106th Rescue Wing

**Senate Defense Bill Suggests ANG Pave Hawk Plan:**
Air Force Magazine, July 22, 2019

109th Airlift Wing

**200 cadets across the area learn leadership skills (Video):**
News 10, July 25, 2019

**Robots roaming in Antarctic waters reveal why Ross Ice Shelf melts rapidly in summer:**
Phys.org, July 22, 2019

27th Brigade

**N.Y. National Guard Soldiers fly the Raven at Fort Drum:**
Army.mil, By Sgt. Alexander Rector, New York National Guard July 24, 2019

**N.Y. National Guard Soldiers fly small spy plane at Fort Drum:**
National Guard.mil July 24, 2019

42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

**Ceremony welcomes new commander of National Guard Brigade:**
WNYT, July 20, 2019

42nd Infantry Division

**National Guard soldiers will head to Fort Drum (Video):**
WNYT, July 19, 2019

Airmen and Soldiers

**National Guard Promotes Cuba and Olean Residents:**
Tap into Greater Olean, July 23, 2019

**Army Combat Fitness Test challenges Best Warriors for the first time:**
Army.mil, July 23, 2019

**Sisters retire after 33 years together in the Army National Guard:**
Army Times, July 21, 2019

**Danbury National Guard Soldier Receives New Rank, New Responsibilities:**
Danbury's Hamlet Hub, July 18, 2019

**Citizen Soldiers vie to Become National Guard Best Warrior 2019 (Video):**
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock District, July 20, 2019

**National Guard soldier retires:**
Pocono Record, July 19, 2019
New Army Combat Fitness Test Challenges Best Warriors:
Military Spot. July, 24

Piscataway Resident Reenlists in New York Army National Guard:
TAPINTO PISCATAWAY, July 24, 2019

Local soldiers re-enlist with National Guard:
Monroe County Post, July 25

New troopers: Four Cayuga County natives graduate from New York State Police Academy:
Auburn Citizen, July 25, 2019

New York Air National Guard

MQ-9 flight in Michigan sets stage for Northern Strike 19:
National Guard.mil, July 23, 2019

'She stopped breathing': Air National Guardsman admitted to strangling his kids' mother, court documents allege:
SiLive.com, Jul 18, 2019

PFOA Issue

Newburgh group to host Saturday events focused on clean water:
Times Herald Record, July 23, 2019

98 claims filed against New Windsor over tainted water:
Times Herald Record, July 23, 2019

Daily Uploader

106th Rescue Wing

Senate Defense Bill Suggests ANG Pave Hawk Plan

Air Force Magazine, July 22, 2019:

The Air National Guard should keep some of its HH-60G Pave Hawks around until the new HH-60W Combat Rescue Helicopter comes online because an interim solution is delayed, according to the Senate version of the 2020 defense policy bill.

"Given delays to Operational Loss Replacement program fielding and the on-time fielding of Combat Rescue Helicopter, the Air National Guard should retain additional HH-60G helicopters" to meet fleet inventory recommendations, lawmakers wrote.
As part of the OLR program, the Air Force is reconfiguring 19 Army UH-60L helos as Pave Hawks in order to have 112 HH-60Gs ready for rescue operations. Two test aircraft have been completed. The service previously said it was using 21 UH-60Ls that were supposed to arrive at ANG units in California, Alaska, and New York in fiscal 2018. That schedule has since gotten pushed back.

"During fiscal year 2018, the OLR team resolved two major developmental testing deficiencies, delaying entry into operational testing, and delivered the second developmental testing aircraft," the Air Force said in its 2018 acquisition report published in April.

The bulk of OLR helicopter deliveries are slated for 2019 and 2020; CRH deliveries are expected to follow in the early 2020s.

Each HH-60G unit—the 210th Rescue Squadron at JB Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; the 101st RQS at Gabreski Field, N.Y.; and the 129th RQS at Moffett Federal Airfield, Calif.—owns five primary helicopters. The New York unit has one backup aircraft.

The Air Force outlined the small ANG HH-60G fleet's training and maintenance demands in a report to the Senate Armed Services Committee last summer, arguing those pilots need an additional three HH-60Gs to meet combat and homeland-security mission requirements.

In the draft 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, SASC asks for a report on the CRH fielding plan no later than 45 days after the bill becomes law. That should describe the differences between the HH-60G, revamped UH-60L, and HH-60W helicopters, which are all built by Sikorsky.

The report must list the costs and risks of changing the CRH delivery plan, include ideas for speeding up the program, and show whether giving Active Duty airmen the CRH first would change when they are deployed and how their capabilities would differ from airmen with OLR helicopters. Lawmakers also want to see the Air Force's plan to continue training Reserve component HH-60G pilots once all HH-60Ws are delivered.


Return to top

109th Airlift Wing

200 cadets across the area learn leadership skills (Video)

News 10, July 25, 2019:
SCOTIA, N.Y. (NEWS10) - Civil Air Patrol cadets from New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Connecticut are spending 10 days at Stratton Air National Guard Base going through leadership training. They got to fly on Blackhawk helicopters, Cessna aircraft, that the CAP operates and today a C-17 Globemaster III from the 105th Airlift Wing out of Stewart Air National Guard Base.

The civil air patrol is open for children ages 12 to 21 and is a nonprofit corporation and is an auxiliary service of the US Air Force.


