

105th Airlift Wing

[NH National Guard trains in Canada:](#)

New Hampshire Union Leader, June 21, 2017

109th Airlift Wing

[109th AW 'Skibird' navigator shares experience in Antarctica through children's book:](#)

Air National Guard, By Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th AW Public Affairs / Published June 20, 2017

27th Brigade

[New York Army National Guard Soldiers head to Australia for 3 week exercise:](#)

Army.mil, June 22, 2017

[800 New York Army National Guard Soldiers heading to Australia for 3-week exercise:](#)

National Guard.mil, June 22, 2017

369th Sustainment Brigade

[The Harlem Hellfighters: A 104 year retrospective:](#)

army.mil, By Maj. Bryon Linnehan, June 18, 2017

42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

[Driver Accused in National Guardsman's Death Pleads Not Guilty to Upgraded Charges \(Video\):](#)

Spectrum News, June 21, 2017

[Driver pleads not guilty in fatal hit-and-run case:](#)

Times Union, June 21, 2017

[Man indicted, accused of hit and run involving National Guard member:](#)

WRGB, June 19, 2017

[Driver indicted for alleged hit-and-run death: Brian Tromans, 33, faces three felony charges related to January incident:](#)

Times Union, Monday, June 19, 2017

[Charges upgraded in connection with National Guard master sergeant's death:](#)

WNYT, June 19, 2017

[Man accused in hit-and-run of National Guardsman due in court \(Video\):](#)

WNYT, June 21, 2017

42nd Infantry Division

[Guardsmen Illustrate Air Assault and Howitzer Skills:](#)

Defense.gov, June 21, 2017

[New York Army Guard aviators and artillerymen team up for joint training at Fort Drum:](#)
Nationalguard.mil, June 19, 2017

53rd Troop Command

[New York National Guard officer is Army National Guard Logistician of the Year for 2016:](#)
Army.mil ,By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis, 138th Public Affairs Detachment June 20, 2017

[New York officer is Army National Guard Logistician of the Year for 2016:](#)
National Guard ,By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis | New York National Guard | June 20, 2017

[Face of Defense: Guardsman Trains Next Generation of Shooters:](#)
U.S. Department of Defense, By Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis New York Army National Guard

[Duty Calls: Guard soldier earns Military Photographer of the Year award:](#)
Times Union, June 18, 2017

Citizens Preparedness

[Jamaica church to host citizen preparedness program:](#)
Times Ledger, June 21, 2017

Counter Drug Task Force

['Operation Wrecking Ball' nabs alleged 'Miley Cyrus' cocaine dealers:](#)
Brooklyn Daily Eagle, June 23, 2017

Emergency Response

[Guardsmen Set Up Temporary Dam Along Lake Ontario:](#)
defense.gov, June 22, 2017

History

[New book on bloody WWII battle inspired by NY veteran:](#)
ABC News, June 19, 2017

[New York Army Guard helps right a record, remember sacrifice of WWII Soldier:](#)
Army.mil, June 16, 2017

[Righting a war record and remembering young Soldier's sacrifice during World War II:](#)
National Guard.mil , June 16, 2017

[New book on bloody WWII battle inspired by NY veteran:](#)
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Monday, June 19, 2017, 10:31 AM

New York Air National Guard

[Owens reminds Class 17-10 to remain engaged:](#)
Columbus.af.mil, June 16, 2017

New York Army National Guard

[Soldiers, Communities around the world celebrate the Army's 242nd birthday:](#)

Aerotech News, June 16, 2017

PFOA Issue

[Stewart ANG Base may add filtration system:](#)

Times Herald-Record, Jun 19, 2017

105th Airlift Wing

NH National Guard trains in Canada

New Hampshire Union Leader, June 21, 2017 :

GAGETOWN, Canada - Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment, New Hampshire Army National Guard, conducted a live-fire exercise using their High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) on June 12 in Gagetown, Canada.

The unit launched 30 rockets during the exercise.

"The goal for the exercise was to qualify our launcher crews, which is an annual requirement for National Guard HIMARS units," said Lt. Col. Davis Ulricson, commander of 3rd Battalion, 197th FAR. "Whether real world or simulated, it's important that we're able to respond quickly and effectively to field artillery missions. We were able (to) achieve that goal and increase our proficiency during our training in Gagetown."

The live-fire demonstration was the culminating event for the unit's two-week annual training, which began June 4 and concluded Sunday.

"Working together with supporting units prepares us for missions both stateside and abroad," said Maj. Christopher Thompson, operations officer for 3rd Battalion. "It's been a valuable training opportunity for our staff, and a great learning experience for all soldiers involved."

The annual training kicked off with a tactical exercise on June 4, when soldiers loaded two HIMARS launchers onto a C-17 aircraft operated by the 105th Airlift Wing of the New York National Guard. When the aircraft landed in Gagetown, soldiers rapidly deployed the HIMARS launchers for a simulated mission, locating and neutralizing a notional target.

By June 5, more than 200 New Hampshire National Guard soldiers were en route to Gagetown by convoy. When soldiers arrived, they were tasked with building their area-of-operations site from the ground up.

"We teach sustainment tasks that support survivability in the field, which means we're responsible for the maintenance of our vehicles and equipment," said Sgt. 1st Class Joel Nault, who oversees sustainment operations for 3rd Battalion. "We also provide meals and medical care for our soldiers with our own assets. We train as we fight, so it's critical for our soldiers to learn how the unit can sustain itself."

In addition to live-fire drills, soldiers with 3rd Battalion participated in medical evacuation drills and sling load operations with help from the 238th Medical Evacuation Company and 744th Forward Support Company of the New Hampshire Army National Guard.

As the annual training got underway, soldiers completed warrior tasks daily, including land navigation and night drivers' training. For Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, soldiers' tasks were turned into a competition, pitting platoons against each other in timed events including a 5K ruck march and a team Humvee push.

Canadian Armed Forces also participated in 3rd Battalion's training with site visits to each battery's area of operations. With a focus on radar systems, 3rd Battalion's Echo Battery provided a demonstration of its radar equipment, while 3rd Battalion's HIMARS firing battery showcased its launchers.

"Overall, the training in Gagetown adds to our level of readiness to react to upcoming missions, and speaks to our willingness to work with an artillery coalition partner," said Ulicson.

<http://www.unionleader.com/veterans/nh-national-guard-trains-in-canada--20170622>

[Return to top](#)

109th Airlift Wing

109th AW 'Skibird' navigator shares experience in Antarctica through children's book

Air National Guard, By Master Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th AW Public Affairs / Published June 20, 2017:

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. -- "Her mighty 109th Airlift Wing provides support for Science Exploration. Flying gives her adventure and pride serving her glorious Nation. Air Force Amanda is a Navigator in the 'Skibird', the Air Force's coolest plane! Her navigation skills help fly through dangerous and challenging terrain." - Air Force Amanda: Adventure in Antarctica

Air Force Amanda - the storybook character version of Maj. Amanda Coonradt of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing - came to life in December 2015 while Coonradt was supporting U.S. science research in Antarctica.

Her daughter, Amelia, was just 7 months old, and Coonradt wanted to explain to her why her mom was 9,500 miles away from Grafton, New York, where Amelia was.

So she decided to write a book to not only make her feel closer to her daughter back home but to also help other children of the 109th understand why the mission that took their parents to the other side of the world was so important.

"I made it a goal of mine during my quiet time while I was on the ice and missing her," Coonradt explained.

"I'd go to the library or write in my room and try to get inspired to get the ball rolling. I wrote about three-quarters of it while I was on the ice that year," she said.

Now Coonradt, a navigator for the LC-130 "Skibird" planes the 109th flies to the Antarctic, the Arctic and Greenland, is sharing the adventure of Air Force Amanda with children everywhere through "Air Force Amanda: Adventure in Antarctica."

She envisions the self-published book as the first in a series.

"Since I had Amelia, I'm always on the lookout for books about military parents or a military female parent who deploys or does exciting things," Coonradt said.

"I had a hard time finding that. I don't really see a lot of very specific mission-orientated books especially with female flyers. That's when I decided I really want to get this out there," she said. "I thought it might benefit my military brothers and sisters who do this mission year after year. And sometimes it's hard to explain to their loved ones what they're doing when they deploy."

Along with being a navigator, Coonradt holds a bachelor's degree in childhood education and a master's degree in education and literacy. Her goal when she first enlisted with the 109th in 2000 was to obtain her bachelor's degree and become a teacher.

