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Serving the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia, New York Guard and Families

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

It seems at times the only certainty in life is change.

The Army I joined as a young man was focused on a massive tank-on-tank fight against the Warsaw Pact in Germany.

The Army I served in during the 1990s prepared to fight a conventional enemy army in Korea or the Middle East.

The Army I served in after Sept. 11, 2001—and the one which at least half of you reading this joined—fought low-intensity, nation-building wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now the Army and the Air Force--and the Army and Air National Guard with them--are facing more changes.

The resources available to the military are going to be less than we're used to. As a result the Army and Air Force are shrinking and the National Guard components of each service are going to shrink as well. And the focus on one kind of threat—guerilla warfare or terrorists in a third world country—is shifting back to multiple threats our military has to be prepared for.

Our weapons systems are changing. For example, more Air Guard units are flying remotely piloted aircraft.

These changes and many more, are why we chose "Growing Adaptive Leaders in a Rapidly Changing Environment" as the theme for our annual Leader Professional Development program held in March. I want our Army and Air National Guard leaders to think about the changes we face, and what they can do to grow junior officers and non-commissioned officers who can adapt and meet future challenges.

But thinking about the changes we face, how leaders can adapt to those changes, isn't just the job of colonels and E-9s. Every New York Army and Air National Guard leader, from sergeant on up, need to be ready to cope with the challenges and opportunities facing us every day.

While we may not be facing an enemy that could destroy our country, as we believed the Soviet Union once could, there are plenty of threats to peace and security that our leaders need to prepare for.

New York City is always going to be a target for terrorists. We need to be prepared to respond to a terrorist attack just as the New York National Guard did when the World Trade Towers were attacked on Sept. 11, 2001.

Fortunately, today our capability and capacity to respond is more robust. We've drilled repeatedly to respond to attacks with our CERFP and our New York Homeland Response Force. The combat experience our Army and Air Guard have gained since 2001 means we have plenty of battle-tested leaders who know how to react to a complex operational environment.

Weather is a threat as well. In 2011, Tropical Storms Lee and Irene caused millions of dollars of damage in the Catskills, Adirondacks, and the Southern Tier. In 2012, Superstorm Sandy destroyed parts of New York City and Long Island.

The Army and Air National Guard were an integral part of the state's response to those storms, so we can never stop planning and preparing to meet those threats.

And while we're preparing to deal with natural disasters and responding to terrorist attacks, we have to make sure our conventional warfighting skills are first rate.

The Russian Federation's recent annexation of Crimea makes it clear that nation-states are still a threat to world peace, and the U.S. Army and Air Force could still be called upon to fight a well-armed aggressor.

Our leaders also have to adapt the way we train.

While we were sending units to war in Iraq or Afghanistan, mobilizing units trained to meet standards set by higher headquarters. All other units that were not mobilizing supported those units that were. Our junior leaders often know no other model.

The art and science of developing a Mission Essential Training List and then generating a unit's long-range and short-range training plan has atrophied over time.

We have to rediscover the training management skills we used to have. Leaders from squad and section, to the squadron and battalion will need to know how to take advantage of their available training time and resources to ensure their units reach the highest state of readiness.

The reduction in funding means leaders have to relearn the art of doing creative training in local training areas.

In the 1990s, as Guard dollars were cut in the post-Cold War environment, leaders at all levels looked for smart, low-cost ways to train. We built terrain models on the drill shed floors to practice artillery call-for-fire drills and used jeeps to simulate tanks during mounted battle drills.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

Our senior leaders also have to adapt to the way our young Guard Soldiers and Airmen embrace technology in their everyday lives. These young people instinctively understand how to leverage technology to do their jobs better.

In World War II, the average GI's ability to fix an engine was a tremendous force multiplier for the U.S. Army. The modern tech-savvy Soldier and Airmen can bring that same advantage to our military today as we deal with cyber threats and information operations.

While the environment will change and leaders need to learn to adapt, the foundations of the Army and Air Force will not change.

The core values of the Army - Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage - and the Air Force - Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do, are enduring.

If all leaders embrace these core values and allow them to guide decisions and influence interactions with Soldiers and Airmen, our organization will flourish.

The quality of our Soldiers and Airmen today is collectively better than at any time in my more than 35 years in uniform. These same Soldiers and Airmen deserve our best effort as leaders. We all need to be adaptable and mission focused professionals as we work to maintain the highest level of readiness in support of our state and nation.

Watch the TAG's Year in Review Video on YouTube.

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FORT DRUM -- Soldiers of the Headquarters and Support Company, 42nd Infantry Division fire an MK-19 automatic grenade launcher while training in the rain and snow at Fort Drum's Range 20C on April 5. Photo by Sgt. J. p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

FRONT COVER: A Soldier from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment, runs toward Gun 5 moments after it fired in the rain and snow at Fort Drum, N.Y. April 5. Photo by Sgt. J.p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

BACK COVER: A Member of the 106th Rescue Wing Honor Guard trains in various movements at FS Gabreski Air National Guard Base on March 31st, 2014. Photo by Senior Airman C.S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

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Pentagon Announces Changes to Imminent Danger Pay

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr., American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- The Defense Department announced changes in imminent danger pay that will go into effect June 1, Col. Steven Warren said.

"This is a process that began [in 2011]," he said, and "included in-depth threat assessment from the combatant commands. It was made in coordination with the Joint Staff, combatant commands and military services."

Warren noted this policy change was not a budget-driven decision, but part of a routine recertification that "happens every couple of years -- it's an ongoing process."

According to a DOD news release announcing the recertification, the combatant commands conducted in-depth threat assessments for countries within their areas of responsibility.

Following the review, the release stated, it was determined that the imminent threat of physical harm to U.S. military personnel due to civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism or wartime conditions is significantly reduced in many countries, resulting in the discontinuation of imminent danger pay in those areas.

Periodic recertification of IDP, according to the news release, ensures that imminent danger designations match the actual conditions of designated countries so that the department can provide fair entitlements and benefits. The last recertification was completed in 2007.

The DOD news release noted the following areas would no longer be designated as imminent danger areas for IDP purposes:

- The nine land areas of East Timor, Haiti, Liberia, Oman, Rwanda, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
- The six land areas and airspace above Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro.
- The four water areas of the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea.
- The water area and air space above the Persian Gulf.

"Of specific note," Warren said, "imminent danger pay will remain in effect for the following: Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Jordan, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Egypt."

Although 2013 statistics are not currently available, Warren noted the year prior, 194,189 personnel received imminent danger pay.

"Approximately 50,000 less will be receiving imminent danger pay," he said. "In [2012], we spent approximately $500 million on imminent danger pay. This will result in a reduction of approximately $100 million."

The benefit provides troops in imminent danger areas about $7.50 per day up to the maximum monthly rate of $225.gt

Guard Athletes Honored at White House

Photo courtesy of Sgt. Matt Mortensen, New York National Guard

WASHINGTON -- Soldier-athletes who competed in the 2014 Winter Olympics and Paralympics pose on the South Lawn of the White House, April 3. From left to right are: Sgt. Matthew Mortensen; luge coach Staff Sgt. William Tavares (in suit); Sgt. Preston Griffall; Sgt. Justin Olsen; Staff Sgt. Jen Lee; Capt. Christopher Fogt; and Sgt. Nicholas Cunningham. (Not pictured, Sgt. Dallas Robinson)

Testimony: National Guard is part of cyber security solution

By Sgt. 1st Class Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

Soldiers from the Fairfax, Va.-based Data Processing Unit conduct a computer network defense exercise Sept. 15, 2012, in Fairfax. The exercise used different cyber scenarios of varying difficulty in order to evaluate the proficiency levels of the unit's Soldiers in computer network defense. Photo by Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard.

WASHINGTON - Many people are unaware of the full scope of cyber security challenges facing the nation and the National Guard is part of the solution.

Those were among the messages that emerged from a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the nominee to be the next commander of U.S. Cyber Command on Tuesday.

"The Guard can play a huge role," Army Gen. Keith Alexander, the current chief of USCYBERCOM told Congress in 2013. "It gives us additional capacity that we may need in a cyber conflict. … It also provides us an ability to work with the states."

On Tuesday, Navy Vice Adm. Michael Rogers, the president's nominee to replace Alexander, told senators he agrees.

"U.S. Cyber Command currently has an ongoing series of exercises designed to exercise with Guard units in the cyber arena," Rogers said, adding that the USCYBERCOM also is talking with governors and adjutants general about how to maximize cyber capability. "We've got to maximize that capability," he said.

Tuesday's hearing highlighted the scope of the cyber challenge. Also testifying was Air Force Gen. Paul Selva, the nominee to command U.S. Transportation Command. USTRANSCOM provides an illustration of the extent of the cyber challenge: It relies on commercial partners' unclassified civilian networks to exchange a significant percentage of its information and in 2012 faced about 100,000 attempted attacks on its networks, according to committee testimony.

Government and public and private businesses and individuals all face cyber intrusions, the Senate Armed Services Committee heard, discussing whether cyber attacks are analogous to conventional warfare attacks, because of the personal and economic harm they can inflict.

"We face a growing array of cyber threats from foreign intelligence services, terrorists, criminal groups and hacktivists, who are increasing their capability to steal, manipulate or destroy information and networks in a manner that risks compromising our personal and national security," Rogers told Congress.

Even with budget constraints, cyber capabilities are one of the few areas targeted for growth by the Defense Department, Rogers noted.

Because of their civilian-acquired skills, National Guard members offer valuable capabilities, training, education and abilities for cyber missions, the committee heard.

"Cyber will be an element of almost any crisis we are going to see in the future," Rogers said.

The National Guard has longstanding relationships with public and private cyber-related organizations in the more than 3,000 communities where the Guard is based.

'Small Steps to a Healthier You'

By Guard Your Health, Army National Guard Chief Surgeon's Office

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Guard Your Health launched the Small Steps to a Healthier You Challenge, also known as Small Steps, this spring to help Army National Guard Soldiers and their families create long-term healthy habits by changing their daily routines slightly.

Small Steps was inspired by the fact that almost 90 percent of New Year's resolutions fail each year -- largely because they are too ambitious or ill-defined.

By early spring, many Soldiers find their aspiration turning into frustration and ditch their healthy living efforts.

The challenge is designed to encourage these individuals to take a more realistic approach to self-improvement for the remainder of the year.

Small Steps represents the first push in the Guard Your Health team's effort to teach Soldiers, their families and communities about how easy and impactful small changes can be.

Small Steps is a 28-day challenge in which participants are asked to adopt one quick and easy health change a day. The steps touch on all aspects of mental, physical and spiritual health, from drinking more water and increasing time outdoors to remembering to floss.

"People tend to give up on their resolutions around this time of year," said Army National Guard Chief Surgeon Col. Anne Naclerio, a board-certified pediatrician. "They head into January with so much momentum and then abandon their goals after a couple months. We're hoping Small Steps will help keep people on track without overwhelming them with too much change all at once. We want to teach the community that it is not about the size of change, but rather the fact that they do just a little bit every day."

"People tend to give up on their resolutions around this time of year. They head into January with so much momentum and then abandon their goals after a couple months."

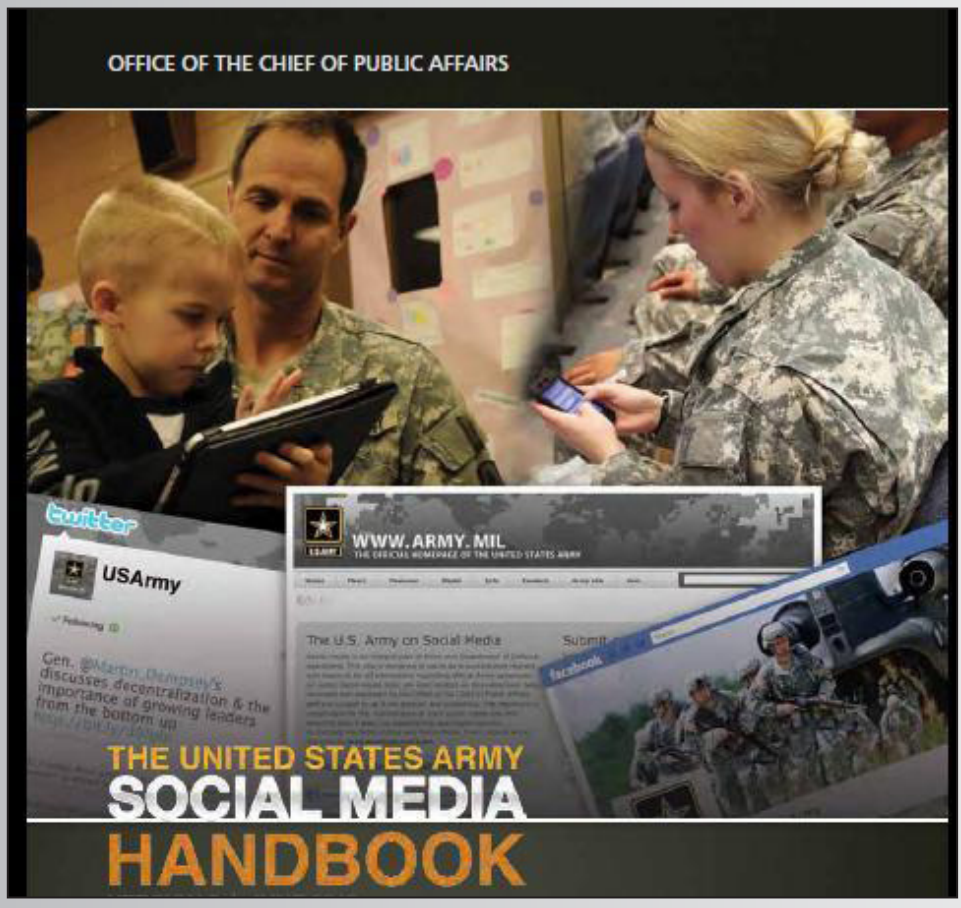
-- Army National Guard Chief Surgeon Col. Anne Naclerio

Guard Your Health, a health and medical readiness website for Army National Guard Soldiers and their families, supports the Chief Surgeon of the Army National Guard's efforts to build and sustain a resilient, adaptable and medically ready Citizen-Soldier force. Guard Your Health provides Army National Guard Soldiers with the information, motivation, and support they need to overcome challenges and make healthy decisions for themselves, their units, and their families.

To learn more, visit GuardYourHealth.com, Like "Army National Guard Health" on Facebook, or follow @ARNGHealth on Twitter. **gt**

Social Media Offers Many Benefits - Guard Members Must Remain Aware of its Risks

By Tech. Sgt. David Eichaker, National Guard Bureau



ARLINGTON, Va. - The use of social media has made it easier for many to stay connected to friends and family. It often provides the opportunities to give near instant communications via text or images and can help ease stresses when servicemembers are deployed. The benefits of social media are nearly endless and often far reaching.

"Social media spreads news faster than any other media," said Chief Master Sgt. Mitchell Brush, the senior enlisted advisor for the chief, National Guard Bureau, on his Facebook page, adding "it empowers us to effect change and do good on a community, state, national or even international level."

But while there are many benefits of social media, there are sometimes dangerous ramifications if used inappropriately. The use of social media can often have unintended consequences and in some cases, end military careers.

Even things that may be part of an inside joke among friends, may have a larger meaning or significance when the uniform is worn. Guardmembers must avoid offensive and inappropriate behavior that could bring discredit upon themselves and the National Guard. This includes posting any defamatory, libelous or obscene material.

"You represent the National Guard in cyberspace just as you do in the real world," said Brush, adding "the same military bearing is expected of you here as we expect on the street."

To educate Soldiers and Airmen of the use of social media, both the Army and Air Force have each published a social media handbook which gives guidance for Guardmembers on the use of the medium.

