



THE ON GUARD

Volume 36, Issue 4

April 2007

On-line at www.ngb.army.mil

Newspaper of the National Guard



Aerovac mission
to Balad, Iraq

PAGE 5

Gates addresses TAGs on readiness, mobilizations

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – Equipment readiness and shorter, more predictable mobilizations spaced further apart are Department of Defense priorities for the National Guard, the secretary of defense said Feb. 27.

“The goal is to distribute more fairly and more effectively the burden of war among our active and Reserve components by providing a more predictable schedule ... for troops, their families and their civilian employers,” Robert M. Gates told the adjutants general, the National Guard leaders in the 54 states and territories. “In the future, our troops should be deployed and/or mobilized less often, for shorter periods of time and with more predictability.”

“We are not there yet,” Gates told the Adjutants General Association of the United States, meeting in the National Guard Memorial Building. “Because of the demands

“The Department of Defense is committed to providing adequate resources so [the National Guard] remains a truly operational force”

-Secretary of Defense

Robert M. Gates

on our military today, some Guardsmen will have to deploy sooner than they ... expected or wanted. Others will serve longer than they anticipated or would like.”

Gates has already made significant changes that have impacted the National Guard since he was sworn in Dec. 18.

Those changes include announcing that deployments will not exceed 12 months. Until now, overseas deployments have lasted about 18 months of active duty for Guardmembers,

including pre-deployment training and post-deployment recovery. Gates has also set a goal of five years between deployments.

A post-Sept. 11 policy limiting the total involuntary mobilized time in a Guardmember's career to 24 months has been revoked. “One effect of that policy was that the Army was forced to cobble together Guard battalions and brigades with personnel taken from other units and ... from other states,” Gates said. “It is important ... that Citizen-Soldiers who live together and train together also deploy and fight together.”

Gates has also ordered additional compensation for Guardmembers faced with extended deployments, announced a review of the waiver policy for Guardmembers whose deployments create undue hardship and directed the services to minimize the use of stop-loss. Stop-loss is the involuntary retention of troops beyond their expected period of enlistment.

He also has addressed concerns about the

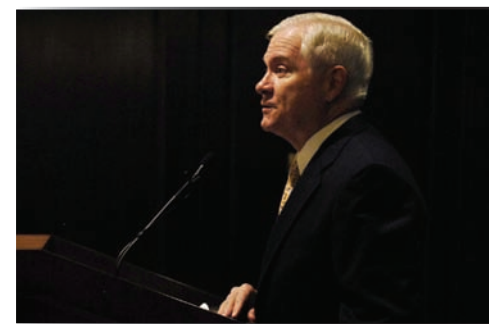


Photo by Cherie A. Thurlby

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates speaks at the National Guard Bureau's senior leadership meeting Feb. 27.

National Guard's equipment readiness.

“The practice of leaving equipment behind in theater has created unique challenges for Guard units returning from overseas,” Gates said. “Unlike active duty units, these Guard

**GATES TO TAGS continued on:
Page 3**

Commission: Policies have to change Enhance homeland security role among recommendations

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – Changes in legislation and policies for the National Guard are urgently needed so that America's homeland defenders can perform like a professional football team rather than like a neighborhood pickup team.

That was Chairman Arnold L. Punaro's message as the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves delivered its interim report to Congress on March 1.

Among numerous recommendations, commissioners called for enhancing the National Guard's homeland security role, forming a Council of Governors, giving governors and National Guard officers command of federal forces during domestic emergencies, and improving communication between federal

**COMMISSION continued on:
Page 6**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

New Hampshire Spc. Peter Miner, of the 237th Military Police Company, pulls security at a landing zone in preparation for Soldiers from the 1159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) to pick up a simulated casualty during Exercise Granite Triangle at Fort Pickett, Va.

Soldiers get serious joint training in Granite Triangle

Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy
National Guard Bureau

FORT PICKETT, Va. – The gray clouds seemed to turn darker with each passing minute. The sun was blotted out from the sky as a shadow loomed overhead, a whirlwind of air blowing leaves, grass and nearly everything not tied down across the field.

Four New Hampshire Army National Guard Soldiers rushed to complete their mission in the downdraft created by a U.S. Navy MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter, one of the U.S. military's largest helicopters, as it hovered close to the ground. The Soldiers from C Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain) rushed to sling load a Humvee to

a yellow hook dangling at head level from the hovering aircraft.

The sling-load training was part of Exercise Granite Triangle, an annual training exercise at Fort Pickett that brought together about

**GRANITE TRIANGLE continued on:
Page 10**

Installations maintain balance with the environment: Page 12

IS IT TIME FOR THE PT TEST? AGAIN?

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

The On Guard is published monthly using federal funds under provisions of AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101 by the Command Information Branch of the National Guard Bureau's Public Affairs Office for all members of the Army and Air National Guard. About 70,000 copies are distributed to all National Guard units and selected organizations throughout the Total Force. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force or the National Guard Bureau.

SUBMISSION

E-mail your stories to us by the first Friday of each month. We prefer that photos be high-quality digital (300 dpi or more) and e-mailed to:

Editor.OnGuard@ngb.ang.af.mil

ADDRESS

NGB-PAC
Suite 11200
411 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202-3231

PHONE/FAX

(703) 607-2649
DSN: 327-2649
FAX: (703) 607-0032

WEB SITE

For more National Guard news, visit our Web site at:
www.ngb.army.mil

STAFF

CHIEF

National Guard Bureau
LTG H Steven Blum

DIRECTOR

NGB, Public Affairs and Strategic Communications
Mr. Daniel Donohue

CHIEF

NGB-Public Affairs Command Information
Lt. Col. Les' Melnyk

SENIOR EDITOR

Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

EDITOR

Master Sgt. Greg Rudl

STAFF MEMBERS

Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy
Tech. Sgt. Mike Smith
Sgt. Jim Greenhill

BROADCASTERS

Master Sgt. Paul Mouilleseaux
Staff Sgt. Rebecca Doucette
Staff Sgt. Mike Houk

WEBMASTERS

Don Gundermann
Jermaine Walker



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – I'm feeling fat. Very fat. You, know. Minnesota Fats fat. Spare tire? I feel like I'm carrying around one of those heavy, man-high tires that hold a pickup truck about 10 feet off the ground.

You guessed it. It's April. It's the month when I have to take the Army Physical Fitness Test – the dreaded APFT. My date with destiny is April 26. And I'll have to get weighed – no, taped – just before or just after I do the pushups, the sit-ups and the two-mile run.

