

# PHOENIX RISING

Georgia State Defense Force  
5th Brigade Official Newsletter



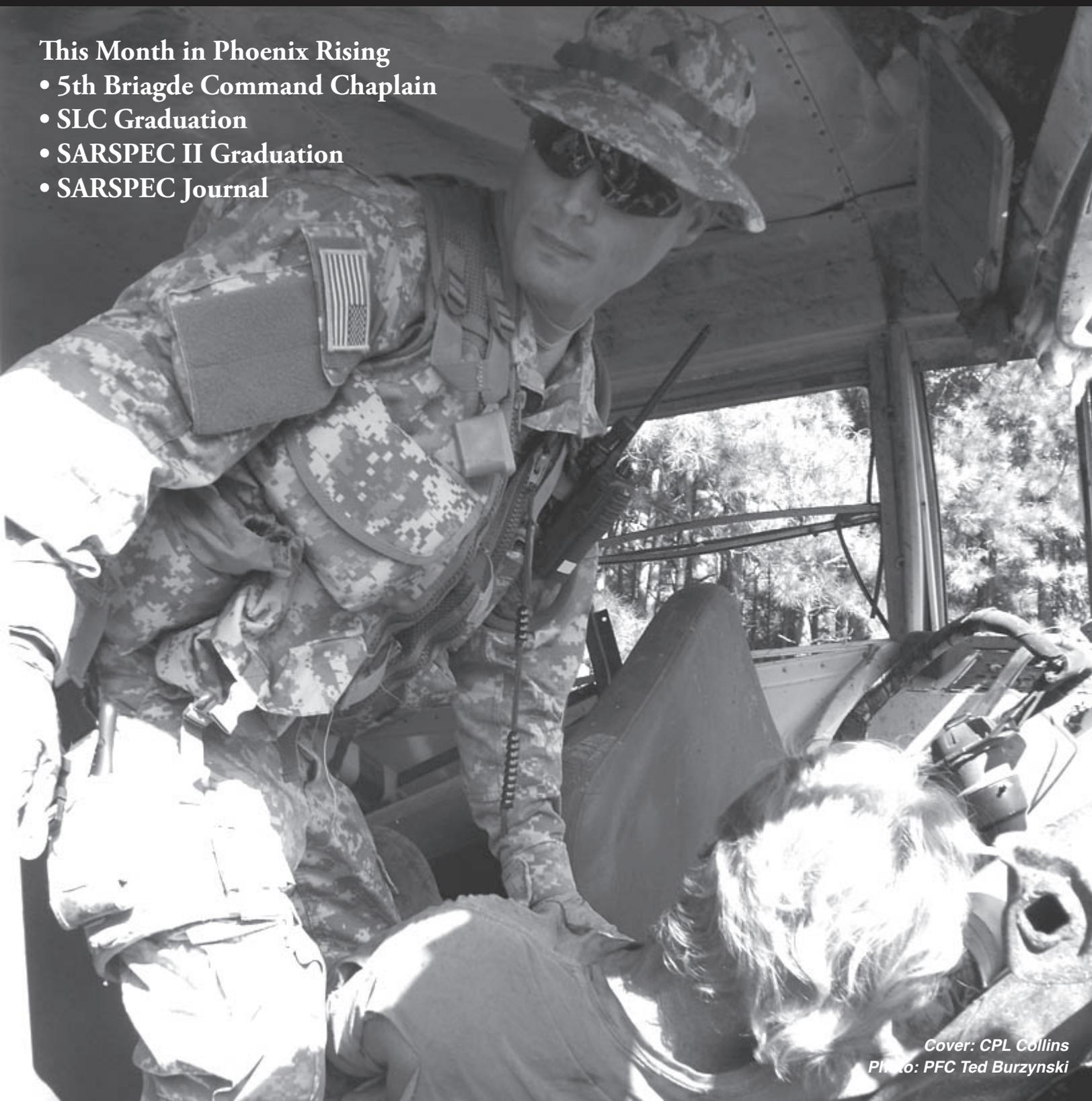
Volume 1, Issue 10

Commanding Officer - LTC Michael Worthington

October 2010

## This Month in Phoenix Rising

- 5th Briagde Command Chaplain
- SLC Graduation
- SARSPEC II Graduation
- SARSPEC Journal



