Volume 7, Number 1

Winter 2014

guardtimes

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

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

To paraphrase the famous Uncle Sam recruiting poster from World War I, "I want you to stay in the New York National Guard."

You can't turn on the television news, open up a newspaper, or call up a news site on your smart phone lately without seeing a headline about cuts to the defense budget. There's talk about reducing military pensions, eliminating entire aircraft types from the fleet and slashing the strength of the Army and Air National Guard, as our combat commitment in Afghanistan comes to a close.

And we've already seen that play out here in New York when we offered the 105th Airlift Wing for conversion to a new aircraft, and we were directed to change the mission and structure of the 107th Airlift Wing. Our Army National Guard forces, of course, went through force structure change in 2005/06 when the state gave up a heavy combat brigade.

This may make you question the viability of the Army and Air National Guard as a military career.

You might ask yourself, "Is it worth it?"

My answer is unequivocally, yes!

The people of New York and the United States need you to stay in the Guard. Your friends and neighbors have come to count on you when the hurricane hits, or when flood waters rise, and our nation has learned to count on your to defend American interests overseas.

Each of you, whether you're a specialist in the Army Guard, or a captain in the Air Guard, possess skills you have refined and experiences that have shaped you and make you our most valued asset. You've taken your basic military training, and applied it during weekend drills, annual training, state emergency mobilizations or deployments for overseas operations. The skills you've learned in your short career, or your long one, have made you a better Soldier or Airman and a better citizen.

Our young Soldiers and Airmen, both enlisted and officer, will be our senior NCO's and field grade officers in 10-15 years. There is an opportunity for you to learn, make a difference, and advance through the ranks to lead and serve in positions of greater responsibility.

Despite all the talk about reducing our force, New York and the nation will still need a strong, well-equipped National Guard serving as an operational force. There may not be as many opportunities for overseas service as we have seen in the past, but there will still be overseas training opportunities and missions to support overseas contingencies.

We will not return to the National Guard of the 1990s in which our forces trained but never deployed.

An E-5 with ten years under his or her belt will be making more than $400 a month in drill pay in 2014. That's a car payment, an insurance payment, or a chunk of a mortgage payment.

Continued membership also comes with benefits like $400,000 worth of life insurance at $26 a month, college tuition assistance while you serve as a traditional Guard member, and access online to the benefits of shopping tax free at the Army/Air Force Exchanges at Fort Drum, West Point, Fort Hamilton, and other locations or online.

In addition, of course, Soldiers and Airmen who serve in a Title 10 status also earn education benefits for themselves, their spouses or their children under the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

And of course, continued service in our force gives our members an opportunity to make a difference here at home.

Thousands of New York Army and Air National Guard members responded to help their fellow New Yorkers when Tropical Storm Irene and Superstorm Sandy hit New York in 2011 and 2012, and our service members were there when flooding hit Mohawk Valley communities in 2013.

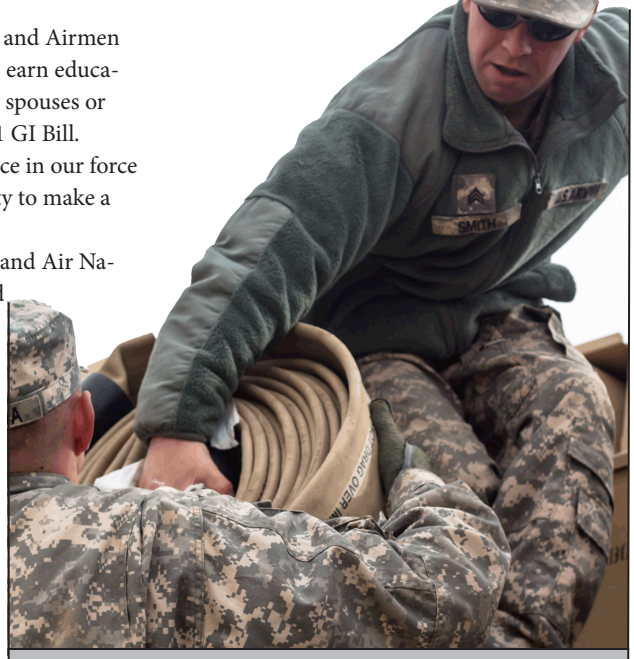
People around New York have come to look to the New York National Guard for help in some of the most challenging situations.

While your friends and neighbors are watching these disasters unfold on their TV, you and your fellow Guard members get an opportunity to do something about it.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

Make the decision to stay in the New York Army or Air National Guard and be part of that legacy as we move deeper into the 21st Century.

We need you in the Army and Air National Guard. Retaining a quality force is the key to success at home and overseas.



CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- Sgt. Nicholas Smith of Company A, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, secures a fuel hose while setting up a Forward Arming and Refueling Point for AH-64 Apaches during an exercise with 4th Battalion, 227th Attack Reconnaissance, 1st Cavalry, on Jan. 15. Photo by 1st Lt. Jean Marie Kratzer, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

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Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Commander in Chief
Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General
Eric Durr, Director of Public Affairs
Col. Richard Goldenberg, Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Alvin Phillips, Command Information Officer
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, NYARNG, Editor

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Guard Times
DMNA-MNPA
330 Old Niskayuna Road
Latham, New York 12110-3514
OFFICE (518) 786-4581 FAX (518) 786-4649
or richard.l.goldenberg.mil@mail.mil

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www.dmna.ny.gov

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CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General shakes hands with Col. Albert Ricci, Sr. commander of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade during his visit on Feb. 7. Photo by 1st Lt. Jean Marie Kratzer, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

FRONT COVER: A New York Army National Guard helicopter flown by Company A, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment is guided onto the deck of the USS Harpers Ferry by Navy Boatswains Mate 2nd Class Brynn Proudfoot, on December 26, 2013 during deck land qualification trials. The Army National Guard aviators and Navy conducted joint training to build familiarity with each other's equipment and procedures, including landing different models of rotary wing aircraft on Navy Dock Landing Ships.

BACK COVER: Col. Howard N. Wagner, Commander of the 105th Maintenance Group, Stewart Air National Guard Base, Newburgh, answers a question about cold weather aircraft maintenance operations from Brig. Gen. Mashoro Abel Phala, the Senior Defense Attache to the United States from the Republic of South Africa after a tour of the 11th C-5M Super Galaxy undergoing refurbishment at the New York Army National Guard facility. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael OHalloran, 105th Air Lift Wing.

Military OneSource Offers Free Tax Services

By Nick Simeone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Your 2013 W-2 wage and tax statement is likely on its way, and with it the countdown toward the April 15 tax filing deadline.

As preparations begin for the upcoming tax season, military families are being offered a no-cost to the customer service to ensure they can meet that deadline from anywhere they may be stationed around the world.

Military OneSource, partnering with H&R Block, is offering all active duty, Guard and reserve forces help in preparing their taxes and in filing their federal and state returns, in addition to the variety of other financial planning services it already provides free of charge.

"No matter where you are, when you call 800-342-9647 or go to [the Military OneSource website], you can access the programs and services," Tony Jackson, a military community and family policy analyst for the service told American Forces Press Service.

The program is designed to address the unique tax requirements and issues affecting military personnel and their families, Jackson said.

With many still likely dealing with holiday credit card bills, the April tax deadline may seem far off. But with many military families having to file multiple state tax returns in addition to federal taxes, beginning the work now on gathering tax-related documents can prevent headaches later.

"Now is the time to prepare, to gather your documents and your questions," Jackson said, "and [you can] speak to a tax consultant at no cost at Military OneSource."

Additional paperwork at tax time for those living outside their home state who may have rental property or may be subject to taxes where they are currently deployed is a common additional burden, he noted. Military OneSource will provide help filing a federal tax return, as well as up to three state returns, at no charge.

Jackson said some 224,000 federal and state tax returns were prepared for military families last year.

The program's tax experts are able to help military families navigate changes in tax laws that may have a particular impact on or benefit for members of the military -- as well as any tax implications related to military benefits, he added.

"They are nationally certified financial planners, so they are definitely qualified to assist families and service members," regardless of the topic, Jackson said.

Reserve component members are eligible for the free service regardless of their activation status, as are veterans within 180 days of being discharged, retired or separated.

The Defense Department established Military OneSource in 2002 to provide comprehensive information on military life at no cost to military families.gt

CID Warns of Website Scam Targeting Soldiers

By CID Public Affairs

QUANTICO, Va. -- The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command is warning the greater Army community about a new website scam where criminals are potentially attempting to take advantage of Soldiers and their families.

The My Army Benefits website that is currently using the www.usmilitarybenifit.org web address, is not an official website. The website also claims to be the "Official Army Benefits Website," however, the organization is not affiliated nor endorsed in any way with the United States Army.

According to Criminal Investigation Command Special Agents, the primary purpose of the website is to collect Soldiers' Army Knowledge Online e-mail accounts and passwords. The bogus website also makes the false claim that "The U.S. military has granted access to unclaimed and accumulated army benefits for listed active duty Soldiers. Benefits not claimed within the stipulated period will be available for claims after 60 months."

CID recommends that Soldiers, Department of the Army Civilians, Army retirees and family members avoid this website and ignore any information or claims posted on the site.

Most online scam attempts are easily recognizable as they are usually unsolicited e-mail or texts; hoax websites that contain misspelled words, punctuation and grammatical errors, and often ask for private information, such as an individual's e-mail address and password.

Cyber-crime and internet fraud presents unique challenges to U.S. law enforcement agencies as criminals have the ability to mask their true identities, locations and cover their tracks quickly.

The ability of law enforcement to identify these perpetrators is very limited, so individuals must stay on the alert and be personally responsible to protect both themselves and their loved ones.

However, if you have provided any information to the My Army Benefits website or have received any correspondence from the website, take the following steps:

DO NOT LOG IN TO THE WEBSITE

DO NOT RESPOND TO ANY EMAILS

STOP all contact if you responded to e-mail.

IMMEDIATELY CONTACT your local Information Assurance (IA) office if you accessed the website from a government computer or system.

Other cyber-crime resources available are:

Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3): http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx

Federal Trade Commission: spam@uce.gov

By reporting this cybercrime one can help bring those responsible to justice. For more information regarding cyber crime and staying safe online, visit the CID Lookout or the Computer Crimes Investigative Unit webpage at www.cid.army.mil.gt

DOD Releases New Religious Accommodation Instruction

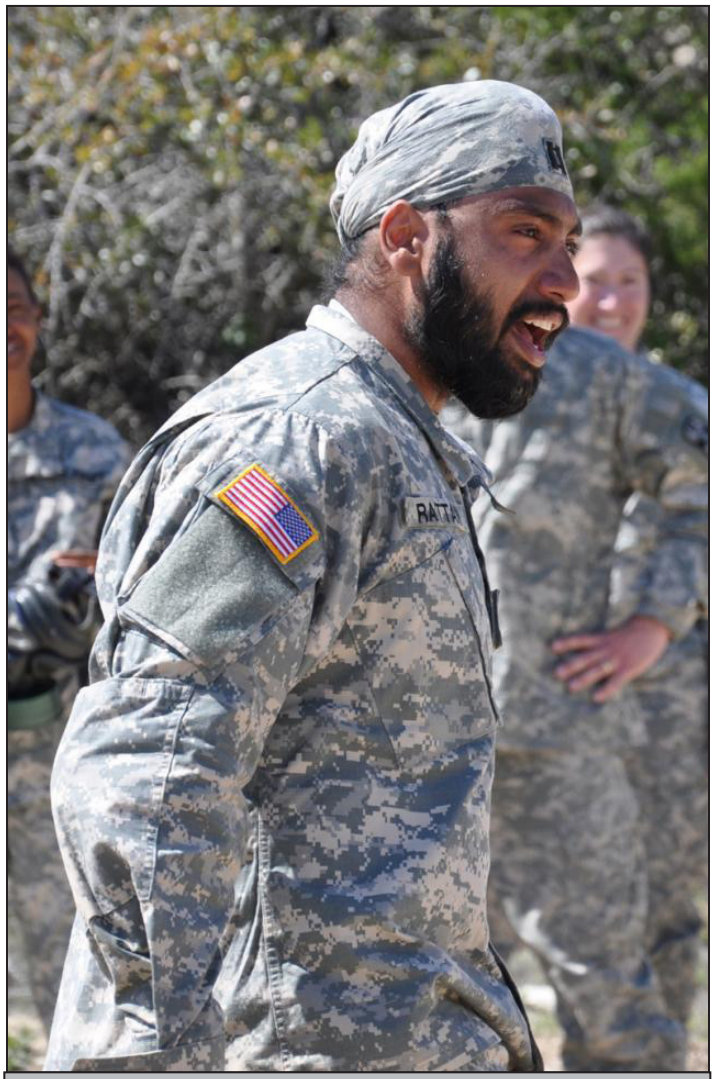
Commanders to allow wear of beards, religious garb

By Cheryl Pellerin, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department released a new instruction Jan. 22 that details its updated policy on making religious accommodations requested by service members, Pentagon spokesman Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nathan J. Christensen said today.

A DOD instruction implements a policy or prescribes the manner or plan of action used to carry out a policy, operate a program or activity, and assign responsibilities.

"The new policy states that military departments will accommodate religious requests of service members," Christensen said, "unless a request would have an adverse effect on military readiness, mission accomplishment, unit cohesion and good order and discipline."



Army Capt. (Dr.) Tejdeep Singh Rattan proclaims "I am a Sikh warrior" to the delight of his classmates after exiting the gas chamber during nuclear, biological and chemical training at Camp Bullis, Texas. Army photo.

When a service member requests such an accommodation, he added, department officials balance the need of the service member against the need to accomplish the military mission. Such a request is denied only if an official determines that mission accomplishment needs outweigh the need of the service member, Christensen said.

Requests to accommodate religious practices will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, the spokesman noted.

"Each request must be considered based on its unique facts, the nature of the requested religious accommodation, the effect of approval or denial on the service member's exercise of religion, and the effect of approval or denial on mission accomplishment, including unit cohesion," he added.

Immediate commanders may resolve religious accommodation requests that don't require a waiver of military department or service policies that address wearing of military uniforms and religious apparel, grooming, appearance or body-art standards.

Accommodation requests that require a waiver will be forwarded to the respective military department for determination.

Christensen said that factors used to determine if religious apparel interferes with military duties include whether the item:

-- Impairs the safe and effective operation of weapons, military equipment or machinery;

-- Poses a health or safety hazard to the service member wearing the religious apparel;

-- Interferes with the wear or function of special or protective clothing or equipment such as helmets, flak jackets, flight suits, camouflaged uniforms, protective masks, wet suits and crash and rescue equipment; or

-- Otherwise impairs the accomplishment of the military mission.

