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guardtimes

Serving the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia, New York Guard and families

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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Our Force Grows in Strength, Capabilities and Confidence

When I take stock of the New York National Guard these days, I'm very happy with what I see.

Our recruiting program is working well. The Army National Guard has topped the 10,000 figure, moving closer to our full-strength goal of 10,300 members. The Air National Guard recruiting effort is also paying off. We're only a few dozen Airmen short of meeting our 6,040 goal for fiscal 2008.

Our ability to execute domestic operations missions in support of Homeland Security and state disasters has been steadily improving. Our CERFP—the Soldiers, Airmen and New York Guard volunteers specially trained to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and high-yield explosive events—has been tested in two major exercises since last summer; most recently with the New York City Fire Department. We have established an additional Civil Support Team in New York City, the 24th CST, which will provide the capacity to detect biological, chemical or radiological hazards and weapons in the downstate area.

And our Joint Task Force Empire Shield of state active duty Soldiers and Airmen re-configured this spring into a more responsive, operational force in New York City. That force and concept was tested by the Pope's visit to New York in April as well as the joint training with the FDNY during Operation Civil Support in early May. We are steadily improving our capability downstate.

We also tested our ability to respond to state emergency missions in April when fire broke out in Minnewasak State Park. Aviation Soldiers training at Fort Drum for deployment to Iraq were able to shift gear rapidly to domestic support and were soon dropping buckets of water from Blackhawk helicopters on the fire.

At the same time we've mobilized and deployed almost 2,000 Sol-

diers to Afghanistan and Iraq, while welcoming home those who have been deployed over the past year with a new reintegration program for

Soldiers and their Families in the Army Guard. Soldiers across the force stepped up to help their deploying brothers and sisters get out the door the right way. I'm very proud of our new reintegration program and the way we're helping our Soldiers come home right; addressing their health concerns and other issues.

We've been able to do this because of you—the Soldiers and Airmen of the New York National Guard—as well as the

members of our state defense forces, the New York Guard and the New York Naval Militia. The 20,000 members of New York's Military Forces are working as one team, towards one mission: serving our state and nation and taking care of our deploying and redeploying warriors.

I'm proud to be your commander.



Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto

Five Years of VA Health Care for Combat Veterans

Peake: Honoring Commitment to Newest Veterans

WASHINGTON - Military veterans who served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This measure increases a two-year limit that has been in effect nearly a decade.

"By their service and their sacrifice, America's newest combat veterans have earned this special eligibility period for VA's world-class health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

The five-year deadline has no effect upon veterans with medical conditions related to their military service. Veterans

may apply at any time after their discharge from the military -- even decades later -- for medical care for service-connected health problems.

The new provision, part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 signed by President Bush on Jan. 28, 2008, applies to care in a VA hospital, outpatient clinic or nursing home. It also extends VA dental benefits -- previously limited to 90 days after discharge for most veterans -- to 180 days.

Combat veterans who were discharged between Nov. 11, 1998 and Jan. 16, 2003, and who never took advantage of VA's health care system, have until Jan. 27, 2011 to qualify for free VA health care.

The five-year window is also open to activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, if they served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998 and were dis-

"By their service and their sacrifice, America's newest combat veterans have earned this special eligibility period for VA's world-class health care"

--Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs

charged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Veterans who take advantage of this five-year window to receive VA health care can continue to receive care after five years, although they may have to pay copayments for medical problems unrelated to their military service. Copayments range from \$8 for a 30-day supply of prescription medicine to \$1,024 for the first 90 days of inpatient care each year. **gt**

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◀◀ CAMP BUCCA, Iraq –The 104th Military Police Battalion from Kingston, stands in formation at a transfer of authority ceremony with the 179th Infantry Battalion from Stillwater, Okla. on Feb. 25. The 104th provided base defense for Camp Bucca, one of the largest Forward Operating Bases and the largest prisoner detention facility in Iraq. The 104th returned to Kingston on Mar. 13. See homecoming story and photos on pages 12-13. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Carlos Vinson 300th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

On the cover: Major General Robert Cone (right) commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan presents the 27th Brigade Combat Team Colors to Col. Brian Balfe, commander, as the incoming commander of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII during the Transition of Authority ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan on Saturday, April 26. Photo by Capt. Robert Romano, 27th Bde Cbt Tm.

Back cover: On the tarmac in Afghanistan, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter operated by the 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Army National Guard air crews from Rochester await the next mission. Photo by 1st Sgt. Greg Kecken.

Guard Spouses Get Career Training Relief

LAGUNA HILLS, Calif. – Allied Schools is now offering no-charge career training for the spouses of Army National Guard Soldiers (ARNG) on active drilling status. This military spouse education program initiated in February 2008 and designed exclusively by Allied Schools – comes in the wake of efforts by the Department of Defense and various service branches to broaden the career and educational opportunities of military spouses.

Guard spouses study at no charge when Guard Soldiers enroll at Allied Schools using their Tuition Assistance benefits. Guard spouses can choose from an approved list of courses – many of which are 100% online. Allied offers

training to be a medical transcriptionist and real estate broker, for example, which are highly mobile professions well-suited to the military lifestyle.

Allied Schools, Inc. is nationally accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), which is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally-recognized accrediting agency. Students can choose from 25+ career training courses in the areas of real estate, medical and business or enroll in a high school diploma program. Allied Schools is based in Laguna Hills, Calif.

Distance (online) education allows Guard spouses to train from home while still maintaining their daily commitments to family and

friends.

The school hopes that no-charge vocational training for Guard spouses will build on recent efforts by both private and governmental institutions to help combat the career and educational challenges that face all military spouses, including those men and women married to National Guard members.

Allied's no-charge career training for military spouses is an in-house program that is not affiliated with any US government spouse education programs.

To learn more about no-charge career training for military spouses, visit www.education-4military.com or call (888) 501-5221 to speak with a military admissions representative. **gt**

Military Personnel News: The MILPO Corner

Defense Integrated Military Human Resource System (DIMHRS) Update

The single most significant change ever made to the military Human Resource system, DIMHRS, is now scheduled for implementation during the spring of 2009.

The entire Department of Defense, both active and reserve, is transitioning to this new system which will replace all existing Soldier support systems. This all-component fully integrated personnel and pay system has the goal of improving Soldier and Soldier family support, with the creation of one personnel record per service member that can follow them across all components.

DIMHRS will replace all existing personnel and pay support systems, and move the responsibility for most data input to command levels closer to each Soldier, with each Soldier actually also participating.

Soldiers can expect to see their administrative staffs at each major command, brigade, and battalion level begin training in performing SIDPERS transactions during the first quarter of 2009.

Reintegration Program

The reintegration of our Citizen Soldiers back into society and their families upon return from deployment is an extremely critical task, especially with many Soldiers experiencing their second or potentially third tour of duty. During 2008, the Military Personnel Directorate will be participating, with the remainder of the Joint Force Headquarters, in conducting formal Reintegration Programs for Soldiers and their families.

The goal is to conduct reintegration events, involving returning Soldiers and their families, where State and Federal Government veteran support representatives, counselors, employers, universities/colleges, etc. provide briefings, handouts, etc. to ensure each veteran and family member is aware of all the benefits they are eligible for.

TRICARE Select (TRS) Program

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is a premium based health plan for the traditional National Guard Soldier and their family. It allows a Soldier to manage his or her own health care. Premiums are \$81 per month for single Soldiers, and \$253 per month for the family plan. These are 2007 rates, with a slight increase expected in the near future. To enroll Soldiers must download a TRS request form (DD Form 2896-1). Go to: www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs/index.jsp.

Community College Locator

A link to a community college profile/locator for New York is provided. Simply enter the zip code of your HOR or unit location, to find a college in close proximity. Visit the site at www.communitycollegereview.com

Free Hunting and Fishing Licenses

Did you know you could get a free hunting and fishing license as a drilling member of the New York National Guard? Licenses may be issued to all active (e.g., drilling) New York resident members of the state organized militia or the reserve components of the U.S.

Armed Forces. For more information, contact the New York State Department of Conservation, Sporting License Help Line at (866) 472-4332 or at www.dec.state.ny.us.

Free Empire Passports to NYS Parks

Is it important to you to get free admission to selected State Parks, etc.? The Empire Passport Program allows for free Empire Passports for personnel called to federal or state active duty in response to an emergency after September 11, 2001. This program has been extended for 2008. Please contact the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation at 518-474-8081 or at www.nysparks.com/passport/ for details. **gt**



Commissaries take benefits to Guard, Reserve

ALEXANDRIA, Va. -- The Defense Commissary Agency is taking the commissary benefit to National Guard and Reserve members and their families living in remote areas across New York State this summer.

"The 2004 National Defense Authorization Act authorized full commissary benefits for members of the Ready Reserve," said Richard Page, acting director at DeCA. "Through our new "Bringing the Benefit to You" campaign, we are reaching out to our Guard and Reserve members who have earned the commissary benefit, but who cannot easily travel to a local commissary to shop on a regular basis."

"Bringing the Benefit to You" involves conducting on-site sales out of warehouses, aircraft hangars, armories, tents in parking lots, and even the back end of semi-trailers at remote locations where Soldiers and Families do not have access to a commissary.

The program is scheduled for New York Air National Guard facilities at the Niagara Air Force Reserve Station on August 2-3, Hancock Field in Syracuse on September 5-6 and the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia on September 13-14.

The Vermont Air National Guard hosts a similar program in Burlington on June 7-8 and again November 8-9.

This is part of the Army's reinforced commitment of support to military members and their Families through the Army Family Covenant. A core military Family support element and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to Family readiness and enhance the quality of life for America's military and their Families.

"While the focus is on Guard and Reserve, the on-site sales are a boon to all authorized shoppers living near them," Page said. "The Guard and Reserve members have earned this



Guard and Reserve members and their families shop at the on-site case-lot sale at the North Carolina Air National Guard base of the 145th Airlift Wing, April 3 through 6 in Charlotte, N.C. The Defense Commissary Agency will conduct statewide sales throughout this summer. Photo by Margaret McKenzie.

benefit and we want to make sure that we are delivering the benefit to them."

More than 55 percent of the National Guard and Reserves members do not live in what is considered the immediate area of a commissary.

"This is just part of a larger picture," Page continued. "Back in the fall when I became the acting director of DeCA, I had several priorities, one of which was to make sure that we were doing our very best for the Guard and Reserve members not located near a commissary."

Page said DeCA is exploring ways to increase the frequency of the on-site sales and locations by looking at the demographic areas that are largely populated with the Guard and Reserve members.

"I love this case-lot sale," said Clinton R. Douglas, a former Marine who visited the case lot sale at a North Carolina Air Guard hanger in April. "My wife and I were here three days ago and we are back here again today. We can get everything here that we could get at Sam's, only here we can get it at a cheaper rate and no sales tax and everybody treats you nice and that's one thing I love about it."

"This is my first case-lot sale," said Leslye A. Arsht, deputy under secretary for the Military Community and Family Policy. "It is everything I had hoped it to be," Arsht said. "People are coming; some are coming even more than once. This was an important step in supporting a quality of life for the guard and reserve and the rest of the folks who are eligible and who live in the area." **gt**

VA Increases Travel Reimbursement for Eligible Veterans

WASHINGTON -- Effective February 1, 2008, over a million eligible veterans will see their mileage reimbursement more than double for travel to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities. The 2008 appropriations act provided funding for VA to increase the beneficiary travel mileage reimbursement rate from 11 cents per mile to 28.5 cents per

mile.

"This increase helps veterans -- especially those living in rural areas -- offset some of the gasoline costs as they travel to VA's world-class health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Increasing the mileage reimbursement is one more step by VA to help veterans access the health care they deserve."

While increasing the payment, VA, as mandated by law, also equally increased the deductible amounts applied to certain mileage reimbursements. The new deductibles are \$7.77 for a one way trip, \$15.54 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$46.62 per calendar month. These deductibles can be waived if they cause a financial hardship to the veteran. **gt**

National Guard Trains Alongside New York's Bravest Citizen Soldiers Prepare for the Worst by Training with the Best

Story by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK – More than 500 New York National Guard Soldiers, Airman and volunteers of the New York Guard trained alongside the City of New York Fire Department (FDNY) at the fire training academy on Randall's Island May 3. The exercise strengthened the coordination, liaison, communications and procedures for employing the New York National Guard's premiere Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Explosive (CBRNE) response elements.

With the world's largest municipal fire department, the City of New York responds daily to the challenges of local emergencies and has national and international fame since their



Battalion Chief Don Hayde from the New York City Fire Department's Special Operations Command moves to the scene of a simulated bus explosion during a joint interagency training event May 3 between the FDNY and the New York National Guard. Hayde served as incident commander during the city and National Guard response exercise at the FDNY's fire training academy on Randall's Island in New York.

heroic response during the World Trade Center attacks of 2001. Rescuing fellow New Yorkers is the mainstay of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and the group of firefighters and emergency medical service personnel have earned their nicknames as "New York's Bravest and New York's Best."

