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Volume 15 Number 2

# guardtimes

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



# FROM THE LEADERSHIP

## Aircrew Heroism a Standard We Can All Aspire to

As the new Commander of our New York Air National Guard, I am humbled and honored to lead over 5,800 Airmen, our nation's largest Air National Guard. My priorities are simple – Safety, Strength, and Readiness.

The best way to highlight those priorities is the story of Reach 824.

On August 16, 2021, a New York C-17 aircrew, callsign Reach 824, launched for the Kabul airport as the Taliban and panicked civilians swarmed the airfield. This crew of Drill Status Guardsmen - airline pilots, police officers, a materials test technician and a crew chief – carried a special operations package of 22 operators and an Army Chinook helicopter.

While enroute, the crew of Reach 824 saw other C-17s turn back unable to land due to the deteriorating conditions. Determined to complete their mission, the Reach 824 Airmen refueled twice in-flight and orbited overhead while ground forces cleared the runway.

During landing, the crew took ground fire that damaged the aircraft's left wing. Once on the ground, Reach 824 was immediately surrounded by 12 heavily armed Taliban vehicles. Taxiing around debris and the Taliban, the crew off-loaded their cargo in less than 45 minutes. In the following days, that cargo – the Chinook and its special operators – rescued over 800 people.

The crew's original mission was a routine flight to South America. On August 16 and the weeks that followed, the crew did something very different.

As members of the New York Military Forces, we too may be called upon to execute missions in similar chaotic situations with little

or no warning. Our priorities – Safety, Strength, and Readiness – are the foundation for

flexibility, adaptability, and mission success.

### Safety

We must exercise discipline in flight and on the ground to manage and mitigate risks appropriately; knowing boundaries and limits is critical. Safety includes sexual assault response & prevention, suicide prevention, and equal opportunity for all service members.

### Strength

100% manning is not just a metric. 100% means that we have a full team with the skills, training, and experience to meet our mission requirements. From operations to

maintenance, mission support to medical, every squadron and group in the 105th Airlift Wing contributed to the largest evacuation in Air Force history.

### Readiness

We must be ready for our federal and state missions. Individual Airman and Soldier training must be realistic, challenging, and integrated across units. We must also make sure that our families and employers are ready before we deploy. Reach 824 was ready. Are you ready?

Whether you are a member of the Air, Army, Naval Militia, or New York Guard, Reach 824 represents



Brig. Gen. Denise Donnell

the best of what it means to be part of our New York Military Forces. Always Ready, Always There!



The crew of Reach 824, recognized June 4, 2022 for their heroic actions to deliver essential equipment and personnel to Kabul during the Afghanistan evacuation. From left, 105th Airlift Wing members Capt. Matthew McChesney (Aircrew Commander), Tech. Sgt. Byron Catu (Flying Crew Chief), Staff Sgt. Evan Imbriglio (Loadmaster), Tech. Sgt. Joseph Caponi (Loadmaster), Staff Sgt. Corey Berke (Loadmaster), Capt. Jonathan Guagenti (Pilot) and Lt. Col. Andrew Townsend (Pilot). Courtesy photo.

"Our priorities – Safety, Strength, and Readiness – are the foundation for flexibility, adaptability, and mission success."

-- Brig. Gen. Denise Donnell, Assistant Adjutant General and Commander, New York Air National Guard





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Volume 15, Number 2

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**Spc. Ilies Benaiche, assigned to Bravo Company, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, dons his protective mask during the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade's Best Warrior competition at Guilderland Range, New York on March 19, 2022. The competition evaluated basic soldier skills while under stressful situations. Photo by Staff Sergeant Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.**



**FRONT COVER:** Spc. Austin Mannville, assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, exits the pool after performing his 100-meter swim, part of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge evaluation at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, April 6, 2022. Mannville competed for the qualification as part of his selection as Best Warrior in the enlisted category of the New York National Guard Best Warrior Competition. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavirajna, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

**BACK COVER:** Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment lead the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City, March 17, 2022. The 69th Infantry led the parade where city officials estimated more than 2 million showed up to watch. Photo by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times Staff.

# FACES of the FORCE

## 105<sup>th</sup> Airman Recognized for Life-Saving Actions

Story and photo by Airman 1st Class Michael Piccoli, 105th Airlift Wing

NEWBURGH, N.Y. -- Tech. Sgt. Woo Ham received an accommodation award after he saved an infant child from death while on a mission at New Jersey's Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, Dec. 4, 2021.

JBMDL is one of eight U.S. military bases designated to house Afghan refugees and is planned to be the last after things settle down. The refugees were living in temporary housing separated into four villages.

"I was assigned to village three as a liaison officer," said Ham who volunteered for this mission.

As he walked past a crowd of refugees, he saw a distraught Airman who told him there was an infant who was unconscious.

Ham, who is also a member of the NYPD and a CPR instructor, immediately leaped into action. He performed CPR on the infant until he became conscious and was able to bring the child to an EMT.

The infant's parents were not immediately found. Ham had to link up with security forces to try and find the child's parents.

"We began systematically canvassing the village," said Ham. "We used the locals as translators and were finally able to locate the family in about an hour."

Ham said helping those refugees in need was amazing and has also been one of the most rewarding experiences of his military career. **gt**



Tech. Sgt. Woo Ham receives a commendation award at Stewart Air National Guard Base Dec. 4, 2021.

## Soldier Thanks Local Business for their Support

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Army National Guard 1st Lt. Christian Larrabee recognized the Speedy Medical Transport company in East Syracuse, New York, and its owner, Jim Dispenza, with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Award and Seven Seals Awards on May 17 for exemplary support to a military family in need.

Larrabee, a logistics staff officer assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry headquarters in Utica, N.Y., recommended Dispenza for the Patriot Award and Seven Seals Award to recognize the special contribution Speedy Medical Transport made for his military family.

"My grandfather, Giovanni (John) Rossi, passed away March 2 at 92 years old," Larrabee said. "He was a prior 27th Division Soldier and had a beautiful funeral with military honors. However, in planning his funeral, I searched far and wide and could not source a wheelchair accessible service for my grandmother to be able to attend her husband's services."

The referral for Dispenza came from a family coworker who already had received quality care for a military family before.

"Just when I had exhausted all the options that I could think of, it was by a miracle that an old coworker of my grandfather recommended

I reach out to Jim Dispenza, owner of Speedy Medical Transport. Jim had helped him in the past to get his father-in-law to a family gathering for Thanksgiving."

Dispenza personally used his position as owner to dispatch a driver and wheelchair-accessible van for my grandmother to be able to attend the wake and all services, Larrabee said.

"Jim had a history of helping people in need. Jim was incredible and went above and beyond to help us," he said. "I wanted to recognize Jim and Speedy Medical Transport officially in whatever capacity possible."

The award recognizes Dispenza and Speedy Medical Transport for "contributing to national security and protecting liberty and freedom by supporting employee participation in America's National Guard and Reserve force."

Dispenza said it was an honor to help with the funeral and he was thankful for the armed forces to recognize him and his employees.

He was just doing his job and being who he was when he offered to help, Dispenza said.

Larrabee said he wanted to recognize support for military members that went above and beyond a routine business service.

"Jim is a patriot and compassionate busi-

ness owner who deserved to be recognized," he said. "I am honored to have been a part of that process." **gt**



Army National Guard 1st Lt. Christian Larrabee presents the Speedy Medical Transport company in East Syracuse, New York, and its owner, Jim Dispenza, with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Award and Seven Seals Awards on May 17. Courtesy photo.

# Air Guard Spouse Receives Top Honors

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Cindy Meili, the wife of New York Air National Guard Col. John Meili, commander of the 152nd Air Intelligence Squadron, a component of the 174th Attack Wing, was named Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year for the National Guard.

Meili is assistant director for the Onondaga county veteran's service agency in Syracuse, N.Y.

Online voting determined the winners.

The company's award highlights military spouses who have made exceptional contributions to their community and who have a "deep commitment to the military community and our country", according to the company.

The award was founded in 2008.

Meili was nominated by her husband.

"She does a lot and deserves to be recognized, Col. Meili said. "Our spouses are in this with us; at

some point we have to recognize the contributions of our families. I am going to stand by her side," he explained

"I had no idea the impact of that award had and I was quickly going to learn," Meili said.

"While attending a town hall in D.C. that brought in spouses across the country, she saw the impact that spouses have on the military community," Meili said.

"They were changing policies and raising awareness and advocating for change for our military families," she said.

Meili said she understands the difficulties military families go through.

She has been a military spouse for 29 years, through her husband's move from the active Air Force to the Air National Guard.

She realized that the Guard can be called upon at any time and that the current programs available to

active duty families are not readily available to Guard families with members on long term active duty status, Meili said.

"By creating awareness in our surrounding communities we are better able to understand how we can support National Guard members and their families," she said.

Meili volunteers as a member of the National Military Spouses Advocacy Network, National Military Family Advisory Network and is a Key Spouse mentor.

These programs allow her to engage with family members and create a community of educating and mentoring while a family member is on a deployment or temporary duty.

She has spent countless hours helping veterans or military members transitioning as a civilian by updating many programs for the community that will assist them.

Military Spouse of the Year



Cindy Meili, wife of Air National Guard Col. John Meili, commander of the 152nd Air Intelligence Squadron, is the 2022 National Guard representative in the Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year program. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.

nominees are judged in five categories: leadership, communication, involvement, community building and compelling story. **gt**

# NY Guard Leader Honored for Lifetime of Service

Story by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard

ALBANY, N.Y. -- New York Guard Col. Glenn Marchi recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award from his alma mater, the State University of New York at Albany, College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, on April 27, 2022. The award recognized his military, federal and state, and civilian achievements.

Marchi, the commander of the New York Guard's 56th Area Command, received his Ph.D. in Information Science from the University in 1999 and has held numerous senior level positions in information technology. He is currently the Commissioner of Central and Information Services for Dutchess County Government in Poughkeepsie, New York.

Marchi's role as Commissioner of Central and Information Services directly contributed to Dutchess County being continuously recognized as a leader on the national level for technological innovation. The county earned the number one ranking in the nation, among mid-size county governments, in the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties annual Digital Counties Survey.



New York Guard Col. Glenn Marchi receives the SUNY Albany Lifetime Achievement Award in Albany, N.Y. April 27, 2022. Courtesy photo.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro congratulated Marchi and his entire team for being on the "forefront of Dutchess County's efforts to provide technology that is efficient, secure and accessible for our departments and residents."

Marchi's military service began in 1975 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany. In 1978, he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. Commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in 1980 he transferred to New York in 1983.

Marchi retired from the New York Army National Guard in 2010 with 35 years of military service.

Marchi joined the New York Guard in 2011 as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations and Training Officer. He was deployed as a liaison officer during Hurricane Irene in 2011 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012. In 2015, Marchi served as the commander of the 12th Regimental Training Institute before assuming his current command in 2018. **gt**

# AROUND THE STATE

## Troops Deliver Puck for Islanders' NHL game



ELMONT, N.Y. -- Eight New York Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company of the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, rappel down from the UBS Arena rafters for the ceremonial puck drop during Military Appreciation Night at the NHL Islanders vs Arizona Coyotes hockey game, January 21, 2022. The Soldiers joined with ten local area Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets and cadre for a military tribute before the game. The Islanders shutout the Coyotes in the game, 4-0. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantonio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

# NY Medical Readiness Tops Among Big States

Stories by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- The New York Army National Guard has been recognized as tops in medical readiness among large state forces across the entire National Guard.

Major General Jill Faris, the director of the National Guard Bureau's Office of the Joint Surgeon General, recognized New York April 26, 2022, during the Medical Team Conference at the National Guard Professional Education Center in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

The Best Overall Medical Readiness Award recognizes the work that leaders up and down the chain of command and medical personnel achieved during fiscal year 2021 to make medical readiness a priority, said Lt. Col. Luis Garcia, the New York deputy state surgeon.

