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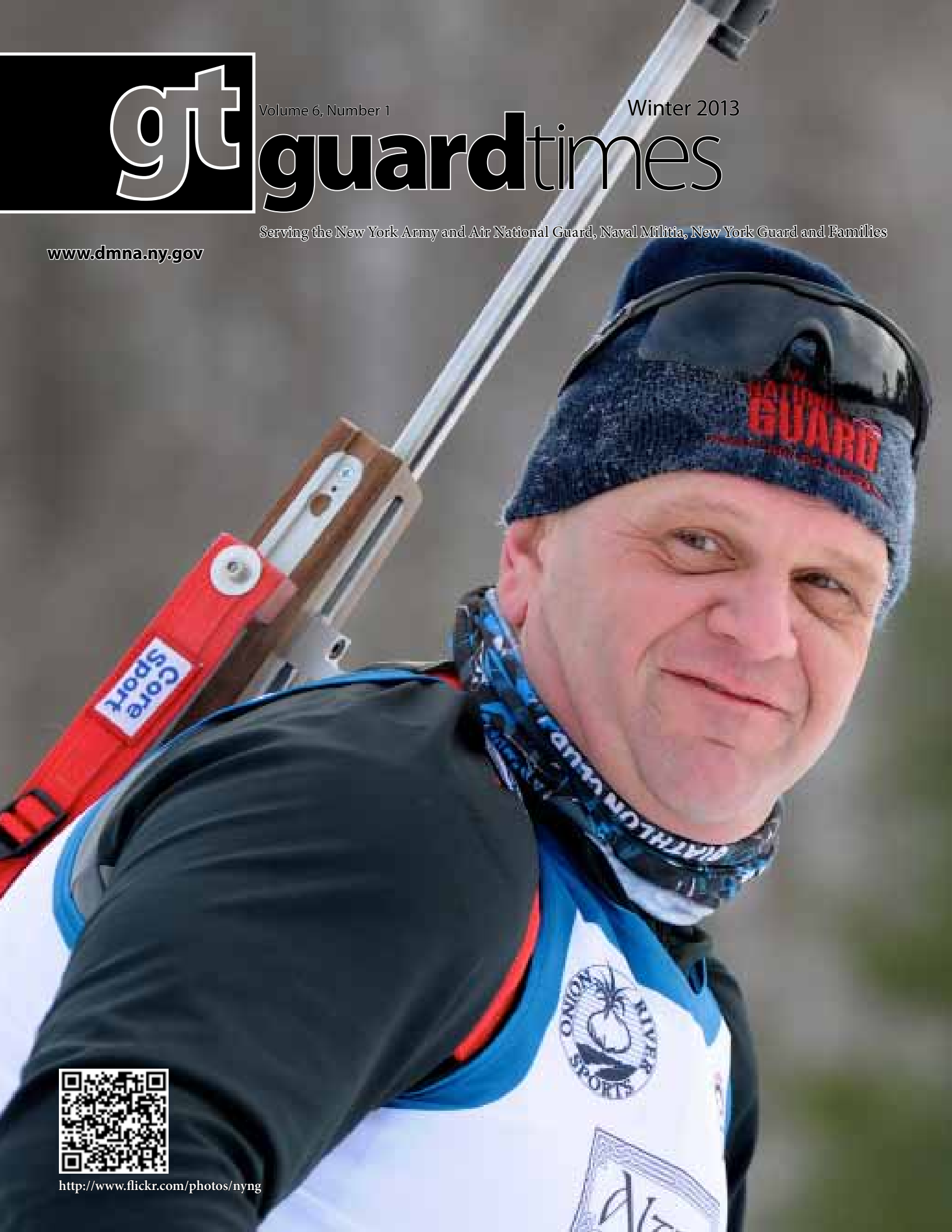
Volume 6, Number 1

Winter 2013

guardtimes

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

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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

“May you live in interesting times” is reportedly the English translation of an ancient proverb.

The inference, of course, is that when things get interesting, times may be challenging.

I don't believe that's necessarily true. I believe when things get interesting it means there are opportunities for smart, adaptive people to do what they do best - take advantage of the situation.

Well, things are about to get “interesting” for the National Guard.

Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, we have been a nation at war. We've worked in what some would consider a resource rich environment in which our mission was clear; train and equip our force for overseas deployments to places like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Resources—money, training time, equipment and ammunition—were readily available. We stood up Pre-mobilization Training Assistance Elements to run training for deploying Soldiers. We sent units to the National Training Center or Fort Drum for three week pre-mobilization training and Soldiers and Airmen were sent to qualification or refresher training they needed to become mission ready in their assigned duty position.

Mobilization money meant we could assign traditional service members on a full-time basis to positions which supported improved readiness within our units. These same Soldiers and Airmen supported new equipment fielding and increased medical readiness.

Soldiers and Airmen not deployed into a combat theater or training to deploy, trained in places like Thailand, Japan and Germany in order to maintain existing relations with our allies and partner nations.

These events—be they overseas operations and training, NTC rotations, or combat deployments—also drove training schedules. Leaders inherited a training plan which was driven by their deployment manning documents and theater requirements.

Soldiers and Airmen, NCOs and officers who joined our ranks since 2001 haven't known another training environment.

But that environment is changing. The greatly reduced number of deployments to Afghanistan means money to support additional full-time service members in our units is diminishing resource. The scheduled deployments as a driver of training requirements will be greatly decreased. The dedicated training assets to assist units will not be funded.

We will find ourselves looking back at how we conducted training management prior to Sept. 11, 2001.

You can tell the stage is set for interesting times. These interesting times are a chance for adaptive leaders at all levels to show what they have learned over more than a decade of war. We are provided a challenge as well as an opportunity for leaders who can adapt in a resource constrained environment to continue conducting meaningful training that ensures individuals and units are ready to meet their state and federal missions.

Fortunately, we have invested in a wide variety of relatively inexpensive computer simulators and war gaming tools which can be used to support maintaining battle skills from individual marksmanship to flight crew proficiency.

High-tech computer simulations are great, and our 19-year old Service Members who grew up playing video games thrive on them, but the key to really effective, adaptive leaders remains imagination and the ability to motivate troops.

There are also virtual tools out there we can use to link units in one armory or base with a subject matter expert in another to accomplish required training without spending travel funds.

Leaders at all levels will need to determine what their mission critical tasks are and determine the best way to create trained units in a resource-constrained environment. Training isn't tough when it's handed to you in a package. Coming up with the training plan that supports your unit tasks, and determining how to get there no matter how much time and money you may think you need challenge us all.

So, your challenge and opportunity is to be innovative and adaptable. Determine the best way to train and maintain readiness. Don't be afraid to try new things. At the same time, don't forget the basics. Look for advice and ideas from your peers. When you come up with a training strategy that works, share those good ideas with your peers and leaders.

We face interesting times, but I know leaders across our force will make the most of them and ensure their organization is well-trained and prepared for their next mission.



Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

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<http://dmna.ny.gov/sandyvid>





guardtimes

Winter 2013 | Volume 6, Number 1

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, COMMANDER IN CHIEF
Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Eric Durr, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Col. Richard Goldenberg, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
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Complimentary or Back Issues of the *Guard Times* are available. Contact us at the address above or visit us on the web for current news, photos or to download prior issues at www.dmna.state.ny.us.



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LATHAM-- CDR. David Hawley, CW03 Larry Cassidy and MT1 Robert Morisseau of the New York State Naval Militia respond to requests for assistance in response to Hurricane Sandy on October 30, 2012.

ON THE COVER: Jericho, Vt.-- Lt. Col. Brian O'Keefe, New York Army National Guard, representing the New York National Guard for the first time in competition, during the Sprint portion of the 2013 National Guard Eastern Regional Biathlon held at the Ethan Allen Training Site, Jericho Vt., Feb. 9, 2013. The New York National Guard has a long history of creating Olympic Biathletes including Maj. (Ret.) Curtis Schreiner, a three time Olympian. According to the National Guards Biathlon headquarters, located at the Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, Vt., members of the National Guard All-Guard Biathlon Team were represented on the 1988 to 2010 U.S. Winter Olympic Biathlon Teams .
BACK COVER: ALBANY, N.Y. - New York Army National Guard leaders from the 27th Infantry Brigade Rear Detachment, 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters and Joint Force Headquarters welcome nearly 100 Soldiers here Jan. 8 with honors from the Capital Region's Patriot Guard Riders at Albany International Airport. The troops, from the 427th Brigade Support Battalion's Headquarters Company and Company B returned home following demobilization at Camp Shelby, Miss. The Soldiers served in Kuwait or Afghanistan as part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's overseas service in 2012. U.S. Army photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg.

GUARD NOTES

Military kids websites helps parents and educators

Courtesy story and photos

JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD, Wash. - The Defense Department website for military children has added new features to help parents and educators explain difficult topics of the military lifestyle to children.

Since its launch in January 2012, MilitaryKidsConnect.org has served more than 125,000 visitors and won five industry excellence awards. To mark the one-year anniversary, the website added new content designed for children, parents and educators, officials said.

The new features include:

- Military culture videos and lesson plans for teachers, school counselors, and educators to better understand the differences between military and civilian youth.
- Graphic novels and mini-documentaries by military kids sharing their experiences.
- New modules for children and parents on handling grief, loss and physical injury.

The website, created by the Defense Department's National Center for Telehealth and Technology, known as T2, uses innovative ways to help military youth cope with the unique

strains of military life. In addition to disruptions from parents deploying to assignments away from home, military children are affected by moving frequently, changing schools and making new friends.

They also have to live with readjustment issues when a parent returns from deployments. These issues may include post-traumatic stress and physical disabilities.

"After watching the interaction with kids on MilitaryKidsConnect this past year, we saw many conversations about trying to understand the issues they live with," said Dr. Kelly Blasko, T2 psychologist. "We developed the added features to help parents and teachers answer the questions the kids were sharing with each other."

Blasko said the website is continuing to add features and information to military children with the special challenges of living in a military family.

Separations, moving and changing friends frequently may be unusual for civilian children, but it's a normal lifestyle for military children.



The website helps them live in that world and, hopefully, makes it more fun for them, Blasko added.

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology serves as the primary Defense Department office for cutting-edge approaches in applying technology to psychological health.

Task Force Aim: Improve the Total Air Force

Courtesy story



Maj. Gen. Mark Bartman, the head of the Ohio Air National Guard, represents the National Guard on an Air Force task force that is designed to better merge the active component and the two reserve components of the force.

The Total Force Task Force was announced last week in a memo from Air Force Secretary Michael Donley and Gen. Mark Welsh, the Air Force chief of staff. Maj. Gen. Brian Meenan represents the Reserve and Maj. Gen. John Posner represents the active component on the task force.

The panel will complete a review by Oct. 1 that will be used in creating the fiscal 2015 budget, according to Air Force

Times, which reported on the task force last week.

The task force is examining ways to better integrate the total force and to determine which component can best handle particular missions.

A statement from the Air Force Friday noted the increased integration of the force in recent years.

"In view of this increased integration—as well as upcoming strategic shifts driven by Post-Afghanistan reconstitution and the new Defense Strategic Guidance—the Air Force needs to undertake a comprehensive review of Total Force requirements and develop a strategic plan to ensure the USAF correctly balances the strengths of each of the components to sustain the capabilities required in the years ahead," the statement said.

Hotaling named next Air Guard Command Chief

Courtesy story and photos

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. -- Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling from the Continental U.S. NORAD Region-1st Air Force here was named as the Air National Guard's next command chief Jan. 8.

As ANG command chief, Hotaling will serve as the senior advisor to Lt. Gen. Sid Clarke, the incoming director of the Air National Guard, on matters concerning the readiness, morale, welfare, proper use and progress of more than 90,000 enlisted Airmen.

Hotaling succeeds Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, who retired in September after serving almost four years as the Air National Guard's command chief.

"This is a bittersweet moment for my family and I," said Hotaling. "On one hand I am excited to be moving on to bigger challenges serving our Air National Guard, but

on the other I will miss the camaraderie and friendships I have established during my short time here at First Air Force."

Hotaling will be the Air Guard's 11th command chief. Prior to July 1998, the title was "senior enlisted advisor."

Hotaling currently serves as command chief for the Continental U.S. NORAD Region-1st Air Force (Air Forces Northern). He previously spent nearly 24 years in various Air Force Special Tactics and leadership positions. He also serves as a member of the Air Guard's Enlisted Field Advisory Council and the Combat Control Association.

Hotaling is a native of North Carolina where he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1987 and joined the Oregon Air National Guard in 2003.



Military OneSource provides free tax assistance

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

WASHINGTON -- With tax season here, Military OneSource and H&R Block have joined forces again to provide a free online tax preparation service for service members.

During an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel, Tony Jackson, a program analyst for the Military OneSource program office, detailed the services available for troops and their families.

"Military OneSource is a gateway to a free tax preparation service, partnered with H&R Block," he said. "We also have tax consultants who can provide assistance, whether it's seeking and filling out tax forms or any other tax-related information."

Jackson emphasized it is a safe and secure way for service members to prepare their taxes online.

"Military OneSource and H&R Block definitely meet industry standards for security for websites," he said. "Also, encryption software [is used], and there's also no selling of information, so service members and family members can be assured that their information is secure, and it stays within Military OneSource and H&R Block."

Jackson noted that two services -- basic and premium-- are provided through H&R Block, with one notable difference. The basic service is free, he said, and the premium service would

apply to taxpayers who must file Schedule C returns, generally to report gains or losses from business ownership.

"When you [start] getting into premium, ... you're going to incur some additional costs, where basic is free," Jackson said. "But if you have Schedule C tax issues, that's when you'd go to the premium. Again, the key point there is you do incur additional costs if you have to use the premium."

For those not sure which service they should use, Jackson encouraged them to use the Military OneSource website as a guide. The site lists answers to frequently asked questions, he added.

"You can always contact Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647," Jackson said. "We're open 24-hours a day, seven days a week, so any questions you have, you can use the website or the call center at the [toll-free] number."

"Not only do they provide forms and basic information relative to military-specific tax issues and questions, they are a gateway to get you to H&R Block," he said. "If your tax situation warrants, they'll get you to a volunteer income tax assistance clinic on your local military installation or larger command. It's one-stop shopping."

These tax consultants cannot prepare tax forms or direct people to do anything, Jackson

said. Everything is on a recommended basis.

All members of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps are eligible to use the service, he said, including members of the National Guard and Reserve components, regardless of activation status.

Coast Guard reservists activated under Title 10 authority to serve with the Navy also are eligible, he added, and so are spouses and other family members enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

"Family members that have been designated to provide support to deployed service members, medically discharged retirees and discharged service members [within] 180 days of their discharge date are eligible for Military OneSource services," Jackson added.

The key to these services is financial readiness, which is a Defense Department priority, Jackson said.

"We understand that financial readiness is a readiness issue," he said. "If you have a service [member] who's concerned about their financial situation then that detracts from the mission."

This program's ultimate goal, Jackson said, is to ensure service members and their families know that Military OneSource is an option.

"Just know that Military OneSource is there to help you," added Jackson.

Safety Corner

Keep your eye on the road

Commentary by Art Powell, Directorate of Communications and Public Affairs, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/ Safety Center

Golfers know they make a better shot if they keep their eye on the ball. Likewise, motorists and pedestrians can be safer if they keep their eye on the road.

Distracted driving has become a major safety issue for American drivers. According to distraction.gov, more than 3,000 people were killed in distraction-related crashes on U.S. roadways during 2010.

There are many causes of distracted driving: texting, talking on a cell-phone, eating and drinking, chatting with passengers, grooming, reading, using a navigation system, watching videos and adjusting the radio, to name a few. Text messaging, however, is the most alarming distraction, for it requires virtually all of a driver's visual, manual and cognitive attention.

In an effort to address the problem, the U.S. Department of Transportation has banned commercial drivers from using cellphones while driving, encouraged states to adopt tough laws and launched several campaigns to raise public awareness about the dangers of texting and driving.

Department of Defense and Army leaders have taken their own steps to reduce distracted driving accidents. DOD Instruction 6055.04 prohibits

personnel from engaging in text messaging while driving government-owned vehicles on or off military installations, and while driving any vehicle, regardless of duty status, with government-supplied electronic equipment. It also discourages the use of hands-free devices, which inhibit safe driving.

Texting while walking can pose perilous hazards as well. Fortunately, many incidents end with only an embarrassing situation — bumping into a wall or falling without injury, for instance. Walking in front of a car, though, could produce far worse results.

Walt Beckman, a safety specialist with the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center Driving Directorate, said drivers and pedestrians can keep themselves both safe and connected with just a little patience.

“Smart motorists know the best way to talk on their portable devices is to get out of traffic and come to a stop so they can talk,” Beckman said. “The same holds true with texting and walking. If you're in a busy area, stop and complete your texting in a safe place, then resume walking.”

For more information on driving safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

ARE YOU READY?

ARAP is a Web-based initiative that provides battalion-level commanders with data on their formation's readiness posture.

ARAP:

- Assesses safety culture and climate
- Provides leading indicators to identify losses or mishaps
- Shows proactive leaders produce the best results
- Recommends methods to direct resources
- Provides immediate feedback

ARAP
ARMY READINESS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

<https://arap.safety.army.mil>

Help your organization reduce accidental loss and maintain its workforce and combat power.

Inspector Generals Corner

It's a Two-Way Street

Commentary by Col. Daren Sears, Inspector General

LATHAM-- The Inspector General is a fair and impartial entity available to every Soldier and Airman from commander to new recruit.