Those emergency responders were again challenged during a training exercise known as Operation Civil Support. It included a bus explosion, car fires, building fire and collapse and a chemical incident in a nearby subway station.

With a scenario that placed tremendous demands on responding fire stations and a nearby National Guard response force, firemen and EMS members from the FDNY had an opportunity to train with some of the New York National Guard's most capable response elements.

The exercise began with an alert and mobilization of forces across the entire state. Staging at the National Guard's training site at Camp Smith, near Peekskill, the response forces conducted joint reception, staging and onward integration (JRSOI) rehearsals needed to gather together, disperse military forces, linkup with equipment and deploy forward to an incident site.

The troop movement included the airlift of engineers from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, the home of the Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing to Stewart Air National Guard Base, home of the 105th Airlift Wing. Both Air Guard elements supported embarking/debarking operations.

The exercise provided members of the National Guard the chance to learn from the FDNY and EMS members in their core competencies of technical rescue, structural evacuation and CBRNE/HAZMAT life safety and decontamination.

"We simply wanted to train with the best," said Lt. Col. John Andonie, Director of Military Support for the New York National Guard for the exercise. "This exercise was a great place to start and then go forward," he said.



Firefighters with the City of New York conduct rescue training to remove simulated casualties from a notional chemical incident in a city subway station alongside members of the National Guard's 2nd Civil Support Team. Photo by Spc. Amanda MacWinnie.

Perhaps the most important exchange throughout the daylong training was the information about roles and capabilities between the various fire company captains, battalion chiefs



Members of the CERFP remove casualties from an notional subway station for decontamination. The scenario required elements of the Guard's 2nd CST to conduct a survey of the scene and the CERFP to respond to a mass casualty event.

and senior FDNY officials with their National Guard counterparts.

"Knowing each other's capabilities is the baseline to get things done," said Deputy Chief Michael Puzifferri, the acting Counterterror-



ism and Emergency Preparedness Chief. “That basic understanding helps us employ the Guard more quickly and effectively, and in these situations that time can save lives,” he said.

Initially assisting the incident com-

As the decontamination and medical teams prepared their sites for potential casualties, the FDNY incident commander called forward the search and extraction team to integrate with the collapsed building rescue operations.

“Chief Hayde (the incident commander on the scene) chopped us up and got our folks in line with the FDNY rescue personnel right away,” said Lt. Col. Dennis Deeley, the CERFP Commander. “I really appreciate that firemen got them right in there and integrated them onto the rescue team,” Deeley said.

“I saw a lot of mentoring and things to sustain,” noted 1st Lt. Christopher Clements, an engineer from Company A, 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. Clements directed the CERFP search and extraction team during the collapsed building casualty evacuation training. “We’ve done some training with confined spaces, but we’re definitely not the same capability as these guys. It has absolutely been a learning experience for all our guys,” Clements said.

Operation Civil Support also trained the New York’s standing homeland security task force for command and control of response forces in New York City. Task Force Empire Shield, the full-time state active duty task force oversaw the employment of the Guard’s CBRNE response forces, security elements, and communications and logistics forces. *(See additional coverage on page 8).*

“We have to understand the capabilities of each other to be better integrated when the time comes to do this for real,” said Capt. James D’Avolio, from the FDNY Hazardous Material Team.

“Seeing that interaction between a Guardsman and fireman at the grass roots level made this event worthwhile. This was a tremendous success for us,” Andonie said. **gt**



CERFP engineers Sgt. Jerry Rivas (left) Spc. Nicholas Sarafin prepare to enter a confined space during the confined area extraction scenario of the exercise.

mander at the site was the New York National Guard’s 2nd Civil Support Team (CST), whose 22 members are trained, certified and equipped to assist civil authorities and rapidly identify, assess and respond to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or hazardous materials (HAZMAT) events.

The team was further augmented by a traditional National Guard CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP). Its 300 Soldiers, Airmen and N.Y. Guard volunteers mobilize and deploy with equipment to provide emergency responders with additional CBRNE casualty extraction, decontamination and triage for the evacuation and initial treatment assessment of victims of a CBRNE or other hazardous materials incident.



Lt. Col. Dennis Deeley, commander of the CERFP element coordinates confined space extraction of casualties with incident commander Chief Don Hayde from the New York City Fire Department’s Special Operations Command



1st Lt. Christopher Clements briefs members of his platoon from Company A, 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion as they prepare to conduct urban area confined operations as the CERFP Search and Extraction Team.

Bringing Commo to the Fight

Story and photo by Spc. Amanda MacWhinnie, JFHQ-NY Public Affairs

NEW YORK - Ten Soldiers from the New York National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters and 101st Signal Battalion deployed a high-tech, satellite communications system as part of a the joint National Guard/ New York Fire Department exercise dubbed Operation Civil Support held on Randall's Island on May 3.

Called the JISCC, for Joint Incident Site Communication Capability, the system allows National Guard military radios to connect to emergency responder police and fire radios. The JISCC also enables on-site incident commanders to talk worldwide using voice communications and e-mail through the Internet.

The New York National Guard acquired the system in 2006, and Guard communications experts try to incorporate it in exercises whenever possible.

"This exercise was very beneficial and showed us how we can get things set up, how we can be effective working with other units, and also showed us how well we can work together" Warrant Officer Chris Lightener, the JISCC team leader said. "We've shown that we can deploy the unit effectively in a fairly short period of time" he added.

"We identified areas that we need to work on, areas that are strengths, and we identified what works best in a particular situation," Lightener said.

The critical element for supporting emergency responders for the JISCC is an application called the RIOS, for Radio Interoperability System. This application allows the Army National Guard to bridge connections with a variety of radios by plugging handheld radios from each system into a central rack. The JISCC changes the frequency automatically so different systems can communicate.

The JISCC takes approximately 45 minutes to set up and establish network connections with a complete team of 7 to 10 people to operate the system.

Some members of the communications team had never worked together prior to this exercise but they managed to set up the JISCC in a timely manner with minimal issues, said Sgt Ken Falzarano, a JISCC systems operator.

For the members of the team, learning on the job during exercise opportunities is critical. Although there is no formal MOS training specific to operating the JISCC, a great deal of Soldier skill is involved.

"This deployment went smoothly and quickly" Falzarano said. **gt**



Members of the Joint Force HQ JISCC Team work to setup the communications system during Operation Civil Support, the joint interagency training exercise on Randall's Island May 3.



New York Guard volunteer Sgt. 1st Class Mauro Bacolo, part of the Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) prepares to receive simulated contaminated casualties from an subway bombing during a joint interagency training event May 3 in support of emergency responders from the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) and the New York National Guard. Bacolo served on the team's inception in 2003 and deployed with the CERFP in support of the Republican National Convention in 2004 and validated the newest Army National Guard elements on the team in 2007. Photo by Staff Sgt. David Konig.

When Experience Matters

Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK - The New York National Guard's response mission to train alongside members of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) on May 3 for Operation Civil Support included the first real exercise of the New York Guard's 88th Brigade for command and control of N.Y. Guard volunteers.

In early January, Maj. Gen. Michael Van Patten, the N.Y. Guard Commander, designated the 88th Brigade from New York City as the command's CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package element.

Led by Col. James Whalen, the brigade oversees the training, certification and integration with Army National Guard forces for CERFP operations anywhere in the State of New York.

The 88th Brigade has had a strong presence on the CERFP since the team's inception in the summer of 2003, with many volunteers of the New York Guard on hand and on the ground since the first team trained and validated for support to the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City.

The brigade and the N.Y. Guard Soldiers supporting the CERFP mission will provide a foundation of experience and knowledge even as the CERFP Army National Guard support elements transition later this year from to another Army Guard unit. **gt**



Members of the New York National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) decontaminate simulated casualties from an incident area during a joint interagency training event May 3 in support of emergency responders from the FDNY. The exercise involved interagency response hypothetical CBRNE incident in a subway station. The CERFP provided search and extraction, patient decontamination and medical triage as part of the FDNY incident command exercise response. Photo by Spc. Amanda MacWhinnie.

Marksmanship Matches Bring Military Services Together

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff



“If you haven’t been here, come and shoot and if you have been here, come back and shoot again.”

-- Sgt. Timothy Farnam, pistol range coordinator

At left, an Air National Guard shooter engages targets during the reflexive fire portion of the combat rifle competition of the TAG Match at Camp Smith. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott.

CAMP SMITH, PEEKSKILL – More than 150 military members from almost every branch of service migrate to Camp Smith in April to compete in The Adjutant General’s Combat Rifle, Sniper, Pistol and Light Machine Gun Championships Match or “TAG Matches”.

The competition is open to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines throughout New York as well as military members from neighboring states who like to compete for the training and qualification as well as the sportsmanship.

“People that participate are all

service members of some unit in New York,” said Maj. Dana Brewer, State Mobilization Readiness Officer. “However, any battalion-sized element from a neighboring state can put together a team.”

According to Brewer there is more to the competition besides getting the best score and accepting a trophy.

“Here we’ll show you where you hit the target and when you miss we’ll show the Soldier what they’re doing wrong,” Brewer said. “Then the Soldier will have that basic skill reinforced so he or she can go back to their unit and help with their

marksmanship program.”

“It’s just a lot of fun!” said Sgt. Timothy Farnam, the pistol range coordinator and member of Joint Forces Headquarters. “If you haven’t been here, come and shoot and if have been here, come back and shoot again.”

This year marked the 29th Annual “Modern TAG Matches” as Brewer referred to them. He pointed out that records started to be kept about 1978, but that there are paper records that date back to the late 1930’s.

Competitors came from Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and New York

City as well as Connecticut and Massachusetts. However, only New York military members are awarded first, second and third place trophies.

First place team trophies were awarded to the Air National Guard’s 174th Fighter Wing for both the Combat Rifle and Combined Arms competitions and the 109th Airlift Wing for Combat Pistol.

To learn more about the “TAG Matches” category winners, go to: www.dmna.state.ny.us/sarts/services.htm. **gt**



A member of the Army National Guard combat pistol competition prepares to engage targets during the TAG Matches on April 26. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.

Aviation Soldiers check door gunnery before mobilizing

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade



Range 44, Fort Drum - Five companies of 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Soldiers waited anxiously for the early morning April fog to clear so they could get to their scheduled training, aerial door gunnery.

During the second week of a three week annual training, the 3-142nd Aviation conducted their gunnery training in preparation for their federal mobilization for Iraq this summer.

Primarily, the 3-142nd's mission will be to transport Soldiers and supplies through the air so that they will be less likely to get attacked said the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Albert Ricci.

According to Ricci, the 3-142nd will incorporate more than 30 Blackhawk helicopters into their operations while they are deployed.

Ricci points out that unit enthusiasm is high at the prospect of putting years of training and exercises to the test.

"They're excited because these helicopters are a great asset. We don't get to use them to their fullest potential stateside." Ricci said.

Ensuring that troops and supplies are transported safely will be in the hands of each door

gunner.

"Let's face it, we're the number one target over there." said Chief Warrant Officer Ricky Gianotti, a pilot who already deployed to Iraq. "They take us down and it's a big win for them."

Within three days, all five companies qualified their door gunners.

These gunnery skills will be refined at Fort Sill, Okla. during predeployment training. **gt**



First things first. Aviation Soldiers unload boxes of 7.62 mm ammunition belts for their M-240 machine guns before door gunnery qualification at Range 44. Photo by Sgt. Ally Andolina

"Prepare to engage the target!"

Above: Door gunner Sgt. Ian Buck has identified his target while hovering approximately 300 feet over Range 44 during the qualifying stage of training. Validating Buck is Staff Sgt. Bo Hall, Company C. Photo by Sgt. Ally Andolina

Right: Private First Class John Loring gets behind the door-mounted M-240 while the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter comes to a stationary hover at Fort Drum's Range 44. Crew Chief Staff Sgt. Michael Roeding (foreground) is observing Loring's target acquisition of large stationary wooden targets on the ground in order to validate Loring before being federally mobilized in support of Iraqi Freedom this summer. Both Soldiers are from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone



From aerial gunnery to ground combat refresher training

Aviation Soldiers forge through one last pre-deployment annual training

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

FORT DRUM – More than 450 Soldiers from the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade and the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation conducted annual training together to train up the 3-142nd Aviation for their Iraqi Freedom deployment this summer.



Turning their world upside down. 2nd Lt. Doreen Corrano and Staff Sgt. Veronica Rosas, from HHC, exit a simulated Humvee rollover at Fort Drum's Emergency Egress Simulation Training site. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone

The pre-deployment three-week annual training this year was split between qualifying Soldiers in aerial door gunnery and a rehash of basic combat warrior skills.

These warrior skills included map reading, Humvee emergency egress training, nuclear and biological chemical training, communications and small arms tactical firing.

For many members of the 3-142nd, this tour

of duty will be their second rotation to Iraq.

"Most (active duty) units are on their second, third or even fourth deployment," said Warrant Officer Danny Edling, a pilot for the 3-142nd. "I can't walk around thinking I haven't pulled my weight."

Third Battalion aviation Soldiers will spend a majority of their time airborne, but are required to hone combat skills should they be called on.