Return to top

Robots roaming in Antarctic waters reveal why Ross Ice Shelf melts rapidly in summer

Phys.org, July 22, 2019:

A new paper offers fresh insight into the forces causing the world's largest ice shelf to melt.

The Ross Ice Shelf, a part of the Antarctic Ice Sheet that is floating on the ocean, measures several hundred meters thick and sits over 480,000 square kilometers, approximately the size of Spain. Its magnitude, and the fact that thinning of the ice shelf will speed up the flow of Antarctica's ice sheets into the ocean, mean that it carries significant sea level rise potential if it were to melt. Melting ice shelves like the Ross could cause seas to rise by several feet over the next few centuries.

A study just published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans helps to reveal the local factors that influence the Ross Ice Shelf's stability, refining predictions of how it will change and influence sea rise in the future.

Prior studies on ice shelf melt have focused on warming global waters. Yet three years of Rosetta data show that the Ross Ice Shelf is melting due to local surface waters, and that the melt is happening on an unanticipated part of the shelf. These discoveries were released in a Rosetta paper published in May; the new study details the source of this strange activity. The study comes out of the Rosetta-Ice project, a three-year-long collection of geologic, oceanographic, and glaciological data in Antarctica. The project is immense in scope, involving a multi-institutional, interdisciplinary team with specialized instrumentation to collect first-of-its kind Antarctic data.

A new approach

The Rosetta team needed data on ocean temperature, salinity, depth, and circulation around the ice shelf. Traditionally, this oceanographic data is obtained in two ways: research cruises
and deep moorings. Because the Ross Sea is covered by sea ice for most of the year, ship-based measurements are restricted to a short period in high Austral summer. Moored sensors, on the other hand, can collect data for several years; however, they are generally deployed no higher than 200 meters below the water's surface, to avoid passing icebergs, so they provide a less complete picture of what's happening around the ice shelf.

The Rosetta scientists took a new approach to gather data from the Ross Sea.

They deployed six profiling floats called Air-Launched Autonomous Micro Observer, or ALAMO, floats. They fastened parachutes to the floats and launched them out of a New York Air National Guard airplane from 2,500 feet above the icy waters below. The instruments were programmed to avoid sea ice that could damage their external sensors and antennae. In addition, the team took a novel approach by "parking" the floats on the sea floor between profiling so as to limit their drifting on ocean currents.

The floats gathered temperature and salinity data from the seabed to the surface, sending data back to the team by satellite every day. Seven other floats, deployed from a ship three years earlier, provided records of ocean conditions further north, away from the ice shelf.

Local effects

"In other places in Antarctica, the ice shelves are being melted by flows of global warm water from the deep ocean to the coast," explained Dave Porter, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory scientist who led the new study. "But changing melt rates for the Ross are caused mainly by a local buildup of heat in the surface layer. The question is: What dictates how much heat we build up in the summer? And the answer is that it's mostly caused by local weather processes along the ice front."

The team found that the main source of ocean heat causing the ice shelf to melt was sunlight warming the upper ocean after the region's sea ice disappeared in summertime; sea ice normally reflects sunlight, whereas darker sea water absorbs it. The team also measured large amounts of fresh water coming into the Ross Sea from rapidly melting ice shelves in the Amundsen Sea to the east of the Ross Sea. Once this extra fresh water reaches the ice front, it changes how heat mixes down from the surface to the base of the ice shelf, where melting occurs, leading the team to conclude that future Ross Ice Shelf stability depends on changing coastal conditions in both the Amundsen Sea and close to the ice shelf front.

The scientists noted that increased ocean heating and ice-shelf melting could occur if the summer season, during which the sea is free of ice, becomes longer—for example, if changing local winds pushing the sea ice away from the ice shelf, or a decrease in summer cloudiness allowing more sunlight to reach the ocean surface.

Co-author Scott Springer of Earth & Space Research in Seattle said that "this new approach to collecting data from remote Antarctica's continental shelves provides a new way to check the reliability of numerical models that we use to understand how the Antarctic Ice Sheet will respond to future changes in the oceans around Antarctica."
The importance of local conditions near the ice front also shows that researchers must find a way to include these smaller-scale processes in global climate models, which scientists use to simulate climate impacts over the coming centuries. Testing and refining the global models will be critical in narrowing the range of predictions regarding how much ice Antarctica will lose in future climates, and how high seas will rise.

To co-author Helen Amanda Fricker of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego the study also shows how important it is to study relatively stable areas such as the Ross ice shelf. "Many current field programs are focused on parts of Antarctica that are known to be changing, but we must also collect observations in regions that are not changing to understand how the ice sheet works as a whole," she said. "This is critical because there remains a large range across predictions of Antarctica's contribution to sea level in future climates."


27th Brigade

N.Y. National Guard Soldiers fly the Raven at Fort Drum

Army.mil, By Sgt. Alexander Rector, New York National Guard July 24, 2019:

FORT DRUM, N.Y. - Fifteen New York Army National Guard Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team tested their ability to fly the Army's smallest spy plane by conducting re-certification training with the RQ-11B Raven unmanned aircraft system during the brigade's annual training on July 21.

In the fields of Fort Drum's training ranges, Soldiers practiced assembling, launching, piloting and recovering the Raven. The small, hand-launched remote-controlled aircraft looks and flies like a model airplane a hobbyist would use.