"It starts with the leadership," Garcia said. "Nothing comes to fruition without support from the adjutant general down to everyone else in the unit."

The award is based on 90 percent of New York's Soldiers falling into Medical Readiness Categories 1 or 2, which means they are able to do their missions and deploy, Garcia explained.

This means Soldiers need to have good dental health, and also need to be up to date for annual flu shots and other required vaccines.

The effort to get Soldiers vaccinated for COVID-19 was not a part of the award evaluation.

New York's competitors included the states of Texas, California, and Illinois, among states with Army Guard forces exceeding 10,000.

States with smaller forces and those in the middle compete for their own medical readiness awards in separate categories.

The data comes from the MEDPROS-- Medical Protection System—which the Army uses to track Soldier health, Garcia said.

Making sure Soldiers are medically ready takes a lot of organization and planning, said Maj. Lance Woodward, the operations officer for the state surgeon's office.

The surgeon's office coordinates 18 to 20 months out to ensure that units deploying have enough medical readiness opportunities to ensure their Soldiers are fit, Woodward said.

At the same time, Medical Command and unit medical personnel evaluate individual re-



A New York Army National Guard medical specialist assigned to the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducts a physical at the Medical Command's Buffalo clinic, March 2, 2022. Courtesy photo.

ords to ensure Soldiers who need more time or help to meet standards get it, Woodward said.

"We do a great job of communicating with the medical contact in each unit to make sure each Soldier is taken care of," he said. **gt**

## Recruiters Judge Students' MRE prep skills



SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Brandon Moseman, a recruiter assigned to the Recruiting and Retention Battalion Bravo Company, tally's scores during a Meal Ready to Eat (MRE) cooking challenge at the BOCES Washington Saratoga held in Saratoga Springs, May 5, 2022. The event was sponsored by the New York National Guard and emulated a cooking TV show where the chefs have a limited amount of ingredients and must present a dish to a panel of four judges under a time limit. Moseman was both an organizer and judge for the event. At left, students open the MREs to begin their culinary planning. Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.

# THE JOINT FORCE

## Retired Brazilian Officer Keeps Partnership Strong

Story and photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing

LATHAM, N.Y. -- The New York National Guard state partnership with Brazil will benefit because a Brazilian army officer who helped launch the relationship will continue coordinating events as a Brazilian army civilian, according to Maj. David Myones, the officer who runs the New York partnership program.

Retired Col. Anderson Pedreira Silva, a 37-year military veteran, played a key role in getting the training partnership between the Brazilian military and the New York National Guard organized in 2019, Myones explained.

Pedreira Silva was on the first Brazilian military delegation to meet with New York National Guard leaders. His mission was to understand how the New York National Guard works so he could propose joint events, he explained.

The opportunity to continue his relationship with the New York National Guard, planning activities for future engagement, was a welcome surprise, he said.

"I was about to completely retire," Pedreira Silva said, but he welcomed the chance to serve the Brazilian Army General Staff in his new role.

"It was an honor for me," he said.

Now, as a "strategic planning analyst" he will continue working on State Partnership Program issues. He will play a major role in staff talks between U.S. Army leaders and their Brazilian coun-

terparts when joint training, to include state partnership events, are discussed.

This means the personal relationship remains in place, which makes it easier to coordinate exchanges, Myones said.

The National Guard State Partnership Program pairs a state National Guard with the military of another nation to build relationships. New York has had a State Partnership Program relationship with South Africa since 2003 and entered into an agreement with Brazil's military in March 2019.

Since August of 2021, the New York National Guard and Brazilian Army and Air Force have engaged in 10 exchange events. These included a combat search and rescue exercise in Brazil, a cyber warfare expert exchange, an exchange of remotely piloted aircraft crews and Air Guard C-17 support for American troops at a Brazilian army exercise.

Pedreira Silva organized the Brazilian army events.

"This type of exchange of best practices and ideas helps increase our interoperability, a common operating language and understanding between the U.S. and Brazilian militaries, further strengthening our partnership," Myones said.

Pedreira Silva played a key role in allocating slots for New York National Guard Soldiers and

Airmen at Brazil's jungle warfare school.

Pedreira Silva also participated in a visit of Brazilian chemical and biological warfare experts to New York City in October of 2021. The team observed a training exercise being held in the city and met with the New York National Guard's 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team and New York

City firefighters.

These kinds of soldier-to-soldier meetings, as well as high-level meetings are critical to the Brazilian-American relationship, Pedreira Silva said.

"As the two largest democracies of the Americas, we can develop ways to help other countries and our people with our experiences," Pedreira Silva said. **✶**



Brazilian army Col. Anderson Pedreira Silva and Army Sgt Maj. Robert Jenks, New York Army National Guard, meet with a New York City firefighter on board one of the city's fire boats during a National Guard State Partnership Program visit to the Fire Department New York's Randall's Island training site in New York City on Oct. 20 2021.

*"As the two largest democracies of the Americas, we can develop ways to help other countries and our people with our experiences,"*

*-- Anderson Pedreira Silva, Strategic Planning Analyst, Brazilian General Staff*





## Troops Train as EMTs

*Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff and Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing*

Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Kenneth Brown, assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, demonstrates the proper way to check a patient to instructor Andy Bershada, during emergency medical technician training conducted at the Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center in Farmingdale, New York on Jan. 17, 2022. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. -- It's Jan. 18, 2022, and 37 Soldiers and Airmen are at Long Island's Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center going through the steps for checking a patient's airways and blood pressure.

None of the 25 Soldiers and 12 Airmen are medics. They're volunteers, half-way through a 180-hour program designed to turn Guardsmen into emergency medical technicians, or EMTs.

"The trainers that we have are making sure we are equipped for the test and actual practical stuff in real life," said Staff Sgt. Kenneth Brown, an air transportation specialist assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing.

The program, directed by Governor Kathy Hochul, was a joint effort of the New York National Guard and the State Department of Health, provided 400 Guardsmen with medical training they can use while on state active duty.

Her goal, Hochul said, was to have more Guardsmen with basic medical skills who can help fill medical staffing shortages.

Eventually 334 Guard members earned their EMT certificate.

The Soldiers and Airmen completed month-long training modeled on a program used to

train New York City police officers, according to Instructor Andy Bershada, the owner of Flying Aces, a consulting company contracted to teach the Farmingdale course.

It's a tough training program, but the pass rate is about 90%, Bershada said.

"I want to give these guys kudos," Bershada said. "I'm very impressed with the professionalism and ability for these military students to absorb complex medical instruction."

The same day, another class of 40 troops was also underway at the Lexington Avenue Armory in Manhattan. Other sites were placed to run more classes in New York City, Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo.

"The Department of Health and our New York National Guard have been working side-by-side to fight this pandemic since day one and I am proud to see this innovative plan between the two agencies come to fruition. When times get tough, New Yorkers put their heads together and find solutions," Hochul said.

Those who pass the course will be certified by New York state as EMTs for three years.

Training more people as EMTs gives the Guard greater flexibility, said Army Brig. Gen.

Isabel Rivera Smith, the director of joint staff. Soldiers and Airmen also see the value in their civilian and military lives, she said.

Airman 1st Class Aziza Alieva, a firefighter assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, said she appreciated the instructor's hands on approach and sharing real world lessons.

That training approach makes the class more effective for her, she added.

Spc. Nicholas Zerella, a member of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, and New York City firefighter, said the training was first rate.

"It's a great opportunity," Zerella said.

Being able to help made him sign up, said Staff Sgt. Tyrone Price, a member of the 1569th Transportation Company, transit railroad motorman in civilian life, and the class leader.

"I just want to help out the best way I know how and most professional way I can," he said.

Spc. Robert Coleman, a member of the 719th Transportation Company and postal worker in civilian life, said taking the class was important.

"This training could save someone's life,"

Coleman said.

"It's a big deal to have someone's life in your hands," he added. **gt**

# State Partnership Helps Future Leaders

## South Africa and West Point Agree to Shared Training

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY, West Point, N.Y. -- New York National Guard leaders were present April 20, 2022, when representatives of the U.S. Military Academy and South Africa's Stellenbosch University --which trains that nation's military officers-- signed an agreement launching a cadet and faculty exchange program between the two countries at West Point.

Major General Michel Natali, the assistant adjutant general, Army, was present as a representative of the New York Guard's training partnership with the South African National Defence Force.

Under the agreement, faculty and cadets from West Point will visit the South African Military Academy, which is run for the South African National Defence Force by Stellenbosch University.

Eventually, the goal is to have South African cadets study at the United States Military Academy, with American cadets spending time studying in South Africa.

New York Army Guard Lt. Col. Al Phillips, then a major serving as the deputy chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, managed the administrative process of putting the agreement in place in 2020.

Phillips organized exchanges between the South African military and the New York National Guard under the State Partnership Program. New York has had a partnership agreement with South Africa since 2003.

Phillips, who now commands the 10th Main Command Post-Operational Detachment, was also part of the National Guard delegation at the signing ceremony.

"I am always proud as a New

York National Guardsman when we invest time, resources and energy into something that produces dividends and this agreement today will produce significant dividends for all parties involved," Phillips said.

This kind of partnership agreement could also expand to include New York's 106th Regional Training Institute, which provides training for National Guard Soldiers, and South African military schools, Phillips said.

Like West Point, the training institute has been in discussions with South African military leaders to offer courses from its catalog such as NCO Development, Combatives, Master Fitness Training and Officer Candidate Courses.

New York has conducted regular exchanges with South Africa, sending Air Guard firefighters to train with their counterparts, military police Soldiers teaching skills, and conferences with military chaplains and senior leaders.

On April 21, New York leaders also coordinated a visit to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point in New York City for the 10-member South African delegation, made up of both military and academic officials.

The group received a briefing on the academy's training program and visited key training facilities.

The South African delegation also visited the New York National Guard's historic Harlem Armory for talks and a tour of the facility.

The armory was built between 1921 and 1933 to house the 369th Infantry Regiment, which became famous during World War I as the Harlem Hell Fighters.

The armory was renovated at



New York Assistant Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Michel Natali meets with Vice Admiral A. E. Kubu, Chief Human Resources for the South African National Defence Force at West Point, N.Y. April 20, 2022. The South Africans met with officials at the United States Military Academy at West Point to sign an agreement setting up an exchange program with South Africa's officer education program. The New York National Guard has had a State Partnership Program agreement with the South African National Defence Force since 2003. Photo by Lt. Col. Al Phillips, 10th Mountain Command Post Operational Detachment.

a cost of \$62 million and serves as a key node during emergency response missions.

The South African delegation also received a helicopter-eye

view of Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty as they traveled from Kings Point to a Manhattan helipad for the meeting at the Harlem Armory. **gt**



Army National Guard Major Anthony McLean, the executive officer of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, conducts a tour of the brigade's historic Harlem Armory, in New York, for a delegation of South African officers and academics on April 21, 2022. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.



# County Leaders Thank Guard Troops

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters

Schenectady County Legislators Michelle Ostrellich and Gary Hughes meet with members of the New York National Guard deployed at the Glendale Home in Glenville, New York, thanking them for their assistance March 25, 2022. The Glendale Home is a 200-bed nursing home, where seven Soldiers and New York Guard state defense force volunteers deployed to assist with the care of residents during the recent COVID-19 Omicron surge. Below, SHughes thanks New York Army National Guard Sgt. Olivia Mannetti for her service at the Glendale Home.

GLENVILLE, N.Y. – Schenectady County legislators honored New York National Guard Soldiers and New York Guard volunteers deployed to assist the Schenectady Glendale Home Friday, March 25, 2022.

County legislators Michelle Ostrellich and Gary Hughes met with the five personnel serving on active-duty orders since December 2021 to bolster the workforce of the nursing home.