I just took the damned test, and got taped, last November. That was only two weeks ago, wasn't it? So why do I have to take it again so soon?

Allow me to come out of the closet. I ain't lookin' forward to it. Because I'm fat. Weak. Out of shape.

I just know that, this time, there will be no fooling Sgt. 1st Class Sean Creamer and the other master fitness trainers here at the National Guard Bureau who pump out pushups and sit-ups and run the two miles as if they have just made the U.S. Olympic Team. They're on to me. This time they will not let me pass.

I'm pretty sure I'm not alone. I suspect there are a lot of Soldiers who feel the same way I do. Slow. Weak. Old. Damned near dead. We look forward to the APFT with all of the enthusiasm that we have for knee surgery or a root canal. No one can convince us that it ain't gonna hurt.

Why is that? It's because not everybody loves to run. Not everyone relishes the idea of – gasp – physical exercise. We are all different. Some people like to read. Some people understand computers. Some people like to do their own income tax. Some people, perhaps, like castor oil.

I stand in awe of the people I work with who long to run and row and ride bicycles and compete in biathlons. Some of them run marathons. For them, the Army 10-Miler is a warm-up. They barely break a sweat. But whatever inspiration I get from them does not carry over into my perspiration.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I'm glad that we Soldiers have

the APFT – twice a year for those of us in the Active Guard and Reserve program.

It's called incentive – to remain in uniform; to continue to serve; to stay employed; to keep ourselves in some kind of shape. There's also the matter of pride. We want to pass the test so we don't look like a bunch of weaklings to our peers.

We all know the advantages of keeping fit. We feel better. We sleep better. We are strong when we have to be strong and quick when we have to be quick. We are better able to cope with the stresses of families, jobs, temporary duty and full-blown deployments to some miserably hot and cold places.

Hey, I'm 58. I used to tell people that I have to keep fit to keep up with the kids, the twenty-something and thirty-something Guard Soldiers and Airmen who I used to cover at the National Training Center in California and in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Now I try to stay in shape so I can supervise a half dozen public affairs Soldiers and Airmen who cover those troops for the Guard Bureau.


However, it is a fact of life that many of us do not exercise, or do anything else that does not come as second nature, unless we have to. I'm here to tell you that I pay an

accountant to do my income tax and that I don't run a step or walk a mile or do a single pushup unless my life depends on it.

Eating. That's what I'm good at. I've never seen a buffet with all of the meats and macaroni salads and desserts and eggs and biscuits and gravy that I didn't just love. I may not be world class, but I can hold my own with a knife, fork and spoon.

So, for people like me who are not driven to run 26 miles and 385 yards or ski 20 kilometers across country, having to take the good ol' APFT is a pretty good reason to stay in shape. Having to pass the weight test or body fat test twice a year is a good reason to pass up the biscuits and gravy and all of those cakes and pies.

Face it. We can only say "I'll work out tomorrow" so many times before we know in our hearts and minds that it's time to do it today because the test is only two months away. Then we do it.

Many of us would make a pretty sorry looking lot if we had stopped exercising after basic training; if the APFT wasn't hanging over our heads once or twice a year. I would weigh 300 pounds. My gut would be hanging over my belt by 9 o'clock most mornings. I would be as fat as I'm feeling these days before the April APFT. 

PAGE
2

Nine things to know about joining the VA

By Maj. Andrew J. Chontos, MD, FACS
South Dakota National Guard

The United States has amassed the finest military in history, and war veterans return to a nation proud of its Soldiers.

I meet yesterday's and today's heroes every day – men and women from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, and the heroes of the war on terrorism. I am a full-time physician at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Sioux Falls, S. D., and a surgeon in the 114th Fighter Wing, South Dakota Air National Guard.

Each month, as I interview and examine our wing members, I routinely ask them about enrolling in the Veterans Administration. To my surprise, easily half of our returning veterans miss out on their VA benefits. They are typically young and healthy.

I see some strong reasons for enrolling in the VA. Any Guardmember called to active duty by a federal executive order may qualify for VA healthcare benefits. I believe both the VA and the National Guard should strive for higher enrollment by its OEF and OIF forces.

And you should start learning about your VA benefits even before you enter the theatre. Here are some reasons why:




Chontos

1. The VA door is wide open. For OEF and OIF veterans, your healthcare is currently covered for two years. To learn more, go to www.va.gov/healtheligibility.
2. The VA is where you want it to be. Veterans receive care at nearly 1,600 hospitals and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). To find your nearest VA, try www.va.gov or call the Veterans Health Benefits Service Center 1-877-222-VETS (8387).
3. War is hard on the body. Some Guard members will suffer permanent injury. Other injuries are less noticeable, such as hearing loss or chronic neck and back pain. These losses are sometimes compensated by the VA as service-connected injuries, but the veteran must enroll in the VA and then request a special Compensation and Pension Examination (Comp and Pen Exam).
4. War is hard on the soul. Early estimates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Iraq War were approximately 20 percent, and some believe this number is low. The VA has more experience in treating combat-related mental health problems than any other organization, and a new federal law requires the CBOCs to provide mental health services.
5. War is messy. Some Guard members are exposed to hazardous material. Any unknown chemical contact or inhalation or exposure to radioactive materials should be reported to the VA. You should request a separate Comp and Pen Exam.
6. War will come again. Many Guardmembers will re-deploy to OEF and OIF, and future wars will call on the Guard's strength. Therefore, it's a

good idea to enroll in the VA while your health is good. If you are injured during a subsequent deployment, you can file a Comp and Pen claim.

7. Enrollment is easy. Enrollment requires completing the 1010EZ, Application for Health Benefits. You can pick up a copy at your local VA, print a copy at www.va.gov/1010ez.htm or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

8. Don't just enroll, get vested. The simple first step is completing the 1010EZ enrollment. The more difficult step is scheduling a day for a full vesting examination. On that day you will have a Base-Line Medical Exam performed including a physical, medication review, X-rays, and lab work.

9. Everyone needs a safety net. Like body armor, the VA may protect you from disaster. Consider a 25-year-old Guardmember who has returned from a tour to her truck-driving job in Ohio. She's held this job, with healthcare benefits, for five years. A year after returning, she contracts West Nile virus. She cannot work and loses her job and her health insurance. She's ill for six months and hospitalized three times. Her medical care exceeds \$150,000. Fortunately, this Soldier did several things right. Returning to her normal life post-deployment and maintaining private health insurance was the right move. In addition, this veteran applied for VA benefits post deployment, completed her vesting examination, and continued her healthcare despite loss of private health insurance. And since her enrollment "grandfathered" her into the system, she will likely have this safety net available during her lifetime. 