As she got more exposure to the military, she found an interest in flying and her priorities changed; her new goal was to become a navigator. She got her commission in 2007.

In April of 2015, Coonradt and her husband, Russ, had their daughter, Amelia.

Coonradt began writing the book while she was deployed to Antarctica in December of 2015 - her first time deployed to the ice since her daughter was born.

"I knew (deploying) was going to be a huge hardship, but it was something that Russ and I talked about even before we tried for children - that this was going to be part of our lifestyle," she said.

The book discusses the history, science, animals and landscape of Antarctica from the perspective of a female LC-130 navigator.

Coonradt needed to find someone who would bring her words to life through illustration. Through online research, she was able to find Julio Rodriguez.

She sent pictures of herself, the aircraft and other images to help him illustrate her story.

The next step was to get the book published.

"I wasn't sure how to be published - so I started digging deeper," she said.

After a lot of online research, she discovered the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and was able to find the tools and resources needed to self-publish her book.

Coonradt self-published the book through Create Space, an Amazon company, and released it June 10. She has plans for an "Air Force Amanda" adventure series.

"I want to educate and empower! I have joined my love for education and my profession as an Air Force aviator by bringing to life 'Air Force Amanda's' adventure series," she said.

"I might go into a little bit more detail about what the navigator really does on the airplane, with plotting and mission planning and fuel planning," Coonradt said.

"I absolutely wrote this for Amelia and any future children we may have. If it's not successful, that's fine. The success for me is that I've completed this goal, and I have this for her."

"This was my first try and there were definitely some lessons learned. I'd like to do one about New Zealand, Greenland, United States - something fun, I don't really know yet," Coonradt said. "We'll see where my imagination goes and what I'm able to do."

"Thank you for flying with Air Force Amanda today. You too can find pride and adventure in your own special way! Adventure can be found through the world, anywhere. It's up to you to reach for the stars. Try it, it's a dare!" - Air Force Amanda: Adventure in Antarctica

<http://www.109aw.ang.af.mil/News/Features/Display/Article/1219792/109th-aw-skibird-navigator-shares-experience-in-antarctica-through-childrens-bo/>

[Return to top](#)

27th Brigade

New York Army National Guard Soldiers head to Australia for 3 week exercise

Army.mil, June 22, 2017 :

NEW YORK, NY -- More than 800 New York Army National Guard Soldiers head for Australia on July 7 for a three-week training exercise with the Australian Army.

The bulk of the Soldiers are assigned to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry which has units in New York, Farmingdale, N.Y. and Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, N.Y.

Troop C from the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, based at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in Niagara Falls, N.Y. , an engineer platoon from the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Lockport N.Y. and an intelligence section from the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Syracuse, N.Y. will also be part of the deployment.

A team from the headquarters of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will accompany the task force as an administrative support cell.

The New York National Guard Soldiers are deploying as part of a regularly scheduled Australian/U.S. military exercise known as Talisman Sabre. The exercise is held every other year and involves 30,000 Australian and American military personnel at six different locations conducting field exercises and command and control exercises.

Australia and the United States have been allies since the Second World War.

The bulk of the training in the field, which has focused on amphibious and air assault operations during past exercises, takes place at the Australian's Shoalwater Bay Training Area.

The training site is located near Rockhampton in the Australian state of Queensland, along Australia's northeast coastline, north of Brisbane.

The extended annual training this year provides the battalion with an opportunity to conduct much more complex and integrated training for the combat Soldiers. A routine training period would only encompass 15 days.

The New York Army National Guard Soldiers have been preparing for the mission for the past year, according to Lt. Col. Don Makay, the battalion commander. The Soldiers have conducted road marches with full field gear and tactical training exercises at the platoon and company level to get ready.

Unit Soldiers prepared and shipped equipment and 139 vehicles required for the mission to Australia and an advance party from the battalion is already in Australia. A team of Soldiers in Fort Lewis, Washington prepared the vehicles and equipment for shipment across the Pacific.

The Americans have also met with their Australian counterparts to prepare orders and plans that integrate the National Guard into the Australian Army unit they will be training with, Makay said.

For the exercise, the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry will be part of an Australian Army brigade.

This mission is a great way for the Citizen Soldiers of the 69th Infantry to demonstrate their ability to mobilize and deploy to anyplace in the world, Makay said.

"An opportunity to work for the Australians is an opportunity to show that the 69th is prepared to lead and follow other allied formations," he said.

The unit will return to New York at the end of the month.

https://www.army.mil/article/189886/new_york_army_national_guard_soldiers_head_to_australia_for_3_week_exercise

[Return to top](#)

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<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1225964/800-new-york-army-national-guard-soldiers-heading-to-australia-for-3-week-exerc/>

[Return to top](#)

369th Sustainment Brigade

The Harlem Hellfighters: A 104 year retrospective

Army.mil, By Maj. Bryon Linnehan, June 18, 2017:

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait - June marks the 104 Year Anniversary of the 15th Infantry Regiment, the forerunners of today's 369th Sustainment Brigade. This storied unit, that was given the famous nickname "The Harlem Hellfighters," by their German adversaries, has earned a distinguished place in history as a result of the tenacity they displayed both on and off the battlefield.

"As the first and only all-black New York National Guard unit, the story of the 369th Infantry in World War I, is a heroic tale of the struggle of African-Americans to prove their worth as soldiers on the battlefield as well as assert their rights as citizens at home," said Courtney Burns, the Director of Military History, New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

On June 2nd, 1913 the 15th Infantry Regiment, was constituted as a part of the New York National Guard. The men that formed the initial ranks of the unit faced a society at the time that was highly fragmented along racial lines, enduring prejudice and unjust treatment in the segregated Army of the time. They were forced to fight under the command of the French Army, as many white American Soldiers refused to fight alongside the black Soldiers.

The unit's fortitude would soon be put to the ultimate test on the ground in war-torn France, where the Hellfighters did not merely survive, but thrived on the battlefield. Their resilience resulted directly in a proud heritage as those men from Harlem never lost a man through capture, lost a trench, or a foot of ground to the enemy.

"With 191 days in continuous combat, the first American unit to cross the Rhine, and the only American unit awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the 369th was one of the most successful units in the US Army, black or white. Their deeds earned them widespread respect and acknowledgement and helped to lay the groundwork for the 20th century civil rights movement," said Burns.

Sgt. (then Pvt.) Henry Johnson earned the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme (France's highest award for valor) and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart in 1996, the Distinguished Service Cross in 2002, and in June 2015 received the American military's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor. While on sentry duty, Johnson and Pvt. Needham Roberts were attacked by a German raiding party of at least a dozen Soldiers. Johnson managed to fight off the German forces while also preventing the wounded Needham from being captured by the enemy, even though he himself had also suffered significant injuries.

1st Lt. George S. Robb would also earn the Medal of Honor for his valor displayed in the fields of France. Despite being severely wounded several times while leading his platoon near Sechault, France, Robb displayed courage and tenacity by remaining with his platoon. When his commanding officer was killed, he assumed command of the entire company and continued to take out machine gun nests and sniping posts, greatly contributing to his battalion completing their objective.

During World War I, the unit was credited with campaign participation in Champagne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Champagne 1918, Alsace 1918, and Lorraine 1918, earning a regimental French Croix de Guerre with Silver Star and Streamer, and more than 170 individual Croix de Guerre medals.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, the unit underwent extensive reorganization. The unit transitioned from the 15th Infantry to the 369th Infantry, prior to being converted and redesignated on August 30th, 1940 as the 369th Coastal Artillery. Despite all these organizational changes, the Hellfighters did not lose their fighting spirit. By the end of World War II, the various units that trace their lineage back to the 15th Infantry are credited with campaign participation in Ryukyus, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Eastern Mandates, Western Pacific, North Apennines, Luzon and Po Valley.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the Hellfighters were ordered into active Federal service as the 369th Transportation Battalion, having made the transition from Artillery to Transportation in February, 1968. The Hellfighters would be credited with campaign participation in the Defense of Saudi Arabia, the Liberation and Defense of Kuwait, and the Cease-Fire.

During peacetime, the Hellfighters maintain their ability to operate in a joint environment, and build upon their operational effectiveness and deployment capability by conducting numerous partner nation exercises on the African continent as well as mobilizing for state civil-support missions in the case of a natural disaster or other state emergency. When Hurricane Sandy ripped up the Eastern Coast and caused extensive destruction in the New York metropolitan area, the unit was called upon by the Governor of New York to help mitigate the suffering of their neighbors and fellow New Yorkers.

