

# **GX**

**THE GUARD EXPERIENCE**

p. 46

## **FURY AND FIRE AT BEST WARRIOR**

Inside the Guard's  
most intense  
competition

p. 82

## **OLYMPIAN- SOLDIER**

The sergeant  
who wrestled  
his way to London

# **GLOBAL IMPACT**

State by state, the Guard is spreading goodwill around the world—and making America safer

p. 60

## **SO YOU WANT TO BE A GREEN BERET?**

**STEP 1: ENDURE THIS WEEKEND**



# STEP UP TO YOUR FUTURE WITH A GED.

The National Guard's GED Plus Program gives aspiring Guard Soldiers the opportunity to earn their high school degree before Basic Training. It's just one aspect of the Guard that can change your future. Help someone else change their future by spreading the word.

# FEATURES

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2012 | VOL. 9, ISSUE 4



16

> COVER STORY

## 16 INTERNATIONAL GUARD

Through humanitarian missions, infrastructure projects, joint training exercises and more, Soldiers are building strong relations with countries around the world — and making America safer.

By Susan Katz Keating

> SPECIAL FEATURE

## 46 THE WARRIOR WAY

They came. They endured. They conquered. This year's National Guard Best Warrior Competition, featuring 14 of the grittest, savviest, hungriest troops in the force, was a showcase of character and Soldiering at its finest.

By James Sullivan



46

> LEGACY

## 54 SAVING MISSISSIPPI

In 1962, riots erupted when James Meredith, a young black man, tried to enroll at the University of Mississippi. But the Mississippi National Guard prevented more bloodshed.

By Brooke Lea Foster

> ON THE ROAD

## 60 BEYOND LIMITS

To find out whether you're Special Forces material, you must endure one of the most punishing week-ends in the Guard.

By Stephanie Inman

## 66 PRIDE AND PAIN

Before you can make it through four years at West Point, you have to make it through the first day.

By Christian Anderson



60

> STRENGTH

## 82 STAYING POWER

Tenacious in his training and explosive on the wrestling mat, Sergeant Spenser Mango reached his second straight Olympics. And before long, he'll be gunning for a third.

By Jeff Walter

> HERO

## 98 RELOADING THEIR LIVES

Thanks to the selflessness of a Delaware sergeant, many Wounded Warriors are discovering that getting back to the firing range can help rehabilitate body and mind.

By Jennifer Graham



98

IN EVERY ISSUE

5 LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

7 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

8 MAILBAG

10 RECON

106 AAR: LTG (RET.) RUSSEL L. HONORÉ



24

## 24 INTEL

**GUARD NEWS AROUND THE WORLD**  
The Guard helps battle wildfires across the Midwest and West; LTG Frank Grass is confirmed as the Guard's new chief; the Guard's own museum prepares to open an exhibit about 9/11; and more.

## 34 24/SEVEN

**A PORTRAIT OF NONSTOP PUBLIC SERVICE**  
Soldier, police officer, student and single mom, SSG Mary Jane Middleton finds fulfillment by making multiple sacrifices. *By Rachel Gladstone*

## 37 FAMILY

**EMPOWERING THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT**

- 37 Prepared for a disaster?
- 38 Get free tutoring
- 39 Helping teens cope with deployment
- 40 Secrets of a Guard marriage
- 41 How single Soldiers can meet new people
- 42 Make college more affordable

## 43 DOWNRANGE

**STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE**

Members of Kentucky's Agribusiness Development Team IV discuss the many ways they're connecting with Afghan villagers.

## 73 STRENGTH

**IMPROVING BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT**

- 74 Arizona program makes Soldiers more resilient
- 76 Hone your motorcycle skills
- 78 Conquer your fears
- 79 How to make a tourniquet
- 80 Alcohol's toll on the body

## 87 CAREERS

**YOUR WORK, YOUR FUTURE**

- 87 Tips for starting your own business
- 88 Paths to Special Forces
- 90 How to get a new MOS
- 91 How to transfer to another state
- 92 Guard-friendly employer: Nyemaster Goode
- 94 My specialty: Diver
- 95 Know your job rights
- 97 Leadership lessons from CW5 Gary Nisker

## 104 GEAR

**TOOLS FOR THE MODERN SOLDIER**

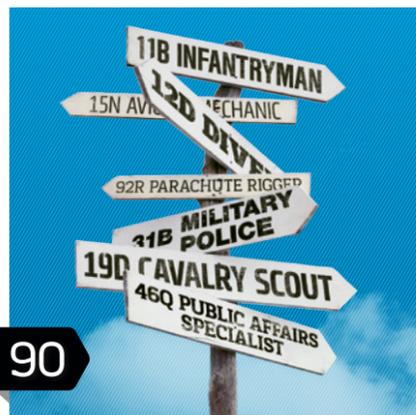
The M230 30 mm chain gun, paired with the M789 round, is one of the most lethal weapons on the battlefield.



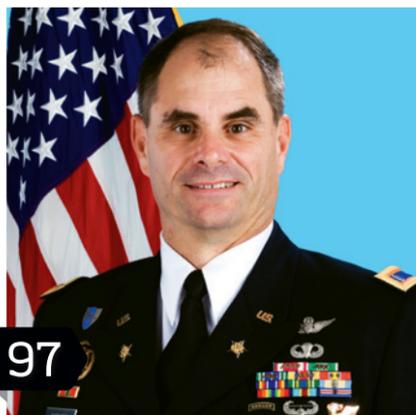
43



76



90



97

“**PERHAPS WE AS A NATION CAN LOOK TO THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED WITH HONOR IN THE MILITARY FOR INSIGHT INTO HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS.**”

## Soldiers,

General George Washington once said, “When we assumed the Soldier, we did not lay aside the Citizen.” He was referring to what our forefathers envisioned—volunteers willing to serve their country when the need arose.

Before we became a nation, we were militia-based: colonies of citizens willing to lay down their plows and take up their muskets. From that moment in time, and in each and every conflict of our nation, the National Guard has always played a huge role in defending the homeland.

Men and women who comprise each state's National Guard leave their communities, families and jobs during times of need. They take up their weapons and their tools, and leave to fight in our nation's wars and conflicts. Those who are fortunate return to their communities, families and jobs to contribute in both gentle and monumental ways.

When our nation eliminated the draft in 1973, naysayers said that a nation of our size would never be able to generate an all-volunteer military force, particularly during a time of protracted conflict.

Well, those naysayers were wrong.

While we have been engaged in the Global War on Terror for more than a decade, recruitment and retention remain high. Further, the honor and respect bestowed upon those who serve with dignity remain high.

Every assignment to which each member of our military responds takes extraordinary valor and a resolute commitment to preserve the precious privilege of liberty that we all enjoy. We reserve our utmost gratitude for the few who are serving for the benefit of many.

We recognize that so many National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have deployed multiple times both at home and abroad. We will make certain to care for those who come home with wounds, both seen and unseen.

Our hearts swell with pride when we see so many of our young men and women return from deployment and reintegrate into their communities. They have the abilities



and the aptitude to accomplish much more than they ever thought possible because of the life lessons learned while serving in uniform. They understand hard work, respect, loyalty, teamwork, time management and selfless service.

Perhaps we as a nation can look to those who have served with honor in the military for insight into how to solve problems. We owe to those young men and women who have volunteered to serve an opportunity to use the tangible and intangible skills they acquired in the National Guard to help rebuild our nation's economy in the workforce.

Recently, here in the heartland, our Indiana National Guard hosted a job fair with more than 150 employers. We opened it up to all service members and Veterans. We have confirmed that more than 100 have been hired from the event.

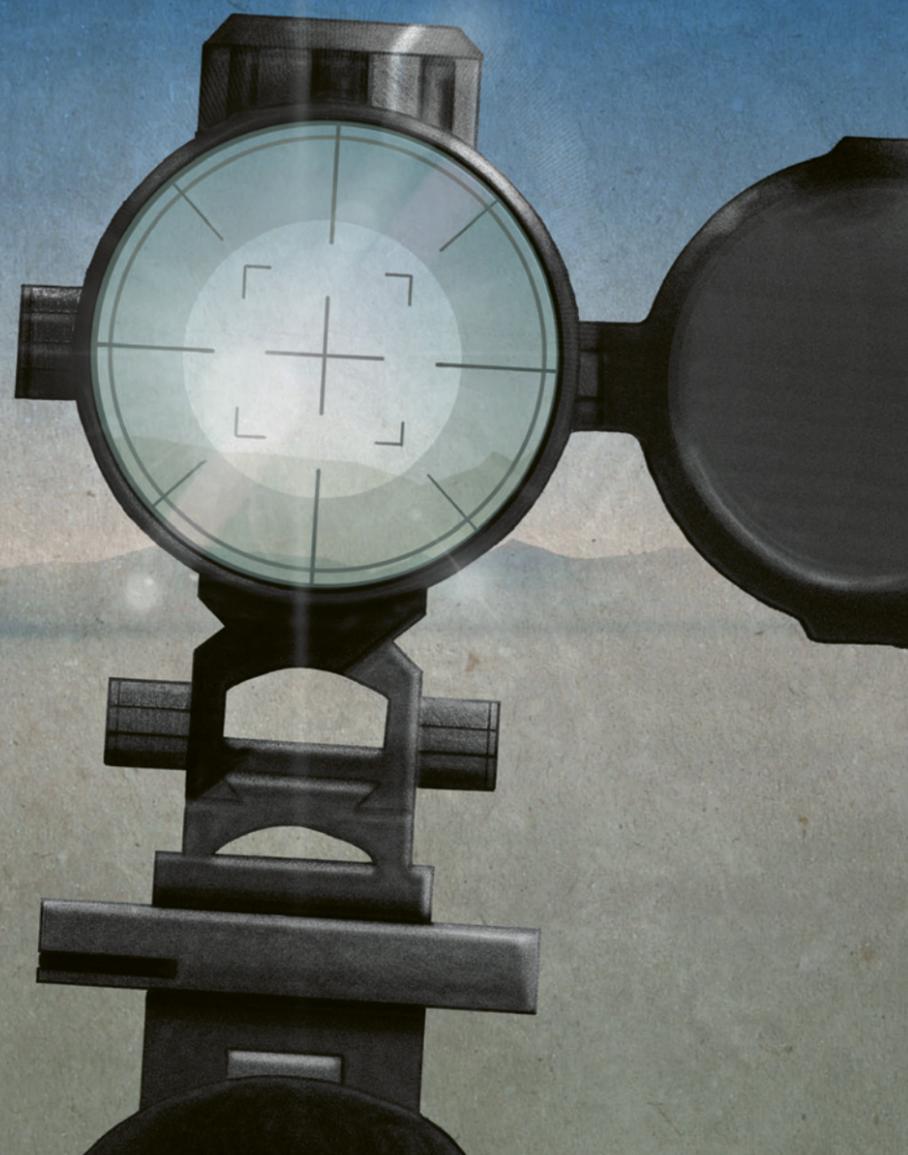
Security is our business, and the National Guard is security America can afford.

Sincerely,

Major General R. Martin Umberger  
Adjutant General, Indiana National Guard

# HELP US ADJUST OUR SCOPE.

WE CAN FOCUS ON OUR TARGET WITH YOUR FEEDBACK.



# GX

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

www.GXONLINE.com

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

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GX welcomes article and photo submissions from Soldiers, family members, employers and supporting agencies. Content may be submitted to stories@GXonline.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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## LETTER from the EDITOR



### ON THE COVER

The work of state units using their skills and expertise around the world benefits U.S. diplomacy and security significantly. See our feature on page 16. The cover of state patches was designed by Art Director Laurel Petty and illustrated by Gary Ingle.

## Battle of the Best

The path to the competition takes months. The preparation is all-consuming. And the weeklong contest itself is a unique marathon of strength and speed, will and wits.

The National Guard's annual Best Warrior Competition, which tests troops in just about every Soldiering skill there is, is so fierce that simply making it in is a career achievement.

At GX, we wanted you to experience the event, held this year in late July and early August, as if you were there on the ground. So we turned to two pros: Contributing Writer James Sullivan and GX Features Editor Christian Anderson. James, a contributing editor for RollingStone.com, has a gift for revealing slices of American culture, having written books on James Brown, the history of blue jeans and a one-of-a-kind football rivalry in Massachusetts.

"For a writer, covering the Best Warrior Competition was the best kind of assignment," James says. "Watching the faces of these exceptional men and women as they worked so diligently to prove how they've bettered themselves as Soldiers and people—and by extension have bettered the National Guard—was an absolute honor and a privilege."

Christian worked with James on his story (it begins on page 46) and was an integral member of a team that produced videos so vivid you could almost feel the sweat drop. (Check them out at nationalguard.com/bestwarrior.) To Christian, Best Warrior

makes a definitive statement about the troops in today's force: They're young, highly trained and tougher than ever. "It was like being at the military's version of the Super Bowl," he says. "The energy, passion and excitement was unlike anything else I've experienced since I've been at GX."

A big thanks to all the competitors who generated that passion – 14 of the baddest Soldiers in the country: Specialist Julian Batz (Nevada); Staff Sergeant Michael R. Bautista (Idaho); Specialist Isaac H. Chestnut (South Carolina); Specialist Jevon Daurbigny (Louisiana); Staff Sergeant Beau Detrick (Illinois); Sergeant Mark H. Fuggiti (Pennsylvania); Sergeant Matthew S. Howard (Arkansas); Specialist Ryan M. Johnson (Oregon); Specialist Clay J. Landry (Maine); Staff Sergeant Eugene A. Patton (Colorado); Staff Sergeant Brian J. Reighard (Pennsylvania); Specialist Jeremy P. Stotz (Ohio); Sergeant First Class Vanessa Urban (Massachusetts); and Staff Sergeant Richard R. Williams (Mississippi).

We can't wait till next year. Until then, let the train-up begin.

Thank you,

Mark Shimabukuro, Managing Editor

We want to know what you think about GX.

Take our short survey and tell us what you like, what you want and what we can do better.

# GX

THE GUARD EXPERIENCE

Visit [GXonline.com/survey](http://GXonline.com/survey)

today.

# Mailbag

YOUR THOUGHTS, PHOTOS AND STORIES

## DROP US A LINE

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

Email all comments and photos to editor@GXonline.com

## INTERACT WITH US

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

URL + /NationalGuard

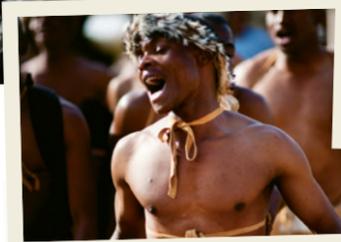


## GIVE US FEEDBACK!

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

## CORRECTION

Our feature on SPC Jenny Shinn in the July/August issue contained an incorrect photo credit. The photographer was SGT Cory Grogan. GX regrets the error.



## LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

I will never forget the people of Botswana. Their big smiles and genuine character welcomed us into their country and military community with open arms as if we were their own family. As part of Southern Accord 2012, I was able to document the largest U.S. combined, joint force humanitarian exercise in that country as a Guard Soldier. I am a 25V Combat Cameraman and 46Q Public Affairs Specialist (a photojournalist, essentially) and worked side by side with Airmen, Marines and Sailors during the mission, which brought U.S. service members from all ends of the United States and around the world to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, working with the Botswana Defence Force. I was able to perform my duties as a Soldier while pursuing my

passions as a photographer, enabling me to tell the stories of our military and the relationships we had built with our BDF counterparts. In addition to the military relationships and operations, I strived to provide the visual essence regarding life in the country of Botswana and the beauty in the people that characterize it because that is what each of our military members experienced for themselves during the mission. From the unforgettable people that have become our friends to the new handshake they taught us, the experience changed us—both as people and as Soldiers.

—SGT ADAM FISCHMAN

## SINCERE PRAISE

I have read your magazine, which is addressed to my son, who is currently at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, for Basic Training. After having served in the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy Reserve, and the Pennsylvania and New Jersey National Guards for nearly 32 years, this publication is an absolute inspiration and shows the direction of true leadership that needs to be conveyed to young Soldiers committed to the National Guard today. Thank you for your insight.

—PETER J. COCHRAN

Thankful for my husband's service in the @USArmy @NationalGuard and all they do for our family. @Zanedivaneh, via Twitter

## PERSONAL TOUCH

I was excited to see an article regarding the pre-Ranger course at the WTC in Fort Benning, GA. And I was absolutely ecstatic to see the article focus on Captain Gary Dettloff. I attended pre-Ranger from January 13–27, 2012, and I was lucky enough to be in A Company with Captain Dettloff and his cadre.

Only a month out of Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course (IBOLC), I had no idea what to expect. The rumors surrounding pre-Ranger and Ranger were intimidating to say the least, especially for me, a 35-year-old, brand-new second lieutenant in the infantry from New York City. Pre-Ranger was both physically and mentally demanding, and there is no doubt in my mind that it prepared me for the rigors of Ranger school. I went on to Ranger school, Class #04-12, and graduated without having to recycle any of the phases. Having my parents pin on my tab was one of the proudest moments of my life. The pre-Ranger course took the mystery out of Ranger school and allowed me to focus on what I would need to do in order to complete the mission. I owe a sincere debt of gratitude to Captain Dettloff and the rest of the A Company instructors.

—2LT ETHAN C. MENNEN

Shout out to the National Guard going into #Plaquemines Parish! Stay safe & save our fellow citizens! @jawbonin, via Twitter

## A LITTLE SISTER'S LOVE

A manila envelope arrived at GX magazine's Nashville office containing the following contents:

Dear GX magazine,

I am a mother of two Soldiers, with one currently serving in Afghanistan. I also have a 14-year-old daughter (Hayley Felton) who idolizes her brothers and deeply misses her brother who's deployed. Hayley is going into 9th grade this year and will be in the ROTC program, because she also wants to be a Soldier.

The reason I am writing this letter is that this past year when her brother was deployed, she wrote a poem. It was very touching to us. I thought it would be great to share with others in your magazine. I'm sure there are plenty of others who feel the same way as Hayley.

You will find enclosed a picture of Hayley and a copy of her poem in writing. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Kim Felton



## TOP OF THE (AFGHAN) MORNING

SGT Anthony Pruitt, a CH-47 crew chief with Co. B 238 GSAB, Ohio Army National Guard, plays his bagpipes in Afghanistan. Pruitt is a member of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Pipe & Drum Corps in Ohio, as well as a Hamilton County deputy sheriff.

## THE SILENT RANKS

I wear no uniform, no blues, or Army greens, but I am in the Military, in the ranks rarely seen.

I have no rank upon my shoulders, salutes I do not give, but the military world, is the place where I live.

I'm not in the chain of command, orders I do not get, but my brother is the one who does, this I cannot forget.

I'm not the one who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line, but my job is just as tough—I'm the one who is left behind.

My brother is a patriot, a brave and prideful man, and the call to serve his country not all can understand.

Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free. My brother makes the sacrifice, but so do I.

I love my brother Soldiering is his life.

So here I stand, among the silent ranks, known as an Army sister.



Hayley

**MOSS POINT, MS**

Members of Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) rescue stranded residents in Moss Point, MS, following Hurricane Isaac. In total, Mississippi National Guard Soldiers rescued more than 350 individuals along the Gulf Coast.



PHOTO BY  
SSG SHANE HAMANN



**KANDAHAR,  
AFGHANISTAN**

SGT Brian Reid of the Alaska National Guard talks with a local Afghan boy on Aug. 8 during a dismounted patrol to a Department of Public Works facility.

*Distance: Anchorage, AK, to Kandahar, Afghanistan: 5,491 miles*



PHOTO FROM  
U.S. ARMY

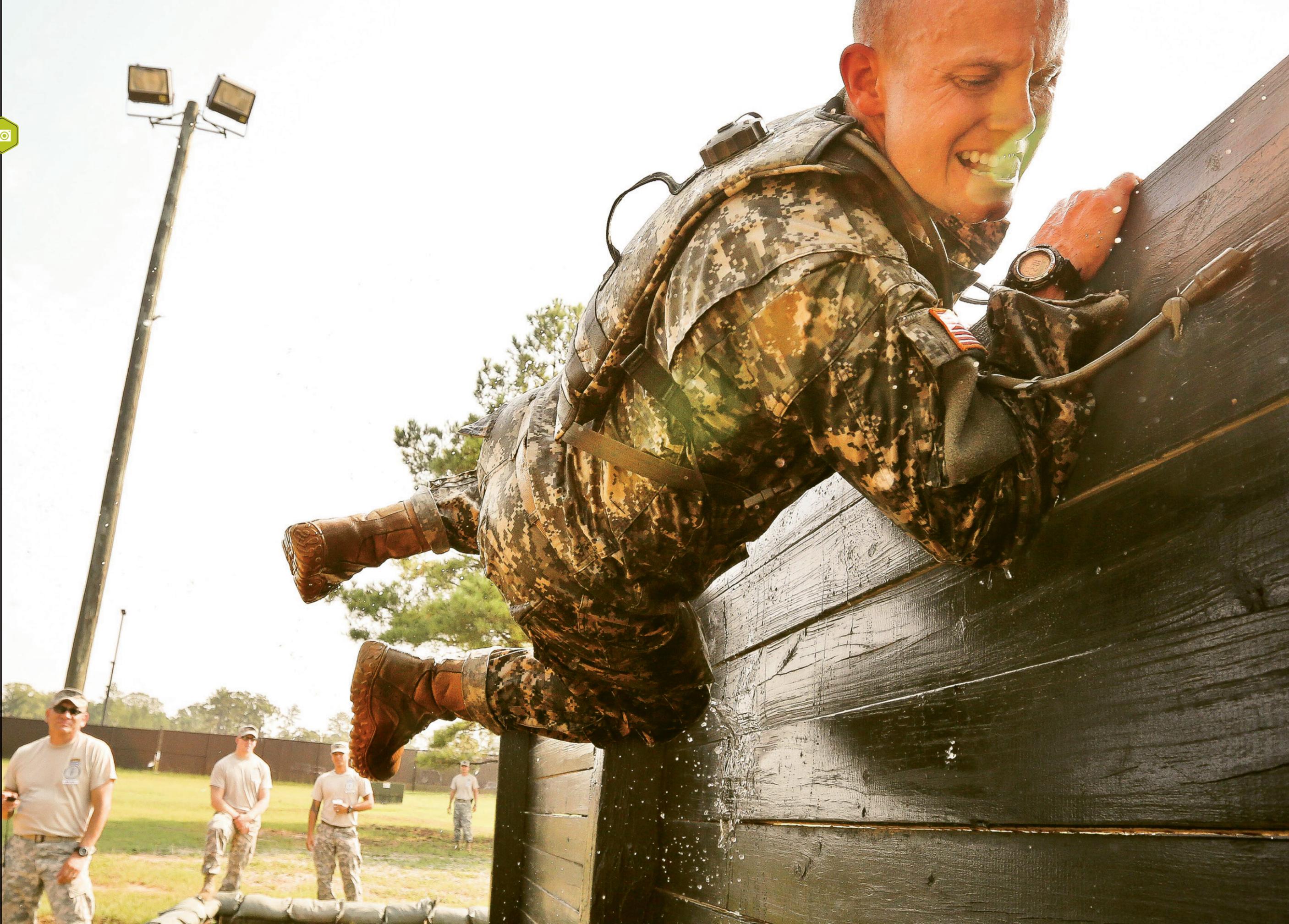


**FORT BENNING, GA**

Staff Sergeant Beau Detrick of the Illinois National Guard rolls over a 6-foot wall on Aug. 2 during this year's National Guard Best Warrior Competition at the Warrior Training Center. To find out more about the competition, go to p. 46.



PHOTO BY  
ADAM LIVINGSTON





# **INTERNATIONAL** **GUARD**

BY SUSAN KATZ KEATING

Through humanitarian missions, infrastructure projects, joint training exercises and more, Soldiers are building strong relations with countries around the globe, which bolsters America's security and global standing.



## A NETWORK OF FRIENDSHIPS

The state-nation relationship typically starts with a partner country making a formal request through the U.S. ambassador stationed in their country. That request then goes through the State Department and the combatant command, and on to the National Guard Bureau. Sometimes states can compete for the partnership, but not always. Here's a state-by-state breakdown of the global relationships, according to the State Partnership Program's Web page:

Alabama-Romania	Montana-Turkmenistan
Alaska-Mongolia	Nebraska-Czech Republic
Arizona-Kazakhstan	New Hampshire-El Salvador
Arkansas-Guatemala	New Jersey-Albania
California-Ukraine, Nigeria	New Mexico-Costa Rica
Colorado-Slovenia, Jordan	New York-South Africa
Connecticut-Uruguay	North Carolina-Moldova, Botswana
Delaware-Trinidad, Tobago	North Dakota-Ghana
District of Columbia-Jamaica	Ohio-Hungary, Serbia
Florida-Venezuela, Guyana, Virgin Islands	Oklahoma-Azerbaijan
Georgia-Georgia	Oregon-Bangladesh
Hawaii-Guam, Philippines, Indonesia	Pennsylvania-Lithuania
Idaho-Cambodia	Puerto Rico-Honduras, Dominican Republic
Illinois-Poland	Rhode Island-Bahamas
Indiana-Slovakia	South Dakota-Suriname
Iowa-Kosovo	Tennessee-Bulgaria
Kansas-Armenia	Texas-Czech Republic, Chile
Kentucky-Ecuador	Utah-Morocco
Louisiana-Uzbekistan, Belize	Vermont-Macedonia, Senegal
Maine-Montenegro	Virginia-Tajikistan
Maryland-Estonia, Bosnia	Washington-Thailand
Massachusetts-Paraguay	West Virginia-Peru
Michigan-Latvia, Liberia	Wisconsin-Haiti
Minnesota-Croatia, Norway	Wyoming-Tunisia
Mississippi-Bolivia	
Missouri-Panama	

lieutenant Colonel Fred Friel arrived early at the staging site, deep within the Cambodian countryside. He drove past the tents and canopies sheltering hundreds of people who had waited through the night for a chance to see him or his colleagues. He went inside the makeshift headquarters—a concrete floor schoolhouse, requisitioned for the important business ahead—and soon met with the day's first villagers, who spoke through interpreters to ask the Americans for help.

A newly declassified incident from 40 years ago, when the United States did not acknowledge a military presence in Cambodia?

Far from it. The scene occurred openly, only last year. Friel, a physician assistant from Boise, ID, went to Cambodia to administer desperately needed healthcare as part of a humanitarian mission with the Idaho National Guard.

The mission was but one of dozens the Guard performs on an ongoing basis in scores of countries around the world. From Norway to Uruguay, Jordan to Mongolia, and all points in between.

"The National Guard is active in places that probably would surprise a lot of people," says Senate Armed Services Committee spokesman Brian Rogers. "They do more jobs than I can list, working in tandem with foreign partners to meet mutual goals."

"It's one of the best things we do as members of the Guard," Friel says. "We give real help and make a real difference to underserved people who turn to us for assistance."

The Guard and the U.S., in turn, benefit in immeasurable ways. These missions strengthen diplomatic and military ties by establishing real and long-lasting relationships, educating our military about diverse cultures and geopolitics, and providing critical training for our troops.

Guard units have worked with overseas partners for decades. In the 1980s, for example, thousands of Soldiers embarked on training missions to Costa Rica, Panama and elsewhere in Central America and South America. And, reflecting the Guard's unique capabilities, the missions expanded beyond a traditional military role.

In Honduras, Soldiers built or repaired nearly 16 miles of roads. In Bolivia, they built schools and clinics.

"The military training went well, and that was great," says Colonel Mike Aberle, now chief of staff for the North Dakota National Guard and an engineer who went to Bolivia in the 1980s. "But I like to think we also left things a little better from us being there. When you build a school or a clinic, you leave behind something for them to use."

### "CROWN JEWEL" OF ENGAGEMENT

That "leave it better" principle later came into play officially, when the U.S. wanted to engage

peacefully with international friends who had been aligned with the Warsaw Pact. After the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, the United States looked for ways to go in-country to support nascent democracies in a manner that did not antagonize an old adversary, Russia.

The National Guard, with its unique structure and capabilities, fit the bill perfectly. Three states—Michigan, Pennsylvania and Maryland—each formed a Guard partnership with an Eastern Bloc nation (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, respectively). Those pairings evolved into the State Partnership Program (SPP), which matches individual states with foreign countries. The SPP has active pairings in more than 60 countries.

"This is a permanent, valuable program that fosters enduring relationships between countries and people," says Air Force Colonel Joey Booher, chief international affairs officer for the State Partnership Program. "It's one of the Defense Department's toolkit programs and serves as a model for how we work with other countries."

The program works so well that National Guard Bureau Chief General Craig R. McKinley termed it the "crown jewel" of the Guard's

international engagement.

At a July conference marking the 20th anniversary of the SPP, Kathleen Hicks, the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, credited the SPP as taking the lead in international partnership-building, though there are also other plenty of overseas missions that fall outside the SPP.

"Guard members' dual state and federal status affords them a broad range of skills and experience that are applicable to many challenges faced by partner nations," she said.

The partnerships are key to supporting both security and diplomatic goals. "The SPP echoes our international strategy," says Colonel Tracy Settle, chief of international engagement for the National Guard Bureau. "It's a small-footprint, high-impact, low-cost program that supports the interests of the United States."

All this, while helping our foreign friends. When the pro-democracy Arab Spring movement swept through Tunisia, for example, that country's military asked its partner, the Wyoming National Guard, for ideas on how to teach democratic values to young people. The Wyoming Guard already had its own U.S.-based Youth ChalleNGe program, which is

**Clockwise From Top Left:** SGT Davidson of Utah hugs his Moroccan counterpart in Kenitra, Morocco; GEN Craig McKinley and Serbian Army LTG Miloje Miletic review Serbian troops in Belgrade, Serbia; SSG Todd Payne of Virginia speaks with a Tajikistan Border Forces Soldier in Tajikistan; MAJ Shane Vania of Idaho poses with a girl after her dental checkup in Cambodia.



STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM  
BENEFITS  
AT A GLANCE

**Safety.** The relationships strengthen homeland security. For example, Washington state has helped its partner, Thailand, on critical infrastructure protection. Thailand has the world's 15th busiest port, and in 2010 one in three vessels leaving there was bound for Tacoma, WA.

**Employment.** In 2010, former Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton said the SPP relationships add "tremendous commercial value" to states and

that jobs have been created because of the relationships.

**Diplomacy.** When it comes to avoiding diplomatic turmoil, the bonds "can be profoundly preventative," Lawton said, describing these ties as "the fabric which holds us together even when there are disruptions in international relationships at the top."

**Influence.** By demonstrating expertise in their civilian fields, Guard Soldiers are serving as models for other countries. "Their actions are watched," Command Sergeant Major Robert Lawrence of the Colorado National Guard has said. "They're teaching an entire other nation what they do."

Source: SFC Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

geared toward teaching at-risk youth skills and discipline, and it helped the Tunisian military set up a similar program.

### THE FIRST STEP: LISTEN

National Guard missions abroad span a range of duties, based on what the partner country asks for. "We don't go in with a training plan and dictate," Booher says. "We ask questions, and we listen, the way a friend would discuss a problem."

"This is how you get such a variety of projects," echoes Captain Chris Borders, SPP director for the Idaho National Guard. "We consistently offer help, but each case is different."

North Carolina has assisted Botswana with integrating military intelligence into various operations. Virginia has shared medical information with Tajikistan. Minnesota has sent engineers to Croatia to build a kindergarten and facilities accessible to disabled persons.

Colorado worked with the Jordan Armed Forces on how to work with local and international news media, how to use internal communications to serve members and their families, and how to better tell their story

**Above:** Alaska and Mongolia have enjoyed a lengthy partnership involving humanitarian missions, tactical field training and even a combat deployment to Afghanistan. **Right:** After helping Ghana prepare proper flood response plans, the North Dakota Guard was able to fly their Ghanaian counterparts to North Dakota to see how the Guard Soldiers dealt with floods in Bismarck.

industry. Members of the West Virginia Guard taught their Mongolian friends how to keep mine shafts properly ventilated and how to maintain overall mine safety.

Elsewhere, New York has shared what it knows about handling domestic emergencies with its partner nation, South Africa. The Alabama Guard has a thriving partnership with Romania. The Florida National Guard works with Venezuela; Maine, with Montenegro.

### SPECIAL TIES

North Dakota helps its partner country, Ghana, on a wide range of projects. Soldiers have worked with the Ghanaian military on how to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance. In May, engineers from the North Dakota National Guard's 164th Regiment spent a week working with Ghanaian army engineers, exchanging techniques and ideas on how to address complex problems such as bridge design.

"The idea is to build their capacity," says Major Brock Larson, who runs the SPP for the North Dakota Guard. "We work with them a lot on deployment issues. We have a strong Family Readiness Group here in our state, and we work with them on pre-deployment and reintegration issues."

"It's a partnership for peace," Aberle says. "We go in and show them how we do things over here. It's not just related to military. We hope we can make things better for them overall. We hope we can help them grow their economy. It's a very close partnership."

The pairing has clicked particularly well in regard to disaster management. "Ghana has a lot of flooding," Larson says. "We show them ways to engage with civilian agencies, and how to handle disaster cleanup and public health, and how to maintain situational awareness during floods.

using social media. Colorado also trained female members of the Jordan military on issues including communication styles, deployment preparations, sexual assault prevention, and balancing work and home life.

West Virginia pitched in to assist another state, Alaska, in reducing mining fatalities with Alaska's partner state, Mongolia. Last year, Mongolia saw more than 100 fatalities in the mining industry. Officials turned to their Guard partners for help, but Alaska has little experience with mining. So the Alaska Guard looked for experts and approached West Virginia, where coal mining is a major

"There are things you need to know that you might not think of, if you are in charge of dealing with flood response. How do you work with civilian agencies? How do you get help, fast, to where it's needed the most? What do you look for in public health? Floods can bring water-borne disease, and you need to be aware of what to look for. What is your health response when a lot of people get sick at once?"

When North Dakota was hit with disastrous floods last year, an army colonel from Ghana came to the United States to consult with his Guard counterparts. He found that the state's flat terrain was similar to the landscape in Ghana, where a flood might cut a swath similar to what took place in North Dakota.

"He learned much from us," Larson says. "When he went back, he immediately began an emergency management center. He had so much gain from that visit."

The Guard has helped with the project and continues to work with Ghanaian armed forces on finding ways that a joint operations center can coordinate a response to flooding and other large-scale disasters, such as hurricanes or wildfires. "Ghana now is ahead of the game in Africa in flood response," Larson says. "They are motivated to be the best on the continent."

### MORE THAN ALLIES

Soldiers who have served in the overseas missions say one of their greatest strengths is that they foster strong international personal ties. Late last year, Booher saw this firsthand when he traveled to Macedonia with a delegation from the Vermont National Guard.

"Three of us—the American ambassador, the state adjutant general (TAG) and myself—went to visit the president of the country. As soon as

## STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AND SPECIAL OPS

Guard missions around the world are not limited to regular forces. The State Partnership Program, for instance, has a need for Special Operations Forces (SOF). "In the State Partnership Program, our activities are foundational," says Colonel Joey Booher. "They lead to other things. They involve humanitarian assistance and leadership development.

"SOF is out of the box. They train and operate in small units. They are trained to be the only U.S. presence in an area. They often have four to five experts going downrange for four or more days. They have language abilities, cultural knowledge and other skills. "Special Operations Forces are ideally suited to our missions."

the TAG walked in the door, the president shouted his name and gave him a bear hug. That's the level of rapport they developed."

