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**New York Air National Guard**

**Air Guard troops doing space missions face identity crisis**

**Associated Press, June 27, 2022 ::**

WASHINGTON — About 1,000 Air National Guard troops who are assigned to space missions are mired in an identity crisis.

pTorn between the Air Force, where they have historically been assigned, and the military’s shiny new Space Force where they now work, their units have become orphans, according to commanders, as state and federal leaders wrangle over whether to create a Space National Guard.

For federal authorities, the issue is mainly about the money. A Space Guard, they say, will create unneeded bureaucracy and cost up to $500 million a year. They argue it's too high a price to slap a new name on a patch for an airman doing the same job at the same desk as a year ago.

But state Guard leaders say what's at stake is more than than just uniform patches. They say the split has caused budgeting gaps, training delays and recruiting problems, and if unresolved will lead to bigger divisions, eroding units' readiness in some of the nation's critical space warfighting and nuclear command and control jobs.

The state leaders don't buy the money argument. They say a Space Guard will be needed in only seven states and Guam, where the Air Guard members who support space missions already reside. The cost, they say, will only be about $250,000, for new signs, tags and other administrative changes.

"When they removed all the space operators out of the Air Force, the Air Force no longer really does space," said Air Guard Lt. Col. Jeremiah Hitchner, commander of the 109th Space Electromagnetic Warfare Squadron in Guam.
Hitchner was referring to the decision to shift active-duty Air Force troops doing space missions into the new Space Force. "They left us in the Air Force. So we were — for lack of a better term — orphaned. We were left on our own to survive."

Across the country, there are 1,008 Air National Guard citizen-irmen performing space jobs in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, New York, Ohio and Guam.

Many of those Guard members work with America’s highly sensitive and technical military satellite communications and missile warning systems. They are responsible for ensuring that those systems can survive and operate under all peace and wartime conditions.

President Donald Trump ordered the creation of a Space Force in June 2018. But even before then, it had already been under discussion within the Air Force as a way to better defend U.S. interests in space, especially navigation and communication satellites.

Unlike the Army, Navy and Air Force, the Space Force is not its own military department. Instead, it’s administered by the Air Force secretary, is led by a four-star general and provides forces for U.S. Space Command, which oversees the military’s space operations.

To limit costs and avoid establishing a vast space bureaucracy, only a few military career fields were created for the Space Force: mainly space operations, cyber and intelligence jobs. Active-duty airmen who were doing those missions became Space Force Guardians.

There are about 7,000 active-duty Guardians, and a similar number of civilians, with a budget of about $18 billion for this fiscal year. Other duties — including legal, medical, public affairs and some administrative posts — continue to be carried out by Air Force staff.

The opposition to creating a small Space Guard appears to be centered at the White House and Office of Management and Budget. Last September, the budget office said it strongly opposed a Space National Guard, citing Congressional Budget Office estimates that it could cost about $500 million a year.

"Establishing a Space National Guard would not deliver new capabilities — it would instead create new government bureaucracy," OMB said. "The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units with space missions have effectively performed their roles with no adverse effect on DOD’s space mission since the establishment of the Space Force." DOD refers to the Department of Defense.

While having a Space Guard was part of the initial Air Force plan, the funding limits have become the overriding issue. There are worries that creating a Guard structure
would mean more overhead costs, including the need for a Space Guard commander and other senior staff. Also, there is a distant fear that once that structure was in place, other states could lobby for their own units, again expanding the costs.

In the states, Guard members say they are struggling with increased bureaucracy and that it's becoming harder to get training slots for new recruits.

Sitting alongside the active-duty Space Guardians, the Air Guard members say they're doing their same jobs, but without a formal link to the Space Force. As the Space Force develops its own job descriptions and requirements, Air Guard troops complain it's more difficult to be promoted in space mission jobs.

"We need to be aligned with people that understand the space mission, have responsibility for the space mission, and have all the authorities and alignment in the space mission," said Senior Master Sgt. Harry Smith, flight chief for the 137th Space Warning Squadron in Colorado. "The Air Force should be focused on air power."

Commanders said that over time, the disconnect will worsen. Already, they said, funding is becoming a problem because they are requesting money from the Air Force for a Space Force mission or equipment.

"The Space Force and Air Force now have their own fund lines. They're appropriated completely different," said Hitchner. "That makes an issue for me because I'm in the air side trying to spend Space Force money. It's sometimes legally not possible."

Some members of Congress are pushing for a Space Guard, citing many of the same efficiency and bureaucracy reasons. Legislation has been proposed but has not passed.

In a letter to President Joe Biden, the National Guard Association of the U.S. argued that OMB incorrectly inflated the price tag and ignored Air Force studies that concluded creating a Guard would be more efficient.

"The personnel are already on the payroll and the equipment and facilities are in place," said retired Brig. Gen. J. Roy Robinson, the association's president. "A Space National Guard could grow in the future, but only to meet requirements specified by the Space Force."

https://apnews.com/article/technology-air-force-government-and-politics-a4870de3e2ea83a7bbee287c33d25a44
WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. – On April 24, 2017, seven Airmen from the New York Air National Guard’s 106th Rescue Wing jumped into the night sky over the Atlantic, 1,700 miles from Long Island.

Their mission was to provide emergency care for two sailors on the Slovenian bulk carrier Tamar who had been badly burned in an explosion.

On June 4, 2022, during a ceremony at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach, the two combat rescue officers and five pararescuemen from the wing’s 103rd Rescue Squadron were awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for heroism for their actions.

The medal recognizes Airmen who distinguish themselves through heroism, meritorious achievement and service.


Master Sgt. Bryan Dalere was also honored but was not present because he is now assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard.

Col. Jeffrey Cannet, the commander of the 106th Operations Group, who piloted the HC-130 search and rescue aircraft on the mission, praised those who jumped into the ocean that night.

“The amount of complexity in that mission just can’t be overstated,” Cannet said. “The fact that these guys had to do that, all out there, alone and unafraid, getting it done, was just a testament to their skill and ability.”

The facts of the mission show how incredibly demanding it was, Cannet said.

“I remember getting the call that a 625-foot vessel traveling from Baltimore to Gibraltar had an explosion 1,700 miles off the east coast of New York,” Cannet said. “Four seamen were critically injured and required immediate medical care.”

Col. Andrew Weinberger, then the 106th Operations Group commander, maintained the wing was capable and ready to execute the mission, Cannet said.

The 106th could not formally be assigned the Tamar rescue because it was a civil search and rescue mission, he said. However, all the Airmen involved volunteered to go on the flight.
Before they could take off, the team needed to gather medical and surgical equipment from local hospitals.

Then, aircraft maintenance issues threatened to end the mission shortly after takeoff, but the flight engineers mitigated the problem, Cannet said.

The jump into the Atlantic at night required dropping equipment bundles on target, along with two inflatable Zodiac boats.

Once in the water, the pararescue team had to climb into the Zoilds, retrieve the floating supplies, head to the ship, and board the Tamar on a rope ladder while 15-foot waves tossed the boat up and down, Cannet said.

Every aspect of the mission presented challenges, said St. Clair, the team leader.

