Volume 6, Number 3

Summer 2013

gt guardtimes

www.dmna.ny.gov

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

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Over the last ten years the New York Army National Guard has learned to do many things well.

We changed from a strategic reserve force to an operational reserve force.

Our officers and non-commissioned officers acquired hands on combat experience in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We've recruited and retained quality Soldiers and keep our ranks filled.

And we've learned how to take care of our Soldiers' families before, during and after deployment.

Family readiness groups have been part of our National Guard program for more than two decades. But prior to the commitment of National Guard some names in a binder or the annual Christmas or Thanksgiving drill family dinner.

The Yellow Ribbon Program adopted by the National Guard in 2007 changed the way we did business. Congress provided money from contingency funds that paid for people and training to help Guard Soldiers reintegrate back into their families, civilian jobs and communities.

As the program matured we went from focusing only on post deployment to providing support services, benefits and entitlement briefings, and counseling during and then before deployment. We hired professionals to help the volunteers who run our Family Readiness Groups.

And we expanded the program to include services for children, psychological counseling, and partnerships with state agencies and volunteer groups that want to help Soldiers and families.

We've also realized ensuring a National Guard Soldier has a job is an important piece of ensuring our families are secure. That realization drove our decision to focus part of our family programs effort on connecting Soldiers with job opportunities.

As combat operations in Afghanistan end, as Army Guard deployments become less frequent and the deployment funds supporting the Yellow Ribbon Program vanish, we face the challenge of ensuring the professionalism of our well-functioning family program system is maintained.

With these issues in mind the New York National Guard Family Programs office is developing what we call the Military Life Cycle Continuum of Support.

We are exploring ways to connect with community based services already in place – physical health, mental health, family support, child care and financial education— so we can provide resources for service members from the time they join the military to the point of separation.

Instead of being focused around deployments, our new family support effort will cover the spectrum of challenges our Soldiers deal with from the time they enlist to the time they leave.

The single Soldier may not care too much about child care when they join, but when he or she has their first child finding child care can become a priority.

Financial needs change and our program can help Soldiers balance their budgets.

Going away for two or three weeks to Annual Training or a school doesn't strain family resources much, but a 10-month overseas deployment can, and families may need help then.

It's my intention to keep the focus on finding jobs for our Soldiers and Airmen who need them. That's an invaluable effort to improve the quality of life of our Citizen Soldiers and their families.

If members have jobs, their family life is more stable and they are more likely to continue their military service. They'll lead a healthy, productive life in their community.

Your leadership will advocate for the funding we need to ensure that the programs supporting our Soldiers' families remain in place, while looking for every opportunity to leverage partnerships we already have with local and state agencies and businesses.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

Your spouses, children, and extended family members share many of the joys and hardships of Guard service alongside you even though they are not wearing the uniform.

We know they matter to you. I want you to know they matter to me and the rest of your New York National Guard leadership as well.

RYE BROOK N.Y. -- Children from the New York Army National Guards 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion display welcome home banners for their deployed parent following the New York National Guard Family Program Strong Bonds event June 2 at the Doral Arrowwood Conference Center. The weekend event supported 18 spouses and family members of deployed Soldiers from the 101st Signal Battalion who returned home from Afghanistan in late June and early July. The retreat encouraged discussion about issues families faced during the deployment and how families can help their Soldier with reintegration once they return. The battalion mobilized some 450 Soldiers in September 2012 and provided communications support for the past nine months in Afghanistan. Photo by Chaplain Candidate (1st Lt.) Mark Getman 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation.

guardtimes

Summer 2013 | Volume 6, Number 3

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Commander in Chief
Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General
Eric Durr, Director of Public Affairs
Col. Richard Goldenberg, Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Alvin Phillips, Command Information Officer
Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Wheeler, NYARNG, Editor

About Guard Times

The *Guard Times* is published quarterly using federal funds authorized under provisions of AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101 by the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs and the New York Army and Air National Guard Public Affairs Office.

Views which appear in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force or the National Guard Bureau.

The *Guard Times* has a circulation of 20,000 and is distributed free to members of the New York State Military Forces and employees of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

Submissions

Articles, photos and letters are welcome. Please provide article submissions via email saved in Microsoft Word or rich text (rtf) format along with high resolution digital (jpg) photos. Submission deadlines are January 15 (winter issue), April 15 (spring issue), July 15 (summer issue), and October 15 (fall issue). Send your submissions to:

Guard Times
DMNA-MNPA
330 Old Niskayuna Road
Latham, New York 12110-3514
OFFICE (518) 786-4581 FAX (518) 786-4649
or richard.l.goldenberg.mil@mail.mil

Complimentary or Back Issues of the *Guard Times* are available. Contact us at the address above or visit us on the web for current news, photos or to download prior issues at www.dmna.state.ny.us.

gt

www.dmna.ny.gov

This Issue's Highlights:

The Joint Force

14 New York Mobilizes for Mohawk Flooding
18 TAG Matches Bring Top Shooters to Camp Smith
19 Boston Salutes CST Support for Marathon Bombing

Army National Guard

18 Bronze Star with Valor Device Awarded to EOD Soldier
19 Combatives Competition Select Top Warriors
22 Miller Receives Second Star as Commander of 42nd Rainbow Division
23 Rainbow Division Warfighter Training
26 Camp Smith Soldiers Receive New Colors, New Shoulder Patch
27 Engineers Complete Work on Erie Canal Restoration

Air National Guard

30 Newburgh Tests Medical Response for 'Golden Eagle III"
32 107th Air Wing Deploys more than 100 Airmen for Overseas Service
34 105th Security Forces Train for Base Defense
35 Acting Air Force Secretary Visits 106th Rescue Wing
36 Hudson Valley Airmen Home from Afghanistan
38 'Patriot 2013' brings Air Guard units Together for Disaster Training

New York Guard

42 NY Guard Volunteers Assist in Medical Response Training

New York Naval Militia

43 NY Naval Militia Crews Conducts Boat Training

Guard News Briefs and Photos

45 Building Resiliency with Words

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH - Para-rescue jumpers of the 103rd Rescue Squadron, a component of the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing, exit the door of an HH-60 Pavehawk helicopter high over Long Island on July 9 during parachute jump training. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

ON THE COVER: FORT PLAIN, N.Y. - New York National Guard engineers from Task Force Engineer, a mixed force comprised of forces of the 204th Engineer Battalion, 206th Military Police Company and 1427th Transportation Company assist with debris removal and widening the Otsquago Creek July 5th following the Guard's recovery support to flash flooding in the Mohawk Valley. The initial response force of more than 50 Soldiers on June 28 grew to some 250 Soldiers by July 3. Photo by Lt. Col. Christopher Panzer, Joint Force Headquarters.

BACK COVER: Members of the 42nd Infantry Division Band perform in tribute to WWII veterans departing at Albany International Airport May 18 for an Honor Flight visit to Washington DC. The trip, coordinated, funded and arranged by the Leatherstocking and North Country Chapters of Honor Flight, flies veterans down to DC to visit the WWII and Korean War Memorials. More than 55 veterans and their escorts participated in this trip, held on Armed Forces Day. U.S. Army photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters.

DOD Ready for Supreme Court Marriage Decision

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Defense Department officials announced Aug. 14 that they will move forward in making benefits available to all military spouses in September.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said June 26 in a statement issued after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act that extending benefits is an appropriate action.

The law prevented federal agencies from offering the same benefits to spouses in same-sex marriages that they provide to other spouses.

"The Department of Defense welcomes the Supreme Court's decision on the Defense of Marriage Act," Hagel said. "The Department of Defense intends to make the same benefits available to all military spouses -- regardless of sexual orientation -- as soon as possible. That is now the law, and it is the right thing to do."

After a review of the department's benefit policies following the Supreme Court's ruling, the Defense Department will make spousal benefits available no later than Sept. 3, regardless of sexual orientation, as long as sponsors provide a valid marriage certificate.

Entitlements such as TRICARE enrollment, basic allowance for housing and family separation allowance are retroactive to the date of the Supreme Court's decision. Any claims to entitlements before that date will not be granted. For those members married after June 26, 2013, entitlements begin at the date of marriage.

"Every person who serves our nation in uniform stepped forward with courage and commitment. All that matters is their patriotism, their willingness to serve their country and their qualifications to do so," Hagel said.

The DOD recognizes that same-sex military couples who are not stationed in a jurisdiction that permits same-sex marriage would have to travel to another jurisdiction to marry. The department will allow military personnel non-chargeable leave for the purpose of travelling to a jurisdiction where such a marriage may occur. This will provide access to the benefits offered to married couples and help level the playing field between opposite-sex and same-sex couples seeking to be married. **gt**

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said the military will make benefits available to all spouses after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act. File photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad McNeeley, U.S. Navy.

Deployment Health Assessment builds Ready, Resilient Soldiers

Courtesy story from the Deployment Health Assessment Program

WASHINGTON - Just in the month of June, the Army has screened more than 1 million Soldiers - pre- and post-deployment - to ensure they are healthy both physically and mentally, before deployment and after they return home to their families.

The Deployment Health Assessment Program, or DHAP, screenings are part of an ongoing Army effort to assess the health of Soldiers. Screenings happen before deployment, and twice after returning home.

The DHAP is a key element in the Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign, an effort to improve the readiness and resilience of Soldiers and their families.

The Army began screening active duty, Army Reserve and Army National Guard Soldiers though DHAP in August 2006.

The DHAP includes three individual assessments, including the pre-deployment health assessment, the post-deployment health assessment, taken within 30 days of returning home; and the post-deployment health reassessment, taken within six months of returning home.

All three involve resilience training, asking various questions about a Soldier's health, and a one-on-one confidential meeting with a healthcare provider.

DHAP intends to evaluate the physical and mental health of Soldiers before and after deployment.

"As Soldiers we all have challenges downrange," said Maj. Christine Ludwig, DHAP program manager. "This program examines what we as Soldiers go through on a personal level. Soldiers deploy to combat zones, support humanitarian missions and respond to natural disasters. This program aims to identify conditions and symptoms in every type of deployment."

The DHAP plays a unique role across the Army as a tool to identify physical and behavioral concerns, and also as a conduit to various treatments, access to medical services, all with the goal of taking care of Soldiers.

"We have seen that for every Soldier in the deployment cycle who gets help, there is a commander reinforcing the message and raising awareness," said Maj. Tracie Willie, from the Army Guard's surgeon general's office.

Ludwig urges all Soldiers to actively participate in the process.

"DHAP brings the medical care system to the Soldier," she said. "It allows them to tap directly into the system to get the care they need, when they need it the most." **gt**

Maj. Christine Ludwig, program executive officer, Deployment Health Assessment Program, answers questions about assessments. Courtesy photo by DHAP.

Chaplain's Corner

Hope Helps

Commentary By Chaplain (1st Lt.) Anthony Stevens, 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion

I just returned from deployment in Afghanistan. As deployments go, it was far from perilous, and now I am back in New York; unscathed.

I served as a chaplain, and my vision for that had been administering last rites at the beachhead during a hailstorm of fire. Afghanistan does not have many beaches, and the only hailstorm that I experienced was of hail (really).

Prior to deploying I was given various stories by friends and colleagues that ended up having little bearing on the reality of the deployment. Nonetheless I prepared for carnage and mayhem by watching numerous You Tube videos of explicit surgeries and graphic injuries. Although I am not particularly squeamish, it was nonetheless important that I would be able to remain composed and able to execute my mission if suddenly I became awash in blood.

This preparation turned out to be quite superfluous, and it was spiritual preparation that turned out to be the true gold. This was the preparation that allowed me to overcome not only whatever transient anxiety that there might be, but also boredom, loneliness, confusion and anger.

I will explain this from my perspective of a liturgical Christian, but there are many different and distinct spiritual practices and perspectives that no doubt would achieve similar ends. Like most faiths, my faith, I happen to be Lutheran, has a central metaphor for confidence in a reliable and trustworthy presence and protection of a Divine being – for us it is baptism.

Baptism for me stands for the proposition that our Divine being, who we call God, knows us and calls us by name, and has promised to, and will save. "All who call on [God], will be saved," reports scripture I consider Holy.

In the Jewish tradition, circumcision is a mark of a similar covenant. In Islam, the strict disciplines of faith also point to the reliability of "the Most Holy and Most Merciful." Outside of the frame the Abramic faiths (Judaism, Islam, Christianity), other faiths also have some mark or reference that says that confidence comes not in the capacity to personally act oneself, but in the capacity of the mysterious Other to intervene positively on our behalf.

As a Lutheran pastor I told my congregation before I deployed that I did not fear death or injury, because, I said, "I am baptized." It was true. I didn't. Though as a runner I hoped that my legs would remain intact, and, being picky, I would prefer all of my body to be undamaged.

Prior to leaving I had had the privilege of offering a prayer of invocation and benediction at a deployment ceremony. My theme was simple. The hope and comfort of spiritual presence grows stronger at times of physical absence.

No lesser a person than Maj. Gen. Murphy followed my invocation with the quip that he would try to keep his comments briefer than the chaplain's. He gave some fine and polished comments to the Soldiers and their families, and I am sure they appreciated them. I had several families come up to me with tears in their eyes, with words of thanks despite my apparent lack of brevity.

Chaplain (1st Lt.) Anthony Stephens, right, leads a prayer with the 101st Signal Battalion command team home from Afghanistan. Courtesy photo.

My theory is that those who appeal to a "Higher Power" or Divine being find hope, a hope that endures all things, not because the hope is illusory but because they find that What they have called upon does and has burst into their world in surprising and often wonderful ways.

The words of thanks were not for my eloquence, or lack thereof, or much to do with me at all. Rather, something had stirred in them that had reminded them to hope.

As a chaplain, which, also as a civilian attorney I am particularly aware; my role is not to establish or endorse a particular religion in the Army, but rather to act to promote the free exercise of religion. The free exercise of religion is the ability to systematically and enthusiastically uphold practices that encourage hope.

What I can say, is that hope helps. Spiritual practice helps hope help. It did for me.

Military Suicides: Army seeks Dialogue, Solutions

By Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM - Class is in session, and each of the students was imagining a drive home from work on a cloudless Friday afternoon. "Now open your eyes," the instructor said. The next thing the class of 10 Soldiers saw was one of their instructors standing on the top of a chair.

"There is a woman on the bridge," the instructor said. "What do you do?"

A silence overcame the students as they groped for their next step. The previous day, they had learned about suicide intervention, the idea that a person who knows what they're doing can prevent a person with suicidal thoughts from performing suicidal acts.