Today, 104 years since the original Hellfighters first fought for equality and against naked aggression in Western Europe, the Brigade Headquarters, Battalion Headquarters, and Headquarters Company are deployed to the Middle East fighting The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The unit continues to build upon the strong foundation laid over a century ago despite facing seemingly insurmountable odds at times. The unit, first commanded by Colonel William Hayward, a former U.S., is now commanded by Col. Stephen Bousquet, a native of Buffalo, N.Y. Bousquet, a Supervisory Health Physicist with the US Army Corps of Engineers, commands a high degree of respect from his Hellfighters as a master logistician who leads several thousand Hellfighters in the US Army Central Command's Area of Operations.

"The professionalism and expertise the 369th possesses is second to none. Senior leaders, both here in theater and back in New York, have remarked upon the outstanding job we have done and offered their gratitude for our continuing efforts," said Bousquet. "We are the best sustainment brigade in the Army and it is important that we continue to earn that reputation and our place in the Hellfighter legacy every day."

The 369th Sustainment Brigade is made up of several Combat Sustainment Support Battalions (CSSB) and a Special Troops Battalion command by Lt. Col. Seth Morgulas, a

resident of Scarsdale, N.Y. While the CSSBs build partner nation capacity working to combat ISIS by moving thousands of tons of bullets, fuel, vehicles and spare parts on a daily basis, the Special Troops Battalion provides critical customs, postal, personnel accountability, finance, and mortuary affairs support both internal and external to the Brigade to the tens of thousands of service-members distributed throughout more than 10 countries in the Middle East.

"The Special Troops Battalion 'Rattlers' have accomplished a tremendous amount while spread across 11 countries throughout the Middle East. Their discipline and professionalism resulted directly in the effective processing of more than 4.5 million pounds of mail, accounting for more than 40,000 personnel transiting theatre, providing pre-customs clearance for tens of thousands of personnel and hundreds of thousands of pieces of equipment worth more than \$1 billion," said Morgulas. "They worked tirelessly to ensure fiscal oversight of more than 100 billion in U.S. funds, and made countless other contributions to the fight."

The Brigade and Battalion Command Sergeants Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Mclean and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lampkins, with a combined 12 deployments between them, provide invaluable experience to their respective commands, who are faced with daunting mission command and operational oversight challenges presented by a non-linear and fluid modern combat environment across more than twenty remote locations that span five imminent danger areas.

"The Hellfighters continued accomplishments as citizen-soldiers are a direct result of two things: Firstly, the Soldiers on the front lines and their first line leaders - the junior Non-Commissioned Officer's that bear the heaviest burdens. Secondly, the incredible support those Soldiers receive from their Families and employers that they had to temporarily leave behind on their way to today's battlefields," said Command Sgt. Maj. Lampkins.

https://www.army.mil/article/189579/the_harlem_hellfighters_a_104_year_retrospective

[Return to top](#)

42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

Driver Accused in National Guardsman's Death Pleads Not Guilty to Upgraded Charges (Video)

Spectrum News, June 21, 2017:

The man accused in a hit-and-run in Colonie that killed a Mohawk Valley man pleaded not guilty to elevated charges at an arraignment in Albany County Court Wednesday afternoon.

A grand jury indicted 33-year-old Brian Tromans on charges of criminal negligent homicide and tampering with physical evidence. Tromans had already appeared in city court on a charge of leaving the scene of a fatal motor vehicle accident without reporting it.

Tromans is accused of killing Master Sgt. Rudolph Seabron, of Rome, on Watervliet-Shaker Road in January. Tromans turned himself into police during the investigation; however, the DA's office says he hid his car trying to hinder the investigation.

"He was driving home; didn't think anything had happened," said defense attorney Lee Kindlon. "He thought he hit something in the road. He didn't think it was a person at all."

"The tragedy is no one even made an attempt to assist [Seabron]," said Albany County Legislator Merton Simpson, Seabron's cousin. "I understand shock and fear response, but you have to take responsibility for what we do to our fellow man."

<http://www.twcnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2017/06/21/colonie-hit-and-run-tromans-seabron-rome-guardsmen.html>

[Return to top](#)

Driver pleads not guilty in fatal hit-and-run case

**Times Union, June 21,2017:
Jun 23, 2017**

ALBANY - The man accused of killing a pedestrian in January and driving off pleaded not guilty to charges in the indictment on Wednesday, Albany County prosecutors said.

Brian Tromans, 33, of Colonie, was arraigned before the Judge Roger D. McDonough in Albany County Supreme Court where bail was set at \$75,000.

Tromans will be back in court June 30, District Attorney David Soares' office said.

A grand jury previously indicted Tromans on criminally negligent homicide, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting and tampering with evidence in the death of Rudolph E. Seabron, a New York National Guard master sergeant.

The indictment alleges that on Jan. 8 at about 4:40 a.m. Tromans was driving in the area of Watervliet Shaker Road in Colonie and collided with Seabron.

Tromans also allegedly hid his car in an effort to hinder police investigation.

Police said in January they had video of Tromans leaving the same bar around the time of the collision.

Seabron's body was found on Watervliet Shaker Road, near the Northway Exit 5 overpass. Police soon suspected the driver who called them was likely not behind the collision but was the second person to come upon the scene.

Investigators made a list of some 900 CX-5 vehicles sold in Albany County between 2013 and 2016 and went to their homes to see if there was a car with significant front end damage. They found the vehicle and Tromans after watching surveillance video from businesses -- one of which allegedly caught

Tromans on camera earlier in the evening. And police said three other grainy videos show a car that looks like a CX-5 traveling from the first business to the crash scene.

His attorney Lee Kindlon said in January that Tromans had no idea he may have hit a person and thus thought there was no crime scene to leave. "Like everybody else, like me, (Tromans) saw (later) that somebody had been hit on the side of the road and became worried that he was involved," Kindlon said.

"You had the Colonie police looking for these kinds of cars, and you had him realizing that, 'Oh no, maybe I was involved in something.' And so he reached out to the Colonie police just as they were reaching out to him," he said.

<http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Driver-pleads-not-guilty-in-fatal-hit-and-run-case-11237812.php>

[Return to top](#)

Man indicted, accused of hit and run involving National Guard member

WRGB, June 19, 2017:

ALBANY, NY (WRGB) A Colonie man has been indicted in Albany County Court.

33 year old Brian Tromans was indicted on charges of criminally negligent homicide, leaving the scene of an accident, and tampering with evidence.

Tromans is accused of hitting Master Sergeant Rudolph Seabron with his car while he was walking along Watervliet Shaker Rd. and leaving him for dead back in January.

Police say Tromans never reported the crash, and a second car struck Seabron while his body was laying in the road.

That driver called 911 and was cleared of wrongdoing.

Tromans is due back in court Wednesday.

<http://cbs6albany.com/news/local/the-man-accused-of-hit-and-run-involving-national-guard-member-indicted>

[Return to top](#)

Driver indicted for alleged hit-and-run death: Brian Tromans, 33, faces three felony charges related to January incident

Times Union , Monday, June 19, 2017:

ALBANY — The motorist allegedly behind a January hit-and-run collision that killed a pedestrian has been indicted on felony charges that include negligent homicide, according to the office of Albany County District Attorney David Soares .

Brian Tromans , 33, of Colonie was indicted by an Albany County grand jury to face one count apiece of criminal negligent homicide, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting, and tampering with physical evidence.

Police believe Tromans struck New York National Guard Master Sgt. Rudolph E. Seabron , who left the Philly Bar & Grill on Watervliet Shaker Road after 3 a.m. on the morning of Jan. 8. Roughly an hour later, police got a call from a person who believed he had struck someone. Police found parts of a Mazda CX-5 at the scene.

Police said in January they had video of Tromans leaving the same bar around the time of the collision.

Seabron's body was found on Watervliet Shaker Road, near the Northway Exit 5 overpass. Police soon suspected the driver who called them was likely not behind the collision but was the second person to come upon the scene.

Investigators made a list of some 900 CX-5 vehicles sold in Albany County between 2013 and 2016 and went to their homes to see if there was a car with significant front end damage. They found the vehicle and Tromans after watching surveillance video from businesses — one of which allegedly caught Tromans on camera earlier in the evening. And police said three other grainy videos show a car that looks like a CX-5 traveling from the first business to the crash scene.

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"You had the Colonie police looking for these kinds of cars, and you had him realizing that, 'Oh no, maybe I was involved in something.' And so he reached out to the Colonie police just as they were reaching out to him," he said.

