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[Maloney presents Purple Heart to Korean War vet:](#)
Midhudsonnews.com: Sept. 6, 2013

105th Airlift Wing

Stewart Air National Guard team honored

Daily Freeman: August 31, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

NEW WINDSOR, N.Y. — The members of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Air and Ground Operations Response Team have received the Air National Guard Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award.

The award recognizes the work that the team, based at the Stewart Air National Guard Base in New Windsor, performed during deployments to Afghanistan and during the Guard's response to Superstorm Sandy in the fall of 2012.

The Air and Ground Operations Response Team is trained to coordinate air cargo operations and quickly move supplies on and off aircraft in a combat environment.

During a deployment in Afghanistan last year, the team trained International Security Assistance Force personnel in loading and unloading cargo aircraft at forward-operating locations. It also designed aerial port of debarkation loading and unloading procedures at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, a major coalition forces installation, which reduced air cargo idle time by 45 percent.

The experience the team gained in Afghanistan was put to good use in the wake of Sandy when the Stewart Air National Guard base became the hub of national-level efforts to ship utility repair equipment and vehicles into the Northeast from other parts of the country.

The team handled a 600 percent increase in normal cargo flow into the base in the storm's aftermath.

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/articles/2013/08/31/news/doc52215d29d2d5e629917272.txt>

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Stewart Air Guard members recognized

**Mid-Hudson News: August 30, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

TOWN OF NEWBURGH – The members of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Air and Ground Operations Response Team have received the Air National Guard Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award. The award recognizes the work team members at the Stewart Airport Air Guard Base performed during deployments to Afghanistan and during the Guard's response to Hurricane Sandy in the fall of 2012.

The Air and Ground Operations Response Team is trained to coordinate air cargo operations and quickly move supplies on and off aircraft in a combat environment.

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The experience the team gained in Afghanistan was put to good use in the wake of Hurricane Sandy when the Stewart Air National Guard base became the hob of national-level efforts to ship utility repair equipment and vehicles into the northeast from other parts of the country.

The team handled the 600 percent increase in normal cargo flow into the base without incident.

“If everyone is doing a little bit and supplementing the city’s efforts – and we are making a big effort picking up trash six days a week downtown, we have a street cleanup guy five days a week in downtown, we have street sweeping on a regular basis downtown – now the merchants have to make another extra effort over and above and I think you will see some change,” DeStefano said.

Among other recommendations to make the corridor more appealing to customers was to remove large signs that covered store windows. DeStefano also said the BID was going to purchase a special machine next year to remove unsightly chewing gum from sidewalks.

http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/August/30/AirNG_AGORT-30Aug13.html

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Local Air National Guard Members Recognized for Excellence in Afghanistan and Hurricane Sandy Response

**BlackAnthem.com: Sept. 1, 2013:
Sep 06, 2013**

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURG, NY - The team of New York Air National Guard members responsible for organizing cargo operations at the 105th Airlift Wing has been recognized by the Air National Guard.

The members of the 105th' Air and Ground Operations Response Team received the Air National Guard Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award at a ceremony held here earlier this week.

The award recognizes the work team members performed during deployments to Afghanistan and here at home during the New York National Guard response to Hurricane Sandy in the fall of 2012.

The Air and Ground Operations Response Team, or AGORT, is trained to coordinate air cargo operations and quickly move supplies on and off of aircraft in a combat environment.

During a deployment to Afghanistan last year the team played a major role in training International Security Assistance Force personnel in loading and unloading cargo aircraft at forward operating locations. They also designed aerial port of debarkation loading and unloading procedures at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan-a major coalition forces installation-which reduced air cargo idle time by 45 percent.

Higher headquarters inspectors declared the Camp Bastion air cargo operation run by the 105th Airlift Wing members the best in the Area of Operations and estimated they saved almost \$20 million by reducing backlogs in the cargo handling system.

The team was also credited with keeping 99 percent of the 122 airfield vehicles they managed running, reducing safety violations, moving 13.6 million pounds of cargo and 60,381 passengers in six months, and coordinating a swap of Spanish helicopters and 6.7 million pounds of cargo ahead of schedule.

The experience the team gained in Afghanistan was put to good use in the wake of Hurricane Sandy when Stewart Air National Guard base became the hub of national-level efforts to ship utility repair equipment and vehicles into the northeast from other parts of the county.

