107th Attack Wing

NY Air National Guard honors President Millard Fillmore: National Guard.mil, January 13, 2020:

109th Airlift Wing

Planning.com:
ENR New England, January 13, 2020:

174th Attack Wing

By assassinating Soleimani, Pentagon connives to escalate war (Your letters):
Syracuse.com, January 13, 2020:

42nd Infantry Division

North Country National Guard troops headed for Middle East:
North Country Public Radio, January 13, 2020:

North Country National Guard troops headed for Middle East:
by NCPR News, in Canton, NY, January 13, 2020:

New York National Guard Troops Prepare for Middle East Deployment:
New York 1, Jan. 11, 2020:

New York’s National Guard 42nd Infantry Prepares for Deployment to the Middle East:
Spectrum News Rochester, Jan. 11, 2020:

‘This nation is depending on you’: National Guard holds ceremony for 230 local soldiers deploying to Middle East:
Staten Island Advance, January 11, 2020:

New York National Guard bids family farewell at College of Staten Island:
Staten Island Advance, January 12, 2020:

Families give National Guard soldiers a sendoff ceremony as they deploy:
WRGB, January 11, 2020:

National Guard soldiers deploy from Capital Region at Siena College ceremony:
News 10 Albany, January 11, 2020:

Local National Guard members leave for Middle East:
WHEC, January 11, 2020:

Over 200 New York-based soldiers depart for long-term deployment:
ABC 7, January 11, 2020:

80 local National Guard Soldiers leave for training, Middle East:
WROC TV, January 11, 2020:
53rd Troop Command

Forward Support Company gets new commander:
WBNG, January 12, 2020

Airmen and Soldiers

Military Notes: Cayuga County National Guard members reenlist:
Auburn Pub, Jan 11, 2020:

Local Army National Guard soldiers reenlist:
The Tribune, January 13, 2020:

Timothy Fay Reenlists for Continued Service in New York Army National Guard:
Carmel’s Hamlet Hub, January 16, 2020:

North Country people:
NNY 360, January 14, 2020:

Bloomfield soldier retires from military service:
Daily Messenger, January 12, 2020:

DUTY CALLS: Army National Guard gets new top medical adviser:
Times Union, Jan. 12, 2020:

Central NY military news: Graduation, reenlistments, promotions and more:
Syracuse.com, Jan. 16, 2020

In the Military for Jan. 17, 2020:
Hudson Valley 360, Jan. 17, 2020

Emergency Response

Assistance for Puerto Rico after quakes:
Manhattan Times January 16, 2020

Stewart National Guard members deployed to Puerto Rico:
Poughkeepsie Journal, Jan. 15, 2020

Cuomo, Visiting Puerto Rico, Chastises Federal Earthquake Response:
Caribbean Business, January 15, 2020

New York Governor Cuomo visiting earthquake-rattled Puerto Rico:
Eye Witness News ABC 7, January 14, 2020:

Cuomo leads delegation to Puerto Rico, pledges National Guard assistance:
1010 WINS, January 14, 2020:

National Guard triples force in Puerto Rico as New York prepares to send troops:
Stars and Stripes, January 14, 2020:
New York Army National Guard

NY National Guard Soldiers train for new fitness test:
Army.mil, January 10, 2020:

New York National Guard

Letter: Giving thanks to Trees for Troops contributors:
Daily Messenger, January 11, 2020:

PFOA Issue

Maloney legislation to require PFAS testing passes House:
Mid-Hudson News, January 13, 2020:

Veterans

Upstart Democrat eyes 131st state Assembly seat:
Ithaca.com, Jan. 15 2020

Tonko closes 2019 with fundraising lead; Primaries on tap for 20th congressional district race:
Times Union, Jan. 13, 2020:

Source: German To End Bid For Congress In NY-19:
WSKG, January 14, 2020:

Republican Tony German drops bid for NY 19th Congressional District seat:
Daily Freeman, January 14, 2020:

Former Olean disc jockey, who now serves as a priest, seeking liver donation:
Olean Times Herald, January 14, 2020:

World War I

Fighting off German soldiers single-handedly during WWI, meet the one-man army Henry Johnson:
Face2Face Africa, January 14, 2020:

107th Attack Wing

NY Air National Guard honors President Millard Fillmore

National Guard.mil, January 13, 2020
By Airman Daniel Meade| New York Air National Guard
BUFFALO, N.Y. – The deputy commander of the 107th Operations Group of the New York National Guard's 107th Attack Wing honored the nation's 13th president, Millard Fillmore, on his 220th birthday with a wreath-laying ceremony at his grave.

Lt. Col. Shawn Reynolds, representing President Trump, placed a wreath from the White House on Fillmore's grave in Forest Lawn Cemetery Jan. 7.

A wreath from the current president is placed on the graves of former presidents on their birthdays by members of the U.S. military. The New York National Guard also honors Presidents Chester Arthur, who is buried outside Albany, and Martin Van Buren, who is buried in Kinderhook.

The simple wreath is adorned in red, white and blue, with a card marked "The President."

Reynolds joined representatives of various organizations started by Fillmore in placing wreaths at this grave.

The 107th has represented the president in honoring Fillmore for more than three decades, Reynolds said.

"President Fillmore was a co-founder of the University at Buffalo," Reynolds said. "As an alumnus of the university myself, it was nice to be selected to lay the wreath for a president who is known for the community service he's done in the Buffalo area."

A Buffalo native, Fillmore immersed himself in the inner workings of the community and was part of writing the charter that incorporated Buffalo as a city in 1832. He also helped found such institutions as the Buffalo Historical Society, which today includes the Buffalo History Museum and Tifft Nature Preserve, in 1862.

Fillmore became vice president to President Zachary Taylor in 1849 while serving as the first chancellor of The University at Buffalo. After Taylor's sudden death in 1850, Fillmore was sworn in July 9 of that year.

After his presidency, Fillmore lived in Buffalo with his wife, Caroline, supporting every cause they could.

He died March 8, 1874, and hundreds of people, including three members of the U.S. Senate, attended his funeral.

"It's amazing the things that he helped start here in Buffalo," said Reynolds "I'm very honored to present this wreath and say a couple of words about President Fillmore."

https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/2055420/ny-air-national-guard-hon/
109th Airlift Wing

Planning.com

ENR New England, January 13, 2020 ::

The 109th Airlift Wing, Stratton Air National Guard Base in Schenectady is planning a $1-billion to $5-billion (CORRECTED there is a TYPE $1 million to $5 million) project to renovate communications and security forces buildings. Work includes HVAC removal and installation; minor interior demolition and structural work; plumbing and electrical; carpentry, drywall, trim, painting, tile and other finish work; ADA compliant bathrooms, stairwell and other access renovations; installation of fire sprinkler and dry chemical systems; and roof repairs. Air National Guard 109th Airlift Wing, Attn: Nicholas Bastiani, 1 Air National Guard Road, Scotia 12302-9752. DR#19-00878318.


Return to top

174th Attack Wing

By assassinating Soleimani, Pentagon connives to escalate war (Your letters)

Syracuse.com, January 13, 2020::

Letter to the Editor:

The Jan. 2, 2020, Reaper drone assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Iraq was provocative and unforgivably reckless. Recall that it was an assassination that sparked World War I.

Also recall that when President Bill Clinton was being impeached, he, too, diverted attention by manufacturing a crisis: bombing what turned out to be a desperately needed pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. That cheap ploy was small potatoes compared to killing a key player in a rival nation’s high command — a nation vastly more powerful and nowhere near as defenseless as Sudan. Not smart.

Such impeachment distractions undermine law, democracy and our own security. Both were implemented with Pentagon connivance – a Pentagon that thrives, along with its corporate buddies, by escalating war.

Thanks to such manufactured tensions, especially in the Islamic oil lands, the Pentagon consolidates power and reaps hundreds of billions of tax dollars a year. Conveniently, these
are mostly unaudited. Those billions, divvied up among U.S. “defense” corporations, are
diverted from human needs both here and abroad. Sure, they create jobs – numbing the
public’s conscience – but those billions, if earmarked for human needs, would create more
jobs and do more to make our lives safer and more livable.

Gen. Soleimani reportedly was killed by an MQ9 Reaper drone. Note that Onondaga County
is the home of Hancock Air Base, hub of the 174th Attack Wing of the New York National
Guard (emphasis added). The 174th, a clandestine operation, pilots the MQ9 drone “24/7”
over Afghanistan — Iran and Iraq’s immediate neighbor. Hancock’s MQ9 wields bombs and
missiles; their purpose: to terrorize and assassinate.

Onondaga County not only hosts the 174th, it is also the hub of a burgeoning drone industry.
While this technology has various benign and practical applications, the allure of jobs and
profits risks making us blind to the war crimes being perpetrated from Hancock AFB. If
Central New Yorkers don’t expose this cancer in our midst, who else will?

Ed Kinane
Syracuse

The writer has traveled in Iran and in 2003 spent five months in war-torn Iraq. Locally, he is
active with the Upstate Drone Action Coalition and with the CNY Beyond War and
Militarism Committee.

https://www.syracuse.com/opinion/2020/01/by-assassinating-soleimani-pentagon-connives-
to-escalate-war-your-letters.html

Return to top

42nd Infantry Division

North Country National Guard troops headed for Middle East

North Country Public Radio, January 13, 2020 ::

Ceremonies were held across New York state on Saturday as 650 National Guard soldiers
prepared to ship out to serve for a year in the Middle East - many of them deployed from the
North Country.

The 42nd Infantry Division, based in Troy, will deploy as part of the united States Central
Command, which operates in Southwest Asia and the Middle East.

This is the unit's first full mobilization as a unit since 2005, when the group took part in
Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to a statement from the New York National Guard,
North Country National Guard troops headed for Middle East

by NCPR News, in Canton, NY, January 13, 2020:

Jan 13, 2020 — Ceremonies were held across New York state on Saturday as 650 National Guard soldiers prepared to ship out to serve for a year in the Middle East - many of them deployed from the North Country.

The 42nd Infantry Division, based in Troy, will deploy as part of the United States Central Command, which operates in Southwest Asia and the Middle East.

This is the unit’s first full mobilization as a unit since 2005, when the group took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom. According to a statement from the New York National Guard, soldiers will do more training in the Pennsylvania and Texas before being sent overseas. They'll be deployed abroad for roughly 10 months.

New York National Guard Troops Prepare for Middle East Deployment

New York 1, Jan. 11, 2020:

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. - Members of the New York National Guard said goodbye to loved ones Saturday as they prepare for deployment to the Middle East.

More than 600 soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division geared up Saturday to board buses destined for Pennsylvania.

