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Volume 16 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

## We are about People: Our Highest Priority is You

Hello, everyone. It's been more than 18 months since I authored this section of the Guard Times. I have really enjoyed having our other senior leaders provide their perspective as the lead to the magazine.

When last I wrote this section of the Guard Times, we were in the middle of our COVID response throughout the state and were then focused on vaccinations. Well, a lot has changed since then, and I want to take a few minutes of your time to provide my thoughts.

Many of you have heard my three priorities for the organization. They are Safety, Strength and Readiness. All three are focused on our people. People are our most important asset and therefore, are the most important thing we have.

Without each of you – our service members and employees, we cannot be successful.

September has been a sad and tragic month for us. Two Soldiers and an Airmen took their lives by suicide. They chose a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

I remind each of you that we have significant resources to help our people get through hard times in their lives – be it relationships, financial, spiritual, or whatever the issues may be.

We have licensed social workers, financial planners, and chaplains within our organizations, and outside assistance available to you.

All this information is available from our Family Programs office either through a phone call or online on the DMNA website.

Seeking assistance – for any reason, is not a sign of weakness, **IT IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH!**

I did not come up with this, but

another senior leader recently said “if you hurt your leg, you go see

a doctor, and the same goes for suicidal thoughts or depression, ask for assistance! It's no different than seeing a doctor for any other ailment or injury.”

**As a reminder, if you are in crisis, dial the national suicide and crisis hotline at “988.”**

People are our most valuable resource. We need each of you to be successful.

Looking at our formations, the New York Army and Air National Guard are each doing very well on the strength front, with the Army National Guard leading the nation for the third year in a row on accessions and retention.

At the end of September, our New York Army National Guard is assigned over 10,950 or more than 107.5% and the New York Air National Guard is assigned more than 5,800 or more than 101.8%. The Naval Militia has grown more than 300 members this past year and

the New York Guard has added dozens of new members. These are fantastic achievements that are attributable to each of you and your commitment to serve our state and nation. Thank you.

We also continue to support our State Active Duty missions on many fronts. On Sept. 14, 2023 and again on Sept. 25, Governor Hochul visited our service members to thank them for their ongoing support.

In preparation for Hurricane Lee, she visited Soldiers and Airmen in Farmingdale and then visited with service members supporting the asylum seeker mission at the 5th Avenue Armory in Harlem.

As always, I am super impressed with your dedication and commitment to service.

When we say we're all about people – we mean it. You are truly the most important thing we have.



Maj. Gen. Ray Shields

We need you all – be it our service members, civilian employees, and families.

I thank you and look forward to seeing more of you as I continue to travel the state and our formations.



Governor Kathy Hochul greets Soldiers and Airmen mobilized for potential response to Hurricane Lee during a visit to the Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center on Sept. 14, 2023. The governor mobilized 50 troops out of “an abundance of caution” for the storm. Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Farrell, 106th Rescue Wing.

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**Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Nick Yurenda and Staff Sgt. Alex Dhrberg, two fire protection specialists assigned to the 174th Attack Wing, douses a fire during a training exercise at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, N.Y., Aug. 22, 2023. The fire department, consisting of a mix of uniformed and civilian firefighters, provides emergency services to Hancock International Airport. Photo by Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.**



Governor Kathy Hochul, COMMANDER IN CHIEF  
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FRONT COVER: Army National Guard Spc. Damian Pagano, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, clears a room on Fort Drum, New York, Aug. 14, 2023. Pagano and Soldiers from the 2-108th practiced room clearing in "shoot houses" during annual training. Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Valenza, 42nd Infantry Division.

BACK COVER: Junior ROTC high school cadets exit an HC-130J Combat King II, July 21, 2023 at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, N.Y. The 106th Rescue Wing hosted its very first JROTC camp July 18-21, 2023. Courtesy photo.

## Air Guard Leader Dominates Ultramarathon

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Schwarzler, 105th Airlift Wing

CATSKILLS, N.Y. — A famous athlete once said “It’s hard to beat a person who never gives up.”

Maj. Brian Ibbs, commander of the 105th Base Defense Squadron, lived up to this Babe Ruth quote when he completed the Manitou’s Revenge Ultramarathon, a grueling 52 mile race in the Catskill Mountains that starts in Windham and ends in downtown Phoenicia, on June 24-25, 2023.

Unlike urban marathons, this ultramarathon contains running, hiking, and climbing. With Manitou’s cumulative elevation gain at over 15,000 feet, participants must be extremely experienced and self-sufficient due to the difficulty of the trail. The race itself allows for runners to complete it in 23 hours, but Ibbs finished the journey in just over 14 hours, placing 17th out of 125 runners.

“This race was on my mind for several years,” Ibbs said. “I set it as a 2023 goal, trained for it and ultimately had the support of my wife which made race day a success.”

For this year, participants must have run another 50 mile or longer trail or mountain race, with at least 8,000 feet elevation gain, within a certain time limit. Qualifications must have been within the last two years.

“I began with winter hiking, trail running and ice climbing in the Catskills and Adirondacks with dozens of trips up and down Mount Beacon,” Ibbs said, regarding

his training for this monster of a course.

To prepare for this event, Ibbs logged seven runs over 20 miles and averaged 25-45 miles per week, with his longest at 31 miles. These long runs were critical in preparation with additional sprints and hill workouts to help condition his body.


Even with all his training, race day came with its own sets of challenges.

“It rained for the first 35 miles, making the rocks wet and the footing treacherous,” he said.

With only nine aid stations along the trail, runners had limited availability to eat and rehydrate, making it difficult to maintain the energy levels needed to make it through the course.

“I was taking in as much food as I could at the aid stations. Things like bacon, potatoes and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches,” Ibbs said. “Keeping hydrated in between stations was important too, and things like salt pills helped with that.”

Having previously been the commander of the 105th Force Support Squadron, Ibbs has always been an officer that leads from the front.

“I’ve been fortunate enough to lead Airmen,” he said. “I consider it a duty of my position to ensure I maintain a high level of fitness to set the example. Staying fit to fight is critical to lethality and this race tested both my physical and mental toughness.” 



Maj. Brian Ibbs, commander of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Base Defense Squadron, participates in the Manitou's Revenge Ultramarathon in the Catskill Mountains June 24-45, 2023. Manitou's Revenge is a 52-mile ultramarathon that involves running, hiking, and climbing. The course runs through the Catskills beginning in Windham and then mostly follows the Long Path from Acra Point all the way to downtown Phoenicia, N.Y. Courtesy photo.



Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, presents state employee Alfredo Carias, the maintenance supervisor at the Masten Avenue Armory in Buffalo, the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal at the Joint Force Headquarters on July 20, 2023.

## State Employee Recognized for Extradordinary Storm Support

Story and photo by Ryan Campbell, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. — Alfredo Carias, the state maintenance supervisor at the New York Army National Guard Masten Avenue Armory in Buffalo, received the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal from Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, July 20, 2023 at the Joint Force Headquarters for his extraordinary support to the National Guard response during the Christmas Blizzard in Buffalo in December 2022.

Carias was called to respond to the snow emergency in Buffalo on Chirstmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2022, that saw over four feet of snow buyring the city and surrounding sub-urbs, stranding hundreds of residents and killing dozens.

Two hundred Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard were initially called to state active duty and needed to report to the armory for operations.

Out of all state employees tasked with opening up the armory, Carias was the only one able to make it to the facility. What is normally a 30-minute commute, Carlas said, took two hours.

He had to plow his way through the snow and ultimately abandoned his vehicle two miles from the armory and make the rest of the way on foot.

Shields praised his efforts in clearing a way around the armory for the arriving Soldiers and for engineering a temporary fix for the frozen overhead garage door so vehicles and equipment could get in and out.

"Thank you," Carias said after receiving his award. "I did what anyone else would have done." **gt**

## NY's Newest Army Guard Leaders Complete OCS

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, *Joint Force Headquarters*

OLD BETHPAGE, N.Y. — The New York Army National Guard commissioned seven new officers Aug. 13, 2023 at the Museum of American Armor in Old Bethpage, N.Y., following their successful completion of Officer Candidate School.

The new second lieutenants took their oath of commissioning and received their officer's rank during a ceremony led by Col. Patrick Claire, the Joint Force Headquarters Director of Logistics.

officer with the 37th Finance Detachment in Whitestone, Queens, N.Y.

- Kevin Ng, who will serve as a Signal officer with Alpha Company of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion in Peekskill, N.Y. Ng received the Army Commendation Medal as the class distinguished military graduate.

- Tyler Pratt, who will serve as a Military Police officer with the 105th Military Police Company in Buffalo, N.Y.



Army Guard officer candidates take their oath of commissioning as second lieutenants during their graduation ceremony at the Museum of American Armor, Old Bethpage, N.Y., Aug. 13, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

Officer Candidate School is a three-phase training course that lasts approximately 15 months.

Clare, a graduate of the very same Officer Candidate School from 2000, highlighted the importance of continuity of leadership for the new generation.

"You stand on the broad shoulders of generations of Americans who have worn the uniform," Clare said.

New York's newest leaders include:

- Adebisi Adewole-Olowe will serve as a Transportation officer with the 719th Truck Company in Harlem, N.Y.

- Randy Brown will serve as an Ordnance officer with the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation in Ronkonkoma, N.Y.

- Jason Frantz, who will serve as an Engineer officer with the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion in Buffalo, N.Y.

- Eric Lunzer will serve as a Finance

- Jason Wang will serve as a Finance officer with the 37th Finance Detachment in Whitestone, N.Y. Wang was recognized as academic Honor Graduate, having completed the training course with a 95% overall academic average.

Training began for this year's class in the spring of 2022. Skills included physical fitness training, land navigation, road marches, warrior tasks and fundamentals of leadership.

Candidates then continued into an 11-month phase to provide a foundation of Army leadership, military ethics, military history and tactics.

"You all have an amazing future in front of you. One full of promise, and I'm very proud of every single one of you," said Col. Jeffrey Csoka, commander of the 106th Regional Training Institute. **gt**

# AROUND THE STATE



## Soldier Awarded Full Scholarship for Leadership

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. — Army Pfc. Daniel Canhedo, an electrician assigned to the 1156th Engineer Company, received a four-year Minuteman Scholarship Award to Syracuse University at Camp Smith, June 15, 2023. The Minuteman Scholarship recognizes potential in future ROTC cadets and Army National Guard officers. The award check was presented to Canhedo, joined by his family members in front of the company for the amount of \$306,000, which will cover his cost of tuition and other expenses while at Syracuse University. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantonio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.



## CST Recognitions

NEW YORK — Army Staff Sgt. Raven Oneal, assigned to the 24th Civil Support Team, based at Fort Hamilton, displays her certificate of achievement and challenge coin for exemplary performance presented by the garrison commander, Col. Brian A. Jacobs, June 24, 2023. Photo by Ephraim Rodriguez, Fort Hamilton Public Affairs staff.



## Engineers Complete Building Rehab at Camp Smith

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. — Building 90 at Camp Smith, a 150-year old farmhouse which has been used for a number of purposes over the years, completed a lengthy four-year renovation June 2, 2023. Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company provided work for the renovation as part of their individual skills training. The facility now houses five guest rooms for the installation housing office. Courtesy photo.

