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Volume 14 Number 3

# guardtimes

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





# FROM THE LEADERSHIP

## NY's Remarkable & Historic COVID-19 Response

It's been a long and challenging 18 months for all of us. For those of you who lost a loved one, a friend, coworker or in the case of the 106th Rescue Wing, a member of your unit to COVID-19, please accept my deepest sympathy and condolences. We are all praying that we have seen the worst of the COVID-19 crisis and that our state and nation are on the trajectory of recovery and renewal.

When we look back from March 2020 to today, what you have done as part of the National Guard, or our State Defense Forces, or the civilian workforce of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), it is truly historic in nature and will not be forgotten.

During my 39 years of military service, I have had the opportunity to see our National Guard, State Defense Forces and DMNA in action time and time again. Our military service members, civilian workforce, families and civilian employers have accomplished so much during our COVID-19 response – just simply remarkable achievements.

Your COVID-19 response will be remembered along with September 11, 2001, combat deployments and our response to Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

On June 23, 2021, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the location and design of the State's Essential Worker Monument to be located in Battery Park City along the water, in view of the Statue of Liberty.

The Circle of Heroes design will include 19 Red Maple trees symbolizing the essential workers that carried New York through the pandemic. This will include a reference to you, the men and women of the New York National Guard.

It recognizes your contributions alongside nurses, doctors, healthcare workers, transit workers, police officers, EMTs and paramedics, firefighters, correctional officers, store employees, government employees, building service workers, utility and communications workers, delivery drivers, teachers, sanitation workers, construction and manufacturing workers, food service workers and hospitality workers.

The monument will also feature an eternal flame as a symbol of New York State's everlasting gratitude for

essential workers.

So as we wind down our COVID-19 support, all we can say to everyone is THANK YOU! Your service, dedication and professionalism has been remarkable.

However, the COVID crisis is not over. Much of our force remains unvaccinated and with new strains of the COVID-19 virus gaining ground, those who are not vaccinated remain at serious risk of serious illness and death. We strongly encourage anyone not vaccinated to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Our focus now turns back to Soldier and Airmen readiness and preparedness for our federal and state missions, and the daily work to support the force of our civilian staff at DMNA.

Our enduring priority remains – "Soldier and Airmen safety," (which includes physical safety; prevention and protection from sexual assault and sexual harassment; treating everyone fairly and consistently), we also have no higher priority than our unit assigned strength – that means retention for units and accessions for our recruiting team.

Again, I cannot thank you all enough for your service to our state and nation.

Just as Governor Cuomo has said, you are essential! Essential to our organization. Essential to our state and nation. Essential to your families. Essential to your civilian employers. We need you and care about you. Thank you for all you do.



Maj. Gen. Ray Shields



New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo presents a plaque of appreciation for COVID-19 response efforts of the New York National Guard to Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general, in New York City June 16, 2021. Courtesy photo.



New York State Military Forces Service members assigned to JTF South mark one million vaccines administered throughout the JTF South area of operations in front of the Manhattan Skyline on June 1st, 2021. JTF South encompasses NYC, Long Island and Westchester County area. Over 3,180 members of the New York Military Forces are supporting the multi-agency response to COVID-19 in the JTF. Courtesy photo.





# guardtimes

Volume 14, Number 3

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
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**Spc. Austin Manville, left, and Sgt. Zachary Marafioti, assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, conduct a ruck march during the squadron's Best Warrior Competition in Ellicottville, New York on May 22, 2021. Manville and Marafioti placed first in the competition's Soldier and NCO categories, respectively, and will represent the squadron at a brigade-level competition. Photo by Capt. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.**



FRONT COVER: New York Army National Guard Spc. Julisa Sanchez, a combat medic assigned to the 107th Military Police Company, draws a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine into syringes at the Yankee Stadium mass vaccination site on March 22, 2021. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

BACK COVER: Airmen with the 105th Airlift Wing's 105th Base Defense Squadron conduct close quarters combat drills at Stewart Air National Guard Base on April 10, 2021. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Patrick Espeut, 105th Airlift Wing.



# FACES of the FORCE

## Cavalry Troopers Remember Soldier who Died in DC

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

GENEVA, N.Y. -- Family and friends of New York Army National Guard Spc. Justin Grennell joined the troopers of his unit, Alpha Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, for a memorial service at Grennell's former armory here on May 16, 2021.

Grennell, age 26, had been serving with the New York National Guard's 540 member task force providing security in Washington, D.C. when he was found unresponsive on March 11 in his hotel room.

The event honored Grennell's service to his state and country.

A corrections officer in civilian life, Grennell enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 2014 and served as an anti-tank gunner in A Troop.

His fellow Soldiers shared memories and experiences with Grennell.

With more than seven years of service, Grennell was very reliable and was our muscle for mission accomplishment, said Staff Sgt. Timothy Murphy.

He never said no and took pride in everything the unit needed, Murphy added.

Grennell was always ready to volunteer for another mission, said Capt. Ian Merritt, the troop's past commander.

He had served on the COVID-19 response mission from April to June of

2020 and stood out as a leader, Merritt said. He had a dedication to duty and a passion to serve, Merritt added.

"Let his memory inspire us to push forward with integrity, bravery and camaraderie," said Capt. Raymond Campbell, the current A Troop commander.

"There will be good days and bad days," Campbell told members of the Grennell family. "Please know that you have a whole room of people here with you today who are willing to help you through it, in any way they can."

"I did not have the privilege of meeting Spc. Grennell while he was alive, but I did meet him through the hearts of those that knew him," said Chaplain (1st Lt.) Viviana Ruizbosch.

"Spc. Grennell was deeply loved," Ruizbosch said.

Campbell, and A Troop 1st Sgt. Olden Ingram, presented Grennell's mother, Julie Kelly, with several mementos. These included an American flag that had been flown over the nation's capital and a framed cavalry saber and spurs.

Campbell then presented Kelly with an Army Commendation Medal and New York State Long and Faithful service medal which were awarded to Grennell posthumously.

His military awards

include the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon and the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge.

Grennell also earned the Cavalry Order of Spur. This traditional award signifies a professional cavalry Soldier and is something all cavalry troopers hope to achieve in their career, Murphy said.

The memorial service, Murphy said, showed just how much the unit and the community will miss Grennell's leadership and presence. 🇺🇸



Boots, a helmet, M-4 carbine and photo comprise the Soldier's memorial to Spc. Justin Grennell, a member of A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, who was honored during a service at the New York State Armory in Geneva, N.Y., May 15, 2021. Grennell passed away March 11, 2021 after Soldiers found him unresponsive in his hotel room in Washington, D.C. Grennell was serving with the New York National Guard security task force there.

"Let his memory inspire us to push forward with integrity, bravery and camaraderie,"

-- Capt. Raymond Campbell, A Troop Commander



Capt. Raymond Campbell, commander of A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, presents an American flag to Julie Kelly, the mother of Spc. Justin Grennell during a memorial service at the armory in Geneva, N.Y. on May 15, 2021. Grennell passed away on March 11 after he was found unresponsive in his hotel room while serving as part of the security mission in the city.



# NY Soldier Finishes 2nd at NGB Best Warrior Event

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*



New York Army National Guard Cpl. Dakoatah Miller negotiates the land navigation course during the 2021 Northeast Region Best Warrior Competition at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 4, 2021. Miller won the competition in the junior enlisted Soldier category and will represent the Northeast at the Army National Guard competition in Arizona in July. Photo by Sgt. Benjamin Martinez, New Jersey Army National Guard.

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Army National Guard Cpl. Dakoatah Miller, a Cortland resident and college student, finished second in the Army National Guard's national Best Warrior competition held July 19-30 at Camp Navajo, Arizona.

Miller, age 21, was previously the winner in the junior enlisted category at the Northeast region Best Warrior competition held at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst from May 3 to 7.

He defeated the top Army Guard Soldiers from New England and New Jersey to get the chance to be the best junior enlisted Soldier in the 350,000 member Army National Guard.

Miller, who joined the Army National Guard in 2017, serves in the Scout Platoon of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment which is headquartered in Utica.

He took part in the competition alongside Staff Sgt. Stephen Mulholland, an Auburn resident who is also a member of his battalion, who was the New York Army National Guard Best Warrior winner in the non-commissioned officer category. Mulholland finished second in the regional competition in his category.

For the past three years New York Soldiers have won the Northeast competition in both the junior enlisted and NCO categories.

Miller will be a "fierce competitor" at the national Best Warrior competition, said New

York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski.

"He is a focused and professional Soldier who prepares and executes Army business with great energy," Piwowarski said.

The Best Warrior competition is an annual event in which Soldiers from across New York compete at their local units before going onto a statewide competition.

The multi-day competition tests a Soldier's military knowledge, physical fitness, endurance and marksmanship.

The events usually include a stress shoot, which involves engaging multiple targets with multiple weapons in a simulated tactical environment, and a physical fitness test as well as a 12-mile forced march in which Soldiers must carry a 35 pound pack and a weapon. Miller completed the march at the regional competition in 2 hours and 14 minutes.

Soldiers are also judged on tasks that can range from assembling and disassembling a machine gun, emplacing a land mine, navigating at night and during the day with map and compass, to treating a simulated casualty.

The Soldiers are also quizzed on their military knowledge by a board of senior Soldiers and judged on the correct wear of their military dress uniforms.

Miller went directly from the competition in

"I love the infantry, I do not want to do anything other than that,"

-- Cpl. Dakoatah Miller, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment

New Jersey to taking part in an Expert Infantry Badge test at Fort Drum, New York sponsored by the 10th Mountain Division.

He prepared for the national competition with a program of "high-quality physical training and studying," Miller said.

A team of experienced sergeants, including Mulholland, helped him train for the Best Warrior competitions, Miller said.

The winner of that competition competes against winners of the active Army and Army Reserve contests to be the top Soldier in the entire United States Army.

Miller, a football player in high school and college, said he viewed the Best Warrior Competition as another athletic event.

"I've always been a competitor," he said. "The first time I heard about the Best Warrior, I wanted to do it."

Miller holds an Associate of Science degree from Tompkins County Community college and is working towards a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology at SUNY Cortland. Kinesiology is the study of human body movement.

Miller is a graduate of the Army's Air Assault School and Distributed Leader Course. He has been awarded an Army Commendation Medal and Army Achievement Medal.

"I love the infantry, I do not want to do anything other than that," Miller said.

His career plan now, Miller said, is to attend as many military schools as he can to "get as much experience as I can with the Guard."

Ultimately, he would like to transfer to the active Army and become a Green Beret. That course, he said, would be the ultimate competition. **gt**



## Hellfighters Get New Senior Enlisted Leader

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y. -- Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Moss, a veteran of the Iraq War, assumed duties as the highest ranking enlisted Soldier in the 369th Sustainment Brigade during a ceremony held April 24 at the Camp Smith Training Site.

The brigade carries the lineage and honors of the 369th Infantry Regiment, the famous Harlem Hellfighters, of World War I. The unit is configured to provide logistic support to division sized Army units.

As the brigade command sergeant major, Moss is the advisor on enlisted Soldier training and discipline to Col. Seth Morgulas, the brigade commander.

Moss replaced Command Sgt. Major Andrew Lampkins.

