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Buffalo News, October 19, 2017

105th Airlift Wing

Fallen NYPD detectives honored with memorial

New York Post, October 17, 2017:

Three fallen NYPD detectives were honored at a ceremony in Brooklyn Tuesday - where three widows spoke of loss and thanked a sea of police officers.

"It's quite new for me still, barely two years now," said Christine Lemm, whose husband Joseph was killed while serving in the military in Afghanistan in 2015. "We have our good days and bad days. But the days really get better with the support of all of you by my family's side."

Lemm, who became a cop in 2000, was with the Warrant Section's Bronx office.

He was serving with the Air National Guard when he and five other service members were killed when a suicide bomber attacked their convoy.

"I couldn't be more proud of the profession that Joe chose," his widow continued. "I know Joe would be really proud of all of you here today, honoring him, remembering him, paying tribute to his service and all of the others lost in the line of duty."

She was joined at the outdoor ceremony at the 84 Precinct station house by two other widows, Angela Davis, whose husband Charles Davis was killed while trying to thwart an armed robbery in 1996, and Amanda Archer, whose husband Fermin Archer died from injuries he suffered in an accident while on duty in 2011.

The officers will be memorialized with their names on a memorial wall inside the Fugitive Enforcement Division, officials said.

Archer said she honors her dead husband, nicknamed "Sonny," by speaking about his high blood pressure, which contributed to his death after the crash.

She warned the police officers in the crowd to check theirs often.

"You are much too important to lose you the way as we did Sonny," she said.

"He called and said he was in a minor fender bender. Within 12 hours my husband was in a vegetative state."

Davis told the crowd of about 300 that she talked to the other widows and told them things would get better, but that she still feels her loss every day.

"It's been 20 years for me," said Davis. "I miss him every day. Moments come up and I think about him. A smell will go by and I think about him. I dream about him. I miss him."

<http://nypost.com/2017/10/17/fallen-nypd-detectives-honored-with-memorial/>

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109th Airlift Wing

"Operation Deep Freeze" lifting off

WNYT, October 17, 2017:

SCOTIA - If you thought it was cold Tuesday morning, how about half that -- or worse. Those are the temperatures in "Operation Deep Freeze." The annual mission from the Stratton Air Base that took off Tuesday morning.

Normal takeoff speed for an LC-130 is about 110 knots. Now try half that in the stickiness of snow and ice at the South Pole. Suzy Nielson's done it many times.

"So breaking that friction can take a lot of effort and take a lot of muscle just to break that friction, but then in addition sometimes that's when you get those bumpy days where you're trying and you can't even get the airspeed up to 50 knots," said Nielson.

She pilots one of the ski-equipped planes that is part of "Operation Deep Freeze" out of Stratton Air Base, the support mission to Antarctica.

"The weather's probably our biggest challenge down there. The airplanes are getting older, but the weather is probably the most difficult thing, because we don't have any alternates like we do here. There's not another airport you can land at so you're out in the middle of nowhere," said Nielson.

"I've got veterans here that have been around for 30 years -- guys that have dedicated their whole livelihoods to going down to the ice," said Col. Rob Donaldson, the 109th Maintenance Group commander. "Part of that means they have to understand the logistics and how that sustainment trail works. And part of that means that you've got to rely on your own ingenuity to get things done."

This talented team from the 109th Airlift Wing has been making these runs for 30 years. They bring fuel, fresh food and people. It's all in support of the National Science Foundation's work from studying atmosphere to space to seals and penguins - and occasionally, there's a rescue mission, too.

"If we stay with our training and do everything, we're ready for all that.

It's right up our alley, it's in our wheelhouse, we say. So anything that comes at us we're ready to go. In fact, it's a little exciting to have something fresh and new to do," said Col. Chris Sander.

The first plane this season took off last Friday. The season itself runs until February.

<http://wnyt.com/news/quotoperation-deep-freezequot-lifting-off/4637362/?cat=10114>

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Air National Guard head to Antarctica (photos)

Times Union , October 17, 2017:

Members of the 109th Airlift Wing load two LC-130s fitted for snow landings Tuesday before their annual trip to the Antarctic from Stratton Air National Guard base. Operation Deep Freeze is the logistical support that the military provides to the National Science Foundation-managed U.S. Antarctic Program. The first flight of the season launched on Friday, Oct. 13

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Air-National-Guard-head-to-Antarctica-12286052.php#photo-14368118>

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Wheels up: 109th Airlift Wing begins latest Antarctica mission (Video):Glenville-based unit heads there as part of Operation Deep Freeze

The Daily Gazette, October 17, 2017:

Snow and wind are in the forecast for Major Suzy Nielson, and that's OK; Nielson and her friends packed winter coats - and their skis.

"We're the largest, ski-equipped aircraft in the Air Force," said Nielson, flight commander on one of two massive LC-130 airplanes that left the 109th Airlift Wing in Glenville on Tuesday morning.

The aircraft - with crew, equipment and supplies aboard - are bound for McMurdo Station Antarctica in support of the 109th's 30th season of Operation Deep Freeze. The mission lends military support to the National Science Foundation's U.S. Antarctic Program.

"This will be my sixth season going out to the South Pole, taking scientists and cargo to these outcamps and even farther away from the South Pole," Nielson said. "We're out in the middle of nowhere, and the skis allow us to pretty much land anywhere."

It's cold country. According to NASA, Antarctica is nearly covered in ice.

The Earth's fifth-largest continent is the coldest place on the planet, with Wednesday temperatures expected to be around 40 below zero.

November and December are considered Antarctica's spring and early summer.

January and February are summer months, with daytime high temperatures on the Antarctic Peninsula reaching around 50 degrees.

The 109th's mission in Antarctica - the 109th is the only branch of the U.S. military that makes the trip - begins Oct. 25 and runs through February.

