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

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Should I stay or should I go?

For the better part of a decade now, our New York National Guard recruiting has consistently brought new Soldiers and Airmen into our force, year after year, despite the challenges we've all seen of deployments both here and overseas. It continues to impress me on the numbers of young men and women who understand the roles and responsibilities our Guard plays here in New York State and in the warfight, and they continue to step forward in our communities to join our ranks.

But those same Soldiers and Airmen face a difficult choice near the end of their initial service obligation. Do they reup and stay in our Guard family to meet new challenges, new responsibilities and become our leaders of tomorrow? Or do they walk away with the confidence of their accomplishments and pride of service for that time, leaving the uniform behind?

Retention of quality people defines our force. Ensuring the very best of our young men and women serving today are still in our ranks tomorrow builds the continuity and keeps our force at its historic peak of excellence.

The National Guard Bureau wants to retain two out of every three Soldiers after their initial term on enlistment. Here in New York, we're seeing around half of our Soldiers choosing to stay past their first term. We can do better.

Those of us who have served beyond a first-term obligation know the demands are great. Yet so too are the rewards. Staying in uniform gives you opportunities for financial, educational and perhaps most importantly, leadership rewards.

Just this past year, our Army National Guard paid out over $3.5 Million in retention bonuses to some 425 Soldiers who decided to reenlist. Nine other Soldiers saw student loan repayments for nearly half a million more.

Still others took the financial benefit available for their service and went to school. This year some 264 Soldiers utilized the Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program, allowing our Guard members to receive more than $600,000 in tuition incentives paid out.

And membership provides opportunity for affordable health insurance through Tricare Reserve Select. Our traditional Soldiers and Airmen can choose to enroll in coverage for themselves for about $50 a month or cover themselves and their families for about $205 a month.

In our formations of young airmen or privates are the first sergeants, sergeants major or chief master sergeants of tomorrow's units. They are future officer candidates and warrant officers. They are our leaders of the force that will tackle natural disasters, homeland security and contingency operations with confidence, experience, resources and training honed today.

So my message is two-fold.

To our current leaders, make retention a clear goal for your formation. Make sure that we conduct innovative and effective training. Set high standards for our organization and model them for tomorrow's leaders.

Look for those Guardsmen and women who need to stay in our ranks and ensure they understand their military career path for schools, training and assignments. Make sure we speak to them early enough in their reenlistment window to communicate all the benefits of staying in uniform. Be the mentor that makes successful careers.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

And to our Soldiers and Airmen, take pride in your achievements of your first years of service. Our New York Army and Air National Guard have never been this good or this capable. Our response for security or disasters here at home is known across the state. Our training and readiness to perform overseas is proven. Each of you contributes to that.

Focus your energies to make yourself ready and responsive. Build on that in teams, sections, units to do your job, your mission as part of the bigger team, as part of our profession of arms.

So look over the horizon and make a commitment to be part of our team for the challenges ahead. Be the Soldier and Airmen who remains ready, reliable and relevant for our communities and our nation.

As we look at all the uncertainty ahead, whether in military budgets, school slots, deployments or threats, one thing remains unchanged: we need those men and women who stepped up to join our ranks to stay in our ranks.

Lt. Col. Chris Panzer, 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Battalion Commander, promotes Spc. Laila Barnes to Sgt. during the Oct. 6 drill. The 42nd routinely uses each Saturday drill to recognize Soldiers accomplishments via awards, commendations and promotions before close of business. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd ID.

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FORT DRUM -- Pathfinder Sgt. Masami Yamakado Masami of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 142 Assault Helicopter Battalion Conducts Pathfinder Operations (Established Helicopter Landing Zones) in Support of C Troop, 2nd Bn., 101st Cavalry Scout Platoons Air Assault Movement on Aug. 13.

FRONT COVER: Soldiers from C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry descended onto Indian Lake on the back side of Fort Drum on Aug. 10-11 to conduct their first Zodiac boat training after a long period of preparation. The New York Naval Militia was also on hand to oversee the training and provide flotation devices and a rescue boat. See page 16 for the full story. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division. See also page 16 for full story.
BACK COVER: New York Air National Guard Airmen from the 103rd Rescue Squadron of the 106th Rescue Wing, conduct a training jump on July 30 near Calverton. The group consisted of several Pararescue Jumpers, Survival Escape Resistance and Evasion Specialists and a Combat Rescue Officer. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

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www.dmna.ny.gov

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Inspector General Corner

Inspector General Transitions After 26 Years of Service

Commentary by Col. Daren Sears, Joint Force Headquarters Inspector General

I want to take this opportunity to thank the men and women of the New York National Guard for allowing me to serve as your Inspector General for the past two and a half years. I am moving on to retirement after twenty-six years in the Air Force, but I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to pass on my observations gleaned from this position.

I learned quickly that the New York Army National Guard and New York Air National Guard have a diverse group of mission sets. I also learned quickly that the 16,000 members of the New York National Guard are executing those mission sets daily for the State and Nation at locations throughout New York and around the world.

What you do every day makes me proud to wear the uniform, and I will always be a proponent of the great things you have accomplished and will continue to accomplish. I salute you!

I also know that 99 percent of our Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians are working hard every day in a professional manner to execute missions that help the citizens of New York and enable the strategy of our Nation.

One may think that the over 700 IG cases my office has worked during my tenure would leave me somewhat jaded to negative things that happen. I assure you that this is not the case. I know the good far outweighs any negative. However, I ask you to re-double your efforts to ensure the perception of the New York National Guard remains outstanding. Outstanding for all of the good things you are accomplishing and outstanding because of all the good and hard working men and women that this organization has in it.

The way to continue the great reputation of the New York National Guard is to ensure that you wear the uniform for the right reasons. Being part of this organization is not all about you, it's about being part of the one percent that answer the call to duty. It's about being a professional. It's about understanding and living our core values. The foundation of what we do is rooted in our core values, standards, and discipline.

For the 99 percent that I mentioned earlier, you get it. For the other one percent, I ask that you reaffirm the reason you took the oath to begin with; to serve the State of New York and the Nation. Don't allow yourself to tarnish your own image and that of the New York National Guard by failing to uphold the standards, values, and discipline required of you.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Air National Guard Col. Maureen Murphy into the Inspector General position as my replacement. In her previous position as Director of Staff for Headquarters, New York Air National Guard, she is well versed in the people, units, and missions that make up the New York National Guard. She will do a great job serving you as the Inspector General.

The active component Air Force should work a replacement for my position by next summer, but in the meantime, Col. Murphy will do a tremendous job in adjudicating any issues that come to the office. I would also like to thank the Soldiers and Airmen I have worked with in the Inspector General office for their professionalism and dedication.

Thank you for your service. I am proud to have been given the opportunity to serve with you. Keep up the great work you do! **gt**

Final Honors for WWII New York National Guardsman

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Va. - World War II veteran Pfc. Bernard Gavrin, a former member of the New York Army National Guard's 105th Infantry Regiment, is laid to rest with full military honors here Sept. 12. Gavrin was listed as missing in action in Saipan following the July 7, 1944 infamous suicide attack by Japanese forces, considered the largest banzai attack of the war. Gavrin's remains were recovered in September 2013 from an unmarked burial site by a Japanese non-governmental organization interested in recovering Japanese Soldiers from the battle in Saipan. The remains were handed over to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command which identified them as Pfc. Gavrin. Photo by Maj. Paul Hernandez.

New Army PT Uniforms Result of Soldier Feedback

By David Vergun, Army News Service

Soldiers in black fleece caps do physical training at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

WASHINGTON -- A new Army Physical Fitness Uniform will become available servicewide, beginning in October next year.

Its design is based on Soldier feedback, said Col. Robert Mortlock, program manager, Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

There's a three-year phase-in program and the cost will be about $3 less than the current IPFU, or Improved Physical Fitness Uniform, he said.

The Army Physical Fitness Uniform, or APFU, program was actually initiated because of Soldier feedback. A February 2012 Army Knowledge Online survey of some 76,000 Soldiers found that Soldiers had issues with the IPFU, he said. They liked its durability but believed the IPFU's textiles had not kept pace with commercially-available workout clothes. They also had concerns with other things, particularly modesty issues with the shorts, especially in events like sit-ups. Those concerns were expressed by males as well as females.

The issue was of such concern that Soldiers were purchasing spandex-like under garments to wear beneath the trunks, Mortlock said.

Another issue was that there were not enough female sizes in the IPFU, he said, meaning IPFUs that would fit all shapes and sizes.

PEO Soldier worked closely with the Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Center to develop a new physical training uniform that met Soldier concerns but did not cost more than the IPFU. The APFU met the goal of controlling costs and improving performance by adopting lighter high tech moisture wicking fabric. The APFU introduces multiple sizes, including female sizing, and has solved the modesty issue, Mortlock said.

The fabric of the trunks will continue to be made with durable nylon fabric, but it is lighter than and not as stiff as the IPFU trunks. Also, there will be a four-way stretch panel inside the trunks, sort of like bicycle pants, which eliminates the need for Soldiers to purchase their own under garments. The trunks include a bigger key pocket and a convenient and secure ID card pouch.

In all, some 34 changes were made to the new APFU.

The APFU has five parts: the jacket and pants which resemble warm ups, trunks or shorts, and the short and long-sleeve T-shirts, he said. The ensemble is modular; meaning parts of the APFU can be mixed and matched, for example, short- or long-sleeve T-shirts with the pants or trunks. During Physical Training formations, the platoon sergeants will determine the appropriate combo.

Soldier feedback not only determined the form, fit and function of the APFU, it also determined its look. The Army made prototypes of the APFU in a variety of colors and designs and taken to a series of Soldier town halls at Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Bragg, N.C. and Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Soldier feedback was solicited about the design features as well as the preferred color scheme.

Then, the Army launched a second Army Knowledge Online survey, in which more than 190,000 responded, Mortlock said. Soldiers overwhelmingly favored a black T-shirt with gold lettering and a black jacket with gold chevron and the Army logo.

Then it was on to testing.

About 876 Soldiers at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Join Base Lewis-McChord, Fort Bragg, Fort Sill, Okla., Fort Hood and Fort Jackson, S.C. wore the APFU during physical training for a three-month period, providing feedback on form, fit, comfort and so on, Mortlock said. The APFU was also tested for things like durability, laundering, fiber strength, color fastness and color maintenance after laundering.

A key part of testing addressed the concern of some Soldiers that a black shirt may cause over-heating. Instrumented tests showed that the lighter weight material and superior moisture wicking fabric more than compensated for any increased heat from the dark material.

The response to the APFU was "overwhelmingly positive," he said, particularly with the trunks. **gt**

Army to Issue New Combat Uniform Next Summer

By Army Public Affairs

WASHINGTON -- The Army has confirmed what Soldiers have been hearing rumors of for months now: A new camouflage pattern for combat uniforms is on the way with a number of improvements.

Beginning in the fall of 2015, the Army will begin issuing to new Soldiers an Army Combat Uniform that bears the Operational Camouflage Pattern. That same uniform will also become available in military clothing sales stores in the summer of 2015.

Soldiers are expected to retire their current uniform and begin wearing the new pattern by the summer of 2018.

The uniform bearing the new pattern will be largely the same as what Soldiers wear now, except that the lower leg pockets will be closed by a button instead of the "hook and loop" fabric fastener on the current Army Combat Uniform, or ACU. Soldiers complained that fastener made too much noise in combat environments, officials said. The insert pockets for knee pads and elbow pads will also be removed from the new uniform, according to Program Executive Office Soldier.

Other changes that will be considered by the 2015 Army Uniform Board include:

-- elimination of the mandarin collar and replacement with a fold-down design

-- change of the infrared square identification for friend or foe, known as the IFF tab

-- removal of one of three pen pockets on the ACU sleeve

-- elimination of the drawstring on the trouser waistband

The last four potential changes are not approved yet but are being considered, according to PEO Soldier.

Currently, Soldiers wear ACU with the Universal Camouflage Pattern, or UCP. By 2018, they will be wearing an Army Combat Uniform with the "Operational Camouflage Pattern." The fabric of the uniform, the cut, the placement of pockets and other details, for instance, will remain the same. It is only the geometry and palette of the camouflage pattern printed on the fabric that will change.

The cost of uniforms with the new pattern will be comparable to the current uniform. At the Fort Myer, Virginia, military clothing sales store, for instance, an ACU top now sells for approximately $45. The pants sell for around $45 as well. A cap sells for about $8.

According to the 2014 pay charts, online at dfas.mil, enlisted Soldiers receive between $439 and $468 annually to buy new uniforms -- that includes replacing the outgoing UCP ACU with the Operational Camouflage Pattern ACU.

Soldiers will have about three years -- the time between the first availability of the uniform in military clothing sales in 2015 and the time they are required to wear it in 2018 -- to transition the contents of their clothing bag to the new look. They will also have more than $1,300 in clothing allowance at their disposal to make that happen.

The new pattern is different, but visually compatible with what Soldiers wear now in Afghanistan. It does have the same acronym, however. In Afghanistan, Soldiers wear the "Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern," called OCP for short. The new uniform pattern is also called OCP.

"The Army is naming the pattern the Operational Camouflage Pattern to emphasize that the pattern's use extends beyond Afghanistan to all combatant commands," said one senior Army official in a July 31 press release.

The new pattern is borne from efforts to meet a 2009 directive by Congress to develop a camouflage uniform suitable for the Afghanistan environment. That initiative, along with Soldier feedback, led the Army to develop the Operational Camouflage Pattern.

As part of that program, the Army was directed to develop and evaluate camouflage patterns that will provide effective concealment in a wide variety of terrains and environments. The Operational Camouflage Pattern is a result of that effort. As part of the program two "bookend patterns" of OCP are being optimized and evaluated for possible use on Flame Resistant ACUs that would be worn by Soldiers deployed in either arid or heavily wooded terrains.

All organizational clothing and individual equipment, referred to as OCIE, such as MOLLE gear, protective vests, ruck sacks and plate carriers and non-flame resistant ACUs and be offered in the OCP pattern only.

The Army has also said that following rigorous testing and evaluation, the OCP was proven "the best value for the Army. Soldier force protection and safety was the Army's primary decision criteria," a senior Army official said.

"The Army has selected a pattern as its base combat uniform camouflage pattern," explained the official. "The Army has confirmed through testing that the pattern would offer exceptional concealment, which directly enhances force protection and survivability for Soldiers."

The senior official said the Army's adoption of OCP "will be fiscally responsible, by transitioning over time and simply replacing current uniforms and OCIE equipment as they wear out." **gt**

Submitted by Sgt. 1st Class Charles Austin, Safety Specialist

According to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, we as citizens have the right "to keep and bear Arms." Along with that right, comes the inherent legal and moral responsibility to handle those "arms" in a safe manner. Practicing safe weapons handling procedures will protect you, your Family members, fellow citizens and fellow Soldiers from harm. Following some simple guidelines for the handling and storage of firearms will allow you to enjoy your constitutional rights and the activities associated with your weapons.

Get Safety Training

Do not assume you are an expert with all weapons because you carried an M4 or M9 during a deployment. Different weapons have different handling characteristics and safety mechanisms. Read your owner's manual and sign up for a weapons safety course. A firearm is only as safe as the person handling it.

Know Appropriate Laws and Policies

Laws and procedures for the transport, storage and ownership of weapons vary between states and cover information regarding registration, prohibited weapons and legal compliance requirements. Take time to familiarize yourself with and follow applicable laws.

THINK Weapons Safety

- Treat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- Handle every weapon with care.
- Identify the target before you fire.
- Never point the muzzle at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

Don't Handle Weapons Under the Influence

Weapons and alcohol never mix. Never use alcohol before or while handling a weapon. Be aware that other substances such as prescription medications can alter your perceptions and influence your coordination.

Never Point a Weapon at Anything or Anyone Intentionally

Even if you are completely sure the weapon is unloaded, never, under any circumstances, point a weapon at anyone. Many people have lost their lives to "unloaded" weapons.

Never Leave an Unsecured Weapon Unattended

Lock your weapons unloaded in a secure area so that children or others unfamiliar with weapons handling do not have access.

For more information about firearms safety techniques from the U.S. Army Combat/Safety Readiness Center, go to https://safety.army.mil/Firearm-Safety/Pages/WeaponSafety. This web site allows access to interactive training, safety messages, presentations, videos, posters and links to other tools and resources.

Whether you are a collector, a hunter or a target shooter, the safe handling of weapons will allow you to prevent injury while enjoying your firearm activities.

Airmen and Soldiers Reminded to be on Guard

New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are the first line of defense in keeping our air bases and armories secure against terrorist attacks, Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, reminded the force in a recent memorandum.

"Maintaining situational awareness and remaining vigilant is our best defense," the memo says. "I am asking each of you to be proactive to protect our service members, facilities and operations."

"Whether at work, home, in public places, or while online in the virtual realm, suspicious activity reporting is crucial to detecting and thwarting terrorist attacks. If something doesn't seem right, it's out of place, or the behavior is not normal, please report it. "If you see something, say something," Murphy's memo says.

According to Greg Psoinos, the New York National Guard Anti-Terrorist Program Manager, Soldiers and Airmen should be on the lookout for:

•People drawing or measuring important buildings;

•People asking questions about security forces, security measures, or sensitive information;

•Briefcase, backpack, suitcase, or package left unattended;

•Vehicle parked in NO PARKING ZONES in front of an important building;

•People in restricted areas where they are not supposed to be;

• Communicating with known or suspected homegrown or foreign-based violent extremists using e-mail or social media platforms;

• New or increased advocacy of violence, including providing material support or recruiting others to commit criminal acts;

• Consumption and sharing of media glorifying violent extremist acts;

• Use of religious texts as justification that violence is religiously sanctioned;

• Individuals purchasing weapons or uniforms without proper credentials.

Indicators of potential terrorist behavior or activities should be reported to Security Forces, local law enforcement officials, the New York State Intelligence Center 1-866-SAFE-NYS (866-723-3697), or the local FBI, immediately, Psoinos said.