Along with the distance and the jump, once on board, the 106th Airmen had to conduct emergency surgery, provide medical care for three days as the ship approached the Azores, then ensure the victims were airlifted onto a Portuguese helicopter, St. Clair said.

“We were able to make a difference in the lives of two men,” St. Clair said. “Those two men are alive and enjoying life today because of our ability to provide a capability that very few organizations can.”

Boughal said the unusual mission was a perfect example of the wisdom his pararescue instructor had passed along to him: “Someday when somebody is having their worst day, you better have your best day.”

Cannet, Boughal and St. Clair credited Lt. Col. Stephen Rush, the 106th Medical Group commander and 103rd Rescue Squadron wing flight surgeon, for having such a huge impact on the medical capabilities of the entire pararescue career field, preparing the team to be elite medical professionals.

The Tamar rescue mission, Boughal told the audience, is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the 106th Rescue Wing and its commitment to the pararescue creed “... that others may live.”

“Today, we honor these incredible men for putting it all on the line to save lives,” Boughal said.

https://www.ang.af.mil/Media/Article-Display/Article/3074662/new-york-air-guardsmen-recognized-for-dramatic-rescue/

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New York air guardsmen awarded for valor in Afghanistan evacuation

Air Force Times, June 24, 2022 ::

One airman from the New York National Guard’s 105th Airlift Wing was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, while five others received Air Medals with a “V” device for valor to honor efforts in 2021’s humanitarian evacuation from Afghanistan.

The latest ceremony, held at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, emphasized the airmen’s bravery onboard a C-17 Globemaster III transport jet — nicknamed “Reach 824” — as part of Operation Allies Refuge in August 2021.

“The Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with Valor have been awarded to other great Americans such as ‘Hap’ Arnold, Jimmy Doolittle, and Benjamin O. Davis Jr.,” Air Force Lt. Gen. Michael Loh, director of the Air National Guard, said at the June 4 ceremony. “Today, the Air Force adds to this distinguished list of American airmen heroes the crew of Reach 824.”

Capt. Matthew McChesney, Reach 824’s aircrew commander, was the sole recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, the highest honor for heroism during air operations.


Tech. Sgt. Byron Catu, a flight mechanic, earned the Meritorious Service Medal in May.

New York National Guard Airmen with the 105th Airlift Wing were recognized with the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with valor at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, June 4, 2022. (Staff Sgt. Terrence Clyburn/ Air National Guard)

Despite knowing that Taliban forces had reached the outskirts of Kabul — much closer than recent intelligence reports had indicated — the crew of Reach 824 was slated to fly a MH-47 Chinook helicopter and 22 soldiers from the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment from the United Arab Emirates to Hamid Karzai International Airport on Aug. 15, 2021.

Once there, rescuers were supposed to find Americans on the ground and prepare them for immediate evacuation. But the team didn’t make it to the airport.

The crew couldn’t securely communicate with air traffic control, while another C-17 was on the ground, reporting heavy small-arms fire, panicked civilians overrunning
the airfield and both civilian and military aircraft flying in every direction. One crew member described the situation as flying into a “hornet’s nest.”

Reach 824 was forced to abort its mission and divert to Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates.

“After we turned around that first night, the whole crew felt disappointed, discouraged, upset because it was a hard decision to make, and I have no doubts that it was the right decision,” McChesney said in a press release. “Discouragement and disappointment only motivated us to want to get in there even more.”

The next day, determined to try again under the cover of night, Reach 824 navigated the mountains around Kabul and passed several other C-17s that couldn’t land due to the airfield closure, low fuel or other threats. Still lacking controlled airspace, McChesney asked a Chinook crew on the ground for help figuring out where to land.

The jet had been airborne for so long, though, that it was running out of fuel. So the crew turned back a second time.

While flying to Qatar, the airmen were able to connect with a nearby KC-10 Extender tanker jet that accompanied the C-17 back to Kabul. That way, the transport plane could gas up after landing and takeoff from the airport as well.

With enough fuel in tow, the crew came up with a plan to land.

“We knew how serious [our mission] was,” Catu said. “We knew the cargo we were carrying was really desperately needed by the people on the ground.”

With no landing clearance and no terminal or building lights, and while being continually shot at, the crew was given one simple instruction: “Land at your own risk.”

Reach 824 finally touched down in Afghanistan and was swarmed by heavily armed Taliban forces in 12 vehicles, who escorted them over taxiways littered with garbage, stray animals and abandoned cars to the allied side of the airfield.

In the face of severe stress and danger, the crew still managed to offload the rescue crews’ cargo in an unprecedented 40 minutes, allowing the special operations team to recover Americans across the country.

“They were able to get over 800 people out from the countryside who otherwise would not have made it to Kabul,” Guagenti said. “If we did not complete our mission, that’s 800 people who would be stuck there still.”

The crew returned to Kabul two more times to help evacuate 348 people, the youngest of whom was a 17-day-old girl.
On its final mission, the crew transported the remains of 13 service members killed in the Aug. 26 suicide bombing at the airport’s Abbey Gate.


“That was at the end of a long two weeks trying to figure everything out,” Guagenti said. “We were all exhausted. We thought we were going home. Not one of us hesitated, even as exhausted as we were.”

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, praised the team’s dedication to the mission despite setbacks and danger.

“You met crisis with conviction,” Hokanson said during the ceremony. “With purpose. With valor.”


New York Air Guardsmen Recognized for Dramatic Rescue

National Guard Bureau, by Staff Sgt. Kevin Donaldson, New York National Guard, June 24, 2022 ::

WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. – On April 24, 2017, seven Airmen from the New York Air National Guard’s 106th Rescue Wing jumped into the night sky over the Atlantic, 1,700 miles from Long Island.

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“How New York Air National Guard chief went from P-3s to Skibirds

As the first woman to command the USA’s largest Air National Guard unit, Brigadier General Denise Donnell wants to use her position to inspire anyone to follow their aviation dream.

Denise Donnell was a third-year undergraduate student at Georgetown University when she had her first taste of flying, in the early 1990s. While home in Montana over Christmas holiday, the international politics major was gifted 10 hours of flight lessons from her father.

Donnell made the hour-long drive across the frozen North American prairie from Helena to a local airport in Butte. The experience changed the course of her life.
“I was hooked,” she recalls three decades later. At the time of that first flight, Donnell was enrolled in Georgetown’s Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps programme, and on the path to becoming an officer in the US Navy (USN). “Initially I thought I wanted to be an intelligence officer.”

But when she returned to Washington, DC after her Christmas flight, Donnell changed course to pursue a set of naval aviator’s wings. Some 30 years later, she is now a Brigadier General and the first female commander of the New York State Air National Guard, a sub-component of the US Air Force (USAF).

In the US military, national guards act as a reserve force of army and air force troops. There are 54 such units: one in each of the 50 states, plus in the national capital Washington DC, the territories of Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Guam.

National Guard forces can be activated at the local level for disaster response, as was widely the case during the Covid-19 pandemic, or at the federal level for military and national security missions.

While Army National Guard units are typically activated for discreet periods of time, the USAF regularly makes use of pilots and support troops in the Air National Guard for its day-to-day operations.