The team handled the 600 percent increase in normal cargo flow into the base without incident. They oversaw the recovery and launch of 36 heavy cargo planes in less than 60 hours, unloaded 98 large utility vehicles and 2.6 million pounds of cargo and 800 civilian and military responders to the disaster from federal agencies.

At the same time the 105th Airlift Wing sent unit members into the New York City and Long Island area to assist with relief operations and served as a transit point for other New York Air National Guard elements moving to assist in the storm response.

http://www.blackanthem.com/News/Military_News_1/Local-Air-National-Guard-Members-Recognized-for-Excellence-in-Afghanistan-and-Hurricane-Sandy-Response25801.shtml

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174th Attack Wing

Too Long At The Fair

Esquire.com: Sept. 3, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

As it happens, we made our annual trip to the New York State Fair this weekend. I watched some very enthusiastic, if less than artistic, amateur boxing. Among the other delights, including Doc Baker's Famous Cornell Chicken, we saw the New York Air National Guard's special exhibit of Freedom Missiles.

That there on the left is your Hellfire. Parents had their children pose with these. (In, say, Pakistan, children have less of a choice about getting close to these things.) On the whole, I much rather preferred the dairy barn. We are a very strange country.

<http://www.esquire.com/blogs/politics/missiles-new-york-state-fair-090313>

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Counter Drug Task Force

Schoharie County Sheriff's department looks for marijuana plants

YNN: Sept. 4, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

If you were in Schoharie County Wednesday, you may have noticed a helicopter circling above. The Sheriff's department with help from the National Guard Counter Drug Task Force was on the hunt for marijuana plants. YNN's Maria Valvanis fills us in on what they found.

SCHOHARIE COUNTY, N.Y. -- "Much easier doing it from the air, much easier to spot in the air," said Tony Desmond.

That's why Schoharie County Sheriff Tony Desmond called in the National Guard Counter Drug Task Force to help him and his deputies spot marijuana plants.

Desmond said, "We have tips come in just about once a day, I would say."

"They look for it and if they find it, they'll mark it for eradication and someone will come in later to dispose of it or they'll call for back up on the ground," said Tech Sergeant Catharine Schmidt.

On Wednesday, crews spotted plants about a mile into the woods in Esperance. Directions to the plants were relayed to deputies on the ground.

"Chop that marijuana down," said Desmond.

Deputies returned from the woods with 29 plants.

Desmond said, "We'll hold on them, keep them for evidence and hopefully get some information."

And the ride above also brought along information of where more people are harvesting.

"We do have more that we can eradicate, but it's going to take time because the location is a little more difficult to get to, a little more further from the road, and it will take more than a four-wheeler to get back there," said Desmond.

The Sheriff says he believes marijuana is the number one problem in the county when it comes to illegal substances.

"As you know, the county is a very rural county and there's a lot of forest lands and remote lands," Desmond said.

"Just to keep drugs off the streets, out of the schools and this is just one of the ways of doing it," said Schmidt.

<http://hudsonvalley.ynn.com/content/news/694791/schoharie-county-sheriff-s-department-looks-for-marijuana-plants/>

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Schoharie County deputies flying on pot-eradication missions

**WNYT: Sept. 4, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

SHARON - Deputies were standing by as an Army National Guard helicopter flew into the Sharon Airport Wednesday morning.

Their shared mission -- search from the air for marijuana.

"I would dare say that marijuana is the biggest thing in the county as far as illegal substances," said Schoharie County Sheriff Tony Desmond.

The sheriff says they've been working with the National Guard on these search flights for several years. Sometimes they play a hunch, but often they have an idea where to look before they take off.

"We have tips that come in just about one a day," Desmond said. "People find it out in the fields. They hear people talk about it and they will call us and give us the information."

Often the marijuana is planted and cultivated on state land or property that has been abandoned.

That may mean the pot farmer isn't caught, but his crop ends up going up in smoke -- and not in the way it was intended.

Desmond said deputies found and eradicated 21 marijuana plants in Esperance. They also spotted about 50 additional plants at an undisclosed location that they plan to go after.

<http://wnyt.com/article/stories/S3148953.shtml?cat=300>

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Emergency Response

CAPITAL REGION: Disaster drill fitting after train wrecks

**Daily Gazette: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

Canadian firefighters had their hands full after a freight train carrying crude oil derailed in Quebec on July 6, setting a town on fire and killing dozens of people.

In its aftermath, U.S. officials called for more oversight on train cars used to carry fuels and federal regulators issued a rule aimed at preventing entire trains from rolling downhill.

