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

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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Watch Out for Your Buddies Here at Home, Too

Soldiers stick together.

The "Soldiers Creed"-- putting the mission first, never accepting defeat, and never leaving a fallen comrade—are part of the way we live. I've been pleased to see that in effect here at home, as National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and professional staffs have worked tirelessly to help our 27th Brigade Combat Team and other veterans reintegrate back into home and work, after serving in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program has steadily improved as we've reached out to embrace our returning servicemen and women and their families.

These are extraordinary times for our National Guard Soldiers and Airmen. Americans are aware, as never before, of the service that Citizen Soldiers perform here at home and overseas in combat. You have stepped up to the plate when your country needed your service and you and your families made sacrifices.

However, after eight years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the stress is beginning to show on our force. The Army has experienced a surge of suicides—at least 142 in 2008-- that has disturbed us all. This may be due to an increase in PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.

New York has not been immune; at least two of our Soldiers have taken their life in theater or back here at home. This is two Soldiers too many.

We need to continue to stick together and watch our battle buddies here at home, as well as in the combat zone. Be aware of what is going on in the lives of your friends and fellow Soldiers now that they've returned home. Reach out and be ready to talk, and if your friend starts to talk about ending his or her life take it seriously.

The Army is launching a crash program to educate Soldiers and leaders about the indicators of suicide and how to fight it. We will be part of that training and we're making suicide prevention an important part of our reintegration program. At the same time our units will be conducting formal training as directed by the Army.

Each of us should familiarize ourselves with the indicators of suicidal tendencies and look for them in ourselves and each other. A good place to start is to go the National Guard's Vir-

tual Armory website at <http://virtualarmory.com/WELLBEING/SUICIDE.ASPX> page. You'll find information there on the signs of suicide, and a questionnaire you can take. Another good place to go is www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org or call 1-800-273-TALK for help any time of the day or night.

Indicators to watch out for from a friend or spouse include comments about life not being worth living, or the family being better off without me, as well as a general sense that life is very, very hard. Is your friend talking about giving away personal items, or speculating about what will happen after he or she dies? Does your battle buddy want a weapon or talk about ways to take their life painlessly?

You need to be willing to listen to your friend; you need to take what they say seriously and you need to take the risk of reaching out to the chaplain, a unit leader, or a counselor for help for your friend.

Don't be afraid to ask the unthinkable and ask your friend if they are thinking about killing themselves. This doesn't cause suicidal people to kill themselves, it helps you identify a risk and act on it.

You didn't let your battle buddy down in Iraq or Afghanistan; don't let them down here at home.

Each and every Soldier has a story and we all

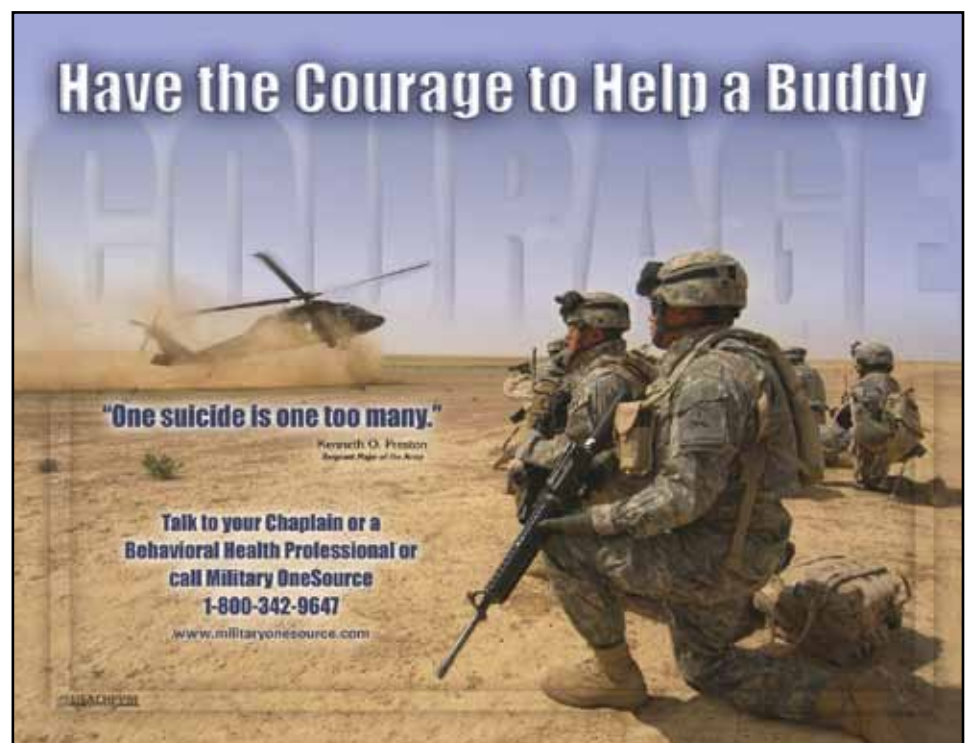


Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto

have complicated lives. It doesn't matter what your age is, what your rank is, or what your job was overseas; you can still have a tough time coming home.

Now more than ever those of us who have chosen to serve our nation and state by wearing our country's uniform and carrying arms in her defense, must stand side-by-side in battle and back home.

Remember: Soldiers stick together.



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Complimentary or Back Issues of the *Guard Times* are available. Contact us at the address above or visit us on the web for current news, photos or to download prior issues at www.dmna.state.ny.us.



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◀ *New York Air National Guard Fire Fighters Airman 1st Class Jamie Bak and Airman 1st Class Nicholas Yurenda of the 174th Fighter Wing Fire Department, Syracuse hone their skills on auto extraction and rescue tools during their April drill, at Hancock Field. Photo Courtesy of 174th Fighter Wing.*

On the cover: Corporal Jonathan Martinez, Company C, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry gets motivated while participating in martial arts training alongside of Thai Soldiers during a two-week annual joint training exercise this year from Feb. 4-17 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The Royal Thai Army, Navy, and Marines as well as U.S. Army Pacific with support from U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Air Force Pacific and contingencies from the militaries of Indonesia, Japan, and Singapore participated in the exercise that has been conducted since 1981. Courtesy photo.

Back cover: New York Naval Militia Chief Machinery Technician Sean Lynch piloted Patrol Boat 440 under the stern of the Saudi freighter M.V. Saudi Diriyah, a 44,000 ton roll-on/roll-off ship, while a U.S. Coast Guard boarding team leader coordinated inspection instructions with the ship's master on the morning of Feb. 25 at the Ambrose Anchorage. The anchorage is where half a dozen huge commercial container ships and freighters await harbor pilots and their appointed time to enter the busy Ports of New York and New Jersey. Photo courtesy of N.Y. Naval Militia.

Military Personnel News: The MILPO CORNER

Military Personnel Directorate (MNP) continues development of the AKO Web Portal for convenience in accessing tools, websites and information relating to all personnel actions. Please visit this web portal on a regular basis: <https://www.us.army.mil.suite/page/553732>.

Military Personnel Guides

In an effort to provide informational resources for Soldiers to help understand important areas of military personnel management, we have prepared a series of NYARNG Military Personnel Guides.

These pamphlets include important information concerning the particular subject areas, with references and web sites included for detailed information. A summary of the first six pamphlets in the series is provided below.

All can be accessed on the main page of the MNP AKO Portal and used as handouts. Go to <https://www.us.army.mil.suite/page/553732>.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 1, Soldier Enlisted Promotion Program (EPP). This pamphlet provides information concerning the method to promote Soldiers, Sgt. and above, to the next higher grade.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 2, Soldier Advancement Program. This pamphlet provides critical information concerning the advancement of Soldiers from Pvt. to Spc.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 3, Soldier Mentorship. This pamphlet provides information concerning valuable advice and knowledge Soldiers can gain and reflect upon from a positive mentorship relationship.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 4, Military Correspondence. This pamphlet provides sample formats for correspondence regularly used for day to day correspondence preparation, to improve communication.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 5, Soldier Military Personnel Records. This guide provides instruction for Soldiers concerning their military personnel record as well as their responsibility in its maintenance.

NYARNG MNP Guide Number 6, Practical Leadership. This guide provides a summary of information extracted from Department of the Army leadership references, combined with practical guidance from the MILPO Intranet Guide, designed to help Soldiers in their day to day interaction with superiors, their peers and

most importantly, their subordinates.

Summer Benefits for Soldiers.

Free Hunting and Fishing Licenses. Did you know you could get a free hunting and fishing license? 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. POC: New York State Department of Conservation, Sporting License Help Line at 1-866-933-2257 or at www.dec.ny.gov.

Free Empire Passports to New York State Parks. Is it important to you to get free admission to select NYS Parks? The Empire Passport Program allows for free Empire Passports for personnel called to federal or state active duty after Sep. 11, 2001. This program has been extended for 2009. Please contact the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation at 518-474-0458 or at www.nysparks.com/passport/ for details.

Officer Personnel Management.

MNP electronic Form 11. MNP has created an electronic Form 11. It is located in the OPM Tools and Links portion of the MNP AKO Web Portal. All officers are strongly encouraged to update this form annually or when a significant personnel action has occurred. An example would be if an officer is federally selected to the next higher grade and would like to expand his or her regions of the state. By expanding your regions choice additional opportunities may arise for a promotion.

MNP OPM/OER Section. All officers should visit IPERMs and check your files at <http://55.39.113.241/rms/login.jsp>.

Officer Evaluation Reports (DA Form 67-9 version 6.5) should be used with Pure Edge software. This software can be downloaded from AKO. Recently deployed officers and warrant officers should note that OERs were sent directly to the Department of the Army and did not come through the New York Army National Guard (NYARNG). There have been many instances where the report did not make it to IPERMs. It is imperative that the officer check that all OERs make it to their permanent files.

MNP Digital Signatures. MNP needs all officers to be aware of the new technology and trend to sign all forms digitally with your CAC card. This is especially important when

completing OERs but can be equally important with routine correspondence. Specific Approve It software can be downloaded from AKO at <https://www.us.army.mil.suite/doc/8499050>.

MNP Warrant Officer Promotions. MNP WOPM reminds Warrant Officers that if eligible, they can submit promotion packets 120 days in advance of their eligibility date through their chain of command.

MNP New Promotion Policy Information for Mobilized Officers. MNP has posted the new promotion policy on mobilized officers. The new policy covers the procedure and guidance on how a mobilized officer can get promoted against a projected position back in the Unit Identification Codes (UICs) that are not currently deployed forward. The bottom line to this memorandum is an officer can be promoted now against a projected vacancy. This can be found at the MNP-OPM Web Portal under the MNP-OPM Knowledge Center in the Policy Information folder.

Enlisted Personnel Management

Enlisted Personnel Promotion Information. The Personnel Automated Branch is pleased to announce the creation of an Enlisted Personnel webpage that is available for all Soldiers to view on AKO. To view the website go to <https://www.us.army.mil.suite/page/553732>.

Civilian Education. The Education Office recognizes the following Soldiers for completing their degrees. Congratulations to...

Justin Cappon	BS- With Distinction Nyack College
Nicole Daly	BS- Criminal Justice St John's University
Raul Echevarria	BS- Business Admin TUI University
Jesse Keith	BA- Criminology SUNY Cortland
Jonathan Neilen	BA- History University of Albany
Damari Tavera	BA- Accounting Queens College
Dennis Tierney	BA- Business Admin Hofstra University
Joseph Brady	Masters- Criminal Justice Tiffin University

If you've recently completed your degree, please send an official transcript to the Education Office to have your records updated.

LATHAM -- With the motorcycle season approaching, the National Guard's Safety Office would like to encourage all members of the N.Y. Army National Guard who operate or intend to operate a motorcycle to sign up for this year's Motorcycle Safety Courses.

There will be 10 courses available this summer at 5 different locations throughout the state. Please check the link at <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/arnng/safety/cycle.html> for additional information.

In order to take the safety course, Soldiers must bring a license with motorcycle endorsement or permit and Personal Protective Equipment. Also, remember to bring wet weather gear (rain jacket & pants) since you will ride rain or shine. No Ponchos! Point of contact is Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Howard, Safety Specialist at Alicia.Howard@us.army.mil.

Biker Safety Can Save Your Life

By Warrant Officer Candidate Shawn Murray, Joint Forces Headquarters Safety Specialist

ROCHESTER - Time and again, Soldiers and Airmen are reminded about motorcycle safety and especially the rider safety courses offered by the New York National Guard.

One Soldier can credit his life to the tips and techniques learned from the class last year.

The Soldier, redeployed from a combat tour in Afghanistan less than six months prior to the incident, considered himself an experienced rider, with more than 18 years of motorcycle riding experience.

Like many other returned veterans, the Soldier purchased a brand new Kawasaki motorcycle following his redeployment.

After buying the motorcycle, he requested the motorcycle safety course. He purchased what he felt was the best gear possible to ride in and never rode without it.

As with many motor vehicle accident statistics, this particular incident occurred less than a mile from the Soldier's home while traveling approximately 45 miles per hour at night.

Striking a deer attempting to cross in front of the bike, the rider was ejected over his handle bars onto the asphalt road. While attempting to move his motorcycle from the road, a help-

ful motorist stopped and made the emergency calls for first responders.

The Soldier was hospitalized and treated for a fractured collar bone, with only minor bruises.

Due to the wearing of appropriate and prescribed protective equipment, notably a full face helmet, riding jacket with extra layers of protection on the shoulder and elbows, riding pants, thick reinforced leather riding gloves, and leather combat boots this rider did not suffer the cuts, abrasions or "road-rash" related injuries so common in motorcycle accidents.

The Soldier's motorcycle received minor damage and was able to be driven home by a family member.

The Soldier returned to work after three days on light duty status. An assessment of the wear and tear on the Soldier's protective equipment in this accident reveal that his injuries sustained could have been much more severe.

Safety instructors and classes only provide



our service members with the tools, techniques and information to make the right choice and decisions that can save their lives. In this case, the Soldier's personal responsibility to use and apply what he learned made a difference between light or severe injuries.

Your bottom line is to seek out the safety training offered by the National Guard or your local community. Invest in the best possible personal protection equipment. Those items are a smart choice. When riding a motorcycle, wrap yourself in the best possible protection money can buy and wear it properly.

Remember, the life you save will have a direct impact on the lives of your families, friends and co-workers.

2nd Civil Support Team Rolls Out for Evaluation

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott, Joint Forces Headquarters

ORISKANY - The call went out at 4 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24 to members of New York's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (CST). The special unit of 22 Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldiers and Airmen, commonly known as the 2nd CST was on alert.

They had 90 minutes to roll out of bed, report to their Headquarters at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, gear up and get the advance party on the road.

The mission this day would take the unit to the former Oneida County Airport, now the State Preparedness Training Center. The exercise would be evaluated by a team from Army North.

The advance party of approximately 8 team members in two vehicles were the first to arrive on scene where they received a briefing from the Incident Commander, (IC). The IC is the head of the local lead agency on scene, usually the Fire or Police Chief or State Police.

"The IC briefing helps establish the objectives from which an 'Incident Action Plan' is developed" said 1st Sgt. John Craft. "The Incident Action Plan must be approved before the team can go in and set up the operation," he said.

Once the



(Photo above and below left) New York National Guard Staff Sgt. Bryon Sommers assists Capt. Robert Miron at the decontamination station after returning from the "hot zone" during an exercise, March 24 at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany. Both Soldiers are members of the New York National Guard's 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team.

Incident Action Plan is approved, the team moves to set up the various elements of the operation. The six sections making up the team are command, operations, communications, administration/logistics, medical and survey.

A decontamination station is set up and certified before the survey team can move "down range" into the "hot zone" to inspect for contamination and collect samples for testing, if found.