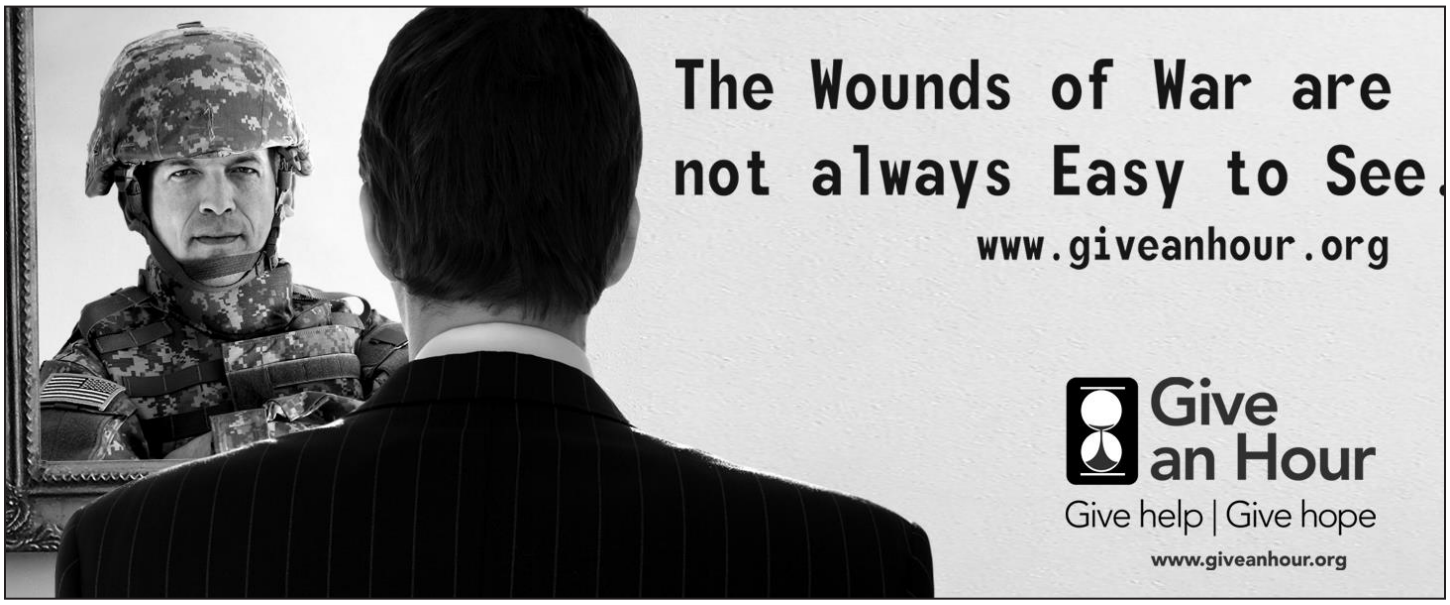
The spokesman said department officials believe the new instruction will enhance commanders' and supervisors' ability to promote the climate needed to maintain good order and discipline, and will reduce the instances and perception of discrimination toward those whose religious expressions are less familiar to the command.

"The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the military services to observe the tenets of their respective religions and the rights of others to their own religious beliefs," Christensen said, "including the right to hold no beliefs."**gt**

"Each request must be considered based on its unique facts, the nature of the requested religious accommodation, the effect of approval or denial on the service member's exercise of religion, and the effect of approval or denial on mission accomplishment, including unit cohesion,"

-- Navy Lt. Cdr. Nathan Christensen, Pentagon Spokesman

Give an Hour™ Provides Free and Confidential Mental Health Care



WASHINGTON -- "Over 2.6 million troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since the wars began more than a decade ago," says Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, president and founder of Give an Hour. "All of them will be affected by their experience and some will return with understandable mental health consequences of their exposure to war."

Give an Hour, founded in 2005, has created a network of volunteer mental health professionals pledging an hour a week of their services, free of charge, to members of the military—including active duty, reserve, and guard—veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq, their families, and their communities. Their services range from one-on-one counseling for post-traumatic stress to substance abuse treatment groups and counseling for adolescents and children.

"And we can assume that a service member's experience will directly affect at least ten people within their social networks—spouses and significant others, children, mothers, fathers, and friends—which means over 20 million Americans might need assistance with the complicated process of reintegration as service members come home," Van Dahlen said.

Locating and accessing this assistance is not always easy. Cost is often an issue, as is availability of appropriate care within communities where service members, veterans, and their families live. While there is more acceptance of the importance of mental health care for those who serve and their families today, there are still many who are suffering unnecessarily because they lack an understanding of the issues that affect them or they are unaware of options available to them.

Give an Hour now includes more than 6,700 psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, marriage and family therapists, drug and alcohol counselors, pastoral counselors, and other professional counselors. These providers work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health by participating in and leading education, training, and outreach efforts in schools and communities and around military bases.

Give an Hour offers an important option for the men, women, and families who serve by providing services in the community at no cost to those in need. And, there is no limit to the number of sessions one can receive – help is available for as long as it is needed.

"We are proud of the opportunity to work with the Army National Guard to ensure critical mental health services are available for these deserving men, women, and families," notes Dr. Van Dahlen.

Members can learn more about the services available at www.giveanhour.org. **gt**

MRE Changes: An Eye on Army Nutrition

WASHINGTON, Army News Service -- Barbecue shredded beef, vegetarian taco pasta, and seasoned black beans will replace chicken fajitas, vegetable lasagna, refried beans and potato cheddar soup in the 2014 production of Meals, Ready-to-Eat.

Each year, the Combat Feeding Directorate goes into the field to test new food items with the warfighters and get input on existing food items, said Jeanette Kennedy, a senior food technologist at Natick Labs, Mass.

Soldiers also make recommendations for items they would like to see in Meals, Ready-to-Eat, known as MREs. But sometimes, implementing these items is not feasible due to the process of food preservation technology. Kennedy said this is the case with a commonly recommended item, pizza.

MREs are produced through the "retort process," which is a thermal processing method meant to sterilize food. The food items are sealed into a pouch and heated under pressure to temperatures above 240 degrees. This inactivates the microbes that would cause food spoilage.

Kennedy said Natick Soldier Research is currently researching non-thermal, low-thermal, and advanced thermal processes that are less detrimental to the food as compared to the retort process.

"For example, the next generation of ration entrees may be processed via microwave sterilization, high pressure processing, super critical carbon dioxide preservation, or osmotic dehydration," Kennedy said. "These novel food processing and preservation methods may enable us to produce a greater variety of highly desired menu items, for example eggs, macaroni and cheese and deli meats-that have a near fresh quality and high nutrient value."

For next year's production, Combat Feeding Directorate will also transition to foldable fiberboard sleeves instead of the current cartons inside the MREs to greatly reduce the size and weight, Kennedy said.

MREs have grown immensely in terms of variety of options and cuisines represented since the Trench Rations of World War I. Kennedy, along with Julie Smith, senior food technologist for the Combat Rations Team, said options will continue to grow.

Currently, there are 24 menus, which consist of an entrée, such as beef stew or lemon pepper tuna, and several other food items, such as crackers with cheese spread, fruit, and pound cake.

Since World War I's Trench Rations, which consisted of large amounts of food such as canned bread, corned beef and sardines meant for the entire unit to consume, MREs have grown smaller and more complex, while still retaining the nutrients required to sustain Soldier's energy.

In 2008, Combat Feeding began fielding the "First Strike Ration," which is a compact assault ration designed to eat on the move. It consists of many of the items found in the MRE, but which can be carried in the cargo pocket and don't need to be eaten with a spoon.

Smith said the goal is to increase Soldiers caloric intake throughout the day in combat operations while eliminating the need to stop and heat up the food.

She said they are currently testing around six new flavors for the First Strike Ration's pocket sandwiches.gt

Air Force to Replace Locator Beacons

By Staff Sgt. David Salanitri, Air Force Public Affairs Agency, Armed Forces News Service

WASHINGTON -- The Air Force will replace thousands of unreliable aircraft personnel locator beacons across the fleet, a service official said Jan. 16.

Locator beacons are an automated method used to locate an aviator should he or she eject or egress in peacetime flights, said Col. Aaron Clark, the Global Power Programs Directorate deputy director for Air Force acquisitions.

During the past three years, a steady trend of increasing failures in the URT-44 personnel locator beacon occurred during ejections. The beacons were purchased in 2009 and 2010 in order to communicate with a new satellite operating frequency.

According to Clark, when the beacon turns on, it sends a signal to a satellite. That signal is then used by rescue crews to locate the downed aviator. Since the beacon broadcasts a signal, it is normally not used during wartime operations.

"We issued additional maintenance instructions to inspect and repair a couple possible problems to make sure the system was installed and prepared to operate properly," Clark said.

Phase one has begun and will replace 3,900 beacons on all aircraft with ejection seats by 2015, Clark said. The second phase will complete a fleet-wide replacement and cost approximately $40 million.

Since no single piece of equipment alone will be an aviator's saving grace, survival kits are packed with redundancies and multi-use tools for worst-case scenarios. For instance, a kit may be equipped with more than one radio with similar capabilities or multiple flares.

While all of these mechanisms and tools are important, they don't trump the most important resource, according to one air crew member -- the wingman.gt

Inspector General's Corner

Fitness: Mission Ready

Commentary by Col. Darren Sears, Inspector General

LATHAM -- The Joint Force Headquarters Inspector General Office has seen a spike in the number of complaints we have received recently, from both Soldiers and Airmen, regarding the Army and Air Force height/weight and physical fitness standards.

Some in the Air Force might even argue that the standards have been getting tougher and tougher. However, I would argue that both the Army and Air Force have gone out of their way to ensure these standards are fair and clear.

Implementation has been thoroughly explained to our Soldiers and Airmen, and the Army Regulation, Field Manual, and Air Force Instruction are easily accessible and easy to understand.

There is really only one option when it comes to the Army and Air Force height/weight and physical fitness standards, and that is to meet the standard. Especially in this day and age of shrinking military budgets and manpower, we need to retain the most professionally ready Soldiers and Airmen. Therefore, don't get yourself into a situation where you don't meet standard because it may end up being the disqualifier to your continued service in the New York Army or Air National Guard.

Don't get me wrong. For many, it is not an easy journey to maintain their physical fitness, but it's not far from impossible. Yet for most who can't meet height/weight and physical fitness standards, it is based on excuses, not reality.

Many don't even make an honest effort. They say they do, but when they really look at what they could have done and should have done versus what effort they really put forth, they know that they were woefully short. I keep hearing that, "back in the old days, we didn't kick people out for physical training; it was all about getting the mission done."

My response is that both the Army and the Air Force have directed that part of accomplishing the mission is to be able to meet height/weight and physical fitness standards.

The excuses we hear are sometimes comical; sometimes sad; and sometimes unbelievable. One of the most used is, "I'm on a profile or have a medical condition, so I can't do physical activity." I ask, "What does your profile say you can't do?" As an example, many will say, "It says I can't run." My next question is usually, "Well, does it say you can't walk, bike, swim, lift weights, eat less, or watch what you eat?" I also hear from a lot of Soldiers and Airmen who prepare themselves to barely meet the height/weight and fitness test standards and then when tested fall just shy of the standard. I always wonder why they didn't prepare themselves to max the test, so when they fall a little short of the goal they are still well within standard.

If you have a legitimate reason (per regulation) not to take portions of the physical fitness test, or if you have a condition that will affect your performance, ensure that matter is adjudicated by the proper authorities early enough to not become an issue.

All too often we hear from Soldiers and Airmen who fail the standard and then bring up the fact that there was some underlying cause to their poor performance. Those underlying issues should be known to your chain of command and the proper authorities before you are tested.

It may not be easy, but as they say, nothing worth doing is ever easy. Put forth the effort to be one of those Soldiers and Airmen that are always within height/weight and physical fitness standards. Don't be that Soldier or Airman who is grasping for excuses when faced with the possible negative consequences of multiple failures of the height/weight measurement or physical fitness test. I want to provide one thought for leadership also. Ensure that you are consistently following the AR, FM, and AFI when adjudicating your height/weight and physical fitness programs. Don't hold one Soldier or Airman to the standard and then turn around and hold the next Soldier or Airman to a different standard.

The Army and the Air Force have put a lot of effort into giving us fair physical fitness standards. Let's ensure we all put forth the same effort in maintaining those standards. For the Army and Air Force's clear guidance, please reference Army Regulation 600-9, Army Field Manual 7-22, and Air Force Instruction 36-2905. Physical fitness is an important readiness metric, and most Soldiers and Airmen in the New York Army and Air National Guard do a great job in showing that New York is mission ready. Be part of the majority that is fit to fight, and if you're not, don't be surprised when it possibly leads to negative administrative action. Continue to give physical fitness the effort it deserves and the effort that both the Army and Air Force demand.gt

"There is really only one option when it comes to the Army and Air Force height/weight and physical fitness standards, and that is to meet the standard."

--Col. Darren Sears, Inspector General

Chaplain's Corner

Today's Unit Ministry Teams must be "Ready in a Minute"

By Sgt. Major Roy Sayward, Joint Force Headquarters

Recently Ch. (Maj) Brian Murphy, the 42nd Infantry Division Chaplain, and I, attended an Army National Guard Senior Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant Conference. This was the first to have all 50 states represented.

Many topics were discussed as to how future religious support operations were going to be conducted in the future. With the draw down of troops in Afghanistan, there are fewer deployments requiring full units, which means; fewer Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) being deployed with units.

The Army National Guard will remain an operational force, which means the Guard will maintain a high state of readiness. The Army Guard UMTs must remain sharp and also maintain a high state of readiness. Since September 11, 2001 the New York Army National Guard Chaplains and assistants have answered the call to duty; nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, and honoring the fallen like no other UMTs have in the previous decades during peace time. With fewer deployments one would assume we could revert back to the pre-war days, kick back and assume the "traditional guard" role of one weekend a month and 2 weeks a year. With today's modern contemporary battlefield our chaplains and assistants must remain trained and ready more now than ever before to respond to natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and deploying in austere environments to assist in the fight for freedom.

Today's chaplains and assistants must be prepared for domestic operations and operations abroad. There will be less time to train, less money, and less resources to prepare for operations. The UMTs must be able to hit the ground running and keep up with their units needs.

To accomplish this, UMTs must establish a competent staff officer/staff non-commissioned officer relationship, be able to soldier the worst types of conditions and lastly provide good pastoral care for our fighting men and women. Not to mention still caring for the families at home of the Soldiers who have been called upon once again.

The UMTs of the future must be able to accomplish this with fewer in their ranks as the Army continues to downsize.

The chaplain and the assistant must be well rounded in order to accomplish their mission. The UMTs must be physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually strong to sustain in these times to respond in short notice, "in a minute", just as our forefathers of our this great nation were required to do when fighting for our freedom from England.gt

Soldier's Wife Selected as NY Military Spouse of 2014

Guard Times Staff

Military Spouse of the Year, Amanda Baro. Courtesy photo.

NEW YORK - A New York Army National Guard Family Readiness Group leader in Jamaica has been selected by the readership of Military Spouse as the 2014 Base Level Spouse of the Year for New York State.

Amanda Baro has been married to Sgt. 1st Class Victor Lopez, the Readiness NCO for Company G, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, since 2012.

She is an FRG Treasurer with the company and volunteer with the unit families since before the couple wed.

