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## **106th Rescue Wing**

**106th Rescue Wing to mark transformative date in its history:**

**Newsday, June 11, 2018:**

Early in its history as an elite force, the New York National Guard's 106<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing suffered a devastating tragedy.

On June 13, 1978, the Westhampton Beach-based unit lost seven members when one of its helicopters slammed into a rain-shrouded Adirondack peak while returning from a training mission near the Canadian border.

This Wednesday, the 106th will mark the 40th anniversary of the crash, in a ceremony at themountain side near Keeseville, New York, where their comrades -perished.

The ceremony, during which aircraft from the 106th will perform a flyover, is expected to draw scores of the unit's current and former members, as well as relatives of the lost crew.

"We lost seven men, and for a young rescue unit, it was devastating," said Jay Jinks, 68, of Mastic, who was a para-rescueman with the 106th at the time, and who, with several other retired veterans of the 106th, are organizing the commemorative event. "We were close even before the accident, but after that, it brought the unit even closer together."

The crash came before the unit's reputation had caught up with its critical mission, before it drew praise for saving American soldiers trapped in firefights in Iraq, or for rescuing crew members from aboard a stricken freighter last year by dropping pararescue swimmers into the night-darkened Atlantic 1,500 miles offshore.

Dead in the crash were Capt. John Sfeir, 29, of East Moriches; Capt. John Kievens, 30, of Northport; Master Sgt. Allan Snyder, 35, of Center Moriches; Tech Sgt. Ronald Allen of Corona, Queens; Tech. Sgt. Ralph Tomassone Jr. of Bayport; and Staff Sgt. Scott Hursch, 26, and Staff Sgt. David D. Lambert, 22, who were roommates in East Moriches.

The crew, which had been practicing water landings in Lake Champlain, had left Plattsburgh and was heading back to Long Island when a thunderstorm persuaded the pilot to turn back about 10 minutes into the flight. The helicopter clipped the top of Trembleau Mountain. A resident of nearby

Keeseville hiked two miles through deep brush to find the burning wreckage.

Jinks and others say the 1978 crash helped to steel the newly formed rescue unit, which remains composed of transport aircraft, rescue helicopters, and pararescuemen like himself - paramedic soldiers who are equipped to parachute into the sea and swim to the aid of people needing medical aid.

They say the crash, and weeks of consoling the wives and children of the dead, served as a sobering reminder of the deadly seriousness of the mission.

"It wasn't an obvious change, but all of a sudden you realized you had to train harder and be more aware," Jinks said.

Members of the 106th, which is responsible for civilian search-and-rescue missions off the Atlantic coast, as well as on land during U.S. combat operations, belie the National Guard's often-held image of one-weekend-per-month warriors.

The wing's pararescue airmen go through two years of training in scuba diving, parachuting, emergency medical skills, search and rescue, and survival, escape and evasion. A large fraction of the 106th's personnel serve full time - as did four of the seven who perished in 1978.

The dangerous mission of the 106th was on display again just three months ago, when an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter crashed in western Iraq. Staff Sgt. Dashan Briggs, 30, of Port Jefferson Station, Capt. Christopher Zanetis, 37, of Long Island City, Capt. Andreas O'Keeffe, 37, of Center Moriches, and Master Sgt. Christopher Raguso, 39, of Commack, were among seven Americans who were killed.

Members of the 106th who deployed to Iraq with the crew members who were killed in the March crash are just now returning home from that deployment. And even the unit's part-time guardsmen are typically on duty about 150 days a year.

Kurt Silverstein, a former pararescue airman who served 18 years in the unit before retiring in 2005, said a framed question mark once hung amid a display of photographs of the perished crew members in the unit's former operations building, as if to ask "Who's next?" He said the unspoken question served as a regular reminder that even during the unit's training missions - like that which led to the 1978 crash - lives are at stake.

"Though I'd never met them, knowing something like that had happened to people with their character, their work ethic, their willingness to do the job would bring your focus and attention to higher mark," said Silverstein, a wiry motorcyclist who had worked as an emergency room physician at Good Samaritan Hospital before joining the unit.

"You knew this was training, but you knew you had better act like it's the real thing," Silverstein said. "Because training could be more dangerous than the actual mission."

The unit has had two other fatal incidents since the 1978 crash, according to the commemoration's organizers.

One came during another training incident, in 1980, when Staff Sgt. Larry Arnott hit a rock during a parachute jump while training in the Nevada desert.

The next happened Oct. 30, 1991, an incident depicted in the feature film during "The Perfect Storm."

A helicopter sent to the rescue of three people trapped on a sailboat in 80-foot waves was unable to execute an in-flight refueling in 75-mph winds, ran out of gas, and was forced into the sea. Tech. Sgt. Arden "Rick" Smith became separated from the others during the six hours it took rescuers to find them. His body was never recovered.

Jinks decided to organize the commemoration last year, after visiting the 1978 crash site for the first time.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Mike Hewson, who oversees the 106th's pararescue squadron, said Jinks and the other former members are repositories of memories and values that help guide the unit's newer members, who typically were born more than a decade after the 1978 crash.

"A lot of the younger people will never appreciate the gravity of what went on then without these guys to keep these stories alive," Hewson said. "To have these guys still involved, it's an honor to have their knowledge and experience."

Jacque Sfeir was raising three children when her husband, John Sfeir, perished on the mountain. Her youngest - twin 4-year-olds then - were still so small their feet couldn't reach the ground from the chairs they sat on during a memorial ceremony at the 106th 40 years ago.

But she plans to travel to Wednesday's memorial service from her home near Canton, Ohio, saying members and spouses of the 106th had rallied around her and others in grief, helping her and her children to endure.

"You build your life again, but the memories come back," said Sfeir. "I feel honored and thankful that they are doing this. It will be great to see everyone again and give John and the crew this honor."

<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/106th-air-national-guard-1.19087810>

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## **Family of fallen FDNY hero seeks refuge on family boat**

**NY Post, June 11, 2018 :**

Fallen FDNY hero Christopher Raguso - killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq during a stint with the Air National Guard - often sought refuge from the haunting memories of his service aboard his boat.

Now, the family he left behind can try to do the same.

Fresh off a major overhaul - provided free of charge by a fellow volunteer firefighter - Raguso's Edgewater 185 power boat was presented back to Raguso's wife, two young daughters, and brother Sunday afternoon on Long Island.

"He's seen a lot of death and destruction, and he had that thousand-yard stare a lot," John Raguso told The Post of his late son.

"[But] the smile on his face was ear-to-ear as he took his wife and his two little girls out there and went water-skiing and clamming and catching sea robins, and just exploring. That's what he loved to do," he said.

The elder Raguso, 68, bought the 18-foot, fiberglass-hull boat as a Christmas gift for his son a few years back after he served a harrowing tour in Somalia.

