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**Hugh
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politics

DNR clips the wings of trespassing tanks

News item: National Guard tank column trespasses in Kirtland's warbler nesting area near Grayling; DNR conservation officer makes interception and cites platoon leader, who pays \$105 fine — the first action of its kind ever. Score: Warblers 1, Tanks 0.

Ever wonder about those stories?

Are they for real?

Answer: In this case, yes.

And, interestingly, nobody's mad at anybody.

Seems Lt. Charles Holwerda, a 35-year-old Michigan national guardman from Grand Rapids, lost his bearings back on June 17 while leading nine M60 tanks single file on maneuvers through the jack-pine forest



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about eight miles east of Grayling, drove smack between two "posted" signs and, after some tracking around, emerged to find Bruce Patrick, a conservation officer with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, waiting to write him a ticket.

Patrick had been tipped by a caller (who lived nearby) who told him the tanks were going "clank, clank, clank" in the nesting area. So he hustled over from his Grayling field office.

'Just screwed up'

"I talked first to the company commander (who was waiting outside the area), and had him summon the platoon leader (Lt. Holwerda)," said Patrick. "The lieutenant was pretty sheepish, but co-operative. He said he'd been briefed about it (avoiding the nesting areas), but had just screwed up."

Holwerda, a 35-year-old electronics technician at Calvin College who has been with the tank outfit for three years, confirmed the story.

"We'd been issued maps of the Kirtland's warbler areas, but they don't help much when you're lost," he said. "I was acting as company commander and the (eight other tanks) just followed along like little ducklings.

"It was right of the DNR to catch us."

The Kirtland's warblers, an endangered species, nest almost exclusively beneath young (8-to-10-foot-tall) jack pines. The only nesting sites in the world are in Michigan, and many of them are in or near the National Guard training grounds in the Grayling area.

In this case, no serious harm was done.