"You are personally responsible for what you say and post on social networking services and any other medium," according to the Air Force Social Media Guide. In addition, "if you have doubts about whether you should post something, err on the side of caution."

The Army Social Media Handbook provides similar guidance for Soldiers.

"Soldiers using social media must abide by the Uniform Code of Military Justice at all times. Commenting, posting or linking to material that violates the UCMJ or basic rules of Soldier conduct is prohibited," adding "it is important that all Soldiers know that once they log on to a social media platform, they still represent the Army."

Even if personal settings are set to private, posted items may not stay private as those who have been granted access can share those postings with others.

According to the Army Social Media Handbook, acceptable postings include pride and support for service, links to published articles about a unit or any information that is already public domain is acceptable.

Prohibited postings include specific unit movement information, gossip, or anything that would represent the military in a bad light.

Guardmembers should not release personal identifiable information that could be used to distinguish their individual identity or that of another servicemember.gt

"Social media spreads news faster than any other media. It empowers us to effect change and do good on a community, state, national or even international level."

--Chief Master Sgt. Mitchell Brush, senior enlisted advisor for Gen. Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau

Inspector General's Corner

Retention is Everyone's Job

Commentary by Col. Darren Sears, JFHQ Inspector General

The Joint Force Headquarters Inspector General Office has fielded a number of inquiries lately dealing with retention issues. We understand that retention issues are a delicate topic when dealing with complainants. After all, we are talking about someone's military career.

However, more often than not, the IG Office is only able to validate bad news and provide a level of expectation management. In most cases, the retention decision has been based solely on factors that were either entirely or substantially within the Soldier or Airman's control.

Soldiers and Airmen need to understand that they are putting themselves at a higher risk of not being retained when they fail to maintain such standards as: performance standards as measured on OERs/OPRs and NCOERs/EPRs, MOS/AFSC qualifications, medical readiness, physical fitness, height/weight, and disciplinary standards to name a few.

One of our IGs likes to say a phrase that we've adopted; "don't put your career in somebody else's hands." What we mean by that is that you should not give decision makers an easy reason not to retain you by not meeting one or more standards expected of you. You should consistently be the Soldier or Airman who strives to be the best and puts forth the effort to maintain readiness and standards always.

The New York National Guard wants and needs Soldiers and Airmen who are ready when the State of New York or our Nation calls. If you're not one of those Soldiers or Airmen, there is an increased chance that you might not be asked to continue your service.

Always strive to be a member that is looking for ways to contribute to the organization, and one of the key ways is just by maintaining your readiness and standards. Don't be a member who is distracting from the diverse missions the New York National Guard is asked to perform every day.

It is also important to realize where you are at in your career. Some of our complainants seem to believe that they have a right to retention beyond 20 years. They seem to equate their mandatory retirement date (MRD) with an entitlement to stay until that date. This is absolutely a false assumption, but many of these Soldiers and Airmen are surprised and unprepared when they are asked to wrap up their career after 20-plus years but prior to their MRD.

Retention past 20 years is at the needs of the Army and Air National Guard. Try hard to make yourself someone that the organization needs, but also realize that just because you think the organization needs you past 20 years does not mean that you have a right or entitlement to stay. Again, know where you stand with respect to your career.

Leaders and supervisors need to ensure they are doing their part when it comes to retention, as well. Leaders and supervisors play an important role in ensuring Soldiers and Airmen are ready and maintain standards, and leaders and supervisors are also key to getting Soldiers and Airmen back on track when they stray.

Don't be the leader or supervisor who failed to make an effort to ensure his or her Soldiers or Airmen were worth retaining.

Lastly, always be planning for that retention decision. In other words, just because that decision is many months or years away, do all you can today to influence it in a positive manner.

Also, understand where you stand in the eyes of leadership. The retention decision should never be a surprise. If it is a surprise, it is most likely caused by one of two things, poor leadership or your failure to meet standards.

Rarely is non-retention a result of poor leadership, but more likely the result of factors that you, as a Soldier or Airmen, were in direct control of and/or capable of fully understanding. Know how retention works and do all you can to ensure you get retained. Don't get surprised.**gt**

Airmen on the Ramp in Afghanistan

BAGRAM, Afghanistan -- Airmen from the 109th Airlift Wing, New York Air National Guard, pose for a team photo in front of a C-130J Super Hercules here Feb. 28, 2014. The team was deployed from their home base in Scotia, N.Y. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Gary J. Rihn.

Chaplain's Corner

Respecting Faith is part of Standards, Discipline

By Master Sgt. Ottavio Lo Piccolo, Chaplain Assistant, 109th Airlift Wing

I'd like to share an event that happened to me when I was a young Airman. I was a 23 year old Senior Airman and working as a graphic artist in the audiovisual field at the time. My job was making posters, signs, etc., for Air Force commanders.

There was a Tech. Sgt. who used to come over to my design table and talk to me about his faith and how great it was. But then he would say negative and offensive things about my own Catholic faith. In fact, he tried to convince me to switch, because according to him I was doomed!

I felt offended and humiliated, but I didn't do anything about it.

I forced myself to listen to his put down "sermons." I just didn't know how to respond. I was afraid and honestly, I was intimidated by the rank.

I'm also sure others have found themselves in similar situations; or may experience a similar incident in the future.

What would you do in a situation like this? We all understand that a noncommissioned officer, or an officer, has no right to degrade another's faith, culture, nationality, gender or sexual orientation. It is part of our military culture, ingrained from our first days in uniform.

What that Tech. Sgt. did was wrong, to say the least. He abused his rank and his authority. But at the time, in my youth and with my own inexperience, I didn't know any better.

Don't be afraid when you see something wrong. We are all responsible to take corrective action. We all have a right to our individual dignity, and it is protected within our force through enforcing standards and discipline.

Whether you are an Airman 1st Class or a Senior Master Sgt., know what right looks like. Know that you can take corrective action, either on-the-spot or through your unit chaplaincy. If a supervisor or boss is part of the problem or doesn't take action, go see your chaplain or you can also talk to the Inspector General.

As a force, we respect all of our members and protect their individuality. It is fundamental to building great teams and achieving great tasks. It is what right looks like. **gt**

Deskins: Military leadership committed to fixing sexual harassment, assault

By Staff Sgt. Michelle Gonzalez, National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON -- Bare walls dominate the office décor, evidence that the newest tenant has recently moved in.

"I'm still getting used to it," says Air Force Brig. Gen. Dawne Deskins about her promotion to brigadier general last month.

For Deskins — the sixth woman promoted to general in the New York National Guard — spearheading the Air National Guard's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program for the 100,000 Air National Guard members is the latest opportunity in a 30-year career.

"It's an exciting time to be in this program. It's a terrible thing that's happening within our ranks, and we've got to get our arms around it, because if we don't, someone else will. I know our leadership all the way up is committed to fixing this."

With her experience as a commander, Deskins was attracted to the opportunity to work as the special assistant to Air Force Lt. Gen. Stanley Clarke, the director of the Air National Guard, and influence the program at a higher level.

"As a commander, there was nothing more important to me than taking care of the people under my command. I held that responsibility very closely and very dear to my heart that I was supposed to create an environment where people could come safely to work and felt that they would not be in any kind of hostile work environment."

Deskins' military experience has been extremely positive and harassment free. "I want every Airman to have that experience," she says. "I bring a perspective of what I know things should look like."

Her goals: improve training for commanders at all levels, improve the process of reporting across the Guard and improve success with local law enforcement.

Deskins plans to look at the similarities of reporting across the Army, Air Force and the Guard to integrate reporting and improve the process.

"Ultimately, I would hope that as we go through our climate assessments, that we'll see trust in the system," Deskins says on how she would measure the success in the program. "That we will find that eventually reports will go down because we've had an effect at the culture level."

Leading the Air National Guard's sexual assault prevention program at a time where sexual assault in the military has garnered national attention, Deskins is carving a moment in the program's history.

But it is not the first time Deskins is part of history: She helped coordinate the military response following the Sept. 11 attacks and the official 9/11 Commission report credits Deskins and the personnel she led that day with responding well to a confusing set of circumstances.

Deskins doesn't limit her opportunities.

"Gen. Clarke asked me if I was willing to look at an opportunity outside of New York. My response was 'yes, as long as I can make a difference.'"

And by taking charge of the Air Guard's SAPR program she can make a difference. **gt**

Brig. Gen. Dawne Deskins leads the Air National Guard's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.

Military Personnel News: The MILPO Corner

Administrative News

Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) update. The Integrated Personnel and Pay System - Army (IPPS-A) Soldier Record Brief (SRB) is preparing for an incremental launch across our force.

This innovative system transformation of personnel and pay systems will occur over the course of the next 4 years. During each release, the Army will launch additional IPPS-A capabilities building on previous releases, including pay functionality. Presently the first of IPPS-A Increment I Wave I has been launched.

The first wave provides ARNG Soldiers the ability to view their individual Soldier Record Brief (SRB), a new multi-component report that will eventually replace the Enlisted Record Brief (ERB) and Officer Record Brief (ORB). The SRB is populated through a trusted multi-component database that interfaces with 15 personnel systems. The SRB will ultimately become a single record for all Army Soldiers. The initial data quality of the SRB will rely heavily on the data accuracy of individual Soldier records.

Army National Guard Soldiers will begin to receive emails to the Soldiers' official military email informing them of their access to IPPS-A and the steps to take to review their SRB. Soldiers will be asked to respond to a correctness survey to assist the IPPS-A program in providing the best capability to the field possible.

Additional information can be accessed on the IPPS-A website: https://www.IPPS-A.army.mil or https://www.IPPS-A.army.mil.

The IPPS-A website is a valuable resource for all Soldiers, HR Professionals, and Leaders, to assist in educating those not familiar with IPPS-A.

MNP AKO Web Page And Wiki Site. Every Officer, Warrant Officer, and Enlisted Soldier involved in Soldier human resource support, has the daily challenge of being aware of current programs, new programs, regulations and procedures as they change on a sometimes daily basis. It is recognized that it is very difficult for both experienced and new administrators to meet this challenge.

The Directorate of Military Personnel, in an effort to help meet this challenge, maintains two web sites which are designed as a combination of specific guidance and/or links to DOD, DA, NGB, or NYARNG guidance. These sites are maintained by our Directorate Branch Managers and Sections Leaders.

Unfortunately, based on some recurring inquiries, some administrators are not aware of this resource or do not use them. The use of these sites is especially essential for any new or inexperienced HR support personnel.

As a secondary requirement, recognizing it is easy for our HR personnel to miss a critical change or possibly not include guidance that is easily understood due to the large number of conflicting responsibilities. Please assist the entire Soldier support structure by providing your input/suggestions to our respective branch and section leaders.

It is important to note the more we collectively utilize and provide input on these sites, the better our overall Soldier support and personnel readiness will be.

Find more at the site https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/553732

Personnel News

New Army Officer Evaluations. Beginning April 1, officers from across the Army are now subject to a new Officer Evaluation Report System (OER). The new system will increase rater accountability and reflect current Army leadership doctrine. One of the changes in the new system is the inclusion of three different forms, or "grade plates," with each being aimed a different subset of the officer corps. The company-grade plate will be used to evaluate company-grade officers, warrant officers and chief warrant officers 2. The field-grade plate will be for field-grade officers and chief warrant officers 3 through 5, while the strategic leader plate will include colonels and brigadier generals. Also, raters will now use check boxes marked "excels," "proficient," "capable" and "unsatisfactory." For information on the new OER process, visit the U.S. Army Human Resources Command website at www.hrc.army.mil.

New Evaluation Publications. The Department of the Army revised evaluation publications, AR 623-3 and DA Pam 623-3, Evaluation Reporting System. The new editions are dated March 31, 2014. The updated regulation and pamphlet prescribe policy and procedures for leaders and Soldiers in the Army's Evaluation Reporting System. They address officer, noncommissioned officer, and academic evaluation reports and academic evaluation reports focused on the assessment of performance.

Please go to the following link to view these publications.

http://www.apd.army.mil/AdminPubs/searchtitle_number_pubs.asp?xradio=pubnum&search=623-3&submit=Go

Official Photograph Requirements. The Fort Drum Visual Information office, located at Building P-1029, Lewis Avenue, Fort Drum, NY, has announced that all services and support from the office requires a work order in advance. Work requests for Troop Self Help, Photo, Graphics and Audiovisual support, must be submitted electronically using the Visual Information Ordering System (www.vios.army.mil). The office hours of operation for photographs are as follows:

a. DA Photo: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 0800-1100 and 1230 – 1500, and from 0800-1100 on Fridays.

b. Head and Shoulder Photos: Mondays only, from 1230-1500.

c. Passport Photos: Monday-Friday, 0800-1100 and 1230-1500

New Uniform Regulation. The completely revised, AR Regulation 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, and Department of the Army Pam 670-1, Uniform and Insignia, dated March 31 2014 are now available on the Army publications web site at the following link.

www.apd.army.mil/AdminPubs/searchtitle_number_pubs.asp?xradio=pubnum&search=670-1&submit=Go

In addition the ARNG G-1 has provided a link to slides that introduce Soldiers at every level to the recently updated regulation. This brief highlights all changes in policy for leaders and Soldiers. Please follow the below link.

https://g1arng.army.pentagon.mil/Pages/DisplayAnnouncement.aspx?AnnouncementID=662

Soldier Support

New York City And Surrounding Area, Survivor Outreach Coordinator (SOS). Mr. Raul Lopez, the Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) Coordinator for Camp Smith, celebrated

his last day with MNP on February 14, 2014. Lopez has been the downstate SOS coordinator since 2010. He provided outstanding assistance to survivors all throughout the New York City and surrounding area. Mr. Lopez will be taking a new job as an SOS Coordinator at West Point.

In appreciation of his hard work, Mr. Lopez was awarded the New York State Adjutant General's Award. It is expected that the position will be filled with a new coordinator by early May 2014. For downstate SOS emergency matters please contact Ms. Bonnie Deiter at 518-270-1541 or Mr. Dan Arena at 315-438-3301.

Casualty Assistance Officer Roster. In order to alleviate some of the common questions regarding the Duty Roster, MNP-CAS has created a Q&A document. For furether questions regarding the Duty Roster please contact the Casualty Affairs Officer, 1st Lt. Katie Kurtz, at 518-270-1542 or Katie.l.kurtz.mil@mil.mil

Education

Guard Incentive Management Systems (GIMS) SOP. Your attention is invited to our updated SOP. https://www.milsuite.mil/wiki/Portal:NYARNG_-_MNP_Procedural_Guide

Information can be found on State and Federal TA or any of our Incentive Programs. MNP-ED is working to provide new, relevant and useful information on our MilWiki site.

New VA Tool Lets Troops Determine GI Bill Benefits. The Department of Veterans Affairs unveiled a new online tool in February, allowing current and former service members or their dependents to compare colleges and universities, calculating what their G.I. Bill benefits provide at each institution, as reported by USA Today. The link provides such information as the amount of tuition the government will cover for a school, how many veterans are attending and graduation rates.

The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill from 2008 provides education benefits to veterans or service members who were on active duty status for at least 90 days after Sept. 10, 2001. Since 2009, $30 billion has gone toward higher education for veterans, troops and family members. The government also launched online sites where troops or veterans can file a complaint if they have problems using their educational benefits.

