Volume 4, Number 3 Summer 2011

guardtimes

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

www.dmna.ny.gov

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

The 8,000 Soldiers and Airmen who've joined the New York National Guard since the events of Sept. 11, 2001 probably wouldn't recognize the National Guard that existed on Sept. 10, 2001.

As a novelist once wrote: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."

The Army National Guard I joined in Waterloo, Iowa in 1977 trained to fight World War III.

We prepared to mobilize, train, and then deploy to Europe or Korea to defeat massive conventional armies equipped with T-64 tanks and BMP-2 armored personnel carriers. We learned how to defeat Soviet-era formations. During our drill weekends and our two weeks of annual training, we trained hard for that mission. We kept an unspoken assumption that when our country went to war, it would be for the BIG ONE, and other than that, we would be left to our civilian careers.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, that scenario looked less likely, and we focused on re-fighting Desert Storm or a second Korean War. And while it was clear the Guard would go to war in a future conflict, it still looked like a Guardsman could spend his career training one weekend a month and two weeks a year.

The events of 9/11 changed all that. The National Guard -with the New York Army and Air Guard most of all - were in the thick of things from the first.

Our Airmen and Soldiers were among the first to respond on Sept. 11, 2001 when New York City and Washington were attacked. Our Guardsmen were at Ground zero looking for survivors and securing New York's streets, and in the air to prevent other attacks. We responded to New York's call to secure our homeland. Today we still have a security force on duty in New York City working with law enforcement agencies.

We take our responsibility to prepare for attacks very seriously. The old saying is you fight as you train and we train aggressively for homeland defense and support to civil authorities.

gt We created a force of Army and Air Guardsmen specially trained to rescue victims of a terrorist attack using biological, radiological or chemical weapons, decontaminate them and provide medical care. We participated in a brigade-sized federal response force to deploy anywhere in the event of a disaster and we are now standing up a Homeland Security Force for the New York/New Jersey region.

The days when a member of the Army National Guard prepared to fight a "peer competitor" army with uniformed troops equipped with tanks and armored personnel carriers is long gone. You who have joined us since 9/11 know that you will be expected to deploy and destroy the enemies of the United States of America and you will probably do so.

Since 9/11, the New York Army National Guard sent almost 8,000 Soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan—including the 42nd Infantry Division headquarters, the first Guard division headquarters to deploy to combat since the Korean War, and today we are preparing to send more than 2,000 Soldiers overseas in 2012 and 2013. Among them is our 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, which deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 and now prepares to deploy there again in 2012.

Meanwhile, our Army aviation, military police, engineer and finance units have operated in both Iraq and Afghanistan and many of them are preparing for their second time overseas.

We have trained Iraqi and Afghan Soldiers, wrested control of Route Irish in Baghdad from insurgents, and bested the Taliban in battle. Some of our Soldiers are on their third and forth deployments. Our Army National Guard Soldiers haven't been "weekend warriors" for years.

The Air National Guard was always a more ready force than our Army Guard, but the New York Air National Guard, too, has learned to be more flexible in the years since Sept. 11, 2001.

Our 6,000 Airmen have flown rescue missions in Afghanistan, carried vitally needed supplies into the Central Command Theater, and still managed to carry relief supplies to Haiti and to Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. The 106th Rescue Wing provided rescue support to Space Shuttle launches, while the 109th Airlift Wing continues support to vital science missions in Antarctica and Greenland.

The 174th Fighter Wing made the tough decision to trade F-16s for remotely piloted aircraft and today Airmen in Syracuse control aircraft protecting our warfighters on the ground in Afghanistan. The 107th Airlift Wing transitioned from the strategic mission of air refueling to tactical airlift, supporting troops in Afghanistan and supporting aid operations in Haiti. Our 105th Airlft Wing provided worldwide strategic airlift with the giant C-5 Galaxies and will soon operate the C-17 Globemaster.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

Here at home, our Air National Guard units are integrated into our domestic operations plans in a way they never were prior to Sept. 11, 2001.

Our Soldiers and Airmen play a key role in advancing American diplomacy through our State Partnership Program with the South African National Defense Force. Through their contacts with our South African counterparts we build trust and enhance American diplomacy in this vital democracy and important African nation.

We will never return to the Cold War attitudes that prevailed in the National Guard 10 or 15 years ago. We know that we have to be prepared to fight unconventional enemies and respond to threats both overseas and at home.

The National Guard today is a more demanding organization to belong to than it was on Sept. 10, 2011. Our state and nation expects more from us than it did prior to 9/11. You have stepped up to the challenge over the past 10 years and today I am incredibly proud to be part of this great organization.

Scan this QR code with a smart phone to see photographs and hear Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy's message for the National Guard Association on the missions of the New York National Guard since 9/11.

guardtimes

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Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Commander in Chief
Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General
Eric Durr, Director of Public Affairs
Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Public Affairs Officer
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, NYARNG, Editor

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About Guard Times

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www.dmna.ny.gov

AFGHANISTAN - A C-130 Hercules from the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing flies over mountainous terrain on its way to deliver supplies to a forward operating base here June 22. Airdrops help mitigate the danger of transporting supplies via convoy. For more on this story, go to page 40. Photo by Sr. Airman Krista Rose, U.S. Air Force.

ON THE COVER: FORT DRUM - Staff Sgt. Gregory Meyers from the 727th Military Police Law and Order Detachment, based at Camp Smith, works his way through the combat lanes training May 28 at Fort Drum. The 727th is ramping up for a deployment to Afghanistan later this year. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.
BACK COVER: FORT DRUM - New York Army National Guard Pvt. Danielle C. Powe, an artilleryman with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, yanks the lanyard of an M-198 howitzer, blasting 100 pounds of high explosives down range during the battalion's certification here on June 20. The battalion is part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and will be deploying to Afghanistan early 2012. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

New York Announces New Ribbons for Overseas Deployments

Federal Service in Iraq, Afghanistan Recognized

The three newly created New York State Campaign Ribbons are, from left, in order of precedence: the New York State Operation Enduring Freedom Service Ribbon, the New York State Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Ribbon and the New York State Operation New Dawn Service Ribbon.

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, LATHAM -- Three new state ribbons are now available to honor New York National Guard service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Two ribbons will recognize service in Iraq - one for Operation Iraqi Freedom and one for Operation New Dawn - while the third ribbon recognizes service in Afghanistan.

The three new awards will replace the New York State Medal of Merit and the New York State Conspicuous Service Medal as a way to recognize federal deployment service. The two state medals were intended as awards for veterans and retiring Guard members as a way to recognize total service.

The Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom Awards will be presented to Soldiers and Airmen during Freedom Salute Ceremonies and Hometown Hero ceremonies marking their return from deployment.

About 1,400 New York Army National Guard Soldiers who deployed to Iraq between Oct. 1, 2008 and Aug. 31, 2010, when Operation New Dawn began, will be eligible for the Iraqi Freedom Award through their units.

The three state awards are based on the color scheme of federal ribbons issued to recognize service in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Operation Enduring Freedom ribbon is available to any member of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard or the New York Naval Militia who has served in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001. The ribbon is worn below the New York State Desert Storm Service Medal ribbon and above the Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Ribbon.

The Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Ribbon is available to New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and Naval Militia members who served between Oct. 1, 2008 and Aug. 31, 2010.

Soldiers who deployed to Iraq prior to October 1, 2008 are not eligible for the ribbon. It is worn below the New York State Operation Enduring Freedom Service Ribbon and above the Operation New Dawn Service Ribbon.

The Operation New Dawn Service Ribbon is available to New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, and Naval Militia members who have served in Iraq since Aug. 31, 2010. The ribbon is worn below the New York State Operation Iraqi Freedom Service Ribbon and above the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal issued to mark service during and after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

For each succeeding issue of the Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom ribbons, eligible members will receive silver ribbon pins.

Soldiers and Airmen who have left the National Guard but qualify for these awards can obtain them by going to the Division of Military and Naval Affairs website and following the application directions. gt

Counties Recognize Local Veterans to 'Return the Favor'

Guard Times Staff

ALBANY -- Members of the New York National Guard who served in contingency operations overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan are frequently eligible to receive discounts from merchants, restaurants and retailers in their home town through their local "Return the Favor" initiative.

"FAVOR" stands for "Find and Assist Veterans of Record."

The program enables veterans to receive exclusive discounts from a variety of area business owners. Eligible veterans receive an ID card to present to participating merchants for their discount. In many localities, window decals will announce retailer participation in the program.

Initially begun in 2008 in Rockland County, the incentive program has spread through an estimated 23 counties in the state as another mean to honor veterans.

Saratoga and Warran Counties are the most recent New York counties to join the program.

Eligibility for the Veterans ID Card is dependent on an honorable discharge and DD214.

For more information about the program in your area, contact your local county clerks office or FAVORprogram@yahoo.com. gt

RETURN THE FAVOR

Fort Belvoir Selected Future Site of National Army Museum

Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh has approved the Gunston location of Fort Belvoir's North Post as the official site of the National Museum of the United States Army after the completion of a comprehensive and thorough site selection process that concluded with a favorable environmental assessment of the area.

McHugh's announcement came on June 17, rounding out the week during which the United States Army celebrated its 236th birthday.

"In presenting the Army's storied 236-year history, this long overdue facility will offer the American people a unique opportunity to connect with our Soldiers and better understand and appreciate their many and glorious stories," McHugh noted.

To date nearly $60 million in donations and pledges have been contributed toward the Museum's construction by various corporations, foundations, veterans' service organizations, and over 85,000 individuals.

"Secretary McHugh's designation marks a significant milestone in our efforts to move forward with construction of the National Museum of the United States Army," said Brig. Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, Jr. (USA-Ret.), Executive Director of the Army Historical Foundation which is spearheading the Museum's capital campaign.

The National Army Museum. Conceptual rendering courtesy of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, LLP.

"We now have the green light. Our plan is to break ground next year to allow the Army's Corps of Engineers to begin construction," Abrams said.

Initial construction will include a multi-story main building with major galleries, exhibit halls, a theater, a Veterans' Hall, an Education Pavilion with an experiential learning center, and lobby with areas for visitor reception, food service, and retail sales.

"The Museum will be just 16 miles south of our nation's capital on 41 publicly accessible acres of Fort Belvoir along the Fairfax County Parkway via either US Route 1 or I-95 — an absolutely ideal location. It will also stand six miles from Mount Vernon, home of George Washington, the Army's first Commander-in-Chief," Abrams added. **gt**

Empire Passport Updates Eligibility Requirements

Guard Times Staff

ALBANY -- The rules that provide members of the New York National Guard and the New York Naval Militia free access to New York State Parks and Department of Environmental Conservation day-use facilities under the New York Patriot Plan have been changed for 2011.

Only National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, as well as Sailors and Marines who are also members of the New York Naval Militia currently serving on Title 10 duty and deployed in support of a named operation - like Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation New Dawn - are now eligible for the Empire Passport. Previously, passports had been made available to members of the National Guard and Naval Militia who had served in any one of these operations in the past.

The program is also open to members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine and Coast Guard Reserve.

The change in the rules is more in keeping with the spirit of the law, which is designed to assist and honor members of the New York Military Forces on federal active duty, explained Debra Keville, director of the Empire Passport program.

In order to obtain a pass for their use and the use of their family, service members must submit orders which indicate that they are on Title 10 status in support of a named operation at the time they request the pass. A DD214 indicating a prior deployment will no longer be recognized, she explained.

While service members can only obtain a free Empire Passport while they are in Title 10 status, they can use any time during the year that the passport is valid. So a Soldier or Airman who applies for a passport near the end of his or her deployment can enjoy access to the parks when they return home, Keville said.

Service member families can use the Empire Passport to access swimming areas and other recreational facilities while their serving member is deployed.

For information about applying for an Empire Passport go to New York state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Reservation at http://nysparks.com/admission/empire-passport. **gt**

The IG Corner

Facilities: Leave it Better than you Found it

By Col. Eric J. Hesse, Command Inspector General

Our final installment on the Commander's Lines of Operations (LOOs) will discuss Facility Readiness. As a review for readers, we covered Soldier, Family and Equipment Readiness in the course of the last three issues of the Guard Times news magazine.

They have been relatively easy to write, as most of what we see as IGs falls in to one of those categories. I think we've been called only once in my last two years about a facility issue, and that had to do with a report of survey and a missing locker.

My first thought to share is something we've all been taught, and that is to leave it better than you found it. My second thought is something I've heard The Adjutant General address on more than one occasion: is your facility, armory, readiness center or workplace a place where you would want to bring your family?

I think we are getting there in many cases.

Right now money is tight and in the next few years it will get even tighter. This shouldn't be a surprise to anyone in our force. So we have to really think about maintaining what we have, rather than receiving something new, and this applies across our other lines of operation as well.

I remember back to my first deployment and the realization that my office in Kosovo was nicer than my work space at Fort Drum. Soldiers spent six months figuring out how to make things better even though they knew they would be leaving.

Here at home, we just have a tendency to get complacent when we see the same thing every day.

Look around and address the things we can fix now. Here is where we need to go: ensure we document things like broken windows and leaking roofs on a DMNA Form 47 on file. Clean up and organize what we own, turn in obsolete or excess equipment, packing materials, tentage, etc. Use the drill floor for what it was intended, for our Soldiers. Also take a look around and see if what is posted on your bulletin boards is current. The policy letters from the Adjutant General were all updated and distributed in June and are available online, so ensure you are current.

Bottom line is that it is up to all of us to take a look around at our work areas and common areas and see where we can make a difference. If families feel welcome and comfortable, they may want to get more involved in the activities you do at your facilities.

When you walk in to your facility tomorrow, ask yourself if it is a place you'd like to drop off your son or daughter for their introduction to the Army, and then make a plan to fix what you see and don't like. **gt**

Chaplain's Corner

Strong Bonds, Strong Families, Stronger Soldiers

Guard Times Staff

QUEENSBURY -- More than 180 New York Army National Guard Soldiers and family members gathered at the the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge July 8-10, to learn about strengthening their bonds to each other as the New York Army National Guard prepares to deploy more than 2,200 Soldiers to Afghanistan in 2012.

Recognizing the importance of family support, the Army introduced the program Building Strong and Ready Families in 1997. Initially, 90 active-duty couples participated in four events. Over the past year, more than 160,000 Soldiers and Family members have participated in over 2,600 Strong Bonds events. The program's success has led to increased funding, expansion Army-wide, and more training options.

New programs now meet Soldiers at different phases of the relationship cycle. Specific training is offered for the single Soldier, couples, families with children, and all Soldiers and families facing deployment.

Strong Bonds is fully funded and Chaplain-led with the support of the Commanding Officer. Soldiers and their families attend with others in the unit who share the same deployment cycle. During the retreat, Soldiers and families participate in small group activities that reveal common bonds and nurture friendships.

This shores up spousal support at home, which can be vitally important while the Soldier is away. In addition, Soldiers and families gain awareness of community resources that can assist with concerns about health and wellness, even crisis intervention.

The New York Army National Guard implemented it's Strong Bonds program two years ago. The Great Escape Lodge event is the sixth Strong Bonds event held this year in locations across the state.

For more information, visit www.strongbonds.org. **gt**

Safety Corner

Boating Safety: A Real Concern

By 2nd Lt. Alicia Howard, Safety Specialist

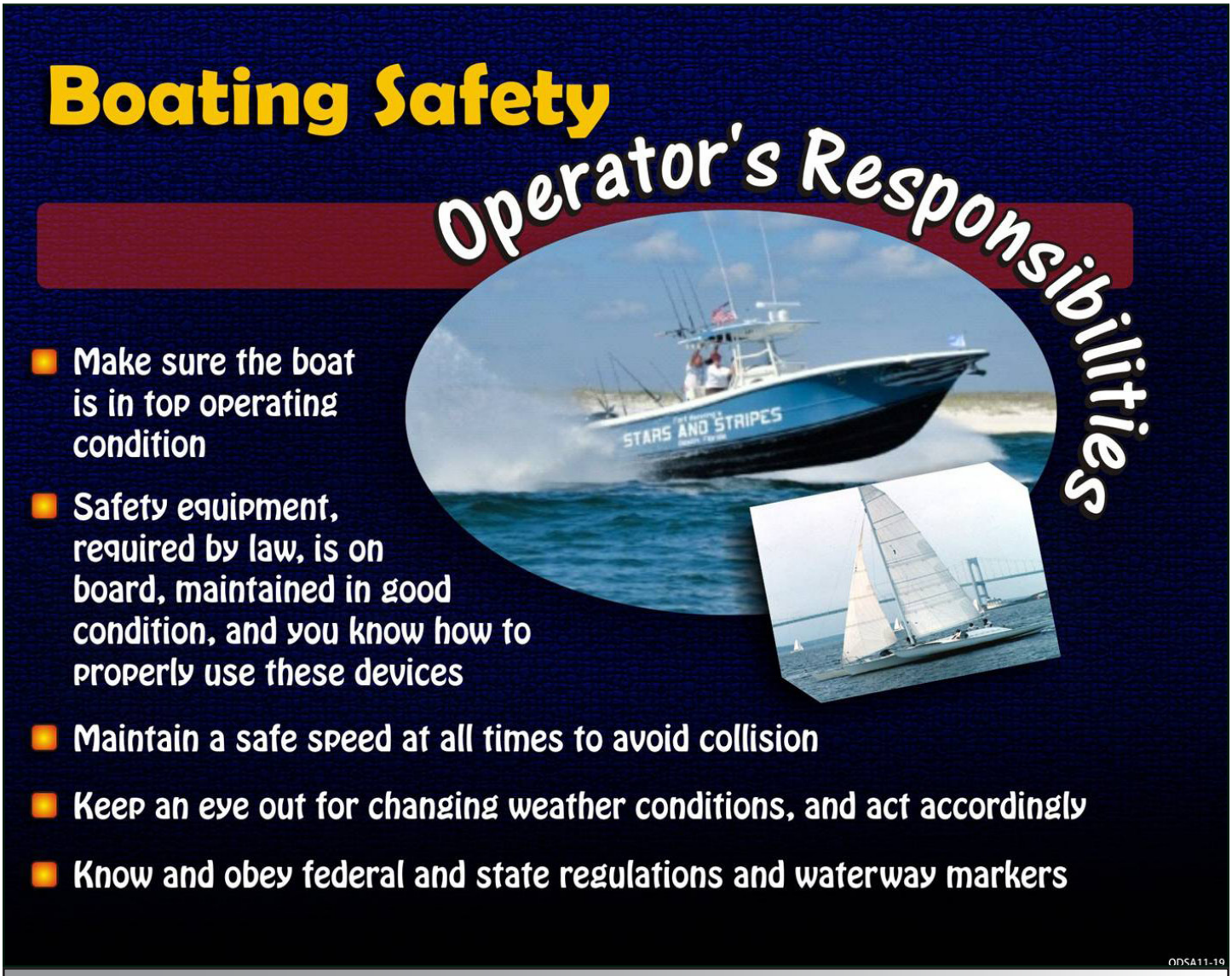
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, LATHAM -- **According to the U.S. Coast Guard, recreational boating casualties are the second leading cause of transportation-related fatalities after automobile/motorcycle accidents.**

The main causes of these accidents are speed, weather, and congested waterways. Intoxicated operators contribute to approximately 50 percent of all serious boating accidents. Studies even show that the overwhelming majority of boat operators who have fatal accidents have never even taken a safe-boating course.

