awareness for severely injured Veterans.



VICTORY MAP >>>



KOSOVO



42 30 N, 21 00 E
Capital: Priština
Population: 1,900,000

The situation in Kosovo is "stable, but potentially fragile." BG Douglas B. Earhart, commander of the American contingent in the NATO-led Kosovo force, said he is proud of the job that his 1,500-member force has done and believes the province is ready for several key events. BG Earhart commands a multi-national force based around

the 29th Infantry Division. The 39th Infantry Division will take over the command Nov. 2.

MO UNIT HONORED WITH OFFICIAL DAY

Story and photos by SSG Heather Carden, Public Representative

KIRKWOOD, MO—Kirkwood mayor Mike Swoboda proclaimed Aug. 27 220th Engineer Company Day in the city of Kirkwood. As part of the festivities, 16 Citizen-Soldiers from Missouri National Guard's 220th Engineer Company volunteered their time to participate in Operation Clean Stream held on Aug. 25.

The proclamation presented to the 220th stated that their "commitment has resulted in the restoration of the natural beauty of the Mermac River and would not be as successful without their participation."

The Soldiers brought along a 5-ton dump truck and 3-skid steer loaders, also known as Bobcats, to haul debris out of the Mermac River at Green Tree Park. Soldiers worked at various sites along the river, including a boat ramp, where volunteers in canoes and boats brought in debris accumulated during a cleanup float.

CPT Robert Daly, commander of the 220th, said, "We hauled enough debris to fill approximately four large construction dumpsters. We even pulled a picnic table out of the water."

"Every Soldier who participated volunteered their personal time to do so. We arrived that morning and stayed until the very end. I'm so proud of the Soldiers. They worked in some pretty nasty areas, but it was great to get out and help a community."

The 220th Engineer Company is a subordinate unit of the 1140th Engineer Battalion. "When our Soldiers are involved in this type of event, it's a win-win situation. It benefits everyone," said CSM Dan Armour, command sergeant major of the 1140th.

Ron Coleman, director of the Open Space Council, praised the 220th for their participation. "Operation Clean Stream was founded in 1967. The National Guard has played a key role in Operation Clean Stream for the past 25 years, providing much-needed manpower and equipment, [enabling] our cleanups to be more productive and successful," said Coleman. **GX**

DOING THEIR PART (upper right) The 220th Engineer Company and other volunteers pull a picnic table out of the Mermac River.

COMMENDABLE EFFORT (bottom) Mayor Swoboda presents proclamation to CPT Daly. Also pictured are SGT David Clardy and Ron Coleman.



BAD VOODOO PROFILE

Name: SPC Jose Andres Ramirez
Age: 36
Unit: 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1/160th Infantry Regiment California Army National Guard

Currently deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, **GX** interviewed platoon members during train up at Camp Shelby, MS.



What prompted you to join the military?

Back in '83, I wanted to join the military. My dad kept saying, "No. Wait till you finish high school." Wait till I finish high school in '87. I say, "Dad, I'm ready to do it. I'm a grown up. I'm 17." He says, "Nope. You're not yet ready. Wait till you get a degree." I went to college, got a full-time job. By that time I was 23. I say, "I'm old enough now, Dad. But I want your blessing." He said, "Yes." So, ever since then the military has been taking care of me. I was in the 82nd Airborne from '94-'97.

Why did you choose the Guard?

My mom used to call me and say, "Your dad needs you. Nobody's here to help him out." So, I said, "All right, I'm going to take care of my family." In order for me to keep up with the military [and be home], I joined the National Guard.

Why did you choose infantry?

Just the challenge. The toughness. The pride of being in the infantry, especially in America.

What's your civilian career?

I'm a private security guard, a contractor with TSA, airport security.

Plans after deployment?

I want to start my own business. I want to raise wild turkeys, pheasants for hunting. Quails, pheasants, doves.

Are you married?

Yes. In 2001 . . . we got married on the third of October. The same week, I got mobilized to Fort Huachuca. She's from Mexico. I married her because we've been together two to three years. I used to visit her three times a year in Mexico. [We have] two little girls. One just turned two and the other will be four years. I miss them.

Watch for more Bad Voodoo Profiles in future issues of **GX**.

TS/SGT NICK CHOY, OR NG PAO



SECURITY STOP Soldiers from the 235th MP Company perform a security halt while patrolling as they continue security missions during their deployment in support of OEF.

235TH MP COMPANY, ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN AFGHANISTAN

By MAJ Orson Ward, PAO

BAGRAM AIR BASE, AFGHANISTAN—As of late 2007, Soldiers from the 235th Military Police Company, South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG), remained actively engaged conducting security missions during a year-long deployment in support of OEF.

The 130 Soldiers from the Rapid City-based unit began their 12-month “boots-on-ground” deployment in January 2007 and have served for the past several months in four separate locations: Bagram Air Base, FOB Salerno, FOB Fenty and at Camp Eggers.

According to 1SG Dana Nelson of Rapid City, SD, the unit’s operations include law-and-order and convoy security missions, provincial reconstruction team site security, customs inspections and detainee security. He said the unit also provides additional support to the bases where unit members are stationed. With a mobilized reactionary force, the 235th provides immediate military response in case of an incident or attack.

“We are staying pretty busy and the troops are doing great,” said 1SG Nelson.

1SG Nelson said one of the reasons the morale of the unit remains high is because of the satisfaction of knowing the service they’re providing and the interaction with the local population is having a positive effect.

“Our troops are well-received because they’re getting things done to make things better here,” he said, “like building schools, hospitals, bridges and that type of thing.”

“The locals know you’re here to help them out,” said SPC Jeremy Timmer, Spearfish, SD, who has had a great deal of interaction with the local population. His platoon was assigned to conduct village assessments the first few months of the deployment.

“We have interactions with everybody, from far away into the mountains to right next to the base,” said SPC Timmer. “It’s really good to know that you are doing something for the locals around here, and it’s nice to go out and visit with these people.”

SPC Timmer said his unit has been able to help by providing food and fresh water from newly dug wells, and its presence reduces the threat of attack from the Taliban.

“The Taliban is real big out here, so we talk to them about making sure the Taliban is gone and if they show up we can help,” he said.

This is SPC Timmer’s first deployment overseas but for SPC Andrew Martinmaas of Miller, SD, this is his second, as he deployed for a year to Iraq in 2004–2005 with 2nd Battalion, 147th Field Artillery. While serving with the South Dakota artillery unit, SPC Martinmaas performed security escort

missions similar to those he and fellow Soldiers are now conducting in Afghanistan.

“We do some convoys that are similar but also different,” said SPC Martinmaas comparing the two deployments. “In Iraq we would spend 14 to 16 hours a day on the road and we’d travel hundreds of miles. [Now] we spend 14- to 16-hour days on the road and we may only go about 30 miles.”

SPC Martinmaas said this is due to the extreme difference in the two countries’ terrain and weather. He said the mountains and climate in Afghanistan have some similarities to the Black Hills of South Dakota, which he calls home.

Despite the similarities, the one thing all 235th Soldiers have in the back of their mind is the distance and absence of their families.

“Leaving my family obviously was difficult,” said SSG Seth Brennan of Deadwood, SD.

SSG Brennan and many of his fellow MPs are familiar with separation from family. He and about a third of the unit members serving in Afghanistan deployed to Fort Carson, CO, in Feb. 2003, to conduct law enforcement missions for the active duty installation.

SSG Brennan said he was personally disappointed when the unit got mobilized a few years ago because they weren’t going overseas. The deployment to Afghanistan is an adventure he and his fellow Soldiers were eager to experience.

“My wife and I kind of knew what to expect since we had already been in this situation,” said SSG Brennan. “The only difference this time around is I’ve got a three-year-old daughter.” **GX**

NEW TROOPS TAKEN ABOVE, BEYOND AND UNDER WATER

Story and photo by MSG Jodie Stafford, IN NG

EVANSVILLE, IN—On an overcast September day in Indiana, a veteran Soldier—leader of new, young Warriors—splashes into the small lake beside the Evansville armory enthusiastically yelling, “Yeah, that’s cold! That’s good for training!”

This is SSG Joseph McCaffrey’s first of many bellowed remarks on a training day for Detachment 5 Recruit Sustainment Battalion. The new Soldiers with this Indiana Army National Guard (INARNG) unit are about to experience Combat Waterborne Operations Training. It’s just another training day for these Warriors, but it’s a rare experience for most Guard members.

The lead trainer of this detachment, SFC Larry Lightburne, is responsible for making the atypical day somewhat of a norm for his newest Soldiers. “I couldn’t live with not giving these guys every opportunity for training I can,” he said.

SFC Lightburne has to prepare each of these Soldiers for the very real possibility of combat, as many of his Warriors are enlisted with the deploying 76th Brigade Combat Team. When their basic and advanced trainings are complete, they will join units such as the 1/151st Infantry Battalion and the 1/163rd Field Artillery Battalion.

The possibility that some of these young Soldiers may go overseas is the reason the leaders of Detachment 5 work to continuously add tough and interesting training to the drill schedules. Other recent additions include a regular combative class, a challenging obstacle course competition and Combat Water Survivability training.

Training begins with SSG McCaffrey and his co-instructor, SSG Eddie Embry, on a Zodiac boat, attempting to do what they expect their troops to do that afternoon—breach the boat. They have to capsize it using their weight and a rope.

Then three privates, tasked to assist in training, are asked to test breaching the boat with minimal struggle. The instructors swim proudly around the splashing Soldiers as they attempt to get each other back into the boat by pushing, pulling, shoving and consuming significant quantities of lake water. Training has begun.

Then the real fun begins. More than 40 of Indiana’s newest recruits form eight teams and start racing through the combat survivability course to show they have what it takes not just to pass the tests, but to win against their peers. The goals are to be the best and strongest, to defeat one’s enemy and to win.

Team names are chosen, briefings are heard, spare boots and uniforms are donned, and then they are weighed down, tasked out and flying into the water.

“The enemy’s not going to wait on you, private,” SSG Embry yells as he moves alongside his Soldiers, motivating them to move at “combat speed.”

The watchful eyes of SFC McCaffrey and SSG Embry follow every move, and their words are teaching lessons that these new Soldiers will carry for life.

“Don’t you leave your buddy behind, private,” says SFC McCaffrey, the lead instructor who moves effortlessly through the water, splashing the troops for a more realistic training effect. “Get back there and help your team.”

The words echo as the Soldiers work through the two events. The strongest swimmer takes a rope across the lake to tie off as the team members cross with their gear. The teammates work together to pull in the last Soldier and retrieve the rope.

Once across the lake, they immediately race back to the other side and jump into the Zodiac boat. There, they perform breaches and assists to get their teammates back in the capsized boat. The effort is great, but the lessons learned from standing by, instead of helping out a teammate, are too obvious to ignore: If you don’t work as a team, you don’t accomplish the task—or the mission.

At the end of the day, the young Warriors have been tested by the older sergeants. They are worn out, but smiling as they find out which team came out on top.

The previously screaming instructors smile as they hand out certificates and shake hands with the winning teams.

As the five Soldiers receive their applause, the detachment of new recruits is given an added opportunity to take away a valuable lesson from the day’s training. The winning team didn’t have the advantage from watching the others and learning from their mistakes. They succeeded by counting on their training and each other. They accomplished their mission in the true spirit of the Soldier’s Creed: “I am an American Soldier. I am a Warrior and a member of a team . . .” **GX**



MAKING A SPLASH A young Warrior reaches out to help a team member during Combat Waterborne Operations Training.

MISS UTAH, UTARNG SOLDIER, HELPS “BATTLE BUDDIES”

By Craig Coleman, Assistant Editor, *WRAMC* Stripe

WASHINGTON, DC—SGT Jill Stevens, combat medic, recent university graduate and reigning Miss Utah 2007, visited wounded Warriors on Oct. 24 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

“To me this was an opportunity to give back,” SGT Stevens said during her visit to the hospital. Sharlene Wells Hawkes, Miss America 1985, and William A. Chatfield, director of Selective Service accompanied her.

While in DC, the pageant-winning non-commissioned officer also met with officials at the Pentagon and ran in the Marine Corps Marathon on Oct. 28.

SGT Stevens makes several personal appearances each day as Miss Utah, but this trip was different. She visited wounded Warriors, both a Miss America contestant, and a Soldier with the Utah Army National Guard.

During the hospital visit, SGT Stevens spoke about the similarities between the U.S. Army and the Miss America organization. “To me, they go hand-in-hand,” she said, “because they both promote education, helping you go to college and giving scholarships. Both promote fitness as well, and, most importantly, giving back to your country.”

SGT Stevens, a self-described “tomboy,” participated in the Miss Southern Utah University pageant because, “I just wanted to do something feminine.”

She adapted well, learning to put on makeup and walk in high-heeled shoes. She placed third in the 2006 Miss Utah pageant, and was convinced by her success to try again. She was crowned Miss Utah 2007 at the state pageant in June. She will compete against the other Miss America 2008 finalists at the national pageant in Las Vegas, on Jan. 28, 2008.

“I loved the challenge,” SGT Stevens said of participating in the pageants. “After getting into this I realized what this organization [Miss America] brought, why I’m in the mili-

tary and the link between the Miss America organization and the military.”

SGT Stevens said her fellow contestants appreciate having a combat medic among their ranks, and she enjoys incorporating her military life into the pageant world.

“It’s kind of fun,” she said. “Whenever girls get injured walking in high heels they yell, ‘medic!’ and I come running. I say, ‘Grab your battle buddy’ whenever we go anywhere as a group . . . We do pushups in evening gowns!”

The pageant world also spills

into SGT Stevens’ life as a Soldier whenever she drills. “[The other Soldiers] always laugh when I’m coming down the hall and [they] start singing, ‘There she is, Miss America!’” she said. “Then I usually end up doing pushups.”

SGT Stevens said she is grateful for the support of the other Soldiers in her unit. “It

makes a world of difference for me. It’s fun to have my buddies be there and want to support me in this endeavor; it’s really great.”

As far as she has traveled as a beauty contest winner, she has traveled even farther as a Soldier. In 2004, she deployed with the 211th Aviation Group to Afghanistan, where she spent one year caring for sick and injured Soldiers. After her return stateside, SGT Stevens completed her nursing degree and passed her board examinations to become a registered nurse. She plans to use her new nursing credentials to serve in the Army, having submitted an application to become a commissioned officer.

COL Patricia Horoho, Walter Reed Health Care System commander and an Army nurse, was pleased to hear of her decision to stay in the Army.

“I am actually very, very proud of her and that she has dedicated her life to the nursing profession,” COL Horoho said. “It speaks volumes about her and about her commitment—how she represents herself, the Army and the future of the nursing profession.”

“I want to work here [at Walter Reed] and work with the Soldiers,” Stevens said. “If I can help Soldiers—my battle buddies—that means a lot.” **GX**

DEDICATED SUPPORT SGT Jill Stevens, a combat medic and the current Miss Utah, offers a wounded Soldier words of encouragement.



COURTESY OF SGT JILL STEVENS



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HIRE A HERO LINKS VETERANS WITH JOBS



By SFC Erick Studenicka, NGB

ARLINGTON, VA—Although much of the stress associated with a National Guard deployment concludes upon return to the U.S., a new concern can surface during this reintegration period—the angst that goes with finding a job.

Now there's a new Internet tool that links job-seeking Soldiers and Airmen with military-friendly employers: www.HireAHero.org.

"It's a site best described as MySpace-meets-Monster.com for the military community," said Dan Caulfield, executive director of the not-for-profit organization. "It's a social network that enables Veterans to connect with jobs."

More than 600 businesses have participated on the job board, and more than 180,000 individuals have registered at the site. The site also allows those in the military to expand their networking abilities, especially in their home communities.

"When someone comes back from a military deployment, they want to work in their home area," said Caulfield, a Marine Corps infantry officer from 1989–1994. "The networking features of Hire a Hero allow Soldiers or Airmen to talk to more people in their area."

Caulfield stressed that networking is an important aspect of a job search. "We know that the more people you talk to as you look for a job, the better your chances of finding a good job," Caulfield said. "We want to get you connected with people local to where you want to work."

Caulfield's ultimate goal is to eliminate the "military service penalty." He describes the penalty as the underemployment of recently discharged Veterans as compared to their

civilian peers. According to the Department of Labor, the rate of unemployment for recently discharged Veterans ages 20–24 was 15.6 percent in 2005—about double the non-Veteran rate of 8.7 percent.