Healthcare News

Converting Spousal Coverage Under Family Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (FSGLI). The spouse of each Servicemember who has Spousal Coverage under FSGLI now has the option of converting their coverage to an individual insurance policy with a provate insurance company within 120 days after certain key events. Visit the following link provided by S1Net for more information. https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-126089

Tricare Provides Preventive Care. TRICARE supports military families, retirees and other eligible beneficiaries with prevention-based information and resources. Some of the preventive services TRICARE covers are breast cancer exams/mammograms, immunizations, prostate cancer exams, well child care, and cholesterol testing. Costs for these preventive services vary based on an individual's TRICARE plan. Visit the TRICARE Preventive Care webpage at www.tricare.mil/preventivecare

Impact of IRR Assignment On SGLI Coverage. If you are part of the IRR, then you need to know that your Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage will end 120 days after the date you were assigned to the IRR. SGLI provides life insurance coverage to all members of the uniformed services from their date of enlistment to 120 days after their date of separation. For the purposes of SGLI coverage, the date you were assigned to IRR is your date of separation. To learn more about SGLI, visit: w ww.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp

The good news is that you can continue life insurance coverage through Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI). You must enroll for VGLI within 1 year and 120 days from the date you were assigned to the IRR. If you apply for VGLI within the first 240 days of your assignment to the IRR, then you can get VGLI without providing proof of good health—even if you have a serious injury or medical condition. To apply for VGLI, visit: w ww.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/apply-for-VGLI.asp

Dietary Supplement Warning. Warfighters often utilize dietary supplements to help in meeting the extreme demands of military duty. Informed decisions about which supplements to use is critical, with bad decisions adversely impacting on health. The FDA advises consumers to stop using all supplements labeled as OxyElite Pro or VERSA-1. Visit this site for more information: http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm374742.htm

Engineers Get the Job Done in Hohenfels

HOHENFELS, Germany -- Chief Warrant Officer Michael Quijano, 1156th Engineer Company (center) reviews architectural plans with Staff Sgt. Aaron Owens (right), 2nd Lt. Noelle Makhoul (center left) and Sgt. 1st Class John Craig (left) during construction of a multi-use building here at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in March. The 1156th troops and two New York Air National Guardsmen constructed two buildings, complete with wiring, during a three-week period. See our full story on page 27. Photo by Capt. Dan Colomb, 1156th Engineer Company.

Street-Wise Samaritan Spouse

Story by Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

Marison Matias.

NEW YORK -- The wife of a Army National Guard Soldier disarmed a knife-wielding attacker in Cambria Heights Queens March 18, according to police.

The city presented Marisol Matias, wife of Master Sgt. Jose Matias, an award April 30 for helping to stop a potentially deadly incident.

Marisol is a Family Readiness Group leader for Recruiting and Retention Command's Company A in New York City.

Officers charged 19-year old Romario Walker, the alleged assailant, with attempted murder, robbery and three counts of assault, police officials said. Though some of the people involved suffered stab wounds, none of their injuries were life-threatening, they added.

The incident occurred at about 12:30 p.m. on March 18. Matias, of East Meadow, N.Y. was on her way to file her taxes when she saw a man running and screaming for help.

"When I looked up to see why he was screaming, I saw an overturned vehicle," said Matias, who quickly got out of her car to go assist at the crash site.

After discovering a woman trapped inside, Matias kicked out the windows in order to help.

"I stuck my head inside the vehicle to help her get out," said Matias, "but when I did, I saw a young kid inside the car stabbing her."

Overwhelmed by the fact that this had now turned from a vehicle accident to also being a possible hostage situation, she calmed herself down and began to talk to Walker.

"He just kept looking at me, and repeating the word police," she said. "I tried to convince him to hand over the knife, but he wouldn't."

Instead, Walker got out of one of the windows that Matias had broken.

"I thought he was going to stab me," Matias said, adding that two men quickly tackled Walker and tried to restrain him. "He still had his knife in his hand though, and was able to cut through those people," she said.

Shortly after freeing himself, Walker came face-to-face with a police officer who had his gun drawn telling him to lower his weapon.

Walker was still on the ground, and at this point her instinct just kicked in, Matias said.

"I ran up behind him and kicked the knife out of his hand," Matias recalled.

It was this action that prevented any further escalation and led to Walker's arrest.

"We're very proud of her," said her husband Jose, a recruiting section chief. "I think most of us would stop at an accident to help where we can, but at the spur of the moment where the situation changed, you have to react, and I think she did just that."

"I did not know what I was getting myself into," Marisol said. "I was just thinking that I was helping to save somebody from a car accident." **gt**

Centennial World War I Commemoration Effort Gears Up

Story by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- It was called The Great War even as it was going on. It engulfed the world, and the world still feels its effects.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I, and U.S. officials are gearing up to mark the centennial.

In his day job, Robert J. Dalessandro is director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History at Fort Lesley J. McNair here. He also is the acting chairman of the World War I Centennial Commission.

The Great War began in July 1914 with the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This triggered an interconnecting network of alliances to spark mobilization of Europe. England, France and Russia lined up against Germany, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires.

A generation of men died in battle on the fields of France. Overall, about 16.5 million people were killed in the war.

At first, the United States stayed out of it. In fact, when President Woodrow Wilson ran for re-election in 1916, his campaign slogan was "He kept us out of war."

But on April 7, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and the other Central Powers and raised a military force of more than 4 million men. The United States lost 116,516 service members in World War I. Another 205,690 were wounded.

The U.S. commemoration commission is beginning its mission of education now to provide Americans some context for the war.

"You can't just drop into World War I in April of '17 without understanding the road to war," Dalessandro said in an interview. "It was complex politically and internationally, and Americans today need to know what Americans then thought about the war."

This summer begins the centennial, Dalessandro said, calling the archduke's assassination "the Fort Sumter of World War I."

"We want to lead efforts that raise awareness, that encourage a spectrum of organizations to plan programs and develop an education program targeting America's youth," Dalessandro said.

The education aspect may be the commission's most important challenge, he added. "We need to wake up the interest of a new generation of Americans on the effects of World War I," he said.

The Battle of Meuse-Argonne, for example, was the largest American battle up to that point. More than 500,000 doughboys and Marines fought. They faced not only bullets and artillery, but poison gas, tanks and planes. And yet, the American impression of the war is "Snoopy vs. the Red Baron" or "All Quiet on the Western Front," or "Wings," Dalessandro said.

World War I set the stage for the rest of the 20th century. It destroyed four empires: the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire.

One hundred years on, World War I continues to cast a shadow, he said. The nation needs to learn from it, he added, and the commemoration is a place to start. **gt**

Motorcycle Safety Courses for 2014

Classes Available for Troops Across New York State

The following Basic Motorcycle Rider courses will be available at no cost for Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard as of the following dates:

June 21-22	Hudson Valley Community College
June 28 -29	Learn2Ride 2485 W. Henrietta Road, Rochester, N.Y.
June 28-29	First MSP, Shoppingtown Mall 3649 Erie Blvd., East Dewitt, N.Y.
July 12-13 July 26-27	80 Vanderburgh Ave., Troy, N.Y. On the Road Again 533 College Road, Selden, N.Y.

Soldiers attending the course will need, as a minimum, a New York State Motorcycle Learners Permit.

Motorcycles will be provided for these courses. The following equipment will be furnished and worn by the Soldier during the course:
- DOT approved helmet
- Eye protection (or full face helmet)
- Full fingered gloves
- Long legged trousers
- Long sleeved shirt or jacket
- Over the ankle shoes or boots
- High visibility reflective garment or device (PT belt is acceptable)

Soldiers are required to register with Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Austin at (518) 786-6121 or charles.b.austin2.mil@mail.mil to choose which date, location and course prior to attendance. Courses will be closed two weeks prior to the start date of each class.

Soldiers who have already completed the Basic course and possess a motorcycle license can enroll in the MSF Basic Rider Course 2 by contacting Sgt. 1st Class Austin for more information. **gt**

Spring/Summer Safety

JFHQ Safety Office

LATHAM -- The long days and warm temperatures are finally here and Soldiers throughout your formations will be eager to take advantage of their downtime by heading outdoors.

As leaders and safety professionals, it should never be far from your minds that this time of year is historically the most risky for our Soldiers off duty. In fact, off-duty fatalities during the months between April and September have risen nearly 20 percent during the past three fiscal years, a trend that can't be curbed without your help.

So it's up to you to take advantage of the materials in this year's Army Safe Spring/Summer campaign, which runs through September, to raise awareness of common seasonal hazards. A complete toolkit includes posters, videos, informative articles and a presentation template perfect for weekend or holiday safety briefs.

You can find these helpful tips on the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's Safety Multimedia page.

Finally, make an effort to redouble your efforts on Privately Owned Vehicle and Motorcycle accident prevention. Indiscipline continues to be the predominant factor in vehicle and motorcycle accidents, so please do everything you can to educate Soldiers on the dangers of speeding, use of seat belts and personal protective equipment, and drinking and driving.

The same principles hold true for water-related activities, where there is little margin for error.

Safety standards apply to Soldiers 24/7, and just a moment's inattention or an unwise split-second decision can have tragic consequences.**gt**

Counterdrug Task Force Receives National Honor

NATIONAL HARBOR Md. -- Members of the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force received the 2013 Outstanding State National Guard Civil Operations Program Award during a ceremony Feb. 6 .

The New York Counterdrug Program headquartered at Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia was recognized by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America for its efforts to strengthen community coalitions throughout the state. Photo by Master Sgt. Matthew Hilborn.

Emergency Response Training in Schenectady

SCHENECTADY -- Sgt. Pamela Daigle (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Karin Tirinato (right) distribute disaster and emergency response starter kits after a session of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program at Union College, here on March 1. As of mid-April, Guardsmen have given disaster preparedness training to about 5,300 people across the state. The program gives citizens the knowledge and tools to prepare for disasters, respond accordingly, and recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions. New York Guardsmen, working with New York State disaster preparedness experts and local emergency management personnel, will conduct future training sessions with the goal of teaching approximately 100,000 New Yorkers during 2014. Each starter kit contains first-aid items, face mask, pocket radio with batteries, food bars, emergency blanket and other key items to help citizens in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Courtesy photo.

New Yorkers Score in South African Competition

By Guard Times Staff

NIAGARA FALLS -- Ten members of the New York Army and Air National Guard who represented the United States at a marksmanship competition in South Africa this month took two second place awards during the competition which began March 4 and finished on March 15.

The American team, comprised of five members of the New York Army National Guard from the 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, based in Niagara Falls, and five Air National Guard members from bases across the state, took second place in the International Team Active Duty military category and also took second place in the International Best of Match overall.

Thirty-five teams, including those from the United States and four other nations, and a total of 350 soldiers, participated in the shooting competition.

The New York National Guard Team also outshot a U.S. Army team, composed of sniper trained Soldiers from Fort Riley, Kan.

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa -- Members of the joint New York Army and Air National Guard team participating in the South African Combat Rifle Competition take time out to pose for a picture on March 10. The ten member team, composed of five Soldiers and five Airmen, competed against 350 other marksmen from South Africa and other nations. So far three New York Airman and one New York Soldier have received the South African Army Rifle Qualification Badge. All the New Yorkers are in the top 50 shooters and Master Sgt. Jose Pena-Rojas from the 105th Airlift Wing placed sixth. Courtesy photo.

Individual members of the New York team were also recognized at the event.

Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Edward Stefik, a Lewiston resident and member of the 107th Airlift Wing, took second place in the Warrant Officer and NCO category.

Army National Guard 1st Lt. Thomas Beach, a Buffalo resident, finished in sixth place overall out of 350 shooters.

The Americans fired the South African R-4 rifle during the competition instead of the American M16A2 and M4 rifles they normally train on.

The New York National Guard has a training and exchange partnership with the South African National Defense Force through the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

"We are proud that Soldiers and Airmen of the New York National Guard represented the United States at this international marksmanship competition," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York.

New York Army National Guard Lt. Thomas Beach, who is also a Buffalo resident and the joint Army and Air Guard team captain, said he enjoyed learning marksmanship techniques from the South Africans.

Beach, an 11-year veteran of the Army who served in Iraq with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, is the signal officer for the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry and target shoots as a hobby.

The 2nd Squadron Soldiers had no nearby ranges to train on, he said. Instead they trained on the electronic Engagement Skills Trainer.

Stefik, the team manager, said the joint Army and Air Guard team was the right way to organize.

"I am seeing one team, one fight," Stefik said. "Everything is joint service and joint operations when we deploy, and this is the same thing."

The Airmen are Joint Tactical Air Ground Controllers (JTAC), or security forces members, Stefik said.

"All these guys have operated in real world missions," Stefik said." They threw us together but I think it worked out really well."

Participants used the South African R-4 Rifle. The weapon fires a 5.56 millimeter round similar to that fired by the American M-4. However, the American shooters needed to get used to the different sighting system and the different feel of the South African rifle.

This is the second time a New York National Guard Team has participated in this competition. An eight-Soldier New York National Guard team finished in fourth place during the 2011 competition.

Guard members participating in the event were :

- Army National Guard 1st Lt. Thomas Beach, Buffalo.
- Army National Guard 1st Lt. Roberts Wesley, Lockport.
- Army National Guard 1st Lt. Sean Lucas, Buffalo.
- Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Nicholas Hare, Tonawanda.
- Army National Guard Sgt. Ryan Campbell, Cheektowaga.
- Air National Guard Senior Master Sgt. Edward Stefik, Lewiston.
- Air National Guard Master Sgt. Jose Pena-Rojas, Mount Kisco.
- Air National Guard Tech Sgt. Kevin Weatherby, Cohoes.
- Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Matthew Rossen, Fabius.
- Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Matthew Zimmer, Westhampton. gt

ARMY **NATIONAL GUARD**

Wearing of the Green for St. Patrick's Day

NEW YORK--Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion 69th Infantry step off towards the start point to lead the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade here for the 163rd time on Monday, March 17. More than 800 New York National Guard members participated in the parade. Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Lengyel, the vice chief of the National Guard Bureau joined the battalion's Soldiers during this year's march along with U.S. Representative Peter King. Additionally, a detachment of the Irish Army Reserve Defense Force's 58th Infantry Battalion, above left, attended the parade to march with the 69th Infantry Regiment. The Soldiers of the battalion were joined by the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Band as well as by Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, and Maj. Gen. Harry Miller, the 42nd Infantry Division Commander. Photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg. Joint Force Headquarters.

Transportation Company Deploys

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh -- Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Chatfield, with the 1569th Transportation Company, New York Army National Guard, with family members, friends and fellow Soldiers during a pre-deployment ceremony for the 1569th Transportation Company conducted in a hangar at the 105th Airlift Wing, March 9.

The Soldiers will conduct training at Fort Hood, Killeen, Texas, before leaving for operations in Afghanistan. The mobilization and deployment of the 1569th Transportation Company is expected to last one year. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

222nd MP's Host Yellow Ribbon Event Joined by Air Guard

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division

ROCHESTER -- More than 200 New York Army and Air National Guardsmen and family members of the 222nd Military Police Company took part in the New York Army National Guard's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program here during the weekend of March 1-2.

The 222nd Soldiers returned from deployment to Qatar in December 2013, right before Christmas.

In addition to the 222nd Soldiers, seven Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing also attended to meet their Yellow Ribbon redeployment requirements. They did not have an Air Force Yellow Ribbon scheduled in the near future and attended the 222nd's because they provide the same support and information.

Family readiness is working to integrate the two programs (Air and Army) to best serve the service members and families of the New York National Guard.

This integration will work towards the Family Programs goal of accreditation for both services.

The Yellow Ribbon event was held at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Rochester. The full-time Family Readiness staff from Latham was there for this 60/90 day event to provide guidance and information to everyone, including family members about post deployment programs and entitlements ranging from medical treatment to health care and counseling.

"I think it's hard when you first come home and everyone is trying to grab a piece of your time," 1st Lt. Joshua Spencer said. "You want to be there for everybody and you know that it is just as important for them that it is for you and you just want to get back into your life."