"In 2015, it was like a shooting gallery over there," said John Raguso.

"When he came back from that deployment, he was really stressed out."

Going out on the boat with his wife, Carmela, and two daughters, 6-year-old Mila and 5-year-old Eva, "was something that really took the hard edge off of his life," Raguso said of his son.

But before long, the 18-year-old vessel's engine started to act up.

So when his son shipped out to Iraq in January - on what was supposed to be his final tour - Raguso thought he'd surprise him by having the craft's engine replaced in time for his return.

That return never came.

Raguso was one of seven Air National Guardsmen killed in March when their chopper crashed while supporting coalition forces. Raguso, 39, was a master sergeant in the 106th Rescue Wing, an FDNY lieutenant, and a volunteer firefighter in Commack. Also killed was FDNY Fire Marshal Christopher "Tripp" Zanetis.

In the tragedy's wake, his dad forged ahead with the boat's overhaul, vowing to pass the boat along to his son's widow and brother.

Bill Witzke - owner of the Albertson Marina and, like Raguso, a volunteer firefighter - completed the \$2,500 job free of charge.

"New engine, new steering, new gauges, new everything," gushed Raguso. "And he said, 'John, I wouldn't take a nickel from you.' "

The boat was returned to the family Sunday.

"There's nothing that I've ever done in my life that has prepared me for the worst thing that has ever happened to me," said the elder Raguso. "But we're trying."

<https://nypost.com/2018/06/11/family-of-fallen-fdny-hero-seeks-refuge-on-family-boat/>

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## **Part Of Jericho Turnpike To Be Renamed For Hero Airman**

**Commack Patch, June 13, 2018 :**

COMMACK, NY - A portion of Jericho Turnpike will be renamed in honor of Commack resident Christopher Raguso, a Air National Guard flight engineer who died in a helicopter crash in Iraq back in March, New York State officials announced on Wednesday.

Sen. John Flanagan announced that the New York State Senate has passed legislation that will rename part of the road on behalf of the former firefighter for both the Commack Fire Department and the FDNY.

The legislation will ceremonially name a seven mile stretch of Route 25, from East Deer Park Road in Dix Hills to St. Johnland Road in Smithtown, the "Lt. Christopher J. Raguso FDNY-CFD Memorial Highway."

A commemorative sign will be installed on the roadway. The official roadway name will remain unchanged to help avoid confusion and to limit any possible disruption of commerce.

"The renaming of this roadway will serve as a reminder of the service and

dedication of Lt. Raguso to all who travel through this area," Flanagan said. "While the word hero is sometimes overused, it is a truly fitting description to the life of Lt. Raguso who lived a selfless life of

dedication to others. It is my hope that this honor helps to express the deep appreciation our community has for his brave service."

Raguso was tragically killed along with six of his fellow service members in a military helicopter crash in Iraq on March 15.

He was serving in Iraq as part of the 106th Rescue Wing, which is stationed at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach.

In addition to serving the nation in the military, Raguso was a respected member of the Commack Volunteer Fire Department since 2000 and a 13-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department since 2005, where he served in both Ladder Company 113, Flatbush, Brooklyn, and Engine Company 302,

Jamaica, Queens.

During his service in the FDNY, he was honored six times for bravery and lifesaving actions.

He is survived by his wife, Carmela, and his two daughters, Eva and Mila.

<https://patch.com/new-york/commack/part-jericho-turnpike-be-renamed-hero-airman>

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## **Plattsburgh Press Republican, June 13, 2018**

### **Memorial marks 40th anniversary of Jolly 85 helicopter crash:**

KEESEVILLE — Saluting the American flag, friends, family and current and veteran military members showed their respect during a ceremony Wednesday at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1505 in Keeseville, honoring the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jolly 85 helicopter crash on nearby Trembleau Mountain.

On June 13, 1978, the HH-3 “Jolly Green Giant” search and rescue helicopter operated by the 102 Aerospace Rescue Squadron of the 106th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group, New York Air National Guard in Westhampton Beach, Long Island, was returning home from Plattsburgh Air Force Base after training there.

The seven-man crew encountered inclement weather and the pilot, Capt. John D. Sfeir, radioed the base to say they were turning around.

The aircraft crashed on fog-covered Trembleau Mountain.

Memorial stones honoring the crew, also Capt. John W. Kleven, MSgt. Allan C. Snyder, TSgt. Ronald H. Allen, TSgt. Ralph J. Tomassone Jr., SSgt. Scott B. Hursh and SSgt. David D. Lambert, were placed at both the crash site and VFW Post 1505, bought with funds raised by VFW Post 5350 in Westhampton Beach.

The 106th Rescue Wing honored the fallen with a fly-over featuring a HC-130

SAR Hercules and a HH-60 “Pavehawk” helicopter during the ceremony.

[http://www.pressrepublican.com/news/memorial-marks-th-anniversary-of-jolly-helicopter-crash/article\\_1bfa9cba-6f75-11e8-ac68-13779091fae7.html](http://www.pressrepublican.com/news/memorial-marks-th-anniversary-of-jolly-helicopter-crash/article_1bfa9cba-6f75-11e8-ac68-13779091fae7.html)

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**NY Guardsmen lost in 1978 crash remembered (Video)**



**WCAX 3, June 13, 2018:**

This is the 40th anniversary of the Jolly 85 helicopter crash.

The search and rescue helicopter was heading back to its Westhampton Beach base in Long Island when the helicopter crashed on Trembleau Mountain near Keeseville. The 1978 crash was caused by bad weather and left seven dead.

Wednesday, the New York Air National Guard along with VFW Post 1505 and family members of those killed gathered to honor the fallen. Memorial stones were placed at the site of the crash and the VFW.

"I don't think it's ever going to be closure for the families," said Sven Klevlens, the son of one of the airmen. "We all live with it and I think it's just a way to connect with everyone else and share remembering, honoring the men that died and also to help each other press on."

The crew members were part of the 102nd Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron.

<http://www.wcax.com/content/news/NY-Guardsmen-lost-in-1978-crash-remembered-485423041.html>

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## **Road being renamed for Christopher Raguso, killed in Iraq**

**Libn.com, June 13, 2018 :**

The New York State Senate has passed legislation that would rename a portion of Jericho Turnpike in honor of Commack resident Christopher Raguso, a New York City Fire Department fire fighter and soldier who lost his life earlier this year in Iraq.

Raguso served at home and abroad and was honored six times for bravery and lifesaving actions as a fire fighter in addition to his military service.

The legislation, which Senator John Flanagan sponsored, will ceremonially name a 7-mile stretch of Route 25, from East Deer Park Road in Dix Hills to St. Johnland Road in Smithtown the "Lt. Christopher J. Raguso FDNY-CFD Memorial Highway."