"Today's scenario is a training lane in preparation for the team's 18-month inspection and re-certification" said Russ Stevens, Army North evaluator. "

These teams are highly trained and are constantly being brought up on the latest technology and science, so we have to work hard ourselves in order to be able to give them a good evaluation," said Stevens.

The exercise scenario involved a stolen bus that was discovered in an aircraft han-

gar. Hidden on the bus were items simulating "dispersal devices." These exposed passengers to a pesticide-based nerve agent. The survey team had to thoroughly inspect both the hangar and the bus and locate the devices for sampling.

"Samples are then tested in the unit's mobile laboratory. Material can be identified in seconds, sometimes down to specific brand names and then the team models how agents are likely to spread, based on factors such as dispersion method or weather conditions, said Lt. Col. Mathew Cooper from the State Weapons of Mass Destruction office.

"Oneida is a great training site," said Maj. Rich Nunziato, who recently took command from Cooper. "I think we can definitely use this site again.

"It was my first opportunity to run an exercise like this as commander," Nunziato said. "It went well and we were able to work in some new team members and get them involved."

Nunziato is an original member of the 2nd CST and responded with the team to the World Trade Center attacks on Sep. 11, 2001.

New York's second CST will be based at Fort Hamilton. Team members undergo hundreds of hours of training before being certified. **gt**



Deputy Adjutant General Retires After 33 Years

Guard Times Staff

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Syracuse
Major General Robert A. Knauff, former commander of the 6,000-member New York Air National Guard and deputy commander of the 17,000 men and women of the New York Army and Air National Guard, retired Feb. 26 during a formal ceremony here.

Knauff, a pilot with 3,900 flying hours in F-106 Delta Daggers, F-15 Eagle, F-16 Falcon and OV-10 observation aircraft, commanded the 174th Fighter Wing here from 1996 to 2003, prior to becoming Chief of Staff and then Commander of the New York Air National Guard.

“Since assuming command of the New York Air National Guard in 2005, Knauff put New York’s air units at the heart of the Global War on Terrorism and humanitarian support operations throughout the United States and around the globe,” said Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, The Adjutant General. “Under his leadership, New York deployed thousands of airmen as part of designated deployments worldwide, including domestic security operations in the years following the 2001 World Trade Center attacks and combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

A 1975 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy, Knauff completed Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1976. In the years following, he undertook a series of flying and command assignments culminating with his present duty at the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs in Latham, N.Y. In addition, he served as the Air National Guard assistant to the commander, U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command. He is a combat veteran with more than 3,900 flying hours.

A resident of Manlius, Knauff’s previous assignments included serving as an F-15 instructor pilot at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona; serving as a forward air controller at George Air Force Base in California; flying F-106s with the New Jersey Air National Guard; and serving as the Chief of Staff of the New York Air National Guard.



Major General Robert Knauff, stands at attention as his command flag is furled for the last time, Thursday, Feb. 26 at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base. Knauff, retired after a 33-year career. Photo by Staff Sgt. James N. Faso II.

His awards include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Overseas Ribbon, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal, and the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal. **gt**

Joint Task Force Supports Puerto Rico Exercise



FORT HAMILTON, Brooklyn - Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Brian Mathews, at right, from the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse, provides communications support for Operation Empire Sun, the New York National Guard’s support to Vigilant Guard exercise conducted by the Puerto Rico National Guard March 25.

At left, Army National Guard intelligence analyst Pvt. 1st Class Joshua Haynes prepares a staff assessment.

New York’s Joint Task Force Empire Shield headquartered in New York City, portrayed the headquarters of a 300-member task force notionally deployed to Puerto Rico to help the Commonwealth recover from a simulated earthquake and tsunami.

The exercise tested the ability of Guard forces, state and federal agencies to react to civil emergencies. Photos by Spc. Errol Cadet.



Soldiers Train Alongside of the Thai Army

Troops Support U.S. Pacific Command's Cobra Gold Training Exercise

Story by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Headquarters, 42nd Infantry Division

PHITSANULOK, Thailand - Approximately 275 Soldiers and Airmen from the New York National Guard deployed to Thailand this winter, departing from armories across the state on Jan. 29.

The overseas troop deployment supported the U.S. Pacific Command Cobra Gold 2009 training exercise in Thailand alongside members of the Thai army.



The annual exercise brought together forces from the United States and Pacific Rim nations to train together for combat operations, military planning, humanitarian assistance or disaster response missions and civil affairs operations.

Cobra Gold 2009 included service members from the active, Reserve, and Guard components of the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps to work with their Thai army counterparts. The main focus was to maximize Joint and Combined Operations in order to develop and enhance interoperability and capabilities of military forces.

This deployment for the New York National Guard also marked 26 years that the Kingdom of Thailand has hosted Cobra Gold. The exercise is important to maintaining military to military relations with forces in the Pacific Rim region.



Bon appétit! From left to right, Specialists Raymond Schmitz, Philip Trossbach, Matthew Medina (back row) and Sgt. Raymond Moldonado (holding the bamboo) sample grubs, cockroaches and crickets during survival training. The Soldiers are from Company C, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry. Courtesy photo.

While Cobra Gold is a military training exercise, it provided unique opportunities for service men and women from the U.S. to work with neighbors and allies in Asia to develop friendships that improve understanding beyond military operations.

"This kind of training really strengthens the camaraderie for when we may have to do any joint exercises with them," Capt. Frank Washburn said during training. "It's always nice to have these guys on the same page as our military."

The task force included elements from across the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph Biehler. The 2-108th Infantry, based in Utica, N.Y. also led elements of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry from New York's Hudson Valley and the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry from Buffalo, N.Y.

Cobra Gold training included small unit tactics, live fire exercises, communications and employing close air support and artillery fires; land navigation and reacting to combat scenarios such as ambushes and Improvised Explosive Devices.

Soldiers from the Thai army also instructed their U.S. guests in hand-to-hand combat and jungle survival skills. The New York National Guard infantry Soldiers, known and respected for their effectiveness and use of technology, in-turn demonstrated several emerging weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicle systems.

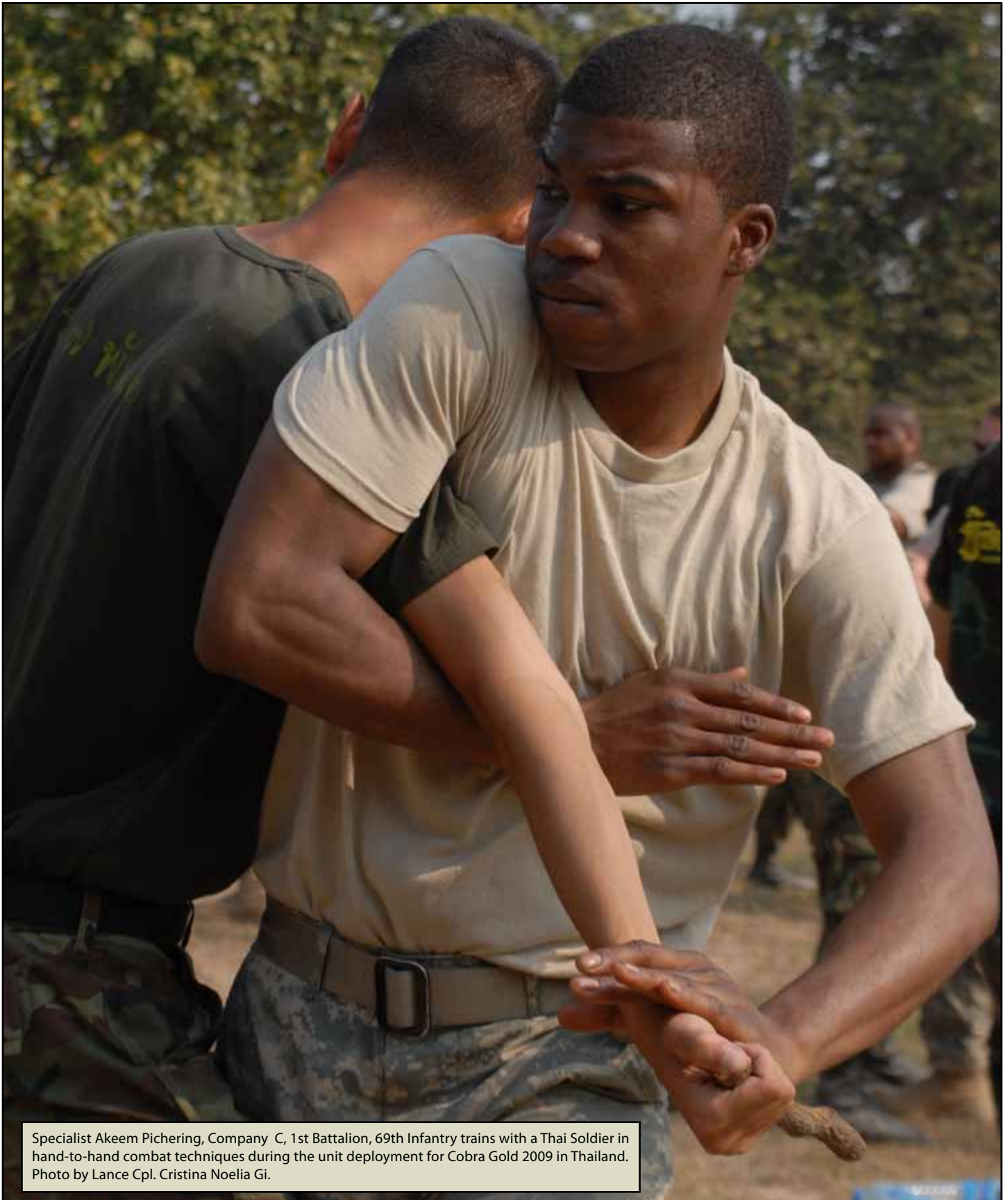
In the end, Cobra Gold shared military knowledge and cultural understanding among the two forces.

"We get to work with another army across the world and we get something out of it to take home," Spec. Terry Mitchell said during the survival training.

The unit returned home to New York on the 22nd of February. **gt**



Sergeant Sayantiamme Suwat, Royal Thai Army, and New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. John T. Snyder, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Battalion, plot coordinates during a call for fire exercise Feb. 5. During Cobra Gold 2009, Thai and U.S. Soldiers are working side-by-side conducting squad-level training. Photo by Lance Cpl. Cristina Noelia Gil.



Specialist Akeem Pichering, Company C, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry trains with a Thai Soldier in hand-to-hand combat techniques during the unit deployment for Cobra Gold 2009 in Thailand. Photo by Lance Cpl. Cristina Noelia Gi.

53rd Army Liaison Team Back in Iraq

Army Guard Liaison Team First in State Tapped for Second Deployment

Guard Times Staff

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The 53rd Army Liaison Team is back in Iraq. After mobilizing

on Feb. 21 for the small unit's second deployment to that country, the 26 Soldiers - including nine who deployed with the 53rd once before, reached Baghdad in April.

The 53rd Army Liaison Team deployed to Baghdad in 2004-05 and conducted a similar mission as the Iraqi army first organized during the country's first national election and constitutional referendum vote.

The team's role is to ensure that different unit headquarters understands the missions and intentions of other forces that work with the United States Army. The 53rd Army Liaison Team will be an interface between the Iraqi army and the American led-Multinational Forces in Iraq.

The unit is based in what was formerly called the International Zone or Green Zone, where Iraqi government ministries are located. The team is also expected to have elements in Camp Victory, the

massive operations base near Baghdad International Airport which serves as headquarters for the Multinational Corps in Iraq.

The Soldiers will be on federal active duty for 12 months. They are expected to spend about 10 months in Iraq.

The 53rd Army Liaison Team is a small unit that has one of the most storied lineages in the National Guard; in fact one of the unit's ancestors gave the name National Guard to what was once known as the militia.

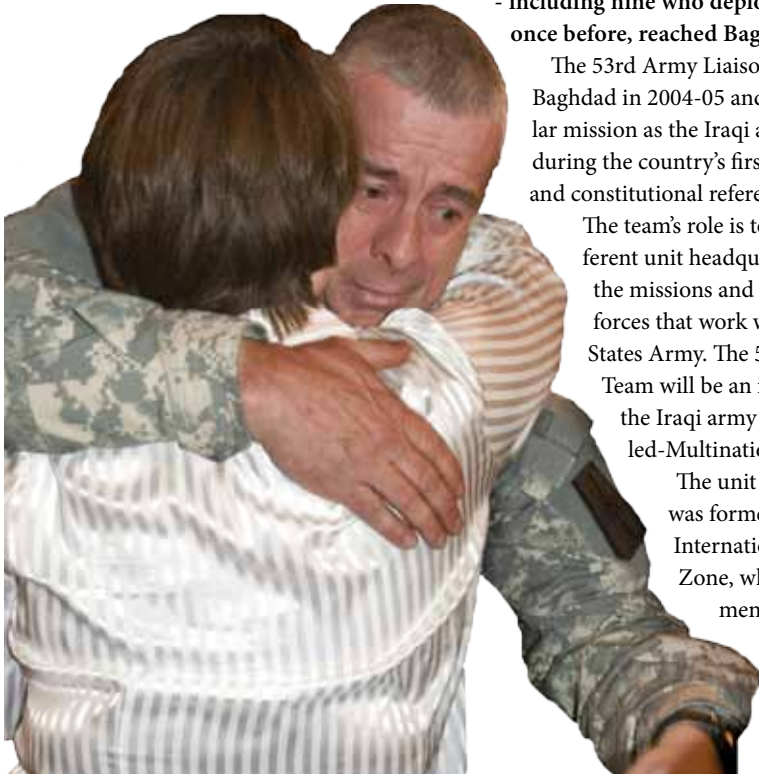
In 1825 the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment of Artillery assembled to welcome the Marquis de Lafayette, the French hero of the Revolutionary War, to the United States on what was to become a famous tour of the country. In the early days of the French Revolution, Lafayette had commanded a citizen's militia known as the "Gard Nationale de Paris." To honor Lafayette the unit decided to change its name to the American version, the National Guard. Lafayette left his carriage and shook hands with every member of the unit.

The name stuck, and by the end of the 19th Century most militia units were calling themselves the National Guard, a change which was made official in 1903.

This artillery battalion was later reorganized as infantry and became New York's 7th Regiment, and under that name participated in the Civil War. In World War I its name was changed to the 107th Infantry Regiment.

Eventually the unit deactivated in 1993 and the lineage transferred to the 107th Support Group, responsible for providing combat support to fighting units. In 2006 a further reorganization of the National Guard resulted in the consolidation of this historic unit into the 53rd Army Liaison Team. **gt**

Top photo, Sgt. Maj. Randy Ross of the 53rd Army Forces Liaison Detachment says farewell to his wife Rose during a departure ceremony Feb. 21 in New York City. At left, Lt. Col. Gary Machina, center right, speaks with N.Y. Army National Guard Chief of Staff Col. James Lettko at Fort Dix, N.J. during a predeployment sendoff March 23. The deployment marks the second mobilization to Iraq for the unit. Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.





New York State Aviation Officer Col. Michael Bobeck addresses friends and family of the Operational Support Airlift Command Detachment 20, March 13.

Aviation Detachment Wheels Up for Deployment

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Headquarters.3

LATHAM - Soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan will be safer thanks to the efforts of ten New York Army National Guard Aviators from Operational Support Airlift Detachment 20.

The flying unit will conduct aerial reconnaissance to better detect the presence of Improvised Explosive Devices.

The ten Soldiers, including some warrant officers who came out of retirement for this mission, deployed for their year-long mission on March 13.

As part of the detachment's preparation for deployment, four of the aviation Soldiers got a taste of high-altitude flying on Feb. 25.