Cover: CPL Collins  
Photo: PFC Ted Burzynski

# 5th Brigade Welcomes New Command Chaplain



**Major Daniel Varga, 5th Brigade Command Chaplain**

Archbishop Daniel Varga, serves as the Diocesan Archbishop for the Archdiocese of the Uniformed Services. The diocese is part of the North American Old Catholic Church. In his position as archbishop, Bishop Varga is responsible for all Old Catholic clergy assigned worldwide as chaplains serving in the military and in the public sector as Police, Fire, and EMS personnel.

The bishop was elevated to the office and dignity of Bishop on March 6, 2010, at Saint Joan of Arc Progressive Catholic Cathedral, in New Orleans, LA. He was consecrated by Archbishop James West, Bishop Shane Price, and Bishop Michael Hillis.

Bishop Varga continues his military career as a chaplain in the Georgia State Defense Force. He holds the rank of Major, and is the Command Chaplain for the 5th Brigade.

Major Varga began his military career at the age of 17 when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He served for ten years on active duty. He left the Marines to become a police officer in South Carolina, and to begin his seminary studies.

As his studies became more intense, he joined the Army National Guard in Arizona to help pay for his seminary education. His civilian employment transferred him to Ohio, where he joined the Air Force Reserve. After serving for a year as a unit reservist, he accepted a position on active duty as a Military Training Instructor and then as a recruiter. Major Varga left active duty in 2005.

After being ordained as an Old Catholic priest, he then joined the Alabama State Defense Force and served as a Battalion Chaplain. In July of 2010, Major Varga transferred to the Georgia State Defense Force and was assigned as the Command Chaplain for the 5th Brigade. He has also been designated as an Honorary NASA Reserve Flight Chaplain.

Bishop Varga holds a Masters in Ministry and a Doctorate in Divinity. He is a Board Certified Chaplain and is employed by Coliseum Medical Center in Macon, GA as a chaplain.

His military awards and honors include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon, and others. He is authorized to wear Naval Aircrew Insignia, Basic Parachutist Insignia, and NASA Chaplain Insignia.

His military training include USAF Military Training Instructor School, USAF Recruiter School, USMC / USN Naval Aircrew School, Basic Airborne Course, Basic Army Chaplain Course, USAF Air University, and the USMC Command and Staff College.

Bishop Varga is married to the former Terri Sedrick of Vivian LA. They have two children.

# SOLDIER LEADERSHIP COURSE



*SSG John Dill and the SLC class following their Field Training Exercise*

BY PFC Ted Burzynski  
(Forsyth, GA) On September 26th, 2010, The Georgia State Defense Force's Soldier Leadership Course (SLC) came to a conclusion. Three previous months' training included a wide variety of leadership and command instruction for the up and coming non-commissioned officers of the 5th Brigade.

The final weekend's training consisted of a large scale mass-casualty exercise conducted on the grounds of the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) in Forsyth, GA. This exercise would test the ingenuity and leadership ability of these new leaders.

Staff Sergeant Larry Caldwell supervised and coordinated the exercise down to the very last detail. Volunteers from SSG Caldwell's church posed as victims during the exercise donning artificial injuries ranging from compound fractures, sucking chest wounds, burns as well as fatalities. It was the students' mission to properly triage and classify these victims while instructors observed from the sidelines scoring them.

It was the mission of 5th Brigade public affairs personnel to act as reporters during the exercise to test the students on properly establishing security during a catastrophic event such

as the one staged by SSG Caldwell. Also, 5th Brigade public affairs personnel would embed with the search teams and cover the events as they unfolded.