Arkansas engineer battalion reaches IED milestone

Clears 500th in Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Chris Durney
Arkansas National Guard

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – Less than six months into a yearlong deployment to Iraq, the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion has found and cleared its 500th improvised explosive device.

The 875th deployed to Iraq in late September 2006 and is tasked with a critical route clearance and route sanitation mission along a major military and Iraqi commerce artery in central Iraq. Staff Sgt. Adam Edmons of Floral, Ark., made the historic 500th find while on patrol Mar. 6 with 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company.

According to Capt. David Moore, Alpha Company commander, the 500th was significant, but the 499th was a more difficult find due to the way it was concealed. The sharp eyes of Sgt. Zachary Mullins, of Cherry Valley, Ark., spotted the dangerous

roadside bomb before it could be detonated by terrorists.

Each of the IEDs were rendered harmless by an explosive ordinance detachment before the patrol continued with a mission that lasted over eight hours. Alpha and Charlie Companies operate out of Logistics Support Area Anaconda, near Balad. The battalion headquarters and the 131st Engineer Company are located at Camp Striker, near Baghdad.

"We honor all of the 499 finds and clears that got us to 500," said Lt. Col. Patricia Anslow, 875th battalion commander, "but we are especially proud of the 500th because it is a significant milestone in the battalion's fight against IEDs."

Over 400 Arkansas troops are deployed with the 875th, which is also made up of over 200 Soldiers from Vermont and Indiana Army National Guard units. The battalion mobilized in March 2006, and is slated to return from Operation Iraqi Freedom in the fall.



Photo by Master Sgt. Phillip Jones

Engine change

Personnel from the South Carolina National Guard's 751st Maintenance Battalion replace a blown engine on a damaged Border Patrol vehicle in March. Palmetto Guard Soldiers are rotating into Arizona on annual training for Operation Jump Start to assist U.S. Border Patrol agents along the 262-mile Tucson Sector of the U.S. – Mexico border.

From page 1: GATES TO TAGS

formations must always be on call in case of a domestic emergency or natural disaster."

The National Guard Bureau has addressed this by arranging for states to share equipment when needed. "But it is understood that mutual support agreements between states are not the long-term solution," Gates said. "Reconstituting and resetting the Guard and Reserve, in particular the nation's ground forces, is a top priority for the Department of Defense."

The department has asked for almost \$9 billion in the 2007 and 2008 fiscal years to address the equipment readiness issue.

"The Department of Defense is committed to providing adequate resources so [the National Guard] remains a truly operational force," Gates said. "The goal of this program is a National Guard that will be fully manned, fully trained and fully equipped and fully capable of taking on a range of traditional and nontraditional missions both at home and abroad. This will ensure that the Guard remains, 'Always Ready, Always There.'"

He said that he had two concerns about the nation's military before he became defense secretary. "One was that the Army and the Marine Corps were not big enough. ... Second was the use and condition of the Guard," Gates said. "The high tempo of operations and frequency of deployments in recent years has created a stress on the force."

The Army and the Marine Corps will increase by 92,000 personnel over the next five years. "One effect of this increase ... should be that with a larger pool of ground forces available it will be less necessary to call on Guard formations as often for overseas deployment," he said.

Returning to the nation's capital after almost 14 years, Gates said he was struck by changes in America's governmental and military operations – and, notably, in the National Guard.

He was president of Texas A&M University before returning to D.C.

"One of the most dramatic shifts has been in the role and the capabilities of the National Guard," he said. "For much of the last century ... the Guard was ... considered a strategic reserve standing by in case of a mass mobilization. It was not a priority for funding and equipment, even though its members had served in every conflict since the Revolutionary War."

"Since Sept. 11, we've seen a remarkable transformation ... from a strategic reserve to a fully operational reserve. It is an integral – indeed, indispensable – part of America's pool of forces."

"In Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, when I share a meal with our troops, they're unafraid to say what they think and to criticize, almost always constructively. I hope we never change that, because it means American democracy is planted firmly in the spirit and the

hearts of our Citizen-Soldiers."

Gates recounted meeting with Minnesota Army Guard Soldiers whose tours of duty had been extended.

"Despite the difficult circumstances that they were in, I was struck by their positive attitude," Gates said. "They were proud of what they had accomplished in a region that had once been one of Iraq's most dangerous."

Guardmembers' families are also giving to this country, Gates said. "Their quiet but noble performance deserves our attention and our gratitude. The support of these family members as well as their employers and our communities has been crucial to keeping our best Citizen-Soldiers in the Guard."

The Army National Guard retained 18 percent more troops than its goal in 2006. "Even with

the strain of extended deployments and homeland security and border missions, the Army Guard was able to meet its annual goal four months early," Gates said. "The willingness of patriotic young Americans to sign up for the Guard has been equally impressive, given the high likelihood of dangerous duty overseas."

The Army National Guard achieved 99 percent of its recruiting goal in 2006, signing up 19,000 more Soldiers than during the previous year. "In what has arguably been the most cost-effective recruiting effort in the military, the Army Guard has seen a net increase of some 14,000 Soldiers over the past year," Gates said. "This strong showing is a tribute to the men and women who choose to join and stay in the Guard."

"Since the beginning of this con-

flict, we have asked a tremendous amount of our Citizen-Soldiers," he said. "The men and women of the Guard have responded ... with real spirit and resilience. They have done everything asked of them and more. I thank them ... for their service."

Gates is the only career officer in the history of the Central Intelligence Agency to join as an entry-level employee and rise to become its director.

"He listens. He's smart," said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, while introducing Gates to the adjutants general. "He is a decisive, visionary leader, is sensitive to the Citizen-Soldier and does appreciate and understand his critical role and essentiality in the defense of America."

The AGAUS represents the senior leadership of the Army and Air National Guard of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

According to the AGAUS, the National Guard is the world's 11th largest army and its 5th largest air force. Providing 38 percent of the total U.S. military force structure, the National Guard includes more than 458,000 personnel serving in 3,600 communities nationwide.

The National Guard has provided America's homeland defense for more than 370 years, has been a part of every war the nation has fought and is at the forefront during domestic emergencies and disasters.

"America's Citizen-Soldiers are unique in the history of armies. Not just because of their patriotism, dedication and skill, but because they're American citizens first and foremost, and thus they're not overly impressed with rank, and they're unafraid to ask questions or offer advice or criticism."
-Secretary Robert M. Gates

Photo by Cherie A. Thurlby

ALASKA

Reporters from the Washington-based Polish Radio and TV toured the missile defense facility at Fort Greely Feb. 21. Reporters interviewed and ate lunch with Soldiers of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion. Made up entirely of Guard Soldiers from the Last Frontier State, the battalion has the dual mission of manning the missile defense system and guarding the complex. The two Polish media outlets have a combined audience of 14 million people. The timing of the visit was significant because Poland and the Czech Republic are deciding if their countries will agree to host a missile defense capability.

