

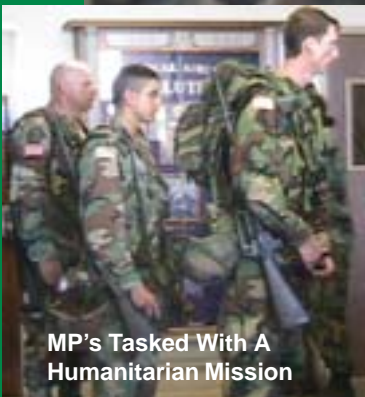
The Official Magazine of the Rhode Island National Guard

OCEAN STATE GUARDIAN



The 173RD LRS Returns Home After A 16 Month Deployment

FALL 2005
END OF YEAR
EDITION



MP's Tasked With A Humanitarian Mission

Major General Reginald A. Centrachio Retires From Rhode Island National Guard After 48 Years Of Dedicated Service

VOLUME II ISSUE 5



**Ocean State
GUARDIAN
EDITORIAL STAFF**

Adjutant General
Brigadier General John Enright

Assistant Adjutant General, Air
Brigadier General Michael Hickey

Chief of Staff
Colonel Brian Goodwin

Public Affairs Officer
LTC Micheal McNamara

Editor/Design
Sergeant John Cervone

Reproduction Staff
SFC Richard Rowe

Reader Contributions are encouraged.

For guidelines contact the Public Affairs Office at:

(401) 275-4193
(401) 275-4338 (Fax)

Submit articles or photographs to:

RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS
COMMAND READINESS CENTER
645 NEW LONDON AVENUE
CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND
02920-3097

Or you may e-mail:
michael.mcnamara@ri.ngb.army.mil

The OSG can be viewed at - http://www.dvidshub.net/?script=pubs/pubs_main.php

FALL 2005 * END OF YEAR

OSG



TOP STORY:

Rhode Island Military Police Are Deployed To Hurricane Devastated Louisiana

Page: 7

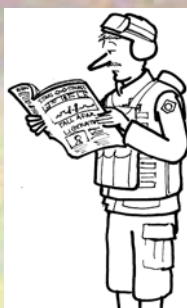


Features:

The Quiet Professional
Page: 36



Leadership Over Adversity
Page: 41



Army Guard Promotions
Page: 44

Departments:

Army Guard History
Page: 29

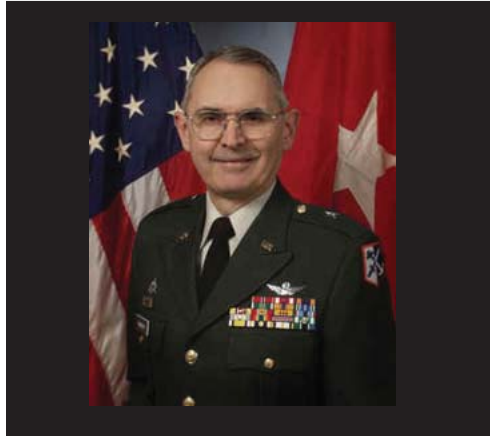
Primary Leadership Development Program
Page: 43

Veterans Guide
Page: 46

Military Humor
Page: 51



From The Desk Of The Interim Adjutant General,
Brigadier General John Leonard Enright Sr



This new year will see a new program instituted for servicemembers returning from deployments. They will now participate in a post-deployment health reassessment program that all the services are instituting. This new program will assess the health - both physical and mental - of servicemembers some 90 to 120 days after they have redeployed. This program has been instituted due to the recognition that deployments may have an impact on the health and well-being of our soldiers and airmen, and having learned from research that health concerns are identified even several months after returning from operational deployments. This new program will be in addition to the routine post-deployment health screening that all servicemembers go through upon return to the states from a deployment. More than 900,000 servicemembers have already gone through that program. The reassessment program is designed to find servicemembers whose symptoms don't show up immediately. The program aims to get them the help they need. Key elements of the program include outreach to servicemembers, education and training for servicemembers and their families, screening of servicemembers, assessment by medical professionals, evaluation and treatment, and follow-up. It is important that military leaders, servicemembers and clinicians understand the process and buy into it. Effective education to gain leadership support and servicemember participation and optimal clinical practice is critical to the success of this program. We need to accept the philosophy that everyone who goes into combat is in some way psychologically affected. We should not have our combat veterans go out into society without any questions asked or without any contact. Active-duty and reserve-component personnel will be treated exactly the same. And all unit commanders are charged with ensuring servicemembers participate in this program



FROM THE DESK OF THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

JOHN McDONOUGH

STATE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD



Effective military leadership requires skills which are virtually unknown in the civilian world. These leadership skills are taught through extensive training in leadership theory and focused development of the time-tested military leadership style. Leadership skills are not something many people are born with, but with proper training and development in leadership theory most students are able to develop a quality leadership style from a fusion of their own natural leadership traits and the military's leadership development training. I would like to divide my comments between what is expected in a leader's preparations for battlefield leadership and my own philosophy on the conduct of a leader in battle.

You should become a student of past wars and significant battles. Read military history, particularly small unit actions. The personality of a big battle is often formed by a small unit action.

Visit historic battlefields with maps, books and narratives from actual participants to understand the intricacies of battles and campaigns. This helps determine how and why key leaders made their decisions when and where they did.

I can not overstate the necessity of installing the will to win in your unit. Too often we expect the mediocre from our troops, when we should expect excellence and commitment. Leave that type of philosophy to the civilian world. We are warriors. In combat, we are in charge of keeping our soldiers alive. Focus on winning, being first, and your soldiers, who are hard chargers, will respond more rapidly. Demand a commitment to excellence and success above all else.

Concentrate on building unit discipline and teamwork. Have your unit participate in a confidence course, go out on field marches and spend time in the field to improve morale and prepare your soldiers for combat. Leaders need to stay focused on caring for their soldiers.

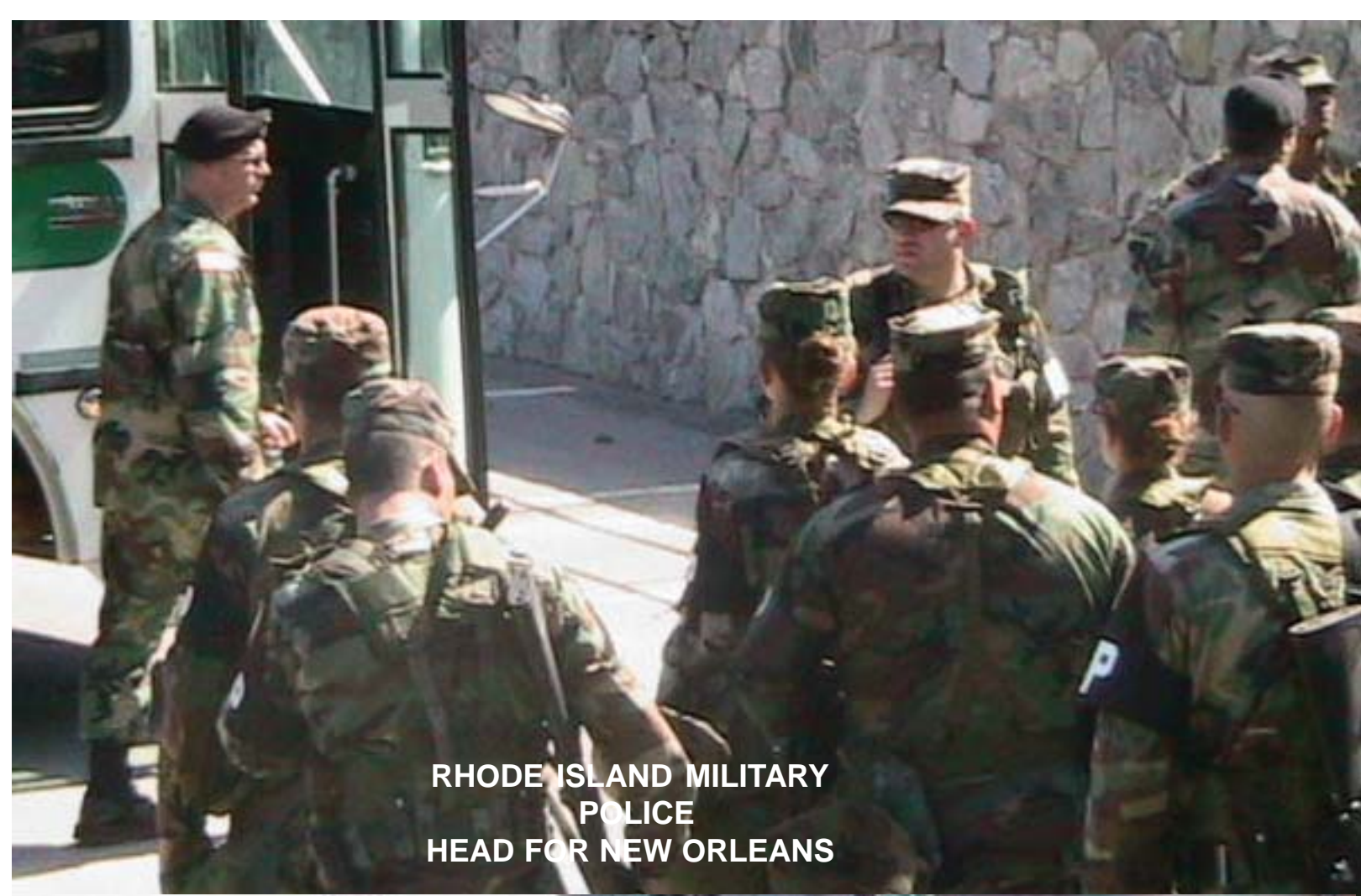
Communicating continually with the soldier on the quality of life, post deployment issues, career progression and individual soldiers requirements. Now more than ever has "Welfare of our Soldier" been more important.





Major General Reginald Centrachio retired from the Rhode Island National Guard in September of 2005. His career spanned over forty eight years, including his ten year tenure as the Adjutant General of the Rhode Island National Guard.





**RHODE ISLAND MILITARY
POLICE
HEAD FOR NEW ORLEANS**

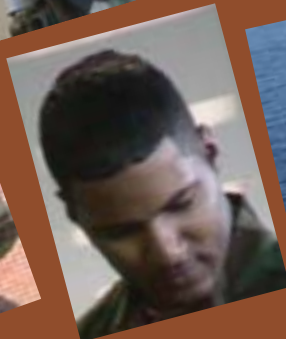
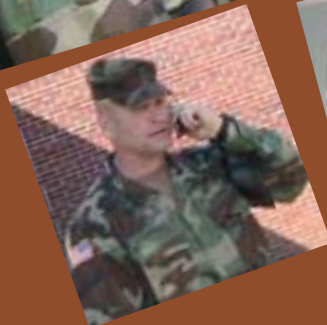
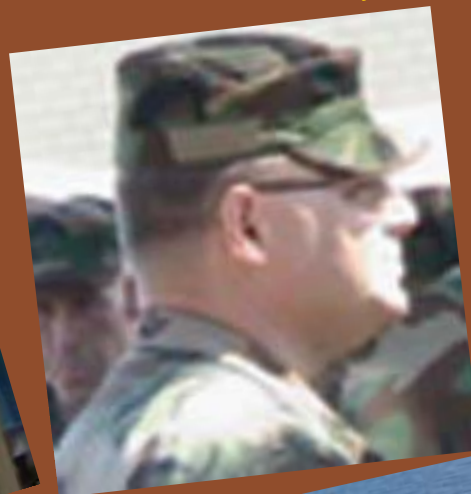


The Rhode Island National Guard has again exhibited the

professionalism and self sacrifice that have truly earned them the title of "Heroes". The following is a brief excerpt of the report sent by Burton C. Quist, Colonel, US Marine Corps, XO of the USS Iwo Jima. The subject was the USS Iwo Jima and the soldiers of the 119th MP Company stationed aboard.

"Finally, a word about our guests onboard, the 119th Military Police Company, Rhode Island National Guard. These folks are headed home after a very long two weeks. To their credit, they were the first to enter the Convention Center and restore order with only 140 troops, though the mission called for more than 500. They saved 15 lives and evacuated hundreds. The Company averaged more than 20 missions per day that lasted from 0600 until well past midnight on most days. I had an opportunity to accompany them on two missions and found them to be extremely professional - since they were among the first to arrive after Katrina, they became the resident experts for mission planning and execution for many other Guard and Army units. Their company even found time to care for 4 stray canines to relieve the stress. Footnote: most of the MP Company returned from a tour in Iraq in April. Huge Heroes from a Small State."

These Soldiers were truly an inspiration for all of us as they were to their families, who support them through their absence. It is human nature to desire to be part of a noble event like rescuing a human being from raging flood waters. But the reality is that fulfillment is not always measured in the numbers of lives saved but in the incalculable relieving of physical or emotional suffering. There is still much to be done in New Orleans, but all Rhode Islander's can hold their heads up proudly, knowing that their sons and daughters have again responded to the needs of others, and have performed their duties to the best of their ability.

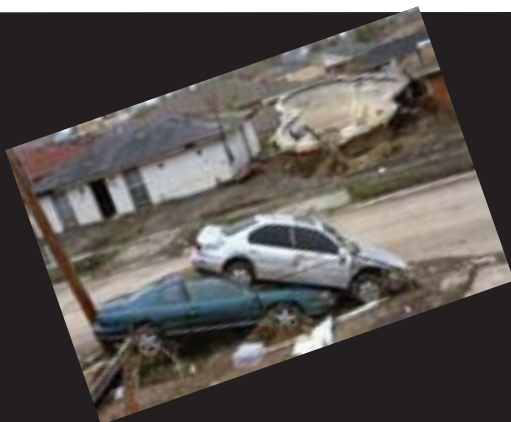


Heroes of the Week



Iraqi Soldiers serving at Taji military base collected 1 million Iraqi dinars for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Col. Abbas Fadhil, Iraqi base commander, presented the money to Col. Paul D. Linkenhoker, Taji Coalition base commander, at a Sept. 5 staff meeting. "We are all brothers," said Abbas. "When one suffers tragedy, we all suffer their pain." The amount of money is small in American dollars, roughly \$680, but it represents a huge act of compassion from Iraqi Soldiers to their American counterparts, said Maj. Michael Goynes. "I was overwhelmed by the amount of their generosity," Goynes said. "I was proud and happy to know Col. Abbas, his officers, NCOs and fellow Soldiers.

That amount represents a month's salary for most of those Soldiers." Abbas read a letter he wrote after giving the envelope to Linkenhoker. "I am Col. Abbas Fadhil; Taji Military Base Commander," Abbas wrote. "On behalf of myself and all the People of Taji Military Base; I would like to console the American people and government for getting this horrible disaster. So we would like to donate 1 million Iraqi Dinars to help the government and the people. Also I would like to console all the Americans who are helping us rebuild our country and our Army. We appreciate the Americans' help and support. Thank you. "In a reciprocal gesture, U.S. Soldiers attended a memorial service Sept. 5 for victims of the disastrous panic during a pilgrimage in Baghdad, which happened the same day Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S. More than 1,000 people fell into the Tigris River or died on a bridge when the crowd panicked after rumors that suicide bombers were in the procession. Abbas spoke of the Iraqi victims as "martyrs" and donated one half of his paycheck to a fund earmarked for their families. A collection box for the fund was filled with contributions from American Soldiers.