Dietary supplements: Safety Still an Issue, Better Options Available

SAN ANTONIO -- Being a Soldier is as physically demanding, at times, as being a professional athlete. As a result, Soldiers are especially conscious of physical training requirements and the need to remain fit and ready.

In recent years, a larger percentage of Soldiers have begun to rely on dietary supplements to help them stay at a peak level of performance. In a few cases, the use of dietary supplements has led to unwanted and serious consequences.

In late 2011, the Department of Defense ordered workout supplements that contained 1,3-dimethlyamylamine, better known as DMAA, removed from the shelves of on-post stores, while the Army led a safety review, after it was linked to deaths among otherwise healthy Soldiers. In 2012, the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, issued warning letters to companies notifying them that products with DMAA needed to be taken off the market, or reformulated to remove this substance.

Recently, the use of powdered caffeine as a performance supplement has also drawn attention. Caffeine is readily available in coffee, soft drinks, and other products, and millions ingest these beverages globally.

On July 21, the FDA issued a warning about powdered caffeine, which is likely to be 100 percent pure caffeine, with a recommendation to avoid this form of caffeine. Pure caffeine is a powerful stimulant, and even very small amounts may lead to an accidental overdose. A single teaspoon of pure caffeine, for example, is roughly equivalent to the amount of caffeine in 25 cups of coffee.

Symptoms of caffeine overdose can include rapid or dangerously erratic heartbeat, vomiting, stupor, and disorientation. These symptoms are unlikely to be caused by drinking too much coffee or other caffeinated drinks, and are more commonly observed when concentrated sources of caffeine are used.

Fitness is indispensable to being a Soldier, and there are safe ways to promote health and fitness over the long run.

For example, proper management of the components of the Performance Triad -- sleep, activity, and nutrition -- remains the best way for Soldiers and Families to meet their fitness and training requirements.

Getting seven to eight hours of sleep every 24 hours is critical in achieving optimal physical, mental, and emotional health.

Physical fitness and activity are crucial to ensuring our Soldiers perform as elite athletes. Practicing principles of safe and effective training are vital to maintaining physical readiness, preventing injuries, and improving general health.

Fueling for performance enables top-level training, increases energy and endurance, shortens recovery time between activities, and improves focus and concentration.

There is overwhelming proof that sleep, activity, and nutrition, when optimally managed, comprise the best approach to promote peak physical and emotional well-being, and ensure rapid and clear decision making under pressure, which is exactly what is required by professional athletes and Soldiers alike.

In war, a well-focused Soldier is a combat advantage.

It is important to get the facts before using dietary supplements. Soldiers should be knowledgeable of what they are taking, and the possible side effects of those substances. The FDA continues to examine dietary supplements, and reminds users that certain supplements, specifically weight-loss and bodybuilding supplements, have potentially dangerous ingredients.

Soldiers and Families should be particularly careful when using these types of supplements.

Under no circumstances are supplements a replacement for the triad of proper nutrition, physical activity, and adequate sleep. Hard work remains the safest and most effective way to stay fit and improve stamina, which are needed on the playing field, and the battlefield. **gt**

Army Echoes updates Retired Soldiers, surviving spouses, and their Families on changes to their benefits and entitlements, developments within the Army, and how they can continue to support the Army.

Where can I read Echoes?

The current issue of Echoes is available in PDF and Word. For past editions of Echoes, visit the Echoes archive.

Note: PDF documents require the use of Adobe Acrobat Reader. It may be downloaded for free at Adobe's Web site.

How do I subscribe to Echoes?

The best way to subscribe depends on your status. If you are:

• A retired Soldier collecting retired pay or the surviving spouse of a Soldier who is collecting a Survivor Benefit Plan annuity, just ensure that the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) has your current mailing and email address. To update DFAS, create or update your myPay account. You may also call DFAS at 1-800-321-1080 or call the nearest installation retirement services officer.

•A "Gray Area" Soldier (in the Retired Reserve not yet collecting retired pay), just ensure the Reserve Retirements Branch at the US Army Human Resources Command has your current mailing and email address by calling them at 1-888-276-9472.

• A surviving spouse of a Soldier and are NOT collecting a Survivor Benefit Plan annuity, send an email to listserv@listserv.army.pentagon.mil and put "Subscribe rso-echoes" (without the quotation marks) in the body of the email. We'll send you Echoes electronically. If you prefer to receive it by mail, send your name and address to the editor at ArmyEchoes@mail.mil.

• An Active Duty, National Guard, or Army Reserve Soldier, send an email to listserv@listserv.army.pentagon.mil and put "Subscribe rso-echoes" (without the quotation marks) in the body of the email. We'll send you Echoes electronically.

If your status is NOT listed above and you'd like to receive Echoes, send an email to listserv@listserv.army.pentagon.mil and put "Subscribe rso-echoes" (without the quotation marks) in the body of the email. We'll send you Echoes electronically.

What is different about the electronic edition?

In 2013, the Army increased the electronic edition of Echoes to 20 pages. Fiscal constraints prevent printing more than 16 pages in hard copy.

You can download the electronic edition on your iPhone, iPad, and Android phone using the free Echoes apps in the App Store (iOS) and Google Play (Android).

Electronic editions include links to additional information on external websites and to email addresses for RSOs and other resources.

Periodic email updates keep electronic subscribers updated between editions. To subscribe to the email updates, send an email to listserv@listserv.army.pentagon.mil and put "Subscribe ArmyEchoesUpdates" (without quotes and no spaces in ArmyEchoesUpdates) in the body of an email. Old editions are posted here and can be downloaded again if lost or deleted.

Echoes History

The first Retired Army Personnel Bulletin was published in March 1956. Previously, Retired Soldiers received information through inserts in their paychecks. After conducting a survey of Retired Soldiers, the Army changed the publication's name to Army Echoes in January 1979, and shortened it to just Echoes in January 2009. Today, Echoes, is a 16 page printed newsletter and a 20 page electronic newsletter published three times each year plus frequent e-mail updates. The Army now mails or e-mail's Echoes to over one million Retired Soldiers and surviving spouses. As publication and mailing costs have increased, the Army is shifting to more electronic publication. Soldiers who retired after January 1, 2012 may only receive Echoes by e-mail.

Contact Echoes

Comments concerning Echoes can be e-mailed to ArmyEchoes@mail.mil or directed to:
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2530 Crystal Drive, Room 6048,
Arlington, Va. 22202-3941

NCOER Update

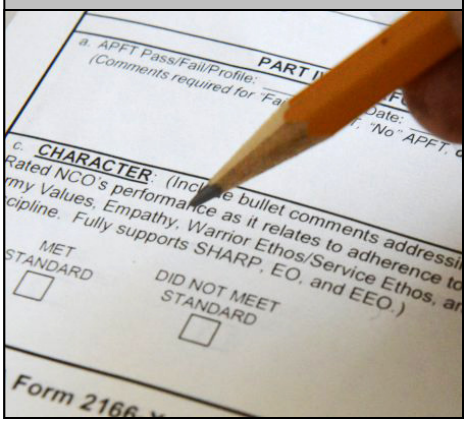
WASHINGTON -- On Aug. 1, the Secretary of the Army approved the new Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report to take effect September 2015.

"The new NCOER will come out in five phases: inform, educate, train, roll-out and after-action review. Human Resources Command is beginning to build the NCOER into the Evaluation System now," said Command Sgt. Maj. Charles E. Smith, senior enlisted adviser for Human Resources Command.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III provided his take on the new NCOER: "The biggest challenge during the preparation and transition of the new NCOER over the next year will be to ensure NCO leaders at all levels clearly understand the new report, and its role in evaluations. We must ensure the new NCOER is perceived as a tool that delivers the best measures available to review and evaluate performance.

"NCO leaders must understand the process on how to effectively manage rating profiles," Chandler continued. "It is very important to the future of the Army that Soldiers view the Army as an institution, which is clearly able to identify premier leaders in a highly competitive environment. Therefore, as we prepare for the system to roll out around September 2015, I expect all NCOs to take the time to learn and understand how the evaluation system works, and how it supports the selection and promotion processes."

The new NCOER will require insightful narratives instead of what are often nondescript, bulleted lists in the current NCOER and the evaluations themselves will be different for junior and senior NCOs, explained Sgt. Maj. Stephen J. McDermid, with the HRC Evaluations Selections and Promotions Division, Evaluations Branch. gt



Military Personnel News: The MILPO Corner

Administrative News

Official Photograph Requirements. The Fort Drum Visual Information office, located at Building P-1029, Lewis Avenue, Fort Drum, NY, has announced that all services and support from the office requires a work order in advance. Work requests for Troop Self Help, Photo, Graphics and Audiovisual support, must be submitted electronically using the Visual Information Ordering System at www.vios.army.mil

New Army Physical Fitness Uniform (APFU) and the New Black Microfleece. All Army message, ALARACT 209/2014, provides information on the introduction of the Army Physical Fitness Uniform (APFU) and the new black microfleece cap. For the first time, the Army is introducing two physical fitness uniforms, issue and optional versions of the APFU. The Army plans to introduce them over several years. The APFU will be available for Army Military Clothing Stores (AMCS) in the 1st quarter of FY 2015. The mandatory implementation date for the APFTU is October 2017. The wear-out date for the current IPFU is September 2017.

Soldier Support

Survey to Help Fight the #1 Threat to Military Medical Readiness. From US Army MEDCOM: While accidents do happen - many of these injuries can be prevented by being aware of individual risk factors and scientifically proven injury reduction strategies. By increasing the awareness of this information amongst Soldiers, Army Civilians, and leaders we can reduce these injuries and impact to individuals as well as our overall Army readiness. Please complete a short survey at https://usaphcapps.amedd.army.mil/Survey/se.ashx?s=251137451930287F. More information is provided at the following link: https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-158255

Improved Transition Tools for Soldiers. Soldiers now have a more defined plan for transitioning out of the Army with the implementation of the new Soldier Life Cycle. This three-phase career cycle prepares Soldiers from the beginning of their military service, until their transition to civilian life, with the resources needed to equip them with the employment skills, training, counseling and opportunities designed tool enhance their marketability after military service. For more information, visit the Soldier for Life website at www.soldierforlife.army.mil. It features links to informational resources for the National Guard, retired Soldiers and their families.

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. All Army message, ALARACT 216/2014, informs Soldiers about the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) new Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. This registry is a database of health Information about veterans and service members, advises them where they can voluntarily register to become more aware of their individual health and to receive health related based on studies and available VA services. Registry participation is open to any veteran or service member who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, or in Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001, or Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia theater of operations after August 2, 1990.

MyArmyBenefits Helps Soldiers Plan for Life Changes. By Army Retirement Service Office - ARNG, LNO Maj. John Hinkell, G-1 Personnel Gateway.

If you are not aware, MyArmyBenefits, http://MyArmyBenefits.us.army.mil, the Army's official benefits website, provides state and federal benefit fact sheets, benefit calculators, and a responsive help-desk to assist Soldiers. Information and decision tools are available to support planning for retirement, preparing for transition or deployment, starting a family, buying a home, planning for taxes or licensing a car in a new state. Many states do offer benefits to veterans. MyArmyBenefits knows exactly what is offered by each State or Territory.

Soldier Awards and Decorations Ribbon and Device Guide. NYARNG Circular 672-1, dated 1 November 2012, is the NYARNG Soldier Awards and Decorations Ribbon and Device Guide, which can be found as one of many awards and decorations resources, by visiting the MNP AKO Main page. Go to https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/553732 and click on "Awards and Decorations Resources," under "MNP References", on the bottom right side of the page. This guide is intended as an easy to use reference for the wear of both federal and state military ribbons and is most useful during annual uniform inspections. It is one of many awards and decorations resources which are contained in the folder. The circular displays a selection of the most commonly issued federal and state ribbons in order of precedence, and on its reverse, a federal and state ribbon device guide.

Healthcare News

TRICARE for Guard, Reserve. The life of a Guardsman has many cycles. You are TRICARE eligible on the date your orders are issued, or 180 days before you report to active duty; whichever is later. When you deploy, you are eligible for the same health and dental benefits as active duty service members. Guard and Reserve members are recommended to enroll in a TRICARE Prime option and continue TRICARE Standard, after arriving at their final duty station. When you are inactive, you may qualify for either Line of Duty (LOD) care, TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) or TRICARE Retiree Reserve. When you leave active duty, your health plan options are different depending on if you were called to active duty in support of a contingency operation. For more information, visit the TRICARE National Guard/Reserve Members and Families webpage at http://www.tricare.mil/reserve.

Fort Drum and New York Army National Guard Officials Memorialize Two Buildings for Fallen WWII Heroes

Story and photos by Michelle Kennedy, Fort Drum Staff Writer

Col. Richard Goldenberg, New York's National Guard public affairs officer and Fort Drum Instillation Garrison Commander, Gary Rosenberg unveil the Weapons Training Facility plague honoring Sgt. Thomas Baker. Baker was a member of 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division during World War II.

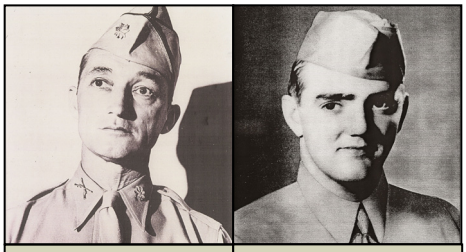
FORT DRUM -- Fort Drum and New York Army National Guard officials honored the courage and sacrifice of two native New Yorkers during two separate memorial ceremonies Monday.

Two buildings were renamed to honor Lt. Col. William J. O'Brien and Sgt. Thomas A. Baker, both natives of Troy who served in the New York's 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division. O'Brien and Baker both posthumously received the Medal of Honor on May 9, 1945, for their heroic actions during their service in Saipan, Marianas Islands, during World War II. Both were killed during an enemy attack July 7, 1944.

"In the Army, we always instill history in our Soldiers," said Col. Richard Goldenberg, New York Army National Guard public affairs officer. "We take pride in our units and the contributions (of Soldiers) across the centuries. Today, we're honoring two specific Soldiers from the 27th Infantry (Division). They were the forbearers of the 27th Infantry Brigade based in Syracuse."

"As our Soldiers learn about these two great Americans, they'll learn that they were just ordinary New Yorkers who joined the National Guard during a time of war," Goldenberg continued. "We've seen that in the past decade as fellow New Yorkers mobilized with their units and have gone off to war. It's a hallmark of the National Guard that friends and neighbors often serve side by side – at home and abroad. In this case, the two Troy natives fought and died together as well."

According to his Medal of Honor citation, O'Brien ordered three tanks to knock out an enemy strong point. In the heat of battle and under direct enemy fire, the tankers closed the turrets. In doing so, they lost direction and began fire upon their fellow Soldiers. O'Brien ran through enemy fire, mounted the lead tank and personally directed the assault, annihilating the enemy strongpoint.



Lt. Col. William J. O'Brien | Sgt. Thomas A. Baker

During his time in Saipan, O'Brien also orchestrated a maneuver to capture two enemy units. He crossed through 1,200 yards of sniper-infested underbrush to reach a platoon that had been held up by enemy fighters. He led four Soldiers through enemy territory, organized two platoons for a night defense and led his unit to hold its ground.

On July 7, 1944, the Soldiers of 1-105th Infantry were attacked by thousands of Japanese banzai fighters. O'Brien and his Soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The unit ran through almost all of its ammunition and suffered many casualties.

O'Brien refused to leave the front lines. He walked up and down the lines firing a pistol from each hand, boosting morale and encouraging his Soldiers. O'Brien was seriously wounded, but after refusing to be evacuated and running through his own ammunition, he took control of a 50-caliber machine gun and continued to fight. His body was found surrounded by many enemy fighters who had fallen to his gun fire.

Baker worked at the Troy YMCA when he enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 1935. He served for three years, but he rejoined the unit in 1940.

When Baker arrived in Saipan on June 19, 1944, he was a private. During a battle in which his company was held up by heavy enemy fire, Baker grabbed a bazooka and ran toward the enemy.

In another instance, Baker served as rear guard for his company. He came across 12 Japanese soldiers and exchanged small-arms fire until he eliminated the threat. Baker later was responsible for killing another six enemy fighters that day.