ARKANSAS

The Natural State's 1st Squadron, 151st Cavalry Regiment, part of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, spent nearly a week providing security for the city of Dumas in the wake of Feb. 24 tornados. The unit deployed over 100 Soldiers to support local authorities. Up to 130 Arkansas Guard Soldiers patrolled the area, but that number was cut back to approximately 50 because of the overwhelming support from surrounding communities.

GEORGIA

Peach State Gov. Sonny Perdue recognized the more than 12,000 men and women of the Georgia National Guard in ceremonies held at the Georgia state capitol March 6. More than 100 Georgia Army and Air Guardmembers were in the rotunda when the governor presented a proclamation to Maj. Gen. David Poythress, Georgia's adjutant general, declaring the day as "National Guard Day in Georgia." The governor also was presented the Charles Dick Medal of Merit from the National Guard Association of the United States.

HAWAII

Members of the Aloha State Air Guard's 154th Wing took part in Cope Tiger in Thailand from Jan. 29 to Feb. 9. Cope Tiger is an exercise between the Royal Thai, the Republic of Singapore and U.S. Air Forces as well as the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps at Korat and Udorn Air Bases. The exercise included large force employment, air defense, civic assistance programs, and more than 1,250 sorties.

IOWA

Approximately 120 Soldiers from the Hawkeye State's 833rd Engineer Company, formerly B Company B, 224th Engineer Battalion, were alerted for possible mobilization for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Based in Ottumwa, the unit's mission is to increase the combat effectiveness of U.S. and coalition forces by removing obstacles, identifying and reducing minefields and explosive devices, executing mobility missions, emplacing barriers, constructing protective positions, and performing infantry missions. This unit was last deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom from October 2004 to December 2005.

KENTUCKY

Bluegrass State Guardmembers, in conjunction with state and local emergency responders, conducted an earthquake preparedness exercise from Feb. 26 to March 3. Primarily focused in western Kentucky, the exercise simulated a major earthquake along the New Madrid fault and tested the Guard's statewide communications and information capabilities. It also validated command and control relationships among state and local agencies.

LOUISIANA

The Pelican State in mid-February trans-

★ Guarding America ★

ferred \$2,595,326.82 to Oregon as reimbursement for Oregon National Guard troops who supported Hurricane Katrina and Rita recovery efforts in 2005. The money will be used for the operation and maintenance of Oregon armories and other facilities.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Bay State held a homecoming and awards ceremony for some 25 members of the 685th Finance Detachment March 4. The unit returned in December after being deployed for more than a year to Kosovo where they provided military pay support, commercial vendor services, and finance database maintenance.

The state also held a farewell ceremony for approximately 50 members of 151st Regional Support Group Feb. 24. Those Guard troops will deploy for one year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 151st will operate a base defense operations center, responsible for base security, in Iraq.

MISSISSIPPI

A Magnolia State Guardsman was honored Feb. 25 by having his image placed on the hood of a NASCAR Nextel Cup car – the No. 25 National Guard/GMAC Chevrolet driven by Casey Mears in California. Staff Sgt. Quinton Martin, of Gulfport, was selected as the National Guard's "Hero of the Year" for a year-long campaign launched by the Jackson Hewitt Tax Service.

MISSOURI

Show Me State Staff Sgt. Robert Bertram and the 1175th Military Police Company were honored by The Salvation Army Feb. 26. Bertram and the 1175th were presented with a certificate of appreciation for their work with The Salvation Army during the summer storms last July and the winter storms in December.

The 1175th's Soldiers delivered meals prepared at Salvation Army community centers to emergency shelters. They also delivered blankets during December's storms and power outages. Bertram coordinated the efforts as a liaison between the 1175th and The Salvation Army.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Granite State Gov. John Lynch and other state leaders joined families and friends during a Feb. 11 departure ceremony for 16 Army Guard Soldiers preparing for duty in Afghanistan. The Soldiers, with various military specialties, will support a mentorship program with the Afghan National Army. The embedded training team will train the Afghans in reconnaissance, engineering and other operations.

NEW YORK

About 100 troops from the Empire State assisted in snow removal in mid-February in upstate New York, where winter storms left more than 10 feet of snow in some areas. More than 100 troops helped remove snow in Oswego and Onondaga counties. The task force used bucket loaders, dump trucks, Humvees and other support vehicles for its mission.

OHIO

Cadets from the Naval Sea Cadet Corps of Columbus in the Buckeye State recently visited Soldiers from the Newark-based Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade, for some Army Warrior Training. The 371st, along with Soldiers from the 211th Field Maintenance Company, instructed the cadets in an array of Soldier tasks to include searching vehicles, attempting to enter a base camp, detaining and searching personnel and vehicles, and administering first aid.

OREGON

Beaver State emergency responders in Eugene called on the 102nd Civil Support Team to support a training exercise at the University of Oregon's Autzen Stadium Feb. 28. About 20 members took part. The team is trained to augment emergency personnel following a massive natural disaster or suspected terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction.

RHODE ISLAND

The University of Rhode Island and the College of the Bahamas signed an agreement in Nassau creating a joint program in marine affairs Feb. 7 thanks to the Ocean State National Guard's State Partnership Program.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Mount Rushmore State's Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve presented its prestigious 2007 Pro Patria Award to the state of South Dakota Feb. 15 during the South Dakota National Guard's Legislative Dining Out in Pierre. "Pro Patria" is Latin "for the country." The award is given to an individual, company or organization that supports employees who are in the National Guard and Reserve.

VIRGINIA

Old Dominion State Soldiers across the Shenandoah Valley have been alerted for possible mobilization. The units include Headquarters of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, based in Staunton, and the 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry from Harrisonburg, Woodstock, Charlottesville, Winchester, Warrenton, Leesburg, Manassas and Fredericksburg.

WYOMING

Thirty-five Soldiers of the Equality State's Medical Command in Cheyenne deployed to Panama in mid-March to support New Horizons 2007. The New Horizons missions are annual deployments to Latin American nations to provide humanitarian support in rural locations and improve relations with the host nations. Medical Command personnel are providing medical, dental, optometric, and veterinary services in three communities for two weeks.