Moss has served in the active Army and the Army National Guard since 1987, in Germany, Fort Carson and then the New York's 156th Field Artillery as a canon crewman in 1996 after a break in service..

In October 2001 he was among the members who responded to the attacks on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. He performed security missions at JFK International Airport and LaGuardia Airport.

Moss became full-time in September 2002, serving as the readiness NCO for Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.



Col. Seth Morgulas, the commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, passes the guidon to Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Moss, the incoming CSM of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, during a change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Smith Training Site, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., April 24, 2021. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantoni, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

In January 2004 he mobilized for service in Iraq and deployed as a platoon sergeant. He led 32 Soldiers conducting convoy security and force protection missions. **gt**

## Counterdrug Soldier Recognized by Homeland Security

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Al Phillips, *Joint Force Headquarters*

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- Sgt. Warren Solomon, a member of Charlie Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry has been named the New York National Guard Counterdrug Analyst of the Year for 2020.

A cavalry scout who joined 2015, he has been working as an intelligence analyst for the New York Counter Drug Task Force for the past three years.

The 130 members provide case analysis support to law enforcement across the state. Others provide demand reduction support by pairing trained civil operations specialists with specific community anti-drug groups.

Solomon was the first New York Guardsman picked for the recognition by the leadership of the Counter Drug Task Force. He'll now be consid-

ered for a national award.

He is working with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the principal investigative arm of Homeland Security, investigating transnational crimes.

"It's not a typical workday for an Army Soldier; waking up and going to work and not wearing a uniform," Solomon said.

Solomon and the other Counter Drug Task Force Smembers provide additional "capacity" to law enforcement, according to Col. Robert Epp, the former Counter Drug Task Force commander.

Solomon is one of seven Guard analysts working with HSI personnel across New York. They are trained by NGB and DEA personnel on how to take what they learned in the military and apply it to law enforcement work, Epp said.

"What I enjoy most is the fact that I am gathering intel on real time targets helping to further operations and dismantle transnational criminal organizations," Solomon said.

"What the New York National Guard is doing here in Buffalo is blazing a trail and cross-cutting because our analysts like Solomon are advancing the threat out of New York," said HSI Special Agent in charge Kevin Kelly.

"We fully integrate these analysts with our agents, which has resulted in a winning formula and significante successes," Kelly added.

"At the end of the day it's not about the award which is a tremendous honor but it is about strengthening partnerships and that's what being an analyst is all about, regardless on the battlefield or intel shop," Solomon said. **gt**

Sgt. Warren Solomon, a member of the New York Army National Guard's Counter Drug Task Force, who works as an intelligence analyst in support of the Buffalo Office of Homeland Security Investigations, discusses a case with his civilian supervisor at the office of Supervisory Special Agent Christopher Nasca.





# National Guard Honors Korean War MIA Soldier

Story and photos by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

SCHUYLERVILLE, N.Y. -- Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, joined New York National Guard Soldiers to salute a Korean War Soldier whose remains were finally laid to rest on May 20, 2021, 70 years after he fell in combat.

A honor guard provided funeral honors and firing party while two UH-60 helicopters conducted a ceremony flyover, as Cpl. Clifford Johnson was laid to rest at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville.

Johnson, who grew up in Valatie, New York, went missing in December 1950 near Hagaru-ri, North Korea during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

He was assigned as a field wireman with Headquarters Battery of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion.

Johnson's remains were among those handed over by the North Korean government in 2018.

"Having a role in bringing home a fellow Soldier, missing in action for 70 years, is a tremendous honor and privilege for us," Shields said.

Johnson's great nephew, New York Army National Guard Maj. Tyler Lamire, a communications officer assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters, said the event was moving.

"It's really meaningful for our entire family to see this kind of support and acknowledgement," Lamire said. "I grew up unaware of his actions in Korea, only that he didn't come home; but I know my mom and other members of the family never forgot his loss."

Clifford Johnson was born October 22, 1930 and enlisted in the Army October 3, 1949.

In the fall of 1950 the United Nations' forces had turned back



Capt. Eric Samson presents the American flag to Clara Sanzo, sister of Korean War MIA Cpl. Clifford Johnson, as part of the military honors for Johnson's funeral on May 20, 2021 at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville, N.Y.

the North Korean invasion of the South. Johnson and the 31st Regimental Combat Team had attacked north into North Korea to unify the Korean Peninsula.

The unit was on east side of the Chosin Reservoir when Johnson and 30,000 other U.N. troops were encircled and attacked by 120,000 Chinese Peoples Volunteer Forces Nov. 27, 1950.

The task force fought off two Chinese divisions before breaking out December 1. Johnson was reported missing on Dec. 6.

"We are so thankful for the return of Clifford's remains from Korea almost 71 years ago," said Paul O'Keefe, the chaplain of Adirondack Chapter 60, Korean War Veterans. "We are sad, but happy Clifford will soon be laid to rest in this hallowed ground."

He was presumed dead December 31, 1953.

The breakthrough for the family came in 2018. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Laboratory received 55 boxes of

remains for analysis.

To identify Johnson's remains, scientists used DNA analysis.

The DPAA used samples from Johnson's brother Norman and surviving sister, Clara Sanzo.

His remains were confirmed on April 16, 2020.

"I was deployed overseas when I got a call from my mom say-

ing 'they found Uncle Clifford,'" Lamire said. "At first I thought it couldn't be real, that it must be a joke."

Johnson's name was recorded on the Courts of the Missing in Honolulu, along with the others who are missing from the Korean War. A rosette will now be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. **gt**



Sgt. Stanley Paul, part of the Military Forces Honor Guard, prepares to render final honors to Korean War MIA Cpl. Clifford Johnson during his funeral ceremony May 20, 2021



Honor Guard members prepare to fold the American flag as they render final honors to Korean War MIA Cpl. Clifford Johnson during his funeral ceremony May 20, 2021 at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville.



# THE JOINT FORCE

## NY Declares Victory Against COVID-19

Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK -- As Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced an end to most COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on June 15, New York National Guard leaders began planning to downsize the 2,900 service member force on the COVID-19 mission.

"This is a momentous day and we deserve it because it has been a long, long road, and it's a day to look backwards, remember where we were, but also to look forward and where we're going," the governor said during a New York City event.

Cuomo recognized the men and women of the New York National Guard for the efforts in coping with the pandemic.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general, accepted an award from the governor on behalf of the service members and civilians.

The governor asked him to pass along that message, Shields said in an email to New York National Guard leaders.

"We would not be in this position today without the efforts of all our military service members and

civilian employees. DMNA and the state's military forces have played a key role in the state's COVID response efforts," Shields said.

As of June 15, the New York National Guard was staffing 28 vaccination sites across the state with 1,781 personnel. This included three sites formerly run by FEMA and active Navy and Air Force personnel in Brooklyn, Queens and Yonkers which were taken over in mid-May.

Between Feb. 24 and May 19 the Medgar Evers College site administered 215,570 vaccine doses, while the York College location administered 223,927 shots. The Yonkers site administered 70,071 vaccinations as of late May.

Since the vaccination mission began in January, National Guard personnel have supported 3,734,220 vaccinations through June 15. New York National Guard medical personnel administered 108,707 of those shots.

According to the New York State Department of Health, a total of 20,296,035 vaccinations have been given in New York and over 9.94 million state residents are totally vaccinated, as of June 16.

Along with running vaccination sites, the 2,294 New York military personnel on mission duties on June 15 continued staffing 15 testing sites, assemble and ship COVID-19 test kits around New York and conduct logistics support missions.

The state, though, had already announced plans to eliminate those drive-thru sites, including the first one at Glenn Island Park in Westchester which was established in March of 2020.

Since March 8, 2020, a total of

6,394 New York National Guard members have served on the COVID-19 mission.

On May 13, the New York National Guard reported that service members had spent 1,000,000 man days supporting the state COVID-19 response.

As of June 15 the New York National Guard also:

- Assisted in collecting 1,664,013 COVID-19 tests at 15 locations
- Assembled 12,534,154 COVID-19 test kits
- Received 57,389 pallets of goods and distributed 27,055 pallets from six warehouse locations
- Conducted 12,655 mobile lab COVID-19 tests
- Providing access control at nine locations.
- Completed missions include:
  - Screening 3,074,048 passengers for health information at 12 airports
  - Distributing 112,707 gallons of hand sanitizer
  - Processing 278,162 phone calls for the Department of Health and NYC Veterans Services
  - Preparing 444,987 meals for needy resident
  - Distributing 54,899,025 meals (Most in NYC)
  - Cleaning 907,000 square feet of facility space at 22 Locations



Tom Pescatore, 26, of Manhattan receives his second Pfizer vaccination from Lt. Col. John Reynolds, a registered nurse assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing on May 20, 2021 at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York. This marks the 600,000th vaccine administered at Javits. Photo by Spc. Li Ji, 369th Sustainment Brigade.



Senior staff from Joint Task Force Javits at the Jacob Javits Center in Manhattan mark 600,000 vaccines administered on May 20, 2021. Photo by New York Guard Sgt. Michael Bilski.

- Collecting 14,269 COVID antibody tests
- Conducting the dignified recovery of 2,882 New Yorkers who died during the crisis
- Assisted in providing medical treatment for 1,095 patients at the Javits Convention Center **gt**



Cassie Huang, 28, of Manhattan, speaks to Col. Michael Bice, Joint Task Force Javits Incident Commander after her first vaccination on April 26, 2021. She received the 500,000th vaccine at Javits. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.





Soldiers of the New York National Guard assemble COVID-19 test kits to be shipped across New York State from Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, N.Y., April 13, 2021. Photo by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times staff.

## Troops Ship Over 12.5 Million COVID-19 Test Kits

Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

TROY, N.Y. -- Between April 4, 2020 and June 18, 2021, New York National Guard troops assembled more than 12.5 million COVID-19 test kits that were shipped statewide to public testing sites, nursing homes, schools, universities and hospitals.

Early in the mission, packaging 18,000 test kits in a workday was a pretty big deal, recalled Spc. Aubree Brothers, who has been on the mission from the start. Now, the 20-member team can package enough items for 100,000 test kits daily, the Delta Company, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion Soldier said.

On April 7, a little more than year after starting the mission, military members who work in the Hudson Valley Community College ice arena hit the 10 million test kits mark.

It's good to be able to tout that accomplishment, said Pfc. Sydney Smith, a MP from the 206th Military Police Company, and a Niskayuna, New York resident, who has been on the mission for a month.

"I feel good about it," she said. "We are helping out the community."

The New York National Guard team, led by Senior Master Sgt. Darla Roote, a member of the Syracuse, New York based 152nd Air Operations Group, works at the direction of the New York State Department of Health and the state's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

The Department of Health's Wadsworth Center—the state's premier health research facility

commonly known as Wadsworth Lab—determines how many test kits need to be made and shipped each week, said Melissa Nussbaum, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services program manager who oversees the test kit operation.

Her team works the logistics piece to meet that requirement, Nussbaum said. The Guardsmen and women play a critical role in making sure the test kits get assembled and shipped, she added.

Monday is the big day for the COVID-19 test kit assembly team, Roote said.

The team spends the previous week getting materials ready for packing and shipping via United Parcel Service truck based on the Department of Health order for kits. Supplies are quality checked and boxes are labeled to indicate how many test sets are inside and where they are going, she explained.