Before you launch a boat, take a Coast Guard-approved boating safety course, review local laws and policies and ensure that you, your buddies and your family members use a personal flotation device.

In addition, be sure to have a Float Plan. A Float Plan is an itinerary of when and where you plan to go while on the water. It is to be completed before you go boating and given to a person who can notify the Coast Guard or other rescue organization if you fail to check-in according to the plan.

Additional information, as well as boating safety courses and New York State Boating laws, can be found at www.nysparks.com/recreation/boating/education.aspx **gt**



The safety office is looking for safety articles from Soldiers in the field. If you have any personal safety related experiences to contribute, please contact 1st Lt. Alicia Howard, Safety Specialist @ (518) 786-6097 or Alicia.howard@us.army.mil.

Military Personnel News: the MILPO Corner

Message from the MILPO.

Today's increased deployment OPTEMPO and reduced Human Resource Manning, has made it even more imperative that all Soldiers and their families are well-versed in personnel policy and procedures. Commanders and their Soldiers depend upon quality Human Resource support to ensure the readiness of our units and the effective support of Soldier family members.

We utilize the MILPO Corner to provide a summary of new or changed tools, programs and policy updates to assist personnel administrators in achieving the mission of effective support.

Each Commander, Soldier, and administrator can visit the MNP AKO Web Page at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/553732 and the MNP WIKI site at https://www.kc.army.mil/wiki/Portal:NYARNG_-_MNP_Procedural_Guide for additional comprehensive Soldier personnel readiness support guidance and information.

Deadline for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Extended.

The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to Oct. 21, 2011, allowing those eligible additional time to apply for the benefits they've earned under the program guidelines.

The RSLSP was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of $500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop-Loss status.

When RSLSP began on Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for this benefit. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts over the past 18 months. Outreach efforts, including direct mail and engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue through Oct. 21, 2011.

To apply, or for more information on RSLSP, including submission requirements and service-specific links, go to http://www.defense.gov/stoploss.

How to Request a DD 220 for 30-89 Days of Continuous Active Duty or a DD 214 for 90 DAYS or More of Continuous Active Duty.

The types of Active Duty that are Acceptable include: ADOS, ADSW, Full Time National Guard Duty, Temporary Tours of active duty, ADT, and AGR (all AGR 214s will be processed by the AGR Office).

Have your Unit Administrator submit a DA Form 543 with the following information to MNP-DSCH.

-Soldier's Name
-Type of Document Request
-Active Duty order numbers
-AKO address of requesting Soldier
-If applicable, annotate for Unemployment
-Working contact number for the requesting Soldier (i.e., cell phone #)

Submit along with the DA 543, Active Duty orders, any missing awards (ie: federal awards i.e. MSM cert or DA Form 638), documentation for any missing Military Education that was completed during the Active duty period which exceeds 40 hours and/or five days.

All 214 worksheets will be sent to the requester AKO address. Review the worksheet for accuracy. If corrections are needed, then reply to sender and attach the supporting documentation.

If the DD 214 worksheet is 100 percent correct, simply reply stating the form is correct and no changes are needed.

GoArmyEd.

National Guard Soldiers can now start setting up accounts through GoArmyEd for Federal Tuition Assistance. Keep in mind, these accounts will only be used for courses that start AFTER Oct. 1, 2011.

All Soldiers applying for Federal TA for summer 2011 or fall 2011 will continue to apply through https://minuteman.ngb.army.mil/ benefits no later than your class start date.

AGR Soldiers and Mobilized Soldiers who are currently using GoArmyEd will continue to do so. This change will not affect them.

The process for the Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program (RIRP) aka State TA will remain the same.

Soldiers are encouraged to visit GoArmyEd and set up their account. There is a short video and slide presentation that explains the new process we will use under GoArmyEd. Soldiers who have used ARNG Federal TA within the last five years will be fast-tracked through the account registration. This means their account will not require approval by the Education Office. Also, they will not be required to provide a Statement of Understanding (SOU) signed by the Commander for the first year.

Soldiers who have never used Federal TA before will need a SOU signed by the Commander and their account must be approved by the Education Office before they can apply for Federal TA.

Have You Transferred the Post 9/11 GI Bill?

Soldiers eligible for Post 9/11 GI Bill can transfer the benefits to a spouse or dependent if they meet the following requirements:

1) Served at least 6 years in the Armed Forces
2) Current member of the Armed Forces (does not include IRR/ING)
3) No adverse action FLAGs
4) Agree to serve an additional 4 years in the armed forces from the date of transfer.

*NOTE: Special rules apply to Soldiers who had over 17 years TIS on 1 Aug 09. These rules are only in effect until 1 Aug 2013. For more details contact the Education Office at Education@ng.army.mil.

Dependents must be eligible dependents in DEERS to qualify for transfer. Children are no longer considered eligible dependents in DEERs once they turn 21 years old or 23 years old if they are in college.

In order to qualify for the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Soldiers must have 90 days or more of Title 10 or Title 32 AGR or National Emergency time following 9/11. ADOS or training time does not count toward this benefit.

For more information see our website at www.dmna.state.ny.us/education or contact the Education Office at Education@ng.army.mil.

Civilian Education.

Soldiers missing their high school diplomas

in their records should forward copies to the Education Services Office immediately. Missing high school diplomas will delay bonus payments and GI Bill benefits. A list of Soldiers missing HS diplomas can be found at: https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/535774.

Additional Phases Identified for Iraq and Afghanistan Campaign Medals.

The Department of Defense announced that additional campaign stars are authorized for wear on the Iraq Campaign Medal (ICM) and the Afghanistan Campaign Medal (ACM).

The campaign stars recognize a service member's participation in DoD-designated campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Service members who have qualified for the ICM and ACM may display a bronze campaign star on their medal for each designated campaign phase in which they participated. The stars will be worn on the suspension and campaign ribbon of the campaign medal.

The additional campaign phase and associated dates established for the ICM is:
. New Dawn - Sept. 1, 2010 through a date to be determined.

Six other phases, previously identified, include:
. Liberation of Iraq - March 19 to May 1, 2003.
. Transition of Iraq - May 2, 2003 to June 28, 2004.
. Iraqi Governance - June 29, 2004 to Dec. 15, 2005.
. National Resolution - Dec. 16, 2005 to Jan. 9, 2007.
. Iraqi Surge - Jan. 10, 2007 to Dec. 31, 2008.
. Iraqi Sovereignty - Jan. 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010

The additional campaign phase and associated dates established for the ACM is:
. Consolidation III - Dec. 1, 2009 through a date to be determined.

Three other phases, previously identified, include:
. Liberation of Afghanistan - Sept. 11 to Nov. 30, 2001
. Consolidation I - Dec. 1, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2006
. Consolidation II - Oct. 1, 2006 to Nov. 30, 2009

Medical Update.

Army Medical Command and AR 40-501 prohibits Bariatric Surgery in any component of the Army. Soldiers who consent to or undergo this procedure may be subject to separation from military service without benefits.

This includes gastric bypass and gastric banding. Commanders must advise Soldiers accordingly who may be contemplating this procedure.

Army Senior Leader Thanks EOD Soldiers

BASRA, Iraq -- New York Army National Guard Specialist Jorge Alvarez, a member of the 501st Ordnance Battalion who lives in the Bronx, receives a coin from Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond Chandler during a visit to Contingency Operating Base Basrah on June 25. The Soldiers are overseeing Explosive Ordnance Disposal units in southern Iraq as part of Task Force Troy. The unit is based in Scotia, New York. Photo c courtesy of 1st Lt. John Harder, 501st Ordnance Battalion.

Personnel e-tool Available for Air Guard

Courtesy of National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON -- New York Air National Guard members now have access to the new electronic learning tool "vPC-GR Basics."

The program is the first in a planned series of web-based interactive courses developed for transformed personnel processes. This course gives you an overview of the virtual Personnel Center – Guard & Reserve (vPC-GR).

Through guided simulations, the program shows Airmen how to establish an account, use the dashboard, and manage requests for personnel actions.

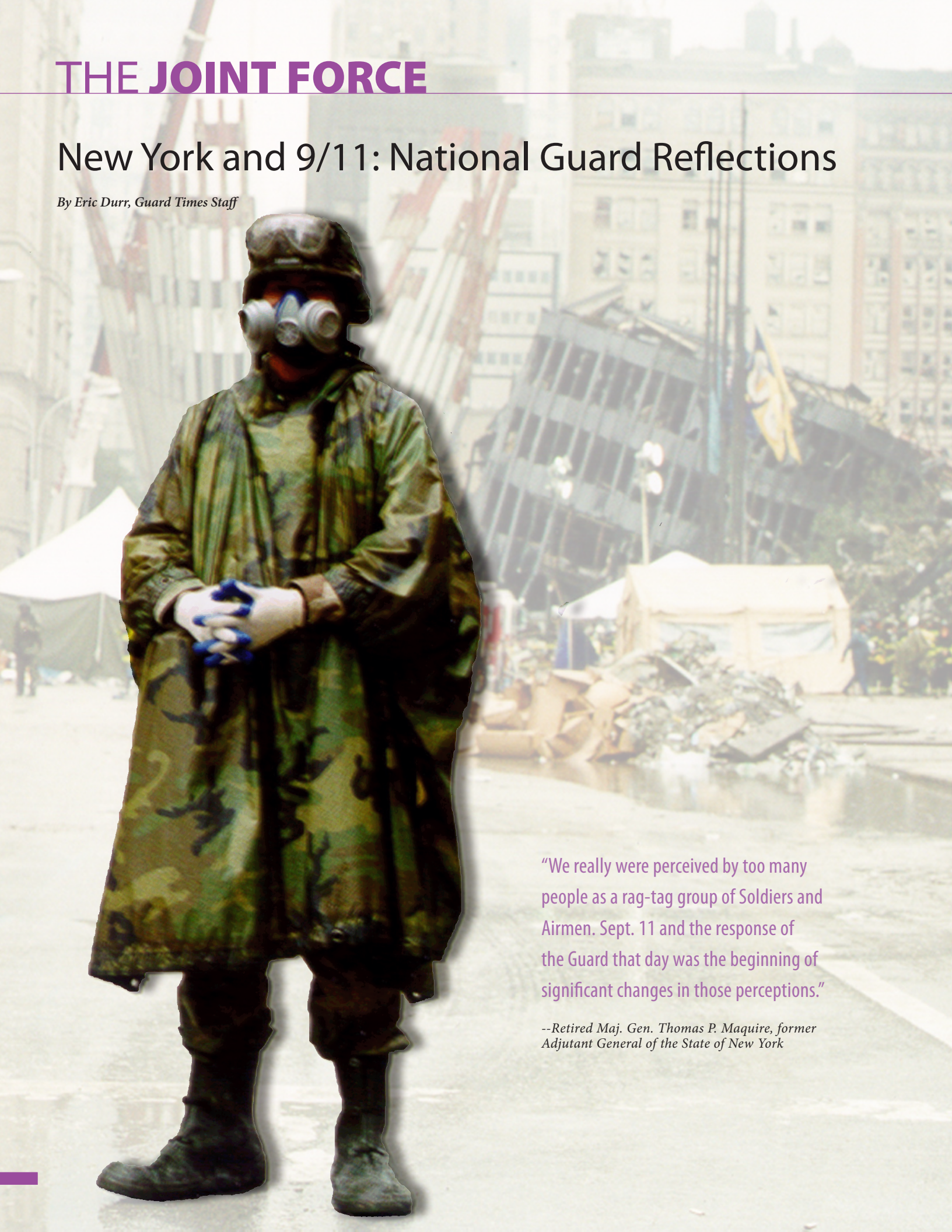
vPC-GR provides online services for submitting personnel action requests, coordinating requests, and managing cases.

The eLT is available through the Advanced Distributed Learning Service website at https://golearn.csd.disa.mil. Airmen can review the program by visiting the "Course List" page, where it's found under the "Miscellaneous" category.

Any questions or comments on the course should be directed to NGB/A1XT, Mrs Alison Dougherty, email: alison.dougherty@ang.af.mil

New York and 9/11: National Guard Reflections

By Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff



"We really were perceived by too many people as a rag-tag group of Soldiers and Airmen. Sept. 11 and the response of the Guard that day was the beginning of significant changes in those perceptions."

--Retired Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maquire, former Adjutant General of the State of New York

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham -- New York Air National Guard Tech Sgt. - now captain - Jeremy Powell, was the first to know that something was wrong.

At 8:37 on the morning of Sept. 11, Powell , a senior radar technician at what was then known as Northeast Air Defense Sector, took a call. The man on the phone told him the Federal Aviation Administration suspected an airliner had been hijacked and the agency wanted an F-16 to check it out.

Powell got the attention of Lt. Col. Dawn Deskins (now Col. Deskins and the vice commander of the Eastern Air Defense Sector). She took the call, got the information, informed her commander, and with his approval, ordered aircraft to alert status and then to launch.

The New York National Guard had joined the Global War on Terror.

When the first plane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center at 8:46 a.m. the team in the NEADS command center briefly thought the crisis was over. But then the second jet hit the South Tower at 9:03 a.m. and the Air Guardsmen knew America was under attack .

"I remember calling Air Guard wings across the northeast and asking them if they had planes or pilots available and how quickly they could get airborne, " Deskins said. "I was just amazed at how these units were willing and able to respond."

"The biggest memory I have is how well we handled the situation that day, " Powell said. "I have been asked many times that if I could change anything I did that day, what would it be? My answer has always been the same... nothing."

New York Army National Guard Capt. Vince Heintz, who is now Maj. Heintz with a couple of combat deployments under his belt, was exiting a subway station in Manhattan when he saw the planes hit. He went immediately to the World Trade Center to volunteer his services. Later that night he led his company of the 105th Infantry Battalion back to the site to begin providing security in conjunction with the New York Police Department.

1st Sgt. Joseph Ranauro, a member of the 1st Battalion 101st Cavalry, now retired, was working as a court protection officer in lower Manhattan and saw the first plane hit. He rallied ten fellow officers who knew emergency medical aid and headed for the site.

He and his team began evacuating people from the towers after the second plane hit. When the South Tower collapsed he and his team ran for cover in a nearby building, but were buried with debris and soot. When the 1st Battalion, 101st Cavalry rolled into Manhattan the morning of Sept. 12, however, Ranauro was with them.

Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, then commander of the 1st Battalion 69th Infantry, drove to one of his battalion's Long Island armories, grabbed a military vehicle and began heading into Manhattan while everybody else was heading out. Today Col. Geoff Slack is commander of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

New York Army National Guard Soldiers assist first responders at ground zero in the days following the collapse of Twin Towers at the World Trade Center. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Across New York City and New York State members of the Army National Guard called their armories or simply went there as word of the attack spread. Within hours governor George Pataki had 4,256 traditional Soldiers on State Active Duty with 2,000 full-time Soldiers.

"The New York Army National Guard was magnificent," recalled retired Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Thomas Maguire, who was then serving as the Adjutant General. "The Soldiers went to the sound of the guns."

Maguire had been sitting in a plane at Newark International Airport when the planes hit. His first thought was to get back to state headquarters and he began fighting his way north.

Fortunately, the New York National Guard had just gone through a planning process to prepare for disaster if the change in dates from 1999 to 2000 (Y2K) caused problems with computer systems. Staff at headquarters and commanders in the field began implementing those plans automatically.

As Maguire tried to get back to Latham, and Slack fought his way to the Lexington Avenue Armory, New York Air National Guard Majors Gregg Semmel and Tom Owens from the 174th Fighter Wing were screaming south toward Washington in F-16s to stop United Airlines Flight 93 from crashing into a target there.

The two pilots were preparing for gunnery training at Fort Drum when NEADS called. The Wing Commander, Col. Robert Knauff, who retired as a major general in 2009, ordered them to take off with the ammunition they had on board, even before NEADS said launch.

The two were airborne in five minutes, trying to figure out how to shoot down a Boeing 757 with 20 mm cannon rounds.

"In hindsight I'm not sure how much damage we could do," Semmel, now the vice commander of the 174th and a colonel, said. "Our intent was to shoot for the wings."

When Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville Penn., Owens - now a colonel and the commander of the 106th Rescue Wing - and Semmel were directed to Pittsburgh and began a combat air patrol over that city.

In New York City, the commanders of the 1st Battalion 101st Cavalry, the 1st Battalion 69th Infantry, the 1st Battalion 258th Field Artillery, along with two companies of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry coordinated with the 107th Corps Support Group to provide troops to assist the police and fire departments.

At the end of the day about 1,500 troops were on the ground in southern Manhattan and another 1,500 were ready to relieve them on the morning of September 12.

Officers and NCOS did whatever it took to get the mission done. They worked directly with the police and fire departments to coordinate for buses to move Soldiers and worked out patrol arrangements.

One of the units on the ground right away was the newly formed 2nd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, a joint element created to identify the existence of chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

Maguire knew what the team was capable of and wanted to get them deployed to New York. But the New York City officials familiar with the

Guardsmen Remember 9/11, Continued from Page 11

team had been killed. Eventually he convinced city officials to take the team, and once they got on the ground they were invaluable, Maguire said.