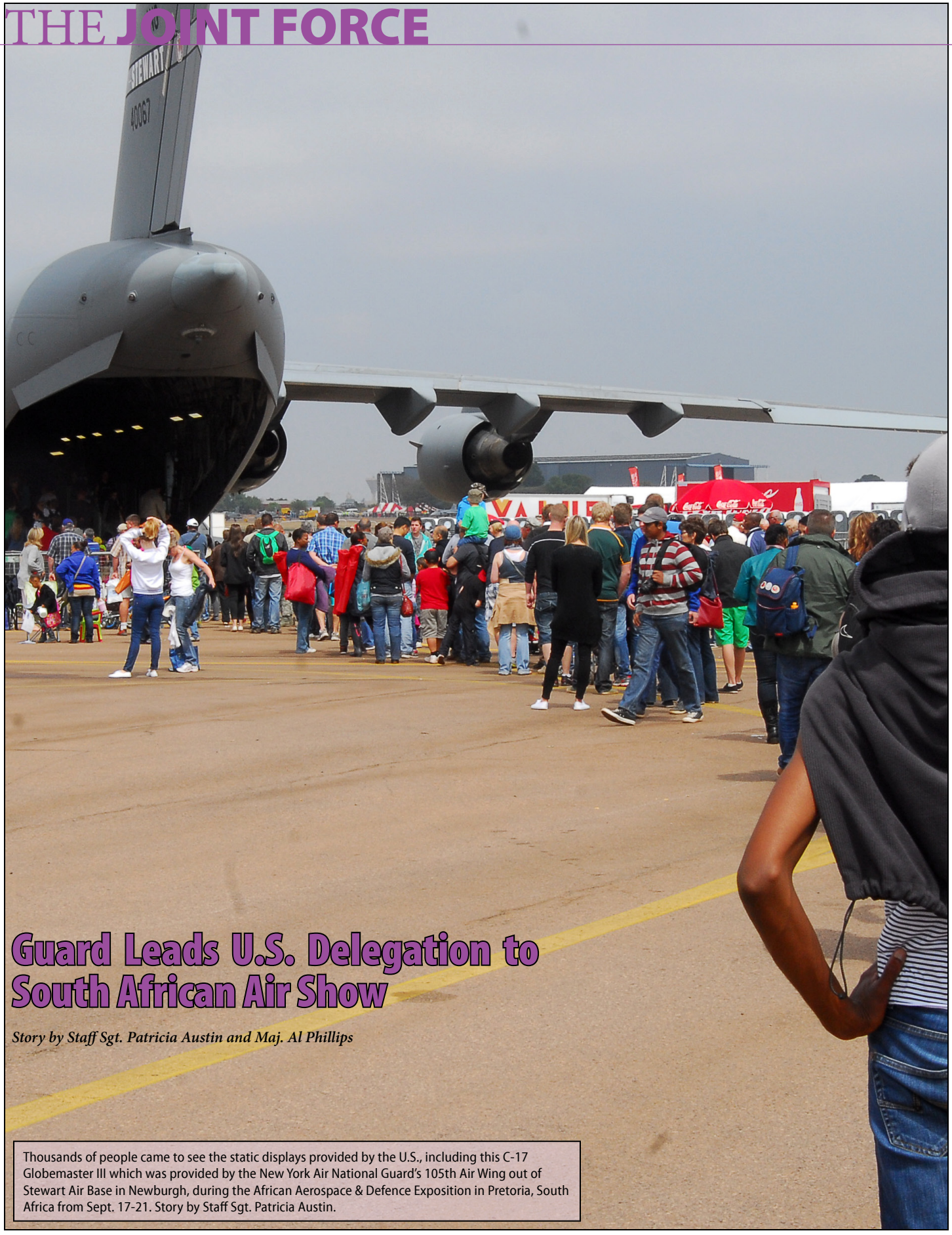
During the banzai attack that took the life of O'Brien on July 7, 1944, Baker was hit with grenade shrapnel. He fought until all of his ammunition had been expended before using his rifle as a club to fight off Japanese fighters.

Baker agreed to be evacuated from his position on the front lines. Soldiers who were attempting to move injured Soldiers to a safer place also became casualties.

"Baker doggedly refused to be carried any further, stating that he'd rather be left to die than risk the lives of any more of his friends," Goldenberg explained. "He insisted that he be left alone and given a cigarette and a pistol that, when fully loaded, held eight rounds."

His body was found propped up with his cigarette burned down and eight dead Japanese fighters lying around him, Goldenberg said.

"By all accounts, every man who fought and died with the 105th Infantry Regiment during the banzai charge on July 7, (1944), is a tremendous hero to our Army," he said. gt



Guard Leads U.S. Delegation to South African Air Show

Story by Staff Sgt. Patricia Austin and Maj. Al Phillips

Thousands of people came to see the static displays provided by the U.S., including this C-17 Globemaster III which was provided by the New York Air National Guard's 105th Air Wing out of Stewart Air Base in Newburgh, during the African Aerospace & Defence Exposition in Pretoria, South Africa from Sept. 17-21. Story by Staff Sgt. Patricia Austin.

Aircraft of the Flying Lions Aerobatics Team perform in their North American AT-6 Harvard Trainers during the African Aerospace & Defense Exposition outside Pretoria, South Africa, Sept. 17, 2014. The New York Army and Air National Guard sent 15 Airmen and Soldiers, a C-17 Globemaster III transport and an RQ-7 Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle to participate in the show. They were part of a U.S. contingent of 100 service members. Photo by Staff Sgt. Patricia Austin.

PRETORIA, South Africa - More than 100 U.S. military personal, including 15 members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, the Army's Golden Knights Parachute Team and the U.S. Air Force's Europe jazz band, "Wings of Dixie," represented the U.S. at the African continent's largest air show at Waterkloof Air Force Base, Sept. 17-21.

The African Aerospace & Defence Exposition, which is held every other year, featured nearly 60 civilian and military aircraft, vehicle and safety equipment demonstrations; and flying and static displays from some of the biggest names in the aviation and the defense industry. The event combines a trade show with an air show open to the public.

The American contribution to the exposition included a C-17 Globemaster III flown by the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh and a New York Army National Guard RQ-7B Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle operated by the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Rochester.

The New York C-17 was the largest plane on display at the show. A C-130J Super Hercules operated by the 86th Airlift Wing from Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, rounded out the American contribution to the static displays.

The New York National Guard has a bilateral partnership arrangement with the South African National Defense Force as part of the National Guard State Partnership Program. This was the fourth time the New York National Guard participated in the exhibition.

For the New York National Guard, the trip to the air show is another opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship, said Brig. Gen. Anthony German, the chief of staff for the New York Air National Guard.

"What is important to keep in mind is that nearly 11 years later, the partnership between South Africa and New York National Guard is continuing to grow stronger," said German, the ranking officer in the U.S. military contingent.

The crowds, the excitement and genuine interest of the South African people and others here at the events this week to visit our static displays and engage with the pilots, crew or operators are emblematic of the fact that our attendance here is greater than an air show," he added.

But while the air show is the reason that military and business representatives from across Africa and around the world gather here, the event is about much more than that.

"Our participation in this air show is a big part of an even bigger picture which is to strengthen our relationship with South Africa and also our regional partners," explained John McNamara, the acting deputy chief of missions of the U.S. Embassy in South Africa.

"For me personally, representing the chief of staff of the Air Force, it's a tremendous opportunity for me to interact with the senior officials of not only South Africa, but also the leaders of many of the countries that participate in this," said Lt. Gen. Darryl L. Roberson, commander of the 3rd Air Force and 17th Expeditionary Air Force headquartered at Ramstein, Germany.

During the trade and air shows, over 145,000 people visited the C-17, while about 60,000 saw the Shadow. New York Army and Air National Guard members posed for 1,500 pictures with visitors.

"The C-17 is absolutely fantastic," said South African Air Force Capt. Leon Olinsky, a C-130 pilot with the 28th Squadron. "It gives us a broader perspective of what else is out there and, at the end of the day, it's events like these that help us build better relationships."

The chance to talk to ordinary South Africans, as well as military people, made the trip really special for the Airmen and Soldiers who took part.

"Meeting the people makes all of the travel and the prep time worth it," said New York Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Burke.

"They stand in line for up to an hour, in some cases, for five minutes of conversation. It means a lot and hopefully they go away fulfilled," he added.

"I have had more than a few young people tell me how this is an unforgettable moment and how much it means to them that we attended this year's air show and exposition, which marks the 20th year celebration of South Africa as a democracy," said Maj. Wayne Brown, a 105th Airlift Wing pilot.

"It's been an awesome experience," said Sgt. Matthew Larue, a Shadow operator and member of the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion. "Being able to come here and see equipment from other countries has been really cool."

The Golden Knights, whose members are the top parachutists in the Army, performed five times during the show.

Maj. Constant Benadé, a member of South Africa's Golden Eagles parachute team, jumped with the Americans and said he was impressed.

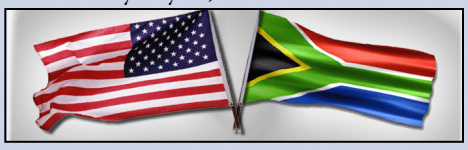
"I've been jumping for more than 20 years, and so far my favorite jump has been with the U.S. Golden Knights," the Pretoria, South Africa, resident said.

Along with meeting South Africans at the air show, Americans had a chance to get out into the local communities.

Some of the New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen visited the Music Academy of Gauten in nearby Benoni with the Wings of Dixie band. The academy was started by South African trumpeter Johnny Mekoa, who specializes in the South African music known as Jozi.

The Guardsmen took the time to interact one-on-one, and collectively, to describe the state partnership program with South Africa and to answer questions related to the military, New York State and the United States as a whole.

"The people of South Africa have a deep appreciation for the American people, we learn so much from them and always are excited when such events as this week's air show and exposition allow such interactions or forums," said Leonard Mbyucayani, a resident of Pretoria. **gt**



Citizen Preparedness Corps Continues with Robust Schedule

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Raymond Drumsta

BROOKLYN -- New York Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Joseph Hernon teaches an emergency preparedness class during a session of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program at the Miccio Community Center here on Aug. 11. New York National Guard troops gave disaster and emergency training to about 40 people who attended the event. The program is designed to give citizens the knowledge and tools to prepare for emergencies and disasters, respond accordingly, and recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions. New York National Guard troops, working with experts from the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and local emergency management personnel have been conducting these sessions across the state. Hernon, of Fayetteville, is a member of the 174th Attack Wing. Photo by Master Sgt. Raymond Drumsta, New York Army National Guard.

LATHAM -- September was a busy month for the troops assigned to the New York State Citizen Preparedness Corps program, who gave emergency preparedness training to over 6,200 New Yorkers at 55 events statewide.

The September events included a 10-location push on Sept. 27 in which more than 1,300 people were trained at locations ranging from the North Country to Long Island and Buffalo.

Between the program's launch in February and September's end, troops trained about 19,850 citizens at over 140 events

The program is New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's initiative, and the goal is to provide citizens the knowledge and tools to prepare for emergencies and disasters, respond accordingly, and recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions.

Two dozen New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen conduct the instruction, prepared by the state Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, and organize the classes. They work with experts from DHSES, local emergency management personnel, additional troops from New York National Guard units across the state, and the governor's office.

"New Yorkers are acutely aware of the damage that frequent and severe storms inflict on communities across the state," Cuomo said in a press release ahead of the Sept. 27 events. "The Citizen Preparedness Corps has already equipped thousands of New Yorkers to better respond in the event of an emergency or disaster - and by offering additional classes this weekend, more communities will be ready than ever before."

Emergency preparedness is part of the New York National Guard's mission and experience, according to New York State Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Patrick A. Murphy. "The men and women of the New York Army and Air National Guard, who have responded to help their fellow New Yorkers during floods, hurricanes, and snow storms, know first-hand the value of being prepared for emergencies," Murphy said ahead of the Sept. 27 events. "Our Soldiers and Airmen are proud to be part of Governor Cuomo's effort to help our fellow citizens prepare to cope with disasters and emergencies." gt

South Africans Visit Guard Headquarters

LATHAM- South African National Defense Force senior enlisted leaders joined New York National Guard Command Sgt. Major Louis Wilson (left) during a visit to Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters on Saturday, Sept. 20.

South African Army Reserve Regimental Sgt. Major Abraham Wakies from the South African Army Reserve and South African Army Sgt. Major Charles Laubacher participated in the State Partnership Program exchange. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Moody. State Partnership Program.

Empire Shield Sailor Awarded Meritorious Award

NEW YORK -- Machinery Technician 2 (Petty Officer 2nd Class) Ken Stefandel (left) receives the New York State Military Commendation Medal from Lt. Col. Pete Riley, commander, Joint Task Force Empire Shield at North Cove Marina on the Hudson River, on Aug. 29.

Stefandel, was previously active duty U.S. Navy before going to the Coast Guard and coming to the New York Naval Militia in October, 2009.

He received the award as a result of his continued successful operation and expense management of Patrol Boat 440 operating in New York City.

Stefandel coordinated more than $210,000 in relation to engine maintenance, power train repairs, hull refurbishment, electronics and auxiliaries upkeep.

He resolved numerous charge disputes to the benefit of the state, while also maintaining an exceptionally positive relationship with the vendor.

The 44-foot patrol catamaran is based in Staten Island to conduct homeland security missions under the operational control of Joint Force Headquarters.

PB 440 is routinely tasked with the most demanding and highest visibility missions, including the critical commercial vessel boarding program, the annual Save the Cities exercise, dignitary visits and homeland security patrols.

Photo by Boatswains Mate 1 (Petty Officer 1st Class) Kurt Schneider, New York Naval Militia. gt

Spc. John Krupa of C Troop, 2nd Battalion, 101st Cavalry Regiment, assists his platoon members as they lift and haul their rubber Zodiac boat from Indian Lake to a nearby wooded area to cover and conceal it during Zodiac boat training at Fort Drum on Aug. 10. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division.

Cavalry Scouts Take to Water at Fort Drum

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division

Sgt. 1st Class Ethan Lynch and Sgt. Phillip Noble (in water), conduct Zodiac boat familiarization and boat capsizing recovery at Lovejoy Buffalo Public Pool, Buffalo on November 17, 2013. In Boat: Sgt. Justin Borst, Spc. Joseph Golonka, Spc. Nicholas Celano, Spc. Micheal Kidder and Spc. Anthony Coppola. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Jaskowiak, 101st Cavalry.

FORT DRUM- About Sixty Soldiers from C Troop of the New York Army National Guard's 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry went boating on the waters of Fort Drum's Indian Lake on Aug. 10, as part of their two weeks of annual training.

It was the first time the 101st Cavalry — the reconnaissance eyes and ears of New York's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team — had done any tactical training with their inflatable rubber boats, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Jaskowiak, Troop C's readiness and training NCO.

In combat the squadron's scouts would be expected to use their rubber boats to slip across a river or lake to get eyes on enemy troops.

"Our job is to do long range reconnaissance," said C Troop commander Capt. Matt Lynch. "C Troop is a dismounted troop. Having the capability of waterborne insertion gives us another way to move Cavalry Scouts in ahead of the mounted troops. It also gives us the access to terrain that was previously denied."

The boats are known as Zodiac boats, taking their name from a French airplane maker who first started building them in 1934.

It was training that the unit had planned to do for quite awhile, but deployments, individual active duty call-ups and state active duty missions kept them from getting Soldiers into the boats for training, Jaskowiak explained.

When Hurricane Irene hit New York in August 2011, causing massive flooding in the Catskill Mountains and along the Susquehanna River in the Binghamton area, New York National Guard leaders decided it would be a good idea if the 101st Cavalry troops learned to use the boats the unit had been issued, he said.

"It was after Hurricane Irene that the 101st initiated the lengthy training to get our Soldiers qualified to use the Zodiac boats," Jaskowiak said. "It started with getting everyone Red Cross lifesaver certified and then we needed supplies and pool time so that each Soldier could do water training in order to know how to react should they be underwater with all their equipment on."

According to Jaskowiak, the 101st troopers did a lot of dry run and dry land training to get ready.

When the unit was ready for water training the City of Buffalo donated pool time at the Best Street Park there.

This type of training also produces added benefits, especially for commanders who are looking for ways to retain a core of Soldiers that will be able to be proficient and pass this type of skill set onto new Soldiers coming into the unit, Jaskowiak said.

Annual Training at Fort Drum provided a water obstacle where Soldiers could execute the kind of full-up tactical drill, using weapons, they couldn't do back home, Jaskowiak said.

"This is the kind of training that I joined the 101st for!" said Spc. Joseph Golonka, of 2nd Platoon who was also steering his boat with his paddle while crossing the lake. "In order to maintain silence while rowing, each Soldier has to be in sync, at first it isn't easy but after the first time we just watched each other row and got more in tune."

While the 101st troopers executed a tactical insertion via the boats, safety was a primary consideration.

A team from the New York Naval Militia — A New York state defense force made up of Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps Reservists who volunteer to do state missions in addition to their federal duty — provided a safety boat to over-watch the operation. The Naval Militia sailors brought their 23-foot river patrol boats, but Indian Lake proved to be too shallow, so the 101st Cavalry went out and rented a flat bottom fishing boat to use as a safety vessel.

"Next year we hope to be ready to get certified from First Army so that we have the ability to train our own new Soldiers who come into the unit," Lynch said.

Ideally, his unit will work more boat training into their training program and obtain funding to purchase more boats and outboard motors that would make the boats more useful in responding to a natural disaster like the flooding which followed Hurricane Irene in 2011, Lynch said. More boats and motors would also allow quicker troop insertion in a tactical situation, he added. **gt**

Soldiers from C Troop, 2/101st spend most of the day Aug. 10 learning how to use hand and eye signals to coordinate maneuvers on the water at Indian Lake. Three platoons of Soldiers made three runs each across approximately a one and a half mile stretch of water and back. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division.

National Guard Medics Get Professional Guidance

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division

Pfc. Tyler Kinzel, from Port Jervis, assigned to Medical Command, begins bag-mask ventilating a medical mannequin after inserting an endotracheal tube through the esophagus under the direction of Dr. Anar Patel on Aug. 5, during annual training at Camp Smith Training Site, Cortlandt Manor. Patel, an emergency room physician from Albany Medical Center was invited to attend a day of training with the New York Army National Guard medics at the Camp Smith Training Site on Aug. 5 and give them tips on how to improve this skill.

CORTLANDT MANOR - New York Army National Guard medical Soldiers turned their training up a notch Aug. 5 when they got some hands-on instruction from experienced emergency room doctors.

Dr. Anar Patel, an emergency medicine associate professor and Dr. Erica Igbindghene, another emergency medicine specialist, took a day away from their regular jobs at Albany Medical Center to share their specialist skills with the Medical Command, or Medcom, Soldiers.

The two have three years of combined experience working as resident physicians in the medical center's emergency room.

"Working with a few civilian counterparts gives our Soldiers an edge," said Col. James Coleman, the New York Army National Guard state surgeon. "They (the doctors) provide a level of training that most of the Soldiers haven't gotten before, especially in emergency situations while manning a Combat Support Hospital."

The doctors spent the entire day instructing small groups of Soldiers on two key life-saving skills.

Working with a medical mannequin at Camp Smith's Medical Simulation Center, they taught the Soldiers how to insert a laryngoscope through the throat in order to open an air passage. They also taught the medical troops how to put an endotracheal tube into the lungs so that a bag-mask ventilator can be applied to assist a patient's breathing.