New York Guard Sgts. Stephan Hershenfeld and Shreeganes Meade, along with Sgt. Olivia Mannetti, Sgt. Michael Shaw and Spc. Charles Burton of the New York Army National Guard were honored at a small ceremony held at the Glendale Home.

Staff Sgt. Felix Cruz and Spc. Keegan Holt were also honored but could not attend the ceremony.

Ostrellich, who chairs the county’s health, housing and human services committee, presented an official proclamation to the Soldiers, thanking them for the assistance they provided.

They are among 485 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen on duty at 87 nursing homes to help ease staffing shortages.

“We really needed the help, and the Soldiers came at just the right time,” Ostrellich said. “Our appreciation for their efforts cannot be overstated.”

Glendale Home is a 200-bed facility that

offers short term rehabilitation and long-term care, and like many such facilities, the COVID-19 Omicron variant surge offered a new set of challenges.

The Guard members are part of a mission that kicked off at the beginning of December 2021 at the direction of new York Governor Kathy Hochul.

A surge in COVID-19 cases threatened to overload hospitals. But a shortage of nursing facility staff meant older patients could not be moved from hospitals to nursing homes.

The goal, the governor explained at the time, was to relieve staffing shortages in nursing facilities so that patients in hospitals could move into those facilities and, in turn, free up hospital beds.

At the governor’s direction, the New York National Guard initially identified 120 Army Guard medics and Air Guard medical technicians who could go on duty in nursing homes to help with patient care and free up staff.

The Soldiers said they were eager to take some of the workload off the staff.

Mannetti, a combat medic assigned to 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, just came back from a deployment to Iraq, and was grateful for the learning experience.

“Our job as medics is normally focused on battlefield medicine,” Mannetti said. “This



assignment was more about long term care, which is a very different field. I enjoyed the challenge, and the skills I learned along the way will likely come in handy down the road.”

Hershenfeld, who’s full-time job is a hazmat paramedic with the New York City Fire Department, also appreciated learning a new aspect of healthcare.

“Geriatric care is something I wasn’t very familiar with, and it’s something that can be hard to fully understand unless you actually do it,” Hershenfeld said. “There will no doubt be situations where what I learned here will come in handy for my day job.”

The troops remained on duty supporting the facility until the end of May. **gt**

# Airmen Discuss Space Ops with Brazilian Peers

## Visit to Brazil brings Space Domain to New York's state partnership program

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

BRASILIA, Brazil--Three New York Air National Guard Airmen spent April 18 to 25 sharing their knowledge of space operations and their organization with Brazilian airmen assigned to that country's Aerospace Operations Command.

The visit by the New York Airmen, assigned to the 222nd Command and Control Squadron, was the latest exchange under the State Partnership Program agreement the New York National Guard initiated with Brazil in 2018. It was also the fourth time the New York National Guard's space experts have met with their Brazilian counterparts to discuss space operations.

The 222nd Command and Control Squadron, based in Rome, New York, has a mission of providing personnel to augment operations of the National Reconnaissance Office.

The National Reconnaissance Office is the agency responsible for operating the United States network of spy satellites and providing space-based intelligence to the Department of Defense and other agencies.

If a Space National Guard is created, the 222nd would be New York's component of that force.

The State Partnership Program links state National Guard forces with militaries in other nations to develop relationships and share information. New York has also had a partnership program relationship with the South African National Defense Force since 2003.

The Brazilians are seeking to develop their own military space operations program and join the system of space domain awareness the United States utilizes,



Air National Guard Airmen from the 222nd Command and Control Squadron, which augments the U.S. agency managing American surveillance satellites, pose with Brazilian officials at Brazil's Space Operations Center in Brasilia, the country's capital on April 19, 2022. The Guard Airmen were there as part of a State Partnership Program exchange. Courtesy photo,

said Capt. Leah Elsbeck, the space operations officer for the 222nd.

She also serves as the space liaison for the New York National Guard's State Partnership Program office.

The purpose of the exchange is to provide the Brazilians with helpful information and lessons learned by the United States they can use as they shape their own program, Elsbeck explained.

Lt. Col. Chris Graziano, the 222nd's chief of plans and strategy, and Staff Sgt. Ryan Keenen, a counterspace intelligence analyst, also took part in the exchange with Elsbeck. A civilian representative from United States Space Command's headquarters, Chad Goldlewski, was also part of the team.

Many of the discussions centered on managing data and how to keep track of more than 27,000 objects orbiting the earth, Elsbeck said.

These range from the International Space Station to pieces of satellites blown up in weapon tests, according to NASA.

"We discussed with them the way to collect, and store their information to make it accessible," Elsbeck said.

While the 222nd members specialize in working with the National Reconnaissance Office, they are also up to date in the latest Space Force doctrine and shared that organizational information with the Brazilians, she said.

The 222nd is working to integrate the Brazilians with an existing Space Domain Awareness network used by the U.S. Space Force, the National Guard, commercial partners and allied countries, Elsbeck said.

The effort is being conducted as part of Space Command's Joint Task Force Space Defense Joint Commercial Operations, or JTF-

SD JCO for short, she said.

Brazil can contribute to this effort because it will have telescopes and sensors located near the equator which can fill in gaps in the current tracking system, Elsbeck said.

The team discussed Brazil's upcoming launch of two satellites into an orbit in which the country currently does not operate, highlighting the advantages and challenges that come with that expansion, she added.

Additional discussion points included Brazilian integration into United States space operations through annual exercises with both active duty and the National Guard.

The New York team visited the Brazilian Air Force's Space Operations Center in Brasilia, the nation's capital.

They also met with officials at the Brazilian Aeronautical Institute of Technology in Sao Jose dos Campos. The Aeronautical Institute of Technology is a joint military-civilian academic research effort.

It is one of the top engineering schools in Brazil and engages in advanced research in aerospace science and technology, according to the institute's website. [gt](#)





## Task Force Empire Shield Welcomes New Leadership

*NEW YORK -- Joint Task Force Empire Shield, the standing homeland security task force based at Fort Hamilton, New York, held a change of command ceremony to welcome Army National Guard Lt. Col. Jeffrey Roth on May 9, 2022.*

*Roth assumed command of Joint Task Force Empire Shield - a unit composed of up to 750 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen- who work with law enforcement agencies in New York City to secure transportation hubs.*

*The members of Joint Task Force Empire Shield are under the command of Gov. Kathy Hochul and perform their duties in a state active duty status. While serving full-time in his homeland security capacity, the members also serve in their assigned Army and Air National Guard units and perform federal military duties.*

*Roth concurrently commands the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.*

*Salas retires after a 32-year military career. He served in the U.S. Marine Corp and Marine Corps Reserve from 1987 to 2000 before joining the New York Air National Guard in 2003.*

*Salas has commanded Empire Shield since May 2019. He received the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal from Brig. Gen. Isabel Smith, the New York National Guard Director of the Joint Staff for his leadership.*

*In the photo above, the task force presents colors for the change of command ceremony. At right, Roth passes the colors of the task force back to Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Giamberdino, the task force senior enlisted advisor, signifying his first role as the new commander.*

*Photos by Capt Mark Getman, New York Guard.*



## NY Soldiers Represent as Guard's Best Medics

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Two medics from Syracuse, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, were among 44 Soldiers competing to be the Army's best medics competition at Fort Hood, Texas, January 24 to 28.

Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter, the Headquarters Company medical platoon sergeant, and Sgt. Ethan Hart, a medic in Delamarter's platoon, were the only National Guard Soldiers vying for the title during the Command Sgt. Major Jack L. Clark Best Medic competition.

They didn't win, but just being among the 21 two-Soldier teams to finish the Army Medical Command competition put them in a select category among the Army's 82,149 medical personnel, said Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, the surgeon general of the Army.

"What you have right here, out of that 82,000 plus Army medicine Soldiers, are the world's best medics," Dingle said during remarks at the award ceremony.

It was physically and mentally demanding, the weather was rainy and cold, the ruck marches were long, the days were long, there was too little sleep and they felt like they fit right in, the two Soldiers said.

"Everybody there was super humble, whether they were coming from a special operations unit or any other unit in the Army," Hart said. "There was a good comradery."

The two wound up at Fort Hood because New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major David Piwowarski thought there should be a New York National Guard medic team in the Army competition.

To compete, candidates had

to be either Expert Field Medic Badge or Combat Medic Badge qualified.

"These two NCOs stepped up," Markle said.

Delamarter, who also serves as the Headquarters Company training NCO at the 108th's armory in Utica, held the Combat Medic Badge from a 2012 Afghanistan deployment. Hart had recently earned the Expert Field Medic Badge in the fall during at Fort Drum.

Hart and Delamarter had two months to get ready for the competition. They focused on physical fitness. They live near enough to each other that they could work out at the same gym.

"We knew it was going to be a marathon rather than a sprint," Delamarter said. "We started doing more unorthodox things at the gym to build endurance."

Thinking marathon, not sprint, was the right strategy the two discovered when the event kicked off.

"It was very endurance heavy," Delamarter said. "As long as we could ruck and run, move patients from here to there, we were set up



Sgt. Ethan Hart and Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, transport a casualty during the Army's Best Medic Competition at Fort Hood, Texas on January 27, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Herman, III Corps Headquarters.

for success. It was just a matter of how long we could do it."

"It ended up being three and a half, almost four days, of beating up our bodies," he added.

While there were a lot of physical demands, there was also very

little sleep, the two said. The most sleep they got was five hours one night, Delamarter said.

Competition events included a 13-mile march in the rain, M-4 rifle marksmanship, carrying simulated casualties using a two-man litter and dragging a patient in a plastic sked."

At the same time, the Soldiers were carrying rucksacks weighing 65 or so pounds.

It rained regularly during the competition. The 13-mile march carrying 65 pounds was done in the rain, so it was harder to move, Hart said.

A challenge for him was the water combat survival event, Hart said.

Each team jumped into a pool in full combat gear, ditched the gear at the bottom of the pool, surfaced and swam to the aid of a casualty. While one teammate conducted



Sgt. Ethan Hart and Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, assess a casualty during the Army's Best Medic Competition at Fort Hood, Texas on January 27, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Herman, III Corps Headquarters.



Sgt. Ethan Hart and Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, transport a casualty during the Army's Best Medic Competition at Fort Hood, Texas on January 27, 2022. Photo by Spc. Bradley McKinley, III Corps Headquarters.

cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the other had to swim back, and retrieve the equipment.

They were also expected to tread water in combat boots for five minutes and make a float from their gear to stay up in the water, Hart said.

"It was pretty rough," he recalled. "I didn't think I could be so close to death for so long."

Another task involved pulling a casualty out of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and moving him to an evacuation point.

That task required caring for the badly wounded Soldier for four hours while waiting for the medevac, Delamarter said.

The Soldiers were given a field

operations order at the start of the three-and-half days of competition and then the mission kept changing, they said.

Despite the physical demands, lack of sleep and being damp, getting the chance to compete was the best reward for being there, Hart and Delamarter said.

"It is not an opportunity that somebody gives you freely," Hart said. "It is a once in a career opportunity."

"I didn't want to miss the challenge. I wanted to see where I stack up against the rest of the Army," he added. **gt**



Sgt. Ethan Hart and Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, assess a simulated casualty during the Army's Best Medic Competition at Fort Hood, Texas on January 27, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Desmond Cassell, III Corps Headquarters.

**"Everybody there was super humble, whether they were coming from a special operations unit or any other unit in the Army. There was a good comradery."**

*-- Sgt. Ethan Hart, combat medic, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry*

# 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Plans for Uncertain Future

Story and photo by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Leaders from across the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team focused on preparing Soldiers for this summer's deployments, developing leaders and building esprit de corps during their February 26-27 drill weekend.

The officers and senior NCOs spent the first day planning for upcoming deployments to Africa and the Middle East. The second day used the lessons of the brigade's World War II history when it was the 27th Infantry Division, to discuss the Army's new operational doctrines.