A hero at home and abroad, Raguso was a lieutenant in the New York City Fire Department and a master sergeant in the military. The New York State Assembly and Gov. Andrew Cuomo still must both approve the measure.

The legislation calls for the installation of commemorative signage on the roadway, although the official roadway name will remain unchanged to avoid confusion.

“The renaming of this roadway will serve as a reminder of the service and dedication of Lt. Raguso to all who travel through this area,” Sen. Flanagan said in a written statement. “It is my hope that this honor helps to express the deep appreciation our community has for his brave service.”

An aviation flight engineer, Master Sergeant Raguso and six others were killed in a military helicopter crash in Iraq on March 15. He was serving in Iraq as part of the 106th Rescue Wing, stationed at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach.

He also was a member of the Commack Volunteer Fire Department since 2000 and a 13-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department, where he served in Ladder Company 113, Flatbush, Brooklyn, and Engine Company 302, Jamaica, Queens.

Master Sergeant Raguso is survived by his wife, Carmela, his two daughters Eva and Mila and the many who remember and respect him and treasure his memory and example.

<https://libn.com/2018/06/13/road-being-renamed-for-christopher-raguso-killed-in-iraq/>

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## **Army Birthday**

### **New York Army National Guard celebrates birthday (Photo and Video)**

**News 10, June 14, 2018 :**

LATHAM, N.Y. (NEWS10) - The New York Army National Guard is turning 234 years old on Thursday.

A cake cutting ceremony was held at the State Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters in Latham.

One of the oldest soldiers joined one of the youngest to cut the cake.

They say the youngest soldier represents the future of the army while the oldest represents continuity with the army's history.

Cake cutters used a special calvary saber to cut the cake.

<http://www.news10.com/news/ny-news/new-york-army-national-guard-celebrates-birthday/1239212818>

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## **Photos: National Guard marks the 243rd birthday of the U.S. Army**

**Times Union, June 14, 2018 :**

COLONIE - The oldest soldier and the youngest soldier in the room joined hands with the commanding major on Thursday to cut a birthday cake for the U.S. Army.

The New York Army National Guard marked the 243rd anniversary of the U.S. Army's founding with a 2 p.m. ceremony at the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters in Latham. The Army considers June 14, 1775, its birthday.

Tradition has it that the two soldiers of most disparate ages take part in the cake-cutting, representing the continuity and the future of the Army.

The oldest was 58-year-old Master Sgt. John Batza of Watervliet. The youngest was 24-year-old Sgt. Tyler Center of Slingerlands,

Batza, who served in the Army from 1980 to 1985 and joined the National Guard in 1991, is a personnel specialist in the New York Army National Guard's military personnel office at the Watervliet Arsenal.

Center is a supply specialist assigned to New York Army National Guard headquarters and enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2014.

Major General Raymond Shields of Saratoga Springs, the commander of the New York Army National Guard, presided over the ceremony. The three men used a ceremonial cavalry saber to cut the cake, which was provided by the Capital Region Chapter of the Association of the United States Army.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Photos-National-Guard-marks-the-243rd-birthday-12995644.php>

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## **US Army celebrates 243rd birthday on 'Fox & Friends' (Video)**

**Fox News, Jun. 14, 2018:**

Jun. 14, 2018 - 2:40 - Soldiers and West Point cadets mark the milestone on the plaza.

<http://video.foxnews.com/v/5797506676001/?#sp=show-clips>

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## **Citizens Preparedness**

### **State officials teach disaster preparedness in Mohawk (Video)**

WKTV, June 1, 2018 :

MOHAWK, N.Y.-- Officials with the New York State Citizen Preparedness Corps are trying to help people become better prepared for danger. Thursday night, they held a training session at the German Flatts Community Park as part of a series to better educate the public on what to do in a natural disaster, terrorist attack and other hazardous situations.

The instructor covered topics from terrorism to preparing a family plan for a weather evacuation.

"The most important thing they should do is practice their routine," Duane Morgan, the state instructor said. "They should run their children and grandchildren through the procedure as well, so if something like that happens again, they already know exactly what it is they need to do."

"The active shooter situation, my workplace has some training on that, but not nearly anything as comprehensive as this," Scott Lance, one of the participants said.

More than 30 people turned out for the training. Each received an emergency preparedness kit starter and a certificate of completion.

"It's the fact that we have so many people come out, which means that they're interested," Morgan said. "They want to learn the stuff and they want to get the information."

For more information on the training material and on upcoming events, visit

<https://prepare.ny.gov/> .

<http://www.wktv.com/content/news/State-officials-teach-disaster-preparedness-in-Mohawk-484247921.html>

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## **Civil Support Teams**

### **N.Y. Guard Civil Support Team gets wet to prep for missions**

**Army.mil June 13, 2018:  
Jun 15, 2018**

BROOKLYN, N.Y. - Once a year members of the New York National Guard's 24<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team jump out of a perfectly good helicopter and into the waters of Gravesend Bay off the southern tip of Long Island. It's a technique called helocasting and this year the annual training exercise took place June 6.

The Soldiers and Airmen of the 24th Civil Support Team (CST)-the full title is 24th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team-- are trained to detect and identify radiological, chemical, and biological weapons and hazards for civil authorities. The 24th is based at Fort Hamilton and focuses on responding to incidents in New York City.

New York City is built around rivers, islands and other waterways and traffic on local highways is notoriously subject to traffic jams. So using a helicopter to get close to an incident, and then jumping into the water nearby, could be the fastest way to deploy, explained Sgt. Madalena Noyse,

one of the CST's chemical operations specialists.

The 24th CST conducts helocasting training each year to prepare for that kind of delivery to a target site, said Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Bhoorasingh, the 24th CST's reconnaissance non-commissioned officer.

The 24th CST also has to be prepared to respond to incidents on board a ship entering New York harbor. The Soldiers and Airmen need to be prepared to exit a helicopter into the water by a ship or Coast Guard boat, if they can't land directly on the vessel, explained Capt. Robert Freed, deputy commander of the 24th CST.

Helocasting is an aerial insertion technique used by small units to move personnel and equipment into a maritime area when they can't land. The small unit is flown by helicopter to a position just above the water's surface. The team members jump into the water and then swim to a waiting boat or the shore.

The June 6 exercise was the culmination of a week of water-related training for the 24th CST, Freed said.

The Soldiers and Airmen started off training in basic Army water survival and then on drown-proofing training to make sure they were comfortable in the water, Freed explained.

The next step was open water training in which the CST members jumped off U.S. Coast Guard boats into the water.

The final process before the helocasting exercise was to practice jumping from a high dive into a pool, Freed said. This is about the height at which the CST members are expected to exit a hovering helicopter into the water, he explained.