New York’s Air National Guard is the largest in the country. It contains a squadron of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems MQ-9 Reaper unmanned air vehicle pilots, a pararescue combat search and rescue unit, and the USAF’s only wing of Arctic resupply Lockheed Martin LC-130 cargo aircraft – all of which are now overseen by Donnell.

In addition to her historic appointment by the first female governor of New York State, Donnell’s career in military aviation has taken her all over the world in a variety of aircraft. She has more than 4,000 flight hours on five USN and USAF aircraft types, with 280 of those hours in combat.

She is qualified on five operational models, including the Lockheed P-3 Orion anti-submarine warfare aircraft, Lockheed C-5 Galaxy and Boeing C-17 Globemaster strategic transports, and two variants of the C-130 Hercules transport.

Donnell took a winding road to arrive in her current role commanding 5,900 part-time airmen; not a typical career destination for a USN midshipman (the term for a naval officer in training).
She was raised as a “navy brat”, in military parlance, with her father a USN doctor and her mother a service nurse. Donnell had already lived all over the world before joining up herself; she attended elementary school in Japan, middle school in Tennessee, and graduated from high school in Montana.

“All I knew was navy,” Donnell says. “That was what I grew up in and that was what I was planning to do.”

After graduating from Georgetown in 1993, she entered the navy and earned a slot in the highly competitive naval aviation programme, ultimately selected to fly the P-3.

Donnell describes a feeling of shock when she opened the envelope revealing she had been admitted to flight school. It contained an image of the iconic “Wings of Gold” worn by USN aviators.

It was early 1993; the US military was being downsized by Clinton-era “reductions in force” as the Cold War receded. It was also a time when women were becoming more widely integrated into the force.

Just 19% of the USA’s total military force are women, according to a 2020 report by the US Department of Defense, with the breakdown fairly consistent across the five service components measured and between the officer and enlisted ranks.

US Federal Aviation Statistics for 2021 show that this gender imbalance is even worse in civil aviation, where only 9% of pilots and flight students in the USA are women.

Donnell acknowledges that “double whammy” of male domination, but says she has never felt held back by her gender throughout her military career. She cites an incident that occurred just before her joining as having spurred positive change within the USN on integrating women.

The ‘Tailhook’ scandal was a 1991 naval aviation conference in Las Vegas, Nevada at which USN and US Marine Corps officers were alleged to have sexually assaulted 83 women and seven men, prompting outrage and calls for change.

“That started a tremendous change in the navy,” says Donnell, who joined two years after ‘Tailhook’. “I was very fortunate to have benefited from that change.”

Donnell says that by the time she reached flight school, “what people really cared about was how well you could fly”. She believes that her gender was a neutral factor during flight training, neither hurting nor assisting her in completing the multi-year activity, describing it as “a very positive experience”.
For the next four years, she flew patrol missions, operating just 300ft feet above the water in a P-3 hunting Russian Oscar-class submarines and chasing pirates in the South China Sea. At the age of 27, she deployed to the Persian Gulf, where she commanded flights with “release authority” to launch live ordnance.

However, she also caveats that many patrol missions were “quite boring”, often consisting of flying in circles for eight to 10 hours, to discourage enemy submarines from surfacing. Donnell also deployed twice to Japan and flew cargo missions to far-flung locales like Kurdistan.

RESCUE CALL

Her favorite navy flight experience came during one of those deployments to Japan. Donnell's aircraft was on “Ready One” status, meaning the entire crew had to be prepared to take off on just one-hour’s notice, when a search and rescue call came in.

Donnell was the aircraft commander on the mission, which was to locate a sailing boat that had been severely damaged in the western Pacific. Her crew launched in the evening and flew through the night, combing the vast expanse of ocean with radar and visual scans for any sign of the stranded craft.

Their plan was to fly the P-3 to the “prudent limit of endurance”, minimising fuel consumption so they could continue the search during daylight. After hours of searching unsuccessfully, with the sunrise approaching and the crew still a three-hour flight from land, just 15-20 minutes of fuel remained in the tank before the crew would have to turn for home.

“It was like something out of a movie,” Donnell recalls. “The sun rose and we saw a flare off in the horizon.”

Following the flare, the crew finally laid eyes on their target: a now mast-less vessel. Donnell dropped to an altitude of 300ft and the crew opened the P-3’s main cabin door, pushing out a life raft containing food, water, and an emergency radio.

During their return flight, Donnell’s crew were able to make radio contact with a passing cargo ship and direct it to the stranded boat. They were credited by the navy as having saved three lives aboard.

Donnell estimates that she was 25 at the time and describes the experience as one of her most memorable. Although there were technical procedures for that kind of rescue, it was not something on which P-3 crews trained at the time.
After six years of flying, Donnell was ready to resign from the navy to pursue a career in maritime law and settle down with the boyfriend who would go on to become her husband.

Then the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001 happened. At the time, Donnell was assigned to a squadron outside of Washington, DC and combat aircraft were patrolling the skies above the capital city.

During a flight briefing for other pilots operating in the area, Donnell learned about an opportunity to fly the largest transport in the USAF inventory – the C-5 – in Upstate New York, not far from where her then-boyfriend was living.

DIFFERENT GALAXY

She applied for a position in the 105th Airlift Wing and was accepted into the New York Air National Guard. After attending C-5 flight training in Oklahoma and settling in New York’s Hudson Valley, Donnell married and started a family.

She quickly ran into the obstacles of being a mother and a working pilot, describing these as very challenging.

“Especially with strategic airlift, you’re gone for five, six, seven days,” she says. Once or twice per month, the unit would fly resupply missions to Afghanistan and Iraq and then return cargo to the USA, as the nation rapidly expanded worldwide operations during the so-called Global War on Terror.

Donnell describes that mission as gratifying, delivering combat supplies to troops overseas. She delivered heavy armoured vehicles, helicopters, and even a special patrol boat used by USN SEAL commandos.

Sometimes the missions were more humanitarian in nature, such as bringing the families of US service members stationed in Europe home for summer vacation.

By far, Donnell says the most emotionally moving missions she flew during that time were flights to repatriate the remains of American troops killed overseas.

“It really makes you take stock of what you’re doing when you see to those transfer cases with flags,” she says.

In fact, three C-17 aircrews from the New York air guard were sent to Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, during the chaotic and deadly US withdrawal from the country. During the retreat, 13 US marines and dozens of Afghan civilians were killed in a suicide bombing at the makeshift perimeter around Hamid Karzai International airport in Kabul. One of the New York aircrews brought home the marines’ remains.
Donnell was not personally on that mission, but says that when she saw a photo of several marines kneeling while that aircraft taxied toward take-off in Kabul, it invoked the same feeling of solemnity she had when flying repatriation missions.

In her new role commanding New York’s “citizen airmen”, Donnell is now a strategic policy planner on top of overseeing the air guard’s operational units. Her top priority is securing funding to recapitalise its LC-130 'Skibird' turboprops.

Flown by the 109th Airlift Wing in Schenectady, the Skibird resembles a standard C-130 with one notable exception: there are large metal skis surrounding the landing gear.