New York Army, and eventually Air National Guardsmen began a day-to-day routine of assisting in securing the site, and then providing security on New York's bridges and tunnels, train stations and subways. At one point more than 2,500 Guard Soldiers and Airmen were on duty in the city.

When residents of lower Manhattan were allowed to return to their homes, National Guard Soldiers took them into and out of their buildings. National Guard Soldiers provided fuel to emergency vehicles when asked and aided emergency workers at the site. They directed traffic and helped organize incoming supplies.

"It was an overwhelming experience," Slack recalls. "The shock to my senses was profound. I don't think there was a first responder who escaped the feeling of rage, horror and frustration at finding almost nothing alive to save."

"I suppose that translated to a look on everyone's face of unspeakable pain which is etched into my memory forever," Slack said. "It was the same pain I saw on my Soldiers faces later on in Iraq after their unit took fatalities in combat."

As the immediate response morphed into a security operation, armed Soldiers manned checkpoints at bridges and tunnels to assist the NYPD and were also visible at Penn Station and Grand Central Station. Over time that mission evolved into Joint Task Force Empire Shield which is still on duty in New York City.

Elements of the 1-69th were mobilized on federal orders to protect West Point, while the 1st Battalion 127th Armor in Buffalo sent elements to critical sites across the country as part of Operation Noble Eagle. The 27th Infantry Brigade sent Soldiers into airports across the state to beef up security at the same time. The 42nd Infantry Division, whose key leaders had been in Fort Leavenworth and drove non-stop to get home, took over control of the mission as Joint Task Force 42.

Sept. 11, 2001 changed the country and changed the New York National Guard, those involved said.

Members of the Air National Guard have become more integrated in civil support and domestic operations missions than they were in the past, said Col. Kevin Bradley, the commander of the 174th Fighter Wing who was flying F-16s over Iraq on September 11.

"We have our federal mission and we always knew that we had a state mission and now we are actually living our state mission," Bradley said.

The New York Army National Guard went to war in the aftermath of Sept. 11 2001. By the beginning of 2005 more than 4,500 New York Army National Guard Soldiers were deployed in Iraq. In 2008, Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade deployed to Afghanistan.

Since Sept. 11, the New York Army National Guard has sent more than 8,000 Soldiers from all its units to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Guard also created the CERFP to respond to terrorist attacks at home, fielded an additional Civil Support Team and now train forces for a Homeland Response Force mission in 2012.

"For us older Soldiers, who have seen decades of service in the Guard, we have seen a complete transformation from the troubled post-Vietnam era to today's really excellent force,'" Slack said.

"To see the units to which I am assigned move seamlessly in and out of active service, into and out of combat, and be welcomed by our active Army counterparts makes me prouder than I can express," Slack said.

The attitude change towards the National Guard in New York and the nation began on Sept. 11 in the skies above New York and on the ground in New York City, Maguire said.

"We really were perceived by too many people as a rag-tag group of Soldiers and Airmen," he said. "Sept. 11 and the response of the Guard that day was the beginning of significant changes in those perceptions." **gt**

New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry provide security at ground zero during the response and recovery efforts in New York City on Sept. 13, 2001. At its peak, some 2,500 members of the New York Army National Guard, Air National Guard, New York Naval Militia and New York Guard served to support recovery efforts around the World Trade Center attack site. Photo by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters.

Just weeks following the armory use as a family information center after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry prepare for federal mobilization at their Lexington Ave. armory. The troops went on to serve in Operation Noble Eagle, augmenting security forces at West Point before the unit again mobilized in 2004 for service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Tribute WTC Seeks National Guard Volunteers

Tell your 9/11 Guard story of Ground zero while Serving as a site Tour Guide

By Lt. Col. Paul Fanning, Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK -- The organization that runs the Tribute World Trade Center Visitors Center is seeking National Guard volunteers to join their growing ranks of tour guides.

As the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks nears, members and alumni of the New York National Guard who served at the World Trade Center or performed Homeland Defense missions are being offered a new and special opportunity. Tour guides provide a valuable public service by sharing their personal stories of that difficult time.

"We are the voice for those who can't speak," said Lee Ielpi, retired New York Fire Department fire chief, Vietnam veteran and cofounder of the September 11th Families Association. Lee led a guided tour of the visitors' center June 3 to 14 volunteers including two members of the New York Army National Guard.

"We are here to tell what it was like though person-to-person history," he said. He described the vital role that volunteers are performing, while also sharing specific and painful details, including his nine months at the World Trade Center and the loss of his own fire fighter son, Jonathan.

More than 400 guides have been trained so far. Volunteers lead tours around the World Trade Center lasting just over an hour. Thousands come to lower Manhattan from around the world daily. The visitors' center and guided tours were created in late 2005 to connect with visitors and to ensure that victims and the response efforts wouldn't be forgotten.

Tribute WTC grew from the September 11th Families Association as an outreach effort. Since October 2005 more than 140,000 have taken tours and more than two million have visited the Tribute Center galleries at 120 Liberty Street next to the World Trade Center. Its mission is to unite the September 11th community by presenting evolving issues and sharing resources for long-term recovery.

A training program was developed by historians, educators and corporate trainers to prepare volunteers for their role. But it's the personal stories that make the tour an unforgettable experience. Tribute WTC volunteers are survivors, responders, residents, family members and others who become tour leaders, support staff and gallery docents. Now, Tribute WTC is hoping Guard members will join the effort, too by taking the training and leading and supporting tours on a monthly basis.

Maj. Vincent Heintz was among the 14 in Class 46 at the Visitors Center and at Tribute WTC headquarters nearby on Cortlandt Street.

"We operated from right in front here," he said pointing out the window that looked out on the World Trade Center, now a bustling construction site. It was his turn to tell his personal story. On Sept. 11, 2001 then-Captain Heintz commanded a company of the Guard's 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry that arrived on scene in the evening to take up positions along Church Street. "The visibility was so bad I needed a compass to navigate us into position," he said.

For 13 days his 80 soldiers conducted security missions on the east side of what became known as "the pile." On the last day, after he was relieved by a company of the 204th Engineer Battalion, he moved his unit up West Street.

Tour guide leader Mickey Kross leads 14 volunteers on a walking tour of the world Trade Center. Kross was a lieutenant with the New York City Fire Department and was among 14 people who survived the collapse of the North Tower from inside stairway B.

"That was our march to war," he said. "We all realized then we would be going and that it was just a question of when," he added.

As they approached the security perimeter, thousands of civilians cheered the men which caused them all to struggle emotionally. "It was tough," he said. "There were a lot of us wiping at our eyes. We spent 13 days there and rescued not one person," he said. Since then Heintz and many of the men with him have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a third deployment is coming.

For information on becoming a Tribute WTC volunteer, contact Nancy Gamerman, Volunteer Program Coordinator, Tribute WTC Visitor Center at (212) 422-3520, ext 112 or ngamerman@911families.org. **gt**

The Evolution of Radicalization: Homegrown Extremists

By Gregory Psoinos and Capt. Frank Quintana, Antiterrorism Program Coordinators

Background to Radicalization:

Sept. 11, 2011 marks the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks, which propelled our nation into a global war on terrorism. While it is highly unlikely that the tactics used on 9/11 will be used against New York again, the enemy's desire to attack our homeland still exists and their tactics have evolved.

The United States began to see an increase in terrorist plots in 2009 perpetrated by radicalized Homegrown Violent Extremists. These homegrown extremists in most instances have been influenced by international terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaida and other affiliated groups.

Extremists such as American born Muslim cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who encourages American Muslims to fight the United States as part of a religious jihad, continue to fuel extremism and hatred toward Americans and our culture. People like Anwar al-Awlaki commonly distort the truth by providing misinformation and radical interpretations of otherwise peaceful religious teachings. Al-Awlaki has been linked to the 9/11 hijackers, the Christmas Day airplane bomber, the attempted car bomb in Times Square, New York City and was instrumental in providing hate messages that inspired Army Maj. Nidal Hassan to perpetrate the Fort Hood shootings that killed 13 and wounded over 20.

The face of the adversary has changed. Recent trends illustrate that our adversaries are likely already here among us, living, working or studying. They are individuals with college degrees, professional businessmen and women or teenagers from all walks of life that have become the prime target of this radicalization campaign. The evolution of social media, mobile networking, and the Web provide radicals with a forum to openly communicate, teach and plot against us. Interactive online websites that allow anonymity provide the perfect forum for dynamic and charismatic preachers such as Al-Awlaki to spread their ideology of hatred throughout society.

The radicalization is a dynamic evolution that targets unremarkable, law abiding people and influences them to become radicalized against the American ideology. There is no single factor that influences an individual to become radicalized, but on multiple occasions it has been successful.

What you can do to prevent radicalization.

A key to identifying radicalization is to not dismiss changes in an individual's behaviors or actions, simply because we know or trust them or may be embarrassed. A simple observance that may appear trivial in nature may in fact be an indicator of radicalization taking place within a person. This is why first-line leadership and community-based outreach is key in preventing acts of terrorism. Close friends or family members can identify signs of radicalization early in the process.

It is imperative for our New York Military Forces to implement effective antiterrorism awareness programs. Some examples are the "iWATCH NYNG" program for reporting suspicious activities, found on the DMNA homepage at www.dmna.ny.gov/aftp, Eagle Eyes (used primarily by the Air National Guard) and "iSALUTE," a program for reporting of suspected espionage and subversion. **gt**

Never Forget the 9/11 Attacks

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On September 11, 2001, Americans woke to face one of the most challenging times in our history. We cannot forget that horrific day—nor the sacrifices that the men and women in uniform and their families make every day.

Photo credit: U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brien Aho

The Pentagon Memorial

Commemorating those who died on American Airlines Flight 77 and in the Pentagon

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On target for partnership: Soldiers form bonds in South Africa

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

LATHAM -- New York Army National Guard troops scored friendships and more at the South African National Defense Force 2011 Regional Combat Rifle Competition in Bloemfontein, South Africa May 8.

A team of eight New York Army National Guard Soldiers competed against soldiers and police officers from South Africa, Great Britain and New Zealand in Bloemfontein May 2-8. Under the State Partnership Program, New York National Guardsmen work with the South African National Defense Force, or SANDF, in a variety of events, including safety, aviation and combat skills training exercises.

Though their top Soldier finished 103rd out of 274 competitors and the team came in fourth out of four in the team matches, the trip strengthened the state's partnership with the South Africans, said Staff Sgt. Dennis Rick, the team's assistant NCOIC. Team members got a chance to fire the SANDF-issue R4, 5.56 mm rifle; test their marksmanship skills in different combat scenarios; and trade information on tactics and techniques with a diverse, talented pool of soldiers and police officers, he added.

"I had a great time," said Spc. Matthew Melendez, of New York City. "I love to compete, and I made friends with a lot of people."

Though the 18-hour flight was the most physically challenging part of the trip, they had to adjust to the lighter bullets used in the competition, he said.

"It took us a couple of days to get used to the ballistics of that round," Melendez said.

They also had to learn how to shoot the R4 instead of the American M-4 or M-16A2, said Spc. Masami Yamakado, also of New York City.

"It's a different weapon system entirely," Yamakado said. However, it was fun to shoot the weapon, which never malfunctioned, he recalled.

"That alone was huge," he said. "Just familiarizing myself with it helped a ton." He was very impressed by the marksmanship skills of the South African personnel, he added.

The competition consisted of various types and styles of shooting, including a counter-terrorism match with targets at 200 meters and a close-quarters battle match with targets at 25, 50, 75 and 100 meters, Rick said.

New York National Guardsmen visit a South African game preserve during the South African National Defense Force 2011 Regional Combat Rifle Competition. Top row, left to right: Spc. Jason Grossman of Airmont, N.Y.; Spc. Masami Yamakado, of New York City; Sgt. Justin Vonderheyde, of Middletown, N.Y.; Staff Sgt. Dennis Rick, of Staten Island, N.Y. Bottom row, left to right: Cpl. Jonathan Patton, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Staff Sgt. David Cartwright, of Buffalo; Spc. Matthew Melendez, of New York City; Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Evans, of Saugerties, N.Y. and New York Air National Guard Maj. Scott Williams, of Long Island. Williams is the bilateral affairs officer for the State Partnership Program. Courtesy photo.

"This is excellent training," Rick said. "We're intermingling with soldiers from other countries, and learning how they shoot," he said.

Like the other Soldiers, Sgt. Justin Vonderheyde enjoyed working with the South African troops. They made friends and exchanged ideas easily, he recalled.

"They were eager to learn anything we had to teach, and we were the same way," said Vonderheyde, of Middletown, N.Y.

They learned tips on basic Soldier tasks, such as tricks to firing the R4 and how to craft a notched stick to tally the rounds remaining in a rifle magazine, Yamakado said. They also shared the work load with the South African personnel, like moving range targets, he added.

"Working with different forces, you get to learn all kinds of new things," he reflected. "We got to know each other very well, and we made very good friends."

Vonderheyde said he also learned a great deal from his fellow sniper-trained team members.

"I watched them teach the South Africans quite a bit," Vonderheyde said. "They helped me a lot, and they helped the South Africans too."

The Soldiers taught him and others more advanced shooting, spotting and zeroing techniques, said Vonderheyde, a team leader in the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry.

"I've been shooting for a long time, but they taught me things I didn't know," Vonderheyde said.

The country of South Africa also left a deep impression on the New York Soldiers. They saw giraffe, antelope and zebras everywhere - including near their hotel - calmly walking around as deer do in New York, Yamakado said.

"I really felt like I was in Africa," he said.

Despite the hectic competition schedule, they had a chance to visit a game preserve, where they saw more wildlife and took in the South African landscape, Melendez said.

"It was absolutely beautiful," he said. "It's a very peaceful country." **gt**

Honoring New York's Fallen Guardsmen

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, LATHAM -- New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Carl Chapman, Readiness NCO for the Joint Force Headquarters and member of the New York Military Forces Color Guard posts the national colors at the start of a Memorial Day service held here May 26 for all military and civilian employees of the agency.

The event, presided over by Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General and New York National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks, recognized the 32 members of the New York Army National Guard, and one Marine Corps Reservist who was also a member of the New York Naval Militia who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

A New York Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook based in Rochester, N.Y., hoists a New York State Park Police boat out of the Niagara River on June 19. The Chinook, assigned to Detachment 1, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th General Services Aviation Battalion and commanded by Capt. Eric Fritz retrieved the boat after its crew was forced to abandon it just above the falls June 18. The State Park Police crew had rescued stranded boaters. They anchored their boat and were airlifted to shore by a Canadian rescue helicopter. Photo by 1st Lt. Benjamin Postle, 128th GSAB.

Army Guard CH-47 Gives Lift to Park Police Boat

By Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

NIAGARA FALLS -- New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. James Lentz planned to spend Father's Day morning, June 19, sleeping in before spending the day with his wife JoAnne and four young kids.

But early Father's Day morning, the six foot, four inch tall, Hamlin, N.Y. resident was hanging upside down out of a CH-47 helicopter with his head two feet above the raging Niagara River, just 1,000 feet upstream from the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, trying to get a hook on a stuck motorboat.

Lentz's Father's Day flight got its genesis more than 24 hours earlier when four teenagers went boating in the Niagara River. Their motor failed and they were swept downstream towards Horseshoe Falls (the name of the Canadian side of Niagara Falls) where the boat grounded. New York State Park Police were able to rescue the teens.

But after retrieving the teens' vessel the Park Police boat ran aground too. The two-man crew was airlifted off by a Canadian helicopter, but the boat was stuck just above the falls.

New York State Office of Parks and Recreation officials worried that the boat would be swept over the falls, damaging the natural wonder and interfering with navigation. A private salvage company wanted more than $100,000 to retrieve the steel-hulled motor boat, so state officials turned to the New York Army National Guard.

Planning for the mission began when Col. Mark Burke, the State Aviation Officer called instructor pilot Capt. Eric Fritz, a veteran pilot with Detachment 1 of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th General Aviation Support Battalion. The unit flies CH-47 Chinooks out of the New York Army National Guard's Rochester flight facility.

Fritz, a Webster, N.Y. resident who grew up Amherst, N.Y. was in his old hometown that Saturday for a social engagement. He immediately drove out to Goat Island, the New York State Park that straddles Niagara Falls, for a look at the problem.

When he got there Fritz called Lentz, a veteran flight engineer for the unit, and the two began planning the mission.

Their challenge was to get a helicopter above the stuck boat and get a hook onto hoisting points installed on the bow and stern of the Park Police vessel. Then they would either tow or lift the boat onto Goat Island.

Once the two decided the mission was doable, Fritz called Burke, who got final approval from the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy.

> "I was soaked from my head to my waist. Everything that was hanging out of the hole was soaked. Water was constantly spraying up in my face."
>
> *-- Staff Sgt. Jeff Lentz, crewchief, 3-126th GSAB*

It was a good mission, said Brig. Gen. Renwick Payne, the New York National Guard's Director of Joint Staff. The Guard could save New York money and help another state agency while getting valuable training for its aviation Soldiers, he explained.

The mission had to be done early when water flow over the falls is reduced. During the night water is diverted from the river into hydroelectric reservoirs and canals on both sides of the falls.

So at 4:30 a.m. on Father's Day, Lentz, Fritz and four other crewmen, Chief Warrant Officer Thomas Zimmerman, an instructor pilot; Sgt. 1st Class John Bobeck, flight engineer; Staff Sgt. Stanley Bagrowski, crew chief and 1st Lt. Benjamin Postle, a pilot slated to act as the eyes on the ground, were at the Rochester flight facility.

The team arrived at Goat Island just before 7 a.m. and after dropping off Postle to watch the maneuver from the ground, they went into action.

Col. Mark Stryker, the commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade and a New York State Police helicopter pilot in civilian

Continued on next page

A 126th crew member peers through the bottom porthole to ensure the New York State Parks boat is securely hooked to the boat's bow sling point before hoisting the craft from the edge of Horseshoe Falls. Photo by 1st Lt. Benjamin Postle, 126th GSAB.