Standing next to the Humvee rollover simulator at the Emergency Egress Simulation Training site, Pvt. David Murray, Company D, experienced how his combat skills might come into play.

"I'm a little nervous," he said. "But I'm sure that will go away once we get there."

The 3rd-142nd is now poised to head to Fort Sill, Okla. for their active-duty portion of mobilization training before deploying to Iraq. **gt**



Looks easy on paper. Specialist William Twoguns and Pfc. James Pastor, Company C, work on map reading skills before encountering the Land Navigation course at Fort Drum. Photo by Sgt. Ally Andolina, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade



Above: Soldiers from Headquarters Company lunge forward at Training Area 13A, Military Operations on Urban Terrain site as they encounter heavy simulated enemy fire. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.



Left: Private First Class Craig DePuy leaps out of the trench to keep members of Company D moving during a high-speed simulated casualty extraction to medical first aid. The medical obstacle course completed Co. D's Combat Lifesaver Course. Photo by Sgt. Ally Andolina.

Kings of Kingston for a Day



104th MPs return to hometown among a flurry of community support

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, *Guard Times* Staff

KINGSTON –Swarms of high-school students crowded the street in front of their school in a show of community support when approximately 70 Soldiers of the 104th Military Police Battalion arrived home from Iraq on 13 March.

Students crowded around the chartered buses as 104th Soldiers disembarked in front of the high-school, prior to being led down Broadway Avenue by the Police Emerald Society Pipe and Drum Corps of Westchester County.

The 104th marched from Kinston High School to the Midtown Neighborhood Center, about two city blocks

away, where happily anxious family members filled bleachers to await the units final dismissal.

Kingston Mayor James Sottile began the hometown ceremony by welcoming the 104th home.

“We’re so proud of your service to the country,” Sottile said “I stand here as an elected official of a free society because of the sacrifices of people who wear that uniform.”

Thunderous applause and cheers erupted at the end of almost every sentence in the mayor’s speech.

“Because of the fortitude and resolve of these Soldiers and



Standing outside of the Midtown Recreation Center in Kingston, a family member shows her support of returning 104th MPs.



Like father, like daughter. Sergeant Thomas Flanagan is warmly greeted by his Army Combat Uniform-clad daughter upon his return to Kingston.

"I'm compelled to state the obvious, it's great to be home."

-- Lt. Col. Ronnie L. Ridner, commander, 104th Military Police Battalion

holding the office of Mayor of Kingston, I declare March thirteen, 104th Military Police Day in the town of Kingston."

Again, thunderous applause and cheers.

Following the mayor's complimentary speeches, he introduced the 104th commander, Lt. Col. Ronnie L. Ridner.

"I'm compelled to state the obvious, it's great to be home." Ridner stated.

Ridner praised his unit for achieving extraordinary results during the deployment where they managed a detention facility at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq.

He also told families that their time in Iraq was more difficult for the 104th's families at home than for the Guardsmen themselves.

"During our deployment time we became used to having everything done for us, even our laundry," Ridner said.

Before turning the unit over to the 104th detachment commander 1st Lt. Steven Perry, Jr., Ridner formally presented the Town of Kingston flag to Mayor Sottile. The flag went to Iraq with the unit and flew over their battalion headquarters.

In keeping with Army standards, Perry gave Soldiers a lighthearted safety brief. "Please do not hurt any family members trying to hug and kiss them," Perry said. **gt**



Soldiers of the 104th Military Police Battalion present the flag of the City of Kingston to Kingston Mayor James Sottile. The flag, given to the unit by the mayor when the unit first mobilized, was flown over the 104th's headquarters while deployed to Iraq in 2007.



Triple Deuce MPs Celebrate Successful Tour in Iraq

Specialist Brian Herbig, an MP with the 222nd Military Police Company, receives the Army Commendation medal from his commander, 1st Lt. Monique Barnhart while his mother looks on during the unit's Freedom Salute Ceremony Feb. 10, in Auburn. The Military Police Soldiers, from hometown armories in Hornell and Auburn served in Iraq throughout the fall of 2006 and returned in October of 2007. The two platoons of Soldiers merged with troops from 12 other states to support the 240th Military Police Company from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard. The Military Police Soldiers conducted a variety of convoy security and military law enforcement missions in and around Baghdad. The company was tasked with the Police Transition Team's mission in the Karrada District of Baghdad. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Peter Towse.

Glens Falls' 466th Med Recognized for Saving Lives in Iraq

Spc. Joshua Desteve of Oswego, receives an encased American flag, a commemorative coin and a certificate of appreciation from his 466th Area Support Medical Company commander, Lt. Col. Richard Green during the unit Freedom Salute ceremony at the Glens Falls High School on Sunday, Feb. 3. Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand, State Senator Susan Little and community leaders recognized the 70 National Guard Soldiers and their families for their service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit returned from Iraq in October 2007, after operating four separate medical treatment facilities across Iraq. During their year-long deployment, unit personnel completed more than 30,000 medical visits and filled more than 40,000 prescriptions. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo.



Army Guard Soldiers Teach Afghan Police Lifesaving Skills

Story and photos by Sgt. Matthew Clifton, 22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHANK, Afghanistan – Two combat medics have devoted their time this winter to teaching Afghan police officers one of the most important Soldier skills...first aid.

Every other week, Sgt. 1st Class Maurice Wells, Joint Forces Headquarters, Arizona Army National Guard, and Spc. Richard L. Bacher, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard, teach a first aid class to about 20 Afghan National Police officers from Logar Province.

The class is reminiscent of the first aid classes U.S. Soldiers go through. The topics taught include checking a casualty's airway, breathing and circulation and stopping bleeding.

The class also covers checking for wounds, treating shock, applying field dressings and tourniquets, treating a sucking chest wound, splinting a fracture and treating head wounds.

"Teaching this stuff is challenging because we have to take the same curriculum we use and modify it so the ANP understand," said Wells. "For example, we use the 'A, B, C's of first aid to explain searching for an airway, breathing and circulation.

"Our guys [U.S. Soldiers] understand that,

but the ANP have no idea what 'A, B or C' stands for so we have to modify things."

One method the instructors use to help the ANP grasp the importance of their lesson is to use real-life events as vignettes in their class.

"Because these guys have to drive around in the back of their trucks, a lot of the injuries we see come from when they flip their truck and fall out," Bacher said. "So whenever we present an injury scenario, we'll put it in the context of a fellow policeman being thrown out of the back of his truck."

The high rate of illiteracy among the Afghans comes into play as well, and since the ANP cannot take notes, hands-on training becomes paramount, he continued.

But their inability to read and write has not affected their willingness to learn, Wells said.

"These guys are super-attentive, and when we do our hands-on portion of the class you can really tell they have paid attention," Bacher said. "It's not perfect, but they are progressing well."

One of the issues Wells and Bacher have realized is that the ANP tend to rush a casualty to the hospital without trying to administer first aid themselves. The instructors are hoping these classes will curb that tendency.

"These guys are super-attentive, and when we do our hands-on portion of the class you can really tell they have paid attention."

-- Spc. Richard Bacher, Afghan Embedded Team Trainer

Before the class ends, Wells and Bacher review what they have taught and familiarize the policemen with the first aid equipment they will receive, as well as the equipment their U.S. counterparts carry.

"We're working on getting these guys the same equipment (U.S. Soldiers) are using, but of course that takes time," Bacher said. "Until then, we try to teach them how to be improvisational by using sticks for splints or pieces of their shirt for cravats."

Wells and Bacher have a visibly positive attitude towards their students, and the same feeling is present in the ANP observers who will eventually take over the class.

"This class is very important because our police don't have much experience with first aid and they need to know how to stop bleeding, treat fractures and things like that," said 3rd Basic Officer Jamil Ala Mi, an ANP observer who will be taking over the class. "The students pay very good attention and will be able to take these lessons back to their districts."

Seeing these Afghan students gives Wells an appreciation for the ANPs willingness to learn as well as a new gratitude for the level of first aid education that is given to U.S. Soldiers.

"When you're trying to teach these guys the things we have been taught since our first day of basic training, it makes you realize just how much life-saving knowledge each of our Soldiers has," Wells said. "The most significant things these ANP can learn is when they save a life, they are helping to make Afghanistan a better place." **gt**



An Afghan National Policeman from Logar Province applies a simulated field dressing during a first-aid class Feb. 20 at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan



Specialist Richard L. Bacher, a medic from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard helps a student find his radial pulse during a first-aid class given to Afghan National Police of the Logar Province Feb. 20 at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan.

Taking Command in Kabul

27th Brigade Combat Team Leads Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning, CJTF Phoenix

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The command of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTF-P) transferred from the South Carolina National Guard's 218th Heavy Separate Brigade (HSB) to the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) here on April 26.

Colonel Brian K. Balfe, the incoming commander of CJTF-P VII and the 27th IBCT officially succeeded Brigadier General Robert E. Livingston during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony in Patriot Square, Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan.

“Members of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are proud Soldiers, with a storied history,” said incoming commander, Colonel Brian K. Balfe. “We are honored to be here as guests of the government and people of Afghanistan. We believe in our mission. It is a privilege to have been called to perform it,” he said.

The ceremony signaled both the transfer of command responsibility from the 218th to the 27th and, more importantly, that the CJTF-P mission to train and mentor Afghanistan's National Security Forces (ANSF) will continue. It also points to the continued commitment by the United States to the Phoenix mission, and to the government and people of Afghanistan.

Nearly 1700 members of the New York National Guard's 27th IBCT, based in communities from across New York State, have been deployed for this mission, the largest single deployment of forces from New York in the Global War on Terror. Thousands of New York troops have performed both state and federal active duty since the 9-11, 2001 terrorist attacks. It is the only part of America's military force that served at “Ground Zero.” Roughly a third of the team in Afghanistan already served in previous deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 218th assumed command of CJTF-P VI in May 2007. During its command tenure, the 218th implemented the training and mentor-



Major General Robert Cone, commander Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan hands the colors of the 27th Brigade to Col. Brian Balfe, incoming commander of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII during a Transition of Authority Ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan April 26.

ing program for the Afghan National Police (ANP), while also sustaining the highly successful training for the Afghan National Army.

“Early in our tour, the Police were being destroyed by the Taliban and the Army needed to take the lead in fighting,” said Livingston. “After we deployed our police mentors, the Police started holding ground and gained the upper hand. Their losses decreased seven-fold. At the same time we accelerated the march forward with the ANA, where most kandaks (ANA battalions) now take the lead and some have become operationally independent.”

“It is clear to all of us from New York that the team from South Carolina has moved the ball well down field, gained great yardage on its watch here, and placed the follow-on team in the Red Zone,” said Balfe, the incoming commander. “I am delighted that more than 125 Soldiers of the 218th have volunteered to stay on with us in support of the mission.”

“Our South Carolina Soldiers are now



Members of the 27th Brigade Combat Team exit an Air Force C-17 Transport that has brought them to Kabul International Airport on April 7 to begin their assignment to Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII. The unit conducted its transfer of authority as CJTF Phoenix on April 26.

returning home, having changed Afghanistan for the better,” said Livingston. “The 27th IBCT from the New York National Guard is poised to take over and continue this vital mission. I am confident I am leaving the CJTF-P mission in capable hands.”

The brigade mission is expected to last through the rest of the year. **gt**

Orion Soldiers Protect Aghan Police Mentors

Story and photos by Senior Airman James Bolinger, Combined Joint Task Force-82 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Two Soldiers sit shoulder-to-shoulder packed into a small room filled with shura leaders and Afghan National Police (ANP) from Kohe Safi District, Parwan Province on March 3, 2008.

In order for these two Soldiers to safely mentor the nearly 90 ANP that keep the peace in Kohe Safi, they need people who can keep an eye out for Taliban and insurgent operations. The Soldiers who perform this mission are light infantrymen from the New York Army National Guard.

“Our job is to keep the members of the Police Mentor Team (PMT) safe,” said Army Sgt. Chris Marciano, a 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, six-year veteran. “We escort the mentors everywhere and one of us is next to them whenever they exit a vehicle.”

The mission of protecting a mentor team is something infantry Soldiers traditionally don’t train for. The police mentoring team is not designed manned nor equipped to fight; they are here to mentor the Afghans.

For the infantrymen of the 2-108th in Afghanistan, their role as security forces puts limits on their offensive nature. Escort and security missions here mean responding to threats, not seeking them out.

“Infantry are offensive or kinetic units that go out and get the enemy; here we wait for them to find us,” said Army Sgt. Justin Koers, out of Geneseo, N.Y.

Koers, and his Company A colleagues attended three months of training at Fort Bragg, N.C., to train as motorized infantry and learn how to use Humvees in a tactical environment.

“However, the tight roads and steep mountains of Kohe Safi District sometimes make the training hard to use,” said Spc. Adam Kutinsky.

“One of the best parts of this job is getting to improvise,” said Marciano. “We don’t have to wait for our squad leader to talk to our platoon sergeant, who got his information from our platoon leader. Instead, since two E-5s (Sergeants) are the highest enlisted, we get to make the decisions on security for a particular situation.”