The 173d Infantry Detachment, (LRS), Returns Home To Rhode Island



The 861st Engineer Company in Iraq



The 43D M.P. Brigade in Iraq

The oldest is 54 and the youngest twenty-two. Seventy percent have been deployed before. One hundred members of the 43rd Military Police Brigade are presently deployed in Baghdad serving a 12-month tour. At Camp Victory, in Baghdad, they will assist with prisoner detention operations.



FROM THE BATTLEFIELD



Spc. Jeff Brelsford



1st Lt. David Disi



SPC Jason A. Beaulieu



CPT Mike GRYZBOWSKI, MAJ Ken Niles,
MAJ Dan Lutz and CPT Bob Petrarca.
All URI Graduates



1st Lt. David Disi & Staff Sgt. John Kelley



Spc. Dave Seymour



Pfc. Doug LaPierre



Sgt. Marcio Soares



Spc. Andrew Ferrar



Troops of the 861st in action
in Iraq



WAR IN THE DESERT

For Rhode Island National Guard soldiers of D Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, the Iraqi heat has been a challenge, but integrating with other units has gone smoothly. The infantry company is attached to 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Brigade, Georgia National Guard, which is supporting 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division here. "Three-quarters of my unit are prior active-duty soldiers, so they seamlessly transitioned to what they once were," said Capt. William H. Tuttle IV, D Co. commander from Warwick, R.I. "I have not seen any difficulties in working with an active-duty component at all. They're very professional, and so are we." The 1-118th FA took over responsibility for a part of 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division's area of operations previously patrolled by 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Before dawn, the American and Iraqi soldiers rolled into the target area, secured entry and exit roads and searched the objectives. The troops worked together to search the houses thoroughly and gather information from local residents, all while keeping the cordon area secure. Helicopters, providing air cover, alerted Tuttle that some of the suspects

were fleeing through the palm target house. Staying true to the he dispatched a combined team of apprehend them. After finishing with investigated a factory complex to to manufacture car bombs. Tuttle success, netting a targeted suspect will help shape future operations. soldiers' performance and the way part of the mission as well. "I have have never let me down. The Iraqi standards and professionalism," he to learn, which is so important to us army, who will hopefully take over



independently someday." All the combat units in 3rd Brigade are working side-by-side with the Iraqi Army, and 1-118th Field Artillery is no different. "I typically perform combined operations with the Iraqi Army every time I go out," Tuttle said. During a cordon-and-search mission near Taji on July 16, the battalion's B and D companies teamed up with C Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 6th Division, Iraqi Army, to search for and detain suspected terrorists. The purpose of the mission was to find bad guys in two different locations. Tuttle said the aim of the mission was for two different elements to search two target houses simultaneously and detain the suspected terrorists who were hiding there. The Iraqis are very good once you get to the target. They know how to do cordon and searches. They are very good soldiers. They pick up things quickly. His soldiers have also picked things up quickly, putting the training they received at Ft. Stewart, Ga., to good use on real-life missions in Iraq, and fitting in with their active-duty comrades and Iraqi Army partners. "We really are an 'Army of one,'" Tuttle said. "Soldiers are soldiers."

grove behind D Company's teamwork ethos of the mission, Iraqi and D Company troops to the houses, the soldiers make sure it wasn't being used said the mission was a and valuable intelligence that He was impressed with his the Iraqi troops carried out their very professional soldiers, who Army is right up there in their said. "They have a willingness to help shape them into an and conduct these operations



Every time Soldiers leave Camp Taji and every time they come back in, they see a group of their comrades, patrolling the gates and keeping things safe. Soldiers of 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division and supporting units are responsible for guarding the entry and exit points on post. They brave long hours and searing heat, while monitoring the gates day in and day out. "We maintain security," said Sgt. Ricky V. Fields, section chief for A Battery, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team, Georgia National Guard, which is supporting 3rd Bde. "We keep the bad stuff and the bad people out." Keeping them out requires constant vigilance by the guards. "Our job at the gate is to... provide security to ensure we aren't being attacked," said Staff Sgt. Robert Bakie, food service specialist for 3rd Brigade's Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment. Bakie said situational awareness is always on his mind when he is manning the gate, and reminds his Soldiers to stay alert. Not all of the Soldiers securing the sun-baked guard stations are in the U.S. Army. Iraqi Army Soldiers also help man the gate alongside their American counterparts, working the same long hours and sharing responsibility for the safety of the post. "Communication is a challenge (with the IA Soldiers)," Fields said. "It's a good experience, though." Spc. Prince Yohannes, an artilleryman with 4-1 FA, helps bridge that communication gap while on guard duty. His mother is Muslim and he is very familiar with Arabic. "I can understand (Arabic) and I can communicate with the Iraqi guys out here," Yohannes said. "It helps me and the other Soldiers around here a lot." Yohannes relays instructions from the American sergeant-of-the-guard to the Iraqi Soldiers, making the gate-guard team more effective. He also gave the American guards tips on how to communicate with the Iraqis. "Use a lot of hand gestures," he told one of his fellow guards. "When they reply to you, you have to listen closely to the words, and look at their eyes because they are usually looking at what they are trying to tell you about." By guarding the gate together, the Soldiers have gained insight about different cultures. "We learn about their culture. They learn about our culture," Fields said. "They want to talk to you, you want to talk to them, and we learn a little bit about each other," Bakie said. Yohannes said he liked working with the Iraqi

troops, and it gave him the feeling that the Iraqis are getting closer to securing their own country. The Soldiers understand the importance of their mission out at the gate. "There are Soldiers in their room right now sleeping. We're at the perimeter making sure those sleeping Soldiers are safe," Yohannes said. "While we're out here protecting the perimeter, they can go about their business on the camp, doing their jobs."



The Soldiers of 1st Platoon, D Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, Rhode Island National Guard patrol the towns and streets just outside of Baghdad looking for enemy terrorists or signs of their activity. These Soldiers, who are attached to 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, 48th Brigade, Georgia National Guard, must be prepared to defend themselves and handle any situation that may arise. Although they are ready for combat, they are also ready to reach out to the people in the community they patrol.

Recently, 1st Lt. Dave Disi, 1st Platoon leader, had an opportunity to do just that with his Soldiers. "We were at a night traffic control point to catch curfew violators in cars," he explained. "When we arrived, the locals were watching television outside a coffee shop, and then they started to gather around and talk to us."

It was not too much longer until "their kids came out and we gave them Beanie Babies and candy," he said. "I got about half the Beanie Babies and candy from my sister-in-law, who is an elementary school teacher in Long Island, N.Y., and my aunt, who is a retired Wisconsin school teacher," said Disi. "We got the other half of the toys and candy from a storage warehouse at Camp Taji."

"This crowd was nice and approachable," Disi said. "In fact, here the local people even aided us with the traffic control point by helping to tell the drivers to stop for us."

After about an hour on the ground with the town's residents, the Soldiers' relief arrived in the area and the Rhode Islanders went back to Camp Taji.

"We are happy to give back to the community. We returned to the town just a few days ago and saw the same people as friendly as ever," Disi said. "Hopefully, we can continue this good relationship together."

D Company has detained a few terrorists in their area and now is enjoying a relatively calm setting compared to other areas of Iraq. However, they search every day to find more terrorists and stand ready to defend their area along with its residents.

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers found bomb-making materials and mortar aiming stakes in a house they searched northwest of Baghdad on Sept. 8, 2005.

The Soldiers from the Rhode Island National Guard's D Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, detained three male suspects at the house and confiscated terrorist propaganda, two expended rocket casings, two timers and the aiming stakes. "We did a three-patrol raid on a suspected Anti-Iraqi Forces meeting location and it was a complete success," said Capt. William H. Tuttle IV, D Company commander from Warwick, R.I. "Speed and surprise were our best attributes."



The shapes rise from the dark, with the marsh grass blowing in the draft of the helicopter's downwash. The crew chief jumps out, into the


darkness, and the soldiers heave their rucksacks into the back bay of the helicopter and climb in. Then the crew chief is back in and the helicopter lifts and tilts as it rises. The river passes underneath and the lights of houses can be seen again. The 12 men in Teams 4 and 5 of the 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment of the Rhode Island National Guard have been lifted out of a 72-hour mission and are on their way back to base. It has been a mission of long days of heat and thick brush and 15-foot-tall reeds. Staff Sgt. James Leonard of Waldwick, N.J., who has flown out to meet them, passes back bottles of water. The men arrive at their base at 11:42 p.m. and walk into the detachment's quarters. As they come in, other members of the unit greet them. Everybody is excited and talking. The returning men have thick beards and they are dirty. They wear green camouflage instead of the standard tan-and-brown desert uniforms. On the floor around them are their rucksacks and weapons, including the M-14 sniper rifles and the M-24 rifle with a scope for shooting precisely at night. The operations sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Saquet, calls the two team leaders and their assistants into the operations tent for the debriefing. Saquet wants to know what they did, what they saw and what they learned. Their mission was surveillance and what the Army calls denying the enemy the use of the terrain, which means if you can see them acting against us, you can shoot them. The teams were put in at night to watch a road - frequently used by Americans - where the enemy have frequently set off roadside bombs. At the debriefing are Saquet, of Brockton, Mass.; Capt. Michael Manning, the unit commander, of North Kingstown, R.I.; Staff Sgt. Dave Raymond, the Team 4 leader, of Wrentham, Mass.; Staff Sgt. Tim Halloran, the Team 5 leader, of Stonington, Conn.; and Sgts. Joseph Voccio, of Cranston, R.I., and Phillip Wagoner, of Bristol, R.I. The briefing starts with everybody talking at once, and Saquet brings order to the discussion by taking it from the beginning. How did the insertion go? There was water everywhere. The river had risen since the unit first looked the area over to plan the mission. The helicopter couldn't land at the planned spot. The soldiers found the brush thick and brittle and difficult to move through in their heavy rucksacks. Halloran says weight was an issue. The packs they carried weighed up to 100 pounds, loaded with radios, batteries, ammunition and water. Voccio says leaving the body armor and helmets behind would save weight and make it easier to move. Manning has insisted his men wear their armor, but they don't all like it. It saves lives, he says. They talk about the way they use their radios and if they need to carry as many spare batteries. The batteries weigh a lot. Manning is concerned about the amount of water they needed to drink, up to 12 or 14 bottles per man. Halloran says the temperature on one day rose to 124. The teams moved several times. Each time, the reeds and brush and rising water made the march difficult. From positions back in the brush, they would watch the river and the road. They describe a red-and-white, 15-foot aluminum boat with two men, who would motor up the river and then drift back down. "Did they have poles?" Saquet asks. Did they have an electric device for catching fish? No, they didn't have any fishing gear. "We lay there with four sniper scopes trained on these guys," Halloran says, "and all they did was sit there and drink tea." "Were they early warning?" Manning asks. "No," Halloran says, "they definitely weren't patrolling." Later in the debriefing, Saquet suggests: "So ask them, 'What the (expletive) are you doing?' If what they say isn't what you saw, they're lying." The talk turns to the real reason the two teams were out in the heat and the brush: finding who's planting bombs that blow up Americans on the road. "He hits them every time," Voccio says of the bomber. "He's good. You know he could be sitting in his house with a Motorola drinking tea." A bomb can be triggered by a device as simple as a garage-door opener. It is during this exchange that you realize that this is not a discussion about how hot the weather was or the weight of rucksacks. It is talk among men who are trying to kill other men who are trying to kill them.

Men Of Honor

The four armored Humvees trailed dust as they drove down a narrow dirt farm road near Samarra. The commander, Capt. Michael Manning, is returning to a shepherd's home, where two weeks ago his vehicles became stuck in the mud and tore up the shepherd's road and field. Manning means to make restitution. The Humvees are manned by soldiers of the 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment of the Rhode Island National Guard. In the second Humvee are Sgt. Josh Heywood, of Johnston, R.I., the vehicle's commander; Specialist Dave Santos, of Kearny, N.J., driver; and Specialist Juan Ventura, of Waterbury, Conn., gunner. Each of the three other Humvees are similarly manned. The soldiers park the vehicles along the road. Manning, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Saquet, of Brockton, Mass., Sgt. Wayne Lynch, of Tewksbury, Mass., Heywood and an interpreter walk across open fields past the ruts in the mud about two feet deep. As the soldiers approach a low house made of mud brick, three men _ an older man, his son and a cousin _ dressed in ankle-length robes, come out to greet them. Manning and Saquet explain that they were in the area and thought they'd drop by to see how things were going. Saquet is carrying cash. The older man _ a shepherd _ leads the group around his house, past where his sheep are penned, and invites the visitors inside. There are mats on the floor arranged in a U, and the shepherd and his son and the soldiers all sit. Saquet lays his weapon on the mat and takes off his helmet and body armor. He sits next to the interpreter, Sammy Uleiman of Tampa, Fla., a civilian contractor. The shepherd looks to be in his mid-50s. He asks the cousin to get tea, which is served in small glasses on saucers. Manning declines but Saquet and the interpreter each take a glass. It is hot and sweet. Have they had problems with the road, the shepherd and his son are asked. No problems. Could you find someone to fix the road? They say it would be hard to find somebody. The shepherd shows them a small black box labeled Nomec Super and says he needs medicine for his sheep. The box costs about 17,000 Iraqi dinars or about \$10. The medicine is for parasites, and one box will treat about 50 sheep. The shepherd says he needs to inject the sheep about every 21 days. Saquet says, "Tell them we'll let the colonel know about the problems with the sheep." The interpreter translates. Manning says to the shepherd, "We're trying to identify what the problems are for the Iraqi people and help them." The shepherd speaks, and the interpreter says, "I don't know what the problems are in Iraq." Then the shepherd says the problem is foreigners from places like Jordan and Syria. He saw them on TV. Would you see them if they were in the area? Don't know, he says. He sees cars on the canal road. He is asked who lives on the northern side of the canal road. What family? He says he doesn't know them. The shepherd is asked about Samarra, now that the Iraqi police are in charge. There is an issue with long delays at checkpoints. Saquet says, "We have talked to the colonel and he will work on it. The United States Army values your opinions." The shepherd says bandits forced his truck over and stole it. He says the Iraqi army found it and the truck is now at the "silo," the Forward Operating Base where the 173rd is stationed. It was once a large grain storage facility. Saquet asks him if he can describe the truck. The shepherd says it is white. Manning asks whether there are any other problems. Any problems with security? Saquet writes a note in English for the shepherd to present at the gate to the base. It says this man claims his truck was stolen. The recipient of the note should contact Saquet or Manning. Then they do business and settle on a payment of \$260 for the damage to the road. Saquet pulls a roll of U.S. bills out of his pocket and hands the money to the shepherd. The soldiers of the 173rd not only protect the people of Iraq but they also protect the integrity of the United States and it's people. The Iraqi people don't have a crystal ball to view what things are like here in the states. They can only learn the truth about us from the actions they see and the conversations they have with American military people. We are fortunate to have soldiers like the men of the 173rd representing us. Their actions speak volumes to the Iraqi people.

