



THE ON GUARD

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Linked

Capability reduces communication barriers between first responders

By Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – A National Guard capability can rapidly bridge communications gaps between first responders to domestic incidents, senior defense officials saw during a hands-on demonstration at the Pentagon.

The Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC) provides voice, data, video and radio links between first responders and other local, state and federal agencies, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale heard as they visited a JISCC set up outside the north entrance to the Pentagon July 25.

A JISCC team can have communications up and running within an hour of arriving at an incident scene, LTG H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, told the defense

*JISCC continued on:
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New Mexico flood victims look to the skies for help

By Staff Sgt. Anna Doo
New Mexico National Guard

SANTA FE, N.M. – New Mexico Army National Guard aviators put their hoist training to the test not once, not twice, but 57 times on July 27 after Tropical Depression Dolly caused flooding in the high desert of Ruidoso, N.M.

By the end of the mission, the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crews had picked up more than 250 residents and vacationers. This feat set a state record for the number of victims rescued in just two days.

“[The Blackhawk] kind of looked like Noah’s Ark in the back,” said Staff Sgt. Ian Weiger.

When asked if there is a precedent for a rescue of this magnitude, Capt. Daniel Purcell

*LOOK TO SKIES continued on:
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Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

Spc. Richard Codd of the Security Small-Arms Readiness Group at Camp Atterbury, Ind., low-crawls under wire while competing in the 2008 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition Aug. 9 at Fort Benning, Ga.

Army Guard names top Soldier, NCO

By Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy
National Guard Bureau

SAVANNAH, Ga. – Soldiers from Utah and Montana were named the Army National Guard’s top Soldier and noncommissioned officer of the year Aug. 14 at the “Best Warrior” competition at Fort Benning, Ga.

After two grueling days with little sleep and events designed to stress the candidates physically and mentally, the winners were:

Soldier of the Year: Spc. Jeremy Whipple of Utah’s E Company, 1st Attack Helicopter Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment.

NCO of the Year: Staff Sgt. Michael Noyce-Merino from Montana’s B Troop, 1st Squadron, 163rd Cavalry Regiment.

Thirteen competed Aug. 11-13 for the right to be called the two best Soldiers among the Army Guard’s more than 323,000 enlisted and to advance to the Army’s competition for top Soldier and NCO in October at Fort Lee, Va.

Runner-up for Soldier of the Year was Connecticut’s Spc. Joel Cadett; Florida’s Sgt. Douglas Bishop was the runner-up NCO.

The winners and runners-up were announced during the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States’

37th annual conference.

“There were some phenomenal Soldiers in this competition,” said Whipple. “I had even read some articles about [the other competitors] before I began. I knew the competition was going to be tough. I knew I was going to give it my best effort, but, quite honestly, I expected not to win.”

“I’m shocked,” Noyce-Merino said. “I never thought six months ago before I started all of this that this would ever happen in my career, so it’s a bit overwhelming. Now, of course, the challenge is going to be the next level.”

“When you get done with this competition, you can stand up to anybody at any time and you’ll have that confidence level because you’ll know you have done something that very few people can say they have done or ever will do,” Army Guard Command Sgt. Maj. John Gipe told the competitors before the events began.

In order to make it to this point, competitors had already competed at the unit, major command, state and regional levels. All 13 had won regional Soldier and NCO competitions.

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

Spc. Jeremy Whipple, left, and Staff Sgt. Michael Noyce-Merino were the winners of Soldier and NCO of the Year in the 2008 Army Guard Best Warrior Competition.



Annual training wrap-up: Page 13



It's curtains for Number 8

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

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

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ARLINGTON, Va. – I should have written this a year ago because I knew exactly what I wanted to say. I was merely contemplating retirement then, knowing that 12 whole months stood between me and an uncertain future called life after 60. Now, all too quickly, the year has passed and the time has come to say good-bye. And I am not quite as sure how to do it as I was last year.

But, trust me, I'll think of something for my final Page 2.

I've been fortunate indeed that LTG H Steven Blum, whose capacity as chief of the National Guard Bureau makes him this newspaper's publisher, and the public affairs powers that be have let me occupy this space most months since December 2005. I realize that many people in our profession don't have access to this kind of a forum for that long.

The truth about starting something like this is that, sooner or later, you have to finish it. So I'm going to finish by telling you a little about how I got started in this business of soldiering and then what I really think of you.

It occurred to me a few years ago that 8 is my lucky number. The Chinese believe that good things are associated with the number 8, but it took awhile for me to affiliate that number with my good fortune.

I was Number 8 in the 1969 draft lottery, which was considered a crap shoot for an all-expense paid trip to Vietnam. My birth date, Sept. 7, was the eighth number drawn at Selective Service



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor

headquarters in Washington on Dec. 1. I was going to be drafted half an hour after leaving the University of Maine.

That was not in my plans for a lot of reasons, getting married being one of them. Neither was splitting for Canada. So I joined the Maine Army National Guard in March 1971 and then steered myself to begin basic training in August, ironically the eighth month.

Little did I know that would be my threshold to a great American adventure. I might never have crossed that threshold had my lottery number been 208 or 308.

I won't bore you with a lot of the details. But I will tell you that I would not have seen Germany at least a dozen times, or Italy or Panama or Eastern Europe or the Philippines, or Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Iraq or Afghanistan had I not remained in the National Guard for more than 35 years. I've flown in a two-seat F-16, and I've landed on an aircraft carrier. I've covered two Olympics. I've ridden into the night to within five miles of Iran. Ironically, the last

country that I visited for a significant amount of time was Israel, the first country that I ever wanted to go to.

I've written stories about corporals, captains, colonels, chaplains and congressmen.

The Guard has grown up over the last 37 years, and it has been my privilege to write or oversee the coverage of a lot of the stories about the progress and the growing pains – especially much that we have accomplished during these seven years since 9/11.

It has also been my privilege for nearly three years to supervise a Command Information team of reporters, photographers, broadcasters and editors who have dedicated themselves to chronicling the Army and Air National Guard as capably as any news team in this country. They never cease to amaze me with their knowledge about information and computer technology. I'm the office dinosaur who still longs for my typewriter.

That's enough about me. I have worn an Army uniform for a long time and an Air Force uniform for a year. I have served as a senior NCO. But I have always been a reporter at heart. So, truth to be told, I have gotten my greatest satisfaction by telling as many people as I could about the dangerous and wonderful things that so many of you have done. You are my heroes.

Some people I'll never forget: ⇒ Two Guard Soldiers in New Orleans who remained on duty for long days and nights after Hurricane Katrina had flooded their families out of their homes.

⇒ A young Soldier in Alabama who waded into waist-deep flood waters to carry a little girl to the

safety of an Army truck after another hurricane, wondering if the rumors about an alligator swimming around the neighborhood were true.

⇒ A warrant officer who ignored lightning bolts dancing around his Blackhawk while scooping up Bambi buckets of water to try to save a family's home from a Florida wildfire.

⇒ A lieutenant whose maturity exceeded his years while his platoon, including two Bradley Fighting Vehicles, searched an Iraqi village for a reported weapons cache. He kept his cool while dealing with the villagers in the middle of the night. He was 23.

⇒ An exhausted Air Guard surgeon who refused to give up on a severely wounded Marine who grabbed him with a bloody hand and murmured "Doc, I ain't dead yet."

⇒ The Guard Soldiers who trained to the limits of their endurance so they could earn gold and bronze medals for this country in bobsled-ding during the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah.

These are some of America's heroes whom I have met and who have trusted me to tell their stories during these past 37 years.

I really don't know where my life's path would have led me had my draft lottery number been significantly higher than 8 in 1969; had I not joined the Guard in 1971; had I not come to the National Guard Bureau in 1996.

But I do know this. Nothing that I could have done would have given me any more satisfaction. It has been a privilege to work and serve with my National Guard family. It's been a great ride. Thanks for the memories.



The On Guard is going online

The National Guard Bureau's monthly newspaper will become a quarterly magazine that will be distributed electronically to every member of the National Guard beginning in 2009.

While the September 2008 edition will be the final printed version, many of the regular features, stories and photos will also continue to be posted on the National Guard Bureau's home page at www.ngb.army.mil.

On the Web site, users will be able to sign up for a new, automatic e-mail function that will immediately send to them any National Guard news posted to the site. This will also allow anyone interested to receive the new magazine in the same manner.

The changes were announced in August

by Jack Harrison, director of the National Guard Bureau's Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications.

"Our goal is to reach much more of our audience and provide the most timely, accurate and interesting news and information to National Guard members and their families, retirees and civilian employers," Harrison said. "It is time to move The On Guard into the 21st century."

The On Guard has been published as a monthly newspaper by the National Guard Bureau's Public Affairs staff for about a quarter of a century, and has been distributed to about 60,000 people each month.

"The new magazine will reach virtually every member of the National Guard and

anyone else who signs up to receive our products through e-mail," said Harrison. "We are very excited about these possibilities."

The new quarterly electronic magazine and the automatic e-mail feature will provide a more in-depth look at news and offer features and other ways to allow readers to explore issues that are important to them almost daily, he added.

Using the modern technology will save the taxpayers about \$500,000 in printing and mailing costs each year, Harrison explained.

The quarterly editions of the new magazine will be published and distributed electronically every January, April, July and October through www.ngb.army.mil.

Training center marks 40 years

At least 44,000 have graduated from ANG's center in Tennessee

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air National Guard celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Training and Education Center (TEC) at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base, Tenn., July 30-31 with several events that honored the installation where men and women earn officer commissions and Airmen learn to be NCOs.

The celebrations, attended by Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, Air Guard director, and the first faculty members of what is now called the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center, included a State's Night July 30 and a morning ceremony July 31 with a parade of academy students.

In July 1968, the TEC's first faculty and students started the Air Guard's six-week NCO Academy (NCOA) in a gymnasium at McGhee Tyson. The school expanded rapidly and added NCO Leadership School – precursor to today's Airman Leadership School (ALS) – in 1970 and an officer preparatory academy. The NCO school was the first of its kind to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for credit toward an associate degree. The preparatory academy, today's Academy of Military Science (AMS), became the Air Force's fourth commissioning center in 1971.

Significantly, AMS was the first Air Force commissioning school to fully integrate male and female students into the same flights.

"Today it's referred to as the 'crown jewel' of the Air National Guard," said retired Air Force Col. Edmund Morrissey, commandant of the first NCOA class and the center's first commander.

Today, the center runs an average of 18 professional military education courses throughout the year. Its flagship schools are the Academy of Military Science, the NCO Academy, which is one of the nation's largest, and the Airman Leadership School, which accounts for nearly 80 percent of all Air Guard ALS students. In addition, the center holds more than 20 skills enhancement classes in subjects ranging from explosives ordnance disposal to services, recruiting, retention and management.

At least 44,000 students have graduated from the center's programs. Forty-three academy graduates have become general officers, and at least two serve today as state adjutants general: Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Kansas, and Maj. Gen. Cindy Kirkland, Nevada. The late Dean Martin Jr., son of the famed entertainer, was also commissioned

there before becoming a California Air Guard fighter pilot.

"They all made it what it is today," said Morrissey of the Airmen who have walked the center's hallways. "Those who attended here made possible today's image of the Air National Guard."

Officials said the center's academies and schools, which served as models for other service components, are the products of the Air Guard's "flexible" senior leaders and the staff's "innovative" thinking. Morrissey agreed and said the faculty started with an attitude that they would be second to none.

"We were given the latitude to take the minimum Air Force curriculum specified and add the Air Guard flavor to it, and we were off and running," said Morrissey who visits the center often.