Bear hug—basis friendships offer assurances to allies, Booher says, reminding them that the Americans are in it for the long haul. The relationships also help pave the way to getting things done. "When the chief of defense can pick up the phone and talk to his American counterpart about real issues, that sends a powerful message on both ends."

The relationships aren't limited to top-level officials, either. Soldiers who serve in the overseas missions form personal friendships that continue when the Americans return home. The international participants find one another on social media sites and keep tabs on one another's families and personal lives.

The ties also have brought powerful, unexpected benefits—such as one unusual project that sprang from an official pairing that began in 2008 between Oregon and Bangladesh on disaster management and mitigation.

"They are a lot like Louisiana, in that they have a lot of cyclones and hurricanes," says Colonel Mark Crosby, head of the Oregon SPP, talking about Bangladesh. "They also are concerned about earthquakes. With their capital city having a population of 7 million people, a Haiti-like earthquake could cause a catastrophe far greater than what happened in Haiti."

Bangladesh does not have American-type technology, Crosby says, but they do have huge numbers of people. "They looked at ways to turn that into an asset they could use to make up for what they lacked in technology," he says. "So they turned their focus to search and rescue." Crosby and the Oregon team helped the country focus on how to use their people as a resource during that stage and for first aid.

That facet of the partnership, along with bomb disposal training to work with old,

unexploded ordnance, was part of the official assignment. But the unexpected project sprang from the personal side.

"My Bangladeshi counterpart and I built a level of trust, and we got to be friends," Crosby says. "I was having dinner at the American Embassy, and in conversation, he mentioned that they wanted to upgrade their airport security."

As it happens, Crosby's civilian job is chief of public safety and security for Portland International Airport and the Port of Portland. "I knew exactly how to help him, since that's what I do every day back home," Crosby says. "Right there, we arranged it. I would help him work out a way to solve his airport security needs."

Now, in addition to the National Guard assisting in Bangladesh, the city of Portland sends teams to help bring FAA-level security measures to the airport. The project will economically benefit the small country nestled against the Himalayas.

"The Guard made the connection," Crosby says. "That's how it started."

## TWO-WAY EDUCATION

Soldiers who have gone overseas to help their partner countries say that the benefits work both ways. "We learn from them, too," Aberle says. "We get good ideas from our partners."

Borders, of the Idaho National Guard, says the unit's Cambodian colleagues might not have had modern gear, but they were good at field expediency and gave the Americans lessons in resourcefulness. "They did not have the equipment to remove an engine block, but they knew how to rig a lasso on a bent-over banana tree and pull out an engine," he says.

Participants speak also of reaping intangible rewards, with the biggest reward stemming from being able to help those who need it. Friel experienced this in Cambodia, on a mission that was outside the SPP.

"We went there to work with the Royal Cambodian military on a humanitarian medical aid mission," Friel says. The American team included two physician assistants, two physicians, two dentists, eye surgeons, medics, pharmacy technicians and assorted medical corps officers.

An advance group scouted the areas to prepare the medical team for the spartan Cambodian environment. Friel, who had never been to Cambodia, found it austere, indeed. "We set up in an elementary school classroom. We had desks, chairs, concrete walls and floors, and nothing else,"

MSG Karen Dumke of Wisconsin engages with a local Afghan family while on patrol during her deployment as part of a Cultural Support Team with Special Operations Forces.



he says. "We had no running water and no electricity."

Light was provided by the sun, which shone in through open windows that had neither glass nor screens. The medics brought their own propane tanks to supply power and were diligent about using portable sterilization equipment to maintain clean supplies.

The medical team stayed at a peacekeeping base, rising early each day to leave the compound by 5:30 a.m. and driving to the makeshift medical center to start seeing patients around 7 a.m.

The patients came from miles around. "They arrived the day before and lined up, and got numbers," Friel says. "They waited all through the night in order to see us the next day."

Medical team members set up tents, canopies and water stations for the patients who waited. "We didn't want anyone getting sick from being too long in the sun without water," Friel says. Security, too, was important. "We

had to keep security and prevent riot or panic if people thought they wouldn't be seen."

Friel and his co-workers generally worked through the day and saw patients until around 6 p.m. "We ate lunch when we could. We kept the flow going the entire time." After closing the clinic for the day, the team members worked until 11 p.m., packaging the bulk medicine for the next day's patients.

"We had ... so many levels of illness," Friel says. "We had mothers coming in to get vitamins for their children, and we had end-stage malarial liver disease or parasites or badly healed bone fractures."

For many patients, it was the first time in their lives they had received medical care. "For some, there was not a lot we could offer," Friel adds. "For others, we gave life-changing treatment."

"The dentists and the eye surgeons made huge differences in people's lives. The dentists alone had a huge impact on quality of life. They pulled rotted teeth, which instantly

made a difference. They alleviated real suffering. The eye surgeons removed cataracts and made it so people could see."

Friel recalls two children who came in with typhoid fever. "If not for coming to us, they would have died. We saved lives."

In the course of that three-week visit, medical team members saw up to 700 patients per day. In total, the team treated 5,416 people.

Friel and other Soldiers concede that the pace overseas can be brutal. Jet lag alone makes it tough to get up to speed, only to have to return home. Still, again and again, they say they love the work.

"When our members get back from Ghana, the first thing they say is, 'When can I go back?' and can they stay longer next time," Larson says. "They wish we had a higher OPTEMPO."

Says Booher: "This is how you make and keep friends. The National Guard is doing it throughout the world." **GX**

**New Guard Chief**  
GEN Frank Grass confirmed by Senate **26**

**To the Rescue**  
Florida Soldiers assist flood victims **28**

**Making History**  
Guard museum set to open 9/11 exhibit **30**

**Panther Strike**  
Utah hosts premier intelligence training **31**

**Show of Force**  
Minnesota shines in combatives tournament **32**

## NEWS & EVENTS IN THE GUARD



## Extreme Firefight

Soldiers team with first responders to battle blazes across the West

More than 10,000 people were forced to flee their homes in June as wildfires spread across the Western region of the U.S., hitting Colorado, New Mexico and other states. As civilians evacuated the area, the National Guard, along with other first responders, began battling the fires that raged across tens of thousands of acres.

Two months later, the fires lingered, although their expanse was greatly diminished, largely due to the efforts of the Guard. Soldiers from Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado and other states spent countless nights away from their families and jobs to fight fires such as the High Park wildfire near Fort Collins, CO, and the Little Bear wildfire near Ruidoso, NM.

The Soldiers deployed with UH-60 Black Hawks and Bambi Buckets on operations to suppress the fires, in addition to providing communication, refueling and security support.

Despite flames that rose stories above treetops, the National Guard never shied from the danger and worked 14-hour days. Some Soldiers had never experienced a situation of this magnitude, but they embraced the challenge.

When the 1157th Engineer Firefighter Company, Colorado National Guard, was called to support the High Park fire, it marked the first time the unit assisted with a domestic emergency. The Soldiers brought with them tactical trucks that fit the rugged terrain.

Unlike the cherry-red trucks that respond to household fires, the tactical firefighting trucks—officially known as heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks but affectionately called “beasts” by their crews—roll on eight heavy-

**Left:** A Soldier with the 1157th Engineer Firefighter Company, Colorado National Guard, sits atop a tactical fire-fighting truck while battling the High Park fire. **Right:** Three Soldiers with the 1157th clean up areas destroyed by the wildfire.



### ANOTHER FRONT

In the Midwest, the South

Dakota Army National Guard, along with about 300 local firefighter personnel, worked in July to control the 7,000-acre Myrtle fire, located about one mile east of Pringle, SD. They fought to contain and suppress the fire while protecting life, property and natural resources.

Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters conducted water-bucket drop operations and, along with several trucks, hauled supplies from Rapid City, SD, to the Myrtle fire and other fires throughout the Black Hills area.

“Bucket drops really support the firefighters on the ground, cool off hot spots, save structures and help get some containment on the fire,” said Matt Spring, the commander of an incident management team. “Helicopters won’t put a fire out by themselves but help ensure the firefighters’ safety by knocking the intensity down so it’s manageable for the firefighters.”

duty tractor tires for off-road maneuvering and are perfectly suited to attack fires in remote areas.

During the fight, the Soldiers worked efficiently alongside the civilian firefighters. “They understand us because of what we do on the military side, and we understand them because of what they do on the civilian side,” said Sergeant First Class John Schreiber, fire chief and first sergeant with the unit. “Their strategies and tactics are very similar to ours, and we fit in very nicely. We all understand chain of command and span of control, so it’s a natural partnership.”

Schreiber, his fellow Soldiers and the civilian firefighters worked from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. or later, to keep the fires at bay.

During wildfires like this, firefighters normally get two days of rest and relaxation for every 14 days on the line—until the fire is out or contained to the extent that an incident commander can start demobilizing assets.

Schreiber and the other firefighters slept in camps scattered throughout the area of operations. For these Soldiers, rest came in the form of sleeping bags and open air. Bathing wasn’t an option, one of many sacrifices the Soldiers had to make.

“I have a Soldier who is missing a wedding,” Schreiber said. “Another Soldier has a landscaping business that’s on hold, and one is missing a job interview, and not one of them has complained. They’re 100 percent volunteers. These are the kinds of personalities we draw. Every time you see them, they’re just happy to do their job. It’s a passion.”

The Soldiers’ determination was fueled by a sense of duty to protect those in need. “The first and foremost mission of any firefighter, civilian or military, is saving lives and protecting property, and that’s what we’re doing here,” said Schreiber.

“We can imagine how devastating it would be to come home and find that everything we care about is gone,” Schreiber continued. “It’s not the structure—the two-by-fours and the shingles—that matter, but the pets and the photos and the mementos that comfort that can’t be replaced. Those are hugely important to us.”

—Compiled by Stephanie Inman

## Prepared and Willing

Illinois Soldiers assist in bus crash

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** Firefighters and police officers throughout the Litchfield area came to aid the victims after a Megabus crash in August that killed one person and injured three dozen. Among those assisting the first responders were two Illinois National Guard Soldiers, Cadet Casey Fay of Edwardsville, with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in Litchfield, and Private First Class Christopher Morris of Robinson, with 445th Chemical Company in Shiloh.

“Their actions reflect selfless service,” said Major General Dennis Celletti, the acting adjutant general of the Illinois National Guard. “These two Soldiers refused to turn a blind eye to people in need of help.”

The two were driving from Camp Lincoln in Springfield, heading to their office at the Illinois National Guard’s East St. Louis Readiness Center, when they came across the crash. Morris said as they passed the wreck, they saw firefighters and EMTs assisting people at the scene. “We both felt it in our gut that we should get out there and help these people,” he said.

Fay, a combat medic and certified EMT, helped the first responders treat the victims. Morris, who just returned from a search-and-extraction class, assisted with litters and patient aid.

Fay said the first responders were happy to receive the additional help from the two Soldiers. They directed the two to help the walking wounded and get casualties onto stretchers to be transported for further treatment. They also assisted with gathering patient information.

After most of the walking wounded were triaged, they were loaded onto a bus to be transported to Litchfield Community Center for further medical treatment. Fay was assigned as the primary medic on one of the buses transporting patients to the community center. Morris stayed on scene to help more casualties onto stretchers to be transported to area hospitals. “We were glad we stopped and helped out,” said Fay. “They definitely put our skills to good use.”

—SGT Michael Camacho

# National Guard Bureau Welcomes New Chief

GEN Frank Grass appointed to new position

**WASHINGTON, DC** The U.S. Senate has confirmed Army General Frank Grass as the new chief of the National Guard Bureau and Air Force Major General Joseph Lengyel as vice chief. Grass assumed responsibility on Sept. 7, 2012.

Grass, who joins the Joint Chiefs of Staff as part of the appointment, was promoted from three-star to four-star general. The Senate action in July followed Grass' hearing a week earlier before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Grass, who has been deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command and vice commander of U.S. Element, North American Aerospace Defense Command, testified about the state of the Guard:

"Your National Guard is more ready, more capable and rapidly deployable than ever before in our nation's history and also ready to respond to disasters in our states, territories and the District of Columbia.

"The past decade has also demonstrated that the National Guard is an operational force and a critical partner with the Army and the Air Force in all missions, all contingencies and on the North American continent," he told the committee.

He attributed the Guard's transformation to previous bureau chiefs, Army and Air National Guard directors, adjutants general, senior enlisted personnel and, "most importantly, the sacrifice and commitment of the Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and their families."

As Guard Bureau chief, Grass told senators, "I will work to ensure the capabilities gained since 9/11 are not lost and the investment not squandered."

As the channel of communications to the adjutants general of the 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia, Grass also will partner with Congress, the Army and the Air Force to ensure the Guard's readiness and availability.

"To the men and women and families of the Army and the Air National Guard ... you can know that I will be your strongest advocate," Grass said.

Asked about the chief's role on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Grass said, "I [will] definitely have to bring forward the adjutants generals' and governors' thoughts, concerns, on the homeland mission. ... I also need to be able to balance that with the federal mission and deployable forces and be able to give my best



military advice to the secretary of defense as well as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs."

Grass told senators he is an advocate of the National Guard's 20-year-old, 64-nation State Partnership Program, with which he became well acquainted as director, mobilization and Reserve component affairs; at U.S. European Command; and at other points in his career.

## A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

Grass' military career began in 1969, when he enlisted in the Missouri Army National Guard. He served as a traditional Citizen-Soldier, juggling a civilian career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and family life with monthly Guard drills. He was promoted to staff sergeant, and his awards include the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development ribbon. In 1981, he was commissioned.

Grass, who becomes the 27th chief of the National Guard Bureau, succeeds Air Force General Craig McKinley, the first four-star

general and first to be appointed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the National Guard's more than 375-year history. Grass and his wife, Patricia, have five children and seven grandchildren.

Lengyel, the senior U.S. defense official in Egypt, will be the first three-star vice chief of the Guard Bureau. The position of vice chief was re-established and elevated to the three-star level by the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.

Lengyel is a command pilot with more than 3,000 flying hours, mostly in the F-16 Fighting Falcon. His 30-year career has included extensive service with the Texas Air National Guard and key assignments as commander, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan; commander of the Air National Guard Readiness Center at Joint Base Andrews, MD; and vice commander, First Air Force, Tyndall Air Force Base, FL.

—SFC Jim Greenhill

# Biological Defense Plan Issued

President's strategy to address threats

**WASHINGTON, DC** The White House has issued the first U.S. National Strategy for Biosurveillance to quickly detect a range of global health and security hazards, and the Defense Department has a running start in implementing the new plan, a senior defense official says.

Andrew C. Weber, assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs, says that many of the activities described in the strategy are ongoing at DoD.

"So much of what we're doing is integrating the efforts and working hard on the overlap between global security and global health, in what [President Barack Obama] refers to as global health security," he says.

Biosurveillance is defined as gathering, analyzing and interpreting data related to disease activity and threats to human and animal health in order to achieve early warning, detection and situational awareness.

In a letter that introduces the new strategy, President Obama says the United States "must be prepared for the full range of threats, including a terrorist attack involving a biological agent [and] the spread of infectious diseases and food-borne illnesses."

The strategy calls for a coordinated approach involving federal, state, local and tribal governments; the private sector; nongovernmental organizations; and international partners.

"It challenges us," the president writes, "to take full advantage of the advanced technologies, new vaccines, the latest science, and social media that can help keep our citizens safe. It describes the core functions and critical capabilities we need to succeed."

Monitoring and understanding infectious disease always has been a DoD priority, Weber says, "because for much of our history we've been a global force, and we've had to understand what we call exotic infectious diseases.

"Biosurveillance is about early detection and prediction of biological events no matter what their cause," Weber adds, "so we can save lives, so we can continue military operations and protect American citizens and our forces and families around the world."

—Cheryl Pellerin



## Missouri, Second Harvest Join Forces

**ST. JOSEPH, MO** The Missouri National Guard's Partners in Care initiative and Second Harvest Community Food Bank have formed a partnership to assist Guard members with another layer of support. The state chaplain's office uses Partners in Care to coordinate support for Soldiers and their families by teaming up with local faith-based entities. It's a network of networks that identifies church resources and refers troops to those services. "We are committed to building hunger-free communities and assisting military families in times of war, peace and after service," says Tamara Grubb, Second Harvest COO.

—Story and photo by Jennifer Archdekin



## New Citizen-Soldiers Honored

**WASHINGTON, DC** Three New York Soldiers celebrated the nation's birthday with President Barack Obama as American citizens for the first time following their naturalization ceremony at the White House. SGT Daniel Geneta II, SPC Alla Ausheva and PVT Fatima Rivera Fuentes recited their oath of citizenship with the president. "All of you did something profound: You chose to serve," the president said. "You put on the uniform of a country that was not yet fully your own. You displayed the values that we celebrate every Fourth of July — duty, responsibility and patriotism."

—Story by CPT Al Phillips; photo by Pete Souza



## All-Star Treatment for Guard Kids

**NORMAN, OK** Two children of Oklahoma Guard Soldiers received a big surprise when they were chosen to receive a scholarship for Kevin Durant's basketball camp. "Oh my gosh," says Cassidy McCann, daughter of MAJ Larry Marcy. "I'm a big fan of Kevin Durant, so I was really excited." The camp runs for two days and teaches kids the fundamentals of basketball and sportsmanship. Durant is in his fourth year of sponsoring this camp, held on the campus of The University of Oklahoma. This year had a record attendance of nearly 650 kids ranging from 7 to 18.

—Story and photo by MAJ Lindy White



## Vermont Trains in Macedonia

**MACEDONIA** About 40 Vermont Soldiers joined a dozen other countries in Macedonia in May for a two-week NATO exercise called Cooperative Lancer and Longbow. The operation was designed to enhance interoperability between participating countries. "To [NATO], the U.S. military is one of the most experienced in the world, and getting training from us was received as though it was an honor," says CPT Gene Enriquez, Vermont's deputy company commander. Vermont has had a good relationship with Macedonia via the State Partnership Program since 1993.

—Story by Senior Airman Victoria Greenia; photo by Senior Airman Sarah Mattison



## Atterbury Hosts Special Forces

**EDINBURGH, IN** Soldiers from West Virginia's 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group, trained at Camp Atterbury in June. They conducted specialized training, including airborne and convoy operations, and drilled on reacting to IEDs. The objective was to train them in their mission-essential tasks in a deployment-like scenario, wherein the unit deploys to Atterbury and Utah, establishes an operational footprint, conducts special operations and then redeploys home. Their capabilities now make them a "completely different" unit, says SSG Thomas Hungerford, a communication sergeant with the unit.

—Story and photo by SFC Matt Scotten

## Florida Guard Assists Flood Victims

Rescues and evacuations get residents to safety

**LIVE OAK, FL** The Florida National Guard supported relief efforts in several counties affected by widespread flooding after Tropical Storm Debby dumped large amounts of rain on its slow journey across the state.

Gov. Rick Scott, along with state adjutant general Major General Emmett R. Titshaw Jr. and several other state officials, visited residents in impacted areas in Wakulla, Suwannee and Pasco counties to survey the flooding and damage, and to talk to residents impacted by the storm.

"We just left the shelter here that has the citizens of Live Oak who lost their homes, who essentially lost everything," said Titshaw. "Talking to some of the people, it was very gratifying to hear when they told me they were rescued by the Florida National Guard. It's the reason we do what we do."

The Florida National Guard participated in several rescues of



local residents from the floodwaters in Columbia and Suwannee counties.

"The National Guard pulled up in a truck and I was like, 'Thank God,'" said Michaela Solomon, a resident of Live Oak who was rescued, along with her children, from her home by Soldiers from the Florida National Guard. "It

was such a relief to know we were going to somewhere safe. It was just a blessing that the National Guard came to where we were."

As of late June, more than 70 Florida National Guard personnel had been called to duty to support relief efforts. Due to rising floodwaters, Guard members were providing high-water tactical

vehicles to assist with rescues, evacuations and damage assessments in Suwannee and Columbia counties. For Soldiers from the 868th Engineer Company, the flooding hit close to home. Approximately half of the unit resides in the area, and several members were affected by the storm. —SFC Blair Heusdens

## Vacationing Officer Saves Child's Life

MAJ Jason Kettwig receives South Dakota Medal of Valor



**MILBANK, SD** Major Jason Kettwig, a Soldier with the South Dakota National Guard, was awarded the South Dakota Medal of Valor in June for the act of heroism he displayed while saving a young child's life.

Kettwig was relaxing poolside at a hotel with his family in Marshall, MN, Oct. 28, 2011, when he heard a scream. He looked around and saw a mother diving into the pool to get her daughter, who was unconscious. He assisted the mother in pulling the child out of the pool and, upon noticing that the girl had no pulse and had turned blue, immediately began trying to resuscitate her. She started gasping for air after two to three minutes of compressions.

Kettwig, who serves with the 139th Brigade Support Battalion, credits the combat lifesaver

training he received through the military and his local community for his ability to react to the situation immediately. He also says his experience could serve as a reminder of how important it is for all parents and grandparents to learn how to perform lifesaving resuscitation, and that the potential for something like this to happen is present every day.

The South Dakota Medal of Valor is awarded to any individual who, while a member of the South Dakota National Guard, distinguishes themselves by heroism—not involving actual conflict with an armed enemy—while in the Armed Forces of the United States. It is awarded for heroism while performing normal civilian functions and/or duties while a member of the South Dakota National Guard. —South Dakota National Guard

## Hope Through Healthcare

Alaska Soldiers aid underserved Mongolians

**ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA** At an elementary school in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, people—both young and old—lined the halls eagerly waiting their turn. The school had been set up as a medical clinic, and the classrooms were transformed into medical offices that ranged from pediatric and gynecological care to optometric and neurological services.

The clinic was part of the Medical Humanitarian Civic Action (HCA) Outreach Project, one of the many exercises of Khaan Quest 12, a multinational exercise in August hosted annually by the Mongolian Armed Forces that's designed to promote regional peace and security.

The HCA portion of Khaan Quest strives to provide an exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures; the exchange of medical services; and community outreach for the U.S. and Mongolian medical teams as they treat underserved communities. Among those on hand for this year's exercise were about 80 Alaska National Guard Soldiers.

During HCA, patients could receive eye exams, along with a pair of donated glasses. In Mongolia, many people can't afford glasses, explains Major Andrew Adamich, lead optometrist, 176th Medical Group, Alaska Air National Guard.

Children could also visit a pediatric specialist for treatment. Captain Tori Schmidt, physician assistant, 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, Alaska Army National Guard, treated and diagnosed a young girl suffering from rickets, which is often caused by malnutrition.

"Programs such as this one have a positive impact on the communities," Schmidt explains. "The people get free assistance and leave with what they need, whether it's advice and treatment or acute care."

Secretary of the Army John McHugh echoes her sentiment that this program significantly benefits both the community and the Soldiers.

"This has been a critically important opportunity, originally between the Mongolian and the United States Army—particularly through the Alaska National Guard—to get together to do interoperability training," he says. "Over the last several years, the objective has grown. We have many nations here."

—SGT Edward Eagerton



## Training Soldiers for Resilience

**WASHINGTON, DC** Citizen-Soldiers need effective tools for handling adversity and trauma. The Guard's Soldier and Family Services Division, along with the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, is now offering resources designed to develop the social, emotional, spiritual and family skills of Soldiers and their loved ones. More than 1,000 Master Resilience Trainers are available to provide quarterly training on how to cope with challenges and develop strong support networks. For helpful strategies, check out training programs at <https://g1arng.army.pentagon.mil/programs/crms>

—Story by Ronnie Brooks; photo by SPC Kristin Berg



## Georgia Wins TAG Defenders Cup

**MARIETTA, GA** The Georgia Army National Guard was champion by a landslide of the second annual Adjutant General's Defenders Cup competition, which pitted teams from Georgia's Army National Guard, Air National Guard and State Defense Force in a friendly head-to-head challenge of strength, fortitude and aptitude. After the State Defense Force won the first Defenders Cup in 2011, this year's Army National Guard team came back with a vengeance. The Air Guard, who had never participated before, finished second in the competition, consisting of a modified physical fitness test, a tug-of-war and a four-event round-robin.

—Story by PFC Andrew Badeen; photo from Georgia National Guard



## Guam Unit Trains Philippine Troops

**COTABATO, PHILIPPINES** Packing wounds and providing intravenous fluids in the field were just two of the skills a joint team of Guam Army National Guard Soldiers and U.S. Naval Hospital Guam corpsmen taught to Philippine Soldiers. About 80 members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines received 10 days of medical and equipment training during the Combat Lifesaver Course refresher and Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course at Camp Siongco, Awang Datu Odin Sinsuat, Cotabato City, Mindanao. They also were familiarized with the PA's new field litter ambulances.

—Story by CPT Ken Ola; photo from Guam National Guard



## 5K Raises Funds in Pennsylvania

**WELLSBORO, PA** Nearly 100 runners and walkers participated in the second annual Armed Forces 5K Run/Walk to benefit the Tioga County Honor Guard. The June event raised close to \$4,000 to purchase uniforms and rifle boxes for the volunteer Honor Guard, composed of local Veterans. Since forming in 2008, the group has provided burial and memorial services for former military members, in addition to performing at local ceremonies, parades and other community events. The cross-country race, held at nearby Nessmuk Lake, offered special prizes for Veterans and Active military members.

—Story by Ronnie Brooks; photo by John Harris



## Freedom Salute for Virginia

**WILLIAMSBURG, VA** About 40 Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Provincial Reconstruction Team Security Force Platoon were honored in July with a Freedom Salute for their service in Afghanistan. The Soldiers returned home in March after serving on Active Duty since June 2011. They performed more than 640 security missions supporting PRT Uruzgan as it worked to rebuild infrastructure, assist with agriculture, build wells and provide healthcare. The platoon saw no Soldiers killed in action or seriously wounded. During the ceremony, the Soldiers received the Virginia Governor's National Service Medal.

—Story by Cotton Puryear; photo by Tech. Sgt. Meghan Skrepenski

## The Guard and 9/11

New museum exhibit reveals sacrifices on that fateful day and beyond

**WASHINGTON, DC** In July 1976, the National Guard Association of the United States opened its doors to the first museum dedicated to record and exhibit the proud history of the National Guard: The Heritage Gallery in Washington, DC. It housed one of the finest collections of military artifacts in the country. In 1991, the museum received a new design and a new name: The National Guard Memorial Museum. While representing the Guard's role in the international arena, the updated museum depicted the main role of the Guard as emergency response to homeland disasters. And in a solemn ribbon-cutting ceremony in 2002, the Memorial Museum was updated to reflect the Guard response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

By this November, the National Guard Memorial Museum, located at One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, will add a dramatic new exhibition depicting the mission of the Guard since September 11, 2001. The exhibition will be called the 9/11 Era Gallery.

The most significant change to the Guard occurred on that date, when Citizen-Soldiers were called upon to defend home soil from the terrorist attacks. The new 9/11 Era Gallery will reflect the sudden urgency, the rapid response and the noble sacrifices made by the National Guard that fateful day and beyond. In order to tangibly show the effects of that day, the museum has collected artifacts from New York City; Washington, DC; Virginia; Shanksville, PA; and around the globe.

The museum team will present contemporary audiotape from air traffic control for the visitor to hear. The dramatic audio leads the participant through the initial events of September 11 as the hijacked aircraft begin their fateful descents toward New York. Accordingly, a centerpiece of the 9/11 Era Gallery will include steel girders salvaged from the wreckage of the World Trade Center Twin Towers, donated by New York's Port Authority and Fire Department. The girder and steel reinforcement pieces will be displayed for interactive handling. Encased in a protective cover, a piece of the Pentagon's west wall that survived the American Airlines Flight 77 crash represents the loss of 184 lives on that day.

Photographs show the National Guard and first responders as they rush to the stricken towers and Pentagon, and the exhibit salutes the unflinching support provided by the Guard in the days and weeks that followed.



The War on Terror began with the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, and to that end, the 9/11 Era Gallery will have an extensive display of equipment and uniforms from National Guard Soldiers who served in Operation Enduring Freedom and, by 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Included in the displays are uniforms from Special Forces Soldiers as well as computer equipment that survived the rugged terrain and combat conditions encountered in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

The National Guard defends the United States in life and in death. Therefore, included in the displays is a somber reflection of that uncompromising mission. A Memorial Wall commemorating the service and death of more than 700 Guard Soldiers will be erected, with individual plaques for each Soldier lost. Nearby,

a video montage will play back the faces, names, ranks and ages of each Soldier lost.

The National Guard Memorial Museum is the only national museum dedicated to the history of the National Guard. Through exhibits, educational programming and community outreach, the museum's mission is to broaden awareness of the National Guard as an integral part of American society. Located in the heart of the nation's capital, the National Guard Memorial Museum houses artifacts and relics from the entire history of the National Guard—from its first muster in 1636 to the present-day actions of brave Guard members at home and abroad. The museum comprises more than 5,000 square feet of artifacts, images and interactive exhibits telling the expansive story of the Citizen-Soldier.

—Anne Armstrong

PHOTO FROM NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

## School, Medical Clinic for Honduran Villages

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and residents gather for ribbon-cutting ceremony

**LA LIMA, HONDURAS** Soldiers and Seabees joined the people of Oriente and Morales, Honduras, for a ribbon-cutting celebration for a clinic and school in June. Both projects were part of U.S. Army South's Beyond the Horizon 2012 exercise, and provided a promise to improve life in the small communities in La Lima, says Chief Petty Officer Chet Kowalski of the Fort Belvoir, VA-based Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 23.



"This project had meaning to it," Kowalski says. "We're very thankful we've been able to complete it."

The task force commander, Missouri National Guard Lieutenant Colonel Robert Jones of Cape Girardeau, says these types of missions are a shot in the arm for the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who get to participate. "We have many missions," Jones says. "I've been a Soldier 37 years. Any time we have a mission to come down to Central America to work on projects like these, our Soldiers are very excited."

In his remarks, Jones told the people gathered that troops from three branches and 15 states had participated in the overall mission. He also thanked nearby residents for their support of the Soldiers and Seabees as they did their work.

Beyond the Horizon Honduras is an Army South-led exercise and is part of U.S. Southern Command's humanitarian and civic assistance program. U.S. Army engineers and U.S. Navy Seabees are working with host-nation personnel, building medical clinics and schoolhouses for the local Hondurans.

The town had been without a medical clinic for some time, Kowalski says. Likewise, the school gives the area children a modern schoolhouse to call their own.

"I've worked in construction for 20 years, but working with people who specialize in different areas was really rewarding," says Petty Officer Second Class John Filbey of York, PA.

—1LT John Quin

## Panther Strike Is a Whole New Animal

Military intelligence training event grows to meet changing demands

**CAMP WILLIAMS, UT** Panther Strike, a military intelligence training event that began over a decade ago as a battalion-sized exercise, has evolved into a completely new animal this year. Nearly 700 military intelligence Soldiers, trainers and professionals from 14 states, Guam, Canada, the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, trained at Camp Williams in June in the largest exercise of its kind in the U.S.

From the beginning stages of planning for this year's exercise, hosted by the Utah National Guard's 142nd Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion, 300th MI Brigade, the goal has been to expand the size and scope of Panther Strike to make it into the premier military intelligence training event in the nation.

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Green, commander of the 142nd and Task Force Panther commander, says that the exercise has recently shifted from a relatively small exercise, focused on human intelligence, to a large-scale multidiscipline exercise that incorporates human intelligence, signals

intelligence, counterintelligence and imagery intelligence, all acting at the same time in a real-world, deployment-based scenario, to prepare military intelligence Soldiers for the kinds of missions they face when deployed.

Incorporating all MI disciplines into a single, cohesive exercise is extremely difficult because of how complex the scenario has to be to allow for all the intelligence disciplines to train at the same time, the way it happens in actual deployed situations, says Green. But despite the inherent difficulties, Panther Strike leadership and planners have high expectations. "We have a big vision for the exercise to be a mechanism to train our Soldiers to be mobilization-ready and prepared in their collective military-intelligence tasks," says Green. "That's what I think we've achieved with this version of Panther Strike, and from here on out the brigade is intent on keeping the same kind of blueprint, still moving it around to its battalions, but keeping it at this level."

—SFC Brock Jones



PHOTO BY 1LT JOHN QUIN; SFC BROCK JONES

## Top-10 Fighters

Minnesota finishes strong at All-Army Combatives

**FORT HOOD, TX** Sixteen members of the Minnesota Army National Guard shone at the All-Army Combatives Tournament at Fort Hood, TX, in July.

"Once again the competitors from Team Minnesota set themselves apart from not only the rest of the National Guard, but the vast majority of the Active Army as well," says First Lieutenant Chad Malmberg, deputy officer in charge and Minnesota combatives team coach.

The Minnesota National Guard team placed sixth out of 28 teams and more than 320 competitors from around the globe. Combatives is the Army's training method for teaching Soldiers hand-to-hand combat along with instilling confidence, motivation, discipline and dedication.

Much of Team Minnesota's success can be credited to their high submission rate. Of their 63 total preliminary bouts, they had 30 of their 37 wins by submission. The competitors who advanced to the semifinals accumulated an additional three wins, all three by submission. This remarkably high submission rate is another testament to the technical superiority and



toughness of the Minnesota Guard competitors.

"As a Soldier, I can tell you that there may be nothing more frightening than engaging in armed combat with the enemy, but nothing comes closer to that than stepping into the cage

at the All-Army [Combatives]," says Malmberg. "Team Minnesota embodies everything you want and need in the men and women alongside you in combat, and elsewhere in life."

— CPT Joachim Eitenmiller

## DC Captain Brings Home Gold

Adjusting on the fly works out well for medevac pilot in skills competition



**HOEVELTE, DENMARK** Captain Leala McCollum, a medevac pilot with the 121st Medical Company (Air Ambulance), District of Columbia Army National Guard, was a member of a team that won the gold medal in the international category at the NATO Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers' (CIOR) Military Skills Competition, held in August.

The CIOR competition consists of a pentathlon with rifle and pistol marksmanship, land and water obstacle courses, and a 10-to-15-kilometer orienteering course, as well as Combat Casualty Care and a written test on Laws of Armed Conflict. Team and individual medals are given for each event as well as overall.

When a country brings more competitors than can form a three-person team, they are put into a pool

and teams are created. The U.S. team had two females, including McCollum, put into that situation when a third U.S. female was unable to attend. Four international teams consisting of two males and one female were created.

"Coming together last-minute was hard," she says. "I had prepared with my U.S. teammates, practicing events like the obstacle course. Then we had to compete with another team."

McCollum would go on to find that competing with an international team was one of the highlights of the competition. "The teambuilding with our international partners was the best part," she says. "We worked hand in hand with other nations. I learned a lot about other countries and how their militaries are structured."

— 1LT Miranda Summers Lowe

## Golden Opportunity

Soldiers learn from nationwide exercise for moving ammunition

**WINNEMUCCA, NV** Soldiers from the Army National Guard took to the road in July with troops from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps Reserves as part of Operation Golden Cargo, a logistics operation designed to move ammunition to military installations nationwide.

The operation involves more than 2,000 service members. "It provides a real-world mission for the Soldiers to accomplish," says Captain Robert L. Blankenship, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 329th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion, which took care of troops in Winnemucca, NV. "It's not just a training exercise. There's cargo to be moved. There's Soldiers to be taken care of, and there's a logistical side to all of it."

A few miles away was a staging area where service members exchanged trailers loaded with ammunition. By transferring the cargo from one truck to another driven by service members from a different unit, the operation maximized safety and kept the shipment moving.

Private Phil C. England, of Payson, AZ, began checking his vehicle after arriving at the staging area. He said he had been with his unit only about four months.