Underemployment, Caulfield explained, occurs when Veterans return home and take a job for which they are overqualified—the same job they could have landed right out of high school.

"They are being offered bottom-level corporate jobs that pay \$8–12 per hour, as opposed to the \$15–20 per hour jobs they need to make it in the market today," Caulfield said.

Caulfield added that the military stereotype—that military people are disciplined, follow orders and understand a chain-of-command—can actually be detrimental in the eyes of a human resources professional.

"How does a [human resources] manager view that stereotype? As a frontline worker bee," Caulfield said.

Caulfield believes the Hire a Hero site will be especially effective for National Guard members and that much of the site's potential will stem from Guard member use.

With that goal in mind, on May 5 Hire a Hero signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the California National Guard. The alliance will work with the state's public affairs offices, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Family Services in a cooperative effort designed to assist with employment acquisition, as well as recruiting and retention.

The initial statistics for use of the site by California Guard members during the first three months were impressive. According

to COL Charlotte Miller, California Army National Guard, 694 California employers have posted more than 20,000 potential job opportunities on the site, and the site has led to 706 connections between employers and California Guard members.

"It is important to us that our Soldiers are provided with quality civilian employment opportunities," said MG William Wade II, the California National Guard's adjutant general. "We are excited to be the first state to take part in this initiative."

Caulfield anticipates that other states, including Texas, New York, Florida and Pennsylvania, will sign Memorandums of Understanding with Hire a Hero in the near future. Eventually, Caulfield would like to sign a memo with all 54 states and territories.

Before becoming the executive director of Hire a Hero, Caulfield was the managing director of Helmets to Hardhats, a program that helped about 60,000 military personnel transition into the construction industry. Caulfield decided to organize Hire a Hero because it involves all industries, whereas the construction industry involves about 5 percent of U.S. employment. **GX**

It's a site best described as MySpace-meets-Monster.com for the military community. It's a social network that enables Veterans to connect with jobs.

—Dan Caulfield, executive director of Hire a Hero.



For more info on how Hire a Hero is helping Veterans find employment visit:

HireAHero.org

ARNG ASSISTS DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AFTER TROPICAL STORM NOEL



Courtesy of PAO and DVIDS



SOTO CANO AIR BASE, HONDURAS—A team of 19 Airmen and Soldiers, and two helicopters from U.S. Southern Command’s Joint Task Force Bravo, deployed to the Dominican Republic to assist with recovery efforts in the wake of Tropical Storm Noel.

The Airmen, Soldiers and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters were loaded on a C-5 Galaxy cargo aircraft from the New York Air National Guard to travel to the Dominican Republic.

The Soldiers’ main focus was search and rescue missions, said SGT Jose Burgos-Mercado, one of the Soldiers deployed with the team. “The task force consists mostly of aircrew and search and rescue personnel. There [were] a lot of people still missing, so we [helped] look for them and move relief supplies.”

Two additional UH-60 Black Hawks from the Puerto Rico National Guard deployed to the Dominican Republic a few days later, and conducted search and rescue missions in the San Isidro area.

A humanitarian assistance survey team from U.S. Army South, based in San Antonio, TX, also helped with the mission.

A C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft from the Puerto Rico Air National Guard, delivered 27 crates of potable water to San Isidro Air Base for distribution to victims impacted by the storm.

The U.S. Southern Command deployments followed a disaster declaration announced by U.S. Chargé de Affaires Roland W. Bullen on Oct. 31, paving the way for U.S. assistance to the Caribbean nation.

To date, the U.S. Agency for International Development has contributed approximately \$959,000 in aid and assistance to the Dominican Republic in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Noel.

Three U.S. Coast Guard helicopters also assisted with ongoing search and rescue operations and the delivery of emergency provisions. The U.S. Coast Guard crews saved at least 54 lives and delivered 29,278 food rations and 74,970 water rations to survivors.

In the past 25 months, U.S. Southern Command has supported a dozen disaster-

PREPARATION Soldiers and Airmen from Joint Task Force Bravo position a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter for loading onto a C-5 Galaxy from the New York Air National Guard.

relief missions in the Caribbean, Central America and South America. Their military planners continue to work with inter-agency partners and their counterparts in countries affected by Noel. Through their assessment of recovery needs in the affected areas, they identify additional U.S. military units that can provide assistance. **GX**

ETT LEADS ANSF TO SOLIDARITY

Story and photos by SPC Nathan W. Hutchison, 22nd MPAD
Courtesy of DVIDS



GHAZNI PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN—Although the goal of American and coalition forces is to assist the Afghan military during their operations, the Afghan national security forces (ANSF) also need mentoring in earning the respect and acceptance of the Afghan people.

Embedded tactical trainers (ETTs) are Soldiers whose primary role is to train and coach the Afghan National Army (ANA) and police (ANP) in their behavior.

“Our biggest job is showing ANSF what right looks like,” said MAJ Chris P. Guziec, district commander for the ANP ETT.

“We take what they think is right and mold it into something that is workable,” said MAJ Guziec, an Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldier from New York. “This helps them better understand the steps to take and the reason for the changes.”

MAJ Guziec said this type of training requires flexibility from both groups, along with consideration for Afghanistan’s cultural and religious foundation.

“We are the ANP’s mentors—making sure they are being professional at their jobs and not exploiting their power,” said CPT Jason E. Knueven, district team chief for the ANP ETT.

CPT Knueven, a Guard Soldier from Iowa, said he notices positive changes in each of the missions he oversees.

The most recent mission, based on intelligence gathered by coalition forces and ANSF, involved the ANA and ANP securing several villages and searching houses.

“They were being professional at their job,” CPT Knueven said. “They weren’t going in and stirring up the houses. The people took it really well because the ANSF were doing it the right way.”

Even those working with the ANSF in operations and exercises see improvement in their proficiency.

“It’s a slow process and a gradual process, but I definitely see an improvement in the way they plan and execute missions and control their forces,” said 1LT Brian M. Kitching of the 82nd Airborne Division.

“The local populace needs to be able to build that trust with its own military and



DISCUSSION CPT Knueven gathers information and discusses troop movement during Operation Jam Morad.

INVESTIGATION An Afghan Soldier searches a vehicle at a checkpoint during Operation Jam Morad.

police,” said 1LT Kitching. “ANA and ANP working to catch the bad guys will do that.”

1LT Kitching said the ANSF has to do more than catch bad guys to earn the trust and respect of the Afghan people. Civilians need to know they can rely on their military and police to protect them.

“The good people want the bad people out too, but they have to trust the people searching their homes,” said CPT Knueven. “Our presence helps ensure their guys are not tempted to do anything other than act professionally.” **GX**



SOLDIERS SAVE LIVES ON KUWAITI HIGHWAY

By PVT Christopher Grammer
Courtesy of DVIDS



With more than 1 million vehicles on the road in Kuwait—a country roughly the size of Rhode Island—getting from one place to another becomes dangerous.

On Oct. 2, two Central Command Soldiers stationed at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, played the role of Good Samaritan on these roads.

When 2LT Phillip Compean, platoon leader for 708th Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG), saw a vehicle get cut off in his rear view mirror, the first thing he thought was, “This is going to be bad.”

“[The vehicle] came by us like it was shot from a cannon,” said CPT Jimm Dodd, commander of the 708th.

Reacting quickly, 2LT Compean slowed his vehicle and moved over to avoid being hit as the approaching vehicle lost control, flipped onto its side and slammed into a pole.

Riding with 2LT Compean and CPT Dodd were two Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) civilians.

“As the vehicle passed by us it was close enough for us to see their faces,” said CPT Dodd. “You could see the look of panic on the driver’s face as he tried to regain control of the vehicle.”

Witnessing the accident, 2LT Compean quickly pulled over to the side of the road. He and CPT Dodd approached the crash site to offer aid to anyone injured in the wreck.

Before first aid could be applied, the victims had to be moved a safe distance from the site. While CPT Dodd and 2LT Compean were treating the injured, one of the KBR civilians communicated with the driver, acting as translator.

The driver had sustained fractures to his lower extremities and hands. The passenger, who was unconscious due to a head injury,

suffered fractures in his legs and hands, as well as injuries to his chest.

2LT Compean and CPT Dodd provided aid using only an individual lifesaving kit, PVC pipe and scraps of clothing for splints.

“We made do with what we had,” 2LT Compean said.

Both Soldiers stayed with the victims until the ambulance arrived, 20 minutes after the initial call was placed to emergency services.

2LT Compean and CPT Dodd felt good about fulfilling their duty as medically trained Soldiers by applying their skills to those in need.

“It couldn’t have been more perfect that we were there to help those people,” CPT Dodd said. **GX**



LOAD UP CPT Dodd, left, and 2LT Compean load a stretcher onto an ambulance at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

PA CHINOOK AIRLIFTS C-130 FUSELAGE

Story and photo by SPC Matthew E. Jones, PAARNG PAO

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, PA—Residents of the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area may have been a tad startled on the afternoon of Sept. 14 when they saw the fuselage of a C-130 aircraft flying through the sky—especially since the tail section was nowhere in sight.

Members of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's (PAARNG) 104th Aviation Battalion airlifted the plane in two massive pieces from Forty Fort Airport to Tobyhanna Army Depot using a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The tail section arrived at Tobyhanna a few hours after the fuselage.

The pilots, CWOs Jeff Reep and Patrick Quinton, said the 11-ton payload was among the largest loads they had ever seen carried by a Chinook. In fact, the crew was slightly nervous about the heavy cargo, they said, so they reduced their airspeed and were careful to avoid populated areas en route to their destination.

"The load was swaying more than we had anticipated," said CWO Reep, "so it took a little longer than we had hoped to get to our destination. But you have to expect the unexpected when you're carrying a non-standard load."

Apparently, a C-130 is about as non-standard as it gets.

"I don't think this has ever been done before," said CWO Reep. "But thankfully, the engineers at Tobyhanna Army Depot did a great job preparing the load for us."

Missions such as the C-130 airlift benefit all parties involved, said CWO Reep. The depot saves tremendous amounts of time and money by using a helicopter instead of trucks to transport the aircraft. Guard members, meanwhile, get to participate in an excellent training opportunity.

"The mission went very well and we got a lot of positive feedback," said CWO Reep. "Any time we can lift something it's a good day for a Chinook pilot. That's what we're in the business for."

The reassembled C-130, which had previously been used by a soon-to-be-inactive Air Force Reserve unit, will now be used to test the various electronic communication systems developed and maintained by the depot. The systems must be able to be transported by a C-130, so having the aircraft on site will expedite the projects. **GX**

LIFT OFF Members of the PAARNG's 104th Aviation Battalion airlifted a C-130 in two massive pieces from Forty Fort Airport Sept. 14.



DESERT PATROL Michigan Army National Guard SFC Craig Pulver accompanies Afghan National Police Soldiers on a joint ANA and ANP patrol in Tagabe valley, Afghanistan.



POLICING KAPISA

By SFC James Downen, 218th INF

The mission of the Kapisa Police Mentor Team (PMT) is to help the Afghan National Police (ANP) assume its duties of providing law enforcement services and enable the ANP to support the Afghan National Army (ANA) against the Anti-Government Elements (AGE) that threaten the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Kapisa PMT is comprised of Police Mentors and a Security Force element from Army National Guard (ARNG) units around the U.S. commanded by Michigan ARNG (MIARNG) LTC Shawn Harris. Vermont ARNG SSG Ronny Burt, a member of the Kapisa PMT, describes the role of the ANP in Afghanistan's National Defense.

"The ANP must be police and Soldiers," SSG Burt said. "They have a police role and a combat role in the fight against the AGE," he explained. "The government of Afghanistan wants the ANP to conduct searches of the property and homes of citizens using law enforcement procedures to guarantee their

constitutional rights when there is a need for sweeps during combat operations."

SSG Burt elaborated on the challenges they face in their development.

"The ANP as an organization [is] only a year old," he said. "Many are illiterate and lack proper training. However, when they get their act together, they are effective in gathering intelligence that we've been able to use to apprehend suspects."

The Kapisa PMT accompanies their ANP counterparts on combat and sweeps. Kapisa PMT member SFC Craig Pulver, MIARNG, went on a patrol in Tagabe valley with an ANP squad on Sept. 5. The ANP mission was to show presence to the populace and search for AGE in the valley.

SFC Pulver shook hands with every citizen he encountered. By the end of the patrol, his counterparts began doing the same. "We get our best leads on suspects from contact with the community," said SFC Pulver. "The vital part of mentoring our ANP counterparts is to show them the importance of good relations with the people they serve." He elaborated,

"The effective ANP are those who conscientiously try to better their country."

SFC Pulver also serves as a supply mentor to the Kapisa ANP logistics officer. "My counterpart is beginning to understand the need for long-term planning," said SFC Pulver. "Right now, they still order supplies as they need them, but as they conduct extended operations, they are confronted by the need for stockpiled supplies to support long-term operations." He concluded, "Logistics is a big wheel. My counterpart works with his ANP side and I work with the PMT side and we'll meet in the middle."

SSG Burt and SFC Pulver recognize that the ANP have much to learn and more professional development to achieve before they assume law enforcement duties.

The PMT Soldiers stated how they wanted their respective missions to end. "I'd like to leave Afghanistan knowing that the Afghans in the valleys I've worked in have full confidence in their police to provide security in their communities," said SSG Burt.

"I want to feel we made a difference in Afghanistan. I believe in what we're doing here. Sometimes it can be frustrating, three steps forward and one back, but the Afghan people do want to go forward," said SFC Pulver. **GX**

OPERATION RISING WARRIOR BUILDS RISING FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN U.S., JAPAN



SALUTE Members of the 184th Infantry Regiment and the 5th Brigade, 27th Infantry Regiment Japanese Ground Self Defense Force salute the flag during the American national anthem at the Operation Rising Warrior opening ceremony.

Story and photos by SGT Kara Greene

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, CA—“Doomo arigato,” [“Thank you”] said SGT Bryce Trauger of A Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, before the opening ceremony of Operation Rising Warrior.

This is the first time the 5th Brigade, 27th Infantry Regiment, Japanese Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) has left Japan to train with another nation’s army.

Hosted by the 184th Infantry Regiment of Modesto, at California’s Fort Hunter Liggett, the Soldiers will practice individual movement tactics and techniques learned during recent deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

On the parade field, SGT Trauger’s troops shout out simple Japanese words in preparation for meeting their brothers-in-arms from the Land of the Rising Sun. The enlisted Soldiers listened intently as the non-commissioned officer (NCO) conducted this impromptu language class. Two of the NCOs in the group had served in Japan during their time in the Marine Corps.

The California National Guard (CA NG) Soldiers do not know much Japanese. However, language is anything but a barrier to them.

“Hand and arm signals are effective in combat situations,” said PFC Rudy Marez of the 3rd Platoon as he made the motions for basic infantry directions with his hands. “This will be the best way to communicate during the next three weeks of training.”

SGT Trauger conducted convoy operations in Iraq every day for a year, and feels this training will give him the confidence to teach the Japanese what he knows.

“This training is our bread and butter,” SGT Trauger said. “[A] Company practices infantry techniques each month at drill. But this is an opportunity for improvement, as more than 100 California National Guard Soldiers will train with the 200 JGSDF Soldiers during this exercise, for the first time.”

The Japanese Soldiers here have the mission of spreading what they learn to their comrades at home, explained COL Yoshimasa Yamaguchi, brigade commander. “[Operation] Rising Warrior,” he said, “assists in the devel-

opment of trust between the United States and Japan.”

“In the 1960s, we became a self defense force, not an army,” explained Japanese SGM Kaname Koike. “We are bound by the Constitution not to act on the offensive.” JGSDF Soldiers have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan to support the humanitarian mission and rebuilding efforts.

SGM Koike hopes to learn from the CA NG Soldiers. He would like to learn the most from those men who deployed to Iraq.

“As we train, we’ll discover our differences—our strengths and our weaknesses—and grow from there,” said SGM Koike.

Beyond the field training, Soldiers from both sides of the Pacific hope to learn more about each other’s culture. LTC Hideki Onizuka, JGSDF, would like to compare experiences and cultural differences with the CA NG Soldiers. It’s his first time in the United States, but said he felt welcome as soon as he arrived.

After the ceremony, the Soldiers left their two separate platoons and melted into a larger group to casually greet each other.

California Soldiers pointed out patches and pins on Japanese Soldiers' uniforms. Each side answered questions about their boots, pants and headgear, with the assistance of translators, or engaged in a quick game of charades. They snapped photos and practiced each other's language.

