109th Airlift Wing

**NY Air National Guard Writing the Book on New Propellers While Flying Antarctica Mission**
Air Force Magazine, June 28, 2019

**Step inside the C-130, the super-versatile workhorse that flies Navy SEAL missions, delivers supplies to Antarctica and fights wildfires**
Business Insider, July 2, 2019

Airmen and Soldiers

**Sisters enlist and retire together after 34 year National Guard career**
Army.mil and NationalGuard.mil, By Ryan Campbell, New York National Guard, July 2, 2019

**Palmyra re-enlists with state National Guard**
Monroe County Post, June 30, 2019

**In The Service: Gerstner promoted to specialist**
Finger Lakes Times, June 30, 2019

**In the military: Area National Guard soldiers promoted**
Post Star, June 29, 2019

**A photo by sheer chance, a sister's way back to fallen Officer Craig Lehner**
The Buffalo News, June 29, 2019

**New York Army National Guard promotions**
NNY 360, June 29, 2019

**Twin sisters from Troy announce retirement from Army National Guard**
Troy Record, By Record Staff, July 4, 2019

**A flag flies in Lewis County that was flown over Pentagon, Capitol & 9/11 Memorial**
WWNY, July 4, 2019

Eastern Air Defense Sector

**Airman receives Meritorious Service Medal**
Utica OD, July 4, 2019

PFOA Issue

**Public officials, environmentalists call for quick action by state and feds to resolve Newburgh's water contamination**
Mid-Hudson. com July 2, 2019

**State urged to implement new drinking water standards**
Times Herald Record, July 3, 2019
109th Airlift Wing

NY Air National Guard Writing the Book on New Propellers While Flying Antarctica Mission

Air Force Magazine, June 28, 2019:

The airmen of the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing are not only tasked with flying one of the most unique missions in the Air Force - airlift in Antarctica using their ski-equipped LC-130s - they are doing it while literally writing the book on their plane's new propellers.

The wing is the first operational unit in the Air Force with a fleet of the new NP-2000 eight-bladed propellers for their LC-130s, and earlier this year completed their first deployment for Operation Deep Freeze with a full fleet of the updated aircraft. Since they are the first operational unit in the Air Force with the propeller system, the wing's maintainers have written the Air Force Instructions and the task order process USAF will use as more aircraft are outfitted with them.

"Other units don't know how to fix 'em, no one knows how to work on 'em, it's our maintainers who are figuring it out," said 1st Lt. Laura James, a navigator with the 109th, during an interview at the Paris Air Show in late June.

Previously, the unit used NAVAIR instructions, but that did not cover USAF-specific needs. Last year, the handful of maintainers finished writing the instructions shortly before the wing sent six of the updated LC-130s to Deep Freeze, the 31st season that the unit supported the National Science Foundation in Antarctica.

During the five-month season, the wing flew 2,100 researchers and staff, 2.8 million pounds of cargo, and more than 250,000 gallons of fuel to research stations across Antarctica.

The new propellers system makes maintainers lives easier, especially in the frigid weather. The older T56 four-bladed system was prone to cracking and seal leaks. Airmen had to take the jet down for a day or two, depending on weather, and remove the entire blade assembly just to replace one of the blades. This work has to be done without a hangar. About four seasons ago, SSgt. Jason Candido, maintainer and engine specialist with the 109th, said his aircraft was set to return home on the last day of the season when a blade cracked, prompting the team to unpack the aircraft and start the lengthy replacement process outside when it was -38 degrees.

To do such maintenance, crews had to pull the aircraft to the side of the skiway and bury its landing gear in snow so it wouldn't move during engine runs. With the new NP-2000, however, individual blades can be swapped out on a much shorter timeline, Candido said.
"It's about two hours in and out, as opposed to the entire day, so it keeps everything operational if we do have that issue," he said.

The Air Force identified the NYANG to be an early adopter of the new system because the increased thrust it offers on takeoff—about 20 percent more per engine according to its manufacturer UTC Aerospace Systems—means the aircraft no longer has to rely on the dwindling stock of jet-assisted-takeoff rockets to lift off from snow.

