



WILL COUNTY GRASSROOTS DIVISION OF THE ILLINOIS STATE RIFLE ASSOCIATION

NEXT MEETING - July 20th - 7:00 PM

**Sara's Place Restaurant
Joliet, IL (815)741-3076**

Pilot and Adventurer, Will Martin, will be our guest speaker for July. Mr. Martin will tell of his exploits flying P51 fighter planes from the Nicaraguan military to sell to Warbird lovers here in the states. Will has crash landed 6 times without a scratch and was once rescued in a dugout canoe when he could not make it back to shore. He has also flown B25 and B26 twin engine bombers. He learned to fly all these planes by reading the manuals, never having had any pilot training. A slideshow of Will's experiences will confirm some of his more "unbelievable tales". Come enjoy an entertaining evening with us...and bring your friends.

BRONZE STAR Earned for Heroism



February 2003. It was a devastating attack by the enemy. Before it was over, six 7-ton trucks and 5 Hum-V's were lost, leaving only one Hum-V and one ambulance for the wounded. HM2 Alan Demeter, USN was near the south wall. Alan had already sustained wounds in the leg and shoulder, but that didn't stop him from performing his duties as a Corpsman. He treated five of his

fellow soldiers that had suffered serious injuries. Shots rang out, as the area was still under attack. There were eight badly wounded soldiers on the other side of the wall. Knowing that they must be saved, Alan climbed over the wall amidst the gunfire, treated the soldiers and got them evacuated. For his actions, he was awarded the Bronze Star on March 26, 2003. During this attack, there were 58 soldiers hit within 35 minutes; 32 suffered life-threatening injuries and were evacuated from the area within an hour.

HM2 Alan Demeter, USN shared this and other experiences with us at the June meeting. He was accompanied by corpsman HM2 Damon Chandler, USN. Demeter has been a navy field medic for 15 years and is presently stationed in Great Lakes Naval Base. During the first Desert Storm, he was stationed in Haiti. In 2003, he was stationed in Iraq where he was assigned to the 28th Battalion and served six months as part of a combat troop. Alan spoke of his experiences in Iraq and with the help of Corpsman Chandler, shared with us a slide presentation depicting a soldier's life in Iraq.

Alan explained that the US Navy has the largest hospital corps of all the armed services. Each battalion is assigned 45-60 corpsmen and ships have 35-40 corpsmen. Hospital ships housed twelve operating rooms, an eighty-bed emergency room area and a forty-bed recovery unit. There were sixteen wards and four intensive care units (two general, one for burns and one for pediatric needs).

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They were equipped with portable x-ray machines and CT scanners. The ships had a 1000-bed capacity. You may remember hearing about one of these ships, the Mercy, which was recently part of the Tsunami aid.

While in Iraq, Corpsmen lived in desert tents and suffered in temperatures up to 130 degrees! With this intense heat, a person must drink a great deal of water to stay hydrated. For sanitation purposes, they had lister bags that had 6 spouts providing water in which to wash your hands. Waterless soap also was used very often. Norwalk Virus, an intestinal illness that often occurs in outbreaks, is common in the region. People can get infected with the virus by swallowing stool-contaminated food or water. Those infected are treated with antibiotics and usually recover in 2 to 3 days without serious or long-term health effects.

A Marine combat medic is trained to patch holes, set splints and carries only aspirin while Corpsmen are able to perform more invasive procedures and carry medications such as morphine. They are typically within 100 yards of the front lines. A combat soldier is almost always within fifteen minutes of treatment. This is planned because getting treatment in the "golden hour" can mean the difference between life and death.

Corpsmen sometimes treated a large number of civilians, including children. Huey helicopters are among those used for evacuating patients and can carry 24-48 patients, depending upon their condition. Ambulances are air-conditioned and impregnated with Kevlar, making them able to withstand a bullet from an AK-47 rifle.

As for the Iraqis, most live in adobe huts just as they have done for hundreds of years. For over 40 years, the civilians of Iraq did not have clean water and had to boil it for cooking, drinking, etc. Malaria was prevalent. With the liberation, most Iraqis finally have good, potable water to use. Trucks and other pieces of equipment have been handed over to cities that have been liberated. And, the Iraqis now have their own trained security forces and border patrol that are continuing to grow.

It took 9-12 days to stabilize Nazaria. During this time, the Iraqi people would pray for the soldiers' wellbeing, offer them tea and share their meager supply of food with the Americans. The Taliban and insurgents, in their efforts to regain control, attempt daily attacks on the three hydroelectric dams that provide power to the entire country. Thus, the dams are very closely guarded. Saddam Hussein used many schools for strongholds and fortresses and set mines in children's playgrounds. It has been discovered that Saddam used children as young as 13 for some of his defenses. Corpsmen carry weapons such as 9 mm pistols and M-16 rifles to protect themselves and their patients. For security reasons while in combat, neither medics nor officers wear any type of identification to differentiate themselves from the rest of the troops. This is done so no one will be labeled as a target.