A total of 500 men and women will participate in between 200 and 250 missions, with about 120 airmen stationed on the ice at any given time during the season.

The Airlift's chief mission in the region is to fly scientists, support, fuel, supplies and medical supplies from McMurdo to various remote locations. The numbers add up: During the 2016-17 season, the 109th flew an estimated 2,550 researchers and support staff - along with about 3 million pounds of cargo and 2 million pounds of fuel - to research stations across the continent.

Nielson, whose father was a Navy pilot, said Antarctic snow can present a challenge for LC-130 operation.

"On a day like this, when the weather's beautiful, no," she said, referring to Tuesday's sunny skies and clear conditions. "But when the weather is not so great and you have to land in a camp in the middle of nowhere, a lot of times there's a stickiness to the snow, and the skis stick to that snow."

And that causes the trouble.

"Breaking that friction can take a lot of effort, can take a lot of muscle," Nielson said. "In addition, that's when you get those really bumpy days when you're trying and you can't even get the air speed up to 50 knots. It's amazing, to have four big engines like this and not even be able to get to 50 knots."

Col. Michele L. Kilgore, who became the first female commander of the 109th on Sunday, will be on the ice in January and February. She said she has enjoyed her first days in Glenville.

"It's amazing," she said. "The hospitality has been warm, and everyone has been so welcoming to me and my family."

Kilgore, a command pilot with more than 3,500 hours in various aircraft, said the Airlift Wing has been busy this summer.

"The best part of any job is obviously the people," she said. "We bounce from one mission to the other. We were fresh off hurricane support to Puerto Rico - taking on people and supplies and assistance down there to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico - then we're right back into: Repack your bags and get ready to go to Antarctica."

Men and women from the Wing are ready to travel.

"This is really what we're here for," said Col. Chris Sander, commander of the 109th Operations Group. "We anticipate it, we talk about it, we plan it to the Nth degree, and now it's time to execute, so we're all looking forward to it."

While warmer weather will come to Antarctica, Sander said personnel are ready for the cold.

"When we first get down there, it really takes a little time for the airplanes to acclimate, as well as the people," he said. "The people are a little quicker to acclimate, I think. The planes kind of have a littlerougher time.

"The toughest part of the mission is really getting it all rolling – getting it all started," Sander added.

Before anything starts rolling, Airlift Wing officials talk to scientists about their plans for Deep Freeze.

"From an airman's point of view, it's great hearing about that," said Col. Robert Donaldson, commander of the 109th Maintenance Group. "It's great understanding the larger picture, so it's not just what the airplane can do for them, but really, what's the end result of what they're all trying to do.

"The National Science Foundation is doing some terrific work and is able to accomplish the big picture for the greater good of America and the rest of the world."

The trip to Antarctica includes a stop in California, at Point Mugu. That is the home of the California Air National Guard. Then, there is a stop in Hawaii, at Hickam Air Force Base; and then American Samoa.

While crews are rotated in and out of Antarctica, men and women do spend plenty of time together in the chilly place.

"There are plenty of little hikes you can do - walks you can do," Sander said. "It's actually camaraderie between each other that really keeps things going, and playing cards is one of them. There are a few guys who really like to play cards."

"It's a great mission," Donaldson said. "We have a lot of fun doing it. I can honestly say the patriotism from these women and men in the 109th is top notch.

"I've worked a lot of different jobs throughout my career, and I can honestly say, to see these folks come together and push for the greater good across the spectrum ... is second to none."

<https://dailygazette.com/article/2017/10/17/wheels-up-109th-airlift-wing-begins-latest-antarctica-mission>

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109th Airlift Wing bringing much-needed supplies to Antarctica

Spectrum News , October 17, 2017:

VILLAGE OF SCOTIA, N.Y. -- It's a new season for members of the 109th Airlift Wing in Scotia as they deploy to begin Operation Deep Freeze.

All 10 L-C 130 skibird aircrafts are deployed to Antarctica this week with hundreds of support personnel.

The primary mission is to support the work of the National Science Foundation and their work doing atmospheric research, animal research and climate change research.

This deployment is all being overseen by the unit's newly installed female commander who says they play an important role in developing science right now.

"It's a very exciting time in the world in terms of what's going on in Antarctic research. A lot of atmospheric, a lot of animal research. There's a lot of climate change research," said Col. Michele Kilgore, 109th Airlift Wing commander.

Most deployments last about a month in the land where temperatures can reach negative 50 degrees.

<http://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2017/10/17/109th-airlift-wing-bringing-much-needed-supplies-to-antarctica>

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NY Air Guard unit starts 30th season supporting S. Pole site

Associated Press, October 17, 2017:

SCOTIA, N.Y. (AP) - Members of an Air National Guard unit based in upstate New York have departed for the 30th season of supporting U.S. scientific missions at the South Pole.

Two LC-130s took off early Tuesday morning from Schenectady County's Stratton Air National Guard Base, home of the 109th Airlift Wing. The first flight of the season departed from the base last Friday.

Other crews will follow as the unit gears up for its annual Operation Deep Freeze to support McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

The 109th, the only unit in the U.S. military to fly ski-equipped aircraft, provides logistical support to the National Science Foundation's Antarctic research program. Over the next few months hundreds of airmen will transport scientists, fuel, medical supplies and other cargo during missions on the frozen continent.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/ny-air-guard-unit-starts-30th-season-supporting-s-pole-site/>

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"Operation Deep Freeze" lifting off (Video)

WNYT, October 17, 2017:

Flight crews boarding a pair of LC 130s will be departing from the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, for the annual "Operation Deep Freeze" mission.

The goal of the operation is to keep the base fully stocked in Antarctica.

These types of planes are the only aircraft in the U.S. military equipped to land on snow and ice.

