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More Out the Door in 2004

By Lt. Col. Paul Fanning
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS,
LATHAM

Hundreds of troops from New York's Army and Air National Guard from across the state are undergoing alert, mobilization and deployment for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom as the new-year begins.

Infantrymen from the 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry in Buffalo, engineers and maintenance troops of the 204th Engineer Battalion and 133rd Maintenance Company from the Hudson Valley and Southern tier, aviators from the 1st Battalion 142nd Aviation Intermediate Maintenance from Rochester, Airmen and women from aerial port teams of the 109th Airlift Wing and others mobilized for active duty in the US and overseas.

Following months of training, the 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry with engineer, artillery forward observers and medical support personnel – nearly 800 soldiers in all, deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom late in February in the first federal deployment of NY Army National Guard infantry since World War II. This “all-New York” battalion includes soldiers from New York City, the Hudson Valley, the Capital District, the Adirondack North Country, Central New York, Rochester and Buffalo.

And the history-making developments keep coming. Late in February, at a gathering of NY Army National Guard officers at the Empire State Plaza in Albany, Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz,

the Director of the Army National Guard from National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon announced the likely spring activation of the Headquarters 42nd Infantry Division plus hundreds of other NY-based Rainbow Division troops for Operation Iraqi Freedom – not the NATO Peacekeeping Mission that the 42nd had long been preparing for. The activation will likely affect as many as 1200 Rainbow Division troops statewide. The division headquarters will command up to three National Guard maneuver brigades from other states with augmentation and support by NY-based Rainbow Division brigades headquarters like the Long Island-based aviation brigade and the Buffalo-based engineer brigade.

Troops assigned to Task Force Empire Shield operating from Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn continue to perform State Active Duty security missions at the rail stations in New York City and at the state's four nuclear power sites in support of the civil authorities.

Air Wings of New York's Air National Guard continue to press forward with Air Expeditionary Deployments and missions such as the 109th Airlift Wing's continued support to the National Science Foundation in Antarctica, ongoing homeland defense operations by the Northeast Air Defense Sector out of Rome, refueling missions by the 107th Air Refueling Wing from Niagara and the 105th Airlift Wing from Newburgh continues its strategic airlift support to military operations around the world.



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment's Company B board their aircraft for movement to their Fort Hood mobilization station. The troops join nearly seven hundred other Orion Soldiers who deployed this winter to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Story on page 3.

Air Guard Recognizes Unit Heroes, Page 10

Guard Notes

New Temporary Health Benefits for Guard

WASHINGTON, DC (DoD News Release)—The Department of Defense announced Feb 12th, 2004 that it will implement the "2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program" for certain eligible Reserve Component sponsors and their family members.

The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal 2004 authorized new health benefits, some permanent and some temporary. The 2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program includes three temporary Tricare benefit provisions and all expire Dec. 31, 2004. Tricare Management Activity will implement the new provisions in phases starting in the spring.

"These new temporary provisions were designed by Congress to improve readiness and enhance access to care for Reserve servicemembers and their families," said Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. "We are implementing these new provisions as soon as possible," he said.

One provision temporarily authorizes Tricare medical and dental coverage for Reserve component sponsors and their families when activated for more than 30 days. Eligibility begins either on the day the sponsor receives delayed-effective active duty orders or 90 days prior to the date the active duty period begins, whichever is later.

A second provision temporarily extends eligibility for Tricare benefits to 180 days under the Transitional Assistance Management Program for Reserve component sponsors who separate from active duty status during the period Nov. 6, 2003 through Dec. 31, 2004, and their eligible family members.

The third provision temporarily extends Tricare medical benefits to Reserve component sponsors and family members who are either unemployed or employed but not eligible for employer-provided health coverage.

"We encourage Reserve component sponsors and family members to save health care receipts, claims and explanation of benefits for dates of service from Nov. 6, 2003, through Dec. 31, 2004. This is necessary in the event the sponsor is determined to be eligible and the care qualifies for retroactive Tricare reimbursement once the 2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program begins," said Winkenwerder.

The three permanent health benefit provisions include: benefit counselors for the Reserve component in each Tricare region; authorization for medical and dental screening and care for members alerted for mobilization; and Tricare eligibility for reserve officers pending orders to active duty following commissioning.

Additional information for Reserve component families, who have questions regarding the Tricare benefit or need assistance processing Tricare claims, are available on the Tricare Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil and the Reserve Affairs Web site at www.defenselink.mil/ra.

AAFES monitoring BDU supply

DALLAS, TX (AAFES News Release) -- Backorders from the military supply system (Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, DSCP) are affecting Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) Military Clothing Sales Stores (MCSS). Both Army & Air Force MCSSs are out of stock on selected sizes of Enhanced Hot Weather and Temperate Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) coats and trousers.

The military supply system advised AAFES that the get-well date for the temperate BDUs will be August. "AAFES continues to be in constant communication with DSCP," said Military Clothing Divisional Merchandise Manager Dave Lumbley. "The information we received from DSCP indicates AAFES will be experiencing shortages on temperate BDUs through the end of summer 2004."

Representatives from DSCP said the current supply position is due to the allocation of BDU production from woodland to desert to support the tremendous increase in desert requirements as a result of the war in Iraq.

"The temperate trousers are the item in the most critical position, and while DSCP does not expect to get well until August, we will experience a significant increase in deliveries starting in April," said Jim Kane, product manager for battledress uniforms. "We have recently released all backorders for enhanced hot weather coats and trousers. These assets should be reaching the stores soon."

The military supply system provides routine support for AAFES requirements. Recruits/units and other higher priority requirements such as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Recruit Induction Centers (CIFs) receive first priority.

Since DSCP is the only authorized BDU source with the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force, AAFES has no other choice but to continue to monitor the situation. "We remain committed to providing customers with the latest information and fix shortages regarding the situation," Lumbley said. "Until such notice is received, AAFES is asking for customers' patience as it continues to work with the military supply system to find a solution to the BDU situation."



By Tim Hipps
Army News Service

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FLA.

More military members and their families can exclaim "I'm going to Disney World," thanks to the recent expansion of Shades of Green Armed Forces Recreation Center on Walt Disney World Resort.

Brig. Gen. Robert Decker, commander of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, served as master of ceremonies for Shades of Green's grand reopening March 31 at the hotel's Porte Cochere.

"This is not just a grand opening, it's a celebration of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines because that's what these properties take care of," said John McLaurin, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Human Resources. "The Shades of Green here represents the Army's latest commitment to providing high-quality morale, welfare and recreation opportunities to members of the U.S. Armed Forces."

Shades of Green is adjacent to Disney's Palm Golf Course, home of the PGA Tour's FUNAI Classic, and just outside the gates of Mickey Mouse's famous house. Another one of Disney's five championship 18-hole golf courses and a nine-hole executive layout are within walking distance.

Charles Abell, deputy undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness said the resort provides much-needed respite from the rigors of military duty.

"This is an occasion that reaffirms the Department of Defense's commitment to provide quality, wholesome and affordable recreation opportunities to members of U.S. forces who have and who continue to underwrite the peace and stability of our nation," Abell said.

Abell also mentioned how Shades of Green makes the Central Florida vacation experience affordable.

"The majority of military families tell us that if it weren't for the Shades of Green, they would not have been able to vacation here in America's premiere vacation desti-

nation," Abell said. "It is gratifying to see this dramatically improved and expanded hotel on these beautiful grounds. This wonderful facility is one of the jewels in the Armed Forces Recreation Center crown."

Even Mickey and Minnie Mouse joined the festivities, along with friends Donald, Daisy, Pluto and Goofy.

But the true star of the ceremony was the resort itself. With the reopening, it has more than doubled in size with the addition of 299 rooms to the previous 287, plus a 500-seat ballroom, two new restaurants, and a second heated swimming pool. The upgraded complex also better accommodates buses that shuttle guests around Disney's property, separate from the flow of traffic near the hotel's check-in area.

Shades of Green is adjacent to Disney's Palm Golf Course and just outside the gates of Mickey Mouse's famous house.

The hotel features two tennis courts, hot tub, children's pool and play area, lounge and sports bar, banquet accommodations, gift shops, video arcade, laundry, fitness center and automated teller machines.

Guests are provided transportation to all Walt Disney World attractions and early entry into select venues inside the Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney-MGM Studios and Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park are just minutes away.

Self-supporting and operated with non-appropriated funds, Shades of Green is reserved for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, Reserves and National Guard, as well as active and retired Department of Defense civilians and their families.

Affordability, to Disney World, is the main attraction to Shades of Green. Room rates are based on rank and range from \$70 to \$225 per night for a standard room.

For room reservations at Shades of Green, call 888-593-2242 or fax to 407-824-3665. The hotel's direct number is 407-824-3400 and fax is 407-824-3460. An online reservation system is coming soon.

Artillery Units Train for Deployment as MPs

Story and photos by Spc. Richard D. Vogt
138th MPAD

NEWBURGH & JAMAICA

Soldiers from the Rainbow Division's 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment began preparations January 6th for a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Though an artillery unit, the 1-258 will perform in-lieu-of-MP (military police) duties because of the Army-wide shortage of military police.

Members of A Battery in Newburgh packed their bags and kissed their spouses and children goodbye in their Newburgh and Jamaica armories as they prepared to go to Fort Dix, New Jersey for training. The unit will leave for Iraq by spring.

"This is a really outstanding group of Soldiers," said Capt. David Powell, incoming commander of Alpha Battery. "The 42nd Infantry Division, the 258... the community and the country should be very proud. They're asked to give up a lot to go and they do so willingly."

As Soldiers readied their gear, much of the mission details were still in flux, and what was known involved a lot of change. In addition to learning new skills and getting used to a foreign country, the Soldiers will have to learn to work with new team members. Troops will fill in and become part of Bravo and Charlie Companies so the artillery battalion can fill two MP companies.

"It's a little different to be an artilleryman one day and then be an MP the next," Powell said. "I don't think it will be that

different. A lot of tasks are basic soldier skills." Artillery units already possess many of the skills they will use as MPs. They provide their own security, both in firebases and while in convoy.

Powell, the incoming battery commander, will not go to Iraq. He is the 3rd Brigade Deployment Officer.

"From this point on, it's a new ball game," said 1st Sgt. Joseph Patti. "There are no more part-timers. We're going to ask some of these Soldiers to take charge and do things they'd never realize they'd do. It's going to be a whole different type of training and skill set. The tone that we set today is going to determine whether they get hurt or come back with no injuries."

As they readied their gear and carried overloaded bags to a waiting truck, the Soldiers in the unit displayed mixed feelings, at times joking, at other times tense.

"I'm proud to serve, I'm anxious and excited at the same time," said Spc. Scott VanWinter. He thought about the danger of the mission. "It's in the back of my head, we're



Artillery Soldiers conducted weapons training this past winter as they prepare for military police duties in Iraq. Photo courtesy Fort Dix Public Affairs Office.

doing this for the first time. It puts everything in perspective." Others in the unit are battle-proven veterans.

"Second tour, son, put that down," said Sgt. Kevin Dooley, a veteran of Desert Storm.

Buffalo and Syracuse Soldiers to Deploy to Iraq

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
138th MPAD

BUFFALO

It was a familiar scene in time of war: Soldiers saying goodbye to their loved ones. This time it was Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 127th Armor who were leaving, bound for training stateside, and ultimately, Iraq.

The tears and long hugs, however, masked a resolve to complete mission -- Operation Iraqi Freedom.

More than 100 Soldiers from the two battalions said goodbye to home, family and friends following separate farewell ceremonies held here at the Masten Avenue Armory in January and February.

"I'm ready," said Pfc. Ken Truesdell, B Company, 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry. Truesdell heard he was going to Iraq just two weeks after graduating from Infantry School. He felt shock and anxiety, he said, which he soon got over.

"This is going to be a great experience," he said.

Truesdell said though he didn't think he was going to deploy, his mother predicted he would -- and that his family is taking it in stride. "It's part of life," he said. "I think it's a good thing we're helping the Iraqi people."

Though joining the Army has always been his dream, Truesdell said 9-11 made him join sooner.

"I decided to join the National Guard when I was 17 instead of 18, before high school ended."

"I signed the dotted line," said Spc. Dion Gilman, from B Company. "Whatever the president says to do, I do."

Gilman said his one and half-year old son Brad had just begun to talk. "My son will wonder where I am."

Gilman took part in the ongoing airport security missions which followed 9-11, once reporting for duty with only four hours notice; an experience, he said, which made him feel like a minuteman.



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry conduct weapons training in the halls of the Masten Avenue Armory, Buffalo, before deploying for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"This will be a lot longer," he said. "I just want to get to Iraq and do my job. That's when the clock starts to tick."

The armor Soldiers will train to operate as military police in Iraq -- a line of work Sgt. Richard Cruz, 1-127th Armor knows well. Cruz has been a Buffalo Police officer for 19 years, an experience his daughter Amanda called a plus.

"I want my Dad to come home safely, in one piece," she said. "I think my father has better instincts, since he's a police officer. It's a bonus."

Speaking at the farewell ceremony for the infantry Soldiers, Capt. Michael Batt, commander of 1-108th Infantry's B Company, also emphasized teamwork.

"Trust in each other," Batt said. "My second rule as your commander has always been to take care of the Soldier on your left and the Soldier on your right before yourself."

Gulf War veteran and ROTC Cadet Clifton Vincent, B Company, 1st Battalion 108th Infantry said he was glad his fellow Soldiers would receive additional training before deploying.

"There is no 'green key' over there," Vincent said, referring to the MILES equipment soldiers wear in training to simulate casualties. "The squad leaders and team leaders need to know their men are proficient."

Though he volunteered to go with his fellow soldiers, Vincent is temporarily non-deployable because of his ROTC commitment.

"I joined knowing this could happen," said Pfc. Eric Smith B Company, 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry. "I'm leaving my wife and baby for 18 months." Recently married, Smith said the use of force is necessary in Iraq.

He was happy the Army took care of his family's benefits.

"The Army helped with everything I needed to do," he said.

"I've got to believe the Soldiers expected this, judging from the reactions we got," said Lt. Col. David Zysk, the 127th Armor Battalion Commander. "As long as the unit exists, it is ripe for deployment, regardless of what other plans may have been announced."

Zysk said he sensed Soldiers' commitment during the mobilization process, when the Soldiers were told they would be going to Iraq.

"I've been waiting to go," said Spc. Christopher Kneut, 1st Battalion, 127th Armor. "It's only been a matter of time."

A member of the battalion's scout platoon, Kneut was mobilized for the Ice Storm of 1998 and Operation Noble Eagle.

"I want to carry out the mission and do it right," Kneut said. "We have to look after each other and come home safely."

In the Line of Fire

105th MPs Confront Deadly Reality of 'Post' War Iraq

(Part II in a continuing series)

By Lt. Col Paul Fanning
Guard Times Staff

CAMP KALSU, IRAQ

Even as Iraqi citizens were celebrating the fall of Saddam Hussein and a new sense of freedom from his regime, coalition forces were shifting from offensive operations to occupation duty.

Consistent with this development and following its arrival into the theater, the 105th Military Police Company was ordered to perform area security in a specified sector, which included patrolling supply routes into Baghdad and escorting convoys. The unit was ordered to create a forward base camp inside its sector and at a distance from the other units of their military police battalion and brigade. Only later, following numerous guerilla attacks on coalition forces, would the region become infamous as the "Sunni Triangle" — the most dangerous area in Iraq.

By April, Operation Iraqi Freedom had progressed quickly into the next stage. The hunt for fugitives of the Hussein regime and for weapons of mass destruction and military hardware were the main focus. Along the way, coalition forces discovered dreadful living and infrastructure conditions that made life miserable for the Iraqi people. In 30 years of rule, the Saddam regime had run the country into the ground and terrorized, traumatized and in some cases "brainwashed" the populace. Ba'ath party officials, fedayeen guerillas, republican guard leaders had shed uniforms for civilian clothes in order to hide, plot and later, launch attacks. Their purpose was to keep conditions unstable and the people in constant fear of Saddam's promised return to power.



Now, the US military including the 105th along with other coalition partners, were on the scene and taking the first steps in the difficult process of helping the nation get back

on its feet. It would not be easy, nor without pain and sacrifice.

Serving and Living in Desolation

The 105th established its base and immediately began security operations. When the troops first moved into the designated site they were shocked. The conditions were far worse than any of them expected and the polite term "austere" could hardly apply. In form and in fact it was a dump. None of them realized at the time that it would become the unit's home for more than five months, through the entire torrid summer period.

"It is hot, sandy and boring," wrote Spc. Deanna Nagel of the garbage-laden former electronics station south of Baghdad. "It was an old communications center before the war and when we got there it was just three empty buildings and a bunch of blown up stuff."

