

National Guard Soldier & Family

March/April 2011  
Volume 2 • Issue 6

# FOUNDATIONS

## I AM A WARRIOR

Inside Ashley Crandall's  
Daily Struggle With PTSD

**HURTS ONE. AFFECTS ALL.**



**WE DON'T LET  
OUR GUARD DOWN**

**PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT  
IS EVERYONE'S DUTY.**

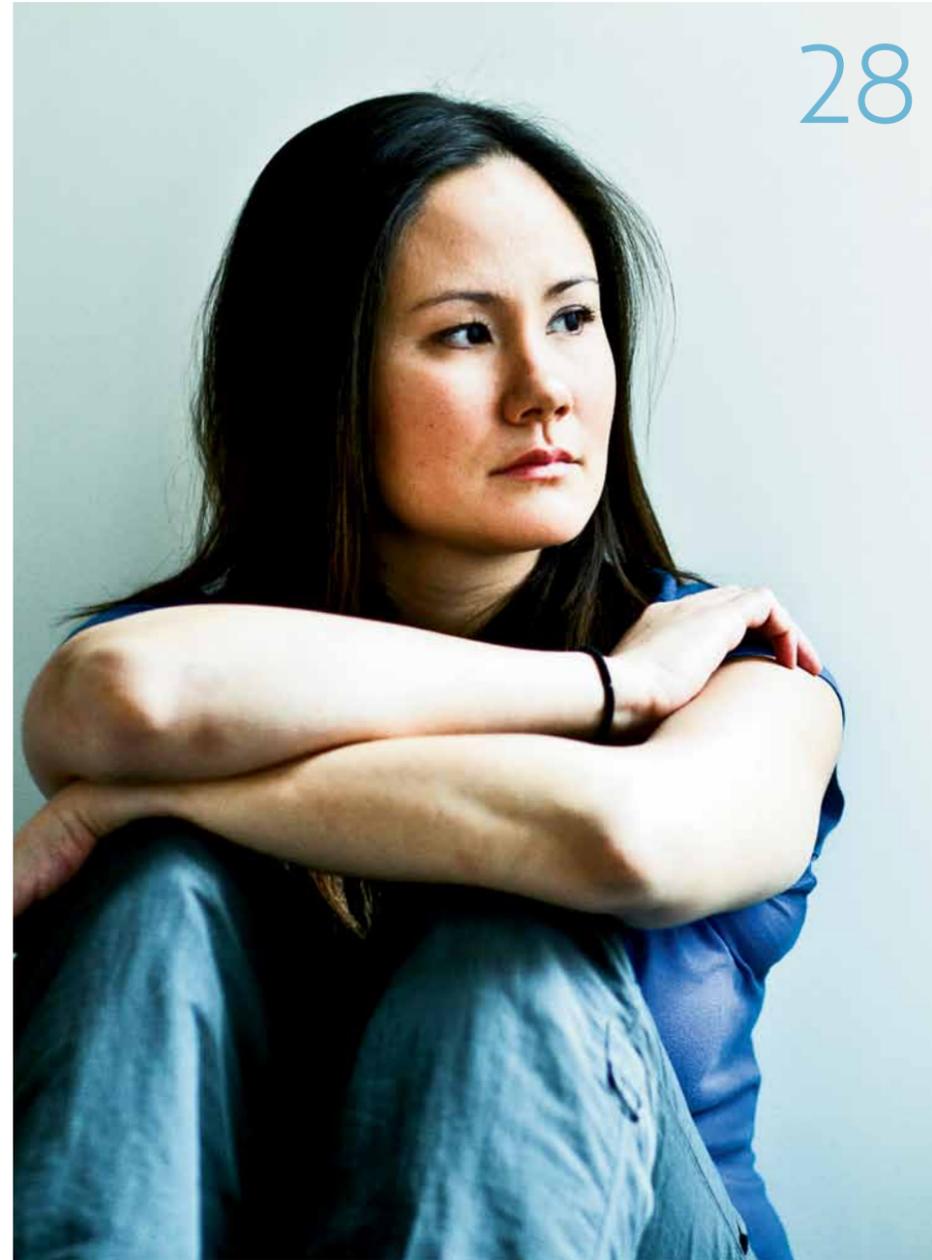


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WARRIOR**

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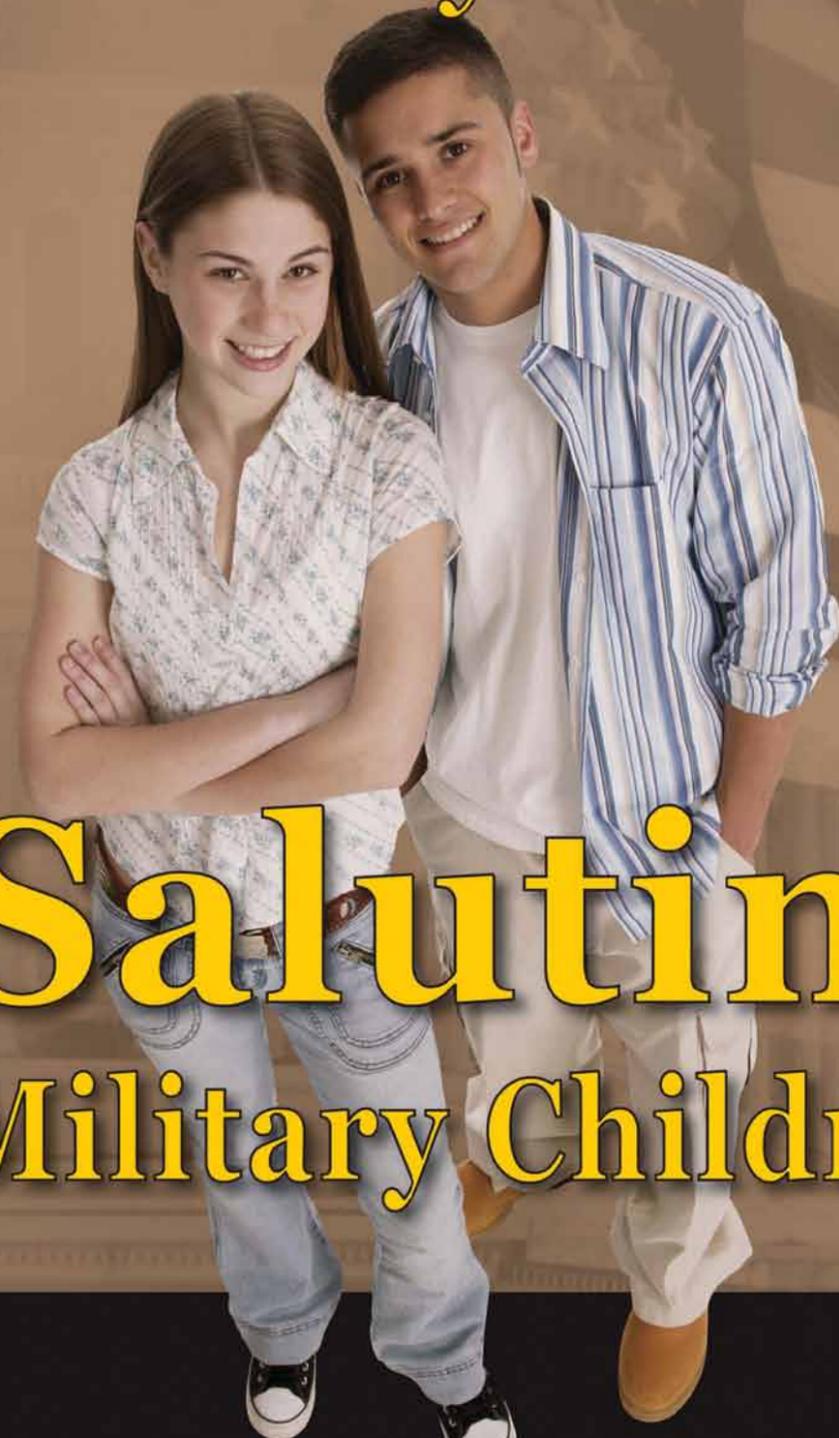
# Honoring . . .



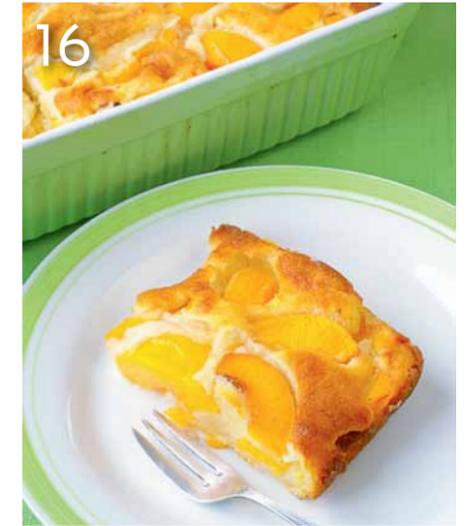
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# Saluting Military Children



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## “I am a Warrior.”

—SPC Ashley Crandall

In the brief history of *Foundations* magazine we've never quoted a more powerful statement. And, I doubt we ever will. SPC Ashley Crandall's story is the feature article in this issue of *Foundations*. Ashley's daily struggle with PTSD and depression is both alarming and, in an odd way, inspirational. In her story you will learn what it's like for many Soldiers returning from theater who experience tremendous difficulty reintegrating into society.

You'll also learn about the difficulties the Families of these Soldiers undergo. Ashley's mother speaks in great detail about her lack of knowledge of PTSD and her belief that Ashley was misdiagnosed, as well as the distance that has grown between them as a result of Ashley's PTSD.

This is the most important article we've done to date, as it shows the stress PTSD places on the Soldier and Family, causing rifts that make Soldiers feel isolated.

Parts of Ashley's story were tough for me to read, and I contemplated not running the article for fear of negative reaction. But removing this article would be a disservice to the brave Soldiers, Airmen and Family members who serve. By pulling back the veil covering this issue, we can begin to have true, honest dialogue.

I hope this article is a step in that direction and that you—the Soldiers, Airmen and Families experiencing PTSD—will reach out for help. Along with this article you'll find resources available to you and your Soldier or Airman.

If you have a comment about this article or topic, contact me at [Editor@GuardFoundations.com](mailto:Editor@GuardFoundations.com). What you have to say matters, so please send me your thoughts or suggestions.

Sincerely,

**Fred D. McGhee II**  
Managing Editor



### ON THE COVER

SPC Ashley Crandall, a PTSD sufferer, has served three tours overseas.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN VOSS

## National Guard Soldier & Family FOUNDATIONS

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To serve and support Army National Guard Soldiers and their Families by providing information and resources to improve their quality of life. To provide opportunities for all Soldiers and Families to benefit from the services available to them through the National Guard by presenting timely and relevant knowledge.

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## Dear Soldiers, Families and Friends of the Army National Guard,

National Guardsmen and their Families make significant sacrifices for our country and often do so without recognition. The willingness of Service Members to risk life and limb for our freedom is one of the amazing strengths of our nation.

Our Wounded Warriors carry the daily reminder of the price of freedom. It's a heavy burden for anyone, but with the support of Family and friends, the weight can become more bearable. Recovery is often a long and painful road, but the smiles, hugs and help of loved ones, and the sincere gratitude of our citizens, can make the difference.

In October, 11 of our country's finest service men and women, who have suffered wounds in combat, took a great challenge. They were a part of the "Soldiers to the Summit" climb in the Himalayas. These brave Wounded Warriors showed great resolve and determination despite extremely dangerous conditions.

To these 11, and all Wounded Warriors, we thank you and realize our debt of gratitude to you is greater than we can ever repay. And to the Families and friends supporting all Guard members, thank you for everything you do!

Major General (Ret.) Tod Bunting  
Adjutant General  
Kansas National Guard





TS/SGT NICK CHOY, OREGON NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS



SSG JOHN HUGHEL, 142ND FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

SSG Roy Harper from the 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, holds his daughter Patricia.

► Family members and friends hold welcome home signs dedicated to Soldiers of the 2-218 Field Artillery, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

► ORNG SPC Stephen R. Printup, of the 162 Engineer Company, plays with his youngest sister, Jeanette, while his other sister, Merilee, watches.

▼ SGT Robert Caldwell hugs his girlfriend, Danielle Zagoronde, as his son, Aryean, reaches out for him.



SPC KIRBY RIDER, 115TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT



SGT ERIC A. RUTHERFORD, OREGON MILITARY DEPARTMENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ORNG SFC Roland Howard greets his son Addison, after arriving at the Chiles Center on the University of Portland campus.

▲ ORNG TSGT Mick Gremaund holds his daughter Lucy, after returning from a six-month deployment to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.

◀ SPC Travis Kramer kisses his son, Ashton, after meeting with his wife, Jill, at the demobilization ceremony in Eugene, OR.



SGT ERIC A. RUTHERFORD, OREGON MILITARY DEPARTMENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS



TS/SGT NICK CHOY, OREGON NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS



TS/SGT NICK CHOY, OREGON NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# third time around

## Courage and Experience Help Family With Deployment No. 3

STORY BY RACHEL LATHAM  
PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE INMAN



The Latham Family will rely on their experience to make their third deployment go a bit easier. **Right:** SFC Ken and Rachel Latham will use Guard programs to stay resilient during their upcoming deployment.

A few months after my husband returned from his second deployment to Iraq, we started to hear the rumblings and rumors of an upcoming deployment with his new unit. We were still at the reintegration stage from the previous deployment and I couldn't imagine the mental shift back to pre-deployment thinking.