The Afghan-bound members of Detachment 20, Operational Support Airlift, conducted mandatory high-altitude oxygen chamber training at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. The Soldiers must be able to recognize the symptoms of hypoxia, or oxygen starvation, in themselves and others in order to undertake the mission, said Chief Warrant Officer Kent Wagner, the commander of the deploying detachment.

Sergeant First Class Mike Judge, Sgt. 1st Class Tarek Warner, Staff Sgt. Scott Leslie, and Spc. Brad Provost, made it through the training with flying colors.

The active duty Air Force trainers first let the

Soldiers experience the feel of flying without an oxygen mask at 8,000 feet, by lowering the pressure in the oxygen chamber. Then they "flew" to 25,000 feet and repeated the exercise again.

The Soldiers then removed their oxygen mask at each altitude and performed tasks so they could recognize the symptoms of oxygen deprivation.

The flight detachment normally operates the fixed-wing, turbo-prop, C-12 aircraft to ferry VIPs and Guard personnel around the country.

The C-12 aircraft for the unit deployment are specifically fitted with high-tech instruments for Task Force ODIN.

The acronym ODIN derives from "observe, detect, identify and neutralize". The Army put the ODIN concept together in 2006 at Fort Hood, Texas and was sent to Iraq later that year to tackle the problem of roadside explosions, which had become the main method of attacking military personnel and truck convoys.

ODIN began with a small, sensor-carrying civilian aircraft, the Beech C-12, and a network of unmanned surveillance vehicles equipped with night-vision, infrared and full-motion video. This entire network of surveillance equipment was linked to infantry units and Apache attack helicopters armed with missiles and machine guns.

Detachment 20 joined a company-sized C-12 aviation unit at Fort Benning, Ga. for their initial training cycle in order to get proficiency training on a modernized combat version of the C-12. **gt**



Sergeant First Class Michael Judge gets a "whiff" of reality getting to his "rescue" tank of air while experiencing high altitude low pressure in the pressure chamber during mandatory high-altitude training at Andrews Air Force Base, Md. on Feb. 25.

133rd Quartermaster Company Back in Brooklyn



Approximately 130 members of the 133rd Quartermaster Company returned to home station at Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn on Feb. 29 after their successful year-long support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 133rd provided logistical support for coalition forces in Iraq with approximately one-third of the unit personnel trained as petroleum supply or water treatment specialists. Above: Sergeant Janine Negron embraces her son Jimmy Negron. Photo by Spc. Errol Cadet.

4th Finance Det. *Back Home from Afghanistan* 2516

Guard Times Staff

WHITESTONE ARMORY, Queens - Approximately two dozen New York Army National Guardsmen from the 4th Finance Detachment got their boots back on the ground here Jan. 30. after serving a ten-month tour-of-duty in Bagram, Afghanistan.

The Finance Soldiers were responsible for providing general finance support while attached to the 101st Airborne Division.

The finance Soldiers conducted extensive predeployment training in Feb. 2008 at Camp Atterbury, Ind. and then Fort McCoy, Wis. before deploying overseas.

While supporting the 101st Airborne Division, the New York Finance Soldiers were instrumental in many facets of day-to-day combat operations.

The Soldiers supported many combat convoys and airlifts to remote combat outposts and forward operating bases to get money to Soldiers stationed there, Sgt. Mark Gonzales said. They also dispersed funds to Civil Affairs units in order to ensure local Afghans were paid for special joint U.S.-Afghan community projects.

During their tour, the 4th dispersed more than 20 million dollars. **gt**



At right, a New York Army National Guard Soldier from the 4th Finance Detachment steps off the bus during the unit homecoming in Queens Jan. 30. Above: Spc. Marisol Sierra-Mateo is affectionately greeted by her husband, Spc. Edwin Mateo. Photos by Spc. Errol Cadet.



Leader of the Band



ALBANY - New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer Mark Kimes, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division Band, guest conducts the United States Army Field Band Saturday, March 7 at the Hart Theater, Empire State Plaza for the Performing Arts.

The field band performed across New York State this month as part of their spring 2009 tour. Kimes commands the Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Band, based at Camp Smith, N.Y. near Peekskill with approximately 50 Citizen Soldier musicians.

Photo by Robert McIver, Courtesy U.S. Army Band

Funeral Farewells for Fellow Army Guard Soldiers

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Headquarters, 42nd Infantry Division

CALVERTON NATIONAL CEMETERY – The New York Army National Guard Military Forces Honor Guard rendered final military honors to Sergeants Jonathan Keller and Jerry Johnson here on Long Island Feb. 2 and April 13,

Both Soldiers served with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment. Both mobilized for overseas service. Keller was a wounded veteran of the deployment to Afghanistan.

Keller, 29, from Wading River, died Jan. 24 at Fort Bragg, N.C. at Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C. where he was rehabilitating from wounds received in April 2008 during combat actions in Afghanistan.

“Words can’t describe how great of a person he is,” Spec. Jason Hwang, Keller’s former team leader from Afghanistan, said. Hwang was present with Keller in Afghanistan during the combat action where Keller received his wound.

“He was my Soldier,” Hwang said. “Not only that, he was a very good friend of mine and I would have taken that bullet for him any day. I would have done anything I could have done to change all this.”

At the time of his death, Keller was assigned to the Army’s Warrior Transition Unit following wounds received in Afghanistan. His death remains under investigation.

Keller had almost five years of military service, first enlisting in the U.S. Navy and later serving as an infantryman with the New York Army National Guard.

“He just had an infectious smile,” said Spc. Ethan Garran, another fellow Soldier from the Afghan mission.

“Jonathan was a special guy. Warrior, leader, great Soldier,” Lt. Louis Delli Pizzi told local news reporters following the funeral mass in Wading River, Long Island on Feb. 2.

“That’s how he lived,” Delli Pizzi said. “He’s going to be remembered in the Fighting 69th for how he lived.”

Sgt. Jerry Johnson collapsed and died April 1 at the Fort Bragg Warrior Transition Unit. Johnson, 46, from Manhattan, was a logistics specialist from Company F, 427th Brigade Support Battalion who mobilized in 2008. He had just over four years of service with the New York Army National Guard, with an additional five years of service in the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army Reserve.

He sustained injuries at Fort Bragg prior to overseas deployment and was recovering at the Warrior Transition Unit.

Johnson was also buried with full military honors. Dozens of fellow Soldiers, including his battalion commander and deputy division commander attended the funeral service. **gt**



With fellow Soldiers and leaders of the New York Army National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment and 42nd Infantry Division present for a final tribute, members of the New York State Military Forces Honor Guard render honors to Sgt. Jonathan Keller at Calverton National Cemetery, Feb. 2. Keller, a Soldier from Wading River, N.Y., served in the Army National Guard’s 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployment to Afghanistan in 2008. Keller, 29, died Jan. 24 at Fort Bragg, N.C. at Womack Army Medical Center in Fort Bragg, N.C. where he was rehabilitating from wounds received in April 2008 during combat actions in Afghanistan. The New York Army National Guard provided the same final tribute to Sgt. Jerry Johnson, buried here on April 13.

NY Welcomes Latest Army Guard Warrant Officers

Newest Officers Receive their Warrant Officer Commission

By Chief Warrant Officer Harry McDonough, Joint Force Headquarters

FORT RUCKER, Ala. - The best kept secret in the New York Army National Guard is less of a secret these days. With the six most recent graduates of the Army's Warrant Officer Qualification course, more current members of the Army Guard are pursuing new career opportunities available to enlisted Soldiers.

The six newest Non-Commissioned Officers to graduate from the Army Warrant Officer Candidate (WOC) Course on March 17 selected their class name as the Razorbacks and class motto was "Rock hard, razor sharp!"

Five of the six graduates took their Oath of Office and received appointments as Warrant Officers with 64 of their Razorback classmates in a graduation ceremony conducted here at Fort Rucker, Ala. The five New Yorkers, Renee DeRouche from the Joint Forces Headquarters, Lance Geddis from the 42nd Infantry Division Special Troops Battalion, Lawrence Langley of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters, Brian McLeod from the 369th Sustainment Brigade Headquarters and Richard Pappert of the Headquarters Service Company of the 42nd Support Battalion all graduated on the Commandant's List. The new officers will now return to their units and apply their leadership and technical skills while they await attendance at their respective Warrant Officer basic courses.

One of the six new graduates, Staff Sgt. David Vetter from the Joint Forces Headquarters, although a successful graduate from the course will hold his Certificate of Eligibility for two years while he seeks a warrant officer position that will also allow him to remain in the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program.

The recent graduates began their new career paths after contacting Chief Warrant Officers Peter Padilla and Harry McDonough, the Warrant Officer Strength Managers. They work together to build a Soldier's Predetermination Packet that is submitted to the Army branch proponent for the military occupational specialty that Soldiers are best qualified for.

Upon approval of the branch personnel manager, a second packet is submitted for review by the New York Army National Guard's Federal



Newly pinned Warrant Officers take a pose with other New York Army National Guard attendees after their Warrant Officer Candidate Course graduation ceremony on March 17, 2009 at Fort Rucker, Ala. Front row Warrant Officer Strength Managers - Chief Warrant Officers 2 Harry McDonough and Peter Padilla. Back row: Warrant Officer Heather Langley, attending graduation of her husband, Warrant Officer Candidate Course graduates - SSG David Vetter, Warrant Officers Lawrence Langley, Lance Geddis, Command Chief Warrant Officer - Mario Collorafi, Director of Logistics, Col. Philip Pugliese, and new course graduates Warrant Officers Renee DeRouche, Brian McLeod and Richard Pappert. Photo by Ms. Maggie Dawn.

Recognition Board. The board meets once a month to determine if eligible Soldiers meet all the requirements to become a warrant officer.

Each of the five newly appointed warrant officers was selected to fill a specific unit vacancy. Upon approval of the board, the military personnel office then generates an appointment order to reassign each Soldier to their new warrant officer position.

If a vacancy is not yet identified or currently available, such as with Vetter, the board can approve a Certificate of Eligibility. Once appointed or receiving the certificate, new Warrant Officer Candidates (WOCs) then enroll and pursue completion of the WOC course. The course is completed in one of two ways. Soldiers attend the active duty school at Fort Rucker for five weeks, like these recent graduates or seven weeks of training if the eligible Soldier is a Specialist or Sergeant, who has not yet completed their primary leader develop-

ment or warrior leader course). The second option is attending a WOC course conducted by one of the northeast's Regional Training Institutes (RTI) in Penn., Mass., Conn. or N.H. The RTI program requires WOC's to meet the same high standards as the active duty school, but through attendance of one drill weekend a month over five months, culminating with a two week annual training course.

The candidates were required to prepare physically and mentally for the "right of passage" course that tested their physical conditioning, military skills and leadership. The course is demanding, but so far every New York Army National Guard Soldier enrolled has successfully completed the course.

For more information contact one of the Warrant Officer Strength Managers or visit the N.Y. Army National Guard warrant officer website site on AKO at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/562245>. **gt**

Mother, Son Duo Share National Guard Careers

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM - It started off as another phone call from mom to her trainee son at Fort Jackson, S.C. back in 2006.

Then, New York Army National Guardsman Spc. Justin Van Deusen got the shock of his life. Not only was his mother Juanita Locke there at Fort Jackson; but she was there to start basic training. Four months after he enlisted, she decided to follow her son into the Army National Guard.

"I was coming back from pass and got a phone call from her. I'm sitting with all my friends and had my phone on speaker phone, and we were all kind of in shock," the 19-year old Van Deusen recalled.

"He was quite surprised when I told him I was there, I'm going through basic training," Locke, age 37 said.

Now mom was just another Soldier.

But Fort Jackson's drill sergeants did let Recruit Juniata Locke take time off to watch her son graduate from Advanced Individual Training.

Today, three years later, mother and son share a military bond, as well as the tight relationship they've always had.

Specialist Juanita Locke is an administrative specialist with the Joint Forces Headquarters Military Personnel Office at the Watervliet Arsenal, and works full time as a technician. Spec. Justin Van Deusen is a traditional Guard member, the administrative specialist for Company C, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry in Gloversville.

Van Deusen, the father of a year-and-a-half old girl, joined the National Guard at 17 because he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. He found a purpose in the National Guard, he said.

Van Deusen deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Brigade Combat Team, where he started out working in the personnel section, moved to an Embedded Training Team and finished up manning a turret machine gun with the Security Force.

Juanita Locke had thought about joining the military when she graduated high school in 1990. But Justin was a year old, and she couldn't leave him. Her military dreams went on hold.

But when Justin joined the National Guard at age 17, there was no reason to put her military dream on hold any longer.

"He was my big decision for not joining the military in high school and my big decision for joining the military now," Locke said. "He had joined the military so I had nothing stopping me."

For Locke, who joined at age 35, basic training was tough at first.

"My first week of basic training was torture. I hated it. It was the worst week of my life. But then you learn to realize that it is just their way of beating you down to bring you back up," Locke said. Joining the National Guard has energized her life, Locke said.

Since signing up she's turned the Guard into a full-time job, started taking college courses, and purchased a house in Gloversville. Justin and his girlfriend are moving in below her.

"I love it. I love my job," Locke said.

Occasionally, though, Spc. Van Deusen, who has more time in grade than Spc. Locke, will try to lord it over her a bit.

"He always tells me that I out rank you, so I can make you do push-ups," Locke said. "But I always have the last say in that. Since I'm his mother I will out rank him no matter what. He'll never out rank me." **gt**

"He always tells me that I out rank you, so I can make you do push-ups. Since I'm his mother, I will out rank him no matter what. He'll never out rank me."

-- Specialist Juanita Locke, mother of Spc. Justin van Deusen



Specialist Juanita Locke (left), mother of Spc. Justin Van Deusen meet in front of the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. on March 11. Locke is an administrative specialist with the Joint Forces Headquarters Military Personnel Office. Van Deusen is a traditional Guard member with Company C, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry in Gloversville. Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, *Guard Times Staff*.

Local Hero Finds New Freedom on the Slopes

By Katie Moshier, STRIDE Adaptive Sports
RENSSELEAR – New York Army National Guard Spc. Kevin Miller, Jr. joined some fourteen other Wounded Warriors for a reception Feb. 27 as a prelude to a weekend of rehabilitative snowsports at the Jiminy Peak Ski Resort. The dinner celebration for the Soldiers was part of the Stride Adaptive Sports snowsports event on Feb. 28 and March 1.

Less than seven months prior Miller was near death, in a coma at Walter Reed Army Hospital with a 15% chance of survival after toxic poisoning while deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Now recovering at home in New York, Miller benefited from a weekend rehabilitation and recreation with skiing as part of the STRIDE Adaptive Sports support of wounded veterans.

STRIDE Adaptive Sports is a volunteer non-profit organization providing over 3,600 adaptive sport and recreation lessons annually to children and individuals with special needs. STRIDE has over 200 skilled volunteer sport instructors, serving over 925 families; and offers free programs in sixteen different sports and locations.

Miller, a single father from Johnsonville, N.Y., was one of STRIDE's fifteen Wounded Warriors who visited Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort in Hancock, Mass. to take part in an adaptive snow sports program, rehabilitating their lives through adaptive sports.

STRIDE instructors, Wynn Englisbe and Eric Alberti fitted Miller for a dual-ski (a seated device for mobility-impaired skiers) and he independently negotiated the beginner ski trails after only a few runs.

Modeling for him was retired U.S. Army Captain Will Reynolds III, a returning participant and mono-skier (also a seated ski device) from STRIDE's 2008 Wounded Warrior event.