The New York National Guard Inspector General Office worked more than 300 cases for the New York Army and New York Air National Guard during Fiscal Year 2012. The bulk of these cases were assistance to Soldiers and Airmen who were having problems getting final adjudication on a wide variety of matters. When this office looks at a case, we always look for the root cause of the issue; and I want to share with you what we found to be the cause most often.

Let me begin by saying that the Inspector General System is rooted in regulations, instructions, policy, processes, and procedures. When we gather facts for a case, we look at whether or not regulations, instructions, policy, processes, and procedures have been followed. In most of the assistance cases we handle, one or more of those have not been followed along the path to adjudication. But what is the cause of that break down? More often than not, it is a lack of knowledge and communication by a Soldier or Airman to his/her chain of command, or a lack of knowledge and communication by the chain of command to the Soldier or Airman. That's the Two-Way Street.

One of the things we ask any complainant is; "did you talk to your chain of command about this issue?" We hear a lot of, "I talked to my Readiness NCO, or I talked to my coworker." Last time I checked, the Readiness NCO or a coworker weren't part of the chain of command. That's part of the problem. If the chain of command doesn't know about an issue a Soldier or Airman is having, how are they able to advocate for the Soldier or Airman or help manage the expectations of the Soldier or Airman.

I ask Soldiers and Airmen to do a few simple things when they start the process of having any matter adjudicated; from personnel actions to pay actions and anything in between. First, become familiar with the regulation, instruction, policy, and process that guide the action. Secondly, know who your official chain

of command really is. Lastly, make sure the first person in your official chain of command knows your issue or matter.

The chain of command has equal responsibilities. Many times we see members of the chain of command who are totally unfamiliar with the regulations, instructions, policies, or processes that guide actions that apply to many of their unit members. As an example, enlisted members will come up on a reenlistment action at some point. How could the chain of command be unfamiliar with the guidance that covers the reenlistment actions of their enlisted members?

I ask leaders who are in positions within a Soldier or Airman's chain of command to know your Soldiers or Airmen; be familiar with what is going on in their lives and careers; and counsel them before an issue or matter becomes a problem. The member needs to engage their chain of command, but the chain of command needs to engage their members also. It's a Two-Way Street.

Additionally, many people don't realize that

the Inspector General Office is available to them to simply ask a question and get information. You can be a Soldier or Airman or a member of that member's chain of command, and you might not be comfortable that you fully understand the guidance or process governing a certain action. Feel free to contact our office to clarify that uncertainty before embarking down the road of some action. We will dig into the regulations, instructions, policies, or processes to get you the right answer; or we will find the subject matter expert that can get you the right answer. We are more than happy to provide that service, because nine times out of ten that will preclude a complaint later.

Please take a minute after reading this article, and ask yourself, "do I become familiar with the guidance that regulates an action, and have I communicated effectively to those involved in the action?" These are the questions for the Soldier, Airman, and his/her chain of command. It's a Two-Way Street, and it has to be working in both directions to preclude a break down in an action.



Military Personnel News: the MILPO Corner

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A REENLISTMENT BONUS?

Each Soldier should spend time reviewing their eligibility for a reenlistment bonus. The following information is furnished to assist you in this endeavor.

Soldiers must be the primary position holder and cannot be in an over-strength or excess status, and in an MOS that matches the authorized military grade and skill.

Soldiers must reenlist/extend DMOSQ in an MOS within an MTOE or Medical TDA unit only, regardless of State or National strength levels unless they are Non-DMOSQ due to unit transition only.

Soldiers Non-DMOSQ at the time of reenlistment/extension must become DMOSQ within 24 months from contract start date.

Soldiers must be in pay grade E-7 or below on the date of request and contract start date.

Reenlist/extent for a minimum of 6 years.

Soldiers cannot exceed 13 years Time in Service (TIS) at the current ETS.

The window to reenlist/extend is 365-91 days. A Soldier within 90 days of ETS is not eligible for SRIP.

Soldiers cannot be FLAG at the time of reenlistment/extension.

6 Yr Rate		
Extension Eligibility Period	365-91 Days Before ETS	90-1 Days Before ETS
Less than 13 Yrs Time in Service	\$10,000	Not Eligible (\$0)

3 Yr Rate		
Extension Eligibility Period	365-91 Days Before ETS	90-1 Days Before ETS
Less than 13 Yrs Time in Service	\$5,000	Not Eligible \$0

ARMY GUARD NCO CORPS MILBOOK PAGE

The ARNG NCO Corps now has its own milBook page. This page is open to all ARNG NCOs and is used to collaborate and communicate with NCOs throughout the entire ARNG in all States and Territories. The contents of this page include discussions, polls, projects, and document sharing. Interested NCOs can register at: <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/army-national-guard-nco-corps>.

UPDATED ENLISTED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT REG.

The new NYARNG Regulation 600-2m dated October 26, 2012, is now available on the DMNA electronic library. This is the most extensive overhaul of this regulation in five years. The change which drove this update was the inclusion of the NGABS Senior Promotion Board Whole Soldier One Vote Process. Additionally, with the fielding of ePAM, this

regulation further pushes the limits of PSDR within the state. One key addition is the outlining of procedures for GOCOMs and below to manage selections. The elimination of the Secondary Promotion List which was implemented in January of 2012 is included in this version, as well as the elimination of counties. Additionally, the clarification of the 18-month stabilization policy for AGR Soldiers allows for Soldiers within their initial 18-month stabilization tour to be promoted in their parent unit of assignment. Other changes will be clarified once the regulation is fielded.

Other parts of the regulation have been streamlined with updates to Commander, First Sergeant, and First Line leader responsibilities for Chapters 1, 5, and 6. The regulation also combines previous segments making the flow and verbiage more succinct.

STRUCTURED SELF DEVELOPMENT (SSD)

Recently, ALARACT 216/2012 established effective dates for SSD to become a prerequisite for NCOES. The effective dates are as follows. If you are attending NCOES in 2013 after these effective dates, make sure you have the appropriate SSD completed:

SSD-1	1 APR 13	to attend WLC
SSD-3	1 JUN 13	to attend SLC
SSD-4	1 JUN 13	to attend SMC
SSD-5	1 JAN 15	for Nominative Assignments

GO ARMY ED ISSUE

Emails/phone calls from Soldiers have been received by the Military Personnel Directorate regarding information received from GoArmyEd, on November 6, 2012. These communications indicated the Soldiers had a civilian education/degree level mismatch. This was a systems issue requiring no action by Soldiers. GoArmyEd is actively working to resolve the problem.

NATO MEDAL CLARIFICATION

Only the basic NATO medal and service ribbon are authorized for wear on the uniform. The basic NATO medal is defined as a NATO medal awarded by the Secretary General to a Soldier for meeting eligibility criteria for a specific operation listed in AR 600-8-22, paragraph 9-11. A bronze service star will denote subsequent awards for service in a different NATO operation. <https://forums.army.mil/SECURE/Community-Browser.aspx?id=1817312>

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

2nd Lt. Katie Kurtz has returned to the MNP staff as the Casualty Assistance Coordinator, replacing 1st Lt. Jean-Marie Kratzer in that position. Kurtz will be the point of contact for the state's servicing Casualty Assistance Centers (Ft. Drum and Ft. Dix) and units. All phone numbers remain the same. Office: 518-270-1542 Cell: 518-527-3713. E-mail: Katie.kurtz@ng.army.mil

SOLDIER CASUALTY ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

All Soldiers are required to have a completed and current DD Form 93,

Record of Emergency Data and SGLV Form 8286, SGLI Election & Certificate, within iPERMS. Soldiers and unit personnel must verify the accuracy of the data on DD Form 93 and SGLV Form 8286, yearly. Whenever there is a change to the forms, a new form must be prepared and transmitted to iPERMS immediately. Soldiers should contact their Human Resource administrator to accomplish this requirement.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE TRAINING

Casualty Assistance Training is mandatory for all AGR and long term ADOS Soldiers E7/W2/O3 and above. Make sure your training is up to date on a yearly basis. Make sure to complete the online refresher training available at the CMAOC website. Please email all completion certificates to 2nd Lt. Katie Kurtz. <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/tagd/CMAOC/cmaoc.htm>.

SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT WITH SMA CHANDLER, SUICIDE PREVENTION LEADER'S GUIDE.

The Sergeant Major of the Army, SMA Raymond F. Chandler III, has shown his support for health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention in a public service announcement (PSA) on the "Suicide Awareness: Guide for Leaders." The SMA emphasizes leadership involvement at all levels and the need for leaders to know their available local and national resources. Leaders are highly encouraged to embrace and communicate this message. <https://forums.army.mil/communitybrowser.aspx?id=1797353&lang=en-US>

ARNG TO PROMOTE HEALTH & FITNESS

The Army National Guard (ARNG) launched a Facebook page to promote health, wellness and fitness among ARNG Soldiers and their Families. The page, which can be found at www.facebook.com/ARNGHealth, will be used to promote dialogue on a variety of important health topics, including sleep, activity, nutrition, injury prevention and emotional health. The Army National Guard is committed to providing our Soldiers and Families with resources to achieve and maintain high standards, as well as avenues to seek out support when they need it. <https://www.facebook.com/ARNGHealth>

MEDICAL READINESS

On August 23 2012, the Directorate of Military Personnel (MNP) instituted MNP Policy 12-11, Soldier's Responsibility to maintain their Medical Readiness. This policy is designed to ensure Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard are taking responsibility to maintain their medical readiness. Soldiers issued a temporary profile over 30 days must consistently follow up with their Medical Case Manager by providing required documentation to extend their profile or to close their case no later than the expiration of the profile.

Soldiers who fail to provide required documentation to their Medical Case Managers may be subject to administrative adverse action and possible transfer to the Inactive National Guard (ING). Adverse administrative action affects Soldiers promotions, awards, military school attendance, bonuses and GI Bill benefits. Units are encouraged to ensure their Soldiers are maintaining contact with their individual Medical Case Managers to ensure a Soldiers medical readiness is being met. For questions regarding this policy please contact CW2 Stephanie Spanton at 518-272-6469.

CLARIFYING TRICARE

TRICARE is the health care program serving Active Duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, retirees, dependents, survivors and certain former spouses worldwide. TRICARE brings together the health care resources of the uniformed services and supplements them with networks of civilian health care professionals, institutions, pharmacies and suppliers to provide access to high-quality health care services while maintaining the capability to support military operations.

When a National Guard Soldier is called or ordered to active duty for more than 30 consecutive days, their eligible dependents are entitled to TRICARE benefits. A Soldier's active duty status must be updated in the Standard Installation and Division Personnel Reporting System (SIDPERS) and Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) in order for Soldiers and their dependents to receive their eligible benefits. Failure to properly update both systems may result in eligibility issues and create delays in health care as well as billing issues. TRICARE offers several options to better fit the needs of dependents, and plan availability is based on Home of Record (HOR).

TRICARE Standard and Extra is a fee-for-

service plan that utilizes TRICARE-authorized providers with cost shares and deductibles and is available to all eligible dependents. Enrollment is not required and coverage is automatic for dependents as long as their information is current in DEERS. TRICARE Standard and Extra may be the right choice for dependents if they have a provider who is not in the TRICARE network and they do not want to change providers. If dependents live in an area where TRICARE Prime is not available, TRICARE Standard and Extra may be a dependents only option.

TRICARE Prime/Prime Remote is a managed care option. With TRICARE Prime dependents have an assigned primary care manager (PCM), either at a military treatment facility (MTF) or from the TRICARE network that manages dependent's day-to-day care and provides them with health care referrals for specialized treatment as required.

TRICARE Prime offers fewer out-of-pocket costs than TRICARE Standard and Extra, but less freedom of choice for providers as dependents must select a provider from the network. Dependents must enroll to participate in TRICARE Prime/Prime Remote. For more information, please contact SSG Collins at 518-272-6446 or SPC Nathan Morency at 518-272-6470, or visit www.tricare.mil

OPM WORKSHOPS

Officer Personnel Management will conduct Officer Personnel Workshops in FY 13 in various locations throughout the state. This will be a one day workshop that focuses on educating officers on the promotion system and recent changes to officer policy. Workshops will also include an individual records review for all officers present. All officers are encouraged to attend a workshop in your area. Workshops will be held on drill weekends in order to maximum attendance. Dates have been selected based on input from BDEs and GOCOMs in the area. Units that are not drilling on the selected weekend are encouraged to allow their officers to split to attend the workshop.

Events will be held at the Connecticut Street Armory in Buffalo May 4-5, at the 5th Avenue Armory in Harlem May 18-19 and at the Thompson Road Armory in Syracuse June 1-2.

Chaplain's Corner

Chaplains gather to honor 70th anniversary

Courtesy of Chaplain (Col.) Eric Olsen, State Chaplain, Joint Force Headquarters



This official Army portrait honors the heroic actions and sacrifice of the Four Chaplains on Feb. 3, 1943, during an attack on the military transport ship Dorchester by a German U-boat. The chaplains—Lt. George Fox, a Methodist; Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister from Schenectady, New York—ignored their own needs and ministered to the Soldiers on board.

FORT HAMILTON -- Military and community members from the Brooklyn area gathered here February 3 to remember and honor on the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the military transport ship Dorchester and the heroic actions and sacrifice of the Four Chaplains on Feb. 3, 1943.

The ship was attacked by a German U-boat. The chaplains--Lt. George Fox, a Methodist; Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister from Schenectady, New York--ignored their own needs and ministered to the Soldiers on board.

The chaplains gave up their life preservers to save the lives of frantic Soldiers and helped direct troops paralyzed with fear to life boats as the Dorchester sank into the cold Atlantic Ocean. 672 lives were lost. A postage stamp in 1948 honored the two Protestant ministers, the Catholic priest and the rabbi. Today, military chaplains, veterans groups and descendants of the 230 survivors keep the story alive.

New York Army National Guard Chaplains joined their active duty counterparts at the ceremony here.

Army National Guard Muslim Chaplain Candidate 2nd Lt. Rana Suba, and Jewish Chaplain Candidate 1st Lt. Mark Getman, joined Fort Hamilton Army Garrison Deputy Post Deputy Chaplain (1st Lt.) Menachem Stern, along with Fort Hamilton's Army Garrison Chaplain (Maj.) Bowman in paying tribute to the men. **gt**



Same-sex couples can claim benefits by October

Story by Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Military members and retirees with same-sex partners will qualify for up to 24 new benefits under policy changes Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced Feb. 11.

In a memo to the service chiefs outlining the new policy, Panetta noted the department has "essentially completed" repeal of the so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law that barred gay and lesbian military members from serving openly.

Now, the secretary wrote to the chiefs, military leaders' work must "expand to changing our policies and practices to ensure fairness and equal treatment and to taking care of all of our service members and their families, to the extent allowable under law."

Two of the new benefits are available at the service member's election: hospital visitation and Family Readiness Group membership. For 22 other benefits, service members and their same-sex partners may file a "declaration of domestic partnership." That declaration entitles same-sex partners to military identification cards, commissary and exchange shopping privileges, child care and youth programs, sexual assault counseling and other benefits.

Housing, medical and dental care, and overseas command sponsorship for same-sex partners are not included in this round of

policy changes. As Panetta noted in a statement, those benefits are restricted under the Defense of Marriage Act, commonly known as DOMA, which defines "spouse" as someone married to a person of the opposite sex.

construe the words 'spouse' and 'marriage' without regard to sexual orientation, and married couples, irrespective of sexual orientation, and their dependents, will be granted full military benefits."



The Supreme Court is reviewing the law, and is expected to rule on it later this year.

The secretary wrote, "In the event that the Defense of Marriage Act is no longer applicable to the Department of Defense, it will be the policy of the department to

A senior Pentagon official emphasized in a briefing to Pentagon reporters that benefit changes will happen as soon as possible. Panetta's guidance to the services directed they make "every effort" to have systems in place to accept same-sex benefit requests by Aug. 31.

In no case, he wrote, may the services delay beyond Oct. 1 in rolling out the benefits.

Rolling out a new benefit takes time, the official said, as regulations and instructions, systems and software all have to be updated, and workers will need to be trained in new processes.

"Normally, we're looking at a year" to make such changes, the official noted. "This is a very ambitious schedule; we're really pressing hard to do this."

Another official said the Defense Department is working to see if the housing benefit can be added to the list and is developing a mechanism to allow burial of same-sex partners at Arlington National Cemetery, Va. The domestic partnership declaration isn't feasible in cases where one or both partners have died, the second official added.

Retirees and their same-sex partners will be able to file the declaration once the new systems are in place. The first official estimated that 5,600 same-sex couples include an active-duty service member, 3,400 include a Reserve or National Guard member, and 8,000 include a retired military member. The cost of implementing the new benefits, the official added, would be negligible.

Team Sandy continues mission in storm's aftermath

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division



QUEENS, NY -- New York Army National Guard Soldier Sgt. Alfaro Geovanny with C Company, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion and McKineley Theobald with the Americorps National Civilian Community Corps talks with a local resident of Breezy Point, NY November 28, 2012. Working with local authorities in the wake of hurricane Sandy, Geovanny and other Soldiers of the 642nd are going door to door, providing goods and services, like water and food, and also collecting data to better assess the welfare of the residents.