We had just come through 18 months of Active Duty and were trying to find our footing and settle into a "normal" routine. (Normal for us is four busy children, two big dogs, two princess cats and six funny chickens.) Despite my hoping that something would change, the months have slipped by at an alarming rate, and we are, in fact, right on the doorstep of deployment No. 3. My husband, SFC Kenneth Latham, is deploying with the 230th Sustainment Brigade out of Chattanooga, TN, in 2011. Are we ready? Yes and no.

Having been through two deployments already, we have learned some important lessons that can make the third deployment a little bit easier. On the flip side, we know how hard it can be, how long a year can be and just how challenging the whole process can be. It's not something that ever becomes easy or normal. You don't just get used to it. Each deployment brings different challenges.

### Trial by fire

Our first deployment was a mystery. I was ignorant of the process and what to expect. We lived far from the unit, so I had no connection with the Families. The only information I did have was from my husband and what filtered to me through the Family Readiness Group (FRG) phone chain.

My husband was home briefly for the birth of our fourth child. Our twins were 6 years old at the time, and our oldest daughter was 8. On a wintry day in February he flew out, leaving me at home with four children.



I can't stop deployment, I can't stop the challenges that come with deployment but I can control my response to those challenges.

For deployment No. 3, the baby will be 7, the twins will turn 13 and our oldest will turn 15. I anticipate the shift from being physically exhausted caring for small children to being emotionally exhausted guiding somewhat older children.

### The lines are open

As the weeks tick by, we try to prepare the children by having frequent, honest discussions with them. We are open and honest about deployment, without overloading them on the doom and gloom. We want them mentally prepared, but also confident that their daddy is well trained and capable.

We talk about how we'll communicate while he's away. That will be primarily by using Skype, Facebook, email, letters and packages. We have a Family project to work on while he's away—starting restoration on a sailboat—and we plan sending pictures of the project to him overseas. Our Family goal is to be sailing together the summer he returns.

I sold our home in Virginia and moved with our children and dog back to our home in Tennessee. This was truly home to us, and a place where we had Family support. I had little contact with the unit, and I dealt with the day-to-day trials to the best of my ability. I was too busy to realize that there were resources out there available to me, if only I were to look.

Fast-forward to deployment No. 2. The baby was 5 years old, the twins 11, and our oldest was 13. My husband was assigned to a local unit in the community. We knew the people and were deeply involved in the community and our FRG.

### Lay of the land

Since we were local, I held various positions in support of our FRG. I became informed and educated. I attended briefings and learned about the wide array of information and resources available to Families and Soldiers. That deployment still had its challenges, but with our church Family, community support and military resources, I learned we were not alone.

We are very close to deployment No. 3 now. My husband is assigned to yet a different unit that is farther away. I do not know the people, nor am I a part of that local community. Despite that, I am seeking to become involved. I have learned the value of being proactive in understanding resources and deployment issues. I expect to have challenges with the children, for appliances to break down, and for a myriad of things to go wrong. Because of this, I want to be prepared.

As much as we prepare the children, we have to prepare ourselves. Ken's greatest concerns for the deployment are about what could happen to us while he's away, and being unable to help, and also for the young Soldiers under him on his mission. For me, that means making sure the practical issues are taken care of and spending time with Ken. Deployment is such an emotional challenge. I plan to pass the time during this deployment by taking care of my Family to the best of my ability, writing, gardening and exercising. Ken plans on much of the same—going to the gym, sleeping, reading and taking classes between missions.

### More ready than ever

On the practical side, I take the paperwork side of deployment seriously. I understand what Ken gives me, why I need it and where to file it. I will apply for the Our Military Kids grants at the appropriate time. I will file appropriate letters by certified mail with our creditors. I understand TRICARE and how to use it. I will be aware of the unit activities and make an effort to participate. I will search MilitaryOneSource for answers when I need them. These are all choices, because I understand now the resources that are available whether we live near or far from the unit.

So, our journey begins, with preparations and prayerful hearts. We try to take what we have learned both practically and emotionally as we apply it to this next deployment. 📌

To learn more about resources available to you and your Family, check out [MilitaryOneSource.com](http://MilitaryOneSource.com) for the Deployment Guide and [OurMilitaryKids.org](http://OurMilitaryKids.org) for more information on grants for kids.

# your perfect garden

Helpful Tips for Creating a Peaceful Retreat

BY ERIN SORROW

Spring is finally here. The warm weather beckons Families out of their homes and into the fresh air. So grab a shovel and start digging.

Gardening is an activity that will beautify your lawn and allow for Family bonding time. What kid doesn't enjoy playing in the dirt? Then, as spring turns into summer, your Family can sit back and marvel at the beautiful flowers and plants that bloom.

Some people may be intimidated by the seemingly daunting task of designing, creating and planting a garden. But this article lays out the foundation for building a tranquil and peaceful retreat in your own backyard.

## Location and inspiration

As a designer, I love that a garden can be created anywhere there is soil.

You can create a unique space all your own, in any size or shape. You are not limited to the backyard. Those narrow slivers along the side of your property might be the perfect size for a secret garden. An outdoor deck could house a few potted herbs or flowers.

Wherever you decide to plant your garden, be sure to include bits of inspiration from places you've seen and loved. You want to nurture and maintain a garden that invokes positive emotions. A snow-peaked mountain might elicit feelings of relaxation. Or perhaps you daydream of lying in a brookside retreat. Gather pictures and memories of places you've been. Inspiration for designing a garden is everywhere.

## Start with a sustainable garden

Once you've roused your imagination, and you have the perfect spot picked out, it's time to start putting together the planting plan. Your design could incorporate any or all of these plant types: trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines, perennials, bulbs or annuals. Sun, soil, moisture and maintenance are all things to consider for your plant selection.

One important item to remember during this process is sustainability. A sustainable garden is not only better for the environment, but it's easier on your wallet. Organic amendments may cost more up front, but over time, your garden will need less of the amendments. Therefore, you save money over the long term.

## Be flexible

Your garden is a living, breathing environment. And, like us, it will grow and change through the years. A well-planned garden will provide surprise and delight season after season for years to come. Take pictures frequently. This can help you when planning for next year. But, the most important thing to remember when growing a garden is to have fun. 

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◀ Erin Sorrow is the lead designer at Gardens of Babylon, a Nashville-based landscaping company. She holds a degree in landscape architecture from the University of Georgia.

## Budget and Planning

Design your garden based on the amount of space allotted and your priorities, style and preferences. The ideal retreat doesn't have to be created all at once. It can be implemented in phases. Start by planting trees and shrubs—they take the longest to grow. Plan for future paths, structures, fences and ponds, as your budget allows. Concrete, pea gravel, pavers and stone are all great choices for a path.

No matter what design you envision, it's smart to lay out and plan the garden arrangement before you buy anything. If you're not a fan of graph paper and circle templates, grab a few chairs and buckets, then position them around the yard. They can symbolize the location of each plant and shrub. Bed edges and paths can be represented with a garden hose.

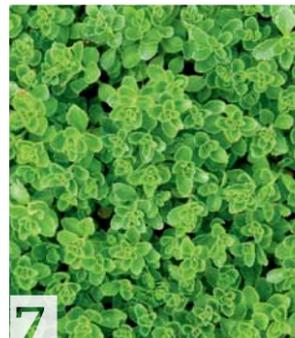
Having a plan allows you to stay on track and, at the same time, incorporate spontaneity. For example, if you find discounted plants at the store, you can consult your plan to see if you have room in the layout for additional plants. Keep in mind, though, overbuying can lead to frustration. An overcrowded garden is hard to keep healthy. Plan enough space for your plants to grow to maturity.



# Tried & True Performers

Choosing the perfect plant can be a chore. This list of trees, shrubs and perennials makes a good starting point for anyone planning a garden.

- 1 HOLLY**  
Great for bird lovers.
- 2 DAYLILY**  
An endless choice of colors.
- 3 PACHYSANDRA**  
This dark, lush, shade-loving ground cover is also drought-tolerant.
- 4 LAVENDER**  
A very resilient herb used for perfume and cooking.
- 5 CONEFLOWER**  
Also known as Echinacea. It's available in a wide range of heights and colors.
- 6 HOSTA**  
Everyone's favorite.
- 7 SEDUM**  
It can add texture to a rock garden or perennial border.



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## YOUR GARDEN CALENDAR

MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Use the warm days in March to get outside and start cleaning. Remove winter mulch from perennials. It's a good idea to keep a garden journal from year to year. You may want to get your intentions and goals on paper or review the previous year's observations, successes and failures.	Time to green up that lawn. Aerate, spread your compost and overseed in time for May showers. Prune flowering shrubs immediately after blooming. Perennials can be divided and transplanted once growth is 3–4 inches. Continue fertilizing, top-dressing and mulching.	Finish planting before summer arrives and the cooler temperatures disappear. Spend some time pinching back perennials for height control. Prune off any foliage damaged by a late frost. Weeding is a must right now.	Get on a regular watering regimen now. Pay extra attention to new plants, and don't let them dry out. Pruning, staking and weeding are in store over the next few months. Any transplants done now should be cut back first. Summer flowering plants can be cut back for height control and to delay/extend blooming.

## Common Soil Amendments

Research shows us that a majority of plant problems are caused by poor soil. So as a preventive measure, add generous amounts of compost and other organic matter to help improve the soil structure. Here are a few soil supplements that help build a sturdy foundation for your plants.

**Compost** – A term for homemade and commercially available yard and/or kitchen waste. It's the most sustainable choice for amending your soil.

**Mushroom Compost** – Sometimes comes packaged with other ingredients like horse manure or sphagnum peat moss. Pay attention to the salt content—it can be high.

**Composted Manure** – Be certain the manure has been composted at high enough temperatures to kill weed seeds. If you are using it for food production, make sure it's from organically fed animals.

**Worm Castings** – Or worm manure. Extremely beneficial and hard to overuse. Highly recommended for indoor and outdoor plants of all types.

**Sphagnum Peat Moss** – Sterile and weed-free, peat moss helps aerate clay soil, increasing drainage. Choose a Canadian sphagnum peat moss in bulk bales, not to be confused with bags of dark black muck peat.



# quick & delicious

## Four Dishes Your Family Will Love

BY TESSA SMITH

It's the time of year to unwind and pamper yourself. So, make life a little easier by making recipes that can be tossed into a Crock-Pot and made ahead of time. With that in mind, I've provided a beef burgundy recipe that is simple to make and absolutely delicious. I've also added a few side dishes and desserts to round out your meal and have you looking forward to leftovers. 



### Beef Burgundy

- 2 lbs. round or chuck steak
- 1 tbsp. Kitchen Bouquet
- ¼ cup Cream of Rice cereal (dry)
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 2 cups onions (sliced)
- 1–2 cloves garlic (to taste)
- 2 tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. pepper (to taste)
- ⅛ tsp. marjoram
- ⅛ tsp. thyme (I love fresh)
- 1 cup burgundy or dry red wine
- 1 can mushrooms and broth (6 oz.)

First trim the excess fat from the meat, and cut into 1-inch cubes. Place in a 2-quart casserole dish and toss with Kitchen Bouquet (for this, I suggest using a Crock-Pot—this recipe is great for this and easy to prepare and set aside). Next, stir in the Cream of Rice cereal, wash and remove the skin from the carrots and cut into small pieces and slice the onions; add all to the meat. Mix the seasonings together next and add to the meat mix. Add the burgundy wine and mushrooms (don't drain them). Cover tightly and bake at 350 degrees for 2½ hours or until done; stir every 30 minutes. Add more burgundy wine if dry. Once done, serve with noodles, rice or potato dish.

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### Simple Parmesan Potatoes

- 6 large potatoes
- ¼ cup flour
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. pepper
- ⅓ cup butter

Peel the potatoes and cut into small pieces (quarters). Combine the flour, cheese, pepper and salt in a plastic bag. Moisten the potatoes with water and shake a few times in the bag until they are coated completely with the cheese mixture. Melt butter in 9x13 baking pan or dish. Place the potatoes in the pan and bake at 375 degrees for 1 hour. Turn once during baking.

*NOTE: These freeze great for easy meals throughout the week.*

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### The Easiest Peach Cobbler Recipe Ever

- 1 can slices cling peaches, drained (13 oz.)
- ¾–1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. honey
- 1 box Jiffy Yellow Cake Mix (9 oz.)
- ½ cup melted butter (1 stick)

Spread the drained peaches in a baking dish. Drizzle the honey on top of the peaches. Sprinkle the brown sugar on top. Make sure to get around the edges and in between the peaches. Sprinkle the cake mix evenly over the peaches. Melt butter and pour over the cake mix; all mix doesn't have to be moistened. Bake in preheated oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until brown.

*What do you think of these recipes?*  
Contact [editor@guardfoundations.com](mailto:editor@guardfoundations.com).



TESSA SMITH IS THE WIFE OF 1LT DAVID B. SMITH OF DCO, 1/141ST INFANTRY, TEXAS ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.

### Cool Coleslaw

- 2½ lbs. shredded cabbage
- 1 shredded carrot
- ½ medium size onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped (optional)
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup tarragon vinegar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 cup sugar

Mix together cabbage, carrot, onion and green pepper; set aside. Mix together oil, mayo, vinegar, salt and sugar. Pour mix over cabbage mixture. Ready to serve or refrigerate for later.