Along with helocasting, the CST members also practice fast-roping into the water. In this helicopter exit, the Soldiers and Airmen slide down a rope into the water.

This technique was also practiced on June 6.

The June 6 training mission began with 24th CST members linking up with a UH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter flown by members of the 106th Rescue Wing based at Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach, N.Y.

The CST members were fitted with Mustang Survival Flotation Suits specifically designed to protect them from weather and environmental conditions. The suits also use closed-cell foam to offer flotation and

protection from hypothermia.

The 24th CST has these suits in its supply room because of the need to be ready for water-based missions, Freed said. "A CST in Kansas would not have a need for them," Freed said.

The CST waited for the Airmen at the baseball field at Fort Hamilton, the Army's military base in New York City.

The CST members were briefed on the mission and safety protocols before embarking on a one-minute flight over the Belt Parkway and out over Gravesend Bay.

Hovering 10 feet above the water, Freed took charge as each team member exited the aircraft, splashing into the water.

Once in the water the Soldiers and Airmen were picked up by New York Naval Militia Patrol Boat 440.

The boat is based at the United States Coast Guard base on Staten Island as part of Joint Task Force Empire Shield, the New York National Guard security augmentation force in New York City.

The June 6 training exercise was the culmination of water-focused training the 27th CST had been conducting, Noyes said.

"Today's training really ties everything together," she said. Not only is the training useful, but it is also fun, Bhoorasingh said. "It is pretty awesome," Freed said about the helocasting training. "One of

these things about a very small, elite unit is to have these kinds of training opportunities. It is pretty special."

[https://www.army.mil/article/206940/ny\\_guard\\_civil\\_support\\_team\\_gets\\_wet\\_to\\_prep\\_for\\_missions](https://www.army.mil/article/206940/ny_guard_civil_support_team_gets_wet_to_prep_for_missions)

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## **N.Y. Guard Civil Support Team gets wet to prep for missions**

**nationalguard.mil, June 13, 2018 :  
Jun 15, 2018**

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The CST waited for the Airmen at the baseball field at Fort Hamilton, the Army's military base in New York City.

The CST members were briefed on the mission and safety protocols before embarking on a one-minute flight over the Belt Parkway and out over Gravesend Bay.

Hovering 10 feet above the water, Freed took charge as each team member exited the aircraft, splashing into the water.

Once in the water, the Soldiers and Airmen were picked up by New York Naval Militia Patrol Boat 440.

The boat is based at the United States Coast Guard base on Staten Island as part of Joint Task Force Empire Shield, the New York National Guard security augmentation force in New York City.

The June 6 training exercise was the culmination of water-focused training the 27th CST had been conducting, Noyes said.

"Today's training really ties everything together," she said.

Not only is the training useful, but it is also fun, Bhoorasingh said.



“It is pretty awesome,” Freed said about the helocasting training. “One of these things about a very small, elite unit is to have these kinds of training opportunities. It is pretty special.”

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1549728/ny-guard-civil-support-team-gets-wet-to-prep-for-missions/>

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## **Counter Drug Task Force**

### **County Hosts Open House at New Hudson Valley Crime Analysis Center**

**Hudson Valley News Network, June 13, 2018:  
Jun 15, 2018**

GOSHEN – Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus, District Attorney David Hoovler and Sheriff Carl E. DuBois attended an open house on Wednesday to celebrate the opening of the Hudson Valley Crime Analysis Center (HVCAC).

Michael C. Green, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Chairman of the Legislature Steve Brescia, Legislators Kevin Hines and Barry Cheney, and Orange County Commissioner of Emergency Services Brendan Casey also attended the event.

The Hudson Valley Crime Analysis Center is the ninth intelligence and data-sharing center established by the DCJS in partnership with local law enforcement agencies and will provide investigative support and information to help police and prosecutors in the region more effectively prevent, reduce and solve crime.

“We are very fortunate to be the host of this cutting-edge center which will provide a valuable tool to law enforcement,” Neuhaus said. “Orange County is vigilant about protecting our residents and the HVCAC will play an integral role in supporting local police agencies to help prevent and reduce as well as solve crime. It serves as another tool in helping to keep our community safe.”

Located in the Orange County Emergency Services Center in Goshen, the Hudson Valley Center serves 65 police agencies in the three-county area which includes 96 municipalities and more than 2,700 square miles. The Center began operations in March and presently has a staff of 14 full- and part-time crime analysts and investigators from the Orange County Sheriff’s Office and county Emergency Services; Ulster County Sheriff’s Office; and police departments in the cities of Newburgh, Poughkeepsie and Middletown; the village of Montgomery and town of New Windsor.

Eric Johansen, HVCAC’s Director, worked for the City of Peekskill Police Department for 24 years, including the last five as Chief.

“The HVCAC in Goshen will go a long way toward enhancing the potential of our law enforcement officers and is a tremendous benefit to the region,” Hoovler said. “The Crime Analysis Center will allow law enforcement to collaborate on a variety of cases and has already played an integral role in solving crimes. This facility is indicative of how proactive Orange County is about protecting our residents.”

The State invested approximately \$410,000 to renovate a 2,300-square-foot space within the Orange County Emergency Services Center to host the Center, which features a state-of-the-art video wall measuring 4½ -feet high by 20-feet wide that displays multiple sources of data and information in real time, including feeds from public surveillance cameras in the cities of Newburgh and Middletown, Shot-Spotter technology used by the city of Newburgh and computer-aided dispatch feeds from both Ulster and Orange counties.

Since launching operations, staff at the Hudson Valley Center have already provided valuable assistance to law enforcement. For example, their work has assisted with the investigation of a fraud case, helped police solve a bank robbery in the City of Newburgh, and identify and arrest an individual who

was using social media to threaten and compel young teens to provide explicit photos of themselves. Collectively, the work done by staff at the Centers since the network’s inception in 2007 has assisted with the resolution of more than 2,500 cases.

“Technology and intelligence is an extremely component to solving crimes,” DuBois said. “The HVCAC is a welcome addition to law enforcement, and absorbs some or most of the tedious research that investigators sometimes don’t have enough hours in the day to do.”

The Hudson Valley Center operates Monday through Friday and will eventually expand operations to include evenings and weekends. Staff will also be assigned soon from the Orange County District Attorney’s Office, New York-New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and the New York Air National Guard, bringing total staff to 20. The Center is overseen by a 11-member Board of Directors with representatives from the police departments in the cities of Kingston, Middletown, Newburgh and Poughkeepsie; the District Attorney’s offices and Sheriff’s offices from Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties; and the Division of Criminal Justice Services.

“The HVCAC is a great addition to our Emergency Services Center,” said Casey, who worked for the New York State Police for 30 years, retiring with the rank of Captain. “Our partnership with DCJS and the surrounding counties will enable local police departments to have access to the latest tools and technology that have become essential to law enforcement in today’s world.”