The event coincided with a celebration of the 124th birthday of the 27th Infantry Division.

The weekend began with spending an entire day planning pre-mobilization training that will take place this June and July at Fort Drum. The training will validate units' combat skills at the squad, platoon and company levels before additional training at mobilization

stations, followed by deployment overseas.

The brigade is sending more than 1,000 Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment and other units across the state to conduct security missions in the horn of Africa. It represents one of the largest overseas deployments for the New York National Guard in the last decade.

Additionally, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment will head to the Middle East in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

"Our commitment here in the 27th Brigade, the 42nd Infantry Division and the New York Army National Guard to our families is that we will do everything within our power to train aggressively and train well," said Col. Sean Flynn, the brigade commander.

The following day focused on teaching the Army's emerging operational concept of Multi-Domain Operations, in which land, sea,



Capt. Nicholas Charnley, Maj. Dermot Gavin and Maj. Jared Kausner, assigned to the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, discuss the theoretical application of multi-domain operations in a modern-day version of the World War II Battle of Saipan during a leaders workshop in Syracuse, New York, Feb. 26, 2022.

air space and cyberspace capabilities are employed simultaneously, rapidly, and continuously against an enemy.

But this was no ordinary professional development seminar. The 27th took a unique approach.

"We're attempting to put (Multi-Domain Operations) into a historical perspective by looking at the Battle for Saipan in (June) 1944 in the Pacific of World War II," explained Lt. Col. Marshall Hunt, the 27th's executive officer.

After learning how predecessors in the 27th Division conducted the battle, the brigade staff, along with maneuver battalions were tasked to think through how they would conduct the operation using today's units and equipment against a peer competitor.

"We have to think about fighting in an environment where our enemy has every advantage that we do. In some cases, they may have more advantages than we do. We have to change that mindset," Flynn said.

Flynn explained that the campaign on Saipan offers particularly

good context for understanding the maneuver warfighting function.

"The fact that there's three divisions maneuvering with air and sea support makes it a very good operation to use to visualize, to practice and, of course, since it's our own heritage, it's good to know what our grandfathers did and, in some cases, our great-grandfathers," Flynn said.

For some, including 1st Sgt. Alexander Gomez, the senior NCO for Fox Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, the full weekend training was a first.

"It was really interesting to see how leaders get together, and how generals see the big picture and the overall mission of the National Guard," Gomez said.

"It boils down to how we're going to take all this training and all this mentorship back to our junior Soldiers and NCOs to make them better. I feel that this makes me better, stronger and a better leader for the future." **gt**



## 69<sup>th</sup> Soldiers Train for Deployment

JOINT BASE DIX MAGUIRE LAKEHURST, New Jersey -- Soldiers assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry conduct 60mm mortar training at the Fort Dix Range Complex February 23, 2022. The company is preparing to deploy this summer in support of security missions on the Horn of Africa. Photo courtesy of the Fort Dix Training Support Center.



# Army Revises Combat Fitness Test for Soldiers

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Will Reinier, Army News Service

WASHINGTON – The Army Combat Fitness Test, or ACFT, will undergo more revisions as National Guard Soldiers prepare for its full implementation in 2023.

Among the key changes announced by the Army are new age- and gender-performance normed scoring scales; the replacement of the leg tuck with the plank for the core-strength assessment; and the addition of the 2.5-mile walk as an alternate aerobic event.

Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth issued an Army Directive March 23 outlining a time-phased implementation of the revised ACFT as the Army's physical fitness test.

Changes made to the ACFT incorporates feedback from Soldiers and independent analysis of test performance.

"The ACFT is an essential part of maintaining the readiness of the Army as we transform into the Army of 2030," Wormuth said.

"The revisions to the ACFT are based on data and analysis, including an independent assessment required by Congress. We will continue to assess our implementation of the test to ensure it is fair and achieves our goal of strengthening the Army's fitness culture."

A common concern identified was that a gender-neutral test might not accurately measure all Soldiers' general physical

**ACFT ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST EVENTS**

- 3 REPETITION MAXIMUM DEADLIFT (MDL)
- STANDING POWER THROW (SPT)
- HAND RELEASE PUSH-UP ARM EXTENSION (HRP)
- SPRINT-DRAG-CARRY (SDC)
- PLANK (PLK)
- TWO-MILE RUN (2MR)\*

\* The 2.5 mile walk has been added as an alternate aerobic event along with the row, bike, and swim

**ACFT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

- ★ APRIL 1, 2022: Soldiers continue to take diagnostic tests
- ★ OCTOBER 1, 2022: Regular Army and Active Guard Reserve start taking the ACFT for record
- ★ APRIL 1, 2023: Reserve Component Soldiers start taking the ACFT for record. All Regular Army and Active Guard Reserve Soldiers must have a record ACFT
- ★ APRIL 1, 2024: Reserve Component Soldiers must have a record ACFT

For more info: <https://www.army.mil/acft>

**TIME-PHASED PERSONNEL POLICY**

	PME	FLAGS REENLISTMENT EVALUATIONS	NCO EVAL BOARD	E5/E6 PROMOTION POINTS	SEPARATIONS
REGULAR ARMY/AGR		October 1, 2022		April 1, 2023	
ARMY RESERVE	Oct 1, 2022		April 1, 2023		April 1, 2024
NATIONAL GUARD	Oct 1, 2022		April 1, 2023	Will be issued by DARNG	April 1, 2024

fitness levels.

Soldiers might have the core strength that is not accurately measured if they lack the upper body strength required to perform a leg tuck. Now, the plank will be the sole exercise to assess core strength.

The revised ACFT will utilize scoring scales that are age and gender normed, similar to the APFT. The Army designed the new scales from nearly 630,000 ACFT performance scores, historical performance rates from the APFT, and scoring scales used by other military

services.

The Army will continue to assess performance data and established an ACFT governance body to provide oversight of the new test.

Unlike the APFT, which went largely unchanged for 40 years, Army leaders believe the ACFT must be adaptable.

"Since 2018 we've said this test would evolve, and it has," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston.

The six-event ACFT now provides commanders and Soldiers an accurate assessment of a Soldier's physical fitness level and

sustains the Army's efforts to maintain a physically fit force capable of a wide range of missions.

Beginning April 1, units will start diagnostic testing. Record testing begins for Regular Army and Active Guard Reserve Soldiers on October 1, 2022, to allow six-months to train.

Also on October 1, a passing ACFT score will be used for graduation of initial military training, military education, and evaluation reports for Regular Army and Active Guard Reserve Soldiers.

The Army also approved timelines for Army Guard

Soldiers, with April 2023 the start point.

"During this transition, we want to make sure all Soldiers have the proper time to succeed," Grinston explained. "Put the test on the calendar and make sure your Soldiers have a solid training plan."

There are a number of resources to help Soldiers train, including workout programs and videos of exercises – many of which require no equipment.

For full details on ACFT implementation, visit [www.army.mil/acft](https://www.army.mil/acft).

# Groundbreaking in Bronx

Story and photos by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing

**NEW YORK --** The New York National Guard kicked off a \$10 million upgrade of a 1950s-era armory in the Bronx with a formal groundbreaking ceremony on March 3.

Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, the adjutant general, joined New York State Office of General Services Commissioner Jeanette Moy to launch the revamp of the Bronx Armory complex.

The armory at 10 West 195th Street was originally the administrative annex of the massive Kingsbridge Armory next door, which was built between 1912 and 1917. The two buildings now beginning their upgrade were first constructed to complement the larger armory structure in 1950 and 1957.

These buildings include administrative, storage and training spaces as well as a vehicle storage building.

The New York National Guard transferred title to the Kingsbridge Armory to New York City in 1996 and the city has explored multiple uses for the facility, but it still stands vacant.

The old administrative space, though, houses the 100 Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.

"The project is all about our Sol-

diers," Shields said in his remarks.

Back in 2004, Shields said, the first sergeant of the unit stationed here complained that the building was substandard. It's taken 18 years, but the work is finally being done, he said.

The building renovation is funded by New York state, which shows the priority Governor Kathy Hochul places on the National Guard, Shields said.

"It's so crucial because the governor sees all the time how important our Soldiers are," Shields said. "I think it's just a great demonstration of the state's commitment to our Soldiers."

In her remarks, Moy said the New York National Guard was one of her agencies' most important clients.

"Considering what is happening today in the world, what's happening here in New York, being able to give back by being able to help us renovate this historic facility to contribute to the mission in the readiness of the troops, that means a lot to us," Moy said.

The Office of General Services is responsible for the construction and upkeep of New York state buildings and is overseeing the armory upgrade project.

Capt. Zachary Rowland, the battery commander, said he was



New York State Office of General Services Commissioner Jeanette Moy, Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, the adjutant general, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Roth, commander of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery and Capt. Zachary Rowland, Bravo Battery Commander, break ceremonial ground at the Bronx Armory Complex on March 3, 2022.

happy to see the investment being made in the building.

"A lot of the Soldiers are from the Bronx, from this area, so they take pride in being from the Bronx," Rowland said.

"So to see this kind of investment in Bravo Battery and this community means a lot to the Soldiers because it is their backyard," he added.

The contract calls for replacing all roofing and windows as well as rehabilitating the electrical, plumbing, air condition and heating systems. The interior space - offices, locker rooms, storage areas, classrooms and latrines - will be

redesigned for modern office computer and phone systems.

The buildings will also be made compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Fratello Construction Corporation, based in Farmingdale on Long Island, received the construction contract for \$9,033,108 in December 2021. The work is due to be completed in April of 2023.

The Soldiers who drill in the facility are currently drilling at New York's Camp Smith Training Site located about a 45 minute drive north in Cortlandt Manor. **gt**



## New 719<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company Commander

CAMP SMITH, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. -- Capt. Eric Samson received the guidon of the 719th Transportation Company from Lt. Col. Michael Bedryk, commander of the 369th Special Troops Battalion, during a ceremony observed by Samson's mother Anne, Feb. 6, 2022. Photos by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.



# Five NY Units Running to Win Maintenance Excellence Awards

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM, N.Y. – Maintenance Soldiers from five New York Army National Guard units are in the running to win the Army Award of Maintenance Excellence.

The Army selected the five as semifinalists in December 2021 and the on-site evaluations at their armories took place from March 12 to 20.

The five units, nominated across three categories, are:

- The 145th Support Maintenance Company, on Staten Island, part of the 369th Sustainment Brigade. The unit is being evaluated in the medium unit category for deployable units.

- The 204th Engineer Battalion's Forward Support Company, based in Binghamton, and assigned to the 53rd Troop Command. The unit is competing in the small unit category for deployable units.

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion, which is part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, based in Syracuse. The maintenance team there is competing in the small unit category for deployable units.

- Combined Support Maintenance Shop-C in Rochester. This unit, which supports units across the region is competing in the installation support category.

- Field Maintenance Shop-13 located in Binghamton, which is also competing in the installation support category.

The Army Maintenance Excellence Award, created in 1982, recognizes Army units with excellence in maintenance operations.

Nominations come from across all Army components, with up to 157 nominees across a dozen categories.

The Army National Guard is eligible for up to 40 nominees in four categories, so having five semi-finalists from New York is a significant achievement on its own, explained Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tyler Clough.

Clough is the Battalion Maintenance Officer for the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion and the mainte-

nance award program coordinator.

While visiting units, evaluators met with personnel and reviewed maintenance records, policies and procedures.

"The Phase 2 evaluation was more in-depth than what I expected, but we were prepared and I felt good about the evaluation when the team left," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Morgan Gorman, supervisor of Field Maintenance Shop-13, known as an FMS, in Binghamton.

Nominated units were screened for mission accomplishment, weapon system and equip-

ate the opportunity to showcase their hard work.

"This began with us submitting a packet for them to come and evaluate us," said Capt. Rachid Kabbabe, commander of the 145th Maintenance Company. "We will be ranked on how well our unit functions, (our) safety procedures and several other tasks that prove our proficiency as a maintenance unit."