The Medical Simulation Center is filled with advanced-level hospital-based medical mannequins that are connected to computers. These computers monitor the vital signs of the computerized "patients" so that the students know what works best in a life-saving emergency.

Sgt. Rachelle Cunningham, a medic team leader from Lee Center, N.Y., said that training with the emergency room doctors was extremely useful.

When her Soldiers went through the training she made it a point to have a junior Soldier take charge of each drill.

"I like to place the younger Soldiers who are

Continued on next page

Con't.

Sgt. Rachelle Cunningham (left), a team leader with Medical Command, guides her team toward a Humvee during 'hot zone' evacuation training. Her team successfully diagnosed and treated a simulated casualty while being timed on Aug. 5 at Camp Smith. MEDCOM performed their annual training utilizing the simulation center where two doctors from Albany Medical Center spent the day showing Soldiers the finer points of patient treatment in a simulated Combat Support Hospital.

"I'm definitely all in for this type of training. I will spread the word around Albany Medical Center about the high level of training that the New York National Guard does here and bring more doctors here the next time."

-- Dr. Anar Patel, an emergency medicine associate professor at Albany Medical Center

not experienced into a more senior role," Cunningham said. "By doing that they are forced to see things their way and then later make suggestions that we might not have thought of during the training."

Along with honing their medical skills, the Medcom Soldiers also worked on basic military skills like map reading and land navigation. In one exercise, for example, the troops had to navigate their way to the simulation center and then treat wounded troops coming in from the field, including working with Patel and Igbindghene.

For the two emergency room doctors, their day training with the National Guard was very worthwhile, Patel said.

"I'm definitely all in for this type of training," she said. "I will spread the word around Albany Medical Center about the high level of training that the New York National Guard does here and bring more doctors here the next time." **gt**

Training the K-9 Force

FORT DRUM -- Army Pvt. Ethan Taylor and his search dog sit aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter piloted by the New York National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment based in Ronkonkoma, during some annual training exercises on July 23. Taylor, his dog and about 15 others are members of the 16th Military Police Brigade headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C., an active duty unit temporarily stationed at Fort Drum for training purposes.

There were five dog handlers introducing their dogs to boarding a helicopter while the aircraft was not operational. Later training would allow the dogs to ride aboard an actual flight.

The 142nd was also performing annual training and assisting the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment and the 258th Field Artillery to conduct sling load and air assault training. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division.

MP Soldiers Certified in Key Law Enforcement Tasks

By Lt. Col. Craig Maceri, 104th Military Police Battalion

Sgt. 1st Class Morgan Cady (left) watches on as Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Meyers demonstrates the proper use and handling of an M32 Baton to other 104th Military Police Battalion Soldiers. Photo by Sgt. Kim Hunter, 104th Military Police Battalion.

FORT DRUM -- More than 100 Military Policemen from the 104th Military Police Battalion are now certified to enforce the law at Fort Drum after 12 days of tough, intensive training during their Annual Training here, Aug. 3-14.

Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 104th MP Battalion, and the 107th and 442nd MP Companies combined classroom instruction and practical exercises in a variety of subjects including military law, felony traffic stops, emergency vehicle operations, dealing with domestic disputes, active shooter actions and processing offenders. It was the largest law enforcement certification exercise conducted by New York National Guard MP's.

Training culminated with a three-day law enforcement exercise in which the MP Soldiers took what they learned and put it to work in training scenarios. These included responding to an active shooter, handling a sexual assault case, processing a crime scene and dealing with domestic disturbances and driving under the influence.

"It has been a very successful annual training across the board. Soldiers continued to develop and hone their critical policing and investigation skills during the law enforcement certification," said 104th MP Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Smilinich. "The abilities of our Soldiers and the qualities they display are dependent on their training, and for this particular AT, the training they received was top-notch."

All reserve component MPs are required to conduct law and order operations as a key task, but repeated deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq since Sept. 2001, required New York MP units to focus mainly on security missions and training local law enforcement.

This AT gave the 104th a chance to revisit the law enforcement skill.

The battalion staff put together a training team from within the unit, the Active Army's 91st MP Battalion and the Fort Drum Directorate of Emergency Services to make it happen.

"It was an 18-month process from start to finish and the entire staff stepped up their game to pull it off. It was a true team effort – from the staff that developed, planned, and coordinated the training event to the Soldiers that took part in it. I couldn't be more proud of the Battalion as a whole," said Maj. Matthew Schaffer, the 104th operations officer.

Originally, the AT was going to be at the Camp Smith Training Site, but then the decision was made to move the certification to Fort Drum.

Facilities and training areas at Fort Drum were much better suited for the training that needed to be done, Schaffer said. Training at Fort Drum also allowed the Battalion to access instructors from the 91st MP Battalion and Fort Drum personnel, building on relationships the battalion has developed with those units, he added.

During the final law enforcement exercise Military Police Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. John F. McNierney visited the troops and talked about the MP mission and training.

"What is it you need from us?" McNierney asked. "More training like this," one Soldier responded. **gt**

Pfc. Vannesa Rivera of the 107th MP Company, 104th MP Battalion goes through a hand-to-hand defense drill after being hit in the face by pepper spray during a training exercise at Fort Drum on Aug. 4.

Keeping Law and Order at West Point

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE-- Brigadier Gen. Michael C. Swezey presented a coin to Spc. Joseph Selchick of the 727th Law and Order Detachment Aug. 17 in recognition of a job well done while serving as a Military Policeman during his annual training. While on patrol Aug. 11, Selchick, pulled over a car that had illegally entered West Point. It was during this pull-over and search that illegal weapons and drugs were found in the possession of the driver and two passengers.

WEST POINT — For New York Army National Guard Spc. Joseph Selchick, an MP in the 727th Law and Order Detachment, what was supposed to be a routine day of Annual Training on Aug. 11, was anything but that.

Selchick, from Suffern, and other members of the detachment were serving in a law enforcement capacity at the United States Military Academy while on AT, allowing many of the Active Duty Military Police officers to take leave.

Selchick was on a routine patrol when a passing motorist told him that there was a vehicle driving back and forth on the railroad tracks running alongside the academy.

"By the time I got there, they weren't on the railroad tracks anymore," said Selchick. "I followed them and watched as they entered through a gate that said 'Do not enter.'"

So Selchick pulled over the vehicle with four passengers in it and asked for the driver's identification. The driver told him that he didn't have any. Slechick called for help.

When a back-up officer arrived the true purpose of their illegal trespassing was discovered.

"We had enough probable cause to detain the suspects and search the vehicle," Selchick said. "As we searched the car we found weapons, drug paraphernalia, illegal drugs and prescription drugs that were labeled with somebody else's name."

The case was quickly turned over to the Army's Criminal Investigation Division, but because the perpetrators had trespassed on federal property, it was then handed over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

For his quick thinking Selchick was awarded a coin from Brig. Gen. Michael Swezey, commander of the 53rd Troop Command.

Selchick's action is a tribute to the relationship the New York Army National Guard's MP Corps has established with the MPs at West Point, said Lt. Col. Craig Maceri, the commander of the 104th Military Police Battalion, the 727th's higher headquarters.

"He was able to take what he learned during his certification training and apply it to a real-life scenario," Maceri said. "I'm very proud of the way he conducted himself, and of the way he represented the 727th Law and Order Com-

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37th Finance Assumes Duties in Kuwait

CAMP BEUHRING, Kuwait -- Capt. Clinton Bailly, commander and Sgt. 1st Class Carona Brown, detachment sergeant, salute the 37th Financial Management Detachment guidon signifying the incoming unit during the Transfer of Authority ceremony July 22. The New York Army National Guard unit took over duties from the Texas Army National Guard's 149th Financial Management Detachment. Courtesy photo.

42nd Infantry Division Band Rocks out on Long Island

Story by Sgt. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Kimes conducts the 42nd Infantry Division Band during a free concert the evening of Aug. 13 at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow, Long Island. The concert is part of many events that the Army National Guard band performs each year for annual training.

EAST MEADOW -- The night hummed with the magic of many instruments melding into one song during the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Band's concert Aug. 13, in East Meadow, Long Island.

The 42nd Band performs throughout New York during its two-week annual training, and it often asks guests from the community to conduct songs during its concerts.

Each performance – which includes a string quintet, a classical and march band, and a rock band – serves as a chance for the unit to interact with the community and to hone their skills.

It takes a lot of practice for a diverse unit of Citizen-Soldiers – a group that includes policemen, firemen, a botanist, nurses, college students, and a Wall Street floor manager – into a cohesive band.

"When it all comes together, the way the 42nd Infantry Division Band plays, it's unlike any other experience you can have," said Joseph Romano, a local guest conductor from Gen. Douglas MacArthur High School.

When they are not performing at ceremonies or other events, band members fulfill other military tasks. Training on the same weapons and combat skills that all Soldiers learn. The concert series help form the band's needed cohesion.

"An instrument is a perishable skill, like shooting a weapon," Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Kimes, leader of the band, said. "You have to practice year-round."

Historically members of Army bands served as stretcher-bearers during battle, caring for wounded Soldiers. In modern times band members have been trained to perform security missions.

During the Band's deployment to Tikrit, Iraq in 2005, for example, band members acted as guards for the 42nd Infantry Division Main Command Post. Recently, they also supported Hurricane Sandy Recovery Operations on Staten Island, in Rockland County and at Floyd Bennett field.

These roles are part of the job description of a Citizen-Soldier and musician, and part of the appeal of the job, said Sgt. Anthony Wevers.

"I am a science teacher at Kellenberg Memorial High School, so annual training is an opportunity to serve in the Army and perform as a musician, which is a nice change of pace and outlet to continue a life-long hobby," Wevers said.

At the end of three or four days of annual training, everyone starts getting into the routine, remembers their roles, locks into what they have to do, they're not bumping into each other as much. This is the benefit of having 12 hours a day for training, Kimes said.

The result is a band cohesive enough that Romano could easily step in and conduct – no score required. Romano has been teaching music for a long time. But for the 42nd Band, he was happy to make a few changes.

"You're dealing with professional caliber band, amongst the best concert bands in the world," Romano, said. "Something someone like me — who's dealing with students — you often don't get the opportunity to perform as you hear the music in your head. So last night was a real blessing. It's a great gig, it's unlike anything I've ever experienced." gt

The 42nd Infantry Division Band performed at Eisenhower Park on Aug. 13 in East Meadow, Nassau County, Long Island. The performance was part of the 42nd Infantry Division Band's two-week Annual Training. The band performs across the state as the musical ambassadors of the New York Army National Guard and the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division. Photos by 1st Lt. Mark H. Getman, Joint Force Headquarters.

NGB Chief Speaks at Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation

Story by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

General Frank Grass, the 27th Chief, National Guard Bureau and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks to 42nd Infantry Division Soldiers, veterans and retirees at the Desmond Hotel in Colonie on Sept. 6 during the "Rainbow" Division Veterans Foundation's annual dinner. Photo by Master Sgt. Pete Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

COLONIE -- General Frank Grass, the highest ranking officer in the National Guard, praised the Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division who went to war in Iraq in 2005 during the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation annual dinner here Sept. 6.

The men and women of the 42nd Infantry Division took an organization that was resourced at a very low level, integrated new equipment and technologies, and went onto perform tremendously while providing mission command to four brigades in an area of Iraq the size of West Virginia, said Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau who also sits on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The division integrated National Guard and Army Reserve units from 29 states as well as two brigades from the active Army's 3rd Infantry division and did it well, Grass said. Just as it had done in World War I, the 42nd Division reached across America like a rainbow, just as General Douglas McArthur had said about it during World War I, Grass told the audience at the Desmond Hotel.

"That is what is so great about the 42nd Division," Grass said," is that when you mobilize it you touch America."

The 42nd Infantry Division did all this, on top of leading the National Guard response to the Sept. 11, attacks in New York City, providing Soldiers to help secure West Point, and sending troops to the state's airports and northern border with Canada to assist the Border Patrol, Grass said.

Grass delivered his remarks to a group which included the current 42nd Infantry Division commander and three past division commanders, as well as a handful of the division's surviving World War II veterans and their descendants, along with the men and women who served in Iraq in 2005 and those who serve with the division today.

Grass also visited Joint Force Headquarters before going to the dinner.

The Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation was originally founded in 1919 as the Rainbow Division Veterans Association by men who served in the division in World War I. The ranks of the association grew following World War II when the division's veterans of that war joined the group.

> "That is what is so great about the 42nd Division...is that when you mobilize it you touch America."
>
> ***Gen. Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau***

In 1971 the association was reorganized as a foundation with the mission of preserving the division's history through memorials and encouraging education as well as fellowship.

As the 42nd Infantry Division mobilized and went to war in Iraq, the Rainbow veterans reached out to include those National Guard division members in their ranks. The foundation now honors those who served in the division throughout the Cold War and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This year, the foundation dedicated two memorials to the Soldiers who served in Iraq—one at Fort Drum and another at Fort Dix—and presented scholarships totaling $20,000 to further those missions—said retired Major Gen. Joseph Taluto, the chairman of the foundation.

The memorials join two other sites, one at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma honoring WWII veterans and one in Garden City, site of the former Camp Mills where the division was created during WWI, to recognize the mobilization sites of Rainbow Division Soldiers.

Taluto was the division commander in Iraq and then went on to serve as Adjutant General from 2006 to 2010.

The $20,000 in education money was divided up among six recipients, with three awards going to the children of serving Guard Soldiers. gt

Guardsmen Run for 9/11 Fallen at Kandahar Airfield

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Richard Stowell

Spc. Timothy Keaveny, from Harlem, a pay analyst with the 4th Finance Management Support Detachment, displays a Port Authority of New York and New Jersey 9/11 shirt Sept. 4th at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. The agency donated the shirts to the unit to honor first responders who answered the call of duty in 2001.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Soldiers conducted a series of runs in honor of New York first responders who put themselves in harm's way the morning of September 11, 2001 13 years ago.

"We are running to show that we are here to represent New York City, to show all of Kandahar and all of the Army that we are a great city and that we are proud of where we come from," said Spc. Oscar Chicaiza, a cashier from Brooklyn.

Chicaiza was only six years old when the Twin Towers fell, but he recalls it being traumatic. He said those events helped inspire him to join the National Guard nine years later.

He is one of 20 Soldiers with the 4th Financial Management Support Detachment from Whitestone serving at Kandahar Airfield. They represent the city that took the brunt of the opening attacks in the War on Terror, as well as the final rotation of the international response, Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Here on Kandahar (Airfield) they do a weekly 5K run; we wanted to remember the events of 9/11 and being from New York, our connection to it," said Capt. Andrew King, commander of the 4th Finance Management Detachment, New York National Guard.

> "We are running to show that we are here to represent New York City, to show all of Kandahar and all of the Army that we are a great city and that we are proud of where we come from."
>
> -- *Spc. Oscar Chicaiza, 4th Finance*

He and one of his noncommissioned officers, Sgt. Daniel London, began earlier this summer to plan a base-wide 9/11 memorial 5K for all comers to honor Service members from the International Security Assistance Force who have died in Afghanistan since the operation began in 2001. But the New Yorkers also wanted to run specifically for those who were affected by the attacks in their native state.

"We lost a lot of heroes that day, thousands of people in those towers, and we can't forget about the Pentagon and the other flights," said London, a dispersing analyst from Brooklyn. "This helps us remember what we are out here for."

London and the other members of his unit, along with several Soldiers from the 133rd Quartermaster Company, based in Brooklyn, have gathered for several mornings outside their housing units before the sun slipped above the eastern horizon. Standing out among the other Soldiers scattered about the roads of Kandahar Airfield, the New Yorkers wear shirts emblazoned with FDNY, NYPD and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as they run for their hometown.

"We wanted to represent New York," said Sgt. Rovin Seosankar, a military pay analyst from Queens. "The (KAF) 9/11 run represents all of the fallen heroes in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we wanted to represent the fallen heroes in New York. We had a lot of civilians, police officers, EMTs, first responders who answered the call of duty," he said.