# 5 diet myths exposed

## The Truth Behind the Most Common Food Tall Tales

BY 2LT HOLLY DI GIOVINE

The amount of nutrition information available to the consumer can be overwhelming, and the content can be misleading. Tips taken out of context can result in avoidance of entire food groups, temporary results or—most frustrating of all—lack of results. To help arm you with accurate information, I'm exploring a few common diet myths, so that you can identify what isn't entirely true and learn a more effective approach to a healthier, trimmer you.

2LT Holly Di Giovine of the South Carolina Army National Guard earned her bachelor's in Nutrition and Fitness from the University of Missouri and her fitness certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM). 2LT Di Giovine works as a personal trainer and as a fit camp leader. You can contact 2LT Di Giovine with your fitness questions at [Holly@HollyPT.com](mailto:Holly@HollyPT.com).

SGT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE

### MYTH Sugar-Free Foods Are Healthier

The grocery store is full of “sugar-free” variations of full-sugar foods. “Sugar-free” is defined by the FDA as “a food that contains less than 0.5 g of sugars.” The artificial sweeteners used in sugar-free foods are calorie-free, are generally approved for diabetic consumption and do not promote cavities. But the drawbacks of these sweeteners, which include aspartame (Equal), saccharin (Sweet’N Low) and sucralose (Splenda), are a topic of much debate among researchers and the FDA. Their current ruling is to consume in moderation.

Perhaps more important than their worth is how these products fit into a healthy diet. A healthy diet—one that promotes weight loss or optimal-weight maintenance—will consist of a variety of whole, nonprocessed foods—fruits, veggies, beans, lean meats, whole grains. A typical sugar-free food is packaged, is processed and includes a long list of ingredients that are difficult to pronounce.

Compare an apple to a sugar-free Oreo: two sugar-free Oreos provide 0 grams of sugar and 100 calories, while the apple has 13 grams of sugar and 65 calories. Sure, the apple has more sugar, but it has fewer calories, is high in fiber and has other health-promoting benefits. Plus, you're less likely to reach for another apple, whereas you may have trouble closing the bag of cookies, resulting in consuming more calories overall—especially if you use the justification that they're sugar-free.

### MYTH Cut Out Carbs

Carbohydrates have received a bad rap in the last decade, but in large part are just misunderstood. Carbs are the body's primary source of energy and come in either simple or complex form. Simple carbs are easily broken down and absorbed into the bloodstream, causing blood sugar to spike. Complex carbs take longer to digest and provide vitamins, minerals and fiber.

The average diet should include 40–60 percent complex carbohydrates from

whole grains and legumes, and healthy simple carbs like fruits and vegetables. Stay away from “empty” calories—those found in foods like candy, soda, syrup and table sugar. Read the sidebar “The Bread for You” for more guidance on how to pick the best whole-grain products.

Keep in mind, if you cut out carbs completely, your body will be forced to use protein as an energy source, reducing the amount of protein available to support structural and lean muscle synthesis. This can ultimately result in decreasing lean mass, thereby lowering your metabolism.

### MYTH Eat Three Square Meals a Day

For the fastest metabolism, you must provide your body with energy to burn all day long. If you eat only three times, you will experience times of feast or famine, where your body will either store excess food or go hungry due to large gaps between meals. To keep your engines running on high, eat 100–300 calories every three hours for females and four hours for males.

### MYTH Don't Eat Past 8:00 p.m.

This long-standing myth originated from the mindless eating that occurs after dinner. This is a dangerous habit because often the calories are unnecessary and come from undesirable (snack) foods.

If you stick with a basic daily plan of three meals at 300–400 calories, and two to three snacks at 100–150 calories, evenly spaced at three hours apart, a final after-hours snack should be fine. In fact, if you have a 100-calorie, high-protein, low-carb snack at night, the thermic effect of food—the energy required for digestion—will kick in and keep you from waking up starving.

Ideally, you'll be on a schedule that allows you to eat dinner at a reasonable hour, but in the event of an evening workout or late work-night, exercise portion control and choose clean food. Good choices are chicken or fish with grilled veggies for a late dinner, or Greek yogurt with blueberries if you need a snack. Step away from the chips and cookies.

### MYTH Eating Less Will Result in Weight Loss

In general, in order to lose weight you must consume fewer calories than you burn. Unfortunately, too often, I see this rule taken to the extreme, where clients skip meals or eat fewer than 1,200 calories per day. When you don't eat enough to provide your body with energy to support its daily functions, your body responds by lowering its basal metabolism. That's generally what happens when you reach a weight-loss plateau—your body has adjusted to your habits.

When you repeatedly tell your body that you do not need food, any time you eat slightly more, the remainder will be stored as fat, as part of your body's “reserves.” Those who successfully lose or maintain their desired weight are masters of regulating their intake at a steady level at all times.

# Read It Right

## THE NUTRITION LABEL



## (Not So) Refined Sugar

**High-fructose corn syrup**, sometimes called corn sugar, has become a popular ingredient in sodas and fruit-flavored drinks. In fact, high-fructose corn syrup is the most common added sweetener in processed foods and beverages.

Some research studies have linked consumption of large amounts of any type of added sugar—not just high-fructose corn syrup—to such health problems as weight gain, dental cavities, poor nutrition, and increased triglyceride levels, which can boost your heart attack risk.

Recommendations from the American Heart Association—not a part of official U.S. dietary guidelines—say that most American **women should consume no more than 100 calories a day from added sugar from any source**, and that most American **men should consume no more than 150 calories a day from added sugar**, and that even less is better. That's about 6 teaspoons of added sugar for women and 9 for men.

## The Bread for You

Here is a simple list of prerequisites when buying a loaf of bread. If the product fails to meet any one of these, put it back on the shelf.

**Fiber:** Must contain at least 3 grams of fiber per 100 calories. This is an easy way to quickly rule out several options.

**Ingredient list:** Many items will claim to be “whole grain,” but the truth lies on the back of the package. Avoid breads that are enriched, bleached, or anything other than 100% whole grain or whole wheat flour.

**Protein:** Like fiber, ensure your bread provides at least 3 grams of protein per 100-calorie serving.



SGT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE

## TIPS FOR REDUCING SUGAR INTAKE



**Avoid sugary sodas.** Drink water or other unsweetened beverages instead.



**Snack wisely.** Snack on vegetables, fruit, low-fat cheese, whole-grain crackers, and low-fat, low-calorie yogurt instead of candy, pastries and cookies.



**Choose breakfast cereals carefully.** Although healthy breakfast cereals can contain added sugar to make them more appealing to children, skip the non-nutritious, sugary and frosted cereals.



**Eat fewer processed and packaged foods,** such as sweetened grains like cookies and cakes and some microwaveable meals.

SOURCE: MAYOCLINIC.COM

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/ FELIX BRANDU/ DENNIS DESILVA/ ZONECREATIVE/ JOHANEL/ BURWELL AND BURWELL

**Serving Size**  
Note serving size and use measuring utensils to ensure portion control.

**Servings per Container**  
This is especially important to examine when consuming drinks or anything that comes in a bag with multiple portions, like snack foods or pasta.

**Cholesterol**  
Limit to less than 300 mg per day.

**Sodium**  
The average adult can consume up to 2,300 mg per day; it's easy to reach that limit when consuming processed food and eating out.

**Dietary Fiber**  
Focusing on consuming 25 grams per day will help increase the quality of your food.

**Ingredient List**  
Look for short lists with words you can pronounce. Items are listed in order from greatest to least amounts. Most words ending in “ose” mean it's a sugar. Put it back if it says bleached, enriched or white. Read the sidebar “The Bread for You” for more tips.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Cup	
Servings Per Container 10	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b>	120
Calories from Fat	20
% Daily Value	
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 290mg	12%
<b>Potassium</b> 110mg	3%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Soluble Fiber 1g	
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 4g	
Vitamin A	20%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	10%
Iron	20%
Thiamin	20%
Riboflavin	20%
Niacin	20%
Vitamin B6	20%
Folic Acid	20%
Phosphorus	10%
Magnesium	8%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

**Ingredients:** Whole grain rolled oats, sugar, natural and artificial flavor, salt, calcium carbonate, guar gum, oat flour, caramel color, sucralose, niacinamide, reduced iron

**Total Calories per Serving**  
A frozen pizza seems acceptable at 350 calories per serving, but when you multiply that times the number of servings in the whole pizza, it may add up to over 1,000 calories.

**Saturated Fat**  
Limit to less than 7% total daily intake.

**Trans Fat**  
Should be limited as much as possible; less than 1% overall daily caloric intake is best.

**Protein**  
20%–30% of your daily intake should come from protein.

**Percentage of Daily Value**  
5% or less is low; 20% or more is high.

# elite training

When SFC Andrea Bell first stepped into a CrossFit gym six years ago, she wasn't sure what to expect. A lifelong athlete, Bell has always considered herself a strong and capable woman. But she had no idea that CrossFit would boost her strength, confidence and athletic abilities even more. After her first session, she was hooked.

"CrossFit is nicknamed the 'sport of fitness' for a reason," Bell said. "The international CrossFit winner is coined the fittest man or woman in the world."

Sounds intense, right? That's because it is. The principal strength and conditioning program for police academies, tactical operations teams, military special operations units, champion martial artists and other elite professional athletes, CrossFit is designed to be one of the most intense workouts imaginable. And for participants like SFC Bell, there's definitely something addicting about the challenge that CrossFit offers.

According to CrossFit.com, CrossFit "delivers a fitness that is, by design, broad, general, and inclusive. Our specialty is not specializing." In short, CrossFit is a combination of several sports that test an athlete's strength, balance and endurance.

"As soon as I tried CrossFit, I was honestly just addicted," Bell says. "You never get bored with it because it's so challenging. Plus, every workout is

different. Some days I'm walking on my hands, other days I'm doing Olympic weight-lifting or running sprints that leave me breathless and winded. One thing is for sure: Every day is exhausting and it's grueling. I love it."

## Getting started

It might sound like CrossFit is only for people in tiptop shape, but that's not the case. According to CrossFit.com, "The CrossFit program is designed for universal scalability making it the perfect application for any committed individual regardless of experience. We've used our same routines for elderly individuals with heart disease and cage fighters one month out from televised bouts. We scale load and intensity; we don't change programs."

For Bell, one of the most attractive qualities of CrossFit is that, in a CrossFit gym, everyone has a personal trainer.

"It's not like you're going into a regular gym and forcing yourself to run on the treadmill," she says. "Every single person who walks through the gym doors

## SFC Andrea Bell Tones Up With CrossFit

BY MEGAN PACELLA

has a trainer who is certified in CrossFit, and they know precisely how to develop you. They are 100 percent professionally trained to get you fit."

Whether you're a combat Soldier or a Guard wife, CrossFit is designed to help you fulfill your fitness potential—without overwhelming you. After working with a CrossFit trainer for several years, Bell is in the best shape of her life, and she has become one of the top female CrossFit participants in the world.

## Confidence booster

Bell is an Active Duty Soldier who works as a team leader for recruiting and retention in her civilian career. After just a few weeks of attending CrossFit sessions, Bell noticed a boost in her confidence at work, at home and in her military service.

"One thing I've noticed since I started doing it is the amount of confidence that grows within you," she says. "For me to be in the military recruiting field, confidence is huge. I'm a team leader, so I have a team of recruiters working under me, and I'm sure they would all say that I'm extremely confident and strong-willed in the workplace."

Although the act of completing challenging CrossFit workouts is enough to boost anyone's confidence, Bell also takes pride in her success as an elite athlete. Last year, she qualified



"As far as military training goes, CrossFit makes the [APFT] seem like a warm-up."

—SFC Andrea Bell, Soldier and CrossFit athlete

## CrossFit Exercises

Wondering what a typical CrossFit session would involve? It could consist of the following exercises:

- Pull-ups
- Box squats
- Kettlebell swings
- Rope climbing
- Handstand push-ups
- Shoulder press
- Walking lunge
- Ring dips
- Running sprints

PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY HUGHES

for the annual CrossFit international competition, where she placed 33rd in the women's division.

"That's 33rd in the world!" she exclaims.

"The international competition was by far the best moment of my training," she adds. "It was held at an outdoor facility in California, and there were thousands of people there watching and cheering. It was so surreal! It made me feel like I'm a professional athlete, because I actually had fans."

Another huge confidence booster is the amount of strength a CrossFit athlete builds over time. Because the workouts are designed to combine cardiovascular exercise with Olympic weight-lifting workouts, CrossFit participants gain massive amounts of strength—which, in turn, makes them feel more confident. And that confidence can help men and women in the Guard develop into better, stronger Soldiers.

"As far as military training goes, CrossFit makes the [APFT] seem like a warm-up," SFC Bell says. "It's amazing how prepared I am. I feel like I could probably be prepared for almost anything they could throw at me [in training]—even if it's combat-related. If I had to throw a 200-pound man over my shoulder and run out of a dangerous combat zone, I feel like I could do that. CrossFit puts me in that place physically and mentally."

### Building strength

A six-year devotee to CrossFit, Bell can't imagine quitting on her own accord. However, she had to take a break from training because of medical complications that arose when she became pregnant. After a nine-month pregnancy and a few months nursing a newborn, Bell had gained more than 70 pounds.

"I've never considered quitting CrossFit unless I'm 100 percent forced to by life circumstance, military service or injury," she says. "That sort of came up when I got pregnant; I had to take a



"CrossFit gives me the confidence and the will to keep going every day."

—SFC Andrea Bell

year off. But I came back to it as soon as I was ready, even after gaining 73 pounds. Within four months of CrossFit training, I lost every pound of that weight that I put on. It's a fat-burning, muscle-building workout that just whips you into shape."