Gary Senice (well-known for playing the role of "Sgt. Dan" in the movie Forest Gump) and others personally send aid to the Iraqi people. Alan Dementer feels that the vast majority of Iraqis like us and appreciate what we are doing for them.

Alan stated that the news media only reports on about 15 percent of what actually happens in Iraq, and then seems to focus on the negative events. He said that there are many positive results of our work in Iraq, and that the Iraqi people are, for the most part, living in much better conditions than under Sadam Hussein's regime. Not only do the Iraqi citizens owe Alan and his fellow soldiers a tremendous debt of gratitude, but we also extend our thanks and support to our Armed Services. Their tireless efforts and sacrifices serve to make us proud to call America our home.

United Service Organization (USO) of Illinois

We were pleased to have the president of USO Illinois, Lisa Moeller, at our June meeting. Upon addressing the audience, Lisa acknowledged the veterans in attendance that night and extended her heartfelt thanks to them all for serving their country. She then gave a brief history and description of the USO and its programs.

The mission of this non-profit organization is to "...enhance the quality of life of the active duty men and women of the Armed Forces and their families through social, recreational, entertainment and educational programs and services."

The USO invites celebrities such as Jay Leno and Gary Senise to help raise awareness and funds. She noted that USO Illinois was hosting a Freedom Run on June 18, 2005. This was a motorcycle run from Joliet to Marseilles to honor fallen soldiers and to raise money. More than 15,000 bikers were expected to take part in the event that was to be led by John Ayers in a deuce and a half military vehicle.

USO Illinois is also holding a fundraising event on October 22, 2005 in the Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier where they will announce the winner of a 2005 Harley-Davidson Fat Boy motorcycle. Raffle tickets are now on sale for \$10.00 each or \$50.00 for 6 tickets. You may contact their website at www.uso.org/Illinois for more information.

The USO provides various services for those on active duty and their families. Some of these services include;

1. Support for deploying troops and families left behind
2. Telephone, internet and e-mail capabilities
3. Family outreach services-providing furniture, car seats, formula and diapers for young military families and parents who find themselves in time of need
4. Discounted tickets and passes to Chicago area events and attractions
5. Deployment events for reserve and National Guard and Reserve units in Illinois featuring entertainment

The USO is also present during each deployment and every homecoming.

Lisa noted that the USO is not funded in any part by the US Government, but is endorsed by the President and the Department of Defense.

The USO relies on private donations to provide these services to our troops. If you are interested in supporting the USO, please contact Lisa at 312-923-7070, or via e-mail.

We would like to thank Lisa for joining us and for all the fine work that USO Illinois does for our military personnel and their families.

LOCKPORT OLD CANAL DAYS PARADE

For 32 years, Lockport has celebrated its historical roots with a festival including a parade, rides and crafts. This year, the Lockport Old Canal Days Festival was held from June 17th - 19th. The parade kicked off at 6:30pm on Friday. The parade's Grand Marshal was Robert "Whitey" Miller, Lockport's former police chief.

The ISRA was represented in the parade this year with two military vehicles. Leading the ISRA contingent was a jeep driven by Doug Mayhall, followed by a 2 ½ ton truck driven by Ron Danihel. ISRA participation in the event was coordinated by Will County Grassroots member, Lee Nelson. Also riding on the vehicles were ISRA members Lee Groharing, Ed Ronkowski, Tony Zurek, and several other friends and family members. We received a very warm reception from the spectators with many people giving us a thumbs up or "high five" throughout the parade route. We seemed to be well received by the crowd, especially by the veterans.

Following the parade, we went to dinner at The Old Stone Café, one of our newest advertisers on the Will County Grassroots website. The food was terrific and the atmosphere was relaxing.

The Illinois and Michigan Canal that runs along the west side of downtown Lockport once played a key role in transportation and commerce in Illinois. The city's current name came from locks along the waterway. With its buildings dated from the 1800's to its museums and historical society, Lockport continues to be a focal point for Midwest historians. - Doug Mayhall



Calendar of Events

- August 4-7** Kendall County Fair - www.kendallcountyfair.com (volunteers needed, contact Dave Lombardo at (815) 741-3474 or wordsmith@voyager.net)
- August 6-7** CADA - St.Charles - Dupage Expo Center (815) 259-5445
- August 12-21** Illinois State Fair - www.agr.state.il.us/isf/index.php
- August 20** 2nd Annual ISRA/NRA Youth Shooting Sports Camp - ISRA Range, Bonfield
- August 24-28** Will County Fair - Peotone Rd, 1 mile East of 1-57 willcountyfair.org
- Sept. 24-25** National Hunting and Fishing Days - Silver Springs, Yorkville www.huntingandfishingdays.org
Please contact Secretary, Doug Mayhall, or the ISRA office if you would like to help out at any of the ISRA events. E-mail willcounty@isra.org if you have any events you would like included in next month's newsletter.
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Camp Perry - National Matches

Forty miles east of Toledo, Ohio, on the shores of Lake Erie, there is a place unlike any I've ever seen. This place is called Camp Perry. It was used as a training center for officers & marksmanship instructors during WWI and served as a P.O.W. camp during WWII. Since 1907, it has been the home of the National Matches, which are considered to be the "World Series of the Shooting Sports."