But suicide is an issue that can be devilishly simple to reduce to abstract terms. Faced with a threat of action, even a simulated one, the Soldiers found it harder than they expected to produce a proper response – and they're not the only ones looking for answers.

The students, members of various units of the 42nd Infantry Division, took an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course during their annual training here in June. Their class was just a small part in the multitude of efforts that the Department of Defense hopes will stem what has been called an epidemic of military suicides in the last decade.

At least 2,700 service members are believed to have committed suicide since 2001, and in 2012, there were at least 349 confirmed suicides, almost a full platoon more than the 310 U.S. combat deaths during the same period.

This is the highest number of suicides since the Department of Defense began keeping detailed statistics in 2001, and it tracks only active duty military personnel. There were an additional 172 suicides in 2012 by inactive reservists and National Guard members, the LA Times reported.

The suicide rate in the military has historically hovered around half the civilian rate. But something changed over the last decade: the rate doubled and is now on track to overtake that of civilians.

"This is an epidemic," then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said, speaking May 12 to members of the House of Representatives. "Something is wrong."

First Bell - Suicide 101

The ASIST program is one of almost 900 anti-suicide efforts by the Department of Defense. The program, a two-day, 15-hour course, is produced by LivingWorks, a Canadian public service company. The class aims to teach Soldiers a model for preventing a person who already has suicidal thoughts from actually committing suicide.

"Most of the training we've done in the military, that I've done in my 17-year career, has been suicide prevention," Sgt. 1st Class Shaun Butcher, an ASIST instructor with the 106th Regional Training Institute, said. "What happens when prevention doesn't work? And somebody's still thinking of suicide or in the act of committing suicide? How do we help them?"

Since January, New York's 11 ASIST instructors have taught 132 troops in Camp Smith, N.Y. and around the state.

Students like Staff Sgt. Richard Jones, a maintenance sergeant with the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Support Company, said the class opened his eyes to the nature of suicide. Jones said

> "Most of the training we've done in the military, that I've done in my 17-year career, has been suicide prevention. What happens when prevention doesn't work?"
>
> *-- Sgt. 1st Class Shaun Butcher, 106th Regional Training Institute ASIST instructor*

he never thought of committing suicide, never knew anyone who committed suicide, and didn't have any opinions on it, really.

The role-playing exercises in the class helped Jones and other students understand what it could be like to walk in the boots of a person in need.

The woman on the bridge scenario in particular tends to shock many of the students, said Staff Sgt. Melissa Guckian, an ASIST instructor. Guckian has played the woman on the bridge three times; the key, she said, is letting students use the model and figure things out by themselves. That way, students won't be nervous when they have to save a life and do a real intervention.

1st Lt. Nathaniel Adams, one of the students, said he was "frazzled" when he opened his eyes. Oh god, he thought. How do I approach this? He said he could vividly imagine himself in the scenario, and he felt as if it all would have been overwhelming – even the word "suicide" seemed daunting, something dark and eerie, something to stay away from.

"Attitudes affect everything," Butcher said. In one exercise, the instructors asked the class: who could be at risk of suicide, and why? The class wrote their answers in longs lists, but the instructors were looking for a shorter response: anyone, and for any kind of loss.

In other words, the assumption that a Soldier is fine because they don't fit some stereotype is a quick way for people to fall through the cracks.

Second Session – "I was at the bottom…"

No one in the class knew this quite like Sgt. Zachary Dalrymple.

The intelligence sergeant was the hard-charging and motivated type of Soldier that scores high ratings on the fitness test and gets promoted from private first class to sergeant in one year. The kind of Soldier who will proudly yell that the 'N' in Airborne stands for "Never quit."

One would never expect he has had thoughts of suicide – Dalrymple said it was a shock to him too.

Dalrymple deployed to Afghanistan with the 173rd Airborne Special Troops Battalion. He saw his team leader wounded in action; he saw one of his best friends killed. He came back from deployment and met the woman who would become his wife. He left the military, moved to Boston, enrolled in college. But in Boston, in the one-bedroom apartment he had rented, he was alone. He had left his friends in the Army, his team, his support structure.

And his health suffered. He said he had anxiety attacks, a short temper, and his physical fitness regressed from the peaks of his Airborne years. But he didn't think

Continued on Page 8

Enigmatic Causes of Suicide

While experts believe that post-traumatic stress disorder, hazing, multiple deployments and injuries from combat are more than likely contributing factors, there is no standard formula that leads to suicidal thoughts, and some common assumptions fail to hold up under scrutiny.

For instance, more than half of the suicides in the military are troops who were never assigned to Iraq or Afghanistan, according to Pentagon data. Just one in 10 of those who died did so while posted in the war zone, and only 15 percent had ever experienced direct combat. In all, only 8 percent of suicide victims in 2011 had been deployed more than once.

Suicide Interventions:

Nowhere is the intervention model as dramatic as in the case of Spc. Joe Sanders, who deployed to Iraq with the 5th Battalion, 25th Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

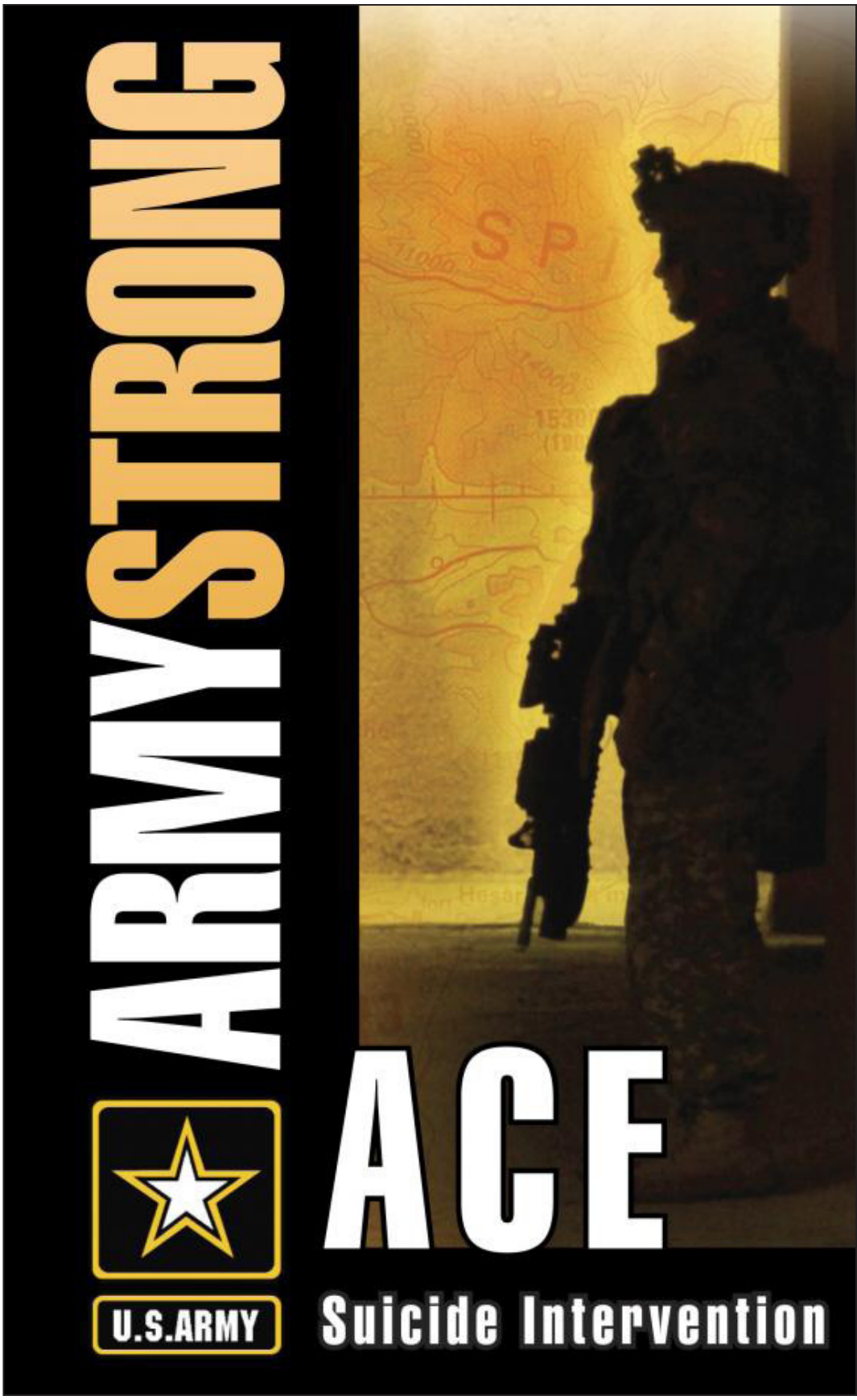
Sanders knew his wife was leaving him, and he still had several months of deployment at Operating Base Rustamiyah. So Sanders pulled his M-4 carbine to his chin, closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. But there was only a slight click. His roommate had taken his firing pin.

When Sanders realized what had happened -- that his roommate was worried enough that he'd removed the firing pin -- Sanders broke down in great, wracking sobs. "Okay, let's go get you some help," Spec. Albert Godding, who had walked into the room, told him, putting a hand on Sanders' heaving shoulder, Politics Daily reported.

Godding had noticed that Sanders had not been talking to anyone and had been talking about killing himself. So when Sanders checked his email, he took the firing pin out of Sanders' weapon and hid it.

Godding received a Meritorious Service Medal for his actions, and Sanders has since been remarried, promoted, and selected for marksmanship school.

"Friends and supervisors who notice changes in behavior should address it," Godding said. "It doesn't hurt to ask how a person is feeling."



Military Suicides
Continued from Page 6

anything was wrong. He just thought he wasn't up to par, or that he was just unhappy. Soon, the only thing that brought him joy was being with his wife.

And then she deployed. Now Dalrymple was fully alone, and he said he would consider suicide for days at a time. Nothing definite, nothing planned – but the thought was there.

"It was — it was a pretty low point in my life, and it was one of those things where I couldn't keep my head above water, I couldn't do anything right like I used to," Dalyrmple said. "I was at the bottom, and I couldn't find a way up, and it was like that for months and months."

When his wife came home, the couple went to a marriage counselor. Within minutes, the counselor asked Dalyrmple if he had ever been treated for PTSD.

"And I was like, 'no, are you crazy? I wasn't the one who was shot; I wasn't the one who was killed. I don't have PTSD,'" Dalyrmple said, but after some more questions he broke down and began talking.

Suicidal thoughts were something that happened to other people, and counseling was something Dalrymple never thought he'd need. For so long, he had to keep the bad thoughts out of his head without anyone to help him.

Dalyrmple told this story to his fellow students in the ASIST class, and he said being able to tell other Soldiers his story was a relief, like a bear taken off his back.

Final Roll Call – "Let me sit with you."

"The Army had traditionally perpetuated a culture in which asking for help was seen as weakness," U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Howard Bromberg, Deputy Chief of Staff, told the House of Representatives. "This culture is now changing and must continue to change."

A 2008 study showed that troops were up to four times as likely to reveal emotional troubles when their responses were anonymous, and 43 percent of Soldiers, sailors, Airmen and Marines who took their own lives in 2010 did not seek help from military treatment facilities in the month before their deaths.

Encouraging Soldiers to ask for help is of special importance in the National Guard and Reserves, where there are gaps between monthly drill periods, and leaders and peers have less opportunity to watch for warning signs of suicide. By the numbers, the overall National Guard suicide rate has been higher than active-duty Soldiers and the civilian population since 2010, and the Austin American-Statesman reported that 1 in 3 Army suicides last year was of a National Guardsmen.

Capt. Karen Marotz, manager of the New York National Guard's resiliency and suicide prevention programs, said that change is expected to come through programs such as ASIST and Comprehensive Soldier Fitness – programs that promote dialogue about life issues between Soldiers and those in charge of them.

"We want Soldiers to be comfortable reaching to their chain of command with issues," Marotz said. "We feel that that change is already happening."

Indeed, the need to talk as human beings with Soldiers was one of the key lessons students took from the ASIST course in Fort Drum.

Jones, the maintenance sergeant who said he didn't know anything about suicide, now takes care to watch for troubling signs in his Soldiers. Soldiers in Jones' unit who have "a bonehead day" are awarded a rock and are responsible for cleaning the maintenance area, and Jones said he noticed something in a Soldier of his that he wouldn't have noticed before.

"We gave out a rock," Jones said, "and the guy looked pretty down about it. So I kind of kept my eye out on him, let him know that 'hey, it's only a joke, somebody gonna get it tomorrow, don't worry about it.' I wouldn't have ever did that before.

"Seems like I'm always looking for signs now," Jones continued. "If I see a Soldier sitting by himself or walking on their own, now I feel that it's my job to say 'hey, how're you doing? Why are you sitting by yourself? Let me sit with you.'"

Dalrymple said he had a similar response. At first, he didn't want to go the training, expecting that it would be another slideshow, with people going through the motions: "Here's suicide, here's a card, don't do it." But after going through the course, he called it the best suicide prevention training he's ever had.

"Just be open with your Soldiers," Dalyrmple said, "greet them, actually mean what you say, and actually receive what they're saying, and spend time with them. It just comes down to communicating with people and understanding."

Butcher, for his part, said he believes he and other ASIST trainers are doing something good, not only for the state of New York, but the entire National Guard.

"When things go bad, you have to help your teammates out," Butcher said, "and that is what this is: giving people tools to help their teammates out and not let them fall victim to suicide." **gt**

The Fort Bliss Experiment:

Notably, the ASIST program has been used at Fort Bliss, which has one of the lowest Soldier suicide rates in the Army, — four confirmed and one still under investigation in 2012 from its population of 33,000 Soldiers, down from seven in 2011.

More Soldiers are trained in suicide prevention at Fort Bliss than at any other Army post. At Fort Bliss, 30 percent of Soldiers received ASIST training, compared to 3 to 5 percent Armywide, and the goal is 90 percent trained by 2015.

Army Maj. Gen. Dana J.H. Pittard, the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss commander launched the "No Preventable Soldier Deaths" campaign in 2010.

The campaign, which consists of 32 different programs and initiatives, aimed to prevent not only suicides, but also high-risk behaviors that can lead to drug overdoses, motorcycle and vehicle accidents.

Each company or larger submits a monthly list of Soldiers with known emotional, financial or substance abuse issues, and troops are drug tested eight times more often than normally required, reported the LA Times.

Even with all these efforts, the post still reports two or four suicide attempts every day, and Soldiers at Ft. Bliss talked about killing themselves or someone else, or were admitted to the hospital psychiatric ward, more than 50 times a month on average in 2012.