"As soon as I married, my husband, I married the Army as well," Baro said in her application to Military Spouse. "Along with a big learning curve mostly with acronyms, I quickly learned this is a community. The Army is a family of its own, or is wonderful being a part of such a large supportive family unit. I have made a lot of great friends in the process as well."

> "As soon as I married, my husband, I married the Army as well."
>
> ***-Amanda Baro, Military Spouse***

Military Spouse magazine founded the Military Spouse of the Year award in 2008 to honor military spouses of all ranks and from all branches of service each year. The program is largely sponsored by Armed Forces Insurance.

The selection criteria for Baro's nomination included her impact on community change, volunteerism, personal sacrifice in pursuit of goals and her special efforts to support military families.

Nominations were chosen based public voting and a judges panel.

Baro received the 258 Field Artillery's Molly Pitcher Award in 2013 for her volunteerism and service to the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, which Company G supports.

"Amanda is praiseworthy of receiving the military spouse of the year award," said Lopez in his application on her behalf. "Her personal sacrifice and dedication to our family, her work and the Soldiers and Families of the 258 Field Artillery are in keeping with the highest traditions of an army wife."gt

Military Personnel News: The MILPO Corner

Personnel News

Maintaining Your Army Military Human Resource Record. As the decentralization of human resource management continues across the Army and Army National Guard, more records will convert to an electronic format. Soldiers are reminded that All Soldiers are responsible for updating their individual Army Military Human Resource Records (AMHRR). Soldiers must keep their personnel records updated at all times by routinely reviewing their record online.

Soldiers should maintain original copies of all documents submitted for upload to the AMHRR. At a minimum, Soldiers will annually review their record to ensure it is accurate, free of errors, and includes all authorized documents. When out processing or retiring from service, members should print a copy of their AMHRR for personal use.

Ultimately, your record is more and more your responsibility for its accuracy and completeness.

Casualty Notification and Assistance Officer Training. The 2014 Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) and Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) training courses will be held at three sites this Spring. They include March 26-27 at Camp Smith, Cortlandt Manor; April 2-3 at the Thompson Road Armory, Syracuse; and April 23-24 at Latham.

The training is a requirement for all AGR E-7's and above who have not previously taken the course or have a certificate older than 12 months of issue. Personnel who wish to re-take the course are also encouraged to attend.

This training is part of our collective obligation to the families of our Soldier's, therefore if you are scheduled for this training, remember your individual attendance is critical. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Fiscal Year 14 CNO/CAO training, please contact 1st Lt. Katie Kurtz at 518-270-1542 or katie.l.kurtz.mil@mail.mil

Gold Star Mothers Convention For 2014. The Gold Star Mothers will be holding a convention at the Courtyard by Marriott in Saratoga Springs from April 24, 2014 to April 27, 2014. For more information please contact your local Chapter President. (http://www.goldstarmoms.com/Depts/AllDepts/AllDepts.htm

Home for Christmas

ROCHESTER -- More than 120 New York Army National Guard Soldiers from the 222nd Military Police Company returned home December 21 following their demobilization at Camp Shelby, Miss. They were met by family members ready to take their Soldiers home for Christmas following the successful completion of a security force mission for U.S. facilities in Qatar over the past ten months. Photo courtesy Staff Sgt. Jonathan Cregg, 222nd Military Police Company.

Medical News

Resource for Soldiers & Families. The National Guard Bureau Personnel Office recently announced the launch of "Guard Your Health," a central place for Army National Guard Soldiers and family members to find information on medical readiness.

The site supports the Army National Guard Chief Surgeon's efforts to build and sustain a resilient, adaptable and medically ready Citizen-Soldier force. It is available at https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-127450

Comprehensive Resilience Modules Available.

The Army G1 has noted on his web site that Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness has two new Comprehensive Resilience Modules which are now available. The first is the Resilience and the Army Profession and the second, Concerned about a Friend. Both can be accessed from the Soldier Fitness Tracker. Go to the following link for additional information. https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-121559

Health Supplements. The Army Personnel Office recognizes that Warfighters often turn to dietary supplements because of the extreme demands of military performance. Making an informed decision about supplement use can be difficult, and a bad decision could adversely affect your health. The Food and Drug Administration advises consumers to stop using any supplement products labeled as OxyElite Pro or VERSA-1. Visit the following link for more information: http://hprc-online.org/dietary-supplements.

Prescription Drug Use. There are new guidelines for Soldiers concerning Prescription Drug use and guidance on urine analysis testing and medical profiling of controlled substances.

Commanders and NCOs should ensure that Soldiers are informed concerning the legitimate versus illegitimate use of controlled prescription medications. The use of a legally obtained prescription drug will be considered illegitimate if it is beyond a clearly defined expiration date.

Soldiers should understand that prescriptions will expire six months after the last date prescribed. Soldiers on long-term controlled substances will be considered for medical profiling to ensure Commanders are aware of potential duty restrictions, side effects, and risks of certain medications.

Injury Prevention and Physical Fitness.

Why focus on injury prevention and physical fitness? Among the Army active duty popu-

lation, injury is a leading cause of medical encounters with over 1 million medical reports due to acute injuries and chronic musculoskeletal conditions annually. Approximately 275,000 Soldiers are affected each year. Injuries are also a leading health problem among Army Reserve and National Guard populations, according to a 2010 Defense Medical Surveillance System.

Improving physical fitness and reducing injuries is good for the Soldier, the unit, and the Army. Physically fit and injury-free Soldiers can perform their jobs to the highest degree possible. A physically fit, medically ready unit is best positioned for mission and operational success. Injury prevention programs free medical resources to treat those with non-preventable and serious conditions and brings those Soldiers back to duty.

Injury Prevention and Human Performance Optimization Initiatives. The Army Personnel Office recently noted that there are two key barriers to medical readiness, injuries and poor physical fitness. The identification and evaluation of injury prevention and human performance optimization programs are vital to avoid these barriers.

Some suggested goals include walking 10,000 steps per day; choosing lean and green meals; adding one hour of physical activity four to five times per week; download an App to monitor calories and activity; and sleeping for eight hours each night.

Further information in this article may be found at The U.S. Army Public Health Command and consists of health promotion, human performance optimization, and injury prevention efforts.

http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/Pages/SoldierMedicalReadinessCampaignPlanLOE3.aspx

Military Awards News

Federal Military Awards. Army Regulation 600-8-22 is the "bible" of federal military awards providing all award criteria, recommendation, and processing instruction. The Human Resources Command, Awards and Decorations Branch, Soldier Programs and Services Division, link is the primary link for current policy concerning federal awards. http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r600_8_22.pdf

The Institute of Heraldry site provides access to charts which display all medals and ribbons, as well as criteria guidance. Veteran Medal Replacement information can also be accessed. http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/

State Military Awards. DMNA Regulation 672-1, State Military Awards, dated 30 August 2013, governs the criteria and application procedures for New York State Military Awards. The guidelines and a state award ribbon chart, showing order of precedence, are available online at www.dmna.ny.gov/awards.

Evaluations. New Officer Evaluation Report Support Form. New OER Support Form (DA Form 67-10-1A) was released in December 2013 to enable a smooth transition to the new OER in April 2014 and allow officers an opportunity to discuss and develop rating objectives in accordance with the army doctrine, unit missions and goals. The DA Form 67-10-1A will be mandatory for all evaluations with a thru date of 1 April 2014. For more information, please visit the Officer Personnel Management Website at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/553732.

Revised Officer Evaluation Reports. The revised Officer Evaluation Reports is scheduled to be implemented April 1, 2014. OERs completed with a thru date of April 1, 2014 will be done under the new system. OERs completed prior to April 1 will continue to be processed using the current system.

The changes include four different evaluation reports based on an officer's grade (DA Form 67-10 series): company grade, field grade, strategic leaders (Col.) and General officer.

The officer evaluations will add a rater profile. Raters must maintain less than half of their assessments below the "excels" box. The Rater assesses performance and senior rater assesses potential. The evaluation format is also now tied to leadership doctrine.

The new system implements an Evaluations Entry System. It will allow for all OERs to be completed and submitted using the web-based application to reduce errors and be more user-friendly.

Oldest Serving Guardsman to Retire

LATHAM -- Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General, poses with Sgt. 1st Class Michael Lieber and his wife Marcia after awarding Lieber the Meritorious Service Medal during ceremonies here on Dec. 13. Lieber, who is retiring at the end of December, 2013, served from 1975 to 1985, re-enlisted in 2003 and served in Iraq about two years later with the 42nd Infantry Division. As the oldest serving Soldier in the New York Army National Guard, Lieber joined two of the youngest New York National Guard members to cut a cake in celebration of the National Guard's 377th Birthday. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters.

SOLDIERS LEADERS CIVILIANS FAMILIES

Take 5

Safe on the Slopes

- Warm up before hitting the slopes
- Wear the proper protective gear
- Dress in layers
- Take frequent breaks to avoid dehydration and overheating
- Watch the weather

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Recognizing Winter Dehydration

By Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM -- Do you think summer time is the only time you should be concerned about drinking enough fluids, dehydration can strike us during all seasons, and winter is no exception.

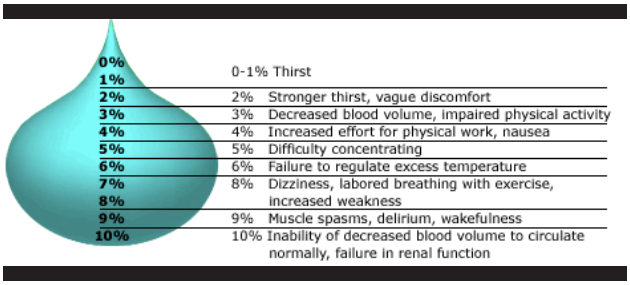
In fact, dehydration is accelerated during the cold weather and at higher altitudes because the air we breathe is drier under these conditions. When we breathe, our bodies humidify the dry outside air and heat it up to our body's temperature. We can lose between one to two liters of water a day through evaporation from the lungs. So, since your body has to work harder to humidify the air you breathe and to warm it up, you need to drink plenty more water if you are spending time outdoors.

Also, heated indoor air tends to dry the skin, increasing the need for more fluids. Be especially alert if you like to keep your home or office extra heated.

Aside from the weather itself, another key reason for winter dehydration is that it's easy to skip drinking during wintertime activities since you are less likely to feel thirsty in the colder weather. As a result, the consequences of winter dehydration are much higher, since dehydration can accelerate hypothermia, frostbite or fatigue.

So how do you best avoid the effects of dehydration this winter? For starters, don't forget how important it is to drink! Keep your bottled water near you or on your desk at work, and remember to sip throughout the day. If you prefer something warmer in the colder winter months, beverages such as teas and soups will help keep you hydrated too.

Increase intake by switching to water breaks; fill your coffee mug with water instead of another coffee. gt



Preventing Winter Sports Injuries

By Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Austin, Joint Force Headquarters

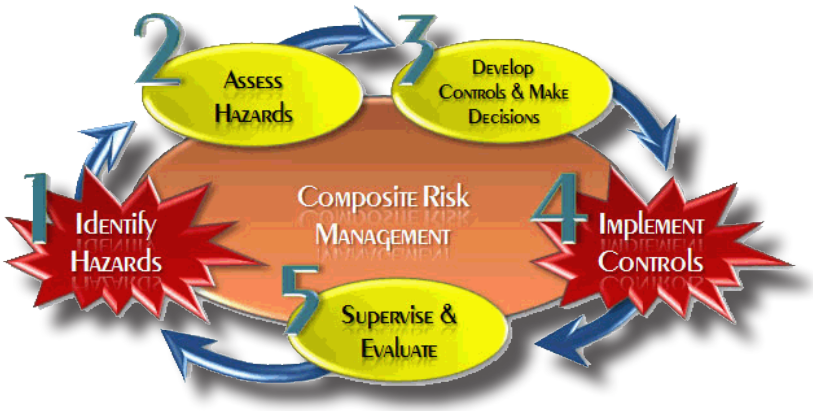
LATHAM -- A complete periodic physical is important for many reasons, but is extremely important before strenuous activities. An annual physical exam ensures wellness and good health in addition to keeping you from causing an unwanted career ending accident or to impede your deployment readiness.

Proper conditioning before and after an event, to the degree necessary for that event is essential. Warm up, gently stretch and when finished, cool down. Often times athletes play with muscle imbalances, poor core strength, and inflexibility. This can increase the risk of injury. Muscle Imbalance: A muscle imbalance is when there is a strength deficit between the muscles acting on a joint. That muscle may work effectively during a specific movement, but it can fail when doing functional movements like cross-country skiing, shoveling snow, down hill skiing or ice skating.

Do not ignore pain. Whether it's our sore muscles or an upset stomach, all of us have pain at some point. But it can be hard to separate annoying, run-of-the-mill aches from pain that signals something is seriously wrong. Sometimes, overlooking a little pain can leave you with a big problem. Talk to your doctor if you're not sure what is causing your pain, but if you think you might more serious pains, get a sound medical opinion as soon as you can.

Watch the weather. Be especially alert if the weather starts to get colder or warmer and how the change will effect your activity.

Water breaks must be frequent and mandatory.



Make sure the area in which the activity takes place is clear of hazards.

Wear appropriate outdoor clothing that is either made for that activity or that is in layers and have a place to put it when discarded in order to keep it dry. Carry dry clothing that you will need to replace should your initial clothing become wet or damaged.

Think about your winter activity in terms of others who may also participate. Children will need the same consideration as you would give yourself. Supervision and protective equipment must be used when applicable.

A person who is already injured should not continue in the activity. Avoid excess and know where to get medical help if needed. Keep a first aid kit accessible.

Soldiers are expected to exercise sound judgement and self-discipline in all activities and not put life or limb or performance of their Army duties in jeopardy.

The commander's role in safety does not replace the individual's responsibility.

More information on winter safety and composite risk management can be found at: https://safety.army.mil. gt

Marking Ten Years of State Partnership Program

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

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, presents an award commemorating the 10-year old National Guard State Partnership Program relationship between the New York National Guard and the South African National Defense Force to Brig. Gen. Mashoro Phala, the South African Military Attache during a ceremony at the Lexington Avenue Armory.

NEW YORK- The New York National Guard marked 10 years of a National Guard State Partnership Program relationship with the South African National Defense Force during a ceremony at the Lexington Avenue Armory on Dec. 18.

The ten year National Guard State Partnership Program relationship between the New York National Guard and the South African National Defense Force has been a good deal for both the U.S. and South Africa.

"Over the last 10 years, we have achieved great success through our intense training and engagements and we do so because the elements of our success and future are built not on a one-way relationship but a reciprocal one," said Brig. Gen. Mashoro Phala, the South African Military Attache.

"We have a unique relationship with New York, one that we feel is reciprocal and mutually beneficial," said George Monyemangene, the South African consul General to New York City.

The State Partnership program got its start as a way to develop military-to-military relationships between the U.S. and countries which had once been behind the Iron Curtain, in the post Cold War world of the 1990s, Murphy said.

Since then it has grown into something much more useful, he said.

