

# DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 29, 2011



## ONE DIAMOND; TWO PASSIONS

**By Army Spc. Michael Davis, 444th MPAD**

Game after game, season after season, team after team, and the pattern was always the same: train, play and train again. That familiar smell of glove oil could instantly evoke the distant memories of stadiums, scoreboards, teammates, rivals, triumphs and setbacks. The recognizable cacophony of bats cracking, coaches screaming and crowds roaring were part of life's symphony for the dedicated baseball player.

"I've been playing baseball for as long as I can remember," said 2nd Lt. Brian Shubsda, of the New Jersey Army National Guard and the only National Guard Soldier on the U.S. Military All Stars Baseball team, a collection of top military and former military members from around the United States.

Shubsda, 24, did more than just play. The 6-foot-1, 190 pound catcher hit .364 as a senior in high school in Toms River, then excelled after walking onto the Division I college team at the Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, before beginning a semi-professional career in 2009.

Yet the call of military service beckoned. Shubsda considered joining the Marine Corps after college, but put the plan on hold when he signed a two-year contract with the Newark Bears. He was playing for the Somerset Patriots last spring when military opportunity knocked again. This time Shubsda answered.

Shubsda had the opportunity to join the New Jersey National Guard as an officer after completing Officer Candidate School. Shubsda chose the accelerated option and earned his gold lieutenants' bars last year.

Shubsda called upon his tireless work ethic, training and experience in baseball to help him, and his fellow officer candidates, successfully handle the rigors of Officer Candidate School (OCS).

"Being an athlete in that environment, guys would grab me at OCS and ask me

about semi-pro baseball; they wanted to know if that was more stressful than here," said Shubsda. "I would always tell them that people get stressed out no matter where they are; whether it was getting their baseball gear squared away or getting prepared for the field training on the next day. You just have to stay focused and determined."

One of the most difficult lessons in OCS is that doing all the right things; constant preparation; extreme focus and adaptability; can still result in not completing your immediate goals. Shubsda was keenly aware of this from baseball and knew that you must possess a strong mindset to overcome the current setbacks and failures, to achieve future success.

"Baseball is a game of failures, but you never get used to failing," he said. "You go from at-bat to at-bat, and in OCS it was the same thing—you try to get to the next field, and go day to day. That's where I was able to help a lot of guys at OCS, the mental aspect of the whole game."

Shubsda recently earned the position of OIC for the military baseball team, the U.S. Military All Stars. As both a player and a general manager, he is using this position, and off season time, to meet with influential sports figures from around the country and learn the business side of baseball. He has always had aspirations of working in the front office for Major League Baseball, and being an officer in the Army National



*2nd Lt. Brian Shubsda, left, of the New Jersey Army National Guard and the only National Guard Soldier on the U.S. Military All Stars Baseball team, shakes hands with Lt. Col. John F. Sheard, commander, 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion.*

Guard is helping him to achieve his goal. Shubsda, whose team nickname is "Black-hawk," which also happens to be the name of the Army's workhorse helicopter, plans to make Army aviation his career specialty.

"It's all starting to fall into place," said Shubsda.

The U.S. Military All Stars was founded in 1990 by retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Terry Allvord, and consists of players from all five branches of the military. They feature active duty, reserve, guard, veterans, Delayed Entry Program and First Responders who compete against baseball teams of all levels, in over 40 states and 6 countries, during the annual "Red, White and Blue Tour." With more than 300 appearances annually, they are the largest, most successful and only joint armed forces baseball program in the world, according to the US Military All Stars and the Baseball in Wartime websites.

# MY NATION'S SWORD AND SHIELD



Top left: Staff Sgt. Nathan Hollander checks the inside of an F-16C Fighting Falcon intake at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Dec 25. Hollander is a crew chief assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and is deployed from the 177th Fighter Wing. The National Guard is currently celebrating its 375th year of service. Center: Senior Airman Cody Passaro and Airman 1st Class Jordan Deangelis, both are assigned to the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and are both deployed from the 177th Fighter Wing, inspect the wing of an F-16C Fighting Falcon at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Dec 25. Bottom left: Airmen deployed from the 177th Fighter prepare an F-16C Fighting Falcon engine for transport at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Dec 21. Bottom right: Senior Airman Cody Passaro, Airman 1st Class Jordan Deangelis, and Staff Sgt. Nathan Hollander inspect the wing of an F-16C Fighting Falcon at Bagram, Dec 25.



## Greetings from Camp Bondsteel



Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, pose for a group photo at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The New Jersey Soldiers are working alongside NATO troops to promote a safe and secure envi-

ronment, ensure freedom of movement and assist in the core civil capacity building of institutions in Kosovo. U.S. Army photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert Drapala

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West Orange National Guard Armory

Pleasant Valley Way

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Tuesday, December 13, 2011**



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