

53rd Troop Scoop

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About the 53rd Troop Scoop

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53rd Troop Scoop

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FRONT COVER (LEFT): Soldiers assigned to the NYARNG's CERFP elements practise their new found skills during the NYARNG's Defense Support to Civil Authorities exercise held at the Rockland County Fire Training Center located in Pomona, NY, November 20, 2010.

BACK COVER: The NYARNGs 827th Engineers are forward deployed to Southeastern Afghanistan to assist in the building of Afghanistan infrastructure as well as the completion of ongoing FOB projects.





Brig. Gen. Mike Swezey
53rd Troop Command
“For The Soldier”

Fellow Soldiers,
Greetings and happy holidays. This is certainly a joyful time of year filled with fam-

ily gatherings, holiday events, and celebrations with friends. I want to take this time to ask you to remember our fellow Soldiers fighting and serving overseas, specifically the 827th Engineers, 442nd Military Police, and 501st Ordnance Battalion (EOD), in support of our great Nation. Please keep them and their families in your thoughts as they are separated from one another during this holiday season. They, like most of you, have sacrificed a lot, and I am sure they would appreciate your support.

I want to thank all of you for your service and sacrifice as you go about fulfilling your duties as members of the 53rd Troop Command.

Being a Citizen Soldier is not an easy job and I am grateful for how all of you balance your civilian and family obligations with the commitment you have made to serving your state and country. I ask you to help me remember the fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who have given the ultimate sacrifice in support of our nation as you give thanks around the dinner table with your families this year.

As the dawn of a New Year approaches and the War on Terror continues, I thank you and I am grateful to know that the Soldiers I serve beside will answer the call to duty when it comes again.

On behalf of myself, the 53rd Troop Command, and my family at home, we would like to wish you all a merry and safe holiday season.

I would like to echo the Commanders sentiments concerning the Holiday season and keeping our fellow deployed Soldiers in your thoughts. We have great Soldiers who have just returned, are preparing, or are currently deployed. We are proud of all of them and wish them the very best.

I would also like to discuss a critical topic, Enlisted Promotions. We are well in to the Enlisted Promotion cycle. The packets for selection of SGM/CSM have been submitted, reviewed and the new list will be published in the near future.

The packets for selection of MSG/ISG will be due shortly with each grade following. The proper completion of these packets is critical to our organization. The packets MUST be reviewed by every member of the NCO Support channel up to the promotion level. For example, I (and every member of the NCO Support Channel) should have reviewed every packet submitted for promotion to E9. The Brigade CSM's (and every member of the NCO Support Channel) MUST review every packet submitted for promotion to E7 and E8. The Battalion CSM's (and every member of the NCO Support Channel) MUST review every packet submitted for promotion to E5 and E6. These reviews will ensure that we have afforded every Soldier the opportunity to fairly compete for promotions within the NYARNG. Every Soldiers promotion is important, and we

have an obligation to ensure we are performing these critical reviews. We play a significant role in who will be the future leaders of the NYARNG. This is an area where we must be fully involved.



Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks
53rd Troop Command
“For The Soldier”

Annual Event Remembers Soldiers Deployed Over Holidays

Story and Pictures by Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs, NYARNG

QUEENSBURY, NY (12/24/2010)- More than 320 Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, veterans and military family members and friends took part in the annual Christmas Eve Road March held Friday, Dec. 24 at the New York State Armory here.

It was the largest turnout since Sgt 1st Class Arthur Coon, the New York Army National Guard recruiter here, organized the first march in 2003.

Specialist Ashley Towers, a local Soldier home on leave from Iraq (assigned for deployment to the Queens, NY-based 442nd Military Police Company), marched carrying a guidon of her unit, which continues to serve near Baghdad.

Many marchers wore dog tags carrying the names of more than 200 deployed service members.



QUEENSBURY, NY-- More than 320 participants head out on the annual Christmas Eve Road March Friday morning Dec. 24 (Photo by LTC Paul Fanning, New York Army National Guard)

In addition to New York National Guard members from many units, one group of marchers, comprised of military Family members and friends, participated on behalf of a deployed platoon of Soldiers assigned to the Army's 10th Mountain

Division based at Fort Drum. Family members from the New York National Guard's Scotia-based Headquarters 501st Ordnance Battalion also took part. The unit was mobilized in September.

Some area mothers of Active Duty Soldiers serving in Afghanistan marched carrying dog tags which bear the names of their loved ones.

The first Christmas Road March was conducted in 2003 when Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, which was then based at the now-closed Glens Falls Armory, were away from home in Iraq over Christmas. Other Soldiers assigned to the armory, from the 466th Area Medical Company, got together to conduct a road march, the military term for a walking movement, in their honor.

Since then, the march has become a tradition to recognize the sacrifices being made by all American service men and women who are on duty away from their Families during the Christmas season.