The team members assist Army Maj. Jeremy McGuire and Army Chief Warrant Officer Gaylon Yazzie, Kohe Safi police mentors, with their

ANP mentoring mission.

According to Marciano, there are many advantages to working with the PMT, versus filling another infantry job in Afghanistan.

“We get to see a lot of Afghanistan,” he said. “Since the rest of our company works with other PMTs, if we want to see a different place we just trade spots for a couple of missions.”

So far, members of the Kohe Safi team have been to Bamyan, Kapisa, Panjshir and several districts in Parwan Province. The Kohe Safi security forces are all on their first deployment and agree that Afghanistan was not what they expected.

Before the PMT Soldiers put their boots on Afghan soil, both Marciano and Army Pfc. Steven Olmstead agreed that they thought they would hate Afghanistan. “But now that I am here, I am really having a good time,” said Marciano. “I just don’t know if I will enjoy the heat.”



New York Army National Guard Sgt. Justin Koers, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, 27th Infantry Brigade, keeps a watch on Army Maj. Jeremy McGuire, Kohe Safi Police Mentor Team leader, March 1, during a humanitarian assistance drop in Jurahati, Kohe Safi District, Parwan Province.

“This is just one more step toward my goal of becoming a police officer,” said Olmstead, though he agrees with fellow Soldier Marciano about the heat. **gt**



Army Sgt. Chris Marciano, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, pulls security during a humanitarian aid drop in Jurahati, Kohe Safi District, Parwan Province, March 1. Marciano’s company, from the New York Army National Guard, Geneseo, N.Y., provides security for several Police Mentor Teams throughout Regional Command-East.

Guard Aircrews Respond to Mid-Hudson Wildfires

Aviation Soldiers Make Quick Transition from Annual Training to Firefighting

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

MINNEWASKA STATE PARK PRESERVE - Two New York Army National Guard Blackhawk helicopters and up to 22 Soldiers spent three days dousing wildfires at Minnewaska State Park in Ulster County, April 19-21.

The aviators, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, were in the final phases of pre-deployment training at Fort Drum when the wildfires broke out on April 17. When New York Governor David Paterson directed National Guard assistance, the crews switched from a training mission to a real-world mission to support civilian firefighters.

The battalion and aviation brigade commanders assured him that the state mission wouldn't disrupt any critical skills training, explained Col. Michael Bobeck, the State Army Aviation Officer.

"It's a humanitarian mission not unlike hurricane and flood relief missions.

Hopefully we prevented anyone from getting injured or losing their homes"

Chief Warrant Officer Mark Shumway, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Standardization Officer

"Both commanders quickly identified aircraft and crews and were on their way," Bobeck said. "It took approximately five and one-half hours to deploy the Blackhawks from Fort Drum to dumping water on the fires."

While Blackhawks from Fort Drum were in route, ground crews at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham, N.Y. were preparing the "Bambi Buckets" to be air-lifted to the fire site. Bambi Buckets are collapsible, fast-fill, buckets that can be slung underneath a helicopter. They can take in 660 gallons of water in about two minutes.

Flying a wildfire mission presents unique risks.

"Flying over water is a different type of flying." Said Chief Warrant Officer Mark Shumway, one of the pilots who flew the missions. "Once the Bambi Bucket is full it can weigh more than 5000 pounds, then it becomes a question of power management and maneuver-

ability to get the bucket to the target."

"Once over the flames, hover time and evacuation are critical," Shumway said.

"By Saturday, the fire was raging making it difficult to accurately get over the target because of the smoke so we have to hover lower and then exit as quickly as possible," he said.

Aviation crews flew more than 60 water dump missions using two "Bambi Buckets" within the three days working with local fire departments and the State Police.

"I like what we do." Shumway, said. "It's a humanitarian mission not unlike hurricane and flood relief missions. Hopefully we prevented anyone from getting injured or losing their homes."

The 3-142nd was at Fort Drum training for a mission in Iraq later this year (*see our related story on page 10*). The unit will deploy later this year and provide transportation support for Multinational Corps Iraq. **gt.**



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Army Guard Air Crews Work in the Shadow of a Heavy Hauler

Air crew members from Companies B and D, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation, New York Army National Guard, prepare for flight operations with their CH-47 Chinook helicopter in the shadow of an Air Force C-17 at a forward deployed location in Afghanistan March 24, 2008. The members of Companies B and D from Rochester, N.Y. are due to redeploy home from Operation Enduring Freedom in late May. Courtesy photo



A New York Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk fills a 600 gallon "Bambi Bucket" from Lake Awosting in Minnewaska State Park, Ulster County on April 21, prior to making another dump on a 3,100 acre wildfire. Photo by Sgt. Logan Ambrosio.

'Fighting 69th' Leads New York's St. Patrick's Day Celebration

Led by the battalion color guard, members of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry march down Lexington Avenue in the shadow of the Chrysler Building to their armory entrance on March 17, 2008 in New York. The battalion has led the city celebration of Irish culture and heritage for more than 150 years. Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg.



Brooklyn Soldiers receive NYC sendoff at Fort Hamilton

Story and photos by Bruce Hill, Fort Hamilton Public Affairs

FORT HAMILTON -- "I looked for the definition of the word family and I found two. The first is defined as any group of people closely related by blood. The other is defined as individuals who are genuinely not blood related but share common attitudes, interests or goals. Today, everyone in this audience has become the family of the 133rd Quartermaster Company," said Capt. Tony Plata, company commander of the 133rd.

The crowd roared at Plata's words as he became emotional when he addressed a packed house during the unit's deployment ceremony at the post theater March 9. The company will deploy more than 130 Soldiers to Iraq later this year. Plata further praised the families for their support.

Army Community Service vows to reciprocate that support by extending their arms and hands to those families and offering an array of services and programs to them to help ease the minds of their loved ones as they head out to partake in the ongoing War on Terrorism.

"Our goal is to be able to support families of deployed Soldiers," said Mary Jo Lohrenz, Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation director. "We'll help coordinate logistical support they need for events such as today. We also provided free childcare for them today at a safe environment, lots of important information and many other needs."

"We have an array of programs for families of deployed service members they can take advantage," she said. "Child, Youth and Services has reduced fees for full-time child care rates for children up to aged 11, we have training for spouses, we're developing recreational programs for the children, Waiting Family Support Groups and we're also establishing a fitness program. We have a lot of quality of life programs to offer them"

As the members of the 133rd prepare to head to Fort Bliss, Texas, for predeployment training, their hearts and minds will be at ease knowing that the Fort Hamilton community plans to treat their family members as their own, because as Plata believes, they are all one family, and families look out for each other.

"You inspire us to do things we wouldn't be able to do if it had not been for your courage,"



Members of the 133rd Quartermaster Company gather for their unit sendoff ceremony prior to their mobilization for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Fort Hamilton hosted the unit and its Family Readiness Group on March 9 for the company sendoff ceremony. The company deployed 130 Soldiers to Fort Bliss, Texas for predeployment training before shipping to Iraq in May.

"We are leaving to make you proud and so that you don't have to – because freedom isn't free."

-- Capt. Tony Plata, Commander, 133rd Quartermaster Company

Plata said. "You have shown us strength and given us the will to do others might not or just won't (do). When we're gone, we will be family to each other and we will return. We are leaving to make you proud and so that you don't have to – because freedom isn't free." **gt**



With his company commander, Capt. Tony Plata, joining from the podium, First Sgt. Henry B. Mack Jr. of the 133rd Quartermaster Company, leads his Soldiers three thunderous "HOOAH" cheers at the conclusion of the unit's deployment ceremony hosted by the Fort Hamilton Army installation.

Homeland Defense Leader Meets Homeland Security Troops

NEW YORK -- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Dr. Steven P. Bucci (left) meets with New York Army National Guard Sergeant Linda Liautaud, center and Spc. Jean Johnson, right, from Task Force Empire Shield, the state's homeland security standing task force in Manhattan's Grand Central Station rail terminal on Wednesday, April 2. Dr. Bucci, who oversees Department of Defense policy issues regarding Domestic Counter Terrorism and National Guard operational issues, was in New York to meet with state Office of Homeland Security officials, representatives of the New York City Police Department Counter Terrorism leaders and members of the National Guard's Civil Support Team in lower Manhattan. Photo by Lt. Col. Joseph Sullivan.



From the Inspector General

Story by Lt. Col. John Burke, Acting IG

The Inspector General Corps ensures the readiness and war fighting capability of the Army. We do this through four basic functions: Assistance, Investigations, Inspections and Teaching and Training.

Frankly, the most rewarding parts of the serving as an Inspector General are the opportunities to help educate you, the Soldiers in the field.

It is my intent, through the use of this column, to help Soldiers better understand what the IG does in support of the chain of command, and to provide information Soldiers can use to help yourself and your unit.

Every quarter, our office publishes the Inspector General Quarterly (IGQ) to assist, teach and train Soldiers and leaders. The IG established a new AKO website at www.us.army.mil/suite/page/534621 where you can read current and previous issues plus find other helpful resources. I encourage you to visit the site.

We are focused on improving our services to Commanders and Soldiers and welcome your comments. Please send your comments to John.Ross5@us.army.mil. **gt**



New Commission, New Leader, New Chaplain Candidate for the Guard

LATHAM -- Maj. Lawrence A. Weaver, New York Officer Strength Manager, left, and Chaplain (Capt.) Glen Lightfoot, a Chaplain Recruiter, pin the new bars of a 2nd Lieutenant onto Mark Getman during his commissioning ceremony held at Joint Forces Headquarters on Jan. 16. Getman will serve as a Chaplain Candidate with the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery. Getman is a Rabbinical Student at the

Academy of Jewish Religion in Riverdale. He expects to become ordained as a Rabbi in 2013. This summer Getman will attend the Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership Course at Fort Jackson, S.C. He previously served as an enlisted Signal Support Technician Specialist with Company G of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion. Courtesy photo.



Officer / Warrant Officer \$20,000 Retention Bonus



Officer Bonus

- Must currently hold rank of CPT
- 6-12 years of commissioned service
- Less than 22 years of overall service
- Not be within 12 months of any transfer from Active Duty or selected Reserves
- Must have Bachelors Degree
- Must be fully qualified in designated branch for not less than 3 years
- Certain criteria apply for Mil techs and AGR

* JAG (27A) and Chaplain (56A) authorized \$30,000 and MAJ in rank

Warrant Officer Bonus

- Must have completed any current bonus contract
- Must currently hold CW2
- Not reach 25 years of service at end of bonus entitlement period
- 6-12 years of total service
- Must be MOSQ in designated skill

Critical skills List

Officer: 11A,13A, 15B, 15C, 15D, 19B, 21A, 21B, 21D, 24A, 25A, 31A, 35D, 35E, 35G, 42B, 44A, 46A, 51C, 53A, 59A, 74A, 88A, 88B, 90A, 91A, 92A, 92F

Warrant Officer: 131A,152B, 152D, 152F, 152H, 153D, 154C, 270A, 913A, 914A, 915A, 919A, 920A, 920B

See your Battalion Career Counselor for Details



Air Guard Unit Celebrates Historic Canadian Partnership

Story and photo by Brooke Davis, Northeast Air Defense Sector Public Affairs

ROME – Commemorating the North American Aerospace Defense Command’s 50th anniversary involves highlighting how two nations have consistently worked together through the years to guard against threats to North America.

One unit in Central New York charged with keeping their eyes on the skies 24 hours of everyday in the year captures the spirit of this historic, working partnership.

The Northeast Air Defense Sector, located in Rome, has taken this partnership to a new level of first-ever achievements. The close-knit unit is composed of N.Y. Air National Guardsmen and 15 Canadian Component personnel, and as a cohesive unit, they have gone through historic times, including restructuring, modernization and the tragic events of Sept. 11.

As the busiest sector located in the U.S., the unit’s air defense mission doubled for the first time ever in November 2007 with the deactivation of the Southeast Air Defense Sector at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., said Col. Clark Speicher, NEADS commander.

“Everyone in this unit worked tirelessly to ensure that the expansion of our air defense mission was seamless,” reflected Speicher. “Transition from controlling 500,000 square miles to 1 million square miles of airspace would seem like a huge undertaking, yet the professionalism displayed by everyone in the unit ensured that this expansion was and remains continuously flawless. At NEADS, we have a no fail mission and everyone works to ensure that this is achieved.”

One Canadian Component member here is on his second tour at NEADS, and during his first tour, he was at the forefront of the NEADS

response on 9-11. In an article he wrote about his experience on 9-11, Capt. Rob Hogarth, who is currently a mission crew commander at NEADS, reflects on the NEADS response to the terrorist attacks on that day.

“...it was impossible to separate the actions of the Canadians and those of the Americans, because the Canadian Component is an integral part of NEADS, and we have been incorporated seamlessly into the team,” he wrote. “It was a

became evident that it was a historical first,” said Capt. Chris Semchuk, who is assigned to NEADS as a senior director aerospace controller. “No American city had ever been presented a Canadian Flag by the Canadian Forces and after almost two years of planning, two Canadian flags were presented to Rome Mayor James Brown.