Army Guard Lifts Park Police Boat, Continued from Page 19

The New York Army National Guard aviators tasked with retrieving a New York State Park Police boat from the waters of the Niagara River stand with the boat they recovered following their mission on June 19. They are (from left) Staff Sgt. Jeff Lentz; Col. Mark Stryker, commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade and a New York State Police helicopter pilot who was flying in his civilian capacity; Sgt. 1st Class John Bobeck; Capt. Eric Fritz; Staff Sgt. Stanley Bagrowski; Chief Warrant Officer Thomas Zimmerman; and 1st Lt. Benjamin Postle. Courtesy Photo

life, was in the area in his State Police helicopter providing an aerial set of eyes as well.

Fritz and Zimmerman flew the helicopter just above the stuck boat and then went into a hover.

That was more challenging than usual because the water rushing below him at 25 miles per hour made it look like the helicopter was constantly moving, Fritz said. He was so close to the river that the rear wheels went into the water at times, and he and Zimmerman had to turn on the windshield wipers to deal with the spray.

Meanwhile, Lentz, strapped into a body harness with Bagrowski hanging onto him to make sure he didn't get tangled up, was hanging halfway out the hatch in the floor of the CH-47 troop cabin, trying to get a sling hook onto the small hook at the rear of the stuck boat.

"What I was trying to hook up to was a pretty small target and I had to hang out pretty far so we could get to the boat's hook," Lentz said.

Lentz hung there, getting wetter and wetter, talking over the intercom to Fritz at the controls: telling him where to maneuver the massive 23,400 pound helicopter, so he could make the hook-up.

"I was soaked from my head to my waist," Lentz said. "Everything that was hanging out of the hole was soaked. Water was constantly spraying up in my face."

His face mask kept most of the water out, but he still had to drain the lenses in the mask every so often, Lentz recalled.

After about 45 minutes of failing to hook onto the stern of the boat, Fitz made the call to go for the larger bow hook instead.

"The forward sling point was a little bit bigger target and it was a lot higher off the water," Lentz said.

He got the hook on the boat, got back inside, and Fitz and Zimmerman at the controls started lifting.

He'd been afraid that the boat-which was filled with water-would be heavy and hard to lift, Fitz said. But the water ran out until the boat weighed only about 8,000 pounds, much less than the 26,000 pounds the Chinook is designed to lift.

The next trick was to fly forward just enough so that the stuck boat's anchor pulled out easily, Fitz said.

They got the boat onshore, dropped it, landed, picked up Postel and headed home to enjoy the rest of their Father's Day.

The Soldiers of the 3-126th have flown troops and supplies into combat outposts in Afghanistan, dropped armored personnel carriers into Fort Drum impact area to serve as targets, and carried sandbags during post-Hurricane Katrina operations.

"But this has kind of been the strangest mission we've ever flown," Fitz said. **gt**

Army Patrol Cap Makes Comeback

WASHINGTON -- On June 14, the Army's 236th Birthday, the ACU patrol cap became the primary headgear for all Soldiers as the duty uniform headgear. Commanders retain the authority to prescribe the beret for special events such as parades and changes of command or responsibility.

The black beret will be retained and worn with the dress uniforms. Soldiers are still authorized to wear the tan, green or maroon beret in accordance with Army Regulation 670-1.

Also effective June 14, 2011, Soldiers may sew on the U.S. Army tape, the name tape and rank insignia as an option at their own expense.

Soldiers may sew on all authorized skill and identification badges at their own expense as supplies become available. Initial stocks are anticipated in 8 to 10 weeks from the date of this directive. Skill and identification badges must be sewn on or pinned on; Soldiers are not authorized to mix sew-on with pin-on badges once they are available. Soldiers will not sew on the following: shoulder sleeve insignia-current organization, shoulder sleeve insignia-former wartime service, tabs or the U.S. flag.

These wear policy changes are effective June 14, 2011 and will be incorporated into the next revision of AR 670-1.

In a Pentagon census taken by Army Sergeant Majors, the over whelming reaction by Soldiers was to switch to the ACU patrol cap and retain the black beret to wear with the Army service uniform.

The change in the policy is expected to save the Army $6.5 million over the life of the ACU due to issuance of one beret instead of two. **gt**

Vietnam Era Pilot Takes Off Before Retirement

By Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

LATHAM -- The New York Army National Guard's last Vietnam War pilot took his final light Tuesday June 14.

In 29 years of Army flying Chief Warrant Officer Steven Derry amassed more than 3,000 hours in UH-1 "Hueys", AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters and the UH-60 Blackhawk. He spent 10 months in Vietnam in 1971/1972 and went back to war twice more; serving in Iraq in 2005 and again in 2008/2009.

At top, Chief Warrant Officer Steven Derry prepares for his last official flight as a New York Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk pilot. Derry, a Vietnam-era pilot, began his military career in 1969 and joined the New York National Guard in 1988 and retires later this year. Above, Derry is congratulated by fellow aviation Soldiers following his final flight June 14.

He's enjoyed the people, he's enjoyed the flying, and he's enjoyed serving, but everything needs to come to an end, Derry said.

So on June 14, Derry took one more flight out of the facility he's operated at for 20 years, and when he came back two hours later he was done.

Derry's been an icon at the Army Aviation Support Facility here since he joined the New York Army National Guard in 1988, said Maj. Kevin Ferreira, the facility Officer in Charge.

"In my last 11 years here I have been with Chief Derry through (deployments to) Nicaragua, Honduras, Bosnia and Iraq," said Ferreira, who is also Operations Officer for the 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation Regiment. "He has been there and done it all. There's a tremendous amount of experience for the young aviators coming here that we are going to lose."

As Derry's UH-60 taxied back to the Army hanger two fire trucks from Albany International Airport sprayed water over the spinning rotors and two lines of aviation Soldiers and TV cameras stood ready to welcome him back for the last time.

When he exited the aircraft he was ambushed by two Soldiers carrying the traditional bottles of Champagne to wet him down with.

"It's bittersweet," Derry said about his last flight.

Derry joined the Army in 1969 to fly helicopters. He flew combat missions in UH-1 H helicopters with the 23rd "Americal" Division and the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam.

He joined the New Jersey National Guard in 1985 and transferred to New York in 1988. He flew AH-1 attack helicopters and then transitioned to the UH-60.

His New York National Guard career took him to Iceland in 1997, Honduras in 1999, Nicaragua in 2002 and Bosnia in 2002/2003.

He went back to war for a second time when the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom III in 2004. Derry spent 20 months serving as the brigade tactical operations officer.

In 2008 the 3-142nd Aviation went Iraq and Derry went along, serving as the Air Movement Request Cell OIC and managing helicopter support for the 10th Mountain Division Commander.

The world of Army Aviation has changed a lot since he was a young man in Vietnam, Derry said. Pilots carry "a lot more stuff" and the cockpit is stuffed with technology.

But one thing that hasn't changed is pilots, Derry said.

"It's pretty much the same. They just want to fly," he said. **gt**

For video, mobile media users can use the following QR code:

Military Police Troops, Families Say Hello Again...

Troops Transition Home from Iraq Deployment

442nd Military Police Company Begins Yellow Ribbon Reintegration

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

New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Jason Diaz, his wife Nisha (left) and daughter Thalia, 4 of Peekskill, discuss scheduled activities during the 442nd Military Police Company 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event May 14 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains, NY. At right, Spc. Eloy Rodriguez and his wife Carol from Bronx, N.Y discuss program opportunities with Colleen Casey, New York National Guard Child & Youth Coordinator.

WHITE PLAINS -- There have been a lot of changes in his house since New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Jason Diaz left for Iraq in 2010, but the thing that stands out most now is how independent his wife Nisha is.

"She finished her degree and did a great job of taking care of our family while I was away," said Diaz.

Nisha Diaz pretty much got used to doing it all on her own, which is a little tough on her husband.

"I've been home for a little over a month and the hardest part is finding a place where I belong," said Diaz.

Coping with changes like those in the Diaz household, and learning how to embrace them is what the New York National Guard's Yellow Ribbon Program is about.

Diaz returned home in early April after spending nearly nine months in Iraq with the New York National Guard's 442nd Military Police Company.

"Our Soldiers were motivated and did an excellent job advising and assisting Iraqi law enforcement," said Capt. Tara Dawe, 442nd MP Commander.

Diaz, along with roughly 150 Soldiers from his unit, met up again for their 30-day Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program event here May 14. The Soldiers and their families gathered to learn about problems and concerns that can crop up when Soldiers return from a combat zone.

While he was on his mission, Nisha Diaz was on hers.

"I learned how important management skills are and how to juggle three kids, three dogs and being a full-time student," said Nisha. "Things are much better now that he's home, but we're still getting used to him being there to help take care of the kids and take the burden off of me," Nisha added.

"The Soldiers took care of their mission and it's only right that we take care of them," said Col. Reginald Sanders, commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade. "This is a great program and our Soldiers and families deserve the best we have to offer."

Spc. Eloy Rodriguez, a signal support specialist from Bronx, N.Y., was excited that the Department of Labor was on hand to provide assistance.

"This is perfect timing for me, I'm looking for a career change and was really worried about finding a new job," Rodriquez said. "My wife pretty much took care of everything else." **gt**

... And Goodbye Again

Soldiers Deploy for Cuba Security Mission

107th Military Police Company to Guard Detention Center

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

UTICA -- The New York Army National Guard's 107th Military Police Company has a rich, centuries-old heritage of worldwide service defending America, and now they're doing it again - at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

"This deployment is another in long line of honorable ones for this company," 107th Military Police Company Commander Capt. Chris Marion said at the unit's send-off ceremony, held here June 17 at the SUNY Institute of Technology. The unit left after the ceremony, trained at Fort Bliss, Texas and deployed for a year guarding the detention center.

Family, friends and well-wishers, along with New York Army National Guard and government leaders, attended the ceremony in the institute's Campus Center. Before recounting the unit's heritage to those assembled at the ceremony, Marion said the company is very young, in terms of experience. However, the company's platoon sergeants and squad leaders have combat experience, he added.

"They'll be leading the Soldiers," Marion said of the platoon sergeants and squad leaders. "Our overseas experience will be passed onto the Soldiers, and they'll also get all the training they need."

The Utica-based unit received notice of the deployment about a year ago, Marion said. Since then, the company's ranks swelled from about 70 to 170 Soldiers, he added.

The Soldiers hail from all over New York State, including Auburn, Hornell, Latham, Queens and Utica, he said.

"We've drawn Soldiers from all across our battalion to make this unit," Marion said.

Their preparations for the deployment began when they were notified and included three weeks of intensive pre-mobilization training at Fort Drum, Marion said.

"We're a new unit, but we've come together very quickly and professionally," he said.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul McKinney, from Rome, N.Y., the company's 2nd Platoon sergeant, deployed with the unit for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991. The unit guarded Iraqi prisoners of war captured during that war, McKinney said.

Above, Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 107th Military Police Company enter the hall during their deployment ceremony June 17 at SUNY Institute of Technology. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Below, 107th Military Police Soldiers move under concertina wire obstacles as part of their pre-mobilization training at Fort Drum in April. Photo by Lt. Col. Arthur E. Zegers, commander, 102nd Military Police Battalion.

He also has 27 years of military police experience with the Army and Marines, and has been a village of Mohawk police officer for 21 years, McKinney said. While other Soldiers in the unit also have law-enforcement or corrections experience, the deployment will be learning experience for the younger Soldiers, he added.

"It'll be a good environment for them to learn and grow," McKinney said.

The unit performed security duties in New York City following the 9/11 attacks, he said. They saw the beginnings of the global war on terror, and now they're part of the response.

"For many in the company, this is their first deployment, and they're looking forward to contributing to the overall effort," McKinney said. **gt**

Trainers, Sustainers and the Trained

New York Marshals All its Forces to Prepare Troops for Deployment

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

New York Army National Guard Soldiers negotiate a mud obstacle during tactical training at Fort Drum in June. Members of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in 2012. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

FORT DRUM -- Working hand-in-hand and according to plan, New York Army National Guard troops broke out of the box this last spring and met a United States Army Goal: to train its own Soldiers for deployment.

In what was dubbed Pre-mobilization II, or PMT II, New York National Guard Soldiers from units across the state trained and sustained about 1,950 of their fellow New York state Soldiers for overseas deployments - mostly troops from the Afghanistan-bound 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT).

The troops were trained and validated on 15 warrior tasks and four collective tasks at Fort Drum to prepare them for unit-level training at their mobilization stations, said Col. Gary Yaple, chief of staff for the 42 Infantry Division, the lead unit for PMT II.

FORSCOM requires all states to prepare their deploying forces this way, and New York units involved in PMT II - the 42 Infantry Division, the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, the Pre-mobilization Training and Assistance Element (PTAE), 53rd Troop Command, 369th Sustainment Brigade and the 27th IBCT - came through, he added.

"This was the main effort, and everybody delivered," he said, adding that the troops were trained in iterations during a six-week period in May and June. More Soldiers expect to train in August, Yaple added.

The Plan

The effort began about a year before, when FORSCOM issued the training requirement and guidance, Yaple said. Faced with the daunting training mission, leaders from all major state commands decided to bust the paradigm and mass annual training (AT) days - normally meted out in two-week periods for individual units - to provide Soldiers and resources to train and sustain the other troops, he added.

"The science behind it, developed by our battle majors, was outstanding," Yaple said. "They did very good staff work."

The Soldiers to be trained were divided into training classes, said Maj. Larry Weaver, a 42nd Infantry Division planner.

"Everyday a new class would start up, and go for 15 days," Weaver explained. The trainers and sustainers conducted "multiple shoulder tours" – with units rotating in and out of PMT II to cover down on each class, Yaple said.

Leaders wanted to fold lessons learned from

Task Force Phoenix - the 27th IBCT's 2008 Afghanistan deployment - into the training plan, Yaple said. Unlike then, leaders wanted an "uninhibited focus" with nothing to distract troops from training, he added.

"We knew what we didn't like about our previous experience with Task Force Phoenix PMTs, and we applied considerable effort to overcome those shortcomings," he said. "We learned from all our past experiences in preparing for Task Force Phoenix."

The 42nd Infantry Division formed Task Force Excelsior to oversee the training and logistical wings of PMT II: Task Force Train, made up of 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and PTAE; and Task Force Sustain, composed of 369th Sustainment Brigade and 53rd Troop Command Soldiers, Weaver said.

"This is the first time that all the units in the state of New York converged to assist a deployment such as this," said 369th SB Commander Col. Reginald D. Sanders, of Springfield, Mass.

The Soldiers lived in a tent city at Fort Drum, called Forwarding Operating Base (FOB) Orion, which was built by contractors and run by Task Force Sustain, Weaver said.

"This is a full-force effort by the New York National Guard," said Lt. Col. James Gonyo, commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry. "The (27th IBCT) walks in; they get trained. They don't have to worry about how they're going get to somewhere or how they're getting food; they show up on time, in the right uniform, and we do everything else for them."

PMT II was a great experience which should serve most of the brigade Soldiers during the deployment to Afghanistan, said Lt. Col. Paul Conte, executive officer for the 27th IBCT.

"It got Soldiers back to basics," Conte said. "These skills most closely relate to survival, and that's why Soldiers need to know them."

The Trainers

Along with instruction on individual tasks, trainers took Soldiers through scenarios on Fort Drum's roads, in its fields and forests, and in mock villages. The scenarios were based on things Soldiers may encounter overseas, like snipers, improvised explosive devices, uncertified journalists and village residents.

2nd Lt. Austin Luckenbach watches his fellow Soldiers crawl through mud and under a barbwire obstacle to get to a mock village during PMT II at Fort Drum. Luckenbach, from Yonkers, N.Y., is an intelligence officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. At right, Master Sgt. James Weaver, a medical sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, peeks around the corner of a building in a mock village. Below, acting as an enemy gunman, Pfc. Carlos Flores, fires blank rounds in a mock ambush during PMT II at Fort Drum. Flores and other role players heightened realism during the training. Flores belongs to the 427th Brigade Support Battalion. The training gave Soldiers the basic infantry skills they'll need while deployed. Photos by Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

Working with New York's PTAE, trainers toiled behind the scenes to ensure the scenarios were realistic, relevant and challenging, such as convoy and checkpoint training, which was complete with scripts, actors and props.

"Soldiers have a vehicle and they have to determine if it has an IED," said trainer Spc. Luis Munoz, describing the scenario. "Then, a group of civilians bring in an injured person, supposedly shot by the Americans. All of a sudden, a riot breaks out. How are they going to handle that situation?"

PMT Story continues on next page

Army Guard Marshals its Forces to Train Troops, Continued from Page 25

The pressure increases as the Soldiers try to leave the mock FOB and encounter role players acting as a mob angry about not getting medical assistance, Munoz said. Then a sniper joins the fray, "firing off shots, to see if the Soldiers will take cover or just start laying on rounds on top of those civilians," he added.

"A lot of them succeeded in not shooting," Munoz said proudly says, adding that scenarios like this are what will prepare them best. "Every scenario somebody's been through, or somebody's seen it. If this happens again, they know what to do."

The 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and PTAE had full latitude to conduct training within their fields of expertise, Yaple said.

"You can say, 'squad leader, what are you doing here? What's going on?'" said Staff Sgt. Elias Kougemitros, a trainer with the 1-69th Infantry. "And you can use your experience in-country to give them an idea of what they're working on."

Kougemitros, of New York City, is a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan. Though the hours were long, it was an honor to train the Soldiers, he said.

"I'm proud to share my knowledge," Kougemitros said, "being able to help them see what they don't see. Really push down at every level, everyone one of them realizing that they'll be on convoys, they'll be on patrols with infantry, and they have to know how to become part of the team. Because the quicker they can become part of the team, the more successful the mission is going to be."

The Sustainers

A key component of PMT II was FOB Orion. The FOB had everything needed to care for the troops as they trained, including a chow hall, aid station, laundry, showers and a chapel, Weaver said.

The FOB, with its huge tents, showers in shipping containers, and clearing barrels is familiar to veterans, but may be foreign to others.