Tromans is due to be arraigned on Wednesday before Judge Roger McDonough in Albany County Court.

<http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Driver-indicted-for-alleged-hit-and-run-death->

[Return to top](#)

Charges upgraded in connection with National Guard master sergeant's death

WNYT, June 19, 2017 :

Charges have been upgraded against an Albany man accused of killing National Guard Master Sergeant Rudy Seabron.

Brian Tromans has now been indicted on felony charges of criminally negligent homicide, leaving the scene of an incident without reporting as a felony and tampering with physical evidence.

Seabron was in town for a weekend drill in January and walking back to base along Watervliet Shaker Road when he was hit and killed. Police tracked down the vehicle four days later.

Seabron served in the Marines and did tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait.

<http://wnyt.com/news/charges-upgraded-brian-tromans-rudolph-seabron/4518717/>

[Return to top](#)

Man accused in hit-and-run of National Guardsman due in court (Video)

WNYT, June 21, 2017:

COLONIE -- A 33-year-old Colonie man accused of being the driver who hit a National Guardsman with his car and taking off is due in court Wednesday afternoon.

Brian Tromans is scheduled to be arraigned. Master Sgt. Rudy Seabron was walking along Watervliet- Shaker road in January. He was hit and later died. Seabron served in the Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan before joining the National Guard.

<http://wnyt.com/news/brian-tromans-arraignment-rudy-seabron/4520683/?cat=10114>

[Return to top](#)

42nd Infantry Division

Guardsmen Illustrate Air Assault and Howitzer Skills

Defense.gov, June 21, 2017 :

New York Army National Guardsmen practice an artillery air assault raid at Fort Drum, N.Y., June 9, 2017. Photos by Army National Guard Sgt. Alexander Rector

<https://www.defense.gov/Photos/Essay-View/CollectionID/16643/>

[Return to top](#)

New York Army Guard aviators and artillerymen team up for joint training at Fort Drum

Nationalguard.mil, June 19, 2017:

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – It was hard to tell which was louder: the boom from the cannons or the roar of the downdraft from helicopter rotors, as New York Army National Guard artillery and aviation Soldiers teamed up for air assault artillery raid training here Jun 8-9.

The training scenario called for the artillerymen of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery to be airlifted forward with their cannons and ammunition by the UH-60s of the 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation. Once back on the ground the artilleryman would fire on a critical target, call in the helicopters, hook their guns back up and be airlifted back out.

This field artillery air assault is a critical task for his battalion, which provides fire support for the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, said Lt. Col. Peter Mehling, the commander of the 258th.

"It gives the maneuver commander the ability to strike a high-value target using speed, surprise and precision that is beyond the normal range of his indirect fire assets," Mehling said.

The air assault artillery raid is an integral part of the howitzer firing requirements his Soldiers need to conduct annually, he added.

This year the battalion's Alpha Battery, based in New Windsor, New York, fielded four M119A2 howitzers to conduct live fire training as part of the air assault drill, while Bravo Battery, located in the Bronx, had two gun crews go through the exercise in a dry fire status.

The mission kicked off as the Black Hawks airlifted in an advance party which had 20 minutes to secure the area and mark gun locations.

While this was going on, the rest of the battery's Soldiers were preparing the M119A2s howitzers for sling-loading under the UH-60s and then hooking them up to the hovering helicopters.

Flying with 2.3 tons of cannon hanging underneath a helicopter is tricky, so it's always good for his aircrews to get a chance to practice the task, said Lt. Col. Kevin Ferreira, the commander of the 142nd Aviation.

"With an external load the handling capabilities and the flight characteristics of the aircraft change a little bit so, it's a thought process...it's a good decision making process for all the air crews that are participating," he explained.

Two Soldiers from the 258th stood on each cannon as the Blackhawks came in over top of them. The downdraft from a helicopter can range from 70 to 115 miles per hour, so it was a challenge for the Soldiers to hook on correctly as dirt and dust flew around them.

On board the UH-60s, crew chiefs sitting in the doorway of the helicopters helped guide the pilots in to hook onto the guns.

The 142nd Aviation is a good unit to work with for this training, said Capt. Eric Emerling, the Alpha Battery commander.

"They're very user friendly," he said. "We keep in contact with them on the radio and they've been very adaptive if we have an issue on the ground. They're willing to work with us, give us more time or adapt as we need it so it's pretty good."

Next stop was the landing zone where the advance party had prepared a location for all four guns in the section.

When all guns were in place each howitzer fired four rounds on the target.

The M119A2 can fire a 105 millimeter shell filled with 4.6 pounds of high explosive, 8.6 miles downrange. A seven-member gun crew can fire three rounds a minute.

Along with exercising the gun crews, the air assault exercise is important because it gives the battalion Soldiers who are air assault qualified a chance to use the skills they learned in the Air Assault Course, Mehling said. These Soldiers don't often get a chance to use this training, so any time they can it is a plus.

"The success of this training was largely due to the knowledge, experience, and leadership of these personnel," he emphasized.

The air assault artillery raid is also the kind of training his Soldiers love to do, Mehling said.

"Executing challenging training, with rigorously evaluated standards is the reason many cite when they re-enlist," Mehling said.

Overall the mission went well, Mehling said. Both batteries met the standards of the raid and the standards for the field artillery firing tables. They inserted their howitzers, computed accurate firing data, delivered the rounds on target and exfiltrated people and guns within the time standards.

"The fire mission itself went very well," Emerling said. "We got word that there were good effects on the target from the observers."

"In the field artillery it is very easy to measure success," Mehling said, "either you hit the target or you don't."

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1218856/new-york-army-guard-aviators-and-artillerymen-team-up-for-joint-training-at-for/>

[Return to top](#)

53rd Troop Command

New York National Guard officer is Army National Guard Logistician of the Year for 2016

Army.mil ,By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis, 138th Public Affairs Detachment June 20, 2017:

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y. - Major David Myones, the logistics officer for the New York Army National Guard's 53rd Troop Command is not just a good logistics officer, right now he's the best in the Army National Guard.

Myones, who oversees logistics operations for 4,100 Soldiers in combat support and combat service support units located across New York, has been named Army National Guard Logistician of the Year for 2016 by the Army Guard G4 and Executive Advisory Group for Logistics Excellence.

Myones is the first New York Army National Guard Soldier to receive this distinction, and only the fourth person to receive the award since its establishment in 2012.

"I'm surprised and humbled," Myones, said. "Even though it's an individual award, I've had countless mentors, peers, and colleagues who have contributed to the logistician I am today."

He was selected among officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and Department of the Army civilians from the Army National Guard's 54 States and Territories.

"Maj. Myones is one of the most qualified field grade logisticians in the state," said Col. Isabel R. Smith, Chief of Staff for the 53rd Troop Command "He is thorough in every aspect of his duties and responsibilities, he takes pride in all he does, and his follow-up is one of the best I've ever seen."

Myones, a Boston University graduate who commissioned from their ROTC program in 2008, has quickly grown his military logistics career. He's held five positions, each with increasing levels of responsibility and authority, from Active Duty Operational Support with the directorate of logistics to his current role as Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics with the 53d TC.

In his current capacity, Myones establishes logistics policies and guidance for the more than 4,100 Soldiers in the 53d TC.

He is in charge of resource management to include budgeting and property book oversight, supporting Inactive Duty and Annual Training, as well as deployment assistance and planning to units going overseas.

"In logistics there's never just one solution to a problem," remarked Myones. "I use my own successful deployment experience as a model for other units and constantly build and improve upon it."

One of his professional highlights that significantly contributed to earning this award was the innovative and strategic approach he utilized when preparing for the Command Logistics Review Team evaluation.

This National Guard Bureau directed inspection assessed the overall sustainability, mobilization readiness and effectiveness of logistics operations for two battalions in the 53d TC.

"An organization is only as good as its weakest link," said Myones. "If it was wrong in one place, it's probably wrong in many other places as well."

Myones directed companies to self-identify their current posture, which provided him with a realistic understanding of the current logistical landscape.

This approach yielded the systemic deficiencies and trends that he was able to quickly correct via a combination of teaching, mentoring and coaching, as well as coordinating with peers and the directorate of logistics for additional support.

"He's very good at working with people towards a common goal," said Lt. Col. Joseph "Chip" Richardson, a New York National Guard Logistics planner who previously worked in New York's logistics directorate.

He sent Soldiers from other units to help fix those problems. In turn those Soldiers learned something and went back to their own units and made changes using what they had learned, Richardson added.

