



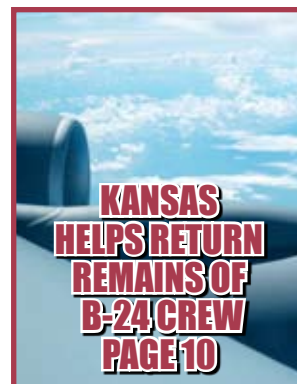
THE ON GUARD

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Newspaper of the National Guard



Arkansas National Guard photo

Soldiers hurt in collapse

Soldiers and workers at Camp Shelby, Miss., sift through debris to salvage equipment and personal items from a barracks damaged by a severe storm that struck around 11 p.m. March 3. Fourteen Soldiers with Arkansas' 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were injured when the building's roof collapsed. [Story on page 3.](#)

Nevada's civil support team responds to ricin scare

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — A National Guard civil support team was on the scene within an hour Feb. 28 after Las Vegas authorities sought help in identifying a suspicious substance that turned out to be deadly ricin.

The incident occurred at a hotel on Valley View Boulevard in west Las Vegas, said Capt. April Conway, a Nevada National Guard spokesperson.

The Nevada National Guard's 92nd Civil Support Team (CST) provided support with



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka

92nd CST members collect samples in '05.

identifying the suspicious substance and assisting with decontamination, Conway said.

Seven people were taken to a hospital as a precaution, CNN reported. The network said that a man brought a bag with a small container to the hotel manager's office sometime before 3 p.m. He said he found it while retrieving items from a hotel room, CNN reported.

Las Vegas police asked for support from the CST about 5 p.m., Conway said. Within 30

[RICIN SCARE continued on: Page 11](#)

"We moved out slow and methodically," said Chamberlain. "If we had crashed or had a problem with our convoy, it would have delayed our response time even more."

"'Slow is smooth and smooth is fast' is a saying in the infantry, and this mission was no different than any other," he said.

Chamberlain's Soldiers were no strangers to adversity. Since arriving in Afghanistan 11 months ago, the platoon has been in more than 100 engagements with the enemy, primarily in the Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa Province, from where they had just recently returned after conducting numerous missions.

[SENATORS RESCUED continued on: Page 3](#)

Korean War hero's medal finally comes

Guardsman receives Medal of Honor posthumously

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — Mentor. Teacher. Legend. Strong. Courageous. A great Soldier. A good Samaritan.

These are some of the ways President Bush described Master Sgt. Woodrow "Woody" Wilson Keeble, a former North Dakota National Guardmember to whom the commander in chief posthumously gave the nation's highest

military award March 3.

Keeble is the first full-blooded Sioux Indian to be awarded the Medal of Honor. He was also honored March 4 when he was inducted into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon.

Keeble is the 121st member of the National Guard to be awarded the Medal of Honor, according to National Guard Educational Foundation records. Famous Medal of Honor recipients who were in the National Guard include pioneering pilot Charles A. Lindbergh and President Theodore Roosevelt.

It was President Bush's ninth Medal of Honor ceremony, but he said this one was different.

"It's taken nearly 60 years for ... Keeble to be awarded the medal he earned on the battlefield in Korea," Bush said in the East Room of the White House. Russell Hawkins, Keeble's stepson, accepted the medal. His stepfather enlisted in the North Dakota National Guard in 1942.

The audience included Vice President Cheney; Secretary of Defense Robert Gates; the Joint Chiefs of Staff; LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau; and numerous other civilian and military leaders,

[WAR HERO continued on: Page 12](#)



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Woodrow Wilson Keeble



Biathlon Championships wrap-up: Pages 8-9



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: **Editor. OnGuard@ng.army.mil**

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Mr. D: What will we do without you?

I had to wait awhile to file this piece about Dan Donohue. Otherwise, the last thing he might have done on his last day on the job would be to fire me – or see to it that I spent my few remaining months with the National Guard Bureau washing windows.

Friday, Feb. 1, was Mr. Donohue's last day as the bureau's director of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications and special assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau. It was his last day in his 11th-floor corner office here at Jefferson Plaza 1 before turning to that chapter in his life titled "Retirement." Mr. Donohue's days as the principal spokesman and Public Affairs Yoda for the National Guard have numbered down to zero. His 28-year career here, a little less than half of my life, is finished.

Rarely has anyone who has done so much and labored so long for one organization and so many people departed with such little ceremony or fanfare. He did agree to let the staff hold a tribute for him one evening in Anchorage, Alaska, last October during the bureau's annual workshop for this country's National Guard public affairs people. He attended the office holiday luncheon before Christmas when his boss, LTG H Steven Blum, expressed some richly-deserved words of praise.

Mr. D could probably have had a special night with a big banquet at some fancy ballroom that a lot of people would have gladly paid to attend. But that has never been his style. He has never been comfortable in that spotlight. He only wanted to say goodbye and "keep up the great work" to his Public Affairs family. He wanted to meet with the Public Affairs staff's dozen or so Army and Air Guard sergeants on Jan. 31 to individually thank us for what we do. That's what he did. That was enough for Mr. D.

In short, he departed as he worked – quietly and behind the scenes and without ever letting his presence steal any thunder from any of the seven NGB chiefs he worked for.

Don't get me wrong. Dan Donohue is as good at holding a roomful of people's undivided attention as anyone I have ever seen. He does it with a matter-of-fact, rapid-fire style of speaking that is rich with information and lean on posturing and pretense. You never had to worry about "death by Power Point" when Mr. D held the microphone. And you knew you'd better pay attention. Absorbing one of Mr. D's briefings was like drinking from a fire hose.

He was equally generous at sharing his vast store of knowledge one-on-one with anyone who



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor



wanted to pick his brain. Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill recently asked Mr. D about the significance of the State Partnership Program conference that they would

both attend a few days later in Hawaii. Mr. D stopped what he was doing and, in 20 minutes, gave Greenhill a semester's worth of background and information about the program and the conference.

Mr. D's footprint is on virtually every major National Guard program that can be related to national security and making America a better place. He covered a lot of ground – well before 9-11 made national security and national defense the hot-button issues that they are today.

⇒ In 1999 he directed the first comprehensive Weapons of Mass Destruction national preparedness study. It was directed by Congress and cost \$10 million. He authored the report to Congress on this

country's ability to respond to a WMD event. That, among other things, led to the creation of the National Guard's civil support teams that now exist in every state.

⇒ He is the father of the bureau's Youth ChalleNGe Program that has been hailed as the most cost effective and successful program for at-risk youth in this country and that is being funded with \$83 million this year. About 78,000 high school dropouts are living productive lives because they found a second chance while attending one of the National Guard's 35 ChalleNGe programs that now exist in 28 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. It is impossible to calculate how much money taxpayers have been saved because so many of those young people did not wind up in prison.

⇒ He developed a national drug demand reduction program that enables National Guard forces to conduct counterdrug operations with law enforcement agencies and makes it possible for Guardmembers to talk to young people about the advantages of living drug-free lives.

⇒ He created the first formal environmental public affairs program in the federal government.

The list goes on. A lot of people know or have heard of Dan Donohue. But he has touched the lives of a lot more who do not know his name. That's because he has been content to let others run with, and take the bows for, the programs he

has initiated.

Based on my experience, Mr. D's management style could be compared to that of a benevolent father. I have never seen him angry or heard him raise his voice. And God knows I have given him good reason to get mad at me a few times during my dozen years at the bureau. He is so polite and laid back that, sometimes, we had to be reminded that we were working for the equivalent of a two-star general.

The first time I traveled with him, in early 1996, I asked him what I should call him during a brief conversation before we boarded the plane.

"You're an E-8," he replied. "I was an E-7 when I got out. Call me Dan. Everybody else does."

Yes, he has been known to order people to do things. But he has always preferred to use his remarkable powers of persuasion. You did what he wanted you to do because he made you believe it was the right thing and because you didn't want to let the old man down. And he has this way of letting you know that he believes in you and your ability to get the job done.

I could go on. But you get the idea. It's going to be difficult indeed for anyone to match Dan Donohue's legacy.

Now, I'm still not sure that I won't wind up in hot water after Mr. D reads this. He still has enough clout around here to have me washing windows. OK. I'm happy to take my chances. The pail with the sponges and the squeegee is under my desk.



Air Readiness Center room named for Airman

Maj. Gregory L. Stone
one of first casualties of
Operation Iraqi Freedom

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

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. – The last time his coworkers saw Maj. Gregory L. Stone around here was shortly after 9/11.

Stone had just served three months as the Air National Guard's Crisis Action Team (CAT) executive officer here at the Air Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC) before returning to his home in Idaho.

Stone, 40, died in a Kuwaiti field hospital March 25, 2003, three days after a Soldier in his deployed division discharged grenades and gunfire into his and two other tents, mortally wounding him and Army Capt. Christopher Seifert and injuring 14 others.

Today, Stone is buried at Arlington National



Maj. Stone

Cemetery in Virginia and will never return to the CAT or to its new, high-tech operations room the Air Guard dedicated to him March 14.

Stone was one of the Guard's first casualties for Operation Iraqi Freedom that began five years ago March 19.

Nearly five years later, fellow Guardmembers, family and friends of the Idaho Air Guardsman gathered at the ANGRC to remember him. They signed a proclamation dedicating the CAT as the Stone Room. They also unveiled a bronze plaque etched with his image, name and story and hung it inside the CAT.

Stone joined the Air Force in 1983 and graduated from Oregon State University in

1988. He flew on KC-135 Stratotankers, B-1 Lancers and B-52 Stratofortresses during his active-duty career and served as a senior navigator and weapons system officer.

In 2000, Stone transferred to the Idaho Air Guard's 124th Air Support Operations Squadron. At the time of his death, he was serving as an air liaison officer with the 19th Air Support Operations Squadron supporting the 101st Airborne Division at Camp Pennsylvania in Kuwait. His death occurred five days into Operation Iraqi Freedom.

During the ceremony, Stone's two sons, Alex and Joshua, listened from a front row of seats to guest speakers that included U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, who was governor of Idaho at the time of Stone's death; Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, director of the Air National Guard; and Col. Christopher Swadener, who worked with Stone in the CAT.

McKinley talked about the sacrifices made in war to defend the nation and offered condolences and thanks to both boys for their father's

sacrifice. "We are here today to honor your father. We are here today to honor his memory and to say that we won't forget the sacrifices that he made," he said.

Swadener described Stone as a "solid Citizen-Airman that knew all the issues needed to serve as the CAT's executive officer."

"There are a lot of things that we do for this country that operate out of that room," said Swadener. "Not only do we do the fight abroad, but we assist other government agencies and people in our communities in need."

The newly named Stone Room was first manned in 2005. Officials said it faced its true test during the Air Guard's Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

For the last couple of years, the CAT has sustained 24/7 operations in support of the 54 states and territories, including support to the Guard's southwest border missions during Operation Jump Start (OJS). At its peak, nearly 60 Airmen supported OJS from the CAT. Eighteen Airmen currently operate the CAT.