The unit named their forward operating base "Camp Kalsu," in honor of Buffalo Bills football player and Army 1st Lt. Bob Kalsu killed during the Vietnam War. The Soldiers established a security perimeter, pitched tents and made it a functional — although primitive — base to live and work from.

"We set up a TOC (tactical operations center), a motor and a supply section. We even have a store that Sgt. Milton started with his own money," wrote Nagel. "It's called 'Milton's Mini Mart,'" she said and went on to describe the normal fare — mini mag flashlights, soda, chips and more.

From the beginning, the unit experienced shortages of all kinds — from spare parts for the aging humvees to water in sufficient quantities to face the searing desert heat. Insects



Photo at top right: Soldiers from the 105th Military Police Company display a unit memorial to fallen comrade Sgt. Heath McMillin at Camp Kalsu. The unit suffered the loss of McMillin and Spc. Michael Williams during the unit mission in Iraq. Above, a local Iraqi family gathers outside the unit perimeter. After nearly one year of duties in Iraq, the MP Company is expected back in the U.S. this spring. Photos courtesy the Soldiers of the 105th Military Police Company.



A 105th Military Police Soldier patrols outside the unit base camp. The 105th redeploys along with the 442nd Military Police Co. and 719th Transportation Co. back to New York after its one-year of service this spring. Courtesy photos.

'In the Line of Fire' Continues from preceding page...

were everywhere and there was never enough repellent. It took weeks for the Soldiers to get mail from home as the military support system was still trying to rapidly grow in order to fill the urgent need in theater. Still, the Soldiers did everything possible to improve their living conditions by scrounging and innovating.

They ate MREs almost exclusively, later supplemented by goodies from home. They went weeks before bathing at all and changed uniforms only once a week. At one point the Soldiers held a contest to see who smelled the worse.

But, throughout it all the 105th patrolled the assigned routes 24-hours a day. As one patrol came back, another went out. And there were other missions too.

"We escort humanitarian aid convoys, patrol local villages and meet with the sheiks and the people and search for the remnants of the past regime," wrote Capt. Michael Fowler in one of his many open letters to the family readiness group back in New York. "We are the local police while at the same time, Soldiers looking to maintain control of a foreign country," he added.

In July, 2003 the Department of Defense announced a policy of keeping units in theater for up to a year. The one-year "boots on the ground" policy was hardly good news for the troops and shattered the hopes of family members who were anxiously looking for just the opposite plan.

Escalating Attacks

"At first, we would occasionally get a pot shot fired at us," said Sgt. Fred Salber, who came home last August for the funeral of his comrade Sgt. Heath McMillin. "They would miss us by a mile, it seemed. They are lousy shots. We fired in return and by the time we got to the berm where they were hiding, they were gone," he said. "They'd sneak around, fire one off (a Rocket Propelled Grenade) and run. The attack that claimed Heath was the worst we had up until then," he said.

overall. Enemy forces had changed tactics, having studied the Americans.

Soon, Camp Kalsu came under mortar attack. During sporadic attacks a few members received minor injuries and some very close calls. By the time the troops could get to the suspected site of the firing, the enemy was gone and local civilians were less than helpful, either out of fear of reprisal or outright sympathy with the guerillas.

The enemy began mining the roads with explosives that could be remotely triggered. All coalition vehicles were targets. For units like the 105th equipped solely with Humvees, the attacks proved deadly and soon all units, active and reserve, were seeking ways to replace their assigned vehicles with the rare M1114 up-armored Humvee.

Getting Up-armored Humvees

When the 105th MPs deployed from home station it deployed its assigned M1025 Humvees as per its table of organization and equipment. Nearly all Army MP companies share the same authorization and very few are provided the armored variant, which provides improved but limited ballistic protection from small arms fire and shrapnel. Nationwide, the Army Guard is short nearly 10,000 Humvees of all variants and only a handful of M1114s are assigned to any Guard units – none of them in New York.

"We were absolutely concerned about the unit's equipment and did everything we could with the Army and National Guard Bureau (NGB) to track down up-armored Humvees and send them over to the 105th," said Lt. Col Lawrence Ashley, logistics directorate, joint force headquarters. "We found about thirty of them to ship over from Kentucky. NGB had them earmarked for the 105th and one other Guard MP company in Iraq. This was something we had always been told couldn't be done. Special permission was required. We found a way, but it took time and a lot of effort to work it through," he said.

By the time the up-armored Humvees had finally gotten into theater, however, the 105th had suffered its second casualty.

On July 29, 2003, an Improvised Explosive Device was triggered just as a 105th Humvee was passing by. McMillin was mortally wounded and Spec. Brett Goheen was peppered with shrapnel. The attack coincided with the steadily increased levels of guerilla activity towards coalition forces



Troops from the 105th Military Police Co. serving in Iraq pose for a group photo while in theater. The unit is now preparing to redeploy back to New York after nearly one year of service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Courtesy photo.

(Look for Part III in the next issue of Guard Times)

Not All Roads Lead to Iraq

Maintenance Company Gets Hands-On Training at NTC

Story and photos by Sgt. Peter Towse
138th MPAD

FORT IRWIN, CALIF.

Thinking that two weeks of annual training was just going to be another two weeks at home station, the 145th Maintenance Company from the Bronx was in for a challenge when they heard that they were going to the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, Calif., for a direct support mission.

"This mission was last minute," said Capt. Andre Washington, the commander of the 145th Maintenance Company. "We received our orders in November and are backfilling for the 102nd Maintenance Company out of Brooklyn because they are being deployed."

The 145th repairs all types of wheeled vehicles, generators and air conditioning units.

"At NTC, we are acting in a theater operation and fall under a Reserve component combat battalion," Washington said. "NTC is only one part in a series of training exercises that prepares a unit for deployment. We went to Germany and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) for pre-deployment training and we will be going to the Maintenance National Training Center (MNTC) at Ft. Dodge, Iowa, next year."



Staff Sgt. Louis Mancuso assists Sgt. Louis Torres in the replacement of a Humvee engine and transmission at Fort Irwin. The Soldiers deployed to the NTC with the 145th Maintenance Company to repair equipment for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Receiving their orders in November 2003 to deploy to NTC in January 2004 was not the only challenge the 145th had to overcome. The company normally has 168 Soldiers, but because of the short notice of this rotation, only 89 were able to attend.

"We were short some Soldiers because of college and other deployments, but we are still completing the mission because of the motivation the Soldiers are showing," said 1st Sgt. Santos Diaz, Jr., 1st Sgt for the 145th. "The morale is high and the Soldiers are motivated to get the job done. There were a lot of bumps when we first got here, but we worked through them and continued on with the mission."

The 145th also had to come to NTC with a limited amount of unit equipment.

"Since our sister unit, the 133rd Maintenance Company from Peekskill deployed, we cross-leveled most of our equipment to them and, even though we brought most of

our own tools, we still had to borrow a lot of equipment from Ft. Irwin," Diaz said. "Fortunately, the active component at NTC was able to provide most of the necessary tools that we were not able to bring with us."

"We are training for the worst and, even though we do not have all the required tools, we are able to adapt and get the job done," said Spc. Arnaldo Colon, a Humvee mechanic. "This is good training for us."

Because of this deployment, NTC is providing an environment for quality MOS training. "This is a great opportunity for us to work on MOS specific duties because we do not have all of this equipment at home station," Washington said. "We are working hand-in-hand with the civilians here and try to do a lot of cross-training while we are here. I am concentrating on MOS specific training on this rotation."

"This mission has been an absolute success so far," Diaz said. "Whenever Soldiers get to train in their MOS, it is always a success."

With the high winds, dust and the fast pace that the 145th has to work in, safety is always a priority.

"We may be in the desert, but it is still very cold at night and even during the day," said Spc. Charles Hernandez, a vehicle mechanic. "We manage because the morale is high and we work as a family. All the NCOs are really taking care of us and are concerned for us."

"There have been no injuries so far," Diaz said. "I started with 89 Soldiers and I intend on bringing 89 Soldiers home."

All the equipment the 145th repairs during the rotation will go directly to units in Iraq.

"The equipment that we are maintaining and repairing is being shipped directly from Iraq to us," Diaz said. "Once we repair it, it is shipped back to Iraq and there is plenty of work to keep us busy."

"We received 111 maintenance work orders since we arrived here and we knocked out 98% of those jobs with no rejections," said Staff Sgt. Andrew Lampkins, the Maintenance Control NCO. "My maintenance sections have all done an outstanding job considering the limited resources and changes in weather."

Working with the Active Army has also been a benefit for the 145th and Ft. Irwin.

"NTC is teaching us how important our jobs in maintenance are and how important it is to be ready at all times," Washington said. "We dramatically improved since we started this mission on January 31st."

"NTC is designed for units to go through their growing pains here instead of going to the theater first and finding out then what their problems are," said Capt. Lenny Sloat, the Direct Support and General Support Program Coordinator at NTC. "I have seen a real improvement in the 145th in the last 6 days. I have every confidence that the 145th can enter any theater and perform their mission."

"The Soldiers are outstanding in their performance," Washington said. "Each and every Soldier did the task that they were supposed to do and I have seen much improvement since our last annual training, especially in the leadership qualities of the enlisted."

"Our job here is real life," Diaz said. "We are fixing equipment to go back to Iraq for our brothers and sisters-in-arms and we are all proud of it. The equipment that is going to Iraq is fixed by the Soldiers from the Bronx!"

"We are here to provide direct maintenance support in a theater operation, and we are doing just that," Washington said. "If the need arises, we are ready to deploy."



Spc. Charles Hernandez repairs a 5-ton engine while deployed to the National Training Center with the 145th Maintenance Company. Much of the equipment repaired by Army National Guard unit returned to service in Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Ishmael Gonzales troubleshoots a SINGARS radio in an M-1 tank during annual training at Ft. Irwin.



Above, Spc. Kelly Buscaglia from C Company, 342nd Forward Support Battalion demonstrates how to apply a tourniquet for combat lifesaver students from B Company, 152nd Engineers.

Charlie Med Train Combat Lifesavers

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Chris Hughes
C Company, 342nd Forward Support Battalion

BUFFALO

One of the most intimidating and challenging components of the Combat Lifesaver Course (CLSC) is the Intravenous (IV) Module. For new Soldiers, properly "sticking" casualties with an IV can be one of the most demanding events for their medical response training. During the February drill, Soldiers from Army National Guard units all over western New York went under the needle while attending C Company 342nd Forward Support Battalion's combat lifesaver program.

Under the guidance of Sgt. 1st Class John Burek, a registered nurse, C Company medics served as primary instructors for all phases of the class. The payout for Charlie medics is two-fold: they sharpen current Soldier skills and gain instruction time in front of large audiences.

Medics from the company have provided this training for combat lifesavers for about six years in two locations, the Buffalo and Brooklyn armories. More than 100 students have completed the qualification or recertification training.

For a medic, the IV is a needed and valued tool, one that can make the difference between a stable casualty and a life-threatening situation. The medical community has a term called the 'Golden Hour,' whereby if the patient receives medical intervention during this timeframe, their chances of survival rapidly increase. The qualification of combat lifesavers puts that medical resource closer to Soldiers and improves the response of the medical community.

The goal of the CLSC is to provide not only a medical resource at the squad level, but to assist the combat medic during a mass casualty incident. For the group of highly motivated engineers attending the formal course, mastery of this task is paramount. With intense one-on-one instruction during the phase, the majority of the students completed it with flying colors. What the Combat Lifesaver brings is basic medical stabilization closer to line unit giving injured troops a better chance at recovery.



The Charlie Company medics provided instruction for combat lifesaver training at their home station armory. Below, Spc. Richard Senior from B Co., 152nd Engineers preps the intravenous (IV) site while the instructor, Capt. Edward Kenney observes. Spc. Billy Colon from the 152nd provides the patient for the training. The Soldiers conducted combat lifesaver training at the C Co., 342nd FSB armory in Buffalo in February.

Soldier's Sense Saves Home

Story and photo by Sgt. Peter Towse
138th MPAD

FT. IRWIN, CALIF.

Spc. Xiomara Thomas, a utilities repairer for the 145th Maintenance Company here for annual training, was working on a routine call when she noticed the smell of propane gas.

"We received this call about a heater motor making a clanking noise," Thomas said. "It seemed like a routine job until I smelled the gas."

Thomas was inside the post housing as part of a unit training and support program at the National Training Center (NTC).

"We work with maintenance Soldiers on every rotation," said Leroy Caulkins, a utilities expert and maintenance shop supervisor for Johnson Controls at Ft. Irwin.

"This is an excellent opportunity for the Soldiers to train and help our shop with all of our work orders," Caulkins said.

"It seemed like a routine job until I smelled the gas"

Thomas was replacing the motor when she smelled gas. "When I smelled the gas, I immediately told my supervisor, Tracy Osborne," Thomas said. "He went outside to the truck to get the leak detector and I noticed that the smell got stronger."

Once back inside, Tracy Osborne saw that Thomas had found the leak in the main line coming into the house.

"I stepped out for only a minute," said Osborne, a Heating and Air Conditioning

technician at Ft. Irwin. "When I came back in, she already found the leak."

The leak on the main line was a loose connection that was a foot away from the pilot light.

"It only took a minute or two to fix the leak, but if we had not found that leak, lives could have been lost," Osborne said. "The pilot light could have ignited the gas and exploded. It was a life-saving find."

"I found out later that the owners of the house were getting headaches," Thomas said.

"We are very proud of her," said 1st Sgt. Santos Diaz, Jr. "She will be receiving an Army Commendation Medal for this."



Spc. Xiomara Thomas works on a similar heater motor that she was changing when she noticed the smell of gas and found a leak.

Aerial Porters Return From Iraq and Qatar

By Staff Sgt. John Gassler
HQ, 105th Airlift Wing

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE

In one of his greatest speeches of World War II, Sir Winston Churchill said, "Do not let us speak of darker days; let us speak rather of sterner days. These are not dark days; these are great days, the greatest days our country has ever lived; and we must all thank God that we have been allowed, each of us according to our stations, to play a part in making these days memorable in the history of our race." For 34 members of the 105th Aerial Port Squadron, who returned home on January 10, 2004 from a four-month deployment to Iraq and Qatar, their service overseas most certainly earned them a place not only in Stewart history, but in world history as well.

"This was the first time members of the 105th Aerial Port Squadron deployed overseas to directly support a mission in a hostile environment. I know I'm proud of them, and I'm sure their families are even more proud. I also know it wasn't an easy deployment, but at least it's behind us now and we can thankfully say everyone made it home safely," said Chief Master Sgt. Peter Johnson, 105th Aerial Port Squadron Superintendent.

So, what's it like in Iraq these days? According to Tech Sgt. Armando Aguiar, a member of the 105th Aerial Port Squadron who worked the flightline while overseas, it was constantly busy, the workdays were long and at times it was hazardous to be outside in a military uniform.

"I'd be lying if I said working in Iraq wasn't dangerous.



Members of the 105th Aerial Port Squadron, who returned home from a four month tour to Iraq and Qatar on January 10, inventory their gear. The 34 Aerial Porters deployed overseas in support of "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Digital image provided by Staff Sgt. Sara Davis.

There were occasional mortar attacks, but honestly, work was so busy you didn't have a chance to dwell on your fears. Aircraft never stopped landing or taking off, it was just one plane after another," he said.

Life in an arid environment, far away from home, is unarguably tough for any military member to handle for 120 days. Throw a few holidays and exploding mortar rounds into the mix and it's not unlikely that emotions would elevate even further. However, despite the looming fog

of war and little time to take showers, Staff Sgt. Ray Lucca said moral remained relatively high amongst the group because everyone looked out for each other, both physically and emotionally.

"We left Stewart as a team, and we worked as a team in Iraq. Everyone watched out for each other, and if someone needed to talk or vent frustrations, someone always willingly listened. Outside on the flightline and around base, everyone made sure someone was watching over his or her safety. At times, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, it was emotionally hard to handle being away from home, but we survived. Like I said, we left as a team and fortunately we returned as a team," he said.

"It's tough to describe such a culturally different and far away place like Iraq," said Lucca. "It's even harder to describe what



Tech Sgt. Fred Westfall (left) and Staff Sgt. Tony Clary (right) from the 105th Aerial Port Squadron take a break from work while in Qatar. Courtesy photo.

it's like when a mortar round blows up near you. Honestly, if you don't live through or experience such things in person, you'll never completely understand what it feels like," he said.