While officials talked about political and administrative remedies to prevent a similar disaster in the U.S., members of the military were donning biological hazard suits and practicing what they'd do in the event of a Quebec-like disaster.

About 500 soldiers descended downstate in Westchester County for a weekend of training in the second week of August, an event U.S. Army Lt. Col. Aron Sacchetti said was planned long before Schenectady and Montgomery counties saw three trains derail, and before the deadly disaster in Canada.

A mess the size of the July 6 train derailment is but one of numerous scenarios the Homeland Response Force for FEMA Region II practices for. These members of the National Guard and Air National Guard are the ones who would respond to the Capital Region in the event a freight train toppled and exploded in a populated area.

“We chose that scenario last fall, and in the time since, there have been half a dozen significant train incidents from New Jersey to Quebec,” said Sacchetti, the Troy-based executive officer for the FEMA Region II Homeland Response Force.

Locally, a mobile home community — and Glenville’s drinking water supply wells — were threatened when Pan Am/Guilford Rail employees lost control of a freight train that rolled downhill and crashed just feet from homes in February.

Months later, two CSX freight trains derailed near the Mohawk River in Montgomery County just west of Fonda on June 27. Officials have said no hazardous materials aside from diesel fuel were spilled, but one freight car landed on Route 5. The derailment left that portion of Route 5 shut down for weeks. It reopened temporarily this week.

Luckily, there were no fires reported in either derailment.

The Homeland Response Force consists of members of the Troy-based 42nd Infantry Division headquarters; the 104th Military Police Battalion from Kingston; the 222nd Chemical Company from Fort Hamilton; New York City-based New York Guard volunteers of the 88th Brigade; and Air National Guard medical personnel and military security from the New Jersey National Guard.

The derailment exercise at the Westchester County Fire Training Center was timely enough to receive promotion by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who issued a news release to demonstrate New York state's efforts to prepare for the worst.

"Training our soldiers and first responders before a disaster strikes is a top priority when it comes to keeping New Yorkers safe," Cuomo said in the release. "Recent years have shown us the need to prepare for the unthinkable or unlikely, and exercises like this are an important step toward building a world-class emergency response network that is ready for any crisis."
WHAT'S BURNING?

A mangled mess of steel containers and flames puts one critical team first on the scene because it's unclear in the immediate aftermath of a derailment what was on the train to begin with. Answering that question falls on the "civil support team," Sacchetti said.

He described this team's capabilities as "highly technical." They are on call full-time throughout the year and bring the ability to identify the vast majority of agents, or chemicals, that might be on a train.

They have an advanced team that aims for a 90-minute response time in FEMA's Region II, which covers all of New York and New Jersey, in addition to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The entire team of more than 20 experts to be on a scene, when needed, within three hours.

"Very quickly we do have an ability to identify what an agent is," Sacchetti said.

The August training scenario entailed noxious chemicals, so soldiers had to gear up with hazardous-material suits to do their work.

Often, the military trains for incidents considered a primary goal of terrorists — dropping some radioactive material to contaminate multiple victims. But Sacchetti said even accidents can require a full response by the Homeland Response Force.

He said there doesn't appear to be any focus on the part of regulators to govern what is stored where with trains — so it's just as likely a tanker with flammables can be sitting in front of a tanker full of garbage, fuel for the flammables if they catch fire.

"Which is kind of why we are preparing for these types of events. They could happen and could very quickly take on catastrophic characteristics," he said.

Sacchetti said the Homeland Response Force has three primary missions when it responds to a massive disaster: save lives, protect property and mitigate suffering.

There's already a chain of contact between local first responders and officials higher up, including the Homeland Response Force, but Sacchetti said officials are eyeing "more robust training" between local and military first responders.

"It's continually evolving, and we're definitely going in the right direction for being better prepared," Sacchetti said.

http://www.dailygazette.net/standard/ShowStoryTemplate.asp?Path=SCH/2013/09/05&ID=Ar01300&Section=Local_News

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Joint Force Headquarters

New York National Guard team participates in 'Cyber Spear' computer security exercise in Arkansas

**Defense Visual Information Distribution System: Sept. 4, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

LATHAM, N.Y. - A team of New York Army and Air National Guard computer security specialists will be participating in a two-week-long cyber security exercise being conducted by the National Guard in Arkansas.

Known as Cyber Spear, the exercise will bring together National Guard computer security specialists from approximately 25 states at the National Guard's Professional Education Center in Little Rock Arkansas.

