



# Home through the eyes of deployed Soldiers

STAFF SGT. MICHEL SAURET  
MND-C



**CAMP VICTORY** – As Thanksgiving Day and the holiday season approach, Soldiers deployed with the 10th Mountain Division in Iraq will eat their share of turkey, reminisce with the members of their military family, laugh and celebrate. At these moments, more than ever, home is on their minds.

When these Soldiers speak, their words paint a clear picture of being “home for the holidays.”

### Home in a Small Town

For Sgt. Anthony Hendrich, a trombone player for the 10th Mtn. Div. Band, the images of harvesting corn and sunflowers are what he misses most about home. When he started talking about them, in fact, the expression on his face relaxed and his posture became at ease as he shared the memories.

“The best times with corn is usu-

ally when it’s pollinating, and all the tassels are out, and it has a nice, good smell to it. You can definitely smell when the corn is pollinating,” said Hendrich, who calls Portis, Kan., home.

Portis is a small, unincorporated town with just a grain co-op, a post office and a population of less than 150 people, located about five hours west of Kansas City. In the morning, six or seven cars will be parked outside of the co-op as farmers brew the morning coffee and talk about the weather and how much rain they’ve received.

Hendrich’s family plants roughly 2,000 acres of corn and 3,000 acres of sunflowers a year. The cornfields are right next to their small house.

“When you go to picking corn, it just comes in the bin. You can usually get 100 to 150 bushels per acre, and so once you start picking, you pretty much have to have the grain cart and the trucks ready because it comes in really, really fast.

“And it’s just, you look up over your shoulder, and you just see a window full of golden grain. And it’s cold. It’s cold when you touch it. It’s really cold. And it smells good, and it’s not dusty like all the other grain. That’s the other part, you don’t get all itchy, and it feels good to just lay down in the truck full of corn,” he said.

On Thanksgiving, more than 50 family members will pack into the small house,



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

**Sgt. Anthony Hendrich, a trombone player for the 10th Mtn. Div. band, thinks of harvesting corn and sunflowers when he thinks back to his home in Portis, Kan.**

and everyone takes a break from harvest. The rooms will fill with the aroma of turkey and the smell of cottonwood burning in the old stove.

“Usually we have two or three big turkeys, couple hams, bunch of different pies, home-made ice cream,” Hendrich said.

“Probably my favorite food is the strawberry-rhubarb pie,” he said.

Afterward, the whole family will socialize and play games like dominos or chicken scratch.



Courtesy photo

**Sgt. Anthony Hendrich stands next to his wife, Sgt. Josephine Hendrich, in a field of wild sunflowers in Portis, Kan. Both Soldiers are deployed with the 10th Mtn. Div. Band and stationed on Camp Victory.**

# HOME

## From page 1

### Home in a Big Town

What Staff Sgt. Roger Larson, an operational law noncommissioned officer with the 10th Mtn. Div., remembers is catching Rutgers football games and going out to Point Pleasant beach with friends on the weekend. Larson is originally from Edison, N.J., a township of roughly 100,000 people, located an hour drive north of Philadelphia and a 30 to 40-minute train ride south of Newark and New York City. The shores to the Atlantic are just a 35-minute drive away, where the crowd is young and passing time on the boardwalk is easy with a beer or two.

"I just like being close to the city but just far enough away to where you're not on top of everybody ... It's not in the city, but you still have that city mentality, you know, of getting things done," Larson said of his hometown. "I guess you could hop on a train and be in Philly and New

York all in the same night if you really wanted to."

Catching the Rutgers games for Larson provided a good excuse to get together with friends.

Down the street from campus was another favorite hangout spot where mobile delis called "grease trucks" parked in a lot to serve fried foods and sandwiches.

"Whenever everybody would have to leave the bar, we'd go hit the grease trucks, you know, two, three in the morning and pick up a sandwich and some fries or whatever," Larson said.

His favorite was the "Fat Cat" sandwich, which consists of every fried food imaginable stuffed into a roll. Potatoes, Philly cheese steak, mozzarella sticks, chicken ... everything just thrown together with cheese, onions, peppers and whatever else could fit.

For Thanksgiving, Larson's family is a smaller crowd, all of whom would later visit his godparents, who lived just around the corner, for the afternoon. Watching football on TV was always part of the schedule.