The Canadian Component commander at the time, Lt. Col. Francois Malo, presented

Mayor Brown with a Canadian Flag flown on the Peace Tower of Canada’s Parliament mounted in a shadow box and accompanied by a copy of the Jan. 28, 1965 National Flag Royal Proclamation. The second flag was raised over Rome City Hall, where it still flies today.

Mayor Brown captured the significance of the event by stating that he was, “...honored to be a part of this event which was a first in both American and Canadian history.”

From its beginnings in World War II, Air Defense has been a continuous process of modernization. NEADS is one of the only two operational sectors in the continental United States still in existence from WWII.

As part of Air Force re-organization that started in 1993, NEADS was the first Air Defense Sector to transform from the Air

Force to the Air National Guard. During that transition, Griffiss Air Force Base also realigned into the Griffiss Business and Technology Park where NEADS is located.

In addition to the Air Guard and Canadian Forces military personnel assigned to NEADS, the unit’s manpower includes civilian contractor personnel as well as active duty members from the Air Force, Navy, Army, and Coast Guard. **gt**



Members of the Rome community watch as Lt. Col. Wendy Rickards, Northeast Air Defense Sector Canadian Component commander, and Warrant Officer Norm Maccoomb, NEADS Canadian Component unit warrant officer, place a Canadian Component wreath next to the United States wreath during a joint, bi-national Veterans Day ceremony in Rome. NEADS is the joint American-Canadian unit responsible for orchestrating the air defense of the eastern United States.

tremendous honor and responsibility to have a nation put its faith in you, to trust you to keep them safe. I am very proud to have been called upon to defend that faith and to justify that trust. In every sense, the men and women of NEADS rose to the occasion.”

As the result of combined efforts from local veterans, the City of Rome and members from the Canadian Component to recognize its support of the organization, Rome was the first U.S. city presented with a Canadian Flag by Canadian Forces on May 21, 2005.

“In the course of planning the event, it

NEADS, AWACS Link-up for Integration Training

Airborne and Ground Radar Crews compare techniques and procedures to ensure safe skies

Story and photo by Brooke Davis, Northeast Air Defense Sector Public Affairs

ROME, – Two diverse and critical components of the military and the nation's air defense forces came together March 10 when an E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, aircraft from the 552nd Air Control Wing based at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., landed at the Oneida County Airport in Rome.

During the week long visit, the air crew toured the Sector Operations Control Center and learned about the sector's support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE operations. Operators from NEADS learned about the aircraft's operational capabilities during several missions.

"Both NEADS and the AWACS have unique radar capabilities that can be linked to each other so that information between the two can be shared during operations," said Maj. Jim Maunsell, NEADS chief of standards. "This training allows operators from both the sector and AWACS to better understand the capabilities the other has and to be able to integrate this knowledge to improve operations."

The AWACS are heavily focused on operations in overseas; however, it is important for the aircrew to be aware of the missions of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Northern Command.

"Overall, this was a great training opportunity to interact with our counterparts at NEADS," said Master Sgt. Scott Mills, operations superintendent for the visiting AWACS air crew. "We were able to perform every aspect of training like surveillance, fighter control, air-to-air refueling."

The air crew was impressed with the support provided by the Oneida County Airport as well as in the local community, said Sergeant Mills.

"Every part of this visit was truly a great experience - the support provided by the Oneida County Airfield was outstanding and the community was extremely friendly and welcoming to the air crew," said Sergeant Mills.

Local elected officials, firefighters, Rome Free Academy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and Syracuse University ROTC cadets were able to tour the aircraft and interact with the air crew during a static display

Tuesday.

The firefighters were provided valuable first responder training by the AWACS crew as well.

"We enjoyed being able to tour the aircraft," said Rome Fire Department Chief Roger Sabia. "Hearing about the AWACS mission was very

interesting and the size of the aircrew was also surprising as well."

The ground-based unit at NEADS performs a year-round 24 hour NORAD air defense and homeland defense mission, and it supports both NORAD and NORTHCOM mission areas. **gt**



An air crew member on the E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, aircraft from the 552nd Air Control Wing based at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., briefs Rome Fire Department Chief Roger Sabia about the AWACS mission during a week long information exchange mission on March 11, 2008. The orientation was part of the AWACS interaction with the New York Air National Guard's NEADS mission in Rome, N.Y. The two elements work together to support the NORAD / NORTHCOM Homeland Security Air Defense mission over the skies of North America.

Aeromedics Give Shot to the Arm in Albania

Overseas training helps Guard's State Partnership Program

Story by Staff Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, – Members of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing provided support to the New Jersey National Guard this February and turned their war fighting attention to nation building in Albania.

Five medics volunteered to support the humanitarian mission. The group administered Hepatitis A vaccines to 1,000 Albanian children.

Through New Jersey's State Partnership Agreement Program with Albania, the National Guard agreed to send medics to the area for about a week. Three Army medics joined the 109th Airmen.

"This is an excellent opportunity for both the 109th Medical/Dental Group and the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron to work together and do what we do best," said Master Sgt. Jim Welch in a press release, one of the medics here participating in the mission.

Once there, the medics got right to work. In two days, they vaccinated 1,000 children in two separate areas of the country. The teamwork with the Army, the local nurses and the Albanian army proved to be critical.

While the Albanian army provided security and helped translate, local nurses helped hold the kids while medics gave them their shots. The nurses were also able to translate for the kids and the medics.



Tech. Sgt. Jacqueline Sweet-McNeil visits with local children in Albania. She, along with four other 109th Airlift Wing medics, administered 1,000 Hepatitis A shots during a humanitarian mission to Albania for the Partnership for Peace Program. Courtesy photo.

"It was a great team effort," Welch said.

"We now have a tighter relationship the New Jersey soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Maureen Moffet. "(During a joint mission like this) you knock down the stereotypes of Army, Air Force and just join up together to provide the support needed."

Both Airmen said the opportunity was something they would jump at again, and encouraged other Airmen to do the same.

"It was a good opportunity and something new," Welch said. "It was a real good humanitarian mission."

"It was definitely rewarding for everybody who went," Moffet said. "It was a good time, even working with the nurses, and the Albanian military was great. Morale was awesome."

Welch said the Albanians really appreciated what was done for them.

"Everybody seems to think we as Americans are there to take over a country, but we're not, we're there to help," he said. "And a lot of countries out there want us there to help because they know we're going to give them medical attention, food, clothing, whatever we can. So that's why it's important for these partnerships, so we can be out there around the world."

"I would hope that, God forbid something terrible happened to our country, there would be people, medics like us, who would be willing to come to the country and help our children. You just never know," Moffett said.

Both Airmen said they realized a lot in America is taken for granted, including taking your kids to the doctor to get their shots.

"We can bring our kids to get shots, it's just there," he said. "Over there, it's not. Parents



Master Sgt. David Morrison administers the Hepatitis A shot to a local boy. The 109th Airlift Wing medics supported the New Jersey National Guard Partnership for Peace Program with a humanitarian mission to Albania. Courtesy photo.

fight to get their kids there because they want to get them vaccinated. They don't have that medication there."

Having a 6-month-old child himself, Welch said he couldn't imagine being in that situation.

"You just take things for granted," Moffet said.

"The medical professionals from the 109th Airlift Wing have served their country and the Air National Guard in all corners of the world," said Col. Anthony German, 109th Airlift Wing commander. "We are proud of the work that they do and the skill sets that they bring to this unique mission." **gt**

Maintenance on Ice



New York Air National Guard Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing's engine shop at Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y., work on an LC-130 at Willie's Field near McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The LC-130 is a ski-equipped aircraft from Stratton. Photo by Senior Airman Stephen Girolami.

New commander, vice at NEADS

Story by Brooke Davis, Northeast Air Defense Sector

ROME - The Northeast Air Defense Sector officially welcomed a new commander and vice commander here on April 4. The outgoing commander, Col. Clark Speicher, handed over the reins to Col. John P. Bartholf.

As Bartholf assumed command, he handed over his previous vice commander duties to Col. Dawne Deskins. She is the first-ever female sector vice commander and a 13-year member of the N.Y. Air National Guard.

The ceremony was officiated by Maj. Gen. Henry Morrow, 1st Air Force commander. During the ceremony, he spoke about the bright future of the unit.

"With the incredible record of accomplishments you have accumulated and the top notch leadership we are recognizing today, I have no doubt that we will continue to see great things coming out of NEADS," he said.

Then he addressed the men and women of NEADS, thanking them for their time, talent and sacrifices.

"As we work together as one Air Force to protect the greatest nation on Earth, I'm honored to have such a dedicated and successful organization be part of 1st Air Force," he concluded.

During an interview, Bartholf addressed his new role in the unit.

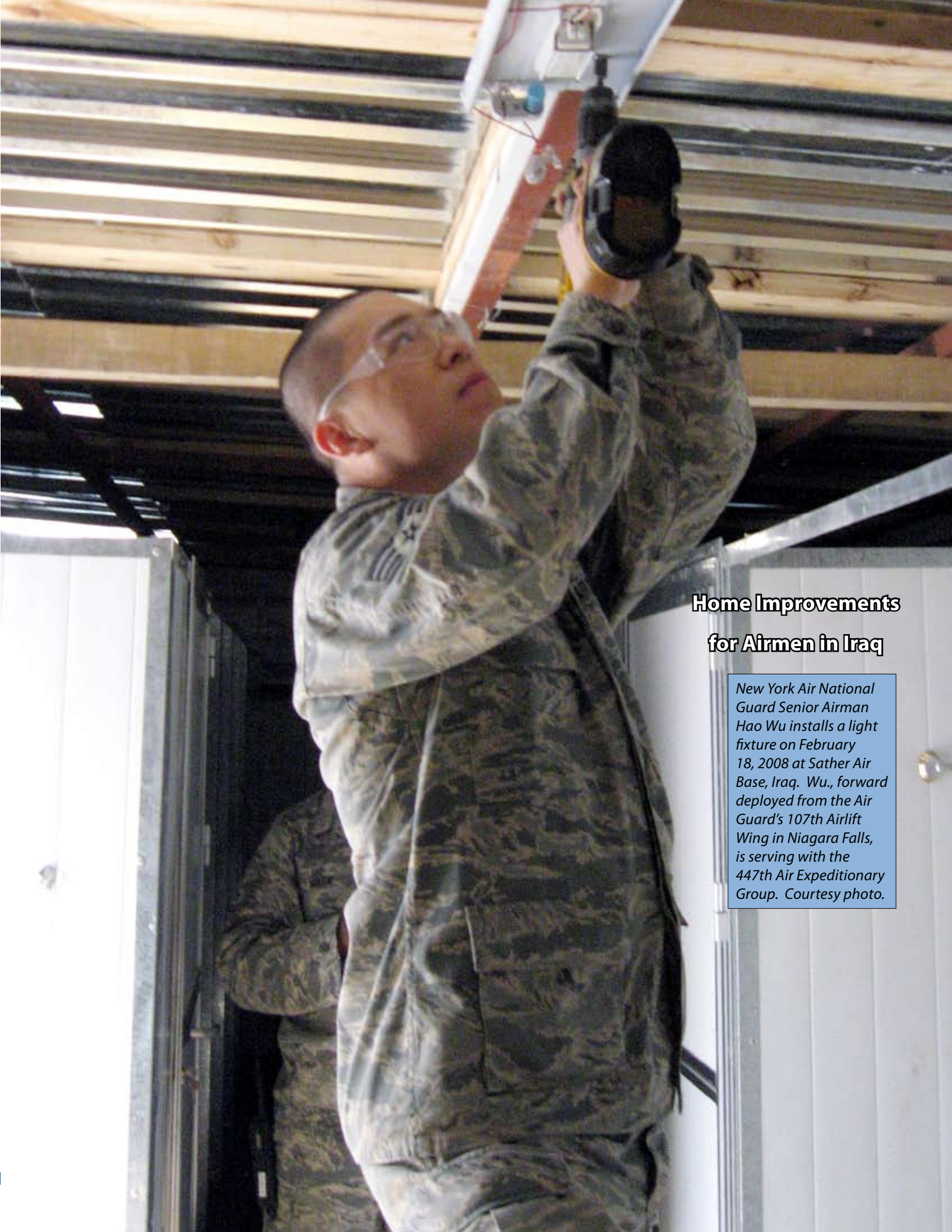
"Ultimately, my vision as the new commander is to capitalize on the current technological advances in order to perform our homeland defense mission more effectively," he said.

Deskins explained her role as focused on the personnel in the unit as a whole.

"I have absolute faith in the men and women assigned to this unit as the most professional people I have ever served with, but we need to continue to give them the training and opportunities to succeed in their careers," she said. "Our people are our greatest asset and my focus will be to continue to recruit and retain the talented people we need to be successful." **gt**



Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow, 1st Air Force Commander, returns Col. John Bartholf's salute, the new Northeast Air Defense Sector commander, during his Change of Command Ceremony April 4. Chief Master Sgt. Michael Granato, NEADS operations superintendent stands with the NEADS unit flag. Photo by Staff Sgt. CeeJay Garner.