Acknowledgement by: Sgt John Cervone

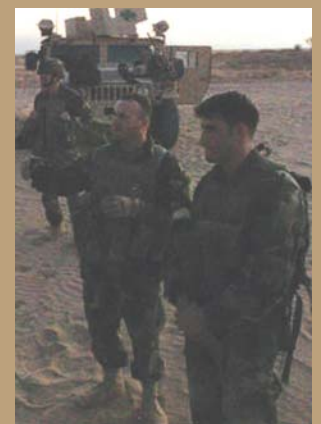
Hunting Insurgents



They seem almost casual as they talk among themselves, noting traffic and other activity. However, their ease is actually a professional detachment, a cool reserve which serves them as they again prepare to embark on one of the missions they've been doing for the last ten months – going outside the wire and scouting for insurgents. The team belongs to the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division's 173rd Long-Range Surveillance Detachment (LRS-D) - the reconnaissance arm of Task Force Liberty, which has been conducting security and stability operations in North-Central Iraq since January. Soldiers of the Rhode Island-based detachment have worked throughout Task Force Liberty's sector, doing missions with names like "terrain denial" and "offensive reconnaissance," according to detachment Commander Capt. Michael Manning. "We've been all over Task Force Liberty's area of operations," Manning said. "We've worked with all kinds of different units." By working with other maneuver units such as infantry companies and scout platoons, the detachment is part of a combined-arms fight which denies insurgents areas like Coalition Forces supply routes – a strategy Manning calls "pushing the deer" to the hunter. 'Deer' are insurgents, and Task Force Liberty units like LRS-D are the hunters. "You have to push the deer," Manning said, "and we have to be there, covertly, to catch them." For LRS-D teams like Halloran's, that means leaving the base, patrolling to an observation point and lying in wait – a mission the detachment did in Samarra from March through May. "These guys would spend 24 to 48 hours out there," Manning said, "waiting for a target." "I like the excitement, the thrill," said Sgt. Joe Voccio, Halloran's assistant team leader, from Cranston, R.I. "We work in small teams. We go where most people don't want to go. We've lain in excrement, chicken coops and drainage ditches. You're among the people and they don't even know you're there." "You have to have a field mentality," said team member Spc. Mike Finn, who is from Warwick, R.I. Everyone on the team can think for themselves, he added. "If something happens, you have to know what to do without being told," he said. "You have to be able to pick up and do other team members' jobs." The combined arms operations LRS-D was part of in Samarra were successful, said Manning. "It was a good combined arms fight," Manning said. In Samarra, LRS-D worked with units such as 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor to deny insurgents use of a route locals called the Fallujah Road, Manning said. "There's a lot of crime on that road," he said. "It's a main line of communication for anti-Iraqi forces." In Samarra, detachment Soldiers patrolled into areas anti-Iraqi forces had been forced into, Manning said. This led to some direct fire engagements. "It was great teamwork," Manning said. "We denied [anti-Iraqi forces] use of the terrain. That was a success. What we didn't deliver was a high body count." The first job of LRS-D is to "observe and report," Manning added. "First and foremost, we're collectors of information," he said. "I have a tremendous amount of respect for the infantry companies working in Samarra. They've experienced the full spectrum of combat operations. They're in the fight. Those guys are outstanding.

"It's dusk when the team sets out. Tiny clouds erupt around the Soldiers' boots as they walk across the dust and sparse scrub-brush toward the wire about 300 yards away. Halfway there, Halloran halts his team behind a dirt mound. The team waits for a break in the traffic, then quickly walks the final 150 yards. There, they lie prone in a shallow depression and wait several minutes for the traffic to thin out again. Once it does, they're up, over the wire and across the road into the shadows on the other side. It's fully dark now, but potential danger still lingers nearby. A truck approaches on a narrow dirt road parallel to the team's line of march.

Again they duck behind a dirt mound and wait out the tense seconds as the truck passes. And that's the way it goes...short walks, then short halts through the empty desert spaces between Iraqi villages and towns - narrow corridors the team moves along, unseen. In Iraq, LRS-D had to modify its mission to short-range reconnaissance, Manning said, and take on other, non-doctrinal missions. "You use the same tactics and procedures, but for a close-in fight," Manning said. "We redefined how we employed ourselves." That included a month-long mounted reconnaissance push, or offensive reconnaissance, into the western desert in April. Manning said unit members mapped the western desert from Samarra to Lake Thar Thar, identifying routes and confirming the presences of anti-Iraqi forces. The Soldiers made stops along the way – talking with Iraqis, engendering good will, collecting information and developing intelligence (intel) sources. With persistence and revisits, the unit was successful at this, relying on police officers in its ranks to build trust with locals, who were forthcoming with information, Manning said. "Our cops were best at this...it took a beat-cop mentality to talk with people and develop sources," Manning said. "But it takes time. You have to develop a rapport." This effort helped build a 'snapshot,' Manning said, of Samarra and its influences. "The push out into the western desert was a combination of emerging doctrine and traditional LRS-D missions," he said. Besides scrub brush, the terrain the team traverses is uneven, hardened clay humps and stretches of soft, ankle-wrenching sand. Even so, they move swiftly, stopping occasionally to check their position or make a radio call. They reach their surveillance point behind a low ridge a short time later, and lie down. From the spot they can peer over the crest of the ridge – "to overwatch a road where a lot of IEDs have been planted," Halloran later explained.






HUNTING INSURGENTS (Continued)

When the team spots someone planting an IED, they'll call other units to respond in force. But it's a wait, so the team radios that they've reached their spot, pull night-vision devices from their patrol packs, and scan the road and the terrain around them. Following their duty in Samarra, the unit was sent to Forward Operating Base Summerall to help fight a growing problem for Task Force Liberty – IEDs and Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). In fact, the base was hit with a VBIED while LRS-D was doing its advance reconnaissance of the area, said Manning. "We knew it would be busy here as well," he said. Manning said LRS-D began working in coordination with other units, and for Task Force Dragoon, 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor, doing mounted and dismounted operations to deny insurgents use of key terrain – roads. The mission continues to be a success, he added. "We've been able to do terrain-denial very well," said Manning. "In the area LRS-D is working, there are no attacks. That is our legacy." With Task Force 1-103, LRS-D's efforts led to the capture of two key members of a Bayji VBIED cell, said Manning. The two insurgents were considered to be high-value targets, and attacks went down dramatically. "These kids shut it down," said Manning. The unit has shamrocks on the gun turrets and doors of their humvees – a highly-visible, distinct symbol rooted in LRS-D's nickname, "Murphy," and its diversity, which includes first and second-generation Irish Americans, and Portuguese, Dominican and Puerto Rican immigrants, among others. "I want [the insurgents] to know who we are," Manning said. "I want them to know when they see that shamrock, that they're in for a fight."

The stars are visible, and the Milky Way lives up to its name in the dark of the desert where the team sits hidden. With their night-vision devices, the team commands the terrain around them, insofar as they can probably see better than anyone else. Still, Halloran had said in his mission briefing that some night-vision devices came up missing in the sector, so the team keeps low. They speak only when necessary, and only in whispers. Around them however, Iraq is talking in a dissonant choir of human and bestial voices. Along with the stars, the lights of nearby towns can be seen, and the sound of barking dogs and human voices coming from them make it seem like the team is on the fringe of an American suburb, not lying in the dust of the Iraqi desert, watching for terrorists. But the team is attuned to other sounds around them, like the occasional gunshot. When it happens they speculate among themselves, making educated guesses as to its origin and the weapon used. Then they radio this estimate to their headquarters.

The unit patrols near key areas Manning called "centers of gravity," - large population centers which insurgents use to set up ambushes, and IED and VBIED attacks. Samarra and Bayji are centers of gravity, Manning said, and LRS-D's surveillance operations are part of the effort to disrupt insurgent activities. "We've set up [observation posts] 200 meters from a village, and they don't even know we're there," Manning said. But these centers of gravity have people and livestock, so this means LRS-D Soldiers have learned to "accept some compromise" said Manning. Dogs have actually walked up to teams during missions, he added. "The terrain is not conducive to dismounted operations," Halloran said. "There are very few places to hide. The darkness is our ally." Halloran, who is from Stonington, Ct., later laughed when asked about the barking they seem to encounter every mission. "Spy or neuter your pets," he joked. Some unit members are more comfortable doing dismounted operations, Finn said. "You're not going to get hit with an IED out in the desert," he said. "With such a small team, you have the leeway to do what you have to do."

There's traffic on the road, and it makes the team anxious and disappointed by turns. Silently, patiently, they track the occasional civilian vehicle coming down the road. When a civilian pick-up truck drones by without stopping, Finn curses softly. "Damn it," he whispers. "I'd like to stop the guy from blowing up Americans." The 'guy' Finn is referring to is an insurgent unit members call the 'the landmine guy'. "I thought it might have been the landmine guy," Finn said later about the pick-up truck. "It's frustrating sometimes. He's been putting in landmines since we've been [at FOB Summerall]." "Landmine guy' is generic term Halloran explained. "It could be five or six people," he said. Team members go out wanting to find insurgents, said Voccio – "to destroy the enemy," he said. "That's why we're out there." "You want tangible evidence you made a difference," said Halloran. Soon, another nerve-racking, louder presence rumbles by – a Coalition Forces Convoy Logistic Patrol, or CLP. The trucks drown out the dogs and noise from towns, and their lights make the team hunker down even more behind the ridge. Soon after the team is buzzed by the Apache attack helicopters that are orbiting the convoy. Though the team is working with other units, elements from outside the area of operations come through, usually in convoys. The team knows the danger of friendly fire is very real. "Pretty dangerous," whispers Voccio. "If they spot us, they'll shine lights and lasers at us." But the team's headquarters knows where they are, and they've let other friendly forces know. Even so, Halloran can radio the helicopters or convoys if he thinks there is a problem, and make sure they know the team is there, and that they're friendly forces as well.



HUNTING INSURGENTS (continued)

Manning tempered talk of his unit's success with a sober appraisal of the enemy and lessons they've learned. "All the stupid [insurgents] are dead," Manning said. "The rest are cunning opponents. Some of them are very good at what they do." Better coordination is needed in the terrain-denial battle on main-supply routes (MSRs), Manning said. "Everyone has to own a piece of the MSR fight," he said. Soldiers are the best source of information he added. "The best intel we get, that drives operations, is from the Soldier on the ground," he said. "You have to talk to people. Use your intel to create sources of information." It's after 1 a.m. when the team picks up and heads back to base. Inside the wire they're greeted by a chow truck making the rounds of the guard posts. The team members accept some ice-cream bars and eat them as they stow their equipment and climb aboard their humvee. The next stop is the task force intel section, where they'll bluntly report that they saw nothing. The team will go out again tomorrow. The Soldiers are blunt about the situation as well. Halloran and Voccio said the insurgents they face are being paid. "The money is in IEDs," Voccio said. "That, and they hate us."



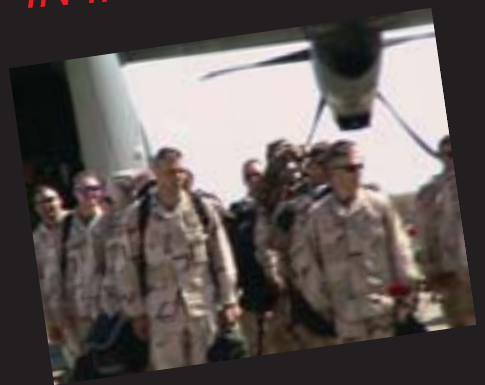
Taking The Good With the Bad

I'll be the first to admit that after weeks of reading nothing but intelligence reports on insurgents that had vowed to turn the referendum into a bloodbath, we rolled out the gate this morning expecting World War III. The whole team was pretty wound-up, expecting to be blown up at any minute. Mouths were dry, and knuckles were white around weapon grips. And then a funny thing happened. The moment we came near the first polling station, our "combat patrol" turned into a parade. The city was completely closed off to non-official vehicular traffic for the referendum, and most businesses were closed for the day. The weather was beautiful: clear and relatively cool. The streets filled with families in their finest clothes, and children playing soccer in the streets. The moment the children caught sight of us, pandemonium broke loose as they chased after us yelling "hey mister!" and "America good!" One clever little fellow, all of 8 years old, even hollered "Whassup!" Some people walked the streets caped in Iraqi or Kurdish flags, while children waved miniature versions of the flags along with printed copies of the constitution that were as big as their young bodies, and that they almost certainly couldn't read yet. While the adults were less demonstrative than the children, every few feet another man or woman fresh from voting would hold up an ink stained index finger, and then transition to a "thumbs up," with a smile and obvious pride. This was the pattern that was to be repeated throughout the city this morning. We drove through the streets feeling like visiting royalty, even in some neighborhoods in which friendliness toward Americans is far from customary. We stopped to let our Iraqi interpreters cast their ballots, but we could not get closer than a block from the actual polling site due to the immense crowds of happy voters. My buddy and I hopped down to escort the interpreters, locally called "terps" to the school, with its makeshift voting booths. We walked through the crowds followed by no less than 50 children, who took turns mustering the courage to run up and shake our hands or flash a "thumbs up." At the polling site, a portly election official patted down male voters for weapons. Apologetically, he informed us that we could not bring our weapons inside the polling station. "Iraqi law," he said. We found this both amusing and immensely heartening. We told him that we would wait outside while our 'terps voted. "But you're not going to vote?" he asked disappointedly. "No," we replied, "that's just for Iraqis." The official, who obviously had a looser grasp on eligibility requirements than weapons policy, responded "but we are brothers!" Obviously, there are many parts of this country in which public sentiment is very different. Even here, many days we all make do with the hopes that our work and sacrifices will help the people of the country. And of course, the people in our intelligence reports ARE out there in the city, even if they often fail to bring about the carnage and destruction that is their aim. But on this "distinguished" day, as one of our 'terps called it, my team saw a whole lot of people who seemed genuinely proud to be Iraqi, and excited to have a chance to be heard. I can think of a few people who were pretty proud to be Americans, too.

By: James N. Williams, MAJ, MP Force Integration Readiness Officer., TAGRI-J3/MRO



**RHODE ISLAND "REDLEGS" RETURN HOME ,
AFTER
A YEAR TOUR OF DUTY IN IRAQ**



On Saturday, Aug. 27, one year and 14 days after they departed Fort Dix for Baghdad, soldiers of the Rhode Island National Guard 103rd Field Artillery Brigade, arrived back home in Quonset, Rhode Island.