The USAF only has 10 operational LC-130s in its fleet, all of them belonging to the New York air guard. The 109th’s mission is to resupply remote outposts in the snowy high latitudes of the Arctic and Antarctica.

The first such mission was flown in 1975, delivering cargo to a network of early warning radar sites in Greenland. In 1988, the first mission to the southern-most continent was flown by the unit, with full responsibility for Antarctic deliveries coming in 1998. After 9-11, it was called on to deploy emergency response personnel to nearby New York City less than 24h after the attack in Manhattan.

Today, the 109th’s Skibirds still support scientific research missions in Greenland and Antarctica. During the austral summer, the transports will make the 11,000 mile (18,000km) trip from New York to Antarctica several times. The route takes five to seven days, with stops along the way in California, Hawaii, American Samoa, and New Zealand.

The first LC-130 was fielded to the New York air guard almost four decades ago, in 1984. The aircraft delivered all the materials for the current US station at the South Pole, which Donnell describes as being akin to a space station.

Donnell is qualified on the LC-130 and has herself made several trips to Antarctica, including three landings at the South Pole. She says an LC-130 ski landing on open snow is bumpy, equating it to a seaplane landing. However, crews can also land on groomed “ski-ways” that are much smoother.

But Donnell says an LC-130 take-off from snow is unlike any other aircraft. Pilots must adjust the flaps to get the nose of the aircraft pitched upward from the snow, a manoeuvre she says is not standard in any other aircraft. The unique physics associated with the Skibird’s landing skis, which have a much greater surface area than conventional wheeled landing gear, necessitate the move.
Snow creates substantially more friction than tarmac. Combined with the added surface area of landing skis, the two factors produce extra drag that must be overcome to achieve take-off. Manipulating flaps to get the forward landing gear off the ground allows the aircraft to gain ground speed faster.

Donnell says she has heard anecdotally of one LC-130 take-off that took five miles to achieve lift. Earlier flights occasionally used an external rocket system known as jet assisted take-off (JATO) to overcome that challenge. That system is rarely used now, after a C-130 propeller modernisation allowed the aircraft to produce more thrust.

The USN’s Blue Angels aerobatic display team has also previously used JATO on their demonstration C-130, known colloquially as “Fat Albert”.

Revitalising the LC-130 fleet is among Donnell’s top priorities during her command, noting the small fleet size and the oldest examples being almost 50 years old.

Donnell describes the Skibird as a “priceless national treasure”, both in historic terms and for the current operational capability it brings to the table. She points to increased competition in the Artic between the USA, Russia, and China as providing an immediate need to support the ageing LC-130 fleet.

It is a topic that has been on her mind for years. While earning her master’s degree, she authored a paper laying out the strategic imperative of expanding the nation’s fleet of icebreakers, which has since been funded, and the USAF’s LC-130 fleet.

Arctic assets and polar competition are now hot topics in US defence policy circles, but Donnell laughs recounting the feedback she received from her professor at the time.

“You needed to write on something more strategically relevant,” she recalls him saying.

Donnell also wants to deepen the New York Air National Guard’s foreign partnerships. The US Department of Defense runs a State Partnership Program, aligning state national guards with foreign militaries around the world to improve training and skill development, while also building strategic relationships.

Troops from the Florida National Guard were helping to train the Ukrainian army in February when Russia invaded the nation. The guardsmen were relocated to Germany, where they eventually began training Ukrainian counterparts on weapons supplied by the USA.
Donnell says the unexpected outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine is a timely example of how impactful the State Partnership Program can be to the national security, both for partner countries and the USA.

The New York National Guard is partnered with Brazil and South Africa. Donnell says the Brazilian military is interested in expanding its space capabilities, which she believes can be strategically beneficial to both parties.

INSPIRING OTHERS

Beyond her technical objectives for her time in command, Donnell hopes that she can serve as an inspiration to young women, but also young men, who may be considering a career in aviation or the military.

She acknowledges the groundbreaking nature of her latest professional accomplishment, but is hesitant to put too much emphasis on her gender.

“The airplane doesn’t care if you’re a man, or a woman; black or white,” Donnell says. “The passengers don’t care either. They just want someone to operate the aircraft safely and return them home.”

However, she is not shy at all when it comes to describing the unique opportunities of a career in the military and the Air National Guard specifically, calling her own experience phenomenal.

“I have had experiences that most of my classmates at Georgetown only read about in the newspaper,” she says. “Responding to tsunamis in Japan, taking a cargo to the South Pole. Those are adventures that most people read about in a fiction novel.”

Donnell does have a piece of advice for anyone interested in turning that kind of fiction into their own reality.

“You can’t wait for someone to bring it to you,” she notes. “You have to pursue it.

https://www.flightglobal.com/flight-international/how-new-york-air-national-guard-chief-went-from-p-3s-to-skibirds/148652.article

New York Army National Guard

Army Guard troops risk dismissal as vaccine deadline looms
WASHINGTON (AP) — Up to 40,000 Army National Guard soldiers across the country — or about 13% of the force — have not yet gotten the mandated COVID-19 vaccine, and as the deadline for shots looms, at least 14,000 of them have flatly refused and could be forced out of the service.

Guard soldiers have until Thursday to get the vaccine. According to data obtained by The Associated Press, between 20% to 30% of the Guard soldiers in six states are not vaccinated, and more than 10% in 43 other states still need shots.

Guard leaders say states are doing all they can to encourage soldiers to get vaccinated by the time limit. And they said they will work with the roughly 7,000 who have sought exemptions, which are almost all for religious reasons.

“We’re going to give every soldier every opportunity to get vaccinated and continue their military career. Every soldier that is pending an exemption, we will continue to support them through their process,” said Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, director of the Army National Guard, in an Associated Press interview. “We’re not giving up on anybody until the separation paperwork is signed and completed. There’s still time.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin last year ordered all service members — active-duty, National Guard and Reserves — to get the vaccine, saying it is critical to maintaining the health and readiness of the force. The military services had varying deadlines for their forces, and the Army National Guard was given the longest amount of time to get the shots, mainly because it’s a large force of about 330,000 soldiers who are widely scattered around the country, many in remote locations.

The Army Guard’s vaccine percentage is the lowest among the U.S. military — with all the active-duty Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps at 97% or greater and the Air Guard at about 94%. The Army reported Friday that 90% of Army Reserve forces were partially or completely vaccinated.

The Pentagon has said that after June 30, Guard members won’t be paid by the federal government when they are activated on federal status, which includes their monthly drill weekends and their two-week annual training period. Guard troops mobilized on federal status and assigned to the southern border or on COVID-19 missions in various states also would have to be vaccinated or they would not be allowed to participate or be paid.

To make it more complicated, however, Guard soldiers on state activate duty may not have to be vaccinated — based on the requirements in their states. As long as they remain in state duty status, they can be paid by the state and used for state missions.
At least seven governors formally asked Austin to reconsider or not enforce the vaccine mandate for National Guard members, and some filed or signed on to lawsuits. In letters to the governors, Austin declined, and said that the coronavirus “takes our service members out of the fight, temporarily or permanently, and jeopardizes our ability to meet mission requirements.” He said Guard troops must either get the vaccine or lose their Guard status.