"If Soldiers have never seen a FOB before, it is kind of a foreign concept for exactly what a FOB can provide," says Lt. Col. Brian Marshall, deputy commander of the 369th SB. "We built a FOB here so Soldiers can now see what that is, they know what services are available, and it also takes away some of the fear of the unknown."

Marshall, of Mansville, N.Y., served with the 27th IBCT for 15 years and deployed to Afghanistan with the unit. The lessons learned during that deployment helped shaped PMT II, and one of those lessons was the FOB, he said.

Above, Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, crawl through mud and under a barb-wire obstacle to get to a mock village during training. Below, Master Sgt. Andrew Lampkins, a logistics sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, speaks to Soldiers portraying Afghan villagers. Photos by Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

"We looked at that and said, 'you know, trying to train as well as maintain ourselves administratively just doesn't work,'" Marshall said. "If the Soldiers who are going through training could concentrate on just training, and not have to worry about sustainment, the logistical support, the administrative support, they could concentrate on what they have to do."

That includes supply and maintenance. It's important to deliver needed supplies like water and ammunition, before they even know they exist, Lt. Col. Daniel E. Harris, 369th Special Troops Battalion commander.

"When we don't deliver, there is a war fighter out there who is going without," said Harris, of Pocono, Pa. "Whatever happens, come hell or high water, we've got to get those war fighters what they need, before they ask for it." Behind all this, Harris added, is the simple idea that once Soldiers' basic needs are taken care of, they can focus on the training.

Sustaining the Soldiers was a training bonus for the 369th SB, Yaple said.

"The 369th was supporting like they've never been able to do before," he stressed. "This was a great opportunity for them. Col. Sanders and his team did an outstanding job."

Results

All told, PMT II came just shy of its goal of validating 2,000 Soldiers. Yaple described PMT II as statewide effort, with "unprecedented cooperation" between Joint Force Headquarters, 53rd Troop Command, and the 42nd Infantry Division. Marshall shared these sentiments.

"This is truly a joint effort," Marshall said. "Every subordinate unit within the New York National Guard had a piece of it. There really is not one entity that made this happen. It was truly a state effort. One unit could not have done this by themselves. It took the entire state."

He's never seen such a successful operation, Yaple said.

"Literally on day three, it was working," he said. "It was going so well, I was waiting for something bad to happen."

The 27th IBCT played no small part in the success, Yaple said, taking considerable effort to deliver its troops - which are spread across the state - to PMT II.

"We could've had the best plan in the world, but if nobody shows up, we can't execute." **gt**

Honoring a Fallen Hero

Story and photos by Sgt. Tamara Gabbard, 42nd Infantry Division

GREENLAWN -- "The blood of fallen Soldiers waters the tree of liberty," appear in the end of a letter written by New York Army National Guard Spc. Anthony L. Mangano prior to his deployment with the 2nd squadron, 101st Calvary in 2008. Mangano's best friend Vincent Sirago, a Deputy Sheriff in Saratoga, N.Y., repeated those words in Mangano's hometown during a memorial street dedication to mark third year anniversary of his death here June 21.

Mangano died June 21, 2008 in Kandahar Afghanistan with four other comrades when their vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device and small arms fire.

"You always hear the statement that Soldiers are never forgotten," said his mother Constance Mangano, "and I believe that this is just another way to keep that true."

The dedication was held to rename the street that Mangano's mother lives on, Irving Street. The street is now named Sgt. Anthony L. Mangano Way.

"It is never easy," she said as tears filled her eyes, "you know, you think, it's been three years and I can discuss it, but the pain of losing your son never goes away."

After her loss Connie, as they call her, became part of the American Gold Star Mothers. Through the efforts of this long established group of mothers, events like this have been made possible.

The Gold Star Mothers started in World War I by Grace Darling Seibold, after she had lost contact with her son who was serving under an aviation brigade. After losing contact with her son, she began visiting the hospitalized veterans in hopes that she would recover him. Grace, realizing that her grief was becoming self-destructive, devoted her time and efforts to, not only working in the hospital, but extending the hand of friendship to other mothers dealing with the same heartache.

"Today, what I try and do is to make sure that every veteran is not forgotten, whether they are alive or deceased," said Michele McNaughton, Chapter 61 President of the American Gold Star mothers on Long Island. "And you really come to [build relationships] with all the families this happens to."

Michele lost her son, Staff Sgt. James McNaughton of the 306th Military Police Battalion, August 2, 2005.

"So basically we are support for one another," she continued. "Because no one can really [walk in our shoes] and understand what we go through. We are all somebody that lost a child in a war, so it is important to have that support."

With the support of her ladies and the town of Huntington, Connie humbly unveiled the sign under an American flag that the Huntington Fire Department rigged high over the crowd of veterans and family to show their gratitude for not just Anthony, but all fallen Soldiers across the United States.

"This dedication is bittersweet," said Glenda A. Jackson, a member of the Huntington City Council. "It is bitter that he paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we all could enjoy our freedoms, and sweet is the acknowledgement of that sacrifice and how we will remember and recognize [his death] as a continuation of freedom across New York."

"Everything is good," said Connie. "That is what I would tell him if I could see him right now." **gt**

Constance Mangano of Greenlawn, N.Y., with the help of Huntington City Council member Mark Cuthbertson unveils the newly named street named after her deceased son, Army National Guard Spc. Anthony Mangano. Below, members of Company B, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry provide the colors for the ceremony. The street was dedicated in the memory of Mangono on the third year anniversary of his death in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He was with the 1-69th Infantry Regiment, but deployed with the 2nd squadron, 101st Cavalry in 2008.

New York Army National Guard Pvt. Danielle C. Powe, an artilleryman with Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, yanks the lanyard of a M-198 howitzer, blasting 100 lbs. of high explosives down range during certification at Fort Drum, June 20. The battalion expects to deploy Soldiers to Afghanistan in early 2012. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

Troops Try New Tubes

By Maj. Ben Tupper, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM -- When most people think of the "Bronx Bombers," pinstripes and baseball gloves come to mind.

But don't tell that to Bronx native and New York Army National Guard Sgt. Tomas Couvertier, a member of Battery A, 258th Field Artillery.

He and his squad members sport a different uniform, one that features digital camouflage and the patch of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team instead of pinstripes. But when Battery A takes the field, their equipment packs a bigger punch than the bats of any professional baseball team.

Couvertier, alongside his battery mates from New York City and Long Island, conducted a live fire exercise on June 20th with an impressive piece of equipment: the M-198 Howitzer. After completing a nine day certification process under the supervision of artillery specialists from Fort Sill, Battery A fired the M-198 for the first time.

The battalion is equipped with the 105mm M-119A2 howitzer, while the M-198 fires the larger 155mm round. This gives the M-198 longer range and greater firepower.

By training on this artillery piece, the battery's Soldiers added a new skill set that would be used in the event during a deployment.

Battery B and Battery A for the 1-258th had been programmed to deploy to Afghanistan with the 27th Brigade Combat Team, but changes in the mission mean they will not be going now.

The M-198 Howitzer, while new to the 258th Field Artillery, is not new to the Army's inventory. The artillery piece was first introduced in the late 1970s, and has seen service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Four M-198s howitzers were loaned to the 258th from the Missouri National Guard for this nine-day training certification conducted at Fort Drum.

While Soldiers from Battery A fired only 155mm high explosive rounds during their certification, the artillery piece is capable of firing a wide range of munitions, like illumination, smoke, and white phosphorus.

As part of their training and certification, battery Soldiers received fire missions from forward observers from the 2nd Battalion, 108 Infantry, one of the maneuver elements of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

The battery fired high-angle and low-angle fire missions, and completed the certification process by conducting a disassemble drill, allowing the artillery piece to be towed away for its next mission. **gt**

Behind the Barrel

Weapons Safety Habits Learned Before Deployment

Story and photo by Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM -- New York Army National Guard Sgt. John D. Smith stands waiting in line outside Forward Operating Base Orion dining facility here in the late spring sun hoping for a good meal. Smith, a Soldier preparing for mobilization later this year with more than 1,900 Army National Guard Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, had been training all day on individual deployment tasks.

But between Smith and his well-earned meal sits a squat red metal barrel, filled with sand and topped with a hole in its center.

These are known as clearing barrels, and they act as a security check for Soldiers, who by placing their weapon inside the clearing barrel and clearing their weapon, can and make sure that there are no rounds inside.

In various forms, they are a familiar sight to Soldiers who have deployed to the Middle East, where they can be found near the entrance of nearly every building. For Soldiers of the 27th IBCT training at Fort Drum, their presence is a precursor to what they will see when deployed to Afghanistan next year.

"We want to train them as they fight," said Lt. Col. Daniel E. Harris, commander of the 369th Special Troops Battalion, the logistics task force providing a full range of services to the Soldiers in training. "The importance of the clearing barrel is to ensure that Soldiers get used to clearing their weapon every time they enter a building. That's very important, because that is the standard."

Sgt. Maj. Philip Klipp, support operations manager for the 369th Sustainment Brigade and acting safety manager, says it is important to have Soldiers learn to reflexively clear their weapons before entering a room, preferably when in a safe training environment like the premobilization training at Fort Drum.

"If you don't clear your weapon, there could possibly be an injury to the Soldier himself," Klipp said, "or the Soldiers in the surrounding area."

"Weapons can get dropped," Harris said, "weapons can be left lying around and somebody can pick it up, and if there's a round in that chamber -- you can just think of the ramifications from there. There is just no excuse."

"All the training that we do is not worth one Soldier's life," Harris adds. "That's my personal philosophy. If we lose Soldiers due to a lack of safety during training, in my opinion, that's a serious lack of oversight by leadership."

Klipp, who adds that while there are other safety measures, like the cages Soldiers put over the muzzle, clearing barrels are simple measures that prevent meaningless harm, whether in training or in a mess hall in Afghanistan.

"We're just trying to prevent Soldiers from an unfortunate accident," says Klipp.

At the mess hall, Smith brings his weapon to the lip of the clearing barrel. He presses the magazine release, slides the selection switch to place the weapon on safe and grabs the charging handle to bring the weapon's bolt to the rear.

With his other hand, he presses the bolt catch, which holds the bolt carrier to the rear.

Looking into the chamber of his weapon, at the spot where a bullet could hide, he finds nothing. He unleashes the bolt and it slides forward with a slicing metal sound before collecting itself in one thick crash. He then places the weapon back on fire and squeezes the trigger. There's no explosion, only a hollow click, like a single tick of an old clock. With his other hand, he sweeps the charging handle back once again, places the weapon back to safe, and takes his weapons out of the clearing barrel.

Passing the clearing barrel, Smith takes his weapon, washes his hands, and enters the tent where his repast awaits.

General Tsao's chicken is the meal of the day. **gt**

Sgt. John D. Smith, a public affairs Soldier with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, clears his weapon before entering a mess hall on Fort Drum May 29.

107th MPs 'Prepare to Defend'

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. April Melton, 5th Armored Brigade, First Army Division West

Soldiers from the 107th Military Police Company, New York Army National Guard prepare to "defend" the base at McGregor Range, N.M. July 11. The Soldiers left New York in mid-June and have since deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

MCGREGOR RANGE, N.M. -- Soldiers from the 107th Military Police Company, New York Army National Guard prepared to "defend" the base here during a base defense live fire training event led by the 5th Armored Brigade July 11.

The company left New York less than a month before.

"The joint war fighters are getting a good training event in today. They are doing a base defense live fire; learning how to defend their contingency and forward operating bases." said Sgt. 1st Class Chad Izworski, observer controller/trainer. "All the Soldiers seem really motivated and they are enjoying the training that they are getting."

The idea behind the training event is to simulate an attack on the "base" and see how well the Soldiers react to the different scenarios from a sniper or mortar attack.

"Basically what it does is trains the Soldiers to give them that realistic [feel] as far as enemy contact and getting them familiar with their weapons," added Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Crowder, another OC/T. "They need to learn how to react, engage targets and defend bases."

"Our goal is to stop any possible attack on our base… We're deploying personnel along the front wall and in the towers. We also had teams set up to evacuate casualties, if necessary," said Spc. Jonathan Wellington, 107th MP Company, from Seneca Falls, N.Y.

One of the goals of this training is to teach leadership, communication and teamwork.

"I learned that when you're a good team, you work a lot better together," added Wellington.

"I'm getting experience giving commands to the team leaders and lower enlisted Soldiers on what to do when engaging the enemy target," added Cpl. Jennifer Fish, 107th MP Co., from Hawthorne, N.Y., about her training as a squad leader.

"The best part of my job is getting to train Soldiers, NCO's and officers alike," added Izworski. "At the end of the day they've got the training I know they deserve. I can tell in their eyes that [they got the] training needed to go down range and do their mission successfully."

The Soldiers of the 107th MP Co. deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in late July. They are expected back home in the spring of 2012. **gt**

Civil War re-enactor Howard Young and Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Weidlich, from the 206th Military Police Company discuss gear from eras 150 years apart July 20.

Soldiering On after 150 Years

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

LATHAM -- It was blue versus ACU (Army Combat Uniform) here on July 20, as Civil War Soldier met modern Soldier to commemorate the First Battle of Bull Run.

Civil War re-enactor Sgt. Howard Young, dressed in Union Army military gear complete with musket, stood in sharp contrast to Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Weidlich, standing just as tall in his ACUs, helmet with night-vision sights and M4 carbine. Young belongs to the 125th New York Volunteer Infantry, a re-enactor group, and Weidlich, who served two tours in Iraq, is a member of the New York Army National Guard's 206th Military Police Company.

Young, of Rotterdam, N.Y. and Weidlich, of Cobleskill, N.Y. fired blanks with their weapons outside the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs and spoke to the differences between 1861 and now for members of the Albany, N.Y.-area press corps.

It cost about $1,000 in today's currency to outfit a New York Militia Soldier like those who fought at the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21st, 1861. Outfitting a New York National Guard Soldier for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan today costs 18 times that amount.

But that gap is dwarfed by other gaping differences. By the time of Bull Run, a Confederate victory, New York State had sent about 46,000 Soldiers to serve. A great many of the 33,000 Union Soldiers who fought at Bull Run were Empire State natives.

Civil War Soldiers were only trained to load and fire their muskets, not aim them, Young said. The 125th never fired their muskets until they went into combat, he added.

"If you carry this around all day, you're tired," Young said of his musket, which he's wielded at numerous Civil War re-enactments.

While a modern Soldier can fire 90 rounds a minute with the M4 carbine and change magazines quickly, Civil War combat required an elaborate manual of arms, cutting the rate of fire to three rounds per minute, at best.

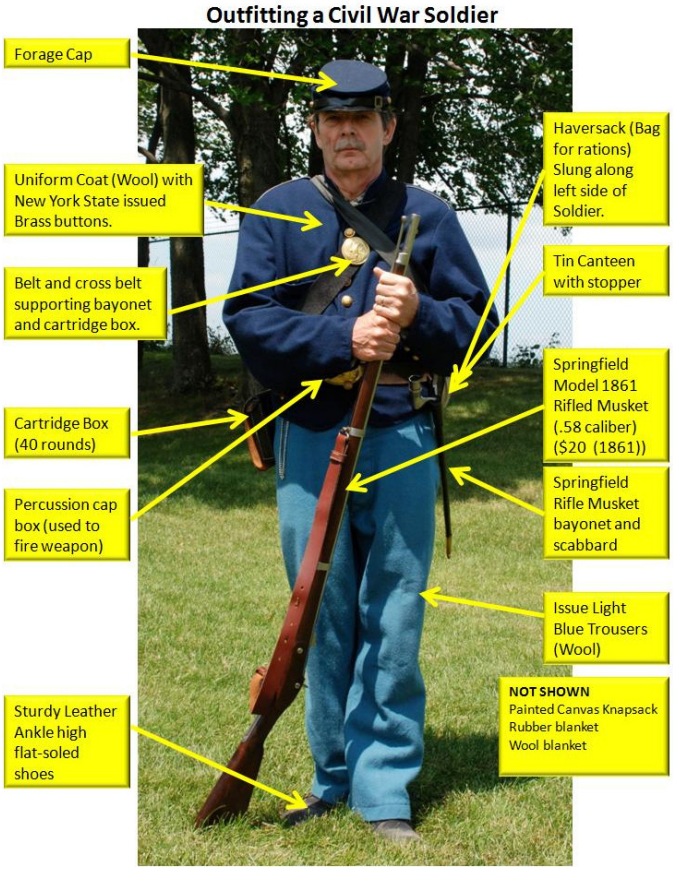
"It's a much more structured and disciplined way of firing," Weidlich said. Civil War Soldiers carried fewer rounds, and had to make every one count, he added.

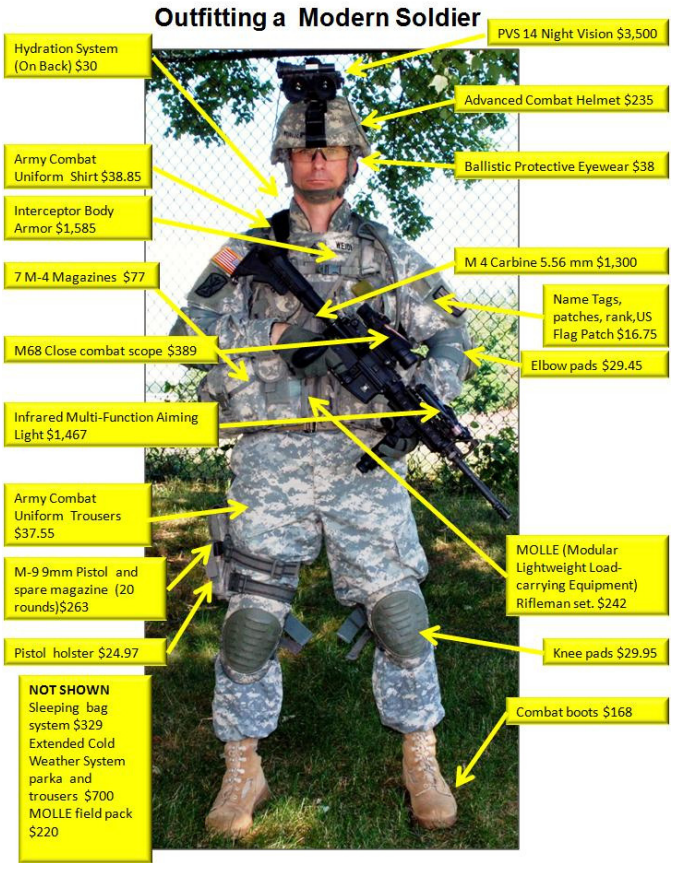
Young's uniform was wool, which he said was tough, breathable and a bit waterproof, but hot. Civil War Soldiers carried between 45 to 60 lbs. of equipment on the march, Young said.