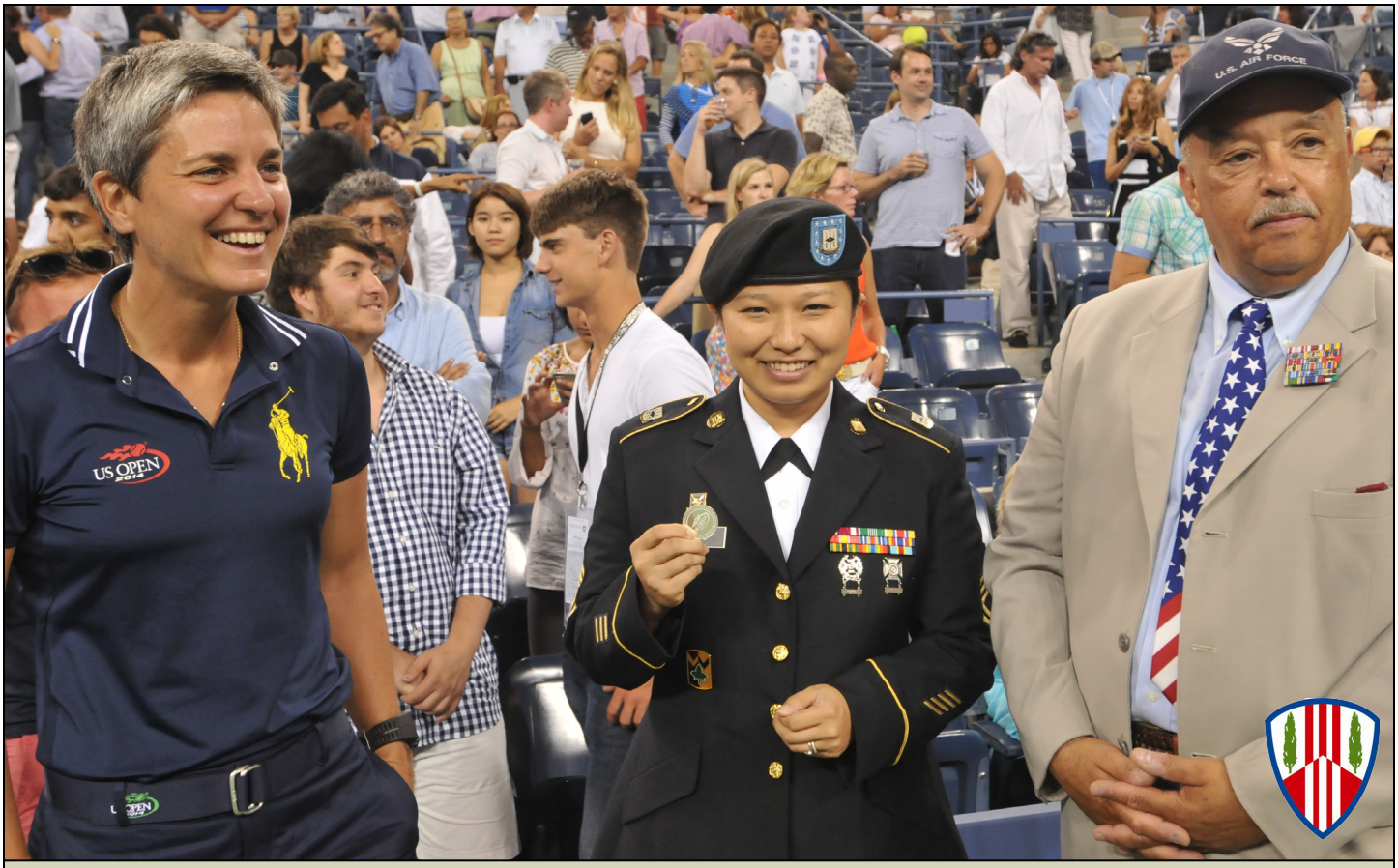
In all, they have run three separate times, once for each of the major agencies whose members put their lives on the line to help the victims of the attack on the twin towers. The New York Department of Corrections also donated and sent shirts. The Soldiers ran for that agency on the morning of Sept. 11.

Running has become a way for Americans to honor the fallen and to remind others to not forget their sacrifices. A group called Run for the Fallen began in the summer of 2008 and ran across the United States—one mile for every American service member killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Travis Manion Foundation, named for a Marine killed in Iraq in 2007, sponsors a 9/11 Heroes Run that is held in dozens of cities worldwide during the first weeks of September. Wear Blue: Run to Remember is a similar organization that sponsors runs to help the survivors of those killed in America's wars to heal. It was started by the widow of a U.S. Army captain killed in southern Afghanistan in 2009.

"Running is a way to show determination." said London. **gt**

Spc. Oscar Chicaiza from Brooklyn, carries the guidon with three other Soldiers on the run with the 4th Finance Management Support Detachment based at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Sept. 9.

New York Guardsman Recognized at Tennis Match



FLUSHING -- New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Sharon Rimal holds the coin used in the pre-match coin toss inside Arthur Ashe Stadium at the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament on Labor Day. Rimal and U.S. Air Force Col. (Ret.) Terrance Holliday, the commissioner of Veterans Affairs for New York City, were recognized in a short ceremony during the third annual Military Appreciation Day at the U.S. Open. Rimal serves with the New York Army National Guard's 27th Financial Management Company as the Readiness NCO and returned in the Spring from a deployment to Kuwait. Photo by Master Sgt. Dean Welch.

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Sgt. Patrick Decker of the 727th Military Police Detachment completes paperwork during joint operations with the West Point Military Police."

pany and the 104th Military Police Battalion."

The 727th, which is headquartered at Camp Smith, began training to handle law enforcement duties at West Point during their weekend drills, Maceri said.

The unit has long had a relationship with the MPs at the Military Academy; 727th MPs have helped handle security during Army football games at the academy as a training opportunity.

For the first four days of annual training, the Soldiers from the 727th conducted a right seat ride with the West Point Military, Maceri said. Then the West Point MPs handed the road patrol duties over to the Guard Soldiers while continuing in supervisory roles.

"For the 727th, this training allowed the Soldiers to perform their wartime mission," said Capt. Tim Gannon, the detachment commander. "It was the perfect culmination of a year's worth of training."

"It was definitely one of the best annual trainings that I've been in," said Selchick. "We actually got to put into practice what we learned in training. Everything that I know about law enforcement, I learned in the military." **gt**

Soldiers Become MP's During Course at Camp Smith

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, Joint Force Headquarters

New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Juan Torres (right), an Instructor with the 106th Regional Training Institute instructs Spc. Brian Toribio, 442nd Military Police Co., from Jamaica Queens, how to operate and clear a MK 19 Grenade Machine Gun, Aug. 4. The training is part of a four-week military police reclassification course taught at Camp Smith Training Site, Peekskill.

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor -- Instructors at the New York Army National Guard's 106th Regional Training Institute here are cramming 20 weeks of classroom, field training and on-the-job instruction in police methods into an intense four week training program.

Eighteen New York Army National Guard Soldiers graduated from the course to reclassify as Military Police officers on Aug. 15.

Through classroom instruction and scenario based training, they are taught how to protect lives and property by enforcing military laws and regulations, as well as traffic control, crime prevention, and responding to emergencies.

"Our students are already Soldiers and come with basic warrior skills, so we can focus on military police functions like civil law and jurisdiction, investigating and collecting evidence techniques, traffic and crowd control and suspect arrest and restraint procedures," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Seidenstein, Senior Instructor for the course.

According to Seidenstein, once students graduate they will also be prepared to support battlefield operations by conducting security, internment and resettlement of civilians, provide law and order to include criminal investigations and confinement of US military prisoners and conduct police intelligence operations.

The 106th Regional Training Institute (RTI) is an Army National Guard unit that trains Soldiers, officer and non-commissioned officers across New York State and the northeast. The 106th's 1st Battalion specializes in military police proficiency training.

It's a lot to learn in just four weeks, said Lt. Col. Robert Giordano, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 106th RTI. Their instructors are well versed, rounded and up to the task. They include several members of various police and fire departments, professors in criminal justice and senior finance experts, to name a few.

"Their wealth of knowledge creates a high caliber of teachers," Giordano said. "We want the most proficient MP's possible teaching and mentoring the next generation of MP's. Our instructors have what it takes to lead by example."

According to Giordano, Instructors are handpicked based on their leadership qualities and combat experience. Once selected for the 3-year commitment, they attend both basic and small group instructor courses, complete a rigorous on-the-job teaching program and are evaluated by senior leaders before being certified by the U.S. Army Military Police School.

"I am really impressed with the structured training and hands-on opportunities," said Spc. Michael Jankowski. Jankowski, a Gowand resident, is a former Marine forward observer who joined the National Guard's 105th Military Police Company to become a military police officer.

"The student to instructor ratio makes it possible to ask questions and I really appreciate the opportunity to practice what we're learning, rather than being taught and then told to go out and do it," Jankowski added.

The course employs up to 11 instructors who interact with students and provide administrative and logistics support as well as instruction. Having a large force allows instructors to surge capacity during critical times such as ranges, practical exercises or when more hands-on instruction is needed, Giordano explained.

"Our Instructors teach to task standard because it's critical our students learn how to do this job right. We don't cut corners and we don't check the block – if and when retraining is needed, the task is done over and over until it's done correctly," Giordano emphasized.

For Spc. Brian Toribio, a Jamiaca, Queens resident, reclassifying from an automated logistical specialist to a Military Police officer is a perfect fit because he aspires to be a New York State Trooper. A member of the 442 MP Co., Toribio is attending John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.

"I want a career in law enforcement because I have a passion for justice and want to help keep my community safe," Toribio explained.

"Taking this course gives me an advantage at college because I already have hands on experience with a lot of basic law enforcement responsibilities and techniques," Toribio said. gt

Field observers Sgt. Abdul Pressley and 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Headquarters Battery Commander Capt. Joseph Laiosa direct illumination rounds from Alpha Battery on Fort Drum's Impact Area.

258th Field Artillery Takes Training to the Next Level

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Andrew Higgins

FORT DRUM -- Lt. Col. David Feeley, New York's 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery battalion commander, first addressed the battalion by guaranteeing his Soldiers three things for annual training: a few good hours of rest, a cup of coffee, and some ammunition.

For the Soldiers of the 258, that was all they needed to hear. Along with the unit's more formidable instruments of war, Soldiers of the 258th utilized these assurances in July at Fort Drum during the unit's two-week annual training to grow as a battalion and stretch their limits in order to prepare for the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La in 2016.

The intent of this years' training was to prepare for a transition into platoon level operations in order to provide safe, timely, and precise fires to the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during future training and Unified Land Operations. Key tasks involved sling load and air assault operations, individual and crew served weapon qualification, developing proficiency in sustainment and convoy operations, exercising radar and retransmission sections to facilitate operations and observation of fires, establish digital communications from observers to the gun line, battalion mission command of operations, tactical operation center operations, battle tracking and reporting and to complete certification and qualification of howitzers.

New York Army National Guard Artilleryman Spc. Tariq Hylton and fellow Bravo Battery Soldier prepare a 105mm howitzer for another fire during 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery's annual training, July 12-16.

Alpha and Bravo Battery's fired over 1100 rounds of 105mm ammunition during a week of artillery live fire training.

Headquarters Battery partnered with the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry's Fire Support Element to provide observed fires utilizing lasers and handheld computers as well as radar. The Battalion focused on exercising the vital digital links from the observer on the hill all the way to the gun line.

"Using digital fire support and fire control systems can be difficult if you have gotten rusty, but it's ultimately faster, more precise, and therefore safer – digital is vital" said Feeley.

These operations were accomplished with the timely and effective support provided by Golf Company of the 427th Support Battalion, who kept the ammo moving, ensured that Soldiers received the cup of coffee that Feeley promised, and provided the fuel to keep the Battalion moving. Golf Company's support provided the battalion with over 5,000 meals via a daily Logistics Package operations and 5,800 gallons of fuel in the field. This contributed to Golf Company's total of 750 hours of field maintenance. Additionally, Golf Company's Maintenance Recovery Teams recovered 15 tactical vehicles. When not directly supporting the 258th, Golf Company also conducted Mission Essential Task List-focused training on tactical convoy operations, vehicle recovery, field maintenance operations and Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services.

Finally, annual training ended with Company G conducting a retrograde operation that included a PMCS and "jiffy lube" of all 125 vehicles the 258th used during their two weeks at Fort Drum.

2nd Lt. Joseph Decaprio, a new addition to the 258th staff, describes his first annual training with a Field Artillery unit. "The complexity and proficiency of the daily tasks were intimidating, yet reassuring when I look around and see everyone on the same page and prepared."

Soldiers also trained and certified as Combat Life Savers through a 40-hour course offered by Fort Drum's Bridgewater-Vaccaro Medical Simulation Training Center. Nearby units were fortunate to have a full time staff at the Medical

Continued on next page

New York Soldiers Earn German Award

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE -- Lt. Col. Rolf Metz German Army Liaison Officer to the United States Military Academy, West Point presents the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge to New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Dorvee, 1427th Transportation Company and Sgt. Sean Massimo, 442nd Military Police Company, during a ceremony here Aug. 3. The decoration is traditionally awarded to German enlisted Soldiers for weapons proficiency and is one of the few foreign awards approved for wear by U.S. military personnel. Metz worked with 53rd Troop Command leaders to allow New York Army National Guard Soldiers to earn the coveted award in New York. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo. Joint Force Headquarters.

Soldiers are critiqued on their abilities to identify and treat life-threatening injuries in the blood lab at the Bridgewater-Vaccaro Medical Simulation Training Center, Fort Drum.

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Simulation Training Centers who offer instruction on Combat Lifesaver course, Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, the Expert Field Medical Badge course and the Mountain Medic course. Soldiers certified their CLS training through practical scenarios using the MSTC blood lab. The lab recreates battlefield scenarios composed of sound effects, smoke, and state of the art medical mannequins with real-time vitals and speech abilities.

At the end of annual training, time was set aside for unit pictures, an awards ceremony, and a quick BBQ.

With mission success in hand, Soldiers headed safely home to their families and friends, taking with them a greater sense of pride and accomplishment in their comrades. Feeley said. **gt**

Soldiers Pumped Up as Master Fitness Trainers

Story by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Kreiss, Washington Army National Guard

JOINT BASE LEWIS McCHORD, Wash. – Nine Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard completed the Army's Master Fitness Training Course here August 14 to provide commanders with Master Fitness Trainers that can better teach, train and prepare Soldiers for physical training.

The four-week long course graduated just 31 of its original 43 attendees, noted Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian Sherman, Warrant Officer Strength Manager from the New York Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command.

The instruction includes classroom and hands-on training that review the how and why of physical fitness and exercise, anatomy, injury prevention, and Army regulations and doctrine regarding physical training.

"It is a Comprehensive Course that is challenging both physically and mentally," Sherman said.

Sherman was accompanied by seven other NCOs from Recruiting Command to better support the Recruit Sustainment Program in New York that introduces Soldier fundamentals and prepares recruits for basic combat training, an area of concern for the Army and Department of Defense.

Their efforts address a report released in 2012 from senior retired military leaders' concern that poor fitness and higher childhood obesity rates were significant limitations in accepting new recruits and a threat to national security.

The report, entitled "Too Fat to Fight," released in September 2012, calls for greater efforts to the obesity epidemic that challenges military effectiveness, especially among recruits.

The Master Fitness Course prepares these trainers to be the unit experts for commanders as they build their own fitness program.

"The first day was the APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test) conducted to Standard," said Sherman, and "that was the eye opener for many Soldiers as the grading standards came to light."

The primary focus of the course was the proper method of instruction and implementation of Army Physical Readiness Training (FM 7-22) centered on the proper methods of Preparation Drill.

These ten exercises, with 5-10 repetitions each, prepare Soldiers for Physical Readiness Training. Their training sessions included Strength Training Circuits, Climbing Drills, Military Movements or Conditioning Drills or Endurance Training with Ability Group Runs, Terrain Running or Hill Climbing.

There were also academic classes related to Nutrition, Exercise Physiology, Muscle Physiology, Kinesiology and Muscle Anatomy, Sherman said.

The success in training would not have been possible without the support of the Washington State Army National Guard, Sherman said.

"We received a great bit of logistical and classroom support from our brothers and sisters with the Washington Army National Guard," he said. "Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Massey was the team leader for their group along with his team of three other Soldiers, whom were Certified MFT Instructors, that will be conducting the newer version of the MFT course."

Soldiers also learned about the value of properly stretching, hydration and nutrition.

"Our class was comprised of mostly National Guard Soldiers whom really pulled together and trained together in leadership and academics," Sherman said.

Most of the New York Soldiers belong to the Recruiting and Retention Battalion, with one other Soldier, Sgt. Sergio Allen, serving with the 222nd Military Police Company.

Recruiting Command graduates include Sherman, Sgt. 1st Class Eric Sabater and Staff Sgts. Johnny Han, Jose Hernandez, Michael Trask, Darrick Zwack, Nicholas Archibald and Carl Bush.

The training provided graduates with an Additional Skill Identifier for those who completed the course. gt

Staff Sgt. Michael Trask from Recruiting and Retention Command conducts pull-ups with body armor during training at the Master Fitness Training Course on Aug. 14, Trask and eight other Soldiers will provide training and advice to commanders on improving physical fitness training after completion.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Douglas B. Sherman conducts a fireman's carry during physical fitness training while participating in the Master Fitness Training Course held at Joint Base Lewis McChord on Aug. 14.

Recent Change of Commands

LATHAM - Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson (right) looks on as outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks passes the Division of Military and Naval Affairs colors to Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General, during a change of responsibility ceremony on Aug. 15, at DMNA Headquarters. Wilson took the role of top enlisted advisor to the Adjutant General from Wicks, who is retiring. Wilson, an Iraq War veteran, was previously the command sergeant major for the 53rd Troop Command. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

CAMP SMITH -- Col. Dave Martinez holds the colors of the 369th Sustainment Brigade during formal Change-of-Command ceremonies here on, Aug. 3. Martinez took command of the brigade from Lt. Col. James Gonyo the Deputy Brigade Commander. Photo by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director.

New Commander for MEDCOM

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE-- Col. Richard Green, the new commander of the New York Army National Guard Medical Command takes the unit guidon from Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, during the Change-of-Command ceremony here on Aug. 3.

Green replaces Col. James Coleman who has been tapped to become the New York Army National Guard State Surgeon. Green has been serving as deputy MEDCOM commander since October 2013.

Coleman replaced Col. Joan Sullivan as the New York Army National Guard State Surgeon.

MEDCOM, based at the Watervliet Arsenal, is a small unit, with less than 100 Soldiers, but its members are responsible for monitoring the health and ability to deploy on both state and federal missions for more than 10,000 Soldiers around New York. Photo by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director.