The Raven is operated by Soldiers in several of the 27th Brigade's units.

"This is the first time I'm doing Raven training in New York," said Sgt. Foluke Marsh, a signal support systems specialist assigned to Alpha Battery of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment. Marsh, a New York City resident, received his initial training to fly the Raven during a two-week course at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

"You learn the basic functionalities of the aircraft and all of its different parts," Marsh said. "You then learn how to launch the aircraft, set up the flight path, and how to manually fly it. It's an awesome course and everyone should take it."
Sgt. Jordan Aguiar, a cavalry scout assigned to Alpha Troop of the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment who led the training at Fort Drum, said the purpose was to give operators like Marsh the flight time needed to keep their certifications current.

The Raven, first adopted by the U.S. Army in 2005, is now used by more than 25 countries across the globe. Weighing in at just over four pounds, with a wingspan of 4.5 feet, and with a flying range of 10 kilometers, it is currently the smallest unmanned aircraft in wide use across the Army.

The Raven delivers real-time color or infrared pictures to the operator or a ground control station and uses a GPS system to navigate.

Aguiar said the Raven is more agile and less detectable than larger and more costly unmanned aircraft. Soldiers use it to conduct battlefield reconnaissance and provide their units with a greater level of security.

"If you need to have eyes on a target, or eyes on a convoy to make sure everything is safe, it's good to send out the Raven instead of risking someone getting hurt or killed," Marsh said.

27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers from around New York are at Fort Drum for their annual training from July 19 to August 3.

https://www.army.mil/article/224931/ny_national_guard_soldiers_fly_the_raven_at_fort_drum

N.Y. National Guard Soldiers fly small spy plane at Fort Drum

National Guard.mil July 24, 2019:

FORT DRUM, N.Y. - Fifteen New York Army National Guard Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team tested their ability to fly the Army's smallest spy plane by conducting re-certification training with the RQ-11B Raven unmanned aircraft system during the brigade's annual training on July 21.

In the fields of Fort Drum's training ranges, Soldiers practiced assembling, launching, piloting and recovering the Raven. The small, hand-launched remote-controlled aircraft looks and flies like a model airplane a hobbyist would use.

The Raven is operated by Soldiers in several of the 27th Brigade's units.
"This is the first time I'm doing Raven training in New York," said Sgt. Foluke Marsh, a signal support systems specialist assigned to Alpha Battery of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment. Marsh, a New York City resident, received his initial training to fly the Raven during a two-week course at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

"You learn the basic functionalities of the aircraft and all of its different parts," Marsh said. "You then learn how to launch the aircraft, set up the flight path, and how to fly it manually. It's an awesome course and everyone should take it."

Sgt. Jordan Aguiar, a cavalry scout assigned to Alpha Troop of the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment who led the training at Fort Drum, said the purpose was to give operators like Marsh the flight time needed to keep their certifications current.

The Raven, first adopted by the U.S. Army in 2005, is now used by more than 25 countries across the globe. Weighing in at just over four pounds, with a wingspan of 4.5 feet, and with a flying range of 10 kilometers, it is currently the smallest unmanned aircraft in wide use across the Army.

The Raven delivers real-time color or infrared pictures to the operator or a ground control station and uses a GPS system to navigate.

Aguiar said the Raven is more agile and less detectable than larger and more costly unmanned aircraft. Soldiers use it to conduct battlefield reconnaissance and provide their units with a greater level of security.

"If you need to have eyes on a target, or eyes on a convoy to make sure everything is safe, it's good to send out the Raven instead of risking someone getting hurt or killed," Marsh said.

27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers from around New York are at Fort Drum for their annual training from July 19 to August 3.


Return to top

42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

Ceremony welcomes new commander of National Guard Brigade

WNYT, July 20, 2019:
LATHAM - A ceremony was held Saturday morning to welcome the new commander of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Charnley was sworn in as the new commander.

Charnley served in Panama, Bosnia and Kuwait.

Charnley replaced Col. Jack James who has commanded the brigade since 2014.

James is moving into the position of Commander of the New York Army National Guard's 53rd Troop command.

The ceremony included a transfer of flags from the outgoing to incoming commander. Colors were also changed to symbolize a transfer of authority.


42nd Infantry Division

National Guard soldiers will head to Fort Drum (Video)

WNYT, July 19, 2019:

600 New York Army National Guard soldiers from around the state will head to Fort Drum on Friday.

It's for an annual command-post-exercise going on until the end of the month.

The soldiers will take part in a computer simulation that tests their ability to plan and execute missions. It forces the soldiers to plan missions as they would in an actual battle.

Soldiers stationed in Latham, Troy, Syracuse and New York City will be heading to Northern New York for the training.


Airmen and Soldiers
National Guard Promotes Cuba and Olean Residents

Tap into Greater Olean, July 23, 2019:

LATHAM, NY – Two residents of the Greater Olean area have received promotions in the New York Army National Guard.

Levi Blake of Cuba and Dylan Main of Olean have been promoted to the rank of private.

Levi Blake is assigned to the Company A, 2-108th Infantry. Main is assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition).

Army National Guard promotions are based on overall performance, attitude, leadership ability, and development potential.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the State of New York announced the promotions.