Civil War Soldiers took weeks to get to the battlefield - unlike today, where "you can go to bed, and less than 24 hours later, you're boots on the ground, in the combat zone," Weidlich said.

He enjoyed the demonstration and admired Young's Civil War knowledge, Weidlich said. But, after getting an idea of what Civil War troops went through, he prefers being a modern Soldier, he added.

"They're better equipped, they're better trained," Young noted. **gt**





Guard Aviators Prepare for Wildfires, Bambi Style

SCHUYLERVILLE -- A New York Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter lifts a Bambi Bucket filled with 660 gallons of water out of the Hudson River during fire bucket training on June 28. Two Blackhawks based at Army Aviation Support Facility 3 in Latham took part in the annual training exercise that prepares air crews to battle wildfires and forest fires in support of other state agencies during the summer months. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Guard Father, Son Toss Opening Pitch

TROY -- New York Army National Guard Soldiers 1st Sgt. Joseph Landy (right), and his son Pfc. Joseph Landy, both of Speigletown, N.Y., threw the opening pitches during the Tri-City Valley Cats minor league baseball game at Joe Bruno Stadium here on July 5. 1st Sgt. Landy, of the 501st Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), was home on leave from Iraq and Pfc. Landy is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2012. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

‘Like Son, Like Mother’

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

LATHAM -- The truth be told, the inspirations for Spc. Cola Jade and her son Spc. Miami Jade were all relative, and included each other and another family member.

Cola joined the New York Army National Guard’s Staten Island-based 145th Surface Maintenance Company as a wheeled vehicle mechanic in 2009 - right after her son Miami finished training for the same career field and unit.

He was excited and proud when Cola enlisted, Miami said.

“Not everyone’s parents are in the Army,” he said.

Cola’s father was a pilot and mechanic in the British military, and she and Miami lived in Great Britain. They vacationed in the United States in 2004, but settled in Brooklyn after Cola found a job teaching fitness and modern dance.

“We just never left,” she said.

When Miami was 19, he decided to join the New York Army National Guard. Recalling that his grandfather fixed vehicles, he opted to follow in his footsteps and became a wheeled vehicle mechanic, Miami said.

Cola felt a mixture of emotions at her son’s enlistment. At the time, her only images of the American Army came from films, she admitted.

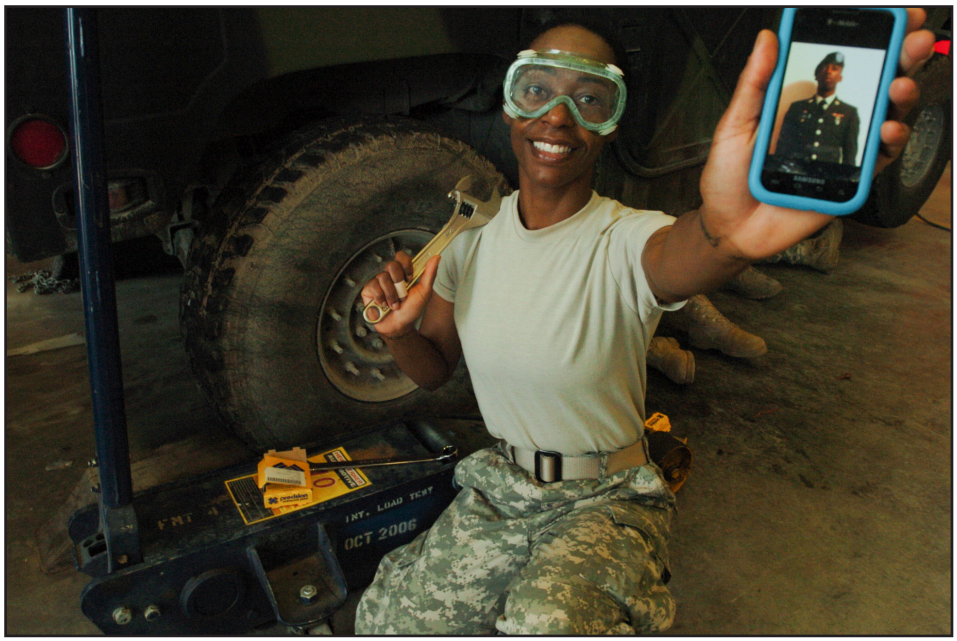
“I was angry,” Cola recalled. “I didn’t know anything about the Army.” She was also afraid for Miami’s safety.

Basic training, though difficult, was a good experience, and he enjoyed Advanced Individual Training because he learned a lot about vehicles, Miami said. He wrote to Cola every week, and she encouraged him as he was undergoing training, he added.

“I was really proud of him, that he could go through all that,” Cola recalled. She also did some research and found the Army wasn’t like she thought, she added.

They spoke by phone toward the end of his training and she attended his graduation at Fort Jackson, S.C., Miami said. He told her it was a good experience and that he’d made lifelong friends, he added.

“I told her how it was, and it gave her the idea to join,” Miami recalled.



Spc. Cola Jade, a mechanic in the 145th Maintenance Company at annual training at Fort Drum, shows a picture of her son, Miami, who is in the same unit. Photo by Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division. At right, Cola and her son, Spc. Miami Jade, prepare to march in the New York City Memorial Day parade with the 369th Sustainment Brigade on May 15. Photo by Sgt. Michael Davis, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

Cola remembered something else Miami told her.

“He said ‘you’re just like the drill sergeants, you should join,’” she said.

The recruiter was surprised when she approached him to enlist, because she had been angry before, and had since changed her mind, she said.

“He laughed, because he didn’t believe it,” she said.

Unable to enlist in a medical field due to her pending citizenship status, Cola recalled her father and consulted Miami, asking him how he felt about her becoming a wheeled vehicle mechanic like him.

“He said he didn’t mind,” she said.

Her drill instructors were shocked to discover that she’d followed her son into the Army, and that, as a British citizen, she’d decided to join the American Army, Cola said. She achieved the maximum score on her physical training test in AIT, she added.

Miami, in turn, attended Cola’s graduation from AIT at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and mother and son continue to enjoy their military careers.

“I love it,” Miami said, adding that he wants to join the regular Army as a mechanic.

“It’s cool,” Cola said. “It’s like having a best friend right there with you in the unit.”

Though they’re still the same rank, Miami believes Cola will make sergeant before him.

“We’re both specialists, but I think she will,” Miami said. “She was a specialist before me.” **gt**

107th Air Wing Heads Out the Door for Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Peter Dean, 107th Airlift Wing

In a Memorial Day send off, families and loved ones gather to bid farewell to members of the 107th Airlift Wing. The Airmen left Niagara Air Reserve Station for their four-day journey aboard a C-130 to Afghanistan for the start of their 90-day tour of duty. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Peretta, 107th Airlift Wing.

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- Instead of gathering to view Memorial Day parades, enjoy family barbeques, and remember the sacrifices of past servicemen, the families of 80 members of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing gathered to say goodbye to their Airmen destined for a 90-day deployment to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom.

"On Memorial Day I think it's a tribute, actually, that we're recognizing both not only those who have served but those who continue to serve...so I think it's a perfect day to have them leave," said Brenda Basher, mother of Staff Sgt. Rick Basher, a deploying member.

"I think it was clutch for us, to have the morning with the family and then be able to leave. I take a lot of pride not only in serving but to be able to wear this uniform today and know that I'm really going to make a difference and have an impact, I take a lot of pride out of it," said a 107th pilot who asked not to be identified.

"To the families, these are the best trained Airmen in the world," said Col. Jim McCready, commander of the 107th Airlift Wing. "They are the truest professionals at their business. They are going there with one sense and that sense of mission, that sense of accomplishment and that sense of bringing everyone back the same way they left. So take that home with you tonight, rest assured they will be fine."

"To the deployers, I'm envious; sitting this out is probably harder than going, I wish I were there with all of you. You're going to experience things and face challenges that you've never had before and when you come home you'll have an immense sense of pride in what you've accomplished and you don't lose that, it stays with you for the rest of your career, the rest of your life. Be proud of what you do, look out for each other, and God speed, we'll see you in three months," McCready said.

Although members of the 107th have deployed numerous times, this will be the first major deployment for the 107th Airlift Wing since converting to the C-130. The aircrews and Airmen are expected to return in the late summer.

> "To the families, these are the best trained Airmen in the world."
>
> *-- Col. Jim McCready, Commander, 107th Airlift Wing*

As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission decision, the wing converted from their mission as an air refueling wing flying the KC-135 to an airlift wing flying the C-130. The 107th now associates with their collocated counterparts from the Air Force Reserve's 914th Airlift Wing. Both wings now work together flying and maintaining the same C-130 aircraft. **gt**

New York Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Aaron Clause, right, and Tech. Sgt. Dan Weiser guide a prop onto a newly installed C-130 T56 engine. The Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing's maintenance team intalled the rebuilt engine during sheduled maintenance May 4 to prepare the wing aircraft for deployment to Afghanistan.

Maintenance Crews Keep C-130s Flying

107th Air Wing Engine Shop Installs New Engines on Afghan Bound Aircraft

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

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- If you ever thought that changing the oil in your car every 3,000 miles was a task, you have not met the maintenance crews of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing.

Here at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, Airmen prepare to change the powerful C-130H aircraft every 6,000 hours.

Prior the this summer's deployment of crews and personnel to Afghanistan, members of the 107th Airlift Wing's Propulsion Shop known as the engine shop, installed a rebuilt Allison T56-A-15LFE turboprop engine on the C-130H aircraft. The aircraft was in the hanger for its annual 15-month inspection.

Master Sgt. Patrick Martin, Propulsion Section Supervisor, oversaw the installation.

The maintenance crew involved on this install included Master Sgt. John Venditti - Crane Driver, Tech. Sgt. Aaron Clause, Tech. Sgt. Dan Weiser, Staff Sgt. Noah Bellreng and Staff Sgt. Scott Weis. All of the Airment serve in the Component Repair Flight Section of the 107th Maintenance Group. Installing the 5,400 lb. turboprop engine takes a team effort to coordinate the complex many airmen working together as a team.

The wing is associated with the 914th Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing.

The Allison T56 is a single shaft, modular design military turboprop with a 14-stage axial flow compressor driven by a four-stage turbine. It was originally developed by the Allison Engine Company for the Lockheed C-130 transport, entering production in 1954.

It is now produced under Rolls-Royce, which acquired Allison in 1995. The commercial version is designated 501-D. With an unusually long and numerous production run, over 18,000 engines have been produced since 1954. The engine series have logged over 200 million flying hours. **gt**

Airdrop Delivers Needed Supplies, Saves Lives

By Master Sgt. Mary Davis, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

Pallets loaded with much-needed supplies drop out of the back of a C-130 Hercules on their way to a forward operating base in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan, June 22. Two C-130s, one from the Alaska Air National Guard and one from the New York Air National Guard, performed the formation airdrop. The Air National Guard members of the 107th Airlift Wing from Niagara Falls deployed here in early June for a 90-day deployment. Airdrops help mitigate the danger of transporting supplies via convoy. U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Korry Leverett, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Airmen from the 107th Airlift Wing, flying a Niagara Falls based C-130, teamed up with a crew from the Alaska Air National Guard and dropped 20,000 pounds of supplies to Soldiers in remote operating bases in Oruzgan Province on June 22.

The 107th Airmen, assigned to the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron conducted two back-to-back missions with the Alaska-based C-130, which tested their skills and strengthened them as a team.

"We flew a two-ship formation airdrop of C-130s supporting Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in southern Afghanistan," said the 774th EAS Commander Lt. Col. Rich Adams from Anchorage, Alaska. "We supported them by carrying food, fuel, ammunition and water to support forward operating bases in southern Afghanistan."

Despite having air crews from two separate Air National Guard units, they had one mission in mind - getting supplies downrange to combat forces on the ground.

"We delivered about 10 containers per aircraft at about 1,000 pounds per container," said Master Sgt. Timothy Griffin, a C-130 loadmaster from Buffalo, N.Y. "I ensured the cargo was balanced, so the weight was distributed evenly on the aircraft."

Griffin worked with the Army riggers at Bagram Airfield to prepare cargo pallets for the drop using the Improved Container Delivery System.

The system enables accuracy by adjusting to wind data, terrain and other vital information affecting the airdrop," said Capt. Tom Bradford, an active-duty C-130 navigator from the 39th Airlift Squadron at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

"The ICDS collects data so aircraft speed and altitude can be adjusted," he said.

Bradford provided his airdrop expertise to ANG aircrews and served as an extra set of eyes on the flight. He also operates as continuity between ANG units completing 90-day rotations in theater demonstrating the Total Force concept.

"It's challenging to work with different aircrews, but one benefit is learning how people do things differently," said the Eighty Four, Pa., native. "I've been deployed to this area twice, so I advise them about various aspects of the drop zones."

There is an inherent amount of risk when flying during the daytime, that is doubled when flying more than one aircraft to the drop area, said Lt. Col. Chris Thurn, 107th C-130 pilot and mission commander.

"These types of missions are typically flown at night," he said. "The second aircraft had to perform fluid travel maneuvers from the 3 to 9 o'clock positions to mitigate threats and keep from becoming predictable."

Exercises and training is a huge aspect of Thurn's work back at his home station. This helped his team perform flawlessly during the airdrop.

"As an instructor pilot and evaluator pilot, I put a lot of emphasis on training to make sure we are prepared," he said. "It's the long-term effects of what we do on a daily basis that makes a difference. If I can help those on the ground, I'm proud to do this."

The commander echoed Thurn's sentiments.

"We take pride in doing this, because it keeps people from having to drive in convoys. Airdropping supplies, keeps people out of harm's way and keeps war fighters in the fight." **gt**

A New York Air National Guard C-130 Hercules from the 107th Airlift Wing based in Niagara Falls airdrops much-needed supplies to a forward operating base in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan, June 22. The New York C-130 flew the airdrop mission in conjunction with another C-130 from the Alaska Air National Guard. Airdrops help mitigate the danger of transporting supplies via convoy. Photo by Senior Airman Krista Rose, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.

Guardian Angels Witness Final Shuttle Launch

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Staff Sgt. Eric Miller, 106th Rescue Wing

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. -- The Space Shuttle mission may have ended, but the New York Air National Guard's contribution to space exploration - like the challenge of exploration itself - may continue.

"Basically there are a lot of follow-on programs after the space shuttle," said Lt. Col. Scott Stenger of the 106th Rescue Wing, which has been part of the rescue forces for the shuttle program since 1988. "There'll probably be a two-to-three year gap where there won't be any launches. But I fully expect that we'll be back down here, doing something else for some other type of vehicle."

Meanwhile, the 106th Rescue Wing, based at F.S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton Beach, N.Y., will continue to do what it always does: perform rescue missions stateside and overseas, in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa, said Stenger, of Riverhead, N.Y.

"Basically this is an additional duty for us," he said, "though it's a big deal when we're here." The 106th Rescue Wing has supported about 109 shuttle launches, he added, and he took part in his first launch in 1997.

Stenger and other 106th Rescue Wing aircrews, pararescuemen and support personnel were on hand here for the space shuttle Atlantis' final launch in mid-July. The unit members formed part of a group of Air Force, Coast Guard and Marine Corps personnel and aircraft standing by to rescue the shuttle astronauts in case of an emergency.

Other elements of the New York Air National Guard also supported the mission. Members of the 106th Rescue Wing worked with civilian emergency personnel to provide an emergency landing site at F.S. Gabreski Airport in case the shuttle had to divert along the eastern seaboard. New York Air National Guardsmen from the Eastern Air Defense Sector in Rome, N.Y. controlled air patrols enforcing the Federal Aviation Administration's temporary no-fly zone around the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Rescue personnel in Florida were tasked with finding and rescuing the astronauts in case of a mid-ocean bailout, explained Stenger, who was the air boss, or mission commander, for the 106th Rescue Wing contingent of the rescue forces. After the Challenger disaster, NASA developed an escape mechanism for the orbiter so the astronauts could bail out if necessary.

Rescue and medical personnel from NASA and the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing study the astronaut flight suit at Patrick Air Force Base July 7 as members of the wing prepare to provide rescue support for the final Space Shuttle launch July 8. Below, Atlantis sits on launch pad 39A, one day before it's final flight. Photos by Sr. Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

If the shuttle didn't have enough power to get into orbit, the crew would attempt to return to the launch site, Stenger said.

"If they didn't have the energy to make it back to the airport, then what they'd do is bail out, and it would be our job, specifically my job, to go out and find them, out on the ocean, and make sure they got rescued," he explained.

"The space shuttle is the most complex machine that's ever been built," he said. "I would say that this is the most complex rescue situation that you could probably encounter, because there's so many moving pieces."

In addition to Air Force rescue training, the airman involved in the mission had to meet NASA qualifications and requirements and take part in large rescue exercises, Stenger said.

"We've done a giant practice exercise, put people in the water and gone and picked them up," Stenger recalled. It was a great honor that America had pride and confidence in their ability to do the shuttle mission, he reflected. **gt**

Eastern Air Defense Sector: 10 Years After 9/11

By Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME -- Few units in the military were impacted more by 9/11 than the New York Air National Guard's Eastern Air Defense Sector.

EADS, then the Northeast Air Defense Sector, was the first U.S. military unit to act on 9/11, and the events of the day still resonate 10 years later.

"It's safe to say that 9/11 affected everything we do," said Col. John P. Bartholf, the commander of the Rome-based unit. "Because of that day, we've expanded our mission, upgraded our technology and refined our training and tactics."