# Airman Named Top Guard NCO Crewmember

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Sean Madden, 106th Rescue Wing

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, New York — Tech. Sgt. Ryan Rutz, a member of the 106th Rescue Wing, has been named the top career enlisted air crew member in the 100,000-member Air National Guard.

Rutz serves as the loadmaster for an HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft flown by the 106th Rescue Wing's 102nd Rescue Squadron.

Based at Gabreski Air Guard Base on the eastern tip of Long Island, the wing is trained to rescue personnel down behind enemy lines and conduct search and rescue operations anywhere in the world.

The wing recently conducted aerial searches of the North Atlantic as part of the Coast Guard-led effort to locate the Titan submersible which went missing while diving on the wreck of the Titanic.

Rutz, who lives in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, was presented with the Staff Sgt. Henry E. "Red" Erwin Outstanding Enlisted Aircrew Member Airman of the Year Award by Col. Shawn Fitzgerald, the commander of the 106th Rescue Wing during a ceremony at the base on May 6, 2023.

Rutz, who joined the Air National Guard in 2006 at age 19, will now compete against other Airmen from the active Air Force and Air Force Reserve for the overall service award.

The award, created in 1997, takes its name from a World War II Airman who risked his life to save the crew of his B-29 bomber and was awarded the Medal of Honor.

Erwin was in the lead bomber on a raid over Japan, and he was supposed to drop a white phosphorus bomb down a chute out of the plane to mark an assembly area for other aircraft. The device malfunctioned and flamed up, blinding Erwin, and burning him.

He picked up the bomb and carried it to a window in the cockpit, while it was still burning, and threw it out, saving the plane. Despite everything, Erwin recovered his sight and lived until 2002.

The award named after Erwin recognizes outstanding leadership and sustained self-improvement in support of enlisted aircrew operations.

Rutz was picked for the award because he is an outstanding loadmaster instructor, according to Chief Master Sgt. Craig Conner, the senior enlisted leader of the 102nd Rescue Squadron, which flies the HC-130J.

A loadmaster is responsible for what happens in the back of an Air Force cargo plane like the C-130.

"As an instructor, Rutz has gone above and beyond to contribute to the combat readiness of the squadron," said Connor. "He has completed a significant amount of training across all crew positions and administered half of all our loadmaster evaluations."

He also supports the unit responsible for training HC-130J aircrews.


In one instance, Rutz was conducting a pre-flight inspection when he discovered an armed pyrotechnic device loaded onboard an aircraft, dangerously close to nearly 70 pounds of explosive material. He took immediate action to safeguard the \$66 million aircraft and more importantly, the lives of five other crew members, the citation says.

As an instructor, Rutz has helped train 20 other loadmasters.

"Who we're shaping and who we're teaching are the future instructors and I want to move on knowing we're leaving a capable force behind us to fill our shoes," Rutz said.

Rutz credited the wing and his squadron with helping him do the things that led to earning the Erwin award.

"Because of the unit I was able to do those things and those things earned me the award," Rutz emphasized. "It's the unit around me that really won the award, I'm the face of it."

"I'm just proud to have him in the 102nd Squadron and will be even more proud to see him grow as a future leader in the 106th Rescue Wing," Connor said. 



Tech. Sgt. Ryan Rutz a loadmaster assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, stands with wing commander Col. Shawn Fitzgerald at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, May 6, 2023. Rutz received the Air National Guard 2022 Henry "Red" Erwin Outstanding NCO Aircrew Member of the Year Award, which recognizes excellence in the enlisted aircrew career field.

## Chaplain helps open Watertown Vet Center



WATERTOWN, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard Chaplain (Major) Timothy Miller gives the benediction during the opening of a new Veterans Center in Watertown on June 21, 2023. Miller is the full-time chaplain for the New York National Guard at Joint Forces Headquarters. Courtesy photo.

# THE JOINT FORCE

## Airmen Train with Brazilians for Search & Rescue

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Sarah McKernan, 106th Rescue Wing

CAMPO GRANDE, Brazil — One hundred New York National Guard Airmen spent August 16 to 27 in Campo Grande, Brazil conducting combat search and rescue exercises with their Brazilian Air Force counterparts.

The Airmen, most of whom are assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, conducted missions simulating the recovery of downed aircrews, conducted aerial refueling of search and rescue helicopters, trained Brazilian parachute rescue personnel, and conducted security exercises.

This was the third year New York Airmen took part in Brazil's annual search and rescue training known as Exercise Tapio as part of the State Partnership Program with Brazil.

"It was a great experience training with the Brazilian Air Force during Tapio," said Senior Airman Eury Villalona-Taveras, a security forces Airman with the 106th Rescue Wing.

The American security forces Airmen conducted a variety of ground security missions together with the Brazilians, he said.

"By the end of the exercise, we were able to exchange ideas, experiences and made a lot of long-lasting friendships," he said.

The joint training and exchanges furthers interoperability between the U.S. military and Brazilians, according to Col. Jeff Cannet, the commander of the 106th Operations Group, who led the mission.

"When we come into each other's areas, we can work together seamlessly and help rescue people faster than we otherwise could have if we did not practice down here together," Cannet said.

"This has been my third time as a liaison officer for the U.S. delegation on

Exercise Tapio," said 1st Lt. Tales Pimenta, a Brazilian pilot at the Campo Grande Air Base.

The relationships built, and effort put in practicing and training with the Brazilians will help save lives in the future, he explained.

"It's something we are very proud of, and we have a deep connection with our partners here in Brazil who do the same thing," Pimenta said.

New York has had a State Partnership relationship with Brazil since 2019 and this event is the largest annual bilateral air exercise in the Western hemisphere, Cannet said.

New York deployed two HH-60G Pave Hawk search and rescue helicopters, one HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft from the 106th Rescue Wing and two C-17 Globemaster III airlifters from the 105th Airlift Wing.

The C-17s, and 14 Airmen based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, transported the helicopters and personnel.

Eighty Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing included aircrews, maintenance personnel and security forces, and were joined by six from the 107th Attack Wing, which flies the MQ-9 Reaper from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

Three 107th Airmen integrated remotely piloted aircraft in the exercise and three from the 274th Air Support Operations



A Brazilian soldier provides security at a forward refuel point during Exercise Tapio in Campo Grande, Brazil, Aug. 25, 2023. The Brazilian forces trained alongside security force personnel of the 106th Rescue Wing to support the search and rescue exercise.

Squadron trained to direct airstrikes on ground targets.



106th Rescue Wing Pararescuemen return from a search and rescue exercise with their Brazilian counterparts in Campo Grande, Brazil, Aug. 25, 2023.

The Americans helped train 40 Brazilian Para Search and Rescue personnel, known by the acronym PARASAR.

"Working alongside the Brazilian PARASAR and Air Force was a truly enlightening experience," said Staff Sgt.

John Kosequat, a pararescueman.

gt



A New York Air National Guard HH-60G Pave Hawk search and rescue helicopter prepares for a familiarization flight ahead of Exercise Tapio at Brazilian Air Base Campo Grande in Campo Grande, Brazil, Aug. 19, 2023. Photo by Airman 1st Class Sarah McKernan, 106th Rescue Wing.



## 24<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team Trains for Water Hazards



NEW YORK — Members of the New York National Guard's 24th Civil Support Team for Weapons of Mass Destruction conduct training to function safely in a water environment during the unit's annual Water Survival Training at the Fort Hamilton pool July 13, 2023. The training ensures the team's readiness and proficiency for potential maritime response operations in hazardous environments. Photos by Ephraim Rodriguez, Fort Hamilton Public Affairs staff.

## NY Medical Troops Train Alongside Brazilian Partners

Story by Capt. Stephanie Fernandez, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

FOZ DO IGUAZU, BRAZIL — Fifteen New York Army National Guard medics and physicians assistants took part in a South America's largest military humanitarian response exercise in Brazil from August 12 to 18.

The Soldiers, from the Queensbury-based 466th Area Support Medical Company, joined 100 other foreign military personnel from 13 countries, and 1,700 Brazilians for Operation Parana III, conducted in Brazil's Parana State.

National Guard Maj. Shelly Respecki, the com-

mander to the 466th, said that working with the Brazilian medical personnel was a great experience.

"We really enjoyed the opportunity to integrate into the Brazilian medical team and see how other countries really treat and care for their Soldiers," Respecki said.

"The entire staff really took us all in and were open to a collaboration of sharing best practices and techniques," she said.

The exercise simulated a catastrophic flood which triggered humanitarian functions.

The 466th Soldiers worked alongside the Brazilian Army medical personnel to open a role II field hospital. These hospitals provide advanced medical support such as advanced trauma management, emergency treatment and surgical care.

New York National Guard 1st Lt. Justin Perez, a registered nurse, who works at the Stoney Brook Hospital intensive care unit in civilian life, said he learned a lot working in the field hospital.

"It was an incredible experience, just to be able

to see how the Brazilians in a medical setting work and how much we were able to

learn from them and vice versa," Perez said. **gt**



Sgt. 1st Class Frank Castillo and Sgt. Brion Pasquale, combat medics assigned to the 466th Area Support Medical Company, assist during trauma care alongside Brazilian Army partners in the State of Parana, Brazil, Aug. 15, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Pietrantoni, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

# Israelis Share Lessons in Rubble Recovery

Story by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters

ORISKANY, N.Y. — Fifteen New York Army National Guard engineers got hands-on training from four members of Israel's Home Front Command on Israeli techniques for locating and rescuing people from destroyed buildings, during three days of training from July 17 to 19 at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany.

The Soldiers are members of the 827th Engi-

neer Company, based in Horseheads, assigned as the search and extraction element for the FEMA Region II Homeland Response Force. That force, designed to respond to natural disasters, or terror attacks, is staffed by the New York and New Jersey National Guards.

Their mission is to go into destroyed buildings to locate survivors and pull them out,

according to Maj. Kevin O'Reilly Jr., the executive officer of the 204th Engineer Battalion, the 827th's higher headquarters.

Israel's Home Front Command, created in 1992, conducts many of the missions the National Guard does in the United States, and are the acknowledged experts in the art and science of saving people from destroyed buildings, O'Reilly said.

"The Israelis' success in search and rescue boils down to the analytical, engineering-based approach which they apply to a collapsed structure," O'Reilly said.

"They are able to understand and map collapsed structures, accurately predicting where to find victims trapped in chaotic rubble," he said.

The Israeli techniques were eye-opening, said Spc. Jerome Griffin.

"I think from a Soldier's perspective we have a tendency to want to jump in and just start saving people as fast as we can, but the engineers from Israel really stressed patience," Griffin said. "They said to take a step back and really calculate how to operate safely and smoothly without causing more damage, and that really resonated with me," he added.

New York is one of four states, along with Illinois, Indiana and Missouri, which have cultivated training relationships with Israel's Home Front Command, according to Maj. Davie Myones, the New York National Guard State Partnership Program officer.

The New York National Guard and Israeli Home Front Command initiated a partnership in 2006, which was formalized in 2019 with a bilateral security cooperation agreement.