The exercise begins Sept. 9 and ends Sept. 20.

Seven New York National Guard members – four from the Army National Guard and three from the Air National Guard – will participate in the training.

The goal of the exercise is to allow National Guard Computer Network Defense teams from around the country to learn from each other and practice dealing with the kinds of threats National Guard computer networks face from hackers as well as a myriad of other threats, said Maj. James Keller, the head of the New York National Guard's Computer Network Defense Team.

The Guardsmen will refine standard operating procedures and tactics techniques and procedures for dealing with threats to the computer network and hone their skills by running around the clock exercises to defend against network attacks as well as other incidents, Keller said.

Since the participants are coming from many different states, and from both the Army and Air National Guard, the two-week exercise will help build relationships that will enable Guard technology experts to learn best practices from each other, Keller said.

One of the advantages the National Guard brings to the armed forces effort to secure its computer networks is the outside, civilian experience that traditional National Guard members bring with them, not to mention the fact that the full time members also have access to industry recognized certifications, Keller said.

Keller, for example, is an IT Director for an insurance company in his civilian job.

Read more: <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/113065/new-york-national-guard-team-participates-cyber-spear-computer-security-exercise-arkansas#ixzz2e0zpVy7M>

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New York Air National Guard

SCHAGHTICOKE : Up close with the Air National Guard

Daily Gazette: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

One side of the Air National Guard's Mobile Experience booth looks much like a kitchen that could be found in any residence across the country.

But through another door in the exhibit is a mock command post designed to look like the ones guardsmen see when they're deployed on missions. This duality is to impress on viewers and potential recruits the nature of joining the Guard, said Master Sgt. Andrew Stearns, a program manager for the mobile experience.

"This simulated experience demonstrates how our guardsmen serve our country and still maintain their day-to-day lives — one of the key points of difference for the Air Guard versus other U.S. military branches," he said.

The interactive exhibit that was set up at the Schaghticoke Fair recently allowed patrons to participate in simulations aimed at replicating the real-life experiences during basic training, technical school and drill weekends.

The exhibit is touring states until December and highlights the traditional career path of a guardsman. The exhibit features a series of three interactive challenges simulating real-life roles and skill sets of those in the Air National Guard, including challenges that test electronic, mechanical, observational and spatial aptitudes.

The games are housed in a touring vehicle custom-built to simulate a mission command center and a home. The two distinctly separate environments are aimed at reflecting the dual life of the citizen soldier.

One station features a pull-up bar to test physical conditioning, while another station has a screen that brings up a picture of a medical facility and tests participants' ability to recognize instruments. A third station is set up like the control station of a drone and has participants identify certain aspects of a surveillance image.

Participants receive dog tags that track their scores at each gaming station. After completing all three challenges, participants get their picture taken inside the mission command center and are sent their final scores, along with how they ranked among other tour participants.

Staff Sgt. Darren Landerway, a recruiter based with the 109th Airlift Wing in Glenville, said the interactive device was popular at the Schaghticoke Fair, drawing hundreds of participants throughout the six-day fair. The booth was even more popular during a stop at the State Fair in Syracuse.

"This is a more hands-on, more enjoyable tool," he said of the exhibit.

The Air National Guard is a reserve component of the U.S. Air Force. Guardsmen serve a dual role, supporting both federal and state missions, and are called upon in times of natural disaster and civil disturbance and to support homeland defense. There are 140 units across the U.S. states and territories.

The Air National Guard offers more than 200 career field opportunities, including communications, engineering, ministry, technology and the health care industry.

Landerway said the exhibit helped showcase some of the different opportunities offered by the Air National Guard. He said the exhibit is an excellent recruiting tool that allows prospective guardsmen to get a feel for the experience.

"It's starting to show individuals the different opportunities and different avenues when they join," he said.

http://www.dailygazette.net/standard/ShowStoryTemplate.asp?Path=SCH/2013/09/05&ID=Ar01301&Section=Local_News

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New York Army National Guard

Unknown Soldiers | America's real stars are here among us

**Centre Daily: Sept. 6, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

“I’m not sure what all the hubbub is all about,” New York Army National Guard Sgt. Joshua Young reportedly said after receiving the Bronze Star with Valor on July 19. “It happened a long time ago, and I would do it again.”

According to his award citation, Sgt. Young’s actions on March 16, 2012, were anything but ordinary.