One of the issues that Soldiers were most interested in and expressive about was the availability of employment after being away for approximately nine months.

"There are not that many jobs, so these Soldiers are coming home, who are putting their life on the line, and there's not much for them," said Jolynn Mulholland, wife of Spc. Stephen Mulholland.

"It's a little hard transitioning into the family life because I was gone and used to being on the go," Spc. Mulholland said.

Army and Air National Guardsmen and their spouses get signatures from Capt. Karen Marotz, Resilience, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention program manager following their portion of training at the Yellow Ribbon event. In all, there was a total of 18 booths where Soldiers and Airmen could get information on their benefits even after coming off of mobilization.

"It's a little hard transitioning into the family life because I was gone and used to being on the go,"

-- Spc. Stephen Mulholland, 222nd Military Police Company

The Soldiers attend these events after 30, 60 and then 90 days from their last day on active duty.

According to John Willsey, Director of New York State Family Programs, these events help Soldiers integrate a little more and struggle a little less.

"It allows us to see the Soldiers up close and personal," Willsey said. **gt**

Sgt. Chad Miles talks to News Channel 8 in Rochester about his experiences and reaction to being home and attending the New York National Guard Yellow Ribbon event. Miles is planning on attending college.

Guardsmen Score Big in Best Warrior Competition

Story and photos by Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE -- After days of difficult challenges, two Soldiers took top honors in the New York Army National Guard's Best Warrior Competition, held here April 3-6.

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Dorvee and Spc. Caleb Longley have proven that they have what it takes to represent New York at the northeast regional Best Warrior Competition.

Dorvee, a supply sergeant with the 1427th Transportation Battalion, was the winner of the Active Guard and Reserve, or AGR, Non-Commissioned Officer category. He was the highest scoring NCO overall, and will therefore represent New York in the AGR category.

Sgt. Sean Massimo, a military policeman with the 442nd Military Police Company, won in the Traditional NCO category. Longley, an engineer with the 152nd Engineer Support Company, is the winner in the Traditional Soldier category.

"I'm glad I got to come here," said Massimo, a resident of New Rochelle, "I loved the competition."

Both champions of each NCO category won by less than a point, said Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks, the New York National Guard senior enlisted adviser.

"This is the closest competition we've ever had," Wicks said.

The annual event tests competitors in a wide range of Soldier skills, including physical fitness, military knowledge, endurance, marksmanship and land-navigation

There are more than 10,000 Soldiers in the New York Army National Guard.

"We developed the events based on the skills that every Soldier should have," Wicks said. "It makes me proud to see these Soldiers step up to the challenge in order to train with the objective to be the best of the best."

Each day of the competition started early, ended late, and was filled with physically demanding events with little time to rest in between. The second day of the competition began at 5:30 a.m., with an Army Physical Fitness Test, where Soldiers performed a specified number of push-ups and sit-ups, and completed a two-mile run.

"The stress from this brings out your weaknesses and helps you realize what you need to work on," said Dorvee, a father of two and resident of Queensbury, "I think this is beneficial for every Soldier."

Soldiers from across the commands of the New York Army National Guard engage targets with their M16A2 rifles during the New York Army National Guard's annual Best Warrior Competition at Camp Smith April 4.

This year, rain and other unfavorable weather conditions did not deter the competitors from trying their hardest.

"It was a very hard competition," said Longley, who lives in Pulaski. "I felt prepared; but you can only prepare so much."

That's because every competitor had to prove their physical and mental proficiency, while also demonstrating that they could operate effectively under stress.

"The timeline for the events made transitioning extremely intense," said Dorvee. "I definitely

A New York Army National Guard Soldier reviews his map coordinates during a night land navigation course at Camp Smith April 4 during the Best Warrior Competition. Each soldier was given coordinates, a compass, a protractor and map and had two hours to complete the course.

A Soldier pulls a sked rescue stretcher during the Stress Shoot portion of the annual Best Warrior competition April 4. In this event each competitor must exhibit their ability to shoot their weapons effectively while in a stressful environment.

have a sense of accomplishment."

At the northeast region competition, Dorvee and Longley will compete against the Best Warriors of Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and New Jersey.

"I'm nervous but I feel that this competition has really prepared me," said Longley. "I just plan to keep training and to do my best."

The Region One competition is scheduled to take place May 13-15, in Camp Ethan Allen, Vt.

"I'm extremely proud of the competitors," said Wicks. "It's obvious that each of the units sent the right Soldiers to this competition." **gt**

Digital Liaison Detachment Members Deploying

FORT HAMILTON-- Members of the 53rd Digital Liaison Detachment gathered at Fort Hamilton on March 8, for a brief send off ceremony prior to leaving for post-mobilization training. The five members of the team will deploy to Afghanistan. They are (from left) Maj. Robert Lathrop, Maj. Philip Miller, 1st Lt. Teofilo Espinal, Master Sgt. Jaime Mendez and Master Sgt. Thomas London. Photo by Maj. Alvin Phillips, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

Guardsmen Score Big in Best Warrior Competition2

Three New York Army National Guardsmen have proven their true grit after being selected as this years Best Warriors. From left: Spc. Caleb Longley, an engineer with the 152nd Engineer Support Company, was selected as the Traditional Soldier. Sgt. Sean Massimo, a 442nd Military Company, military policeman was selected as the Traditional (M-day) Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Staff Sgt. Jeffery Dorvee, a supply sergeant from the 1427th Maintenance Battalion, was named as the Active Guard and Reserve NCO of the Year. For the complete story, see page 20.

Guard Soldier Receives Valor Medal for Saving Fellow Soldier

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters

New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Presley III received the New York State Medal of Valor from New York State Lt. Governor Robert Duffy for heroism and leadership displayed on Dec. 9, 2013 when he rescued fellow Guardsman Capt. Timothy Neild from the flaming wreck of Neild's truck. Courtesy photo.

ALBANY -- New York Army National Guard Soldier Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Presley III was awarded the Medal of Valor -- the state's highest award for heroism -- for saving a fellow Soldier from a burning, exploding vehicle in December.

But months after the accident, Presley's thoughts were still with crash victim Capt. Timothy Neild. who is expected to fully recover.

"I'm happy he's ok," said Presley, a member of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and North Syracuse resident. "I'm happy he's with his wife and daughter. I'm not big on awards. I just want to make sure people are ok."

Lt. Governor Robert Duffy awarded Presley during a ceremony at Governor Andrew Cuomo's Veterans and Military Family Summit on March 20. Though Presley, a tractor-trailer driver by profession, routinely stops to lend a hand at accidents, the incident on December 9, 2013 rapidly turned into an urgent, life-saving rescue of one Soldier by another.

On that morning, Neild, of Duanesburg was heading to Hancock Air National Guard Base in Syracuse via the New York State Thruway. At about 8:20 a.m., he lost control of his pickup truck and crashed into a bridge abutment, according to witnesses.

The truck doors were crumpled shut, the engine was on fire and Neild -- unconscious with compound fractures in both legs -- was trapped inside. Thomas Buckle, Kevin Shier, Sherry Kline, Kevin Harrigan and Christopher Sewell -- a practicing orthopedic surgeon -- pulled off the road and tried to pry the driver's side door open.

"By this time, the flames began to catch Capt. Neild's clothing on fire," the narrative said.

Presley said he was returning from furniture deliveries in Connecticut and Massachusetts when he saw the cars pulled off the road and "smoke coming out from underneath the bridge."

He pulled over, grabbed his vehicle's fire-extinguisher and ran over to help. The others were trying to pry the door open, so he reached into the driver's side window with his fire extinguisher and began to put out the flames around Neild's legs.

Through the smoke he could see the Neild's Army uniform and the 27th Brigade patch on his arm, Presley recalled. But as he worked, Neild's name tape became visible, and the rescue became personal.

"That's when it clicked," he said. Presley remembered "swearing a lot," and shouting things like, "We're not leaving my captain!" and "We've got to get him out of there!"

Others recalled Presley screaming, "That's my captain, we're not leaving him!" according to the narrative. Shier and Kline patting out the flames on Neild's clothing and arms while Kline, Harrigan and Buckle kept trying to pry the door open.

An onlooker shouted, "It's going to blow, it's going to explode!" the narrative said.

"Sgt. 1st Class Presley again told the rescuers they weren't going to leave Capt. Neild behind," according to the narrative. "Under Presley's direct leadership (the rescuers) began to tug on the crumpled door before it finally gave way."

Though Presley remembers other things about the incident, he doesn't recall leading the rescue.

"I just grabbed hold of the door and started yanking as well," he said. "Everyone else was yanking too, and we kind of developed a rhythm."

The door opened and Shier used Presley's lock-blade knife to cut the seat belt and free Neild, according to the narrative. The others dragged Neild away from the burning vehicle, which "exploded in a fireball, knocking Mr. Buckle off his feet."

Sgt. John Tirinato, a 27th IBCT Soldier and Castleton resident who had stopped to assist, realized the pickup truck might explode again.

"We are too close and we don't have a choice...we have to get him to a safer area," Tirinato told the rescuers. The group moved Neild 20 feet away, the truck made a popping noise and exploded again.

Sewell used bandages to stop Neild's bleeding, while Presley and Buckle held Neild's burned hands.

"We're here for you, damn it captain, don't you leave us," Presley said. "You're ok, help is coming."

"Without the emotion, passion and love that Sgt. 1st Class Presley displayed, I do not believe that we would have pried the door open in time to save Capt. Neild," Buckle said.

But Presley insists that it was a team effort.

"It was a concerted effort between the six of us," he said. Without that effort, Neild wouldn't be here, he added.**gt**

Sgt. Michael Kovalik, a Brooklyn resident and an ammo loader with Battery A, 1st Battalion of the 258th Field Artillery Regiment, prepares Gun 4 while training in the rain and snow at Fort Drum's artillery range on April 5.

Artillerymen Battle Icy Western New York Weather

Story and photo by Sgt. J. p. Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division

FORT DRUM -- "When those guns go off, you hear the woom! woom! woom! It's going to be fun!" Spc. Daniel Bendettie said. As he pointed to the line of seven 258th Field Artillery, 105-millimeter howitzers nearby at Fort Drum's artillery range on April 5.

For now, however, the cannons stayed silent as Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258 Field Artillery Regiment trained in the early Spring rain and snow.

The troops had been waiting to shoot all day. The day began in a frenzy as they assembled the cannons as soon as there was a break in the weather. The rest of the day was spent adjusting the cannon's aim and waiting for permission to shoot. Each team of Soldiers worked together to keep the weapon ready in the rain and mud.

"The artillery is the king of battle," Sgt. Michael Kovalik, an ammo loader on Gun 4, said. "Even though the infantry likes to take credit, we attack from above."

Battery A is part of the storied 258th Field Artillery Regiment, which fought in the War of 1812, the Spanish American War, the United States Civil War, World War I, World War II, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

The unit uses M119 Howitzer, a lightweight artillery piece that can be easily airlifted by helicopter, or dropped by parachute.

The troops shivered in their cold-weather clothing as rain began to fall. Sgt. Robert McNair, once a gunner from Long Island, prepared ammo during his last drill in the National Guard. His replacement, Sgt. Kelvin Lopez, sat as he prepped to fire the weapon for the first time.

It was a bittersweet moment for McNair, who reminisced and bragged about when he was the fastest gunner around. "When you're shooting, you feel real powerful," he said. "It's so loud, and there's a lot of smog, and it feels like there's nothing in the world except for you and your crew and the gun."

Eventually, the battery received permission to shoot. One shot – Woom! – fired from Gun 4, and then another – Woom! – from Gun 5. As the rain fell, the smoke from the guns drifted in the cold, stiff Fort Drum wind.

Sometimes, one is reminded, training is not meant to be fun. gt

New York Army National Guard Soldiers go Hollywood

Story and photo by Maj. Al Phillips, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

FARMINGDALE – The Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry aren't Navy SEALs, but now they've played them on TV.

Nine members of the battalion were among the 18 members of the New York Army National Guard who supported a Universal Studios television show called "State of Affairs" during filming on April 3.

The show is due to air on NBC TV this fall.

The program stars Katherine Heigl—famous for her roles in the TV show "Greys Anatomy" and the movies "Knocked Up" and "27 Dresses"— as a CIA agent. It will be a high-intensity thriller, heavily focused on operational maneuvers, said Sam Glenn, the show's military and technical advisor.

The pilot was being filmed in the New York City area, which is home to many TV productions.

Along with the infantry Soldiers, the TV production company used a UH-60 Blackhawk and four-member crew based at Army Aviation Support Facility 1 in Ronkonkoma, and four members from the New York Military Forces Honor Guard to lend reality to the TV story. The 69th Infantry also provided humvees and LMTVs to "dress the set".

For the purposes of the TV show, the Army Guard infantrymen portrayed Navy SEALs exiting the helicopter instead of an Army unit.

"It was really cool to work on a show that's going to be on an actual TV network. All of the guys had a good time especially since a lot of them have never been in a Blackhawk before," said Sgt. Herbet Gomezmaldonado, a member of B Co. from Central Islip.

The Honor Guard team, which portrayed a military color guard during a funeral, was filmed at Long Island National Cemetery in Farmingdale. The bulk of the shooting involving New York National Guard members took place during a 12-hour session at Republic Airport in East Farmingdale.

The Guard Soldiers worked closely with production crews and costume staff as they meticulously tweaked details to ensure accuracy.

For the Army Guard aviators it was business as usual. They were asked to fly the UH-60 into a hover, do a 180 degree turn, and taxi into position. They also shot a third scene in which they landed at night and the 69th Soldiers, costumed as SEALS, exited the aircraft.

Sgt. Dennis Raffanelo and Sgt. Herbert Gomezmaldonado, both members of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, on the set at Republic Airport during the filming of scenes for the Universal Television TV show "State of Affairs". Gomezmaldonado portrayed a Navy SEAL in the TV show, while Raffanelo drove a humvee used to dress the set during the production.

This is something they'd all done before in Afghanistan or Iraq, said Chief Warrant Officer John Seeger, a pilot from Center Moriches.

The infantrymen simply executed a standard air assault drill as they exited the helicopter.

"It was fun to use what I learned in Air Assault School for something other than the military. It's good to know that some of the skills they give us here can apply to the civilian world," said Sgt. Anthony Olivari, a member of Company F, 427th Forward Support Battalion from Brooklyn.

Television production companies come to the Department of Defense, and the National Guard in particular, for assistance because "there is nothing more authentic than using the real thing," explained Russell Maheras, the National Guard Bureau's expert on working with TV and movies.

The military wants to help Hollywood get it right, but the rules about when the military can provide equipment and personnel are strict, Maheras said.

"We do our best to be very selective," he said. "Support must not interfere with the unit's mission, must come at no additional cost to the government, and must be accurate – even for programs that are primarily fictitious."

"In addition, visible National Guard portrayal is also an important deciding factor, as is whether or not the production is fully funded by a studio or network and is scheduled to have national distribution," he added.

Before the New York Army National Guard, agreed to support the TV show, Mahares negotiated with the studio to ensure the Guard was reimbursed the $25,000 it cost. This covered three hours of helicopter flight time, Soldier pay, and additional support costs.

He also insisted that the New York National Guard gets mentioned in the script.

In the scene leading up to the helicopter landing, one of the actors will mention New York's 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation.

"I have the JSOC (Joint Special Operations Commander) on the phone with command center –tell them, his guys and the third of the 142nd are RED CON 1."

The sequence culminates in the SEAL team being airlifted into Somalia to execute a daunting night rescue of a key figure (or figures), whose identities are left purposefully undisclosed to maintaizn suspense.