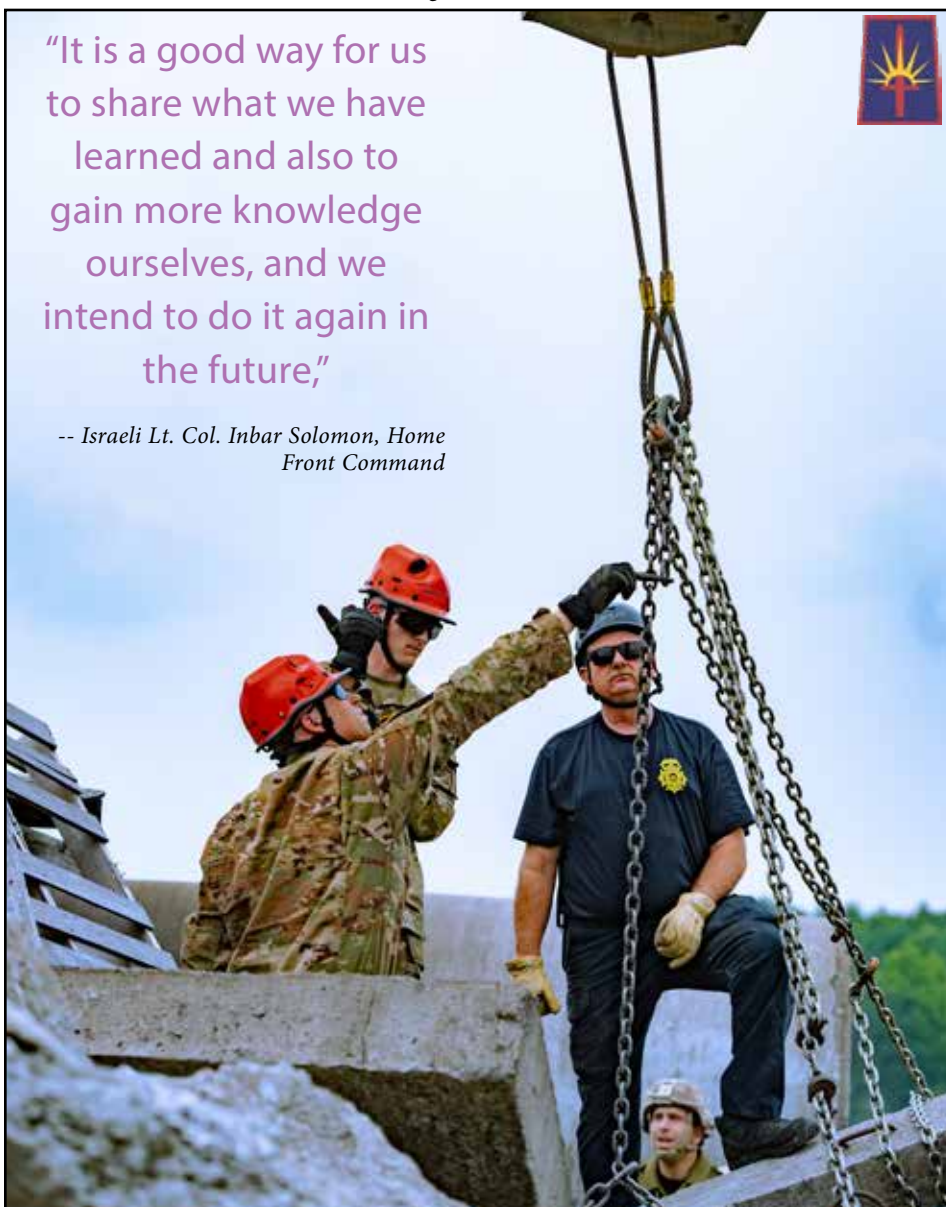
"What my Israeli counterpart and I really wanted to do was create a venue for the exchange of ideas and to build relationships," Myones explained.

"All these personnel have so much experience and knowledge, we wanted to get them together and share these things with the intent of making all of their organizations better," he added.

A major part of the Home Front Command mission is conducting search and rescue during disasters, said Israeli Lt. Col. Inbar Solomon.

"It is a good way for us to share what we have learned and also to gain more knowledge ourselves, and we intend to do it again in the future,"

-- Israeli Lt. Col. Inbar Solomon, Home Front Command



Soldiers of the 827th Engineer Company and firefighters of the New York City Fire Department prepare to lift a concrete slab during extraction training at the state Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany, July 18. Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.



827th Engineer Company Soldiers prepare to lift a section of a simulated collapsed building during training with members of the Israeli Home Front Command at the New York State Disaster Preparedness Center in Oriskany, July 18, while Israeli Senior Academic Officer Raanan Ben-Sinai looks on. Photo by Maj. Kevin O'Reilly Jr., 204th Engineer Battalion.

When other countries need help conducting those types of missions, Israel responds to assist and learn from those disasters, she explained.

"Whenever there is a large-scale disaster, such as the earthquake in Haiti, the one in Turkey recently, or even the building collapse in Miami, we try to send a team to help with search and rescue efforts," Solomon said.

"This typically forms a bond between Israel and these countries, and we also learn a lot from the collaboration," she added.

The Israelis have been called to assist in building collapse rescue missions around the world, ranging from the Turkish earthquake in February of this year, to the Champlain Towers collapse in Miami Beach, Florida in 2021 because of their expertise, O'Reilly said.

Five members of the New York City fire department, five members of the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and two Soldiers from the Missouri National Guard, also took part in the training.

New York's Preparedness Training Center is an 1,100-acre training facility run by the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. The facility includes a rubble pile urban search and rescue simulator, a 45,000 square-foot "Cityscape" and a swift water and flood rescue training simulator.

On day one the course focused on classroom presentations. The Israelis discussed the events that lead to search and rescue operations, and the role of engineers in search and rescue.

On day two the teams utilized various equipment at the search and rescue simulator. This included an excavator and crane for moving heavy debris and rubble, as well as jacks and lumber for lifting and bracing.


The four Israelis offered insights on how to retrieve casualties - simulated by dummies - safely and efficiently at the simulator.

"Never count on friction to keep an element in place," Maj. Matti Adan told the National Guard Soldiers and civilian firefighters, when discussing methods for extracting victims trapped by chunks of destroyed concrete.

On day three, the focus was advanced shoring techniques. The Soldiers and fire fighters learned methods for bracing and propping up weak or compromised structures.

While Home Front Command soldiers and officers have experience executing missions overseas, this was the first time they traveled to take part in a course like this, Solomon said.

"It is a good way for us to share what we have learned and also to gain more knowledge ourselves, and we intend to do it again in the future," Solomon added.

The lessons learned, along with the U.S. Army search and extraction course, will go a long way in preparing the 827th Engineers to take over the search and rescue mission from the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion in October, O'Reilly said. 



Senior Academic Officer Raanan Ben-Sinai of the Israeli Home Front Command supervises American personnel in the simulated rubble extraction of casualties during training at the New York State Preparedness Training Center in Oriskany, July 18. Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.

# Joint Force Welcomes New State Senior Enlisted Leader

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM, N.Y. — New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Cush, a veteran with nearly 37 years of military service, took on the responsibilities as the senior enlisted leader of New York State's military forces during a ceremony held at the Joint Force Headquarters in Latham, New York, July 6, 2023.

Cush is now the top senior enlisted advisor to the adjutant general for the training, readiness of more than 18,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and New York Guard state defense force volunteers who make up New York State military forces.

"I am truly grateful and humbled to be able to take on this new responsibility," Cush said.

He serves as the adjutant general's personal advisor for all enlisted-related issues, particularly those affecting training and quality of life. He travels throughout the state observing training and talking to troops and their families.

Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, presided over the ceremony

in which Cush replaced Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Jenks, who retires later this year after nearly 42 years of military service.

"Command Sergeant Major Cush is a dedicated and thoughtful leader who will really carry on the work started by all our previous Senior Enlisted Leaders," Shields said. "You are a remarkable leader and I know our organization remains in steady, caring, experienced and people-focused hands."

Cush comes to the Joint Force Headquarters following his service as the Command Sergeant Major for the Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters in Troy, New York, since October 2018.

As the Division Command Sergeant Major, he was the principal enlisted advisor to the division commander and was responsible for establishing and enforcing standards, appearance, physical conditioning, military courtesy, discipline, and



Army Maj. Gen. Ray Shields passes the colors of the New York National Guard to Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Cush, signifying his delegation of responsibility as the Senior Enlisted Leader for the New York National Guard and Joint Force Headquarters during his change of responsibility ceremony at the Joint Force Headquarters on July 6, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.

professional development for the division.

He deployed with the division

headquarters to Kuwait as the senior enlisted advisor for Task Force Spartan in 2020. **gt**

## Empire Shield Sailors Support Search and Rescue Training

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters



NEW YORK — Naval Militia crewmembers of the Military Emergency Boat Service Patrol Boat 440 supported the U.S. Coast Guard with a search and rescue training exercise in New York City waters Aug. 1, 2023.

The exercise hosted NBC Weather presenter and journalist Al Roker, who accompanied the Coast Guard for their mission.

Naval Militia members provided a platform for additional support to the media coverage and augmentation for the Coast Guard response.

Courtesy photos.



# Quick Action Helps Save Suicidal Migrant

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

NEW YORK — An Army Guardsman and two Naval Militia members moved quickly to save a life, when a 23-year-old woman seeking asylum in the U.S. slashed her wrist in a suicide attempt on the morning of July 22 at the Holiday Inn Queens.

Army Guard Staff Sgt. Adam Perez, and Naval Militia Marines Sgt. Luis Giralde and Lance Cpl. Patricio Rubilar, were on duty that Saturday morning when the young migrant woman appeared in the lobby of the hotel.

The three men, serving as part of the Joint Task Force Asylum Seeker detail at the hotel, were at the front desk of the hotel when they heard somebody asking for help in Spanish, Perez recalled. They responded right away.

Since October of 2022, members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia, and the New York Guard, have been on duty in up to 50 New York hotels and other locations assisting New York City with over 90,000 migrants. The migrants, who arrived in the U.S. claiming asylum, were bused to the city from Texas and other border states.

At the end of July, there were 1,660 service members on the mission, and about 54,800 migrants relying on services from New York City.

The three service members quickly saw that the young woman had blood seeping down her right arm, Perez said. Giralde, a Naval Militia member from Flushing, grabbed a bandage from the hotel first aid kit and instantly went to work on her wrist. He wrapped it with a bandage and then began applying pressure, Perez said.

Rubilar, a Spanish speaker from Huntington, began talking to the young woman to find out what had happened and calm her down.

Perez, a Baldwin resident, and the leader of the hotel's 11-person Alpha shift, said he im-



New York Naval Militia Marines Sgt. Luis Giralde, Lance Cpl. Patricio Rubilar and Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Adam Perez, acted quickly when a young migrant woman staying at the Holiday Inn Queens, attempted suicide July 22, 2023. The three men stopped her bleeding and called emergency medical services. Courtesy photo.

mediately contacted the New York City Department of Homeless Services rep at the Holiday Inn, who called emergency medical services and the New York police department.

Originally, the young woman said she had cut herself when she fell, Perez said. She had scrapes and bruises, along with the cuts on her arm.

But as she spoke to Rubilar and Perez, she admitted that she had thought about killing herself and cut herself with a shaving razor, the sergeant said.

"We could speak to her in her native language, so she calmed down," he said. "She wanted to go back home, and she missed her homeland."

"I think when she saw the blood, that kind of freaked her out," he added.