Evaluations looked at all the key functions of the unit, from maintenance management, to supply, arms rooms, tools, shop and testing equipment, environment management and the unit battery programs.

The inspections also looked beyond the basic policies of a shop, looking to see if the organization is developing future maintenance experts, Gorman explained.

"The advantage of being an FMS as opposed to a National Guard unit is that we are here all year," he added.

"We rotate additional duties within the FMS, so our future leaders know how to manage multiple programs. I think that is what the evaluation team wanted to see."

Unit leaders agreed the evaluation provided insights to improve.

"From a leadership perspective, this evaluation was an outstanding opportunity to take an honest inventory of our maintenance operation," Kabbabe said.

"The great part about the onsite visit was not only were we evaluated by an external source, but provided valuable insight to better ourselves," said Capt. Tim Anzovino, commander of 204th Engineer Battalion Forward Support Company.

"That makes the organization better as a whole," Anzovino said.

"A lot of Soldiers think they are merely doing their jobs and don't take the time to realize how talented and dedicated they really are; or how much of an asset they are to the New York Army Guard as a whole," Anzovino said.

Winners receive a plaque and Certificate of Achievement from the Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin. **gt**



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jeffrey Swem, program coordinator for the Department of the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence, inspects an M4 rifle for cleanliness handed to him by Warrant Officer Gary Coleman and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Maclean, both assigned to the 145th Maintenance Company, during the unit evaluation at the Staten Island Armory, March 20, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavirojna, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

ment readiness and deployment participation and successes, among other criteria within the Command Maintenance Discipline Program.

The program is the basis of the award evaluation. The program ensures commanders are fiscally responsible, maintain and account for their equipment, and follow established Army Supply procedures, Clough said.

"I'm here to evaluate their overall Command Maintenance Discipline Program process and gauge the readiness of the unit," explained David Hausler, the Department of the Army program manager during the unit visit to the 145th Maintenance Company on Staten Island, on March 20.

Soldiers said they were confident and appreci-

# NY Soldiers Compete to be Named 'Best Warrior'

Story by Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavirojna, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y. -- Heavy rain and cold winds descended on Camp Smith, and the smells of gunmetal and sweat mixed with mud as the sounds of gunfire echoed across the wood line, as six Soldiers competed to be the New York Army National Guard 2022 Best Warrior, from April 6 to 8.

In the end, Spc. Austin Mannville, from Rochester, N.Y., a cavalry trooper with Charlie Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, won the junior enlisted title.

Manville, featured on this issue's cover photo,

also won the regional competition and was preparing to compete in the national event in Nashville, Tennessee in July.

Meanwhile, Staff Sgt. Alexander Sanchez, from Baldwinsville, N.Y., a military police Soldier with the 222nd Military Police Company, part of the 153rd Troop Command, was named winner in the non-commissioned officer category.

"It's a great honor to represent the cavalry and 27th (Brigade)," Mannville said. "It's been a long time coming. I'm ready for the next competition to give it all I got and bring it back home."

The Best Warrior tests a Soldier's physical

they perform under stress, Piwowski said.

"The Best Warrior is the only competition where enlisted Soldiers and NCOs can compete individually and show what they can do as a Soldier," Piwowski said.

"Normally, when a unit does something well, the leaders get all the credit. This is all about the individual Soldier doing their best – that's what good and unique about it," he added.

Soldiers across New York previously participated in brigade-level competitions to advance to the state level. Soldiers from the 153rd Troop Command, 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and 369th Sustainment Brigade made the cut, but only Mannville and Sanchez will continue on to compete at the regional level.

"I just really liked to see what I can do against the best Soldiers," Sanchez said. "I do it because I enjoy pushing myself."

Although Best Warrior is a solo competition, the competitors kept each other's spirits high, said Sgt. Gavin Winkler, assigned to 719th Composite Truck Company competing on behalf of the 369th Sustainment Brigade.

"The others motivated me to do my best," Winkler. "There is a sense of camaraderie, and everyone wants to see each other do well."

The demanding three-day competition included events such as M-4 rifle qualification, the Army Combat Fitness Test, night into day land navigation and several other tactical events that are finished by a 12-mile road march.

"I see Best Warrior as twofold," said Maj. Doug Berinstein, the competition officer in charge from the Joint Force Headquarters. "One, we identify the best Soldiers in our ranks. But we also want to provide unique training opportunities these Soldiers wouldn't normally be able to get."

"The more difficult and miserable the conditions, the better the training and this demonstrates how tough our Soldiers are," Berinstein said. "Hopefully, the Soldiers will be able to leave this competition with good memories."

The event also brought back the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency test, which added additional tests like pistol qualification and swimming in full uniform. The evaluation was removed in 2021 due to



Spc. Arnaldo Santos, assigned to the 222nd Military Police Company, shoots during a simulated attack while competing in the Best Warrior Competition at Camp Smith, Apr. 7, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavirojna, 138th Public Affairs Detachment. Below, Staff Sgt. Alexander Sanchez, assigned to the 222nd Military Police Company, prepares for the deadlift portion of the Army Combat Fitness Test during competition at Camp Smith, April 6, 2022. Sanchez earned the title of Best NCO. Photo by Pfc. Jean Sanon, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.



endurance, military knowledge, current events, and mental perseverance, said State Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowski, the senior enlisted advisor for the New York Army National Guard and NCO in charge of the event.

"These Soldiers represent some of the best New York has in uniform," Piwowski said.

The competition was an opportunity for warriors to highlight their military skills in a competitive environment and measures how well



New York Army National Guard competitors conduct weapons qualification as part of the Best Warrior Competition April 6, 2022 at the Camp Smith Training Site. The three-day event tested Soldiers on their Army knowledge, physical fitness, and tactical prowess, ending in a 12-mile road march. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavrojna, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.



Spc. Arnaldo Santos, assigned to the 222nd Military Police Company, performs the 100-meter swim, part of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge evaluation at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, April 6, 2022. Santos competed for the qualification as part of the New York National Guard Best Warrior Competition. Photo by Pfc. Jean Sanon, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

limitations related to COVID-19.

“The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge was established to determine how proficient Soldiers are at marksmanship and physical fitness,” said German army Sgt. Maj. Timo Braese, the senior enlisted advisor at West Point who assisted in the evaluation.

“Guard and Reserve units don’t have these opportunities normally,” he said. “I think it’s great we can provide that.”

The harsh weather, strenuous events, and little sleep wasn’t the only difficulty facing the troops, explained Spc. Ilies Benaiche, assigned to Bravo Company, 642 Aviation Support Battalion, competing for the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Benaiche is a practicing Muslim and fasted for Ramadan during the competition.

Ramadan teaches self-discipline, self-control, sacrifice and empathy for those less fortunate and limits Muslims from eating or drinking during daylight.

“I believe I’m the first one to do it while fasting,” Benaiche said. “What motivated me is being able to test my limits and compete with the best the state had to offer.”

Sanchez finished third in the regional Best Warrior against eight other Northeastern states May 9-13 in Connecticut. 🇺🇸

## New York's Newest First Shirt



**NEW YORK** – 1st Sgt. Derrick Perez, the incoming first sergeant of the 133rd Composite Supply Company, 369th Sustainment Brigade, receives his promotion to first sergeant and is pinned by his daughter, prior to a change of responsibility ceremony marking the company’s change from outgoing 1st Sgt. Rebecca Santana at the U.S. Army Reserve Center on Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, N.Y., March 27, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

# 'Big Noise III' lends Big Lift

Story by Lt. Col. Roberta Comerford, Joint Force Headquarters

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. -- New York Army Guard aviators teamed up with New York State Park Police to move a 3,900-pound steel pontoon from the Niagara River on Wednesday, May 4, before it could go over the lip of Niagara Falls 100 yards away.

It took five minutes for the CH-47F belonging to Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation to move the pontoon from the river off Bird Island —where it had sat for 38 months— to a parking lot on nearby Goat Island.

A Park Police High Water Rescue Team waded into the river and attached cables from the hovering CH-47 so it could be hoisted.

The pontoon had broken away from the ice dam erected each winter where Lake Erie meets the Niagara River back in 2019.

The decision was made to move it this year out of concerns that it could go over the falls and crash into the “Cave of the Winds” section of Bridal Veil falls, according to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Weather played a role in mission execution.

Two CH-47s waited for fog, wind and rain to clear before departing from the Army Aviation Support Facility at Rochester International Airport in the afternoon.

The first aircraft conducted a reconnaissance of the area for debris or obstructions. The second Chinook —named “Big Noise III”— flew to the site to do another survey.

“The pontoon has just been floating next to Bird Island since 2019 and it is one of 244 other pontoons that make up an ice boom, according to Louis Pagness, a spokesman for the New York Power Authority which erects the boom each year, so ice does not get into dam intakes.

“The pontoon broke free in a huge wind event,” he said.

The pontoon had previously been tied to a tree so it would not go over the falls and High-Water Rescue personnel placed additional ropes in place for to assist with the removal.

The ice boom continued to work without the one pontoon, Pagness, said the loss of one pontoon was similar to a charm bracelet with one charm coming off.

Safety was the highest priority, said Bravo Company Commander Capt. Jonathan Peralta.

After getting their own look at the pontoon and the river, the crew of Big Noise III —Chief

Warrant Officer 4 John Hermanson, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Christopher Scott, Staff Sgt. Michael Landaur, Sgt. Tyler DeGone, and Staff Sgt. Christopher Santiago— touched down at the Goat Island parking area. They got a final briefing and mounted the large sling cables that would go on the pontoon.

With preparations completed, the crew lifted off for the short distance to recover the pontoon.

Hovering in place above the pontoon, the crew dropped down cables and members of the Park Police team waded out into the chilly, fast-moving currents to attach the cables.

The lift was no sweat for the Chinook, which has a lifting capacity of 13 tons, Peralta said.

The Chinook slowly lifted the pontoon out of the water.

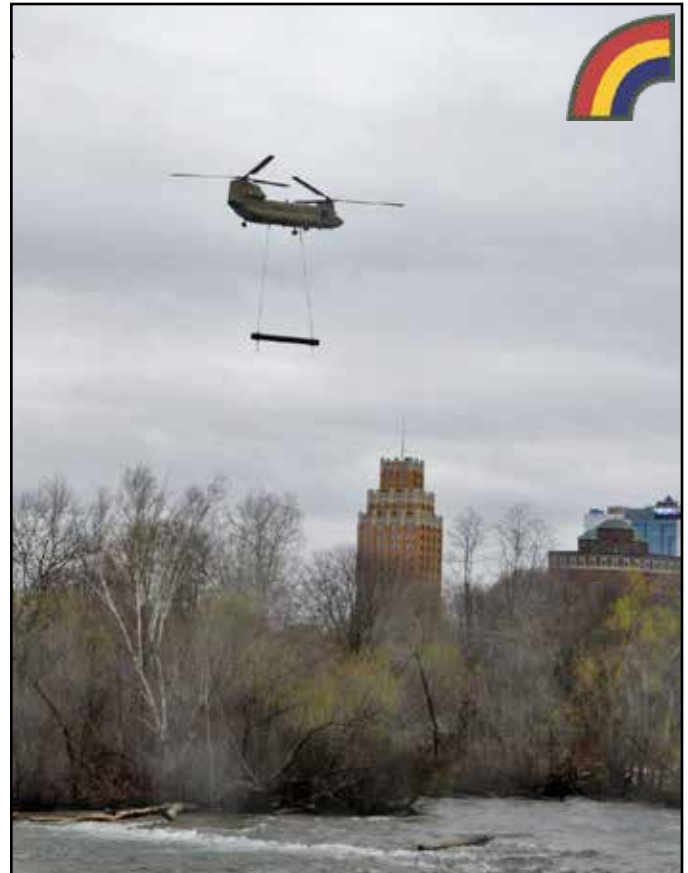
Lifting the pontoon was only about a quarter of the capacity that the Chinook is able to lift, said Lt. Col. Eric Fritz, the aviation facility commander. “There's very minimal risk, but the biggest risk was the (nearby) trees.”