According to recent statistics, posted on the Air Force Link website, Air Force aircraft have flown over 5,700 airlift sorties in support of "Operation Iraqi Freedom," moving more than 55,000 passengers and more than 40,000 tons of cargo. And as Staff Sgt. Pete Richardson, who worked in Qatar attested to, those numbers aren't exaggerations.

"Without going into great detail, my job in Qatar was to work with passengers—thousands upon thousands of



Tech Sgt. Armando Aguiar from the 105th Aerial Port Squadron poses for the camera while in Qatar. Courtesy photo.

them. There was never a shortage of work, and certainly never a shortage of passengers waiting to be processed for flight. I'll say this much about my time in Qatar: It wasn't the least bit boring," he said.

It's safe to say that war isn't one of mankind's better ways of resolving problems, or conflicts of interest. However, since ancient times and ancient civilizations, like the Greeks or the Mesopotamians, organized war has time and time



Members of the 105th Aerial Port Squadron work the flightline in Iraq. They deployed for 120 days in direct support of "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Of the 34 that deployed, 16 were stationed in Iraq and the remaining 18 were in Qatar. Everyone returned home safely. Courtesy photo.

again been used as a tool to achieve lasting peace. And according to Lucca, "Sometimes you need to fight for what you believe is right, in hopes that you'll forever prevent future fighting. In other words, it's a suffer now so you don't have to suffer later sort of philosophy."

The right to have opinions and to speak out, for or against an issue, is one of the reasons America is the shining beacon of democracy much of the world looks up to. And 34 Aerial Porters from the 105th Airlift Wing can proudly say they helped defend that democracy, and even played a part in forging world history.

"The work our Aerial Porters did overseas in Iraq and Qatar is nothing less than heroic. We're tremendously proud of them. Without question, they did an outstanding job not only representing the 105th Airlift Wing, but in representing New York, the Air National Guard and America.

Air Guard Sustains the Global Fight on Terror

By Senior Airman Mike R. Smith
HQ, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR GUARD BASE, GLENVILLE

More than 20 members of the 109th Airlift Wing deployed to a forward operating location in Southwest Asia supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Most of the deployed members belong to the 109th Aerial Port Squadron, providing air transportation support for the

C-130 and the 109th Airlift Wing. The deployment marks the largest contingency of 109th Aerial Port Guardsmen since their return from Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

The deployed members will join more than ten other 109th members from a cross section of jobs currently deployed in support of the Global War On Terror; to date, more than 200 members of the 109th Airlift Wing have deployed for the Global War On Terror.



105th Airman Selected for State's Top Enlisted Air Guard Position

Brig. Gen. Dana B. Demand, Commander 105th Airlift Wing congratulates Chief Master Sergeant Hardy Pierce Jr., the New York National Guard Command Chief Master Sergeant, after awarding him an Air Force Meritorious Service medal for his many years of service to the men and women of Stewart Air National Guard Base. At right, Demand transfers the base flag to Senior Master Sergeant Joseph D. Keenan, 105th Command Chief Master Sergeant selectee to signify the Change of Authority from Former 105th Command Chief Master Sergeant Hardy Pierce. The ceremony was held in the Base dining facility on Sunday, February 8th. Pierce takes on the duties as The Adjutant General's most senior enlisted Air National Guard advisor this winter. Photos by Senior Airman Lee Guagenti.



By Staff Sgt. John Gassler
HQ, 105th AW

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE

Newburgh native and 105th Airlift Wing Command Chief Hardy Pierce was recently selected for the New York Air National Guard's top enlisted position. As the New York State Command Chief, Pierce will be responsible for the morale and welfare of the state's more than 6,500 enlisted Air National Guard personnel and will report directly to the State Adjutant General, Major General Thomas Maguire Jr.

Pierce comes to the position with more than thirty years of military service in the Air Force and Air National Guard.

Chief Pierce said his top priorities on assuming the post include recruiting and retention and family readiness. "Our recruiting and retention numbers in the New York Air Guard are doing okay, but they need to get better," he said.

"I think it's a little more difficult today to recruit non-prior service individuals. Not only are we competing with a strong economy, but this is also the first generation of

young people whose parents are not as familiar with the military as past generations. With our experienced, prior-service recruits, we have to show them the value of being a member of a community-based organization where the emphasis is on working with family and employer commitments.

"Family support and family readiness are always big issues," said Pierce, "because as we know, if the family of a member has issues then it can become very difficult for the troop—who may be in harms way—to fully focus on his or her job." Chief Pierce said he will also be emphasizing training and professional military education, which, in addition to family are important retention issues for members currently in the Guard.

Chief Pierce was born in Elizabethtown, N.C., and raised in the city of Newburgh. He graduated from Newburgh Free Academy in 1969 and began working for IBM in Fishkill. Though he had a relatively low chance of being drafted into

the Vietnam War, Pierce decided to join the active duty Air Force the following year.

"I was 19 years old and working fulltime for IBM in mechanical maintenance," he said. "Part of the IBM policy, at the time, was that if you were drafted or if you volunteered for active duty, you were guaranteed your job back. I had a high lottery number—it was 227—and really had a slim chance of being drafted, but the Air Force was always appealing to me so I decided to join," he said. Chief Pierce was assigned to the Civil Engineering Squadron as an electrician at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey.

After finishing his active duty tour, Pierce returned to IBM in 1974, working in Environmental Gas Controls and later in the Environmental Chemical Lab. He joined the 105th Airlift Wing in 1975, then based out of White Plains Airport in Westchester County.

"I liked the military setting and had thought about joining the Reserves, I had never heard of the National Guard. But the only Reserve base was up in Niagara Falls, and that was a little too far for me to travel. The recruiter then told me about an Air Guard unit based in White Plains, which was great, close to home." Chief Pierce joined the 105th Airlift Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron as a traditional guardsman in the power production shop.

He left the 105th briefly when he accepted a transfer to an IBM facility in Virginia in the late 70s. Pierce returned in 1982, after accepting a job at an IBM office in Poughkeepsie. At the same time the 105th was converting to its C-5A transport mission and relocating from its small base in Westchester to its new home in Newburgh the Chief's former hometown. He rejoined the unit in 1983, again settling into the Civil Engineering Squadron.

While he aspired to higher rank, Pierce said he never dreamed that someday he'd be the top enlisted person in New York. "My mindset that was if I retired after 20 years as a technical sergeant or master sergeant then that would be great. But various individuals kept encouraging me to go further," Pierce said. He continued to seek advanced job training and education—the very things he champions as important to troops now—until being selected as superintendent of his shop and then the unit's Command Chief.

Chief Pierce said his move to the State Command Chief position will be bittersweet. "Of course it's a great honor for me to have this responsibility of looking after our state's airmen, but the 105th has been my extended family for a long, long time and I'll miss it."

Air Guard to Continue Scholarship Awards

Guard Times Staff

LATHAM

Two 1000 dollar scholarships will be awarded this fall to two enlisted members of the New York Air National Guard who are pursuing a bachelor's degree. One of the scholarships is reserved for a minority service member.

The family of Brig. Gen. Ravindra F. Shah and his wife, Dr. Manjula Ravindra Shah has graciously continued the Shah scholarship program for 2004. The Shahs, from Oswego NY., died in September 2003 in a tragic small plane crash in Mass.

Known as the Manjula Scholarship Program, applicants must submit two essays that discuss the following: The applicant's educational objective, contributions to their unit and community and any other reason for receipt of the award; and what are the most important responsibilities of a good American citizen. Essays must be a minimum of 500 words.

Shah who was responsible for medical recruiting and promoting flying safety with the New York Air National Guard. He had provided medical advice and support to the emergency responders on duty at ground zero after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks.

He had been a member of the Oswego Hospital medical staff for about 33 years. He also had a private practice in Fulton, N.Y. and taught at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse. His wife was a retired anesthesiologist who had worked on staff at the A.L. Lee Memorial Hospital in Fulton.

The scholarship program is an individual application. The unit chain of command may support or endorse an applicant, but each individual Airman may submit a scholarship application.

Applications will be accepted through May 30, 2004. Individuals may submit applications or questions directly to Col. Esther Rada at (518) 786-6033, (203) 267-7190 or via email at Esther.Rada@ny.ngb.army.mil.

Of the many stars in the desert... Two 107th Airmen Really Shine

By Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean
HQ, 107th ARW

NIAGARA FALLS

Military planners figured about 1,000 airmen would be needed at the austere location in northern Africa where the refueling mission would be based. The chosen spot was nothing but sand and a landing strip when the men and women of the air expeditionary wing got there: no tents, no latrines, no running water... nothing. But just three weeks later, 8.98 million pounds of fuel had been offloaded to United States and allied aircraft in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM — and it had been done with less than 350 airmen.

Many of these airmen were from the 107th Air Refueling Wing. Two of them were recognized for their exemplary leadership and performance Jan. 10 as The Adjutant General of New York and the commander of the 487th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW) visited the base to award Bronze Star medals to Lt. Cols. James F. Atkinson III and John S. Cramer.

Atkinson was commander of the 487th AEW Maintenance Squadron from March 10 through May 2, 2003. Cramer was commander of the 487th Medical Group March 16 through May 2, 2003.

"His superb 'can do' attitude enabled operations at a politically sensitive location, orchestrating a tactical deception plan through sustained foreign military sales, turning aircraft for 21 training sorties, fueling 341 host nation receivers with 801,000 pounds of fuel," reads part of Atkinson's citation.

"... in the presence of bare bones basing with no equipment available, he began clinic operations within two hours of arrival with a respiratory emergency. [Cramer] acted quickly to adapt available resources and provide a prioritized crisis management plan while performing the essential functions of the senior medical expert and acting as the sole physician to the base," reads part of Cramer's citation.

Lt. Col. James P. Atkinson enjoys the moment with his children Tanner (left) and Griffin (right). Atkinson received the Bronze Star for his actions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on January 10th. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean.



Although the citations seem to single these men out as "extraordinary," both view their individual recognition as conduits for acclaim earned by all of those who deployed alongside them.

"This award is dedicated to those over there with me — they're the ones that actually did the job," said Atkinson.

"[This ceremony] speaks for itself. It shows how unique, very tough and extraordinary the performance of these award winners was. Obviously, these men are only as good as the other members of the 107th [Air Refueling Wing]," said The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr.

"These two men epitomize the 'service before self' concept, because it really means serving others before yourself," said Col. (Brig. Gen. select) Randal D. Fullhart, commander of the 487th during the time Atkinson and Cramer were deployed. "They both stepped up and said not 'what's my job, but, how can I help?'" he added.

Even though Atkinson and Cramer shrug off the efforts as "just doing their jobs," the medals only solidify the pride that their families have in the two men. Their near refusal to recognize in themselves what others witnessed continues beyond the actions of 2003 and even the ceremony honoring them in 2004.

"He's the biggest source of inspiration in my life. I look at him and see integrity. He always teaches us honor and to live up to your promises," said Jacquie, Cramer's daughter.

"And also to play the hand we're dealt with, be kind to others and to be a good person," added Norman, Cramer's son.

His wife, Pat, rolls all of these traits into a simple explanation of how Cramer came to earn the Bronze Star: "He's a really thorough and caring person, which makes him not only a good doctor but a good [guardsman]," she said.



The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire Jr., presents the Bronze Star to Lt. Col. John S. Cramer at a Jan. 10 ceremony at the Niagara Falls Air Base. Photo by Master Sgt. Veronica Jadoch.

Atkinson also stands out as a man above others, especially in the eyes of his wife and children. But of course, he was "just doing his job!"

His boys, Tanner and Griffin, are both proud of their dad and all of his ribbons. There's a citation missing on his dress blues though. Tanner thinks it should be purple, Griffin said red, white and blue: his ribbon for "Best Dad."

"Because he's fighting out for us," said Griffin. "Because he's a great guy and a really hard worker," said Tanner.

"This is the only time I've seen him so modest," said Caryn, Atkinson's wife. "I don't see him at work, in action. But I know he's very focused. It makes us really proud that he does such a great job," she added.

Atkinson is well aware of the history behind the Bronze Star and how unique the recipients are — this is what honors him. He is adamant that those who he led earned the medal for him — this is what humbles him.

"We really made a difference. We started with nothing, made something and didn't fail in anything we did. This is all about wanting to succeed at the mission and caring for the people there with me," Atkinson said.

"We train to do our jobs all of the time. But this is the real thing. Our people refuse to fail, there's a pride factor. And when it all comes down to it... this is combat... You must make the mission, or somebody could die," he added.

When it all comes down to it, the men and women entrusted to the leadership of Atkinson and Cramer came home safe and sound. When it all comes down to it, the mission was accomplished — every time. When it all comes down to it, Atkinson and Cramer have earned praise for the inspiration, leadership and competence that they displayed in a land far from home.

The men and women under them may have provided the polish, but the two colonels made it shine. There's no passing that along.

Free Time Spent Reflecting on Meaning of freedom

By Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean
HQ, 107th ARW

NIAGARA FALLS

The school year was starting slow: hours and hours reviewing last year's lessons. But Jessica Hefferon didn't need any review, and she was getting bored — she needed something for her mind to chew on while she waited for the *real* school year to start.

Maj. Steven Hefferon, 107th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) Logistics Readiness Squadron commander, and his wife, Tobi, were well aware that their 9-year-old daughter likes to stay busy — in mind and body — Jessica plays on a championship softball team, spends time on 4-H projects, hangs out with her 6-year-old brother, Brian, and volunteers at the 107th ARW Family Support Office.

Around the time that Jessica's boredom set in, *Weekly Reader* magazine announced rules for an essay contest: the topic was freedom.

Jessica had some great ideas about freedom. Her dad wears a uniform to work and her mom is a very active volunteer for the 107th ARW. Spending time at the wing family support center and helping during deployments and homecomings had given Jessica first hand knowledge of people who dedicate their lives to freedom.

"I really like to help with the receptions," said Jessica. "It's really nice when the people come home again and see their families. I like how happy they are," she added.

But she's not so naive to ignore the "responsibility" part of the story. She realizes that there's a real possibility that not all of those people she serves cookies and smiles to before they deploy are guaranteed a safe journey home.

The essay contest was more than something to stay busy; it gave Jessica a chance to learn new things, one of her favorite pastimes. And although the subject matter didn't center on her passions of math and science, her structured approach to the task adopted the same logical patterns of a great science experiment. Once she learned of the opportunity to excel, it was a challenge that she pursued, not one that burdened her.

"Jessica worked really hard on the essay, there were several revisions before she was happy with it," said Maj. Hefferon. She considered the suggestions and advice from parents and teachers along the way, but kept at it until she was happy that she'd done her best. From start to finish, it took almost four weeks until she was satisfied.

"Jessica is wise beyond her years," said Tobi. "She learned a lot of lessons from all of this, especially that hard work and dedication pay off," she added.

The Hefferon family met New York Governor George Pataki and attended his 2004 State of the State address at the capitol building in Albany Jan. 7. Jessica had won the national essay contest at the third grade level and the governor invited her to the event — the words of his speech echoing the same theme as Jessica's essay: what freedom is and how to keep it alive.

With so much hard work to earn the \$50 prize, Jessica isn't about to spend the fruits of her labor foolishly: "I'm saving it for a car or college, probably college," she said.

"I'm really proud of her," said Maj. Hefferon. "She's always done well at everything that she tries and this is just another thing to show her that she has the ability to do anything," he added.

It's been a busy time for Jessica since she won the competition: dinners and celebrations from friends and family; newspaper reporters and photographers; a trip to Albany; and her response: "I just want to thank all of the people at the base for doing what you do," she said.



Invited to attend the Governor's State of the State Address in Albany thanks to 9-year-old Jessica Hefferon's 3rd grade level winning essay about Freedom (clockwise from left); Jessica, 107th ARW's Maj. Steven Hefferon, Tobi Hefferon, New York Governor George E. Pataki, and Jessica's 6-year-old brother Brian. Courtesy photo.

'Our Freedom'

by Jessica Hefferon

Today I would like to share with you what I think of when I hear the word freedom. When I hear the word freedom I think of good things and bad things.

For instance braveness, being free and heroes fall into the category of good. To me being brave means that you demonstrate courage. It is when you show people that you are not afraid to take chances and try something that other people might not try. That might make you a hero in other people's lives. Being free means to me that you can make your own choices in life.

These are things you won't want to hear when you think about freedom: war, fighting and especially when you hear that soldiers died. War and fighting makes a difference in everyone's life.

It is sad when soldiers die in war but when they die it means that they were doing their job, which is fighting for freedom.

Finally, to be able to do whatever I want is a privilege I have because of our democracy and freedom. I know that freedom is great to have, so I think we should try to share it with people who don't have the freedom that we have in our country.

Freedom is one of the biggest things in people's lives. That is why FREEDOM is so important!



