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# guardtimes

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



# FROM THE LEADERSHIP

## Troops Learn to Balance COVID and Training

I am Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, the new commander of the 42nd Infantry Division and I'm happy to share some thoughts on leadership and service with the almost 20,000 members of the New York Military Forces.

I was previously the Deputy Commander of Support for the division and it was an honor to serve with the great Soldiers of the 42nd in the Middle East this past year.

Before that, I deployed to Iraq for a year as a member of the New Hampshire Army National Guard and I've had the privilege of commanding at the battalion and brigade level.

As a leader, I like to "walk about" and to just show up where troops are working.

When I do this, I do not expect "special" treatment. I just want to see what is going on and have the opportunity to get speak to leaders and their Soldiers to better understand their jobs.

I "walk about" because when I was a captain getting ready to deploy my aviation company to Somalia, I had a division commander, Maj. Gen. Thomas Schwartz, who had that command philosophy and I have used that ever since.

I advocate that leaders at every level across the Army and Air Force adopt the philosophy of TIPS.

Here is how TIPS translates:

- T = Talk: As leaders, we need to talk and communicate across the chain of command. By talking, we get to learn about and know each other, what motivates us and how to get things done.

- I = Inform: By communicating we are informing each other. Information is useless unless it is shared with those around us and being informed empowers the organization.

- P = Predictability: Leaders owe it to our organizations to be predictable in actions and emotions. We must understand how well or poorly news will be received and not be deterred from sharing. We must be predictable in our expectations of our troops.

If we do not give people time to plan and prepare, they will execute poorly. Our training must be well thought out. This means we need to plan our training and execute the plan. Nothing irritates me more than expecting a Soldier or Airman to conduct training without the proper preparation time.

"Hip Pocket" training is an excuse for either having no, or a poorly planned training plan. I do believe in Sergeant's Time training, but it must be planned and coordinated in order to be effective. NCOs, you should always have a training plan ready to execute. Idle time is a wasted training opportunity.

- S = Sensitivity: We must be sensitive to the needs of our Soldiers and Airmen.

I consider myself to lead with optimism.

I firmly believe that we wake up every day to succeed and not fail. We will not succeed all the time, but from challenges we will develop our potential. As an organization, if our individuals succeed then the organization succeeds.

We, as leaders, must develop our future leaders and show them they have the potential to excel and succeed.

I am a risk adaptive leader and ask all leaders to accept reasonable risks so that we are nimble and agile. We must be able to adapt to a changing environment by accepting new ideas, strategies and options.

Taking risks enables us to learn. As we assess risk, we will mitigate the negatives while ensuring the safety of the force.

Being risk adaptive does not mean accepting unreasonable risks that will bring harm to a Soldier or Airman. Stupidity is not risk adaptive!

I am a leader who accepts the 70-80% solution. Never ask for perfection because nothing gets done that way.

We will face many tough problems. There is always a solution and we just need to figure it out. Challenges present opportunities to grow – think outside the box and share your thoughts.

I have been a Soldier for over 33 years because I enjoy being in the Army and having the opportunity to get to know so many different people, do amazing things and see great places.

Have fun with your time in uniform. We are a select group of Americans who have the opportunity to serve our great country and to give back just a little of what the United States provides us.

I define leadership as the ability to motivate and influence others to accomplish the mission or task.

We must have the ability to lead before we can expect others to follow.

We must be able to motivate others when things get tough.

We must be able to influence others to potentially give their lives in the defense of our nation.



Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer

And we must be focused on mission accomplishment.

2020 was a tough year and the members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard have performed admirably both here at home dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and overseas carrying our nation's flag.

I look forward to being part of the team as we move forward into 2021.