A Japanese Humvee and a fighting vehicle were quickly overtaken by curious CA NG troops. They kicked the tires and crawled through turret openings, asking questions about the vehicle's capabilities.

The Japanese and American Soldiers left the ceremony grounds together and headed toward the dining facility, sharing stories and jokes. The ice was broken and friendships were blossoming. **GX**



INFORMED SGT Boyce, 184th Infantry Regiment Soldier, asks Japanese Ground Self Defense Force Soldiers about the patches on their uniform after Operation Rising Warrior's opening ceremony.

CEREMONY HONORS WWI CHOCTAW CODE TALKERS

Story and photos by SPC Derek Del Rosario, 100th MPAD

CAMP MABRY, TX—During WWI, the Choctaw Code Talkers played an integral role in defending against the German forces' last major offensive in 1918. Almost 90 years later, their efforts were honored during a ceremony at the BG John C. L. Scribner Texas Military Forces Museum Sept. 16.

LTG Charles G. Rodriguez, adjutant general of Texas, presented the families of the Choctaw Code Talkers with 18 Lone Star Medals of Valor, the second highest decoration awarded by the Texas Military Forces. The awards also marked the first military medals given in recognition of the Code Talkers' service to the U.S.

"It has been almost 90 years and it is finally time they receive the recognition they deserve for their service," said LTG Rodriguez. "It is my hope that more opportunities for more recognition will open up in the future."

During WWI, 16 Choctaw Soldiers were members of the 143rd Infantry Regiment and two were members of the 141st Infantry Regiment, both part of the Texas National Guard's 36th ID. While on the Western Front in France, American forces suffered significant losses because German forces were able to intercept radio communications. When an officer overheard two Choctaw Soldiers talking in their native language, he perceptively pushed the idea of using their native language to relay vital information.

The Choctaw Soldiers relayed messages between various company headquarters that the German forces could not decipher. Their language proved to be an unbreakable code that helped American Expeditionary Forces win several key battles in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign in France. The Code Talkers' success also proved to be the catalyst that drove use of the Navajo language during WWII.

In addition to recognizing the Code Talkers, the museum officially dedicated its Choctaw Code Talker exhibit to mark their historic contributions to military history. During the ceremony, Choctaw Nation Tribal Chaplain Bertram Bobb blessed the exhibit and expressed appreciation for the Texas Military Forces.

"It is great to see all the code talker relatives here to honor these great Choctaw Soldiers,"

said Chaplain Bobb. "I am also grateful to the museum and [the Texas Military Forces] for helping remember a part of history of the Choctaw nation."

Relatives of the Choctaw Code Talkers and members of the Choctaw Nation traveled from as far as Oklahoma to witness the ceremony. Judy Allen, executive director of public relations for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, said she felt that the ceremony was a proud moment for the Choctaw Indians in attendance.

"The reaction has been fabulous. The past years we have been trying to get recognition for the valiant efforts of these Code Talkers, so this is definitely a proud moment," said Ms. Allen. "The families are absolutely overwhelmed. Some have told me that to get this much public recognition has been one of the proudest moments in their lives."

While Allen is happy that the Code Talkers are receiving their recognition, it is her hope that the story of the Choctaw Code Talkers will continue to live on.

"There are still Choctaw active and serving [in the military], and I hope they can continue to be recognized," Allen said. "The Choctaw have a great history, and I hope we can continue to share that with as many people as possible." **GX**

HONOR LTG Rodriguez, adjutant general of Texas, presents the Lone Star Medal of Valor to a family member of Code Talker Tobias Frazier.

CEREMONY (L-R) Chief Gregory Pyle, LTG Rodriguez, Choctaw Nation Assistant Chief Gary Batton and Chaplain Bertram Bobb cut a ribbon signifying the opening of the Choctaw Code Talkers exhibit.





THE REASONS FOR A STRONG NATIONAL GUARD ARE SPREADING.

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Around the World

The Guard Delivers Freedom and Security Across the Globe

By SFC Toby Nunn
2nd Platoon, Company B, 1/160th Infantry Regiment

While on patrol, Soldiers of the 218th Brigade Combat Team meet up with an excited group of local children in Afghanistan this past fall.

PFC ROBERTO DI GIOVINE

and Back Again

Year in Review



It has been an unbelievable year for the Army National Guard.

Soldiers mobilized to serve their communities and neighbors. Soldiers deployed overseas for the first time and served in multiple capacities. Join us as we travel across the continent and around the world for a look the Army National Guard, 2007.

Starting in the far south and the temperate Gulf of Mexico, the Florida National Guard answered the call of the community and state, preparing to assist during another hurricane season. Though a little anti-climactic, it's nice to know the Guard is there even when you don't need them. For example, SFC Travis Fitzgerald sits in his office preparing the records and daily tasks of Headquarters Headquarters Company 2/124th Infantry in Orlando, when the phone rings with an alert message from his higher headquarters. It's time to notify the troops and get them ready to roll.

This is not as uncommon as one would think. This well-trained and prepared unit answers the call several times a year, despite how many would-be hurricanes rush in but taper off. As part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade based on the Gulf Coast of Florida, the brigade understands nature's fury and reacts like a well-oiled machine, re-establishing crucial infrastructure, working hand-in-hand with local government.

So what is so strange about the National Guard answering the call of the homeland? Nothing, but what makes it amazing is that at the same time, they were also downrange, working in the northern region of Iraq, in and around Tal'Afar, in the form of a SECFOR unit. The 53rd was training the Iraqi army and providing prisons for insurgents. Notable also is that the brigade included an all-female security assistance team. The 53rd returned in September after more than a year of deployment.

The Alaska National Guard has seen major changes and accomplishments in the past year and will see more throughout 2008. Soldiers from all over the state, including the most remote and rural areas, answered the call in early 2006. United as the 3/297th Infantry, they found themselves in the dusty desert and combat action of Kuwait and southern Iraq, participating in Alaska's first major deployment since WWII. You'd think this would be a little terrifying, such a dramatic change. However, LTC Duff Mitchell, commander, may have said it best in a Department of Defense press release: "Some [of these] guys have killed many bears—they're not worried about insurgents."

The Alaska Guard's 3/297th Infantry began their security mission by relieving Wisconsin's 1/128th Infantry in July 2006. They returned in October. They faced unique challenges on the home front, since some of the more rural communities live a lifestyle of mere subsistence, depending on their young healthy men to hunt for winter meat and fish. Though they receive a paycheck, it doesn't help hungry families who lack the luxury of a neighborhood Albertson's, butcher shop or fishmonger. The tight-knit tribal communities have to pull together to overcome the nation's call, despite missing members of their hunting parties during many hunting and fishing seasons.

It's important to brag on Alaska because even with these challenges, the Alaska Army National Guard operates at near 100 percent

of its intended force with extremely high recruiting and retention numbers. They not only serve their mission—they embrace it.

"It's almost a way of life out there that's been passed down from generation to generation," said CSM Alan Feaster of the 3/297th in a Department of Defense press release.

On the far southern Pacific coast of the U.S., units of the California National Guard support Operation Jump Start on the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Simultaneously, California Soldiers were instrumental in the containment and rescue missions enacted during the Southern California wildfires, which burned more than 500,000 acres in late October. At the same time, the state deployed several units in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The California Guard's 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 160th Infantry Regiment deployed to Kuwait and Iraq. The 3rd Battalion serves in infantry and also assisted active components guarding detainees at the Bucca Detention Facility.

The 1st Battalion, based in Kuwait, are responsible for the security of logistical convoys that travel throughout the Iraqi theater. This is also the parent unit of the high-speed 2nd Platoon of Company B, better known as the Bad Voodoo Platoon, which is receiving ongoing coverage in *GX*. Bad Voodoo landed in the sandbox this past summer and has already taken the fight head-on to the enemy numerous times.

Back on the U.S.-Mexico border, the Arizona Guard, like California, is also responsible for a bulk of the personnel supporting security. These Soldiers spend their days and nights on a vigil directly impacting the local and national community.

Homeland defense remains the paramount mission of the Guard and it has not been neglected, even with all the deployments all states experience. All states still train for the scariest possibility of all—another 9/11. In mid-October, members of the Arizona National Guard participated in an exercise known as TOPOFF. The TOPOFF exercises put all levels of government and leadership in a mock Weapons of Mass Destruction event requiring all levels of first responders' participation. These live events included teams and crews going to actual locations. The 91st Civil Support Team reacted to a radiological dispersion along local interstates, forcing them to calculate potential plume and contamination areas. This information led to the deployment of Guard members as a Quick Reactionary Force under the direction of Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano.

Even as the Arizona National Guard conducts TOPOFF exercises back home, their 1/158th Infantry, also known as the Bushmasters, continue to put a punishing hurt on Taliban and al-Qaida insurgents manufacturing Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in the caves and compounds of Afghanistan's Alishang Valley. Additionally, these Soldiers provide security for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which work with Afghans to rebuild their villages, roads and schools. They've been at it since March, making patrols, many times on foot and sometimes at night, through the mountain landscape.



1LT Charles C. Kissling Jr. conducts a patrol in the Al Noiomanya Al Jamssa neighborhood market in Mosul, Iraq, March 12. 1LT Kissling is from D Company, 3rd Platoon, D Company, 2nd Battalion, 124th Regiment, 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

“Night patrols deter IED emplacement in key areas,” CPT Jon Cookson told the 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in July. “The majority of IEDs are emplaced at night,” 1LT Darcy Jones added. Both Soldiers are with the 1/158th.

South Carolina’s 218th Brigade Combat Team is also making their mark in Afghanistan. The 218th is training non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in the Afghan National Army (ANA), and with great success.

“NCOs are ready to take on the responsibility,” said MSG Roberto Garcia, a drill sergeant assigned to the 218th at the Kabul Military Training Center. “It’s sometimes hard for us to [step back], but we have to remember that we have to be patient. We just have to realize that our military has been around and developing for over [300] years. We can’t expect [for theirs to develop] in five years.”

Diagonally north across the water from the Land of a Thousand Lakes is a state that has been very busy this year and will continue

to be busy for quite a while. I am speaking of Minnesota and the renowned 34th “Red Bull” Division. Other than sustaining a whopping and successful 16-month deployment, this division has brought a new type of recognition to the military.

Of course, right now you’re saying to yourself, “How can there be any kind of new recognition for institutions that have been around [for] centuries?” Well, get ready, because the Emmy went to the Minnesota National Guard. This unprecedented honor was earned for the Minnesota Guard’s work with Fox Sports News North, which was embedded with them while deployed to Iraq from 2006 to 2007. It was a powerful partnership for Freedom Week and Operation Home Base that resulted in replacing commercials with live interactions of deployed Soldiers and their families back home during a Twins/Brewers game on July 1. One of the coolest parts of this story is that the ratings for these events were through the roof, demonstrating the



COURTESY OF NGB

COLLECTING WATER

(below) A CAARNG Black Hawk helicopter from 1/140th Aviation from Los Alamitos helped with the Southern California fires. This Black Hawk is filling a water bucket to drop on the Witch fire in the Poway area on Oct. 25.

SNACK TIME

(right) Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Infantry Regiment, AZ NG, rest and eat snacks at their objective observation post overlooking a village outside of Forward Operation Base Kalagush in the Nuristan province of Afghanistan, June 19.



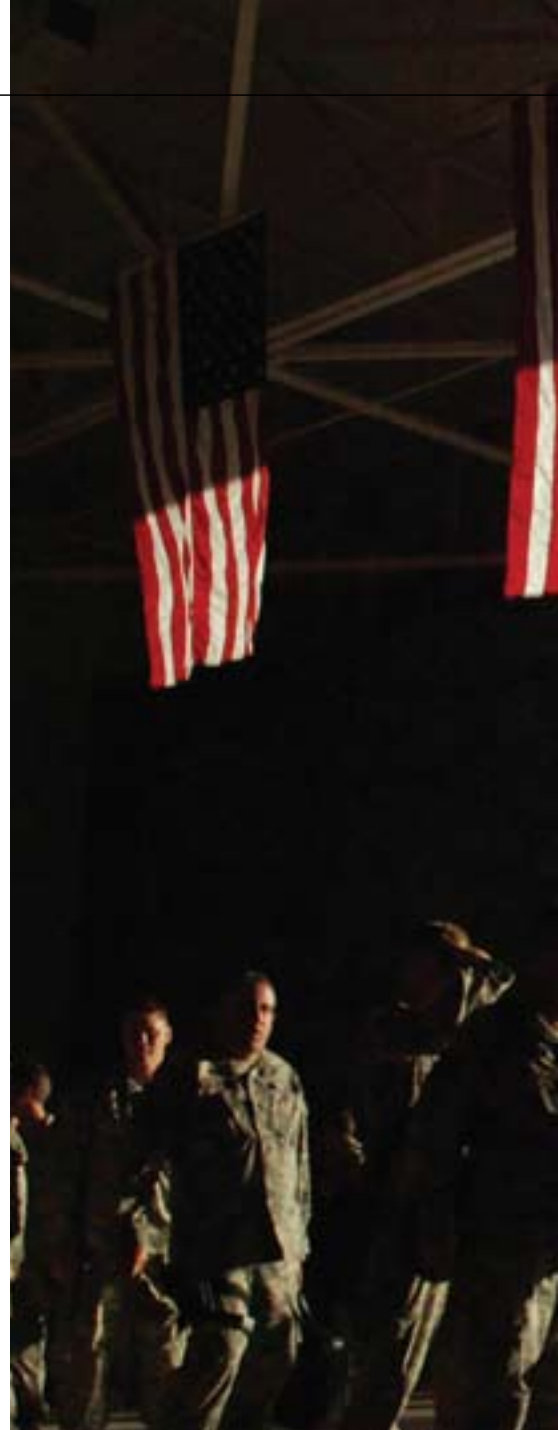
SSG ISAAC A. GRAHAM



National [Guard members] are a valuable asset to the safety and security of Kosovo. I volunteered for this mission so that I could get the chance to help Kosovars make a better life for themselves—and that is what being in the National Guard is all about, helping those in need.—SGT David Owen, TNARNG



SGT John Hairston, 130th Military Police Company, TNARNG, TF Guardian, re-enlists at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo on Oct. 26.



local and regional support for these Warriors.

While we are on the topic of Minnesota Warriors, I am compelled and honored to tell you about SSG Chad Malmberg.

On Jan. 27, SSG Malmberg earned the Silver Star for valorous duty while protecting a convoy under attack by insurgents outside of Baghdad International Airport. He maneuvered his security under intense enemy fire to protect equipment and casualties in fighting so close and intense that he threw hand grenades to repel a flanking counter attack.

SSG Malmberg is a member of the Minnesota National Guard's 2/135th Infantry, part of those superhero Red Bulls who just recently deployed to Kosovo in support of KFOR9 as Task Force Bayonet. This is the second deployment to Kosovo by the Minnesota National Guard, the folks responsible for returning calm after deadly riots there in

2004. The Soldiers trained for the mission at Camp Atterberry, IN, and concluded their training in Hohenfels Training Area in Germany.

Already in Kosovo is Task Force Guardian, which consists of the 130th Military Police (MP) Company out of Memphis, TN, and a small group of MPs from the Provost Marshal's cell from the 35th Infantry Division Headquarters Headquarters Company out of Kansas. Task Force Guardian is under Task Force Falcon (35th Infantry Division). Kosovo held elections Nov. 17. Our Guard Soldiers provided a critical security presence.

"National [Guard members] are a valuable asset to the safety and security of Kosovo," said Tennessee's SGT David Owen to GX. "We bring skills from our civilian careers that enhance our ability to help this country stand on its feet. The Military Police we relieved built roads, adopted schools and [did] numerous other projects.



Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division arrive at Volk Field Air National Guard Base, WI, July 10. The Soldiers are returning from a deployment in Iraq and will be transported to Fort McCoy, WI, for reintegration training.

I volunteered for this mission so that I could get the chance to help Kosovars make a better life for themselves—and that is what being in the National Guard is all about, helping those in need.”

“This is my second trip to Kosovo,” added SSG Keith Thomas of Kansas, “and I am happy to help those who are in desperate need. The mission is about keeping people safe and helping them try to find a way to coexist. It will be a great day when the task is accomplished and our leaders and our countrymen look to us, the Army National Guard, and say, ‘Well done.’”