<http://wnyt.com/news/quotoperation-deep-freezequot-lifting-off/4637362/?cat=10114>

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NY Air National Guard crew deploying for Antarctica mission

WRGB, October 17, 2017:

SCOTIA (WRGB) - Two LC-130s and an aircrew from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing are gearing up to head to Antarctica Tuesday morning, for Operation Deep Freeze.

This is the 30th season of Operation Deep Freeze. The military provides support to the National Science Foundation for South Pole research.

During the support season, the LC-130 aircraft will transport scientists, fuel, medical supplies and more. These ski-equipped LC-130 aircraft are one of a kind in the U.S military because they can land on snow and ice. About five of these aircraft and about 500 Airmen are expected to deploy throughout the support season, which runs through February.

Last year, the 109th wing flew about 2,550 researchers and support staff, about 3 million pounds of cargo, and 2 million pounds of fuel to research stations across the continent.

The crew will leave from the Stratton Air National Guard Base around 6:30 a.m. Tuesday, to head to the McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

<http://cbs6albany.com/news/local/ny-air-national-guard-crew-deploying-for-antarctica-mission>

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109th Airlift Wing names first female commander (Video)

WNYT, October 16, 2017:

SCOTIA - The 109th airlift wing of Stratton Air National Guard Base has named its first female commander.

“I've been in the Air Force for 25 years so it's exciting to assume command of the wing with the heritage like this one,” Colonel Michele Kilgore said.

Kilgore's Air Force experience includes a previous post as a commander in Syracuse and over 3,500 hours of flying military aircrafts.

“I've flown the KC-10A, the C-12F/J, the EA-6B, the F-16C+, the MQ-9 and now the C-130,” Kilgore said.

Outgoing 109th commander, Colonel Shawn Clouthier handed over the reins at a change-of-command ceremony Sunday.

“To me it's not a gender thing. It's the ability the knowledge and the ability and she brings all of that,” Clouthier said.

As the first person in heels to lead the Scotia air base, Kilgore is in charge of the nearly 12-hundred airmen and women who primarily support military and national science foundation operations in the Arctic and Antarctica.

The base is home to the only ski-equipped LC -130 aircrafts in the world.

Kilgore will be flying the aircrafts along with the other men and women of the 109th to the Polar Regions.

The Watertown native said serving her country is in her blood.

“My grandfather was in the Navy, has a purple heart. My Dad is a F-4 pilot in Vietnam, has a purple heart,” Kilgore said. “And then there's me so I knew I always wanted to fly.”

She even married a pilot.

Colonel Robert Kilgore is the commander of the 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls.

Kilgore and her husband are the first husband and wife commanders in the New York's Air National Guard.

“She is an outstanding commander and she knows how to take care of airmen and that's really the most important part of what we do in our jobs,” Robert Kilgore said.

“It's not really about me it's about the mission,” Kilgore said.

Kilgore previously served as commander at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse.

She is also only the second female wing commander in the New York Air National Guard.

<http://wnyt.com/news/109th-airlift-wing-names-first-female-commander-michele-kilgore-scotia-stratton-air/4635987/>

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109th Airlift Wing welcomes first woman commander

Times Union, October 15, 2017:

SCOTIA — Col. Michele Kilgore continues to use her passion for flying to soar to new heights in the military.

She was among the first women to fly F-16 fighter jets after the ban was lifted in 1993. She was the first woman to be a group commander at the 174th Attack Wing.

On Sunday afternoon, Kilgore became the first woman to command the 109 Airlift Wing at Stratton Air Base in Scotia during a 45-minute change-of-command ceremony.

Kilgore is only the second female wing commander in the New York Air National Guard.

Her skills as a commander are more important than her gender though, said Col. Shawn Clouthier, the 109th's out-going commander.

"To me, it's a not a gender thing, it's the ability, the capability and she brings all of that," he said. "She's going to be a marvelous commander."

Military tradition was a part of Kilgore's life long before she joined the Air Force. Her grandfather served in the Navy during World War II and her father flew F-4s in Vietnam.

"I knew I always wanted to fly," she said. "And I joined the Air Force to fly airplanes. So whenever they wanted someone to change from one mission to another...I was right there to say, 'Yea, let's do it.'"

That desire was cemented the first time she went flying. Her parents bought her flying lessons for her 18th birthday and she went up in a Cessna 152 along the San Diego coastline.

"Out over the coast, out over the water watching the waves crash and I was hooked," she said. "It only took one hour."

Kilgore enrolled in the Air Force Academy and graduated in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in political science.

From there she moved on to a number of duty tours that took her around the world.

She flew KC-10As and C-12Fs in California and F-16s in Arizona and Japan.

Eventually she deployed seven times, flying in support of operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Freedom's Sentinel, according to her Air Force biography.

Before assuming command Sunday in Scotia, Kilgore served as the commander for the 174th Operations Group, 174th Attack Wing at Hancock Field in Syracuse. While there she oversaw MQ-9 Reaper combat operations in support of U.S. military efforts against the Taliban and the Islamic State.

As 109th's commander Kilgore will have a unique mission.

The 109th primarily provides support for U.S. military and National Science Foundation operations in the Arctic and Antarctic with the military's only LC-130Hs, which are transport aircraft modified with wheel-ski gear.

She'll oversee more than 1,100 people, a massive budget and be responsible for missions at opposite ends of the earth.

And last month the Air Force announced it was developing a new Arctic strategy.

"If we're the only ski-equipped airplanes then we're going to be part of that in terms of our experience," Kilgore said. "It's an exciting time to be a part of the Air Force."

And when the woman who grew up dreaming of flying was asked if she find the opportunity to fly as part of her new post, she just flashed a smile.

"Yes," she said.