They will receive additional training there, before being shipped out to the Middle East.

It's the first deployment for some soldiers, while others will be doing their second and even third tours of duty.
Service members who spoke with NY1 say recent tension between the US and Iran has not affected their focus.

"The approach is not different, the training is not different and neither is the focus now. Some things may change once we get into theater, but again the same training that we were going to have on the move. We will be able to accommodate any changes in theater," said New York National Guard Command Sergeant Major Corey Cush.

This is the infantry's first deployment in 15 years, which is not happening in connection with the rising tension.


New York's National Guard 42nd Infantry Prepares for Deployment to the Middle East

Spectrum News Rochester, Jan. 11, 2020:

Eighty New York National Guard soldiers assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division said goodbye to family members as they prepare for deployment to the Middle East. Soldiers and their families say they are ready for the mission.

Hundreds were in attendance at a farewell ceremony held at the Patriot Way Armory near Rochester International Airport early Saturday. This was one of three ceremonies, as more than 600 soldiers mobilize from several states to be deployed to the United States Central Command Area of Responsibility. Soldiers are expected to spend more than 10 months deployed.

Family and friends in attendance say while it is hard to say goodbye, for now, they are proud and in full support of the soldiers.


‘This nation is depending on you’: National Guard holds ceremony for 230 local soldiers deploying to Middle East
STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Family members and friends of 230 New York-based soldiers said good-bye to their loved ones during an emotional event Saturday, as a New York division of the National Guard departed for training in advance of Middle East deployment.

The deployment ceremony took place at the College of Staten Island, Willowbrook.

“Today is the day to say goodbye. Today is the day for our family members to give one last look at their soldiers and wish them well,” said Richard Goldenberg, public affairs officer for the New York National Guard. “Today is the day that you start to miss your loved one.”

The soldiers who took part in Saturday’s ceremony belong to the 42nd Infantry Division located in Troy, N.Y., but they all hail from the five boroughs, and a large number are Staten Island residents.

It could be a full year before the soldiers see their loved ones. Shortly after the ceremony, they departed for Fort Indiantown Gap, PA for further training. They will then move to Fort Hood, TX for their pre-deployment training, and in early spring will leave for the Middle East, Goldenberg said.

The 42nd Infantry Division has deployed its soldiers three times before in its 100-year history: during World War I, World War II and in 2004 to serve in Iraq.

Goldenberg said that this year’s deployment is not related to the recent tensions in Iran.

“Obviously tensions in the Middle East are a little bit higher now than they were maybe a week and a half ago, but regardless of that the mission and focus of our soldiers is rock steady,” said Goldenberg. “We are prepared to do whatever the army asks of us.”

Willy Short, 50, of Brooklyn, said this is his fourth deployment after serving in Iraq and Kuwait.

Short leaves in New York his wife, his daughter, 29, and son, 30.

“It’s never easy for them to see me deployed and it never should be,” said Short.

On the other hand, this will be the first deployment for Natasha Gibson, of Jamaica, Queens, who will leave a 4-year-old son at home.

“I don’t think he fully understands,” Gibson said. “He knows that I am going to be away but he doesn’t understand for how long yet.”

Rep. Max Rose (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), a speaker at the event, said he was among familiar faces, since he served with some of the people being deployed.
“The mission is so incredibly vital,” said Rose while addressing the audience. “This nation is depending on you, especially in these incredibly turbulent times when we do not know what will happen tomorrow.”

Robert and Linda Ollis were also recognized with a plaque; the SSG Michael Ollis Freedom Foundation provided funding for the ceremony.

Major General Steven Ferrari, the division’s commander, thanked all the family members who “have a much harder job” than the soldiers.

“You can’t get to the finish line without crossing the start line,” said Ferrari. “Today we cross the start line.”


New York National Guard bids family farewell at College of Staten Island

Staten Island Advance, January 12, 2020 ::

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard soldiers said goodbye to their families on Saturday at a farewell ceremony at the College of Staten Island (CSI), Willowbrook.

Family members turned out to support 230 soldiers at the farewell ceremony held at CSI. Rep. Max Rose, a New York National Guard combat veteran, attended the ceremony.

The soldiers, who are assigned to the headquarters of the 42nd Infantry Division that is based in Troy, have been training for more than a year to prepare for deployment.

Soldiers will initially conduct training at Fort Indiantown Gap, Penn., and move to Fort Hood in Killeen, Tex., for additional pre-deployment training. They will then deploy to the United States Central Command area of operations, which includes the Middle East, later this year.

Staten Island Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General of New York, told the soldiers at the ceremony that “[their] hard work preparing for this day is evident in the enthusiasm and professionalism.”

Soldiers also bid farewell at ceremonies at Siena College in Loudonville and the New York National Guard’s Army Aviation Support Facility in Rochester on Saturday.
Families give National Guard soldiers a sendoff ceremony as they deploy

WRGB, January 11, 2020 ::

LOUDONVILLE (WRGB) As the buses rolled in and the bags were dropped off...family members and friends gathered in Loudonville Saturday morning to send off our soldiers through a farewell ceremony.

Col. Sean Flynn, Chief of Staff for the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division, says, "The 42nd Division has been training for the past year to get ready for this mission. Everybody's in great shape, well-trained, and I think we're going to have a great deployment."

650 soldiers are headed to the United States Central Command Area of Operations.

Farewell ceremonies were not only held here at Siena College, but also in Rochester and Staten Island.

"Today's a tough day...saying goodbye to your families for the better part of the year is never easy," replied Flynn.

For Alexandria Wiedenbaum, this is her first deployment.

Alexandria Wiedenbaum, Captain in the 42nd Infantry Division, says "It's nice having everybody here...all the families, you know...just getting to see everybody before we leave."

Her mom was in the stands, someone who Wiedenbaum says never thought her own daughter would be serving.

"I have my mother here. I don't know if she was expecting it; I'm sure she's not excited but...you know, we'll be able to contact our families throughout the entire time, so it'll be good," replied Wiedenbaum.

One by one, leaders from the military and the state delivered speeches expressing their gratitude for what each soldier is about to do.
200 soldiers and more than 800 family members were at the Loudonville ceremony.

"It's important for our soldiers to know that the community supports them, the community is behind them, and the community is aware of what they're doing,” said Flynn.

"This is what we trained for. This is what we signed up for, so we'll be prepared to do our jobs and we'll be home next year,” said Wiedenbaum.

For these guys, it's not a goodbye...just a see you later.


Return to top

National Guard soldiers deploy from Capital Region at Siena College ceremony

News 10 Albany, January 11, 2020 ::

LOUDONVILLE, N.Y. (NEWS10) — Today 200 New York National Guard soldiers said goodbye to their loved ones at a deployment ceremony at Siena College.

News10 was there and spoke to one mother about how she feels seeing her daughter take the next step in her journey serving the county.

The soldiers from the 42nd infantry division headquarters in Troy are departing to Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania to begin training. Later this year, they will deploy to the Middle East. Captain Alexandria Wiedenbaum says she and her fellow soldiers are well prepared for what is ahead, but first, she had to say goodbye to her mother.

“I have my mother here. I’m sure she’s not excited but will be able to contact our families throughout the entire time,” said Alexandria Wiedenbaum, a Captain in the U.S. Army.

Alexandria’s mom, June, responded by saying, “It is hard letting her go away. I have to let her go because she’s serving our country”

The soldiers will spend about ten months deployed. About 800 family members were at the ceremony in Loudonville today. Hundreds more from the 42nd Infantry Division said farewell in Staten Island and Rochester as well.


Return to top
Local National Guard members leave for Middle East

WHEC, January 11, 2020 ::

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (WHEC) — The New York National Guard mobilized 650 soldiers for a long-planned deployment on Saturday, including 80 from the Rochester region.

Family members and other loved ones took part in the farewell event hosted by the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters.

The mission to the U.S. Central Command area in the Middle East and Southwest Asia had been planned for the last two years.

Although the troops know that they are going to a volatile area of the world far away from their families, they say that it's part of their duty.

"I'm sad I'm not going to see them," said Lt. Col. Scott Polichette. "But it's my duty as being part of the U.S. Army, to go on deployments like this."

"Somebody has to do it," he said. "If not me, then somebody is going to have to make the same sacrifice that I am."

Farewell events also took place in Staten island and the Albany area.


Return to top

Over 200 New York-based soldiers depart for long-term deployment

ABC 7, January 11, 2020 ::

STATEN ISLAND, New York (WABC) -- It was an emotional send-off Saturday on Staten Island as 230 New York-based soldiers said goodbye to their loved ones, as a New York division of the National Guard departed in advance of long-term deployment.

The guardsmen will spend some time training in Texas before heading to the Middle East - a region that is growing more and more hostile by the day with U.S. and Iranian airstrikes.

Command Sergeant Major Corey Cush has been through this before. He entered active duty
back in 1986 and has been deployed to Afghanistan.

"It's mixed emotions, right. There's a lot of excitement associated with this mission we are about to do. But there is, of course, sadness for leaving your family for a year," he said.

Command Sergeant Cush had advice for those deploying for the first time.

"Be focused, pick a goal, stay with that goal, and you'll see how fast time will go by," he said.

https://abc7ny.com/5840113/

80 local National Guard Soldiers leave for training, Middle East

WROC TV, January 11, 2020 ::

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (WROC-TV) After their training in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, 80 New York National Guard Soldiers will spend ten months in the Middle East. Today, the troops attached to the 42nd Infantry Division said goodbye to their families on Patriot Way in Rochester near the airport.

Major Joseph Laiosa says they are well prepared for the coming mission. “It’s time to get it going. Get over there, do our job, and come back to our families,” MAJ Laiosa said.

According to a press release, the division has been preparing for this deployment for two years.

Upon arrival, Major General Steven Ferrari with the 42nd Infantry Division will assume command over Task Force Spartan. Spartan maintains U.S. posture in Southwest Asia to strengthen defense relationships. Units will support Operation Spartan Shield with aviation, logistics, force protection and information management.

Representative Joe Morelle (D-NY 25th District) was on-hand to salute the Soldiers. “As members of the 42nd Infantry, you are continuing a distinguished and proud tradition of service,” Morelle said.

Sergeant Major David Oliver said this will be his fourth deployment overseas, and he’s already can’t wait to get back to his family.

“You miss birthdays, anniversaries, miss the family. You know, I’ve got a whole life here, I have a civilian job so I’ll miss that and basically everything about home,” SGM Oliver said.
While deployed, Corporal Garett Heale plans to spend a lot of time with his family, even from thousands of miles away.