Jensen and Maj. Gen. Jill Faris, director of the Guard’s office of the Joint Surgeon General, said they are working with states adjutants general to get progress updates, including on the nearly 20,000 troops who are not flat refusals and haven’t submitted any type of exemption request. Some, they said, may just be a lag in self-reporting, while others may still be undecided.

“Part of those undefined are our soldiers who say, well, I have until 30 June and so I’ll take till 30 June,” said Jensen.

Others may have promised to bring in vaccine paperwork, and haven’t done it yet. Still others are on the books, but haven’t yet reported to basic training, so don’t have to be vaccinated until they get there. It’s not clear how many are in each category.

Jensen acknowledged that if the current numbers hold, there are concerns about possible impact on Guard readiness in the states, including whether it will affect any Guard units preparing to deploy.

“When you’re looking at, 40,000 soldiers that potentially are in that unvaccinated category, absolutely there’s readiness implications on that and concerns associated with that,” said Jensen. “That’s a significant chunk.”

Overall, according to the data obtained by the AP, about 85% of all Army Guard soldiers are fully vaccinated. Officials said that if those with one shot are counted, 87% are at least partially vaccinated.

Across the country, in all but one case, Guard soldiers are vaccinated at a higher rate that the general population in their state. Only in New Jersey is the percentage of vaccinated Guard soldiers very slightly lower than the state’s overall population, as of earlier this month when the data was collected.

The three U.S. territories — Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico — and the District of Columbia, all have more than 90% of their soldiers fully vaccinated. The highest percentage is in Hawaii, with nearly 97%, while the lowest is Oklahoma, at just under 70%.

Guard leaders in the states have run special shot programs, and provided as much information as possible to their forces in order to keep them on the job.
In Tennessee, they set up small teams in the east, west and central regions and did monthly events providing vaccines to troops who wanted them. And every Wednesday, Guard members could make appointments for shots in the middle Tennessee region, in Smyrna. In addition, in early June they called in all soldiers who have so far refused the vaccine.

“We held a big, mass event,” said Army Guard Col. Keith Evans. “We had all of our medical providers here. So if there were any questions to clear up, any misconceptions, any misinformation, we had all of our data and were able to provide them all the information.”

Evans, who is commander of his Army Guard’s medical readiness command, said they also had recruiting and other leaders there who could explain what would happen if soldiers chose to not get the shot and ended up leaving the Guard.

“We wanted to let them know what benefits they had earned because these are soldiers that had done their time, served their country,” said Evans.

Officials say they believe the information campaign has been working. Jensen said that about 1,500 soldiers a week around the country are moving into the vaccinated category. “We expect, as we approach the deadline, that we’ll see some larger growth.”

https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-army-only-on-ap-government-and-politics-41f0f24bd26b2f8c4284e1fd396f88b8

Oswego National Guard soldier receives new rank, new responsibilities

NNY 360.com, June 27, 2022 ::

LATHAM - Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the state of New York, announced the recent promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Kollyn Roach from Oswego, and assigned to the Company D, 152nd Combat Engineer Battalion, received a promotion to the rank of private on May 4.

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.


DUTY CALLS: Flags represent those lost to Battle Within

Times Union, June 27, 2022 ::

PHOTO CAPTION New York National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Ciampolillo, the outgoing command sergeant major of the 53rd Troop Command, receives the Legion of Merit from Brig. Gen. Joseph Biehler, the commander of the 53rd, on May 15. (Pfc. Jean D. Sanon)

Thousands of soldiers, Marines, airmen, sailors, and Coast Guardsmen survived the trauma of battle but lost the Battle Within.

During the past year, more than 7,300 veterans and military personnel who were so traumatized and without effective therapies to help them cope turned to suicide, according to Veterans Affairs and Pentagon statistics.

But they are not forgotten.

In Riverlink Park in Amsterdam a dozen Masonic and Elks members as well as family members and friends planted 7,300 small flags in the ground to commemorate those who lost their lives to suicide.

Brian Desrochers of Amsterdam, a Masonic District staff officer and flag project leader planted the first flag. He said that flag represented retired Marine Lt. Sammy Smith, who served four tours in the Vietnam War.

The loss of Smith prompted his friend, Desrochers to launch the “One Life, One Flag, One Voice” project that honors those who volunteered and swore an oath to God to protect and defend our country but lost to the Battle Within. These troops experienced and saw the carnage of warfare. Those images often became unbearable as they suffered through Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Approximately three hours after the volunteers began their work in the park the project was completed.
“Afterward, I walked to a bridge that overlooks the flag field,” said Justine Crowley-Duncan of Latham. “The field of flags was so powerful it left me crying. I could see people passing, look at the field and cry.”

“We did it to create an awareness of the number of suicides that most people can’t quantify and seeing the number of suicides becomes overwhelming,” Desrochers said, after completing the project that was displayed for a week. "As many as 22 veterans are committing suicide each day."

After a Masonic Lodge member in the Buffalo area, Army Capt. Peter Schank took his life in 2017 at the age of 30 while battling depression and post-traumatic stress, fellow Masons in the Buffalo area began an effort to remember our fallen troops who lost the Battle Within. Schank was a veteran of three deployments to Afghanistan.

Schank’s fellow Masons founded a Battle Within Foundation in an effort to prevent future suicides. The foundation, financed by donations, has an endowment that is financing research on the causes and prevention of suicide. The foundation is developing a training program for first responders’ response to veterans and others suffering from PTSD.

Donations can be sent to The Battle Within Foundation, P.O. Box 4184, 3014 Delaware Ave., Kenmore, NY 14217.

For information, call (716) 935-0570.

New commander

New York Army National Guard Maj. Terry Benson of Queensbury, has assumed command of the 1st Battalion of the 106th Regional Training Institute during a ceremony at Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill.

Benson, a full-time National Guard officer who serves in the New York National Guard Joint Operations Section, is a veteran of the Afghan War, and previously served in the Marine Corps.

He leads the 106th Training Institute that provides military occupational specialty qualification, medical training, Officer Candidate School, and general studies training for the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve, and active components soldiers. His battalion is responsible for teaching the basic infantry soldier course, the maneuver tactics course, hand-to-hand combat, and the Army drone operator’s course.

Benson is a 2004 honor graduate of the New York State Officer Candidate School program and was commissioned as an infantry officer.

Prior to his service in the Army National Guard, he served on active duty in the Marine Corps as an intelligence intercept operator assigned to 3rd Marines, 1st
Radio Battalion, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. In August 2005, Benson was assigned as a rifle platoon leader with the Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry in Gloversville.

He deployed to Afghanistan as part of an Embedded Training Team serving as a company mentor to the 3rd Kanda in Ghazni, Afghanistan. Upon completion of this deployment, Benson was assigned as the executive officer of Charlie Company before becoming the New York Army National Guard Force Integration Readiness officer.

He also served as the commander for Alpha Company of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry. Subsequently he was selected to serve a second company command tour as the commander of Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry. He has also served as the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry executive officer and administrative officer and as the operations officer for the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

His other assignments have included as 42nd Infantry Division deputy chief of plans, state mobilization readiness officer, and secretary to the general staff to the 42nd Infantry Division.