<http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/109th-Airlift-Wing-welcomes-its-new-commander-12280021.php>

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NY Air Guard unit starts 30th season supporting S. Pole site

McClatchy DC Bureau, October, 17, 2017:

SCOTIA, N.Y. - Members of an Air National Guard unit based in upstate New York have departed for the 30th season of supporting U.S. scientific missions at the South Pole.

Two LC-130s took off early Tuesday morning from Schenectady County's Stratton Air National Guard Base, home of the 109th Airlift Wing. The first flight of the season departed from the base last Friday.

Other crews will follow as the unit gears up for its annual Operation Deep Freeze to support McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

The 109th, the only unit in the U.S. military to fly ski-equipped aircraft, provides logistical support to the National Science Foundation's Antarctic research program. Over the next few months hundreds of airmen will transport scientists, fuel, medical supplies and other cargo during missions on the frozen continent.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/politics-government/national-politics/article179251636.html>

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New York's 109th Airlift Wing gets new commander

National Guard, By Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert | 109th Airlift Wing | October 18, 2017:

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. - Col. Michele Kilgore became the first woman to assume command of the 109th Airlift Wing during a change of command ceremony here Oct. 15.

Kilgore, a command pilot with more than 3,500 flight hours and seven deployments under her belt, becomes the 14th commander of the 109th AW. She assumed command from Col. Shawn A. Clouthier who served as the wing commander since 2012.

In a time honored traditional change of command ceremony representing the transfer of responsibility from the outgoing commander to the incoming commander, Kilgore respectfully accepted the guidon of the wing from Maj. Gen. Anthony German, the adjutant general of New York and commander of the New York Air National Guard.

"Ability and capability is not a gender thing," said Clouthier. "She will bring a whole new perspective, it will be great for our history as a wing."

Kilgore is the third generation of military in her family with both her father and grandfather having received a Purple Heart while serving.

"Flying is in my blood, and I am excited to bring my vast expertise to this wing; it's not about me, it's about the mission," said Kilgore.

Kilgore said it is an honor to be selected to follow in Clouthier's footsteps.

"It's a privilege to follow in (Col. Clouthier's) footsteps and his legacy of over 35 years here. Thank you for the tutelage over these last few weeks, and I am indebted for the education so that I can hit the ground running," Kilgore said to Clouthier during the ceremony.

The ceremony was well attended by 109th Airmen, family members including her husband Col. Robert Kilgore, 107th Airlift Wing commander, and several military leaders from across New York at both the wing and state level.

"Whether it's the Arctic or Antarctic, domestically or globally, service to this nation is a calling; it is the noblest of professions and you have my commitment to protect the mission from pole to pole, preserve the legacy, and honor the heritage of our wing that is nearly 70 years old," Kilgore said to the Airmen of the wing.

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1346887/new-yorks-109th-airlift-wing-gets-new-commander/>

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New York's 109th Airlift Wing takes off for 30th season supporting Antarctic mission

National Guard, By Staff Sgt. Stephanie Lambert | 109th Airlift Wing | October 18, 2017:

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. - The hum of an LC-130 Skibird taking off on a crisp upstate New York morning marked the 109th Airlift Wing's annual migration south on Tuesday.

Two LC-130 aircrews, transporting supplies and equipment, began the first leg of a five-day journey to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, to provide logistical support to the National Science Foundation. The primary mission of the New York Air National Guard's 109th AW is to provide airlift within Antarctica to support science research.

The wing flies the LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft; the only one of its kind in the U.S. military, able to land on snow and ice.

The U.S. military provides logistics support with ships and aircraft to the National Science Foundation annually under the designation Operation Deep Freeze.

These aircraft were the third and fourth to depart from the base here. The first and second flew out on Oct. 13 and 16.

Flying in the Antarctic is challenging, according to LC-130 pilots.

"The weather is our biggest challenge there, if a storm rolls in you can't take off," said Maj. Suzanne Nielson, LC-130 pilot.

"There's always something that comes up over the year but our training prepares us for anything," said Col. Robert Donaldson, 109th Maintenance Group commander.

The start of this season coincides with the first week of Col. Michele Kilgore's command of the 109th AW. Kilgore took command of the wing during a ceremony Oct. 15.

"What a great way to start my first week," said Kilgore. "It's great to be a part of such a unique mission."

Kilgore is slated to go for the first time in support of ODF later on this season.

Approximately 120 Airmen will be deployed on the ice at any one time with about 500 Airmen deploying throughout the season. Five aircraft will provide support.

Throughout the ODF support season, which runs through February, the wing plans to fly between 200 and 250 missions.

During the 2016-17 season, the 109th flew an estimated 2,550 researchers and support staff plus about 3 million pounds of cargo and 2 million pounds of fuel to research stations across the continent.

Operation Deep Freeze is the military component of the U.S. Antarctic Program. The 109th has supported the National Science Foundation since 1988 and been the sole provider of this type of airlift since 1999.

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1345648/new-yorks-109th-airlift-wing-takes-off-for-30th-season-supporting-antarctic-mis/>

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NY Air National Guard unit gets first woman commander

Associated Press, October 16, 2017:

SCOTIA, N.Y. — A northern New York resident has become the first woman to command the only ski-equipped aircraft unit in the U.S. military.

A change-of-command ceremony was held Sunday at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Schenectady County, home to the 109th Airlift Wing. Col. Michele Kilgore, of Watertown, took over command from Col. Shawn Clouthier, who is moving to a position at New York Air National Guard headquarters.

Kilgore is a 1992 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy with more than 3,500 flight hours as a command pilot. During her career she has flown combat support missions in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

Her husband, Col. Robert Kilgore, is commander of the Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing based in Niagara Falls.

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/politics-government/national-politics/article179064266.html>

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Col. Michele Kilgore becomes first woman to command 109th Airlift Wing (Video)

News 10, October 15, 2017 :

SCOTIA, N.Y. (NEWS10) – History was made when Colonel Michele Kilgore assumed command of the 109th Airlift Wing at the Stratton Air National Guard base in Scotia.