“Super sad to leave, but we have amazing technology, so I’ll be able to see her almost everyday on some kind of technology,” CPL Heale said.

While they are deploying as a team, MAJ Laiosa says it’s always the family that helps get Soldiers through the time away.

“We couldn’t do this. None of us could deploy without the support of our family like this,” MAJ Laiosa said.


Return to top

53rd Troop Command

Forward Support Company gets new commander

WBNG, January 12, 2020:

BINGHAMTON (WBNG) -- The Forward Support Company of the Binghamton's 204th Engineer Company has a new commander.

"To assume command of the FSC is a great honor and accomplishment," said incoming Commander Captain Timothy Anzovino.

Timothy Anzovino is taking the reigns over from outgoing commander Captain Brett White.

"I've done three and a half years of command time and I'm passing it off to my successor," said White.

White saying Sunday's ceremony, the exchange of the Guidon, is a traditional way for the unit to see who their commander will be.

"It's something that happens in front of all of the soldiers so they can see that there is an official change of whoever their officer in charge is," said White. "That way there's no question," he said The Guidon is a small flag with an important history in the military.

"It was traditionally used in battle so that you can see where your unit was in the confusion of everything," White said.
In this case, the flag facilitates the change to a new commander, one who will be familiar face to his unit.

"Captain Anzivino has been in the unit since before I was in the unit so he knows more about it than I do because he's been here longer," said White.

Captain Anzivino says the opportunity to lead the 204th is not something he saw coming in his early days with the unit.

"When I came to the 204th as a transfer from the Pennsylvania National Guard I had no idea I would one day be the commander within this organization," Anzivino said.

As for Captain White, he says he is ready for the next chapter of his career.

"I'm going to be transferring to a Unit that is based in New York City, Park Avenue Armory," said White. "It's a digital liaison attachment which is a pretty rare unit there's only fifteen in the entire army and I'll be there as a logistics officer," he said.

White tells 12 News that the ceremony was a great moment for the company.

https://wbng.com/2020/01/12/forward-support-company-gets-new-commander/

Airmen and Soldiers

Military Notes: Cayuga County National Guard members reenlist

Auburn Pub, Jan 11, 2020:

LATHAM — Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the state of New York, announces the recent reenlistment of members of the state National Guard in recognition of their continuing commitment to serve community, state and nation as part of the Army National Guard:

• Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Stmartin, from Genoa, reenlisted to continue service with the Company C, Recruiting and Retention.

• Pvt. Scott White, from Port Byron, reenlisted to continue service with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, visit dmna.ny.gov or 1800goguard.com.
Local Army National Guard soldiers reenlist

The Tribune, January 13, 2020:

LATHAM — Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General, announces the recent reenlistment of members of the State National Guard in recognition of their continuing commitment to serve community, state and nation as part of the Army National Guard.

Corporal Keith Winchell from Friendship reenlisted to continue service with the 152nd Engineer Support Company.

Sergeant First Class Kevin Davis from Bath reenlisted to continue service with the 827th Engineer Company.

Sergeant Brodie Emmons from Hume reenlisted to continue service with the Company C, Recruiting and Retention.

Sergeant First Class Kyle King from Geneseo reenlisted to continue service with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry.

“It’s great to see Soldiers staying in the Army and continuing to serve their State and Nation in the New York Army National Guard,” Shields said. “The most important Army asset we have is the individual Soldier. The dedication, skills, and leadership traits they bring to our community and their employers are invaluable.”

“By choosing to stay in the Army National Guard they directly contribute to our nation’s security and to the governor’s ability to respond to disasters, all while building a bright future for their family through the Guard’s retirement, education, and health insurance programs,” Shields said.


Return to top
Timothy Fay Reenlists for Continued Service in New York Army National Guard

Carmel’s Hamlet Hub, January 16, 2020::

Major General Ray Shields, the Adjutant General, announces the recent reenlistment of members of the State National Guard in recognition of their continuing commitment to serve community, state and nation as part of the Army National Guard.

Sergeant Timothy Fay from Carmel, N.Y. reenlisted to continue service with the 107th Military Police Company.

"It's great to see Soldiers staying in the Army and continuing to serve their State and Nation in the New York Army National Guard," Shields said. "The most important Army asset we have is the individual Soldier. The dedication, skills, and leadership traits they bring to our community and their employers are invaluable."

"By choosing to stay in the Army National Guard they directly contribute to our nation's security and to the governor's ability to respond to disasters, all while building a bright future for their family through the Guard's retirement, education, and health insurance programs," Shields said.


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.


Return to top

North Country people

NNY 360, January 14, 2020::

The following local members of the Army National Guard recently received promotions:

Matthew Scofield, Black River, 22nd Military Police Company, promoted to specialist Colby Jenkinson, North Lawrence, Company B, 2-108th Infantry, promoted to private first class
Bloomfield soldier retires from military service

Daily Messenger, January 12, 2020 ::

Staff Sgt. Christopher Beaver, of Bloomfield, recently retired from the New York Army National Guard after 20 years of military service.

Beaver was assigned to the Headquarters and Service Company, 642nd Support Battalion. He first entered the military in April 1999.

“I congratulate our soldiers, their loved ones and their employers on this milestone of more than 20 years of service,” said Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general for the state of New York. “On behalf of our force, I extend my best wishes for the successes of our retirees as they begin new chapters in their lives.”

DUTY CALLS: Army National Guard gets new top medical adviser

Times Union, Jan. 12, 2020 ::

Lieutenant Col. (Dr.) William LeCates of Copperstown has been named the new New York Army National Guard state surgeon.

As a civilian, Dr. LeCates is president of Bassett Medical Center, a 180-bed teaching hospital in Cooperstown.

He serves as the senior medical adviser to Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, state adjutant general.

LeCates oversees the Army National Guard medical practitioners and the medical readiness of National Guard soldiers. He also ensures that Department of Defense, New York state, and national medical standards are adhered to.
He replaced Col. Mathew Liepke of Oswego.

LeCates, who previously served as the New York Army National Guard's chief aviation medical officer, will work with more than 100 other medical professionals assigned to the New York Army National Guard Medical Command, as well as with other units.

LeCates is a veteran of the Afghanistan war, having deployed there twice. He also deployed to Liberia in 2015 to help combat tropical and infectious diseases, which included an outbreak of the Ebola virus.

He has earned a Meritorious Service Medal, an Army Commendation Medal, an Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, and a Flight Surgeon Badge.

LeCates is a nephrologist — a specialist in kidney diseases and hypertension — who studied at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for 10 years, which included a residency and fellowship. He is also a graduate of Amherst College and worked as an assistant economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York before studying medicine.

After graduating, he returned to Cooperstown as a practicing doctor, specializing in internal medicine with a focus on kidney disease.

He joined the New York National Guard in 2009.

206th MPs deploying

Twenty-four New York Army National Guard soldiers from the Latham-based 206th Military Police Company have left the state to prepare to deploy to Afghanistan.

A farewell ceremony was held Jan. 4 at the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters in Latham.

They deployed for Fort Bliss, Texas, for pre-deployment training. Their primary mission during their 10-month deployment in Afghanistan will be to provide security for a U.S. commander. They expect their total deployment in both the United States and Afghanistan will be for 12 months.

The unit had deployed to the Iraq war in 2009.

New platoon sergeant

Steven Quinn of Colonie has been promoted to sergeant first class during a ceremony at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters in Latham.

Quinn is assigned full time with the Medical Detachment in Watervliet and works full time as the unit's training noncommissioned officer.
Quinn began his military career in 2008 when he enlisted in the New York Army National Guard.

He graduated from Advanced Individual Training as a health care specialist in 2010. He has worked with the 206th Military Police Company out of Latham and then transferred to the Medical Detachment.

In 2019, Quinn was nominated by the New York Army National Guard deputy state surgeon and recognized by the National Guard Bureau as the Medical Readiness Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

He has earned an Army Commendation Medal, an Army Achievement Medal and an Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal.


Central NY military news: Graduation, reenlistments, promotions and more

Syracuse.com, Jan. 16, 2020:

U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class Laura M. Hanford graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. She earned distinction as an honor graduate. Hanford is the daughter of Annemarie and Mark Hanford, of Baldwinsville. She is a 2010 graduate of Charles W. Baker High School, and earned a bachelor's degree from State University of New York at Brockport.

U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class Alexandra V. Tracy graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Tracy is the daughter of Kristina and Robert Vanderwerf, of Marietta. She is a 2011 graduate of Marcellus High School.

U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class Allison J. Santafera graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Santafera is the daughter of Thomas and Kim Santafera, of Canastota, and Ada and Ana Martinez, of Delray Beach, Fla. She earned an associate degree from Herkimer College, and is a 2000 graduate of Massena High School.

U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class Anthony T. Vaughn graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Vaughn is the son of Angela Vaughn, of Syracuse. He is a 2009 graduate of Corcoran High School.
U.S. Air Force National Guard Airman 1st Class Dustin B. Bestul graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas. Bestul earned distinction as an honor graduate. He is the son of Dustin M. and Andrea G. Bestul of LaFayette. Bestul earned an associate degree from Onondaga Community College, and is a 2017 graduate of Hampstead Center For Inquiry, Hampstead, N.C.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjunct general, announced the promotions of members of the New York Army National Guard: Promoted are:

Joshua Butera, of Cleveland, with the 204th Engineer Detachment, to the rank of Private; Trey Lindsey, of Syracuse, with the 42nd Infantry Division Band, to the rank of Sgt; Courtney Mangan, of Kirkville, with the 466th Medical Company Area Support, to the rank of Private; Christopher Hobbs, of Chittenango, with the Company A (Distribution), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Erik Harris, of Oswego, with the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Brandon Vanwormer, of Pulaski, with the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Sgt; James Garrigan, of Port Byron, with the Headquarters and Headquarters, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Sergeant 1st Class; Jeremy Ruotolo, of Oswego, with the Headquarters and Headquarters, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Tyler Hunt, of Liverpool, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Anthony Petrosky, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Support Company, 42nd Infantry Division, to the rank of Sgt; Nick Bonacorsi, of Oswego, with the Intelligence and Sustainment Company, 42nd Infantry Division, to the rank of Sgt; Holden Wheeler, of Syracuse, with the Company A (Distribution), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private; Nathaniel Shugars, of Cleveland, with the Company D (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private; Andy Carter, of Pulaski, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Sgt; Zachary Grevelding, of East Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Michael O’Neill, of Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Hayden Smith, of Oswego, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Dylan Fort, of Manlius, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Zachary McCargar, of Mexico, with the Company B, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Samantha Goucher, of Cato, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private; Ramel Davis, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Heather Hilbrand, of Fayetteville, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Sgt; Nicholas Weber, of Cicero, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Private 1st Class; Holden Wheeler, of Syracuse, with the Company A (Distribution), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private; Nathaniel Shugars, of Cleveland, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private; Andy Carter, of Pulaski, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Zachary Grevelding, of East Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Michael O’Neill, of Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Hayden Smith, of Oswego, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Michael O’Neill, of Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Hayden Smith, of Oswego, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the
rank of Private; Dylan Fort, of Manlius, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Zachary McCargar, of Mexico, with the Company B, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Samantha Goucher, of Cato, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private; Ramel Davis, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Heather Hiltbrand, of Fayetteville, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Sgt; Nicholas Weber, of Cicero, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Private 1st Class; Dylan Whittico, of Memphis, with the 827th Engineer Company, to the rank of Sgt; Tyrell Owen, of Brookfield, with the 206th Military Police Company, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Aiden Russell, of Elbridge, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private; Marshall Simmons, of Pulaski, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private; Kaylee Taylor, of Marietta, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Tyler Hunt, of Liverpool, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Jakob Cunningham, of Cicero, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Justin Gennell, of Aurora, with the Troop A, 2-101st Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Sgt; Joshua Butera, of Cleveland, with the 204th Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Courtney Mangan, of Kirkville, with the 466th Medical Company Area Support, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Zachary Grevelding, of East Syracuse, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Karl Mensch, of Cicero, with the 206th Military Police Company, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Nathan Siriano, of Kirkville, with the 206th Military Police Company, to the rank of Spc; Zachary Shear, of Oswego, with the Company B, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Spc; Lopez Henson, of North Syracuse, with the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Eric Shaffer, of Phoenix, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Staff Sgt; Patrick Cassidy, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Captain; Andrew Shear, of Baldwinsville, with the 105th Military Police Company, to the rank of Spc; Alyssa Hills, of Syracuse, with the 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post - Operational Detachment), to the rank of Private; Sawyer Mitchell, of Central Square, with the 206th Military Police Company, to the rank of Private; Zahara Dunn, of Liverpool, with the 222nd Military Police Company, to the rank of Private; Clark Sponable, of Phoenix, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, to the rank of Staff Sgt; Judson Fletcher, of Syracuse, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private; Cristian Anoceto, of Cicero, with the Company D, 3-142nd, Aviation, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Jayson Isabelle, of Oneida, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Hunter Van Noy, of Oswego, with the Company D, 2-108th Infantry, to the rank of Private; Dyerin Gareau, of Altmar, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Samantha Goucher, of Cato, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; David Valencia, of Pulaski, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private; Brenon Weed, of Aurora, with the Headquarters and
Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Zachary Curinga, of Brewerton, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Combat Aviation Brigade, 42nd Infantry Division, to the rank of Sgt; Douglas Whaley, of Union Springs, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 501st Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), to the rank of Staff Sgt; David Collins, of Bridgeport, with the Headquarters and Service Company, 642nd Support Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Conner McKeen, of Oswego, with the Intelligence and Sustainment Company, 42nd Infantry Division, to the rank of Spc; Justin Farber, of Hubbardsville, with the Military Intelligence Company D, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Thomas Markert, of Manlius, with the Military Intelligence Company D, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Brenden Hall, of Baldwinsville, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Spc; Mark Mrowinski, of Syracuse, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Spc; Kolby Williams, of Auburn, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition), to the rank of Spc; Daniel Smith, of Mexico, with the United States Army Cyber Team 173, to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3; Matthew Geers, of Georgetown, with the 207 Military Police Company, to the rank of Sgt; Samuel Guthrie, of Phoenix, with the 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post-Operations Detachment), to the rank of Private; Richard Richardson, of Baldwinsville, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, to the rank of Sgt Major; Grace Collins, of Parish, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, to the rank of Spc; Nathaniel Shugars, of Cleveland, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Richard Hyde, of Auburn, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion, to the rank of Spc; Kelsey Campbell, of Syracuse, with the 1427th Transportation Company, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Spencer Koester, of Sandy Creek, with the Company D, 3-126th Aviation, to the rank of Private; Austin Davis, of Parish, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, to the rank of Private 1st Class; Mark Marvin, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Support Company, 42nd Infantry Division, to the rank of Private 1st Class; and Zaire Robinson, of Syracuse, with the Military Intelligence Company D, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, to the rank of Private.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjunct general, announced the reenlistments of members of the New York Army National Guard: Reenlisted are:

Sgt. 1st Class James Crosby, of Auburn, with the 222nd Military Police Company; Private 1st Class Richard Hyde, of Auburn, with the Company B (Maintenance), 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Spc. Tyler Arel, of North Syracuse, with the 1427th Transportation Company; Sgt. Brandon VanWormer, of Pulaski, with the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion; Sgt. 1st Class James Garrigan, of Port Byron, with the Headquarters and Headquarters, 102nd Military Police Battalion; Sgt. Thomas Camaj, of Auburn, with the Headquarters and Headquarters, 102nd Military Police Battalion; Spc. Alisha Jennings, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Spc. Katrina Tafler, of Oswego, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Sgt. Heather Hiltbrand, of Fayetteville, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and
Target Acquisition); Sgt. Nick Bonacorsi, of Oswego, with the Intelligence and Sustainment Company, 42nd Infantry Division; Sgt. Christopher Elmer, of Phoenix, with the Medical Command; Spc. Sean Coyne, of Liverpool, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Staff Sgt. Jake Pollock, of Jordan, with the Camp Smith Training Site; Sgt. Jeffrey Vogt, of Marcellus, with the Headquarters and Service Company, 642nd Support Battalion; Sgt. Ronald Gonzalez, of Auburn, with the 1156th Engineer Company; Sgt. Michael Stone, of North Syracuse, with the 204th Engineer Detachment; Sgt. Erica Loucks, of Pulaski, with the Company C, Recruiting and Retention; Spc. Jaquawn Holloway, of Liverpool, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry; Sgt. Justin Grennell, of Aurora, with the Troop A, 2-101st Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition); Sgt. Major Nathan Hawker, of Clay, with the 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post - Operational Detachment); Spc. Jared Snyder, of Syracuse, with the 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post - Operational Detachment); Spc. Jill Davidson, of Minoa, with the 10th Mountain Division (Mobile Command Post - Operational Detachment); Spc. Amanda Bixby, of Georgetown, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Spc. Luke Zuercher, of Cicero, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Staff Sgt. Christopher Denman, of Camillus, with the Company C, Recruiting and Retention; Sgt. Alex Forsyth, of Syracuse, with the Company D, 1-171st Aviation Regiment; Spc. Matthew Zorovic, of Manlius, with the 206th Military Police Company; Sgt. Ian Wilson, of West Monroe, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry; Sgt. Richard Walters, of Liverpool, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th Infantry; Staff Sgt. Jonathan Crego, of Oswego, with the Headquarters, 106th Regiment (Regional Training Institute); Sgt. James Rude, of Parish, with the Medical Command; Staff Sgt. Joshua Sherman, of Central Square, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition); Sgt. Alexander Sanchez, of Baldwinsville, with the 222nd Military Police Company; Sgt. Major Richard Richardson, of Baldwinsville, with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Sgt. Amanda Gallow, of Locke, with the 827th Engineer Company; Sgt. Deborah Pollock, of Jordan, with the Company C, Recruiting and Retention; Spc. Matthew McDaniels, of Syracuse, with the Division Signal Company, 42nd Infantry Division; Sgt. Justin Alvey, of Baldwinsville, with the Military Intelligence Company D, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion; 1st Sgt. Edward Briggs, of Weedsport, with the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion; Spc. Carlos Rivera, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion; Sgt. Major Deborah Mallet, of Syracuse, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Staff Sgt. Patrick Baker, of Auburn, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion; Staff Sgt. Alexander Forst, of Brewerton, with the Headquarters and Support Company, 42nd Infantry Division; and Spc. Joshua Banick, of Baldwinsville, with the Troop A, 2-101 Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance and Target Acquisition).

Maj. General Ray Shields, the adjutant general, announced the recent service accomplishment of members of the New York Army National Guard. They are:

Pvt. Joshua Butera, of Cleveland, to the 204th Engineer Detachment; Pvt. Austin Davis, of Parish, to the 102nd Military Police Battalion; Pvt. Erik Harris, of Oswego, to the Forward Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion; Pvt. Tyler Hunt, of Liverpool, to the
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry; Pfc. Thomas Markert, of Manlius, to the Company B (Military Intelligence), 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion; Pvt. Samantha Goucher, of Port Byron, to the 102nd Military Police Battalion; Pvt. Christopher Hobbs, of Chittenango, to the Company A, 427th Brigade Support Battalion; and Pfc. Zachary Briggs, of Cicero, to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

Joseph Marji, from Oneida, was promoted to senior airman with the New York Air National Guard's 224th Air Defense Group (ADG). Marji is cyber transport systems journeyman at the 224th Support Squadron.

Angelina Palmer, of Canastota, was promoted to master sergeant with the New York Air National Guard's 224th Air Defense Group (ADG). Palmer is an identification technician at the 224th ADS.

David Bowers, of Baldwinsville, was promoted to technical sergeant with the New York Air National Guard's 224th Air Defense Group (ADG) 224th Support Squadron's civil engineering department.


Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Nowak, of Baldwinsville, with the 222nd Military Police Company retired from the New York Army National Guard after twenty years of military service. Nowak first entered the military in February 1999.

Sgt. 1st Class James Bucci, of Volney, retired from the New York Army National Guard last month after some 35 years of military service. Bucci assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 102nd Military Police Battalion, and first entered the military in April 1984.

Lt. Colonel Andrew Pinckney, of Cazenovia, retired from the New York Army National Guard 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team after twenty-three years of military service. Pinckney first entered the military in March 1996.

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Return to top

In the Military for Jan. 17, 2020
LATHAM — Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general for the state of New York, announces the promotion of members of the New York Army National Guard in recognition of their capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Amanda Eldred from Earlton and assigned to the 466th Medical Company Area Support received a promotion to the rank of sergeant first class.

Victoria Brundage from Leeds and assigned to the Company A, 1-224th Aviation Security and Support Battalion received a promotion to the rank of specialist.

Brig. Gen. retires

LATHAM — Brig. Gen. Shawn Clouthier, of Coxsackie, a former commander of the 109th Airlift Wing, ended his military career after 38 years of service Jan. 12, during a ceremony at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham.

Clouthier served as chief of staff of the 5,800-person New York Air National guard after relinquishing command of the 109th Airlift Wing in 2017.

