

GX[®]

THE GUARDIAN EXPERIENCE

VOLUME THREE ISSUE SIX
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

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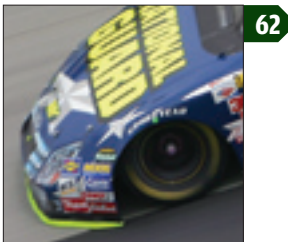
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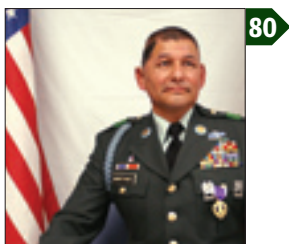
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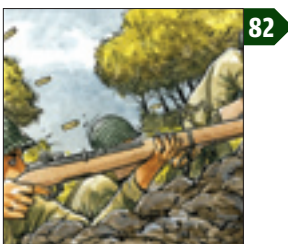
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Dear Soldiers,

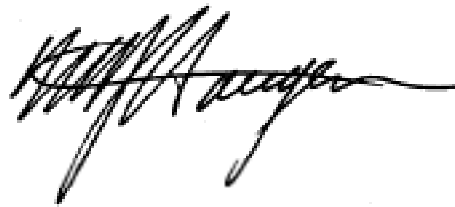
As I prepare to retire, I have been reflecting on the past forty years—the last six as the North Dakota Adjutant General—and am reminded of the vast number of people it requires to make this National Guard organization great. It takes people who share their knowledge, understanding, and talent, and who are willing to make sacrifices in their own lives so the National Guard can continue to grow and improve. All of you have helped make today's National Guard better than the National Guard of yesterday, and it has been a privilege to serve with you.

Public service is a great trust. People depend on us to be good stewards of resources that are hard-earned, and when our states and country need a steady, responsive force, they turn to us. From Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom to hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, security and rescue operations, we, the National Guard, are literally everywhere in the world. This trust and respect is because of your dedication.

I have attended several funerals of fallen comrades and am reminded there is a cost for freedom. President Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream." You have certainly done your part to insure the next generation will have a firm foundation of freedom upon which to build.

I thank you for the privilege to stand in your ranks and be a part of the most respected organization in this country—the National Guard!

Sincerely,



Michael J. Haugen
Major General
North Dakota National Guard



I thank you for the privilege to stand in your ranks and be a part of the most respected organization in this country—the National Guard!



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Dear Soldiers,

Aloha and *mahalo* to all our service men and women. We continue to stay as busy as ever as National Guard members. By now many of you have either deployed, or are preparing to deploy, in support of operations around the world providing security, surveillance, medical assistance and much more to those in need.

You have proven over and over again to yourselves and to the world that you are willing, wanting and prepared to respond in times of need, no matter what the circumstances are. From deploying to Iraq and helping the Iraqi people to saving lives in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, it is impossible to doubt the relevance and effectiveness of our National Guard. It's impossible to express how proud I am to be a part of this dynamic organization.

Earlier this year, the Hawaii National Guard welcomed our 29th Brigade Combat Team home from Iraq and Kuwait, and several other units came home from Afghanistan. At the peak of deployment, we had five out of every six of our Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers deployed, leaving our State with just 50% of our entire Hawaii National Guard (mostly Air Guard) here at home. Although it wasn't easy, the families and community here in Hawaii made it possible. The support that the National Guard received while the Brigade was deployed was astounding. The community rallied together to send care packages and letters to the deployed troops. One of the things the troops said they were lacking during the deployment was rice, which is a staple here in Hawaii. As soon as word got out, the community quickly sprung into action sending over 1.5 tons of rice to the troops.

Having been able to visit the deployed troops, I was honored to see firsthand the dedication of our National Guard Soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. They were excelling in all missions assigned.

With most of the Hawaii Army National Guard deployed, the Hawaii Air National Guard stepped up and volunteered to take on new missions such as the CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package and fielding a well-trained Quick Reaction Force. This enabled the deployed troops to rest at ease, knowing if something did happen back home, there were National Guard members prepared and ready to protect their families. This is just another example of the great team effort put forth by the National Guard troops, their families and the community.

That team effort continues and can be seen not only in Hawaii but in every State, as up to 6,000 National Guard members serve along United States border in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The fact that almost all of the National Guard members participating in this mission (Operation Jump Start) are volunteers shows the dedication and determination in our troops to support our country. Even more so are the Soldiers who returned from year-long deployments to Southwest Asia and then, shortly after, signed up to support the border patrol. Hawaii is also one of the States volunteering to participate in Operation Jump Start.

Another hot topic for Army Guard soldiers as they return from deployments is transformation. Like all military services, the Army is forever changing, while its members are forever fluidly adapting to those changes. The Army, including the Army National Guard, is transforming into smaller, more mobile units. Hawaii's own 29th Brigade Combat Team is in the progress of converting from a light infantry to a Unit of Action (UA). These changes will enable the Guard to remain relevant, reliable and ready.

On the Air side of the house, Total Force Integration is becoming a



reality for many Air National Guard units. The combination of Active Duty and Guard units is becoming a more efficient and smarter way to do business. In July of this year, the Hawaii Air National Guard and the Active Duty's 15th Airlift Wing welcomed the eighth and final C-17, the Spirit of Kamehameha, to Hickam Air Force Base as part of Hickam's total force integration. Since the arrival of the first C-17, Spirit of Hawai'i - Ke Aloha, the HIANG's 204th Airlift Squadron and the 15th Airlift Wing's 535th Airlift Squadron have successfully flown a wide range of integrated missions. Some of those missions took them to the Philippines to support relief efforts after a massive mudslide and even to Australia, transporting Australian military forces and equipment to allow the Australian Defense Force to respond quickly to unrest in East Timor.

Change is inevitable. It's going to happen whether we want it or not, and the National Guard is the prime example of an organization embracing change. I'm sure there is more to come as we continue to modernize every aspect of our military forces. *Mahalo* (thank you).

Sincerely,

ROBERT G.F. LEE
Major General
Hawaii National Guard
The Adjutant General



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Renewing Our Vows

2006 sure flew by fast. And as GX sits at the dawn of its fourth year, the Army National Guard is turning 370 years old. We've got a lot of catching up to do.

Before we saddle up for the stretch ahead, we at GX would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our mission to you.

The driving force of this publication is to celebrate and support the Soldiers and families of the Army National Guard. To provide today's Army National Guard member with information for becoming a better Soldier and better citizen.

To encourage and assist Guard Soldiers in maximizing the benefits of their military career, as well as their personal and family goals.

We take great honor in the privilege of serving America's heroes, both at home and abroad. With the rise of each day, there is a sincere appreciation for the sacrifice you have made to secure the blessing of Freedom in this land. In this time of Thanksgiving and holiday celebration, please know you and yours are raised in our thoughts and prayers.

This past year, GX was able to visit many more of you, in person, than in years past. From South Carolina to Montana to Cuba to Iraq, and many places in between, we were both humbled and strengthened by our meetings with you. We thank you for your hospitality, patience, and participation in our mission.

It is your active participation that controls our relevance and affect. We invite every Guard Soldier and every family member to submit ideas and photography, as well as critiques and compliments, via email, to editor@gxonline.com.

Active participation has permitted us to acknowledge Native American Heritage Month this November with a feature salute to America's Native American Soldiers and the proud Warrior tradition that has protected our homeland for centuries (p. 36). In conjunction, we were invited to the National Guard's Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous in North Dakota, where we personally witnessed living history impact the youth of America (p. 54). These stories would have been impossible without the cooperation and assistance of MSG Rob Keller of North Dakota National Guard Public Affairs, SFC Thomas Steber of Montana National Guard Public Affairs, Sammye Ruscoe and Veronica Hix of the Cherokee Nation, and certainly Keith Heavyrunner of Native American Indian Veterans, Inc.

As 2007 breaks on the horizon, we at GX are renewed in our mission and anxiously look forward to sharing the adventures and heroic stories of the coming year.

Thank you,

The GX Team

ON THE COVER
Santa prepares to make a special delivery in a borrowed Backhawk, loaded with presents from deployed Soldiers to their families back home. As you and your family celebrate this holiday season, be sure to remember those families who cannot be together and be thankful for the sacrifice they, and their Soldiers, are making for all of us.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM NEWSOM

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FROM THE EDITOR

Since we began the “Running with the Bulls” feature, we have received emails and letters from a number of people asking why we are spending so much time focusing on a single Division. No one questions the importance of the Red Bulls’ work, but they don’t see why we would spend 20 months following just one group of Soldiers, when there are Guard members all around the world working just as hard everyday.

Our intention with the “Running with the Bulls” feature is to tell the story of all Guard Soldiers through the eyes of a single Division. While the experience of every Soldier and their family is unique, the process of training up, saying goodbye to families, deploying, adjusting to life while separated, serving at home and abroad and, finally, coming home is common to all who serve their nation. We want to demystify deployment for those who haven’t been through it. By sharing the thoughts and feelings of one group throughout the process, we hope to remind all members of the Guard Family that they are not alone. There is a strength to be gained from the knowledge that others have endured similar trials and grown through the process. Finally, because we cannot honor the efforts of every Soldier individually, we seek to show, on a small scale, the amazing works undertaken every day by all those, both in uniform and out, who serve with great honor and distinction in the Army National Guard.

Jason West
Editor
GX Magazine

HAPPY CAMPERS

This is Crystal Yardman and Jake Yardman. They are the cousin and son of Spec. Mike Yardman, with the 126th MP CO, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Spec. Yardman returned with his unit in February of 2006 after spending one year in Iraq. This picture was taken at the unit’s Homecoming. We are proud of the NMANG and all of our Soldiers who fight daily to keep us safe.

Sincerely,
Karen Yardman
Mother of SPC Yardman

A POEM TO DADDY

My oldest daughter wrote the enclosed poem while her daddy was serving in Iraq. Her name is Jessica and she was 10 when she wrote it. Her daddy, SGT Michael Quinones, returned in April of 2006. Our community just recently had a children’s parade in honor of our Soldiers serving in the Georgia Guard’s 48th brigade. The parade was followed by a ceremony at the court house and Jessica read her poem from the podium.

I was extremely proud of my children—Jessica, Mike and Alex—while their dad was gone. Each of them was a light for me when some days seemed very long. As a family, we are proud of Michael and all that our brigade was able to accomplish while serving in Iraq. We are equally as glad to have them home.

Thanks for a great magazine. I enjoy reading it as much as my husband.

Sincerely,
Joy Quinones

My brave Soldier in Iraq,
hoping to come home quick and fast.
Fighting so we can be free
to live in peace with our families.
He’s hot, tired and dirty, too,
but he’s still fighting for me and you.

I pray for his safety every night and day.
That there would be no bomb in his sight.
My brave Soldier fighting strong
for his friends and family way back home.

When he comes home,
we will all shout for joy,
give hugs and kisses, too.
We’ll all tear up, some may even cry,
but that will be the best day of my life.
My brave Soldier, strong and nice,
coming home sometime.
That’s my Daddy. That’s my friend.



UPSETTING OVERSIGHT

I was amazed and very upset by what I read on the last page of the September/October 2006 edition of GX magazine. The article about the SSG who was awarded the Soldiers Medal for bravery. What the SSG did was definitely commendable, but what I have issues with is how the “Iraqi civilian” is described. First of all, if you have a car filled with explosives and you are trying to blow up Americans, you are not an Iraqi civilian, you are a terrorist. Second, this terrorist is described as “braving coalition fire.”

He is not a hero, he is not brave, he is a coward who was trying to blow up coalition forces. Thank you,

SSG Brian Graves
Sycamore, IL

The copy on that comic was poorly edited which was entirely my responsibility. First off, you are entirely correct in pointing out that saying the bomber “braved” coalition fire was an incredibly poor and inaccurate word choice. Second, although the text implies otherwise, it is our understanding the Iraqi who was saved was not, in fact, the driver of the original car bomb, but rather an innocent bystander.

I sincerely apologize for the sloppy editing and thank you for bringing it to my attention.

Jason West
Editor
GX Magazine

READER SURVEY EXCERPTS

GX is, by far, my most prized Army-related magazine. Within my armory, we regularly receive copies of NCO Journal, Army Times, and other periodicals. While their information is, at times, valuable, I feel that I have to search for it. With GX, I know that almost every page has something I either need or want to know. Thank you for producing this incredible magazine!

It is a great magazine. My son-in-law is deployed in Iraq and it makes me feel like he is closer to home with the updates on what they are doing. I also enjoy reading profiles on individual Guard members and their families. It is also very informative; until I read your magazine, I had no idea how much our Guard does for the country as a whole, even during peacetime.

Survey comments were submitted anonymously

LOAD UP ARNG paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group and 116th Air Support Operations Squadron board a Canadian CH-146 Griffon helicopter from the 430th Helicopter Squadron out of Quebec, at Fort McCoy, WI, July 21.



PATRIOT 2006 JOINT TRAINING REVEALS THE BIG PICTURE

By SPC Sarah E. Stannard, 111th PCH, Det. 1, WYARNG, and MSG Chance C. Babin, 926th Fighter Wing
Courtesy of 111th Press Camp HQ, Det 1, PATRIOT 2006-
Public Affairs

WISCONSIN—The first F-16 Falcons thundered over Volk Field, WI, on July 15th, and by the following Monday, the skies in southwestern Wisconsin were filled with aircraft. The unmistakable thumping of a CH-47 Chinook or a Canadian CH-146 Griffon could be heard at almost any given moment in the firmament above Juneau and Monroe counties. Frequently, the roaring of a fighter or the low drone of a C-130 Hercules could be caught, but the sound would be gone just as quickly as it had arrived.

The buzzing of an unmanned aerial vehicle sounded faintly over the training area at Ft. McCoy, WI, prompting Soldiers there to search for some stealthy insect that seemed to be following them anywhere they went.

With the aircraft came troops—not only troops to maintain and fly the plethora of military-fixed and rotary-wing crafts, but ground transportation troops, artillery troops, medical troops, communications troops, Special Forces troops and photo troops. Cooks and kitchen personnel descended upon the installation's dining facilities to prepare meals daily for more than 1,600 Army and Air National Guard members, U.S. Air Force and Army active duty and reserve personnel,

and the assortment of Soldiers and Airmen from Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The director's staff and their personnel packed into a Volk Field orderly room and its surrounding classrooms. A menagerie of wires and cables lay tangled on the floor, waiting for a communications specialist to sort them out for the communications network used throughout PATRIOT, the National Guard Bureau's premier training exercise.

"Our goal is that every single Soldier or Airman who comes here gets to see how his or her job or duty fits into the big machine and is important. It gives them the big-picture view," explained LTC Tom Floyd, National

Director of PATRIOT.

Part of getting the big-picture view is creating a realistic training scenario that closely duplicates a deployed unit in a war environment.

For two weeks, America's dairyland became a fierce battleground, as U.S. and Coalition forces honed their skills, demonstrating their interoperability, and preparedness to fight the War on Terror.

At Ft. McCoy, Nebraska, Guard troops labored in the hot temperatures to establish their forward operating base, Base Cluster Eagle, where their tactical operating center tracked and analyzed intelligence, troop movements and convoy missions.

Soldiers engaged in training created specifically to teach them to recognize improvised explosive devices (IED) on the roadway and techniques for clearing them. Using pyrotechnics to simulate explosions, Soldiers had to respond to the situation on the ground, returning fire and calling in air support.

"We always train like we fight," said Jessica Baker, one of the civilians installing pyrotechnics on the convoy route. "[T]he fireworks at least give the feeling of an explosion. It will get your heart pumping, gets some adrenaline going."

Meanwhile, 30 miles down the road, Air and Army National Guard members at Volk Field supported troops fighting in the ground-war raging at Ft. McCoy. Troops trained in logistics, air power, medical services and communications helped to ensure the ground war's success.

National Guard members, Air Force reservists and active duty Air Force personnel, along with coalition troops from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Canada all came together to create a state-of-the-art field-medical facility in PATRIOT's training environment. The team built its expeditionary medical support system (EMEDS) from the ground up over the first 24 hours and completed EMEDS certification training in the week leading up to the live exercise.

As the war began, the EMEDS ran 24-hour operations, along with contingency and mobile aero-medical staging facility staffs. They had a continuous influx of simulated casualties arriving by ground, fixed-wing and rotary-wing ambulances.

"I've been impressed with how quickly the different forces have melded and become a cohesive, well-functioning organization," said COL Gerald Schneider, the EMEDS

commander and 144th Medical Group commander, Fresno, CA. "The scenarios have been derived directly from scenarios seen in theater."

In addition to standardized medical equipment, the group tested new technologies that may one day be used in the battlefield. Along with advances in digital radiology, digital ultrasound and oxygen generator technology, military doctors were given the opportunity to participate in video-teleconference trauma resuscitations. With the assistance of a physician in St. Louis, MO, military emergency medical staff members were guided in the process over live-feed video. Research for this system is being conducted by The Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills, or C-STARS, a joint effort by the Air Force and Air National Guard at St. Louis University Hospital.

"Our goal is to look at differences in patient outcome with surgeon-guided versus non-surgeon-guided trauma teams," said LTC Robert Bell, trauma/critical care instructor at C-STARS.

Communications' assets on the ground played a major role in both setting up and testing the equipment used in the video teleconference. They were also instrumental in creating an internal network for the entire exercise, from dial tone to internet connectivity. Thunder storms knocked out many of the services on base, but Comm. troops worked tirelessly to get the network, and other tools for communication back up and running within hours.

Depending on PATRIOT's array of communication equipment, Soldiers from the 20th Special Forces Group in Chicago, IL, as well as Airmen from the 116th Air Support

Operations Squadron, Ft. Lewis, WA, waited eagerly for their counterparts soaring above them in a pair of Canadian Griffons to parachute into their location on the Badger Drop Zone (DZ), Volk Field. Reporting wind speed and temperature over Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS), the troops on the ground waited for the descent of over 60 Army and Air Guard Paratroopers to inundate the sky.

"We're jumping in all mixtures of groups, with all different types of parachutes," Sr. Airmen Joseph Tullisbroth, a Paratrooper with the Washington State Air National Guard's 116th Air Support Operations Squadron. "We really are getting a good feel for each other, other types of equipment, other countries' aircraft and what we ourselves can do with all of that stuff."

For three days the simulated war raged on. Nebraska Army National Guard Soldiers fought intensely, reacting to attacks by the opposition and breached perimeters. Responding to their simulated casualties, Soldiers called in air support and medical evacuation staff.

Then suddenly, the exercise was over and southwestern Wisconsin was once again returned to sleepy little houses dotting the countryside and small dairy farms and cranberry bogs hiding behind thick forests.

From the bullets of the battlefield to the beds of the medical facilities, the exercise encompassed a gamut of training opportunities that troops could take back to their home units and to future deployments. The myriad of new ideas, new technology and new experiences will continue to enhance the capabilities of our nation's war-fighters—on the ground and in the sky. **GX**



HOOK IT UP Students attending the Sling Load Inspector Certification Course 860-F4 with the help of their Instructor, prepares a HUMVEE to be sling loaded by a CH-47 Chinook on Volk Field, July 21.



SISTERS-IN-ARMS PVT Aivin Pagan (left) and PFC Crystal Schenkel hug for the camera during mobilization processing.

ALL-FEMALE GUARD TEAM ASSEMBLED FOR MISSION

Courtesy of Florida Guardsman Online

FORT PIERCE, FL—In numbers alone, women are essential to the American military effort in Iraq—where tens of thousands have served—and many are playing a bigger role than in any previous U.S. conflict.

The latest example of women participating in the Global War on Terror comes with the mobilization in late August of eleven female members of the Florida National Guard who are accompanying Orlando's 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry to Iraq in November.

The small group is being sent along with the infantry security force to Baghdad as part of the increasing U.S. military presence intended to combat the recent insurgent activities there.

Historically, women's involvement in the military operations has surged in wartime. Today, that pattern is amplified by the all-volunteer U.S. military's growing share of women, which has steadily expanded in recent years to 15 percent of the active-duty force.

In contrast to their roles in past wars however, women are serving in a widening variety of Army ground units—from logistics to military police, military intelligence and civil affairs—where they routinely face the

same risks as Soldiers in all-male combat units such as infantry and armor.

Female Soldiers in Iraq are performing in risky jobs that require infantry skills from military police and civil affairs troops to female search teams that go on raids with Army and Marine infantry units.

Considering the Army's frequent use of the slogan "every Soldier an infantryman," a woman is as much infantry Soldier on the ground doing the duties as anyone else.

"She may not have been the person who knocked the door in, but she's with the next squad getting ready to come in," said 1LT Christina Manley, 32, from St. Petersburg, the team leader for the all-female detachment.

The mission of this small group of Soldiers will be to assist with combating insurgent operations by bridging the cultural differences in Iraq, a problem recognized by the Army leaders when increased insurgent activity began.

Military planners understand that cultural differences between western countries and Muslim people required different approaches. These Soldiers will be accompanying and

assisting security teams that gather information in communities by working through interpreters interviewing female witnesses and victims and searching female suspects, Guard leaders say.

It will be dangerous work, but the women volunteering were unanimous in wanting to do their part.

"I want to make a contribution," said SSG Julie Negron, 39, of Haines City and a 13-year veteran of the Florida National Guard. "I have served as a traditional Guardsman, as an active duty Guardsman, participated in state active duty operations, and many other activities the Guard has been involved in, but I hadn't been called up for Iraq or Afghanistan. I just want to do my part."

1LT Manley added that most of her team feels the same. "I wanted to be a part of this operation and as a Guardsman with some experience and in a leadership position, I wanted to make sure our Soldiers are taken care of," said the seven-year member of the Florida National Guard's 53rd Support Battalion.

"We can all do this job, and we want to share the responsibilities of it," she said.

For PFC Crystal Schenkel, a 23-year-old Soldier from Lehigh Acres, the deployment is a natural event in her career with the National Guard. The Edison Community College cross-country athlete joined the Guard to help pay for her education but always knew she'd be deployed, she says.

"I knew that I would be going, even before I enlisted, I knew," said the recent member of the 3rd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment in Fort Myers. "Going overseas while

we are at war was always in the back of my mind, and I felt it was important to volunteer."

While her education and sports program will be put on hold for a year, PFC Schenkel knows that she is

making history. She and her team members were given journals to record their personal stories while they are away. "I want to be able to tell my story to my family when I return. Writing it down while it is happening will help me not to forget all the little things that happen," she said.

The small team met up with the 2nd Battalion security force at Camp Shelby, MS, late August for five weeks of theater-unique training before deploying to Iraq in October. The unit is scheduled to serve a 12-month tour overseas. **GX**

We can all do this job, and we want to share the responsibilities of it.

—1LT Christina Manley, FLARNG

SOLDIER'S JOURNEY TO IRAQ BEGINS IN VIETNAM

By SPC Richard Phelps
Unit Public Affairs Rep. 2-137 INF, KSARNG

CAMP SLAYER, IRAQ—SPC Tam Quoc Tram, a human resources specialist with 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, 17th Field Artillery Brigade, 4th Infantry Division may have arrived in Iraq last year, but the journey began 18 years ago in Vietnam.

Born in Can Tho, a city approximately 100 miles Southwest of Saigon, Tram's father, CPT Minh Quoc Tram, was a company commander for South Vietnam's National Police Field Force.

"When the U.S. left (Vietnam), the North took over the South," SPC Tram explained. "They put my dad in jail for an eight-year confinement." Upon release from prison, SPC Tram's father discovered his sister found a way to "make it to the states," and decided it was time for his family to follow suit.

A year later, CPT Tram attempted to escape, but was caught and imprisoned for two years. "That did not stop him from wanting to try again," SPC Tram said of his father. On his second attempt in 1987, SPC Tram's father and oldest brother were successful, arriving to America in 1988.

After coming to America, SPC Tram's father realized that the only prerequisite for admission into the United States was that the head of household have been a member of the South Vietnamese government with a minimum of three years in communist labor camp.

"My dad and brother went ahead of me and my mom to find work and get our house set up," SPC Tram said. The Tram family received assistance from the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Wichita. "The duplex we lived in and all of the bills were taken care of by the church until my dad started making money," SPC Tram explained.

SPC Tram and his mother, Ann, departed Vietnam in April 1988 in what would become an extensive journey to reach American soil.

Escaping under the cover of darkness, SPC Tram (then only four years old) and his mother found their way to a small escape boat. "We just left one night with the clothes on our back and a few smaller items," SPC Tram explained. "We were on a boat crammed with 164 people." One memory that remains

vivid in his mind was the conditions of the vessel. "It was hell. The smell was terrible from people using the restroom where they stood."

Without food and water, the five-day trip was naturally irritating. "My mom told me I would cry at night. She said it scared her because she thought it would get us caught."

The first stop in the journey was a Vietnamese refugee camp in Malaysia. "The camp there had about 7,000 people. They had food and water—not the best food, but it was food."

During the six-month stay in Malaysia, while awaiting approval to enter the United States, SPC Tram recalled the atmosphere. "We had food and beds. People were dying from disease and lack of medical care."

The next stop was the Philippines, where the quality of life was not much different. "There was no running water or plumbing for toilets," said SPC Tram.

SPC Tram said his mother hoped for a quick departure from the Philippines. "She knew we couldn't stay there for too long. We could have easily been tracked by the communists in Vietnam. If you got caught, you went to jail."

Learning to cope with very little in the way of material objects became a quick adjustment. "I remember collecting marbles, rubber bands and bottle caps and being upset because I could not take them with me," SPC Tram said, explaining different games that were played with those items.

After a layover in California, the Tram family reunited in Wichita, where SPC Tram's father had found work at Raytheon Aircraft. "He is still there today," SPC Tram said.

Graduating from Wichita West High School in 2002, SPC Tram began taking classes at Butler County Community College and then Wichita State before making the decision to join the Army National Guard.

"Life became easier when me and my family got here. I felt an obligation to give back and show my appreciation to the country that helped me have a life I may not have had elsewhere," SPC Tram continued. "My dad didn't want me to join at first, because he was afraid I would have a tough life like he did, but supported the decision when I explained my reasons."



SPC Tam Quoc Tram is a human resources specialist for the 2nd Battalion, 137th Inf.

Finishing his degree program in finance is a top priority for SPC Tram. "When we leave, I want to go back to school and buy a house with the money I have been saving."

