



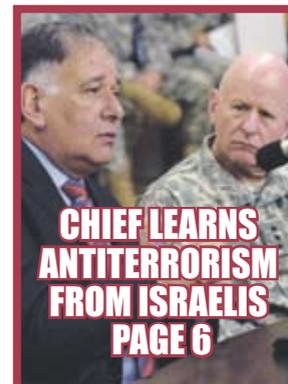
THE ON GUARD

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Delaware National Guard photo

Helping hands

A Delaware National Guard soldier from the 153rd Military Police Company, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, gives an Iraqi citizen from Arab Jabour training on police tactics and techniques. Read story on page 5.

Five Guard brigades alerted for '09 deployments

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Defense officials announced today the deployment of five National Guard brigade combat teams to begin in the summer of 2009.

These units will replace units that have not yet deployed. Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters the units are being identified well in advance to give maximum time possible for mission-specific training.

"It's a tribute to the military planners who are trying to provide -- particularly for our National Guard brigades -- the type of timely notification so they can be prepared for the specific missions, but also to give the predictability for their families and employers," Whitman said.

The Soldiers will be mobilized for 12 months.

The Defense Department alerted the 53rd and 48th brigade combat teams, roughly 7,000 soldiers, to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. "The 48th Infantry Brigade is from Georgia, and its mission will be to train the Afghan national security forces," Whitman said. "The 53rd, out of Florida, will assume battlespace in Afghanistan and conduct the full spectrum of operations."

DEPLOYMENTS continued on: Page 12

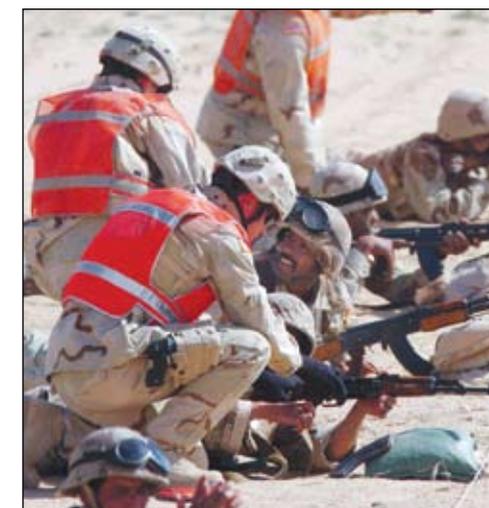


Photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Edward Martens

Soldiers of the 155th Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, train Iraqi National Guard in April 2005.

Hundreds called up after storms in Northwest

Heavy rains and hurricane-force winds prompted two states in the Pacific Northwest to activate almost 500 National Guard troops on Dec. 4 to conduct recovery operations.

Storms caused flood watches in Washington state and along the coast of Oregon.

In Washington, about 350 National Guard troops provided support to law enforcement officials, conducted search and rescue operations, established traffic control points along Interstate 5, provided drinking water and Meals Ready to Eat for evacuees in Shelton, Wash., and transported eight pallets of sandbags to Kitsap County Fire Stations.

They also provided four, 7,500-watt generators for the South Bend School District. About 30 Guardmembers evacuated residents of Centralia in Lewis County.

The Oregon National Guard (ORNG) sent two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to Rochester, Wash., to help evacuate residents, Kay Friestad, a spokeswoman for the ORNG, told "The Oregonian." The helicopters were equipped with full crews and medics.

The two states have a memorandum of understanding to help each other during an emergency.

"It's pretty devastating, and you can only imagine what it was like for the people trying to get out," Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire said on a tour of the flood damage.

Both governors, Gregoire and Theodore R. Kulongoski of Oregon, declared a state of emergency in their respective states Dec. 3.

Kulongoski and other state officials visited coastal towns in the northwest part of the state hit hard by widespread flooding.

They arrived in Vernonia, Ore., via an ORNG UH-60 Black Hawk, and spoke with residents and town officials affected by heavy rains which pounded the Oregon coast. The governor held a press conference at the Oregon Army National Guard aviation facility following the group's return to Salem.

Both the governor and Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, deputy director of State Affairs for the ORNG, lauded the quick response of local and state agencies.

They pointed to the recent interagency emergency exercise, TOPOFF 4, held in mid-October, in helping prepare rescue and relief agencies for such a disaster.

The ORNG in particular, said the governor, is very good at conducting relief efforts. "But now we're doing a great job at recovery," he added.

Oregon's 125th Special Tactics Squadron (STS) was mobilized on Dec. 3 to assist first responders in the rescue of citizens of Vernonia.

By the time the mission was completed, about 400 residents had been evacuated by the unit.

Due to extreme weather conditions and obstacles on the ground, rescue by air was considered too risky.

The 125th STS, with support from the 141st Support Battalion, arrived in Vernonia overnight and quickly deployed four zodiac

FLOODING continued on: Page 12

Year in review: Pages 7-10



Training day: getting to know you during a very big game

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

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BALTIMORE – Airman 1st Class Adam Lewellen, meet Detective Ryan Felker and Trainee Leighton McDermott. Sgt. Timothy Carte, meet Detective Lakishia Sawyer. 2nd Lt. Winston Bridgeman, meet Sgt. Lavern Ellis.

There was a whole lot of meeting and getting-to-know-you by members of the Maryland National Guard and the Baltimore Police Department during the 108th Army-Navy football here on the first Saturday in December.

It turned out to be a glad day for bowl-bound Navy and a sad day for Army because Navy convincingly won the nationally televised game, 38-3, before a full house of 71,610 at M&T Bank Stadium, home of the NFL's Baltimore Ravens.

The fact that Dec. 1 was a training day for about 25 Soldiers in the Maryland Army Guard's 200th Military Police Company from nearby Catonsville and for a like number of members of the Air Guard's 175th Security Forces Squadron out of Martin State Airport was one of the less visible elements of the big college game.

The orange smoke-trailing parachutists, the mule and goat mascots, the flyovers by the Navy's F-18s and the Maryland Army Guard's Black Hawk helicopters, the Naval Academy Glee Club's moving rendition of the national anthem, the videos about the rivalry played on the stadium's two giant screens, the field-size flag and Lee Greenwood's performance of "God Bless the U.S.A." during halftime, and the action on the



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor

gridiron were the riveting aspects of this venerable athletic event.

But it did lend itself to a training venue for the National Guard's role in homeland security which, it is safe to bet, will gain more momentum during 2008 and beyond. It was a chance for the first military and civilian responders to a domestic emergency – the National Guard and the police – to get acquainted in case they are suddenly thrown together because of a terrorist attack or some other crisis.

Guardmembers, police detectives and Baltimore Police Academy trainees were teamed into threesomes to secure the route for the march of the West Point cadets and the Naval Academy midshipmen into the stadium before the game. The Guardmembers were then paired up with other Baltimore police people to provide security inside the stadium during the brisk fall afternoon's contest. Members of the Army Guard and Air Guard police forces also got to work together.

The fact that it was not especially taxing duty, because there

were no serious incidents, did not diminish the importance of the mission during the long day that began before sunrise for the Guard and police forces.

"This is a follow-on for our Vigilant Guard exercise that we conducted at this stadium in September and a preparatory event for the National Guard Association of the United States' conference that will be held here next September," explained Maryland Army Guard Lt. Col. Kevin Preston.

"To me, this is a partnership. We're sharing skills, information and resources," said Baltimore Police Lt. Milton Corbet, who is in charge of the department's Overtime Special Events Unit. Corbet was responsible for securing the route of the pregame march.

"A lot of these Guard people are in law enforcement fulltime," the imposing Corbet added. "They bring additional experience to this detail. They fill in a void so that other members of the Baltimore Police Department can fight crime in the streets instead of having to be here."

Indeed, the Maryland Guardmembers included police officers from Delaware, the Aberdeen Proving Ground and Andrews Air Force Base. Army Guard Col. John Russo was the Guard force's liaison with the Baltimore PD from which he retired as a sergeant in late 2002. Many of the Guardmembers said they would have been on duty in their civilian jobs that Saturday had they not been performing their military training beside Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

They were, however, glad to have the chance to get acquainted with their police counterparts

on a national stage even if some of them did not see much of the game. "I love this detail," said Carte, who patrolled the concessions area with Sawyer and the Bridgeman-Ellis team. "It doesn't seem like a game at all. But it's another chance for the MPs to get out into the public. And we get to train with the Baltimore police so we would know who they are and they would know who we are if something were to really go down."

It was not the MPs' first exposure to a high-profile event. "A lot of these people have worked the Preakness," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Naegele about the horserace that is run in Baltimore every May when the world watches to see if the Kentucky Derby winner remains in the hunt for the Triple Crown.

Nor did the Guard people have to learn a lot of the ropes about dealing firmly but politely with the public. "We know a lot about that from MP school and because so many of us are police officers," Naegele added.

Still, every Soldier and policeman worth their salt will tell you there is no such thing as too much hands-on training. "I love Army training. I love doing anything outside of the armory. And I'd love to work with these policemen again," said Army Guard Sgt. Timothy Sank, a Baltimore firefighter.

Who knows. The training during the Army-Navy game may have provided the Guard MPs and security forces people and the members of the Baltimore police with some of the valuable knowledge they would need should something terrible disrupt their world.



Offline *By SSG W. Michael Houk*

Missouri partners to help Afghan farmers

By Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn
National Guard Bureau

Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

That well-known proverb is the philosophy behind the Army National Guard's use of an all-Soldier team of agricultural experts to improve agri-business in Afghanistan.

Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard, announced Dec. 6 that the first-ever Agri-business Development Team (ADT) will deploy to eastern Afghanistan in late winter 2008.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Vaughn, Missouri Farm Bureau President Charles Kruse and adjutant general of the Missouri National Guard Maj. Gen. King Sidwell, have explored the idea to deploy Soldiers with agricultural expertise for over a year.

Several deployments demonstrated the important role agriculture plays in the lives of Afghanistan's people.

Agriculture makes up 45 percent of the gross domestic product, and the industry employs over 70 percent of the population. Unfortunately, many of their practices are inefficient or seriously out of date.

"They're where we were 300 years ago," said Col. Martin Leppert, who deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 and now serves as the Afghanistan ADT coordinator.

The Guard is uniquely positioned, as Citizen-Soldiers who use these skills in their civilian lives, to begin a grassroots, cooperative effort with the universities, the farming community and the state to bring aid and education to the Afghan farmer, he said. Through the use of internet, voice communications and virtual satellite technology, the Soldiers will

be able to "reach back" to agricultural expertise within the states.

The program will function with the help of the Missouri Farm Bureau, University of Missouri and the National Guard Bureau. The ADT is partnered with U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Agency for International Development and others to ensure maximum use of resources, efficient coordination and avoid conflict with other projects.

The ADT consists of Soldiers with a variety of agriculture expertise: from diesel mechanics who fix the farm equipment, to veterinarians. They will work to improve the irrigations systems and teach various farming techniques for fertilizing, planting, marketing, or storage of

crops.

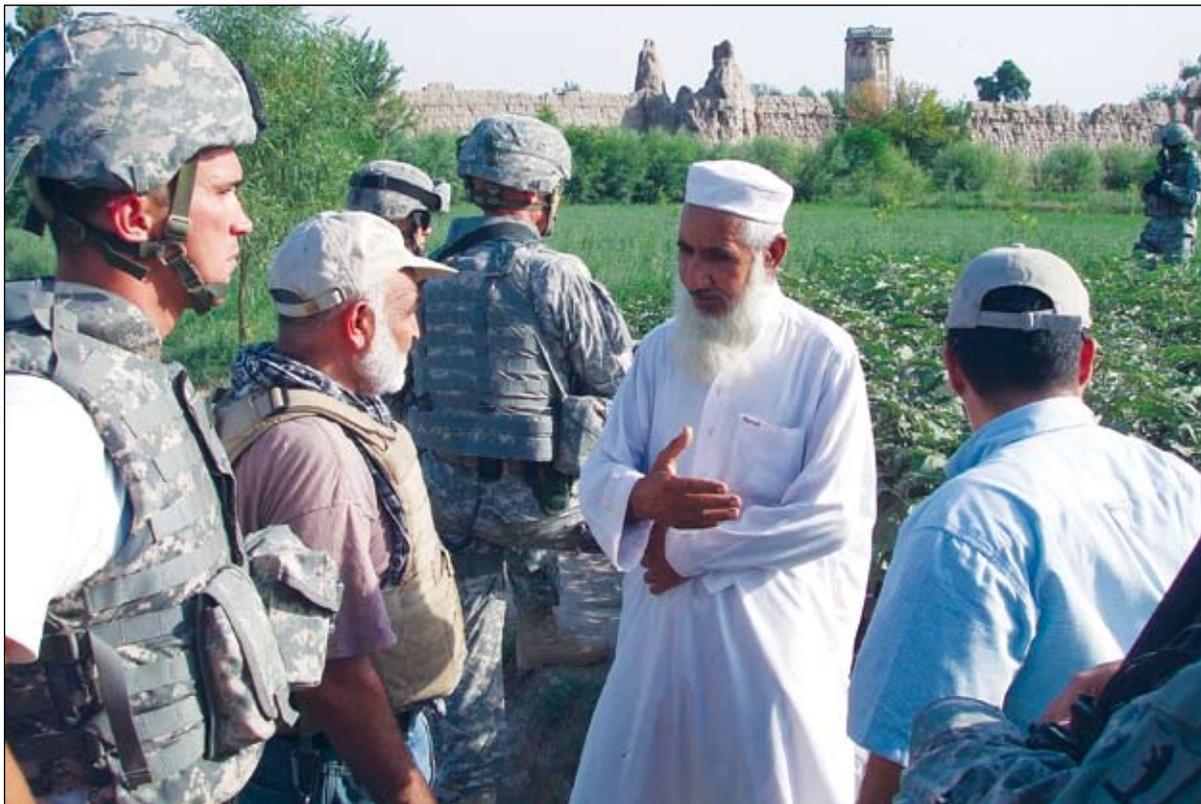
"While deployed, we will be looking for Afghan solutions for Afghan challenges," said Capt. Doug Dunlap, executive officer of the ADT, "Everything that works for Missouri farmers may not necessarily be a solution for Afghan farmers, but we can certainly help them with some technical and infrastructure assistance."