I know we haven’t been able to dive deep into all the Guard has experienced in the past year, so don’t feel bad if you didn’t get a shout-out. I’m just hoping to illustrate this one point: The Guard is out there, everywhere, tackling a full range of missions with precision and a dedicated spirit.

So, what’s in store for the upcoming year? More of the same. More local heroes going out into the community and world, doing great things that will raise the Army National Guard to new heights of training and employment.

A lot of returning Guard Soldiers are opting into “Operation Warrior Trainer,” a program in which the leadership of 1st Army takes Warriors fresh off the global battlefield and puts them in front of formations about to take up the baton. Who better to train a task than someone with knowledge of and familiarity with that specific area. Units like the Red Bulls in Kosovo received the most accurate and applicable cultural and tactical training from Soldiers who had just returned the area of operation.

All around the nation where units mobilize out, there are steadfast heroes who have extended their active duty time to give a little bit

more, knowing full well that “a little bit more” might save a life. This opportunity to serve also provides returning Soldiers with extended employment and additional benefits, helping them get re-established.

This training is happening all the time now. And what for? Well, according to a Pentagon press release on Oct. 19, there will be seven National Guard brigades going to support Operation Iraqi Freedom and another brigade deploying to support Operation Enduring Freedom. This alert of nearly 18,000 troops will go to their respective theater of operations to kick in the doors of bad guys, guard them while detained and provide security.

The two brigades that will conduct combat operations are the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team (North Carolina) and the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team of the 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania). The brigades that will be used for security are the 56th Brigade Combat Team of the 36th Infantry Division (Texas), the 29th Brigade Combat Team (Hawaii), the 81st Brigade Combat Team (Washington) and the 45th Brigade Combat Team (Oklahoma), with the 50th Brigade Combat Team (New Jersey) conducting detention operations. The 33rd Brigade Combat Team (Illinois) will deploy to Afghanistan to train host-nation forces. Further, we can expect the 49th Missile Defense Battalion in Alaska to garner more headlines as Russian officials take a greater interest in the facility at Fort Greely.

Added to the mix is the fact that the Guard has yet another great incentive to join the ranks: Active First. The new plan allows recruits to enter and serve active duty, then finish out their military obligation in the Guard. This is a wonderful program that will bring freshly

trained and highly motivated Soldiers onto the team. Of course, like everything else, there needs to be some kind of a punch line—and there is: they get up to \$40,000 to go into the active component and then an additional bonus when they go Guard to finish enlistment. Where was this offer when I was coming off active?


The plan, according to SSG Robert Freeman, a recruiter for the New Jersey National Guard, allows him to recruit for the active component, which opens news door for recruits to gain valuable work experience before they serve part-time as an “M day” Soldier. SSG Freeman is my old sniper buddy from active duty and the man responsible for transitioning me into the Guard.

“This also allows the National Guard recruiter, as a community-based entity, to put Soldiers on active duty,” SSG Freeman explained to me, “and then bring those skills not only back to the Guard unit, but back to the very same community that the Soldier comes from. This is exactly what the Guard stands for—serving your community, nation and yourself. . . and you get one heck of a check to do it!”

As usual, it’s an exciting time to be a Guard Soldier. Gear up and be sure to follow *GX* into 2008.

About the author:

*SFC Toby Nunn is currently deployed as the platoon sergeant of California’s 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1/160th Infantry in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For more info about SFC Nunn, check out GX 4.6, “Introducing Bad Voodoo Platoon,” available for download at GXonline.com. **GX***



**218th Brigade Combat Team
Soldiers on an evening patrol in
Afghanistan this past fall.**



The Bugler



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



G-RAP Changes Prior Service Referral Bonus

G-RAP is proud to announce a change in the payout for a prior-service referral bonus. Previously, upon verified enlistment, the Recruiting Assistant (RA) would receive a \$1,000 payment, with a second \$1,000 payment upon verification that the recruit completed 120 days with their unit. With the new policy, the RA will receive one payment of \$2,000 upon verification of a contract. There will be more changes coming soon to improve G-RAP performance and allow RAs to receive compensation in a timely manner. Visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com or call (866) 566-2472 for more assistance.



Celebration Challenge

The Celebration Challenge helped to overdrive year-end accession numbers. During FY 07, ARNG Recruiting and Retention generated 67,000 accessions, while retaining 39,000 Soldiers. During the period of Aug. 1 through Sept. 30, 690 challenge winners combined for 4,523 enlistments. SGT Kevin Crist, 76th Infantry Brigade, INARNG, achieved an impressive 19 enlistments during this period. Congratulations to SGT Crist and other winners. Your hard work helped make the end-strength of the ARNG 352,500 Soldiers—a number not seen since the early 1990s.



Tip of the Month

Do you have daily real-time visibility of your monthly production? If not, you may want to begin tracking ARISS gains daily. Several states have adopted a system that allows leaders at leadership levels to do this. Many leaders have a Blackberry. These allow users to upload and view an Excel spreadsheet. Many in leadership positions endorsed this tool. According to COL Denton, INARNG, the purpose of this report is to give leaders a daily snapshot of where their organizations stand on meeting their monthly gain mission. This tool allows us to see ourselves as we really are at all levels on any given day.

COURTESY OF NGB-ASM

Continuous Feedback System

Continuous Feedback System is a Web-based application that feeds information from the Recruiting and Retention force to leadership within their states and to program managers at NGB. This ensures all programs are current and program suggestions are implemented. Continual information, in a timely manner, is critical to Recruiting and Retention efforts. The information is anonymous to maximize participation, ensuring the mission is met. Any full-time Recruiting and Retention force member can participate. For information, contact SFC Andrew E. Berger: Andrew.Berger@ng.army.mil.



What Happens When Recruits Don't Ship?

If you have a Soldier scheduled for IET training, or any schools, you need to do everything in your power to make sure they show up. Keep track of your enlistments and set up a system that reminds you to check on these recruits. This is especially important for Soldiers who aren't able to ship right away. Many things can change over a span of months, and it is important to make sure these Soldiers are where they need to be. When a new Soldier does not ship to IET, the Army says, "Well you didn't fill all your seats, so you can't have any more next year." If NGB doesn't have the seats, then it goes without saying—recruiters can't enlist new Soldiers.



Director's Adaptive Reporting Tool (DART)

DART tracks all the "return on investment" from all recruiting programs. DART lets NGB see many things, including demographics. They can enter any Soldier's SSN and see most of that Soldier's information, such as when they enlisted, if they are enrolled in G-RAP and so on. DART is used to analyze future requirements and helps to build requirements five years out.



Important Changes to Drill Sergeant Program

A recent change in the ARNG drill sergeant program now allows up to 100 qualified NCOs to attend the Drill Sergeant School at Fort Jackson, SC, with a one-summer support commitment in FY 08. Previously, this initiative required a two-year commitment, which was reduced to one summer only to promote maximum participation in support of Summer Surge '08. Drill sergeants will be TDY for the initial nine weeks of Drill Sergeant School, and then a period, not to exceed 120 days, at the IET site. TRADOC will pay for both. The Soldier must arrange to attend school through NGB and their chain of command. To learn more visit, www.GuardDrillSergeant.com.



COURTESY OF NGB-ASM



What Can the Drill Sergeant Program Do for You?

An up-and-coming NCO can utilize what they learn at this school when they return to their RSP unit or any other unit. Once the Soldier returns, leaders will have an NCO with cutting-edge expertise as an instructor. Basic Combat Training (BCT) has changed dramatically in the past few years. There are things going on in BCT that used to only happen in higher-level infantry schools. Every Soldier receives this training now because it is based on lessons learned during the War on Terror. When units get this drill sergeant back, they are a force multiplier. You get a master trainer and a Soldier counselor, and they will teach the new lessons to their unit. Units are going to ship a squared-away NCO to Drill Sergeant School and receive a tremendous asset upon their return.

TRADOC LNOs

A TRADOC LNO is a National Guard Soldier stationed at a training base to assist Soldiers in the process of arriving to training or who are already in training. The National Guard has had issues with getting Soldiers down to basic training with deficiencies in their packets. NGB has a new system that allows the LNOs to identify deficiencies and transfer that information back to Soldiers' states in real time so they can address them. This creates a "trouble ticket" on the spot, allowing the states to react and giving NGB a type of quality-control mechanism. This can help improve those states not meeting standards.

RSP Master Cadre Course

Many leaders guiding young Soldiers today may not realize the differences between the National Guard of yesterday and how things are today. NGB has created a two-level Master Cadre Course. There will be one 14-day course for the M-day instructor where they will be validated and calibrated, and given new information on standards in IET as well as conflict resolution for today's generation and many other Warrior tasks. The full-time Title 32 or long-term ADSW Soldiers will continue on after the first two weeks for an additional 14 days, where they will learn how to be involved in database management, administration and other tasks. NGB is pushing to have a special skill-identifier added after completion of this course.

Soldier for a Day

This RSP Guest program promotes possible enlistees attending an RSP drill for one weekend to get a feel for what it's like. RSP is one of the best things to train new Soldiers and can give potential recruits an appreciation for what the Guard is all about—how exciting and fulfilling it can be. This visit targets the "fear of the unknown" that keeps some people from enlisting. This could include a weekend when RSP Soldiers are rappelling, doing an obstacle course, or taking other challenges of BCT. This helps both RSP Soldiers and potential recruits to overcome their fears.

Did You Know?

The Professional Education Center (PEC) has mobile training catered to each state's individual needs. For example, if an area is having great luck with obtaining leads but no success "closing the deal," a PEC course can teach them specifically how to get the leads to enlist. You also get training in many other courses specific to your area of need. For more information, visit: www.pec.ngb.army.mil.

HEART

Harnessing Exceptional Achievements through Recruiting Testimonials, or the HEART initiative, improves RRNCOs' competence by incorporating lessons learned, tactics, techniques and procedures in a timely manner. HEART is a tool for recruiters to share success stories and bridges the gap between performance support and training. Comments are stored on a searchable database available to all Soldiers in this field. SMTC's mission is to "develop and deliver quality, relevant training that positively impacts the end strength of the ARNG." HEART will assist in meeting national recruiting and retention challenges.

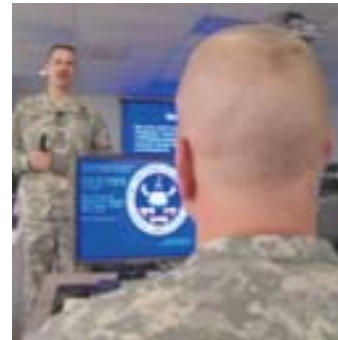
Active First Recruit for Indiana

The first Soldier in Indiana to be enlisted through the Active First program took her oath Oct. 24. PVT Angelina Dillahay, with the advice of a friend who's a Guard Soldier, said she visited a Guard armory wanting to learn more about what they could offer after the Active Duty recruiters couldn't help her. She spoke of efforts she made after talking to Active Duty recruiters. "I got online and did some research and found articles on the Active First program, and I told my recruiter about the program and what I wanted to do. After talking to him, he said he would help me."

It's for Real!

Travis Devall is a 40-year-old retiree from Florida with more than 20 years of service in the Guard. Travis has been in G-RAP less than a year and has mentored 40 people into the Guard. When asked how he does it, Devall points out contacts he has developed over his 17 years of recruiting experience and that he "goes where the potential Soldiers are." He appreciates the amazing opportunity G-RAP has afforded him in retirement with both the financial gain and the impact he can have on individual's lives. "The impact retirees can have within this program can be felt at the national level all the way down to the individual recruiting level."

For questions about the Bugler or to submit new ideas, please email: heather.allen@gxonline.com.



COURTESY OF NGB-ASM

Education Goals and New Year's Resolutions for 2008

By Johanna Altland, Grantham University

As the ball drops over Times Square, when the clock strikes 12 and the last few lines of “Auld Lang Syne” fade into the night, you are left with a feeling of excitement that the new year is here.

This New Year, Put Education at the Top of Your List

Each year, we start off with a blank slate, and the coming year is truly what we make it. In 2008, as you think about the goals you would like to accomplish, put furthering your education at the top of the list. Education is an investment that will last you a lifetime.

Some people return to school to earn a degree because they want a better job, want to change careers or want to become more skilled in their current field. Right now, you may be thinking, “I’m happy where I am. Why should I go back to school?” The answer is simple: because you never know what your future will hold.

Research shows that the amount of education it takes to succeed in today’s business environment has increased dramatically compared to just five or 10 years ago. Now, a high school education no longer guarantees you a “living wage.” Earning a degree and participating in ongoing career training are the best ways to increase your earning potential and job security.

5 REASONS YOU SHOULD EARN YOUR DEGREE

1 Degree holders earn more. Statistics show that a degree holder makes more money than those with a high school diploma. On average, someone with a bachelor’s degree makes \$18,000 more annually than someone with just a high school diploma (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics).

2 Advance your career. Earning a degree can help you move up in your civilian career, earn promotion points or qualify you for Officer Candidate School in the military. For more info on Officer Candidate School, please visit www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com.

3 You may be closer to a degree than you think. At many schools, prior military training and prior college coursework can be evaluated for transfer credit. Those transfer credits will reduce the number of courses you’ll have to take to earn your degree.

4 Online learning makes it convenient. 100 percent online programs offer you the ability to earn your degree with no classroom attendance required. You don’t have to worry about your work schedule or deployment disrupting your classes.

5 There is life after the military. Combining your military experience with a college education will open the door to more employment opportunities when you transition to a civilian career.

If you are eligible to receive tuition assistance and/or G.I. Bill benefits, there’s no excuse for not furthering your education. Take advantage of benefits and plan for your future. Start the new year off right by making education a top priority.



Keep Your Resolution for 2008

It's that time of year again. The weather is getting colder, the shopping frenzy is well under way, and holiday parties are taking up most of your weekends. But, before you get caught up in the craziness of the season, take a few minutes to think about what changes you would like to make in 2008. That's right. It's time to create your new year's resolutions.

Each year, millions of Americans create new year's resolutions, but few actually achieve them. Follow the tips below to create a resolution that you can stick to; don't let your resolution become a dim memory of the past.

New year's resolutions should be:

Attainable Your resolution must be important to you; what you want to achieve, not what someone else wants for you. If something is truly important to you, you will discover ways to make it come true.

Realistic Make sure that your goal is reasonable and not a pie in the sky. One of the most common reasons a person doesn't achieve their new year's resolution is because it isn't realistic. For example, wanting to lose 30 pounds in two weeks just isn't possible. Not only will you do a lot of harm to your body trying, you will easily become discouraged when it is obvious that you aren't going to achieve your goal.

Detailed A resolution should be clear, focused, concise and well-defined. Remember, the more thorough you are in defining your goal, the more likely you are to achieve it. Instead of saying, "I don't want to be a

couch potato," say, "I want to exercise three days a week."

Measurable When creating your resolution, establish timelines and check-points. Measuring your progress will enable you to stay on track and keep yourself motivated to achieve the end result.

Shared Tell your family and close friends about your goal. This will make your resolution even more real in your mind, and also allow your friends and family to act as a support system.

Documented Post your goal in a prominent place where you will read it every day. Some of the most common places are on your refrigerator, in your car and on your calendar. Besides, some experts say that simply writing down your goal will give you a better chance of attaining it.

Don't look toward the coming year with dread. Instead, create a resolution that'll be a slam dunk for you to achieve. **GX**

Common New Year's Resolutions

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Lose weight | Get out of debt | Save more money |
| Quit smoking | Further your education | Find a better job |
| Get organized | Volunteer | Spend more time with family and friends |

Fun Facts about New Year's Resolutions

- By March, only 63 percent of people are keeping their resolutions.
- More people made resolutions to start a new habit than to break an old one.
- The tradition of new year's resolutions goes all the way back to 153 B.C.
- 65 percent of people made their resolutions between Dec. 28 and New Year's Day.
- The number one resolution involves more exercise.
- About 63 percent of Americans make one or more new year's resolutions each year.

The Financial Institution of the Future

Not banking online? You're throwing time and money out the window.



Courtesy of USAA

In today's increasingly mobile society, it's clear that you can take it with you. Small and more powerful cell phones, notebook computers and MP3 players mean that no matter where you are or what you're doing, you are connected to family, friends, work and entertainment. Today's technology also means that whether you're at home, across town or across the ocean, your financial network is at your fingertips.

J.J. Montanaro, a USAA CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner, answers questions about the financial institution of the future and how you can use the latest technology to manage your money.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY “FINANCIAL INSTITUTION OF THE FUTURE”?