Army Combat Fitness Test challenges Best Warriors for the first time

Army.mil, July 23, 2019:

CAMP GRUBER, Okla. - After 40 years of the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) the Army National Guard has administered a new physical fitness assessment, the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), during the Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Gruber Training Center, Oklahoma, July 17.

For the first time in history, the 14 Best Warrior Soldiers performed a modified version of the six-event ACFT which included hurling medicine balls over their heads, performing dozens of push-ups and showing their strength on the pull-up bar. Capt. Vanessa LaGrange, the only level II ACFT administrator in the Oklahoma Army National Guard, was excited to see the Warriors implement this test for the first time.

"Typically they'll show up in their Physical Training (PT) uniforms, but they are here in their Operational Camouflage Pattern uniforms," said LaGrange. "The two-mile is a cross-country run instead of the normal laps around a track. Other than that, this is the updated and soon-to-be-in effect Army physical training test."
As the ACFT approaches Army-wide standardization, Best Warrior contestants had questions about how they will do in each event.

"It's something different and I'm not sure I've done all my research yet to find out all the techniques for it," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamison Yager, Best Warrior competitor with the Michigan Army National Guard. "I need to work on hand-release push-ups and need to find out what protocol they're going to use, hands to the side or hands beneath the body."

The ACFT has seen field testing since 2018, and many units are already applying the fundamentals of this PT test into their everyday workouts. Just like the former APFT, tips and tricks on how to improve your performance will come as the ACFT is implemented.

"I can definitely make my technique better," said Spc. Andrew Brotherton, Best Warrior competitor and member of the North Carolina Army National Guard. "There's a bunch of things you can do to shave off some seconds just by knowing the correct techniques."

The ACFT drastically varies from its APFT predecessor, with gender and age-neutral criteria, and standards tailored towards specific job fields. The Army National Guard will fully adopt the new test in October 2020, with Citizen-Soldiers and their active-duty counterparts maintaining the same standards.

"Being a prior active-duty Soldier, I know the stigma that sometimes the National Guard gets, that we are not good, that we are not well trained, that we are not as motivated, but competitions like this defy that," said Sgt. 1st Class Martin H. Cozens, New York Army National Guard. "I think competitions like this show that we have some of the most lethal, resilient and versatile Soldiers in our military ranks."

The Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition is the culminating test for the top 14 noncommissioned officers and Soldiers from seven regions across the nation who to compete in a week-long test of soldiering skills and abilities to take home the title of 2019 Army National Guard Soldier and NCO of the Year.

https://www.army.mil/article/224865/army_combat_fitness_test_challenges_best_warriors_for_the_first_time

Return to top

Sisters retire after 33 years together in the Army National Guard

Army Times, July 21, 2019:

It's a story that could easily be turned into a sitcom.
Two sisters simultaneously join the Army National Guard, deploy together, retire together after over 30 years, and become roommates after buying a house together.

That was indeed the sister act of Master Sgt. Lisa Currier and Lt. Col. Lynn Currier, who enlisted together in February 1986, shipping off to boot camp on the buddy system.

Little did the two know that their decision, which was originally made solely in the interest of paying off student loans, would turn into 30-plus-year careers.

"When I first enlisted I never thought I'd make three years," Lisa, a senior logistics officer, said in an Army release. "And now these years have flown by."

It was Lisa who persuaded Lynn, an information management branch chief, to join the Army National Guard over a potential foray into the state police department, the release said.

Before long, Lynn was fully immersed with the New York National Guard, eventually trading in her staff sergeant chevrons for brass.

"I always wanted to be more assertive and more in control of things," Lynn said. "I felt the only way that was going to happen was to be an officer." Sign up for the Army Times Daily News Roundup

Don't miss the top Army stories, delivered each afternoon

"She just wants to be the hot dog," Lisa joked.

After spending some brief years apart, during which time Lisa was working long, arduous days at an IBM office in Vermont, the two were reunited following repeated requests by Lynn for her sister to join her in New York.

"She kept saying, come over, come over," Lisa said in the release. "I was working like 12-hour shifts and it was just crazy. I woke up on Sunday morning and decided, I'm tired of this."

Years passed, and in 2008, the tandem deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the release said.

Prior to their tour in Afghanistan, Lisa had a 2004 Iraq deployment derailed while fighting and beating breast cancer.

"We did deploy together, but they separated us after three or four months," said Lisa, who was sent to Mazar-i-Sharif while Lynn remained behind in Kabul, a standard practice throughout the armed services to prevent the possibility of multiple sibling fatalities in one attack.
At the June retirement ceremony, with the war- and National Guard careers - now in the rear-view mirror, Lynn and Lisa were able to reflect on their experiences, many of which made it difficult to tie a bow on a lengthy career.

"When I had to take my uniform off, let me tell you," Lynn said in the release, adding that the sisters' time in the ranks felt "like a family."

They would know, after all.


Danbury National Guard Soldier Receives New Rank, New Responsibilities

Danbury's Hamlet Hub, July 18, 2019:

Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, announces the recent promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Omar Laureano from Danbury, Conn. and assigned to the Company B, 101st Signal Battalion received a promotion to the rank of Sergeant First Class.

Army National Guard promotions are based on overall performance, attitude, leadership ability, and development potential.