NEW YORK -- Hurricane Sandy may be over, but the New York Army National Guard is still engaged in providing assistance to New Yorkers in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

Working with local, state and federal agencies, Soldiers assigned to the 230-member Team Sandy continue to go door to door checking on the current status of the citizens recovering from the devastation and collecting data to better help the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). With so many homes ruined by the flooding of hurricane Sandy, the data is invaluable when sending resources out into the boroughs, officials said.

Citizen- Soldiers go out in teams of two and knock on the doors of houses in a designated area. Each Soldier has a form and a series of questions to ask the homeowner.

"We started with the forms and collected data from the building managers," said 1st Lt. Malinda Vazquez, the planning officer and a resident of Queens, NY. "Now, we are going

door to door, checking on the well-being of each resident and making sure they are ok."

The completed forms are uploaded manually each day and give OEM the information to help those most in need.

"The forms limited our ability to move the data because the information had to be inputted manually and would take 3-5 days for the information to reach to proper agency," said 2nd Lt. Anthony Migliore, the team Operations Officer and resident of Smithtown, NY.

Because of the time necessary for the information to reach local and state agencies, a new system was developed to make the information gathering process more efficient. A new form, that is filled out electronically using an electronic tablet, can now be sent to the database instantly and the information is automatically sent to the proper agency.

"Now that we have over 200 [electronic] tablets, the information is transmitted instantly to a centralized database managed by the

Disaster Immediate Response Team," Migliore said. "As we continue the operation, we are able to configure the tablets to reflect more detailed information."

The New York National Guard has completed over 96,000 door-to-door wellness checks and continues to refine the process to knock on more doors in less time.

"We are working closely with the New York City police department, fire department, Americorps, FEMA, OEM and the Mayor's office to make our data collection more efficient," Migliore said. "Our maps are becoming more precise and the use of the electronic tables makes our information gathering easier."

The maps of each affected area are broken down by sectors and cells. Each sector is made up of an entire neighborhood and each cell is roughly 5 city blocks.

Each tablet is tracked to record the progress of the Soldiers on the ground throughout the day and changes are made to increase the streets covered during the nightly meetings. The questions are also refined to make information gathering easier.

"We have developed eight teams to go door to door," said Master Sgt. Troy Haley, the NCOIC for one of the teams and a Troy, NY, resident. "With those teams, we are able to provide information instantly and get help to the people most affected by the hurricane. We also provide food, water, blankets and comfort kits as we go."

"We are here to serve our fellow citizens during this crisis," said Col. Mark Leahey, the commander of Joint Task Force Sandy and a resident of Rochester, N.Y. "We are here to let them know that they are not alone and we will do everything we can to help them." **gt**

Long Island Soldier; Criminal Analyst of the Year

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division

NEW YORK-- New York National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Robert Bacon from Hampton Bays, N.Y. was recently selected as the National Guard Bureau's Counterdrug Program National Criminal Analyst of the Year in a ceremony here Oct. 24 at the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul N. Stockton (Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs) presented Bacon the award in the presence of his father, Frederick Bacon and professional peers and partners from the Counterdrug Task Force.

Bacon works with the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force as a finance analyst and has been assigned to the program since 2007.

His dedication and expertise of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Financial Investigation Team (FIT) was credited in the success of a 2012 seizure of millions of dollars of illicit funds following the identification of an out-of-state banking institution holding multiple suspicious accounts of a suspected drug trafficking organization.

Bacon "provided instrumental assistance in identifying financial accounts and subjects of the accounts," said Drug Enforcement Agency group supervisor William Callahan.

Additionally, Bacon helped to create a Counter Threat Finance case archive. The archive of relevant examples enables him to share lessons learned, setting the stage for more efficient operations. Because of his recent success and foreign language skills, the Financial Investigation Team continues to request Bacon's individual support for international investigations. **gt**



NEW YORK-- Sgt. 1st Class Robert Bacon, left, is joined by his father, Frederick Bacon, center to receive the National Counterdrug Program Criminal Analyst of the Year award from Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul N. Stockton (Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs) at the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency services (DHSES) in New York City Oct. 24. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Wolfe, New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force.

First Muster firearm on display in New York

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters



(From left to right) Chief Master Sgt. Richard D. King, Command Chief Master Sergeant, New York Air National Guard, Brig. Gen Anthony P. German, Chief of Staff, New York Air National Guard, David P. Benamati, President of the Enlisted Association of the New York National Guard, and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks, New York National Guard Command Sergeant Major, stand in front of an exact replica of an original 1636 Newtowne Musket used by the Massachusetts militia after the colony enacted its first charter on Dec. 13, 1636 formally establishing of the militia. As number 11 of 375, the musket was purchased with the generous donations of New York Army and Air National Guard Senior NCO's and presented for display by the New York chapter of EANGUS Dec. 13, 2012. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Wheeler, 138th PAD.

LATHAM -- The New York National Guard's top two NCOs unveiled a historic display, a replica 1636 musket, in honor of the National Guard's birthday here Dec. 13.

Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks, the New York National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. and Command Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, the senior enlisted advisor for the New York Air National Guard joined to present a full replica Newtowne musket at the entrance of New York's Joint Force Headquarters as a tribute from the Enlisted Association of New York.

"If there's one thing I know about our senior NCOs is that they can and will donate money," Wicks said, for the right cause.

The project to create the replica muskets began in the summer of 2011 when EANGUS representatives met with David Miller, the Associate Curator of the Smithsonian's Armed Forces History Division to accurately measure, photograph and make replications for

reproduction of the original weapon from the museum collection.

Only 375 muskets will be produced, a tribute to the 2011 375th birthday of the National Guard.

"The E9s (senior NCOs) of the Army and Air National Guard got together to purchase a replica musket, number 11, with the significance that New York was the 11th state in the nation," Wicks said.

Purchased on behalf of the Enlisted Association of New York, the musket was presented, accepted and dedicated for display as part of the New York National Guard's 376th birthday celebration.

The National Guard traces its roots to the first mandatory muster in December 1636 and the Newtowne musket was the first firearm of the National Guard's Citizen Soldier.

The replica is known among historians as one of the first American-produced muskets,

produced in Newtowne, Massachusetts for colonists between 1631 and 1636. It is a .75 caliber (3/4-inch musket ball) matchlock musket.

The Smithsonian dates the musket to 1636 because Newtowne changed its name to Cambridge in 1636, when Harvard University was founded there. Additionally, the unique stock shape and curly maple construction is indigenous to the eastern coast of North America, also indicating American manufacture.

The replica was manufactured in Oklahoma by The Rifle Shoppe. The company is known among gun collectors for its historically correct reproductions with attention to even the smallest details.

Net proceeds of this project go to benefit EANGUS and its We Care for America Foundation, which provides emergency financial grants to Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard who experience a catastrophic loss. **gt**

Re-deploying Troops hone job seeking skills

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Brandy Fowler, New York Air National Guard

BUFFALO, N.Y. -- Forty-nine New York National Guard Citizen Soldiers got a leg up on the skills it takes to get a job at a three-day training workshop hosted here by the New York National Guard.

The Soldiers, who just returned from deployment to Afghanistan and Kuwait, learned how to write a resume, interview for a job and translate their military skills into something that makes sense for a civilian employer during the three-days of training at the Adams Mark Hotel.

The Transition Assistance Program is mandatory for Soldiers leaving Active Duty, said Andrew DePalò, the director of Family Programs for the New York National Guard. The Veterans Opportunity to Work Act (VOW) of 2011 established the program and allocated the funding, he said. It's the first time the New York National Guard has offered the program.

"The program provides service members with employment opportunities and gives them the tools and resources to become successful in the community," DePalò explained. "The training focuses on transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. It's about getting these service members actively engaged back into the community."

For Spc. Jon-Christopher Dixon, a Military Police Soldier from Central Square, N.Y., the class offered a chance to move closer to his goal of turning his skills as a Military Police Soldier into a job as a United States Marshall.

"My resume is mediocre and this training will help strengthen it. It's also helping me with the federal hiring process," said Dixon, a member of the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

"This course is a great bunch of tools for our toolbox," said Spc. Andrew Waite, who is also a member of the 27th BSTB.

"I have been looking for a job ever since I returned from deployment three months ago," the Lowville, N.Y. Soldier said. I need help with my interviewing skills and need to learn how to write a resume in order to market myself to prospective employers. This course is going to help me be better organized in job seeking and this class can only help me improve myself."

The instruction highlights websites that returning veterans can use as a resources for



Transition Assistance Program instructor, Michele Lewis, looks on as her class completes a group project about strengths and weaknesses of hiring a veteran during a workshop here in March 3. The class is required of returning veterans. The TAP training is mandated by the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act.

job hunting.

One of these is the New York National Guard's "Job Zone" at <http://dmna.ny.gov/jobs/>, maintained by retired Command Sergeants Major John Willsey and Robert Van Pelt. The website allows Soldiers to find jobs being offered by businesses that want to hire veterans.

Other websites offered help translate military skills into their civilian equivalents like the MOS Translator maintained by the Veterans Administration at : <https://mst.vaforvets.va.gov/mst/va/mos-translator>. The site allows service members to pick their service and military skill and see what civilian jobs their rank and experience translates into.

"I'm glad to be here because I am learning a lot of things I didn't know before," said Air National Guard Sgt. Michael Jenkins, a Scotia resident assigned to Hancock Field Air National Guard Base.

The students are learning these skills from people who have seen the benefits of the program first hand, said instructor Michele Lewis.

"I am a firm believer in this program. My father was a veteran and I watched as he came back from a deployment. It was hard for him to find a job. He didn't have this program to help him out and it took him about a year to get

back on his feet," she said.

"We have a lot of veterans coming home and with all the problems that veterans are returning with, employment shouldn't be another one they have to deal with," said Sgt. 1st Class Byron Barnes, a member of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion from Rochester, N.Y.

"I'm getting some pretty good pointers and am excited to see where this is going to go. I think this is a good program and the instructors are passionate about the knowledge they are offering us," he added.

The course has many advantages, DePalò said.

Not only are the Soldiers receiving valuable training and getting expert advice, the State of New York is also saving money because of it, he added.

"When these Soldiers go back into the community to work, it cuts back on the cost of unemployment insurance for the state," DePalò said. "The state unemployment rate has decreased due to the VOW Act."

"The Soldiers leave here more educated about job hunting and when they finally get back to work, it's a boost to their confidence and in turn, a boost to their mental health. This is a tool to help eliminate negative stigma associated with unemployment," DePalò said. **gt**

“Triple Deuce” deploys; Destination Qatar

Story and photos by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

HORNELL, N.Y.-- “Listen to the walls” Hornell Mayor Shawn Hogan told members of the 222nd Military Police Company as they prepared to depart Hornell’s historic armory for federal duty on Feb. 22.

The walls of the 100-year old armory—covered with plaques and pictures—tell the story of Citizen Soldiers leaving the Hornell Armory to fight in the Spanish American War in 1898, World War I in 1917, and World War II in 1940, the mayor said. Now 134 Soldiers of the “Triple Deuce” are adding to this legacy as they leave the armory to serve in Qatar, he added.

Hogan, was one of several speakers who honored the Soldiers during their mobilization ceremony. U.S. Representative Tom Reed, R-Corning, joined Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General; and Col. Jim Pabis, the commander of the 53rd Troop Command; in speaking to the Soldiers and their families.

Murphy assured the families that their Soldiers were ready and that their nine-month mission to secure U.S. facilities in the small Persian Gulf state would be a good one. “The Soldiers standing here are well-trained and professional,” he emphasized.

“This is not necessarily a happy time but it does not have to be a sad time either,” Murphy said. Soldiers join the Army National Guard because they want to deploy and this is an opportunity for these part-time Soldiers to serve, he emphasized.



Soldiers of the 222nd Military Police Company file past Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, New York State Adjutant General, as well as other dignitaries, during the units deployment ceremony held at the historic Hornell Armory, Hornell, NY, Feb. 22. The “Triple Deuce” as they are known, are deploying to Camp Shelby, Miss. for training and then on to Qatar.

He urged the Soldiers and families to stay connected by phone and e-mail while they were apart.

The 222nd Military Police Company is headquartered at the Patriot Way Armory in Rochester and has a detachment at the small armory in Hornell. But the unit decided to conduct its farewell in Hornell because the community reached out to embrace the company, Pabis explained. The local Red Cross

stepped up to host the ceremony and everybody wanted to get involved, he said.

“This is an historic moment for the entire community and for you,” Hornell Mayor Hogan told the troops. “You are the sons and daughters of the City of Hornell. We embrace you and we will be here when you return.”

The Fire Chief of

Margaretville, a Catskill Mountain town whose residents were aided by 222nd Soldiers following Hurricane Irene in 2011, was also there to wish the Soldiers well. The residents of the small, flooded mountain town have adopted the 222nd Soldiers as their own, said Gene Rosa.

Rosa brought Margaretville Volunteer Fire Department tee-shirts to distribute to all the soldiers.

The 222nd has been filled with qualified National Guard Soldiers from around the state who want to deploy, said Sgt. 1st Class Shane Stevens.

“It’s been a great unit to be in and they know that they can trust our leadership and the leadership will guide them in the right direction and we should have a pretty good deployment,” he said.

Major Karl Berg, the commander of the 222nd, said he had many Soldiers with previous deployments with Afghanistan or Iraq to help the newcomers figure out what needs to be done.

It is going to be a good deployment, Berg said.

The unit is conducting post-mobilization training at Camp Shelby, MS prior to deploying. **gt**



Families of Soldiers assigned to the 222nd Military Police Company await the start of the units deployment ceremony held Feb. 22, at the historic Hornell Armory.

Army moving women into combat positions

Story and photos by Eric Durr, Division of Military and Naval Affairs

LATHAM-- Beginning in May, women will be able to fill officer and non-commissioned officer positions in the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's four combat battalions.

The changes announced in January by the Department of Defense will allow female officers and non-commissioned officers to serve in up to 350 positions which currently only male Soldiers are authorized to fill.

The change will involve the Headquarters Troop of the 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, located at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station; the Headquarters Companies of the 1st Battalion 69th Infantry and the 1st Battalion 258th Field Artillery in New York City; and the Headquarters Company of the 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry in Utica.

These include positions as medics, intelligence analysts, human resources specialists, and staff officer jobs such as battalion logistics, intelligence, personnel, chemical warfare, signal or fire support officers.

"I'm confident female Soldiers are fully capable of performing critical skills in combat units," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York.

"Our female Soldiers have distinguished themselves in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world, working side-by-side with their male counterparts. I personally think this is a great opportunity for our Soldiers and our organization," Murphy said.

Since 1994 the Army's policy has been to exclude female Soldiers from Infantry, Armor, and Special Forces elements because these units are likely to engage in direct combat with the enemy. While women have been attached to these units from other types of Army units, and have seen combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, they have not been assigned to these units at the battalion level or below.

There are currently 1,657 women in the New York Army National Guard-- 159 Officers, 23



FORT DRUM, N.Y. -Female Soldiers of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion conduct premobilization training Aug. 10th, 2012. The battalion, based in Yonkers, deployed to Afghanistan in Oct. 2012. Courtesy photo.

Warrant Officers and 1,475 enlisted women--about 16 percent of the authorized total New York Army National Guard strength of 10,009.

Of these female Soldiers, 590 have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and 26 of these women have been awarded the combat action badge, noting that they have come under enemy fire. Another 13 women have earned the award and are no longer serving.

The positions which will be open to women are in the enlisted grades of sergeant, staff sergeant, and sergeant first class. Female officers will be able to fill positions open to second and first lieutenants and captains. The jobs are in the headquarters elements of the battalion.

Female Soldiers will be identified for these assignments based on their Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), experience, and professional development needs. Women currently in 27th Infantry Brigade Combat team units will be considered first for these jobs. Female Soldiers can transfer from other states to fill these jobs as well.

"I think we have earned this opportunity with

our mission execution and professionalism," said Major General Steven Wickstrom, the Commander of the 42nd Infantry Division.

"The 27th Brigade and its subordinate battalions have earned the opportunity. Now they have to demonstrate with planning, preparation, goal setting and execution that they continue to be worthy of being pathfinders as the Army makes this change," Wickstrom said.

The jobs now open to women in the battalion headquarters are:

- Human Resources Specialist (MOS 42A)
- Chemical Operations Specialist (MOS 74D)
- Unit Supply Specialist (MOS 92Y)
- Intelligence Analyst (MOS 35F)
- Medical Specialist (MOS 68W)
- Signal Support Specialist (MOS 25U)
- Personnel Officer (MOS 42B)
- Chaplain (MOS 56A)
- Chemical Officer (MOS 74A)
- Fire Support Officer (MOS 13A)
- Logistics Officer (MOS 90A)
- Battalion Surgeon (MOS 62B)
- Intelligence Officer (MOS 35D)
- Medical Service Corps Officer (MOS 70B)
- Signal Officer (MOS 25A)
- Physicians Assistant (MOS 65D) **gt**



69th commemorates Fredericksburg

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, *Guard Times* Staff



Soldiers from the Sandston-based Battery A, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Brigade Combat Team and the Fredericksburg-based 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team participate in the sesquicentennial celebration of the Battle of Fredericksburg Dec. 9. Elements of the New York-based Company A, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and the 116th BCT greeted each other on the Sunken Road where they met 150 years ago – then as enemies, today as friends. Photo by Staff Sgt. Rebecca Petrie, 116th BCT Public Affairs.

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. – New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry visit the historic battlefields of their regiment as part of the Civil War sesquicentennial commemoration, Dec. 7-9 at the National Military Park here.