Home Improvements for Airmen in Iraq

New York Air National Guard Senior Airman Hao Wu installs a light fixture on February 18, 2008 at Sather Air Base, Iraq. Wu., forward deployed from the Air Guard's 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls, is serving with the 447th Air Expeditionary Group. Courtesy photo.

NEADS Troops Return Home from Overseas Deployment

Story by Brooke Davis, Northeast Air Defense Sector Public Affairs

ROME --The Northeast Air Defense Sector doesn't deploy people, right? Wrong.

In the unit's largest deployment ever, nearly 30 security force members deployed for six months to Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan. The deployment involved Guard units from six other states, which resulted in the first-ever all Guard Security Force team at Manas.

The unit redeployed home March 14. Families and fellow unit members met their Airmen at the Syracuse Airport.

"This deployment afforded the opportunity for the families, NEADS personnel and the local community to come together in support of the troops," said former NEADS commander Col. Clark Speicher.

NEADS Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Tim Bejian said that volunteers were key to supporting families during the deployment.

"One of the best demonstrations on how the NEADS family came together to make sure that the families of our deployed members were taken care of in their absence was the Helping Hands volunteers," he explained. "The response of volunteers making sure that our troop's families were watched over and helped when needs arose was impressive.

"Each of the volunteers already had busy lives and little free time, but they made time to help when the need was at hand," he continued. "All this just confirmed to me that the people here are of the highest quality."

The Air Guard members provided force protection at the 376th Expeditionary Wing, the lead refueling wing and premiere mobility hub for operations over Afghanistan. The troops were also able to get out into the Oktyabra'skoe community for humanitarian missions.

"It was important for the troops deployed to Manas to perform community outreach and humanitarian assistance to our sister village, which was Oktyabra'skoe," said Security Force superintendant Senior Master Sgt. Paul Dubay. "Providing the community things like coal for schools when they didn't have any and interacting with the elders resulted in improved relations between the base and the local community."

Another member, Master Sgt. Joseph



Staff Sgt. Stephen Manley, a Northeast Air Defense Sector Security Force member, smiles at his daughter Morgan at the Syracuse International Airport March 14. Nearly 30 security force members deployed on a six-month tour to Kyrgyzstan, in September 2007. Photo by Staff Sgt. CeeJay Garner.

Montana, worked with the Office of Special Investigations to collect identification data for a database. Montana also engaged the local community by helping their security personnel train K-9s.

"I helped the local police center train their K-9s so that they were trained to our standards," explained Montana, who is a certified K-9 trainer. His three dogs are happy to have him home.

On the home front, local businesses stepped-up to support the deployed troops by assisting with mailing care packages. Master

Sgt. Danny Doucette, NEADS first sergeant, said that "... there were some businesses that didn't even know the Air Force was still located at Griffiss Park. Once they heard we were, the community support was tremendous throughout the deployment."

While the deployment brought together a community of support for the Security Force members, the overall mission of NEADS to provide air sovereignty and execute counter-air operations in support of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command over the eastern United States carried on. **gt**



CSAR: 106th RQW Conducts Search & Rescue Training

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. David J. Murphy, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMTON BEACH -- Master Sgt. Eric S. Blom calls for helicopter extraction as his fellow Para rescue men (PJ) prepare a downed pilot for exfiltration during a 106th Rescue Wing training exercise on Long Island on March 18. The para rescue men of the 103rd Rescue Squadron parachuted into the training area to provide medical care and stabilize a downed pilot. The pilot was secured in a stokes litter and air lifted out on a HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter. At right, playing the role of the injured pilot, Tech. Sgt. Shawn Struder, a Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) specialist, describes the training mission to local News 12 Long Island reporter Doug Greed.



New York Air Guard Member Receives Air Force Cross

Medal is Awarded After 40 Years

Story by Lt. Col. Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

WESTHAMPTON BEACH --Retired Chief Master Sgt. Dennis M. Richardson was awarded the Air Force Cross 40 years after the mission which earned him the Air Force's second-highest honor.

Richardson, a flight engineer with the 106th Rescue Wing for thirty years, was recognized for his actions during a rescue mission on March 14, 1968 in Vietnam, while 600 members of his former unit watched.

"In an extraordinary display of courage and valor, Sergeant Richardson, despite his wounds, leaned far outside the door (of the helicopter) and neutralized charging enemy combatants who appeared intent on boarding," his citation reads.

"It was a long scary day," said Richardson, "and I don't think I did anything different than the rest of the crew on that day."

On that day in 1968, two HH-53 "Jolly Green Giant" rescue helicopters were called in to rescue the two-man crew of a downed F-4 Phantom. The helicopters repeatedly moved in to make a pick-up of the downed airmen but were driven away by heavy North Vietnamese Army gunfire. Both aircraft sustained heavy damage on the mission, said retired Brig Gen. Frank Cardile, a pilot on the mission.

Richardson displayed exceptional courage when he stood unprotected in the door of the helicopter to drive off the enemy, said Cardile, who presented Richardson with his medal.

The team failed to make the pickup, Cardile said. Ultimately it took ten Army helicopters full of Soldiers to rescue one of the downed Airmen.

Richardson and three other crew members on the mission were put in for awards. Three of the members received the Silver Star, the third-highest medal for courage, but while Richardson's medal had been awarded, it got lost in the paperwork maze. A military history buff uncovered a paper trail that showed Richardson had been granted the

medal. In December an Air Force review panel recently confirmed the award and restored the medal.

Richardson, a Xerox repairman who was famed around the 106th for his gruff manner and his knowledge of helicopters, said he was glad that he was able to receive the medal in front of the Airmen he'd served with for so long.

"This is my family," he explained. It was good to get the recognition and share it with the people he cared about, he added.

Col. Michael Canders, commander of the 106th Rescue Wing, recalled a mission he and Richardson had flown on a dark night many years ago. A routine training flight had turned into a mission to rescue a sick seaman, Canders recalled, and the helicopter was running low on fuel.

"Don't waste your time down there sonny boy, we're running out of gas," Canders remembered Richardson telling the pararescueman who left the helicopter for the deck of the ship.

Sure enough the veteran flight engineer was right, Canders said, just as they landed the low fuel light came on.

Lt. Gen. Donald Hoffman, chief of Air Force acquisition represented the



106th Air Rescue Wing Commander Colonel Michael F. Canders presents the Air Force Cross to retired Chief Master Sergeant Dennis Richardson at Francis S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach on April 5. Photo by Staff Sgt. David J. Murphy.



Retired Chief Master Sergeant Dennis Richardson during his overseas deployment for combat search and rescue operations in the Republic of South Vietnam in 1968. Richardson received the Air Force Cross for actions to save his aircraft and crew in the spring of 1968. Courtesy photo.

Secretary of the Air Force at the event. Rep. Tim Bishop, of Long Island and New York State Deputy Secretary for Homeland Security Michal Balboni also attended the event.

The Air Force Cross has been awarded to enlisted Airmen only 21 times since the award was created in 1960. Since the end of the Vietnam War only three additional Air Force Crosses have been awarded to an enlisted airman, one for action in Somalia and two for action in Afghanistan.

Based at Gabreski Field in Westhampton Beach, Long Island, the 106th Rescue Wing of the New York Air National Guard conducts search and rescue missions on a regular basis. The unit also provides rescue support for Space Shuttle launches and recently sent a contingent of airmen to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, where they flew 145 missions. **gt**



Chief Warrant Officer Joey Nickischer from the New York Guard's 56th Brigade demonstrates rappelling at the N.Y. Guard Basic Search and Rescue training class. Nickischer, along with Maj. Robert Bly of the 65th Brigade received the 2007 Dewey Award for outstanding contributions to the Search and Rescue mission. In civilian life, Nickischer is a detective with the New York City Police Dept. Photo by Sgt. Crystal Passarotti.

NY Guard Recognizes Top Rescue Personnel

Biggest contributors to Rescue Mission Receive Award

Story by Maj. John J. Neeley, 10th Brigade, NY Guard

WATERVLIET – Members of the New York Guard all-volunteer force recognized their top Search and Rescue personnel during an awards ceremony here on April 5, 2008.

Major Robert Bly, 65th Brigade in Western N.Y. and Chief Warrant Officer Joey Nickischer, 56th Brigade in the Hudson Valley received the Lieutenant Colonel Gordon “Duke” Dewey Search and Rescue Award. The award is presented annually at the 10th BDE Dining Out for outstanding contribution to training, development, mentorship, leadership and operations of the New York Guard Search and Rescue Program. The presentation is made at the annual dinner of the 10th Brigade Association hosted at the Cannon Club, on the grounds of the Watervliet Arsenal.

Lt. Col. Dewey retired from military service after 50 years in uniform, serving with the 82nd Airborne, U.S. Army Special Forces, Vermont State Guard and the New York Guard. The award, given in his honor, was

inaugurated in 2005, recognizes the contributions to include the previous year. The inaugural award was presented to Dewey himself. In honor of the occasion, proclamations were made in the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate. A congratulatory letter was also sent to Dewey from then Governor George Pataki.

Major Robert Bly is assigned to the 56th Brigade New York Guard, serving in Horseheads, N.Y. and commands a Search and Rescue Company there. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joey Nickischer is stationed with the 56th Brigade in Peekskill, NY. Nickischer is active in Search and Rescue Training in the Hudson Valley for his brigade. Both officers are instructors with the New York Guard Search and Rescue (SAR) School.

Previous recipients of the Dewey Search and Rescue Award include Command Sgt. Maj. Yatram “Bruce” Jagroop from the 65th Brigade in 2006 and Col. Donald Kock from the same brigade in 2005. **gt**

5th Civil Affairs Trains for “Dirty War”

NY Guard Volunteers Conduct Emergency Response Training

Story by Maj. Joe O’Brien, 56th Brigade, N.Y. Guard

WESTCHESTER – Members of the New York Guard’s 5th Civil Affairs Regiment turned entertainment into training when the volunteer unit showed the HBO film “Dirty War” as an innovative centerpiece of an emergency response training exercise. Unit members trained on February 5th to better respond as part of New York State Military Forces confronting the threat of a terrorist attack using a dirty bomb. Major John Mangialardi, the unit commander, also invited several law enforcement and other first responding agencies to the training for added realism and a more productive interagency experience.

Maj. Robert Coulombe designed and coordinated the exercise for the New York Guard, using his extensive experience as a first responder and his training at the New Mexico Tech Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center. The participants in the training each played the roles of key officials involved in a hypothetical

incident involving a radioactive explosive device, or dirty bomb in the area. These roles included the incident commander and emergency response personnel, civil government authorities, police and fire officials and a public information office.

Additional participants to the training included representatives from the Greenburgh Police Department, the Pleasantville Police Chief, detectives from the Westchester District Attorney’s office, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and a private ambulance company from New York City.

The movie “Dirty War” is a 2005 HBO production that tells the hypothetical story of the planning and execution of a dirty bomb terrorist attack on central London and its disastrous aftermath. Because “Dirty War” was not produced as a training film, it is entertainment; the subsequent training discussion led by Coulombe following the film was instructive. Early in the film, the protagonist, commander of a London Fire

Department unit, is frustrated by municipal authorities who won’t prepare adequately. After the dirty bomb explodes, he allows his dedication to blind him to procedure, and he becomes a victim himself. This movie provided some key warnings about preparation for such events.

Issues such as the inadequate emergency-services training and planning, an ongoing cover-up of these inadequacies by civil authorities and, finally, the misguided dedication of the commander in the film gave the participants scores of relevant problems to discuss when comparing the scenario to the Hudson Valley.

“The film is an effective training tool that brings home the point that municipalities have to engage in drills to be prepared for what we all agree is a certainty,” said Mangialardi after the training event.

The exercise was held at the brand new emergency medicine



training facility at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Westchester. Dr. Emil Nigro, Head of Emergency Medicine at Phelps, took all in attendance on a tour of the facility. The facility includes computerized mannequins and an ambulance interior which replicates field conditions. Such a facility will play a critical role in any emergencies that threaten the tri-state area. **gt**



Top right photo and above: Maj. Joseph Coulombe leads a group discussion with members of the New York Guard’s 5th Civil Affairs Regiment on Feb. 5th. The emergency response training in Westchester included representatives of area emergency response agencies. Courtesy photos.

Commo On Demand from N.Y. Guard Volunteers

Emergency Radio Network Keeps the State Talking

Story by Staff Sgt. Dave Konig, HQ, N.Y. Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE -- A Category 4 hurricane – “Hurricane Gigi” – slams the New Jersey coastline, all of lower Manhattan and the southern shore of Long Island. The storm leaves the region devastated and both military and commercial communications severely degraded. This scenario provided the backdrop for members of the N.Y. Guard’s Military Emergency Radio Network (MERN) Task Force and Military Assistance Radio System (MARS) as they trained on April 5th across the state during a joint training exercise, “Operation Deep Freeze”.