Surrounded by about 50 Taliban fighters after a huge explosion in southern Afghanistan, Young braved enemy gunfire to save the life of his badly wounded platoon sergeant, who lost both legs but ultimately survived the attack.

Young, who is from Perinton, N.Y., is just 26 years old. His modesty represents the most remarkable percentage point of our population: the courageous men and women who volunteer to serve in a dangerous post-9/11 world.

“We’re extremely proud of Josh and his accomplishments,” the hero soldier’s mother, Kim Young, told Sgt. Corine Lombardo. “He never really told us a lot about the incident, so we are learning about his actions today.”

U.S. Marine Sgt. Matthew Woodall, now 28, did not have to spend two days dodging bullets and crawling through cornfields in July 2011. Instead of fighting the Taliban on their turf, he could have been home enjoying a summer in Paducah, Ky.

He chose to serve.

“I was doing my job; I don’t think I did anything different than anyone else would,” Woodall, who recently left the Marine Corps, told Sgt. Alfred Lopez.

Woodall’s humility became even more apparent after reading his citation for the Silver Star, which he was awarded Aug. 2.

“Woodall rushed his squad forward when enemy fire wounded the Marine directly in front of him,” the citation reads. “Exposed and under a hail of enemy fire, he laid down suppressive fires and shielded the wounded Marine with his body until a (Navy hospital) corpsman arrived.”

Even though the citation credits Woodall with defeating an enemy attack, the hero Marine is quick to shift attention elsewhere.

“I know that the citation that was read says my name on it, but I’m just an individual Marine,” Woodall told the military reporter. “My squad was just amazing.”

On Apr. 23, 2011, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Zachary Kline spent about six hours taking enemy gunfire near Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan while helping rescue two Army pilots involved in a helicopter crash.

On July 14, the Albuquerque, N.M., airman received the Silver Star for saving the soldiers’ lives.

“It’s an honor being recognized for just doing my job,” Kline, 33, told Airman 1st Class Christine Griffiths. “I worked with some awesome guys, and (it) was nice being a part of it.”

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Benny Flores, 30, is from the U.S. territory of Guam. On April 28, 2012, he was in remote southwestern Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device blew up under the vehicle he was riding in.

With shrapnel wounds to his arms and neck, Flores, a hospital corpsman, “treated the nearest wounded Marine while he was engaged by enemy small-arms fire,” Flores’ Silver Star citation reads. “He assisted the wounded Marine in maneuvering to a covered position and without hesitation ran back into the street, exposed to enemy fire, and quickly provided medical assistance to a severely wounded Afghan Uniform Police Officer.”

When Flores received his award May 3, his thoughts were with the family of a Marine who didn’t survive the harrowing attack.

“We lost one guy, Master Sgt. Scott Pruitt, and to this day he’s always in my thoughts and prayers,” the hero sailor told Cpl. Mark Garcia. “I really wish he were here, maybe not for the ceremony, but just to see his face and him being with his family — his two daughters that he left behind.”

I wish some of our nation’s so-called celebrities could read the words of Sgt. Joshua Young, Sgt. Matthew Woodall, Staff Sgt. Zachary Kline and Petty Officer 1st Class Benny Flores.

Instead of being consumed with their own popularity, their first instinct is to salute others.

You won’t find most of America’s true celebrities in Hollywood. They’re in communities all around us. The next time you see a U.S. service member or veteran, shake their hand and say thanks.

Read more here: <http://www.centredaily.com/2013/09/06/3773296/unknown-soldiers-america-real.html#storylink=cpy>

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Soldiers get new flag, unit patch

**Times Union: August 31, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

The New York Army 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 have worn for years while on duty at Smith.

The new flag indicates that Camp Smith is also Training Center Garrison Command at Cortland Manor, near Peekskill.

The new patch and flag mark the installation as being a component in the Army National Guard Training Center network.

Forty-one soldiers are assigned to run the 1,585 acres of Camp Smith, which opened as a National Guard training base in 1882. They marked the change with a flag unfurling and "repatching" ceremony at the training center's highest point overlooking the Hudson River.

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Seifert unfurled the new garrison flag just before the soldiers ceremonially traded their old patches for new ones.

Adopting a garrison flag and wearing a distinctive patch is a way of building pride in what his soldiers do, Lt. Col. Robert Epp, Camp Smith commander, said.

Camp Smith was originally named Camp Townsend and renamed after Gov. Al Smith in 1924. Hundreds of officers, including many from Capital Region communities, were commissioned through Empire State Military Academy at Smith.