The larger hope of the initiative is that by improving the economy, it will help to improve security in Afghanistan. In the past, Afghanistan agricultural areas that have provided a place for Taliban to take refuge, as many peasant farmers are easily led to join the insurgency for lack of a better livelihood.

Afghanistan is the leading producer of the world's opium, the raw material from which heroin is made, and many of its fields are lush with the crops of opium poppy plants. We want to establish agribusiness as an alternative livelihood to the easy life of growing poppies, says Leppert.

The project's leaders have made two trips to Afghanistan to get the emerging partnership off the ground. The groups met with Afghan community leaders and local farmers to discuss the details of the partnership.

A small advance party deployed to the Jalabad area earlier this fall, and a larger team of approximately 50 people, including security forces, will deploy in late winter.



Members of the Missouri Army National Guard's Agri-business Development Team visit with a local farmer in eastern Afghanistan to discuss how they will assist the farmers in that region in the future.

Photo courtesy of Col. Martin Leppert

Army prepares to launch new pay, personnel system

By Sgt. Sara Moore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - The Army is getting ready to launch a new pay and personnel system next year that will streamline personnel processes and integrate the active-duty, National Guard and Army Reserve components, the Army representative for the new program said.

The Army Defense Integrated Human Resources System, which is part of a Defense Department initiative, will be implemented Oct. 1, 2008, at all Army installations and within all service components, Army Col. Patrick Devine, program director of DIMHRS, told online journalists and bloggers during a conference call.

DIMHRS is a commercial product that will take the pay and personnel data from all three components of the Army and put it in a single database accessible online 24 hours a day. A key feature of DIMHRS is that it integrates the pay and personnel systems, which means that when a personnel action is taken, the system automatically will trigger any associated pay change, Devine said.

DIMHRS goes toward solving the problem

of multi-component units, or those units made up of Soldiers from the active duty, National Guard and Army Reserve, Devine said. In the past, these units had to deal with six different personnel systems and three pay systems, he noted, and DIMHRS will consolidate those into one system.

A big benefit that DIMHRS will give National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers is continuity of pay when they are mobilized, Devine said. In the current environment, National Guard Soldiers go through five different sites from mobilization to deployment and have to complete paperwork and be certified at each location, he said. When DIMHRS is launched, all military pay will be handled in the one system, and will be coordinated with personnel data so problems can be avoided.

"In a DIMHRS environment, it's one record per soldier for military personnel and pay, so all that information is shared and it further expedites his entitlements and getting his compensation," Devine said.

A unique aspect of DIMHRS is that it will allow Soldiers to access their records and make certain self-service changes, such as a change of address or requesting a personnel action, Devine

said. In this way, every Soldier will be a user of the system, and all supervisors, including Army civilians who supervise Soldiers, will be required to know the system so they can process leave requests, awards and evaluations, he said.

To prepare for the implementation of this new system, the Army is launching an ambitious training program designed to reach all installations, Devine said. The training team starts by briefing senior leadership on the program, he said, then moves to battalion- and brigade-level leadership, and then briefs the human resources personnel who will be using the system the most.

The Army also is making distance-learning materials available for DIMHRS and will be training Soldiers to be instructors on the system, Devine said. The DIMHRS Web site, at www.armydimhrs.army.mil, also will have all the training materials available to Soldiers, he said.

The Web site also includes other helpful materials, such as a universal translator to help with commercial terms Soldiers may not be familiar with, and work force readiness packages which describe how each action was done under the old system and how it will be done under DIMHRS.

Start Walkin'!

Army Guard promotes physical activity with program

ARLINGTON, Va. - The Army National Guard recently announced the expansion of its strategic alliance with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) at the Army National Guard Readiness Center during a media event highlighting its efforts to become a Start! Fit Friendly worksite by the end of 2007.

Start! is the AHA's groundbreaking national movement that calls on all Americans and their employers to create a culture of physical activity and health to live longer, heart-healthy lives through walking.

Promoting physical activity through work-place walking programs can help employees reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke and lead longer, stronger, healthier lives.

The Army Guard is launching this effort to magnify its successful 2007 blood pressure awareness campaign, Get Cuffed!, as well as to support its upcoming 2008 weight management campaign, Lighten Up! both in partnership with the AHA.

The Decade of Health Program is a 10-year strategic outreach campaign promoting a healthy military force by emphasizing the central message, "Always Ready, Always There ... Always Healthy."

"The entire nation is focused on preventing and reducing health risks in the general population, and so is the Army National Guard. That's why we developed the Decade of Health Program to provide a targeted media outreach that includes an emphasis on health literacy in addressing critical wellness issues related to deployment and quality of life for our Soldiers today," said Col. David Sproat, the Army Guard's chief surgeon.

"The 2007 blood pressure campaign 'Get Cuffed!' is proving to be extremely successful in bringing awareness about this silent killer to thousands of Citizen-Soldiers and their families," he said. "We will pursue these same goals as we launch the 2008 campaign for healthy weight management."

Brisk walking for 30 minutes on most, or preferably all days can increase good cholesterol (HDL), lower blood pressure, reduce stress and can help attain and maintain a healthy body weight.



Guarding America

Alabama

Yellowhammer State's Company A, 115th Signal Battalion from Florence was recently awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for distinguished service in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004 and 2005. While deployed, Company A was attached to the 21st Signal Battalion of the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized). The award citation cited Company A for "outstanding support in providing continuous, redundant tactical communication support to the 1st Infantry Division's area of responsibility."

Alaska

The Last Frontier State's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Craig Campbell, visited the Airmen of the 478th Expeditionary Operations Squadron at Forward Operating Location Manta, Ecuador, Nov. 15. Airmen from the state's 168th Air Refueling Wing are currently deployed there. Campbell visited a "soup kitchen" that feeds children in a local impoverished neighborhood. While there, he pledged \$405 towards the purchase of two doors and three windows, which the building currently does not have.

Arizona

The Grand Canyon State's 162nd Fighter Wing at Tucson International Airport hosted the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton, Dec. 1. The congressional leader is responsible for the Department of Defense's funding and oversight. He heard a mission briefing from Brig. Gen. Rick Moiso, 162nd Fighter Wing commander, and later toured the unit's state-of-the-art engine maintenance shop and fire department.

California

One hundred Soldiers from the Golden State's Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment conducted a joint military exercise called Operation Rising Warrior in November with 200 Japanese Ground Self Defense Force soldiers at Fort Hunter Liggett. The soldiers practiced individual movement tactics and techniques based from lesson's learned during recent deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

Florida

Members of the Sunshine State's 44th Civil Support Team responded in early December to a possible chemical contamination at a cruise terminal located near Blount Island in Jacksonville. The exercise was part of an evaluation that each civil support team in the country undergoes every 18 months to ensure

that the team is prepared for actual chemical or biological attacks.

Georgia

The Peach State's 4th Platoon, 461st Postal Company of Decatur, Ga., took over the postal duties at Camp Taji, Iraq. Personnel sort hundreds of packages and letters daily at the central warehouse, maintaining this lifeline to the friends and families of Soldiers and civilians deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Guam

The Air and Army Guard hosted an open house in celebration of the National Guard's 371st birthday Dec. 13 at the Guam National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters at its Barrigada complex. During the open house, there were static displays, table-top displays and entertainment, such as a U.S. Army band quartet from Camp Zama, Japan, and tactical military demonstrations.

Hawaii

The Aloha State's adjutant general approved the use of the 93rd Civil Support Team Dec. 6 to support a real-world search and rescue effort on the island of Maui near the town of Kula. Two homes were washed into a gulch by a flash flood, and two people were missing. The 93rd CST was on the island conducting training with the 95th CST of California. The 93rd CST was to linkup with Maui County first responders

to support this effort.

Indiana

Hoosier State Col. Margaret S. Washburn was promoted to the rank of brigadier general Nov. 30. She is the first female to be promoted to the rank of general officer in the state's National Guard.

Kentucky

The Bluegrass State's 1st Cavalry Division and the 138th Fires Brigade conducted a traditional Saint Barbara's induction ceremony at the Al-Faw Palace, Iraq, Nov. 23. More than 130 Soldiers and guests attended the ceremony, a tradition among artillerymen, where 21 new members were inducted into the Order of St. Barbara. Two fallen Soldiers, Pvt. Sammie Phillips and Staff Sgt. Delmar White, were posthumously inducted into the order and recognized for their performance and commitment.

Maryland

Approximately 300 family members and significant others of the Old Line State's 1st Battalion, 158th Cavalry were treated to a holiday meal by the unit's Family Readiness Group at the Annapolis Armory Dec. 1. The 1/158th is part of the 58th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and is currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The annual holiday party was presented to promote a sense of community among the Soldiers and their fami-

lies, and the gathering also provided an opportunity for some family members to see their loved ones via satellite uplink from Iraq.

Minnesota

The North Star State's Chisholm-based 114th "Wolf Pack" Transportation Company christened 15 Palletized Load Systems (PLS) Dec. 1 at the Chisholm Armory. The convoy of trucks arrived from Camp Ripley. The new PLS are the first in the state's inventory and provide Soldiers with the capability of traversing through difficult terrain.

Missouri

Show Me State Citizen-Soldiers of the 70th Troop Command made school visits in November as part of this year's "The Power of 11 Cents" Program. Their mission was to thank students for raising money to benefit the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund. They also shared their feelings about why they became Soldiers and why we should honor past and current veterans. Plus, the children were taught the value of patriotism and why it's important to show pride in their country.

New Hampshire

Several members of the Granite State Guard were called up in early December to provide search and rescue support. They flew a UH-60A helicopter and drove a van that transported ground search personnel in Bear Brook State Park, Allenstown,

after a 70-year-old man on a hunting trip in the park did not return as scheduled.

New York

More than 1,400 members of the Empire State's 27th Brigade Combat Team conducted a week of training from Nov. 30 to Dec. 8 at Fort Drum, N.Y. in preparation for federal active duty in early 2008. This was the third premobilization training for 27th Brigade Soldiers since the unit was identified last spring for overseas deployment for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Ohio

Several dozen Buckeye State Guardmembers were provided a rare treat Nov. 10 as Ohio State University honored them with a military appreciation day during the Buckeyes' final home football game of the 2007 regular season. The Buckeyes hosted military members from all branches including 42 men and women—all who have been deployed overseas in support of the Global War on Terrorism—representing Ohio National Guard units from throughout the state. Four F-16 fighter jets from the Toledo-based 180th Fighter Wing performed a flyover.

Oregon

The Beaver State's 1st Battalion, 82nd Reconnaissance Squadron headquartered held an open house for news media Dec. 1-2 in response to a potential upcoming mobilization for the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, which includes the 1/82nd.

Texas

A specially-painted F-16C Fighting Falcon from the 111th Fighter Squadron from the Lone Star State flew in honor of the squadron's 90th anniversary in November. All the colors and markings have specific meanings, reflecting the unit's nine-decade history.

West Virginia

The Mountain State's 35th Civil Support Team responded to a water treatment plant break in Milton Nov. 26. Members reported to the scene and conducted water tests on five samples, which all proved negative.

Wyoming

The Cowboy State stood up the 920th Forward Support Company in Bighorn and Park counties Dec. 15, part of the transformation that the state's Army Guard is undergoing to better prepare for state and federal missions. The company provides support for the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Regiment.



Photo courtesy of Mr. Charles Kaminski

Glacial speed

Air National Guard aircrew members use a jet-assisted takeoff to depart Shackleton Glacier, located in the Transantarctic Mountains 500 miles south of McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Nov. 26. The aircrew conducted an open field landing to deliver a small National Science Foundation geology field camp team to the area. Assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, Scotia, N.Y., the aircrews are flying the Antarctica missions in support of Operation Deep Freeze.

