Military service unites YRC Freight employees
Unique friendship began years ago in Minnesota

(Editor's note: America celebrates Armed Forces Day on May 19. In conjunction with that celebration, YRC Freight salutes our employees who serve our country and particularly those who are currently deployed or have recently returned from a deployment. This story is about two employees who were deployed to Kuwait and served there together. More employees are featured on page three.)

When Jeff Reeves was a linehaul dispatcher at terminal 347 in St. Paul, MN, he didn’t know John Reich, P&D driver at terminal 370 in Duluth, MN.

John is the son-in-law of Rick Dangers, a linehaul driver at 347 who knew Jeff was in the Army Reserves. Jeff and Rick had several conversations about John’s plans to enter Officer Candidate School, and Jeff and John began conversing by email.

Then while assigned to the same unit in Minnesota, one day at drills they struck up a conversation by chance.

“It was a random meeting,” Jeff said. “I didn’t know who he was when I met him face to face. He asked who I worked for and then we figured it out. It ended up being a small world.”

Today, Jeff is an operations supervisor at terminal 155 in Baltimore, MD. He began work there April 16 after an eight-month deployment to Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. And as fate would have it, he served part of that tour with now 1LT John Reich.

“At Arifjan we talked daily,” said Jeff, a Staff Sergeant whose military occupation is truck driver. “He was in charge of assigning me my missions. He would request me to do special missions for him. His office was one cubicle away from (where I was).”

At Arifjan, Jeff worked in a completely secure environment, he said, similar to driving in the United States. Things changed drastically when he became part of Operation New Dawn in Iraq, assisting with the largest drawdown of troops and equipment since WWII.

“I ran five missions into Iraq as convoy commander,” he said. “Usually I was leading around 60 troops. The first mission into Iraq was awfully scary. You are going into a place where you knew that people wanted to kill you.”

Jeff drove a heavy equipment transporter which is designed to haul tanks but was used to haul all types of heavy equipment.

“It was pretty intense,” he said. “Once I started moving equipment out of Iraq, we didn’t stop for about a two-month period. There were days we worked 24 hours straight. There were quite a few long days.”

Jeff joined the reserves in 2006 and re-enlisted while deployed overseas. And he’s deeply appreciative of the support he received from YRC Freight.

“I felt terrible when they brought me on board in Baltimore and all of a sudden I was leaving,” he said. “It was amazing how they handled it. They said, ‘OK, we’ll deal with it. See you when you get back.’”

When he did return, he was impressed with the warm welcome he received.

“This terminal has been amazing,” he said. “Every time I talked to them, they said they were looking forward to me coming back, how much they appreciated me while I was gone and what I’ve done. All those things added up to me wanting to come back even more.”

Jeff, who is close to completing his bachelor’s degree in transportation, currently is an operations planner with responsibility for scheduling drivers and planning inbound and outbound shipments. He’s also putting to use his background as a training NCO as a safety trainer.

John is still in Kuwait, serving as a unit movement officer, which he describes as similar to a terminal manager at YRC Freight. He expects to leave sometime in August and to return to work in Duluth shortly thereafter.

“Jeff was in one of the units under us,” he said. “We laughed because our roles are reversed with YRC Freight.”
Mark Thomas, dock professional Carlisle, PA, and Major in Army reserves. Mark entered the military in 1988, attended Officer Candidate School in 1996 and has since been assigned as a military police officer and intelligence officer. In his most recent assignment, he commanded a joint Army and Air Force team providing support to civilian authorities during an incident involving chemical/biological contamination.

Francisco A. Herrera Jr., driver/dock professional, Bellows Falls, VT, Command Sergeant Major, Vermont Army National Guard, prepares for foot patrol in the city of Charkar, Afghanistan. Francisco has deployed twice in five years, first to Iraq for a year in 2005 and then to Afghanistan for 2010.

Jeffrey Glenn, dock professional, Chesapeake, VA, Master Sergeant, U.S. Air Force. Jeffrey has 27 years’ active and reserve service in the Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps combined. He works in aerial port transportation, loading and unloading transport cargo. During his eight-month deployment, he was in Baghdad, Iraq, Thumrait, Oman and Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Patrick Thibodeau (left), dock professional, Indianapolis, IN, Lt. Col., Indiana Army National Guard. For more than 25 years, Patrick has worn two hats serving his country and his company. Deployments have taken him away from his family for up to a year. His current military assignment has him working as the operations officer for Indiana’s standing state joint task force for civil support.


Paul Schweikert, dock professional, Cleveland, OH, and Sergeant First Class (SFC), active Army reserves. After jumping from airplanes 20 years ago while on active duty, Paul now serves as a training NCO with responsibility for training 80-plus soldiers.

Frederic “Rick” Smith, P&D driver, Syracuse, NY, Sergeant Major in Army reserves. With 32 years’ service, Rick is currently in Afghanistan serving as the Commander’s Emergency Relief Payment Agent. He is a Civil Affairs Senior NCO and has been deployed three times.

Yohann Weaver, dock professional, Carlisle, PA, Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army. With 15 years in the military, Yohann is a traffic management coordinator. He’s currently deployed to Afghanistan where his responsibilities include deployments of units and equipment.