The young woman had come into the lobby at 7:05 a.m. and by 7:15 the three task force members had bandaged her injuries and by 7:20 Emergency Medical Services was on the scene.

The three task force members handled every-

thing professionally, said Lt. Col. Aaron Lefton, the task force commander.

"I'm extremely proud of this team's quick actions to save a life," he said.

"We are grateful they were in the right place at the right time and willing to act," Lefton added.

She was transported to Cornell Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan and kept for observation for three days, Perez said. Then she was back at the Holiday Inn, but she wasn't ignored, he added.

The young woman's mother, who is also in the hotel checked on her regularly, as did the New York City homeless services workers and the Soldiers, Airmen and Naval Militia members on the task force, Perez said.

It's easy to understand why this poor woman was upset, Perez said. She was born and raised someplace else and now she's in whole new environment.

"These migrants are going through some tough times," he said. "It's not all sunshine and rainbows," he added.

He, Giralde, and Rubilar, are glad they could be there when she needed them, he said.

"We are just here to help. As New Yorkers we have been through a lot, and we want to help. And as service members you learn to respond when somebody needs help." **gt**

**"We are just here to help. As New Yorkers, we have been through a lot, and we want to help. And as service members you learn to respond when somebody needs help."**

-- Staff Sgt. Adam Perez, Joint Task Force Asylum Seeker

## Hellfighters Finish Kuwait Mission, Return Home

Story and photos by Sgt. Ryan Scribner, 369th Sustainment Brigade

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait — The New York National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade, deployed to Kuwait as Task Force Hellfighter for nine months, cased their colors during a transfer of authority ceremony to mark the end of their mission overseas at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 3, 2023.

The ceremony signified the end of the duties and responsibilities of the Harlem-based 369th, commanded by New York Army National Guard Col. Seth Morgulas, and the assumption of those duties and responsibilities passed to the Ohio National Guard's 371st Sustainment Brigade, commanded by Col. Michael Burgett.

U.S. Army Reserve Brig. Gen. Maria Juarez, deputy commander of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, conducted the transfer of authority ceremony.

Juarez said that Morgulas and Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Moss, the senior enlisted advisor of the 369th, achieved repeated mission success in the complex United States Central Command area of responsibility with successful command of 2,800 Soldiers spread across 32 locations.

"The Hellfighters significant achievements and numerous and seemingly endless showcase of an impressive skillset and endless dedication will without question have a lasting impact on the future of our partners in securing their borders, deterring aggression and stabilizing the region," Juarez said.

Task Force Hellfighter provided command and control of five direct reporting battalions, achieving mission success while running dynamic distributed mission command in support of Combined Joint Task Forces - Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield.

Morgulas said that while the Hellfighter Soldiers who served in Kuwait from 2022-23 did not endure combat conditions comparable to the original Hellfighters -where Sgt. Henry Johnson fought against a German raiding party during World War I- they nonetheless planned, coordinated and executed missions that made history.

"I've been assigned to many units and worked with many great teams during my 31 years of service, but I've never worked with as amazing a group of Soldiers as the Harlem Hellfighters," Morgulas said. "Hellfighters, your dedication and ability to rise to any challenge



Col. Seth Morgulas, the commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, and his senior enlisted leader, Command Sgt. Maj. Curtis Moss, case their unit colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 3, 2023. The brigade redeployed home to New York this summer. Photos by Sgt. Ryan Scribner, 369th Sustainment Brigade



Staff Sgt. Teon Desir, an information technology specialist and Sgt. Michael Mann, a signal support systems specialist with the 369th Sustainment Brigade, install a Joint Battle Command - Platform, or JBC-P during a communications exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 16, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

has been truly inspiring."

The 369th Sustainment Brigade cased their colors, and the subordinate units-the 369th Special Troops Battalion, the brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the

187th Signal Company-all did the same as the Soldiers prepared for their redeployment home.

The Soldiers returned back to the states for demobilization and then returned home to New York in late July. **gt**

## 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Changes Command

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters



Army Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters, passes the colors of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to its incoming commander, Army Col. Bradley Frank, during his change of command ceremony July 7, 2023 at the Joint Force Headquarters in Latham, N.Y. Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters.

LATHAM, N.Y. — New York Army National Guard Col. Bradley Frank, a West Valley resident, West Point graduate and a veteran of the war in Iraq, took command of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a

ceremony at New York National Guard Headquarters in Latham on July 7, 2023.

Frank took over from Col. Sean Flynn who led the brigade since July 2021. Flynn has been promoted to one-star general and now serves

in the United States European Command.

Army Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, the commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, which the brigade is part of, praised Frank as being up to the task of commanding the 27th brigade's 4,600 Soldiers.


"Colonel Frank, you are the right guy for the job," Spencer said. "It has been a busy time and it will continue to be a busy time.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general for New York, said that Frank was taking on "huge job and a massive responsibility."

In his remarks, Frank acknowledged the achievements of the brigade, its Soldiers, and the task in front of him.

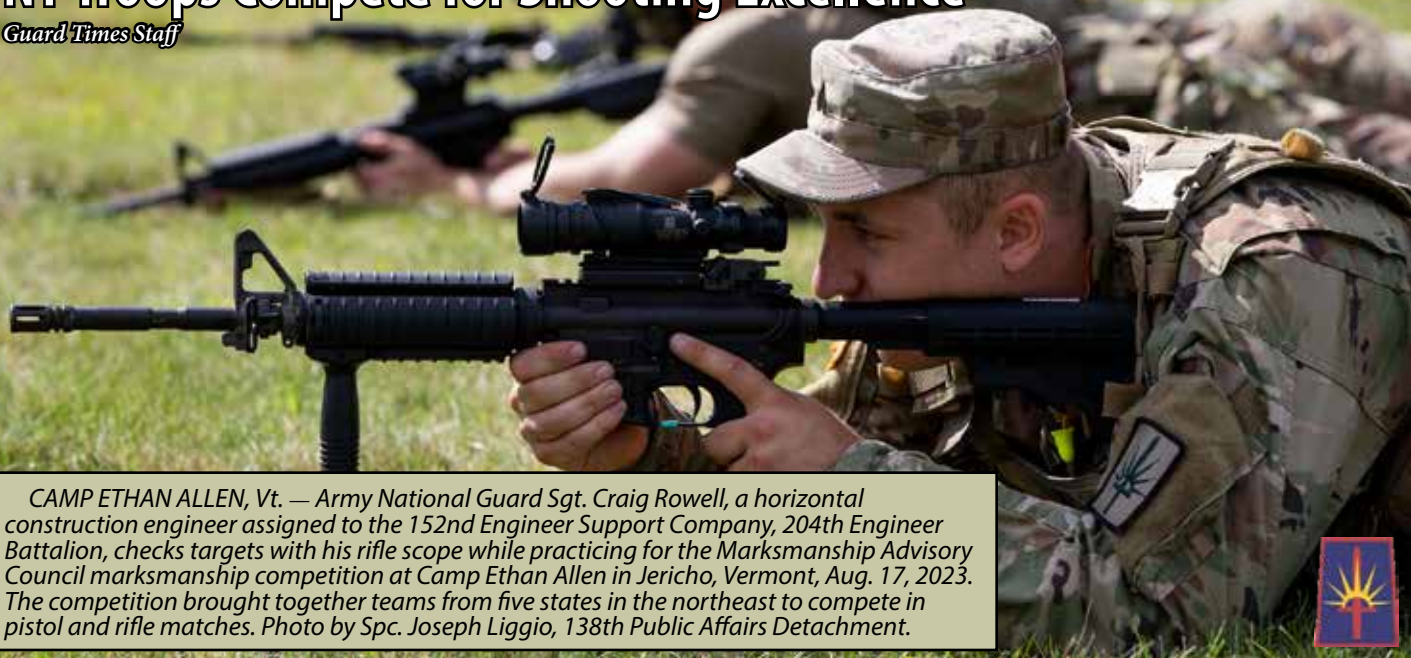
"Thank you for having confidence in me to lead this fine organization," Frank said. "It is a privilege I do not take lightly. Commanding a combat formation during these trying times is extremely humbling," he said. "Know that I will do my best to continue to move the brigade forward."

The brigade has deployed to Afghanistan, and Kuwait and has deployed Soldiers to help train Ukraine's military twice, once in 2017 and most recently in 2022.

In his civilian career, Frank is a Program Manager for New York's Energy Research and Development Authority located at the West Valley Demonstration Project. 

## NY Troops Compete for Shooting Excellence

Guard Times Staff



CAMP ETHAN ALLEN, Vt. — Army National Guard Sgt. Craig Rowell, a horizontal construction engineer assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, checks targets with his rifle scope while practicing for the Marksmanship Advisory Council marksmanship competition at Camp Ethan Allen in Jericho, Vermont, Aug. 17, 2023. The competition brought together teams from five states in the northeast to compete in pistol and rifle matches. Photo by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

# Signal Soldiers Heading for Kuwait mission

Story and photo by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment  
**STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y.** — Three hundred and forty Soldiers assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, which has units in Yonkers, Peekskill and Orangeburg, departed Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, August 15 on the first leg of a deployment to Kuwait.

The signal Soldiers headed for Fort Cavazos, Texas, formerly Fort Hood, where they trained before deploying as part of Task Force Spartan —the Army’s 10,000-person force in the region— for 10 months.

The battalion held a deployment ceremony at Stewart Air National Guard Base August 13 —the date they were originally expected to leave — so leadership could thank the Soldiers friends and families for their support.

The ceremony signaled the

departure of the battalion to the Middle East provide communications support for Operation Spartan Shield, the Army’s mission to strengthen defense relationships and build partner capacity

“The 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion has a unique and complex mission to provide communication support anywhere in the world,” said Lt. Col. Paul Mulligan, the battalion commander.

“The Soldiers have shown that they are masters of their craft and will represent the state of New York and nation with utmost professionalism,” Mulligan said.

After conducting post-mobilization training, the battalion will move to the Middle East. The Soldiers are expected to return home in May of 2024.

Members of the unit have spent months preparing for deployment, including the repair and configu-



Soldiers assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion and family members pose for a photo prior to the battalion farewell ceremony in Newburgh, New York on Aug. 13, 2023. The battalion deploys to Kuwait later this fall to support Operation Spartan Shield.