Despite the rough road to reach America, SPC Tram said he would like to make a return visit to Vietnam one day. **GX**

'CHECK IT'

Courtesy of Clif Jenkins, ARNG Internal Management Control Program Manager

In July, the Department of Defense (DoD) launched "Check It," a new campaign to heighten awareness of the importance of internal management controls. The message of the campaign is short and to the point: Everyone has a job to do, every job is important, and we count on everyone to do the job right.

Internal management controls ensure what should happen does happen—every day. The new DoD campaign encourages all ARNG personnel to validate the controls for all processes and procedures supporting day-to-day operations throughout the ARNG. The focus of the campaign is: "Check It," because what gets checked gets done. If each and everyone of us checks those controls for the processes and procedures we are responsible, we are taking care of our most valuable resource, our Soldiers.

Each month, through June 2007, the "Check It" campaign will highlight a different functional area, such as logistics, acquisitions, personnel, and information technology, to demonstrate the importance of internal management controls to all DoD operations. November's focus is personnel, followed by logistics in January 2007.

All personnel are encouraged to recognize and promote the importance of internal management controls. For more information, please visit:

[gkportal.ngb.army.mil/C1/C19 Internal%20 Control/default.aspx](http://gkportal.ngb.army.mil/C1/C19%20Internal%20Control/default.aspx)

REFLECTION An Alpha Company, Task Force Saber Soldier takes a moment to himself at the end of his tour in Iraq.



ALPHA CO., TF SABER TAKING THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY

By 2LT Aaron Flint, Platoon Leader, Alpha Company
Courtesy of VTARNG

IRAQ—For nearly a year, National Guard Soldiers with Alpha Company, Task Force Saber, controlled a sector in the place *Time* magazine cited as the worst place in Iraq—Ramadi.

The Marines operated in the heart of Ramadi on one side of the river, while Alpha Co. operated in the urban area on the other side of the river. The urban portion of Alpha's battlespace alone contained upward of 40,000 people.

Faced with the daily threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), small arms fire, sniper, and rocket attacks, Alpha's commander, MAJ Jason Pelletier put together an unorthodox team of tankers, infantrymen, field artillerymen, and Long Range Surveillance snipers from different units across Vermont, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania to stay on the offense in the counterinsurgency fight.

During their time in Ramadi, Alpha, whose parent unit is 3-172nd Infantry Battalion (Mountain) headquartered in VT, successfully held the line in a battalion-sized battlespace for close to a year while serving under TF Saber and the 2nd BCT of the 28th Infantry Division. More than holding

the line, Alpha took the fight to the enemy, increasing the foothold of Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

"We took the Iraqi Army from conducting squad-level patrols to owning their own urban Battalion battlespace in under a year," said MAJ Pelletier of the increased presence of Iraqi Army (IA) forces in Ramadi. "We've done it by creating an unconventional combat set that is combined arms in nature."

To hinder the IED threat and provide security for main routes into and out of the city, Alpha manned observation posts (OPs) with tanks, Humvees, and Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles from the main combined arms platoons referred to as "vigilant hunters." From these OPs, the men were able to successfully engage IED-emplacement teams on the main routes and overwatch the sector. Alpha was able to combine the optics and the firepower of the tanks and Bradleys with the ground assets in the Humvee crews.

While manning OPs, the platoon charged with securing the sector at any given time, then used their Humvee crews to patrol the inner city. These Humvee crews became the eyes, ears, and representatives of the unit on the ground. In addition to combat patrol missions, these crews roved the city and gathered atmospherics on the neighborhoods, checking in with locals on services and any

unusual activity in the area. If a terrorist target came down to secure, often two truck crews would be able to conduct the mission on their own.

"It was pretty wild," said SGT Brandon Allmond, a 21-year old tanker, who ended up serving as a truck commander with Alpha Co. "When you're roving, it's just your two trucks and the guys in those trucks. You are your own security, you are your own overwatch, and you are your own assault team."

While it was mainly the truck crews roving the city, they knew they had the Bradley and tank crews watching their backs.

Although a smaller unit, Alpha was able to organize into a lethal team. Crucial to Alpha's success were the enablers who contributed their resources to the mission. Several teams composed the enablers, including the TF Saber Intelligence shop, as well as Tactical Human Intelligence Teams, Naval Special Warfare through their work with the IA Soldiers, Marine Corps K9 teams, Civil Affairs Groups, counter-IED engineer units, and others.

Part of that enabler team included Marine Corps MAJ David Berke. MAJ Berke and his Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) team started roving with the Alpha Co. Humvees when MAJ Berke first came to Ramadi.

"I never thought in my career I'd be on the ground in a firefight with my M-4," said MAJ Berke, an F-18 fighter pilot who spent the last three years as a Top Gun flight instructor.

One more piece of the full-spectrum combined-arms fight, MAJ Berke's ANGLICO teams coordinated air support for the Soldiers when they came under enemy contact or were conducting raids, creating a link between the Army ground units and the Marine aviation units in sector. MAJ Berke is used to seeing the fight from 20,000 feet in the air, traveling at 500 miles per hour. Now, MAJ Berke is on the ground in the middle of firefights and going on high-speed car chases.

"The more familiar I am with the battlespace—the less time it's going to take me to get the air support you need," said MAJ Berke.

More than coordinating air support, he and his team could be counted on as skilled riflemen on the ground. In another sector, MAJ Berke was pinned down in enemy crossfire. Fortunately, he was already in radio contact with the F-18 pilot overhead . . .

"We're in major contact down here," yelled MAJ Berke.

The pilot, an old friend of his from Top Gun school, immediately fired back with a show of force from the air.

For the Soldier on the ground, the battle-

field is complex, with few standard operating procedures on how to respond to a myriad of situations.

“You really got to stay vigilant—looking everywhere,” said SGT Brett Clairmont.

“Going out there day after day knowing that in a split second it can go from people smiling and waving to the streets clearing—and being in the middle of a full-blown firefight,” adds SGT Allmond as to what the hardest part of the job at hand.

“That’s our preventive measure (roving), that’s why we go back out there,” said SGT Clairmont. “That’s how we prevent the enemy from putting more IEDs in. We know that at some point, we’re going to have to go back in. So, we need to keep a constant presence in the area.”

“If you can dream it, you can do it,” said SSG Ed Robinson. SSG Robinson led one of the sniper teams from the 104th LRS Detachment who were always watching the backs of the vigilant hunter platoons and leading missions of their own. SSG Robinson said Ramadi was more than just a testing ground for the combined arms team.

“It was simply what is necessary to be effective in this environment,” he said. “Conventional sniper and LRS tactics are not the norm here. We have to combine sniper, ambush, and recon roles into one operation. Because of the nature of the fight, because of the mystery of who the enemy is, you can put different tactics to use and see what works.”

By manning OPs and staying on the offense, Alpha was able to minimize the IED threat.

“We’ve been able to sustain single-digit IEDs during our final five months. And, we found and disabled 80 to 90 percent of

those,” said MAJ Pelletier.

More than stopping and removing emplaced IEDs, Alpha Co. had an aggressive focus on locating and detaining the terrorist and insurgent networks responsible for carrying out the attacks, and then forwarding the criminals to the Iraqi court system for prosecution.

All of Alpha’s success did not come without significant heartache. The company suffered most of their losses early on. SGT Joshua Johnson, who died in January during a support mission for the Iraqi Soldiers, fought in one of the toughest battles in Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division before deploying to Ramadi. 2LT Mark Procopio, assigned to another company, died while rushing to the aid of a downed helicopter. SPC

In the end, when you strip it down, this is a person-to-person commitment won by individual Soldiers at the lowest tactical level. —MAJ Jason Pelletier, Alpha Commander

Will Fernandez, SGT Mike Egan, and 1LT Mark Dooley were killed last September while on their way to assist their fellow Soldiers. 1LT Dooley cruised straight through the Infantry Officer Basic Course and Ranger School before deploying with Alpha Company.

On Memorial Day, President Bush quoted 1LT Dooley’s letter home during an address at Arlington National Cemetery. In the letter, 1LT Dooley said; “Remember that my leaving

was in the service of something that we loved, and be proud. The best way to pay respect is to value why a sacrifice was made.”

That was the moral compass that guided Alpha Company.

“No matter how hard it is, you can’t come out here, lose someone close to you and then say, ‘kill ‘em all,’ ” said MAJ Pelletier. “You have to be able to bounce back from that and still have the ability to hand out teddy bears to kids—to demonstrate compassion even after tremendous loss. The bottom line is that you honor their sacrifice by continuing to do what is right.”

MAJ Pelletier said the quote, “War will always be a human endeavor” sums up the counterinsurgency fight.

“We focus so much on all the gear, the F-18’s, the up-armor,” he said. “In the end, when you strip it down, this is a person-to-person commitment won by individual Soldiers at the lowest tactical level—the team leaders, squad leaders, and platoon leaders.”

As the Soldiers of Alpha Company made their way back home this past June, they left Ramadi behind—knowing of the hardship they endured, the fine Soldiers they lost, and the success they accrued. They also left knowing that a much larger force would be replacing them in their area of operation, but that the struggle against terror will continue for those still in the fight.

“You can’t duplicate this; training cannot duplicate this,” said SGT Allmond of his tour in Ramadi. “Yeah, I hate it here. But if I had the choice, I’d do it all over again.” **GX**

KEEPING THE PEACE Task Force Saber Soldiers on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq.





Courtesy of Harley-Davidson Communications

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MILWAUKEE, WI—American Military personnel and Veterans know well the sacrifice required to serve their country and protect freedom around the world. It is a level of dedication and commitment that cannot be taken for granted and is greatly respected by Harley-Davidson.

Harley-Davidson will provide those who have served their country the chance to customize their motorcycle with details honoring their military service with the 2007 Patriot Special Edition program. These specially-decorated models will be sold only to active U.S. Military Service men and women, Veterans and immediate family members of both those categories.

The Patriot Special Edition program will

TN GUARD RIDES TO SUPPORT VETS



VIP ESCORT TNARNG Soldiers and Veterans gather at LP Field in Nashville, TN, on Sept. 26 before riding to KY to escort the Vietnam Wall Experience back to Nashville.

By Keith Kawasaki

NASHVILLE, TN—Approximately 75 Tennessee National Guard Soldiers and Veterans joined over 500 riders, including the Patriot Guard Riders, on September 26 to raise awareness for the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall Experience, held that week in the city.

Motorcycle riders gathered at the Tennessee Titans' LP Field at 8 a.m. and rode to Frankfort, KY, then escorted the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall Experience truck to Nashville's Woodlawn Cemetery, where the Wall Experience was assembled.

The Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall Experience is a traveling version of the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC.

Dignity Memorial funeral providers created this replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a service to those who might never have the opportunity to travel to the nation's capital. **GX**



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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SUPPORT NDARNG 188TH ADA



Courtesy of Shelle Michaels
Soldiers' Angels Public Relations, Regional Manager
and University of North Dakota Professor

NORTH DAKOTA—During the summer of 2006, the Women Studies class instructed by Shelle Michaels at the University of North Dakota (UND) applied the theory they were learning into activism by adopting the female Soldiers of the NDARNG 188th ADA. They tied this support with the national organization Soldiers' Angels, in which Michaels is the head of Public Relations and the North Dakota/Minnesota/South Dakota Regional Manager.

The project, "Supporting our Soldiers with Tender Loving Care from the University of North Dakota," or "SOS with TLC from UND," was started by allowing the students to show their support to the deployed Soldiers in many different manners.

Each week, the students and Michaels wrote letters to the Soldiers, who they aptly named "Ladies of Liberty." The weekly letters were part of a research project for the students as Michaels assigned a new topic for part of the letter and the students had to educate the "Ladies" on the topic while making it a personal note to lift their spirits.

Topics included: a woman the students associated with freedom, female health issues, equality, victimization and objectification.

"It is easy for the students to identify with these Soldiers, as many of them are UND alumni or students on academic leave while serving their country," Michaels mentioned. "It is very empowering for the students to see what women of today are capable of accomplishing as those rights have not always been in existence in our society."

Student Nathan Vasquez was intrigued with the concepts of this class, giving him another outlook in to the lives of women and the opportunity to care for many that are miles away from home. "6,140 miles," Michaels reminded him.

Vasquez, who used to work in the National

Guard Armory, said he has met many of the Soldiers who are deployed. SPC Courtney Olson (UND student on academic leave) is a good friend of his, so this project became personal for him.

"It's a job that many people wouldn't do, and I respect them for it," Vasquez said.

The class also gathered donations from local businesses to ship weekly care kits that they named "Kreature Komfort Kare Kits." The kits included "feel-good" items such as manicure and pedicure kits, stationery, spa-kits, vitamins (calcium in particular), tea, cookies, candy and more, Michaels said.

Getting the local community involved has been easy. The initial response from them has been good, Michaels said. "People want to help they just don't always have the avenue to be involved."

It is very empowering for the students to see what women of today are capable of accomplishing as those rights have not always been in existence in our society.

—Shelle Michaels, UND Professor

Although the summer class has ended, the support mission for the "Ladies of Liberty" has not. Michaels has her fall semester students writing letters every other week, while she has not missed a week of communication with them in her own letter-writing campaign. The "letter" that she started with four pages this summer, has grown to 60 pages of information from home, as well as additional local and global female-based issues.

SPC Courtney Olson said that she will sit in the sand and read what she calls the "Shelle Michaels Chronicles" in its entirety and then she passes it along to someone else to read, so it makes its way around the Forward

CLASS ACT (above) Shelle Michaels (front row, right), founder of the "SOS with TLC from UND" support program, with some of the University of North Dakota students involved in the program.

GRATEFUL RECIPIENTS (right) SGT Margaret Mork and SPC Courtney Olson of the NDARNG A/188th ADA (RAID), and a UND student, look forward to receiving support letters from Shelle Michaels and her students.



COURTESY OF UND WOMEN STUDIES

Operating Base (FOB) in Afghanistan.

Inspired by SPC Olson's reaction, Michaels named her letter the "Ladies of Liberty Freedom Focus" just to add some more personality to the letter.

Several of the Soldiers have made their way back to the class at UND while on "R & R" to tell the students about their experiences in Afghanistan. Soldiers have included MAJ Scott Fontaine, the commander for the 188th ADA RAID, SGT Laura Bearfield, SPC Courtney Olson both from RAID and SPC Megan Docktor of SECFOR.

One of the biggest projects stemming from this summer class started with student Thomas Harlow asking the Grand Forks City Band if they would donate toward the cause. Don Craig the director asked "if a concert would be appropriate?" Michaels and Harlow jumped at this opportunity to further advance the support of the community for the Soldiers.

What started out as a concert in recognition of "the Ladies of Liberty" soon spun into the project called "Day of the Deployed." A proclamation to Governor John Hoeven was written to express that October 26, 2006 recognize all North Dakota service members serving in and from ND deployed in the year 2006.

Through the chain of events that has transpired through this class at UND, it is very obvious what differences can be made in support of our Soldiers with a little bit of creativity, imagination and determination. It is quite true that everyone can make a difference. Michaels asks, "What will you do today to make a Soldier's deployment a little better? I challenge you to step up and start a 'Day of the Deployed' in your state for 2007."

Soldiers' Angels liked the idea of "Day of the Deployed" so much, that Michaels will be able to incorporate this in to a national event in 2007. **GX**

HAWAII GUARD HOLDS NATION'S FIRST IND EXERCISE



By 1LT Regina Berry
Courtesy of HIARNG

JUST IN CASE Teams treat "patients" for possible radiation exposure in the IND exercise.

HAWAII—In August, Hawaii's Bellows Air Force Station and Marine Corps Training Area-Bellows was the scene of the nation's first large-scale improvised nuclear device (IND) exercise. The Hawaii National Guard's Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear or high-yield explosive Enhanced Response Force Package and 93rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team played critical roles in the exercise.

The Hawaii National Guard and State Civil Defense teamed up with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and many other government agencies and non-government organizations. The exercise was one of many conducted to ensure emergency management and first responder personnel are trained for all hazards.

"We wanted to make sure that our first responders from both the military and civilian sides of the house were going to be challenged and able to progress over the years," said MG Robert G.F. Lee, Hawaii Adjutant General. "That means getting a more complex comprehensive exercise every year."

The CERF-P team, which also included members of the Illinois Guard, was able to practice much more than simply decontaminating patients.

"We also had a search and extraction group that was led by CPT Ian Beltran from the 154th Civil Engineering Squadron doing collapsed structure search and recovery, decontamination, as well as the 154 MDG handling triage," said CPT Aaron Blanchard, Hawaii National Guard CERF-P coordinator, and a member of the HIARNG.

"We also had a command control, which is also made up primarily of 154th Medical Group members," he added.

Hundreds of HI Guard members participated as part of the 93 WMD/CST, CERF-P and Joint Force Headquarters.

"The National Guard certainly had a large part," said MG Lee. "But, we could not be doing this without support from our military partners in the active duty led by United States Pacific Command because they will be determining what other AD forces will come to the aid of Hawaii."

"We were able to connect and test all of our communications with the various state and local levels and also provide a lot of direct feed from the exercise site to the operations centers," said MG Lee.

The IND exercise was on the list as number one of the Department of Homeland Security's top-15 exercises that the Nation has to be prepared for, according to MG Lee. **GX**

For more information, visit
www.dayofthedeveloped.com
www.soldiersangels.org

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129TH MPAD: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES

By SSG Mark Watson
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Courtesy of SDARNG PAO

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, QATAR—"It's weird, the wind never blows this hard here," one of the Soldiers who we were replacing told us while leaning into a stiff headwind, his head lowered to avoid a thorough sandblasting. For three days, whenever we stepped outside we were peppered by tiny particles of sand and baked by the triple-digit heat.

Thus began our tour in Qatar. Our unit, the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment is split between South and North Dakota and was activated in mid-April in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After two and a half months at our mobilization station, Fort McCoy, WI, we were trained and ready to deploy to the Middle East.

Looking back at the first month, all I can wonder is, "where did it go?" The forward detachment of the 129th MPAD arrived in Doha, Qatar, in early July after 20-some hours in the air, and watching the sun rise twice in one day.

I've been asked how hot it really gets by family and friends. Usually when I arrive at work, in mid-morning, the thermometer we have near the office is pegged out at 120 degrees. It will stay that way for most of the day, and then shortly before 5 p.m. it will begin to dip. Still, when I go home late in the night, it still registers in the 90s. It's funny though, 90 feels so good. I don't think I'll ever get used to the heat. This marked my third trip "across the pond" to report on Soldiers deployed for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, but this would prove to be my first

long deployment as the other two were less than a month each overseas. Previously, I had reported on South Dakota National Guard units deployed. This time my mission is vastly different. I no longer am strictly reporting on units. In fact, that mission takes a backburner to our media engagement mission.

Our team gives civilian media organizations the chance to virtually embed with units to help tell stories about service members that would go otherwise untold.

—SSG Mark Watson, 129th MPAD



Our media engagement team gives civilian media organizations the chance to virtually embed with units to help tell stories about service members that would go otherwise untold. We seek out a service member who is willing to talk with the media. We make a call to reporters back in the U.S. The interview is conducted completely over the phone and gives smaller

media outlets a chance that they would otherwise never get. Many of the interviews are conducted with hometown newspapers, others via the radio. We also have the capability to travel into an area with a satellite uplink. We are able to put service members on live TV from just about anywhere in the world.

I think the best interview I've been part of was a video shout-out to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. The Devil Rays asked if anyone in Qatar had family in the Tampa area. One Soldier

THE DAKOTA BOYS (Bottom row from left) SGT Eric Jensen, Mandan, ND; SPC Brett Miller, Bismarck, ND; ZLT Dan Murphy, Bismarck, ND; SPC Eric Jungles, Wayzata, MN. (Top row from left) SGT Nicholas Pavlik, Columbus, OH; SFC David Dodds, Grand Forks, ND, and SSG Mark Watson, Spearfish, SD, show their state pride at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar.

did. We shot a brief video of him saying "Hi" to his family and wishing the Devil Rays luck at their game. Then, the baseball team invited his family to the game on the pretense that it was just a military appreciation event. In the fourth inning, as his family was in the stands, his video played. His wife didn't see it for a bit, but her young son saw "Daddy" on the jumbo screen. The whole family was in awe. At the end of the game when the family left, everyone in the stands was giving them high-fives and made his wife feel like a celebrity, he told me.

It is moments like these that make me feel like everything we do over here makes a difference. Not only to the people in the Middle East, but also our families and friends back home. **GX**

SCANNING THE HORIZON Task Force Iron Gray Soldiers on patrol in Afghanistan.



OPERATION MOUNTAIN FURY

AMERICAN AND AFGHAN FORCES TEAM UP IN GHAZNI

By U.S. Army SFC Michael Pintagro
 Courtesy of Department of Defense

FOB GHAZNI, AFGHANISTAN—Coalition forces serving in the Andar District of Ghazni Province dealt Taliban and foreign fighters a string of sharp defeats this past fall as the main effort of Operation Mountain Fury continued.

Afghan National Army Soldiers from the 203rd ANA Corps, along with Connecticut National Guard Soldiers from Task Force Iron Gray, scattered militants operating in Andar, inflicting heavy casualties along the way as coalition forces progressed through Ghazni Province.

Infantrymen and field artillerymen from Task Force Spartan fought alongside the Iron Grays and ANA “Thunder Corps” Soldiers in the joint, combined operation.

“We’ve defeated several enemy cells,” said U.S. Army MAJ Todd Reichert, the Task Force Spartan intelligence officer. “The enemy has to react to American and Afghan forces of an extent he hasn’t seen before.”

“I think we have the initiative,” added Army LTC Todd Brown, a foreign area officer

attached to the Spartan staff. “The enemy is being forced to react to our actions on the battlefield.”

As allied Soldiers pressed their advantage in Andar, several militant cells gave way. Large swaths of southern and central Ghazni Province, described as ungovernable as recently as late August, embraced the allies and the reemerging provincial government.

Task Force Iron Gray’s CSM David Warner attributed the Taliban’s relative strength in Ghazni Province to its intimidation of poor, isolated and often uneducated farmers, ranchers and shepherds.

“When the Taliban comes in with AK-47s and demands rice and water, who are they to say no?” CSM Warner asked rhetorically.

“If the government were stronger in these remote areas, the Taliban

wouldn’t come and wouldn’t find themselves welcome if they did. That’s why we’re working to strengthen the local government.”

The sergeant major expressed confidence in the skill, tenacity and iron resolve of his Connecticut Guard Soldiers.

“When Task Force Iron Gray confronts the enemy, we carry the battle,” he said flatly.

“The hard part is bringing (enemy fighters) to battle. They usually flee to another area.”

U.S. Army COL John Nicholson, the Task Force Spartan commander, praised the courage and determination of his Soldiers and Afghan National Army colleagues. He also cast doubt on the strength and popularity of Taliban militants even in one of their putative heartlands.

“The Taliban fighters and their foreign supporters seem to fare a lot better against defenseless farmers and shepherds than they do against Afghan and American Soldiers,” COL Nicholson said. “It would seem the militants down here ran into some guys they couldn’t bully.”

COL Nicholson said he “fully expects” the people of Ghazni Province to embrace the government of Afghanistan absent the threats of violence and expropriation.

“When given a chance to decide for themselves, the people of Andar and the whole province choose the government every time,” he said. “The popularity of the Taliban seems based mainly on night letters, explosives and AK-47s. I think the Afghan people see through the blatant fraud of ‘jihadists’ who murder good Muslims and finance their terror campaigns through drug money and extortion.” **GX**

If the government were stronger, the Taliban wouldn’t come. That’s why we’re working to strengthen the local government.

— CSM David Warner

LTG BLUM DELIVERS 'STATE OF THE GUARD' ADDRESS

By SGT Jim Greenhill
Courtesy of National Guard Bureau

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—The National Guard's domestic equipment levels must be significantly improved, the chief of the National Guard Bureau said Sept. 16.

"We are superbly equipped overseas," LTG H Steven Blum told the 128th National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference. "The Soldiers want for nothing as far as equipment in the combat zone, and that's the way it should be."

But the domestic picture is less rosy. "We are now in a dangerously low resourcing level for missions back here at home, and that must be seriously addressed," LTG Blum said.

Talking to about 2,500 National Guard officers and others attending the conference, the general used the analogy of a small town fire department that needs people, training and equipment to fight fires. Americans would not tolerate inadequately equipped fire departments, he said.

"Nobody would accept that from their fire department in any hometown in America, and we should not allow that to be accepted in any [National Guard] armory or readiness center," he said. "The American people are not going to be happy with a response from the National Guard that has not been fully equipped for the mission it has been assigned."

The comments were the one note of warning during LTG Blum's hour-long "State of the Guard" address that amounted to a celebration of five years of extraordinary change.

"Sept. 11 [2001] marked the beginning of a no-notice transformation of the National Guard," he said. "For the Minutemen and Minutewomen of the National Guard, it was a call to arms, and we have been answering that call to support and defend America and its freedoms and our very way of life every day since."

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the National Guard has added 45 weapons of mass destruction-civil support teams; 17 chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive enhanced response force packages; 54 computer emergency response

teams; six critical infrastructure protection-mission assurance assessment detachments; 54 reaction forces; 54 24-hour a day joint operations centers; and numerous other capabilities, LTG Blum said.

"Show me any organization anywhere in the world that has made that much progress that fast on such important issues in five short years," he said.

He cited many achievements including:

- The immediate response to the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent airport mission that restored civilian confidence in flying.
- The historic response to Hurricane Katrina. "The Guard's response . . . may well go down as the Guard's finest hour," LTG Blum said. "I have never had a prouder moment in my almost 40 years in uniform."
- The contribution to the war effort in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- The contribution on the U.S. border with Mexico, where up to 6,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are taking part in Operation Jump Start, the National Guard's assistance to the Border Patrol.
- The State Partnership Program, Counterdrug operations, family programs, Youth ChalleNGe and numerous other initiatives that have continued in spite of the increased domestic and overseas operations tempos.

"You name the theater, the Guard is there," LTG Blum said. "You name the operation, the Guard is there, and that's the way it should be, because when you call out the Guard you call out America, and this nation should never go to war without the National Guard because it will go to war without the nation's will behind it."