MERN operators from the N.Y. Guard’s 88th, 14th, 10th and 56th Brigades and Headquarters Detachment responded to the mock disaster, requiring them to deploy members to man communications stations in Latham, Camp Smith and the Staten Island and Riverhead National Guard armories. The task force set up operations and tested the MERN radios by passing radio traffic to each other and to designated Army MARS operators.

Major Edward Murray, an Army Vietnam veteran and the N.Y. Guard lead point of contact for the exercise, feels that exercises like this “give the state a valuable asset in disaster preparation.”

“The N.Y. Guard has several missions, and this is one of our oldest, primary missions – to support active National Guard units in times of emergency with High Frequency radio capabilities,” Murray said.

Murray and the net control officer in charge, Chief Warrant Officer Two Patrick Guthoff from the 56th Brigade designed the operation as a complete exercise, incorporating shift changes at all stations to provide the maximum amount of hands on training with the equipment in a real-world



N.Y. Guard volunteer Chief Warrant Officer Two Pat Guthoff from the 56th Brigade operates an emergency communications radio during training at Camp Smith. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Copeletti.

scenario. “There was a lot of cross-training built in,” Murray explained.

The team is made up of volunteers with prior radio communications experience, like Sgt. 1st Class Paul White, from the headquarters detachment who previously served as a radio operator in the Air Force. Other members like Sgt. 1st Class Mark Copeletti of the 56th Brigade draws upon civilian HAM radio experience for the mission.

The MERN mission was once a National Guard responsibility, but has been turned back over to the N.Y. Guard in recent years. The MARS network is made up of military and civilian operators, and exists to provide auxiliary communications for military, civil, and/or disaster officials during periods of emergency.

With the summer hurricane season approaching, the training takes on a new priority for Guard members. “We are accelerating our MERN training, so that the N.Y. Guard can help the National Guard keep the comms going in any scenario,” said Murray. **gt**

N.Y. Guard Returns to Active Rolls for Afghanistan Duty

Story by Staff Sgt. Dave Konig, HQ, N.Y. Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE – Many members of the all-volunteer New York Guard join the force to continue their service to the state after retirement from federal service. Most recently, one of the Guard’s members volunteered to return to active duty and serve his country once more.

Colonel Thomas Finn volunteered to rejoin the Army to serve in Afghanistan later this year. Finn, a Massachusetts resident, commands the 12th Regional Training Institute at Camp Smith. He told fellow NY Guard volunteers at his last NY Guard drill in March prior to mobilizing for deployment with the Army’s Volunteer Retiree Recall Program, “It is an

honor to serve my country again, this time in Afghanistan.”

The Volunteers for Retiree Recall Program allows physically fit, experienced veterans to raise their right hand again for Army logistical and support missions. The program is open to retired members of the Army, Reserves and National Guard and N.Y. Guard members with prior military service. It is managed by Army Human Resources Command in St. Louis, Mo.

Finn will be put through Warrior Transition Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Upon completion of his required individual training, he will deploy to commence his tour. Finn will likely serve a one-year mobilization tour,

including boots on the ground overseas.

Finn brings invaluable military experience to the mission.

“I served thirty one years as an Army Infantry Officer,” Finn said, “commanding four different company sized units - four years active and twenty seven years Active Reserve duty in the 187th Infantry Brigade and 94th Regional Readiness Command.”

What does Mrs. Finn think of his new undertaking? “She thinks I’m crazy-but she understands,” Finn said. “She knows, whether I’m volunteering for duty in the N.Y. Guard or for the Army in Afghanistan, it is always an honor to serve.” **gt**

N.Y. Guard Volunteers Help Instruct Air Guard Recruits

Guard Members Bridge Gap Between the Citizen and the Airman

Story by Sgt. Christopher Ferraro, HQ, 56th Brigade, N.Y. Guard

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE -- In April, the New York Guard's 56th Brigade provided yet another vital support role to members of the National Guard when members assisted the 105th Airlift Wing from the Air National Guard (NYANG). Volunteer cadre from the brigade now instruct new recruits in the wing at Stewart Air Base.

The N.Y. Guard instructors teach Student Flight, the pre-basic training courses that bridge the gap between the civilian world and an Airman's basic military training.

The augmentation mission developed in late February when Brig. Gen. Verle L. Johnston Jr., commander of the 105th Airlift Wing and Stewart Air National Guard base, invited Col. Mike Hodges, commander of the 56th Brigade to attend the unit commander's conference. Hodges, a Desert Storm veteran who joined the N.Y. Guard after twenty years of service as an Army paratrooper, briefed Brig. Gen. Johnston on the capabilities of the 56th Brigade.

Many of the members of the New York Guard serving in the Newburgh area had previously served in the Guard's 105th Air Support Battalion. That element merged with the 56th Brigade in January when all air components of the New York Guard deactivated and led directly to the brigade's new relationship with the Air National Guard wing.

"We had a great afternoon as we set up an alliance between the 105th Airlift

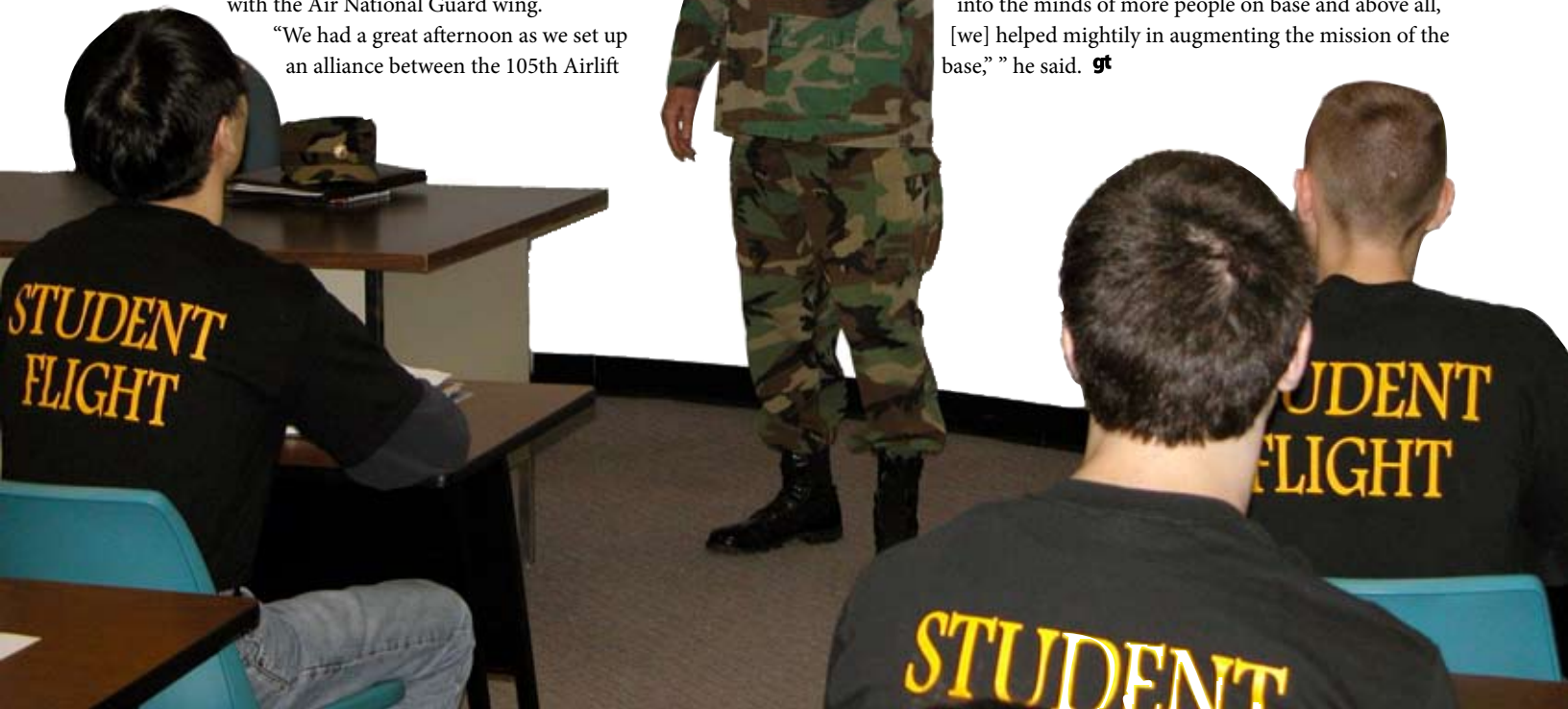
Wing of the New York Air National Guard and the 56th Brigade of the N.Y. Guard," said Hodges. "We will be working very closely with the Air National Guard."

In addition to instruction support to the Student Flight course, the brigade will assist the 105th in preparations for an upcoming Operational Readiness Training and Evaluation Inspection this summer.

N.Y. Guard troops also supported other areas of the airlift wing. Legal officers from the brigade's 5th Civil Affairs Regiment worked with Family Services and with the Operational Readiness teams that are preparing for inspection. NY Guard soldiers helped the wing's food service office serve more than 1,400 meals to Air Guard personnel during the day-long operation in Newburgh.

In the coming months the 56th will spend many of its drills at the base augmenting many ANG activities as personnel prepare for their Operational Readiness Inspection in June.

Maj. Bob Coulombe, who brings prior military experience in the Air Force to his N.Y. Guard role, was enthusiastic about the 56th Brigade's new support mission and deemed the initial partnership and integrated mission training a success. "All in all we worked hard, met people, and helped put our name and capability into the minds of more people on base and above all, [we] helped mightily in augmenting the mission of the base," he said. **gt**



New York Guard Maj. Bob Columbe instructs members of the 105th Student Flight for the Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, N.Y. The New York Guard's 56th Brigade established a new support relationship this spring to support administrative, support, training and other functions of the Air Guard facility as the Air Wing prepares for an Operational Readiness Inspection later in June. Photo by Capt. Paul Clayton.

Emergency Boat Service Takes to Upstate Waters

Story by Lt. Col. Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

LAKE CHAMPLAIN -- The New York Naval Militia's Military Emergency Boat Service (MEBS) trained on Lake Champlain for the first time May 5-9, as part of the service's effort to increase its supply of trained coxswains.

The five member team, led by Chief Warrant Officer Phillip Slominski, launched PB 300, a 33-foot catamaran boat at Westport, Essex County, and navigated the 110 mile long lake from Whitehall to Rouses Point on the Canadian border. The training familiarized the coxswains with both the boat and the lake so that the service has trained boat operators who understand Lake Champlain's water if a mission there is needed, said Commander Don McKnight, the MEBS officer-in-charge.

Along with navigation, the mission tested the ability to trailer the boat to a remote location and operate independently, McKnight said.

Participants in the mission also included: Master Chief Petty Officer Michael Clark, of Albany; Senior Chief Petty Officer David Selmer, of Schenectady; Equipment Operator 1st Class Donald Hart, of Whitehall; and Utility Man 1st Class Petty Officer Jim Keller of Delmar. Slominski, the lead trainer, comes from Liverpool.

Lake Champlain, covers two-thirds of the Vermont/New York border and is 400 feet deep at its deepest point and 12 miles across at its widest point. The lake has been called the "Sixth Great Lake" and was the scene of pivotal clashes in the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

On October 11, 1776, at the Battle of Valcour Island near modern Plattsburgh, volunteer Soldiers and militiamen, similar to current Naval Militia members, manned hastily built boats and small ships and fought a battle against a similar British fleet. While the American force, led by Major Gen. Benedict Arnold, was defeated, the fight delayed the British advance



Petty Officer Jim Keller of Delmar trains on the Naval Militia's Patrol Boat 300, a 33-foot catamaran boat on Lake Champlain in New York's North Country. The team of five sailors conducted navigation training on Lake Champlain's waters to better prepare coxswains for boat operations and better familiarize New York Naval Militia personnel with Lake Champlain's waterways. Courtesy photo.

southward by a year, and is considered a strategic victory.

At the Battle of Lake Champlain, also fought near Plattsburgh, on Sept. 14, 1814, a small American naval force defeated a British fleet, turning back an invasion attempt. **gt**

Naval Militia Recognizes Outstanding New Leadership



Story and photo by Capt. Chuck Haunss, New York Naval Militia

NEW YORK -- In recognition of his outstanding achievements at the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime College, New York Naval Militia Commander Maj. Gen. Robert Wolf presents a Naval Militia sword to newly commissioned Ensign Gerin on May 3, at the historic Grant's Tomb Memorial.

On the following day, Ensign Choiniere graduated from the SUNY Maritime College at Fort Schuyler, SUNY Maritime is one of the nation's oldest maritime schools.

The NYNM composed of approximately 3,600 Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reservists, is the only active, federally-recognized Naval Militia with continuous, unbroken service to the state and nation for more than a century, and a history dating back to the American Revolution.

SUNY Maritime College and the New York Naval Militia routinely conduct joint training exercises. SUNY Maritime has a center for the study of port security matters, which is one of the Naval Militia's missions. Many Navy and Marine Corps Reservists who drill at the nearby Reserve Center are members of the Naval Militia. In addition, Wolf is Director of Graduate Admissions at the college. **gt**

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Open Doors in Utica

Army Guard Welcomes Community for NASCAR #88 Dale Earnhardt, Jr. Car

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott, Guard Times Staff

UTICA – Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 107th and 108th Military Police Companies, working with local area Guard recruiters, hosted an open house for the community to view the National Guard sponsored Dale Earnhardt Jr. NASCAR, static displays of unit equipment, vehicles and weapons at the Utica armory Mar. 8.