Spec. Ashley Towers from Corinth, NY, assigned to the Queens-based 442nd Military Police Company now serving in Iraq, speaks to reporter Marie Luby from WTEN TV 10 News in Albany prior to the annual Christmas Eve Road March.

Troops Volunteer Their Time To Benefit Western NY Food Bank

Story and Picture by Spc. Jimmy Bedgood, 42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

Buffalo, N.Y. -- Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 105th Military Police Company here fought a battle against hometown hunger during the fifth annual Heroes' March Against Hunger Dec. 4.

One Guardsman in particular was vigilant about this mission because last year at this time he confronted with the harsh reality of disparity he sought to eradicate.

The company presented Spc. Alex Gonzalez special recognition for his extra efforts to support the cause long after Soldiers concluded their march of more than 11-miles from the Williamsville Town Hall to Buffalo City Hall.

"Gonzalez goes above and beyond collecting in his neighborhood,"

said Sgt. Kevin Lang, a fellow Soldier in the company and founder of the Heroes' March. Gonzalez went door to door passing out a combined total of over 400 flyers and letters and collected food from his neighbors. He was motivated in part, he said, after Lang and other members of the 105th MP Company helped him last year during the holidays when he fell upon hard times.

"My son was hospitalized last year at this time," Gonzalez said. "Members of the unit came to the hospital and asked me if I needed anything."

His commitment to the Hunger March intensified after receiving the support of his unit during a difficult time, Gonzalez said.

"I don't think people should suffer during the Holidays," he said. "This was my way of giving back."

The potential for wintry weather would not stop the Soldiers' plan to

go on with the march. More than eight inches of snow fell at Buffalo Airport in the hours before the march, with some two to three feet of lake effect snow falling south of Buffalo.

Buffalo received national attention when motorists were stranded on the New York State Thruway for some 12 hours when a four-mile stretch of highway was closed due to those lake effect snows on Dec. 2.

"We knew we were going to do it, regardless of the weather," Lang said.

The moral was so high. We knew we were going to do it, regardless of the weather," Lang said. "Anytime they [the Soldiers] can get out and do something like this they get fired-up."

For the morning of the march, the Western New York skies cleared, winds were low and the brisk temperature hovered near 20 degrees. But the 105th showed no signs of slowing down along their route of march until they reached their destination.

"Once we got moving, the motivation from the event helped keep us warm," Lang said.

The food collected by the 105th MP Company was donated to the Western New York Food Bank to benefit families in the area during the holiday season.

Supporters of the Heroes' March included the Wegman's Grocery Stores, the Vietnam Veterans/Legacy Veterans and the Buffalo area Recruiting and Retention Command.



Spc. Alex Gonzalez, front and center, is recognized by Sgt. Kevin Lang during a formation in front of Buffalo's City Hall following the Hero's March Against Hunger Dec. 4 by Soldiers of the NYARNG's 105th Military Police Company.

53RD FORWARD DEPLOYED!



South African Reserve Chief And Staff Observe NYARNG SRPs

Story by Joint Force Headquarters
Public Affairs

Latham, NY—Members of the New York Army National Guard completed a Soldier Readiness Program Dec. 3 and 4 at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

Contracted civilian workers and Medical Command staff joined forces bringing a program that maintains and tracks Soldier health and readiness. The SRP prepares servicemembers to deploy.

Soldiers make their way through 12 stations that review, update, and fix any health issues. Anything from mental health, vision, dental, and even immunizations are covered.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Hannon, a member of MedCom and Joint Force Headquarters, works to bring these programs to the servicemembers. He travels to Fort Drum, Camp Smith, and other installations that each unit has the opportunity to meet required standards for soldiers.

Keeping track of each Soldier's medical records is essential in having a healthy and ready unit."

"To ensure that the process runs smoothly, it is important that each soldier does his own part, he said. Soldiers are asked to bring their eyeglasses, any medical documentation, and to fill out a physical health assessment beforehand."

"Everything that we have to do for them slows the process down," Hannon said. "But the more work they need with their mouth, the slower the process is."

Soldiers needing fillings, root canals, wisdom tooth removal, or any other dental work, receive it on the spot. While the need for this is substantial, it does slow the process

down.

After completing dental, the Soldiers continue on to get blood drawn and vaccinations. Sgt. Robert Lamorte, a medical specialist with MedCom, helps to ensure that each Soldier gets the necessary vaccinations and testing.

Organizing the week before allows the medical staff to prepare immunization records for each Soldier. This makes processing go more quickly. The shots are given and blood is drawn with only a brief sit in a chair and a no fuss attitude.

With only three and some folding tables, hundreds of Soldiers are processed through this station without a problem.