More Guard news at www.ngb.army.mil



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brett R. Ewald

Minnesota Senior Airman Alexandra Olson (left), Capt. Anthony Valetine and Staff Sgt. Daisha McCuskey perform a simulated IV.

Air Guard medics board Navy ship for Continuing Promise

By Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Eight Air National Guard medical technicians boarded the USS Kearsarge in Norfolk, Va., Friday to participate in the second phase of Continuing Promise 2008, a four-month humanitarian and civic assistance mission to six Caribbean islands.

During the deployment, the Kearsarge, a Navy amphibious ship, will visit Nicaragua, Colombia, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

Master Sgt. Cassandra McNeal of the 177th Fighter Wing, Atlantic City, N.J. is a lab technician at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, N.J., and said she has been deployed twice before to Iraq.

But she has never been on a Navy ship. "It will be a good opportunity just to work alongside different military organizations ... to try to make a difference in people's lives," she said.

About 80 Air Force personnel have volunteered for this mission. McNeal said that in Balad, once everyone was placed in their different departments, "everyone pretty much blended, worked as a team. The same thing will happen once we are on board."

McNeal said she expects the work to be steady. "It will be a little challenging on shore in the communities, because that will entail painting buildings and doing clean-up work."

But the hardest part of the mission will be adjusting to the ship. Although she has been on several cruises, "not being on land for a length of time going from port to port" will be a challenge, McNeal said. But once they are in port, "being docked for two weeks is not so bad."

"I am really hoping to help the native people ... to make an impact and difference in their lives," she said.

The first phase of Continuing Promise ended in June. Personnel aboard USS Boxer saw more than 14,000 patients, performed 127 surgeries, dispensed 40,000 medications and saw nearly 4,000 optometry patients, distributing about 3,500 pairs of eyeglasses, according to U.S. Southern Command.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Kendra Owenby

ANG director Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, left, Col. Michael L. Waggett, commander of the ANG's I.G. Brown Training and Education Center, and Chief Master Sgt. Deborah Davidson, TEC's enlisted education commandant, watch a pass and review July 31.

States support air show in Wisconsin

By Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Hackley
National Guard Bureau

OSHKOSH, Wis. – National Guard personnel and aircraft from Wisconsin, Iowa and Mississippi supported the world's largest experimental aircraft show here July 28 to Aug. 3.

An Air National Guard fighter, a refueling tanker, a reconnaissance plane and three Army Guard helicopters were among 12,000 aircraft flown in for the event.

"We look forward every year to participating in Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture," said Air Guard Col. Paul Russell, a Wisconsin counterdrug coordinator.

"The National Guard has supported this show since 1990."

There were about 60 Guard personnel on hand during the week-long event that last year attracted an estimated 560,000 people from around the world.

In addition to the aircraft static displays, the National Guard Bureau's Counterdrug Program and the Wisconsin Air Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center housed exhibits inside the Federal Pavilion to inform air show enthusiasts about their programs.

Air Guard Staff Sgt. Curtis Cooksey, assistant marketing manager for the National Guard Bureau Counterdrug Program, worked

at the counterdrug booth for a third straight year. According to Cooksey, it's important to reach as many people as possible about the dangers of drug use.

"I really enjoy talking to children as they pass through," he said. "I get to hear a lot about their experiences and how they try to make positive life choices."

Other Guardmembers agree.

Lt. Col. Steve Dunai, an RC-26B pilot, said it's important to show the public the positive impact the Guard has on society.

"It's not just telling children to go to school and work hard to get a good job, but showing them we have all done it successfully," Dunai said.

Hawaiian troops help search after B-52 crash near Guam

By Sgt. Jamieson Pond
Hawaii National Guard

GUAM – While participating in Operation Green Harvest in Guam in July, Hawaii Army National Guard members were called to help in a search and rescue mission for a downed Air Force B-52H Stratofortress that crashed about 30 nautical miles off the northwest coast of Guam.

The B-52 was enroute to perform a fly-over during the Liberation Day parade, which

celebrates Guam's liberation from Japan in 1944.

Hawaii Army Guard pilots worked in conjunction with the Coast Guard, Navy and other local law enforcement agencies during the search and rescue. Maj. Stanley T. Garcia, operations officer-in-charge for Operation Green Harvest, and Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Hebert took part in the operation. Hebert was assigned as the chief hoist operator and spotter on the McDonnell Douglas 902 helicopter and Garcia navigated.

"It was my responsibility to navigate us into a grid pattern to form a search and rescue for the downed aircraft in the hopes of locating the flight crew," he said.

Garcia and Hebert were given 10 to 15 minutes notice and worked almost three hours, covering several hundred square miles in the helicopter.

All six crewmembers aboard the B-52 were killed. The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

More Guard news at www.ngb.army.mil

If you're in the area...

Nashville country music recording artist Laura Bryna, the new voice of Air National Guard advertising,



will appear at the Eastern States Exposition, known as "The Big E" in Springfield, Mass., Sept. 18 to showcase her new "Hometown Heroes" music video.

Guarding America

Alabama

Members of the Yellowhammer State Guard took part in the dedication ceremony of the new Alabama National Cemetery July 13. It is located adjacent to the American Village in Montevallo. A firing squad from the Guard's Funeral Honors Program fired a three-volley salute at the end of the program. William Tuerk, undersecretary for memorial affairs for the Department of Veterans Affairs, was the keynote speaker and said the new cemetery has been called the "Arlington of the South."

Alaska

Col. Charles E. "Chuck" Foster, a former rescue helicopter pilot and former vice commander of the Last Frontier State's 176th Wing, assumed command of the wing at a change-of-command ceremony July 13. Foster received the wing's command flag from Brig. Gen. Tony Hart, who has served as commander since January 2005. Hart will retire in September after 26 years of service.

Delaware

A C-130 Hercules transport aircraft from the First State's 142nd Airlift Squadron, part of the 166th Airlift Wing, broke the 10,000 flying hours barrier in June during a training proficiency flight. This was a new milestone for C-130H's flown by the unit for the last 23 years. The aircraft has seen combat duty in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm and from 2003 until now in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Hawaii

Representatives from the Department of Defense and the National Guard Bureau visited the Aloha state in August to hear what their Guard troops had to say about the DoD's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Policy that was implemented four years ago. The SAPR Policy Assistance Team (PAT) was comprised of Col. Jane Helton, SAPRO division chief, Bette Stebbins, Office of Secretary of Defense senior victim care advisor, and Jane Lux, SAPRO deputy. The PAT spoke with Guardmembers about the usefulness of the preventive and response programs and how effective the training has been.

Illinois

A deployment ceremony honoring about 70 Soldiers of the Prairie State's Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry was held at the Aurora East High School Aug. 16. The Soldiers are deploying to Afghanistan as part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and will form Police Mentor Teams that will train and mentor the Afghan National Police. The teams will also conduct patrols and security missions alongside the Afghan National Police.

Louisiana

The Pelican State hosted a ceremony for its new state-of-the-art readiness center in Covington July 30. The center will be home to the 1021st Engineer Company and Detachment 1, 843rd Engineer Company. Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness directors, state lawmakers, city and parish leaders and appropriate military personnel attended.

Maryland

More than 125 Soldiers of the Free State's Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment were acknowledged for their service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom during a Freedom Salute Aug. 10. The Soldiers deployed to Iraq in September 2007 and returned in April.

Michigan

The Defense Readiness Reporting System premiered at Camp Grayling in the Great Lakes state July 17 using the 51st Civil Support Team's Mobile Unified Command Suite. While staged at Camp Grayling, a team of defense readiness specialists from the National Guard Bureau working with the state's Joint Force Headquarters, accessed the Web-based classified readiness system and successfully integrated the JFHQ's joint operational readiness data into the global readiness database.

Minnesota

More than 700 Soldiers from the St. Paul-based 34th Combat Aviation Brigade deployed to Iraq in August. The 34th is the command element of Task Force 34, which consists of 2,500 Soldiers, including Guard Soldiers from 11 states and an active-duty unit stationed in Germany. Task Force 34 will command, direct, maintain and operate UH-60 Blackhawk utility helicopters, CH-47 Chinook cargo helicopters and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters.

Missouri

Members of the Show Me State Army National Guard's Recruit Sustainment Program learned about camouflage, hand grenades and claymore mines at a monthly drill in August. The program prepares new recruits for basic training. Each month Soldiers drill with recruits who get a taste of what their newly-chosen military career will be like. The latest drill took place at Rosecrans Air Field and focused on camouflage techniques.

Montana

Over 150 participants from around the nation were in Helena in



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen

Take-down

New Jersey Army National Guard Pfc. Danilo Vargas, kneeling, subdues a "prisoner" after being sprayed with pepper spray during Detainee Operations Training at Camp McGregor located at Fort Bliss, Texas, July 31.

early August attending a quarterly meeting of all 55 National Guard Civil Support Teams. The event was an opportunity for all teams from every state, district and territory in the United States to meet, discuss and learn about current processes, new techniques and methods for assisting civilian authorities as well as new equipment.

New York

The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station hosted more than 200 employers for Bosses' Day Aug. 8, reaching out to civilian employers of Air Force Reservists and the Air Guard members stationed there. It was the first Associated Bosses' Day for Team Niagara. Airmen accompanied their bosses during military demonstrations to familiarize them with their duties and responsibilities. Employers flew on one of the base's C-130 aircraft during a local orientation flight.

North Carolina

The Tar Heel State's senior Army leadership joined with major community leaders Aug. 14 in affirming the community's commitment to support local Soldiers. Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory hosted Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve, and others as they signed a Community Covenant for Charlotte. The Community Covenant is an Army initiative bringing together citizens, employers and organizations to support their local Soldiers in the Guard, Army Reserve and the regular Army.

North Dakota

Three months after returning from a yearlong deployment to Iraq, 20 Soldiers from the Peace Garden State's 132nd Quartermaster Company were reunited at a Freedom Salute and Tribute ceremony held in their honor at the Grand Forks National Guard Armory Complex. The event also recognized the contributions and sacrifices by the Soldiers' families and employers during the mobilization. The 132nd mobilized May 1, 2007, and performed water purification operations in support of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq until April.

Ohio

The Buckeye State Guard's Joint Task Force 73 conducted an exercise Aug. 11-15 in Perrysburg Township to test its ability to support local and state civilian authorities during a Homeland Defense/Homeland Security event. The exercise was based on a scenario of a natural disaster striking the Toledo area and tested the task force's ability to command and control its units and its ability to alert, assemble, deploy and operate in support of civil authorities.

South Dakota

A closing ceremony took place July 30 at the De Nieuwe Grond Clinic in Wanica, Suriname, to commemorate the successful completion of all the engineering projects conducted by Mount Rushmore State Army Guard Soldiers. The De Nieuwe Grond Clinic was just one of six engineering projects completed by 210 Soldiers of the 155th Engineer Company and 153rd Engineer Battalion working the exercise Beyond the Horizon 2008.

Virginia

About 20 Old Dominion Army National Guard Soldiers from the Manassas-based Data Processing Unit mobilized for federal active duty Aug. 11 at Fort Belvoir. The Soldiers will deploy overseas as a Regional Computer Emergency Response Team providing network security support in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pilot's fitness program goes nationwide

By Tech. Sgt. Angela Walz
Arizona National Guard

TUCSON, Ariz. – One Arizona fighter pilot is no longer flying solo – at least not in her efforts to make the Air National Guard a fitter force.

Maj. Windy Hendrick, an F-16 instructor pilot at Arizona's 162nd Fighter Wing, developed the "9G Force Fitness" program locally, but it has drawn national recognition and will now be a pilot program for the National Guard Bureau.