Key to stability

Delaware Soldiers train future Iraqi police force

By Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Special to American Forces Press Service

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq - In a dramatic transformation, a courtyard that a year ago was home to insurgent weapons caches designed to inflict destruction and chaos in the Arab Jabour region has become a training ground for a group of potential Iraqi policemen who want to help rebuild and bring order to their community.

On Nov. 13, Delaware National Guard Soldiers of the 153rd Military Police Company, currently attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, gave 25 Arab Jabour citizens training to help them on their way.

The Guardmembers, most of whom are police officers in their communities back home, instructed the Iraqis in police tactics and techniques.

The training included how to search vehicles and people, check identification, establish checkpoints, administer first aid, react to violence in the community and fight in hand-to-hand combat.

1st Lt. Daniel DeFlavis, a Delaware state trooper, said his Soldiers were able to bring a significant amount of police knowledge to the classroom.

"We have a lot of police officers in our unit: Wilmington officers, New Castle County officers, probation and patrol and customs control," DeFlavis said. "We have a wide variety of different police and policing styles."

The Soldiers also tried to teach less tangible lessons to the citizens.

"We want [them] ... to take pride in their uniform and service to their community," said Staff Sgt. John French, a Wilmington, Del., probation and parole officer.



Delaware National Guard photo

Delaware Soldiers, most of whom are police officers, train 25 Iraqi citizens in police tactics and techniques in November.

Such pride and sense of responsibility is important in creating a respected police force in an area that has never had its own internal police force, DeFlavis said.

One stigma left over from Saddam Hussein's rule was corruption in the police force, DeFlavis said. By drawing future police officers from citizens within the community who have proven their dedication to its security, DeFlavis said. He hopes to create a model police force in the area.

"It is a great honor to start this mission from the ground up," French said.

Although not all the individuals who went through the training may go on to become Iraqi police, the MPs said they hope their training will help give those who do a push toward success.

Sheikh Tomah al-Juburi, a prominent local sheikh who has taken an active role in rebuilding the infrastructure of Arab Jabour, said involvement and partnership with the central government by integrating local security would add even more pride to the community.

"They fought the terrorists and are proud of it. No more insurgents come and shoot at their families and animals," he said through an interpreter. "They feel proud of their community and want the officials of Iraq to come and help build up the country."

Because of the importance of a police force

in helping unify the local and central government, DeFlavis said, he and his Soldiers were dedicated to giving the recruits the best training they could.

"You guys are a priority," DeFlavis told the potential recruits. "We are very motivated and dedicated to training you. Use these classes to establish what works for you."

Although some of the training mirrored lessons already taught during other training for concerned local citizens groups, the recruits were glad for the refresher course.

"I want to be trained more and more," said Sabah Salem. "I need to build myself up to protect myself and my country. Thank you for this opportunity."

Salem, who said he hopes to become a policeman, will have an opportunity to apply for that position in the future when a recruiting drive is conducted in the area.

Although a date has yet to be determined for the initial drive, the day of training did help generate interest. In addition to the trainees, other men from the outlying communities heard of the event and came to the training area, expressing interest in joining concerned local citizen groups. Thirty-seven new people had their background information taken by the MPs.

"Today was a big success," DeFlavis said.

Oklahoma brigade training for Iraq deployment

CAMP MCGREGOR, N.M. - More than 2,600 members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) who answered the call to duty earlier this year have successfully completed seven weeks of mission-specific training at Camp McGregor.

The brigade has 23 companies training

at Camp McGregor, most have successfully completed at least 50 percent of their required training. The training has included convoy operations, advanced rifle marksmanship, close quarter combat, land navigation, language familiarization and base defense operations.

"I have really learned a lot," said Spc. Christina Black of Oklahoma City about the

training she has received. "During our close-quarters combat training, I was a squad leader in charge of several Soldiers who outrank me. I am very grateful to have had the leadership opportunity during such an important phase of our training."

Col. Frank Sherman, commander of the 5th Armor Brigade, which is the unit charged with preparing the 45th for deployment, has been very pleased with the 45th's progress through the various training sites. "The 45th is one of the most professional organizations I have had the pleasure of working with," said Sherman. "My Soldiers have told me repeatedly that they feel as if the 45th has integrated them into their units, which has made for a very smooth training process both for my staff and for the 45th's Soldiers."

Once all 23 companies have completed their training, they will deploy to a number of locations within Iraq in early 2008 to perform a variety of missions to include the administration of the International Zone in Baghdad and several security-related missions.



Photo by Capt. Geoff Legler

Members of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team receive instruction on firing their weapons during individual movement training at Camp McGregor, N.M.

Film based on Oregon Soldiers debuts

By Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — Like many Soldiers deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, the Soldiers from the Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry, brought their personal cameras along during their deployment to Iraq in 2004. They snapped photos of each other firing weapons, shot video of explosives they detonated and logged plenty of footage of their own commentaries intermixed with Soldier humor.

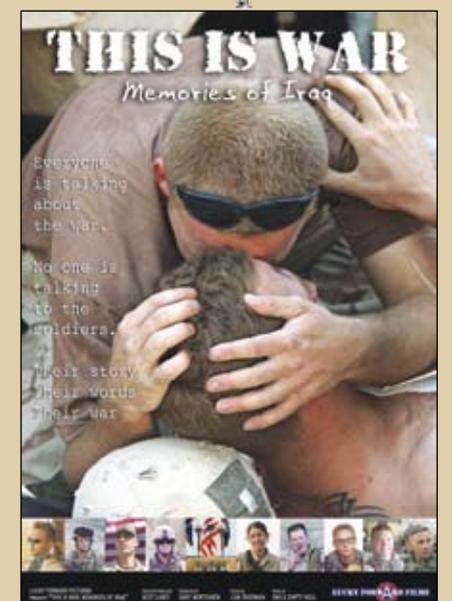
Little did these Soldiers know that their day-to-day antics would one day represent deployed Guardmembers everywhere, preserved in a feature-length documentary film called, "This is War: Memories of Iraq."

The National Combat History Archive with Lucky Forward Films used the unscripted testimonies of nine Soldiers of varying ranks and experiences to narrate the events. Photos and video the Soldiers shot with their own cameras depict their experiences.

"We wanted to make a very non-political film that took someone who's never been to Iraq ... to show what it means to go into combat," said the film's director, Gary Mortensen. "We told it in a non-specific way so that it could represent soldiers everywhere. We wanted to tell a tale that anyone who has been over there can identify with."

Mortensen added that the unique thing about the film is that these Soldiers had their own personal recording devices on hand, giving an intimate view of what they saw on a daily basis. The Soldiers had no idea any of this would be turned into a film, so the result is a very honest and raw portrait of their experiences.

"It's very powerful," said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip "Vince" Jacques, who's featured in the film. "It really represents the professionalism of these guys and shows exactly what troops are going through over there."



Lessons learned from a city under fire

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

HAIFA, Israel – Studying how to respond to sustained terrorist attacks against a U.S. city, National Guard leaders visited Haifa, which in late summer 2006 was an Israeli city under fire.

LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, stopped here Dec. 4 during a four-day visit to Israel to bolster the Bureau's relationship with the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Home Front Command and discuss joint exercises and other possible exchanges carried out under the aegis of U.S. European Command (EUCOM).

Blum's third official visit to Israel included meetings with Maj. Gen. Yitzhak (Jerry) Gershon, Home Front commander, and other senior IDF military leaders; briefings on lessons learned from the 2006 Lebanon War; and visits to military installations and historic and cultural sites such as the Negev Desert, Masada, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The Home Front Command

Israel's equivalent of the National Guard, the Home Front Command was established in 1992, after the Gulf War.

The National Guard and the Home Front Command are comprised mostly of reservists. Both defend their homelands; both stand ready to manage the consequences of natural or manmade catastrophes.

Home Front Command leaders even borrow a National Guard slogan: Always ready, always there.

"We're in the same business, just different 'neighborhoods,'" Blum said.

"We in the Home Front Command and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] benefit from this relationship," Gershon said. "In our unstable world where the terrorists try to threaten us, we have no other choice except to exchange knowledge ... to avoid their harming innocent people ... no matter the country we are dealing with."

The Guard is an all-volunteer force; Israel's face mandatory military service at age 17; the Guard draws on 371 years' experience; the Home Front Command is in its second decade. Americans have largely dodged direct threats to the homeland; Israel-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Yona Yahav, mayor of Haifa, Israel, briefs LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, about how his city responded to the 2006 Lebanon War. National Guard Bureau officials visited Haifa in early December to learn how the city coped with a 34-day missile bombardment.

is have fended off external attacks since the nation's 1948 independence.

"The Home Front Command did not always exist in Israel even though their country is in a rough neighborhood and has been fighting since the day it was born," Blum said. "The fight changed in 1990. The enemy stopped attacking the Israeli military and started attacking the civilian population. That's exactly what could come our way, and we better be ready for it."

The possibility that the relative tranquility of American cities could one day be shattered by sustained terrorism brought Guard Bureau leaders to Haifa, a city self-reliant in the face of a 34-day missile barrage.

Under fire

About 270,000 Jews and Arabs live together in Northern Israel's largest city, third-largest in the country, a 1,700-year-old Mediterranean seaport north of Tel Aviv. Another 350,000 live close to city boundaries, officials said.

During the 2006 Lebanon War, Hezbollah

terrorists fired about 4,000 Katyusha rockets into Israel. At first, Haifa sustained most of the attacks.

By the Aug. 14 ceasefire, 13 Haifa residents were dead, 50 injured and an estimated 500 affected by trauma similar to post-traumatic stress disorder, according to Mayor Yona Yahav. Some residents spent a month in shelters, dodging missiles sometimes packed with metal ball bearings.

"The long-range rockets [each] contained 40,000 ball bearings, specifically designed to inflict civilian casualties," Yahav said. "Once the rocket hits solid ground, the ball bearings are dispersed [over] one mile."

Residents were told to shelter behind concrete walls. Schools, clinics and pharmacies closed. Tourism ceased.

"The whole city was on hold," Yahav said. "No weddings. No funerals. No shopping. No moving on the streets."

It was the way Haifa reacted that set it apart.

Yahav told the Israeli prime minister, "Haifa doesn't need anything." "We decided

to do everything on our own," he explained.

City officials improvised. "We did it just from the gut feelings," Yahav said.

"Haifa showed what strong, resourceful civilian leadership at the mayoral level can do to make normal an abnormal condition without the intervention of the state or the federal government or, in this case, the nation," Blum said.

Haifa's initiative may be part of a global trend of cities reacting to crises without waiting for outside help.

Emerging trend

"The days of sitting back and waiting for national governments to act are becoming a memory," Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City, wrote recently in *The Economist*.

The majority of the world's people now live in cities, Bloomberg noted. "A new urban global community is emerging in which cities are collaborating with each other on common problems."

Some ingredients of Haifa's success during the 2006 Lebanon War:

- Deliberately keeping the response local. Residents were invested in their own recovery.
- Morning brainstorming sessions by city leaders willing to work beyond the framework of formal disaster plans and to tap expertise from outside local government.
- Creative financing. The city took out a \$15 million loan to cover initial expenses.
- Immediate damage repair, to include replanting trees within hours of attacks. "It passed on a message to the inhabitants that everything is under control," Yahav said. Eighty percent of Haifa's residents chose to stay during the bombardment.
- Tapping assistance from Israeli Home Front Command Soldiers.
- Finding solutions to problems as they emerged: Improvising a food supply chain and maintenance for shelters not originally designed for long stays. Spending \$500,000 to turn mall parking garages into children's kindergartens. Organizing volunteers to deposit pensions in banks.
- Boosting morale: "We covered the

LESSONS LEARNED *continued*
on: **Page 12**

North Carolina engineers improve quality of life for African villagers

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Regina L. Brown
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa

ASSAMO, Djibouti – Djiboutians from the village of Assamo welcomed some greatly-needed new additions to their primary school during a dedication ceremony Nov. 29, thanks to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and the North Carolina National Guard.

CJTF-HOA paid for a contracting company to build a three-room female dormitory, outdoor eating area, kitchen, fence, and latrine with four stalls. A solar panel and an update of the plumbing system will provide the school with electricity and running water.

Further additions include three wells dug by the 1132nd Engineering Detachment from the North Carolina National Guard.

The 1132nd worked for over a week to repair weather damage to the roads leading to Assamo before bringing their equipment in to dig the wells.

"I enjoy the fact that we're helping these villagers develop their living area," said Sgt. 1st Class William Brown, lead



Photo by MC1 Regina L. Brown

A young girl from the village of Assamo, Djibouti, waves a flag prior to a dedication ceremony celebrating the completion of additions to the Assamo primary school. The project was made possible in part by the work of the 1132nd Engineering Detachment from the North Carolina National Guard.

driller for the 1132nd. "We developed a good relationship with the locals here, they would bring us food in thanks for the work we did on the wells."

An eight-person team from the 1132nd worked on all three wells together, finishing the project in five weeks. The team would have been finished in three weeks, but due to seasonal rains, they were delayed an extra two weeks.