By applying extra resources to the most critical areas of need, he garnered the highest overall grades for the 53d TC in more than 20 years.

"His ability to be transparent to all entities in the logistician community helped him identify the subject matter experts needed to correct the deficiencies and reach their goals," said Lt. Col. Patrick Clare, the state maintenance officer for the New York Army National Guard.

"His tireless work in becoming a complete logistician has paid huge dividends to the community as well as the New York Army National Guard," Clare added.

Myones excelled in all eight assessed areas: supporting NGB/State procedures and policies, innovation and proactive leadership, extraordinary service to the community, substantial cost-effectiveness, building relationships/ partnerships, customer focus, quality and teamwork.

"To be a good logistics officer you need to look at every problem in a unique way," said Myones. "For me, it's solving those problems and helping Soldiers out that makes it rewarding."

He had no problem demonstrating his service both in and out of uniform.

Myones volunteers with several veteran organizations including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and United Veterans Beacon House, as well as taking the time to visit a local middle school and teach 7th grade students how to manage conflict.

This award exists to recognize ARNG Soldiers and Department of the Army Civilians who have demonstrated great potential and contributions toward the improvement of the ARNG logistics posture, according to the National Guard Bureau.

https://www.army.mil/article/189687/new_york_national_guard_officer_is_army_national_guard_logistician_of_the_year_for_2016

[Return to top](#)

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National Guard ,By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis | New York National Guard | June 20, 2017:

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<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1220510/new-york-officer-is-army-national-guard-logistician-of-the-year-for-2016/>

[Return to top](#)

Face of Defense: Guardsman Trains Next Generation of Shooters

U.S. Department of Defense, By Army Staff Sgt. Michael Davis New York Army National Guard:

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, CORTLANDT MANOR, N.Y., June 21, 2017 - For New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Michael Kapela, his seventh Adjutant General's Combat Sustainment Training Exercise -- known as the "TAG Match" -- was more meaningful than his first.

Ten years ago, Kapela, who has served in the Guard for 16 years, won a clean sweep of all the events during his first TAG Match, and he has since competed twice at regional National Guard shooting matches and once at the national level.

This year -- the 38th time the TAG Match has been held -- he took top honors in the individual rifle match and was also part of the rifle team that won first place.

Helping the team from his unit, the 152nd Engineer Support Company, earn first place in the rifle marksmanship event is what made this time around special, Kapela said.

Training for the match was an opportunity to teach marksmanship skills while learning new tips and techniques from other service members, he explained.

Kapela added that he's not in the competition for the trophy or the recognition; he's in it to help the next generation of soldiers.

"There are 101 theories out there on how to be a great shooter, but not everything will work for you," he said. "It's about trying and implementing new tips until you get it right, and that's what the TAG Match gives you an opportunity to do."

Kapela has a significant amblyopia, or lazy eye, and that would deter most people from pursuing both a hobby and profession that relies heavily on ocular accuracy. But he said it only strengthened his resolve to learn and try even harder.

He said he uses the mantra that his father, a 35-year Army veteran combat engineer, gave to him when he was eight years old: "If you're going to show someone what you can do, first you need to show them how to get it done."

Kapela was one of 68 service members who participated in the 38th Annual "TAG Match" Combat Sustainment Training Exercise here from June 1-4.

TAG Match

The TAG Match is a 3-day event conducted by the New York Army National Guard to promote excellence in marksmanship training and offers soldiers and airmen the opportunity to test their skills and weapon systems in a battle-focused environment.

Members of the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard, the state's volunteer self-defense forces, are also invited to participate in the competition.

These skills and techniques are forged during four high-tempo and high-pressure marksmanship events, each designed to test the knowledge of weapon systems and accuracy during battle-like conditions.

The four advanced marksmanship events are the Sgt. Henry Johnson Individual Combat Rifle Match, the Sgt. Reidar Waaler Team Combat Rifle Match, the Sgt. Thomas Baker Individual Combat Pistol Match, and the Lt. Col. William Donovan Team Combat Pistol Match.

Each event is named in honor of a past Medal of Honor recipient from New York Army National Guard units.

The matches are a mix of both team and individual timed events that combine three different firing positions, quick movements to varying locations and short sprints, all of which simulate combat scenarios.

Aside from improved marksmanship techniques, one of the benefits to participating in the TAG Match is that everyone from the supporting staff to the competitors gets a chance to network with peers outside of their military branches.

Collaboration Builds Relationships

Sgt. Michael Ryan, a soldier with the New York Army National Guard's 827th Horizontal Engineer Company, has been a part of the TAG Match support staff in the past and was a competitor this year.

"The best asset that staff and participants come away with is the people," said Ryan. "There's soldiers, airmen and militia competing together; we'll end up working together and seeing each other out there when responding to state active duty missions."

The collaboration at the TAG Match helps to build relationships among competitors, while the peer instruction and coaching allows soldiers to hone their craft and bring new knowledge to their units.

"The TAG Match trains soldiers to first gain individual proficiency and then gauge proficiency in others," said Maj. Christopher Culpepper, the officer-in-charge of the TAG Match and deputy operations officer of the 53rd Troop Command. "This is an important skill that improves every level of the organization from the individual Soldier to the unit and ultimately the New York National Guard."

The overall match champion, based on a summary of scoring across all categories, was the team from the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1223768/face-of-defense-guardsmen-trains-next-generation-of-shooters/>

[Return to top](#)

Duty Calls: Guard soldier earns Military Photographer of the Year award

Times Union, June 18, 201:

A graduate of the University at Albany has been named the best photojournalist in the Army.

Sgt. Harley Jelis, a member of the New York Army National Guard's 138th Public Affairs Detachment, has been named the United States' Army's Military Photographer of the Year.

Jelis of New Milford, Conn., was selected for the honor during the Army's annual Keith L. Ware Communications Award competition. The competition, named after a major general who headed the Army's public affairs efforts in the 1960s, recognizes the work of Army photographers, journalists, and broadcasters in the active Army, the Army Reserve, and the Army National Guard.

Major Gen. Malcolm B. Frost, the chief of Army Public Affairs, will present the award to Jelis during a conference in November.

As a public affairs specialist, Jelis is responsible for producing written and photographic coverage of service members assigned to or working alongside the 53rd Troop Command or other New York Army National Guard units.

"Sgt. Harley Jelis has a terrific ability to truly capture the emotion and intensity of what our soldiers experience in training," said Col. Richard Goldenberg, public affairs officer for the

New York National Guard in Latham, "He puts himself alongside the troops and immerses himself in the environment, giving viewers a vantage point of soldiering that few ever see."

Jelis joined the New York Army National Guard in 2008 and originally served as an artilleryman assigned to the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery. He transferred to the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, Latham, in 2013.

He began working full-time as a public affairs soldier during the brigade's deployment to Kuwait in 2013 and 2014. Jelis traveled to a number of Persian Gulf areas taking pictures of training operations including New York Army National Guard helicopters landing on U.S. Navy ships and joint training operations with the U.S. Marine Corps and the Saudi Arabian armed forces.

He became a full-fledged public affairs soldier in 2015. In 2016 he supported the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team during a three-week long deployment to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

He documented training conducted by almost 4,500 troops from the National Guard, Army Reserve and Active Army during the exercise. Many of his award-winning photographs were taken during this exercise.

His photographs have been used by a number of military websites and publications and have been used by the Army Times, Business Insider, and the Times Union among other publications.

"The key to getting good photographs of military action is to spend time with the unit so the soldiers get to know the photographer and he gets to know them," Jelis explained.

Jelis earned a bachelor's degree in documentary studies, focusing on film and photography, from the University at Albany and a master's degree in integrated marketing communications from Marist College, Poughkeepsie. He is also a graduate of the Defense Information School at Fort Meade, Md.

He has earned an Army Commendation Medal and an Army Achievement Medal.

Best new videographer

New York Air National Guard Senior Airman Jamie Spaulding of Ballston Spa has been named best New Videographer of the Year in the Air National Guard.

Spaulding, a broadcast communications specialist assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing's public affairs section, Stratton Air National Guard base, Scotia, also won first place in the Video Spot and Video Feature categories during the annual Air National Guard media competition.

Spaulding's video submission featured Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Kayla Ludivig, a maintenance crew chief, talking about why she likes her job in the 109th Airlift Maintenance

Squadron. His winning spot video submission focused on the Air Force sexual harassment prevention campaign at the 109th Airlift Wing.