One benefit for women, especially women who are living on their own, is that CrossFit helps you perfect and build strength for movements you make every day. For example, certain weight-lifting exercises involve squatting or lifting weight over your head. Learning how to make these movements properly can prevent people who live alone from getting injured around the house.

For Bell, CrossFit is a way to be a better wife, mother, Soldier and recruiter.

"CrossFit gives me the confidence and the will to keep going every day," she says. "I am a mom, I work full time and I take care of a house—the days never end. As a recruiter, I go preach to my team and our prospective Soldiers that you can have it all, and the military aids that. Thanks to CrossFit, I get to live that life. If you have the will and the desire to get something done, you'll do it. I hate the whole 'I don't have time' line. I hate that because there's always something to fit in—and CrossFit is the perfect thing to make time for."

Not every CrossFit participant will become a major competitor, but one thing is certain: CrossFit will give you the confidence you need to succeed at whatever you put your mind to. 📌

# boost your immunity

## Learn Ways to Beat an Illness

BY STEPHANIE INMAN, NEWS EDITOR

Your immune system is the first line of defense against an infection or virus. Keeping it strong and solid helps fend off unwanted visitors, like the flu or cold. Children, especially, need extra protection because they encounter foreign agents on a daily basis. Try these tips for improving your immune system.

### Look at the diet

One of the most crucial ways to boost your immunity is keep a close watch on your diet.

"People need to make sure they have healthy, well-balanced diets," said Rachel Mehr, M.D., a primary care internist with the Nashville Medical Group in Nashville, TN. However, that's easier said than done for those with busy lives. So focus on fruits and vegetables when trying to "add more punch" to your white blood cells. Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that can significantly build up your immune system.

According to WebMD, antioxidants are vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that aid in protecting and repairing cells that fight off infections. The three major antioxidant vitamins are beta-carotene, vitamin C and vitamin E, which are mostly found in very colorful fruits and vegetables. When ingesting these immune boosters, eat them raw or lightly steamed for best results.

If you aren't a huge fan of these two food groups, herbs and supplements can help take up the slack. But approach these with caution. A Harvard Medical School publication examined a few supplements that claim to be the solution to a weak immune system, but actually may not live up to their promises. Echinacea, for instance, shouldn't be taken on a long-term basis to prevent colds, and it may result in serious side effects.

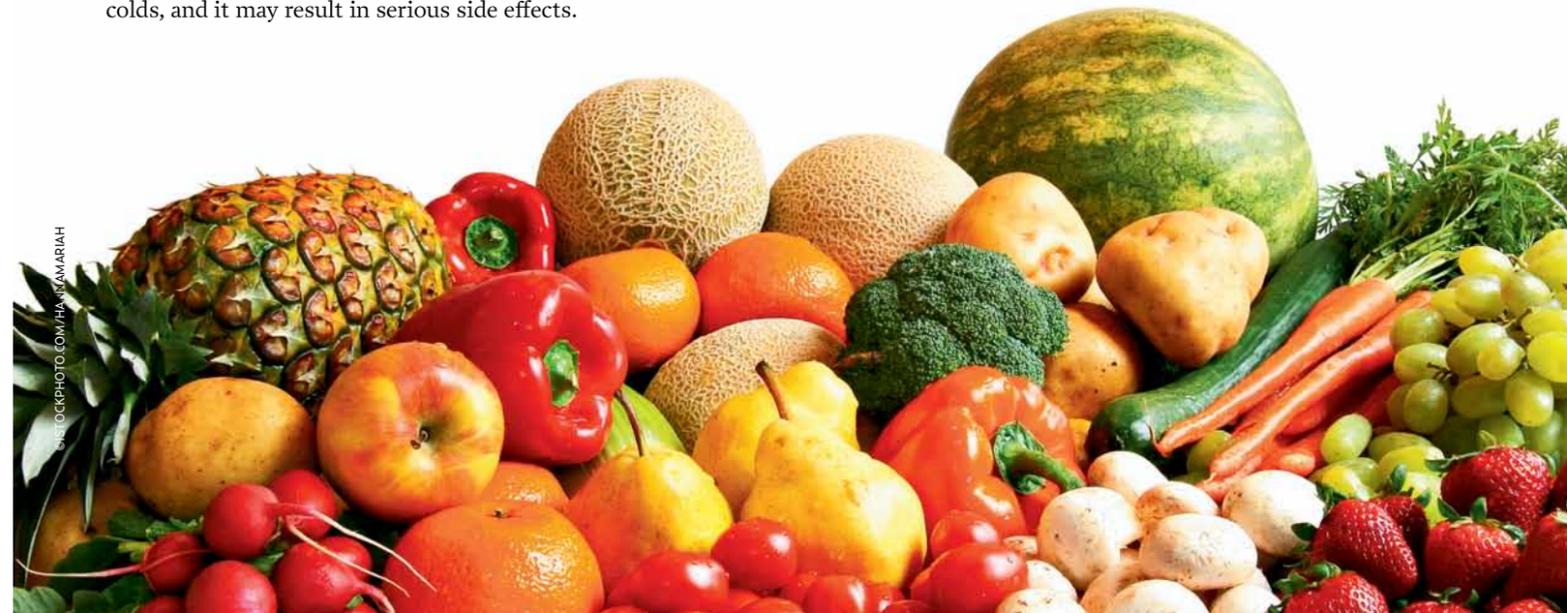
### Relax a little

Although many people wish they could avoid it, stress is a daily occurrence. But steering clear of it may prove to be the best medicine for strengthening the immune system (for more information on relieving stress, see pages 26–27).

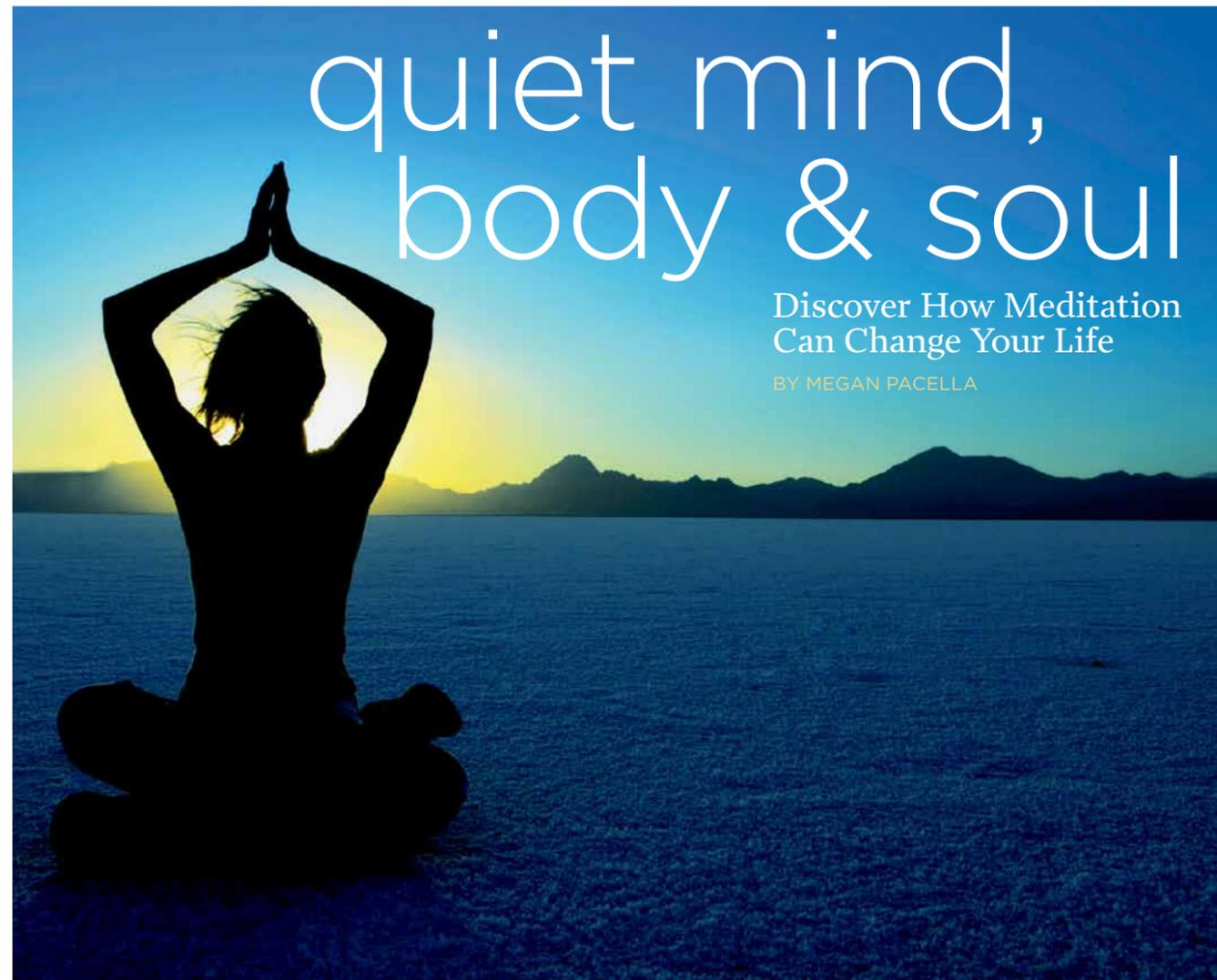
"Modern medicine, which once treated the connection between emotions and physical health with skepticism, has come to appreciate the closely linked relationship of mind and body," the Harvard publication states.

A research team from The Ohio State University examined the interconnection between stressful situations and the cellular immune system. Their findings suggest that psychological stress breaks down the communication between the nervous system, endocrine system and immune system. When the communication is interrupted, it causes each system to lose effectiveness.

So when you start worrying about bills, work or the kids, remember to relax. Your immune system will thank you. 📌



TIMOTHY HUGHES



Everybody has days where they feel so stressed out, it seems like the list of to-dos and shoulds will never end. And as most Guard Soldiers and Families can attest, the pressure only increases when a Family member is deployed.

Whether you're trying to run a household on your own or support your Family on one income, or you simply worry about the safety of your Soldier, one thing is clear: You have to learn to relax—and meditation is a good way to do it.

The history of meditation stretches back 5,000 years to when ancient civilizations took part in meditation exercises called “tantra.” Legend has it

that hunters and gatherers discovered the different states of consciousness by gazing into the flames of their fires. Through the early history of the practice, meditation spread to Eastern religions like Buddhism.

Meditation grew popular in Western societies in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, people of all religions use meditative prayers to focus on their spirituality. People also practice meditation for a number of health reasons, including quitting smoking, losing weight, alleviating pain, and easing stress and depression.

“Anyone who feels like their emotions get carried away with stress should

try meditation,” recommends Linda Manning, a clinical psychologist at the Vanderbilt Center for Integrative Health. “If you want to feel in control and able to calm down, and to use your thinking capacity better, try meditation.”

Meditation might sound complicated or difficult, but the practice is actually very simple. It focuses on the action of breathing deeply, focusing on your feelings and sensations, and quieting your mind.

#### Quiet your mind

When your stress levels increase, it can be hard to turn off your mind—and many times, the thoughts you have are

negative. Meditation can help curb those mental reminders to bathe the kids, empty the dishwasher, call your mother and vacuum the rug. By training your mind and body to accept your feelings, you will begin to silence that pesky voice.

“Through meditation, we can begin to focus our attention and learn to accept the thoughts and feelings we may have,” Manning says.

**“I cannot think of a group of people who more deserve time and compassion for themselves than Soldiers and their Families.”**

—Linda Manning,  
clinical psychologist,  
Vanderbilt Center for  
Integrative Health

\* \* \*

While some people think meditation should help you to stop thinking, or get rid of bad thoughts, that's not exactly the case. The point of meditation is to increase concentration, strengthen your mind and find a deeper sense of well-being through a state of deep relaxation. Meditation also boosts mental health by increasing the serotonin levels in your brain. This influences your mood and behavior, and helps prevent depression.

“You become able to accept what's coming up, so you can slow your life and quiet those stressful thoughts,” Manning says.

#### Relax your body

Many healthy people use meditation as a way to reduce physical stress. For some people, daily motions or physical sensations can trigger stressful memories or flashbacks. Meditation can

help you get to know your body better, so that you are able to notice the physical sensations that will send you into a whirlwind of negative thinking.

“We're all under so much stress, and that causes everything to move very quickly,” Manning says. “Soldiers who have been in combat situations sometimes experience physical reactions to things they've experienced. In a way, their bodies become the enemy, because bodily sensations can remind them of being in danger.”

For example, an increased heart rate could trigger a flashback of being in danger for Soldiers who have experienced combat. Meditation is a healthy and helpful way to focus on your increased heart rate and control your reaction to it. This is also helpful for Families of deployed Guard members, who spend their days in a flurry of running the household and caring for the Family.

Meditation can also help improve your posture and, in turn, ease back and neck pain. Other benefits to your body include: keeping blood pressure at a healthy level, reducing the risk of heart disease, helping with weight loss, and enhancing energy and strength.

#### Calm your soul

Do you ever feel like you're moving so fast that you can hardly pause to feel any happiness? The practice of meditating can help you focus your mind on the things worth noticing.

“When you feel like there is never enough time or energy, there is very little opportunity to just slow down and get in touch with one's self or one's environment,” Manning says. “For example, if I can become more mindful through meditation, I can actually stop to notice the unique qualities of a flower, and that sort of gets me back in touch with awe and my own soul.”