"We don't worry about it," Lamorte said. "We've all been doing this for a long time and most Soldiers know what is happening and are prepared to let us do our job." Moving through the different medical stations, the Soldier's eyesight is tested as well. The vision station can hold people up, Hannon said.

Any servicemember with glasses or contacts are sent to an extra station to get an exam to update their prescription.



NYARNG Col. Craig Meinking explains NYARNG health check procedures to South African Major General Roy Andersen, the Chief of Defence Reserves for the South African National Defence Force. Representatives from the South African National Defense Forces-Reserve Forces visit the Division of Military and Naval Affairs during annual Soldier Readiness Processing December 4, 2010. The State Partnership Program is a National Guard initiative designed to grow relationships, enhance international security and promote the exchange of free ideas and open doors of cooperation in political, military, economic and social realms. (Photo by Spec. Mary Hogle, 138th Public Affairs Detachment)

Mental health is something that is reviewed individually with each Soldier. Depression or other mental issues effects not only the individual but the unit as well.

A substantial amount of coordination and planning goes into setting up Soldier Readiness Processing. While the time spent waiting in line could be extensive at times, each unit came away from the SRP with updated personnel records and an accurate gage of their Soldiers overall health and readiness.

"It's good for everyone," Hannon said. "Being ready to deploy looks good for the state, the unit, and on down to the individual soldier to make sure they are both physically and mentally ready to deploy."

Joint Disaster Training Benefits New York National Guard, Civilian First Responders

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Thomas Wheeler and Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

POMONA, NY (11/20/2010) - React to, and contain, a structure fire at a suspected drug lab, or worse, a suspected terrorist attack involving chemical weapons.

That was the mission of the Soldiers, Airman, and New York Guard members assigned to the New York National Guard's 24th Civil Support Team for Weapons of Mass Destruction and the CERFP (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package), were given at an exercise held at the Rockland County Fire Training Center here.

More than 400 members of the New York Army and Air National



POMONA, NY--New York Army National Guardsmen practice evacuating the victim of a terrorist attack from a contaminated environment at the Rockland County Fire Training Center here on Saturday, Nov. 20. More than 400 members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, along with volunteers of the New York Guard, the state defense force participated in the weekend exercise along with civilian first responders.

Guard, the volunteer New York Guard (A state defense force), and participating Rockland County-based law enforcement and emergency response took part in the Defense Support to Civil Authorities exercise.

Like a clip from the movie "Sum of All Fears" with Ben Affleck and Morgan Freeman, figures in yellow and blue chemical protection suits with hi-tech gadgets that looked like they were straight out of an episode of Star Trek, checked the site for deadly chemicals and evacuated the wounded to decontamination tents for treatment.

"These exercises are mandatory to maintain our proficiency," said Lt. Col. David, Gagnon, commander of the 104th Military Police Battalion and the CERFP. "The

CERFP generally rotates the location of the exercise to integrate with different communities throughout New York State in order to show local authorities what capabilities we bring."

The exercise began with a call to the local fire department about a structure fire and quickly resulted in a call for back up from the Rockland County Hazardous Materials Team.

"My team went in with normal firefighter protective equipment and reported back that there were multiple casualties with a heavy, strong chemical odor," said Pete Byrne, Incident Commander and Assistant Fire Chief for the Pomona, NY, Fire Company. "At that point I backed our crews out and called for the Rockland County hazardous materials team," added Bryne.

"They [Rockland County HAZMAT] arrived on the scene and went down with meters confirming that there were multiple casualties



NYNG First Responders check the entrance of this building with Nuclear Biological Chemical detection equipment to ensure it is safe for personnel to enter.

and several DOA's (Dead on Arrivals), two live casualties, heavy smoke conditions in the building,' added Bryne. "What they found inside made us realize that this was much more than just a normal household materials incident so we backed out again and called in the military to come in and assist."

The New York National Guard's 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (CST) quickly responded and performed a thorough check of the area to determine what chemical, biological or radiological agents may be present.

After determining the danger, extraction elements of the CERFP descended on the scene and evacuated the wounded for treatment at decontamination facilities set up on the hill above the scene.

New York Army and Air National Guard personnel quickly responded to casualties requiring assistance and separated each based on ambulatory category treating and decontamination the wounded as well as response personnel.

Gagnon and Byrne both stressed the benefits of recurring joint civilian, military disaster training.

Once they see it they really start to understand what type of force we are and how we can help to facilitate any kind of decontamination and treatment of casualties when their capa-

bilities have been exceeded," added Gagnon. "It also helps us to better integrate and learn about local authorities and what assets they have," said Gagnon.

"I think it's a win," Bryne said of the exercise. "It establishes relationships between emergency services and the military that from our experience are critical to the success of an incident response."