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"We, as leaders, must develop our future leaders and show them they have the potential to excel and succeed,"

-- Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, Commander, 42nd Infantry Division



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Maj. Jean Kratzer, COMMAND INFORMATION OFFICER  
Ryan Campbell, GUARD TIMES STAFF

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Guard Times  
DMNA-MNPA  
330 Old Niskayuna Road  
Latham, New York 12110-3514  
OFFICE (518) 786-4581 FAX (518) 786-4649  
or richard.l.goldenberg.mil@mail.mil

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New York Air National Guard Col. Steven Hefferon, commander of the 107th Mission Support Group, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, presents a wreath on behalf of the president at the grave of Millard Fillmore, the 13th president, in Buffalo, N.Y., Jan. 7, 2021. The 107th Attack Wing has honored the former president with a wreath each year on his birthday for more than 30 years. Photo by Master Sgt. Brandy Fowler, 107th Attack Wing.

FRONT COVER: Staff Sgt. Jennifer Aracena, assigned to the Medical Command, prepares a dosage of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Camp Smith on December 18, 2020. The New York National Guard administered 1,000 doses of vaccine as part of a Department of Defense vaccine pilot program. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantoni, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

BACK COVER: New York Air National Guard Capt. Will Boddy, a joint terminal attack controller with the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, controls aircraft during Exercise Bold Quest 20.2 at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, Oct. 24, 2020. Bold Quest was a multinational exercise that demonstrated joint capabilities. Photo by Staff Sgt. Joel Pfister, 1st Combat Camera Squadron.

# FACES of the FORCE

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# AROUND THE STATE

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# THE JOINT FORCE

















# ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

















# AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Members of the 174th Maintenance Group prepare to taxi the first Block 5 MQ-9 Reaper on February, 12, 2019 at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, N.Y. A Block 5 is an updated version of the MQ-9 that allows upgraded communication and electrical systems. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.

A LC-130H assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing lands at at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, 2020. Because of COVID-19 the wing deployed aircraft to New Zealand where they were in a standby status, responding to emergency mission flights only. Courtesy photo.

# 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Returns to New Zealand

## COVID restrictions keep LC-130 flights in standby status

Story by Tech. Sgt. Jamie Spaulding, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia N.Y. — Airmen and aircraft from the 109th Airlift Wing flew to Antarctica this year to provide logistics support to the National Science Foundation's U.S. Antarctic Program.

For the last 32 years the 109th Airlift Wing has supported National Science Foundation research in Antarctica by flying people, supplies and equipment around the continent.

The mission was part of Operation Deep Freeze, the Department of Defense's annual support to U.S. Antarctic operations.

The wing deployed three LC-130s and three aircrews and a maintenance team, a total of 31 Airmen, to Christchurch, New

Zealand where they were on standby for contingency missions that require flying to Antarctica.

The three Skibirds left Scotia on Monday, November 23. It takes roughly a week to fly from upstate New York to New Zealand.

The change in mission is being made because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The National Science Foundation minimized the number of people who set foot on the continent during the 2020-21 season as part of a commitment by the United States and other nations to prevent the introduction of the COVID-19 virus to Antarctica.

The footprint of activity will be "reasonably reduced," according to the National Science Foundation.

Traditionally the 109th Airlift

Wing flew six to seven LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft and around 250 personnel to McMurdo Station, the National Science Foundation facility on the continent which serves as the hub for U.S. research activities.

McMurdo Station is 2,415 miles away from New Zealand, roughly eight hours of flying time.

"Despite the complications of operating during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the 109th Airlift Wing will continue its support of the National Science Foundation," said Col. Christian Sander, the wing's vice commander. "Personnel and aircraft will operate during the timeframe when only ski-equipped aircraft may operate within Antarctica, while adhering to all international and Center for

Disease Control guidelines."

Sander will be in command of the deployed aircraft and personnel.

The 109th Airlift Wing flies the largest aircraft in the world which are equipped to land on ice and snow. This ability makes the 109th Airlift Wing an indispensable partner to the National Science Foundation in the Arctic and Antarctic activities.

During the 2019-20 season, crews completed more than 150 missions within Antarctica by flying 2,100 researchers and support staff, 2.8 million pounds of cargo and 1.8 million pounds of fuel to research stations across the continent. **gt**

LATHAM, N.Y. — Denise Donnell, the commander of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, was promoted to brigadier general during a ceremony held at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham, New York, January 6.

Donnell has commanded the wing since 2017 and will continue as the wing commander. The base is also host to the Marine Corps Reserve's Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452 and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 49.