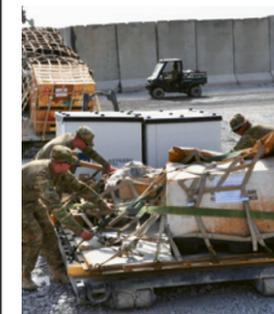
"It's all new stuff," he says of the operation. "It's a completely fresh environment."

The newness extended to England's vehicle—a Palletized Loading System truck—a type he had never driven before Golden Cargo.

"It's a bit of a learning curve, but it was good," he says.

Similar activities were under way at Blue Grass Army Depot in Lexington, KY. "Golden Cargo is the simple movement of ammunition out of the Blue Grass Army Depot here in Lexington, KY, to other depots within the United States," says Lieutenant Colonel David Gayle, battalion commander of the South Carolina Army National Guard's 1050th Transportation Battalion and Task Force Wildcat. "The purpose is to move ammunition to other depots for shipment to other parts of the United States Central Command to support the war fight for overseas contingency operations."

— SGT Daniel Haur; SSG Gary Witte



## Fearless in Afghanistan

**KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN** In July, the 781st Transportation Company of Alabama, which transports retrograde cargo from Kandahar Airfield to FOBs throughout Afghanistan, delivered Stryker parts and multiclass items to FOB Walton. SSG Joseph Anderson, a 39-year Army Veteran, says, "In the last 39 years I've seen it all, but the difference is that we're fighting an enemy who's much more fierce and aggressive. . . . We're always ready for the challenge, and that has always made our Army stronger." With that strength, the 781st completed over 30 difficult missions in three months.

— Story and photo by SGT Gregory Williams



## Hawaii in Botswana for Joint Exercise

**THEBEPHATSWHA AIR BASE, BOTSWANA** In August, Hawaii's Company B, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, deployed to Botswana, Southern Africa, for joint exercise Southern Accord 12, which united the U.S. Army and Botswana Defence Force troops for humanitarian and military missions. Company B transported four Chinook helicopters to the country, which were used for aerial support and to transport personnel and equipment between the base and training sites. "The Botswana Defence Forces are extremely helpful," says CW2 Darren Byler of B Company.

— Story by SGTs James D. Sims and Adam Fischman; photo from National Guard



## South Dakota Improves Afghan Bases

**FOB SALERNO, AFGHANISTAN** Members of South Dakota's 842nd Engineer Company have been making security improvements to bases in Afghanistan and improving their partnership with the Afghan National Army. One mission took place at FOB Salerno, in the southeast province of Khowst. After an enemy attack there in June, members of the unit helped dig a tank ditch around the base for increased security. "This mission really makes it feel like we are doing something with our skills, not just building and tearing down FOBs," said SPC Justin Symonds, a heavy-equipment operator with the 842nd.

— Story and photo from the 578th Engineer Battalion



## "Stop the Loss" Campaign Kicks Off

**WASHINGTON, DC** Since any personnel loss impacts a unit's readiness, the National Guard is ramping up efforts to prevent losses through its new "Stop the Loss" campaign. The program will promote resilience and risk reduction and coordinate health promotion, safety and outreach efforts. By collaborating with organizations such as the American Red Cross, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, and the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) Program, the Guard hopes to improve well-being of Soldiers and families, reduce behavioral health problems, and encourage people to seek help.

— Story by Ronnie Brooks



## Last AH-64A Apache Is Retired

**REDSTONE ARSENAL, AL** The last AH-64A Apache helicopter, aircraft 451, was "retired" from the Army during a ceremony on Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston in July. The event was hosted by Texas' 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack/Reconnaissance), the unit in possession of the craft. "It's like losing an old friend," says CPT Stacy James Rostorfer of the 149th. "That aircraft has saved my life; it has saved many lives." The aircraft will be disassembled, then reconfigured into the next generation AH-64D Apache Longbow.

— Story and photo by Sofia Bledsoe

# A STUDY IN DISCIPLINE

Soldier, police officer, student and single mom, SSG Mary Jane Middleton finds fulfillment by making multiple sacrifices.

by RACHEL GLADSTONE

Staff Sergeant Mary Jane Middleton is a force to be reckoned with. Not only has she served in the National Guard for 13 years—she's part of the 891st Engineer Battalion, Iola, KS—but this single mother of two is also a patrol officer with the Independence, KS, police department. She also recently earned her associate degree in multidisciplinary studies. For many of us, juggling so many endeavors would seem like an impossible feat, but 32-year-old Middleton has it down to a science. "It's all about time management," she says. "I work the midnight shift so I can spend time with my kids in the afternoons and evenings." She fits in the rest along the way.

In 2005, while deployed to Iraq, Middleton began her college education via online classes and, upon returning home, set her sights on a career in law enforcement. "After serving in Iraq for a year, I knew my mission in life was to serve," she explains. And by 2009, after a 2½-year stint as a corrections officer for the Montgomery Department of Corrections and a year as a Reserve Deputy for the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, her dream of becoming a police officer materialized.

Covering an average of 20 miles per day on the stationary bike and treadmill keeps the 5-foot-4-inch Middleton fit and focused. She credits the Guard with instilling her with discipline and believes her military training has given her the ability not only to set goals, but to reach them. "Being a Soldier has made me who I am today," she says. "It has given me stability."

Although she joined the military first, Middleton understands that the skills she learned as a Soldier go hand in hand with her chosen civilian career. But it's her love of helping people that keeps her on the job. "I know that what I do helps my community as a whole," she says, "whether it be catching a burglar or a drunk driver, or arresting some guy for [abusing] his wife."

Never one to rest on her laurels, Middleton intends to pursue a law degree while continuing her work as a police officer and Soldier. But first and foremost, she's proud to serve as a role model for her kids. "I want my children to know that no matter what life throws at you, anything is achievable as long as you set your mind to it," she says.

Middleton's advice to women who want to pursue a career in law enforcement is to "go for it," as she believes there's a need for females in the field. "As difficult or intimidating as it seems, women are very versatile, and we can do the job." **GX**

## MILITARY:

**Rank:** E-6, staff sergeant

**Unit:** 891st Engineer Battalion

**MOS:** Battalion S4 Section

**Length of Service:** 13 years

## PUBLIC SERVICE:

**Rank:** Patrol officer

**Unit:** Independence Police Department

**Length of Service:** 3 years



# 1

DEPLOYMENT  
TO IRAQ

MORE THAN

# 450

LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
CASES

136  
ARRESTS

582  
INVESTIGATIONS

648  
CITATIONS

AWARDS  
& BADGES

IRAQ  
CAMPAIGN  
MEDAL

3 ARMY  
ACHIEVEMENT  
MEDALS

ARMY  
COMMENDATION  
MEDAL

NATIONAL  
DEFENSE  
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Follow SGT Mark Fuggiti, 2012 National Guard Soldier of the Year, as he calls upon his training and discipline to compete in the 2012 Army Best Warrior Competition.

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 2012

# Family

EMPOWERING THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT

## 7 Items You Need to Be Disaster-Ready

Every household should be prepared for a natural disaster. Here are a few key supplies to include in an emergency kit.

BY JULIE ZEITLIN

**1 WATER.** Keep a three-day supply, enough for one gallon per person per day. Commercially bottled water is safest, but you can fill any empty containers—juice bottles, glass jars—with tap or filtered water. Keep commercially bottled water sealed until you need to use it.

**2 FOOD.** Have enough nonperishable food for each person for three days. Examples of these include canned foods, dry mixes and items that don't require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Some good choices are trail mix, granola bars, canned meat, crackers, candy and jerky. Be sure to include eating utensils.

**3 CRANK RADIO AND NOAA WEATHER RADIO.** In emergencies, you need a connection to the outside world. Crank radios work via a hand crank, so no electricity or batteries are necessary. NOAA radios broadcast national weather updates 24/7, and can be purchased at electronics stores and sporting goods outlets, in person and online.

**4 FLASHLIGHT.** You'll need it if the power is out. Make sure you have spare batteries. Flashlights powered by a solar panel or hand crank are also available.

**5 FIRST AID KIT.** Key items to include: disposable gloves; sterile dressings;

soap; antibiotic towelettes; antibiotic ointment; burn ointment; adhesive bandages; eye wash solution; scissors; pain reliever such as aspirin; anti-diarrhea medication; prescription medications and prescribed medical supplies.

**6 WRENCH OR PLIERS.** You'll need these to turn off utilities for safety. Natural gas leaks and explosions often cause fires following disasters. Water becomes a precious resource. Electrical sparks can ignite natural gas if it's leaking. All household members should know how to shut off natural gas, water and electricity.

**STAY INFORMED**  
 Have a family communication plan and make sure your whole family understands it. For ideas and guidance in formulating a plan, visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)

**7 MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES.** Staples should include: toiletries; cleaning supplies; toilet paper; hand soap; waterless shampoo; garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation; a dust mask to help filter contaminated air; plastic sheeting and duct tape to create a shelter if necessary.

**WHEN DISASTER STRIKES:**  
**What You Should Do in an Actual Emergency**

**TORNADO**  
 If indoors: Go to your basement or to the interior-most room of your home. Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down. If outdoors: Enter a sturdy building, or lie facedown on low ground, away from trees and cars.

**FLOOD**  
 If there's a chance of flash flooding, move to higher ground. Don't walk through moving water. Disconnect electrical appliances. Don't touch electrical equipment if you're wet. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car for higher ground if you can do so safely.

**WILDFIRE**  
 If you know about a wildfire, call 911. Don't assume someone else has already called. If you evacuate, close shutters and blinds to reduce the house's radiant heat, and place a ladder against the house to allow firefighters access to the roof.

This is not a complete guide. For more thorough instructions, visit [FEMA.gov](http://FEMA.gov) or [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)



## Get Free Homework Help

The start of the school year brings new opportunities for success. For many students, it also brings frustration over their studies. But Army National Guard families can get the help they need, when they need it, at no cost.

BY PAMELA BREHM, TUTOR.COM

**T**utor.com for U.S. Military Families is an online resource that provides free, personalized, 24/7 tutoring for Army National Guard children in grades K–12. This Department of Defense-funded program is offered to all K–12 students in National Guard families, regardless of the service member's deployment or duty status.

Tutor.com allows students to work one-on-one with a live tutor online for homework assistance, studying, test preparation, proofreading, essay writing and more. Support is available in all core K–12 subjects, including algebra, geometry, calculus, physics, earth science, world history and literature.

Students of all skill levels can benefit. Parents of younger or struggling students can log in and work alongside their children. Advanced students can get help with more challenging

coursework. Feedback collected from Tutor.com users shows that students who use its resources are more confident in their schoolwork, complete more homework assignments and are improving their grades. Data also indicates that students who know they can rely on receiving tutoring when they need it are more likely to enroll in advanced courses.

### ACCESS FOR ADULTS

Tutor.com for U.S. Military Families isn't only for children and adolescents. Part-time Army National Guard Soldiers, their spouses and other adult dependents also have access to free career transition and college support. Career help includes resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and job search tips. Support for college-level subjects includes test preparation, essay writing, physics and calculus.

National Guard Soldiers who are not deployed may be working full time, attending college and drilling on weekends. Having expert tutors available around the clock to accommodate demanding work, college and drill schedules helps alleviate stress and improves quality of life for the entire family.

### EXPERT HELP

Tutor.com is staffed by more than 2,500 carefully screened, expert tutors who are available to work one-on-one with National Guard families. A student and tutor work together in a secure online classroom that features an interactive whiteboard, file sharing and instant text messaging.

Creating an account and getting a tutor is quick and easy. To connect, simply use an Internet-enabled computer or handheld mobile device. No appointment is necessary.

## WHAT USERS SAY

"Thank you so very much for this service. It has saved our household from many screaming matches over homework!"  
— a parent

"After about a week of using Tutor.com, I've seen improvements in my math grade. Math is very confusing for me, and tutors on Tutor.com actually take time to explain it to me. Thanks, Tutor.com!"  
— a K–12 student

"I absolutely love this service. I would have quit college had it not been for this wonderful service."  
— a college student

## TUTOR.COM FOR U.S. MILITARY FAMILIES

is funded by the Department of Defense MWR Library Program, the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and the Navy General Library Program. For more information about the program and to create an account, visit [Tutor.com/military](http://Tutor.com/military)

## When Teens Miss Mom or Dad

Deployment can upset their emotions and unsettle their lives. Here's how you can help.

BY RACHEL GLADSTONE

**D**eployment is challenging for everyone in the family, but often it's teenagers who have the hardest time. For the parent at home, coping with the behavioral changes a teen might exhibit can be painful because solutions can seem elusive. Dr. Judith Broder, founder of The Soldiers Project, a free counseling service, shares some suggestions that might make communication with your teen easier.

### ACKNOWLEDGE THE CHANGE

If you have concerns about your teenager's behavior, having an initial conversation is a good place to start. Tell them that you've noticed changes in their behavior by saying something like, "I'm aware that ... you're not doing your schoolwork, you've been acting out, et cetera. I think it started when dad/mom deployed. I'm concerned because this is not like you. Can we talk?"

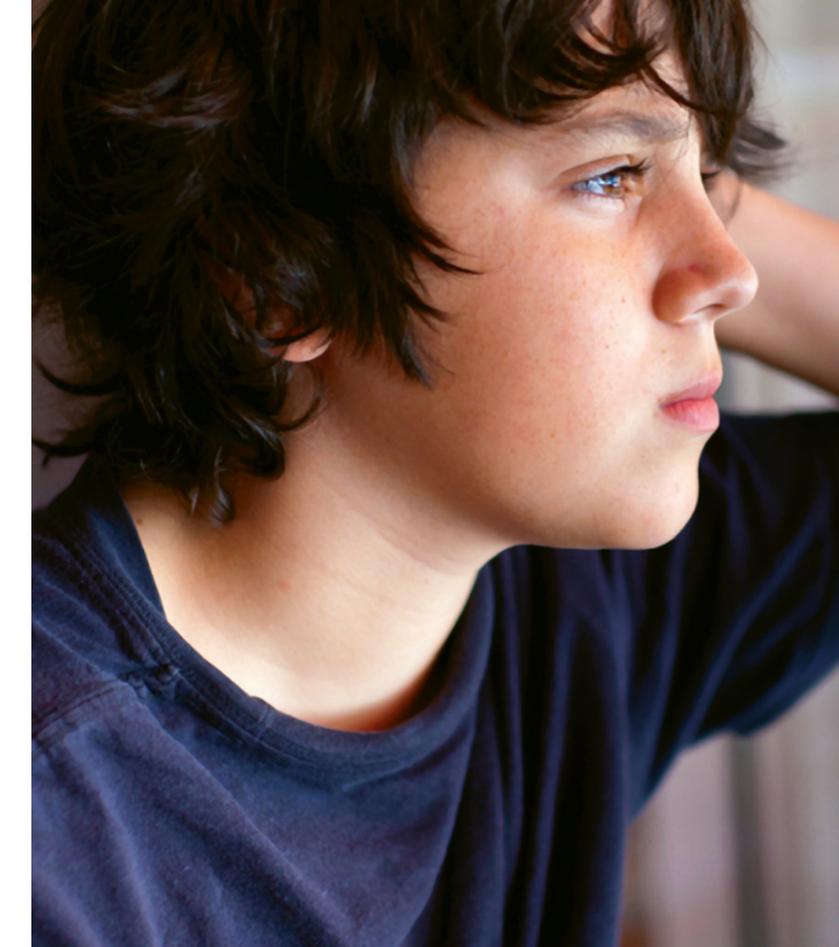
Make it clear that, although the family dynamic has shifted, the deployed parent is still there for the teen. Discuss this with your spouse and set a time for all of you to talk. You may want to have a practice run with your teenager before calling the deployed parent so the teen can be clear about how to express their feelings.

If possible, schedule regular calls between the deployed parent and the teen. This can make the teen feel special and more comfortable about opening up to both parents when problems arise.

The deployed parent can take the lead when it comes to solving issues that arise between siblings. (But before taking this step, make sure it won't be a distraction for the Soldier.) Try having family meetings via Skype, where everyone can be seen and heard.

### EXPRESS YOURSELF

The parent at home often becomes the target of anger and resentment. It's too scary for a child to be mad at the parent who's deployed, especially if they're in a combat zone. This is a time to be proactive. "There has to be room for everyone to say 'This sucks!'" Dr. Broder says. "This is one of the most difficult things for parents to do:



## GET HELP

Counseling for the family or the teen can open avenues of communication. To find counselors in your area, contact your local VA, or check out [The Soldiers Project at thesoldiersproject.org](http://TheSoldiersProject.org)

to acknowledge the upset and to acknowledge that this is not what we planned."

So don't shy away from expressing your feelings in a calm and rational way by saying something like, "I know you think this situation is horrible. I think it's horrible, too. But if we hang together, we can get through it."

### GET THEM WRITING

Keeping a daily journal can be a great way for teenagers to express themselves. It can help them articulate their feelings and, from there, they may be able to express their concerns verbally to the parents.

Select a notebook specifically for this purpose. You can make this a fun project by encouraging them to decorate the front cover or to purchase a notebook with a design that speaks to them.

Let your teenager know that you're ready and willing to listen if they feel like sharing. You can say something like, "If there's a feeling you're having, and you want to talk about it with me, let me know. Whatever you say is fine; they're your feelings." This will encourage teenagers to own their emotions and be more able to readily recognize and express them in the future.

Expand the journaling process to include photo and video journals, which can be shared by the entire family. This is an enjoyable way for teens to document the standout events in their life, despite the stresses deployment can bring.

### REACHING OUT

Peer-to-peer interaction can be the best remedy for teenagers who are having trouble communicating with their parents. Contact your Family Readiness Group (FRG) to connect with groups that specialize in getting teens together.

Also, talk to your child's teacher about organizing a care package project for the entire class. This can make the teen feel less isolated and turn the deployment into a source of pride.

# Lasting Bond

Nineteen years married and stronger than ever, the Olsens share their secrets to relationship success.

BY RACHEL GLADSTONE

1SG Morgan and Corina Olsen are shown with two of their children, Kayla, 19, and Erik, 11. Their oldest child, Kyle, isn't pictured.



First Sergeant Morgan Olsen of the 218th Field Artillery, Oregon Army National Guard, and his wife, Corina, have been married for 19 years. As a full-time Operations NCO, Olsen has deployed numerous times, leaving Corina and their three children to hold down the fort. In a candid conversation, *GX* asked them how they keep their marriage on track despite the miles that often separate them.

**GX:** You obviously have a long-lasting marriage; what's the secret to your success?

**Morgan:** I think the secret to our success is ...

**Corina:** Me. (they laugh)

**Morgan:** I trust my wife implicitly; I listen to her. We don't always get along, but we always talk. No matter what the problem, we work it out together.

**GX:** It has got to be hectic, being married to a Soldier. How do you balance everything?

**Corina:** I have really good kids who help out. Maintaining the house is one of the biggest challenges, but you have to realize that you can't always get everything done.

**Morgan:** You have to prioritize. When I'm not here, she does everything, and then when I get home, I pick up the slack.

**GX:** How has the relationship changed over the years with respect to how you handle problems?

**Corina:** When we were younger, we definitely stressed more. But we've learned you can't sweat the small stuff.

**Morgan:** Unrealistic expectations are a problem I see with younger Soldiers and their spouses, and I have to caution them [about that]. My wife and I know we have to balance our expectations.

**GX:** Morgan, do you feel bad when you're gone and you know Corina's taking care of everything back home?

**Morgan:** One of the things that attracted me to Corina was that she's very independent. But sure, I feel guilty when I can't be there for key events. We keep in contact via email, Skype, phone—but it's just not the same.

**Corina:** I don't really try to make him feel guilty, but I've had my little outbursts; you get burned out doing so much on your own. I usually don't tell him the little stuff that's going on, like, the oven blew up.

**GX:** So, do you ever get into fights

when he's deployed?

**Morgan:** Absolutely. I think, on this last deployment, we went for almost two months where we barely even spoke to one another.

**Corina:** I get in a zone where it's just easier if I don't talk too much with him.

**Morgan:** If she's upset with me about something, I try to cope with it, because I recognize that my wife has a legitimate [complaint]. My work is keeping me away and in harm's way, so sometimes one of her coping mechanisms is to step back and disconnect a little bit.

**GX:** How did you work through it?

**Corina:** Even if it's hurtful, you've got to talk, and that's what we did. We had our moments of lashing out at each other, but we came together at the end.

**GX:** Does a sense of humor play a big part in solving conflicts?

**Morgan:** Yes! That's a big part, not necessarily of the resolution, but of getting beyond it. When it feels awkward, I can make my wife laugh, and she can usually

do the same thing.

**Corina:** We poke fun at each other, and we balance each other out.

**GX:** Does being a military family make you appreciate each other in a different way than if you were a civilian family?

**Morgan:** Big time! I think our values are slightly different. We have a greater appreciation for sacrifice and a greater understanding of bigger-picture issues within our society.

**Corina:** We don't take our time together for granted.

**GX:** What do you love most about your marriage?

**Corina:** Humor. And he's not bad-looking, either.

**Morgan:** The thing I love most is that we've remained best friends no matter what. We've had some trying times, and a couple of times, it's brought us to the edge. But our love for one another is the thing that drives us to talk and get past it.

**Corina:** The mantra I keep in my head is "for better or worse, in sickness and health." Those vows actually mean something.

## From Single to Mingle

Even the happiest single people may eventually want a romantic relationship. But that's easier said than done, right? When you're single, getting out of a routine and meeting new people can be difficult. Here are five tips for improving your chances of finding a significant other.

BY MEGAN PACELLA



**SPEND TIME WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE.** It's nice to have a solid social circle you can trust, but spending all your time with the same people may not help you find a new love interest. Join a club or sports team to expand your social horizons. If playing on a coed softball, kickball or ultimate Frisbee team isn't your cup of tea, try a group devoted to cycling, hiking, reading or other extracurricular activities. You can also meet people by reaching out to your acquaintances and arranging a night on the town to get to know *their* group of friends.

**NAIL DOWN YOUR VALUES.** Wouldn't it be nice to meet someone who sees life the same way you do? Start by identifying your priorities.

"Think about [which] values and experiences are important to you, and try to involve yourself in things that align with them," suggests Dr. Mark Sharp, owner of the Aiki Relationship Institute, which specializes in helping people create healthy and satisfying relationships. "Then, you're more likely to meet like-minded people."

Maybe you feel passionate about helping the homeless, serving Veterans or working with neglected animals. Check out VolunteerMatch.org to find service opportunities near you. Not only can serving others feed your spirit, it can help you meet new people.

**CHANGE YOUR ROUTINE.** It's hard to meet a potential match if you're spending all your time in the same places. Simple actions like going to a different coffee shop, trying new restaurants or working out at a gym across town can open up your world to new people and possibilities.

**QUIET YOUR INSECURITIES.** One of the biggest barriers to meeting new people is the nagging voice in the back of your head that reminds you of your downfalls. Focus on your good qualities so you can feel confident when approaching a potential date. "Any hang-ups we have about ourselves tend to get in the way of being open to other people and of our willingness to put ourselves out there," says Sharp. "That requires some work on self-acceptance."

**LOVE YOUR LIFE NOW.** Too often, people wait for their love lives to line up before doing things they've always wanted to do. If you're interested in traveling, plan your dream road trip. Do you want to go back to school? Sign up for a few classes. "Following your dreams just makes you more confident and more interesting," says Sharp. "When you follow your heart, you enjoy life more and get into an emotionally healthy place. Plus, that's just one more opportunity to meet someone great."

Sharp stresses that loving yourself for who you are is the most important thing. "One of the most helpful things for people is to be as happy as possible with their single life. It's good to think of a new relationship as the icing on the cake," he explains. "People who are looking for a relationship in order to feel better about themselves usually end up in a match that is unsatisfying. Once you feel good about your life, you'll have a much easier time connecting with someone."



### INTERNET HOTSPOTS

These websites make meeting new people fun and relaxing.

#### Meetup.com

Whether you like swing dancing, wine tasting or watching movies, there's a Meetup group that will connect you with dozens of like-minded friends.

#### EventsAndAdventures.com

Through sporting events, game nights, parties and cruises, you'll get to meet fellow singles, possibly leading to your next love interest.

#### Tagged.com

Tagged matches you up with new people who are similar to you. Before long, you'll have loads of new friends and potential dates.

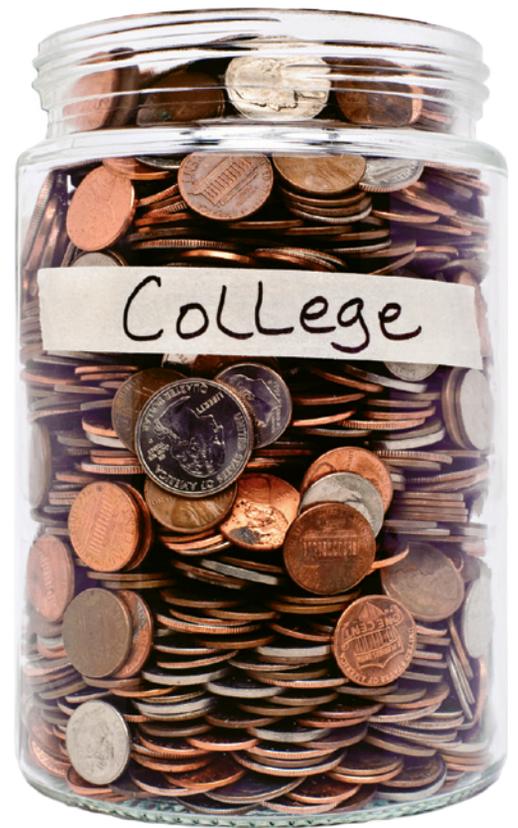
The Strong Bonds program can help strengthen your marriage. Find out more at [strongbonds.org](http://strongbonds.org)



# Make College More Affordable

Let's face it: Higher education is anything but cheap these days. But that doesn't mean attending isn't achievable or that it has to ruin you financially. So whether you're saving for your own advanced education or your children's, these five strategies will put you on the right track.

BY SCOTT HALLIWELL, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER, USAA



## GET REAL

To accomplish any goal, you must first establish it and then figure out what you have to do to get there. The good news for college savers is that numerous online resources are available that can help you determine what steps to take. USAA, for instance, offers a wide range of information and tools at [usaa.com](http://usaa.com) to help you figure out how much money you will need to save to pay for college. Other sites, such as [SavingForCollege.com](http://SavingForCollege.com) and [CollegeBoard.org](http://CollegeBoard.org), are also stocked with information and ideas. It's often good to start with your ideal scenario, and if that doesn't appear financially feasible, scale it back until you reach a set of numbers that you feel comfortable planning around.

**ANSWER THIS:** *What is your goal and where do you sit relative to it?*

## GET CREATIVE

Is it written anywhere that a child must attend whatever college they choose and have their parents pay for it? Sure, that may be ideal from the child's perspective, but it may not be from the parents'—especially when tens of thousands of dollars are at stake. So don't be afraid to take a more cost-effective approach. Does your child's high school offer Advanced Placement courses? Take advantage of them if you can. Also, why not go local, at least initially? Community colleges and branch campuses are often great places to get general education courses covered at a lower cost; a student can transfer to a university to finish upper-level courses. Remember, the objective is to get a degree, not to get a degree in the most expensive manner possible.

**ANSWER THIS:** *What's your approach going to be?*

## GET CUTTING

Since your backyard is probably devoid of money trees, you'll have to find another source of funds. For many people, this means scrutinizing their budget and finding places to cut back. Cost-saving ideas include eating out less, dropping premium TV channels or even using coupons. The good news is that little changes can make a big difference. Saving \$20 each week equals more than \$1,000 over a year.

**ANSWER THIS:** *What will you cut if you need to?*

## GET EDUCATED

College savings options are abundant. Some parents choose 529 plans for potentially tax-free growth. Some choose custodial accounts for their less restrictive nature. Others choose regular investment accounts in their own name in case they later change their mind or the money isn't needed. The beauty of college funding is that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The key is to learn about each of the options, and then pick the one that works best for your situation.

**ANSWER THIS:** *What savings vehicle will you use?*

## GET STARTED

Marathons are completed one step at a time. Saving for college is achieved using the same method. To accomplish either, though, you've got to get started. While it's important to develop a sound savings and investing strategy to help you reach your goals, it's even more important to put that plan into action. Even if you just set up an automatic transfer into a savings account while you work out all of the details, get started. That's the hardest part.

**ANSWER THIS:** *When are you going to start?*

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE POST-9/11 GI BILL

### BENEFITS INCLUDE:

Tuition and fees paid

Monthly housing stipend

Book stipend

Licensing and certification exams fees covered

Transferability of benefits



Check out [gibill.va.gov](http://gibill.va.gov) for more program details and restrictions.

# Downrange

■ STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE

## Kentucky Takes to the Field

COURTESY OF THE KENTUCKY NATIONAL GUARD

**T**he Kentucky National Guard's Agribusiness Development Team IV, which deployed to Afghanistan in March, is made up of more than 50 Army and Air National Guard members. This is the fourth agribusiness mission for the Kentucky National Guard; the current team replaced ADT III, which had been in country for almost a year.

ADT IV trained at Camp Atterbury, IN, for several weeks, brushing up on its Soldiers' qualifications while learning to work together as a cohesive unit. Its mission is the first of its type to teach agriculture and business development in the Kandahar province of southern Afghanistan. The team is helping empower local leaders to provide sustainable agriculture and business teachings to the area's residents in the Arghandab district in the Kandahar province. About 70 percent of the district's population relies on agriculture as a means of survival, so the members of ADT IV are focused on helping the Afghan farmers work more efficiently.

In multiple districts within Kandahar province, ADT IV has instituted a multipronged veterinarian training program that combines basic and advanced training. Student farmers who completed the basic training course received vaccines to treat diseased animals in their village. Student farmers selected for advanced training were sent to a six-month para-vet training school in northern Afghanistan.

Kentucky has been assigned a fifth ADT mission for 2013, authorizing the Kentucky Guard to assign personnel to this task force.



**Home Station:**  
The ADT IV, Kentucky National Guard, is based in Frankfort, KY.

**7,259 miles** | Distance from Frankfort, KY, to Kandahar province, Afghanistan

### Current Operations

**Deployed to:**  
Kandahar province, Afghanistan

**Current Mission:**  
ADT IV is charged with sustaining the relationships built between former ADTs and Afghan farmers to ensure the country becomes agriculturally self-sufficient. The task force is composed of Kentucky Army and Air National Guard members with a variety of skills in agricultural matters.



### HISTORY OF THE INSIGNIA

Red, white and blue are our nation's colors. The yellow and the red and blue allude to the combat arms: Armor (Cavalry), Artillery and Infantry. The long rifle is inseparably associated with the early history of Kentucky before and after its admission to the Union as the 15th state.

The shoulder sleeve insignia was approved on December 30, 1983.

Since arriving in Afghanistan in March, Kentucky's ADT IV has reached the following milestones:

**10,000+** | Afghan locals assisted

**29,926** | Sheep, goats and cows vaccinated

**117** | Missions conducted off the forward operating base

# THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND

ADT members discuss their mission's importance and what it's like working alongside Afghan villagers.

INTERVIEWS BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

**CAPTAIN VARINKA ENSMINGER**  
Agricultural Team Project Manager for Panjwai District



What are some of the challenges when interacting with the Afghans, considering their unique culture? Being a woman [in Afghanistan] is a challenge. At first, I was more reserved and even wore a headscarf. I wanted to show respect for their culture. I always wait for them to initiate a handshake, since in their culture men and women do not shake hands. I think if you listen, and accept them, they will accept you.

How will you describe your experiences in Afghanistan to your family, friends and peers? I describe it now as totally random. I have

traveled all over the world, and this is the most random place I have ever been. People are people, and most have good hearts. I am pleased that I work with the better portion of the population.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GREG DUNNING**  
Platoon Sergeant, Security Platoon



Would you redeploy to Afghanistan again if you had the chance? I am a Soldier, and I will always go where I am needed, whenever I am needed there. There is potential here, and they have already tapped into large amounts of that. I would definitely come here again if needed, and if the mission still persists.

Have you had a chance to sample their cuisine? If so, what is it like? I have had the opportunity to try a few of their dishes. Sweet naan bread is my favorite. It's like flatbread, but it's covered with a type of honey glaze and is delicious. Also, their kabobs are good. They use some spices that are out of this world and would be hard to describe to someone who has never tasted them. I got the chance to try something we called "chips." Chips were simply french fries in a pita-like pocket, but it was the spices that made them delicious. Many of these items are made in shops, but some of them you can buy from vendors in the markets.

What's your daily routine like, if there is such a thing? Things pretty much change day to day, so there's not much of a routine except watching each other's backs and doing the best we can to maintain good morale. We try not to let all the things that come along with combat and being away from our families get the best of us and take our minds off the mission at hand.

**STAFF SERGEANT CHARLES YANKEY**  
Truck Commander, Security Platoon Team Leader



What is it like to interact with the children in the villages? It's like being a giant candy bowl and they are all trying to get some candy! They ask a million questions and want everything

that isn't tied down on our vehicles. But they mean well, and I don't blame them. They are just kids being kids, but it's a fun experience interacting with them. It makes me miss my kids and makes me feel like I'm in the toy section of Walmart.

**“THERE IS POTENTIAL HERE, AND THEY HAVE ALREADY TAPPED INTO LARGE AMOUNTS OF THAT.”**

SFC Greg Dunning

Does your time on the ground in Afghanistan make you appreciate what you have back home? Very much so! I have been to many other places in the world, and everyone shows you a different culture. We take things for granted at times, but it teaches you that you don't need all the bells and whistles to survive and be happy. So I appreciate all I have, and I make sure to take a lot of pictures to show my kids and teach them to appreciate what they have.

Why is it important to have Guard Soldiers and Airmen conducting the ADT mission? We as Guard Soldiers and Airmen basically live two lives: military and civilian. So we have members that are experts in the field of growing and taking care of farms. So we bring a lot to the table when we talk to the Afghan people, and they can see that we understand what they are doing, which helps them understand what we are trying to do for them and not just being a group of people blowing smoke and pretending we know what will help them. This in turn lets them see another side of us Soldiers and people, and that we aren't just trying to take over their country.

**“WE BRING A LOT TO THE TABLE WHEN WE TALK TO THE AFGHAN PEOPLE, AND THEY CAN SEE THAT WE UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE DOING, WHICH HELPS THEM UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO FOR THEM.”**

SSG Charles Yankey

**STAFF SERGEANT JONATHON STRIBLING**  
Mine Roller Driver, Security Platoon



Why is the ADT mission so important for the success of the Afghan people? The Afghan people are very primitive. They are almost completely unaware of modern methods of farming and harvesting crops as well as the means to produce profit from their harvest.

Teaching the Afghans proper agriculture and business methods, and explaining to them how to make a suitable living from market trades in larger cities such as Kandahar, is essential for their success after we leave.

How do the Afghan people show their appreciation for everything you do for them? They engage in conversation and say "thank you." They love to take photos with me and offer me to join them for lunch. Some even tell me that they appreciate my hard work and my willingness to assist them in training, resources and funding avenues. Sometimes they give me small gifts. One woman brought me flowers from her garden; another brought a scarf. Some of the farmers have brought me grapes, tomatoes and eggplant. They always offer me tea. The women give me hugs and kisses and the men a handshake. The children love to run up and give you hugs. Some even draw pictures or write notes. It's all about building positive relationships, and that in itself is appreciated by both of us.

**SPECIALIST EMILY BALDWIN**  
Security Platoon Driver



What were your initial thoughts when you learned of the deployment to Afghanistan? My initial thought was that I was very happy to be selected to be a part of KYADT IV. I couldn't wait to start training with my new unit for our exciting adventure.