These promotions additionally recognize the best qualified Soldiers and attract and retain the highest caliber Citizen Soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit www.dmna.ny.gov or www.1800goguard.com


Return to top
Citizen Soldiers vie to Become National Guard Best Warrior 2019 (Video)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Little Rock District, July 20, 2019:

Cpl. Joseph W Ryan, with the New York Army National Guard, discusses his experiences training for and competing at the 2019 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition at Camp Gruber Training Center, Oklahoma, July 16, 2019.

The Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition is the culminating test for the top 14 noncommissioned officers and Soldiers from seven regions across the nation who compete in a week-long test of soldiering skills and abilities to take home the title of 2019 Army National Guard Soldier and NCO of the Year. (Oklahoma Army National Guard video by 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

https://www.swl.usace.army.mil/?videoid=697335

National Guard soldier retires

Pocono Record, July 19, 2019:

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, announces the recent retirement of members of the New York Army National Guard, marking their end of service to community, state and nation as part of the Army National Guard.

Staff Sgt. Anil Ramnath from East Stroudsburg and assigned to the Company B, 642nd Support Battalion retired from the New York Army National Guard last month after some 21 years of military service.

Ramnath first entered the military in April 1998.


New Army Combat Fitness Test Challenges Best Warriors
For the first time in history, the 14 Best Warrior Soldiers performed a modified version of the six-event ACFT which included hurling medicine balls over their heads, performing dozens of push-ups and showing their strength on the pull-up bar. Capt. Vanessa LaGrange, the only level II ACFT administrator in the Oklahoma Army National Guard, was excited to see the Warriors implement this test for the first time.

"Typically they'll show up in their Physical Training (PT) uniforms, but they are here in their Operational Camouflage Pattern uniforms," said LaGrange. "The two-mile is a cross-country run instead of the normal laps around a track. Other than that, this is the updated and soon-to-be-in effect Army physical training test."

As the ACFT approaches Army-wide standardization, Best Warrior contestants had questions about how they will do in each event.

"It's something different and I'm not sure I've done all my research yet to find out all the techniques for it," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamison Yager, Best Warrior competitor with the Michigan Army National Guard. "I need to work on hand-release push-ups and need to find out what protocol they're going to use, hands to the side or hands beneath the body."

The ACFT has seen field testing since 2018, and many units are already applying the fundamentals of this PT test into their everyday workouts. Just like the former APFT, tips and tricks on how to improve your performance will come as the ACFT is implemented.

"I can definitely make my technique better," said Spc. Andrew Brotherton, Best Warrior competitor and member of the North Carolina Army National Guard. "There's a bunch of things you can do to shave off some seconds just by knowing the correct techniques."

The ACFT drastically varies from its APFT predecessor, with gender and age-neutral criteria, and standards tailored towards specific job fields.

The Army National Guard will fully adopt the new test in October 2020, with Citizen-Soldiers and their active-duty counterparts maintaining the same standards.

"Being a prior active-duty Soldier, I know the stigma that sometimes the National Guard gets, that we are not good, that we are not well trained, that we are not as motivated, but competitions like this defy that," said Sgt. 1st Class Martin H. Cozens, New York Army National Guard. "I think competitions like this show that we have some of the most lethal, resilient and versatile Soldiers in our military ranks."

The Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition is the culminating test for the top 14 noncommissioned officers and Soldiers from seven regions across the nation who to compete in a week-long test of soldiering skills and abilities to take home the title of 2019 Army National Guard Soldier and NCO of the Year.
Piscataway Resident Reenlists in New York Army National Guard

TAPINTO PISCATAWAY, July 24, 2019:

LATHAM, NY -- Sergeant Robert Rivera, a Piscataway resident in the New York Army National Guard, reenlisted to continue service with the 145th Maintenance Company.

Rivera is among National Guard members whose re-enlistments were recently announced by Major Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the State of New York.

"It's great to see soldiers staying in the Army and continuing to serve their state and nation in the New York Army National Guard," Shields said.

"The most important Army asset we have is the individual soldier. The dedication, skills, and leadership traits they bring to our community and their employers are invaluable."

Shields continued, "By choosing to stay in the Army National Guard they directly contribute to our nation's security and to the governor's ability to respond to disasters, all while building a bright future for their families through the Guard's retirement, education, and health insurance programs."

The New York National Guard (New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs) is the state's executive agency responsible to the Governor for managing New York's Military Forces, which consists of nearly 20,000 members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.


Local soldiers re-enlist with National Guard

Monroe County Post, July 25, 2019:
Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Belmonte, of North Chili, and Spc. Vanessa Morales, of Rochester, recently re-enlisted to continue service with the New York Army National Guard.

Belmonte serves with the Headquarters 153rd Troop Command (Brigade). Morales is assigned to the Company C (Medical), 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

The New York National Guard is the executive agency responsible to the governor for managing the state's military forces, which consists of nearly 20,000 members of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, Naval Militia and Guard.


New troopers: Four Cayuga County natives graduate from New York State Police Academy

Auburn Citizen, July 25, 2019:

Four Cayuga County residents were among more than 200 new troopers who graduated from the New York State Police Academy's Basic School Wednesday.

Three of the new troopers hail from Auburn: Anthony Butera, Jamie Cuff and Thomas Giannettino Jr. The Auburnians have been assigned to Troop C, which covers a seven-county area in central New York and the Southern Tier.