Family reunion

Sgt. 1st Class Keron Johnson of the 250th Personnel Services Detachment, New Jersey Army National Guard, reunites with daughters Sapphira (left), 12, and Mikayla, 15. The 250th, along with the 50th Personnel Services Battalion, returned recently to New Jersey from a yearlong deployment in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith

Air Force aeromedical evacuation team members load a patient onto a Mississippi Air National Guard C-17 Globemaster III at Balad Air Base, Iraq, on March 3 during a scheduled flight to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Below: 1st Lt. Wes Carter at the controls.



Did you know ...

that the **critical care air transport teams** in this article can care for up to three critical condition patients at a time? There are four teams assigned to Operation Iraqi Freedom and two teams assigned to Operation Enduring Freedom. Each team has a critical care doctor, a critical care nurse and a respiratory therapist.

Fighting chance

Aerovac team scrambles to save Soldier's life

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

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — They flew at night and into the next day from Iraq nonstop to the United States. Fifteen hours and many time zones later, they handed over their precious cargo in Maryland: a Soldier wounded in combat.

Then, to the hum of jet engines, they packed their gear and returned to fly similar missions again and again.

Members of the Air National Guard flew directly from Balad Air Base, Iraq, to Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Feb. 7 to transport a critically injured Soldier to stateside medical personnel in an effort to save his life.

The Soldier had sustained life threatening injuries from an improvised explosive device. His best chances for survival were in the hands of neurologists thousands of miles away.

An all-Guard critical care air transport team (CCATT) from the 332nd Expeditionary Operational Support Squadron and a C-17 Globemaster III aircrew from the Mississippi Air Guard's 172nd Airlift Wing changed their schedule to fly the Soldier to the States.

Air Guard Col. Jerry Fenwick, the critical care team physician, said his team had never before flown a critical care mission nonstop from Iraq to Andrews. But after consulting with neurosurgeons in Balad and Maryland, they agreed the Soldier's condition warranted the nonstop flight.

Fenwick coordinated with the command post and the C-17 crew, which had just flown in from Germany with the 791st Expeditionary Aeromedical Squadron. Members of the 791st also joined the mission.

"When we got on the ground, they said they had a flight plan change for us," said 1st Lt. Wes Carter, a pilot from Mississippi. "So we went to the command post and found out we were going direct to Andrews."

The longer flight would require an aerial refueling — something that is generally not done during normal medical flights. It was the first direct flight from Iraq to Andrews for the Mississippi Guard, which transports a large number of sick, wounded and critical care patients out of Balad to Germany and then flies to the States.

Carter said the crew quickly filed a new flight plan, took on more fuel and boarded

the medical team and patient. They took off into the Iraqi night with aircraft commander Maj. Mark Crossman, pilots Capt. Lee Miller and Maj. Ed Evans and loadmasters Tech. Sgt. Dean McDill and Master Sgt. Allen Randle.

Fenwick's CCATT team included critical care nurse Maj. Dave Cox of the Indiana Air Guard and respiratory therapist Staff Sgt. Nicole Costigan from New Hampshire. Together they constantly monitored the wounded Soldier.

Their challenge was providing critical care for 15 hours in a cargo bay. That was equivalent to nearly a full day at civilian intensive care units on the ground and not traveling at 500 mph, Fenwick said.

The Mississippi pilots said their biggest obstacle was the refueling. Their C-17 needed 100,000 pounds of fuel from a 100th Air Refueling Wing tanker out of England.

"Aerial refueling puts a whole new challenge into it," Carter said. "We had already flown five hours from Ramstein to Balad, and we flew six hours from Balad to meet the tanker."

Everything worked out well and the C-17 got its fuel. The pilots rested throughout the flight by alternating time at the controls.

Carter said it felt good to know that the military spends so much time and effort to bring critical care patients back home to the best care possible. "The Soldier might not have made it if he had not arrived at Andrews as quickly as he did," he said.

The Soldier was handed over to stateside specialists and was downgraded from critical to serious condition. The CCATTs, air crew and aeromedics had given him a fighting chance.

Fenwick's all-Guard CCATT team returned to Iraq and continues to fly lifesaving missions to Germany and back. They fly into Ramstein every 36 to 48 hours. The Air Force has seven other CCATT teams performing similar missions across Southwest Asia.

As good as these special teams are, they cannot perform their missions without the support of aeromedical evacuation squadrons and aircrews who are conducting extensive operations overseas.

The squadrons also transport the walking wounded and patients that don't require critical care. They configure the aircraft with litter systems, hang power and oxygen lines and connect other medical equipment.

"The Guard and the Reserves are vital participants in the CCATT and aeromedical missions," said Fenwick. "They pull in experienced medical professionals and critical care specialists from the civilian sector."

Air National Guard's defining moments - April

1908: Aviation enthusiasts in the 1st Company, Signal Corps, New York National Guard, organized an "aeronautical corps" to learn ballooning.

1946: Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, the commander of the Air Defense Command, wrote the chief of the National Guard Bureau that "The mission of the air national security of the United States . . . has been assigned in large measure to the Air National Guard."

1952: Approximately 400 members of the Colo-

rado ANG's 120th Fighter Squadron participated as human guinea pigs in an atomic bomb test, "Tumbler Snapper Shot III," at Yucca Flats, Nev., while on temporary duty from Clovis AFB, N.M.

1968: Brig. Gen. Willard W. Millikan, the commander of the 113th Tactical Fighter Wing, District of Columbia ANG, was assigned as the commander of the 833rd Air Division, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C. Millikan and his ANG unit had been mobilized during the Pueblo Crisis.

1977: Operation Creek Party, the ANG volun-

teer KC-97L tanker rotation in Germany, was terminated after 10 years.

1984: Astronaut Terry J. Hart, a Texas Air Guard F-4C pilot, served as a mission specialist on the Space Shuttle Challenger (STS-41C). The Challenger landed safely on April 13.

1992: Col. Roberta V. Mills, a nurse originally from the Tennessee Air Guard, became the first woman ever promoted to the general officer rank in the ANG.

-Compiled by Dr. Charles J. Gross





Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Arnold L. Punaro, chairman of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, gives interim report March 1.

From page 1: COMMISSION

agencies.

"You need everybody on the same team," said Punaro, a retired Marine Corps major general. "You need everybody working off the same playbook. You need the offense, you need the defense, you need the special teams."

"We don't have that now. We've got stovepipes. We've got the governors. We've got NORTHCOM (U.S. Northern Command). And they're not working together. With the threats we face, particularly here in the homeland, we cannot use this sandlot pickup team approach."