Colonel Kilgore is the first woman to command the 109th and only the second female wing commander in the New York Air National Guard.

A change of command ceremony was held today.

Colonel Kilgore is an Afghanistan war veteran from Watertown, N.Y.

She says the air force's biggest strength is its people.

“The ability to know that you're time is worth something valuable is priceless, I can't pay people more, but I can make a promise that I will make the time that you serve count,” Kilgore said.

The 109th Air Wing is home to the ski-equipped “C -130” and provides support of military and scientific operations in the arctic and Antarctica Polar Regions.

<http://news10.com/2017/10/15/col-michele-kilgore-becomes-first-to-command-109th-airlift-wing/>

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NY Air National Guard Unit Gets First Woman Commander : A northern New York resident has become the first woman to command the only ski-equipped aircraft unit in the U.S. military.

Associated Press, Oct. 16, 2017:

N.Y. (AP) - A northern New York resident has become the first woman to command the only ski-equipped aircraft unit in the U.S. military.

A change-of-command ceremony was held Sunday at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Schenectady County, home to the 109th Airlift Wing. Col. Michele Kilgore, of Watertown, took over command from Col. Shawn Clouthier, who is moving to a position at New York Air National Guard headquarters.

Kilgore is a 1992 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy with more than 3,500 flight hours as a command pilot. During her career she has flown combat support missions in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan.

Her husband, Col. Robert Kilgore, is commander of the Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing based in Niagara Falls.

The 109th flies ski-equipped C-130 cargo planes that support missions in the Arctic and Antarctica regions.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/new-york/articles/2017-10-16/ny-air-national-guard-unit-gets-first-woman-commander>

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369th Sustainment Brigade

Saratoga Springs resident to take command of guard battalion

The Record and The Saratogian , October 17, 2017:

LATHAM, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard Maj. Todd Balog, a Saratoga Springs resident and Afghanistan veteran, will take command of the 369th Special Troops Battalion, on Sunday, Oct. 22 at the Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor.

Balog earned his commission as a second lieutenant from Michigan State University Army ROTC program in August 2001 and served as an armor officer for the active duty Army for six years.

In 2007, Balog joined the New York Army National Guard and currently serves full time as part of the joint staff in the New York National Guard Headquarters. He is currently the force development officer for the joint training and exercises division.

In 2012, Balog deployed to Afghanistan for a combat tour with the Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, as a base closure team leader in Regional Command East.

In February 2013, upon return from Afghanistan, Balog served as the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Battalion executive officer in Troy and then was assigned to the joint staff in the New York National Guard Headquarters in Latham.

Balog holds a Bachelor's degree from Michigan State University in criminal justice.

Balog is a graduate of the Armor Officer Basic Course, Scout Leader Course, Adjutant General Captains Career Course and Command & General Staff Officers Courses.

Balog's awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Serve Medal, the NATO Medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Army Parachutist Badge and the US Cavalry Spur Holder.

Balog is married to his wife Amy and they have two sons named Hyrum and Aiden.

<http://www.troyrecord.com/article/TR/20171017/NEWS/171019819>

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53rd Troop Command

Watertown resident takes lead of New York National Guard battalion

**Watertown Daily Times, Sept. 17, 2017:
Oct 20, 2017**

A Watertown resident has taken the lead for a New York Army National Guard battalion based in Binghamton.

Lt. Col. Wing Yu took command of the 204th Engineer Battalion in a ceremony on Sunday afternoon, replacing Lt. Col. Christopher M. Guilmette.

In a news release, state officials said the battalion is the only engineer battalion in the New York Army National Guard and plays a key role in the New York National Guard's plans in responding to emergencies at the direction of the governor.

Col. Yu, who lives in Watertown with his wife Michelle, enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 1987, before commissioning as an officer in 1994. He rejoined the state Guard in 1999.

His career includes deployments to Afghanistan and Kuwait.

The lieutenant colonel's assignment prior to taking the new command was as the liaison and administrative officer responsible for the establishment and operations of the 10th Mountain Division's Main Command Post Operational Detachment in Syracuse.

The battalion has subordinate companies in Kingston in the Hudson Valley, Walton, Horseheads and Buffalo. The 827th Engineer Company, which specializes in repairing roads, recently returned from a yearlong mobilization and deployment to Afghanistan.

The 152nd Engineer Company is trained to rescue victims from destroyed buildings, along with basic combat engineer tasks. The 1156th Engineer Company specializes in the construction of buildings and other basic facilities.

<http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/news03/watertown-resident-takes-lead-of-new-york-national-guard-battalion-20171017>

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Citizens Preparedness

Plan Ahead: Preparedness class will be held Oct. 25

Times Union, October 14, 2017:

GLENS FALLS — A free disaster preparedness class will be offered at 7 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Cool Insuring Arena (formerly the Glens Falls Civic Center), 1 Civic Center Plaza.

The class is being presented by the New York National Guard troops, in cooperation with the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and provides citizens with the knowledge and tools to prepare for emergencies and disasters, respond accordingly and recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions.

To register, go to <http://www.nyprepare.gov/aware-prepare/nysprepare>.

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Plan-ahead-12278502.php>

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Emergency Preparedness Training by NY National Guard

Hamlet Hub, October 14, 2017:

Are you and your family prepared for an emergency? Presented by the New York National Guard, this program, on Wednesday, October 18th, from 6:00-7:30 p.m will provide an introduction to responding to a natural or man-made disaster. Each participant will receive a certificate, a "Z card" and learn

how to make an emergency preparedness kit. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to never be caught by disaster again! This is a free event, but registration is required. Presentation is hosted with the Putnam Civil Air Patrol. You may register for the program by going to www.kentlibrary.org or calling the Kent Public Library at 845-225-8585. The library is located at 17 Sybil's Crossing, Kent Lakes, NY 10512.