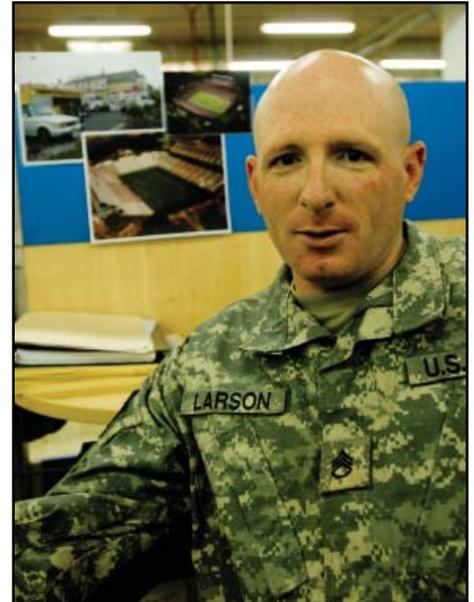


Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

**Staff Sgt. Roger Larson, an operational law noncommissioned officer with the 10th Mtn. Div., remembers the Rutgers football stadium and the "grease trucks" when he thinks back of his home in Edison, N.J.**

## Online shopping tips for the holiday season

Deployed Soldiers often utilize online shopping in order to buy for their loved ones at home, but they should be aware of the dangers of shopping online. The following tips can be useful and can be referenced by going to <http://www.bbbonline.org/OnlineShopTips/tips.asp>.

- **Trust your instincts.** If you don't feel comfortable buying or bidding on an item over the web, or if you feel pressured to place your order immediately, maybe you shouldn't.

- **Be knowledgeable about web-based auctions.** Take special care to familiarize yourself not only with the rules and policies of the auction site itself but with the legal terms of the seller's items that you wish to bid on.

- **Read the privacy policy carefully** to find out what information the seller is gathering from you, how the information will be used, and how you can stop the process. If a site does not have a privacy policy posted, you may not want to do business with that site. If it does have a privacy policy, there will

probably be a link to it from the seller's home page, or it could be included with the legal terms.

- **Review** the return, refund, and shipping and handling policies as well as the other legal terms. If you can't find them, ask the seller through an e-mail or telephone call to indicate where they are on the site or to provide them to you in writing.

- **Check that the Internet connections are secure.** Before you give your payment information, there are various icons and software programs that indicate that security software is in place.

- **Order using a credit card,** it is the safest way to pay on the Internet.

- **Print the terms.** You should print out and date a copy of terms, conditions, warranties, item description, company information, even confirming e-mails, and save them with your records of your purchase.

## THE Mountain View

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# HOME

From page 2



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

**Capt. Jonathan Zeppa, an assistant division chemical officer for the 10th Mtn. Div., considers Wasilla, Alaska, his home where he used to hunt caribou.**

## Home at the Cold Front

Capt. Jonathan Zeppa, division assistant chemical officer, remembers hunting in the valleys and mountains of Alaska while living in Wasilla.

Wasilla is a city near the southern coast of Alaska with a population of roughly 10,000, a railroad track running through it and road signs that warn of moose crossings.

"It comes to all the beauty and ... mountains and tundra-type plain," Zeppa said of Alaska. "A lot of different types of habitats there; animals you don't see (normally). They're pretty exotic ... moose, mountain goat, dull sheep, muskrat. They have bison up near Fort Greely. I have hunted caribou, bear."

One memory sticks in Zeppa's mind: on a hunting trip in October 2004, he and six other friends divided up into two trucks and camped out on the Dalton Highway Express during a four-day weekend. The temperature was around zero, with snow coating the ground. On the last day of their trip, hunters lined up and hid behind a berm in the valley with their bows ready, waiting for a movement of 3,000 caribou. The caribou came through in waves, the hunters held the arrows back for the right moment and finally let them rip through the air to their targets.

"They came through, and I shot

two, and I was the only one who shot any caribou from my party that weekend," Zeppa said.

Thanksgivings were often spent in different areas, depending on where he was stationed with the military.

"I can remember some of my fondest Thanksgivings were at my grandmother's house. She lives down in Fort Lauderdale, (Fla.) ... (When I was younger, living in Georgia, we would) have a big Thanksgiving dinner, take a nap and play basketball all afternoon."