Jessica Hefferon (left) and her brother Brian.

Training Taken to the Next Level

Story and photos by Spc. Dennis Gravelle and Staff Sgt. Steve Petibone
Guard Times Staff

FT. POLK, LA

Historically, Fort Polk in West Central Louisiana has been training and deploying combat and combat support units since World War II.

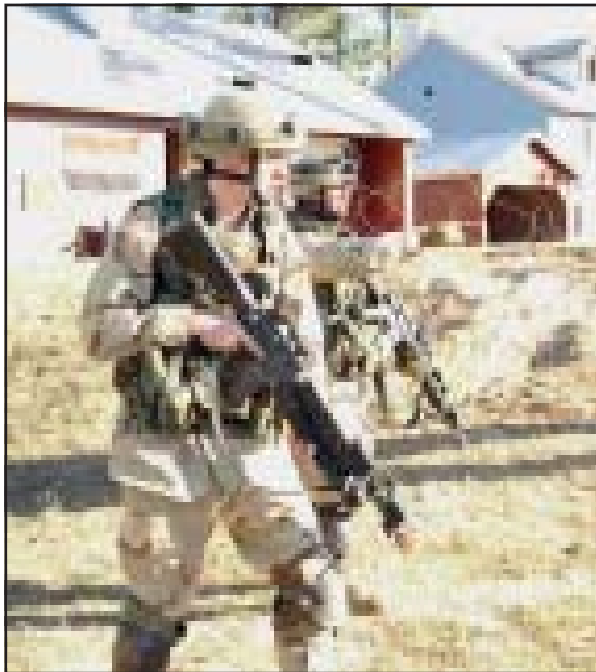
In the interim of those years, the training site was used whenever times of crisis arose, to include Korea, Vietnam and years during the Cold War.

Symbolically, the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment recently trained here at one of the most modernized Military Operations on Urban Terrain (MOUT) sites for deploying combat units.

In a more temperate environment than offered by Fort Drum in mid-winter, Soldiers of the 108th battle-focused more sharply on their tactical skills as the time for their departure in support of Iraqi Freedom draws near.

Creating an Iraqi Battlefield for Training

The 108th's training agenda and scenario pulled no punches. The entire unit bivouacked in enormous tents, showered in tents and ate in tents. The mess tent was so close to the C-130 airstrip that when a plane landed, the door-flaps would flutter from the propeller wash.



Work and sleep were separated by long hours of patrols using Humvees, calls for back up fire support and/or medical evacuations.

"The script-writers at JRTC replicated Iraq as close as they possibly could," said Maj. Dennis Deeley, executive officer, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry. "They did a lot of in-

country studies to include language, cultural and political barriers based on experiences brought back from Iraq."

Continually striving to keep the training as real-world as possible, Iraqi nationals and American role players interwove into a loose crowd of meandering faces in and around the MOUT site.

"By far, this is the best and most realistic training that we have had." Stated 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Merrill, platoon leader from C company.

Each time soldiers took to the streets, alleys or the town square, they did so with caution. If a Soldier's MILES equipment activated, then he became a fatality or casualty and the unit must begin to evacuate the area.

Photo at left taken by Sgt. 1st Class Glenn A. Somelofske.



Images from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry's Mission Readiness Exercise at Fort Polk. Clockwise from top left: Soldiers arrive at the MOUT site to face a hostile crowd. Spc. Andrew McClure begins perimeter patrolling after dismounting from his Humvee on the outskirts of the MOUT site. 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Merrill radios to his headquarters that his Soldiers have successfully killed a sniper but has sustained two casualties. Humvees provide a buffer against a possible attack on the Mayor's office. Last photo - Soldiers open fire on suspected enemy movement. They are situated atop the Mayor's office.



The Guard is Family

New York National Guard

Family Assistance

330 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, NY 12110-2224

New York National Guard Families...Enduring for America's Freedom

If you'll be communicating with your family member through the mail, be sure you have the correct address so that letters and packages will get there quickly. Learn about any guidelines for military mail, such as how and where to pick up mail, what you can and cannot send, and how long it may take for a letter or package to reach your family member. The same advice holds for e-mail, too: be sure you have the exact address, and find out about any rules for sending messages or attachments.

Try to write to your family member as often as you can, but don't be disappointed or worried if you don't always get quick responses. There may be times when your family member is in places where mail cannot go or he or she may be too busy to respond right away.

Here are some things you should think about when you're writing to a family member:

- *Be honest.* You don't have to hide things or pretend that you're feeling fine when you're not. Your family member may be able to tell that there's something you're not saying and worry.

- *Let your family member know how much you appreciate his or her response.* Tell them how much it means for you and other members of your family when you get a letter or e-mail.

- *Answer any questions he or she asked in an earlier message.* If you ignore questions, your family member may spend time wondering and worrying why you didn't respond.

- *Try to express yourself clearly.* Remember that you won't be there in person to explain what you mean when your family member reads your letter, so try not to leave any doubt about exactly what you're saying.

- *Keep some addressed and stamped envelopes on hand, ready to mail.* This may make it easier to write a quick note. You can also pass out addressed and stamped envelopes or postcards to friends and family members to encourage them to write.

- *Don't try to read between the lines of letters or notes that you receive.* Try not to make assumptions or judgments

based on just a single sentence or the overall tone of a letter. If you have a question or don't understand something, ask your questions in your next letter or phone call rather than wasting time wondering and worrying.

- *Consider numbering letters that you send and receive so that you can easily keep them in order.*

- *If you send a package, try to remember that your family member may not have a lot of space.* Send small, funny presents, like souvenirs or a favorite section of the Sunday paper, or personal items, such as soap or toothpaste. If you plan on sending food items, take care with packaging. Always check to make sure that any package you send fits with regulations.

- *Be creative.* Letters and e-mails are wonderful, but there are lots of ways you can make them even better. You can send a message in the form of a tape recording or a video. If you have children, send artwork, school papers, or even a photocopy of their handprints. You can send clippings from the local paper or tape recordings of a family gathering, a child reading, singing, or playing music, or even just the sounds of your home. You may come up with your own ideas that have special meaning for your family member.

- *Use the Internet for more than e-mail.* If you can use the Internet to stay in touch, there are lots of things you can do beyond sending e-mail messages. You can set up a Web

page with pictures and news — or find a service that hosts Web pages — or you can “talk” with your family member in chatrooms. You can also send digital pictures or use a scanner to send newspaper clippings, artwork, or a child's report card or school papers.

- *Send photos.* Pictures of loved ones can be very comforting when a family is separated. Just as you like to look at photos of your family member who has been deployed, he or she will enjoy seeing photos of people at home. You don't have to send professional pictures or photographs of special events. Send photos of your pets, your neighbors, your *child's* sporting event, a recital, or another occasion. You can also send photos of your home and other places that are special to you and your family member. Some families document a normal day in photos and send them as a kind of “picture story.”

- *Tips for communicating with e-mail.* E-mail is convenient, fast, and inexpensive, which makes it a great way to communicate during a deployment. But because e-mail is instantaneous, it's also possible to click the “send” button and send something you later wish you could recall. If dashing off an e-mail makes you feel better when you're upset or angry, go ahead — just wait before you send it. Come back a few hours later or the next day and review what you wrote to see if you still want to send it.

Some Tips for Keeping in Touch

Does your FRG have a website? Send the web address to the Family Readiness Office and we'll publish it in this newsletter.

Co. A, 204th Engineers – Oneonta www.soldiersupport.vze.com
102nd Maintenance Co. – Brooklyn www.102nd.com
105th MPCo. – Buffalo/Rochester www.105thmpfamilyreadiness.com
1-156th FA – Kingston www.156fa.com
29th PSD – Buffalo www.29psdfsg.freesevers.com
Co. C, 2-108th IN – Gloversville www.geocities.com/frg2108/index
HHC, 2-108th IN – Utica www.familyreadiness.net

Please remember that if you do have or are planning to start a website to be aware of the information that you are putting on it.

Do not provide any information about deployments, troop strengths, base and armory security, etc. If you are approached for this type of information by anyone, notify your unit immediately. Any questions pertaining to what is permissible should be addressed to your unit representative.

I Am the Guard.
Wherever a Strong Arm and Valiant Spirit Must Defend the Nation,
In Peace or War,
Wherever a Child Cries, or a Woman Weeps in Time of Disaster,
There I Stand ... I Am the Guard.
For Three Centuries a Soldier (or Airman) in War, a Civilian in Peace - of Security and Honor, I am the Custodian,
Now and Forever ...
I Am the Guard.

Courtesy the Air National Guard website,
www.ang.af.mil

Contact Information:

State Family Program Coordinator –
Sgt. Major Charles Steele
518-786-4656
State Family Program Assistant –
Mrs. Patti Jensen
518-786-4774
State Family Program Office –
Toll Free 877-715-7817
MarieClaus
518-786-4614
Spc. Adrain VonAhrensburg
518-786-4656



Getting to Know Your Commissary

The Commissary is now open for unlimited use for Guard and Reserve members and their dependents. You will no longer need your commissary Privilege Card - just your valid military or dependent identification (ID) card.

It is recommended that when going to the commissary you also carry along a personal check and/or cash as a backup in the event that the system or your bank's system goes down. This would make it impossible to complete a credit card transaction. Credit cards, checks and food stamps need to be in the name of the authorized patron.

Although you do not pay sales tax, there is a 5% surcharge. This surcharge funds the building of new commissaries and renovating existing stores. Even with the surcharge, you can still see savings of 30% or more annually....and that's without coupons. Hundreds of vendor coupons are made available in handy locations. And, you don't need a special store "savings card" to save on specials offered that week. Your ID Card is all you need.

Visit their website at www.commissaries.com to find special sales and offers. To find the



locations of the five commissaries located in New York go to the bottom of the page and find "Locations." Each of the locations (Fort Drum, Fort Hamilton, Mitchel Field, Scotia and West Point) have links to their own page with directions and other information.

Websites of Family Interest

Here are some websites that you may find helpful or of interest -

www.nmfa.org/ - National Military Family Association

www.aerhq.org/ - Army Emergency Relief

www.afas.org - Air Force Aid Society

www.wblo.org/home.asp - Army Well-Being Office

www.esgr.org - Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

www.lewis.army.mil/ag/id1.htm - Listing of the required documents for DEERS enrollment/Uniformed Services ID Card Issue

http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html - information on obtaining a passport for overseas travel

http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/kidslink/grade_select.htm - K.I.D.S. (Kids Information on Deployment Stuff) an interactive site that will allow kids to explore and learn more about deployments.

www.epa.gov/region02/superfund/brownfields/newyork.htm

- the National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP)

www.armyonesource.com and

www.airforceonesource.com

- commercial web sites that provide a

wide spectrum of information for military families.

www.army1.army.mil/WellBeing/RRLeave/Index - Central Command R&R Leave information

www.redcross.org/services/afes/0,1082,0_321_00.html - American Red Cross for military members

www.vba.va.gov/EFIF - VA web site for returning Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve service members of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom

www.va.gov/kids - VA web site for kids

*Army and Air Force One
Source deals with life's
little and not so little issues*

The Family Program office does not endorse any offers or website listed in this newsletter. They are passed on to you for your reference and information only.

Avoid Scams Targeted at Military Families

(Source: *Soldiers magazine*)

Each year consumers lose millions of dollars to scams and fraud. Some victims just don't take time to educate themselves, and make smart choices. Others know or suspect that a deal is questionable, but let themselves be persuaded by the pressure tactics of skilled con artists.

A scam is a fraudulent business scheme that robs consumers of their money. Scam artists appeal to consumers' emotions and desires for financial security, luring them into attractive deals then disappearing when the consumer has handed over the money.

Some of the types of scams that are commonly aimed at the military include: charity fraud; credit-repair scams; debt negotiations; employment and work-at-home scams; identity theft; Internet auctions; investment and financial scams; life-insurance fraud; loan scams; military-pension scams; "Nigerian Letter" scams; pyramid schemes; tax scams; telemarketing recovery scams; telephone scams; travel scams; weight-loss scams and used-car fraud.

Lower incomes and frequent military deployments make Soldiers attractive targets for scam artists. Soldiers are a unique target of financial scams because they receive regular paychecks. The standard expectation for Soldiers to maintain orderly lives puts them at risk because they may

seek advance-fee loans or so-called "credit repair" when they're in financial straits.

What many Soldiers and their spouses don't realize - and what scam artists never admit - is that they get credit at a much lower interest rate through credit unions and banks. However, some Soldiers fall prey to scams simply because they lack experience dealing with money.

The best defense against scams is skepticism. Certain tactics usually give scam artists away, so consumers should be observant of their behavior.

Don't be afraid to walk away if you are pressured to act quickly; you can't research the details or claims for yourself; you haven't checked out the seller with the Better Business Bureau or if you feel uncomfortable with any part of the deal.

Remember:

-- If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

-- Advertising can be misleading. Don't believe everything just because it's in writing.

-- Take notes of important points for later reference.

-- Reading contracts and fine print before the purchase can illuminate problems. Make sure you understand the contract and that it matches what the salesperson told you.

-- Ask for an explanation of anything you don't understand.

-- If any part of the deal isn't in writing, it probably isn't going to happen.

-- Always get the company's physical address and phone number, and check out the company with the local Better Business Bureau.

Beware of promoters who are not locally based, provide no telephone number and who use a post office box or mail drop rather than a full street address.

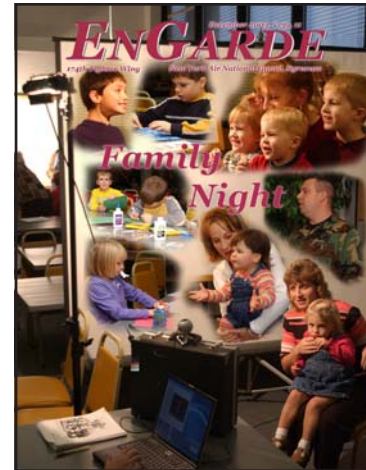
If asked to purchase goods sight-unseen, compare the prices and warranties with those offered by local businesses. You risk getting inferior merchandise when ordering products from unfamiliar businesses without being able to first inspect them.

To protect yourself from telemarketing and mail scams, request information in writing. Avoid giving out credit card and bank account numbers or Social Security numbers. Don't just assume the callers are who they say they are. Avoid sending cash, checks, or money orders to strangers, P.O. boxes or couriers.

Don't allow embarrassment or fear to keep you from reporting fraud to the appropriate authorities.

174th Fighter Wing Holds Family Event

The 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse held a Family Support Event in their wing dining hall recently and partnered with the local Red Cross for families of deployed members. The Onondaga-Oswego Red Cross Chapter brought their Face-to-Face Video Conference Laptop and families sent Video messages to their loved ones overseas. Security Forces Squadron member Master Sgt. McAfee provided a home security briefing which was useful and very informative. Deployed members received their return messages from spouses within 12 hours and the morale was enhanced among all the families in attendance.



Retiree Donates 'Support Our Troops' Wooden Nickels

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

As a show of support for the men and women in uniform, a San Antonio businessman is giving away free wooden nickels imprinted with the words, "Support Our Troops" and "The Price of Freedom is NOT Free!"

Herb Hornung, a retired Air Force master sergeant who now runs the Old Time Wooden Nickel Co., has a long history of passing out wooden nickels with slogans supporting America's veterans.

So when the United States started deploying service members to Iraq, Hornung decided to print up wooden nickels urging people to support the troops. Initially he carried pockets full of them around town and handed them out when he noticed men and women in uniform. Then he

got the brainstorm to broaden his effort and promote the giveaway on his company web site.

Hornung estimates that since he started his cyber-effort he's given away about 50,000 "Support the Troops" nickels. Requests have poured in from throughout the United States, he said, and a few have come from Canada. Some requests come from overseas military post office addresses, but Hornung said he's not sure if they're from Iraq or other overseas locations.

The first wooden nickels were issued during the Depression when two Washington state banks failed, leaving their communities with a money shortage. Later, wooden coins became popular for use at state fairs and centennials. The

old saying, "Don't take any wooden nickels" cautioned people not to accept wooden money during the last days of a fair, in case they didn't get to cash them in before the event ended.

Likewise, while Hornung's "Support the Troops" coins can't be used as legal tender, he's hopeful the coins have a significant although less tangible, value. "I figured that this is something I can do to show support for the troops and to let them know that we're behind them," he said.

To request four free wooden nickels, send a self-addressed business-size envelope with two first-class stamps to: Support Our Troops, Wooden Nickel Building, 345 Austin Road, San Antonio, TX 78209.