He also served as assistant adjutant general of the New York Air National Guard.

He served as commander of the 109th Airlift Wing, which flies the unique ski-equipped LC-130 transport from Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia from April 2012 until October of 2017.

Clouthier joined the New York Air National Guard in 1982 after earning his commission through the Academy of Military Science at McGhee-Tyson Air National Guard base.

That same year, Clouthier attended Undergraduate Navigator Training and was assigned to the 139th Tactical Airlift Squadron of the 109th Airlift Wing at Stratton Air National Guard Base.

In 1983, Clouthier became a LC-130 navigator.

He also served as a weapons and tactics officer, an instructor navigator, an evaluator navigator and chief of current operations for the 109th Operations Support Flight during his career.

He served as deputy commander, and then commander of the 109th Maintenance Group and as commander of the 109th Operations Group before taking command of the 109th Airlift Wing in 2012.

Clouthier is a command navigator with over 7,000 flying hours in various models of the C-130 and the LC-130.
Emergency Response

Assistance for Puerto Rico after quakes

Manhattan Times January 16, 2020:

In response to the recent earthquakes and aftershocks that have rocked Puerto Rico, city and state resources are being deployed to assist those affected.

A pair of strong earthquakes hit Puerto Rico on January 6 and 7, killing one person and leaving much of the island without power or water. The quakes are part of a series of seismic events that have occurred on the island in recent weeks.

Mayor Bill de Blasio has announced that New York City will deploy 24 additional city personnel to Puerto Rico to support municipalities affected by recent earthquakes.

The city’s response team consists of 15 building inspectors and structural engineers, seven emergency managers and two mental health professionals.

“There’s thousands of buildings in Puerto Rico and they don’t even know if they’re safe to live in or to work in, and they don’t have enough experts, they don’t have enough inspectors and engineers, but the City of New York can help,” de Blasio said at a press conference on Tues., Jan. 14th. “There’s food and water supplies that have to be distributed. There are not enough people who know how to do that. These experts do.”

During the deployment, the city team will work closely with the cities of San Juan, Guayanilla, Ponce, Guánica, and Peñuelas to coordinate resources to assist with structural damage assessments and assess further need for mental health and counseling services.

“I applaud the mayor for his swift response to the devastation in Puerto Rico,” said Councilmember Rafael Salamanca. “Sending top city officials to access the island and determine its needs is crucial at this time.”

It has been reported that nearly 5,000 people are currently living in shelters and temporary housing and Governor Wanda Vázquez has declared a state of emergency.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has also deployed 115 National Guard members to Puerto Rico. The members will be deployed for 90 days to assist in emergency response efforts following a series of earthquakes that impacted the island.
Cuomo visited the island on Tuesday, with a delegation that included State Assembl
genmember Marcos Crespo, Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr., Assembl
ngenmember Maritza Dávila, Greater NY Hospital Association President Kenneth Raske, members of the Red Cross and others.

The delegation helped distribute 800 blankets, 800 pillows and 500 emergency preparedness kits to residents. It also assessed damage in Guánica, Ponce and the Costa Sur power plant.

Following his visit, Cuomo announced the deployment of additional resources to Puerto Rico, including additional engineers and utility experts from the New York Power Authority, building inspectors and bilingual mental health professionals.

Cuomo remarked that the island, still reeling from Hurricane María is 2017, is struggling with the impact of the earthquakes and has been neglected by the federal government.

“Hurricane María was devastating. The island still hasn’t fully recovered and then they get hit with an earthquake and a second,” Cuomo said at a press conference. “I think this is insult to injury as far as the federal government is concerned. The President showed up and threw paper towels into the crowd and now we have an earthquake and continuing tremors and once again the federal government hasn’t showed up the way they should. Luckily, New Yorkers have.”

The New York City personnel are experienced in areas including structural stability inspections, logistics, planning, operations and mental health support, noted de Blasio.

The city had previously deployed two emergency managers and a building inspector to Puerto Rico after the earthquakes first struck.

“The heart of New York City is with the people of Puerto Rico,” said NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell. “We are sending an excellent team that is equipped with the skills and expertise to support the response efforts and help those who need us during this difficult time.”

Since their deployment, the team has conducted structural assessments, assisted with commodity distribution and initiated planning for affected communities.

The total number of city personnel who will be coordinating on the ground in Puerto Rico is now 28.

“The suffering in Puerto Rico is felt deeply in New York City,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot. “While we make Health Department staff available to the people of Puerto Rico, we know that the pain caused by these earthquakes is not confined to the island. Any New Yorker who needs help can call 888.NYC.WELL for free, confidential support, 24 hours a day.”
Stewart National Guard members deployed to Puerto Rico

Poughkeepsie Journal, Jan. 15, 2020:

New York plans to deploy 115 National Guard members from Stewart Air National Guard Base in the Town of Newburgh to Puerto Rico to help the island recover from a series of earthquakes that have forced thousands of people from their homes.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s office announced Tuesday that the 105th Airlift Wing from Stewart will bring an air-conditioned tent system to southern Puerto Rico to house up to 150 displaced residents, at the request of Puerto Rico’s emergency management officials. The facility is meant for disaster relief and comes with a kitchen, bathrooms, showers, laundry equipment, water-purification equipment and generators.

According to Cuomo’s office, 26 Air National Guard members will set up the tent system, and 15 will remain there to run it for up to 90 days.

Meet the Poughkeepsie student who repaired homes in Puerto Rico NY, U.S. phasing out PFAS in firefighting foam Cuomo traveled to Puerto Rico with a delegation of state officials and others on Tuesday to visit areas and a power plant that sustained damage and determine if New York should send further aid to an island still recovering from the devastating Hurricane Maria in 2017.

“From day one New York has been a tremendous supporter of the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the island during these challenging times,” Cuomo said in a statement.

Cuomo, Visiting Puerto Rico, Chastises Federal Earthquake Response

Caribbean Business, January 15, 2020:

“Once again, the federal government hasn’t showed up the way they should,” the New York governor said.
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York criticized the Trump administration’s response to a series of powerful earthquakes that has shaken Puerto Rico for weeks, toppling homes and knocking out power to parts of the island, which has still not fully recovered from Hurricane Maria.

If the effects of the tremors have reminded residents of Hurricane Maria’s devastation two years ago, so have the politics surrounding the recovery of the island, which experienced a magnitude-4.6 temblor on Tuesday morning.

“They didn’t respond appropriately at Hurricane Maria,” Cuomo said in New York City before boarding a plane to the island on Tuesday. “The president showed up and threw paper towels into the crowd, and now we have an earthquake and continuing tremors, and once again the federal government hasn’t showed up the way they should.”

Puerto Rico has become a recurring cudgel for Cuomo in his attacks on President Donald Trump, which have included criticism over federal immigration policy and the president’s failure to disclose his tax returns. Cuomo, a Democrat, has called Trump’s handling of Hurricane Maria an “embarrassment” and “appalling.”

Cuomo did not offer specifics on his criticism of the federal government’s response to the earthquakes, which began in late December and have forced thousands of fearful residents to leave their homes: More than 8,000 residents are scattered in more than 40 shelters, and thousands more are sleeping in makeshift tents and inside parked cars near highways.

But the island is clearly showing signs of recovery: Electricity has been restored to 99% of customers, and the Army Corps of Engineers has mobilized personnel to help install generators.

Cuomo, along with a delegation of elected officials from New York, is expected to visit a power plant that was damaged in the southern part of the island, as well as a ravaged school and a shelter.

It is Cuomo’s seventh trip to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria devastated the U.S. territory in September 2017, knocking out power, water and telecommunications across the island and resulting in more than 3,000 fatalities.

At the time, Cuomo deployed state resources to the island almost immediately. He has sought to frame New York’s response as more effective, albeit more modest, than that of the federal government. He used his visit on Tuesday to announce the deployment of 115 members of the National Guard, adding to the New York Power Authority personnel already helping the island’s government in repairing its power grid.

The Trump administration’s Hurricane Maria response has resurfaced in light of the recent temblors.
Chase Jennings, the press secretary for the Office of Management and Budget at the White House, said more than $90 billion had been forecast to be spent on Puerto Rico’s recovery.

“While we continue to ensure Puerto Rico has what they need, we must also make sure the proper guidelines are in place to make certain the people of Puerto Rico directly benefit, not politicians with their history of corruption,” he said in a statement.

Last week, Trump approved Puerto Rico’s request for an emergency declaration.

But on Monday, some Democratic members of Congress wrote to Trump, urging him to release more than $18 billion that was allocated to the island after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, both two years ago.

“Let us be clear,” the letter said. “Postponing the disbursement of this vital assistance any longer — in the face of the humanitarian needs of Puerto Rico — is simply shameful.”

Thousands of reconstruction projects in Puerto Rico remain in limbo because of stalled federal funding, compared with speedier and more generous aid sent to hurricane-ravaged states like Florida and Texas.

After Hurricane Maria, New York sent utility poles and trucks, and about 500 workers who spent months on the island helping restore power. New Yorkers donated more than 4,000 pallets of canned goods and water bottles. And Cuomo mobilized Black Hawk helicopters and dozens of state troopers and members of the National Guard.

Last year, he commissioned a $700,000 memorial in the Battery Park City area in Manhattan to honor the victims of Hurricane Maria.

Like many in New York, the state with the largest Puerto Rican population, Cuomo has lengthy ties to the island.

In 1998, when Cuomo was the secretary of housing and urban development, President Bill Clinton sent him to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Georges, which left the island without power and destroyed thousands of homes, causing more than $2 billion in damage.

Cuomo oversaw part of the federal government’s response and worked closely with the island’s governor at the time, Pedro Rosselló, the father of the recently ousted Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, who welcomed Cuomo multiple times in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Cuomo has also attended an annual gathering of New York politicians and lobbyists in San Juan, and he spent Thanksgiving on the island with his daughters last year.

The visits are a savvy political move: More than 1 million Puerto Ricans live in New York, making it a timeworn tradition for candidates and elected officials to travel to the island and capitalize on its most pressing issues.
In 2001, for example, Gov. George E. Pataki flew to the territory to speak out against the Navy’s bombings in Vieques, a small island-town off the coast of Puerto Rico. Cuomo, who at the time was vying for the Democratic nomination to unseat Pataki, accused the former governor of pandering, saying: “He has paid no attention to Puerto Ricans.”

Mayor Bill de Blasio on Tuesday also sought to honor that tradition: Although he did not go to Puerto Rico, he appeared in Brooklyn to announce that New York City will send another team of city personnel to the island. The contingent of 24 workers, which includes 15 building inspectors and engineers, brings the total number of the city’s recovery team to 28.