These new buildings and wells will not only provide a service for the villagers of Assamo, but the many surrounding nomadic families that travel through the area. The population using the facilities will fluctuate between 800 and 1,200, depending on the amount of nomads in the area.

Houssein Hildid, Assamo village chief, was very grateful for what the American servicemembers have done for them. "The Americans have done much for our village," said Hildid. "Everyone is happy with the new wells and school additions."

The ceremony ended with the passing out of school supplies and soccer balls to the children, which quickly led to an impromptu game of soccer. 🏈



2007

YEAR IN REVIEW

MONTH BY MONTH

January

- Ten Army National Guard Soldiers are killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq; it was the highest number of Guard fatalities in a single combat incident during the five-year Global War on Terrorism
- Congress directs the formation of the Commission on the Guard and Reserve and charges it with recommending any needed changes in law and policy to ensure that the nation's Guard and reserve forces are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported to best meet national security requirements

February

- The Air National Guard Band of the Southwest performs in Peru at a joint military exercise with Peru

March

- An all-Guard critical care air transport team from the 332nd Expeditionary Operational Support Squadron and a Mississippi Air Guard C-17 Globemaster III aircrew makes an unplanned flight transporting a critically wounded U.S. Soldier from Balad Air Base, Iraq, to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., in an effort to save his life
- Minnesota's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division surpasses \$15 million in reenlistment bonuses awarded to Soldiers in the unit who have extended their military obligations while deployed to Iraq

April

- President Bush thanks Guardmembers deployed across Texas, California, Arizona and New Mexico for helping the Border Patrol crack down on illegal entry across America's southern border during a visit to Yuma, Ariz.
- The Texas Guard responds after the town of Eagle Pass, Texas, is torn asunder from severe weather that kills seven

May

- Hundreds of Soldiers and Airmen respond after an EF5 tornado hits Greensburg, Kan.; 200-mile per hour winds and a 1.7 mile diameter funnel leveled most of the town
- The National Guard sponsored-State Partnership Program Regional Workshop takes place in Dubrovnik, Croatia, bringing together several Balkan countries
- More than 2,000 National Guard personnel take part in Vigilant Guard, an 11-day exercise in Indiana that tests the National Guard as first military responder in support of the governor and the state emergency management agency after the simulated detonation of an 10-kiloton nuclear device

June

- The last operational F-16A Fighting Falcon flies its final mission at Tucson Air National Guard Base, Ariz, with the 162nd Fighter Wing
- Montenegro, the world's newest nation, becomes the 56th country to join the National Guard's 14-year-old State Partnership Program

Q&A with the director

By Staff Sgt. Mary Flynn
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Director of the Army National Guard Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn recently recounted the major events of the past year and what they mean for the 350,000+ Citizen-Soldiers he manages.

THE ON GUARD: What have been the significant accomplishments for the ARNG in 2007?

LT. GEN. CLYDE VAUGHN: The most significant accomplishment is being able to continue to support the federal and state missions as requested. When the nation calls, we are there to do whatever we are asked to do. The tornado in Kansas, the bridge collapse in Minnesota and the California wildfires are some of the major disasters we have deployed to, while continuing to deploy Soldiers into Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., at the same time.

Another significant accomplishment is the rebuilding of the force to 353,500 Citizen-Soldiers. This demonstrates the huge amount of pride the communities throughout the United States have in our formations.

This year also marked the conclusion of our force structure reorganization, one of the largest reorganizations that the ARNG has ever gone through. The result will be the most highly-trained, highly-resourced force for our nation at all times.

TOG: What have been the biggest challenges of 2007, and how has the ARNG worked to overcome them?

VAUGHN: The persistent conflict is the biggest challenge; the hardest thing is putting Soldiers into harm's way. We have deployed Soldiers into conflict by continuing to prioritize and by focusing on taking care of the families and the Soldiers – the states have some really remarkable programs.

Another challenge is implementing the Secretary of Defense's historical 12-month mobilization policy. It was not acceptable to send Soldiers away from their families and employers for 18 months, especially if they were getting mobilized again shortly afterward. However, implementing that policy requires significant change to our training structures. This policy will allow us to regenerate Soldiers in units when the nation requires them, so that we are always ready, always there.

TOG: Where does the ARNG stand on its end strength? How did we accomplish this?

VAUGHN: We are slightly over strength at about 353,500 Citizen-Soldiers. G-RAP has changed the face of the way the recruiting is done, and I can't recall a recruiting initiative that's made more of an impact.

Additionally, no matter the incentive, you wouldn't have

new recruits if they didn't know they were joining a good team. I think young men and women place a high value on the ARNG and see their service as rewarding – both from personal pride and being able to serve their state and country while still living in their communities.

An incredible marketing strategy has also greatly helped to get the Guard name out there in new ways. The Guard incorporates early influence programs: helping youngsters get their GED (the ARNG runs the nation's largest GED program), appealing to conservation-oriented people through [our] fishing program, and identifying with one of [the] nation's largest spectator sports in NASCAR. All those things have come together to produce the tools that keep the ARNG at a high level of strength.

TOG: In October, along with the vice chief of Staff of the Army, you signed a memo of understanding to formalize the Army's plan to rebalance its forces. What is the progress of that rebalance?

VAUGHN: That document resulted from a council of adjutants general who worked together to reshape the ARNG. The docu-

ment promises to fully equip and resource the ARNG in the same manner as active forces. It won't be until 2013 that the entire force is reorganized, but there will not be the same turbulence that there has been in the past with other reorganizations. This document ensures, with the signature from the Army, that these formations will be interchangeable with army formations and will be equipped at the very highest levels. The document puts the resources into the budget to make that happen. We are very proud of that particular action - it took a lot of people and a lot of teamwork to make that happen.

TOG: There is criticism that the era of persistent conflict has stretched the ARNG too thin, and we are less capable to respond to domestic disasters. How do you respond to that?

VAUGHN: I don't agree with that. I think that because of the level of troop strength today and the training we have had, we are probably better off today in responding than we've ever been. We do not have all of the necessary equipment, but it is improving quickly. These formations take a lot more equipment than the formations we had before. The requirements for our mobility, for example, are much greater than before. There is a stress on the force, but we have been able to man this force, and we're actually over end strength. I think because of the conflict, the pride in the force is probably greater than ever before. It takes a lot of care from support groups, families, and adjutants general in the field. I think we're a stronger force today; not as well-equipped as we'd like to be just yet, but that day is coming.

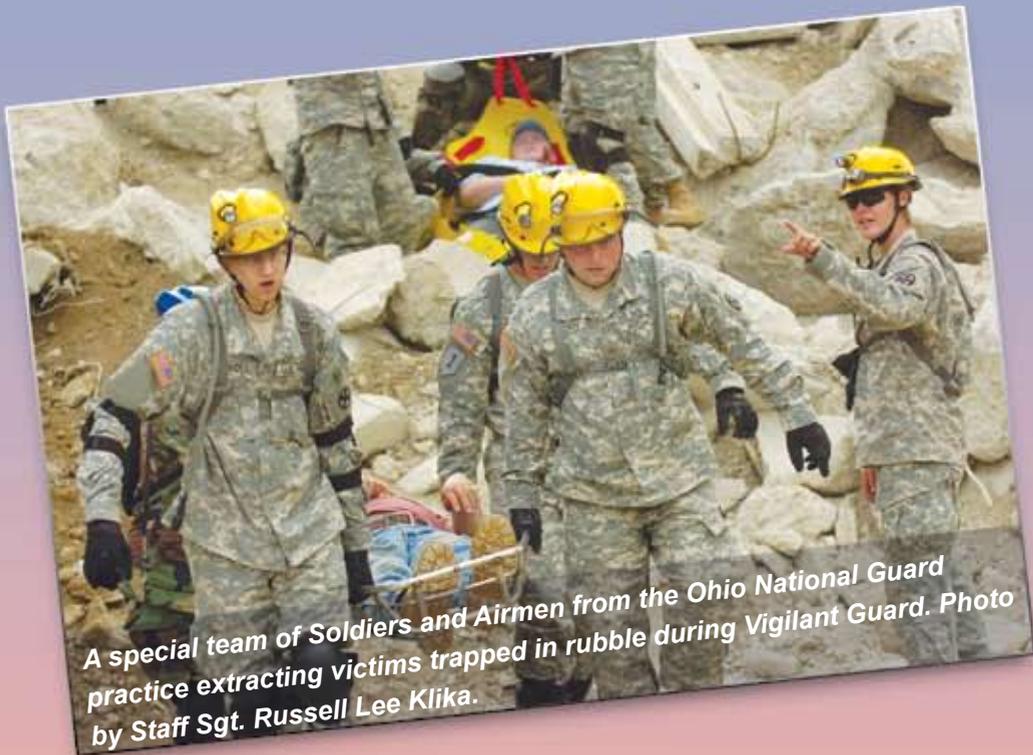
Read the full Q&A with Lt. Gen. Vaughn at www.ngb.army.mil/news



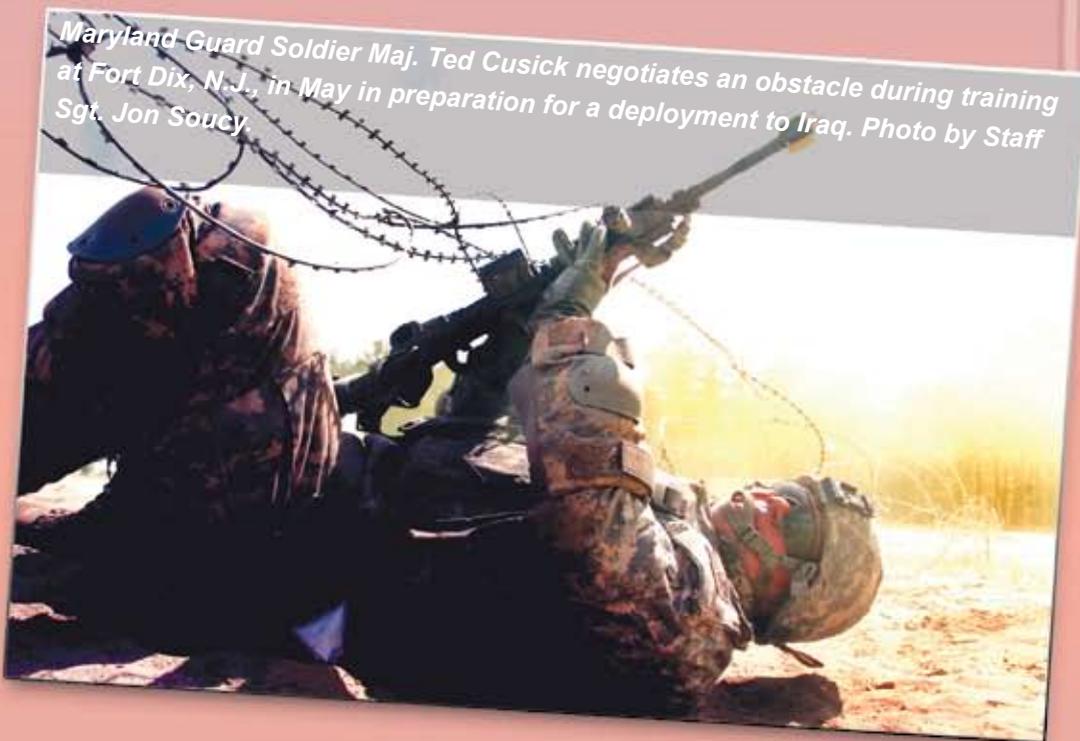
Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn

200

CAPTURED



A special team of Soldiers and Airmen from the Ohio National Guard practice extracting victims trapped in rubble during Vigilant Guard. Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika.



Maryland Guard Soldier Maj. Ted Cusick negotiates an obstacle during training at Fort Dix, N.J., in May in preparation for a deployment to Iraq. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy.



Kentucky Guard Soldiers from Company joke with a local Iraqi girl while on patrol in August. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy.



A local boy tells LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, and others about his village during a sensing mission in rural Kosovo in May. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill.

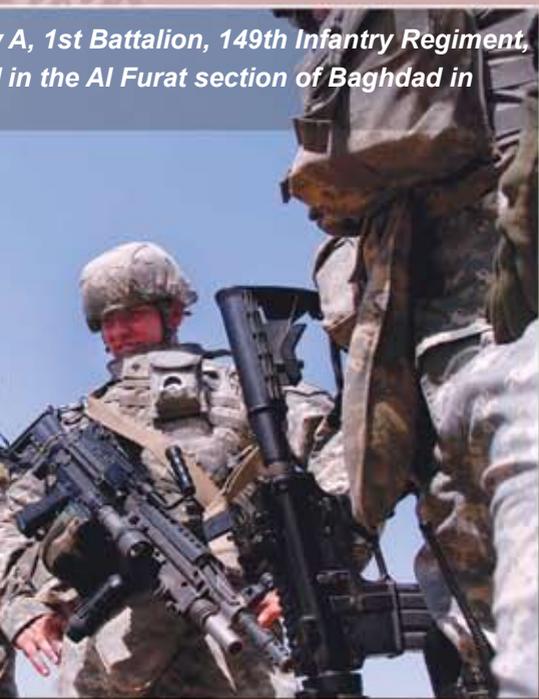


Oregon Air Guard Tech. Sgt. Mark Quinn scales a communications tower near Tucson, Ariz., for Operation Jump Start. Courtesy photo.