Meditation can lead to a state of consciousness that brings serenity, clarity and bliss. Before you know it, you will experience fewer stressful thoughts,

#### In a Minute



Setting aside a few hours a week to meditate is nearly impossible for most Soldiers and their Families—but that doesn't mean you can't do it. Follow these three steps for your own at-home meditation routine:

**Close your eyes.** Find a place where you can be alone and feel relaxed. Sit in your favorite chair, at the foot of your bed or on a floor mat and close your eyes. This shuts out the distractions surrounding you, so that you can focus on yourself.

**Breathe.** Draw in a deep breath, and let it out slowly. Focus intensely on your breathing. Feel the air you inhale, pause, and then let it out. Continue to breathe in and out, focusing on each breath.

**Push out distractions.** Whether you are a meditation newbie or you've been practicing your breathing for months, you may find your mind wandering. Try not to focus on your grocery list or other pressures. Instead, push intruding thoughts out of your mind and return to your breathing.

After you spend 10 or 15 minutes in a meditative state, slowly open your eyes and relax your muscles for a few minutes before returning to your daily activities.

and you'll feel like you have more time to enjoy your work, your Family and your interests.

“I cannot think of a group of people who more deserve time and compassion for themselves than Soldiers and their Families,” Manning says. “I would love to see them give themselves the gift of meditation, because I know it could improve their lives.”

For more information on meditation and how it can help you, visit [LearningMeditation.com](http://LearningMeditation.com).

# I AM A WARRIOR

By Stephanie Inman, News Editor

## Inside Ashley Crandall's Daily Struggle With PTSD

Specialist Ashley Crandall was silent. The scene in front of her was too mesmerizing for words. Sitting in a tiny Hindu temple deep in Nepal, she watched monks sway back and forth as they chanted. It was a sight very few Americans ever get to witness: a Puja ceremony. Crandall felt her own body move to the beat. The slow murmuring of the chants provided an easy rhythm for her to follow. She closed her dark, almond-shaped eyes and listened. She knew they were praying for her protection. And she would need it.

In a few days, she and 10 other U.S. Soldiers would attempt to climb Mount Lobuche, a 20,075-foot mountain located in the Himalayas. The expedition was called "Soldiers to the Summit." Although the climb would be treacherous, Ashley, 27, was facing an even more deadly obstacle—one she'd been trying to defeat since 2009—post-traumatic stress disorder. Every day was a fight to keep going. On more than one occasion, she had considered ending her life.

But Crandall was resilient. She had been that way even as a child growing up in Salt Lake City, UT, with her mother; father; younger brother, Jed; and younger sister, Annika. When Crandall was 2, her biological parents divorced. She has not seen her biological father since she was 6.





### WARRIOR CHILD

Crandall's mother, Lillian Crandall, said she never had to worry about Ashley. The girl possessed mental toughness and stability well beyond her years. While Crandall's older brother was creating mischief, Ashley was reliable. She exhibited the traits of a fighter and a Warrior.

So Lillian wasn't surprised or worried when, three days after graduating from high school, Crandall enlisted in the Army. But Lillian assumed Ashley would eventually leave the military for another career. Ashley had other plans. For her, being a Soldier wasn't a job. It was a way of life.

"There are some people who are meant for it," Crandall said. "I was definitely born into it. I don't remember even making the decision of going into the Army. I always knew it was going to happen."

In 2001, Crandall attended Basic Combat Training. Next was Advanced Individual Training (AIT), where she trained to be a helicopter mechanic. During her time in AIT, an event occurred that would redefine the meaning of being a Soldier: 9/11. Crandall readied herself for an inevitable deployment.

At age 19, when most girls are attending college parties, Crandall flew to Iraq with the 217th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, in her uniform, with an M4 between her feet.

"During that deployment, we [experienced] oncoming fire, rockets, mortars and grenades. We also saw a lot of enemy casualties. I remember rolling through Baghdad and there were cars on fire. There were bodies in the street."

Despite the ongoing danger overseas, Crandall found

AS MANY AS  
**300,000**  
**{20 PERCENT}**  
OF MILITARY  
**SERVICE MEMBERS**  
WHO HAVE  
RETURNED  
FROM IRAQ OR  
AFGHANISTAN  
HAVE REPORTED  
SYMPTOMS OF  
PTSD OR MAJOR  
DEPRESSION.  
**ONLY HALF OF**  
**THEM HAVE SOUGHT**  
**TREATMENT.**

— 2008 RAND Study



comfort and camaraderie among her fellow Soldiers.

"I loved being out in the middle of the field with the sun shining, just completely absorbed in [my] work," she said. "I would watch an aircraft that's completely unusable be put back together. I took pride in knowing I did that. My squad—we could take an aircraft and tear it down to its transmission in less than 45 minutes. That's completely unheard of nowadays. We knew each other so well that we could work all day and not say a single word to each other."

"Sometimes you like them, sometimes you hate them," she said of her buddies, "but no matter what, they are your Family. My job was to make sure that they all [went] home safely."

After a year overseas, Crandall returned to the U.S. Then, 14 months later, she was again sent to Iraq. During this deployment, like her first, she was on the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART). Her mission was to go out and retrieve downed helicopters, and either repair them or destroy them so that the enemy couldn't use them.

Occasionally, she would enter a crash site before the casualties had been cleared. The experience impacted her severely. But she

couldn't dwell on the losses because there was always another mission requiring her attention.

When Crandall returned from that deployment, she transitioned out of Active Duty into the Utah National Guard. In the Guard, she was no longer a full-time Soldier—she was a civilian as well. This proved to be extremely difficult for a woman who lived and breathed the life of a Soldier.

"I got a civilian job and had a home," she said of her new

▲ From Left: SPC Ashley Crandall (pictured L to R) with her grandfather, father, younger sister and grandmother; Despite their 14-year age difference, Crandall and her younger sister, Annika, are extremely close; Crandall has served three tours overseas.

lifestyle. "I had dogs. I was living a normal life. But I just didn't feel right. I couldn't adjust."

She found a job that allowed her to continue working on helicopters. But she noticed vast differences between the military's methods and those of a private company.

"I would hear 20 times a day, 'Hey, Crandall, remember, you aren't in the military anymore. You are a civilian now. We do it this way,'" she recalled. "I was used to a certain mentality. You work until the job is completed. You don't stop working when the day ends. I felt like I was living a stranger's life."

Crandall had trouble adjusting in other areas of her life as well. For instance, if she was driving down the road and saw bags along the side of the highway, it would trigger memories of possible roadside explosive devices in Iraq, and she would instinctively conduct evasive maneuvers. She was pulled over by police more than once for driving in the middle of the road.

Ultimately, the pressure, stress and confusion of trying to adapt to a new environment became too much for her to handle.

### BREAKING POINT

"I was driving home one day and flipped out," she shared. "I started having a panic attack. I pulled off to the side of the road to call my parents. They basically told me that they couldn't help. This

was beyond what they knew."

She went home and nearly attempted suicide that day. "The only thing that stopped me ... was the thought that my little sister might be the one to find me."

The following morning, Crandall volunteered for the next deployment. She prayed that this would be the solution to her problem. She believed that if she just went back overseas, everything would return to normal.

At first, things did appear to be looking up. In 2008, while she was stationed along the Kuwait/Iraq border, she fell in love with a fellow Soldier. Halfway through her deployment, in August 2008, the couple flew to the U.S. to get married.

On the morning of her wedding, she slipped into a red dress, in keeping with her Chinese heritage, and prepared herself for the day that every girl dreams of. Then she received devastating news: Her grandfather had passed away at 5 that morning.

"He had really been the only one in my Family who supported my decision to stay in the military," she explained. "So losing him was difficult."

On what should've been the happiest day of her life, Crandall replaced her red dress with a black one and prepared to bury her grandfather.

### SOLDIERING ON

But Crandall was trained to overcome hardships. So she went back overseas with her new husband.

One evening that September, in a deserted hangar, Crandall was cornered by a fellow Soldier and sexually assaulted. She decided not to tell her husband about the attack and did not report it. Without any way to process the pain, it became buried deep inside her.

The tension caused a rift in her marriage. By December, she and her husband were hardly on speaking terms. As Christmas approached, she made an effort to repair the relationship. On Christmas Day, she handed her husband a present. He didn't give her one in return. She gathered her courage, braced herself and asked, "Do you love me anymore?"

His response was a crippling "No."

It's difficult for her to say what exactly was the breaking point—the assault, her failed marriage, or perhaps the news that two Soldiers from her prior unit had been killed. In any case, she made up her mind: She didn't want to continue living. She went to the armory in search of a gun. By chance—or fate—she got lost and stumbled onto the mental health clinic building instead.

## PTSD

### The Symptoms

People who've experienced a significant trauma in their life may have PTSD. Andrea Gonzalez, director of psychology for the National Guard Bureau, listed a few of the most common signs a person with PTSD may exhibit:

- Re-experiencing the trauma through flashbacks or nightmares
- Hyper-vigilance or feeling constantly on guard
- Angers easily
- Difficulty relaxing
- Withdrawn behavior or avoidance

To be diagnosed with PTSD, a person must experience these symptoms for more than a month, and the symptoms must have caused significant impairment to their regular routine.

### PTSD WARNING SIGNS

DON'T USUALLY EMERGE UNTIL 3 TO 6 MONTHS AFTER THE TRAUMA.

# Stamping Out the Stigma

Many people suffering from PTSD don't seek help.

The National Guard Bureau is determined to eliminate the fears and the stigma attached.

A study regarding Soldiers returning from Iraq with newly acquired mental problems found that **only four in 10 said they would get help.**

**20%**  
SAY THEY MIGHT NOT GET HELP BECAUSE OF WHAT OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT THINK

**33%**  
SAY THEY WOULD NOT WANT ANYONE ELSE TO KNOW THEY WERE IN THERAPY

"I went to talk to [them] just to get some things off my chest," she said. "And within half an hour ... they sent me to a different post, down in Kuwait, to be hospitalized. They thought that the stresses were more than I could handle on my own. When I got to the hospital in Kuwait, they decided that they didn't have the ability to treat me there."

In early January of 2009, Crandall was medevaced out of Kuwait and sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. She arrived on Jan. 4 and has been there ever since.

To an outsider looking in, Walter Reed Army Medical Center might seem like a fortress. A wire fence wraps around the full length of the perimeter. A guard stands watch at the entrance, checking everyone as they enter and exit. Access to the inside is a privilege.

Inside, many of the scenes are startling—not for what one sees, but for what's missing: outward signs of injury. Many of the patients appear perfectly healthy. That's the nature of PTSD. It doesn't leave outward marks. It dwells within the psyche.

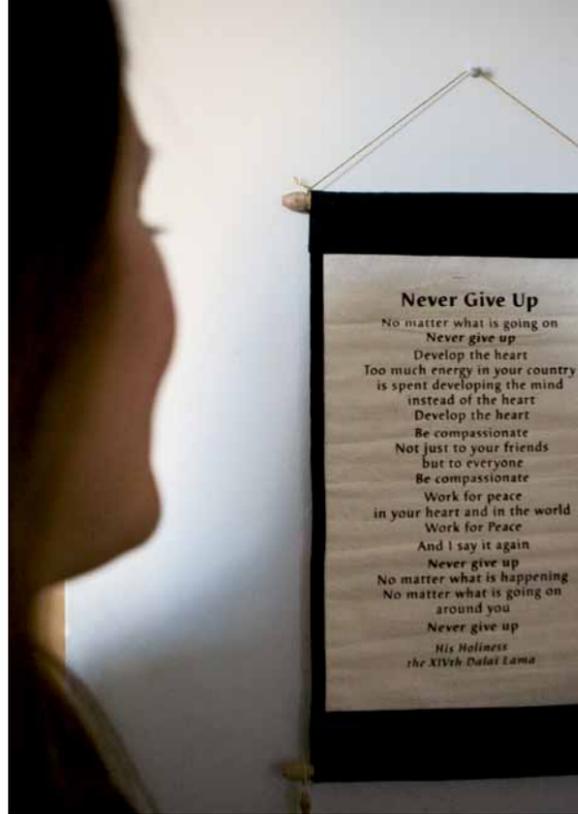
Crandall is a perfect example of this. At first glance, she doesn't exhibit any symptoms. Contrary to common signs, like withdrawn behavior, her nature is warm and friendly. Her room at Walter Reed contradicts any evidence of PTSD as well. It exudes the same welcoming atmosphere. On her refrigerator are crayon drawings from her nephew. Her wall has a tapestry saying "Never Give Up." Based on appearances, she seems like a normal young woman with hopes and dreams.

But after a few hours with her, it's clear that she experiences a level of pain that many of us could never imagine.

"Since I have been here, I don't leave my room unless I have to go to an appointment," she revealed. "I have been here for two years, and most people think I am new because they've never seen me. I don't even go to the chow hall because I can't make myself walk out the door. I don't think a lot of people know what PTSD is. They are still trying to figure out how to treat it. Soldiers don't realize how much it could affect your life."

She often wakes up in the middle of the night drenched in sweat due to nightmares. In the dreams she sees casualties. But instead of unrecognizable faces, she sees the faces of her comrades. The dreams seem frighteningly real to her—down to specific smells.

The nightmares began when Crandall arrived at Walter Reed. After so many years of repressing



▲ Since Jan. 4, 2009, Crandall has lived at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In her room, she hangs reminders to herself to "never give up."

the trauma she had endured, she couldn't ignore it any longer.

"I started talking about one subject, and it was like opening the door to the closet and pulling a shoe box from the bottom," she recalled. "Everything in the closet falls on top of you. That's how it was for me. Talking about one subject just opened up everything inside of me. It all came crashing down."