On Monday, the supplies are pushed out. Kits go to 15 New York State run COVID-19 testing sites, universities, schools, nursing homes and hospitals and other locations as required.

Each kit consists of a nose swab, a vial full of a liquid, which is part of the testing process, and an absorbent pad to wipe up any leaks from the vials.

A team of Soldiers charged with quality control eyeball the liquid inside the vials to make sure it hasn't gone bad.

If the liquid looks like pink drink its okay, explained Spc. Christopher Udell, a member of

the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion who has been on the mission since April 2020. If it looks like murky pond water then it has gone bad and that vial cannot be used, the Lockport, New York resident added.

When the mission first started, the National Guard Soldiers and Airmen assembled complete test kits, said Spc. Sterling Jolly, another 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion Soldier. The three items were packaged inside plastic bags and then packed in boxes, the Knoxville, Pennsylvania resident explained.

But in June, 2020 the system changed.

The Guardsman stopped making complete test kits. Instead they would package the three main items and the plastic "bio bag" were counted out into sets and then packed in boxes for shipping. This switch to "mass production" allowed the National Guard team on site to ship far more test kits, Brothers said.

This is when the numbers of kits shipped really began growing, Udell said.

Along with members of the Army and Air National Guard, the test kit making team also includes members of the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

It's a good team and a good mission, said Brothers, who is a Williamson, New York resident.

"It feels like we are helping," she added. **gt**



# NY Supports Indiana Disaster Drill

Story and photos by Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade

MUSCATATUCK, Ind. -- One hundred and eighty-seven New York Army National Guard Soldiers were among 4,200 troops taking part in a nuclear attack response drill conducted April 19 and 20 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center in Indiana.

The annual Guardian Response training involves Army Guard, Army Reserve and active Army responding to a CBRN incident.

The 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion sent 138 troops from Bravo Company and the 204th Engineer Battalion sent 59 Soldiers from the Headquarters Company.

The scenario for the 2021 exercise revolved around the detonation of a nuclear device with a 20-kiloton yield.

Participating in Guardian Response is part of the process of validating units for CBRN command and control missions and the 101st's Bravo Company has that mission for the next two years, explained Col. Seth Morgulas, the commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade.

"Participating in the event allows them to practice with the units that would be called upon to support in the event of an actual large scale CBRN event," Morgulas said.

The job for the Soldiers from Bravo Company was to keep the communications working, explained Capt. Sean Gallagher, the company commander.

"If a CBRN event occurs in the United States, we are the communications that allows everybody talk to each other and enable mission command to conduct operations," he said.

The network they set up not only let the military units talk to each other, but allowed notional civilian police, fire and rescue units, to talk with the military, Gallagher said.

In this exercise, his team was supporting the 119th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of the New Jersey Army National Guard, which was the responding force.

Working with another signal unit was good training for his Soldiers, said Lt. Col. Mario Coaxum, the commander of the 119th.

"They provided us a command post node and set us up with VOIPs. They've increased our bandwidth for internet which has been helpful, because we got a lot of folks that need to use it," he added.

Responding to CBRN events requires coordinating the activities of a variety of forces across a wide area. Soldiers have to operate inside and outside a "hot zone" where the chemical or radiological event occurred, Coaxum explained.

The Soldiers from the 204th engineers served as the battalion headquarters element for National Guard engineers and chemical decontamination specialists from the California Army National Guard and medics from the Indiana National Guard, said Lt. Col. Brandon Gendron, the 204th commander.

The task force mission run by the New York Soldiers provides search and rescue, decontamination and mass casualty triage operations to the incident commander, Gendron said.

His troops were able to use the exercise to hone their ability to operate as a cohesive staff and go through the national disaster incident command system planning cycle, he added.

"I think this exercise broadened our perspective on these types of disaster response mission sets which will posture us well for future operations," Gendron said.

In the area where buildings were destroyed by the simulated blast, Soldiers from California's 216th Engineer Company donned protective suits and worked to search for, and extract, victims of the attack.

"We translate between our units downrange as far as exposure levels and how that will affect the mass population from the type of exposure; its levels and whether there are short term or long-term effects," said Sgt. 1st Class Jessica Gonzalez, the battalion's CBRN specialist.

The California Guard's 140th Chemical Company ran the decontamination mission.

The Indiana National Guard's 738th Area Support Medical Company, tracked radiation exposure and cared for response forces.

Everyone worked together as if they had been doing this for a long time, despite most Soldiers performing these missions for the first time, Gonzalez said.

Once outside the hot zone, medics of the 738th assessed radiation exposure and reported to the 204th Engineer command post. **gt**



Staff Sgt. Christian Cuesta, a multichannel transmission systems operator-maintainer and the team leader at Regional Support Center Panther, assigned to Bravo Company of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, prepares a generator in North Vernon, Ind., April 20, 2021.



1st Lt. Stephen Rolston, assigned to the Headquarters Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, adjusts radios at Regional Support Camp Panther in North Vernon, Ind., April 20, 2021 while supporting the 2021 Guardian Response exercise at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center.



Staff Sgt. Julius Forde, center, a multichannel transmission systems operator, and Spc. Chris Chen, an information technology specialist, both assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, prepare a portable satellite transmission terminal for the Guardian Response training exercise at Regional Support Camp Nighthawk, Nineveh, Ind., April 21, 2021.

# Syracuse Twin Brothers Support Capitol Response

Story by Ryan Campbell, *Guard Times Staff*

WASHINGTON -- Twin brothers Colin and Cameron Pare, both specialists in the New York National Army National Guard's 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion spent more than two months on duty in D.C. on the capital response mission.

Colin, an unmanned aircraft operator and Cameron, a geospatial imagery intelligence analyst, both 19, are assigned to the battalion's Delta Company. They arrived in D.C. on January 9, days after the capitol riots, joining more than other 26,000 Guardsmen.

"We got the call to get down here literally the day after the riots happened," said Cameron. "We were talking about it honestly, we didn't think we were going to get activated because we're part of an intel company."

Having not been to D.C. since they were children, they found a great reception when they arrived from their homes and jobs as security guards at Lockheed Martin in Syracuse, New York, as part of the capitol response mission.

"All of the agencies were definitely welcoming," said Colin. "They needed the help at the time, they were very unsure of what was going to happen in the days or weeks to come."

**"All of the agencies were definitely welcoming. They needed the help at the time, they were very unsure of what was going to happen in the days or weeks to come."**

-- Spc. Colin Pare, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion



Spc. Colin and Cameron Pare, both assigned to the N.Y. Army National Guard's 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, on patrol around the security perimeter along the Capitol Building, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2021. The twin brothers are part of the Capitol Response mission which saw 26,000 National Guardsmen supporting security efforts around D.C. since January. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Sam Root)

The twins, along with other members of the New York National Guard, were deputized as "special police" and assigned an area around the Hart Senate Office Building, across the street from the U.S. Capitol building. They worked on the night shift, securing a perimeter surrounded by vast lengths of fencing and razor wire.

"We've been pulling guard on the fence mostly," said Cameron. "We were QRF for the first month when we first got down here."

With the Capitol Police being the lead on responding to security incidents, the National Guard maintained QRF teams that were on standby to respond in a moments notice if the police needed

support.

"It wasn't too rough," said Colin. "For something that had to happen so quickly and on such a large scale, I'd say it went off without many hitches."

The brothers said they both volunteered to go for the experience of it being their first activation in the nearly three years they've been in the Army National Guard.

Colin said he joined on Oct. 26, 2018, with his brother following two weeks later.

"For me, I wanted a lot of experiences and I didn't quite want to go to college immediately out of high school," said Cameron, who also said he wants to seek out more opportunities for missions in the

future.

"I had to explore my options a bit, I wanted a good challenge so I decided to join the Guard."

Colin, who aspires to become at least a first sergeant, said "I wanted to do some sort of public service, something military related."

"I thought the National Guard would be a perfect way to do still service my community and my country while pursuing a civilian career."

Looking back on being able to be some of the few people to witness the 59th presidential inauguration in person, they said it was a very memorable experience.

"It was weird knowing that usually there would be thousands of people lined up across the streets," said Cameron. "When the day came, it was a ghost town. We pretty much saw nobody."

Ultimately at the end of the mission, Cameron said they appreciate being able to see how the National Guard handles activations and responding to a situation.

"The more experience I have, the better leader I'll be in the future," he said.

**"It was weird knowing that usually there would be thousands of people lined up across the streets. When the day came, it was a ghost town. We pretty much saw nobody."**

-- Spc. Cameron Pare, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion



# Museum Crafts Glass Coins for NY Guardsmen

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Lauren Warner, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

CORNING, N.Y. -- Military challenge coins are nothing new. But a glass military challenge coin is.

Soldiers and Airmen who work at the National Guard led vaccination site in Corning, New York, will be recognized with coins made of glass thanks to the Corning Museum of Glass and Air Force Master Sgt. Jason Borghi, who came up with the idea.

On April 8, Borghi, a member of the 107th Attack Wing, and Airman 1st Class Rico Richardson, from the 105th Airlift Wing, joined museum experts to craft 40 of these one-of-a-kind items in the museum's glass works.

The museum, three miles away from the vaccination site at Corning Community College, is a not-for-profit museum that explores the art, history and science of glass.

The vaccination site has been distributing about 1,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccines daily since March 18.

"To hold a vial of vaccine and look back at the loss of life and the sacrifice made by the Guard, our families and the entire nation over the past year, is an insanely surreal moment," Borghi said. "The first tray of vaccine I held, I literally started laughing to the point I had tears running down my face."

When he realized he was working in the same town as the home to the company that makes the Pfizer vaccine vials, he decided he wanted to create a challenge coin from the same glass, Borghi recalled.

Borghi said it's important to recognize the service members that stood up this vaccine site, because it is the first state vaccination center where the New York National Guard, which is active at 24 total sites, is the lead entity for the operation.

Borghi reached out to Corning corporate headquarters with his idea and to see if he could buy glass challenge coins from the company. The staff there directed him to the museum, which has the facilities to make these kind of small, one-of-a-kind glass items.

Eric Meek, the Senior Manager of Hot Glass Programs at the Corning Museum of Glass, explained that he received an email from Corning Incorporated about the potential of creating a challenge coin.

"We immediately said yes, we are going to do this," Meek said.

They couldn't use the same industrial glass used in the vaccine vials, but instead turned to a glass designed to be worked and stamped at 2,300 degree Fahrenheit temperatures, Meek said. Then he and his staff of designers began working with Borghi to create the coin.

The design they settled on included a vial of vaccine in the center, surrounded by the words "F Co. JTF COVID-19" on top and "Corning NY 2021" on the bottom.

Meek reached out to Tobeyco Manufacturing, a Corning-area machine shop to produce a brass stamp for the coin once a design was in place. Tobeyco was able to make the stamp in an afternoon.

G. Brien and George Kennard, Corning Museum of Glass glassmakers, started the process of making coins by gathering a blob of the red, hot, molten glass from a 2,300 degree Fahrenheit furnace.

Then they dripped it onto the table, where the glass was cut.

Brien torched the glass and fire-polished any sharp edges left behind.

At that point, Borghi and Richardson used the brass stamp to place the logo on the coins, which had cooled to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit, leaving a nice impression on the coin.