New relief act provisions protect servicemembers

A new law replacing the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940 will provide servicemembers – especially those deployed or called to active duty – greater protections to handle their personal financial and legal obligations, since President Bush signed the Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act into law Dec. 19.

The focus of the new act is pretty much the same as the SSCRA – to provide protections to servicemembers who have difficulty meeting their personal financial and legal obligations because of their military service.

This new law is significant because it clarifies and updates the provisions that existed in the SSCRA, and offers additional protections.

Servicemembers on long-term deployments, or called to active duty, should not have to worry about their families being evicted from their quarters without sufficient legal protections while they are gone. Nor should they be worried that they are paying on a leased car or apartment they can't use; or about civil legal proceedings they can't attend because of their deployment.

These are just some of the situations the new SCRA covers so that servicemembers are able to devote their energies to their military mission, and not on civil matters back home.

One significant change in the SCRA is an automatic 90-day stay of civil proceedings upon application by the servicemember. This applies to all judicial and administrative hearings. In the past, stays were discretionary with the courts.

The SCRA also makes it clear that the 6 percent limitation on interest rates for pre-service debts requires a reduction in monthly payments, and that any interest in excess of 6 percent is forgiven, not deferred.

The SCRA also expands protection against eviction. Under the SSCRA, servicemembers, and their dependents, who entered into a lease for \$1,200 or less could not be evicted without a court order. The SCRA increases that maximum lease amount to \$2,400, and adds an annual adjustment for inflation. For 2004, the maximum will be \$2,465. This will significantly increase the number

of servicemembers entitled to this protection.

The SCRA also gives servicemembers who have received permanent-change-of-station orders, or who are being deployed for not less than 90 days, the right to terminate a housing lease with 30 days' written notice. Previously, servicemembers could be required to pay for housing they were unable to occupy.

Another of the more significant provisions in the SCRA is an added protection for servicemembers who have motor vehicle leases. Any active-duty servicemember who has received PCS orders outside the continental United States, or who is being deployed for not less than 180 days, may terminate a motor vehicle lease. Additionally, the law prohibits early termination charges. Now, servicemembers won't have to pay monthly lease payments for a car they can't use.

Servicemembers may not always realize all the protections they have under the law. Servicemembers who have questions about the SCRA, or the protections that they may be entitled to, should contact their judge advocate or installation legal assistance officer for more information.

We'd like to spotlight your FRG. Let us know how you started, and what you're doing. Your story may help others with their FRG. Contact the Family Readiness Office for submissions. Pictures are always welcome!

TRICARE Choices For Maternity, Family Healthcare

(Source: Well-Being Liaison Office)

For maternity care, military families have a choice between TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Prime. Beneficiaries now have more healthcare choices with TRICARE.

Recent changes in TRICARE regulations allow beneficiaries with TRICARE Standard to choose a civilian provider for maternity care, even if they live close to a military treatment facility (MTF).

Being able to choose between TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Standard is an attractive benefit choice for many. But families need to consider additional financial costs. Beneficiaries need to understand all the financial implications when they disenroll from TRICARE Prime and convert to TRICARE Standard. They need to keep in mind that any healthcare, other than maternity care, is going to require co-pays. There may also be charges for maternity care related to inpatient hospitalization in civilian facilities.

TRICARE Prime uses military providers and hospitals, and a network of civilian providers and hospitals. In some locations, beneficiaries can choose either a military or a civilian healthcare provider as a primary care manager.

This provider takes care of routine outpatient medical problems and check-ups. If in-hospital or specialty care is required, including maternity care, the patient must go to an MTF if the services are available. In most cases, expectant mothers with TRICARE Prime must have their prenatal care and deliver their babies in an MTF. There are no yearly deductible and the co-payments within the civilian healthcare provider network tend to be less than TRICARE Standard.

Under the new law, a woman may choose a civilian doctor or midwife for prenatal care, and have her baby in a civilian hospital under TRICARE Standard. This benefit is available even if she lives near an MTF where maternity care is provided. TRICARE pays the expenses for prenatal care, labor and delivery, and postnatal care. However, there are co-payments involved. The amount varies based on length of stay in the hospital and the sponsor's status.

In choosing civilian maternity care, a family must disenroll from TRICARE Prime and convert to TRICARE Standard. Switching to TRICARE Standard means not being able to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime for a period of one year unless the sponsor's pay grade is E-4 or below. During this time, patients needing medical attention, other than maternity care, will be subject to out-of-pocket expenses, such as deductibles and co-payments.

Once a family has converted to TRICARE Standard, all standard co-pays apply. So for example, if a patient is pregnant and requires care for a broken leg or pneumonia, something not related to the pregnancy, the family would be required to pay co-pays for healthcare, and that can be significant. Each family needs to consider all the factors and make the best choice based on their family's needs.

Active-duty women will continue to obtain their maternity care at MTFs.

The situation may be confusing and could result in unexpected out-of-pocket expenses. Contact the TRICARE Service Center at an MTF or visit the **TRICARE Web site** for more information.

Medical Care for Guard Members and Their Families

Members of the reserve component who are called to active duty for more than 30 days are eligible for TRICARE, the same as any active duty service member. Families of these individuals may also become eligible for TRICARE if the sponsor is called to active duty for more than 30 days. To ensure family members are eligible for TRICARE upon activation, sponsors should register their family members in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).*

TRICARE for a Reserve Component Military Sponsor:

Members of the reserve component are entitled to medical care in any uniformed services military treatment facility (MTF) for any injury, illness or disease incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. When activated for more than 30 days, members of the reserve component become eligible for TRICARE Prime. All care should be sought from an MTF or TRICARE network provider.

When the sponsor is no longer on active duty orders, TRICARE eligibility ends; however, line-of-duty care may be received in a MTF for injuries or illnesses incurred while the sponsor was on active duty.

Members ordered to active duty in support of a contingency operation and their family members may be eligible for transitional health care for 60 to 120 days, depending on their total active federal military service.

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TRICARE for Families of Activated Members of the Reserve Component:

Family members of reserve component members become eligible for TRICARE Extra and TRICARE Standard on the first day of the military sponsor's active duty if his or her orders are for more than 30 consecutive days or if the orders are for an indefinite period. They also become eligible for the TRICARE Pharmacy Program* and may have prescriptions filled at MTF pharmacies, through the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy, or at retail pharmacies.

Eligible family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime if their sponsor is called to active duty for more than 30 days. If eligibility criteria are met, eligible family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members. There are no enrollment fees or co-payments for family members, but enrollment forms must be completed, and MTFs or TRICARE Prime network providers must be used.

Many reserve component families may have continuing relationships with providers who are not in the TRICARE Prime

network. In these cases, enrolling in TRICARE Prime may not be the best choice—instead, using TRICARE Standard can be the most flexible and economical option, even though beneficiaries must pay a share of the cost of health care.

Benefits Available During Demobilization:

Reserve component members ordered to active duty for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation (does not include full-time National Guard Duty) are entitled to transitional health care upon separation. They are also entitled to dental care in military dental treatment facilities on a space available basis with the same priority for care as active duty family members.

Family members are not eligible for transitional dental benefits, but they are eligible for dental benefits under the TDP. Members separated with less than six years of total active federal military service (as indicated on the DD 214) and eligible family members are eligible for 60 days of transitional health care.

Members separated with six years or more of total active federal military service and their eligible family members are eligible for 120 days of transitional health care.

Reserve component members are eligible for the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP) when they lose military health benefits and their transitional health care benefit period has expired. They also may enroll their family members for this coverage.

CHCBP provides benefits similar to TRICARE Standard for a specific period of time (up to 18 months for members and their

family members). They must enroll within 60 days of the date that their transitional benefit period expires and pay quarterly premiums.

For more information about CHCBP, individuals may call toll free: 1-800-444-5445, visit online at www.humana-military.com or write to Humana Military Healthcare Services Inc., Attn: CHCBP, P.O. Box 740072, Louisville, KY 40201.



When a Reserve Component Sponsor Retires:

When reserve component members retire, they do not become eligible for TRICARE or space-available care in an MTF until they reach age 60 or are receiving retired pay. At that time, they and their family members may enroll in TRICARE Prime or they may use TRICARE Extra or TRICARE Standard.

Retired reserve component members also become eligible for TRICARE For Life when they become eligible for Medicare at age 65 and enroll in Medicare Part B.

In addition, retired reserve component members, and their spouses and dependent children are eligible for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program, regardless of the sponsor's age and whether the sponsor is receiving retired pay.



Light Fighters Trained and Dangerous, Ready to Deploy

Story by Staff Sgt. Steve Petibone
Photos by Spc. Dennis Gravelle
Guard Times Staff

FORT DRUM

Capping off four months of intense infantry training through widely varying temperatures and weather conditions, the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, 27th Separate Infantry Brigade (Light) is now trained to deploy to the nation's second front in the Global War on Terror in Iraq.

This is the first combat-oriented deployment for this 27th Brigade unit since World War II. In March of 1942, the 27th Infantry Division (as it was called then) trained up at Fort

McClellan, Ala. before deploying to the Hawaiian Islands and eventually to the Battle of Saipan. Following Senator Little, New York's Adjutant General, Thomas P. Maguire, Jr.'s theme was compassionate and family oriented. He implored each soldier to not only take care of his or her family before they leave, but to also to treat each other as family while deployed.

Concluding the send-off speeches, Lt. Col. Mark Warnecke, battalion commander, informed the audience of the colossal list of combat and non-combat taskings that the 108th accomplished. "The Battalion did not meet the Army standard, we set the standard." he said to thunderous applause.

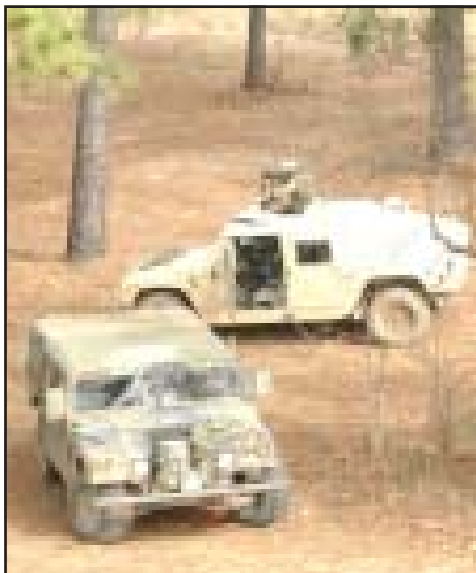
To sustain the realism, a military morgue was set up inside the bivouac area. Once a soldier became a casualty, the entire process was implemented right down to zipping the "body-bag".

The final scenario ended in what resembled a western "show-down". Shots rang out from sniper fire, the streets were quickly abandoned by the civilians and the 108th soldiers assembled atop a central building where they could scan the entire MOUT site from a single rooftop until back ups arrived.

Training at the JRTC is intended to stretch every soldier to their maximum limit and then push just a little further to see how they react under the pressure.

"As our soldiers get better, the scenarios get tougher, this is the training we need in order to succeed in Iraq." Stated Deeley.

After JRTC, the 108th returned to Fort Drum for more weapons qualification and some time off to spend with their families before leaving for Iraq in February. The battalion is expected to serve overseas for about one year.



McClellan, Ala. before deploying to the Hawaiian Islands and eventually to the Battle of Saipan.

More than 700 soldiers dressed in Desert Camouflage Uniforms (DCU's) were the center of attention for family, friends and visiting dignitaries in the standing-room-only crowd at Fort Drum's Magrath Sports Complex.

The dignitaries included New York State Senator Betty Little (45th District) and Mr. Bill Howard, First Deputy Secretary to Governor George Pataki.

The high point of the ceremony occurred when 11 Guardsmen were sworn in as United States citizens. Mr. Howard introduced each Soldier by name and what country he was from. He concluded by thanking each soldier for accepting their citizenship as both New York and United States citizens.

Senator Little admonished the soldiers to go forward, complete their mission and return safely.

One of the taskings that will have a direct effect on the 108th is a moderate transition from their light infantry moniker to a more mechanized infantry situation using Humvees.



Ms. Fran Holmes from Immigration Services administers the oath of citizenship to 11 members of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry during the unit's departure ceremony at Fort Drum. In top photo, Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr., The Adjutant General, conveys his well-wishes to Soldiers. Nearly 700 Soldiers from the battalion are now serving in Iraq.

Artillery Transformation Moves 'Ever Onward'

By Sgt. Peter Towse
138th MPAD

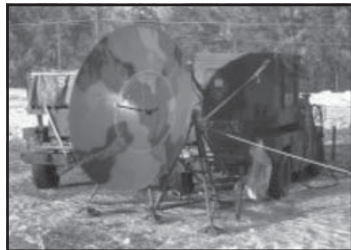
POUGHKEEPSIE

For the oldest Army National Guard unit in the State of New York, "SEMPER PROCEDAMUS", or "Ever Onward," is the motto. The Soldiers from A Battery, 1st Battalion, 156th Field Artillery epitomized that motto in 2004.

A Battery will end an epic of 228 years of military service on September 1st, 2004 when they will become the 101st Signal Battalion, 53rd Troop Command. The 101st will be a full spectrum communication force designed to provide trained, ready and dedicated Soldiers in support of America's defense.

"This transformation is a positive thing for the New York Army National Guard," said New York State Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Van Pelt. "One of the benefits of the transformation is that it helps recruiting by opening the door with more positions available to female Soldiers."

As a part of the Total Force Structure, A Battery is in the process of transforming in order to meet the needs of the future and is



Soldiers in the 101st Signal Battalion will utilize the Army Tactical Satellite Communications Terminal-93B (AN/TSC-93). It is the primary link to the world by communicating via satellite. File photo.

the first unit to transform in the New York Army National Guard.

"There were mixed reactions at first," said Capt. Bryan A. Foley, commander, A Battery, 156th Field Artillery. "The Soldiers were able to turn the transformation into a positive thing once they realized the opportunities and skills that would be open to them."

"I am amazed at the quality of Soldiers coming into the unit," said Capt. Christopher J. Spriegel, the in-coming company commander. "Each and every Soldier in the unit has shown their eagerness for this new mission and its latest technology. All of these skill sets are easily transferred into the civilian marketplace."

This transformation will prepare the New York Army National Guard for a full range of missions.

"Our mission right now is manning the force," Spriegel said. "We are actively bringing new Soldiers into the unit, training

the Soldiers for their military occupation skills (MOS), and fielding new equipment."

The primary mission of the 101st is to support the battalion in installing, operating, and maintaining communication nodes within the theater of operations. The 101st is able to install a tactical mobile communications network that is capable of passing data, voice, and video traffic anywhere in the world.



"No cell phone coverage? No problem, the 101st is here!"

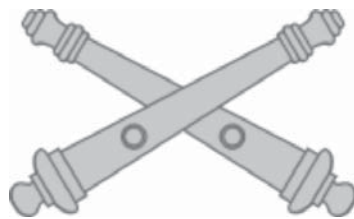
The equipment of the 101st Signal Battalion has been modernized and it stands shoulder to shoulder with the active Army.

"The unit has the most modern signal equipment available to signal units in the military," Spriegel said.

"The 101st offers the cutting edge into the digital world and provides the critical Command & Control (C2) for our commanders on the battlefield."

The 101st will maintain their ability to contribute to the war and support commanders in the field to ensure compatibility and synchronization of the components and operating systems on the battlefield.

"The battalion has organic equipment that can establish a robust communication network with the ability to pass voice and



data traffic with no dependency on the civilian infrastructure," Spriegel said.

"This mobile network can be established within hours anywhere in the world," Spriegel said. "No cell phone coverage? No problem, the 101st is here!"

The 27th Brigade will officially be reorganized September 1st, 2004 when the Wisconsin Army National Guard assumes the 27th's mission.



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 156th Field Artillery render honors for Gov. George E. Pataki's 2003 inauguration in Albany. Photo by Sgt. Matthew Johnson.

An End of an Era 'King of Battle' Closes the Breech on Two Centuries of Loyalty

By Sgt. Peter Towse
138th MPAD

POUGHKEEPSIE

More than 200 years of military service will end on September 1, 2004, when Battery A of the 1st Battalion, 156th Field Artillery Regiment transforms into the 101st Signal Battalion. Along with other components of the military, Battery A is moving "ever onward" after 228 years of service in order to meet the needs of the future.

"The 156th Field Artillery will be very much missed by all of us," said Capt. Brian A. Foley, commander of Battery A, 156th Field Artillery. "It represents a piece of history that they were part of and they are proud of that history."

The 156th Field Artillery has a long history as Dutchess County's first artillery battalion, originating in 1658, and is New York State's oldest continuously operating Army National Guard unit.