Defying Army predictions that the Guard's numbers would shrink to 324,000 Citizen-Soldiers in 2006, the National Guard instead had its best year of recruiting in 35 years, LTG Blum said. Recruiting and retention must remain an absolute priority, he added.

"The National Guard is a national treasure," he said. "The National Guard is a national bargain when it comes to national defense. The National Guard is providing real, critically needed skills and real capabilities—not just some PowerPoint slide



FORMAL ADDRESS LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told the National Guard Association of the United States that the Guard's domestic resources need to be significantly improved.

promises that never materialize that you've all seen in other places. For the National Guard, homeland defense is deeds, not words. The National Guard's proven performance has been simply incredible.

"We don't check pedigrees and worry about who's in charge. We want to know what needs to be done, and we go and do it, and that's your National Guard," LTG Blum said.

The general expressed particular pride in the fact that the National Guard has maintained its commitment to the Youth ChalleNGe program that helps at-risk high school dropouts regain their footing. The program has graduated some 60,000 youths, he said.

"They represent 60,000 lives saved from either a cemetery or a jail cell," he said. He called Youth ChalleNGe one of the most worthwhile things the Guard does.

"I am, if you can't tell, immensely proud to be the chief of this organization," he concluded.

The conference host, NGAUS, includes nearly 45,000 current and former officers. NGAUS was created in 1878 to provide unified Guard representation in Washington with the goal of obtaining better equipment and training by petitioning Congress for more resources, the same mission it has today. **GX**

TX MPs ASSIST IN CENTRAL AMERICA

By Officer Candidate Adam Musil, TXARNG
 Courtesy of TXARNG PAO

SOTO CANO, HONDURAS—Resting snugly between the mountains of central Honduras is Soto Cano air base, home of the Honduran air force and Joint Task force Bravo—the United States power projection platform for military operations in Central and South America.

JTF-Bravo is made up of more than 550 military personnel and 650 Honduran civilians. In a Third World country with a history of violence, security is a must. The task of providing this security falls to a joint security force made up predominately of Air Force personnel. The Texas Army National Guard's 136th Military Police Battalion has assembled a platoon to give its active duty counterparts some relief.

"It is a great opportunity for us to see how the Air Force works," said SGT Miguel Reyes, a member of the mission, as he scanned the area outside the front gate for suspi-

cious activity. "Military police and the Air Force have different rules and regulations. Working with the Air Force makes us better prepared for combined missions inside the state of Texas."

The 136th MP Battalion is maintaining security at access control points, providing building security, and securing the perimeter of the flight line. The 136th Soldiers have yet to have direct contact with an intruder. However, civilians have been known for trying to sneak in, and at Threat Condition Bravo, the Guard Soldiers work hard at maintaining their edge and staying focused.

"Some of us are not MOS [Military Occupation Specialty] qualified, and there is nothing better than on-the-job-training," said SGT Nancy Guzman.

This is the first rotation of TXARNG to perform this mission, but most likely not the last. Under the new force structure there is a call for more MP units within the TX Guard.

1LT Raul Perez is excited about the growth of the MPs and their current mission.



ON GUARD SGT Miguel Reyes, 136th MP BN, at the front entrance of the Soto Cano Air Base.

"[M]issions like these are a great chance for us to get more acquainted and mentor each other," 1LT Perez said. "This is a very ambitious battalion, and these are very exciting times for Soldiers in the Texas National Guard."

The 136th MP platoon were deployed Soto Cano for approximately two weeks. **GX**

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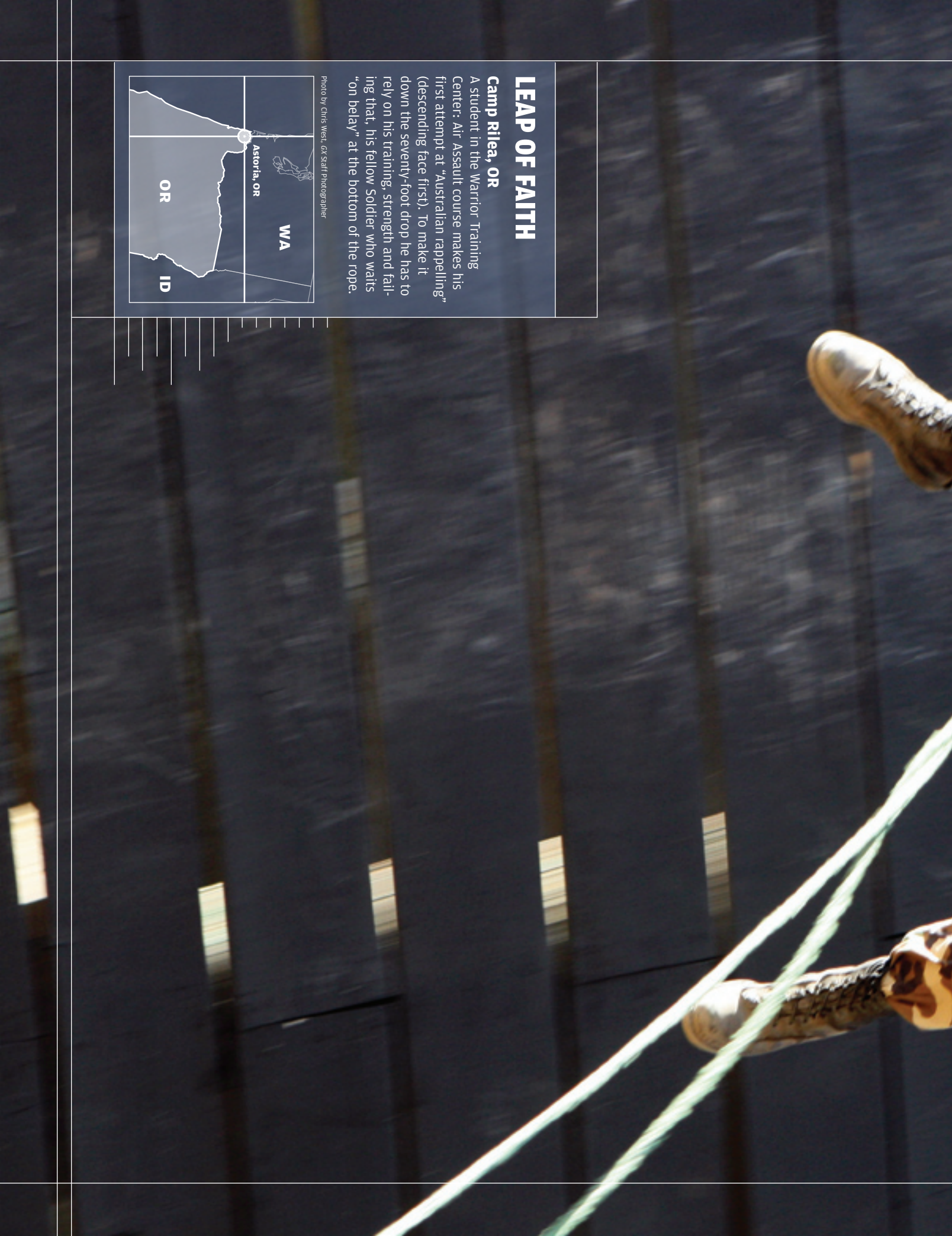
Sinyia, Iraq

U.S. Army SGT Chris Walsh and SPC Ishmael Campbell take up security positions on the roof of a police station in Sinyia, Iraq, Sept. 16, 2006. The Soldiers are from 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment, WYARNG.

DoD photo by SPC Billy Brothers, U.S. Army. (Released)



Distance from Wyoming to Iraq: 6,950 miles

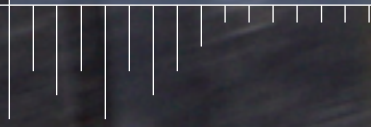


LEAP OF FAITH

Camp Rilea, OR

A student in the Warrior Training Center: Air Assault course makes his first attempt at "Austrian rappelling" (descending face first). To make it down the seventy-foot drop he has to rely on his training, strength and failing that, his fellow Soldier who waits "on belay" at the bottom of the rope.

Photo by Chris West, GX Staff Photographer







IN REMEMBRANCE

Lebanon, TN

TNARNG Soldier, SFC James P. Williams, makes a nine-mile “road march” August 20, in honor of Soldiers of the Tennessee Guard who have died in combat zones since Sept. 11, 2001. He is a member of Lebanon’s 278th Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Photo by SGT Heather Allen, Tennessee National Guard Public Affairs





BADGE OF HONOR

LSA Anaconda, Iraq

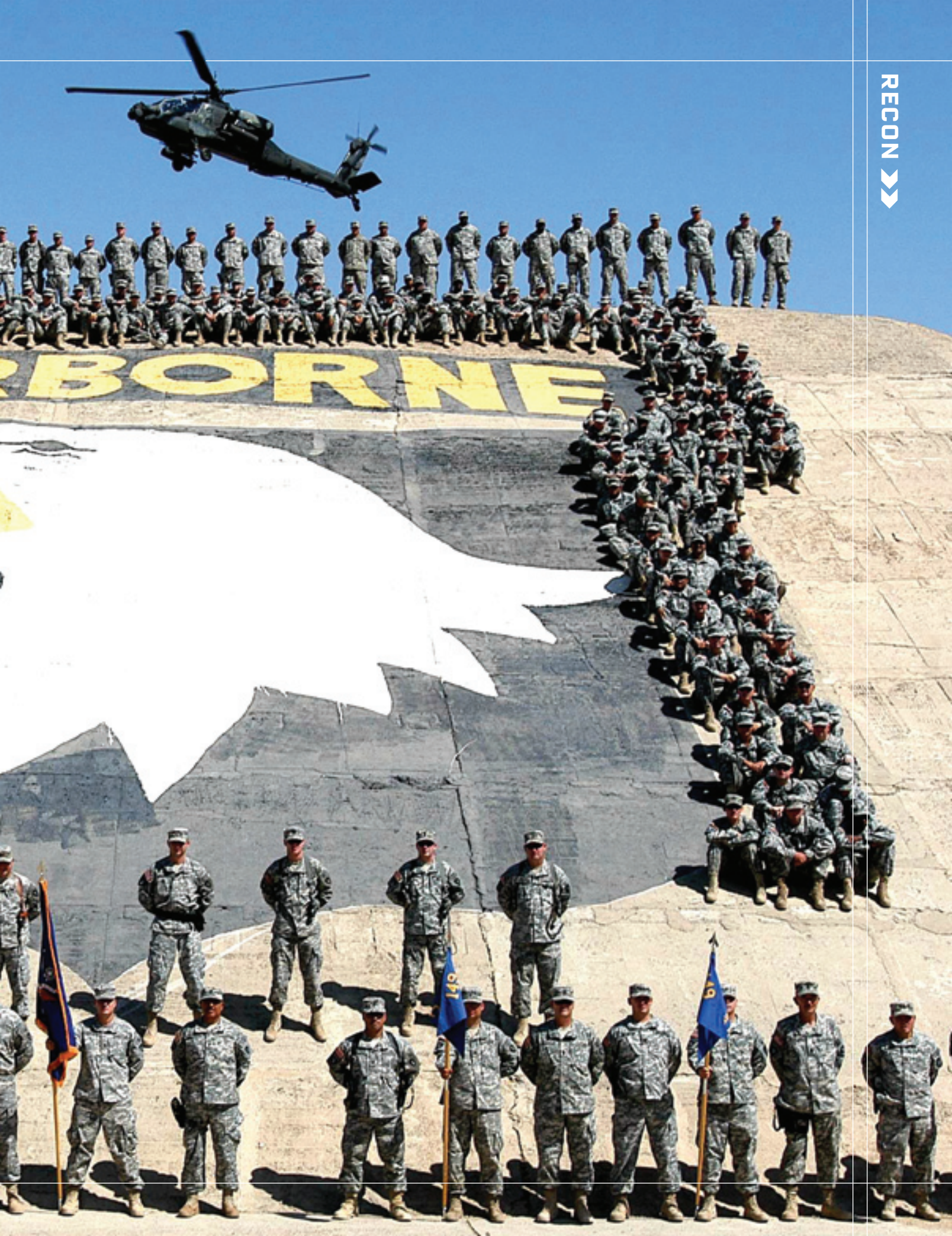
Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack), TXARNG gather around "Old Abe" painted on Hardened Aircraft Shelter 9 after earning the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)'s combat patch at Logistical Support Area Anaconda on Sept. 11, 2006.

Army photo by SSG Ray Steele



Distance from Houston, Texas to Sammara, Iraq: 7,294 miles







WARRIOR SPIRIT


A Tribute to Native Americans in Service

by Keith Kawasaki

W

Warrior is defined as “a man engaged or experienced in war,” according to *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*. Native American culture, however, expounds something much heavier and altogether higher. Native American poet, Mike Walker, wrote in *What is a Warrior*, “A Warrior is the protector of his family, clan, and his tribe . . . A Warrior is the living spirit of our Grandfathers.”

It is Walker’s definition of Warrior spirit that many Native American Soldiers today embrace, and embody with great honor.

As Native American Soldiers deploy to Southwest Asia in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, many see themselves, and are regarded by their tribesmen and women, as protecting their homeland and defending their people, just as their ancestors throughout history. The same tenacity and fearlessness is well evident within them. Today’s Native American Soldiers step into the shoes of history’s most noted Warriors and serve as walking examples for the next generation. 

► This is nothing new. Native Americans dedicated their lives to protect our homeland well before it was even ours to claim. Prior to our Nation's birth, Native Americans participated in several organized European conflicts. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the French and the Iroquois Confederation (composed of six nations—the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca—who formed a peace dating back to 1142, according to oral history) fought a series of brutal wars known as the French-Iroquois Wars, said to be some of the bloodiest in history.

Much of the fighting was the result not only of colonization by Europeans, but also tribe-on-tribe skirmishes. Today, our Federal government recognizes over 560 tribes in the U.S. Centuries ago, there wasn't an organized government. Allegiance was first to the tribe, which resulted in numerous rivalries. Europeans didn't make things any easier by deciding to colonize coast-to-coast, and many tribes chose European allegiances based on which side an enemy tribe chose to support.

Alliances formed again in the French and Indian War (1754–1763). Both the British and French boldly laid claim to the Ohio territory—land occupied by native tribes between the Appalachians

at Appomattox, LTC Ely Parker—also known as Donehogawa, a Seneca Chief—stood beside General Ulysses S. Grant and wrote the terms. LTC Parker later became Commissioner of Indian Affairs under President Grant, playing an instrumental role in keeping the peace between the government and tribes in the late 1860s to early 70s.

It is in this period of the middle-to-late 1800s that the most identifiable names in Native American culture arose, the figures that modern society regards as iconic such as Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse and Red Cloud.

The Sioux War Chief Red Cloud launched what is known as Red Cloud's War in 1866 against the government, which sought to expand through Montana to the Powder River country, the last hunting grounds of the Lakota people. Red Cloud had had enough of expansion.

After two years, Red Cloud defeated military forces in what is now regarded as the most successful war fought by Native Americans against the U.S. (you can read of Red Cloud's brilliant tactics in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown). The great battles even included a young Crazy Horse, fearless in the fight and later a fierce War Chief in his own right. The famous General William Tecumseh Sherman



and the Mississippi river, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The European nations coveted the wildlife trade, as well as the establishment of their religious sects (French Catholicism, British Protestantism). Most tribes sided with the French, though the united Iroquois Confederacy stood with the British.

It took the American Revolution (1775–1783) to break the ancient peace agreement that bonded the Iroquois Confederacy, and tribes split to fight on either side of the war, aiding as scouts and light infantry. Those who joined the Americans can be thought of as the first “enlistment” of Native Americans into the U.S. military.

American victory led to Manifest Destiny, and settlers spread like wildfire. President Andrew Jackson stirred the flames by enacting his Indian Removal Act of 1830, which called for the relocation of tribes east of the Mississippi to the West.

Throughout the American Civil War (1861–1865), tribes played an integral role in battle and reconnaissance for both the Union Army and the Confederates. In fact, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered

WAR PARTY A band of Brule Sioux Warriors fall into formation before battle.

(successful Union general during the Civil War and later Commanding General of the Army) surrendered to Red Cloud and signed The Treaty of Fort Laramie, granting the Lakota ownership of their land. The peace lasted almost ten years, until General George Armstrong Custer found gold in the Black Hills in 1874. One year later, swearing on a sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe (a Lakota peace pipe), General Custer made an oath to never again fight Native Americans. On June 25, 1876, General Custer broke his promise at Little Big Horn—a fatal error in judgment that led to his legendary “last stand.”

Flash forward to 2005 and over 6,000 miles from Little Big Horn: SGT Keith DeBoo stands before his Humvee, about to head out on a convoy traveling across the dusty Iraqi desert, across roads possibly



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littered with IEDs. Yet, confidence is high. SGT DeBoo knows he's carrying a noble tradition and the spirit of great Warriors past, like Red Cloud and Crazy Horse. He burns a little sweetgrass, focuses, and shares the smoke with his fellow riders. SGT DeBoo is ready. SGT DeBoo is protecting his homeland and his people. He, too, is a great Warrior and "today," just as his old high school football coach used to tell him, "is a great day to die."

SGT DeBoo and the Montana Army National Guard's 1-163rd Infantry Battalion (Bravo Company) returned home from Iraq in November 2005. Mobilized in early summer 2004, the 1-163rd served 18 months in Iraq as part of Montana's largest call-up of military forces since WWII. As a whole, the battalion performed 6,400 patrols, diffused almost 200 IED's, engaged 359 IED's, and confiscated hundreds of enemy weapons. The 1-163rd was involved in 35 battles and was fired upon 130 times. The battalion experienced 35 task force-level operations, 10 air assault missions, and 120 company-level operations.* In other words, these Soldiers saw action.

SGT DeBoo is also a member of the Blackfeet tribe, and the Blackfeet people have seen their share of action. According to the Lewis and Clark Rediscovery: Lifelong Learning Online Project (a federally funded education project), the Blackfeet date back over 6,000 years ago, living in the Northwest Plains of the U.S. Unlike most tribes, which were forced from territory to territory with broken treaty after broken treaty, the Blackfeet still occupy their land today. Thanks, in part, to the tribe's powerful and fearless Warriors.

With the assistance of Montana National Guard public affairs officer SFC Thomas Steber and Keith Heavyrunner (Region 3 Commander of the National American Indian Veterans, Inc., www.naivonline.org, and the Blackfeet Warrior Society), GX met with seven Warriors of the Montana Army National Guard in Great Falls, MT, late August. In attendance were four Blackfeet and two Chippewa Cree Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1-163rd Infantry Battalion and one Blackfeet Soldier of Montana National Guard's Counter Drug Division. Among the Blackfeet of the 1-163rd was Keith Heavyrunner's brother, SSG Earl Heavyrunner, section leader of Bravo Company and their proclaimed War Chief.

"The one thing about the Blackfeet tribe: they are warriors. They are serious warriors. They are the real deal. I was honored when I was asked to become a member of their Warrior Society," said SSG Rick Haerter (Chippewa Cree), previously of the 1-163rd Infantry Battalion, now with Montana National Guard

Recruiting and Retention.

"The Blackfeet stayed apart the longest. We were the fiercest Warriors in this area. We have the greatest history as far as Warriors go. Ask any Crow or Cree—they'll say Blackfeet," declared 1LT Carla Lott of the Blackfeet tribe and acting Distribution Platoon Leader for the Forward Support Company of the 1-163rd, as well as Drug Demand Reduction Administrator for Montana's Counter Drug Division.

"My family's been part of the Warrior clans for generations," continued 1LT Lott. "When I decided to grow up—about 29 and

had four kids (laughs)—I said, 'you know what? I think I'm going to join the military.' And, I went down to the recruiter without telling anyone in my family. Yeah, I was Christmas shopping (laughs) . . . Ever since I was little, I remember listening to my grandmother tell me stories about our people and how great our history is, as far as Warriors go. My great-grandmother, Teresa 'Old Lady' Warclub, she was a female Warrior and healer."

When SGT DeBoo lit the sweetgrass before his convoy left base, he and the Bravo Company Soldiers were practicing ancient native traditions, asking for blessings and preparing themselves for the dangerous mission ahead. This process is referred to as smudging.

"Our vehicles, they have braided sweetgrass," explained SSG Haerter. "They light it on fire and burn it and the smoke has powers. It gets you ready. You do it to your horse; you do it to yourself. You take the smoke and envelope the smoke over you. We would do that to our vehicles and each other."

"My driver was LaFountain and he had an eagle feather with us," added SSG Haerter.

Upon deployment, the Blackfeet Tribal Council recognized Bravo Company as Warriors, granting each man an eagle feather during his service in Iraq. This gift is the highest honor a Warrior can receive. SPC Tagan LaFountain (Chippewa Cree) regarded his eagle feather as a good luck charm and carried it with him in his Humvee. His vehicle was hit with the greatest number of IED's in the company—everyone survived, and no one was seriously injured.

"So, you know, it's all 'do you believe, do you not believe.' I believe," concluded SSG Haerter.

Unfortunately, Customs snatched SPC LaFountain's lucky feather upon returning home, claiming that it was from a foreign animal in a foreign country and he was trying to smuggle it stateside.

For SPC Jody Aimsback (Blackfeet), the feather he received was his fourth eagle feather, yet it meant the most. "This one was huge. You know, you were going off to combat," said SPC Aimsback. "It meant more to me. In the old ways, you become a Warrior on your first war party. It's a big deal."

SPC Aimsback, with a decade of service already, is going to



PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE (top) OKARNG SPC Keith Danner's uncle, Leroy Bean (half Cherokee), U.S. Army, photographed during WWII. (bottom) MTARNG SGT Keith DeBoo (Blackfeet) represents the modern generation of Guard Warrior. Pictured here at a meeting with GX in Great Falls, MT in August.

(TOP) COURTESY OF SPC KEITH DANNER; (BOTTOM) SFC THOMAS STEBER, MTARNG PAO; (RIGHT) COURTESY OF KEITH HEAVYRUNNER

We were the first ones here in America, so, you know, the roots are very deep. I think that's one of the driving forces of young Native Americans today. We were the first ones here, so we need to protect our homeland.—SFC Jade Falcon, NDARNG and Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe

reenlist with the Guard. “Ten years in total service, so I got 10 years to go,” said SPC Aimsback.

As War Chief of Bravo Company, and the only War Chief currently of the Blackfeet people,** SSG Heavyrunner received a full war bonnet, or headdress. Each eagle feather attached to the bonnet signifies a brave and honorable action performed by the Warrior. SSG Heavyrunner's bonnet carries 32 feathers.

“My adopted father—he's a medicine man,” said SSG Heavyrunner. “I came back home on leave, and he said, ‘Well, you're leader of all these Native American troops, so that means you are a chief.’ I looked at him and I said, ‘What do you mean?’ And he said, ‘Well, now you're the War Chief.’ It was a great honor.” This casual proclamation just put SSG Heavyrunner on the same level as Red Cloud.

Native Americans historically muster a high enlistment into military service. Some young men and women make their choice, hoping to branch from their reservation, where opportunities are limited. Some make their decision for college benefits. Many, even those who choose to serve for benefits and travel, cite an inner-calling to become Warriors, to pick up the tradition carried by their ancestors, their elders and family members. In fact, there were two Soldiers among our seven in Great Falls who were closely related, and all seven have relatives who had served before them.

SSG Alfred DeBoo (Blackfeet) and his nephew, SGT Keith DeBoo, served in Iraq together with Bravo Company. SGT Deboo's younger

brother just finished Basic. “I have another nephew who's about to go into the Guard this month,” said SSG DeBoo. “I have uncles who have served in the past. My dad was in the Air Force.”

“It's good to be recognized as a Warrior,” continued SSG Alfred DeBoo. “And, I would hope that maybe with getting recognized as a member of the military, that it's an honorable thing—that it might motivate some of the younger generation to get out and serve in an honorable way—that way they can get away from the reservation. It's a cycle of poverty, almost. Sometimes the military is a way to get out and see there are bigger and better things out there and see that, ‘I can still be proud of my heritage, but at the same time I can come back and maybe make a difference here.’ I would like to see almost all the young kids join the service.”

“I'm proud to serve this country. Going to two different third world countries, and just—the devastation of Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Budapest, Hungary—you go to those countries and the freedom's not there. It's dirty. It's disgusting. You feel bad for them. But, in the same breath you learn not to take America for granted. You learn to enjoy it and express your freedom a lot more. For the most part, the natives that I've met out on deployments, we take extreme pride in serving our nation. I think a lot of it [goes] back to our heritage. I know that's where mine comes from,” adds SGT Keith DeBoo. “Before I left, one of the medicine men came and blessed me and my uncle as Warriors, and that meant a lot to me. I have always thought about being in



MODERN WARRIORS
SSG Earl Heavyrunner (far left) stands with fellow Soldiers of the 1-163rd Infantry Battalion SGT Keith DeBoo and SPC Jeremy Crawford during their deployment last year to Iraq.



PRIDE RUNS DEEP
Native American Soldiers of the 1-163rd Infantry Battalion and Montana Army National Guard gathered in Great Falls, MT for a reunion and GX interview, mid-August: (left to right) SPC Jody Aimsback, SGT Keith DeBoo, SSG Alfred DeBoo, SPC Tagan LaFountain, SSG Earl Heavyrunner, 1LT Carla Lott

the military. If I had been around 100 years ago, I would have been a native brave.”

Tribes passionately support their Soldiers and take measures to declare them Warriors because, as SSG Heavyrunner explained, “You are actually fighting for two countries. You’re fighting for the United States and you’re also fighting for the Blackfeet tribe, or whatever tribe you’re from. It’s a big role.”

Proving this is nothing singular to the Blackfeet, SPC Keith Danner, A Company 1-279 Infantry, Oklahoma Army National Guard and member of the Cherokee tribe, shared in a GX interview, “In a sense, I find a lot of Native Americans, be it Cherokee or other tribes, take pride in having members who are Warriors. In much of history, the Warriors were held in very high regard.”

SPC Danner served active duty during the 1980s, followed by a 15-year break from military service. A year ago, he joined the Oklahoma Guard. “I got kids now. I would rather go fight somewhere else than have the fighting take place in my homeland.”

“You know, we were the first ones here in America, so, you know, the roots are very deep,” adds SFC Jade Falcon in a GX interview. SFC Falcon is a 14-year Guard Veteran and serves with the North Dakota National Guard Recruiting and Retention. SFC Falcon is also a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe. “I think that’s one of the driving forces of young Native Americans today. We were the first ones here, so we need to protect our homeland.”