In addition to the 109th, the Wyoming Air National Guard has a small amount of aircraft with the NP-2000. The service is upgrading the MAFFS-equipped aircraft with the propellers, and Guard officials have said they would like to retrofit the entire C-130H fleet with them.

Operationally, the upgraded aircraft "leap off the snow," which is noticeable especially at some of the higher altitude locations where the unit flies, James said. While the blades cause a slight reduction in fuel economy, the "tradeoff is significant for our specific mission."

The 109th, unlike the rest of the service, exclusively flies support for the National Science Foundation as opposed to military operational missions. The wing's year is split between Antarctic operations and training, both at home and in Greenland, where they practice snow operations. The NSF has a presence in Greenland that the unit supports, but the bulk of the Greenland flying is training.

Flying on a skiway is dramatically different than traditional flying on a runway. There are very few navigation aids and no tower, so the navigator is active in providing detailed information to the pilot on the approach, including distance, drift, heading, and altitude down to about 10 feet, especially in some of the intense weather conditions the unit faces.

"Some days have whiteout conditions, so it looks like you are flying in the inside of a ping pong ball," James said. "There's no surface or horizon definition, so you have no clue when the plane's going to touch the ground."

While deployed to Antarctica, crews maintain 24-hour operations with day and night crews. Getting there takes about a week, ferrying from New York, to the West Coast, to Hawaii, on to Christchurch, N.Z., and then on to McMurdo Station. The deployment is unique because of the personnel the unit flies: scientists in the back of the C-130 instead of soldiers. Sometimes they also carry VIPs. For James, her very first flight to the South Pole, on her first deployment, had a special VIP: her dad, who once was a pilot and now works with the NSF, she said.

The 109th is a small wing, but because of its unique capability maintains high operations, said 1st Lt. Daniel Urbanski, a pilot with the unit. "It's a unique mission, we're serving a niche that only we can do," he said.

"The ops tempo is high, it's like that for a reason. We're the only ones doing it. It definitely keeps us busy, but we're proud of it. We love the mission and it's something we hope to do for a long time."
Step inside the C-130, the super-versatile workhorse that flies Navy SEAL missions, delivers supplies to Antarctica and fights wildfires

Business Insider, July 2, 2019:

The C-130 transport, now built by Lockheed Martin, has been in use since 1956 and has Rolls-Royce engines.

The versatile aircraft can be used to transport medical patients, resupply Antarctic missions, and fight fires, among other capabilities. Some versions have a skylight for navigating by the stars.

The C-130J-30 and the LC-130 were on display at the Paris Air Show in June.

INSIDER toured the US Air Force's workhorse C-130J-30 Super Hercules and the LC-130, both variants of the long-used C-130 transport airplane, at this year's Paris Air show. The C-130 transport has been in production since 1956, but the plane remains a vital part of US military missions, performing a wide variety of tasks from refueling to humanitarian aid.

The C-130J-30 measures a whopping 112 feet, 9 inches and has four Rolls-Royce AS 2100D3 turboprop engines capable of 4,700 horsepower. It is "the prime transport for airdropping troops and equipment into hostile areas," according to the Air Force. But it's not just good for parachuting troops into enemy territory; the aircraft also assists with weather reconnaissance, medical evacuations, natural disaster relief, and Antarctic ice resupply missions, among others.

The C-130J-30 is an extended version of the C-130. The C-130 is built for missions in challenging weather and is extremely versatile; the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing performs missions in Antarctica using ski-outfitted LC-130s in Operation Deep Freeze, which supports the National Science Foundation there.

For the Wing's 2019 mission, the C-130s were outfitted with NP-2000 propellers, providing more thrust on takeoff and allowing the aircraft to better lift off in snowy conditions, according to Air Force Magazine. The LC-130 is the largest ski aircraft in the world, according to Lockheed Martin.

"Old school is the way to go with this mission," Urbanski told INSIDER.
Airmen and Soldiers

Sisters enlist and retire together after 34 year National Guard career

Army.mil and NationalGuard.mil, By Ryan Campbell, New York National Guard, July 2, 2019:

LATHAM, N.Y.,- Two sisters who began their Army National Guard careers together went to war in Afghanistan together and share a house together, are now planning their retirements from the New York Army National Guard together.