07

IN IMAGES

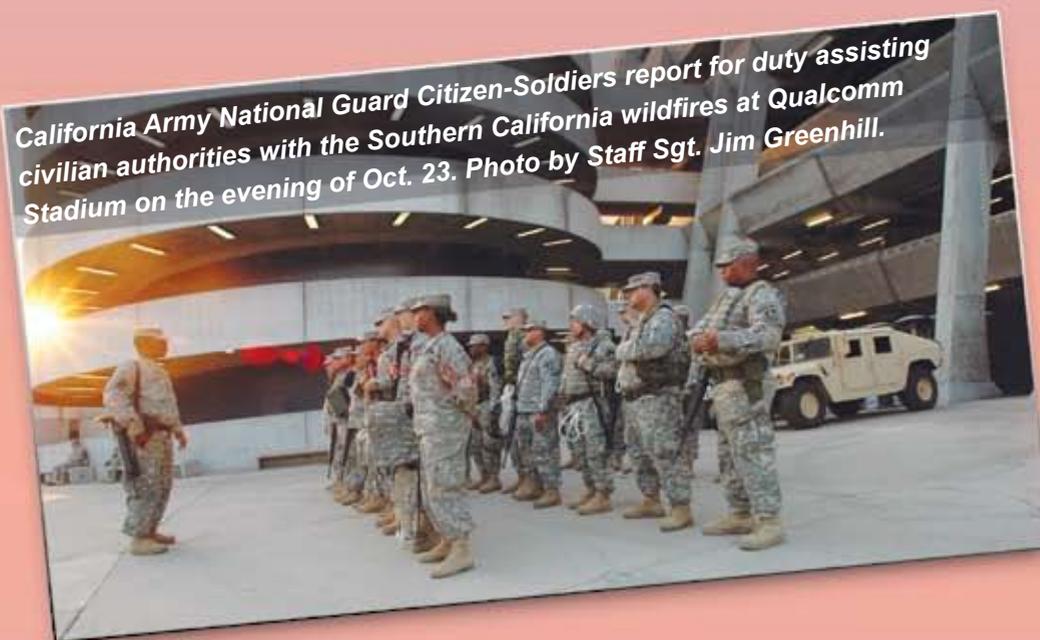
*...A, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment,
...in the Al Furat section of Baghdad in*



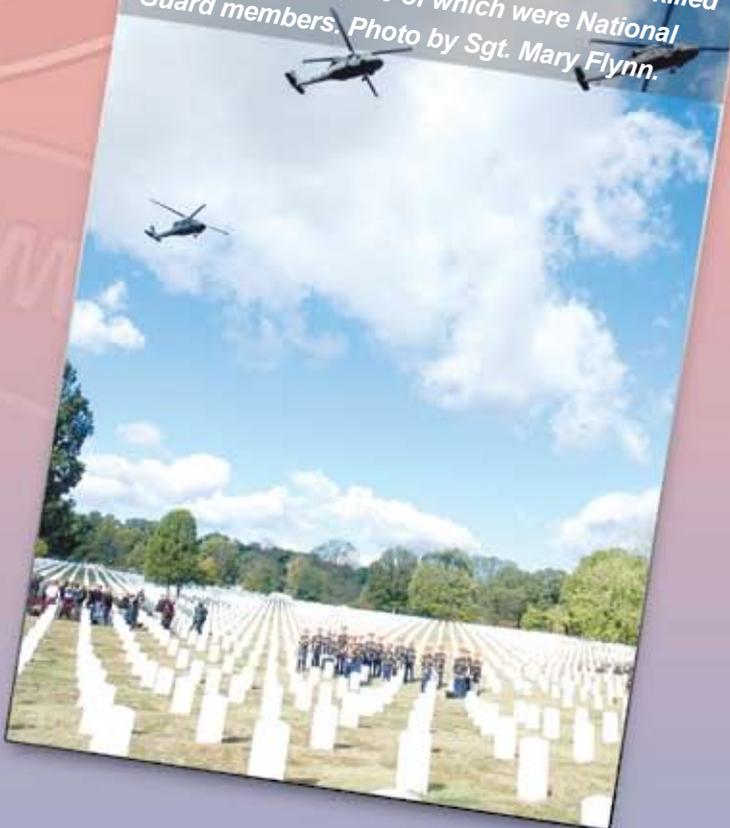
*The sun sets on Greensburg, Kan., just a few days after a massive
tornado leveled the town. Hundreds of Guardmembers respond-
ed. Photo by Master Sgt. Greg Rudl.*



*California Army National Guard Citizen-Soldiers report for duty assisting
civilian authorities with the Southern California wildfires at Qualcomm
Stadium on the evening of Oct. 23. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill.*



*An interment ceremony takes place at Arlington
National Cemetery Oct. 10 for 12 Soldiers killed
in Iraq in January, 10 of which were National
Guard members. Photo by Sgt. Mary Flynn.*



*Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher observes LTG H Steven Blum as he
awards Kentucky Guard Staff Sgt. Timothy F. Nein with the Distin-
guished Service Cross. Photo by David Altom.*



2007 YEAR IN REVIEW



Q&A with the director

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — As this review article is being written, the Air National Guard was exiting 2007 after a year of establishing, planning and developing new missions, providing natural disaster relief and humanitarian missions at home and abroad, protecting the homeland and celebrating with the Air Force more than 60 years of its history.

Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, Air Guard director, gave his perspective about the Air Guard's achievements of the past year and the challenges in next.

THE ON GUARD: What have been the significant accomplishments for the Air National Guard in 2007?

LT. GEN. MCKINLEY: We brought 2007 to a close with our Air National Guard Senior Leadership Summit. The year was spent rebalancing our force structure, making sure we had the right Airmen, in the right jobs, in the right numbers and in the right states for both their wartime missions and state missions. Then we continued the hard work to implement BRAC, which has to be completed by 2011. We remained engaged in our support of the day-to-day fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, and perform at home with [Operation] Noble Eagle missions and support of our combatant commander at Northern Command. Our states did a marvelous job of supporting the natural disasters [relief efforts] that occurred in the country last year. It started in the spring with the tornado in Greensburg, Kan., where Air National Guard Airmen were the first to reach that small town to provide aid and recovery. We ended the year with our Air Guard modular airborne firefighting systems from Charlotte, N.C., and Cheyenne, Wyo., working from the airfield at Channel Islands, Calif., helping to put out the California wildfires. There were a wide variety of missions to include the big winter storms in Colorado. So, overall a very busy year.

TOG: What are the major challenges and issues facing the Air Guard in 2008?

MCKINLEY: We continue to face resource challenges as our primary challenge. I say that because if we are going to continue to support the war on terror, by providing Airmen to our Air Force to fight overseas, and to protect Americans at home through Noble Eagle missions or provide support through the governors for state missions, we have to have the right equipment, and we have to have the right people with the training and the right skill sets. That means we have to continue transforming to a capabilities-based force, which we talked about at our leadership summit, and we also need to have newer equipment that comes with recapitalization. All of that comes back

to being adequately resourced, through our Air Force. The debate is on right now on Capitol Hill as to how much is adequate funding for the U.S. Air Force. We have to participate with the Air Force in recapitalization or we will not be able to field a force without some strain and stresses. So, I consider adequate resources, recapitalization, modernization, transformation, while continuing to support the global war on terror our major challenges. Let me also throw in -- because I could spend all day on this question -- that the Air National Guard has got to get recruiting to a point where we meet end strength. The Army National Guard has had a phenomenal record



Lt. Gen Craig McKinley

of recruiting new members. We, on the other hand, are very close and well within our two percent margin, but we fell short of our 2007 end strength goal. We should be able to just push through and meet the goal. Once achieved, it will not be as difficult to maintain. So, recruiting will continue to be a huge challenge for us in 2008.

TOG: In what numbers did the Air Guard's Airmen deploy this year? Were many deployed away from their families?

MCKINLEY: I will tell you that in any AEF [Aerospace Expeditionary Force] we have approximately 18 percent of our ANG Airmen in support of the overseas rotations. For 2007, we had close to 14,000 Airmen deployed supporting operations around the world. But I consider that only a small percentage of the contributions being made everyday. I look at the air defense of the United States, which is under U.S. Northern Command, North American Aerospace Defense Command and executed by our command and control facility down at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., [First Air Force]. We have 16 flying units on air defense alert, and those are in fighters. We have at least four units of KC-135 [Stratotankers] on alert for those fighters in case they are scrambled. We have facilities in Washington State, New York State and at Tyndall AFB that provide the command and control for this entire North American continent, and that shouldn't go unnoticed or unappreciated. And, as I mentioned earlier, there are many Air Guard Airmen supporting their governors, their adjutants general and their missions at home. We certainly thank those who have gone overseas and have been away from their families. But we thank those who serve at home, too, who may be on an alert tonight, at an "alert barn" in the U.S., away from their homes. So, I really feel that as a team and as a family we are all in this together.

Read the full Q&A with Lt. Gen. McKinley at www.ngb.army.mil/news

From page 7:
YEAR IN REVIEW

July

- Mississippi National Guard's Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center opens the Air National Guard's first C-17 Globemaster III assault landing training facility
- The chief of the National Guard Bureau and Pakistani military officials meet in Washington and strongly support a partnership between the National Guard and Pakistan

August

- Missouri National Guard members, military leaders, legislators and local residents celebrate the transfer of a 14.3-mile road to the Metlakatla Indian Community, marking the end of a 10-year "Alaska Road" project
- 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson, Miss., makes an emergency airlift with its C-17 transporting specialized equipment to Utah to locate trapped miners
- Pease and Otis Air National Guard Bases co-host Air Force Week New England, becoming the only two Air Guard bases to host the year's six Air Force Weeks commemorating the Air Force's 60th anniversary
- Rhode Island National Guard's international military parachute competition Leapfest XXV takes place

September

- The Nevada National Guard takes part in a massive search effort for famed aviator Steve Fosset
- A 175th Fighter Wing member of the Maryland ANG makes history in Iraq when he drops the first Joint Direct Attack Munition from the newly upgraded A-10C Thunderbolt II in combat
- Dale Earnhardt Jr. announces that he will drive the Chevrolet that the National Guard will sponsor in NASCAR's top-level Sprint Cup series in 2008

October

- Over 2,500 California Army and Air National Guard members respond to wildfires in the state; among their many missions, they perform firefighting, security, support to law enforcement, interoperable communications, transportation, medical support and command and control
- Members of the Oregon National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry take part in Orient Shield 2007, an annual training exercise between the U.S. and Japanese armies

November

- The Mississippi ANG's 172nd Airlift Wing names one of its C-17 Globemaster IIIs "The Spirit of the Purple Heart" and paints a Purple Heart medal on it
- Nearly 200 members of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division headquarters take part in a large-scale command post exercise jointly with Egyptian army staff officers in Cairo as part of Bright Star 2007

December

- Heavy rains and hurricane-force winds prompt Washington and Oregon to activate almost 800 National Guard troops to conduct support operations

Aircraft name now honors a precious payload

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

JACKSON, Miss. -- One of the Air Force's most modern cargo aircraft was named after the nation's oldest military decoration Nov. 20 in a ceremony here attended by Medal of Honor and Purple Heart recipients.

The Mississippi Air National Guard's 172nd Airlift Wing named one of its C-17 Globemaster IIIs "The Spirit of the Purple Heart" and painted a Purple Heart nose art above its passenger door to honor the nation's combat wounded.

The unit routinely flies aeromedical evacuation missions from Balad Air Base Hospital, Iraq, to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, and then on to Walter Reed Medical Center, District of Columbia, and has transported more than 19,000 patients since its mobilization for the mission in October 2005.

The wing chose to name aircraft number 33113 for the Purple Heart because it flew the C-17's millionth-hour mission during an aeromedical flight from Balad in March 2006.

Active duty, Guard and Reserve members, past and present combat veterans and their families, and political dignitaries gathered to dedicate the "The Spirit of the Purple Heart" with patriotic speeches, an aircraft tour and an unveiling of its nose art.

Dignitaries included Lieutenant Gov.-elect Phil Bryant, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield and Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, the Mississippi adjutant general.

Cross said the nose art will serve as a long standing honor to the sacrifices combat wounded and their families make to protect the nation.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
A distinguished group unveils the Purple Heart nose art on a Mississippi Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III Nov. 20 at the 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson, Miss.

"We will sign the vivid air with your honor as this Purple Heart slices through the sky ... and we will take care of our wounded, always, because they have taken care of us," said Cross.

Cross' words echoed from the stage, set inside a huge C-17 hanger as the autumn sun cast long shadows from the aircraft parked outside. A slight breeze unfurled dozens of American flags held by members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) and other veteran's organizations.