<https://hudsonvalleynewsnetwork.com/2018/06/13/county-hosts-open-house-at-ne\w-hudson-valley-crime-analysis-center/>

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## **Riverhead Kids Say 'No' To Drugs: The event, which teaches kids to stand strong against drugs and alcohol, is in its 33rd year.**

**Riverhead Patch , Jun 14, 2018:**

RIVERHEAD, NY - Some of the smallest kids learned a big lesson recently about fighting back against addiction.

Students at the Pulaski Street Elementary School in the Riverhead Central School District wrapped up the Riverhead Community Awareness Program's yearlong anti-drug initiative with a spirited "Say No to Drugs" rally and luncheon on June 1.

The students, wearing "Drug Free Body" shirts, were originally set to march through the streets of Riverhead carrying bright signs they had created with anti-drug messages, but rainy weather moved the event indoors, district officials said.

With the colorful signs on display, the assembly featured speakers, including New York State Sen. Kenneth LaValle, who delivered anti-drug messages to an audience of students, staff and administrators.

The keynote address was given by Sgt. Sean Cassidy of the New York National Guard Counter Drug Task Force, who has volunteered for CAP's Pulaski Street Prevention Education Program for the past several years, the district said.

Fifth-grader Owen Karlson was honored as the winner of an anti-drug essay contest sponsored by CAP. He was one of 400 students to submit an entry. The event, a 33-year tradition, ended with a luncheon provided by the Riverhead Loyal Order of Moose Lodge.

Photo courtesy of the Riverhead Central School District.

<https://patch.com/new-york/riverhead/riverhead-kids-say-no-drugs>

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## **New York Army National Guard**

**Notable names**

**Wayne Post, June 13, 2018 :**  
**Jun 15, 2018**

New York Army National Guard promotes local soldiers

- Kirkland Brown, of Clyde;
- Avery Bueso and Hannah Peterson, of Newark;
- Cameron Crisafulli and Christopher Doty, of Ontario;
- Cody Sgro, of Palmyra;
- and Delmar Osorio Ortiz, of Wolcott,

recently received promotions in the New York Army National Guard.

Brown, Crisafulli and Sgro were promoted to the rank of specialist.

Brown is assigned to the Company A, 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

Crisafulli serves with the A Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition).

Sgro is assigned to the Headquarters and Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.

Bueso and Osorio Ortiz were promoted to the rank of private 1st class. Both are assigned to the Headquarters and Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.

Doty and Peterson were promoted to the rank of sergeant.

Doty is assigned to the Headquarters and Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.  
Peterson

serves with the 222nd Military Police Company.

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

Sodus soldier re-enlists with New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class James Russell, of Sodus, recently re-enlisted to continue service in the New York Army National Guard.

Russell serves with the Company E (Forward Support Company, Brigade Engineer Battalion), 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

“I congratulate our members for choosing to stay in service and striking that balance between military duties, education or employment commitments and family obligations,” said Maj. Gen. Anthony German, the adjutant general.

<http://www.waynepost.com/news/20180613/notable-names/1>

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## **New York Army National Guard promotes local soldiers**

**Monroe Post, June 13, 2018:**

Adam Perkel, of Hilton, and Dylan Abraham, Aaron Brown, Manuel Cintron, Zachery Elliott, Flore Flux, Jennifer Harmon, Vanessa Morales and Aden Yusuf, of Rochester, recently received promotions in the New York Army National Guard.

Abraham, Cintron, Elliott and Morales were promoted to the rank of specialist. Abraham and Morales are assigned to the Company C (Medical), 427th Brigade Support Battalion. Cintron serves with the Company A, 427<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion. Elliott is assigned to the Headquarters and

Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.

Brown was promoted to the rank of private. He is assigned to the 222<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company.

Flux was promoted to the rank of chief warrant officer 3, and serves with the Company C, 1-171st Aviation.

Harmon was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant. She is assigned to the Headquarters and Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.

Perkel was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He serves with the Company A, 2-108th Infantry.

Yusef was promoted to the rank of private 1st class. He is assigned to the Company A, 2-108th Infantry.

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

Local soldiers re-enlist with New York Army National Guard Spc. Jacob Napier and Sgt. Larry Sloan, of Hilton, and Sgt. 1st Class Jeramy Baldwin, Spc. Zachery Elliott, Sgt. Jared Kaminski and Sgt. 1st Class

Timothy Lamagra, of Rochester, recently re-enlisted to continue service in the New York Army National Guard.

Baldwin serves with the 1108th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal). Elliott re-enlisted to serve with the Headquarters and Support Company, 642nd Support Battalion.

Kaminski serves with the Company D (Military Intelligence), 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion. Lamagra re-enlisted to serve with the Company E (Forward Support Company, Brigade Engineer Battalion), 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

Napier serves with the A Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition). Sloan re-enlisted to serve with the Company C, 1-171st Aviation.

“I congratulate our members for choosing to stay in service and striking that balance between military duties, education or employment commitments and family obligations,” said Maj. Gen. Anthony German, the adjutant general.

<http://www.monroecopost.com/news/20180613/notable-names>

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## **Troy native wins regional Best Warrior Competition**

**Times Union, June 10, 2018 :**

New York Army National Guard Sgt. Quentin Davis, of Queens, a native of Troy, will compete to be one of the top noncommissioned officers in the 340,000-member Army National Guard in July at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.

Davis, a signal support systems specialist in the 69th Infantry's Headquarters Company, was named Best Warrior in the Northeast in the noncommissioned officer category, which includes sergeants, staff sergeants and sergeants first class, following a competition May 16-19 at the National Guard's Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

The regional competition was for the best soldiers from New England, New York and New Jersey. Davis won the New York state competition in April.

The winners of the National Guard competition will compete against the top soldiers from the active Army and the Army Reserve to see who is best in the Army overall.

The Best Warrior competition tests a soldier's military knowledge, skills, physical fitness, marksmanship and stamina.

Davis joined the New York Army National Guard in 2009. He is a full-time member of the National Guard and has served in the 222nd Military Police Company in Rochester, the 187th Signal Company in Farmingdale and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade in Latham before joining the 1st Battalion 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry at the Lexington Avenue Armory in New York.

He deployed to Qatar in 2013-2014. The Rensselaer High School graduate attended Hudson Valley Community College in Troy.

Davis said he entered the Best Warrior competition to test his limits and improve his soldier skills. He said he wants to take what he has learned in these competitions to help better train his soldiers.

"The regional level (competition) showed me how to dig deep and challenge myself to use all of my National Guard training," Davis said after his victory.

During the four-day contest, 14 competitors from eight Northeast states were evaluated on events that were specifically designed to mirror today's war-fighting environment and focus on leadership tasks.