COURAGE
U.S. ARMY
Don’t deal with a problem alone. Reach out to a helping hand!
▶ Talk to your Battle Buddy and chain of command
▶ Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK [8255]
It takes COURAGE to ask for help when needed
TA-148-0212
USAPHC
U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND

Military Personnel News: the MILPO Corner

Education

Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program (RIRP). The Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program (RIRP) is a New York State program designed to recruit and retain quality members for the State Military Forces (Army and Air National Guard, and Naval Militia). This competitive program will pay the cost of tuition up to a maximum of $4,350 per calendar year for eligible qualified applicants.

Soldiers who apply by the deadline have an additional 60 days to forward any and all pertinent financial aid documentation to the Education Office. Applications must be submitted electronically to ng.ny.nyarng.list.rirp-ny@mail.mil. No paper copies, faxes, etc will be accepted.

GI Bill Changes May Require ARNG Soldiers to Take Action. Eligible Soldiers intending to transfer Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to a dependent should do so immediately. After August 1, 2013, all Soldiers will incur 4-year service obligations as part of the education benefits transfer process. After more than three years since the Post-9/11 GI Bill was implemented, Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers and Family members continue to have the opportunity to utilize the benefits of the Post 9/11 GI Bill program. Now, however, ARNG Soldiers may be eligible for Chapter 33, Post-9/11 benefits and may be eligible to transfer any portion of those benefits to eligible dependents. New Transfer of Education Benefits (TEB) requires ARNG Soldiers to initiate the request prior to separation from service. Additionally, a military service obligation is required for those Soldiers desiring to transfer their benefit to an eligible Family member listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

A significant change took place after August 1, 2013. Soldiers are required to obligate themselves to 4-years of service if they desire to transfer any portion of their Post-9/11 GI Bill to dependants. ARNG Soldiers have the option, however, of committing to a lesser military service obligation if they transferred their benefit prior to August and retirement eligible during the period of August 2009 through August 2013.

Go to the following link for additional information: https://g1arng.army.pentagon.mil/Pages/DisplayFeaturedNewsItem.aspx?featuredNewsItemID=143

Soldier Readiness

Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA). PDHRA is a comprehensive health screening process that identifies physical and behavioral health concerns for Soldiers returning from deployment. It is a required screening (by law) for all who have deployed OCONUS for 30 days or more. The screening is conducted 90-180 days post-deployment, and it must be completed regardless of location, upcoming separation (ETS), or retirement within the prescribed 90-180 day window.

There are three components to the PDHRA; Resilience Training, DD Form 2900 (Post Deployment Health Reassessment Form), and discussion with a health care provider.

a. Resilience Training is one of the Army's mandatory training programs and conducted prior to PDHRA event.

b. DD Form 2900 (PDHRA Form) is a questionnaire the Soldier completes to help guide discussion with the health care provider.

c. The discussion with the health care provider can take place either at an on-site event, a call center event, or via telephone for individuals completing the PDHRA. MNP-Health Services (MNP-HS) coordinates with units to setup PDHRA events, typically during Freedom Salute weekends.

For individually mobilized Soldiers, MNP-HS will work directly with the Soldier to complete the PDHRA requirement. If it is determined that a Soldier requires treatment for a condition listed by the PDHRA, then a referral is generated to send the Soldier to their local Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital or clinic for treatment. Soldiers are also entitled to pay and allowances for assessments based on the referral. For more information, contact Staff Sgt. John Collins at 518-272-6446.

Healthcare

Information for Soldiers who have Open Medical Cases. On August 23, 2012 the Directorate of Military Personnel (MNP) instituted MNP Policy 12-11, Soldier's Responsibility to Maintain Their Medical Readiness. This policy is designed to ensure Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard are taking responsibility to maintain their medical readiness.

Soldiers issued a temporary profile over 30 days must consistently follow up with their Medical Case Manager by providing required documentation to extend their profile or to close their case no later than the expiration of the profile.

Soldiers who fail to provide required documentation to their Medical Case Managers may be subject to administrative adverse action and possible transfer to the Inactive National Guard. Adverse administrative action affects Soldiers promotions, awards, military schooling attendance and even effects bonuses and GI Bill benefits.

Units are highly encouraged to monitor their open medical cases to ensure medical readiness is being met. In addition, Commanders are notified when their Soldiers are not in compliance with this policy and are required to counsel each Soldier of these responsibilities and provide the counseling back to the Health Services Branch. For questions regarding this policy please contact Chief Warrant Officer Two Stephanie Spanton at 518-272-6469.

Officer Records

MNP Policy Memorandum 13-04; Promotion from Second Lieutenant (2LT) to First Lieutenant (1LT) and from Warrant Officer One (WO1) to Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2). Effective March 2013 all eligible 2nd Lts. will be considered for promotion to 1st Lt. at 18 months Time in Grade (TIG). Eligible warrant officers will be considered for promotion to Chief Warrant Officer Two at 24 months TIG. Chief Warrant Officer Two promotions will no longer require a Federal Recognition Board action. Officers or warrant officers ineligible for promotion consideration at their rank's respective time will be separated or will have an approved waiver. To read the full policy memorandum, please visit the OPM Website at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/555489.

Report (OER) Enhancements. The Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army recently approved additional changes to the officer evaluation system to better align with current Army leadership doctrine. These changes will more accurately evaluate the performance and potential of Army officers, better inform and equip leaders and create a more transparent

process for officer assignments and selection. The enhancements are planned for implementation by the end of calendar year 2013. Visit the following link on Army.mil for an informative article on the upcoming changes. http://www.army.mil/article/87652/Army_changing_Officer_Evaluation_Reports/

Retirement

Retirement Guidance for Soldier's With 20 or more Years of Service. Retirement eligible Soldier's must be aware, that once they are discharged, their retirement pay is not going to automatically appear in their bank account after age 60. Each qualifying Soldier is required to complete a Reserve Retired Pay Application with the MNP Retirement NCO, located in MNP. This should be done at least one year prior to age 60, in order for the Soldier to receive his or her first payment the month following their 60th birthday.

Each retiring Soldier receives a retirement packet with their discharge, which advises that they have to apply for retirement and who they need to contact. If an application is received more than 6 years after a Soldier becomes age 60, one day of retired pay is deducted for each day's delay. If a Soldier was granted an age exception beyond age 60, then the application must be submitted within 6 years after that new end date.

All Soldier's should maintain throughout their career a personal file which contains as a minimum all active duty orders, DD Form 214's, Leave and Earnings Statements, etc. that document service, in case there is a discrepancy during the retirement application process.

For additional information please contact the NYARNG Retirement NCO, Staff Sgt. Fredericks at 518-272-6417.

ARNG Retirement is a Process. Amanda Koons, ARNG G1 STRATCOMM, recently prepared an article for ARNG G1 Personnel Gateway pertaining to retirement. "Retirement is a lifelong process," advises the Retirement Services and Policy Section of the Transition Branch at the National Guard Bureau (NGB). "From the moment a Soldier joins the Army National Guard, they can guarantee a smoother transition at the end of their career by being proactive about their records." Soldiers have the responsibility of annually reviewing NGB Form 23B, Army National Guard Retirement Points History Statement as part of any type of records review. Retirement connects to personnel readiness, the Army National Guard G1's number one priority in support of the Director of the ARNG's Strategic Imperative. As Soldiers maintain a correct, up-to-date history of their service, they contribute to increasing data quality and system accuracy.

Soldier and Family resiliency are also improved as Soldiers plan ahead for their retirement and their Family's future.

Soldiers with questions should contact their Human Resource FTS asset within their unit or one of two individuals within the Joint Force Headquarters of their State, the Retirement Points Account Management (RPAM) Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) or their Active Guard Reserve Retirement Manager. Each one can assist Soldiers with state-specific guidance and are cross-trained to provide assistance.

Frequently asked questions about ARNG retirement include those centered on reduced retirement age and how the process varies for Soldiers going through the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) or Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) process. If a Soldier going through the MEB or PEB process is on a promotion list, he or she will retire at the higher rank. Soldiers should strive to make all of their years in service "good" years for retirement as they accrue points annually.

Frequent monitoring and maintaining of points ensures that there are no surprises toward the end of a career. Finally, Soldiers considering accepting severance pay should consult with their State RPAM NCO or AGR Manager, because doing so may eliminate retirement pay and benefit eligibility in the future.

Awards

Stolen Valor Act of 2013 Signed. President Barack Obama has signed into law the Stolen Valor Act of 2013, making it a federal crime for anyone to make false claims about military medals with the intent to obtain money, property, or other tangible benefits. The law passed through Congress May of this year with rare bipartisan support. The Senate passed the measure by unanimous consent, two days after the House passed the legislation 390-3.

Violators face fines of up to $1,000 and/or up to a year in prison. The law is a more narrowly focused version of a Stolen Valor Act that was signed into law in 2006 by former President George W. Bush. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down that law in 2012, saying it violated the First Amendment. The new action by Congress followed the resignation of the national president of the Korean War Veterans Association. James E. Ferris, 81, of Clay, N.Y., who admitted that he wore five military service ribbons or medals that he never earned.

It does not apply to every medal. Specifically covered are the Medal of Honor, service crosses, Silver Star, Purple Heart and combat badges such as Combat Infantryman's Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon, or Combat Action Medal.

Claiming to have received one of the awards becomes fraudulent if the liar obtains or tries to obtain money, property or some other tangible benefit. For example, claiming to be a combat veteran on a job application or to receive a government contract set aside for a veteran would be fraud, as would receiving unearned veterans' disability or health benefits if any of the combat-related awards used to qualify for those benefits were falsely claimed.

Benefits

Repeal of Automatic Enrollment in FSGLI for Members of the Armed Forces Married to Other Members (ALARACT 120/2013). The information in this message pertains to dual military couples who married on or after January 2, 2013. The law no longer provides automatic enrollment in the Family Service-Members Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) Program. The Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) anticipate refunds will begin in May 2013 for Soldiers who paid premiums after January 2, 2013. See the S1NET message below for actions that Soldiers affected by this change must take if they choose to apply for coverage.

Same-Sex Domestic Partners (SSDP) to Receive Benefits/ID Cards. The Department of Defense extended benefits and issuance of ID cards to same-sex domestic partners (SSDPs) beginning February 2013. Eligible SSDPs and their families can begin receiving benefits/ID cards on September 1, 2013. Visit https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-112265 for more information.

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DRIVE. . . *DISTRACTED?*

You know not to drive distracted, but does your buddy?

KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT

know the signs

DO WHAT'S RIGHT

What is Distracted Driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger and bystander safety.

U.S.ARMY
ARMY STRONG.

U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER
https://safety.army.mil

Fall into Safety this Autumn

By Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM -- Autumn is one of the most beautiful times of the year with colorful leaves and pumpkins littering the ground. As summer turns to fall, the seasonal changes also bring up safety issues for the entire family. Prepare for the changing weather to ensure that your family is both happy and healthy the whole season long.

Colder Weather

As autumn comes into full swing, the temperatures may lower in your area, which can lead to several safety issues.

• Have your chimney and furnace cleaned and inspected on a regular basis. This helps prevent chimney fires and carbon monoxide buildup.

• Keep your fireplace hearth free of newspapers, magazines, toys, or anything combustible.

• Do not burn cardboard boxes or trash in your fireplace; they can cause chimney fires.

• Leave at least three feet of space around your space heater. Remember to unplug it when it's not in use.

• Use candles with care. Keep them away from flammable objects. Never leave them unattended and always extinguish them before leaving the room.

Fall Driving

There are multiple autumn safety issues that relate to the road.

• Since days are getting shorter during the fall, more driving will occur when it is dark. This can lead to drowsiness which leads to more accidents.

• School buses will now be present in the morning and small children walking to the bus. Use extra caution when driving around busses or in school zones.

• Leaves may cover the road and become slippery with weather. This requires extra care, especially for bicycles and motorcycles.

• Tire pressure can be affected by the cool nights and warm days of autumn. Check tire pressure throughout the season.

Staying Healthy

One of the downsides of fall is that cold and flu season comes with it. Some recommendations:

• Always get a flu shot. While it's not pleasant, it's better than the flu, which can linger for weeks, and in some cases can be fatal.

• If you do get sick, don't go to work. A cold or flu can spread around the workplace quickly, ruining productivity.

• Always wash your hands carefully. One of the best ways to avoid a cold or the flu is to wash your hands regularly. Make sure the water is hot, use plenty of soap, and keep the hands under the water for at least 30 seconds.

For more information, visit: https://safety.army.mil/multimedia/CAMPAIGN-SINITIATIVES/KnowtheSigns/AutumnSafety/tabid/2370/Default.aspx.

Inspector General's Corner

Building Relationships; Professional Relationships

Commentary By Col. Darren Sears, Inspector General

One of my previous commanders was fond of saying, "It's all about the relationships." As a matter of fact, he had it printed on his challenge coin that he handed out to exceptional performers.

The meaning of this phrase was all about what he thought of the importance of building and maintaining professional relationships. He was big on advocating that we ensured we were doing our utmost to engage with our fellow Airmen, our fellow services, our coalition partners, or anyone else who could work toward the betterment of the mission, our organization, and the military as a whole.

He was spot on about the importance of developing sound professional relationships. I personally saw his mantra pay off in the joint and combined environment we were working in. What my old boss was talking about was relationships that help build a sound organization. There is a big difference between the relationships that he was talking about, and the unprofessional relationships that can tear apart the fiber of our military organization.

Unprofessional relationships are a problem, and a problem that needs to be addressed. It is a problem that recently prompted the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Odierno, to publish a note to leadership about the Army's Fraternization Policy. This problem prompts me to write this article after the Inspector General's Office has seen an uptick in complaints about unprofessional relationships on both the Army and Air side.

It is a problem across all services and components. It is a problem across all ranks. It is a problem that causes perceptions of favoritism. It is a problem that erodes the effectiveness of the chain of command. It is a problem that erodes trust. It is a problem that those looking at the military from the outside could connect with our problem with sexual assault and sexual harassment. They might argue that if we think it's okay to carry on unprofessional relationships then how are we ever expected to tackle the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The good thing is that it is a problem that is fully within our power, as Airmen, Soldiers, and civilians to address.

First, we can start by reviewing Army Regulation 600-20 and Air Force Instruction 36-2909. The policies are clear about what constitutes an unprofessional relationship, and if you are unsure, ask.

Second, we can think before we act. Give some thought as to how our fellow Airmen and Soldiers would perceive the relationship. If it might be perceived as wrong, then it's probably wrong.