<http://news.hamlethub.com/brewster/neighbors/5679-emergency-preparedness-training-by-ny-national-guard>

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New York Army National Guard

Officer Craig Lehner, "committed to helping others"

WKBW, Oct 16, 2017:

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) - Dustin Lovell has spent countless hours tattooing Buffalo Police Officer Craig Lehner. He can't put a specific number on it, but says he's probably tattooed the missing diver about 100 times.

"I tattooed him and his mother maybe two or three years ago," Lovell said Monday. "She was the sweetest lady. The relationship that they had with each other was just so good."

Over the years, Lovell and Lehner became close friends. They'd spend hours talking about girls, working out and boxing.

"Craig was a good guy," Lovell said. "He was super genuine. A silly guy who could make jokes and be super serious when he needed to. He was very good at making you laugh when you were upset and turning a negative situation upside down into a joke."

Sgt. Matthew McCabe served with Lehner in the 105th Military Police Company of the New York Army National Guard. They deployed together to Iraq in 2011.

"Upon deployment he was a mentor for a lot of us," McCabe explained. "He was a good guy you could go up to with questions."

It was in the Army National Guard when Lehner first took an interest in diving. He learned to scuba dive while deployed at Guantanamo Bay in 2013.

"It's tragic. But I know he loved doing what he was doing with the police department," McCabe said. "He was fully committed within the 105th military police company. Committed to the Army. Committed to helping others."

Recovery teams are still working to track down 34-year-old Craig Lehner.

In his tattoo parlor Monday, Lovell found two sketches from pieces he did for Lehner over the years. He's saving those to give to Lehner's mother.

<http://www.wkbw.com/news/officer-craig-lehner-committed-to-helping-others->

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Reserve Aid gives \$500,000 for scholarships for veterans at UAlbany

Times Union, October 15, 2017 :

Guard soldiers advance

Todd Summers of Schenectady has been promoted to lieutenant colonel while serving with the New York Army National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters.

Simone Adamsmitchell of Clifton Park, 145th Maintenance Company; Wade Collins of Wilton, Operations Company, 42nd Infantry Division; and Brennan Thierry of East Schodack, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Signal Battalion, advanced to captain.

Todd Dreaney of Altamont was promoted to chief warrant officer 4 while assigned to the Intelligence and Sustainment Company, 42nd Infantry Division.

Jeremy Cianciosi of Copake was promoted to staff sergeant while assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry.

Joshua Phillips of Rensselaer advanced to staff sergeant while on duty with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry.

Others promoted include:

Sergeant: Kyle Eddy, Johnsonville, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation; and Sarah Ronsani, Hudson, 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post Operations Detachment).

Specialist: Nicholas Brino, Charlton, 206th Military Police Company; Alex Gagnon, Schenectady, 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post Operations Detachment); Joseph Markham, Philmont, 1156th Engineer Company; and Elena Neimeyer, Albany, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Walk to Heroes

The Mechanicville-Stillwater Elks Lodge will sponsor a 5K Walk to the Heroes at 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 29, from the Saratoga Battlefield to the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Stillwater.

Register by Friday or on the day of the walk at 9 a.m.

Parking will be at the cemetery; walkers will be bused to the Saratoga Battlefield, where the walk will begin.

Participants will go from the Visitor Center, northbound onto Route 32, turn right and head onto Duell Road straight to the cemetery.

Individual or team walkers are welcome. Registration fee is \$20 per person.

Walkers are welcome to solicit sponsors. Proceeds will benefit the lodge's veterans' programs.

For information, registration and sponsorship forms, contact Justine Crowley-Duncan, the lodge's veterans chairwoman at 518-378-1212 or memories99@me.com.

New airman

Air Force Airman Kenneth T. Myers of Rotterdam has graduated from basic training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio.

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

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/ReserveAid-gives-500-000-for-scholarships-for-12280279.php>

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Puerto Rico

The cost of New York aid in Puerto Rico (Video)

News 10 ,October 16, 2017,:

ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10) - In the wake of the recent hurricanes, New York has sent over mutual aid to a number of places, particularly Puerto Rico.

The list of some of the resources that have been sent over by the state includes, 132 National Guard military police, 60 National Guard soldiers, helicopters, more than 50 state troopers and two DEC drone pilots.

Many items such as water, diapers and other toiletries were also donated by different groups.

Much of this aid stems from the fact that New York has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the U.S. In 2014, the Census Bureau reported that there were over 1 million Puerto Ricans living in New York.

How much is this costing taxpayers? The New York Budget Division says it is too soon for even an approximate amount, but according to the governor's office, most of this bill will most likely be reimbursed by the federal government.

Yet, there is also no guarantee of how much the federal government will cover.

<http://news10.com/2017/10/16/the-cost-of-new-york-aid-in-puerto-rico/>

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125 National Guard soldiers leaving Thursday for Puerto Rico hurricane relief mission

Pocono Record, October 18, 2017:

One-hundred twenty-five Buffalo-based members of the New York Army National Guard are expected to leave Thursday to help with relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

The flight taking soldiers with the 152nd Engineer Support Company will leave from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

Guard members will likely be helping to remove debris and clear roadways in the southern region of the island, one of four designated areas of operation there, said Capt. Nathan Attard, company commander. The 152nd, which is based at the Connecticut Street Armory, is comprised of soldiers from across the state.

The unit's heavy construction equipment is already bound for the island, having left on a ship from New Jersey on Thursday. The deployment is part of the state effort to assist Puerto Rico, which was devastated by Hurricane Maria which hit the island on Sept. 20.

The flight was initially scheduled to leave Wednesday. Military flights can be rescheduled based on the availability of aircraft, crews and space for planes on the ground in Puerto Rico, a spokesman said.