Photographs BY: Sgt J Cervone



A HEARTY WELCOME
HOME TO OUR
HEROES



Photographs By: Sgt J Cervone

Diversity Brings Understanding

It's called "Leapfest" and military people who jump out of perfectly good airplanes - or helicopters - know about Rhode Island. They know where the best action is year in and year out. Representatives from 11 countries participated in this year's 23rd Annual Rhode Island Army National Guard's International Parachute Competition. Leapfest is the short name for the International Military Parachute Competition which is the only event like it in the world and is put on every August by the Rhode Island Army National Guard. Leapfest turned 23 this year, and word has certainly gotten around among the international airborne brotherhood that West Kingston, R.I. is the place to be. This year, representatives from the Hellenic Airborne Reserve Union participated in the event. They were led by LTG (ret) Konstantinos Trahanatzis. Lieutenant General Trahanatzis is a highly decorated officer who has served in both the Hellenic Special Forces and the Hellenic Rangers. During the Cyprus War, he led Greek Special Forces units into battle. There were eighteen paratroopers from Greece, including one female soldier, MSGT Maria Tsaeri, among the over two hundred and twelve individuals that participated in the event. This contingent of Greek soldiers paid for their own flights and lodging, receiving no military pay. As representatives of their nation they exhibited professionalism and a keen desire to understand the cultures of the other nations involved in the event. Their enthusiasm and their ability to interact with troopers from other nations will probably end in lasting friendships that go well beyond diverse cultures and nationalistic borders. "This is what we hoped this would grow to. We wanted to foster these relations with the international teams," said Major General Reginald Centracchio, who has hosted Leapfest, as Adjutant General, since 1996. The rules are fairly simple for the single-day event that is open to military qualified parachutists. Each four-member team jumps three times from 1,500 feet with static lines that pull the chutes open. The parachutists land as close as they can to a large orange X in the middle of a manicured, 218-acre drop zone on a farm where turf for golf courses is grown. They are timed from the moment they touch the ground until they touch the X - while dragging their chutes. The individuals and teams with the lowest total times win. The international team members are pinned with United States parachutist wings. That courtesy is common within the international airborne culture. The bonding that the paratroopers from the different lands experience during the week or two they are together in Rhode Island is considered as important as the competition. The big thing is the camaraderie. The Rhode Island hospitality includes a trip to nearby Boston and Newport and the chance to visit nearby shops and participate in local events.

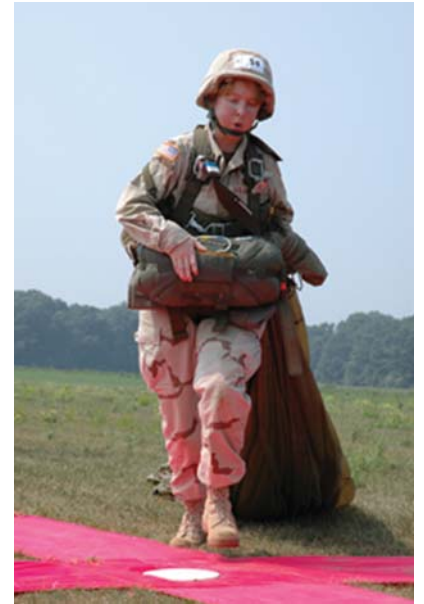
Sgt John Cervone



ALL WOMEN JUMP TEAM

Members of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) participated in an airborne event in Rhode Island on Aug. 13, 2005, a week after being released from more than a year of active duty. Still wearing desert camouflage uniforms, three teams competed in the 23rd annual Leapfest hosted by the 56th Troop Command of the Rhode Island Army National Guard. Parachutists from 16 countries converged on the University of Rhode Island campus to compete in the largest static line parachute competition in the world. The competition is a timed event in which the parachutists have to make their decent, aiming for a target. The clock starts when their feet hit the ground. The competitors land, collect their parachute and run to touch the target, stopping the clock. Each team member's time is added to compile a team time. The Leapfest competition was initiated by Rhode Island Army National Guard members of the 19th Special Forces Group and has evolved into an international parachute festival. The 450th CA troops, just back from Afghanistan, returned to their civilian status following their Aug. 5th release. Yet they volunteered to leave their families, again, to don their recently packed uniforms and jump out of a helicopter. Soldiers disrupted their lives this time out of respect for each other and because their commander, Lt Col. Christopher F. Carney, asked them to participate in the unique event. Carney said he was proud of all of his soldiers, regardless of how they placed individually or as teams in the competition, that they earned his respect performing their missions in a combat environment. "We have a really good unit," he said.

"The members care about each other and the mission we do. When we got into situations, if you could look left and then right and if you saw other members of the 450th, you knew you'd be all right." The 450th CA made their mark on the 23rd international parachuting contest by ranking as the top United States entry. The team from A Company has won bragging rights among members of the U.S. airborne community for taking third place in the overall competition, behind the Uruguay and El Salvador teams which finished first and second respectively. Another team of 450th jumpers will go into the record books of the Leapfest competition as the first all-female team to compete in the event. The five-member team, competing in their faded DCUs, is named Carney's Angles in honor of their commander. The team members cited a variety of reasons, all related to the strong bonds developed during deployments, as the motivating factor in participating in this event. The 450th CA has been deployed twice to Afghanistan and once to Bosnia within the past five years. Many of the 450th soldiers present at Leapfest are veterans of multiple deployments. Maj. David Johnson, clutching his team's plaque, said that Leapfest was not an additional duty for the soldiers of the 450th, but a reward for their dedication and service. Capt. Johanna Knoch, a CA team leader, said the unit members were released from active duty just a few days prior to the event, giving the teams of the 450th little time to practice for the competition. The offer to attend Leapfest came while the soldiers were performing their requalifying jumps as part of their demobilization process at Fort Bragg. "It sounded like a good idea," Knoch said. "We didn't set any records, but we did have fun. We came here for the experience. Most of us have never competed in an event like this." Sgt. Jill Murphy said she participated in Leapfest as a team member for the 20th Engineering Brigade while on active duty at Fort Bragg. "I never thought I'd get the chance to do it again," Murphy said. "I put off my vacation to Ireland to participate on this team." Murphy said she and Knoch both had to run a distance to the target because their descents were slowed by the hot and humid weather. "We had a hard time of it because we're light," Murphy said. "In my case, it wasn't a spring to the X, it was a marathon." Murphy, who is returning to active duty and who will soon be commissioned as a lieutenant in the United States Army Medical Corps as a nurse, bears the mark of her Afghanistan experience on her left forearm, a large tattoo with the legend "Always Hope." "We were fired upon several times," she said. "It became so bad that we couldn't move without an infantry escort. During one mission, we were ambushed by a numerically superior force. We should have all been killed, but they made tactical errors. Our escorts took a KIA (killed in action) and several WIA (wounded in action) before they drove off the hostiles. I treated a soldier who had taken the rod from a RPG (rocket propelled grenade) that came through the back of his up-armored Humvee and hit his upper arm, cutting it off except for some triceps tissue. This kid was so brave. We were able to save his life, but he lost his arm. This is the tattoo he had," she said displaying her arm with the fresh ink work, "so we agreed that I would have his tattoo. It was a life changing event." Sgt. Monica Peck said her decision to compete was based the opportunity to spend time in a different setting with her teammates and fellow soldiers as they prepare to resume their civilian lives. "A lot of us served together, so primarily I'm bonding with my team," she said. "I really like these people." Staff Sgt. Julie Rosado, a jumpmaster, said she joined the competition because of her addiction to parachuting. "I love jumping, supporting events like this," Rosado said. "I never dreamed that I'd be a part of something as exciting as this competition. I'm glad to be a member of a unit that does jump." Staff Sgt. Jennifer Brooks said that she has anticipated jumping in Leapfest since she heard about the competition in 1998. "I just never had the opportunity," Brooks said. "It was the commander's idea to make three teams. We have so much respect for him that people put off vacations to come here. United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command was also represented by teams from the 416th Civil Affairs (CA) Battalion: 360th CA Brigade (Headquarters Company); 345th Psychological Operations Company (Airborne); and the 346th Psychological Operations Company (Tactical).



Story by Sgt. 1st Class Dan Moriarty, 65th Public Affairs Operations Center

2005 Was A Busy Year for The Rhode Island National Guard



Photographs By Sgt J Cervone



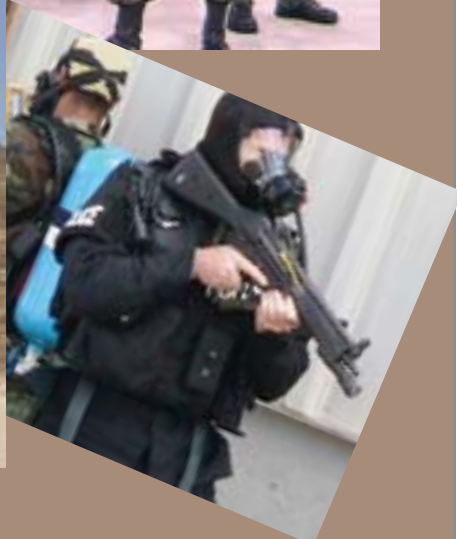
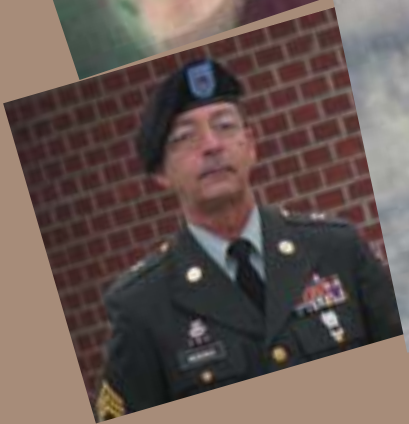
**RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL
GUARDSMEN
TRAIN FOR WAR**



Photographs By - Sgt J Cervone



Looking Back At 2005



All Photographs By: Sgt J Cervone



2005 REVISITED



All Photographs By Sgt John Cervone

AIR GUARD NEWS



The Tuskegee Airmen know about war. They battled the Nazis abroad and racism at home. Now they've made their way back to the front lines to show their support for Airmen fighting

the war on terror. Five members arrived at Balad, on Oct. 25 to interact with military members, sharing their stories and offering words of encouragement. "We're here to lend support to the troops," said retired Tuskegee pilot Lt. Col. Bob Ashby. "It's a rare opportunity for us to show them that their hometown, their home state supports them — and that their fellow Tuskegee Airmen wish them well." Airman 1st Class Charles Hernandez said he's glad the famous Airmen made the visit. They've helped give him a better understanding of his mission. "It gave me a newer perspective on what we're doing here; not just at Balad, but as an Airman in today's air force," said Airman Hernandez an electrical power production troop with the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron. "They fought a battle both overseas and one in the states because they were black," the Airman said. "Yet they did what they needed to do for the greatness of our country and our freedom." Airman Hernandez said, "They reminded me that we're here for a good reason and there are people back home who believe in what we're doing — and believe in our cause. The Tuskegee Airmen are heroes and patriots and I was honored to sit and eat with them." The Tuskegee Airmen formed in 1941 when the Army Air Force began a program to train black Americans as military pilots at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. "It was an experimental program and we were expected to fail. But our primary objective was to finish the program and prove them wrong," said Colonel Ashby, an original Tuskegee Airman. Lt. Col. Lee Archer, also an original Tuskegee Airman — and the only documented African-American ace — said the men wanted to do more than that. "All we wanted was to fly for our service," he said. "We wanted to do it for our country." Colonels Archer and Ashby and many others did just that, and so was born the legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen. It continues to thrive in today's Air Force, especially at the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, home of the Tuskegee Airmen's alma mater, the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group. "The Tuskegee Airmen paved the way for future generations," said Col. Dick Toliver. He is a second generation Airman who joined the Air Force and the Tuskegee Airmen after the Korean War. "The legacy is right here, but it doesn't look like the original group. It's a collection of people of color and different nationalities. It's what it's always been, a reflection of America." Just by being in the military, Airmen are part of the legacy, he said. And they have a responsibility to live up to. "



The challenge is to continue to improve because when you become complacent it opens the door to regress," Colonel Toliver said. "Don't assume racism is dead and the challenges are gone. Racism is about more than color so the challenge is to improve relations and build upon what's already been done." During their Balad visit, the Tuskegee Airmen will see today's Airmen are following in the footsteps that have been left for them, wing commander Brig. Gen. Frank Gorenc said. "(The Tuskegee Airmen's) work, their accomplishments, their collective experiences laid the very foundation of our wing," he said. "They should be proud of what they see because the Tuskegee Airmen of today are writing another chapter in the already distinguished history. "For the Tuskegee Airmen," the general said, "the legacy continues in the air and on the ground."



“I Am My Brother’s Keeper”

SSgt Stephen D’Amicco

143rd Aerial Port Squadron

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast region, countless people were uprooted from their homes and their lives were plunged into turmoil. The call to duty arose and the 143rd Aerial Port squadron responded. Two teams, lead by Major Peter Piteira, OIC and SMSgt Robert Arrico and SMSgt Mark Dore, NCOICs, deployed to the Combat Readiness Training Center at Gulfport, Mississippi. The first team arrived in Gulfport on the 20th of September; the second team arrived on Oct 4th and remained until October 19th. The Aerial Port’s team was tasked with setting up a mobile air terminal in support of all air relief efforts being conducted in the Mississippi/Louisiana Area of Operations. Despite the searing heat, the thick humidity and the evident devastation that occurred in the area, the Aerial Port Squadron worked diligently in order to complete their mission. This mission involved the movement of 260 tons of inbound and outbound cargo, including food, water, equipment and troops designated for relief assistance throughout the Gulf Coast region. Over 2000 passengers were moved in and out of the region as well. The men and women of the Aerial Port squadron had to be flexible and adaptable, as numerous types of aircraft, including those from the Air Force, Army and Navy needed to be uploaded and downloaded. The squadron members gained valuable training as they routinely worked on C-130s, C-5c, B717s, C-9s, KC-135s and various other aircraft from the sister services as well as civilian relief agencies. The flexible nature of the Air Transportation career field held the Rhode Islanders in good stead during their deployment as many accolades were received back in Rhode Island praising their performance. In fact, Col Lawrence Gallogly, Commander 143 Air Wing, told the group that he had “never received so many accolades for one group in his tenure with the 143 AW.” Nature’s wrath struck again while the 143rd was deployed in the area. Hurricane Rita landed a decisive blow in Florida, adding further distress to an area already suffering for more than a month. This increased the workload that the team had to handle and delayed their anticipated return from the emergency area. Through it all, the Aerial Porters rose above every challenged and lived up to their motto “Ready to move the world.” When asked to comment on the hard work of his team, SMSgt Arrico stated “The 143rd team took on an abundance of hard work when Hurricane Rita struck. For example, on the day after Rita arrived, the team loaded 6 C-130’s with water to be sent to Texas and moved out numerous aircraft full of Army troops heading home after spending a month in New Orleans working hurricane relief. The dedication of the men and women of the 143rd Aerial Port squadron is exemplary and I would work with these people anywhere in the world.” All members of the relief team were recognized for their extraordinary efforts at the November Commander’s Call were they were all awarded Air Force Achievement Medals for their efforts. Squadron Commander Lt Col Denis Riel noted proudly that “this unit continues to excel in the face of real world contingencies which have taxed our capabilities to the brink. You live out the real meaning of “citizen-soldier” every day by answering the call in both our state disaster relief role and our response to the global war on terrorism. You make us all proud.”