Over 12,000 Native Americans served in WWI (1914–1918), despite the fact that it wasn’t until after the war that Native Americans were actually granted American citizenship. Perhaps as a result, enlistment

numbers skyrocketed to 44,000 during WWII (1939–1945).

A Warrior calling may be what spurred Ira Hayes to leave the Pima reservation and enlist in the Marines—a choice that would eventually bring PFC Hayes to stand atop Mount Suribachi in 1945 and raise the flag at the Battle of Iwo Jima. The same goes for Medal of Honor recipient 1LT Jack C. Montgomery of the 45th Infantry Division (ID). In a single-handed attack launched at the pre-dawn hours of February 22, 1944, 1LT Montgomery terminated 11 enemy soldiers, took 32 prisoners, and wounded countless others. 2LT Van T. Barfoot, also of the 45th ID, earned a Medal of Honor as well for actions that included standing just 75 yards out in the face of three charging Mark VI tanks on an exposed position, armed with a bazooka. 2LT Barfoot destroyed the lead tank and, by the end of the fight, killed almost 10 enemy men,

took almost 20 prisoners and saved the lives of two fellow U.S. Soldiers.

When the U.S. went to war in Korea in the 1950s, Native Americans again proved their valor and dedication to this land. The Medal of Honor was earned on the night of November 30, 1952, when PFC George Charles of, once again, the mighty 45th ID, crept into the trenches, engaging in hand-to-hand combat with enemy forces. When his troops were ordered back, he remained as cover with two other

U.S. Soldiers. An enemy hurled a hand grenade toward PFC Charles and his unit members. Instantly, the private pushed his men out of the way and leapt onto the grenade, absorbing the blast completely, seriously—and eventually fatally—wounding the young Soldier. Yet, while guarding his fellow men with his own body atop an explosive, he never once cried out, as that would have revealed their location to the oncoming enemy forces.

Native Americans have sacrificed centuries of blood and lives to protect our homeland and will continue to do so, for centuries ahead. They are proven and proud Americans and Warriors.

Over 85,000 Native Americans served during the Vietnam era (1957–1975). “Of the first survey we did, 37% had been wounded in action,” said Harold Barse of the Vietnam Veterans Inter-Tribal Association in the film *Warriors: Native American Vietnam Veterans*, which pays tribute to these men while discussing the stereotypes put upon them. “The reason for that is they were on the front lines. They were in the combat units. If you’re an Indian, you’re supposed to be good . . . When you move out, they’d say, ‘Hey, Chief, get to point.’ And that point is a dangerous place to be when you’re walking around in the jungles.”

“The Indian was supposed to be the great sneak artist and brave,” added Ed Yava (Tewa/Hopi/Navajo). “Every time that operation came up, you’d find yourself either leading a patrol or being the point man . . . I’m supposed to be able to see through the dark. When you question them, they say, ‘Well, you Indians have that sixth sensibility’ . . . and I just said ‘bull\$#@*.’”

At the same time, many Native Americans found honor in the jungle. Grady Renville (Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux), a combat medic, describes, “The Marines call us ‘Doc,’ you know? And they meant it. To me that was like music. ‘Nam was the place where I got a lot of respect.”

Unlike many of the Vietnam Veterans of non-Native descent, many Native Veterans were honored in grand homecoming ceremonies after the war.

“Indian people have recognized that war changes people for centuries,” explained Barse. “When you send a person to war, something happens to him out there. [The tribes] recognize these people did something that is completely against the law of the universe. They stepped into total turmoil, disruption. And they did this for their people. They gave up something for the people. And when they bring them back in, they need to be taken care of. But they are also honored for that sacrifice they made. It’s not just a pat on the back. The Indian people assume some of the burden . . . and shoulder some of the problems that [the Soldiers are] dealing with.”

“It has solidified my place in this country. I don’t have to take a backseat to nobody now. I’ve paid my dues,” concluded Renville. “I was with my young son the other day and asked him if he wanted to go in the service after school. And, he shakes his head, ‘no.’ And that’s okay. I paid our dues. His uncle was killed in Vietnam; he paid the price.”

“A lot of me feels like the world right now is in identity crisis and that (Native American heritage) is something that I can always claim and it always stands behind me,” shared SGT DeBoo. His culture provided him, personally, with emotional stability and foundation, critical to any Soldier on mission.

READY FOR THE CHARGE An Apsaroke Native American Warrior, photographed in 1908, preparing for battle.



“[The medicine man] blessed us with sage and you take that sage to your favorite place, here in America,” continued SGT DeBoo, “and you burn it and then put it in your medicine pouch. Then, when you’re over there, when you burnt that sage, it puts your mind back to that last place you smelled it. The stress over there, it’s never-ending. From day one to the day you flew home. There were times when you needed, in a sense, to be alone, but you really couldn’t. So you just step outside and burn sage, and it takes you back to where you want to be.”

Today, there are approximately 200,000 Native American Military Veterans. With the highest per capita record of service compared to other ethnicities, recruitment, particularly on the reservation, is highly successful.

“Recruiting on the reservation has been great,” said SFC Falcon. “[Warrior spirit] was one of the big things on the reservation that I recruited on.”

“When I talk to the kids . . . we talk a little bit about their heritage,” said SSG Haerter. “There’s not a lot for them [at the reservation]. Most have never traveled away. I have parents that call *me* and tell me that their kid needs to do something! So, when you go up there, Mom and Dad are behind it. The Marine Corps does very well up there. Their relatives for thousands of years were Warriors, and it’s in their tradition.”

And that tradition dates further back than any other human to set foot on American soil. Native Americans have sacrificed centuries of blood and lives to protect our homeland and will continue to do so, without ceasing, for centuries ahead. They are proven and proud Americans and Warriors.

As racism and poverty burden their people on the reservations, Native American Soldiers today hope by embracing their Warrior status and role as Soldiers and Veterans, they can inspire a break from that cycle for the next generation of Native Americans. Many, like SSG DeBoo and Keith Heavyrunner, are active with the youth and serve as living examples that there’s a whole world of opportunity out there. They simply must be brave enough to chase it, and they, too, can be great Warriors. **GX**



Battle Book Extreme

The Strength Maintenance Division recently completed and fielded the updated Battle Book renamed the Battle Book Extreme (B2X). The B2X is issued to non-prior service Soldiers by Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) Cadre upon in-processing at their assigned RSP or at their first RSP Drill.

The contents of the B2X are structured to support the main mission of the RSP: to indoctrinate ARNG Soldiers with the skills required to successfully MOS qualify and return to their units; fit, trained and ready to deploy in support of the ARNG mission. Bottom line up front: the RSP provides a MAP to Success: Mentally Prepared, Administratively Correct, and Physically Fit.

The B2X contains an array of practical and technical tools for Soldiers. The enclosed calendar assists in keeping civilian, education, and military demands in order resulting in maximizing all aspects of Citizen-Soldier lives. The military indoctrination and Basic Combat Training (BCT) preparation tools within the B2X contain basic Soldier information necessary to “hit the ground running” at BCT.

To ensure Warriors are mentally prepared, the National Guard Bureau created *The Way of the Warrior: From RSP to BCT* DVD. This Department of Defense award-winning video provides spot-on, up-front footage of Warriors enduring the rigors of BCT while providing preparation techniques and teaching points throughout the video.

Addressing administratively correctness, the B2X provides a Monthly RSP Checklist and Shipper Checklist to help the new Soldiers gather and prepare their personal documents facilitating swift, accurate processing through TRADOC’s reception battalions. Use of these tools will prevent unnecessary delays to entering Basic Combat Training.

One of the most important tools in the B2X is the most up to date physical training (PT) regimen to include explanations of the specific exercises that are conducted at BCT. RSP history shows the days and weeks between drills are crucial to the Soldier’s level of physical readiness. To ensure the Warrior is physically fit for BCT, a PT Log is included in the B2X. This log, used to plan daily workout sessions and track progress, offers RSP Cadre and their Soldiers a way to “follow through”

with the training executed during RSP drill weekends.

Other useful tools consist of grooming standards, proper wear and care for military uniforms, rank and branch insignia, education benefits, veteran benefits, military education system and promotions.

Allocations of the B2X are determined on state compliance with the fiscal years 2006 and 2007 RSP Accreditation Imperatives and the state active drilling population in the RSP Population Drill Status report of the Director’s Strength Readiness Overview.

Ensure your success at BCT with a MAP to Success—maximize the BATTLE BOOK EXTREME!



For more information, email

ASM-RSPOperations@ngb.army.mil



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- ☆ Simulations
- ☆ Strategic Plans & Policy
- ☆ Aviation

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- ☆ Signal
- ☆ Information Operations
- ☆ Information Systems Management

FINANCE

- ☆ Comptroller
- ☆ Financial Analyst
- ☆ Acquisitions
- ☆ Operational Research Systems Analysis



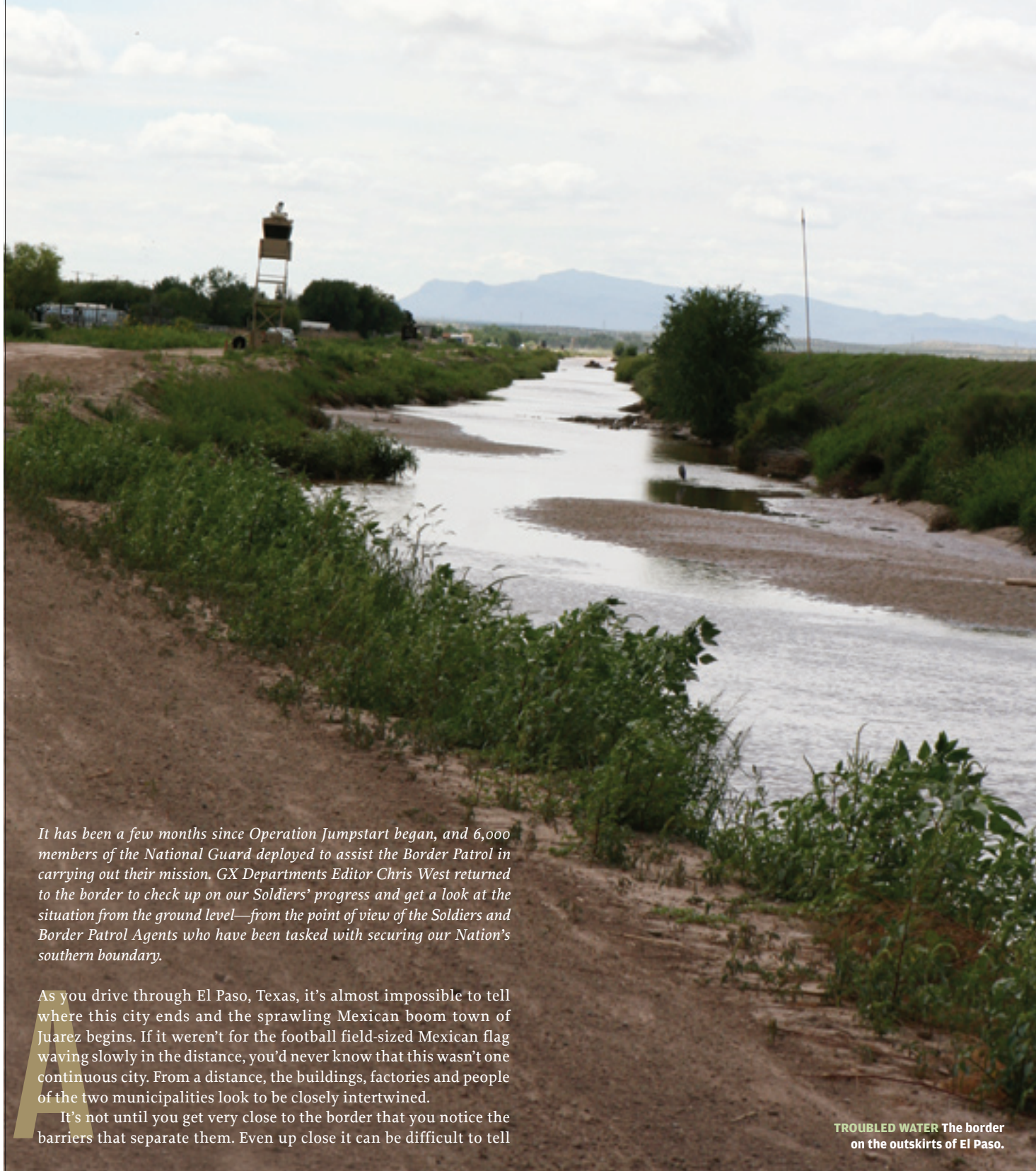
For more information on the T10 AGR Program, visit

[www.arng.ngb.army.mil/
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Back to the Border

Operation Jumpstart, part 2

Story and photos by Chris West



It has been a few months since Operation Jumpstart began, and 6,000 members of the National Guard deployed to assist the Border Patrol in carrying out their mission. GX Departments Editor Chris West returned to the border to check up on our Soldiers' progress and get a look at the situation from the ground level—from the point of view of the Soldiers and Border Patrol Agents who have been tasked with securing our Nation's southern boundary.

As you drive through El Paso, Texas, it's almost impossible to tell where this city ends and the sprawling Mexican boom town of Juarez begins. If it weren't for the football field-sized Mexican flag waving slowly in the distance, you'd never know that this wasn't one continuous city. From a distance, the buildings, factories and people of the two municipalities look to be closely intertwined.

It's not until you get very close to the border that you notice the barriers that separate them. Even up close it can be difficult to tell

TROUBLED WATER The border on the outskirts of El Paso.

where the divide is. The border here is marked by a shallow stretch of the Rio Grande, some fencing, a series of drainage and water storage canals and a dusty road. Other than that, these two dense urban areas nest closely together.

This landscape is one of the factors that keeps the El Paso sector a very busy entry point for illegal immigration. The entire border area is covered by thick scrub brush, perfect cover for anyone trying to avoid detection. If an undocumented alien can make it across this short clearing, they can easily disappear in the dense urban maze of El Paso.

The crossing isn't nearly as easy as it sounds, though. The canals that roughly parallel the river are usually full of deep, fast-moving water. The water and the surrounding fences make a formidable barrier. Although their purpose is drainage and water storage, they also act as a moat around El Paso, diverting illegal traffic to areas where it is more easily detected.

Complementing this impediment are the eyes and ears of the National Guard. Entry Identification Teams (EIT) of two or more Soldiers have been placed at strategic points along the border road. Each team is equipped with a "sky box." This air-conditioned platform can be towed into place and raised to provide a watchtower wherever needed. The elevated position gives Soldiers with binoculars an excellent view of the surrounding countryside during the day. At night, when the background heat is lower, they can switch on powerful infrared cameras and continue their watch.

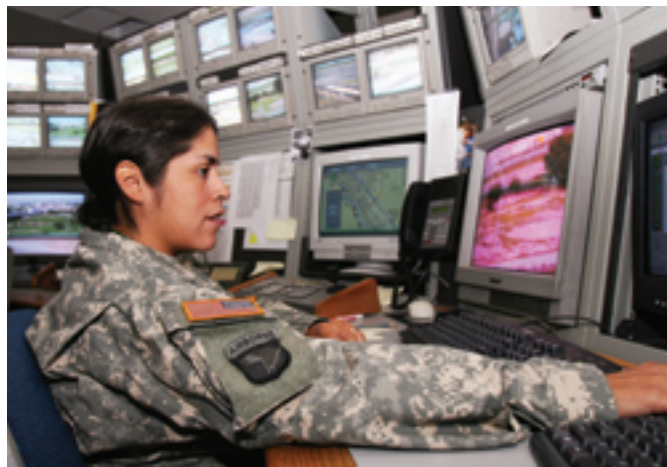
Whenever they spot illegal activity, they call in the Border Patrol to make the arrest. This is an active partnership, where the Soldier maintains a constant watch on the Agent. Continuous communications help guide the Agent to where he or she needs to be, and if there is trouble, the Soldiers will have help on the way in a moment's notice.

This duty seems to have settled down into the daily routine typical of guard duty. At first glance, it looks like a dull assignment. Nothing much seems to happen. There's a group of Mexican kids playing in

the river, a goat herder with his flock grazing not far away and the occasional truck kicking up a cloud of dust as it moves down the border. The Soldiers gaze through their binoculars, watching for anything out of the ordinary and occasionally speaking on the radio to their partners in the Border Patrol.

It takes a little while before you figure out that there is a subtle game of cat and mouse going on here.

Those kids in the water are most likely just cooling off on a hot day, but it is a fairly common occurrence for one of the swimmers to make a break for it. The goat herder is probably harmless, but he does have a cell phone, so it's possible he's running a little surveillance for smugglers. That truck is kicking up a lot of dust and is sitting low on its rear axle; it is obviously carrying a heavy load. It also has a covered back with darkly tinted windows. This, according to a Border Patrol Agent, is a sure sign of a smuggler. The truck is



CENTRAL COMMAND (above) A TXARNG Soldier monitors an array of cameras and sensors at a Border Patrol station. Her efforts free up Border Patrol Agents for other duties. **EYES PEELED (below)** During the heat of the day, when the air temperature is near that of a human body, infra-red cameras are all but useless. Soldiers instead rely on their own eyes and a good set of binoculars.

most likely cruising up and down the border, looking for a place to dump its load of illegal immigrants.

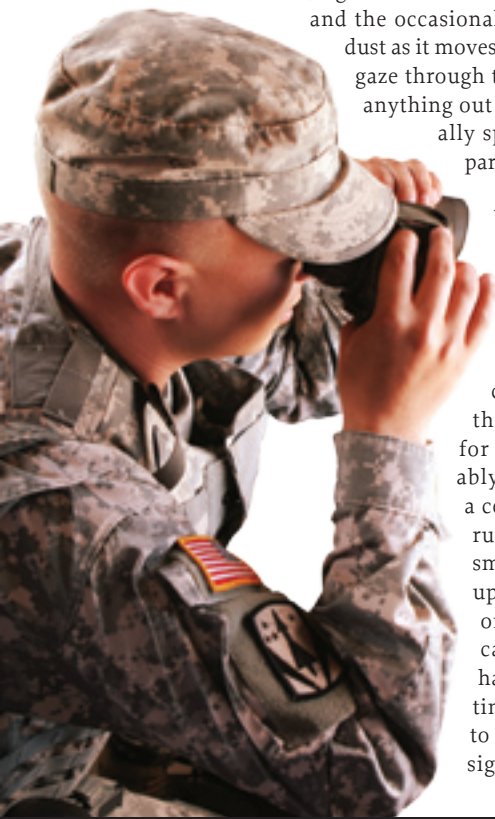
Without calling any attention to the fact they are watching, the combined force of Guard and Border Patrol is keeping an eye on this vehicle. As soon as it comes into view, the Soldiers fall silent, locking onto the truck. They whisper a few words into their radios, letting their friends know they have eyes on the suspect. This smuggler may think he is being clever, but as soon as he sends his passengers across the border, they will most likely find agents waiting for them.

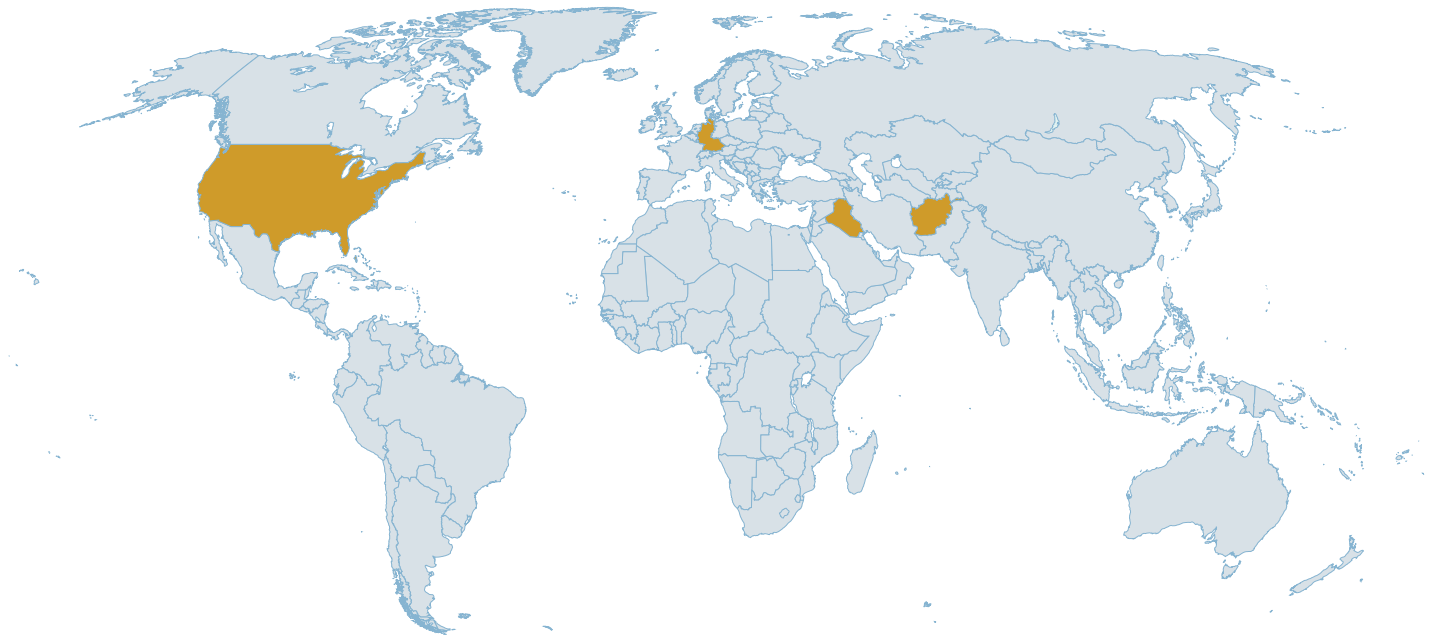
These smugglers are the real enemy. They are clever, adaptable, experienced and extremely well-financed. They have ties to organized crime and drug cartels. They are brutal in their treatment of their clients, and their level of aggression against our forces has been steadily increasing.

Most illegal crossings are done with the help of "coyotes" or smugglers who currently charge between \$2,000 and \$5,000 U.S. to "help" people make it across. These immigrants are extremely poor, and most cannot afford these fees. "Not to worry," they are told, "you can work off your debt." It sounds good to someone desperate for a better life, but it is a lie. Once across the border, the immigrants are forced to work in terrible conditions. They are charged for housing, food and the use of the tools needed to do their jobs. This "company store" approach keeps the workers in perpetual debt, never able to find the better life they sought. At best, this is indentured servitude; at worst, slavery.

This is only one manifestation of our enemy's activities. These same criminals are responsible for smuggling a flood of illegal narcotics into the United States. Every day, they bring their contraband across the border to be sold on our streets and in our schools. They have no apparent ethical or moral code; their only goal is to make money. Given that, they are also the most likely candidates for bringing the tools of terrorism into our country.

Spend just a little time talking to an experienced Border Patrol Agent and he or she will tell you stories that will give you nightmares for days. Extortion, blackmail, theft, assault, intimidation and murder are the tools of the smugglers' trade. This is the face of the enemy. This is the reason our Soldiers, our Border Patrol Agents, and Law Enforcement agencies on both sides of the border are standing watch—not to prevent immigrants from finding a better life, but to stop human trafficking, drug smuggling and terrorism. **GX**





VICTORY MAP

Sharing the good news from Guard units around the world. Send your news to editor@gxonline.com.



UNITED STATES

Arkansas

ARARNG members can get free tuition at Mid-South Community College thanks to an agreement signed today between the West Memphis-based institution and the Arkansas National Guard.

According to the document signed by MG Ronald S. Chastain, Adjutant General of Arkansas, and Dr. Glen Fenter, the school's president, Guard members attending Mid-South Community College will have their tuition completely paid by a federal tuition assistance program. Should the funding be reduced for this federal program in

the future, the College has agreed to pick up 25 percent of a Guard Soldier's annual tuition up to a \$1,125 limit.

Delaware

The DE National Guard and Reserve Foundation (DNGRF) is \$1,000 richer today, thanks to the efforts of Veterans of the Korean War. Franklin Davidson, vice-commander of the local chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association, presented MG Francis Vavala with a check on September 27 at Joint Force Headquarters. The DNGRF gives grants in cases of unforeseen financial duress to current and retired members of any reserve component located in Delaware.

Indiana

As a result of their outstanding performance in theater, the 939th Military Police Detachment was awarded in July the Meritorious Unit Commendation, an award reserved for units that have exhibited superior devotion and meritorious conduct towards their

mission. This was the first time in decades since an Indiana National Guard unit has received this award, the last being the D Company Rangers, 151st Infantry, in 1969.

While deployed in 2004-05, the 939th was split into two separate elements; one was deployed to LSA Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, while the second element was deployed to Camp Victory Base Complex in Baghdad. Both elements were tasked with undertaking various Law and Order missions while deployed as well as administrative, humanitarian and technical tasking.

Massachusetts

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts was selected as one of 15 recipients of the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award in mid-September. The award recognizes public and private employers for going above and beyond what is required by the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act. The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve manages the award.

Seventeen new Soldiers from Maine stood on the 50-yard line at Gillette Stadium and participated in the swearing-in ceremony of a lifetime. The New England Patriots extended an invitation to New England Guard organizations to have new Soldiers take their oath of enlistment during

halftime. Three different swearing-in ceremonies are planned this season. "The New England Patriots and the Army National Guard have had a huge relationship that has gone on for a few years now," said SSG Gabriel Rios, MEARNG Recruiter. "Bob Kraft [owner of the Patriots] really supports the Military with enlistment, reenlistment, and Operation Iraqi Freedom ceremonies."

Missouri

LTC(ret.) Robert T. Scruggs, owner of Jefferson City-based Scruggs Lumber Company, recently received the Legion of Merit award for his outstanding service to the US Army and the Missouri National Guard. LTC Scruggs joined the Guard nearly 20 years after his service as an active duty Vietnam-era draftee. As the state chief plans officer, LTC Scruggs was a key contributor in updating the state emergency response operations plans. These plans were the foundation for the recently implemented Operation Cracked Earth, the state of Missouri's emergency response plan.