### OPENING UP

At Walter Reed, Crandall visits psychiatrists, psychologists, physical therapists and social workers every day. Each doctor or specialist has a niche in her life, whether it's to prescribe medication, perform analyses or just listen.

In her therapy sessions, she reluctantly discusses traumatic events such as the sexual assault and her deployments. Reliving those experiences can take a significant toll on the body. For instance, during one three-week PTSD program, she lost 15 pounds, and was treated for dehydration and malnutrition. She also didn't sleep for several days.

But therapy allowed Crandall to open up about important topics, such as her family. For years, she had tried—and failed—to share her experiences with her mother and father.

"I love my parents," she emphasized. "They have always been there for me. But I don't think

STEPHANIE INMAN



STEPHEN VOSS

they know how to handle me. I think they are afraid to talk to me about any of it. I have tried telling my mom a couple of times about what happened to me, but it just never seems to be the right time."

Her parents didn't know about the sexual assault and her other traumatic experiences. So when Lillian heard the diagnosis of PTSD, she thought the doctors had it wrong.

"I started to wonder, 'Are they really getting this diagnosis right?'" Lillian shared. "I mean, she has been at Walter Reed for two years. Is there a reason why she's been there that long?"

Lillian visited her daughter at the hospital when Crandall had surgery on her wrist. Crandall was comforted by the visit, and wishes it would happen more often. But she realizes that like many others, her family hasn't grasped the nature and severity of PTSD.

Lillian admits that she hasn't learned or read much about PTSD.

"I won't read about [PTSD] unless I absolutely have to," she said. "If I ... find out a lot about it, I know it's going to make me crazy. [When] she is

[home, and] I can see what goes on in her life, then I think it's something we could do together."

Even if a family member doesn't understand what the soldier is going through, Crandall explained, it's still crucial to support the soldier's recovery—whether it's from PTSD or losing a limb.

"There are so many guys here that [came] back and their spouse [left] them, and they are stuck in this hospital. I just met a gentleman the other day who is a quadruple amputee, and he has no one to visit him. He has no family, and his wife has left him."

PTSD patients have more to endure than just the symptoms—they must also deal with the stigma sometimes associated with the condition.

### LOSING THE STIGMA

"There are some people out there who think you're weak if you have PTSD," Crandall said. "[Soldiers] don't understand that they may have it themselves. They refuse to admit it. I thought I was fine for six years. [I thought] nothing was wrong with me. I went to work, did my job and did it well. I smiled, I laughed and I cracked jokes. No

# Need Help?

If you think you or a loved one might have PTSD, here are two great resources:

Psychological Health Program,  
National Guard Bureau  
[JointServicesSupport.org/php/](http://JointServicesSupport.org/php/)

National Center of Veterans Affairs,  
National Center for PTSD  
[ptsd.va.gov/index.asp](http://ptsd.va.gov/index.asp)

## Treatments for PTSD

If someone is dealing with PTSD, the best course of action is to contact a mental health professional. Often, Soldiers try to medicate themselves or repress the experience, but these coping mechanisms can lead to disastrous results. There are many different therapy methods available. A professional can steer a Soldier to the right course of action.

**According to the Department of Veterans Affairs:** Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) appears to be the most effective type of counseling for PTSD. There are different types of CBTs, such as cognitive therapy and exposure therapy. There is also a similar kind of therapy called eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) that is used for PTSD. Medications have also been shown to be effective. A type of drug known as a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), which is also used for depression, can be effective for PTSD.



one knew that anything was wrong with me. Until the day that I was medevaced out.”

Crandall resisted the notion that she had PTSD because she thought it would indicate weakness. She lived by the motto “Pain is weakness leaving the body.” She had to exude strength because on the battlefield, her fellow Soldiers were counting on her.

Now, after being officially diagnosed with PTSD in January 2010, she is gradually accepting her condition.

Even though certain moments prove to be very challenging, she finds motivation in the fact that she’s a Soldier. It’s her duty to push on.

“I have always been the reliable and dependable one,” she said. “At this point, the only thing that gets me up in the morning is the fact that I am still a Soldier, and I have personal accountability.”

However, the medical review board is considering whether to let her stay in the military or discharge her. She suspects she’ll be released. If so, it will be devastating to her. Her only wish is to deploy again.

Crandall needed a new motivation, and it came from an unexpected place. One day, one of her friends at the hospital invited her on a 100-mile bike ride with an organization called World T.E.A.M. Sports. The ride would be from Washington, DC, to Gettysburg, PA. Reluctant at first, Crandall finally agreed to participate.

“I hadn’t been on a bike in 15 years,” she said. “I didn’t think I would like it. I didn’t have an interest in biking. But I said I would try it. The first day I got out there, I forgot all about the PTSD. I forgot about being afraid of people, crowds or loud noises. I got back to talking with people and

laughing again. I enjoyed it so much that I started signing up for longer bike rides.”

Then Crandall branched out beyond biking. She tried hiking and mountain climbing, and then found her true passion—whitewater kayaking. She loved the thrill. It provided an adrenaline rush that she hadn’t experienced since her deployments.

### GAME-CHANGER

In 2010, on an adventure bicycle race with World T.E.A.M. Sports, a fellow cyclist crashed into Crandall underneath a covered bridge, and Crandall hit her head on one of the crossbeams. She suffered a concussion and was rushed to the hospital.

Jeff Messner, the director of World T.E.A.M. Sports, visited Crandall in the hospital to make sure she was OK. There was an instant connection between the two. She reminded him of his daughter. He asked her if she wanted to join a group of Wounded Warriors for a climb up Mount Lobuche in Nepal. Crandall was ecstatic. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

On Oct. 2, 2010, Crandall and 10 other fellow Wounded Warriors traveled to Lukla, Nepal, to conquer the mountain. They were led by 10 highly experienced Mount Everest climbers. One of them was Erik Weihenmayer, the only blind man to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents. The purpose of the trip was to symbolize Soldiers overcoming their injuries.

After almost two weeks of intense hiking up the mountain, the team reached the most important part of the climb—summit day. Just before they set out for the peak, one of the Wounded Warriors,



Katherine Rizzo, announced that she would have to stay behind. She was plagued by altitude sickness, and climbing any higher would be dangerous.

Cody Miranda, a Soldier and friend of Rizzo, declared that he wouldn’t allow Rizzo to remain at camp alone. He abandoned the chance to summit in order to help his friend.

Crandall had great respect for Rizzo and Miranda. The thought of them not participating on the climb caused her great anxiety, a symptom of PTSD. So on summit day, after an hour of climbing, her anxiety proved too much for her to handle, and she was forced to return to camp.

Some people may view this as a defeat, but not Crandall. She managed to venture outside the safety of Walter Reed and onto foreign soil.

But it goes deeper than that. While in Nepal, Crandall developed a new attitude and renewed strength, one that she couldn’t find in the U.S. It occurred at the Puja ceremony mentioned at the beginning of this story.

The ceremony was a crucial event for anyone planning to climb a mountain in the Himalayas. During the ritual, the monks chant in prayer for “permission” for the climbers to set foot on the mountain. Crandall sat with her back straight against the wall and listened to the soothing chants. Suddenly, the mellow drone subsided and was replaced with violent banging of drums and cymbals. Crandall’s heart began to race, beating faster and faster until it matched the drums’ rhythm. The ferocious sound reminded her of a Marshalls Call to Arms—a traditional signal telling her to pick up her weapon and fight.

DIBRIK JOHNECK



◀ From Left: Crandall on a training climb at St. Mary’s Glacier in Colorado; Crandall in Nepal, spinning Buddhist prayer wheels, which are believed to purge negativity; Crandall finds inner peace attending a Puja ceremony in a Nepalese Hindu temple with fellow climbers.

## The Next Step for Ashley Crandall

As Ashley Crandall considers her future, she’s certain that it will always include PTSD. But instead of letting it hold her back, she uses it to drive her forward. She’s made her goal in life to alleviate the plight of other PTSD patients.

A large part of Crandall’s success in managing PTSD was attained by partaking in athletic and sporting events. So, she plans to enroll in the University of Utah and earn a degree in recreational therapy. With her degree, she intends to promote athletic programs in hospitals. At Walter Reed, she noticed that while many of the amputees participate in sporting events, not as many PTSD patients do. She hopes to change this.

For more information about the Missouri National Guard Teen Leadership Council, contact Abigail Rolbiecki at (573) 638-9500, ext. 7094, or by email at [abigail.rolbiecki@us.army.mil](mailto:abigail.rolbiecki@us.army.mil).



# tomorrow's leaders

## Missouri's Teen Leadership Council

BY NANCY K. LANE, *Missouri National Guard Public Affairs*

▲ GEN Duncan J. McNabb and his wife are assisted by Emily Hulberg, Missouri National Guard's Teen Leadership Council.

The Missouri National Guard Child and Youth Program has taken on a new focus: leadership development and community service among teens.

With this in mind, the program formed the Teen Leadership Council, said Abigail Rolbiecki, Child and Youth Coordinator for the Missouri National Guard. Members of the council work with the adult sponsors to organize monthly meetings, activities and service projects for Missouri National Guard children between the ages of 13 and 18.

Council members and advisors also gather for quarterly leadership retreats.

### Hands on

“When we initially began working on developing a leadership council, our main motive was to get teens involved with civic engagement and leadership,” Rolbiecki said.

These young people recently worked with Jon Jerome of Operation Homefront in St. Louis at the Touhill Performing Arts Center to help build care packages to be sent to deployed military personnel.

Members of the community came to Touhill to purchase the items of their choice supplied by Operation Homefront to fill the care packages. Teen Leadership Council members boxed the items for overseas shipment. Packages could be sent to Family members, friends or deployed Service Members selected by the program.

GEN Duncan J. McNabb, commander of U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base, IL, attended the event. In addition to the typical care package items sent to the deployed

Soldiers and Airmen, McNabb included his military coin.

McNabb also presented a coin to Emily Hulberg of the Teen Leadership Council for her assistance and dedication to the deployed Soldiers and Airmen and the Operation Homefront project. Hulberg, of Linn, MO, is the daughter of SGT Abbi Buhr of the Joint Force Headquarters Human Resource Office and MSG Bradley Buhr, 835th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

“To have someone of such a distinguished rank come to a community event and not only participate in the overall program but with our service project, speaks loudly,” said Rolbiecki. “It was a great representation of leadership at its finest. It meant a lot for General McNabb to participate in the service project and to give Emily his coin.”

### Like parent, like child

The event is just the first in what Rolbiecki said will be a long line of similar events that allow the teens to follow in their parents' footsteps.

“The kids who participate in the Teen Leadership Council are children of members in the Guard, and their parents have volunteered their time ... to protect our nation,” Rolbiecki said. “We want our teens to partake in a similar act of volunteerism, only on a community level. They look up to their parents and often want to be like them, and this is a way for them to give back.”

The council has a variety of activities planned for the coming months, including a trip in February to Rolla, MO, to plant flowers for the Veterans' home and local nursing homes.

In March, the youth have planned a college tour of Truman State University in Kirksville, MO.

The annual Missouri National Guard Youth Symposium will be held April 14–16 in St. Louis at the Hilton Ball Park Inn. The symposium is for Missouri National Guard children ages 6–18 and their parents. 📍

# making a difference

## TRICARE Assistance Program Is Here for You

BY MAUREEN P. HEARD

**Soldiers and Family** members love to stay in touch using webcams and videoconferencing while they are apart. It's much more personal than just a phone call or email. What if you could reach out to a counselor anytime you needed help in the same way? For eligible TRICARE beneficiaries, this capability is as close as your computer.

In a four-minute video, “Getting the Help You Need, When You Need It,” at [tricare.mil/mentalhealth](http://tricare.mil/mentalhealth), ADM Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, encourages Service Members and Family members to reach out for help if they are struggling with feelings of stress, anxiety or depression.

It's critical that TRICARE beneficiaries reach out to Family members and friends if they are experiencing any feelings of stress or depression. Sometimes frequent communication with a loved one can get a beneficiary back on track. The TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) is here to assist.

To access information on TRIAP, go to [tricare.mil/triap](http://tricare.mil/triap) or go to your regional healthcare contractor's website. TRIAP is Web-based videoconferencing that provides short-term, solution-focused, nonmedical counseling for situations resulting from commonly occurring life circumstances such as deployment

If you can't access TRIAP services or are not currently eligible, you may receive behavioral health support by telephone through Military OneSource at (800) 342-9647 or go to [tricare.mil/mentalhealth](http://tricare.mil/mentalhealth) to view other TRICARE behavioral health resources.

stress, relationships, personal loss and parent-child communications. All TRIAP services, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year, are provided on a one-to-one basis, in the context of a confidential relationship with a licensed professional.

“Through the coordinated efforts of leaders, medical professionals, chaplains, Families and military personnel, TRIAP services can provide positive care for those who seek help,” said COL Chris Philbrick, deputy director, Army Health Promotion, Risk Reduction Task Force.

TRIAP services are available to Active Duty Service Members, Active Duty Family members (children must be age 18 or older), beneficiaries using TRICARE Reserve Select, and beneficiaries covered under the Transition Assistance Management Program. Beneficiaries do not need a referral or prior authorization to use TRIAP services.

If a beneficiary requests TRIAP services, they will receive an initial assessment with a licensed professional to determine if Web-based counseling is an appropriate level of care. If video services are not possible or Web-based counseling is not an appropriate level of care, the licensed professional will refer the beneficiary to the correct organization to receive services. 📍

TRIAP does not include medication management or financial counseling and is not for emergency situations. The Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs national suicide hotline is (800) 273-TALK (8255). In an emergency, beneficiaries should call 911.