For the purposes of testing leadership ability, soldiers from 1st and 2nd BN of the 5th Brigade formed the squads and platoons that the SLC candidates would lead.

Saturday morning the soldiers were briefed on their mission, given maps and coordinates and phase lines in which to search. The exercise tested a multitude of leadership skills throughout the day; land navigation, radio communications, triage and first aid, calling in medical evacuation teams for casualties as well as putting them under the pressure of having to care and evacuate one of their own personnel injured during the exercise.

The various teams performed valiantly throughout the day making minimal mistakes if any, and learning from the mistakes they did make and correcting them on the spot.

The 5th Brigade Schools Section once again succeeded in coordinating an excellent training program both in regards to cadre as well as training scenarios and materials which can only better prepare these future leaders for whatever situation

*cont.-*



*Soldier Leadership Course cont.- they may face in the future.*

Cadre for the course included; 2LT Georgia Ritchie (OIC), SSG John Dill (NCOIC), WO1 Sam McCowan, 1SG Eddie Dumas, SSG Larry Caldwell, SGT Jerry Barnes, SGT Glen Uebler.

The graduates of the Georgia State Defense Force Soldier Leadership Course are: CPL Mike Ganas (2nd BN, 5th BDE), CPL Ron Jones (HHC, 5th BDE), CPL Thomas Collins (3rdBN, 5th BDE), PFC Charles Henry (2nd BN, 5th BDE), PFC John Adkins (3rd BN, 5th BDE), PFC Rebekah Uebler (2nd BN 5th BDE) and PFC Daniel Willaims (1st BN, 5th BDE).



*CPL Ganas and PVT Thompson load simulated victim into medevac vehicle during mass-casualty exercise.*

*To view more photographs of the Soldier Leadership Course Field training exercise go to:  
[\*http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsd/\*](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsd/)*



# Waiting for a Mission...

## *My Sarspec Journal*

By PFC Ted Burzynski

Week 3 - Friday 17 September 2010

Friday 17SEP2010

1800 hrs. As I drove through the gate of the GPSTC Bomb disposal area, (the location of our final weekend of SARSPEC II training.) I noticed a soldier waiting at the head of the parking area. He wasn't one of our guys, as I got closed I recognized him as PVT Reed, a medic from 1st MEDCO that I had gone to IET with last year. He didn't recognize me at first but when I offered my handshake and asked him how he was doing he recognized me, we talked for a second and I parked. I guess PVT Reed was going to be one of our medics for the weekend. My first thought was "oh hell, their bringing in medics – this final weekend is really going to be rough." PVT Reed gave me my instructions, which I already knew. "Bring to camp what you can carry in one trip." That was easy enough I had been doing that the whole time anyway.

So, I got out all my gear, slammed a green tea, had a smoke and headed off to the camp.

As I understood it we would be living in the "field" for the final training weekend. I was expecting to be camped out in the middle of the rattlesnake infested bomb range. What we got was nice grassy campsite behind the Bomb Disposal Training building. It was actually fairly nice.

When I got around the building, at least half of my classmates were already there. I reported to SSG Gillham, my TAC NCO. He pointed me in the direction of where he wanted me. I went and dropped my gear then preceded to greet some of my fellow soldiers made the usual greetings and got busy setting up my tent.

One good thing, there was no rain in the forecast and the temperatures would be lower and virtually no humidity. Good weather.

After getting set up, there were the usual questions to our NCOs; "what would we do tonight?" "When is the rope knot test?" "When do we turn in our homework?" etc.

Everyone who was there at that point was getting together in small groups and practicing knots. The knot test one of our final exams prior to graduation and earlier in the week when we finally got our itinerary for the weekend, they added a written land navigation test. A lot of the guys were discussing that and the short notice. I just figured that it was all info we



were supposed to know already and I had been doing it heavy in my unit over the last year preparing for the "common task testing." I felt pretty confident...little did I know.