The financial institution of the future will allow you to manage your money any time, anywhere, via telephone or computer. It will give you the freedom to bank and invest electronically—open accounts, move money, make deposits, check credit card and bank account balances, get stock market quotes—24 hours a day, seven days a week.

WHY IS IT BETTER TO DO BUSINESS ELECTRONICALLY? ISN'T IT PREFERABLE TO SPEAK TO A LIVE PERSON?

There certainly will be times when it's necessary to seek advice from an experienced banking or investing representative. But for day-to-day financial activities, electronic banking and investing is far more convenient. You never have to wait for banking hours to begin—your financial institution is open day and night, and you'll never have to step inside a branch.

Soldiers deployed in war zones can manage their money via email and cell phones. Distance doesn't matter and time zones are no obstacle when banking and investing needs are handled electronically.

WILL THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION OF THE FUTURE SAVE ME MONEY?

Absolutely. Online institutions don't have to spend money on building and maintaining brick and mortar buildings, real estate taxes, electricity or outsized labor forces. The savings—time and money—are passed on to consumers in the form of better rates and up-to-date technology.

WHAT ABOUT THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF MILITARY FAMILIES?

Online financial institutions are tailor-made to serve the unique needs of the military community. Even Soldiers deployed in war zones can manage their money via e-mail and cell phones. Distance doesn't matter and time zones are no obstacle when banking and investing needs are handled electronically.

WHAT ABOUT CASH WITHDRAWALS? THOSE CAN'T BE HANDLED ELECTRONICALLY. WHAT IF I NEED MONEY RIGHT AWAY?

The best online financial institutions give their customers easy access to cash through ATMs anywhere in the world. Look for a bank that will reimburse all or part of ATM fees charged by third-party banks.

HOW CAN I MAKE DEPOSITS TO MY ACCOUNTS? WON'T IT TAKE DAYS TO DEPOSIT A CHECK BY MAIL?

Look for a financial institution that allows you to make deposits from anywhere in the world—day or night—with a scanner and a computer. With just a few clicks of a mouse, your money will be securely deposited and readily available.

WHAT IF I WANT TO REVIEW MY STATEMENTS? HOW CAN I TRACK MY SPENDING, SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT EARNINGS?

With electronic banking and investing, it's easy to track funds. When you pay a bill online, you'll see exactly when a payment was made or cleared, simply by logging on to your account. Look for a financial institution that will let you review several months of banking or investing statements online—and one that will let you download your records to financial software, such as Quicken or Microsoft Money. That will make budgeting and record-keeping even easier.

WHAT OTHER BENEFITS DO THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE FUTURE OFFER?

Look for an institution that is truly personalized—one that goes the extra mile by offering financial advice via email, customized bank account and credit card alerts, and special features such as online debt analysis and start-to-finish loan applications and approvals. **GX**



BE SMART AND SAFE WITH YOUR ONLINE FINANCES

Online banking and investing allow you to receive bills and statements electronically, essentially eliminating the paper trail that leads thieves to your credit, debit, and account information. Still, it's best to follow a few simple rules that can keep your financial information safe and secure:



Protect personal information. Never save your online ID, password, or PIN so they are automatically entered when you log on to your account.



Don't be too forthcoming. Don't respond to emails asking for personal information, such as your date of birth, social security number or phone number.



Secure your computer. Install anti-spyware, anti-virus, and firewall software on your computer, and keep your operating system current with software updates.



Have a Healthy Holiday



By Judith S. Harris, BSN, MA, CHES

Those five extra holiday pounds. Upon occasion, they're called the "festive five," "candy handles," and "fruitcake cushions." Whatever you call them, they can sabotage a healthy holiday agenda.

A holiday weight-gain study conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) found that two factors influence weight management over the holidays: level of hunger and level of activity. Study volunteers who reported less hunger and more physical activity had less holiday weight gain, and those who reported more hunger and less activity gained more weight. The study concluded that holiday weight gain is risky because the additional pounds may not be lost during the course of the year, and more may even be gained during the next holiday season, resulting in a significant cumulative weight gain over time.

Making healthy food choices, continuing daily physical activities and managing holiday stress triggers are critical to maintaining equilibrium. A few simple, fun steps you can share with family and friends might lend a fresh, festive approach to well-being during the holidays.

MAKE MODERATION YOUR EATING MANTRA

The National Institutes of Health's National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute has developed a "Portion Distortion" Web page that shows proper portion sizes. Test your knowledge at <http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion>. Remember to rate your plate at all times—a sliver, not a slab, will keep holiday weight gain in check.

- Eat small, regular meals throughout the day, even if you're "saving the calories" for a holiday party

- Keep healthy snacks in the car or at the office to stave off hunger before or after a shopping trip
- Be a party sampler and select goodies with care
- Limit intake of alcoholic and sugary beverages—the average alcoholic beverage contains 150-200 calories per glass

STICK TO YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN

Keep your date with physical activity. Maintain at least 15 minutes of your usual exercise routine. If necessary, cut sessions shorter or choose an alternative to fill the gap, but keep moving.

- Take a walk—according to the American Heart Association, brisk walking for 30 minutes per day can increase good cholesterol (HDL), lower blood pressure, reduce stress and help maintain a healthy body weight
- Exercise with family members or friends—the togetherness makes it more fun
- Start keeping a daily activity log before Jan. 1 to keep yourself on track in the new year

WATCH FOR SIGNS OF STRESS IN YOURSELF AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Although stress may be amplified during the holidays, it can stem from difficult situations that have occurred throughout the year. Mobilization and deployment can create a unique set of challenges, but 24/7 help is available to all Guard families at the information-packed National Guard Bureau Family Program Group Web site: www.GuardFamily.org.

If someone in the family has returned from deployment in the past year or so, lots of bright lights, loud noise and big crowds may be difficult for them. Make sure all family members are aware of, and satisfied with, holiday plans and events.

Help children understand why service members may not respond to the holidays the same way they did before deployment.

Stress management requires a calm, cool perspective. In other words, don't sweat the small stuff. Here are four simple stress management techniques recommended by the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association:

- Practice positive self-talk to calm down and control negativity
- Use emergency stress stoppers such as counting to 10 slowly while taking deep breaths, and walking away from overwhelming situations
- Enjoy the simple pleasures by taking 15 minutes every day to do something you enjoy
- Learn to relax daily year-round, not just during the holidays **GX**

Holiday Help

Coping With Holiday Stress, The American Psychological Association:

<http://apaHelpCenter.org/articles/article.php?id=8>

Holiday Stressbusters for Big and Little People:

http://OhioLine.osu.edu/bb-fact/pdf/bb_k_4.pdf

HOOAH 4 HEALTH, MIND—Depression and Suicide:

www.hooah4health.com/mind/SuicidePrev/default.htm

National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800) 784-2433

VA Suicide Prevention Hotline (800) 273-8255



Survey Results Show NC Takes Lead in Family Support

By Renee Hoffman, NC State Government

RALEIGH, NC—Gov. Mike Easley announced that a new survey from the National Governors' Association (NGA) shows North Carolina has some of the nation's most comprehensive support programs for Army National Guard (ARNG) and Reserve family members. The survey indicated that more states are seeking additional and creative ways to support members of the military and their families.

"These men and women are making a tremendous sacrifice, leaving their families, full-time jobs and communities for months on end to aid our nation, our state and our communities," said Easley. "It is only appropriate that we do all we can to support them, and their families during what is a very stressful time."

The NGA surveyed the 50 states and Puerto Rico about programs and benefits they provide to National Guard and Reserve members in six categories: family support education; licensing and registration; tax and financial; state employees; and protections, recognition and employment. Fifty-one states and territories offer some type of family support, while 43 offer educational benefits. Thirty-nine states offer tax or financial relief and about half offer state employees additional benefits. North Carolina provides benefits in all six categories, and the survey pointed out that the state is especially aggressive in the area of family support.

Earlier this year, the state provided funds to develop three additional National Guard-operated family assistance centers. The centers

serve as a one-stop-shop for information on topics such as healthcare benefits, support groups, and other benefits and entitlements available to military families. The state-funded centers will augment the five existing federally funded centers, giving more Guard members access to such vital services. Last month, Easley announced the state would distribute \$1 million to improve community service, morale and recreation programs for all active duty, Guard and Reserve members and their families based in North Carolina.

Easley said another way the state is helping Guard families is through the "Operation Kids on Guard" program. This home grown program, which has gained interest from other states, was created specifically for the children of North Carolina National Guard (NC NG) members as a way to address deployment fears and concerns, and reduce isolation among children ages 5 to 18. A similar program, "Kiddies on Guard," serves younger children ages 2 to 4. The daylong programs offer kids an opportunity to learn more about what their deployed parent is doing and bond with other children in similar situations.

Other benefits offered to military members and families include:

FAMILY SUPPORT

More than 100 banks provide toll-free financial counseling. Project Community Action Readiness Effort provides emergency vehicles, home repair, childcare assistance and transportation. Several programs provide emotional counseling to children to help them cope with the



deployment, while other programs create community-based recreational, social and educational programs to support the well-being of kids whose parents are deployed.

STATE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

State employees who serve receive the difference between their military pay and state salary. The length of active duty service is credited toward state employee retirement. Veterans who served during a period of war can receive preference for being hired, promoted or reassigned.

included in federal taxable income; some may also exclude their retirement income from state taxes. North Carolina increased the pension for retired Guard members (the second increase in recent years). The state also provides funds to the Soldier and Airmen Assistance Fund to help Guard members who find themselves with financial challenges while serving in the NC NG.

LICENSING, REGISTRATIONS AND FEES

Deployed Soldiers receive an extension for vehicle license plate registration renewals and are relieved from civil penalties for expired emissions tests.

These men and women are making a tremendous sacrifice . . . It is only appropriate that we do all we can to support them, and their families during what is a very stressful time.

—Mike Easley, Governor of North Carolina

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

More than \$2 million is budgeted annually to provide tuition assistance for NC NG members. Out-of-state resident members are charged in-state tuition. Children of deployed military parents are eligible for the program More at Four.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

State tax is exempted for any pay received when serving in a combat zone. Retirees may deduct up to \$4,000 annually of retirement benefits

PROTECTIONS, RECOGNITION AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Any court action againsts deployed Soldiers are delayed until they return to the state. **GX**



A copy of the NGA survey is available at:

[NGA.org/GuardSurvey](https://www.nga.org/GuardSurvey)

Story and photos by Chris West

There is a transition that Soldiers go through when they “go to work.” It’s kind of unsettling to watch until you get used to it. American Soldiers the world over seem to have the preternatural ability to change from Average Joe or Jane, to a focused, highly trained professional within minutes. With younger Soldiers, it’s all Xbox 360 and hip hop music one second, then stone-cold expert the next. It’s like watching Clark Kent turn into Superman . . . the only thing missing is a phone booth. It’s one of the qualities I admire most in Soldiers—their “Minuteman” superpower.

I only wish that there was more of a transition when this happens. A guy needs a little warning when there’s a change like this. A puff of smoke, sparkling lights and the ringing call of “Shazam!” would do nicely (ask somebody a little older to explain the reference). However, there are none of the obvious clues. A narrowing of the eyes, a tightness around the mouth and the fact that they suddenly stand a little straighter are the only tips you get that these men and women are no longer just citizens; they are on the job now and as a result, they have become something more.

Let me give you an example. I was in New York City recently covering Joint Task Force Empire Shield (JTES), a group designed to provide added security to key points throughout the state of New York. I was riding with LTC George DeSimone and his team through thick Manhattan traffic, listening as they regaled me with their stories. LTC DeSimone is the quintessential New Yorker. Born and raised in Brooklyn, he served as a firefighter during 9/11 and has since served as Commander of Task Force MTA (responsible for securing the subways) for the last six years. He is a stocky fireplug of a man whose thick Brooklyn accent and infectious humor revives any room. He’s everybody’s favorite uncle, the guy who always livens up a party. At least he was until his phone rang that day.

He picked up his cell phone, answering with a jaunty “Colonel DeSimone.” A heartbeat later, I noticed the tell-tale signs of “the transition.” His eyes narrowed, his mouth became a thin tight line and spring-coil tension seemed to fill his body. Before he was even off the phone, the transition had spread to the other Soldiers in the car. They knew something was up.

“There has been an explosion at Grand Central . . . we don’t know anything else yet,” he said as he put his phone away. Everyone held their breath for a moment, the same thought flitting across all of our minds: terrorist attack. LTC DeSimone glanced over at me with a bit of uncertainty on his face. This could be a dangerous situation and here he was, escorting press. Apparently the fact that I was already stripping my gear down, so I could move fast reassured him. “All right, let’s go.” And with that we were off.

The sergeant at the wheel demonstrated what New York driving really was all about as he made it across town in record time. The colonel was on the phone constantly, trying to get more information on the situation as we got closer. The light-hearted men I had been riding with moments ago were gone, replaced by these hard professionals. These men had all been in the city on 9/11, and they understood, deep in their souls, just how bad it could get. Yet, here they were, dashing madly toward the explosion to see if there was any help they could give. LTC DeSimone had almost been killed that day when the second tower collapsed. He had seen the horrors with his own eyes and yet, he returned, leading his Soldiers into God knows what. These were men on a mission and nothing was going to get in their way.

Fortunately, a few minutes later, another call came in; the explosion turned out to be a burst steam pipe. When that information came through, it was like the air had been let out of everyone in the car.



A CALMING PRESENCE (above) Guard Soldiers stand watch over Grand Central in New York City soon after a large steam pipe explosion. Their calm and professional demeanor provides reassurance to travelers. **COMMITTED** (right) LTC George DeSimone, the commander of Team MTA, descends an escalator into the World Trade Center Train Station. He was present at Ground Zero on 9/11 as an NYC firefighter and has worked to protect New York since that day as a Guard Soldier.

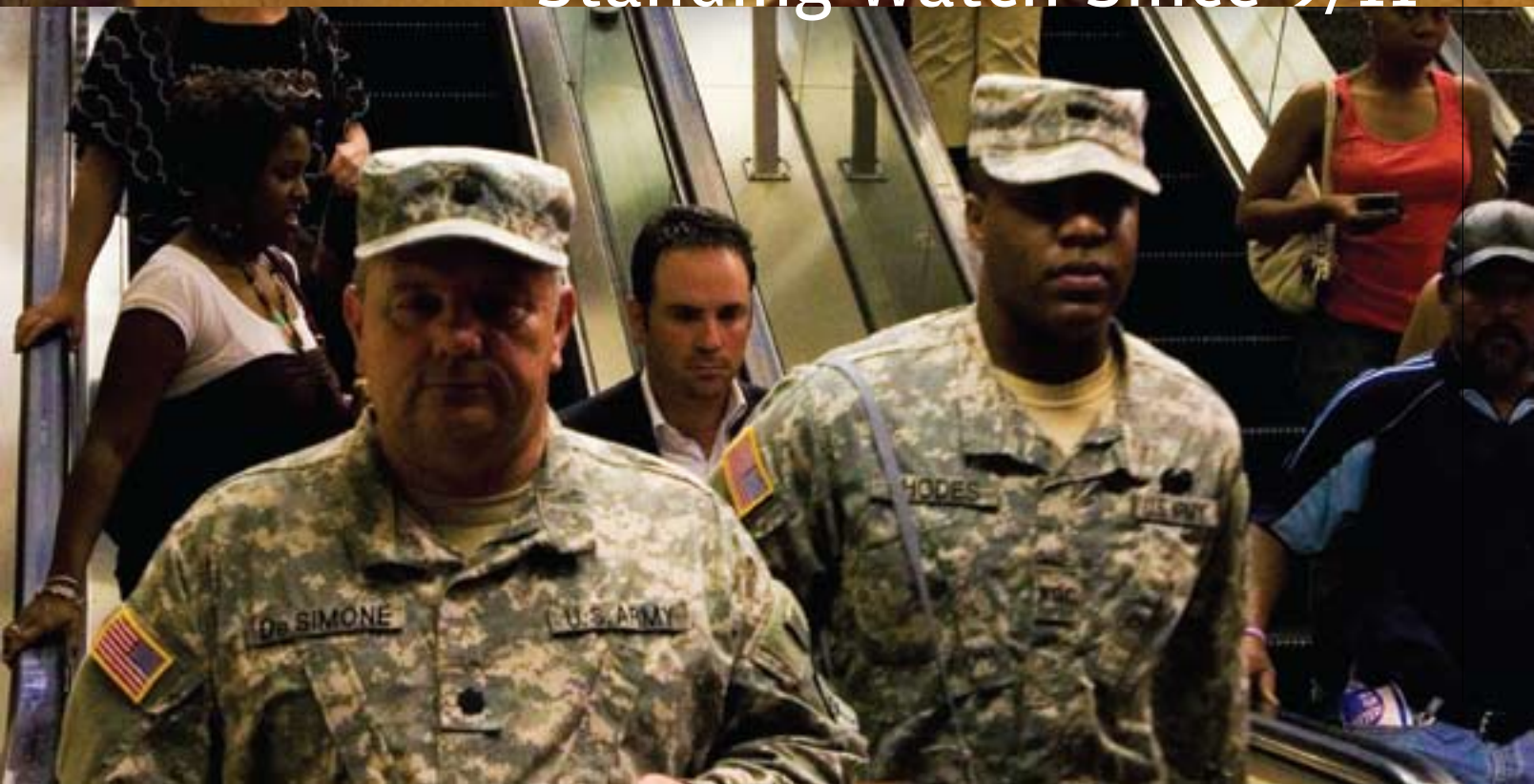
The Soldiers visibly relaxed and the jokes started up again as they smoothly made the transition back to Clark Kent.