About 75 Soldiers from the battalion's Company A, based at Lexington Avenue in New York City, and led by Capt. Terry Benson of Glens Falls, N.Y., traveled to Fredericksburg by invitation of the National Park Service to participate in the commemoration of the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862.

The troops conducted routine military training at nearby Fort A.P. Hill for their weekend drill before joining in the sesquicentennial celebration on Sunday.

The National Guard representatives rededicated the Irish Brigade monument, alongside members of the Irish Defense Forces. The Soldiers then marched through the City of Fredericksburg at 1 p.m. Sunday to retrace the footsteps of the 69th Regiment, alongside reenactors and members of the 69th Infantry Veterans' Corps. The Soldiers carried the battalion's battle flag along the route of march from Riverfront Park up to the Sunken Road. Joining the Soldiers for the march through Fredericksburg was Lt. Col. James Gonyo from

New Windsor, N.Y., the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Commander.

The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park marks the 150th anniversary of the Civil War battles fought here with four large battle anniversaries and several smaller programs, exhibits, and performances that highlight events which took place in Fredericksburg in 1862.

Members of the 69th Infantry toured the battlefield, learned about the military decisions and orders of the battle and met up with former foes of the Confederacy, Soldiers of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, part of the Virginia Army National Guard. The unit is a legacy of the Stonewall Jackson Brigade from the Army of Northern Virginia.

The two groups joined at the Sunken Road alongside descendants for music, words, reflection and a salute to their service in 1862.

The battle of Fredericksburg, unusual for the season in which it was fought, was fought December 11-15, 1862 in and around the town between General Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac, commanded by Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside.

Burnside's plan was to race across the Rappahannock River and through Fredericksburg

in mid-November to seize the Confederate capital of Richmond before winter. Logistics delays prevented Burnside from crossing the river before Lee could challenge him to block Burnside's advance.

Union forces crossed the river under fire and forced their way through Fredericksburg on December 11-12, but failed to carry their assault against strongly defended Confederate positions on a fortified ridge west of the city known as Marye's Heights.

Soldiers of the 69th Infantry, part of the famed Irish Brigade under Brig. Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher, were in the second wave to assault the heights and suffered terrible losses.

By coincidence, the Irish Brigade attacked the area of Marye's Heights defended by fellow Confederate Irishmen of Col. Robert McMillan's 24th Georgia Infantry. One Confederate who spotted the green regimental flags approaching cried out, "Oh God, what a pity! Here comes Meagher's fellows."

The Irish Brigade, attacking the stone wall in front of the now famous Sunken Road on Marye's Heights, saw its fighting strength reduced from 1,600 Soldiers to 263 in a matter of minutes. It was at Fredericksburg that Robert E. Lee allegedly referred to Meagher's regiment as the "Fighting 69th."

In a matter of two hours, four Union divisions were thrust into the attack, suffering some 4,114 casualties and gaining no ground before the fortified positions atop Marye's Heights. Confederate General Longstreet is said to have remarked to his commander, Robert E. Lee, "General, if you put every man on the other side of the Potomac on that field to approach me over the same line, and give me plenty of ammunition, I will kill them all before they reach my line."

Union forces in front of Marye's Heights suffered eight casualties for every one of the Confederacy.

The battle is remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the Civil War with Union casualties more than twice those suffered by the Confederates. All told, Union casualties after the battle were 12,653 while Confederate losses were 5,377. **gt**

Finance Troops help put pay into state paychecks

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters



LATHAM -- New York Army National Guard Spec. Timothy Keaveny (right) assigned to the 4th Finance Detachment and Spec. Kingsley Anku from the 7th Finance Detachment join a dozen finance Soldiers inputting payroll for Soldiers who performed State Active Duty in response to Hurricane Sandy, here Nov 20. The Soldiers processed 4,100 individual pay records. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, Joint Force Headquarters.

LATHAM – When New York State Military Forces are called on for disaster response, state active duty payroll processing puts those Soldiers and Airmen on the state payroll.

With the overwhelming numbers of forces employed during the National Guard response to Hurricane Sandy last fall, however, extra manpower and expertise was needed to assist the Joint Force Headquarters and ensure personnel were paid for their service during the disaster.

“We have 10 personnel from the 4th Finance Detachment and four to six personnel from MNP inputting over 9,900 pay transactions and thousands of Direct Deposit requests,” said Col. Teresa Vancort, director of Military Personnel.

Those Soldiers augmented the state headquarters budget and finance staff, responsible for ensuring the state payroll processing during

disaster response missions.

Beginning in early November, with thousands of New York National Guard military forces on duty to respond to the storm’s damage, each National Guard member required a unique payroll entry as a state active duty pay action.

Over five pay periods from November 2012 into January 2013, every servicemember needed to be entered into the state payroll system, described Chief Warrant Officer Sean Fredericks, a Human Resources Systems Chief from Military Personnel.

The challenge is that the federal pay system for Army and Air National Guard members is distinct from the New York State payroll system. The state could not easily obtain payroll data for Soldiers and Airmen, Vancort said.

The Finance Detachment Soldiers and Military Personnel Directorate Staff were a perfect

fit for the payroll actions, which peaked in mid-November with more than 4,100 pay actions for the state active duty force.

“Almost every Soldier in the mission had to be input into the state pay system as a new hire before any other transactions could occur,” said Vancort.

“This was a big activation, so having the Soldiers was a positive impact,” said Rob Martin, director of the state headquarters Budget and Finance office.

“Actually, we usually plan on bringing in Soldiers to help on processing depending on the size of the activation,” Martin said. “This particular one was large so hence the 16 (Soldiers). The agency hopes in the future to automate the process to some extent to lessen the use of uniformed personnel.” **gt**



27th IBCT re from overse



(Background Image) Members of the New York Army National Guard's 427th Brigade Support Battalion return to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station from demobilization at Camp Shelby, Mississippi on Friday, Jan. 25. The Soldiers conducted security and logistics support missions in Kuwait, other Persian Gulf nations and Afghanistan. They were the last large lift of 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers to return home from a Mobilization which began last January.

(Bottom Left) – New York Army National Guard 1st Lt. Michael Costello greets his family during his unit homecoming Jan. 8 at the Albany International Airport.

(Bottom Middle) – New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Antoine Juste greets his wife Mary and twin daughters Danika and McKinley during his unit homecoming Jan. 8 at the Albany International Airport.

(Bottom Right) – New York Army National Guard Sgt. Marlana Watson and Chief Warrant Officer Brian Trudeau receive a welcome home from members of the Joint Force Headquarters and 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Jan. 8 at the Albany International Airport. The two arrived with some 200 other Soldiers in two flights across the state from the 427th Brigade Support Battalion's Headquarters Company and Company B following demobilization at Camp Shelby, Miss. Photos by Col. Richard Goldenberg.



Returns Reas



NY school donates supplies to Afghanistan

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Ryan Sheldon, 117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Sgt. Andrew Brechko, an intelligence analyst with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, poses for a group photo next to Haji Badrudin (fourth from left standing), the director of education of Spin Boldak, at the district center in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, Nov. 2, 2012.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan – How far did school supplies travel from New York to Afghanistan? Approximately 7,800 miles. That distance may seem far for some people, but for a school located 70 miles south of Syracuse, N.Y., it was right around the corner.

Teachers at Windsor Central High School first learned of a need for basic school supplies after receiving a request for materials from Sgt. Andrew Brechko, an intelligence analyst with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Brechko, a teacher at the school, is deployed with the New York Army National Guard in the Spin Boldak area of Afghanistan.

“I made a poster here in Afghanistan and I sent it back to my school,” said Brechko, “The poster was presented at a faculty meeting at Windsor Central and the idea went from there.”

Donations of school supplies were gathered from the community and school at several different locations and then amassed at a central location. After two weeks of collecting supplies, two central drop locations were established so more students could pack the supplies.

Students in Afghanistan’s Spin Boldak district also received 30 new backpacks purchased by the Future Business Leaders of America, a club at Windsor Central High.

“When the goods came in, they were sorted for patriotic, religious themes,” Brechko said. “The products were sorted so it wouldn’t put the students and teachers in Afghanistan at risk.”

Using American patriotic-themed products in Afghanistan can put students and teachers at risk of being targeted by the Taliban.

The students made sure to evenly distribute the materials such as pencils and paper.

“They tried to make sure they packed a variety of school supplies in each box with the thought that each box would be going to a different teacher,” Brechko said. “Paper and writing utensils were the majority of the products in each box.”

While packaging the supplies, the students learned the importance of their donations.

“The students packing the boxes were taught how appreciative they should be,” Brechko said. “The difference between a student in the U.S.

and a student in Afghanistan is how much a little item they take for granted could mean the world for another.”

Brechko hoped the Central High students walked away from the experience with the knowledge and realization that many students in the world are not as fortunate as American students.

“I wanted the students at Windsor Central High School to gain some perspective as to how lucky they are,” Brechko said. “[They are] lucky with their education system and what supplies they have. It’s an appreciative perspective.

Overall, the students of Windsor Central High School sent Afghan students a total of 70-75 boxes of basic school supplies that have the potential to influence a child to become a doctor, lawyer, politician or a teacher.

“The items were dropped off at the Spin Boldak district center,” Brechko said. “My hopes are that these supplies get distributed to all the outlying schools that are in the Spin Boldak district. It was a simple and idealistic project that came to fruition.” **gt**

Reserve officer blesses land where stepson died

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

ARIF KALA, Afghanistan - The farm field near Arif Kala, Afghanistan looks nothing like a memorial.

But that's what it became last autumn as United States Army Reserve Col. Frank Kestler, surrounded by a cordon of solemn warriors, knelt and offered prayers for his stepson New York Army National Guard 1st Lt. Joseph Theinert, who had died in combat there a little over two years before.

"To actually be there, where Joe was killed, was very sobering," Kestler said.

Kestler wanted to make the trip to Arif Kala from the moment he learned Joe died there. He also went for the family, and to find peace, he said.

"I knew I was the only member of the family to walk where Joe had walked with his men," he said.

Joe and his men had walked there, and fought there.

Deeply affected by the 9-11 attacks and committed to making a difference, Joe joined the New York Army National Guard and later volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division, said his mother, Chrys Kestler.

Joe was leading an assault on an enemy position near Arif Kala when he was killed by the full force of an IED blast, Chrys said.

A little over two years later, Frank, an Army Reserve dentist, deployed to Afghanistan, where he immediately became intimate with the trauma of combat. He got blood on his boots while helping carry casualties, he recalled.

Then he went to his assignment at Forward Operating Base Salerno. The base had sustained a severe insurgent attack just before his arrival, he said.

In addition to providing dental care there and at 20 other bases, Frank assisted with surgeries and attended memorial ceremonies for Soldiers.

Though these were eye-opening experiences, but he still felt a calling to travel to Arif Kala and visit the spot where Joe had fallen, he added.

Once a hotbed for terrorist activity, the area had since become a model for security, Frank said.

"It was due to Joe and his squadron," he said.

But FOB Salerno is far from Arif Kala, which is the Dand District. Frank only had grid coordinates, pictures and some hand-drawn maps from Joe's Soldiers to go on.

Then hundreds of Soldiers, SEALs and other combat warriors -- whom he'd met during his time in Afghanistan -- stepped forward to help him research the location and find ways across thousands of miles of forbidding, hostile country.

Through this network and military channels, Frank connected with Lt. Col. Russell Clark, a New York Army National Guard officer mentoring Afghan National Police (ANP) in Dand District.

Clark and the ANP had patrolled the area, and Clark wasn't surprised by the idea of visiting the area, Frank said.

"I think these combat arms Soldiers understand loss," he said.

Frank flew to Khandahar and met up with Clark. Using the "little bits of information" he had, they determined the location where Joe was killed, Frank said. Clark had actually conducted a reconnaissance of the area, he added.

They traveled to the vicinity and spent the night at a nearby base, he recalled.

They set off the next day and rendezvoused with the ANP, who wanted to be part of the convoy security for the trip, Frank said.

Frank's description -- a plowed field next to a grape field -- makes the spot seem unremarkable. However his actions -- and the reactions of the half dozen Soldiers providing security



United States Army Reserve Soldier Col. Frank Kestler, of Shelter Island, N.Y., gathers some earth from an Afghanistan field near Arif Kala where his stepson, New York National Guard 1st Lt. Joseph Theinert, was killed in combat in June, 2010. Escorted by a patrol of American Soldiers and Afghan National Police, Kestler visited the site last Autumn, prayed there with the other Soldiers and blessed the ground with holy water given to him by Chrys Kestler, Joe's mother. Courtesy photo.

-- were not.

DoFFing his gloves -- the ones all troops wear for protection -- he knelt about 20 yards from the spot where Joe died, Frank said. Using some holy water Chrys had given him, he blessed the ground and prayed, he recalled.

"It was very emotional," he said. "I felt very close to Joe."

He began to say the Lord's prayer, and the Soldiers -- also emotional now -- joined in.

"At that point, the tears were running pretty good," Frank recalled.

He then traded the empty holy water for an empty plastic bag.

"I took some earth from the same field where Joe's blood ran," he said.

Frank is home now and Chrys, who was reluctant for him to make the trip to Arif Kala, feels differently now.

"It's brought a measure of peace to the family," she said. **gt**

2-108th Infantry Freedom Salute

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Wheeler, 138th Public Affairs Detachment



Soldiers assigned to Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, receive their end of tour awards for excellence during the units Freedom Salute Ceremony held Jan. 12, 2013 at the Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, N.Y. The unit returned approximately three months ago after being deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment's Family Readiness Group is recognized during the units Freedom Salute Ceremony held Jan. 12, 2013 at the Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, N.Y. The unit returned approximately three months ago after deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Capt. Joseph J. Minning, commander of the New York National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, recognizes the units Family Readiness Group lead volunteer, Tanya Brountas, during the units Freedom Salute Ceremony.

NY Troops help Kuwaitis move forward

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT -- They deployed in March and came to call themselves “The New York 39”: New York Army National Guard Soldiers who put their skills and experience to work for the Army here.

“We helped facilitate the shift from Operation New Dawn to the enduring footprint of U.S. forces in Kuwait,” said Lt. Col. Bready, the officer-in-charge of thirty-nine 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) troops, who returned home in late November.

Assigned to Area Support Group (ASG) Kuwait, the Soldiers worked in operations and plans, base defense, logistics, personnel, training, law-enforcement and intelligence.

“They looked at people’s talents and found ways to support ASG Kuwait,” said Maj. Robert Romano, of Freeville, N.Y., who worked in Host Nation Affairs.

The business of the Base Defense Liaison Team was the security of U.S. bases. The team evaluated defenses, helped train security personnel and arranged for the installation and movement of force-protection structures, like the bases’ omnipresent concrete barriers.

The threat level is high all over Kuwait, and force-protection needs vary according with changes in base infrastructure and populations, said 1st Lt. Teofilo Espinal, a Queens resident. To meet those shifting needs, the team planned and executed the movement of hundreds of barriers and other force protection structures, he explained.

“It took us a little while to learn everything,” he said. “We ended up fixing many force-protection issues that had been here for years.”

On most missions, team members acted like construction foremen, directing contractors where to place barriers, said Staff Sgt. Miguel Santiago, of West Orange, N.J. In one memorable mission, they replaced an old wooden tower with a stronger, air-conditioned one for the security personnel, Santiago and Sgt. Daniel Ruperd recalled.

“They were all very happy,” said Ruperd, of Watertown, N.Y.

Team members also created and conducted force-protection exercises to train them, Santiago said. In some of the exercises he played a terrorist, complete with a fake beard, he added.



New York Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to Area Support Group Kuwait’s Base Defense Liaison Team discuss force-protection operations during a recent site visit. The team evaluates defenses, helps train security personnel and arranges for installations and movement of force-protection structures.

“You get arrested a lot, which is what you want to happen,” Santiago said, smiling. “You feel rewarded. You see that you’re keeping the place safe.”

While some of the Soldiers filled individual positions at bases in Kuwait, others started working for operations and plans, monitoring all activity within ASG Kuwait’s area of responsibility (AOR).

“We’re like a brigade operations center,” said Operations Sgt. Maj. Timothy Casey, of Harford, N.Y. “We’re involved in every aspect of this AOR.”

“It’s not as hard as Afghanistan,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Huard, remembering three-hour patrols followed by six-hours of guard duty there. “You’re more likely to get mortared in Afghanistan, depending on where you are.”

“There were a lot of growing pains, trying to figure out what we were doing,” he said. But they kept up the good communications with each other, cooperating through good and bad times, Huard added.

As in the BDLT, knowledgeable troops in the New York 39 stepped up to help.

For example, Sgt. Benjamin Roden and Pfc. Richard Altermann -- who are junior enlisted

Soldiers and “computer whizzes” -- helped link tactical computers to several large highly-visible television screens in the operations center, Huard said.

1st Lt. Chelsea Gunter and other Soldiers updated ASG Kuwait’s plans, policies, standard operating procedures. In addition, they created ASG Kuwait’s CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Explosive) management plan, Gunter said.

“There was no CBRNE management plan, now there is,” said Gunter, of Brooklyn, N.Y.

They also helped ASG Kuwait prepare for training exercises, reviewed and straightened out contracts, put new contracts in place and ensured things were done legally, she recalled. She learned a lot about the planning process and force-protection standards, Gunter said.

Despite the heat, the deployment was a great experience, complete with many home comforts like ice cream and movies, Gunter said. Santiago and Huard expressed similar sentiments.

