**THOMAS M. GREGORY**

Brick Location: C8

I joined the Ohio Army National Guard in 1982 after graduating from Gahanna Lincoln High School. I went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for basic training. Because I was going to be gone most of the summer, I thought I should get some sun before I left for training. I put baby oil all over my body and went out and mowed our lawn. I was burned so bad that my red skin couldn’t be missed in that green uniform. My goal was to fly under the radar in basic training. I definitely missed the mark. When the Drill Sergeant saw me he said “what’s the matter with you, boy—you look like a Christmas tree.”

Before training someone had told me that if you get your hair cut yourself, they won’t take as much off. When I tried to explain that I already had a haircut and it wasn’t necessary to get another one, my Drill Sergeant came over and said to the barber “cut this soldier’s hair closer than everyone else’s.”

The final faux pas came halfway through basic when I asked my Drill Sergeant “when are we going camping?” He said “Camping? Camping!!! We’re not roasting marshmallows and sitting around a campfire singing kumbaya.”

I finally learned to keep my mouth shut.

The next summer I went to the Defense Information School for Journalism training in Indianapolis. Believe it or not in 1984 I was named Soldier of the Year for the State of Ohio by the Ohio Army National Guard. I was commissioned as an officer in the Army Reserve in 1987. Not bad for such a “green” recruit.

Submitted by:

Thomas M. Gregory

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