Since 1985, STRIDE has enriched the lives of children and individuals with disabilities by providing adaptive sports opportunities. The most recent endeavor has been a partnership with Wounded Warrior Project to provide sports opportunities for injured Soldiers and Marines home from combat deployments.

As a part of the Wounded Warrior Snowsports event, Miller and Spc. Erik Tirado of Am-



Specialist Kevin Miller is locked and cocked in a dual-ski ready to head down the slope at Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort, Hancock, Mass. on Feb. 27. Behind Miller are Capt. Ryan Walsh (right) and Eric Alberti, STRIDE Program ski instructor.

sterdam, N.Y. also visited Christian Brothers Academy in Albany as mentors for the cadets considering service in the military. The Soldiers lectured about their reasons for joining and their continued commitment to serving those in their own communities.

Miller planned to return to the slopes of Jiminy Peak March 14th as a racer in STRIDE's "Great Race," held at the end of every ski season

to offer an opportunity for all STRIDE athletes to race to the finish line.

STRIDE, headquartered in East Greenbush, N.Y., is completely funded by donations, grants and special gifts. Most programs are cost-free for participants. STRIDE is an official U.S. Paralympic Sport Camp and provider for Wounded Warriors. More information is available at www.stride.org. **gt**

Passing the Guidon of Leadership



Lieutenant Colonel Deborah J. Foley (right), commander, 56th Personnel Services Battalion, passes the 466th Area Medical Company guidon to Maj. Edward C. Bonk (left), incoming commander for the 466th Area Support Medical Company during the unit change of command ceremony held March 7 at the unit's Glens Falls armory. Photo by Sgt. Thomas Wheeler.

Proficient in Two Armies

Warrant Officers Awarded for Achieving Excellence

By Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, HQ, 42nd Infantry Division
FORT GORDON, Ala. -- Warrant Officer Douglas Sherman, the Avionics Platoon Leader with Company B, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y., recently graduated from his Warrant Officer Basic Course with more than the standard certificate of training. Sherman returns to New York with the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.

Sherman completed his Electronics Maintenance Technician Warrant Officer Basic Course at Fort Gordon, Ga. in April 8 after 19 weeks of ordnance corps training, split between the Redstone Arsenal in Ala. and Fort Gordon.

"During my entrance into Phase 2, my class was introduced to the German Army Liaison Team here at Fort Gordon," Sherman explained. "We were introduced to Sgt. Maj. Marcus S. Petrack who gave a thorough explanation of the requirements to qualify for the Bronze, Silver or Gold German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge."

In the United States military, the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency is one of the few approved foreign awards, and is one of the most sought after awards to achieve.

There are six requirements for Soldiers to complete to earn the award.

First, Soldiers must be recommended for consideration by their unit chain of command to highlight the Soldier's physical and moral fitness.

There is a First Aid written test administered to all candidates that are not CLS qualified within the past fiscal year.

The next mandatory requirement is a 200 meter swim qualification, usually completed at the beginning of the qualification.

A German sports test assesses a candidate's overall fitness. It includes run, sprint, long jump, high jump, shot put or stone throw categories, all graded respective of a candidate's age.

Weapons marksmanship also determines qualification for the Gold, Silver or Bronze qualification.



Warrant Officers Brian Sherman and Derick Wambach come up to their finish of the 20-kilometer ruck march on Jan. 29. The two Soldiers completed the march in 2 hours and 52 minutes to qualify for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge at Fort Gordon, Ga. Courtesy photo.



Warrant Officer Brian Sherman, at center, and Warrant Officer Derick Wambach from the Wyoming National Guard speak with German Army Liaison Lt. Col. Lothar Lange at the finish line of the 20-kilometer ruck march on Jan. 29. Courtesy photo.

The two events that determine the Gold, Silver or Bronze are the 9 mm pistol marksmanship qualification and the road march distance and time score.

"Usually the 9 mm pistol is the hardest event for Soldiers to attain Gold," Sherman said.

"Once you have earned the right to claim Gold, Silver or Bronze with the pistol, then generally individuals will select the distance in their age category for the ruck march."

Sherman completed his 20-kilometer road march on January 29, finishing in 2 hours, 52 minutes to achieve the Gold rating for his German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.

Sgt. Maj. Petrack, the German Army Liaison NCO from the Federal Republic of Germany Bundeswehr, supervised the scoring of all the events for the Soldiers.

"Out of my class of 12 warrant officers, five Soldiers partook of the event," Sherman said. "Four were members of the Army National Guard and one Soldier is currently Regular Army."

"I found it to be a great opportunity to take on some physical challenges along with the friendships and teamwork that is derived from wanting to see your peers succeed," Sherman said. **gt**

Warrant Officer Brian Sherman tosses a 16 pound shotput for 28 feet during his qualifications for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge at Fort Gordon, Ga. Courtesy photo.



Filming Task Force Phoenix

Documentary Tells 'Untold' Story of Embedded Trainers in Afghanistan

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning, Headquarters, 27th Brigade Combat Team

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO – An award winning journalist embedded with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII in 2008 stopped in Buffalo, March 9 to screen his first documentary film.

The independent production “At War” was presented to the public at the University of Buffalo’s North Campus Arts Building before a small but appreciative audience. The university’s Media Studies Program hosted and co-sponsored the event along with the Military Association of New York and the military blog site “bouhammer.com.”

The 113-minute film comes on like “high art” with a gritty edge that captures viewers rather than just appealing to them. The audience becomes immersed in the dust and the drama that is the combat zone of Afghanistan. Action scenes put viewers at the shoulders of U.S. and Canadian troops as they take and return fire, toss grenades and rush through narrow paths.

Intimate scenes offer poignant and raw portraits of mentors and their Afghan charges. “At War” delivers aspects of Afghan culture, the conditions of poverty and ignorance and the near-daily life and death situations where Soldiers must make the “quick call” and hope that it is the right one later. “At War” captures the confusion and frustration felt by its participants, as well as the energy and adrenalin.

At times both startling and confusing, “At War” brings uncommon film realism that military, veteran and civilians can relate to. “At War” is circulating the country at small venues and is the collaborative effort of a first-time photo journalist and a Pulitzer award-winning combat correspondent and author. Scott Kesterson did an about turn in his life at the age of 41 to follow a life-long ambition and re-made himself into a seasoned combat photographer and reporter with help and guidance from David Leeson who became the cinematographer’s mentor, editor, creative director and producer. Some of Kesterson’s “At War”



Posing with Pulitzer award winning combat photographer Scott Kesterson (center) are New York Army National Guard 1st Sgt. Troy Steward (left) and Catherine Anderson of the media studies department at the University of Buffalo. Kesterson’s documentary film “At War” screened at SUNY Buffalo on March 9.

combat scenes were used in a PBS Frontline documentary and won him an Emmy Award in 2007.

Kesterson embedded with the Oregon National Guard’s 41st Brigade Combat Team in 2006, spending 15 months with Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix V. He was introduced to National Guard Embedded Training Teams

that support the Afghan National Army. “At War” pays tribute to unsung Guard mentors, operating from remote sites under challenging, austere and dangerous conditions to help form an army at the grass roots level to face off the Taliban and al Qaeda.

The 27th Brigade’s 1st Sgt. Troy Steward from Buffalo served as the non-commissioned officer in charge of an embedded training team and hosted Kesterson in 2006. Steward runs the military blog site bouhammer.com. Steward’s son Jon, also a Guardsman, deployed with the 27th Inf. Brigade Combat Team to Afghanistan in 2008.

Kesterson returned to Afghanistan to embed with mentors and trainers of the 27th Brigade during its deployment.

To view samples of “At War” and for information about Kesterson, go to www.atwarfilm.com. **gt**

Overseas Soldier Our Newest National Citizen



BAGHDAD, Iraq – New York Army National Guard Spc. Roberto R. Wells, a member of the 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, takes his oath of U.S. citizenship during a naturalization ceremony at Al-Faw Palace March 3. The naturalization ceremony was the final step for 251 Servicemembers to become citizens of the United States. Wells is a native of Trinidad and Tobago and has served in the New York Army National Guard for the past three years. The participants were originally citizens of more than 60 countries, including 10 from Iraq. Joining Wells as America’s newest citizens from the deployed battalion were Sgt. Daniel J. Sherwin of Canada and Sgt. Norberto M. Reyes from the Dominican Republic. Photo by Pvt. 1st Class Jasmine N. Walthall.



Specialist Maria Romeo (right) and Sgt. Crystal Wilson, 42nd Infantry Division, intelligence analysts prepare for their joint training at the Joint Intelligence Combat Training Center, Fort Huachuca, Ariz., as Chief Warrant Jonathan Molik looks on and advises.

Intel Troops Train for Wartime Tasks

Story and photo by Sgt. Chris Connelly, Headquarters, 42nd Infantry Division

TROY - Behind closed doors, the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division G-2 Intelligence Analysts prepare for real world contingency operations.

Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division Intelligence community, known in military terms as G2, deployed March 18 to Fort Huachuca, Ariz. to train at the Joint Intelligence Combat Training Center (JICTC).

The exercise included Soldiers from the intelligence sections of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters based in Troy, N.Y., the division's tactical command posts on Staten Island and Buffalo, N.Y. and intelligence Soldiers from the Mass. Army National Guard.

The training exercise simulated division intelligence operations by employing real-world events and scenarios from recent combat actions overseas. While many of the systems and technologies used to collect intelligence data remains classified, the training and skills for intelligence analysis for the Soldiers is not.

For the exercise, the analysts and intelligence staff responded to actual battlefield data gathered in 2006 from Army operations in Iraq.

"I think it is exciting because we get real world training rather than the normal classroom training," Spec. Maria Romeo said. Ro-

meo is a division intelligence analyst from the South Lake Armory in Troy, N.Y.

The JICTC battle staff exercise in March was called Exercise Eagle 2. It included students from across the Army Intelligence community — new lieutenants, seasoned captains, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and new Soldiers just learning their intelligence craft — into one large multi-echelon exercise.

Soldiers like Romeo were eager to participate in the training because it prepares them for the possible day when their skills are called on for real.

"I have been in for three years now and if I had to re-enlist today I would because I love what I am doing," Romeo said.

The training isn't just new to young recruits but also for Soldiers like Warrant Officer Jonathan Molik, a 42nd Infantry Division All Sources Intelligence Technician with 11 years of service, including prior enlisted time.

Part of Molik's leadership experience sees the Soldiers that were once young privates and now serving as Non-Commissioned Officers step up and show what they can do.

"I am very excited to see the influx of these new Soldiers step up to the plate since 9-11 in a real world scenario," Molik said. **gt**

Maintenance Job Keeps Trucks Up

Story and photo by Pvt. 1st Class Jasmine N. Walthall Task Force 449

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – For members of the New York Army National Guard's Company E, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, their maintenance job begins well before helicopters ever take to the air.

Company E is made up of heavy and light equipment mechanics, refuelers, generator mechanics and suppliers. The mechanics faced quite a challenge upon arrival in Iraq last fall with the aviation battalion. They were tasked to completely rebuild and repair all of the vehicles in the motor pool.

"It was a big job," says Spc. Luis A. Lopez, 3-142nd heavy construction equipment mechanic, "but we all pulled together and got the motor pool up and in working order."

The mechanics also perform preventative maintenance checks and services on the vehicles to ensure they continue to work properly and maintain the mission.

"We are a crucial part of the refueling mission," said Sgt. Darryl K. Joseph, 3-142 light equipment mechanic from Brooklyn. "The vehicles that fuel aircraft may need repair in the middle of the night, and if they are not fixed right away, the mission is impacted. It's our job to make sure that does not happen."

"I learned how to drive heavy equipment vehicles in AIT," said Lopez. "So when I started my job, I was prepared to not only drive the vehicles, but fix them as well." **gt**



New York Army National Guard Sgt. Darryl Joseph, a light equipment mechanic, checks a transmission belt on a Humvee for rips and tears at Camp Striker, Baghdad, Iraq, Jan. 27.



Rainbow Troops Train in Warrior, Leader Tasks

FORT PICKETT, Va. -- Sergeant Justin Leslie from the 42nd Infantry Division Special Troops Battalion (above) almost makes it across a water obstacle during leader reaction course training at Fort Pickett, Va. on March 6. Approximately 300 "Rainbow Division" Soldiers from the division's headquarters company, tactical command posts and network signal company travelled to the Fort Pickett training areas to conduct weapons qualification along with individual and section training where recent heavy snows made the terrain very familiar to the New York Soldiers. Courtesy photo. Below, New York Army National Guard Soldiers Maj. Henry Pettit, right, and Capt. Todd Balog conduct 9mm pistol qualification training here March 5. Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg.



'Fighting 69th' Welcomes Vets on St. Patrick's Day

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Headquarters, 42nd Infantry Division

NEW YORK – Members of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, the Army's legendary "Fighting 69th" extended an invitation statewide to combat veterans of the 27th Brigade Combat Team to join them in their welcome home of more than 300 veteran Soldiers back from Afghanistan.

During the early morning mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral the battalion received a special blessing for the regiment and its fallen heroes from Operation Enduring Freedom. Following the city parade and a reserved subway ride back to the unit armory on Lexington Avenue, more than 1,000 Soldiers, family members and veterans gathered to honor the combat troops.

For more than six generations, Citizen Soldiers from the 69th Infantry led the city celebration of Saint Patrick's Day.

"It's about preserving our heritage and celebrating our traditions," said Lt. Col. John Andonie, the battalion commander.

"At the core, today we are all Irish. And for 158 years, we've been a symbol of Irish strength and Irish tradition," Andonie said in remarks to the unit.

The combat veterans served overseas with the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, providing training and mentoring for the Afghan National Army and police forces.

Part of the unit's ceremony is to celebrate the unique service and contributions of the "Fighting 69th" in American history, explained Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, The Adjutant General for New York State's military forces. The contribution of these Soldiers in this era will not be lost to history, he said.

"Years from now they will talk about this time," Taluto said. "And they will talk about you."

The 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry served in the Civil War as part of the Irish Brigade. The regiment's Civil War era battle cry was "Fág an Bealach," which is Irish Gaelic for "Clear the Way."

In World War I the 69th fought in France as part of the 42nd Infantry Division, the "Rainbow Division." In World War II, the regiment mobilized with the New York National Guard's



Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry celebrate Saint Patrick's Day in Manhattan in leading the citywide parade up Fifth Avenue past Saint Patrick's Cathedral. The battalion celebration included the homecoming Freedom Salute for more than 300 recently returned veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

27th Infantry Division for service in the Pacific.

In 2004 the battalion mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit secured "Route Irish," the road from Baghdad International Airport. At one time, this road was termed the most dangerous in Iraq and the 1-69th turned that around in the summer of 2005.

"I served with you in Iraq and recall vividly travelling on Route Irish (in Baghdad) where the Fighting 69th had again 'cleared the way,'" said Gen. Martin Dempsey, Commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), in his keynote address.

"Rededicate yourselves to your great legacy," Dempsey said. "When my career is done I'll be proud to say that I served with the Fighting 69th."

The ceremony included Soldier and family volunteer recognitions, part of the National Guard's Freedom Salute program. Celebrating the Soldiers return home was Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band, performing for the group until the early evening.

Dempsey concluded his remarks in a manner fitting for the day. With a thousand Soldiers and families clapping and singing along, Dempsey sang verses of the regimental marching tune, Garryowen. The 69th Infantry Regiment adopted the Irish drinking song before the Civil War.

"Our hearts so stout have got us fame, for soon 'tis known from whence we came, where'er we go they fear the name, of Garryowen in glory," Dempsey sang with the troops. **gt**



Command Sergeant Major Jorge Vasquez, senior enlisted Soldier from 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry presents the battalion colors inside Saint Patrick's Cathedral March 17 for the blessings for the battalion during the city's celebration of the Irish.