Under Congressional charter, the 13 commissioners are studying the National Defense Enhancement and National Guard Empowerment Act first introduced before Congress last year and reintroduced during the current session. The act could make sweeping changes in how the National Guard does business.

"We're looking at the overall broad national security and trying to break down these institutional stovepipes and turf," Punaro said. "We need to ... promote integration, promote joint-ness and promote accountability."

The March 1 interim report makes 26 findings and 23 recommendations in six broad areas. Congress could act on all, some or none of the recommendations. A final report is due Jan. 31.

"We are, in fact, putting our citizens at greater risk and our economy at greater risk by taking these traditional Washington-stovepipe-bureaucratic approaches," Punaro said. "The problem is so bad that it's going to compel the leadership to do something about it."

Only eight of the recommendations require Congressional legislation. "The rest ... could be implemented today by the executive branch," Punaro said. "People don't need to wait around ... they can move out smartly."

Most of the issues requiring legislative changes concern the National Guard Bureau Charter.

Change is urgent, Punaro said.

The National Guard and the Reserve have mobilized more than 550,000 troops since Sept. 11, he said. "They're performing exceedingly well against an array of missions – warfighting, peacekeeping, stability operations, civil support."

The National Guard is now an operational reserve – a predominantly part-time force

Recommendations affecting the Guard

The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves has delivered its interim report to Congress. Among the recommendations affecting the National Guard:

- In a new advisory role, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau should advise the U.S. Northern Command commander, the Secretaries of the Air Force and Army, and, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense regarding gaps between federal and state emergency response capabilities.
- The budget information for National Guard training and equipment for military assistance to civil authorities and other domestic operations should be included in appropriate sections of the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force budgets. There should not be separate budget documents for National Guard training and equipment for military assistance to civil authorities and other domestic operations.
- Laws and procedures should be put into place to enable the president and a governor to consent in advance that National Guard officers called to federal duty are not relieved of their National Guard state commission, can continue to command National Guard troops, and are exempt from the provisions of the Posse Comitatus Act.
- The DoD should develop protocols that allow governors to direct the efforts of federal military assets responding to an emergency such as a natural disaster.
- The NGB should be made a joint activity of the Department of Defense, rather than a joint bureau of the Army and Air Force.
- The statute authorizing the NGB Charter should be amended to make the Chief of the NGB a senior advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, through the Chairman, to the Secretary of Defense, for matters pertaining to the National Guard in its nonfederal role.
- The grade of the Chief of the NGB should be increased to general, O-10, and the position should be reevaluated periodically to ensure that the duties required to be performed by the CNGB remain commensurate with that rank.
- The Chief of the NGB should not be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Either the commander or the deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command should be a National Guard or Reserve officer at all times.
- U.S. Northern Command should develop plans for consequence management and support to civil authorities that account for state-level activities and incorporate the use of National Guard and Reserve forces as first military responders.
- The DoD should strive to ensure that Reserve and National Guard flag and general officers have the opportunity to serve in joint assignments, obtain joint experience, and acquire joint qualifications to compete for promotion to O-9 and O-10 positions, including combatant commanders and senior joint and service positions.

used on a day-to-day basis, with an active duty state of readiness. It is no longer a strategic reserve.

"That's a huge paradigm shift," Punaro said. "And yet our commission has found that [the Department of Defense] has not made any of the underlying changes in the laws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, funding and equipment to make it truly a ready operational reserve. ... Resourcing has not yet paced with requirements. ..."

"[DoD] has declared that we have this operational reserve, but they haven't made the changes necessary to ensure that such an operational reserve is sustainable," Punaro said. "We have concluded that ... it is not sustainable."

"If major changes are not made, the Guard and Reserves' ... capability to carry out their missions will continue to deteriorate."

Punaro used equipment readiness as an example. "The equipment readiness of our Guard and Reserve today is totally unacceptable," he said.

Some 88 percent of Army National Guard and some 45 percent of Air National Guard units that are back at home are not ready due to equipment deficiencies. Some National Guard equipment left in Iraq and Afghanistan might not be replaced for four years.

"This is worse than the worst readiness days of the hollow force in the late '70s and the early '80s," Punaro said.

Worse, these deficiencies only represent warfighting readiness because no one has established standards for its readiness for homeland defense. "No one in the government has been willing to say we're the ones responsible for figuring out what are the requirements here," Punaro said, calling this discovery one of the commission's biggest surprises.

"Probably the fundamental recommendation is that we have to identify the critical requirements for homeland defense and homeland security," he said. "We can't know what our deficiencies are until we ... figure out what our requirements are."

This is a vital task, he said.

Asked if it would take a major crisis for the commission's recommendations to be acted on, he said, "I think that would be an indictable offense, if our government failed to act on these compelling problems. ... I personally believe ... [that] if you look at the 15 [domestic emergency] planning scenarios that we have to deal with, some of them are so horrible to contemplate that if our government doesn't get its act together to put us in a better position to protect the lives and property of our citizens ... governments are going to fall."

The secretary of Homeland Security is supposed to identify civil support requirements and provide them to the DoD, which declares them valid or invalid and pays for the valid ones, Punaro said. He said that is not happening and that the many agencies tasked with homeland security are not communicating with each other.

"[DoD] has long taken the position if they're ready for the away game, if they can fight the big one overseas, then they're ready for the home game, and that all of the homeland requirements can be met as a subset of their warfighting capabilities," he said.

The 15 scenarios of potential domestic emergencies include earthquakes, hurricanes and terrorist attacks. "An M1A1 Abrams tank and a Bradley Fighting Vehicle is not going to help you in those types of situations," Punaro said, calling the Defense policy "a fatally flawed assumption. ... We are not ready, we are not prepared. ..."

"There needs to be a massive exchange of personnel and coordination [between agencies that play a homeland defense role.] Prior planning, prior coordination, prior training agreements is the key to success."

Federal and state governments and agencies must pull together with the National Guard to address America's homeland security needs, the commission said.

"Our recommendations look at ... pulling together the whole national security team ... which is more than just the National Guard," Punaro said. "It's the whole Department of Defense. It's the Department of Homeland Security. It's the National Guard as an integral and extremely important part of that team. It's the U.S. Northern Command. It's the states and their governors. Without the governors, none of this will work."

Among the commission's 23 recommendations:

A bipartisan Council of Governors should advise the secretary of Defense, secretary of Homeland Security and White House Homeland Security Council about National Guard and civil support issues.

"The governors are on the front lines," Punaro said. Homeland emergencies "are best handled at the lowest level possible."

Governors should be allowed to lead federal troops in domestic emergencies.