Master Sgt. Lisa Currier, a senior logistics officer, and her sister, retired Lt. Col. Lynn Currier, an information management branch chief, who both worked at the New York National Guard headquarters here, have seen many parts of their military careers share the same path.

Beginning in 1986, the two sisters, who are both Troy, N.Y. residents, have spent more than three decades sharing service and experiences. Lynn got through the retirement process first and continued to work as a civilian while Lisa waits for her retirement date.

"We got out of college back in 1986, and were in Burlington, Vermont working and we had to pay bills and student loans," Lisa said. "I was reading a newspaper and it said get your student loans repaid and work weekends, and stuff like that."

That turned out to be an advertisement for the Vermont Army National Guard, highlighting some of the education benefits that were offered. Lisa explained that she was able to talk her sister into joining with her, ultimately the Army Reserves, rather than looking into the state police.

"So we enlisted within a month or two on February 3rd of 1986 together," said Lisa.

"On the buddy system," Lynn emphasized.

Under that system, Lynn explained, the two sisters were able to go to basic training and advanced individual training together. Coming home to Vermont they went right to work at Camp Johnson in Colchester.

In 1990, a previous supervisor called and told Lynn about the fulltime positions in the New York National Guard. She interviewed for a New York National Guard position in December of 1990 and got the job.
Over the course of the next three years, Lynn advanced her career in the New York National Guard while her sister stayed in behind in Vermont. Lisa, who had transitioned from working for the Vermont National Guard to working for IBM, wouldn't stay behind for long.

"She kept saying, come over, come over," Lisa recalled. "I was working like 12-hour shifts and it was just crazy. I woke up on Sunday morning and decided, I'm tired of this."

Three years after Lynn made her way for New York, Lisa put in her resignation to IBM and left. Moving in with her sister, Lisa explained that within a couple of weeks she was then able to find a job at the New York National Guard headquarters.

The Currier sisters agreed that one of the most significant changes they've seen during their 34-year careers was an increase in women joining the National Guard. They've also been pleased to see more and more women being selected for leadership positions.

Those opportunities, along with the full-time employment and benefits afforded to them, the sisters explained there was no reason to leave the National Guard.

"I love coming to work," Lisa said. "We actually like it!", Lynn added.

With more women joining the military, the Army needed to make changes, Lisa said. She experienced first-hand she considers to be one of the most significant changes.

While preparing to mobilize for deployment to Iraq in 2004, Lisa who is a breast cancer survivor, discovered the Army didn't have guidelines for how to treat women who had once had cancer. There were regulations on how long men had to be free from the various types of cancers that can develop in men, but there were no regulations covering cancers which affect only women, Lisa said.

During mobilization at Fort Drum, the staff decided to insist on a six month period of being cancer free before Lisa could proceed with mobilization. There were relapses that reset the six month waiting period, and as a result, Lisa spent her 18-month deployment at Fort Drum.

Since then, medical policies have changed to accommodate women as well, Lisa said.

While the Curriers both started as enlisted Soldiers in 1986, Lynn decided she wanted to take her military career to another level and become an officer after reaching the rank of staff sergeant.

"I always wanted to be more assertive and more in control of things," said Lynn. "I felt the only way that was going to happen was to be an officer."

"She just wants to be the hot dog," laughed Lisa. As an officer, Lynn served as a military police officer which was an aspiration of hers before joining the National Guard.
In 2008, the Currier sisters found themselves deploying with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team to Afghanistan, one of several related pairs that were sent together on the year-long deployment.

"We did deploy together, but they separated us after three or four months," said Lisa. "That was the big thing, they didn't want them together on the same base."

"In case there was an attack," added Lynn.

They said that Lynn remained in Kabul, while Lisa was sent 500 miles away to Mazar-i-Sharif. Initially, however, Lynn arrived in the country several days before Lisa and was waiting to offer her a lift to the astonishment of other, higher-ranking service members.