“I don’t know how anybody else feels, but I’m really proud of the work we’ve done here,” Huard said. **gt**

Troops find home, happiness in Afghanistan

Story and photo by Sgt. Lori Bilyou, 114th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Staff Sgt. Marcus A. Jones, from Staten Island, N.Y., and Sgt. James P. O'Connell, from Bronx, N.Y., relax in their tent on Forward Operating Base Mescal, Afghanistan, Dec. 25, 2012. Jones is the noncommissioned officer in charge of a six man team at FOB Mescal with the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion from Yonkers, N.Y. O'Connell is a multichannel transmission systems operator with the same unit.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MESCAL, Afghanistan -- Forward Operating Base Mescal has no Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility. It has no Post Exchange, no laundry drop off and no post office.

Soldiers stationed here receive mail once a month and the chow hall offers two choices at every meal: Take it or leave it.

Despite the spartan accommodations, six National Guard Soldiers with the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion from Yonkers, N.Y., call Forward Operating Base, or FOB, Mescal home and they are happy to do so.

"I looked FOB Mescal up before we got here and it didn't look very pleasant. There was a lot of talk about the food and the bad winters, but it's not that bad," said Sgt. Sergio A. Rodriguez, a light-wheeled mechanic from the Bronx, N.Y. "I guess you could say it's become home."

All of the Soldiers come from urban areas in New York: Mount Vernon, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island -- places where crowds are the norm and convenience is taken for granted. Now they live on a FOB that has fewer inhabitants than an average New York City elementary school and on which money is useless because there's no place to spend it.

"As far as my team is concerned, I feel like being away from the comforts of Kandahar Airfield has been beneficial to them," said Staff Sgt. Marcus A. Jones, a noncommissioned officer in

charge of the signal team.

The Yonkers' team was not impressed when they arrived and surveyed the facilities they inherited from the outgoing signal unit.

"This place was really bad when we got here, especially the living conditions," said Rodriguez. "The tent was just a big hollow shell. It was very messy with clumps of stuff here and there -- very disorganized."

But when the outgoing unit showed the New York team around, they offhandedly mentioned a pile of wood they hadn't used and were leaving behind.

"We saw the wood as gold," said Rodriguez. "Our eyes lit up and instantly there were a million ideas of what to build. Now everybody claims we have the best living conditions in the southern region because of the way that our tent is set up."

Inside the tent the team built individual rooms for each Soldier. They separated the living area from the work area and created a common room for meals or a movie. They built shelves to store and organize supplies and a workstation to set up computers and signal equipment.

"I think in the short time that we've been here we've accomplished great things with what we had," said Rodriguez. "And that has made everything much easier."

In addition to learning construction skills,

the signal team is of course, doing their job by providing both secure and unsecured radio and satellite capabilities for the entire FOB as well as boosting the networks of other nearby FOBs.

Their small number has enabled each Soldier to cross train, which in turn ensures things run smoothly. The network specialists learned some transmission skills and the transmission specialists learned some networking. They've all learned to lay cable.

"Even Rodriguez, who's a mechanic, comes in and tries to trouble shoot some issues or helps out with installing printers or Google Earth or whatever the request is," Jones said.

Without the distractions that larger bases have, Jones and the members of his team utilize their time better than others who might waste it on video gaming or hanging out on the boardwalk like some do on Kandahar Airfield.

"People on larger bases could do more constructive things, self development things like looking into schools, applying for jobs or researching what they'd like to do when they get home," Jones said. "I think everyone on our team has found their own way or what direction they'd like to travel since they've been out here."

Jones' team can also enjoy the simplicity of a FOB with little to offer but time.

"This is probably the most peaceful state of mind I've been in, in a very long time," said Spc. John Martin, an information and technology specialist with the team. "Being here has made me realize all the stuff I used to take for granted back home. Whether it's something as simple as hot water or vegetables, being here has made me grateful for all the stuff I have back home and conscious of the fact that people in this country are not as fortunate as we are."

This might explain why this six-man team, is quite content to remain on FOB Mescal for the duration of their deployment.

As Rodriguez explains it, "It's complicated, but to me I feel like I can learn more out here than I can at KAF. I'm actually hoping that they'll fly us home from Mescal. I don't even want to go back to KAF, not even for transition. If it was my option, that's how it would be. I really like it out here." **gt**

Adjutant General visits 145th Maintenance Company

Photos by Staff Sgt. Chad D. Nelson, Iowa Army National Guard



CAMP DODGE, Iowa.-- Maj. Gen. Patrick A. Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, listens as Staff Sgt. Willis Wynne, Brooklyn, New York, 145th Surface Maintenance Company, New York National Guard, explain the wear and use of a mine detector headset, Jan. 16. The 145th SMC is training on a variety of equipment during their annual training period at the National Maintenance Training Center.

FDNY crew: from New York streets to Afghan skies

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Russell Martin, 451st Air Expeditionary Wing



(From left) Capt. Shaun Cullen, Capt. Tripp Zanetis, Tech. Sgt. Jim Denniston and Tech. Sgt. Erick Pound are all members of the 101st Rescue Squadron, New York Air National Guard, currently assigned to the 26th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, take turns “busting each other’s chops,” following shift-change at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan Nov. 29. They are all firefighters when not activated. Cullen, the aircraft commander, is assigned to Engine 54, in Midtown Manhattan; Zanetis, the copilot, is assigned to Ladder 11 in Lower East Manhattan; Pound, the aerial gunner, is assigned to Engine 58 in Harlem; and Denniston, the flight engineer, is assigned to Engine 285 in Queens. Together at the 26th ERQS, the team makes-up Pedro 24, a quick-response HH-60 Pave Hawk medical evacuation crew.

CAMP BASTION, Afghanistan - Four New York City firefighters, four Airmen, four friends, one team, one HH-60 Pave Hawk, one crew deployed together with the 26th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron to Afghanistan, and they brought a flavor unique of New York Fire Departments with them.

Capt. Shaun Cullen, Capt. Tripp Zanetis, Tech. Sgt. Erick Pound and Tech. Sgt. Jim Denniston are all members of the 101st Rescue Squadron, New York Air National Guard, and they are all firefighters when not activated.

Cullen, the aircraft commander, is assigned to Engine 54, in Midtown Manhattan; Zanetis, the copilot, is assigned to Ladder 11 in Lower

East Manhattan; Pound, the aerial gunner, is assigned to Engine 58 in Harlem; and Denniston, the flight engineer, is assigned to Engine 285 in Queens. Back home, they’re all from a different “ladder” and a different “engine” designation, but at Camp Bastion they share one, Pedro 24.

“This is a first,” said Zanetis. “An entire rescue crew made up of New York City Firefighters. We may have different jobs to do, but we all know what each other are capable of and what to expect when we fly together.”

Crews are on standby around-the-clock to provide personnel recovery capabilities with medical evacuation operations in Afghanistan’s Regional Command Southwest.

As part of the 26th ERQS, the Airmen may serve many different functions, but they are all part of one crew, one team that’s charged with responding to air-evacuation calls for downed Airmen, injured service members on missions outside the wire, and even humanitarian missions to aid civilians in the event they are involved in an improvised explosive device explosion or have been injured. Since being deployed to Camp Bastion, they have more than 50 missions together as a team, and they assisted in stabilizing and extracting casualties close to double that amount.

From the start, they knew their experiences back home would bond them together

downrange.

“From day one we gelled,” said Denniston. “There’s something different about firefighters. You can walk into any given situation when you’re called up (on active-duty) and meet another Airman that you have never seen a day in your life and within minutes can say, ‘What ladder are you on? What department?’”

Their first day as a team required them to scramble for an alert in Helmand province. The crew, carrying three Guardian Angel pararescuemen, negotiated the mountainous terrain to find their objective, civilian casualties who were the victim of an IED strike. Prior to landing, they had to quickly assess the situation before possibly entering harm’s way.

“You really didn’t know what to expect, it was our first day,” Cullen said. “We went out in a two-ship to the site and our adrenaline started pumping...we knew there were casualties and we needed to get them out. But were insurgents laying a trap for us?”

“After surveying the area and the terrain enough to where we felt comfortable setting down, we began to dive at about 6,000 feet-

per-minute, just slicing through the sky. It was amazing. And because we, as a team, were able to coordinate so well, something that seemed daunting went off without a hitch.”

The crew admits that though their ride may be different, their attitude and drive to save lives remain the same.

“Here, we can fight our way in; we can fight our way out. We have a different platform, but we’ll use our tactics to try and save anyone when called upon,” Denniston said. “But just like at home, we’re going in. Whether it’s a massive fire with people trapped on the 16th floor back home, or a hot-zone here with IEDs and small-arms fire. We’re going to go in, and we’re going to do everything in our power to ensure they get out and have a chance.”

The crews work around-the-clock, on 12-hour shifts. And when they’re not in the air, on a mission, they’re on alert waiting to respond at a moment’s notice.

But until they hear the call “Scramble, scramble, scramble,” come across the loud speaker they do what comes naturally, “bust each other’s chops.”

“Oh we’re vicious,” Pound said. “It’s a lot like it is at home, ‘no thin skins.’ We give each other a hard time but no one takes it to heart. It’s part of who we are and we know it’s all in good fun, after all we’re family.”

“We don’t like sitting around waiting for a call to come,” said Cullen. “But we also understand that if we’re needed, then someone is having a really bad day. Just like at home, if the bell sounds, it’s an emergency and we have to respond quickly to save lives. We will answer that bell, that scramble-call without hesitation. That’s our mission, and that’s what we love.” **gt**

“An entire rescue crew made up of New York City Firefighters. We may have different jobs to do, but we all know what each other are capable of and what to expect when we fly together.”

-- Capt. Tripp Zanetis, 101st Rescue Squadron

105th Security Forces home from Afghanistan deployment



STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH, N.Y. -- New York Air National Guard Col. Timothy J. LaBarge, commander of the 105th Airlift Wing, along with Cols. Matthew Godfrey, 105th vice commander and Lori Scheuermann, mission support group commander, welcome home 31 members of the 105th Base Defense Squadron here Jan. 25, 2013. The Airmen returned from an eight-month deployment with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, conducting base defense missions at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran, 105th Airlift Wing.



Members of the 174th Attack Wing Security Forces Squadron pose for a group photo while deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan in late 2012. A total of 30 personnel deployed from Hancock Field Air National Guard Base and provided an array of security functions both inside and outside the wire. This was the fourth overseas deployment for the SFS since 2005. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ronald Atwood, 174th Attack Wing.

174th Security Forces back from Afghanistan

Story by Tech. Sgt. Justin Huett, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE -- Thirty personnel from the 174th Attack Wing's Security Forces Squadron (SFS) returned home Jan. 22 after a successful six-month deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The deployment was the fourth overseas mission for the 174th SFS since 2005.

The primary mission of the 174th personnel was to secure Bagram, its perimeter, assets and most importantly its personnel. Beyond the routine of providing flight line and general base security, however, the unit was responsible for a wide array of distinct security missions.

A key role of the deployers was to prevent security breaches involving the large number of local Afghans who worked on base. Senior Master Sgt. Todd Day met that role head-on while serving as the NCOIC of the Pedestrian Entry Control Point (ECP), a place where 5,500 locals entered the base daily. Day worked local security personnel to thwart efforts to smuggle contraband onto the base and prevent suicide bomber attacks.

As an adviser to the commander for civil and military impacts of the base in Afghanistan,

Tech. Sgt. Michael McQuown's extensive interaction with local nationals gave him a greater appreciation of the situation. He frequently went "outside the wire" to help local residents with locating wells, repairing equipment, pouring concrete and fixing wells.

"I was particularly impressed with the resourcefulness of the nationals," recalled McQuown. "For example, I routinely watched women collect cow manure and make patties out of them; after which they were dried to be burned and used as heat source."

Building relationships with deployed personnel from different units was also essential. Master Sgt. James Gallup, who served as NCOIC of Bagram's Bravo Sector which included several ECP's, a hospital and fly-away missions, had the opportunity to manage a wide variety of security forces personnel. In so doing, he developed a strong appreciation for the different skills that each member brought to the fight, and obtained maximum effort from each individual.

A member who stepped outside his training and played a role in protecting fellow personnel was Tech. Sgt. Terrence Buckman. While

serving as the Battle NCO for the Joint Defense Operations Center on Bagram, he managed a variety of patrols outside the wire. His duties included providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support or medevac resources. By streamlining the coordination of joint forces in response to enemy contact, Buckman kept people alive. **gt**



Tech. Sgt. Michael McQuown, a member of the 174th Attack Wing Security Forces Squadron, works to help secure drainage grates and razor wire on flooded fields outside Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan in late 2012. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ronald Atwood, 174th Attack Wing.

174th First in Northeast to get Mobile Ops Center

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Chris Ewsuk, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE -- The 174th Attack Wing introduced its new, Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) here in January. The MEOC will provide command and control capabilities for emergency responders during natural disasters and is the first such emergency center to be assigned in the Northeast.

“We are excited about the opportunity to have such an important new community asset staged here at the 174th Attack Wing,” said Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Scanlin, Hancock Field Base Emergency Manager. “Interoperability among various responding organizations is the key during any emergency response, and this new mobile center will greatly enhance the ability to effectively work together.”

The MEOC will deploy wherever it is needed in the northeast region, providing command capabilities for emergency response situations similar to those of hurricanes Sandy and Irene. When deployed, the MEOC will provide the hosting location with news and weather information, as well as communication to all military assets needed.

The MEOC assigned to Hancock Field is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 2 asset and will cover emergency response in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Currently, the 174th MEOC is the only one of its kind in the northeast United States, with the next closest located in Maryland. Funding has been approved for 20 MEOCs, eventually providing at least one to each FEMA region. The 174th Civil Engineering Squadron is currently undergoing training with the MEOC, and are able to get it up and running in as little as 15 minutes.

Hancock Field personnel have repeatedly participated in response missions in the past, including disaster relief for Hurricanes Sandy and Irene. Hancock Field’s capabilities and location made it an ideal candidate for having one of the new MEOCs stationed at the base.

The MEOC has up to eight workstations and a conference room. The center has its own weather and Direct TV satellites, providing up to date weather or news information. **gt**



New York State Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) assigned to the 174th Civil Engineering Squadron. The operations center can be deployed in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist first responders during disaster response efforts.



New York Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Scanlin gives a tour inside the New York State Mobile Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) assigned to the 174th Civil Engineering Squadron being trained on at Hancock Field on Jan. 5. The MEOC was assigned to the unit to assist in emergency response missions such as natural disasters in the northeast and FEMA 2 region.



107th Airlift Wing's Force Support Squadron (FSS) Commander Major Bryan DalPorto stands with members of his unit following his appointment as Niagara Falls Police Superintendent Jan. 4. DalPorto has been a member of the National Guard since 1997 and has served on the Niagara Falls Police Department for 17 years.

107th AW leader now Niagara Falls top cop

Story and photo by Senior Master Sgt. Raymond Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS – New York Air National Guard Maj. Bryan DalPorto, commander of the 107th Airlift Wing's Force Support Squadron was named the new police superintendent for the city of Niagara Falls by Mayor Paul Dyster. DalPorto took the oath of office on Jan 4, 2013.

He has been with the department for 17 years and will replace retiring John Chella who served 40 years on the job.

"DalPorto's military experience played a big part on my decision for promoting him to superintendent," said Mayor Dyster.

DalPorto joined the 107th in 1997 in the security police flight as an enlisted Airman.

He received his commission as a lieutenant in 1998 and served as Public Affairs Officer and Military Equality Officer. He deployed to Iraq serving as the Executive Officer of 447th Expeditionary Group in 2008. He became the commander of services upon his return and in 2011 assumed command of the 107th Force Support Squadron.

"I'm excited and humble on receiving this position," DalPorto said. "I will do my best for the citizens of Niagara Falls."

DalPorto's law enforcement ca-

reer has an extensive background. He joined the Niagara County Sheriff's Department and then became a patrolman for Niagara Falls in 2006. He was promoted to Detective and worked in the Narcotics Intelligence Division and also served on the department's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team as a leader and trainer and academy instructor.

DalPorto was promoted to Lieutenant in 2008 and assigned to the patrol division and was later promoted to Detective Lieutenant assigned to Community Relations/Police Administration and then transferred back to the Narcotics

Intelligence Division.

He has also served as the department's Public Information Officer.

"He approaches all leadership challenges with an open mind; a true inspiration to all," said Col. Timothy Vaughan, 107th Mission Support Group Commander. "His leadership experience and skills from the Air National Guard will be an asset to the Niagara Falls Police Department.

"It's a great feeling and I'm so proud of my son," said Doreen Rairie, DalPorto's mother at the swearing in. **gt**

Honors for Syracuse Airmen

2012 Airmen of Year Hail from Hancock

Story by Tech. Sgt. Justin A. Huett, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE -- Three Airmen here were recognized for their outstanding achievements on and off base by being selected as "Airmen of the Year" for New York State on Jan. 31.

Every year bases from across the state have the opportunity to submit up to six members to be recognized as one of the six Airman of the Year awards: Airman of the Year, Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, First Sergeant of the Year, Honor Guard Member of the Year and Honor Guard Coordinator of the Year.

The members of the 174th Attack Wing won an unprecedented three out of the six awards in 2012.

Senior Master Sgt. Raymond Herr, Superintendent of the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS), won the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year award. He began his career in 1996 when he joined the active duty Air Force. After seeing the world and twelve years later Herr transitioned from active duty to the New York Air National Guard through the "Palace Front" program in

April 2008.