"Governors should be able to command all forces, all resources in their state, not just their Guard," Punaro said. "They should be able to command the Marine Reserve, the Army Reserve ... the 82nd Airborne, the 1st Marine Division."

"This may be a big gulp for some people, but ... we allow the U.S. military to come under the command of foreign commanders when we're fighting overseas, and we can trust our governors as much as we trust a foreign commander. ..."

"Our taxpayers ... don't care who it is. ... They expect that their property, their lives, the economy, the quality and the way of life is going to be protected, and the federal government ought to look at it through that lens. ... We have put our citizens at greater risk due to the Washington bureaucracy."

National Guard officers called to federal duty should be able to retain their state commissions, continue to command National Guard troops as well as federal troops – a practice called dual-hatting -- and be exempt from the Posse Comitatus Act. The act limits federal power to use troops for law enforcement.

A majority of U.S. Northern Command positions should be filled by people with reserve component qualifications. The commander or deputy should always be a Guardmember or Reservist.

The DoD should provide joint education and assignments for reserve component officers.

The National Guard Bureau should be a joint activity of the DoD.

An amended NGB Charter should make the chief of the National Guard Bureau a senior advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of Defense and an advisor to the combatant commands and Homeland Security department.

The chief of the restructured National Guard Bureau should be a four-star general.

Read more at www.ngb.army.mil

Rapid response Alabama Guard provides order after tornado rips through town

By Sgt. Taylor Barbaree
Alabama National Guard

ENTERPRISE, Ala. — March 1 will long be remembered in this southeast Alabama town of over 23,000 for the devastation and broken lives caused by a category 3 tornado.

The deadly twister, part of a severe weather system that stretched from the Florida Panhandle to Missouri, ripped a half-mile path through the downtown area and gutted the focal point of the community when it hit Enterprise High School. In the aftermath of the 30 seconds of fury, nine deaths were confirmed, including eight high school students. The tornado did millions of dollars of damage to homes and businesses.

"I have lived here for 49 years and although I have worked many natural disasters during my time in the Guard, this has been more personal to me because this is my hometown," said Lt. Col. Nicky Medley, commander of 160 Alabama Army Guard troops rapidly placed on state active duty by Gov. Bob Riley.

"We were able to mobilize Soldiers rapidly and physically have them here within an hour after this tragedy. Most of the Soldiers that are part of this security task force are volunteers that just wanted to

do something to help," Medley said. "They have been very motivated about this mission as well as sensitive to the needs of the residents here in Enterprise."

The Soldiers helped civilian authorities by conducting roving patrols and manning traffic control points near the city's hardest hit areas. At the high school campus, referred to as "ground zero," Soldiers escorted teachers to their classrooms and helped parents and students find their vehicles in the school's ravaged parking area.

On the third day, they helped provide security as President Bush toured the area and met with families of the dead students.

"I really appreciate them providing me with this opportunity to get back to my classroom and retrieve my student roster complete with my students' phone numbers. I want to call each one to let them know that I am thinking about them," said teacher Jim McClellan, who was with his students in one of the hardest hit areas of the school. "I was fortunate that all of my students were OK."

"It hurts to see my high school this way," said Sgt. Ronald Acreman, a 2000 Enterprise graduate and a Soldier in B Company, 1st Battalion, 131st Armor. "I have been called



Photos by Sgt. Taylor Barbaree

Alabama Sgt. Caleb Pope escorts parents to a vehicle that was damaged by the twister in the Enterprise High School parking lot. Below: The deadly category 3 tornado caused severe damage to the gym and the athletics department.



up several times for state active duty missions similar to what I am being asked to do here, but I never thought I would have to pull duty at my alma mater."

Capt. David Van Horn, the C Company commander, said many of the Soldiers had responded to natural disasters before.

"A good portion of the Soldiers that are working 12-hour shifts each day during this mission were called up for either Hurricane Ivan (in 2004) or Hurricane Katrina (in 2005)," Van Horn said. "Having boots on the ground with experience in this type of operation is undoubtedly comforting to me and helpful to the residents affected by this disaster."

Medley also indicated that the mission has given Soldiers in the ar-


mor battalion the chance to work together before some of them are mobilized for possible overseas duty this summer.

Enterprise Mayor Kenneth Boswell commended the Alabama Guard's role.

"The Guard has been exceptional, and I really appreciate the manpower that they have been able to provide to us in working with our police department," he said. "They are exactly what they portray, 'Citizen-Soldiers helping neighbors in times of need'."

The Guard Soldiers called up for the disaster are assigned to the battalion's units in the neighboring

communities of Hartford and Florala as well as in Calera. The battalion's headquarters is in Ozark.

Soldiers from the 31st Forward Support Battalion's Headquarters Company in Enterprise were also part of the task force commanded by the 62nd Troop Command. Members of the 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment, who are serving as a rear detachment while the battalion is deployed to Iraq, also provided assistance. 

Georgia on our mind

Guard helps town pick up the pieces

AMERICUS, Ga. - Members of the Georgia National Guard were called to duty in the wake of a deadly tornado that ripped through portions of southwest Georgia March 1.

More than 130 Guardsmen participated, including members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry from Americus.

The Soldiers were supported by the 148th Support Battalion along with aviation assets from the 185th Aviation Battalion. Air Guard support came from the 283rd Combat Communications Squadron, Dobbs Air Reserve Base; 202nd Engineering and Installation Squadron, Macon; 165th Airlift Wing, Savannah; and 116th Air Control Wing, Warner Robins.

"The Army and Air Guardsmen here this weekend couldn't have performed better," said Maj. Gen. David B. Poythress, Georgia's adjutant general. "Thanks to the cooperation of Guardsmen and police, there have been zero law enforcement problems."

"Our mission here is to assist

and provide stability and support for local and state law enforcement agencies," said Capt. Brian Lassetter, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry.

Originally called in March 2, Guardmembers manned 36 checkpoints in and around devastated portions of Americus. They helped police to enforce the "dusk till dawn" curfew and to keep traffic and pedestrians away from unsafe areas, Lassetter said.

Army Guard medevac support also helped to evacuate wounded civilians and those displaced from Sumter Regional Hospital which was forced to shut down due to extensive damage from a direct hit by the tornado, according to Lassetter.

In addition, the Air Guard provided communications support and high-powered light sets and generators around checkpoints where power was out, said Lassetter.

In remarks to troops gathered at the National Guard Armory in Americus, Maj. Gen. Terry Nesbitt, commander, Georgia Army Guard, applauded the efforts of Guardmembers in response to the tragedy.