"When I flew in, I think she knew I was coming," said Lisa.

"I did," said Lynn.

"I flew in with people that were a lot higher ranking than me," said Lisa with a laugh, "she pulls up with the Gator and I throw all my stuff in it and we take off, while everyone else has to carry their stuff."

The year passed, with those initial few months spent with Lisa sleeping on her sister's floor on a couple sleeping mats, and they returned safely home to their families. Now as they prepare to retire, looking back at their fondest memories of their military careers, Lisa said for her it is of all the wonderful people they have been able to meet.

"It's like a family," Lynn added.

Lynn's retirement came on June 21, 2019, as she has plans to move onto being an education officer at the Watervliet Arsenal, but it was being a Soldier that meant the most to her.

"When I had to take my uniform off, let me tell you," Lynn started before Lisa emphasized that her sister was upset for weeks afterward.

After all of the years spent in uniform together, they explained that they still travel together, have recently bought a house together, and remain as close as ever.

"If I had the same chance again, I'd do the 34 years again," said Lisa.

"When I first enlisted I never thought I'd make three years. And now these years have flown by."

https://www.army.mil/article/224054/sisters_enlist_and_retire_together_after_34_year_national_guardCareer

Return to top
Palmyra re-enlists with state National Guard

Monroe County Post, June 30, 2019:

Sgt. 1st Class Peter Holden, of Palmyra, re-enlisted to continue service with the New York Army National Guard.

Holden serves with the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

"The most important Army asset we have is the individual soldier," said Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general. "The dedication, skills and leadership traits they bring to our community and their employers are invaluable. By choosing to stay in the Army National Guard, they directly contribute to our nation's security and to the governor's ability to respond to disasters."


In The Service: Gerstner promoted to specialist

Finger Lakes Times, June 30, 2019:

CANANDAIGUA -New York Army National Guard Spc. Kenny Gerstner has been promoted to his current rank.

He is assigned to the Company A (Distribution), 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

https://www.fltimes.com/briefs/in_the_service/in-the-service-gerstner-promoted-to-specialist/article_16c1a69c-945a-5ba3-bb7d-d15092a92d55.html

In the military: Area National Guard soldiers promoted

Post Star, June 29, 2019:
LATHAM - Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the State of New York, announces the promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership. Local soldiers include:

Kurt Dachtler from Wilton, assigned to the 206th Military Police Company received a promotion to the rank of private;

Sean Early from Fort Edward, assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters received a promotion to the rank of chief warrant officer 3;

Mark Knoeller from Greenwich, assigned to the Intelligence and Sustainment Company, 42nd Infantry Division received a promotion to the rank of major;

Dustin Johnson of Fort Edward, assigned to the Company B, 2-108th Infantry received a promotion to the rank of private first class;

Noah Ringer of South Glens Falls, assigned to the 206th Military Police Company received a promotion to the rank of private; and

Lindsey Palso of Greenfield Center, assigned to the Headquarters and Support Company, 42nd Infantry Division received a promotion to the rank of private first class.

Army National Guard soldiers reenlist

LATHAM - Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general, announced the recent reenlistment of members of the State National Guard in recognition of their continuing commitment to serve community, state and nation as part of the Army National Guard. Local soldiers include:

Sgt. Michael Murray of Lake Luzerne, reenlisted to continue service with the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 501st Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal); and

Sgt. David Ballard of Argyle, reenlisted to continue service with the Operations Company, 42nd Infantry Division; and

Spc. Morgan Dufour of Hudson Falls, reenlisted to continue service with the 1427th Transportation Company.


Return to top

A photo by sheer chance, a sister's way back to fallen Officer Craig Lehner
Haleigh Wilson started at the end. She walked into the upstairs community room on a busy evening at the Buffalo History Museum and immediately noticed the last image in a new photo exhibit, the one of a Buffalo police officer leaning against his car.

The 10-year-old walked toward it, raised her finger, turned toward her mother.

Look.

The child knew that photo. To the best of her family's knowledge, it is one of the final images ever captured of Haleigh's uncle, Lt. Craig Lehner, who died in the Niagara River about 21 months ago during a police diving exercise.