Soldiers and Power Authority employees stood on the shoreline to provide feedback for obstacle avoidance.

Back at the parking lot, the pontoon was lowered, cables dropped and disconnected, and the big Chinook could land next to its payload.

Now in a safer recovery location, the Power Authority will recover the pontoon by truck, thanks to the successful efforts of the Army Guard aircrews and support personnel working together, Pagnessa said.

Landaul, the crew chief for Big Noise III, said the aircraft's nickname has some history. It was



A CH-47 Chinook assigned to Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation removes a 3,900-pound steel pontoon from the Niagara River just above the American side of Niagara Falls in Niagara Falls, New York on May 4, 2022. The pontoon, which washed away from an ice dam in 2019, was removed because of concerns that it could go over the falls and damage the “Cave of the Winds”. Photo courtesy of the New York Power Authority. Below, New York State Park Police High Water Rescue Team clipping a lifting cable onto a 3,900-pound steel pontoon in the Niagara River. Photo by Lt. Col. Roberta Comerford, Joint Force Headquarters.



named Big Noise III in honor of his grandfather, Sgt. 1st Class Cleon Whiting who served in the United States Army Air Forces during World War II.

The aircraft his grandfather crewed in the 453rd Bomb Group—in which actor Jimmy Stewart as an operations officer —was dubbed “Big Noise II,” Landaul said. **gt**

# Aviation Troops Train in Air, Water & Land

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, honed their marksmanship skills on the range and in the air, during unit annual training at Fort Drum, New York, which kicked off on April 23.

The 218 Soldiers are conducting two weeks of annual training as they prepare to deploy to Fort Hood, Texas and then

Kuwait in June.

Training teams from Fort Hood were there to help the New York National Guard troops train more effectively.

The battalion is slated for mobilization and deployment to support U.S. Army Central Command later this summer and the training validates many of the pre-deployment tasks, said Colonel Jason Lefton, the 42nd Combat Aviation

Brigade commander.

Soldiers trained with individual M4s, and M17 pistols, the M246 squad automatic weapon and the M320 grenade launcher. They also trained on crew served weapons; the M2 .50 caliber machine gun, Mark 19 grenade launcher and M240B machine gun.

The highlight was when door gunners engaged targets on the ground with the M240B from a hovering UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

Lefton, who is a former battalion commander for the unit, had nothing but praise for the Soldiers.

“Most years I need to step in here and there and make some changes, or nudge things along during the preparation and planning for a large event like this,” Lefton said. “This year, that wasn’t the case. I couldn’t be prouder of you all.”

Soldiers built towards firing live ammunition by training in the Engagement Skills Trainer first.

On this electronic indoor range, the recoil is simulated with an air hose that connects to the weapon and an air compressor. Soldiers must engage targets that appear on a large screen on the other end of the room.



Col. Jason Lefton, the commander of the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, prepares to speak to Soldiers assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment as they prepare for aerial gunnery training at Fort Drum, New York on April 28, 2022. Below, a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter prepares to takeoff during aerial gunnery.



Crews prepare 7.62mm ammunition for loading to aerial gunnery during annual at Fort Drum, New York on April 27, 2022.



Crews from the 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation Regiment learn how to survive a water crash at Fort Drum's Simulated Water Egress Training at the McGrath sports complex on April 29, 2022. The battalion conducted annual training at Fort Drum from April 23 to May 7 as they prepare to mobilize and deploy to Kuwait in June.



The Soldiers’ aim is tracked in real time by a computer, so that they can receive coaching from an expert that is present on each range.

The simulator lets Soldiers practice marksmanship basics before firing live ammunition.

The annual event takes a lot of planning and preparation, said Master Sgt. Christopher Bullock, the battalions’ operations non-commissioned officer.

The Soldiers need to be fed and housed, helicop-

ters and vehicles must be fueled and maintained, ammo and weapons must be provided, and much more,” he said,

Along with practicing marksmanship, Soldiers took combat lifesaver classes, trained to counter improvised explosive devices, learned hand-to-hand combat, and conducted water egress training in a pool.

The water training focused on how to get out of a vehicle that had crashed into a lake or canal. **gt**

## 109<sup>th</sup> Home from Antarctic; Heading to Greenland

*Story by Airman 1st Class Jocelyn Tuller, 109th Airlift Wing*  
SCOTIA, N.Y. -- Seventy-three Airmen and three LC-130 "Skibirds" assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing returned from Antarctica to Stratton Air National Guard Base outside Schenectady during early February.

This flight wrapped up the 34th year the 109th Airlift Wing has supported Antarctic research efforts flying the largest ski-equipped aircraft in the world,

Then, in April, the wing deployed 75 Airmen and three aircraft to Greenland, marking the start of the summer season spent re-supplying science stations on the icecap there.

From October through February, the 109th provided support to the United States Antarctic research efforts as part of

Operation Deep Freeze. Operation Deep Freeze is the Department of Defense's annual support to the National Science Foundation research program.

"Overall, Operation Deep Freeze this year was a success considering substantial mission limitations and rapidly evolving COVID constraints which made the routine deployment exponentially complex," said Maj. Shay Price, the 109th Airlift Wing's chief of Antarctic operations.

The 109th Airmen completed 40 missions, transporting 204 passengers and 357,926 pounds of critical cargo to research stations located across Antarctica.

The wing Airmen flew 24 missions between bases on the continent.

Sixteen missions were flown between Christchurch, New Zealand and Antarctica. These included four medical evacuation missions.

"I am proud of the work we do each year to support the United States Antarctic Program and the hard work put in by all of our maintenance, aircrew and support staff to make each season a success," said Col. Robert Donaldson, the vice commander of the 109th Airlift Wing.

"Operating in extreme weather is a difficult task. Our 109th Airlift Wing



An Airman refuels a LC-130 Skibird while it is loaded February 10, 2022 with cargo for delivery to a research station in Antarctica. Photo by Maj. Shay Price, 109th Airlift Wing.

Airmen are constantly going above and beyond to complete the mission in the most efficient and safest way," Donaldson said.

In Greenland, this summer, the wing's main focus will be training airmen from the 109th and supporting ongoing construction at Summit Station which is operated by the National Science Foundation.

Summit Station is the

only high altitude, high latitude, inland, year-round observing station in the Arctic. Summit Station is funded by the NSF and supports their research due to Greenland's weather conditions. It is located at the apex of the Greenland ice sheet and is staffed in the winter by a team of five people.

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## Syracuse University Visits Hancock Field

*Story by Staff Sgt. Duane Morgan, 174th Attack Wing*  
SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Advisors from Syracuse University showed up to Hancock Field Air National Guard Base for a presentation about educational benefits that will be available to all members of the 174th Attack Wing and their dependents in the near future.

The presentation covered programs that are available, tuition assistance and class dates.

What was previously known as Columbia College will now be known as the Syracuse University building.

Starting on Feb. 8, 2022, Syracuse University advisors will be on base every Tuesday and Thursday. This will give members a chance to be able to sit down and speak in person to ask any questions that they may have regarding taking classes at SU.

"We're starting with the short-term goal first, which is just getting advisors on base, and then working toward the bigger goal, which is getting actual classes," Master Sgt. Miles Sauer, 174th recruiting and retention manager said.

"When we had Columbia College here, a lot of our members utilized that school and it was a very easy way for them to finish their CCAF, and then move on towards a bachelor's degree," Sauer added.

Liz Green, executive director of online student success, is thrilled to bring SU to the 174th ATKW.

"We could not be more excited," Green said. "I've had the opportunity to come out here about a half dozen times in the last month or

so. Everyone has been welcoming, collaborative, helpful, and I feel like we'll be able to work together to give the best access possible to the members of the 174th Attack Wing. gt



Liz Green, executive director of online student success, speaks to members of the 174th Attack Wing at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Feb. 6, 2022.



# New York Names its Airmen of the Year for 2022

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing, 109th and 105th Airlift Wings and the 106th Rescue Wing have been named 2022 Airman of the Year by the New York Air National Guard.

The four enlisted Airmen and one officer were recognized for outstanding leadership abilities, job performance and personal achievement during 2021.

Those recognized are:

- Senior Airman Jessica L. Cruz, 109th Airlift Wing from Troy, who was named Airman of the Year;
- Staff Sgt. Joshua A. Kuritzky, 105th Airlift Wing from Walden, who was named NCO of the Year;
- Senior Master Sgt. Christine A. Wiesen, 174th Attack Wing from Erie, Pennsylvania, named SNCO of the Year;
- Senior Master Sgt. Tricia L. Shivers, 174th Attack Wing from Canasota, named 1st Sergeant of the Year; and
- Capt. Joseph Nolan, 106th Rescue Wing from Massapequa, who was named Company Grade Officer of the Year.

"This recognition identifies these members as the best of the best and further validates their professional standards as leaders, wingmen and warriors," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson, the senior enlisted leader for the 5,900-member New York Air National Guard.

Senior Airman Cruz is an air transportation specialist in the 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

During 2021, Cruz volunteered for a deployment to Ali Al Salem Airbase, Kuwait where she built pallets and checked in more than 27 tons of cargo. Additionally, Cruz deployed to Greenland to provide support for the National Science Foundation where she moved over 141,000 tons of cargo and processed 133 passengers for 33 missions.

Cruz also volunteered to be part of Operation Allies Welcome, a mission to provide services to Afghans evacuated prior to the Taliban takeover. In civilian life she is a Rensselaer County corrections officer.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Kuritzky is a security forces trainer and a full-time member of the 105th Base Defense Squadron. He serves as a Phoenix Raven; a security forces Airman specially trained to provide security for aircraft in austere and remote environments.

He served as the Phoenix Raven team leader in August 2021, when the 105th Airlift Wing assisted in efforts to evacuate Afghans from Kabul. The 105th Airlift Wing deployed three aircrews and three C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and evacuated 2,084 people.

Senior Master Sgt. Christine Wiesen serves as the superintendent aviation resource manager for the 174th Operations Group. She oversees aircrew scheduling systems for 369 air-

crew members at seven flying squadrons, four of which are geographically separated.

Wiesen enlisted in the Air Force in 1999. During the first five years of her career she deployed once in support of an air expeditionary force rotation and four times in support of operations in Afghanistan.

Senior Master Sgt. Tricia Shivers serves as the first sergeant for the 138th Attack Squadron. She is the key enlisted advisor to the squadron commander on these matters and works directly with Airmen on their professional development and leadership skills.

Shivers entered the Air Force in 2004 and served as an aerospace ground equipment specialist. She deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan three times over the next eight years while stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas.

Capt. Joseph Nolan serves in the 106th Medical Group as a full-time medical administrative officer. During the past year he has played a key role in the wing's participation in the New York National Guard COVID-19 response mission. Nolan led 125 Airmen and Soldiers conducting testing, vaccinations and alternate care facility security missions, and dealt with state and federal agencies as part of the COVID-19 mission.

Nolan has deployed as part of the response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, in support of operations in Afghanistan with the 779th Aeromedical Staging Squadron. 🇺🇸



Staff Sgt. Jessica Cruz



Staff Sgt. Joshua Kuritzky



Senior Master Sgt. Tricia Shivers



Senior Master Sgt. Christine Wiesen



Capt. Joseph Nolan

"This recognition identifies these members as the best of the best and further validates their professional standards as leaders, wingmen and warriors,"

-- Command Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson, New York Air National Guard senior enlisted leader

# Airmen Train on Frozen Lake for Polar Missions

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



Airmen assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing prepare to set up camp on the ice of the Great Sacandaga Lake near Northville, New York on Feb. 15, 2022. The Airmen were training on the tasks involved with creating an ice "ski-way" to land massive ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules aircraft on ice in the polar regions. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Maj. Brandon Caldwell, 109th Airlift Wing.