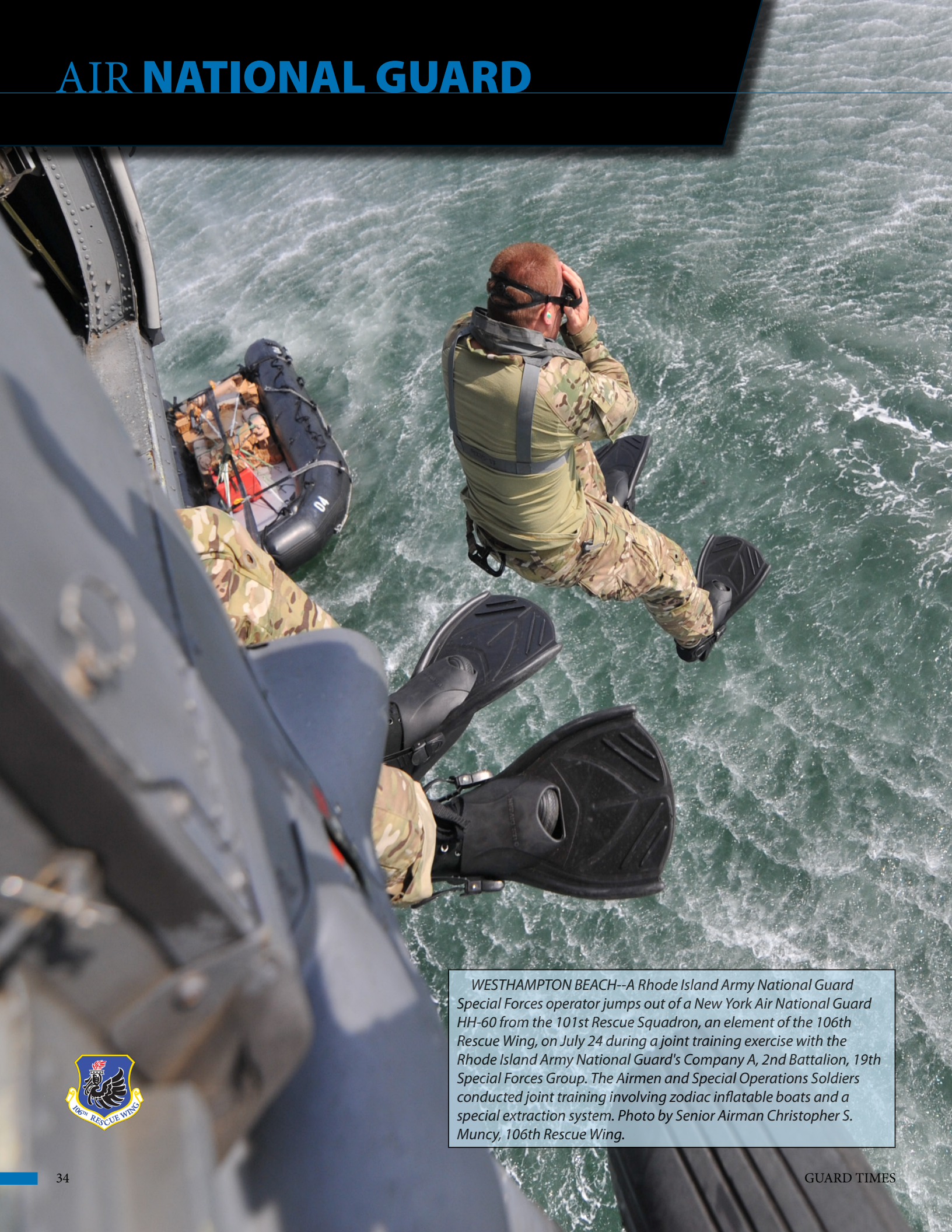
Final Flight in Africa for New York Pilot

CAMP LEMMONNIER, Djibouti-- Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dave Lewis (right), a C-12 pilot from Detachment 20, Operational Support Airlift, is congratulated by the commander of Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, Maj. Gen. Wayne W. Grigsby, following his final flight as an Army aviator on July 25. Lewis' last flight was back from Kenya in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. The Latham-based C-12 detachment has been serving in Djibouti since November, 2013. Photo by Staff Sgt. Leslie Keopka, U.S. Air Force.

LATHAM -- Six new Warrant Officer candidates were introduced in a ceremony here on Sept. 24. Attending the event was Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields. The new candidates are: (Back Row) Shields, Sgt. Anthony Alessi, Sergeant 1st Class Jeffrey Bailey, Spc. Aaron Pacholk, Staff Sgt. Paul Pennell, Staff Sgt. Richard Perkins, Staff Sgt. Richard Reed, Sgt. Morris Williams and Command Chief Warrant Officer Robert Wold. Front Row from Recruiting: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Chris Seeger, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian Sherman and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Harry McDonough. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone

Airborne Guardsmen

A New York Army National Guard flight medic from the Rochester based Company F, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation (Air Ambulance) rises up from the wood line to conduct medical evacuation training with infantry Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry from Gloversville. The two units conducted integrated training on July 17 at Fort Drum during the units' annual training. Courtesy photo.



WESTHAMPTON BEACH--A Rhode Island Army National Guard Special Forces operator jumps out of a New York Air National Guard HH-60 from the 101st Rescue Squadron, an element of the 106th Rescue Wing, on July 24 during a joint training exercise with the Rhode Island Army National Guard's Company A, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group. The Airmen and Special Operations Soldiers conducted joint training involving zodiac inflatable boats and a special extraction system. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

106th Rescue Wing Welcomes Secretary of the Air Force

Story by Master Sgt. Cheran Cambridge, 106th Rescue Wing

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James visits the 106th Rescue Wing, Aug. 13 and meets face to face with six Bronze star recipients. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James visited the 106th Rescue Wing on Aug. 13 to get a first-hand look at the mission.

"My initial reaction to you is one word -- 'Wow!'" said James. "You all and everything that you are doing is so impressive."

James's trip from New York City to Westhampton Beach was no ordinary ride. On her way to the 106th, James witnessed a Combat Search and Rescue exercise featuring the HC-130 and Pararescue Jumpers while flying on a HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter.

After James touched down at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base she discussed the needs of the New York National Guard with Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York and met with six Bronze Star recipients from the 106th: Capt. Ronnie Maloney, Senior Master Sgt. Erik Blom, Master Sgt. Anthony Yusup, Staff Sgt. Matthew Zimmer, Staff Sgt. James Dougherty, and Senior Airman Christopher Petersen.

During the 106th town hall meeting, James spoke very highly of the Bronze star recipients.

"These six are a testimony to the tremendous work that you do," James said.

James told the wing members she has three priorities: taking care of people, balancing today's readiness with tomorrow's modernization and making every dollar count.

"Great people fuel all great organizations," James said. "It always comes down to people and that is why I wanted to put people first," she said referring to her top priority.

The Air Force of the future will be smaller, James said, but the downsizing will be more on the active duty side compared to the Guard and Reserve side.

"Over time we are going to see more missions shift toward the Guard and Reserve, which I think is a good thing for the tax payers."

James also said there will be less of a divide between the Active Duty, Guard and Reserve forces administratively in the future.

"We are working on how to make it more seamless in the back office so people can flow more easily from Active, Guard and Reserve," she explained, saying the Air Force is working on reducing paperwork by integrating personnel systems across the components.

James also talked about readiness now and the future of readiness.

"We have to make sure that we return to a higher level of readiness and that is precisely why we have pumped more money into Fiscal Year 14 and Fiscal Year 15 budget to increase our readiness levels," James added. "I am talking about fully funding flying hours, more money for spare parts and maintenance and more money for munitions. These are some of the categories that contribute to readiness."

James also said fleets of aircraft have to be retired so that money is freed up to put back into future readiness, which includes newer weapon systems.

"Here at Gabreski, you are slated to take possession of modernized C-130Js," the Secretary said of the aircraft scheduled for the base in 2019. Just two months ago, we ordered the contract for the new rescue helicopter which will help you, again decades into the future, continue to save lives."

During her explanation of make every dollar count, James described the need to closely monitor programs to make sure that they do not go over budget.

"There is really a roll for all of us to play in this make every dollar count campaign," James explained, saying her part includes program review to ensure programs stay on budget and deliver as promised.

She also said Airmen can help make every dollar count by sharing their ideas on the Airmen Powered by Innovation website. These ideas will make the Air Force more efficient.

"Bubble up ideas that you have from your perspective," James said, mentioning that Airmen on the ground typically have cost and time-saving ideas because they're the ones doing the mission every day.

So far, 14,000 ideas have been compiled from the website and these ideas are projected to save the Air Force 76 million dollars.

James concluded her speech by sending her gratitude to the 106th personal support systems.

"Our Air Force would not be able to support our critical national and state missions without the ongoing support of your families and your employers." she said. "Please tell them, from me to you, 'Thank you.'" **gt**

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION--New York Air National Guard Col. John J. Higgins commander of the 107th Airlift Wing is doused by his comrades as he steps off of the aircraft following his final flight as a navigator on Sept. 25. It was the 107th Airlift Wings final flight in a C-130 before converting to the MQ-9 'Reaper' mission. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Raymond Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing.

107th Airlift Wing Conducts Final Flight in C-130

Story by Capt. Elaine Nowak, 107th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -Aircrews from the 107th Airlift Wing flew their final C-130 flight and were greeted with a water salute here on Sept. 25.

The unit is in the process of converting from the C-130 Hercules tactical transport to the MQ-9 Reaper, a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA). The flight was the last time 107th aircrew members will fly C-130s. The mission was flown in partnership with the 914th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve, who will continue to fly the C-130 from Niagara.

It is a long-standing aviation and Air Force tradition that marks the milestone of an aircrew member's last flight. Comrades spray water or champagne on the aircrew as they exit the aircraft. It is dubbed the "fini flight."

As the aircraft taxied in, two fire trucks from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station Fire Emergency Services made an archway of water. Members of the 107th and 914th Airlift Wings lined the flightline to be present for the historic event. As the crew exited the aircraft, they were met with buckets of water, sprays of champagne and cheers.

Col. John J. Higgins, 107th Airlift Wing Commander served as the navigator for the fini flight. It was the last flight of his military career.

"It is a day of mixed emotions. We are transitioning from the C-130, which we've been flying since 2008 and have become comfortable with, having deployed with it to Iraq and Afghanistan. However, we look to the future with excitement as we take on the MQ-9 mission," Higgins said.

"It is a long-standing aviation and Air Force tradition that marks the milestone of an aircrew member's last flight. Comrades spray water or champagne on the aircrew as they exit the aircraft. It is dubbed the 'fini flight.'"

Lt. Col. Douglas Eoute, was the aircraft commander for the flight. "It was nostalgic. I have been flying for 25 years. It was bittersweet. We are looking forward to the future but we're going to miss flying up in the aircraft," he said.

107th Airlift Wing commander, Col. John J. Higgins, on the flight deck of the C-130 for the last time on Sept. 25 before the 107th transitions to the MQ-9 'Reaper' mission. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Raymond Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing.

Today marked the end of the C-130 era for the 107th Airlift Wing. The conversion to the RPA mission is underway. Many members are currently in training or have recently completed training as RPA pilots, sensor operators, intelligence coordinators and other high-tech communications positions. The unit is on course to be fully operational by 2017.

Since it was first organized during World War II the wing has flown propeller driven fight planes, supersonic jets designed to knock down enemy bombers, ground attack aircraft and giant KC-135 tankers.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the community for their support of the 107th and ask for their continued support as we convert to the MQ-9. I'd also like to thank the 914th Airlift Wing for being our partners in C-130 operations and convey my gratitude for all they have done for us," Higgins said. **gt**

FARMINGDALE - Airmen First Class Emilsi Santiago and Larissa Morales, both members of the 106th Rescue Wing Honor Guard, render a final salute as the body of Corporal Paul J. Ricioppi is laid to rest at Long Island National Cemetery on July 28. Cpl. Ricioppi was an honorably discharged member of the Army Air Corps. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

New York Airman is Honor Guard Member of the Year

By Maj. Mary L. Harrington, Air National Guard Readiness Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. – Setting the example is a way of life for Tech. Sgt. Amy Ough, the Air National Guard's Honor Guard Member of the Year. Ough takes to heart her influence as a role model, and is deeply committed to her family, her community and her unit.

"I think it's important to show my children and the next generation that your gender, your age, your profession doesn't matter. You can excel at anything, if you put your mind to it," said Ough, a full-time member of the New York Air National Guard, assigned to the Eastern Air Defense Sector in Rome, N.Y.

Ough was chosen in March and was formally recognized during an Aug. 7 ceremony at the Air National Guard Readiness Center, located at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. She stood out because of her dedication, exceptional leadership and military bearing. She has volunteered countless hours at special events, funerals and military ceremonies as a member of the Honor Guard. She has also dedicated her time to numerous organizations, charities and special events including food drives, run-walks and school events.

Ough worked as a waitress, a retail customer service rep, and as a baby sitter prior to joining the Air Force. "I knew I definitely didn't want to work three jobs the rest of my life," she said. "So I did some research, met with a variety of recruiters, and fell in love with the Air Force." After four-and-a-half years in the active component, Ough joined the Air National Guard.

"As a family, we are very active and try to give back to the community. I think that's important," she said. "We also spend a lot of time outdoors.

Ough graduated from the Community College of the Air Force with an associate's degree in air and space operations technology. She plans to stay in the military for at least five more years. "I'll stay as long as they let me," she said. gt

Providing Boost to Air Operations During Northern Strike

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Daniel Heaton, 127th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard

Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing, refuel an A-10 Thunderbolt II during Operation Northern Strike at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Aug. 16. The A-10 is from the 127th Wing, Michigan Air National Guard. Twenty-four units from 12 states and two coalition partners participated in the three-week event at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center and Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center.

ALPENA, Mich. -- A group of experienced maintenance Airmen from the New York Air National Guard helped to facilitate the air power component of Operation Northern Strike.

Airmen from the 174th Attack Wing provided crew chief, fuels, ground equipment, weapons and ammunition support to the various types of fighter and attack aircraft participating in the exercise, which is based at two major National Guard-operated training facilities in northern Michigan.

"We're able to function as a maintenance group that can quickly be picked up and relocated to a position anywhere there's a forward operating air field," said 1st Lt. Chris Sturick, detachment commander of the New York maintenance contingent.

The New York Airmen are operating at the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center. There, F-16 Fighting Falcon and A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft from various units and states are staging operations at Alpena and the Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center. Over 300 Total Force fighter, bomber, mobility, and rotary sorties were planned in support of live fire exercises during the Aug. 4-22 exercise. In total, 24 units from 12 States and two Coalition partners participated in the three-week event, involving 5,000 Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors.

The group of about 20 New York Airmen worked at Alpena during the exercise. They are part of a detachment of the 174th based in Syracuse. The detached unit operates at the Wheeler-Sack Army Air Field at Fort Drum supporting a variety of types of aircraft that train on the air-to-ground ranges there.

"Our Airmen are all qualified on the A-10, F-16 and the F-15, meaning we bring a lot of diversity to the table," said Senior Master Sgt. Edward Newcombe. "A benefit of the exercise was being able to work with other Air National Guard units."

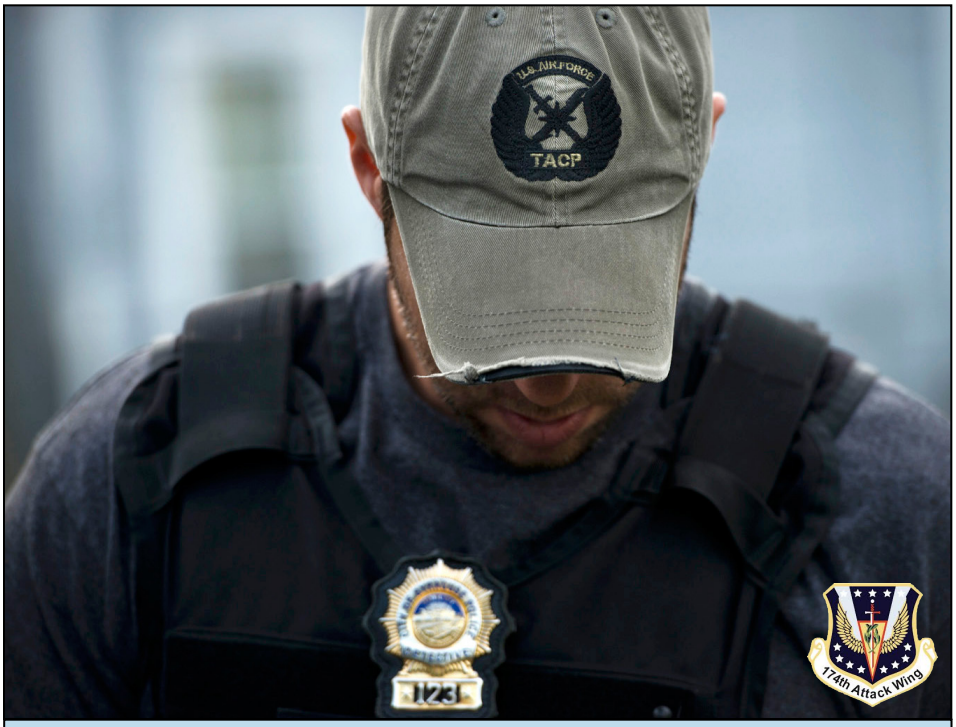
"One of the other Wings brought a few junior Airmen to work in the fuels shop and our guy working in there has more than 20 years of experience," Newcombe said. "So they were able to partner up and help the Airmen tap into some of his knowledge."

Operation Northern Strike is centered at two of the nation's largest National Guard training facilities - Camp Grayling Joint Military Training Center and the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center - Operation Northern Strike is an annual National Guard Bureau sponsored Combined Live Fire Exercise. The exercise emphasizes the Theater Air Control and Army Air Ground Systems within the Theater Air Ground System. It blends Maneuver, Close Air Support, Joint Fire Support, and Air Mobility in both Major Combat Operations and limited Operation Enduring Freedom scenarios. gt

Bringing Justice

Guardsman Chases 'Bad Guys'

Story by Randy Roughton
Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Lee



Master Sgt. Patrick DiCrasto is a Tactical Air Control Party specialist at Hancock Air National Guard Base.

SYRACUSE -- Whether he's calling in close air support during a fire fight or investigating narcotics activity in Syracuse, Master Sgt. Patrick DiCrasto's mind is focused on bringing justice to the "bad guys."

The Tactical Air Control Party specialist at Hancock Air National Guard Base, home of the 174th Attack Wing of the New York Air National Guard, is also a detective with the Syracuse Police Department's Special Investigations Division. The division investigates narcotics activity and vice and works hand in hand with the gang task force. He's also an assistant team leader with the department's SWAT sniper squad.