**New York Governor Cuomo visiting earthquake-rattled Puerto Rico**

Eye Witness News ABC 7, January 14, 2020::

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (WABC) -- New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is leading delegation to survey damage in Puerto Rico on Tuesday.

His visit will help determine what is needed in the recovery from the earthquakes in Puerto Rico.

"The point of the visit is basically to assess the damage and determine how we can best help... to find out what we can do to help. Can we help with engineering, can we help with the power plant, can we help with supplies? What do they need that we can best provide," Cuomo said.

Cuomo directed the New York Power Authority to assist in recovery efforts last week alongside the Puerto Rican Electric Power Authority.

NYPA has deployed multiple teams of power grid experts to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria in 2017.

On Tuesday morning he authorized the deployment of 115 National Guard troops to Puerto Rico.

"Puerto Rico is still hurting from the destruction caused by Hurricane Maria and the federal government's protracted recovery over two years ago, and now the island is once again being dealt a devastating blow with a series of earthquakes and tremors that has caused widespread damage and power outages, leaving thousands of families in shelters," Cuomo said. "From
day one New York has been a tremendous supporter of the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the island during these challenging times. New York State will deploy National Guard to assist in emergency response efforts, and I will be traveling with a delegation to assess the damage and determine what more we can do to help."

Cuomo and the National Guard members are joined by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and State Assemblyman Marcos Crespo.

"My family has been affected by this. My friends and neighbors have been affected by this. My people have been affected by this," Crespo said.

"They need blankets! They need cots! They need tents. They need sleeping bags! People are sleeping outside in the elements because they fear if they sleep indoors, even if their homes are not compromised, at some point it may fall on their heads," Diaz said.

The flurry of earthquakes topped by a magnitude 6.4 temblor that killed one person and damaged hundreds of buildings has many accusing the Puerto Rico government of being caught unready again.

"It proved that Puerto Rico is not prepared for a seismic movement," said Nazario Lugo, president of the island's Association of Emergency Managers. "The government has to be proactive, and we saw that was not the case until they were up to their neck in water."

Lugo, a former emergency management director for Puerto Rico, told The Associated Press that the government didn't activate its emergency command center until the day after the largest quake hit, breaking with protocol.

This drew comparisons to Hurricane Maria of 2017, which devastated the island and caused thousands of deaths. Critics said it caught the local and federal governments with limited supplies on an island with poorly maintained infrastructure and led to a delayed response stemming from a lack of communication and organization.

"I think this nation should be ashamed of their response to Hurricane Maria," Cuomo said.

A flurry of hundreds of small quakes began hitting Puerto Rico on Dec. 28, and a magnitude 5.8 jolt that toppled a famed rock formation landmark struck on Jan. 6, Three Kings' Day, a major holiday on the island.

"The first day, when toys were being handed out, they should have started a process to activate the emergency plan," he said.

That didn't happen until Tuesday's 6.4 earthquake hit before dawn. It knocked out power to the entire island, collapsed several homes and schools and cracked bridges. Many living along the southern coastline were left without water service and more than 4,900 people sought refuge in government shelters.
President Trump declared a state of emergency, but has otherwise kept quiet.

While many Puerto Ricans were surprised, scientists were not, including Christa von Hillebrandt, former director of the island's Seismic Network and manager of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Caribbean tsunami warning program.

"For decades, scientists and people like me have been informing and alerting communities and the government of Puerto Rico of the physical threat," she said. "In the past 30 years, seismic conscience definitely improved in Puerto Rico, but not much action was taken. ... You would see some improvements, but some critical areas did not receive sufficient attention."

Just days after the natural disaster, emergency management Director Carlos Acevedo acknowledged to reporters that the government had yet to complete a plan that dictates protocol for when an earthquake hits the island.

Juan Alicea, president of Puerto Rico's Society of Professional Engineers, told the AP that he received a draft of the plan only on Jan. 5.

"I see that as a failure," he said. "We all have to assume our responsibilities."

Acevedo did not return messages for comment and has insisted that Puerto Rico is prepared in case another big quake strikes.

Von Hillebrandt partially agreed with that assessment, noting that local officials had identified all tsunami risk zones by 2003 and completed evacuation maps in 2015. By 2016, all coastal communities in Puerto Rico were certified as being ready for a tsunami.

In October 1918, a magnitude 7.3 quake struck near Puerto Rico's northwest coast, unleashing a tsunami and killing 116 people.

While concerns remain about Puerto Rico's preparedness, federal authorities have praised the local government's response.

Jeff Byard, with the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, said he is extremely pleased with the post-quake operation.

"I cannot commend the commonwealth enough for the proactive nature that they've taken providing the initial resources, the initial support," he said.

More than 1,280 earthquakes have hit Puerto Rico's southern region since Dec. 28, more than two dozen of them magnitude 4.5 or greater, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

https://abc7ny.com/5845691/
NEW YORK (1010 WINS) -- New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is leading a delegation to Puerto Rico and has pledged to deploy 115 members of the National Guard to help with earthquake recovery efforts.

Cuomo's office says that the governor plans to be in Puerto Rico on Tuesday and Wednesday. Other members of the 12-person delegation include Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr., Bronx Assembly Member Marcos Crespo and Brooklyn Assembly Member Maritza Davila.

Puerto Rico has been rocked by earthquakes over the last week, with tremors up to a 6.4 magnitude. In the aftermath, nearly one million people were without power, and thousands were living in shelters.

The governor's delegation will survey areas impacted by the quakes and assess damage to determine what support the state can provide. They will also meet with residents who are currently sheltered in a local high school.

The National Guard will assist in emergency response efforts over the next 90 days. Along with personnel, New York State will send tents, blankets, pillows and emergency preparedness kits.

Andrew Cuomo

Traveling to #PuertoRico today with a delegation to assess the damage & determine what more NY can do to help.

I'm deploying 115 National Guard to assist with earthquake recovery efforts. NY will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in Puerto Rico.

"Puerto Rico is still hurting from the destruction caused by Hurricane Maria and the federal government's protracted recovery over two years ago, and now the island is once again being dealt a devastating blow with a series of earthquakes and tremors that has caused widespread damage and power outages, leaving thousands of families in shelters," Cuomo said in a statement.

"From day one New York has been a tremendous supporter of the recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, and we will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the island during these challenging times. New York State will deploy National Guard to assist in emergency response efforts, and I will be traveling with a delegation to assess the damage and determine what more we can do to help."
In addition, New York City Major Bill de Blasio said that the city would send 24 more city personnel to help the City of San Juan and its surrounding areas. The response team including building inspectors, engineers, emergency managers, and mental health professionals.

In a press conference on Tuesday afternoon, de Blasio praised New York City workers who have worked in Puerto Rico in past emergencies and reiterated the city's commitment to helping Puerto Ricans. He also called out the Trump administration's lack of response to the recent earthquakes, encouraging the federal government to release the $18 billion in disaster funding that has been approved by Congress for Puerto Rico but has not been released.

"If this were just a matter of Puerto Rico being in trouble and the question was, would New York City be there, it'd be a no brainer," the mayor said. "We were there last time, we're there this time, we're going to be with Puerto Rico every step of the way. If that's all it took, this would be a much easier conversation. But the problem is, what Puerto Rico needs the most is for the federal government to show up. Puerto Rico is a part of the United States of America but it's rarely treated that way. Puerto Rico needs the US government to step up and really help in this moment of crisis."

Mayor Bill de Blasio

Puerto Rico is our sixth borough — we’ll ALWAYS be there for them. Join me at @NYCEmergencyMgt headquarters.

https://www.pscp.tv/w/cO4XNiF4blIfyeW5Hbk5MRV18MU1ZR05QTVJWeVZ4d_s78u2-9jH19m5PNHuBWwW9JKvlBssssRmiKjtGS1aHI ...

Return to top

National Guard triples force in Puerto Rico as New York prepares to send troops

Stars and Stripes, January 14, 2020 ::

Puerto Rico has activated more than 650 of its National Guard members with 115 more traveling from New York to help construct and support tent shelters across the southern region of the island where thousands of residents continue to sleep outdoors for fear of another major earthquake.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Tuesday authorized the activation of troops for up to 90 days and said he intends to travel to the island to tour impacted areas along the southern edge of the U.S. territory.

Hundreds of small quakes, mostly too weak to feel, began rocking Puerto Rico on Dec. 28, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. But a magnitude 5.8 earthquake hit Jan. 6 with a larger 6.4-magnitude striking just before dawn Jan. 7, which led Gov. Wanda Vazquez to
declare an emergency and activate the National Guard. Since then, troop levels have increased as they continue to support requests from local governments and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Vazquez estimated damage from the largest earthquake at $110 million, with a total of 559 structures affected, The Associated Press reported. More than 4,000 people have been staying in shelters.

On Saturday, a 5.9-magnitude quake didn’t appear to cause injury or damage, but revived people’s fears that the worst is not yet over.

The Puerto Rico National Guard is building tent cities in Ponce, Peñuelas, Guayanilla, Yauco and Guánica that will shelter thousands of displaced people, said Lt. Col. Paul Dahlen, spokesman for the Puerto Rico National Guard. He estimated about 500 to 600 homes were damaged, but hundreds of others were sleeping in the open air in case another earthquake hit.

“Many people don’t feel safe in their houses,” Dahlen said.

An aftershock forecast released by the Geological Survey on Monday predicted a 3% chance of another earthquake of 6.4-magnitude or greater within the next seven days. Most likely, the aftershocks will continue to decrease in severity over the next month, according to the forecast.

The National Guard Bureau in Washington also sent a team to Puerto Rico to help with the local mission, said April Cunningham, spokeswoman for the bureau.

“Joint liaison teams work closely with states and territories and coordinate with every level of government to rapidly provide much-needed resources,” she said.

Each tent built by the Guard can hold between 1,000 and 1,500 people, Dahlen said, adding troops also provide security at the facilities. Some tents have air-conditioning and are prioritized for the elderly and families with small children. Others are being used as recreation spaces and dining facilities.

As of Monday evening, the National Guard had distributed more than 72,000 bottles of water and 30,000 meals, Dahlen said. The Guard also activated medical personnel, including mental health professionals and chaplains who are available to speak to civilians experiencing stress or trauma in the wake the earthquakes.

To provide laundry and shower services, about 200 soldiers from the island’s 430th Quartermaster Company of the Army Reserve were activated Monday.

“If the local authorities need federal military assistance, there is no need to wait for resources to arrive from outside Puerto Rico. Our command is already here on the island, prepositioned and ready to assist immediately,” said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey W. Jurasek, senior Army officer in the Caribbean.
The facilities should be operational Tuesday, Dahlen said.