Third, we shouldn't have to hide relationships. If you hide a relationship, then you probably already know it's wrong.

Lastly, we shouldn't sit idly by and allow our fellow Airmen and Soldiers to enter into unprofessional relationships. Say something. We all have a responsibility, regardless of rank, to correct behaviors that are unprofessional.

My bottom line? Don't enter into unprofessional relationships and don't let others enter them either. Make my former commander's word's ring true. It's all about relationships…PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS!

PROTECTED

Mohawk Flooding met with Guard Response

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters

GERMAN FLATTS -- Hands on or treads on, New York Army National Guard troops of Task Force Engineer battled Mohawk Valley flood damage for several days in early July.

Using bulldozers, excavators, and just plain muscle, about 250 troops cleared tons of rocky debris from flood-ravaged waterways in the towns of German Flatts and Fort Plain, and helped Village of Mohawk residents remove rotting, muddy, and sodden property from their homes.

By July 8, the Soldiers had restored 2,500 feet of Fords Creek and a mile of Fulmer Creek in German Flatts and hauled 1,650 cubic yards of debris from Otsquago Creek in Fort Plain while reinforcing its banks and clearing 340 cubic yards of debris from 160 Mohawk homes.

"We helped the citizens to have a greater sense of security during threatening weather conditions as they recover from the flooding," said Lt. Col. James Freehart, a Latham, N.Y., resident who commands the 204th Engineer Battalion and headed Task Force Engineer.

On June 27 and 28, several thunderstorms dumped massive amounts of rain into Mohawk Valley streams, causing them to rise and flood nearby towns. Local officials asked for help with reconnaissance and evacuation, and members of the 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry and 1427th Truck Company responded within hours with high-axle vehicles which can drive through floodwaters.

As the scope of the flooding became clearer, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo called up Soldiers of the 204th Engineer Battalion and the 206th Military Police Company on July 2. Troops of these units, along with individual Soldiers and airmen from other New York National Guard units, formed Task Force Engineer.

The 204th Engineer Battalion's 152nd and 827th Engineer Companies went to Fort Plain and German Flatts to remove flood debris from waterways in order to prevent further flood damage, Freehart said.

Using a bulldozer and a hydraulic excavator, the 827th Engineer Company drew first mud in German Flatts the afternoon of July 3, about 24 hours after Cuomo called them up.

Longtime resident Libby Mack, who helped the engineers survey the worksite, was aghast at the effects of the flood.

In addition to re-routing Fords Creek, the torrent had also deposited silt, boulders, trash, dead animals, rusted corrugated pipe, damaged wood and other flotsam into the creeks and along their banks, she said.

"It obliterated my property," she said.

German Flatts resident Bob Morgan, Jr. also expressed shock.

"I grew up playing in these creeks," he said. "It's crazy what happened."

Along with removing the debris, their mission was to firm up the banks, Capt. Chad Clark, the company commander from Chester, said. This should stabilize them, and prevent more damage if more flooding occurs, he explained.

Engineer Soldier Sgt. Sean Moffett explained the engineers' goal more bluntly: "find the dirt and push it."

The flood had created more channels in the bed of Fulmer Creek, and part of their job was to unite these streams into one waterway again, he said.

"We're going to try to put it back the way it was so it's less of a problem next time," said Moffett, of Dryden, N.Y.

The bulldozer and a hydraulic excavator are equipped with treads. With astonishing ease, the Soldiers drove them right down into the brown waters of Fulmer Creek and Fords Creek and began clearing them of rocks and other debris.

Staff Sgt. Bryan Starkweather, of Wayne, N.Y., used his bulldozer's blade to gut huge rocks and excess silt from Fords Creek, while Pfc. Joshua Haller, of Odessa, N.Y. used the long arm and jaws of his excavator to pluck mammoth boulders from Fulmer Creek.

David Day, a German Flatts resident and former member of the New York Army National Guard, grinned as he watched the troops work.

"It's running a whole lot better," Day said of Fords Creek, about an hour after the engineer Soldiers began working. "Leave it to the military. They'll get it done right."

The Soldiers seemed to work quickly and efficiently, Morgan said.

"I'm sure all the neighbors will like it, upstream and downstream," he said.

Mack also noted the Soldiers' efficiency, and the fact that Fords Creek was running faster. The Soldiers, she said, are awesome.

Pfc. Michael Bykowicz, from the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Company, uses a bulldozer to remove rocks and other flood debris from Otsquago Creek near Fort Plain, N.Y. July 4. In addition to other missions, the engineers removed an island of debris which had choked the creek's flow. Bykowicz is from West Seneca, N.Y. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters.

Engineers and Military Police Soldiers work together to help with debris clearance in Mohawk, N.Y. on July 3. Photo by Lt. Col. Christopher Panzer, Joint Force Headquarters.

"If I had a million dollars, I'd hand it out to them," Mack said.

There are other benefits as well to having the Soldiers remove the flood debris, Day said.

"It's good experience for these guys," he reflected. "The state has the equipment, they might as well use it."

Speaking the Same Language, Seamless Assistance

In Fort Plain, Soldiers of the 152nd Engineer Company were confronted by an island of flood debris in the middle of Otsquago Creek. Composed of shale and other rock, this island was about 500 yards long by 75 yards wide, according to Sgt. 1st Class Mark Flint, of Natural Bridge, N.Y.

"It dammed up the water and caused flooding in the area," Flint said.

There was four feet of water on the Fort Plain streets at one point, said Fort Plain resident Jack Zeidner.

"It made me sick to see all the damage," he said. "It was devastating."

Like their fellow Soldiers in German Flatts, the troops used bulldozers to remove the debris from the center of the creek. The bulldozers churned noisily through the muddy waters, and

Continued on Next Page

Sgt. John Johnson, from Stockton, N.Y., uses a front-end loader to drop flood-damaged appliances into a dumpster in Mohawk, N.Y. July 5. Johnson belongs to the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Company, one of the units called up to provide humanitarian assistance to flood victims and clear debris in towns like Fort Plain and German Flatts, N.Y. Soldiers helped dispose of flood debris from about 150 homes here by July 7. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters.

Above right, Soldiers and engineers assist residents in Mohawk with recovery July 3 following flash flooding. The Guard's initial response of more than 50 Soldiers on June 28 grew to some 250 Soldiers on July 3. Photo by Lt. Col. Christopher Panzer, Joint Force Headquarters.

Mohawk Flood Response
Continued from Page 15

the creek bed echoed with the sound of crashing rock as the engineers pushed tons of materials into the creek's banks to shore them up.

He didn't care if the Soldiers worked all night, Zeidner said, smiling as he watched the Soldiers work.

"They're doing a good job," he said. "It's going to alleviate this problem."

Upstream, engineer troops worked with municipal workers, state workers and civilian contractors to remove debris from another part of Otsquago Creek. Using hydraulic excavators, the workers and contractors loaded flood debris into the 152nd Engineer Company's 10-ton dump trucks for the troops to haul away.

Coordination between the troops, workers and contractors was pretty seamless, said Capt. Eric Butcher, 152nd Engineer Company Commander. They all use the same type of equipment, and for the most part, speak the same language,

"We're essentially augmenting what they're already doing," said Butcher, of Callicoon, N.Y. "We're just doing it in green vehicles, and they're doing it in yellow vehicles."

The 206th Military Police Company Soldiers, meanwhile, went to the village of Mohawk to perform a familiar task -- help residents clear flood-damaged materials from homes.

Their job was to "knock on doors, and see what needs to be done to clear debris," explained 2nd Lt. Andrew Bognaski, a Lafargeville resident.

They arrived on July 3, worked with civilian authorities, and began going block by block and house by house to see who needed help, Bognaski said. In addition to hauling garbage out of homes, the Soldiers worked with engineer troops, who used front-end loaders to pick up piles of debris and deposit them in dumpsters.

Mohawk resident Sharon White Douglas was moved to tears by the Soldiers' efforts. They'd been on their own, using a wheelbarrow to move garbage to dumpsters, she said.

"Neighbors have been helping, but they're in the same boat," Douglas said as the military police Soldiers lugged water-logged dry wall and ceiling tiles out of her house. "Five days of this...we're tired. This is a Godsend."

The Soldiers' help relieved their emotional strain as well, and enabled them to get a new hot-water heater and furnace installed sooner, she said.

"We're much further along, thank God," she said. "This would've taken us forever to clean up."

The mission was something of a homecoming for Staff Sgt. Corey Guido of the 206th Military Police Company, who had taken part in disaster relief operations following floods before. A Boonville, N.Y. resident, Guido was raised in Mohawk, and still has family there.

"I've never been here for a military mission," he reflected. Clearing debris from homes minimized citizens' exposure to mold and mildew and helped prevent health problems, he added.

The job was hot, muggy and muddy for residents and troops alike. Guido said he saw one Soldier whose Army Camouflage Uniform (ACU) was covered in muck, top to bottom.

"You couldn't even tell he was wearing ACUs," he said.

But the Soldiers seemed undaunted by the task and the fact that it had little to do with military police work.

"We did all this at the tail end of Hurricane Sandy," Guido said. "We're just happy to be here helping out."

The job needed to get done, said Cpl. Patrick West, of Utica, N.Y.

"Guys are motivated," he said. "They don't mind getting dirty. They want to get the job done." **gt**

Above, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo meets with engineers of the 204th Engineer Battalion in Mohawk July 8 to survey flood damage and thank them for their disaster recovery efforts following flash flooding in the Mohawk Valley that began June 28. Opposite page, engineers clear a creek bed in German Flatts, N.Y. July 3. Photos by Lt. Col. Christopher Panzer, Joint Force Headquarters.

New York Shooters Compete in 2013 TAG Match

By Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, PEEKSKILL, N.Y. - Members of the Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing achieved top honors for the fourth straight year in the New York National Guard's Adjutant General's Marksmanship Competition held here on June 1-2.

The members of the team--1st Sgt. Randal Schenefiel, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Doherty, Tech. Sgt. Ryan Mang and Master Sgt. Edward Stefik.--placed first in the General George Patton Pistol match and the National Guard Infantry Team Rifle match at the competition.

"It was an honor to be the team captain for the 107th. I find it very humbling every time I compete to be in the presence of such professional Soldiers and Airman. These folks display some of the best marksmanship skills in the state," Stefik said.

The 107th marksmanship team won individual awards as well. Stefik was the individual champion for the combined arms match involving combat pistol and rifle. He also took first place in both the Excellence in Pistol and Combat Pistol Competitions.

Schenefiel took high scorer in the novice rank, earning the New York State Master Sgt. Joseph A. Longobardo Trophy, while Mang took third place in the Exercise in Competition and Tech Sgt. Christopher Doherty placed third in the individual rifle match.

Organized marksmanship competition has been a part of the New York National Guard's training program since the 1800s.

Marksmanship competition today allows individual Soldiers and Airmen the opportunity to improve their level of marksmanship, engage in healthy competition, and pick top contenders to represent the state in national competitions.

The modern Adjutant General's Match requires participants to employ the weapons used on modern battlefields, including M-16 rifle, M-9 pistol and M-249 light machine gun. Participants in the TAG Match learn to improve their shooting skills and take those lessons back to their units.

The match consists of eight timed events that include the use of a pistol, rifle and machine gun - to include close quarters combat, casualty, and nuclear biological chemical (NBC) drills.

"It's very, very competitive," said Lt. Col. Joe Martellaro, coordinator for the training competition at Camp Smith, "and they do have a bit of a rivalry between individuals and teams."**gt**

Members of the New York National Guard compete in the individual pistol marskmanship range during the New York State Adjutant General's Marskmanship Competition. The training, held June 1-2, recognizes the best shooters in the New York National Guard for 2013. Photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters.

Members of the 107th Airlift Wing achieved top honors for the fourth straight year in The Adjutant General Marksmanship Competition June 1-2. The team won many individual awards as well. With their awards are (from left to right) 1st Sgt. Randal Schenefiel, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Doherty, Tech. Sgt. Ryan Mang and Master Sgt. Edward Stefik. The team placed first in the General George Patton Pistol match and the National Guard Infantry Team Rifle match. Photo courtesy of the 107th Airlift Wing.

New York Army National Guard Sgt. Saul Rodriguez (third from left) joins members of the Massacshuetts Army National Guard during a June 3 recognition ceremony conducted by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick on Boston Common. The event was a symbolic thank you to the 1,300 members of the Massachusetts National Guard who responded in the aftermath of the bombing at the Boston Marathon finish line on April 15. Also participating were General Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau; and Major General L. Scott Rice, the Adjutant General of Massachusetts. Photo courtesy the Massachusetts National Guard.

Boston Thanks Troops for Marathon Response

By Eric Durr, Joint Force Headquarters

BOSTON--New York Army National Guard Sgt. Saul Rodriguez, a member of the Fort Hamilton-based 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team, was one of 14 Army National Guard Soldiers recognized for their response to the Boston Marathon bombing by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and National Guard officials during a ceremony here on June 3.

Rodriguez, a Brentwood resident, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal by Patrick; General Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau; and Major General L. Scott Rice, the Adjutant General of Massachusetts at a ceremony on Boston Commons.

Rodriguez, and the other 13 Soldiers from the Massachusetts Army National Guard, was also presented with a coin to recognize their selfless and quick response to the bombing which occurred during the Boston Marathon on April 15.

Rodriguez was one of five members of the 24th CST who augmenting the Massachusetts National Guard's security precautions during the marathon. When the bomb went off he responded to the scene. Also on duty that day were: Staff Sgt. Darren Odom, Staff Sgt. James Haynes, Staff Sgt. Omar Rodriguez, and Staff Sgt. Taekwon Kim.

More than 1,300 Massachusetts National Guard Soldiers and Airmen supported civic authorities in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing. The June 3 awards ceremony was a symbolic thanks to all the Soldiers and Airmen involved.

Members of National Guard CSTs are specially trained to identify the presence of chemical, biological, and radiological agents and inform civilian first responders about what they have found. As a precautionary measure CST members are usually present at all major events.

New York maintains two CSTs, the 24th CST at Fort Hamilton in New York City and the 2nd CST at Stratton Air National Guard Base near Schenectady.

"I am extremely proud of the Soldiers and Airmen who were deployed to Boston," said Major Jody Lupo, the commander of the 24th CST. "In the face of grave danger they flawlessly executed their tactical mission and placed themselves in harms way to protect others."

"The 24th CST has a long standing cooperative partnership with the 1st CST of the Massachusetts National Guard. The value of that relationship was tested and proven under fire in the moments following the horrific events at the Boston Marathon," Lupo said.