The facility has also played host to National Guard Annual Training and has served as a mobilization facility for the National Guard. Camp Smith has 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.

Christmas cards needed

Can you spare a few or more Christmas cards for deployed troops?

Melody D. Burns of Idea Practitioner LLC, and the The Melody Burns Show aired on Conservative Talk WGDJ TALK 1300 and other stations, is helping Red Cross Services to Armed Forces with its Holiday Mail for Troops.

The drive for Christmas Cards for Troops will be kicked off at 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7, at the Sheehy Palmer VFW Post, 525 Delaware Ave., Albany.

"The first year I did it, I collected about 2,000 cards," Burns said. "Last year we collected 10,000 cards. This year I have set a goal of 20,000 cards from the Capital District and 40,000 others from across the United States."

She is the host of a segment on a syndicated radio show that is aired on 43 stations and shortwave in the middle of the country.

During the kickoff, Capital Q Smokehouse will provide food. Whiskey John band will perform rock music. Cost is \$10 per person. Attendees are urged to donate Christmas cards to help launch this year's drive.

Melody is also collecting sleeping bags that will be distributed to homeless veterans.

For information, contact Melody at 518.275.5663 or melody@melodyburns.com. Send donations of Christmas cards to Melody D. Burns, 413 Feura Bush Road, Glenmont, NY 12077

Off to War College

New York Army National Guard Lt. Col. Michael Murphy of East Greenbush, a veteran of the war in Iraq, has been selected to attend the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa., as a resident student.

Murphy, a full-time member of the National Guard, recently finished a tour as commander of the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, which served in Kuwait during 2012.

The 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion is comprised of specialist units; combat engineers, military police, signal Soldiers, military intelligence soldiers and other specialists who support the combat battalions of the 27th Brigade Combat Team.

Soldiers complete training

Several New York Army National Guard soldiers from Capital Region communities have completed training at the 106th Regional Training Institute at Camp Smith.

They are Spc. Tyler Farrar of Ballston Lake, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, and Spc. Sterling Mosher of Albany, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, have graduated from the Basic Infantryman Course.

Spc. Natiasia Cooper of Cohoes, Company E (Forward Support Company) Infantry 427th Brigade Support Battalion, has graduated from the Motor Transport Operator Course.

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Soldiers-get-new-flag-unit-patch-4778525.php>

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Afghanistan war veterans reunited in NY with dog and her 7 puppies born on the battlefield

**The Washington Post: Sept. 15, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

PORT JEFFERSON STATION, N.Y. — Army reunions have been held as long as soldiers have been going off to war, yet a reunion this week was perhaps like no other in history.

National Guard soldiers from New York who befriended a stray dog while on patrol in Afghanistan were reunited with the 65-pound mixed breed and her seven rambunctious puppies after the animals arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport on Wednesday.

The reunion was made possible by the efforts of a Long Island pet rescue organization whose motto is: “Paws of War — No Buddy Left Behind.”

“They really became part of the family to us,” 1st Lt. Joseph LaPenta of Staten Island said. The soldiers befriended the dog they called Sheba after arriving in Afghanistan in January. She sometimes joined them on patrol, chasing away other stray dogs that may have threatened the soldiers, they said.

In March, Sheba had a litter of seven puppies. Because Sheba was weakened from the births, they nursed her and the puppies back to health, feeding her their allotment of beef jerky and MREs — Army issued “meals ready to eat.” Later, relatives sent bags of dog food from home.

Soon, however, the soldiers learned their base would be closed as part of the U.S. draw down in Afghanistan.

“It really broke our hearts that we might have to leave them there” LaPenta said.

That’s when Staff Sgt. Edwin Caba of Long Beach sprang into action and contacted an old high school teacher. She put him in touch with a Long Island group called Guardians of Rescue, which has for several years collected donations to bring dogs back from combat zones. They had rescued about 20 when the request came in for help getting Sheba and her pups.

“We won’t turn our back on the servicemen and we won’t turn our back on the dogs,” said Guardians of Rescue president Robert Misseri. Working with a private Kabul-based organization called Nowzad, the groups arranged to have the dogs sent to the United States so they could be adopted by the soldiers.

Misseri estimates it costs about \$4,000 for every dog rescued from a war zone. He said an online crowd sourcing fundraiser is still collecting money to pay for Sheba and her pups. The money is needed to pay for transportation and other logistics, including health care for the dogs — they are quarantined for 30 days and given all their vaccinations before being sent.