He has earned a Bronze Star, a Meritorious Service Medal, a Combat Infantryman’s badge, and a Mountain Warfare Badge.

*News of troops and units can be sent to Duty Calls, Terry Brown, Times Union, Box 15000, Albany, NY 12212 or email brownt@timesunion.com.*

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**Local man recognized in Army Best Medic contest**

**Rome Sentinel, June 30, 2022 ::**

WHITESBORO — New York Army National Guard Sgt. Ethan Hart, a combat medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, was presented with a challenge coin and certificate of appreciation for his participation in the U.S. Army Best Medic Competition held in Texas recently.

The 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment is headquartered in Utica and is part of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

During the ceremony, held at Fort Drum, Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski, the senior enlisted advisor for the New York Army National Guard, presented the certificate along with a challenge coin from Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston.
“Sgt. Hart did an outstanding job at this competition with little to no time to prepare,” Piwowarski said.

Hart, a Whitesboro resident, is currently training at Fort Drum with 1,100 other New York Army National Guard Soldiers preparing to deploy to the Horn of African in the fall.

Hart and Staff Sgt. Dylan Delamarter, the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment medical platoon sergeant were among 21 teams vying to be the best combat medics in the Army at Fort Hood, Texas. They did not win, but just showing up and finishing put them in a select category of the Army’s 82,000 medical personnel, Lt. Gen. R. Scott Dingle, the surgeon general of the Army, said.

Hart and Delamarter went up against teams from the Army's active-duty divisions, medical commands and the Ranger Regiment.

It was physically and mentally demanding, the weather was rainy and cold, the ruck marches were long, the days were long, there was too little sleep and they felt like they fit right in, Hart said.

Competition events included a 13-mile march in the rain, M-4 rifle marksmanship, carrying simulated casualties using a two-person litter, and dragging a patient in a plastic “sked.”

At the same time, the soldiers were carrying rucksacks weighing 65 or so pounds. They were also often wet, as it rained regularly during the competition.

Hart is a holder of the Expert Field Medic Badge, which he earned during a competition at Fort Drum in 2021.

The 108th Infantry was formed in 1898 and has seen service in the Spanish-American war, World War I and World War II. The 108th also deployed to Iraq in 2004, and had elements deploy to Afghanistan in 2008 and 2012.


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NY Army Guard sends 1,380 for East Africa, Kuwait deployments

Fort Hood Herald, June 29, 2022:
NEW YORK — Kicking off New York’s largest mobilization of National Guard forces in more than a decade, 1,380 New York Army National Guard soldiers have mobilized for deployments in East Africa and Kuwait since June 9.

Two hundred and fifty soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation left for Fort Hood, Texas on June 9 and June 10 to prepare for a deployment to Kuwait in support of U.S. Central Command.

On June 13 and June 14, 1,130 soldiers from New York City’s 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, along with companies from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, and the 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, which together constitute Task Force Wolfhound, held farewells marking their deployment to the Horn of Africa.

They departed for Fort Drum, New York and will train there for two weeks — meeting all of U.S. Africa Command’s training requirements. Then they move to Fort Bliss, Texas, for two more months of training before heading to Camp Lemmonier in Djibouti as a security task force.

“When we hit the ground in Africa this September, this will be the most ready battalion in the United States Army, Lt. Col. Shawn Tabankin, the commander of the 69th Infantry, told 600 soldiers at a June 14 ceremony at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.

This is the largest deployment year for the New York Army National Guard since 2008-2009, when the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan, according to Army Maj. Gen. Michel Natali, the New York National Guard’s assistant adjutant general, Army.

Along with the aviation battalion and the task force built around the 69th Infantry, the New York National Guard will deploy the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, the 369th Sustainment Brigade, the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion and other small support elements to Kuwait before the fall of 2022.

The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, is an assault helicopter battalion which has companies and support elements at Army Aviation Support Facilities at Albany International Airport in Latham, New York and at Long Island McArthur Airport in Ronkonkoma, New York.

A training rotation to support units at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, in 2021 did a lot to prepare the soldiers for a Middle East deployment, said Lt. Col. Matt Green, the battalion commander.

Originally, only one assault helicopter company and some supporting elements were slated to deploy.
But that changed in late 2021 to include both of the helicopter companies based in New York and the bulk of the battalion headquarters and support companies deploying, Green said.

The battalion’s C Company is split between the Maine and Connecticut Army National Guards.

The battalion has emphasized individual readiness during weekend training, and annual training at Fort Drum, Green said. The battalion will focus on collective training and the skills needed to conduct and coordinate air assaults while at Fort Hood, he added.

The battalion launched 11 UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters from Latham and 10 from Ronkonkoma following farewell ceremonies held on June 9. The rest of the troops deployed by chartered airplane.

Task Force Wolfhound, which takes its name form the Irish dog which is the official mascot of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, has been training for 18 months to be ready for the mission, Tabankin said.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant the battalion didn’t have the normal two-year training period to get ready, Tabankin said. This mean that traditional weekend drills turned into four to five days of training to get everything done, he said.

“Sometimes utilizing a full week down at Fort Dix, was really the only way we could meet our individual, leader and collective training goals,” Tabankin said.

In Djibouti, the task force will provide security at Camp Lemonnier, a former French Foreign Legion post used by the United States since 2002. They will also be tasked with security missions at remote locations as well, Tabankin said.

The mission requirements necessitated reaching out across the New York Army National Guard for soldiers, Tabankin said.

The 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry and 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, which have units across upstate New York, each contributed 130-soldier companies.

The task force also includes combat engineers from Binghamton’s 204th Engineer Battalion, a platoon from the 207th Military Police Company, and Joint Tactical Air Controllers from the New York Air National Guard.

The 69th Infantry has a strong tradition of service in the Civil War, World War I, World War II and in Iraq in 2005, Tabankin told 600 soldiers and 1000 family members during the farewell ceremony at the Jacob Javits Convention Center.
The 69th Infantry was manned by Irish immigrants in the days before the Civil War. Today the Citizen Soldiers of the 69th Infantry include immigrants from 33 different countries who share service together, he emphasized.

“That immigrant fighting spirit, which makes true New Yorkers, and the melting pot, which makes true Americans, continues to form a foundation of strength in this battalion,” Tabankin said.

Tabankin reiterated that message during a second farewell ceremony for 300 soldiers at the Nassau County Police Academy on Long Island.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, also spoke at both farewell events.

“We know that today is a difficult day for many as it represents the start of a lengthy absence of your loved ones to faraway places in Africa," Shields said. “But it is also a day of immense pride and love of our state and nation as these citizen soldiers deploy to protect our freedoms.”

The farewell ceremony for the soldiers for the 101st Cavalry was held on June 13 at Hobart and Smith College in Geneva, New York, while the troops from the 108th Infantry held their goodbye ceremony at Mohawk Community College in Utica, New York.

“It’s never easy telling a loved one or a family member that you have to leave,” said Sgt. Nicholas Murphy, a member of the 101st Cavalry’s A Troop, following the Geneva event.