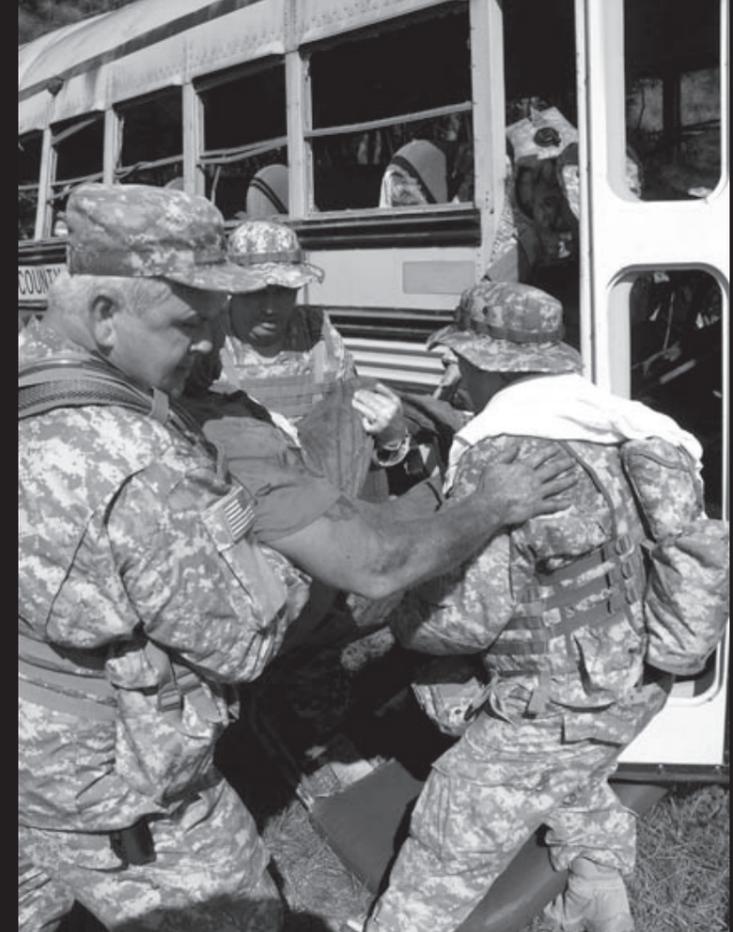
I had already mastered my knots, and helped some of the other students do the same. It became apparent that there were many ways to tie the same knot, but we all agreed to stick with what you know and not to change at the last minute. Again... failure was not an option for anyone at this point in the game. As we tied knots and shot the shit, doing all the camaraderie type stuff, 1SG Ulmer came around and collected the homework.

Somewhere around 2100 hrs they called us all into the classroom for an instructional block on SAR travel skills given by SSG Matthews and WO1 Laflair. The class was very short and sweet, WO1 Laflair didn't kill us with a 2 hour power point, he hit the main points, was communicative and to the point. I know he hates power points as much as I do. Not to berate power points too much, they are great learning tool, but just that, a tool not a substitute for good instruction.

Somewhere around 2200 or 2300 hrs they cut us loose for the night. As always we hung out and talked amongst ourselves for about another hour, then we went to our tents. The temperature was dropping. At last I would not sweat half to death and maybe get some rest. That first night was great; I actually got into my poncho liner and slept well.

*cont.-*

# THE ANATOMY OF A RESCUE





Saturday 18SEP2010

0500 hrs – The rooster crows! I got up, got dressed and pulled out my toiletry kit and brushed my teeth in my canteen cup. We had until 0615 before chow, so I cleaned out my canteen cup and made a cup of coffee. I then strolled over to the other side of camp to talk with Wo1 Clark and SGT Uebler, my classmates from 5th Brigade. We from the 5th kind of stick together, we seem to be the “black sheep” of the SDF.