Since entering the Air National Guard, Senior Master Sergeant Herr has served as an Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) member with the 274th ASOS where he has served as the Chief, Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC)-Instructor and the Operations Superintendent.

Senior Airman Donald Anderson and Senior Airmen Matthias Anderson of the 174th Attack Wing are not only brothers in arms, but cousins by blood. Both are members of the Honor Guard as well as coordinators for the Honor Guard.

These two Airmen were selected as Honor Guard Member of the Year and Honor Guard Coordinator of the Year. Matthias received the Coordinator of the Year award for his service and exemplary record of coordinating requests made for the Honor Guard, while Donald was awarded the Honor Guard Member of the Year award. For many, the Honor Guard is the last group of military members surviving family members will see and both Donald and Matthias said that they feel it is their duty to perform with honor and respect and to leave the families with a positive lasting memory.



New York Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Ramond Herr (right), Senior Airman Matthias Anderson (Center) and Senior Airman Donald Anderson pose as award winners at Hancock Field in Syracuse Jan 31, 2013. Herr won the Senior Non Commissioned Officer of the Year for New York State, Matthias Anderson won the Honor Guard Coordinator of the Year for New York State and Donald Anderson won Honor Guard Member of the Year for New York State. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeremy M. Call, 174th Attack Wing.

The task of selecting members for these awards requires significant time and effort from a board made up of senior leaders from across Hancock Field and the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs Joint Force Headquarters. The process began at the individual section level with the selection of Airmen of the Quarter. These individuals then competed on a base-wide level. From there they moved onto Airmen of the Half and Airmen of the Year. Once the base Airmen of the Year were selected, the winners moved up to compete on the State and National levels. **gt**

Syracuse EO Director heads to DOD

Story and photo by Senior Airman Duane Morgan, 174th Attack Wing
HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE -- The 174th Attack Wing will say farewell to one of its members in April as he begins a new chapter in his career.

Major Gary Richardson, Equal Opportunity Director for the 174th Attack Wing, will become the service liaison officer for the Air National Guard component at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida.

Once there, he will run the Equal Opportunity program as an extension of the National Guard Bureau. The job is a logical progression for Richardson, since he helped develop the program for anyone coming into the Equal Opportunity Field. "It's a joint services position," said Richardson. "I'll be working closely with the Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force, Army and all DOD employees."

Richardson has come a long way in his career. He enlisted and rose through the ranks to become an officer later in his career, becoming the second African American to accomplish this at the 174th.

After attending a human relations training course, Richardson became

involved in the Equal Opportunity career field. When he completed the Equal Opportunity course, he was selected as an instructor, a role he has held since 2004.

Leaving the 174th was a tough decision for Richardson, but he feels it was time to move on.

"No matter where I go, no matter what position I hold, I will always be a member of the 174th in my heart," said Richardson. "This is where I was allowed to fulfill my dreams." **gt**



Maj. Gary Richardson (right), 174th Attack Wing Equal Opportunity Director and Capt. James Hockey, Equal Opportunity Officer, read from a book on equal opportunity at the Joint Health and Wellness Center on Hancock Field Feb. 3.



107th Airlift Wing airmen deliver a truckload of food goods to the Niagara Falls Community Mission on December 18, 2012. From left, Staff Sgt. Jeanette Valdez, Chief Master Sgt. Virginia Ballester, Andrea Gray, Tech. Sgt. Paul Wiegand, Master Sgt. Mark Lewandowski, Master Sgt. Steven Buja and Staff Sgt. Robert Kurzdorfer.

“This time of year and having the help from the Air National Guard is great. Having the help from those who protect our nation is a blessing,”

-- Andrea Gray, Public Relations & Development Manager, Niagara Community Mission

The Air National Guard serves the Community

Story and photo by Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS -- “INTEGRITY FIRST, SERVICE BEFORE SELF AND EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO.” The Air Force motto not only applies to military duty but carries over into all that Airmen do.

Members of the 107th Airlift Wing continued that tradition of serving and supporting the Niagara Community Mission by sponsoring an annual food drive and providing a truckload containing boxes of food, canned goods purchased from their Feed the Family Campaign here December 18, 2012.

The campaign was held over the past few unit training weekends where members had the opportunity to contribute monetary donations as well as canned goods. The donations were used to feed a family.

“This is my fourth year as committee chairman, and although the donations were not as abundant as in past years, we managed to provide help for the mission,” said Master Sergeant Steve Buja, Fabrication Element Supervisor.

Unit members along with mission staff unloaded boxes of food, canned goods and stocking up the food pantry. It may not have felt like Christmas with wet, rainy weather in

Niagara Falls, but the spirit of the holiday was felt at the mission.

Recognizing the needs of the community, the 107th has been contributing to the Niagara Falls City Mission for more than 18 years.

“This time of year and having the help from the Air National Guard is great,” said Andrea Gray, Public Relations & Development Manager for the Community Missions.

“We have doubled the amount of families in need from last year. Having the help from those who protect our nation is a blessing.”

Unit members considered the work personally rewarding emphasizing the meaning of the holiday season - being able to help out those less fortunate. Members said that the volunteerism is a small way of showing appreciation to the local community for the support they give throughout the year.

“This is my second year, and I found it extremely rewarding to see how our unit as a whole is helping the local community in such a great way,” said Staff. Sgt. Robert Kurzdorfer, Communication Plans. “Knowing that over 150 families will have meals through this holiday season speaks for itself.” **gt**



Safety Professionals of 2012

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- The 107th Airlift Wing recognized members of the Logistics Readiness Squadron as the Safety Professionals of 2012 here Jan. 23. From left, Operations and Compliance Superintendent Senior Master Sgt. Matthew Rose, Unit Safety Representative Tech. Sgt. Joanna Blackburn, assistant Unit Safety Representative Master Sgt. Melissa Shenefiel, asst. Building Manager Senior Airman Andrew Thompson and Asset Management Supervisor Senior Master Sgt. Ralph Burrows. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing.

Three decades of service lead to Wing Command

30 years to the day of joining Air Force, Col. John Higgins becomes 107th commander

Story by Senior Airman Dan Fravel, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION--New York Air National Guard Col. John J. Higgins assumed command of the 107th Airlift Wing in a ceremony held here Jan. 12.

Higgins had formerly served as the 107th AW's vice commander since August 2011.

The assumption of command ceremony, held on the 30 year anniversary of Col. Higgins' entry into the Air Force, marked the transition of leadership from former commander Col. Jim McCready.

Higgins previously served as the Air National Guard advisor to the Air Force Special Operations Command and as ANG Advisor for Air Force Strategic Planning at the Pentagon.

In his new role, Col. Higgins will be command over 800 personnel assigned to the 107th AW, its assets, and ensuring the wing meets state and national missions at a time when the 107th is facing the likelihood of a mission change.

"No matter what our mission will be, I have no doubt we will be an invaluable part of the Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force. We will be as successful as we have always been," Higgins said. "I am proud to lead the 107th into the future." Higgins brings over 3,500 hours flying experience as a navigator in various aircraft including the F-4 Phantom, the F-111 Aardvark, and C-130 Hercules.

"He joins one of the best units in the country, lead and supported by a team of talented professionals," said Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York. **gt**



Maj. Gen. Verle Johnston, commander of the New York Air National Guard hands the 107th Airlift Wing's colors to Col. John Higgins as he assumes command at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station Jan. 12. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Stephan Kovacs, 107th Airlift Wing.



C17s Brave the Winter Storm

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH --A 105th Airlift Wing C-17 Globemaster sits on the ramp as snowfall generated by winter storm Nemo intensifies here Feb 8. The wing, along with all of the state's military forces, prepared initial response elements to support New York City and Long Island during the storm. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

EADS Best of 2012 recognizes top performers

Airmen, Civilian Honored for Service

Story by Senior Airman Dan Fravel, 107th Airlift Wing

UTICA -- More than 100 New York Air National Guardsmen, Canadian Forces members, federal civilians and guests were in attendance at the Radisson Hotel in Utica Jan. 25 as the Eastern Air Defense Sector recognized its outstanding performers from 2012.

"EADS' mission of protecting the eastern U.S. airspace requires consistent excellence from all of our staff," said Col. Dawne Deskins, EADS Commander. "Our 2012 award winners distinguished themselves by going above and beyond our high standards and I congratulate each of them on their outstanding accomplishments and thank them for their extraordinary efforts."

Award recipients were:

- Capt. Bradley Dunford, Wampsville, Outstanding Company Grade Officer. Capt. Dunford was evaluated as the best of the unit's nearly 40 air weapons officers and won EADS Top Scope weapons and tactics competition for the second straight year.

- Master Sgt. Chris Spurrier, Andrews AFB, Md., Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer. A member of EADS Detachment 1 at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) in Washington, D.C., Master Sgt. Spurrier managed more than \$9 million in contract and budget expenditures. He also serves as president of JBAB's "Top 3," a senior noncommissioned officers' organization that represents more than 190 senior NCOs on the base.

- Tech. Sgt. Joshua Barrett, Camden, Outstanding Noncommissioned Officer. Rated exceptionally qualified during his position evaluation, Tech. Sgt. Barrett's tactical skills were judged as "best seen to date" by a recent Headquarters 1st Air Force/Air Forces Northern inspection team.

- Airman 1st Class Matthew Weber, Outstanding Airman. A tracking technician, A1C Weber required only 70 percent of the allotted time to qualify for his position. Recognized for his work ethic, creativity and operational skills, he is also a recent winner of the "Iron Airman" award, given for physical fitness.

- Master Sgt. Tracy Blum, Rome, Outstand-



ing Honor Guard Member. A senior member of the Honor Guard, Master Sgt. Blum volunteered 96 hours of his time - a total of 12 workdays - to support Honor Guard events. He personally participated in nearly one-third of the 72 total details EADS Honor Guard performed in 2012.

- Sonepith Keoviengsamay, Rome, Outstanding Civilian. Mr. Keoviengsamay's management of 25 personnel during an Air Force cyber readiness inspection last June was instrumental in the unit's outstanding rating. He was also named the Air National Guard's Outstanding Civilian Manager in the Information Domi-

nance category.

EADS employs more than 400 active-duty military, fed-

eral civilians, civilian contractors and part-time Air National Guardsmen.

The Eastern Air Defense Sector is headquartered at Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome. Staffed by active-duty New York Air National Guardsmen and a Canadian Forces detachment, the unit supports the North American Aerospace Defense Command's (NORAD) integrated warning and attack assessment missions and the U.S. Northern Command's (USNORTHCOM) homeland defense mission.^{gt}

106th recognized for outstanding Afghan service

Story by 106th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

WESTHAMPTON BEACH - The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan awarded 106th Security Forces Squadron Staff Sgt. Rudolf W. Lonk the Joint Service Commendation Medal for his service in Afghanistan, from January through July 2012.

According to U.S. Army Major General Robert P. Ashley, Director of the ISAF in Afghanistan, Sgt. Lonk, upon arriving, immediately took over the general's personal security detachment (PSD). In this role, Staff Sgt Lonk prepared and led daily missions outside the wire (off-base), where he coordinated the security and movement of key leaders in Kabul, provided security for other mission essential personnel movements, and resupplied pickups.

"Sgt. Lonk also built a legacy of professionalism and competence..." Ashley continued. Lonk trained four new drivers through a rigorous, hands-on program that Lonk devised, which included 230 driving hours, pre-mission security preparation, and combatives.

Additionally, Lonk was the ISAF Headquarters NCOIC of the security for the sensitive compartmentalized information facilities (SCIF). In this position, he verified, cleared and registered over 1,700 personnel for access.



U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), congratulates New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Rudolf W. Lonk for his receipt of the Joint Service Commendation Medal for his service in Afghanistan June 17. Courtesy photo.

He also took part in a large scale inventory effort, accounting for 567 pieces of equipment and supplies, ensuring complete accounting accuracy.

"Under his leadership, my personal security detachment maintained a spotless record of zero security or safety incidents. Sgt. Lonk demonstrated professionalism and leadership

during a trying time in our Afghan campaign; truly a job well done," said General Ashley.

Major Martinez, the 106th Security Forces Squadron Commander, said that "General Ashley's comments are a testament to the character of Sgt. Lonk, and our entire unit is proud of Rudy and his accomplishments." **gt**

Manno new 106th Command Chief



WESTHAMPTON BEACH, NY - Chief Master Sergeant Diana L. Manno assumes the position of Command Chief, succeeding Chief Edward Reiter, February 2, 2013. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy.

Airmen Train for Honor Guard



WESTHAMPTON BEACH - Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing take part in Honor Guard training on December 13, 2012. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy.



NYC mission continues with New York Guard

Story and photo by Warrant Officer Ubon Mendie, New York Guard



New York Army National Guard Spc. Joely Rosario hands off a case of water from the FEMA relief supply to New York Guard Sgt. 1st Class Carl Majors, both members of the Joint Task Force Sandy response team activated by Gov. Cuomo in wake of the Hurricane Sandy here, Oct 31. The two are a part of a team staged at the baseball park which is a temporary staging point for emergency supplies. From this point the troops are distributing water and food to any point specified by the New York State Office of Emergency Management.

NEW YORK - Three months after Super Storm Sandy, members of the New York Guard, the state's all volunteer defense force, continue to assist in hurricane relief missions.

The group are part of a crucial logistics team who are responsible for sustaining the ongoing response mission based at the New York Mets baseball home, Citi-Field.

"New York Guardsmen are responsible for all logistical support operations for the New York State Department of Homeland Security Sandy Mission," said Col. George DeSimone, the com-

mander of the New York Guard's 88th Brigade.

"This is uncharted territory for our force and state civilian agencies. Until now, such a response has never been practiced or even thought to be needed," DeSimone added.

Upon activation, Soldiers were tasked with setting up a formidable response operation to address the urgent needs of some New York City residents.

Maj. Peter Morici, a Brooklyn native, was charged with overseeing the task and was named by New York City Office of Emergency

Management and New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) operations section chief for the Citi-Field unified command logistical staging area, a first in New York Guard history.

"Since October 30th we have been on the ground 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week," said Morici. "We've been tasked to keep the response going."

Morici and his team coordinate disaster equipment handling to include generators, light towers, fork lifts, cables and other heavy operating materials.

"We ensure state equipment is serviced and ready to be placed anywhere it's needed," said Sergeant 1st Class Carl Majors. "I'm from the city, so I have friends and family that depend on the equipment. It's a major responsibility. We have to do this job right."


Before troop activation, there was no tracking system in place to account for the vast state owned and leased materials that were urgently needed in areas affected by the storm, Morici said.

Without such a system, the state would be liable for lost equipment and damages, that may, or may not have occurred as a result of the mission, he explained.

We have millions of dollars of assets in the field," said George Gibson, DHSES Deputy Incident Commander for Citi-field operations. "I can't begin to come up with a number of what our possible losses could have been without this system. Their work has truly kept us ahead."

Gibson also added that the New York Guard logistical system would be used in future DHSES response missions helping to ensure citizens receive the best possible assistance if another emergency were to occur.

"They give me peace of mind being here. They are 110 percent reliable and their expertise in security and logistical experience has helped tremendously," said Thomas J. Barkowski, NYCOEM over night incident commander. "We are one unit."

"The New York Guard will stand ready to serve the state, no matter the time length or incident," Majors added. "We train to respond, and we're glad to help." 

Capital District Guard leaders promoted

Story and photo by Lt. Col. David Greenwood, 10th Brigade, NY Guard



Newly promoted Lt. Cols. from the New York Guard, left to right, David Greenwood, Edward Keyrouze and John Neeley celebrate their Jan. 19 promotion ceremony by cutting a cake with an officer's sword at the National Guard's South Lake Armory in Troy. The three volunteers are part of the 10th Brigade of the New York Guard. Courtesy photo.



TROY, N.Y. – Three volunteer members of the New York State Defense Force received promotions to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at the National Guard Armory on South Lake Avenue here January 19.

New York Guard majors David W. Greenwood, Edward J. Keyrouze and John J. Neeley were promoted to rank Lieutenant Colonel after more than a decade each of service as volunteer members of the Capital Region's 10th Brigade.

The New York Guard assists and supports Soldiers and Airmen of the New York Army and Air National Guard and aides civil authorities in New York State when called to state service.

Lt. Col. David Greenwood, from Glenville, N.Y. joined the New York Guard in 2000 and was recognized as the Honor Graduate for his Company Grade Officers Course during his first year's annual training. He has held command and staff positions that include command of Detachment B, 102nd Engineers and logistics officer for the 10th Brigade headquarters.

His achievements in marksmanship led to Greenwood representing the New York Guard during the annual Adjutant General Marksmanship Competition in 2003 and 2004. In each year he led the New York Guard team as team captain and received honors as the second place winner in the pistol team for all of New York State.

Greenwood has an Industrial Engineering baccalaureate degree from Clarkson College of Technology in Potsdam, N.Y. He is currently employed by General Electric as a Senior Contract Manager.

Lt. Col. Edward Keyrouze, from Waterford, N.Y., came to the New York Guard in 2003 after 24 years of both active and reserve military service with the Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard. He first enlisted in 1979 and served initially as an Army Reservist before entering active service for five years, achieving the rank of sergeant. Returning to the Army Reserve and the Capital Region in 1985, Keyrouze transferred to the New York

Army National Guard in 1987, receiving an officer's commission through Officer Candidate School and retired as a major.