“In addition to the military support, it’s great to see the outpouring of grassroots organizations bringing food and water and supplies and entertainment to ease the suffering a little bit,” he said. Some locations even have large projection screens to show children’s movies.

“It helps the morale,” Dahlen said.

The New York National Guard’s 105th Airlift Wing, based at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, is preparing to send a disaster relief bed-down system that supports about 150 people, at the request Puerto Rican emergency management officials, according to a news release. The system includes air-conditioned tents that can house 16 to 20 people each, shower and latrine facilities, a kitchen and self-help laundry machines, water purification capabilities and generators.

The wing will also dispatch 26 Air National Guard specialists who will set up the facility with 15 remaining on site for up to 90 days to run the shelter system, according to the release.

Cuomo said in a statement that New York “will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the island during these challenging times.”

Outside of these tent cities, the Puerto Rico National Guard is helping municipalities with everything from directing traffic to standby ambulance services to providing perimeter security at a prison.


**Return to top**

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**New York Army National Guard**

**NY National Guard Soldiers train for new fitness test**

*Army.mil, January 10, 2020 ::*

By Staff Sgt. Warren Wright | New York National Guard January 10, 2020

SYRACUSE, New York - For active-duty Soldiers, the day begins before sunrise; donning Army physical fitness uniforms and heading out for PT.

Daily physical fitness training is one of the essential tasks of a Soldier's day.
For the part-time Soldiers of the Army National Guard, maintaining the Army's demanding physical fitness standards means finding creative ways to exercise at home and on their own time, far away from the influences and guidance of unit leadership.

Now, with the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) replacing the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) in October, Soldiers will need to do more than work on their pushups, sit-ups and run to pass the new test, according to Sgt. 1st Class Travis C. Muhlnickel, a master fitness trainer with the New York Army National Guard's 10th Mountain Division Main Command Post -- Operational Detachment (MCP-OD).

Based in Syracuse, the MCP-OD augments the 10th Mountain Division's command post during combat deployments.

"The ACFT is a solid, holistic test," Muhlnickel said. "It's more comprehensive than the APFT, so if Soldiers train for the ACFT, it's going to benefit them in all areas of their physical levels."

Instead of testing in three areas like the APFT -- pushups, sit-ups, and a two-mile run -- the new ACFT will push Soldiers to their limits by using six events to test everything from muscular strength, explosive power, balance, muscular endurance, agility and aerobic endurance, he noted.

Muhlnickel said preparing Soldiers for the ACFT will require a multitude of physical fitness activities to target muscle groups tested in the new comprehensive test. This process could be difficult for reserve-component Soldiers without a proper understanding of how to approach their fitness training at home, he added.

"I think the only reason it's more difficult is that (reserve component Soldiers) have less structured lifestyles," he said.

"However, the resources are just as available. From where most people live, they're usually within driving distance of a gym. But if not, we want to make sure they understand there are a lot of exercises that can be done without any equipment. If you have some self-motivation, it can be done," he emphasized.

During one of the MCP-OD's drills in late 2019, Muhlnickel and other noncommissioned officers spent a day showing Soldiers how they can better prepare for the ACFT in between drills.

"The emphasis was arming them with exercises that can be done with or without a gym and with minimal equipment," Muhlnickel said.

Muhlnickel's team demonstrated how to conduct power jumps to build explosive power, chest presses to build muscular strength, and squat exercises to build endurance.
"Training like this is great because it's one thing to read about it in a book or watch a video, but to have it demonstrated by people who know what they're doing, it was awesome," said Lt. Col. Brian Bonanno, the MCP-OD's commander.

"As Soldiers, part of our job is to be physically fit, whether we're Guard or active component. (Training) like this is vital because we're preparing for this important test which is going to determine promotions, schools, people's careers and command," Bonanno said.

Ultimately, it's up to the Soldiers to take responsibility for their physical fitness, Bonanno said. "Don't wish for it, work for it. You're not going to show up and just pass this test. ... If you're ignoring this, hiding under your sheets and not getting out of bed and getting physically fit, you're going to fail."


New York National Guard

Letter: Giving thanks to Trees for Troops contributors

Daily Messenger, January 11, 2020 ::

Thank you for participating in the 2019 Trees for Troops program sponsored by the Christmas Spirit Foundation. Over the past 15 years, with the support of many tree farmers, organizations, school groups, companies and individuals across the nation, this program has contributed almost 245,000 trees to soldiers and their families in over 79 bases in the U.S. and overseas.

This year, over 18,000 trees were delivered to soldiers in all branches of the service, including local National Guard units, West Point and over 650 trees went to our soldiers at Fort Drum in Watertown. New York tree farmers and donors contributed over 15% of the total trees, over 3,200 trees.

Special thanks go out to all who helped us again this year: Magee Fire Department, Phelps American Legion Seeley B. Parish Post 457, LS Lee Inc., Steve Van Camp Tire Service and the many, many businesses, organizations, individuals and our tree farm customers.

A special thank you to the area tree farms who also participated: Brickle Tree Farm in Phelps, Castle Breeze Christmas Trees in Seneca Castle and Buttonwood Farms in Watkins Glen.

To our soldiers, please come home safe and until then, we will support you the way we know best: giving you and your family a farm-fresh, made in the USA Christmas tree.
Dick and Mary Ellen Darling

Darling’s Tree Farm - Clifton Springs


PFOA Issue

Maloney legislation to require PFAS testing passes House

Mid-Hudson News, January 13, 2020::

WASHINGTON – Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney’s (D, NY-18) bill calling for PFAS testing, passed in the House of Representatives with bipartisan support. The bill was included in a larger bill package, the PFAS Action Act, which Maloney cosponsored.

The Hudson Valley lawmaker’s bill requires testing of all PFAS substances under the Toxic Substances Control Act by any entity that manufactures or processes PFAS chemicals.

The bill also requires the Environmental Protection Agency to set testing requirements for all PFAS substances and makes all results public.

“Every family across the Hudson Valley and America deserves to know they have a reliable, clean water source,” he said.

The concern about PFAS chemicals in the region stems from the revelation over three years ago that the chemical was finding its way from the Stewart Air National Guard Base into Washington Lake, the City of Newburgh’s water source.

Since then, the spigot was turned off and the city has been receiving its water from the New York City Catskill Aqueduct with the state footing the bill.

The measure now goes to the Senate for action.

https://midhudsonnews.com/2020/01/13/maloney-legislation-to(require-pfas-testing-passes-house-2/

Veterans
Upstart Democrat eyes 131st state Assembly seat

Ithaca.com, Jan. 15 2020:

CANANDAIGUA — State Assemblyman Brian Kolb hasn’t had many challengers to his job representing the 131st Assembly District. If the Republican decides to run again in 2020, he will have at least one opponent.

Democrat Matt Miller, 24, an Irondequoit native who now lives in Canandaigua, plans to challenge Kolb, who is at the center of controversy over his recent DWI arrest. He recently stepped down from his position as Assembly minority leader position, but has not indicated whether he will run for another term.

Miller began his candidacy last summer and has been holding meet-and-greet events with voters in recent weeks, including the Canandaigua coffee house Dalai Java. He said he hopes to arrange similar events around the district, including Geneva and Seneca County.

Miller said the reception to his candidacy has been positive.

A former member of the New York National Guard, he now works at Ryan’s Wine and Spirits in Canandaigua. Miller said his first choice is to become the district’s next state assemblyman, but if not, he plans to pursue a career in the beverage industry.

He said he became interested in running when he saw so many candidates without challengers in recent elections, including Kolb, who won his first Assembly seat in 2000.

Miller doesn’t think his age — he’ll be 25 on Friday — is a factor.

“Even though I am going to be 25, I have a lot of experience of being a regular New Yorker,” he said.

Miller said he was an intelligence analyst in the Guard, which involved gathering information and presenting solutions. It’s akin to the work of a state legislator, he said.

Miller has criticized Kolb on several issues, including those involving the climate. Miller said the changing climate is starting to impact agriculture in the Finger Lakes, pointing to the Seneca County flooding of 2018 as an example.

Miller noted that Kolb was allowed a recommendation for a state climate panel and he chose someone from the fossil-fuel industry, which he believed was counter-intuitive.

He said other issues important to his district include healthcare — in particular, the cost of prescription drugs. Miller noted that Gov. Andrew Cuomo is working on capping the cost of insulin, which has skyrocketed in price over the past few years.
Some Democrats in the Legislature are supporting the New York Health Act, which would provide publicly funded healthcare.

“"I am not so much in favor," he said. “I’d like to see a public option” that he said would compete with private insurance and, hopefully, drive down costs.

Miller said he is a supporter of allowing pharmacists to prescribe a limited number of medications, such as those for HIV prevention, which he said would save money by eliminating the need for a doctor’s visit. California has adopted such legislation, he said.

As for gun reform, Miller generally supports the SAFE Act, which has come under criticism by some pro-gun groups. As a former member of the military who has extensive experience handling firearms, Miller doesn’t see the SAFE Act as an infringement on Second Amendment rights.

“"Being pro-gun and pro-gun reform does not mean anti-gun," he said.

On the controversial bail reforms passed in the last Albany session, Miller supports the changes.

“I believe bail reform was a necessary step for New York to take,” he said. “We have to remember that these same people being released could already be released before the reform took place, so long as they had the money. A mother of three could be locked up and lose everything over not paying parking tickets, while someone who commits a terrible act could post bail and walk free.”

And as for his chances of winning in a district where Republicans have a significant enrollment advantage, Miller is undeterred.

“We’re pretty confident that this is something we can pull off and win,” he said, noting there are Democratic strongholds in the 131st District, including Geneva and Canandaigua, as well as strong enrollment in Seneca Falls and Waterloo. He said he hopes to appeal to many Republicans and independents as well.

“It just seems the district is looking for fresh ideas,” he said.


Return to top

Tonko closes 2019 with fundraising lead: Primaries on tap for 20th congressional district race
WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko, D-Amsterdam, ended the year with a comfortable fundraising lead over multiple challengers who are seeking his seat in 2020.

Tonko raised $179,920 in the fourth quarter of 2019, his campaign said. The six-term incumbent started this year with $771,510 in campaign cash on hand to fund his re-election effort.

"We’re ready to go out there and share what we’ve done, what we are in the midst of doing and what we hope to do as we go down the road," Tonko said. "Then, let the people give us our report card."

Tonko’s leading opponent, Republican Liz Joy, a Schenectady resident and real estate agent, said Sunday she raised $57,765 in the fourth quarter. Her total fundraising to date is $115,730.