If you could tell the American public one thing about your experience in Afghanistan, what would that be? That I couldn't have done this deployment without them. I can't even begin to count how many care packages and letters from children at schools I've received during my tour. Honestly, they are what keep me motivated and going every day.

## WHY IS THE ADT MISSION SO IMPORTANT?

The ADT concept has two major benefits: provide immediate agricultural expertise and provide security to enable daily community engagement. The revitalization of the agribusiness sector in Afghanistan requires a complex and integrated set of solutions. ADTs ensure that improvements are sustainable with local assets and within the capabilities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). To be immediately effective, ADT personnel must be in place to affect the next growing season. If the ADT and supporting USDA administrators are not in place, the Taliban will move into the area and increase opium production in the next growing season.

### CONSIDER THIS:

Afghanistan is the world's **LEADING** supplier of opium, with over **375 TONS** of heroin exported each year.

**10** – the percentage of Afghanistan's opium, sales that reach the **TALIBAN** and other insurgent groups – a staggering total of **\$500 MILLION!**

**5** – The number of provinces that produce **78%** of Afghanistan's opium. There are 34 provinces in all.

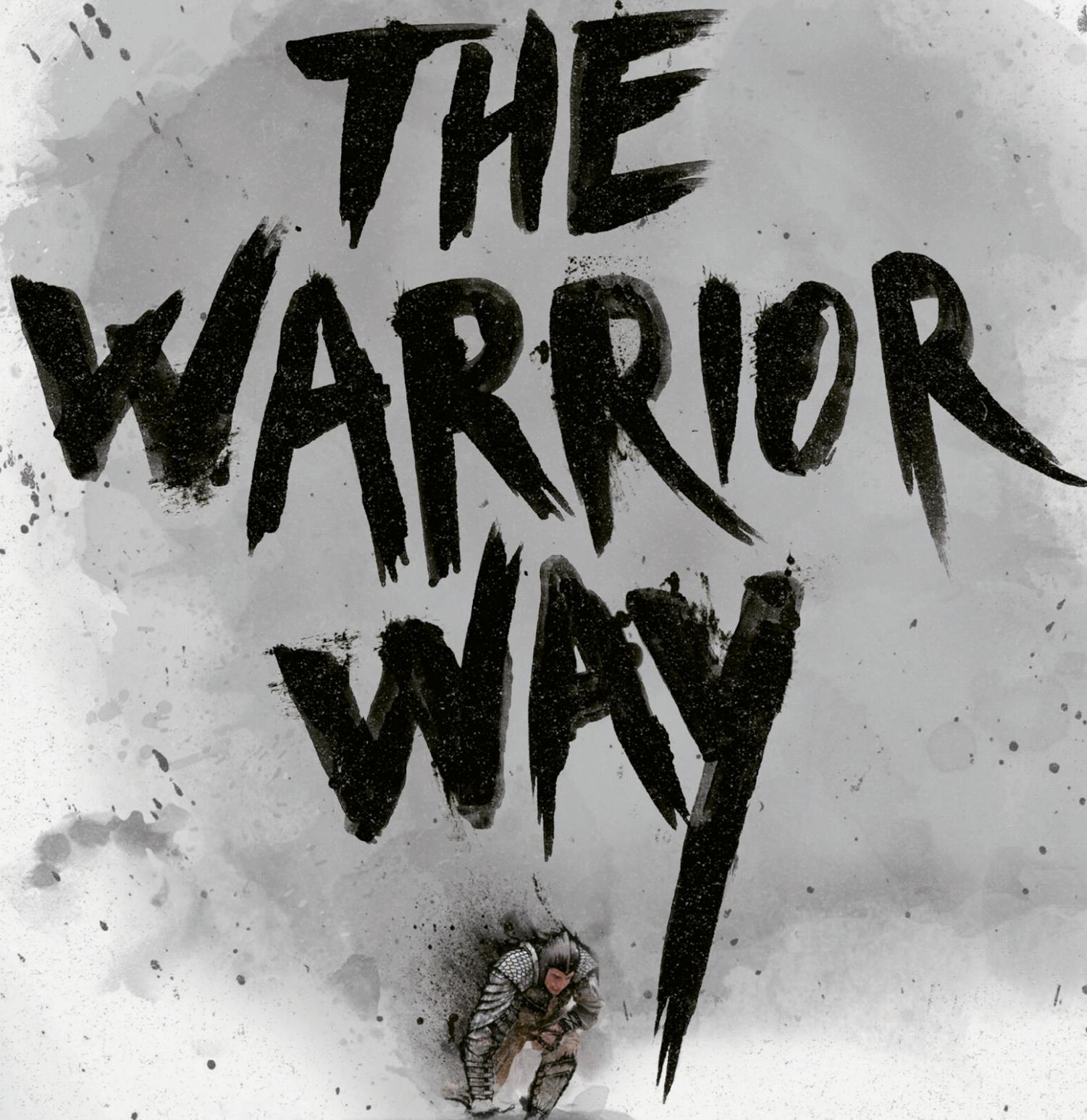
## 3 PHASES OF THE ADT MISSION

**PHASE I - ASSESSMENT**  
An Agricultural Assessment Team (AAT) of three or four agricultural experts deploys to the province to assess the agribusiness needs of the area. This includes the identification of specific projects for the ADT to conduct upon its arrival. Phase I ends with the arrival of the ADT.

**PHASE II - OPERATIONS**  
The ADT executes projects to improve all aspects of agribusiness and undertakes projects to improve the expertise of Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) employees; teachers at the Nangarhar University's Department of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences Department; and the general knowledge of farmers in the area.

**PHASE III - DISENGAGEMENT**  
During this phase, the ADT begins to disengage from active support to the agribusiness sector. Phase III ends with the team's departure from the designated area.

# THE WARRIOR WAY



**T**HEY CAME. THEY ENDURED.  
THEY CONQUERED. THIS YEAR'S  
NATIONAL GUARD BEST WARRIOR COMPETITION,  
FEATURING 14 OF THE GRITTIEST,  
HUNGRIEST TROOPS, WAS A  
SHOWCASE OF SOLDIERING AT ITS FINEST.

Story by JAMES SULLIVAN | Photos by ADAM LIVINGSTON

“Come on, Massachusetts!”  
Two Soldiers set themselves in the plank position and began doing push-ups in the pre-dawn mist. Several yards behind them, a dozen more National Guard NCOs and specialists were shadowy figures. Milling silently on the track’s patchy infield in their gray Army T-shirts and black athletic shorts, they stood with hands on hips or jangled their limbs, awaiting their turn. Nearby, supporters and onlookers shouted encouragement from a holding area behind a yellow rope.

Outwardly, the Soldiers presented faces of stone. Inside, however, their minds raced. They wondered whether the stomach butterflies or the extreme Georgia humidity would affect their endurance during the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), the first event since their arrival here at Fort Benning. They shot discreet glances at one another: Who looked especially strong? Who would set the pace in the 2-mile run?

Mostly, though, they anticipated the week ahead with a potent mix of excitement, aggression and bewilderment. They’d flown in the previous day from points across the country: Maine and Pennsylvania, Idaho and Oregon and Louisiana. Mississippi and Colorado, Massachusetts and Arkansas, Ohio, South Carolina, Nevada and Illinois. They were at Fort Benning’s Warrior Training Center (WTC) to participate in this year’s finals of the National Guard’s Best Warrior Competition (BWC)—seven enlisted Soldiers and seven NCOs, each having beaten all rivals in their companies, their battalions, their states and their regions.

All 14 Soldiers hoped to earn the right to represent the Guard in this year’s all-Army Best Warrior finale in October. Held at Fort Lee, VA, the Army’s Best Warrior Competition pegs the best Soldier and noncommissioned officer from the Active Duty Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

The Soldiers set for competition were not simply vying for individual achievement: They were here to demonstrate the mental and physical

fortitude—the problem-solving skills, the attention to detail and the sheer fearlessness—it takes to be a model member of the National Guard.

Sergeant First Class Vanessa Urban, a human resources specialist from Massachusetts, had a little trouble grinding out the last of her push-ups on the black tar of the running track at the 1-81 Armor PT Field. A few moments later, she was churning out a steady stream of seemingly effortless sit-ups as the bugle call sounded “Reveille” at 0600 from the barracks just south of the track.

A few dozen onlookers in fatigues watched as the competitors were called up in pairs. At times, the only sound other than the puffing and groaning of the competing Soldiers was the faint clacking of their buckles on their reflector belts beating against the pavement. Cadre members charged with ensuring the Army standards of push-ups and sit-ups leaned forward on hands and knees, whispering instruction into the ears of the competitors.

“C’m on, Williams—dial it up!” hollered one visiting Soldier, piercing the stillness as the rising sun began to brighten streaks of sky behind the cloud cover. “There you go! Keep it up.”

Beginning the competition with a basic PT challenge “sets a baseline to identify the Soldiers’ fitness levels,” said Sergeant First Class Jessie Parsons, standing on the edge of the track an hour later. The competitors had just completed

the APFT and climbed aboard the white bus that would become a home of sorts for them as the week unfolded.

Parsons, who had overall responsibility for the APFT, is the Alpha Company first sergeant at the WTC. Hosting the BWC “is a great privilege,” he said, “a great opportunity. These are the best of the best from the seven regions. Some of them have multiple deployments. They bring a lot to the table.”

Many of the week’s events, including the WTC’s infamous obstacle course and a nighttime foot march, would involve unequivocal displays of strength and stamina. Others, such as the second day’s Stress Shoot, combined physical ability with small weapons marksmanship. Still



**[HOSTING THE BWC] IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE . . . A GREAT OPPORTUNITY. THESE ARE THE BEST OF THE BEST FROM THE SEVEN REGIONS. SOME OF THEM HAVE MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS. THEY BRING A LOT TO THE TABLE.”**

SFC Jessie Parsons, Alpha Company First Sergeant



**Left:** The instant the competitors stepped off the bus, the heat was on. They weren't going to get any slack from the WTC cadre or the hot Georgia sun. **Right:** SSG Richard Williams of Mississippi strains to make it over the Island Hopper obstacle.

others would require intellectual agility and knowledge of military conduct and preparedness, such as an early-morning Land Navigation exercise and an Urban Operations challenge that would test the competitors' ability to rescue a wounded Soldier under adverse conditions.

On the last Monday of July, the first day of the competition, the Soldiers assembled in dress blues an hour or so after PT, set to be graded on their recitation of the NCO and Soldier's Creeds. That exercise would be followed by a Board empaneled by eight state command sergeants major. The competitors sat in a classroom full of metal shelving, audio-visual equipment and a 25 mm Bushmaster cannon, waiting to be briefed on the expectations of the Board.

Some of the Soldiers stared ahead in quiet confidence. Others looked wildly alert. Specialist Jevon Daurbigny, an information technology specialist from Louisiana, slowly chewed a stick of gum.

A few of the competitors took advantage of some last-minute brushing up on the Army Study Guide with their sponsors who had traveled with them to the competition. "Sponsors, you're not going in with the competitors to the Creed," said the NCOIC from WTC. One by one, they rose and strode out of the room as their names were called to face the Board.

"They have no idea what the makeup of that Board will be before the door opens," said Command Sergeant Major Richard J. Burch later that day. "So the 'pucker factor' increases," he added with a wry smile.

"[The cadre are] tallying up the scores right now, and they'll be posted to the master scorecard later today," explained Command Sergeant Major Brian Sann of Maryland. Not that the competitors would get to see it: This year the WTC did away with the BWC's leaderboard, leaving the Soldiers guessing about where they stood throughout the competition.

There were pluses and minuses to not knowing how they were faring, several competitors said. Those who felt they were doing well might not be inclined to coast, since they wouldn't know for sure whether they had a

comfortable lead. And a disappointing performance in a given event could be set aside more easily to focus on the next event.

Ultimately, the two Soldiers who finish the week on top will be strong challengers in the next competition. The fact that two National Guard NCOs—Staff Sergeant Guy Mellor of Utah and Staff Sergeant Michael Noyce Merino of Montana—have won the all-Army Best Warrior Competition in the past four years "has to be a thorn in the side of the Sergeant Major of the Army, I'm sure," said Commander Sergeant Major William Clark Jr., of the California National Guard, who's president of the Guard's Enlisted Board. "The biggest advantage we have is that most of our Soldiers are mature."

This year's crop of BWC challengers was impressive in their presentation, Clark said.

"I think they walked out of that room a little better Soldier."

### 'YOU CAN NEVER BE TRAINED ENOUGH'

Staff Sergeant Eugene A. Patton is an intelligence analyst with the 117th Space Battalion in Colorado. A father of four and a weightlifting enthusiast with a shaved head like a bullet and a poised, affable demeanor, Patton epitomizes the kind of Soldier the BWC attracts. "He's a very dedicated person with the leadership traits we need," said Command Sergeant Major Ken Berube, who traveled from Colorado to watch his regional Best Warrior compete. Among Patton's strong suits, Berube said, are his discipline and his resiliency: "You can't have one without the other."

Patton had plenty of help as he moved up the BWC ladder. An Olympic trainer helped him shed some of his muscle mass—18 pounds to be exact—to gain more endurance, he said, standing behind the bus during a rare break on Day 3. And the 519th Transportation Association of Colorado assisted in securing range time for extra target practice.

Yet he wished he'd had even more time to train. "I'm a perfectionist," said Patton, who hopes to complete a master's degree and retire as a command sergeant major. "You can never be trained enough."



**From Left:** SSG Brian Reighard of Pennsylvania focuses before Day 2's Selection Boards. SPC Ryan Johnson of Oregon crushes Day 2's APFT run. SSG Beau Detrick of Illinois concentrates during Weapons Qualification.

After just a handful of events, it was clear that the competitors had distinct strengths that undoubtedly helped carry them through the lower levels of the competition. Specialist Ryan Johnson, an infantryman with Oregon's B Company, 2nd Battalion, who is studying to be an orthodontist, sprinted ahead of the pack on the 2-mile run, finishing in a fleet-footed 10:18. A day later, he effectively ran the 6.8-mile rucksack march at 2200 hours, finishing first with ease.

"You animal!" one supporter yelled as he watched Johnson finish the obstacle course at Camp Butler with an explosive last push.

Specialist Mark H. Fuggiti, a 92Y unit supply specialist with Pennsylvania's Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, entered the Stress Shoot on the second day with a distinct advantage: Of the seven enlisted Soldiers, he was the only one who passed qualification on both the M9 pistol and the M16 rifle. As a result, he entered the event without the time penalties assessed each of the other Soldiers, so simply hitting his targets put him dramatically ahead of his peers.

Before the competitors qualified and performed a familiarization fire with the M249 light machine gun, they were greeted by Chief Master Sergeant Denise M. Jelinski-Hall, senior enlisted leader for the National Guard Bureau. In a brief but heartfelt pep talk, she thanked them not only for what they do for the Guard, but for what they do at home and in their communities. "Are we motivated?" she asked as she addressed the Soldiers, who were mustered in two rows with their hands clasped behind their backs.

"Hooah!" they responded. "Yes, Chief!" Some wore wet boots, a product of the Land Navigation exercise the

Soldiers had performed in the deep woods of Fort Benning before dawn.

The morning's spitting rain turned to a steady downfall at English Range, where the competitors were bused to qualify on M16s. From various positions, they shot at green pop-up targets, ranging from 25 to 150 yards; a minimum of 23 hits (out of 40 shots) was required to receive a score.

Back at Krilling Range a few miles away, the rain let up just as the competitors prepared to run the course.

"The sun's gonna come out and it's gonna be about 900 degrees here in 20 minutes," joked one WTC cadre member.

Wearing full "battle rattle," the competitors were required to pull a 150-lb. Skedco litter to a helicopter landing zone, then engage various targets as they moved from lane to lane, taking care to hit only hostile targets. The rattle of the M249s and the "pop-pop-pop" of the 9 mm pistols were immediately followed by small plumes of sand jumping from the berms behind the targets. After the first few competitors ran the course, the smell of sulfur filled the air.

As exhaustion (both mental and physical) began to settle in, several of the warriors had difficulty vaulting over a 5-foot wall midway through the course. Wearing helmets and Interceptor Body Armor, with rifles slung over their backs, some of the Soldiers found the obstacle harder than it appeared.

"I ain't got it," muttered Sergeant Matthew Howard of Arkansas after failing on his fourth approach.

When Staff Sergeant Richard Williams, a 68W from the 2/198th Combined Arms Battalion, Mississippi, dropped the 60-lb. ammo can each competitor was required to carry across the finish line, he shook his head at his sponsor. Despite

earning a good time, he was discouraged that he'd had trouble with his pistol holster, which set him back as he refastened it around his leg.

"Friggin' holster cost me a good minute," he said to his sponsor. From over the farthest berm, the air horn blared, indicating the next competitor's start time.

Frustration was perhaps the biggest obstacle throughout the week, as the heat bore down, weapons occasionally malfunctioned and will-power sometimes flagged. Johnson's sponsor, Staff Sergeant Tyler Brown (who won last year's Oregon National Guard Best Warrior Competition), repeated a line he'd just heard from a supporter back home: "You might step in dog crap sometimes, but that doesn't keep you from walking away."

Time and again during the week, Soldiers described the competition as more than a simple contest: It is designed to exemplify the strength of character the Guard hopes to instill in all its members, regardless of their role.

"We're developing agility in our Soldiers," said Burch, who has been instrumental in ramping up the BWC in his capacity as command sergeant major of the Army National Guard. "We're training them not what to think, but how to think."

"It really doesn't matter what your MOS is," echoed Captain Keith Bell, operations officer for the Warrior Training Center. "The enemy is everywhere, so everyone has to be way more combat-ready than in years past. The gap has narrowed a lot in the last 10 years."

As Fuggiti navigated the Stress Shoot, he was determined not to squander the opportunity he'd gained after passing the weapons quals. "Dig, baby, dig!" shouted his sponsor, Staff Sergeant Victor Arocho, as the Soldier negotiated a barbed wire crawl and

**Lower Left:** SPC Jevon Daurbigny of Louisiana checks the action of an M2 .50 cal machine gun after assembling it during Day Stakes. **Right:** SPC Ryan Johnson of Oregon works hard to pull the 150-pound Skedco during the Stress Shoot. **Right:** SFC Vanessa Urban of Massachusetts makes sense of multiple disassembled weapons during Day 5's Mystery Event.

## DEMANDING DETAILS

A GLIMPSE AT A FEW OF THE EVENTS



### ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (APFT)

Soldiers have two minutes to complete as many push-ups and then two minutes to complete as many sit-ups as they can. Soldiers then run eight laps around the quarter mile track in a 2-mile footrace.



### LAND NAVIGATION

Soldiers have to navigate their way between points 250 meters to 2,500 meters apart. Soldiers move by foot in complete uniform with a load-bearing vest, including four quarts of water, compass, protractor, 1:50,000 scale map of the area, M-RK radio and a GPS. Soldiers are tracked by a D-STAR transmitter and must find four of five points in four hours to pass the event.



### STRESS SHOOT

Soldiers move through the course of fire, engaging targets in a simulated complex ambush. Throughout the course, the Soldiers negotiate various obstacles, including dragging a 150-pound Skedco litter, negotiating a low crawl, doing a wall vault and carrying two 60-lb. ammo cans. Using the M9, M249 and M16, Soldiers must strike only hostile targets and are penalized for misses and uncompleted obstacles.



### URBAN OPERATIONS

Soldiers engage targets with hand grenades and firearms, tend to a casualty and put a radio in operation to call for help. Soldiers are scored by time and number of hits on hostile targets.



### OBSTACLE COURSE

Soldiers perform 13 obstacles in complete uniform, with time penalties for obstacles not properly negotiated. Obstacles include the Confidence Climb, Weaver, High Step-Over, Low Crawl, Island Hopper and Inverted Rope.





SFC Vanessa Urban of Massachusetts tackles the obstacle course's Confidence Climb. One competitor likened the obstacle to a leap of faith because the rungs get farther and farther apart toward the top.

lumbered to the next checkpoint.

When he arrived at the wall, he ran at it and leaped, bracing his elbows along the top. For a fleeting moment, the Soldier appeared to sag, as though he was about to drop and have to try again. But he quickly summoned whatever reserve he had left, throwing a boot above the wall with a war whoop and scrambling over.

The Stress Shoot "could be a make-or-breaker," said Sergeant First Class Jeremy Scribner, a platoon sergeant with the Ranger Training Assessment Course at WTC, when the last competitor completed the course. "This could be a very good separator."

With several events completed and the ruck march still to come, the heat was on in more ways than one. "It was 107 when we validated down here the other day," Scribner said. "My guys were smoking hot when they finished."

### STILL SMILING

For the competitors, Day 3 began with little sleep. Just a few hours after finishing the late-night foot march, they arrived by bus at the McKenna Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site, a village theater of empty cinderblock buildings—red, tan, green, blue—with flecked paint and broken

windows. The competitors were set to conduct their Urban Operations event, in which they would toss practice grenades and shoot simunitions, or paint rounds, at targets; locate and tend to a casualty in one of the buildings; and put a radio into operation to call for help.

Urban is qualified as a Combat Lifesaver. As she hustled through the Urban Ops tasks, securing a tourniquet around a dummy's wounded leg and loading the "Soldier" onto a medical sled, Massachusetts Command Sergeant Major David Costa stood outside the venue, speaking quietly about his Soldier's fortitude. When Urban finished a disap-

pointing effort at the Stress Shoot the day before, Costa had greeted her with a big smile.

"You're my star," he said.

"This is great for morale, to motivate the Soldiers to take the next step in everything," said Costa at the McKenna MOUT. "They're all self-starters, obsessed with improving themselves personally." Noting that Urban has overcome some personal hardship, he called her a "poster child" for the Guard and the BWC. "We show her off to the rest of the Soldiers," he said. "At the regionals, she really smoked."

A little later, Howard seemed confident and composed as he tackled the course. "We're gonna call you Jack, just because," he said to the dummy casualty as he prepared to load it onto the litter. "All right, Jack, let's roll!"

At the other end of the site, several cadre members stood at the edge of the woods, manning a folding table that served as the starting point. Specialist Clay Landry, a young military policeman from Maine, joked as he waited his turn. A purple belt in mixed martial arts, he was full of good-natured gusto.

If he had a weapons malfunction as he entered the mock jail site, he asked with a grin, could he just rush the targets and kick them?

The NCOIC noted that Urban Ops was one event perhaps better suited for the enlisted Soldiers, who had the advantage of youthful enthusiasm, over the more experienced NCOs.

"These kids are crushing it," he said.

### MUTUAL SUPPORT

Later in the day, Landry jumped onto a landing mat as he descended the Confidence Climb, one of 13 challenges that constituted the WTC's grueling obstacle course. Temperatures were soaring into the upper 90s, and as he tumbled across the mat, he shouted, "Wow! That's hot!"

Despite staggered start times, some of the competitors overtook others along the course. Urban worked methodically. Specialist Isaac Chestnut of South Carolina, the tallest of the competitors by a few inches, had a clear advantage on segments such as the High Step-Over (five horizontal beams that Soldiers had to negotiate while holding their hands to their head) and the Six Vaults (a series of stumps they had to jump on from a standing position).

After Landry's fast start, Howard caught up with him on the final obstacle, the Inverted Rope.

There were no hard feelings. By now the competitors, far removed from the first day's uncertainties, had grown eager to see their fellow regional winners succeed.

Earlier in the day, Patton had addressed the "esprit de corps" that the BWC fosters among colleagues back home. But he also expressed genuine surprise that the competitors here were so supportive of one another.

"In some arenas, there's too much competition. People don't talk," he said. But Best Warrior, he added, had helped him forge some potentially lasting friendships.

At the end of the competition, Howard was declared this year's National Guard NCO winner, and Fuggiti returned to Pennsylvania with

## THE GUARD'S BEST



### NCO OF THE YEAR

**SGT MATTHEW S. HOWARD**  
Arkansas

### BACKGROUND

Howard is a 13B Cannon Crewmember with C Battery, 2/142nd Fires Brigade out of Ozark, AR. Over a 17-year career in the Army, he has served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle. A motorcycle enthusiast, he lives with his wife, Jennifer, and their daughter, Julianna.

### WHAT HE TOOK AWAY FROM THE COMPETITION

*"I learned how to face the adversities; you have all of these different situations. There were lessons throughout the week. When they announced my name [at the end], it just blew me away. It's a very humbling experience."*

### THE OTHER COMPETITORS:

SPC Julian Batz (Nevada); SSG Michael R. Bautista (Idaho); SPC Isaac H. Chestnut (South Carolina); SPC Jevon Daurbigny (Louisiana); SSG Beau Detrick (Illinois); SPC Ryan M. Johnson (Oregon); SPC Clay J. Landry (Maine); SSG Eugene A. Patton (Colorado); SSG Brian J. Reighard (Pennsylvania); SPC Jeremy P. Stotz (Ohio); SFC Vanessa Urban (Massachusetts); and SSG Richard R. Williams (Mississippi).



### SOLDIER OF THE YEAR

**SPC\* MARK H. FUGGITI**  
Pennsylvania

### BACKGROUND

A 92Y Unit Supply Specialist with the Pennsylvania National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Battalion, he has served in the Army for two years; he recently became Distinguished Honor Graduate of his class in the Warrior Leader Course. He lives with his wife, Ashley, and their son, Joshua, in Orwigsburg, PA. He plans to serve more than 20 years in the Active Guard/Reserve program and retire as sergeant major.

### HIS REACTION AFTER WINNING

*"You have so much adrenaline going that whole time that the rush of emotions hasn't set in yet. A lot of things that we experienced here, I don't think any of the competitors were ready for."*

\*SPC Fuggiti was recently promoted to sergeant.

the top spot among the enlisted Soldiers. (Fuggiti was promoted to sergeant just before the competition.) A day before learning he would represent the Guard at the all-Army BWC, Howard said it was an honor just to compete at Fort Benning as the representative of his seven-state region.

Of course, he admitted with a smile, "Everyone wants to win. "I feel like I'm still in it," he said. To win would be a thrill: "Of 300,000 Soldiers or more," he said, "you're the one."

Now, as he prepares to compete against the best Soldiers the Army and the Army Reserves have to offer, he knows just how it feels to be the one. **GX**



To follow SGT Howard and SGT Fuggiti at the All-Army Best Warrior Competition, check out [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/bestwarrior](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/bestwarrior)

# The Soldiers

BY BROOKE LEA FOSTER

# Who Saved Mississippi

**Right:** Transformed into a battleground overnight, the sleepy town of Oxford, MS, became the center of controversy during one of the most pivotal moments of the civil rights movement.  
**Lower Right:** The Lyceum, The University of Mississippi's most historic building, became ground zero during the riots.



James Meredith was determined to gain admission to The University of Mississippi. In doing so, he found himself in a vicious battle against racists who did not accept desegregation.



IN 1962, SEGREGATION WAS ALL THE SOUTH KNEW. So when James Meredith, a young black man, decided to take advantage of a Supreme Court ruling affirming his right to enroll at The University of Mississippi, riots erupted. Soldiers from the Mississippi National Guard answered the call, followed orders and prevented more bloodshed, helping usher in a new chapter in the civil rights struggle. Fifty years later, Meredith and Guard Soldiers who were there reflect on that pivotal event.

PHOTO FROM DR. ED MEEKS; AP

“What is taking place here at the University is completely unbelievable. This is 1962, and ... a new Civil War has begun, exactly 100 years after the big one.”

—Diary entry of University of Mississippi English professor Gerald Walton on Oct. 1, 1962, at 1:30 a.m.

ergeant Larry Mims and his fellow Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers couldn't help but snicker during the impromptu riot training. It was Sunday, Sept. 30, 1962, and there had been rumors that President John F. Kennedy might call up the Mississippi National Guard to quell racial tensions simmering at nearby University of Mississippi, more affectionately known by many Southerners as Ole Miss. A black student, James Meredith, was trying to go to the school, the state's flagship university. On the grass outside the Nettleton Armory in northeast Mississippi, Mims, then 23, cooperated with his unit's preparations, though he saw little need for the exercises.

“We had never had this kind of training before, and it all seemed silly,” says Mims, now 73. In 1962, he had a job selling advertising at the *Tupelo Daily Journal*. “We would have paid more attention if we knew what was about to happen.”

After training that day, Mims, a gregarious, 5-foot-10-inch officer candidate, was sent home. He was watching “Bonanza” with his wife when a headline flashed on the screen: *Two people killed at The University of Mississippi*. Anticipating a call-up, he went into his bedroom to put on his Army fatigues, and that's when the call came: “Report to the armory at Nettleton immediately.”

Mims knew he was going to Ole Miss.

At around 8 p.m. on Sept. 30, Mims and his unit, the 108th Cavalry Regiment's 1st Squadron, set off in two Jeeps and three 2½-ton trucks for the campus, some 60 miles north in Oxford. The canvas tops were up, so the Soldiers couldn't see the steady stream of cars and pickup trucks heading for the same destination—filled with angry white men carrying guns.

Mims was one of 10,000 Mississippi Army National Guard Soldiers mobilized by President Kennedy that day. Their mission was to protect Ole Miss from the escalating riots. Many Mississippians worried that James Meredith's entry could threaten more than 100 years of white rule and Southern tradition.

The Soldiers worried about what their families would think if they helped fight for desegregation and how their friends would treat them when they came home.

They were right to worry. Brigadier General (Ret.) Jim Jackson, then a lieutenant who was activated for duty the same time Mims was, remembers getting chills when, in the hours after the federalization, his cousin made plain that Jackson was fighting the wrong battle. They may have been blood relatives, but when it came down to it, his cousin now saw him as the enemy. He told Jackson: “It's us against you now.”

### INTO THE UNKNOWN

It was eerily quiet when the convoy came to a stop in front of the Oxford armory. The Soldiers waited in the back of the truck, in the dark, for instructions. It would be 30 minutes before orders would come. Finally, noncommissioned officers at the armory approached the truck with two big boxes filled with clips and a box of live ammunition. The Soldiers each took 30 rounds of ammunition, but were told not to load their rifles. No one knew what to expect.

When the convoy left the armory and went east on Highway 6, Mims knew they were heading toward campus. He'd attended college there in 1960. As soon as the trucks passed over the railroad tracks near campus, they were assaulted with brickbats and rocks by rioters. A mob of angry students and other individuals opposing desegregation had taken up around the campus, mostly by the Lyceum, the university's main administration building. Built in 1848, it's the oldest building on campus and a symbol of its heritage. They also set up a roadblock made of lumber and concrete to block the entrance to the Ole Miss campus; the lead Jeep in Mims' unit was forced to smash through it. Another group of protesters tried to heave a 4x4 wooden post at the convoy, using it as a battering ram. Fortunately, it only hit a steering wheel. Less than a minute later, Mims' truck pulled up to the curb of the Lyceum.

The air outside was so thick with tear gas that the Soldiers couldn't see anything. Mims heard .22 rifle fire and was trying to see out when a Molotov cocktail hit his truck, setting it on fire. “I was so damned frightened,” he says. The Soldiers started jumping out of the back of the truck. Seconds later, Mims watched rioters overturn a Memphis news truck and set it ablaze.

At first, the Soldiers huddled together. “We didn't go into any formation. We were just backing up against the Lyceum as far as we could to protect ourselves,” says Mims. Rioters stepped out of the darkness to chuck bricks at



Fighting throughout the night, the 500 National Guard Soldiers were able to secure the campus by dawn of Oct. 1, allowing James Meredith to enroll.

them, and then disappeared as quickly as they'd come. He felt like he was at war, which quickly dissipated his sympathy for the rioters. “These were our folks, my fellow Mississippians,” he says. “But they ceased being our folks when they started attacking us.”

### TO OBEY OR NOT TO OBEY

The day before President Kennedy signed the Meredith federalization, Captain Billy Ross Brown, commander of an 80-man howitzer battery unit of the 108th Cavalry Regiment's 2nd Squadron in Water Valley, MS, was told to start preparing his men mentally for mobilization. Racial tensions had been building for the last several years, and the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to integrate institutions of higher education in *Brown v. Board of Education* ricocheted through the South. Many Southerners felt the verdict was unfair and a direct insult to their way of life, and despite the ruling, they intended to stand their ground. When Ross Barnett was elected governor in 1960, he formed Citizen Councils to promote white supremacy, and the state became committed to a massive resistance.

Mississippi's government just wasn't ready for these changes, says Kaye Bryant. Her husband, Bob, was in one of the first National Guard units to arrive at Ole Miss. “The world was coming to us ... ready or not.”

In 1961, Meredith, then a 29-year-old Air Force Veteran, filed suit against Ole Miss claiming that he had twice been illegally denied admission based on the color of his skin. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that he had a legal right to attend.

On Sept. 20, 1962, during Meredith's post-victory attempt to enroll once again, Gov. Barnett stood in a theatrical display of power in front of the Lyceum to block his registration. Five days later, Meredith was denied admission in the company of a lawyer from the U.S. Department of Justice. Mississippi's resistance left President Kennedy in a very public—and what could be politically devastating—standoff with Gov. Barnett.

“The university was a symbol of the Old South,” says Dr. Charles Ross, currently a professor there who both studies and teaches African-American history. “Having the governor and president involved only made people dig in their heels and be more defiant.”

### A CLASH OF EMOTIONS

In 1962, the notion of joining the Mississippi Army National Guard was popular. Many joined to earn extra money. Others enlisted because, as one Soldier from that era says, “It's just what you did back then.” Tom Logue, commander of the 134th Transportation Company at the time, remembers his high school football coach telling him that joining the Guard meant you could “ride big trucks with the wind in your face, live in a field under the trees and see the moon at night, eat as much as you want at the mess hall, and fire weapons.” That sounded pretty good to a 17-year-old kid, he says. Logue retired from the Guard in 2006, as a major general.

Black men weren't allowed to enlist in the Mississippi National Guard then, and segregation affected all aspects of life in Mississippi. “In 1962, I had never [shaken] hands with a black person,” says Jackson, who was with Company A, 106th Combat Engineers, 31st Dixie Division. “We had [separate] water fountains and ... restrooms.

Using his political appointment as governor of Mississippi to sway public opinion, Ross Barnett was James Meredith's biggest obstacle in his quest to enroll at Ole Miss.



When I went to the theater, the blacks sat in the balcony.”

On Saturday, Sept. 29, two days before the riots began, Gov. Barnett gave an impromptu speech at an Ole Miss football game. “I love Mississippi! I love her people! Our customs. I love and respect our heritage,” he roared to a crowd of 50,000. It was a rallying cry. The students understood that he was referring to segregation and the prospect of Meredith's enrollment, and he was met with such thunderous applause, you would have thought he was preaching disciples into a state of rapture. “It was a call to arms,” says Dr. Ross. “Here, Governor Barnett decides to arbitrarily go to the microphone during the game and let the crowd know that what's going on at Oxford is wrong. He was saying, ‘Let's fight. Let's not just go along with this. Are we going to roll over and take this?’”

Students began gathering in front of the Lyceum. Anticipating a fervor following Meredith's enrollment, President Kennedy had sent a few hundred unarmed federal marshals to keep the peace on campus. About 20 percent of the marshals were black. At some point, the marshals formed a human chain around the Lyceum, angering the student rioters who resented their presence. Students felt antagonized by the marshals especially because the blockade felt like a takeover, writes historian William Doyle in *An American*



*Insurrection: James Meredith and the Battle of Oxford, Mississippi.* By the time President Kennedy was delivering his televised address about his decision to send in troops, the marshals were fighting back mobs of protesters.