"We are now sharing lessons learned and best practices on disaster response; port security; battalion and small unit training; senior non-commissioned officer and officer development; facility management; environment protection; family support and joint exercises and trade shows," Murphy said.

Since 2003 New York Army and Air National Guard members have participated in South African air shows, military competitions and presented at South African military schools and leadership forums. South Africans, in turn, have visited New York Air National Guard bases and New York Army National Guard training events to share their knowledge.

During the past decade, the State Partnership Program enhanced the relationship between the U.S. and South Africa through numerous military and civilian exchanges, exercises and conferences," said Maj. John Sandefur, the New York Partnership Program Coordinator.

Program highlights have centered around the role of the New York National Guard as an all-volunteer, professional military with dual missions that support the nation and the state. Emphasis on force structure, budgeting, recruiting and retention, civil-military cooperation and border security were primary objectives, Sandefur said.

"Our partnership with South Africa significantly increases U.S. engagement on the continent of Africa and serves to expand military interoperability, build cultural understanding and create lasting friendships," said Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields, the New York National Guard Director of the Joint Staff.

The Lexington Avenue Armory ceremony featured an exchange of symbolic gifts between the New Yorkers and South African officials. The South African delegation each received presentations of an award, lapel pin and military coin commemorating the occasion.

The Republic of South Africa, a country that will celebrate its 20th anniversary as a nation following the apartheid era, shares not only a professional relationship with New York but also a sentimental one, Mamabolo said.

Nelson Mandela, its first elected President chose New York as his first major visit after his release from serving 27 years at an apartheid-era political prison, the ambassador added.

Mandela's death on Dec. 5 was marked with a moment of silence during the ceremony.

The National Guard's State Partnership program is a low-cost way for the National Guard to assist combatant commanders responsible for U.S. military relationships in countries around the world, explained. Col. Michael Norton, National Guard Bureau's coordinator for State Partnership Programs.

When it comes to discussing military response to disasters, the National Guard is and especially perfect fit, he said.

"This is our niche," Norton said.gt

National Guard Helps with Emergency Preparedness

Story and photo by Ray Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters

Pfc. Edwin Olivera distributes disaster and emergency response starter kits at the launch of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program on Feb. 1. New York National Guard troops gave disaster and emergency training to more than 1,200 people who attended events at New Dorp High School in Suffolk County.

NEW YORK -– New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are on the front lines in New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's program to help citizens prepare for emergencies.

Guard members trained more than 1,200 people on Saturday, Feb. 1 as the governor's initiative to provide basic disaster response training to 100,000

New Yorkers kicked off at New Dorp High School on Staten Island and at Farmingdale State College.

A 17 member team of Guard Soldiers and Airmen on state active duty status will train participants in the Citizens Preparedness Corps Training Program.

The program aims to give citizens the knowledge and tools to prepare for emergencies and disasters, respond accordingly, and recover as quickly as possible.

Participants in the two-hour volunteer training sessions also received a backpack full of emergency supplies.

The disaster and emergency response starter kits, also known as a "go-kit," handed out at the events included a first-aid kit, face mask, pocket radio with batteries, food bars, emergency blanket and other key items to help citizens in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

The real first responder is every citizen, the governor told participants in the two training sessions.

"The greatest asset is you," Cuomo said. "That is the greatest asset. You are there first. By definition, you are the first responder in your own home. And you are the first responder on your own block, and you can be the first responder for your own neighbor."

The program, designed by the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control covers a broad range of emergency preparedness topics, like developing a family emergency plan, stocking up on emergency supplies, and registering for NY-Alert, the free statewide emergency alert system.

> "Just showing up for the training says that you are stepping up to be the first to prepare yourself, to prepare your family, and prepare the community for what could happen next."
>
> *- Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York*

People listened closely to the training, and occasionally applauded. Though the program included a short break, the Farmingdale audience encouraged trainer Capt. Rafael Castillo to continue the class without a break, according to trainer Master Sgt. Pete Towse.

It's a great mission and the trainers enjoy the job, Towse said.

The presentation had good information and preparedness points, said Staten Island resident Abe Aruch. The information should be taught in schools, he added.

Ensuring residents are prepared for emergencies is more important than ever, the governor said.

In addition to Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, there have been other unprecedented situations, like earthquakes and flooding, in upstate New York, he stressed.

"This is a much different reality that we're dealing with," he said. "Whatever is happening is generating an extreme weather pattern like we've never seen before. That is a fact. The extreme weather is a fact."

"Just showing up for the training says that you are stepping up to be the first to prepare yourself, to prepare your family, and prepare the community for what could happen next," Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, told the Staten Island audience.

Susan Miserandino, a senior planning analyst for the utility company Con Edison who deals with storm issues, said the training delivered at the Saturday session was very relevant.

The training program will help citizens to be better prepared, she said.

"If not for themselves, for their family members," Miserandino added.gt

Preparing for a Polar Vortex

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION - New York Air National Guard Tech Sgt. Richard Ball of Tonawanda and a member of the 107th Airlift Wing, packs his cold weather gear Jan. 7 in preparation for missions as part of the New York National Guard initial response force for Operation Polar Vortex. With heavy lake effect snows and wind chill warnings forecasting three feet of snow and temperatures at or below zero, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo mobilized 300 members of the New York National Guard to prepare to assist civil authorities during the storm's passage. Members of the New York National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry and 105th Military Police Company in Buffalo and the 174th Attack Wing in Syracuse provided Soldiers and Airmen along with vehicles to support local authorities.

Photo below: A New York Army National Guard Soldier assigned to the 427th Brigade Support Battalion heads for his vehicle as he prepares to deploy with one of four New York National Guard Initial Response Forces stood up to assist local officials as Arctic cold and driving snow descend on the Buffalo area on Jan. 7.

Among these forces are four Initial Response Forces, like the one being stood up by the 174th Attack Wing. The 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry in Utica, and the 427th Brigade Support Battalion and the 107th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls are also mobilizing Initial Response Forces.

The Army National Guard's 204th Engineer Battalion has an engineer response force on call while the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry and the 105th Military Police Battalion in Buffalo are mobilizing 100 Soldiers to assist, if necessary. Photos by Master Sgt. Raymond Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing.

Training Dogs to Fly

CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT - Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion 142nd Aviation take a break with United States Air Force dog handlers during training here on Jan. 10. The Air Force dog handlers were familiarizing their animals with the process of getting on and off a helicopter. The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation Regiment Soldiers are deployed as part of a task force lead by the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade. Photo by 1st Lt. Jean Kratzer 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Louisiana Guard Staff Visit New York

LATHAM -- New York Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields (center), Director of Joint Staff for New York, briefs his Louisiana National Guard counterpart, Brig. Gen. Barry Keeling during a visit to the New York National Guard's Joint Operations Center on Jan. 15.

Keeling and other members of his staff were in New York for a visit to exchange information on best practices in dealing with disasters and other state emergencies.

Photo by Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director.

Residents and Soldiers March to Remember Soldiers

Story and photos by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Forces Headquarters

GLENS FALLS -- More than a dozen combat veterans of the New York Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry joined the thousand marchers here as honorary marchers in the 10th Annual Christmas Eve Road march.

The Soldiers joined more than 1,000 fellow National Guard Soldiers, Airmen, veterans, families and community members to show their support of troops serving overseas during the holidays. The march first started in 2004 with humble beginnings, explained event organizer Art Coon, a retired Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class who served as the regional recruiting non-commissioned officer.

"It was a fluke," Coon explained of the first year's success. "This all started ten years ago when the 2-108th went to Iraq. I wanted to do something to honor their sacrifice, so I decided to put on a ruck and head out for this road march."

"I thought I would walk by myself and Julie (Coon's wife and supporter of the unit's family readiness group) would take a photo for the guys overseas."

That first year, some 15 or so family members came out to join the Coons for the Christmas Eve event. The annual Christmas Eve tribute for the troops has grown in size each and every year since then. When the Soldiers returned for their homecoming road march in 2005, momentum was already in place from families, veterans and community members to spark the tremendous growth in each year, Coon said.

Among those marchers in subsequent years has been Sgt. 1st Class Jason Springer, a Glens Falls resident and veteran of the 2-108th Infantry deployment to Iraq.

It is great to see the numbers increase with each year, said Springer, who has marched in every year but one. Then he was too ill to join in the 3.6 mile road march.

"This road march has undergone so many changes over the years," Coon said. "We've had international marches where our National Guard Soldiers were deployed, first in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and last year in Afghanistan. This year Soldiers deployed to Kuwait from the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade joined us for their own road march."

Marchers wear bands each year, carrying the names of deployed Soldiers or fallen members from Iraq, Afghanistan and all of our nation's past wars.

The march has its own share of sadness as well, Coon said.

For Christmas Eve 2012, Army Lt. Col. Todd Clark from Guilderland joined the marchers to show his support of fellow Soldiers. Clark was killed in action in Afghanistan while serving as an Afghan Army advisor with the 10th Mountain Division just six months later in June 2013, he said.

The annual event has consistently drawn more than 1,000 supporters for half a decade or more, and receiving the additional support of the Glens Falls Civic Center and city police department to help with the crowd.

"The road march has grown each and every year, it's never gone down, which says a lot about this community," Coon said. **gt**

Photo left: New York Army National Guard Specialists James Zito of South Glens Falls and Nicolas Cassey from Gansevoort and Russell Smith of Queensbury assist event organizer and retired Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Art Coon (center) as they lead more than 1000 participants on December 24, 2013 during 10th annual Christmas Eve road march saluting the original unit members of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry who were deployed to Iraq in 2004.
Above: Sgt. 1st Class Jason Springer from Glens Falls participates in the 10th annual Christmas Eve road march here Dec. 24. Springer was one of the original members of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry deployed to Iraq when the event began in 2004. He has since been part of all but one Christmas Eve events. Participants from the New York Army and Air National Guard, veterans organizations, family members and community supporters turned out for the 3.6 mile march to support deployed service members around the world. More than 1,000 participants turned out for the 2013 event. Photos by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Forces Headquarters.

"This all started ten years ago when the 2-108th went to Iraq. I wanted to do something to honor their sacrifice, so I decided to put on a ruck and head out for this road march."

-Retired Sgt. 1st Class Art Coon, Christmas Eve Road March organizer

Soldiers Compete in Skills Challenge

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

Specialist Steven Smith, an automated logistics Soldier with the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Support Company, strips an M249 light machine gun while competing in a Best Warrior Competition at Fort Drum, Jan. 10. Smith, one of seven competing Soldiers from the 42nd Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, won the competition and will proceed to the divisional level.

FORT DRUM -- Seven Soldiers of the 42nd Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion tested their skills in a battalion-level Best Warrior Competition at Fort Drum N.Y., Jan. 10.

Two Battalion Soldiers will move on to the next level: Spc. Steven Smith, a Cobleskill resident, and Sgt. Ethan Hale, a Buffalo resident.

The two-day competition assessed the soldiers' comprehensive knowledge and physical fitness by evaluating their abilities in written tests, Army Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, and a verbal test before a board.

"The idea is to find well-rounded soldiers, mentally and physically," said Master Sgt. Luis Barsallo, 42nd Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion operations Non Commissioned Officer in charge. "We want Soldiers who are technically and tactically proficient."

The competition began with a written test and then a map exercise. The day continued with tasks and drills such as inspecting a vehicle for Improvised Explosive Devices, prepping a M249 light machine gun, and operating a military radio.

Soldiers had 25 minutes to do each task, in addition to five minutes of instruction from their graders.

"These are tasks that a soldier needs to know how to do," Sgt. Lesly Fontaine, an air defense artillery soldier with the 42nd Signal Company, said. "When I deployed overseas, I did these things. You learn it, but it can be abstract until you do it for real."

The next day, Soldiers were quizzed by three senior NCOs on questions such as current events, regulations, and drill and ceremony.

"It's always intimidating," Smith, an automated logistics Soldier with the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Support Company, said. "If you do not know the answer, you have to tell them without losing your military bearing."

Smith, in his second year of participating in the Best Warrior Competition, said he practiced one to two hours everyday, quizzing himself on questions as he went throughout his day.

His efforts were rewarded; he and Hale moved on to compete in the 42nd Infantry Division Best Warrior Competition Feb. 9.

"It's an honor to win this at the battalion level," Smith said. "I thank all the NCOs I've looked up to, and trainers who prepped me. I wouldn't have been able to do this without them."gt

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DATE	LOCATION	ENLISTED FEEDER MOS	WO BRANCH – WO MOS
5 April 2014	Thompson Road Armory Syracuse, NY	25B, 25N, 25U 25F, 25P, 25Q, 25S, 25W 12Y, 35F, 35G 15E, 15W 146, 14H, 14S 89A, 89B, 89D 94D, 94E, 94H, 94R, 94W, 94Y, 94Z	Signal Corps 255A Info System Tech 255N Network Mgt Tech Miscellaneous 125D Geospatial Eng Tech 150U TUAV 140A C&C Sys Tech 890A Ammo Tech 948B Elect Sys Maint Tech
6 April 2014	Thompson Road Armory Syracuse, NY	12K, 12H, 12N, 12P, 12R, 12T, 12W 92Y, 68J 92A 92G	Engineer 120A Construction Eng Tech Quartermaster M 920A Property Acct Tech QM 920B Supply Syst Tech QM 922A Food Service Tech
31 May 2014	Thompson Road Armory Syracuse, NY	25B, 25N, 25U 25F, 25P, 25Q, 25S, 25W 35F, N 35G, H 35L 35M 35N 35T	Signal Corps 225A Info System Tech 255N Network Mgt. Tech Military Intelligence 350F All Source Intelligence 350G Imagery Intelligence 351L Counterintelligence 351M Human Intel Collect 352N Traffic Analysis Tech 353T Intel and Electronic Warfare
1 Jun 2014	Thompson Road Armory Syracuse, NY	11C, 13B, 13D, 13F, 13M, 13P, 13R, 13T	Field Artillery 131A FA Targeting Tech
		92Y, 68J 92A 92G	Quartermaster M 920A Property Acct Tech QM 920B Supply Syst Tech QM 922A Food Service Tech
21 Jun 2014	Camp Smith Cortlandt, NY	25B, 25N, 25U 25F, 25P, 25Q, 25S, 25W 35F, N 35G, H 35L 35M 35N 35T	Signal Corps 225A Info System Tech 255N Network Mgt. Tech Military Intelligence 350F All Source Intelligence 350G Imagery Intelligence 351L Counterintelligence 351m Human Intel Collect 352N Traffic Analysis Tech 353T Intel and Electronic Warfare
22 Jun 2014	Camp Smith Cortlandt, NY	12K, 12H, 12N, 12P, 12R, 12T, 12W 92Y, 68J 92A 92G	Engineer 120A Construction Eng Tech Quartermaster M 920A Property Acct Tech QM 920B Supply Syst Tech QM 922A Food Service Tech

To see if you qualify, contact a WOSM below:

CW3 Harry McDonough
WOSM-Area: Newburgh North to Upstate Capital Region/North Country
Cell: 518-788-1831/Office: 518-272-6353
harry.j.mcdonough.mil@mail.mil

CW2 Christopher Seeger
WOSM-Area: Syracuse/Rochester/Buffalo
Cell: 585-259-5147
christopher.c.seeger.mil@mail.mil

CW2 Brian Sherman
WOSM-Area: NYC/Long Island/Westchester
Cell: 518-491-3448
douglas.b.sherman2.mil@mail.mil

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Director of Army National Guard visits Aviation Soldiers

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait -- Spc. Anthony Serrano of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade shows Army National Guard Director Lt. Gen. William Ingram Jr., operational systems used for the Brigade's regional aviation partnership exercises, Monday, Dec.16, 2013.

