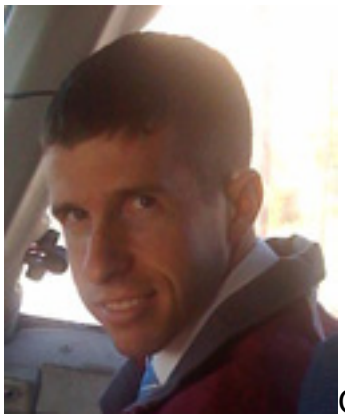
ECN’s Veteran’s Day tribute: Remembering those who’ve served

Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

 On the cusp of Veteran’s Day, I’m reminded that a disproportionate number of our friends and colleagues served in the military. And that makes me proud to work in this industry.

ECN — and her parent company, Advantage Business Media — is no exception. You can’t swing a dead cat (or give a resounding Hoooah!) without hitting a veteran.

Your humble editor served three years in the Army Reserves as a “butterbar” (aka, 2nd Lieutenant Jason Lomberg). But I already told my story here [1]. This year, we’d like to highlight SFC Reinke and SGT Fujihira.

Jeff Reinke (aka, my boss) is the Editorial Director of ABM’s Design Group. Previously, Reinke (formerly Sergeant First Class Reinke) served 12 years in the United States Army Reserves as a 11B3X (11B is infantry; the x-ray identifier means he was drill sergeant qualified).

Jeff enlisted to pay for college and the opportunity to experience something new. Reminiscing about his time in service, Jeff said the following:

“I always felt truly honored to be given the privilege of wearing that uniform and serving with the best, most loyal, most dedicated and hardest working people in the

world. Playing even the smallest of parts in the defense of the greatest nation on the planet always provided a sense of pride that simply can't be matched."

He went to Basic Combat Training (boot camp) and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Ft. Sill, OK – part of an 18-week One Station Unit Training (OSUT) cycle for Field Artillery. His unit — and by extension, Jeff — would later be re-classified to infantry.

Jeff was part of the 3rd Battalion/334 Regiment – 84th Division (later 100th Division) IT, a drill sergeant training unit. As a reservist — obligated to train for one weekend a month and two weeks a year — Jeff spent his drill weekends prepping to take over a two-three week slice of basic training later that summer.

During Annual Training (AT), his unit would go to Ft. Benning, Ft. Knox, or Ft. Sill to train initial entry soldiers.

That's right — Jeff took charge of your sons and daughters, beat the civilian out of them (not literally, of course), and helped mold and shape them into a soldier.

Mike Fujihira is the National Sales Manager for Product Design & Development (PD&D) and the Design Group. Fujihara, a Sergeant (E5) in the Army National Guard, spent 8 years in the Army as a 19D (Cavalry Scout).

Sergeant Fujihira wanted to be part of a proud family tradition. Mike’s brother in law was a Cavalry Scout in the 90’s (served in the Somalia conflict) and influenced his own decision to enlist. Now his brother-in-law, his two brothers (one served in Iraq, one in Afghanistan), and his nephew (just graduated OSUT and is in Air Assault school currently) are carrying on the historic tradition of the Cavalry Scout.

“I wanted to do something different and be part of something bigger than myself,” Mike said.

Like Jeff, Mike completed an OSUT program for his Initial Entry Training (IET). In 2005, Mike shipped out to Fort Knox, KY for boot camp and AIT.

Mike spent his Active Duty time with the 5/7 Cav, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Ft. Stewart, GA. He’s currently with the 1-105th Cav out of Watertown, WI in the Wisconsin National Guard.

For those who didn’t know, a traditional Cavalry Scout's mission is enemy, area, and route reconnaissance, while in today’s military, they’ve become a “jack of all trades.” As a Guardsman, Mike has shouldered the additional responsibilities of a “citizen soldier,” ready to respond at a moment’s notice (like the NJ Guard’s mobilization during Hurricane Sandy).

SGT Fujihira deployed to “the sandbox” from Jan 2007-April 2008 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His unit started out in Ramadi, moved to Falluja after a

few months to assist the Marines in an unoccupied area just outside of the city, and finished assisting the 2nd Brigade in Baghdad.

“The thing I’ve enjoyed the most in my time has been affecting people’s lives for the better and training and mentoring junior soldiers. Also the skills and friends that I’ve gotten that will last a lifetime,” he said.

Mike's experience is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices our men and women in uniform make on a daily basis:

"What I've enjoyed the least would be the effect it had on my family, being deployed and the uncertainty that comes with constantly being gone and never really knowing what was coming up next. Also I would have to say the friends we left overseas only to meet again in Fiddler's Green someday. I still wear a bracelet in memory of one of my best friends that was killed while we were trying to secure the area outside of Fallujah, and constantly struggle with his loss."

ECN, the Design Group, and ABM would like to thank all who have served. Your sacrifice, perseverance, and heroism will not be forgotten.

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[1] http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2011/11/ecn%E2%80%99s-tale-two-veterans