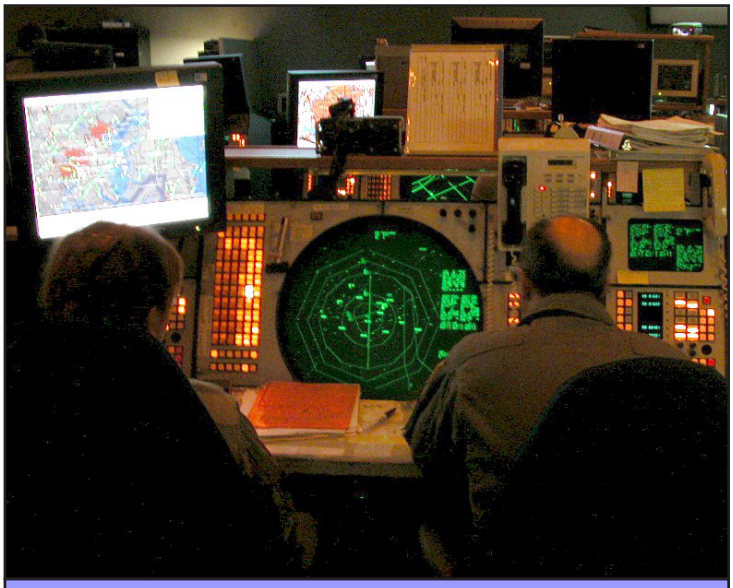
Among the most prominent changes EADS has undergone since 9/11 are:

Improved air defense technology. The Cold War-era Q-93 radar equipment EADS used on 9/11 was designed to track Soviet bombers and cruise missiles but it was inadequate for the terrorist threat. The NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense Command) Contingency Suite (NCR) provided radar data of the entire U.S. airspace and augmented the old system shortly after 9/11. Both the Q-93 and NCR have since been replaced with a new command and control system, the Battle Control System-Fixed (BCS-F). The BCS-F enables EADS to monitor incoming and domestic air traffic.

An expanded area of responsibility. As air defense technology improved, the unit's geographic area of operation expanded. In 2006, NEADS and the Southeast Air Defense Sector (SEADS) merged to form EADS. With the merger, EADS became responsible for one million square miles of airspace east of the Mississippi River. The expanded area created several new missions for EADS, including controlling air patrols during space shuttle launches at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, monitoring Cuban Air Force activities and an increase in special national security events such as State of the Union addresses, political conventions and Super Bowls that required support.

EADS Detachments in the National Capital Region (NCR). The Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC) was created in 2003 to provide an integrated, ground-based, air defense system for the NCR. EADS worked closely with Army National Guard in standing up the JADOC and provided continual personnel support and technical expertise for eight years. In March of this year, EADS Detachment 1 was formally established to serve as the JADOC's Air Force component. Composed of approximately 40 New York Air National Guardsmen, Det 1 is stationed at the JADOC on Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling.

EADS Detachment 2, a smaller unit of seven New York Air National Guardsmen, also was formally created in March. Det 2 is part of the National Capital Region Coordination Center (NCRCC) in Herndon, Va., where it serves as the Department of Defense liaison and works directly with the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Secret Service and the other federal agencies responsible for the protection of the national capital's airspace. **gt**



Members of the Eastern Air Defense Sector monitor airspace over the entire eastern United States, a mission that now looks at threats within U.S. airspace as well as threats from outside the U.S. Shortly after 9/11, the NORAD Contingency Suite (NCR) – it's the computer monitor on the upper left - augmented the Cold War-era Q 93 radar, center. Courtesy photo.

Hudson Valley Welcomes New C-17 Globemaster Aircraft

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh -- Aircraft maintainers look over the first C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing after the aircraft's arrival here on July 18. The New York Air National Guard's 105 Airlift Wing is transitioning from the C-5A Galaxy and will eventually have eight C-17s assigned. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael R. O'Halloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

Air Defenders Welcome Canadian Commander

Story and photo by Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME -- The Canadian Forces Detachment at the Eastern Air Defense Sector officially changed commanders July 8 during a formal ceremony at the New York Air National Guard facility.

Lt. Col. Dave Pletz, a CF-18 pilot, assumed command from Lt. Col Joe MacMillan, who finishes his three-year tour of duty as Canadian Detachment Commanding Officer. Pletz's new responsibilities will include leading the 15-member Canadian Detachment and serving as part of the EADS staff.

"Canadian Forces personnel are a critical part of EADS' daily operations and play an essential role in protecting the North American airspace," said Col. John Bartholf, EADS Commander. "On behalf of the unit, I want to welcome Lt. Col. Pletz and his family to EADS and thank Lt. Col. MacMillan and his family for their service and wish them well in their new assignment."

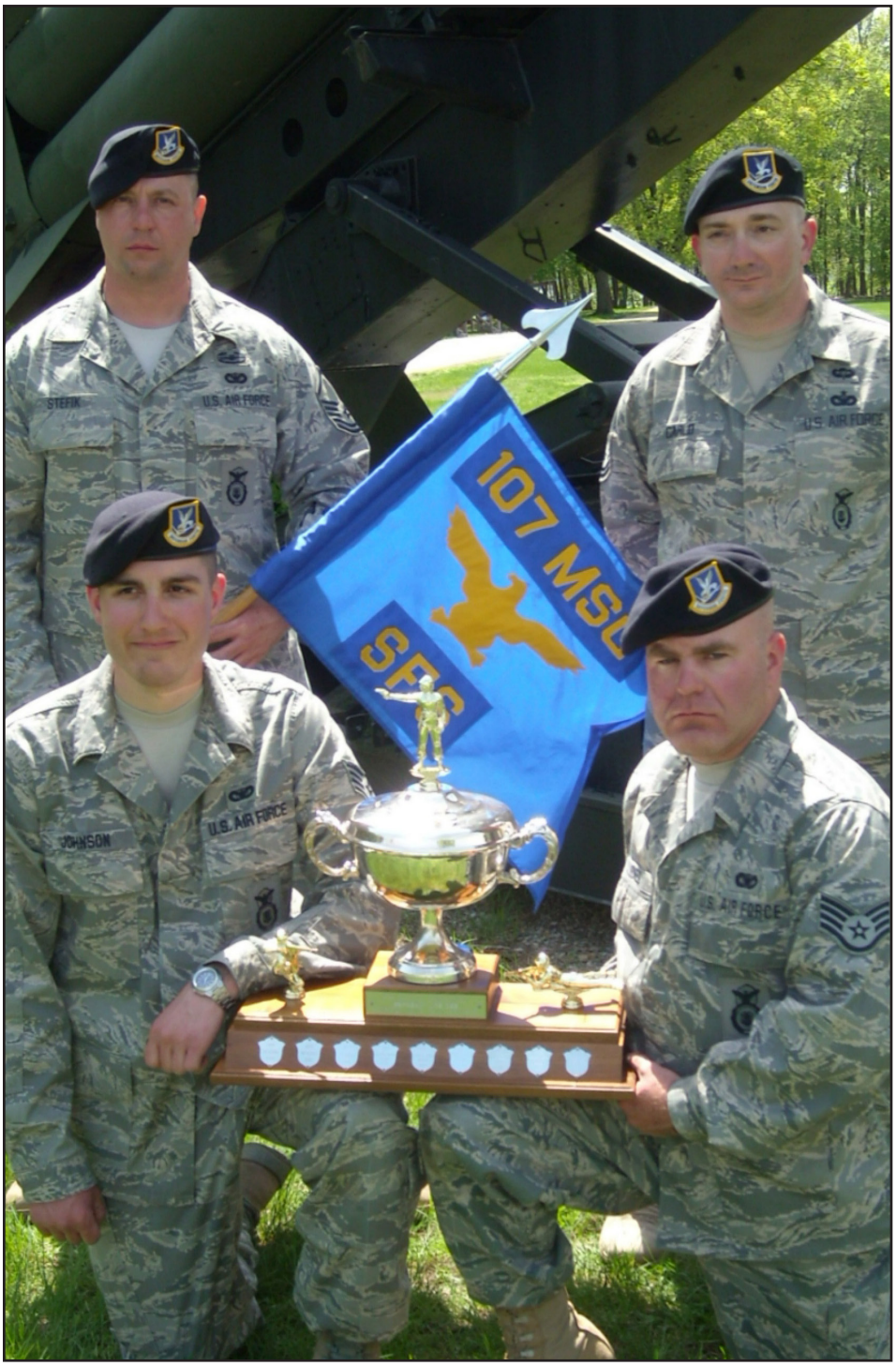
The Eastern Air Defense Sector is headquartered at Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome. Staffed by active-duty New York Air National Guardsmen and a Canadian Forces detachment, the unit supports the North American Aerospace Defense Command's integrated warning and the U.S. Northern Command's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

EADS is responsible for air sovereignty and counter-air operations over the eastern United States to defend the airspace over one million square miles of land and sea. **gt**

Canadian Forces Lt. Col. Joe MacMillan, left, outgoing Commanding Officer of Canadian Detachment Rome, and Lt. Col. Dave Pletz, right, the incoming commander, sign formal orders during the change of command July 8. Brig. Gen. Chris Coates, the Deputy Commander of the Continental U.S. NORAD Region, center, served as Presiding Officer.

Security Forces Ready to React

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE -- Members of the 105th Security Forces Squadron receive active-shooter scenario training here May 13-15. Law enforcement officers from the city of Kingston Special Weapons and Tactics Unit assisted with the training. The scenarios were designed to project realism and teach muscle memory, an important attribute needed during a high pressure situation. Photo by Airman 1st Class Deanna DeLaura, 105th Airlift Wing.



107th Shooters Repeat Title

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- The 107th Airlift Wing Combined Arms team, consisting of Security Forces members (from left) Staff Sgt. Erik Johnson, Master Sgt. Edward Stefik, Tech Sgt. Guy Carlo, and Staff Sgt. Warren Jones achieved top honors again in the New York State 2011 Combat Sustainment Training Exercise Match (TAG Match). The 107th repeated last year's title of the match's overall top champions. Photo courtesy of the 107th Security Forces Squadron.

ASOS Changes Command

By Capt. Anthony L. Bucci, 174th Fighter Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE -- Members of the New York Air National Guard's 274th Air Support Operations Squadron welcomed their new commander and formally opened their new facility here June 5.

Col. Kevin W. Bradley, 174th Fighter Wing Commander presented the colors from 274th ASOS First Sergeant William Schroeder at the transfer of command from Lt. Col. Alberto Gaston to Maj. Patrick Cox.

"Under Lt. Col. Gaston's leadership, he helped the 274th ASOS prepare, plan and execute a successful deployment to Afghanistan," Bradley said. "In fact, the 274th deployed for 279 days, the longest deployment by an Air National Guard ASOS unit."

Gaston's remarks reflected the support of his family during his time in command.

"I want to thank my wife Stephanie and daughter Olivia for everything they do," he said. "As everyone knows, it is always harder on the families and Stephanie is my rock."

Cox "crossed into the Blue" after 15 years of service with the Marine Corps in various command positions. His last command was with Company B, 8th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division in 2003.

The mission of the 274th ASOS is to deploy with Army combat units to provide command, control, and coordination of Close Air Support aircraft.

The ceremony also opened the 274th ASOS new facility. The project reutilized existing infrastructure, combining renovation with a 17,000 square foot addition. **gt**

New York Air National Guard Maj. Patrick Cox , right, accepts the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron colors from Col. Kevin Bradley during his change of command June 5. Photo by Staff Sgt. James N. Faso II, 174th Fighter Wing.

Members of the New York Guard's 14th Brigade join Civil War reenactors of Company E, 14th New York Volunteers and other military enthusiasts at the 14th Regiment Armory in Brooklyn to mark the 150th anniversary of the regiment's muster into federal service in 1861. Courtesy photo.

Guard Marks 150th Anniversary Civil War Muster

New York State Militia's 14th Brooklyn Regiment Marched to War in 1861

Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK -- To honor the men from Brooklyn who fought in the 14th New York State Militia in the Civil War, members of today's New York Guard joined with reenactors and Civil War enthusiasts here at the 14th Regiment Armory May 21.

The ceremony included remarks by 1st Lt. Raymond Gallagher, part the 14th Brigade, New York Guard. Gallagher paid tribute to the men of the 14th and their service and he spoke of the importance of the Citizen Soldier of the Civil War era and how important their contribution was to the Union victory.

The regiment mustered on May 23, 1861 and left Brooklyn for Fort Green where the troops boarded boats at teh Fulton Ferry.

Among the enthusiasts at the ceremony were actors portraying Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln, addressing the reenactors of Company "E" and administering their oath of allegiance and enrollment as part of the ceremony.

During the Civil War, the 14th NY had a distinguished fighting record. It served in most of the major battles of the eastern theater, including the First and Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania.

The militia's 14th Regiment had the nickname, "Red Legged Devils" for the red trousers worn by the troops. The nickname is attributed to the unit's performance at First Bull Run by Stonewall Jackson.

When the Union Army sought to reorganize, the state attempted to reflag the regiment as the 84th New York Volunteers. The unit protest went up to Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell, then commander of Union forces, who responded to the unit with its future motto.

"You mustered by me into the service of the United States as part of the militia of the State of New York known as the Fourteenth," McDowell wrote the unit. "You have been baptized by fire under that number and as such, you shall be recognized by thte United States government and by no other number."

Today's 14th Battalion of the New York Guard continues the heritage of the Regiment.

For a timeline of New York's forces in the Civil War, visit the website: www.dmna.state.ny.us/civilwar/index.php. gt

Honoring the Past

ALBANY -- Members of the New York Guard's 10th Brigade color guard enter the Graceland Cemetery here May 1 for the annual dedication to honor members of the 177th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry (the 10th Regiment's federal designation during the Civil War) and 1st N.Y. Volunteer Infantry who served in the Spanish-American War, as well as other service members of other wars interred here.

The cemetery was established in 1902 on the grounds of what was formerly called the Palmer Camp, originally established as the Frank R. Palmer Camp in 1899. The group's original members were volunteers of the 10th N.Y. Infantry Regiment, after their return from service in Hawaii during the Spanish American War.

The first Soldier from the camp was buried in 1904. Less than a decade later, the Palmer group, part of the American Veterans of Foreign Service, a network of veterans' associations, became the VFW.

The ceremony was held jointly with with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Sheehy-Palmer Post. Courtesy photo.

New York Naval Militia Serving for 120 Years

By Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham -- The New York Naval Militia - a force older than the Navy Reserve by a quarter century - celebrated its 120th birthday as an integral part of New York's Military forces on June 23.

The first unit of the New York Naval Militia mustered into service as an organized part of New York's armed forces on June 23, 1891 as the 1st Battalion, Naval Reserve Artillery, a unit of 15 officers and 190 enlisted sailors.

Today the New York Naval Militia consists of more than 2,000 members, 95 percent of them members of the United States Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve; along with a small number of retired service members and volunteers.

"Today's New York Naval Militia continues a tradition that includes service in the Spanish American War and World Wars I and II by members of our state's Naval Service," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York. "The men and women of the New York Naval Militia bring unique skills and knowledge to help our state when needed."

The New York Naval Militia first organized when the United States Navy was small and the Navy Reserve did not exist (it was created in 1916). A state law in 1889 authorized the New York Naval Militia, but the first Naval Militia unit took almost two years to organize, form and get accepted for state service.

In the 1890s and early 20th Century, Naval Militia members trained on old ships set aside for that purpose by the Navy. The first state duty the Naval Militia performed was in 1892 when the governor called on them to help quarantine cholera patients being landed from infected immigrant ships.

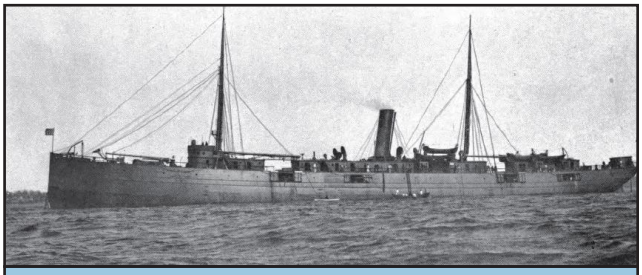
During the Spanish-American War the New York Naval Militia crewed two ships used as auxiliary cruisers to scout out the movements of the Spanish fleet around Cuba. Naval Militia members served in the Navy in World War I and World War II and in Korea. At one time New York had Naval Militia armories that served the same purpose as facilities used by the Army National Guard. Following World War II and the restructuring of the Naval Militia, these facilities were turned over to the Navy Reserve.

Today the New York Naval Militia maintains a fleet of nine patrol boats in its Military Emergency Boat Service, which stands ready to work with the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol, and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies as directed by the governor. Individual members of the Naval Militia stand ready to serve New York in a State Active Duty status when called upon by the governor and bring the skills they have acquired through military service and training.

New York Naval Militia members served during New York's response to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York City, providing trained forces for security service in New York City and crews to man a patrol craft off the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant. New York Naval Militia members respond in all state emergencies when the governor activities the National Guard. On an almost daily basis, the Military Emergency Boat Service provides a state of the art patrol boat and crews to ferry United States Coast Guard boarding parties onto ships waiting outside New York Harbor and conduct surveillance missions throughout the Port of New York and New Jersey.

New York's Naval Militia is by far the largest in the country. Several other states have naval militias, including Ohio and South Carolina. **gt**

Commodore Jacob Williams Miller was the Naval Militia's first commander from 1891 until 1911. Archive photo.



The USS Yankee, one of the ships the New York Naval Militia crewed during the Spanish-American War. Archive photo.

The New York Naval Militia today: New York Naval Militia Chief Petty Officer Michael Porter and Petty Officer Matt MacDowell prepare the starboard side of Patrol Boat 281 as it enters the Erie Canal's Lock 24 in Baldwinsville, N.Y., during training June 11. Photo by David Tucker, New York Naval Militia.

Above, Petty Officer Robert Hill monitors boaters approaching the customs inspection station on Lake Champlain. At left, the Naval Militia Patrol Boat PB-221 maneuvers out onto the lake to support the Border Patrol.

Sailors Keep Summer Safe for Boaters

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Guard Times Staff

ROUSES POINT -- For the third time in four years, Sailors of the New York Naval Militia will assist the United States Border Patrol inspecting pleasure craft entering the United States from Canada on Lake Champlain this summer.