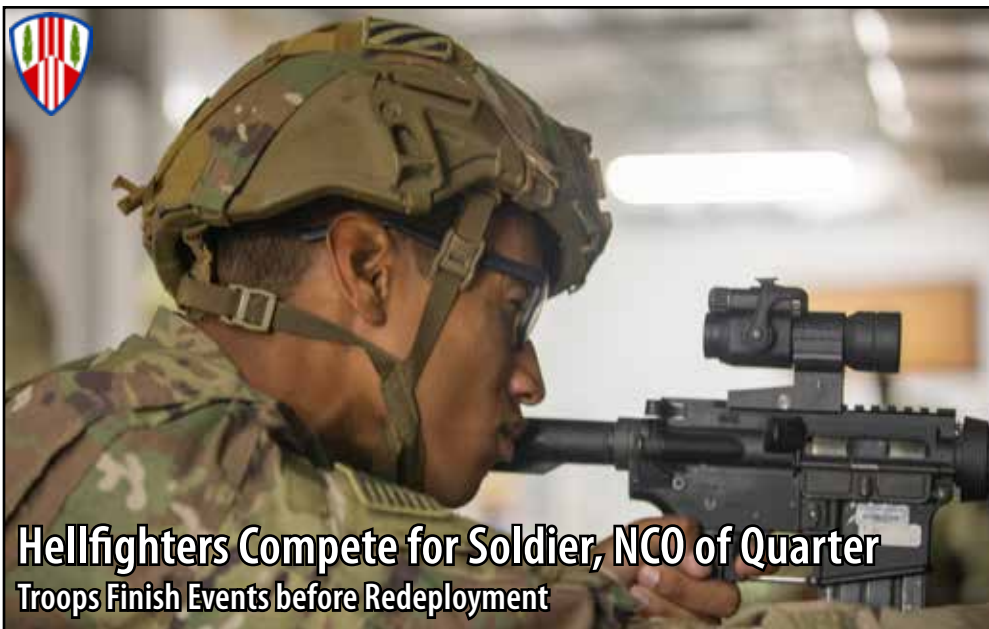
ration of hundreds of pieces of communications equipment.

Pfc. Junhee Choi, who joined the battalion in November of 2022, said she was looking forward to the overseas tour.

“I am definitely excited to go

on deployment,” said Choi, a utilities equipment repairer in Bravo Company.

“I am looking forward to learning more about Army skills and life,” she said. **gt**



## Hellfighters Compete for Soldier, NCO of Quarter Troops Finish Events before Redeployment

**CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait** — Members of Task Force Hellfighter, led by the 369th Sustainment Brigade, conduct a Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competition June 20, 2023 in Kuwait before the task force final transfer of authority and redeployment this summer. Above, Sgt. Merlin Padilla, a water treatment specialist with the 87th Composite Supply Company, 630th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, aims an electronic M4 using the Electronic Skills Trainer; at right, Spc. Jennifer Powell, a human resources specialist with the 492nd Adjutant General Company, 369th Special Troops Battalion, drags a sled during the combat fitness test portion. Photos by Sgt. Ryan Scribner, 369th Sustainment Brigade.



# Cavalry Troopers Compete for Spurs

Story and photo by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times Staff

**YOUNGSTOWN, N.Y. —** Twenty Troopers assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment earned their silver spurs after completing a three-day long “Spur Ride” at the Youngstown Lewiston Training Area, outside of Niagara Falls from August 16 to 18, 2023.

“It’s an esprit-de-corps event where we take our best scouts across the squadron where they have to conduct scout tasks to standard and then various other physical activities over a 48 hour period,” said squadron Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Cross.

The squadron provides reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition as the “eyes” of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, scouting out enemy locations.

Starting August 16, 31 Soldiers began the spur ride with an exam that focused

on tactical proficiency. They then spent the following two days outdoors to complete a series of training lanes and a 12-mile ruck-march to be completed in four-and-a-half hours.

“I thought the lanes were really good,” said Spc. Peter Fillion, a senior scout observer from Charlie Troop.

“It was more challenging than I thought it was going to be, but it covered the three main mission sets of being a cavalry scout.”

Fillion, who has been in the 101st for two years, finished first in the ruck-march.

The tradition of earning spurs goes back to the beginning of American cavalry, where new troopers received training in horsemanship and the use of the cavalry saber. Once they proved their ability, they were given their spurs, Cross said. 9



## Honors for WWI Unknown Rainbow Soldier

**OISE-AISNE AMERICAN CEMETERY, France —** New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major Corey Cush, the former senior enlisted leader for the 42nd Infantry Division, salutes the remains of a World War I Soldier which were interred at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery on June 7, 2023.

The Soldier was initially buried in a churchyard that was within the 42nd Infantry Division area of operations in 1918. The Soldier was probably a member of the 165th Infantry Regiment, originally the New York National Guard’s 69th Infantry.

The military honors burial followed a year-long process to exhume the remains and artifacts to identify the Soldier’s nationality or identity. The remains were discovered in February 2022 in Villers-sur-Fere, France.

The recovery included a partial skeleton and several bone fragments, along with various artifacts, including the remains of a 1917 steel helmet used by American troops; U.S. uniform insignia buttons; a model 1917 U.S. trench knife; and remnants of a round U.S. identity tag.

This was the first burial of an American unknown from WWI since 1988, and the first burial at Oise-Aisne cemetery since 1932.

Oise-Aisne American Cemetery is roughly 4 kilometers from Villers-sur-Fere, and contains the graves of more than 6,000 American service members who died in the vicinity during World War I. This unknown soldier is now one of nearly 600 other unknowns buried at Oise-Aisne.



# Orion Soldiers Deploy for Northern Strike



CAMP GRAYLING, Mich. — Six hundred Soldiers from the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with over 300 coming from the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, took part in the National Guard's annual Northern Strike exercise at Camp Grayling from August 5 to 19. Over 7,000 personnel from the National Guard and foreign militaries took part. Clockwise from above, Spc. Mohammed Islam, of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, fires an M777 towed 155mm howitzer Aug. 10, 2023; Pvt. Areana Roberts, also assigned to Charlie Battery, operates a radio at the fire direction center supporting M777 Howitzer fire missions August 9; Spc. Daniel Hernandez loads 155mm ammunition into a howitzer August 10; Staff Sgt. Michael Sick, assigned to the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, inspects an RQ-7 Shadow before flight August 9; and Sgt. Mason Youngberg, at left, a cavalry scout with the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, checks the marksmanship of British Army Pvt. Daniel Reed, an infantryman with the 4th Royal Yorkshire Regiment. Photos by Staff Sgts. Drake Chandler and Tegan Kucera, 126th Theater Public Affairs Support Element and Staff Sgt. Daniel Garas, Michigan National Guard Joint Force Headquarters.



# 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Band Plays Jerusalem for July 4<sup>th</sup>

Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

JERUSALEM — Nine Soldiers assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division Band spent their July 4 holiday weekend in Israel, performing at a reception hosted by the American Ambassador to Israel, Thomas Nides.

The eight musicians and sound engineer provided background music for a July 3 party held at the Israel Museum, the country's most important archeological museum.

The musicians, who make up the "Rock Band" musical performance team, played a two-hour set in the museum's garden.

Attendees included Israeli legislators, the mayor of Jerusalem, Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"It was definitely a once in a lifetime experience," said Staff Sgt. Drew


Gansz, the non-commissioned officer in charge.

"It went pretty great," he added. "This was easily the coolest event we have ever played," said Spc. Noah Martella, percussion player. "I never expected to do something like this when I enlisted in the band."

The band worked well together, according to Sgt. Tejera-Velasquez Napoleon, the sound engineer.

"It was poetry in motion to see everyone execute what was necessary to achieve a successful mission," she said.

The rock band members left for Israel on June 30 and returned July 5 on board a C-17 Globemaster III flown by the 105th Airlift Wing.

"The audience was incredibly receptive to our performance," Gansz said. 



Members of the 42nd Infantry Division Band perform at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Israel, July 3, 2023. The Rock Band performance team was invited by the U.S. ambassador as part of the American Independence Day celebration. Courtesy photo.



## MPs train UAV Hunting with NATO Partners

PABRADE, Lithuania — New York Army National Guard Cpl. Darren Kuney and Spc. Alexander Mistretta, assigned to 102nd Military Police Battalion and supporting the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division while deployed in Eastern Europe, operate the Dronebuster during counter-unmanned aerial systems training near Pabrade, Lithuania, on June 23, 2023. The Soldiers are part of the 4th Infantry Division engagement with partners in Europe for multinational training to build readiness, increase interoperability and reinforce allies and partners and other elements of the battalion are conducting joint patrols with their host nation military police counterparts. Photo by Staff Sgt. Cesar Rivas, 164th Air Defense Artillery Brigade.

## 642<sup>nd</sup> Patch Ceremony

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait  
-- Army Col. J. Ashley Mills, commander of the 185th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, Mississippi Army National Guard, provides 185th ECAB patches to 642nd Aviation Support Battalion Soldiers July 14, 2023, at Camp Buehring. The ceremony marked the new command for the 642nd, deployed since February 2023, in support of Inherent Resolve, Spartan Shield, and New Normal. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Shane Hamann, 185th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.





## 53<sup>rd</sup> Troop Command Takes to the Range

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Penn. — Soldiers of the 53rd Troop Command Headquarters Detachment conduct weapons qualification training at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, July 10, 2023. Above, Staff Sgt. Estenia Aquino fires an M4A1 Carbine during rifle qualification. Top right, Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Graham collects magazines prior to M18 pistol qualification. At top left, Aquino instructs Spc. Ehlani Ocean, prior to firing an M18 pistol. Photos by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

# 42<sup>nd</sup> Division HQ Completes Warfighter Exercise

Story by Staff Sgt. Trevor Cullen, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Penn. — More than 600 Soldiers from across the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters and its subordinate brigades from multiple states completed the Warfighter command post exercise at Fort Indiantown Gap June 2-11, 2023.

The exercise trains and evaluates Army division-sized elements on mission command during simulated large-scale warfighting functions.

The focus on collective staff training was invaluable, said Maj. Gen. Thomas Spencer, the 42nd Division commander.

“The 42nd Infantry Division came here with a mission, to use this Warfighter exercise to train and mentor our noncommissioned officers, warrant officers and commissioned officers on taking their specific skill sets and aggregating them together to accomplish our corps commander’s intent,” Spencer said.

The division headquarters and headquarters battalion established the command post for the staff while brigades from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire provided cells for the exercise.

The simulation exercise was able to reflect the challenges of complex operational environments, presenting problems and opportunities to staffs and commanders for decisions regarding operational maneuver, fires, personnel management and logistics.

Professional observer, coach/trainers from the Mission Command Training Program, based at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, provide feedback and mentoring to the variety of staff functions.

The exercise forces leaders and staffs to plan and respond to a real-world, “free thinking” adversary, with a competitive opposing force also making decisions that make every exercise unique.

It is less about winning or losing a battle than learning about a staff’s strengths and weaknesses, said Maj. Jean Kratzer, the 42nd Infantry Division’s Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion operations officer.

**“I am very proud of my Soldiers and am extremely confident that the Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division are ready to accomplish any mission.”**

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



Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters conduct preparations June 4, 2023 for the unit Warfighter exercise at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Courtesy Photo.

“Our training is just starting,” Kratzer said. “The warfighter may be over, but we now get to incorporate lessons learned into our training schedule.”

Leaders of the division staff still acknowledged the overall success of the training.

“We have gotten further in this exercise than any other National Guard Division,” noted Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Cush, the former division senior enlisted leader.

Having completed a deployment for Operation Spartan Shield in 2020 and returning to support the state’s COVID-19 response missions in 2021, the division staff was able to show that it is still ready for its warfighting mission, Spencer said.

“We accomplished our mission and trained how we would fight,” Spencer said. “I am very proud of my Soldiers and am extremely confident that the Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division are ready to accomplish any mission.” **gt**



Spc. Simeon Moorehead of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion conducts maintenance on a vehicle June 11, 2023, during the unit Warfighter exercise at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Valenza, 42nd Infantry Division.