Ingram and the Command Sgt. Major of the Army National Guard, Brunk W. Conley visited various training sites on Buehring on December 16, 2013 where New York's 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade demonstrated the capabilities of AH-64D and UH-60s helicopters, to increase Ingram's and Conley's familiarity of the operations and regional partnership exercises the 42nd CAB will conduct.

Photo by 1st Lt. Jean Marie Kratzer, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

New Guardsmen Sworn In During 377th Birthday Celebration

LATHAM -- Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, The Adjutant General of New York State (left), swears in some new members of the New York Army National Guard during ceremonies here on Dec. 13. The new Soldiers taking the oath of enlistment are (from left) Pfc. Danielle Carl, of Slingerlands.; Pvt. Monica Dinoto, of Ballston Lake; Pvt. Nicolette Jackson of East Greenbush; Pvt. Andrew Rizzuto, of Altamont and Pvt. Haley Smith, of Fort Ann. The ceremony included awards and a celebration of the National Guard's 377th Birthday. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Drumsta, Joint Force Headquarters.

Unique Command of Historic "Fighting 69th Infantry"

By Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK -- New York Army National Guardsmen, Maj. Sean Flynn, a Delmar resident who wrote a book about New York's "Fighting 69th" Infantry in Iraq and a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been tapped to take command of the battalion.

Flynn served as a company commander in the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry in Baghdad in 2004 and 2005, and deployed again as the second-in-command of the New York Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry in western Afghanistan in 2012.

A member of the Flynn family has served in the 69th Infantry in the Civil War, World War I, and World War II.

In a statement released Wednesday, Jan. 15, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he was proud to announce Flynn's appointment to the job.

"The Fighting 69th has a rich history of defending our nation and keeping New York's communities safe," Cuomo said. "This battalion fought to end slavery during the Civil War, supported New York City in the aftermath of September 11th, and most recently came to the aid of the many New Yorkers who were displaced by this past summer's flooding. It is with great pride that I announce Major Sean Flynn's selection to lead this regiment."

Flynn is currently a full-time National Guard officer who serves as chief of operations at the New York National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Latham. In that position he is responsible for coordinating the National Guard response to domestic emergencies in New York State, like the Mohawk Valley floods in the summer of 2013.

He will continue to serve in that position while also commanding the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry in his traditional National Guard role.

He replaces Lt. Col. Vincent Heintz, another veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, who is employed as a prosecutor by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board in New York City. Heinz decided to retire from military service after a 23-year Army National Guard career.

The battalion is headquartered at the historic Lexington Avenue Armory in New York City and has units located at the Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center on Long Island, the Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, and the Leeds Armory in Greene County.

The unit first earned fame as the heart of the historic "Irish Brigade" of the Union Army during the Civil War, and was the subject of a 1940 movie "The Fighting 69th" about the unit's World War I accomplishments. The battalion leads the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City each year.

Flynn is the author of the book The Fighting 69th: From Ground Zero to Baghdad (Viking 2007). The third person narrative is recommended by the Army's Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth for its focus on small unit leadership.

Maj. Sean Flynn, the new commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry. Courtesy photo.

The book details the unit's response to the 9/11 attacks and its training before deploying to Iraq and the assignment of securing "Route Irish," the road from the Baghdad Airport to the Green Zone that saw frequent and deadly insurgent attacks. Flynn received the Military Order of St. Louis for "significant contributions to military history" for his authorship of the book.

He responded to Ground Zero with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry on Sept. 12, 2001 when, along with other members of the New York National Guard, the National Guard provided response and recovery support to the City of New York. He went on to command a company of the battalion at the United States Military Academy at West Point when the unit was charged with providing security for that location later in the fall of 2001.

Flynn earned his commission in 1994 through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Maryland at College Park and holds a bachelors degree in Journalism. He served in the Air Force as a public affairs officer from 1994 to 1997 before joining the Army National Guard.

He has served as an infantry platoon leader, division operations officer and as a rifle company commander and battalion executive officer.

He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the US Army Command and General Staff College, the Department of State's Afghanistan Field Orientation Course, the Department of Defense's Joint Public Affairs Officers Course and the military's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training course. **gt**

"The Fighting 69th has a rich history of defending our nation and keeping New York's communities safe."

--***Andrew Cuomo, New York Governor***

New York Guardsmen Compete in Olympics

By Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

Sgt. Nick Cunningham of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program jumps into the sled to drive Olympic gold medalist and AWCAP teammate Sgt. Justin Olsen, Johnny Quinn and Abe Morlu to 16th place in the four-man bobsled event at the International Bobsled & Skeleton Federation's 2013 World Cup stop, Dec. 7, 2013, at Utah Olympic Park in Park City, Utah. Photo by Tim Hipps IMCOM Public Affairs

LATHAM -- Four New York Army National Guard Soldiers were part of the United States Olympic team at the Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Sergeants Nicholas Cunningham and Justin Olsen joined the United States Olympic Bobsled Team while Sgt. Matthew Mortensen and Staff Sgt. William Tavares were part of the United States Olympic Luge Team.

Olsen, a bobsled "pusher" won a gold medal in the sport at the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver, while Cunningham is a bobsled driver who is ranked 17th in the world.

Mortensen, a native of Huntington Station, competed for Olympic Gold, while Tavares, a Lake Placid resident, who competed in the Olympics himself in 1992, coached the 2010 and 2014 American luge teams.

All four men are part of the U. S. Army's World Class Athlete Program in which Active Army and Army National Guard Soldiers serve while training as an athlete on a United States Olympic sports team.

The Army pays their military salaries, while allowing them to focus on honing their skills. Of the seven Army athletes who participated in the games, four are New York National Guard members.

Athletes who enlist in the program attend basic training and become qualified in their military skills

Both the luge and bobsled teams train at the United States Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid.

Mortensen, age 28, is a member of the 1156th Engineer Company based in Kingston. Mortensen secured his spot on the Olympic team when he and fellow Army athlete Sgt. Preston Griffall earned a ninth-place finish in luge doubles at the Luge World Cup stop on Dec. 13, at Utah Olympic Park.

He and his partner finished 14th the double luge event.

Tavares, 50, is an infantryman in Company B, 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry. He has served in the New York Army National Guard since 1982. He has been involved in the Army's World Class Athlete program since 1998.

Tavares finished ninth at the 1992 Olympic Winter Games as a luge competitor. He coached the U.S. women's bobsled teams at the 1998, 2002 and 2006 Winter Olympics. As a coach for U.S. National Teams since 1997, Tavares has helped lead athletes to five world championships and 70 medals in World Cup competitions.

Olsen, age 26, serves as a personal services specialist in the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the Joint Force Headquarters in Watervliet. He is originally from Wittenburg, Texas.

Photos by Tim Hipps, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command

Sgt. Nick Cunningham, New York National Guard

Sgt. Matt Mortensen, New York National Guard

U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program bobsled coach and New York National Guardsmen Sgt. Bill Tavares (right).

In 2010 Olsen was one of the three "pushers" on the U.S. four-man bobsled team which took the gold medal that year.

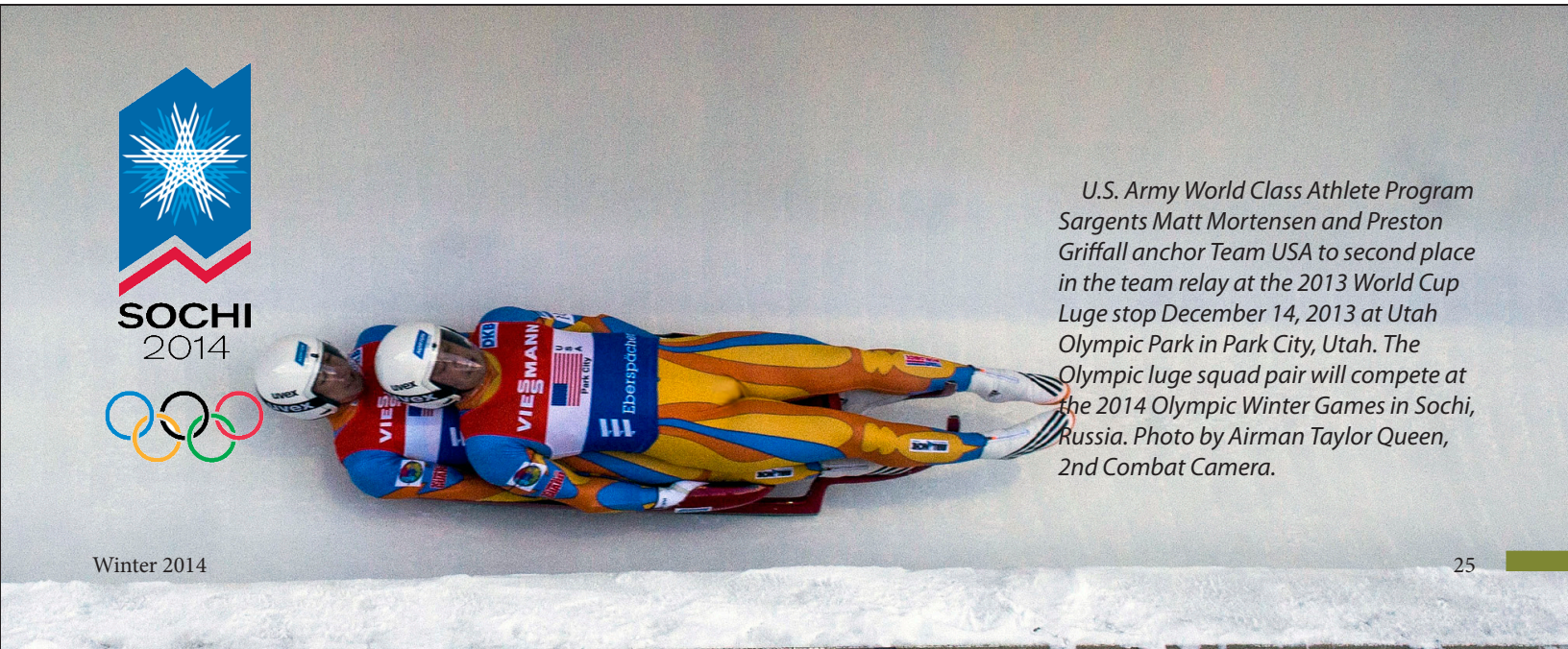
Cunningham, age 28, enlisted in the New York National Guard in March of 2011 and was trained as a carpentry and masonry specialist in the 1156th Engineer Company.

A fifth New York Army National Guard Soldier is a part of the U.S. National Luge Team but did not make the Olympic team.

Sgt. Emily Sweeney is a 20-year old member of the 206th Military Police Company headquartered in Latham who finished 9th in the 2013 Lake Placid World Cup.

The Army World Class Athlete program was created in 1997 to help Soldier/Athletes excel at their sports. The Soldiers must all successfully complete required military training to participate. The program pays them to train full time and, in return, they host clinics for Soldiers and act as goodwill ambassadors for the Army and the United States at international games.

Since the Army's World Class Athlete Program was created, 55 U. S. Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard athletes have won Gold, Silver or Bronze medals at the Olympic Summer or Winter games.**gt**



U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program Sargents Matt Mortensen and Preston Griffall anchor Team USA to second place in the team relay at the 2013 World Cup Luge stop December 14, 2013 at Utah Olympic Park in Park City, Utah. The Olympic luge squad pair will compete at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. Photo by Airman Taylor Queen, 2nd Combat Camera.

Soldier's Training pays off in Building Collapse

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

CAMP SMITH -- A New York Army National Guard soldier and police officer credits his military training for helping him save the victim of a building collapse in 2011.

"Being in the military, being calm, cool and collected definitely helped," said Sgt. Martin Gonzalez, recounting the day that he and other officers gave first aid to Tariq Mohmood Guja and helped extricated him from under some fallen roof trusses. "In the Army you're trained to go toward the fight. That's what we did that day."

For his actions, Gonzalez was awarded the New York State Medal of Valor in a ceremony here on Nov. 17. Now a Fallsburg, N.Y. police officer, Gonzalez was working as police officer for the village of Liberty, N.Y. when the structure -- a gas station under construction -- collapsed on the afternoon of Oct. 15, 2011.

It was very windy that day, and he saw them putting up the trusses when he drove by the site in the morning, said Gonzalez, a member of the 727th Military Police Detachment and resident of Woodburn.

"I thought, 'it's a little windy to be doing that today,'" he recalled.

That afternoon, a person came into the police station lobby and told them that the gas station, which was about a block away, had collapsed, Gonzalez recalled. Though he didn't quite believe it, he and his fellow officer Devin Brust headed off on foot to investigate.

On the way, they saw a panicky construction worker running toward them, screaming, "My friends! My friends!" Gonzalez said.

"At that point I said, 'holy cow,' this is real," he recalled. The sight that greeted them when they arrived was "a disaster," he added.

"It was horrible," he recalled. "The building trusses were collapsed into the building itself." A construction worker told them the location of two people trapped under the wooden trusses, and he and Brust entered through a window.

They found Guja, the gas station owner, and Franco Suquilanda, a construction worker, trapped under the timber, Guja was bleeding heavily from a large gash on his forehead, and Gonzalez immediately thought, "without our help, they're not going to survive."

Guja was also in great pain and couldn't open his eyes because of his wound, Gonzalez said. As he and Brust crouched next to him in the closet-like space, Guja grabbed at his arms, moaned and asked if he was going to die, he recalled.

Gonzalez is a trained Army Combat Lifesaver -- a non-medical Soldier who can provide life-saving measures as a secondary duty if primary or combat missions allow. He responded with these skills, used Guja's shirt to apply direct pressure to his wound, checked his pulse and breathing and reassured him.

"We were doing what I learned in that class," Gonzalez said.

Liberty Police Department Sgt. Scott McAfee arrived and began coordinating medical and other emergency aid, Gonzalez recalled, while Brust prevented other construction workers from trying to free Suquilanda.

As they worked, a broken window frame swayed dangerously over their heads, Gonzalez said.

"It seemed ready to fall down," he recalled. "It was windy, and it was moving back and forth over us."

Firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) arrived about 10 minutes later and took over first aid, Gonzalez said. Brust used a chainsaw to clear away beams so the EMTs would have room to move Guja to a stretcher, and both victims were flown to a hospital, he added.

About six months later he ran into Guja, who was still recovering, Gonzalez said. Though Guja didn't remember what happened, he was very grateful for the officers' help, he added.