Tech. Sgt. Bobby Kinabrew, the aircraft's crew chief who helped coordinate the aircraft's naming, said the unit worked with members of the MOPH to select a name and nose art for his assigned aircraft. He said he felt compelled to push the naming request through his chain of command because his uncle is a retired Army sergeant major who received a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam.

After its approval, wing maintenance personnel as well as members of the Boeing Company worked for two days using screen printing inks and stencils to paint the purple-, gold- and black-colored nose art on the aircraft.

"It looks wonderful in my eyes," Kinabrew said. "I hope it honors all of the recipients of the Purple Heart."

Retired Army Col. Henry Cook, the MOPH's national commander, said that the nose art pays a fitting tribute to the medal. The MOPH's more than 40,000 combat wounded veterans are the self-proclaimed custodians of the medal.

"It says so much because it honors everybody who flies aboard it who has made that sacrifice for this country ... now they come back in an aircraft that honors them," said Cook, who received his Purple Heart during World War II.

The Purple Heart is one of the most recognized and respected medals in the U.S. military. It is awarded to servicemembers wounded in combat. It was created in 1782 by Gen. George Washington as a Military Badge of Merit. It's the oldest military decoration in the nation, and it was the first enlisted medal of any army of the 1700s. Gen. Douglas MacArthur resurrected the medal in 1931 as a way to recognize combat wounded.

For more National Guard news, including stories, photos and video, visit www.ngb.army.mil

Air Guard readies for expanded center

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. - Civil engineers call it the Air National Guard's most high-tech office space ever.

When completed, the \$52 million Air Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC) expansion - a four-story complex of shining glass and steel - will unite the existing ANGRC here with its Air Guard offices in Arlington, Va.

Its construction phase began here Nov. 19, when Air Guard Director Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, ANGRC Commander Col. Joseph Lengyel and other officials scooped out shovelfuls of damp earth from the

building site during a groundbreaking ceremony. A group of Air Guard members and civilians watched and applauded.

"The reason we are here today is that, after 9/11, force protection became a major issue, especially in the city," said McKinley.

He explained that the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission moved government offices at risk of terrorist attacks away from downtown areas.

An added benefit from the project is that the Air Guard will soon have its entire nine directorate offices located under one roof. The directorates serve the Air Guard's day-to-day operations of 88 flying units and more than 200 geographi-

cally-separated units.

"It will give the commander of the ANGRC a chance to have a span of control over all the people that work for him, and it will streamline and make more orderly the process of command," said McKinley.

The centralized ANGRC campus will be occupied by more than 1,100 Airmen and federal employees by September 2011.

The contract was awarded to Clarke Construction of Bethesda, Md.

"It will be one of the most sustainable and energy efficient [buildings] that the Air Guard has built to date," said Ben Lawless, chief of the engineering division in the Air Guard's Installation and Mission

Support directorate.

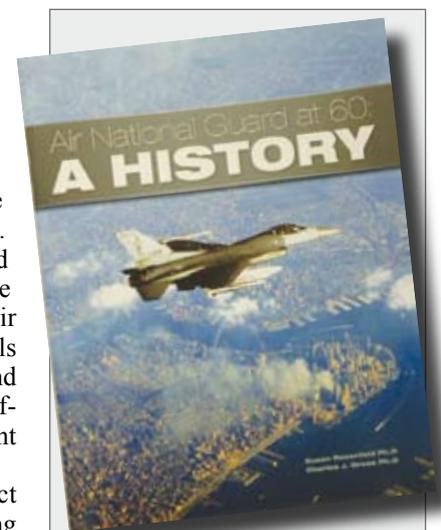
Some energy-saving items include interior lighting that will adjust automatically with the percentage of natural daylight. Storm water will be recycled and filtered through a special drainage system before it's discharged. Air conditioning and heating controls will be located at work stations and fed underneath the floor which, officials said, provides better occupant comfort and energy efficiency.

Officials will have the project certified by the U.S. Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, which is a nationally-accepted benchmark for green buildings.

"It's going to set the example for energy conservation, which is really important to everyone," said Lawless. "I think it's also going to set the tone for the future of the Air Guard in terms of facilities that can be reconfigured for new occupants and new missions and functions."

Lawless explained that moveable wall partitions will allow occupants to simply reconfigure their office space to meet future mission requirements. Officials also hope to lay out an open working environment that fosters teamwork.

The new building will be landscaped with a variety of native plants and trees, and it will be built adjacent to the existing ANGRC building: Conaway Hall.



New history book

Co-authored by Dr. Susan Rosenfeld and Dr. Charles Gross, "Air National Guard at 60: A History," is an 80-page, illustrated monograph published for Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley's 2007 ANG Senior Leadership Summit and the 60th anniversary of the Air Guard. It is available to Guardmembers through their unit or state public affairs officers from the National Guard Publication Management Center in Maine.



An artist's rendering of the new \$52 million Air Guard Readiness Center expansion at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

From page 1: DEPLOYMENTS

The 32nd BCT from the Wisconsin Guard, the 41st BCT of the Oregon Guard and the 155th BCT from the Mississippi Guard have been alerted for deployment to Iraq in the summer of 2009.

The roughly 8,000 soldiers will take over the security force mission "and will ensure freedom of movement and continuity of operations within the country," Whitman said. The units will be responsible for base defense and route security within Kuwait and Iraq.

The units called up:

- The 32nd IBCT from Wisconsin deployed approximately 1,200 Soldiers to Iraq from June 2005 until December 2006. Their upcoming mission to Iraq will include approximately 3,100 Soldiers.

- The 41st IBCT from Oregon deployed approximately 1,300 Soldiers to Afghanistan from March 2006 until August 2007. Their upcoming mission to Iraq will include approximately 3,200 Soldiers.

- The 155th HBCT from Mississippi deployed approximately 4,000 Soldiers to Iraq from August 2004 until February 2006. Their upcoming mission to Iraq will include approximately 3,000 Soldiers.

- The 53rd IBCT from Florida deployed approximately 1,200 Soldiers to Afghanistan from April 2005 until September 2006. Their upcoming mission to Afghanistan will include approximately 3,700 Soldiers.

- The 48th HBCT from Georgia deployed approximately 4,400 Soldiers to Iraq from December 2004 until July 2006. Their upcoming mission for Afghanistan will include approximately 1,500 Soldiers.

For more National Guard news, visit www.ngb.army.mil

From page 1: FLOODING

boats, which made their way through the flooded streets and residences of the city.

They're moving down the streets, and through the backyards," Maj. Mike Braibish, the state public affairs officer, told the Associated Press.

Vernonia, which has about 2,200 residents, had been largely cut off by landslides that blocked roads into the community, but Guard trucks with high clearance were able to get in late in the day on Dec. 3 and more trucks were being sent, Braibish said.

The Camp Rilea training site located in Warrenton, Ore., offered shelter to the evacuated residents. There are 1,100 beds available at the training site, the ORNG reported.

Officials in areas hardest hit by the storm asked for generators, water and assistance with getting supplies. The ORNG was also working closely with state agencies and private organizations like the Red Cross to move equipment and supplies to where they're needed most.

From page 6: LESSONS LEARNED

whole area with Israeli flags, and it gave a tremendous drive to the people," Yahav said. "We learned from you Americans."

War or natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis remain threats to Israel. A thriving seaport with chemical production and oil storage facilities, Haifa also has a heightened risk of industrial accidents.

"We are preparing now," Yahav said.

City officials acted on after-action reviews of the 2006 crisis. They bought a mobile headquarters, improved property records to more easily identify owners of damaged

apartments and invested in ongoing disaster awareness training. Leaders have increased their attention to continuity of services during a crisis, improved evacuation plans and increased cooperation between local agencies. They've held exercises. They've added surveillance cameras to monitor disaster or war aftermaths.

Like Haifa and the Israeli Home Front Command, the National Guard continuously prepares.

"We need to make sure that we continue to maintain our outreach to state and local leaders and work in harmony with them in planning for, rehearsing, exercising and preparing for disasters or terrorism," Blum said. "It doesn't really matter from our point of view what causes a problem. We have to deal with the problem, whether it's caused by Mother Nature, God, bad people or an accident."

The National Guard's foreign outreach, conducted as part of the theater security cooperation program of U.S. combatant commanders and U.S. ambassadors abroad, includes partnerships between U.S. states and 58 countries and relationships such as that between the Guard and Israel's Home Front Command. Efforts in the Middle East include the pairing of the Colorado National Guard and the Kingdom of Jordan under the State Partnership Program (SPP).

National Guard military-to-military, military-to-civilian and civilian-to-civilian initiatives undertaken by the SPP are closely coordinated with the staff of the combatant commander and U.S. country teams to ensure consistency with other American interests.

- Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, *The Economist newspaper and other sources contributed to this report.*

HEADS UP!

Penn. Gulf War vets

Keystone State voters gave overwhelming approval to a ballot question to fund the Persian Gulf Conflict Veterans' Benefit Program recently. It is the Pennsylvania "Bonus" for Veterans of the Persian Gulf Conflict (August 1990 to August 1991). Eligible veterans in the state from the Persian Gulf Conflict will receive \$75 per month for each month, or major fraction, of active service in the Persian Gulf Conflict Theater up to a maximum of \$525. \$5,000 will be paid on behalf of veterans who died in active service in the Persian Gulf Theater or as a result of service-connected wounds, diseases or injuries sustained during active service there.

http://sites.state.pa.us/PA_Exec/Military_Affairs/DMVA/548.htm

Translators in demand

Our nation's defense has always depended on the military's ability to glean information from foreign language newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts and other sources. Nowhere is this more important than in the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army needs speakers of Middle-Eastern languages to serve as interpreters/translators on both active and reserve duty.

www.military.com/Careers

MyArmyBenefits

The MyArmyBenefits Web site is the official Army benefits resource for regular Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, family, and retirees. Active duty Soldiers with AKO accounts can access personalized reports on the survivor, disability, and retirement benefits through MyArmyBenefits.

<http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil>

Soldier's support

The Soldier Support Foundation assists Soldiers, families and communities by providing transition assistance to members of the armed forces who are returning to their communities. It provides our Servicemembers with access to reputable and established resources to use as tools for transitioning back to civilian life. The foundation has a nationwide resource network that can help veterans with housing, employment, counseling, and financial assistance.

www.soldiersupportfoundation.org

Thrift Savings Plan

The DoD recently began a push to let the Guard and Reserve members know about the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and the Savings Deposit Program (SDP) - a special program available to servicemembers specifically while they are deployed to a combat zone. To help get the word out, the DoD will visit mobilization sites to conduct financial planning briefings during command-sponsored pre-mobilization programs and offer customized one-day train-the-trainer sessions.

www.tsp.gov/uniserv/features/index.html



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. Anthony L. Taylor

Repeat after me

One hundred new Soldiers are inducted into the Tennessee Army National Guard during halftime of the University of Tennessee-Vanderbilt football game Nov. 17. The Soldiers come from all over the eastern Tennessee region. Brig. Gen. David E. Greer, the state assistant adjutant general for Army, administered the oath. More than 104,000 people attended the game.

Paralyzed vets enjoy hunting experience courtesy of Georgia Guard

A group of Georgia Air National Guard members assigned to Brunswick's Townsend Bombing Range and a handful of local outdoorsmen are making a big difference in the lives of paralyzed American military veterans.

On Veterans' Day weekend, volunteers including 14 Air Guard members hosted 12 paralyzed American veterans during a three-day hunting experience on the sprawling 5,100-acre National Guard range in South Georgia.

"We love getting these guys back out in the woods to hunt," said Master Sgt. Brian Leverette, who organized the first hunt back in 2003 and has been involved each year in the annual event.

For many vets, the hunt offers the opportunity to be outside and enjoy a sport that many thought no longer possible to them.

Since the first Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) hunt, more than 50 disabled hunters have shared the excitement of a hunt at Townsend Range. Leverette said that the aim of this hunt, and of many outdoor sports activities sponsored by the PVA, is to improve the quality of life for paralyzed and disabled veterans.

This year, the 12 disabled military vets were paired with the volunteers for the three-day event. Kicking off at 4:30 a.m., the veterans were escorted into the dense woods and swamplands around the range to hunt for deer and wild hogs. The range is rich with wild game and annually hosts several controlled archery, black powder and rifle hunts for local outdoor enthusiasts.

Every hunter and volunteer carries a radio, and every blind is carefully plotted on a map. The local game warden briefs hunters daily on hunting safety. All food plots are carefully located on maps and hunters are strategically located both for individual safety and for ideal hunting opportunities.

From dawn to dusk each day, the vets are positioned in ground blinds or hydraulic-lift deer stands throughout the property. This year's hunt resulted in 10 deer and two hogs being taken. A disabled Iraqi veteran participating in the hunt for the first time bagged an eight-point buck.



Georgia National Guard photo

Staff Sgt. Luke Murphy of the 101st Airborne, an amputee from Operation Iraqi Freedom, admires his eight-point trophy buck taken during the three-day PVA hunt at Georgia's Townsend Bombing Range in November.