Helping Turn Soldiers Back into Citizens

By Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*



Air National Guard Tech Sgt. Shannon Pingitore, a member of Joint Forces Headquarters-New York Human Resources Directorate, provides Army National Guard Spec. Michael Anderson Jr. with information about full time employment opportunities in the National Guard during the New York Army National Guard Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program meeting at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Feb. 21. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo.

LATHAM - More than 2,000 27th Brigade Soldiers and families, worked through the stresses and joys of returning from combat at events held across the state in February, March and April.

At plush hotels in Rochester, Tarrytown and on the shores of Lake George, Soldiers and their families heard from experts about what to expect as they go through the phases of reintegrating back into civilian life, and got a chance to reconnect with each other.

For 1st Lt. Frank Washington, a member of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion, it was a chance to talk about his feelings of being left out of family decision making even though he was back home. His wife Alicia, meanwhile, had a chance to talk to other military families and find out that the challenges she faced at home were normal.

For Spc. Peter Phillips, coming home meant getting reacquainted with his fiancée Danielle Fry, who he's dated since high school.

"We've been together for seven years now, high school sweethearts, and then I leave for a year; you don't know where to start. You don't know exactly where you left off," Phillips said.

Coming Home to the New Normal

"Coming back together again isn't as easy as it sounds," said Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the Adjutant General and commander of the New York National Guard. "It's a joyful reunion, but the process of coming back together and being together again is not exactly as one might envision," he added.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program is supposed to help Soldiers fit back into their families, and back into their jobs, after serving

in a combat zone for a year.

With \$2.5 million in funding from National Guard Bureau, Soldiers and their families are invited to spend two weekends in nice hotels, learning about the services available to them, and some of the pitfalls of coming back together. There are sessions discussing suicide—a major issue for the Army now—alcohol abuse, dealing with the "new normal" after living apart for a year, and sit-downs with Veterans Affairs counselors. There's also information on job training, education, veterans services, and military educational opportunities.

"Prior to this, service members had to really seek out these services themselves," said Col. Curtis Williamson, the officer responsible for New York National Guard Family Programs.

The Soldier's year in Afghanistan or Iraq should shape their life, but not define it, said

Chaplain (Col.) Eric Olsen.

“We don’t want you to be stuck in Afghanistan or some other emotional place. We want you to come home,” he told Soldiers and their families in Rochester.

The 30-day and 60-day events the Army Guard organizes, which get their names because they take place at roughly that interval after homecoming, are great, but there’s more to Guard family programs, Taluto emphasized.

Serving Soldiers, Serving Families

The National Guard offers a full spectrum of services for families.

Professionally staffed Family Assistance Centers and Wing Family Coordinators are open to all members of the military and their families across the state. The professionals in these centers also stand ready to provide resources to unit Family Readiness Group volunteers.

The state also has professional Family Readiness Support Assistants who are ready to help

units work through family issues and training rear detachment personnel in their mission to support families while Soldiers are deployed. There are also experts on military family life and the Military One Source program, who are subject matter experts in the resources available to Soldiers, families and unit commanders.

“We have to take care of our families, just as we take care of our Soldiers,” Taluto said.

Battalion commanders are critical in making the Army Guard family system work, Taluto emphasized.

“The Army National Guard is demanding more of Soldiers and their families. When Soldiers deploy our families have to know that the unit is there for them. That means commanders have to create strong Family Readiness Groups and Rear Detachments need to be filled with smart NCOs and officers who can fix problems before they get worse,” Taluto said.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are going

to demand regular deployments of National Guard troops in the foreseeable future, and that means families have to be prepared for two or maybe three to four deployments in a long National Guard career, Taluto said.

“It’s vital that commanders take care of families or when a Soldier’s 20-year mark comes up, that veteran, that skilled, incredibly valuable Soldier is going to leave us if his family isn’t happy,” Taluto added. **gt**

“The Army National Guard is demanding more of Soldiers and their families. When Soldiers deploy our families have to know that the unit is there for them.”

-- Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, The Adjutant General



27th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers listen to Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto talk about reintegration during the downstate 30-Day Reintegration event held at the Tarrytown Marriott Hotel on Saturday, March 7. Photo by Spc. Errol Cadet.

Final Fight for F-16 Falcons

Syracuse Fighter Wing Takes on F-22 Raptors in Final Training Mission

Guard Times Staff

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. - The 174th Fighter Wing deployed six F-16C Fighting Falcons and just under 90 Airmen to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada on March 20. The Air National Guard force served as the opposing force in the Air Force's Weapons Instructor Course aerial combat training exercise, taking on the Air Force's most modern fighter, the F-22 Raptor, in aerial combat training.

This deployment of F-16s from Hancock Field was the last operational mission for the fighter wing before the unit transitions to the operation of the MQ-9 Reaper Unmanned Aerial Vehicle later this year.

The Airmen flew to Nellis AFB aboard a C-5A Galaxy transport aircraft piloted by the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh.

The Air Force Weapons School traces its roots to the Aircraft Gunnery School first established in 1949 at Las Vegas Air Force Base (which became Nellis Air Force Base in 1950). This organization brought together a cadre of World War II combat veterans dedicated to teaching the next generation of pilots. The Gunnery School converted to combat crew training to meet the needs of the Korean War. The school teaches graduate-level instructor courses and the world's most advanced training in weapons and tactics employment. **gt**



New York Air National Guard Master Sgt. Keith Fleurry gives the hold sign while Capt. Robbins comes to a stop in an F-16 at Nellis Air Force Base on March 23. Both individuals are part of the 174th Fighter Wing, Syracuse, N.Y.; they are on their last scheduled deployment supporting the Weapons Instructors course. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best.



An F-16 Falcon Fighter takes off from Nellis Air Force Base on March 24 for training as the opposing force at the Air Force Weapons School. The aircraft from the 174th Fighter Wing went up against the F-22 Raptor, the Air Force's most advanced fighter. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best.



New York Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Ed Peck, Staff Sgt Mack McMclowry, Senior Airmen Kyle Potter and Airman Cliff Lamb replace the engine of an F-16 March 24 while at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. The Airmen from the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse are on their last scheduled deployment as an F-16 unit. The wing is converting to the unmanned aerial vehicle, the MQ-9 Reaper. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best.



Photo at left, Tech. Sgt. David Kuchera and Senior Airman Brett DoBransky work on the wing of an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Nellis Air Force Base Nev. March 23. Both Airman are members of the 174th Fighter Wing, Syracuse, N.Y. and are with the unit for it's last scheduled deployment as an opposing force for Air Force Weapons School training against the F-22 Raptor. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best.

Air Force, Guard Leaders Assess Wing Conversion

Story and photo by Sr. Airman Peter Dean, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE BASE - In a show of service solidarity, the senior enlisted command chiefs from the Air National Guard, Air Mobility Command, Air Force Reserve Command and the New York Air National Guard converged on the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station on Feb. 12. The group came to see first hand the progress of the association between the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing and the Air Force Reserve's 914th Airlift Wing.

Due to recent Air Force reorganization, the New York Air National Guard's 107th Air Refueling Wing converted from KC-135s to C-130s. The decision included an association with Air Force Reserve's 914th Airlift Wing, the first association of its kind for the Air National Guard.

"You're going to be the textbook example of associations," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith from the Air National Guard.

Progress has been made, the senior leaders noted, but there are still hurdles to overcome.

"We've made great strides, but we still have many details to iron out," said Col. Patrick Givanan, Commander, 107th Airlift Wing. "This will work, it must," he added.

"I look forward to deploying with the 107th," said Col. Terry Lawrence, 914th Airlift Wing. I



Command Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Barron, Air Mobility Command, right, listens to comments and answers Airmen's questions during an informal luncheon Feb. 12. The command chief was one of four that recently visited the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

see the importance of doing it together," he said.

Junior enlisted personnel from the 107th and the 914th joined the command chiefs in an informal luncheon at the base dining hall. They shared with the command chiefs, comments and ideas about the association.

"We're going to get there together," Command Chief Master Sgt. Troy McIntosh, Air

Force Reserve Command said. "You're setting the stone work, tell us what you need."

The command chiefs spent the afternoon visiting different shops and squadrons.

"You're doing a great job," Command Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Barron from Air Mobility Command said. "Continue what you're doing, its working," he added. **gt**

Team Niagara Plays Game of Epic Proportions

Story and photo by Sr. Airman Peter Dean, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS - In what is dubbed the hockey game of the year, the Buffalo Sabres Alumni delivered a thrashing Team Niagara would not soon forget. On April 5, Team Niagara, composed of members from the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing and the Air Force Reserve's 914th Airlift Wing, experienced a once in a lifetime opportunity to play a charity game with local hockey icons.

"The good thing is they spend their time protecting the country, allowing us to practice and play," said Rob Ray, Buffalo Sabres Alumni. "We would prefer they be good at what they do off the ice and we'll take care of business on the ice."



More than 700 spectators with divided loyalty between fellow Airmen and their hometown hockey team packed into the Dwyer Arena at Niagara University for the game. All proceeds from ticket sales benefited the family support groups from both units. The groups use the money to send care packages to deployed Airmen, set up events and functions that ease the burden placed on families during deployments and events that promote overall morale on the base.

"We were very pleased with the turnout, said Jeanne Goetze, 107th Family Support Coordinator. "We raised a considerable amount of money," she added.

Following the game, the Sabres alumni received a tour of an aircraft hangar and a C-130 aircraft. Pilots, engineers and loadmasters were on hand to answer any questions. In turn the alumni returned the gesture and offered members and families' autographs and posed for photos.

"We can't thank the Sabres Alumni enough," said Col. James Atkinson, 107th AW Maintenance Group Commander. "This was a great experience for all involved," he added. **gt**

Service 'Above & Beyond'



107th Airlift Wing's Combat Arms Instructor Senior Airman Stephen J. Flateau, conducts an inventory of the units weaponry and accessories. Photo by Senior Airman Peter Dean.

Guard Times Staff

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION- The National Guard Bureau recognized a 107th Airlift Wing Airmen this February for service "Above and Beyond" the call of duty. The Guard selected Senior Airman Stephen Flateau for his volunteerism and can-do attitude from among nominees from all the National Guard's states and territories.

Following in his father's footsteps, 20-year-old Senior Airman Stephen Flateau joined the 107th Airlift Wing's Security Force Squadron in 2005. Not wanting to be overshadowed by his father, young Flateau set out to make a name for himself. Immediately upon returning home from basic training, he volunteered for flight line security duties at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

When the wing was in need of a Combat Arms Instructor, Flateau was off to Lackland Air Force Base to complete Combat Arms Training and Maintenance School. Flateau is currently the only full time Combat Arms

Instructor assigned to the wing. Flateau's experience and responsibilities surpass his rank and years. He is not only responsible for training and qualifying his fellow security force members, but also the entire base service personnel.

In his short career so far, Flateau volunteered for numerous deployments that include a detainee movement operation in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, flight line security in Moron, Spain and support to Operation Iraqi Freedom.


During a six month deployment to Sather Air Base in Iraq he was instrumental in safe and secure VIP movements of more than 1,000 visitors to or through Sather. These VIP's included former Vice President Dick Cheney, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and country singer Toby Keith.

In recognition of Flateau's dedication and exceptional performance, the 107th Airlift Wing awarded him Airman of the Half-Year and Airman of the Year in addition to his honors from the National Guard Bureau. **gt**

Airmen Receive Army Awards During Deployment

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, BAGHDAD, Iraq Many 107th Airlift Wing members have earned Air Force related awards, but only three have earned the distinction of being recognized by the Army. Senior Airman Derek Cutter, Master Sgt. Kenneth Devole and Staff Sgt. Ernest Covell (seen in photo from left to right during their deployment in August of 2008) were awarded Army Commendation Medals for their performance during a deployment to Iraq. While attached to the 447th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron the three Airmen transported more than 160 helium trailers throughout the Victory Base Complex to secured locations that housed Counter-Rocket, Artillery and Mortar (C-RAM) systems. The men and women on the Victory Base Complex rely on the C-RAM to provide around the clock protection against incoming and indirect fire. Helium is a vital component to the proper operation of the system. Courtesy photo.





PJs Practice Hanging Around

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Members of the New York Air National Guard's 103rd Rescue Squadron conduct a tree rescue exercise March 8. The goal is to prepare Pararescuemen in situations involving a parachutist landing in a tree. Staff Sgt. Mike Talbot (left) climbed the tree to rescue Senior Airman Raymond Santos (right), who acted as the stranded parachutist. Master Sgt. Joseph A. Spadavecchia instructed and supervised the Pararescuemen. Staff Sgt. Talbot's task was to reach the stranded parachutist to evaluate and, if necessary, apply medical treatment. Safety is the number one priority during a tree rescue maneuver in that the first step is to secure oneself as the rescuer. The second step is to secure the parachutist since the parachute might not be securely tangled in the tree. Finally, a line is attached to the parachutist before being lowered to the ground. Photo by Staff Sgt. David J. Murphy.

Homecoming from Iraq for 106 Rescue Wing



WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Offering from the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing Security Force Squadron, greets his girlfriend on Feb. 28, 2009, after returning from a six month deployment. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marcus P. Calliste.

BRATS Prepare for Basic Training

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia - Many soon-to-be Airmen show up at Basic Military Training (BMT) not sure what to expect of the demands training can put on new trainees. But those who join the 109th Airlift Wing have a little advantage when they show up at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, thanks to Stratton's Basic Recruits Attending Training, or BRATS program.

The Basic Recruits Attending Training at Stratton program began about 10 years ago when supervisors weren't sure what to do with incoming Airmen who had to wait to go to Basic Training. Throughout the years, the program has turned into a full-fledged flight that currently has more than 60 members – the most the program has ever had.

Now, more than ever, going to basic training prepared is essential. In Nov. 2008, Basic Military Training extended from six to 8 1/2 weeks, and now includes the BEAST, the Basic Expeditionary Airmen Skills Training. The course introduces Airmen to the joint expeditionary concept and immerses them in deployment scenarios.

Airman 1st Class Vincent Pricolo was the first 109th Airlift Wing member to experience the new training program.

"(BRATS) gave me more confidence going into basic training," he said. "There's things (during training) I had already learned -- I'm glad I got to go through it. There weren't as many surprises (as I think there could have been if I hadn't gone through BRATS)."

Pricolo graduated in January. Now, he's back with the program, but in a different role.



Master Sgt. Donna Roper, BRATS cadre, inspects a trainee during an open ranks inspection March 8 at Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y. The Stratton BRATS program prepares recruits for the atmosphere they will encounter in Basic Military Training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"I'm basically there to help everyone out," he said. "I give them a lot of advice. There were quite a few people who came back to talk to us about basic training. It's really helpful."

"Each day (of the UTA) we do inspections, drill and ceremony (marching and facing movements), and uniform inspections," said Master Sgt. Donna Roper, BRATS cadre. "We try to cover any of the topics they are going to be exposed to at basic training," Roper said.

Roper said going through the program gives trainees a big advantage during basic training.

"We have a very high success rate -- a lot of our BMT graduates graduate with honors," Sergeant Roper said. "Most of them feel that they were with people in other units who did not have a program like our BRATS program, and

they felt like they were leaps and bounds beyond their classmates at BMT."

Airman 1st Class Sabrena Healey, an intelligence analyst with the 109th, went through the BRATS program for three months before Basic Training in May 2008.

"I found it extremely helpful," she said. "Coming into the military was something so outside of my realm. I had no prior anything with the military -- no family, no experience, nothing! So going into basic, I actually felt right on key with a lot of the other trainees who had been a part of ROTC."

She said things taught during BRATS helped her out in training.