The village of Liberty later gave their Meritorious Service Award to Gonzalez, Brust and McAfee.

Col. Reginald Sanders, commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade, presented the New York State Medal of Valor to Gonzalez. The Medal of Valor is presented for acts of "valor, heroism, courage or gallantry" in either a civilian or a military capacity, and is the highest state award a member of the National Guard can receive.

Sgt. Martin Gonzalez poses after receiving the New York State Medal of Valor in a ceremony Nov. 17. The Medal of Valor is presented for acts of valor, heroism, courage or gallantry in either a civilian or a military capacity, and is the highest state award a member of the National Guard can receive. Courtesy photo.

Sanders and Gonzalez's fellow soldiers applauded him at the ceremony. He responded humbly, saying that soldiers are different breed who put others first.

"The desire to serve our community courses through our blood," Gonzalez remarked at the ceremony. "I don't consider what I did that day special. I responded to a call for help and I acted."

He advised his fellow soldiers to rely on their training, trust their judgment, never give up, never give in and always fight.

"The Army gave us the skills to succeed, we always have the courage to get the job done," Gonzalez said. **gt**

A Heart for Erin and America

NY Commander Triumphed Over Adversity to Become Union Hero

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

LATHAM -- Michael Corcoran's love of liberty made him an Irish rebel but an enemy of the rebellion in America, where he led the 69th New York Militia Regiment and other troops under the American flag during the Civil War.

That banner was the "emblem of freedom and human rights" that he was willing to risk his life for, said Corcoran, whose own unflagging, tandem passions for Ireland and America often put him at risk. Before his untimely death in December 1863, Corcoran ducked a court martial, typhoid fever, assault, execution and Confederate bullets to become a hero in his own time and beyond.

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. Corcoran stands out among the numbered dead - his exploits and others are firmly entrenched in Civil War history, and memorialized in Irish ballads of the period.

Born the son of a British Army officer in Northwest Ireland 1827, Corcoran also claimed to be a descendent of Irish rebel Patrick Sarsfield. Showing his warrior and rebel roots early, he joined Her Majesty's Revenue Police at the age of 19 but later ran with rural guerillas who were fighting for home rule and tenant rights.

Corcoran was "leading an ironic double life: pursuing law-breakers during the day and harassing and terrorizing and ruthless landlords by killing their livestock and burning their barns at night," wrote Richard Demeter in his history of the 69th.

Being over six feet tall, Corcoran literally stood out during these raids, came under suspicion for seditious activity, fled Ireland for America in 1849, settled in New York City and later joined an Irish militia company.

This unit later merged with the 69th New York Militia Regiment, which Corcoran rose to command by 1859. Corcoran's career progression was almost cut short, however, when his troops voted to boycott a parade for the Prince of Wales during his visit in 1860. Citing inadequate British response to the Irish famine, Corcoran honored his troops' decision, was reviled by the press, relieved of command and court-martialed.

This Currier and Ives depicts Col. Michael Corcoran, commander, 69th New York State Militia, leading his troops at the battle of Bull Run, Va. in July 1861. Corcoran and his Soldiers took part in several failed assaults against the Confederates, who counterattacked and routed Union Forces.

Fortunately for Corcoran, the Civil War began. Within a week of Fort Sumter's surrender in 1861, the Army dismissed the charges, restored Corcoran to command, and ordered him to lead the 69th south to help defend Washington, D.C.

"The commandant feels proud that his first duty, after being relieved from long arrest, is to have the honor of promulgating an order to the regiment to rally to the support of the Constitution and laws of the United States," Corcoran said in his general order to his troops.

After helping to build Washington's defenses, Corcoran and his Soldiers joined the horde of Federal troops who clashed with Confederate forces around a Virginia stream called Bull Run in July, 1861.

Corcoran and his Soldiers took part in several failed assaults against the Confederates, who counterattacked and routed Union forces. Corcoran rallied and led his men in every assault, suffered a leg wound, led an unsuccessful rear guard action during the rout and was captured along with some other Soldiers, according to various histories of the 69th, and the ballad "The Boys That Wore The Green."

"Col. Corcoran led the 69th on that eventful day/ I wish the Prince of Wales were there to see him in the fray/ His charge upon the batteries was a most glorious scene/ With gallant New York firemen and the boys that wear the green."

As a prisoner, Corcoran stood on his honor and patriotism and refused parole.

"One half of my heart is Erin's and the other half is America's," Corcoran wrote, recalling his imprisonment. "God bless America, and ever preserve her the asylum of all the oppressed of the earth, is the sincere prayer of my heart."

During a prison transfer, a North Carolina orator mocked Corcoran and his troops, to which Corcoran replied: "You'll see the 69th likely before long, with standards waving victoriously in this very place." A "murderous-looking ruffian" with a knife in his belt confronted Corcoran after his remark, but a young woman intervened, possibly saving him.

When the Union threatened to execute some captured southern privateers, the Confederate government threatened to retaliate by hanging Corcoran and 13 of his fellow prisoners.

(Continued on Pg. 42)

109th Airmen Complete First Leadership Course

By Tech Sgt. Catherine Schimdt, 109th Airlift Wing

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schaible instructs a portion of the 109th Airlift Wing's first Leadership Development Course at the Naval Operations Support Center on Jan. 12. The three-day course, held by the 109th AW's chief's council, covered topics including Profession of Arms, performance review writing, time management and career management. Air National Guard photo by Chief Master Sgt. Michelle Shafer.

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA -- More than 25 New York Air National Guardsmen got "re-blued" over the January Unit Training Assembly during the 109th Airlift Wing's first Leadership Development Course held by the 109th AW Chief's Council.

The three-day course, held Jan. 10-12 for technical sergeants through senior master sergeants and second lieutenants through captains, covered topics including Profession of Arms, performance review writing, time management and career management.

In an article published in October, Chief Master Sgt. Amy Giaquinto, 109th AW command chief, said her priorities mirror Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling, Air National Guard command chief, which is for Airmen to renew their commitment to the Profession of Arms and Health of the Force, and recognize/embrace our accomplishments. These three focus areas cover training, leadership, mentorship, the "little Brown Book", safety, resilience, recognition and realizing how each Airman fits into the mission.

Giaquinto said she wanted to bring all this back through the Leadership Development Course.

"I was expecting to gain some valuable tools that I could take back with me to my office to utilize in my job," said Senior Master Sgt. Brian Roberts, human resources specialist with Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham. "I was hoping it wouldn't be death by PowerPoint, and it turned out it wasn't. It was really great getting to meet some of the men and women who work on the base. They bring a lot of perspective and diversity from working in the field that I normally wouldn't get a chance to see while working here at (the Division of Military and Naval Affairs)."

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Schaible, 109th Logistics Readiness Squadron, said one of their goals was to get Airmen to know others around the base. "All these people now know people they probably didn't even know before the course because of the different duty sections. Now they have a common ground after going through the course together."

"Seeing the different perspectives from different areas on the base is not always available when you are coming in doing your job and going home," said Tech. Sgt. Anna Franklin, NCO in charge of formal schools with the 109th Force Support Squadron. "Talking to other members in the unit that work in all different areas provided the exposure to how what we each do really impacts the mission."

Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Trottier, 109th Intelligence Office, served as an instructor for a teambuilding exercise on the second day. Students were separated into three teams and given a box of uncooked spaghetti and a bag of marshmallows. They had 50 minutes to build a tower with just those supplies.

"The goal was to come together as a team to build the highest tower," said Trottier. "We asked what strategies they used, did they assign

taskers and how they communicated. Did the teamwork work, did they establish a goal? We also wanted to know what challenges they had. Everybody did a great job. The winning team built a tower that was 39.5 inches. They all communicated and worked as a team, even with the time constraint."

"Exposure to problem solving with other members in the unit was eye opening," Franklin said. "Everyone has a different perspective, but working together we can come to a solution."

"It was a very good way to teach how you can accomplish a common goal when you work together," said Master Sgt. Donna Torres, equal employment specialist at the Joint Force Headquarters.

Along with teamwork, Torres said some of the things she took away from the weekend were "leadership skills, a better understanding of the (Enlisted Performance Review) process, great information about counseling subordinates, (the importance of) communication, programs that were offered by the Wellness Center, dress and appearance, great pointers on organizing outlook, and much more."

"I would absolutely recommend others to take this course," Roberts said. "In the Guard, we sometimes don't have the opportunities to attend these types of courses. Any chance a member gets to get 're-blued' they should jump on it. We should never stop trying to learn and grow as NCOs and senior NCOs."

"One of the key things we kept reiterating to the class is this is not the Chief's Council's class, this is your class," Schaible said. "You can help us do this better for the next class. This should be an ever-evolving and changing leadership development course."

"I was fortunate to observe different portions of (the course)," Giaquinto said. "Leaders came together to create the three-day course curriculum and a small group of students were the first to take advantage of this training opportunity. I want to thank both groups for laying the groundwork, and I am looking forward to more future leaders attending this course in the upcoming months. I highly encourage all 109th members take advantage of this unique training opportunity."

The chief's council is already looking at dates for the next course. Airmen who are interested should be on the lookout for announcements and talk with their first sergeants about signing up. **gt**

Airmen Down Range

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan -- Senior Airman Brittany Foster is one of a group of Airmen from the 109th Small Air Terminal at Stratton Air National Guard Base, N.Y. currently deployed to the 455th Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron here. Courtesy photo.

Training to Assist Downed Airmen

WESTHAMPTON BEACH -- Pararescue Jumpers with the 103rd Rescue Squadron train with a simulated casualty at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard base on November 13, 2013. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Chiefs Leave New York Legacy Behind at Camp Bastion

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Wing

Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Wessberg (left) meets with two chiefs from the 451st Air Expeditionary Wing at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, about the improvements Bastion had made in 2012. He is the 105th Airlift Wing's small air terminal superintendent in Newburgh.

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia -- New York made its mark on Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, for almost a year and a half with the presence of New York Air National Guardsmen for three consecutive rotations -- more specifically, three chiefs who each assumed the role of superintendent of the camp's 651st Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron's Aerial Port Flight.

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Mann, 109th Airlift Wing's Small Air Terminal superintendent here, deployed in August 2012 to replace Chief Master Sgt. Daniel Wessberg, the 105th Airlift Wing's SAT superintendent in Newburgh. Six months later, Chief Master Sgt. Robert Ward, 107th AW's SAT superintendent in Niagara Falls, relieved Mann and completed the trio of New York deployments.

Wessberg deployed with his unit in March 2012. According to an earlier article published in the Fall 2013 edition of the Guard Times, his team played a major role in training International Security Assistance Force personnel in loading and unloading cargo aircraft at forward operating locations. They also designed loading and unloading procedures, which reduced air cargo idle time by 45 percent. Higher headquarters inspectors declared the Camp Bastion air cargo operation run by the 105th Airlift Wing members the best in the area of operations and estimated they saved almost $20 million by reducing backlogs in the cargo handling system. Wessberg's team received the Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award for their work.

"As the title states, it was truly a team effort from all of our folks, and I'm sure the other chiefs feel the same," Wessberg said.

Passing the baton from the 105th to the 109th also helped smooth over the mission change.

"This was my third deployment to Afghanistan, while difficult, it was probably the easiest transition I ever had," Mann said. "(Chief Wessberg) had set up an aerial port, in a new facility, and established procedures and policies which made it easy to take control and keep the mission running smoothly."

Mann deployed with Airmen from the Guard, Reserve and active duty from various different states. During their six-month rotation, the team moved more than 31,000 tons of cargo and assisted in moving more than 34,000 passengers. During an inspection in November, the aerial port was singled out for their outstanding achievements. The flight set a new Air Force Central Command record with the entire Air Terminal Operations Center team receiving the "Top Performer" award.

"This was my second deployment, first in Afghanistan," Ward said after arriving in February, 2013. "Chief Mann had everything organized, every couple of weeks he sent me information and forms to complete prior to arriving. It was one of the smoothest transitions I have seen. My men were working missions within 24 hours."

During Ward's rotation, his team successfully moved 22,000 tons of cargo and assisted in the movement of 24,000 passengers. During that time, Camp Bastion was slated to close, resulting in very little cargo coming in, but a lot going out.

During both Mann and Ward's rotation, the camp came under attack. During Mann's rotation it was one of the largest insurgent attacks it the camp's history. "The next couple of days were very solemn, as some of our U.S. Marines had lost their lives," Mann said.

The camp came under indirect fire attacks while Ward and his team were there. These were the first aerial attacks the camp had endured. On one attack, a rocket hit just outside the aerial port building, Ward said.

"Luckily no one was seriously injured in the attack," Ward said. "We had a long night assessing the damage, making work-arounds and ensuring the building and personnel were safe." Within seven hours of the attack, the aerial porters were back to loading cargo and processing passengers.

Over that year and a half, the deployed aerial port had become one of the most dependable and efficient aerial port units in Afghanistan. And the New York Air National Guard played a large role in making that happen.

"It was an honor to have followed to two dynamic New York chiefs," Ward said. "They both skillfully paved the way for operation success in the AOR."

"It was an honor to have served with Chiefs Wessberg and Ward and to have left a New York legacy at Camp Bastion, knowing we made a difference," Mann said.gt

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Mann (left) hands over the keys to the 651st Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron's Aerial Port Flight to Chief Master Sgt. Robert Ward in March 2013. Ward was the third consecutive chief from the New York Air National Guard to take over the deployed aerial port. Mann is the 109th Airlift Wing's Small Air Terminal superintendent at Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia.

Where Maroon and Green Berets Meet

By Capt. Sean Gavin, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMPTON BEACH – Members of the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing brought the rescue experience of the maroon berets to a joint training exercise to share with the Army National Guard Special Forces, the Green Berets.

An air crew of the 101st Rescue Squadron—the "Jolly Green Giants" whose pararescue jumpers wear a maroon beret— joined with National Guard elements from two other states on November 22, 2013, for a joint training exercise at Newport State Airport, Rhode Island.

The 101st Rescue Squadron of the New York Air National Guard flies HH-60G Pavehawks, and specializes in Personnel Recovery missions. The squadron, in keeping with tradition from its roots in Air Force rescue operations during the Vietnam War, is known as the "Jolly Green Giants," based on the green camouflage paint scheme of the unit's original HH-3 and then HH-53 helicopters. The squadron still uses the call sign Jolly.

"We had been trying to get an initial cadre of instructors qualified in alternate insertion and extraction procedures, to expand our capabilities for both overseas tasks and domestic operations," explained Staff Sgt. Kane Lawlor, of the New Jersey Air National Guard's 227th Air Support Operations Squadron. "So I contacted the 101st Rescue Squadron, which we had worked with before for gunnery operations, to see if they could help out."

To add to the mix, the Joint Terminal Air Controllers who are trained to guide aircraft munitions onto ground targets for the close air support mission, wear an Air Force black beret.

Following a deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan last year, the 101st made an effort to contact units from other services to conduct joint training, and established a training relationship with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group, of the Rhode Island Army National Guard.