Normally, her promotion would have taken place in one of the wing's massive hangers with 1,000 Airmen in formation. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic a small group of 35 people gathered at New York National Guard headquarters and others viewed the proceedings over a Zoom call.

Maj. Gen. Timothy LaBarge, the commander of the New York Air National Guard, said the Donnell was promoted to the general officers rank because of her leadership skills and drive.

"Denise has demonstrated her capabilities time and time and time again and she has never disappointed," LaBarge said.

Donnell, who has more than 4,000 flying hours in aircraft ranging from the giant C-5 Galaxy transport to the Navy's P3 Orion patrol plane, started her career in the Navy and has served in the New York Air National Guard since 2002.

In her remarks, Donnell thanked her family for their support and those along the way who helped her do well.

"It is an honor to continue to serve the men and women of the 105th Airlift Wing," Donnell said. "This star is as much for them as it is for me."

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Robert Tilli, the chaplain of the 105th Airlift Wing, noted that the star, the rank of the general officer, has traditionally denoted exceptional things. Donnell, he said, has been an outstanding leader and "she truly is a shining star."

Her husband Greg Szczesny, and son Max Szczesny pinned her new one star rank on her uniform during the ceremony. Her daughter Alison presented her with a new officer cap with one star.

Donnell received her commission through Naval ROTC and served in the Navy for nine years as a naval aviator.

She joined the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing in 2002 and qualified to fly the C-5 galaxy.

In 2005 she was selected as the commander of the 105th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and earned her maintenance badge while continuing to fly as a C-5 aircraft commander.

In May 2010, she assumed command of the 105th Maintenance Squadron, and led the unit through a conversion from C-5 to C-17 aircraft and simultaneously qualified as a C-17 pilot.

In 2013 she was assigned to the 109th Maintenance Group at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia and also qualified to fly the LC-130 "Skibird" that the wing flies in support of missions in Antarctica and the arctic.

In 2016 she was reassigned to the 105th Airlift Wing as wing vice , commander.

Other New York Air National Guard female officers who have reached

the general officer ranks are: Maj. Gen. Dawne Deskins, currently serving as Deputy Director of the Air National Guard; retired Maj. Gen. Irene Trowell-Harris, a medical officer; and retired Brig. Gen. Esther A. Rada, a judge advocate general. **gt**

## NY Guard Volunteers Lend Support to Vaccinations

Photos by Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade



*NEW YORK — New York Guard Spc. Jennifer Alvarado, assigned to 56th Area Command, assists with safety for New York City residents in the observation area at the Javits Vaccination Site by sanitizing chairs before and after use January 31, 2021. At left, Pfc. Yuriy Burmagin, assigned to the 88th Area Command, provides chaplain assistance January 13, 2021 in support of the Javits Incident Command Post. The NY Guard members support efforts to provide mass COVID-19 vaccinations administered by the New York State Department of Health at the Javits Convention Center in Manhattan, New York. The National Guard has more than 350 Guardsmen and women deployed to support staffing for the site.*



# New York Naval Militia



## Supporting Task Force COVID-19

*ORISKANY, N.Y. — Members of the New York Naval Militia are supporting COVID-19 missions across the state, including unloading pallets of hand sanitizer at the State Preparedness Training Center, in order to be distributed across New York. Courtest photos.*



## Patrol Boat Maintenance

*LEEDS, N.Y. — Engineman Petty Officer Third Class Maria Serani and Maintenance Technicians Bill Fenty and Keith White perform 300 hour service on an OptiMax engine for Patrol Boat 281 December 28, 2020. The water pump was replaced on the engine's lower unit.*

*The fleet of patrol boats were built specifically for the New York Naval Militia. They are all aluminum, high speed boats capable of operating in waters throughout the state's waterways.*

*At left, Patrol Boat 281 is part of the New York State Military Emergency Boat Service, formed in 2001 after identifying the need to develop a boat service to support homeland security efforts. The fleet can conduct missions including port security, support of law enforcement, surveillance, evacuations and maritime transport. Courtesy photos.*





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