This year's National Matches run from July 7th to August 17th. Visit the websites of the NRA (www.nrahq.org/compete/champ3.asp) and Civilian Marksmanship Program (www.ocdmp.com) for details. I would like to wish all of the competitors the best of luck in this year's events. Drive safely, shoot straight and most of all...have fun! - Kim Beard

The Occasional Shooter

You all know one. You may be one. The firearm owner that has that gun tucked away in a safe place, rarely seeing the light of day. You keep meaning to go shooting, but circumstances or resources work against you. I am one of those people. I own several firearms, but rarely go shooting. I'm embarrassed to admit I even own guns I've never fired. "One of these days..." I keep telling myself, but then the lawn needs mowing, or my wife needs something fixed, and I just never get around to it. Why, then, do I bother to belong to an organization like the NRA or the ISRA you ask? Isn't the NRA and ISRA just a bunch of hunters, competitive shooters and gun rights' activists?

Yes, the NRA and the ISRA have many members who enjoy nothing more than spending the weekend in the field hunting for pheasant, or at the range shooting holes in a piece of paper. However, the vast majority of NRA and ISRA members are people like you and me. People who feel it is their constitutional right to own a firearm and choose to exercise that right. Whether it be for protection of yourself and your family, the annual trip to the range, or just because you enjoy collecting them, we know that it is our heritage and history as Americans to be able to own the firearms we choose.

I shoot on occasion, but not enough to warrant owning a gun strictly for that purpose. I have been hunting on a few occasions, but it's been several years since I've looked over the barrel at a bunny. I own guns because I like them. I enjoy the aesthetics and mechanical beauty of a well-made gun. But since I do not shoot them very often, does this mean I have any less of a right to own them? Of course not!

Unfortunately, there are many politicians that disagree with me. They want to ban any weapon that they feel is not specifically made for hunting. Some want even those taken away. They disregard the entire premise behind the Second Amendment to our Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment was put in place to ensure that the citizenry of the United States would be able to protect themselves against injustice of any type. From the twice convicted felon who kicks in your door at 3am to an oppressive government

that strips the rights and freedoms from its people, the Second Amendment sets up a last line of defense, namely a militia, made up of the people. That's you and me. I feel that not only do we have a right to protect ourselves and our families from any threat, but we also have an obligation to do so. To that end, I choose to exercise my right to arm myself.

Now I can write to my legislators, and I do. I can talk to others about the merits of the Second Amendment, and I do that as well. But how am I, one lonely firearm owner, going to protect my right to protect myself? The answer is by joining with individuals like myself so that my voice can be heard in Springfield and in Washington DC. Individuals that may not be hunters and may not shoot regularly but believe that they have the right to do so if they choose. People, like you and me, who know that the rest of the Constitution of the United States is not worth the paper it's written on if you delete Amendment #2! People who still believe that this is the greatest country on the face of the planet, but will only remain so as long as we keep our freedoms and say, "No!" to those who continually chip away at them. That is why I send my yearly check to organizations like the National Rifle Association and the Illinois State Rifle Association. (Well, that, and the cool hats you get.) I know that by joining my voice with yours, we can be heard and we can make a difference. How do I know this? Because it's working! Take a look at the ISRA website, and read about the impact that this organization has had in Illinois this year. Isn't it worth a few bucks a year to be a part of a group that can make a real difference in your life, liberty and pursuit of happiness? No, that's not a trick question. The answer is really that simple. Yes! So you are one of us, one of the "occasional shooters". You choose to exercise your freedom to own a gun. You believe that the right to self-preservation and self-protection is just that...a Right! You know that you cannot rely on anyone else to protect you or your loved ones. Don't be put off, thinking that the NRA or ISRA is just for shooters and hunters. YOU are the NRA! YOU are the ISRA! We can make a real difference, but only if we join together and send our message to Washington and Springfield. - Dave Beard

Political Disclaimer

The ISRA and the Will County Division of the ISRA **CAN NOT** and **WILL NOT** endorse any candidate or party. We feature speakers to allow us to learn about the positions a candidate holds about the Second Amendment, and welcome all candidates to speak to us. Only the ISRA Political Victory Fund can endorse candidates or donate to political campaigns.

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