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Armories
Child care center opens in old Freeport Armory
Newsday, Nov 21, 2021 :

Freeport officials opened the first phase of the repurposed Freeport Armory on Thursday, cutting the ribbon on a new child care center after the village wrestled back the building after decades of state control.

Elected officials with the village, Town of Hempstead and Nassau County joined local residents and clergy Thursday to open the Ready Set Grow Learning Academy at the armory on Babylon Turnpike.

Freeport Mayor Robert Kennedy said the child care center is the first tenant of the armory on the 3-acre property that housed the National Guard and the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs until 2011.

"After decades of attempting to get this and the denials by Albany it’s a great feeling to open this up for the community," Kennedy said. "We felt it was only right to bring it back to the village and generate some income on this. This is what stabilizes taxes and it’s a benefit for the residents to have these programs available."

Kennedy said the village is also looking to add a sports complex and a technical trade school for HVAC, carpentry, electrical and plumbing to occupy the building. It was reopened using $800,000 in Nassau County Community Development funding.

The village pivoted to add new tenants to the armory after residents rejected proposals to relocate the village Department of Public Works to the armory.
Kennedy said the village is also looking to add a sports complex and a technical trade school for HVAC, carpentry, electrical and plumbing to occupy the building. It was reopened using $800,000 in Nassau County Community Development funding.

"Mayor Kennedy and my state colleagues worked tremendously hard to make this come to fruition," Darling said. "This is a happy ending and proof of what can happen when layers of government work with their community."

The new day care center, which opened last week, serves 15 students, but has the capacity to serve up to 90 students ranging from ages 2½ to 12 years old. The center will focus on teaching science, technology, reading, engineering, arts and math.

"We are determined to make this an exemplary center to bring children up in a way they can be successful in Freeport and extend in their lives and grow," the learning center’s director Chelisa Harris said.

Stitt has framed the issue around “personal freedoms,” arguing in a Nov. 1 letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that the vaccine requirement forces Oklahoma National Guardsmen “to potentially sacrifice their personal beliefs in order to not lose their jobs.”

It is worth noting that Stitt has not raised objections to any of the other 17 vaccinations that service members are required to get for diseases such as Anthrax, Chickenpox, Polio, Rabies, Typhoid, and Measles, Mumps, and Rubella.

The governor also wrote that up to 800 Oklahoma National Guardsmen, or 10% of the entire force, have indicated they will refuse to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

The Pentagon must deal with the Oklahoma National Guard vaccine revolt

A U.S. Soldier with the Oklahoma National Guard, stands watch along a perimeter fence near the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Anthony Jones)

“It is irresponsible for the federal government to place mandatory vaccine obligations on Oklahoma national guardsmen which could potentially limit the number of individuals that I can call upon to assist the state during an emergency,” Stitt wrote.

But Eugene Fidell, who teaches military law at New York University Law School, described Stitt’s comments about protecting the personal freedoms of Oklahoma National Guard troops as a “dog whistle” that is meant to appeal to former President Donald Trump and his supporters.

“The provocation here is from the state,” said Fidell, president emeritus of the National Institute of Military Justice. “The federal government hasn’t provoked anybody. This is a health and welfare measure that everybody knows makes sense and people are resisting this for no good reason. This is politics by other means. This is Trumpism manifesting itself in the state Guard.”

While the Defense Department could force Oklahoma National Guard troops to comply with the vaccine mandate by putting them on federal orders, federal taxpayers would end up footing the bill, Fidell said.

The Pentagon has other options available to deal with National Guard troops who refuse to get vaccinated, including slowing their promotions and withdrawing their federal recognition, which affect their retirement benefits, he said.
“If the federal government plays hardball, which I think it should, these people are going to pay a penalty,” Fidell said.

On Nov. 17, a defense official told reporters that the COVID-19 vaccine requirement is one of the conditions that National Guard troops must meet in order to maintain their federal recognition, but he indicated the Defense Department is not enthusiastic about exacting a penalty on Guardsmen who refuse to get vaccinated.