The evaluated tasks included urban warfare simulations, a 12-mile forced march, soldier tasks and battle drills, marksmanship and board interviews, physical fitness tests and written exams.

Another soldier from his unit who also represented New York state came out on top in the Region 1 Best Warrior Competition.

His fellow soldier, Spc. Ilya Titov of Rockway Park, also a member of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, won the soldier honors. Titov, an infantryman, was the winner in the junior enlisted competition, which covers soldiers in the ranks from private to specialist.

The soldiers were faced with adversity every step of the way, said Sgt. Maj. Matthew Gutzwiller, who led the operational support for the Best Warrior Competition.

"They had to display knowledge across multifaceted areas, shifting focus from their specialized military jobs to foundational soldiering and leadership skills," Gutzwiller said.

Soldiers get to focus on team training throughout the year, but this competition gave the competitors the opportunity to perform and test themselves individually, he said.

Thanks to an arrangement with West Point and the German Liaison Office there, all of the events of the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge were part of the Best Warrior Competition.

The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge is one of the few approved foreign awards American service members can wear. The first phase consists of the basic fitness test, which included an 11x10 meter sprint, chin-ups, and 1,000-meter run.

Soldiers are also graded on their swimming ability when earning the German award. This year, Davis and all the other competitors each scored high enough to earn the badge.

<https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Troy-native-wins-regional-Best-Warrior-Competition-12982829.php>

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## **Newtown's Marko Saric Promoted To Captain In National Guard**

**Newton Patch, Jun 8, 2018:**

NEWTOWN, CT - From New York National Guard: Major General Anthony P. German, 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.

Marko Saric from Newtown, Conn. and assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-258th Field Artillery received a promotion to the rank of Captain.

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](http://www.dmna.ny.gov) or [www.1800goguard.com](http://www.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://patch.com/connecticut/newtown/newtowns-marko-saric-promoted-captain-national-guard>

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## **National Guard announces promotions**

**Fulton County Express, June 14, 2018 :**

LATHAM — Major General Anthony P. German, 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.



Jordan Monette of Gloversville and assigned to the Company C, 2-108<sup>th</sup> Infantry received a promotion to the rank of Private 1st Class.

Joel Pettengill of Gloversville and assigned to the Company C, 2-108<sup>th</sup> Infantry received a promotion to the rank of Private 1st Class.

Marrina Wilson from Johnstown and assigned to the Company G (Forward Support Company, Infantry), 427th Brigade Support Battalion received a promotion to the rank of Specialist.

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

Caroga Lake National Guard soldier receives new rank

LATHAM — Major General Anthony P. German, the Adjutant General for the state of New York, recently announced the promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

According to a release, Gary Bishop from Caroga Lake, assigned to the 827<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, 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.

<https://www.fultoncountyexpress.com/news-in-brief-6-14-18/>

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## **Cookie Drop Op: Delivering Sweet to Service Personnel and Veterans**

**Rockland County Times, June 14, 2018:**

Elena Stoicheva-Egan carried boxes of Girl Scout cookies to teenagers waiting inside a large, colorfully-decorated crate, handing them off and returning to the huge pile of cookie boxes behind her; 107,000 in all. Their destination: National Guard troops heading out overseas and Veterans Administration hospitals.

“Many families in Rockland County have veterans or current service members,” Stoicheva-Egan, leader of Troop 40273 from Germond Service Unit, said. “This is close to home,

something the Scouts can relate to and know they're helping the community as well as those serving overseas.”

She was one of more than 400 scouts, parents and scout leaders from Heart of the Hudson – encompassing Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan and Ulster counties – taking part in GSHH's 17th annual Operation Cookie Drop at the Westchester County Police Academy in Valhalla last Saturday.

Spearheaded by Troop leader and volunteer coordinator Alison Bergman, the annual project began with Ardsley Girl Scouts in 2002 — in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 — to thank military personnel for their hard work and remember them when they're away from home. Fifteen crates of donated cookies will be sent to Fort Bragg and forwarded to other bases and Veterans Administration hospitals.

“Our focus is to get as many boxes as we can to the New York Guard and the New York Army National Guard deploying to Syria and the Ukraine,” Bergman said. “When most of the soldiers returned home, we stopped sending cookies overseas and had to find new homes for them.”

Two pallets will remain at the Academy, after which members of the Special Operations Police unit will distribute their contents to American Legion posts in the Catskills, nearby veterans, the annual America's Run for the Fallen (August), and the Albany Stratton VA Medical Center. Local food pantries and hospitals will also receive cookie-filled crates.

Part of the fun includes anticipating the response when crates of cookies arrive at their destinations. “We make cards and decorate the crates that the cookies are shipped in, and the Cadettes love to hear something they're doing is making others happy,” Stoicheva-Egan said.

Cadette Troop 40465 from the Miniscengo – Central Haverstraw Service Unit engaged a team effort to load cookie boxes with help from co-leaders Yu-Shi Lin and Jamie Fodor.

“Our troop has been coming to Op Drop since 2013,” Fodor said. “Each year, we met different service men and women and enjoyed hearing their stories. We have also enjoyed meeting troops from other nearby services units.”

Throughout the years, she said, the girls also loved meeting the many soldiers who received cookies. “Making a personal connection really helps the girls understand the bigger picture.”

Orangetown Supervisor Chris Day spent more than two months at FOB Sykes in Tal Afar, Iraq, and later spent one year in Afghanistan as a Platoon Leader with the 82nd Airborne Division. “We got care packages, and the morale boost was really helpful,” Day said. He recalls getting packages from the Girl

Scouts and a few elementary schools, “and we'd share with everyone.”

“Our troop has attended Operation Cookie Drop for nine years,” New City Troop 40393 co-leader Dee Silverman said. “It has been a wonderful experience, and we met so many amazing service men and women, veterans of various branches of the Armed Forces, local politicians, and those involved with Girl Scouts.”

Her favorite part is watching the girls communicate while sorting donations and packing the crates.

“No girl is too little, and there is a component all can help with,” Silverman said. “We are thankful and appreciate their (troop’s) sacrifices and care about them, too. Real heroes wear uniforms not capes.”

Recently-appointed GSHH CEO Marie Reger addressed the crowd prior to the official Color Guard flag ceremony with Troop 141 in Peekskill and Troop 2360 in White Plains. Master Sgt. Mary Kay Messenger, a West Point Concert Band Vocalist, sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

“You’re learning not just to be helpful, but also citizenship to work together, to do something good for our community, especially for people doing good for us and who are often forgotten,” State Assemblyman Tom Abinanti told the scouts. “Those men and women feel they’re being appreciated when they get a package like this.”