Rhode Island National Guard History

The 103rd Field Artillery in France

Battery B of the 103rd Field Artillery began the war as part of Battery A of the Rhode Island National Guard Artillery. They were called into Federal service on July 25, 1917 and incorporated with other New England guard units into the 26th Division of the American Expeditionary Force. Trained to fire 155mm field pieces under their first commander, Capt. Gerald T. Hanley, the unit arrived in France two months later. They experienced additional training in France and were eventually deployed in a combat sector near Toul, where their weapons temporarily included some obsolete 95mm cannons. In early July 1918, the 26th division was deployed to the area around Belleau Wood, relieving the 2nd AEF division. On July 18th French and American forces would launch the first of a series of great offensive operations to roll back the German Army on the Western Front. This action would be known as the Second Battle of the Marne. On July 1, 1918 the men of Battery B would begin an ordeal that would change many of their lives forever. On July 2, late at night, they detrained at Ligny, and immediately started out on a forced march to the front. They arrived at their final destination, the town of Jouarre, at two o'clock the next afternoon. Here, they prepared to spend the night. Horse lines were stretched and pup tents pitched as they waited for their meal. The meal, however, was hardly over when orders came to prepare to move. And so, they moved out at dusk. Early the next morning they reached Citry. Pup tents were again pitched and horse lines stretched in a meadow in front of a rather pretentious looking Chateau. Many hoped that they would be staying here for awhile but they were sadly disappointed. That evening the Regimental band "entertained" the Battery with a concert. When the entertainment ended the "Redlegs" sought sleep, but immediately they were called to attention by the shrill sounds of blowing whistles. The orders had come down to "Harness and hitch and prepare to move!" Their guns had been parked in a lane, completely screened from the eyes of enemy aviators by large trees. The night itself was pitch black, and it seemed as if the shadow of the trees intensified this darkness. To expedite things a few lanterns were lit, but the Germans began shelling the area and they were quickly extinguished while men raced for the reserve trenches and dugouts. Many just tumbled in. Finally they moved out again and on the morning of the fifth found themselves back in Jouarre. It was beginning to look as if no one could make up their mind as to where the 103rd would stand and fight.

The next move, and the real beginning of the horror that would follow, began the following evening. The gun crews left Jouarre and followed the guns and caissons to Champigny on the Paris-Metz highway. There the guns were run into position, and made ready for action, on the edge of the road. A skeleton gun crew was left on duty while the rest of the troops found quarters in a large farm house across from the fields. The following day, the Battery Field Train, joined the firing Battery. The wagons and carts were brought, up one at a time, so as to conceal the size of the troop movements from the Germans. The same evening the second platoon moved into position, in the woods near Fèrme d'Issinge, opposite Bois de Belleau, relieving one platoon of a Battery of the 17th Field Artillery, Second Division. The next day, July 8th, the first platoon joined up with the second, completing the relief of the Battery of the 17th. At the same time the echelon was divided. The horses of the gun sections were always close to the pieces, but the remainder of the echelon and most of the field train, moved back to Jouarre, and after this just kept close enough to keep supplies moving forward.

The move to Fèrme d'Issinge was the final one for a number of days. Life there was monotonous. Fire and dig trenches, dig trenches and fire; the kind of work that makes soldiers grumble but keeps them alert and moving around. On the morning of the 14th the first piece moved into position in front of Fèrme Paris. At this point things began to get livelier. The 26th Artillery Brigade joined with a French brigade in reducing a patch of woods behind the German lines in which large forces of reserves had been concentrated. The seventy-fives had thrown a box barrage around the woods while the 103rd's one fifty fives demolished the target.

By: Sgt J Cervone

Photographs donated by Mr. Larry Smith - Grandson of original member of the 103rd who served in Mexico and France



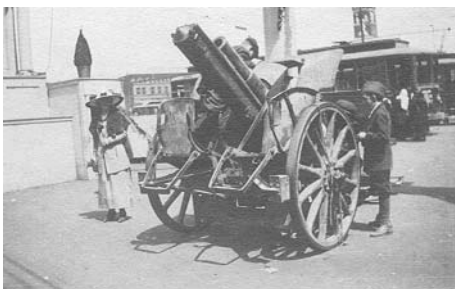
History - Continued

On the afternoon of the 18th, it became evident that the 26th was going to be involved in a great battle. Circumstances were falling into place that could not be ignored, even by the most optimistic soldiers in the division. Great supplies of ammunition were being brought up. That evening the second, third and fourth artillery pieces moved into position alongside the first. Darkness brought a thunder storm complete with lightning. As the thunder and lightning rumbled and flashed a terrible downpour of rain began to fall from the sky. All "Redlegs" were ordered to their posts. For hours they remained alert and on duty, greasing shells and trying to anticipate what would happen next. At one-thirty-five the order came to fire, and just as their guns opened up, the whole front leaped into action. Flares, gun flashes, streaks of lightning, the rumble of thunder, the rat-a-tat of machine guns, the snap of the seventy-fives, the crash of the big guns, all of this firepower combined to make it a night these men would not soon forget. Naturally, very few of them had been told or even realized how great a mission had been assigned to them. It was later discovered that the French had assigned the 26th the most important and difficult position of the great counter-offensive. All through that day and night, and then again, through the next day, they fired constantly, only taking time out occasionally to cool and swab their guns. The German's feeble attempt to respond to their fire had quickly been quieted. As the range of the artillery was lengthened, the 26th Division Infantry entered Torcy, after the fiercest kind of fighting. At the end of the second day, the artillerymen began to realize what a change was taking place on the front. Their guns had a range of thirteen miles. They had started immediately in back of the front line trenches. Now they were firing at their maximum range and could not reach the Germans. The "Hun" was on the run. They had been driven out of their trenches and dugouts and now the fighting had been reduced to open warfare.

On the morning of the twenty-second, the Battery moved into Sorcerie Woods, but only for a short while. That night they moved into position near Beceau, which because of its general appearance at this time, they called "the slaughter house." Here they exchanged fire with a German battery, and were very fortunate to escape without losses. They occupied this position for almost two days, or until the afternoon of the twenty-fourth, when they moved into position east of Epieds. This was their first opportunity to see the damage that had been done by their own guns. Torcy, the first town through which they passed, was absolutely demolished. Everything was level with the ground. It was very apparent that American Infantry as well as the Germans had suffered heavily.

Cercy and Belleau were the same as Torcy. That night they marched to a position northeast of Courpoil. The guns were hastily camouflaged and the horses put under cover. This was to be the first anniversary of the day they had been mustered into federal service. At Courpoil, a spare gun crew was formed, in order to relieve the other gun crews and give them a rest. They were also implemented to carry ammunition, dig, and do all the other odd jobs. Very little enemy activity was experienced in this area. The Germans dropped a few shells over, some which landed pretty close, but the Americans sent some back that probably landed closer. That night the second platoon moved forward again and took up another position about two kilometers away. Intermittent firing followed for the rest of the night and all the next day. On the night of the 27th they moved again and the entire Battery took up a position in an apple orchard northeast of Beauvardes. Action started immediately.

Up till now the gun crews had been lucky. A few men had been wounded and a number of horses lost. But unfortunately for the Americans, on the 28th, a battery which the Germans had left behind to cover their retreat, found the exact range of their Battery, and began pouring deadly fire down on the American positions. A number of the "Red legs" were wounded, some of them severely, and seven horses were killed. German aviators also helped to make things lively for them, and for the first time in their experience the artillerymen found a use for the rifle. They remained in position there until August 2nd. Their Infantry meanwhile, had been relieved by the 28th Division Doughboys, only to have to come back into the lines again. The 42nd Division Doughboys now relieved the 26th Infantry, but the Twenty-Sixth Artillery followed along in support. On August 2nd they were sent forward to a new position near Villiers-sur-Fere, on the banks of the Ourcq. They crossed the river and entered the town of Sergy where there was plenty of evidence on hand as to how fierce the fighting had been.



By: Sgt J Cervone

*The Second World War took place not so much because no one won the First, but because the Versailles Treaty did not acknowledge this truth.
Historian Paul Johnson, 1972*



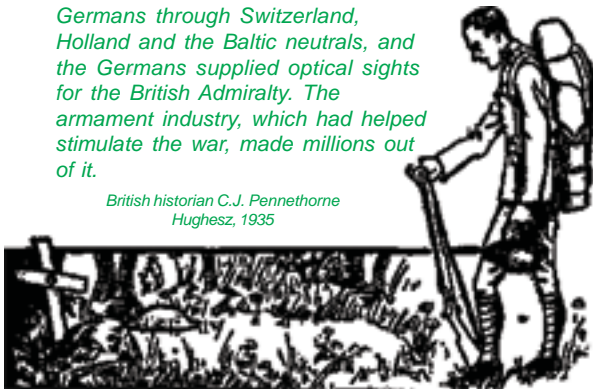
History - Continued

The next day, August 3rd, they made their final move forward, through the town of Sergy to a position near Chery Chartreuse. They had advanced farther against the enemy than any other division and were as proud of this as they were of the evidence of the result of their firing. Anyone who thought the artillery at all unessential, needed only to follow up the drive, before the damage was camouflaged by the engineers, to find out their mistake. On August 5th they were relieved by the 4th Division and started back that evening. The next morning they reached Beauvarden. Here they met the rear echelon. One of the earliest arriving and most active of the AEF divisions, the 26th New Englanders would see subsequent heavy action at both St. Mihiel and north of Verdun in the Meuse Argonne Offensive.

By: Sgt J. Cervone

All through the war the great armament firms were supplied from the enemy countries. The French and the British sold war materials to the Germans through Switzerland, Holland and the Baltic neutrals, and the Germans supplied optical sights for the British Admiralty. The armament industry, which had helped stimulate the war, made millions out of it.

*British historian C.J. Pennethorne
Hughes, 1935*



Joint Force Headquarters Staff Call At Gettysburg Battlefield

Staff rides represent a unique and persuasive method of conveying the lessons of the past to the present-day Army leadership for current application. Properly conducted, these exercises bring to life, on the very terrain where historic encounters took place, examples, applicable today as in the past, of leadership, tactics and strategy, communications, use of terrain, and, above all, the psychology of men in battle. This historical study, particularly with personal reconnaissance, offers valuable opportunities to develop professional leadership and the capacity for effective use of combined arms on the air-land battlefield. Gettysburg is a wonderful example of this type of historical study. Members of the Rhode Island National Guards - Joint Forces Officer Corps, conducted such an exercise this past September. By incorporating their monthly Staff Call with a Staff Ride to Gettysburg, they were able to view and discuss one of the most dynamic battles that occurred during the American Civil War. LTC Michael McNamara, Public Affairs Officer for the Rhode Island National Guard, gave an in-depth after action report of the entire battle. He also touched on the many historic figures that helped to bring about victory for the Union Army. He described the resolution, initiative, and courage of Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain of the 20th Maine and reflected on the valuable principles for study by today's leaders. Lt. Colonel McNamara also explained that these leadership principles transcend technological advances and have no historical bounds, and are not bound by parameters of geography and time. Lt. Colonel McNamara went on to state that many of the elements that he discussed are still important elements in battle today. He explained how leadership and the psychology of troops in combat is timeless, and that we can always learn from the past and convey those lessons into modern warfare. The overall intrinsic rewards that can be acquired from this type of properly conducted Staff Ride will be that the participants will walk away with an enhanced understanding of those key elements and of the essential fact that battles are not systematic, logical undertakings but rather activities of men and women with all their frailties and strengths. *BY: Sgt J Cervone*

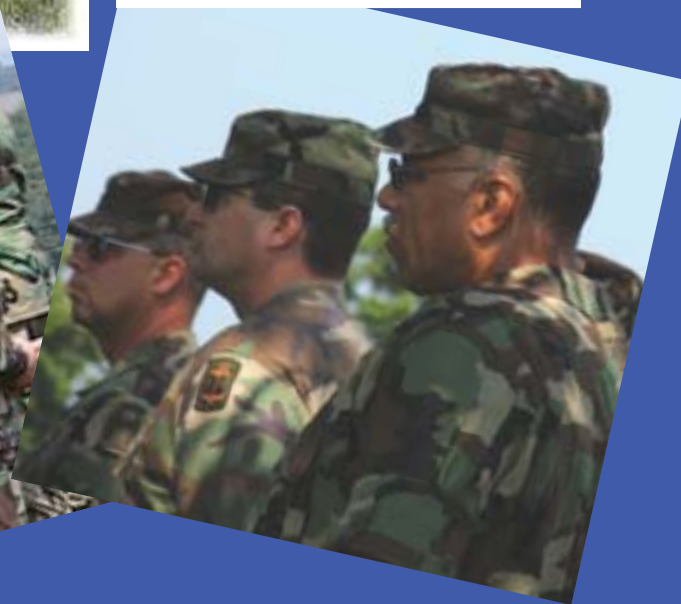
Major General Daniel E. Sickles

On the evening of July 2, 1863, while riding horseback during the second day of fighting at Gettysburg, 3rd Army Corps commander, Major General Daniel E. Sickles, had his right leg shattered by a solid 12 pound cannonball. He quieted his horse, dismounted, and was removed to a sheltered area where his leg was amputated just above the knee by Surgeon Thomas Sim, U.S. Volunteers. A short time later, the Army Medical Museum received the amputated leg in a box bearing a visiting card which read: "With the compliments of Major General D.E.S." For many years on the anniversary of the amputation, Sickles would visit the Museum to view his leg.

STAFF CALL AT GETTYSBURG PENNSYLVANIA



*General, I have no
division..."*
Major General George
Edward Pickett to General
Lee at Gettysburg
July 3, 1863



Garden of Heroes

The "Garden of Heroes" is definitely not for garden-variety heroes . It honors all native Rhode Islanders, or those with significant connections to the state, who have lost their lives in the global war on terrorism. It is located on the southwest lawn of the Statehouse and featuring a granite memorial marker, it has taken root in the former rose garden that was planted for the Steven Spielberg movie, "Amistad." The garden was dedicated at a 1 p.m. ceremony on Oct. 23, 2005. Construction work began July 12 with removal of the rose garden, but as with any major project, it's the organizing that goes on behind the scenes that makes it all possible. That started with lining up expert help. "Everybody we called to ask on this," said Lt. Governor, Charles Fogarty, "could not do enough." The gray granite marker carved by New England Stone features an insert, set at an upward-slanting 45-degree angle, to accommodate the engraved names.



Rhode Island Army National Guard Graduates Four from War College

In separate ceremonies this past summer at Carlisle Barracks, PA and the Naval War College in Newport, RI, four officers from the Army Guard were presented with diplomas. The graduates were COL David Russell, LTC Martin Lafferty, LTC David Medeiros, and LTC Patricia Ryan. The War College prepares selected military, civilian, and international leaders for strategic responsibilities. It does so by studying the unique role of military power as part of a unified, joint, or combined force in support of the national military strategy. Congratulations to all of them.

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America support Local Troops.