Among the 152nd's work, the unit helped dig Buffalo out from a major snowstorm in November 2014 as well as New York City after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

There are 97 soldiers from the Buffalo-based 105th Military Police Company in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which were struck by two hurricanes last month.

<http://www.poconorecord.com/news/20171018/125-national-guard-soldiers-leaving-thursday-for-puerto-rico-hurricane-relief-mission>

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More NY Guardsmen heading to Puerto Rico for storm recovery

Associated Press, October 18, 2017:

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) - Another contingent of National Guard members from New York is preparing to depart for Puerto Rico to help the U.S. territory recover from Hurricane Maria.

New York Army National Guard officials say 125 members of the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Co. of the 204th Engineer Battalion are now scheduled to depart Thursday morning from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. The departure was originally scheduled for Wednesday.

The unit's heavy construction equipment has already been sent to the Caribbean island aboard a ship from New Jersey.

The New York Army National Guard currently has about 200 soldiers in Puerto Rico providing security and helping to repair the island's utility grid and other infrastructure that was devastated by last month's Category 5 hurricane.

Twenty members of the New York Air National Guard are helping with airport operations and aircraft maintenance on the island.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/more-ny-guardsmen-heading-to-puerto-rico-for-storm-recovery/>

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More New York Guardsmen Heading to Puerto Rico for Storm Recovery

VOA News, October 18, 2017:

BUFFALO, NEW YORK - Another contingent of National Guard members from New York is preparing to depart for Puerto Rico to help the U.S. territory recover from Hurricane Maria.

New York Army National Guard officials say 125 members of the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Co. of the 204th Engineer Battalion are now scheduled to depart Thursday morning from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. The departure was originally scheduled for Wednesday.

The unit's heavy construction equipment has already been sent to the Caribbean island aboard a ship from New Jersey.

The New York Army National Guard currently has about 200 soldiers in Puerto Rico providing security and helping to repair the island's utility grid and other infrastructure that was devastated by last month's Category 5 hurricane.

Twenty members of the New York Air National Guard are helping with airport operations and aircraft maintenance on the island.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/puerto-rico-new-york-national-guard/4076218.html>

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125 National Guard soldiers leave for Puerto Rico hurricane relief mission

Buffalo News, October 18, 2017:

One-hundred twenty-five Buffalo-based members of the New York National Guard will be leaving Wednesday afternoon to help with relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

The soldiers with the 152nd Engineer Support Company, which is based at the Connecticut Street Armory, are scheduled to fly out of Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

The unit's heavy construction equipment is already bound for the island, having left on a ship from New Jersey on Thursday, the New York National Guard said.

Puerto Rico was devastated by Hurricane Maria, which hit the island on Sept. 20.

Among the 152nd's work, the unit helped dig Buffalo out from a major snowstorm in November 2014.

The departure, initially scheduled for late morning, was moved to the early afternoon, the National Guard said.

<http://buffalonews.com/2017/10/18/local-national-guard-soldiers-help-hurricane-relief-puerto-rico/>

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Help to Puerto Rico coming from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station

WKBW, Oct 18, 2017:

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (WKBW) - More soldiers stationed at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station are headed to Puerto Rico to help with recovery efforts following Hurricane Maria. The 125 members are from the New York National Guard's 152nd Engineer Company.

The soldiers will begin deploying to Puerto Rico Wednesday, October 18th.

Their heavy construction equipment was already shipped to Puerto Rico, and will be there for them to use.

The New York Army National Guard already has 60 soldiers and four helicopters from the 3rd battalion 142nd Aviation conducting relief efforts, as well as 132 soldiers of the 442nd Military Police Company, and 20 members of the New York Air National Guard.

<http://www.wkbw.com/news/help-to-puerto-rico-coming-from-niagara-falls-air-reserve-station>

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Carlos Beltran Foundation to distribute over 160,000 pounds of supplies to Puerto Rico

Daily News, October 13, 2017:

ALBANY — The Yankees aren't the only thing Houston Astros' slugger Carlos Beltran is taking on these days.

Beltran's Carlos Beltran Foundation is working with state officials and Major League Baseball to distribute more than 160,000 pounds of supplies donated by New Yorkers for storm ravaged Puerto Rico, Gov. Cuomo announced Friday.

"Puerto Rico needs our help now more than ever and we are proud to partner with Gov. Cuomo and the State of New York to provide critical supplies and assistance the island as they recover from Hurricane Maria," Beltran, a Puerto Rico native, said in a statement. "With this latest shipment, we give

these individuals and their families hope and assurance that they are not alone as they embark on this journey to recovery."

The supplies, including bottles of water, diapers and baby food and wipes, were flown to Puerto Rico Thursday aboard an MD-11 Cargo plane chartered by Major League Baseball. Beltran's foundation is distributing the goods around the island.

State Homeland Security Commissioner Roger Parrino has also been deployed to Puerto Rico to coordinate distribution of relief supplies.

Cuomo also announced that 50 State Police members are headed to Puerto Rico aboard donated Delta flights to replace 53 troopers who were deployed to the island two weeks ago.

"I want our brothers and sisters still recovering from Hurricane Maria to know that under no circumstances will New York abandon them," Cuomo said.

"We are in this for the long haul and will continue to not only send supplies, but do whatever else we can to support them as they embark on this long and difficult recovery process."

Prior to the latest shipment, New York had already sent 433,000 bottles of water, 19,000 canned goods, 59,000 packages of baby wipes, 89,000 packages of diapers, 40,000 containers of baby food, 15,000 juice pouches, 8,600 solar lamps, 6,300 pounds of dry food and 10 generators to the island.

National Guard troops and helicopters from New York have also been sent to Puerto Rico.