“I am really very pleased that this is the way the day ended,” Bergman said last Sunday. “So much work, so, so, so much work but the pay off — knowing that this first batch of cookies is going to so many great places — is uplifting and worth it all!”

<http://www.rocklandtimes.com/2018/06/14/cookie-drop-op-delivering-sweet-to-service-personnel-and-veterans/>

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## **Allegany National Guard Soldier Receives New Rank, New Responsibilities**

**Tapinto.net, June 11, 2018:**

ALLEGANY, NY -- An Allegany man has been promoted to a new rank in the New York Army National Guard.

Matthew Sweet, who is assigned to the 152nd Engineer Company, received a promotion to the rank of specialist.

Major General Anthony P. German, the Adjutant General for the State of New York, announced the promotion, which recognizes the capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

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://www.tapinto.net/towns/greater-olean/articles/allegany-national-guard-soldier-receives-new-rank>

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## **In the Service: June 15, 2018**

**Press - Republican June 15, 2018 :**

Several local soldiers have received promotions in the New York Army National Guard. They are:

Austin Allen from Witherbee, specialist, 206th Military Police;

Jamie Bigelow from Plattsburgh, private first class, Company B, 2-108th Infantry;

Trevor Brooks from Elizabethtown, private first class, Company B 2-108th Infantry;

Aron Countryman from Malone, specialist, Company B 2-108th Infantry;

Paris Gurdon from Plattsburgh, private first class, Company B, 2-108th Infantry;

and Lance Hackett from Saranac, specialist, Company B, 2-108th Infantry;

[http://www.pressrepublican.com/opinion/in-the-service-june/article\\_299a8d20-8078-5218-ade9-4d3ba8446a43.html](http://www.pressrepublican.com/opinion/in-the-service-june/article_299a8d20-8078-5218-ade9-4d3ba8446a43.html)

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## **National Guard members promoted**

**Finger Lakes Times, June 14, 2018 :**

Local members of the New York Army National Guard have been promoted to their current rank.

Canandaigua: Spc. Hanz Toropadilla, Company D, 2-108th Infantry.

Geneva: Spc. Michael Shriver, Company D, 2-108th Infantry.

Newark: Spc. Zachary Vankoevinger, Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition).

[http://www.fltimes.com/briefs/national-guard-members-promoted/article\\_245354a1-5f19-56d6-bcee-76eecd37abf3.html](http://www.fltimes.com/briefs/national-guard-members-promoted/article_245354a1-5f19-56d6-bcee-76eecd37abf3.html)

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## **Puerto Rico**

### **Lending a helping hand: Salamanca native to be awarded Humanitarian Service Medal for hurricane response**

**Salamanca Press, June 14, 2018 :**

SALAMANCA - New York Army National Guard Specialist Anthony Caputi of Salamanca recently received the Humanitarian Service Award for his service last autumn in the hurricane response in Puerto Rico.

Early last month, Major General Anthony P. German, the Adjutant General of New York, announced the recent award recognitions for members of the New York Army National Guard who participated in the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief support missions following the devastation caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in 2017. Caputi was among those National Guard members who will receive an award recognition.

"The support of our New York National Guard in the Caribbean following Hurricanes Irma and Maria was nothing short of exceptional, and our soldiers are the reason for that success," German said. "Our Citizen Soldiers are used to responding here at home, so the effort to move troops and equipment to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands presented unique challenges. The presentation of the Humanitarian Service Medal is a great reflection of our soldiers' commitment to serve others."

Caputi, who serves with the 152nd Engineer Company of the New York Army National Guard, based in Buffalo, was among 125 other soldiers from the same company that departed for Puerto Rico from the 914th Air Refueling Wing at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, Oct. 18 and 19, according to a press release issued by the air reserve station.

According to Caputi, the soldiers were sent there with heavy equipment to help clean up the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria and restore lines of communication. He said the task included a mission to distribute food and potable water to locals in need.

Caputi said he is trained on 10 different pieces of heavy equipment and operated a high-mobility engineer excavator almost daily while in Puerto Rico. He said it's basically a modified version of a backhoe loader that is meant to travel at high speeds.

"Personally, I was on debris removal missions for a majority of my time down there," he said. "We made roads passable so people could get to where they needed to go."

Along with his fellow Guard soldiers, Caputi has gone through a lot of special training to be able to successfully perform these tasks. He said they train every drill weekend and during their annual training.

"All of the training I did up to that point prepared me for it (Puerto Rico) and we continue to train for natural disasters," he said.

A 2011 graduate of Salamanca High School, Caputi enlisted in March 2014. He said the National Guard is separate from active duty and the reserves and soldiers are the first responders to natural disasters.

This is not his first time coming to the aid of people in need. Caputi was active and helped with snow removal efforts during the Snowvember storm that dumped seven feet of snow in the Buffalo area in 2014. Caputi said it means a lot to him to be able to assist people in the face a disaster and he's fortunate to have the opportunities to do so.

"The people (in Puerto Rico) were extremely grateful. We were greeted with smiles everywhere we went," he said. "It was a very gratifying and humbling experience. Some people lost everything they had, but we were able to give them hope."

Although he hasn't received the physical award, yet, Caputi said he has it on paper. As far as an official ceremony, he's sure his leadership has something planned, but they have been really busy with planning their annual training that's right around the corner.

Caputi said he really appreciates the recognition. As the father of two children, Avah and Annsley, he said they are his motivation to be the best person he can be and joining the National Guard was a step toward that goal.

The National Guard Bureau provided guidance for awarding the Humanitarian Service Medal on March 29 for soldiers who provided meritorious participation in operations of a humanitarian nature. More than 400 Army National Guard Soldiers will be eligible to receive the award. Presentations will be made at the unit level at a future date.

[http://www.salamancapress.com/news/lending-a-helping-hand/article\\_aa0e4822-6e43-11e8-a381-37d072bc53cc.html](http://www.salamancapress.com/news/lending-a-helping-hand/article_aa0e4822-6e43-11e8-a381-37d072bc53cc.html)

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## **World War I**

### **Fort Hamilton museum director relives New York WWI Soldier's journey**

**Army.mil, June 12, 2018:**

In summer 2017, Justin Batt, the director of the Harbor Defense Museum at Fort Hamilton, New York, met a member of the New York Army National Guard's 13th Coastal Artillery.

The meeting wasn't face to face. Nor did the meeting take place by telephone. Rather, the meeting was happenstance, and it would lead the museum director on a journey through time.

Batt had been directing the museum less than a year. He was combing through the roughly 3,000 museum artifacts for a new display to honor America's and the Army's 100th anniversary of entry into World War I.

In the archives he "met" Army First Class Gunner Angelo A. Rizzo, a young man from Brooklyn, New York, sent to war in France in 1918. What he found led him on a mission to honor a legacy and inspire the next generation of Soldiers.