Members of New York's 101st Rescue Squadron, New Jersey's 227th Air Support Operations Squadron and 19th Special Forces Group, of the Rhode Island Army National Guard, got together for a joint Fast Rope Insertion/Extraction System training exercise at Newport State Airport in R.I. Photo courtesy of 101st Rescue Squadron.

Air Force Pararescue personnel wear the maroon beret to signify their elite status among military forces and welcomed the opportunity for the joint training.

"During our overseas deployments, we have seen how important it is to have interoperability, "said Lt. Col. Tom Keany, the 101st Rescue Squadron Commander.

"This was particularly true in our last activation, which saw us working with air and ground units from the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Army, as well as our foreign allies, including the British, Danish, and several other nations," Keany said.

The 101st linked up the 227th ASOS with the Rhode Island Army Guard Green Berets for a two-day training event. First, the Green Berets and Air Guard Joint Tactical Air Controllers conducted ground training November 21, 2013 on the different rappel techniques and use rappel ropes, baskets and ladders.

Crews arrived the following day with a rescue HH-60 to conduct live training. The Joint Terminal Attack Controllers were certified in fast rope and rope ladder operations, as well as the fast-rope insertion and extraction operations.

"This is really a great opportunity for us to practice one of our primary missions," said Green Beret Master Sergeant Eric Blue. "As Special Forces, we are tasked with training allied indigenous forces to accomplish many types of military operations. Since many of the JTACs had no prior extraction experience, this was a chance to exercise our instructional skills for that arena."

The success of the training led the three units to plan for future opportunities as well, with the prospect of mixing the colors of the special operations Soldiers and Airmen with Close Air Support training for the Green Berets from the black berets of the 227th ASOS, or ground weapons training for the maroon berets of the 101st from the Green Berets, and Close Combat Attack/Emergency Close Air Support training between the maroon and black berets.gt

Eastern Air Defense Sector Recognizes Personnel at Annual Awards Banquet

Story by Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

Photos by Tech Sgt. Jeremy Call , 174th Attack Wing

ROME – More than 170 New York Air National Guardsmen, Canadian Forces members and guests were in attendance at the Radisson Hotel in Utica as the Eastern Air Defense Sector recognized its outstanding members and employees from 2013.

"EADS' mission of protecting the eastern U.S. airspace requires consistent excellence from all of our members," said Col. Dawne Deskins, EADS Commander. "Our 2013 award winners distinguished themselves by going above and beyond our high standards and I congratulate each of them on their outstanding accomplishments and thank them for their extraordinary efforts."

EADS is part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and is composed of New York Air National Guardsmen, a Canadian Forces detachment and a civilian support staff. The unit recognized outstanding performers in six categories: company grade officer (junior officers below the rank of major), senior noncommissioned officer, noncommissioned officer, junior enlisted airman, honor guard member and civilian.

Award recipients were:

Capt. Angela Hudson, Royal Canadian Air Force, Outstanding Company Grade Officer. A senior director in operations, Hudson qualified as an instructor in the shortest time possible. A third-year law student, she was noted as a "stellar performer" on a major 1st Air Force operational inspection and was a national finalist for the prestigious RCAF Space Studies program.

Master Sgt. Jonathon Lake, Holland Patent, Outstanding Senior Noncommissioned Officer. A versatile senior NCO, Lake maintained three different operational qualifications. The only EADS member to earn an "exceptionally qualified" rating as an emergency action coordinator, Lake performed superbly in nine NORAD-level exercises. He also developed a training program for military pay certifiers, participated in eight Honor Guard details and was active in several volunteer efforts.

Master Cpl. Sean Parent, Royal Canadian Air Force, Outstanding Noncommissioned Officer. The first RCAF member to be assigned to EADS data-link management control cell, Parent was recognized for outstanding performance by the Commander and four visiting generals. Parent is the Canadian Detachment's suicide prevention adviser and serves on the unit's bi-national honor guard.

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Plumley, Herkimer, Outstanding Airman. A radio transmission specialist, Plumley's ingenuity during installations and maintenance saved thousands of dollars. As lead antenna climbing instructor, Plumley trained five Airmen on safety and rescue techniques, which contributed greatly to the unit's perfect safety record in this area. An energetic volunteer, he served as a youth baseball coach and helped with flood-relief and Thanksgiving charity events.

Tech. Sgt. Amy Ough, Whitesboro, Outstanding Honor Guard Member. Ough participated in more than 30 percent of the Honor Guard's 50 details, including 11 funeral ceremonies. She contributed more than 125 volunteer hours to the program, coordinating with local funeral directors and training new personnel for ceremonial duties. Ough has also been named the New York Air National Guard's Outstanding Honor Guard member.

Arnold Zumbrun, Rome, Outstanding Civilian. Lead program manager for computer room addition, which was completed on time and included more than $1.3 million in communications equipment. As a resource adviser, Zumbrun streamlined his section's budget, maintaining mission critical support projects while reducing spending by more than 20 percent.

The Eastern Air Defense Sector is headquartered at Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome. Staffed by active-duty New York Air National Guardsmen and a Canadian Forces detachment, the unit supports the North American Aerospace Defense Command's integrated warning and attack assessment missions and the U.S. Northern Command's homeland defense mission. EADS is responsible for air sovereignty and counter-air operations over the eastern United States and directs a variety of assets to defend one million square miles of land and sea.**gt**

"EADS' mission of protecting the eastern U.S. airspace requires consistent excellence from all of our members."

Col. Dawne Deskins, EADS Commander.

Airlift Wing Returns from Final Deployment with Aircraft

By Capt. Elaine Nowak, 107th Air Wing

107th Airlift Wing returns from Southwest Asia. Col. Robert Kilgore, Vice Commander and Col. Kevin Rogers, Maintenance Group Commander greets their airmen as they come off the C-130 aircraft. Nov. 7, 2013. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 1009th Air Wing.

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION- Thirty three members of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing were reunited with friends and family here Thursday after returning from a deployment in Southwest Asia.

The returning group of personnel is part of a larger deployment of 130 members of the 107th Operations and Maintenance Group personnel that rotated in over the past four months.

Families and friends gathered here in the evening to welcome deployers home with handmade signs, American flags, balloons and even custom-made t-shirts worn by excited sons and daughters. Master Sgt. Michele Martin surprised her sister, Tech. Sgt. Nicole Martin by bringing along her sister's beloved dog, Chip, whom she hadn't seen in the last four months.

There were many happy reunions after the C-130 landed, delivering the Airmen home. Staff Sgt. Aron Miller of the 107th Maintenance Group was reunited with his wife, Bonnie, infant son and young daughter. This was his longest deployment, during which he missed his daughter's first day of kindergarten and some of his son's first year milestones.

"I get to see him lots now," said his daughter, Evenlyn, who had big plans for a spending time with her Dad. They plan to spend Monday, her day off of school for Veterans Day, at the movies and going out for ice cream.

> "This homecoming is bittersweet since it is likely our last combat deployment with the C-130s,"
>
> --*Col. Robert Kilgore, 107th Vice Wing Commander.*

The 107th's mission for the deployment was to transport passengers and cargo across the U.S. Central Command area of operations and is part of operation enduring freedom. Over the length of the deployment, members flew a total of more than 360 combat sorties, 650 combat flying hours, transported about 3,500 passengers and moved over 1,400 tons of cargo.

For the 107th, this deployment marked a chapter in the unit's history that will soon be ending as the unit prepares to convert to a new mission with the MQ-9 unmanned aerial vehicle.

"This homecoming is bittersweet since it is likely our last combat deployment with the C-130s," said Col. Robert Kilgore, 107th Vice Wing Commander.

First time deployer, Airman 1st Class Kyle Zastrow, was one of the returning Airman.

The deployment gave him an opportunity to use his training as a sheet metal technician, to learn some new skills and to work with other Air Force counterparts.

"It was definitely cool to see the other side of the Air Force. I have always been in the Guard. It was great integrating with active duty and reserve Airmen to see how they deploy and how they work," he said.gt

Last Deployment with Son, Son-in-Law

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Marelise Wood, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

Senior Master Sgt. Steven Buchwald is flanked by his son-in-law Senior Airman Hans Hock on his right and his son, Senior Airman Travis Buchwald, on his left as they stand proudly in front of a C-130 from their home unit, the 107th Airlift Wing, Air National Guard, Niagara Falls. The trio are deployed together as part of the 386th Maintenance Group, to Southwest Asia. The Buchwalds are natives of Lockport. Hock is a native of Buffalo. Photo by Master Sgt. Marelise Wood.

SOUTHWEST ASIA -- Members of the military commonly refer to each other as family. They share experiences that most times can't be truly understood by those who haven't lived them. Often these experiences are forged in places far from home where mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, children and other loved ones can only be seen on the screen of some electronic device, or not at all.

For three members of the 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Group, the only thing standing between them and a family member is shift change.

Senior Master Sgt. Steven Buchwald, 386th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, is the lead production superintendent for the C-130 Aircraft Maintenance Unit. He, his son and his son-in-law are members of the 107th Airlift Wing, Air National Guard, and are deployed here together from Niagara Falls.

As members of the 386th, dad is responsible for the C-130 personnel and flying schedule, Travis, a senior airman, is a crew chief and ensures the aircraft are ready for flight and repairs them when necessary. Son-in-law, Senior Airman Hans Hock, an air crew ground equipment mechanic in the 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, keeps the machinery and tools supporting the aircraft in working order.

For the senior Buchwald, deployments are nothing new, this being his 18th, but being deployed with his family is a whole new experience. Family and staying close to his roots have always been important to him.

At the beginning of his military career, Steven spent four years on active duty as a crew chief. During that time he was assigned to a base in England and subsequently one in New Mexico. By the time he was in New Mexico, he had married his hometown sweetheart and they had already had their first of three children. He began exploring the option of getting stationed closer to home and after his attempts were unsuccessful, the Lockport, native chose to join the Air National Guard and move back to his home state.

"I took mechanics in school; if you could tear it apart, I did," said Steven. "When I took the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, mechanics was my top score and I was told I could pick any job. They told me I could work on airplanes and that sounded cool so that's what I did."

Steven's time as a crew chief and his passion for his job made an impression on his son Travis who frequently went to work with him. It was really no surprise that Steven's son is now also a crew chief.

"It was basically something I grew up doing," said the younger Buchwald. "For as long as I can remember, I was out in the barn working on cars, anything else you can think of--four-wheel motorcycles, tractors; it just seemed right."

But for Hock, Buchwald's son-in-law, the decision to join the military was not such a foregone conclusion.

Hock met Milissa Buchwald during his freshman year in college. They began dating and he had his first encounter with the military.

"She [Milissa] wasn't shy about telling everybody that her dad was in the military," said Hock. "The first time I went to her house, he did the dad thing; he came out in his uniform on the porch and I was like, 'I am not getting

Family Deployment Con't.

out of the car. That was a pretty scary thing.'"

However, Hock was not scared off. The pair kept dating and got married in 2010.

By then, Hock had graduated college and was working odd jobs. His wife had begun a teaching career and he wanted something steadier so he could contribute more to his household. His father-in-law broached the subject of joining the military.

"I wasn't so sure," said Hock. "I didn't want to be away from home, I didn't want to do the whole back and forth thing, but then I looked into the Guard and Reserve side and I thought, this could actually be pretty nice. I was talking to a recruiter for a couple months and he assured me it would work out. It didn't work out the way he said, but it has worked out."

It's been almost three years later and here he is on his first deployment, sharing the experience with his brother-in-law and father-in-law.

"I knew my brother-in-law was coming and that was one of the biggest reasons I was going to do it because there would be somebody here who I already knew," said Hock. "Then we found out just before we left that my father-in-law was going to come too."

Steven, who is on his last deployment before he retires after 32 years of service, is especially proud to be here with his family.

This is my last deployment, I'm retiring in December and it's neat to be here with the two boys," he said. "His [Travis'] first deployment was as a third country national escort, so this is his first deployment doing his real job. This is my last and their first--hand-off!".gt

"They told me I could work on airplanes and that sounded cool so that's what I did."

--Senior Master Sgt. Steven Buchwald, 107th Airlift Wing.

Funds for Fisher House

The 109th Airlift Wing Company Grade Officer's Council donated $2,250 to the Fisher House on Dec. 17, 2013, with funds raised from a golf tournament the council hosted earlier in the year. Pictured are (from left) Capt. James Vendetti, Capt. James Roth, Linda Weiss, Stratton VA Medical Center Director, Capt. Melissa Cucchi, Capt. Ashley FitzGibbon and Jerry Jensen, Albany Fisher House Manager. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing.

SCOTIA – The New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing Company Grade Officer's Council presented a check of $2,250 to the Fisher House at the Albany Stratton Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center on Dec. 17, 2013, from money the council raised during a golf tournament, with help from local businesses.

More than 65 golfers from the 109th Airlift Wing and the surrounding community participated in the golf outing, hosted by the CGO Council, at Airway Meadows in Saratoga on Sept. 20, 2013, with the intent of raising money for a local charity.

"We wanted to donate to a local charity, and the Fisher House seemed like the perfect fit," said Capt. Jim Roth, CGO Council president. "They are a unique organization that a lot of people don't hear about, but they really deserve the recognition. Their program allows families to be close to their loved ones during (hospitalization). I wish we could give more."

"The CGO has done a great job of getting a core group of people working together," Roth said. "We received this opportunity for a golf tournament and really tried to make it a worthwhile event. It was the first time we've done something like this, but it won't be the last."

The 109th CGO came to life about three years ago and comprises 2nd lieutenants through captains from throughout the base. Roth said the council currently has about 10 active members.

According to their mission statement, The 109th Airlift Wing Company Grade Officers' Council is a dedicated alliance of junior officers, committed to the development and maintenance of an informational network to enhance professional development, community service, and camaraderie within our unit and local community. This is accomplished through our dedication to mentorship and leadership as company grade officers.

The Fisher House at Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany is currently the only one in the state, and when opened in 1994 was the first Fisher House located at a VA Medical Center. More than 60 Fisher Houses are open nationwide and according to its website, The Fisher House Foundation has served more than 180,000 families and provided over 5 million days of lodging, saving more than $200 million in lodging and transportation costs since 1990.gt

Keeping Aircraft in a Ready State

WESTHAMPTON BEACH - Members of the 106th Rescue Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron help to de-ice aircraft and clear the runways at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base following a morning snowstorm January 29. Long Island has about 28 inches of snowfall so far this season, with nearly 21 inches of snow falling in the month of January. Photo by Senior Airman Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Uniform Update: T-shirts in, Reflective Belt, Out

By Staff Sgt. David Salanitri, Air Force Public Affairs

WASHINGTON Armed Forces News Service -- The Air Force updated the policy governing uniform wear Jan. 17, with a goal of not financially burdening Airmen. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark. A. Welsh III approved several updates to Air Force Instruction 36-2903, Air Force Dress and Appearance, with many of the changes coming directly from Airmen.

During the past year, Welsh prompted Airmen to make their voice heard through the Every Dollar Counts campaign, held last spring, and suggestions made directly to him during base visits or comments to the uniform survey board itself.