Spaulding began his military service in the New York Army National Guard in 2010, where he served as an aviation operations specialist in the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade in Latham. He transferred to the New York Air National Guard in 2014 and trained to be a military broadcaster at the Defense Information School, Fort Mead, Md.

New Army leader

Conor P. Driscoll of Albany has been commissioned as a second lieutenant upon completion of an Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program and graduation from Canisius College, Buffalo.

Driscoll earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

The Adjutant General Corps officer's active duty assignment will be with the 36th Signal Battalion in South Korea.

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.lmtonline.com/local/article/Duty-Calls-Guard-soldier-earns-Military-11229013.php>

[Return to top](#)

Citizens Preparedness

Jamaica church to host citizen preparedness program

Times Ledger, June 21, 2017:

The Rose of Sharon Baptist Church in Jamaica will be participating in a Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program Saturday.

The program was created by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and is supported by elected officials including Congressman Gregory Meeks (D-Jamaica), Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, state Assemblywoman Vivian Cook (D-Jamaica), City Councilman I. Daneek Miller (D-St. Albans) and state Sen. Leroy Comrie (D-St. Albans).

"The NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps. is a New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services initiative that's designed to bring disaster and emergency preparedness

training and resource kits to communities across New York State," according to Comrie's office.

The classes are two hours long and are headed by officials from the New York National Guard, New York State Office of Emergency Management, and NYS Office of Fire Prevention and Control, according to a representative for Comrie.

With hurricane season on the horizon, this workshop will help people in the southeast Queens region, which has "experienced major storms, flooding, and fires in homes and businesses, among other tragedies," the representative said.

This will help residents of the 14th Senate District learn how to prepare for both man-made and natural disasters and will "ensure that constituents have access to these invaluable resources," Comrie's office said.

The church is located at 104-19 165th St., and the event starts at noon.

http://www.timesledger.com/stories/2017/24/corpstraining_2017_06_16_q.html

[Return to top](#)

Counter Drug Task Force

'Operation Wrecking Ball' nabs alleged 'Miley Cyrus' cocaine dealers

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, June 23, 2017:

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman announced his sixth major drug bust in recent weeks, and this one had some star power as "Operation Wrecking Ball" led to 19 arrests on 226 charges as a gun and drug trafficking ring was busted up.

The two major traffickers involved, Cedric James and Laquan Wright, both of Brooklyn, allegedly arranged for large quantities of cocaine to be transported from Brooklyn and parts of New York City to the Albany region.

During the course of the yearlong investigation, officials noticed that traffickers were using coded and cryptic terminology in an attempt to disguise their alleged illicit activities and often referred to cocaine that they sold as "Miley Cyrus."

In total, investigators found more than three pounds of bulk cocaine, 35 firearms, more than \$63,000 in cash and large quantities of drug paraphernalia.

"Operation Wrecking Ball marks another significant dent in the narcotics pipeline that funnels in drugs and guns and threatens families across the Capital Region," said Schneiderman. "My

office is laser-focused on the growing epidemic of drugs and violence that's surging across our state.

"Today's arrests - and the 265 dealers we've taken off the street in the last two months alone - send an unmistakable message that we won't tolerate those who deal death and violence in our communities," Schneiderman continued.

The charges include operating as a major trafficker, which carries with it a mandatory life sentence in state prison. Other charges involved include criminal sale and criminal possession of a controlled substance (class A and B felonies), and conspiracy to commit those crimes.

The remaining defendants face maximum sentences between nine and 24 years in prison.

The other 17 charged in the case included Joseph Berghela, Elijahjuan Cancer, Derrick Carrington, Richard Chrise, Dennis Durham, Ladawn Harris, Clifford Jackson, Lewis Labshere, I'Quan Mayo, Traevon Shannon, Christopher Mzone, Nekie Ricks and Deanna McCargo, all from Albany, New York; and Octavius Mills (Ruecker), Summer Saglimbeni, Meghan Wilkinson and Frances Wright, of Schenectady, New York.

The case was investigated by the Organized Crime Task Force, the Albany Police Department and was assisted by the NY National Guard Counterdrug Task Force.

<http://www.brooklyneagle.com/articles/2017/6/22/%E2%80%98operation-wrecking-ball%E2%80%99-nabs-alleged-%E2%80%98miley-cyrus%E2%80%99-cocaine-dealers>

[Return to top](#)

Emergency Response

Guardsmen Set Up Temporary Dam Along Lake Ontario

defense.gov, June 22, 2017:

New York Army National Guardsmen use an AquaDam, a water-filled cofferdam, to control Lake Ontario's high water levels at Sodus Point, N.Y., June 13, 2017. New York Army National Guard photos by multiple military photographers

<https://www.defense.gov/Photos/Essay-View/CollectionID/16653/>

[Return to top](#)

History

New book on bloody WWII battle inspired by NY veteran

ABC News, June 19, 2017:

When military history author Bill Sloan sought inspiration for his new book on World War II in the Pacific, he found it in a then-96-year-old combat veteran from upstate New York who survived one of the war's bloodiest battles.

John Sidur rescued two hometown buddies during Japan's largest banzai attack of the war, near the end of the Battle of Saipan in July 1945. Sidur's Army regiment, part of the New York National Guard, was nearly wiped out in the attack.

"If one person could be identified as the reason I wrote this book, John Sidur of Cohoes, New York, is that person," writes Sloan at the end of "Their Backs Against The Sea: The Battle of Saipan and the largest Banzai Attack of World War II."

The book, being published this month by Da Capo Press, tells the story of the fight for Saipan in the Mariana Islands that began June 15, 1944. The latest in a series of American island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific drew less attention back home because it started just nine days after the D-Day landings at Normandy.

The U.S. plan had the Marines landing two divisions, with the Army's 27th Infantry Division held in reserve. But as the Marines met tough resistance from the 30,000 Japanese defending the island, the mostly inexperienced troops of the 27th Division were sent in on June 17. It was the first time in the war that Army and Marine divisions would go into a campaign fighting side-by-side at division strength. Problems between the services began nearly from the start.

"The Marines thought the Army was cautious, too slow, too plodding," said Tom Kelly, professor emeritus of history and American studies at Siena College. "

For his Saipan book, Dallas-based Sloan researched official U.S. combat reports, including a trove of 27th Division documents at the New York State Military Museum. The lone 27th Division member he interviewed was Sidur, who lived near Albany before his death in 2015.

At dawn on July 7, 1944, more than 4,000 Japanese launched a banzai attack against the division's 105th Infantry Regiment. Outnumbered by more than 3-to-1, many of the Americans died in their foxholes. Survivors of the initial onslaught were driven back to the beach, where they literally fought with their backs to the ocean while annihilating the Japanese attackers.

When it was over, more than 400 American soldiers were dead and another 500 wounded. Two days later, Saipan was declared secure.

Among the casualties were scores of New Yorkers, including two from Troy who would be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The wounded included two soldiers from Cohoes rescued by Sidur. One of them, Wilfred "Spike" Mailloux, remained close with Sidur after the war, and the two veterans met for breakfast once a month until Sidur's death.

"I sit in my chair and think about it all the time," said Mailloux, 93, one of the last living survivors of the attack that left him with a severe leg wound. "I miss my buddies."

<http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/wireStory/book-bloody-wwii-battle-inspired-ny-veteran-48133894>

[Return to top](#)

New York Army Guard helps right a record, remember sacrifice of WWII Soldier

Army.mil, June 16, 2017:

ALBANY, N.Y. -- For 69 years the gravestone of Army Pfc. Silvio Campanella, killed in France while serving in the 42nd Infantry Division during World War II, had the wrong death date.

Veterans and current members of the famed "Rainbow Division" gathered at St. Agnes Cemetery here June 14 to correct that date -- changing it from January 31 to January 19, 1945 -- and tell the story of Campanella's death which had been secret for a generation.

Campanella and the 42nd Infantry Division, now a part of the New York Army National Guard, got caught up in a vicious defensive battle against a German attack called Operation Nordwind in southern France. It was a companion attack to the more famous Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

Campanella was one of the 42nd Soldiers who tried to stop that attack, although he wasn't killed in action. He was shot while a prisoner of the German Army.

"What brings us together here is our need to pay a debt of gratitude to an all but forgotten Soldier. We also feel the need to set things right - as right as we can - to honor him," said retired Army Major Patrick Chaisson, historian for the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation, which provided the new grave marker.

"Well, we are correcting a mistake that was made almost 70 years ago," Chaisson said.