He serves the New York Guard as a Joint Task Force Liaison Officer for the 10th Brigade, supporting National Guard disaster response missions. Keyrouze most recently served on state service for the National Guard's response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

Keyrouze currently works as a Mortgage Loan Reviewer with Homestead Funding

Lt. Col. John J. Neeley, from Saratoga County, N.Y., has served as a volunteer in the New York Guard for 11 years.

As commander of the 2nd Emergency Response Battalion at the South Lake Armory in Troy, Neeley coordinates New York Guard support of search and rescue, communications or logistics missions during state emergencies.

He has held a variety of positions to include deputy operations officer at battalion and brigade as well as the New York Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear Emergency Response Force Coordinator, Search and Rescue Coordinator and Search and Rescue School Administrator. He has led elements during Adirondack search and rescue efforts and participated in the National Guard response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

Neeley is a New York State Trooper with some 30 years of service as a law enforcement officer.

Many New York Guard members are retired members of the National Guard or other military services; military experience, however, is not a prerequisite to membership. **gt**

Naval Militia: There for neighbors when it counts

Story by Lt. j.g. Carl P. Zeilman, New York Naval Militia



New York Naval Militia Sgt. Jonathan Morales, a U.S. Marine Corps Reservist on state active duty for the New York National Guard recovery efforts following Hurricane Sandy, helps with the distribution of Thanksgiving meals Nov. 21 as part of the National Guard delivery of more than 4,000 meals to affected families and communities of the storm. Morales is part of a joint response force that includes members of the New York Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Naval Militia and New York Guard. Photo by Warrant Officer Ubon Mendie, New York Guard.

NEW YORK-- New York State Naval Militia members received a call to duty to respond to Hurricane Sandy. Not knowing what to expect they packed their bags and prepared for one of the worst natural disasters to affect New York state. The hurricane damaged infrastructure, waterways and commerce. In some cases complete municipalities were destroyed.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered more than 4,000 citizen Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors to mobilize to New York City and Long Island to assist with the rescue and recovery efforts for Operation Sandy. Of those called to serve, more than 90 were Naval Militia members. The militia is a 2,200-member force made up in part with Navy and Marine Corps Reservists who operate a fleet of emergency service patrol boats to secure state waterways and assist where manpower is needed.

“The New York Naval Militia gives maritime capability to the military forces of the state of New York, as well as the ability to call to duty, within hours, highly trained, Reserve Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen,” said Naval Militia spokesperson Trip Powell, a retired Navy captain.

As New Yorkers began to emerge from the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, emergency service boats were patrolling the New York City har-

bor, and running missions along the Hudson River. While most would assume these boats were a part of a federal force, the five boats deployed were in fact operated by the state’s Naval Militia and manned with men and women who also call themselves Navy Reservists.

“The Navy Reservists in the Naval Militia bring the individual skills and knowledge they’ve honed on active duty or in the Reserve and put them to work for the people of New York during natural disasters, emergencies and day-to-day ops,” said Eric Durr, the director of public affairs for the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs and a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel.

The Navy Reservists working as Naval Militia were tasked with various missions from evacuating a major downtown hospital to handing out food and water to displaced victims. The Naval Militia Sailors, part of a joint force, helped hundreds of men, women and children get through a difficult situation.

Some of the Navy Reservists were assigned to the Lexington Avenue Armory in hard-hit lower Manhattan. Many of these Sailors faced their own challenges brought on by Hurricane Sandy but stepped up and answered the call to serve their community and neighbors in need.

“Being healthy and able, I felt it was my obligation to go out and help those who were affected the most. New York is my home and it hurts when you see it suffer,” Machinist Mate 1st Class Luis Donarye, a Navy Reservist from Long Island and New York State Militia member said. “Giving a helping hand was the right thing to do. What I enjoyed the most was working with other Sailors and Marines who selflessly dedicated lots of hours of hard work, lack of sleep, time away from home and other discomforts in order to assist the people in need.”

In addition to providing help to citizens affected by the hurricane, 20 Navy Reservists manned five emergency service boats. The boats were used on patrol missions to assist the Coast Guard secure waterways and identify displaced residents.

“To see the destruction was heartbreaking,” said Electronics Technician 3rd Class Heather Oligny of Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) Schenectady. “Every small thing we did made someone’s suffering lessen and that is why we serve.”

The importance of the New York’s State’s Naval Militia has proved to be

a valuable asset to New York State’s Defense forces, helping to secure New York state’s waterways and provide relief to residents in need.

The skills Navy Reservists bring to the New York Military forces — whether in construction, nuclear engineering, electronics, or boat handling — could not be replicated in a state volunteer-only force, Durr added.

NOSC Schenectady commanding officer Cmdr. Vincent Perry was proud of his Sailors.

“More than 60 Reservists from NOSC Schenectady responded to Operation Sandy in New York,” said Perry. “We also had an additional 17 Reservists sign-up for the militia during the December drill weekend. This is indicative of a Navy Sailor, drop everything to help those in need.”

In addition to the Reserve Sailors from NOSC Schenectady, three other New York NOSC’s had Reservists perform duty as part of the Naval Militia. NOSC Rochester had seven members, NOSC Buffalo had three, and NOSC Syracuse had 10 Sailors join the relief efforts. **gt**

Coeyman resident “Trip” Powell named Deputy Commander for New York Naval Militia

Courtesy story and photo, New York Naval Militia

LATHAM -- New York Naval Militia Captain Ten Eyck “Trip” Powell, a Coeymans resident, has been named Deputy Commander for Operations for the 2,500-member Naval Militia.

Powell is President and Chief Executive Officer of The H.B. Davis Seed Company in Albany. He has served in the state’s naval military force since 1986 and is a veteran of the United States Navy and the United States Navy Reserve.

As Deputy Commander for Operations Powell directs the Naval Militia’s day-to-day operations and its response to state emergencies like Hurricane Sandy. More than 200 members of the New York Naval Militia joined the New York Army and Air National Guard in responding to Hurricane Sandy in October and November 2012.

The Naval Militia is the naval component of the New York Military forces. The bulk of the members of the Naval Militia belong to the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserves and also agree to perform duty for the state of New York when called upon. A small number of Naval Militia members are retired from the military service but still serve the state of New York.

The Naval Militia also operates a fleet of nine patrol boats which work regularly with the Coast Guard, Border Patrol, and local law enforcement agencies on New York’s waterways.

The New York Naval Militia was organized in 1891 and predates the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve as an organized reserve of the naval services.

Powell was commissioned an Ensign in the United States Navy in 1978 and served as a naval flight officer. He flew the S3-A Viking Carrier Anti-submarine aircraft and deployed to the Persian Gulf onboard USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

In 1983 Powell was assigned to Navy Recruiting District Albany, as an officer recruiter and department head. He joined the Navy Reserve in 1986 and also joined the New York Naval Militia.

After retiring from the Navy Reserve with the rank of Captain in 2008 he was assigned as Commander of the Naval Militia’s Northern Command and served on State Active Duty during the state’s response to Tropical Storm Lee in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Powell is married to Dr. Julia Dessloch and has three children. **gt**



Capt. Ten Eyck “Trip” Powell



New York N skis, shoot

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Tho

JERICHO, Vt. - You ski as fast as you can over several kilometers of rough terrain with a .22 caliber rifle strapped on your back; then steady that rifle -- controlling your labored breathing and heart rate and shaky legs in mind-numbing cold that freezes your fingers and face. Then you must fire five shots to hit targets the size of 50-cent pieces, 50 meters away.

For New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Brian O'Keefe, and Soldier athletes like him, this is the biathlon.

"It's brutal," said O'Keefe of the Nordic event that has been a popular Winter Olympic sport since the Squaw Valley Olympics of 1960.

"It's brutal but relates to everything we do as Soldiers," O'Keefe said. "It combines physical, cardio, and mental stress with precision shooting. It's everything we strive to achieve as Soldiers and much of what we think about when we hear Soldier readiness."

O'Keefe, who finished eighth in the sprint in his first official outing, represented the New York National Guard at the 2013 National Guard Eastern Regional Biathlon, held Feb. 8 to 10, 2013, at the Vermont National Guards Camp Ethan Allen Training Site, in Jericho, Vt. He has high hopes for encouraging New York National Guard biathletes.

O'Keefe, a Soldier since 1988, just returned from a 2012 Afghanistan deployment as part of the New York Stability Transition Team, and served in the Civil Military Operations Cell of the 42nd Infantry Division, in Iraq in 2005.

While O'Keefe never competed in a biathlon until the Vermont event, he's practiced the sport for fun with friend and former Olympic competitor, retired New York Army National Guard Maj. Curtis "Curt" Schreiner.

Not long ago, New York had a very prosperous biathlon program that developed Olympic-caliber athletes like Schreiner, a three-time Olympic biathlete, O'Keefe said. He would like to see more interest in the sport among Guard members, O'Keefe added.

"I hope that my participation will get others in New York involved so we can rebuild New York's program," O'Keefe said. "I wanted everyone to see that if I can

National Guard Soldier starts in biathlon competition

Thomas Wheeler, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

do it, anyone can.”

It’s not the skill, but the dedication that is the most important characteristic of a Soldier biathlete, O’Keefe said.

“Anyone can do it. Army, Air Force, male or female. If this old man can do it, anyone can. It’s the dedication that’s most important. The skiing and the shooting will come with time and practice,” he said.

“No experience is necessary,” O’Keefe emphasized.

Biathlon obviously develops Soldiers marksmanship and skiing skill, Schreiner said. It also teaches competitors to set goals, establish a plan to reach those goals, and work hard at the plan, he added.

According to Maj. Christopher Ruggerio, the National Guard Biathlon program coordinator, the biathlon has a long history with the military that can be traced back to the Great Scandinavian War of 1700 to 1718, where its skills proved vital for military defense. The skills of skiing and shooting also allowed the Finns to fight the Soviet Army to standstill in 1939.

Ruggerio added that the biathlon skills of marksmanship and skiing are practiced to this day by the armed forces of several nations and that many European Olympic Biathletes are current members of their countries’ militaries.

“It’s a perfect fit for Soldiers,” said Ruggerio. “Where else can you find a sport that encompasses everything that we do as Soldiers? It is Soldier readiness.”

Ruggerio also added that the National Guard Biathlon program is a win-win for National Guard recruitment and retention as the program offers access to the highest levels of training for those interested in competing at the highest levels the sport has to offer.

It is believed by many that the first biathlon competition was organized circa 1912 by the Norwegian military initially consisting of a 17

kilometer cross-country ski race combined with time penalties incurred for missed targets.

Today’s modern biathlon comprises of the sprint (three loops with two shooting stages totaling 7.5-10km), the pursuit (five laps with four shooting stages totaling 10-12.5km), the individual event (five loops with four shooting stages totaling 15-20km), the mass start (five loops with four shooting stages totaling 12.5-15km), and the team relay event (teams of three to four skiers each completing three laps with two shooting stages for a total of 24-30km).

According to the National Guards Biathlon headquarters, the National Guard Biathlon program was turned over by the Army in 1973 and boasts more than 30 states participating in the program.

“Right now we have 31 states that participate in the program but we’re not stopping there. We want to get all the states involved,” said Ruggerio.

For more information concerning the National Guard Biathlon program go to <http://national-guardbiathlon.org/>, or call 802-899-7120. **gt**



(Above) Lt. Col. Brian O’Keefe, New York Army National Guard, starts the Sprint portion of the 2013 National Guard Eastern Regional Biathlon held at the Ethan Allen Training Site, Jericho Vt., Feb. 9, 2013. The New York National Guard has a long history of creating Olympic Biathletes including Maj. (Ret.) Curtis Schreiner, a three time Olympian. (Background picture) O’Keefe fires five shots in the standing position, the second of two required shooting rounds during the sprint competition. Each athlete must complete three loops of 7.5-10km while accurately firing five rounds at five targets the size of 50-cent pieces at a range of 50 meters from both the prone and standing positions.



Courtesy story, Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- The Army has made available to Soldiers a new online resource to complement the Ready and Resilient Campaign that launched March 12.

The campaign's website is available now at www.army.mil/readyandresilient, and is designed as a "one-stop shop" for resources related to Soldier resilience and readiness. The new site includes sections for medical readiness, personal readiness, and Soldier transition issues.

On the front page of the site is a list of hotlines for Soldiers to call for when "something bad happens," said Col. John Sims, with the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs. Such an event could include a sexual assault, suicide issues, traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Army already has dozens of programs and websites that can help Soldiers improve their readiness, help them become more resilient, and help them deal with crises such as sexual assault, suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder, or traumatic brain injury for instance. But the new website is meant to bring access to those resources together in one place.

"You can find this information in 500 other different places. But this is supposed to be the one-stop shop for Soldiers," Sims said. "We wanted to make a place where leaders, Soldiers and family members could go and find information and quick resources, emergency hotlines, and learn to improve their resiliency."

Resilience is an individual's ability to bounce back when "something bad happens, in the sim-

plest terms," said Sims. A Soldier's resilience, he said, can come from how they were raised, the experiences they had in their lives, and how they were trained.

Sims said the secretary of the Army, the chief of staff of the Army and the vice chief of staff of the Army want to show the connection between a Soldier's resilience and a Soldier's readiness for duty. That connection, and maintaining that connection, is the impetus for the Ready and Resilient Campaign.

Readiness, Sims said, is the ability of an individual or unit to accomplish its assigned task or mission.

"We are recognizing that it's not just the training we go through that makes us ready, but all the things that we bring as an individual," Sims said.

Col. Theresa Gonzalez, with Army Medical Command, said for an individual, not being ready could be the result of administrative, medical, or mental health issues. Readiness, she said, means that a Soldier is resilient to the many stressors that all Soldiers face.

"The difference between people who do well and sustain their capacity, is what we refer to under the name resilience," Gonzalez said. "A more resilient Soldier is able to accept the same load, allostatic load is the term we would use. They can accept the same allostatic load and continue to perform their mission."

An "allostatic load," she said, describes the physical consequences to one's body that result from repeated exposure to stressors. Those stressors could include, among other things, relationship issues or financial issues, for instance.

Such stressors can affect a Soldier's ability to concentrate, Sims added. And long-term exposure to such stressors, and a Soldier's inability to adapt to them and deal with them can also affect his or her health, Gonzalez added.

Additionally, Gonzalez said, Soldiers rarely have just one stressor in their lives, they often have multiple stressors that can affect them. And the Ready and Resilient Campaign website, and program overall, is meant to help Soldiers identify in one place the things that are affecting their lives and then point them to available solutions.

Sims said the Ready and Resilient Campaign offers "nothing new" in terms of programs, but instead aims to take an array of existing Army programs and optimize them, to make them all more effective. Additionally, he said, some programs that are redundant have been eliminated to ensure resources are directed to other more effective programs.

"Really what we are doing is changing how we view these programs," Sims said. "No longer do we view suicide as unconnected to negative behavior, or sexual assault, or other things. We are now seeing them much more holistically."

The Ready and Resilient Campaign website is just one part of a larger Campaign to emphasize how Soldier resilience directly affects a Soldier's readiness, and the readiness of that Soldier's unit. The goal of the Ready and Resilient Campaign is to make it easier for Soldiers, commanders and families from all components of the Army to find the resources they need to make themselves ready for the war fight, and to help them understand the connection between being resilient and being ready to be a Soldier.

Four Soldiers attend Commander-in-Chief's Inaugural ball

Story and photos by Eric Durr, Division of Military and Naval Affairs

LATHAM -- Four members of the New York Army National Guard were among 230 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who attended the Commander-in-Chief's Inaugural Ball, January 21 as Washington celebrated the second inaugural of President Barack Obama.

The Commander-in-Chief's Ball is one of two inaugural balls which the president sponsors. It is open to members of the military and their guests. President George W. Bush organized the first Commander-in-Chief's Ball in 2005 and President Obama has continued the tradition to honor Active Duty and Reserve service members.

Attending from the New York Army National Guard are:

- Captain Shawn Tabankin, a Rexford resident, who serves as Force Integration Officer for the New York Army National Guard;
- New York State Command Sgt. Major Frank Wicks, a West Sand Lake resident;
- Staff Sgt. Sihoon Chung, a Ridgefield, New Jersey resident who is the New York Army National Guard Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for 2012;
- And Staff Sgt. David Martinsen, a Troy resident who is the New York Army National Guard full-time Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for 2012.

All four service members are veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Tabankin and Wicks were both awarded the Bronze Star for their service and Tabankin has been awarded the Purple Heart.

The four Soldiers were each allowed to bring a guest to the event. **gt**



Command Sgt. Major Frank Wicks, a West Sand Lake resident, and his wife Beth, pose for a photo during the Commander-in-Chief's Inaugural Ball on Monday, January 21.

107th Airlift Wing honors former U.S. President

Story and photos by Senior Master Sgt Ray Lloyd 107th Airlift Wing

BUFFALO, NY -- A wreath was laid at the Western New York gravesite of former U.S. President Millard Fillmore to commemorate the 213th anniversary of his birth.

Col. Kevin Rogers, Maintenance Commander of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing, placed the wreath on behalf of President Barack Obama at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo, NY on January 7, 2013.

The U.S. military honors former presidents by laying wreaths sent by the current president. Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States was a cofounder of the University at Buffalo and school's first chancellor and was also instrumental in starting Buffalo General Hospital and the city's libraries and museums. Fillmore died in 1874.