PHOTO BY ABIGAIL ROLBIECKI



# the wheel deal

## Drive a Hard Bargain on Your Next Car

BY JUNE WALBERT

Thinking about buying a car? Tap the brakes! Don't do it without considering the financial impact. The least expensive new car in the U.S. is just under \$10,000, and the average is \$28,400, according to the National Automobile Dealers Association. While a car payment may seem harmless at only \$300 per month, a longer view will show that it actually costs a lot more. Here are some points to consider before cruising down to the dealer.

**1 Want vs. need.** Do you need a new vehicle? Or did that slick ad work especially well on you? If there truly is a need, try to be practical. Address your current and future requirements, such as a growing family, safety and fuel efficiency. And then buy for the long term—like seven to eight years.

**2 Calculate opportunity cost—it may be a million bucks.** When it comes to the car game, you can't win if you buy and sell every couple of years. You'll almost certainly end up upside down (owing more than the car is worth).

Try this instead: Pay off your car in four years, keep it another four and in the meantime, invest what would've been your car payment. One savvy couple, both age 30, does just that. They decided to keep both of their modest

\$16,000 cars eight years, with the plan to buy new cars costing an equivalent of \$16,000 today on a rotating four-year schedule. They pay off the new car in four years and then, sure enough, invest what would have been their car payment for the remaining four years. Their first car payment was approximately \$383, but each new car purchase over the 35 years comes with a bigger price tag and therefore a bigger payment because of the 3 percent inflation assumption.

At the age of 65, assuming a 7 percent rate of return, they'll have almost \$1 million. That's a nice nest egg built over a 35-year period.

**3 Fabulous or functional.** Can you really afford the car you want? No more than 12 percent of your net income should go to all car payments combined. So, if you bring home \$4,000 per month, no more than \$480 per month should be spent on car payments. If your dream car causes you to exceed this number, walk away. Your car should provide reliable transportation, not financial stress. In fact, some financially distressed folks turn to title loans to free up cash. Say no to that option, and be sure you can truly afford the car from the get-go.

**4 Keeping score.** If you need to finance the car, be aware that your credit score will impact your interest rate. Review your reports and clean up any mistakes at least six months prior to making a big purchase. The higher your score, the lower your interest rate. That means keeping more of your hard-earned money.

If you have a great credit score, you may be offered 0-percent financing. That

may sound perfect, but you have to do the math to determine if no interest or that upfront discount will be the best deal for you.

**5 Budget busters.** Will your insurance rates rise with this new purchase? Many car buyers forget that if they're buying a newer or fancier car—which is often the case—insurance rates will likely rise.

Because insurance is an ongoing expense, it's best to get an estimate on premiums before you buy, so that you can make an informed decision and budget for it. Don't forget to account for maintenance and gas costs. Wheels plus no cash to fill the tank equals a bad combo.

Keep in mind, luxury autos bring not only a hefty price tag, but steep repair bills when something goes wrong. While some car deals may include a time-phased maintenance package, once that's expired, you're stuck with the tab. Ask in advance what to expect.

**6 New or newer.** It's estimated a new car's value drops 20 percent (or more) the second you drive it off the dealer's lot. Consider letting someone else take that financial hit. Instead, buy a one- or two-year-old car with a warranty still intact.

**7 Short is good.** Limit financing to three or four years. The longer your loan term, the more interest you pay. Most cars depreciate on a daily basis, so it makes no sense to drag it out. Instead, make a down payment on the car and finance for a shorter term, sticking to a monthly payment you know you can afford.

## Know Your Responsibilities

- Learn the difference between gross vs. net income, and budget to the latter.
- Calculate expenses you'll have to pay (rent, car, groceries, utilities, insurance, etc.).
- Get insurance, and protect yourself and the things you own.
- Use credit wisely! Bad credit will stick with you for a long time, impacting you when making large purchases, such as a car.

**8 Know before you go.** Arrive at the dealership prepared to cut a deal. Know what car you want and its fair price. Have financing already arranged. Better yet, use a reputable online buying service, eliminating the temptations a car salesperson may bring to the table.

Avoid abusive lending practices such as bait-and-switch financing, fake auto loan documents and exorbitant interest rates. And make sure there is no penalty for paying off the loan early. Most banks don't do that, but some do. Be sure you're not penalized for doing the right thing. It pays to secure your loan through a financial institution you can trust. If in doubt, go to the Better Business Bureau Military Line at [bbb.org/us/military](http://bbb.org/us/military). 



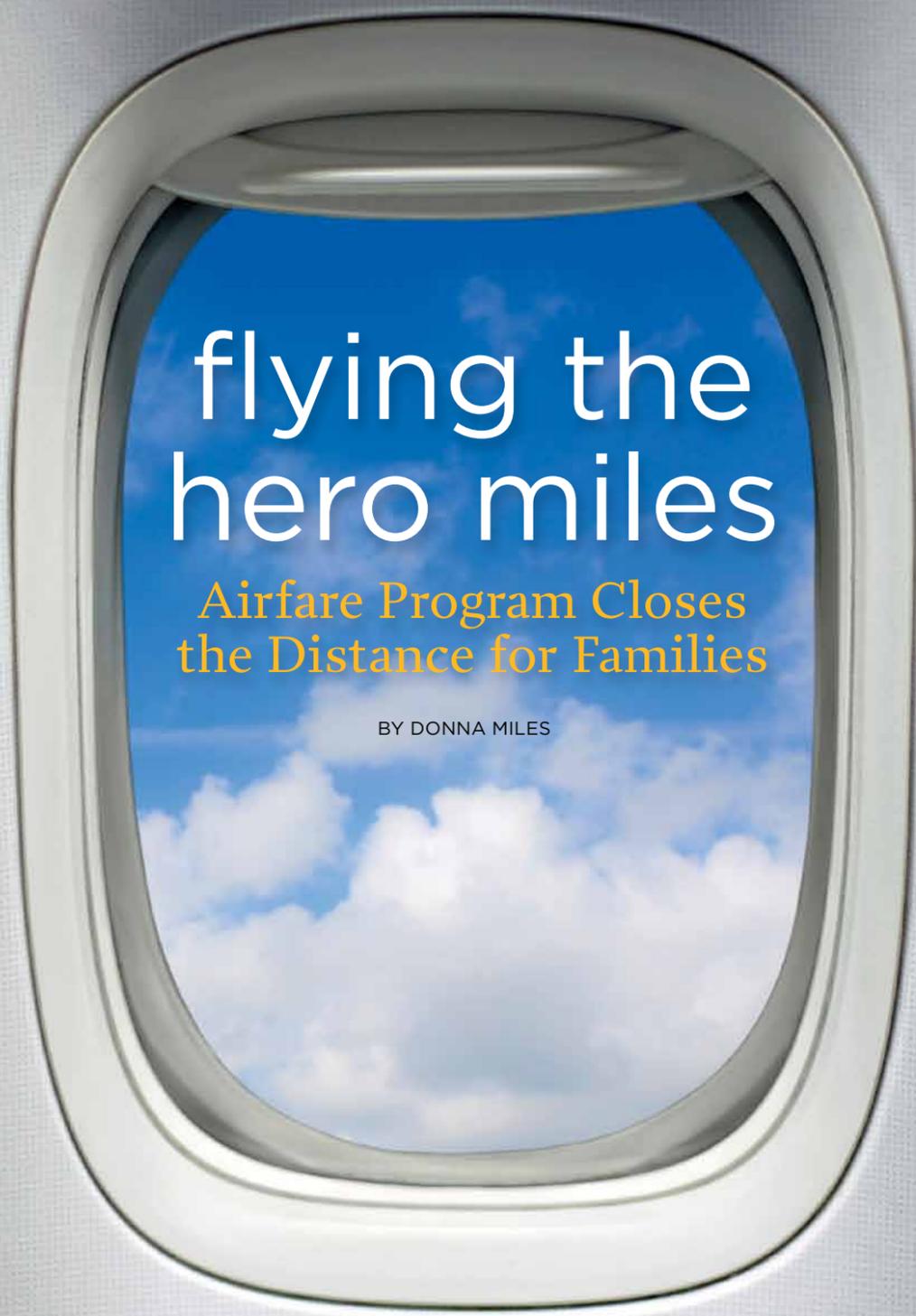
Do you have a financial question for June? Visit June's website, [AskJune.military.com](http://AskJune.military.com).

## Set Up a Budget



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For more information, visit:  
[www.FisherHouse.org/  
programs/heromiles.html](http://www.FisherHouse.org/programs/heromiles.html).



# flying the hero miles

## Airfare Program Closes the Distance for Families

BY DONNA MILES

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/CRAFTVISION

A popular program that turns donated frequent-flyer miles into free airline tickets for Wounded Warriors receiving medical care as well as their Families will expand this year so Families of the fallen and combat wounded can participate in two upcoming events.

The Fisher House Foundation, which administers the Hero Miles program, plans to offer airline tickets so grieving Families needing assistance can fly to Washington, DC, this Memorial Day weekend to participate in the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors seminar, said President Dave Coker.

The annual conference, to run May 27–30, offers a camp for children, a workshop for adults and comfort for Families whose military member died in service to the nation, regardless of the cause.

“We will use Hero Miles to bring in any Families that need assistance, and eliminate the cost of getting to [Washington], DC, as a barrier,” Coker said.

In addition, the Hero Miles program will help Families to attend the second annual Warrior Games, held in the spring in Colorado Springs, CO, Coker said.

### Warrior Games

Some 200 disabled Active Duty Service Members and military Veterans will compete in the second annual Warrior Games, scheduled for May 16–21 at the U.S. Olympic Training Center. Participants will put their long recuperations and months of training to the test as they go for the gold in events to include shooting, swimming, archery, track and field, cycling, sitting volleyball, and wheelchair basketball, officials said.

Coker called it fitting that the Hero Miles program helps Families who might otherwise not get the opportunity to participate in these events.

“Our goal is to eliminate the barriers to participation, and make sure that Families who wish to attend these events can do so,” he said.

The Fisher House Foundation has been underwriting all administrative costs and ticketing charges for the Hero Miles program since 2005. The program provides a way for

passengers of participating airlines to donate their unused frequent-flyer miles to reunite military men and women who are undergoing treatment at a military or Veterans Affairs medical center with their Families.

The program provides free round-trip airline tickets to two categories of passengers. Service Members on at least five days of approved leave from their medical center who don’t qualify for government-funded airfare can receive tickets home and back. In addition, qualified Service Members may receive tickets to enable their Family or close friends to visit them while they’re treated at the medical center.

“This is a tremendous way that we can have a huge impact.”

Dave Coker, President, Fisher House Foundation

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### Sky-high success

To date, the program has provided more than 21,000 airline tickets—valued at more than \$27 million—to combat Veterans of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and their Families, Coker said.

Coker marveled at the generosity of people who donate their frequent-flyer miles to support the program.

“The miles have no intrinsic value, and [donors] aren’t getting a tax deduction for donating the miles,” he said. “They are doing it because they want to support the military.”

For as little as \$5, or more typically, \$10, the program can provide airline tickets to Service Members or Families that otherwise might cost them about \$1,400, Coker said. “So this is a tremendous way that we can have a huge impact.”

Fisher House Foundation, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.



Service men and women with an approved leave of five or more days may be given a free round-trip airline ticket for a trip from the medical center to their home and return if they are not eligible for government-funded airfare.

Qualifying service men and women may be given free round-trip airline tickets to enable their Family or close friends to visit them while they are being treated at the medical center.

# striking a chord

Music Takes Wounded Warriors From Surviving to Thriving

BY RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

Research shows that music has a profound ability to heal the body as well as the mind. Music therapy is currently being used by the medical community to treat everything from cancer to depression.

In that vein, Guitars for Vets, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Milwaukee, WI, has made it their mission to bring the healing power of music to Wounded Warriors across the country by giving them free guitars and guitar lessons. But that is only a small part of what they do.

## In the beginning

When Dan Van Buskirk, a former Marine sergeant and Vietnam Veteran, met Patrick Nettesheim, a musician and guitar teacher, in the fall of 2006, little did they know that the course of their lives was about to change.

Looking for ways to treat the symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Van Buskirk had gone in search of guitar lessons and was introduced to Nettesheim, a teacher at Cream City Music in Milwaukee. From their very first lesson, Van Buskirk found that his symptoms had been reduced.

“I found that first lesson to be very calming,” Van Buskirk shared. “I was facing challenges with PTSD from the Vietnam War. I was trying to learn to be calm and sit still, and I found that [when I played] the guitar, it was a very harmonious experience.”

After several more lessons, Van Buskirk was hooked and suggested to Nettesheim that they share the experience with other Veterans.

“Dan suggested that we go up to the spinal rehab floor at the VA here in Milwaukee and just play for some of the Vets up there,” Nettesheim shared. “I said, ‘OK, maybe just for an hour or so.’ And interestingly enough, Cream City Music gave us a couple of guitars to give away that day. We went up there and played, and afterwards, we sat down with a couple of the guys and worked with them a little.

“The first guy was paralyzed from the waist down,” Van Buskirk continued, “so he was able to get a guitar in his arms and hold it. The other guy’s legs were paralyzed, which had affected his hands somewhat. But even though he couldn’t fully grip the guitar, we were able to get some sounds out of it and get him playing.