"Learning to tear down the weapons was also a huge help," she said. "I was definitely one of the fastest in my flight thanks to BRATS."

The program has been such a success, that other Air Guard units have come to the 109th Airlift Wing for advice on how to get a similar program started.

And to make things a little more interesting, BRATS will add a little Air Force-Army competition to the mix.

"This summer we're going to have a competition with the Army's version of the BRATS program, competing with weapons qualification, PT, drill and ceremony," Roper said.

For those still waiting to leave for basic training, Airman Pricolo provided his best advice. "Definitely get in shape, be mentally strong, train themselves to deal with yelling. They yell a lot at the BEAST. There's a lot of positive motivation, but they have zero tolerance." **gt**

Air Force Top Honors for Former Guardsman

Story by Capt. Lynn Lee, Air National Guard Readiness Center

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. - Entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in members of the New York Air National Guard. Based on a recent award presentation, innovation and financial discipline led one Air Guard officer to unprecedented success in global safety program management.

In a ceremony at the Air War College Feb. 8, the Air Force Safety Hall of Fame inducted Lt. Col. Edward L. Vaughan. Vaughan, the first Air National Guard member so honored, served in New York's 109th Airlift Wing in Scotia and the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse from 1991 through 2001. He joins a select list of only 63 inductees since 1975.

According to the Air Force Safety Center, Vaughan's efforts likely saved dozens of military lives and tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

Vaughan said "this [award] recognizes the innovation, hard work and tenacity of the 106,800 men and women who serve dual missions for the nation and 54 states and territories in the

Air National Guard."

"Our role is simply to help them bring their good ideas to a practical reality," Vaughan said

Vaughan's team pairs the best ideas from Airmen in the field against Air Force mission



National Guard Director Gen. Craig McKinley, left, and Maj. Gen. Wendell Griffin, The Air Force Chief of Safety, present the 2008 Air Force Safety Hall of Fame induction award to Lt. Col. Edward Vaughan on Feb. 8. Vaughan is a former member of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift and 174th Fighter Wings. Photo by Michael Pausic.

requirements and then executes the safety solution. As he says, "it's a disruptive, requirements-driven process, which is hard for most career bureaucrats to grasp at first. It means working closely with contracting officers, finance experts, academia, the scientific community and other governmental departments to leverage existing capabilities against creative solutions from front line Warfighters."

"The Air National Guard can get a lot done with just a little money, or in some cases, no additional money at all. The Warfighters and the taxpayers win," he said.

Vaughan is a student at the Air War College where he participates in a future studies think tank. An Iraq-war veteran pilot, he previously deployed for tours to Antarctica, Greenland, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations.

Vaughan transferred out of the 109th Airlift Wing in 2001, but remains on active duty, where he served as the national Deputy Director for Air Guard Safety through July, 2008. **gt**

Purple Heart Museum Welcomes Namesake Aircraft

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh - Chief Master Sergeant Howard Doty and Tech. Sgt. Bobby Kinabrew present a framed photograph of the Mississippi Air National Guard's C-17 "Spirit of the Purple Heart" to Mr. Peter Bedrossian, accepting on behalf of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor N.Y. on Feb. 27.

The C-17 Globemaster III "Spirit of the Purple Heart," named in honor of the medal presented to wounded warriors is assigned to the 172nd Airlift Wing of the Mississippi Air National Guard. The aircraft and crew arrived in Newburgh during a unit training mission, and volunteered their time to make the presentation.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor commemorates the extraordinary sacrifices of America's servicemen and women who were killed or wounded in combat. The Hall of Honor collects and preserves stories of Purple Heart recipients from all branches of service and across generations to ensure that all recipients are represented.





Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Benjamin Casarez stands by to help power down a returning F-16 fighter jet March 6 at Misawa Air Base, Japan. Casarez is an F-16 Fighting Falcon crew chief deployed from McEntire Air National Guard Station, S.C. He joined 30 other Air National Guardsmen, including members of the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse, to help fill manning shortages throughout the 35th Maintenance Group.

Syracuse Airmen Augment Misawa Maintenance

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse, 35th Fighter Wing

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan – Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing volunteered to leave the United States in late February to help members of the 35th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron here recover and maintain F-16 Fighting Falcons returning from Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Members of the 14th Aircraft Maintenance Unit (AMU), who returned to Japan from Iraq March 1, were given much-needed time off to be with their families after their deployment, while Airmen of the 13th Aircraft Maintenance Unit deployed to South Korea to recover the F-16 fighters.

Faced with manning shortages and aircraft that needed to be taken care of after returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom, Misawa Air Base officials decided to bring in the Air National Guard. The contingent of 31 personnel came from across the states, including Syracuse, N.Y.; Columbia, S.C.; and Fresno, Calif. The majority, however, came from the 122nd Fighter Wing from Fort Wayne, Ind.

"Because the 13th Aircraft Maintenance Unit has deployed (to South Korea), we are short of maintenance personnel and would be struggling to take care of our returning aircraft," said Senior Master Sgt. Michael Radford, the lead production superintendent.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime shot," said Staff Sgt. Brad Millhouse, an Air National Guard F-16 crew chief from the 122nd Fighter Wing from Fort

Wayne, Ind. "I was surprised there were still slots left."

"It's great because you get to meet up with people you haven't seen in a while," said Staff Sgt. William Thomas, one of the few active-duty crew chiefs present from the 14th AMU. Thomas' working partner, Tech. Sgt. Nathan Bechdolt from the 122nd Fighter Wing, went to technical training with him after Basic Training. They had not seen each other since.

Many cited weather as the most challenging part of the assignment. A blizzard, dumped more than 10 inches of snow on Bechdolt his first day.

"We realized it snowed in Japan, but not like that," he said.

There were other challenges as well. The Air National Guard maintainers were trained on Block 30 airframes -- an older version of the F-16 from the 1980s.

"None are trained on the Block 50 aircraft, so I've been training them every day," Thomas said.

A total of 16 fighter jets needed to be washed, cleaned and brought up-to-date with scheduled maintenance. Millhouse said playing his part in the war effort and supporting the jets gives him a sense of pride.

The guardsmen, who returned to their home bases in late March, hit the ground running and really helped a lot, Sergeant Radford said.

"We would not have been able to accomplish half the maintenance we completed without their assistance," he said. **gt**

174th Helps Open “New” Yankee Stadium

By Capt. Anthony L. Bucci, 174th Fighter Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Syracuse -- Four F-16C Fighting Falcons from the 174th Fighter Wing marked the first ball game ever played in the new Yankee Stadium, as the Yankees held their season opener on Thursday, April 16.

The F-16s took off at approximately 12:15 pm from Hancock Field Air National Guard Base on their fly-by mission for the opening of the “New” Yankee Stadium.

“We are extremely proud of all of our New York teams and feel extremely honored to take part in this historic event” said Col. Kevin W. Bradley, 174th Fighter Wing Commander.

Maj. John Knutsen, 138th Fighter Squadron Director of Operations and Flight Lead for this formation said, “It is an honor to be able to support this fly-by in helping to open the New Yankee Stadium”.

The 174th Fighter Wing has flown the F-16C Fighting Falcon for almost 20 years. The 174th Fighter Wing has been deployed nine times to Southwest Asia in support of various contingency operations. The last such deployment was this past summer, when the unit returned in August after supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom while stationed at Balad Air Base, Iraq. **gt**



At right: Air crews on their return from the fly-by for the Yankee Stadium Opening Day. Bottom row L-R: Capt. Scott Bissonnette and Staff Sgt. Preston Cox; Top Row L-R: Maj. Kurt Tongren, Maj. John Knutsen and Lt. Col. Sean McQuaid. Photo by Staff Sgt. James N. Faso II. Below: Four F-16C Fighting Falcons fly over center field at the “New” Yankee Stadium April 16. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeremy M. Call.



N.Y. Guard 'Brings the Fight' to Fighting 69th

Story and photos by Pvt. Ubon Mendie, Headquarters, N.Y. Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor –Volunteers from the N.Y. Guard's 14 Brigade took on the role of bad guys over two training weekends here in February and March. The Guard members assisted in the training of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry as part of the unit collective training to prepare for platoon-level tasks.

Serving as an opposing force, or OPFOR, the N.Y. Guard troops "brought the fight" during simulated infantry attacks for Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT). The mock enemy forces operated from simulated buildings and in the field, helping the infantrymen of the 69th hone their tactical skills. The use of N.Y. Guard members allowed the Army National Guard's junior leaders to deploy and lead full squad and platoon size elements in a realistic exercise environment.

"We are freeing up National Guard Soldiers who would ordinarily have to simulate the OPFOR troops," said Capt. Peter Giakoumis, commander of the N.Y. Guard's Company A, 1st Battalion, 71st Infantry Regiment, 14th Brigade. "This way, the 69th can focus on their training maneuvers and they don't have to split up their assets."

February's drill focused on the Camp Smith MOUT site. With the N.Y. Guard as an "enemy" force, the 69th infantrymen assaulted their target locations, drilling in door breaching and room clearing maneuvers. The training weekend was a full circle for the N.Y. Guard; members of the Guard's 102nd Engineer Battalion, 10th Brigade, built the Camp Smith urban training structures in the summer of 2007.

"For me, this is a dream come true," explained the N.Y. Guard's Pvt. Raymond Gallagher. "The 69th is legendary. These guys are much younger than me, and they are putting themselves in harms way," the 54-year-old Gallagher added. "This is why I signed up- to help support their force."

Without the N.Y. Guard OPFOR support, the Army Guard unit would be forced to split their resources to facilitate the training scenario.

"If I didn't have the Guard here, our training time would have been cut by at least a third," proclaimed company 1st Sgt. Frank Tooker, who led the days' training.



Sergeant First Class Steven Swiderski, right, from the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry reviews actions on the objective following infantry training at Camp Smith in Feb. and March. Members of the New York Guard's 14th Brigade served as the opposing force, allowing the 69th Infantrymen to focus on platoon training.

The Guard troops returned again for March's exercise, an assault on a mountain top in a woodland environment. A bleacher training area was transformed into an OPFOR base camp, dubbed "Corregidor."

Led by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Milton, the troops fortified the perimeter and set up trip wires. Two Guard volunteers were placed at a second location, acting as snipers to enhance a leadership reaction test to see how the approaching platoons would react to sniper fire.

The first few hours were quiet for the opposing forces as the National Guard Soldiers worked their way stealthily through the wooded training area. Suddenly, the engagement began and a firefight broke out as the 69th troops fought their way towards the OPFOR base and seized their objective.

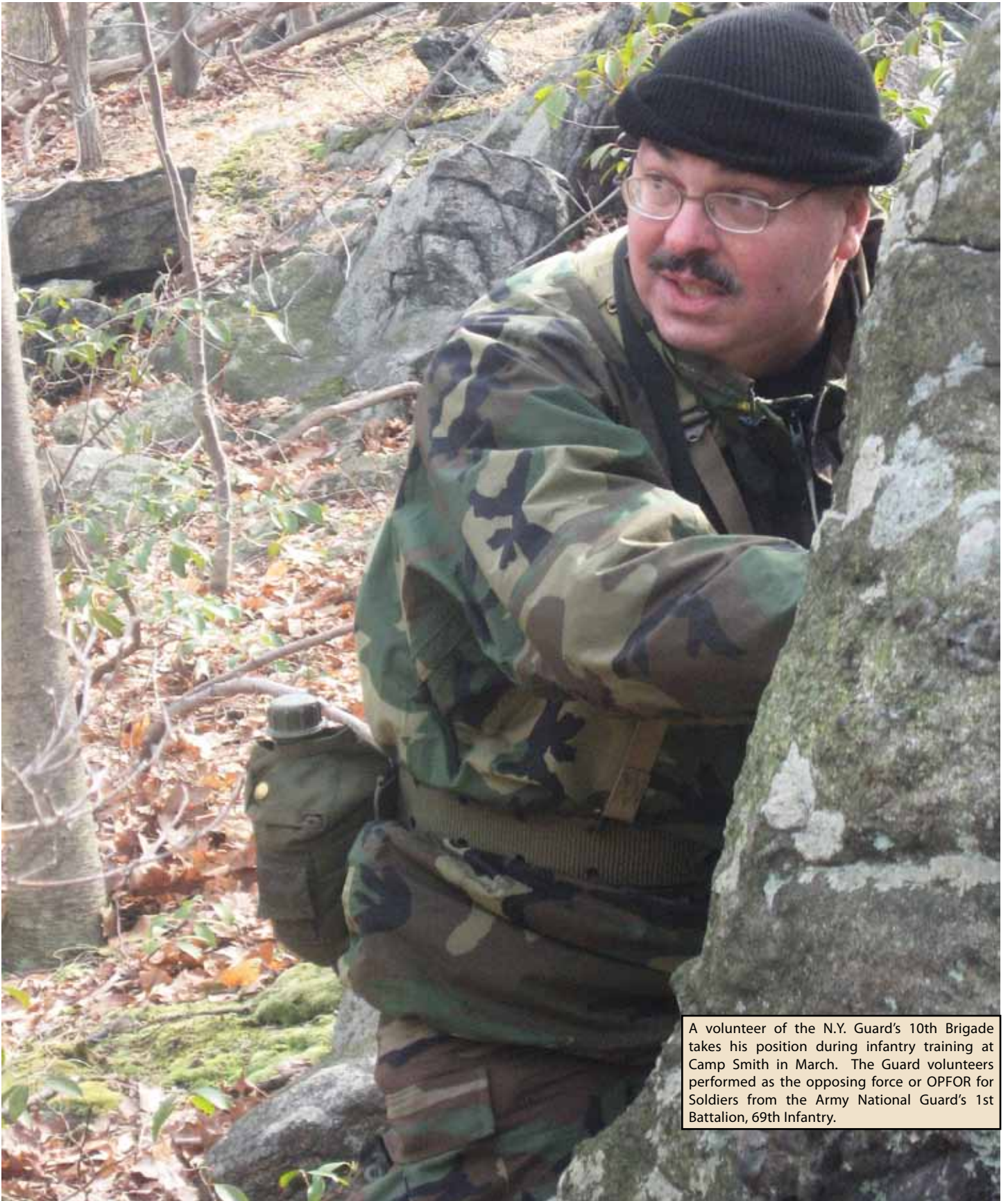
"The N.Y. Guard were great," said Sgt. Franklin Veliz, team leader from Company A after the battle. "It doesn't usually get this intense because the opposition is generally focused on strategy and implementation, just like we are."

Sergeant 1st Class Steve Swiderski, a company platoon sergeant, was grateful for the N.Y. Guard support.

"Our guys are used to Iraq, where you're either in convoys, cities, or farmland. It's been a while since they've moved through wooded terrain, so it's been a real plus for this training to have them all out in the field," Swiderski said. "The N.Y. Guard was outstanding, they did much more than we expected. A lot of the N.Y. Guard have been in combat themselves, so they brought a realistic intensity to the simulation."

Staff Sgt. Steven C. Milito, a 14th Brigade team leader and Army veteran, said the training opportunities were perfect for him. "The harder we make it for them, the better they will become," he said. "It's easier to correct the game plan before you get down range. As long as we are needed, we will be here; we will give them our best." **gt**

Editor's Note: Staff Sgt. Dave Konig, N.Y. Guard headquarters and Staff Sgt. Paul Rosa, 14th Brigade contributed to this article.



A volunteer of the N.Y. Guard's 10th Brigade takes his position during infantry training at Camp Smith in March. The Guard volunteers performed as the opposing force or OPFOR for Soldiers from the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry.

NY Guard a 'Shining Light' of Support

Volunteers Lend Assistance to Airmen, Marines Deployment Preparations

Story and photo by Sgt. Chris Ferraro, Headquarters, 56th Brigade, N.Y. Guard

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh - The New York Guard's all-volunteer 56th Brigade provided legal, medical and logistics support to New York Air National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps Reserve troops here during their January drill.