## Around the World in 8 Days

Story and photo by 2nd Lt. Briana Ross, 105th Airlift Wing



A C-17 Globemaster III from the 105th Airlift Wing sits on the ramp at Kuwait International Airport June 30, 2023. Seventeen Airmen from the wing flew around the world carrying the 123rd Contingency Response Team in support of exercises Air Defender 23 and Mobility Guardian 23.

**NEWBURGH, N.Y. —** Seventeen Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing flew around the world from June 28 to July 6 while supporting two major Air Force exercises.

The Airmen, flying two C-17 Globemaster III strategic airlifters, left Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh and flew to Scotland and then Germany. They picked up 30 personnel and 75 tons of cargo and moved them to the Philippines and Guam before returning home.

“This mission was an awesome opportunity to showcase our aircraft’s long-range capability and cargo capacity,” said 1st Lt. Sinead Kirnan, one of the aircraft commanders.

“The Pacific is a different type of flying which is great for an East Coast based crew to see,” she added.

The two aircraft, call signs “Reach 804” and “Reach 831,” were supporting Air Defender 23 and Mobility Guardian 23.

Air Defender 23, organized by the German Bundeswehr, involved 10,000 military personnel and 250 aircraft from 25 nations in the largest air deployment exercise in NATO’s history.

Mobility Guardian 23 was the movement of 15,000 U.S. and international military personnel for simultaneous exercises across the Indo-Pacific.

The 105th Airmen moved 30 Airmen of the Kentucky Air National Guard’s 123rd Airlift

Wing and their gear from the exercises in Europe to the exercise in the Pacific.

The Kentucky Airmen are assigned to the wing’s Contingency Response Team.

These teams set up and operate airfields in austere locations. They can be deployed anywhere in the world on short notice.

This was the first time a contingency response team moved from Europe to the Pacific without resupply, according to team members.

“Participating in exercises back-to-back like this allows us to prove we can work in any domain with the same equipment,” said Master Sgt. Darren Wiles, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 123rd Airlift Wing team.

Usually, units return home to refit before deploying on another exercise, he said.

The New York Airmen arrived in Scotland on June 28. The next day they flew to Wunstorf, Germany to pick up the 123rd Airmen.

Loadmasters worked diligently to load the 123rd Airmen and their cargo onto the C-17s.

“It took less than three hours to load more than 150,000 lbs of cargo and 30 passengers between the two aircraft,” said Staff Sgt. Christen Mills, loadmaster on Reach 804.

The two aircraft headed to Kuwait for a refueling stop, and then to Diego Garcia, the U.S. base in the Indian Ocean, to end an almost 20-hour day.

After two days of crew rest, the aircraft continued on to drop off the team. Fifteen Airmen were deployed to Puerto Princesa, Philippines and 15 Airmen to the U.S. territory of Guam.

“We worked long hours under a tight schedule to deliver the 123rd Contingency Response Team on time,” said Kirnan.

“We also faced challenges relating to diplomatic clearances, fuel availability and starting the aircraft in extreme heat. Despite all this, we were able to drop the team off in the Philippines on time,” she said.

The 105th Airmen completed their 22,000-mile journey back to New York after stopping in Hawaii to refuel.

For the 105th Airlift Wing, this mission presented new challenges as well, Kirnan said.

“The aircraft usually only fly to Europe and back or to the Pacific and back,” said Kirnan.

“Bringing the 123rd Airmen from Germany to the Philippines required flying over parts of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia that the 105th rarely traverses,” she said.

“It presented a unique opportunity to figure out a safe and effective route, while practicing flying in new parts of the world. The route also allowed the crew to fly around the entire world, touching all four hemispheres along the way,” Kirnan said. **gt**

# Attack Wing Airmen Train for Tactical Operations

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

SYRACUSE, NY — One hundred and twenty Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing and eight Airmen from the 107th Attack Wing spent four days establishing and defending a forward operating site in a wooded section of Hancock Field Air National Guard Base from August 6 to 9.

The members of the two wing's mission support group spent the four-day Annual Training period setting up living and operating areas, preparing for potential chemical attack, and fighting off enemy probes of their perimeter.

"I have been in the Guard 16 years, and we have never done anything like this," said Master Sgt. Nick Detota, a member of the 174th Communication Squadron. "The extent of this exercise was a complete 180 to what we had done in the past."

The goal, according to Lt. Col. Jason Taylor, the deputy commander of the 174th Mission Support Group, was to execute the tasks necessary to set up an austere base, or Forward Operating Site, or FOS for short, from scratch.

"In this scenario, the forward operating site was simulating an MQ-9 launch and recovery and refuel location," he explained.

"It's our attempt to be able to go to a foreign country and set-up a Forward Operating Site and function in a contested environment," Taylor said. "From the main operating base there would be several FOSs to help disperse capabilities amongst different locations."

The first step was to establish a Reception Control Center that allowed Airmen to process into their deployed location. Airmen were then organized into teams to set up tents, communications, latrines and showers, a mobile kitchen, and other necessities.

The Airmen participated in scenarios they would encounter in a combat zone. Every Airman was handed an M4 Carbine weapon with blank ammunition.

"This kind of realistic training was great," said Airman 1st Class David Johnson.

"It has been a good experience and helped prepare us if a situation

arises," Johnson said.

During the exercise, alarms were sounded that specified that an attack, or incident, was underway and what type. These ranged from attacks on the perimeter, threatening protestors at the gate, to biological and chemical agent attacks.

"We did everything out here. We slept out here and we ate MRE's out here. It's really been the true experience," said Staff Sgt. Paige Blakeman, a member of the 174th

Logistics Readiness Squadron.

"Most Air Guard units don't conduct this type of training," said Col. Chuck Hutson, the wing vice commander.

The training plan was "unprecedented amongst our Air National Guard base peers," he said. "And the training worked," he added.

"You can feel the excitement these Airmen have practicing support operations amidst a contested, degraded environment," Hutson said. **gt**



Airmen assigned to the 174th Mission Support Group respond to simulated tactical threats Aug. 7, 2023 during a four day exercise at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base. During the exercise, members established a Forward Operating Site and acted as if they were in a deployed location, responding to threats and emergencies. Photo by Senior Airman Tiffany Scofield, 174th Attack Wing.

## 105<sup>th</sup> Airlift Training with Army Aviation



WHEELER SACK ARMY AIRFIELD, FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- An AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopter assigned to the 10th Aviation Brigade, part of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) is loaded onto an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing at Fort Drum, New York on July 12, 2023. The training was an opportunity for Soldiers and Airmen to gain experience and familiarization moving the aircraft as part of the 105th Airlift Wing's global mobility mission. Courtesy photo.

# Skibirds Return from Greenland Flight Training

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA, New York — The 109th Airlift Wing wrapped up its annual support to the National Science Foundation in Greenland when Airmen and LC-130 “Skibirds” returned to Stratton Air National Guard Base on August 23, 2023.

The unit supplied 2.4 million pounds of cargo, eighty-six-thousand gallons of fuel and delivered 1300 passengers to research locations across the Greenland Ice Cap. The wing’s aircrews flew a total of 721 hours support the science stations from April to August.

Four hundred Airmen rotated through the mission during the five months. Three LC-130 Hercules were deployed during each of the seven deployment periods.

The wing also conducted two Barren Land Arctic Survival Training classes, known as BLAST for short, with instructors from the 66th Training Squadron from Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska.

BLAST training teaches Airmen

how to survive a forced landing in a totally barren, Arctic landscape, and all members of the 109th who deploy to Antarctica and the Arctic are required to take the course.

This year the aircrews were flying LC-130s with new, improved engines which reduced fuel use, according to Master Sgt. Andrew Ham, an LC-130 flight engineers. This “3.5 engine upgrade is intended improve long-duration flight fuel efficiency,” Ham explained.

According to Master Sgt. Jared Nardi, a propulsion technician for the LC-130, the engine upgrades mean that along with flying farther on less fuel, the aircraft can also takeoff faster.

The new engines also require less maintenance, Nardi added.

This new capability was needed because the wing was tasked with flying construction materials to Summit Station, a year-around science observation outpost high up on the Greenland ice cap.

The summer missions in Green-



A 109th Airlift Wing aircrew flies an LC-130 Hercules over Baffin Bay in Greenland, May 12, 2023. The wing deploys to Greenland annually to provide airlift to the National Science Foundation and train members in the Arctic. Photo by Staff Sgt. Madison Scaringe, 109th Airlift Wing.

land are critical for providing aircrews with experience in operating in Polar Regions, Ham said.

The ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules in the 109th are the largest aircraft in the world able to land on snow and ice.

The 109th’s Airmen will now immediately begin preparing to deploy for Operation Deep Freeze in October. **gt**



Airmen conduct survival training in Greenland, May 14, 2023. Photo by Master Sgt. Jamie Spaulding, 109th Airlift Wing.



Senior Airman Shannon Jackson, a hydraulics specialist in the 109th Airlift Wing, teaches a class about LC-130H ski hydraulics Aug. 22, 2023 in Gulfport, Mississippi during Maintenance University, a week of skills training designed for C-130H maintainers.

## Multistate Teamup for Maintenance University

Story and photo by Jaclyn Lyons, 109th Airlift Wing

GULFPORT, Miss. — Maintenance Airmen assigned to the New York Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing spent the first week of August training in Gulfport, Mississippi teamed up with the Missouri Air Guard’s 139th Airlift Wing for intensive training, dubbed maintenance university.

A total of 85 Airmen, 30 from the 109th and 55 from the 139th traveled to the Gulfport Combat Readiness Training Center, an Air Force training center just outside of Biloxi, Miss., from July 31-Aug. 5, 2023.

Maintenance university is a collaboration with other Air National Guard units and is specifically for units that fly C-130H models. This gives the Airmen that maintain these aircraft a chance to focus on the tasks that particular model of airplane.

The 139th flew in two C-130H and the 109th flew in one LC-130H to do hands-on training.

Airmen from both units taught classes some contractors were brought in to give another level of training in the classroom.

“Instead of having a crew chief that’s been doing the job for 10 years sitting in a marshaling class he has already taken, maybe they sit through an engine class where we have a Rolls Royce rep there to talk about our engines,” explained 1st Lt. James Cappadora, 109th maintenance officer.

“The goal is to increase their knowledge of the airframe completely,” he said.

The training covered everything from general tasks such as marshaling aircraft and launch and recovery, to more specific skillsets. Hydraulics— for both the wheeled aircraft and the specialized skis on the LC-130- and propulsion- the engines and propellers that power the enormous planes— were two of the main topics. **gt**



# 107<sup>th</sup> Makes First MQ-9 Landing in Niagara Falls ...

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Janker, 107th Attack Wing

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — The 107th Attack Wing made history Aug. 9, 2023 with the first successful landing of an MQ-9 Reaper Remotely Piloted Aircraft at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

The landing was supported by the Satellite Launch and Recovery system, an instrumental part of the aircraft's capabilities known as SLR, said Lt. Col. Marshal Plavan, Lead SLR Instructor Pilot from the 107th Operations Support Squadron.

"SLR essentially removes the need for forward-deployed crews" Plavan said.

"The aircraft still operates from a satellite, but utilizes an auto take-off and landing profile, allowing the MQ-9 to land autonomously."

Aside from demonstrating the technological capabilities of the aircraft and the 107th, this operation marked a training resurgence for the unit.