Dear Col. Behm,
Subject: Phone Cards

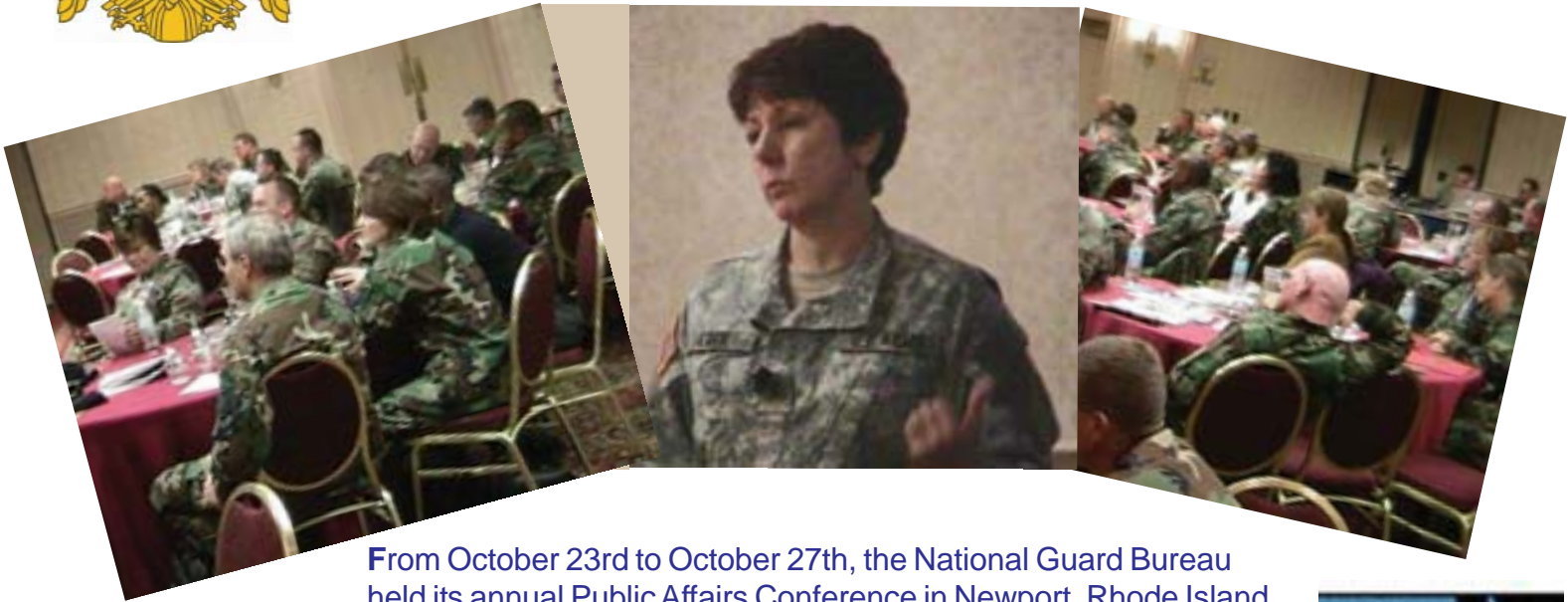
It was a pleasure to meet with you, Jennifer and Gen. Enright yesterday, and on behalf of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in Rhode Island, I am glad we were able to show some tangible support for our troops being deployed to the Middle East. Good luck to all of you and thank you for your commitment to the ideals of our country.

Sincerely,
Elizbeth Connelly President

On 28 September, BG John Enright, and members of his staff, visited the new Coast Cutter USCGC Tiger Shark, stationed at Goat Island in Newport. The visit was designed to further joint service understanding and help define cooperation within Rhode Island's Joint Forces Headquarters. The Tiger Shark is an 87 foot Marine Protector Class Patrol boat and was built in Louisiana at a cost of \$4 million. She was commissioned into service in Newport on 16 July 2005. The cutter is assigned to Coast Guard Group Woods Hole, MA, and is responsible for the coastline from Duxbury, MA to the Rhode Island/Connecticut border. She is a multi-mission patrol boat that is particularly well suited for search and rescue, law enforcement, homeland security and marine environmental protection missions

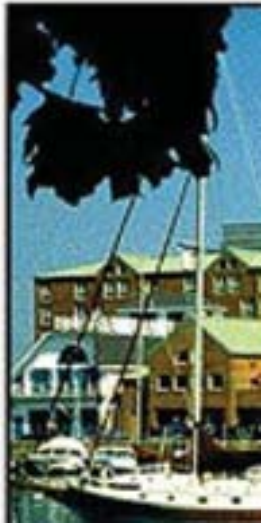


PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE HELD IN NEWPORT RHODE ISLAND



From October 23rd to October 27th, the National Guard Bureau held its annual Public Affairs Conference in Newport, Rhode Island. The conference was held at the Newport Marriott, and was attended by over 350 public affairs specialists from all 54 states and territories as well as from the commands in Washington, DC. On Monday, October 24, LTG H Steven Blum, Chief, NGB, spoke of the importance of working with the media and keeping the lines of communication open with them. He went on to explain that whenever possible the media should be included in operations, military or humanitarian. The conference itself is a learning experience for all who attend. The workshops are informative and user friendly. It is also a good time to put a face with a voice as they say and for public affairs folks to become more of a team.

By: Sgt J Cervone



“We are defending our homeland today in scheduled away games, to use a sports analogy, both in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

Lt. General H. Steven Blum



UNITED STATES ARMY WARRANT OFFICER CAREER CENTER

Warrant officers are highly specialized, single-track specialty officers who receive their authority from the Secretary of the Army upon their initial appointment. However, Title 10 USC authorizes the commissioning of warrant officers (WO1) upon promotion to chief warrant officer (CW2). These commissioned warrant officers are direct representatives of the president of the United States. They derive their authority from the same source as commissioned officers but remain specialists, in contrast to commissioned officers, who are generalists. Warrant officers can and do command detachments, units, activities, and vessels as well as lead, coach, train, and counsel subordinates. As leaders and technical experts, they provide valuable skills, guidance, and expertise to commanders and organizations in their particular field.

The Army Warrant Officer Corps is comprised of over 25,000 men and women of the active Army and reserve components. Warrant officers are technical experts that manage and maintain increasingly complex battlefield systems. They enhance the Army's ability to defend our national interests, and to fight and win our nations wars.

Candidates who successfully complete Warrant Officer Candidate School are appointed in the grade of Warrant Officer One. When promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Two, warrant officers are commissioned by the President and have the same legal status as their traditional commissioned officer counterparts. However, warrant officers remain single-specialty officers whose career track is oriented towards progressing within their career field rather than focusing on increased levels of command and staff duty positions.

There are five grades within the Army Warrant Officer Corps A person is initially appointed as a Warrant Officer (WO1), and progresses to Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) after 2 years. Competitive promotion to Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3), Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4), and Chief Warrant Officer Five (CW5) occur at approximately six year intervals for Aviation Warrant Officers and five year intervals for those in technical fields.

Warrant officers serve at all levels of the Army. Typically, junior warrant officers are assigned at the unit level, whereas senior warrant officers are assigned at higher levels such as Battalion, Brigade and Division, and also to positions on the Army Staff at the Pentagon. Warrant officers also serve with Department of Defense, Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other military services.

By: Sgt John Cervone



“The Quiet Professional”



A Warrant Officer Professional Development and Recruiting Day was held on 5 November 2005, at Camp Fogarty, East Greenwich, Rhode Island. It was attended by all Rhode Island National Guard Warrant Officers and any guardmembers interested in the program itself. The seminar was hosted by Command Chief Warrant Officer, CW5 George Wilkins. Mr. Wilkins briefed the audience on the state of the warrant officer corps, polices, changes, career development and benefits. He also introduced all WOC, Noncommissioned Officers, and potential Warrant Officers to Warrant Officer Culture, protocol and mentorship. Chief Wilkins stressed the positive relationship that has come into being, among all the components of the Army, in their attempt to ensure that the Warrant Officer Program will continue to be a viable part of the army. CW5 George Wilkins is the State Command Chief Warrant Officer. He is responsible to the Adjutant General for a variety of matters pertaining to the policies and actions affecting the Warrant Officer Corps, and he is also the key technical advisor to the TAG. He is the principle advisor, counselor and mentor for all other senior warrant officers. He is in effect the senior representative of the States Warrant Officer Corps just as the State Command Sgt. Major is the senior representative for the States Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.



Who can become a Warrant Officer in the Army National Guard? You can. If you are currently an E-5 or higher in the Army National Guard, a USAR soldier, a transitioning active component soldier, or a current or former Warrant Officer, you might just be the person we're looking for. There are also some basic requirements you must meet as determined by the Army National Guard. Applicants must:

Be between the ages of 18 and 46, Score 110 or above on the General Aptitude Area Test, Be a High School Graduate or pass the General Education Development test (GED), Be a U.S. citizen by birth or naturalization, Be able to successfully pass all events on the Army Physical Fitness Test, Meet certain mandatory technical qualifications for your specific MOS, Meet certain medical, security and licensing requirements (depending on your specific MOS).

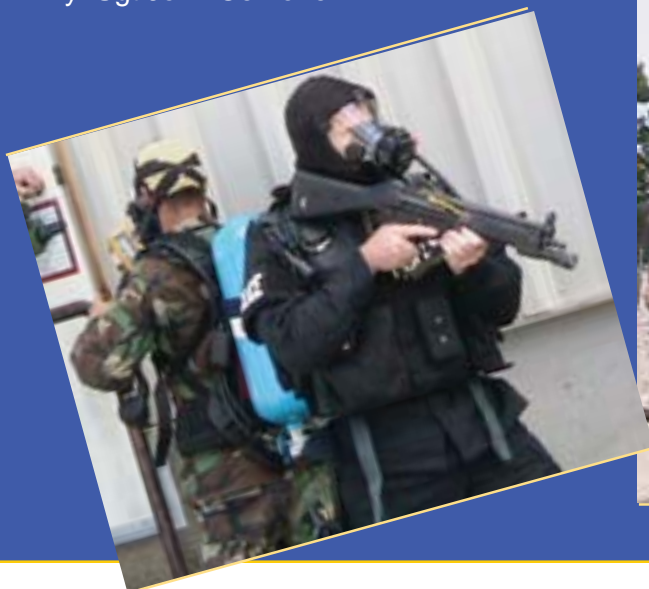
Article and Photographs by Sgt John Cervone



Training To Combat Terror At Home

One of the government's overall goals, in the war against domestic terrorism, is to provide first responders with as much capability as possible during the first critical minutes, hours, and days after an attack. The National Guard's WMD-CST teams are part of this initial response. The role of today's Civil Support teams is to deploy to provide early assessment and initial detection of WMD; provide technical advice to the Incident Commander and advise local and state response elements. The teams will always work in support of civilian agencies under the jurisdiction of the governor. Unless federalized, WMD-CST teams remain under the control of the governor of the host state. They are unique because of their federal-state relationship. The teams are federally resourced, trained, and evaluated and operate under federal doctrine. And yet their mission is performed primarily under command and control of state governors. First and foremost, these teams are state assets that fall under the command and control of the adjutants general of their respective states. Because training with a WMD-CST unit is extensive, specialized, and proceeds with intensity on a daily basis, a three-year commitment is required. Soldiers train year-round, in all weather conditions and possible environments (contaminated zones, crash sites, etc.). Soldiers and airmen from the 13th CST, stationed in Coventry, Rhode Island, are involved in this type of intensive training on a daily basis. Along with the Rhode Island Weapons of Mass Destruction Tactical Team, they conduct exercises on Deployment, Search and subsequent Apprehension of would be terrorist suspects. The RIWMDT Team is made up of police officers from five state organizations. They train together, along with members of the 13th CST Team. These law enforcement officers train on a part-time basis and this duty is just a part of their many duties and responsibilities. We, in Rhode Island, are very fortunate to have such dedicated and concerned individuals in our midst. These people train to protect us and are not afraid to put their lives on the line for their neighbors. What else could you ask of anyone?

By: Sgt John Cervone



THE 30TH ANNUAL MILITARY BALL

THE RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD HELD ITS 30TH ANNUAL MILITARY BALL ON NOVEMBER 11, 2005. THIS YEAR IT WAS DEDICATED TO THE EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE.

ESGR



OPERATION HOLIDAY CHEER

On Saturday November 5, 2005 a group of volunteers gathered together at the RI Armory to complete phase II of Operation Holiday Cheer. Phase I consisted of preparations as volunteers made and labeled 800 boxes. These volunteers were made up of the family and friends of the RI National Guard soldiers who are deployed. Joining them were members of the Patriot Battalion ROTC and workers from the post office. Their mission was to put together care packages that would be sent overseas to soldiers as a holiday gift. Each box was loaded with goodies ranging from shampoo and board games to candy and foot powder. Also present was General Enright, who packed boxes and took the time to write a personal note in them. The event was a success as all of the boxes were packed, weighed, and ready to be sent out in record time. Come December each soldier can look forward to a holiday package heading his or her way.

By: Cadet Rachel Williams



Deployment brings easy question, tough answer.

By Spc. Jennifer Fitts

I've been asked before what makes me stay in the Army through what will probably be, in its entirety, an almost three-year separation from my husband, and I can't seem to explain it.

Why am I in the Army? The simple answer might be "patriotism." My patriotism toward the Army is the topic of this commentary, but there's so much more to it than that.

Yes, I am a patriot. I love my country and I'm proud of her. I'm not proud of everything that she's done, but I am proud of her as a whole. I am proud of the ideals that my country stands for; proud of the people who, whatever background they come from, stand beside me and say "I'm an American."

I'm proud of the country that my great-grandparents risked their lives to come to, from Holland, from France, from Poland and from Russia. They saw a golden land, one where dreams grew wild in endless stretches of land. I still see that original promise that brought them here.

I see those very same dreams, though there are days when those dreams don't shine so brightly, and I wonder if the "American Dream" is a shadow that I've been told to chase with no hope of actually catching it. Then, the sun comes out again, and my dreams, so big that only a land as vast as America could hold them, shimmer in the sun like treasures scattered over mountains.

I love my country. I love her with a fierce pride and a passion that isn't always explainable to someone who hasn't experienced that love. I love my country enough to answer her call, to put my civilian life on hold to respond to the burden she asks me to pick up, regardless of whether or not I agree with why she's asking me. I love her enough to wear a uniform and to possibly give my life in her service. But there's more to it than that. Over the years, I've tried putting it in plain words, with various degrees of success.

I'm a patriot, yes, but it's more than a deep and abiding love of my country and a need to give back to her somehow that keeps me in the Army. It's not the pay; although for the first time in my adult life I am totally out of debt and living more than just barely above the poverty level. It's not the education benefits, since I earned them after my first enlistment. The GI Bill is a lovely thing, but it's not why I stay. It's not the medical care necessarily, since as a National Guard member, I don't get many medical bennies when I'm not activated. It's the people – the Soldiers. The good, the bad and the indifferent.

It's that human factor that reaches out, across backgrounds and educations and lives, and binds us together. No matter how fragile those bonds seem, they're still there and they're everlasting.


Get a group of people together and the Soldiers and veterans will congregate, usually trading "No kidding, there I was" stories, peppered with obscure acronyms and coarse language.

It's a uniquely shared set of experiences, shared by individuals who are, forever afterward, part of something bigger than themselves. It's something that honestly defies my attempts to catalogue, classify or quantify. It's almost impossible to truly dissect. I've been asked if I could find such fulfilling camaraderie in another field, and I probably could, as long as certain parameters were met. My alternative calling would have to be challenging, both physically and emotionally. I'd require that my other calling involve daily "somethings" that, with rare exception, leave me dirty and tired but still have me laughing at the end of the day.

I could probably find that dream job somewhere else, but I love Soldiers, like no one I've ever loved before. They are, in my mind, my family. I've been through so many things with other Soldiers. I've been hurt by other Soldiers and also held up by Soldiers when I thought I couldn't take any more.

I've fallen in love with a Soldier, someone who understands the why, the what, and the how of the Army, and I wouldn't trade that for anything. I've cried because of my love of the Army and I've experienced anguished heartbreak, enduring personal sacrifices that made me doubt my future in the military. I've laughed and cried and made friends who will be part of my life until the day I die.