Arkansas Soldiers hurt as severe weather strikes Camp Shelby

By Capt. Chris Heathscott
Arkansas National Guard

CAMP SHELBY JOINT FORCES TRAINING CENTER, Miss. – Fourteen Soldiers with the Arkansas National Guard's 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team were injured the night of March 3 as a result of severe weather passing through Camp Shelby.

Injuries were mainly limited to minor cuts and bruises, with one Soldier suffering a more severe, yet non-life-threatening, injury.

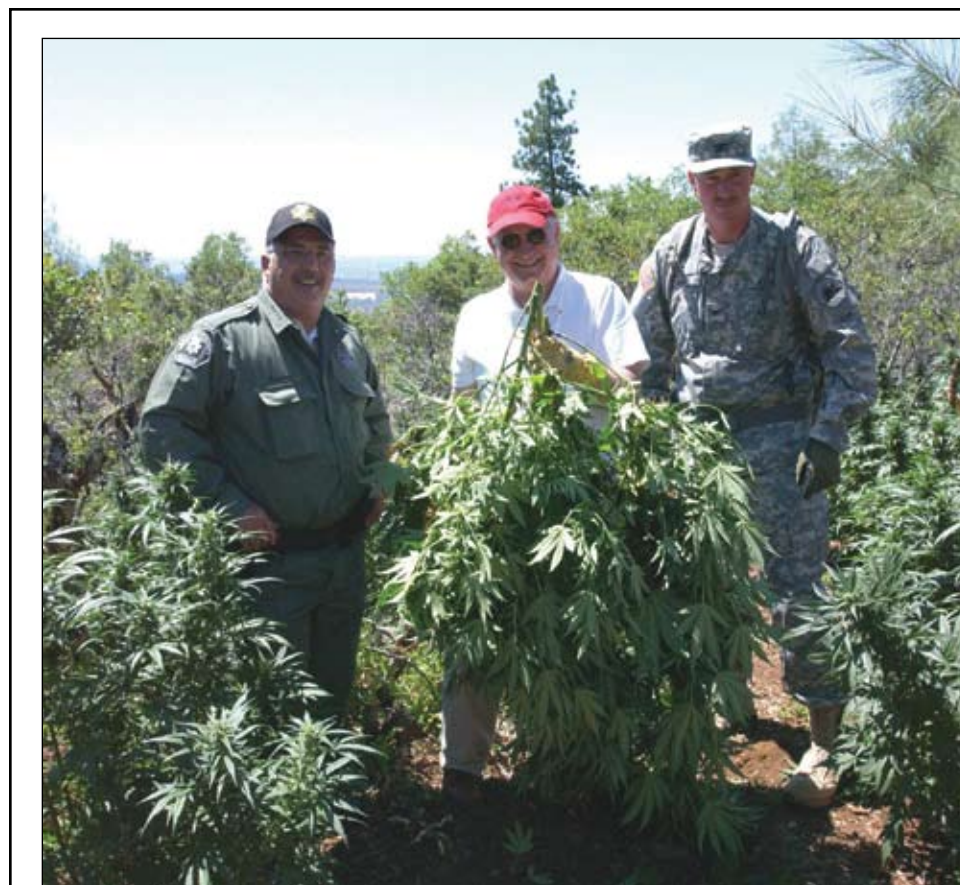
At about 11 p.m., what may have been a tornado passed through the post just south of Hattiesburg, Miss., seriously damaging a barracks, which housed Soldiers from the 39th's 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry units based in Arkansas.

The building's roof was partially blown away by strong winds with the remainder collapsing on several Soldiers inside. The 39th's Soldiers from neighboring barracks quickly responded with a search and rescue effort and established a triage.

Along with the battalion's physician assistant, the 39th's medics and combat lifesavers there outnumbered the injured Soldiers. Civilian emergency officials arrived in short order and were able to quickly get the injured transported to a local hospital where all 14 were treated then released.

"My Soldiers are slightly injured, yet safe today," said the 39th's Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Veazey March 4 while taking a break from sifting through the damaged barracks that housed nearly 50 brigade Soldiers. "They are safe due to the instinctive reactions of their fellow Soldiers in a time of crisis, and that's what combat experience and good training will get you."

The 39th, which is headquartered in Little Rock, was conducting mobilization training at Camp Shelby in preparation for an upcoming deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The brigade planned to hold its farewell ceremony March 6 and deploy overseas later in the month.



California National Guard photo

Eradication

John P. Walters (center), director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, pauses while being escorted on a marijuana eradication mission by Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko (left) and the California National Guard Counterdrug Task Force commander, Col. Timothy Swann. Earlier this year, Walters presented the task force with an award for its service in supporting the National Marijuana Eradication Initiative.

From page 1: SENATORS RESCUED

The unit was just beginning to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere at Bagram, where they are attached to CJTF-82, when they received the order to move again. Initially, the Soldiers were not aware of the VIPs on the helicopter.

Staff Sgt. Chris Dempsey, who was conducting inventories in the platoon office when the call came, was concerned about the crew.

"They had so many times come to our aid when we were pinned down by enemy fire. Now it was time to return the favor," Dempsey said.

When the platoon arrived at the site, one squad immediately convoyed the senators back to base while the rest of the platoon endured bitter winds, freezing rain and snow for more than 15 hours through the night. They secured the helicopter and crew until relief arrived the following day, said Sgt. Brian Genthe.

Due to the bad weather, finding a route to the downed aircraft proved to be tough, but Staff Sgt. William McClain led the way.

"With only a grid to go by, he led us," Dempsey said. "As the snow fell to the point where you could barely see the vehicle in front of you, he stayed on course. When the road turned into no more than a trail, he plowed through."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program benefactors were honored Feb. 26.

Youth ChalleNGe honors its star supporters in DC

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

WASHINGTON - Three-time Grammy winner Trisha Yearwood, famed NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., and Kirsten Haglund, the newly-crowned Miss America, were the star power during a gala here Feb. 26 that honored five people who champion the National Guard's Youth ChalleNGe program.

Youth ChalleNGe focuses on kids who drop out of high school, which puts them at risk for drug use, gang violence and abusive relationships.

North Carolina Sen. Elizabeth Dole, Washington Rep. Norm Dicks, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall, West Virginia Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Allen Tackett and Microsoft's Curt Kolcun were the program's honored leaders this year.

The National Guard Youth Foundation's 2008 ChalleNGe Champions Gala brought out a who's who of state and federal officials, defense leaders, sports figures, performers and corporate representatives to mark the success of the program.

The Guard started Youth ChalleNGe in 1993, and more than 77,000 Youth ChalleNGe graduates have returned to school, earned GEDs, enrolled in college, started careers or joined the military.

Guarding America

Alaska

The Last Frontier State's 176th Wing received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its service from Aug. 31, 2005, to Sept. 1, 2007. Among the successes cited were the wing's mobilization and deployments supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, as well as Operation Jump Start, the nation's southwestern border mission. The wing was also praised for sustaining normal peacetime airlift operations and its 24-hour rescue alert. The wing continued to provide community support, maintaining the 51-year Operation Santa Claus tradition of delivering Christmas gifts to remote Alaska villages.

Arkansas

The Natural State's approximately 2,800 Soldiers in the 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team departed for Iraq in mid-March. In preparation for their deployment, the 39th conducted Theater Immersion Training at the Joint Forces Training Center at Camp Shelby, Miss., beginning the first week in January.

Delaware

The First State's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala, traveled to Iraq and Kuwait to visit nearly 200 of the state's Guard personnel who are deployed there. He visited the 153rd Military Police Company in Baghdad, Iraq, and the 166th Civil Engineer Squadron and Detachment 7, Operational Support Airlift Command, in Kuwait. The 153rd is conducting security missions, VIP escorts, neighborhood patrols and helping to train members of the Iraqi police force. The 166th Civil Engineers are building and repairing facilities at the Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait. The crews and pilots from Detachment 7, OSACOM are flying C-12 Huron aircraft within the theater. All units are scheduled to come home by June.

District of Columbia

The 33rd Civil Support Team participated in a training exercise with six other states, the National Capital Region Joint Force Headquarters and the Department of Energy in early March. The exercise simulated terrorist events at various locations within and outside the district.

Georgia

Five Peach State Air Guard units earned Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. The 165th Air Support Operations Squadron, the 116th Air Control Wing, the 283rd Combat Communications Squadron, the 202nd Engineering Installation Squadron and the 224th Joint Communications Support Squadron all received the award which is given to units that have shown exceptionally meritorious service and outstanding achievements that clearly sets them above and apart from similar units nationwide.

Indiana

A departure ceremony for the Hoosier State's 38th Military Police Company was held Feb. 22. Two days later, the Soldiers traveled to Fort Dix, N.J., to train for their deployment to Southwest Asia. The 170-person company is scheduled to train Iraqi police officers during its year-long tour.

Kentucky

The Bluegrass State Guard, in conjunction with federal, state and local emergency response agencies, conducted its largest disaster emergency response exercise March 3-6. The exercise was based on a simulated 7.5 Richter-scale magnitude earthquake along the New Madrid Fault and incorporated Army and Air Guard resources.

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Maryland

Winning the Old Line State's Airmen of the Year competition for 2007 were Senior Airman Kyle Greene of the 135th Aerial Port Flight; Tech. Sgt. Amy Franklin of the 175th Medical Group; and Chief Master Sgt. David Davies of the 175th Maintenance Squadron.

Massachusetts

Deployed Bay State Airmen in the 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron's fire department at Sather Air Base, Iraq, are training local Iraqi firefighters. The U.S. firemen work with about 130 firefighters from New Al Muthanna Air Base and the Baghdad International Airport three times a week. The training includes classroom lectures and live-fire exercises.

Minnesota

Community leaders, friends and families of the North Star State's 147th Personnel Services Battalion gathered Feb. 12 for a welcome home ceremony following the unit's return from more than 12 months of deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The 32 Soldiers managed joint personnel reception centers, Soldier support centers and Army post offices in Afghanistan and provided human resource support to 14 forward operating bases in Afghanistan,



Photo by Capt. Gabe Johnson

Nice day for flying

Arizona Air National Guard security forces troops load their gear on a KC-135 Stratotanker at Tucson International Airport Feb. 24. The 19 Airmen assigned to the 162nd Fighter Wing hitched a ride with Pennsylvania's 171st Air Refueling Wing on their way to Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, for a six-month tour. The Guardmembers, who provide full-time security for the 162nd, will use their training and expertise to help secure Iraq's largest airport.

Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan and Qatar.

Mississippi

The Magnolia State's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, announced Feb. 27 that approximately 193 members of the 1st Battalion, 204th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, received mobilization orders in support of Operation Nobel Eagle. The regiment specializes in providing air defenses against a wide range of airborne threats, including helicopters, jets and cruise missiles.

Nevada

About 40 Airmen from the Silver State's 152nd Airlift Wing and 152nd Intelligence Squadron returned March 5 after completing a deployment to Iraq that lasted about two months. It marked the end of an airlift and airdrop operations mission for the state that began more than a year ago.

New Hampshire

A Granite State Army Guard helicopter crew spotted two men missing in the White Mountains in February and hoisted them to safety. The two were found on the south side of Mount Washington. They said they trudged through torrential rain and five-foot-deep snow and spent two nights in the wild.

New York

The Empire State Guard in February unveiled a new state-of-the-art command center similar to those in Iraq and Afghanistan. The \$280,000 Joint Operations Center integrates computers, video displays, and communications links to state and federal authorities. The JOC will allow Guard commanders to make better and more rapid decisions when New York military forces are deployed during emergencies or for homeland security operations.

Oregon

Thirteen members of the Beaver State's 173rd Security Forces Squadron returned home Feb. 20 after deploying to Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan, for more than six months. It was the second group from the squadron to return in two weeks, and another was slated to return in March. A total of 32 personnel deployed.

Virginia

Soldiers and Airmen from Old Dominion's Civil Support Team trained March 5 with the District of Columbia Metro Transit Police at the Metro Training Facility in Landover, Md. The training involved responding to a simulated dirty bomb threat and was part of a multistate training exercise called Capital Spear that took place in several locations in the DC area March 4-6.

Wisconsin

The Badger State Guard assisted the Taylor County Sheriff's Department in a missing-persons investigation starting Jan. 30. During their drill weekend, the Soldiers provided four Humvees, one tent, one generator, one heater and metal detectors used to sweep the crime scene.

Wyoming

The Equality State's 153rd Command and Control Squadron was selected Feb. 22 to receive the 2007 Outstanding Unit Award by Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, Air National Guard director. The 153rd provides the combatant commander of U.S. Northern Command with command and control capabilities to defend the country.

Convoy security

Training, experience help Alaska Soldiers when attacked in Iraq

By Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BALAD, Iraq -- "We're taking fire, we're taking fire," said a truck commander. "Gain fire superiority," demanded the convoy leader.

Easier said than done, but remaining calm, following orders and remembering their training has become routine for Soldiers of the Alaska Army National Guard's Bravo Company, 297th Support Battalion in Iraq.

Security teams with the 297th SB escort supply trucks throughout Iraq day and night to ensure that supplies reach American and allied forces.

"We've been trained to deal with any situation that may arise while we are here, and we are prepared to use force if we have to," said Staff Sgt. Edward Jones, a convoy leader and retention NCO with the 297th. "This is the second and third deployment for many of our Soldiers, and they do an outstanding job."

The Soldiers are also prepared to save lives, as was the case in mid-January when the convoy they were securing came under attack.

Before the convoy set out on its mission, Spc. Veronica Alfaro, a medic, said she hoped to be able to use her health care skills. Before the sun rose, Alfaro provided care to a civilian driver who was hit by enemy fire. Unfortunately, his injuries were fatal.

Another medic, Pfc. Kelly Perham, helped save the life of yet another civilian truck driver who was hit.

"He was surprisingly calm and thanked us, although he was freezing," Perham said.

2nd Lt. Walter Hotch-Hill, a platoon leader, offered his sleeping bag so the victim could remain warm as the team awaited a medevac flight.



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Pfc. Kelly Perham, a medic with the 297th Support Battalion, checks the oil in a Humvee before a security mission.

"We all came together," said Sgt. Richard Murphy, a convoy security team member. "The wrecker crew recovered the vehicles, the medics launched, the gunners engaged, the reports were called up; everyone did exactly what they had trained to do," he said.

The Guardmembers spent two months training at Fort Richardson, Alaska, prior to deploying. Still in Iraq, they said they continue to provide convoy security with greater confidence and insight, now that they have proven their skills under fire.



Photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester

Soldiers at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, create bundles to be dropped at a forward deployed location.

Squadron made up of ANG reaches airdrop record

By Capt. Toni Tones

455th Air Expeditionary Wing

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – February marked an airdrop record for the C-130s of the 774th Air Expeditionary Squadron, made up of Air National Guard members from Delaware, Tennessee and Texas.

The joint team delivered approximately 1 million pounds of humanitarian aid to villages and supplies to forward deployed forces in Afghanistan. This was a 40 percent increase over January operations and breaks the previous record of September 2007.

The record was only possible with the support of the Army's 11th Quartermaster Rigger Detachment and the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force's riggers here.

Nearly 35 percent of the record cargo delivered was humanitarian assistance to Afghan villagers hard hit by extreme winter weather. These humanitarian assistance bundles consisted of essentials, to include blankets, rice, beans, coal, oil and stoves. More than 300 people died from the severe conditions, according to Afghan government reports.

The other 600,000-plus pounds were supplies to coalition troops who are combating insurgents and bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan.

"The only way for this to work is when the Army and Air Force work together," said Master Sgt. Mike Pierson, 774th joint airdrop inspector from Delaware's 142nd Airlift Squadron. "Operating here in a combat environment is where it all pays off."

"This winter has been very harsh and cold. Bad weather and impassable roads were the primary reasons for the increase," said Lt. Col. Scott Morris, former 774th director of operations. "We had to deliver the cargo to the villagers and the troops. Airdrop was the best means to get it there."

Medical group capitalizes on total force cohesion

By 2nd Lt. Tania Bryan

379th Air Expeditionary Wing

SOUTHWEST ASIA – The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group relies on a total force team of medical experts to give wounded servicemembers the best health care available.

"When Soldiers suffer injuries that have a relatively fast recovery period, they are sent here to be treated and given time to recuperate," said Air National Guard Lt. Col. Michele Gavin, the 379th EMDG primary care clinic element chief, on her third deployment to Southwest Asia. "We have a very cohesive unit, which enables us to return them to the front lines quickly."

Gavin has served in the Army Reserve Command and Air National Guard for more than 26 years. Whether working as a Guardmember or in her civilian position at the Cleveland Clinic, "my job is to practice medicine," said the physician's assistant deployed from the 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo, Ohio.

"Ten to 15 percent of the group is Guard or Reserve," said Col. Michael Menning, 379th EMDG commander. One of the biggest benefits to having a total force team is the fact that many of the Guardsmen and Reservists have deployed before, he said. It provides stability and corporate knowledge.

"Bringing their experiences gained in the civilian sector, the Guard and Reserve offer a fresh set of eyes to what we do here," said active-duty Capt. Christine Yarbrough, a pharmacist deployed from Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

A self-proclaimed "Guard bum," Staff Sgt. Trisha Myers' diverse background offers a unique perspective. A Michigan native and medical technician, she has spent 18 years as a member of the active Air Force as well as



Photo by Senior Airman Domonique Simmons

Air Guard Staff Sgt. Trisha Myers dresses a wound on Army Spc. Eric Beauchamp's abdomen Feb. 19 at a hospital in Southwest Asia. The Soldier was wounded when a .50-caliber machine gun exploded in Iraq.

the Army and Air National Guards.

"I've been given a variety of opportunities to serve over the years, but my passion is patient care," Myers said. "Working with the Wounded Warrior Program here is very rewarding. I do whatever I can to make the patients more comfortable, from giving them a Popsicle to telling them a joke." She says it's the simple things that brighten their days.

"You never know what type of patient will walk through the door next. We see a lot of

patients, with many different complaints," Gavin said.

"We have a small footprint in terms of personnel, but overall we make a mammoth impact," Menning said.

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

Other partnerships

Ecuador-Kentucky

Members of the Kentucky Air National Guard helped flood-ravaged Ecuador by flying 162 cleanup kits in a C-130 Hercules March 6 from Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., to Manta, Ecuador. The kits were delivered to Ecuadorian disaster relief officials charged with cleaning items contaminated by mud, sewage, mold and mildew as flooding in the country's western and central provinces receded. Also, two senior Ecuador government officials visited Kentucky March 4-6 to observe an earthquake response exercise conducted by the state.

Canada-Virginia

Soldiers from the Canadian Army Reserve conducted a major field training exercise Feb. 22 at the Virginia National Guard's Maneuver Training Center at Fort Pickett. The exercise was part of Exercise Southbound Trooper VIII and involved soldiers from the 36th Canadian Brigade Group from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Training with them were Soldiers from the New Hampshire Guard and the North Carolina Guard, U.S. Navy units from Norfolk, Va., and the Virginia Guard's 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation. The exercise simulated a peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan. It kicked off with about 300 air assault Soldiers conducting a cordon and search operation near a simulated village.

Albania-New York

Five medical technicians from the 109th Airlift Wing spent three days in Albania in February instructing members of that country's army on vaccination procedures. The five enlisted Airmen, based at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, N.Y., participated as part of the Guard's State Partnership Program.

Suriname-South Dakota

Four Soldiers from the Suriname Army visited the 196th Regional Training Institute Feb. 28 at Fort Meade, S.D., to exchange ideas and information about how the Guard training institute organizes and manages a professional military education program.

Soldiers learn jungle survival from Filipinos during exercise

By Sgt. 1st Class Jason Shepherd and Lance Cpl. Kevin M. Knallay

CAMP AGUINALDO, Philippines -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines stood shoulder to shoulder with U.S. service-members at Camp Aguinaldo Feb. 18 and watched the unfurling of the Balikatan colors, beginning the annual, bilateral exercise.

The next day, about 100 National Guard Soldiers maneuvered through thick jungle brush to eat wild leaves and insects. They quenched their thirst with king cobra blood, enhancing their jungle survival skills at the Philippine Army Special Forces School at Fort Ramon Magsaysay.

The jungle survival training was a small part of Balikatan 2008, the 24th such exercise, which this year included dozens of medical and engineering projects.

True to its meaning in Filipino, Balikatan entails Philippine and U.S. forces "shouldering the load together" to help the greatest possible number of people in need, according to Philippine Brig. Gen. Nestor R. Sadiarin, exercise co-director.

The two-week Balikatan 2008 focused on training members of both armed forces to provide relief and assistance in the event of natural disasters and other crises that endanger public health and safety. Several medical, dental and engineering civil action projects took place.

"Joined together in a collective effort, our military medical professionals along with local doctors, nurses, veterinarians and volunteers will provide free medical, dental, and veterinary care to local communities where these services are most needed," said U.S. Brig. Gen. John Y. H. Ma, exercise co-director of BK 08.

The jungle survival training involved Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry, Guam Army National Guard and 2nd Battalion, 200th Infantry, New Mexico National Guard. Guam and the Philippines are paired in the National Guard's State Partnership program.

The Soldiers killed and cooked cobras, ate wild plants and tested their strength and endurance under the "jump wings" of Philippine Army special forces soldiers.

"I have learned so much in the short time we've been out here," said Pvt. Lorenzo Castillo



Photo by Lance Cpl. Kevin M. Knallay

Philippine Army Staff Sgt. Manolo Martin demonstrates the proper way to hold a king cobra Feb. 19 at a survival course during Balikatan 2008.

The Soldiers killed and cooked cobras, ate wild plants and tested their strength and endurance under the 'jump wings' of Philippine Army special forces soldiers

of New Mexico.

Before getting to the survival course, the Soldiers tackled the ropes course which featured obstacles that weave through the canopy of dense jungle. The most dominant feature was the slide for life, which is about 100 feet tall and requires a person to hold on to a thick branch and rope as he or she slides back to the ground.

"Honestly, it was kind of scary," Castillo said, "but it's a challenge, and I am glad I did it."

After climbing around in the trees, the Soldiers were led down a path which displayed traps built from natural materials, capable of catching a variety of wildlife. Philippine

test and tried the jungle food, most of which they found to be surprisingly tasty.

"They taste like lemons," said Sgt. Randy Eustaquio, an infantryman with the 1-294th, after tasting red ants off a tree branch. "They have a little zest to them," he joked.

Philippine Staff Sgt. Manolo Martin, assistant chief instructor at the survival course, then took the stage.

Martin brought out the next item on the buffet line—a king cobra—which was a little more intimidating and had some Soldiers taking a few steps back. Martin explained how to capture a snake with a stick as it slithered between his boots and attempted to get closer to the Americans.

A handful of the Americans, with the instructors' help, pinned the snake's head and snatched it up before tossing it back to the ground.

Finally, it was time for the highlight of the course: killing the cobra, cooking it and drinking its blood—a warrior tradition shared by both Philippine and American Soldiers.

"Drinking the snake's blood was definitely the highlight," Eustaquio said. "It was a unique experience."

The Philippine instructors said giving the training to their international guests was a great experience.

"I had a Soldier shake my hand and say, 'thank you so much for your instruction today,'" Agonoy said. "They tell me that they have learned some great things, and I'm glad I had the chance to be their teacher."

The American Soldiers felt the same way.

"It's been really good to work with the Philippine special forces," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Piper, a rifle squad leader with 2-200th. "The cohesion has been great."



Watch the video of this story at www.ngb.army.mil/mp/default.aspx?VID=44

Alaska, Mongolia partnership flourishes with shared challenges

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

HONOLULU – Sprawling territory, extreme cold and rich natural resources are among shared conditions that have created a perfect marriage for Alaska and Mongolia in the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP).

The two paired up in 2003 and formalized the relationship in 2005. What they lack in longevity they've more than made up for in initiatives.

"Our partnership has grown dynamically," Lt. Gen. Tsevegsuren Togoo, the chief of staff of the Mongolian Armed Forces, said during a break at the first two-day Pacific State Partnership Program Regional Workshop here in late January. "We have done a lot in a very short time."

Mongolia's president visited Alaska in 2007, bringing business leaders and other VIPs. Alaska and Mongolia train together. Alaskan medical teams have treated people in Mongolia. Mongolia has hosted bilateral exercises.

Military-to-military exchanges have been catalysts for civilian-to-civilian initiatives beyond the SPP. The partners' mining industries are cooperating. The Mongolian city of Erdenet has a sister relationship with Alaska's Fairbanks. Mongolian students are enrolled in Alaskan universities.

"Only the National Guard can do this," said Air Force Maj. Gen. Craig Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard.

"It can't be done by the active duty military. It can't be done solely by the civilian community. The reason is, the National Guard brings significant civilian expertise. We're Citizen-Soldiers. The majority of us have civilian jobs. We have that experience and skills from doctors to engineers to carpenters. We're the only ones that have that military and civilian combined in one package."

"The [beneficiaries] of our partnership are not only the military but also the civilians," Togoo said. "The partnership opened the way for the businessmen of the two countries. In the future we will see Alaskan investment in Mongolia, and also we will ship our products to Alaska."

Alaska and Mongolia have similar geography, topography, sparse population and weather challenges.

- Alaska covers 663,267 square miles. Mongolia covers 603,909.
- Alaska has the lowest population density of any state. The density of its 626,932 residents is 1.09 per square mile. Mongolia has the lowest population density of any country. The density of its 2.9 million residents is 4.41 per square mile.

- Mount McKinley, at 20,320 feet, is Alaska's highest peak. Khuiten Peak, Mongolia's highest, is 14,350 feet.

"There are a lot of things that bring together Mongolia and Alaska," Togoo said. "The desire to work and know each other is the driving force of cooperation and partnership. The most important thing is democracy. Mongolia established democracy in

1990. We are a young democracy. Alaska is a part of America, and America is a democratic country. That's the most important thing uniting us."

"Alaska, too, is a young state," Campbell said. "We're just going to celebrate our 50th year of statehood in '09, so we too are evolving in a democracy – two young states and countries working through democracy together to do the right thing."

Mongolians and Alaskans also stand side-by-side in the front lines of the war on terror.

"Our partners in Mongolia, they're on their ninth rotation to Iraq. They're one of [our] most steadfast friends in this Global War on Terrorism," Campbell said. "But even in Mongolia the discussion of Iraq can be difficult, and they've had discussions ... about whether they should continue. I was asked when I was over there, 'If we continue our engagement with Iraq, will you continue to send Alaskans with us?'"

"I made the commitment that as long as Mongolia is serving in Iraq, we will have Alaskans go with Mongolians to Iraq. I don't think that was the answer that made the parliament decide to go, but it helped."

Maj. Steve Wilson, Alaska's SPP coordinator, was the liaison officer for Mongolian troops in Iraq for two rotations. "I had the opportunity to interact with probably 10 different coalition partners," he said. "The Mongolians were the most professional. Everybody slept well in that camp at night knowing the Mongolians were up on the wall."

HEADS UP!

Army's new field manual

The Army's new field manual for operations, FM 3-0, was unveiled recently and features the first major update of Army capstone doctrine since the terrorist attacks of 9/11. This is the 15th edition of the field manual.

<http://downloads.army.mil/fm3-0/FM3-0.pdf>

Family care form

Army Guardmembers should update their Family Care Plan (DA Form 5305) regularly with their personnel office, first sergeant or other appropriate authority. The form is mandatory, and failure to maintain a plan could subject the Soldier to separation, administrative action or disciplinary action under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice. The form can be found at:

www.army.mil/usapa/eforms/pdf/A5305.PDF

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.

www.militaryonesource.com

Political activity policies

A revised Defense Department directive provides a more clear definition of what servicemembers may and may not do within the political realm, particularly running for political office. The new version of Directive 1344.10, titled, "Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces," took effect Feb. 19 and replaces the previous version issued in August 2004.

www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/134410p.pdf

Health care

Veterans who have served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, are eligible for five years of free care for most medical conditions from the Department of Veterans Affairs. This measure increases a two-year limit that has been in effect for nearly a decade. The five-year window is also open to members of the National Guard if they served in a combat theater of operations after Nov. 11, 1998.

www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel



Photo by Master Sgt. Dan Kacir

African visit

Nigerian Air Force Group Capt. Son Igwe (hands out) and other members of the Nigerian Air Force tour a 129th Rescue Wing facility in February with Chief Master Sgt. Ray Estrella (right), 129th Maintenance Group Equipment Maintenance Branch chief, and Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Detar (left), 129th Maintenance Group Propulsion Section supervisor. The visit was part of the California State Partnership Program between the California National Guard and Nigeria.

Skiing fast and shooting clean in National Guard biathlon

Guard Championship's rookie from Vermont wins race by one second; Green Mountain state skiers dominate individual races

Story/photos by Master Sgt. Greg Rudl
National Guard Bureau

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. — Winning your first race in the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships race is a rare accomplishment.

Winning it by one second—rarer still.

That's the impressive feat that 2nd Lt. Samuel Morse of Vermont managed here March 9 when he edged Spc. Nigel Kinney in the 10-km sprint.

Morse was one of a triumvirate of Vermont skiers who dominated the individual men's races at this year's 27th championships March 9-15.

Eighteen states sent about 75 athletes to the championships. The event rotates annually between the biathlon facilities at Camp Ripley and Camp Ethan Allen near Burlington, Vt.

Biathlon combines rifle marksmanship with cross country skiing. Competitors ski loops on hilly trails, returning to a 50-meter firing range to shoot at five targets with .22-caliber rifles from the prone and standing positions.

Morse, a newly-minted lieutenant from

the 131st Engineer Company, Colchester, Vt., didn't know he had won by just one second until well after the race had ended. Competitors start at 30-second intervals, and the results have to be certified by race officials before they are posted.

Morse disguised his excitement with a calm and unassuming demeanor. But whether he knew it or not, the 24-year-old was clearly a favorite, having skied in cross country races around Syracuse, N.Y., for most of his life.

He was not distracted during the race because he kept one simple thought in mind: "You gotta do your thing, and you can't worry about anyone else," he said.

"I think if Nigel knew it was that close he could have gone harder and beat me," said the humble Morse who actually thought teammate Sgt. Jesse Downs would triumph.

Morse admitted that he and his other Vermont teammates were saving themselves for the national biathlon championships the following week and the Canadian championships the week after that.

In the 20-km race, Downs cruised to a three-minute-plus victory. He described his strategy this way: "I would try to go hard out of the range for the first half of the loop and then back off the second half so I would come into the range controlled," he said. "Because of the one-minute penalties, it's hard to ski those off. You're better off slowing down a little bit and losing a few seconds versus coming into the range too hard, missing, and having a couple of minutes of penalties."

Downs was the best shooter for the 20-km race, missing only four targets.

"The wind picked up a little bit on my second prone, and I adjusted for that," he said. Rules allow competitors to make sight corrections on their rifles during the race.

On the women's side, Minnesota Spc. Jill Krause won the 7.5-km race in 31 minutes, 19 seconds, and Ohio Army Staff Sgt. Andrea Motley won the 15-km race. About six women started in both races.

Minnesota won the 15-km patrol race gold and Vermont won the 3 X 7.5-km relay race.

Due to a lack of snow, racing conditions were marginal. According to Chief Warrant Officer Keith Silbernick, the chief of competition, there was a 6-inch base on the trails March 10. Temperatures warmed as

the week progressed, melting snow and also the hopes of getting the team races in March 14-15. Athletes had to dodge several bare spots on the course during the 20-km

race, and many left their best skis in the bag for fear of scuffing

them. Support workers spent March 13 shoveling four large truck loads of snow onto bare spots on the course to get the team races in. Approximately 50 Guardmembers served in support roles which included drivers, race officials and course groomers.

Athletes and coaches met for a biathlon congress March 13, and the newly-appointed National Guard Biathlon Program director, Maj. Teresa Benevento, briefed the group.

She welcomed the competitors and encouraged more state rep-

resentation by saying

that the "more visibility the states have here, the more visibility the National Guard biathlon has at the national level."

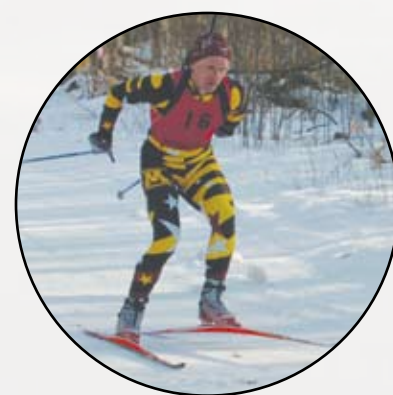
The 34 states involved in Guard biathlon are broken into three regions: West, Central and East. During the congress, these regions held breakout sessions and discussed funding, best practices, spreading the word about the program to the rest of Guard, attracting high school Nordic racers and procuring ammunition.

The National Guard biathlon program aims to develop the highest levels of skiing and rifle marksmanship necessary to improve the combat ability of individual Soldiers and Airmen and to represent the National Guard and the U.S. Armed Services in national and international events including the World Cup and Winter Olympics.

Shooting well

An Airman or Soldier will probably never fire a weapon that is lighter or with less recoil than a biathlon rifle, but that doesn't diminish its importance for teaching Guardmembers proper shooting techniques. Just ask Indiana's Sgt. Gregory Swanson who has fired many of the Army's small arms. The 13-year Guard veteran spent 2006-07 in Iraq training policemen, deploying there to replace a Soldier killed in action.

"To shoot well anywhere, especially in



10-km winner 2nd Lt. Samuel Morse of Vermont scales a hill in the 20-km race.



Idaho Master Sgt. David Berlinguet comes off the top of a hill during the race.

biathlon, it's imperative to focus on the shooting fundamentals that this program teaches, like breath control, sight alignment, trigger squeezing and follow through," said Swanson. He was referring to one of the biggest challenges of the sport: holding a rifle steady and knocking down small targets 50 meters away with an elevated heart rate.

The civilian police officer said co-workers have told him that his shooting has improved because of his involvement in biathlon. Swanson was competing in his third Guard championships.



range in the relay race.

Beginners' perspectives

Ask any beginner, especially one who's never Nordic skied before, and he or she will probably say that biathlon is difficult. Why does the sport befuddle beginners so much, even incredibly-gifted endurance athletes like 2:30 marathoner Spc. Bill Raitter from Nevada, who finished well down in the results? Most will say it lies in the difficulty of mastering the skate-skiing technique.

For North Dakota Spc. Brandon Pulst, who's in his second year, learning that technique, especially



Photo by Sgt. Lynette Hoke

California 2nd Lt. Kel Thede of the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing shows his state colors.

on the hills, could prove to be his breakthrough in the sport.

"The hardest part for new people is having the power and endurance to push up the hills," said the Guard vehicle mechanic who's pursuing a mathematics degree at the University of North Dakota. "It's what's holding me and many beginners back."

A California biathlete said he picked up surfing a lot easier than skate-skiing and that he's never had so much difficulty learning a new sport.

Many biathletes from states that don't have reliable snow train by using roller skis, which are similar to rollerblades and include the use of ski poles. Some, like Swanson, even go so far as to ski uphill at downhill ski resorts to train for Guard biathlon.

Interested in biathlon?

Contact the National Guard Sports Office at (802) 899-7122 for more info.

North Dakota's Blake Hillerson moves around a bend during the relay race.

Biathlon by the numbers

4.5 cm in diameter: the prone target area

4.5 inches: the off hand target area

50 meters: distance targets are down range

.22 caliber: rifle used by competitors

5 loops: number skied in the 20-km race

8 lbs.: minimum weight of the rifle

1924: the first recognized international competition in biathlon, held during the Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France



Minnesota Tech. Sgt. Michele McVenes of the 133rd Air Wing tumbled on the 15-km race and has the marks to prove it.



The medal table at the awards ceremony March 15.

Sunken treasure

Kansas aircrew brings WW II comrades back from watery grave

By Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk
National Guard Bureau

A drama unfolded in the skies above the western Pacific island nation of Palau on Sept. 1, 1944, as intense fighting between American and Japanese forces was getting underway. During a raid, comrades of the U.S. Army Air Forces looked on helplessly as the crew of a B-24 Liberator bomber, the Babes in Arms, was brought down by antiaircraft fire. Three of the crew reportedly bailed out, one without a parachute, before the bomber dove headlong into the ocean never to be found ... or so it was thought.

PALAU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – A volunteer Kansas Air National Guard crew in a KC-135 Stratotanker from the 190th Air Refueling Wing returned the human remains recovered from that ill-fated bomber back to this country in early March.

The crash site was found in 2004 by a privately-funded organization called BentProp, which searches for planes and crews shot down by the Japanese in 1944-45.

After discovering the wreckage of the Babes in Arms, they reported it to the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command, or JPAC, who for the last three years investigated and recovered the remains from the site.

The Kansas Coyotes had the honor of transporting the fallen Airmen back to U.S. soil – to Hawaii – for identification.

“That seemed like a pretty good thing to do to give some closure to some families back home in the states,” said Master Sgt. Mark Mertel, adding that it was an honorable thing to do and “a fine way to end my career with the Kansas Air Guard. I jumped on it.”

The Kansas Stratotanker crew flew from

its home at Forbes Field, just outside of Topeka, to Hawaii then to Guam. From there it was another 90-minute hop to the Republic of Palau.

“It was really moving to see that island and kind of imagine what might have happened that day,” said Maj. Jeff Warrender from the pilot’s seat, “It really made me think about how brave those guys must have been and what they might’ve gone through before they died. To see how beautiful the island was, it was just kind of eerie.”

Warrender first did a flyover inspection of the short airstrip with no tower in order for the crew to ensure conditions would permit a safe landing. Standing water, among other things, might keep the lumbering tanker from landing. Satisfied, Warrender circled back around, smoothly touched down and

brought the big plane to a quick halt on the island nation.

Local officials, without whom any of this would have been possible, met the KC-135 crew on the runway. Jennifer Anson, executive assistant to the vice president of Palau, said the event was emotional for her.

“A lot of my relatives were here during the war, and a lot of them went missing and we never found them,” said Anson. “I’m happy for whoever’s family has that peace of mind now, knowing that their family members are being returned back home.”

U.S. Navy divers appeared as well, sitting in the back of a large truck with their cargo – two sealed black cases containing the remains of the B-24’s lost crew. These divers, dispatched by JPAC, spent a month and a half under 70 feet of water meticulously

recovering the remains and, in some cases, personal effects of the bomber’s crew.

When BentProp personnel find a crash site, they tell JPAC and an investigation is begun. It involves archaeologists, doctors, forensic scientists, divers and whoever else is required to recover and identify a servicemember so that a family might be notified and the remains appropriately honored.

At the tanker, Capt. Jarrod Ramsey, a pilot, and Master Sgt. Matt Miltz, a refueling boom operator, carefully helped the divers who handed the cases up from the truck into the side cargo door of the KC-135. Other members of the crew got the aircraft ready to fly again, checking and rechecking its structure and systems.

At the end of the runway, the engines whined louder and louder as the pilot let their power build. Finally, the pilot released the brakes and the tanker rocketed down a rapidly-shortening runway and into the Pacific sky. On board: the remaining crew of the Babes in Arms finally on their way to completing a trip that took much longer than anyone would have imagined.

After a quick stop back in Guam, the KC-135 flew east to Hawaii where the remains of the Liberator crew would be examined forensically by JPAC experts to verify their identities. Once identified, the servicemembers will be flown the rest of the way home to their families, that honor reserved for another aircrew. The Kansas Coyotes had accomplished their mission.

“We’ve had some fairly long days and not a lot of ground time,” Miltz explained. “But it’s all been worth it, helping to bring these people back.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk

Above: A Kansas Air Guard KC-135 aircrew discuss the mission while en route to Palau.
Below: The aircraft flies over a Pacific island on its way to Palau.



Photo by Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk

The Battle of Palau

Codenamed Operation Stalemate, the battle fought between the United States and Japan in the Pacific Theater of World War II, taking place between Sept. 15 and Nov. 25, 1944. The U.S. forces, consisting of the 1st Marine Division and the Army’s 81st Infantry Division, fought to capture an airstrip on the small coral island. U.S. Navy Cmdr. William Rupertus predicted that the island would be secured within three days, but due to Japan’s well-crafted fortifications and stiff resistance, the battle lasted over two months. The battle remains one of the war’s most controversial, due to its questionable strategic value and high death toll. When considering the number of men involved, Palau had the highest proportional casualty rate of any battle in the Pacific War.

-Wikipedia

Gangway: civil support teams charge through March test

Exercise Capital Spear includes CSTs from seven states

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

WASHINGTON – Tech. Sgt. Chris Bolt and three other members of the Maryland National Guard's 32nd Civil Support Team (CST) stood in their full chemical gear March 6 deep inside the Navy's display ship *Berry* during a training exercise at the Washington Navy Yard.

Straining their eyes to see in the dim light below the decommissioned destroyer's main deck, they bumped between air ducts and steam pipes to study a suitcase-sized device and some white powder scattered in the cramped space.

"We have a positive hit for ricin! I repeat. We have a positive hit for ricin!" Bolt yelled. The message was repeated over the radio. It was followed by a knocking noise from a nearby passageway.

"There are ghosts in this place," Bolt added.

The 32nd was responding to one of several simulated terrorists events in the National Capital Region March 4-6 as part of Exercise Capital Spear.

Capital Spear included Guard civil support teams from Delaware, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia. The three-day exercise began with a multi-state response to simulated, synchronized terrorist events around the nation's capital and northwest of Indianapolis. Officials said the purpose was to enhance the interoperability of the teams.

A Navy ship is not a typical place where you would find one of the National Guard's highly-trained CSTs which investigate sites for chemical, biological and radiological agents and advise civilian responders. But then, nothing is typical about training for terrorist threats.

Members of civil support teams are trained to deal with weapons of mass destruction and they are prepared to support their governors during domestic emergencies.

Bolt said the ricin scenario on the *Berry* provided realistic training for what could be encountered at any moment in the real world. Ricin, a biological weapon, is the poisonous protein in the castor bean. The discovery of ricin at a Las Vegas motel by the Nevada National Guard's 92nd CST Feb. 28 was believed to be one of the deadliest substances discovered to date by a National Guard team.

"We received a call from the incident commander at this location and where eight Boy Scouts had spent their weekend on the



Photo by Lt. Col. Mike Cadle

Sgt. Zach King of West Virginia's 35th Civil Support Team stands in a decontamination shower after being exposed to a simulated hazardous material aboard the Navy's display ship *Berry* during Exercise Capital Spear.

ship," said 2nd Lt. Michael Kesh, survey team leader, on the ship's gangway.

In the simulation, four of the Scouts went to a hospital with symptoms including weakness, vomiting, nausea and tightness in their chests. The 32nd was sent to check out the ship.

"At this point we sent an entry team down. They have done some presumptive analysis and found the potential for a biological weapon," said Kesh.

It's not the first time the team has conducted an exercise at a port. "We have a large maritime threat with the Port of Baltimore, so we have done a lot of training with the Coast Guard," said Kesh.

There is currently one CST in each U.S. state and territory, and some states have or will have two teams. The teams are similar in their equipment and WMD training, but they are unique in the way the governors might ask them to respond.

A standard CST has 22 full-time Army and Air Guard members, but Kesh said the Maryland CST has a maritime strike team that can deploy four survey members with a medic and a communications expert to quickly assist civilian agencies without sending in the entire team with all of its equipment.

"It's something we are still experimenting with and seeing what works for us and what doesn't," Kesh said.

Noticeably different here were the

standard charcoal chemical warfare suits the team wore as opposed to the vinyl "Robbie the Robot" self-contained protective suits that they usually operate in.

"We will typically wear the 'JLIST' suit here as opposed to the 'Saratoga' suit because of the confined spaces, the slip and tip hazards and the snags and tears. We don't want to risk ripping our suits," said Kesh.

The team also used rebreathing systems instead of self-contained breathing apparatus, and they deployed by driving a single communication van, leaving the team's high-tech analysis lab and other vehicles behind.

Bolt said the larger CST team was nearby to assist them if the smaller strike team required help.

"It seems to be that they are targeting the Boy Scouts," said Bolt about the exercise. He explained that in the first days of the exercise the 32nd also responded to scenarios at a Boy Scout camp on the 350-acre Camp William B. Snyder in Haymarket, Va.

Civil support teams participating in Capital Spear coordinated through joint operation centers at the District of Columbia Armory and in northern Virginia.

Bolt said multi-state exercises are held every year with the CSTs. As in Exercise Capital Spear, Bolt said the teams responded to different scenarios and operated nonstop for 72 hours, taking time out only for short breaks and to re-equip.

From page 1:
RICIN SCARE

minutes, a 19-member team and a half-dozen vehicles from the CST were out the door, and they were on scene in less than 60 minutes from the initial request, Conway said.

The vehicles provide communications, laboratory and other support for the team at the scene.

"They worked in conjunction with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and Clark County fire and hazardous materials teams to collect and analyze samples at the site," Conway said.

"Initial tests came back indicating that the substance that they were testing was ricin," Conway said. "More samples were sent to the Nevada public health laboratory for additional testing."

Ricin, a biological weapon, is a poisonous protein in the castor bean.

Because CST members regularly train with civilian responders, they already know each other when a crisis occurs, Conway said.

Nevada's CST is one of this country's 53 certified units mandated by Congress to support local and state authorities at domestic incidents by identifying agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences and advising on response measures, Conway stated.

They are the first military responders on the ground.

"Having an extra set of eyes, an extra set of hands, an extra set of knowledgeable people ... [is] the asset that the CST brings to the table," Conway said.

The 95th CST of California and that state's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) also stood by if additional assistance was needed, Conway and National Guard Bureau officials said.

— Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Rotherham contributed to this report.

Oregon CST responds to suspicious powder

By Tech. Sgt. Nick Choy
Oregon National Guard

One of the newest units in the Oregon National Guard worked closely with local first responders and civilian emergency agencies during an incident in Albany, Ore., in March.

Members of the Oregon's 102nd Civil Support Team were called to the Linn County Courthouse in Albany after workers found two envelopes containing a suspicious white powder March 4. Later tests proved the powder to be harmless.

One envelope was located behind the building near an air-conditioning unit and the other was located in an office inside the building. Local authorities cordoned off the building, shutting down surrounding streets.

Lt. Col. Steve Ferrell, 102nd CST commander, said frequent training with simulated anthrax scenarios over the past several years prepared the unit to assist first responders during the incident. "Anthrax training seems to be the most common scenario," he said.

The CST worked with the Albany Fire Department, Linn-Benton Regional Region-5 HAZMAT team, the Linn County Sheriff's office and the FBI.

GUARD FACTS

Did you know?

CST units possess satellite and secure digital and voice communications to provide connectivity with both civil and military forces within the operational conditions.

Newsmakers

Air combat honors

Three members of the South Dakota Air Guard's 114th Logistics Squadron were among the first in the country to receive the recently authorized Air Force Combat Action Medal. A ceremony honoring Master Sgt. Dana Storm and Staff Sgt. Luke Cunningham was held March 2 at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, S.D. A third medal for the late Tech. Sgt. Keith Fuerst will be presented posthumously to his family. Fuerst was killed in a civilian motor vehicle accident in December 2006.



Right equipment

Washington Army Guard Staff Sgt. Richard Powell and two fellow Soldiers saved a man's life Feb. 13 with an automated external defibrillator. Their quick reaction with the right equipment revived a man believed to have suffered a heart attack. The Soldiers used the AED to shock the victim's heart back into rhythm, then the machine and the Soldiers monitored his condition until firefighters transported him to a hospital.



Retired, but still G-RAP'in

As a recruiting assistant for the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP), retired Chief Warrant Officer Jack Reppart loves to talk to people about the Ohio Army National Guard. His efforts have paid off nicely for himself and the Guard. Reppart's most recent enlistment pushed total earnings for Ohio's recruiting assistants to more than \$4 million.



Class leader

Col. Greg Champagne, the 131st Fighter Wing's vice commander, is the first Missouri Air Guard pilot to attend the B-2 stealth bomber initial qualification training course at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. He also is the highest ranking pilot ever to attend.



Money isn't everything

After completing two tours in Iraq, Sgt. Wayne Leyde won \$1 million from a scratch-and-win lottery ticket in February, ABC News reported. The 26-year-old and member of the Washington National Guard said he's still going to volunteer to go back to Iraq for a third tour and won't spend any of the money in the meantime.



Keeble is first full-blooded Sioux Indian to be awarded Medal of Honor

From page 1:
WAR HERO

but the president focused on the 17 members of Keeble's surviving family and dozens of Sioux Indians, many of them uniformed veterans.

"His [Medal of Honor] nominating paperwork was lost, and then it was resubmitted, and then it was lost again," Bush explained. "Then the deadline passed, and Woody and his family were told it was too late. Some blamed the bureaucracy for a shameful blunder. Others suspected racism. ... Whatever the reason, the first Sioux to ever receive the Medal of Honor died without knowing it was his. A terrible injustice was done to a good man, to his family and to history. ... On behalf of a grateful nation, I deeply regret that this tribute comes decades too late."

His voice lowered, the commander in chief became storyteller in chief as he honored Keeble by telling of his exploits as a Soldier on the battlefield and of the respect he earned as a citizen in his community.

"There are some things we can still do for him," Bush said. "We can tell his story. We can honor his memory. And we can follow his lead by showing all those who have followed him on the battlefield the same love and generosity of spirit that Woody showed his country every day."

Keeble's Medal of Honor was awarded for action near Sangsan-ni, Korea, Oct. 20, 1951. It was awarded for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty."

Prior to Oct. 20, Keeble's company had taken heavy losses and the master sergeant himself had more than 83 grenade fragments in his body, Bush said. Defying his doctor, he returned to the battlefield Oct. 20.

"Communist forces still held a crucial hill," Bush said. "They had pinned down U.S. forces. ... One Soldier said the enemy lobbed so many grenades ... that they looked like a flock of blackbirds. ... Nothing seemed to be working. ... American boys were dying. But our forces had one advantage: Woody was back, and Woody was some kind of mad."

"He grabbed grenades and his weapon and climbed that crucial hill alone. Woody climbed hundreds of yards through dirt and rock, with his wounds aching, bullets flying and grenades falling. ... Someone ... remarked: 'Either he's the bravest Soldier I have ever met, or he's crazy.' Soldiers watched in awe as Woody single-handedly took out one machine gun nest and then another. When Woody was through, all 16 enemy Soldiers were dead, the hill was taken and the allies

won the day."

The president credited Keeble's heroism with saving many American lives.

But Keeble's life wasn't defined by that act alone, and the president described the man who won the affection and respect of those with whom he served, of his fellow Sioux and of those who came in contact with him.

He was already a decorated veteran of



Photo by Carrie L. McLeroy

Above: In accordance with Sioux tradition, two empty chairs represent Master Sgt. Woodrow Keeble and his wife Blossom during a Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House March 3. Below: Keeble (2nd from right) with the 164th Infantry in World War II.



Photo courtesy of James Fenelon

World War II, for actions at Guadalcanal. The Chicago White Sox scouted him, but his arm would throw grenades, not baseballs. He led Soldiers through a minefield, putting himself at risk. He fought on despite wounds to his arm.

Though he suffered strokes after Korea and could not speak, after his first wife's death he courted a second woman, named Blossom.

"He wrote a note asking Blossom to marry him," Bush said. "She told him she needed some time to think about it. So while she was deliberating, Woody put their engagement announcement in the newspaper. This is a man who was relentless in love as well as war."

On the platform behind the president were two empty chairs, honoring a Sioux tradition by representing Woody and Blossom and acknowledging their passing to the spiritual world.

The president called the master sergeant "an everyday hero" who despite his war injuries and strokes mowed

lawns for senior citizens, helped pull cars from snow banks and was generous to those less fortunate than himself. Bush called him a devoted veteran who never complained about his missing medal.

"The Sioux have a saying: 'The life of a man is a circle,'" Bush said. "Today we complete Woody Keeble's circle – from an example to his men to an example for the ages."

Hawkins talked about his stepfather after the ceremony. "We know he lives with us in spirit," he said. "His honor will continue by the honor that his country gave him by recognizing him with the Medal of Honor."

"It means a lot to the Sioux nation," Hawkins said. "The traditional values that we had were ones of bravery, humility and generosity, and when you look at Woodrow's life as a Soldier and as a civilian, you can see that he exemplified all those qualities."

A National Guard armory is among places the family is considering displaying the medal so the public can learn of the story.

"Woodrow started his military service with the 164th Infantry, which is a National Guard unit in North Dakota," Hawkins explained. "The National Guard ... has been very, very supportive of Woodrow throughout all these efforts."

At the Pentagon the following day, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren called Keeble an extraordinary American hero. Geren quoted Keeble's own writings about his combat experiences: "There were terrible moments that encompassed a lifetime, an endlessness when terror was so strong in me that I could feel idiocy replace reason. Yet, I never left my position, nor

have I shirked hazardous duty. Fear never made a coward out of me."

Geren hosted the Hall of Heroes ceremony with Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and Gen. Richard Cody, the Army's vice chief of staff.

"He was a professional Soldier," said Lawrence Orcutt, who served alongside Keeble in Korea and was one of the numerous Soldiers who first nominated him for the Medal of Honor, said after the Pentagon ceremony. "Everywhere he went, I had confidence in the man and I would follow him. I'm glad he got this. I hope there's some way in our spirit world for him to know."

GUARD FACTS

Did you know?
Since 1898, 121 recipients of the Medal of Honor have had National Guard service at some point in their career.

First Guard Active First graduate continues family tradition of service

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Pvt. Raymond Loree is the first Army National Guard Soldier to graduate directly into the active Army's ranks through a new program called Active First.

Loree graduated One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Feb. 22. He enlisted Oct. 18 through Active First, which recruits commit to service in the active Army followed by service in the National Guard. Recruits enlist in the Army Guard and attend monthly drills until initial entry training (IET) is complete.

Following IET, Soldiers can serve up to 48 months of active duty with the option to continue an active-duty career or return to their Guard unit. Bonuses of up to \$60,000 can be obtained by completing the program. Loree, who enlisted for 48 months, is scheduled to receive \$40,000. Married with two young children, he said the money will help his family.

The National Guard has been tasked with enlisting 1,600 recruits through Active First during the 2008 fiscal year; 984 Soldiers had been recruited through Feb. 20, according to Sgt. 1st Class David Hawkins, Active First project manager.

Loree is following a longstanding family tradition by serving in the military. A sister is serving in the Army in Afghanistan, and a cousin is in Kuwait. At least six other immediate family members, including both parents, are either



Courtesy photo

Pvt. Raymond Loree became the first Army Guard Soldier to graduate directly into the active Army's ranks through a new program called Active First.

retired from the armed forces or currently serving. His father spent more than 18 years in the Marines and his mother wore Air Force blue.

"It's my time to serve my country," Loree said by telephone from Fort Leonard Wood where he completed a 20-week OSUT, emerging as a combat engineer. "Growing up as a kid, I looked up to my dad. I always wanted to serve our country. I get to keep the tradition going."

Loree said he told his family: "You guys did it for me, now I'm doing it for you guys." The 22-year-old tried civilian life first, working as a salesman. "I went to work dreading it every morning," he said.

That changed during the rigors of Basic Combat Training. "I feel motivated," Loree said. "It's very motivating knowing that I can get up in the morning serving my country."

Staff Sgt. Shane Carvella was one of Loree's drill sergeants. "He listens," Carvella said. "He understands. He asked a lot of questions. He tries to prove himself a little more because of the weight

that he has on his shoulders." That's the weight of tradition and the weight of leading the way through Active First.

Loree said the rifle range, where he shot a variety of weapons besides the M-16 rifle, and obstacle courses were highlights of his training. "Dealing with the cold weather in Missouri is the hardest thing about Basic," he said.

— Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith contributed to this report.

Suggestion program awards Pennsylvania master sergeant \$10K for A-10 innovation

By Tech. Sgt. Elisabeth A. Matulewicz
Pennsylvania National Guard

WILLOW GROVE AIR RESERVE STATION, Pa. - Necessity was the mother of invention for Master Sgt. David R. Austin, 111th Maintenance Squadron, who developed an A-10 Thunderbolt II External Fuel System Replacement Tester after the current tester became unavailable for purchase.

Austin developed a new tester, submitted his idea to the National Guard Bureau's Suggestion Program and was awarded \$10,000 Feb. 5 after officials found cost savings of almost \$600,000.

"The tester must be used whenever any of the three wing pylons that carry the external fuel tanks on the A-10 are installed," said Lt. Col. Barry A. Orbinati, 111th commander.

"The cost to produce the tester through a private company was nearly \$600,000; the unit's cost would be around \$100,000 each. Austin used locally purchased items to develop a tester



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Elisabeth A. Matulewicz

Master Sgt. David R. Austin and his External Fuel System Replacement Tester.

that could perform all of the required functions and be made locally with a unit cost of just over \$1,600. He cut the time to field the tester from more than two years to only six months," said Orbinati.

Austin also wrote the applicable technical data to test the A-10's fuel system. While troubleshooting an A-10 fuel cell problem, field engineers from the Ogden Air Logistics Center examined the tester and took its plans back to Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

They told Austin to submit an AFTO Form 22, Technical Manual Change Recommendation, for its use. Earlier this year, they authorized the tester's use and incorporated it in the latest technical data.

Another Austin suggestion, an external fuel tank certifier, has been approved by state and Guard Bureau officials and is being evaluated for use on multiple airframes.

Newsmakers

14,000th butter bar

The Academy of Military Science at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn., reached a milestone Feb. 22 when it commissioned its 14,000th second lieutenant. 2nd Lt. Casey Vetter will serve as an aircraft maintenance officer for the 122nd Fighter Wing at Fort Wayne, Ind. The academy trains and commissions second lieutenants for service in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve and is one of four commissioning programs in the Air Force.



Five deployments and counting

Sgt. Brian Gallagher recently finished his fifth deployment to the Middle East to support combat operations. He was a machinist in the 181st Infantry, 26th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad's International Zone supporting personnel security missions. A 23-year veteran with the Massachusetts Army Guard, Gallagher first deployed to Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.



Frequent flyer hours

Master Sgt. Steve Pargan, a loadmaster with Maryland's 135th Airlift Squadron, reached a milestone few fliers ever achieve: more than 12,500 hours of military flight time. Pargan reached it during a local proficiency flight Jan. 9. He was awarded the patch worn on his flight suit Feb. 9, his 25th anniversary of joining the Maryland Air National Guard. During those years, he has flown the C-130B, E and J model aircraft at Warfield Air National Guard Base.



Eagle eye award

Florida Guard Pvt. Justin Gromer was presented an "Eagle Eye Award," an Army Commendation Medal, in Tikrit, Iraq, after he spotted unexploded ordnance during a security check of his base. After further investigation by an explosives ordnance disposal team, the UXO turned out to be two 54 mm mortar rockets.

Scholarship winner

Illinois Staff Sgt. Tyler Heleine of the 1544th Transportation Company recently won a four-year scholarship to Grantham University sponsored by GX (Guard Experience) Magazine. He completed a 1,000 word essay explaining why he deserved the scholarship. "It was easy for me because I know what my goals are and why I want to get an education," he said. Heleine is the first person in his family to strive for a college education.

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Guard boxers shape their futures during National championships

By Staff Sgt. Rebecca Doucette
National Guard Bureau

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – Even though this year’s U.S. Olympic boxing team has been selected for Beijing, other athletes already have set their sights for London in 2012.

National Guard Sgts. Cherrie Retamozzo from New York and John Franklin from Missouri competed in USA Boxing’s U.S. Future Stars National Championships during the second week in March as part of their personal journeys toward the next Summer Olympics. They were on the All-Army boxing team and they fought the best civilian boxers from around the country with hopes of being ranked among the elite and gaining eligibility to compete internationally.

Retamozzo placed third in the women’s elite rankings. Franklin lost in his first bout 36-14 to defending national bantamweight champion Ronny Rios who went on to reclaim the title and elite ranking.

Retamozzo returned to the All-Army team after a two-year hiatus. During that time she left active duty, had a baby and won a women’s title at the Empire State Games in New York.

She competed in the women’s featherweight division at the nationals and outscored her first challenger, California’s Carmen Montes, 20-5 on the third night of competition. She advanced to the semifinals to face Alexandria Cardenas of San Angelo, Texas.

According to Retamozzo, after a win she allows herself to “go home and sleep,” but she uses a loss to learn and keep focused. She experienced both at the nationals.

The Texan gave Retamozzo a run for her money. Spurred on by loud cheers from her Army teammates, Retamozzo came back to tie the score twice in the fourth round.



Photo by Tim Hipps

New York Guard Sgt. Cherrie Retamozzo triumphs over Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Sonia Deputee during the 2008 Armed Forces Boxing Championships at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The judges were left to decide who would advance to the finals. The decision went to Cardenas.

Staff Sgt. Charles Leverette, the World Class Athlete Program assistant head coach, described Retamozzo as “the most disciplined boxer of this whole tournament. Word for word, she did exactly what we asked her to do. We got 100 percent out of her.”

Retamozzo is not part of WCAP because women’s boxing is not an Olympic sport. But Leverette’s observations were welcome words of encouragement.

Cardenas won the championship which left Retamozzo third in the women’s elite rankings. That should allow her to compete in the Pan American Games and The World Games later this year.

“I would like to one day, God willing, and it’s allowed for women, become a World Class Athlete Program member [at Fort Carson, Colo.],” Retamozzo said.

Franklin, a WCAP veteran, made it to the semifinals in last year’s U.S. championships. He’s a national Golden Gloves bronze medalist and most recently won silver at the 2007 World Military Games in Hyderabad, India. Franklin can also claim four straight All-Army and Armed Forces championships.

This U.S. championships marked his first tournament in the bantamweight class. Referring to his move up in weight, Franklin said, “You get some strong guys down there, but it’s more about speed. [In bantamweight] the guys are a little bit stronger ‘cause they come down from a higher weight. They

might walk around at 130, 132 pounds and drop weight, so it’s just a difference of a little bit of power.”

Despite his tournament-ending loss, Franklin kept his perspective. “Moving up from a different weight class is like starting all over again. ... You have to prove yourself all over again. ... I knew that, so I wanted to be strong against [Rios], and I had him hurt a couple of times. I wasn’t able to capitalize on it like I wanted to, but I think now he knows that I’m one of the guys he’s going to have to respect if he ever meets me again.”

Franklin is the only full-time Guard Soldier on the All-Army team. “You can accomplish your dream, whether you join the Army, whether you join any service, but the National Guard has helped me so much in this process,” he said. “Just keep supporting me and you guys will have a champion here pretty soon.”

Leverette spoke highly of Franklin. “He leads from the front. A lot of the guys respect him because of his past accomplishments. When you have somebody with that strong character and that leadership trait, it makes my job easier.”

As returning members of the All-Army team, Franklin and Retamozzo are regarded as leaders for the younger Soldiers who try out every January. “They’re great veterans, great leaders,” said Leverette of the Guard boxers. “They bring both sides of the table, which makes us good and diverse. They understand the civilian side and they understand the military side. For a lot of our guys, the Army’s all they’ve ever done, so [the Guard boxers] give them guidance and feedback.”

“If you’re out there and you want to box and you’re in the Guard, come see me,” Leverette concluded. “Look me up on AKO, Staff Sgt. Charles Leverette. Send me an e-mail. We’ll see what we can do. We’re looking for all the athletes we can find.”

Tennessee Soldier completes nine days of Alaska’s grueling Iditarod

ARLINGTON, Va. – A National Guard Soldier made it through nine days of one of the world’s most challenging sports events, Alaska’s Iditarod, before dropping out of this year’s race March 9.

Seven teams had scratched from the 1,159-mile dog sled race from Anchorage to Nome by March 7, but Tennessee Army National Guard Master Sgt. Rod Whaley was still going, running 87th in a remaining field of 89 sleds after 401 miles. His average speed was 3.22 mph, Iditarod officials reported.

“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.”

But on March 9 the 56-year-old Whaley, who is the first Tennessean to enter “The World’s Last Great Race,” became one of 11 teams to leave the race, ending his try at the Cripple checkpoint, nine days, 12 checkpoints and 503 miles into the race. His average speed had slowed to 2.53 mph.

Whaley set out March 1 with 16 sled dogs. Mushers are on the trail from 10-17 days, accompanied only by their dogs as they battle the fierce elements along the dangerous route. When he scratched, Whaley was down to 13 dogs.

Whaley lived in Alaska as a child, according to Iditarod officials, competing in junior races in the 1960s and keeping a lifelong passion for dogsled racing.

Using skills honed in a 24-year Army National Guard career

and with the help of Army National Guard sponsorship, Whaley ran the 2008 Iditarod after six years of preparation that began with training in 2002 at Nakitsilik Outdoor Adventures in British Columbia, Canada.

Further training included stints at the Howling Dog Farm in Willow, Alaska, and with Al Hardman in northern Michigan.

Whaley lives in Franklin, Tenn., with his wife, Vicki. He has



Tennessee National Guard photo

Tennessee Army National Guard Master Sgt. Rod Whaley and his team of sled dogs.

two grown children and holds a master’s degree from Middle Tennessee State University. Among other community activities beyond his National Guard service and family commitments, he’s a high school football official for a quarter-century.

Whaley is one of only 102 people in the world to qualify for this year’s Iditarod. Fifty-two racers came from Alaska, 14 from other states and 16 from foreign countries.

The course crosses frozen rivers, jagged mountain ranges, dense forests, desolate tundra and miles of windswept coast. Temperatures fall far below zero, winds can cause a complete loss of visibility and mushers face long hours of darkness and treacherous climbs.

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 dog sled. Heroes were made and legends were born.

In 1925, part of the trail became a 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 particularly proud.

For current information about Master Sgt. Whaley and the Iditarod, go to <http://tndogmusher.com> or www.iditarod.com.

–Compiled from staff reports

What parascuemen and combat controllers did during the nation's worst domestic crisis

By David P. Anderson
National Guard Bureau

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Air National Guard rescue and special tactics units employed the skills they would use on the battlefield to rescue residents of New Orleans stranded by floodwaters. These pararescuemen and combat controllers were part of the largest military response to a domestic crisis in U.S. history.

As many as 45 Air Guard pararescuemen and combat controllers from Kentucky's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, Oregon's 125th Special Tactics Squadron, New York's 106th Rescue Wing, California's 129th Rescue Wing and Alaska's 210th Rescue Squadron traveled to Naval Air Station New Orleans to conduct ground rescue operations. Along with their highly-specialized skills and talents, they brought rubber Zodiac boats, radio equipment and medical supplies.

The Air Guard's participation in the Katrina rescue effort resulted in 1,282 victims rescued on the ground by Air Guard pararescuemen and an additional 161 by Air Guard rescue helicopters. Air Guard combat controllers evacuated 11,927 people and controlled 3,249 helicopter sorties.

The 123rd STS was the first unit to arrive Aug. 31, setting up an ad hoc command post in an abandoned hangar. There were no rescue operations underway and no coordination between civilian and military agencies for search and rescue efforts. This absence placed the burden of a comprehensive rescue plan on the members of the 123rd. With a map of the city, they went to work.

While searching the flooded neighborhoods for victims, each of 14 rescue boat teams cautiously navigated the flooded streets, carefully avoiding hidden hazards such as submerged street signs. Air Guard crews soon earned residents' trust by treating minor injuries and distributing food and water. As the boat teams patrolled, they used loudspeakers to tell stranded residents that they were Air Force rescue personnel, often having to convince the residents to evacuate. One victim accidentally fell out of a rescue boat into the sewage-contaminated waters. Combat controller Senior Master Sgt. Thomas DeSchane immediately jumped in after her, rescuing her again.

Crews worked 14-hour days in hazardous conditions. For over a week, these pararescuemen waded through contaminated water to reach stranded victims. Because of their near-constant contact with the water, several of them developed skin rashes and respiratory rashes, or received fuel burns. None of them suffered long-term health problems.

Take a number

Air Guard combat controllers from the 123rd and the 125th STSs played crucial roles in the rescue effort. Being certified by the Federal Aviation Administration, they directed helicopters working with the Zodiac crews to the few highway overpasses and

cloverleaves that were not underwater and which served as makeshift helicopter landing sites. To make these landing zones safe, the combat controllers sawed down light and telephone poles so the helicopter rotor blades would not hit them.

In order to communicate with arriving helicopters, combat controllers spray painted their radio frequency in bold numbers on the landing zone. They also managed the crowds of victims awaiting evacuation. The sheer numbers and limited space for people to wait forced the controllers to devise an evacuation process similar to that used by restaurants. When a family checked in, a

combat controller wrote down their names and the number in their party. Evacuees were then directed to sit away from the landing zone and wait for their number to be called.

During the first three days, combat controllers landed helicopters every 50 seconds. According to Chief Master Sgt. Jonathan Rosa of the 123rd STS, the landing zones "became the busiest airports on the face of the earth" and controllers "received three helicopters a minute for five hours straight, averaging 10 survivors per helicopter."

Rescued from above

In Jackson, Miss., rescue crews from the



Air National Guard History Office photo

Combat controllers work at a makeshift landing zone evacuating victims of Katrina.

GUARD FACTS

The National Guard's response to Hurricane Katrina:

- 50,000-plus Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen deployed to stricken area
- 17,000-plus people rescued
- 70,000-plus people evacuated
- More than three times the number of Guardmembers deployed to any previous natural disaster
- More than three times the number of troops on the ground as all other services combined
- The largest and fastest disaster response in the Guard's history

106th RW and two of the wing's HH-60G helicopters went to work. Crews from the 106th did not have difficulty finding people needing rescue. Often, crews spotted stranded residents waving at the helicopter from rooftops. Other times, pararescuemen were lowered to rooftops by cable from a hovering helicopter. They then searched homes for victims through holes cut in the roof.

New York HH-60 pilot Maj. Kevin Fennel recalled bringing his helicopter in for a final approach to pick up one group when he noticed another group waving to be rescued. His crew loaded the first group, flew it to a transfer site and quickly returned to pick up the second group. This operations tempo continued for days, Fennel said.

Each rescue with a cable and winch required a pararescuemen to accompany each victim up to the helicopter. The pararescuemen made sure the evacuees did not slip out of the sling or injure themselves while entering the cabin. Once the victims were safely strapped in, the pararescuemen immediately provided first aid. Many of the survivors pulled in were drenched in a watery slime and clutching their only remaining possessions. Others were distraught at the thought of leaving behind family pets. Unwilling to increase the victims' trauma, pararescuemen often found room for the furry companions.

A number of residents were reluctant to leave their homes because of the fear of looters. Other residents refused rescue because their fear of flying was stronger than their fear of drowning. To the Air Guardsmen, it seemed that the hardships experienced by the residents of New Orleans culminated when they were rescued by helicopter and got their first glimpse of Katrina's destruction. While flying high above their flooded homes, their faces expressed shock at seeing the extent of the devastation.

This month in Guard history

April 7, 1712: HANCOCK'S FORT, N.C. — South Carolina's Col. John Barnwell, commanding a combined white militia and friendly Indian force numbering about 300 men, again besieges this main encampment of the hostile Tuscarora Indians. The Tuscaroras had launched a surprise attack in September 1711, killing about 130 colonists and prompting North Carolina to ask Virginia and South Carolina for help. Barnwell's army was composed mostly of South Carolina militia.

The family unit

Daughters follow father's lead at Indiana military police detachment

By **Spc. William E. Henry**
Indiana National Guard

It was a busy day for an Indiana Army National Guard family doing Soldier readiness processing at the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center Feb. 8.

The family members are part of the 384th Military Police Battalion located in Evansville, Ind.

Sgt. Kelly Yarde is a proud father of three daughters, Sps. Kelly and Shelly Yarde, 21 and identical twins, and stepdaughter Ashley McGinnis, 24, all of whom are in the same unit.

"We're in it for the long haul," said Sgt. Yarde. "We got the family plan. Most people get family plans with cell phones. We went with the National Guard."

All four Soldiers carry traditional status.



Photo by Spc. William E. Henry

The Yarde family from the 384th Military Police Battalion.

In civilian life, Kelly is a full-time mother taking care of her new son. Shelly is a pharmacy technician. Ashley works in retail. Sgt. Yarde has worked as an animal control officer for six years in Evansville.

Sgt. Yarde said he and his daughters get great support from his wife, Amanda. She is a volunteer for the family support group and her mother, Janie Kuntz, is the group's treasurer.

Sgt. Yarde said he enjoys the camaraderie most of all. "It's more respected by active-duty compo-

nents than what it was in the 1980s and '90s.

"People ask me, 'how can you let your daughters join the military?'" Sgt. Yarde said. "I just look at them and say, 'You know, if it wasn't for people like that, your sons or daughters might be drafted. It's something they want to do and I'm proud of them.'"

Meet the Adducchio family: 60-year tradition at Ohio base

By **Senior Airman Jennifer L. Anderson**
Ohio National Guard

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio - There's yet another member of the Adducchio family at the Springfield Air National Guard Base. Airman 1st Class Amy Adducchio, a 178th Fighter Wing public affairs specialist, joined her five brothers and an uncle there in December.

The six other family members at the base include Chief Master Sgt. David Adducchio, Staff Sgt. Dan Adducchio and Senior Airmen Eric and Tom Adducchio at the 178th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron; Tech. Sgt. Ben Adducchio at the 269th Combat Communications Squadron; and Tech. Sgt. Andrew Adducchio at the 178th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

A longstanding family tradition, college

benefits and a strong dedication to service are the key components that motivated each to enlist in the Air National Guard.

Since 1948, at least one member of the family has been serving at the Springfield base.

Master Sgt. Patsy Adducchio, grandfather to the six siblings currently at the base, began this tradition. Later, two of his sons and two of his daughters also joined.

"We are all inspired to serve the Department of

Defense because of our father," Tom said.

College benefits are another motivating factor.

"I can't believe how much money this unit is saving my brother Mark in college tuition," David said.

Eric agreed: "This is paying for my degree in engineering," he said.



Photo by Senior Airman Jennifer L. Anderson

The Adducchio family from the 178th Fighter Wing.

Family support volunteers honored

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

ARLINGTON, Va. - Department of Defense leaders recognized six National Guard and Reserve Family Readiness Groups (FRG) as the best in the nation at enhancing military readiness through family support for 2007.

They spotlighted the FRGs during a DoD Reserve Family Readiness Awards Ceremony Feb. 15 in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes. This year's winners included an Army National Guard unit from Wisconsin and an Air Guard unit from California.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall presented awards to Guard FRG representatives from the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, Wisconsin Army National Guard, and the 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard.

Defense officials said the awards recognize individual National Guard and Reserve units from each of the seven reserve components for having the best programs to support their families.

There are about 700 military family service centers across the nation, and 400 of them are based in the National Guard. Hall pointed out the important role these centers play in retention, among other things.

"If [servicemembers] cannot have the ability to continue with their families and also serve, then ... servicemen and women are not going to stay," Hall said.

Representatives from each of the units were present to receive their awards. Each received an engraved plaque, a signed Certificate of Appreciation and a \$1,000 check from the Military Officers Association of America.

Among the Guard's award winners were nine volunteers from the Milwaukee-based 121st Field Artillery.

The battalion recently returned from a deployment in Kuwait and Iraq. Its Soldiers - from five states and 30 units - escorted convoys throughout Iraq.

"We had a very demanding, dangerous mission," said Maj. Brian Wolhaupter, battalion commander. "On a daily basis, our Soldiers were out there in harm's way."

Wolhaupter said family readiness was critical to the mission's success.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone

Family covenant signed

Family members of New York Guard Soldiers gather at the Department of Military and Naval Affairs in Latham, N.Y., Feb. 22 as Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, adjutant general, signs the Army National Guard Family Covenant presented by the New York National Guard Family Readiness Program. The ceremony symbolized a recommitment of the state's military forces to support Army Guard families. Other states have signed or will sign similar covenants, including the Louisiana National Guard in March.