To protect themselves, the marshals sprayed tear gas, but this seemed to further agitate the rioters. Within hours, many marshals would lie bleeding in the Lyceum halls while an Oxford doctor set up a makeshift triage. The campus had become a battlefield.

### IN THE MIDDLE OF HELL

Mims had been on campus for only a few minutes, but he was already wondering if he was going to make it out alive. The air smelled like burning rubber, and his pants leg was soaked with blood. He had no idea what his injury was or how it had happened. Others from his unit were falling to their knees in pain, having suffered direct hits from steel pipes and chunks of concrete that rioters had taken from a nearby construction site. Some rioters had broken into the chemistry building and stolen acid to throw on the marshals and Soldiers. Many of the Soldiers were ducking behind trees and shrubs to avoid the enemy barrage, which included rifle and pistol fire. The unit still hadn't been instructed to load their carbines or M1s.

The Jeeps were riddled with bullet holes, and some men had ripped their names off their uniforms out of fear that the rioters would retaliate against their families. According to a 1962 National Guard report, "The situation was like a scene from Dante's 'Inferno'; pitch dark, several thousand men and youth milling around among the trees on the

Circle and Grove, and among the university streets."

At the direction of federal authorities, Meredith was asleep in a safe house at Baxter Hall that night to prepare for his enrollment the next morning. It wasn't until 6:30 a.m. that he learned that Soldiers had taken over the campus. That morning, accompanied by federal marshals, he sneaked into a back entrance of the Lyceum to try once again to register. He had to step over injured marshals scattered in the halls. He says he was fearless then and lucky for it. He probably hadn't considered that if it weren't for the National Guard, the protestors may have charged all the way to Meredith's dormitory and done the unthinkable.

He never doubted the troops and their commitment to the mission. "The greatest fear of a military commander is that his troops won't follow his orders," Meredith said recently. "The Kennedys were scared to death that the Mississippi Guard wouldn't follow theirs." In his nine years in the Air Force, Meredith learned that when you get an order, you follow it. Meredith was "absolutely not" surprised when the Mississippi National Guard did the same.

Even Gov. Barnett's son, Ross Barnett Jr., reported for duty after his unit was federalized.

### "FORWARD, MARCH"

Once Mims' squadron reached campus, all three arms of the 108th Cavalry were there—some 500 National Guard Soldiers. It was enough to put an end to the riots. The marshals were badly injured and needed the reinforcements. According to reports, one marshal told a Guard officer: "If y'all hadn't come, we couldn't have held out much longer."

Colonel Guy J. Gravlee, who was in command of Mims' unit, blew his whistle to

**Above:** By the morning of Oct. 1, more than 100 Soldiers and marshals were wounded, but the rioters had been routed from campus. **Right:** James Meredith became a symbol of the civil rights movement, joining the likes of Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many other African-Americans who fought against racism and segregation.

call his men to attention—"I'll never forget it," says Mims. He hollered so all of the Soldiers could hear. "Men, when I blow this whistle, I want you to lock and load." The colonel immediately blew the whistle. The Soldiers loaded bullets into the chambers of their weapons. "The order ripped around the building, 'Forward, march.' The circle slowly surged out in all directions. Another voice called out 'Charge!' and parts of the line rushed forward in disorganized fragments," writes Doyle in *An American Insurrection*.

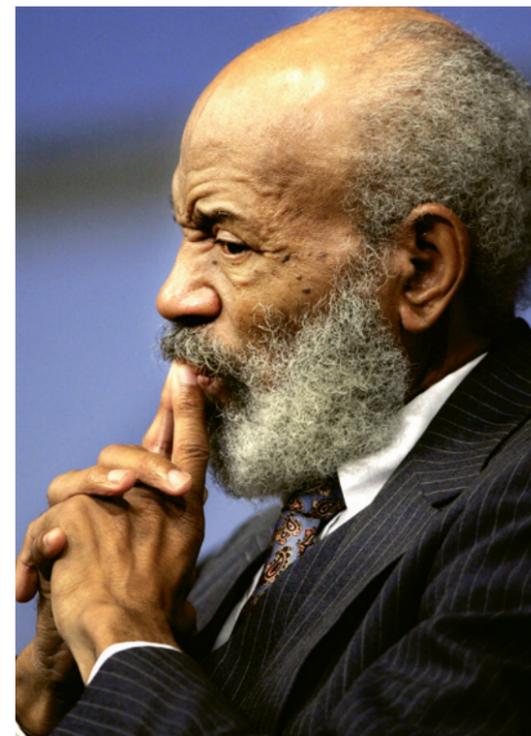
Mims recalls a shift in the crowd at that moment. "When we put those clips in our weapons, the rioters started running," he says. "It could have turned into an absolute disaster, but it didn't because of the strong discipline of the Guard."

Soon after, sometime around 4 a.m., the National Guard secured the campus. Units began rounding up stray rioters and walking them at gunpoint to the Lyceum. Mims recognized someone he went to college with in the group of prisoners they'd arrested.

Finally, sometime after lunch on Monday, Oct. 1, Army troops from Fort Bragg, NC, and Fort Dix, NJ, arrived to relieve the exhausted troops, and Mims and his unit were sent to the Oxford armory for some rest. They hadn't slept since Saturday, so many of them passed out cold in the grass around the building.

When the Soldiers returned home from Ole Miss, they hardly received a hero's welcome. Many in their communities resented the Guard for the role it had played in helping secure the campus for Meredith's registration, and some Soldiers faced discrimination for quite a while afterward. When Mims dropped into an Oxford restaurant a few days after the riots, he was ushered out. "We don't serve Soldiers," the waitress told him.

No Soldiers bragged about being involved in what many on campus referred to as "the incident." Even some of their wives received offensive phone calls. "When we went home, we didn't talk about what we did," says Mims, who retired from the Guard as a colonel in 1993, after serving in Desert Storm.



### DIFFERENT TIMES

Meredith graduated from Ole Miss a year after he enrolled. In 2002, his son, Joseph, graduated from the university with a Ph.D. in business.

Meredith doesn't seem to carry the battle scars that you'd expect from a man who went through hell and back to enroll in college. "There wasn't a day that went by that I didn't go up my dorm's steps and get called a [racial slur]," he says. "But it didn't affect me. I expected people to say things like that to me, and I just didn't care."

Today, Meredith focuses most of his energy on being a self-proclaimed "propagandist" for Mississippi's lagging public school system, which has been ranked by the American Legislative Exchange Council as one of the worst in the country. Now 80, he walks up to the local Kroger grocery store in Jackson often to attend a coffee club. Some of the other members of the coffee club served in the National Guard during the

Meredith federalization. To them, Meredith is a bit of a celebrity. They were all in that nightmare together, and these days, talking about it is part of the healing process. Says Meredith: "I've studied a lot, but I've learned more sitting at that table and listening to those old white men talk than I have in all of my life. I can't explain why, but my optimism is improving."

With those ugly times behind them, the Veterans have struck a different tone when it comes to the event. "Mississippi is a much different place than it was then," says 82-year-old Gene Bagwell, who left the Mississippi Guard just before the 1962 riots. Bagwell occasionally stops into the coffee club and looks forward to getting Meredith alone for a few minutes of conversation. "He tells me things I never really thought about," says Bagwell.

### THE LEGACY

Nearly every Guard Soldier interviewed for this story was quick to point out that today they count African-American neighbors as friends and co-workers, and

many celebrate their role in this pivotal moment in history. Kaye Bryant's husband is deceased now, but when he was alive, he would often show visitors a book he had that was autographed by Meredith. In 2008, the mayor of Oxford reached out to Soldiers who served during the Meredith federalization to thank them for saving the town during the riots. Logue was given a key to the city and a framed "thank-you," which hangs on the wall of his home office.

Says Bryant: "They accomplished their mission with dignity and valor—today, there's not a single one of them that is not extremely proud of the part they played."

Mississippi has come a long way since 1962—but some of the state's oldest residents are still trying to make sense of what happened at Ole Miss. "We continually try to apologize and convince people that we've changed," says Dr. Ross. "No other state works as hard to convince the rest of the country that everything is different." **GX**

## STRUGGLE AND PROGRESS

The civil rights era saw African-Americans breaking many barriers in society but also included several tragic events. Here's a glimpse of some pivotal moments.





# BEYOND LIMITS

When National Guard and Reserve Soldiers want to find out whether they're Special Forces material, they must endure one of the most punishing weekends in the Guard.

BY STEPHANIE INMAN  
PHOTOS BY RUSSELL KLIKA

**a** bead of sweat rolled down between Sergeant Derek's half-closed eyes. After a moment, he wiped the rest of the sweat from his face with his left hand. His right hand remained still by his side, so it wouldn't disturb the IV bag in his arm.

Slightly dazed, he was lying on the floor of the temporary command center at Fort McClellan, AL, accompanied by a medic from 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Alabama National Guard. Derek had blacked out. The last thing he knew, he was trying to complete a 2-mile run in sweltering heat, the final event in the Special Forces Readiness Evaluation (SFRE). Held twice a year, the weekend-long SFRE is the first step on the path to becoming a Green Beret. Before blacking out, Derek was 300 meters from completing one of the most grueling two-day periods in the Guard.

Now he was flat on his back, soaked in sweat. An Army Reserve Soldier and an eight-year Veteran with three deployments, Derek had never experienced a heat injury before. Since Soldiers must complete the SFRE to advance on the Special Forces path, Derek's status was in jeopardy.

Would he be disqualified? Would he be told, like countless other skilled, smart, fit, tough Soldiers before him, "Thanks, but no thanks"?

Not if he could help it. In both his civilian and military careers, he hadn't quit, even during the toughest times. He just couldn't.

"I'm fine," he said to the medic, Staff Sergeant Drew. His voice was

shaky at first, but as the minutes passed, it gathered more strength.

Every Soldier who goes through SFRE reaches this pivotal point. The event is designed to not only push candidates to the brink, but also give them a swift kick over. It's at that moment when a Soldier can truly discover—and show the cadre—what he's made of. The choice was simple: Give up or press on. This was Derek's moment.

## A NOTCH ABOVE THE REST

Created as an assessment tool, SFRE is primarily meant for Guard and Reserve members and reveals who has what it takes to join the ranks of the most elite and highly trained Soldiers in the military.

Throughout the weekend, candidates are thrust into one event after another, which include ruck marches that can span 12 miles or more, exhausting combat swims and agonizing team events. They're evaluated not only on how well they perform in the events,



**THE MINIMUM ISN'T WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR. DON'T EVEN WORRY ABOUT THE STANDARD. THOSE [SOLDIERS] WORRYING ABOUT THE MINIMUM WILL EVENTUALLY FAIL."**

MSG Mark, Special Operations Recruiting Detachment NCOIC, 20th Special Forces Group



## SF in the Guard

Special Forces in the National Guard are divided into two groups: the 19th Group, based in Utah, and the 20th Group, based in Alabama. Here are the states that have SF units.

### 19TH GROUP UNITS

California  
Colorado  
Ohio  
Rhode Island  
Texas  
Utah  
Washington  
West Virginia

### 20TH GROUP UNITS

Alabama  
Florida  
Illinois  
Maryland  
Massachusetts  
Mississippi  
North Carolina

but also on their personalities and how they interact with their teammates.

The 28 participants arrived on Friday night and settled into the barracks. By 6 a.m. on Saturday, they were lined up outside the command center in T-shirts and shorts, rucks by their side. There was an air of uneasiness. You could see it on their faces.

One unique aspect about SFRE is that the Soldiers are completely in the dark about what will happen over the weekend. They don't know how long the days will last, how many events there will be, or what the events will require.

Derek looked a little more at ease than most of the Soldiers. This wasn't his first time at SFRE. He'd completed the assessment in March but didn't move to the next phase—Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS)—because he failed the requisite APFT. Physically, he wasn't yet at the Special Forces level. And that's saying something. At 6 feet, 5 inches, and 205 pounds of almost pure muscle, he looks intimidating. He's a mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter. Competing in the light heavyweight division, he has trained with some of the most noteworthy fighters in the industry. So it was natural for him to assume that he'd be successful at his first SFRE. But Derek quickly discovered that the physical demands of SFRE were vastly different from MMA fighting.

Not ready to give up on his Special Forces dream, Derek spent two months training for the second SFRE in July, running four to six miles three times a week, doing a ruck march once a week and lifting weights four to five times a week.

## LET THE GAMES BEGIN

The first SFRE event was an APFT. It was an eye-opening experience for many of the candidates because the cadre had strict grading methods. Six candidates failed and one was medically dropped, disqualifying them for the weekend.

The Soldiers who passed were assigned a number. These digits were attached to their uniform, and all ranks and names were removed. The candidates had no idea what the numbers meant, but they were their only IDs throughout the weekend. Derek was No. 7. (For operational



At SFRE, the drills never end. Top left: Candidates never know beforehand what an exercise is, how long it will last, or what will be coming next. Above: Treading water is tacked on to a 50-meter swim. Right: Candidates take turns in a 30-foot rope climb.

security reasons, only first names and ranks of participants and cadre are used in this story.)

Next, the candidates were ushered into the command center for a briefing. All eyes were on the front of the room, where Master Sergeant Mark, the 20th Group's Special Operations Recruiting Detachment NCOIC, eyed the candidates with a mix of skepticism and curiosity. Finally, he welcomed the students to SFRE. "Who has ever had a heat injury?" he asked, scanning the room. Not a hand went up. Mark didn't seem surprised. He said many candidates experience their first heat injury at SFRE because they don't properly hydrate and care for their bodies.

As the Soldiers sat quietly in their chairs, he discussed how SFRE candidates will not only face physical demands, but mental ones as well. He stated that the cadre are looking for Soldiers who will push on, no matter what. "The minimum isn't what we are looking for," he said. "Don't even worry about the standard. Those [Soldiers] worrying about the minimum will eventually fail—maybe not here, but eventually. We aren't looking for people who will fail. ... We have to make sure we are picking the right people."

After the briefing, the candidates were loaded into vans and driven to a remote location about 30 minutes away, out in the woods.



After the vans stopped, the only sound that could be heard were rucks being unloaded and the cadre yelling at the candidates, "Hurry up!" The candidates formed two lines, and the cadre ordered them to march. The first ruck march had begun.

Within a couple of miles, the group began to break up into smaller groups. A few Soldiers emerged in front—Derek among them. Others struggled to keep up. The high humidity and the 45-pound rucks proved heavy burdens for many. Within an hour, some were giving up.

The cadre and medics monitored the condition of the candidates by driving back and forth in vans and ATVs.

After about an hour and a half, one Soldier collapsed. Drew rushed to his side and quickly administered an IV bag. Ultimately, the Soldier was not able to resume.

Most Soldiers don't properly prepare for the physical demands of the evaluation, Drew would explain later. Many don't begin hydrating until they arrive at SFRE. And that's usually not enough. Drew recommends beginning the hydration process 72 hours before arriving at Fort McClellan.

After the ruck march, at about 12:30 p.m., the candidates were transported to a swimming pool. Only 18 candidates were left since three quit during the march. At the pool, they would have to complete a 50-meter swim in full uniform—combat boots included—and perform exercises in and out of the pool, such as flutter kicks and treading water without using their hands. About an hour later, they were instructed to get out of the pool and out of their wet uniforms. By this point, the physical stress was wearing them down. Their faces and bodies testified to that. A few cried out in agony as they exited the pool, their legs were cramping so intensely.

Some of the Soldiers removed their wet boots to discover that blisters and cuts covered

their feet, and some toes were shades of blue. They grimaced as they massaged their worn-out muscles. The cadre passed out oral rehydration salts (ORS) to the candidates, which are used to treat dehydration. And the day was barely even half over.

By 3 p.m., they were back in the vans and on their way to one of the most challenging events of the day, not to mention the most crucial: the team event.

The Soldiers were divided into two teams and given a scenario: American forces had been ambushed and were in desperate need of ammunition and supplies. The teams had to carry crates of ammunition and water, with no idea of how far they had to go. All they knew was that they needed to move as fast as possible.

As if the situation weren't challenging enough, the cadre would add impromptu changes to the scenario. For instance, they would designate one Soldier to act "wounded," forcing his team members to carry his load and rucksack—and him.

The importance of this exercise was that it evaluated how the Soldiers interacted with one another in a high-stress environment. "They are always being assessed," said Sergeant First Class Mark, another member of the cadre. "At evaluation, even the trees have eyes."

## Advice From the Cadre

Staff Sergeant Drew of the 1st Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, gives advice on how Soldiers should train to be successful at the Special Forces Readiness Evaluation.

*"Leave your comfort zone behind. There's no running on a treadmill. No air-conditioned gyms. When it's raining or 100 degrees, that's when you need to train. When [Soldiers] leave their comfort zone, that's when you can see their character and who they truly are as a candidate."*



To stand out, candidates must adhere to a simple principle: Quitting is not an option. **Below:** Prospects prepare for a "smoke session" of exercises before day's end. **Opposite Page:** Leg raises are part of an exhausting team drill.

He was impressed with Derek's performance. "He was the only one [who], when he tried to [present] himself as a leader, didn't just [act as a] cheerleader and say 'Come on guys. You can do it.' That's not leadership. The Army's definition of leadership is: Give a specific task, condition and standard. And he did that in the team event exercise under stress, which is unnatural."

Once the team event was over, the Soldiers were taken to an overgrown baseball field near the command center. For about an hour, they received one of the most intense "smoke sessions" of drills most Soldiers had ever seen. Some candidates appeared on the verge of tears. One Soldier was dry heaving so much that his voice was hoarse. Another Soldier quit, saying that this just wasn't for him. At around 9:30 p.m., the cadre told the Soldiers they were done for the day. They were to return to their barracks and be on location at 5:45 the following morning.

Only 15 Soldiers remained.

## THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Sunday was a little easier, but not by much. The candidates had to successfully climb a 30-foot rope, complete a 6-mile ruck march and finish the day with a 2-mile run. Because Saturday was so brutal, some Soldiers would not make it through Sunday's events. A few would quit, and a few others would not finish due to physical problems.



Before the ruck march even began, the Soldier labeled No. 2 was medically dropped when the muscles in his arms began to seize up. His fingers straightened, and his hands took on a claw-like position. As hard as he tried, he couldn't get his fingers to bend or relax. The medics immediately began administering an IV into both of his arms, because he was suffering from dehydration. Eventually he was taken back to the



command center to recuperate.

As Sunday drew to a close, the 11 candidates who had completed all of the weekend's events were called into a private room one by one for a critique of their performance and were told whether they'd move on to SFAS.

But one of the candidates was missing.

During the last event of the day, the 2-mile run, Derek was about 300 meters from the finish line when his knees began to give out. He struggled to put one foot in front of the other. His shoulders were hunched forward, and his head was swinging from side to side, as if barely attached to the rest of his body. Then he collapsed.

Earlier, a few cadre in a van had noticed Derek having problems. They questioned him about his health condition, but he said that he was fine. It's protocol that the cadre not interfere unless a candidate requests help or it's apparent that his health is in danger. They continued to trail him in the van and saw when he collapsed. "He fell off on the side of

the road, stood up, then started running the other direction," said Staff Sergeant Eric, another medic in the 20th Group.

Eric and another member of the cadre jumped out of the van and ran to him. "We got a hold of him," he said, "and then for five minutes straight he kept saying, 'I can finish the run. I can finish the run.'"

Eric asked Derek to state his name and the date. He was clueless. The cadre gave him an IV, carried him to the van and drove him back to the command center where Drew was waiting. As Derek lay on the floor of the command center, he kept pleading for the cadre to let him continue with the run. He had come so far and was afraid that by not completing the evaluation, he would automatically fail. That would mean two months of preparation completely wasted.

Even though Derek wasn't allowed to finish the run, he'd impressed several members of the cadre. Throughout the weekend, he had shone brighter than a lot of other candidates, displaying a good attitude, leadership skills and outstanding physical capabilities.

The fact that he didn't quit, even when his body shut down, showed that he possessed one of the most important character traits of Green Berets: mental toughness. The ability to keep going, even through the worst pain. It's absolutely necessary, because throughout the two-year Special Forces training process, Soldiers will have to perform and excel despite significant injuries.

Eventually, Derek was OK. But he was more concerned with whether he could move on to SFAS. In a private meeting, the cadre told him that there were a few areas where he needed to improve before he would be ready for SFAS—his APFT score and the 50-meter combat swim. The cadre decided that Derek wouldn't have to retake SFRE, but he would be reassessed on those two areas in September. With a successful reassessment, he would move on to SFAS.

If he makes it there, he will need the same attitude to survive the next stage of his Special Forces quest.

"I would take a guy like him over anyone else," said Eric. "It's better to fail than to quit. For five or 10 minutes after [Derek fell], he kept saying, 'I can finish. I can finish.' Those are the guys you want next to you." **GX**

## Becoming a Green Beret

Typically, it takes about two years for a Soldier to become a Green Beret. Soldiers can sustain significant injuries throughout the process and be forced to stop the training until the injury heals. If that happens, and the Soldier drops out during a specific phase or course, they must repeat that course.

After a Soldier completes SFRE, they are sent to Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS), which lasts about three weeks. SFAS is a more intense and high-speed version of SFRE. The Soldiers are tested and pushed to their limits. The cadre assess the candidates critically to make sure they are

sending only the most elite Soldiers to the next phase — Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC, or Q School).

"[SFAS] is very different than most Army schools," said Sergeant First Class Mark, an SFRE cadre member with the 20th Group Special Forces. "The [cadre] aren't instructors. They are called assessors. It's a key distinction, because they aren't there to teach you anything. Initially, that's [a Soldier's] biggest hurdle — the three-week selection. The [cadre] are trying to decide whether you are trainable during those three weeks — can you go to the Q course? At the end of it, [the Soldiers] think they did the hardest thing. They think it's like hell week at SEAL School, and it's not. Our hell week is two years long."



For more information on joining Special Forces, see our graphic on pages 88–89 or email [special\\_forces@nationalguard.com](mailto:special_forces@nationalguard.com)



# PRIDE AND PAIN

*Before you can make it through FOUR YEARS at West Point, you have to make it through the FIRST DAY.*

**POINTS OF INTEREST**  
Built in 1788, West Point is the oldest military post in the United States. It's also the oldest military academy, having opened its doors in 1802.

It's 6 a.m. in early July at the United States Military Academy, and a group of 25 young men and women are in Eisenhower Hall with their proud families seated next to them. Standing outside, a thousand more wait for their turn to enter and be part of the next small group. A sense of uncertainty fills the air as an Army officer speaks for a minute about how fortunate they are to have been accepted to such a prestigious institution. When he's done, he turns the microphone over to a young female cadet, who talks briefly about the 18 hours to come. Then, with one sentence, she calmly but firmly shatters the morning quiet. "You now have 90 seconds to say your goodbyes."

And so it begins. Embarking on what may be the most challenging journey of their lives so far, the audience members rise from their seats, kiss their family and friends—and the world as they know it—farewell, and walk through a back door, not knowing what awaits them on the other side. These are the first steps of West Point's Class of 2016.

Thirty-five National Guard Soldiers are part of this class, including Privates First Class Dana Millirons of Ohio, Heather Berzenye of Indiana and Franklin Gallo of South Carolina. They and the rest of their new classmates being greeted in Eisenhower Hall are on their way to join another family, one of the most elite in the world: the cadets past and present known as the Long Gray Line. To count themselves as permanent members of this club, however, they must first prove themselves throughout a 47-month experience that will mold them into leaders. But before that, they must endure six weeks of Cadet Basic Training. And before even that, they must make it through Reception Day, or R-Day. Over the next 18 hours, they will swear into the United States Army and learn how to speak, how to salute and how to march. Perhaps toughest of all, though, they'll also learn that their lives are no longer their own.

### IMMEDIATE LEADERS

West Point designates a number of slots each year to prior service members. Of the 1,193 cadets reporting for R-Day, 105 are prior service, including the Guard Soldiers. These cadets have a major advantage over the civilians because they have been to Basic Combat Training and AIT, and some have a combat deployment under their belt. They understand what it takes to be a Soldier.

"What they bring to the table are a couple of things," says Colonel Joseph DeAntona, West Point's brigade tactical officer. "One being maturity, because they tend to be a little bit older. And two, a good understanding of the institution and the profession that the rest of these new cadets will join once they leave West Point. That's invaluable, because aside from them, the only real contact the cadets have are with the officers and noncommissioned officers. So they act as peer leaders, if you will, for a host of high school young men and women who don't really have an understanding of what the Army is."

DeAntona oversees the daily life and training of all 4,400 cadets during their stay, and he expects the prior service cadets to help lead the class. For the 6-foot-8-inch Gallo, this is his biggest focus. "The only thing I worry about is to make sure I do a



**Above:** From the moment they raise their hands and swear into the Army, West Point cadets are held to the standards of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. **Right:** After the swear-in, the day is spent preparing for Cadet Basic Training, which is six weeks long. Haircuts, uniform issue and the simple act of learning how to march keep the cadets busy during their first day at West Point.

good job supporting the incoming freshmen, because if it's easier for them, it's easier for the rest of us," he says.

Gallo, 19, was at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, training to be in the military police when he called home and his dad told him he had received admission to West Point.

Being here is surreal for Gallo, because his attendance represents the first of many accomplishments for his family: the first to attend college; the first military officer; and if he makes the track and basketball teams, the first collegiate athlete.

If Gallo and the other cadets can keep up with the Point's blistering pace, they will be on track to graduate as second lieutenants in the Army. But first, they have to survive one of the most demanding college experiences in the country.

### TAKING THE VOW

After the 90-second goodbyes, the cadets are ushered to another section of Eisenhower Hall and issued tags to document their personal belongings. A few of the new cadets take their time, prompting an upperclassman to bark, "Move with a sense of purpose, new cadet!" If they've been yelled at before, they've never been yelled at like this. R-Day, as well as the day-to-day supervision of cadets during the school year, is run primarily by upperclassmen so they can polish their leadership and time management skills.

After the new cadets receive their identification tags, they take a mile-long bus ride across campus to Thayer Hall. There, they begin a process similar to what recruits experience at Basic Combat Training. They turn in their civvies, receive APFT uniforms and duffels, and hear "Hurry up, new cadet" constantly. Only an hour has passed since the beginning of

R-Day, but many of the new cadets now appear stressed.

Following a thorough medical screening (which disqualifies a handful of new cadets every year), the new cadets review their enlistment documents. If everything looks correct, they are ushered into a classroom, 25 at a time, for one of most important moments of the day: their oath of enlistment. A JAG officer instructs them to read their enlistment papers word for word and think about the magnitude of their pledge. They are about to sign the next nine years of their life over to the Army—a lifetime to most 18-year-olds. Then, when prompted, they stand up, push their chairs under the table and begin their vow. They beam with pride, but there is no time to get sentimental. R-Day is far from over.

It's a little after 10 a.m., and next up is a quick haircut at the West Point Club Barber Shop and Saloon. Some shaved their heads before reporting to R-Day, while others obviously hadn't had their hair cut for months. Regardless, the 17-member barber staff inspects everyone to make sure all are in regulation. The barbers joke with the new cadets to help ease the tension, and one of them even quotes R. Lee Ermey's more colorful lines from the film *Full Metal Jacket*, making the cadets laugh. Val Weygant has been cutting hair at West Point for over 30 years and wouldn't have it any other way.

"I'm not here because of the pay," she says. "I'm here because of these cadets and what they do for our country."

After the haircuts, the students are moved to the basement of the Cadet Dining Hall to receive their dress pants. They won't get their dress coats until after the six-week Cadet Basic Training, since most bulk up in their chests, shoulders and arms after doing thousands of push-ups. The basement is packed with new cadets, along with about 50 civilians who are there to help. The new cadets get their inseams measured for their dress

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

West Point was the first school in the U.S. to use rings as a class symbol. The tradition started in 1835 and has been continuous with the exception of 1836 (no rings), and 1879 (cuff links).

pants on one side of the room. On the other, they are issued underwear, undershirts and everything else they will need at West Point.

The layers of noise in the basement are overwhelming, from the air conditioning and sewing machines to the workers, new cadets and upperclassmen. In the middle of all this commotion is Millirons. Having completed Basic Combat Training last summer, he looks calm. The day before, he had talked about applying to West Point because of his mother's urging.

"After Basic, I told my mom I was thinking about going Active Duty, but she flipped out," he says. She wanted him to get a degree first. "So I figured I'd apply to West Point. You know, go big or go home!"

Millirons, 18, received his acceptance letter in January and immediately began preparing. He learned to shine shoes, memorized bugle calls, and studied military dictionaries and anything else that could give him an edge. But right now, he is focused on keeping his cool and relying on his experience as a Guard Soldier to get through R-Day.

He received some extra inspiration from one of his family members. "Right before I came here, I spent a lot of time with my grandfather, who served in the Navy during World War II," he says. "He has Alzheimer's, but for some reason when we are together, his memory is great. The last time I saw him, he told me I was going to be a general one day. His words really motivate me. I want to make him proud."

It's almost 11:20 a.m., and after the new cadets receive their gear from the basement, they march to their new home, the cadet barracks. In the center of the barracks is a parade ground where upperclassmen are instructing hundreds of new cadets how to march, salute and stand at attention. At first glance, the area appears congested, but the upperclassmen skillfully keep the small formations out of each other's way. When the new cadets get out of sync, the upperclassmen halt the formation and give instructions: "Rotate on the balls of your feet, new cadet." "Watch your cadence." But the upperclassmen aren't yelling. They, too, once experienced the confusion of R-Day, so they show patience and sprinkle in encouragement.

After the new cadets properly execute a few simple marching orders, including the elusive "about face," they line up with their backs facing the barracks. One of the most time-honored traditions at West Point, reporting to the barracks is serious business because it's the first time the new cadets actually report to an upperclassman. They have to execute an about face, march up to a line a few inches from the barracks

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

West Point began admitting females in 1976. Today, women represent 17 percent of all cadets — the same percentage as in the entire U.S. Army.

entrance, drop their bag, pop a salute and recite the following script:

"Sir/Ma'am,

"New Cadet [Last Name] reports to the cadet in the red sash for the first time as ordered."

Just before noon, the new cadets appear exhausted, having been on their feet for nearly six hours. But if they lose focus now and make a

mistake, they will have to repeat the process again until they get it right.

"About face! New cadet, step up to my line! Not on my line, not over my line, not behind my line, step up to my line, new cadet!" the upperclassman barks. Wearing a crimson sash, which signifies he is an officer in the cadet corps, the upperclassman is built like an oak tree. The process continues for hours until every new cadet reports to the barracks correctly.

### TAKING THE PLAIN

In the afternoon, there's more marching, along with lessons in the protocol of military orders. At the end of the day, the cadets gather to march on the famous and immaculate West Point parade grounds, affectionately called "the Plain." Here, they'll again recite the oath of



## A CADET'S TYPICAL DAY

### 0600 REVEILLE

A cannon discharge, bugle call and flag raising begin the day.

### 0655 BREAKFAST FORMATION

Cadets must report to their company before the meal.

### 0705 BREAKFAST

0720 That's correct: They have 15 minutes to eat.

### 0730 CLASSES

1150 This period can include tutoring.

### 1205 LUNCH

Now they can finally relax because lunch is 45 minutes long.

### 1250 DEAN'S HOUR

Cadets get an uninterrupted block of time to prepare for afternoon classes.

### 1355 CLASSES

1600 There is no free period.

### 1615 ATHLETICS

1830 Whether it's a varsity, intramural or club sport, all cadets have two hours of practice every day of the week.

### 1800 DINNER

1930 The time is stretched out to accommodate the sports teams.

### 1930 EVENING STUDY PERIOD

2130 Mandatory time to complete homework, study and hold group study sessions.

### 2130 DUTIES

2330 Cleaning rooms, uniforms and other chores.

### 2330 TAPS

Lights out, no exceptions.



“ ABOUT FACE!  
NEW CADET, STEP UP TO  
MY LINE! NOT ON MY LINE,  
NOT OVER MY LINE, NOT  
BEHIND MY LINE, **STEP UP TO  
MY LINE, NEW CADET!** ”

enlistment, this time in a ceremony in front of family and friends. An hour before the ceremony, the bleachers facing the Plain fill up with new cadets' relatives and well-wishers, and a few general officers from the Army.

At 6:30 p.m., the U.S. Military Academy band begins to play "The Army Goes Rolling Along." As the notes resonate across the field, the Class of 2016 marches out from the barracks more than a quarter of a mile away, moving as one giant mass. The new cadets take their place on the parade grounds, front and center, and the audience applauds enthusiastically.

Brigadier General Theodore D. Martin, commandant of the U.S. Corps of Cadets, conducts the oath. The sight is impressive as the 1,193 new cadets salute in unison on the general's command. Once the oath is completed, the new cadets march back toward the barracks, symbolizing the completion of R-Day for family and friends. But the new cadets' journey is hardly over.

### CHASING THE DREAM

For Private First Class Heather Berzenye, attending West Point has been a dream since she was a teen. She was at AIT to become a 92G, a cook, when she called home and her dad read her acceptance letter, which came after 4½ years of trying and waiting. "I couldn't say anything because I was so excited," she recalls.

Now the 21-year-old former cook (who never actually cooked at all in the Guard) looks forward to the next 47 months. "I have pretty much always thought about a life in the military, and I want to make the most of my experiences in the Army," she says.

Berzenye realizes the importance of the opportunity in front of her. West Point has consistently ranked in the top five of *Forbes* magazine's America's Top Colleges, placing third last year. In 2009, the academy beat out Princeton and Harvard in the same ratings.

"I am pretty confident we can take 500 of our best cadets to Harvard,



#### POINTS OF INTEREST

**West Point** is an official U.S. Mint. It's located near the academy and it produces platinum, gold and silver coins for our government.

and they would do OK. But if we took 500 of Harvard's best and brought them here, well, let's just say things wouldn't turn out so good for them," DeAntona jokes.

Cadets take 18 hours of classes each semester, although academics account for only 55 percent of a cadet's grade. Military development and physical fitness account for the other 30 and 15 percent, respectively. Cadets are required to participate in a sport of their choice, whether it's on a Division I, club or intramural team. Each summer is filled with training opportunities, including airborne, air assault, pathfinder and mountain warfare schools. Some students study abroad in Asia and Europe. Not surprisingly, West Point has a list of Rhodes scholars.

And if the cadets endure until graduation, their only obligation will be to serve in the Army for five years. They might even find themselves in the history books. For Millirons, Berzenye and Gallo, this is the ultimate dream.

"I've known for a while now that I want to



By the end of R-Day, the new cadets have undergone a tremendous transformation, and at the oath of enlistment ceremony in the evening, they are one step closer to becoming officers in the United States Army.

### WANT TO APPLY?

Here's the process for Guard Soldiers:

Meet the basic requirements for admission

Submit the preliminary application with SAT or ACT scores

Secure nomination from commander

Complete the full application

Complete DoDMERB medical exam

Pass the qualifying medical exam and candidate fitness assessment

To learn more about the requirements, go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/lead-from-the-top/west-point](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/lead-from-the-top/west-point). For more information on how to apply to West Point, email Major Brian Wire at [brian.wire@usma.edu](mailto:brian.wire@usma.edu) or visit [www.WestPoint.edu](http://www.WestPoint.edu)

“ I AM PRETTY CONFIDENT WE CAN TAKE 500 OF OUR BEST CADETS TO HARVARD, AND THEY WOULD DO OK. BUT IF WE TOOK 500 OF HARVARD'S BEST AND BROUGHT THEM HERE, WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THINGS WOULDN'T TURN OUT SO GOOD FOR THEM.”