The CERFP currently consists of Soldiers assigned to the Kingston based 104th MP Battalion, the Brooklyn based 222nd Chemical Company, search and extraction teams from the Kingston based 1156th Engineer Company, medical elements of the New York Air National Guard and volunteers from the New York Guard.

The New York Air National Guard provides medical personnel for the CERFP medical section. Airmen

from the 105th Security Forces Squadron of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, provided the security detachment for the exercise.

The 104th recently took control of the CERFP mission from the 102nd MPs based in Auburn, NY and conducted training and validations on July 1, 2010 at the Camp Smith Training Area, Cortlandt Manor, NY.

The New York National Guard trains regularly to work with civilian authorities in natural disasters or terrorist attacks, said Brig. Gen. Renwick Payne, the Director of the Joint Staff.

"Our Soldiers and Airmen are trained and ready to respond to any emergency around the state from ice storms, to flooding, to chemical, radiological or biological attacks, he said.



POMONA, NY--(above) New York Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Roman Rushlion, Recon Platoon Leader with the 222nd Chemical Company, Brooklyn, NY, fits a chemical protective mask on a Soldier ready to go into the exercise site to place chemical detectors. (left) CERFP Soldiers prepare an injured victim for decontamination enroute to receiving medical treatment for his wounds.

204th FSC Cooks Compete for Top DA Level Culinary Honors

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle, 369th Sus. Bde.

Cortlandt Manor N.Y. -- It took time, determination and teamwork in the Mobile Kitchen Trailer (MKT) to put together a holiday meal November 13th at Camp Smith, but the cooks of 204th Engineer Battalion, Forward Support Company had the temperature under control.

The Battalion is in its final cook off of the Philip A. Connelly awards program for excellence in Army food service, and now leave it up to the three judges to determine if they are the best in the National Guard.

"The best thing I can say right now with all the teams involved at this level is that they are operating at the highest standards," said Michael P. Pizzuto, judge for the Connelly competition. "We look at everything from the forms required by the military for authorization, the training involved, how to operate equipment, safety, and if the entire field site is in compliance with field site operations,"

The Connelly program was established in March 1968 to recognize excellence in Army food service and is named for the late Philip A. Connelly, former President of the International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA) and was responsible for obtaining IFSEA's sponsorship with the Army.

The objective of the awards pro-



CAMP SMITH--NYARNG Pvt. Daiamy Osario, a New York City resident and a member of the 204th Eng. Bn. mess section, prepares vegetables to accompany a turkey dinner the cooks made on Saturday, Nov. 13, as they competed to earn the Philip A. Connelly Award of Excellence in Army Food Service. The mess team from the Binghamton-based battalion, prepared a dinner with all the trimmings for the battalion's Soldiers conducting weekend training here. Graded on their ability to produce a hot, tasty meal in field conditions, the NYARNG Soldiers are competing against five other mess sections to be the best in the Army National Guard.

gram includes improving professionalism of food service personnel in order to provide the best quality product and service to military members, and to provide recognition for excellence in the preparation and service of food in Army dining facilities, and during field kitchen operations.

"The Connelly competition is where we come out to a field setting and what we do is cook our food in an MKT, and our whole goal is to feed Soldiers in the field," said Ashley R. Biase. "We are cooking for about 96 Soldiers and we have about four and a half hours to prepare our holiday meal."

Awards for winning the competition include scholarships to a presti-

gious culinary school, trophy bowls and plaques awarded at a special ceremony, attendance at IFSEA's annual awards ceremony, and recognition throughout the Army for significant accomplishments.

The cooks of the 204th Eng. Btn., made it to the final cook off by winning the regional competition in June which was held in Binghamton, N.Y.

"Winners will not be announced until January, but I definitely think we have a good chance to win," said Chad J. Clark, commander, 204th Eng. Btn. "These Soldiers did a great job during the regional competition and are highly motivated, and I hope we are at the awards ceremony in April."

53rd Troop Command Stand Alones

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor-- (Right) Area emergency responders work on a Soldier simulating a car accident victim during an emergency preparedness drill conducted here on Saturday, Oct. 23. The exercise involved personnel from Camp Smith Training Site, 106th Regional Training Institute, The 727 MP Co. Force Protection personnel from Task Force Empire Shield, the Peekskill Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Continental Village Fire Department, Lifenet of NY, the Peekskill Office of Emergency Management and Garrison Ambulance Corps. The exercise tested the ability of Camp Smith personnel to work with local first responders.



GLENVILLE--(Left) Sgt. 1st Class Michael Horner a member of the 1108th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) is all smiles after greeting his family after returning from Operation New Dawn. The 1108th mobilized to Kuwait last December and supervised eight EOD Teams that were spread between three countries in the region. (Above) Local fire departments provided an escort for the returning Soldiers of the 1108th as well as raising this flag to salute the returning troops.