Courtesy photo

**Capt. Jonathan Zeppa, of Wasilla, Alaska, makes a weather prediction after pitching a tent on a hunting spot north of Talkeetna, Alaska.**

## Home at the Beach Front

On the opposite side of the coast, Sgt. Scott Sperling considers California his home, which is where he lived before joining the Army. He also spent two years in Monterey while studying Arabic at the Defense Language Institute.

"I just (know) it's the area where I want to end up," said Sperling, now serving as an intelligence analyst. "Somewhere around (Monterey). The weather, scenery, everything's ideal. Close to the water."

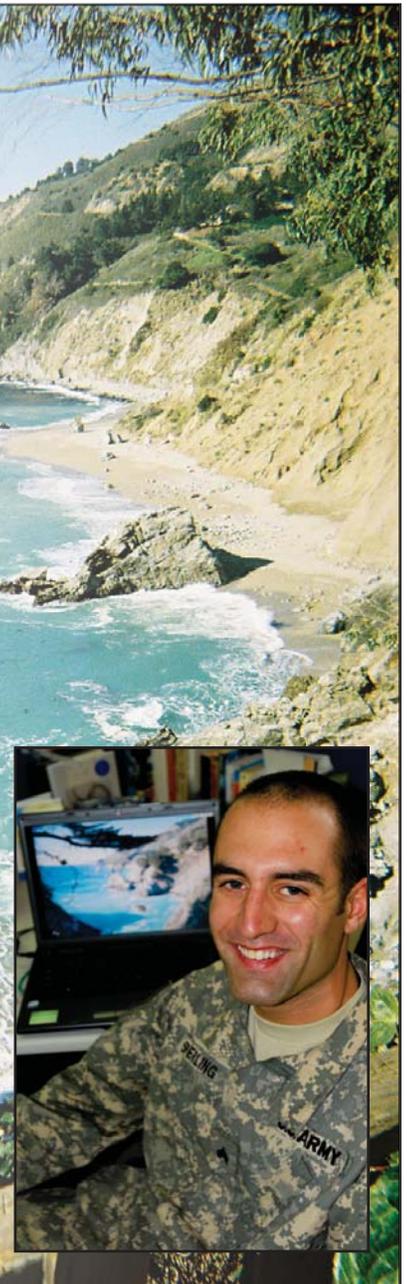
His favorite places are never more than an hour away from the Pacific Ocean. The landscape of Santa Cruise held mountains and windy roads with scenic routes. At the beach, the waves gave way to surfing and skim-boarding. The clear water also made it ideal for snorkeling.

"You can dive down twenty feet, snorkel, the water is clear, you know? Just snorkeling around you can see starfish, pick shells, whatever, just dive down and pick them up. Granted, you can't keep them, but it's fun to see," Sperling said.

During the last Thanksgiving Sperling spent in Monterey, he invited some friends over to his house where they held a "UFC Night" to watch matches from the Ultimate Fighting Championship®.

"Thanksgiving is so awesome. Last year we had a duplex in Monterey and had an uber amount of food," he said. "We had everything. Whatever you could think of."

(Background: photo by Sgt. Scott Sperling) The ocean splashes along the shores near Monterey, Calif. (Foreground: Photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret) Sgt. Scott Sperling, an intelligence analyst for the 10th Mtn. Div., thinks of the beaches of Monterey, Calif., when he thinks of home.



# Books to read that are REALLY cool and stuff!

SPC. JOSH LeCAPPELAIN  
MND-C



As the monsoon of humanity known as “holiday shoppers” prepares to embark upon stores with their usual carnivorous ways, readers who love to read about the history of the United States and its military have a veritable smorgasbord of delicious treats that could entice them well into 2009.

One of the biggest releases this fall is Jon Meacham’s “American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House.” One of the most unique presidents in our country’s history, Meacham explores Jackson’s term in office, chronicling his role in the shaping of America as well as his rough life. Jackson helped shape the modern Democratic Party, as well as served as a personal role model to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States. Jackson’s military heroics are chronicled, giving readers a view into why Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C. is named in his honor.