"It's what we're here for – to get justice," said DiCrasto, who's also the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron superintendent of operations under the wing. The squadron is a TACP unit that primarily coordinates and controls close air support for an Army maneuver unit.

"We're going out looking for bad guys overseas, and we're going out looking for bad guys here in Syracuse. The biggest difference is you have to be able to separate the military job from the police job because you obviously can't call in air strikes back here," he said. "Overseas, I know what I'm there to do and what I can do to get the job done. My actions are governed by the rules of engagement, the ground scheme of maneuver and the commander's intent. When I'm back home, I know that it's local, state and federal laws that govern what I do as a police officer."

"I can't say being a police officer on the street is like being in combat," DiCrasto said. "However, cops on the street always need to have that heightened sense of security, just like when you're on patrol in Iraq and Afghanistan. You are always on point when it comes to looking for suspicious activity, identifying possible enemy activity, or providing security for you, your team and everyone else."

His Army background has proven useful with building trust while working with ground troops in forward locations. He deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq twice each, the last time in 2010 and found building trust a difficult, but necessary, part of the TACP role during the wars in both theaters. The knowledge that he was a prior infantryman, coupled with his SWAT experience in the police force, helped bridge that gap easier, DiCrasto believes.

"Sometimes it's tough because you have to build that respect and trust," he said. "Typically, it's done in the field when your unit becomes engaged in direct combat. They're looking to see if you can do your job, and if they can count on you to call in air support and get ordnance on target. They are always assessing to see if you can be a combat operator like them and a TACP. That's when they know they can count on you."

Both DiCrasto's civilian and military occupations are also service-directed and save lives. A TACP, who is a qualified joint terminal attack controller, is a force-multiplier on the battlefield, he said.

"I don't really see my job as going out there and saving lives," DiCrasto said of his TACP responsibilities. "Our job is to basically go out there and kill as much of the enemy as possible and be a force multiplier for the ground commander and his maneuver element or team. But when you get into a firefight, you typically need air support because you and your ground commander are trying to mass as much firepower on the enemy as possible. At the end of the day,the close air support you called in may have saved lives. That's one of the aspects of this job that make it so satisfying."

"Some people think of drugs as a victimless crime, but I don't believe it is," he said. "I have seen how it destroys people when they are hooked on drugs and how it destroys your family. A good majority of our murders are drug and gang-related here.

While DiCrasto has grown accustomed to seeing some disturbing scenes during his two careers, both in a war zone and in the city, he still has his focus on bringing justice. That remains the case, whether he's working to help protect ground forces in a firefight or the citizens of Syracuse. gt

Discussion on Identifying Offenders

By Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing

107th unit members participate in the 5K Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program run at the Niagara Falls Reserve Station on Sept. 13. Photo by Senior Airman Kayla Blake, 107th Airlift Wing.

Five hundred members of the 107th Airlift Wing put their normal drill weekend duties on hold, Sept. 13, to spend three hours talking about sexual predators.

The training –Identifying Sexual Predators in the Air Force – was a required block of instruction designed to help keep all Airmen safe.

"The 107th aspires to a safe culture among its members and this is one way of keeping Airmen informed," said Col. John J. Higgins, the wing commander.

The curriculum consisted of squadron level small group discussions. The discussion included facts about how offenders operate, the devastation they cause and what each Airman can do to deter them.

"We want to create and have a safe culture for our Airmen here at Niagara," Higgins said. "There is no room for predators in our Air Force."

Unfortunately there are sexual offenders in the Air National Guard too, said Master Sgt. Venita D. Jackson, who runs the Military Equal Opportunity Office for the 107th Airlift Wing. Actively talking about this issue is one way to prevent sexual assaults, she explained.

"Communication is a great tool at our disposal for promoting an environment where it will be harder for predators to prey," Jackson said.

Along with the instruction, wing members were able to talk with the wing Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Victim Advocates, Chaplain Services and the Wing Director of Psychological Health one-on-one if needed.

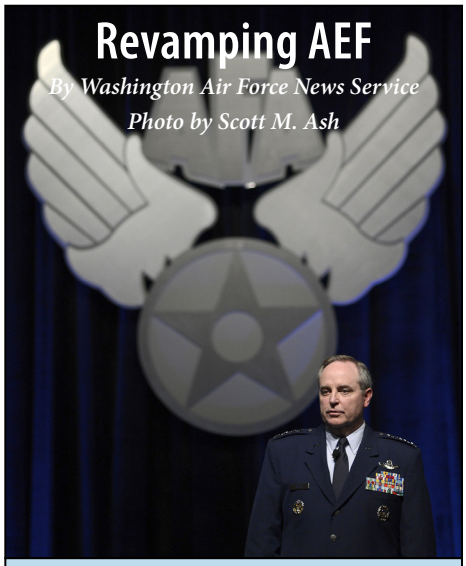
The day ended with a 5K run on the Niagara Falls Reserve Station for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program for the Air Force. gt

"We want to create and have a safe culture for our Airmen here at Niagara. There is no room for predators in our Air Force."

-- Col. John J. Higgins, Wing Commander

Revamping AEF

By Washington Air Force News Service
Photo by Scott M. Ash



WASHINGTON -- Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III delivers his keynote speech on Feb. 20 at the 30th Annual Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium and Technology Exposition in Orlando, Fla.

The Air Force recently announced its plan to deploy Agile Combat Support Airmen under its redesigned air expeditionary force construct.

The primary purpose of the redesign was to look at ways to deploy more ACS Airmen with their units and standardize dwell times across the Air Force as much as possible to present a consistent Air Force capacity to the warfighter.

While the construct was approved in April 2013 by Welsh, the first deployments under this construct will be October 2014. Under the revised Air Expeditionary Force construct, installations will deploy larger numbers of Airmen from the same unit under a 1:2 deploy-to-dwell ratio for active component.

The revised construct establishes an 18 month battle rhythm where an Airman may deploy for six months and be home for 12. This will allow wings to more effectively posture their forces to meet global mission requirements as well as continue home station training.

For more information on AEF battle rhythm and individual base dwell times, Airmen should contact their local unit deployment manager or base deployment manager. gt

105th Airlifters Help out West Point

FORT BENNING, Ga.-- An M1A1 tank from the Army Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga. prepares to load aboard a C-17 belonging to the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing on Sept. 4. The tank was en route to Branch Day at the United States Military Academy at West Point. On Branch Day USMA Cadets get a chance to find out what the different branches of the Army do. Photo by Maj. Paul Jancsy, 105th Airlift Wing.

AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF READING LIST 2015

By Air Force Public Affairs Agency OL-Pentagon, Staff Sgt. Carlin Leslie

WASHINGTON -- For the past eight years the chiefs of staff of the Air Force along with the chief master sergeants of the Air Force, have created a comprehensive reading list of motivating and inspiring material that invigorates and gives a perspective to Airmen in their Air Force careers, highlighting a common theme.

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Mark A. Welsh III has issued a call to all Airmen, to help create the 2015 CSAF Professional Reading Program, asking for submissions that center on the profession of arms and more specifically the Air Force core values: Integrity first, service before self and excellence in all we do.

"I ask you to give me your thoughts on those books and movies that have inspired you throughout your service as an Airman, that have made you proud to be among the half-a-percent of Americans who've dedicated themselves to the profession of arms, or gave you a new perspective on Integrity, service or excellence," Welsh said.

The list has inspired and highlighted many areas throughout the years of its existence to include books, conferences, films, art and photographers that give sight into the military way of life and Air Force core values.

"A list will be built that will make our Air Force stronger," Welsh said. "I'm excited to hear from you and excited to read some terrific books recommended by the greatest Airmen in the world! Thanks for all you do."

To view the current 2014 CSAF reading list visit http://static.dma.mil/usaf/csafreadinglist/index.html and follow the link for submissions to answer the call. **gt**

Airmen Clean up Community Streets

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing

Airmen with the 109th Airlift Wing participated in the Adopt-A-Highway program in Schenectady on Aug. 10. The First Six Council planned the event to clean up the Wing's neighboring community and will be out four times a year.

SCHENECTADY -- More than 30 Airmen came together Aug. 10 to clean up the community, thanks to the efforts of the 109th Airlift Wing First Six Council and their initiative with the Adopt-A-Highway Program.

The First Six Council represents the junior enlisted of the Wing at Stratton Air National Guard Base. The council's president, Senior Airman James Comstock, has been planning the Wing's involvement with Adopt-A-Highway for a little more than a year.

"We really want to get Airmen involved in portraying that the Air National Guard is here to support and help the community," he said. "What better way to do that than to have a bunch of us in ABUs cleaning up the streets."

According to its website, the Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway Program was formalized in 1990 to "encourage individuals or groups to clean up highway roadsides and to recognize those volunteers who do. Participation in the program also fosters a sense of community ownership of the roadway as well as a sense of pride in the appearance."

Comstock got the idea for this program even before he was elected the council's president, and said he just ran with it. "As I started getting more and more people involved, the word got out and it kind of just snowballed from there."

Volunteers lined Freeman's Bridge Road, picking up trash and debris as they went along. With the large number of volunteers, from junior enlisted to wing leadership, the job didn't take long to do at all.

"This is a great way for us to do community outreach," said Tech. Sgt. John Albert, 109th Maintenance Group. "And it feels good to be out here doing this."

"This is a huge event for us," said Col. Shawn Clouthier, 109th commander. "It shows that we are part of the community that we're out in every day, and that we live in. We want the community to be a good place for everyone to live, and our Airmen out there cleaning up the highway is a good way to show support for the community. (The First Six Council) is doing great work for us as well as Schenectady and Scotia-Glenville."

"This is just another way our junior enlisted are making it happen," said Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, 109th command chief. "It's another way for the entire Wing to show support for the community, who consistently show their support for us."

Comstock said this will be an ongoing event and he and other volunteers will be out four times a year.

"As long as the garbage keeps piling up, we'll be here," he said. gt

See more photos here

106th 'Guardians' Bring the Force to Life

Story and photos by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMPTON BEACH - "You have to be careful with your armor," Staff Sgt. James Bavaro says as he pulls it over his chest. "It's hard to move around in it, and if you're not careful it can crack or break on you."

Bavaro's armor isn't the ABU or ACU camouflage pattern vest worn by Air Force deployers or Security Forces members overseas. Instead, he's donning the blue-on-white armor of an Imperial Clone Trooper from the Star Wars movies.

Bavaro, an aircraft armament systems craftsman in the 106th Rescue Wing's Maintenance group is also a member of the Emerald City Garrison of the 501st Legion, a Star Wars enactors group.

The 501st (also known as "Vader's Fist") is an international organization with almost 6,500 members who build and wear costumes and uniforms from the Star Wars universe.

The Emerald City Garrison boasts over a hundred active members, who take part in various charitable events around New York City.

He got the urge to done the Star Wars costume just before his first deployment to Afghanistan, Bavaro said.

"My roommate threw me a going away party before I deployed," Bavaro explained. "A couple of guys from the 501st showed up in costume. After that, I knew I wanted to be a member. So my buddy Eric gave me a suit so I could get in."

The suit is as complicated as anything Soldiers and Airmen wear to war in this world.

It consists of a black jumpsuit underneath the white plastic chest and stomach sections. There is a mask along with several different leg, arm, knee and elbow pieces. A microphone worn beneath the chest piece gives his voice the familiar distortion heard in the Star Wars movies.

The mask itself features a built-in fan designed to keep him cool. That is essential.

"I once spent almost eight hours working in this thing, Bavaro explained.

Each uniform or "kit" as they are called, varies wildly in costs and upkeep, Bavaro said.

"My particular kit cost approximately $2000 and another $2-300 to put together after all the supplies were purchased," he explained.

"Some kits can be built for as low as $800-1000. Others, such as Darth Vader, can exceed $3000. The most basic kit is a Stormtrooper, and although there are several variants of the build, you can do it for about $900 and it is relatively easy to assemble," Bavaro added.

His girlfriend Allison Fleming, while not the Star Wars fan that Bavaro is, has been very supportive.

"When I first heard about the 501st Legion and what they do, I knew this was an organization that James would want to join," Fleming said.

"It combines his passion for volunteering and giving back to the community, with his love of Star Wars. I've attended a few trooping events with James and the children love it - and so do the parents! It is a very rewarding experience for James and I am very proud of him for taking time to give back to others," she said.

Since joining, Bavaro has taken part in a number of events, including a New York Mets Family Day, the opening of the Maria Ferrari Children's Hospital, Stand Up for Cancer, as well as various other children's events.

He also took part in the 106th Rescue Wing's Family Day on Sept. 6.

In 2012, The Emerald City Garrison volunteered almost six-million man hours and raised more than $184,000 for various causes.

"I love giving back to the community," Bavaro said. "I have done volunteer work with the USO and the Long Island craft beer community in the past, and genuinely just love helping out where I can."

"I feel that working with the 501st I am able to more directly impact someone's life in a very positive way," he added.

In July Bavaro "trooped" at Camp Paquatuck for the Muscular Dystrophy Association's summer camp BBQ.

"I came in contact with some of the strongest kids and families I've ever seen," he recalled. "Most of these children were in wheelchairs and will never know what it's like to walk."

"In particular I saw a little girl around six years old," he said. "She was unable to move her arms to operate her wheelchair, but when she saw myself and a fellow trooper walk towards her, she had the biggest, brightest smile I've ever seen."

"Even though she couldn't speak or move her hands, her smile made me feel like I truly made her life better, even if for just a brief moment," he added.

"Her mother thanked us and hugged us for her," Bavaro said. "The mother said that was the first time she smiled in a very long time and was so happy we were there to make her day better. It's that reason that I love working with the 501st. I don't get emotional easily, but that instance made it difficult to keep them in check." gt

Staff Sgt. James Bavaro, 106th Rescue Wing.

New Commander for States All-Volunteer Force

CAMP SMITH- New York Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Anthony German, the Assistant Adjutant General, transfers the colors of the New York Guard to New York Guard Brig. Gen. Stephen Bucaria during Change-of-Command ceremonies here on July 26. Bucaria assumed command of the volunteer state defense and emergency response force from New York Guard Maj. Gen. Fergal Foley.

Bucaria is a sitting New York State Supreme Court Judge and Long Island resident. He is also a Brigadier General in the New York Guard and has served in the state force since 1996.

"Stephen Bucaria has served the people of New York selflessly both as a Supreme Court Judge and a member of the New York Guard," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. "I am confident that he will continue this great work as commander of this group of dedicated volunteers."

Photo by Col. Carole Ryder, New York Guard.

New York Guard Conducts Supply Exercise

CAMP SMITH -- Members of the New York Guard, the state's all-volunteer defense and emergency response force, practice distributing supplies following a natural or man-made disaster during their annual training here on July 25.

The Point of Distribution, or POD, exercise walked the New York Guard members through the multistep process of setting up a site at which up to 5,000 people could draw food, water and emergency supplies.

Photo by Col. Carole Ryder, New York Guard.

Boat Handling, Emergency Response Skills Tested on Hudson River

Story and photos by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

Naval Militia Patrol Boat 220 ties up during a break in training, July 25. Two boat crews and a command group exercised on the Hudson River conducting drills ranging from checking on a reported bomb on a bridge to recovering human remains floating in the river. The drills are designed to exercise boat handling skills, communications, and command and control procedures.

CASTLETON-ON-HUDSON - Two New York Naval Militia boat crews refined their watercraft handling skills while also executing emergency response drills during a day of training on the Hudson River at Schodack Island State Park on July 25.

The exercise, in which eight Naval Militia Sailors on patrol boats 220 and 221 executed a missing person drill, investigated a bomb threat, and set up a boat-traffic exclusion zone. They also provided training for a three-person command party on shore manning the Naval Militia's mobile command trailer.

The goal, explained Naval Militia Cmdr. Don McKnight, commander of the Naval Militia's Military Emergency Boat Service, was to integrate command and control with boat handling training and tasks the Naval Militia would be asked to perform during an emergency response.

The scenarios were designed to exercise improvements in communications procedures identified during the Naval Militia's participation in the state response to Superstorm Sandy in November 2012, McKnight explained.

A key goal for this exercise was using computer communications to pass orders from the New York National Guard Joint Operation Center to the Naval Militia forces on the ground. The command team on the river bank then used radios and sometimes cellphones to pass along new missions.

The 25-foot boats were crewed with a mix of experienced Naval Militia boat handlers and members of the Navy Reserve who were new to small boats.

The new Naval Militia members got a chance to practice piloting the boat as well as learning the skills involved in approaching a floating object in the river and mooring the boat, said Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Hill.

The Hudson River can be especially tricky because currents are always changing depending on the time of the day and the weather, Hill said.

The training exercise was significant because the Naval Militia members who were also Navy Reserve members were being paid for a federal drill day to take part in the exercise.

Because the training is useful to the Navy Reserve members in their federal role, they can be paid for conducting the exercise, explained Cmdr. Vincent Perry, commanding officer of

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Japanese Researchers Look for Clues on Missing Guardsmen from World War II

Story and photo by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

SARATOGA SPRINGS - A team of Japanese researchers are hoping records sitting in the New York State Military Museum here will provide a clue to finding the remains of American Soldiers 7,600 miles away on the island of Saipan.

They are racing against time, explained Yukari Akatsuka one of the Japanese researchers, because in September, a condominium developer began pouring concrete over the area where they think missing American Soldiers may be buried.

About 20 of the American Soldiers who fought on Saipan are still unaccounted for, according to the Hawaii-based U.S. Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command.

"The chance to find the remains during the construction is very small," she said. "That is why we want to clean the site ahead of time."

The group has a deal with the condo developer to let them research the site, but is still waiting on local approval, she added.

The Soldiers who went missing during the battle for the island in July of 1944 were most likely members of the 105th Infantry Regiment, an upstate New York unit which was part of the National Guard's 27th Division, which fought there.

The missing 105th Infantry Soldiers were likely killed on July 7, 1944 when more than 3,000 Japanese soldiers attacked their positions in the largest "banzai" attack of the war.