New Jersey

New Jersey's 50th PSB Family Readiness Group Auxiliary honored Soldiers of the 250th Personnel Services Detachment, Headquarters, and Headquarters Co., 50th Personnel Services Battalion currently serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, with a 3.5-mile walk on Oct. 21.

Funds raised from the event are being used for holiday gifts for the deployed Soldiers and a homecoming party when they return.

North Dakota

SFC Timothy Wicks (Bismarck) was awarded the Combat Action Badge, Purple Heart and Bronze Star in a ceremony Aug. 28 at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, where he is recuperating from wounds received in combat. SFC Wicks received the awards for his service during combat operations while serving with the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery Battalion in Afghanistan.

Ohio

OHARNG, during the week of Sept. 11, exceeded 10,800 Soldiers for the first time since 1994. End strength—the number of personnel in service—is one of the most critical factors in organizational readiness, that is, the ability of the National Guard successfully to perform its assigned missions.

Rhode Island

On September 9, the Medical Command of the RIARNG was honored by the Rhode Island Society of the Order of The Founders and Patriots of America. The Medical Detachment was honored for its work supporting thousands of troops leaving for and returning from duty.

South Carolina

In an acknowledgement of a history of service to both community and country, SCARNG SSG Brent D. Cobb has been named a monthly finalist in the Jackson Hewitt National Guard “Heroes of the Year” campaign. Sponsored by Jackson Hewitt Tax Service®, the year-long search honors National Guard Soldiers, families and even employers around the country who have made a difference in their states or on foreign shores. SSG Cobb was personally recognized by Jackson Hewitt President and CEO, Michael Lister, at the Fountain Inn Armory in mid-September.

Wyoming

WYARNG’s Detachment 53 arrived home late September from Operation Iraqi Freedom. Unit members provided predictable, efficient and timely air transport for priority cargo, personnel and general logistical fixed wing support in the theater of operations. The

Soldiers deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom in March. The unit is located in Cheyenne. The Soldiers are from Cheyenne, Laramie, Fort Collins, CO, and Scottsbluff, NE.

Wyoming Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, C-130 cargo aircraft, and their crews dropped more than 1.4 million gallons of retardant and water on wildfires this fire season. The WYARNG fought seven fires throughout the state at Guernsey, Hulett, Douglas, Midwest, Casper, and Kaycee.

The WYARNG is working on plans to protect sacred Native American sites from fires at the state’s largest training facility, Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center. It was a hot topic for discussion between WYARNG and representatives from Native American tribes during a three-day consultation at the camp.

MAJ Sam House, WYARNG environmental protection specialist, said there is a plan being developed. Proposals include more prescribed burns and clearing trees out of the buffer zone surrounding impact zones for munitions.

The partnership of the Guard with tribes is also finding ways to increase protection from treasure and souvenir hunters while increasing cultural awareness. A video showing some of the culturally important areas on Camp Guernsey property and explaining the importance of not disturbing them was reviewed during the consultation. Other ideas explored included using signs to keep guests away from sensitive areas.

MAJ House said the Guard will continue seeking the advice of tribes with connections to Camp Guernsey.



IRAQ

In conjunction with TX’s 25th annual Hotter ‘N Hell Hundred (a 100-mile bike, an event organized to celebrate the centennial of Wichita Falls, TX), SPC Don

Lobmeyer (Charlie Co., 2-137th Infantry, KSARNG), stationed in Baghdad, battled 117-degree temperatures to participate in the ride. SPC Lobmeyer finished with an actual ride time of 6 hours and 18 minutes.

Thanks to a new wastewater treatment plant built and opened at LSA Anaconda this summer, the Army is now helping create cleaner water for Iraqis. The plant, which processes 1.6 million gallons of wastewater per day, will be used in conjunction with an older plant on LSA Anaconda that processes 1.1 million gallons, said LTC Chuck F. Blaschke III, an engineer for the 35th Area Support Group and a Missouri Guard Soldier. Construction took more than 500 days.

A high-level al Qaeda-in-Iraq leader, whose capture was announced Sept. 3 by the Iraqi government, was actually captured June 19 and has been yielding valuable intelligence since then.

Abu Humam, also known as Hamed Jumaa Farid al-Saeedi and Abu Rana, has been in custody of the Iraqi government since his capture near Baquba, and has provided intelligence that has led to the capture of 11 mid-level and nine lower-level al Qaeda-in-Iraq members, said U.S. Army MG William Caldwell, a Multinational Force Iraq spokesman.

“He was the most significant al Qaeda leader captured since the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi,” MG Caldwell said. “Abu Humam admitted to being a senior leader . . . particularly in the Saladin region, where he had several terrorist cells reporting directly to him.”

In a show of continued confidence in the skills of its Iraqi counterparts, Multinational Division-Baghdad transferred authority for a major portion of the northern Baghdad region to the 9th Iraqi Army Division during an “Iraqis in the Lead” ceremony June 19.



SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

From February to July 2006, UTARNG CPT Steve Calder served as the Bilateral Affairs Officer to Sao Tome and Principe. CPT Calder was the sole member of the U.S. military or embassy stationed in the country.

Some projects CPT Calder helped execute include: renovating the national hospital and its emergency room, renovating the national high school gymnasium and water system for some 6,000 students, building two schools in Principe, installing a water system and latrines at a middle school, and delivering some \$170,000 worth of school supplies.

RECESS CPT Steve Calder of the Utah Army National Guard gives a lift to a young child on the playground at a Sao Tome and Principe school.





Half-way Home

Story and photos by Chris West

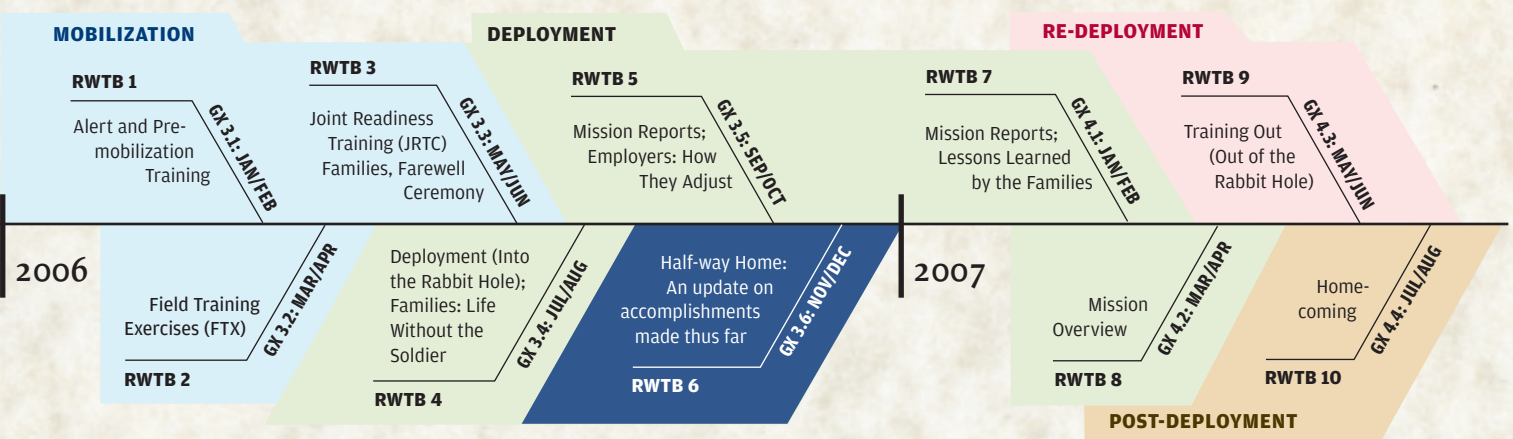
GX looks at the disposition and accomplishments of the 1/34th BCT as they reach the mid-point in their deployment.

Our intention with the “Running with the Bulls” feature is to tell the story of all Guard Soldiers through the eyes of a single Division. While the experience of every Soldier and their family is unique, the process of training up, saying goodbye to families, deploying, adjusting to life while separated, serving at home and abroad and, finally, coming home is common to all who serve their nation. We want to demystify deployment for those who haven’t been through it. By sharing the thoughts and feelings of one group throughout the process, we hope to remind all members of the Guard Family that they are not alone. There is a strength to be gained from the knowledge that others have endured similar trials and grown through the process. Finally, because we cannot honor the efforts of every Soldier individually, we seek to show, on a small scale, the amazing works undertaken every day by all those, both in uniform and out, who serve with great honor and distinction in the Army National Guard.

GOOD WILL SFC Oakes and SSG DOUTY, 1/34th CIVIL AFFAIRS TEAM HAND OUT STUFFED ANIMALS TO IRAQI CHILDREN IN A LOCAL VILLAGE.



GX Red Bulls Coverage



UNIT LOCATIONS

The 1/34th BCT is headquartered in Minnesota but also includes Soldiers and Units from many different states including: California, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

SINCE 6 MAY 2006, THE RED BULLS HAVE:

- » Issued 434 awards to include 227 Combat Action Badges and 129 Combat Infantry Badges for action against insurgents; awarded \$10 million in re-enlistment bonuses; awarded citizenship to 19 Soldiers; and promoted 130 Soldiers.
- » Completed 15 reconstruction projects worth \$960,000 with more than 70 current and ongoing projects worth \$8.7 million.
- » Conducted operations and planning with Coalition Forces to include the Iraqi, British, Australian, Romanian, Polish, Italian and Japanese armies.
- » Increased the percent of IEDs found from 10% in May to more than 35% in Sept. (one of the best rates in theater).
- » Drove more than one million miles on convoy or patrolling missions.
- » Upgraded vehicle tracking software to allow real time convoy location, status, and messaging.
- » Flew more than 300 Raven UAV flights.

CAMP AL ASAD

1-133 Infantry Battalion

CAMP TAQADDAM AND CAMP FALUJAH

2-136 Combined Arms Battalion (CAB)

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA

1-167 Cavalry Squadron

CONVOY SUPPORT CENTER SCANIA

1-125 Strike Battalion

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ADDER / ALI AIR FORCE BASE

1/34 BCT Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC)
1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion (BTB)
134th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB)
7th Transportation Battalion (7th Trans)





Improving the lives of the Iraqi people

AL BATHA

Nahia District – Distributed 100 water tanks. These 1,500 liter tanks will provide clean storage of drinking water for 11 villages and 287 homes.

City Center – Improved 10 kilometers of road, improving access in and around the city center. This project will support up to 20,000 vehicles a day enabling the commercial expansion of the city. It will also allow other infrastructure upgrades to proceed.

City Park – Renovation of the park included repairing swingsets, adding new gravel, repairing the water fountain, repairing the lighting and painting the buildings and equipment. The parents of Al Batha now have a safe place for their children to play and relax.

AL FAWAZ

Construction of a water treatment facility and a reverse osmosis purification unit. These facilities will provide clean drinking water to 1,500 villagers, contributing to their overall health.

Improvement of a 12.5 km section of road on the north bank of the Euphrates River. This road will provide help up to 3,000 Iraqi vehicles travel roads that are otherwise unusable during the rainy season.

AL HARZA

Improvement of a 12.5 kilometer section of road on the south bank of the Euphrates River. This road provides improved mobility for 2,000–3,000 Iraqi vehicles. Prior to completion of this project, this road was impassable during the rainy season.

AL KAWAAM

Electrical upgrade of a reverse osmosis water treatment facility. Upgrades and repairs will allow this plant provide clean drinking water for an estimated 500 villagers.

AL KUTIAH

Construction of a reverse osmosis water treatment plant. This project provides potable water to 1,500 villages in the surrounding area.

DHI QAR PROVINCE

Completed construction and opened the Omar El Sharaf School. This new, modern building replaces a small and poorly lit earthen structure. This improved school will help provide an education of the children of Iraq.

The Brigade is currently pursuing projects that will improve the irrigation of the local fields. A network of canals will provide water for crops and live stock. Increased crop yields will positively affect the provincial economy.

LEAVING THEIR MARK A concrete barricade becomes a handy canvas for aspiring Army artists.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE MAJ Peterson of the 134th BSB shakes hands with Iraqi school boys. The battalion helps provide them with much needed school supplies.

The Red Bulls are engaged in many missions designed to improve the lives of the Iraqi people. Schools, medical missions, water storage and treatment are just a few of the ways the Soldiers of the 134th are making a difference. The water treatment projects in particular make an important impact. Without the clean water they provide, villagers are forced to rely on unfiltered water drawn from the polluted Euphrates River. Clean water improves the public health and decreases the infant mortality rate. Wherever possible, local labor is used in order to infuse additional money in to the province.





Red Bulls History

Part V: Italy

by MAJ Jack Johnson, MNARNG (retired)

The campaign for North Africa had taken six months and many lives, but it was essential to the invasion of Italy. Sicily was the stepping-stone. The 34th was assigned to set up staging camps for the assaulting Allies, who pushed the Italian and German troops out of Sicily in July and August 1943. The success of the Sicilian invasion prompted the Italian government to drop out of the war, and Italy signed an armistice on the same day that the invasion of Italy was launched from Sicily—September 3, 1943.

The 34th was designated as a reserve force for the invasion, but its 151st Field Artillery Battalion was temporarily detached to help the 36th Division (Texas National Guard) establish a beachhead at Salerno. The Germans had launched a bewildering nighttime counter-attack on the beachhead just as the 151st was landing, but with sheer grit and courage, the artillerymen stopped it cold. The Chief-of-Staff for the 36th later commented, “The beachhead would have been destroyed had it not been for the early arrival of the 151st.”

The 34th, now part of General Mark Clark’s 5th Army, arrived at Salerno a few weeks later. From there it advanced slowly northward through mountainous terrain, freezing wet weather, and the turbulent Volturno River, capturing Montemilite and Benevento in the process. The objective was to capture the “Gustav Line,” a formidable chain of German defensive positions spanning the entire Italian peninsula above Naples.

Fighting along the route was as hard and unforgiving as ever an army could face, but the Germans were gradually pushed back as, one by one, the strategic objectives were taken: Monte Pantano, San Vittore, Monte Chiaia, Monte Trocchio, the Rapido River. Bitter hand-to-hand combat was often needed to root the enemy out of his holes in the mountains, and the men frequently fought in regions, which could only be supplied by animal pack trains. Then came the long, grim assault on Monte Cassino, the most heavily fortified keystone of the Gustav Line. The division attacked the network of hills near Cassino and attempted to storm the ancient abbey itself, but the Germans defied all attempts to wrest control of it.

During the brutal winter that followed, the 34th would see the fiercest action yet. **GX**

Next issue, Italy part 2



ITALY 1934 The intense fighting for control of Monte Cassino, one of the most heavily fortified points along the Gustav Line, reduced the town to rubble. Image from the Army Quartermaster Museum Collection, Fort Lee, Virginia.

Put Your Degree to Work

By Johanna Altland
Grantham University

Over the past year, *GX* magazine has provided you with information about earning your degree, your available education benefits, establishing your educational goals and the importance of investing in your future. You are probably wondering, "Now that I have my degree, what should I do with it?" By following a few simple steps, you can put yourself on the path toward finding a new career that could offer limitless possibilities.

1 RESUMÉ A resum  is a potential employer's first impression of you. On average resum s get a cursory glance that takes 15 seconds or less. Be certain that your objective is clearly stated in the beginning and include a summary of your qualifications. Use design elements like bullets, indentions, and bold font to guide the viewer's eye through the text, but keep them minimal and consistent. Many job hunting Web sites offer free resum  writing advice, and some will even review your resum  before you post it.

Tip for Military Personnel Assume that your potential employer has no knowledge of military terminology and replace military terms with civilian keywords. For more tips on writing a civilian resum  with military experience, visit <http://featuredreports.monster.com/military/resumetips/>.

2 NETWORKING Imagine the endless possibilities of having a network of people to utilize in your job search. Building a network does take time, but once it is established, it is an invaluable resource that will last a lifetime. Begin creating a network by using the people that you already know. They might not have a job opportunity for you, but they may know someone who does. Another great way to grow your network is to join a professional association and become active in your community. You never know who you might meet.

3 CAREER RESOURCE SITES There are a lot of career resource sites on the Internet that offer you a variety of tools including resum  writing, interviewing tips, resum  posting, job searching and networking to help you make the career choice that's best for you. Some colleges and universities partner with these sites to offer their alumni free memberships. Check with your institution to find out if this option is available to you. Also, utilize Web sites with online job listings like Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com. In addition to viewing

thousands of job listings, you can post your resum  for potential employers to review.

Tip for Military Personnel A great place to start your job search is to target "military-friendly" companies. Many companies are interested in hiring Veterans because of their leadership and teamwork skills and their ability to work under pressure. Utilize military specific job sites like OperationHeroForHire.com to begin your search.

4 INTERVIEWING Now that you have landed an interview for your dream job, it is time to get prepared. The first step is to conduct some simple research to learn more about the company. Next, create a list of common interview questions and write down your answers. Be sure to call attention to past skills that your potential employer is looking for. Then, come up with a few examples that highlight your achievements. These examples should emphasize hard to measure qualities like teamwork, time management, and overcoming challenges. Preparing in advance will reduce your stress on the day of the interview and demonstrate to your potential employer that you are serious about the job.

Convert Military Experience into a Civilian Career

Transitioning into a civilian career, after years in the military, may seem like a daunting task, but there are a lot of great resources available to help the transition go smoothly.

O*NET O*Net Online enables you to match your Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) with similar occupations in the civilian workforce. For example, if you are a Computer Operator for the Guard, you could work as a Computer Operator, Operations and Maintenance Technician, Computer Specialist, Information Technology Specialist, or Software Technician in the civilian sector. O*Net is also a comprehensive database of occupational skills, knowledge, and abilities

that may help you align your military experience, education and training with current civilian workplace needs. Visit online.onet-center.org/crosswalk

VETS The Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS) provides Veterans and transitioning service members with the resources to succeed in the workforce by maximizing their employment opportunities, protecting their employment rights and meeting labor-market demands. Visit www.dol.gov/vets/

TAP The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was created by the Department of Defense to smooth a service member's transition into the civilian workforce. The Transition Assistance Office, typically located on military installations at the Military Family Support/Service Center, provides assistance with job searches, career decisions, advice on current labor market conditions, resum  and cover letter preparation and interviewing techniques.

ACINET America's Career InfoNet offers you the opportunity to assess your marketability, learn about different careers and industries and search for job listings. It also offers career resource tools and online coaching. Visit www.acinet.org



Stick to Your New Year's Resolution

Now that the holidays are here, it's time to start thinking about making your New Year's resolutions. This year, make it your resolution to earn your college degree. A degree can bring you many rewards including more money, lower unemployment, and more career advancement opportunities.

Most people fail to keep their resolutions because they overextend themselves by creating too many goals. Make sure that your resolution is one that you can commit to, like earning your degree, then think about the importance of why you should stick to your resolution.

1 MAKE A PLAN Create a timeline for yourself that is realistic. For example, if you want to return to college, your timeline might include the date that you want to begin classes. If your timeline is unrealistic, you will get discouraged and give up.

2 POST YOUR PLAN Once you create your timeline, don't put it away into a drawer and let it gather dust. Post it where you will see it daily, or incorporate your timeline into the family calendar.

3 ENLIST SUPPORT Everyone needs help, and your friends and family will be more than willing to support you along the way. Support can come in many forms—from a word of encouragement to someone watching your kids so you can study. Just be careful not to ask for support from someone who will derail your efforts or become overbearing.

4 REWARD YOURSELF Build incentives into your timeline so you have something to look forward to while working toward your goal. For example, once you complete your first class, treat yourself to a special dinner, a massage, or a night out on the town.

What better way to start off your year than by returning to school to earn a degree that will have life-long benefits?

Army National Guard



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ENDURING TRADITIONS A young Native American stands ready to perform one of several cultural dances for students attending the Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous in ND.

On the Trail of Lewis and Clark Youth Discover Roots of America and Keys to Success

Story and photos by Keith Kawasaki

Throughout August 13–15, central North Dakota was flooded with high school juniors and seniors, eager to embrace American history for the National Guard's Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous.

The National Guard invited 271 teenagers from across the U.S. and its territories to experience firsthand North Dakota's chapter of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery, the legendary government exploration of the American West that took place 200 years ago.

Participating teens were selected from a pool of 436, based on Lewis and Clark-themed essays they submitted throughout the past year. Essays were judged by AMVETS (the American Veterans organization that services the Veterans' community and local communities-at-large). However, planning for the event began three years earlier.

"The Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous kind of started as an idea from North Dakota," said MAJ Alisha Hamel of the Oregon National Guard and Lewis and Clark Trail State Committee.

In 2003, an inter-governmental agency partnership began celebration of the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's journey, which included a traveling series of discovery expedition events, called Corps of Discovery II, organized by the National Park Service. Events were held in different states along the exploration trail and picked up increased Guard involvement along the way. A friendly rivalry began as each state wished to raise the bar when its turn came around. The events were hands-on activities where local children could experience what Lewis and Clark endured, such as rafting and interaction with Native American tribes and culture.

The event this past August, however, was the culmination of those events—the ultimate Lewis and Clark experience.

In 2003, North Dakota National Guard established a Lewis and Clark Outreach Program, headed by COL Greg Wilz and COL Terry Robinson. The program sought to educate the community and grade-school children on the Corps of Discovery. COL Robinson and COL Wilz knew this idea could and should be expanded, as well as opened

to the entire nation, so they took it to the Guard Bureau. The Bureau enthusiastically signed on, and in 2003, plans began for the National Guard's Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous, hosted by the North Dakota National Guard and sponsored by the National Guard Bureau.

When COL Wilz retired in 2004, he was replaced by SSG Billie Jo Lorius, formerly of North Dakota tourism and now the Lewis and Clark media mastermind.

For the next year and a half, SSG Lorius oversaw outreach, budget planning, and public relations for the Rendezvous. In July 2005, SSG Lorius gained invaluable aid from MAJ Davina French, recently home from Iraq.

MAJ French, a logistics genius and certified hero, earned the Bronze Star during her deployment in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003–04 where she served as Program Manager for the United Nations Development Program, until redeployment in March 2004. Then, CPT French renegotiated contracts and coordinated and supervised the transportation of more than \$1.6 billion in electrical parts located in 23 countries.

MAJ French was also the convoy commander of two heavy-lift convoys, each consisting of multiple loads and involving more than 700 personnel. She supervised convoys that logged approximately 2400 kilometers from the Jordanian border through some of the most hazardous regions of Iraq. This leadership and skill contributed significantly to the addition of two new power plants to the Iraqi electrical system*.

Ultimately, this was perfect training for MAJ French's new domestic mission: figuring out how to wrangle almost 300 kids, plus their chaperones, into Bismarck safely, orchestrate their movement throughout the activities, and get them back home.

MAJ French accomplished this by soliciting support from youth coordinators of the Family Support Groups across the country, as well as the AMVETS.

"She has vision, sees the big picture, and is a transportation guru," said SSG Lorius of MAJ French.

MAJ French is quick to point out that this is truly a labor of love for the organizers. "This was a program built by the people of the Guard who have a passion for youth and education."

"We really kicked it up last July," continued MAJ French. "The focus really changed from a recruiting event . . . to a special 'Thank You' to the community for supporting the Guard through so many activations, alerts and everything; to give back something positive from the Guard."

MAJ French distributed her phone number around the nation early in the essay contest. Despite how that may have seemed like asking for trouble, she appreciated direct communication with the families.

"The mother, the grandmother, and the aunt called me everyday for two weeks straight to see if [their child] won," said MAJ French, sharing one such communication. "So finally, the day she calls, I'm like, 'Your daughter won.' And they're excited and you can hear the tears. And she said, 'We have pooled our money so she can get her own hair dryer and her own shampoo.' And you know at that point, even through any troubles and hassles, somehow this is going to

make a *huge impact* on this kid right here. So, it's really rewarding."

Organizers instituted a military structure over the students, sectioning them off in companies. Companies were assigned squad leaders, which were volunteer Guard Soldiers, Veterans, and Family Support leaders. These volunteers also traveled with the kids and manned the events and activities as guides and support.

"There's over 600 staff supporting this," said MAJ French.

So, where do you put almost 900 people (both the youth and staff) once you get them together? Four separate event locations were set up in Washburn, Fort Lincoln, Medora and Bismarck. Companies of kids rotated from spot to spot, participating in a variety of activities at each destination.

Washburn hosted a guided tour of the Knife River Indian Village given by a Sakakawea re-enactor. Sakakawea was the legendary Shoshone woman who guided Lewis and Clark across the West and translated with Native tribes encountered along the way.

Washburn also offered a tour of Fort Mandan, a replica of Lewis and Clark's winter lodging, where the explorers met Sakakawea. Here, a York re-enactor passionately delivered his life story as Clark's slave, offering an eye-opening, alternative viewpoint of the heroic explorers.

At Fort Lincoln, the youth witnessed Guard Soldiers building a floating bridge over the Missouri River. In addition, kids rode across the river on the Lewis and Clark Riverboat, toured General George Armstrong Custer's home (prior to his ride to Little Bighorn), and enjoyed some good old-fashioned, pitchfork fondue.

Medora showcased the most popular activities. A vast majority of the students *GX* spoke with raved about Medora's high ropes course, which was designed to shape leadership and cooperation skills. Participants also experienced a military history tour and traveled in a wagon train to North Dakota's Badlands.

Finally, in Bismarck, the students toured the North Dakota Heritage Center museum and attended closing ceremonies at the United Tribes Technical College. Here, they bore witness to a beautiful, yet powerful, display of traditional Native American dances, ultimately participating in the dances themselves.

But was it worth it? In today's world, could a kid from DC or Las Vegas really get that excited about a week in North Dakota to study 200-year-old history? You bet.