Beltran, a former New York Met and Yankee, has also donated \$1 million toward Hurricane Relief.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/baseball/carlos-beltran-foundation-distribute-shipment-puerto-rico-article-1.3560653>

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More WNY National Guardsmen traveling to Puerto Rico

Spectrum News, October 19, 2017:

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — A total of 125 Western New York National Guardsmen are on their way to Puerto Rico, flying out of the Niagara Air Falls Reserve Thursday morning.

Members of the 152nd Engineer Company are en route to Puerto Rico to provide relief after Hurricane Maria. It is unknown how long the company will be on the island.

Their mission includes clearing roads, helping to re-establish communications services and provide relief for other New York-based crews already on location.

For Specialist Anthony Nappa and many others in the 152nd Company, this is their first relief deployment.

"I'm excited to help. I feel like throughout my lifetime I have acquired a lot of life skills and tools that are really gonna be useful down there," Nappa said.

<http://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2017/10/19/more-wny-national-guardsmen-head-to-puerto-rico>

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Local NY National Guard members, supplies head to Puerto Rico for hurricane relief

WBFO, October 19, 2017:

The island of Puerto Rico faces months of cleaning up and rebuilding following Hurricane Maria. On Thursday, 125 members of the New York Army National Guard flew out of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, along with supplies that will go toward the ongoing relief effort in the U.S. territory.

WBFO's Michael Mroziak reports.

Puerto Rico is still much devastated and a member of the Puerto Rico National Guard who arrived in Niagara Falls to pick up supplies and people, Captain Mario Ibarra, said up to 95 percent of the population there remains without electricity.

He likened much of the scenery to something one might see on the television show "The Walking Dead."

Military engineers, he said, face the difficulty of trying to clear and fix roads and bridges on rugged terrain and the effort is further complicated by wet weather.

"It's not a flat terrain. It's a lot of mountains. A lot of trees," Captain Ibarra said. "All that and the combination of the water and the wind, the slides, it's a pretty devastated situation in a lot of towns."

Ibarra said he's been carrying food and water aboard his C-130 but on his last trip he also delivered a kitchen setup for the military personnel now in Puerto Rico for hurricane relief efforts.

A KC-135 took off from Niagara Falls as Ibarra and a crew were loading up his aircraft. In a nearby hangar, members of the New York Army National Guard's 204th Engineer Battalion were on standby, awaiting their departure.

First Lieutenant Erin Morris was among those preparing to leave.

"What they've experienced down there is just unimaginable," Morris said. "The fact that we have the opportunity to go down there and help them, and get them back to where they need to be, is an incredible experience. I can't wait to take part in it. I can't wait to try and help people who can't help themselves right now."

Morris added that usually, she and her peers are called up to assist with relief efforts within New York State. This will be an opportunity, as she sees it, to see another part of the country and learn more about its people.

Ibarra is from Puerto Rico, thus he is working to save his home. But it was noted that this mission is about Americans helping out fellow Americans, even if it's off the continent.

"Even though with the madness and the situation a lot of people are in, it's really interesting to see how the military put their training and all their equipment for helping fellow citizens," Ibarra said.

<http://news.wbfo.org/post/local-ny-national-guard-members-supplies-head-puerto-rico-hurricane-relief>

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More NY Guardsmen Heading to Puerto Rico for Storm Recovery

Associated Press Oct 19, 2017:

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) - Another contingent of National Guard members from New York is preparing to depart for Puerto Rico to help the U.S. territory recover from Hurricane Maria.

New York Army National Guard officials say 125 members of the Buffalo-based 152nd Engineer Co. of the 204th Engineer Battalion are now scheduled to depart Thursday morning

from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. The departure was originally scheduled for Wednesday.

The unit's heavy construction equipment has already been sent to the Caribbean island aboard a ship from New Jersey.

The New York Army National Guard currently has about 200 soldiers in Puerto Rico providing security and helping to repair the island's utility grid and other infrastructure that was devastated by last month's Category 5 hurricane.

Twenty members of the New York Air National Guard are helping with airport operations and aircraft maintenance on the island.

<http://www.weny.com/story/36633362/more-ny-guardsmen-heading-to-puerto-rico-for-storm-recovery>

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125 NF reservists on way to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico

WBFO, October 18, 2017:

Another contingent of National Guard members from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is preparing to depart for Puerto Rico to help the U.S. territory recover from Hurricane Maria.

New York Army National Guard officials say 125 members of the 152nd Engineer Co. of the 204th Engineer Battalion are now scheduled to depart Thursday morning from Niagara Falls. The departure was originally scheduled for Wednesday, but the base said there were problems being able to land in Puerto Rico.

The unit's heavy construction equipment has already been sent to the Caribbean island aboard a ship from New Jersey to help the U.S. Territory devastated by a Category 5 hurricane last month.

The New York Army National Guard currently has about 200 soldiers and in Puerto Rico, including 60 soldiers and 4 UH-60 helicopters assigned to the 3rd battalion 142nd Aviation conducting relief missions, 132 soldiers of the 442nd Military Police Co. conducting security missions on the island and 20 members of the New York Air National Guard assisting in air terminal operations and aircraft maintenance missions.

<http://news.wbfo.org/post/125-nf-reservists-way-hurricane-ravaged-puerto-rico>

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National Guard deployment to Puerto Rico begins from Falls base

Buffalo News, October 19, 2017 :

One of four planes taking 125 members of the New York Army National Guard left the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station on Thursday morning for Puerto Rico.

Two more flights were scheduled to leave in the 11 o'clock hour, though the departure times were weather dependent. The final flight is scheduled to leave around midnight.

Soldiers with the 152nd Engineer Support Company, which is based at the Connecticut Street Armory in Buffalo, will assist with hurricane relief efforts, likely helping to clear roadways and remove debris in the southern region of the island.

<http://buffalonews.com/2017/10/19/national-guard-deployment-puerto-rico-begins-niagara-falls-base/>

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