Ten legal officers from the 5th Civil Affairs Regiment, many of them civil and corporate attorneys in their civilian careers, performed a Legal Services Operation for the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) 49. Over the course of the day, the 5th Regiment processed 30 Marines, providing them with legal documentation such as wills and powers of attorney that are necessary for such a unit to be deployed.

Lt. Col. Michael Stoughton, Commanding Officer of MALS 49 was thrilled with the N.Y. Guard assistance. "It's awesome, the 5th CA is self-sustaining; they came in and gave us support and provided everything we've asked for."

The one day Legal Services Operation enabled MALS 49 to focus on their primary mission of providing refueling services for Marine helicopters with their squadron of C-130 aircraft.

"We have JAG (Judge Advocate General) services but not of this kind on site," Stoughton explained. "Something like this would have taken a few months to make happen. There are zero JAGs assigned to a unit at this level."

Typically, JAG services for the Marines are provided by the Navy, but the current operational tempo makes this increasingly difficult. Maj. Ray Mechman lectured on the rights of Marines under the Service Members Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The lecture proved useful to the Marines of MALS 49 as more than half of them are reservists.

At the medical clinic, the 56th Brigade's newest officer, Capt. Joseph Dell, provided dental examinations on his very first day in the N.Y. Guard to Airmen of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing.



New York Guard volunteer Lt. Col. David Warager, 56th Brigade, helps a Marine Corps Reservist conducting deployment preparations.

Stewart Air National Guard Clinic commander Col. Joseph Deluca expressed gratitude for Dell's dental assistance. "A year ago we were belly up, no dentists, and this impacted the mission," he said. "These people and what they do are incredible; the N.Y. Guard saved us a vast amount in expenditures per year. We're all squared away, thanks to them."

Members of the 56th Brigade also worked the chow line, serving food for nearly five hundred Airmen and Marines over the course of the day.

"The N.Y. Guard is a unique force enabler... [we] have an incredible team; we're a shining light," said Brig. Gen. Fergal Foley, N.Y. Guard commander after speaking with Marine and Air Guard commanders. **gt**

Ramping Up for Summer Search and Rescue

By Maj. Dave Greenwood, 10th Brigade, N.Y. Guard

LEEDS -- For members of the 10th Brigade, New York Guard Search and Rescue (SAR) team, finding lost campers in the difficult terrain of upstate New York is not a hypothetical exercise. In the summer of 2006, the team mobilized for three weeks, augmenting Air National Guard and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) park rangers in searching for a missing camper in the Adirondacks. In January, veterans of that mission continued training to maintain readiness for future SAR missions.

Elements from the 10th Brigade Headquarters Company and Forward Medical

Support Detachment, drilled in a Search and Rescue Functional Exercise at the Army National Guard Armory here on Jan. 24. Participating elements included units from Syracuse, Utica, Leeds and Troy. The exercise utilized the mountainside terrain adjacent to the Leeds armory.

For realism, SAR team members processed with DEC paperwork, just as they would in an operational search. Team members were briefed on the mission and the exercise. Col. Brian Farley, 10th Brigade Commander operated the tactical operations center with Col. Jamie Bly, the brigade

training and operations officer, to coordinate missions.

After standard medical, mission, communications and safety briefings, the teams conducted their SAR mission in the wintry, single digit temperatures and freshly fallen snow. Communications assets were exercised to determine their functionality and to troubleshoot for problems that might arise during future operational deployments.

With the summer camping season approaching, members of the New York Guard Search and Rescue Team will continue their training to sharpen their rescue skills. **gt**

The Doctors Are In and Do Make House Calls

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Dave Konig, Headquarters, N.Y. Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor - The New York Guard does make house calls. While most doctors, surgeons, and psychologists in New York spend their weekends on the links honing their golf game, the men and women of the N.Y. Guard's 244th Medical Clinic pack up their stethoscopes and hit the road to make house calls throughout the state for some very special patients: mobilizing and demobilizing Soldiers of the N.Y. Army National Guard.

Since September last year, medical personnel from the 244th work free of charge alongside the National Guard Medical Command (MEDCOM). At least one weekend a month they provide medical, dental, and psychological care to thousands of deploying and returning National Guard Soldiers at Soldier Readiness Processing (SRPs) and Reintegration programs. Each mission provides medical services to anywhere between



Warrant Officer James Goodman Jr., from the New York Guard's 244th Medical Clinic, examines a deploying N.Y. Army National Guard Soldier during a readiness check at Camp Smith.



Capt. Joel Bachman, DDS, conducts a dental examination in a state of the art mobile dental facility at Camp Smith on March 7. Bachman was supporting an Army National Guard Soldier Readiness Program with the N.Y. Guard's 244th Medical Clinic. "It's all about mission readiness," Bachman said.

"We take care of the Soldiers when they deploy, and on their return. That's the way it should be."

-- Lt. Col. Allen Hershman, New York Guard, Commander, 244th Medical Clinic

200 and 600 National Guard Soldiers, with N.Y. Guard and MEDCOM personnel working side by side.

"I am so proud of our doctors, dentists, nurses," said Lt. Col. Allen Hershman, the 244th Medical Clinic Commander. "The medical care they provide the National Guard would cost tens of thousands of dollars in the civilian world. We do this free of charge every month, supporting MEDCOM. It's our part of the mission, and an important one." In civilian life, Hershman is a psychologist trained in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). At the March 7 SRP for units of the 53rd Troop Command at Camp Smith, MEDCOM Commander Col. Donald Britten reflected on the value of the N.Y. Guard volunteers.

"We couldn't do this, process our Soldiers, without the 244th Medical Clinic. To have the services of the N.Y. Guard medical team is a tremendous plus for us." Britten's appreciation of the N.Y. Guard dates back to his time as the state's Homeland Defense and Weapons of Mass Destruction Director, working with the National Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high explosive Response Force Package, known as a CERFP. "The N.Y. Guard were integral to that mission, just as they are integral to this one."

Another old CERFP veteran, Lt. Col. Peter Goetchus, now Deputy State Surgeon for New York's Military Forces, was glad to see the 244th at his unit Soldier Readiness Program. "Always good to have the N.Y. Guard here. They're putting in 12 and 14 hour shifts, incredible effort."

The 244th's efforts have been so well received by MEDCOM, they've been rewarded – with an expanded mission. Throughout the spring the 244th has been assigned by MEDCOM as the lead personnel for Soldier and family assistance at Reintegration programs throughout the state.

The 244th's Hershman, Capt. Michael Lonski (also a CISM trained psychologist), Maj. Ira Salom (a physician) and Maj. Joseph McKeegan (a pharmacist) will work with MEDCOM to provide counseling on topics such as family relations, stress management, and substance abuse. According to Hershman, these missions bring their support to the National Guard full circle. "We take care of the Soldiers when they deploy, and on their return. That's the way it should be."

The 244th provides full service medical care. At the February Soldier Readiness Checks (SRC), while the Soldiers of the 53rd Troop Command received their medical examinations and updated medical files in preparation for federal mobilization and deployment, inside the Camp Smith gym, out in the parking lot the 244th's Capt. Joel Bachman, DDS, was filling a need – and a tooth – in a state of the art mobile dental facility.

"It's all about mission readiness," Bachman said. "I'm glad I have this opportunity to use my skills to help accomplish that mission." But when Bachman's patient was asked which drill he preferred, his drill sergeant at boot camp or Bachman's drill, he simply responded, "no comment." **gt**

New York Naval Militia

All in a Day's Work for New York Naval Militia

Story and Photos by Cmdr. Don McKnight, NYS Military Emergency Boat Service

NEW YORK - Sailors of the New York Naval Militia piloted the Military Emergency Boat Service patrol boat PB 440 over glass-like seas more than 15 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean from New York's Lower Bay on Feb. 25 as part of the Naval Militia's support to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The previous two days of harbor security missions had been blustery and cold with strong north winds. This day, however, was sunny and the seas were calm.

The patrol boat's twin 600 horsepower diesel engines powered the water jet propulsion at a swift 25 knots, capable of supporting Coast Guard intercept or other security missions in New York's waters.

The New York Naval Militia supports Coast Guard water operations around the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Port

District, an area that includes roughly 1,500 square miles within a circle with a 25 mile radius centered on the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

The patrol passed prominent landmarks, including the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, Coney Island's ferris wheel and Cyclone rollercoaster and Rockaway Point on their way to Ambrose Anchorage. The anchorage is where half a dozen huge commercial container ships and freighters await harbor pilots and their appointed time to enter the busy Port of New York and New Jersey.

The Port District includes four major shipping destinations, including the Auto Marine Terminal in Bayonne and Jersey City, the Brooklyn Port Authority Marine Terminal, the Howland Hook Marine Terminal on Staten Island and the Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine

Terminal in Elizabeth, N.J. The Port of New York/New Jersey is the largest port complex on the East Coast of North America.

Working in partnership with the Coast Guard to secure the vast amounts of commercial shipping entering the port, PB 440 carried a squad of seven boarding team members. Their target for the morning of Feb. 25th was the *M.V. Saudi Diriyah*, a 44,000 ton roll-on/roll-off (or RO/RO) ship. The New York Naval Militia sailors delivered the Coast Guard boarding team to inspect the massive, 816 foot-long vessel.

Five miles south of Long Beach, the 44-foot Naval Militia boat approached the anchorage. The crew readily identifies the distinctive RO/RO ship configuration of the *M.V. Saudi Diriyah*. With its huge vehicle ramp attached to the stern, the large ship loaded with shipping



Members of a U.S. Coast Guard boarding party approach the commercial ship Saudi Duriyah on board the New York Naval Militia Military Emergency Boat Service Patrol Boat (PB) 440 on Feb. 25 outside New York Harbor. The Naval Militia partnership and support to the Coast Guard enables greater efficiency and effectiveness in monitoring incoming commercial shipping to New York City. The Port District includes four major shipping destinations including Bayonne, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Elizabeth, N.J. The Port of New York/New Jersey is the largest port complex on the East Coast of North America. Opposite page: PB 440 approaches the Saudi Diriyah.

containers from the Middle East is steaming north to Brooklyn. When it will arrive, the ship will lower the ramp onto a dock and allow stevedores to drive the vehicles and freight off the ship.

As the boat's coxswain, Chief Machinery Technician Sean Lynch piloted the craft under the stern of the Saudi freighter while the Coast Guard boarding team leader coordinated inspection instructions with the ship's master over a marine VHF radio.

Accompanying the boarding team was the Coast Guard 25-foot Secure All-around Flotation Equipped (SAFE) boat from Sandy Hook, N.J. Two heavily armed gunners aboard the boat joined the mission as an armed escort vessel.

PB 440 crewmembers Boatswains Mate First Class Kurt Schneider and Special Warfare Boat Operator Third Class Joe Keller assisted the Coast Guardsmen as they leapt from the small boat's bow to the ladder hanging 50 feet over the side of the ship.

The Coast Guard team conducted a thorough inspection of the vessel, including a complete immigration and passport check of crewmembers. The team also inspects for other possible threats while aboard.

The boarding of the *Saudi Diriyah* found no irregularities. With calm seas and sunny skies, it turned out to be one of the better days for a boarding at Ambrose Anchorage. Frequently, sea swells and poor weather make for gut-twisting adventure, especially when the boarding team has to scale the side of the ship with a ladder. The ability of PB 440 to maintain a stationary position at sea using global positioning satellite systems allows the crew to deliver boarding party members in nearly all weather conditions.

The boat is particularly beneficial to the Coast Guard boarding team members because of its inherent stability. With its wide beam, it is the safest boat available for the boarding team to use when coming alongside a huge freighter at sea.

By the time the boat returned to the small basin at Rosebank on Staten Island, Petty Officer Keller was at the helm. He deftly maneu-



vered the boat with its "mouseboat" technology, another critical element for boarding operations. Essentially a desktop computer mouse shaped like a boat, the controller allows the coxswain to maneuver in the most confined spaces.

Patrol Boat 440 arrived in the New York Naval Militia inventory just over a year ago and the boat and crew have already supported some memorable events, including support for downed US AIR 1549 airplane ditching in the

Hudson River in mid-January.

The continuing partnership between the New York Naval Militia and the U.S. Coast Guard provides benefits for both agencies. The Coast Guard provides fuel and dock space, while the Naval Militia provides the crew and boat.

The boarding mission complete, the New York Naval Militia crew secured the boat and prepared it for the next day's mission, a marine patrol of Upper New York Harbor and Hudson River around Manhattan. **gt**

Keeping the Fleet Ship Shape

Lone Sailor Shoulders Maintenance Load for Entire Naval Militia

Story and photos by Cmdr. Don McKnight, N.Y. Naval Militia



Senior Chief Petty Officer Frank Rogers takes a momentary break from on-site maintenance of the New York Naval Militia Military Emergency Boat Service Patrol Boat 440 engines on Feb. 25. Rogers is the single Sailor working full-time to keep the fleet of patrol boats ready for operations.

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor - The line of trailers fill both sides of the large maintenance shop here at the Army National Guard training facility.

They stand out from the usual sites because they hold the boats of the New York State Military Emergency Boat Service. Evidence of repairs and maintenance are all around the shop where much of the Naval Militia fleet spent the harsh winter months. Lower-end units, water pumps, marine radar antennas and a host of other nautical items are worked on in this facility. This is the domain of Senior Chief Frank Rogers.

As the Maintenance Supervisor for the New York Naval Militia's ten

boat fleet, Steelworker Senior Chief Petty Officer Rogers is a busy man. He is responsible for ensuring that all ten boats, trucks and associated vehicles are ready to go in support of the various missions of the Military Emergency Boat Service, or MEBS.

Senior Chief Rogers is on State Active Duty with the New York Naval Militia, where he serves as part of the naval component of Joint Task Force Empire Shield, the standing homeland security task force based at Fort Hamilton in New York City. His additional duties include serving as the Non-commissioned Officer in Charge of the MEBS Detachment for maritime security support at the Indian Point nuclear power facility.

Rogers has a lengthy and notable history worth telling. As a young man, Frank Rogers served in the heavy equipment operation and maintenance trades near his home town of Elizaville, New York. At age 26, he took those skills and applied to the U.S. Navy as a steelworker in the Construction Battalion, or “SeaBees.” As a member of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 13 at Camp Smith, and later with the Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 202 detachment at Albany, he completed a career in the Navy Reserves. Over those years, he earned numerous qualifications including diving, advanced welding and the Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist designation. With 23 years of service, he retired from the Navy with the rank of Chief Petty Officer.

Shortly after joining the Seabees, he affiliated with the New York Naval Militia in 1981. He participated in several key state emergency or security operations, including the Blizzard of ’96, the World Trade Center response and the 2004 Republican National Convention.

His service as both maintenance chief and skilled instructor brought him to his current role with the state emergency boat service. Senior Chief Rogers has run the boat maintenance program since the summer of 2002. As it turns out, he was taking a vacation that year on his personal boat, down the Hudson River to Long Island Sound. While passing in the vicinity of Charles Point, he learned that one of the Naval Militia boats providing security for the Entergy nuclear plant was experiencing maintenance difficulties. Senior Chief Rogers volunteered to help fix the problem, and he did. As a result of his demonstrated ability and professionalism, the Naval Militia offered him continued service on state active duty and he has served to keep the MEBS fleet operational and mission ready ever since.

For years, Rogers worked on the boats while they sat on trailers in the open parking lot of the Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan. Whether summer or winter, rain or shine, he labored; using the back end of a pickup truck and a small, donated cargo trailer to store his tools and parts.