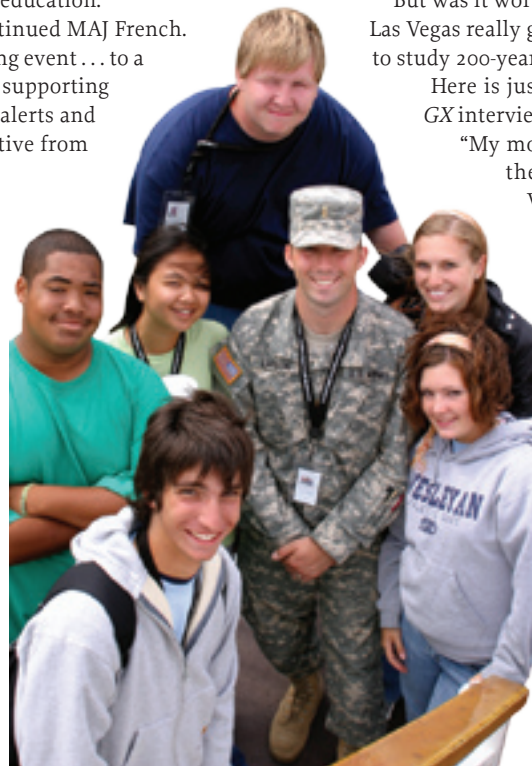
Here is just a sampling of responses from participants *GX* interviewed on site:

"My most enjoyable day was the high ropes course, the rock climbing," said Samuel Duah, 17, of Washington, DC. "I really liked that. 'Cause at first you think you can't do it but when you do do it, you feel really accomplished."

"I wasn't expecting it to be *this fun*. Now I'm leaving, so I'm kind of sad. Next year, I hope they do another event that helps other kids experience something like we did," said Samantha Castanada, 17, of Las Vegas, NV.

"It was better [than I expected]. I wasn't too into it at first, but then I got here and it's just been *really fun*," said Kristen Beblo, 16, of Middletown, DE.

"Rhode Island doesn't look *anything* like this. It's completely new, just a great experience," said Elizabeth McNamara,



A POSITIVE INFLUENCE Squad Leader 2LT Jake Larson (center) with students of his squad aboard the Lewis and Clark Riverboat.

Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery: Quick History

BACKGROUND 1803 wasn't exactly a banner year for the French. That spring, military forces in the western hemisphere were suffering from yellow fever and defecting leaders. War with Britain seemed inevitable, and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's plans for a New World empire were crumbling fast. In an unexpected move, Bonaparte agreed to sell 530-million acres of North American territory, known as the Louisiana Purchase, to the United States, at less than three cents an acre.

With the Purchase, the U.S. more than doubled its size as it acquired parts or all of present-day Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota west of the Mississippi River, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, northern Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, the portions of Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado east of the Rocky Mountains, the portions of southern Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta that drain into the Missouri River, and Louisiana on both sides of the Mississippi River including the city of New Orleans.

MISSION In June of 1803, President Thomas Jefferson gave orders to Captain Meriwether Lewis, a former member of the Virginia Militia and the President's private secretary, to explore the new territory for the purpose of commerce via waterways to the Pacific. After a year of preparation at Camp Dubois in Illinois, CPT Lewis, with 2LT William Clark and a team of 31, embarked on America's greatest exploratory mission: The Corps of Discovery. The Corps traveled 28 months, identifying the American West and its wildlife, as well as opening trade with the Native Americans.

17 of Providence, RI. "The high ropes was great, of course. I really liked meeting the Sakakawea re-enactor—she was great. York was a great guy, too. They all know their stuff. [The Soldiers] are a lot of fun."

"We did the high ropes course and I'm actually petrified of heights! But, with the support of the [Guard] and everyone around us, I got up there and did this 40-ft. ropes course and got over my fear! Just meeting everyone from all over the country, it's been a ton of fun," said Elaina Giolango, 16, of Buffalo, NY.

"My favorite part of this trip has probably been the experience and closeness between the National Guard and the students," said Ed Sanford, of NJ. "We're actually really close. We all have nicknames."

"We learned some of those things they do in the Army, [we had] the MRE's—it's wasn't as bad as you hear about it," said Randy Smith, 17, of Faith, SD.

You didn't even have to talk to the kids, though, to realize they were having the time of their lives and getting along so well. There was a definite buzz in the air—even shouts and team-rousing cadences. They all sported Lewis and Clark Youth Rendezvous t-shirts and were signing each other's every chance they had. For example, one youth's shirt was covered with signatures and enthusiastic messages from Nevada, Kentucky, Oregon, Virgin Islands, Delaware, Connecticut, Maine, Texas, and a myriad other locations. Many children were overheard promising to stay in touch after the event.

The Soldiers were buzzing with excitement as well.

Cadet Harold Hernandez, tour NCOIC for Washburn, NDARNG, and originally from Puerto Rico, volunteered for this assignment. "I always ask the kids how's the day going, what they think of North Dakota—They love it! Everyone here loves it!"

"I do some work with [Family Programs] off and on throughout the year, a lot of 4-H camp

stuff. So, I was asked if I would come out for this by the Family Program for our state. They advertised this as the adventure of a lifetime, and I think that it could be," said SSG Chris Moreland, NVARNG. "[The kids] get to build nationwide bonds and friendships. The difference between something like this and a high school field trip is that all these kids *want* to be here. For them, it's reaping a reward for all their hard work. And if they walk out of here with one good thing, one defining thing, that will make them a better person, or better leader, then what we've done here is a success."

"I think of [the Youth Rendezvous] as a way for the military to interact with civilians because a lot of what you see on the news is negative about the war and the military a lot of the time. It's a way to get with civilians to show them that we're just [average people], just like them and their friends," said SGT Brian Hodges, squad leader, KYARNG.

"It's nice to do something that doesn't involve weapons and war and is actually helping the community," said SPC Jeffery Sorensen of the WAARNG and just one month home from Iraq at the time of the event. "I saw this event and couldn't resist. I've never worked with kids before and I'm thoroughly impressed with these kids. I'm going to miss 'em. We've only been together for a week, and I'm going to miss 'em already."

All fun and games aside, MG Mike Haugen, recently retired and then-Adjutant General for North Dakota, shared the critical benefit of this event for his state.

"What this really is, is a wonderful training opportunity for us," said the general. "Everything that we did here—the planning, the organizing, the logistics, the personnel actions—all the things we had to do here is stuff that we do for a natural disaster. So, if I was going to plan an exercise to exercise all of my staff, we did it here. This is absolutely not a waste of training dollars by any means. What we did was capitalize on the training dollars and events to combine them with an education piece. We gave all of these kids a glimpse of the military while at the same time providing tremendously realistic training for all of our people—only we got to do it with fun.

"I look at a tired staff after a week. I look at all these kids who have discovered something in themselves and each other. They have opened up a whole new world," concluded MG Haugen. "Listen, I have a lot of Soldiers deployed, more Soldiers getting ready to deploy and Soldiers who just came back from deployment; I lacked no volunteers for this entire operation. We still are in the middle of our fire season. And I mean, there's a lot of stuff going on. But, I look at some of the people who say we are doing too much, and I say 'busy hands are happy hands'. And if busy hands are happy hands, we're positively ecstatic (laughs)!" **GX**



FRIENDSHIP DANCE Students, Soldiers, and Native Americans participate in a cultural dance at Fort Lincoln, ND

California's First Lady Maria Shriver

Champion of Guard Support and Volunteer Service

by Keith Kawasaki

"We all need fuel for our soul. Your soul is filled and your heart is filled when you do something that makes another person feel needed and of value; and that in turn makes you feel needed and of value. And at the end of day, that's really what our lives are about . . . I find when I reach out, it fills me. I would think that anybody who is feeling a bit disconnected, a bit empty . . . I think if he or she found some way to be needed through service that feeling might dissipate." —Maria Shriver, First Lady of the State of California

GX recently had the honor of speaking with the First Lady of California, Maria Shriver, in regard to her work supporting California's Soldiers and families, as well as the importance of volunteer efforts.

Since becoming First Lady in 2003, Shriver has developed two standout military support programs: The Military Family Initiative and The Heroic Family program.

The Military Family Initiative connects families of deployed Soldiers, via the internet, with citizens willing to volunteer their support. Similar to the First Lady of Minnesota Mary Pawlenty's efforts (*GX* 3.3), this online program is hosted at the First Lady's Web site (www.firstlady.ca.gov) and can, for example, help a Guard wife find a free lawn service or volunteer babysitters—simple everyday things that can add up to major stress, both financially and emotionally.

The Heroic Family program (www.heroicfamilies.org) provides phone cards for Soldiers to communicate with loved ones back home. "[T]hat idea came from a [Soldier]," said Shriver. "I said to him, 'How can I help?' And he said, 'It would be a really big help if you could just get us phone cards.' "Through the effort, every \$15 donation goes toward pre-paid phone service for a deployed California service member.

"The goal is that I'm trying to make 37 million people aware that we have a huge military population who's loved ones are overseas, who struggle here at home—struggle with paying bills, with family responsibilities; kids struggle without a father or mother," said Shriver. "There are little things that we can all do that make a huge difference in their lives and helps the time pass."

Shriver takes time to personally talk with the citizens of California, discovering what exactly their needs are and how best to accommodate them. Likewise, Shriver has worked to understand the modern, military family experience and continually seeks ways to make it easier. One is by uniting Californians who are willing to help carry that burden with the families.

"To me, the military story is such a multi-faceted story," said Shriver. "It's a story of patriotism and service and duty, but it can become a story of disabilities and emotional issues, marital issues and family dysfunction. All these things affect the military in ways I think so many people aren't really aware of."

To get to the heart of military needs, Shriver held a meeting in March of 2005 with spouses, parents, and children of the 579th Engineer Battalion (CAARNG) at the State Capital. The 579th had recently endured an 18-month deployment in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Just trying to find out from them what I could be doing, what the Governor could be doing," said Shriver. "Were there certain things they were struggling with? Was there anything that I should know

that we didn't know or didn't do?"

"When I was in high school there was a draft, so it was quite a big issue when I was in, what I would call, my formative years," continued Shriver. "So, I've always been interested in military families and the price they pay. My father is a Veteran of WWII. He was in the Navy; my uncles were in the war. I'm interested because the families serve, too. Regardless of your position on the war, we can all do things that support families who defend our country. Even if you are not in favor of the war, you can be in favor of showing compassion to families who are struggling and alone. I feel like there's always so much more I could be doing."

In fact, Shriver welcomes California's military families to help her brainstorm new ideas. She invites family members to log on to www.firstlady.ca.gov and write her directly. "I'm very interested to hear from military families on what more I should be doing. I'd love for them to write to me! I'd like to broaden the Heroic Families program and hear more about what I can do."

As evidenced by not only her military support efforts but also her backing on countless other causes, including Alzheimer's, Special Olympics, California Service Corps and Best Buddies, it is clear Shriver bears a remarkable passion for service and has dedicated her life to aiding others with pure volunteer spirit. Californians can thank her parents for that.

"I was raised with the understanding that [volunteering is] a duty—like certain people are raised in military families and it's something that they continue, that sort of family calling, so to speak. In my family, you're raised to get up and get going, to be involved. You don't dare come home unless you're involved. That was the way I was raised and that's what my parents did. Really, service is—as Chairwoman of the California Service Corps, I call it—fuel for the soul . . . We all need, in a very disjointed, disconnected world, fuel in our soul." *GX*



VOLUNTEER SPIRIT First Lady Maria Shriver takes time with members of the military.

Deck the Halls WITH A BIT OF CHRISTMAS HISTORY

By Chris West

How do you celebrate Christmas? Do you have a Christmas turkey, huge family gatherings and lots of presents? How about a tree with lights, a Yule log or mistletoe over the door? These and many other traditions form the basis for our holiday season, but it wasn't always like this. Christmas has changed dramatically over the years from a drunken bacchanalia to a holiday scorned by the Puritans to today's beloved holiday that is at once both a Christian holy day and a secular celebration of family, compassion and brotherly love.

WHY DECEMBER 25TH IS CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas, as we all know, is the holiday celebrating the birth of Christ. However, the date of December 25th is largely arbitrary. There is no historical basis for choosing this day.

From a Christian point of view, December 25th is nine months after the date of the Incarnation and Mary's Immaculate Conception and thus, a reasonable day to assign to Christ's birth.


It is believed by some historians that the date was chosen in order to aid the transition of the Roman Empire from its many pagan religions to its newly adopted state religion, Christianity. The 25th is the date of the Roman Solstice, the festival of Sol Invictus (a pagan god), as well as the extended, hedonistic celebration known as Saturnalia. With the coming of Christianity, these celebrations were incorporated into the Christian holidays of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, allowing Romans to continue celebrating their beloved winter holiday.

It should be noted, however, that many early Christians did not observe this day as a holiday. In 245 AD, the theologian Origen denounced the very idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus "as if he were a king pharaoh." Instead, worship and prayer were the order of the day.

Extended winter celebrations were fairly typical in all agrarian societies, regardless of their religion. The reason is fairly straight forward: in the winter, there is less to do on a farm. It is common to find these types of celebrations in even the earliest pagan societies. In fact, pagan celebrations such as Yule and Mitwinternacht (Mid Winter Night) contributed many of the traditions we celebrate today.

CHRISTMAS JUST WOULDN'T BE CHRISTMAS WITHOUT THE GERMANS

A great many of our modern Christmas traditions come directly from Germany. The decorated tree that most of us set up each year in our living room traces back to pagan Germany where Oaks (a sacred tree) were



A great many of our modern Christmas traditions come directly from Germany. The decorated tree that most of us set up each year in our living room traces back to pagan Germany where Oaks (a sacred tree) were decorated each year. During the 8th century, St. Boniface adopted this local pagan custom in order to help Christianize the locals. He substituted the fir tree (tannenbaum) for the oak and dedicated it to Christ.

decorated each year. During the 8th century, St. Boniface adopted this local pagan custom in order to help Christianize the locals. He substituted the fir tree (tannenbaum) for the oak and dedicated it to Christ.

Roughly during this same time period, St. Nicholas became wildly popular in Germany. He was the patron saint of children who would distribute treats to them on his feast day of December 6th. After the Protestant Reformation, the idea of a Catholic Saint riding around the country handing out gifts didn't sit very well with the authorities, and so St. Nicholas was "reformed" into Santa Claus.

Additionally, we owe the Germans for the Christmas ham, holly, mistletoe and the giving of gifts, all of which trace back to pagan winter celebrations.

CHRISTMAS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Christmas really began to come into its own in the Middle Ages. Its popularity increased year after year, until, by 1377, it was so prominent that historians began recording the Christmas celebrations of the Royalty. One account recalls a holiday feast put on by King Richard II of England in which 28 oxen and 300 sheep were consumed.

The holiday was characterized by excess and debauchery including feasting, drinking, promiscuity, gambling and caroling. Yes, caroling. Caroling was originally the singing

of songs by troupes of dancers. Apparently, the dancing got so out of hand that it was condemned by several writers of the age as being "lewd." In many ways, this celebration was a throwback to the old, wild pagan celebrations.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND THE CRIMINALIZATION OF CHRISTMAS

The wild celebrations of the Middle Ages were seen by the nascent Protestant movement as being part and parcel with the excess of Catholicism and therefore, something to be avoided. Christmas was to be spent in worship, not in debauchery.

This went so far that, when a Protestant Parliament came to power in England in 1644, the members banned Christmas. This act caused rioting to break out in several cities. Canterbury was seized and held for several weeks by protestors who decorated doorways with holly and shouted Royalist slogans. The Reformation put an end to this law, but the Anglican Clergy still disapproved of the holiday, and as a result it remained a largely Catholic celebration for years to come.

This ardor was shared in America by the Puritans. In Massachusetts, observance of the holiday was outlawed from 1659-1681. Connecticut also passed a law forbidding the celebration of Christmas, as well as the baking of mincemeat pies.



THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTMAS IN THE U.S.A.

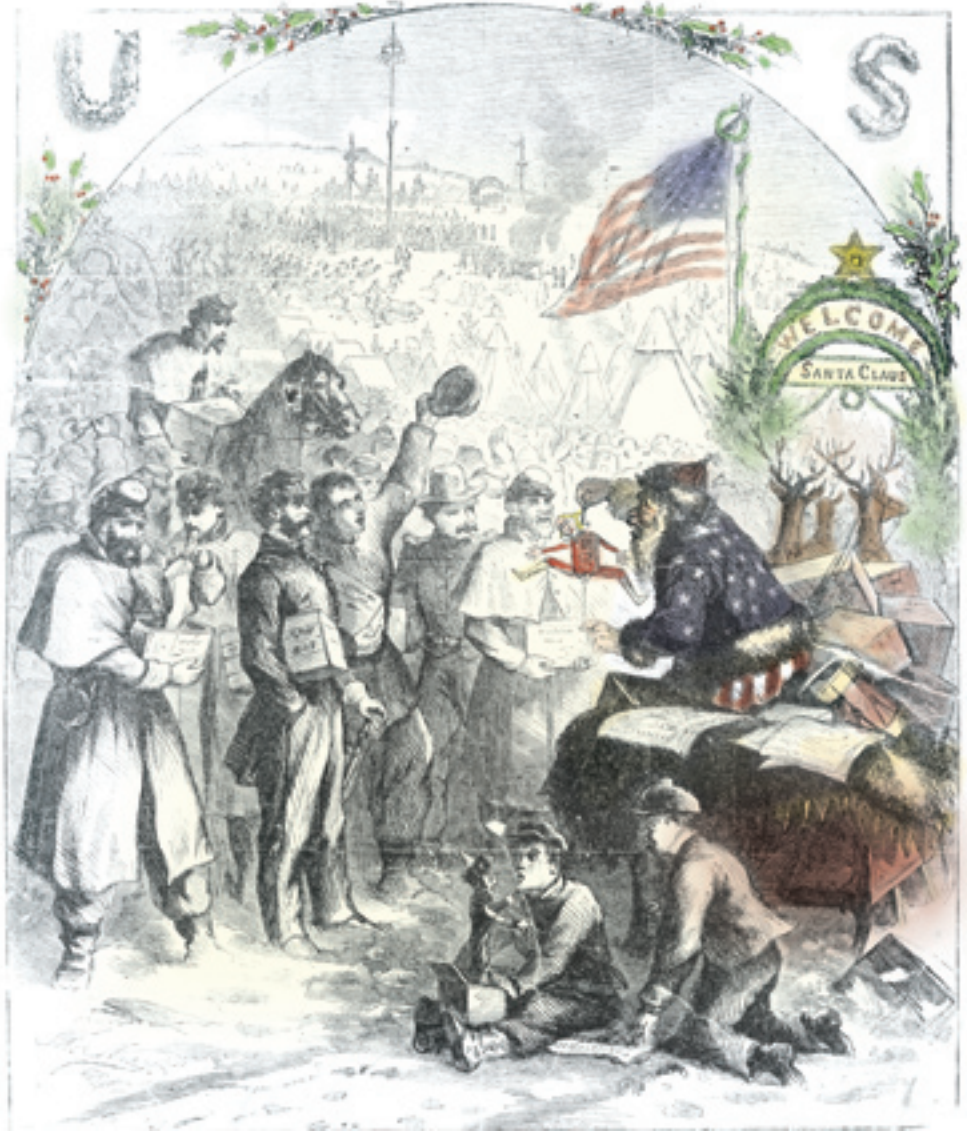
Christmas remained a “frowned upon” holiday during and after the Revolution, not only because of Puritan ethics, but because it was seen as an English custom. However, it didn't entirely die out during this time. German immigrants brought with them their traditions and began spreading them throughout the country.

It was one of these immigrants who is credited with setting up the first Christmas tree on American soil. This is disputed by other states, but Windsor Locks, Connecticut, claims that a Hessian soldier, imprisoned there during Christmas 1777 set up the first Christmas tree. After the war, he remained in America, and for the rest of his life, he continued to set up and decorate his trees.

By the 1820's, religious and sectarian tensions had eased and efforts were made to revive the holiday. Authors of the time seemed to take on the bulk of the work. In 1843, the book, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, did much for this effort by reinventing Christmas as a holiday about family, goodwill and compassion. Washington Irving's writings also helped revive interest in this almost forgotten holiday. Most notably his work *Old Christmas*. In 1822, Clement Clarke Moore published a poem called *A visit from Saint Nicholas*, which firmly established the connection between Santa Claus and Christmas in the American imagination. You probably know it better by its opening line: “T'was the night before Christmas . . .”

By the 1850's Christmas had begun to emerge as a national holiday of both religious and cultural significance. Businesses were closed for the day, and decorated trees became a fashionable trend throughout the country.

The Civil War only served to re-emphasize



SANTA CLAUS IN CAMP cover of *Harper's Weekly Saturday*, January 3, 1863.

the importance of Christmas. In this time, when the country was being torn apart, Christmas helped people escape the harsh reality of life by focusing on family togetherness and brotherly love. After the war, the homecomings of 1865 further reinforced

this view of Christmas. It was no longer a communal holiday of drunken celebration, but a time for being with your loved ones.

By 1870, almost all of the U.S. had embraced this celebration. In that year, perhaps in an effort to reunite the country, the government declared Christmas to be a Federal holiday.

From that day until now, Christmas has remained much the same. It has changed in increments, adding a tradition here, losing one there. It has also admittedly become quite commercial, representing the annual height of retail sales in the States. But, it is still, at its heart, a holiday about family, peace and love.

On this, the Christmas Season of 2006, we at GX want to wish you and your family, wherever they may be, a very safe and Merry Christmas. **GX**

The Civil War only served to re-emphasize the importance of Christmas. In this time, when the country was being torn apart, Christmas helped people escape the harsh reality of life by focusing on family togetherness and brotherly love. After the war was over, the homecomings of 1865 further reinforced this view of Christmas.



Hanging by a Thread

Air Assault School



Story and photos by Chris West

“Give me a good bound and three brakes to the ground! You read me?” the instructor barks at his student as he leans out into empty space. “Hooah, Air Assault Sergeant!” the Specialist responds, holding a near perfect “L” position, his feet on the platform and the rest of his body suspended above open space by rope, strength and sheer determination. The instructor runs a final safety check and yells, “GO!”

The Specialist immediately kicks forcefully away from the open-faced rappelling

platform loosening his grip so that the rope shoots through his hands. Dust flies and for a moment of breathless anticipation the Soldier freefalls, covering more than 20 feet in the blink of an eye. His hand snaps to the small of his back, and he suddenly comes to a halt, swinging slowly, still holding a perfect position.

The Soldier looks up to check with his instructor. “Good! GO!” booms down from above, and he falls another 20 feet. This time, his hand doesn’t quite make it to the small of his back and his stop is less than perfect. The grimace of displeasure on his face is

clearly visible as he looks back to the top of the platform and his unforgiving task master. “Get your hand in the small of your back! One deficiency! GO!”

With this, the Soldier drops another 20 feet, coming to rest just above the ground, braking hand firmly in the small of his back. He looks back up, a little hopefully. He gets nothing more than a non-committal grunt from the instructor who is glaring down from above. “Get off my rope!” comes the dismissive command. The Soldier drops the rest of the way to the ground where another instructor waits to tell the student, in graphic detail, exactly what he did wrong, and exactly how he’s going to fix it when he climbs the tower and tries it again.

Welcome to Air Assault School... National Guard style!

Air Assault is the use of helicopter or aircraft to move troops and material over extended distances, terrain and other obstacles in order to engage the enemy where it is most vulnerable. This means we can put troops where and when they are needed and keep them supplied from the air.

Mobility is a critical tool for any American warrior. Soldiers deployed around the world see extensive, daily use of both rotary and fixed-wing assets. The Global War on Terror has required unprecedented use of these aircraft for getting the troops where they are needed. Their ability to bypass the dangerous roads of Southwest Asia makes them one of the safest ways to move around in theater.

In order to operate as efficiently as possible on the modern battlefield, Soldiers must be capable of working on, around, and with these aircraft. They need to be familiar with a host of skills, from basic aircraft safety to conducting combat assaults from these birds.

Air Assault training for the National Guard has often been hard to come by. The National Guard’s Warrior Training Center (WTC) recognized a need and responded with its own Air Assault Course.

The brainchild of SGM Siter, the Commandant of the WTC, the program rotates between four different regions around the country. This allows National Guard Soldiers to attend training with less travel. Additionally, on request, the Air Assault course can come to a base near you specifically to provide training for your unit.

This is a truly intense course. In phase one, you learn all about aircraft operations including conducting an air medevac, hand and arm signals, combat assault, basic communication, entering and exiting the aircraft, load techniques, and pathfinder operations (setting up and operating a landing zone).

Phase two focuses on setting up, inspecting, and utilizing sling loads with rotary aircraft. These are the techniques for rigging and transporting just about anything from a pallet of construction materials to field artillery. For many, this is the most difficult part of the training.

The challenge comes with what is known as “dirty loads.” These are sling loads set up by the instructors with built in “deficiencies.” The students have two minutes to inspect the cargo load and spot each and every one of the problems. This task is so tough that in previous classes up to 25% of the class washed out on it.

Finally, after an incredibly hard week of training, the students are ready for phase three of their training. During this phase, Soldiers work their way up to exiting a helicopter hovering at 90 feet using nothing more than rope, gloves and a snap link. Troops will learn to tie their seats (rappelling harnesses made of rope) and hook up to a tower. They’ll then start on the ground, then move to rappelling on a 45-degree slant wall. Next, they’ll rappel down a wall side tower; this is the classic image of a rappeller bouncing down a wall. Finally, they move to open towers . . . 70 feet in the air and nothing but rope and their grip to keep them steady.

From there, it’s on to a Blackhawk Helicopter for the final exam: rappelling from the bird while it hovers at 90 feet. Previous rappels have been done under heavily controlled conditions. Now they are dealing with a moving platform, rotor wash, wind, and three other rappellers descending in close proximity. It’s a difficult task, but by this point the Soldiers are confident in their skills and usually breeze through this task.

Did I say final exam? There is one more test: To earn your wings you must complete a 12-mile road march in full ruck. Not too bad right? Wrong. You’ve only got three hours to complete the march.

There is a very good reason that anyone wearing Air Assault wings automatically gets a little extra respect. The physical requirements of this course are nothing short of brutal. In order to get in the course, you must complete an obstacle course and two-mile run. It is not unusual for fully 25% of the Soldiers signing up for this course to fail this test.

One of the biggest challenges they face is simply climbing a rope. Each Soldier must be able to quickly scale a 20-ft. tall rope, a fairly straight forward task if done correctly. “It’s a lower body exercise,” SFC Conaway said. “You lock in with your legs and stand up . . . lock in, stand up. People get into trouble when they try to do it all with their upper bodies.”