Rodriguez has served in the 24th CST since June 2012. He joined the New York Army National Guard in 2008 and served as an avionics mechanic in Company B 642nd Aviation Support Battalion. In 2011 he became the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Specialist for the company.

Since joining the 24th CST Rodriguez has provided support for the U.S. Open Tennis Championship, the New York Yankees and New York Mets home openers, the New Years Eve Celebration, and the United Nations General Assembly. He has served on several Joint Hazard Assessment Teams with members of the New York Police Department-Emergency Services Unit, Fire Department of New York, Rockland County Special Weapons And Tactics team, Suffolk County Police, Nassau County Police, New York State Police, FBI Hazardous Materials Response unit, Boston Fire Department, and the Secret Service.

Rodriguez's awards include the Reserve Components Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon and the Basic Aviation Badge.

Rodriguez is a graduate of the United States Army Aviation and Logistics School, the Warrior Leadership Course, and the United States Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School.**gt**

Soldier Awarded Valor Award for Afghan Service

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

GLENVILLE, N.Y. -- "Despite a massive explosion, and continuous Taliban small arms fire, New York Army National Guard Sgt. Joshua Young rescued his platoon sergeant, rallied his troops, and continued his mission March 16, 2012 while serving in Afghanistan."

On Friday, July 19, Young's heroism was recognized with the award of the Bronze Star with V Device, for valor, at the Scotia-Glenville Armed Forces Reserve Center.

At the time Young was serving with the Army's 760th Ordnance Battalion, based at Fort Drum, N.Y. He is currently assigned to the 1018th Ordnance Co. (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), headquartered at the Reserve Center.

"It's weird, I'm not sure what all the hubbub is all about, said Young, referring to the recognition. "It happened a long time ago, and I would do it again. It's what you do."

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo praised Young's actions in a written statement.

"Today we honor an individual who went to extraordinary lengths to protect and save the lives of his fellow Soldiers," Cuomo said. "At great personal risk, Sergeant Young not only carried his badly injured platoon sergeant to safety through enemy gunfire, but he also returned to the battlefield to successfully complete his mission."

Brig. General Michael Swezey, who presented Young with his medal, pointed out that while many Soldiers serve and serve well, Young did something more.

"The military awards very few Bronze Star Medals for Valor, indicating that Josh demonstrated a level of extreme personal courage and selfless service," Swezey said. "I am struck by the courage he displayed to protect his fellow Soldiers."

On March 16, 2012 Young was attached to Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed Attack Company, operating in Siah Choy, Afghanistan in Regional Command South.

The company had decided to blow up a strategic wall in the village of Manezai. The wall bordered a road used to resupply and reinforce Combat Outpost Siah Choy, where Young's company was located. During the previous three months insurgents planted more than 60 improvised explosive devices (IED) along the road, using the wall as cover.

Young was with 3rd platoon as EOD team leader, tasked to place the explosives and detonating them. Young and his team placed over 1,200 pounds of C4 explosives along the wall.

About 15 minutes after moving into place, 50 enemy fighters began firing AK-47s and mortar rounds at them. One mortar round detonated 400 pounds of C4 placed along the wall at its northern end. The explosion incapacitated the entire squad, including the platoon sergeant.

Sgt. Joshua Young, a member of the 1108th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) receives the Bronze Star with V device for valor during a ceremony at the Scotia-Glenville Armed Forces Reserve Center here on Friday, July 19. Brig. General Michael Swezey, the commander of the 53rd Troop Command presented Young with the medal.

Young was about 150 feet away from the blast, which picked him up and threw him backwards.

While the rest of the platoon sought cover to regroup from the shock of the explosion, Young sprinted across the open ground, through dust and settling debris, to assess casualties.

He searched and found the platoon sergeant 50 feet away from the center of the blast buried under debris. The platoon sergeant was suffering from massive internal trauma and had burns over 60 percent of his body.

Young ignored enemy fire and ran to find the platoon medic. He again moved through the open and brought the aide and litter team to the platoon sergeants location.

Young then volunteered to carry the platoon sergeant to the medivac helicopter, despite the sporadic fire from the enemy.

After carrying the platoon sergeant to safety, Young returned to the battlefield to complete the wall's demolition, accomplishing the platoon's mission.

His award citation reads, "Sergeant Young demonstrated incredible personal courage and selfless service by risking his life on multiple occasions to save a Soldier's life and complete the mission."

Young joined the 1108th in August 2012. Now he is studying chemistry at Monroe County Community College in Rochester, serving on the local volunteer fire department in Fairport, N.Y, and moving ahead with his life.

He still keeps in contact with the Soldier he saved, although the sergeant lost both legs. That platoon sergeant is doing pretty well and learning to walk on his artificial legs, Young said.

The five-months of specialized EOD training prior to deploying gave him the skills and mindset needed when the time came, he said.

"It was second nature, it's what you do as a Soldier," Young said.

But his mother Kim Young, who attended the ceremony with Young's father Tim, said her son needed to give himself more credit.

"We're extremely proud of Josh and his accomplishments. He never really told us alot about the incident so we are learning about his actions today," she said. **gt**

Soldiers compete in the New York Army National Guard's first Combatives Tournament, held at Camp Smith July 27. Over a dozen New York Army National Guard troops took part in the tournament, organized by the 106th Regional Training Institute. Photos by Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters.

Army Guard Soldiers Battle for Combatives Title

By Sgt. 1st Class Ray Drumsta and Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLANDT MANOR -- Over a dozen Soldiers competed in the New York Army National Guard's First Annual Combatives Tournament here on July 27, and the winners in each of the seven weight categories may have the chance to represent the state at the 2014 All Army National Guard Combative Tournament in Ft. Benning, Ga.

Combatives is a combination of Judo, Jujitsu and other techniques which enables Soldiers to prevail in hand-to-hand combat. The 1st Battalion, 106th Regional Training Institute (RTI), organized and held the tournament.

"Today's combatives competition is the first of its kind for the New York Army National Guard, and it brought together Warriors from every major command, from Buffalo to Long Island," said Lt. Col. Robert Giordano, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 106th RTI. "This intense competition brought a true reflection of our New York Army National Guard Force here to Camp Smith to compete. I am thankful to my fellow commanders who sent their Soldiers to compete and I look forward to seeing even more Warriors next year."

The tournament mirrored a ju-jitsu competition, with one-on-matches on tumbling mats. There are four certification levels in combatives, and Soldiers were required to be certified as level one or higher to take part in the tournament. Soldiers won matches by compiling the most points, or if their opponents conceded matches by submitting, also known as "tapping out."

Combatives instills the warrior ethos, in addition to building physical fitness and confidence, said tournament director Sgt. 1st Class Eduardo Hernandez, of Scotch Plains, N.J. He hopes New York forms a team to compete nationally, and tournament winners could be part of that team, he added.

But combatives isn't just for competition, he stressed.

"It's health and fitness, physical conditioning, it's mentally grueling and physically grueling," he said. "This is giving the Soldiers, American Soldiers, the upper edge on the enemy."

Capt. Linette Palladino, a member of the 53rd Digital Liaison Detachment and winner of the flyweight category, agreed.

"You need to be able to defend yourself physically," said Palladino, of Hoboken, N.J. "Combatives is a mentally demanding sport. "You really have to memorize technique, and get it down rote so that you can react instinctively to certain situations."

There's always a chance a Soldier may need to resort to hand-to-hand combat, said Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Palmer, a member of the 466th Area Support Medical Company, who took first place in the middleweight category.

"If you get to a point where you're out of ammo, and all you have is just your hands, that's what you're going to have to use," said Palmer, of Granville, N.Y.

Palmer recalled learning level 1 combatives while deployed to Iraq, and learning level 2 combatives with the 106th RTI. He went on to place third in the All Army National Guard Combatives Tournament in 2008.

"For some of us this is not just a chance to compete, it's a chance to sharpen our skills," he said.

Combatives also builds camaraderie and a competitive atmosphere, said Level 4 combatives trainer and tournament non-commissioned officer in-charge Staff Sgt. Abismael Gonzalez, of Queens, N.Y.

"Combatives is knowing that you could lose, and facing that challenge," he said.

Heavy-weight winner Sgt. Adama Ilboudo of the 719th Transportation Company said he competed in harder tournaments. Ilboudo, of the Bronx, N.Y., holds

Continued on Page 24

Second Star for 42nd Division Commander

By Eric Durr, Joint Force Headquarters

ALBANY -- Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that New York Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Harry E. Miller, commander of the Troy-based 42nd Infantry Division, received his promotion to Maj. Gen. June 24.

Miller was promoted by Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, during a ceremony to present his two stars at Fort Drum where the 42nd Infantry Division was conducting annual training.

Miller was nominated for the two-star position by the governor and confirmed by the New York State Senate on June 17. As a National Guard general officer Miller holds both state and federal military rank.

Miller, a two-tour veteran of the War in Iraq, also served as commander of Fort Drum and rear detachment commander of the 10th Mountain while the division headquarters was deployed to Afghanistan in 2010/2011.

"I congratulate Major General Miller upon this well-earned promotion," Governor Cuomo said. "He has served ably both overseas and here at home and I am proud to have an officer of his caliber play a key role in our National Guard. The 42nd Infantry Headquarters is tasked with running the National Guard's response should another natural disaster hit New York and I know Major General Miller will do an excellent job should the situation arise."

Miller, a former member of the New Hampshire Army National Guard, took command of the 42nd Infantry Division in April of this year.

Miller also served as Director of Joint Doctrine, Training, and Force Development (J7) for the National Guard Bureau's Joint staff in Arlington, Va., before serving as Garrison Commander and 10th Mountain Division Rear Detachment Commander at Fort Drum.

From March of 2006 to March of 2007 he served as the senior adviser to Iraqi Security Forces on the Iraq/Iran border where he commanded 11-teams of embedded advisers. From October 2007 to July 2008 he served with the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) as part of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Arabian Peninsula (CJSOTF-AP) where he served as the senior special operations adviser to the Corps Commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I).

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, congratulates Maj. Gen. Harry Miller, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, after he "pinned on" Millers two star rank during a promotion ceremony June 24. Photo by William Albrecht, Joint Force Headquarters.

> "I am proud to have an officer of his caliber play a key role in our National Guard."
>
> *-- Governor Andrew Cuomo*

Miller's military assignments also include service with the 1st Armored Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 1st Special Forces Group.

Miller holds an Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Valley Forge Military Junior College in Wayne Pennsylvania, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, a Masters of Business Administration from Saint Martin's College in Lacey, Washington, and a Masters in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

His military education also includes attendance at the Army Officer Basic and Advanced courses, the Combined Arms Services Staff School, the Command and General Staff College, the Army War College, and the Army's Strategic Leadership and Development Basic and Intermediate courses.

Miller's awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (awarded twice), Bronze Star (awarded twice), Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, and Master Parachutists Badge.

Miller is currently employed as the Executive Director of Veteran's Services for Easter Seals New Hampshire/New England. gt

Rainbow Division Trains Warfighters

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

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. -- Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division headquarters began a corps-level Warfighter training exercise here at the Mission Training Complex (MTC) June 2.

The 42nd Infantry is supporting the California Guard's 40th Infantry Division, as they are evaluated during their Warfighter Exercise (WFX). The WFX is an electronic battle simulation designed to test and evaluate a division staff on all levels of operations, communications, and adaptation on the battlefield.

"The Warfighter places the primary ground units into enemy territory and terrain," said Paul Spivey, a simulation analyst and trainer. "The simulation involves everything from maneuvering forces to securing an objective. We are able to train high-level commanders and staff on many aspects of war strategy."

Arriving at Fort Leavenworth was only half of the training battle for the 42nd "Rainbow" Division.

"We have been preparing for this Warfighter for about a year," said Sgt. Major Edwin Garris, the division Fires Operation Sgt. Major and resident of Buffalo, N.Y. "We needed to work closely with the 40th in order to help them achieve their goal of a successful Warfighter."

Once on the ground, the 42nd Division, now role-playing the X Corps Headquarters, initiated their operational plans using the Army's new collaboration tool, the Command Post of the Future (CPOF). CPOF gives commanders a clear picture of current operations in real time. The CPOF collects data and analyzes the data to produce movement patterns of both friendly and enemy forces as they move across the landscape. Based on that analysis, commanders and staff members plan and execute detailed decisions in less time.

The skills honed at Warfighter make the National Guard combat headquarters more versatile, agile and adaptable; especially for civil support operations that Guardmembers perform during disasters at home, explained Col. John Andonie, the Operations Officer for the 42nd Division.

"Very simply put, the WFX allows us to train on our go-to-war tasks," Andonie said. "Not only is this exercise building a stronger, more relevant organization for the Army, but also for the citizens of our hometowns."

Once the battle commences, operations run 24-hours a day, testing the effectiveness of synchronization within staff sections.

"The training is invaluable," said Maj. Michael Rodriguez, the Battle Major for the WFX and resident of Queens, N.Y. "We are able to hone our skills as a staff."

The WFX also provides interaction with professional role players, ranging from media on the battlefield to civilian leaders to criminal organizations, all while fighting a war with a comparable enemy force. The 42nd is the command and control unit for over 62,000 simulated Soldiers and Airmen on an electronic battlefield. Over 17,000 vehicles and 800 aircraft have to be refueled, supplies coordinated, and food and water transported, even the tons of simulated mail have to be delivered.

In the past, the natural progression is for the division to be evaluated first, and then move up to the corps level, supporting the next division being evaluated. This WFX will challenge the 42nd Division staff first at the corps level, a demanding war simulation at the MTC.

"These exercises refocus us from operation in counter-insurgency back to unified land operations."

-- Brig. Gen. Steven Ferrari, 42nd Infantry Division Deputy Commander

Brig. Gen. Steven Ferrari and staff of the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, discuss strategy using an analog map of the battlefield during the Mission Training Complex warfighter exercise June 12, 2013. The 42nd supported the 40th Infantry Division, California Army National Guard, at the corps level during the exercise.

"We are using this exercise to prepare the division headquarters for our Warfighter next year," said Brig. Gen. Steven Ferrari, the 42nd Infantry Division Deputy Commander and the commanding general for this exercise. "These exercises refocus us from operation in counter-insurgency back to unified land operations."

The 42nd is scheduled to participate in the WFX evaluation in 2014.

