



Saddle Up... Tonight We Ride

"Daigle, stop! I can't take it anymore! Shut your pie hole and quit complaining! You are killing me with all that incessant whining . . ." So go the unsolicited comments (minus numerous four-letter modifiers) of one MAJ Rex Awesome, a former drinking partner and self-described "Tanker Extraordinaire." Awesome takes issue with the tone and tenor of my ramblings in **Saddle Up . . . Tonight We Ride**. The gist of Awesome's no-so-eloquent comments focus on my fault-finding in recent columns.

Awesome's verbal assault came during a work day; I was busily engaged with important magazine editor stuff (Don't ask. I still can't explain it to my kids). His tirade caught me off guard, and my response was typical of a 6-year-old: "That's what you think!"

"Why don't you write about some of the good stuff going on out there?" challenged Awesome.

"Why don't you?" I reply, always quick with the snappy repartee.

"Done," says Awesome, "I'll write your damn column!"

Rex Awesome Weighs In: It's damn easy to complain and snivel; too many people occupy themselves doing it for my liking. I suffer fools better than I suffer whiners. Simply don't have time to listen to them bitch and complain, and quite frankly, they make me puke! Let's talk about some things that are right with the Army for a change!

My Top Ten "Good" things about the Army follow:

- 10) *Dress blues at a civilian wedding.* Who needs to rent a tux?
- 9) *Physical fitness.* Check out your old high school buddies at the next reunion, but watch for flying harpoons.
- 8) *Unit coins.* Beats the hell out of a pocket full of business cards.

7) *Firing weapons.* Hard to beat the testosterone rush, and if you enjoy it, you can always bolo and get more free ammo.

6) *The "Star Spangled Banner" before movies.* Don't know how this got started, but like the Pledge of Allegiance in schools, it's a damn good idea.

5) *Mess halls.* Yeah, I know we call them dining facilities now, but they will always be mess halls to me. Simply said, if there is a better breakfast deal around, I haven't found it yet.

4) *TDYs and going to the field.* Sometimes ya' just gotta get away from the wife and kids. (Trust me, they feel the same).

3) *Beer calls on Friday after work.* No one brings Palm Pilots and watches the stock market tickers; we trade for cool Class IX stuff.

2) *Army kids.* Ya can't beat 'em. Moving every two or three years and leaving your buddies can't be easy, but our kids do it well. Doing without a mom or dad for a long time ain't easy either. Army kids face this challenge all the time and thrive.

1) *Not working for a living.* Coming out of college with a degree in drinking, the last thing I wanted to do was work for a living, and the Army has allowed me to avoid that for a long time. Yeah, I don't like being away from my wife and kids sometimes, and not all the Army stuff is fun, but I wouldn't trade it for a wearing a suit and working in the corporate world — that'll come soon enough. Don't believe me? Go to a party sometime with your civilian friends and watch the crowd as Big Ed tells his compelling tale of that sales presentation in Topeka. Compare that to the reaction you get when someone asks you about putting steel through targets, or what Kosovo was like.

Rex — Out!

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

ERIC K. SHINSEKI
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

Joel B. Hudson
JOEL B. HUDSON
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

0100406