This theme of adherence to proper technique is one you’ll see again and again at this school. There is a right way to do things, a standard that has been established through years of refinement in the Darwinian crucible of combat, and there is exactly zero tolerance for deviation from that standard. The training itself changes over time to better reflect the realities faced overseas, but the core techniques, the proper way to sling a load, the proper way to rappel from a hovering

helicopter; well, let’s just say that if you want your wings, you better learn the standard.

It’s a tough and unforgiving course, but it’s fun as well. This high speed training is exhilarating, and the skills you learn will make you a better Soldier. And be honest with yourself: stuff like this is, at least in part, the reason you joined the Guard. Just think of the stories you can tell on Monday morning when everyone gathers around the water cooler. **GX**



FREE FALL (facing page) A student at the WTC Air Assault course practices “Australian” rappelling. This technique isn’t a required skill for the course; the Soldiers just do this for fun. **GO TIME** (above) Hovering 90 feet above the ground, two Soldiers prepare for their final exam: rappel out of a Blackhawk helicopter. They have been working off of towers all week but this is the first time they’ve jumped from an airborne vehicle. **END OF THE LINE** (left) It takes a lot to get here . . . you have to make it through a class that typically washes out more than a quarter of the students who sign up. But if you’ve got what it takes, you are in for the ride of your life. When these Soldiers touch the ground (and finish a 12-mile march) they will have earned their wings.

We're Not in Kansas Anymore

Courtesy Roush Racing Inc.

Kansas Speedway, Kansas City, is a racetrack Greg Biffle and the National Guard team look forward to visiting each year. This year, the National Guard team opted to take what they considered to be their best intermediate track racecar. It is the same car that Biffle won with at Homestead and Michigan last year and finished second with at Kansas.

The weekend got off to a rocky start as he was 31st in the first practice and qualified 29th. On Saturday, things turned around as he topped the speed charts in the first practice and was eighth fastest in Happy Hour.

After the drop of the green flag Sunday, Biffle began to pick his way through the field. By the time the first caution flag flew on lap 9, he was in the 23rd position. Biffle brought the National Guard Ford to pit road for two right side tires, fuel and a wedge adjustment. The team picked up several spots in the pits, sending Biffle out 18th for the restart on lap 13. Two laps later, the second caution of the day came out.

The team opted not to pit and Biffle restarted 14th. A caution on lap 57 gave Biffle the opportunity to pit for four tires, fuel and a wedge adjustment as he had reported that the car was loose into the corners and tight off.

Biffle restarted and began to make his way into the top 10. He had dropped back to 12th, when Jamie McMurray made contact with the wall, bringing out a caution on lap 130.

When teammate Matt Kenseth spun on lap 144, bringing out the caution, Biffle made a necessary pit stop and returned to the track in

the second position behind Clint Bowyer.

Biffle eventually dropped back to sixth, which is where he was running when Bowyer spun on lap 171. Biffle opted to pit for four tires, fuel and a wedge adjustment. He returned to the track in the sixth position for the restart when the next caution flag flew. Biffle opted to stay out.

The National Guard crew gave Biffle four fresh tires and fuel. No adjustments were made and Biffle returned to the track in the third position. He took the restart from the second position behind Jimmie Johnson. Biffle took the lead from Johnson on lap 199 and held it for two laps before dropping back.

Crew chief Doug Richert had informed Biffle during the last pit stop that they would not be able to make it on fuel. Biffle began to drop back with an ill-handling racecar and was running sixth when the team decided to make a green-flag pit stop for fuel and two right-side tires. Biffle returned to the track in the 20th position and was able to pick up eight spots before the checkered flag as other drivers were forced to pit for fuel as well.

"It was an unfortunate day for the National Guard team," said Biffle. "The biggest thing is I didn't have any fans working in the car, no A/C, no air, no water—nothing inside—nothing worked. It's just kind of the way our season has gone. We had a decent car, but we're still not where we need to be." **GX**

DOUBLE TROUBLE The #16 National Guard Ford casts a mirror-like reflection heading to the garage, following practice for the Banquet 400 at Kansas Speedway.



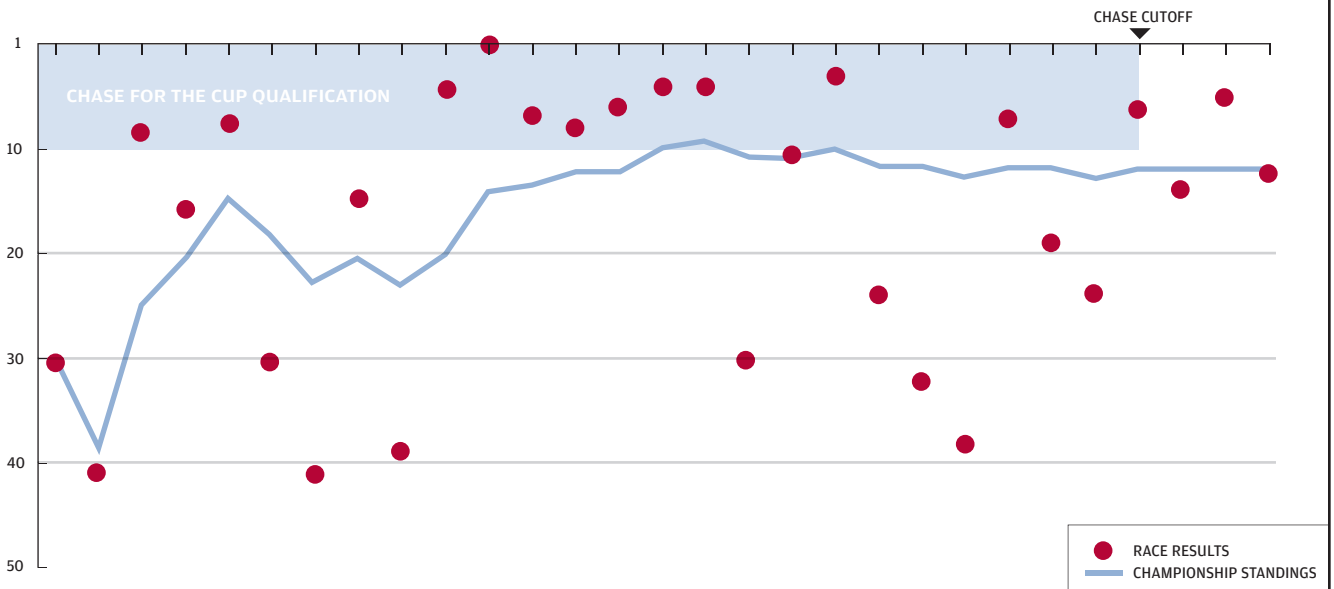
BRIAN BAHR/GETTY IMAGES



HUGGING THE LINE
 #16 National Guard car driver Greg Biffle races Robby Gordon around the track during the Dover 400 at Dover International Raceway.

MIXED RESULTS

Just when it seemed Greg Biffle and the No. 16 National Guard Ford were turning the corner this season, much of the problems that plagued the team earlier—fuel mileage, mechanical failures, and those pesky NASCAR penalties—came back to haunt them again. As the season comes to a close, the highest points position Biffle will be able to reach is 11th.



JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES FOR NASCAR

Taming the Monster Mile

Courtesy Roush Racing Inc.

Greg Biffle and the National Guard team showed that the Monster Mile was nothing to fear when they won the June race in 2005. This time, they returned ready to tame the “Monster” again, and while they did not walk away with the trophy, they did capture a very respectable fifth place finish. Some daring pit strategy in the second half of the race left them a lap down, but the team fought their way back to the lead lap and their sixth top-five finish of the season.

Biffle was second in the first practice session on Friday and went out later that afternoon to turn in the eighth fastest time in qualifying. In the final two practice sessions before Sunday’s main event, Biffle turned in consistent times in both sessions and felt confident with the National Guard Ford Fusion going into the 400-lap race.

Immediately following the drop of the green flag, Biffle reported that the car was a little loose and dropped back to ninth before the caution flew on lap 11. The field restarted on lap 15 and Biffle continued to report that the car was tight in the center of the corners and loose off. He was able to remain in the top ten, however, until a caution on lap 47 allowed him to pit for four fresh tires and fuel.

The National Guard crew returned him to the track in the eighth position for the restart on lap 52. Biffle continued to run just inside the top 10 despite reporting that the car was still tight in the center of the corners. He was back in the ninth position when the next caution came out on lap 98.

The crew again picked up a position in the pits, sending Biffle out in eighth. The handling of the car seemed to have improved, and Biffle began a steady climb into the top five. By the time the next caution came out on lap 164, he had made his way to the third position.

Biffle stayed out during the next two cautions and picked up second. On lap 204, another caution flag flew and the team opted to stay out yet again in order to capitalize on the track position. They were banking on another caution to come out before they would need a green flag pit stop.

Although Biffle was able to hold the lead for the next 60 laps, they were all green flag laps and he brought the National Guard Ford to pit road for fuel only on lap 264 as the rest of the field passed. He returned to the track in the 25th position and one lap down. Biffle was 13th on the board when the next caution came out on lap 297.

Biffle stayed out and along with four other drivers opted to restart on lap 306 in front of the leaders at the tail end of the lead lap. Biffle was able to hold on to the Lucky Dog position until the next caution on lap 322.

The National Guard team took the opportunity to bring Biffle in for the team’s final stop of the day. Despite reporting that the racecar was really loose, Biffle quickly made his way into the top 10 and was running seventh with 22 laps remaining. On the white flag lap, however, Biffle got by Kenseth and Reed Sorenson, who had both run out of gas, for his sixth top-five finish of the season.

“I’m really proud of this National Guard team today,” said Biffle. “We took a chance on pit strategy that just didn’t pay off but the guys didn’t give up and we were able to fight our way back to a top-five finish. I’m not really sure how Matt ran out of gas and I hated to see that for him. He had the fastest car today. I think we were a top-five car and it worked out that we were able to finish there.” **GX**



TIME FOR THE FANS Greg Biffle, driver of the #16 National Guard Ford, signs autographs for members of the National Guard, prior to the NASCAR Nextel Cup Series Dover 400.

JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES FOR NASCAR

GUARD EVENTS



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SPLASHDOWN Guard angler Ramie Colson nets a bass in his quest for the FLW Tour Championship crown.



FLW Tour Championship

Story and Photo by Kathy R. Williams -Through Our Lens, Special NGB Correspondent

National Guard pro bass angler Ramie Colson, Jr. advanced to the semi-finals and finished 19th overall in the FLW Tour Championship held at Logan Martin Lake in Pell City, Alabama, August 2-5. Teammate and western pro Tim Klinger fished in the first round and finished 46th overall.

Fishing practice started for the two National Guard anglers about a week and a half before tournament time. Colson said he had a good practice on the Alabama lake. Klinger had a rougher practice as an ear infection allowed him to practice only one and a half days before the opening-round launch.

Forty-eight FLW Tour pros, selected by their overall point standings from the 2006 season, competed in the championship.

The event featured a bracket-style format plus a cash purse of \$1.5 million. First place paid \$500,000.

Pros were seeded according to year-end standings and competed head to head during the first two days. Colson beat Brent Chapman in round one with a two-day weight of 19-07. Twenty-four pros went on to compete on day three in the semifinal round. Colson brought in a five-bass stringer on day three weighing 7-10. However, it wasn't enough to make it past 40th seed Brent Ehrler, who advanced and beat out 11 competitors to win the championship on day four.

Colson said at the end of day three, "I feel good about the way I fished today . . . I gave 110%. I'm just glad to make the top 48. The National Guard—I hope they're proud of me for what I've done. I know we're proud of them."

Colson added that he had set two goals

for next year: to make a top-10 win and to make the championship again for the National Guard.

Thirteenth-seeded Klinger fished against 36th seeded Steve Kennedy in the first round of competition. After day one, Klinger had a five-bass stringer and was leading Kennedy by eight ounces. But a brutal second day of fishing and only one bass in his live well left Klinger trailing by 6-04 on day two of round one. Klinger finished his 2006 FLW Tour season as Kennedy advanced to the semi-finals and then to the final 12.

Klinger said, "I did the best I could under the circumstances. I'm glad I made the championship, and I'm just looking forward to fishing in 2007 for the National Guard."

Even though these two National Guard anglers didn't advance to the final round, the Guard was involved in the final championship festivities in several ways. The 131st Airborne Division, ALARNG, Company F, provided transportation from the marina to the coliseum, via Chinook helicopter, for the 12 angling finalists and hosts of the FLW Outdoors show. For most of the fishermen, it was their first time riding in a helicopter.

Also, during the championship weigh-in on Saturday, fishing legends Hank Parker and Forest L. Wood, and National Guard BG Ray Carpenter welcomed Alabama Guard member LTC Ron Yarbrough and his wife on stage to talk to their deployed son, Matt, in Iraq, live via satellite. The family reunion was a touching experience for many watching the event on large screens mounted around the coliseum stage.

Matt said from Iraq, "We want to thank you as a group for all of you out there praying for us and thinking of us."

Even though the National Guard's association with the FLW Outdoors is not even a year-old, the Guard announced in July that they would host the 2007 National Guard Open as part of the \$9.5 million FLW Tour. The event is planned for April 26-29 at Lake Norman in Charlotte, N.C.

The National Guard also announced that they will sponsor a new \$10 million Western FLW Series division. The four, big-money, televised events will be held in California, Washington and Arizona. The tournaments, each with a \$1 million purse, will award \$10,000 cash through 50th place, and \$3,850 cash awarded through 75th place in the Pro Division. **GX**

For additional information on the FLW, go to www.flwoutdoors.com



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Part 3 of 3
By SSG Ken Weichert

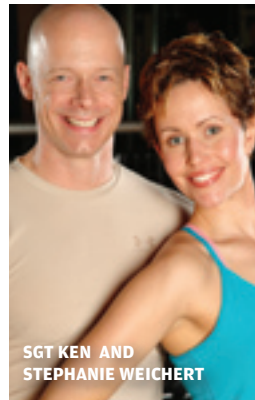
THE CARDIO AND CORE BLASTER!

The other day Stephanie and I were at our gym, and just before the workout, she turned to me and said, "Today I want you to try my workout plan." She had been asking to train me for months. Each time, I told her that I was on a specific fitness schedule. This time, I hesitated. I looked at her beautiful, blue eyes and suddenly lost complete control of any stopping power. Before I could stuff them back in, I heard the words "sure, that sounds great" pour out of my mouth.

"Did I say that?"

Filled with excitement, she smiled and charged forward toward our first exercise station. Following her, I felt the same panic as if I were back on day one of Basic Training. Her surprise exercise program dare not include a single argument from me, lest she believe SGT Ken could not keep up! I was there to receive her best "smoke session" and I had nowhere to go; and people in the gym were now watching my every move. One thing for certain was the anticipation of living in the "house of pain" the next day because of my very own blue-eyed Drill Sergeant of the day! "Bring on the House of Pain!"

Part 3 of Heavy or Not is a quick cardio and core blaster that requires absolutely no equipment. The following exercise routine is what Stephanie prepared for me. Warning: **This exercise routine includes exercises that are NOT for beginners!**



SGT KEN AND
STEPHANIE WEICHERT



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.

HOOAH! askthetrainer@startfitness.com
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BIG CORE NO MORE!

QUICK REVIEW OF THE HEAVY OR NOT:

- Part 1 *Upper Body Muscle Exploitation Day* (GX 3.4, pages 72-73)
Part 2 *We've got lower body answers* (GX 3.5, pages 75-76)
Part 3 *Big Core, No More*

- 1. Warm-up** (5-Minutes Running in-place or 50 Side-Straddle-Hops "Jumping Jacks")
- 2. A few rotation exercises and leg stretches** (2-Minutes)
- 3. Modified Plank Pose Dragging Knee Thrusts** [Pictured on following page]

This is the perfect way to start your core-strengthening routine. While performing this exercise, you are slowly warming up deep tissue muscle groups in the modified plank pose while also stretching lower back and contracting abdominal muscles during each knee thrust.

START POSITION: Assume a modified plank position by balancing on your forearms and on the balls of your feet or toes, feet together, forearms are shoulder width apart and both hands on the ground together or with palms on the ground. Maintain a flat back and do not allow your hips to sag towards the ground.

ACTION: While keeping your abdominal muscles as tight as you can, bend your left knee and drag it lightly on the ground across your body until it reaches your waist. Slowly return to the Start Position and perform the same steps with the other leg.

Basic - 4 reps, each leg; **Intermediate** - 8 reps, each leg; **Advanced** - 16 reps, each leg

- 4. Crunches**
Basic - 15 reps; **Intermediate** - 30 reps; **Advanced** - 50 reps
- 5. Modified Lower Back Bends** [Pictured on following page]

START POSITION: Carefully lower your body to the ground with your arms outward and bent at the elbows, hands slightly above your shoulders, palms on the ground, and your feet shoulder-width apart touching the floor.

ACTION: Slowly arch your lower back by tightening your rear end and lower back muscles until your legs and arms move upward. Slowly return to the Start Position.

WARNING: Do not jerk your body during this exercise. Perform the actions slowly.

Basic - 8 reps; **Intermediate** - 16 reps; **Advanced** - 32 reps

- 6. Flutter Kicks** (See GX 2.4 for exercise description)
Basic - 15 reps; **Intermediate** - 30 reps; **Advanced** - 60 reps

- 7. High Crawl Push-ups** [Pictured on following page]

START POSITION: Assume a modified Push-up Position by placing your left arm slightly higher than your left shoulder and your right arm slightly lower than your chest with your left leg bent at the knee and your right leg straight balancing on your toes or on the balls of your feet.

ACTION: Lower your body to the ground slowly by bending at the elbows. Slowly return to the Start Position. Do not switch positions until you have reached your repetition goal. This exercise can be modified by pointing your fingers downward with your lower hand only.

Basic - 4 reps; **Intermediate** - 8 reps; **Advanced** - 16 reps

In the guard, YOU CAN be fit. Just look at this guy—he turns 40 in November. Happy Birthday SSG Kent

High Crawl Push-ups



Modified Plank Pose Dragging Knee Thrusts



Modified Lower Back Bends



8. Crunches

Basic - 20 reps; **Intermediate** - 40 reps; **Advanced** - 80 reps

9. Dive Bomber Push-ups [Pictured at right]

START POSITION: Assume the standard Push-up position. Now widen your feet and point your rear end in the air.

ACTION: Lower your body to the ground slowly by bending at the elbows. Slightly drag your chest across the ground and press your body upward until your arms are straight and your lower back is arched backwards. Return to the Start Position by reversing the steps.

Basic - 2 reps; **Intermediate** - 8 reps; **Advanced** - 16 reps

10. Aerobics (Treadmill, Elliptical Machines, Running, or Cycle) – 5 minutes

Big Core, No More, levels:

BASIC 1 set = approximately 20 minutes *

INTERMEDIATE 2 sets = approximately 40 minutes *

ADVANCED 3 sets = approximately 60 minutes *

* Depending on repetitions per set and rest periods



SPECIAL REMARKS:

We encourage you to request additional information by emailing us at askthetrainer@startfitness.com or to exercise with us while watching our FIT TO FIGHT DVD series. If you are ever in San Francisco, come to our studio where Military and family members are always FREE. Our new Military line of tubing by SPRI Products is now available at www.startfitness.com.



UNIFORM REMARK: SSG Ken Weichert is pictured in the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) without the ACU Shirt in order to show you what muscles are employed during each exercise.

Dive Bomber Push-ups



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

FOR SPECIFIC APFT PREPARATION EXERCISES: Please refer to START Fitness in GX issues 2.6, 3.1, and 3.2 in www.gxonline.com past issues.

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAMAS GALLAGHER, NICOLE SYLVESTER; PHOTOS BY JONATHAN MILLER



Robert Portman

WELCOME DR. ROBERT PORTMAN TO THE START FITNESS™ TEAM

"In this issue, we are very proud to introduce Dr. Robert Portman, a distinguished nutritionist and exercise physiologist, and author of *The Performance Zone* and *Nutrient Timing* (Basic Health Publishing). He shares the same vision of helping Guard and family members worldwide by providing the absolute best health advice possible! With him on the START Fitness™ team, we stand ready to challenge you to be in the best shape of your life!"

—Stephanie and SSG Ken Weichert

If you have a question about nutrition in general or sports nutrition in particular, please e-mail Dr. Robert Portman at askthetrainer@startfitness.com

He will answer selected questions in an upcoming column. For more information about Dr. Portman, please refer to www.pacifichealthlabs.com.

askthetrainer@startfitness.com
pacifichealthlabs.com

Operation Calorie Control

by Dr. Robert Portman

If you are conscientious about staying in shape and maintaining your weight, the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's is a time of challenge. The average American gains one pound during the holiday season and never loses it. So the typical American, over 20 years of holiday eating, can put on 20 pounds of fat.

During the rest of the year, we concentrate on getting into the best shape possible. However, our objective during the holiday season is simply to maintain. This period is dangerous territory but that doesn't mean we cannot take defensive action to ensure that we do not become a weight gain casualty.

7 Tips to get you through the holiday season:

1. DON'T SKIP MEALS

It is quite common to skip meals or eat less before a major meal such as Thanksgiving or Christmas Dinner to "bank" calories for later. Unfortunately, your appetite doesn't work this way. You will actually eat more later because you are famished.

It is far better not to skip a meal and simply eat less. This will prevent a large increase in hunger, which results in enormous overeating.

2. SPOIL YOUR APPETITE

If you know you are going to a party where there will be great food and drink, take the edge off your appetite beforehand and you will eat less. The best pre-meal appetizers are those that have a little bit of fat and protein. Peanut butter is excellent for helping reduce appetite. A small dab of peanut butter on a celery stick contains only about 100 calories.

3. LIMIT YOUR PORTIONS

Portion control can save you an enormous number of calories. For example, an 8-ounce cup of eggnog has 350 calories. Have half a cup and you save 175 calories. The same strategy can be applied to desserts.

4. DON'T AUTOMATICALLY CLEAN YOUR PLATE

Stop eating your dinner when you are full, not when your plate is clean. When you reach level 4 on a 1-5 scale of fullness, put down the fork.

5. WALK AFTER DINNER

A recent study shows that if you exercise even moderately after dinner, you greatly decrease the deposition of fat in your arteries. Make a post-meal family walk a new Thanksgiving tradition.

6. LIMIT YOUR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Drink a non-caloric beverage such as water after every alcoholic beverage you consume. Since your stomach can hold only so much fluid, this strategy will slow your intake of alcohol calories (there are 130 calories in just one bottle of beer).

7. FOCUS ON HIGH-INTENSITY AEROBIC EXERCISES

Exercises such as stationary cycling, running and brisk walking that burn calories most efficiently. Twenty to thirty minutes on a stationary bike can help you burn 200 calories. That might not seem like much, but if you do it every day during the holiday season, you will bank 8,400 calories, which you can then apply to those desserts, second helpings and champagne.





YOUR NEW TITLE: SECOND LIEUTENANT



Become a leader in the Army National Guard – apply to Officer Candidate School. Wear the gold bar of a Second Lieutenant. Enjoy the respect, challenges and benefits of a commissioned officer. In the Army National Guard, YOU CAN!

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YOU CAN

CPT TIM'S FIELD GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS GIFTS



Having sweated it out in the sands of Afghanistan, Captain Tim knows what a Soldier needs. His practical, no nonsense tips will help you find the perfect gift for your Soldier.

Most of these products are available from the good folks at U.S. Cavalry, purveyors of fine military gear. Just visit www.uscavalry.com and search by item number (found at top of the item description) to get full details.



CPT TIM SAYS:
"Wherever this icon appears, I'll put my two cents in."



**BlackHawk® Warrior Wear™
Desert Ops Boot**
ITEM# 30372

BlackHawk® Warrior Wear™ tactical boots are made from the finest components making them light, comfortable and waterproof.

- Vibram® "Multi sport" rubber outsole with "Trak" compound
- Washable, Anti-Microbial, Ortholite® custom-molded footbed
- Durable, rubberized toe and heel reinforcements
- Dri-Lex® moisture-wicking inner lining
- Steel shank



**BlackHawk® HellStorm™ Fury
KEVLAR® Gloves**
ITEM# 27171

Ideal for tactical Law Enforcement or Military Ops. Lightweight, breathable, and features a cut-resistant DuPont™ Kevlar® back and full gauntlet for heat/flash protection up to 800°F (427°C). An ergonomically-cut leather palm provides superior grip and prevents bunching when clutching objects. Patented Quad Stitching allows customized removal of the index finger for enhanced trigger control, without unraveling.



Armor Skins™ Nomex® Flight Gloves
ITEM# 27509

Protection wherever the job takes you.

- DuPont™ Nomex® fabric and thread
- Flame and flash protective up to 800°F
- Soft leather palms and elongated cuffs for protection
- Imported
- Black, Olive Drab or Sand



"Get the long gloves to keep out sand and debris."



Military Style Compass

ITEM# 3304

- Liquid-filled with luminescent-marked dial and posts
- 1:50,000 meter map scale with adjustable sight
- Gasket-mounted eyepiece
- Die-cast metal
- Olive Drab



Garmin® eTrex GPS

ITEM# 25043

Truly a small wonder, Garmin® GPS receivers take world navigation capabilities and put them into an easy to use package that will literally fit in the palm of your hand.

- Global positioning system (GPS) receiver continuously tracks and uses up to 12 satellites
- Calculates current and average speed, time of sunrise and sunset, trip distance, and more
- Automatic track log-10 saved tracks let you retrace your path in both directions



“Small, light, effective.”



Garmin® Rino® 130 GPS

ITEM# 26163

The Rino 130 is the most feature-rich unit in the Rino family, with a built-in electronic compass, barometric sensor, weather receiver for seven NOAA weather channels, and 24 MB's of internal memory. The Rino 130 provides two-way radio communication with a transmission range of up to two miles using FRS channels and up to five miles with GMRS. The integration of two-way radio and GPS enables users to transmit their position with a simple button press, allowing others to navigate to their position.



“A lot of guys like the built-in radio.”



BlackHawk® 9V Falcata™ Flashlight

ITEM# 30126

The 9-volt Falcata™ incandescent light features a patented Xenon bulb, specifically designed for shock isolation against recoil and drops.

- 9-volt lithium battery powered
- 125 lumens
- Patented bulb system is designed to withstand the effects of weapon recoil



Combat Fighting Sling

ITEM# 28629

Unique stretch feature allows you to strike an opponent with weapon muzzle, while keeping the weapon slung and in the ready position.