"We've (more than) doubled our contributions from the last quarter and received overwhelming support and endorsements from all over the 20th Congressional District," said Joy, a Christian blogger and president of the Republican Women of Schenectady County. Joy declared her candidacy in April 2019.

A newcomer to the race, Republican Michael Seney said his campaign raised $40,202 in the fourth quarter. Seney, an Averill Park resident, is a Rensselaer County sheriff’s deputy and a captain in the Air National Guard.

Seney filed paperwork to run for Congress in October, and said the campaign has been a longtime goal of his. He entered 2020 with $27,702 in campaign cash on hand.

New York’s congressional primary is in June. It appears the 20th District will have a primary on both sides of the ticket.

Democrat Riley Seaburg declared his candidacy for the seat to the Federal Election Commission on Jan. 1. His campaign website indicates that he is a military veteran and owns a marketing company. Seaburg did not respond to requests for comment.

Tonko has not had a primary challenger since he took office in 2009.

“I think competition is good for the soul," Tonko said. "Obviously, the general public deserves a choice."


Return to top
VESTAL, NY (WSKG) — Republican Anthony German plans to suspend his campaign in the race for New York’s 19th Congressional District. The seat is currently held by Democrat Antonio Delgado.

A source close to the campaign told WSKG that German was bowing out. They said an official statement is forthcoming, along with an endorsement for another Republican candidate in the race. Ola Hawatmeh and Michael Roth have both filed for the Republican line with the Federal Elections Commission.

German entered the race in August. He’s a retired two-star general of the National Guard.


KINGSTON, N.Y. — A retired two-star general from Oneonta has dropped out of the race for New York's 19th Congressional District seat, which currently is held by Democrat Antonio Delgado.

"To all who have supported my campaign over the last few months, I regret to inform you that I am withdrawing my candidacy in the 19th Congressional District of New York," Tony German said in a prepared statement. "It has truly been a pleasure meeting with you, speaking with you and working with you in our efforts to get Washington back to work serving the American people."

A lifelong Republican, German announced his campaign in August 2019. He is a retired general and former adjutant general of the New York National Guard, and he is a graduate of SUNY Oneonta and the Naval War College.

Delgado, of Rhinebeck, is serving his first two-year term in the House.

Two other Republicans have announced their candidacies for the 19th Congressional District seat: Ola Hawatmeh, a fashion designer and two-time breast cancer survivor from Poughkeepsie; and Mike Roth, an Ellenville resident and Brooklyn College graduate.
In his statement, German threw his support behind Hawatmeh, calling her "a good friend and strong candidate."

"She is an outsider with a powerful message, and I will be fully supporting her while she continues her campaign," German said. "I encourage you to support her efforts just as much as you have mine."


Former Olean disc jockey, who now serves as a priest, seeking liver donation

Olean Times Herald, January 14, 2020 :

Rev. John P. Mack could be described as living a full and rich life, having worked as a disc jockey in the Olean area, serving as a former chaplain with the military and now dedicating his life to the priesthood.

Mack, a Roman Catholic priest for the Diocese of Buffalo and a faculty member at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, is also facing one of his greatest challenges in his search for a living liver donor who can help save his life.

A longtime friend of Mack’s, Kevin Keenan, is serving as one of Mack’s “champions” by spreading the word to help him find a living liver donor. Keenan said Mack lived in Olean in the late 1970s and worked at WMNS-AM, now WOEN-AM, before entering the seminary.

Mack was also involved with Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels Church at the time.

“He and I have been friends since the 1970s when we were disc jockeys at WMNS,” Keenan shared. “He married my wife and me, baptized our son and buried my wife’s parents. He is truly our family priest.”

Mack shared highlights of his life, and the diagnosis that changed his life, during a telephone interview Monday from his home in Buffalo. Additional information was also obtained from his website.

A native of Rochester, Mack worked on the air as a disc jockey both in Olean and Seneca Falls before studying for the priesthood. Ordained on June 1, 1985, all of his pastoral assignments have been in Western New York. In addition to his ministry, he is a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus in the St. Joseph Assembly at Christ the King Seminary and has published a number of books, including: “Priests: An Inside Look.”

During his military service, he was deployed numerous times to different locations.

Mack said he was diagnosed five years ago with non-alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver, a chronic condition that can be defined as the liver manifestation of a metabolic disorder. It is considered the most severe form of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

“The last year and a half has been when it’s really gotten bad,” Mack said of the disease.

This past October, upon the advice of the liver transplant specialists at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, he said his life entered a new phase when doctors recommended he be placed on a liver transplant list for a living donor.

“In November, I was officially added to the Liver Transplant List through Strong Memorial Hospital Transplant Clinic,” he commented. He then met with his team of champions, who include Keenan and are helping to spread the message about organ donation for their friend as well as living liver donations.

“The transplant numbers are up in all areas,” Mack said of organ donations. “It’s still not enough, because there are people who wait and don’t make it.”

Mack noted the process could take several months or even a few years to find a donor match, which is one of the reasons he is on the transplant list now.

As he is not acutely ill, Mack is still able to teach and celebrate Mass as long as he manages his time to include plenty of rest.

He said the surgery for the Living Donor Liver Transplant is quite extensive and can take 10 to 12 hours for the recipient, as well as six to eight hours for the donor. Recovery time for the donor can be six to eight weeks. During this type of transplant, a piece of the liver is removed from a healthy living donor and the part that remains in the donor regenerates in six to eight weeks. The transplanted segment will also regenerate in six to eight weeks.

The potential living liver donor for Mack would have A or O positive or negative blood and would be between the ages of 18 and 55, in relatively good health, have a medium to large build and a body mass index no higher than 30, among other health requirements.

“I appreciate people’s support, because this journey is uncertain,” Mack remarked.

For more information on helping Mack as a potential donor, contact Jennie Errigo, registered nurse and donor coordinator at Strong Memorial at (585) 275-5875, and state the identifier information as John P. Mack and his date of birth, April 27, 1954.
World War I

Fighting off German soldiers single-handedly during WWI, meet the one-man army Henry Johnson

Face2Face Africa, January 14, 2020 ::

Even though minorities served in the U.S. military since the Revolutionary War, they were usually not given the needed training and support compared to their white folks.

That was William Henry Johnson’s situation from the beginning. The Albany, New York native had enlisted in the all-black 15th New York National Guard Regiment, which was renamed the 369th Infantry Regiment when it shipped out to France.

The unit performed menial jobs as members were poorly trained but it was later lent to the French Fourth Army, which was experiencing a shortage of men.

With the French Army, Johnson would perform an act of heroism, earning him praise from then-President Theodore Roosevelt who eventually called him one of the “five bravest Americans” to serve in World War I.

What was this brave act? Johnson fought off scores of Germans single-handedly in the Forest of Argonne in 1918 during World War I.

Having joined the French Fourth Army, Johnson and his men who became the Harlem Hellfighters, were sent to the front lines in March 1918. They learned enough French words to be able to understand commands from superiors. They were given French rifles and helmets, even though they held on to the bolo knives used by the U.S. Army.

Alongside Needham Roberts, a man from Trenton, Johnson was assigned sentry duty on the western edge of the Forest of Argonne in 1918.

Johnson and Roberts were given the late shift; they were to patrol until midnight on the evening of May 14. They weren’t on duty long when the Germans started attacking them.

It first started with strange noises late into the night. Hearing these, Johnson urged Roberts, who was then tired and resting, to get up. But Roberts ignored, thinking his fellow soldier was just nervous.
Johnson, nevertheless, began “piling up his assortment of grenades and rifle cartridges within arm’s reach. If someone was coming, he would be ready,” writes Then he began to hear rustling noises, which ultimately became German soldiers who were rushing through the darkness. Realizing they were surrounded, Johnson urged Roberts to run and get help. This was around 2am.

Roberts didn’t go far before he decided to return to help Johnson fight off the Germans, who had then begun firing at them.

Roberts was hit with a grenade in the process and got badly wounded to the extent that he couldn’t fight. Lying in the trench, Johnson handed him grenades, which he threw at the Germans.

But the German forces were too many, and they were advancing from every direction. Soon, Johnson ran out of grenades.

“He took German bullets in the head and lip but fired his rifle into the darkness. He took more bullets in his side, then his hand, but kept shooting until he shoved an American cartridge clip into his French rifle and it jammed,” an article on Smithsonian Magazine said.

By now, the Germans were on top of him. Johnson swung his rifle like a club and kept them at bay until the stock of his rifle splintered; then he went down with a blow to his head. Overwhelmed, he saw that the Germans were trying to take Roberts prisoner. The only weapon Johnson had left was a bolo knife, so he climbed up from the ground and charged, hacking away at the Germans before they could get clean shot at him,” the article added.

Stabbing the German forces, including one in the ribs who had climbed on his back, Johnson was able to drag Roberts away from the Germans. After about an hour, the Germans retreated when they heard French and American forces advancing.

When reinforcements finally arrived, Johnson and Roberts were given medical attention. By day, officials found out Johnson had killed four Germans and wounded about 24 others.

Despite suffering 21 wounds, Johnson had prevented the Germans from breaking the French line.

“There wasn’t anything so fine about it,” he said later. “Just fought for my life. A rabbit would have done that.”

Having grabbed the unofficial label “the Black Death” and the official rank of sergeant, Johnson and his fellow soldiers prepared to return home to New York.

But before then, the French honored Johnson and Roberts with the Croix de Guerre, one of France’s highest awards for valor. They became the first two Americans to receive it. Johnson’s medal, however, included the coveted Gold Palm, for extraordinary valor.
In February 1919 when Johnson and the Harlem Hellfighters returned to New York, a parade to honor them was held at Fifth Avenue, with Johnson leading the procession in an open-top Cadillac while thousands celebrated them for their bravery.

But this bravery resulted in difficulties for most of them, especially Johnson.

He had returned from the war with bullets striking both feet, his thigh, his arm, and his head. A scar stretched over his lip, and he had to have a metal plate inserted into his left foot, according to Mental Floss.

These injuries prevented him from grabbing many employment opportunities and sources say his wife and three children subsequently left him.

Even after his death on July 1, 1929, it was unclear where his remains were until historians at the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs found out in 2001 that he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

The following year, the New York native, who grew up doing many odd jobs before becoming a soldier, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. In 2015, then-President Barack Obama topped it with the award of the Medal of Honor.

What is more, every June 5, Albany celebrates Henry Johnson Day to acknowledge the day he enlisted while the city has an award under his name for people who make contributions to the area’s development.


Return to top