When we arrived at Grand Central, we found the Soldiers of Team MTA still in full-alert mode. They were standing watch at every checkpoint side-by-side with their police counterparts. They were calmly redirecting pedestrian traffic and answering questions from the confused New York crowds. Again and again, civilians would walk straight up to the Soldiers and ask in worried and tense tones, “What happened?” Inevitably, as soon as the Soldier explained, the tension would visibly drain out of the questioner. The Guard Soldier says it’s okay, so it must be okay.

This was stunning to me, but I saw it time after time. New Yorkers, who had seen the horrors of what terrorists are about, were obviously taking great comfort from the words of these young heroes. For me, this was a demonstration of the level of trust that has developed between the National Guard and the citizens of New York.



Joint Task Force Empire Shield Standing Watch Since 9/11



I decided to take a closer look at these Soldiers and approached several for interviews. All of them were polite and answered my questions, but throughout the interviews I noticed something strange. None of them looked at me for more than a second or two. Their eyes were darting everywhere, moving from face to face in the passing crowd, pausing briefly on each one to assess for potential threats then moving quickly to the next. They were constantly scanning everything within their sight line, not for one second letting their guard down.

At first, it was disconcerting. I usually have an interviewee's full attention. But, then I realized what they were doing, and like the New Yorkers around me, I relaxed. There was something about these young men and women watching over us; their alertness, focus and obvious determination had all combined to make me feel confident and safe.

This phenomenon wasn't limited to the troops in the subways. Throughout my tour of the JTFES operations, I noticed every Soldier was constantly alert, aware and ready to roll at any given time.

The Soldiers of Team Airport demonstrated the same skills. Even when I asked them to pose for a staged photograph, their heads and eyes never stopped moving. These Soldiers know they are on the front line in the War on Terror and they behave accordingly. They conduct their duties with a constant vigilance usually only seen in a combat zone.

I spent some time speaking with the travelers passing through JFK International Airport about the Guard's presence. I discussed with them how they felt about uniformed and armed Soldiers patrolling the airports. Their answers were consistently positive and supportive. Every person I spoke to said they felt safer seeing the Soldiers on duty. It went so far that one gentleman, who knew very little English, came up to me, pointed to the Guard Soldiers, gave me a huge smile and two big thumbs up saying in a thick accent, "Soldiers good! Very, very good!" **GX**



ALERT AND READY Soldiers at Grand Central Terminal, "constantly alert, aware and ready to roll at any given time."

Joint Task Force Empire Shield (JTFES)

Mission: Provide forces to conduct defense support to civil authorities in New York State to deter, detect, defeat and mitigate terrorist acts. On order, support consequence management operations as required.

Commander: CPT Barry Morgan

Force Composition: JTFES is a State Active Duty force comprised of Soldiers and Airmen of the New York National Guard working in cooperation with New York Naval Militia and New York Guard (State Militias).

The task force is divided into multiple teams, each with the same basic mission: Provide defense support to civil authorities. Additionally, each command has its own specific areas of responsibility.

> JTFES HQ STAFF

Provide command and control, liaison with civil authorities, provide administrative services such as payroll, Soldier care and morale.

> TEAM MTA

Provide security support to Grand Central Station, Penn Station and other key public transportation locations.

> TEAM AIRPORT

Provide security support to JFK International Airport and La Guardia International Airport.

> TEAM INDIAN POINT

Augment power plant security

> TEAM GINNA

Augment power plant security

> TEAM NINE MILE POINT

Augment power plant security

> TEAM CAMP SMITH

Provide security for Camp Smith training site.

> TEAM LATHAM

Provide security for JFHQ-NY



By Jason Hall

Despite the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the year 1776 was not going well for the American colonists fighting for independence from the British. During the summer, GEN George Washington and his forces were soundly defeated at the Battle of Long Island and were driven out of New York. The British continued to push GEN Washington across New Jersey and forced him to retreat across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania on Dec. 7. A lack of food and warm clothing caused the morale of the Soldiers to sink as winter set in.

GEN Washington, himself a former Guard member, now faced one of his worst crises yet. He was watching his Army disappear before his eyes due to desertion and the expiration of annual enlist-

A Christmas Present for a New Nation

ments. He knew he needed to deliver a victory, and soon, to have any hope of keeping his army intact and to keep the cause of American independence alive.

GEN Washington devised a plan that countered military logic. In 18th-century warfare, armies would normally seek shelter and remain dormant during the winter months. Instead, GEN Washington planned to cross the nearly frozen Delaware River and attack the force of Hessian troops quartered in Trenton, NJ.

The Hessians drew their name from their homeland, which was the principality of Hesse in northern Germany. Their ruler, Landgrave Frederick II, hired out thousands of them to Great Britain as auxiliaries to fight against the Americans.

GEN Washington's plan of attack called for three divisions to cross the river, under the cover of darkness, at three locations. GEN Washington would command one division, with the remaining two commanded by LTC Cadwallader and BG Ewing. The crossing was planned for the evening of Dec. 25, with the attack on Trenton the next day.

GEN Washington gathered his division near McConkey's Ferry in preparation for the crossing. The Delaware River was choked with ice. Making matters worse, there was an abrupt change in weather. In addition to the frigid air and water, there came sleet and a blinding snowstorm. This didn't halt the men of Massachusetts, who were ferrying GEN Washington's men to the Jersey shore. The success or failure of this operation rested on them, the "Marbleheaders."

The Marblehead Militia Regiment was raised as a Massachusetts regiment on April 23, 1775, under the command of COL John Glover. The unit, most of which were previously sailors, were referred to as Marbleheaders because of their stubbornness and tenacity. The night of Dec. 25, 1776, would test their resolve. The regiment joined the Continental Army in June of 1775, and became officially the 14th Continental Regiment, though they continued to call themselves the Marblehead Militia Regiment.

The Marbleheaders were a very unique unit in the Continental Army. Besides being different than most other American Soldiers, they also allowed African-Americans to serve in their unit. COL Glover was one of the best officers GEN Washington had at his disposal.

In August, COL Glover had organized the evacuation from Long Island of 9,000 Continental troops, along with their equipment, guns, horses and cannons. COL Glover accomplished this feat at night and under appalling weather conditions. In mid-October, COL



Glover and 750 men had fought to a stalemate a more than 4,000 British regulars.

GEN Washington had some 2,400 Soldiers, most militia from Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York, in his division. He had 18 pieces of artillery under the command of COL Henry Knox. These Guard Soldiers were still stinging from their defeat at Long Island, and were hungry for the chance to redeem themselves.

By 6 p.m. on Christmas Day, the Marbleheaders had begun moving GEN Washington's men across the river. GEN Washington's aide, COL John Fitzgerald, wrote of the crossing, "It is fearfully cold and raw and a snowstorm is setting in. The wind [is coming from the] northeast and beats into the faces of the men. It will be a terrible night for those who have no shoes. Some of them have tied only rags about their feet: others are barefoot, but I have not heard a man complain."

The operation went painfully slower than GEN Washington had hoped. The weather and river proved too much for the two supporting divisions, and prevented their crossing lower down the river. GEN Washington learned of this around 3 a.m., just as the remainder of his force had completed the arduous crossing from the Pennsylvania side. With his force now on New Jersey soil and poised to strike, GEN Washington marched with only one third of his force and moved to attack the Hessian garrison at Trenton, nearly 10 miles away.

As they marched to Trenton, some of the men left traces of blood on the snow, and at least two froze to death during the march. But they pressed on.

The Hessian commander, COL Rahl, had a force of 1,400 Hessians, along with a troop of the British 16th Light Dragoons. COL Rahl had been ordered to construct defensive works around Trenton, but he neglected to do so. On the night before the attack, COL Rahl was at a Christmas dinner when he was given information that the Americans were on the move. COL Rahl ignored the message, as he saw no threat

in the rag tag Americans. The warning letter was later found in his pocket after his death from wounds during the battle.

After marching almost 10 miles over frozen ground, GEN Washington's men slipped undetected into Trenton at approximately 6 a.m. and attacked the Hessians. The Hessians attempted to form in the town square, but were under heavy American fire, which hit them from the front and rear. During the attack, COL Rahl was fatally wounded. The troop of British Dragoons was able to elude capture. COL Rahl's troops were forced to retreat to the southeast of town, where they ultimately surrendered.

The victory would not be complete until GEN Washington's "Second" Crossing returned his forces to Pennsylvania. He and his forces remained vulnerable to a British counter attack as long as it remained in New Jersey. The Americans, exhausted from the long march and the hard-fought battle, now began to march back to the Delaware River. Again, COL Glover's Marbleheaders would prove their worth by ferrying GEN Washington's force across the river. This time, there were 900 prisoners who needed to be transported.

There were several future American notables present during the crossing and the battle. In addition to GEN Washington, two other future presidents with National Guard service were present—James Madison and James Monroe. Other Soldiers present included the future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, and Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton, long before the famous duel.

GEN Washington's crossing of the Delaware and subsequent victory at Trenton re-ignited the cause of American independence and gave new life to the American Revolution. At the end of the war, British Gen. Cornwallis would concede that "Washington won his highest laurels along the banks of the Delaware." **GX**



How to Become Well-Rounded and Master the X-Guard Sweep

By SGT Michael Kerkhoff

First and foremost, I want to thank my close friend SFC Donnie Moseley for giving SGT De La O and me the opportunity to write this article while he is out doing what Soldiers do best. To Donnie, the rest of our CATC brothers, and to all the Warriors deployed around the globe, we wish you good hunting, Godspeed and a safe return home. With that being said, let's get down to training.

This month, I'd like to talk about the physical training side of combatives. Does the biggest guy always win the fight? The answer is "No," and this is seen in the early days of the UFC.

As the sport of mixed martial arts has progressed, it's the well-rounded fighter who is standing with his hand raised in victory

at the end of the fight. The same should be considered when working out. If all I do is toss iron around in the weight room, I may not have the endurance I need to fight off multiple threats if I'm not working my cardio. If I'm concentrating too much on my beach muscles, I also run the risk of not being flexible enough to win a fight if it goes to the ground and I find myself on my back.

KETTLEBELLS

Kettlebells are an excellent way to build not only your core body strength, but your cardio as well. A kettlebell is simply a cannonball with a handle. The great thing about working with kettlebells is they provide a full body workout with practically any exercise. Most kettlebell workouts at some point work all of the body's major

muscle groups. To avoid boredom in the weight room, kettlebell workouts are really only limited to the imagination.

Though kettlebells give us a very powerful well-rounded weight workout to include our cardio system, it doesn't complete us.

CARDIO

Many of us run a couple miles to build or sustain our cardiovascular strength. Running the same pace, the same distance a few times a week isn't necessarily going to improve your cardio. One way to do that is to change your running workout. Cycle your workout with distance running, sprints, and of course, jumping rope. Even by changing your cardio workout on a regular basis, there is nothing like rolling hard for an extended period of time over and over to build that

"breath" needed for a long fight.

STRETCHING

Stretching is a necessary workout for the body, especially in the world of fighting. Eddie Bravo is a great example of how important stretching is as he ties his opponents up in the rubber guard. A good stretching regimen will not only help prevent injury, but also help build the dexterity needed to submit or escape from your opponent.

Talk to your training partners and find out what kind of workouts they use. Soon enough, you'll be well on your way to becoming that perfect well-rounded fighter. Let's roll! **GX**



1. To setup the X Guard, I shoot one arm between my opponent's legs. I trap the leg by wrapping my arm around his leg grasping the back of my head. I secure the other leg by placing one foot under his knee and the other hooking his hip to prevent escape with my legs forming an "X."

2. With both legs secured, I stretch my body out, taking my opponent off balance.

3. As I stretch my body to take my opponent off balance, I use my momentum to push him back for the sweep.

4. After taking my opponent down, I can immediately move into a dominant body position. Another option is to apply the knee bar by maintaining control of my opponent's trapped leg. I drape my leg over my opponent's leg and pinch my knees together preventing escape. To finish, I shoot my hips into my opponent's knee stretching my body out while keeping my opponent's leg close to my body secured.

COURTESY OF SGT MICHAEL KERKHOFF

Missouri Guard Soldier Pedals for a Cure



FAMILY PORTRAIT MSG Doug Johnson with his family, all biking enthusiasts.

By Michelle Key, MO NG PAO

Missouri Army National Guard (MOARNG) Soldiers are known for support during state emergencies and overseas, and for their involvement in community events. But, one Soldier suits up in spandex to ride for a cure.

MSG Doug Johnson recently completed the Ozark Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Bike Tour in southern Missouri. Starting at Willard High School, MSG Johnson and his team, the Biking Iguanas, rode their bikes more than 75 miles to Joplin. The team rested for the night and rode back the next day.

“There were 1,046 riders registered, and more than 900 actually rode,” explained MSG Johnson. “This is my fourth year riding in the MS 150, and I get better every year.”

But MSG Johnson doesn’t ride alone. On his team are his daughter, Nickolett, 19, and girlfriend Diana Jeffries.

“I told Nickolett about the ride and asked her to take part,” said MSG Johnson. “She hasn’t been training, so she only rode about 12 miles of the actual race. That was enough for her to realize how great it felt to help a good cause. She has already started training for next year and we train together whenever we get the chance.”

As part of the race, riders have the option to ride an extra 25 miles each day called the “Century Loop.” This makes the total for the two days 200 miles. MSG Johnson has been a Century rider all four years.

“Each time you ride the ‘Century Loop’ you earn a little pin,” noted MSG Johnson. “It’s great to see riders with a shoulder full of pins for past years. I’ve got four pins—so far.”

Many riders have an interest in the military, so MSG Johnson and Jeffries decided to create a new team. Next year, MSG Johnson and his team will race as the Pedalin’ Patriots—Pedalin’ for MS in the U.S. MSG Johnson said that anyone can join the group, no military service necessary. He explained that there is a large group of patriotic riders, and hopes that the name will attract new cyclists.

“The Guard promotes physical fitness and has [given me] high standards. The Guard has enabled me to be fit and healthy,” said Johnson. “Also, many of the riders are in the Guard, Army, Reserves, prior service, retired Veterans...The ride is a great chance to network and even talk to potential recruits.”

After 31 years in the MOARNG, MSG Johnson is now the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of area II recruiting, including Jackson County, Cass County and Bates County. MSG Johnson said that the Guard supports him and the National MS Society.

“There is so much support at the Kansas City armory,” noted MS Johnson. “Soldiers in the armory support the cause through pledging donations . . . and many want to join. Because of their upcoming deployment to Kosovo, many will be unable to ride in the MS 150 next year, but said they are going to ride when they return. I see people catching the spirit.” **GX**

For more information on the MOARNG or the Pedalin’ Patriots, call MSG Doug Johnson at:

(573) 934-0377



Re-enlistment and Racing With VTARNG

Story and photo by SGT Deborah Beckett

It was a quiet September Sunday morning in the heart of Vermont's Green Mountains . . . until the thunder roared through the valley. Nearly 100 high-power racecars circled the short track for a final practice before the green flag dropped. This day was starting out like most days at trackside, but this race would be different.