Shannon Davis, the photographer behind the show, told the girl why she put the photo in such a climactic place.

"This was the most special one," she said.

Davis meant it with deep respect toward the many families she photographed.

She was speaking of a lightning bolt of fate, the way Lehner came to be such a major part of "I Got Somethin' To Show You," a photo exhibit about the Old First Ward whose title recalls a promise by a longtime neighborhood resident.

The show opened last week. Davis invited Lehner's family, whom she had never to stop by. While Kathleen Lehner, Craig's mother, was not feeling well, Donna Lehner, his sister, arrived with her three children, Haleigh, Gabby and 2-year-old Suzanne.

They got to know each other, standing by the image. Davis explained how she came upon Lehner at dusk in 2017, on a summer evening. He was going through drills with his dog Shield at Buffalo's K9 training grounds on Louisiana Street. At the same time, fellow Officer Sean Zoll was giving Davis a tour of the neighborhood.

By sheer chance, Zoll and Davis found Lehner there. To Davis, as a photographer, Lehner was a guy with elaborate tattoos, spiked orange hair that "almost reminded me of flames" and a dog whose intensity clearly matched his own.

She asked if she could photograph him. He agreed to a spend a few minutes with her, then went back to work.

Davis caught one image showing Lehner with a broad smile, alongside his dog.
In a second photo, he leans against his patrol car with a slight smile tinged by whimsy, even sadness. After Lehner's death, a stunned Davis quickly offered those images to his family through intermediaries, and the second photo was prominent in his obituary and at his funeral.

Even now, it is how much of Western New York envisions him. The power of it, his sister said at the museum, is built on an expression that was not really typical.

"When I remember him, I remember him smiling," Donna said. "He had a smile that could light up a room."

As for Davis, a Buffalo native whose studio is in Atlanta, she said the exhibit will stay up into September. It was inspired by the death of her father, a longtime Buffalo schoolteacher. In the old days, he would go with her as she photographed grain elevators and other landmarks in the Old First Ward, and she returned there in his absence to catch a sense of what she lost.

She stopped one day when she noticed a family on a porch on Hamburg Street, seeing something memorable in how a mother and children looked toward the street. Davis explained why she was there. A woman named Tina Flanagan hurried down from the porch and said, "I'm so sorry."

Flanagan is the same woman whose promise of revelation within the Old First Ward provided a title for the show. Davis tried to honor that trust by capturing an intimacy and urgency she calls "the fragile state of life."

Looking back, it was epitomized by her brief moments with Lehner, as Shield wandered in alert circles around them.

She remembers asking Lehner if he ever felt alone at the K9 grounds.

"It's not lonely," he said. "I've got my dog."

As Davis shared the story, Donna Lehner reached for a dog tag she wears around her neck, next to an angel wing necklace from a family support group.

The dog tag is a tribute from Lehner's 105th Military Police Unit, of the New York Army National Guard. One side holds his name and personal information.

Donna flipped it over. Davis, startled and moved, raised a hand to her chest.

The other side holds her image of Lehner.

In the gallery, her children around her, Donna, 38, sifted through an avalanche of memories. Her phone case carries an image of her with Craig as little children, her brother wearing the Superman pajamas that led to a lifetime nickname. She said small things happen all the time - she spoke with particular emotion of the sudden appearance of many blue jays - that to her send quiet signals her brother is still around.
She was less than two years older than Lehner, a guy of fierce immediacy who would sometimes call at 3 a.m. for long talks about whatever matter regarding love or work was at the center of his life.

The siblings grew up listening to every form of music imaginable, from country to classic rock, but her brother settled on Guns N' Roses as a favorite band. She remembers him as a restless child, a kid "who was constantly at the principal's office" until their mother sat him down when he was in junior high.

There are two ways in life to attract attention, she told her son. The easy one is being disruptive, for no reason. The harder route, with the greater payoff, is to discipline yourself to finding ways to make a difference.

"Instead of always drawing the negative," she told him, "do something good."