“Our number one priority in the Army National Guard is to keep the community safe, and then if we get called upon to deploy, to keep our nation safe,” Murphy said.


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New York Guard

Brooklyn mourns Herb Ryan, civic leader, attorney, military officer

Brooklyn Reporter, June 24, 2022 ::
The Southwest Brooklyn civic and legal communities are mourning Herb Ryan — an attorney, Korean War veteran, former New York City first deputy clerk and major general in the New York State Guard — who died on Friday, June 17 at age 90.

Ryan was appointed first deputy clerk for New York City in 1975, when David Dinkins, later elected mayor of New York City, served as the city clerk. Ryan retired from the position in 1987.

Ryan was also a Republican and Conservative Party candidate for the New York State Assembly in 1964 and for Congress in 1966, according to information provided by the Dennis J. O’Connor Inc. funeral home. In both political contests, he sought to represent a Bay Ridge-area district.

In addition, Ryan was also an attorney, adjutant professor at St. John’s University, assistant district attorney with the Kings County-Rackets Bureau, deputy commissioner of the NYC Department of Licenses, deputy commissioner of the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, and appointment as general counsel of the NYC Department of Traffic.

“My father taught us to be civic-minded and not to sit on the sidelines of life and to give back to the community by getting off the bench and into the game and not leave it to other people to carry the load,” his son Stephen told this paper.

Kings County Conservative Party Chairperson Frances Vella-Marrone commented on his passing:

“I was sad to learn of the passing of Herb Ryan,” she told the Eagle. “For many years. he resided with his family in Dyker Heights. Herb led a life of distinction and service. His long and distinguished military career, years as a public servant and candidacy for public office is an example of a life of service to his country and community."

He retired from the U.S. Army Reserve in 1986, then commanded the 9th and 14th Regiments of the New York Guard.

Ryan was promoted to major general shortly before retiring in 2003. All three of his sons served in Iraq and Afghanistan as Army Reserve officers.

“His military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star and Meritorious Service medals to include the Combat Infantryman badge along with the Special Forces Tab and Senior Parachutists badge,” read his obituary at denissoconnor.com.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, the former Anne Ford; his children Nancy, Stephen, Andrew and David; and grandchildren Thomas, Caitlyn, Brianna, Adit and Shaun.
He was born in Long Branch, N.J. on August 10, 1931. Although he was a resident of Breezy Point, Queens he also lived in Dyker Heights for many years.


New York National Guard

National Guardsmen may soon use personal electronics in deployments

Federal Times, June 28, 2022:

WASHINGTON — National Guardsmen may soon be able to use their personal electronic devices for official functions during domestic deployments to help fill a resources gap and reduce mobilization time, according to the service’s chief information officer.

Speaking during a C4ISRNET webcast, National Guard CIO Kenneth McNeill said an initiative called “Bring Your Own Approved Device” would allow guardsmen to use personal mobile equipment to perform the same functions in the field that they would otherwise carry out at a desktop in their offices.

“In a typical state, all of our guardsmen, unfortunately, they may not have government furnished devices — mobile cellphones, iPads,” McNeill said. “It cuts down on time when we’re planning for a mobilization.”

The initiative, which is a in collaboration with the Department of the Army and the Pentagon’s cybersecurity office, is in a phase III pilot program consisting of a year-long trial with the largest sample size to date. After this trial, if deemed successful, the initiative will be enacted, McNeill said.

Work began on the initiative before the pandemic hit and motivated a transition to remote work. The realities of the situation forced the guard to accelerate the progress.

“This is another tool in the toolkit that will give us an opportunity to allow our workforce, even after the pandemic, to continue to telework and remote work that is critical in the National Guard,” McNeill said. “I don’t think we’re going back ... everyone in the office. I think this is the future of how we’re going to operate here in the in the government and in the Department of Defense.”
While deployed to the streets of Washington, D.C., following the Jan. 6 insurrection, the National Guard employed a similar capability called Commercial Virtual Remote to carry out the mission that was limited in scope and time.

“Now we will have a capability that really links our force, even before they are called up for deployment,” he said. “This will be a game changer.”

JADC2

McNeill also discussed an addition to the Joint All-Domain Command and Control concept being implemented by the DoD that would focus on the needs of the National Guard’s mission set. Called “Project Homeland,” the initiative would apply the same capabilities of JADC2 to the domestic front.

JADC2 is a project by the Department of Defense to connect all the sensors from the individual services and compile data collected into a single information network. Previously, each service had their own tactical networks that were unable to interface with each other.

“JADC2 is a warfighting necessity to keep pace with the volume and complexity of data in modern warfare and to defeat adversaries decisively,” the department said in a statement. “JADC2 enables the Joint Force to ‘sense,’ ‘make sense,’ and ‘act’ on information across the battle-space quickly using automation, artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and machine learning to deliver informed solutions via a resilient and robust network environment.”

Project Homeland would apply those same capabilities during domestic deployments across the 54 states and territories National Guard units and their civilian interagency partners as opposed to the military services and their coalition forces.

McNeill spoke to the challenges the National Guard faced during their humanitarian relief operations post Hurricane Katrina. On the ground, the guard was unable to talk with the local first responders because they did not have cross-banding communication systems.

“We learned from that experience that we’ve got to think out of the box,” McNeill said. “We’ve got to look at capabilities that can talk to first responders and focus on what we do in the homeland.”

https://www.federaltimes.com/smr/5g/2022/06/28/national-guardsmen-may-soon-use-personal-electronics-in-deployments/

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PFOA Issue
NEWBURGH – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry released the report for the PFAS exposure assessment conducted near Stewart Air National Guard Base.

The report summarizes levels of PFAS in blood and urine from a group of residents living in and around the City of Newburgh and compares them to national PFAS levels.

PFAS levels are shown by age, race/ethnicity, sex, number of years living in the community, drinking water consumption patterns, and other exposure factors. The report also presents results from household dust and tap water samples and explores relationships between blood results and the environmental sampling data.

The exposure assessment found that the age-adjusted level of one PFAS, perfluorohexane sulfonic acid or PFHxS, in the blood of participants was higher than national levels, while the other PFAS tested were similar to national averages or not detected enough to calculate averages.

The elevated level of PFHxS in blood may be linked with past contamination of the city’s drinking water.

Tap water samples collected during the 2020 exposure assessment met the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s 2016 Health Advisory for PFAS and New York State public health standards for PFAS in drinking water.

ATSDR does not recommend community members use alternative sources of water.

The final PFAS exposure assessment report for Orange County is available here: https://www.atdsr.cdc.gov/pfas/activities/assessments/sites/orange-county-ny.html.

CDC and ATSDR invite residents living in and around the City of Newburgh to attend a virtual information session to learn more about the results of the PFAS exposure assessment. Experts also will answer community questions.

When: July 12, 2022

Time: 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. EST

To register, please visit: https://bit.ly/OrangeCountyEAMtg.
ATSDR staff will also host small meetings to answer additional community questions. Staff are available in-person at the Newburgh Free Library, located at 124 Grand Street Newburgh, on July 13 from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. until 5 p.m.