My breakfast was a couple of MRE cookies and cakes. high calories, not very filling. It was going to be a long day and I didn't want to get all full and weighted down.

After chow we were had a short class on man tracking given by SSG Matthews. He then took us out and we had an exercise in tracking someone down the dirt road. We were looking for barely visible feet print and using the early morning sunlight to shadow them and make them easier to see. We looked for scuffmarks, drag marks, etc and followed the tracks all the way down the road until they ended. At that point SSG Matthews told us to find the path in which the person those tracks belonged to (him) used to leave the area. There were no tracks out on the road. So he obviously went back another way, more than likely through the grass and brush on the side of the road. Which was exactly what he did and he showed us the way he went. You could barely see where his feet have pushed down the weeds and brush. It was a very good training class, we learned a lot.

While we were doing the man-tracking exercise the other teams had been sent out on their first search and rescue missions of the day. So, we went back to the staging area and waited for them to return so we could go out. This would be the beginning of the waiting game we would play all weekend...little did we know, it was also an exercise in patience. I don't know if that was planned or not, but a good way to test the individuals ability to hurry up and wait. This would later be called the “Wait capacity Test.”

While waiting I did my secondary job, photojournalist. I went around taking pictures of my classmates, conversing, etc.

The first teams had come in and while we were getting ready I went over to talk to one of the newly returned teams and to take some pictures while they were resting. While doing this, I hear “PFC Burzynski, you're team leader”. It was Colonel Watts. However, this wasn't my team. I mentioned that to Colonel Watts and was promptly told to un-ass his AO. Which I did with haste. He was correct in that I should not have left my team area.

When our team was moved into position for the first search mission of the day. Gain, I hear. “PFC Burzynski! You're team leader! Report for briefing” Man, Colonel Watts had my number. At that point I knew he was out to test my leadership ability and was not going to fail him.

I moved to the CP, checked in and was directed to the Colonel fro my mission briefing.

I went to the map of the AO and got the instructions for the mission. I wrote down every detail, redrew the map on my note pad, the call signs, everything. I was then told I had 10 minutes to brief my team and be Oscar Mike.

The first thing I did was round up my team and take them over to the edge of the road where I got down and drew a map in the dirt of the search of the AO. I instructed my team where we were going, how we would conduct the search and what we



**SSG Matthews instructs SARSPEC students in man tracking**  
Photo by PFC Burzynski

were looking for. Our mission was to retrieve a Geiger counter that had been mis-dropped by an aircrew. I instructed Chief Garrard to do a radio check before we departed. The last thing I wanted to do was to get down range and have commo fail. That would be an “epic failure” on the mission. For some reason the CP wasn’t answering, “oh, great”. I ran over to the CP and told them to turn their radios up or on that we were not getting through. I was told we were miscuing the mic set and we need to talk louder. I ran back to the team, got commo up and waited out the last couple minutes before departure time. I checked the team, made sure there were no unanswered questions and we moved out.

We marched up the road a bit, maybe a little more than a hundred meters and found our marker to begin the search. It was a green building on the edge of the road. I directed chief Garrard to call in that we had reached our jumping off point. The target we were looking for had been dropped with pink streamers and we were to call in any clues we found along with their distance from the Jump point and azimuths to the two fixed locations so that the CP could track out movements and where the clues had been found. I decided that if we were to cover the most ground quickly we would start in the corner of the field by the road and move diagonally across the field. I split the team into four groups. Alasa and Abrams would go left, Baker and Rollins would go right, my RTO and me would go up the middle and SFC Langley would go to my right in

between the command element and Baker and Rollins. SFC Langley ended up moving in front of the command element and taking point. We moved quickly, it was a hasty search. The first marker was found at 50 meters in. I as counting pace and so was Abrams. We called it in and moved forward, the next streamer was about another 40 meters in, and we called that one in. At that point I looked up and SFC Langley had found the next one, dead ahead another 40 or 50 meters and the puzzle was coming together.