Donna believes it sank in. As a teenager, Lehner decided to enlist in the Guard, a major step toward the many tales of selflessness shared after his death.

Close friends recalled his intuitive ability to sense in one swift moment how someone else was feeling, whether it was on duty in Iraq, or as a police officer in a chaotic moment, or as someone who simply ran into an old high school friend who needed help.

"We really know now," Donna said, "how much he was doing for other people."

Her brother, she said, fell in love with the city he patrolled. He did not see Buffalo cynically but instead moved there and told his family he could feel it coming back. "He was an optimist about it," Donna said.

She said he also balanced a cascade of grief. Their brother Tom died years ago from injuries in a motorcycle crash, while their brother Jeff was killed in a fall on a construction job eight months before Lehner's death in the river. Six years ago, their father died from cancer, and Lehner also lost several close friends in Iraq.

All of it, Donna said, was part of her brother's world on the quiet night he met Davis.

In the photo, Lehner seems to look straight into you, his expression a mesh of warmth, humor and sadness. It is an image our community always will associate with him, a gift of vulnerability and soul, and it exists only because of a seemingly random meeting between strangers one night in the Old First Ward.

To Donna, it is one more reason she does not believe in chance.

"I believe in signs from above," she said, eyes locked onto her brother.

New York Army National Guard promotions

NNY 360, June 29, 2019:

Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, announces the promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Nathaniel Shugars from Cleveland, and assigned to the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion received a promotion to the rank of Private.

Andy Carter from Pulaski, and assigned to the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion received a promotion to the rank of Sergeant.

Hayden Smith from Oswego, and assigned to the Company D, 2-108th Infantry received a promotion to the rank of Private.

Zachary Mccargar from Mexico, and assigned to the Company B, 2-108th Infantry received a promotion to the rank of Specialist.

Samantha Goucher from Cato, and assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion received a promotion to the rank of Private.

Army National Guard promotions are based on overall performance, attitude, leadership ability, and development potential.

These promotions additionally recognize the best qualified soldiers and attract and retain the highest caliber citizen soldiers for a career in the New York Army National Guard.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit

www.dmna.ny.gov or www.1800goguard.com


Twin sisters from Troy announce retirement from Army National Guard

Troy Record, By Record Staff, July 4, 2019:
TROY, N.Y. - Two twin sisters from the Collar City recently announced their retirement from the New York Army National Guard together.

Master Sgt. Lisa Currier, a senior logistics officer, and her sister, retired Lt. Col. Lynn Currier, an information management branch chief, who both worked at the New York National Guard headquarters are retiring after 34 years of service.

The two sisters went to war in Afghanistan together and share a house in Troy together. They will be honored with a retirement lunch on July 12 at Frear Park Golf Course. Beginning in 1986, the two sisters, spent more than three decades sharing service and experiences. Lynn Currier got through the retirement process first and continued to work as a civilian while Lisa Currier waits for her retirement date. Lynn Currier has already moved onto a civilian job at the Watervliet Arsenal.

"We got out of college back in 1986, and were in Burlington, Vermont, working and we had to pay bills and student loans," Lisa Currier said in a news release. "I was reading a newspaper and it said get your student loans repaid and work weekends, and stuff like that."

That turned out to be an advertisement for the Vermont Army National Guard, highlighting some of the educational benefits that were offered. Lisa Currier explained that she was able to talk her sister into joining with her, ultimately the Army Reserves, rather than looking into the state police.

"So we enlisted within a month or two on February 3rd of 1986 together," said Lisa Currier. "On the buddy system," Lynn Currier emphasized.

Under that system, Lynn Currier explained, the two sisters were able to go to basic training and advanced individual training together. Coming home to Vermont they went right to work at Camp Johnson in Colchester.

In 1990, a previous supervisor called and told Lynn Currier about the full-time positions in the New York National Guard. She interviewed for a New York National Guard position in December of 1990 and got the job.

Over the course of the next three years, Lynn advanced her career in the New York National Guard while her sister stayed in behind in Vermont. Lisa, who had transitioned from working for the Vermont National Guard to working for IBM, wouldn't stay behind for long.