Strength in numbers

Delaware team works together to reach fitness goals

By Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
3rd Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – While deployment may have taken Delaware Guard Soldiers of the 153rd Military Police Company far from home, no distance is enough to pull some of them away from their physical fitness goals.

During their tour, these Soldiers hope to use the time in Iraq to make themselves into "rocks."

Staff Sgt. Boyd Robinson, Sgt. Jeremy Cushman, Spc. Jarrod Pitts and Spc. Lance Love are all part of a group of MPs who decided to combat the declination in physical fitness many Soldiers suffer while deployed.

The group fights daily with gravity, fighting its tug in the weight room in order to help build up. Even when missions prevent them from hitting a normal gym, the group relies on good old Soldier innovation to get a workout.

"You don't always need weights or special equipment," Pitts said.

Using their creativity, the group has come up with unique ways to work out when weights aren't around. Humvee tow bars transform into parallel dip bars and sit-up platforms, body armor and rucks turn into squat weights; and even the Soldiers' own body weight becomes a tool to chisel away fat and build muscle.



Courtesy photo

Spc. Jarrod Pitts, 153rd Military Police Company, Delaware National Guard, presses 215 pounds while fellow MP Staff Sgt. Boyd Robinson spots. Spc. Lance Love, 153rd MP Co., lends motivation. The three are among a group hoping to improve their fitness while deployed.

The group has found another type of strength: strength in numbers.

"We motivate each other," Robinson said.

Cushman said the group holds each other accountable even when one member doesn't want to work out. "You're either getting drug or dragging someone to the gym," he explained.

Another motivation is "one-upping" each

other's gains.

Robinson, who has been lifting on and off since high school, said his ultimate goal is to get a 300 on his Army physical fitness test. Upon hearing of Robinson's goal, Pitts refined his goal.

"I got to beat Staff Sergeant Rob," he said.

Marathon team runs in Las Vegas

CARSON CITY, Nev. – For the third consecutive year, the National Guard's elite marathon team competed with the world's best runners in the Zappos.com Las Vegas Marathon Dec. 2.

The National Guard's elite team is comprised of the top Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen long-distance runners from across the nation.

The Guard team features about 25 men and women and includes the Nevada National Guard's Spc. William Raitter of Reno. With his 11th place finish in 2006, Raitter was the top male Nevada finisher in the Las Vegas Half Marathon. The dental specialist in the Nevada Army Guard's Medical Detachment with a personal record of 1 hour, 8 minutes in the 13.1-mile event, Raitter was once again a favorite in the half-marathon race.

Another top male runner on the National Guard team is Staff Sgt. Troy Harrison of the Pennsylvania National Guard who recorded a 1:13:03 just three months ago at the Virginia Beach Rock and Roll Half Marathon. Harrison was deployed in 2003 for Operation Enduring Freedom. The top female runner for the National Guard this year promises to be 1st Lt. Varinka Barbini. She was second at the Blue Grass 10-kilometer run in Lexington, Ky., this year with a time of 38:04 and she has a marathon personal best of 3 hours, 10 minutes.

The National Guard Marathon Program



Photo courtesy Nevada National Guard

Capt. Matt Cavanaugh of the Guard's Elite Marathon Team and the Minnesota Guard leads a pack of runners to the finish at the Las Vegas Half Marathon Dec. 2. Despite an official's error that caused the lead runners to go the wrong way, Cavanaugh completed the 13.1-mile course in 1:41 in a race that included 18,000 runners.

began in May 1984 and it is a valuable asset to the recruiting and retention efforts for the Army and Air National Guard. Approximately 250 National Guard athletes from the 53 states and territories and the District of Columbia travel to Lincoln, Neb., the first Sunday in May annually to attempt to earn a highly-coveted position on the National Guard's elite team.

The coordinator of the National Guard team is Jack Murphy and can be reached on his cell phone at (402) 871-8401.

Montana, Wyoming strike biathlon gold at western regional

By Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka
Nevada National Guard

Former Olympian Robert Rosser of Wyoming was dominant in the 10-kilometer sprint event but he could not hold off Montana's Lance Clark in the 12.5-kilometer pursuit race at the National Guard Bureau Western Regional Biathlon Championship Dec. 7-8 in West Yellowstone, Mont.

Rosser put nearly two minutes on Clark in the sprint race, finishing the 6.2-mile course in 29:37 while missing only one shot. But Clark was able to make up the deficit in the longer pursuit race as he missed only two of his 20 shots to finish 20 seconds ahead of Rosser in 42:00. Rosser missed seven shots in the pursuit race.

Despite Clark's outstanding individual performance, Montana could not overcome Wyoming in the team results. Montana finished with the team silver medal, just 17 seconds ahead of Utah.

Alaska's Rebecca King took both the women's sprint and pursuit titles. Nevada's Joyce Annacker made history when she secured the state's first medal ever in biathlon with her second-place finish in the women's sprint.

The NGB regionals will continue through the winter with the mid-west regional set for Minnesota in January and the eastern regional set for February in Vermont. The Chief of the NGB Championships will be held at Camp Ripley, Minn., in March. For information, call the NGB Sports office at (802) 899-7122.

Airman keeps vehicles movin' four decades in uniform

By Tech Sgt. Phyllis Hanson
407th Air Expeditionary Group

ALI BASE, Iraq (AFPN) -- Nearly 38 years ago, an Airman from San Antonio received his calling to join the military.

It was a lazy summer morning in 1970. A Harlandale High School letterman awoke to a knock at the door. The young man, who just weeks before had marched down the aisle to receive his diploma, stood scratching his head, absorbing his new marching orders -- an Army draft notification.

"I wasn't doing cartwheels," said Texas Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Miguel Casarez, who is deployed with the 407th Air Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron here. "You take it as the way it comes, so I just took it. I thought, if I was meant to serve my country -- well, here I am."

He had just enough time to dress and say goodbye to his grandfather with whom he lived. He walked out the door dressed in his usual attire -- starched, pleated pants, a starched button-down shirt and polished Stacy Adams shoes -- which he'd soon be trading in for fatigues and spit-shined combat boots. Joining dozens more young draftees at the call station in downtown San Antonio, he was sworn in and then bussed to Fort Ord, Calif.

He served in the Army until 1972 -- and by "divine grace," he said, did not end up going to Vietnam as many of his friends did.

"I felt bad because I wanted to serve my country; not being sent was disappointing," he said. "But people kept saying, 'Be happy that you're alive,' so I took that as a sign."



Photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathan Snyder

Texas Air Guard Tech. Sgt. Miguel Casarez checks the oil of a vehicle at Ali Base, Iraq, in October.

After the Army, he returned to his hometown and worked with his father as a carpenter for about a year. One day his best friend from high school, now a truck driver, asked him to ride along with him to Corpus Christi, Texas. On the way back up to the Alamo City, his friend let him take a test drive. The open road spoke to Casarez, and from that moment he knew what he wanted to do and has been on the road ever since.

His calling to serve still beckoned him, so he joined the Army Reserve for eight more years and drove a tractor trailer full time. At first all the traveling and being away was

difficult for his bride, Mary Lou, but over time and distance she came to understand his longing for the journey.

Just when he thought his military days were done, yet another friend coaxed him into looking into a new journey.

"I crossed into the blue in 1986, and never looked back," Casarez said.

Starting out as an aircraft mechanic and continuing his truck-driving career, he became a member of the Texas Air Guard's 149th Fighter Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron, where he plans to stay until he retires.

After 22 years on the open road, Casarez hung up his driving gloves in 1996 and went civil service, working as a special vehicle mechanic with the Guard. Casarez has no plans to stop working with the military any time soon; he said he intends to just keep on truckin' until they tell him he can't stay any longer.

Being a convoy escort traversing Iraq, north to south, east to west, has made the most impact on Casarez.

"I can never forget the looks of the people as we drove down the highway," he said. "At a glance you would see fear, anger, terror. Some would nod slowly with gratefulness.

"We just kept driving," Casarez continued. "Day after day you get to know the highway -- every bump after bump, always on the lookout for roadside bombs."

Casarez has driven nearly a half-million miles coast to coast and all over the world. Knowing it's time to hand over the reins to the younger Airmen, Casarez says he's satisfied and proud to teach them all that he knows.

"I want to leave them with everything I have learned and hope they will take at least some of it," he said. 

From minefields to Elysian Fields

Texas Medal of Honor recipient never thought of himself as a hero

Story/photo by Sgt. Benjamin Cossel
Ohio National Guard

EDITOR'S NOTE: Medal of Honor winner Silvestre Herrera died Nov. 26, just a few days after giving this interview.

PHOENIX, Ariz. -- On the morning of March 15, 1945, a young private first class and his platoon with the Texas National Guard's 36th Division came under a heavy machine-gun attack near the village of Mertzwiller, France. Mexican-born Silvestre Herrera bravely charged the source of the rifle fire, suppressing the German assault and allowing his platoon to continue, capturing eight of the enemy. Later that day, Herrera walked through a minefield drawing deadly rounds away from their intended mark. He lost both legs in the engagement, all the while firing his M-1 Garand rifle on the source, allowing his brothers-in-arms to flank and overrun the enemy position.

For his actions, Herrera was awarded the Medal of Honor. Ironically, this man who gave so much for his country didn't have to fight for it in the first place.

When Herrera was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1944 at age 27, he learned of some startling news: he was actually born in Mexico and the people he thought were his parents were not.

His uncle—the man Herrera knew as his father until that day—explained that Herrera's biological parents succumbed to



Medal of Honor recipient Silvestre Herrera is escorted by members of the Arizona National Guard Nov. 11 during Phoenix's annual Veterans Day parade.

influenza when Herrera was only a year old. The same uncle brought young Herrera to El Paso in 1928 to make a better life for them all.

Then in 1944, with his wife pregnant with the family's fourth child, his country called.

"You don't have to go," his uncle told him. "You're not a U.S. citizen."

The draft was compulsory only for U.S. citizens and Herrera was technically a Mexican national. But he still felt compelled to go.

"This country had already provided so much for me and my family at that time

that I wanted to go," said Herrera. "Besides, I didn't want someone else dying in my place."

His newly-discovered status as a non-citizen also factored in his decision.

"They told us if we served in the Army, we would be able to get our citizenship," he explained. "I knew this was something I wanted to do."

So Herrera joined the Texas Army National Guard and reported for boot camp at Fort McClellan, Ala. He was assigned to Company E, 142nd Infantry, 36th Division and was in one of the first American units to land in Europe during World War II.

Fast forward to a November afternoon, Herrera's frail, 90-year-old body is folded into the comfortable confines of his easy chair. He thinks back to his days and the actions that not only earned him the Medal of Honor but also the Premier Merito Militar, Mexico's equivalent to the MOH. Herrera is the only person in history to be distinguished with both medals.

"I'm no hero," he says sheepishly. "To say that I am would be bragging."

Nostalgia rolls over him and Herrera's mind gently floats back to Mertzwiller.

"It seems to me that I was always where trouble was," he said. "I remember on that day when we heard the enemy, I started speaking really loud English so the Germans would know who we were. I couldn't really tell where the orders were coming from and so I just kept advancing," he stopped for a minute as a particular memory grabs hold.

"Those Germans, they were really nice people. I remember they all had bad trench foot when we captured them."

Herrera doesn't see his actions that day as brave; he thinks he was just doing what needed to be done, what any good Soldier would have done.

"I remember I kept thinking to myself

that I had to do everything I could to give my company a chance to advance, and so that's what I did."

Herrera blushes from the constant talk of his valiant actions, preferring instead to move the conversation to his life since then.

"This is an amazing country we live in and if you're not too lazy and work hard, you can really make something for yourself here," he said.

When Herrera was presented the Medal of Honor by President Harry Truman, there was great concern about the young Pfc.'s health. But on the morning of Aug. 23, 1945, Herrera wheeled his chair across the White House lawn for the distinction. A year later, he was presented with the Premier Merito Militar and granted U.S. citizenship.

"You can never feel sorry for yourself," said Herrera. "I've never let anything be an obstacle. When I couldn't walk, I crawled. I don't cry for my legs, I never did. They're gone, they don't care."

And Herrera practices what he preaches as a regular on dance floors and frequent speaker at community forums. He is also the perennial grand marshal in Phoenix's Veteran's Day parade.

Herrera left the Army as a sergeant. He was the first Arizonian to receive the Medal of Honor. An elementary school in Phoenix bears his name and, on Oct. 24, 1998, the U. S. Army Reserve Center in Mesa, which houses the 164th Corps Support Group, was dedicated in his honor. In addition, just recently, the Arizona Army National Guard re-designated its NCO of the Year award as the Silvestre Herrera NCO of the Year Award.

On the morning of Nov. 26, family members went into Herrera's room to wake him for the day. He was unresponsive and they called the fire department. Herrera was pronounced dead at his home, just a month short of his 91st birthday. 

Remembering the Air Guard in Vietnam

“We’d had some support with F-100s from the Regulars, but they wouldn’t come in as close ... I had never seen air support that close and accurate!”