The helicopter's tactical maneuvers were dead on, they were accurate and

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Chinooks Train in Big Apple Airspace

NEW YORK -- CH-47 Chinook helicopters assigned to the New York Army National Guard's Detachment 1, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment circle New York City during a training flight on April 1. The aviators, who are based in Rochester, were flying in the New York City area to familiarize themselves with the airspace traffic patterns there in case they needed to respond during an emergency. During the New York National Guard's response to Superstorm Sandy in 2012, CH-47s were used to airlift in supplies. Photo courtesy of 126th Aviation.

Guard Goes Hollywood,

Continued from Page 25

looked good on film, Glenn said.

This type of work is nothing new to the show's director Joe Carnahan, whose work includes NBC's current thriller, "The Blacklist."

"The movie business is just like being in the Army, " joked Spc. Evelio Garcia, a Soldier from D Company, 1-69th who lives in Selden. " You spend a whole day waiting to get something productive done."

"It was a pleasure to be a small part in the filming of 'State of Affairs', said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Hansen, a 3-142nd member from Patchogue. "It was great to showcase some of Army aviation's capabilities, especially on prime time TV," he added.

Being in the movies is nothing new for New York National Guard members. Soldiers from the 1-69th appeared in the Will Smith science fiction thriller "I Am Legend" and Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing are portrayed in the movie "The Perfect Storm."

And of course the 69th Infantry itself is one of the stars of the 1940 Jimmy Cagney movie, "The Fighthing 69th."

"Knowing that I was a part of an event like this, that millions of people are going to see, is really exciting and exhilarating," Seeger said. gt

Four members of the New York Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation flew a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter used in filming. From left, Warrant Officer John Seeger, Sgt. Matt Cordaro, Staff Sgt. Amy Klemm and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Hansen.

Engineer Troops Maximize Time for Lasting Impact

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters

Pfc. Dillon Smith, 1156th Engineer Company, installs European roofing tiles on a building at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, in March. Along with other accomplishments, company troops and two New York Air National Guardsmen constructed two multi-use buildings, complete with wiring during a three-week period. Photo by Capt. Dan Colomb, 1156th Engineer Company.

HOHENFELS, Germany -- Engineer troops raised walls and standards during their three-week annual training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany in March.

Originally assigned to construct one multi-use building in the training area, 80 Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company literally built above and beyond, raising two buildings and wiring them to boot. The engineer Soldiers, along with two airmen from the New York Air National Guard, went to Hohenfels as part of a Troop Construction Program (TCP).

The TCP leadership at Hohenfels was so pleased at what the New York engineer troops accomplished, they asked them to return every year, according to Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Smith, the 1156th Engineer Company readiness non-commissioned officer.

"No unit that's ever been there has ever done more than one building, or completed one building," said Capt. Dan Colomb, officer-in-charge.

Some of the Soldiers also inventoried, re-organized and cleaned a construction and supply yard, he added.

The 204th Engineer Battalion has many new troops who have just completed their Military Occupational Skill (MOS) training, said Smith. Normal annual training doesn't offer the chance to work on longer-term projects, he added.

The Troop Construction Program gives engineer troops a chance to work on construction projects at military installations. Smith explained that Col. James Freehart, the 204th Engineer Battalion commander, asked for the mission so the engineer Soldiers could apply their training on such a project, gain practical experience, see the results and appreciate their skills.

Smith described it as MOS time. "This was a perfect opportunity to get that time on a project," Smith said.

The mission was to build a 50 by 20 foot cinder block building with a European tile roof, said Colomb, of Niskayuna. He and another officer did some reconnaissance before the mission, toured the site where the Concrete Block and Mortar Unit (CMU) was to be built, and met with TCP personnel.

That's when they saw a chance to raise the bar, Colomb said. "We said we have 80 people, we gotta have more work,'" Colomb recalled.

From there it was on, according to Colomb.

"(The TCP personnel) had bets as to whether we'd finish it," Colomb said. The troops rose to the challenge, working most days from 7:30 a.m. to about 5:30 p.m., he added.

Though it was a very ambitious timeline, the projects stayed on track, Smith said. Troops often returned to the worksites and worked as late as 10 p.m. Smith and Colomb recalled.

"We stayed late to keep the projects on schedule," Smith said. "The guys put in a lot of outstanding effort." Some of troops, who are trained as plumbers or electricians, got a chance to do masonry and carpentry work, he added.

The extra effort paid off, and they actually finished ahead of schedule, Colomb said.

"We still had time to install the (wiring) in both units," Colomb said. Along with designing and fabricating window parts, the troops installed lights, switches and outlets, so the buildings are ready to use, he added.

Troops training in the area can utilize the buildings for a number of things, like shelters or tactical operation centers, Colomb said.

"It's a pretty big deal that we built two buildings, and did the tiling and electrical on those buildings," he said.

The engineer Soldiers also ran their own motor pool and conducted driver training, Colomb said. But the troops who worked at the construction and supply yard "knocked it out of the park," he stressed.

The yard had lacked a supply non-commissioned officer for some time, Colomb explained. During their inventory of the area, the Soldiers found and fixed several power tools that had been tagged for turn in, which should lead to some cost-savings, he added.

The training and experience was invaluable, according to Smith. What's more, the engineer troops made a lasting, practical impact, and the results speak for themselves, he added.

"Soldiers are going to live in these buildings, train in them and use them," Smith said. "They're not going to just sit there." gt

Harlem Hellfighters Return to Africa

Story and photo by Sgt. A. M. LaVey, 173rd Airborne Brigade

Congolese National Police Capt. Patrick Ossate and New York Army National Guard Spc. Daren E. Mills, a member of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, process Soldiers arriving at Exercise Central Accord 14 in Douala, Cameroon, March 18. The two are part of the Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration cell, which manages personnel arriving and departing the exercise.

DOUALA, Cameroon--A team from the New York Army National Guard kept service members from the United States and partner nations moving during Exercise Central Accord 14 here. The exercise promoted multinational partnerships to build capacity in Central Africa.

Central Accord 14 was a U.S. Army Africa-led multinational exercise hosted by Cameroon. The exercise brings together approximately 1,000 troops from eight nations including the United States, Nigeria, Gabon, Burundi, Republic of Congo, Chad and the Netherlands.

Soldiers from the 369th Sustainment Brigade were responsible for a multinational Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement, and Integration team. They were joined by members of the Cameroonian defense forces, a national policeman from the Republic of Congo and a service member from Gabon.

"We receive the Soldiers into the country for the mission; we provide them lodging and get them ready to continue their mission here in country," said Spc. Daren E. Mills, a JRSOI team member. "It's our responsibility to know when all U.S. military personnel come into the country and when they are leaving. We know when their flight is so that we can coordinate transportation in and out of the country."

The 369th handled the bulk of the logistics for the multinational exercise.

"These sorts of partnerships are important because it shows us how other countries' militaries operate," said Sgt. Maj. Orell Golding, the brigade's operations sergeant major. "It allows us to return to the roots of soldiering and also challenges us to improvise."

For American troops to be part of the exercise, transit plans have to be made and executed and there has to be someone on the other end -- that is where the JRSOI team comes in.

"We really provide a unique capability and we have experience working in Africa," said Chief Warrant Officer Michele DiGeso, the JRSOI team chief. "We are trained to come into an austere environment, plan and establish the framework necessary to bring multinational forces into the theater, maintain accountability for them and then send them home when the mission is complete."

"We are here to form partnerships and friendships with other nations, working with them --forming a bond with them -- individuals working together -- it doesn't matter what

369th Back in Africa,

Continued from Preceding Page

country they are from," said Golding. "Every day we are learning from each other. Whatever they are going through, we have gone through the same thing before and vice versa. We are here to learn from them, it's not just they who are learning from us."

Some of the knowledge shared with African partners is the military planning process.

"In the U.S., most maneuvers are conceived and you have to follow a particular plan of action, but here in Africa, we make do with what we have at our disposal," said Congolese national police Capt. Patrick Ossate, a JRSOI team member.

"Today we taught them how to do what we call anticipation planning: being able to walk into an austere environment, do an assessment, anticipate challenges, then define those challenges to develop course of actions to overcome them," said DiGeso.

DiGeso said he is confident they can export these skills outside of Central Africa. "At the end of this exercise they will be ready to take the outline of what they are learning and be able to apply it." African members seemed to appreciate the team's teaching methods.

"This is my first time working with American forces - it's been a learning experience and I've learned a lot," said Ossate. "We started by learning the theory and then went to a practical application of what we learned."

A multinational environment, with different languages provided challenges for the team.

"Most of us don't speak French very well, but by having strong interpersonal skills, a genuine care for what you are doing, and trying to build this partnership goes a long way," said DiGeso.

Working together on a daily basis, a multicultural workplace can often be beneficial.

"Our African teammates have also taught my team and me the importance of maintaining relationships with their neighbors and the fact that we, as Americans, need to be more culturally aware," said DiGeso.

"There are many similarities in the lives we lead," said Mills. "Just because there is an ocean between us – we are still humans, we are still people – so we connected on that level. We like to laugh and have fun, while still getting the work done. gt

Run for the Hills

Soldier Takes on All Army Cross Country Race

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta

CORTLANDT MANOR -- A New York Army National Guardsmen and avid runner returned none the worse for wear from her first -- and likely last -- USA Track and Field cross-country race.

As a member of the All-Army Cross Country Team, Staff Sgt. Melissa S. Guckian ran in the eight-kilometer race for the Army in the USA Cross Country Championship in Boulder, Colo. on Feb. 15.

It was an exciting experience, said Guckian, a 32-year old Poughkeepsie resident who serves with the 106th Regional Training Institute at Camp Smith.

"I met a great bunch of women who were on the team," she reflected. "It was a good event."

The cross-country race was also a departure for Guckian, an experienced runner of road races like the Army 10-miler. The eight-kilometer cross-country race was over a golf course, and while much of the running surface was grass, there was also "a lot of mud," she recalled.

Female athletes can qualify for the team by showing that they've run 10 miles in 65 minutes or less during the year prior of their applications. Guckian has a marathon and three Army 10-milers under her belt, and she ran her best 10-miler last October, clocking a time of 61:07.

When one of the other females on the team deployed, the team chose Guckian based on her 2013 Army 10-miler time.

"It was pretty exciting," Guckian said of being selected. "I wasn't expecting it."

Guckian never ran before she joined the Army in 1998. Soldiers must complete a two-mile run within specified times, based on their ages, and Guckian admitted that she didn't like that aspect of Army life.

But that changed in 2005 when she began dating Andrew Guckian, an avid runner and racer. Andrew is also a staff sergeant in the 53rd Troop Command.

By the time they married about a year later, she had become a running enthusiast as well and was taking part in races with her husband. They also belong to several running clubs, and they enjoy the social aspect of it, she added.

"It's fun," she said. "It gives us something to do on the weekends."

Staff Sgt. Melissa S. Guckian, placard 101, runs in the Mad Dash ten kilometer race in Rhinebeck. An avid runner, Guckian was selected to participate on the All-Army Cross County Team this winter in Boulder, Colo. Courtesy photo.

Her 10-miler time notwithstanding, Guckian changed her training routine to prepare for the race. Andrew also helped set the pace of her training, she said.

"I'm pretty lucky because my husband does my training plans," Guckian said. "He's pretty much been my coach."

She usually runs less over the winter because of Christmas and colder temperatures, she said. However, she returned to her rigorous running routine after being selected for the All-Army Cross Country Team.

Though she wasn't intimidated by the competition in the USA Cross Country Championship, the race "was a completely new experience," she said.

"I'd never run on a team before, and I'd never run cross-country before," Guckian said. gt

Six Guardian Angels Awarded for Courage Under Fire

By Guard Times Staff

Photos by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing

Senior Master Sgt. Erik Blom salutes Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy after receiving the Bronze Star for Valor during a ceremony on December 6, 2013 at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base.

Maj. Gen. Murphy displays the unit's unique military challenge coin, "Saved by Pedro," used by combat pararescue personnel in Afghanistan who rescue military personnel.

Capt. Ronnie Maloney from the 103rd Rescue Squadron stands with Congressman Tim Bishop prior to receiving the Bronze Star with device for Valor on December 6, 2013.

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Six New York Air National Guardsmen received the Bronze Star for Valor during a ceremony December 6, 2013 at Gabreski Air National Guard Base.

The six Guardsmen of the 106th Rescue Wing's 103rd Rescue Squadron are being honored for the courage they showed under fire during a December 10, 2012 rescue mission in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The team of Capt. Ronnie Maloney, Senior Master Sgt. Erik Blom, Tech. Sgt. Anthony Yusup, Staff Sgt. James Dougherty, Staff Sgt. Matthew Zimmer and Staff Sgt. Christopher Petersen collectively calling themselves the Guardian Angels, were assigned to the 46th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron Detachment of the 651st Air Expeditionary Group, 451st Air Expeditionary Wing at Kandahar Airfield.

"As a team, it was flawless," said Dougherty. "I would reach back over my shoulder and they would put things in my hand that I hadn't even asked for."

The team of pararescuemen flew into a "hot" landing zone and were under continuous Taliban fire from AK-47s, machine guns and rocket propelled grenades as they called in helicopter gunship support so that they could provide medical care and extraction for four wounded Soldiers; one of whom died of his wounds later.

"Today, we recognize the tremendous bravery of six New York Air National Guardsmen who put their lives on the line to protect the safety of others," said Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, after announcing that the Air Guardsmen would receive the Bronze Stars. "Our Guard members have served admirably both in wars abroad and during emergencies at home. The courage, clear thinking, and selfless dedication of these six Airmen is a testament to the incredible service of New York's Air National Guard. On behalf of all New Yorkers, I offer my congratulations to these brave men for this well-deserved honor."

U.S. Representative Tim Bishop, who attended the award ceremony, called the airmen "extraordinary people who have done extraordinary things" during Friday's ceremony.

"This is a very proud day," he said. "It's a proud day for the six Airmen that we honor and their families. It's a proud day for the Wing. It's a proud day for the Guard. And it's a proud day for our country."

"Courage, intelligence, proficiency are just some of the words that can describe these guys," Capt. Maloney, the leader of the unit, said during Friday's ceremony. "Today, I am humbled to stand next to them."gt

Six members of the 106th Rescue Wing's 103rd Rescue Squadron were honored December 6, 2013 for the courage they showed under fire during a December 10, 2012 rescue mission in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Bronze Star with V device is the fourth highest ranking United States military award for heroism.

Air Guard Awardee Welcomed at State of the Union

Guard Times Staff

WASHINGTON -- New York Air National Guardsmen, Staff Sgt. Christopher Petersen, 103rd Rescue Squadron, who put his life on the line to save four Soldiers that came under fire during an ambush in Afghanistan, was invited to the chamber of the U. S. House of Representatives to attend President Obama's State of the Union Address, Feb. 12.

Petersen, a resident of Commack and a full-time pararescue journeyman with the 103rd, was invited by Rep. Tim Bishop to attend the event with a handful of other military invitees.

"Some are here, some are overseas and some are no longer with us," Petersen said in contrast to being invited in lieu of other troops who deserved the same recognition. "They all deserve their equal, just respect from everybody."

Bishop said he invited Petersen after attending the Bronze Star award ceremony, December, 2013 hosted by the 106th at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach.