"Since our mission conversion to the MQ-9, local training has been a challenge. With operations like this one, we're reigniting this essential facet," Plavan said, emphasizing the importance of these activities at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

The wing began converting to the MQ-9 mission in 2014. **gt**



# ...While 174<sup>th</sup> MQ-9 Lands in Rochester for Airshow

Story by Maj. Suzanne Jedrosko, 174th Attack Wing

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — For the first time on August 9, the New York Air Guard's 174th Attack Wing flew one of their MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft to an airshow.

The MQ-9 that launched from Hancock Field Air National Guard Base and landed at the Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport, was one of the centerpieces of a weekend airshow along with the Air Force's Thunderbirds demonstration team, according to Monroe County Executive Adam Bello on August 9.

It was also the first time the annual Rochester airshow, which ran August 12-13, featured the plane.

In the past, when the 174th displayed an MQ-9, maintenance teams had to break it down and truck it to the location.

Thanks to new satellite control technology, and coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration and Monroe County Airport Authority, the wing could fly the aircraft directly to the airport and land without a ground control station on the other end, according to Col. John O'Conner, the commander of the 174th.



Maintenance personnel assigned to the 174th Attack Wing recover an MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft at Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport on Aug. 9, 2023 following the aircraft's inaugural landing. The event marks the first time an MQ-9 has flown into a civilian airshow without requiring transportation by truck and assembly on site. Courtesy photo.

"Flying to the Rochester Airshow gives us a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of this amazing aircraft to our local communities," he said.

"It's another airplane with a pilot controlling

it landing at the airport," he added.

The MQ-9 did not fly during the airshow, but wing members said they were looking forward to speaking to visitors. **gt**

# EADS Welcomes Two New Commanders

Story and photos by Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME, N.Y. — A combined assumption of command and change of command ceremony on June 30, 2023 formally installed two new commanders at the Eastern Air Defense Sector.

During the ceremony, Col. Steven Rathmell became commander of the New York Air National Guard's 224th Air Defense Group and Lt. Col. Jennifer King became the 224th Air Defense Squadron commander.

Maj. Gen. Denise M. Donnell, the New York Air National Guard commander, was the ceremony's presiding officer.

Rathmell replaced Col. Joseph Roos, who became the EADS commander on May 23.

Rathmell has more than 30,000 mission crew hours conducting the Sector's air defense mission. Prior to becoming the Air Defense Group commander, he served as the 224th Air Defense Sector commander.

King succeeded Rathmell as the 224th commander.

King joined the Eastern Air Defense Sector in 2011. She has held several positions, including air weapons officer, senior director, mission crew commander, flight commander, and joint interface control officer.



Col. Steven Rathmell, right, receives command of the 224th Air Defense Group on June 30, 2023 during his assumption of command ceremony at the Eastern Air Defense Sector in Rome, New York, with Maj. Gen. Denise M. Donnell, the New York Air National Guard commander, presiding.



Lt. Col. Jennifer King, right, becomes the 224th Air Defense Squadron commander on June 30, 2023 during her change of command ceremony at the Eastern Air Defense Sector in Rome, New York, with Maj. Gen. Denise Donnell, the New York Air National Guard commander, presiding.

While serving as a flight commander, King led her team to the Air National Guard's Ground-Based Battle Management Command and Control Crew of the Year award.

Prior to becoming commander, King was the 224th Air Defense Squadron Director of Operations. **gt**

## Rescue Wing Hosts STEM Camp

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. — Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Matthew Gammon provides instruction to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) students about non-destructive aircraft component material inspection at the 106th Rescue Wing at Westhampton Beach, N.Y., Aug. 4, 2023.

Twenty-four children of wing Airmen received a first-hand look at how the Air Force and especially the rescue wing, uses science, technology, engineering and math during the camp program that ran from August 3-6.

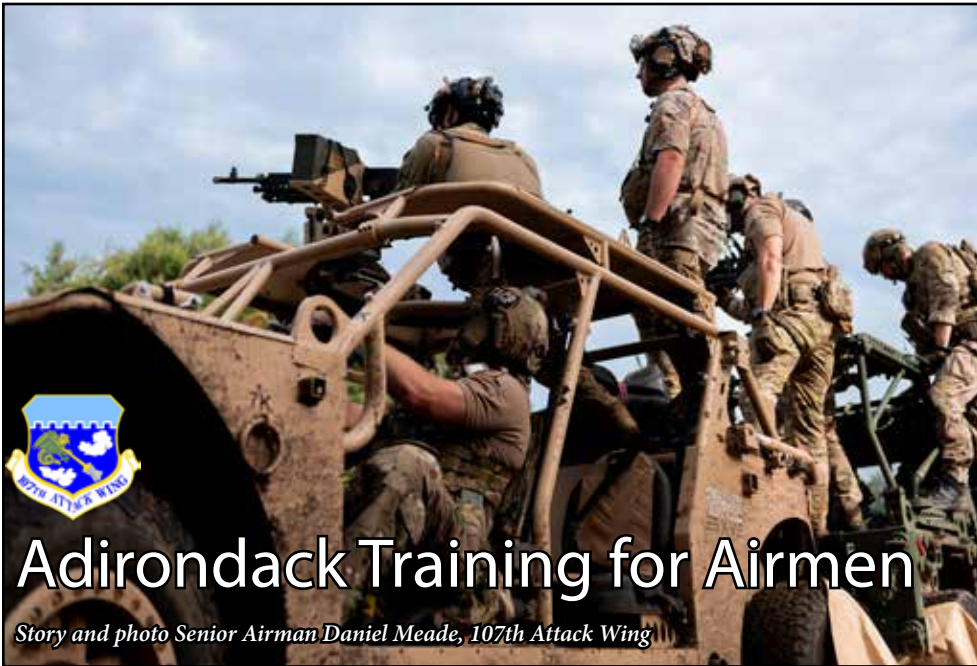
The boys and girls, ranging from seventh graders to high school seniors, took part in the first Department of Defense STEM Camp hosted by the wing.

It was the first time any National Guard unit had hosted this program, according to Col. Shaun Fitzgerald, the wing commander.

"That is a huge accomplishment, not only for the base but for the facilitators that made this happen," he said.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Sean Madden, 106th Rescue Wing.





## Adirondack Training for Airmen

Story and photo Senior Airman Daniel Meade, 107th Attack Wing

Airmen assigned to the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, a unit attached to the 107th Attack Wing, train by using mounted weapons systems in a training operation known as Future Flag in Upstate N.Y., Aug. 12, 2023. The training offered Tactical Air Control Party Airmen the opportunity to test their skills and equipment for use in tactical situations.

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. — Twelve Airmen from the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, whose job is to call air strikes in on enemy forces, spent two days honing their skills and working with new gear, in the Adirondack Mountains near Plattsburgh, N.Y., on August 11 and 12.

The Airmen, who are part of the 107th Attack Wing, were participating in an ongoing series of training exercises called Future Flag, which are designed to test and evaluate new equipment.

On this weekend, the training focused on

using new weapons and off-road vehicles to improve mobility and high-tech communications.

The training is being conducted in conjunction with the Air Force Research Lab, which is based in Rome, N.Y.

“Most of us are familiar with the different weapons systems, so we have been having fun and refamiliarizing ourselves with them,” said Senior Master Sgt. Derick Snyder.

“But the off-road vehicles have been a new experience for us, and we are working to increase our capabilities with them.”

The rugged terrain of the Adirondacks challenged both the TACP Airmen and their equipment, making it the perfect location for their unique training, Snyder said.

The two-year partnership with the Air Force Research Lab is an opportunity for the 274th to develop skills and exclusive experiences with emerging Air Force technology, said Lt. Col. Carl Stumpf, the 274th commander.

“We got to experiment with the communications architecture that will eventually form the backbone to the Advanced Battle Management System and enable the integration of the TACP weapons system into it,” Stumpf said.

The training gave Airmen a chance to be a part of a “one-of-a-kind opportunity to train and experiment with new technology,” he said. 🇺🇸

## Civil Air Patrol Camps with 174<sup>th</sup> Attack Wing

Story and photo by Senior Airman Tiffany Scofield, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. — Over 120 cadets and 30 staff members participated in the 2023 Civil Air Patrol Cadet Leadership Encampment July 9-16, 2023 at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse.

For the young aviation enthusiasts, the graduation ceremony held July 16 represented the end of a journey that refined leadership skills, picked up useful aviation knowledge, and formed relationships that will last a lifetime.

The Civil Air Patrol, known as CAP for short, is the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force. It provides assistance during emergencies and runs a youth cadet program for teens.

The encampment gave cadets hands-on training in aviation and emergency services while also challenging and empowering them. The cadets engaged in a variety of instructional modules, including workshops on leadership development and familiarization with aircraft, all while being supervised by experienced CAP officers and instructors.

“You meet people from all different walks of life, different areas, you learn a lot of military customs and courtesies, get to see a lot of different aircraft, and have a lot of experiences you wouldn’t be able to get elsewhere,” said Cadet Maj. Deirdre O’Callaghan, Squadron 1 Commander



Civil Air Patrol cadets exit a C-17 Globemaster III upon arrival at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, N.Y., July 12, 2023. The 174th Attack Wing hosted more than 100 New York Air Wing cadets for their annual encampment July 10-14. The Civil Air Patrol, known as CAP for short, is the official civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force.

of the 2023 encampment. “Every encampment I’ve attended I’ve gained more experiences, life lessons, and friends.”

Military members hosted a career fair for the cadets. They were able to get a close look at the different career fields the wing has to offer. 🇺🇸

# Medical Training Offers Innovative Care in America

Story and photos by Airman 1st Class Jocelyn Tuller, 109th Airlift Wing



Staff Sgt. Courtney Blood, a medical specialist assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, sits with a dog after surgery in Covelo, California, June 16, 2023.

COVELO, Calif. — Seventeen Air National Guard Airmen assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing spent June 12 to 25 providing no-cost health care and veterinary services at the Round Valley Indian Health Clinic in Covelo, California.

The Airmen, from Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, New York, participated in a Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training Mission, known as IRT for short.

IRT missions are designed to allow military personnel to practice their military skills while helping their fellow Americans. They can involve engineering missions, assisting local governments with cyber security, or providing medical care, as in this case.

Seventy service members from the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps reserves were also part of the mission.

The two-week mission provided 2,457 hours of hands-on training in medical, dental and veterinary specialties for military personnel while assisting the health center.

The Round Valley Indian Health Center serves 3,000 people living in the village of Covelo and the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

## Aircrews Complete Water Survival, Parachute Training

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Madison Scaringe, 109th Airlift Wing

MAYFIELD, N.Y. — Thirty-eight Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing got their feet wet during water survival and parachute training at Great Sacandaga Lake August 5 and 6, 2023.

The man-made lake is located northwest of the wing's home at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia.

The Airmen —pilots, flight engineers, navigators, load masters, flight doctors and aeromedical evacuation nurses— learned the basics of surviving a parachute landing at the Air Force Survival, Eva-

sion, Resistance, Escape School. They are required to requalify in these skills every three years.

“The idea is to make these trainings as realistic as possible,” said Master Sgt. David Gillis, the train-

ing instructor.

“In parachute training, students practice multiple types of malfunctions that could happen when deploying their parachute,” he said.

Landing in the water is

one of the more challenging situations, and Airmen used the lake to practice this.