"The policy changes revolve around three areas," said Director of Air Force Services Col. Patrick Doherty, who has oversight of the uniforms and awards and recognition branch. "The first area of policy changes is focused on heritage, team building, esprit de corps and unit pride."

The second is recognizing and valuing Airmen's experiences, qualifications and job performance, allowing Airmen to wear what they have earned. The last area is a group of common sense approach inputs from Airmen in the field that senior leaders thought were great ideas."

There are dozens of updates to the AFI, including the following:

Morale T-shirts/patches representing individual squadrons that were worn in the past to increase unit pride are now authorized to wear on Fridays. Squadron color T-shirts may be worn with the ABU or flight suit when in-garrison or on-station during unit temporary duty assignments and contingency deployments. Shirts must be one color throughout the squadron, and may have only a small squadron patch over the left chest. Wing Commanders can authorize personnel from different units to wear the same color T-shirts to facilitate esprit de corps and team building.

For example, maintainers, life support personnel and flight doctors are allowed to wear the color T-shirt of the flying squadron they support. Also, authorized is the in-garrison Friday wear of morale patches and name tags that have tasteful nicknames or call signs on flight suits. Unit commanders have approval authority for morale patches and name tag naming conventions.

Earned Air Force and other services' badges are authorized to wear, but only the command insignia pin is mandatory. This reverses a previous decision to prohibit wear of qualification badges and various patches on ABUs, to eliminate the need to remove and replace badges for deployment or permanent change of duty station moves.

In recent years, Airmen deployed to Afghanistan wore the Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern. The OCP is flame retardant, treated with insect repellent and also used by the Army. Following this evolution, the ABU has become primarily an in-garrison uniform, according to Air Force senior leaders.

"The increased wear of the ABU in-garrison, , coupled with Airmen's long-term desires to wear the qualification badges and the command insignia they have earned, makes authorized wear on the ABU a logical step," said Lt. Gen. Sam Cox, Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services.

A list and examples of all newly approved badges authorized for wear on the ABU is located in attachment five of AFI 36-2903.

The Air Force physical training uniform no longer has color restrictions for athletic shoes. Airmen are now also authorized to wear black socks with their athletic shoes. Reflective belts are no longer required during physical training, although local commanders still have the final say.

Cell phones no longer have to be black, as long as they're not worn on the uniform or attached to a purse.gt

Tracking Friendly Bogies

ROME--Senior Airman Kyle Hesse and Sr. Airman Phillip Gentile will be among the Airman at the Eastern Air Defense Sector tracking Santa Claus as he flies around the world Christmas Eve as part of the annual "NORAD tracks Santa" event. The New York Air National Guard unit is responsible for monitoring the airspace over the United States east of the Mississippi River.

Guard Volunteers Help Prep Marines

Guard Times Staff

Photos by Capt. Steve Hartov, New York Guard

New York Guard Maj. Michael Levinson, legal officer and Commander of the 156th Emergency Response Battalion, consults with Marine Corps Reservist Cpl. Mark Morales. Morales is a C-130 aircraft maintainer with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron.

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH - Volunteers of the New York Guard's Legal Service detachment of the 56th Brigade assist with the preparations for deployment for Marine Reservists here on January 6. The New York Guard Judge Advocate staff officers and support staff processed more than 60 Marines for their upcoming overseas deployment.

The Marines, part of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 49, received 54 Powers of Attorney, 27 wills, 13 health care proxies and nine living wills as the troops conducted their pre-deployment Yellow Ribbon tasks and prepared for deployment to the Middle East this year.

The pre-deployment preparations included more than twice as many expected Marines and family members, said Col. David Warager, the New York Guard's 56th Brigade Commander.

"We had 17 New York Guard soldiers and officers where we would usually have between 25 and 30 assigned for a client group this size," Warager said in his after action remarks.

"With our always dependable help from the 7th Legal Assistance Detachment, the team that was there worked extremely hard and we accomplished the mission, commencing operations before 0700 hours and not finishing until after 1700 hours," Warager said. "We were able to process all of the Marines who needed our immediate service. I thank the whole team for their efforts."

"We had 87 Marines in attendance and they were all very happy with the services provided," said the Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 452 Family Readiness Officer Shelly Aiken by email.

The event could not have succeeded without the support of the New York Guard legal experts, Aiken explained. "It is a pleasure to work with people that have the same focus of taking care of our most precious resources, our military men and women!"**gt**

"It is a pleasure to work with people that have the same focus of taking care of our most precious resources, our military men and women!"

--*Shelly Aiken, Family Readiness Officer*

Guard volunteers of the 56th Brigade's legal team assist with the pre-deployment checks for Marine Reservists of the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 49 based in Newburgh Jan. 6.

Guard volunteers of the 56th Brigade's legal team assist with the pre-deployment checks for Marine Reservists of the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 49 based in Newburgh Jan. 6.

Maj. Peter Chiu, Commander of the 7th Legal Assistance Detachment, prepares pre-deployment documents for Marine Corps Reservist Cpl. Shuayb Banks. Banks is a C-130 aircraft maintainer.

New York Naval Militia

Training Boat Crews in Winter Waters

VERPLANCK – Members of the New York Naval Militia conducted crew training for patrol boats of the state's Military Emergency Boat Service on the Hudson River here December 19, 2013. Training of Naval Militia bosuns included launching patrol boats, pre-operational checks and crew drills during patrols on the Hudson River. Top photo, New York Naval Militia Petty Officer Ernesto Ahiable backs PB 280 down to the Hudson River launch while Petty Officer Garrett Aldershoff provides direction. Above, New York Naval Militia Bosuns Mate Charles Golding, conducts pre-operational checks onboard PB 400. Photos by Commander Don McKnight, New York Naval Militia.

New York Guard to render final honors for 11,585 veterans by end of 2013

By Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director
Photos by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo

New York Army National Guard Spc. Christopher Roderiguez and Pvt. Shelbi Vanderbogart salute the remains of Army veteran Harold Smith arriving for grave side services in Hudson, Dec. 17, 2013.

HUDSON -- The New York Army National Guard team, provided funeral services for 11,585 families in 2013; this is more than the 10,175 funerals the Honor Guard conducted in 2012, and well above the peak of 10,752 military funerals conducted in 2011. The New York National Guard had expected that its teams would perform 11,560 ceremonies by January 1, 2014.

The Honor Guard also performed its 100,000th funeral since it first organized in 1999, said Chief Warrant Officer Ryan Comstock, the honor guard officer-in-charge.

Doing the job is incredibly rewarding, said Pvt. Shelbi Vanderbogart, a member of the 206th Military Police Company who lives in Averill Park. "This is a great privilege," he said.

Since 2000, federal law has mandated that any military veteran who did not receive a dishonorable discharge from the armed forces is eligible for military honors at his or her funeral. The ceremony must include the folding and presenting of the flag of the United States to the veteran's survivors and the playing of Taps.

Under federal law, any American who has served in the armed forces and was not dishonorably discharged is eligible for military funeral services during his or her burial The New York Army National Guard Honor Guard employs 35 Soldiers on a full-time basis to man the funeral details and calls upon 135 other Soldiers on an as-needed basis to help, said

The National Guard is allocated funds to comply with this law.

The size of the detail varies from a minimum of two service members to nine or more personnel for deceased service members who retired from the military after a full career or were awarded medals for valor. At least one of the honor guard members must belong to the service the deceased service member had served in.

A veteran in this category of "full military honors" can receive a nine-member detail which provides pall bearers who can also serve as the firing party for a final salute three-volley salute with rifles loaded with blanks, a bugler, and Soldiers to fold the flag and present it to the next of kin, according to Army regulations.

More members can be added to the funeral detail, which includes a military chaplain and separate pall-bearers and firing party if available. This is normally done for the funeral of a service member killed in action.

Originally the bulk of the veterans being buried by the Honor Guard were from the World War II generation, Comstock said. Now that is starting to shift to those who served in The Korean War (1950 to 1953) and the families of more and more Vietnam Era veterans are now asking for services from the Honor Guard, he said.

Currently, the federal government covers the cost of the Honor Guard: $2.3 million in fiscal year 2013, with $1.95 million budgeted for fiscal year 2014, which began Oct. 1.

The New York Honor Guard normally provides services at the funeral of Army veterans, historically the largest of the services, but can provide services for any veteran if the veteran's service cannot provide a detail.

Funeral home directors are responsible for contacting one of the Honor Guard's local offices when a deceased veteran's family requests military funeral honors. Families are asked to provide proof of the deceased service, normally the Department of Defense Form 214, known as a DD214, which service members receive when they leave the military, or an honorable or general discharge certificate.

One of the most critical moments at any military funeral is the playing of Taps, Taps at more than 90 percent of the funerals the New York Military Forces conduct each year is played on a ceremonial or electronic bugle, Comstock said. This is a bugle with an electronic device inside which plays the tune. More than 16,000 are in use across the country, although live human buglers are used when appropriate.gt

Spc. Christopher Roderiguez sounds Taps using an electronic bugle for the family of deceased veteran Harold Smith during services in Hudson on December 17, 2013.

42nd Infantry Division Honors Infantrymen

SYRACUSE --Members of the New York Army National Guard after receiving the Order of St. Maurice Medal Decemnber 14, 2013. From left: Sgt. Maj. Daniel Ames, 42nd Infantry Division, Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields, the Director of the Joint Staff for the New York National Guard, Lt. Col. Aron Sacchetti, 42nd Infantry Division, and New York State Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Wicks. The Order of St. Maurice is presented by the National Infantry Association to infantrymen who have made outstanding contributions. Photo by Lt. Col. Roberta Comerford, 42nd Infantry Division.

Air Guard Honors Millard Fillmore

BUFFALO -- Col. John Higgins, commander of the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing, placed a wreath on the grave of President Millard Fillmore on behalf of President Barack Obama at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo on Jan. 9. The wing places a wreath on the grave of the Fillmore, who served as president from 1850 to 1853 on the anniversary of his birth on Jan. 7, 1800. A major snow storm forced the ceremony, which was held in conjunction with the University of Buffalo, which Fillmore founded, to Jan 9. Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing.

For Erin and America
From Page 27

On his way north, Corcoran dined with President Abraham Lincoln, who promoted him to brigadier general. Newspapers which had branded Corcoran a traitor now extolled his heroism and other noble qualities. In another ironic turnabout, he was honored with a triumphal parade up Broadway in New York City.

Thousands in other northeastern cities gathered to see him and on at least one occasion, mobbed him. He was feted in the song, "Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69th":

"With a hundred thousand welcomes we grasp thee by the hand/And proudly claim thee, Corcoran, brave son of Erin's land."

The crowds' adulation was actually for the government and constitution, Corcoran opined in one speech, and he used these occasions to encourage Irishmen to enlist. He traveled to northern cities to recruit troops for his own unit, which came to be known as Corcoran's Legion or the Irish Legion.

Composed of New York regiments and about 3,500 Soldiers strong, Corcoran's Legion headed south in November 1862 and was bloodied in the Battle of the Deserted House, near Suffolk, Virginia that January. Though the legion would go on to fight in many major battles and suffer almost 2,000 casualties by the end of the war, Corcoran wouldn't live to see it.

On Dec. 22, 1863, Corcoran was apparently thrown from his horse while returning to Camp in Fairfax, Va. He was found "on the ground in a convulsive state," and died from a stroke a few hours later. He was 36 years old, and his requiem Mass in New York City was mobbed.

The New York Army National Guard maintains a bust of Corcoran at the 69th Infantry Battalion's armory on Lexington Avenue in New York City. **gt**

Civil Support Commander Promotion

FORT HAMILTON -- New York Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Raymond Shields, Director of the Joint Staff, promotes Jody Lupo to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel during a ceremony here on December 10, 2013. Lupo is the commander of the 24th Civil Support Team. Members of the CST are trained to rapidly identify radiological, biological, and chemical agents that might be used in a terrorist attack or other disaster incident. Lupo has served as unit commander since March 2011. Joining Shields in pinning the new rank for the 24th CST Commander is Lupo's wife, Leslie. Photo by Lt. Col. Robert Mitchell, Joint Forces Headquarters.

Maintenance Techs Help Renovate Historic Vehicles

By Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

This M-48A5 tank, used by Army National Guard Armored Battalions in the 1970's and 80's, will be repainted by the New York Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site for display by the Connecticut National Guard as a historic vehicle. Courtesy photo.

FORT DRUM, NY--Technicians at the New York Army National Guard's Fort Drum maintenance facility are honing their vehicle repair and painting skills, and helping the Guard tell its story, by refurbishing old military vehicles on their way to armories to serve as display vehicles.

Technicians at the New York Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES) has cleaned and repainted vehicles for display in Connecticut and several New York armories , said Lt. Col. Dana Brewer, the MATES superintendent.

"We've got two new painters. This gets them some hands on training and at the same time there's a little welding and fabricating going on," he said.

MATES serves as a storage site for equipment Army Guard units use while training at Fort Drum. MATES' personnel maintain those vehicles and other equipment to keep them in good shape for training or deployment.

The historic vehicles stored at MATES, or were displayed at the 10th Mountain Division's museum, said Courtney Burns, Director of the New York State Military Museum. He tapped into this pool to provide display vehicles outside armories.

The military museum is run by the Division of Military and Naval Affairs and keeps track of all historic items across the New York Army National Guard, as well as maintaining the museum in Saratoga Springs.

The Center for Military History directed post museums to focus on the history of their current units, so the vehicles being displayed at the Fort Drum museum were no longer appropriate exhibits, Burns explained.

The Army's TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (TACOM once stood for Tank and Automotive Command) "owns" all the Army's military vehicles, Burns said. Requesting a vehicle as a historic display piece involves getting permission from TACOM to move the vehicle.

The MATES technicians treat the old equipment like any other job, said Chief Warrant Officer Robin Steele, the allied trades supervisor at MATES.

The vehicles are moved to a special preparation bay and cleaned, Steele said. A water hose at 40,000 pounds per square inch of pressure is used to strip away paint until just the bare metal is left.

Once that is done the vehicles are moved into the painting booth and repainted.

The time it takes for each piece of equipment varies, Steele said. An M-48A5 Patton tank being repainted for the Connecticut Army National Guard will take about 100 hours of prep work and 40 hours to paint, Steele said.

MATES also repainted an M-1 Abrams tank and AH-1S Cobra attack helicopter which mark the entrance to Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters in Latham.

The Cobra refurbishing job included a special touch, hundreds of thin plastic strips that stick up from the rotor blades to keep birds from nesting on them.

Next in line for work at MATES are an M-102 light which will be displayed at the Kingston Armory and a Combat Engineer Vehicle (CEV)—a tank like engineer vehicle--heading for the 204th Engineer Battalion in Binghamton.

The Connecticut National Guard will also receive an M-113 armored personnel carrier.

The M-113 had a personal connection for Brewer. When the vehicle was cleaned up he found that it had his name and rank as 2nd Lt. Brewer stenciled on the side of the vehicle, from his days as an infantry platoon leader.gt