Joining Chaisson in correcting that mistake were members of a New York National Guard Color Guard from the 42nd Infantry Division's headquarters in Troy, N.Y., and currently serving members and veterans of the division.

Campanella family members, including his surviving sister, Yolanda Campanella Robilotto, also took part in the event.

Silvio Campanella, born in 1923 in Albany, tried to follow his brothers into the Navy. But poor eyesight led him to enlist in the Army instead at age 19 in January 1943. After basic training, he was assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division, known as the Rainbow Division for its shoulder insignia and its WWI service.

Campanella deployed in December 1944, arriving in the front lines with the division just days before the onslaught of Operation Nordwind on New Year's Day.

In January 1945 his unit, Company A, 232nd Infantry Regiment, was defending a French village called Sessenheim without tanks or artillery support.

It was a close quarter fight of small infantry units. Small pockets of infantry Soldiers found themselves surrounded and overwhelmed.

"Campanella and his fellow G.I.s fought bravely, but their rifles and hand grenades were no match for Nazi tanks," Chaisson said. "Those tanks began destroying Sessenheim house by house."

Campanella found himself with 18-20 other Soldiers as German prisoners on January 19, 1945.

"The Germans commenced to move in from all sides. We held them off until around noon," wrote Staff Sgt. James Nichols, also from Company A in his report of September 1945.

"At approximately 11:30, I gave the order to surrender," Nichols report says. "Then we shoved a white sheet out of the window, destroyed all of our equipment, personal belongings and any other items that might have given our organization away. Then leading the column, I marched out of the house, hands over my head," he wrote of the event.

But the entire group would not find their way to a prisoner of war camp. In the midst of the battle, the Germans sought retribution for what they believed was the intentional killing of one of their unit medics.

Sgt. Gerald O'Brien of Company A described what happened in his September, 1945 statement to investigators:

"I saw the group of Americans lined up, and I saw a German officer making a lot of threatening gestures and heard him yelling about the shooting of a German medic by Americans. Then the German officer pulled seven more men out of the group and sent them up the street in (the) charge of a German soldier; they went up the street and that is the last I saw of them," O'Brien recounted.

One of those seven men was Silvio Campanella and his fate was sealed that afternoon when his German captor fired on the seven, killing him and five others.

"Several of these dead Soldiers were hastily buried by French civilians in the village of Sessenheim. Their remains were later recovered by the U.S. Army, but due to a bureaucratic foul-up these Soldiers' death certificates were all wrong. The Army recorded the date they were found - January 31st - not the actual day they were killed - January 19th," Chaisson said.

Campanella's remains were reinterred in Albany in 1948 with the incorrect date.

"That's the simple explanation, but nothing in life is ever this simple. There is a terrible secret to Private Campanella's death, a truth so horrible that the one person who lived to tell it kept this story inside him for decades," Chaisson said.

One Soldier captured with Campanella did survive. He was Private George Sotak and he left this harrowing account in a letter to weapons platoon veteran Sam Polis in February 1946:

"When they picked us out, we marched up the road a couple of yards, went through a barn and stopped before a couple of barbed wire fences. I could sense what was going to happen, but couldn't make a run for it. We were lined up with our backs toward the krauts.

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Sotak played dead until nightfall, with bullet wounds to his left shoulder, lung and arm. After dark, he escaped back to American lines. Treated for his injuries, Sotak eventually made a full recovery. He also made a full report on the incident to headquarters, which was classified after the war.

With investigators unable to identify the unit or enemy personnel involved, it remain unsolved and unprosecuted.

"George Sotak carried in his heart the memories of that awful day for decades," Chaisson said at the ceremony. "He never discussed this incident, afraid it would upset the families of those who were lost. Finally, just before his own death, Sotak allowed his comrades to learn of the Sessenheim murders."

After Sotak's account was published in 2015, two daughters of other WWII Rainbow Division veterans - Suellen McDaniel and Kathy Hemard - began to research the incident and identified all the Soldiers involved, Chaisson explained.

"They discovered that all six grave markers - three in the states, three in European military cemeteries - had incorrect dates of death. Suellen McDaniel made it her mission to get all these markers fixed," he said.

"Thanks to Suellen's work, and to the tireless efforts of Albany Diocese Cemeteries Historian, Kelly Ann Grimaldi, we now have a correct grave marker for Private First Class Silvio C. Campanella, Company A, 232nd Regiment, 42nd Infantry Division, United States Army, Killed in Action January 19th, 1945 at age 21," Chaisson said.

"We remember him and honor him and take the time to show our deep respect and gratitude," Grimaldi said. "I would like to think St. Agnes Cemetery and staff gave his family some measure of comfort."

The group placed memorial wreaths at the gravesite and New York Army National Guard members of the 42nd Infantry Division provided final military honors.

"What happened to Campanella and his fellow G.I.s at Sessenheim is an atrocity, an obscenity," Chaisson said. "That is war. Yet there is honor in service. Many of us gathered here are combat veterans of the Rainbow Division, or veterans of other proud military units. We all can find some connection to this young man, who sacrificed his life for freedom over seventy years ago."

https://www.army.mil/article/189547/new_york_army_guard_helps_right_a_record_remember_sacrifice_of_wwii_soldier

[Return to top](#)

Righting a war record and remembering young Soldier's sacrifice during World War II

National Guard.mil , June 16, 2017 :

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<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1217112/righting-a-war-record-and-remembering-young-soldiers-sacrifice-during-world-war/>

[Return to top](#)

New book on bloody WWII battle inspired by NY veteran

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Monday, June 19, 2017, 10:31 AM:

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — When military history author Bill Sloan sought inspiration for his new book on World War II in the Pacific, he found it in a then-96-year-old combat veteran from upstate New York who survived one of the war's bloodiest battles.

John Sidur rescued two hometown buddies during Japan's largest banzai attack of the war, near the end of the Battle of Saipan in July 1945. Sidur's Army regiment, part of the New York National Guard, was nearly wiped out in the attack.

"If one person could be identified as the reason I wrote this book, John Sidur of Cohoes, New York, is that person," writes Sloan at the end of "Their Backs Against The Sea: The Battle of Saipan and the Largest Banzai Attack of World War II."

The book, being published this month by Da Capo Press, tells the story of the fight for Saipan in the Mariana Islands that began June 15, 1944. The latest in a series of American island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific drew less attention back home because it started just nine days after the D-Day landings at Normandy.

The U.S. plan had the Marines landing two divisions, with the Army's 27th Infantry Division held in reserve. But as the Marines met tough resistance from the 30,000 Japanese defending the island, the mostly inexperienced troops of the 27th Division were sent in on June 17. It was the first time in the war that Army and Marine divisions would go into a campaign fighting side-by-side at division strength. Problems between the services began nearly from the start.

"The Marines thought the Army was cautious, too slow, too plodding," said Tom Kelly, professor emeritus of history and American studies at Siena College. "

For his Saipan book, Dallas-based Sloan researched official U.S. combat reports, including a trove of 27th Division documents at the New York State Military Museum. The lone 27th Division member he interviewed was Sidur, who lived near Albany before his death in 2015.

At dawn on July 7, 1944, more than 4,000 Japanese launched a banzai attack against the division's 105th Infantry Regiment. Outnumbered by more than 3-to-1, many of the Americans died in their foxholes. Survivors of the initial onslaught were driven back to the beach, where they literally fought with their backs to the ocean while annihilating the Japanese attackers.

When it was over, more than 400 American soldiers were dead and another 500 wounded. Two days later, Saipan was declared secure.

Among the casualties were scores of New Yorkers, including two from Troy who would be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. The wounded included two soldiers from Cohoes rescued by Sidur. One of them, Wilfred "Spike" Mailloux, remained close with Sidur after the war, and the two veterans met for breakfast once a month until Sidur's death.

"I sit in my chair and think about it all the time," said Mailloux, 93, one of the last living survivors of the attack that left him with a severe leg wound. "I miss my buddies."

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<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/wires/entertainment/new-book-bloody-wwii-battle-inspired-ny-veteran-article-1.3259642>

[Return to top](#)

New York Air National Guard

Owens reminds Class 17-10 to remain engaged

Columbus.af.mil, June 16, 2017:

COLUMBUS AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. -- Brig. Gen. Thomas Owens II, Assistant Adjutant General of Air New York National Guard, Latham, New York visited Columbus Air Force Base, to speak at Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 17-10's graduation here June 9, 2017.

Owens is the primary advisor on all Guard matters to the Adjutant General. He assists the commander to ensuring mission readiness for the five New York Air National Guard flying wings, the Eastern Air Defense Sector and several geographically separated units.