“Much better than the issue sling.”



4-Piece Patch Conversion Kit

ITEM 29523

Cover up excess VELCRO® on your ACU sleeve with this conversion kit.



“So you don’t stick to your buddy.”



BlackHawk® CQC Carbon-Fiber Holster

ITEM# 26102

Instead of deciding whether to buy your holster as a belt loop or paddle model, BlackHawk® CQC™ provides you with both platforms for your holster. We give you the choice of how you want to wear it, since your needs can change from day to day. This is an example of how BlackHawk® CQC™ holsters give you choices where others give you limits.



“Paddle holsters are good behind the wire.”



CQB/Emergency Rescue Belt

ITEM# 15540

The Improved Last Resort belt is MIL-STD-858 certified and built with parachute quality buckles and adapters.



“Best belt out there. Much better than what you’re issued.”



'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING

If you've been looking for an opportunity to show your support and appreciation for our men and women in uniform, there's no better time than this Holiday Season. Thousands of families will be separated by thousands of miles, unable to share in the season together and leaning on those around them for comfort and support. The following is a list of a few of our favorite organizations that lend a helping hand to Guard Soldiers and their families. Whether you want to volunteer your time or donate money, visit some of the web sites below and find out how you can make a difference this Holiday Season!

A MILLION THANKS
www.amillionthanks.org

TREAT THE TROOPS
www.treatthetroops.org

CARING FOR TROOPS
www.caringfortroops.com

OPERATION CARE AND COMFORT
www.operationcareandcomfort.org

PACKED WITH PRIDE
www.packedwithpride.com

BOATSIE'S BOXES
www.boatsie.com

PROJECT PRAYER FLAG
www.projectprayerflag.org

LADIES AUXILIARY VFW
www.ladiesauxvfw.org

HEARTS ACROSS THE MILES
www.heartsacrossthemiles.org

OPERATION TROOP APPRECIATION
www.operationtroopappreciation.com

A SOLDIER'S WISH LIST
www.asoldierswishlist.org

OPERATION HOLIDAYS
www.operationholidays.com

GIVE 2 THE TROOPS
www.give2thetroops.org

SOLDIERS' ANGELS
www.soldiersangels.org

OPERATION GRATITUDE
www.opgratitude.com

ADOPT A PLATOON
www.adoptaplatoon.org

FOR MANY MORE, VISIT AMERICA SUPPORTS YOU AT
WWW.AMERICASUPPORTSYOU.MIL



Shemagh

ITEM# 22997

The Shemagh is the traditional head-dress of SW Asia, which evolved from the turbans worn in ancient times. A simple wrap-around head covering with fringes that can be found in every desert area of the world, essential for protecting eyes, nose, mouth and neck.



"We all had these in Afghanistan, just like the locals."



Spec Ops 8 in 1 Recon Wrap

ITEM# 25650

This tubular head garment, constructed from polyester microfiber is the Soldier's most versatile piece of gear. Keeps out harmful UV rays, gritty dust and sand.



"One word: Dust!"



ACU Boonie Hat

ITEM# 27463

Army Digital pattern to top off your new ACU.

- Mil Spec
- 50/50 Nylon Cotton Ripstop
- 360° brim for improved sun protection





Ka-Bar® Serrated Tanto Knife

ITEM# 19167

Oval-shaped Kraton G® thermoplastic elastomer handles. High-carbon steel (1095) blades. Hollow ground, epoxy-powder coated. Buff, polished edges. 2" triple-peaked serration. Powdered metal butt caps. Carbon steel guards, both powder coated. Blade length: 8" hollow ground. Measures: Overall 127/8". USA.



“Choose a knife with a sheath that can be easily strapped to your body.”

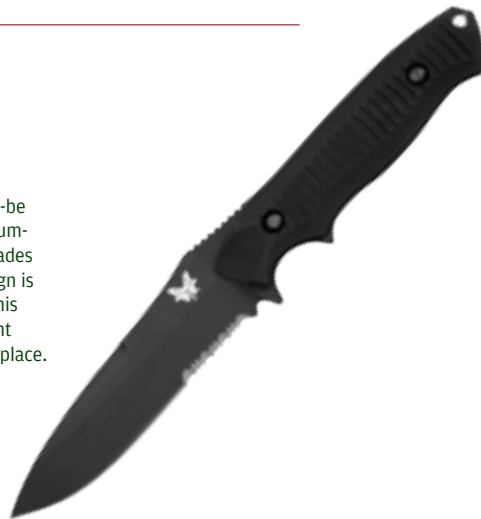


Benchmade Nimravus Knife

ITEM# 26389

A modern tip design towers like an obelisk in an endless spew of would-be challengers. Use of full-tang, premium-grade steel blade consciously dissuades any fear of tool failure. Sheath design is integral to a fixed blade knife and this one is no exception. A unique 3-point secure system holds the knife in its place.

- Overall Length: 9.45"
- Closed Length: 9.45"
- Molded nylon fitted sheath with belt loop



Captain Tim Says: “Don’t Send Beef Jerky!”

Beef jerky, baby wipes and foot powder aren't good gifts! Those sorts of things are widely available at the PX. Don't send them; it's just cruel.



Send things that remind your Soldier of home: Newspapers, local magazines, photographs, videos, leaves from the yard, a lock of hair, a child's drawing . . . whatever says home to your deployed Soldier.



Make sure everything is disposable. Soldiers travel light in a combat zone and may have to leave things behind. So, don't send the one and only picture of your wedding—go to a local camera store and get a copy made.



Here's an idea: Take your video camera and get your Soldier's friends, family and co-workers to record short greetings. Record the video to a DVD and send it overseas. Sound too complicated? Go to a CVS Pharmacy and pick up a single use, disposable video camera. For around \$50, you can easily record twenty minutes of video that CVS will put on a DVD for you.



Be creative . . . find that perfect gift that reminds your Soldier of home. After all, that's what he or she really wants for Christmas.



Revision® Desert Locust™ Deluxe Goggle

ITEM# 30265

The Desert Locust™ military goggle combines the best ballistic protection and widest field of view with a perfect facial and helmet fit, making it the ultimate protective eyewear for extended use.

- Meet ANSI Z87.1 and U.S. military eyewear ballistic impact requirements
- Three-tiered anti-fog system, including top and lateral-forced air vents, increased surface area and highest quality anti-fog coating; filtration media prevents small particle entry
- Widest field of view to enhance war fighting capabilities
- Superior anti-scratch hard coating; designed for use in extreme climatic conditions; resists a wide variety of chemicals
- 100% protection from harmful UV-A, UV-B and UV-C rays; optically correct lenses interchange quickly for various light conditions





Holiday Mailing Deadlines (for overseas military)

¹ EMMS is available to selected military post offices. Check with your local Post Office to determine if this service is available to your APO/FPO of address.

² PAL is a service that provides air transportation for parcels on a space-available basis. It is available for Parcel Post items not exceeding 30 pounds in weight or 60 inches in length and girth combined. The applicable PAL fee must be paid in addition to the regular surface rate of postage for each addressed piece sent by PAL service.

³ Parcels paid at Parcel Post postage rates are first transported domestically by surface and then to overseas destinations by air on a space-available basis. The maximum weight and size limits are 15 pounds and 60 inches in length and girth combined.

Military Mail Addressed to:	Express Mail [®] Military Service (EMMS) ¹	First-Class Mail [®] Letters/Cards	Priority Mail [®]	Parcel Airlift Mail (PAL) ²	Space Available Mail (SAM) ³	Parcel Post [®]
APO/FPO AE ZIPs 090-092	DEC 19	DEC 11	DEC 11	DEC 4	NOV 27	NOV 13
APO/FPO AE ZIP 093	N/A	DEC 4	DEC 4	DEC 2	NOV 27	NOV 13
APO/FPO AE ZIPs 094-098	DEC 19	DEC 11	DEC 11	DEC 4	NOV 27	NOV 13
APO/FPO AA ZIP 340	DEC 19	DEC 11	DEC 11	DEC 4	NOV 27	NOV 13
APO/FPO AP ZIPs 962-966	DEC 19	DEC 11	DEC 11	DEC 4	NOV 27	NOV 13

For full details, visit www.usps.com



Safariland 6004 Tactical Holster

ITEM# 22156

The Tactical SLS holster is built for comfort as well as functionality. This holster features SLS rotating hood system, which is so well-suited for the tactical situations encountered today.

- SLS for a smoother single-motion draw and greater protection
- Thermal-molded Safari-Laminate rugged finish, protects the gun against scrapes, scratches and dents



"The preferred holster of Special Forces."



WileyX SG-1 Interchangeable Sunglass/Tactical Goggles

ITEM# 22372

- The Patented SG-1 provides two functions in one: converting from a fashionable sunglass to low-profile goggle
- Eliminates the need to carry two sets of eyewear when it comes to outdoor activity
- Flexible, ergonomic frame is interchangeable and prescription adaptable to whatever conditions mother nature has in store
- Each lens is treated with anti-fog coating, providing protection from extreme changes in body temperature or weather
- Two 2.0 mm Ballistic selenite polycarbonate lenses
- Temples disengage with a push of a button and can be replaced with a snap

The Arts of War the Brothers West



Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty

Photos by Nick Del Calzo
Text by Peter Collier

Charging armed enemies with an unloaded weapon, flushing a machine gun nest with a rock, repeatedly crossing an open field under a hail of enemy fire to drag buddies to safety—these are only a few of the details that make up the remarkable and awe-inspiring collection of stories in *Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty*.

This beautifully laid-out anthology of the valorous tales of 132 heroes who were awarded the Medal of Honor is, at once, inspirational and humbling. Including accounts of events in World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, it offers a clear, concise retelling of the extraordinary acts of courage undertaken by each man in the service of his nation. Each spread represents one telling, making it easy to pick up and dive into.

While some of the content may be too intense for younger readers, the language is tasteful and refrains from being overly graphic. This newly expanded edition comes packaged with a 90-minute DVD of historical footage and first-person reflections from the recipients, making it an enjoyable and inspiring gift for fans of military history or anyone who appreciates that great heroes still walk among us.

The War Within—One More Step at a Time

By G.B. Trudeau

Once again, Gary Trudeau, the author of *Doonesbury* has penned a collection of comics that reveal a side of the military experience we rarely see: the recovery process of a severely wounded Soldier. In the first collection, *The Long Road Home: One Step at a Time*, he covered the wounding and physical healing process of the character B.D., a Soldier who lost his leg in Iraq. The treatment of this subject was well-informed, sensitive and completely supportive of the American Soldier; it is an amazing piece of work.

This book picks up where that one left off. B.D. has returned home, only to find that he is still fighting the war in his own mind. His problems get worse and worse, and before long it becomes clear that he is suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We follow him and his family as they come to the slow realization that something is terribly wrong. The novel relates B.D.'s decision to seek help and follows his recovery process as he comes to grips with his nightmare.

Trudeau spent an enormous amount of time speaking with Soldiers at various military and VA hospitals in preparation for writing this book. As a result, B.D.'s story is authentic, heartbreaking and at the same time, full of hope. While this is a work of fiction, it is also the true story of all Soldiers who have left a piece of themselves on the battlefield.



300

By Frank Miller and Lynn Varley

This graphic retelling of the Battle of Thermopylae proves, once again, that Frank Miller is the master of the graphic novel. He helped define the genre with his masterpieces *Ronin* and *Batman: The Dark Night Returns*. He reinvented it with his revolutionary *Sin City* series. Now, he takes it to the next level with a coffee table-sized, hardback novel that covers the heroic last stand of King Leonidas and his small band of Spartans.

In this, one of the most famous battles in history, a handful of Greeks, led by Leonidas and the Three Hundred, managed to hold off one of the largest forces ever assembled in the ancient world—the armies of the Persian King Xerxes. For two days, these Soldiers waged war with a force that Herodotus records as numbering in the millions. It is one of the most stirring tales of military heroism, bravery and sacrifice you'll ever find.

The artistic values of this book are simply stunning. The story is exciting and sweeps the reader along to the tragic and inevitable conclusion, while also providing an insight into the mindset of some of the toughest warriors in history. While not appropriate for children, this is a “can't miss” gift for adult fans of military history or graphic novels.

The Afghan Campaign

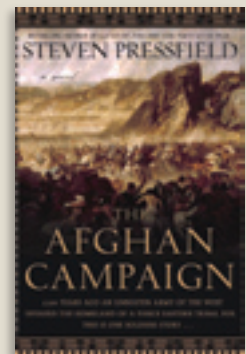
By Steven Pressfield

From the author of the widely renowned *Gates of Fire*, comes this excellent work of historical fiction which views Alexander the Great's invasion of Afghanistan over 2,300 years ago through the eyes of a single infantryman in the great conqueror's army.

In 330 B.C., long before Islam or Christianity, the greatest army the world had ever seen invaded Afghanistan, intending to subdue it in a summer's campaigning. Three years later, Alexander married his chief rival's daughter in an attempt to extricate his forces and proclaim a semblance of victory. This novel is exhaus-

tively researched and creates an engrossing sense of the brutal realities of war two millennia ago. The pace of the tale, its immersive detail and lean writing style, make the book a remarkably fast and enthralling read. Perhaps most impressively, Pressfield refrains from even the slightest attempts at editorializing or tying the tale to modern events. This allows history's own natural and astonishingly accurate parallels to step to the forefront without any distortion by modern politics.

Incredibly brutal and graphically bloody at points, this book is not for the faint of heart. However, for fans of Pressfield or those seeking a sense of the history of war in Afghanistan, this novel should not be missed.



The artistic values of [300] are simply stunning. The story is exciting and sweeps the reader along to the tragic and inevitable conclusion, while also providing an insight into the mindset of some of the toughest warriors in history.

Company of Heroes

Real Time Strategy for the PC

“Wow, what’s that?” Captain Tim said as he wandered into our offices. Apparently the chattering machine gun fire, shouted battlefield commands and bone rattling artillery barrages blasting from our office had caught his attention.

For the next half hour, he looked over our shoulders as we gathered Airborne troops and returned to one of our favorite virtual battlefields: World War II and the beaches and hedgerows of Normandy. Yes, we know, World War II is one of the most overused gaming genres out there. But c’mon, killing Nazi’s is fun. No matter what you do to them, you don’t have to feel bad.

Besides, as we discovered with the Captain’s help, this game is truly something new. As he watched, he began to suggest real-world tactics for us to try. Admittedly, at first we looked at him like he had sprouted a second head . . . What? Try something new? Heresy! For years, we’ve

been stomping real time strategy (RTS) games by massing huge numbers of troops and flinging them at the enemy. It worked in *Warcraft*, *Age of Empires* and every other RTS we’ve played, so there was no reason to think it wouldn’t work here.



Something strange was happening, though. Despite wave after wave of assaulting troops, the enemy fixed emplacements and armor just wouldn’t fall. Jerry was kicking our derrieres. So, just for fun, we gave Captain Tim’s suggestions a shot. We hit the Huns with some suppressing fire, flanked them, chucked some grenades, and sure enough, they folded like cheap lawn chairs. The closer we stuck to Army doctrine, the better we did.

The technical aspects of this game are amazing. Graphics, sound, destructible environments and a great physics engine really draw you into the story. Combine that with addictive fast-paced game play and this is a gift anyone will enjoy (be warned though, both the language and violence can be graphic).

When we were done, we turned to Captain Tim and asked him if he might like this sort of game as a Christmas present. He waved dismissively over his shoulder as he marched out of our office, “#&*% that, I’m going to buy it now.” **GX**

Texas' Miracle First Sergeant

1SG Ramiro Martinez

by Keith Kawasaki

"I saw him right before he hit us."

"That day our mission was to take my commander, my CSM, and the chaplain back to the air force base in Kandahar. We were en route on the outskirts of Kandahar, in one of the small towns that pop up in the middle of nowhere. There were five vehicles. I was in the middle vehicle and I was driving. The suicide bomber came from my right side and ran right into us, into my vehicle. As he ran into us, he ignited the bomb. Everybody asks me, 'Did you see the guy?' I saw him right before he hit us."

1SG Ramiro Martinez was born December 15, 1957, in the rural town of San Bonito, Texas. He knew he wanted to be a Soldier when he was just a kid.

"You ever see *Combat!*," asked 1SG Martinez, in a GX interview. "I wanted to be like one of those guys up there, killing bad guys."

"When Vietnam was going on, you always saw it on TV. You know how politicians are; they talk about how great we're doing. That got me going." And in 1975, 1SG Martinez enlisted into the Marine Corps.

"The recruiter used this video tape of what we went through in Basic Training, but just the icing, because when I got there, I thought I was in hell," continued 1SG Martinez. "But, I overcame and adapted."

During the sergeant's six-year career in the Marine Corps, he deployed two years to Okinawa, Japan. It was the Cold War-era, and 1SG Martinez served as a member of Force Recon, a specially-trained, elite Marine platoon. "We did things that people never knew we were doing," said 1SG Martinez.

Following the Marines, he began to build a civilian career and to study, of all things, accounting. Just a bit of a change to say the least. Yet, in 1982, while still in school, he joined the Texas Army National Guard at the suggestion of one of his older brothers (his two older brothers both served in the Army, one in Vietnam and one during the Cuban missile crisis).

Ten years later, as a staff sergeant, 1SG Martinez deployed with 3-141 Infantry for Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield (August 1990-May 1991). Following September 11, 2001, the sergeant was deployed to an Oklahoma ammunition plant for a year with the 1-141. "In the middle of nowhere, to be honest with you," said 1SG Martinez.

In 2005, his country called again, this time for Operation Enduring Freedom, with the 3-141. 1SG Martinez didn't have to go, but he agreed, knowing that he would bring valuable experience to the field. He deployed in May, but returned abruptly in June.

"Hey, things happen in war," said 1SG Martinez, of the injuries he received from a suicide bomber, June 13, 2005.

"After the explosion, I never lost consciousness," described 1SG Martinez. "I was just trying to figure out where everybody was. Before [the medic] even got there, the guy who was in the back seat was trying to help me, to put the first aid bandage on my ear because my ear was just hanging there. I didn't know my whole left side was paralyzed. And I actually did not know that I had a piece of shrapnel that had gone through my Kevlar. All I knew was we had been hit, and I was just trying to figure out who was hurt, who was not. I felt no pain, to be honest with you."

As a result of the impact, the Humvee was now engulfed in flames. 1SG Martinez was pinned down in his seat by the steering wheel, unable to escape.

"My arms were burned; my face, my ears, and part of my neck were burned."

Within five minutes, medics in the convoy, a vehicle back, were attempting to rescue 1SG Martinez and the three Soldiers with him. 1SG Martinez wasn't ready to be rescued, though, and fought them off so he could continue to yell orders, looking for security. The convoy was in an extremely hostile location. They could not exit the roadway because they were driving alongside a mine field. Just up ahead, they heard later, there was an IED waiting for them.



Once the situation was under control, 1SG Martinez was hurried off for further medical attention. In addition to the aforementioned injuries, he had suffered a traumatic brain injury, which damaged his skull and the right side of his brain. Also, on the right side of his jaw, all his teeth had been knocked out. 1SG Martinez was transferred to Landstuhl, Germany, and then on to Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Doctors would have little hope for any kind of substantial recovery.

1SG Martinez proved the doctors wrong.

"I'm about 80%," said 1SG Martinez, as he continues to make progress daily. "I set my goals and I've accomplished all my goals." Now, he has a new mission.

Doctors at Brooke Army Medical Center asked the sergeant, locally known as the "Miracle First Sergeant," if he would aid fellow wounded Soldiers with their mental recovery. 1SG Martinez earned the "Miracle" moniker from the fact that the doctors had doubts that he would ever walk again. As you can probably guess, 1SG Martinez does, in fact, now walk, and it's no surprise to him at all. "I set my own goals. I said at this time, I'm going to start walking... and I did. My next goal was, in May, before the unit comes back, to be jogging." And of course, this was no contest for the "Miracle First Sergeant." Now, 1SG Martinez can not only jog, but he can ride a stationary bike almost five miles at a time.

"Some parents and family, they tell me, 'You're my son's hero.' I say 'What? I haven't done anything.' I just talk to them," said 1SG Martinez. "I tell them, 'This is what happened to me. It's not the end of the world. All you've got to do is push yourself forward. Just thank your blessings you're alive. You're above the ground! You've made it this far, you can take the next step.'"

1SG Martinez makes the rounds to visit with as many of the Soldiers at the medical center as he can. He develops a rapport with them, joking and sharing stories, while encouraging them to keep moving forward in their lives. More than a few of the Soldiers that the sergeant spends time with are very young, and it's easy for them to lose hope and see only the present situation. 1SG Martinez transfers the same discipline he put on himself onto these Soldiers, urging them to never



HONOR AND SUPPORT (left to right) Mary Jane Martinez, 1SG Ramiro Martinez, and MG Michael H. Taylor, former 36th Infantry Division commander. 1SG Martinez was presented the Purple Heart August 6, 2005 in Austin, TX.

1SG Martinez replied, "Look at me. It did hurt in the beginning, but I overcame and adapted. You will do the same thing!" And sure enough, when that young Soldier finally returned home, she was walking, and her phone was ringing constantly.

Along with the mental strength he chalks up to the Marine Corps, the sergeant also credits his father Eloy Martinez as a major influence for his recovery and ability to inspire others.

"He would tell me, 'Finish what you started and never to give up,'" said 1SG Martinez. "Even though he was never in the military, the lesson's that he taught me have stayed with me always."

1SG Martinez received the Purple Heart for his injuries in August of 2005. At the ceremony, his wife, Mary Jane, sang *Proud to be an American*.

Prior to her husband's injury, Mrs. Martinez had a feeling some-

This is what happened to me. It's not the end of the world. All you've got to do is push yourself forward. Just thank your blessings you're alive. You're above the ground! —1SG Ramiro Martinez

give up and repeatedly telling them, "Hey, the worst is over!"

"I can tell you of a young lady who lost both her legs and was real badly burned," said 1SG Martinez. "She was in the worst, depressed mood you have ever seen. [Her world] just stopped there. I talked to her. I said, 'You know what, six months from now, you're going to look [great]—they've got the best doctors here—nobody will recognize you.' Her mom showed me a picture of her before, and she was really pretty. And now, she had seen herself in the mirror and was more depressed. She said, 'I'm all burned. I'm not the same girl.' And I said, 'Before you leave here, you're going to have guys calling you.' She told me, 'I have no legs, though.' And I said, 'But, you'll be able to walk!' And when she first started walking with her [prosthetic] legs, she would say, 'That hurts.' And she would start to cry."

1SG Martinez told her the tears and the pain was just her weakness coming out. The young Soldier told the sergeant he was crazy.

thing might go wrong during his deployment. When he left, she told him she would love him no matter what.

"I feel like I'm close to God. And it's just that feeling you get," said Mrs. Martinez in a GX interview, describing how she believes God prepared her for 1SG Martinez's injuries. And it's that faith in God that carried her through her husband's Guard deployments and gives her the strength to stand strong today. "I think if I didn't have this relationship I do with Jesus and believe in God, I don't think I would have been able to go through this. A lot of people, in the beginning, said, 'You're so strong.' And I said, 'No, it's not me, it's God.'"

The sergeant shares his wife's faith and feels God's plan allowed his injuries to occur, forging his role today as a mental therapist for young wounded Soldiers.

"If you were to ask me, who's my hero—it's my husband," declared Mrs. Martinez. "Definitely." **GX**



WARPATH



LEADING A PATROL TO PROBE A WELL-ENTRENCHED GERMAN FORCE NEAR OLIVETO, ITALY, SEPT. 22, 1943, ZLT ERNEST CHILDERS, 45TH ID, STEPPED IN A SHELL CRATER IN THE DARKNESS AND BROKE HIS FOOT FORCING HIM TO RETURN TO THE AID STATION FOR TREATMENT.



HIS ALL-NATIVE AMERICAN, OKLAHOMA NATIONAL GUARD UNIT HAD BEEN MOBILIZED IN 1940 AND THE CLOSE-KNIT GROUP HAD FOUGHT THROUGH NORTH AFRICA AND SICILY. MANY WERE ZLT CHILDERS' CLASSMATES AT CHILOCCO INDIAN SCHOOL, BACK IN OKLAHOMA, AND FOR THEM TO GO INTO BATTLE WITHOUT HIM THAT EVENING WAS NEARLY UNBARABLE FOR THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT.

WHEN DAWN BROKE, ZLT CHILDERS WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE HIS COMPANY PINNED DOWN BY THE NAZIS. COLLECTING AN EIGHT-MAN REACTION FORCE, ZLT CHILDERS SKIRTED THE HILL, DESPITE HIS SHATTERED FOOT, AND ORDERED HIS SQUAD TO LAY DOWN FIRE WHILE HE LOW-CRAWLED TOWARD THE GERMANS.



TWO SNIPERS CONFRONTED ZLT CHILDERS AND WERE QUICKLY NEUTRALIZED.



TWO MORE NAZIS IN A MACHINE-GUN NEST WITNESSED THE EXCHANGE AND TURNED THEIR GUN ON ZLT CHILDERS, SPRAYING HIM WITH FIRE. ZLT CHILDERS SHOT THEM BOTH.



THE OCCUPANTS OF THE SECOND MACHINE-GUN NEST, 30 YARDS AWAY, WERE HIDING IN THEIR FOXHOLE. ZLT CHILDERS TOSSED A ROCK INTO THE HOLE.



THE NAZIS APPARENTLY THOUGHT IT WAS A HAND-GRENADE AND JUMPED FROM THE FOXHOLE. ZLT CHILDERS SHOT ONE, AND A G.I. BEHIND HIM, KILLED THE OTHER.



FINALLY, AT THE TOP OF THE HILL, ZLT CHILDERS LEVELLED HIS WEAPON AT THE FINAL GERMAN, ONLY TO FIND THAT HIS WEAPON WAS EMPTY. ZLT CHILDERS SHOUTED "SURRENDER" WITH SUCH AUTHORITY THAT THE GERMAN THREW DOWN HIS WEAPON, ENDING THE ENGAGEMENT.



FOR HIS HEROIC ACTION ON SEPT. 22, 1943, ZLT ERNEST CHILDERS RECEIVED THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR, BRINGING CREDIT AND ESTEEM TO HIS COUNTRY AND HIS CULTURE.



THE END



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