Shawn Mercer, of Cato, has been assigned to Troop D. The troop is comprised of several counties, including Onondaga, in central and northern New York.

The 228 new state troopers were recognized at the graduation ceremony Wednesday in Albany. They completed the 208th session of the New York State Police Academy's Basic School.

To graduate, the troopers needed to complete more than six months of academic, physical and tactical training.

"I am honored to congratulate our new members and welcome them to the most prestigious and well-respected law enforcement agency in the nation," State Police Superintendent Keith Corlett said. "I am confident that you will carry on the traditions of the long gray line with reverence and pride."
A andful of awards were presented at the ceremony. Trooper John Richichi, 26, of Middletown, was selected as the class representative. Richichi is a SUNY Orange graduate, U.S. Marine Corps veteran and New York Army National Guard pilot.

The Investigator Joseph T. Aversa Physical Fitness Award was given to Trooper Jonathan Pupillo, 26, of Watertown. Pupillo had the highest physical agility score of the graduating members.

Trooper Patrick O'Connor, 33, of Cornwall, won the Academic Achievement Award. He had an average of 98.3% during the academy training program.

Trooper Jameson Canning, 30, of Mineola, scored 250 out of a possible 250 points during firearms training to win the Firearms Proficiency Award.

Canning is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and served in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I commend these new troopers for their commitment to public service and protecting the people of New York state," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said. "These men and women have worked and trained extremely hard, and with the graduation of this class, we will continue to make New York a safer place for those who live, work and travel here."


New York Air National Guard

MQ-9 flight in Michigan sets stage for Northern Strike 19

National Guard.mil, July 23, 2019:

ALPENA, Mich. – "This is like the Wright Brothers all over again!"

Shouts of celebration rang out July 18 along the flight line at Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center, Michigan, as an MQ-9 "Reaper" from the 214th Attack Group, Arizona Air National Guard, lifts from the blistering asphalt and into the blue.

The flight – which marks the first time the remotely piloted MQ-9 Reaper took off and landed in Michigan airspace – preempts the MQ-9's participation in Northern Strike 19, one of the Department of Defense's largest annual joint, reserve component readiness events. It is also the first time an MQ-9 Launch and Recovery Element has participated in a major National Guard-sponsored readiness exercise in the U.S.
"Having this MQ-9 on our ramp is a marquee event for us at Alpena this year," said Col. John Miner, commander, Alpena CRTC. "It is truly historic – a huge win to not only see the aircraft here tangibly, but to incorporate it into an exercise that's already very strong and make it better."

Getting the MQ-9 to Alpena for Northern Strike was the result of a frenetic, four-month effort, enabled by a long list of partnerships including nearly every MQ-9-affiliated unit in the Air National Guard and multiple external agencies. Along the way, myriad challenges had to be overcome, including the fact that the MQ-9, which boasts a 66-foot wingspan and weighs more than 4,900 lbs., had to be disassembled, crated, and shipped cross-country before its reassembly on the Alpena flight line.

"It started out in March at the quarterly exercise conference for MQ-9 units," said Maj. Luke Freudenburg, Wing Plans officer, 110th Wing, Battle Creek Air National Guard Base, Michigan. "We knew Northern Strike would be the perfect place to test the deployability of an MQ-9 launch and recovery element, so I literally just started asking, 'can anyone do this?"


"Maj. Barnett's head popped up from behind his computer. He said, 'I think we can do this – let me go make a phone call,'" Freudenburg said. "When he came back, he said, 'yep, we can do it,' and that's how this story began."

According to Freudenburg, finding the right unit to fill the launch and recovery role for the MQ-9's participation at Northern Strike was the easy part. What followed was a staggering behind-the-scenes effort involving skilled professionals in logistics, finance, planning, operations, and other specialties from eight Air National Guard Wings that would eventually play a role in the MQ-9's deployment. Up to the very last minute, there was uncertainty about whether the MQ-9 would actually get to Alpena in time for the exercise.

"This has been a joint effort between the Arizona Air National Guard, Michigan Air National Guard, Iowa Air National Guard, California Air National Guard, New York Air National Guard and the Texas Air National Guard, with great support from the Air National Guard Readiness Center," said Barnett. "A lot of logistical planning and a lot of hard work went into this; packing everything either onto trucks or a C-17 to get it here."

Even after it arrived at Alpena, the MQ-9's maiden flight was enabled only through interagency cooperation and partnerships. Accompanying the MQ-9 on its initial takeoff from Alpena CRTC was a Cessna 206 Stationair, operated by the Michigan Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. The CAP serves as the official, all-volunteer civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force.

"The CAP is here to help track the MQ-9, keep eyes on it, and witness its location at all times," said Lt. Col. Mario Accardo, CAP exercise planner for Northern Strike 19. "We also help keep the MQ-9 out of the clouds, because the Federal Aviation Administration wants to
ensure the MQ-9 flies in clear skies for traffic avoidance on the part of the MQ-9 and other aircraft in the area."

Accardo points out that the Civil Air Patrol has also supported MQ-9 operations in other parts of the country as a cost-effective solution that allows for operation of the MQ-9 in accordance with FAA regulations and the interests of public safety.

"We operate at approximately $160 an hour, we're volunteers, and we're so happy to do it," he said. "Northern Strike gives us a platform to demonstrate that the CAP is a very diverse, adaptable, and capable organization; we hope to continue providing quality, cost-effective services that are a great benefit to our Soldiers and Airmen."