Three 105th Infantry Regiment Soldiers – Lt. Col. William J. O'Brien, Capt. Salomon L. Ben, and Sgt. Thomas Baker - were awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for their actions in that battle.

Akatsuka, and her colleague Usan Kurata, run Kuentai-USA, the American branch of a Japanese nonprofit organization which works to retrieve the remains of Japanese soldiers who died in World War II and bring them home.

The two spent the week of July 28 through Aug. 1 working with New York State Military Museum librarian Jim Gandy to examine the records, photographs, diaries, and maps in the museum's collection. The museum has hundreds of letters, photographs, diaries, and other materials dealing with the Battle of Saipan, including boxes of research material compiled by author Francis O'Brien, a nephew of Lt. Col. O'Brien, who wrote a history of the battle.

Japanese researcher Yukari Akatsuka, the secretary general of Kuentai-USA, a non-governmental group which specializes in locating and retrieving the remains of World War II dead, and New York State Military Museum Librarian Jim Gandy examine records about the Battle of Saipan, July 29. The group, which focuses on finding the remains of Japanese soldiers killed during World War II, is planning to conduct a dig where they think missing American Soldiers, who fought with the New York National Guard's 105th Infantry Regiment during World War II, may be buried. Akatsuka and a colleague visited the museum to go through data in hopes of refining the search area.

Akatsuka and Kurata have already scanned 150,000 pages of documents from the National Archive in Washington related to Saipan and used that information to identify the location of mass graves containing the remains of almost 800 Japanese soldiers.

All types of information are useful to the groups work, Akatsuka explained.

Their search of the National Archives turned up hand-drawn maps made by American officers, which indicated where dead Japanese soldiers had been buried following the July 7 banzai attack. But one of the final clues used by crews on the ground in Saipan came from matching up a 1944 Life magazine shot of the ground with current day terrain to reveal the graves, she said.

While the Kuentai crew was evacuating those Japanese remains, they came across the remains of five American Soldiers who once belonged to the 105th Infantry Regiment. Those remains were turned over to the Department of Defense, who have identified two of the Soldiers and returned their remains to the families.

Their organization believes it is just as important to find and return home the remains of the Americans who fought on Saipan as it is to find those of Japanese soldiers, Kurata explained. So the group wants to explore the area where they think more American remains may be.

Because it is a relatively large area, and because time is limited before construction of the hotel/condo complex begins, the group is hoping some clue in the documents in the Military Museum will help pin down the best location to dig, Akatsuka said.

"We are thinking there may be something in a personal diary or pictures," she said. gt

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New York Naval Militia Lt. j.g. Anthony Washington gets missions directives over the Division of Military and Naval Affairs DLAN system during an exercise on the Hudson River on July 25 as Commander Don McKnight looks on. The exercise allowed the Naval Militia to test the communications systems in their mobile command post as well as patrol boat handling procedures.

Navy Operational Support Center Schenectady.

The opportunity to get out on a boat, learn new skills, and practice tasks, was a great way to spend the day, said Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony Mushaw, one of the Naval Reserve Sailors who participated.

Most of the 2,700 members of the New York Naval Militia are members of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserve who have volunteered to serve the state when asked. They are paid by New York when on state active duty, but most of the time when they train for Naval Militia specific tasks they do so in a volunteer status.

The Naval Militia is part of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs which is also responsible for the 16,000 members of the New York Army and Air National Guard.

A small number of Naval Militia members – five percent of the total force - are volunteers, like Hill, who are normally retired military personnel but who no longer belong to the reserves or active Navy or Marine Corps.

Integrating Sailors being paid for a Navy Reserve drill day with Naval Militia volunteers is significant, because it makes it more likely that dual-status Naval Militia members can participate in training, said Naval Militia Capt. Ten Eyck "Trip" Powell, the Naval Militia's deputy commander of operations. gt

Exchange Senior Chief Visits Hancock Field

Story by Army and Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE – The Senior Enlisted Advisor for the Army & Air Force Exchange Service visited Hancock Field Air National Guard Base on Aug. 22.

Chief Master Sgt. Anthony Pearson, talks to Airmen at the Hancock Exchange about what the manager may need to make operations at the exchange run smoother. Photo by Senior Airman Duane Morgan.

During his visit, Chief Master Sgt. Tony Pearson toured Exchange facilities and talked with National Guardsmen about how the Exchange can better serve them.

"One of the best parts of my job as Senior Enlisted Advisor is connecting with Guardsmen in person to find out how the Exchange can serve them better," he said. "I'm excited to visit Hancock Field, and I want our Guardsmen to know our first duty is to serve them and their families."

Chief Master Sgt. Pearson is one of 52 active duty service members assigned to the Exchange to carry out this mission. The Exchange also employs 36,000 civilian associates worldwide.

"The Exchange wants to be the first choice for Guardsmen at Hancock Field," Chief Master Sgt. Pearson said. "Exchange prices are remarkably competitive. And, we're always tax-free. This is a tremendous savings."

When shoppers buy from the Exchange, money goes back to supporting quality-of-life services on the installation, he said.

"The benefit is real," Chief Master Sgt. Pearson said. "For every dollar earned, historically 67 cents comes back to the military community for the Air Force Services and Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation dividends. Our shoppers get the products they want and deserve, and their military community is better for it."

The Exchange is a joint non-appropriated fund instrumentality of the Department of Defense with a retail mission to provide quality products, services and food to service members, their families, Reserve and Guard members, plus military retirees. Exchange sales generate earnings to supplement Air Force Services and Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

AAFES
Army & Air Force Exchange Service

For more information about the Exchange and Exchange programs, visit shopmyexchange.com.

Air Guard Celebrates AF Birthday in NYC

NEW YORK- Maj. Gen. Verle Johnston, commander of the New York Air National Guard, joins New York Air National Guard Senior Airman Amanda Martino, a member of the 105th Airflight Wing who was awarded two Purple Hearts during service in Afghanistan, in cutting the Air Force Birthday cake during an event in Bryant Park here on Sept. 18. Johnston was the ranking officer at a celebration of the United States Air Force's 67th Birthday. Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. (retired) Patrick Cashin.

Girl Scout Cookie Time at 105th

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh-- Staff Sgt. John Scarano a recruiter with the 105th Force Support Squadron helps Girl Scout Jeanette Dick unload cookie boxes collected by members of Girl Scout Unit 223 for Operation Cookie Drop a program through which customers make donations which are used to purchase Girl Scout cookies for deployed military personnel, July 30. Photo by Tech Sgt. Michael O'Halloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

195 Recruits At 105th Airlift Wing

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE--New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Paul Messina, a recruiter for the 105th Airlift Wing, stands with Jonathan Santiago and Octavia Cornwall the 194th and 195th enlistees this fiscal year starting their military career at Stewart Air National Guard Base, Sept. 30. On September 30, the Wing recruiting team exceeded their goal and topped the previous all-time enlistments of 191 accessions when Santiago and Cornwall, our newest citizen airmen, became the 194th and 195th enlistees of the 2014 fiscal year. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

AMERICAN GOLD STAR MOTHERS INC.

Mothers and Families whose son or daughter died in the service of the nation were remembered Sunday, Sept. 28 as President Barack Obama proclaimed Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day. Thirty-three members of the New York Army and Air National Guard have given their lives in service since Sept. 11, 2001.

Naval Militia Leader Promoted

LATHAM-- New York Naval Militia Deputy Commander for Operations Rear Admiral Ten Eyck "Trip" Powell is promoted by his wife Dr. Julie Dessloch and daughter on Aug. 29 during a ceremony at Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters. The Navy veteran has served in the New York Naval Militia since 1986. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

Story by Sgt. J. p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

NEW YORK -- Sgt. Jessica Gonzalez heard about the Posse Veterans Program and saw an opportunity.

The program offers four-year full scholarships for veterans to attend Vassar College and Wesleyan University. Despite being a few credits shy of a degree, Gonzalez, a Bronx native and member of the 42nd Infantry Division Intelligence and Sustainment Company, decided to apply.

The Posse Veterans program is part of an initiative to bring veterans to elite college campuses. Since 1989, the Posse Foundation has linked "non-traditional" high school achievers with its partner schools. The program offers four tuition-free years to students who survive the three-part screening and interview process.

Students who have been selected attend a summer boot camp before heading to classes and once classes begin, the students support each other within their "posse" during regular meetings.

The Posse Veterans Program began with a phone call between Catharine Bond Hill, president of Vassar College, and Deborah Bial, founder and president of the Posse Foundation. Hill suggested the posse model be applied to veterans.

"It was a light bulb moment," Bial, a 2007 MacArthur Fellow, said. "There are several million veterans, a lot of them haven't gone through college, and they're not choosing colleges like Vassar."

Carl Callender began his second year at Vassar College on Sept. 2. Without the program, Callender said he would never have ended up at Vassar.

After leaving the Marines, Callender struggled to support himself and his daughter. Vassar, a highly selective liberal arts school where the acceptance rate is 22.8% and the sticker price is $61,140 a year didn't seem even in the realm of possibility. But then he found the program.

Callender recalled bringing his daughter, Kylie, to Vassar's bucolic campus. The ten-year-old told her father she wanted to attend Vassar one day. "I was 35 and had never heard of Vassar. She's ten years old and already thinking she wants to go there," Callender said. "I felt that I missed that boat. I felt I had to settle. And now things like this are possible."

Kyle Foley, a Navy vet, began classes Sept. 2 at Wesleyan, the second institution to create a veterans posse.

Foley had been to college before, but had struggled and had dropped out and enlisted in the Navy. After getting out of the Navy, she had enrolled in a community college. Like many veterans, she said, a community college was a good testing ground for re-entering school.

But when she applied to private schools to finish her bachelors, she found that many schools wanted her to restart her freshman year or had transfer standards that stripped her of many of her credits.

In addition, she was worried about how much student debt she could handle. The GI Bill covers the most expensive in-state tuition, a small portion of the bill at most elite liberal arts schools.

The Posse Veterans Program seemed perfect. Through it, Foley plans to study economics at Wesleyan. She plans to review with the other four members of her posse; also interested in her major — it's a ready-made study group.

For more information about this program go to http://www.possefoundation.org. gt

Governor Meets Guard Troops in Afghanistan

BAGRAM, Afghanistan-- New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo poses with New York Army National Guard Major Joel Buffardi during a trip to Bagram Air Base on Sept. 28. Buffardi, a member of the 369th Sustainment Brigade from Sayville, is currently serving as Deputy Support Operations Manager for the 45th Sustainment Brigade. Gov. Cuomo is in Afghanistan with a delegation of Governor's visiting U.S. troops and leaders there. During the trip Cuomo received a series of briefings from U.S. officials on anti-terrorism issues and evolving global threats.

Cuomo met with New York troops, including those from Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division to thank them for their service.

Upon his arrival at Bagram Airfield, Cuomo was met by Maj. Gen. Stephen J. Townsend, the commander of Regional Command East and Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division.

Approximately 270 members of the New York National Guard are currently deployed in Afghanistan – the bulk of which are from the Hudson Valley and New York City. Additionally, approximately 900 members of Fort Drum's 10th Mountain Division are stationed in Afghanistan.

Photo by Master Sgt. Kap Kim, Combined Joint Task Force-10, Public Affairs.

Displaying Cold War Engineer Workhorse

BINGHAMTON -- Members of the 204th Engineer Battalion emplaced an M-728 Combat Engineer Vehicle in front of the Binghamton Armory on Sept. 24.

The vehicle—used by combat engineers during the Cold War—was placed in front of the building as part of the New York State Military Museum's effort to install display's of equipment and artifacts which tell the stories of specific units, the National Guard or the Army in general.

Based on the M-60A1 tank the CEV could clear obstacles with its dozer blade or winch, or dig armored fighting vehicle positions while under fire. The 165 millimeter demolition gun could destroy a bunker or obstacle or be used to dig an instant hole in a road to delay enemy vehicles. The CEV was chosen for display in front of the Binghamton armory because the 204th Engineer Battalion is currently the only large engineer unit in the New York Army National Guard.

The 204th Engineers are primarily a theater-level construction support organization.

A crew from the Military Area Training Equipment Site at Fort Drum repainted the vehicle and prepped it for display. Staff Sgt. Jason Hibbard from the 1156th Engineer Company, Staff Sgt. Robert Jayne and Master Sgt. Ethan Lynch from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 204th Engineer Battalion and 1st Sgt. James Mahoney from the Forward Support Company , 204th Engineer Battalion, worked to put the display vehicle in place. Photo by Maj. Jonathan Dilmore.

Col. Timothy J. LaBarge, commander of the 105 Airlift Wing, with Stewart All-Stars team captain Chief Master Sgt. Mark Cozzupoli and catcher, Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Fenner enjoying the "Hometown Heroes", 9/11 All-Star Tribute Softball Game. The Stewart All-Stars won a hard fought game against a team of the Hudson Valley's "Bravest and Finest", law enforcement and firefighters, by a score of 28 - 23 during a free community event at Dutchess Stadium, Fishkill, New York, Sept. 11. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

New Master Sergeants Inducted into Senior NCO Corps

SCHENECTADY -- Retired Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Robert D. Gaylor speaks at the 109th Airlift Wing's Senior Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony at Schenectady County Community College, Schenectady on Sept. 25.

Gaylor said one of the most popular questions he gets is how the Air Force has changed in the last 66 years. He sums it up with "the four T's" - training, technology, tribe (family), and what he says may be the most important, trust.

Gaylor joined the Air Force in 1948 and became the fifth Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force in 1977. Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara, 109th Airlift Wing.

New Shopette for Air National Guard Base

WESTHAMPTON BEACH - Following several months of construction, the Coast Guard Shopette at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard base opened its doors to waiting 106th Rescue Wing Airmen on Sept. 11. 106th Rescue Wing commander, Col. Thomas J. Owens II cuts the ribbon and officially opens the new Shopette at F.S. Gabreski. In addition to the previously sold merchandise, the new Shopette has expanded its line of uniforms, physical training items and now includes a coffee bar. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

WINGMAN PROJECT

Chaplain James Bridgham

ASK	Ask directly: "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
CARE	Intervene. Control the situation. Use active listening. Remove the means to do self-injury.
ESCORT	Get them to a primary care provider, chaplain or other healthcare professional.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800.273.8255 Option 1

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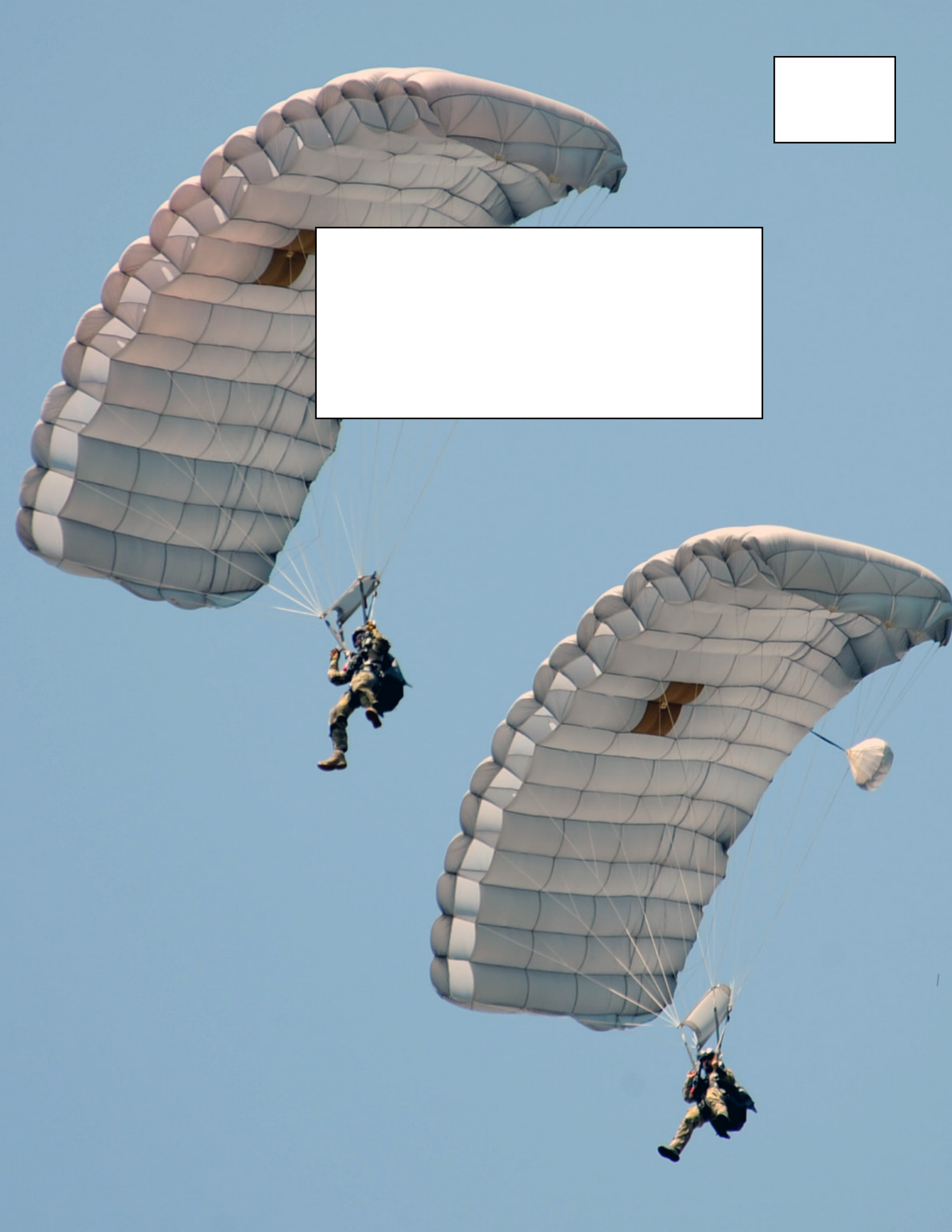
www.wingmanproject.org