The direction of travel for our target had t be dead ahead the streamers were basically leading us to the target. At this point all teams converged like a cone in the northeasterly direction and bam! Target acquired. We still had two more streamers between the target and us and had to call them in. We got to the target and called it in. We had found it in 30 minutes. I was told we had an hour, so that was good, mission accomplished ahead of schedule. It was just what I wanted. We marched out back to the Jump Point and called in theta we were coming in. We marched back to the CP. I took my team over to the shade, we dropped our gear, and while everyone as getting water, did a quick debrief and concluded that the success of the mission was due to good intelligence. I went to the CP and gave my debriefing to the team at the CP and gave them part of a broken quartz arrowhead I had found during the search.

*Cont.-*



SARSPEC students conducting field search. PFC Rollins, SGT Baker, PVT Villegas  
Photo by PFC Burzynski

I went back to my squad and we hydrated and had lunch and rested. During lunch I asked my squad if they could do me a favor. Today was my sons 21st birthday and I wanted to send him a video birthday card. So, I got out my phone/camera/magic toaster and we all wished my son Nick a happy birthday. I sent it to him and he texted me back that that was great. I wanted him to see my squad members that I talk about often and wanted him to know and see what a great bunch of guys these are.

Then we waited.... and waited, and waited for the other teams to come in so we could go back out.

As we waited the other teams started coming in. One team came in carrying the sand dummy on an improvised stretcher. They looked spent. At least I knew what was coming.

Finally, Major Skalla came over to where we were resting and said that he needed volunteers to be platoon leader, assistant platoon leader and squad leaders. I had already had the opportunity to lead a team so I didn't volunteer so that someone else could get some leadership experience. No one volunteered, so Major Skalla started picking individuals for the jobs. He picked PVT Matt Parker for platoon leader, PVT Desiree' Saltkill to be assistant, chief Garrard for squad leader for our team. The new leaders were taken into the building for the mission briefing and returned shortly with their instructions. The briefing was:

There was an escaped prisoner, he had a firearm and ordnance and was last seen by security guards moving down a particular dirt road. We were to look for clues as well as anything that could lead to the possible recapture of the suspect.

The platoon marched out to the jump point and formed into two groups on either side of the road. They called out for navigators and tallymen. I took navigator for our squad and stayed closest to the edge of the road. The rest of the team spread out to my right in 10-meter increments. Once we were all lined up, we moved out, stopping every couple feet to call out a foot print, which was obviously from an earlier search team, this went on for at least two hundred meters, and was really getting old. The subject was on the run. He wasn't fighting through chest high sticker bushes. He ran down the road – the path of least resistance where he probably split off on a game trail and a quick way out of the area to a main road out of there. That was my opinion anyway. I always ask myself, "what would I do?", "How would I get out of here quickly?" and look for where I would travel, if I stayed where would I make camp or dig a hide?

I kept getting ahead of my team in the search line and kept getting called back. The heat was really starting build up and the gear just kept getting heavier and the line kept getting slower and command seemed to be failing. I was ready to snap.



**SGT Baker and SSG Damasche** Photo by PFC Burzynski

Chief Garrard and came over and replaced me on the end so I could move closer to the center of the line and stay in place better. We moved another 20 to 30 meters downrange and Chief Garrard who was slightly ahead of me spotted it. A campsite that was on the edge of the brush to my right. IT had not into view for me yet. He halted the line and went over to take a look. The rest of us stayed in place until our platoon leader came over to document the site. PVT Parker put on his rubber gloves and checked everything and called it in. I went over and took photos of the evidence. The CP replied that they

needed a location. Where the site was I could not get a clear shot with my compass to fixed location. I climbed behind the campsite to a mound of dirt that was high enough to get a good azimuth. I shot it and we called it in. About the time we were getting wrapped up, the team on the other side of the road found some clothing and a LAAW rocket tube.