“It’s not a question of authorities necessarily to compel and punish people,” said the defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity per the Pentagon’s rules for the discussion. “It’s establishing a requirement in order to maintain readiness and to be able to be part of and participate in the National Guard.”

So far, defense officials have said little about how they could override Stitt and Mancino. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby has told reporters the Defense Department “will respond to the governor appropriately.”

“That said, Secretary Austin believes that a vaccinated force is a more ready force,” Kirby said at a Nov. 17 Pentagon news briefing. “That is why he has ordered mandatory vaccines for the total force, and that includes our National Guard, who contribute significantly to national missions at home and abroad.”

While Kirby’s words here are both calm and nuanced, they are not likely to change any minds in Oklahoma City. Meanwhile, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro appeared to waffle on the Marine Corps’ requirement that all active-duty Marines be vaccinated by Nov. 28 when he said recently that all unvaccinated Marines would not be separated on the day of the deadline.

This is not the time for the Pentagon to equivocate on vaccines. The COVID-19 outbreak has now cost the lives of more than 764,000 Americans, including 75 service members. Of the troops who have died from the disease, 28% belonged to the National Guard, which only makes up 19% of the entire military, according to the Washington Post.

The National Guard is constantly being mobilized in response to every type of problem imaginable, including natural disasters, protests, and the U.S. military’s mission to the southern border. National Guard troops have even driven school buses when needed.

If the Guard is to continue to serve as the duct tape that can fix any problem, it needs every soldier and airman that it can muster. The COVID-19 vaccine will ensure that enough National Guard troops are ready the next time the nation dials 911.
Emergency Response

106th Rescue Wing conducts joint winter storm exercise

Air National Guard, By Senior Airman Sean Madden, New York National Guard, Nov. 22, 2021:

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. – The New York National Guard conducted a joint winter storm exercise at the 106th Rescue Wing in Westhampton Beach in November to maximize readiness in the event of a major snowfall.

Military and civilian authorities made up of the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia and the New York Guard, with Department of Homeland Security Emergency Services, formed the Joint Task Force for Joint Exercise Winter Storm Madison.

The exercise was modeled on Winter Storm Nemo, which caused a significant response from the 106th Rescue Wing, including pararescuemen and combat rescue officers who were sent on multiple rescue missions, said Capt. Douglas Duncan, the officer in charge and a planner of the exercise.

Nemo, a blizzard that formed from the combination of two low-pressure areas, severely affected the American Northeast and Canada with heavy snow and hurricane-force winds in November 2013.

"As we get into the winter months, this helps us prepare and helps get the wheels turning so if something does happen, we're ready to go," said Lt.Col. Glyn Weir, the 106th Mission Support Group commander, a Joint Task Force commander for the exercise and a combat rescue officer.

Events from the blizzard of 2013 were scenarios in the exercise that included roof collapses, stranded motorists, displaced residents and warming stations for shelter.

Communication can be challenging when several agencies work together and can hinder the efficiency of disaster response. Interservice exercises help avoid confusion between agencies, build relationships and knowledge of each other's capabilities, Weir said.
Communication can also be compromised when storms damage transmission lines. Collapsed cell towers and downed internet, phone and power lines can make responding to emergencies more difficult.

When officials and responders need to establish reliable communication or extend their range, the Mobile Emergency Response Center (MERC) is towed where needed and set up by Airmen and Soldiers to establish or extend the range of communication.

"We simulated cell towers being down and issues with our mobile radios being out of range, so we deployed the MERC," said Master Sgt. Paul Clemente, an exercise planner and noncommissioned officer in charge of the exercise. "It's a big antenna. When it's set up, it allows us to communicate in a 40-mile radius through satellite and radio transmissions."

Another major scenario of the training event, a roof collapse, borrowed from events of Nemo and allowed the host unit to showcase an important asset.

"A great capability we have is the Urban Search and Rescue Team of the 106th Civil Engineering Squadron, and we wanted to highlight them to our partner agencies," Duncan said.

The two-day event condensed what could be a disaster response that lasts for weeks. The participants faced a barrage of scenarios at a pace meant to be as challenging and realistic as possible.

"The exercise allowed valuable exposure for more Wing members to this aspect of our domestic operations," Duncan said. "This ensures that we are capable of carrying out our federal combat rescue mission while maintaining the capabilities to succeed at our state mission.:


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New York Army National Guard

NY Guard Uses NYC to Understand Urban Operations

Soldier Systems, Nov. 22, 2021 ::

NEW YORK — New York Army National Guard officers and senior sergeants used New York City to explore the challenges of military operations in big cities during a five-day class that ended Nov. 6.
The 18 officers and senior noncommissioned officers walked through the city’s neighborhoods, flew over them and toured the waterfront to gain an appreciation of the complexity of urban warfare. They also learned from New York City officials who deal with those urban challenges every day.

“This class was critical in terms of bridging a knowledge gap between military operations and working with our civilian counterparts,” said Lt. Col. Jason Secrest, commander of the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment.

“The course was helpful for whether we’re involved in large-scale combat operations or if tasked with stability operations, like humanitarian assistance disaster relief at home,” Secrest said.

The New York National Guard is hoping to create a two-week Dense Urban Leaders Operation Course — DULOC for short — that would draw officers and NCOs from across the Army to New York City to get a first-hand look at the challenges of combat operations surrounded by high-rise buildings, tight city streets and hundreds of thousands of civilians.

“Here, in New York City, we were able to learn from our civilian counterparts about how these megacities and trends of urbanization affect operations, planning and troop movement,” said Lt. Col. Matthias Greene, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion.

Some things Greene said he had to consider during the course were the complexities of the airspace, dense buildings, and population bases, all of which affect aviation operations.

Lt. Col. Brian Higgins, the class leader and a New York City Police Department detective, spent two and a half years on active duty as the officer-in-charge of the Dense Urban Terrain Detachment of the Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Group at Fort Meade, Maryland.

His job there, Higgins said, was to take the expertise he’d honed as a cop in one of the world’s densest cities — New York City’s population is 8.2 million and the metro area population is 20.3 million — and help the Army figure out how to fight in those places.

“The problem has to do with globalization trends,” Higgins explained. “The world is becoming more populated. The majority of people are living in cities for a variety of reasons.”

These cities include very tall buildings and subterranean geography of subways and service tunnels and are incredibly interconnected, Higgins said.

The Army’s traditional approach to cities in the past was to bypass them, isolate them, and avoid getting bogged down in a punishing fight, Higgins said. That may have worked when cities were smaller and more compact, he said. But with the rise of the megacity — those with populations of more than 10 million — it doesn’t work anymore. The city is too big to go around.
There’s nothing new about Soldiers using New York for exercises, Higgins said. Military teams continually visit to learn about cities.

Task Force 46, a National Guard team designed to react to chemical, nuclear, and biological attacks, trained there in August. The New York National Guard trains with the police and fire department regularly, focusing on civil support operations.

Lt. Col. Dan Colomb, commander of the 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team (CST) based out of Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, volunteered to participate in the course with his deputy commander and operations officer to offer their expertise in urban operations but to also take new concepts back to their team.

“Every day we work in New York City and the metro area,” said Colomb. “We’re those sensors that are out in the environment and these streets every day, so I’d like to take some of these methodologies, apply them and see if they work better,” he said.

The course focused on getting Soldiers in command and key staff positions, who all have different specialties, to understand how a big city works and how that can affect military operations.

The Soldiers walked through downtown Manhattan, where the streets are narrow and irregular, explored Harlem, where the streets are in a grid, and visited the world-famous subway system.

Secrest said it was the first time in his 22 years in the National Guard that he’d been part of a military course tailored to urban operations.

“We talk about liaison operations with other state and city agencies, but this is the first time we’ve sat down and say, ‘OK, how do we operate in an urban environment?’ ” Secrest said.

Instructors included experts from the Modern War Institute at the U.S. Military Academy and the National Center of Urban Operations, a think-tank that focuses on military operations in megacities. New York City fire officials, transit staff and emergency managers also took part.

Greene noted the collaboration of the course with civilian counterparts as well as having the opportunity to walk the terrain were critical.

“There’s practical knowledge by going onto the grounds, having subject matter experts, and collaborating with classmates who offer perspectives in their areas of expertise as well,” Greene said. “Learning from the perspective of our civilian counterparts is important because we’re able to gauge what they have to offer, what their limitations are, and how we can integrate ourselves into the solution.”

Every morning the class heard from the subject matter experts on military doctrine, military estimates and the “Five Is” of city fighting — infrastructure, interoperability, information operations, interagency, intensity. In the afternoons, they went out and looked around as part of terrain walks.
Higgins and New York National Guard leaders would like to create a two-week course exploring urban operations in more detail. But the week-long class was an excellent start, Higgins said.

Story by By Eric Durr and SPC Marla Ogden, New York National Guard
https://soldiersystems.net/2021/11/22/ny-guard-uses-nyc-to-understand-urban-operations/

Egle wins women's luge race; USA Luge grabs relay silver (NYARNG mention)

Associated press, Nov., 21, 2021 ::

YANQING, China (AP) — Madeleine Egle of Austria won the first World Cup women’s singles gold medal of her career, prevailing Sunday in the season opener on the track built for this winter’s Beijing Olympics.

USA Luge got its first medals of the World Cup season later Sunday, with the team of Ashley Farquharson, Tucker West and the doubles sled of Chris Mazdzer and Jayson Terdiman taking silver in the team relay behind Austria.

USA Luge chooses its relay teams based on who has the fastest heats during the racing weekend, which means the doubles team of Dana Kellogg and Duncan Segger had earned the right to compete in the team event Sunday.

But Kellogg and Segger decided to give up their spot to Mazdzer and Terdiman, who didn’t qualify for the World Cup weekend in large part because Mazdzer has missed most of the preseason because of a broken foot — which still isn’t healed. Had Kellogg and Segger not done that, it would have meant Mazdzer and Terdiman wouldn’t have had a major competitive run on the track until the Olympics in February.

“Big shout out to the younger guys who gave us this opportunity,” Mazdzer said.

Egle was part of that relay gold as well, capping a huge day for her. She had the fastest time in both women’s heats and finished with an overall time of 1 minute, 58.822 seconds, getting her first victory in her 49th career start.

Julia Taubitz of Germany was second in 1:58.928 and Austria also grabbed bronze with Lisa Schulte finishing in 1:59.350.

Reigning Olympic and World Cup overall champion Natalie Geisenberger of Germany was 26th in a field of 28 women’s sliders. Geisenberger crashed in her first run, leading to the worst World Cup finish of her career. It was only the third time in her last 43 World Cup races that Geisenberger failed to medal.
For USA Luge, Farquharson led the way with an eighth-place showing in the women’s race. Summer Britcher was 14th and Emily Sweeney was 16th, while Brittney Arndt had trouble in her first run and elected not to compete in the second heat.

But the relay went far better for the Americans — aided in part by contending teams like Germany and Russia having problems getting down the track. Farquharson led off with what she said was her best run of the day, West followed and Mazdzer and Terdiman had a very clean trip to give the U.S. a chance.

“Ashley's first World Cup medal. We're really stoked to be part of this with her,” Terdiman said.

Tatyana Ivanova of Russia crashed in her run, ending her country’s medal chances in the relay. And the final team in the relay was Germany — which had a lead of more than a full second, a massive margin in luge, but the doubles team of Toni Eggert and Sascha Benecken skidded and lost control just a few turns from the finish and the lead was gone in a flash.

Austria’s final time in the relay was 3:06.953. The U.S. finished in 3:07.328 and Italy was third in 3:07.331. Germany wound up placing seventh, behind Latvia, Canada and South Korea.

The teams arrived in China three weeks ago for training and the first World Cup, with this stay marking the first time that most of the world's luge athletes got to see the track. The circuit moves to Sochi, Russia, for the next two weekends of World Cup racing.

But three Americans — Sweeney, Kellogg and Segger — will not be joining the team in Russia. They're off to Europe on Monday instead because Sweeney and Kellogg's military commitments will not permit them to visit Russia at this time. Segger will remain with Kellogg to continue training.

The State Department currently has a “do not travel” recommendation for U.S. citizens planning to visit Russia, which is among the reasons military officials did not permit Sweeney and Kellogg to go for the next World Cups.

Sweeney is an active soldier in the U.S. Army and a member of the Army's World Class Athlete Program. Kellogg is a member of the New York National Guard.

LATHAM, NY — Logan Cowles of Olean, who is assigned to the 152nd Engineer Company, has been promoted to the rank of private 1st class of the Army National Guard.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjunct general for New York State announced promotions Oct. 1, recognizing New York Army National Guard members who have displayed the ability to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles.

The promotions are based on members' performance, attitude, leadership ability and potential.

The New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs consists of nearly 20,000 members from the New York Army National Guard, New York Air National Guard, New York Naval Militia and New York Guard.


Rob Baker answered calling to Army chaplaincy after overcoming childhood cancer

KTBS (NewOrleans), Nov 21,2021 ::

STONEWALL, La -- Rob Baker had finished his theological studies, and thought he’d be a prison chaplain. Then came a chance to be a chaplain in the Army -- the job of meeting the spiritual needs and bringing emotional support to the troops. He would be battle tested in Iraq.

A framed tribute hang on a wall of his home with the names of 25 soldiers his battalion lost in battle. About half of them from his Louisiana unit based at Fort Humbug. The other half were from New York City.

"Their battalion was next door to the Twin Towers that got destroyed," Rob says.

They would be attached to Rob's infantry brigade for the deployment, beginning in 2004. In an ironic twist, the battalions were on opposing sides during the U.S. Civil War.

"We wind up in Iraq together fighting global Global War on Terrorism, united." Rob says.
Seven of the soldiers were lost in a massive roadside bombing. Chaplain Col. Rob Baker would need his own chaplain.

"I did seek their care at times when I when they became so overwhelming for me, because they were my friends, they were my fellow soldiers," he said.

"I was on no illusion that we were going we were gonna come back unscathed because we were fighting a determined enemy," Rob continued.

"We were under fire all the time. We'd get rocketed, mortared every day and then at night. Yeah, and, and we go outside the wire, you get sniper fire or IED's, he said.

Rob would earn a Bronze Star and other high medals for meritorious service in battle. And to think, he nearly did not live past early childhood.

"I had bone cancer first two, two and a half years, my life, and back then they didn't have any treatment for it," Rob explained. "They said, at times, you could hear me screaming, almost five miles away, I was in so much pain.

"They kept telling my mom and dad that this kid's gonna die. You're gonna lose him. They said even if a miracle happens -- which it's not -- but even if it does, he'll be crippled the rest of his life in a Shriner's crippled children's home," Rob said.

"But God miraculously healed me," he added.

"When I found out about the Army chaplaincy, I said this is it. This is what God left me here for. This is my purpose in life," Rob said. "I'm very proud of what I did. I'm very grateful that's what God called me to do."

Rob came back from the 18-month deployment, and his unit was reactivated right away to help with Hurricane Katrina. And then in 2010, he was activated during Gulf oil disaster. He wound up being activated for five years.

Rob spent a total of 25 years in the Army, and the National Guard. He also worked 30 years for the state health department.


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

Shondra Henry from Morrisville, assigned to the Company A, 427th Brigade Support Battalion received a promotion to the rank of specialist Oct. 25, 2021.

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 dmna.ny.gov or 1800goguard.com.

The New York National Guard (New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs) is the state’s executive agency responsible to the governor for managing New York’s Military Forces, which consists of nearly 20,000 members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

https://madisoncountycourier.com/?p=119845

Thanksgiving

NY National Guard teams up with governor to distribute Thanksgiving turkeys

Air National Guard, By Mark Getman, New York National Guard, Nov, 23, 2021 :

NEW YORK — Fifty New York National Guard Soldiers and airmen turned out to help New York Governor Kathy Hochul and her staff sort and package 3,200 donated turkeys at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan on Monday, Nov. 22, 2021.

“We are here to help with the National Guard, to show New Yorkers and our communities what New York State love is all about and we are going to get to work right away because there are families waiting for this,” Hochul said.
The Soldiers and Airmen bagged the 20-to-30-pound turkeys for distribution to needy families across New York. The turkeys were loaded into New York State Department of Transportation vehicles and trucked across the state for distribution events on Tuesday, Nov. 23, from Buffalo to Long Island.

The National Guard continued their support at three distributions sites, providing the turkeys directly to the community.

In the Hudson Valley town of Kingston, 10 Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing and 10 Soldiers from the 53rd Troop Command helped distribute the turkeys at the Salvation Army building.

In Roosevelt on Long Island, 10 Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing and 10 Soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division helped pass out turkeys at the Police Activity League building.

And in Harlem 20 Soldiers and Airmen assigned to Joint Task Force Empire Shield, the New York National Guard security force in New York City, helped distribute the birds at Memorial Baptist Church in Harlem.

"The state is thankful for the assistance of the National Guard, the kindness of corporations statewide and Feeding New York State for working with us to ensure 3,200 households will have turkeys on their tables this Thanksgiving holiday," Hochul said.

The turkeys were donated by several corporations, including Amazon, The Coca-Cola Company, Liberty Coca-Cola Beverages, Golub Family Foundation, and UJA-Federation of New York, China General Chamber of Commerce, MetLife, and Geico.

Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General of New York, who joined Hochul for the Javits Center event, said that Guard Soldiers and Airmen like doing these kinds of missions.

"After more than a year and a half of support to our communities during the state's COVID-19 response, the men and women of our New York National Guard are glad to be part of an event like this that helps give back to our communities," Shields said.

Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Danny Collado, a member of the 145th Support Maintenance Company, said he enjoyed working alongside the governor for packing turkeys at Javits.

National Guard Soldiers have been asked to help prepare thanksgiving meals in the past, and it's always a good mission, Collado said.
This year, with many people still hurting economically from the pandemic, it is even more important to help, Collado said.

“I am honored to serve and help the governor in making a difference on Thanksgiving,” Collado said. “Our hard work will help our neighbors and children in need this holiday.”

Army National Guard 1st Lt. Stephanie Sylvain, the officer in charge of the turkey packing detail, said she was happy to be part of the mission. “This year has been challenging for many people, especially those who have lost their jobs and are grieving the loss of loved ones due the devastating effect of COVID-19,” Sylvain said.

“It is gesture of compassion for me to be a part of this mission, knowing that thousands of families will not have to buy food for Thanksgiving and can use that money for their utility bill,” she added.

“I hope this Thanksgiving we will give people a sense of dignity that comes with having families over, cooking great food and catching up over the last two years”, she said. “As a National Guard officer, I am delighted to contribute to well-being of this community.”


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Photos: Gov. Hochul gives out turkeys in Kingston

Daily Freeman, Nov, 23, 2021 :

KINGSTON, N.Y. — New York Gov. Kathy Hochul stopped by the Salvation Army on Cedar Street in Midtown Kingston on Tuesday morning, Nov. 23, 2021, to help give out turkeys, along with state Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, D-Kingston, state Senator Michelle Hinchey, D-Saugerties, Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan and members of the 105th Airlift Group of the New York Air National Guard.


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NY National Guard teams up with governor to distribute Thanksgiving turkeys

Army.mil, By Mark Getman, New York National Guard, November 23, 2021:

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“This year has been challenging for many people, especially those who have lost their jobs and are grieving the loss of loved ones due to the devastating effect of COVID-19,” Sylvain said.

“It is a gesture of compassion for me to be a part of this mission, knowing that thousands of families will not have to buy food for Thanksgiving and can use that money for their utility bill,” she added.

“I hope this Thanksgiving we will give people a sense of dignity that comes with having families over, cooking great food and catching up over the last two years”, she said. “As a National Guard officer, I am delighted to contribute to the well-being of this community.”

https://www.army.mil/article/252264/ny_national_guard_teams_up_with_governor_to_distribute_thanksgiving_turkeys

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Talking turkey: Governor Hochul packs meals and a punch on Cuomo rebuke

AMNY, Nov., 22, 2021 ::

Governor Kathy Hochul joined the National Guard Monday to help pack turkeys, but during a press conference at the event, reporters bombarded her with questions on next year’s election and her affiliation with former Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The Governor arrived at the Jacob Javits Center just after 9 a.m. on Nov. 22 to oversee and help pack hundreds of turkeys set to be distributed to New York families in need. She found men and women of the military filling the entertainment mecca’s expansive halls and heaving boxes of refrigerated poultry into the back of multiple trucks.

Hochul thanked those helping to feed the hungry before joining the cause herself.
“We have a lot of work to do, my friends. It is the holiday season and there are a lot of families who are going to be hurting this year. They were in trouble; some of them before the pandemic, but the pandemic has been particularly brutal for so many individuals and communities that have not recovered yet. So we are here to help. We are here to show them what New York State love is all about and we are going to get to work right away because there are families waiting for this,” Hochul said.

Hochul spent time with the service members, standing alongside them stuffing the meals into bags and shaking hands. Working in tandem, several vehicles were swiftly jam-packed.

After concluding her packing duties, the Governor spoke to reporters regarding her support of vaccinated families gathering for Thanksgiving and with the frozen foul still on her fingertips, the governor was asked if she was concerned the public would see herself and her predecessor as birds of the same feather. This comes after fresh reports that the New York State Assembly Judiciary Committee found that former Governor Andrew Cuomo was likely to have committed sexual harassment.

“No, it’s a different administration. I have not had the time to read the report, I have been here making sure that we have turkeys available for families in the State of New York,” the Governor fired back before continuing, “But I did call for an investigation by the Assembly.”

Governor Kathy Hochul stated adamantly that decisions made by former Governor Andrew Cuomo were a part of a different administration.


Gov. Hochul, National Guard, Volunteers Help Pack Thanksgiving Turkeys To Be Given Away Statewide

WCBS, Nov., 22, 2021 ::

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) – Helping fight food insecurity heading into the holidays, Gov. Kathy Hochul and her staff packed Thanksgiving turkeys Monday.

They joined with the National Guard and volunteers at the Javits Center Monday morning.

The mission: To pack 3,200 turkeys to be distributed around the state.

“This is the time of year when we really step up. We make sure that no one goes hungry. No little child should go hungry on Thanksgiving because we
weren’t able to help them. That’s our mission today. I know you’re all mission oriented in this room, so let’s get it done," Hochul said.

The governor thanked volunteers for their efforts and encouraged everyone to help neighbors in need through volunteering and donations.


**Veterans**

**Town Board honors retired pararescue jumper for serving as grand marshal of NYC Veterans Day parade**

Riverhead News- Review, Nov. 21, 2021 ::

Retired Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Carrick of Riverhead received a proclamation from the Riverhead Town Board Tuesday to honor his serving as grand marshal of the 102nd New York City Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11, where he marched down 5th Avenue before an estimated 400,000 spectators.

Mr. Carrick received more than 30 military awards and decorations during his Air Force career, Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said.

The United War Veterans Council, the organizer of the parade, announced Mr. Carrick’s selection during an event in Times Square on Sept. 18. In a social media post, organizers wrote that they “surprised” Mr. Carrick, 62, with the news the week prior, during a visit to the 106th Rescue Wing at Westhampton’s Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base.

A large contingent from the 106th participated in the parade alongside Mr. Carrick.

“The 106th Rescue Wing could not be more proud to have one of our own, retired PJ (pararescue jumper), Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Carrick representing not only our wing but all veterans from all branches past, present and future in this year’s New York City Veterans Day Parade,” the 106th wrote in a Facebook post prior to the parade.

In a press release, parade organizers lauded Mr. Carrick’s service both in overseas combat and in New York, noting his rank of senior master sergeant.
“He participated in countless civilian rescues on sea and land, jumping in to save New Yorkers and other individuals beyond the reach of other rescue efforts,” the release stated.

In a tribute befitting of the public health crisis’s circumstances, the first Veterans Day Parade during the coronavirus pandemic honored a life-saver. Mr. Carrick is a former Air Force pararescueman, the only part of the nation’s Special Forces primarily dedicated to saving lives.

He was based at Gabreski Airport for most of his career, he said.

Pararescuemen, a division of the United States Air Force, recover injured individuals in combat and humanitarian situations. Their nearly two years of training includes emergency medical technician skills, survival techniques, diving courses and parachuting.

Mr. Carrick said the recognition and opportunity was a “huge honor,” particularly because he had the opportunity to represent and spotlight the pararescue field.

In a career spanning 25 years — he joined the New York Air National Guard in 1978 and retired in 2003 — Mr. Carrick served the New York area through some of the region’s most significant tragedies, including TWA Flight 800, the 1995 Sunrise Wildfires and 9/11.


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SCPD helicopter visits Wading River School

Riverhead News Review, Nov., 23, 2021:

An impromptu career day at Wading River School got off to an unusual start Tuesday morning.

Students lined up on the back lawn of the school, their eyes watching the sky for the arrival of a Suffolk County Police Department helicopter.

As the single-engine aircraft touched down on the field, students jumped and cheered, welcoming two of their classmates moms: SCPD pilot Major Phaedra
Musselman and Stony Brook flight paramedic Erin Carey. They were also joined by SCPD aviation officers John Bopp and Darrell Randolph.

“This type of thing doesn’t happen often,” said Principal Louis Parrinello, beaming as he snapped pictures of third, fourth and fifth graders taking turns exploring the aircraft. “It’s an incredible experience for the kids. It gives them a sense of the helpers in our community and something to strive for. Maybe this will inspire one of our students to become a pilot or a paramedic.”

Tuesday’s event gave students a rare glimpse inside the lives of the flight crew, who maintain bases at both Islip MacArthur airport and Francis S. Gabreski Airport in Westhampton.

The aviation unit covers all of Suffolk County, from Montauk and Orient points to the Nassau County border at Route 110 and all surrounding waterways.

“It’s 24/7, 365 days a year,” Maj. Musselman explained. While the majority of calls they respond to are emergency and trauma related, other missions include search and rescue operations for missing people and even animals. Remember the Mastic bull incident in July?

“There are calls that are really bad, but at the end of the day you’re helping someone,” she said.

Maj. Musselman presents frequently at local police and EMS departments, but most enjoys interacting with students.

She’s often approached by girls at air shows and other school events, wide-eyed and wondering: can we fly planes too? She still keeps in touch with one of those students, a then-8-year-old named Rachel she met while presenting at a career day in Farmingdale who’s now pursuing aviation at Embry–Riddle Aeronautical University. “I still talk to her, I still talk to her mom and I’m going to go to her graduation. It’s amazing,” Maj. Musselman. “I didn’t realize how much of an impact it had. She had never seen a girl pilot.”

Maj. Musselman is living proof that girls can indeed fly.

She began her trailblazing military career in 1997 when she enlisted in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and has earned many prestigious accolades over a 23-year career with the Air Force.

She broke barriers as the first female A-10 Thunderbolt II Crew Chief at the 111th Fighter Wing in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, but while she enjoyed working as an aircraft mechanic, she realized that she’d rather fly them.
After earning an undergraduate degree and her pilot’s license, she secured a spot as an Air Force pilot, first on fixed-wing aircrafts. She then became the first female Combat Search and Rescue helicopter pilot at the New York Air National Guard at the 106th Rescue Wing at Gabreski Airport, where she’s deployed several times to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and has received six Air Medals, two Aerial Achievement Medals, seven Combat Readiness Medals, a National Defense Medal, three Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Maj. Musselman was also awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal twice for her efforts to provide stateside support during hurricanes Ike, Gustav, Harvey and Maria.

She was honored by Legis. Al Krupski (D-Peconic) during Women Veterans Appreciation Day in June.

The Air Force motto is ‘These things we do that others may live,’ an ideal that continues to guide Maj. Musselman to this day, though she retired from the Air National Guard last year. She’s one of two female pilots in the SCPD aviation unit, which she joined in 2014.

“I love serving my country and I love serving my county,” she said. “It’s an honor to put the uniform on each day. And every day is different — it’s not like you ever get bored.”

Mr. Parrinello said he was honored to host Maj. Musselman and Ms. Carey at the school. “What an incredible example for our children,” he said. “These are the heroes of our communities and this could be life changing for children in a positive way.”


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