-Capt. Terry Van Meter, 25th Infantry Division, August 1968



The first F-100s of the 174th Tactical Fighter Squadron land at Phu Cat Air Base at the start of their deployment to Vietnam. Photo courtesy of the National Guard Education Foundation.

John W. Listman Jr.
National Guard Bureau

The attack mentioned above, which destroyed enemy bunkers along a riverbank, was staged by fighter-bombers flown by members of the 120th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) from the Colorado Air National Guard. Like most people at the time and persisting to this day, the captain believed until that strike that no National Guard units had served in Vietnam.

In fact, the 120th was one of four Air Guard TFS (plus 85 percent of a fifth) that served in-country in 1968-69. Their story started 40 years ago this month, not directly because of the war in Vietnam, but rather in the wake of the North Korean seizure of the American Navy spy ship USS Pueblo on Jan. 23, 1968.

America was deeply involved in the Vietnam War and now feared a renewed outbreak of fighting in Korea, where an armistice had ended combat, but not the war, in 1953.

To prepare for possible conflict, President Lyndon Johnson authorized the mobilization of 11 Air Guard wings (Army Guard units would not be mobilized until May 1968). With only a reporting date of Jan. 27, they were on active duty for two days when the Tet Offensive erupted across Vietnam. Renewed hostilities with North Korea never developed and it soon became obvious that the ANG was needed in Vietnam.

At the time, a typical ANG organization had one flying squadron plus all of the support units necessary to keep its aircraft maintained and its pilots prepared to fly. Once each of the wings was mobilized, they were often broken up with their flying squadron going off to a foreign assignment where support units already existed from other U.S. Air Force assets. Though some ground crewmembers from each squadron would accompany the squadron overseas, this left most of their support personnel available for reassignment as individuals or as small cells to be used world-wide by the USAF. Many in this capacity served in South Korea. So many in fact, that in late 1968-early 1969 the Air Guard accounted for 60 percent of all USAF strength in Korea.

Of the eleven ANG wings mobilized in January, eight contained fighter squadrons armed with North American F-100C Super Sabre fighter-bombers. While the F-100 could engage in limited air-to-air combat, its real strength was as a close air support platform to destroy enemy formations and installations on the ground. Fully loaded, these aircraft could carry 500-pound, air-to-ground missiles, napalm and machine guns for strafing.

The other three mobilized ANG wings each flew RF-101 “Voodoo” aerial reconnaissance aircraft. These employed a variety of high speed cameras that took photos from different angles to give analysts a 3-D look at the target area. During their time on active duty, all three squadrons from these wings were assigned to Arkansas’s 123rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. Once they completed post-mobilization training, each squadron would, on a rotational basis, serve in one of three assignments for up to 90 days before being transferred to the next duty station. Their assignments were in Panama, Alaska and Japan. This latter assignment often found them flying along the Demilitarized Zone with North Korea, taking pictures inside that communist state.

The four TFS’s assigned to Vietnam began their long deployment flights. The pilots of each squadron flew their F-100C’s over the Pacific, spending many hours over open water. They each had to perform 10, mid-air refu-

elings along the way. Those support personnel still assigned to their squadrons arrived by military transport and linked up at their assigned base.

The first ANG unit to arrive in Vietnam was Colorado’s 120th TFS, which arrived at Phan Rang Air Base on May 3, 1968. Two days after arriving it began combat operations, which continued until it returned home in April 1969. Over its



Photo courtesy of the National Guard Education Foundation

Maj. Gerald McGowan, flight surgeon of Iowa’s 174th Tactical Fighter Squadron, treats a Vietnamese baby at the Kim Chau Orphanage near Phu Cat Air Base. He is being observed by Capt. Joseph Kennedy, the base chaplain. Many members of the squadron volunteered their free time to help treat, play with and educate the children.

one-year tour, the 120th would fly over 5,000 sorties (including the one recounted above) and lose two pilot’s killed in action.

The second ANG squadron to arrive, on May 17, was Iowa’s 174th TFS, which was assigned to Phu Cat Air Base. Due to a shortage of support personnel at Phu Cat, Iowa’s 185th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron accompanied the 174th, making a total of 376 Iowa Airmen serving at this base. When not engaged in combat operations, members of this unit took a great interest in the children in a nearby orphanage. They helped them with everything from medical care to getting families back home, to sending toys, clothes and other items to improve the children’s lives. But the war went on and the 174th had one pilot killed in action. The Iowa Airmen remained in Vietnam until May 1968.

The third and fourth Air Guard TFS’s to arrive in Vietnam were the only Guard units, Air or Army, to serve together in the war. New Mexico’s 188th TFS arrived at Tuy Hoa Air Base on June 7. It was joined by New York’s 136th

TFS a few days later. Both squadrons were assigned to the USAF’s 31st Tactical Fighter Wing. They flew the same type of ground support missions as their fellow Guardsmen in the 120th and 174th. During the course of its one year tour, the 188th lost three pilots killed in action. Fortunately, New York’s 136th suffered no combat losses. Both units received high praise from the USAF for their mission effectiveness. In fact, following a combat strike near the Cambodian border on an enemy bunker complex, the bomb damage assessment team credited the 136th with “100 percent ordnance on target with 90 percent effectiveness.” Both units returned home in June 1969.

There was one other fighter squadron with an Air Guard connection, often referred to as the “fifth” ANG squadron to serve in Vietnam. The USAF organized the 355th TFS in South Carolina in 1968. While about 15 percent of its personnel were USAF members, 85 percent of its men were volunteers drawn from the 119th TFS (New Jersey ANG) and 121st TFS (D.C. ANG). These two squadrons were part of the January mobilization and served as a source for much of the 355th’s ground support personnel as well. The 355th deployed to Vietnam in the summer of 1968. One Guard pilot was killed in action. Though the unit remained in Vietnam into 1970, its Guardmembers were rotated home in the summer of 1969. No campaign credit is given to either ANG unit for this deployment.

While the war raged in Vietnam, tensions were still quite high in the Korean Peninsula. To help forestall a North Korean attack, two ANG fighter squadrons were deployed to South Korea just in case of conflict. They were Kansas’s 127th TFS and Ohio’s 166th TFS. They also flew the F-100C to give close ground support if needed. Seeing no combat, they returned home in June 1969.

The war in Vietnam had one other affect on the Air Guard, a second partial mobilization on May 13, 1968. This was brought about by the strain on the USAF commitments world wide and the need for additional personnel. This mobilization consisted of only three units, the 104th TFS (Maryland), 138th TFS (New York) and the 147th Aeromedical Airlift Squadron (Pennsylvania). All three units remained in the United States, though some of their personnel were assigned overseas, and all were released from active duty by the end of 1968.

In all, 10,511 ANG personnel were mobilized in the two call ups; with about 2,000 serving in Vietnam, of those seven were killed in action. Approximately 4,000 additional personnel served in Korea or Japan. The Air Guard played a small but effective role in the war. In fact, Van Meter credits that air strike by the 120th in August 1968 for saving the lives of some of his Soldiers. Who knows how many other lives were affected by their service and sacrifice.

Editor’s note: The ANG Strategic Airlifters began flying missions to Southeast Asia in December 1965 on a volunteer basis.

Between July 1970 and January 1971, Airmen from Pennsylvania’s 193rd Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron and two of their EC-121 aircraft served in Thailand supporting the USAF in “Operation Command Buzz.” They operated flying radar platforms and airborne control centers for U.S. tactical air operations over North Vietnam and the Gulf of Tonkin.

Dolls bring deployed troops closer to home

By Michelle Key
Missouri National Guard

Nine-year-old Mikayla Vandergriff is supporting Missouri troops in Iraq. With help from her mother, grandmother, little brother, and deployed father, Mikayla is helping children of deployed Soldiers deal with their separation.

Mikayla's dad, Sgt. 1st Class James Vandergriff, is currently deployed to Iraq with the Missouri National Guard's 735th Force Provider Company. When Mikayla's mother, Melissa, saw how much she missed her father, she decided to surprise her with a doll.

"I had my friend help me make a doll for Mikayla and her brother James," said Melissa. "I wasn't sure how the dolls would turn out, but I was hoping that it would work." It did.

"I take it wherever I go," said Mikayla. "I take it to school in my backpack and I really like to just snuggle with it."

After talking to her father on the phone, Mikayla decided that she wanted to help other Soldiers' families.

"We talked about it and decided to make a few dolls for other Soldiers in Jim's unit," said Melissa.

The original plan was to make five dolls for fellow Soldiers' children at no cost to the Soldiers. After word spread, Mikayla and her crew had orders for 20 dolls in just two weeks.

The whole family gets in on the project. First, deployed Soldiers have their picture taken by Vandergriff. He sends the image to Melissa who prints and irons the image onto fabric. Grandmother sews the dolls, and then Mikayla and James stuff them. After each doll is finished, Mikayla writes a personal letter to each child, complete with a hand-drawn picture.

"My job is to stuff the dolls and write the letters," explained Mikayla. "The letters say things like, 'It broke my heart when my dad left.'"

While the project started as a small gesture, Mikayla and her crew are still staying busy. Vandergriff has posted fliers around his base and the base commander even ordered two for his children.

"I would never stop making the dolls," added Mikayla. "The dolls make me happy; I hope it will make other kids happy too."



Missouri National Guard photo

Mikayla Vandergriff sends six new Soldier dolls to children of deployed Soldiers.

16 JANUARY 2008

fight'n family



Courtesy photo

Five members of Cathy Hammack's family are serving in Iraq. Her husband, two sons, brother-in-law and son-in-law all are serving with the 111th Engineer Brigade. They are Sgt. Maj. Keith Hammack, husband (second from right); Capt. Keith Hammack, Jr., son (second from left); Spc. Casey Hammack, son (top); Sgt. Roy Hammack, brother-in-law (right), and Sgt. Casey Phalen, son-in-law (left).

One family, five Guardmembers, one deployment, one strong wife and mother

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — A West Virginia National Guard family readiness assistant ought to know a thing or two about her job: five members of Cathy Hammack's family are serving in Iraq.

Her husband, two sons, brother-in-law and son-in-law all are serving with the 111th Engineer Brigade. That's Sgt. Maj. Keith Hammack, husband; Capt. Keith Hammack, Jr., son; Spc. Casey Hammack, son; Sgt. Roy Hammack, brother-in-law, and Sgt. Casey Phalen, son-in-law.

"Working with family programs helps me," Hammack said. "It's the only thing that keeps me sane. I have a good support network with my real family, my military family and my work family."

You could say military service is a Hammack family value, but Cathy Hammack says the family has also reaped its rewards. "The three oldest are benefiting from that Guard [college] tuition," she said.

She married into the National Guard when she was 17. "It's always been a part of my life, my whole married life," she said. "I've been married three-quarters of my life, so it's always been there."

The multiple deployments weren't an accident. Some of the family volunteered when they heard others were going. "If I want to go, I want to go with dad," Spc. Hammack told his

mother. "I'm going to have to go eventually."

Cathy Hammack was in Virginia in mid-November for joint family support assistance program training, which she said emphasized the resources available for National Guard families.

She said support for National Guard families in her home state starts at the top. Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett, West Virginia's adjutant general, and his wife Sallie Pat make a point of reaching out to Guardmembers, she said.

"They know everybody," she said. "They know all the West Virginia troops. They get out there and meet them. He is so behind family programs. It makes it easier on our Soldiers to know that when their families are gone they're going to be taken care of from the top down in our state."

In her job, Cathy Hammack says she sees Guard families who need financial assistance, who are stressed because a family member is deployed for a second time and there are young children, or who face a family emergency. Her office offers help — and encouragement.

"We teach the families to be self-reliant," she said. "Take care of themselves." She's been overheard telling another wife, "Put on your big-girl pants and step up to the plate."

Hammack's five members have been in Iraq since August 2007. The Eleanor-based 111th Engineer Brigade (combat engineers) is expected to be deployed for about one year.

Perhaps counter-intuitive, Cathy Hammack said she's glad her family is together. "I feel safer with them all together," she said. "They have their own family network over there."

Besides, she said commanders avoid exposing the five to danger at once. "They won't let them stay in the same place," she said. "They're never allowed to be in the same vehicle. They don't let them go on the same missions, usually. They're not allowed to fly on the same plane, but with five of them they only had three planes from West Virginia [when they mobilized]."

The Hammacks use e-mail and Webcams to stay in touch. "The Webcam's nice," Cathy Hammack said. "You can see their faces, and you can see their rooms — and the five boxes of stuff that I sent them that are still unopened."

Hammack's daughter, Christina Phalen, isn't deployed — but she hasn't broken the family tradition. She's a full-time staff sergeant in the Air National Guard.

Military service is a long-standing Hammack tradition. Sgt. Maj. Hammack's father was in the Air Force and National Guard; Cathy Hammack's father was in the Air Force.

"I'm really proud of all of them," she said. "We're just patriotic people. You've got to have a love of country in order to go through this many deployments. I couldn't do this without the support of my military family and my regular family. I couldn't do it without this great support network."