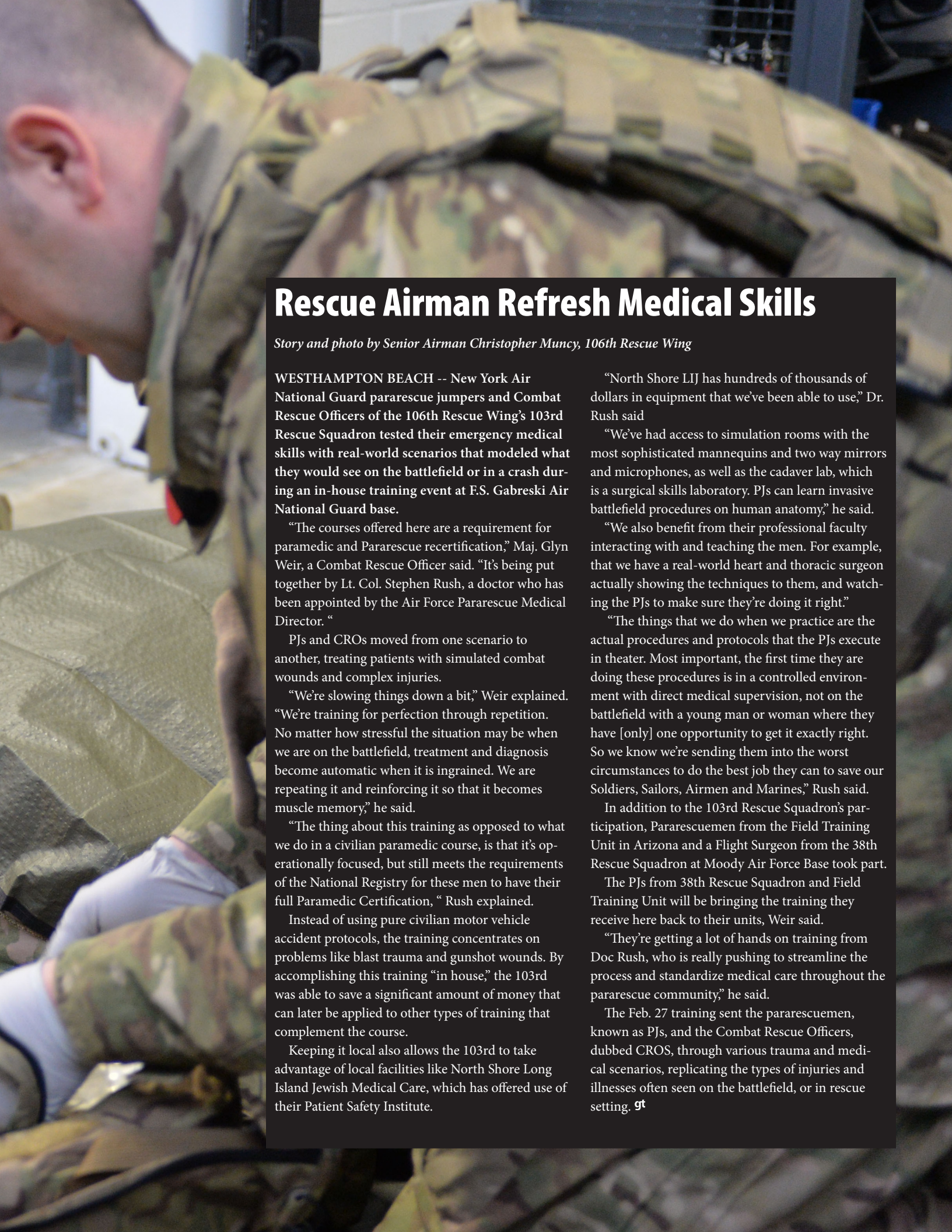
At the ceremony Petersen and five other members of the 106th were awarded the bronze medals for bravery during the rescue of the four wounded Soldiers pinned down by enemy fire.

According to Bishop, he chose to attend the award ceremony to show his support in representing the 106th in Congress and help honor Petersen for being named 'Guardsman of the Year' by the United Service Organizations.

In December, 2012 near Kandahar, Petersen and a team of 106th pararescuer's disembarked from the units rescue helicopter and crossed an open area that was under enemy fire to treat several wounded Soldiers and used his body to shield one of the Soldiers from a rocket launched grenade. He then carried another wounded Soldier through hostile fire back to the rescue helicopter. One of those Soldiers died from his wounds later after the incident.gt

Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Christopher Peterson

106TH RESCUE WING



Rescue Airman Refresh Medical Skills

Story and photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- New York Air National Guard pararescue jumpers and Combat Rescue Officers of the 106th Rescue Wing's 103rd Rescue Squadron tested their emergency medical skills with real-world scenarios that modeled what they would see on the battlefield or in a crash during an in-house training event at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard base.

"The courses offered here are a requirement for paramedic and Pararescue recertification," Maj. Glyn Weir, a Combat Rescue Officer said. "It's being put together by Lt. Col. Stephen Rush, a doctor who has been appointed by the Air Force Pararescue Medical Director. "

PJs and CROs moved from one scenario to another, treating patients with simulated combat wounds and complex injuries.

"We're slowing things down a bit," Weir explained. "We're training for perfection through repetition. No matter how stressful the situation may be when we are on the battlefield, treatment and diagnosis become automatic when it is ingrained. We are repeating it and reinforcing it so that it becomes muscle memory," he said.

"The thing about this training as opposed to what we do in a civilian paramedic course, is that it's operationally focused, but still meets the requirements of the National Registry for these men to have their full Paramedic Certification, " Rush explained.

Instead of using pure civilian motor vehicle accident protocols, the training concentrates on problems like blast trauma and gunshot wounds. By accomplishing this training "in house," the 103rd was able to save a significant amount of money that can later be applied to other types of training that complement the course.

Keeping it local also allows the 103rd to take advantage of local facilities like North Shore Long Island Jewish Medical Care, which has offered use of their Patient Safety Institute.

"North Shore LIJ has hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment that we've been able to use," Dr. Rush said

"We've had access to simulation rooms with the most sophisticated mannequins and two way mirrors and microphones, as well as the cadaver lab, which is a surgical skills laboratory. PJs can learn invasive battlefield procedures on human anatomy," he said.

"We also benefit from their professional faculty interacting with and teaching the men. For example, that we have a real-world heart and thoracic surgeon actually showing the techniques to them, and watching the PJs to make sure they're doing it right."

"The things that we do when we practice are the actual procedures and protocols that the PJs execute in theater. Most important, the first time they are doing these procedures is in a controlled environment with direct medical supervision, not on the battlefield with a young man or woman where they have [only] one opportunity to get it exactly right. So we know we're sending them into the worst circumstances to do the best job they can to save our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines," Rush said.

In addition to the 103rd Rescue Squadron's participation, Pararescuemen from the Field Training Unit in Arizona and a Flight Surgeon from the 38th Rescue Squadron at Moody Air Force Base took part.

The PJs from 38th Rescue Squadron and Field Training Unit will be bringing the training they receive here back to their units, Weir said.

"They're getting a lot of hands on training from Doc Rush, who is really pushing to streamline the process and standardize medical care throughout the pararescue community," he said.

The Feb. 27 training sent the pararescuemen, known as PJs, and the Combat Rescue Officers, dubbed CROS, through various trauma and medical scenarios, replicating the types of injuries and illnesses often seen on the battlefield, or in rescue setting. gt

An LC-130 Hercules aircraft from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing flies over Ice Camp One, Sherard Osborn Island, Nunavut during Operation NUNALIVUT on April 15. The exercise tests Canadian and American forces ability to respond to threats in the high Artic. The 109th Airlift Wing flies the only ski-equipped aircraft in the U.S. military. Photo by Capt. Graham MacMillian, Joint Task Force (North), Yellowknife, Northwest Territory.

109th Airlift Wing Operating in Canadian Arctic

By Tech Sgt. Catherine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA -- Nearly 40 Airmen and two LC-130 ski-equipped aircraft from the 109th Airlift Wing demonstrated their vast capabilities on the Arctic ice as they joined the Canadian Forces April 11 to 18 to participate in Canada's annual Operation Nunalivut Exercise.

Canada's Joint Task Force-North has been conducting this exercise in and around the area of Resolute Bay, Nunavut, Canada, since 2007. This was the first year the 109th took part in the exercise.

This year more than 300 Canadians and Americans were involved in the exercise, including the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy Fleet Diving Unit, divers from the U.S. Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Forces 440 (Transport) Squadron.

The 109th Airlift Wing team of maintainers and aircrew, operated out of Resolute Bay and Thule Air Base, Greenland. Shortly after arriving, maintainers and operations Airmen established a "skiway" camp in the vicinity of Resolute Bay to support LC-130 operations.

"We see on the horizon the need for aircraft capabilities to meet Arctic taskings," said Lt. Col. Clifford Souza, 109th Operations Group and lead 109th officer on the exercise.

"We're trying to get out ahead of it and demonstrate LC-130 capabilities. So we're taking advantage of this exercise. We want to develop joint capabilities and interoperability with the Canadian Arctic Forces because they have a need to maintain an airlift reach throughout the high arctic," he explained.

The Canadians have ski-equipped CC-138 Twin-Otter aircraft which don't have the lift capacity or range the 109th LC-130s have.

The 109th flew fuel and supplies to the forward-deployed locations during the exercise. Normally Canadian aircraft would do this, but the LC-130 is able to do in one trip what they would need to do in 10, Souza said.

"That shows interoperability and integration between the U.S. and Canada to jointly develop capabilities for the future to operate in the Arctic," Souza said.

"The Canadians are very interested in what we can provide," he said. "We're also taking advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate those capabilities to set up an expeditionary skiway on the sea-ice. That has significance for search and rescue, because now we have

Honoring a Fallen Airman at Georgia Air Base

MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. --Family members of New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Todd "TJ" Lobraico Jr. watch as a memorial is unveiled in his honor during a dedication ceremony April 10, 2014, at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. Lobraico was assigned to the 105th Security Forces Squadron out of Stewart Air National Guard Base, N.Y., and died Sept. 5, 2013, from wounds sustained when enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire near Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. His team was serving with Airmen from Moody's 820th Base Defense Group. Photo by Airman 1st Class Alexis Millican.

109th Up in Canadian Arcic

Continued from Preceding Page

the ability to go somewhere where there's no runway, set up a ski landing site on sea ice which can provide a forward staging area for personnel, supplies and fuel to increase the operating radius of other aircraft."

While the 109th AW's primary mission is to support the National Science Foundation in Antarctica and Greenland, in the past "the unit existed to support military customers from the high arctic," Souza said. This was an opportunity for the 109th to show that they can still support those missions if needed.

In 1975, the 109th received their first ski-equipped LC-130s and assumed the responsibility of resupply missions for the Greenland ice cap's radar stations.

Since then, the 109th Airlift Wing has provided the U.S. military's only ski-equipped aircraft, which has been supporting polar research in the Arctic and Antarctic since 1988. Since 1999, the unit has been the sole provider of this type of airlift to the National Science Foundation and U.S. Antarctic research efforts.

A 109th Airlift Wing LC-130 aircraft lands at the Resolute Bay Airport, Nunavut as part of Operation NUNALIVUT 2014. Photo by Canadian Forces Master Corporal Chelsey Hutson.

Active Shooter Exercise

WESTHAMPTON BEACH - Staff Sergeant George Liandrakis stacks up during an "active shooter" training scenario on March 8. During this training, members of the 106th Security Forces Squadron respond to reports of a simulated workplace shooter.

Photo by Senior Airman Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Resuce Wing.

106TH RESCUE WING

Top Guard Officer Presents Awards to 105th Airmen

By 105th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH, -- Twenty members of the 105th Airlift Wing--including two Airmen who received two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in action-were recognized by the Air National Guard's top general at a ceremony here March 2.

The 20 members of the 105th Base Defense Squadron, who deployed to Afghanistan last year, received a total of 29 medals from Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III, the director of the 100,000-member Air National Guard.

It was the first time he had ever awarded a Purple Heart medal and it was unusual to present 12 of them and especially two Airmen with more than one, Clarke said.

"What an honor, I am truly humbled," Clarke said.

The awards included five Bronze Stars, 12 Purple Hearts and 12 Air Force Combat Action Medals.

The 20 Airmen deployed to Bagram Airfield alongside members of the active Air Force's 820th Base Defense Group to provide security at the base. Their missions took them "outside the wire" regularly.

One member of the 105th Base Defense Squadron Team, Staff Sgt. Todd T.J. Lobraico Jr., was killed in action during the deployment in September 2013.

"We are thankful for the manner in which you conducted yourselves under the most challenging of circumstances and we are most thankful for you being here with us today," Col. Timothy LaBarge, the commander of the 105th Airlift Wing told the Airmen.

"Staff Sergeant TJ Lobraico, a true American hero, may not be physically present in the room with us today, but he is with us spiritually and will be forever," LaBarge added.

"I've done multiple award ceremonies throughout my thirty something years, but never one like this; in any capacity, in any place that I've ever served," Clarke said. " It's a historic day obviously for the members themselves, their families, the unit, the New York National Guard, the Air National Guard, and the United States Air Force, and the nation."

Receiving awards during the March 2 ceremony were:

• Chief Master Sgt. David Pritchard from Washingtonville, N.Y.: A full-time Guardsman, Pritchard received the Bronze Star.

• Master Sgt. Shawn Knowlton from Watertown, N.Y.: A federal marshal in civilian life, Knowlton received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Master Sgt. Jose Pena Rojas from the Bronx: A New Rochelle Police Officer, Pena Rojas received the Bronze Star.

• Master Sgt. Michael O'Connell, from Washingtonville, N.Y.: A full-time Guard Airman, he received the Bronze Star.

• Staff Sgt. Nigel Dabry, from Queens: An employee of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Dabry received two Purple Hearts and the Combat Action Medal.

• Senior Airman Amanda Martino, from Lindenhurst: A college student, Martino received two Purple Hearts and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Staff Sgt. Winston Rios, from Clifton N.J.: A college student, Rios received the Purple Heart and Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Senior Airman Michael Hansen, from Newburgh, N.Y.: A Walden New York Police Officer, Hansen received the Purple Heart and Combat Action Medal.

Air National Guard Director Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clark III, commends Senior Airman Amanda Martino, 105th Base Defense Squadron, who received two Purple Heart medals March 2. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Airlift Wing.

• Senior Airman Thomas Pulaski, from Wallkill, N.Y.: A college student, Pulaski received the Purple Heart and Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Airman 1st Class Samuel Davies, from Warwick, N.Y.: A college student, Davies received the Purple Heart and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Airman 1st Class Matthew Zungia, from Newburgh, N.Y.: A college student, Zuniga received the Purple Heart and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Airman 1st Class Marieann Raguso, from Yorktown Heights, N.Y.: A college student, Raguso received the Purple Heart and the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Tech Sgt. Michael Pacenza, from Newburgh, N.Y.: A full-time Guard Airman, Pacenza received the Combat Action Medal.

• Staff Sgt. John Bellino, from Wappingers Falls, N.Y.: A college student, Bellino received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Staff Sgt. Dustin Helms, from Pine Bush, N.Y.: A business owner, Helms received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Staff Sgt. Vinh Taylor, from Vacaville, California: A police officer, Taylor received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Staff Sgt. Miguel Nin, from the Bronx: A New York State Corrections Officer, Nin received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Senior Airman Justin Murphy, from Bergenfield, N.J.: A full-time employee of the Air National Guard, Murphy received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.

• Senior Airman Luis Giron, from Newburgh, N.Y.: A college student, Giron received the Air Force Combat Action Medal.gt

Senior NCO Promoted to Highest Enlisted Rank

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Master Sgt. Edwin Mondezie, Jr. is the newest senior noncommissioned officer for the 106th Rescue Wing when he was promoted to Chief Master Sgt. on April 6 at the 106th Headquarters. Attending the promotion were, from left: Col. Thomas Owen, commander of the 106th, Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks, State Sergeant Major, Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields, Joint Staff Director, Mondezie, Brig. Gen. Anthony German, Chief of Staff of the New York National Guard, Col. Steven Fukino, Director of the New York Air National Guard and Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson, 53rd Troop Command . Photo by Senior Airmen Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Embracing 'One Air Force' Concept for all Components

By Tech. Sgt. David Eichaker, National Guard Bureau

Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling speaks to senior ranking Airmen. Courtesy photo.