Hendrick

Interest in the program piqued during a visit from Lt. Col. Edward Vaughan, an NGB safety officer. He saw its potential and ask Hendrick to brief it at NGB.

With Bureau approval, funding will provide enough training and Web site support for a six-month, 20-unit trial period involving 1,800 Guardmembers. They will learn successful behavior for total fitness through education and motivation via phase manuals, academics, log books and Web support.

The intent of the program isn't to replace the existing ANG fitness program, said Hendrick. The 9G Force Fitness program is an educational tool aimed at teaching healthy nutrition and exercise choices, as well as how to make lasting, positive behavioral changes. It was born out of the disappointment Hendrick experienced when she felt she was failing as a personal trainer in another program.

"I told them what to do everyday – and they did it willingly

The 9Gs of fitness

- 1G - Motivation and behavioral changes
- 2G - Basic nutrition
- 3G - Getting off the couch walking program
- 4G - Basic exercise
- 5G - Objectives and lessons learned
- 6G - Cardio resistance program
- 7G - Advanced nutrition
- 8G - Advanced exercise
- 9G - Putting it all together

– but I didn't teach them what to do when I wasn't there. They didn't feel comfortable in the gym or making healthy nutrition choices. And that's how the 9G Force Fitness program was born," she said.

The success of Hendrick's inaugural class of 30 participants is apparent in the results: 299 pounds lost with an average of 5.3 percent body weight; 40 pounds lost of visceral fat – that which builds around the internal organs; 196 total waistline inches lost; and an average of 3.1 percent body fat reduced.

"I lost 5 percent body fat overall," said Staff Sgt. Virgil Mendivil, a personnelist here. He said the lifestyle changes and education have made the largest impacts. "My family eats



Photo by Capt. Gabe Johnson

Arizona Air Guard members in the first 9G Force Fitness class continue to apply what they learned.

healthier because of the things I learned in the program."

And family has always been the guiding light behind the program.

"Our children are our future, the future of the National Guard," Hendrick said. "We owe it to them and the future of our country to fight ... the epidemic that is attacking us on American soil [is] at our breakfast table! We need to commit today to do our part and the 9G Force Fitness program will help lead the way."



The Decade of Health is a 10-year strategic deployability and readiness marketing campaign supporting personal responsibility for health and wellness. It's targeted at Soldiers and their families to promote readiness and enhance strength management. The objectives are best reflected in the Decade of Health Campaign tag line, "Always Ready, Always there ... Always Healthy." Decade of Health's Web site, www.decadeofhealth.com, highlights the campaign's objectives and provides health and wellness information. This year's theme is geared to weight loss and is "Lighten Up!"



Fighting the good fight against a silent killer; the story of Maj. Warren Harvey

By Patrice Mauck-Messer
Army National Guard Decade of Health

He seemed to have it all: a great career, a pretty wife, bright, twin teenage boys, a three year old and two accomplished adult daughters. Slim, fit and broad-shouldered, he was 42 years old, but looked a decade and a half younger. But it was an illusion because he was harboring a silent killer: high blood pressure.

This is the story of Maj. Warren Harvey, a Soldier in the Army National Guard. He was a seemingly healthy man until he went for a routine dental exam in November 2005. He was preparing to deploy to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. On that day, his life and all his plans changed. The exam showed that he had dangerously high blood pressure: 190 over 110. It was too high for deployment, even too high for dental treatment. The hygienist instructed him to see his physician immediately. He was at high risk for having a stroke at any moment.

Harvey grew up in Little Rock, Ark., in a medical family. His father was a physician's assistant and his mother a nurse. He went to college at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and then on to Baptist Medical System in North Little Rock, becoming a



Harvey

surgical scrub technician. Warren joined the Army National Guard in March 1989, becoming an infantry officer.

When Harvey received his life-threatening diagnosis, his wife Sharon, swung into action. Married four and a half years, Sharon changed her family's eating habits.

Sharon marched into the Ft. Belvoir, Va., commissary with her mind made up to eliminate as much sugar, salt, and processed foods from her family's diet as possible. She became a devout label reader and diligently searched health and wellness Web sites. Fried foods, a family favorite, were virtually eliminated from their diet. The deep fryer was consigned to the garbage, and shrimp tempura along with chicken nuggets became beloved staples of the past. Fresh fruit at every meal replaced sugary desserts.

Sharon now plans meals with lots of fresh vegetables and skinless grilled chicken. She still makes the occasional lasagna, but now the ingredients include very lean meat and part skim milk mozzarella and ricotta cheeses. And she still makes stuffing, but doesn't use butter. She instead stirs in the broth left over from cooking the chicken. All canned soups and bouillon have been jettisoned due to the exorbitantly high sodium content. She opts instead to make her own fresh vegetable soups.

Harvey's lifestyle and daily routines have changed dramatically also. A typical day begins at 4:30 a.m. when the alarm goes off and he swallows a small cup of pills prepared the night before and left on his night stand: blood pressure medication,

a blood thinner, an allergy pill and a multi-vitamin. Breakfast consists of orange juice and sometimes oatmeal with raisins. He commutes from the family home in Ft. Belvoir to the National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington every morning, arriving at approximately 5:30 am. Warren begins his day at the gym where his workout regimen includes 2 ½ miles on the treadmill, pushups, sit-ups and core body exercises. By 7 a.m., he's at his desk, working at his job as an Army National Guard operations assignment officer. At noon, he eats a lunch chosen and packed by his wife: typically leftover chicken, golden potatoes, grilled asparagus, a bag of celery, bottled water, sparkling water or juice and watermelon. Sharon makes every effort to keep the salt content of his meals as low as possible.



Read Harvey's entire story and get nutrition tools—including recipes, ways of coping with stress and other health-related information at:
WWW.DECADEOFHEALTH.COM

From page 1: JISCC

department leaders.

The Bureau's Communications Directorate fielded 72 JISCC systems to 54 states and territories, the District of Columbia, the National Guard's Joint Communication, Command, Control and Computer Coordination Center in Smyrna, Del., and other locations between October 2004 and June 2008.

The JISCC is one piece of the answer to the problem of responders from different agencies being unable to talk on incompatible communications systems in the wake of a crisis, NGB officials explained.

After-action reports from natural and manmade disasters have highlighted the need for communications barriers to be erased as fast as possible after an incident.

The JISCC continues to expand. Among other enhancements planned for the 2009 fiscal year:

- The NGB is scheduled to field 10 modules that provide secret-level communications. Currently, the JISCC supports non-secure exchanges.

- Ten modules are scheduled to be fielded that expand unclassified communications from up to 24 users on the system to as many as 80.

The JISCC is designed to support homeland defense and civil support mission requirements, NGB officials said.

First Lt. Michael Malloy, of the Joint C4 Coordination Center, and other Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen walked the defense



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

1st Lt. Michael Malloy, left, briefs Paul McHale, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense; LTG H Steven Blum; and Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England at the Pentagon July 25 about the National Guard's Joint Incident Site Communications Capability.

leaders through a series of tents and trailers that are used to field the capability.

The JISCC allows someone on the SINGARS (Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System) typically used by the military to talk with a paramedic, police officer or sheriff's deputy using a completely different system or with first responders on other devices such as cell phones, Malloy

explained to England and McHale.

The JISCC is part of the Joint CONUS Communications Support Environment (JCCSE), an operational way of viewing jointly the Army and Air Guards' information technology structures, NGB officials said.

Among other capabilities, the JCCSE can link an incident site anywhere in the nation to state and national headquarters.

From page 1: TOP SOLDIERS

For many, going through that process was one thing that helped them prepare for the competition at Fort Benning.

"We had the regional competition a few months ago, and I got into really good shape for that," said Cadett. "So all you have to do is maintain it. It's basically all the same events."

Events

Those events included performing a functions check on an M-16A2 rifle, calling for artillery fire, placing and recovering an M18A1 Claymore mine and evaluating and treating a casualty.

The competition also included events that were much more physically demanding. The competitors began by taking a modified Army Physical Fitness Test. The pushups and sit-ups were the same, but a five-mile run replaced the traditional two-miler, and competitors then had to do pull-ups.

Later in the day, they all took part in a combat water survival test. They were required to swim in full uniform and with a weapon after jumping into the water blindfolded. The swimming event was new to some.

"There have been a lot of other events here so far that I've never done before, like the combat swim," said Bishop.

But for many, the most physically demanding event was the 12-mile road march while carrying a 35-pound rucksack over Fort Benning's hilly terrain.

"The toughest part – I didn't anticipate this – was the ruck march," said Wyoming's Spc. Eli Lilley. "I just anticipated stepping out, jogging in a few parts and pretty much just shutting off my mind and just ruck. But it actually took a lot of mental fortitude to get through it. Most other ruck marches I'm fine."

Preparation

For some, preparing was the most



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

Spc. Jeremy Whipple of Company E, 1st Attack Helicopter Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment passes the mile three point of the 12-mile road march of the 2008 Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition.

challenging part of the competition.

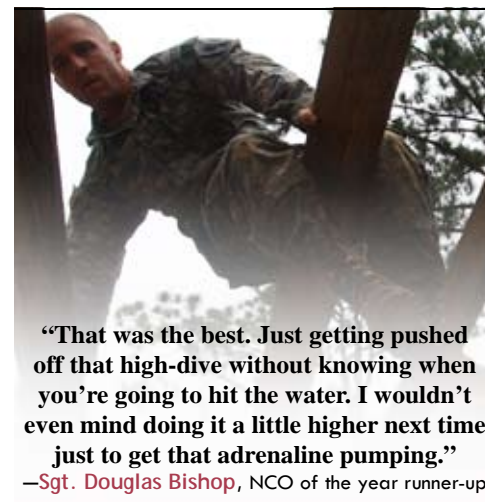
"The most challenging (thing) for me was that I'm a full-time student and I usually take 18-21 credit hours per semester," said Bishop, who attends the University of Florida. "So to balance that and still try and stay on top of this has been a bit of a headache sometimes."

And preparation is the key to success, said many of the competitors. For them, that preparation came in the form of running, ruck marches, additional PT and studying possible board questions. Many of the competitors praised their unit leaders for providing much of the assistance to get ready for the event.

"All around, when they say 'I am a warrior and a member of a team,' (from the Soldier's Creed), whoever wrote that wasn't kidding. This really was a team effort," said Lilley about the help he received to get ready.

Other Soldiers got help in other places.

"I spent a lot of time doing ruck marches and runs, typically with my dog," said Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Butler, a course manager at the 640th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) in Riverton, Utah. "He's a pit bull, but he requires a lot of exercise, so that was one way to get out and move a lot."



"That was the best. Just getting pushed off that high-dive without knowing when you're going to hit the water. I wouldn't even mind doing it a little higher next time just to get that adrenaline pumping."

—Sgt. Douglas Bishop, NCO of the year runner-up

After the events, many of the competitors felt positive about the experience, including the march.

"It's been a fantastic opportunity," said Bishop. "The biggest thing is to just soak up every minute of it. You can learn so much from not only the cadre, but from the senior enlisted people you meet throughout it."

More Guard news at www.ngb.army.mil

HEADS UP!

Mileage rate increases

In response to the mid-year rise in gasoline prices, the General Service Administration raised the temporary duty mileage rate from \$0.505 per mile to \$0.585. The increase applies to all uniformed personnel and civilian employees traveling on official business by privately owned automobile or motorcycle, effective Aug. 1.

www.gsa.gov

GTC change

All government travel charge cards issued by Bank of America (BOA) will expire Nov. 29. Citibank, the new vendor, is mailing out new cards Aug. 13 through Sept. 19. They will be sent to addresses on file with BOA, so cardholders must ensure their information is current. Those who do not receive a new card by Oct. 1 should contact their local agency program coordinator. The new cards will not be active until Nov. 30. Upon receiving the new card, cardholders need to verify receipt by following the instructions affixed to the card.

www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Sections/TCTrans.cfm

Home loan increase

The Veterans Administration Home Loan limit was recently increased for some geographic areas. The new VA Loan limit for loans requiring no down payment has been increased to \$729,750 for some locations within the continental U.S. and \$1,094,625 for Alaska, Guam, Hawaii and other overseas locales. This increase is only good through Dec. 31 and the law will be rescinded Jan. 1. The new limit does not include refinance loans.

www.homeloans.va.gov

Mental health tools

In an effort to focus on post-deployment problems and meet the mental and behavioral health needs of service-members, the Military Health System launched its new behavioral health Web site, afterdeployment.org (AD). The site's wide range of materials can be used anonymously. Self-assessments provide tailored feedback and recommendations. The site is expected to be fully functional by late September.

AD Project Office (253) 968-2492; afterdeployment.org.

Troops to Teachers

School districts around the country are desperate for the maturity experienced troops have gained through military service. Since 1994, the program has placed more than 11,000 former troops into public schools nationwide. To qualify for the program, candidates need a bachelor's degree and teacher certification that the Troops to Teachers program can help finance.

www.ed.gov/programs/troops/index.html

New York Guard teams with British soldiers to aid Afghans

UD KHEIL VILLAGE, KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – More than 1,000 residents of this village were treated by Afghan medical staff and received medicine, vitamins and personal items through a joint assistance operation conducted by New York Army Guard, Afghan and British soldiers Aug. 7.

The project is the latest in a growing partnership between the Afghan community and its closest neighbor – Camp Phoenix in Kabul, home to the New York National Guard's 27th Brigade Combat Team Headquarters and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, its coalition allies and area's Afghan national security forces.

The assistance mission was held at the girls' school, a construction project recently completed in the spring. That work is part of the Camp Phoenix outreach effort and support to the Afghan government and its people.

"We actually requested that Camp Phoenix

provide us medicines," said Haji Farid, the village elder and district representative through an interpreter. "That is why the people are happy that U.S. forces are doing this," he said.

"They have asked for our assistance and we have been able to provide it," said Cpt. John Shannon, project coordinator with Task Force Phoenix. "And, the reason we are able to provide it is because we have this great cooperation with the Afghan Army, the police, our British allies and of course our troops are out here doing a fantastic job as well."

On the morning of Aug. 7, a team of security force, medical and support staff left Camp Phoenix in an armored convoy and moved the short distance east to the village. The team was joined there by units of the Afghan National Army, Kabul Military District and Afghan National Police.

Afghan security personnel were already on check points as the team arrived. Providing

additional security were members of the 2nd Scottish Regiment, Royal Highland Fusiliers, British Army.

"We have worked with the U.S. before at the Ali Khail School, when I first got here in May," said Cpt. Lizzie Winchester, education and training service officer assigned to the 2nd Scots. Her Kabul patrol company conducted mounted surveillance around the site, while Task Force Phoenix security force personnel established an outer cordon. The inner cordon around and inside the school was run by Afghan personnel.

Winchester said her troops discovered a suspicious device along the road, which meant that plans were working. In addition, women soldiers from her command searched females coming to the event, while Afghan soldiers searched the men to ensure that no weapons or explosive devices would threaten the event.

"Our security measures are paying off for us today," said Shannon, who was quick to point out that Afghan units had leading roles. "We are just the outer piece and they are doing the real hard work of making sure that anyone who gets into the clinic to be seen, incidentally by Afghan doctors, are secure," he said.

"We go to the shuras (meetings) to talk to the elders about the health problems of the men, women and children of the community," said Lt. Col. Martin Scott, a nurse from the Camp Phoenix clinic. His team met later to plan and identify the right combination of medicine and supplies that will be needed. At the event, they mentored and supported the Afghan medical staff. "We allow them to take care of their people. We provide the medications and advice on prescribing and then dispensing them," he said.

"The primary thing we need built in our area is a clinic," said Farid, expressing gratitude that both a boys' and girls' schools have been built. His community has more than 4,500 homes with an estimated population of 25 to 30,000. "And now we're happy that the U.S. forces will build a clinic in the village for us, and they are already starting to work on it," he added.

-NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD



Photo by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning

New York Guard Capt. Joseph Merrill, commander of Security Force Delta, works with a translator to direct a father seeking medical attention for his son.



The PDHRA is one of many tools the National Guard is using to maintain and improve the health and general well-being of its members. Returning Guardmembers also have access to chaplains, family support, employment assistance, advocacy, counseling and training. Find out more at <http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo/>.

Q: I need medical attention now for my deployment-related health concerns. Do I need to wait for the PDHRA?

A: No, you should not wait for the PDHRA. In emergency cases, Soldiers should first call 911 for immediate medical care. In non-emergency cases, Soldiers should call the Veterans Affairs National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 to be referred to the nearest crisis center. The Soldier's chain of command will provide assistance as needed.

Q: What is PDHRA?

A: PDHRA is part of the force health protection program. It

is designed to enhance and extend the deployment-related continuum of care by providing education, screening, assessment and access to care for a wide range of questions and concerns you may have about your health after you return from deployment.

Q: Why does the Army National Guard need this program?

A: We have learned over the past few years that deployment health concerns may not be noticed immediately after deployment, when you completed the Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA). Furthermore, the Army recognizes that Soldiers focused on going home may be reluctant to report their concerns at demobilization, since going home is their top priority. Finally, readjustment issues may not emerge until a Soldier re-enters their work and family environment. After you have had time to reflect on your deployment and post-deployment experiences, you may be in a better posi-

tion to identify concerns, questions and issues you wish to discuss with a health care provider. PDHRA offers you an opportunity to do so.

Q: Who should complete the PDHRA?

A: All Soldiers who have returned from deployment to a combat zone since 9/11 will have the opportunity to participate in PDHRA. Ideally, Soldiers will complete the program three- to six-months after their PDHA, but individuals past this window are still eligible. However, if you feel you are in need of immediate medical advice or attention, you do not have to wait to complete the PDHRA in order to access care. Please contact your health care provider directly if any health care concerns arise at any time post-deployment.

Q: Is it a mandatory program?

A: The PDHRA is mandatory for all current Army National Guard Soldiers who have redeployed since March 10, 2005.

Air Guard Predator pilots increase combat air patrols

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Although they are some of the busiest pilots in the U.S. military, Air National Guard pilots who are now flying unmanned aircraft from the ground said they still climb into the cockpit and get some flight time whenever they can.

Lt. Col. Rick Gibney, squadron commander and MQ-1 Predator pilot for the North Dakota Air Guard's 178th Reconnaissance Squadron, said he and others who have switched from flying F-16 Fighting Falcons to piloting unmanned aircraft thousands of miles away are finding ways to get back into the wild blue yonder.

"There are a number of us who are private pilots who still get flying time in some way," said Gibney. He added that his squadron has full-time airline pilots who are also "fully engaged in the Predator mission."

But finding free time for anything now is not so easy, he said. Air National Guard Predator squadrons have more than doubled their combat air patrols (CAP) in Iraq and Afghanistan to support the war-fight. So much so that Gibney added himself to the aircrew's work schedule. That helps make it possible for his pilots to take leave, go flying or just relax.

Guard officials said the remotely piloted Predator with its full motion video is praised regularly by ground forces that are rounding up criminals in Iraq and Afghanistan. The turbo-prop aircraft's strength rests in its ability to fly for extended hours while watching over ground convoys and raids.

Since 2005, the Air Guard has stood up three Predator units in California, Arizona and North Dakota that maintain at least seven overseas CAPs around the clock. One additional squadron is standing up in Texas. New York is standing up the Guard's first MQ-9 Reaper squadron.

Air Guard CAPs are coordinated through the Air Force's 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada. The active-duty wing is the central hub for all MQ-1 and MQ-9 unmanned aircraft missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Initial plans called for one CAP per Air Guard squadron, Gibney said. But the success of the Predator in the war on terrorism brought demands for more patrols.

"We know that Predator is critical to the nation's defense," said Col. Robert Becklund, commander for the 119th Wing in Fargo, N.D., that oversees both the Predator squadron and a C-21 airlift squadron. He added that 50 percent of his Airmen have retrained for new specialties and missions since 2005. More than two thirds of the wing's F-16 pilots chose to retrain for Predator.

The squadron stood up its first Predator CAP in June 2007. Missions are piloted remotely from a small, high-security building on the Fargo base that communicates to the aircraft and joint forces that are thousands of miles away. The wing took on a second CAP mission earlier this year with no additional manning.

Becklund said morale is high among his pilots despite the squadron's 100-percent mobilization.

"We're glad to be in these missions right now," Becklund said.

Leapfest

Rhode Island's international adventure

Stories and photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

KINGSTON, R.I. – Capt. Roy Hatch, who is closing in on 60 years old, is a member of the United Kingdom's Territorial Army who still believes that airborne soldiers are something special.

Their brotherhood transcends boundaries, he reflected, because they have all dared to do something that a lot of people have heard about but that considerably fewer have actually done. They have jumped out of aircraft and trusted their very lives to the expectation that a few pounds of silk will billow open above them and let them fall somewhat gently to the ground.

"We have all stood in the door and have overcome our fears. We have all become brothers," said Hatch, of the 144 Parachute Medical Squadron, after completing his first jump of the day on Aug. 9, a pristine Saturday with lots of sunshine and little wind, during the National Guard's international military parachute competition called Leapfest.

The Territorial Army is the U.K.'s equivalent to the Army National Guard.

"We've done something that most people never do," added Hatch.

That was the tie that bound 289 paratroopers from the United States, the U.K., and nine other countries during the 26th Leapfest hosted by the Rhode Island National Guard. It is the largest and longest continually running international

parachute competition in this country.

This year's cast included four-man parachute teams, plus alternates, from Canada and four European nations, including Serbia, and from Nicaragua and four other Latin American countries.

There were also 24 Army National Guard teams from 13 states and 21 teams from the active Army. There were frequently enough parachutes in the sky to give the impression that Rhode Island was being invaded.

An active Army team from Fort Campbell, Ky., won the championship. Four paratroopers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, became the first active Army team to capture the Leapfest crown since 1999. Team members were Sergeants Justin Rondorf and Jeffrey Inman and Specialists Daniel Almodovar and Justin Greer. Rondorf tied two other jumpers for the day's fastest combined individual time of 21

seconds.

Five international teams, an Alaska Army Guard team and a Navy and Air Force team have won the last eight championships.

Yes, many languages were spoken during the Leapfest events on large, flat fields of sod beside the University of Rhode Island. But Leapfest again reinforced the idea that, at the end of the day, airborne is the same in any language.

"Every jump is still an adrenaline rush," said German Army Master Sgt. Andre Wetter who, he added, has stepped from aircraft into the thin air nearly 600 times and who is a freefall instructor near Hamburg.

"To be a little bit nervous before you jump, that is good," Wetter added. "You don't make mistakes."

"It is still frightening," said the U.K.'s Hatch. "You have to be doubly sure you know what to do."

Why does airborne continue to be one of the most common forms of advanced infantry training during a time when so few soldiers actually parachute into combat?

Col. Charles Petrarca, commander of the Rhode Island Army Guard's 56th Troop Command, believes the answer has to do with a willingness to face down fear.

"Airborne soldiers have already overcome their fear of death. That makes them better soldiers in combat theaters," said Petrarca who went through jump school at Fort Benning, Ga., in January 2007 when he was 47.

"There are 265 Rhode Island airborne troops in this troop command. I felt I should go to airborne school if those Sol-

"Airborne soldiers have already overcome their fear of death. That makes them better soldiers in combat theaters"

—Col. Charles Petrarca, commander of the Rhode Island's 56th Troop Command. He went through jump school at Fort Benning, Ga., in January 2007 when he was 47.





Top left: Rhode Island Army National Guard Capt. Lester King checks out a United Kingdom soldier who was about to make his second jump. Top center: Rhode Island Army Guard Staff Sgt. Chip Lindberg made smoke so jumpers could gauge the wind's direction. Top right: A competitor untangles his parachute chords. Top: United Kingdom Sgt. Shaun Partridge, timed by a judge, drags his chute to where X marks the spot. Bottom: Paratroopers from 11 countries patiently awaited their turns to load up and make their jumps.

diers were in my command," he explained. "The way the world is today, free nations need to band together. These events help band them together," Petrarca told the Leapfest participants during the opening ceremonies. Then he and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Klostermann, the troop command's enlisted leader, jumped with other members of the staff to kick off the ceremonies.

The competition was pretty basic. The four-member teams, mostly men, jumped from the rear ramps of CH-47 Chinook helicopters at 1,500 feet onto a smooth sod field featuring a large orange X. Team members steered themselves as close to the X as they could, executed a parachute landing fall, and then dragged their parachutes to the X as quickly as possible. The team with the lowest combined time for three jumps won. Individual awards were also presented.

But there is much more to Leapfest than prizes for the fastest times. It is a celebration of the camaraderie that exists among those who embrace and practice this military discipline. They believe there is still a place for airborne soldiers.

"I love the opportunity to interact with other forces from other countries, and I am interested in the procedures practiced by the U.S. military members, especially the jumpmasters," said Capt. Silvio Antonio Reyes of the Nicaraguan Army's Special Forces. He was participating in his second Leapfest.

"The value of airborne training is to be ready," added Reyes who is also an army scuba instructor. "We can't wait to get people trained for combat jumps if they are needed right now."

"It is the most efficient way to transport troops during a



Photo by Sgt. John Cervone

conflict," said Ecuadorian Army Capt. Francisco Acosta. "It is easy to drop them where you want at the right time (weather permitting) and in the right place."



Two Soldiers from Fort Campbell, Ky., land safely after their main parachutes became tangled. They resorted to their training and deployed their reserve parachutes.

Pulling the reserve: Two paratroopers overcome tangle, scare during drop

Two Soldiers from Fort Campbell, Ky., who were not members of the championship team, experienced some anxious moments during Leapfest when their main parachutes became tangled after jumping from a helicopter.

Sergeants 1st Class Christopher O'Malley and Kurt Merrell tried several times to free themselves before deploying their reserve parachutes and landing safely on a newly plowed field beside the drop zone.

O'Malley said the incident was his fault because Merrell had the right of way and that he turned the wrong way into Merrell's parachute.

The only injuries, however, were the Soldiers' wounded pride. And they were determined to jump again as soon as they could that day.

"The training came through. Everything worked just like it was supposed to," Merrell said. "Still, you don't pull your reserve every day."

Georgians train Georgians to save lives in combat

By Sgt. 1st Class Roy Henry
Georgia National Guard

VAZIANI MILITARY BASE, Tbilisi, Georgia – In the world of the combat medic, the “golden hour” is the time that he or she has to triage, stabilize and get a wounded comrade off the battlefield and into the hands of medical staff that has the skills to save that casualty’s life.

“When you’re the only medic available to treat a large number of wounded, you find yourself praying that your evaluation is quick, your hands are steady and that the helicopter you called for isn’t delayed,”

said Georgia Army National Guard Sgt. Gerry Pollock.

And that’s where Soldiers trained as combat life savers come in, said the Savannah resident.

Pollock and other medics from Company C, 148th Brigade Support Battalion together with the 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry took part in Exercise Immediate Response 2008 July 15 through Aug. 3.

Immediate Response is an annual Joint Chiefs of Staff-directed bilateral security cooperation exercise conducted between U.S. and coalition partners. This year, it was conducted in the country of Georgia. Other participants included Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The 121st and its commander, Maj. Matthew Smith, used the time to hone their infantry skills for a deployment to Afghanistan

in 2009 with the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Smith and his Soldiers also trained the Georgian army’s 4th Infantry Brigade for its future deployment to Iraq.

Soldiers trained as combat lifesavers get the basics, such as dressing wounds, stopping bleeding and stabilizing fractures, Pollock said, but they’re also trained to evaluate a casualty’s condition, establish an airway using the proper tools and to start IVs.

“With these skills, the combat lifesaver stabilizes those with less serious wounds, and allows me to spend more time with those who are more critical,” he said. “It also gives me more

information to feed the radio operator who’s sending us the Medevac helicopter.”

Working through an interpreter, Pollock and his

fellow medics taught these same skills to the Georgian soldiers. It’s a challenge, he said, and makes the class go slower than normal. But it doesn’t change the fact that each one must know and demonstrate each skill, just as their Georgia Army Guard counterparts must do if they want to become certified combat lifesavers.

Pvt. Daniel Williams, an infantryman with the 121st’s Company D, agreed. “Working with the Georgians is a great experience, and it’s given them a better understanding of what it means to survive on today’s battlefield.”

“Besides,” he added, “the life they save one day may be mine.”

“Besides, the life they save one day may be mine.”

-Pvt. Daniel Williams, COMPANY D, 1ST BATTALION, 121ST INFANTRY



Georgia National Guard photo

A Soldier from the Georgian army lets his combat lifesaver instructor know he’s completed the steps necessary for giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to Georgia National Guard Pvt. Daniel Williams.

Partnership news

Utah-Morocco

The 151st Medical Group from Utah returned in late June from a two-week deployment to the Kingdom of Morocco where it performed a humanitarian mission where close to 10,000 civilians received medical care. The Beehive State’s Air and Army National Guard were teamed with medical and support personnel from the Louisiana National Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force Reserve and the active Air Force. The group was deployed to Guelmim, Morocco, in support of the joint exercise African Lion 2008.

Tennessee-Africa

Tennessee’s 775th Engineer Detachment of the 194th Engineering Brigade left for the Horn of Africa in July for a yearlong deployment for Operation Enduring Freedom.

Alabama-Romania

An Alabama delegation that included the adjutant general, military doctors, dentists and ophthalmologists, and subject matter experts from various state organizations visited their Romanian counterparts recently. Military doctors provided humanitarian assistance in the form of over 500 immunizations, 250 dental screenings and 385 eye screenings. They also gave away 2,000 toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss and 2,000 bars of antibacterial soap.

Alaska-Czech Republic

Vlasta Parkanova, Czech defense minister, toured the Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely, Alaska, in July. The defense minister and several other high-ranking Czech officials visited the remote site that is home to the Alaska Army National Guard’s 49th Missile Defense Battalion.

Louisiana-Thailand

Sgt. First Class James Blackburn, of the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company, participated in the multinational training exercise known as Cobra Gold in Thailand in July. There, U.S. Soldiers along with those from Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and Thailand trained together to strengthen the Royal Thai Armed Forces. It was the 28th year of the exercise but the first in which the Louisiana Guard has participated.

Maryland Air Guard civil engineers work humanitarian projects in Bosnia

By Capt. Wayde Minami
Maryland National Guard

VLASENICA, Bosnia-Herzegovina – Airmen from the Maryland Air National Guard’s 175th Civil Engineer Squadron worked two humanitarian construction projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina in July.

The engineering projects are part of the National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP), which partners states with foreign governments to establish long-term, military-to-military contacts to promote interoperability and support democratic institutions. Maryland is currently one of the few states that is partnered with two countries: Bosnia and the Baltic nation of Estonia.

According to the 175th commander, Lt. Col. John P. McVicker, the squadron is helping to restore an elementary school and a monument to three American diplomats who died during Bosnia’s civil war.

“We’ve got 72 people split between two locations,” McVicker said. “Obviously, most of our effort is being put into getting the school up and running. What we’re doing here is something the local community could never afford on their own. It will make a huge difference for the children here.”

The unit began arriving in Bosnia on July 13, and most members worked through July 25, when troops from California planned to take their place. Approximately 15 of the



Photo by Capt. Wayde R. Minami

Maryland’s 175th Civil Engineer Squadron members install flexible conduit for a new electrical system at a primary school in Vlasenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Maryland engineers planned to stay on to provide continuity and see the projects through to completion.

This is the second major humanitarian assistance deployment the Maryland ANG has conducted to Bosnia under the SPP. In 2006, the 175th Medical Group deployed to the Srebrenica-area of Bosnia, where they provided medical care to more than 2,000 civilians at 14 remote villages.

According to McVicker, the Maryland ANG intends to return to Bosnia to help with additional projects in the future.

“We’re looking at a five-year plan,” McVicker said. “We need to assess the things they’d like done and see where we can help out.”

In addition to the benefit the local population derives from the project, deployments of this nature also help the U.S. military meet its training objectives.

“We get experience in planning and actually deploying to a foreign country,” said Chief

Master Sgt. Michael W. Bosse, civil engineering manager for the 175th. “You can practice your skills at home all you want, but until you have to actually go someplace and do it, with the language barriers, the infrastructure limitations, and all the other things you didn’t count on, you don’t really understand the challenges that are involved.”

From page 1:
LOOK TO SKIES

said, “There is no way in our aviation history in this state that we’ve saved or rescued that many people at once. [It was] certainly a record as far as rescues go.”

The helicopter crew consisted of pilots, Purcell and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charles Boehler, along with their flight crew, Weiger and Sgt. First Class Greg Holmes.

Hundreds of residents and vacationers were stranded due to the swift rise of the Rio Ruidoso, which runs through Ruidoso located southeast of Albuquerque. The rushing river tore through 14 bridges, engulfed roadways and continued to create more rivers, all of which prevented people from escaping.

Crossing the river was impossible as even the trees cut down by rescue workers to act as bridges were unsafe to use. The high waters completely encircled one campground creating an island.

Before the campers had a chance to panic, the Blackhawks were hovering overhead and lowering a hoist and crew to help transport them to safety.

This mission was performed by using a jungle penetrator, which is a seat suspended from the helicopter by cable. Crew members strapped in victims one at a time for the ride from the ground up to the hovering aircraft. Crews were then able to lift them into the safety of the helicopter.

Some of the 57 people hoisted from the ground were picked up well after sunset. The helicopter crews have performed extensive training using night vision goggles to see in the dark.

The focus, said Purcell, “was to get the elderly, women and children out first and then come back for the rest.”

Over the next three days, crews continued to airlift stranded residents and vacationers in addition to dropping water and Meals Ready to Eat to those still on the ground.

Arizona Guard evacuates victims of canyon flooding

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – At least 14 Arizona Army National Guard Soldiers and two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters assisted in the evacuation and emergency care of residents and campers near the Grand Canyon in mid-August after heavy rains overflowed the Redlands Earthen Dam and cut off routes to a remote village and reservation.

Officials said as of Aug. 17 the Arizona Guard’s 98th Aviation Troop Command had airlifted more than 174 people from the Supai Village area, which is a popular summer tourist destination for paddlers and hikers at the Grand Canyon.

Roads and foot paths to the area were closed from heavy rains and flooding, which cut off access for nearly 400 local residents, an unknown number of campers and Havasupai tribal members.

Supai is normally accessible only by foot, horseback or helicopter.

The Arizona Guard worked through the state’s Department of Emergency Management to support federal, state and local responders. The Coconino County Sheriff’s Office directed air rescue missions that include the two Army Guard Blackhawks and a rescue helicopter from the Department of Public Safety.

Florida Guardmembers support residents during tropical storm



Photo by Capt. David Ross

Members of the Florida National Guard’s Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment enter a mobile home park in Melbourne, Fla., to evacuate residents Aug. 21.

Proactive pre-positioning of troops, equipment and supplies key to response

By Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida National Guard

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. – As Tropical Storm Fay moved slowly up Florida’s east coast and caused flooding in coastal communities, members of the Florida National Guard continued to support the storm relief efforts by first responders.

By the afternoon of Aug. 21, nearly 500 Soldiers and Airmen were supporting relief missions, providing command for logistics operations and preparing to engage in recovery missions in flooded areas with Soldiers and high-water vehicles.

Since the storm made landfall in southwest Florida on Aug. 19, Florida sent Soldiers to 10 counties along Fay’s path. Guardmembers linked up with emergency officials and assessed the damage. The Guard also deployed liaison officers to five northeast Florida

counties and staged high-water military vehicles by Aug. 21 in anticipation of rescue missions throughout the state.

Aviation assets including a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters were also positioned for aerial support missions as the storm continued to move across the peninsula.

A team of 15 Soldiers from the Guard’s 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment assisted officials in Brevard County Aug. 20 with voluntary evacuations in three communities, helping move citizens threatened by rising flood waters.

“Right now we’ve sent reconnaissance teams to 10 different counties and have additional forces standing by in north Florida,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Flemming, assistant adjutant general for the Florida Army National Guard. “There are another 14 or so counties that may need assistance as

this storm passes westward across the state. We are well prepared to assist in any high-water vehicle missions, especially search and rescue and area assistance survey work. We work well with our local county and municipal partners and are ready to help them in any way we can.”

The Florida National Guard stationed logistics specialists at the State Logistics Resource Center (SLRC) in Orlando, where they could help with the distribution of needed supplies in the storm’s wake. The supplies – including bottled water and prepackaged food – were being loaded by Guardmembers onto trucks at the SLRC Aug. 20 in case of widespread power outages.

Soldiers working at the warehouse also helped manage the flow and tracking of supplies at the 200,000-square-foot facility that holds more than \$14 million in essential water and emergency supplies for the state.

“We’re maintaining the whole warehouse and just pretty much waiting for the storm,” said Sgt. 1st Class Larry Flemming of the 631st Maintenance Company. “We have all the trucks stocked and are making sure everything is ready to go.”

A team of Florida Guard Airmen from the 290th Joint Communications Support Squadron were also stationed at the SLRC in Orlando to provide emergency communications support if needed. Using a Regional Emergency Response Network (RERN) system, the Airmen were prepared to offer voice and digital communications to the center in the event of a major power failure.

“The RERN system gives the state the ability to rapidly deploy a communications network anywhere if the ‘comms’ have been lost,” explained Tech. Sgt. Ray Simpson as his team extended RERN’s satellite dish in a parking lot next to the SLRC. “And this gives the commanders on the ground the ability to run their operations and get assets out to the people who need them quickly.”

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

Guard rescues nation’s largest Ponderosa Pine

By Lt. Col. Lloyd J. Goodrow
Vermont National Guard

HAYFORK, Calif. – California National Guard’s Task Force Pick came to the rescue when the wildfires here in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest threatened the nation’s tallest Ponderosa Pine tree in July.

The task force was formed to assist CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service in fighting wildfires in Northern California that scorched over a million acres in June and July.

Ponderosa Pines are plentiful in the forests of the West and have an average height of 180 feet and can live for 300 to 600 years.

When the team of about 20 Guard firefighters reached the pine’s location, a few miles north of the Forest Glen campsite, they knew that this tree was something special.

Standing at 240.5 feet high (almost 24 stories) with a trunk nearly eight feet thick and estimated at an age of 700 years, they knew that the tree had to be saved.

The significance of the tree was verified by a U.S. Forest Service team member as being documented by the American Forests’ National Register of Big Trees.



“It was a lot of hard work and heart that went into keeping this incredible tree safe,” said Spc. Diana Diaz. “This majestic tree has witnessed a lot of history and stands as a symbol for survival. There have been wildfires through these forests before ... and this tree still stands.”

That task wasn’t easy. With low hanging branches, the tree was immediately threatened by sparks and embers from nearby fires that could easily ignite the tree if the wind shifted just right.

The Guardmembers spent hours trimming these low hanging threats and also cleared a wide area around the tree that would eliminate any fuel source on the ground.

Two Guardmembers spent the entire day cutting down neighboring trees, and the rest of team stacked flammable piles of wood a safe distance away. They also set up a water sprinkler system that kept the cleared area moist.

“Rescuing a tree that some might consider a national treasure has been one of the most unusual missions I’ve ever been on,” said Spc. David Walker. “Being here in the Shasta-Trinity Forest with the other members of my unit has been a rough but rewarding mission.”

New awards program strives to improve Army Guard installations

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Installations are among the things that Army National Guard Soldiers take for granted. They are like the uniforms, the morning formations and the noon meals that are part of the drill.

Installations are the brick or cement block armories, the state joint force headquarters, and the training centers of fields and woods where Guard Soldiers report for weekend drills, for annual training and to prepare for deployments. They may be old. They may be new. But they're there. Most Guard Soldiers don't think of them as places that have to be managed.

Col. Michael Bouchard is here to tell them differently, and he and his National Guard Bureau team this year have introduced a competitive awards program to determine just how well the 54 states and territories manage this country's installations that are located at 3,046 places.

Bouchard, an engineer officer from Maine, is the chief of the Army Guard's Installations Division at the Readiness Center here. He oversees a competition called the States Installation Management Excellence Award Program. The winning state receives the Fred Aron Award; named for the division chief for Army Guard installations from 1971-92, Bouchard said. States that finish first within seven different regions also receive awards.

Iowa was this year's big winner. It was declared the state with the best installation management program in the country as well as in Region IV during the annual conference for the Army Guard's Construction and Facility Management Officers that was held in Las Vegas June 3-4. Region IV, consisting of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and

Wisconsin as well as Iowa, was declared the best region.

Iowa the big winner

Iowa, with a total score of 902 out of 1,000 points, was the only state to receive a Gold Award. Other regional winners, which received Silver or Bronze awards were: Vermont, Region I; Delaware, Region II; North Carolina, Region III; Nebraska, Region V; Wyoming, Region VI; and Arizona, Region VII. States must score at least 90 percent to earn a gold award; 80-89 percent for silver; and 70-79 percent for bronze.

It was no surprise that Iowa scored so high and won the big

programs, and financial management.

"This is the first year we've used a measuring tool to judge the competition," explained Lt. Col. Daniel Townsend, chief of the Installations Division's Strategic Planning Branch. "It has been very subjective during past years." The installations management competition has been going on since 1992, he added.

It is the report cards, more than the competition, which is most important, Townsend said.

"The competition is a friendly rivalry. It's a positive way for the states and territories to know that the Guard Bureau is paying atten-

tion, restoring and modernizing these facilities. Between \$500 million and \$600 million is being spent each year through 2010 for changes mandated by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Act, Bouchard said.

Col. Scott Ayres, Iowa's construction and facilities management officer since January 2004, cites several reasons for Iowa's success. Among them is the concept that the installations must reflect the fact that the Army Guard cares about the people who are serving and about the ones thinking about signing up.

The Iowa Army Guard has 42 armories in addition to Camp Dodge, the state's joint force headquarters near Des Moines, which has six buildings also classified as armories, Ayres said. Most are about 40 years old.

Iowa builds a new armory about every five years, Ayres said. One key to success is that every year it is renovating two old armories to be suitable for another 20 years of use.

"We want our armories to be compatible with a community college or local small university. We want as high class facilities as possible so they will appeal to the younger Soldiers," said Ayres, who stressed the importance of constructing modern female latrines in armories that were originally built for men only. "Women are not impressed if they have to use what used to be a janitors closet," he said.

So, while Guard Soldiers may take the installations where they serve more or less for granted, people like Colonels Michael Bouchard and Scott Ayres are determined to give them the best ones they can. And if some friendly competition among the states will improve the quality of the facilities and the way they are managed, so much the better.

Bouchard and his staff manage the nearly \$2 billion that the Guard Bureau sends to the states for construction and for maintaining, restoring and modernizing these facilities

prize, said Bouchard who has been chief of the Installations Division since October 2006. "Iowa has one of the best reputations," he said. Iowa was rated excellent in four of eight areas that states were judged.

Now Bouchard hopes that the competitive nature of the evaluation process will give other states additional incentive to manage their facilities as well as Iowa does.

"We began the awards program this year to recognize states and generate improvement. Our strategy is to get the states to analyze themselves more thoroughly and improve on their weak areas," Bouchard explained.

Every state and territory receives a report card from Bouchard's division based on eight criteria that include the execution of military construction projects, compliance with electronic security systems standards and energy

tion," he said. "More importantly, the report cards show the states what their shortcomings are so they can improve on them. And it allows the Installations Division to focus on the states that may need training or support in certain areas."

A lot to look after

State construction and facility management officers are responsible for a lot of property. It includes 121 training sites, including expansive Camp Shelby in Mississippi where troops train for deployments, and 32,614 buildings and other structures located on 2.5 million acres throughout this country. There are 12,763 training facilities, 1,007 ground vehicle maintenance facilities and 272 aviation support facilities.

Bouchard and his staff manage the nearly \$2 billion that the Guard Bureau sends to the states

Gas consumption reduced at Illinois armories

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois National Guard has reduced its heating bill at armories in Joliet and Elgin by nearly \$19,000 per year after installing high-efficiency boilers and anticipates completing more energy efficiency projects in the future.

Two new 40 horsepower natural gas boilers were installed in the Joliet armory in 2002, reducing natural gas usage by 33 percent and allowing less heat to escape through its exhaust system. The 50,000-square-foot facility was built in 1958 and is home to Company E, 634th Brigade Support Battalion and Detachment 1,

Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry.

The Elgin armory is home to Company B, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry and was outfitted with two new 79 horsepower natural gas boilers in 2003, reducing energy usage by 35 percent.

The savings to the Illinois National Guard since installing the new boilers is \$18,944 per year.

In addition to the cost savings, the new equipment has reduced the emission of the most common greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, by 222,800 pounds per year. Emissions of volatile

organic compounds, nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide have also been significantly reduced according to a July 2008 Illinois Sustainable Technology Center study.

"The Illinois National Guard is taking every opportunity to be more efficient with funds and reducing its impact on the environment," said Lt. Col. Randy Scott, director of facilities and engineering for the Illinois Guard. "These two projects highlight the success we've had at meeting both goals and the Guard continues to focus on energy and economic efficiency."

-ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD



Annual Training

Soldiers and Airmen from around the country look back on the summer with pride and satisfaction of knowing they polished their warfighting skills

Photo by Staff Sgt. Walter Thomas



Laying it down

Among several projects, Soldiers from the Louisiana's **1022nd Engineer Company** finished a concrete slab at a small arms firing range during their annual training in Pineville, La. The slab will serve as a walkway at the range that is used by the Louisiana National Guard Special Reaction Team.



Photo by Jennifer Archdekin

Ramming it home

Missouri Army National Guard's **1st Battalion, 129th Field Artillery** performed its annual training exercise in July. About 90 Soldiers from the Albany, Chillicothe, Independence and Maryville armories, and fellow Guardmembers from the **1128th Forward Support Company** in Marshall and Richmond took part. Nearly 80 percent of the battalion is currently deployed to Kosovo. The focus was teaching field artillery tasks to younger, more inexperienced Soldiers.

Photo by Spc. Zachary R. Fehrman

AT starts with food

At Camp Grayling, Mich., in June, Soldiers from the **1485th Transportation Company** prepared meals for their fellow Ohio Army Guard members training at the post. "[We have] the atmosphere of a tight, cohesive unit that really strives to go above and beyond," said Sgt. First Class Allen Metzcar, the food operations sergeant. "If the food is crappy, the Soldier's day is crappy," said one of his crewmembers. The crew started everyday at 3 a.m. to prepare breakfast and worked into the evening with clean up.



Road trip

Pennsylvania's **1067th Transportation Company** spent its summer camp convoying through 11 states and four time zones with 25 vehicles for a total of 2,580 miles. The unit's 60 Soldiers drove their camouflage freightliners, the M915A3, from their armories to the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. Two weeks later, they did it all over again, driving from California back to Pennsylvania. They completed their three-week annual training July 25.



Photo by Spc. Elizabeth Gorenc

Mission essential

This year's annual training was the first time the Pennsylvania's **2nd Squadron, 107th Cavalry Regiment** for the **2nd Brigade Combat Team** of the **28th Infantry Division** has been able to exclusively focus on mission essential task list training instead of common Soldier training. They trained at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Ind. Convoys rolled over roads while Soldiers searched buildings and reacted to simulated attacks. These Soldiers began their two-week training at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Ind., focusing on gunnery exercises.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Theresa L. Walker

Rain or shine

Airmen from Arkansas Air Guard's **154th Weather Flight** pulled their AT with Soldiers from the **77th Aviation Brigade**, focusing on the upcoming hurricane season. The 154th personnel also worked in coordination with local authorities at Swindle Airfield in Walnut Ridge, Ark. The training focused on scenarios for homeland security, homeland defense and disaster relief missions. The 154th is tasked to support the Army Guard by providing weather support to air crews by giving them weather briefings and forecasts.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

On the field

Fifteen members of the Florida Army National Guard's **107th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment** honed their skills as professional sports reporters during the Jacksonville Jaguars' preseason opener against the Atlanta Falcons Aug. 9. They stood shoulder-to-shoulder with civilian journalists on the sidelines at Jacksonville Municipal Stadium throughout the televised game. The detachment is scheduled to deploy in early 2009 to support Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

Spurred on

The **2nd Squadron, 108th Cavalry Regiment** held their 2nd annual Spur Ride at Camp Minden, La. to conclude their AT. While most cavalry Soldiers are easily identified by the unique black felt hats, known as Stetsons, the spurs are awarded to only a deserving few. They represent the best of the best and embody all that has been, is, and will be great about the U.S. Cavalry. The tradition has its roots in knighthood, where the awarding of spurs symbolized entry into the ranks and fraternity of mounted warriors.



Photo by Spc. Qualan M. Jefferson

Thirsty? Iowans provide water at bike ride

By 1st Sgt. Duff E. McFadden
Iowa National Guard

3,400 gallons, 20 ounces at a time. That's what it takes to quench the thirst of 15,000 bicyclists at just one water stop during a 471-mile, week-long trek across the state of Iowa.

Sponsored by the Des Moines Register newspaper, the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) is the longest, largest and oldest touring bicycle ride in the world. Riders, from all 50 states and many foreign countries, are selected through a computerized lottery system.

For Master Sgt. Marty Smith, a firefighter with the Iowa Air National Guard's 132nd Fighter Wing and his six-person "Team H2O," it's the chance to interact with riders, provide an invaluable service and have fun.

"As firefighters, we deal with water on a daily basis and started doing this to have some fun," said Smith. "There are people we see once a year at RAGBRAI. They know we're there and that we have good water."

"This is a great opportunity for our Guard to be introduced to 15,000 people a day," he added. "We usually set up in towns of 100 people or so. For many of them, we're their only exposure to the Guard."

The Iowa Air and Army National Guard team up: the Air provides the manpower, while the Army provides a 450-gallon water buffalo and truck to transport it.

After taking part in the ride for 14 of the past 16 years, they have received distinction as an "official RAGBRAI water supplier" and are highlighted on the daily route map.



Iowa National Guard photo

Riders re-hydrate with the Guard in Iowa.

Guardmembers compete in military pentathlon Nevadan places 2nd, first enlisted on team

By Master Sgt. Greg Rudl
National Guard Bureau

A Nevada Guard Soldier finished second in an international military pentathlon in Istanbul, Turkey, July 4-13.

Teamed with a British and a German soldier, Spc. Bill Raitter finished second in the international team category of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers, or CIOR, military pentathlon competition. He was the only American to earn a podium spot and was the first-ever enlisted Guardmember to place at a CIOR pentathlon.

"We were second-to-last going into the last day, but then I let my running skills take over," said Raitter about his team's come-from-behind move against 15 other teams in the category. "Our map reader was great,"



Idaho National Guard photo

Idaho Sgt. Steven Freeman runs his guidon over the finish line during the ruck march with fellow company Soldiers chanting cadences and providing support. Freeman won the NCO of the Year competition.

Idaho Soldiers compete in their own Olympics

BOISE, Idaho – North Idaho residents didn't have to fly to Beijing to see the Olympics as Idaho Citizen-Soldiers put on the Warrior Olympics Aug. 2-3 in Lewiston.

The event pitted Soldier against Soldier as they competed for the titles of the 145th Brigade Support Battalion's NCO and Enlisted Soldier of the Year.

Spc. Skyler Lucero was the best enlisted and Sgt. Steven Freeman the best NCO. They plan to compete in a state-level event in September in Boise.

"We challenged our Soldiers mental and physical abilities by pushing them through 15 grueling Soldier tasks in a 24-hour period," said Lt. Col. Darren T. Blagburn, 145th BSB commander.

The 15 tasks included a modified Army fitness test composed of pushups, sit-ups and a 10-kilometer run; diagnosing and treating various simulated battlefield injuries; assembling and disassembling different individual weapons; conducting a day and night land navigation course with only a compass across extremely challenging terrain;

and a 10-kilometer ruck-march wearing a 40-pound backpack.

The contest took place at different locations throughout the Lewiston Valley, with the bulk of the events in downtown Lewiston.

"We opened this event to the community in order to show what today's Soldier trains on during their weekend drills and the two-week annual training," said Capt. David Darney, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 145th BSB. "It was also our chance to show off the new equipment we have received since our transformation from combat engineers to support operations."

In addition to the competition, hundreds of people visited equipment displays, various activities like obstacle courses especially set up for adults and children, a climbing wall and other family-friendly activities.

This year's competition varied from previous years. While past competitions tested Soldiers' book knowledge, this year they demonstrated hands-on skills learned throughout the year.

-IDAHO NATIONAL GUARD

Guardmembers compete in military pentathlon

he said.

The three-day competition included rifle and pistol shooting on day one, land and water obstacle courses on day two and an orienteering, or land navigation, event on day three.

A team from France won the overall title, with three U.S. teams – one "veteran" and two "novice" – finishing 35th, 37th and 47th out of 49 teams. An injury during the second day of competition hurt the U.S. veteran team's chances.

The United States CIOR Military Pentathlon Team was made up of Navy Reserve Lt. Cmdr. Grant Staats, Army Reserve Lt. Col. Matthew Lissner and Army Reserve Maj. Lawrence Gnewuch (Team 1); Vermont Air Guard Capt. John



Raitter

Zimmermann, Florida Army Guard Capt. Derick Taylor, and Florida Army Guard 2nd Lt. Andrew Garcia (Team 2); Florida Army Guard 1st Lt. Leala McCullom, Kentucky Army Guard Capt. Robb Campbell, and National Guard 1st Lt. Varinka Barbini (Team 3).

Raitter made the U.S. squad as an alternate in late June, becoming the first enlisted person to do so. The U.S. CIOR team was only open to reserve officers until this year.

CIOR, commonly referred to by its French acronym, represents the interests of over 1.3 million reservists across 36 participating nations within and beyond NATO, making it the world's largest military reserve officer organization. Founded in 1948 by the reserve officer associations of Belgium, France and the Netherlands, CIOR is now a NATO-affiliated, non-political and non-profit umbrella organization. The CIOR meets twice a year to work through committees that examine issues and provide analysis relating to reserve forces.

Briefs

Biathlon first

North Dakota Sgt. Blake Hillerson began his first competitive races with the All-Guard Biathlon Team Aug. 2.



He was the first Soldier in his state to qualify for the team during a national competition in March. He's trained throughout the summer for what will be a

full year as one of only five Guardsmen nationwide to qualify for the elite team. He will compete in races stateside using rollerskis then move to South America for races on snow.

Rocky Mtn. runners high

Army Capt. Matt Cavanaugh and Air Force Staff Sgt. Tyrell Heaton, both from the Minnesota National Guard, completed the Trans-Rockies Race Aug. 25-30. They procured funding for gear and transportation from several sponsors. The Trans-Rockies Run is a six-day stage race totaling around 125 miles that takes place in the Rocky Mountains with a course that includes a mix of single track and forest road with nearly 25,000 feet of elevation gain, reaching altitudes of over 12,500 feet.

Combatives championship

The Army National Guard Warrior Training Center at Fort Benning, Ga., conducted its Combatives Championship Aug. 16-17. About 75 Soldiers assigned to Guard units in more than 16 states competed. Army combatives is a functional mixed martial art form combining Brazilian jiu-jitsu, box-

ing, clinch-hitting, take-downs and ground fighting techniques. The winners were: Flyweight-Sgt.

Joshua Crawford (Illinois); Lightweight-Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hannan (Oklahoma);

Middleweight-1st Lt. Adam Moralez (New Mexico);

Welterweight-Spc. Adam Theriault (Illinois);

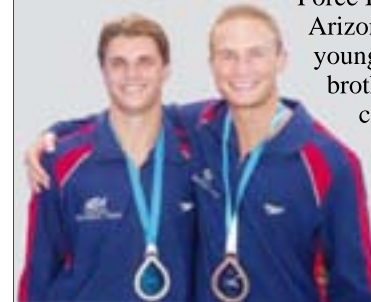
Cruiserweight-Sgt. David Steff (Arizona); Light Heavyweight-Staff Sgt. Tony Genovese (Illinois); Heavyweight-Sgt. Jesse Curry (Minnesota).

Olympic brothers

Troy, left, and 1st Lt. Justin Dumais of the South Carolina Air National Guard finished sixth in the men's synchronized three-meter springboard diving event in the 2004 Olympics in Athens. This year, Lieutenant Dumais is an F-16 student in the Night Systems Training Course at Luke Air

Force Base in Arizona. His younger brother

competed in Beijing without him.



Three small support units do their part in VIETNAM

By John Listman
National Guard Bureau

Of the 34 Army Guard units mobilized during the Vietnam War, all entered active duty May 13, 1968 – 40 years ago. Of these, eight were deployed to Vietnam as intact units, while more than 4,300 other Guardsmen were sent as individual replacements. No two units served together in country, so each has a unique story.

Of the eight, three were combat support or combat service support units. They were the 650th Medical Detachment (Dental Service) from Birmingham, Ala.; the 126th Supply and Service Company from Quincy, Ill., and the 107th Signal Company from East Greenwich, R.I.

Dental care

The first Army Guard unit to deploy to Vietnam was Alabama's 650th, arriving Aug. 27. When mobilized, the 650th had 38 Soldiers: 14 dentists, one Medical Corps officer and 23 enlisted dental technicians.

The 650th was assigned to the 44th Medical Brigade in Vietnam at Long Binh. It worked in a new, state-of-the-art clinic that could accommodate 14 patients at a time. It had its own laboratory and offered limited prosthetic services such as repairing false teeth. Long Binh, outside of Saigon, was a major transient base, with many Soldiers heading to the field or coming back for R&R. The clinic run by the 650th was always busy, sometimes with more than 50 patients a day.

Soon after its arrival, about 10 person-

THE 650TH, AS THE FIRST GUARD UNIT TO ARRIVE IN VIETNAM, WAS ALSO THE FIRST TO COME HOME

nel were assigned to a small clinic at a base camp named Bearcat. While not in the jungle, Bearcat was still removed from the relative safety of Long Binh. One dentist was wounded by a land mine, becoming the only member of the unit to receive the Purple Heart.

The 650th, as the first Guard unit to arrive in Vietnam, was also the first to come home, arriving at Fort Campbell, Ky., July 16, 1969. The four campaign streamers it earned during its tour are carried today by the 208th Chemical Company of Oneonta, Ala.

Supplying a battalion

To help the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal) continue its combat missions, Illinois' 126th Supply and Service Company was assigned to the 23rd Support Battalion. The 126th, home-stationed in Quincy along the Mississippi River, mobilized with five officers and 180 enlisted members, including eight sets of brothers. After four months of training at Fort Carson, Co., the unit deployed to Chu Lai where it joined the 23rd.

Over the next 11 months, the 126th moved various supplies like food and cloth-

ing and fuel for the Americal Division. During much of their tour, a detachment from the 126th operated a fuel point at Duc Pho in the Central Highlands. This was resupplied on a daily basis by 5,000-gallon fuel tankers driven by unit members up from the coast. During one of these missions, Spc. 4 Gail Oitker earned a Bronze Star for Valor for using a machine gun to thwart an enemy ambush.

While the unit was based at Chu Lai, many of its Soldiers served in various locations along supply routes keeping the division operational. To keep the secluded troops – and family members – informed, a company newsletter, The Mississippi Guardsman, was published weekly by the headquarters section.

In August 1969, the unit reassembled at Chu Lai and returned home as a company. During its tour, the 126th had no Guardmembers die and only a few were wounded. Besides Oitker, five other members were awarded the Bronze Star and the unit itself was presented the Meritorious Unit Citation.

Signaling the end

Rhode Island's 107th Signal Company

arrived in Long Binh Oct. 20, 1968. Composed of 260 officers and NCOs, the company was assigned to the 972nd Signal Battalion, 1st Signal Brigade.

The 107th's mission was to establish, operate and maintain three communications centers. Each center had 77 Soldiers conducting 24-hour operations.

The unit suffered no combat deaths or injuries and returned home in October, 1969. The 107th was organized in 1923 as the 43rd Signal Company, an element of the 43rd Infantry Division (ID) and fought in the Pacific during World War II, earning four combat streamers. Mobilized again with the 43rd ID in 1950 for Korean War service, it deployed to Germany to reinforce NATO. When the 43rd ID was reorganized in 1959, the company was separated from it and reorganized and redesignated as the 107th Signal Company. The 107th was mobilized once again for the Berlin Crisis of 1961 but did not deploy overseas. So when the unit entered active duty for its fourth time in 27 years on May 13, it contained a large number of prior-service veterans. The unit was disbanded in 1993 and its lineage is not perpetuated today.

Each of these small Guard units performed important support missions to help

40th anniversary exhibit running

The National Guard Educational Foundation opened a yearlong exhibit in 2008 to mark the 40th anniversary of the call-up of 150 National Guard units to bolster U.S. defense commitments around the globe during a critical phase of the war in Vietnam. The exhibit is located adjacent to the National Guard Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.



Courtesy Steven Eckhardt



National Guard Education Foundation



National Archives and Records Administration

Above: Spc. Steven Eckhardt of the 126th Supply and Service Company unloads fuel from a tanker at Duc Pho. **Top right:** Spc. 5 Arthur Davis of the 650th Medical Detachment fabricates bridgework for a dental patient. **Two members of the 107th Signal Company check the voltage of a series of wet cell batteries used as a backup power system at a telephone exchange.**

the overall American effort in Vietnam. Though the war was lost, each unit did its best in the face of a determined enemy and strong public descent at home.



Photo by Spc. Elizabeth Gorenc

Hoosier reunion: Veterans from Company D, 151st Infantry (Ranger) gathered at Camp Atterbury, Ind., in late July and early August to celebrate the 40-year anniversary of their deployment to Vietnam. The veterans' reunion lasted for several days and included golf outings, motorcycle rides, banquets, guest speakers, educational opportunities about current troops, and healing.

Sisters tied by War

Three pilots fly Afghan skies

By Staff Sgt. Rachel M. Martinez
455th Air Expeditionary Wing

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - They never planned on being pilots and Afghanistan was the last place they expected to see each other, but that's just what happened for two sisters from White Salmon, Wash.

California Air National Guard Capt. Kelly Smith and Army Chief Warrant Officer Amber Smith grew up in a family rich with aviation ties. Their grandfather flew in the Army Air Force as a lieutenant colonel during World War II and a commercial pilot after that. Their grandmother and mother were flight attendants. Others in the family became commercial pilots, including their father, uncle and a few cousins.

"Just growing up around it so much, I think we all loved airplanes," Capt. Smith, 31, said. "We loved being around

They found a commonality in their mission in Afghanistan – aiding troops on the ground

airplanes, going up in airplanes, hearing about them."

However, both went off to college with no intention of going into aviation. Capt. Smith studied English and journalism at the University of Arizona, and Chief Smith became a cheerleader at the University of Washington.

"I think each of us, at one point, started to rebel," said Capt. Smith. "I know I did. I said I wasn't going to be a pilot."

That quickly changed. During her freshman year, Capt. Smith began to notice the A-10s and C-130s flying into Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

"It looked interesting and at that point I decided I didn't want a desk job," she said. "So I started flying my dad's little Cessna 150 when I was home the summer after my freshman year. After I soloed, I decided this is really fun."

Capt. Smith transferred to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical

University and became a flight instructor after graduating.

Their father had encouraged them to look into the military for flying opportunities. Capt. Smith jumped first, enlisting in the California Air Guard shortly after 9/11.

After graduating from basic training, Capt. Smith was selected for the pilot board, got her commission and became a C-130 pilot for the 146th Airlift Wing in Channel Islands, Calif.

"I always liked the C-130s," she said. "I happened to meet this girl whose father is one of the colonels in our unit. He introduced me to everyone in the unit and I got to see all the planes. I thought it was really cool. I decided that was what I wanted to do. I had discovered something that I was really excited in."

Chief Smith turned to aviation after two years of college.

"Flying had always interested me so I went and got my private pilot's license in a fixed wing," she said. Chief Smith enlisted in the Army in 2003, choosing the OH-58 Kiowa helicopter. She got stationed with the 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell, Ky. In late 2007, her unit deployed to Forward Operating Base Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Not long after deploying, Chief Smith began to receive e-mails from her sister, Capt. Smith – whose unit would be deploying to Bagram Air Field. They would be in different services, different locations, assigned to different units, but they found a commonality in their mission in Afghanistan – aiding troops on the ground.

"We have two completely different missions, but we both take care of the ground troops," said Capt. Smith. "The C-130s do a lot of airdrops and it's fulfilling because you are getting the beans and bullets to the guys on the ground."

Although not at the same base, the two sisters got the opportunity to see each other in May when Chief Smith's commander allowed her to fly to Bagram for a two-day visit.

"I loved the day that Amber came to visit," Capt. Smith said. "She came and got me up in the morning, we walked to the PX [post exchange] and got coffee, pizza, and massages. When you're back home, you can have girls' day. It was kind of like that, but Bagram style."

Capt. Smith and Chief Smith have each deployed twice and both agree it is easier being deployed together. Chief Smith went to Iraq in 2005 and Capt. Smith to Southwest Asia shortly after.



455th Air Expeditionary Wing photo

Army Chief Warrant Officer Amber Smith, left, and Air Guard Capt. Kelly Smith, right, celebrate at a graduation for their younger sister, Chief Warrant Officer Lacey Smith.

Despite the fact that there have been a few days the sisters have not been able to see each other or talk to each other because of work, they both agree having each other makes it easier.

"Just knowing that you have that other person who is here for you – not just a friend, but family is really nice," Capt. Smith said.

It may be easier on them, but it's not easy on their parents.

"We are very, very fortunate because our mom realized from the get-go that it would be harder on us to know that they are worrying about us all the time," she said. "So she does a good job of reeling my dad in when he would start whining about how worried he was. That would make it harder on Amber, for example, when she's not only worried about whatever her job is but she's worried about making sure mom and dad are OK."

Capt. and Chief Smith aren't the only ones their parents worry about. Younger sister Lacey, 25, is an Army Chief Warrant Officer and flies the UH-60 Blackhawk. Her unit, A Company, 101st Aviation, replaces Chief Amber Smith's unit this winter.



Guard's diversity found in states, territories, communities

By Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – Today's diversity in the Army and Air National Guard reflects the diversity of the communities its members serve and live in, the National Guard Bureau's equal opportunity and civil rights director said in August.

Felton Page added that gone are the days when an all-white Guard unit would go into a predominantly black neighborhood to maintain order, as during the 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles.

"Look at the California Guard now, and you see some of its largest brigades commanded by minorities. ... It's representative of the community it's in. So, when you call out the Guard, the Guard looks like us," Page said.

The Army Guard has more than 19 percent minorities among its ranks today, and the Air Guard has more than 17 percent.

Although some states were slow

to adopt President Harry S. Truman's federal policy of "equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin," it eventually changed the face of the Guard, Page said.

Guard leaders joined the other military services and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates at the Pentagon today for a 60th anniversary celebration of Truman's executive order.

"Today we understand," Page said. "We see the benefit of our diverse military."

In 1972, Page – the Guard's first black equal opportunity director – attended one of the military's first equal opportunity courses at what was then called the Defense Race Relations Institute, now called the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla. Since then, the military's approach to diversity has grown from reactive race relations to a proactive force that promotes equal



Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Molly A. Burgess

Tuskegee Airmen attended a ceremony in August at the Pentagon honoring the 60th anniversary of the signing of Executive Orders 9980 and 9981, which desegregated the armed forces.

and fair treatment, he said.

"We did race relations back then. ... That school was born from having to react to racial issues that affected combat readiness," he said. "Now, we understand that you have

to do proactive work."

Page's office here is a focal point for the Guard's diversity policies and oversight in all equal opportunity, equal employment opportunity and community outreach programs with

minority organizations. "We are working on programs and issues all the time," said Jacqueline Ray-Morris, the office's minority college outreach manager.

Today, diversity is much more than putting out equal opportunity fires and complaints, she said. Promoting diversity, Ray-Morris travels to historically black, Latino and other minority colleges. During those visits, she speaks with students about careers available in the Defense Department, not only in the military, but also in civil service.

Ray-Morris also is the first African-American woman to serve as committee chair for the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation, a nonprofit named after the nation's first black Airmen to serve in the Army Air Force.

"We work collaboratively in all areas of the community," she said. "We also furnish the tools you need that prevent sexual harassment and ensure you adhere to policies, programs and guidelines."