"Overall, the division is doing a great job and meeting the training objective," Ferrari said. **gt**

'Fighting 69th' Troops Tackle Squad Stakes

FORT AP HILL, Va.- New York Army National Guard Spc. Nick Bielli and Ayaz Khan, back row left and right respectively, help Spcs. Julio Munoz and Godfrey Zulueta, left and right front respectively, all from 3rd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, conduct a hasty casualty evacuation using an improvised litter during the "Fighting 69th Squad Stakes Competition" medical task station during annual training here July 30. The competition develops esprit-de-corps and camaraderie in a grueling course that tests their mental and physical fitness as they negotiate obstacles and scenarios that involve completion of warrior tasks while maintaining security and movement. The competition started at 5 a.m. with a squad run in full battle gear and a pack inspection to standardize load and equipment for the challenge. The Warrior tasks associated with the lane incorporated "Shoot," "Move," "Communicate," and "Survive" as well as other infantry battle drills (react to contact, establish security, perform actions as a member of a mounted/dismounted patrol and evaluate a casualty). The winning team receives bragging rights as "Best Squad" in the battalion as well as individual "Iron Mike" trophies and recognition from the battalion commander and command sergeant major. Photo by Lt. Col. James Gonyo, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Commander.

Medical Partners in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan--New York Army National Guard Major William Lecates, a doctor assigned to the Medical Command clinic at Watervliet Arsenal, poses with an Afghan physician who runs one of Afghanistan's few dialysis clinics. Lecates, a Cooperstown resident, is the doctor in charge of Troop Medical Clinic 1 at U.S. forces headquarters in Kabul. Courtesy photo.

Combatives
Continued from Page 21

a third-degree black belt in Judo, and competed in the European Tournament

There's nothing complicated about getting to that level, he said.

"My diet is this...if you eat hard, then you have to work out harder," he stressed.

Based on their performance in the tournament, the Soldiers would do well at the All Army National Guard Combative Tournament, Hernandez said. Their talent pool, consists of some national league wrestlers and Ju-jistu practitioners, he added.

"I think we have an absolutely great chance," he said.

Whatever the case, the New York Army National Guard should continue to hold combatives tournaments, said Palmer.

"Competitions like this keep us more fit, and battle-ready to fight the fight," he said.

Competition winners were:

• Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Palmer, middleweight, 466th Area Support Medical Company;

• Staff Sgt. Sean Cronin, cruiserweight, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion;

• Sgt. Joshua Mclean, light-heavyweight, 1427th Transportation Company;

• Sgt. Adama Ilboudo, heavyweight, 719th Transportation Company;

• Capt. Linette Palladino, flyweight; 53rd Digital Liaison Detachment;

• Spc. Arber Ceci, lightweight, 133rd Quartermaster Company;

• And Spc. Andres Diaz, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry. **gt**

New Commander for Orion Special Troops

BUFFALO -- Iraq war veteran Lt. Col. Jamey Barcomb, takes command of the New York Army National Guard's 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion June 22 as he receives the battalion colors from Col. Joseph Biehler, commander of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Barcomb replaces Lt. Col. Michael Murphy, at left, also an Iraq veteran who led the battalion during its 2012 deployment to Kuwait. Barcomb has held positions as a battery fire direction officer, company fire support officer, platoon leader, battalion maintenance officer, battalion fire direction officer, battalion fire support officer, division plans officer, company commander, battalion adjutant, assistant brigade operations officer and division effects officer. His last assignment was the 42d Division Information Operations Officer. Murphy, a full time member of the National Guard, has been selected to attend the prestigious Army War College in Carlisle, Penn. Courtesy photo.

Troops Top off the Tower

BEACON -- Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company complete work on the restored Beacon Fire Tower atop Beacon Mountain. The unit constructed a reproduction ranger cabin next to the tower and put finishing touches on the fire tower, which they restored in 2012 during annual training. Courtesy photo.

Signal Leadership Change

FORT DRUM -- Capt. Ryan Brountas accepts the guidon of the 42nd Infantry Division Signal Company during his assumption of command ceremony here June 19. Photo by Spc. J.P. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

Crushing Rocks

FORT DRUM -- Soldiers of the 204th Engineer Battalion operate their rock quarry here during annual training June 9. Courtesy photo.

Camp Smith Receives New Colors, Shoulder Patch

By Eric Durr, Joint Force Headquarters

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLANDT MANOR --The New York National Guard's historic Camp Smith Training Site now has its own garrison flag and the Soldiers who support the installation are wearing their own distinctive unit patch.

The patch replaces the New York National Guard Joint Force Headquarters patch Soldiers who work at Camp Smith have worn for years. The new flag indicates that Camp Smith is also Training Center Garrison Command: New York.

The new patch and flag mark Camp Smith as a component in the Army National Guard Training Center network that stretches across the country with centers in almost every state.

The 41 Soldiers assigned to run the 1,585 acres of Camp Smith, which first opened as a National Guard training base in 1882, marked the change on Monday June 3 with a flag unfurling and "repatching" ceremony at the training center's highest point overlooking the Hudson River.

The new garrison flag was unfurled by Command Sergeant Major Thomas Seifert and then each Soldier ceremonially traded their old patch for the new one. The Soldiers also had a picnic lunch and shared a cake with a copy of their new flag on it.

The new colors of Camp Smith Training Site are unfurled on the highest point of ground on the post, overlooking the Hudson River, during a special Unit Colors Uncasing and Repatching Ceremony on June 3rd 2013. Camp Smith Post Commander Lt. Col. Robert Epp and Camp Smith Command Sgt. Major Thomas Seifert repatched the Soldiers assigned to Camp Smith with their new unit patch after the colors were uncased. Photo by Chaplain Candidate (1st Lt.) Mark Getman, 3-142nd Aviation.

The change is part of an effort to provide better service to the Guard and other units which Camp Smith and other Army National Guard training centers support. The National Guard started to organize its own network of Training Center Garrison Commands in 2007 and the patch the Camp Smith Soldiers now wear was authorized in 2011.

The first National Guard-wide training session for National Guard Garrison Commanders was held in 2012 in Georgia.

The Active Army created Garrison Commands in 2002 to manage its bases across the United States and around the world. This separate command structure took the burden of running a post like Fort Drum off the shoulders of the major unit commander so that he or she could focus on their mission and training.

The National Guard Training Center system is designed to do the same thing for the National Guard, recognizing that it takes a special kind of expertise when Soldiers are responsible for running a post and training operations on the post, said Lt. Col. Robert Epp, the Camp Smith Commander.

Adopting a garrison flag, and wearing a distinctive patch is a way of building pride in what his Soldiers' do, Epp said.

Camp Smith, which was originally named Camp Townsend and renamed after Governor Al Smith in 1924, has been the New York National Guard's main training facility.

The facility has played host to National Guard Annual Training as well as served as a mobilization facility for the National Guard. Camp Smith has also been used as a command and logistic hub during state responses to disasters ranging from the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 to the response to Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012. **gt**

Command Sgt. Major Thomas Seifert helps place new shoulder insignia of the Camp Smith garrison on Soldiers assigned to the installation here June 3. Photo by Chaplain Candidate (1st Lt.) Mark Getman, 3-142nd Aviation.

Soldiers from the 1156th Engineer Company pause behind the Engineer Castle completed at their Cohoes project site (from left to right: Spc. Maliek Brown, Spc. Lukas Dewitt, Sgt. Kenneth Jones, Spc. Radoslaw Mosiej and Spc. Juan Rocha).

Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company load equipment as part of the final efforts in their community project June 13 to restore a former Erie Canal lock into a public park. The Soldiers provided a week-long effort during annual training each year since 2011 to remove debris from the abandoned lock, overgrown since 1911. Cohoes partnered with the Guard to remove the debris, install drainage and develop a walking path as part of the lock's conversion.

Engineers Finish Work on the Erie Canal

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

COHOES -- After three years of annual training, engineers of the New York Army National Guard 1156th Engineer Company withstood heavy spring rains to put the finishing touches on a community project here June 13 to restore a clearing along the Erie Canal, unused for the past 100 years.

"The city of Cohoes wanted to make this path more accessible to tourists and local residents," said 1st Lt. Nina Vanyo, officer in charge of the project. Vanyo explained that the 1156th Engineers and the Department of Public Works for the City of Cohoes have worked very closely, in order to see the successful completion of this project.

The project first began clearing out the old enlarged Erie Canal near locks 14, 15 and 16 in June 2011. The canal had been abandoned in 1911 and debris growing over the site had made it more like an overgrown jungle, Vanyo said.

The Soldiers provided a week-long effort as part of the unit annual training again to improve the site in 2012, first clearing debris from the canal, then grading and installing drainage along a walkway. Their efforts helped create a public park located on the site of the original Erie Canal.

"The first week of annual training, we go over basic soldiering skills, and things that would help us in a combat environment," Vanyo explained. "The second week, we spend working on projects within the community."

Working very closely with Ed Tremblay, Director of Economic and Community Development, Soldiers from the 1156th spent their final week of training making modifications to the grading of the main road and installed drainage culverts along the pathway. The final work creates a new stone dust trail along the west wall of the canal.

The Cohoes project is an Innovative Readiness Training opportunity for the engineers. IRT projects allow Army National Guard and Army Reserve units the ability to take part in local community projects when the work involves the unit's combat tasks and the job is not something the municipal workforce or a private company would ordinarily be able to do.

"I'd rather my Soldiers do their jobs in the community," said Capt. Daniel Colomb, 1156th Company Commander. "It's great to see a historic area that has been reclaimed by its citizens, and to be a part of it."

Spc. Radoslaw Mosiej, who has been a part of this project for two years as well, acknowledged the desire of the Soldiers working in Cohoes to use their engineering skills whenever practicable.

"I think it's a lot better because we get to give something back to the community, and it's more meaningful for us to be able to see the fruits of our labor," Mosiej said.

The last two days of the project were spent building a brick replica castle, the symbol of Army engineers. This enduring mark left by the 1156th Engineer Company will serve as a reminder of the Army National Guard's role in serving their communities. **gt**

Heckscher State Park, East Islip, N.Y. – Army National Guard Spc. Daniel Alarcon, from Hempstead, N.Y. and assigned to Company F, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, helps prepare food for serving here June 2 during the Army's Philip A. Connelly Food Service Competition. More than a dozen Cooks and Soldiers from the Foxtrot Company's food service section setup their field kitchen and prepared meals for evaluation by a team of Army evaluators. Courtesy photo.

‘Iron Chef’ Competition for Army Guard Cooks

HECKSCHER STATE PARK, EAST ISLIP, N.Y. - New York Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to Company F 427th Brigade Support Battalion based in Farmingdale serve meals for fellow troops here June 2 during the Armys regional Philip A. Connelly Food Service Competition. More than a dozen Cooks and Soldiers from the Foxtrot Company food service section setup their field kitchen and prepared meals for review by a team of Army evaluators (shown observing food preparation in photo at top right). The New York Soldiers were evaluated across ten categories of food service including field storage of rations, food safety, field kitchen setup, appearance and attitude of food service staff, use of cooking equipment, meal service (shown at bottom right) and with the highest weighted grading for meal preparation and quality. Courtesy photos.

'Golden Eagle III' Tests Medical Response

Guard Times Staff

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH -- The New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing tested their capabilities to receive casualties, perform triage and then transport them to local medical centers here during Exercise Golden Eagle III on June 1.

More than 200 Airmen participated in the training, including aeromedical and firefighting personnel of the 105th Airlift Wing. They joined local medical agencies and emergency response representatives, along with members of the 109th Aeromedical Squadron and volunteers of the New York Guard and local Boy Scouts who acted as simulated casualties.

The exercise tests the ability of local medical providers to participate in the National Disaster Medical System in which patients are moved from areas affected by a disaster to other locations. The exercise challenged medical providers with casualty reporting mechanisms, communications between state, local, and federal agencies, exercised the Federal Coordinating Centers which are part of the system and examined safety procedures of participating agencies.

In the drill conducted at Stewart, members of the 105th Airlift Wing assisted in a scenario that involved transporting patients in from a war zone to be treated in Orange County area hospitals.

Participants received aircraft loaded with simulated casualties and carried out the steps to remove and triage casualties from the aircraft before arranging transportation to medical facilities,

The National Disaster Medical System is a federally coordinated system that augments the Nation's medical response capability. The overall purpose of the NDMS is to supplement an integrated National medical response capability for assisting State and local authorities in dealing with the medical impacts of major peacetime disasters and to provide support to the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical systems in caring for casualties evacuated back to the U.S. from overseas armed conventional conflicts. **gt**

New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Paul Dempsey, a fire protection journeyman with the 105th Civil Engineering Squadron and local emergency medical personnel transport a simulated patient from a 109th Airlift Wing C-130 Hercules aircraft during the National Disaster Medical System exercise Golden Eagle III at Stewart Air National Guard Base June 1. The NDMS tests the ability of local medical providers to participate in the movement of patients from areas affected by a disaster to other locations for medical treatment. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

Capt. Rita O'Brian and Tech. Sgt. Joseph Carolan of the 109th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, New York Air National Guard, secure mock victims to stretchers during Exercise Golden Eagle III at Stewart Air National Guard Base, N.Y. June 1. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lee Guagenti, 105th Airlift Wing.

Another Deployment for 107th Airlift Wing

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

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- 107th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard deployed to Southwest Asia in June, marking the second deployment for members of the wing in the past two years.

More than 100 Airmen, from aircraft maintenance and operations squadrons, said good bye to their families and friends in the last week of June. The group is scheduled to be deployed for the next several months. The C-130 was loaded with supplies and equipment and the transport of airmen is scheduled to take two days. Upon arrival into the Area of Responsibility (AOR) the mission is to transport personnel, cargo and conduct medical evacuations. The mission is in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

"Thank you all for stepping up again on this deployment and always doing the good job you do" said Colonel John Higgins, 107th Airlift Wing Commander.

The 107th has an impressive history of providing support for various federal and state contingencies. Over the past two years, members have been involved in state relief efforts for Hurricane Sandy, Irene and Lee. They were also involved heavily in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and continuing support of OEF.

The C-130H2 Hercules primarily performs the tactical portion of the Air Force's airlift mission. It is capable of operating from rough dirt strips and is the prime transport for air dropping cargo into hostile areas.

"This is what I love to do", said Tech Sgt. Anthony Re, 107th C-130 Crew Chief. "This is like the Super Bowl of aircraft maintenance. We train daily for this and now it's time to step up and get the job done."