Over five weekends from July 15 through August 14, a Naval Militia boat and two-man crew joined Border Patrol Agents in inspecting boats entering the United States at Rouses Point, Clinton County, directing them to Customs and Border Protection inspection station.

First out on the water were Petty Officers Jeff Alexander of Berne, N.Y. and Robert Hill, from Grafton, N.Y. They arrived Friday, July 15 and were immediately tasked with boater intercept to help guide boaters to the inspection station.

Naval Militia Petty Officers Jeff Alexander, left, and Robert Hill maneuver near the site of Fort Montgomery on Lake Champlain July 16. The Naval Militia conducted security missions on the lake in support of the Border Patrol.

"These guys are our extra eyes and ears out on the water," explained Chief Erik Hipko from the Border Patrol. "They are an incredible boost to our capability here."

The Naval Militia mission is just one part of the interagency effort to keep the waterways safe and secure, Hipko said. Local law enforcement, the New York State Police, the Coast Guard, Border Patrol and Naval Militia all play vital roles and partner to meet the demands of summer travel on Lake Champlain.

The Border Patrol routinely mounts operations during the summer to remind boaters of the need to check-in as they enter the United States. More than 2,000 boats make entry into U.S. waters from the Richelieu River into Lake Champlain each summer. During the peak boating season and high traffic periods of summer weekends, an estimated 100 to 150 boats pass through the border daily.

"Our partnership with the New York Naval Militia continues to be a force multiplier for the U.S. Border Patrol and our efforts to keep waterways of Lake Champlain safe for everyone," said Chief Patrol Agent John Pfeifer. "Their participation allows us to better use our own agents in other regions of the lake and increase border security across our area of operations."

The support on the waters of Lake Champlain allows the Border Patrol agents to better manage the flow of boaters passing through the inspection station and respond to other safety and security needs on the lake.

Throughout the day, a steady stream of boaters heading south from the Canadian side of Lake Champlain near the Richeleu River approached the Naval Militia patrol boat, a visible presence on the waters of Lake Champlain, to adhere to the Border Patrol inspection point.

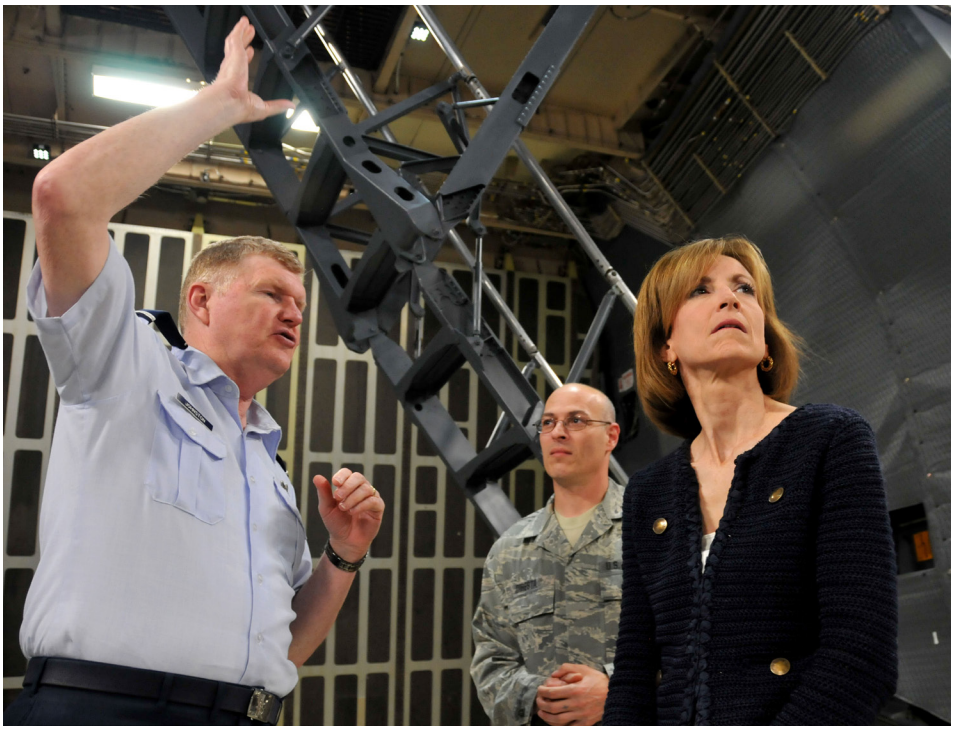
"I originally started in the Army, served a full career with the Navy Reserve Seabees," Alexander said. Throughout his years of Navy Reserve service prior to Sept. 11, 2001, Alexander had limited roles with the Naval Militia. "I didn't know it at first, but I was part of the Naval Militia for my whole Navy Reserve career," he said. He came into the Military Emergency Boat Service in 2005 to continue his service, now as a boat coxswain.

"Partnerships like this one with the New York Naval Militia show some of the best ways to use state and federal resources," Pfeifer said.

The Naval Militia maintains a fleet of nine patrol boats in its Military Emergency Boat Service (MEBS) to support law enforcement agencies, the United States Coast Guard and other federal agencies.

"You guys just don't know how much we appreciate these missions and this support," said Border Patrol Agent James Sherman as the number of boaters increased throughout the day. "In the past, we just didn't have the ability to respond as we do now. We love you guys for being here." **gt**

C-5 Refurbishment Continues in Newburgh



STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh -- New York Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Verle L. Johnston, Jr., commander 105 Airlift Wing, describes refurbishment work accomplished, by the 105th Maintenance Group, on the second C-5M to Congresswoman Nan Hayworth of the state's 19th Congressional District, here May 12. Hayworth was also given a command briefing on 105th Wing operations, a tour of the installation which included a walk-through of a C-5A and a session in the pilot seat of the C-5 flight simulator. The unit receives the first of its new fleet of C-17 cargo aircraft this summer. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran. 105th Airlift Wing.

Soldiers Help Revive a Landmark from the Past

COHOES -- Engineer Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's Detachment 1, 1st Platoon, 1156th Engineer Company, based in Kingston along with members of the 152nd Engineer Company clear brush and debris around Lock 15 on the outskirts of Cohoes on June 15.

The training was an innovative way to employ the engineer troops within their military specialty for training.

The City of Cohoes requested Army National Guard assistance in restoring this historic area in order to transform it into a bike and walking trail for the city residents. The area was once an extension of the Erie Canal.

SURGE Receives State Leader

NEW YORK -- Members of the New York National Guard's Joint Task Force Empire Shield meet with New York State Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Elizabeth Glazer outside Penn Station July 21. The Empire Shield force conducted a Multi-Agency SUper Surge exercise here with local law enforcement to better safeguard critical transportation sites in the city. Glazer was briefed on the task force's day-to-day mission detailing how the task force helps protect the citizens of New York in partnership with law enforcement. Photo by Command Sgt. Maj. Basilio Colon, Joint Task Force Empire Shield.

5k Run Raises Funds for Troops, Families

COLONIE -- New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Dana Brewer from the Joint Force Headquarters begins the New York National Guard's Family Readiness Council "Hometown Heroes" five-kilomter run here June 12. More than 220 runners participated in the race, a fundraiser to support National Guard families. The Family Readiness Counsel provides direct and indirect assistance to the family members of the New York Organized Militia through grant programs, family readiness workshops and education events as well as through family readiness outreach programs. The 2011 "Hometown Heroes Run" was the fourth annual fundraising event of its type for the organization, drawing donations and support from runners, local veterans' organizations and local businesses. Photo by Sgt. Chris Connelly, 42nd Infantry Division.

Airmen Volunteer Time to Benefit Local Charity

SYRACUSE -- New York Air National Guard Chief Master Sgt. James Boswell and Staff Sgt. Kyle Collins from the 174th Fighter Wing install sheetrock at a Habitat for Humanity home here May 26. Members of the 174th Fighter Wing took part in a volunteer opportunity with Lockheed Martin to help Habitat for Humanity. The project involved the week-long construction of a house erected in the City of Syracuse's west side. Syracuse Habitat for Humanity was founded in 1985 and has built and/or renovated more than 61 homes. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best, 174th Fighter Wing.

Members of the New York Air National Guard Wellness Center at the 109th Airlift Wing join in the ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the opening of the wing wellness center June 3 in Scotia. From left to right, Chaplain (Maj.) Jake Marvel, Maj. Bret Wood, Master Sgt. Jacqueline Sweet-McNeill, Ms. Jolene Kent-Stanley, Ms. Bev Keating and Master Sgt. Michelle Brunt. Photo by Sr. Airman Ben German.

Air Wing opens Wellness Center

Courtesy of the 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia -- Unit leaders, Airmen, families and community leaders recently attended a ribbon cutting June 3 for the 109th Airlift Wing's Joint Wellness Center.

A collaborative effort between the offices of the Wing Director of Psychological Health, Airmen and Family Readiness, Chaplaincy and the Medical Clinic, the center is a one-stop-shop for information and resources.

In addition to a relaxation room, a monthly newletter, Skype for families during deployments, marriage and family counseling resources, and a Military OneSource resource library, classes are being offered throughout the year on topics such as financial readiness, physical fitness, nutrition, self-defense, parenting and stress reduction.

"Our wing is in a continual deployment cycle, so we wanted to offer something to alleviate some of the stress these repeated separations are having on our Airmen and their families," said Vice Commander, Col John Russo. "Additionally, there are many benefits and programs available today that were not available just five years ago."

"There will be programs coming out of the wellness center each month focusing on either emotional, social, spiritual (topics), all different types of wellness so we can take care of them as a whole person," said Beverly Keating, Airman and Family Readiness Program Manager.

"We wanted a centralized location to push out infromation on everything from childcare and tutoring programs, continuing education and career changes, to retirement and investing," Russo said.

"Not only (is) our physical fitness part of being here, but our spiritual and mental health," Chaplain (Maj.) Jake Marvel said.

"We have been pleased with the numbers of Airmen and families who have used the center just in its first month, and we are looking forward to expanding and developing this during the next year and seeing where it takes us," he added. **gt**

New York Army National Guard Pfc. Joseph K. Urban, from Cheektowaga, assists the Army National Guard recruiting display during Canal Fest July 23 in Tonawanda. Urban was part of the recruiter's outreach using equipment, weapons, Soldiers and displays of the National Guard NASCAR stock car and custom motorcycle from Orange County Choppers.

Recruiters Meet Community at Canal Fest

Story and photos by Spc. Jimmy Allen Bedgood, 42nd Infantry Division

TONAWANDA -- New York Army National Guard recruiters helped heat things up during this summer's 29th Annual Canal Fest in North Tonawanda and Tonawanda. An estimated 200,000 participants endured near record-breaking temperatures along the Erie Canal Harbor.

Canal Fest is an eight-day event from July 17-24th. It celebrates the Erie Canal and promotes the communities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda. The communities are also the home to nearly 100 Army National Guard members.

Pfc. Joseph K. Urban, a vehicle mechanic from Cheektowaga, who serves with the 42nd Infantry Division at Masten Avenue in Buffalo, says that the Guard is the best thing that ever happened to him. He says recruiting at Canal Fest allows him to give back.

"I was going nowhere. I got my G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) and joined the Guard in 2010," Urban said.

Sgt. James R. Brennan, with the Mobile Security Team at the Masten Avenue Armory in Buffalo explained that the recruiting encounters at the festival vary from year to year.

"A lot of veterans come up to you looking for more information about the Guard," Brennan said. "(Some) tell their stories …, (and other) people say thank you for your service," said Brennan.

Guard recruiters displayed a NASCAR stock car shell and a custom motorcycle from Orange County Choppers that bore the signature Army National Guard fatigue camouflage pattern.

Canal Fest originated in 1983 and included citizens of North Tonawanda. The following year it expanded to include citizens of Tonawanda. Now it is the largest event held along Erie Canal in Western New York.

Urban says he plans to join ROTC to seek an officer's commission and go to Buffalo State College for Criminal Justice. **gt**

Soldiers secure a piece of World Trade Center steel for transport July 26. From left, Staff Sgt. Nicholas Pelliccio from the 369th Sustainment Brigade headquarters company, Spec. Sebastian Rothwyn from the 719th Transportation Company, Staff Sgt. Anthony Marshall of the 369th Early Entry Element, Capt. J.C. Bravo of the brigade headquarters and Spc. Diego Castro of the Early Entry Element. Photo by Paul Fanning, New York National Guard.

Soldiers Help Move WTC Steel

By Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK -- Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade helped transport a piece of World Trade Center steel to its new home in Georgia July 26.

Soldiers from the brigade's Early Entry Element, Headquarters Company and 719th Transportation Company provided the transportation from the Port Authority warehouse to the FedEx Shipping Terminal on Long Island. Their support played a large part to help deliver the WTC artifact to its new home at the Oconee Veterans Park near Athens, Ga.

The WTC artifact will be part of a permanent exhibit unveiled on September 11th at the community center there.

"We plan to permanently display the artifact in the community center for all of our citizens to remember and reflect in perpetuity," said John Gentry, the Director of Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department.

The Georgia Army National Guard provided the U.S. Colors for honors at pickup. Members of the Georgia Army National Guard will assist in the final movement of the WTC steel.

The combined support of the two states Army National Guard members will have a lasting impact on the community, Gentry said.

"I am appreciative of all who have made this possible," Gentry said, "This is quite a coordinated effort to accomplish with reverence and respect to the artifact and what it represents."**gt**

NY Guard Annual Training

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor -- New York Guard Commander Maj. Gen. Fergal Foley and Brig. Gen. Renwick Payne, Director of Joint Staff, review troops at the closing ceremony for New York Guard annual training here July 23. The ceremony closed out a week of training. Photo by Warrant Officer Ubon Mendie.

Close to the Heart

WWI Poem, Artifact Honors Fallen in the 42nd Division

By Maj. Ben Tupper, 42nd Infantry Division

NEW ORLEANS, La. -- In keeping with a 42nd Infantry Division tradition that dates back generations, the Rainbow Division Memorial Veterans Foundation held its annual Champagne Hour ceremony here July 14, 2010.

Father Robert Weiss, a World War II veteran of the 42nd Division (nicknamed the Rainbow Division), read aloud to the group of World War II, Iraq, and Afghanistan Rainbow veterans, the words of the poem "The Rouge Bouquet":

"In a wood they call the Rouge Bouquet
There is a new-made grave today,
Built by never a spade nor pick.

Yet covered with earth ten metres thick There lie many fighting men, Dead in their youthful prime..."

The reading brings tears to the cheeks of veterans and families assembled in New Orleans, La., where the ceremony was held in 2010.

The poem, written in 1918 by Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, a member of the New York National Guard's 69th Infantry Regiment, which served in the 42nd Division as the 165th Infantry, tells of a heavy German artillery barrage that occurred near the French village of Baccarat on March 12, 1918.

Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, 69th Infantry Regiment.

> "When I think of the sacrifice, loss and challenges that those who have carried it have endured, it is an overwhelming feeling to know it rests near my heart,"
>
> *-- Lt. Col. James Gonyo II, Commander, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry*

Twenty-one Rainbow Division Soldiers were killed: 14 of them entombed in a collapsed bunker. Their bodies were never recovered.

Today, Kilmer is best remembered for his poem "Trees."

Sgt. Kilmer's "Rouge Bouquet" poem was so popular in the 42nd Division that it became protocol to read it at the funerals of division Soldiers when they were killed.

While all the division's World War I veterans have since "passed over the Rainbow", the ceremony continues to hold its relevance as World War II Rainbow Division veterans age .

The names of those current division Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan were also read.

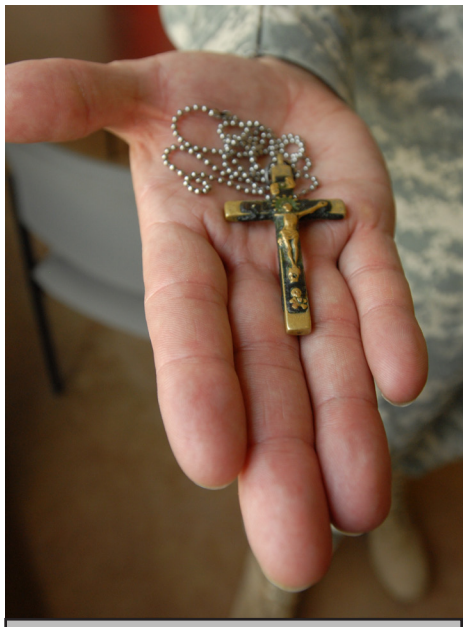
But the legacy of the poem is only one part of the Kilmer story.

On July 30, 1918, Kilmer, age 31, was himself killed in action near the village of Seringes-et-Nesles, France during the Second Battle of the Marne. As he joined his fallen Rainbow Division comrades in burial in the earth of France, his poem was read.

But despite his death, the impact and relevance of Sgt. Joyce Kilmer on the Fighting 69th and the Rainbow Division did not end there.

As a devout Catholic, Kilmer was carrying a crucifix at the time of his death. Today that crucifix is a cherished relic carried and worn by 69th Infantry Commanders for many decades.

In 2004, the Kilmer crucifix returned to the battlefield when it was carried by the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Commander Col. Geoffrey Slack during the unit's deployment in Baghdad.



Lt. Col. James Gonyo, commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, displays the crucifix carried by Sgt. Joyce Kilmer, famous poet and member of the 69th killed in WWI. Photo by Master Sgt. Peter Towse, 42nd Infantry Division.

Today the crucifix is carried by the current commander, Lt. Col. James C. Gonyo II.

The crucifix "has a connection for the Regiment and its leaders that is concrete and sacred to those that believe in it and its history," Gonyo said.

"When I think of the sacrifice, loss and challenges that those who have carried it have endured, it is an overwhelming feeling to know it rests near my heart," he said.

The small Christ figurine that adorns the cross has worn down over the years, a product of countless patrols and battles.

Kilmer's crucifix is a symbol of the historic Fighting 69th and the Rainbow Division. It transcends religion and time.

"I think it is also a special memento that people remember and that connects them to the traditions that we continue to this day. I am honored to be counted among the men who have been charged with the safe keeping of this artifact that has been involved in so much of the regiment's history," Gonyo said. **gt**

For audio of the Rouge Bouquet, mobile media users can access the following QR code: