



THE ON GUARD

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Newspaper of the National Guard



Commission's final report urges Guard investment

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON—An independent commission has recommended changes for the National Guard and the five other reserve components to reflect their transformation from a strategic reserve to an operational force.

“At the core of these changes is the explicit recognition of the evolution of the reserve components from a purely strategic force, with lengthy mobilization times designed to meet Cold War threats from large nation-states, to an operational force,” the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR) wrote in a letter that accompanied the report to senators and congressmen on the Armed Services Committees.

After two-and-a-half years of work, the commission delivered its final report to Congress, the Pentagon and other agencies Jan. 31, calling it the most comprehensive independent review in 60 years.

LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, said many elements of the CNGR report are valuable.

“This commission has made some very significant proposals, many of which have great merit,

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

Arkansas Spc. Richard Newton, Staff Sgt. Scott Pettigrew and Sgt. Jacob Talavera of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Fires Brigade lend some muscle to help a victim of the killer storm that hit Atkins, Ark., Feb. 5.

Virginia wildfire fight just part of nationwide response

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

ARLINGTON, Va. — Fighting wildfires in Virginia became the newest mission for members of the National Guard who were dealing with many domestic emergencies as the new week began on Feb. 11.

More than 500 members of the National Guard were on weather-related duty in the South and West, as well as in Virginia, because of call-ups from governors in several states for emergency assistance to communities hit by tornadoes, heavy snow and floods.

Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine issued a state of emergency Feb. 10 because of wildfires that ignited across the state and were fanned by high winds. The Virginia Department of Forestry estimated that at least 200 fires had burned nearly 6,000 acres from Virginia Beach to Roanoke to Fairfax County.

Virginia Guard Soldiers responded with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters equipped with 600-gallon Bambi Buckets to dump water on the flames. At least 110 Soldiers reported to Fort Pickett southwest of Richmond for firefighting training Feb. 11 and were expected to assist the Virginia Department of Forestry the following day.

National Guard units in Arkansas, Kentucky, Ten-

nessee and Indiana continued recovery operations in their communities through the weekend and into Feb. 11, six days after thunderstorms and tornadoes crippled the states with power outages, destroyed infrastructure, homes and businesses and flooded multiple counties across Indiana.

In Kentucky, four Guardmembers continued to operate a mobile command post in Muhlenberg County while 82 Soldiers from the 307th Maintenance Company continued to support state and local law enforcement agencies at traffic control points.

At least 50 Arkansas Guard Soldiers and Airmen continued their recovery missions in Stone and Van Buren counties through the same weekend. Guard officials said the state's five missions were expected to last several more days as the Guard continued to support civil authorities.

Soldiers provided emergency power for the courthouse and city hall in Mountain View and for the county landfill and Irving Clinic in Stone County. Soldiers in

STORMS continued on: Page 3

Defense Act strengthens National Guard

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — The National Guard Bureau will become a joint activity of the Department of Defense, and the chief of the bureau will serve as a principal advisor to the secretary of defense, through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a result of the National Defense Authorization Act that President George W. Bush signed into law Jan. 28.

The law brings about the most sweeping changes for the National Guard in nearly 100 years, coincidentally during the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Division of Militia Affairs which was the precursor of the modern National Guard Bureau.

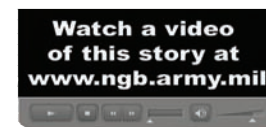
That division of the War Department was created in February 1908, according to Michael Doubler, Ph.D., who is one of the Guard's preeminent historians. The first chief was Lt. Col. Erasmus Weaver, who served from 1908-11. The stature of the chief's office has grown considerably during the past century.

Before this year's defense act became law, the National Guard Bureau was a joint bureau of the Army and Air Force.

The defense act also includes provisions:

- Creating a bipartisan council of governors to advise the secretary of defense, the Department of Homeland Security and others on National Guard matters
- Determining the feasibility of increasing the number of U.S. Northern Command reserve component members
- Upgrading the position of the chief of the National Guard Bureau to a four-star general
- Increasing to 15 the number of reserve component general officers serving at combatant commands

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Chief: Historic year leads to exciting future, Page 2

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

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SUBMISSION

E-mail your stories by the first day of each month for possible inclusion in next month's issue. We prefer that photos be high-quality digital (300 dpi or more) and e-mailed to:

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Historic year leads to exciting future

Guard's people, new law combine as leaders solidify transformation

In late January, President Bush signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This law contains the most significant and sweeping reforms in the administration and organization of the National Guard Bureau, indeed the National Guard itself, since the National Defense Act of 1916. I hope you will take some time to look at the law.

Of significance, the 2008 NDAA designates the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) as the principal advisor to the secretary of defense, through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on matters involving non-federalized National Guard forces, and on other matters as determined by the secretary of defense. The CNGB will continue to advise the secretaries and chiefs of staff of the Army and Air Force on the essential role of the National Guard as a reserve component of each of these services.

The law also designates the National Guard Bureau as a joint activity of the Department of Defense. These and other reforms contained in the 2008 NDAA serve to strengthen the voice of the National Guard inside the Department of Defense in response to our growing roles, both at home and abroad. We stand at the doorstep of a historic opportunity for the National Guard to be an even more effective organization as we work toward the defense and protection of our nation and its citizens.

In the 371-year history of

our National Guard, the year 2007 will most certainly be remembered as one of historic proportions. We are all members of a National Guard in the midst of significant evolution. As the reserve component of the U.S.

Army and Air Force, we are no longer postured to provide only a strategic reserve to respond to threats of the Soviet Union. We have become an operational force, fighting side by side with our active duty partners, working hard to win the long war against terrorism that began some six and half years ago.

Even though we are a significant force multiplier in

In the 371-year history of our National Guard, the year 2007 will most certainly be remembered as one of historic proportions

the overseas war fight, we also remain focused on and connected to our constitutional roots as the organized militia of the states, prepared to rapidly respond domestically under the command of our nation's governors whenever and wherever we are needed in the 54 states and territories. It is important for you to know that from the president, to the Congress, to the secretary of defense and the secretaries of the Army and Air Force, to



By LTG H Steven Blum
Chief, NGB

the governors and the adjutants general, there has been a common message: The country needs a National Guard that is resourced, ready, and structured to meet the 21st century national security

National Guard members made up about half of the ground combat forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that is about to happen again. Yet, even in the face of increased deployments, minimal dwell times with the prospects of further family separations, and extended time away from civilian employers, we are retaining Soldiers and Airmen at extraordinary rates.

Additionally, we are seeing equally impressive recruiting numbers. Right now, the Army National Guard and Air National Guard are contributing to the overseas war fight in staggering numbers approaching 375,000 to date. Parallel to the effort to support the overseas war fight is our effort to support our nation's governors in the domestic mission as the first military responders to incidents and disasters, whether natural or man-made. Each day,

challenges that are facing our nation today.

I have always known our greatest resources are you, our Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen. Today, you are the most professional, most experienced, and most relied upon men and women our National Guard has ever had in its ranks. Hundreds of thousands of our Soldiers and Airmen have deployed to the war fight – many more than once. At one point in this war,

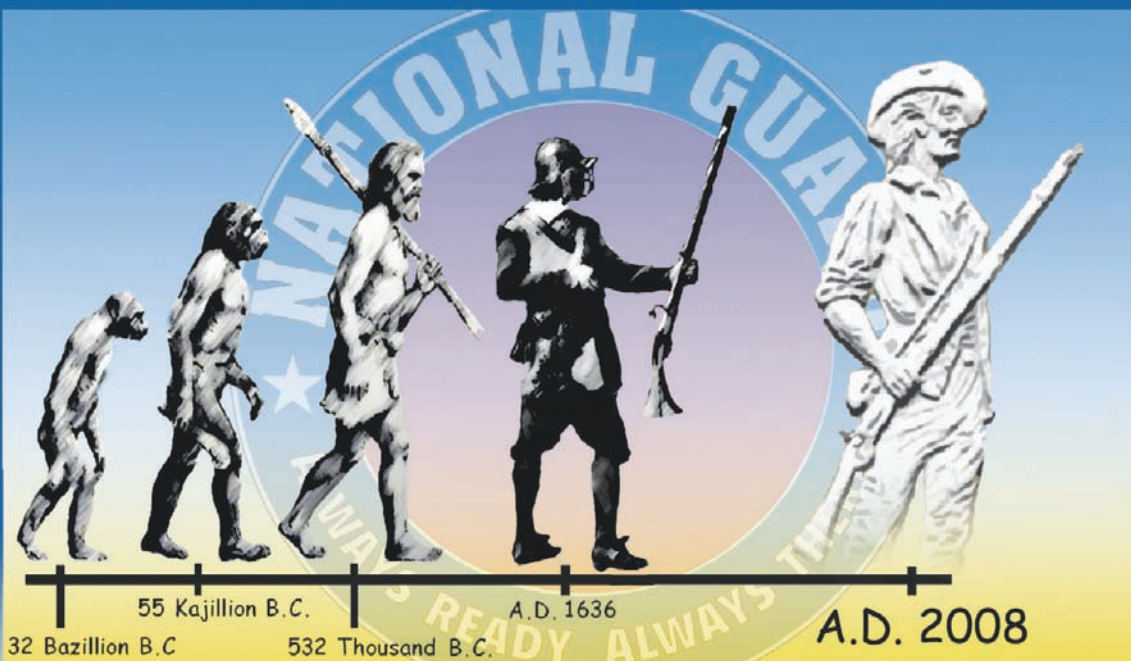
an average of 17 governors call on their National Guards for everything from weather-related assistance to suspected anthrax contamination. While all of that is going on, we are building on other programs you may be unfamiliar with, such as the National Guard State Partnership Program. The SPP establishes "partnerships" between foreign countries and American states and is an important contribution to the Department of Defense theater security cooperation programs conducted by the combatant commanders.

This program was created in 1993 to assist the U.S. European Command's engagement with defense and military establishments of former Warsaw Pact nations after the fall of the Berlin Wall. SPP fosters long-term, mutually beneficial and enduring relationships between states and America's friends and allies around the globe. National Guard Soldiers and Airmen apply both military and civilian skills to support defense reform and military transformation, promote democracy, encourage economic development, and further regional cooperation and stability. There are currently 58 state partnerships throughout the world focused on military-to-military, military-to-civilian and civil security exchanges. This high-value

**HISTORIC continued on:
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Offline

By: SSG W. Michael Houk



Wing ends fighter mission, embraces intelligence

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

OTIS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Mass. – An Air National Guard fighter wing bid a bittersweet goodbye to its old mission as it embraced its new reason for remaining on Cape Cod 24 days into the new year.

The 102nd Fighter Wing flew its final mission when two F-15 Eagle jet fighters were scrambled into a snow-threatening January sky during a ceremonial sortie witnessed by approximately 500 wing members, military officials, family, friends, and local government officials. Col. Anthony Schiavi and Maj. Dan Nash were the pilots.

“At approximately 1320 today, the alert klaxon sounded for the last time,” said Schiavi, commander of the highly regarded unit that is being transformed into the 102nd Intelligence Wing. The F-15 pilots and crews are being replaced by specialists who will use computer technology to acquire, analyze and distribute data gathered from all over the world to combatant commanders and others who need to know what enemy forces are doing.

It is considered a prime example of how well a military unit is adjusting to a new role dictated by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. The 102nd is the Air Guard’s fifth oldest unit, born in the spring of 1921 as the Massachusetts National Guard’s 101st Observation Squadron and federally recognized that November.

“We are ready to show the Air Force, the National Guard Bureau and the nation what the Massachusetts Air National Guard can do,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Akey, the Bay State’s ANG commander.

The 30-minute Thursday flight included three low-level flybys around the base and signaled the end of the 102nd’s more than 35 years of continuous alert on Cape Cod. It has watched over a half-million square miles of Northeast airspace, including heavily-populated Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, since June 1972. It has logged over 80,000 accident-free flying hours during that time, Schiavi said.

“On 9/11, shortly before 9 a.m., our F-15s were scrambled into a clear blue Cape Cod sky, and headed south for New York City – to a scene that none of us could imagine,” Schiavi reminded the well wishers about how the fighters from Cape Cod were the first military aircraft to respond to the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. “But in the days, weeks and months that followed, the 102nd flew thousands of hours over many locations to ensure the safety of our homeland,” Schiavi added.



Photo by Capt. Bill Muthiora

Idaho Soldiers from the 145th Brigade Support Battalion shovel snow off a school in Spirit Lake, Idaho, after four feet of snow crippled school systems in three counties.

Troops in several states called up

From page 1:
STORMS

Clinton and Van Buren counties supported security operations by state and local law enforcement agencies.

The Tennessee National Guard had 146 Guardmembers supporting civilian emergency response agencies with debris removal in Macon, Trousdale and Sumner counties. Many operated from a support base and civilian shelter at the Lafayette Armory.

At least 24 Soldiers in Indiana were called out after a tornado and other high winds caused damage in Jackson, Decatur and Putnam counties. Guard officials said flood conditions were taking a toll on the infrastructure with numerous reports of damaged and washed-out roads,

bridges and railroad tracks.

Soldiers put a sandbag machine in Kokomo and 18 Soldiers deployed to areas in Sullivan County to assist with sandbagging operations. Officials expected to shift operations to the southern part of the state the following week.

Out West, nearly 70 Guardmembers in Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington continued snow removal operations.

In Idaho, where snow levels deepened to dangerous levels, 45 Guardmembers shoveled snow from the roofs of 30 buildings and operated loaders and other heavy equipment in Bonner, Shoshone and Kootenai counties.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear

Cpl. Robert B. Anderson, assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry, works to extinguish some of the remnants of a wildfire near Roanoke, Va., Feb 12. Anderson was one of approximately 60 Virginia Guard Soldiers working with the Virginia Department of Forestry in the Roanoke area.



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HISTORIC



National Guard program will continue to grow in the months and years ahead as we expand in the Pacific region and the new Africa Command stands up its operation.

We also continue to do critically important work on missions such as peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, border security, and counterdrug. The list really does go on and on.

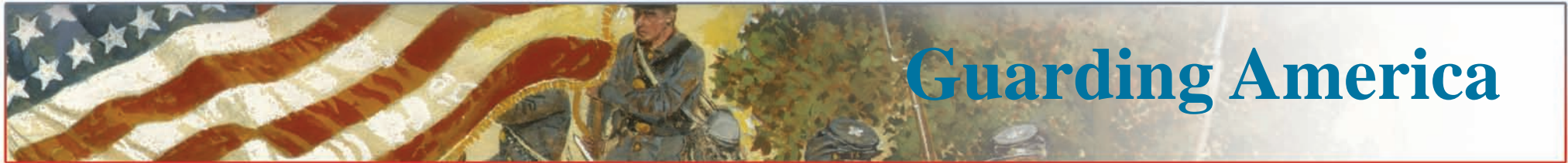
Amazingly, you do all of this while remaining an all-volunteer force. Never before has our nation been asked to fight a similar war and meet the needs of the states simultaneously without resorting to a draft. All of you have asked to serve, and all of you are a testament to what it means to answer the call to something bigger than yourselves. We must continue to work hard to recruit and retain Soldiers and Airmen just like you for the future of the National Guard and for the future of America.

The National Guard will continue to remain focused on operational readiness to answer the calls of our governors and the president in doing our part to secure America’s future. As the nation and our world change, the impacts on our force will be significant. The war fight overseas and our response to crises here at home are but two important areas of our reach. We will continue to invest in our Family Programs, our youth-based programs like ChalleNGe, our Drug Demand Reduction program, and many others.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall recently noted: “Today’s Guardmembers are the continuation of the Minuteman spirit that defended our citizens and way of life. Guardmembers have earned the respect of their fellow Americans by performing above and beyond the call of duty.” No words could ring more true.

The 2008 NDAA gives the National Guard new responsibilities and clarifies our roles. With this unity of effort, and because of everything you do each and every day, we will continue to solidify the foundation for the next 371 years.

We will remain *Always Ready, Always There.*



Alabama

The Yellowhammer State's Youth Challenge Academy held pre-Challenge graduation ceremonies in late January for 84 Class 3 program graduates at the academy's Fort McClellan campus. Youth Challenge gives at-risk teenagers the values, skills, education and self discipline necessary to succeed as productive, positive adults.

Alaska

The Last Frontier State's 176th Wing at Kulis Air National Guard Base flew a HC-130N Hercules aircraft Feb. 3 to help search for a missing Japanese balloonist. The 58-year-old male was reported missing two days earlier while attempting to fly from Japan to Portland, Ore.

Arizona

Several units from the Grand Canyon State deployed in support of Super Bowl XLII. The Air National Guard's 162nd Fighter Wing patrolled air space with F-16 Falcons, and the 161st Air Refueling Wing refueled them. The 91st Civil Support Team deployed 19 personnel and eight specially equipped vehicles. The 363rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company deployed 15 personnel and two vehicles. Nearly 150 Soldiers from the 198th Regional Support Group assembled as a quick reaction force.

Arkansas

The Natural State's 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team continued preparations for its second deployment to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. The January training included urban operations training, reflexive fire exercises, live fire exercises, HUMVEE egress training and combat lifesaver field exercises.

California

Golden State Airmen were among nearly 60 members who completed a 10-week deployment Jan. 11 with the 38th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The group airlifted more than 283 tons of cargo throughout Europe by flying 109 sorties on the HC-130J Hercules.

Colorado

The Centennial State's Army Guard assisted in a 40-square-mile search for three missing snowmobilers in Eagle County. Two men were rescued, and a third man died. The Soldiers operated two OH-58 Kiowa helicopters and one UH-60 Black Hawk. The Soldiers were credited with rescuing the two survivors.

Georgia

Peach State Congressman Jack Kingston thanked members of the 169th Aviation Regiment at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga., Feb. 5 for their work during a wildfire in southern Georgia last year. The Soldiers used CH-47 Chinook helicopters when the fires began spreading in Ware and Brantley Counties. For several weeks they dropped water from 2,000-gallon Bambi Buckets.

Hawaii

Fifty Aloha State Soldiers and Airmen cleared debris on Maui in January after severe weather hit that island in early December. Soldiers cleared gulches and culverts which posed flood hazards.

Illinois

The Prairie State's 1744th Transportation Company was recognized for its Operation Iraqi Freedom service with a Freedom Salute ceremony Jan. 13. At least 170 Soldiers recently returned from a June 2006 deployment.

Indiana

Hoosier State Guardmembers responded to widespread flooding due to heavy rainfall, severe thunderstorms and high winds in early February. Among other missions, the Guard provided transportation for emergency personnel with Army trucks.

Iowa

A rededication ceremony and open house took place in Sioux City Jan. 25 in the Hawkeye State to commemorate the renovations and expansion to the Iowa Army Guard Readiness Center. The \$760,000 project includes a 4,560-square foot addition which includes locker space, storage space and a supply area.

Kentucky

The Bluegrass State's Guard, in conjunction with federal, state and local emergency response agencies, planned an annual state-wide emergency response exercise March 1-8. It is the largest exercise of its kind to date and is based on a simulated 7.5 magnitude earthquake along the New Madrid fault.

Louisiana

Two Pelican State UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and 12 Soldiers helped the Texas National Guard battle wildfires in the Lake Charles region. One UH-60 was dispatched from the Army Aviation Support Facility in Hammond, while the other was dispatched from the facility in Pineville. The aircraft dispersed water from attached Bambi Buckets.

Missouri

The Show Me State hosted Daniel Delgado Diamante, the minister for government and justice for Panama, at the Ike Skelton Training Site in January. The visit was a part of the State Partnership Program.

Nevada

Col. Michael Carlson became the new chief of staff for the Army Guard in the Silver State in February. Carlson replaces Col. Felix Castagnola, who is awaiting approval to become the property and fiscal officer for the state. Maj. Gen. Cindy Kirkland, the adjutant general, selected Carlson in late January.

New Hampshire

The Granite State Guard has inaugurated its new \$15.3 million Joint Command Readiness Center and Civil Support Team facility in Concord. Gov. John Lynch and members of the state's congressional delegation joined Guard leaders to observe the state of the art facility and its strategic importance.

New Mexico

The Land of Enchantment governor ordered Guard troops to the town of Chama Feb. 5 to help the community cope with heavy snowfalls. Snow blocked roads, damaged structures and left residents stranded in their homes.

New York

Five medical technicians from the Empire State's 109th Airlift Wing departed for Albania Feb. 10 to spend three days instructing Albanian soldiers on vaccination procedures. The mission is part of the National Guard's State Partnership Program in which state Guard forces partner with other countries.

Ohio

The Buckeye State's Springfield-based 251st Combat Communications Group received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in January. The unit received the award for outstanding performance from Aug. 1, 2005, through July 31, 2007.

Pennsylvania

Soldiers with the Keystone State's 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry conducted live fire training and squad movements in January. The Soldiers simulated evacuating casualties while utilizing Stryker vehicles and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

Puerto Rico

The 22nd Civil Support Team helped the FBI investigate a suspicious substance in late January. Six small packets containing a green powdery substance and one small container with a white powder were discovered.

South Dakota

A deployment ceremony was held Jan. 22 for 16 Soldiers who make up Coyote One, the Mount Rushmore State's embedded training team. The unit will deploy for 12 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and plans to report to Fort Riley, Kan., for 60 days of training. The state has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 700 Airmen since 9/11.

West Virginia

The Mountain State's 35th Civil Support Team was one of several units on duty for President Bush's Jan. 28 State of the Union Address.

Wisconsin

Members of the Badger State's 115th Fighter Wing in Madison deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom in January. The approximately 300 Airmen included F-16 Falcon pilots and crew chiefs as well as intelligence, life support, supply, munitions, avionics, engine, and hydraulics technicians.

Wyoming

Nine of the Cowboy State's Army Guard Soldiers assisted Niobrara County officials with snow removal on several country roads. The Soldiers were members of the 133rd Engineer Company.

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



Photo by Capt. Sara Shipley

United

Chaplain (Capt.) David Noble of the Joint Logistics Task Force 1144, Illinois Army National Guard, says a prayer with Soldiers in C Company, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry before they head out on a convoy. C Company, from the Alabama Army Guard, is serving as a gun truck company in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Spc. Jonathan Wight (standing) from Lavonia, Ga., was introduced by Secretary of the Army Pete Geren as one of the newest recruits in the Army National Guard's Active First recruiting program during a Jan. 10 Pentagon press conference.

Guard recruits go Active First; recruiting, retention numbers soar

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

ARLINGTON, Va. — An Army recruiting program that combines active and Guard recruiting efforts has been hailed as a success by the secretary of the Army and director of the Army National Guard.

Army Secretary Pete Geren said the National Guard's Active First program deserves credit in meeting the Army's accelerated goal of 74,000 additional Soldiers by 2010.

"The Guard has been innovative and entrepreneurial in developing different approaches to recruiting, and this partnership is bearing great fruit to our total Army," Geren said.

The Active First program includes a commitment to serve initially in the active duty Army and then to serve in the Guard. Recruits join an Army Guard unit where they attend monthly drills until their basic and other initial training is complete.

Then the new Soldiers phase into 30, 36 or 48 months of active duty service with the option to continue an active duty career or return to their Guard units and pursue life as Citizen-Soldiers. Bonuses of up to \$60,000 are available for completing the program.

The Guard has been tasked with enlisting 1,600 recruits through Active First.

Recruiters started working toward that goal by enlisting more than 80 people last October, and they doubled that achievement the next month. In December, which Army

Guard Director Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn called an annual "tough month" for recruiters, 240 recruits signed Active First enlistments. By early February, more than 500 recruits had enlisted through the programs.

Active First recruits joined Geren and Vaughn, along with several Guard recruiters, during a Pentagon press conference. Spc. Jonathan Wight from Lavonia, Ga., was among them. After checking out a couple of different programs, Wight decided that Active First was his best option.

"It's the best of both worlds," said Wight. Wight will serve for 36 months in the military police. He follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who both served in the military, but he said he always wanted to serve in the Army.

He initially got involved with the Guard through the Youth Challenge program, an Army Guard outreach program that helps at-risk youth earn high school diplomas. "I got my GED there and followed that with college education, too," said Wight. "I was really set forward."

Vaughn said Wight and those with him exemplify the best of the Active First program.

"They are the people behind the numbers," said Vaughn. "They have compelling stories, each of them, of why they enlisted."

Army Guard recruiting officials said a multitude of recruiting tools and programs builds end-strength numbers.

"Active First as well as our '3 Doors Down' theater movie, Guard Recruiting

Assistance Program, state leaders and the great support from our communities are all key to our recent success," said Lt. Col. Diana Craun, deputy division chief for Army Guard recruiting and retention.

The Active First announcement coincided with the release of the December recruiting and retention statistics for the Army Guard, which exceeded its congressionally-mandated end strength.

The Army Guard grew by more than a record 1,900 soldiers during the first quarter of the fiscal year. It also reported its December end strength at 354,675, which surpassed an end strength goal of 350,000. It also exceeded its recruiting goal by recruiting 4,985 Soldiers, 119.9 percent of its goal, and exceeded its retention goal by retaining 7,206 Soldiers, 122 percent of its goal.

"The amazing work of our Soldiers working as recruiting assistants along with our recruiting and retention noncommissioned officers has done what has never been done in the history of the Army National Guard," Craun said.

Vaughn said he was confident that the Guard's success would continue through 2008.

"I'm going on record right now that all I have to do is get out of bed and have a cup of coffee and we are going over [end] strength this year," said Vaughn. "That's the kind of machine that's running right now, and it has to do with a lot of pride in the force."

New Hampshire ranks grow to highest mark since mid 1990's

CONCORD, N.H. — In one of its most successful recruiting years in modern history, the New Hampshire National Guard enlisted more than 470 men and women in 2007.

More than 350 joined the state's Army Guard and about 100 entered the Air Guard.

It was the 13th highest recruitment total for Army National Guards nationwide.

"We are seeing a new generation of men and women who are joining us for the right reasons," said Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the state's adjutant general. "They want to serve their state and nation. For some

that means helping in their communities and for others that means going overseas."

Several years ago, the New Hampshire Guard, as well as the military in general, was struggling to meet its recruiting goals, primarily because of the affect of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2005, the New Hampshire Army Guard shrank to 1,635, its lowest membership in two decades. It dropped to 1,608 the following year.

Today, the state's Army strength is more than 1,770 Soldiers, with the Air Guard at more than 950 Airmen.

-NEW HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL GUARD

HEADS UP!

Home loan change

In the past, qualified veterans and active duty Soldiers have been able to obtain loans without down payments, but the loan size has been strictly limited. Now, with a down payment of at least 25 percent of the loan amount above the current limit (\$417,000), the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) will permit larger loans.

www.homeloans.va.gov

Redeployment help

The Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program will soon expand to all members of the Guard and Reserve. The Minnesota National Guard developed the program to help troops transition back into civilian and family life. Workshops held at 30-, 60- and 90-day intervals following redeployment provide training on marriage and parenting, substance and gambling abuse and anger management.

www.minnesotanationalguard.org

Free tax prep

For the third consecutive year, the Department of Defense provides free tax preparation service to Soldiers and their families. Access H&R Block TaxCut Basic Online through www.militaryonesource.com and complete federal and state tax returns electronically. Military OneSource also offers telephonic tax support for those with questions about their returns. Eligible users are active duty, Army and Air Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), spouses and dependent children (authorized in DEERS), family members handling the affairs of a deployed Soldier, and severely-injured Soldiers or family members handling their affairs. Users must create a membership on Military OneSource online and log into the site.

www.militaryonesource.com

Space-A travel change

Military family members can now travel Space Available on military aircraft without sponsors when their Guardmember is deployed for 120 or more days. Under the old policy, family members could only travel unaccompanied during a deployment from an overseas location to their home of record in the United States. Travel was restricted to one round-trip during the deployment. Under the new policy, family members' travel is unlimited when space is available. Eligible family members will need a verification letter from the sponsor's commander confirming the deployment.

www.amc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-060328-001.doc

Expanding State Partnership Program eyes the Pacific

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

HONOLULU - Following successes in Europe, South and Central America, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa, the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) is expanding in the Asia-Pacific region.

"These partnerships are limited only by what the two partners want to accomplish," said LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, characterizing the SPP as two-way relationships built on trust that outlives individual political administrations. "None are more important than the ones we have in the Pacific," he said.

Adm. Timothy Keating, the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) commander, has endorsed Bangladesh's request for a SPP and asked Blum to nominate a state for this new partnership. If approved, this SPP would bring the number of foreign countries partnered with U.S. states to 59. Five of these are Pacific Rim or Southeast Asian countries, and Blum predicted that much of the SPP's expansion in the next two to three years will occur in that region. Some states have more than one partner.

"Our nation needs to do this," Blum said. "It is ... absolutely essential in our international relations in the future."

"The potential and the opportunity in the Asia-Pacific region are significant," Keating said in Hawaii to those attending the first two-day Pacific State Partnership Program Regional Workshop. "Underpinning this potential is the requirement for security and stability, and that's where we all come in. ... Thanks for your efforts. It's making a difference. Life is better for hundreds of millions of people throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and a big reason is the effort you're putting forth in the State Partnership Program."

Marine Lt. Gen. John Goodman, the commanding general of Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, said, "Everything we do from now on is about partnerships ... setting the conditions where we can ... helping one another move forward together to address this complex, dynamic, changing security environment."

"The United States in its national defense military strategy sees the need to do a much better job than we have done ... in increasing our partnership capacity," Blum said. "There's nobody better-suited to do it than the National Guard. Anytime you call out the Guard to do anything, you call out America, and this truly calls out Americans into an international program that otherwise wouldn't be involved."

Keating said his impression of the National Guard was profoundly affected by working with Blum on the response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "I developed an intense and abiding appreciation and respect for what the National Guard does for our country," he said.

The late-January workshop, co-hosted by Blum and Maj. Gen. Bob Lee, Hawaii's adjutant general, brought together Indonesia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand and their respective National Guard partner states of Hawaii, Alaska, Guam and Washington.

Foreign military chiefs, National Guard adjutants general and others discussed activities that promote mutual security cooperation, stability and progress throughout the 41-country PACOM area of operations. The SPP in the Pacific draws on the resources of PACOM, the National Guard Bureau, National Guard states, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. ambassadors and country teams and other agencies and individuals.

Workshop discussions focused on military-to-military, military-to-civilian and civil security cooperation issues as well as funding for SPP events and related topics. Among issues to which attendees assigned a high priority:

- Joint noncommissioned officer and officer training. "We're down at the Soldier level," said Maj. Gen. Donald Goldhorn, the adjutant general of the Guam National Guard, which is partnered with the Philippines. "We're down at the E-5, E-6 level. That's where the relationships really need to start."

"Anytime you call out the Guard to do anything, you call out America, and this truly calls out Americans into an international program that otherwise wouldn't be involved"
-LTG H Steven Blum

Long-serving Guard leaders speak of foreign enlisted Soldiers and officers who held low ranks when the SPP started in the 1990s and now are among their nation's military leaders, saying such relationships built over the long term pay dividends that can't be matched.

- Developing mutual language skills. "We need to learn their language as much as they need to learn ours," said Maj. Gen.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Maj. Gen. Bob Lee (left), the adjutant general of the Hawaii National Guard, and LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, co-hosted the first two-day Pacific State Partnership Program Regional Workshop in Honolulu in late January.

Craig Campbell, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, whose partner is Mongolia.

- National Guard officers serving in partner countries as bilateral affairs officers and foreign officers serving at state joint forces headquarters. "These programs all succeed because of personal relationships," said Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, the adjutant general of the Washington National Guard, whose partner is Thailand.

The SPP taps the unique missions of the National Guard and its Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen. "They [are] the best ambassadors for the United States," Blum said. "The ability to achieve anything is always done through the magnificent work of the Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen. They bring not only their very, very fine military skills, ... but ... civilian life experience, civilian-acquired skills, the ability to interact with other people in an environment outside of the military ... and [they] say more about what's right about America than anything that we could say through ... other programs."

Senior military representatives from Indonesia, Philippines, Mongolia and Thailand echoed these sentiments.

SPP activities include exchanges by high-level military and civilian leaders. Military-to-military contacts bring state National Guard members together with foreign troops. Military-to-civilian activities focus on homeland defense, homeland security and military support to civilian authorities, including disaster preparedness, emergency response and consequence management.

The SPP is more about sharing ideas and knowledge than strictly military exchanges, Blum said. The partnerships can address a wide variety of shared security issues, including border security and migration, combat medical training, computer and

financial crime, improvised explosive devices, disaster response, humanitarian assistance, illegal drugs, military support to civilian authorities, peacekeeping operations, port security and weapons proliferation.

The National Guard Pacific partnerships unite three countries that share the risk of tsunamis with four Western National Guard states. Other regionally shared issues include cyclones, hurricanes or typhoons, mud slides, the pandemic influenza threat and high seas piracy. By addressing these issues ahead of time, National Guard and foreign leaders will know one another before a crisis that calls for swift, effective mutual aid.

Civilian-to-civilian security exchanges often grow from the SPP, with increased contacts between U.S. and foreign businesses, educational institutions, farmers, doctors, lawyers and scientists.

"This state partnership brings so much more than the military side," said Lee, the Hawaii adjutant general. Lee pointed out that he and some other adjutants general also act as their states' civil defense and emergency managers and homeland security leaders, meaning they can offer even more skills to their SPP partners.

Scheduled upcoming exchanges between Hawaii and Indonesia include hurricane and military training exercises and enlisted and officer training. Blum called that partnership "particularly significant because of the geographic location and the strategic importance of Indonesia, [which] has the largest Muslim population in the world." More than 210 million Muslims live there.

The Asia-Pacific region includes 51 percent of the earth's surface, said Brig. Gen. Skip Vincent, PACOM's deputy mobilization assistant. Almost 60 percent of the world's population lives there, and it includes the four most heavily populated nations - China, India, Indonesia and the United States. Five of America's seven mutual defense treaties are in the region, with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

More than 25 percent of the world's trade and 50 percent of its oil are there.

"This [SPP], while today it's just with four countries here, hopefully in the not-too-distant future will be with many more countries here," said Goodman.

Keating noted that trade between the United States and Japan has increased four-fold in the

last 20 years and between the U.S. and China by a factor of 50. He also said the Pacific is home to three of the world's four largest economies and 15 of its 20 largest ports, including the largest of all, Shanghai.

"If you haven't been [to Shanghai] in the last week or so, it's a different city," he said. "It's changing that rapidly."

Partnerships are created through discussions among countries, ministers of defense, the U.S. ambassadors, regional combatant commanders, adjutants general, governors and the chief of the National Guard Bureau, which administers the SPP.

The SPP started in the Baltic region of Europe in 1993 after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, focused on matching U.S. states with former Soviet satellite nations. "This partnership provided them a chance for the path to NATO and the European Union that they wanted to take to determine their future," Blum said.

The SPP later expanded to South and Central America. Goodman saw the SPP at work firsthand during a U.S. Southern Command assignment as chief of staff. "I gained an extraordinary appreciation for the power of the State Partnership Program," he said. "It's of extraordinary value."

Central Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific and Africa came next. The U.S. in October established Africa Command (AFRICOM). "I expect that [region's partnerships] will also grow dramatically in the next two to three years," Blum said.

No SPP relationship has ended and none has failed since the program's inception 15 years ago. The SPP benefits from its ability to connect nations with the U.S. at the state level, Guard leaders said.

The writing is on the wall for streamlining the Air Guard

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

ARLINGTON, Va. – Improvement. For Col. Billy Asbell it often starts with a dozen or more slightly anxious Air National Guard members seated in their conference room. They clutch cups of coffee or water and find some comfort in the familiar walls. Before long, those walls are hidden behind layers of yellow sticky notes and white easel sheets.

Asbell is the Air National Guard's director of Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21). He covers walls with information in his efforts to help units streamline their operations by cutting out fruitless work.

"What are your processes, and how can you improve them?" Asbell asks.

He repeats that question many times a year in many shops across the Air Guard. No, he is not the big bad wolf that blows shops down with outside cost-cutting agendas. Nor is he a Santa Claus bearing gifts of additional funding or manpower.

Asbell and his six-person team from the Air National Guard Readiness Center facilitate Smart Operations. On a unit's invitation, they guide the members through heaps of data, ideas and goals to restructure processes and eliminate waste.

Michael W. Wynne, secretary of the Air Force, introduced Smart Operations to the Air Force in March 2006. The program unites successful methods from the corporate world, including Lean and Six Sigma. Airmen apply it through rapid improvement events in administrative and logistical shops or anywhere processes need improvement.

The Air Guard is on pace with other Air Force major commands in applying Smart Operations, Asbell said. The first two years were spent working with the states to train nearly 50 Smart Operations experts and apply the program to the Air Guard's administrative processes and weapons systems. There are plans to train more than 250 ASFO experts by 2010. The Air Guard's readiness center even applied the program to its own processes.

"I ask them, if you were king for a day with all resources available, what would [work] look like," said Asbell. "Obviously, there would be no nonvalue added work ... Why would you put that on yourself?"

For a week in early December, at the 179th Airlift Wing in Mansfield, Ohio, Asbell held an "event," which he has hosted



Illustration by Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk

“... we have a tendency to be stove-piped

-Col. Billy Asbell, AFSO21 ANG director

many times for the Air Guard. The Ohio Airmen met him in a room and considered all of their suppliers, inputs, processes, outputs and customers.

Asbell challenged them to brainstorm big processes, categorize them, filter them down and lean out those of no value. In turn, the Airmen told him what they wanted fixed. He covered their meeting room with paper notes. It resembled an over-posted bulletin board, but he left them trained and empowered with a focused package of tools, information and goals. It was up to them to make the changes.

With many, including Asbell, believing the National Guard is already intrinsically lean, Asbell says he still sees endless processes where Smart Operations could further Air Guard capabilities.

"It works in administrative processes, it works for maintenance processes, it works anywhere there's a process," said Asbell.

Asbell explained how the team trains and facilitates AFSO21. "We take the subject

matter experts, bring them together, teach them about Lean, lead them through mapping their processes, help them identify and eliminate wasteful steps and then turn them loose to implement. We don't justify positions, we don't justify facilities and we don't eliminate jobs. We eliminate waste."

Asbell and his team also teach participants that there are eight forms of waste using the acronym "DOWNTIME."

DOWNTIME is an easy way to remember Defects, Overproduction, Waiting, NonStandard work, Transportation, Injuries, Motion and Excess Inventory – all forms of waste, said Asbell. The two big forms he targets are overprocessing and transportation; the O and T in DOWNTIME. "Not to slight the others," said Asbell. "I just see those as easy targets."

While DOWNTIME highlights the categories of waste, it also sets the next step for the AFSO21 process: looking at each step and determining if it's "value added, or not, and determining if a nonvalue added step is

required."

If a nonvalue added step is required, the AFSO21 team said they will

ask why and keep asking until participants can determine if it impacts their mission.

Asbell cites the Ohio Air Guard as an example of Smart Operations' success.

The 179th held a rapid improvement event in July 2007 on the C-130H Hercules preventative maintenance process; known as an Isochronal Inspection (ISO). The event brought together nearly two dozen first-line workers, supervisors, members of other C-130 units, supply NCOs and the squadron commander.

Asbell and his team collected unit data and communicated with process owners to identify problems. Then, like an orchestra leader, he traveled to Ohio to guide the subject matter experts through nearly 200 processes to eliminate nonvalue added work.

The result was a 39 percent decrease in ISO workdays and an increase of 224 aircraft available-days per year.

"The result has been fantastic," said Col. Charles Daugherty, Maintenance Group commander.

Daugherty, who sat through the event, said its significance was that AFSO21 works. "That, itself, can improve so many processes across the Air National Guard," he said.

Officials say giving time back to people and organizations using Smart Operations can be valuable for an Air Force that must continue to meet worldwide requirements with busy warfighters.

Asbell focused the Smart Operations program on the Readiness Center and held 26 events there in 2007.


"And we had some big successes," he said.

The center, whose mission supports Air Guard field units, freed hundreds of administrative processing days by joining readiness center personnel and field personnel in process improvement events.

"You certainly can't write a check on those days, but you can do things that could not get done before," said Asbell.

Now, the Smart Operations team plans to conduct more than a dozen unit events in 2008 and to train and certify more Airmen in the field who can facilitate AFSO21. The team is also building bridges with the maintenance councils and joining efforts with the Army Guard's Six Sigma Project to strengthen joint efforts.

For Col. Billy Asbell, Smart Operations concepts should not create anxiety because the unit is the master of its own improvements. If his team can bring that message to all 88 Air Guard flying wings and stick the ideas of Lean on the walls, it will, he said.

"So far," Asbell said, "I am comfortable with what we have achieved and that we are right on target." 



Active duty, Guard, Reserve: One awesome force

By Staff Sgt. Amanda Callahan
447th Air Expeditionary Group

SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq - The chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Michael T. Moseley, recently said, "You can't look at an Airman and tell if he or she is active, Guard or Reserve. We all wear the same uniform, do the same jobs and help make this Air Force the best in the world."

Nowhere is that more appropriate than here, said Sather Air Base officials.

"It seems the Air Force has found out that we are a reliable and capable force," said Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, the 447th Air Expeditionary Group superintendent, and the 107th Air Refueling Wing, New York Air National Guard command chief. "Between us, our active duty and Reserve brothers, the Air Force is one awesome force, and no one can touch us."

Since the first day the 107th ARW members stepped of the plane in Baghdad, Iraq, they have been making an impact on the Sather AB mission. The 107th ARW arrived with 150 members covering 15 different job specialties.

While some members of the unit dig trenches for

essential utilities, others have valuable command, control and administration positions.

"The 107th (ARW) assumed many of the key leadership positions in the 447th AEG and executed a flawless transition from the last (air expeditionary force) team," said Col. Fred Cheney, the 447th AEG commander. "The Niagara Falls team integrated seamlessly with their active duty, joint service and coalition partners."


"The 107th's contribution to Sather (AB) is huge," said Capt. Bryan Dalporto, the 447th Air Expeditionary Group executive officer and a deployed 107th ARW member. "We account for more than one-third the total force here. We've got a lot of folks doing a lot of important jobs." 



Photo by Joe Oliva

Glowing F-16 afterburners cut a dozen streaks through the frigid air at Truax Field in Madison, Wis., Jan. 16 as aircraft from the 115th Fighter Wing depart in the early morning hours for a two-month mission in Iraq. This time exposure photograph also captured the jets' anticollision strobe lights as the aircraft lifted off the runway and climbed to the east, beginning their 6,500-mile journey to Iraq.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

Iowa Soldiers in the 186th Military Police Company detain a possible insurgent during military operations on urban terrain as part of mobilization training conducted by the 72nd Field Artillery Brigade at Fort Dix, N.J., Jan. 10. The unit is scheduled for deployment in support of the war on terrorism.



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Spc. Dennis Alakayak, a convoy gunner, ensures all parts of his Armored Security Vehicle, including hatches, work properly at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, in late January. Alakayak is a member of the Alaska Army National Guard's B Company, 297th Support Battalion and has been deployed to Iraq since October.

8 MARCH 2008

ZEROING IN...

ON A MONTH'S WORTH OF



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

Top: Sgt. 1st Class Porter assists an Indiana Army National Guard Soldier of the 1st Brigade Combat Team in the loading of weapons at Camp Taji, Iraq, as part of their training prior to a deployment to Iraq. Left: Lt. Col. Nash prepares to take off the Massachusetts Army National Guard's two F-15 fighters for the final sortie flown by the 1st Fighter Wing at Otis Field Air National Guard Base on Cape Cod. Right: Spec. Brantley is shown in the cockpit of a Wyoming National Guard rocket pack as it is being loaded into position. It's part of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), the new Multiple Launch Rocket System family.

GUARD NEWS (IN PHOTOS)



Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika

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Photo by Pfc. Anthony Jones



Photo by Sgt. Michael Krieg

What would have been a treacherous rescue attempt for any normal vehicle was no challenge for the Indiana National Guard's six-wheel-drive FMTV (Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles). The truck driven by Sgt. Ronald Gamble of the 38th Infantry Division was used to get through deep water to rescue a woman from her flood-threatened home in Wolcottville, Ind., Feb. 7.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark C. Olsen

Staff Sgt. Robert Waters, an emergency management Airman, employs a Drager Civil Defense Simultest Kit to check for chlorine gas during an antiterrorism/chemical attack exercise at the 177th Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, Jan. 6.

Newsmakers

Wounded warrior

Oklahoma Sgt. Nathan Kent, a member of Company B, 120th Engineer Battalion, received a Purple Heart Jan. 12 for wounds he sustained in Afghanistan a year earlier. Shrapnel from an explosion punctured Kent's right leg, severely wounding him, while he was driving in a convoy. Kent had volunteered for the deployment.



Lifesaver says goodbye

Senior Master Sgt. Paul Reddington has served for the past 25 years as a pararescueman and will officially retire from the Alaska Air National Guard March 1 with 3,300 hours of flight time, 750 parachute jumps, 526 rescue and recovery flights and an even more impressive 134 lives saved.



Arkansas star

Brig. Gen. William J. Johnson, 57, was pinned brigadier general in a ceremony Jan. 5 becoming the first African-American general in the 203-year-old history of the Arkansas National Guard. He has served in the state's Guard for more than 30 years. "I know that you can't get from point A to B by yourself," he said. "Attitude is important, as is respect and discipline."



She's key

As commander of Ohio's 637th Chemical Company, Capt. Tonia McCurdy received the symbolic key of the Joint Biological Point Detection System Jan. 12 in Kettering, Ohio. The JBPDS is the most advanced biological threat detection and identification system in the world. The 637th, which comprises the agent identification and decontamination piece of Ohio's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package is the first chemical unit in the National Guard to get the new system.



Chief appointed CCAF vice commandant



Photo by Master Sgt. Scott Moorman

Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Thornell is the 15th vice commandant of the Community College of the Air Force and the first enlisted servicemember to serve in the position.

South Dakotan first enlisted member to serve in position

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

ARLINGTON, Va. - A chief master sergeant from the South Dakota Air National Guard became a part of the Community College of the Air Force's (CCAF) history books in January when he was appointed as its first enlisted vice commandant.

As vice commandant, Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Thornell now works as a senior enlisted manager

for the CCAF at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, Ala.; a role previously held by an active-duty lieutenant colonel.

The CCAF is the world's largest two-year degree institution and the only exclusive two-year institution for enlisted personnel.

"This is one of many initiatives by Air University to transform and enrich enlisted education and training," said Command Chief Master Sgt. Mark Luzader, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, in an e-mailed announcement.

Thornell explained that the CCAF and its parent, Air University, are transforming and dividing up officer and enlisted programs. In the future, the institution's

commandant - presently a colonels position - will also be a chief master sergeant.

"That will align all of the enlisted programs for education, militarily, with a chief master sergeant at the helm," said Thornell. "So this is a progression toward that."

For all of his military and civilian accomplishments, Thornell seems much in line with the CCAF and its 34-year migration of education, service and opportunity for the total force of active, Guard and Reserve personnel.

Thornell enlisted in the active-duty Air Force in 1977 and served in Minuteman missile maintenance until his separation in 1987. His following enlistments

in the California and South Dakota Air Guard were a steady climb from part-time aircraft maintenance into higher levels of enlisted leadership, including his service as a state command chief and as a commandant of enlisted education for the Air Guard.

The husband, father and sportsman, with reddish-brown hair and blue eyes, said he treasures family time. His hobbies include backwoods motorcycle riding as well as distance running.

During his civilian career he worked as a technical writer for a major military contractor and was an elementary and middle school teacher. He became a high school principal and school system chief education officer.

"I guess it's a collision of time," he said about the appointment. He explained that his experience, in both Guard and active duty, and his preparations in the civilian and military sectors, made his career transition a natural fit. "I'm ready for it," he added.

And as Total Force Integration continues to join active, Guard and Reserve Airmen in their missions, Thornell said his appointment to a strategic-level Air Force position is good for the Guard and Reserve, as well as for the total Air Force.

"Being a Guardmember, it's important to get the recognition ... and break into those senior strategic positions where the Guard and Reserve will shine," he said.

South Dakota's last Vietnam pilot retires

By Roger C. Anderson
South Dakota National Guard

RAPID CITY, S.D. - For 40 years, the aviation section of the South Dakota National Guard relied heavily on the skills and experience of "seasoned" pilots and crew chiefs who served in the Vietnam War.

That era ended recently when the last of those helicopter pilots, Col. Dennis Miller, retired after 37 years of flying.

"I saw the helicopter's use in battle grow from the infancy of airmobile and air assault to the dynamic role it plays today," said Miller.

Miller was among dozens of veteran pilots who returned from Vietnam and joined the South Dakota Guard. Flying 513 hours in

combat zones, he went on to fly rescue missions after blizzards and ice storms.

He was proficient in flying the UH-1 helicopter, better known as the "Huey," and he flew the smaller OH-6 and OH-58 models. When the Guard modernized its aviation program in the late 1990s, Miller became the first South

Dakota pilot to qualify in the UH-60 Black Hawk and became the state's first UH-60 maintenance test pilot.

"I wanted to fly ever since I was a kid," he said. "It's hard to believe that a ticket to Vietnam would impact my entire life the way it did."

Growing up on a farm near Canova, S.D., Miller earned a degree in mechanized agriculture at South Dakota State University. He enrolled in the Army's advanced ROTC aviation program and received a commission in

the Transportation Corps in 1970.

"I had a low draft number and knew I was going to Vietnam," said Miller. "I wanted to be in the air rather than in the jungle."

He completed his pilot training at Fort Wolters, Texas, and Fort Rucker, Ala. He remembers how his instructor pilot got out of his helicopter and said, "It's all yours," after only 15 hours of dual instruction.

Trying to coordinate the use of both hands and feet, Miller began his solo flight and the aircraft "waddled" everywhere before he finally overcame the jitters.

"Everyone goes through that the first time," he said.

He took a 12-week aviation maintenance course at Fort Eustis, Va., and prepared for his one-year tour to Vietnam.

VIETNAM VET continued on:
Page 11



Miller

She's still a winner



Utah's Stevens gains America's Choice nod during Miss America finale

By Staff Sgt. Rebecca Doucette
National Guard Bureau

LAS VEGAS – Utah Army National Guard Sgt. Jill Stevens' quest to capture the crown as the 80th Miss America ended with a flurry of push-ups on the stage of the nationally-televised pageant Saturday, Jan. 26.

Stevens, Miss Utah, immediately assumed the front leaning rest position and gave the audience at least 10 push-ups after host Mark Steines announced that she would not be one of the evening's 10 finalists. Other contestants joined "GI Jill" during the brief demonstration of upper-body strength.

She did, however, find satisfaction from winning the America's Choice part of the competition which made her one of the 16 initial finalists. A panel of celebrity judges eliminated her and five others following the swimsuit competition, the first event during the final night of the pageant televised live on cable's TLC.

"I think it made a stronger statement than winning Miss America," Stevens said the following day. "To be America's Choice is an honor. To me, I won last night."

Kirsten Haglund, Miss Michigan, won the 2008 Miss America crown, that she will wear for the next year, and a \$50,000 college scholarship.

Stevens walked off the stage with a smile and a wave to join the other contestants who the judges had previously eliminated. She received a \$4,000 scholarship.

"I think I have shown that you can be a woman and a Soldier," said Stevens, an Army Guard medic who served in Afghanistan between November 2003 and April 2005.

Stevens was named the last of the initial 16 finalists because of the America's Choice competition that permitted the public to vote for a favorite contestant. It is believed that many National Guard members and others affiliated with the U.S. military services voted for Stevens.

The other 15 initial finalists were selected by the judges following a week of intense competition leading up to the Saturday night finale.

Stevens, according to pageant officials, was the first Miss America contestant since 1992 to be affiliated with the National Guard. Had she won, she would have become the first Miss America to have served in a combat zone.

"Being chosen as America's Choice shows that Jill is a special person and that America supports our Soldiers," said Brig. Gen. Jefferson Burton, the Utah Guard's newly-appointed assistant adjutant general-Army. "We are very proud of Jill. She has handled it all very well."

Her reign as Miss Utah will end in July.



Photo by Amy C. Elliott

Top: Utah Army National Guard Sgt. Jill Stevens, Miss Utah, waves after being selected as one of the 16 initial finalists for the Miss America Pageant in Las Vegas Jan. 26. Right: Stevens, after not being selected for the final round, drops to the floor and does push-ups. Her spirit was contagious as other contestants did push-ups as well.

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"That's when the reality of it all really hit me," he said. "I was married and we just had our first child. I don't think I was ever scared. I just didn't know what to expect."

He returned to South Dakota, moved his family into a house in Brookings, said his goodbyes, and flew to Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

As he waited in the base terminal for his flight to Vietnam, the remains of two pilots he had graduated with at flight school 12 weeks earlier arrived with their escorts.

"That heightened my apprehension," remembered Miller. "The reality of going to Vietnam started closing in on me."

Assigned to the 610th Transportation Company at Red Beach, Miller spent

several months conducting maintenance test flights in the Da Nang area.

"We were always going to the bunkers during mortar attacks and manned the perimeter when attacked," he said.

But it was his next assignment with the 48th Assault Company at Marble Mountain that put Miller in the heat of battle.

The 48th, known as the "Blue Stars," was comprised of Hueys and Cobra gun ships. Its mission included resupply, troop insertions and casualty evacuations.

His first troop insertion mission proved to be the most frightful. He'll never forget the calmness in the other pilots' radio chatter as they approached the landing zone.

"We were flying in a really tight formation, when all of a sudden the gunship right next to us let go a blast

of rockets that streaked right by my window," recalled Miller. "I was not expecting that."

He vividly remembers the chaos that followed as he brought his chopper in for a landing.

"There was crap flying everywhere; the crew chiefs started screaming for the Soldiers to jump out; incoming mortar rounds were exploding; and just like that, we were up and flying again," he said. "The rush of adrenaline was overwhelming."

Miller recalled that the Cobra pilots went by the call sign "Joker," and when they started chattering and firing on a landing zone all hell broke loose.

"Several times we had aircraft shot down while on assault," he said. "But somehow I just never thought it would happen to us. We just kept focused on what we were doing."

Newsmakers

Commendation

Missouri Pfc. Ryan Snider was recently awarded with a Army Commendation Medal for being the honor graduate in his Basic Training class. Snider's reaction: "I said to myself, 'Wow, I can't believe I actually got this.' But inside my heart I knew I had worked hard enough to earn it."



Doctor answers call

Capt. R. Dale Jackson, a Michigan flight surgeon with the 3rd Battalion, 238th General Support Aviation, is deployed to Iraq and taking care of the medical needs of California's 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery who needed a general medical officer.



Medal of Valor

The UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew of 1st Lt. Melissa MacIntyre, Chief Warrant Officer 4 David L. Torres, Sgt. 1st Class Juan J. Rendon and Staff Sgt. Michael L. Faulk were awarded the Lone Star Medal of Valor, Texas' second-highest award, Jan. 24 for rescuing four victims of some of the worst flooding in recent memory in May.



Repeat after me

By enlisting Jan. 30, Summer Kunard became the 19,000th Texas National Guard Soldier. "... our country is very patriotic and there is no shortage of people who volunteer to serve," said Lt. Col. Greg Chaney, the state's Recruiting and Retention Battalion commander.



Extra duty

Jacqueline Ray-Morris, minority college outreach manager for the National Guard Bureau, has been appointed Scholarship Selection Committee chairperson for the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation. "Now, I'm giving back to an organization that really helped me get where I am," she said.





Photo by Sgt. Michael Coleman

Holding the line

Soldiers from Task Force Bayonet, which include Guardmembers from several states, fight to hold their lines against “rioters” during a riot-control training exercise Dec. 21 in Multi-National Task Force-East, Camp Vrelo, Kosovo. Troops from several nations were involved in the exercise, including Irish, Greek, Finnish and Swedish personnel. About 1,200 Guard Soldiers are stationed at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. Their mission is to provide a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for the nation’s people.

From page 1: CNGR REPORT

many of which actually validate some of the policies and the advancements that we have made in the Department of Defense in the last four years,” Blum said during a press conference at the Pentagon Feb. 1 with Paul McHale, assistant secretary of defense for Homeland Defense.

The report has six broad conclusions and 95 recommendations based on 163 findings. The six broad conclusions:

- **Conclusion One:** “The nation requires an operational reserve force. However, DoD and Congress have had no serious public discussion or debate on the matter and have not formally adopted the operational reserve. Steps taken by DoD and Congress have been more reactive than proactive, more timid than bold, and more incremental than systemic. They thus far have not focused on an overarching set of alterations necessary to make the reserve components a ready, rotational force. Congress and DoD have not reformed the laws and policies governing the reserve components in ways that will sustain an operational force.”

- **Conclusion Two:** “The Department of Defense must be fully prepared to protect American lives and property in the homeland. DoD must improve its capabilities and readiness to play a primary role in the response to major catastrophes that incapacitate civilian governments over a wide geographic area. This is a responsibility that is equal in priority to its combat responsibilities. As part of DoD, the National Guard and reserves should play the lead role in supporting the Department of Homeland Security, other federal agencies, and states in addressing these threats of equal

or higher priority.”

- **Conclusion Three:** “Current law and policy still reflect a Cold War-era vision of the employment of valuable military manpower assets and do not adequately support an operational 21st-century force. A new integrated personnel management structure is needed to provide trained and ready forces to meet mission requirements and to foster a continuum of service for the individual service member.”

- **Conclusion Four:** “The reserve components have responded to the call for service. Despite shortages in equipment, training, and personnel, they have once again proven their essential contribution to meeting national security requirements in a time of need. To sustain their service for the duration of the global war on terror will require maintaining the force at a new standard of readiness. Current policies cannot accomplish this task. A ready, capable, and accessible operational reserve will require an enduring commitment to invest in the readiness of the reserve components. This commitment will necessitate service integration, additional resources, and new constructs for employing the reserve components and for assessing readiness.”

- **Conclusion Five:** “To maintain an operational reserve force over the long term, DoD must appropriately support not only the service members themselves but also the two major influencers of members’ decisions to remain in the military – their families and employers. Significant improvements in current programs in all three areas are essential to sustain an operational reserve force both today and in the future.”

- **Conclusion Six:** “The current reserve component structure does not meet the

needs of an operational reserve force. Major changes in DoD organization, reserve component categories, and culture are needed to ensure that management of reserve and active component capabilities are integrated to maximize the effectiveness of the total force for both operational and strategic purposes.”

Blum said that equipment shortages mentioned in Conclusion Four are improving because of “an unprecedented, historic commitment” by the president, Congress and the secretaries of defense, the Army and the Air Force.

In 2006, equipment readiness was at 40 percent, Blum said. In 2007, it was 49 percent. Today, it is 61 percent. A \$45 billion taxpayer investment will increase it to 69 percent by the end of 2009 and 77 percent in 2013.

During the press conference, Blum pointed to a statue of the Minuteman, the symbol of the National Guard. The Minuteman holds a plow and a rifle, symbolizing Citizen-Soldiers’ and -Airmen’s ability to set down the plow and take up the rifle at a moment’s notice in defense of the homeland or for an overseas mission.

“This is a tremendous success story of cooperation among our Congress, the White House, the departments and the end users, the National Guard,” Blum said. “That Minuteman would smile if he knew that the leadership of this nation was devoting that kind of resources to him for the first time in history.”

The National Guard’s structural transformation to a mirror image of the active component combined with improved training, experience, commitment and recruiting success make it the most effective force it has ever been, Blum said.

From page 1: NDAA

A driving force behind many of the changes in the NDAA is the transformation of the National Guard from a Cold War strategic reserve to today’s operational reserve.

The bulk of the major reforms of the National Guard included in the bill were derived from the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007 introduced in Congress by Sen. Kit Bond (R-Mo.), Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and other members.

The provisions of the NDAA that affect the National Guard are among many others that affect the nation’s armed forces.

“The act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction and for national security-related energy programs,” Bush stated.

The NDAA also authorizes:

- \$650 million for miscellaneous equipment for the Army National Guard and \$150 million for Air National Guard. Previously, National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation money has been appropriated without authorization.

- End strengths of 351,300 for the Army National Guard and 106,700 for the Air National Guard. The Army National Guard end strength increased from 350,000 while the Air Guard level is essentially unchanged. The secretary of defense can authorize the Guard to exceed end strength by up to 3 percent.

- *The (New London, Conn.) Day, the National Guard Bureau’s Office of Legislative Liaison and other sources contributed to this report.*

What’s in the NDAA for the troops?

✓ 3.5 percent pay raise

✓ Wounded Warrior Assistance Act which improves support for wounded troops and their families, including providing increased treatment closer to home rather than at the base from which the servicemember deployed

✓ Lowers the eligibility age for retirement by three months for each 90 days a Guardmember serves on certain types of active duty; the active duty must be served after the NDAA was enacted, and eligibility cannot be reduced below 50 years of age

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

Eye in the SKY helps to BOX in illegals

Story and photos by Sgt. Benjamin Cossel
Arizona National Guard

YUMA, Ariz. – When Operation Jump Start-Arizona started scaling back in line with President George W. Bush's original plans, leaders at Task Force Yuma knew they quickly had to do more with less. But how?

"We had to get a bit creative with some of our solutions," said Army Capt. Daniel Turner, Task Force Yuma operations officer. "One of the methods we decided to use was the skybox."

Of all the missions for which Task Force Yuma is responsible, including vehicle maintenance, administration, logistics, and communications, perhaps none is more critical than the entry identification teams (EIT). National Guard Soldiers and Airmen scan the terrain at fixed locations, watching for the illegal crossings of undocumented aliens, drug smugglers and others who could threaten national security.

"The skybox allows us to see more of what's out there while working in a reduced footprint," explained Turner.

The skybox is one of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's not-so-secret weapons in border defense. At first glance, the lumbering monstrosity appears more carnival ride than work station. With crab-leg extensions stabilizing its position and a long, giraffe-like neck holding the enclosed operator room, the skybox gives agents, Airmen and Soldiers a bird's-eye view of the area. When fully extended, the skybox lifts its operator 30 feet into the air, above brush and trees.

"All those bushes and shrubs out there ... [give] undocumented aliens a place to hide and shadows to duck into that are challenging to see if you were standing on the ground," said Spc. Benjamin Olague of Washington state's Company A, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry, pointing out growths of dense brush on the desert terrain.

"And if they make it to the town behind us, they're gone," continued Olague.

While the border fence is more than a quarter of a mile away from the EIT site, a mobile home park flying American and Mexican flags sits immediately behind the team. It's common knowledge in the Border Patrol, and to these Soldiers and Airmen, that if drug runners and undocumented aliens make it to these trailers, they disappear into a well-established network designed to get them farther into the United States.

Olague explained that with its infrared scopes, the skybox's power truly shines during nighttime operations.



In an effort to increase visibility and do more with less, Soldiers and Airmen of Operation Jump Start - Arizona's Task Force Yuma recently began using the skybox. The skybox lifts one entry identification team member 30 feet into the air, offering a bird's-eye view of the area.

Making a difference on the border

Operation Jump Start successes supported by the National Guard, as of early February:

- Alien apprehensions: 146,427
- Vehicle seizures: 1,027
- Marijuana seized (lbs): 283,989
- Cocaine seized (lbs): 5,049
- Aliens rescued: 95
- Currency seized: \$ 68,904

Aiding in these successes were Guardmember involvement in entry identification teams, camera operations, remote monitoring and mechanical support at checkpoints. Data collection started June 15, 2006.

-Data from Department of Homeland Security Office of Border Patrol

Troop strength

National Guardmembers serving on the border, as of early February:

- Army: 2,333
- Air: 516
- Total: 2,849

"The thermo scopes on the skybox are much more powerful than the ones we use on the ground. They allow us to lock into a hotspot, whereas before, if you moved your scope you could lose the position. Plus, being so high in the air, using such a powerful scope at night, we can see what seems like forever," said Olague.

The skybox also features a radio tuned directly to the Border Patrol. The sentinels can hear the radio traffic as well as be alerted when an electronic sensor is tripped, indicating that someone may be crossing the border.

While the skybox offers the servicemembers increased eyes and ears, Chief Master Sgt. Randy Handel, Task Force Yuma's safety NCO, explained that several design changes have been made to make the skybox safer.

"We took a look at the experiences of California and New Mexico's skybox deployments and decided to add

a safety belt across the door to prevent Soldiers and Airmen from falling out, as well as adding a safety chain to the door as another way to make sure it doesn't fly open," said Handel.

Besides the modifications, Handel explained that each EIT site with a skybox is checked to make sure the ground is level and can withstand the weight of the more than five-ton machine.

Skybox operators must monitor the machine's built-in wind gauge. At 30 mph, the crane is lowered to the ground to avoid tipping.

And, in a feature welcomed by those standing long hours in the blistering desert heat, the skybox is air conditioned.

"We've created a visible deterrent along the border," Turner said, "hopefully forcing the approach of illegal aliens to where the Border Patrol can be right there waiting to pick them up."



Spc. Benjamin Olague from Washington hoists himself 30 feet into the air. Olague is one of several entry identification team Guardmembers working in the skybox.

Earnhardt drives toward '08 success with Guard cars

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

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Dale Earnhardt Jr. said he hopes to learn more about the National Guard as he drives its sponsored race cars in NASCAR's top auto racing competitions this year.

"It's going to be a year-long introduction of myself to the Guard ... how I can be an asset to them," Earnhardt said in late January.

Less than a month before the NASCAR season began, Earnhardt said he hoped for a successful season with a new lineup of team members and sponsors, including the National Guard.

"It's just really overwhelming, everything that's happened this year to get to this point," said Earnhardt. "There's not enough hours in the day to explain everything that I have learned, everything that I have seen."

This year Earnhardt is driving the National Guard co-sponsored No. 88 Sprint Cup Series car and will be one of the drivers for the Guard's primary-sponsored No. 5 Nationwide Series car. Landon Cassill is the other driver.



Dale Earnhardt Jr.

This is also the first year Earnhardt is driving under the Hendrick Motorsports (HMS) banner.

HMS owner Rick Hendrick said he is also excited about Earnhardt's Guard sponsorship. "He is a huge spokesman for the Guard," Hendrick said. "I think it's good to see the folks in uniform at the track. We owe them a lot, and we appreciate what [they] do to keep us free so we can go do this stuff."

Earnhardt said he is optimistic about racing with HMS, and he is working with other HMS drivers in their preparations. As far as seeing Guardmembers at the track this year, he said that's a fun part of his race day.

"Lord knows what they have been up to or what they have been doing or what their responsibilities currently are, but for them to be at the racetrack and for us to be able to show them what we do and see some excitement in their face, especially when we do well, it's a lot of fun to have them along," said Earnhardt.

More popularly known as "Junior" by race fans, Earnhardt is one of the nation's most popular sports figures with 17 Sprint Cup wins and two Nationwide Series championships. He spoke with other HMS NASCAR icons here, including Hendrick, two-time defending Sprint Cup champion Jimmie Johnson as well as Jeff Gordon and Casey Mears about accelerating into 2008.



Photo by Brian Czobor

Dale Earnhardt Jr. does a burnout Feb. 9 after winning the Budweiser Shootout at Daytona Beach, Fla.

The Guard's main musher



Tennessee National Guard photo

Master Sgt. Rodney Whaley, first Tennessean ever to compete in the Iditarod, prepares for the big race.

Tennessee Guard Soldier to compete in Alaska's Iditarod

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – A master sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard plans to be the first Tennessean in history to compete in Alaska's 2008 Iditarod, billed as "The World's Last Great Race."

Master Sgt. Rodney Whaley, a Guard veteran of 24 years, is one of only 102 people in the world to qualify for this year's 1,159-mile race from Anchorage to Nome. Fifty-two racers are from Alaska, 14 come from other states and 16 hale from foreign countries.

The 56-year-old Guard Soldier from Franklin, Tenn., is running 16 sled dogs in the event that starts March 1 in Anchorage. The mushers will be on the trail from 10-17 days, accompanied only by their dogs as they battle the fierce elements along the dangerous route.

The two-week race will take the Tennessean over frozen rivers, jagged mountain ranges, dense forests, desolate tundra and miles of windswept coast. Added to that are temperatures far below zero, winds that can cause a complete loss of visibility, long hours of darkness and treacherous climbs on side hills.

Whaley, who spent his childhood in Alaska, is being sponsored by the Army National Guard. As a boy, he raced in

junior sled dog competitions but has always remained passionate about the sport. In recent years, he has raced in British Columbia, Canada, Washington state and northern Michigan.

"The Iditarod is the ultimate experience and my lifelong dream," Whaley said. "Now, utilizing what I've learned in the Guard and with their sponsorship, it's a reality."

To qualify for the Iditarod, Whaley was required to complete two sanctioned races, one of 300 miles and the other of 200 miles. He began full-time training last October in Michigan and Minnesota, but he's been a familiar site in his Franklin neighborhood during the cold months running his team using a "dogsled-on-wheels."

The rules of the race include certain regulations by which each musher must abide. There are also certain pieces of required equipment: an arctic parka, an ax, a heavy sleeping bag, snowshoes, musher food, dog food and boots for each dog's feet to protect against cutting ice and hard-packed snow injuries.

The mushers use different tactics on the trail. Each one has a special diet for feeding and snacking the dogs. Each one also has a different strategy. Some run in the daylight; some run at night. Each has a different training schedule geared to the dogs' stamina and the musher's personal stamina.

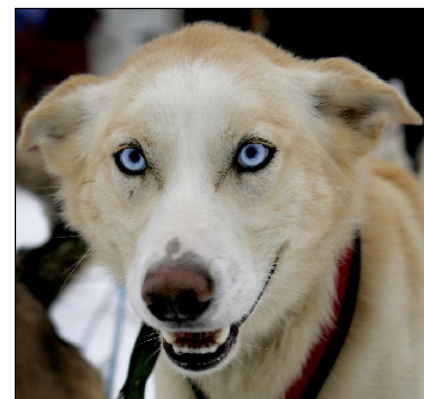
The Iditarod Trail had its beginnings as a mail and supply route from Alaska's coastal towns to the interior mining camps. Men and supplies went in; gold came out, all via dogsled. Heroes were made and legends were born.

In 1925, part of the trail became a



Tennessee National Guard photo

Top: Master Sgt. Rodney Whaley. Below: His favorite sled dog.



Tennessee National Guard photo

lifesaving highway for epidemic-stricken Nome. Diphtheria threatened the people, and serum had to be rushed in by intrepid mushers and their faithful, hard-driving dogs. The Iditarod is a commemoration of those early years, a not-so-distant past of which Alaskans are proud.

-TENNESSEE NATIONAL GUARD

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Dale Earnhardt Jr.

www.ngb.army.mil/features/NASCAR/default.aspx

Home News Photos About Earnhardt

From Militia Affairs to the Guard Bureau: Then and Now

By Bill Boehm

National Guard Bureau

The 2007 National Guard Empowerment Act was part of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act signed by President George W. Bush Jan. 28. Among other provisions, the empowerment act allows for the National Guard Bureau to become a joint activity of the Department of Defense rather than the departments of the Army and the Air Force.

The timing of this historic act serves as a barometer of just how much the world has changed while the National

Guard has evolved within national consciousness. The act took effect nearly 100 years to the date that today's bureau was first designated as the Division of Militia Affairs within the Department of War, now the Department of Defense. After the Dick Act earlier gave federal status to state militias in 1903, a second Dick Act on Feb. 12, 1908, recognized the importance of the militia operation across the United States. Special orders from the War Department two days later ordered Lt. Col. Erasmus



NGB Historical Services photo

Lt. Col. Erasmus Weaver

M. Weaver of the Coast Artillery Corps to report "in person to the assistant secretary of war for duty as chief of the Division of Militia Affairs."

To compare the size and scope of the 1908 operation, it helps to view a snapshot of how the Guard looked at the time. Then, the division included administration of the National Guards and Militias of 45 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia. Headquartered in downtown Washington on the third floor of a rented building located on the corner of 18th and G Streets Northwest, this fledgling office two blocks west of the White House sought to bring about a "systematic and expeditious transaction of business."

Weaver hired 11 more clerks for the division, transforming a formerly quiet office of three clerks into a bustling operation. Since it was necessary to direct an operation that corresponded with hundreds of militia units around a vast nation, the division needed efficient management. Meticulous record keeping during the early years of the division helped maintain order. For example, every letter or correspondence addressed from the states to the division was referenced by a vertical index card which listed the subject

National Guard Bureau: 100 years old

1903 Jan. 22: The Dick Act puts the Guard on federal status, specifies drill times.

1908 Feb. 12: The second Dick Act creates the first administrative body that operates the National Guard on a federal level.

1916 June 3: The National Defense Act renames the Division of Militia Affairs the Militia Bureau and brings forth the most sweeping reforms in the National Guard's history. It also closely foreshadows the Guard's participation in international warfare.

1933 June 15: Amending the National Defense Act, the Department of War renames the Militia Bureau the National Guard Bureau.

1947 July 16: The National Security Act creates the Air Force and, subsequently, the Air National Guard. The Guard Bureau now reports to the Departments of the Army and the Air Force.

2008 Jan. 28: The National Defense Authorization Act makes the National Guard Bureau a joint activity of the Department of Defense and the chief a principal advisor to the secretary of defense through the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

territories and placed the Guard as a reserve force under command of the U.S. Army. The act of 1933 ensured that the National Guard served a dual purpose for both the states and the federal government. These amendments' larger purposes have stayed intact to this day.

Since 1908, five more states – Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska and Hawaii – and other new territories – Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Guam – have been added to the Guard's ranks. In the United States, there were just over 110,000 Soldiers in the Guard in 1908. Today, it numbers about four times that amount. To support their efforts, there are today over 1,000 bureau employees near Washington in multiple locations.

Today, another office building stands on the corner of 18th and G Streets in the District of Columbia. It houses office space for nearby George Washington University, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The sleek offices housing international clientele stand in stark

contrast to a humble office that mainly sought to better organize a national defense force 100 years ago while only a few years away from its first entry into international conflict.

Just as the 1908 act highlighted the importance of the Division of Militia Affairs within the Department of War, Congress has recognized the singular importance of the bureau within the organization of 2008's Department of Defense. The breadth of the Guard's involvement in the Global War on Terrorism and its ability to assist the homeland in times of civil strife and natural disaster bring its importance to the forefront of the nation's defense thinkers. Numbers may change with the times we live in, but the significance of this organization remains as constant as it did 100 years ago.

of the memorandum and brief description of the letter's content. These cards were filed alphabetically by state or territory, making it easy for the clerks to readily access their information just as today's bureau staff members might reference Internet search engines to find data to help their brethren in the field.

Change for the division continued through the 20th century. The Division of Militia Affairs' name evolved into the Militia Bureau in 1916, and it finally was designated the National Guard Bureau in 1933. The name changes were more than cosmetic, however, as they corresponded with key legislative changes in the Guard's structure as in the case of the 1916 National Defense Act. This measure formalized the name "National Guard" for all states and

under the command of Gen. Nathanael Greene, which includes militia units from North Carolina and Virginia, battles Lord Cornwallis' British army as it was moving out of South Carolina. This battle saw some of the most desperate fighting of the war and allowed the Americans time to shift forces into Virginia and led to the surrender of the British at Yorktown seven months later.

1847- March 27: Vera Cruz, Mexico — After a six-day siege, the city capitulates to the American army commanded by Gen. Winfield Scott. Chief among the militia ranks forcing the surrender is South Carolina's Palmetto Regiment, which tallied the highest casualty rates of any American unit during the Mexican War (about 43 percent) both in combat and from disease.

More Guard history at: www.ngb.army.mil/news/todayinhistory

THIS MONTH IN GUARD HISTORY

1997 – March 1: Montpelier, Vt. — Lt. Col. Martha Rainville is elected by Vermont legislature as the nation's first female adjutant general.

1916 – March 9: Columbus, N.M. — Mexican bandit leader Pancho Villa, leading about 500 men, attacks this town in the middle of the night, killing 18 civilians and Soldiers responding from nearby Camp Furlong. Ultimately, it causes President Woodrow Wilson to call up Guardsmen from all states, except Nevada, the first national call-up of its kind.

1781 - March 15: Guilford Courthouse, N.C. — An American army

Quilt project envelopes Nevada troops

By Sgt. Cheri Cramutolo
Nevada National Guard

CARSON CITY, Nev. – Recently-deployed members of the Nevada National Guard were honored in the state's capital city during a Project Comfort Quilt reception Jan. 23 in the Governor's Mansion. Nearly 300 Guard Soldiers and Airmen received quilts from Project Comfort Quilt as tokens of appreciation for their sacrifices.

Debby Bullentini, a former teacher from Reno, Nev., started Project Comfort Quilt after 9/11.

"All I wanted to do was to provide comfort to the children who lost their loved ones in the attacks," said Bullentini. "It blossomed from there."

Bullentini said she originally designed the project to help families who lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks, but that it has grown substantially. The quilts, she said, are a way for Americans to show their gratitude to servicemembers for protecting our freedom.

"I mailed quilt squares to every state with instructions to paint each square, however they wanted, and mail them back to be [sewn] into the quilts," said Bullentini. "The response was unbelievable. So far, I have received quilt squares from 18 countries and all states and territories."

What originally began as a small project became a topic of discussion on the House of Representatives floor in Washington when Rep. Jim Gibbons - now the state's governor - presented the project to Congress.

"After Jim spoke to Congress, everyone



Photo by Sgt. Cheri Cramutolo

Master Sgt. Dean Long with Nevada Air Guard's 152nd Air Wing holds up a Comfort Quilt. Long served five tours overseas from 2002 to 2007.

got on board with the program and took the idea back to their home states. It was like a chain reaction," said Bullentini. "At that point, people could send in finished squares or whole quilts."

Brianna Bullentini, Debby's daughter, was a supporter from the start.

"I had no idea how huge it would get," she said. "I am not surprised at the support itself, but at the extent of the support. The quilts overtook the house and our lives. It

was tough at times but well worth it."

Spc. Rose Nebres from the state's 593rd Transportation Company expressed her thanks after receiving a quilt.

"A lot of time and work go into making a quilt," said Nebres. "It makes me feel good knowing my service is appreciated."

"It really means a lot to have something from the community," said Sgt. Tracy Castro, another 593rd Soldier. "This type of expression of thanks is overwhelming."

Program manager earns top civilian service award

By Tech Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Kathy Pritchett, a federal employee with the National Guard Bureau, has been awarded the Army Superior Civilian Service Award for her "outstanding service" as a program manager for the Guard's Distributive Training Technology Project (DTTP).

LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, presented the medal and certificate to Pritchett in a ceremony at the Army National Guard Readiness Center attended by her coworkers and Guard leaders.

The Superior Civilian Service Award is the third highest Department of the Army award for Army civilians.

Pritchett was responsible for the design, development, testing, deployment, operation and maintenance of the DTTP.

Officials call DTTP a state-of-the-art communications and learning delivery system. It includes a network of specially-designed multimedia classrooms which are stationed throughout the country. Soldiers use it to study foreign languages and improve skills in reading, writing, critical thinking and information technology.

According to bureau officials, several states utilize DTTP classrooms for pre-mobilization training and are witnessing significant Soldier participation.

DTTP assets are also used to conduct video teleconferences between deployed Soldiers and their families and as joint operations centers during natural disasters.

Pritchett was selected as DTTP deputy program manager in 2001 and then began working as its acting program manager in 2003. During the last four years her responsibilities were in direct support of DTTP business operations.

Guard officials said she spent six years "successfully managing the project and diligently serving the needs of the 54 states and territories." This included establishing requirements and determining priorities for funding more than 338 classrooms.

According to bureau officials, Pritchett's "program management and technical expertise resulted in extraordinary improvements in the program that were essential to the operational readiness of the Army and Air National Guard."

"Under Pritchett's leadership, DTTP business operations advanced significantly," officials said, "especially with regard to fostering its joint use and initiating the application and analysis of performance metrics."

The Guard avoided paying \$83 million in travel costs by using DTTP for training and other activities in 2006.

Pritchett has more than 26 years of service as a federal employee and has worked at the National Guard Bureau since 1997.



Pritchett

Lesson from Vietnam: If you need help, ask

By 2nd Lt. Justin Anweiler
Illinois National Guard

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – I received a concussion several years ago after tackling a particularly dangerous running back during college football practice. Later that year, I decided to go to the nearby Veterans Affairs hospital for a checkup. I was a broke college student who had just come off active duty; so the VA was all I had. During my six-hour wait I met a veteran who had such a profound effect on me that I will never forget him.

Frank smelled as if he had just played water polo in a pool full of gin. His long hair and beard were oily, and it was clear what he had eaten for dinner by the crumbs in his beard. He was wearing a jean jacket that had lots of patches that identified him as a Vietnam veteran. He sat across from me and looked me over.

"Marine?" he asked.

"National Guard," I replied.

"I was National Guard back in the '60s," he said.

Frank and I then began to talk about the Army, about Army friends, about how we hated the new beret and about life in general. For the next two hours we were just two Soldiers from different generations chewing the fat. The longer we talked, the more his demeanor changed. He was proud of his service, and rightly so.

A security guard interrupted us.

"Frank, I've found a place for you tonight," he said.

Frank's demeanor changed immediately from pride to hopelessness. I had not noticed it earlier, but there in the hall was a garbage bag stuffed with everything Frank owned.

Frank grabbed his bag, looked at me and said, "Take care of yourself, Soldier."

The security guard shuffled him down the hallway, and I never saw him again.

Later, the same security guard came by and I asked him about Frank. The guard said Frank had been homeless for years. He said Frank was one of those guys who never really "made it home" from the war. He was an alcoholic and was shuffled in and out of the VA on a regular basis, looking for a place to weather cold nights.

As I sat there waiting to be seen, I thought about Frank, about my uncles who fought in Vietnam, and I thought about my fellow Soldiers who were preparing for the invasion of Iraq. I asked myself a lot of questions that night.

"Was Frank's story going to be my generation's story?"

"Would there be thousands of homeless OIF vets in 40 years?"

"Will our generation's Soldiers be treated poorly like the Vietnam vets were?"

Frank needed help a long time ago, but it wasn't there for him. I wonder what Frank's story would have been if he had asked for help and received it 40 years ago. Unlike Frank, our generation is overwhelmingly supported by the communities we come from. Help is out there; so much so that it's often confusing to keep track of all the available programs and organizations. Our generation's problem is *not* that there isn't enough help for us, but it's that we have the notion that asking for help is a sign of weakness.

If Frank's story tells us anything, it's that if we Soldiers don't get the help we need early on, we may spend more time than we ever expected asking for help later. It's *not* a sign of weakness to seek help. Actually, it's a way of building strength for the future.

In Frank's words: "Take care of yourself, Soldier!"

2nd Lt. Justin Anweiler is a Reintegration Project Officer for the Illinois Army National Guard.



Anweiler