"It's an honor and privilege to do this on behalf of President Barack Obama and the White House," said Col. Kevin Rogers,

The university has conducted a memorial ceremony annually since 1937. **gt**



BUFFALO--Col. Kevin Rogers, Maintenance Commander of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing, presents a wreath honoring President Millard Fillmore-- who served from 1850 to 1853-- at his gravesite in Forest Lawn Cemetery on January 7, 2013. The military services present wreaths from the current occupant of the White House at the gravesite of each deceased president on the occasion of his birthday.

New York celebrates National Guard 376th birthday

Story by Eric Durr, Division of Military and Naval Affairs

LATHAM -- The New York National Guard's newest general officer teamed up with its oldest Soldier and one of its youngest, to salute the National Guard's 376th birthday at New York National Guard headquarters here, Dec. 13.

Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields, the New York National Guard's director of joint staff, was joined by Chief Warrant Officer 5 Brian Smith, a Latham resident who enlisted in 1973, and Pvt. Shelbi Vanderbogart, of Averill Park, N.Y., who enlisted during the 2011 National Guard Birthday Ceremony, as they cut a birthday cake with ceremonial sabers.

Shields, a 30-year member of the New York Army National Guard from West Sand Lake, N.Y., was promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony just before the cake cutting.

The ceremony, which commemorates the date the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law establishing formal militia companies, has become an annual event at New York National Guard headquarters.

The annual Guard Birthday Ceremony was started under the previous Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, and Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the current Adjutant General of New York, has continued the tradition.

"It's my opportunity to see everybody at once," Murphy explained. "It's a chance to say thanks for everything people have done and when we get together like this it is a happy occasion. We recognize those who have gone above and beyond for the agency as a whole."

The cake-cutting ceremony traditionally involves the oldest Soldier present as well as the youngest. In past years cake cutters have included a World War II veteran who fought in the Pacific with the New York National Guard's 27th Division, and groups of Soldiers and Airmen who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Murphy thanked the National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, along with the state and federal civilian employees of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, for their daily service and dedication, as well as the extra effort they make during emergencies, like the



The New York Army National Guard's newest brigadier general, Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields (center) joins Chief Warrant Officer 5 Brian Smith, who enlisted in 1973, and Pvt. Shelbi Vanderbogart, who enlisted on Dec. 13, 2011 in cutting the National Guard's Birthday Cake during a ceremony held at New York National Guard headquarters on Dec. 13 which marked the 376th anniversary of the birth of the National Guard. The celebration has become an annual event. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Wheeler, 138th PAD.

New York National Guard response to Hurricane Sandy.

Everybody, whether they wear a uniform or not, is part of the same team, Murphy said.

"Our future is bright, whether it is doing our nation's business overseas or helping our neighbors right here at home," he said. "The National Guard stands ready when our state and nation call."

As part of the ceremony Murphy recognized two civilian employees for outstanding contributions: Robert Eckels, the deputy director of administrative services for the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, and Folena Schumaker, who plays a key role in processing State Active Duty payrolls.

Murphy also administered enlistment oaths to six new members of the New York Army National Guard and one new member of the New York Air National Guard.

Mary Kavaney, assistant to New York's Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, who was representing Gov. Andrew Cuomo, thanked the Guard Soldiers and Airmen for their service in responding to Hurricane Sandy earlier this year.

Shields, who joined the New York Army National Guard in 1983, served in a variety of command positions, to include battalion commander, executive officer of the 27th Infantry Brigade in Afghanistan and chief-of-staff of the New York Army National Guard before assuming his current position.

While the National Guard as a whole traces its birth back to the decision of the General Court of Massachusetts to establish set militia regiments, in New York the Citizen Soldier tradition began in 1640 when the Dutch East Indian Company organized the Burgher Guard (Citizens Guard) to help protect their New Amsterdam Colony on Manhattan Island.

The Dutch settlers were instructed to keep a musket in their homes and assemble at the fort when a cannon shot was fired. They were also fined for speaking ill of other members of the Burgher Guard.

When New Amsterdam and New Netherlands

became New York in the 1660s, the English continued the militia tradition.

In fact, the country owes the term National Guard to New York's Citizen-Soldiers.

In 1824, the 7th Regiment of the New York Militia renamed themselves the National Guard to honor the Marquis de Lafayette, a hero of the American Revolutionary War, who was visiting the city. He had commanded a force called the "Guard de National" in the early days of the French Revolution and the 7th Regiment decided that changing their name would be a way to honor him.

The New Yorkers liked the term National

Guard so much that, in 1862, the New York State Militia was renamed the New York National Guard. Other states began using the term and it was enshrined in law by the Dick Act in 1903 which provided for federal funding and regulation of the state militias and made the term National Guard universal across the United States.

Citizen-Soldiers of the militia and National Guard have fought in all of America's wars from King Philips War against Native Americans in 1675 to the struggle in Afghanistan today. **gt**

Shields promoted to Brigedier General

Story by Eric Durr, Division of Military and Naval Affairs

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Col. Raymond Shields, Director of Joint Staff, Joint Force Headquarters, New York National Guard, was promoted to Brig. Gen. by his mother, and under the watchful eye of Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General of New York at the Joint Force Headquarters, Dec. 13, 2012.

Shields was commissioned as a second lieutenant through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Marion Military Institute, in Marion, Alabama in 1983.

While in college he also served in the 75th Field Hospital of the United States Army Reserve in Tuscaloosa Alabama as an enlisted Soldier.

He is a full-time employee of the National Guard. He joined the New York Army National Guard following his commissioning as a platoon leader in the 205th Support Group, based in Troy, New York.

His assignments during his career included commander of Headquarters Company of the 2nd Battalion 105th Infantry, along with commands of infantry companies belonging to 1st Battalion 105th Infantry in Gloversville and Morrisonville, and command of the 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry in Utica and the 106th Regional Training Institute at Camp Smith Training Site near Peakskill. Shields has also served as a key staff officer at the battalion and brigade level and at New York National Guard headquarters as director for training and operations, among other positions. Shields served as the executive officer and deputy commander of



Cindy Hopek (left) looks on as her mother, Alice Snyder, pins one star general's rank onto her brother and Snyders son, Raymond Shields, during Shields promotion ceremony Dec. 13.

the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and was the brigade chief of staff during its deployment to Afghanistan in 2008 2009. The brigade was responsible for Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, the mission to train the Afghan Army and police headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan. Shields was named Chief of Staff of the New York Army National Guard in October 2011 and took over as Director of Joint Staff in July.

He is also a graduate of the State University of New York in Albany with a Bachelors Degree in

History, and holds a Masters of Public Administration from Marist College in Poughkeepsie.

Shields holds a Masters of Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. and a National Security Management Certificate from Syracuse University's Maxwell School.

Shields awards include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge. **gt**

Historic paintings reunited at Military Museum

Story and photos by Eric Durr, Division of Military and Naval Affairs



A detail from "Benedict Arnold, Triumphant at Saratoga". The painting, originally done for the Hendrick Hudson Hotel in Troy has been donated to the New York State Military Museum.,

SARATOGA SPRINGS --Before he was a traitor, Benedict Arnold was an American hero, and the New York State Military Museum now owns a mural that commemorates Arnold's heroic moment at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777.

The museum, run by the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs-- the state agency responsible for the New York National Guard—was presented with the mural by the H. Lee White Marine Museum in Oswego , N.Y.

The 7 foot by 25 foot painting, titled Benedict Arnold, Triumphant at Saratoga, depicts the moment on Oct. 7, 1777 when Arnold personally led an assault that captured a British fortification known as the Breymann's Redoubt.

The capture of this position, held by Hessian troops under General Henrich von Breymann, exposed the British position on Bemis Heights overlooking the Hudson River and forced the British to withdraw and retreat.

The American victory at Saratoga, resulting in the surrender of a complete British Army brought France into the Revolutionary War on the American side.

The painting was one of many done in the 1930s by muralist and military painter George Gray, who was born in 1907 and died in 2004.

Gray was hired by the American Hotels Corporation to paint murals depicting local history in the hotels the company owned.

The mural donated to the Military Museum originally hung in the Hendrick Hudson Hotel in Troy, N.Y., said Military Museum manager Michael Aikey.

In the 1970's, the mural was moved to The Hotel Pontiac in Oswego, N.Y., Aikey said. In 1985 the painting was moved, to the H. Lee White Marine Museum.

The Benedict Arnold painting really didn't fit in with the museum mission, so the Marine Museum decided to give the Gray battlefield mural to the Military Museum at no cost, Aikey said.

This is the second work by George Gray at the Military Museum. A Gray painting called "Breaking The Hindenberg Line", illustrating the Soldiers of the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Division in action during WWI hangs in the museum already. That painting originally hung in the National Guard Armory in Schenectady, and was moved to the museum when the Division of Military and Naval Affairs surplused that building.

One of the fascinating features of the mural is how it's representation of Benedict Arnold

changed over time, Aikey said.

When Gray's mural was originally hung in Troy, the artist's conflicted view of the general, who would become a traitor to the American cause, was evident, he said.

While Arnold is depicted on horseback leading his men to victory, the legend under the painting reads,

"A victory made possible by an American Major General who neither forgotten nor forgiven and nameless to loyal men, nevertheless with bravery and resourcefulness commanded our forces at Quebec, Valcour Island, Fort Stanwix, Ridgefield, and finally at this one of the decisive battles of the world."

The stigma of Arnold as a traitor was played up by two panels Gray painted at the sides of the mural, Aikey pointed out.

The left panel features a map with Arnold's victories, and a silhouette of the general with the caption, "An American Major General." The right panel illustrates the memorial to Arnold at the Saratoga National Battle Field known as the Boot Monument.

The Boot Monument commemorates Arnold, who was injured in the leg while leading the attack, without naming him.

According to Aikey, the idea for a painting commemorating a heroic Benedict Arnold came from historical fiction novelist Kenneth Roberts (1885-1957). Roberts was a best-selling author and two of his books, focused on the military campaigns Arnold led.

"Roberts, sometime after 1937, contacted either Gray or the American Hotels Corporation and lobbied to give Benedict Arnold his due for the flawed general's important contribution to the American cause," Aikey said.

"As a result of Roberts' efforts, the mural today credits Arnold in the legend, adds his name to the map panel, and replaces the Boot Monument panel with a panel representing Arnold at the Battle of Valcour Island, he added.

The new mural is currently in storage. The Friends of the New York State Military Museum, a private non-profit which raises money to support the museum, will be asked to raise money so the painting can be displayed. **gt**

Troops lend a hand for holiday trees

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Colette Martin, 109th Airlift Wing

BALLSTON SPA, N.Y. -- New York Air National Guard volunteers from the 109th Airlift Wing at the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia N.Y. were on hand Dec. 7 at the Ellms Tree Farm to help load over 150 Christmas trees onto a special delivery FedEx truck.

The donated trees will be sent to military bases around the country to support troops and military families this holiday season. Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing volunteered their time from work and some, their day off, to assist the load out of holiday trees at Ellms Tree Farm for "Trees for Troops."

The Christmas SPIRIT Foundation and FedEx – in cooperation with the National Christmas Tree Association – organized this nationwide effort called Trees for Troops to brighten the holiday of deployed military members and their families by delivering a real Christmas tree right to their living room. Overseas, some military bases receive a Christmas tree delivery as well, bringing members together and bringing back wonderful memories of Christmas's past.

"It's just so cool, an awesome idea. I know if I were deployed I'd love seeing a homegrown Christmas tree," said Sr. Airman Brianna Tator.

With the continued help and support from Chip and Sally Ellms, this year marks the eighth season that Trees for Troops will be loaded at Ellms Christmas Tree Farm.

Nineteen members of the 109th Airlift Wing came out to help load up the FedEx truck this year. "It's a good cause", said Staff Sergeant Kelly Eustis of the Security Forces Squadron. "A lot of us have been deployed during the holiday season. It's a tough time to be away. But just the smell of a real Christmas tree really reminds you of home."

In addition to the trees, hand-made Christmas cards were attached to many of the trees, made by students of area schools and donated to show their support to military members and their families.

Last holiday season, Trees for Troops collected and delivered 19,229 real Christmas trees to 69 military bases in the U.S. and overseas.

Since the start of the program in 2005, FedEx has helped to deliver, on average, 17,000 real Christmas trees each year at home and abroad. Last year, the "Trees for Troops" project and FedEx reached a new milestone by delivering their 100,000th real Christmas tree. Around the country, Christmas Tree growers and individuals donate the trees, while FedEx provides the shipping for them. **gt**



BALLSTON SPA, N.Y. -- New York Air National Guard members of the 109th Airlift Wing from Scotia, N.Y. volunteer their time to assist FedEx driver Don Pelletier load Christmas Trees here at Ellms Christmas Tree Farm Dec. 7. Nearly 20 Airmen volunteered to assist in the annual "Trees for Troops" loading of about 150 donated trees bound for military installations and families around the country and the globe. Photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg, New York Army National Guard.

RTI NCO's prepare for Soldier of the Year Board

Story and photos courtesy of the 106th Regional Training Institute

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor -- Soldiers from the 106th Regional Training Institute (RTI) tested here in February 2013 to qualify for the New York Army National Guard Soldiers of the Year Board.

The RTI holds this training event annually for select NCO's to compete and test their basic Soldier skills and knowledge. From the staff of the RTI, one traditional and one full-time NCO is chosen after the competition that included a 50 question test, eight round-robin Warrior Tasks, a map reading exercise, physical fitness test and board appearance. The senior NCOs of the RTI also rated the ability of NCO competitors' ability to recite the NCO Creed.

The training further helps sharpen our NCO's ability as subject matter experts and instructors, said Lt. Col. Robert Giordano, commander of the 106th RTI's 1st Battalion.

"Thanks to Command Sgt. Maj. Corey Cush's leadership and mentoring, this training event is a priority that provides added value to the Soldier and our units," Giordano said.

"The RTI's cadre of highly trained and professional NCO's is unique in that it is a smaller regiment comprised almost entirely of senior NCOs. RTI NCOs are distinctive because they have been intentionally selected from the force because of the subject matter expertise, communication skills and proven leadership. The NCO's who are selected to compete for the RTI Soldier of the Year Board are even extra special," he added. **gt**



Sgt. 1st Class David Colliton from the Joint Force Headquarters Detachment conducts hands-on testing of the SINCGARS radio during the best warrior competition for the 106th Regional Training Institute held at Camp Smith Feb. 9. Photo by Lt. Col. Robert Giordano, 106th RTI.

The Soldier Medic: Spirit and Tradition

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Lamont Pugh, 106th Regional Training Institute

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor – Knowing that the basic mission of the Army is to fight and win in combat, it follows that the mission of the Soldier Medic (68W) is to provide medical treatment necessary to sustain the Soldier.

And just as the training of Soldiers, leaders, and units is vital to ensure readiness of the force, training must also provide Soldier Medics with opportunities to practice their skills in the field. Conditions should be tough and realistic as well as physically and mentally challenging.

Over this past decade of overseas combat operations, the Army enhanced and redefined the combat medic, 68W Health Care Specialist. The new Soldier Medic embodies the spirit and tradition of the combat medic combined with a mandate for enhanced technical proficiency and medical competency. The Soldier Medic serves alongside our Army's combat Soldiers, as well as our Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF) around the world.

The skills of the Soldier Medic must be sustained and that is where Camp Smith and the instructors of the 106th RTI play a role. Many 68W duty positions do not allow opportunities for Soldier Medics to practice their skills on a routine basis. The Soldier Medic must validate key medical skills every 12 months, across a range of validation test tables, medical skills tests and the Annual Combat Medic Skills Validation Test.

The 68W Sustainment Course conducted at Camp Smith provides the



GRAFENWOEHR, Germany-- 1st Lt. Alan Vaughn (left), a laboratory officer assigned to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, straps a simulated casualty to a skid; in preparation for transport as part of Combat Testing Lane 3 during the 2011 U.S. Army Europe Expert Field Medical Badge Standardization and Testing held Aug. 1-13, 2011. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Wheeler.

necessary sustainment training to re-certify their skills. The next course for 68W will be held from June 5-15, 2013. Contact your unit Readiness NCO for course vacancies to keep our Soldier Medics ready, trained and certified. **gt**



**2013 New York Army National Guard
Combatives Championship
Sponsored by the
106TH REGIMENT – REGIONAL TRAINING**



MODERN ARMY COMBATIVES



Tournament Info:

Minimum Level 1 Combatives
Certification required to compete!

WHO: Soldiers and Airmen within the
NYARNG/NYANG

WHERE: Camp Smith Training Site, Bldg.
502 GYM

WHEN: 26-28 July 2013

Registration forms must be received:

NLT: 25 JUNE 2013

Weight ins: (1200-1500) 26 JULY 2013

All Matches: 27 JUL 2013

Championship Bouts & Awards:

28 JUL 2013

*Note: All registrations must be e-
mailed to:

eddie.hernandez2@us.army.mil

Weight Classes:

Flyweight:

Male 125 lbs. & under
Female 136 lbs. & under

Lightweight:

Male 140 lbs. & under:
Female 153 lbs. & under

Welterweight:

Male 155 lbs. & under
Female 169 lbs. & under

Middleweight:

Male 170 lbs. & under
Female 185 lbs. & under

Cruiserweight:

Male 185 lbs. & under
Female 198 lbs. & under

The New York Army National Guard 106th Regional Training Institute and the RTI's 1st Battalion will host a state-wide Combatives Competition for members of the New York Army and Air National Guard this summer at Camp Smith. The intent is to test the combatives skills and instill Warrior Ethos for New York State Military Forces. The Competition will select the best representative to compete in the annual Army National Guard and All Army Combatives Championships.