Sgt. First Class David Girard of the Mobile Recruiting Team and his assistant Spc. Daniel Moreno travel all over the state doing events like these, many with the number 88 car.

"This car is a really big draw for events like this," said Girard. "I have seen a huge increase in interest since Dale Earnhardt Jr. came on board with the Guard"

"These events are a partnership between units and their recruiters to raise community awareness about the National Guard," said Maj. Steven Rowe, the officer in charge of Central and Western New York Recruiting. "We want people in the local communities to see these Soldiers that are working right in their own back yards," he said.

Attendance was steady throughout the day despite the weather. Braving the snow, John Conway and son Bradley, 11, made the over thirty mile trip from their home in Booneville. "We came to see the car" said



Wade Ingalls and son Tyler, age 15, drove 70 miles from Lafargeville to get a look at the #88 Dale Earnhardt, Jr. race car sponsored by the National Guard. The race car was part of the Army National Guard Open House at the Thompson Road Armory in Syracuse on Sunday, February 24. The car also appeared at the Utica Armory's open house on Mar. 8 and numerous recruiting events across the state this winter and spring.

Conway, whose brother is an Army Ranger drill sergeant, currently serving at Fort Benning, Ga. "I saw an ad in our local Penny Saver and marked the date on my calendar," he said.

"Attendance is way up, in some cases ten-fold from events with our previous cars," Girard said. **gt**

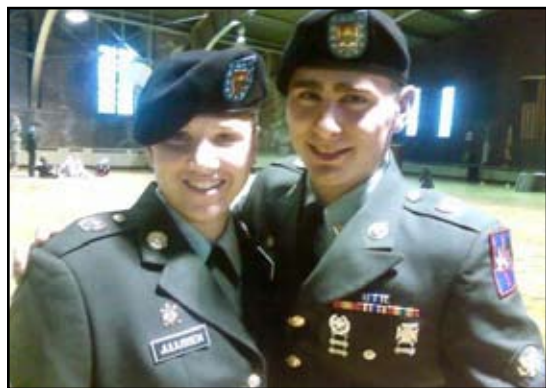
Soldier's Sudden Death a Loss to Entire Guard Family

Guard Times Staff

BINGHAMTON – The New York National Guard family mourned the loss of a full-time Soldier this spring when Spc. Shaine Lymn,

20, of New Lisbon died from complications following an illness on April 13, 2008.

Lymn, a Soldier with the Army



Specialist Shaine Lymn, right, with Pvt. Britt Juliussen in an undated photo. Lymn passed away unexpectedly in April. The two Soldiers served together in the 204th Engineers as wheeled vehicle mechanics. Courtesy photo.

National Guard's 204th Engineer Battalion, worked at the Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) at the Binghamton Armory as a vehicle mechanic when he collapsed while jogging on April 2.

Doctors

determined that Lymn had a virus that affected his heart. He was treated at Wilson Memorial Regional Medical Center in Johnson City. Lymn was taken off life support April 11 and passed away two days later.

Teresa Lymn, Shaine's mother, said doctors described his loss as "one in a million."

Lymn was born April 7, 1988 in Queens, and lived in Otego, Gilbertsville and Morris throughout his childhood.

He joined the New York Army National Guard in 2005, completing basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C. before graduating high school. He completed his Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Aberdeen,

MD. In 2007, he was nominated for Soldier of the year by his unit.

More than 250 Soldiers, family members and loved ones were on hand for the funeral service with military honors on April 17 in West Oneonta.

Sgt. Jennifer Raub Scott of the 204th Engineers said Lymn embodied many of the Army values - courage, integrity, a sense of duty and loyalty. He also was generous with his personal time, helping others without expecting anything in return, she said.

"Shaine was here just a little while," the Rev. Mitchell Spring, pastor of Spirit and Truth Christian Assembly told mourners. "But he will be in our hearts forever." **gt**

New York Hosts Senior Enlisted Leaders Conference:

Army, Air Guard enlisted leaders seek common ground

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

SARATOGA SPRINGS – The stars of the National Guard’s Army and Air Force enlisted force gathered near one of this country’s pivotal battlegrounds to explore ways to work in closer harmony – more jointly – as spring came to the Adirondacks in mid-April.

Eighty Army Guard state command sergeants major and Air Guard command chief master sergeants, whose stripes are punctuated with stars, from 46 states and territories took part in the first Senior Enlisted Leaders Conference ever sponsored by the National Guard Bureau. The New York National Guard hosted this premiere event.

The intent was to bring the state senior enlisted leaders from the two distinct military cultures closer together at a time when they are expected to work together as a joint force, explained Command Sgt. Maj. David Ray Hudson, the senior enlisted leader for the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

Both Guard forces share the same goal, to support their states and defend their country when they are needed. But they do that in considerably different ways.

Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum has stressed the importance of a joint National Guard force since becoming the chief of the Guard Bureau. But some places are joint only in name, in the form of joint staff signs on the wall, Hudson observed, because the Army and Air Guard cultures and funding procedures remain so disparate.

The idea of a joint force is here to stay, Hudson told the group. “I truly believe that jointness for the National Guard in the future is rock solid,” he said.

The four-day conference that began April 18 in this historic city north of Albany was intended to narrow the cultural gap and create a better understanding among the senior sergeants and chiefs who mentor the younger enlisted people in their states.

“We’re learning about each other because we do have different ways of doing business. The ranks are different. The way we get paid is different,” said New York state Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Van Pelt. “The best way to understand your counterpart is to sit next to him and train with him.”

“If we’re really going to make this joint force work, you have to be the bricks and mortar to hold



Army and Air National Guard senior enlisted leaders gather around an 18th-century cannon while touring the Revolutionary War’s Saratoga Battlefield, near Saratoga Springs, N.Y., April 20. They toured the historical site while attending the Guard Bureau’s first Senior Enlisted Leaders Conference.

it together for us,” Blum said. “You’re the ones who have to make this force work. You’re going to have to get the young noncommissioned officers to understand what you’re living.”

It is especially critical, Blum added, because the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act makes the National Guard Bureau a joint activity under the secretary of defense. Gone are the days when the Army Guard was affiliated with the secretary of the Army and the Air Guard was tied to the secretary of the Air Force.

Army and Air Guard personnel may work together at the joint state headquarters, but “they haven’t worked that closely together out in the field,” observed Chief Master Sgt. Michael Dalton, Michigan’s state command chief, about the fact that Air and Army Guard units traditionally train as separate entities.

“We have learned quite a lot about each other over the years,” Dalton said, “but there’s still a lot to learn.” **gt**



Staff Sgt. Thomas McCauley, left, from the 109th Airlift Wing, presents Command Sgt. Maj. David Ray Hudson with a jet-assisted takeoff (JATO) bottle during the Guard Bureau’s Senior Enlisted Leaders Conference in mid-April. The Air Wing uses JATO for extra thrust during difficult takeoff situations.

Guard boxers shape futures in National championships

Story by Staff Sgt. Rebecca Doucette, National Guard Bureau

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - Even though this year's U.S. Olympic boxing team has been selected for Beijing, other athletes already have set their sights for London in 2012.

National Guard Sgts. Cherrie Retamozzo from New York and John Franklin from Missouri competed in USA Boxing's U.S. Future Stars National Championships during the second week in March as part of their personal journeys toward the next Summer Olympics.

They were on the All-Army boxing team and they fought the best civilian boxers from around the country with hopes of being ranked among the elite and gaining eligibility to compete internationally.

both at the nationals.

The Texan gave Retamozzo a run for her money. Spurred on by loud cheers from her Army teammates, Retamozzo came back to tie the score twice in the fourth round. The judges were left to decide who would advance to the finals. The decision went to Cardenas.

Staff Sgt. Charles Leverette, the World Class Athlete Program assistant head coach, described Retamozzo as "the most disciplined boxer of this whole tournament. Word for word, she did exactly what we asked her to do. We got 100 percent out of her."

Retamozzo is not part of WCAP because women's boxing is not an Olympic sport. But Leverette's observations were welcome words of encouragement.

Cardenas won the championship which left Retamozzo third in the women's elite rankings. That should allow her to compete in the Pan American Games and The World Games later this year.

"I would like to one day, God willing, and it's allowed for women, become a World Class Athlete Program member [at Fort Carson, Colo.]," Retamozzo said.

Franklin is the only full-time Guard Soldier on the All-Army team. "You can accomplish your dream, whether you join the Army, whether you join any service, but the National Guard has helped me so much in this process," he said. "Just keep supporting me and you guys will have a champion here pretty soon."

Leverette spoke highly of Franklin. "He leads from the front. A lot of the guys respect him because of his past accomplishments. When you have somebody with that strong character

and that leadership trait, it makes my job easier."

As returning members of the All-Army team, Franklin and Retamozzo are regarded as leaders for the younger Soldiers who try out every January. "They're great veterans, great leaders," said Leverette of the Guard boxers. "They bring both sides of the table, which makes us good and diverse. They understand the civilian side and they understand the military side. For a lot of our guys, the Army's all they've ever done, so [the Guard boxers] give them guidance and feedback."

"If you're out there and you want to box and you're in the Guard, come see me," Leverette concluded. "Look me up on AKO, Staff Sgt. Charles Leverette. Send me an e-mail. We'll see what we can do. We're looking for all the athletes we can find." **gt**



New York Guard Sgt. Cherrie Retamozzo (right) triumphs over Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Sonia Deputee during the 2008 Armed Forces Boxing Championships at Camp Lejeune, N.C on March 25. Photo by Tim Hipps.

Retamozzo placed third in the women's elite rankings. She returned to the All-Army team after a two-year hiatus. During that time she left active duty, had a baby and won a women's title at the Empire State Games in New York. She returned to the military service as a traditional Guard member with the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division.

She competed in the women's featherweight division at the nationals and outscored her first challenger, California's Carmen Montes, 20-5 on the third night of competition. She advanced to the semifinals to face Alexandria Cardenas of San Angelo, Texas.

According to Retamozzo, after a win she allows herself to "go home and sleep," but she uses a loss to learn and keep focused. She experienced

Local School Children Send Donations to Iraq

Western NY Community Shows Support to Troops and Iraqi Children

Story by Staff Sgt. Rebecca Kenyon, 107th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. -- Clothing collected by students at Holy Ghost Lutheran School in Niagara Falls this spring will reach needy Iraqi kids by members of the New York Air National Guard stationed outside Baghdad.

For two weeks in March, students at the school collected more than 30 large bags of clothes for children who live on the other side of the world, children they will probably never know, but children who they heard are in need.

It all started when Mrs. Christine Lange read an email sent from the 107th Airlift Wing Family Support Center announcing that children in Iraq need clothing donations. The deployed members of the 107th Security Forces noted in their updates back home that the children they saw every day outside their airbase needed new clothes and wanted to do something about it.

Christine's husband, Master Sgt. Bryan Lange, a 107th Airlift Wing Recruiting Supervisor, forwarded the email to his wife to see if they had any clothes from home to donate.

Christine said she felt that the clothing drive was a great opportunity to get the school that their daughter and son attend involved.

"I felt if I got more people involved, there would be more clothes for the children in Iraq," said Christine.

Once she mentioned her idea to school principal Kevin Gundell, he was eager to help. Gundell said the school focuses on teaching their students to be mission minded.

"Our hearts go out to those in need," Gundell said.

"We regularly take on projects as a school to teach the children responsibility and to count their blessings and give to others," Gundell said.

On Wednesday March 26, the students presented 107th Wing members with the several bags of clothing they collected.

Tech Sgt. Chris Zastrow talked to the children about his recent deployments to Al Udeid, Qatar and Afghanistan.

"When you go to another country, you see how we take for granted what we have," said Zastrow.

Zastrow told the students how the clothes they donated will help those who don't have the basics that many of us take for granted.

"Even though they don't get to see the kids



Holy Ghost Lutheran School students display a portion of the clothes collected for children in Iraq on March 26. Receiving the donations from the Air National Guard is (back row, from left) Tech. Sgt. Chris Zastrow, Lt. Col. Deanna Miller and Master Sgt. Bryan Lange. Photo by Staff Sgt. Rebecca Kenyon.

they donated to, it gives them a sense of charity, they know that they are blessed for what they have," said Christine.

The collection is complete and the bags of clothes will be sent to deployed 107th Security Forces members in Iraq who will then give them to Iraqi children in need. **gt**

Guardsmen Gets a Grip

BAGRAM, Afghanistan -- Sgt. Justin Koers, who is part of the six man Police Mentoring Team from the New York Army National Guard's 27th Brigade Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix out of Bagram, shows an Afghan National Police officer how to do a physical apprehension restraint technique as part of the hands on training for the class at Dandar village, located in the Kohe Safi district, May 8. Photo by Sgt. Jessica R. Dahlberg.