Borghi was prepared to cover the cost of the glass coins for his fellow Guardsmen; however the museum decided to donate the coins to the men and women supporting the vaccine site, Meek said.

"To work at the vaccine site is a great privilege. Airmen and Soldiers are more than willing to take on this responsibility, especially knowing that we are helping stop the spread of COVID-19," Richardson said. "It was an honor to be able



Air National Guard Master Sgt. Jason Borghi, a member of the 107th Attack Wing, assigned to the Corning, N.Y. vaccination site works with with Corning Museum of Glass experts to create glass challenge coins on April 8, 2021. The museum donated the coins to distribute to the men and women that helped set up the vaccine site.

to help create the challenge coins that will be presented to the service members working the vaccine site."

The glass challenge coin will be a very significant and memorable coin to recognize the Airmen and Soldiers, Borghi said. **gt**

An example of the glass challenge coin created by the Corning Museum of Glass for the Soldiers and Airmen at the Corning, N.Y., vaccine site. The vaccine site began on March 18, 2021 at Corning Community College with nearly 1,000 vaccines provided per day.





## WMD training in NYC

FORT HAMILTON, N.Y. -- Army National Guard Sgt. Marisa Santiago, a survey team member assigned to the 24th Civil Support Team, dons her protective suit to conduct a training exercise at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y. on March 11, 2021 to exercise team capabilities. National Guard Civil Support Teams are trained to detect chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high explosive materials and report on potential threats to civil authorities. The 24th Civil Support Team is based at Fort Hamilton and is one of two in the New York National Guard. Photo by Connie Dillon, Fort Hamilton Garrison Staff.





# NY and NJ Response Force Trains Together Again

Story and photos by Capt. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team



Staff Sgt. Sarah Silvernail, Tech. Sgt. Lacey Kehlenbeck and Staff Sgt. Daniel Hotter, search and extraction medics from the 105th CBRN Task Force Medical Element listen to a search and extraction brief during a Homeland Response Force collective training event in East Amherst, N.Y. on April 17, 2021.

EAST AMHERST, N.Y. -- After over a year of no large-scale training due to COVID-19, more than 200 Soldiers and Airmen from New York and New Jersey trained together to respond to CBRN incidents April 16-17 at A. J. Jureck American Legion Post 1672 and the Erie County Fire Center.

The team is trained to find and rescue victims and provide security, decontamination, medical treatment, and command and control in support of local first responders during the first hours and days of a natural or manmade disaster.

The last time they were able to practice as a whole unit was just four months before the pandemic hit in 2020.

In a typical year, elements of the task force would have trained to reinforce skills for the HRF mission and would have taken part in

two collective training events.

"Normally when we come in, the longest it's been for anybody is six months and it comes right back. But after not doing that for almost two years, it's pretty tough," said Army Capt. Christopher Schrader, commander of the task force's Search and Extraction element.

Those training events would traditionally be overseen by external evaluators grading specific tasks and timing. But Army Lt. Col. William Snyder, commander of the CBRN Task Force, said he wanted this event to be built on lower-stress conditions, with a goal of rebuilding cohesion.

"We're taking today as a crawl," Snyder said on day one of the training.

The official standard is 150 minutes.

After setup on day one, most of the task force practiced ongoing command and control, support operations, and the decontamination and treatment of casualties and HRF personnel. Civilian role players acted as wounded individuals being evacuated from the site of an explosion.

For the 107th Attack Wing's Fatality Search and Recovery Team, it marked a return to collective training. The FSRT was assigned to one of the toughest roles of the COVID mission, helping New York City's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner with the dignified removal of remains of people who died.

"There was a certain bond that was created when everybody was in New York doing something that's really never been done before," said Capt. Shawn Lavin, leader of the FSRT.

At the training, FSRT members practiced dealing not only with the remains of people, but doing so under CBRN conditions.

"It was just really good to see again how serious they take their job but, then again, see them really doing the nuanced stuff that we probably didn't do in New York City," Lavin said.

In most HRF collective training events, the role of civil support teams – specialized units that train full-time, year-round to be the first into a disaster zone – is played by notional characters and made-up information. In this exercise, the CBRN Task Force was joined by the real 2nd Civil Support Team, based out of Scotia, New York.

"I've been on the CST for 12 years. I only remember one other time where we actually trained within the HRF exercise," said Air Force Maj. Ron McCarthy, medical operations officer for the 2nd CST.

"We bring down all sorts of chemical, radiological and analytical equipment to detect what's down there. We also have our recon team that can also go down there and take samples," explained Army Capt. Salvatore Scannapieco, nuclear medical science officer for the 2nd CST.

The CST conducted a detailed inspection of a mock incident site at a nearby fire training center. They reported their findings to the task force's search and extraction and command and control elements, for each to be better informed about the kinds of hazards they could be dealing with.

Every member of the task force's Search and Extraction element, which is provided by Bravo Company of the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, based in Lockport, New York, goes through



Sgt. William Ward, assigned to Alpha Company, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, practices casualty decontamination with a civilian role-player during a Homeland Response Force collective training event in East Amherst, N.Y., April 17, 2021.

certification at the Urban Search and Rescue Extractor course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

The weekend collective training event for the Search and Extraction element served as an opportunity to build on that certification by bringing civilian experience into play and drawing on a deep base of institutional knowledge.

During round-robin training on shoring techniques, breaching and breaking obstacles, lifting and hauling materials, disaster site reconnaissance, and rescue and evacuation of casualties, the S&E members were mentored by Ronnie Sallee, a retired firefighter who responded to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Build-

ing in Oklahoma City in 1995. He now works as a civilian contractor, sharing his expertise in search and extraction with HRFs all across the country.

"Gravity is a building's worst nightmare. Even from the time they build it, it's trying to come down," Sallee taught the S&E members.

He watched as they successfully measured buildings, cut materials, and built braces to shore up structures – in plain combat uniforms on day one, and in full protective suits, gloves and masks on day two.

"I'm telling you, I'm impressed with these guys," said Sallee.

The experience of the S&E members, themselves, goes beyond what they learn at the extractor course. It even goes beyond their traditional Army training as combat engineers. They brought valuable experience to the training site from civilian careers as general contractors and electricians, and personal hobbies like rock climbing.

The S&E element's senior noncommissioned officer, 1st Sgt.

Stephen Campbell, brought vast knowledge of rope rescue from his civilian job as a member of the New York State Parks Police's high angle rescue teams.

"It's about finesse, not muscle," Campbell told his Soldiers while practicing ascents and descents on a five-story building.

On day one, site setup for the task force lasted more than an hour past the 150 minute standard. On day two, there was drastic improvement.

"We almost hit our 150 minutes. We actually were over by 15 minutes [on day two]," said Snyder. "When we get together again in November, I think we're going to be able to meet that time."

November is the next collective training event for the HRF and the CBRN Task Force. They'll travel to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst for a larger-scale evaluation. Between now and then, they'll continue to refine their skills and procedures during drill weekends and annual training. **gt**



Sgt. Victoria Russell, a petroleum supply specialist assigned to Alpha Company, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, practices technical decontamination of a Soldier during a Homeland Response Force collective training exercise in East Amherst, N.Y., April 16, 2021.



## Soldiers Earn Expert Infantry, Medic Badges

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Darren Wright, 10th Mountain Command Post Operational Detachment

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- After five days of grueling testing and intense physical and mental exhaustion, six infantry Soldiers and one combat medic from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat team are now wearing the Expert Infantryman and Expert Field Medical Badges.

Hosted by the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, the testing for the badges pushed Soldiers to their limits with a series of doctrinal tests designed to assess their mastery of individual infantry and medical tasks.

Testing commenced pre-dawn on May 17, and ended with a badge presentation and pinning ceremony May 21.

"It feels good," said Staff Sgt. Robert Majewski with 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment. "It's an opportunity I didn't think I'd have. Now that I have this opportunity, it definitely feels good to make it through to the other side."

Established in 1944, the Expert Infantry Badge is an award designed to recognize infantrymen and Special Forces Soldiers who have demonstrated the discipline and mastery of skills critical to being an infantry Soldier. The medic's equivalent, the Expert Field Medical Badge was established in 1965, and recognizes exceptional competence and outstanding performance by field medical personnel.

"The purpose of the EIB is to get future leaders prepared for infantry tasks and get them up to date with Army training doctrine," Majewski said. "All the stations we went through, all the tasks, just to be subject matter experts on them."

Preparation for testing began months earlier by studying the EIB and EFMB manuals before heading to Fort Drum for five full days of hands-on training the week prior to testing.

"My biggest obstacle was just making sure I got everything in sequential order," Majewski said. "There are so many little things with the tasks. You can do the right thing, but if you mess up the order or do it out of step, that's as simple as a 'no go.'"

Testing for the badges included a challenging physical fitness assessment followed by dozens of testing lanes designed to assess Soldiers' individual skills in multiple areas such as combat first aid, weapons proficiency, land navigation



Spc. Christopher Isom, an infantryman with the New York National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, conducts a communications check with a tactical manpack radio during the 10th Mountain Division Expert Infantryman Badge assessment at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 17, 2021. Ten infantry Soldiers and one medic from across the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team participated in the five-day assessment to earn the coveted Expert Infantryman and Expert Field Medical badges.

and other essential infantry and medical tasks. The event culminated with a 12-mile foot march which Soldiers had to complete in under three hours while wearing rucksacks weighing at least 35 pounds.

Receiving the award were:

- 1st Lt. Phillip Mullen, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Sgt. Troy Perez, 1st Battalion 69th Infantry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Sgt. Joseph Ryan, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Cpl. Dakoatah Miller, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Sgt. 1st Class Alex Rotondi, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Staff Sgt. Robert Majewski, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment – Expert Infantryman Badge
- Sgt. Klayton McCallum, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment – Expert Field Medi-

cal Badge

"It's another day, another school I went to, another course; I just conquered each task one by one," said Sgt. Troy Perez a member of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment. "(The) EIB was created to stand you out, to show you are top tier and you are an expert in your craft."

Testing for the EIB and EFMB alongside their 10th Mtn. Div. active duty counterparts was a welcome opportunity for the National Guard Soldiers not only to earn their badges but to showcase their skills and exhibit what they bring to the fight.

"We showed motivation and we worked great with each other," Perez said of his interactions with other Soldiers. "We all wanted the same thing at the end of the day. So, it doesn't matter what service you're in. We're in the same course, and we're working together; we were all a big team effort."

"They were very welcoming of us," Majewski added. "It was definitely good to train with





Sgt. Troy Perez, left, and Sgt. Joseph Ryan, both infantrymen with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, conduct a 12-mile foot march as part of the 10th Mountain Division Expert Infantryman Badge assessment at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 21, 2021

these guys, to work with them and just be a part of them for this time. Just having this invitation to be with them, I was very appreciative of that.”

Now that they have earned their badges, the 27th IBCT Soldiers will head back to their units to help prepare the next group of candidates for testing.

With earning the badge “comes a responsibility, your duty to now show others and help them develop their skills,” Perez said. “Because a (noncommissioned officer’s) duty is to help develop, motivate, and influence as many individuals as possible to become the better versions of themselves and help develop more leaders.”

Perez and Majewski said they hope others in their respective units follow their lead and take a shot at earning a badge of their own.

When asked what advice he would give to Soldiers looking to earn their badge, Perez said, “Just do it. If you want to have change in your life and you want to be better, then you have to be your own change.”

“The EIB is a great course to challenge yourself,” he added. “Just keep preparing yourself mentally and physically. Each task, each performance measure, it’s very tedious. So, just know each step of what you’re doing and slow down. It’s all slow and steady.” **gt**

**“It feels good. It’s an opportunity I didn’t think I’d have,”**

*-- Staff Sgt. Robert Majewski, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment*



Sgt. Klayton McCallum, a combat medic with the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, lifts a simulated casualty into a military ambulance vehicle as part of a testing lane during the 10th Mountain Division Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB) assessment at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 18, 2021. The EFMB is awarded to field medical personnel who demonstrate exceptional competence and outstanding performance during the testing phase, receiving a “go” on all stages of assessment, including land navigation, physical fitness, a road march, and multiple combat, medical, and Soldier skills.



Sgt. Troy Perez, an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, treats a simulated casualty for shock during the 10th Mountain Division Expert Infantryman Badge assessment at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 19, 2021.



Sgt. Joseph Ryan, an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, moves towards a casualty under fire during a medical lane simulation as part of the 10th Mountain Division Expert Infantryman Badge assessment at Fort Drum, N.Y., May 19, 2021.



# 69<sup>th</sup> Medics Ruck Across Manhattan for Training

Story and photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard

**NEW YORK --** New Yorkers are used to seeing unusual things, but 36 Soldiers carrying 45 pound MOLLE packs got a second look from even the most jaded resident, as medics assigned to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment conducted a 6 mile ruck march through lower Manhattan on May 16.

The medics kicked off from the New York Army National Guard battalion's historic Lexington Avenue armory home in the early morning hours.

They headed east towards the East River and FDR Drive and then followed the highway south to the Williamsburg Bridge connecting Manhattan to Queens. They turned around and came back.

The civilians along the route looked at the Soldiers curiously and took pictures as they moved through the neighborhoods. The Soldiers told the onlookers that they were conducting training they hadn't been able to do before due to COVID-19 restrictions.

During 2020 much of the unit training was conducted remotely and focused on online training and administrative tasks. Many of the medics were involved in the Guard's COVID-19 response which also kept them away from training, said Capt. Mercy Ukpe, the battalion's physician's assistant.

Getting back to regular training is a good thing, Ukpe said.

The march was training for the annual 12 mile ruck march all infantry units must complete annually, explained 1st Lt. Erik Corrigan, the 69th's medical operations officer. The 69th normally conducts that mandatory road march during annual training, he said.

This year the 69th Soldiers will also get the chance to earn the

Norwegian Foot March Badge by adding another 6.6 miles onto the 12 mile Army required road march.

Known as the Marsjmerket in Norwegian and created in 1915, the badge is awarded to Soldiers who cover 18.6 miles with a 25 pound pack in under 4.5 hours.

Normally a Norwegian officer or NCO must oversee the event to earn the award, but the Norwegian Army has waived that requirement due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. This allows more opportunities for non-Norwegians to earn the badge.

Normally the battalion conducts ruck marches at military training areas like Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey or Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill in the Hudson Valley, said Maj. Michael Clifford, the battalion's

executive officer.

But it takes time valuable training time to get to those locations, so for a smaller group and for a shorter distance the hike through New York City works, he explained.

But the urban environment carries its own hazards, Corrigan said.

We were concerned about the safety of our soldiers along the route with the uneven city streets and potholes marching with their 45 pounds rucks," Corrigan added.

So battalion leaders laid out a route that avoided sprained ankles due to potholes or too much traffic, he explained.

Because of the urban environment the Soldiers didn't carry their personal weapons for this road march.

Spc. Michael Nigro, a medic who transferred from the active

Army to the 69th in March, 2020 said he was happy to be out soldiering again instead of training online.

"Remote training that we did was good for medics, but in terms of soldiering training, it missed its mark," Nigro said. "It's nice that we are getting back to doing real Army training again."

The battalion plans to keep marching over the next few months to build stamina and fitness in preparation for annual training, Ukpe said. The marches are also great moral builders for Soldiers who have spent much of the past year coping with a pandemic, she added.

"Soldiers are looking forward to going back to their MOS training after being on COVID-19 related missions for the past year," Ukpe said. **gt**



New York Army National Guard medics assigned to the Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment conduct a 6 mile ruck march through Manhattan during the early morning hours on May 16, 2021. Thirty-six medics took part in the march as a train up for a required ruck march during annual training.



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment in formation at the National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. while holding the colors and guidons of the battalion, during a ceremony memorializing the battalion's World War I service on March 9, 2021. Courtesy photo.

## 108<sup>th</sup> Infantry Troops Mark WWI Service in DC

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

WASHINGTON -- The raising of an American flag over the National World War I Memorial on April 16, officially opened the monument to the Doughboys of that war in Washington's Pershing Park.

But a month before, the colors of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment were unfurled there during a ceremony commemorating the 331 members of the 108th Infantry Regiment who died in World War I.

The formal "First Flag" ceremony on April 16 featured the 3rd Infantry Regiment in dress uniform, the U.S. Army Band, known as "Pershing's Own" and a F-22 flyover.

The short March 9 ceremony, featured Lt. Col. Matthew Kilgore, the battalion commander, making a few remarks accompanied by Soldiers presenting the 108th's colors and the company guidons, while members of the World War I Centennial Commission, which created the memorial, looked on.

They also filmed a "shout out" to the Doughboys of World War I which was included in the 80 minute video which was released to mark the formal opening of the memorial.

They were among 250 108th Infantry Soldiers in Washington as part of the National Guard security mission put in place after the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.

It was simple but it was moving, said Meredith Carr, the deputy director of the World War I Centennial Commission.

"We loved the idea of it. We thought it was a lovely tribute to the unit and the legacy and their history. That is why we said yes," Carr said.

The 108th Infantry Regiment was organized in October of 1917 at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina, while the New York National Guard's 27th Division was training there to deploy to France.

The Army took 1,350 men from the 74th New York Infantry from Buffalo and 293 Soldiers from the 12th New York Infantry from Manhattan to create the 108th Infantry Regiment.

While most American units fought next to French units or in an American Army, the 27th Division was assigned to the British in Belgium as part of a two-division corps.

In September 1918 the 108th spearheaded the 27th Division's part in the British assault on the German Hindenburg Line, a final barrier between the allied armies and Germany.

The 108th penetrated the German defenses at Quennemont Farm, but the attack stalled due to heavy casualties and enemy counterattacks. An Australian unit was sent in to complete the attack and members of the 108th attached themselves to the Australians and went forward.

During three months of combat, the 108th sustained 1,763 casualties, including 331 dead, out of an assigned strength of 3,056 men. Most of those occurred during the Hindenburg Line attack.

"That the 108th Infantry ... should have broken through the maze of wire that existed and in the face of machine guns firing from every trench and nest, lodged one battalion in

the main position, now seems an extraordinary feat," the division command, Maj. Gen. John O'Ryan wrote later.

The idea for honoring those members of the 108th Infantry from 1918 came to him as he looked down at Pershing Park from his hotel room each day, said 108th Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Markle.

"I would look down and see the construction workers at the site having their morning briefing before they went to work," he recalled.

He approached the manager at the site. She approached the commission. And the commission okayed an event, Markle said.

The commission members also thought it was fitting for a unit with World War I ties, in Washington to help defend the Capitol, to hold the first colors ceremony at the memorial, she added.

About 20 people were there for their ceremony, Markle said. They stopped construction on the site, conducted their event and then the work started again.

The bulk of the \$50 million monument opened to the public on April 17, 2021, but the commission is still raising funds to finish a series of sculptures which will tell the story of a World War I Soldier.

Along with the 108th Infantry, other units that are still part of the New York Army National Guard which distinguished themselves during World War I include the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment and the 369th Sustainment Battalion. **gt**



# Aircrews, Forest Rangers Train to Fight Fire

Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff and Sgt. Andrew Valenza, Joint Force Headquarters

COLONIE, N.Y. -- New York and Connecticut Army National Guard UH-60 aircrews teamed up with Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers to hone helicopter wildfire fighting skills on May 6 and 7 over the Mohawk River in Colonie.

Four New York aircrews, based at the nearby Albany International Airport, and three from Connecticut took part in the training.

Over two days, the teams dropped 120 buckets of water, each holding 660 gallons, into the Mohawk.

The Forest Rangers trained alongside the Soldiers; practicing adjusting water drops from both inside the hovering Black Hawks, and by radio from the ground.

Helicopters make fighting wildfires easier and faster, explained Forest Ranger Lt. David Kallen, with the Rangers Division of Forest Protections Aviation Program. So training with the Army Guard crews was valuable, he said.

“Helicopters allow us as fire managers to expedite water delivery to the fire line, accessing locations that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to get to,” Kallen said.

The Soldiers learned a lot from the Rangers as well, said Capt. Forest Thrush, the operations officer for the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation.

They learned about how fires spread and how the Rangers manage fires. They also learned how to integrate helicopters with fire teams on the ground, Thrush explained.



3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment aircrews conduct water bucket training at Camp Smith and over the Hudson River, April 6, 2021. Photo by Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

“One thing we learned is that our previous spot-drop techniques are often not a good course of action due to the way the rotor down-wash can fan out the flames,” he said.

Each of New York’s three Army Aviation Support Facilities, certifies crews annually on using the Bambi buckets which pick up and drop water on a fire.

On April 6, crews from the Ronkonkoma

flight facility tested their skills over the Hudson River near Camp Smith.

The crews used three helicopters, two UH-60M models and a UH-60L, for the training.

The UH-60M version of the Black Hawk incorporates an all-digital display cockpit, improved rotors, and a more powerful engine.


The training was the first use of the UH-60M in firefighting training.

The “glass” cockpit in the newer “Mike” model UH-60 seems to provide greater situational awareness to the pilot during operations, according to Capt. Richard Siracusano, the flight facility operations officer in Ronkonkoma.

The “Mike” displays moving digital maps, and wind speed and direction on the primary flight display and a “height above terrain” digital maps which lets the pilot know where the aircraft is in relation to mountainous terrain, he said.

Using three helicopters allows the crews to make sure that the bucket functions correctly with each aircraft, said staff Sgt. Matthew Corrado, a Black Hawk crew chief.

One bucket did not work correctly when a solenoid failed and water would not release, so the Soldiers had to switch buckets.

“What we do is dangerous and difficult to begin with, so I think it is nice to be able to train on our jobs, solve problems, and just be able to keep practicing,” he said. 



Above right, aircrews from the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, conduct water bucket training at Camp Smith Training Site April 6, 2021. Photo by Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade. Above left, crews train alongside New York State Forest Rangers to improve wildfire fighting techniques in Latham, N.Y., May 6, 2021. Photo by Sgt. Andrew Valenza, Joint Force Headquarters.



Staff Sgt. David Selman, a culinary specialist assigned to 101st Signal Battalion, 53rd Troop Command serves food while Spc. Maurice Borne, assigned to Charlie Company, cooks chicken during training for the Philip A. Connelly Competition at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., May 15, 2021.

## Signal Battalion Cooks Prep for Cooking Competition

*Story and photo by Spc. Michael Kerr, 138th Public Affairs Detachment*

JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. -- Steam billows from under a small tarp out in the woods as Soldiers from the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion receive their dinner meals here on May 15, 2021.

Each Soldier steps up onto the platform of the field kitchen with an empty tray and steps off with a full plate of fresh cooked food.

“Barbecue, jerk or baked?” repeats Spc. Fatima S. Edwards, a culinary specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, referring to the choice of chicken each Soldier has available to them as they move down the line.

With hand-mashed potatoes and an assortment of cookies and snacks to choose from, this meal was far from the Meal, Ready to Eat that Soldiers typically receive in the field.

“Making people smile from just tasting the food, that’s how you know the job is done right,” said Edwards. “We all work hard, and its important work to provide quality meals for our fellow Soldiers.”

Edwards along with Spc. Maurice Bourne, Spc. Jalen Johnson and Spc. Monica C. Good-

ing were selected to participate in the Army’s annual cooking competition, the Philip A. Connelly Awards Program.

The goal was to ensure that the Soldiers are ready to compete in a timed event where they will be assessed on a range of culinary practices and regulations.

The Philip A. Connelly competition provides recognition for excellence in the preparation and serving of food, both in field kitchen operations and Army dining facilities. Competitors are evaluated on details such as food preparation, quality, sanitary practices, personnel appearance and professional attitude.

“I know they are going to give it their all and I hope their nerves don’t get to them,” said Sgt. 1st Class Gordon Rose, the NCOIC of the training event. “There’s no need to be perfect. These Soldiers are always putting their best effort out there and they deserve to be recognized for that.”

The exercise gave the Soldiers a chance to conduct training in an unfamiliar field environment and get hands-on experience with some of the equipment and practices that will be


under evaluation during the competition.

“Our job is not like everybody else’s,” Rose said. “There are multiple things that need to be done like food storage, equipment transport, field sanitation and they all get done as a team. Many hands make light work.”

The Soldiers still prepared meals for their unit while being assessed and worked together to cut, clean and cook as efficiently as possible.

“I am proud of our culinary specialists and their hard work, especially our first-time competitors who are stepping up to the challenge,” said Lt. Col. Michael Hastings, commander of the 101st.

With this training event completed, the team is looking forward to applying what they have learned in the competition and all future training events, said Rose.

“We have a strong team, enjoy what we’re doing, and love cooking,” said Rose. “When you are standing in line, you see that this is where your food is coming from and we want you to feel good about it. Good food is like good music, it feels good to the body especially after you’ve been working hard.” 



# 466<sup>th</sup> Med Home from Middle East

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times* Staff

QUEENSBURY, N.Y. -- Forty-seven New York Army National Guard Soldiers from the 466th Medical Company-Area Support, returned from a deployment that took them to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq in time for the Memorial Day weekend on Thursday, May 27.

The Soldiers mobilized on August 2, 2020 and trained at Fort Hood, Texas before heading to the Middle East a month later.

The company is based at the Queensbury Armory and most of the Soldiers live in the Capital Region and Glens Falls but some come from locations across the state.

Once they arrived in Kuwait, the company split into four sections handling different missions, according to Maj. Jason Cossey, the company commander.

The unit's primary mission was running the Role 2 Medical Treatment Facility at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, he said.

NATO sorts military medical treatment facilities into four categories, or "roles" with Role 1 offering the most basic medical care at a small unit level and Role 4 being the most intensive and offering highly specialized care.

A 22-Soldier team collocated with an active Army Forward Resuscitative from Fort Bliss, Texas. This location provided the highest level of trauma care in western Iraq. The combined team treated more than 2,000 patients which included Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, local nationals and civilian contractors from multiple nations, according to Cossey.

Another team of 466th medical Soldiers located at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait supported a Role 3 Hospital and ran a COVID-19 Isolation Facility. They also ran a Role 1 Medical Treatment Facility and cared for hundreds of COVID-19 positive patients each month.

"It was a whole extra layer on top of providing emergency care. You're now the COVID

experts, so to speak. It fell on us to manage the base COVID plan, testing plan, vaccination plan and quarantine plan," Cossey said.

The 466th's Behavioral Health Technician was assigned to Camp Buehring in Kuwait and supported the Combat Operational Stress Control team there, according to Cossey.

Seven Soldiers were assigned to the Air Force's 378th Emergency Medical Expeditionary Unit to provide Role 2 medical care at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

And finally, three Soldiers were in Jordan supporting a joint training center there and Special Operations Command, Cossey said.

The Soldiers came back together again and arrived back at Fort Hood, Texas from Kuwait on May 19. They began returning home in small groups on May 24 and were all home by May 28.

This was the second deployment for the company. The 466th deployed to Iraq from 2006 to 2007 and operated an Army field hospital and three troop medical facilities in south and central Iraq and received a Meritorious Unit Citation for its service then. **gt**



Army National Guard Sgt. Bradley Perry, left, a combat medic with the 466th Area Support Medical Company, New York National Guard, prepares to draw blood from Command Sgt. Maj. John Hicks, the senior enlisted NCO assigned to the 42nd Regional Support Group, New Jersey National Guard, at a blood drive at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 29, 2020. Photo by Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, New Jersey National Guard.



Army National Guard Sgt. Thomas Rufino, right, a combat medic with the 466th Area Support Medical Company, New York National Guard, prepares to draw blood from U.S. Army Reserve Cpl. Leslie Cardona, an ammunition specialist with the 266th Ordnance Company out of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, at a blood drive at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 29, 2020. Photo by Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez, New Jersey National Guard.



Soldiers assigned to the 466th Area Support Medical Company assist with patient movement during their deployment to the Middle East in 2020. Courtesy photo.

## Pinning the Guard's Newest Leaders

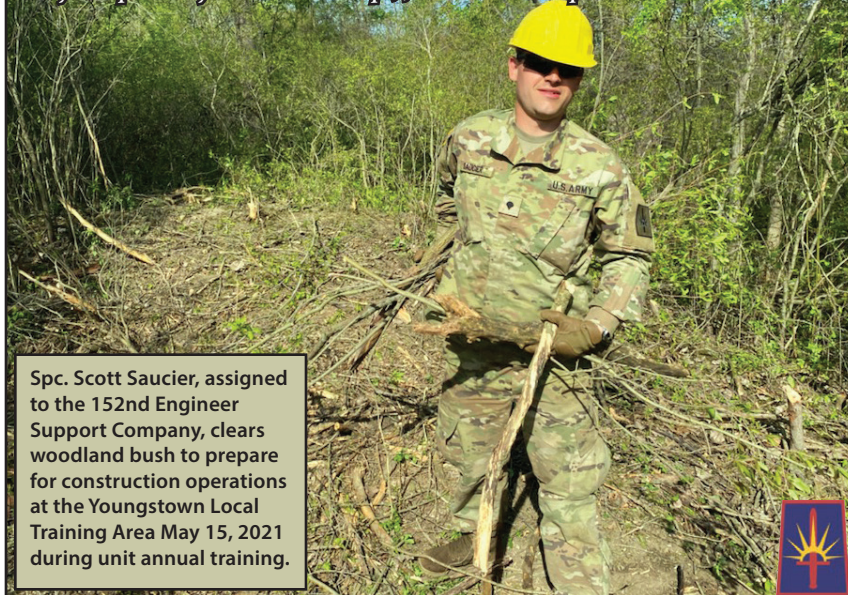


OLD BETHPAGE, N.Y. -- Reserve Officer Training Corps cadet Tiffany Paruolo, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment, has her officer rank pinned on by her parents, Laura Paruolo and Anthony Paruolo, a Vietnam War veteran, her sister Alyson Smith and brother Anthony Paruolo at the Hofstra University spring commissioning at the Museum of American Armor, Old Bethpage, N.Y., on May 22, 2021. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.



# Engineers Sharpen Skills in Youngstown

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Al Phillips, Joint Force Headquarters



Spc. Scott Saucier, assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company, clears woodland bush to prepare for construction operations at the Youngstown Local Training Area May 15, 2021 during unit annual training.

**YOUNGSTOWN, N.Y.**  
-- Soldiers of the 152nd Engineer Support Company dumped the virtual training from 2020 and got down to being combat engineers again May 9-23 during annual training at an 840-acre training site in western New York.

The company, part of the 204th Engineer Battalion, was tasked with upgrading the Youngstown Local Training Area as their two-week mission.

The Soldiers constructed an Army Combat Fitness Course, a Situational Training Exercise lanes course, improved the area's road network and set up a land navigation course.

The engineers cleared woods and improved drainage as well.

The construction is part of the New York National Guard's Range Complex Master Plan, which calls for upgrading training areas to prepare Guard units

for deployments.

The Youngstown training area is 35 miles north of Buffalo. The location makes it ideally suited for units in western New York.

Getting away from computer training and getting back to hands on training is critical for Soldiers, said Capt. Christopher Baun, the company commander.

"We gotta keep pushing and pushing," he said.

Along with the engineering work, the Soldiers traveled to Fort Drum for weapons qualification.

Col. Jamey Barcomb, commander of the 153rd Troop Command who visited the Soldiers on May 15, said getting back to engineer skills is not just a critical part of unit readiness, but a critical retention issue.

They signed up to be engineers and they want to be engineers, not conduct virtual training, he said.

Working individual and collective engineer tasks builds confidence and readiness, he said.

"What I see here today are Soldiers first, but they are also construction workers and engineers taking pride in their service," Barcomb said.

These Soldiers are not just cutting down trees, they are improving their readiness," he said.

Nothing compares to the hands on opportunities in the field, explained Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Lilly, a construction engineer technician with the 152nd.

"We are used to operating with stone, oil, mud and dirt," he said.

The collective training for these western New York Soldiers is a welcome change from the virtual drills the past year of COVID-19, Baun said.

The work at Youngstown



An engineer assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company clears tree trunks and debris during construction operations at the Youngstown Local Training Area May 15, 2021. The company returned to the field for training after a year of virtual training, constructing space for the Army Combat Fitness Test, Situational Training Exercise lanes and land navigation.

not only benefits the engineers, it improves opportunities for other units, Baun said.

The expanded training areas at Youngstown will decrease travel time for other units who otherwise travel to Camp Smith or Fort Drum.

The new areas will also benefit training opportunities for local police, federal agents and local ROTC programs, Baun said.

The training has been "nothing short of awesome," said Spc. Zachary Stabler.

Stabler enlisted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but only completed his Advanced Individual Training as an engineer in the midst of the COVID restrictions.

A civilian carpenter and roofing apprentice in his civilian life, Stabler said he appreciated the opportunity to sharpen his engineering skills at Youngstown, he said.

Spc. Ashley Hicks, another construction worker

in civilian life, said the skills used at Youngstown help individual Soldiers because, they are "construction based, rather than tactical based."

We're just thrilled to be back and training together, Lilley said.

"In the Army, we adapt and build, and that's what these Soldiers are demonstrating today," Barcomb said. **gt**



Spc. Zachary Stabler, left, and Pfc. Caleb Messing, assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company, conduct wood clearing at the Youngstown Local Training Area, May 15, 2021 for annual training.





Spc. Dylan Main, a combat medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, participates in a 12-mile ruck march during the squadron's Best Warrior Competition in Ellicottville, N.Y. on May 22, 2021. The event tested physical fitness and endurance, military knowledge and bearing and basic Soldier skills to determine who will represent the squadron at brigade and state-level competitions. Photo by Capt. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.



# Cavalry Troopers Compete for unit Best Warrior

Story and photos by Capt. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. -- Army National Guard Spc. Austin Manville and Sgt. Zachary Marafioti earned the coveted Best Warrior title during the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment's competition held May 21 to 22 at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

Manville, age 21, is a Rochester resident and infantryman assigned to Charlie Troop. He took first place in the Soldier category.

Marafioti, age 25, is a Greece resident and cavalry scout assigned to Alpha Troop. He took first place in the non-commissioned officer category. Both serve as full-time members of the New York National Guard Honor Guard.

Squadron Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Roeser said he's hoping Marafioti and Manville will go on to place first the New York National Guard's Best Warrior Competition. He's never seen a Soldier from the squadron win.

"I'm looking to try to get back into that first place role and show that our [cavalry scouts] and [infantrymen] in this squadron are just as good, if not better, than the rest of the brigade and the state," Roeser explained.

When Manville found out four months ago he'd been selected to compete, he started hitting the books and developing his training plan.

"A lot of just buckling down and getting done what needs to get done," he said. "A lot of studying when you don't want to study. A lot of working out when you don't want to work out. Just grind."

The ideal candidate is expected to be well-rounded and an expert at "warrior skills" considered critical to survival on the battlefield.

"It's somebody who's extremely physically fit and who's mentally tough, who's intelligent, [and] well-spoken," Roeser said.

A total of nine Soldiers competed from each of the squadron's four troops.

Day one began with a "modified Murph" workout of 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups and 300 air squats, sandwiched between two 1 mile runs. Competitors had one hour to complete as much of the workout as possible.

Then they donned dress uniforms for a written exam, map reading test, and a formal board appearance and oral exam before the squadron's senior NCOs.

The exams covered Army regulations and

administrative programs, leadership competencies, drill and ceremony, weapons and tactics, and current events with a military focus.

"Our Soldiers should know what's going on in the world. I think they should know who we're training to fight and what that looks like," Roeser said.

Day two started with a grueling 12-mile ruck march on small-town streets, winding country roads and steep rocky hills.

It proved to be the most physically challenging part of the competition. But in less than three hours, both Manville and Marafioti crossed the finish line.

"A 12-mile ruck march, uphill almost the entire way isn't fun," Marafioti said. "I think you kind of have to want to do that to be here. Otherwise, it's just going to suck."

Round-robin tests of abilities to shoot, move and communicate, as well as render medical aid marked the final leg of the competition.

Marksmanship was gauged from previous weapons qualification. During the competition, they were graded on how effectively they could clear, disassemble, reassemble and perform functions checks on the M249, M240L and M2 .50 Caliber machine guns.

Movement was judged on a land navigation course filled with wooded and rocky terrain.

Physical fitness, mental fortitude, intelligence and bearing aren't the only things it takes to get



Sgt. Zachary Marafioti, a cavalry scout assigned to Alpha Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, works through a written exam and map reading test during the squadron's Best Warrior Competition in Niagara Falls, N.Y. on May 21, 2021. Marafioti placed first in the competition's NCO category.



Sgt. Samantha Antolik, a health care sergeant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, practices voice communication in Ellicottville, N.Y. on May 22, 2021. The exercise was part of a communication evaluation during the squadron's Best Warrior Competition.

through challenges like these. It takes serious motivation. For each competitor, that motivation is different, but Manville and Marafioti's both center on family and unit pride.

Manville's father is an Air Force major and his uncle was enlisted in the Marine Corps.

"I have to represent them well. I have to represent the unit well," Manville said. "This uniform is more than me. It's a history, it's a lineage."

Marafioti thinks of his fiancé, his six month old son, his German Shepard and his martial arts coach for motivation when he's competing.

"I just always want to make people that believe in me proud," he said.

For the next five months, Manville and Marafioti will focus on preparing for the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Best Warrior Competition.

"This is just the first level. I'm not done fighting," Manville said. **gt**



## NY Air Guard Emergency Managers Train Hard

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Brandy Fowler, 107th Attack Wing

**FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa. -- Air Guard emergency management specialists, assigned to wings in New York and New Jersey, spent two weeks refreshing their skills May 16-29 at Fort Indiantown Gap.**

COVID-19 guidelines kept Airmen from training to maintain currency in their wartime tasks so this training was vital, said Master Sgt. Debra Infante, the National Guard Bureau Emergency Management (EM) program manager.

Emergency Management (EM) specialists are responsible for response and recovery efforts for major accidents, natural disasters, terrorist attacks and Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incidents to minimize casualties and damage in the event of one of these incidents.

"Air Guard EM specialists are offered a fraction of Silver Flag training opportunities. This training was cut back this past year due to COVID and so we had to find an alternate solution to prepare our warfighters," Infante explained.

Silver Flag training prepares civil engineer Airmen with a deployed venue to simulate a contingency environment, focuses on hands-on technical experience and is available at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Ramstein Air Base, Germany and Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

"Fort Indiantown Gap offered a low-cost solution because we leveraged organic talent by having fully-qualified Emergency Management specialists instruct the training curriculum," said Infante. "It all began with EM specialists from the Air Guard identifying local training deficiencies and needs and now we are beta testing the

solutions our National Guardsmen have formulated."

The New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing from Newburgh was selected to run the civil engineer Deployment for Training formal program. 105th Civil Engineer Squadron EM Superintendent, Master Sgt. Daniel

but also a way to maximize Air National Guard training opportunities and be effective as possible," Infante explained.

Classes were taught by craftsmen and superintendents within the EM career field including CBRN and hazardous material operations using standardized Air

Field Training and Education Plan for EM specialists," said Senior Master Sgt. Catrina Gray, the EM chief enlisted manager assigned to the New York Air Guard's 107th Attack Wing in Niagara Falls. "The Airmen on this team have done a great job and are owning this training."

The training included Hazardous Materials and CBRN awareness and operations as well as CBRN-Information Systems; a computer-based application integrating CBRN data and facilitates sensor information into command and control systems for situational awareness.

"We have to be proficient in doing site surveys, map reading, manual plotting and land navigation in this career field," said Staff Sgt. Francisco Viera Periera, an EM craftsman assigned to the New York Air Guard's 106th Civil Engineer Squadron from Westhampton Beach. "This has been a great opportunity to come together as a region, train as one team and learn new tricks and tips from different units. It's been really beneficial."

The planning team and validators from National Guard Bureau praised the ability to implement the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles Brown's approach to "Accelerate Change or Lose."

"Our adversaries are changing and how we fight wars is changing," said Chief Master Sgt. Noah Flick, the National Guard EM career field functional manager.

"These are multi-capable Airmen and are accelerating change within their career field. Emergency managers here will take away these benchmark processes that Airmen worked so hard to create and for others to follow." **gt**



**Master Sgt. Paul Clementi, an emergency management journeyman assigned to the 106th Civil Engineer Squadron, assists Senior Master Sgt. Rob Dodson, a journeyman assigned to the 177th Civil Engineer Squadron from the New Jersey Air National Guard in securing protective equipment during training at Fort Indiantown Gap, Penn., May 19, 2021.**

Dichiara, worked with EM specialists across the region as well as the program and functional managers, to build the training plan.

"Master Sgt. Dichiara meticulously planned this training so our members can accomplish all the task requirements that we do at Silver Flag," Infante said.

Infante and Dichiara said that all the coordination required to write and administer this contingency training flowed through the Air Force Headquarters and the force development manager at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center.

"This is not only a benchmark for EM specialists exercising the Silver Flag waiver authority,

Force training curriculum and was overseen by a team of validators, Infante explained.

"We have members of the National Guard Bureau EM cadre rotating in and out for spot corrections, ensuring training meets intent and upholding standards," Infante said.

The planning team also saw an opportunity to accomplish career upgrade training for Airmen and created a schedule to maximize results for the two-week time frame.

"All the students have demonstrated proficiency in approximately 164 upgrade training items and 53 proficiency training requirements required in the Career



## US, Greenland Leaders Visit 109<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Story by Jaclyn Lyons, 109th Airlift Wing

Maj. Shay Price, a LC-130 navigator, briefs U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Greenland's Premier Múte Bourup Egede about the LC-130s used to support climate science research on Greenland's Ice Cap at the Kangerlussuaq, Greenland airport, May 20, 2021. Courtesy photo.

KANGERLUSSUAQ, Greenland -- The 109th Airlift Wing gave Greenland's Premier Múte Bourup Egede and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken a close-up look at one of the wing's LC-130s, which are critical to conducting climate research on the Greenland Ice Cap, on May 20.

Blinken, who was in Reykjavik, Iceland for a meeting of foreign ministers of Arctic nations, took a helicopter tour of Greenland's ice cap and fjords with the prime minister and then stopped at the Kangerlussuaq airport which serves as a home base for the Airmen of the 109th Airlift Wing when they are conducting missions in Greenland.

The visit, a State Department spokesman told WAMC radio was made to highlight the importance of the climate research done in Greenland and the role of the United States in supporting the research.

"It was an opportunity for the secretary to see the good work of the men and women who are part of the New York Air National Guard. And obviously, while they're based in upstate New York, they're doing critically important scientific research to understand why the cli-

mate is changing and what we can do to resolve this crisis," State Department spokeswoman Jalina Porter told WAMC radio.

This visit was also the first time Greenland's new prime minister met with U.S. military personnel.

Maj. Shay Price, a LC-130 navigator, conducted a tour of the aircraft and explained how the 109th supports the United States National Science Foundation through airlift and logistical support.

Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Business and Climate, Pele Broberg and Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod were also part of the visit.

Greenland is a semi-autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.

Tracy Sheely, a representative from the National Science Foundation, spoke to the group about the National Science Foundation's operations in Greenland. This includes Summit Station, the only high altitude, high latitude, inland, year-round observing station in the Arctic.

Then she turned the conversation over to

Price.

"I thanked the Government of Greenland for their support of our flight operations and training, as well as thanking the Joint Arctic Command for their continued assistance while in Greenland. Access to the Greenland Ice Cap is critical to training LC-130 crews and support personnel to safely operate in polar regions," Price recalled.

Price went on to explain that 109th aircrews rely on survival training at Raven Camp, a remote location on the Ice Cap, to ensure they can safely operate not only in Greenland, but in Antarctica too.

"LC-130 operations in Greenland not only showcase their critical role in supporting multinational science efforts, but also ensure our aircraft, crews and support personnel are fully mission ready for polar operations around the world," Price said.

Price also thanked the thanked Danish Joint Arctic Command for their technical assistance over the many years the 109th has operated at Kangerlussuaq, carrying people and supplies for scientific research on the Greenland ice cap. **gt**



# EADS Marks 9/11 with Survivor Tree

Story and photos by Timothy Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME, N.Y. -- Airmen of the Eastern Air Defense Sector marked the coming anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center by planting a seedling from a tree that survived the attack outside their headquarters here on May 26, 2021.

The seedling from the 9/11 Memorial and Museum Survivor Tree was planted by Rome Mayor Jackie Izzo, EADS commander Col. Paul Bishop and Air National Guardsmen from the 224th Air Defense Group during the ceremony.

The Survivor Tree was found under the rubble of the World Trade Center severely damaged but still alive, during recovery operations in October 2001.