"The unit is like a family to them," Foley said. "It represents something bigger than themselves. While they will go on to other units, or even stay in Poughkeepsie, it probably won't be the same."

The 156th Field Artillery has credit for participation in the Colonial Indian War, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, over a dozen Civil War campaigns, the Spanish American War, World War I and World War II.

Battery C, which was renamed Battery A, earned its Revolutionary War credit as the "Poughkeepsie Invincibles" and was the 4th Dutchess County Regiment, organized in 1715. It descended from 2 companies of the Ulster and Dutchess County militia that began operations in 1776.

According to the 156th Field Artillery's history pamphlet, when General Brandenberger surrendered the German 19th Army to Maj. Gen. William F. Dean on May 5, 1945, the 156th was issued a close station march order (CSMO) and muzzle covers were put on the Howitzers for the last time in combat against an enemy of the United States.

The blue half of the shield indicates service as infantry and the red half indicates service as artillery. The white river dividing the two heraldic fields indicates the battalion is composed of units from both banks of the Hudson River. The red cross of St. George and the blue saltire in the canton represent service in the Revolutionary War and in the Civil War. The taro leaf indicates service in the Spanish-American War and the fleur-de-lis represents service in France in World War I.

"As one door closes another one opens," Foley said. "We all move on to meet new people, gain new skills, and will always have the great memories from the 156th FA. It was a great unit."

The unit equipment will be transferred to the Wisconsin Army National Guard as the 32nd Brigade assumes the mission of the 27th Brigade.

Naval Militia Member Rings in New Year in Times Square

Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK CITY

The Naval Militia helped ring in 2004 at the most famous New Year's location in the world – New York's Times Square.

Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) Terence B. Hoey was selected by the U.S. Navy and sponsored by the Times Square Alliance to participate the city's New Year's celebrations.

Hoey, a New York City resident, Naval Reservist and local business owner, was selected because of his life-long ties to NYC and contributions to the state and nation for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). He has performed both state and federal duties in his role as a member of the New York Naval Militia and Naval Reserve.

Hoey attended the celebration alongside representatives from the U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and the Coast Guard. Included in the group was Army Spc. Shoshana Johnson, who was held as a prisoner of war in Iraq.

The events included raising the ball at One Times Square, lowering the ball at midnight, and opening the NASDAQ Market on the first day of trading on January 4th, 2004.

Hoey, a 24-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and Naval Reserve, was a first responder to the attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I was honored, yet very humbled, to be selected to be involved in these events," Hoey said. "Humbled, because as we stood there in New York City, I felt very safe knowing that there are thousands of U.S. service members and security personnel around the globe providing us with a high degree and sense of security, providing us with freedoms that we cherish, and providing liberty to those less fortunate."

He was subsequently recalled to active duty for 20 months where Hoey conducted a variety of law enforcement and physical security duties. He was detailed to various locations in the nation's capital in support of Operation Noble Eagle. Hoey performed duties as Officer-



Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO) Terence B. Hoey



Master Chief Petty Officer Terence B. Hoey (far right), participates in NYC New Year's festivities at Times Square along with (L-R) Cyndi Lauper, Sgt. Etienne J. Prohete, USMC, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Petty Officer Jesus J. Vazquez, USCG (standing behind Mayor), Senior Airman Carlos R. Morillo, USAF (behind ball), SGT. Marjorie M. Pinnock, USA, and Retired US Army Specialist and former POW Shoshana Johnson. Photo: Boatswain's Mate Jesus Vazquez.

In-Charge (OIC) of a U.S. Navy Law Enforcement & Physical Security Detachment, Antiterrorism Officer, Force Protection Officer, and Senior Enlisted Advisor.

Hoey was directly involved in the implementation of Operation Liberty Shield, the increased security measures taken in New York City associated with the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

In July 2003, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller recognized Hoey for "Exceptional Service in the Public Interest," the second such special recognition from the FBI. In March of 1997 Hoey received his first, from then FBI Director Louis J. Freeh, for his work in connection with the TWA Flight 800 investigation and recovery.

Boy Scouts Tackle 'Galaxy' Program to Earn Science Badges

By Staff Sgt. John Gassler
HQ, 105th Airlift Wing

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE

Italian scientist and mathematician Archimedes once said, "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world."

Well, they may not have moved the world on November 25, 2003, but 12 Boy Scouts from Cub Pack 118 out of Cortland Manor may have broadened theirs during an opportunity to perform a few experiments, earn their science badges and learn about the physics of flight while attending the 105th Airlift Wing's "Galaxy Program" at Stewart.

For those eager young minds that attended the "Galaxy Program," the day's brain teasing curriculum covered everything from Newton's law of motion and Pascal's law of pressure, to Bernoulli's principle of flight. According to Laura Trusler, scout leader for Cub Pack 118, everything Webelos needed to learn in hopes of earning their science badge was touched upon in the class.

"Learning about scientific methods and principles helps Boy Scouts develop their power of thinking and deduction. It also gives them an opportunity to perform experiments,

which aids in the learning process. Couple those two factors with a chance to visit a military base and tour an aircraft like the C-5, and you have a wonderful and enjoyable learning experience," she said.

As fun as climbing around a C-5 may have been, all 12 of the Boy Scouts needed to focus on scientific learning when "Galaxy Program" instructor Staff Sgt. Odie Masztalics from the 137th Airlift Squadron opened his lesson plan. Eager to teach willing young minds about the wonder and science of flight, Masztalics said the only prerequisites for his students were positive attitudes and smiles.

"For as far back as I can remember, flying has been my greatest passion in life. I volunteered to teach the 'Galaxy Program' because I wanted to share and spread that feeling to others. When you love and truthfully enjoy what you do in life, it's more than a pleasure to pass it along to those around you. When there's an opportunity to introduce such enjoyment to our youth, it makes everything that much more enjoyable," he said.

Newton's third law of physics states for every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. But how does an instructor teach such a principle to a group of fourth

graders? According to Masztalics, a good teacher uses experiments to get the point across to the class. "One of the experiments I used to explain Newton's third law of physics was to simply blow up a balloon, and then release it into the air. It's nothing fancy, but it's an effective demonstration nonetheless," he said.

So, how do airplanes fly? Well, according to Bernoulli's principle, the four forces of flight are lift, thrust, gravity and drag. "Teaching Bernoulli's principle was my favorite part of the class because it's the theory most associated with aircraft. It's also the segment of the class with the best experiments," Masztalics said.

From hovering ping-pong balls held aloft by a blowing hairdryer to rudimentary thermometers, there seemed to be something fun and exciting for every Webelos who attended the "Galaxy Program."

Speaking on behalf of the kids in the class, Tech. Sgt. Kim Robertson, 105th Community Initiatives NCOIC who coordinated the event, "The scouts loved visiting the base and having the opportunity to earn their science badges at Stewart. It was a wonderful afternoon for both young and old alike," she said.

**NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
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THOMAS R. FROST	CO B 204 ENGR BN	DANNY L. DAWLEY II	827TH EN CO	STARTASHA DILLARD	DET 1 COB 50TH MSB
TIMOTHY J. GIBBONS	133 OD CO MAINT	RAKAY V. DEITER	HQS 106TH REGIMENT (RTI)	NICHOLAS DUBOVICI	CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
NICOLAS C. GOLDING	HHD 104TH MP BN	MATTHEW DELORENZO	CO C 152D EN BN	MICHAEL FERRANTE	DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
ALEKSEY GONOPOLSKIY	CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	JIMELLE D. DESOUZA	133 OD CO MAINT REAR NY	DANIEL E. FREDRIKSEN	1ST BN 106TH REG (GS)
TAMARA GONZALEZ	HSC 642D SUPPORT BN	EDWARD EASLEY	DET 1 CO C 204TH EN BN	RAFAEL A. GABOT	DET 1 HHC 107TH SPT GROUP
JOSHUA M. GUY	HHC (-) 1-108TH INF	KYLE S. ECKERT	CO A 2-108 IN BN	MORGAN J. GORMAN	CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
ALAN T. HAMILTON	204 EN BN CO A FWD2	ATHENA S. FINGERS	HHC 152D ENGINEER BN	MICHAEL C. GREEN	SERVICE BTY 1-258 FA BN
JOHN K. HARDER	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN	JARED M. FRENKE	CO E 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	SHKUMBIN HOXHA	CO B 1-105 INF
ALAN D. HARGROVE JR	CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	OSCAR A. GARCIA	BTRY A 1-258 FA BN	BRANDON C. ISAAC	29TH PERS SERVICE DET
ISAAC W. HARRIS	CO B 1-108 IN BN	TATIANA A. GARCIA	145TH MAINTENANCE CO	ALEXANNIE KAIRUPAN	CO C 1-105 INF
JOSE A. HERRERA	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	ERIC P. GEISS	133 OD CO MAINT	DEREK KISSOON	CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
BRETT J. HOUCK	CO A(-) 204 ENGR BN	LAWRENCE G. GILLARD	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	ANDREW KULIKOWSKI	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN
ANASTACIO IRIZARRY	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN	LUIS E. GIRALDO	CO C 1-105 INF	MARIO L. LOZANO JR	CO B 1-105 INF
TIFFANY JOHN	HSC 642D SUPPORT BN	JESU E. GODLEWSKI	827TH ENGR CO	STEVE LUGO	HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN	STEPHANIE J. GRAHAM	DET 1 CO J 427TH SPT BN	VICTOR M. MENCIA	CO B 1-105 INF
BENJAMIN L. KESTEL	827 EN CO SEP IN FWD	AMANDA L. GREEN	CO C 1-127TH ARMOR	MICHAEL J. MOERMAN	1427 TRANS CO (MDM TRK)
MICHAEL KINGSLAND	CO C 152D ENGINEER BN	XIAO B. GUAN	CO C 1-105 INF	LORI A. MYERS	CO A(-) 427TH SPT BN
KIN C. LAU	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	CASEY L. HAIGHT	1ST BN 106TH REG (GS)	MICHAEL NEITHARDT	CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
NOCONDA LEGRAND	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN	ALEX J. HEINE	133 OD CO MAINT	DONALD NEWCOMB JR	CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
TONY LEW	HSC 642D SUPPORT BN	MICHAEL K. HERON	HHC 427TH SPT BN	RACHEL H. OLLEY	DET 1 CO A 152D EN BN
LIANG F. LIANG	CO E 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	PAUL W. JONES	CO B 342D FWD SPT BN	DANIEL J. PARADIS	CO A 1-127TH ARMOR
EBUNOLA MACAULAY	HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV	RYAN C. KELLAM	108 IN BN 02 AASLT HHC	CARLOS J. PEREZ II	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN
TIMOTHY P. MACK JR	CO B 1-108 IN BN	JOSHUA J. KRANTZ	827TH ENGR CO	JASON P. PETRI	HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
DANA P. MADDEN	204 EN BN CO A FWD2	AMY E. LAPORT	CO C 427TH SUPPORT BN	GERSHOM N. PHYARS	CO A 342D FWD SPT BN
MATHEW MARCOTTE	CO C 2-108 IN BN	JESUS I. LECARO	1ST BN 106TH REG (GS)	JONATHAN D. POLLARD	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN
VICTOR N. MARRERO	CO B 1-105 IN BN	GAO M. LUAN	CO C 1-105 INF	LUKE L. PORTER	HHD 104TH MP BN
RUBEN L. MARTINEZ	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	BRIAN G. MANNY	HHC 1-105TH INF	WILLIAM J. RIEGGER JR	CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
KEITH N. MCCUE	CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	ELAINE MERCADO	CO B(-) 427TH SPT BN	SEAN W. ROWLAND	133 OD CO MAINT REAR NY
RANDELLE MCUMBER	CO A(-) 204 ENGR BN	TAB L. MERKEL JR	CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY	MICHAEL J. ROZCZKO	HHD 27TH SUPPLY & SVC BN
ANTUAN E. MINOTT	258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP	JOSE A. MIRANDA JR	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	DANIEL SACCHITELLA	DET 1 CO A 427TH SPT BN
SEAN R. MOFFETT	CO B 204 ENGR BN	ROBERT F. MORRIS	1427 TRANS CO (MDM TRK)	BENJAMIN J. SAFFER	TROOP E 101ST CAVALRY
EUGENIO MOYA	4TH FINANCE DET	MARCIN MROWKA	1569 TRANS CO	MICHAEL SANTIAGO	145TH MAINTENANCE CO
FREDERICK MURRAY III	107TH MP CO	MOHAMED MUNASSAR	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	TIMOTHY J. SCHUELER	CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
MICHAEL E. NEWKIRK	CO B 1-108 IN BN	CLINT A. OLIVO	107TH MP CO	LUIS A. SIERRA	CO D 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
KENNETH C. NYDAM	107TH MP CO	ANDREW R. PARSONS	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	AMANDA J. SLEASMAN	HHD ENGINEER BDE 42 ID
ANGEL D. OQUENDO	HSC 642D SUPPORT BN	AMY J. PENREE HHD	369TH WATER SUPPLY BN	ADRIAN H. SMITH	TROOP E 101ST CAVALRY
JIN Y. PAN	827TH ENGR CO	BRIAN R. PERCY	DET 1 CO A 152D EN BN	TROY O. SMITH	HHB 1-258 FA BN
MATTHEW PELLETTIER	CO D 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)	RAUL A. PEREZ	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	WILLIAM E. TAYLOR	CO B 152D EN BN
BI J. PENG	BTRY C 1-258 FA BN	JENNIFER PINEDA	DET 1 133RD MAINT CO	SIMON VOSBURGH III	HQS 106TH REGIMENT (RTI)
KEITH V. PHILLIPS	107TH MP CO	ADAM M. PIRON	827TH ENGR CO	MONICA M. WELLS	CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
MAXIME F. PIERRE	BTRY B 1-258 FA BN	GOBIN R. RAGHUNATH	CO C 1-69TH INF (M)	JUSTIN R. WEMPLE	HHC 1-105TH INF
MICHAEL J. PORTER	CO B 342D FWD SPT BN	PETER G. RIVERA	HHB 1-258 FA BN	BERT C. WHIDDEN	1ST BN 106TH REG (GS)
		JIMMY L. ROBERTS	HSC 642D SUPPORT BN	JOSEPH T. WILSON II	CO B 152D ENGINEER BN
				ADAM M. ZALESKI	258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP

**NEW YORK AIR NATIONAL GUARD
PROMOTIONS**

MAJOR GENERAL

CLARK, JOHN W NEW YORK ANG HQ
TOSCANO, JAMES P NEW YORK ANG HQ

BRIGADIER GENERAL

GREENWALD, STUART J 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
GROSSO, MAURICE G 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
MACK, JOHN P 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP

LIEUTENANT COLONEL

BELTON, JAMES T 138 FIGHTER SQDN
HEDRICK, STEVEN J NORTHEAST AIR DEF SQDN
HUTSON, CHARLES H 174 FIGHTER WG
MALONEY, JUDITH M 109 LOG READINESS SQDN
PIMENTEL, RAMON R 106 MEDICAL SQDN
TESTER, DANIEL N 138 FIGHTER SQDN

MAJOR

JENNINGS, MARY O 106 MAINTENANCE SQDN

CAPTAIN

KRAUS, JENNIFER K 107 MEDICAL SQDN

2nd LIEUTENANT

KRAUS, JENNIFER K 107 MEDICAL SQDN

SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT

ADAMSON, NOEL D NEW YORK ANG HQ
DIROMA, PAUL J 105 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
FOLEY, SUSAN 107 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
RUSNAK, MICHAEL J 106 OPERATIONS GRP
STEWART, MICHAEL G 105 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
THEILEMANN, MARK E 109 LOG READINESS SQDN
TYNYK, TIMOTHY E 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN

MASTER SERGEANT

ADDISON, BRADLEY S 174 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
ARCHAMBEAULT, KELLY 109 LOG READINESS SQDN
BOURQUE, DEBRA A 109 LOG READINESS SQDN
BUTCHER, JOHN E 174 FIGHTER WG
CANADA, TROY E 174 MEDICAL SQDN
CHAMBRONE, SUSAN M 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP
CHU, PING W 106 MAINT OPS FLT
COONS, DOUGLAS H 139 AEROMED EVAC SQDN
CORRELL, AARON S 274 AIR SUPT OPNS SQDN
CRYAN, STEPHAN J 107 SECURITY FORCES SQDN
DECKER, DARYN J 174 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
DEJESUS, VICTOR 105 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
DIXON, SCOTT M 107 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
FABBIANO, GREGORY J 107 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
FRASCIELLO, HELEN M 174 MEDICAL SQDN
GRONER, MICHAEL F 106 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
HANSON, TIMOTHY D 106 AIRCRAFT MAINT SQDN
HEPFNER, FREDERICK JR 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP
HOLCOMB, HALEY NMI 174 SECURITY FORCES SQDN
HURTLE, RICHARD T 106 MAINTENANCE SQDN
JOHNSON, PETER J III 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
KENNEDY, KATHLEENA 174 OPERATIONS SPT FLT
LASKER, JOHN C 107 MAINTENANCE GRP
MATSCHULAT, PETER P 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
MILLER, WILLIAM S F 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
PILARZ, THOMAS A 107 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
RUTHERFORD, JOSEPH NEAD SCTY FORC FLT FLT
SCHWARTZ, ERIC E 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
SHEPARD, BRENDA M 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP
SLUTSKIN, ADAM D 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
THREAT, SUSAN 174 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
TRIEPEI, DAVID G 174 MAINTENANCE SQDN
TROCHE, RICHARD 106 AIRCRAFT MAINT SQDN
WHITE, DAVID J 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP
WILEY, RICHARD P 105 SECURITY FORCES SQDN
ZEAMES, JAMES L 107 MAINTENANCE GRP

TECH SERGEANT

ARCHER, STEPHEN J 152 AIR OPERATIONS GRP
BACON, TAISHA J 105 MEDICAL SQDN
BLAKE, MELONY J 107 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
COLLINS, CHRISTOPHER 139 AIRLIFLT SQDN
EATON, JILL MARIE 106 MISSION SUPPORT GRP
EDGAR, DONALD K 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
FELSMAN, REX E 109 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
IODICE, MARK J NEAD SCTY FORC FLT FLT
JONES, TIMOTHY M 109 AERIAL PORT FLT
KAUFMANN, EUGENE V 109 MAINTENANCE SQDN
MACAULAY, TIMOTHY 139 AIRLIFLT SQDN



Master Sgt. Robert C. Haemmerle, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 156th Field Artillery Regiment, continues his one-man deployment with Central Command. Originally deployed in 2002 to serve with Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, Haemmerle is now deployed in Iraq and provided the Guard Times staff with this updated photo from Baghdad. Haemmerle joins dozens of other members of the New York National Guard called to active duty individually in the Global War on Terror. Courtesy photo.

MART, CLEMENT W 109 AERIAL PORT FLT
MOISAN, KENNETH D 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
NYE, DAVID M 107 LOG READINESS SQDN
PARTRIDGE, DONALD J 139 AIRLIFLT SQDN
PIERSALL, PATRICK B 174 MAINTENANCE GRP
RATYNSKI, JOHN M 109 MEDICAL SQDN
SAVAGE, JONI E 107 LOG READINESS SQDN
SCHOFIELD, KENNETH 105 STUDENT FLT
STAFFORD, LAURIE J NEAD SCTY FORC FLT FLT
STRAUS, MELISSA A 109 LOG READINESS SQDN
THERIO, MICHAEL T 105 AIRLIFLT WG
URBANIACK, FRANCISEK 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
WILLIAMS, RAMONA J 105 MAINTENANCE SQDN
WILLIAMSON, ANDRE L 105 AIRLIFLT WG
YOUNGS, JEFFREY J 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN

STAFF SERGEANT

ARNOLD, JOSHUA L 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
BLAIS, VERONICA L 109 AIRLIFLT WG
BOUGHAL, EDWARD S 106 STUDENT FLT
FISH, DAVID C 107 AIR REFUELING WG
GADMAN, MICHAEL M 106 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
GIFFORD, BRIAN H 109 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
GIGLIO, MATTHEW J 105 MAINTENANCE SQDN
GRONLUND, CRAIG D 109 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
HAINES, SCOTT L 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
HARRISON, JASON R 106 SERVICES FLT
INFANTE, MATTHEW J 106 MAINTENANCE SQDN
INGERSON, LUCRETIA 109 STUDENT FLT
KERGEL, ZACHARY A 139 AIRLIFLT SQDN
KIRKPATRICK, STACEY 174 MEDICAL SQDN
MILLER, AUDRA S 109 OPERATIONS SPT FLT
MORSE, WALTER M 174 MAINTENANCE SQDN
NEWCOMB, LARRY A 105 STUDENT FLT
ORTIZ, RAYMOND 105 STUDENT FLT
PALMOWSKI, JEFFREY R 107 MAINTENANCE SQDN
REILLY, PATRICK M 105 STUDENT FLT
ROBINSON, STEVEN C 107 STUDENT FLT
SAPHARA, WILLIAM D 174 LOG READINESS SQDN
STORM, JASON A 274 AIR SUPT OPNS SQDN
THOMAS, CYNTHIA M 106 MEDICAL SQDN
USZENSKI, SCOTT M 105 AERIAL PORT SQDN
WEBER, DORIE 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
WHITE, KATIE T 106 MEDICAL SQDN
YERG, KELLY A 109 AERIAL PORT FLT

SENIOR AIRMAN

ARNOLD, JOSHUA L 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
BLAIS, VERONICA L 109 AIRLIFLT WG
BOUGHAL, EDWARD S 106 STUDENT FLT
FISH, DAVID C 107 AIR REFUELING WG
GADMAN, MICHAEL M 106 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
GIFFORD, BRIAN H 109 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
GIGLIO, MATTHEW J 105 MAINTENANCE SQDN
GRONLUND, CRAIG D 109 COMMUNICATIONS FLT
HAINES, SCOTT L 174 CIVIL ENGINEER SQDN
HARRISON, JASON R 106 SERVICES FLT

INFANTE, MATTHEW J 106 MAINTENANCE SQDN
INGERSON, LUCRETIA 109 STUDENT FLT
KERGEL, ZACHARY A 139 AIRLIFLT SQDN
KIRKPATRICK, STACEY 174 MEDICAL SQDN
MILLER, AUDRA S 109 OPERATIONS SPT FLT
MORSE, WALTER M 174 MAINTENANCE SQDN
NEWCOMB, LARRY A 105 STUDENT FLT
ORTIZ, RAYMOND 105 STUDENT FLT
PALMOWSKI, JEFFREY R 107 MAINTENANCE SQDN
REILLY, PATRICK M 105 STUDENT FLT
ROBINSON, STEVEN C 107 STUDENT FLT
SAPHARA, WILLIAM D 174 LOG READINESS SQDN
STORM, JASON A 274 AIR SUPT OPNS SQDN
THOMAS, CYNTHIA M 106 MEDICAL SQDN
USZENSKI, SCOTT M 105 AERIAL PORT SQDN
WEBER, DORIE 137 AIRLIFLT SQDN
WHITE, KATIE T 106 MEDICAL SQDN
YERG, KELLY A 109 AERIAL PORT FLT

AIRMAN FIRST CLASS

ACEVEDO, DAVID 105 STUDENT FLT
BURKE, CHRIS T 105 STUDENT FLT
CASPER, JOSHUA M 105 STUDENT FLT
CUNNINGHAM, DAVID J 105 STUDENT FLT
DAVISON, STACEY L 174 STUDENT FLT
DITRO, JASON F 174 STUDENT FLT
DOTY, COLEEN M 106 STUDENT FLT
DRAGOTTI, MICHELE M 105 STUDENT FLT
FIGUEROA, DAVID 106 STUDENT FLT
FRANKS, MERCEDES M 106 STUDENT FLT
GALLARDO, DIEGO R 105 STUDENT FLT
GREEN, ERIC R 105 STUDENT FLT
HEGEDUS, JOSEPH C 105 STUDENT FLT
HURTLEY, DOLINA J 107 STUDENT FLT
ILARDI, JENNIFER L 105 STUDENT FLT
KECHIJIAN, DOUGLAS P 106 STUDENT FLT
KRECKEL, ROBERT S 105 STUDENT FLT
MARSHALL, KYLE R 174 STUDENT FLT
OSTLIE, MELISSA A 105 STUDENT FLT
PASSAGE, KRISTOPHER 174 STUDENT FLT
PENDOLA, CHRISTIAN K 106 STUDENT FLT
PLAIR, JOHNATHAN H 106 STUDENT FLT
RIGHI, JOHN F 174 STUDENT FLT
RODGERS, THOMAS J 107 STUDENT FLT
ROGERS, JOSHUA W 109 STUDENT FLT
ROMANO, NUNZIO C 105 STUDENT FLT
SANTANA, MANUEL D 105 STUDENT FLT
SMITH, ERICA M 106 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
STRICKLAND, JEFFREY JR 105 MISSION SUPPORT FLT
SWANICK, KATIE M 107 STUDENT FLT
TAMBERINO, ANTHONY 106 STUDENT FLT
TISINGER, WILLIAM G 174 STUDENT FLT
VASILAKOS, ANGELA M 109 STUDENT FLT
WILLS, BRIAN J 106 STUDENT FLT

AIRMAN

YOUNG, PATRICK B 174 STUDENT FLT

Engineers Do Double Duty

204th Soldiers Support Ops in Iraq and Afghanistan

By Maj. Richard Goldenberg
Guard Times Staff

BINGHAMTON

In two short weeks this winter, more than 100 members of the 204th Engineer Battalion bid farewell to family and friends in armories across New York state. Soldiers from throughout the battalion mobilized for support to both Operation Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom overseas.

**'If there must be trouble, let it be in my day,
so that my child may know peace'**

The unit said farewell March 23, 2004 to troops from Company A and less than a week later repeated the ceremonies for members of Company B as the entire 204th Engineer Battalion prepared its Soldiers for active duty.

From the detachment of Company A on eastern Long Island to the battalion headquarters in Binghamton, the farewell ceremonies were small gatherings of Soldiers, their families, and an outpouring of community support that overwhelmed the engineers preparing for active duty.

In armories at Riverhead to Peekskill, Horseheads, Walton and Binghamton, Lt. Col. Geoffrey Seals, the 204th Battalion

The engineers, recognized for their performance of GuardHELP community support projects, will utilize those skills for reconstruction projects in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Seals recognized not just the dedication of the engineer Soldiers, but of the devotion and sacrifice of families and employers as the troops prepared for a mobilization that may last between one to two years.

"Thank you for sharing your loved one with us to the important work we do," said Seals to the assembled families and employers.



Staff Sgt. Lisa Spuccafero and her family say farewell at the 204th Engineers farewell ceremony in Binghamton on March 1, 2004. Photo by Sgt. Peter Towse.

Commentary:

Some Soldiers Missed Super Bowl

By Lt. Col. Andrew Straw
Army News Service

WASHINGTON, DC

At kickoff, I was touching up the shine on my combat boots. I thought of calling my wife in Charlotte, N.C., but she had already gone across town to a Super Bowl party.

As I left Washington for the drive to the airfield, the first half was winding down and the score was still 0-0. I couldn't find the game on the car radio and forgot about football for the next 30 minutes.

I arrived at Davison Army Airfield to find the eight young Soldiers from the Honor Guard, also dressed in camouflage fatigues, sprawled out in the small passenger lounge. They were watching the halftime show on TV and wisecracking back and forth just like thousands of other groups of young guys across the country at that moment. I learned that the score was 14-10, Panthers behind.

The general arrived five minutes later, just as the pilot stepped in to say the aircraft was ready. On the TV behind me, play was just beginning for the second half.

The ten of us followed a sergeant through the darkness from the nearly-deserted terminal to a waiting helicopter. As we carefully tiptoed across patches of ice on the tarmac, one of the Honor Guard Soldiers whispered something about Janet Jackson.

We flew to Delaware at low altitude over beautiful snow-covered scenery. We landed at Dover Air Force Base 45 minutes later, and parked near a huge C-141 cargo plane with Air Force Reserve markings. The rear doors and ramp were open, and light spilled from the huge cargo bay.

I followed the general as he was quickly ushered into a small, neat passenger lounge. Coffee? Water? The game was on TV; the score was 22-21. A half dozen others in various uniforms were waiting. I introduced myself to a major from New York City—a forensic dentist in the Army Reserve, called up to help out for a 30-day tour. An Air Force chaplain spoke about the support from his wife while recalled to active duty.

While the general got a briefing on the mission details, an Air Force colonel gathered the rest of us together, and we marched out to the C-141. I followed him up the ladder into the cargo bay. It was empty except for the three oblong

boxes in a perfect row down the center. Two loadmasters were adjusting the ramp in the rear of the aircraft, and several others were carefully arranging U.S. flags over each of the boxes. A congenial major explained the proceedings the way a priest leads a family through a wedding rehearsal.

I line up with the flight crew along the fuselage, facing the caskets. Attention! The Honor Guard marches in silently; wearing white gloves with their camouflage uniforms now. The general marches up the ramp with the Air Force wing commander, a colonel. The chaplain says a prayer with all the right words: fallen warriors...the Army family...selfless service...the price of freedom.

Nobody is thinking about football. Nobody. The young Soldiers from the Old Guard are standing smartly, solemnly, expressionless. No slouching or snickers now, only the serious task at hand. Ready...Down! Ready...Up! Ready...Face! Forward...March! They move to the measured commands with astounding precision.

In the cold dark night, there are fewer than two dozen of us present. No outsiders are watching, but those young men give a TV-quality performance, as if their burden was a fallen president. We salute as the first remains are marched off the plane under the watchful gaze of the general. He salutes.

We do it again for the second set and the third. The unmarked, clean, white truck then drives off very slowly with its red, white, and blue-draped cargo. The Honor Detail marches behind it. The General dismisses us.

Back in the small lounge, the game is still on, eight seconds left. I watch the unfolding excitement numbly.

Welcome home, fallen sergeant, corporal, and private first class.

You missed the Super Bowl. The Patriots won.

Thank you.

(Editor's note: Sgt. Eliu Miersandoval, 27, Cpl. Juan Cabralbanuelos, 25, and Pfc. Holly McGeogh, 19, of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, died Jan. 31 in Kirkuk, Iraq, when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device during convoy operations. Lt. Col. Andrew Straw is an Army Reserve officer from Charlotte, North Carolina now serving on active duty at the Pentagon.)



Spc. Peter Heggie watches as his four-year-old son Jonathan writes well-wishes on a unit banner at the farewell ceremony for Soldiers of B Company, 204th Engineer Battalion in Walton. Heggie joins more than 100 engineer Soldiers deploying for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Photo by Maj. Richard Goldenberg.

Commander, personally addresses the assembled Soldiers as they each prepared for their deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Company A Soldiers will deploy to Afghanistan with an engineer battalion from the Maine Army National Guard while troops from Company B will head to Iraq under the control of Combined Joint Task Force Seven.

"Thomas Paine said more than 225 years ago that 'If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, so that my child may know peace,'" said Seals, the 204th Battalion Commander.

In the wake of the 9-11 terror attacks at the World Trade Center, Soldiers from the 204th have performed considerable state active duty in New York City in support of civil authorities.

Additionally, the battalion's engineers responded to several weather emergencies in central and western New York.

A Family Serving America With Pride

By Staff Sgt. John Gassler
HQ, 105th AW

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD
BASE

Each branch of the Armed Forces has mottos. For example, a motto of the U.S. Navy is, "Not for self, but country." A motto of the U.S. Army is, "This we'll defend." As for



Master Sgt. Bob Clark with his son Gunnery Officer Lt. j.g. Chris Clark. Courtesy photo.

the Air Force, it's "One over all" or "No one comes close." Whatever the adage, however, each exemplifies military pride and honor.

For Master Sgt. Bob Clark from the 105th Medical Squadron, who has a daughter in the Army and a son in the Navy, who both served overseas in support of "Operation Iraqi Freedom," (OIF) there's no shortage of pride in his family.

So, when it comes to serving in the military does the saying, "Pride runs deep," really hold true? According to Gunnery Officer Chris Clark, 24, who is currently serving aboard a guided missile destroyer on a six month overseas deployment, it certainly does.

"My father is in the Air Force and my sister is in the Army. I decided to join the Navy because I felt that branch of service had the most to offer," the younger Clark said. "Regardless of my choice, I joined the military because I'm patriotic and believe in serving my country. I'm proud to say I'm part of the best Navy in the world," he said.

As a member of the "best navy in the world," Lt. j.g. Clark served in the Gulf during the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He said the experience was a real eye opener. "Everyday was something new, and there was always important work

that needed to be done. With so much happening, you had to force yourself to focus on the big picture—the mission. Overall, it's satisfying to know I helped forge a page of world history."

Trying to craft her own niche in life, on land rather than in the skies or on the seas, Spc. Elena Clark, 20, a combat medic attached to the 94th Engineering Battalion said serving in the Army isn't easy, but it is certainly worth it.

"I'll admit part of the reason I joined the Army was for the excitement. I wanted to see new places and experience new things, but I also wanted to serve my country. I enjoy being part of a team and I like feeling my job makes a difference," she said. Clark also served overseas, in Kuwait, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Whether or not Chris Clark stands by the axiom "Accelerate your life" or Elena Clark believes in being "An Army of one," Mas-

ter Sgt. Bob Clark says he's glad both his son and daughter "Aim High."

"As a father, you always worry about the safety and security of your children, especially if they're in the military. Despite my worries, however, I'm proud that they decided to serve. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, it doesn't matter what branch of service they're in, I love them nonetheless," he said.



Spc. Elena Clark with father Master Sgt. Bob Clark. They share a common military thread in their desert BDU uniforms. Courtesy photo.

Guard Soldier Promoted to General Officer

Assistant to Army Surgeon General Receives Star of a Brigadier General

By Maj. Richard Goldenberg
Guard Times Staff

WASHINGTON, DC

The Surgeon General of the United States Army, Lt. Gen. James Peake, and Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, the Director of the Army National Guard presided over the pinning ceremony to promote New York Army National Guard member Deborah Wheeling to the rank of Brig. Gen. The ceremony was held in January at the Memorial for Women in Military Service in Washington, DC.

Since 1999, Wheeling has served on an active Guard and Reserve (AGR) tour with National Guard Bureau to develop and implement healthcare policy for the Army National Guard. In 2002, she was selected as the Assistant Surgeon General for Mobilization, Readiness and National Guard Affairs in the Office of the Surgeon General.

"There is a Chinese proverb that states, 'A single soldier does not make a general, just as a single tree does not make a forest,'" Wheeling said. "I could not and did not reach this momentous point in my career solely on my own merit. All that we have accomplished together over the last 30 years places me here and I am honored and I am humbled."

In her 29 years of military service, Brig. Gen. Deborah Wheeling has served in a variety of active duty and Reserve component assignments for the Army's medical department. Assignments at Army hospitals provided

clinical nursing experience that culminated in her assignment as a head nurse. Wheeling was the first to develop and implement the role of an Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist. Following her service on active duty, she served as the State Chief Nurse for the West Virginia National Guard, overseeing the medical deployment needs of Soldiers and Airmen in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. After transfer to the New York National Guard in the early 1990s, Wheeling served as the State Chief Nurse and Deputy Commander for the State's Area Command Medical Detachment.

Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr., The Adjutant General of New York State said "We are extremely proud of Brig. Gen. Wheeling and the great contributions she has made to the health of National Guard Soldiers across the nation. This promotion is certainly well-deserved."

Wheeling holds a Master of Science in Nursing from Duke University and is board certified as an Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Columbia University in New York City. She is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and Army War College, receiving a master's degree in Strategic Studies.



Brig. Gen. Deborah Wheeling receives the star of a general officer at her promotion ceremony in Washington, DC. Present for her promotion were Lt. Gens. James Peake, Army Surgeon General (at left) and Roger Schultz, Director of the Army National Guard (right). "This is not my celebration alone, nor my success story alone," said Wheeling. "I stand here because of what I have accomplished in concert with you all." Courtesy photo.

Girl Scouts and Buffalo Firm Sweeten Family Support Gift of Caring Sent to Troops

By Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
138th MPAD

BUFFALO

Girl Scouts here were on point for family support last Christmas, selling more than 800 boxes of Girl Scout cookies and donating them to the 105th Military Police Company, New York Army National Guard, now serving in Iraq.

Working with Buffalo-based Mod-Pac Corporation, Western New York Girl Scouts of Troops of the Dodge Service Unit of the Girl Scout Council of Buffalo and Erie County Inc. shipped more than 800 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies to the 105th Military Police in Iraq.

According to Phil Rechin, Mod-Pac Corporation's vice-president of sales, the cookie project began when he jokingly suggested to his daughters, Girl Scouts Melissa Rechin, age 10, and Leigh Rechin, age 12, that they donate cookies to troops serving in Iraq -- like their uncle, Rechin's brother, Staff Sgt. Brian Rechin of the 105th MP Company.

It was no joke to Melissa, Girl Scout Troop #253, and Leigh, Girl Scout Troop #890. They brought the idea to their troop leaders, and through a Girl Scout tradition called "The Gift of Caring", the Girl Scout Troops decided to send cookies to the MPs.

The Gift of Caring is part of the annual Girl Scout cookie sale in Western New York, according to a press release from the Girl Scout Cookie Council of Buffalo and Erie County.

It is an opportunity for friends and neighbors of Girls Scouts to donate cookies to good causes like senior citizen centers, homeless shelters and food pantries.

This year, the cause was the 105th MP Company.

The Girl Scout troops, together with about 20 other individual scouts who volunteered, sold more than 800 boxes of cookies, which were then donated to the project.

Rechin brought the cookie project to Mod-Pac Corporation's President Dan Keane, who approved using Mod-Pac's facilities to pack the cookies.

"I thought since I opened my mouth," Rechin said, "I had to follow it all the way through."

The scouts packed the cookies, along with a scrapbook of photos and letters about themselves, and Mod-Pac paid \$300 to ship them to the troops via the United States Postal Service, since commercial freight carriers can't deliver to post office boxes.

Rechin said the Soldiers are away from the "little things we take for granted."

"They're over there, living in tents, eating MREs," said Rechin. "Even little things that remind them of home are important."



Girl Scouts from Troops #253 and #890 display their shipment of donated cookies destined for Soldiers of the NY Army National Guard's 105th Military Police Company serving in Iraq. The girls were assisted by Mod-Pac Corporation in Buffalo, who provided commercial shipping overseas.

Rechin's brother, Staff Sgt. Brian Rechin, is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm and has performed peacekeeping missions in Bosnia in 2000.

"We forget our rights and freedoms were earned by vets who served overseas," said Rechin. "We should definitely keep the troops in mind," he said. "We're not over there, but we suffer with the separation. Whether you agree with the Iraq mission or not, we need to stand behind the troops."

U.S. Flag Insignia to be Worn by All

By Sgt. 1st Class Marcia Triggs
Army News Service

WASHINGTON, DC

All Soldiers can now wear the U.S. flag insignia on the right shoulder of their utility uniform, as a continued reminder that the Army is engaged in a war at home and abroad.

"The flag has been around for years to identify deploying troops. Now based on the Army's joint expeditionary mindset, the flag represents our commitment to fight the war on terror for the foreseeable future," said Sgt. Maj. Walter Morales, the uniform policy chief for G1.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker approved the uniform item Feb. 11, and all Soldiers have until Oct. 1, 2005 to get the insignia sewn on their uniforms.

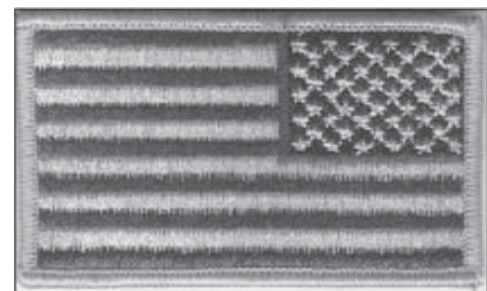
A message on the policy went out Feb. 14, announcing "the current policy of deployed Soldiers wearing the U.S. flag on utility uniforms is expanded to include all Soldiers throughout the force regardless of deployment status."

Currently there are not enough flags in the inventory, which is why Soldiers have a substantial amount of time to get the flags sewn on, Morales said. Deploying troops have the priority. Everyone else will have to wait until the Defense Logistics Agency has more in stock, he said. An estimated 30 million flags need to be procured, he added.

Enlisted Soldiers will not have to purchase the flags. They will be issued five flags from their unit, and commanders will make arrangements for getting the insignia sewn on, Morales said. However, if Soldiers purchase the flags on their own, they will not be reimbursed, he added.

Nothing has changed regarding the placement of the flag, Morales said. It is sewn 1/2 inch below the shoulder seam. If a combat patch is also placed on the right shoulder, the flag is sewn 1/8 inch below the combat patch.

Editor's Note: Due to the high demand, many units have U.S. flag patches on backorder. Upon receipt of the U.S. flag patches, soldiers and units should make arrangements to have the patches sewn on.



Why Wear Flags Backward?

By Lisa Burgess
Courtesy of Stars and Stripes European Edition

ARLINGTON, VA

Why do American Soldiers wear the U.S. flag insignia "backward" on the right shoulder of their utility uniforms, with the canton (the correct name for the rectangle with the stars) on an observer's right?

It's a question Soldiers frequently hear as they travel through civilian airports, or talk to other servicemembers.

And it does look "wrong," because U.S. federal code calls for the canton to always be positioned to an observer's left.

The Soldiers aren't wrong, however, and neither are their tailors, Lt. Col. Stanley Heath, an Army spokesman, explained in a telephone interview.

Army regulations call for the flag "to be worn so that to observers, it looks as if the flag is flying against a breeze," Heath said.

In fact, the rule is a nod to the Army's early history, when wars were fought as a series of choreographed battles — two armies clashing head-on until one side emerged victorious.

In those battles, units would designate one Soldier as "standard bearer," to carry the Colors into the fight.

As the standard bearer charged, his forward momentum would cause the flag to stream back. Since the Stars and Stripes are mounted with the canton closest to the pole, that section staid to the right, while the stripes flew leftward.

And that's why Soldiers wear flag patches "backward" — to show the Army moving forward in everything it does.

Leading the Way from Within

The Adjutant General Calls Conference of Senior Leaders

Story and photos by Spc Richard Vogt, Jr.
138th MPAD

ALBANY

The Adjutant General, Major General Thomas P. Maguire Jr., called a conference of senior leaders on February 20, 2004 to discuss issues facing the New York Army National Guard.

Maguire decided that it was necessary to bring commanders and leaders together to discuss the changes that are taking place within the New York Army National Guard.

"We will measure the success of this conference over the next five years," Maguire said. "It's the long-term benefits we're looking for. We are looking at how officer's and senior Non-Commissioned Officers are interacting."

The response was a positive one to The Adjutant General's goal of making every Soldier a recruiter.

Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire Jr., The Adjutant General, welcomes Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, the Army National Guard's Director at the senior leader conference in Albany.



"We get to be together and see the senior leadership," said Capt. Arthur Zegers, of the 204th Engineers. "There is more camaraderie and, as a result of the conference, a collective orientation toward this goal."

In addition to the meetings about recruiting and retention, there was a change of command ceremony for the New York Army National Guard. Brig. Gen. Stephen Seiter, the former commander of the 53rd Troop Command, assumed command of the New York Army National Guard and left the 53rd Troop Command to Col. Michael Swezey.

Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, Director of the Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau, in Washington, D.C., praised the work of New York's Soldiers and Airmen. "Every time I called, New York has responded," Schultz said to the assembled commanders.

Sgt. Maj. Charles Steele, the State Family Program Coordinator, was on hand to discuss family readiness issues within the Guard. He pointed out that family readiness is one of the most crucial and overlooked aspects of a unit's mission.

"When Soldiers know that their families are taken care of, they can better concentrate on the mission," Steele said. "We need to train families and prepare them so they are ready in the event that a unit is mobilized." Steele also pointed out that there are resources readily available on the web covering a full range of family readiness issues.

Lt. Col. Jane Monville-Helton, a liaison between the 27th brigade and deploying units, is on a two-year professional development tour with the 27th Brigade. Her job is to aid in the medical screening process for units being mobilized. She said that the conference gave commanders a unified sense of mission.

"We all leave on the same sheet of music," Monville-Helton said. "We all get the same message, and that puts an end to misconceptions."

Lt. Col. Nancy McNutt of Medical Command agreed. "This weekend has been great," McNutt said. "We get to be together, get to meet the senior leadership and share comments and suggestions."

"I salute you," Lt. Gen. Schultz said, in a closing address to the Soldiers. "I am proud to serve with you."



Brig. Gen. Seiter receives the colors during an assumption of command ceremony from The Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr. Seiter receives the command from Brig. Gen. Edward Klein, shown at left. Over the weekend conference, Seiter introduced his "Every Soldier a Recruiter" initiative to the force. In addition, Col. Michael Swezey received the command of the 53rd Troop Command in a similar ceremony.

Orion Soldier a New American Citizen



Born and raised in Thailand, Spc. Santy Keophomma, a member of the New York Army National Guard since 1999, received his U.S. Citizenship on March 5, 2004 at the Broom County Courthouse in Binghamton. A Binghamton resident since March of 1990 when he moved to the United States, Keophomma is a member of D Co., 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment from Ithaca. Mobilized in January 2003 to support Operation Noble Eagle, Keophomma and other infantry Soldiers are assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing in Newburgh to provide security for the base. "I'm proud to have a Soldier like Spc. Keophomma in my unit," said Staff Sgt. Brian Bennett, security team leader. "He's dedicated, disciplined and he's a great Soldier. He should be recognized for his efforts and his commitment to the country," Bennett said. Prior to joining the New York Army National Guard, Keophomma served four years with the Active Army from 1996 to 2000. During that time he served in Germany. After active duty, he joined the New York Army National Guard, fulfilled his one-year obligation and rejoined the Army National Guard after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Photo by Sgt. Peter Towse, 138th MPAD.

Miracle on Ice - Hudson Valley Style

By Maj. Edward H. Krafft
HQ, 105th Airlift Wing

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE

On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and other fields will bear the fruits of victory.

— General Douglas MacArthur

Hockey is about teamwork, camaraderie and hard work. The base hockey team here in Newburgh, the Stewart Flyers, was reborn in February 2002 and recently celebrated its second anniversary. It was a chance to lose a few pounds and make some new friends. In previous years, members had come together for pick up games on local rinks. It had never been more than that.

Putting a hockey team together in recent months has been a daunting task. Many members of the 105th Airlift Wing had mobilized in 2001 and 2002 for support to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Mobilizations can produce stress, anxiety and sometimes, opportunity.

A few members in the flying squadron started talking about hockey when the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Air National Guard Base in Mass. hosted a hockey tournament in April of 2002. What started as a hallway conversation produced a meeting of 30 players. Eight weeks later, the air wing sent 17 players to the tournament.

The team results were respectable: a 3-2 loss to the Otis Air National Guard Base and a 4-3 loss to the Massachusetts Army Guard Redlegs. Then an 8-0 victory over Hanscom Air Force Base placed the Stewart Flyers in the playoff round. Unfortunately, inexperience and a lack of practice found us summarily beaten by a Massachusetts State Troopers team.

With an average age on the high side of 35 and little practice, many of us had not played in 15 plus years. Yet we were still able to compete. That in itself is the miracle on ice for the team.

In 2003 we participated in another tournament sponsored by Hanscom, where we were missing two of our best defensemen and lost all three games. The Stewart Flyers also did a charity game against West Point that produced a 7-6 victory.



The goaltender's face mask for the New York Air National Guard's Stewart Flyers, reflects the FDNY background of its owner. Courtesy photo.

The second annual Armed Services Hockey Championship will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada October 11-15, 2004 and we hope to field a team. The inaugural tournament last year had teams from South Carolina, Texas, California, North Dakota, Utah and two of the teams already played against, Hanscom Air Force Base and the Massachusetts Army Guard Redlegs (who managed to win their division).

The Internet website for Armed Services Hockey is www.armedserviceshockey.freeservers.com for further detail about the sport.



The hockey team at Stewart Air National Guard Base, the Stewart Flyers. The team expects to participate in the Second Annual Armed Services Hockey Championship in Las Vegas, Nevada this October. Courtesy photo.

About Guard Times

The Guard Times is authorized under provisions of Army Regulation 360-1 and Air Force Regulation 190-1 and is a publication of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, and the New York Army and Air National Guard. Views which appear in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense.

The Guard Times has a circulation of 25,000 and is distributed free to members of the New York State Militia Force and employees of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

Articles, photos and letters are welcome. Please provide article submissions on a computer disk with a hard print out and a name and telephone number for a point of contact. We prefer stories saved in Microsoft Word or ASCII text. Submission deadlines are February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15 and December 15. Send your submissions to:

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Guard Times Address Changes

Changed your address recently?

Is the Guard Times still coming to an old address?

If so, it may be time to check with your unit administrator. Chances are, the old address is still listed at the unit.

Computerized shipping labels are produced for Guard Times at state headquarters from the electronic data base. This information is updated through periodic submissions from the field. The unit, SIDPERS, the Personnel Services Branch and military pay all need to have a document supplied by the soldier to change the home address.

Before writing us at the Guard Times about your address change, start with your unit. It takes about two months before the change hits the system, but, guess what! The Guard Times comes out every two months. So if you have verified the unit has the correct information and the Guard Times still came to the old address, be patient. The next issue should come to the new address.

Reminder. It is the soldier's responsibility to submit address changes in a prompt manner.

Complimentary or Back Issues

Complimentary or back issues of the Guard Times are available. Contact us at the address above.