“At the end of giving those first lessons—which, by the way, we hadn’t intended to do—we gave them the guitars we’d brought with us. And we realized at that moment that something magical had happened.”

Nettesheim and Van Buskirk returned the following week and the week after that. It was then that Van Buskirk suggested to Nettesheim that they form an official organization, and Guitars for Vets was born.

## Working it

Four short years later, Guitars for Vets boasts more than 30 chapters nationwide, with another four about to open. They have chapters in Iraq and Afghanistan as well.

Operating in conjunction with VA hospitals, their program is driven by volunteers who can teach guitar and are

willing to volunteer at their local VA.

“We look for quality people who want to be chapter coordinators,” Nettesheim explained. “They go through an interview process and they have to fill out an application. And then they become volunteers at a local VA. That’s what determines a chapter of Guitars for Vets.”

In order to qualify as a recipient of this program, a Wounded Warrior must have a referral from a medical professional such as a social worker or a psychologist, or from a PTSD treatment team. If they have a physical impairment, they’ll need a referral from an occupational therapist or M.D.

“Every Veteran gets six free private lessons, [after which] they are awarded [a free] guitar, which are sold to us at 10 percent below cost by a company called Oscar Schmidt,” Nettesheim said. They also get a gig bag, a tuner, strings and picks, as well as a strap. Those are donated to us by a cool company in California—‘Get’m Get’m.’ Two hundred dollars covers everything.”

## The artist within

To date, the organization has given away approximately 1,000 guitars and 6,000 guitar lessons, and both men are thrilled with the consistent results they see. Van Buskirk, who has degrees in anthropology and sociology, has been volunteering his time counseling fellow Veterans for many years now, and Guitars for Vets seems like a natural extension of that work to him.

“What we’re doing is peeling away the layers of the struggle [these Veterans] have been in,” he shared. “And war is so extreme that the struggle is often very severe. We’ve found that the guitar can become a natural, harmonious, healing note in their lives.”

“You asked if we see a change after the first lesson and I have to say, yes, we absolutely do,” Nettesheim added. “We see a mood elevation in the Veterans we teach, and that’s almost immediate. One of the reasons I think their moods improve so much is that we’re choosing to work with them. It’s not a required part of their treatment program. We’re not taking psychiatric notes or trying to figure out what type of medication to put them on. And because we’re approaching them from a different place, they often feel comfortable telling us things they might not tell a therapist. I’d say that 50 to 75 percent of the time when we’re teaching guitar lessons, we just talk. And that’s not us probing—that’s them having a lot they need to talk about and opening up to us.

“I believe the guitar is a catalyst for that positive human interaction,” Nettesheim went on. “And all along the way, they’re learning how to play guitar. But what’s really going on is that we’re developing a sense of camaraderie and trust, teamwork and community.”

Building a community is at the heart of their mission and, one lesson at a time, Guitars for Vets is doing just that and giving Wounded Warriors a glimpse of how good creating music can make them feel.

## The healing sound of music

Kinthy Pourheydarian, who served in the Army National Guard from 1982 to 1991, is a grateful recipient of the Guitars for Vets program. Beginning her career in the military police in Tallahassee, FL, Pourheydarian transferred to Milwaukee, where she worked as an administrative assistant and a small generator mechanic. But when she was injured in a car accident at Fort Knox, KY, she was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

“At first, my speech was affected, and they said I was a good candidate for a stroke,” Pourheydarian shared. “I wasn’t able to hold down a job anymore because the smallest of tasks was so huge for me. They sent me to speech therapy to retrain my brain, but some of [the damage] was irreversible.”



## Guitars for Vets

- Presented approximately 1,000 guitars and 6,000 lessons to Veterans.
- 31 operational chapters across the country, with a goal of 50 by year’s end.
- Plan to have at least one chapter in every state by 2012.
- Nearly 400 guitars have been donated to the organization.

Pourheydarian, who was already musically inclined, was excited when she heard about Nettesheim, Van Buskirk and their fledgling organization.

“I was hanging around at the VA hospital one day and heard about Guitars for Vets,” she recalled. “At that time, I’d begun teaching myself to play the saxophone and I thought, ‘Here’s an opportunity I have to take. I can also learn to play the guitar.’ Patrick was my instructor, and then I was introduced to Dan. They were so enthusiastic that I wanted to be a part of the program. I’ve been playing for two and a half years now.”

Not only does she love to play the guitar, but Pourheydarian finds the benefits of doing so go beyond just making beautiful music. “It keeps my brain stimulated,” she shared. “Although it took me a while to learn to play, watching Patrick and listening to him play and teach became a thing of beauty. My fingers aren’t as flexible as they used to be, so he gave me exercises to do. And [he taught me] how to reach chords and frets that were difficult for me. It was just awesome. It helped me so much

with my TBI because the instrument was helping me to think—to be able to concentrate. It’s given me a new attitude. I still have my moments of frustration, but they are so minute now. Playing the guitar literally takes you out of yourself.”

## This gift gives back

Not only does Guitars for Vets inspire the Veterans who’ve participated, but it has been a gift for Van Buskirk and Nettesheim as well.

“This organization tends to attract wonderful, gracious, caring people,” Van Buskirk shared. “They want to help Vets, whether they’ve personally been in combat or not. And having the privilege of working with these people and helping my fellow combatants has been a very happy experience for me. I was in a sea of sadness when I came to Pat to learn to play the guitar. But since starting this organization, I’ve begun having feelings of happiness and peace.”

Nettesheim concurred. “Everything I have done [in my career as a musician] has been leading up to this point. This is my mission. It gives me purpose.”



# the GTP

## Teen Delegates Address Youth Problems and Challenges

BY NADINE M. MOORE, CHIEF, CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM SECTION  
SOLDIER AND FAMILY SUPPORT DIVISION

Want to get more involved with other National Guard youths? Have a suggestion about Guard youth programs? Take it to the Guard Teen Panel (GTP)!

The GTP is a joint, national-level National Guard youth council made up of teen delegates representing youths in each of the 10 National Guard regions. Members represent both Army National Guard (ARNG) and Air National Guard (ANG) youths within their region, regardless of their parent/sponsor affiliation.

The GTP represents Guard youths by gathering and communicating youth issues and challenges with the state youth coordinators and the Child and Youth Program; connecting youths within their region with resources and programs that fit their needs, particularly those within their state Child and Youth Program; and helping the program and the coordinators to develop programming and initiatives that meet the needs of Guard youths wherever they live.

Each state has at least one youth coordinator who is part of the Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) Family Program office, which develops programming and initiatives to help Guard youths within the state. In addition to state-level opportunities, the Child and Youth Program hosts an annual National Youth Symposium, in conjunction with the National Guard Family Program Volunteer Conference. Here, state youth delegates from the ARNG and the ANG participate in leadership and resilience-building activities and connect with other Guard youths from across the 54 States and Territories, including the District of Columbia.

All GTP members are active volunteers and participants in their state Guard youth programs. They assist with curriculum and activity development at the National Youth Symposium, as well as work with their respective regions during the symposium on regional goals and leadership opportunities locally, regionally and nationally.

If you are a middle school or high school youth and have program feedback, want to get involved or have questions about Guard youth programs, please email the delegate for your region.

### 2011 National Guard Teen Panel

Back Row: Jason Schultz, Taylor Robison, Matthew Constantine, Daniel Culberson, Michael Bramer  
Middle Row: Lynzlie Levitt, Kat Boynton, Hawa Maya Bangura  
Front Row: Conner Hoyt, Lydia Cartagena, Brandie Rice

# MEET THE DELEGATES

## Region 1 (ME, VT, NH, MA, CT and RI)

**Brandie Rice**, a senior at Portsmouth Christian Academy in Portsmouth, NH, plans to pursue an elementary education/special education degree. Her mom, Bonnie Rice, is the Airmen & Family Readiness Program manager for the 157th Air Refueling Wing, and her father is a member of the NH ANG. Brandie recently was chosen to represent her state at the 4H National Conference in Washington, DC. *Email Brandie at rice\_brandie@yahoo.com.*

## Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR and VI)

**Lydia Cartagena**, a senior at Jackson Memorial High School in Jackson, NJ, plans to be a pharmacist when she graduates. Her mom, Tammy Cartagena, works for NJ ESGR and also has served in the NJ ANG 108th Wing. Lydia recently helped relaunch the NJ Guard Teen Panel, which speaks up for military teens on issues related to military culture and lifestyle. The group is planning various events, including Youth Camp and the creation of a state pin. *Email Lydia at lydiacartagena@gmail.com.*

## Region 3 (MD, WV, PA, VA, DE and DC)

**Hawa Maya Bangura**, a junior at Bladensburg High School in Bladensburg, MD, plans to attend the University of New Mexico on an ROTC scholarship, ultimately joining the Air Force. Her father, SFC David Bangura, is a member of the DC ARNG in the 1946 CCT unit and also works as an auditor at the JFHQ. Hawa Maya recently rallied youth at the Annual Awards and Decoration Ceremony. She also is working on the Spring DC NG Youth Symposium, which will include resiliency and anti-bullying training. *Email Hawa Maya at hawa5513@yahoo.com.*

## Region 4 (FL, GA, SC, NC, TN, KY, MS and AL)

**Daniel Culberson**, a senior at Bishop Snyder High School in Jacksonville, FL, plans to study to become a physician after he graduates. His father, CW3 Dan Culberson, is a CH-47 Chinook pilot in the FL ARNG, and his mother, Lori, is a family assistance center specialist for northeast Florida. Daniel was instrumental in establishing the FL NG Youth Advisory Council. *Email Daniel at bak.n.blak@hotmail.com.*

## Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH and WI)

**Jason Schultz**, a senior at Martin Luther King High School in Greendale, WI, will enter pharmacy school at Ohio Northern University in the fall. Both of his parents, LTC Debbie Schultz and MAJ Greg Schultz, are retired from the WI ANG, having served at the 128th Air Refueling Wing. Jason recently helped the SBC Pioneers stuff backpacks and wrap Christmas gifts for needy children. *Email Jason at jasonschultz@wi.rr.com.*

## Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK and TX)

**Kat Boynton**, a sophomore, is home-educated and attends Cottage Garden Homeschool Co-op in Tyler, TX. She plans to attend the University of Texas at Tyler and is undecided on her major. Her father is the XO at 636th Brigade Support Battalion, TX ARNG. Her mom is the 636th FRG advisor and

also volunteers with the TX Guard youth program. Kat recently supported youth activities during Yellow Ribbon reintegration events, which connect youths with resources, support and interaction with other children during the deployment cycle. *Email Kat at kat.boynton36@gmail.com.*

## Region 7 (MO, IA, NE and KS)

**Conner Hoyt**, a junior at Indianola High School in Indianola, IA, plans to continue his education after graduation. His father, Lonnie Hoyt, is a member of the 132nd FW, IA ANG. Conner works to increase opportunities for military youths to network with one another. *Email Conner at hoyt597@aol.com.*

## Region 8 (UT, CO, WY, ND, SD and MT)

**Lynnzie Levitt**, a junior at Westlake High School in Saratoga Springs, UT, would like to pursue a career as an occupational therapist, eventually helping Soldiers recover from deployment-related injuries. Her father is the supply NCO for the 144th ASMC, UT ARNG. During a Youth Symposium at the National Ability Center in Park City, Lynnzie connected with UT Youth Council members and learned valuable leadership skills. *Email Lynnzie at lynnziekellie@aol.com.*

## Region 9 (AZ, CA, GU, HI and NV)

**Taylor Robison** is a senior. Her brother is a member of the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, CA ARNG. Taylor serves as the president for Teen Air and Army, a military family group for children in central California. She is also an active volunteer at Guard youth camps. *Email Taylor at tay\_robison@yahoo.com.*

## Region 10 (AK, ID, OR and WA)

**Michael Bramer**, a senior at Bartlett High School in Anchorage, AK, plans to pursue a career in aerospace engineering and eventually become an astronaut. His mother, TSGT Mary Bramer, is a member of the 176 MOF/MXOT, AK ANG. Michael recently was integral in planning and executing youth activities at Halloween and Christmas holiday events at the AK JFHQ Armory. *Email Michael at astronautmichael@yahoo.com.*

## Member-at-Large

**Matthew Constantine**, a sophomore at Idalou High School in Idalou, TX, plans to study mechanical engineering in college. As the member-at-large, he represents the ARNG on the Army Teen Panel. ATP members discuss and seek resolutions to teen and youth issues brought forth through the Army Family Action Plan. Matthew's father, SSG Scott Constantine, is the communication NCOIC for the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, 56th IBCT, 36th ID, TX ARNG. Matthew is president of the Texas Military Forces Youth Leadership Council, which helps to incorporate youths into all National Guard activities and assist with life issues related to being a military dependent. *Email Matthew at matthewconstantine@rocketmail.com.*

The GTP will soon be adding the ANG representative to the Air Force Teen Panel as a member-at-large. 📢

# TIME TO GET HELP?



Visit the Mental Health Resource Center  
tricare.mil/mentalhealth



# THERE WHEN YOU NEED US

## The Soldier and Family Support Division

is a diverse division focused on the care of Soldiers and their Families. Some of the programs we handle are: Child and Youth Services, Spouse Employment and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. We have several other programs that are equally as important, and we continue to expand our role in Soldier and Family care issues and Deployment Cycle Support.



**NATIONAL**   
**GUARD**

**SOLDIER AND FAMILY  
SUPPORT DIVISION**

If you need information about these programs or have comments about *Foundations* magazine, please send them to [ngb-sfss@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngb-sfss@ng.army.mil).