"She kept saying, come over, come over," Lisa Currier recalled. "I was working like 12-hour shifts and it was just crazy. I woke up on Sunday morning and decided; I'm tired of this."

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pleased to see more and more women being selected for leadership positions. Those opportunities, along with the full-time employment and benefits afforded to them, the sisters explained there was no reason to leave the National Guard.
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"In case there was an attack," added Lynn Currier. They said that Lynn Currier remained in Kabul, while Lisa Currier was sent 500 miles away to Mazar-i-Sharif. Initially, however, Lynn Currier arrived in the country several days before Lisa Currier and was waiting to offer her a lift to the astonishment of other, higher ranking Service Members.
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"I did," said Lynn Currier.
"I flew in with people that were a lot higher ranking than me," said Lisa Currier with a laugh, "she pulls up with the Gator and I throw all my stuff in it and we take off, while everyone else has to carry their stuff."

The year passed, with those initial few months spent with Lisa Currier sleeping on her sister's floor on a couple sleeping mats, and they returned safely home to their families. Now, as they prepare to retire, looking back at their fondest memories of their military careers, Lisa Currier said for her it is of all the wonderful people they have been able to meet.

"It's like a family," Lynn Currier added.

Lynn Currier's retirement came on June 21, 2019, and she has moved onto a civilian job as an education officer at the Watervliet Arsenal.

But it was being a Soldier that meant the most to her.

"When I had to take my uniform off, let me tell you," Lynn Currier started before Lisa Currier emphasized that her sister was upset for weeks afterward.

After all of the years spent in uniform together, they explained that they still travel together, have recently bought a house together, and remain as close as ever.

"If I had the same chance again, I'd do the 34 years again," said Lisa Currier. "When I first enlisted, I never thought I'd make three years. And now these years have flown by."


Return to top

A flag flies in Lewis County that was flown over Pentagon, Capitol & 9/11 Memorial

WWNY, July 4, 2019:

BRANTINGHAM LAKE, N.Y. (WWNY) - A flag that has flown over the Pentagon, the U.S. Capitol, and the 9/11 Memorial is flying over a Lewis County camp this weekend.

The camp that sits between Pleasant and Brantingham lakes. The flag was given to former New York Air National Guard Col. Paul Quigley at his retirement ceremony in May.

His parents suggested that he hoist it over the family camp for the Fourth of July. "It's cool to show off a flag that had been flown all over the world," he said. "It's not nearly as significant to me as it is to my family to see the flag flying."

Quigley says he'll fold the flag up and tuck it away after the holiday is over.
Eastern Air Defense Sector

Airman receives Meritorious Service Medal

Utica OD, July 4, 2019:

A New York Air National Guard officer assigned to the 224th Air Defense Group has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

Lt. Col. Steven Rathmell of Ava serves as the 224th Air Defense Squadron Director of operations. He received the medal for his leadership of the unit's Standardization and Evaluations office. Rathmell led the office through 189 successful evaluations and received the highest rating during the Air Combat Command's Unit Effectiveness Inspection, a major inspection conducted by the Group's higher headquarters every four years. Rathmell also was recognized for effectively resolving manning gaps and scheduling conflicts, enabling the unit to complete 745 operational events without mission interruption.

The 224th Air Defense Group is composed of the 224th Air Defense Squadron and 224th Support Squadron, located in Rome, and Detachment 1 and Detachment 2 that serve in the Washington, D.C. area. The 224th ADG provides the forces to conduct the Eastern Air Defense Sector's (EADS) mission. Part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the Sector is responsible for the air defense of the eastern U.S.

PFOA Issue

Public officials, environmentalists call for quick action by state and feds to resolve Newburgh's water contamination

Mid-Hudson. com July 2, 2019:

NEWBURGH - It has been three years since the chemicals PFOS and PFOA were discovered in the City of Newburgh’s Washington Lake reservoir, leading to officials immediately turning it off.

Since then, the city has been obtaining its water from the New York City Catskill Aqueduct, paid for by the state.
The source of the toxic chemicals is the New York Air National Guard Base at nearby Stewart International Airport and while the Guard is no longer using firefighting foam with those chemicals, they are still in Washington Lake and continue to run through streams in the watershed.

State Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, Senator James Skoufis and several environmental organizations rallied in front of the Newburgh water filtration plant on Tuesday call on the state to immediately implement water quality contaminant levels for those two chemicals and others as recommended seven months ago by the state's Drinking Water Quality Council.

It was also noted that while the Department of Defense finally acknowledged the contamination came from the Guard base, they have done nothing to remediate it and Manna Jo Greene of Clearwater said cleanup work must start immediately.

Even if that is the case, it would take a great many years to do the job, so Jacobson, who has been pushing for a permanent tie-in to the aqueduct, said that should continue with the state paying for it in perpetuity.

"The state owns the (Stewart) property; they had the DEC and they said everything is fine and keep drinking the water, so it's the state's responsibility to keep paying, which is part of the lawsuit we brought when I was on the council," he said. "But, I'm not talking about money; I'm talking about the health of the citizens."

Mayor Torrance Harvey concurred with Jacobson that Albany should continue to pay for aqueduct water.

Skoufis said "clean and safe drinking water is a fundamental human right and there is much, much more that New York State Government needs to be doing to ensure that right."

Maureen Cunningham, senior director for Clean Water of Environmental Advocates of New York said it has been three years since the Newburgh water contamination has been discovered. "We shouldn't be here today because the Cuomo administration has been promising as recently as a month ago to set drinking water standards for PFOS chemicals and 1,4-dioxane, and to set universal testing of these toxic chemicals through an emerging contaminant monitoring list."

Ophra Wolf of the Newburgh Clean Water Project urged the governor to allow small communities to set contamination levels for the emerging contaminants "as low as possible based on available detection and treatment technologies."

John Gebhards, executive director of the Quassaick Creek Watershed Alliance, said, "The only way to keep this tragedy from happening again and again across our state, is to require all public water sources to be tested for those contaminating chemicals."

State urged to implement new drinking water standards

Times Herald Record, July 3, 2019:

NEWBURGH - Officials and environmental activists called on the state Health Department to act now to set lower maximum water contamination standards for chemicals like those that forced the City of Newburgh to stop using Washington Lake as its principal drinking water supply.

They spoke out Tuesday morning in front of the city's water filtration plant on Little Britain Road.

"Having safe drinking water is a fundamental right," state Sen. James Skoufis said.

The city stopped using Washington Lake more than three years ago, after it was found to have levels of PFOS and PFOA about twice the 70 parts per trillion maximum level recommended by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Firefighting foam used at the nearby Stewart Air National Guard base is believed to be the source for the contamination. Both chemicals are used to manufacture the foam. PFOS and PFOA are suspected of causing kidney and testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, low birth weight and other ill health effects.

In December, the New York State Drinking Water Quality Council recommended reduced standards of 10 parts per trillion for PFOS and PFOA, and one part per billion for another contaminant found in some water supplies around the state, 1.4 dioxane.

Skoufis and state Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson said the Health Department has yet to act on those recommendations.

In response to an inquiry from the Times Herald-Record, the department released a statement Tuesday saying it is finalizing its response to the council's recommendations.

Ophra Wolf, an activist with the Newburgh Clean Water Project, said without new, lower state standards, the Department of Defense can say it is only obligated to remediate the situation caused by the foam from Stewart to the EPA standards.

Three dozen officials and environmental activists, including many who were at Tuesday's news conference, sent a letter Monday to Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Dr. Howard Zucker, the state's health commissioner, asking that the drinking water council's recommendations be implemented.
The letter also asked that a list be established to monitor newly known contaminants as they emerge, and that the governor and commissioner support legislation that prevents such chemicals from entering drinking water supplies.

In addition to Newburgh, New Windsor recently stopped using its Butterhill Park wells after they were found to contain PFOS and PFOA, even though their levels were below the EPA standard.

John Gebhards, executive director of the Quassaick Creek Watershed Alliance, said all public water sources across the state should be tested.

"Many people we know have been drinking these toxins for decades, for we don't know how long," Gebhards said.


Return to top