GREAT SACANDAGA LAKE, N.Y. -- Twenty Airmen assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing sharpened their skills as members of the Polar Camp Ski-way Team, known as the PCST for short, on the Great Sacandaga Lake at the southern edge of the Adirondack Park.

These Airmen are trained in remote polar operations. They have deployed to Greenland's ice cap, northern Alaska and Canada's northern regions to establish the ice runways the wing's massive LC-130 "Skibirds" need to land on.

The training began February 15th and finished on February 17.

The members of the team use specifically outfitted snowmobiles to drag tow-hitched groomers thousands of feet for weeks at a time to prepare the snow and ice to withstand the landing of the ski-equipped cargo planes.

The 109th Airlift Wing flies the largest ski-equipped aircraft in the world. The wing's Airmen conduct airlift operations in Greenland and in Antarctica in support of the National Science Foundation, transporting scientists and equipment needed for ongoing research.

The ski-way team is comprised of Airmen from throughout the wing's squadrons, to include the 139th Air Expeditionary Squadron and the 109th Operations Support, Aircraft

Maintenance, and Maintenance Squadrons.

In the winter, Great Sacandaga Lake, which is the 10th largest lake in New York at 41.7 square miles, provides a pretty good approximation of an Arctic wilderness, explained Maj. Brandon Caldwell, a resident of Broadalbin and LC-130 pilot and the PCST leader.

The lake is also 30 miles away from Stratton Air National Guard Base, where the 109th is located outside of Schenectady. This makes it easy for the Guard Airmen to get to.

The training is vital for letting the Airmen practice the skills they need to do their job, Caldwell said.

"We deploy, build up a camp and survive. All in addition to the actual preparation and maintenance of the ski-way," Caldwell explained.

During the exercise on the lake, the team set up a campsite like one they would erect in the arctic. They tested new grooming equipment and snowmobiles, chosen to enhance and extend the capabilities of the team by reducing the time and difficulty of ski-way construction and grooming.

They also used the opportunity to train new members in a controlled environment.

Tech. Sgt. Logan Brennan, non-commissioned

officer in charge of the camp, said the main concern of operations in the arctic and Antarctica is survival.

"Survival is a key element when we are actually on the ice. Camp life revolves around things like food, water, and shelter; then, once those things are taken care of, it's time to work,"

Brennan said.

Caldwell explained building a ski-way at a remote location is a capability conceived of and developed by the very Airmen who now carry out the operation. An innovation intended to expand and capitalize on the 109th Airlift Wing's ability to operate in the Arctic and Antarctic.

According to Caldwell, increased attention on the potential for military operations in the arctic, in the wake of tensions around the world, highlights the important role the 109th Airlift Wing plays.

"The 109th is a tactical asset in these conditions and PCST is just the beginning of the large potential for that aspect of what we do at the poles," Caldwell said.

"We on the PCST want the 109th Airlift Wing to be a part of that and we will continue to hone these skills to that end," Caldwell continued. **gt**

# 106<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineers Train at Silver Flag

Story and photos by Senior Airman Kevin Donaldson, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. -- Nineteen Airmen from the 106th Civil Engineer Squadron deployed to Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Florida, for a 10-day Silver Flag exercise from Jan. 3 to 14, 2022.

The engineers trained for a week, followed by a two-day wartime simulation. According to Air Force regulations, Airmen must be Silver Flag trained every four years and before deployments to maintain readiness.

Silver Flag is an essential exercise for those who serve in engineering, ensuring they are ready to deploy and conduct combat missions.

Master Sgt. Michael Gadman, 106th Rescue Wing assistant chief of fire prevention, explained the Silver Flag exercise is a mecca for civil engineers because it allows members to use their skills in a real-world environment.

"The team worked hard to establish a bare base," Gadman said. "They had to install runways, put up tents, building structures, get clean drinking water, found electrical power to keep everything running smoothly, and made sure aircraft could land and fly out again safely at this new location."

Bare bases are ideal for military operations because it allows flexibility and speed. The engineers can quickly go into a bare base with little infrastructure or support due to their experi-

ence working under minimized circumstances.

The 106th Civil Engineer Squadron is responsible for providing the backbone of any military installation. They are in charge of operations, electrical power production, HVAC, water and fuel management systems, pavement, heavy systems, fire, emergency management and structural management.

"The Air Guard provides a unique opportunity for those with engineering experience, giving our military members an edge," Gadman said. "We also attract high school graduates who can benefit significantly from the skills they develop here in this squadron. Some even pursue them right after joining up."

The 106th engineers have been taking part in Silver Flag exercises for decades, Gadman said. The rigorous training is essential to readiness, should the unit ever be called upon, in conventional or unconventional conflicts, including federal and state missions.

The Airmen's training and equipment proved useful when helping the community during Superstorm Sandy, Gadman recalled.

"Our expertise with heavy equipment came in handy, clearing debris from roads so our neighbors could recover from (the) tragedy quickly," he said.



106th Rescue Wing structural specialist engineers practice welding at the Silver Flag exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Panama City, Florida, Jan. 10, 2022. Courtesy photo.

Tyndall has the only Federal Aviation Administration burn pit in America. This unique facility allows firefighters to ignite jet fuel at high temperatures, making it an essential tool for aircraft rescue and firefighting.

Silver Flag's live-fire training props are the most comprehensive and realistic in all airports. From a life sized combustible airframe to using jet fuel as an ingredient, they have it covered, Gadman said.

Senior Airman Kerry Schmitt, a 106th firefighter, said that Silver Flag was an eye opening experience for bare base firefighting.

"The highlight of the training was fighting a jet fuel fire with foam," Schmitt said. "Most fire training uses propane which can be turned off in an emergency. When jet fuel is burning, you must extinguish it. This training was great for breaking tunnel vision and helping me to open my eyes to see what was going on in fighting fires. It was amazing."

Senior Airman Theodore Quintana, a 106th structural specialist, said that he enjoyed the training and appreciated the expertise from the Air Force active duty instructors.

"The Silver Flag exercise has given me the skills and confidence to handle any situation," Quintana said. **gt**



106th Rescue Wing firefighters extinguish live-fire training props at Silver Flag exercise at Tyndall Air Force Base, Panama City, Florida, Jan. 6, 2022. Courtesy photo.

# Airmen Certify for Fighting Wildfires

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

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia, N.Y. -- Twelve members of the 109th Airlift Wing's fire department earned national certification in wild-land firefighting; a range of firefighting tactics used to suppress wildfires and protect populated areas, during a training course which concluded on April 9, 2022.

"Firefighting efforts in wild land areas require a different skill set than what we are used to," explained Staff Sgt. Daniel Drumm. Drumm is a fire crew chief with the 109th, and wild land subject matter expert.

"Techniques, equipment and training related to wild land firefighting are very different from the structure fires," Drumm said.

"Firefighters work with specially designed aerial firefighting aircraft --these suppress flames-- while we construct fire lines and extinguish flames to protect resources and natural wilderness," Drum explained.

The certification consisted of 30 hours of classroom instruction, as well as field training conducted through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group at the local Albany Pine Bush Preserve.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group provides national leadership to enable interoperable wild land fire operations among federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners.

The field training provided in depth training in wild land firefighting tactics and practices; challenging participants to learn and utilize techniques unique to the environment to fight simulated fires, Drumm said.

Firefighting in wild land conditions requires firefighters to carry 45 pounds of gear over many miles while tracking and suppressing spreading flames, Drumm said.

To simulate this, the Airmen carried their gear on a three-mile run.

"Our biggest challenge is learning that help may be miles or hours away while fighting a wildfire," said Master Sgt. Brian Devlin, who took part in the training. "Inside a burning building, help is always just outside the front door."



Twelve members of the 109th Airlift Wing's fire department earned national certification in wild-land firefighting; a range of firefighting tactics used to suppress wildfires and protect populated areas, during a training course through the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, concluding April 9, 2022.

The classes covered everything from the science of weather effects on wildfires to how firefighters can transition from structural firefighting, equipped with oxygen tanks and heavy "turnout gear" to wearing only leather boots and a hard hat, Drumm said.

"But the different circumstances helped us grow as a team," Devlin said. "We've learned to rely on each other in the field, and we've carried that over into all aspects of the department and improved capabilities across the board," Devlin added.

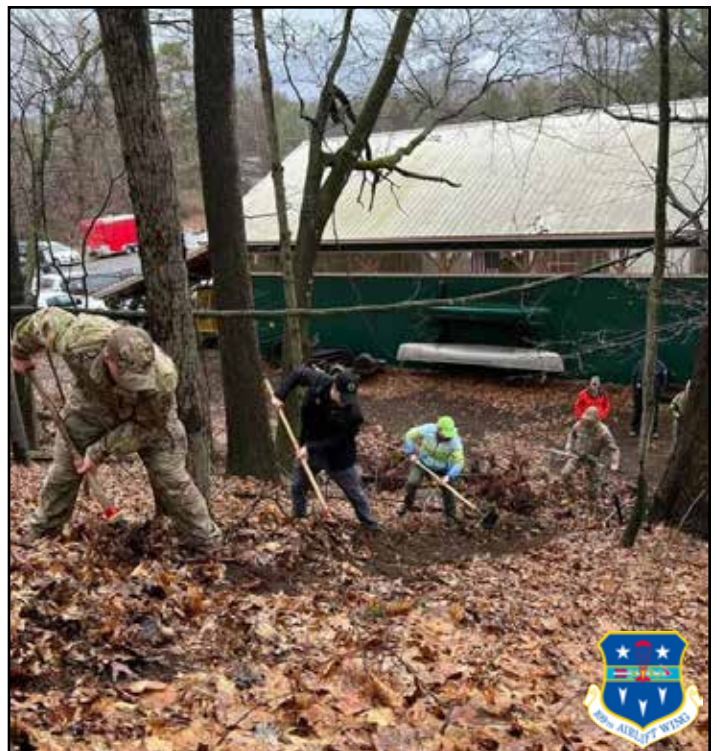
With a trained 12-person wild land firefighting team, the 109th fire department will always have an available team ready to deploy whenever and wherever they are needed, Drumm emphasized.

This capability enables the team to participate in domestic operations fighting wildfires in the western United States, Drumm said.

Or, he added, the team could go to South Africa, where they have trained with their South African counterparts, to help them deal with fires there.

In 2019, eleven 109th Airlift Wing firefighters spent two weeks learning how to battle brush fires with 60 South African firefighters in a training program run by South African National Parks at Table Mountain National Park.

The training was conducted as part of the New York National Guard's State Partnership Program with the South African National Defence Force. **gt**



109th Airlift Wing firefighters prepare a fire break during field training as part of their national certification in wild-land firefighting at the Albany Pine Bush April 9, 2022. Twelve Airmen received certification.

# Air Guard tests MQ-9 remote landing and takeoffs

Story by Airman Tiffany Scofield, 174th Attack Wing



**"I firmly believe this is going to be the way of the future. We look forward to the agility this gives us,"**

*-- Col. William McCrink, Commander, 174th Attack Wing*

An MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft lands at Griffiss International Airport in Rome, New York on May 5, 2022 as the 174th Attack Wing of the New York Air National Guard tests a new remote landing and takeoff capability. This is the first time an MQ-9 flew from one commercial airport, in this case Hancock Field International Airport in Syracuse, to another, the airport in Rome. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.

ROME, N.Y. – The New York Air National Guard's 174th Attack Wing highlighted its ability to fly the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft into any airport, anywhere on Thursday, May 5 when an aircraft was landed at Griffiss International Airport in Rome, New York.

Until last year, an MQ-9 required line of sight guidance from a ground control station to take off and land. This limited the places the MQ-9 could operate from.