According to the 9/11 Memorial website, the tree was removed and rehabilitated by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. It was returned to the 9/11 Memorial in 2010, where it stands in a glade at Ground Zero.

Since 2013, seedlings from the tree have been provided to three communities who have endured tragedy in recent years.

"This September 11 is the 20th anniversary

of the attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C.," Bishop said. "That day profoundly impacted EADS and continues to influence our thoughts and actions 20 years later."

Then known as the Northeast Air Defense Sector, EADS was one of the first U.S. military units to respond to the attacks. The Airmen based in Rome are responsible for coordinating the air defense of the U.S. east of the Mississippi.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Airmen from EADS first took the calls from civilian air traffic controllers notifying them that airliners had been hijacked by terrorists. The EADS controllers vectored fighter jets to intercept the hijacked airliners and coordinated with Federal Aviation Administration traffic control to track the four planes.

"EADS is extremely grateful to the 9/11



From left, Col. Paul Bishop, EADS commander, Rome Mayor Jackie Izzo, Col. Joseph Roos, 224th Air Defense Group commander and EADS Canadian Detachment Commander Lt. Col. Josh Klemen plant the 9/11 Survivor Tree seedling at EADS on May 26, 2021.

Memorial and Museum for the Survivor Tree seedling," Bishop added. "The tree occupies a prominent spot and will provide a constant reminder to Airmen that the air defense we help provide is needed to keep our nation safe."

In 2013, in partnership with Bartlett Tree Experts and John Bowne High School in Queens, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum launched the Survivor Tree Seedling Program.

The tree planting is the first of several EADS 9/11 commemorative events. The events will culminate with a memorial ceremony at the facility on Sept. 11. **gt**

# 62-year old Doctor realizes Military Dreams in Rescue Wing

Story and photo by Senior Airmen Dan Farrell, 106th Rescue Wing

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. -- Dr. David Feldman, a 62-year old New York City gastroenterologist and private pilot, is now also Air National Guard Lt. Col. David Feldman.

"Joining the military was a lifelong dream," Feldman said. "But it was something I never had time for."

Feldman took the oath during a ceremony on May 25, but getting to that point took some doing.

Feldman said he decided he had time to become a military doctor when he was 59. He applied to join, but his application process met some challenges.

About a year later, Feldman reached out to the 106th and Lt.

Col. Stephen "Doc" Rush, the 106th Medical Group commander.

"I met Col. Rush and it seemed like a great fit," Feldman said. "The comradery was there. And the mission of the group really appealed to me."

But because Feldman was 62, Air Force rules stood between him and a uniform. Rush didn't want that to stand in the way.

"Here is an American that wants to raise his hand, wear the uniform and we don't get doctors left and right," Rush said. "He's a civilian flight surgeon, he's a pilot, he's a good doctor."

So Rush turned to 106th Rescue Wing Director of Staff Col. Charles Killian to find a way to make Dr. Feldman, Lt. Col. Feldman.

Killian started combing through Air Force instructions on age waivers and working with experts at National Guard Bureau.

The accession "was a herculean

effort of superb collaboration from start to finish," Killian said.

The 106th requested an exception to policy.

Killian said after four months of coordination with Lt. Col. Jennifer Norwood at the National Guard Bureau Officer Branch, the accession of Feldman was complete.

Feldman is slated to complete two to three months of officer training and flight surgeon training.

"We are grateful to have someone with his immense wealth of experience join the Air National Guard to make a difference with the 106th Rescue Wing," according to Rush. **gt**



106th Medical Group Commander Lt. Col. Steven "Doc" Rush administers the commissioning oath to Dr. David Feldman, at the 106th Rescue Wing May 25, 2021.

# Syracuse Maintainers Help Build Virtual MQ-9

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

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Airmen assigned to the 174th Maintenance Group spent the week of April 5-9 turning a MQ-9 Reaper into a virtual aircraft in a digital hanger.

The Airmen, who maintain the MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft operated by the 174th Attack Wing, took apart an MQ-9 so that computer experts from the Air Education and Training Command could take pictures and scan images of those of those parts.

The images and scans captured will be used to create a virtual 3-D computer model of the MQ-9 which can be used as a training tool by maintenance technicians when they don't have an actual aircraft to work with.

One component of AETC initiative is the Integrated Technology Platform, or ITP for short.

The goal of the ITP is to work with other major commands to build a virtual hangar that is used in a classroom setting to conduct training for maintenance or other career fields.

The computer simulation will enable students to go through a process on a computer in a virtual 3-D environment.

"The team has already created computerized version of the F-16, F-35 and C-130. Once the MQ-9 is complete, it will be placed into a

virtual hangar with those aircraft," said Masoud Rasti program manager for Integrated Technology Platform.

"The goal is to be able to conduct training anywhere and anytime in a highly developed and augmented realistic environment," Rasti explained.

"Students would have a virtual reality headset on and the instructor would also have the virtual reality headset and the premises is they could be sitting anywhere said," said Tech. Sgt. William McConnell Jr., a Field Training Detachment instructor.

"They are all going to be looking at the same view as if they were looking straight at the piece of equipment," he added.

"More than anything, we try to help our current and future Airmen to use the technology that embrace their attentiveness and their cognitive understanding about what we do as far as the Air Force in general," Rasti said.

"Although hands on training is the best realistic training for members to have, there are times when hands on training isn't available," said Chief Master Sgt. Ian Tucker, Field Training Detachment superintendent.

"This type of training is not meant to replace



Master Sgt. Robyn Pryor, right, from the Air Force Education and Training Command, helps Col. William McCrink III, 174th Attack Wing commander, with a demonstration of the MQ-9 virtual reality system.

hands on where you learn the dexterity and things like torquing a bolt but it can help you stay proficient with task based type things," he explained.

"It's an interim opportunity when an actual aircraft is not available which happens a lot in our inventory, so in turn it never stops the continuum of learning when people are without the actual asset," said Chief Master Sgt. Amanda Pelletier, the deputy manager of the Integrated Technology Platform team. **gt**

## 'Port Dawg' Memorial Run Honors Fallen Airmen of 2020

Story by Jaelyn Lyons, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA, N.Y. -- Twenty-five Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing participated in the annual Air Force-wide Port Dawg Memorial Run, May 2 to honor those Airmen who keep aircraft flowing in and out of airfields around the globe.

Port Dawg is what air transportation specialists who man aerial port squadrons call themselves.

These Airmen build and inspect cargo packages, determine how the cargo is stored on aircraft, load and unload cargo and ensure safety and security precautions are implemented, said Chief Master

Sgt. Mark Mann the air transportation superintendent for the 109th Airlift Wing.

The annual Port Dawg run honors air transportation specialists who died in the previous year.

It began in 2013 at Kadena Air Force Base, Japan to honor an Airman who was a homicide victim.

"The air transportation career field, whether active, Guard or Reserve, is a smaller career field," Mann said. "We all know each other, deploy together, help each other out and work extremely well together. It's important to support each other and remember and

pay tribute to those that served so honorably."

He said this was the first year the squadron held the run, which also features an informal ceremony where they named 12 Airmen who passed in 2020.

"Out of the 12 people we honored, zero of those deaths were from natural causes," said Staff Sgt. Eric LaClair, an air transportation specialist. "So it goes to show the peril that our job brings, working with heavy machinery and hazardous materials, we are not on the front lines but it is a dangerous job nonetheless." **gt**



109th Airlift Wing air transportation specialists participate in the Port Dawg Memorial Run May 3, 2021 at Stratton Air Guard Base. Courtesy photo.



## NY Guard Remembers WWI Flu Pandemic Deaths

Story and photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard

SLEEPY HOLLOW, N.Y. -- The New York Guard's annual salute to its World War I era members who died guarding the New York City water system was a hybrid ceremony on May 2, with some people participating in person and others online.

Normally 50 or more people, including a band and firing party, gather in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery to honor the 40 members of the New York Guard's 1st Provisional Regiment who died of influenza or other causes while protecting the city water system from 1917 to 1919.

In 1919 a boulder from Bonticu Craig, a peak in the Shawangunk Mountains, was moved to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in what was then known as North Tarrytown, to serve as a memorial to the men who died on duty; 37 of them due to influenza.

This year 22 people were on site while 16 participated via Zoom due to COVID-19.

Sleepy Hollow Mayor Ken G. Wray and New York Guard Brig. Gen. David Warager, the commander of the New York Guard delivered remarks online.

A color guard from New York City Department of Environmental Protection Police, a team from the Veteran Corps of Artillery, a historic volunteer military unit, provided a firing party and presented a wreath on site.



Chief Frank Milazzo, Chief of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection Police and Col. Glenn Marchi, commander of the New York Guard 56th Area Command, place a wreath during the First Provisional Regiment Memorial Service at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery on May 2, 2021.

Taps was played virtually.

Prior to the American entry into WWI, New York National Guard Soldiers were on duty guarding 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.

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 Guard was formed and given the mission of protecting the reservoirs and aqueducts which served New York City. Other Soldiers guarded the Erie Canal and railroads.

In his remarks, Warager noted that today, members of the New York Guard are again on duty protecting New York.

The 1st Provisional Regiment was successful in protecting the water supply for New York City despite the 1918 influenza pandemic, he said. New York Guard members have today been successful in helping to protect New Yorkers from the COVID-19 pandemic by manning testing and vaccination sites and assisting in medical logistics.

"We are fortunate that the New York Guard Soldiers today are not facing the hardships that the 1st Provisional Regiment faced 103 years ago, he said.

"This virus has not attacked the young and healthy the way the Spanish Flu did, and to date, unfortunately, we have only suffered the loss of one active member of the New York Guard and two retired members," he added. **gt**

## NY Guard Band, volunteers Support Bronx Bombers



DOVER PLAINS, N.Y. -- Major League Baseball's New York Yankees invited the 89th NY Guard Band to produce a video of the national anthem and God Bless America to show at home games in the Bronx. Ten band members performed for the video at Dover Plains High School April 11, 2021, the first in-person gathering of the band since COVID-19 hit in 2020.

"Creating music together over a year after reuniting is memorable," said band member Sgt. Tatsuya Hondo.



# New York Naval Militia



## Sailors, Marines Support Vaccination Sites



NEW YORK -- New York Naval Militia Logistics Specialist First Class Dorrette Ouseley, a Navy Reservist assigned to the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 27, stands in formation outside the Javits Mass Vaccination site in Manhattan, March 25, 2021. Ouseley is part of the joint task force headquarters that has overseen more than 600,000 vaccinations administered at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in support of the New York State Department of Health. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.



MIDDLETOWN, N.Y. -- Naval Militia Sgt. Edwin Feliciano, a U.S. Marine Corps Reservist, talks with recently vaccinated patients in the medical observation area at the SUNY Orange County Community College vaccination site in Middletown, N.Y., May 6, 2020. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

### Patrol Boat Engine Maintenance

VERPLANCK, N.Y. -- New York Naval Militia members conduct a 300-hour engine check of LC-350 a boat assigned to the Naval Militias Military Emergency Boat Service at the Viking Board Yard in Verplanck, March 31 2021. LC-350 is a landing craft style boat conducts security patrols in the Hudson River near the Indian Point nuclear power plants as part of Joint Task Force Empire Shield. Courtesy photo.