ARLINGTON, Va. - Emphasizing the importance of embracing a "one Air Force" concept, Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, addressed newly minted Air Force chief master sergeants attending the Air Force District of Washington Chief's Orientation and Recognition Ceremony here to educate them about the Air Guard and to further build upon relationships between the active and reserve components.

As part of that, Hotaling, the 11th command chief master sergeant of the Air National Guard, talked about the National's Guard's 377-year history performing both state and federal missions. He then focused on three missions where he said the Air Guard excels: protecting the homeland, fighting America's wars and building global partnerships through the State Partnership Program.

The Air Guard is the first choice for homeland operations, said Hotaling, noting that Air Guard personnel were among the first to respond to the tornado that tore through Moore, Okla., in May. And, more recently, Airmen had boots on the ground when winter

EADS Commander Receives Star, New Duties with NGB

By Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME -- The former Commander at the Eastern Air Defense Sector was promoted to Brigadier General in the New York Air National Guard during a short ceremony on March 8.

Deskins was promoted by Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General, New York.

Her new assignment will be working as the Special Assistant, Sexual Assault and Prevention, to the Director of the Air National Guard, Lt. Gen. Stanley E. Clarke III. In her new position Deskins will be spearheading the sexual assault prevention and response program for the 100,000-member Air National Guard.

A graduate of Skaneateles High School and Ithaca College, Deskins was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1984 through the Air Force ROTC program at Cornell University. She served on active duty until 1995 when she returned to New York and joined what was then the Northeast Air Defense Sector.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 Deskins, was overseeing Northeast Air Defense Sector personnel engaged in a routine air defense exercise. When the events of that day evolved--the hijacking of four aircraft with the hijackers crashing them into the Pentagon and the World Trades Center buildings--Deskins played a key role in the military response. In the official 9/11 Commission report the personnel Deskins led that day are credited with responding well to a confusing set of circumstances.

Deskins is the third woman to be promoted to general in the New York Air National Guard. Retired Major General Irene Trowell-Harris, a nurse, joined the New York Air National Guard in 1963 and became a one-star general in 1993. Retired Brigadier General Esther Rada joined the New York Air National Guard in 1987 and became a general officer in 2005.

After joining the Air Force in 1984, Deskins attended Air Weapons Controller training at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, For the next 10 years, she served in a variety of assignments at the Northwest Air Defense Sector at McChord Air Force Base, Washington and at the 3625th Technical Training Squadron and 21st Test and Evaluation Squadron at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

In 1995, Deskins separated from active duty Air Force and joined the New York Air National Guard and what was then known as the Northeast Air Defense Sector. She held several leadership positions at NEADS including Mission Crew Commander, Flight Commander, Assistant Director, Sector Operations Control Center and Chief, Exercise and Analysis and Deputy Commander, Support.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Ithaca College, a Masters of Science Degree in Management from Florida State University, and is a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College and the Air War College.gt

Brig. Gen. Dawn Deskins. Courtesy photo.

One Air Force,

Continued from Preceding Page

storms ravaged the Midwest and water contamination threatened areas of West Virginia.

"It's that link that we have," said Hotaling, adding the Air Guard is the tie between the community, state, local and federal levels.

"The Air National Guard provides that bridge where they can bounce between Title 32 (state active duty) and Title 10 (federal active duty)," he said.

And, the command chief noted, the Air National Guard has played a major part in fighting America's wars, particularly in the time since 2001.

"There are 16 Air National Guard bases around the United States that are providing air coverage (around the clock) for Operation Noble Eagle," he said, adding the Air Guard also runs the Joint Air Defense Operations Center in the nation's capital and has deployed units worldwide.

Hotaling also praised Air Guard members for their long-term involvement in the State Partnership Program, where National Guard units conduct military and civilian engagements with foreign nations that help build stronger allies and support defense security goals.

"Every one of the 54 (states, territories and the District of Columbia) is partnered with at least one other country," Hotaling said, adding the program is run in conjunction with the State Department. "The State Department utilizes the National Guard to create those military-to-military relationships that are long term," said Hotaling.

Quality training and real world experience is why today's more than 105,000 Air Guard members have been invaluable to governors and combatant commanders alike, said Hotaling.

"The status (of Guard members) may be different," said Hotaling, "but the standards will be the same. That's why they are a relevant choice to combatant commanders."

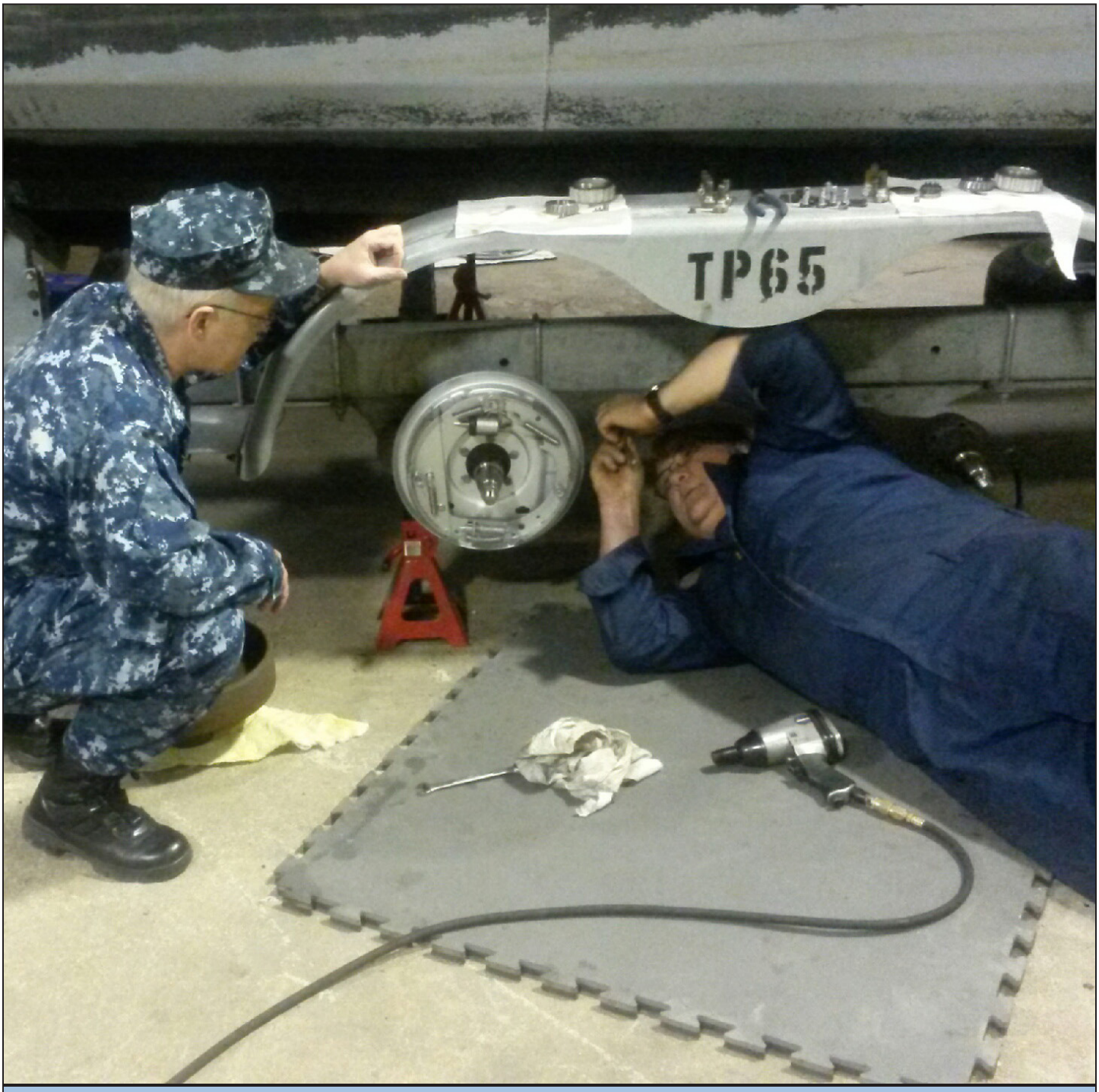
"We are all just American Airman," he said.gt

Guard and Guardsmen Keep Skills Threaded

BUFFALO -- Two New York Guard members of the 8th Decontamination Company, one from the 15th Decontamination Co. and one from Headquarters, 88th Brigade participated in a Mass Decontamination training exercise with the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry in Buffalo, March 28. The 88th Brigade members were requested by the company commander of the 101st Cavalry Homeland Response Force decontamination element to attend a 'meet and greet' during the unit's March drill. The 88th Brigade is the New York Guard's Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) Enhanced Response Force-Packages (CERFP) teams.

Guard CERFP teams have been training alongside the New York Army National Guard HRF elements for several years. The Guard members shared their experience and expertise in relation to their HRF and CERFP training and exercises. Photo by Capt. Hector Jordan 15th Decon Co., 88th Bde.

Sailors Stay on Top of Maintenance Needs



LEEDS -- New York Naval Militia Maintenance Supervisor Frank Rogers (right) replaces a brake assembly on the Patrol Boat 230 boat trailer at the New York State Armory in Leeds on Apr. 10 as Cmdr. Don McKnight, of the Military Emergency Boat Service in Latham looks on.

This fleet of patrol boats was built specifically for the New York Naval Militia. The all-aluminum, high speed boats operate in waters throughout the state, including the Atlantic Ocean; Lakes Champlain, Ontario, and Erie; the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, and throughout the state's canal system. Photo by Cmdr. David Hawley, New York Naval Militia.

Elementary School Shows Support for 106th

By Master Sergeant Cambridge, 106th Rescue Wing

SPEONK -- Last year Remsenburg-Speonk Elementary students sent care packages to deployed members of the 106th Rescue Wing. So on March 20, those who received those care packages visited the school to say thanks.

"It's an honor to give thanks back to a community that sent over care packages while we were deployed, especially during the holiday season," said Lt. Col. Robert Siebelts, commander of the 106th Maintenance Squadron. "They made our time overseas a little bit easier and gave us a part of home."

Those packages were not only shared with Airmen but with fellow Marines and British soldiers as well.

"Our British counterparts were not getting any mail at the time as their airlift was diverted. They didn't even get Christmas presents and for us to share our care packages made a real difference," Siebelts explained.

Rocco Carriero, CEO of Rocco A. Carriero & Associates, whose daughter attends classes, spearheaded the care package project with the students and the 106th Family Readiness Office.

Remsenburg-Speonk Elementary students will send back-to-school packages to 106th Rescue Wing children preparing for the 2014 Fall school session on March 19. Photo by Senior Airmen Christopher S. Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

"I wanted Ella, and her classmates to know the importance of supporting the troops," he explained

After a slideshow presentation from Siebelts about the wing's mission and a demonstration of pararescue equipment from Maj. Edward Boughal, the new project to help 106th Rescue Wing families began.

Attendees and students assembled numerous back to school supply packages. These packages will be given to children of wing families in preparation of the 2014 fall school session. **gt**

Military Museum Marks Black History Month

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- Historian Harry Bradshaw Matthews, Associated Dean of Hartwick College, speaks about the place of the Civil War-era United States Colored Troops in the African American struggle for freedom during a program on Feb. 22, at the New York State Military Museum. Three regiments of federal United States Colored Troops were raised in New York during the Civil War. About 200,000 black men served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Photo by Paul Fanning.

Master Sgt. Linda Nosbisch talks about her tour of duty experiences in front of an audience at the New York State Military Museum while other panel members look on, From left: Paul Fanning, retired Lt. Col. and event organizer, Maj. Lynn Currier, Staff Sgt. Asheley Manny and Nosbish.

Female Guard Members Tell of 'Tales in the Sandbox'

By Guard Times Staff

Photos by Sgt. Patricia Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- In the back of the New York State Military Museum, there is a small stage, podium and microphone. This is where a panel of four female New York Army National Guard Soldiers, who are still serving, sat in front of an audience, ready to share their experiences in combat on March 15 sponsored by Friends of the Museum.

The discussion panel entitled "Stories from the Sandbox," was hosted by retired New York National Guard Lt. Col. Paul Fanning and focused solely on the accounts of female combat veterans who served with the New York's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

All of them, including Fanning, served in either Iraq or Afghanistan but each one of them had different experiences. Three of the four served together in Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team as part of Task Force Phoenix.

The first Soldier to discuss her experiences was a member of the female Embedded Training Team, which specialized in training the female Afghan National Army members.

"I started out doing preventive medicine, for the active duty which consisted of testing the air and water, receiving water samples from local villages to test for parasites. If the water had parasites the recommendation would be to dig a new well if the contamination was really bad. I also inspected the dining facilities water storage units for proper chlorine and chlorate levels and I had the privilege to inspect one of the Afghan hospitals" said Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Moody. "These skills eventually lead the way for me to become a member of the female ETT. I had an opportunity to make a positive impact on the people of Afghanistan. We did humanitarian assistance with the Afghan Army and police. Working with the large multi-national presence of Germans, Romanians and Croatians was an added bonus."

"Everybody comes home different, you're never the same,"

-- Maj. Lynn Currier, Combined Joint Task Force Pheonix veteran of Afghanistan

"I surprised myself," said Staff Sgt. Asheley Manny, who served as an intelligence analyst during her tour in Iraq. "I was 21-years old and I was briefing General Casey."

At the time of her tour, Gen. George W. Casey was the commanding officer in charge of coalition forces in Iraq.

For Maj. Lynn Currier, it was a different type of tour from a managerial perspective. Then serving as the Deputy Provost Marshal for the active duty component, she was actively engaged in wide array of daily activities.

"I worked different hours investigating all

(*Con't. on Pg. 44*)

GUARD TIMES FEATURE

African Americans, Unionists Join Forces to Defy Racism

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM -- The Soldiers of the 20th Regiment, United States Colored Troops were among the half-million New Yorkers who served during the Civil War, but their proudest moment may have occurred in March 1864 -- when they marched off to combat through the same New York City streets which saw bloody, racially-charged draft riots less than a year before.

That historic march was due in no small part to the prestigious Union League Club of New York members, who had fulfilled their vow -- made while huddled in their headquarters at the riots' height the year before -- to raise a black regiment and march them "through the very streets then ruled by the rioters," according to one account. Club members and troops had triumphed and the irony wasn't lost on the New York Times: They were the first black unit formed in New York, which lagged behind other states in enlisting African-Americans.

The Fight to Muster

Blacks saw the coming conflict with the Confederacy as their fight against slavery and a ticket to citizenship. Across the northern states, African-Americans met, made resolutions to fight, formed regiments, drilled and promised to recruit other black troops.

But in 1861, official and civilian reactions to the prospect of African-American enlistment ranged from politely dismissive to violent. Labeling them "disorderly gatherings," police in Providence, R.I. broke up meetings of drilling freemen, while in New York City, a police official told African-Americans to stop drilling, or he couldn't shield the "mob assault by the Negro-hating lower classes of the city," according to historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author James M. McPherson.

Though the Union defeat at Bull Run in July 1861 spurred a call for more troops and bolstered the idea of black enlistment, New York Governor Edwin D. Morgan turned away black volunteers that same month. The Emancipation Proclamation and other laws officially made way for black enlistment about a year and half later, but Horatio Seymour, who succeeded Morgan as governor refused to allow a black regiment to form in New York State.

African-American New Yorkers joined black regiments in other states, like the Massachusetts 54th. Abolitionist, writer, activist, former slave and Rochester resident Frederick Douglass recruited for the 54th, and his son Lewis, along with more than 100 African-Americans from New York State, served in the regiment.