Moving to modern times, “The Forever War” by Dexter Filkin chronicles the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq by bringing the reader into the heart of each country. Filkin doesn’t attempt to pick sides or lead the viewer down a specific path; he merely lets the facts and vignettes speak for themselves. “The Forever War” is a definite for anyone trying to get a better understanding of the War on Terrorism and the effects it has on lives on both sides of the conflict.

Sarah Vowell, a frequent participant on public radio’s “This American Life,” follows up her dynamic “As-

sassination Vacation” (where she visited sites relating to the assassinations of Presidents Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley) with “The Wordy Shipmates,” a book about the Massachusetts Bay Colony and its Puritan inhabitants. Vowell’s writing draws readers into her journey, making them feel as if they were by her side. Tackling many of the beliefs and assumptions made about the Puritans, Vowell will delight and captivate readers with her wit and intelligence.

Regardless of a person’s choice in the recent presidential election, its historical significance cannot be questioned. “Obama: The Historic Campaign in Photographs” details the rise of America’s (soon to be) first African-American president. Following him every step of the way, author Deborah Willis has compiled a fascinating look into the heart of the 2008 presidential campaign that will likely be discussed and dissected for many years to come.

“From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776 (Oxford History of the United States)” is the newest volume in the series that is considered the greatest recollection of American History in print. Author George C. Herring breaks down America’s foreign interactions, from the struggles with Britain that led to the creating of the United States to recent times – skipping no detail. This book covers a specific part of U.S. history, whereas the others in the series talk about smaller blocks of time. Make no mistake, though – this book delivers the goods.

These selections are but a small sampling of the excellent opuses recently released. Give one or more a chance – you may find yourself sucked into a fascinating tale of American history.

## WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT HOME?



Photo by Spc. Sophia R. Lopez  
“Home-cooked meals,” said Spc. John Marlett, of East Aurora, N.Y., aviation operation specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Mountain Division.



Photo by Spc. Sophia R. Lopez  
“Road trips and grass,” said Sgt. Scott Sperling, of Monterey, Calif., an intelligence analyst for Company B, 10th Mtn. Div.

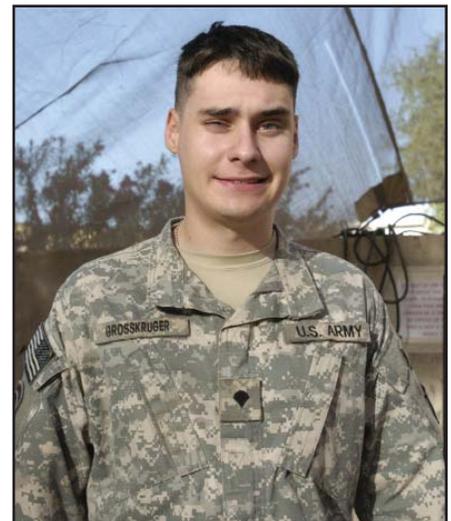


Photo by Spc. Sophia R. Lopez  
“A serious lack of exceptional quesadillas,” said Spc. Jerry Grosskruger, of Jacksonville, Fla., an intelligence analyst for Co. B, 10th Mtn. Div.

## Simple Rules from the Inspector General



Signs (left) placed approximately every 100 yards around the base explain the proper way to conduct PT.

In addition, please pay attention to the following standards for the APFU:

- Proper wear of the reflective belt.
- No headphones outside the gym.
- PT shirt should be tucked in.
- Knit cap should not be worn indoors.

Don't be the one who doesn't know the rules!

Thanks, your IG team.

## PAO WANTS TO KNOW



Will your section give Secret Santa gifts?



Will you light a Menorah or kinara?

Will you trim a Christmas tree?

However you are celebrating this holiday season in Iraq, we'd like to know. Please email Master Sgt. Stephen Opet at [stephen.opet@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:stephen.opet@iraq.centcom.mil) and tell us about your celebration.

We'll write about it, take pictures... maybe even party with you!



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For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



[www.taskforce.mountain.com](http://www.taskforce.mountain.com)

## WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR?



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

"Dan Brown does a great job writing about history. I'm a history buff so he peaks my interest," said Sgt. John Coogen, of Palm Springs, Calif., 445th Civil Affairs Battalion.



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

"I would have to say R.A. Salvatore; he is extremely graphic, and you can see the images clearly in your mind," said Sgt. Robert Foster, of DeRidder, La., Multi-National Division – Center Air Missile Defense.