He is a command pilot with more than 3,900 flying hours in the A-10, F-16, MQ-1, HC-130 and HH-6-G to include over 450 combat sorties over Southwest Asia. He has flown in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Northern Watch, Operation Southern Watch, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

He has commanded at the squadron, group and wing levels.

Owens started off with a large thanks to the 14th Flying Training Wing and the Local Community Partners.

“It’s been truly an honor to be a part of this graduation,” said Owens. “Col. Gosney and the entire team here at Columbus Air Force Base are an extraordinary team of Air Force professionals as well and the surrounding community here at Columbus and what they do to bolster and support this great mission here is vitally important.”

Owens congratulated the 24 new pilots on their next step into the U.S Air Force’s elite group of aviators.

“Do me a favor Class 17-10, please stand up, look around, everyone, let's acknowledge these expert aviators,” said Owens, “You are the newest, most highly trained Airmen in history, anytime and anywhere. Your time to engage is now.”

The pilots went through 13 months of intensive pilot training and will go to their next stations to learn their assigned aircraft. Owens wanted them to remember the keys to success.

“Pilot training is a tough time, but there’s no substitute for good hard work,” said Owens, “You’ve always got choices. The food you eat, the exercise you do, the sleep you get, the collaboration with your teammates, trying to study, you need to take care of yourself so you can be a good team member and then the team will graduate.”

Even with this accomplishment behind them, Owens delivered an important message to the graduating class.

“We as pilots, and Airmen, need to always be ready to engage,” said Owens. “You just don’t know when we are going to need you to go somewhere.”

The son of Owens, 2nd Lt. Thomas J. Owens III, SUPT 17-10, was sitting in the first rows with his classmates. Having his own son in the graduation crowd brought a different feeling to this graduation.

“It’s an honor and it’s very emotional,” Owens said after the speech, “It took me down memory lane in so many ways as I prepared, one of the things was looking for my slick wings to give to my son and in that we found pictures of my pilot training and it really brought back a lot of great memories.”

As 2nd Lt. Owens stood ready to earn his wings, Col. Gosney took a step back and handed off the pin to Owens II so he could pin on his son’s first set of wings.

<http://www.columbus.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1217402/owens-reminds-class-17-10-to-remain-engaged/>

[Return to top](#)

New York Army National Guard

Soldiers, Communities around the world celebrate the Army’s 242nd birthday

Aerotech News, June 16, 2017:

Army installations around the world are celebrating the Army’s 242nd birthday today, June 14. The types of celebrations are as varied and unique as each of the bases where they take place, but they all celebrate the enduring value of the Army and the service of its Soldiers in its 242 years of existence.

A common Army birthday observance at many installations is a cake cutting ceremony, allowing Soldiers to take a few moments from their duties to enjoy the company of their compatriots and reflect together on the Army's distinguished history.

In fact, many of these ceremonies feature a unique Army tradition. It is customary for the Soldier on base with the most amount of time in the service to share the cake cutting duty with the Soldier who has spent the least amount of time in the service.

For the 335th Signal Command stationed in East Point, Ga., U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. James Freitag and Pfc. Maurice Montgomery performed the cake cutting for their unit's Army birthday festivities this year. Freitag, at 59 years of age, has a distinguished 36-year service record, while Montgomery, a 22-year-old medic, just joined the service two months ago. Both men smiled proudly as they posed for photos, ready to serve up a special birthday cake frosted in Army colors.

The New York National Guard also participated in a cake cutting ceremony at the New York National Guard Headquarters in Latham, N.Y. For these Guard Soldiers, the Army's birthday was an opportunity to not only celebrate the Army's heritage, but embrace new beginnings as well. The Soldiers uncased the new colors of the Army National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters detachment during the birthday festivities.

Over at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, U.S. Army Pacific Soldiers counterbalanced their cake consumption with a Family-Soldier Fun Run/Walk. Soldiers, their families, and supportive civilians all participated in the two-mile run that took place on June 12.

Following the run, the fort hosted a wellness fair that promoted activities and programs to ensure that Army Soldiers remain physically, emotionally, and mentally fit as the world's best fighting force for the next 242 years as well. In addition to physical fitness and exercise, the fair emphasized the importance of sleep and balanced nutrition in contributing to overall wellness.

Prior to the run and the fair, U.S. Army Pacific also held ceremony where dozens of Soldiers commemorated the Army's 242-year existence by re-enlisting. Approximately 33 Soldiers from across Oahu, who already had a combined 253 years of service, re-enlisted during the ceremony to commit to another 144 years of service collectively.

Thousands of miles away in Englishtown, N.J., the U.S. Army Reserve's 99th Regional Support Command joined with the local community to celebrate the Army birthday during the National Hot Rod Association Summer Nationals at the Old Bridge Township Raceway. The event, called "Army Day at the Races," invited civilians to partake in a variety of physical fitness challenges alongside Soldiers, including pull-ups and push-ups. For their hard exercise, the Soldiers also participated in a birthday cake-cutting ceremony at the track.

The civilian participation in birthday festivities continued in Hinesville, Ga., as the local community gathered with the 3rd Infantry Division to celebrate the Army birthday at the local farmer's market.

A few Soldiers with the 3rd Infantry Division formed a band and played songs to serenade the market goers, while local community members signed a large Army birthday card with personalized notes of thanks and good wishes.

Col. Townley Hedrick, the garrison commander of Fort Stewart, Ga., cut the Army birthday cake with a local veteran service member as a gesture of the good relationship that Fort Stewart shares with the citizens of Hinesville. Even Rocky, the official mascot of the 3rd Infantry Division, made an appearance to pose for photos and help celebrate.

As each of these commemorations show, Army Soldiers, their families, and their communities are proud to celebrate the Army's birthday and its history as the nation's premier fighting force for 242 years and counting.

<http://www.aerotechnews.com/blog/2017/06/16/soldiers-communities-around-the-world-celebrate-the-armys-242nd-birthday/>

[Return to top](#)

PFOA Issue

Stewart ANG Base may add filtration system

Times Herald-Record, Jun 19, 2017:

TOWN OF NEW WINDSOR – The military is seeking to install a filtration system so Stewart Air National Guard Base can resume sending wastewater to New Windsor's treatment plant and end a ban the town imposed on the base and Stewart International Airport due to levels of contamination.

New Windsor banned wastewater from the airport and base this winter after perfluorinated compounds – including perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS – were found at holding “lagoons” the facilities use mainly to capture wastewater from airplane de-icing in the winter.

The town's concerns are twofold, according to New Windsor Supervisor George Green and treatment plant operator John Egitto: that levels of PFOS could impair the plant's operations or affect the state permit that allows New Windsor to discharge treated water into Moodna Creek and the Hudson River.

“We're not taking it with that level of contamination,” Green said.

The level of contamination in the airport's wastewater is unknown.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates Stewart Airport, had not responded by press deadline to a question about its response to the town's decision.

At the air base's two, 500,000-gallon lagoons, which also capture wastewater from hangar maintenance and airplane washing, testing showed 700 parts per trillion of PFOS, according to a bid notice issued by the Department of the Army on June 7.

That level is 10 times the federal advisory guideline for drinking water, and Stewart Air Base has been transporting the wastewater offsite for incineration since the ban started.

The military is seeking a system that would filter out PFOS and the related chemical PFOA. Initially, the base would rent a system for 60 days.

“Through a short-term filtration system rental, Stewart would measure the effectiveness of the system and, based on satisfactory results, have the option to purchase and install the unit,” said Angelina Casarez, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Air Force's Civil Engineer Center in Lackland, Texas.

Drinking water, not wastewater, has been the main focus ever since Newburgh announced in May 2016 that it would stop using Washington Lake to supply the city's households and businesses due to high levels of PFOS.

State investigators blamed Washington Lake's contamination on discharges of PFOS-containing firefighting foams at Stewart Air Base and declared the base a Superfund site in August.

Investigators also found contamination at the airport and in private wells at nearby residences.

While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency advises local health officials to act if the levels of PFOS and related chemicals exceed 70 parts per trillion in drinking water, no federal or New York standards exist for wastewater.

“While we don't have any permit limits for it, we likewise don't have the capability to treat for it either,” Egitto said.

“What goes out goes into ... receiving waters like the Moodna and the Hudson River.”

<http://www.recordonline.com/news/20170619/stewart-ang-base-may-add-filtration-system>

[Return to top](#)