The line was halted again. This time we would be there for a while. We dropped our gear where we were and waited. I got some water and had a smoke and went over to where my team was huddled up in the brush while we waited for the call to move out.

While we waited team one was busy calling in the items they found, then bagging them up and tagging them. While this was transpiring a call was made to bring in more water, the troops were running low and the sun was hot and we were far enough away from camp that it could present a problem. After a few minutes Colonel Watts comes down the road with a fresh water can. Those who needed it filled up.

The evidence bags were piling up on the side of the road. It looked like we were getting ready to move out again. SSG Brierley was tasked with guarding the evidence. Not breaking the chain of custody was very important in this phase of the operation.

Our platoon leader PVT Parker determined that the man we were searching for had moved out to the east of where we were

finding the evidence. Both teams formed up on the opposite side of the road and formed a search line to the east. We had moved approximately 90 meters from the road and they found the missing firearm we had been looking for. The search mission was a success; e had found everything that we had set out to find. We moved back to the road and formed a single column and headed out.

When we got back to camp, we dropped out gear and debloused and relaxed for a few minutes. We had all done good and the mission was done...and nobody died. The only thing left for us was chow and the land navigation written test.

LTC Worthington treated us to a real meal. Hamburgers, beans, salad and iced tea. So much better than the MRE's we had been living off of for the last three months. Ten coolers full of beer would have been really nice, but regs forbid it on state property. I guess we would survive at this point.

After dinner we loaded up and went back to camp.

Next was the land navigation written exam. Everyone had been studying like mad all weekend every spare minute they had. I had not. I know it inside and out or at least I thought I did. The exam was timed with 35 questions and open book. Up until then I didn't think I even needed the book. Well... The test was written like a damn law school exam and you had to read the questions over and over to make sure you were solving the correct word puzzle. About half of them I didn't need the book, the others I did and about 5 of them were not in the book and I just used deductive reasoning to et the best possible answer. Honestly, I had no idea how I did and still don't just that I passed.

That was it. We were done. The next morning those who needed to rest for the Work capacity test and the Pack test would do so. I didn't have to do either of those over so I was very happy.

I went and set with SSG Baker and PFC Rollins in front of their tent and we talked for a while. They are two of my newest 5th Brigade members. They would be transferring into 5th MEDCO with my friend Major Lieble. I had a smoke and went off to my tent.

I got in my tent, pulled out my clean clothes stripped off my sweaty, stinky uniform I had been wearing for two days and took a baby wipe bath. Believe it or not it felt pretty darn good.



**SARSPEC Students enjoy hamburgers and hotdogs courtesy of 5th Brigade HQ.**  
Photo by PFC Burzynski

Sunday 19SEP2010

0500 – The rooster crows! Damn that ring tone stills scares me awake. I got up, put on clean clothes, shaved and brushed my teeth and started taking down my gear. The last word we had gotten the night before was that we would tear down camp and be at the mock village by 0730.

It was still dark and I had my gear loaded in the car and was waiting for the next move. It didn't come. This is where the "wait capacity test" would really kick in. We drew chow, the infamous heater meal. My heater actually worked this time. I sat with WO1 Chris Clark and ate my breakfast on the side of the building. Before we could get done they were already policing the area coming around with trash bags collecting our garbage.

At 0730 the re-testers left to go test. While we were waiting we went into the class and had to write three sustainable points of the course and three, which should be improved upon. The survey wasn't anonymous as most surveys are, we had to put our name on it, so they knew who said what. I thought that was kind of skewed, but oh well. I forget exactly what I wrote, but the main focus of mine was that we had great instructors and needed to continue in that direction, the parts I thought needed improvement were that there should be some time set aside to teach leadership on the SAR team level specifically and that the outdated MRE's needed to be trashed and get some newer ones. We in the 5th Brigade are perhaps spoiled; we have a mess sergeant that cooks real food for us when we have schools.