(*Con't. on Pg. 46*)

Tales from the Sandbox,

Continued from Preceding Page

sorts of criminal activities, arranging and conducting vehicle convoys for military police protection; I even taught female Afghan Army soldiers combative training to protect themselves."

Additionally, she was part of a large humanitarian and civil assistance effort that the Army called Operation Outreach. The program was set up because more than 1250 tons of humanitarian aid for women and children was sent from various organizations while the 27th was deployed."

For her and 247 others efforts to bring humanitarian relief to the Afghan people she was awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

"Every morning, the 27th IBCT chaplain would go to each vehicle and pray that each passenger would have safety during their missions," said Master Sgt. Linda Nosbisch, a chaplains assistant. She added that during her 2008 deployment the chaplain's office was there to support the Soldiers in any way they could, even if it wasn't religiously.

Nosbisch outlined her daily routines as simply Soldier care; developing a routine of getting out and talking to Soldiers.

"The chaplain's office would conduct 5-8 services per week. The services varied by denomination ranging from Gospel to traditional Protestant in English and Spanish and Catholic services in French."

She also conducted other aspects of the full Soldier spectrum by just being there for the Soldiers, she added.

The stories and accounts of these female combat veterans are in many ways one and the same but different. At the end of the panel discussion though, there was one statement that they all agreed on. "Everybody comes home different," said Currier, "You're never the same."gt

WRITERS IN THE RANKS

New York National Guard members turn their war experiences into books

By Maj. Benjamin Tupper, 42nd Infantry Division

More than a dozen New York Army National Guard Soldiers have turned their Iraq and Afghan war experiences into books: either writing about their own experiences or using those experiences as a basis for fiction.

From personal memoirs dealing with the hardships of war, to broad based historical reviews documenting the achievements of a unit, readers have a wide range of choices should they choose books penned by New York Citizen Soldiers.

Cpt. Matt Zeller's book *Watches Without Time*, chronicles his tour on an Embedded Training Team.

Zeller said he was motivated to write for both personal and professional reasons.

"I felt I had an obligation to share my story for the lessons learned. And, I found it therapeutic -- it really helped me come to terms with everything I experienced and continue to experience" Zeller said.

Writing also had unintended and unexpected positive benefits, he said. As a result of his book, he was regularly invited to discuss Afghan policy and life as a Soldier on a wide range of national television news outlets. He also was a guest lecturer at numerous universities across the nation, including Harvard.

Retired Maj. John Ready served in the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and 42nd Infantry Division, before he went to Iraq as a Civil Affairs Officer in the Army Reserve. He chose a different subject focus from the many Iraq authors who penned works before him.

"Most books on the Iraq War seemed to have the common theme of: 'We came, we saw, we kicked their butt!' They were stories of real combat, but I hadn't seen any books detailing the humorous and ridiculous side of war" Ready said.

His memoir, *Does My Suicide Vest Make Me Look Fat?* infuses the distinctive humor that Soldiers develop when facing the stress of war, with a serious look at the challenges faced by Civil Affairs units and Soldiers in Iraq.

Both Ready and Zeller strongly recommend that all Service members, regardless of rank or duty position or writing experience, consider putting their thoughts and memories to paper.

Zeller advises fellow Soldiers and Airmen to "start writing and don't worry about whether or not it's good enough…find a few trusted friends and editors because their perspective on your writing can prove invaluable."

Maj. Sean Flynn, who now commands the historic 1-69th "Fighting Irish" Regiment, wrote a third person account titled *The Fighting 69th; From Ground Zero to Baghdad*.

Flynn said that writing about and documenting the modern day chapter of the Fighting 69th was an honor in itself.

"There is significant gratification in having captured the modern history of the 69th Infantry and adding to the narrative of this storied Regiment, a unit that my own family has served with since the Civil War," he said.

Flynn worked with an editorial board comprised of Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans, and the final manuscript was approved by the leadership of the 69th Infantry and 42nd Division.

"Memoirs are difficult. I encourage Soldiers, especially those still serving, to consider using their experiences to write fictional accounts of this war." Flynn said.

"Fiction gives Soldiers far more latitude to explore the deeper meaning of warfare and what it means to be a Soldier without disrespecting the service of any Soldier the writer may have served alongside of. For those seeking to write a non-fiction account like the Fighting 69th, I recommend using an editorial board process to ensure key events and key individuals are represented accurately and to seek approval from the chain of command at every juncture,"

Sgt. 1st Class John Holmes, who served with the 42nd Infantry Division in Iraq, is unique among the list of published authors, in that he has mastered two realms of writing: the traditional long book format, as well as a web-based comic format.

With a regular following of over 80,000 readers, his successful comic *Power Point Ranger* captures the humor of military culture.

"I have Soldiers all over the world send me messages saying "Hey, your comic made me laugh when I was really feeling down." That's a great reward," Holmes said.

Holmes is also the author of the science fiction series of books compiled in *Irregular Scout Team One: Small Unit Combat in a Post Apocalypse World* , which looks at military service after a zombie outbreak.

Holmes offered this advice to prospective writers: "Write. Write. Write. And then write some more. Get into the habit of writing, and then rewriting what you wrote. Also, networking is extremely important, he said. Finally, he added, write for your own satisfaction."

While most published New York National Guard authors wrote as a supplemental activity to their regular civilian careers and jobs, some authors, such as Paul Rieckhoff, used their writing as a springboard to starting a new career.

Rieckhoff, who was a member of the Guard when he wrote "Chasing Ghosts: A Soldier's fight for American from Baghdad to Washington," went on to found and direct the I.A.V.A. (Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America), which represents over 300,000 members nationwide. gt

Soldiers Defy Racism,

Continued from Page 44

"I wish I could tell you that the State of New York calls you to this high honor," Douglass editorialized. "For the moment, her constituted authorities are silent on the subject. They will speak by and by and doubtless on the right side; but we are not compelled to wait for her. We can get at the throat of treason and slavery through the State of Massachusetts."

His son and the other New Yorkers were among the troops which stormed Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863, an incident made famous in the movie "Glory." Just days before, New York City mobs, angry over the draft, turned their wrath on African-Americans, tortured and lynched at least 11 black men, beat countless others and destroyed buildings and homes -- including the house of New York Mayor George Opdyke.

The headquarters of the Union League Club of New York stood just a few blocks from Opdyke's home. Formed by some of the city's most prominent, rich and influential citizens earlier that year, the club supported the Union and the war.

During the riots, club members, "well provided with arms and ammunition," locked club doors and windows, barricaded themselves with furniture and awaited attack, according to "A History of the Union League Club of New York City." As the members "sat in the mood of men awaiting battle," they formed a plan.

"If they got out of this thing alive, they would make the club defy public sentiment by raising and equipping a regiment of Negro troops and sending them to the front," the club history states. "More than that, they would march these freed men through the city streets."

The club later approved the idea and Seymour referred decision to the War Department, which sanctioned the formation of the regiment and helped provide living quarters and drilling grounds on Riker's Island.

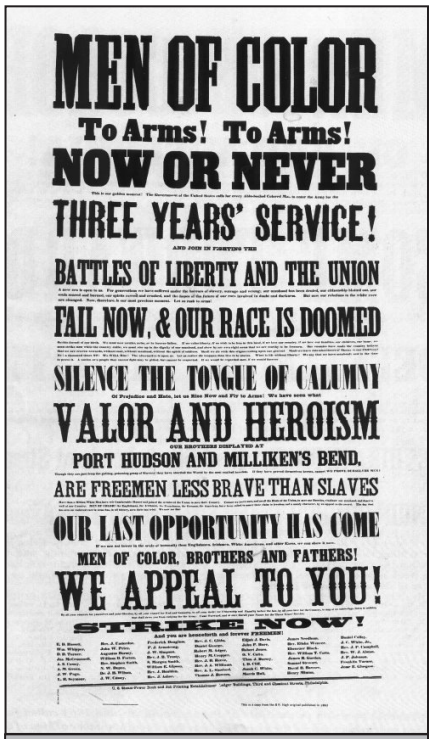
Raising the Regiment

But black recruits had been "pouring in" even before the War Department approved the regiment, including a young man whose mother had been killed and burned by the mob, and "a colored clergyman, leading all the able-bodied men in his flock," according to the club history. By Christmas the ranks were full, and training began on Rikers Island.

The 1,000 Soldiers also began to suffer an "especially cold winter in New York," in inadequate tent space which lacked floors and stoves, according to New York Historical Society accounts.

"The recruits had to crowd together, which provided their only warmth, since the tents had neither floors nor stoves," according to the accounts. "Exposed to the cold, many of the men became ill, and there was no hospital or medical staff to help them."

The Union League Club sent more tents, tent floors and stoves, along with tobacco and newspapers. A hospital was built, and women -- many of whom were the Soldiers' wives and mothers -- tended to sick troops. Though the troops were trained and ready to go in weeks, officer and weapon shortfalls, combined with paperwork snafus, delayed their departure until March, 1864.


MEN OF COLOR
To Arms! To Arms!
NOW OR NEVER
THREE YEARS' SERVICE!
AND JOIN IN FIGHTING THE
BATTLES OF LIBERTY AND THE UNION
FAIL NOW, & OUR RACE IS DOOMED
SILENCE THE TONGUE OF CALUMNY
VALOR AND HEROISM
OUR BROTHERS DISPLAYED AT
PORT HUDSON AND MILLIKEN'S BEND.
ARE FREEMEN LESS BRAVE THAN SLAVES
OUR LAST OPPORTUNITY HAS COME
MEN OF COLOR, BROTHERS AND FATHERS!
WE APPEAL TO YOU!
STRIKE NOW!

Recruitment poster for colored troops near the end of the Civil War. Courtesy photo.

"The spirit of the draft riots still smoldered," the Union League Club history recounted. "Timid friends had warned the club that to display those troops in New York City would 'loose hell again.'"

Pride on Parade

Citing their own bigotry and fear, two bands refused to take part in the regiment's march through New York City. Club members appealed to Governor's Island commander Maj. Gen. John A. Dix, who sent a military band.

On March 5, the band met the regiment when it debarked from Rikers Island, and led them past cheering crowds to the clubhouse.

The parade and ceremonies before the clubhouse attracted "tens of thousands of spectators," according to one account. After presentation of the regimental colors, speeches and more cheering, the regiment fell into line to board a ship which would take them to New Orleans and the war.

The memory of the riots still lingered, however, and the military band wavered."When during the halt before the clubhouse, the musicians found that the parade was to end with a march through Canal Street to the West Side docks, a section which had been a recruiting ground for the draft riots, they balked, putting their objection on the grounds that the mob might smash their instruments," according to the club history.

Led by 100 policemen, the band and regiment set out for the docks, followed by about 250 club members and the Soldiers' loved ones, "marching hand in hand in columns of eight," according to the club history.

"They turned into Canal Street," the history recounts. "It was ominously silent. Spontaneously, the delegation from the Union League Club burst into that provocative battle song, 'John Brown's Body.' The Negro families took it up, the band caught the key and joined in, and it surged through the regiment." The regiment and others completed the march, and "not a paving stone flew and not a voice was raised against them."

The event marked "an era of progress in the political and social history of New York," the New York Times reported.

"A thousand men, with black skins, and clad and equipped with the uniforms and arms of the U.S. Government, marched from their camp through the most aristocratic and busy streets, received a grand ovation at the hands of the wealthiest and most respectable ladies and gentlemen of New York, and then moved down Broadway to the steamer taking them to their destination -- all amid the enthusiastic cheers, the encouraging plaudits, the waving handkerchiefs, the showering bouquets, and other approving manifestations of a hundred thousand of the most loyal of our people," the newspaper said.

The 20th shipped south, followed by two other black regiments later that year serving in Louisiana, Texas, Florida and Tennessee, losing one Soldier to battle wounds and 264 others to disease. More than 500,000 New Yorkers enlisted in the Army and Navy during the four years of the Civil War and 53,114 New Yorkers died.gt

G.I. Joe Marks 50 Years at Military Museum

Story and photo by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

SARATOGA SPRINGS -- "If you call him a doll, you're fired."

That's how Ballston Lake, N.Y., G.I. Joe collector Tearle Ashby described the words of Merrill Hassenfeld in 1964 to employees of Hasbro Toys (known as Hassenfeld Brothers until 1968) during the rollout of one of the most iconic toys for boys.

The G.I. Joe action figure celebrates its 50th anniversary this year since February 9, 1964 is considered by most to be the birthday of G.I. Joe when he was first introduced at the New York City Toy Fair. Ashby brought his own collection for display along with those of other collectors to the New York State Military Museum here Feb. 8 to share with hundreds of visitors and G.I. Joe enthusiasts.

The display added to Ashby's program that recalled the "story of G.I. Joe." Describing the origins of the nickname in WWII, Ashby went on to describe one of the most innovative toys of the 1960s, taking small lead or plastic soldiers in fixed poses and creating a "Movable Fighting Man," as G.I. Joe was first called.

Never to be confused as a mere doll for boys, Merrill Hassenfield and the G.I. Joe development team, led by Don Levine at Hasbro, based in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, created the entire category of action figures for future generations, Ashby explained.

Levine, a Korean War veteran, leveraged the support of the Rhode Island National Guard in the design phase to help create realistic equipment and uniforms. Hassenfeld called on National Guard Maj. Gen. Leonard Holland, an old friend who provided access to weapons, uniforms, and gear for Levine's team to scale down for the new 12-inch soldier.

The rest is G.I. Joe history. A successful military toy for five years, G.I. Joe became an adventurer in 1969 and formed the Adventure Team in the 1970s before Hasbro "furloughed" the 12-inch figures in 1976, offering an 8-inch figure called Super Joe in 1977-78. Joe would not return until 1982, as a 3¾-inch Real American Hero.

The military museum in Saratoga Springs displayed a portion of Ashby's collection as part of its "Toys and Tanks" exhibit, which opened in December 2012 to much fanfare and public interest. Celebrating the 50th Anniversary, to Ashby, was just another great reason to bring more Joes out of storage and into the public eye.

"As a collector, you get to the point where you have nearly everything, but then what?" he said. "Here I get to take them out and share them with dads, kids and G.I. Joe fans from across the region."

It comes down to a great partnership with the military museum, Ashby said.

The exhibit and programs for G.I. Joe was a natural fit, said Museum Director Courtney Burns, since G.I. Joe is as much a part of cultural history as military history. And the attendance draw of visitors to the museum for the "Toys and Tanks" is a good complement to the military artifacts and exhibits for New York's contributions to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII and modern era.

"Our goal is to reach a larger audience and give people a reason to visit the museum again and again," Burns said, and the G.I. Joe program is another way of bringing both parents and children to the museum's exhibits.

G.I. Joe enthusiast Tearle Ashby with 50 years of action figures on display.

"I could not have done this without the support of Courtney Burns, who spent hours with me in the original setup of the exhibit, and again today for this display," Ashby told an audience of more than 50 attendees for his talk, while dozens more walked through the museum eyeing and photographing the collections.

And there were many hundreds of Joes to photograph. From vintage 1964 figures and their original boxes right through the transition of G.I. Joe to an adventurer with life-like hair and Kung Fu grip to the resurgence of G.I. Joe in the 1990s when Joe returned to his 12-inch scale, there were 1/6-scale soldiers of all nations and all eras, along with dozens of vehicles and equipment, on display.

Ashby, who also turns 50 this year with his original Joes, did note that the passing of time has shown both in the action figure and himself.

"I guess like many of the life-like hair Joes, we have a lot in common. After 30 or 40 years, my hair is starting to fall out too," Ashby joked. But all in all, "Joe looks pretty good for 50," he said. gt

A selection of G.I. Joe action figures displayed at the Military Museum Feb. 8.