COL Joseph DeAntona, West Point's brigade tactical officer

have a positive impact on the world," Gallo says. "I want to go out and live my life, and have stories to tell my kids and grandkids."

And Gallo hopes to achieve a lofty goal. "I'd like to be a general, but I'm not a fan of portraits," he says. "I guess if they can remember my name without a portrait hanging somewhere, that must mean I've done a good job."

### TAMING THE BEAST

As R-Day winds down—they'll go to sleep at around midnight that night—the new cadets can look to the week ahead. At 5 a.m. the next day, which marks Day 2 of the six-week-long Cadet Basic Training (CBT),

commonly known as Beast Barracks, the new cadets will ship out to Camp Buckner a few miles away. Similar to Basic Combat Training, the Beast is designed to transform civilians into Soldiers. Physical training, military formalities, marching, marksmanship, land navigation, survival training, rappelling and medical training are all part of the experience. The Beast culminates with "Warrior Forge," a 48-hour endurance-thon testing the new cadets on everything they have learned during the course. If they survive the training, the cadets will once again march on the parade grounds in front of their family and friends on Acceptance Day, which officially distinguishes them as cadets. After all that, the next challenge awaits: fall classes. **GX**

SOME SOLDIERS STRIVE FOR VICTORY.  
THE BEST FORCE IT INTO SUBMISSION.



Follow SGT Matthew Howard, 2012 National Guard NCO of the year, as he calls upon his training and discipline to compete in the 2012 Army Best Warrior Competition.

OCTOBER 15-18, VICTORY IS FOREVER  
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**BEST  
WARRIOR**  
2012

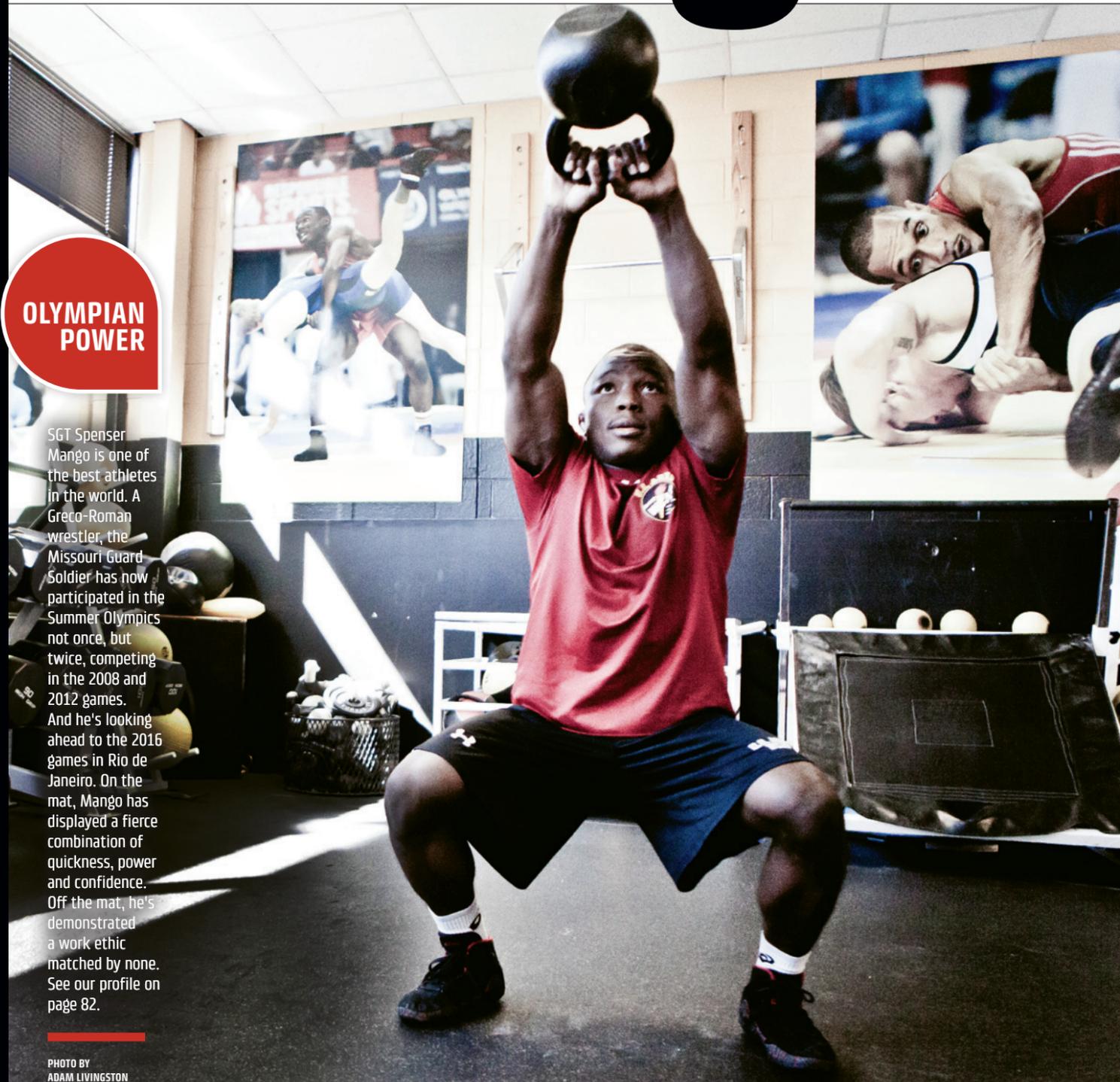
# Strength

■ IMPROVING BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

## OLYMPIAN POWER

SGT Spenser Mango is one of the best athletes in the world. A Greco-Roman wrestler, the Missouri Guard Soldier has now participated in the Summer Olympics not once, but twice, competing in the 2008 and 2012 games. And he's looking ahead to the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro. On the mat, Mango has displayed a fierce combination of quickness, power and confidence. Off the mat, he's demonstrated a work ethic matched by none. See our profile on page 82.

PHOTO BY  
ADAM LIVINGSTON



# PROTECT OUR OWN

That's the mindset behind the Arizona National Guard's Be Resilient Program, which teaches Soldiers how to better cope with stress. Its lessons can change lives, a fact that one of its instructors knows firsthand.

BY CAMILLE BRELAND

**S**ergeant First Class William Naney regularly teaches his battle buddies in the Arizona National Guard how to handle depression, marital problems and post-traumatic stress disorder. And one qualification in particular makes him an especially effective instructor: He speaks from experience.

With assistance, Naney has emerged stronger, with marriage intact, and he's passing along the lessons he's learned as he leads Arizona's Master Resilience Training (MRT), part of the state's Be Resilient Program that teaches tactics for confronting life stressors from relationship problems to financial crises to PTSD.

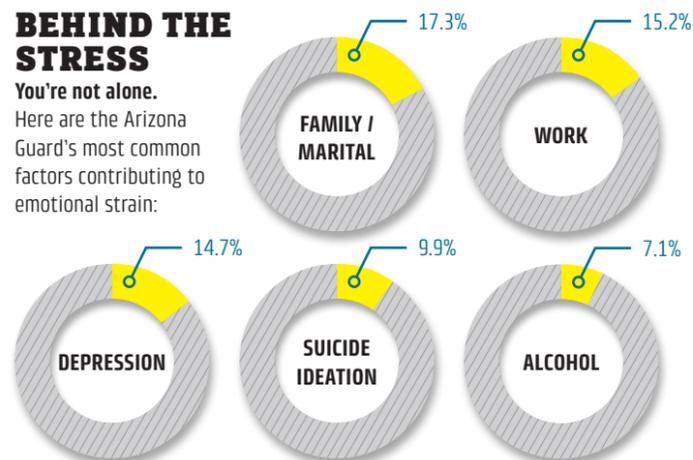
Sometimes, he says, we need to reach our hand out "and say, 'Man, I'm here. How can I help you?'"

Be Resilient does that. It's one of the initiatives of the newly created Total Force Team, which consolidates the Guard's family programs and its Soldier health and resiliency programs. The result is a "one-stop shop" for all the health and wellness resources of Arizona Soldiers and their families, says Arizona's adjutant general, Major General Hugo Salazar, whose team conceptualized and carried out the effort.

## BEHIND THE STRESS

You're not alone.

Here are the Arizona Guard's most common factors contributing to emotional strain:



SFC William Naney is a believer in Master Resilience Training. Not only does he teach it, but he credits the program with turning his life around.

Naney originally joined the Army Rangers before transferring to the Guard in 2000. He deployed to Kuwait in the early '90s and was well-trained to handle the combat operations he would face during his yearlong Afghanistan deployment in 2007. He and his unit, D Company's 158th Infantry Regiment ("Bushmasters"), Arizona National Guard, worked security for the provincial reconstruction teams—a mission rife with enemy attacks. Out of the entire regiment, his platoon was engaged in the most firefights during the deployment, he says.

Naney returned home in 2008, but according to friends and family, something had changed. He was angry, extremely fatigued and beginning to suffer memory loss, but he refused to believe he was struggling. After nearly a year of seeing doctors, therapists and counselors and with his marriage in jeopardy, Naney had to face the reality that he had been diagnosed with PTSD. Accepting that fact still wasn't easy. "Once I realized I had [PTSD], I didn't want to have it," he recalls. "I'd been trained to not have this. I'm a Ranger, and here I am struggling."

Eventually, Naney hit rock bottom. After being kicked out of the house by his wife for the third time, he lived in an apartment with a sleeping bag for a bed, surviving on a diet of ramen noodles and hot dogs. He was also drinking heavily. "I was spiraling out of control," he says. The most painful realization was the impact on his kids. "I was ashamed to have my children in my home because I had nothing."

## Suicide Warning Signs

- + Talking about feeling hopeless.
- + Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- + Talking about being a burden to others.
- + Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- + Neglecting personal welfare.
- + Withdrawing from friends or family or sleeping all the time.
- + Losing interest in things one used to care about.
- + Expressing feelings of excessive guilt.
- + Expressing feelings of failure or decreased performance.

Source: Be Resilient website (<http://www.azguard.gov/resilience/crisis/suicide.html>)

## GIVING—AND GETTING—HELP

During this time, Naney was teaching Master Resilience Training. He felt insecure about leading the instruction, but he continued with the mission because of a sense of duty. While he was training and mentoring Soldiers and civilians on the warning signs of depression and suicide and the skills to help intervene, he was solidifying his own need for assistance.

"I didn't realize until I went to this training that I've dealt with depression for a really long time, but I wouldn't deal with it," he says. "I believed in a gun and my battle buddy, and as long as I had those, I was good."

Day by day, Naney began to pinpoint the negative influences in his life and focus on the positive. "The more I taught [the course], the more I started seeing the good things," he says. His new attitude was especially helpful with his 4-year-old son and two stepchildren: "All I may have is hot dogs and ramen, but guess what? Kids love hot dogs and ramen. Little bit of cheese, little bit of ketchup—they love that. And sleeping bags? They like camping."

He surrounded himself with people who were good influences, and he tapped into the National Guard's resources for marriage counseling and mental health.

Naney knows that many Soldiers don't feel comfortable speaking to someone about their problems; he felt the same. But he says the Arizona Guard is trying to make it easier and more comfortable for Soldiers and Airmen to connect with resources. "It's not about [being] touchy-feely," he insists. "It's about understanding what's going on with you so you can reach out and ask for help and keep asking for help until you get it."

A Soldier's health extends far beyond a yearly checkup in the doctor's office. In the medical field, health is often referred to as a "spectrum of wellness"—including not only physical health, but also mental, emotional, spiritual and family well-being. Within this picture, the Be Resilient Program has a critical goal: Provide the necessary support and care to prevent Soldiers and Airmen from committing suicide.

With the U.S. in its longest period of conflict in history—nearly nine years of war in Iraq, and 11 and counting in Afghanistan—Soldiers are seeing multiple deployments in shorter periods of time, adding stress on them and their families. Be Resilient, with its focus on suicide prevention and awareness, not only offers a free health assessment, counseling and long-term care for National Guard Soldiers and their families, but also helps Soldiers use other resources in their community, whether through private insurance or public funding.

Lieutenant Colonel Cosme Lopez, director of the Total Force Team, says Soldiers' mindsets about emotional and mental health must change. "We need to identify the fact that we have a need for programs like this," he says. "Being open to it is probably the first step. [The military has] issues just like the normal civilian community does."

There are three phases to the Be Resilient Program, with each covering a different training tactic: prevention, intervention and "post-vention." Naney's MRT is used during the prevention and post-vention phases, along with Resilience Training Assistance. Soldiers learn Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) for the intervention phase, while Combat Operational Stress First Aid (COSFA) tactics are applied throughout every phase.



**THE MORE I TAUGHT [THE COURSE], THE MORE I STARTED SEEING THE GOOD THINGS. ... ALL I MAY HAVE IS HOT DOGS AND RAMEN, BUT GUESS WHAT? KIDS LOVE HOT DOGS AND RAMEN. LITTLE BIT OF CHEESE, LITTLE BIT OF KETCHUP—THEY LOVE THAT. AND SLEEPING BAGS? THEY LIKE CAMPING."**

SFC William Naney

"The program teaches Soldiers and Airmen how to manage and assist crisis situations," Lopez says. "It's first aid or CPR for your stress management."

## POSITIVE SIGNS

So far, the program is working. Arizona has seen zero suicides among Soldiers and Airmen in fiscal year 2012, compared with five the previous year. Although the state's number of mental health consultations and high-risk clinical cases has dramatically increased, Lopez suggests that may be a result of service members feeling more comfortable about reaching out for help.

"People are bringing this to their friends', troops', family members' attention a lot quicker, so we're intervening before it actually becomes a crisis response," says Nicki Bartram, state director of psychological health for the Arizona National Guard.

Bartram, who's on call 24/7 for Guard Soldiers needing help, says the program doesn't end when Soldiers finish training. Her team is continually following up with them to ensure they're receiving the care they need since many of them are referred to community organizations for follow-up. "If you have somebody that's on top of you the whole time saying, 'Hey, did you do this? Did you do that? You can call us,' they're more likely to engage in their treatments and stay healthy," Bartram says.

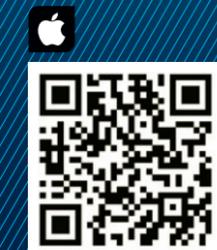
Salazar, who is seeing his vision for the Total Force Team come to fruition, is committed to keeping troops and their families safe, healthy and mission-ready. He's proud that "the Arizona National Guard has embraced our program, and as a result, our Soldiers and Airmen are more resilient."

As for Naney, he's still attending counseling and teaching the MRT courses, listening to Soldiers share their own hardships and experiences, and guiding them to the right resources. He can't imagine doing anything else. "This has been one of the most rewarding things I've ever done in my life," he says. **GX**

## HELP IN AN APP

Be Resilient is also on the cutting edge of technology. The Arizona Guard developed a phone application that can be downloaded on smartphones and that

provides steps and resources, as well as actions to take when someone is contemplating suicide. The application and intervention phase tactics are strictly meant to buy time until a professional can take control of the crisis.





# Own the Road

Motorcycle workshop makes riding safer and more fun for Soldiers by teaching control, confidence and advanced techniques.

BY CAMILLE BRELAND

As the sun and heat began to rise over Texas World Speedway, so did the roar of engines. About 30 National Guard Soldiers cranked their motorcycles—all types of sport bikes and cruisers—creating an energy that could be felt in your bones.

On this May morning, the Soldiers were preparing for an education from one of the nation's best riders, American Motorcyclist Association champion Jason Pridmore. In his traveling STAR Motorcycle School, the Army National Guard sponsors an Experienced Rider Course (ERC) that teaches Soldiers how to be safer on their bikes.

As far as classrooms go, this is about as fun as it gets. Over the next eight hours, the Soldiers would learn techniques for gaining more control and confidence on the bike. The free, one-day course is offered to all Guard Soldiers at eight locations nationwide—Northern and Southern California, Texas, Kansas, Louisiana, Washington, Virginia, and Illinois.

All Guard Soldiers who drive a motorcycle are required by the Army to register with their

state's headquarters and complete a Basic Rider Course (BRC) before hitting the road. The mandate also requires motorcyclists to complete an ERC every three years, a rule the STAR school fulfills. These regulations are part of an ongoing effort by states to increase safety among riders, especially after the staggering surge in motorcycle fatalities from 1997 through 2008—from 5.5 percent of all vehicle traffic deaths to 12.6 percent. Since then, the numbers have been declining, and programs like the STAR school strive to further reduce the number every year.

"This school helps raise awareness for all the riders not to get complacent," says Specialist David Kennedy, who works in the Texas National Guard's Safety and Occupational Health Office. On average, each STAR class contains about 40 Soldiers. By July, 265 Soldiers had been trained so far this year. Kennedy says the STAR course is working: In the two years since Texas implemented the school, the state has also seen a decrease in motorcycle accidents among its Guard Soldiers.

Before the May class got started, STAR school instructors inspected each bike, ensuring all mirrors and reflectors were covered (reflective light can be distracting on a racetrack), and checking the brake lights,

tire pressure and bike chains. The inspections are only one aspect of the project's ultimate goal: saving lives.

"We can't have these guys going to war, and then come back and getting hurt on the street," says Pridmore, who founded the school in 1998. "That doesn't make sense to me."

## ALL ABOUT CONTROL

At the speedway, just outside College Station, TX, Staff Sergeant Anthony Stewart wriggled into his heavy "leathers"—a full-body leather riding suit—and slipped on his black boots and gloves. A cavalry scout in the Tennessee National Guard, Stewart has been riding for about four years, with minimal professional training. Stewart discovered his love for motorcycles by taking his roommate's bike for a spin. After his first bike, a Honda CBR F4i, he bought a Suzuki GSX-R750 and began riding it without taking time to learn its nuances.

On one afternoon ride, he headed into a curve leaning further into the turn than normal, and the bike slid out from under him. He crashed into a brick mailbox. Luckily, he walked away with only scrapes and bruises.

Other Guard bikers haven't been as fortunate. Working with the National Guard's safety offices, Pridmore asks to receive "preliminary loss reports" when a Soldier dies in a motorcycle accident. There are three words he loathes reading: "loss of control."

"If I can teach these guys control, they're going to have so much more fun on their bikes," Pridmore explains.

After all the bikes were inspected and cleared, Stewart and the other Soldiers gathered in a room on the racetrack's paddock. The

school requires every participant to wear a full riding suit or jacket and pants, boots covering the ankles, a helmet, and gloves. As they settled in, Pridmore asked them: "What do you want to get out of today?"

"Confidence." "To get better at turns." "Cornering." "Braking."

"We'll be covering all of those things today," Pridmore affirmed. Then he shared his proudest achievement: Not one service member who has gone through the STAR school has been lost to a motorcycle accident.

Pridmore believes the course is essential for every motorcycle rider, regardless of experience or type of bike—especially since access to owning a bike is as easy as visiting a local dealership. "I couldn't just go buy an F-16 fighter jet and have no clue how to fly the thing, but somebody can go in and buy a GSX-R1000 and have no idea how to ride it," Pridmore says.

## ENERGIZING LESSONS

The day was divided into alternating sessions of riding and classroom, each lasting about 30 minutes. For the first riding session, the Soldiers made several laps in single-file lines to become acquainted with the track's turns and feel. Back in class after that first session, the room was buzzing with energy. "It was amazing!" Stewart reported after his first laps. "You didn't have to worry about traffic, gravel on the road or any other hazards that you do on a normal road. It allows you to focus on the fundamentals of riding."

During subsequent riding sessions, instructors rode alongside each student, analyzing body position, proficiency in shifting gears, line on the track going into turns, and more. Every so often, an instructor would tap his own helmet, signaling the student to pull over so the instructor could deliver personalized tips and advice. During the classroom sessions, the instructors explained the fundamentals of riding and advanced riding techniques.

Everything Pridmore teaches

builds on his chief goal for his students: to help them gain more control over their bikes. He believes the best way to achieve that is through rpm management—riding in a lower gear at a higher rpm (the engine's revolutions per minute). A rider can increase rpm by turning the throttle and increasing speed. The higher rpm allows the motorist to automatically slow down without hitting the brakes just by easing off the throttle. Braking at high speed, especially while turning, can make the bike unstable.

"Rpm management is how I steer a motorcycle," Pridmore addressed the class. "If I'm going into a 50-mile-per-hour corner and I'm in fourth gear, and I roll off the throttle, what's going to happen?" he asked.

"Nothing," several Soldiers responded. "Exactly—nothing. I've got this big disconnection between what my motor's doing and what my throttle is capable of doing," Pridmore continued, suggesting they try the tactic during the next track session.

Pridmore also addressed one of the most difficult aspects of riding—turns. There are three points to every turn or corner: entry, apex and exit. Each is equally important, Pridmore said. Riders should be in gears two or three and ease off the bike's throttle well before approaching a turn to begin decreasing speed. They should hit the apex of a turn when they're closest to the inside of the track, and then immediately begin looking toward their exit point. And they should always keep their line of vision parallel to the ground and their eyes focused on the road ahead. "You can cover a lot of ground when you look back for a second," Pridmore cautioned.

"How many people rode at a higher rpm today?" Pridmore asked during the last class session of the day. All students raised their hands. "I felt a lot more comfortable, and the bike was responding with a completely different position," a Soldier announced from the middle of the room. "I felt like I had a whole lot more control."

"I love that—that's what I want to hear," Pridmore responded enthusiastically. "If you feel like you gained more control today, we did our job." **GX**

**Opposite:** One lesson riders learn at the STAR school is to take turns more efficiently. **Below:** Soldiers graduate with a greatly reduced chance of having or causing accidents.



- >> Run your bike at a higher rpm in a lower gear to gain more control. At a higher rpm, your bike will automatically slow down when you roll off the throttle.
- >> Engage your peripheral vision instead of continually turning your head to look in a direction.
- >> Keep your line of vision parallel to the ground; don't fixate on one object and don't look down.
- >> Guard Soldiers are required to wear the following regardless of their state's laws: helmet; face shield or goggles; over-the-ankle footwear; long-sleeved shirt or jacket; long pants; full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for motorcycles; brightly colored outer garment.
- >> If you get into a situation where you're going too fast, downshift immediately.



# Conquer Your Fears

Four tips for identifying what's holding you back — and how to let it go

BY CHAPLAIN (MAJ) MARK PHILLIPS

**F**ear can be defined as an anxious feeling caused by anticipation of some real or imagined event or experience. It comes in many forms: fear of failure, fear of commitment, fear of unfamiliar experiences/situations and so on.

When uncontrolled, fear can cause us to lose sight of our goals, hinder our personal growth and rob us of life's wonderful blessings. Here are some practical ideas that can help release you from its grip and empower you to reach your potential.

**UNDERSTAND THE CAUSE.** Humans are born with only two fears—falling and loud noises. Every other kind is a learned behavioral response to feeling unsafe or unsure in a given situation. We not only learn it from our own traumatic events but from the distressing experiences of others. This is why scary movies are ... well, scary. After watching the events of 9/11 on TV, many individuals reported apprehension about being in or around tall buildings or flying in airplanes—fears they did not possess before 9/11.

If your fear is a learned behavior, then the unwanted reaction to it can be controlled. Begin by patiently giving yourself a chance to discover what is causing it. Many people then find a release by gradually getting used to that object or situation. Often, they realize there is nothing to be afraid of.

**FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SYMPTOMS.** You may figure out the cause of your fear but

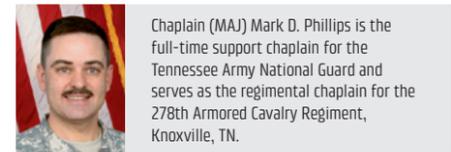
**NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?**  
Call Vets4Warriors, a 24/7 peer-support counseling hotline staffed entirely by Veterans. (855) VET-TALK

still be unable to recognize it in everyday situations. It has a tendency to surface in a different form, making it difficult to identify. For example, if you're afraid of failure, a difficult work project may cause you to experience loss of sleep, loss of appetite and irritability. Our natural tendency is to focus on and treat the symptoms—the loss of sleep or appetite—rather than pinpointing the cause of our discomfort. In this scenario, the cause of the distress is the fear of failing, not the project itself. You can unmask and overcome hidden fears by asking yourself, "What am I really worried about? What am I afraid of that is causing me to worry? What positive steps do I need to take to eliminate this fear?"

**DON'T PROCRASTINATE.** Rather than trying to run from your fears, face them head-on. Imagine a pesky mosquito landing on your arm. Do you procrastinate until it has bitten you or immediately swat it? Fear-producing situations that go ignored often resurface in the future. For example, you may have a fear of failing the Army Physical Fitness Test. Deal with it by starting an aggressive physical training plan well in advance of the test date. This will improve your chance of passing and help eliminate apprehension.

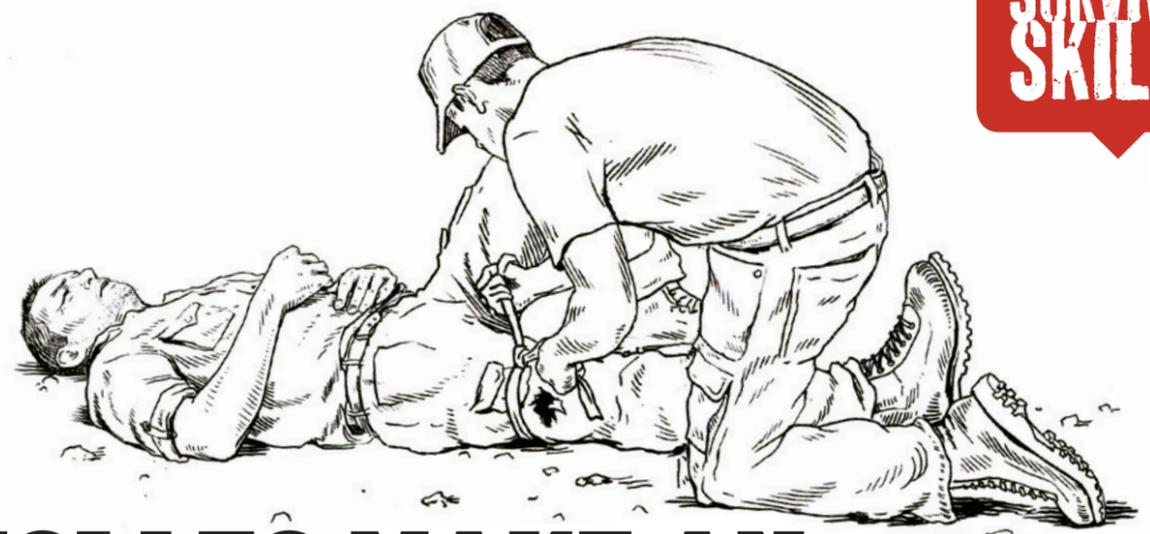
Remember this: Being proactive produces preparedness. Being prepared produces confidence, and confidence drives away fear. Actor and comedian Bill Cosby once stated, "Decide that you want it more than you are afraid of it."

**PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY.** The effects of fear and panic can surface physiologically as well as emotionally. Physical changes begin to occur. Breathing may deepen, and you may begin breathing through the mouth. The heartbeat speeds up. You may break out in a cold sweat. When you find yourself paralyzed by fear, try some simple breathing exercises to bring your body and mind back under control. Close your eyes and take shallow breaths. Your stomach should move, not your chest. When you exhale, try to relax all of the muscles in your body, especially the diaphragm. Do this for two or three minutes. In most cases, the symptoms will disappear. Controlling your breathing can be extremely therapeutic when you're afraid.



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

# SURVIVAL SKILLS

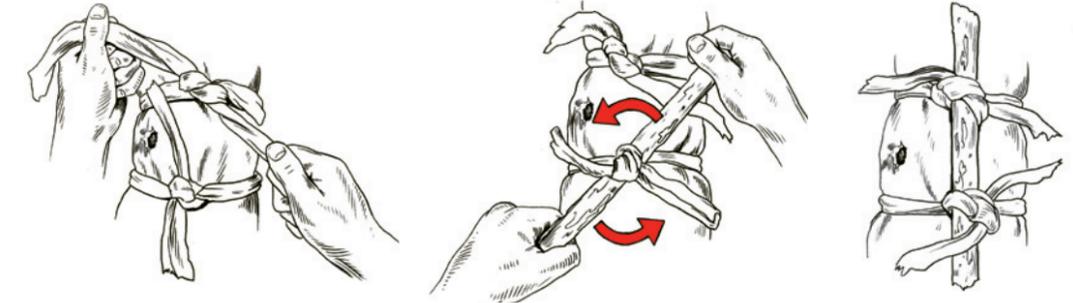


## HOW TO MAKE AN IMPROVISED TOURNIQUET

When an injured Soldier is losing blood uncontrollably, a tourniquet can make the difference between life and death. Ideally, someone present will have a Combat Application Tourniquet (C-A-T) — an official military tourniquet. But if not, anyone can make an improvised tourniquet from two common items, both of which will probably be handy or easy to find. BY SFC PATRICK WILLIAMS

**ITEMS NEEDED**  
• 2 pieces of cloth  
• 1 strong stick, roughly 8-10 inches

**IF A COMBAT APPLICATION TOURNIQUET (C-A-T) is on hand, it should be the first means of controlling blood loss. Soldiers should be trained on how to apply it, both to themselves and to others. If a C-A-T isn't available, then make an improvised tourniquet as instructed.**



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE MCKENDRY

**1** Fold the first piece of cloth in half, forming a strip. Tie the strip around the limb above the wound and at least 2 inches away from the nearest joint. Tie it loosely, leaving approximately two fingers' space between the cloth and the limb. Next, fold the other piece of cloth in half, forming another strip, and tie it with a square knot about 6 inches down the limb from the first piece of cloth. Leave two free ends that measure about 4 inches.

**2** Place the stick under the first piece of cloth, and turn it until the cloth constricts the limb tightly enough to stop the bleeding.

**3** Once the bleeding has stopped, place the stick on top of the square knot of the second piece of cloth, and use the free ends to tie the stick in place.

### A SECOND ASSESSMENT

After you've applied a tourniquet to a wounded comrade, and after the bleeding has stopped, continue to provide care to the patient. Do this by conducting a head-to-toe sweep with your hand. Make sure to curl your fingers (forming almost a claw) in order to locate any wounds. The following list describes what to check for and in what order.

- D** Deformities
- C** Contusions
- A** Abrasions
- P** Punctures/Penetrations
- B** Burns
- T** Tenderness
- L** Lacerations
- S** Swelling
- T** Trauma
- I** Instability
- C** Crepitus



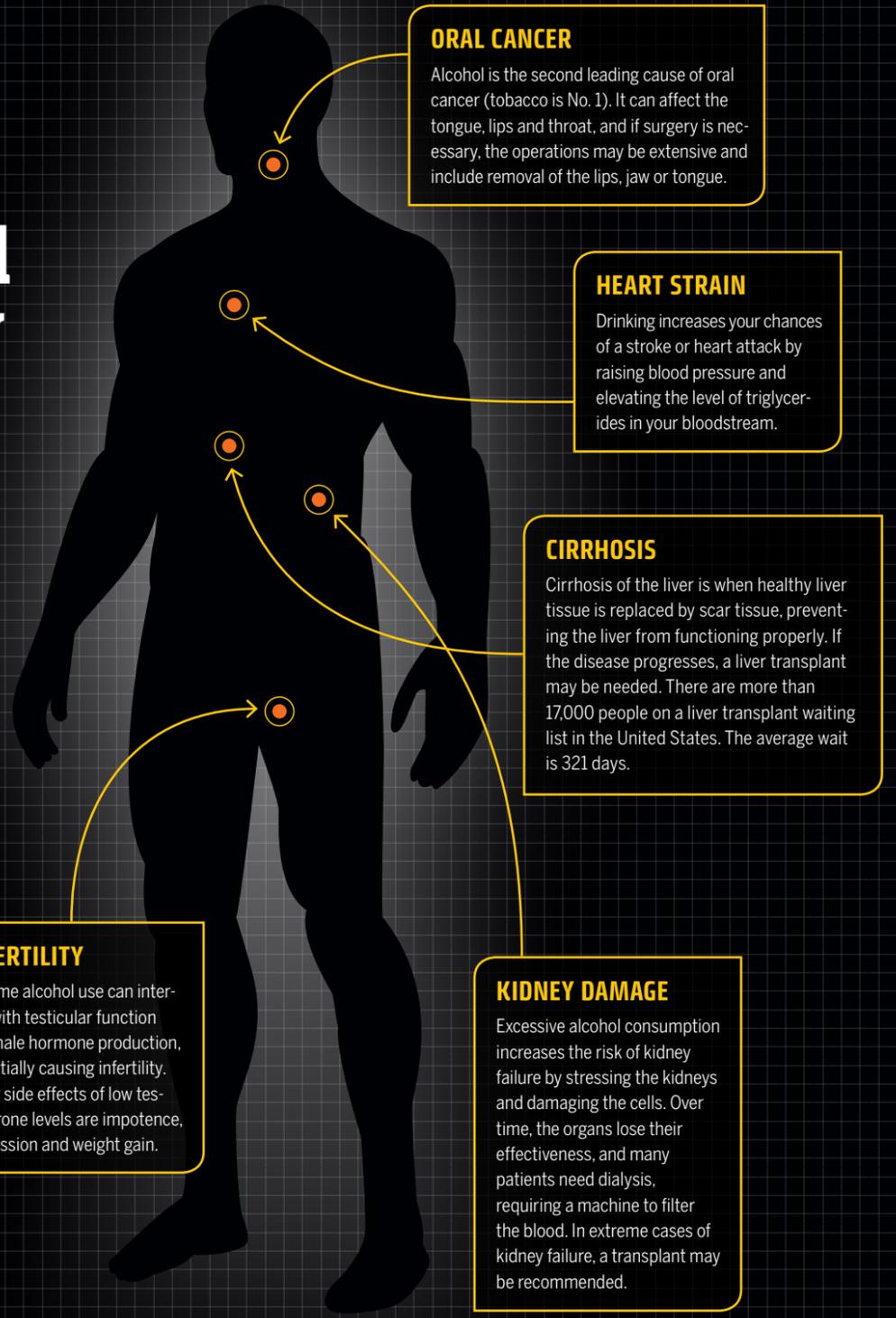
# Alcohol Abuse and Your Body

A closer look at the potential damage to your organs — and quality of life

The facts don't lie — too much alcohol can be bad for your health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol content to 0.08 percent or higher. This typically happens when men consume five or more drinks in two hours, and women consume four or more drinks in the same period.

Excessive drinking does more to harm your body than just causing a hangover — it can lead to cancer and other diseases. Here's a glimpse of some of the problems that may develop.

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON



## A new way to think about quitting.

**EX** is a free, three-step quit plan based on the latest scientific research from the experts at Mayo Clinic and practical experience from ex-smokers. It isn't just about quitting smoking. It's about re-learning life without cigarettes.

Whether this is your first attempt at quitting or 10th, **EX** can help. Get a free **EX** quit plan and re-learn life without cigarettes at [BecomeAnEX.org](http://BecomeAnEX.org).