After the survey, the rest of us found a spot on the bleachers and talked and smoked and waited, and waited. Talked and smoked some more and the term "wait capacity test" was coined. At some point several hours later someone came and got us and told us everyone else was in the classroom. We shuffled off to the classroom and had a seat in the back, the room was full.

Brigadier General Bradford had come to speak with us before the graduation. He congratulated us on completing the course and told us we had endured the toughest training that the GSDF had to offer and succeeded beyond what was expected. For all of us who had made it though this was great. I only wish my friends Mike Ganas and Tom Dager had been there. They were just as good as us and should have been there. After the General spoke Colonel Watts hosted a critique of the course by the students and the instructors in which we had the opportunity to voice what we had written down earlier that day.

After the survey review we were formed up outside and began to rehearse the graduation ceremony - Open ranks, close ranks, etc. After running through it 3 or 4 times we were dismissed. I took this opportunity to get some class pictures taken. I gave my camera to WO1 Laflair to take the photos. We took photos of each of the two platoons. I asked Mr. Laflair if he could take pictures of the graduation for me since I couldn't very well do it myself since I would be in formation.

1100 we moved out to the mock village where the graduation ceremony would take place and formed up on the pad we had become so familiar with over the last three months. This place was beginning to look like a second home and I would feel a bit melancholy when I left that day.

We formed up the way we had practiced and ran through it one more time. It was about as good as it could get. At 1200 sharp the general came out and we were called to attention. Major Skalla turned us over to him and he spoke to us and congratulated us on our achievement.

The tabs... As General Bradford made his way down the formation Colonel Watts called out our names. When the general put the tab on us, he punched it into our arm. Kind of like when they pin your jump wings into your chest. When the General got to me, he thanked me for my work with public affairs and told me he liked my writing as he pounded my tab to my arm. I remember thinking, "damn, he really did it." "This is for real. At that point a great feeling of pride swept over me. I had done it. I had made it. I was a Search and Rescue Specialist and these men surrounding me were my new brothers. We had all endured the strenuous training and accomplished a great feat. We are the best of the best! HOOAH!



## THIS MONTH IN GEORGIA HISTORY

In 1765 John and William Bartram discovered a small grove of trees with white flowers along the southern reaches of the Altamaha River; the species became commonly known as the Franklin tree. In October 1832 the Georgia land lottery, in which plots of Cherokee land were parceled out to white settlers, began in Milledgeville. The legislation creating Georgia's first official state flag was passed by Governor Alfred Colquitt in 1879.

Troops began arriving at a new military camp outside Columbus, which would later be called Fort Benning, in 1918.

Rebecca Latimer Felton, a Cartersville resident and woman suffrage activist, was the first woman in the U.S. Senate; she was appointed on October 3, 1922, to fill a vacant seat until a special election could be held.

In 1964 civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. became the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient in history. In 2002 former U.S. president Jimmy Carter also won the award, setting a record for the most Nobel Peace Prize recipients from one state. Both men donated their prize money to further the cause of peace.

In 1929 the UGA Bulldogs defeated the Yale University team fifteen to nothing in the inaugural game at Sanford Stadium, named for the educator Steadman V. Sanford.

### Other News

Visit the *NEW 5th Brigade website at:*

<http://www.wix.com/5thbrigade/gsdg>

View the *Georgia State Defense Force's photo stream at:*

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsdg/>

*Digital downloads of the PHOENIX RISING may also be obtained through the Georgia Dept of Defense website.*

<http://gadod.net/index.php/news/phoenix-rising>

## Drill / Mission Calendar

### October:

#### **Peachtree City Airshow:**

7-10 Oct. Peachtree City, GA

**OPFOR:** 10-16 Oct., Fort Stewart, GA

**FTX:** 15-17 Oct, Fort Stewart, GA

### November:

**AT:** 5-7 Nov, Fort Stewart, GA

**PLEASE NOTE:** *There is now a current google calendar on the 5th Brigade website that is updated regularly and that you can link to and download to your own personal calendar.*