So, yes, I am a patriot. But the men and women in uniform beside me show me why I'm proud of my country. My fellow Soldiers remind me day in and day out why it is that I love America and why I stay in the Army. For that, I thank them.



LEADERSHIP over ADVERSITY in COMBAT

The battle of the Ia Drang, in November of 1965, was one of the first battles in which U.S. troops and North Vietnamese troops fought a stand up battle. Usually, many of their encounters, before 1965, were of the hit and run kind, favored by the Viet Cong guerillas. The soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, did not face an army of so called “rag tag” guerillas. They fought a division of combat tested People’s Army of Viet Nam regulars. This is the story of the “Lost Second Platoon”. The Second’s platoon leader was Lt. Henry Herrick, who had been considered overly aggressive. Whatever his true shortcomings may have been, it was a known fact that his men did not have the faith in him that a good leader needs to succeed. General Harold Moore (Ret.), mentioned to me in an interview, that he had learned after the battle, that each and every one of the men in Lt. Herrick’s platoon had volunteered to fly as door gunners on the battalion’s choppers. Though door gunners had the shortest life expectancy of anybody in Vietnam, it was the only way a soldier could transfer out of a unit. It revealed how the men felt about going into combat with their Lieutenant. Sadly, for many of the men in the Second Platoon, their worst fears were confirmed, in the “Valley of Death”, known as the Ia Drang. On that fateful day in November 1965, as Second Platoon hunkered down on their Company’s flank, the lieutenant spotted an enemy soldier fleeing through the grass and trees. To any experienced soldier, this had all the makings of the first step of an enemy ambush. Apparently this was not the first thought that went through Lt. Herrick’s mind. Throwing away all the rules of caution, Lt. Herrick jumped up and ordered his men to follow in pursuit of the North Vietnamese soldier. To show his true lack of leadership skills or commitment to the lives of his men, when several of the senior men in the platoon tried to discourage Herrick, he ignored their advice and plunged ahead. His NCO’s, many of them combat veterans, all felt this was a trap. They knew how the enemy operated. But they followed his orders, against their better judgement, and created a wedge formation following their officer.



By: Sgt. John Cervone

Leadership over Adversity (Continued)

The men fanned out on either side, with the two M-60 machine gunners forming the end of the "V" formation. As they got about a hundred yards from the U.S. perimeter, they started to pick up fire. The enemy were already getting behind them, and they knew it was time to stop, but the LT. ordered them to keep going forward. Soon they were overwhelmed by enemy fire. The platoon had been strung out for about 50 yards, and the machine gunners stood their ground to the rear and allowed the rest of men time to gather at a higher point, later called "the knoll." In a matter of minutes, though, Herrick was dead. Lt. General Moore told me that his last words were " I'm happy that I was able to die for my country". The General told me that because of his ineptitude, he allowed for many other men to die for their country that day. At this point of the battle both machine gunners were killed and one of the M-60s and its ammunition was taken by the North Vietnamese. Others were being mowed down by a savage North Vietnamese assault. Just minutes into the fire-fight there were only eight men out of the 29 in the platoon that were not wounded or dead. They formed a perimeter roughly shaped like a football. The wounded and most of the dead were gathered inside the perimeter. Many of the wounded manned their M-16s throughout the battle. The grass was about 10 inches high, and the soldiers were afforded some protection if they could stay hidden in the grass.

At this point in time Sgt. Ernie Savage, an E-5, found himself in command of the American troops. All senior leadership was dead. General Moore told me that he had tried to prepare all his troops for this type of eventuality, but Ernie Savage had not thought that he would be thrust into this type of situation so early in his career. As the afternoon wore on the platoon was subject to sporadic attacks. Three times, rescue efforts were tried, but they were beaten back each time. As soldiers from the 7th Cav would get closer, the Vietnamese that were in between the "Lost Platoon" would slip out of the way, and the Americans would end up shooting at each other. Then the enemy would slip right back in again. They had the captured M60, so they had substantial fire power.

As darkness started to settle in on the lost platoon, they kept hoping a rescue mission would be successful. Then a radio message came in that told them there would be no more rescue attempts that day, and they would have to wait until morning. Those words were hard to accept, but Sgt. Savage knew that the lives of his men were in his hands, and he was not going to let them down. Fortunately, for his men, he had previous training in maps and coordinates, and he would use this training to help to keep them alive.

He immediately got on the radio and began calling in an artillery barrage on all four sides of the stranded cavalrymen. The fire was coming from an artillery base called Falcon, about five miles away. Sgt. Savage had them start the artillery high on the hill, and then had them walk it down until they had it where he wanted it. Each barrage was made up of five shells, and the 105mm howitzers would hit on all four sides of the lost platoon and then start over again. Through the night, the barrage helped keep the enemy at bay. Still, they were attacked three more times during the night. Sgt. Savage kept calling in artillery attacks throughout the night and had to call them in as close as he possibly could to the American positions. The PAVN were always under the false assumption that American soldiers would not call in artillery strikes on top of themselves. Sgt. Savage disproved that theory much to the anguish and death of a good many enemy soldiers. As daylight finally began to creep over the valley the soldiers could see forms running toward them. Not knowing if they were friend or foe they held their fire until someone shouted that they were Vietnamese soldiers and the Americans mowed them down. The daylight also brought air support which was able to keep up a steady ring of fire around the Americans. Relief finally arrived at about 3 p.m., 26 hours after they had been separated from the battalion, and 26 hours since they'd had any food, water or sleep. The survivors of the "Lost Platoon", were taken back to the command post where Col. Moore had set up his headquarters, and debriefed. Sgt. Savage exhibited decisiveness and a natural leadership ability under the most horrible of circumstances.

He proved that a soldier, who stays motivated and composed, while all around others are losing their heads, can prevent a disaster.

As for Lt. Herrick, all Sgt. Savage had to say of him was:

"He made a bad decision, and we knew at the time it was a bad decision. We were breaking contact with the rest of the company. We were supposed to come up on the flank of the 1st Platoon; in fact we were moving away from them. We lost contact with everybody."

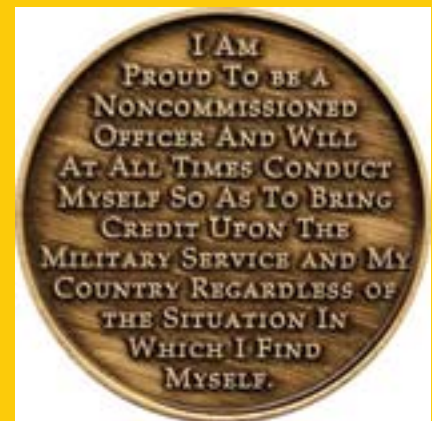
By: Sgt J Cervone

Primary Leadership Development Course

(PLDC)

I attended PLDC at Fort Indian Town Gap, PA, a few months ago, and I thought it would be a nice idea to share my experiences with anyone that is getting ready to attend that school. Firstly, it was very difficult to actually learn what was in store for anyone that would be attending the school. It seemed that everyone I spoke with had a very different recollection of the criteria that was in place and must be adhered to at PLDC. I believe that this happens because PLDC is held at many different places and naturally each location varies in certain policies and procedures from the next. To avoid any confusion, the criteria I will be writing about was the criteria that was practiced at Fort Indian Town Gap. The course itself runs for 2 weeks. It starts on a Saturday and graduation is in two weeks from that Saturday. The first day is all in processing. You are weighed in, checked for profiles and then sent to orientation. The CSM of the school will explain what will basically take place in the next two weeks and you will be told how you are to conduct yourself. You will be locked down for the entire time so don't worry about civilian clothes, you won't need many. After hours you will be in full PT gear. Sunday morning you will be given a PT test and you will be told that if you fail, you will be doing PT every evening until the following Monday, when you will be retested. If you fail the make up test you will be on a plane home that very afternoon. They do not want anyone there that has not exhibited the proper motivation as required by the school. After you have taken the initial PT test, your day will consist of getting up at 4am, cleaning your room, getting ready for PT and then heading out to do PT. After one hour of PT you will go to breakfast. After breakfast you will go back to your room, change into BDU's and prepare for a PI followed by a daily room inspection. Then you will head for class. Before morning class begins, you will be asked to participate in a class discussion that can concern anything that may be occurring in the world. You will be asked to participate in a very emphatic manner. Lunch will follow morning class and then you head back for afternoon class. Your classes will consist of military history, the equal opportunity program, financial education, the military's policy concerning homosexuals and homosexual activity (marriage), map reading, land navigation, uniform regulations, writing appraisals, career counseling, along with many leadership lectures and films. Ethics will also be reviewed.

You will be tested on certain aspects of the material and you must pass the written test. You will be tested on Drill and Ceremony and how to conduct a PT class. Prepare for these two tests before you go to PLDC. Practice D & C and also PT training at your unit. It will save you time that you do not have. You will be requested to give a class on a military subject and you will be graded on it also. You will serve for one or two days as a squad leader and you will be graded on your performance. This task will take time away from your own training so be prepared to stay late in study hall for a few nights. If you are selected as a Platoon leader or First Sgt. be prepared for a certain amount of undue harassment from instructors and be prepared to sacrifice a lot of time trying to keep thirty or forty other soldiers mentally prepared for the next day's activities. Remember, you will be with many types of personalities and not all of them will be pleasant. Try to keep in mind that as each day passes you are getting closer to graduation and hopefully to a well deserved promotion. Your last few days will be spent in the field where you will be tested on your field leadership and land navigation knowledge. You are going to be dictated to by your instructors on a daily basis, that's their job and that's what they do. But in the course of this type of mental abuse, other students may take it upon themselves to try to humiliate other students, less motivated than they see themselves. I witnessed two cases of this type of behavior. I reported both cases to either student platoon leaders or my instructors. There is no reason for any student to berate another student in front of their peers. Remember, you are attending this school to become a good leader not a bully. As professional NCO's we have a duty to our soldiers, but also to ourselves, to remain professional at all times. It is our sworn duty to protect our soldiers and ourselves in combat. Civilians can afford to play these games. We are professional soldiers and should act like a professional at all times.



ARMY GUARD PROMOTIONS

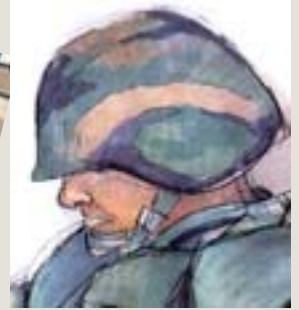
SSG MARTIN RODERICK WENDELL JR
PVT MCCAULEY GREGORY CONRAD
PFC MCMILLIAN JUSTIN XAVIER
SSG MCPARLIN JAMES EDWARD JR
PV2 MOISE ALAIN JULIO
1SG MOTTA THOMAS MANUEL
SPC PARRILLO SCOTT MICHAEL
PVT SIMAS CRAIG STEVEN JR
PFC STLAURENT JAMES JOHN
MSG THOMAS EDWIN MICHAELPVT



PVT ABDULHAKIM JAFAR SADIQ
PVT ALLAN KEITH EDWARD II
PVT ALMEIDA JOSHUA JOSEPH
SPC ANDRADE SEAN PATRICK
SSG BERRIGAN PATRICK MICHAEL
SSG BROOKS JAZZMIN PHEAP
PVT COLEMAN ALISSA BETH
PFC COLEMAN CHRISTOPHER SCOTT
CPL CONROY STEPHEN JAMES

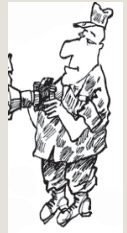


SPC DARIVA THALES CRISTIANO
SSG FELEY PAUL ARTHUR
SSG FERREIRA BRIAN ALBERT
PVT GIRARD ADAM LEE
PVT GRAHAM JORDAN MICHAEL
PFC HARRISON EDWARD DENNIS
PFC HENNE GRANT PAUL II
SSG LUDWIG JACOB ANDREW
PVT LYMAN DONALD ALAN



THE CIVIL AIR PATROL AND LEAPFEST

At 7:00 a.m. on Sat. Aug. 13, 2005, it didn't look like Leapfest was going to happen. The fog was thick, and there were clouds overhead. The weather report called for rain, possibly thunderstorms. In a large grassy field at the University of Rhode Island stood groups of men and women in uniform from around the world, quietly talking amongst themselves. There was another group of young men and women, too young in many cases to be in the military, but in uniforms nonetheless. They were cadet members of the Civil Air Patrol. They were there to support the Rhode Island Army National Guard, which was hosting Leapfest XXIII, the largest static line parachuting competition in the world. Slowly, the sun emerged from behind the clouds, burning off the ground fog. Life began to stir on the field, which was the pickup zone for the paratroopers. American and international competitors formed up as jumpmasters began shouting instructions. At the edge of the field, Col. Anthony Vessella, commander of the Civil Air Patrol's Rhode Island Wing, observed the commotion. Each year, over 8,000 cadets attend and support local events similar to Leapfest, he said, adding that the cadets and volunteers gain valuable knowledge and experience that will help them for the rest of their lives. In the middle of the field were three stationary CH-47 Chinook helicopters. As the sky color changed from grey to blue, the pilots started the engines. The competitors lined up to enter the aircraft, where cadets assisted them. Cadets 2nd Lt. Ben Emerick and Eric Calvey were supporting the Chinooks' aircrews. Emerick said his favorite part of the program was flying. "Definitely flying," agreed Calvey. Both learned how to fly a plane before they started driving. Calvey said the skills they acquired volunteering for events like Leapfest have had an immense impact on their lives. The drop zone was two miles south from the pickup zone, where the competitors landed in a large field, surrounded by trees, behind the West Kingston Elementary School. Here more cadets were tasked with locating soldiers who landed outside the drop zone. Once they found the soldier, they waited until the National Guard arrived to extract the stranded competitor. "You get to do things here you don't get to do as a civilian," Cadet Robert Caouette, 12, said. Each year, Civil Air Patrol responds to 85 percent of all search and rescue missions within the continental United States, Cadet Maj. Josh Lebenns said. In addition to these missions, the organization provides logistical and communications support to local, state and federal agencies in times of disaster. Cadet Airman 1st Class Alberto Iriarte and Cadet Katie Ledger provided security and crowd control at the pick up zone. "Basically, our job is to make sure that the civilians don't enter the restricted military areas, for their own safety," said Iriarte, nodding in the direction of the field where the Chinooks were landing. He described some of the training he received at the Civil Air Patrol's Search and Rescue School, which included survival, land navigation and first aid. At the end of the day, members of the Civil Air Patrol were thankful for the opportunity to help out at Leapfest. As the commotion on the field died down, and the last Chinook made its landing, Calvey reflected briefly on his six years in the organization. "Civil Air Patrol is a great program and I would encourage anyone between the ages of 12 and 18 to join as a cadet. It's a lot of fun," he said.





Gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve.

RIESGR is proud to recognize Citizens Financial Group, the 2004 RI Pro Patria Award winner, and a 2005 Secretary of Defense Freedom Award winner. Citizens was selected as one of the fifteen Freedom Award recipients chosen from a pool of 1,492 nominees countrywide and is Rhode Island's first Freedom Award winner. The Freedom Award is the highest and most prestigious award given to an employer by the Department of Defense and is presented for "exceptional support to their employees who voluntarily serve the nation in the National Guard and Reserve." Citizens received their award on 15 Oct 05 at the ESGR National Conference, Washington, DC. Photo: Citizens Financial Group Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer, William K. Wray (center), receives the 2005 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award presented by Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey (left) and ESGR National Chairman David Janes (right).