> "This is like the Super Bowl of aircraft maintenance. We train daily for this and now it's time to step up and get the job done."
>
> *-- Tech Sgt. Anthony Re, 107th C-130 Crew Chief*

In 2005, the 107th and 914th Airlift Wings became the first team to form a tactical airlift Air Reserve Component (ARC) Association between state and federal commands. Team Niagara works together in this association to maintain fly ability of the C-130 H2 aircraft. gt

Family and friends of 107th Airlift Wings members wave goodbye as the C-130 departs the Niagara Falls Reserve Station for deployment to Southwest Asia June 29, 2013 as part of the wing's support to Air Expeditionary Forces. The Airmen and aircrews are expected to redeploy home in the fall.

Airmen of the 107th Airlift Wing deploy to Southwest Asia for the second time in two years on June 29, 2013. Upon arrival into their Area of Responsibility, their mission is to transport personnel, cargo and conduct medical evacuations.

Airmen Train for Base Defense

Story and photo by Senior Airman Eileen Meier, 23d Wing Public Affairs

Airmen with the 820th Combat Operations Squadron and 105th New York Air National Guard Security Forces Squadron re-enact a scenario of quickly evacuating wounded people in combat for the 105th SFS leadership visit at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., June 12, 2013. The 105th SFS augments the 820th BDG by training and deploying downrange together, and every three to four years major command members conduct visits to observe the latest training.

MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – Airmen of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Security Forces Squadron conducted pre-deployment training here June 11-12 under the watchful eyes of their wing and state leadership.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York State, along with U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Verle Johnston, NYANG commander, and Brig. Gen. Anthony German, NYANG chief of staff, visited Moody to observe the training simulations between the 823d Base Defense Squadron and the 105th SFS.

The training is designed to support a 2009 formal agreement, where the 105th SFS augments the 820th Base Defense Group on deployments downrange.

"We're not going to send an Airman downrange who is not fully trained and qualified," said Murphy. "The commitment is to deploy about 30 Airmen in the needed skill sets, for each rotation into theater." Since the agreement four years ago, the 105th SFS and 820th BDG have completed six month rotations downrange, sometimes training for more than five months.

"The 820th BDG and 105th SFS guard units really work well together," said Johnston. "As they both go to each other's sites they build a better, stronger relationship.

The folks have deployed together over the years; it is really working out very nice for both organizations."

For some Airmen with the 105th SFS, this will be their first deployment with the 820th BDG, and some on their first deployment ever.

"This is my first deployment with the 105th and the 820th," said U.S. Air National Guard Staff Sgt. John Bellino, 105th SFS. "We're sending squad after squad pretty regularly, which is pretty unique to our Guard unit.

Other guard units, like maintenance, will have to deploy at some point; but not like the 105th on a regular basis," added Bellino.

As the two units train together, friendships develop into a sense of brotherhood on the battlefield.

"If you train together, you'll fight together. So that is what we try to do," said Johnston.

For the past four years, challenges such as distance and communication have not hindered the mission of the units.

"The (105th SFS) Airmen who participate in training and deployments feel like they are completely integrated and part of the (820th BDG) team," said Johnston.

"It's real serious business out there (downrange), we're really proud of all of you for serving your country," said Murphy.

Many of the 105th Airmen explained the opportunity to train in a situation like this is rare, and they're glad to be here. Moody, however, is the last stop for the 105th SFS before they depart with the 823d BDS downrange. **gt**

Acting Air Force Secretary Visits 106th Rescue Wing

Story by Eric Durr,Guard Times Staff

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Westhampton Beach--The Air Force will make tough financial decisions as the defense budget shrinks, but there will continue to be an important role for the Air National Guard, the Air Force's top civilian leader told members of the 106th Rescue Wing on July 25.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning spoke to 300 members of the 106th Rescue Wing, fielded questions and flew in an HH-60 Pavehawk rescue helicopter from the 101st Rescue Squadron while pararescue jumpers from the 103rd Rescue Squadron demonstrated an ocean rescue. Gabreski was one of three Air National Guard bases Fanning visited in order to educate himself about the role of the Air Guard.

The goal of the visit was to gain first-hand knowledge about Air Guard missions, hear what the Airmen are thinking about, and explain what is going on in Washington in regards to the sequestration, said Maj. Toni Whaley, a spokeswoman for Fanning.

The visit was an opportunity to demonstrate the unique capabilities of the 106th Airmen, said wing commander Col. Tom Owens.

Fanning was originally confirmed as Undersecretary of the Air Force in April 2013 and became acting secretary in June.

He is responsible for the affairs of the Department of the Air Force, including the organizing, training, equipping and welfare of its more than 333,000 men and women on active duty, 178,000 members of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, 182,000 civilians, and their families. He oversees the Air Force's annual budget of more than $110 billion.

In his meeting with Air Guard members in the base's main hanger, Fanning outlined the budget issues facing the Air Force and urged Air Guard members to take sexual assault and harassment issues very seriously.

Even if individual Airmen don't think the service has a problem with sexual assault and harassment there is a perception that a problem exists which means the service must address it, Fanning said. He urged Airmen to report anything they think is wrong and to look out for each other.

The federal budget sequester which forced the Department of Defense to cut $85 billion in spending has forced the Air Force to make hard budget decisions, Fanning said. This included grounding aircraft not slated for deployments and a furlough--forcing employees to take an unpaid day off weekly for six weeks -- of Air National Guard dual-status technicians who are both Guard members and civilian employees.

The U.S. Air Force is still the best Air Force in the world, but readiness will suffer, Fanning said.

He hopes there will be no furlough in the 2014 fiscal year and Congress will allow the Air Force to make smarter spending reductions.

"Our goal for you is to try to get us back to some stability, some new normal, as soon as possible so we can keep faith with you and you can go back to doing the mission," Fanning said.

Acting Secretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning speaks to members of the 106th Rescue Wing during a visit to the unit July 25. Fanning outlined the challenges facing the Air Force and urged all Airmen to combat sexual harassment and assault. Fanning also took questions from the floor during his presentation. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Fanning also said that Air Force leadership is still trying to decide the future of the air rescue role that the 106th Rescue Wing executes. The decision will be based on how the job can be done best, Fanning said.

The Air Force will have to look at shrinking its force in the future, Fanning told the Guard members. But, Fanning emphasized, there will always be a place in the Air Force for people who do a good job and the Air Guard will continue to play a critical role.

"I have never seen Air Force four stars (generals) on active duty so seriously engaged in how we can leverage the Guard and Reserve," Fanning said. "The Guard and Reserve proved themselves in the last 13 years."

Fanning's remarks went a long way towards answering many of the questions the members of the wing have been asking themselves, said Tech Sgt. Keith Gross.

"A lot of important questions got answered," said Gross, a Manorville resident. "It seems like a lot of the questions we have been speculating on were actually brought out and answered."

Senior Master Sgt. Denise O'Donnell, said she was really pleased that the Air Force's top leader took the time to visit.

"He showed his personal side to the Air Force here," O'Donnell said. "He's concerned about everybody, not just the active Air Force, which is good for the Guard." **gt**

Col. Timothy LaBarge, commander of the 105th Airlift Wing welcomes home members of the 105th Base Security Squadron on July 23, after the Airmen returned from an eight month deployment to Afghanistan. Twenty-nine Airmen took part in the mission, the sixth unit deployment to a combat zone.

Airmen from Afghanistan Home in Hudson Valley

Story and photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran,105th Airlift Wing

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH -- **Twenty-nine members of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Base Defense Squadron returned home from an eight-month in Afghanistan July 22-23.**

The Airmen supported Department of Defense security operations in Parwan Province in northwestern Afghanistan. Security Forces members serve as the Air Force's ground combat element, conducting missions in and around facilities to secure them.

Members of the 105th Base Defense Squadron have deployed six times in support of Air Force operations partnering with the 820th Base Defense Group, Moody AFB GA.

Two Stewart Airmen have been presented Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in action and multiple Bronze Stars awarded to squadron members since the unit took on this new mission in 2010.

The Airmen's return was delayed by bad weather and a landing incident involving a Southwest Airlines 737 losing it's front landing gear at LaGuardia Airport. **gt**

Senior NCOs Discuss Air Guard Future

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH - New York Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Anthony German, chief of the air staff, addresses a question about deployments at the third annual NYANG State Command Chief Master Sergeant's Enlisted Call here July 17. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

EADS Welcomes New Canadian Det Commander

Story and photo by Tim Jones, EADS

ROME -- The Canadian Forces Detachment at the Eastern Air Defense Sector officially changed commanders on June 20 during a formal ceremony here at the New York Air National Guard facility.

Lt. Col. Kyle Paul assumed command from Lt. Col. David Pletz, who finished his two-year tour of duty as Canadian Detachment Commanding Officer. Paul'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. Dawne Deskins, EADS Commander. "On behalf of the unit, I want to welcome Lt. Col. Paul and his family to EADS and thank Lt. Col. Pletz and his family for their service and wish them well in their new assignment."

A formal change-of-command ceremony is a long-standing Canadian military tradition marking the public transfer of command responsibilities. Canadian Lt. Gen. J.A.J. Parent, Deputy Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), based in Peterson AFB, Colo., presided over the ceremony.

The two officers used a ceremonial hockey stick as a symbol of the transfer of command, adding humor to the transfer of command.

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

"Canadian Forces personnel are a critical part of EADS daily operations and play an essential role in protecting the North American airspace,"

-- Col. Dawn Deskins, Commanders, Eastern Air Defense Sector

Canadian Forces Lt. Col. Kyle Paul, right, receives the "ceremonial" change-of-command hockey stick from outgoing Canadian Detachment Commander Lt. Col. Dave Pletz on June 20. The NORAD Deputy Commander, Lt. Gen. J.A.J. Parent presided over the ceremony.

EADS Weapons Course Graduate

Story and photo by Tim Jones, EADS

ROME -- Tech. Sgt. Matthew Cummings of Rome graduated in early June from the prestigious Advanced Weapons Director Course at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

The 16-week course featured nearly 200 hours of classroom instruction, 10 written examinations and a series of graded exercises that required detailed planning and the control of multiple aircraft. One of the most difficult Air Force courses to be selected for - only 10 percent of the weapons directors in the service have completed the course - Cummings was the only Air National Guardsmen in his class.

"On behalf of the entire unit, I want to congratulate Tech. Sgt. Cummings," said Col. Dawne L. Deskins, EADS Commander. "Graduating from a school as selective and difficult as the Advanced Weapons Director Course is an impressive achievement and it's indicative of the highly-professional, highly-trained force we have here at EADS."

The course trains students to learn the art of battle-space dominance. Graduates are familiar not just with weapons systems, but also in how all USAF and DOD assets can be employed to achieve effects.

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

Disaster Training Includes New York Air Guard

Story by Staff Sgt. Megan Burnham, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Wisconsin Army National Guard

VOLK FIELD, WIS. -- With temperatures and humidity soaring, elements of the New York Air National Guard joined more than 2,000 Soldiers, Airmen and civilian first responders to participate in a disaster training exercise at Volk Field and Fort McCoy, Wis., July 15-20.

Approximately 50 Army and Air National Guard units, including the 106th Rescue Wing and 105th Airlift Wing, joined a total of 26 states participating in Patriot Exercise 2013, an annual joint-service exercise that tests their ability to assist local and state first responders contending with multiple emergencies. The goal is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each agency's current response plans.

Patriot 2013 is a milestone for the exercise, which has been conducted at Volk Field for approximately 10 years. This year marks it as the National Guard's first Joint National Training Capability-accredited exercise, putting it on par with such major active duty exercises as Ardent Sentry and Red Flag.

For the past 12 years, the National Guard has dramatically enhanced its warfighting abilities to support combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. But less-acknowledged is the Guard's additional role: helping save lives within their state.

The National Guard is at the forefront of many disaster relief operations, most recently its responses to Hurricane Sandy and the Boston Marathon bombing, as well as wildfire and flood rescue operations. Being ready and available to help support their state respond to any kind of emergency is just as important as supporting combat operations overseas.

One exercise conducted by the New York Air National Guard's 106th Civil Engineering Squadron, simulated a variety of road obstructions to include a washed out road from a flood and fallen trees blocking transportation.

"It's a rewarding career field because we leave the place actually nicer than the way we found it," said Senior Master Sgt. William Connolly of the 106th Rescue Wing's CES.

The unit has prior experience in responding to a natural disaster as they were called to assist in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. Connolly commented on the benefit of participating in a joint exercise as the scenarios and working with other organizations will be similar.

"It will be a seamless transition when we are mobilized," said Connolly.

Supporting domestic operations requires a different mindset than most military members are familiar -- instead of leading operations, they take on a support role aiding the rescue efforts led by civilian emergency managers.

Lt. Col. Saul Hage, Patriot 2013 exercise director, said the National Guard has a host of different capabilities to provide emergency support to civilian rescue efforts. The Patriot exercise provides a venue, he said, tailored to train Guard Soldiers and Airmen to support any hazard that might come along, using the unique equipment and personnel they possess. It's a bottom-up approach that allows participating units to request what types of emergency response they would like to train.

"We don't like to sit there and say just one event [might happen] because as we've seen in our nation, anything can happen at any time,"

Tech. Sgt. Andrew Cruciani, 106th Civil Engineering Squadron, New York Air National Guard, saws a fallen tree during a route clearing exercise at Volk Field in Camp Douglas, Wis., July 15. Photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Burnham, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

Senior Airman Sergey Klebleyev, from the New York Air National Guard's 106th Civil Engineering Squadron, clears a fallen tree during a route clearing exercise at Volk Field in Camp Douglas, Wis., July 15. The domestic response exercise included National Guard and Reserve units from 26 states and local civilian agencies. Photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Burnham, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

A team of New York Air National Guardsmen from the 105th Airlift Wing ready their C-17 for flight at Volk Field in Camp Douglas, Wis., July 16. Photo by Pfc. Christopher Enderle, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

"We don't like to sit there and say just one event [might happen] because as we've seen in our nation, anything can happen at any time. We want to be ready for anything."

-- Lt. Col. Saul Hage, Patriot 2013 exercise director

Hage said. "We want to be ready for anything."

The intent of this year's scenario was to create an emergency situation that quickly overwhelmed local and state response agencies, forcing state government officials to call up the National Guard to support civilian response efforts. In this case, exercise disasters started with tornadoes that devastated two Wisconsin cities, while a terrorist organization simultaneously launches a cyber-, radiological- and conventional-based attack.

The exercise had civilian and military personnel searching for victims, decontaminating residents and neighborhoods, transporting patients and conducting site recovery command and control.

This year's exercise marks the first time that elements of the U.S. Army Reserve have participated in the exercise. Last year, the Secretary of Defense authorized Reserve forces to be called up to active duty at the request of a state governor to aid in emergency operations.