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http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/afghanistan-war-veterans-reunited-in-ny-with-dog-and-her-7-puppies-born-on-the-battlefield/2013/09/05/58473ba0-1652-11e3-961c-f22d3aaf19ab_story.html

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Afghanistan war veterans reunited in NY with dog and her 7 puppies born on the battlefield

**The Washington Post: Sept. 15, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

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The reunion was made possible by the efforts of a Long Island pet rescue organization whose motto is: “Paws of War — No Buddy Left Behind.”

“They really became part of the family to us,” 1st Lt. Joseph LaPenta of Staten Island said. The soldiers befriended the dog they called Sheba after arriving in Afghanistan in January. She sometimes joined them on patrol, chasing away other stray dogs that may have threatened the soldiers, they said.

In March, Sheba had a litter of seven puppies. Because Sheba was weakened from the births, they nursed her and the puppies back to health, feeding her their allotment of beef jerky and MREs — Army issued “meals ready to eat.” Later, relatives sent bags of dog food from home.

Soon, however, the soldiers learned their base would be closed as part of the U.S. draw down in Afghanistan.

“It really broke our hearts that we might have to leave them there” LaPenta said.

That’s when Staff Sgt. Edwin Caba of Long Beach sprang into action and contacted an old high school teacher. She put him in touch with a Long Island group called Guardians of Rescue, which has for several years collected donations to bring dogs back from combat zones. They had rescued about 20 when the request came in for help getting Sheba and her pups.

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Troops leaving for Kuwait duty:Two Colonie-based Army Guard units to do 10-month tour; no Syria mission

**Times Union: Sept. 4, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

About 180 soldiers from the Capital Region will say goodbye to family members Saturday as they begin mobilizing for military duty in Kuwait.

Members of two New York Army National Guard units from Colonie will part ways with their families at a farewell ceremony slated for 10:30 a.m. Saturday in Shaker High School.

The troops with the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade and Company A 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation Assault Helicopter Battalion will train with their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters for two months at Fort Hood in Texas, then fly to Kuwait, where they will be stationed for 10 months.

The soldiers will serve in a 1,250-member force that is assigned to providing air support to U.S. Central Command units in the Persian Gulf region. Their mission also includes training soldiers from Arab countries that are aligned with the U.S., said Col. Al Ricci Sr. of Ballston Lake, commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

"We're going to be doing partnerships and training, and obviously, we are on standby for anything in the region," Ricci said. He said the forces would not be involved in any military missions in Syria.

The 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade is headquartered in Latham and part of the 42nd Infantry Division out of Troy.

It controls all Army aviation units in New York. It will contribute 10 of its 20 Blackhawk helicopters to the mission in Kuwait, Ricci said.

Also deploying from New York are soldiers with the 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation, which is based at the Albany International Airport, and the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, which has elements in Rochester and other parts of the state.

Ricci, 51, served two tours in Iraq in 2004 and 2009, and became commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade last October. In Kuwait, he will lead about 450 total soldiers from across New York, 400 active duty soldiers from an Army regiment at Fort Hood, and 400 National Guard troops from units in Michigan and Delaware.

"I'm confident that we can do our job," Ricci said. "The main goal is to bring everyone home safely."

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Troops-leaving-for-Kuwait-duty-4787942.php>

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Photo gallery: Afghanistan vets reunited with 8 battlefield dogs

Army Times: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

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<http://www.armytimes.com/article/20130905/NEWS02/309050019/Photo-gallery-Afghanistan-vets-reunited-8-battlefield-dogs>

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Soldiers get dogs of war new homes

NBC Nightly News: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

File this under heartwarming. A group of soldiers serving in Afghanistan rescue a dog and her puppies after informally adopting the strays. See how all eight dogs ended up in the U.S. NBC's Anne Thompson reports.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/video/nightly-news/52932401/#52932401>

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Afghan vets reunited in NY with 8 battlefield dogs

Philly Burbs.com: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

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http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/national/afghan-vets-reunited-in-ny-with-battlefield-dogs/article_1a814611-b7a2-5b73-8c65-3ca8a306b7ea.html

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University of Phoenix Collaborates with National Guard Association of the United States to Offer Scholarship Program

**Fort Mill Times: Sept. 5, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013**

PHOENIX -- University of Phoenix® and National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), the nation's oldest military association lobbying for the benefit of the National Guard, awarded three full-tuition scholarships to Guardsmen to complete a master's degree program at University of Phoenix. The scholarships were awarded to Army and Air National Guardsmen and NGAUS members ranked Lieutenant Colonel (O-5) and below.