"The first thing that captivated me was the image," Batt said of finding Rizzo's portrait in the museum's collection.

The black-and-white image is of a teenaged Italian American. His eyes and forehead are covered in shadow from the round-brimmed service hat he's wearing. Short-cropped hair, the color of midnight black, frames a youthful face. Rizzo's World War I-era Army uniform is pressed as if it just came

from the cleaners. He's professional looking, sharp, a model Soldier. Rizzo has a coastal artillery patch the shape of a projectile on the right sleeve of his service coat. His photograph is in near-perfect condition. It could have been an image of one of millions of Soldiers of the day -- 18, 19 years

old, barely men, who would board ships bound for the European Western Front.

Yet Rizzo's story would unfold to museum director Batt in more than image.

The young Soldier's journey from training in New York to fighting in France was documented there in the museum in the form of his personal diary.

"Looking through the diary, it's like an adventure book you are reading through; you are there with him," Batt said, excitement in his voice. "You have an image of this American Soldier, and now you are actually with him, and you don't know how it's going to end."

The diary chronicles Rizzo's journey from Fort Hamilton, then a coastal defense fort which still actively operates at the southern tip of the New York Harbor, through his time in France during World War I, and back to New York.

The diary starts in March 1918. Rizzo details the departure of his unit from New York City aboard the British HMT Olympic, a sister ship to the Titanic. "Left Fort Hamilton, N.Y. March 27, 1918."

"Left New York on Army transport Olympic (sic) March 28, 1918."

"Arrived at Brest (France) Harbor Apr. 4, 1918."

Rizzo details his overseas voyage in a few short pages. He decided to keep a memento along the way.

A slip of paper, preserved yet worn to the yellowish-brown color of an ancient scroll, detailed Rizzo's living arrangement aboard the vessel. One of my favorite items in here is his bunk and mess assignment card,"

Batt said.

The card told Soldiers onboard the HMT Olympic where to eat, mess and sleep.

"KEEP THIS CARD" it reads.

"Your quarters are on deck D, compartment A."

"You will occupy one hammock."

Before boarding the Olympic, however, Rizzo trained at Fort Hamilton as part of his service in the New York Army National Guard. He was mustered into active federal service in August 1917, and shortly after he was transferred into the headquarters company of the 59th Artillery, Coastal Artillery

Corps, at Fort Hamilton.

Soldiers of the time had specific job specialties, just like in today's modern Army. Rizzo was one of a few Soldiers who could read and write well, Batt said.

"They chose him to be a telephone operator," he said. "He would spend his time running lines between the battalion headquarters and the other artillery batteries."



Someone who can relate to that job, and who helped discover Rizzo's collection at the museum, is Tom Trombone, a volunteer at the Harbor Defense Museum. Trombone, like Rizzo, is a Brooklyn native who served in the Army as a radioman, albeit from 1949-51.

"We were running the same wire they were running in World War I," said Trombone, who along with Batt was still thrilled to talk about Rizzo a year after discovering the collection.

Trombone helped Batt conduct research for the exhibit, which is currently on display at the museum. It consists of Rizzo's picture, boarding card, perfectly preserved service uniform, his diary and his identification tag, known colloquially as a "dog tag."

Trombone said that if he could sit down and have a cup of coffee with Rizzo, he would ask him about his time in the coastal artillery and of his time during the war.

"And then," he said, "I would tell him 'thank you.'"

Rizzo's journey to France and his unit's movement to the front is fairly uneventful, according to his diary. That is, until the early morning of Sept. 2, 1918.

"On the morning of Sept. 2, 1918, about 4 a.m. we got our first taste of war," Rizzo wrote. "I was on gas guard and had just woke up my relief. When it seemed as if the whole heavens had opened up and poured out flames. You could hear those shells whistle over head and break on the hills behind. It

was lucky for us that we were in a valley."

That wasn't the end of Rizzo's taste of war. His journey takes him through some of the heaviest fighting of the war and leads him to a final battle, one of America's costliest in terms of lives lost.

"Started Argonne-Meuse drive Sept. 26, 1918 -- 2:30 a.m.," his diary reads.

Known as the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, history documents it as one of the decisive engagements of World War I. It involved over 1 million U.S. Soldiers and was part of a series of battles known as the Hundred Days Offensive. It lasted until the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918, a day which we now celebrate as Veterans Day.

Rizzo made it through days and nights of constant fighting during this culminating battle. His unit, the 59th Artillery, sent round after round at the entrenched Germans. They received many in return, Rizzo chronicled.

For museum director Batt, reading the diary was an emotional journey, he said. He could feel in Rizzo's words the ups and downs of his journey from New York to the Western Front, and back home.

"Reading it early on you can sense that he's on an adventure, you can tell he's excited," Batt said. "But as things move on and he gets toward the front, you can tell he's gone from just being an adventure, he's not fearful for his life, to all of a sudden, he's realizing that he's at war, and he realizes that this is dangerous and that he might not survive."

Rizzo did survive, though, and he made it home.

One of the last entries in his diary reads, "We arrived in New York Jan. 24, 1919."

The story could have ended there, lost to history. But Rizzo's family found his artifacts and donated them to the museum in the 1980s.

"To celebrate the centennial of World War I, you want to have a nice story," Batt said. "This one couldn't have been better."

Batt wanted to ensure that along with Rizzo's artifacts, there was a visual representation of his experience. So, he painstakingly charted the World War I Soldier's course. It took him and his team of volunteers over a month to get the details right.

Today, the relics of the teenaged Soldier from Brooklyn, along with a full-color map detailing his journey, are on display at the Harbor Defense Museum. The collection is available for viewing, along with the rest of the museum, Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Batt and Trombone will likely be there, as well.

"At the end of the day, I hope this story inspires other Soldiers," Batt said. "We want them to see what others have done before them, and to teach them that there is no mission too difficult when Soldiers come together to overcome their fears."

To honor Rizzo's memory, and the memories of millions of Americans like him who served during World War I, the U.S. Army will commemorate the centennial anniversary of America's entry into the war again this year on the Army's birthday, June 14, with festivities around the world.

As for Rizzo's tale after returning to New York, Batt found that he left the Army and went to work for the Brooklyn Transit Authority.

For more information on the Harbor Defense Museum, Fort Hamilton, or U.S. Army First Class Gunner Angelo A. Rizzo, visit [www.hamilton.army.mil/](http://www.hamilton.army.mil/) or call the Harbor Defense Museum at (718) 630-4349

[https://www.army.mil/article/206834/fort\\_hamilton\\_museum\\_director\\_relives\\_new\\_york\\_wi\\_soldiers\\_journey](https://www.army.mil/article/206834/fort_hamilton_museum_director_relives_new_york_wi_soldiers_journey)

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