Aside from the FAA’s requirement that a chase aircraft accompany the MQ-9 through national airspace into restricted airspace – which is already set aside for military flight training, high speeds, and tight maneuvering – there is little else that distinguishes the MQ-9’s functionality from a traditionally-piloted aircraft in terms of air traffic control and airspace management.

"Once the MQ-9 gets into the air, we treat it just like any other aircraft," said Senior Master Sgt. Tom Frutos, air traffic manager, Alpena CRTC. "It can do anything that any other aircraft can do, and we use the same standards for it that have been proven to work in other parts of the country."

Having the MQ-9 on-location at Northern Strike 19 adds a new layer of complexity to what is already one of the most sophisticated defense exercises in the U.S. This year, approximately 6,000 personnel representing more than 20 states and seven partner countries are taking part in the exercise's joint fires training environment, hosted annually by the Michigan National Guard at Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center and Alpena CRTC. The area between the two bases comprises one of the premier military training locations in the U.S., with more than 147,000 acres available for land-based maneuvers, blanketed by the largest military training airspace east of the Mississippi River.

"The capability of having the MQ-9 here at Northern Strike is to provide close air support and Intelligence-Reconnaissance-Surveillance capabilities, along with Combat Search and Rescue event capabilities that are the very core of the exercise's integration between air and ground forces," Barnett said. "We've had MQ-9s in the training airspace here in years past, flying in from other locations, but sometimes the weather affected the success of those missions. To be able to bring that capability here locally, fly it right off the ramp, and get the aircraft to the ranges they need to get to will provide a lot of support to the other agencies here to make them more successful."

Although the MQ-9 has been in the U.S. Air Force inventory since 2007 – and has been utilized with great success as a close air support and ISR platform in combat – its capability is still being pioneered as an asset in domestic operations, including stateside natural disaster response. As a melting pot of agencies with diverse specialization, Northern Strike 19 offers a prime opportunity to test interoperability and relationships that could be used to implement
and expand the MQ-9's employment in other life-protecting operations and partnerships, including work with the Department of Homeland Security.

"Alpena will be a useful location for other governmental organizations and military units in the future, because we have the ability and all of the agreements in place to launch and recover aircraft like the MQ-9," Frutos said. "The fact that Alpena sits underneath an incredible airspace complex makes this an ideal place to stage MQ-9 operations."

Miner agrees that the MQ-9's presence at Northern Strike 19 could ultimately make the difference between life and death by providing a training environment more realistic to what U.S. and coalition forces would encounter in a real-world combat scenario.

"This exercise is about synchronized and integrated training," he said. "The training our Airmen and Soldiers receive at Northern Strike saves lives and forges more effective warfighters in an environment that would not be possible any other way."


'She stopped breathing': Air National Guardsman admitted to strangling his kids' mother, court documents allege

SiLive.com, Jul 18, 2019:

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Shane Walker told detectives he fatally strangled the mother of his two children after finding the youngsters lifeless in the bathtub of their South Beach home last month, court records show.

"I went into the bathroom. I see my kids in the tub not breathing, so I went back into the bedroom and asked (Alla Ausheva, their mother), 'What did you do?'" a Voluntary Disclosure form quotes Walker as telling detectives. "She started saying, 'I can't live like this anymore. We are in debt like $70K.'"

"She said she doesn't want to live anymore," Walker continued. "I placed my hands on her throat and applied pressure until she stopped breathing, then I laid her back on the bed and left the house."
Walker, who was arraigned Thursday in state Supreme Court, St. George, on murder and other charges in connection with Ausheva's death sometime between June 21 and 22, told detectives he then thought about setting the house on fire while he was inside.

Instead, the U.S. Air National Guard member said he got into his car intending to turn himself in at his military base.

But he told detectives he changed his mind and "was going to get a gun and kill myself," said the disclosure form.

Walker, 36, didn't take his life.

Rather, he was taken into custody June 22 in Brooklyn after he was found around 7:50 a.m. wandering the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, said police. He reportedly had been involved in a car crash.

Afterward, police responded to the family's home at about 10:30 a.m. where they found the victims.

According to the disclosure form, Walker spontaneously admitted to killing Ausheva while inside a detective's car around 4 p.m. on June 24.

He was being transported then to his arraignment in Criminal Court following his arrest on charges accusing him of slaying Ausheva, 37, and their two toddlers, Elia Walker, 3, and Ivan Walker, 2, inside their Palisade Street home.

However, at this point, the only murder and manslaughter charges contained in the indictment against Walker refer to Ausheva's death.

Walker is accused of killingAusheva "by compressing her neck" between June 21 and 22.

The Voluntary Disclosure Form further alleges Walker "punctured"Ausheva's neck twice with a knife before strangling her.

The indictment was handed up on July 11.

Assistant District Attorney Lisa Davis told the court Thursday that prosecutors await an autopsy report from the city medical examiner's office regarding the children's cause of death.

She said prosecutors anticipate filing a superseding indictment accusing Walker of murdering the boys after receiving the report.

Sources previously told the Advance the children are believed to have been drowned.
Besides the murder and manslaughter charges, Walker is accused of second-degree arson for allegedly setting fire to the residence while knowing Ausheva and the children were likely inside.