An additional in-person meeting will take place on July 14 from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. and from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. A virtual session is also scheduled for July 18 from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. Those interested in participating are encouraged to sign up online at: https://bit.ly/OrangeCountyEASmallMtg.


State Partnership Program

Medical and tactical exercises the main components of Ex Shared Accord 2022

Defence Web, June 30, 2022 ::

Shared Accord, the joint South African/American humanitarian/tactical exercise, is back on track and set to start with mobilisation on Sunday (3 July) after an absence of five years.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is allocating 600 personnel for the exercise, according to its Directorate: Corporate Communication (DCC). Airmen, military medics, sailors and soldiers will be part of the exercise, with the tactical component set for 12 to 28 July and the humanitarian (exclusively medical) part running from 5 to 26 July.

As host country, South Africa has responsibility for the exercise’s logistic and support services, mainly in KwaZulu-Natal, with the tactical component scheduled for the coastal province and Free State.

American personnel numbers are expected to number around 50 including New York National Guard specialist medical personnel.

The tactical part of Shared Accord 2022 will focus on air cargo handling, from loading through unloading and re-loading for delivery to use sites using Bloemfontein, presumably Air Force Base (AFB) Bloemspruit (which shares runway facilities with Bram Fisher International) and Richards Bay airport on the northern KwaZulu-Natal coast.
DCC terms this part of Shared Accord “intervention training” with American and South African involvement at the Free State air force base and the Richards Bay civil and general aviation facility.

The main focus of Shared Accord’s medical component will be Umhlathuze local municipality. defenceWeb has learnt that eight clinics at villages in the largely rural local authority were identified by military medics from both countries in conjunction with local councillors as sites where medical services will be available to local residents. These include ophthalmic and dental and will be on offer from Tuesday (5 July) until 28 July when Shared Accord starts demobilising and returning to units.

Shared Accord 2022 has ten aims, one of which is to re-establish a “foundation” for regular similar bilateral exercises.

Another aim, according to DCC, is conduct of joint inter-agency, inter-departmental and multi-national (JIIM) exercise planning processes between the SANDF and other state departments (whether SA and/or US not specified).

On military taskings, Shared Accord 2022 will include air support for peace support operations; maritime force protection against conventional and asymmetric threats, at sea and alongside in harbour; establishing a beachhead for humanitarian relief equipment delivery; as well as providing medical support to own forces and humanitarian relief to the local population.

Joint Operations Division Brigadier General Pamla Dlamini is Shared Accord director with 46 SA Brigade's Colonel Wayne Mabuza the South African joint task force (JTF) commander.


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Brazilian Air Force Visits Hancock Field

ANG.MIL, By Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing, June 24, 2022 ::

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. –

The 174th Attack Wing hosted a delegation of eight officer and enlisted leaders from the Brazilian Air Force’s Aerospace Operations Command on June 6 at Hancock Field Air National Guard base.
Gen. Heraldo Luiz Rodrigues, the commander of the command, known by its Portuguese acronym of COMAE, and his team visited the base visit to gain a better understanding of the remotely piloted aircraft program.

The visit was conducted through the National Guard’s State Partnership program which teams state National Guard’s with foreign militaries.

New York initiated a state partnership with Brazil in 2019 and has conducted regular exchange visited yet.

The Brazilian, accompanied by Brig Gen. Denise Donnell, the Commander of the New York Air National Guard, were guided around the base by Col. William McCrink III, 174th Attack Wing commander.

McCrink started the visit with a mission briefing. Then Rodrigues and his team were then given a base tour that started with an up close look at MQ-9 Reaper maintenance.

Master Sgt. Eric Wintersteen, the 174th Maintenance group crew chief was performing an airframe and engine inspection on the MQ-9 when the Brazilian team arrived.

Wintersteen discussed the details of the inspection and all the parts required to be changed on the aircraft. He also explained what the inspection tracking process is and how maintenance is performed.

“We were able to showcase what we do and talk about maintenance to pilots from another country, ”Wintersteen said. “They were interested and engaged.”

The visit continued at the 174th Formal Training Unit or FTU. The FTU provides training to pilot and sensor operators MQ-9 operations.

Next the team visited the 152nd Air Operations Group. The 152nd works with the Active Air Force’s 603rd Air Operations Group at Ramstein, Germany. The 152nd works with the 603rd to plan air operations.

Lastly, the visit included a tour of the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron. The 274th, whose Airmen work with fighter pilots and MQ-9 operators to provide close air support to ground forces, is part of the 107th Attack Wing. While the 107th is based at Niagara Falls Air Reserve station, the 274th calls Hancock Field home.

Rodrigues said his team got everything they wanted out of the visit.

“We’re really interested to improve relations between us and Air National Guard,” Rodrigues said. “These opportunities are very important to us.”
Donnell, said that hosting the Brazilians was important for the New York Air National Guard as well.

New York Airmen learn from the Brazilians and it is also a way to advance United States military-to-military relationships, she added.

“We are very committed to strengthening our relationship,” Donnell said.

The State Partnership Program was originally designed to link American state National Guard’s with the militaries in former Soviet allied nations. Since then it has grown to partnerships with 93 nations.

Along with the Brazilian partnership, the New York National Guard also has a partnership with South Africa and a bi-lateral training exchange relationship with Israel.

[ang.af.mil/Media/Article-Display/Article/3073029/brazilian-air-force-visits-hancock-field/]

Brazilian Air Force visits AFRL Information Directorate

ANG. AF. MIL, June 30, 2022 ::

ROME, N.Y. (AFRL) -- The Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate hosted a delegation of officer and enlisted leaders from the Brazilian Air Force’s Aerospace Operations Command June 7 at several facilities in Rome, New York.

Gen. Heraldo Luiz Rodrigues, the commander of the command, known by its Portuguese acronym of COMAE, and his team visited AFRL to better understand controlled space programs and counter unmanned systems.

The visit was conducted through the National Guard State Partnership Program, which teams the state National Guard with foreign militaries. New York initiated a state partnership with Brazil in 2019.

Members of the Brazilian Air Force test space domain awareness technology June 7, 2022 at the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate in Rome, New York. (U.S. Air Force photo / Marc Denofio)

Brazilian Air Force visits AFRL Information Directorate
Members of the Brazilian Air Force test space domain awareness technology June 7, 2022 at the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate in Rome, New York (U.S. Air Force photo / Marc Denofio).

The Brazilians, accompanied by Col. William McCrink III, 174th Attack Wing commander, received a briefing on space operations, research, development, acquisition, launch and operation of overhead reconnaissance systems necessary to provide support and ongoing space operations with controlled space awareness. Rodrigues and his team also received a comprehensive briefing on AFRL programs, partnerships and opportunities for collaboration. The Brazilian team also visited with the 222nd Command and Control Squadron and the Eastern Air Defense Sector, both based in Rome, New York.

“We’re interested in improving relations between the Air Force and us,” Rodrigues said. “These opportunities are significant to us.”

Col. Fred Garcia, director of the AFRL Information Directorate and commander of Detachment 4, said hosting the Brazilians is important for solidarity with international partners as we advance research for the warfighter and space programs. He also explained these visits promote United States military to military relationships.


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