The 2013 University of Phoenix NGAUS Scholarship recipients are:

Jason Lefton, an officer in the New York National Guard from Clifton Park, N.Y., will pursue a Master of Business Administration degree. Lefton plans on using his degree to complete his military career. He wants to continue his career in personal finance – a career that was put on hold 12 years ago because of the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11. As he prepares to participate in his fourth mobilization with the National Guard since 9/11, he wants to use his degree to provide for his family and possibly start his own business.

Timothy Ames, a warrant officer in the Hawaii National Guard from Waipahu, Hawaii, will pursue a Master of Science in Information Systems degree. Ames will use the degree to increase his strengths as a highly certified networking and security engineer. His long-term career goal is to serve an organization as a Chief Technology or Information System Officer.

James Driscolli, an officer in the Connecticut Air National Guard from West Hartford, Conn., will pursue a Master of Business Administration degree. Driscolli's near-death experience while serving in Afghanistan helped him realize the importance of accountability and living life to the fullest. He plans on using his degree to develop his leadership skills as a military officer and help him transition into the civilian sector to eventually start his own business.

"NGAUS enjoys partnerships with a variety of corporations and institutions, but none is more personally rewarding than our relationship with the University of Phoenix," said retired Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett Jr., the NGAUS president. "This program enables us to provide the key to success, education, to some very deserving young officers. I know the recipients and their families are thrilled. And so is our entire association."

"University of Phoenix is excited to work with NGAUS and provide our nation's Guardsmen an opportunity to achieve their education goals," said Associate Regional Vice President for University of Phoenix's Military Division retired Army Col. Garland Williams. "The 2013 University of Phoenix NGAUS Scholarships demonstrate our corporate social responsibility to provide access to education opportunities. These scholarships allow Guardsmen to increase their professional skill sets through education to help them secure future employment opportunities both in the military and beyond."

Applications for the 2013 University of Phoenix NGAUS Scholarship were accepted through May 30, 2013, and scholarship recipients were notified on July 11, 2013.

More information on University of Phoenix Scholarships can be found at www.phoenix.edu/scholarships.

About NGAUS

The National Guard Association of the United States is the nation's oldest military association lobbying solely for the benefit of the National Guard of the United States and educating the public about the Guard's role and history in the Armed Forces of the United States. It was formed by militia officers in 1878 to obtain better equipment and training by petitioning Congress for more resources. For more information, visit <http://www.ngaus.org/>.

About University of Phoenix

University of Phoenix is constantly innovating to help working adults move efficiently from education to careers in a rapidly changing world. Flexible schedules, relevant and engaging courses, and interactive learning can help students more effectively pursue career and personal aspirations while balancing their busy lives. As a subsidiary of Apollo Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: APOL), University of Phoenix serves a diverse student population, offering associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs from campuses and learning centers across the U.S. as well as online throughout the world. For more information, visit www.phoenix.edu.

<http://www.fortmilltimes.com/2013/09/05/2934844/university-of-phoenix-collaborates.html>

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Veterans

Maloney presents Purple Heart to Korean War vet

Midhudsonnews.com: Sept. 6, 2013 :
Sep 06, 2013

MONTROSE – Harold Tartter, Jr., grew up in Pleasant Valley. He joined the National Guard in 1948 and transferred to the Army one year later to serve in the 156 Field Artillery of New York's 27th Division.

While serving in the Korean War, he was injured while manning a Howitzer that the North Koreans attacked.

Tartter, now 83, lives at the Montrose VA hospital and on Thursday, Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney visited with him and presented the vet with a Purple Heart medal.

“Especially now when we are faced with a decision about whether we place more young Americans in harm's way, I think it is very good that people like me look in the eyes of someone like Harold Tartter and see in that 83-year-old's eyes that young 19 or 21-year-old kid from Pleasant Valley and I think it is important that people like me ask themselves would you ask that 19-, 20-, 21-year-old to go put his life on the line again for the mission,” Maloney said.

The predecessor medal to the Purple Heart, the Badge of Military Merit, was first presented in 1782 by General George Washington while in Newburgh.

http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2013/September/06/Tartter_PH-06Sep13.html

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