On this day, 10 of Vermont's Army National Guard members broke the race-day routine and received a thundering standing ovation from several thousand spectators at Thunder Road after taking their oath of re-enlistment from MG Michael Dubie, Vermont's adjutant general. The ceremony was part of the September pre-race festivities, which included the presentation of colors by the 1/86th Field Artillery Battalion, 86th IBCT (MTN) Color Guard, and a Black Hawk helicopter fly-over by Company C, 3/126th Aviation Bn Air Ambulance Company.

Once the official ceremonies concluded and the Soldiers marched off the track to a second standing ovation, the new re-enlistees were treated to a perfect day of racing at Vermont's premier track. They saw a spectacular upset victory by the National Guard's No. 26 Ford Fusion driven by John Donahue and owned by Kendall Roberts Motor Sports.

This event is an example of unconventional recruiting and retention events. The National Guard, in addition to conducting high visibility re-enlistment ceremonies, is partnering with two cars for this 2007 race season.

"This type of program has been very effective with recruiters. There are not really any tangible results for recruiting from this type of event, but the overwhelming consensus has been that it is a great thing for the Guard to be involved at Thunder Road. We have had nothing but positive reactions to the car partnerships and the National Guard in general both from the fans and the racers," said recruiter SFC Mike Gilman.

"We have gotten so much support from the National Guard, and that has been great," Donahue noted. The team made an exact duplicate of the NASCAR National Guard sponsored car, with decals and the color codes provided by the Guard while Donahue painted the car.

NECK AND NECK The No. 26 National Guard car, driven by John Donahue, took the checkered flag at Thunder Road following ceremonies honoring newly re-enlisted members of the VTARNG.

In addition to the partnership support, the Soldiers have been incredibly supportive as well. "We get a lot of support from members of the Guard, even the generals, no matter where we are racing. It's really amazing," Donahue exclaimed.

The Guard exposure is not only limited to the 18 races at Thunder Road, but also the other 12 races in the ACT Tour taking place throughout New England and Canada.

"It is a big honor to be associating with the National Guard and representing those fighting," said Kendall Roberts, who was determined to get the National Guard decals on his car. Gaining the approval to represent the National Guard at the track was a major undertaking for the team. According to Roberts, "Aside from being in the right place at the right time, we made a presentation to the National Guard giving them the history, background and goals not only of the team, but also of John and me as driver and owner."

The result "has been a great partnership," he said. "We do not forget who we are driving for. We are very appreciative of the Guard, and we are always happy to provide pit passes and race tickets to Guard members as a small token of our thanks."

But Donahue is not the only high-speed representative of the Guard. Shawn Fleury, driver and owner of the No. 31 car, was selected to represent the Vermont Army National Guard. Fleury and his late model Dodge, which has a desert camouflaged paint scheme and the Green Mountain Boys battle flag emblazoned on the side panel, has been a formidable competitor all season. "We came from the NAPA Tiger Sportsman Division where we won the championship, so racing at this level has been our next step, and being given the opportunity to represent the Guard has been awesome," Fleury stated.

"This is proving to be a great relationship, and it has been great that the National Guard has gotten involved in short track racing," Fleury said. "This has definitely taken off right from the start, and this support has really brought so much more to our program," he added. "We see support for the Guard every week, which has been great." **GX**

35th ID Soldiers Recognized at Kansas Speedway

Story and photo by Michelle Key, PAO MO NG

A day at the racetrack usually means juicy hot dogs, fast cars, loud motors and screaming fans. But for the Soldiers of the National Guard's 35th ID, the Yellow Cab 300 meant much more.

The National Guard's 35th ID consists of Guard units from Kansas and Missouri. To celebrate the unit, the No. 24 National Guard racecar wore a 35th ID patch on the hood during the race. After the race, the decal was given to the unit.

At the race, which was held at Kansas Speedway, 30 Soldiers with the 35th said they were treated like VIPs. From a tent in the hospitality village to tours of the pit and great seats, the Soldiers were proud to take part.

"To me this is a neat day of recognition for the Soldiers in the 35th division," said MG Marvin Pierson. "This is something that will carry on enthusiasm, something to be proud of and to be part of."

Long before the race started, Soldiers took part in a National Guard display held outside of Cabela's retail outlet. The parking lot was filled with tactical vehicles, a Black Hawk helicopter, a main battle tank, a mobilized artillery tank, the National Guard's Winnebago and even the National Guard's No. 25 racecar. Soldiers took turns climbing in the window to sit in Casey Mears' seat.

As the Soldiers arrived at the racetrack, they were escorted to the National Guard hospitality tent, where breakfast was waiting. They grabbed a bite and headed out to look at the track, tour the garage and pit, and explore the trailer. Soldiers and fans gathered around as Mears thanked each Guard member for coming out and for what they do every day. CPT Alan Bennett had the opportunity to start the car.

As they left to take their seats, each Soldier received a goody bag filled with a National Guard Racing hat, shirt, mouse pad and more.

"Casey Mears impressed me," explained MG Pierson. "He was cordial with the Soldiers, and he told me that he appreciated the excellent quality of [them]. I couldn't agree more."

Each Soldier was given a replica of the No. 24 racecar with the 35th ID patch on the hood. Mears proudly signed each model car and took a group picture with everyone. With Mears heading off to prep, the Soldiers went back to hospitality village for lunch and to watch the race.

As the cars lined up, some Soldiers went to their seats, while others stayed at the tent to watch by the fence. They were given headsets to listen to Mears and his pit crew. They had a great time watching as Mears fought his way into third place.

By day's end, the Soldiers were tired, but grateful for the opportunity. Throughout the day, the Soldiers said, civilians stopped them for handshakes.

"People would stop the Soldiers to tell them they appreciate what they do and what they sacrifice," said MG Pierson. "We all need to recognize what our Soldiers are doing."

MG Pierson explained that the unit decal from the car would be displayed at the state headquarters, but eventually it will make its way to the division headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

"I've been to about 10 or 11 NASCAR races," explained WOC John Allen. "I've started to lose count, but this race is different. Wearing our uniforms, our unit patch on the National Guard car—I've never gotten treatment like this."

MG Pierson added, "This is a great opportunity for new Soldiers, and a new experience for us all." **GX**

ALL SMILES SPC Amy Pelsor of Detachment 1, 35th ID, poses with the National Guard racecar before the Yellow Cab 300 at Kansas Speedway.





SPOT YOUR PARTNER
SGT KEN™ assists Stephanie
with a triceps extension
exercise with SPRI tubing.

OPERATION QUICK FIX™

Part 2 of 2

Operation Quick Fix™ was also featured as the Camp Crunch Urban Challenge™ used at the Men's Health Urbanathlon™ post-race festivals in Manhattan, New York, and Chicago, Illinois.

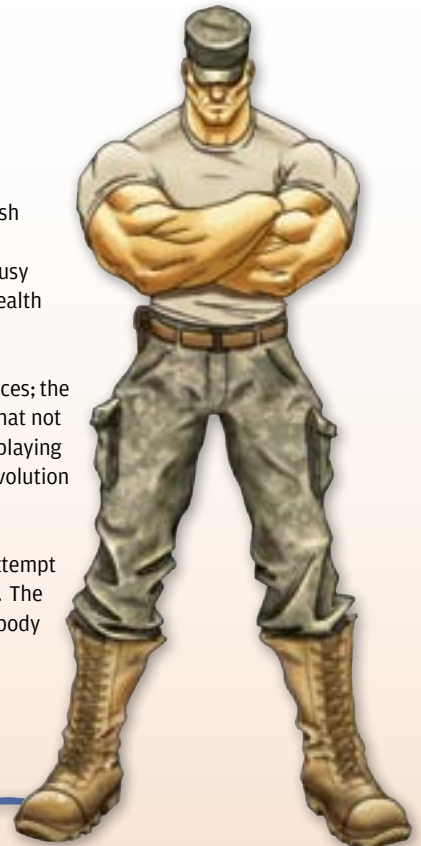
By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert

Chicago slumbered soundly at 0530 hours while the bleary-eyed crew began to check the remaining items of their to-do lists. The loud hum from the generator-powered work lights illuminated the vacant area. Flash floods swept Butler Field the night before, covering the ground as thoroughly as strawberry jam on the sticky fingers of a 6-year-old child. The next morning, despite the dampness, the special-event crew was busy conducting sound checks on the music system and securing exhibitor tents. It was race day at the Men's Health Urbanathlon™. Moreover, it was D-Day for the Camp Crunch Urban Challenge™!

It became evident to me, on that brisk morning in Chicago, that many people no longer wish to simply run races; the turnout proved that they wanted something more diverse and challenging. People are looking for events that not only include racing, but other competitions as well, testing multiple body parts and thereby leveling the playing field. A combined event like the Urbanathlon™ and the Urban Challenge™ is an example of the next evolution of races.

After the Urbanathlon™ race, a multitude of people formed a queue to the side of the Crunch tent in an attempt to become one of the 50 people to perform a more personal feat: The Camp Crunch Urban Challenge™. The challenge included a 15-20 minute circuit that brought many of them to their knees, proving that full-body military-style workouts are still the absolute best fitness training events for anyone!

Here is how it works:



CHRIS KISSLING / ILLUSTRATION BY SEAMAS GALLAGHER, NICOLE SYLVESTER

WARM-UP PHASE

NOTE: At the Urbanathlon™, we conducted the Warm-up Phase before the main event.

A. Aerobics Running in place; Side-Straddle-Hops (“Jumping Jacks”); High Steps/Knees (5 Minutes)

B. Push-ups (1 Minute)

- **Basic:** 1-10 reps
- **Intermediate:** 11-20 reps
- **Advanced:** 21-30 reps

NOTE: At the Urbanathlon™, we performed Push-ups in cadence for a 15-count.

C. Aerobics Running in place; Side-Straddle-Hops (“Jumping Jacks”); High Steps/Knees (4 Minutes)

D. Stretching (5 Minutes)

OPERATION QUICK FIX™/ CAMP CRUNCH URBAN CHALLENGE™

NOTE: At the Urbanathlon™, there were no rest periods while moving from station to station. Participants performed the entire series of exercises knowing that they were being timed, starting with station one and freezing the stopwatch immediately after the completion of station 10. Please go to GXonline.com, Past Issues, START Fitness™, for any needed exercise instructions.

1. Treadmill 3/4-mile Sprint (Male);
Treadmill 1/2-mile Sprint (Female)

2. Stair Climber 300 Step Drill

3. 100 Jump Rope Skips

4. 30 Squat-Thrust-Jumps

5. 50 Leaping Squats

6. 30 Sit-ups

7. 30 Perfect Push-ups™ (Male);
15 Perfect Push-ups™ (Female)

NOTE: You may substitute Push-up Grips or Dumbbells when Perfect Push-ups™ are not available.



A



3



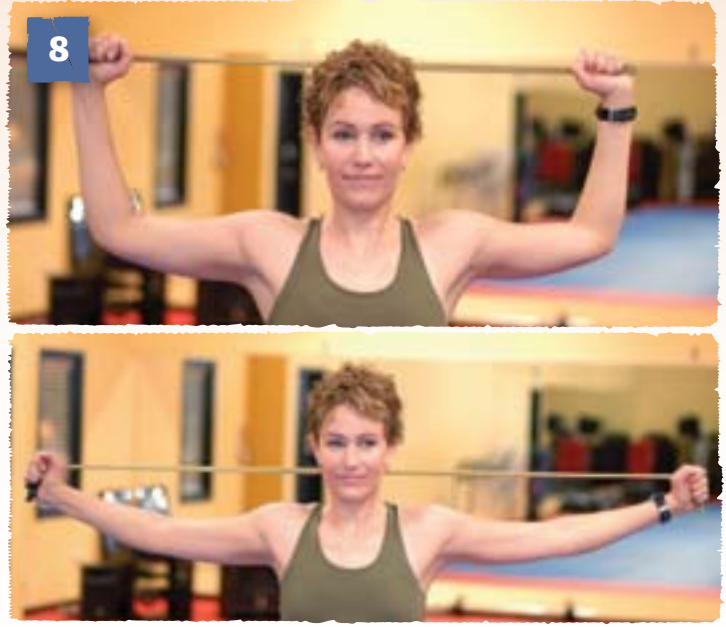
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6



HOOAH!
Let us hear from you.
askthetrainer@startfitness.com



8. 30 Ultratube™ Triceps Extensions

9. 30 Xertube™ Lateral Shoulder Raises

10. Climbing Wall (Finish)

- **Quick Fix:** 1 full set = approximately 15 minutes
- **Full Metal Jacket:** 2 full sets = approximately 30 minutes
- **Max Load:** 3 full sets = approximately 45 minutes

Note: We suggest that you Crab Crawl forward (advanced) or Bear Crawl laterally (intermediate) for 50 feet (25 feet in each direction) in order to create a similar finish for this event without having a rock-climbing wall, which was used at the Urbanathlon™. Or, simply return to the Treadmill (Basic-Intermediate) for station No. 10. Hooah!



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Go to: GXonline.com/Fitness



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

Special thanks to VQ Fitness in Hanford, CA, for allowing us use of their facilities.

SPECIAL REMARKS: START Fitness™ is a group exercise and hiking business based in San Francisco where Soldiers and civilians can experience the thrill of military-style drills performed in cadence or with music. START Fitness™ now trains and certifies Basic, Senior and Master Instructors.

We encourage you to send your questions or requests for additional information to askthetrainer@STARTfitness.com. You can experience our workouts at home with our OPERATION LIVING FIT™ DVD series, available at www.STARTfitness.com or <http://www.AmericanSoldier.com/skwo01.html>.

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 short of breath.

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CHRIS KISSLING

Cleaning Out the Closet— Brothers West-Style

By the Brothers West

You would be amazed at all the stuff that accumulates in our “Review” closet over the course of a year. We try to bring you only the best of the best, so a lot of things that get tested never make it to print. Also, as it turns out, if you have a magazine, people will send you totally bizarre items in the hope that you will write about them. Between those and all the stuff that piles up as leftovers from our printed reviews—well, it was getting pretty packed.

So how do the Brothers West do a year-end closet cleaning? With a shotgun, of course. We pulled out all the leftovers, rejects and random detritus and headed to our home away from home: Owl Hollow Gun Range. Here are a few highlights from our “cleaning spree.” Happy holidays and a wonderful new year to you all. **GX**

Warning: Do not try this at home. The Brothers West are heavily insured professionals and beg you not to shoot these kinds of objects with a shotgun. You could get hurt or killed.



Aaaaaah. The beautiful and mysterious Mammoth Cave. BLAM! Hey look, confetti!

“MRE Gourmet.” Oh yeah, that went over well.

We HATE trivia games. It’s trivia for a reason—no one cares!

“Gallopalooza”? Seriously, someone sent us a book called “Gallopalooza.” It was a lovely book and all, but what were they thinking?

Important safety tip: When shooting a de-tinned ham, stand more than five yards away. The only thing worse than eating this thing is picking it out of your ears, hair and goggles.

The rare and tasty “Trendy shoe with beef stew sauce”!

PROVE IT!

True Confessions: Your Feedback About “Prove It”

By the Brothers West

We would like to thank the nine regular readers of the “Prove It,” the Brothers West column, and everyone else who took the time to send in their feedback on our reviews. We do our best to provide useful information, but not being Soldiers ourselves it’s very helpful for us to hear exactly what kinds of gear you’re interested in. Our three winners were selected randomly from all the feedback emails we received.

The first winner, MAJ John Boatright, TNARNG, sent in exactly the kind of “only a Soldier would ask that” review request that we love to get:

“Could not find any review of watches on the GX Web site. I know that the Luminox watches can be read if you are wearing NVGs (Night Vision Goggles) and most other tritium analog watches can also be read. But all you can do with them is tell time and navigate (daylight only). Digital watches have many more features, but I have never been able to read one with NVGs. This is why I bought a Luminox watch a long time ago. But now the tritium is beginning to fail, and I need a new one.”


We immediately will begin looking for digital watches that can be read through NVGs.

Our second winner, Michael Terzian of College Station, TX, and a graduate of Texas A&M, wrote to take issue with our inclusion of the University of Texas steak branding iron in our recent gift guide. He felt that we should have chosen someone other than “that junior college in Austin” if we wanted to represent top-notch college sports teams. Just to be clear, these are his opinions, not ours.

Anyone with any good Aggie jokes can send them to BrothersWest@gxonline.com. (By the way, Mrs. Terzian, if you didn’t get the hint from the magazine left conspicuously on your bathroom sink, your husband wants the tactical grilling apron for Christmas.)