The Automatic Takeoff and Landing Capability software developed for the MQ-9 first proved itself during tests at Creech Air Force Base in 2021.

On May 5, the 174th became the first MQ-9 wing to fly an aircraft from one commercial airport to another, in this case Hancock Field International Airport in Syracuse, New York, and landed at Rome.

In 2015, the 174th became the first MQ-9 unit to fly from a commercial airport when it began launching and recovering aircraft at Hancock Field alongside commercial passenger flights.

This new capability allows the MQ-9 to be more agile and dynamic, by flying the aircraft

to and from locations without the traditional ground logistical support, said Col. William J. McCrink, the commander of the 174th Attack Wing.

"I firmly believe this is going to be the way of the future," McCrink said. "We look forward to the agility this gives us; then we can dynamically employ this platform."

Using the new system allows for a smaller crew to work on the aircraft, he explained.

The MQ-9 launch and recovery process will only require a few Airmen for maintenance such as refueling and powering, he said.

"We're proving that we can integrate into any airspace and airport no different than any other airframe with limited personnel and equipment, reducing our footprint significantly," said Chief Master Sgt. Aaron Shaffer, 174th Maintenance Squadron's senior enlisted leader.

The new capability is part of the Air Force's Agile Combat Employment initiative designed to allow the Air Force to operate from more locations worldwide.

The new system would also allow the 174th Attack Wing to use MQ-9s in support of civilian missions here at home, like keeping an eye

on wildfires or assisting in a search and rescue effort.

The California Air National Guard has deployed its MQ-9 to support civilian fire officials in monitoring forest fires and the 174th Attack Wing has deployed personnel to California to help with that mission.

The MQ-9 Reaper is an armed, multi-mission, medium-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft that can conduct reconnaissance and surveillance missions, search and rescue, and precision strike and close air support missions, while loitering above the battlefield for hours.

The basic crew consists of a rated pilot to control the aircraft and command the mission, an enlisted aircrew member to operate sensors and weapons as well as a mission coordinator, when required.

Local media covered the MQ-9 landing and Rome Mayor Jacqueline Izzo turned out to watch the aircraft land as well.

"We are really thrilled that the 174th is here today," she said. "We hope that this becomes a regular stop for them, and they do training here. 🇺🇸"

## Guard Remembers WWI Losses

Story by 1st Lt. James Chin and Sgt. Richard Mayfield, New York Guard

SLEEPY HOLLOW, N.Y. – Members of the New York Guard 56th Area Command hosted the 104th Aqueduct Defense Memorial Service May 1, 2022, honoring the First Provisional Regiment of the New York Guard for their sacrifice while protecting New York City's water supply from 1917 to 1919.

The ceremony remembers the forty volunteer militiamen of the New York Guard's 1st Provisional Regiment who died of influenza or other causes while protecting the city water system during World War I.

In 1919 a boulder from Bonticu Craig, a peak in the Shawangunk Mountains, was moved to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery as a memorial to the men who died; 37 of them from influenza.

A floral wreath presentation was made by the Veterans Corps of Artillery, under the command of Veterans Corps of Artillery Commandant Col. Raymond Mechmann and Command Sgt. Maj. Trevis Wimer.

Chief Frank Milazzo, Chief of the Department of NYC Department of Environmental Protection Police and Col. Glenn Marchi, commander of the 56th Area Command, presented a wreath in memory of the departed.

Prior to the American entry in WWI, New York National Guard Soldiers guarded key infrastructure in New York from sabotage. It was not an empty threat. German agents had blown

up an ammunition factory in New Jersey which was producing arms for France and Britain.

The 1st Provisional Regiment was successful in protecting the water supply for New York City despite the 1918 influenza pandemic, which is now a mission provided by the NYC DEP, said Milazzo.

When America entered the war in April of 1917, the National Guard mobilized for combat. To replace those troops, New York created the New York Guard, a state only armed force. The 1st Provisional Regiment of the New York



New York Guard Col. Glenn Marchi and New York City Department of Environmental Protection Chief Frank Milazzo place a wreath during the First Provisional Regiment Memorial at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery on May 1, 2022. Above right, members render honors during the ceremony. Photos by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.



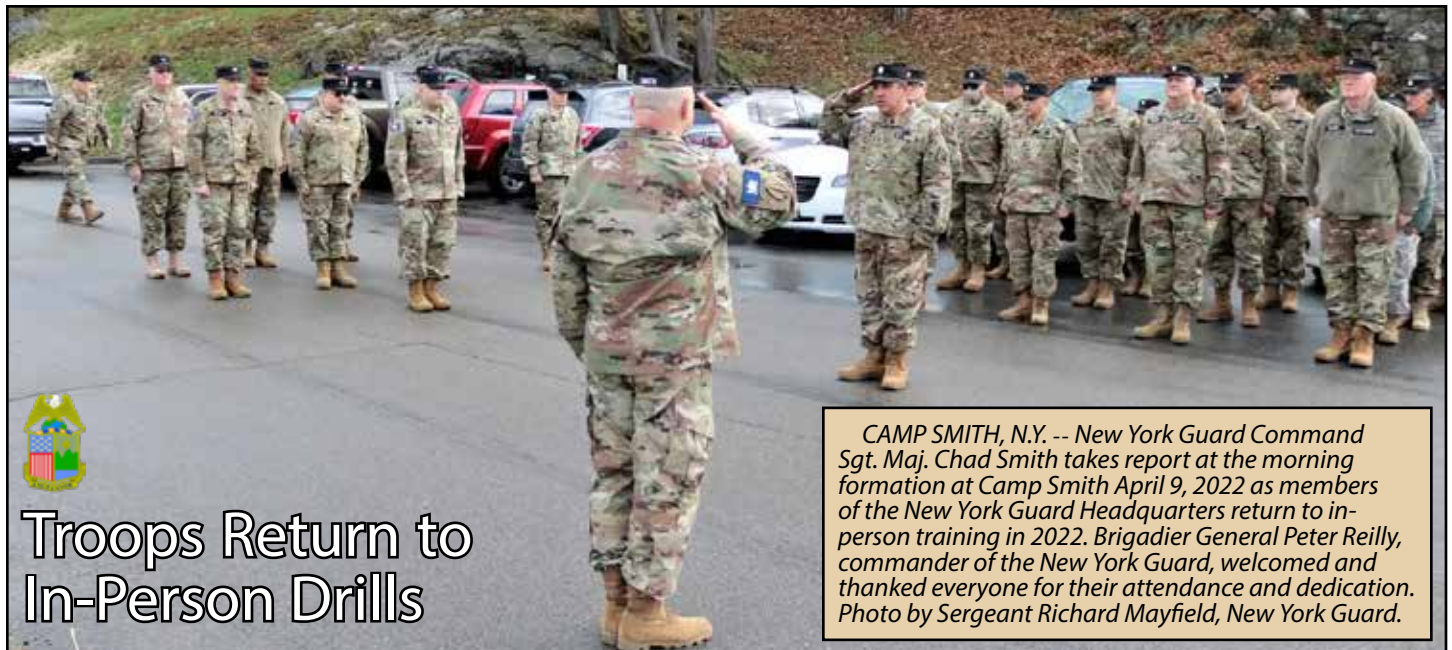
Guard was formed and assigned to protect the reservoirs and aqueducts which serve New York City. Others guarded canals and railroads.

"The threats to our nation [since the Great War], and the mission of the New York Guard remains the same." Marchi said, "The New York Guard is ready, willing, and able to respond to the needs of New York State."

Milazzo noted the "critical and significant" work of the New York Guard over the years and expressed his gratitude of those who remember others made the ultimate sacrifice.

As they did 100 years ago, the New York Guard today continues to protect New Yorkers from the COVID-19 pandemic, Marchi said.

Members have stepped up to man testing and vaccination sites, assist with logistics, public affairs, and with staff shortages in nursing homes, he added. **gt**



CAMP SMITH, N.Y. -- New York Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Smith takes report at the morning formation at Camp Smith April 9, 2022 as members of the New York Guard Headquarters return to in-person training in 2022. Brigadier General Peter Reilly, commander of the New York Guard, welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and dedication. Photo by Sergeant Richard Mayfield, New York Guard.



## Troops Return to In-Person Drills

# New York Naval Militia

## Naval Militia's New CO

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Lawrence Weill, a retired U.S. Navy Reserve officer, took command of the 2,700-member Naval Militia April 29, 2022 during a ceremony at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham.

Weill, who has served in the Naval Militia since 1986, also received a promotion to New York State rear admiral.

He replaced Rear Admiral Warren Smith, who commanded the Naval Militia since 2019.

The New York Naval Militia, with a strength of 2,779, is the largest of the six state naval forces. The force is composed mostly of members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserve who agree to serve in the state force while simultaneously serving in their federal reserve capacity.

During the traditional naval ceremony, Smith read orders giving up his command, while Weill read the orders putting him in command of the state's naval force.

The official party - Weill, Smith, and Army Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the Adjutant General - were welcomed with the traditional naval bells and bosun's whistle calls.

Naval Militia members go on state active duty to put their military skills to work for the people of New York. They have responded to snowstorms, hurricanes and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic where they assisted at vaccination sites and logistics hubs.

The New York Naval Militia also mans a fleet of 11 watercraft which can be used for security patrols or disaster response.



New York Rear Admiral Lawrence Weill, departs the podium after taking command of the New York Naval Militia in Latham, New York April 29, 2022. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times staff*.

"You are assuming command of a vibrant and healthy organization," Shields said. "We all know you are the right person to lead this organization into the future."

Weill praised the members of the Naval Militia for their service.

"We have the very best Sailors,

Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who are always ready to drop everything and report for duty on a moment's notice," Weill said.

"These past two years, in which we contributed to the effort to combat COVID-19 are further proof of our ability," he said. **gt**

## Naval Militia Christens New Landing Craft

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

CATSKILL, N.Y. -- The New York Naval Militia officially welcomed the latest addition to its patrol boat fleet on April 30 during a ceremony on the Hudson River in Catskill, New York.

A 35-foot landing craft-style boat built by the Munson Boat company of Burlington, Washington was christened LC-351 at Historic Catskill Point Park by Patricia Weill, the wife of Rear Admiral Lawrence Weill, the commander of the New York Naval Militia.

New York purchased an identical craft—LC-350-- from Munson in 2018.

LC-351 is 39 feet long and powered by two Mercury Optimax 250 horsepower outboard engines which can drive it to a top speed of 41 miles per hour. The boat has the ability to carry three tons of supplies, 27 people, or a small vehicle and additional supplies and put that equipment ashore.

The boat cost \$321,983 which was paid for by a federal maritime security grant.

The Naval Militia's Military Emergency Boat Service operates a fleet of 11 watercraft, now in-

cluding LC-351, which can be used for maritime patrol. One boat, PB-440, works regularly with the Coast Guard in New York harbor.

The ceremony was marked by the traditional breaking of a bottle of spirits on the bow of the boat and the three-man crew were then instructed to bring LC-351 to life by Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general.

"Landing Craft 351 adds a huge capability to transport people and equipment to our state's naval arsenal," Shields said.

The first landing craft was purchased, because Naval Militia patrol boats were used for emergency supply operations on Long Island following Superstorm Sandy in 2012. While the boats were effective, it was determined that a boat specifically configured to more cargo



The crew of landing craft LC-351 form up on the boat during a christening ceremony at Historic Catskill Point, Catskill, New York, April 30, 2022. After taking delivery in March, the 39 foot catamaran was christened by its sponsor, Mrs. Patricia Weill and the boat will join the Naval Militia's Military Emergency Boat Service. Photo by Ryan Campbell, *Guard Times Staff*.

would be more useful.

As the boat's sponsor, Patricia Weill's duty was to bash a specially designed christening bottle on the bow and ask for favorable seas for the boat and its crew.

"It was a real honor to play a role in accepting the boat into service," Weill said. **gt**