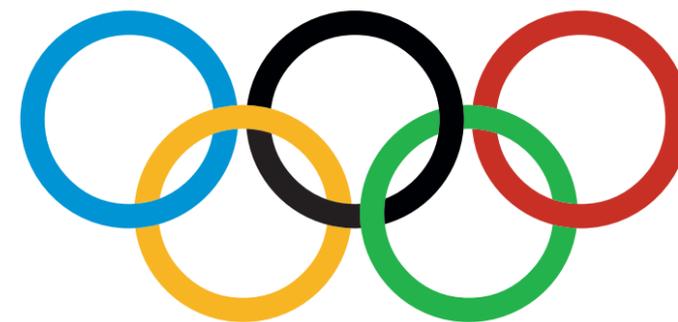
**HEAVY TOLL**  
By the numbers, a glimpse of alcohol's damage in America ▶

**79,000**  
THE NUMBER OF ALCOHOL-RELATED DEATHS IN THE U.S. EACH YEAR. WORLDWIDE, THE FIGURE IS **2.5 MILLION**.

**63%**  
PORTION OF AMERICANS WHO DRINK ALCOHOL.

**Thirty-two**  
PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS WHO ATTRIBUTE THEIR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION TO PROBLEMS IN THE HOME, INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND INFIDELITY.

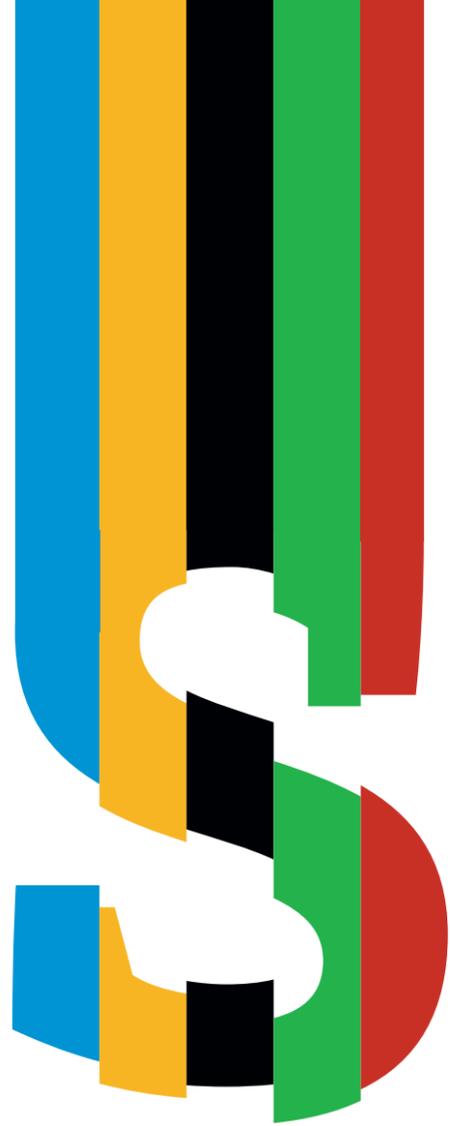




# STAYING POWER

Tenacious in his training and explosive on the wrestling mat, Sergeant Spenser Mango reached his second straight Olympics.

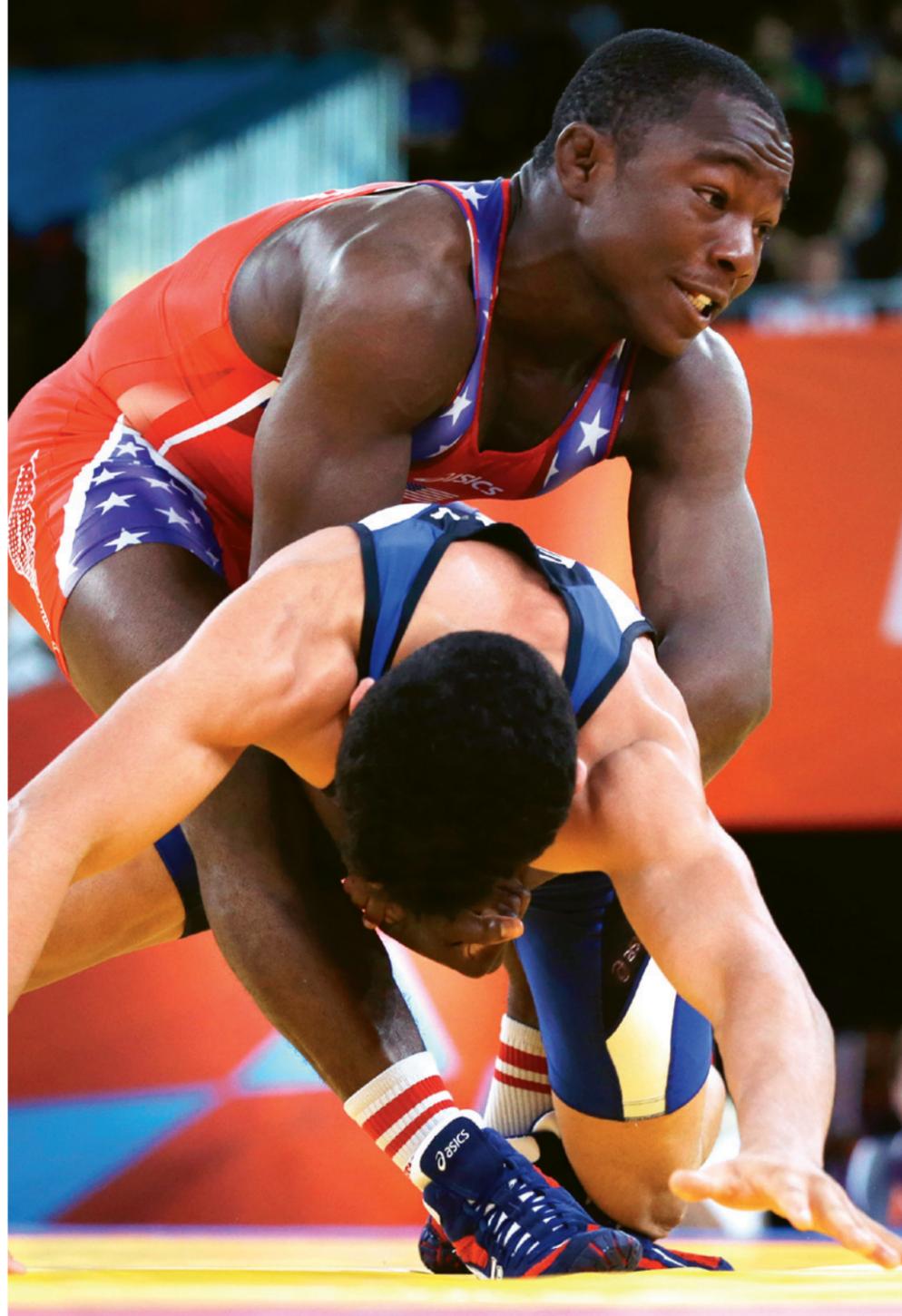
BY JEFF WALTER



ergeant Spenser Mango is an easygoing, fun-loving guy who's quick to crack a joke. When he's not wrestling, that is. A transformation takes place when he steps on the mat, which he turns into his own cold, brutal office. "It's all business," he says. "You have a goal to accomplish, and the guy standing across from you is in the way of it."

Although he stands at just 5-foot-2, Mango moves with stunning force, and he will stop at nothing to take you down. He competes in Greco-Roman wrestling, which prohibits holds below the waist, so upper-body maneuvers are paramount. Mango is "one of the smallest and most dangerous men you'll ever meet," says Captain Jonathan Harmeling, commander of the Army's World Class Athlete Program (WCAP), under which Mango trains. "If you ever got into a fight, he's the guy you'd want to be next to you. He's extremely powerful."

That strength and fierce competitive streak have propelled Mango to what he is today: an elite athlete with appearances in two consecutive Olympics under his belt. Although Mango didn't get a medal in London recently (he lost in the round of 16) or in Beijing in 2008 (he placed eighth), don't count him out for the Rio de Janeiro games in 2016. Mango, 26, has competed for



Mango won his first bout during the 2012 London games against Abouhalima Abouhalima of Egypt, but lost his second match to Rovshan Bayramov of Azerbaijan, who ultimately won silver in the 55-kg division.

five straight world-level teams for the United States, and he wants to push himself to "be the best I possibly can at every level."

"I'll just go back and work hard in the practice room and come back next time," he says. "I'm going to keep going. I can't retire. I love doing this."

His confidence has certainly made believers out of his teammates and coaches, while intimidating opponents. "You've got to have that mentality," Harmeling says. "If he is wrestling to his potential, I fear for anyone going up against him."

### THE PATH TO GREATNESS

Whether Mango chose wrestling or wrestling chose him is up for debate, but his adventure with the sport began during his freshman year at Christian Brothers College High School in St. Louis, MO. His life until then hadn't been easy: When he was in kindergarten, his 32-year-old

father was shot to death one morning while on the way to his job as a pipefitter. The tragedy spurred his mother, a registered nurse, to move her family from their rough urban neighborhood to the safer suburbs, where she enrolled her children in private schools and took an increasingly active role in their lives.

One day in ninth grade, the 88-pound Mango was approached by the freshman wrestling coach, who was looking for potential team members. The coach hoisted Mango and asked him how he'd like to wrestle in the 90-pound classification. The kid, who despite his size, played football as a running back but had no experience with wrestling, "really didn't have much going on," so he decided to give a new sport a try.

"I remember the first day of practice like it was yesterday," says Mango, who experienced a life-changing revelation. "In wrestling, there's a move called a double-leg takedown, which is pretty much just like a football tackle," he recalls. "I remember I was doing the double-leg takedown the entire practice, and I was taking everybody down. It was really working for me, and that became one of the main moves I used throughout my first year of wrestling."

By the time he graduated from high school, he was a two-time state champion who also lettered on the football team. He was planning to attend a Division II college when he ran into Ivan Ivanov, head wrestling coach at Northern Michigan University. Ivanov introduced him to the wrestling program at the U.S. Olympic Education Center in Marquette, MI, which the university operates in conjunction with USA Wrestling and the U.S. Olympic Committee. As a result of this chance meeting, Mango went to Northern Michigan, where he continued to establish himself as a fierce competitor on the mat.

Since then, Mango's accomplishments have piled up, including becoming a four-time U.S. national champion, a University World champion and a three-time U.S. World Team member.

In 2010, after graduating from college, he joined the Army National Guard, just before moving west to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO, to join the WCAP.

### TRAINING WITH THE ELITE

The WCAP represents about a dozen sports in 11 locations across the country, with the headquarters situated at Fort Carson, CO. It's an elite group. Athletes must be ranked in the top 10 of their sport to get into the program. While WCAP's mission is simple—get Soldiers qualified for the U.S. Olympic team—its motto is "Soldier first," making clear the order of priority.

On any given day, 80 to 100 Soldier-athletes are participating in the program. While the program centers on summer sports, it does include winter sports such as bobsled, luge, biathlon and hockey. (This latter group is still two years away from its next Olympics, winter 2014 in Sochi, Russia.) This year, the WCAP sent 12 athletes to the Olympics—10 Soldiers and two civilians. Three of them were wrestlers, including Mango.

So what does it take to become a world-class wrestler?

"Other than the obvious—hard work—wrestlers are very smart and very strong-willed," says Shon Lewis, head coach for the WCAP wrestlers. Lewis, a retired Army sergeant, is a former Greco-Roman wrestling champion, an Army "Athlete of the Year" and a four-time USA Wrestling "Coach of the Year." Now he runs the daily practices and makes sure the athletes are on track to meet their goals.

"You have to have a strong will, because a lot of times in match competitions, and in training more so, you're going to be put to the test, and you're going to be broken down," he says.

### CUTTING WEIGHT

Mango's favorite cardio routine is used when it's time to cut weight before a competition. He starts with 20 minutes on the treadmill: running for 5 minutes to get warmed up, then 10 minutes alternately sprinting and jogging, and then a cool-down walk for the last 5 minutes. Then it's 15 minutes on the elliptical machine followed by another 15 minutes on the bicycle.

"You've got to be strong-willed to build yourself back up and just keep getting after it."

Asked what makes Mango such a tough competitor, Lewis says: "He's very intelligent. He's a fast learner. And pound for pound, he's probably the strongest guy on the Olympic team. ... He's very explosive and has a low center of gravity. And his intellect enables him to adapt quickly."

Although wrestling is a one-on-one sport, there's a team aspect that Mango finds gratifying. "We put in a lot of time," he says. "Your teammates and family are pushing you to do your best, and the coaches are right there with you every day. It's a group effort. Everybody supports each other and gives us a little motivation to keep going."

The discipline of the military and the discipline of the athlete are married in the pursuit of excellence. These Soldier-athletes "will come out being winners at whatever they do," Harmeling says.

Many of the skills involved in being a good Soldier translate into being a good wrestler, and vice versa, Mango says. He points out that a number of his WCAP team members have competed in the Army combatives competition at Fort Carson, CO, which tests hand-to-hand warfare skills, and a few have advanced to the national tournament.

"The wrestling really goes hand-in-hand with the Army combatives program, as well as the things we need as a wrestling team—like hard work," he says. "We're like a family out there, and we want to help each other out. Even if one guy on our team doesn't make it, he still stays around, makes sure you train and helps the guys on our team who did make it. I think all those things tie in with the Army values. Wrestling itself really helps you become a better person and keeps you disciplined."

Lewis agrees. "The discipline of getting up and going down that lonely road at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, going for a run and doing extra when nobody's looking—that goes hand-in-hand with the military mindset," he says. "And it helps our athletes because that's what's expected [in terms of] day-to-day accountability in the military. Being around people who are squared away and doing the right thing, you just follow suit. It becomes habit-forming."

### STRENGTH AND DISCIPLINE

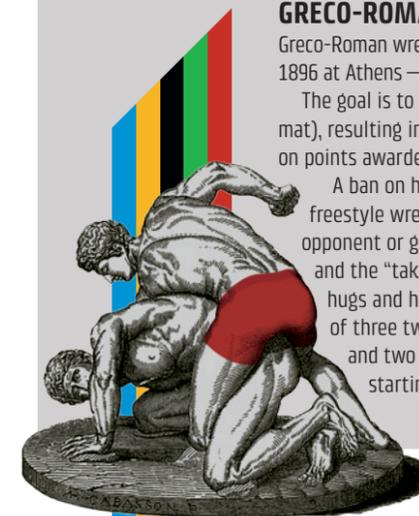
Mango's "unbelievable core strength" is probably his greatest asset, Lewis says. "Mentally, he doesn't shy away from any challenge. ... He'll

### GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLING AT A GLANCE

Greco-Roman wrestling was an event at the first modern Olympics — in 1896 at Athens — and has been a part of every summer Olympics since 1908.

The goal is to "pin" your opponent (hold his shoulder blades on the mat), resulting in a "fall" and ending the match. A wrestler can also win on points awarded by the officials for technique.

A ban on holds below the waist differentiates Greco-Roman from freestyle wrestling. Key moves include the "throw," by lifting your opponent or getting him off-balance and flinging him to the ground, and the "takedown," in which both wrestlers tumble to the mat. Bear hugs and headlocks are also important maneuvers. A match consists of three two-minute periods, one from the neutral standing position and two from the ground wrestling position, with one wrestler starting on his hands and knees.





take on any challenge and not get flustered or emotional.”

He’s also constantly working to improve his flexibility, a vital ingredient in a sport in which the athletes are being pushed, pulled and twisted by powerful forces.

“Wrestlers bring a different kind of strength. They’re not only strong in terms of bench press and squat, but just in how functional they are,” Harmeling says. “Wrestlers are able to use their strength in so many ways and ranges of motion. And they use their entire body: getting down, throwing someone, trying to pin them or get them in some kind of move. They’re just such a strong and dynamic breed of athlete.”

In Greco-Roman wrestling, competitors are not permitted to grab their opponent below the waist, a rule that makes upper-body strength, balance and agility essential.

To get into, and stay in, the required condition, “You have to eat right, live right,” says Mango, whose brother Ryan, five years younger and a human biology major at Stanford University, is also a successful wrestler. “You have to give up some of your freedom and put in a lot of time in the practice room. It’s all worth it once you get your hand raised up on the mat. But it’s a lifestyle.”

Diet means cutting out the fast food, candy, and other sugary and fatty foods that aren’t considered “clean.” Mango’s typical plate includes a lot of lean meat, vegetables and fruit. “You gotta really watch what you eat,” especially as competition time nears and it’s time to get down to fighting weight. Sometimes the weight comes off easily, he says, and sometimes it doesn’t. His advice: “Make sure you do everything right, so it does come off.”

Two weeks before the start of the London Games, Mango’s weight was about 133 pounds, which meant he had to drop 12 pounds by competi-

tion time to meet the limit for his weight class, 55 kilograms. (The other classes: 66 kg; 74 kg; 84 kg; 96 kg; and 120 kg.)

He doesn’t count calories, and he doesn’t eat nearly as much as multiple-gold-medal swimmer Michael Phelps. Some wrestlers usually “pack away quite a few calories” in the afternoons when they’re not watching their weight, but when it comes down to crunch time, they cut back to five small meals a day and put some additional work in, such as an extra cardio workout at night on the treadmill, bike, elliptical machine, and perhaps the sauna. The last five days before competition, the wrestlers drastically reduce their sodium intake to shed extra pounds of water.

## TRAINING LIKE THERE’S NO TOMORROW

Mango is accustomed to putting in extra work, as Harmeling has frequently witnessed since the wrestling area is right next to the office where he works. “I’ll go in there sometimes after hours,” the WCAP commander says, “when most Soldiers are home resting or recovering, their bodies re-energizing for their next workout, and I’ll see Spenser in there a number of times, working all alone by himself, working on drills or lifting weights. Sometimes he’ll bring a buddy. He really goes the extra mile. He doesn’t just go to practice, which is supposed to go till 4 o’clock. At 5 or 6 o’clock, Spenser is still getting after it.”

The team’s scheduled practice time is four hours a day Monday through Saturday: two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. Breakfast is between 8:30 and 9 each morning. The practice schedule varies: Some mornings they hit the weight room, while others are spent on the wrestling mat. Lifting consists of a lot of “cleans,” squats and dead lifts, as well as box jumps and other exercises “to get us explosive on the mat,” Mango says. In the afternoons, they wrestle.

Now, with the 2012 Olympics in the history books, Mango isn’t ready to fold up his singlet yet. “I’m going to hang around for a while. I figure I have at least another cycle in me” as a competitive wrestler, he says. “I plan on being involved in the sport for as long as I can, maybe coach a little bit. And I plan on making the Army a career for myself.”

He has not deployed, having entered the Guard at the end of 2010, and he’s been wrestling since then with the WCAP. But “I’m ready and willing to go. I really just want to do the best I can in wrestling as well as the Guard.”

Whatever he pursues, his strength, skills and attitude are likely to keep Mango a winner. As Lewis says, “He’s a wrestler in every sense of the word, and he’s a good ambassador for the sport because he’s not only a good wrestler—he’s a good person.” **GX**

## BUILDING STRENGTH

Mango’s preferred weightlifting routine involves 25 seconds of “clean” lifts (hang clean, power clean, clean and jerk, or clean and press) followed by a round of “pretty lightweight but high-intensity” squats, lunges, box jumps and deadlifts. Take a 45-second break after going through all five stations, and then repeat until you’ve completed five sets of each. “It gets you sweating. It really helps us keep our weight down as well as stay strong. Instead of building bulk, we keep our muscles nice and lean.”

# Careers

■ YOUR WORK, YOUR FUTURE

## Be Your Own Boss

If you're thinking of starting your own business, you're not alone. In a tough economy with flat job growth, many people are turning to entrepreneurship as a way to take control of their financial future.

BY ANITA WADHWANI

**B**usiness startup rates are up, and more than half of the companies on the Fortune 500 list were launched during a recession or bear market, according to the Kansas City–based Kauffman Foundation, which tracks entrepreneurship. Here are some tips to get started.

### DECIDE ON A BUSINESS

An entrepreneur never punches the clock. Starting a business requires a lot of time and energy, so experts say the first rule of startups is love what you do, whether it's leading mountain-climbing expeditions or bottling your secret family barbecue sauce recipe.

Keep in mind that entrepreneurship doesn't have to mean starting from scratch. Ray Hivoral, founder of the San Diego Entrepreneur Center, points out that one option is to look for small businesses to acquire. "Taking over from retiring business owners is often a great way to get into small-business ownership," he says.

And spot trends. "Most successful entrepreneurs know that every trend has a cause and effect," Hivoral notes. "When Apple came out with the iPhone, someone said, 'I'll come up with the sleeves to protect it.' Others have made money developing apps. But it all started with that trend."

### START NETWORKING

Make business cards, join the online professional networking site LinkedIn.com, and search on Meetup.com for entrepreneurship groups in your area. Networking helps build your support system and introduce you to



potential customers. Erik Spalding, a Navy Veteran who co-founded the apparel and accessory business Bullets2Bandages, says, "I have a great network in the military if I needed to do a hostage rescue or diffuse an IED, but when I wanted to learn how to sell to a retailer, I didn't have a network. I had to find one."

### DEVELOP A MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing means more than spreading the word about your company. It's creating the

entire package, says Hivoral. In marketing, Hivoral suggests keeping the focus on the "Four P's": Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The four are interdependent. A quality product won't sell if it's priced too high. A mom-and-pop shop that sells great products won't get any customers if it's in a poor location. A great advertising and promotion plan won't help a product that nobody wants. "Entrepreneurs have to constantly tweak and adjust those Four P's on a daily basis," Hivoral says.

### LEARN THE RULES

Every industry has its own set of rules, such as health and safety requirements for food establishments, and licensing requirements for service providers. Educate yourself on the industry rules that will affect your new business.

"Whenever you get beyond the lemonade stand into a serious enterprise, you run into city, state or federal regulations that can get you into trouble if you don't know the rules," Hivoral says. "Start with the Internet. It has a wealth of information." But for complex matters—for example, applying for a trademark or filing business taxes—spending the money to hire an expert pays off.

### DECIDE YOUR RISK TOLERANCE

"I was comfortable with physical risk in the military," says Spalding. "But I had to get comfortable with financial risk. It's a very different type of risk."

Starting a business doesn't always require capital. Many people keep their day job while working nights and weekends on their new business until the first, second or third customer comes in.

Small-business loans can be difficult to come by, so home and personal loans are good alternatives.

Spalding and his partner bootstrapped their business, relying on savings alone instead of going into debt. For them, it has paid off. In their first year, they've taken their initial investment of \$10,000 and multiplied it a hundredfold, he says.

# THE PATH TO SPECIAL FORCES

## PRIOR SERVICE + CURRENT SOLDIERS

If not currently serving, you will need to re-enlist into the National Guard. Either use your former MOS or reclass to a new one available within the state.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ENLISTED:

In addition to meeting Non-Prior Service minimum eligibility requirements (see opposite page), enlisted candidates must:

- Be a minimum age of 20. No maximum age, based on individual evaluation.
- Be in the pay grade of E-4 to E-6 or E-7 with no more than 12 years time in service and nine months time in grade.
- Have at least one year since completing an MOS-producing course/school.
- Have a minimum 36 months remaining time in service on completion of the SFQC. If not, must extend or re-enlist before SFQC.
- Must not have been convicted by court-martial or have disciplinary action (Article 15) noted in your official military personnel file under the provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICERS:

In addition to meeting Non-Prior Service minimum eligibility requirements, SF officer candidates must:

- Be 1LT or CPT (O-2 or O-3).
- Have completed BOLC-A and BOLC-B and been successful in your branch assignments before applying to SF.
- Have enough time remaining as captain to complete SF training and serve a minimum of three years in an SF unit.

### PRIOR SPECIAL FORCES

If you've served in the U.S. Army Special Forces, contact the specific SF National Guard unit in which you're interested. For a list of units and more information, call a Special Forces representative at **855-357-3317** or email [special\\_forces@nationalguard.com](mailto:special_forces@nationalguard.com)

### NEXT STEPS

If you meet ALL requirements, schedule a Special Forces Readiness Evaluation drill (SFRE) with an SF unit that is accepting applicants. See the website for more information.

>> **The Special Forces (SF), or Green Berets, are the National Guard's most highly trained Soldiers.** Their primary mission is teaching local forces in other countries to become effective fighters, but SF teams conduct nine types of missions: unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, counterinsurgency, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, information operations, counterproliferation of WMD and security force assistance. Training and participation is demanding, dangerous and, usually, highly classified. BY RONNIE BROOKS

## NON-PRIOR SERVICE

Individuals with prior military or Special Operations Forces experience stand a much better chance of qualifying for Special Forces. However, applicants with no prior military service may enter into a REP 63 enlistment contract, which guarantees a tryout for Special Forces but not qualification. REP 63 contract availability varies by state and only applies to states with Special Forces units.

### MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Male, minimum age of 18, not older than 34.
- High school diploma or GED certificate with 15 college credit hours.
- U.S. citizen.
- ASVAB General Technical (GT) score of 107 or higher (non-waiverable).
- Minimum score of 240 on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), with no less than 80 points in each event, using the standards for 17–21 age group.
- Able to swim 50 meters unassisted, wearing boots and battle dress or Army combat uniform, before beginning the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).
- Volunteer and be eligible to attend Airborne training.
- Meet medical fitness standards as outlined in Chapter 5, AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness.
- No drug- or alcohol-related violations.
- Eligible for a secret security clearance.

>> To see all current requirements, go to [SpecialForces.NationalGuard.com](http://SpecialForces.NationalGuard.com)

For more information on joining, call a Special Forces representative at 855-357-3317 or email [special\\_forces@nationalguard.com](mailto:special_forces@nationalguard.com)

## LENGTH OF ENTIRE TRAINING PERIOD

Complete training timeline for Non-Prior Service is **20–29 months**, depending on language training and SF military occupational specialty (MOS). Recruits who pass SFAS move on to the SFQC. See "Training and Timeline" for details.

Complete training timeline is **16–26 months** for enlisted and **14–22 months** for officers, depending on Airborne school, Warrior Leader Course, language training, Maneuver Captains Career Course and SF MOS.

Soldiers who do not complete SF training will re-enter their selected MOS.

### QUALIFIED CANDIDATES WILL ATTEND:

#### INFANTRY ONE STATION UNIT TRAINING (OSUT)

(Combines Basic Combat Training and Infantry Advanced Individual Training)  
15 WEEKS

#### AIRBORNE TRAINING

3 WEEKS

#### SF PREPARATION AND CONDITIONING COURSE (SFPC)

3 WEEKS

#### SPECIAL FORCES ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION (SFAS)

3 WEEKS

## TRAINING AND TIMELINE



\*Candidates are required to take a Defense Language Proficiency Test at the end of language training. Must pass Oral Proficiency Interview before beginning Phase III.

# HOW TO GET A NEW MOS

Curious about other Guard jobs? Don't hesitate to explore your options and become an even more valuable asset.

BY CAMILLE BRELAND

When Sergeant Aaron Glandon enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard, he had one goal: deploy. After attending Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to become a 91B, wheeled vehicle mechanic, he found out he could serve in Iraq sooner with a deploying unit, but he would have to earn another military occupational specialty (MOS) — a 31B, military police. “The process was easy, and I’m glad I did it,” says Glandon, 23, who returned from Iraq in 2010.

Soldiers can train in and earn numerous MOSs, which allows them to change jobs or units as their MOS slot becomes available, says Sergeant First Class J.J. Clemons, a human resources specialist in the Tennessee National Guard. Whether you want to focus solely on a new MOS or train to supplement your current MOS, the process to earn a new Guard job is typically hassle free. Follow Clemons’ five steps to earn an additional MOS.

## 1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Choosing a second MOS is just as important as deciding on your first. Talk to Soldiers who are currently working in the job, and ask about their training, requirements and drill duties, Glandon advises. Consider your strengths and weaknesses, your ASVAB score, and prior work experience. If you’re within a year and a half of re-enlistment and want to reclass in a new MOS, Clemons suggests waiting until re-enlistment to begin the process. Also, talk to your family, friends and battle buddies, Glandon says. Like most decisions, the process is easier if you have a strong foundation. Glandon says he was able to stay focused on his goal of deploying and earning another MOS because of the support he received from his noncommissioned officer (NCO) and platoon leader.

## 2 TALK TO YOUR READINESS NCO

Have a conversation with your chain of command about the MOS you would like to obtain and your reason for changing or adding the job. Your readiness noncommissioned officer (RNCO) will be able to determine if the desired MOS is available in your unit or identify other units in your state to which you may be able to transfer. If your unit doesn’t have the MOS slot available, Glandon says don’t give up. “Keep pushing through until you get where you want to be,” he says. Your readiness NCO can also identify critical MOSs that need to be filled — some of which may be offering bonus incentives to reclass. On the other hand, if your current MOS is under-strength, you may not be eligible for reclassification until the strength is reached.

## 3 MEET THE REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

First, your unit’s commander must approve your request for reclassification or an additional MOS. You must meet specific requirements for each MOS — like a set ASVAB score — to be approved for training. Talk to your readiness NCO about the mandates for your MOS to ensure you meet the requirements. Clemons emphasizes that Soldiers can’t attend MOS school if they are flagged for any type of adverse action.

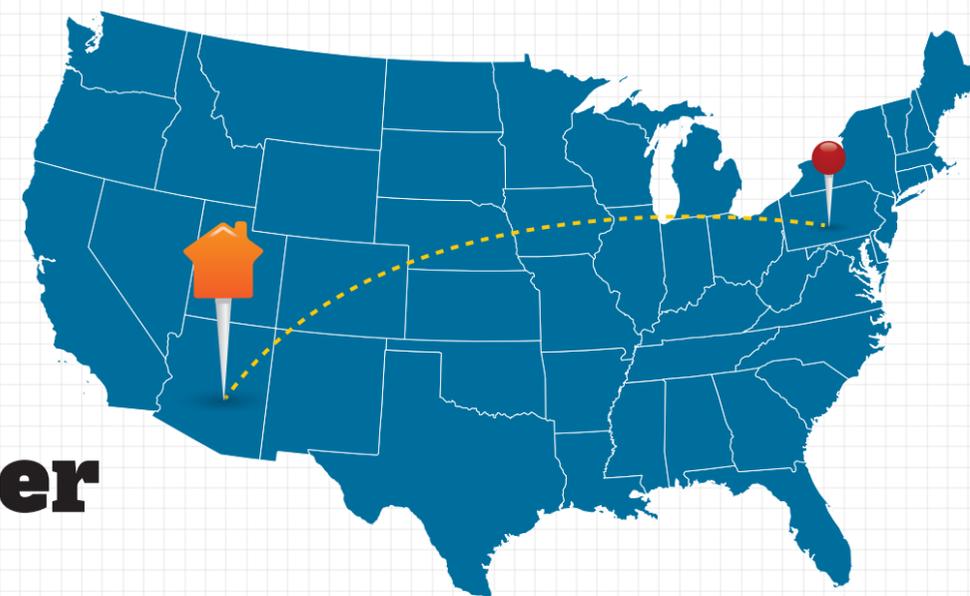
## 4 GO TO SCHOOL

Work with your current unit to reserve a spot in the next MOS training for your MOS. The length of the school varies depending on the job, sometimes lasting for several months. You must graduate and complete all requirements in good standing to earn the MOS.

## 5 WAIT FOR ORDERS TO PUBLISH, AND REQUEST A TRANSFER IF DESIRED

If you’re reclassing to your new MOS, your unit will publish orders to assign you to the MOS. At this point, you may also request a transfer to another unit, depending on availability for your job and rank in the new unit.

# How to Transfer to Another State



As a Guard Soldier, you have committed to serve a dual mission — defend both your state and the nation. But what happens when your personal mission takes you away from the state you swore to protect? BY EMILIE BAUM

Whether it’s for work, family or personal issues, the National Guard understands that Soldiers may need to move to another state during their enlistment. The Interstate Transfer (IST) Process allows Soldiers to transfer to a vacant slot in a different state, ensuring that they can continue fulfilling their enlistment obligation without the burden of traveling back and forth between states.

## GETTING STARTED

The key to a successful IST is communication and coordination with the unit readiness noncommissioned officer (RNCO). As soon as the need for an IST arises, the Soldier should contact their RNCO. The RNCO will determine if the Soldier is “administratively ready” (i.e., no pending Uniform Code of Military Justice or disciplinary action, flags to medical readiness status or other administrative issues). Once they are deemed “ready,” the RNCO will then forward the Soldier’s informa-

tion to the state IST coordinator. The IST coordinator will ensure a valid, vacant position exists in the gaining state.

Because it may take some time for a vacant slot to become available, it is important to communicate the need for an IST as early as possible. “If a Soldier fails to coordinate the move, they risk losing their bonus, rank, military occupational specialty or even face discharge. At no time should a Soldier conduct an IST on their own without coordinating with their unit,” says Master Sergeant Jerry Ramsey, IST/IET NCOIC.

## MAKING THE TRANSITION

Once a slot becomes available, the Soldier will receive a counseling statement from their losing unit. This counseling will assist in identifying any issues, concerns or risks that must be addressed prior to the move. For example, if the counseling reveals that the Soldier will not be employed when arriving to the gaining state, coordination can be made with resources in the gaining state to assist them in their job

administrative reduction if they are not willing to reclass to an available MOS.

## FINALIZING THE PAPERWORK

Once the Soldier has been placed into a gaining unit, the state IST coordinator will assist the Soldier in completing NGB Form 22, which acknowledges their acceptance into the gaining state after an enlisting officer has sworn them in. Their expiration term of service (ETS) will remain the same, unless sooner discharged by proper authority.

As soon as Soldiers have been sworn in, they should contact their new unit of assignment to coordinate training dates and discuss any questions or concerns. As acknowledged on the NGB Form 22, Soldiers have 60 days to report to their new unit. If they fail to report, they can face discharge and potential administrative and judicial action.

Regardless of the reason for needing an IST, the RNCO and state IST coordinator will be able to assist in executing a smooth transition. Communication and flexibility are important, as the National Guard strives to be an “always ready” force.

# Raising the Bar

Iowa law firm goes the extra mile for Guard employees

BY AMY STUMPFL

As the largest law firm in Iowa, Nyemaster Goode has earned a wide range of honors and accolades over the course of its 94-year history. But one of the most heartfelt tributes may have come last November, when Iowa National Guard Staff Sergeant Doug Stanger presented the prestigious law firm with a flag that had flown over his combat outpost in Afghanistan.

It was a simple gesture, but one that has stuck with both Stanger and his wife, Kristina, a member of the firm's litigation department who also serves in the Iowa National Guard.

"It was his way of saying thank you for everything the firm has done for our dual-military family," says Major Kristina Stanger. "Nyemaster Goode keeps that flag on display in its reception area for everyone to see. They're proud of our service, and they've gone out of their way to show their support."

"Nyemaster Goode understands that serving our country is a priority for our family," she adds. "And they have made it a priority for the firm, as well."

Kristina enlisted in 1998, and two years later she commissioned as a Medical Service Corps officer. From 2003 to 2004, she deployed to Iraq with the 109th Medical Battalion.

"There have been times when I've been called up on missions with literally just hours to prepare," she says. "In 2011, my drill weekends, Annual Training and additional training events added up to about five weeks, but Nyemaster Goode never once questioned it. My salary never changed, they maintained all benefits and made transitions as seamless as possible."

In recognition of her firm's unwavering support, Kristina nominated Nyemaster Goode for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award for 2012, and in July the firm was one of 15 employers to be selected as recipients.

## EXTENDED FAMILY

Michael Thrall, president of the firm, says supporting Guard employees is "the right thing to do." The firm, which employs 160 workers, includes many military families, though Kristina, who was hired in 2006, is the only one actively serving or married to an active service member.

"I've always had a great appreciation for our military families," Thrall says, "but it wasn't until I got to know the Stangers that I really understood the enormous sacrifices these people make for our country."