Our final winner is SSG Colleen Kenney, MNARNG. She rides a Harley, “FLHRI—not a girlie Sportster,” and wanted to know if there were any ballistic shades (like the ones we reviewed in GX 4.2) that would fit a woman’s more narrow face. We expressed a certain level of surprise that none of the eyewear we reviewed would work since they had fit us so well. We won’t get into the particulars of the email exchange that followed, but suffice it to say at one point the phrase “head the size of a watermelon” was used. We can’t tell you how thrilled we were that SSG Kenney was selected as a winner.

Thanks again to all of you who wrote us. This is your magazine and your feedback is the best chance we have at making it better. **GX**



Pretty shiny! This sub-standard “survival kit” at least makes a nice party favor with the liberal application of 12-gauge shells.



INCOMING! There's nothing quite so satisfying as calling in an air strike on a Nazi emplacement. If you're looking for some serious WW2 firepower, this is the game for you.

COMPANY OF HEROES OPPOSING FRONTS

Video Game Reviews

By the Brothers West

“Company of Heroes: Opposing Fronts”

The best Real Time Strategy (RTS) game of all time is back.

One year ago, the way we play RTS games changed forever. We recounted in *GX* 3.6 how we were shocked and amazed to finally find ourselves compelled to use real-world tactics in an RTS. We've replayed the game repeatedly and every time we still find ourselves growing attached to our troops, evolving our strategies for their survival and cheering when a mission is completed with only minor casualties.

So how do you follow up on the best? Well, “Opposing Fronts” is essentially a stand-alone version of an expansion pack. You can now play as the Brits and the Panzer Elite. The game play methods of the two forces are diametrically opposed. The Brits are long on defense. Once they've dug themselves some trenches and brought in a few officers to provide additional bonuses, they're nearly impossible to root out. Add in some brutal anti-tank emplacements and you'll be grinding Jerry into sausages at your leisure. Our favorite Brit feature: 25-pound artillery guns. Boom! Baby, boom!

As much as we love destroying Nazis, we do have to admit that the Panzer Elite are good fun to play. These fast moving units lend themselves nicely to a blitzkrieg style of play that neither the Brits nor Americans (in the original) can pull off. They also require constant attention and are more than a little difficult to manage for those new to RTS.

So, once again, if you, like us, STILL haven't had your fill of the WWII genre, or just love a good RTS, pick up “Opposing Fronts,” but be warned—the language can get pretty salty and violence can get pretty graphic (ever watched as a 25-pound shell hit infantry? Eeeeewww!). So, this one isn't for kids. **GX**



The Greatest Running Shoe On Earth*

By Keith Kawasaki

“I'm not as good as I once was, but I'm as good once as I ever was.” That's a Toby Keith line. And yeah, I'm finding it applies more and more to my life as I get older.

I used to run all the time. “Back in the day” (aka waaay back in the day when I was in high school), I used to run spring track, winter track and cross-country. A little bit older now, I haven't been running quite so often. Then, like a gift from heaven above, I received a sweet new pair of running shoes to review from Brooks. And I ran like the wind . . . or a few times a week on a treadmill.

I began a slow, somewhat inconsistent training push for the Tennessee National Guard's 17th Annual 5K Fun Run/Walk to be held Oct. 5 at Radnor Lake in Nashville. I planned to not only run that Fun Run/Walk, but to relive the glory days of my athletically fit youth. The Brooks Radius 7 with its unique MoGo technology would surely be a sleek conduit of my hidden speed and strength, with their flashy, yet

*Claim is only the opinion of the author.

COURTESY OF THQ AND RELIC ENTERTAINMENT / COURTESY OF BROOKS



VALVE = VALUE We would have gladly paid full price for Team Fortress 2 all by itself, but when Valve packaged it with four other games in one box, they may well have created the greatest gaming value of all time.

The Orange Box

The Valve Corporation has managed to cram a whole lot of fun into one little box. It's not all original, but if you haven't played it before, it will be new for you.

The anchor of this group of games is one of our all-time favorite first-person shooters (FPS), "Half-Life 2." Despite being several years old, the game still looks gorgeous. The top-notch graphics and sound design do an excellent job of creating an immersive environment, but it's the bad-guy Artificial Intelligence (AI) that sets this game apart. Although others have closed the gap since its initial release, Valve's AI is still one of the best, with enemies acting as cohesive units, using suppressing fire and flushing us out of hidey-holes with well-placed grenades.

Since the original release of HL2, Valve has begun releasing shorter "episodes" (essentially small expansion packs) as part of the ongoing adventures of Dr. Gordon Freeman (the hero you play in HL2). The first two of these episodes are also included in the Orange Box.

One of the two new games included is a mind-bender called "Portal." While played from the first-person perspective, it's more of a three-dimensional puzzler than a shooter. OK, we have to admit it, this one got us—we're just not this smart. It's so bizarre, we're not

even sure we can accurately describe it. Ever seen an M.C. Escherdrawing?The ones with staircases

at weird angles and no clear definition of "up"? It's like living in one of those, but much more vertigo-inducing. Presumably, smarter people than us can wrap their minds around this one. We'll leave it to them.

The final element of The Orange Box, and the one we've been looking forward to for a long time, is "Team Fortress 2." Aaaaah, such sweet relief after "Portal." This is a straightforward, class-based, team shooter: good guys over here, bad guys over there. Go get 'em! Feel like spraying some hate? Jump in as a mini-gun-wielding Heavy or flame-spewing Pyro. For the more subtle-minded, there are snipers, scouts and our favorite (oddly enough), the engineer. Like every truly good game, it's easy to pick up, incredibly deep and almost impossible to put down. **GX**

Like every truly good game, it's easy to pick up, incredibly deep and almost impossible to put down.

mature style and cozy support. According to the Brooks Web site, MoGo gives you 22 percent "more spring in your step," 40 percent more "cushioning" and offers consistent performance, among other great marketing claims. I was sold. The right shoe can make all the difference in your attitude toward running. See, anyone with an office job like mine knows that despite sitting on your butt for nine or so hours, you're still dog-tired at the end of the day. The Brooks were too darned attractive to resist, though. Like a shiny new car, I had to test them out. My old running shoes were rock hard, stained green and splattered with chunks of mud from yard work. Naturally, I felt like a slob any time I wore them to the gym. So, therefore, I hardly went. Now sporting the Brooks, I admit, it was a confidence boost and I knew they wouldn't hit me with the flat pang of the ground. So, fast-forward to the Fun Run/Walk. Though

not a marathon-like grueling test for the shoe, it would certainly feel like one for me. And, I knew the run would tell me how these boys really fare on the unforgiving pavement, 'round sloping corners, up those hills that kill your knees—oh, and about 100-degree Tennessee heat. The results: Brooks Radius 7: Awesome Me: Not too shabby. Like I quoted earlier, "I'm as good once as I ever was." We made a great team, Brooks and me. One hundred percent BFFs. I was just two minutes higher than those glory days, and I credit my success to the comfort of the Brooks and a stubborn denial of my office physique. Though most of my body ached for a week afterward, my feet felt fine!

Check out Brooks at:
BrooksRunning.com

SSG Danny Stanley: Hero at Home and Abroad

Story and photo by Christian Anderson

The last thing SSG Danny Stanley expected to find on his way to the National Guard Armory in Kosciusko, MS, was a traffic accident. On Oct. 5, 2006, SSG Stanley of the 2nd Battalion, 114th Field Artillery Regiment, noticed a burning vehicle at Munford's Crossing near the Natchez Trace. He immediately stopped to assist the people inside.

"I didn't think, I just reacted; that's part of our training," SSG Stanley told *GX*, when I visited him at Camp Shelby, MS, in late September. We had received a press release late August about the staff sergeant and the incident at Munford's Crossing. As soon as possible, my editor sent me down to meet this man.

Oct. 5 wasn't the first time SSG Stanley had seen an automobile accident; between riding in his father's wrecker when he was a child and serving in Iraq, SSG Stanley had seen his fair share.

As the staff sergeant approached the vehicle, a man got out and fell to the ground, bruised and bleeding. SSG Stanley immediately went to the man's aid, dragging him away from the vehicle. Then SSG Stanley heard the man utter something that made his heart drop: "My family, my babies."

SSG Stanley ran back to the vehicle and as he opened the door, smoke rolled out from inside and flames came from the side. SSG Stanley noticed an injured woman lying in the vehicle. As he reached down to assist her, the woman pushed him away and yelled, "Get my babies!" At that moment, a little girl climbed over the seat and SSG Stanley threw her on his back and pulled the mom out from the fire.

"Fire is not like a bullet where it flies straight. Fire is unpredictable and shows no mercy," SSG Stanley said.

As SSG Stanley pulled the mom and daughter to safety, a teenage girl driving by stopped to help. SSG Stanley instructed her to grab a shirt and wrap the little girl in it to cover her burns. As SSG Stanley was helping the woman get comfortable until help arrived, the woman pleaded for her babies. SSG Stanley exclaimed to her, "I got your baby."

The woman replied, "No! My little babies!"

SSG Stanley rushed back to the vehicle, but was stopped in his tracks as it became engulfed in flames. "I could feel the car start to sizzle; you couldn't touch the door handles," SSG Stanley said. "It was just too hot to get near. I could feel the hair singe on my legs and I backed off, and dropped to my knees. I just prayed right there that the good Lord took them before they felt any pain. When I made the 911 phone call, I was in the middle of the road on my knees."

SSG Stanley, an Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran, acted with bravery and went above the call of duty to help citizens of his community in a time of desperate need. "I didn't hesitate," said SSG Stanley. "It all happened so fast."

His heroism and bravery saved the lives of three people, whom faced certain death if SSG Stanley had not stopped to help. "What I did that day, anybody might have done. As a father, or a brother or parent, when people need help, you stop and help."

For his action at Munford's Crossing, SSG Stanley was awarded the Soldier's Medal, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Award for Heroism and the Valley Forge Cross for Heroism, which was awarded to him in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Aug. 25, 2007.

His wife DeAnna and their 8-year-old son Colby were in attendance, which made the entire ceremony a tremendous experience for SSG Stanley. "It was great . . . they flew me and my family down. There's nothing better than to have a close family to support you."

"It was pretty tough to live with; I think about it a lot, what more I could have done. And then, I tell myself there was nothing else I could have done. I still have a lot of touchy feelings about this," shared the staff sergeant.

SSG Stanley deployed to Iraq in 2004 where he participated in over 300 missions. "We rebuilt the Iraqi police stations, soccer fields, we helped with rebuilding hospitals and schools. We did the best we could and I am proud of what we did over there. I'll go back if they need me."

SSG Stanley is currently stationed at Camp Shelby for Operation Warrior Training

(OWT) and plays a vital role in preparing troops to deploy. He is in control of a firing range that hones Soldiers' abilities with the M-9 service pistol and the Mk-19 grenade launcher.

"It's fulfilling to train Soldiers, share the knowledge, and prepare them to go into theater," said SSG Stanley.

As we were saying our goodbyes, I found myself not wanting leave. In under an hour, I had developed such an enormous appreciation and respect for this man that I felt honored to be in his presence. I tried to thank SSG Stanley for his service, both foreign and domestic, but the words just could not express my true appreciation for his actions. SSG Stanley is the kind of soldier who keeps us safe and protects us—not just in the far corners of the world, but at home, on the street and in the neighborhood. **GX**

We rebuilt the Iraqi police stations, soccer fields, we helped with rebuilding hospitals and schools. We did the best we could and I am proud of what we did over there. I'll go back if they need me.—SSG Danny Stanley



NIGHT PATROL-IRAQ!

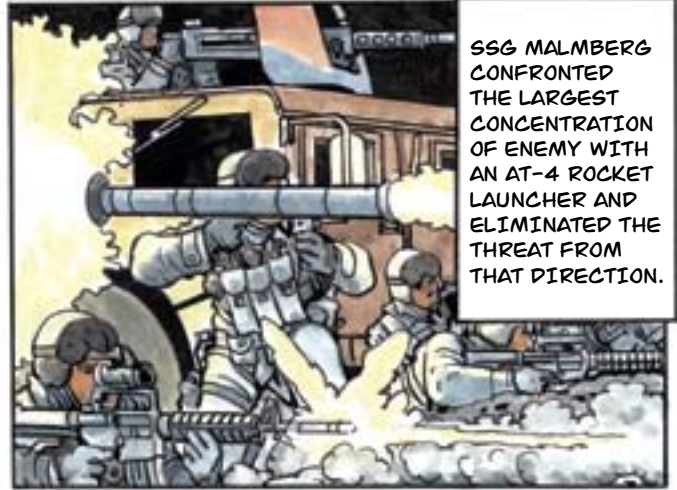
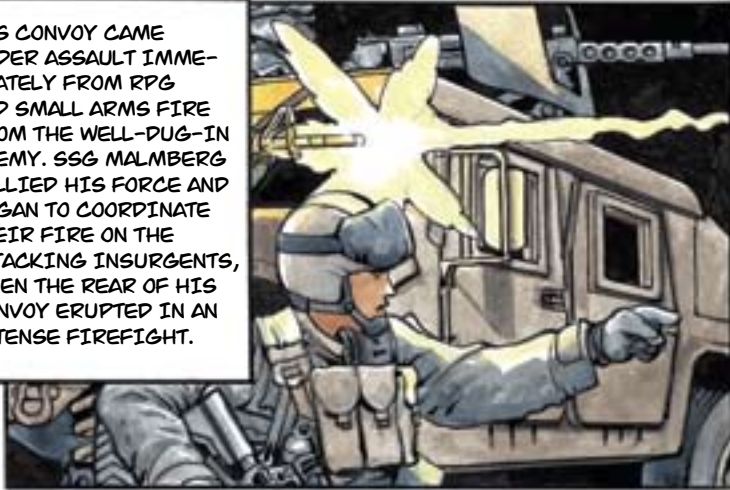
SMALL

JANUARY 27, 2007
2232 HOURS



SSG CHAD MALMBERG, A MINNESOTA SOLDIER WITH 2ND BN, 135TH INF, WAS IN CHARGE OF A 25-VEHICLE CONVOY OUT OF BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, WHEN THE CONVOY AHEAD OF HIM CAME UNDER ATTACK BY A SIZABLE INSURGENT FORCE. SSG MALMBERG ORDERED HIS TROOPS INTO A DEFENSIVE POSTURE.

HIS CONVOY CAME UNDER ASSAULT IMMEDIATELY FROM RPG AND SMALL ARMS FIRE FROM THE WELL-DUG-IN ENEMY. SSG MALMBERG RALLIED HIS FORCE AND BEGAN TO COORDINATE THEIR FIRE ON THE ATTACKING INSURGENTS, WHEN THE REAR OF HIS CONVOY ERUPTED IN AN INTENSE FIREFIGHT.



SSG MALMBERG CONFRONTED THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF ENEMY WITH AN AT-4 ROCKET LAUNCHER AND ELIMINATED THE THREAT FROM THAT DIRECTION.

HE INSTRUCTED HIS PEOPLE TO PAINT THE INSURGENTS WITH INFRARED LASERS FOR AN AIR STRIKE, BUT THE ENEMY HAD WORKED THEIR WAY IN TOO CLOSE TO THE CONVOY. SSG MALMBERG DECIDED TO LEAD HIS VEHICLES THROUGH BARRIERS IN THE ROAD TO BETTER ENGAGE THE ENEMY.



THE BATTLE RAGED FOR 40 MINUTES. AMMUNITION RAN LOW. WHEN A WAVE OF ENEMY INSURGENTS AGAIN ATTACKED THE REAR OF THE CONVOY, SSG MALMBERG TOSSED A GRENADE, KILLING SEVEN.



FINALLY, SSG MALMBERG'S FORCE GAINED THE UPPER HAND, DEFEATING THE ENEMY, AND THE CONVOY CONTINUED TO SAFETY. SSG MALMBERG'S PROFESSIONALISM AND COOL-HEADEDNESS UNDER FIRE WAS A DECIDING FACTOR IN TURNING THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ENEMY PROVOCATEURS.



ON SEPT. 22, 2007, SSG MALMBERG WAS PRESENTED WITH THE SILVER STAR FOR HIS COURAGE AND GALLANTRY UNDER FIRE. BACK IN MINNESOTA NOW, HE IS IN HIS SENIOR YEAR AT MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY IN MANKATO, WITH HOPES OF BECOMING A POLICE OFFICER UPON GRADUATION. HE IS, WITHOUT QUESTION, AN AMERICAN HERO AND A CREDIT TO HIS UNIT.



the end

**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.

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