He's also accused of fourth-degree criminal weapon possession for allegedly having a knife with the intent to use it unlawfully against another person.

In addition, Walker is charged with several counts of assault for allegedly attacking two cops inside a car while en route to Criminal Court for his initial arraignment on June 24.

While in the detectives' car, the defendant allegedly admitted to killing Ausheva, who served as a logistics planner at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn as a member of the U.S. Air National Guard.

The couple, who law enforcement sources said was not married, lived with their children in their South Beach home.

Eric Nelson, Walker's lawyer, pleaded not guilty on the defendant's behalf at Thursday's arraignment.

In a soft, clear voice, Walker stated his name and confirmed Nelson is his lawyer.

A tall, muscular man with tattoos on his arms, he said nothing else during the brief proceeding.

Nelson asked that Walker be placed in protective custody.

The case was adjourned to Aug. 29 for a conference.

More than a dozen Air National Guard members, garbed in camouflage uniforms, attended the arraignment in support of Ausheva.

They turned and looked in unison as court officers escorted Walker into the courtroom at the start of the proceeding.

Asked later for their reaction, one member, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "It's very emotional and raw. It's still too soon to actually see him."

In his June 24 statement, Walker seemed to suggest Ausheva had killed the toddlers.

He said she was "depressed, on medication," but hadn't taken any in a while, said the disclosure form.

"She contemplated suicide in the past," Walker told detectives.
He said he was in the kitchen, preparing oatmeal and a bottle for the toddlers when the events unfolded.

"I heard water running upstairs. I went upstairs to see what was going on," the disclosure form quotes him as saying. "I went into the bedroom. I saw my wife lying in the bed face up. I asked her, 'Where are the kids?' She said they were in the bathroom."

Walker said he then went into the bathroom and found the boys in the tub before returning to the bedroom and strangling Ausheva.

The defendant did not admit to killing Ausheva or the children in a prior interview with investigators on June 22.

Rather, he gave detectives a bizarre, rambling statement portraying himself as a doting father, but also mentioning a knife he had wiped on a shirt and stating Ausheva could never "take" him in a fight, court records show.

Walker also spoke of an argument he and Ausheva had that turned physical, but said he would never "cut" her or hurt the children, said court documents.

However, two days later on June 24 while in the hospital, he did ask a cop an apparently revealing question: "If your wife hurt your kids, what would you do?" court documents quote him as saying.


Return to top

---

**PFOA Issue**

**Newburgh group to host Saturday events focused on clean water**

*Times Herald Record, July 23, 2019:

CITY OF NEWBURGH — The Newburgh Clean Water Project will host events throughout the afternoon and evening Saturday at the Ritz Theater to boost education about toxic water contamination traced to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances.

PFAS contamination was found in the City of Newburgh’s main water supply, Washington Lake, in 2016 that is believed to have come from firefighting foam used at the Stewart Air National Guard Base.*
Since then, the city has been drawing water from New York City’s Catskill Aqueduct and Brown’s Pond.

The following events are scheduled with the Newburgh Clean Water Project on Saturday:

* 2-4 p.m. — watershed safaris; tours will include discussion about PFAS contamination in city water and the threat future development could have on the water supply;

* 3-6 p.m. — activities in the Ritz, including in-person Q&A with environmental experts; a ‘We Deserve Clean Water’ photo booth; interactive watershed model; refreshments; reading lounge with articles, maps, books and post-card writing to the state Department of Health;

* 6-7 p.m. — water ceremony with Grandmother Carole Bubar-Blodgett;

* 7-8:30 p.m. — screening of the documentary “The Devil We Know.”

Learn more about the event at facebook.com/events/507290426480352


Return to top

98 claims filed against New Windsor over tainted water

Times Herald Record, July 23, 2019:

NEW WINDSOR – Ninety-eight notices of claim have been filed against the town, seeking damages in the wake of the disclosure that its water contained PFOS and PFOA.

The state Health Department told the town in April that low levels of the two chemicals were found in April in the Butterhill Park wells. The town publicly disclosed that fact a month later.

PFOS and PFOA are associated with kidney and testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, low infant birth weight, and high cholesterol, among other health problems.

The chemicals, used in the manufacture of firefighting foam, are believed to have come from the Stewart Air National Guard base.

The claimants say they are seeking reimbursement for personal injuries, including hospital and other past and future medical expenses, pain and suffering and other damages they experienced or will experience due to the town’s negligence, recklessness and carelessness.
At least 10 of the claims were filed by adults on behalf of minor children.

A notice of claim is a legally required prelude when suing a municipality. If the town does not pay or settle the claim within 90 days of being served, a lawsuit could follow.

Town Attorney David Zagon had no comment on the claims.

Tate J. Kunkle, the claimants’ New York City lawyer, could not be reached Tuesday.

The town began drawing from the wells in Butterhill Park just last year. The wells were shut down in late May, after the town reactivated its Riley Road water treatment plant and switched back to its former primary supply, the Catskill Aqueduct.

However, the state is paying for a temporary filtration system at the Butterhill treatment plant. It is hoped that will be ready when the aqueduct shuts down for 10 or 12 weeks for repairs on Oct. 7.

Butterhill, along with the town’s Kroll well and water from the Town of Newburgh, will be used while the aqueduct is closed.


Return to top