Still, Kristina insists that Nyemaster Goode goes well beyond normal expectations,



## NYEMASTER GOODE

Established in 1918, Nyemaster Goode is Iowa's largest law firm, with offices in Des Moines, Ames and Cedar Rapids. It provides a wide range of legal services, including business, finance and real estate; governmental affairs; intellectual property; labor and employment; litigation; and tax, estate planning and employee benefits.

pointing out that the firm supported her not only as a Guard Soldier but as a Soldier's wife. "At the time of my husband's last deployment, our girls were just three years and five months old, which added some stress," she says. "The firm was extremely flexible, providing leave so I could attend pre-deployment activities and allowing me to work on a reduced schedule for six months during reintegration. They have been there for us every step of the way."

## HELPING OTHER MILITARY FAMILIES

Because of Nyemaster Goode's sustained commitment, Kristina is able to put her expertise and training to good use—not only for the firm's clients, but also for other Guard members. She chairs the Iowa State Bar Association's Military Affairs Committee and was named Outstanding Committee Chairperson for 2010–2011.

"I'm proud to say that Nyemaster Goode has encouraged me to take a leadership role in the state, advocating for other Soldiers and working to train other attorneys," she says.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of Nyemaster Goode's support came in April 2011, when her husband's battle buddy, Staff Sergeant James A. Justice, was killed in Afghanistan.

"I couldn't believe the firm's generosity," Kristina says. "They stepped forward to help our friend's widow with legal advice, they donated \$1,000 to his daughter's education fund, and gave me four weeks paid leave to focus on my family and grieve the loss of our friend."

"Doug and I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and support Nyemaster Goode has demonstrated. We are very blessed."

Interested in joining the Judge Advocate General (JAG) corps? Visit [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/jag-officer](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/careers/jag-officer)

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# In Deep Water

Whether it's repairing a 1,000-ton ship, surveying for a bridge or destroying blocks of concrete, the 627th Dive Team of the Texas National Guard performs a crucial part of the National Guard's mission. The only team of divers in the Guard, the 627th can do reconnaissance, demolition and salvage operations hundreds of feet underwater. Sergeant First Class Shawn Dagley, the team's NCOIC and senior diving supervisor, describes life below the surface.

INTERVIEW BY MARK KAKKURI

➔ **THE TRAINING TO BE AN ARMY DIVER IS INTENSE AND VERY COMPETITIVE.** Before you can even apply to the program, you have to pass the diver physical fitness test and pressure test. The physical-demands rating is "very heavy," and the physical profile is the highest required in any of the Armed Forces.

➔ **ONCE YOU BECOME A DIVER, THE PHYSICAL TRAINING DEMANDS STAY IN PLACE.** Daily PT for the dive team includes a 3- to 4-mile run followed by 40 to 60 minutes of swimming and then a regimen of push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups.

➔ **WHEN WE PREPARE FOR A DIVING DRILL, THE DIVE TEAM WILL CONDUCT MAINTENANCE ON EVERY PIECE OF DIVE EQUIPMENT.** Anything that goes in the water gets triple checked. Nothing gets left to chance. Once the checks are complete, the team gears up and heads out. If the drill is a scuba dive, it only takes about an hour to an hour and a half to get set up and into the water.

➔ **I'VE ALWAYS LOVED DIVING AND WORKING IN THE WATER.** I've been able to do 300-foot mixed gas dives, secret dive jobs, and I am an aviation water survival expert. The National Guard dive team has given me all that.

➔ **THE ARMY [CAN] CROSS MORE BODIES OF WATER THAN THE NAVY.** In the many bodies of water the Army encounters, which could include lakes, rivers and more, we don't know what might be in the way, so our expertise in construction and demolition gets put to good use.

➔ **OUR WORK CARRIES HUGE RISKS.** In fact, moving massive objects in water has all the elements of a war environment. We have to deal with obstacles, current and mud. Although we're generally not being shot at in the water, we have a security detachment to protect us while we work.

➔ **I HAVE WORKED IN 50 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT, PITCH-BLACK WATER WHILE OPERATING A HAMMER DRILL AND WEARING A HOT WATER SUIT.**

Our team makes it possible to repair an 86,000-pound ship's propellers in the water, as opposed to having the ship brought to a dry dock. We also perform salvage jobs, such as rescuing aircraft that go down in the water, using lift bags and lift pontoons. A tremendous amount of engineering know-how goes into these efforts as we deal with mud, suction, weight and displacement. And it all happens under water.

➔ **DIVING JOBS REQUIRE MENTAL APTITUDE AND TOUGHNESS FROM THE ENTIRE TEAM, NOT JUST THE GUYS WHO ARE IN THE WATER.** If you're recovering a downed plane at a depth of over 100 feet and something goes wrong with your topside air supply, you've got to know what to do. Our entire 25-member team relies on each other for their very lives.

➔ **MY STRANGEST EXPERIENCE WAS WHEN I CAME FACE-TO-FACE WITH A MANATEE — WHICH I'D NEVER SEEN OR HEARD ABOUT BEFORE.** I thought I was going to get eaten, so I tried to hide in some underwater columns until my supervisor [who was on the dive with me] explained what a manatee was and told me to get back to work.



PHOTO BY DICK WITTLIFF

## Know Your Job Rights

When you need to leave a civilian job temporarily for military duty—for example, deployment or drills—you have legal rights that protect you in that job, including leave time, job security and health benefits. But if you don't know about your rights, or don't apply them properly, you could miss out. Mandi Rumble, a public affairs specialist with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), offers the following tips for workers to ensure a smooth transition. BY AMY STUMPFEL

**BE INFORMED.** The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) protects the employment and re-employment rights of service members. This law covers job security, health benefits, pay and much more. For a sampling of basic rights, see the list at right.

Other USERRA rights can vary depending on the circumstance, but they protect and benefit you and your loved ones, so it's important to know them. Visit [dol.gov/vets/programs/userra](http://dol.gov/vets/programs/userra) for more information.

**BE UP FRONT.** In today's competitive job market, many Soldiers are hesitant to bring up ongoing military commitments. But this lack of candor can lead to problems down the road. "A lot of Soldiers are afraid to discuss their service duties with employers," Rumble says. "But the truth is that many companies are really anxious to hire Guard members because of their outstanding leadership experience and professionalism—not to mention valuable skills and training."

Thanks to programs such as Boss Lift, ESGR can provide employers with "a day in the life" experience that fosters a greater understanding—and support—of your military service. "We take them up in planes, demonstrate technology and equipment, and generally acquaint employers with the important role that Guard members play in preserving our national security. It also helps them to see how your specialized training and skills could carry over to the workplace."

**PREPARE THOROUGHLY.** Of course, even the most supportive employer needs some time to plan for your absence—whether it's for a weekend drill exercise or an extended deployment. The more lead-time you can provide, the better the company can accommodate your service duties.

Talk with your boss about specific plans, including dates of departure and when you expect to return to work. This also is a good time to address questions about pay, scheduling and vacation policies.

### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT

- ★ To be re-employed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform military service, provided you meet qualifying conditions
- ★ To be restored to the job (or a comparable job) and benefits you'd have attained if you'd not been absent due to military service
- ★ If you need to leave your job for military service, to continue your employer-based health coverage for you and your dependents for up to 24 months while in the military
- ★ To be free from discrimination and retaliation

"In some cases, you may not receive much advance notice yourself," Rumble says. "So it's good to open up the line of communication early, before there's a problem. When it comes to things like scheduling and vacation accrual, services members should be treated just like every other employee. For example, if other employees are given the opportunity to make up lost shifts, then the Guard member must be given that same opportunity."

**PUT IT IN WRITING.** According to the law, service members must provide advance notice to their employers, either verbally or in writing. However, as with any business agreement, it's always a good idea to document changes or communication relating to your employment.

"You can avoid a lot of confusion and stress by putting everything in writing, and sharing that with your boss or personnel office," Rumble says. "ESGR has a number of sample letters and forms available on our website that suggest the appropriate verbiage. There's also a convenient wallet-sized card that outlines the re-employment timetable, along with specific rights and responsibilities."

**REACH OUT FOR HELP.** ESGR provides a comprehensive menu of resources for service members and their civilian employers. "We have 54 ESGR state committees located in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands," Rumble says. "These local committees provide a highly personalized approach, addressing questions and concerns, and offering free mediation services to resolve problems."

"Most employers really want to do the right thing," Rumble adds. "They just don't fully understand their obligation under the law. ESGR is working to increase awareness, and there are a lot of great success stories out there—amazing examples of employers going above and beyond in their support. And that's good news for everyone."





**YOUR NEXT MISSION IS TO LAND A JOB.  
WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**

Going from Hero to hired can be a big undertaking, so H2H is here to help. You'll find incredibly useful tools on our website, from job search to career and interest assessment to advice on writing a resume and honing your interviewing skills. Designed specifically for Soldiers, H2H can connect you with companies that honor your service and are looking for people with your special skills. So let's get started.

**The next step of your career starts at [www.h2h.jobs](http://www.h2h.jobs).**



## BACKGROUND OF A WARRIOR

Chief Warrant Officer Five Gary Nisker joined the Army in September 1972 with the dream of becoming a military pilot. After serving as an armored cavalry crewmember in Fort Hood, TX, he was accepted into initial entry rotary wing flight school in 1978. He was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Divisional Air Cavalry Squadron, where he flew OH-58, AH-1 and UH-1 aircraft.

In 1985, Nisker decided to leave the Army to serve in the California Army National Guard. Throughout his career in the Guard, he has held a variety of positions, both at the state level and at the National Guard Bureau. Before being assigned as the command chief warrant officer of the Army National Guard, he was the executive officer to the G3 of the Army National Guard.

### QUALIFICATIONS\*

- > Ranger Tab
- > Air Assault
- > Pathfinder
- > Airborne
- > Master Aviator

### MEDALS\*

- > Meritorious Service Medal (5)
- > Army Commendation Medal (4)
- > Army Achievement Medal (3)
- > Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal (9)
- > Army Service Medal

\*Partial list

# Lessons in Leadership

>> WITH CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FIVE GARY NISKER

BY STEPHANIE INMAN

## > NO. 1

### PROVIDE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

Poor communication is one of the biggest obstacles to a team's successful operation. If a leader doesn't adequately explain what needs to be accomplished, it would be difficult for the subordinates to know whether they accomplished the task correctly.

"There's nothing worse than saying 'Let's go,' and no one but myself knows where we are going," says Chief Warrant Officer Five Gary Nisker, the command chief warrant officer of the Army National Guard. "Most Soldiers want to do the right thing. They want to get the mission done. But you have to tell them what they are doing, give a timeline, and let them do it. The better they understand what's going on, the better a product you are going to get."

## > NO. 2

### VALUE YOUR SUBORDINATES

A leader's main responsibility is to encourage and motivate the people who are working for them. The best way to do that is to make every member of the team feel valued and respected. Nisker encourages all leaders, regardless of position, to say "please" and "thank you" when assigning a task. This reinforces the idea that they appreciate their subordinates' hard work. When people feel like their work is appreciated, they are motivated to continue doing good work.

"You need to make [Soldiers] feel like they have worth and value, and that you need them—because you do. Every one of us needs every Soldier we have. But you have to instill that [sense of] value in the Soldier, so they know you appreciate them and what they are doing," says Nisker.

## > NO. 3

### EMULATE RESPECTED LEADERS

For people who aren't born with leadership skills, these qualities can still emerge from experience, knowledge and, most importantly, mimicking. One of the fastest ways to learn leadership is to study and emulate well-respected leaders. Nisker discovered this firsthand after joining the Army in

1972. At age 20, he was placed in a leadership role but was uncertain whether he had what it took.

"When I signed in to my first unit as a leader, everyone ... was a Vietnam Veteran except me," recalls Nisker. "I felt pretty intimidated. [I thought], 'What qualifies me to lead these guys who have been shot at for years? Yet they are supposed to do what I tell them.'"

Nisker decided not to let his lack of experience and knowledge hinder him. He sought out guidance from his company commander and noncommissioned officers. "They understood the position I was suddenly thrust into—an appointed leader [who didn't] have a huge knowledge base to draw from." He gained a wealth of knowledge by learning from and studying those who had more experience than he did.

## > NO. 4

### LEARN HOW TO DELEGATE

Whether it's in a civilian or Guard career, teamwork is essential to accomplishing many missions. But the key to effective teamwork is that each member be responsible for a specific task. The role of a team leader is to understand how to delegate and then withdraw enough to allow each person to complete their work. The mark of a good leader is trust—assuming the job will get done without their needing to be involved in every detail or decision.

"If you sit there and tell [your subordinates] to do this and do that, you might as well do it yourself," Nisker says. "Don't micromanage. As long as you give clear guidance ... then leave them alone."

## > NO. 5

### BE AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS

Nisker learned this valuable lesson from one of his greatest mentors—Major General Raymond Carpenter, the former director of the Army National Guard. "He made himself totally accessible so when I did have a question or concern about a project, he was there so I could go in and see him. Some leaders are so busy that you can't get next to them to get further guidance until the product is due."

# RELOADING *their* LIVES

Thanks to the selflessness of a Delaware sergeant, many Wounded Warriors are discovering that getting back to the firing range can help rehabilitate body and mind.

Story by JENNIFER GRAHAM  
Photos by GREGORY BYERLINE

To the regular Joe, it might seem odd that a Wounded Warrior badly maimed in battle could find comfort and healing on a firing range.

But for Staff Sergeant Jace Badia, who lost a leg in Iraq, and Staff Sergeant (Ret.) Brian Schar, who lost both of his, it's true. If you ask them what happens when they grip a gun and fire for the first time since being ripped from the battlefield, they'll tell you that power surges—not only outward, from the discharge, but inward, through their bodies. Something inside them ignites, and they feel like the Soldiers that they once were.

They'll also sing the praises of Delaware Sergeant First Class Ephraim Rogers, a career Guard Soldier and the catalyst of that unforgettable experience.

Rogers, 31, is the founder of the Warrior Shoot Event Group, Inc. (WSEG), a nonprofit foundation that hosts events twice a year in which Wounded Warriors can regain their sense of purpose in life by shooting firearms with others who are also recovering from combat wounds. Held at professional firing ranges, the event offers participants a diverse arsenal and near-unlimited ammo. It's a chance for them to pop off a few rounds and have some fun, but it's also about giving them a chance to heal by helping them reclaim their pride, self-respect and confidence

in their ability as a Soldier. And with every round fired (sometimes they'll fire a thousand rounds in a single shoot), they feel more like their former selves again. That's what motivated Rogers to keep the guns and ammo coming.

## TAKING A CHANCE

Ephraim Rogers is not the first Allison Ephraim Rogers in the family. His father was one; his grandfather was named that, too. But until Ephraim the third signed on, there were no Guard Soldiers in the family.

Rogers' father was in the Navy; his mother was a teacher. For most of Rogers' childhood, they lived in Virginia Beach, and they moved to Delaware when he was a teen. It was there that, upon graduating from high school, he joined the Delaware National Guard on a lark. Absent family tradition, and not yet stirred by patriotic impulse, Rogers confesses that it was simply "something to do."

"It was boring in Delaware," he says with a laugh. "I didn't have any real motivation other than to do my time and see where it took me."

Where it took him was into a full-time career.

(Left to right) SFC Ephraim Rogers, founder of the Warrior Shoot Event Group; SSG Wayne Swier, 4th BCT, 101st AD, who was injured by an IED in Afghanistan; SPC Stefan LeRoy, 4th BCT, 82nd AD, who was injured by an IED in Afghanistan; SGT Jonathan Pruziner, 2nd SQD, 2nd SCR, who was injured by an IED in Iraq; and Betti (last name withheld for security reasons), vice president of the Warrior Shoot Event Group.

Rogers first trained to become a signal systems specialist; he enjoyed working with and learning about the radio. Later, he cross-trained for the military police and gained extensive experience with weapons. He deployed to Saudi Arabia and Iraq for nine months, and while there he began to seriously consider a long-term career in the Guard.

The Guard also led Rogers to the love of his life. He met his wife, Christina, a member of the South Dakota Guard, while both were training in Georgia. After years of a long-distance relationship (and a “really-long-distance relationship” while he was deployed, Christina says), the pair, both devout Catholics, were married in South Dakota in 2004. They now have three children: two daughters ages 4 and 6, and a 2-year-old-son. And yes, toy guns are most definitely allowed in the house.

In 2008, four years after he was married and eight years after he joined the Guard, Rogers visited a friend who was recovering from injuries at Walter Reed. Rogers realized how limited the opportunities were for Wounded Warriors to regain and enjoy the shooting skills they’d worked hard for so many years to hone. It’s not that there aren’t rehabilitative options for injured Veterans; there are many, and they are varied. They can ride horses and participate in marathons. But when it comes to sending a few rounds downrange, it’s not as simple as finding a target



and giving them a handgun. Typical of a Soldier, Rogers decided to take care of the matter himself instead of complaining about the void or petitioning others to do something about it.

### A GREATER CAUSE

That afternoon, Rogers went home and began planning what would become the WSEG. The first event was held just two months later at Quantico, VA. From the start, it was a rousing success.

“A lot of these guys, it could have been months since they’ve touched a weapon,” says Ross Colquhoun, a retired Navy Veteran who runs the Fire Arms Training Simulator at Walter Reed Medical Center. Getting out on a range is “huge” and can be a milestone in their recovery. It’s here at Walter Reed, he says, that Wounded Warriors can practice their form and grip with a laser system before handling real weapons again.

“An injured Soldier always wants to know, ‘Can I do all the things I used to do?’ and the answer is, ‘Yes, you can. You may not be as fast or as proficient as you used to be, but you have to start, and work your way back there,’” he says.

While the Soldiers were able to simulate the shooting experience via lasers at Walter Reed, many had not been on a firing range or taken a shot since they were injured. Upon hearing this, Rogers’ reaction was, “Well, why not?”

As it turns out, there were a handful of reasons. Many shooting ranges aren’t accessible to disabled individuals, nor can they provide the support, training and personnel needed for safe and enjoyable practice. And ammunition isn’t cheap.

“I did some research and so I just thought, ‘Well, why can’t I do that?’ Shooting was a hobby of mine, and I realized that this was a way that I could help.”

While he single-handedly organized and financed the first event just two months after he had the idea, Rogers admits that, going into it, he had no idea how much time and effort would be involved. Nor did he know how quickly the concept itself would take off.

“I didn’t realize how much work would be required, and it really is a lot of work,” he says. “But



I made the time for it. I had to make the time.”

He also had to find the money. For the first few years, Rogers financed the events by himself, by pinching pennies. “Instead of eating out at lunch, I would eat peanut butter sandwiches, to save enough money to pay for the day, for the ammunition and drinks.”

Later, as the events grew, he started asking for small donations and made the decision to incorporate the concept as a nonprofit, to enable it to grow. Even now, he maintains a zero balance at year’s end; every dollar that is contributed is spent on the Soldiers and the event. “To say we are on a shoestring budget is an understatement,” he says with a laugh. “I can honestly say that 100 percent of donations go into every event.”

Unquestionably, it’s money well spent.

### BACK IN THE SADDLE

Badia lost more than his leg when an insurgent bomb exploded on Veterans Day in central Iraq. A vital part of his professional life disappeared when he was unable to shoot for nearly a year.

“As an avid gun owner and enthusiast, being around weapons is second nature to me. I own, I shoot, I conceal carry when legal, and I am a proud gun owner, not only for sport, but for defense as well,” he says.

Badia, now back on Active Duty in Kuwait, attended the first event, and another the next year, also at Quantico. “The entire day was a blast. I smile even thinking about it,” he says. “Being able to go out with a bunch of fellow Wounded Warriors, some with more extensive injuries than me, was amazing. There was a guy who had lost two legs and an arm who fired a pump-action shotgun. I was blown away, and the smile on his face was unforgettable.”

That experience would not have been possible for Badia and the two dozen Soldiers who were with him, without the vision and determination of Rogers. Furthermore, Badia and the others were able to again

## WEAPONS FOR WARRIORS

**A typical Warrior Shoot Event features weapons both familiar and exotic. (The targets are paper “zombies”—terrorists and Nazis.) Here is a sampling of the firearms that participants are able to handle and fire:**

Accuracy International AE MKIII

AK-47

AK-74



Benelli M4

Beretta M9

Colt M4-A1

Colt .44 caliber

Colt Python

Derringer .45 long colt

FN SCAR-L

FN SCAR-H

FN P-90



FN F2000



FN M249 LMG

FN five-seven

Glock 17, 19, 21, 27, 26, 22

Glock 18C (fully automatic)

H&K G36



H&K P8

H&K MG4

H&K MP5



Kentucky Flintlock Longrifle

Knight’s Armament M110

KRISS Vector



Mossberg 500

Remington M24

Remington M40A3

Remington 870

Rheinmetall MG3

Ruger 10/22

Ruger 22/45

Smith and Wesson MP9

Smith and Wesson MP45

1911-A1



SFC Ephraim Rogers is the glue that holds the Warrior Shoot Event Group together. He puts in countless time, energy, effort and money into the foundation so wounded Veterans can have a little trigger time.

enjoy the thrill of firing a weapon, and to experience more than 100 different systems with a wide range of ammunition.

“But the event wasn’t just about the weapons, but about the camaraderie,” he says.

The event was a catalyst for healing and inspiration for Soldiers who share a horrific experience: a dark moment of pain and terror. Watching the triple amputee fire a weapon with obvious pleasure, Badia saw clearly the value of the event.

“He probably thought when he was injured that his life was over, but that smile I saw let me know that he had just overcome something that had been plaguing him since he was injured,” Badia says. “I have not been able to attend [shooting events] the past few years due to family and Army constraints, but I have every intention of participating or volunteering on a future shoot.”

Badia has nothing but praise for Rogers. “Ephraim Rogers is a stand-up



guy, period. He is an incredibly intelligent and humble guy," he says. "He is the description of a leader and always puts the welfare of his subordinates and nonsubordinates ahead of his own. He is a family man and an entrepreneur. He is a U.S. Army Soldier."

### FIRING WITH PURPOSE

The goals of the WSEG are simple: to help rehabilitate Soldiers wounded in battle with firing and muscle memory drills, to create maximum potential for an eventual return to duty, and to foster an esprit de corps with all Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors.

In addition to firearms practice and education, the Soldiers have the opportunity to compete for awards at the conclusion of the day. Safety is of utmost consideration. Medics and emergency transportation are on hand for the event, although they have never been needed.

The range of weapons provided is astounding: service weapons, handguns, rifles, shotguns—some modern, some vintage. "We try to give them a chance to shoot something completely new, something they've never shot before and might never have a chance to shoot again," Rogers says.

He has found that local law enforcement is enthusiastic about supporting the event, as are officers and NCOs from foreign embassies in Washington, DC—in particular, the Canadian and German forces.

"The Germans have come every year and [brought] their organizational weapons. Being able to handle the machine guns that the Germans use, you don't get to do that every day," Rogers said.

The first two events were held at the Marine Corps base at Quantico; other shoots have been held at the Crucible training center in Fredericksburg, VA, and most recently at the Cresap Rifle Club range in Frederick, MD. In time, Rogers hopes to hold events at other locations across the country, although he is currently stationed in Columbus, IN, and must work around the logistical and time constraints of his Guard career.

He doesn't mind. Love of country, after all, demands love of its Soldiers, who nobly represent its interests afar. For those who are



“[HE] IS A GREAT GUY, WITH A HUGE HEART. HE PUTS HIS HEART AND SOUL INTO THIS.”

Ross Colquhoun, with Rogers above, is a retired Navy Veteran and runs the Fire Arms Training Simulator at Walter Reed Medical Center.

wounded, our debt to them (and to the families) is one that can never be repaid, Rogers emphasizes. "It's never enough. We can never do enough," he says. But that doesn't stop him from trying.

### THE HEALING OF A WARRIOR

In Colorado, Schar is ready and waiting for the Warrior Shoot Event Group to come there.

The retired Army staff sergeant was on his third deployment when a rocket-propelled grenade tore into his vehicle in Baghdad, destroying both of his legs and causing lasting nerve damage to his left arm. Now retired from active service, he has participated in three Warrior Shoot Events—in 2008, 2009 and 2010. For him, it was a significant part of the healing process, as well as a great time.

"It's hard to explain, but a lot of us grew up hunting and shooting with our dads, and you really have a feel for [shooting], especially if you're deployed," Schar says. "And once you've been hurt, it's a good way to relieve stress. It's good to realize that you can still fight and defend yourself despite your disability. I wasn't sure how I was going to be able to shoot, but I enjoyed the hell out of it."

The only requirement for participation is that the Soldiers must have sustained their injuries in combat, and that they be able to travel on their own to the event.

So far, "We've never had to turn anyone away," Rogers explains. And he promises that no one's injuries, no matter how extensive, will keep them off the range.



MSG Michael Trost, 489th Civil Affairs BN, fires a McMillan Tac 50 .50 cal rifle. Trost was injured by small-arms fire in Afghanistan.

"I will put a weapon in their hands if they come out. Getting there is the only hurdle they have," he says. "Some people have told me, 'I only have two fingers' or 'I don't have a hand.' That doesn't matter. We're going to figure out a way to make this happen, and for it to happen safely."

One participant was a Marine corporal, a sniper who was on his first mission in Iraq when a mine blew up and severed both legs above the knee, and left him with only two thumbs and three fingers. To Rogers, this was no problem. "We got him behind a sniper rifle. He did what he does best. He ended up winning the shooting competition, and he was one of the best shooters I've ever seen."

"It's hard to describe the look on the [Wounded Warriors'] faces, when they realize ... that they can shoot, and it's not even hard. Sometimes, they are not sure at first, but we are there with them, and we say, 'Let's try it out; let's see what you've got,' and they find they've still got it, and I can step back and say, 'There you go, you did it. We just gave you the first step.' It's about abilities, not disabilities; it's as simple as that."

Clearly, the life-changing possibilities of the

WSEG are not constricted to those with the guns in their hands. Everyone leaves the range changed and inspired.

### NEVER ENOUGH

Despite having three young children at home, Christina Rogers made time to attend one of the shooting events.

"I got home, and I said to my mother, 'My husband is just amazing,'" she says. "He earns the money to do this, he saves his money for it, he loves doing it. The benefits that he gets from having these shoots and from seeing how happy these Soldiers are, I can't even begin to describe."

Christina Rogers describes her husband as a family man, an "old-school" gentleman, "a ball of energy" and "just a good guy." Then she laughs and confides, "I think he's happiest when he's talking about guns."

"I don't think he had any idea how big this would get," she adds. But now they're both in it for the long haul. When he retires from the Guard, Rogers says he plans to work full time for the group he founded.

Whatever his efforts, he believes they are nothing compared to what the Wounded

Warriors have given. Working with them, seeing their tenacity, courage and resolve in the face of staggering loss, has crystallized his purpose and confirmed his decision to devote his life to the Guard and Wounded Warriors.

"When I first joined, I really didn't know why," Rogers says. "But I do now, and I know why I stay. I am fiercely patriotic. It's my country, and these people are not just my buddies, but my brothers and sisters. There's nothing I wouldn't do for them; there's nothing I wouldn't give."

His efforts, like those of his sponsors, are a tremendous service for those who have lost so much, says Colquhoun, adding, "Rogers is a great guy, with a huge heart. He puts his heart and soul into this."

"We as a country sometimes have a little bit of a shortfall in taking care of our wounded people," Rogers says. "We have a tendency to use them and put them aside. We're doing better, but there is more that we can do. I can't provide tons of money for people, but I can provide a little bit of motivation to help get somebody back on their feet."

"We can do more. We can always do more," he adds. "What we do will never be enough." **GX**

# M230 30 mm Chain Gun

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

The M230 30 mm chain gun, paired with the M789 round, both made by Alliant Techsystems, combine to create one of the most lethal weapons on the battlefield. Attached under the nose of the AH-64D Apache, the 30 mm has gained a reputation in the Guard as a workhorse. The chain gun can engage tanks, vehicles, buildings and other soft targets, including enemy combatants. From the Invasion of Panama to the battlefield in Afghanistan, the M230 has earned a reputation as one of the most impressive, intimidating and reliable weapons in our arsenal.

## SPECS

**TOTAL WEIGHT:** 131 LBS.

**BARREL WEIGHT:** 32 LBS.

**RECEIVER/FEEDE**

**RECOIL ADAPTERS WEIGHT:** 11 LBS.

**RECOIL:** 3,000 LBS.

**VELOCITY:** 2,641 FT./S, 805 M/S

**CASE EJECTION:** SIDE

**POWER REQUIRED:** 3 PHASE, 115 VAC

**RANGE:** 4,000 M  
(2.5 MILES)

**RATE OF FIRE:**  
625 ROUNDS PER MINUTE



The Apache typically carries 300 rounds of 30 mm ammunition but can hold up to 1,200 with a modification.

THE ARMY ORIGINALLY WANTED A 20 MM CANNON ON THE APACHE, BUT TESTING PROVED THE 30 MM FAR SUPERIOR.

### PACKING A HUGE PUNCH

The M230 chain gun fires the M789 high explosive dual purpose round, which contains 27 g (0.95 oz.) of explosives. Fragmenting upon impact, the M789 travels close to 1,000 m (3,300 ft.) in two seconds, but as it slows down, it travels 3,000 m (9,800 ft.) in around 12 seconds.

THE BARREL IS MADE FROM HIGH-STRENGTH STEEL WITH PRECISION NITRIDED RIFLING TO RESIST EXTREME INTERNAL GASES AND PRESSURE PRODUCED DURING FIRING.

THE APACHE'S GUN MOUNT IS OUTFITTED WITH RAZOR-SHARP WIRE CUTTERS TO "SLICE" ITS WAY THROUGH LOW-HUNG CABLES IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS.

BULLETS ARE FED TO THE GUN FROM THE AIRFRAME THROUGH THE GUN MOUNT.

SHELL CASINGS ARE EJECTED UNDERNEATH THE GUN.

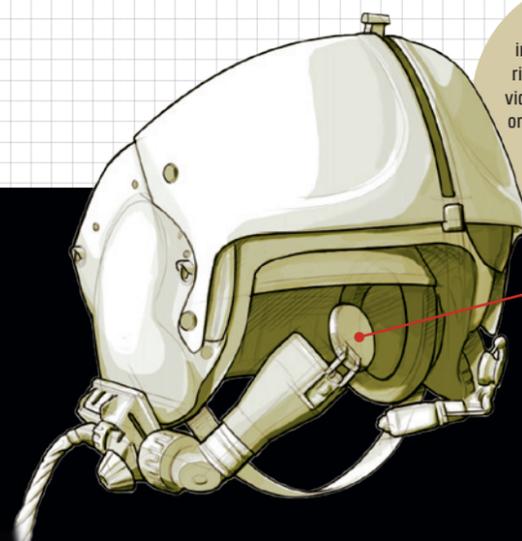
### RAPID FIRE

The M230 can fire at a rate of up to 625 rounds per minute, but the gunner typically chooses a rate of fire at 300 rounds per minute to conserve ammo and improve accuracy.

A monocular lens in front of the gunner's right eye displays either video feed during daylight or night vision so Soldiers can track targets in any lighting situation.

**MODERN HELMET GIVES PILOTS "HEADS-UP" ON THE ENEMY**

The Apache gunner's helmet is high-tech. Simply put, wherever the gunner looks, the chain gun aims at the exact same point. Through the target acquisition and designation sights on the nose of the helicopter, the gunner can engage targets that aren't directly in the Apache's path. The gunner's helmet-mounted display allows them to track and engage targets 120+ degrees in azimuth and 30-60+ degrees in elevation.



# THE RAGIN' CAJUN

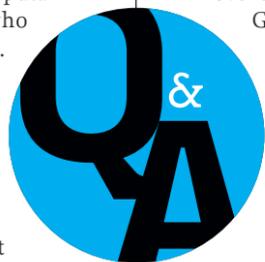
LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)  
 RUSSEL L. HONORÉ LOOKS BACK ON  
 HIS TIME AS THE ARMY'S GO-TO GUY

BY CHRISTIAN ANDERSON



LTG (Ret.) Russel Honoré and President George W. Bush survey the disaster in New Orleans a week after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005.

**W**hen Lieutenant General (Ret.) Russel L. Honoré took the reins of Joint Task Force Katrina following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the city of New Orleans and the surrounding areas were chaotic. As commanding general of the First U.S. Army, Honoré quickly lived up to his reputation as a no-nonsense leader who doesn't quit until the job is done. Now retired, he reflects on his leadership with the task force and his time in the Army.



**What were your responsibilities as commander of Joint Task Force Katrina?** Our mission as First Army was to provide military support to the civil authorities. In that regard, we worked in support of FEMA and in support of the governors of Mississippi and Louisiana. Our job was search and rescue, medical support, transportation support, the distribution of food and water, and any task assigned by FEMA, including removing [casualties] found in and around the city.

The media strongly praised the Active Duty forces that arrived several days after the hurricane, but the Guard had been rescuing people for several days prior. What was your take on that? That was pretty concerning because, following the storm on Monday, the majority of the troops doing the heavy lifting were National Guard. I arrived on Wednesday, and the media started focusing on my presence there. But the National Guard and Coast Guard had [already] been doing much of the search and rescue and evacuation. The federal troops didn't arrive until Saturday.

**What did the Guard learn from its response to Katrina?** Both the 155th IBCT [Infantry Brigade Combat Team] of Mississippi and the 256th IBCT of Louisiana were in Iraq at the time when Katrina hit. Every radio, every piece of equipment, was downrange [with those units]. So our equipment was spread pretty thin. But over the days that followed, the National Guard brought in more radios and equipment from other states. That's the way the plan is designed to work. To quote the infamous [Donald] Rumsfeld saying, "You go to war with what you got"—well, you go to disaster with what you got.

**What images stand out for you from your Katrina experience?** Seeing people walking in the water trying to make it to the Superdome will always stay with me. The people were appreciative of what we were doing for them. A lady walked up to me and told me, "I've lived my entire adult life hating the Army, but my opinion has changed." I asked her why she would hate the Army, and she said because her brother was killed in Vietnam. So she always blamed the Army for killing him. But she said over the last week, every day, someone from the Army had come down the street offering her food and water. That was a life-changing event for her.

**How did your job change when you became a general officer?** I think it's kind of a double-edged sword, really. It gives you a great opportunity to influence procedure and policy. At the same time, everybody is watching what you do to see if you are walking the talk, meeting the measurement to be a senior leader. Much is expected of you to take care of the troops, and the biggest accolade you can have

is being known as someone who gets the job done but also spends an equal amount of time and effort taking care of the troops.

**What is your fondest memory from your career?** Watching the troops return home from a deployment and the welcome-home ceremonies I attended. One in particular was with the Pennsylvania National Guard when they returned home from Iraq. That was a very emotional day, because when they left [Pennsylvania], they were uncertain of what was going to happen when they got [to Iraq]. And then to see the level of confidence, skill and growth [when they returned] was amazing. I was very proud of that.

**If you could do your career all over, would you change anything?** I'm not quite sure; I mean, it was a good ride. The idea of going into the infantry and embracing that lifestyle of being outdoors—that just ended up being what I liked to do. I'm glad that I chose this career, because I never regretted going to work.

**What is the most important lesson you learned from your service in the Army?** I truly feel that I understand the role and mission of the Guard, and the great role they play in the safety and security of this country. They go where the help is needed in our communities. At the same time, they can quickly mobilize and be that strategic reserve that the nation needs in a time of war. In fact, my son, Michael Honoré, is a staff sergeant in the Louisiana National Guard. He was on Route Irish in Baghdad when Katrina hit. And my other son is in the ROTC program at Louisiana State University. He, too, is going to join the Guard before he goes on Active Duty, or after. I have all the respect in the world for the National Guard. **GX**

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