Students reviewed how to find their way out if the 28-foot parachute landed on top of them in the water.


“A lot of people panic because the wet fabric clings to your face and feels suffocating,” said Capt. Nicholas Chakurmanian, a wing navigator.

“We’re taught to float on our back, push the fabric off our face and find one of the parachute cords. Then you grab on and just keep pulling until you find your

way out,” he explained.

Students ran through multiple topics, including familiarization of flotation devices and life rafts, how to camouflage a raft against enemies and how to alert search and rescue parties.

Throughout the training, rescue divers and first responders were geared up in case of a real-world emergency, Gillis said.

“Safety is our number one priority in trainings like these. We want to make it realistic. Ensuring the proper safety steps have been taken means we can continue to do it for years to come,” he said. 



109th Airlift Wing Airmen participate in water survival and parachute refresher training on Great Sacandaga Lake, August 5-6, 2023. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Samantha Gifford, 109th Airlift Wing.



Capt. Jessica Alves, a medical specialist assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, works with a patient during an Innovative Readiness Training in Covelo, California, June 16, 2023. The mission offers no-cost medical care to communities in the U.S. while providing hands-on experience to service members. Photo by Senior Airman Jocelyn Tuller, 109th Airlift Wing.

The village of Covelo has a population of just over 1,300 according to the U.S. Census Bureau, with a median family income of \$31,000.

Over 500 patients were seen during the mission. The medical clinic saw 200 patients, the dental clinic saw 214 patients and the veterinary clinic saw 133 patients.

The market value of services provided was over \$150,000, according to the mission commander.

“It was an amazing opportunity to provide health care at no cost to communities that welcome us while also getting mission essential training,” said Capt. David Falcon, the officer in charge of the 109th Airlift Wing members.

Navy Cmdr. Jordan Buzzell, the officer in charge of the Navy Reserve’s 4th Dental Battalion, said the mission worked so well because the clinic provided the needed equipment.

“This created a unique situation for this IRT mission because we did not have to bring any equipment, which enabled us to hit the ground running instantly to provide immediate patient care,” Buzzell said.

The medical personnel were also given the chance to work at the veterinary clinic to get firsthand experience in that field.

“I had the opportunity to work with animals in the medical field, which was an eye-opening experience I would usually never be able to do in my regular profession,” said Master Sgt. Jessica Corrigan, a critical care specialist.

Rose Abono, the medical clinic manager, said the community appreciated the service provided and that many of the people that participated had not been to the doctor in years.

“Covelo is a very rural community located an hour’s drive from the nearest hospital or other medical care,” Abono said.

“We applied for the U.S. military to come assist with medical, dental, and veterinary services because our community is so rural there is a huge lack of employment, high poverty level and uninsured families. The community was very grateful for all the services,” he said. **gt**



Staff Sgt. Chelsea Perrigo, a dental assistant assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, performs an oral exam during Innovative Readiness Training in Covelo, California, June 15, 2023. Photo by Senior Airman Jocelyn Tuller, 109th Airlift Wing.

## Hudson Valley Airmen Head to Germany for Training

Story and photo by Airman 1st Class Rebekah Wilson, 105th Airlift Wing



Airmen assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing Comptroller Flight deployed to Ramstein Air Base, Germany for training from June 11-23, 2023. In its first such training event, the Airmen participated in contingency training, system process improvement and overall assistance with Ramstein's finance team.

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The 105th Comptroller Flight made history by visiting Ramstein Air Base in its first ever deployment for training June 11-23, 2023.

The wing’s finance flight sent subject matter experts of varying specialties to collaborate with Ramstein on military, civilian and travel pay, as well as accounting practices.

“We had never participated in a DFT before, especially since our flight is too small for its own airlift,” explained Air Force Tech. Sgt. Alejandra Luna, noncommissioned officer in Charge and supervisor for the flight. “Thanks to our supportive leadership, we were able to network with other offices like the logistics readiness squadron, who was kind enough to let us travel with their team.”

The DFT consisted of contingency training, system process improvement and overall assistance with workflow. Members from both units were able to develop new strategies for their processes through collaboration and hands-on training.

“It’s true that these experiences will last us a lifetime,” said Luna. “It felt great to see that if needed, we could deploy at any time and integrate at any finance office, showcasing our abilities as Multi-Capable Airmen.” **gt**

## New Troops, Leaders and Reorganization Highlight AT

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Ed Shevlin, NY Guard

CAMP SMITH, CORTLANDT MANOR, New York — One hundred and thirty-six New York Guard members attended annual training at the Camp Smith Training Site August 12-18, 2023.

The New York Guard is the state's uniformed defense force which augments the National Guard during state emergencies.

Those attending included 57 new volunteers who went through a week-long initial entry training program. Completing that class made them eligible to go on state active duty and 40 of the new volunteers signed up to assist in the asylum seeker support mission.

There are currently 85 New York Guard volunteers serving on state duty for the Asylum Seeker Support mission and they were unable to attend the annual training.

The week provided an opportunity standardized training from experienced instructors, said Col. Stephen Ryan, deputy commander of the New York Guard.

A basic officer course was also taught, allowing six current members to become officers.

The new lieutenants had already completed a year-long training program with their units before the final officer candidate training.

The officer training provides fundamentals for troop leading, teaching skills to help integrate the volunteers with Army and Air National Guard staffs and formations during civil support operations.

"Our intention was to prepare these officer candidates to be value added on state active-duty missions," Ryan said.

"The curriculum included Troop Leading Procedures, the Military Decision-Making Process, writing warning orders and operation orders, and how to handle unexpected incidents, among other



New York Guard Senior Drill Instructor Staff Sergeant Stephan Herschenfeld instructs incoming recruits at initial entry training on Aug. 13, 2023 at Camp Smith. Photo by Warrant Officer Edward Shevlin, New York Guard Headquarters.

important subjects," Ryan said.

"The class was eager to learn, disciplined, and will soon be ready to integrate into any state active duty mission."

The initial training program, with just one week available, can be overwhelming for recruits and instructors, explained Staff Sgt. Stephen Herschenfeld, the senior initial entry instructor.

"The hours that we put in as Initial Entry Instructors are very long, but the reward of seeing the class graduate makes it all worthwhile," Herschenfeld said.

"Our students have worked diligently all week long, not only on drill and ceremony but also on preparing for state active duty and they should be proud of their accomplishments."

One unique aspect of the initial entry training course is an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of the New York Guard during state active duty missions, supporting local authorities during disasters or crisis.

Pvt. Deiry Portorreal, a medical assistant and one of 14 women in the class, said she got a lot out of the training.

"This is my first experience in the military, and I am very excited," Pororreal said. "I am learning a lot from my fellow recruits, and also from my instructors."

She was also happy to be part of a large group of women who took the class together, Portorreal said.

A key motivation for many of the recruits, Portorreal said, was the desire to volunteer and assist communities in need.

"I am looking forward to completing this training and taking other courses in the future," she said. "I want to help my community by going on state active duty."

A highlight of the week's training was the reorganization of the New York Guard, modifying the

manning of the area commands to better reflect the needs of the state, said Brig. Gen. Peter Reilly, commander of the New York Guard.

The three area commands are now led by majors and the senior NCO is the first sergeant. They are now organized more like a company element with subordinate platoons, rather than detachments, and no longer have full staffs, but do have an executive officer, an adjutant, and a logistics officer.

"We need to streamline and right-size the organization in order to be more in line with what the current environment is," Riley said.

Riley presided over three change of command ceremonies during annual training.

The 10th Area Command changed from Col. Geoffrey Miligan to Capt. James Cousins.

The 56th Area Command saw Col. Glenn Marchi relinquish command to Maj. Michael Doria.

Lastly, Lt. Col. Christopher St. Victor passed the mantle of leadership of the 88th Area Command to Capt. David Tsin at Camp Smith.

"We need to put people in the proper roles," Riley said. "We also need to bring in a lot of recruits. We need worker bees; we need lower ranking people to fulfill the mission requirements of the State of New York." **gt**



New York Guard Warrant Officer Richard Perez his dining facility team prepared three meals each day during annual training at Camp Smith. Photo by Sgt. Michael Bilski, New York Guard Headquarters.

# New York Naval Militia

## Sailors Support Operation Lake Thunder

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*



A Naval Militia member on board Patrol Boat 280 shines a spotlight on a boat that was ignoring U.S. Coast Guard instructions to stop, July 29, 2023, in the Niagara River near Youngstown, New York, while operating in support of the Coast Guard's smuggling interdiction effort known as Operation Lake Thunder. The Naval Militia provided two patrol boats, a mobile command post, and nine personnel to support the mission. Courtesy photo.

**BUFFALO, N.Y. —** Nine members of the New York Naval Militia spent three days supporting the U.S. Coast Guard on lakes Ontario and Erie and the Niagara River above and below Niagara Falls as part of an enforcement event known as Operation Lake Thunder.

The Naval Militia members operated two Military Emergency Boat Service patrol boats, and their mobile command trailer in support of the mission, designed to deter cross border smuggling and illegal immigration and enforce boating safety rules when required, according to Naval Militia Commander Don McKnight.

The Naval Militia trains regularly with the Coast Guard, but this is the first time the Coast Guard has requested Naval Militia assistance for an operational mission outside of New York harbor McKnight said.

During their patrols, the three-member Naval Militia crews embarked Coast Guardsmen and Homeland Security agents with law enforcement authority to issue citations or make arrests as required, McKnight explained.

The team came together “seamlessly” and operated well with other agencies, said mission commander Master Chief Glenn Niemitalo.

The patrols were conducted in the evening hours and at night using Patrol Boats 280 and

281, which are 30-foot-long workboats.

The Military Emergency Boat Service operates a fleet of 11 boats, most of which can be trailered to key bodies of water in support of local, state, and federal agencies.

The three-day effort involved the Border Patrol, the Department of Environmental Conservation “Encon Police”, and New York State Police boats, along with Canadian agencies operating on their side of the Niagara River, according to McKnight.

Boat handling in the Niagara River was a challenge, Niemitalo explained.

“The Niagara River has fast-moving waters, strong currents, eddies, and rapids,” he said.

The crews had to make sure they stayed on the U.S. side of the river, which was also challenging, he added.

“The close proximity to the U.S., Canada border and the underwater hazards to navigation made it critical that the crews utilize all of the navigation, and GPS, and radar and plotter to ensure safe operation,” he said.

While conducting border patrol mission, the PB-280 crew hailed and stopped a recreational boat that wasn't responding to Coast Guard efforts to stop the vessel. The PB-280 crew also escorted a boat that was towing a disabled boat



Naval Militia members underway on board Patrol Boat 280 on the Niagara River near Youngstown, New York, while operating in support of Operation Lake Thunder, July 30, 2023. Courtesy photo.

out of a squall on Lake Ontario.

The PB 281 crew, operating on Lake Erie and the upper Niagara River, also responded to a “person in the water” distress call along with other agencies, when somebody fell off a recreational boat.

The Naval Militia crew cruised the shoreline and used a bullhorn to communicate with people on shore. The Buffalo Fire Department found the man safe on shore. **gt**



Naval Militia members track the locations of boats on the Niagara River in the Naval Militia Command trailer near Youngstown, New York on July 29, 2023. Courtesy photo.