The New York National Guard’s Facilities and Engineering Directorate and the leadership at Camp Smith recognized this deficiency and in 2008 offered the Naval Militia Building 70, near the entrance gate to the base, to store and conduct maintenance of the boats.

Rogers notes with pleasure the new location for his work. “This building is perfect for us,” he states. “It’s large enough for us to get our boats in here, so that I can get out of the rain.”

At Camp Smith, Senior Chief Rogers feels like he is at home. “When I was with NMCB 13, I helped build all these buildings,” he notes as he looks out over the group of yellow, metal buildings that now form an urban training ground. More than two decades ago, he helped to design and construct most of the buildings. “Before we built these buildings, there were just a bunch of trailers here,” Rogers said.

During the week, he stays in quarters right at Camp Smith. On weekends, he goes home to his farm in Elizaville. Like most maintenance per-



New York Naval Militia Military Emergency Boat Service Patrol Boat (PB) 230 launches on March 17 from George’s Island Park in Westchester County. The boat crew under the leadership of Petty Officer Richard Penta conducted missions in support of the New York National Guard Joint Task Force Empire Shield security mission at the Indian Point nuclear power facility. Senior Chief Petty Officer Frank Rogers maintains the Naval Militia patrol boats from nearby Camp Smith.

sonnel, however, it is not uncommon to find him still at work long after normal duty hours, still repairing boats up until 8 p.m. any given day.

When asked about his most memorable events while serving with the National Guard’s security forces at Indian Point, Rogers noted several, including the time he had to save a 29-foot recreational vessel from sinking off of Iona Island. There was also the time that he helped recover the body of a drowning victim out of the river, who had jumped off one of the bridges a few days before.

Today, Senior Chief Rogers continues to keep the boats ready to go. He is currently preparing the boats for state-wide operations throughout the boating season this spring and summer.

The Sailors of the New York Naval Militia owe much to Senior Chief Frank Rogers for his individual contribution in maintaining the boat service, instructing boat crews, and serving as a mentor and leader, making a difference for the entire force. **gt**

Unwinding in Minnesota

By *Guard Times Staff*

ELY, Minn. – One New York Army National Guard veteran recently participated in a very different sort of reintegration event – a cross country dog sled expedition.

Sponsored by the Sierra Club and other private sponsors, the Outward Bound program for veterans took Chief Warrant Officer Scott Turner and twelve other veterans from Iraq or Afghanistan, on a group dog sledding and cross country skiing expedition Feb. 2-8.

Turner's days were spent mushing the dogs over frozen lakes or creating new trails through the Minnesota snow to open paths for sledding in the Boundary Waters Wilderness Reserve.

"The trip was truly a life changing experience, proving both physical and mental challenges," Turner said, "I would recommend other Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom veterans to sign up for any of the many expeditions offered by Outward Bound."

Turner deployed to Tikrit, Iraq in 2005 with the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters.

"The dogs were wonderful to be around," Turner said. "My favorite was Baker, a 10-year-old husky getting ready to retire but still plugging along. I could relate to him. When things got tough on the trail, I would think about how he kept going and somehow that made me feel I could too," Turner said.

All costs, including round-trip stateside travel, food, lodging, equipment and instruction were paid by the Military Family Outdoor Initiative Project, a joint partnership of The Sierra Club and Sierra Club Foundation.

For Outward Bound Veterans Programs in 2009, visit www.outwardbound.org.



Chief Warrant Officer Scott Turner and two of his sled dogs break during the Outward Bound Program for veterans. Courtesy photo.



Army National Guard 1st Lt. Louis Delli Pizzi from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry receives the first annual General Douglas MacArthur leadership Award from Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan and Town Councilman Christopher Bodkin at Long Island's Islip MacArthur Airport on Jan. 26. Courtesy photo.

Airport Honors Rainbow Soldier

MacArthur Leadership Award Presented to Hometown Hero

Story and photo by Catherine Green, Long Island MacArthur Airport

ISLIP, Long Island - Flanked by Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's Company D, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan and Town Councilman Christopher Bodkin presented the first annual General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award to 1st Lt. Louis Delli Pizzi of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry during a ceremony at Long Island MacArthur Airport Jan. 26.

The officials declared Jan. 26 "General MacArthur Leadership Day" and announced plans to create a permanent memorial for MacArthur at the airport.

"These are challenging times for our nation as they were in 1942 when this airport was established and named for General MacArthur," Bodkin said. "Our nation is at war again and leadership is just as important now as it was then."

Nolan added, "Lieutenant Delli Pizzi exemplifies the Army motto, 'duty, honor, country' and we are proud to recognize our hometown hero."

Recently returned from Afghanistan where he served as a Combat Advisor to the Afghan army, Delli Pizzi is a recipient of the Bronze Star. In addition, as a detective with the New York City Police Department in his civilian career, Delli Pizzi twice received the NYPD's

Medal of Valor.

"This is an incredible honor; I can only accept such a distinction on behalf of all the brave Soldiers of the Fighting 69th," Delli Pizzi said. "They are the ones who have earned and deserve the accolades."

The General MacArthur Leadership Award will be presented annually on his birthday. To be eligible, an individual must demonstrate the leadership qualities for which General MacArthur was known: steadfast courage, dedication to duty, self sacrifice, public service, moral leadership, personal excellence and vision.

MacArthur has unique ties to Long Island and the New York National Guard. He was the first division chief of staff for the headquarters of the 42nd Infantry Division that organized at Camp Mills near Garden City in 1917. MacArthur later went on to command one of the divisional brigades during combat operations in France and served as division commander during the unit's occupation duties in 1918.

The General Douglas MacArthur Memorial Committee includes local veterans and active duty Soldiers, Long Island graduates of West Point and others who are committed to honoring General MacArthur and educating the public about his legacy. **gt**

New York Teens Tell Deployment Stories on Video

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, Headquarters, 42nd Infantry Division

ROCHESTER - When New York Army National Guard Master Sgt. Edwin Garris deployed to Afghanistan in 2008, his daughters, 12-year old Angelene, 15-year old Valicity, and 18-year old LeShante, missed him terribly.

They never imagined his homecoming would be just as difficult or that when he returned, the initial thrill of having him home would wane quickly.

"It was a big relief to know he was safe," recalled LeShante Garris. "Then it was like it was another person there and two days later, it was like, okay, when are you going back," she said. "It was tough, we had gotten used to it being only four of us at home, and then we had to put him back in the picture somehow. It was kind of awkward at first, but it's better now."

"I think it's been harder for him to come home, than for us to welcome him home" said Valicity. According to Valicity, he's been having a tough time making the transition from "Army mode" where his Soldiers moved instantly when he told them to do something, to family life where an edict

to clean up their room received a response more in line with "Come on dad, do I have to?"

The Garris sisters and other teenage children of New York Army National Guard Soldiers shared similar stories related to their deployment experiences on video as the Guard introduced a new component to its Yellow Ribbon reintegration program.

The New York National Guard Youth Program teamed up with the state Public Affairs office to give teenagers a chance to work in video—both behind of and in front of the camera—interviewing each other about the experiences while mom or dad served overseas.

This new program kicked-off in Rochester on Mar. 21 during the 27th Brigade Combat team's 60-day reintegration session. The unit returned from Afghanistan in late 2008.

"Doing this video helped because I was able to talk about my feelings and I think it will also help other kids know that they are not alone, that there are others out there just like them," said 13-year-old Danae Knowles.



Thirteen year old Danae Knowles, daughter of Capt. Alexander Knowles from Wilson, N.Y. videotapes an interview with 18-yr old LeShante' Garris, daughter of Master Sgt. Edwin Garris from Buffalo, during the 27th Brigade 60-day reintegration event in Rochester on March 21.

"This video class helps these kids talk about their experiences, address some of the concerns they faced while their loved ones were deployed and also discuss some of the issues of rebuilding as a family upon their return, in a fun and innovative way," said Shelly Aiken, Youth Program Coordinator.

The program began with a class on video production and interview techniques, enabling the teens to

visualize their final project and design their own questions.

While returning Soldiers and spouses met with military and civilian counselors, nearly a dozen teens spent their time scoping out and videotaping interviews.

In the end, the teens made a 10-minute video to share with other children of deploying Soldiers in the hope that it will help them cope with issues they may face. **gt**

Handling Hand-to-Hand Combat Training

Guard Times Staff

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor - New York Army National Guard Soldiers recently attended the New York National Guard's Combative School.

The goal of the course is to train Soldiers in close quarters combatives and prepare them to defeat an enemy in hand to hand combat.

Active, Reserve and National Guard Army Soldiers received certification in a Level One Combative Training course here with the Regional Training Institute (RTI).

"Right now, we are qualified to certify Level One for 2009," Staff Sgt. Eduardo Hernandez, an RTI Instructor, said. "Skill Level One is a

40-hour, one week course. Our students learn to teach the techniques of basic combatives. At the conclusion of the course, students will demonstrate proficiency as well as the ability to instruct the course material."

The U.S. Army Combatives course was a "Train the Trainer" program. Graduates of the course also receive five promotion points.

"Combative training helps instill courage and self-confidence," Hernandez said, "With competence comes the ability to remain focused while under duress."

This fiscal year's classes are all full and Hernandez expects next year's slots to also fill up.



Graduates of the Winter 2009 Army Combatives Training Course at Camp Smith. Courtesy photo.

The overall effect of combative training is a successful physical fitness program that can enhance individual and unit fitness.

For more information, contact Staff Sgt. Eduardo Hernandez at eddie.hernandez2@us.army.mil (914) 788-7319 or visit <https://www.benning.army.mil/combatives/>. **gt**

Premium Daycare at a Giveaway Price

Story and photos by Senior Airman Peter Dean, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION
More than five years ago the wheels were set in motion to provide free child care to members of the New York Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve here, similar to that of active duty Air Force installations. Today, families of the Guard benefit from the efforts to support working parents with daycare.

The program grew from the first off-base provider in 2004 with Mrs. Lavina Harris, spouse of Master Sgt. Derrick Harris from the 107th Airlift Wing, when she was selected as the first off-base Air Force approved daycare provider. Today, in part due to the success of Lavina's early efforts, there are 45 approved daycare providers in 37 locations throughout

"I love the kids, I look forward to seeing them and they're really excited to see me."

-- Lavina Harris, Childcare Provider, U.S. Air Force Home Community Care Program

the U.S., supporting Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve families across the country. Nestled in the Wildwing Preserve just minutes away from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, is the Harris home. On scheduled unit training assembly weekends, the children of unit members gather for a day full of healthy meals, snacks and activities.

Lavina opened her own child care service in 2003, a new program run by the Air Force Home Community Care (HCC) Program. The goal was to provide free day care for Reserve Component members. After contacting HCC, meeting the requirements and competing with more than ten other local daycare providers, the HCC selected Harris as daycare provider for the region.

"I love the kids, I look forward to seeing them," Harris said, "and they're really excited to see me."

Military servicemembers can be confident leaving their little ones with Harris, a graduate of more than 39 hours of child care training annually. She stays current on child CPR and first aid and maintains her New York State certifica-



Lavina Harris is surrounded by children that she provides care for, while their parents perform military duties with the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls. Front row, left to right, Lucas, son of Lt. Col. Douglas Eoute and Tech. Sgt. Melissa Eoute, Emma, daughter of Staff Sgt.'s Jason and Sylvia Kirchner. Back row, left to right, Logan Eoute, Jonathon, son of Lt. Col. Deanna Miller and Maj. Greg Miller, Abby Kirchner and Adriana daughter of Tech. Sgt. Charity Edwards.

tion. The Home Community Care program also regulates the number of children allowed at each location. No more than six children under the age of 12 with no more than two of those children under 24 months.

"This is a great program to utilize, since both my husband and I are in the Guard," said Lt. Col. Deanna Miller, 107th Air Wing Executive Officer, "It gives (their son) Jonathon a chance to interact with other children while we go to drill," she added.

Upon arrival the children are served breakfast and then enjoy activity time. During the frigid months some of the children will choose their favorite toy, game or coloring book. During the warmer months activities may include a nature walk, cooling down in the sprinklers or playing on the Harris swing set. As with breakfast, lunch consists of a nutritious array of

foods before the children enjoy quiet time for reading a book, watching a movie or taking a nap, depending on their age.

Space is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis at this premier day care center. Members that wish to use the service must call the Saturday before drill to reserve a child's spot. All members of the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve are eligible regardless of rank or number of children. For more information call Lavina Harris @ (716) 743-9451. **gt**

Editor's Corrections: The Counterdrug photos on page 10 in the Winter 2009 issue of the Guard Times News Magazine were taken by Staff Sgt. Stephen Girolami, 109th Maintenance Squadron, 109th Airlift Wing.

'Kiosk' Terminals Meet Traditional Soldiers' Needs

By Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM - Traditional Army National Guard Soldiers will soon have a dedicated computer terminal for them to use in resetting their Army Knowledge Online password with a Common Access Card.

The goal is to make it less of a hassle for Guardsmen to access a CAC-enabled computer on drill weekends, explained Master Sgt. Roger Townsend, the customer support manager for the Division of Military and Naval Affairs' Administrative Support section, which is responsible for the Army Guard's computer network.

Now when Soldiers need to use their CAC card, they have to borrow access to a computer from a full-time Soldier, Townsend said. On drill weekends, when the administrative staff is busy and plenty of other Soldiers want to do the same thing, there are long waits, or it is not done at all and a Soldier's AKO log-in expires, he added.

armories. Seventy-seven will be installed by June in armories which already have the power hook-ups and Internet access needed, Townsend said. The remaining kiosks will be hooked up later based on need and the infrastructure in the armories needed to support them.

National Guard Bureau is spending \$3.5 million to the kiosk installations in armories from Georgia to Guam. The kiosks are designed to complement the computers already in use in the armories, said Col. Bret Slater, chief of information technology plans, programs and policy for the Army National Guard.

The kiosks are not much to look at and their functionality is limited.

They consist of a Hewlett Packard thin Client station—designed to hook up to a central server-- and a keyboard with a CAC access port. There's no hard drive or storage capability, which means Soldiers can't save their work.

Mostly they're designed to get a Soldier on-line and into AKO or GKO, Townsend said.

The kiosk computers can open Microsoft Office files so Soldiers can examine them, but they do not have the ability to create new files. **gt**

Four NCO's and a Duffle Bag



What were the chances that four New York Army National Guardsmen would unexpectedly meet at their Military Police Advance Non-Commissioned Officer's course Jan. 24 at Fort Knox, Ky. From left to right are Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Roa, 442nd MP Co., Sgt. 1st Class Alan Drew, 222nd MP Co., Staff Sgt. Frans Beaupierre, 442nd MP Co. and Sgt. 1st Class William Grodnick, Joint Forces Headquarters. Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class William Grodnick.



Traditional Army National Guard Soldiers will soon be able to access a common computer kiosk terminal at their armory for updating or reviewing their Army Knowledge Online information or passwords. Above, Sgt. James Petropoulos demonstrates log-in using a computer kiosk at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.

Newburgh Cuts Ribbon on New Fire Station



STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh - Brigadier General Verle L. Johnston Jr., Commander of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing and Rep. John Hall (D-New York) with help from John D'Ambrosio, President of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, cut the ribbon at the official opening of the 105th Airlift Wing's new fire department on March 9. The opening of the new \$10 million Air National Guard airfield fire station greatly enhances our capability to respond to any airfield emergency." said Johnston. "This not only serves our base better by protecting our 13 C-5 aircraft and 14 Marine Corps KC-130 aircraft but also allows us to better serve commercial and general aviation aircraft at Stewart International Airport." Photo by Tech. Sgt Lee C. Guagenti, 105th Airlift Wing.