2005 Rhode Island Pro Patria Award Winner: Cardi's Furniture

The Pro Patria Award is the highest form of recognition presented by a state committee. The RI ESGR is proud to recognize Cardi's Furniture as this year's Pro Patria Award recipient in recognition of their outstanding and sustained support of Rhode Island's Guard and Reserve members, as well as their exceptional contributions to the mission of the RI Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

ESGR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

The RI Committee for ESGR is proud to recognize two of its most senior and dedicated committee members who have served since the committee's inception.

MS. EDNA O'NEILL-MATTSON

Ms. O'Neill-Mattson serves as the committee's Membership Chair and has been directly responsible for the unprecedented growth of the committee in the past 10 years. She is a dedicated volunteer who never misses a deployment or redeployment ceremony and has long been considered the committee's life-force. Ms. O'Neill-Mattson is the Facilities Use Director at the Community College of Rhode Island and lives in North Kingstown.

MR. JAMES "SAM" GIFFORD JR.

Mr. Gifford, a Navy veteran of WWII, is the committee's long-standing treasurer. He was directly responsible for controlling all committee funds when all committee activities were funded by local donations. He has continued to be the committee's sole point of contact for federal funding since the Department of Defense began underwriting local committee initiatives. Mr. Gifford is a retired CPA and lives in Cranston.

Above and Beyond Award Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority

The Above and Beyond Award is presented to employers who demonstrate, throughout their institutional policies, support for their reserve component employees which exceeds the minimum required rights as defined in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act.



**SEAMLESS TRANSITION
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**



Welcome to the Department of Veterans Affairs. The following information is for returning Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

To access any of these programs go to:

<http://www.va.gov/index.htm>

and begin your inquiries.

Benefits

- • Compensation and Pension - VA web site hosting benefits information for veterans with disabilities.
- • Education - Information on the VA education benefits available for veterans.
- • Home Loan Guaranty - VA's Home Loan Guaranty eligibility web site.
- • Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment - Rehabilitation counseling and employment advice for veterans who are disabled and in need of help readjusting.
- • Insurance - VA life insurance program for disabled veterans.
- • Burial - Information on burial benefits for certain qualified veterans.
- • Women Veteran Benefit and the Center for Women Veterans - Two separate web sites where you will find benefits issues and other programs unique to women veterans.
- • Health and Medical Services - VA web site for complete health and medical services information.
- • Medical Care for Combat Theater Veterans - VA web site with specific information for veterans of combat theater of operations.
- • Special Health Benefits Programs for Veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom / Iraqi Freedom - VA health information web site for OEF/OIF veterans specific to environmental agents issues.
- • HealthVet Web Portal - VA's NEW health portal has been developed for the veteran and family — to provide information and tools to enable one to achieve the best health.

**SEAMLESS TRANSITION
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**



* * CHAMPVA (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs) — CHAMPVA is a federal health benefits program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. CHAMPVA is a Fee for Service (indemnity plan) program. CHAMPVA provides reimbursement for most medical expenses - inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care, and durable medical equipment (DME). There is a very limited adjunct dental benefit that requires pre-authorization. CHAMPVA is available to certain veteran's family members who are not eligible for TRICARE.

· · Transitioning from War to Home - Go the VA web site of the Vet Center Readjustment Counseling Service. Provides war veterans and their family members quality readjustment services in a caring manner, assisting them toward a successful post-war adjustment in or near their respective communities.

· · State Benefits - Many States offer benefits for veterans. You should contact the VA regional office that serves your area to find out what your State may offer.

The Providence VA Regional Office is located at:
380 Westminster Mall Providence , RI 02903

Phone: 1 800 827 1000

Travel Directions From the North: Take I-95 South to Exit 21 take left on Atwells Avenue. Follow Atwells Avenue ½ mile to Broadway. Turn left, Broadway runs into Empire Street, follow Empire for ¾ miles, take left on Chapel Street, go one block and turn left on Snow Street, go one block and turn left on Westminster Street, Regional Office is on left.

From the South: Take I-95 North to Exit 21 take right on Broadway to Empire. Follow Empire approximate ¾ miles and take left on Chapel Street, go one block to Snow and then one block to Westminster. The Federal Center is on the left. The Regional Office is located on the 2nd floor of the Federal Center.

Guard Health and Benefits

A "Health and Benefits Support" office has opened in the J-1 section of the Command Readiness Center with Retired Sergeant Major Steve Usler as the newly assigned State Benefits Advisor. The goal of the Health and Benefits office is to serve National Guard Soldiers, Airman and their families by providing information concerning eligibility and assisting them in applying for benefits. Some of the VA benefits and services available to National Guard members and their dependants include health care, disability, pension, education, training benefits and home loan guaranties. The Health and Benefits Support Office can assist you in gathering information, regarding your claim, in order to help determine your eligibility for benefits. The most important fact to remember is that you must make the first move by applying. Also remember that there are deadlines for applying for certain benefits. The sooner you apply for any benefit, especially a health related problem, the sooner a determination can be made regarding your claim.

Mr. Steven Usler - 401-275-4198

"ARMY EDUCATION PLUS"

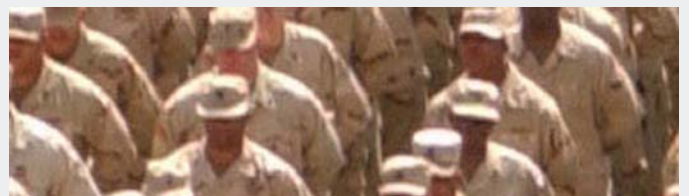
High-school dropouts never have had a future in the all-volunteer Army — until now.

On Sept. 20, 2005, the active Army, Reserve, and National Guard began a nationwide program, "Army Education Plus," that will pay the costs of getting a General Equivalency Diploma, or GED, for non-high school graduates who want to join the service. Individuals interested in the new program must first have withdrawn from high school at least six months prior, according to Douglas Smith, a spokesman for the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. The program was launched to help with recruiting, which has lagged for the Army and its Reserve components. "We would not want to do anything to encourage anyone to drop out of school," Smith said.

Applicants also must pass a physical exam and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, and then enlist for the Army's delayed entry program, before they are eligible for help getting a GED, Smith said. The new GED program will not lower enlistment standards for the Army, because the service has not changed its 10 percent "cap" on the number of GED-holding recruits it will accept, Smith said. "The point of the program is to help [recruits] get their GED," he said. "If they don't make it (through the program), they won't ship" to basic training. In fiscal 2004, 7.6 percent of active Army enlistees had GEDs, while the other 92.4 percent were high-school graduates.



He did not have similar statistics at hand for the Reserve and Army National Guard. Army Education Plus is the service's latest effort to shore up its lagging recruiting program, which has suffered from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and what the recruiters say is an improving national economic picture. Despite improvements in recruiting over the summer months, senior Army leaders have said that when the government's fiscal 2005 ends all three components of the Army will have missed their annual recruiting goals. To counter the reluctance of young Americans to put on Army green, the service has taken a number of steps, such as adding 1,200 new recruiters to its rosters, increasing signing bonuses from an average of \$6,000 per new recruit to as much as \$20,000, and raising the eligible age for the Army National Guard or the Reserve recruits from 35 to 39. The service also launched a multimillion-dollar television advertising campaign that focuses on patriotism and is directed at deployment-wary parents and teachers. Army recruiting officials are calculating that it will cost \$50 to \$100 to send a potential recruit to a GED course.



Newest Vets Receive Priority for VA Medical Care

The estimated 120,000 veterans of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan receiving medical care through the Department of Veterans Affairs are getting top priority as they access some of the world's best-quality medical treatment. R. James Nicholson, the secretary of Veterans Affairs, explained this to American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel in anticipation of National Veterans Awareness Week, which began Nov. 6 and continued through Nov. 12, 2005.

Although the wounded veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom represent just 2 percent of the VA's total patient load, "it's a very important 2 percent because these are young people who have come back from the combat zone," Nicholson said. As a result, the VA is "giving them priority and making sure we are taking care of their physical and mental needs" so they can continue to enjoy productive lives, he said.

Seeing the nation's young people return home from combat reinforces the message that freedom comes at a high cost, Nicholson said. "Freedom is not free, and they are paying the ultimate price," Nicholson said. "And so, they will be taken care of and given whatever (health care and related assistance) they need ... for the rest of their lives."

It's gratifying to watch the recovery these wounded veterans make, particularly when hearing many of them say they want nothing more than to return to duty with their units, Nicholson said. But for those unable to do that, Nicholson said, the VA's responsibility is to help them see beyond their wounds and recognize that they can continue to live productive lives.

VA, GSA Sign Agreement for Veterans Businesses

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the General Services Administration (GSA) have signed a formal agreement expanding GSA's efforts for businesses that are owned by veterans, especially service-disabled veterans. "America's veterans are a national treasure, a pool of trained, motivated, reliable entrepreneurs," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "They're looking for a helping hand, not a hand-out." The agreement signed between the two federal agencies commits GSA to place additional emphasis upon programs for veteran-owned businesses and businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. In 1999, Congress passed legislation urging all federal agencies to strive toward awarding 3 percent of their contracts – by value – to service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. Among other features, the agreement commits VA and GSA to co-sponsor eight regional conferences for veteran businesses in the coming year, with participation by the Small Business Administration and other federal agencies.

"That's part of our mission, to show them all the things they still can do and not have them focus on the things they can no longer do," he said. While the nation gave special consideration to its veterans that week, the VA continues its long-standing commitment to the nation's veterans year-round. For the past 75 years, the VA has provided health services and other benefits to veterans, living up to the promise made by President Abraham Lincoln during his second inaugural speech:

"To care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." Over its history, the VA has created the world's most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans, including what Nicholson described as "world-class health care." Some 237,000 VA professionals provide health care to more than 5 million veterans through 187 medical centers and 860 outpatient clinics. A computerized medical record system — one Nicholson said he hopes will serve as a model for the Defense Department and other organizations — helps eliminate hospital mix-ups and ensures more thorough patient care, he said. In addition, VA remains a leader in medical research, from studies involving Parkinson's disease to a recent breakthrough in immunizations for shingles, he said. Nicholson said Congress and the Bush administration have demonstrated through increased funding for VA health care that they remain committed to ensuring veterans receive the top-quality services they deserve. VA funding has increased more than 50 percent since 2001, he noted.

"Veterans of every era can rest easy knowing that access to what has been described as the finest integrated health care system in the country will remain undiminished — especially for low-income veterans, those with service-connected disabilities (or) special needs or who have recently returned from combat," Nicholson said.

Six new members have been appointed to the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). "The unique health care needs of our Gulf War veterans have not been forgotten," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "VA has an ongoing commitment to ensure they benefit from the best research this country can offer." As directed by Congress, VA established this public advisory committee to provide advice and make recommendations to the VA Secretary on research into the causes and treatments of illnesses and potential health problems of veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War. Committee members are appointed for two- or three-year terms, renewable by the Secretary.

HEALTH UPDATE

Bird Flu May Have Sparked 1918 Pandemic

The flu epidemic of 1918 ranks with the Black Death of the Middle Ages as one of the deadliest contagions of all times. The virus swept across the Earth, killing an estimated 20 million people in little over a year. In the United States, more than half a million people died from the illness between September 1918 and June 1919. To this day, no one knows why the virus was so deadly. Called the Spanish flu, the illness started with aches and fever. As the disease progressed, its victims' faces turned dark, the soles of their feet blackened and they coughed blood. In days, sometimes hours, those infected essentially drowned, their lungs heavy, sodden and engorged with a thin, bloody liquid. Nearly everyone caught the flu in 1918 in some form; 2.5 percent of its victims died, making the strain 25 times more deadly than any flu before or since. The flu left behind many questions: why was it so deadly, why were young, apparently healthy people particularly affected, and why did it never reappear? Researchers continue to look for those answers, and two studies published in Science magazine shed new light on the killer strain's origins. Analysis of a protein coating the virus suggests it started out as an avian virus. Another study, in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows that combining pieces of the 1918 strain with a mouse flu virus results in a very lethal flu. Naturally, these findings trouble health officials who worry a similar scenario is developing in Asia. The region is currently battling a massive avian flu outbreak, which has infected hundreds of millions of birds and killed 16 people. So far, evidence suggests the virus isn't easily spread among humans. But health officials fear the bird virus might combine with a human flu virus, unleashing another potentially uncontrollable pandemic among people.



Boys wear bags of camphor around their necks in the hope of escaping the Spanish flu. There was no vaccine for the flu or treatment once infected.

ARMY HUMOR IN THE NATIONAL GUARD

PFC MURPHY'S PLANE
DEPARTS IRAQ



HIS UNIT IS HEADING HOME!



SOMEWHERE OVER THE ATLANTIC:

AS THESE BATTLE TESTED TROOPS
DRIFT OFF TO SLEEP THEY FOCUS
ON ONE THING THEY HAVE BEEN
DEPRIVED OF FOR SO LONG.



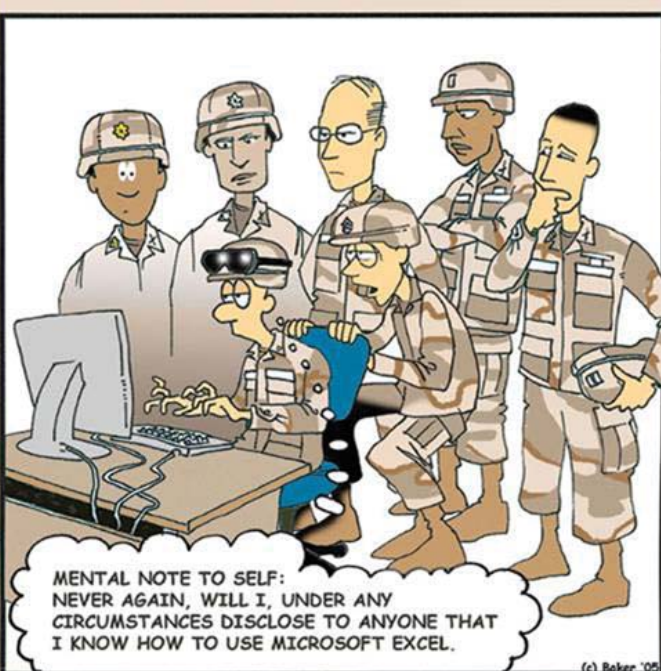
IN ST. LOUIS:

AN ANHEUSER-BUSCH EXECUTIVE
SUDDENLY AWAKENS.

I SENSE A
DISTURBANCE
IN THE FORCE:
AS IF A DIVISION
OF THIRSTY
SOLDIERS WERE
CRYING OUT
IN NEED!



© M. Baker 2005



OCEAN STATE GUARDIAN FALL 2005 END OF YEAR



OCEAN STATE GUARDIAN IS AN AUTHORIZED MAGAZINE PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD. CONTENTS OF THE GUARDIAN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE OFFICIAL VIEW OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OR THE RHODE ISLAND NATIONAL GUARD.