Civilian agencies involved in the training included: the Northeast Wisconsin Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team, the Lacrosse Hazardous Materials Response Team, the State of Wisconsin Radiation Protection System and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Just as important are the communications and command functions. National Guard commanders and leaders learn to communicate effectively with their civilian counterparts, who have developed similar response tactics but have differences that can cause delays -- delays that could cost people their lives.

Standard Operating Procedures and regulations dictate how military personnel respond to an emergency; civilian first responders use best practices encapsulated in the Incident Command System guidelines produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Both sides learn to adapt to and incorporate those different guidelines in their own operations to improve their efficiency.

Volk Field is one of only four Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Centers in the nation which provides a year-round integrated training environment with state-of-the-art facilities for units to enhance their combat capabilities and readiness. **gt**

New York Air National Guard Capt. Paul Sloan and 1st Lt. Joshua Early of the 137th Air Lift Squadron of the 105th Airlift Wing , prepare flight controls before take off from Volk Air Field, Wis., July 16. Numerous states joined forces at Volk Air Field for the Patriot Excercise 2013. Photo by Pfc. Christopher Enderle, 112th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

174th Leader Recognized in Syracuse

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Catherine Hutson, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE-- Hancock Field and Community leaders gathered together on April 24 to recognize leaders selected by Leadership Greater Syracuse (LGS) during their annual Distinguished Community Leader Awards luncheon. This is the first year LGS selected an Alumni Achievement award winner nominated by fellow LGS graduates.

Lt. Col. Edward Cook was selected from the pool of candidates. Cook, 174th Logistics Readiness Squadron Commander, is a LGS 2010 graduate who actively gives back to the Syracuse area.

During his acceptance speech Cook reflected on the day that the 174th Fighter Wing Commander, Major General Knauff, recommended he consider helping out the Salvation Army Christmas Bureau Committee back in 1998. He remarked to the crowd, "if anyone here knows General Knauff, you know you cannot turn him down."

This opportunity was the beginning of Cook's tenure as the logistics lead for all food and toy distribution. Over the past 15 years more than 87,000 children have benefited from his leadership during this huge annual holiday event.

In addition to his involvement with the Salvation Army, Cook is also an ARISE Foundation Board Member and the Chair of the Annual Giving Committee. To date, he and his colleagues have raised over $52,000 to expand the non-profit therapeutic horse riding program.

Charity work has become a family activity as Cooks' wife Svea and children Teddy and Emily are routinely involved in the ARISE and Salvation Army events.

Members of the New York National Guard may recognize that Lt. Col. Cook was selected as the 2012 New York State Organized Militia Colonel Governour Morris Award recipient for outstanding support to the National Guard and the local community.

His military accomplishments include deploying eight times in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, Southern Watch and Noble Eagle. He was recently awarded the prestigious Bronze Star for his service as the Logistics (J4) Director, Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command- Afghanistan.

Cook was the Top Air Graduate from the United Kingdom Joint Advanced Command and Staff College, a graduate from the Central New York Political Leadership Institute and long-time Base Honor Guard Commander.

When asked about the importance of the LGS Alumni Achievement Award he stated that he was honored to be recognized and to represent the 174th Attack Wing's contributions to our neighbors. He humbly pointed out that, "most people will get involved when afforded the opportunity. I encourage everyone to grab the guy next to them and get them involved. It quickly becomes an integral part of life!" **gt**

Lt. Col. Edward Cook (right) poses with fellow recipients of the Leadership Greater Syracuse (LGS) Distinguished Community Leader Awards during a ceremony held on April 25, 2013. Lt. Col. Cook is the Logistics Readiness Squadron Commander for the 174th Attack Wing, Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, Syracuse, New York, and was a LGS 2010 graduate.

Members of the 106th Rescue Wing take part in a 5k run around FS Gabreski to raise awareness for Sexual Assault Awareness Month April 7. Photo by Sr. Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Wing Observes Sexual Assault Awareness With 5K

by Tech. Sgt. Monica Dalberg, 106 Rescue Wing

FS GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Airmen of the 106th Rescue Wing here took time out from their April drill to participate in a 5k walk/run that featured costumed members toting cumbersome items - all in an effort to shed light on a weighty issue, Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Nationally recognized, SAAM is an annual opportunity to highlight and promote Department of Defense and Service policies addressing sexual assault prevention and response, according to the DoD website. The policies are in place to establish a climate of education and training to create an environment in which sexual assault and attitudes that promote it are not tolerated; to ensure victims receive needed support; and to ensure offenders are held accountable.

> "It brings light to a serious situation. Making it fun makes more people want to participate, have an interest in it and be aware of it."
>
> *-- Airman 1st Class Marissa Mugavero, 106th Logistics Readiness Squadron.*

Col. Thomas Owens II, 106th Rescue Wing Commander, stood before members to thank them for taking part in the walk/run. He emphasized the importance of Airmen being respectful to one another in defense of the country. Owens also stressed in order to be a strong fighting force, Airmen must be good wingmen.

Capt. Linda Varela, 106th RQW deployment officer, is the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, and responsible for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program. According to Varela, sexual assault is a problem in the military and there are more bystanders than victims. Varela stated education will help people recognize a sexual assault, become proactive, and intervene to stop it.

"You bring a different mix to the table so it's not white noise anymore," Varela said of the program, referring to walkers and runners clad in wigs, capes, and pajama pants for the walk/run. Others lugged loaded backpacks while taking their turns ferrying a telephone pole, large rocks, and mannequins on stretchers along the 5K route.

Varela was pleased with the enthusiasm and turnout of members and looks forward to more events to bring attention to sexual assault prevention and response.

"It brings light to a serious situation," said Airman 1st Class Marissa Mugavero, 106th Logistics Readiness Squadron. "Making it fun makes more people want to participate, have an interest in it and be aware of it." **gt**

Guard Volunteers Assist in Disaster Training

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH -- New York Guard Staff Sgt. Masi triages a mock victim during Exercise Golden Eagle III at Stewart Air National Guard Base, N.Y. June 1, 2013. Members of the New York Guard regularly provide augmentation to training exercises on the Air National Guard base. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lee Guagenti, 105th Airlift Wing.

New York Naval Militia

Breaking in New Boat Crews

FIRE ISLAND-- Members of the New York Naval Militia take a break during boat coxswain training off Long Island on Wednesday, June 26 aboard Patrol Boat 280. Shown are (left rear) Petty Officer 3 Antonia Ribeiro, (right rear) Petty Officer 2 Mayerlinkow Theus, (from left middle row) Petty Officer 1 Charles Golding, Petty Officer 1 Ariel Gutierrez, Petty Officer 2 Paul LaLanne, and Senior Chief Charles Dick. Chief Bill Towart is kneeling in the middle. Courtesy photo.

Airmen Buy, Build Bikes for Donation

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

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA -- The 109th Airlift Wing helped further its mentoring program for area schoolchildren here June 10 with the purchase and delivery of four new bicycles and helmets to support children in need at the Yates Arts in Education Magnet Elementary School in Schenectady N.Y.

Capt. Matthew Sala, a pilot and Senior Airman Nick O'Neil, a load master, both with the 139 Airlift Squadron helped to deliver the bikes in support of the Airlift Wing's mentoring program. In addition to the new bikes, they also delivered four gently used bikes for the same program. The new bikes were purchased with volunteer money from the 109th Aircrew Life Equipment shop, the 139 Airlift Squadron Flight Engineer shop, the 109th All-Ranks Club and the 109th Alumni Association.

In total, 109th Airlift Wing donated eight brand new and four gently used bikes in the 2012-2013 school year supporting the Positive Behavior In School program at Yates. Other bikes were donated earlier this school year by the 109th Chief's Council, the 139AS Load Master Shop and the 139AS Pilot Shop.

In addition to providing donations to the school, the 109th Airlift Wing participates in a one-on-one reading program as part of the mentoring program, the highlight of the 10-year relationship between the Airlift Wing and the school. **gt**

Capt. Mattew Sala, a 139th Airlift Squadron pilot and Senior Airman Nick O'Neil, a 139th loadmaster together purchased and delivered four brand new bicycles and helmets to the Yates Elementary School in support of the 109th Airlift Wing's mentoring program for local schoolchildren June 10. Photo by Lt. Col. Matthew LeClair, 109th Airlift Wing.

Veterans Writing Project

Building Resiliency with Words

By Maj. Benjamin Tupper, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM -- There are a growing number of writers among members and veterans of the New York Army and Air National Guard. These writers are discovering that sharing their time in uniform is both a therapeutic and resilience building experience. They join a growing trend among military service members and veterans who have found that writing is enriching, enjoyable, and in many cases, can help heal the scars caused by time spent at war.

Tamara Gabbard, who served as a sergeant in the 42nd Infantry Division, has joined this wave of veterans-turned-writers. For Gabbard, a combat veteran of Afghanistan, writing is a healthy outlet for processing many of her challenging life and military experiences.

"The only true therapy I know is writing. It keeps me away from judgment while still allowing me to vent, create, and express myself genuinely" Gabbard said.

From college campuses to active duty Army bases like Fort Drum, groups of Soldiers and former Soldiers like Gabbard are joining together to share stories and experiences, support each other's writing goals, and hone their writing skills.

Soldiers picking up the pen come from a wide spectrum of military positions, from infantrymen to medics to truck drivers. They are equally diverse in their writing skills, some having no formal training or education, while others having studied and experienced writing in college settings. Regardless of what skills these veterans bring to the task, the fact is that they all have stories worth telling, and the audience wishing to listen and learn is large and growing.

Fortunately for these upstart authors of poetry, short stories and novels, a myriad of outlets exist to share their written efforts. One of the most prominent places for up and coming military writers is The Sandbox, an internet military blog that has a large and faithful readership for its diverse pool of veteran contributors. Another great web based resource for up and coming veteran writers is the Veterans Writing Project, whose mission is simply stated front and center on its webpage: "we believe that every veteran has a story".

The Doonesbury Sandbox is a forum for military members, veterans, or spouses to reflect on deployments -- the everyday, the extraordinary, the wonderful, the messed-up, or the absurd. Writing submissions can be offered at http://doonesbury.slate.com/media/contact. The site is an outlet for the Veterans Writing Project, a Washington DC non-profit that offers no-cost writing seminars and workshops for veterans, service members, and military families.

Since 2010, Syracuse University has hosted the Syracuse Veterans' Writing Group. This group is open to any veteran, and many of the participants are not students, nor have they ever studied writing. Founded by Associate Professor of Writing Eileen Schell, the group brings together veterans of many wars and many backgrounds once a month to share their writing, and develop their skills.

"Writing is an active and reflective process that allows veterans to create and make sense of their own narratives about war and military service. Writing also allows veterans to tell their own stories in their own words and avoid being sucked into the scripted, often dramatic and stereotypical narratives put on them by journalists, Hollywood directors, and an unaware citizen public" Schell said.

Regardless of the group or venue, members of the New York National Guard who decide to pick up the pen are likely to find that writing has the same therapeutic results as it did for former Soldiers like Tamara Gabbard, who credit writing as an effective tool for processing the memories and challenges faced in her the life as a Soldier.

Contact The Sandbox at http://gocomics.typepad.com/the_sandbox/ and the Veterans Writing Project at http://veteranswriting.org/.

Contact the Syracuse Veterans Writing Group at http://wrt.syr.edu/syrvetwriters/ gt

Families Decorate Armory for Armed Forces Day

TROY -- Ava Murphy, above, daughter of Joanne Murphy, and Christina Tygert help as members of the New York National Guard Youth Program plant a rainbow of red geraniums, yellow marigolds and blue lobelias May 18 at the armory of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters. Below, Ava Murphy and Anastasia Prince, daughter of Marisol Bonilla, help with the planting. The Youth Program supports children of military members and planted flowers in Troy and in Latham to celebrate Armed Forces Day. Photos by Spc. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

Chris Morton (left) assistant curator at the New York State Military Museum and another museum employee hang a painting as they prepare the new "Empire for Union" exhibit. The new exhibit, opened as the nation marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, tells the story of New York in the Civil War. Photo by Paul Fanning, Friends of the Military Museum.

Museum Opens Civil War Exhibit

By Eric Durr, Joint Force Headquarters

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- As the nation marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg this summer, a new exhibit has opened at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs which tells the story of New Yorkers in the Civil War.

The exhibit chronicles the role that the state's 460,000 Soldiers, Sailors, citizens and industry played to save the Union. It features 100 artifacts, photographs, and pictures from the museum's extensive collection.

The exhibit, "Empire for Union" will be a permanent part of the museum, but artifacts will rotate annually. The museum's collection dates back to 1863 when state officials began collecting items highlighting New York's involvement in the war.

Today, 150 years later, the state has the most extensive collection of Civil War battle flags in the country along with other items to include:

- A Confederate Soldier's body armor salvaged from the battlefield at Gettysburg;
- The guidon of the 125th New York State Volunteer Infantry carried at Gettysburg by Pvt. William Mullin when a Confederate bullet smashed the flag-pole as he held it;
- The coat worn by Mechanicville, N.Y. native Col. Elmer Ellsworth when he was shot by a Confederate sympathizer at the start of the Civil War;
- A Scottish regiment dress uniform, with kilt and Glengarry cap of the 79th Regiment from New York City;
- And a cloth stained with President Abraham Lincoln's blood following his assassination at Ford's Theater.

The exhibit will focus on six major themes, the run-up to the Civil War and a summary of the major events of each year, 1861 through the war's end in 1865.

For example, more than 23,000 New York Soldiers fought at the three-day battle of Gettysburg, a quarter of the total strength of the Union Army of the Potomac.

These New York Soldiers served in 68 infantry regiments, one separate infantry battalion, seven cavalry regiments, a cavalry company, 16 artillery batteries and four companies of sharpshooters.

By the end of the battle 994 New Yorkers were killed, 4,069 were wounded, and 1,753 were missing or captured, many of whom were among the unknown dead or died later in prison. **gt**

Air Guard Making a Difference in their Communities

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH -- New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Marc Muniz, an aerospace medical technician with the 105th Medical Group, donates the gift of life via Alyx Component Collection System here July 3. Alyx safely collects double the amount of red blood cells versus a regular whole blood donation. The 105th Airlift Wing community is a consistent supporter of the New York Blood Service in the Hudson Valley. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

CALVERTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, LONG ISLAND - Members of the 106th Rescue Wing Honor Guard stand at attention during honors at a military funeral here June 25. Members of the wing honor guard support military funerals at the nearby national cemetery. Photo by Sr. Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

KIMES