Photo by Pfc. Adam Dean

President Bush greets Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen D. Mein, offering words of encouragement and of appreciation for the Soldier's service. More than 130 Georgia Guardmembers responded to tornado devastation in southwest Georgia.

"Your presence here really adds a sense of security to the people of Americus," he said.

Spc. Roberto Martinez, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, was one of the Guardsmen pulling duty at a checkpoint.

"I was impressed how the people around here reacted," Martinez said. "I saw everybody helping one another out a lot, from the people of Americus to the police and the Guard." 

Called out

A sampling of current state active duty missions

New York: Security missions and command and control at train stations, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, JFK and LaGuardia airports; providing key asset and infrastructure protection at nuclear power plants

Louisiana: Special response team in New Orleans to support the police department for operation Crescent Guard; conducting roving patrols and static checkpoints

California: Force protection for several key installations

New Jersey: Security and infrastructure protection of key assets at nuclear power generation plants

Iowa: Winter storm response operations in Burlington; mission is to provide generator power support and water missions

Massachusetts: Security and infrastructure protection of key assets at a nuclear power plant

Kentucky: Water purification for Knott County due to a county-wide water shortage

New Mexico: Furnishing potable water and equipment to various communities as a result of annual drought conditions

Florida: Supporting Florida Division of Law Enforcement assisting with assessment of Florida's seaport inspection program

Hawaii: Earthquake recovery efforts on the west coasts of Hawaii and Maui

Recruiting

Taking care of people is key

Army National Guard recruiters enjoy challenges of their rewarding careers

Story, photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy
National Guard Bureau

The car show was in full swing with new models displayed throughout the convention hall, each one polished to mirror perfection. A blur of people filed past, looking at the latest automotive offerings, kicking a few tires and testing various features of the vehicles on display.

Intermixed with the cars and trucks was one that looked startlingly different. Using a standard military Humvee as the base, the vehicle was something entirely dissimilar to the standard model of the military workhorse. A stereo system blasted out a variety of music as visitors played video games on a plasma TV wired into the cargo area of the truck. Custom gauges and seating, along with a diamond plated dashboard, tricked out the interior. A custom paint job in the gray and tan pattern of the Army Combat Uniform finished off the truck.

The truck was part of the Maryland Army National Guard recruiting booth on display at the Baltimore International Auto Show, one of many events where recruiters work. The tricked out Humvee, dubbed “The Minuteman,” the Na-

tional Guard’s symbol, is one tool that Maryland Army Guard recruiters use to attract potential recruits.

“We’ve had this at numerous events, high school homecomings, all kinds of recruiting events, and its always a crowd pleaser and it always draws the people,” said Sgt. Chris Parker, a recruiter with the Maryland Guard.

“It gives you an opportunity to just talk and interject some things about the Guard,” said Parker. “Things like, ‘Hey you know this was built by National Guard Soldiers? You could actually do this, one weekend a month, two weeks a year.’ It gives us a foot in the door, and it’s appealing to the young people. They like it.”

“I treat every [potential recruit] like I treated my Soldiers when I was a squad leader or platoon sergeant. You treat them like they’re Soldiers. You take responsibility for them and force them to take responsibility for themselves ...”

-Sgt. 1st Class Steven Chillas

For many, being a recruiter is one of the toughest, most challenging jobs in the military. It’s also the most important, they claim.

For many recruiters, meeting people and telling them about the Guard is one of the perks of the job.

“I like interacting with people,” said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Chillas, a recruiter with the Delaware Army Guard. “I like being a positive

representation of the military. I like to break people’s perceptions of recruiting as far as recruiters being dishonest.”

Chillas’s method for changing those perceptions comes down to simply taking care of Soldiers, one of the tenets of the non-commissioned officer corps.

“I treat every [potential recruit] like I treated my Soldiers when I was a squad leader or platoon sergeant,” he said. “You treat them like they’re Soldiers. You take responsibility for them and force them to take responsibility for themselves, and you end up with a positive Soldier going into the Guard and that transfers over to the unit when they finally get to their unit. The Soldiers are motivated when they come back from training.”

Chillas, who served as a combat engineer and a drill sergeant on active duty before transferring to the Guard in 2005, goes a step further than many when it comes to taking care of those he recruits and pointing them in a direction to follow.

“I take many of my recruits to get situated in college,” said Chillas.

For many, money for college is a big draw for enlisting, and Chillas said he wants to make sure that those who he enlists get to take advantage of the benefits.

“I don’t want to enlist somebody and give them the college money and the bonus and everything and then have (him or her) not be able to go to college,” he said, adding that he wants to make sure that they don’t end up like himself when it comes to education.

“I’ve been going to college on and off for 13 years,” said Chillas. “I have enough credits probably for an associate degree, but I don’t have a degree yet. And one of the things I try to push on Soldiers is to make sure they get their education taken care of.”

There is a lot that goes into being a recruiter. One aspect is long days.

“An average day is usually pretty long,” said Parker. “I’m usually out and about by 8 o’clock, usually not finishing up until 7 or 8 at night. Time management is pretty critical and crucial to recruiting. It does get tiring, and it can be exhausting at times.”

But those long days can have other benefits.

“I’d prefer to be jumping out of airplanes,” said Chillas, who is Airborne and Air Assault qualified and has earned the Sapper tab as well. “But on the same token my son was born Oct. 22, 2001. I was there when he was born, then I was gone for a month and came back for four or five days for Christmas. Then I was gone for two months for Drill Sergeant School and then was a drill sergeant for two years. I didn’t really get to know my son until he was 2½ or 3 years old. My daughter was the same way. Now, I get to see my kids every night. That’s the greatest



Left: Sgt. 1st Class Steven Chillas takes a call from a potential recruit at Dover High School in Dover, Del. He spends much of his time away from his office, so a cell phone is vital. Right: He works with the staff at the school to provide information about the Guard to prospective candidates.



Sgt. 1st Class Steven Chillas, a recruiter with the Delaware Army National Guard, goes over enlistment paperwork with potential recruit Jezerie Blango in the Dover, Del., restaurant where Blango works part time. Chillas, who averages two enlistments a month, said many times he can take several weeks to many months working with a possible recruit before all paperwork is in order and the enlistment finalized.

thing in the world.”

However, Chillas still finds himself working at night after coming home.

“As soon as I get done at work, I’ll come home and I’ll sit down and help the kids with homework and eat dinner,” he said. “(My wife and I) will sit down and talk for a little bit, and then I’ll pop my computer back open and start making calls.”

For Chillas and Parker, the long days are just part of the job. The downsides to being a recruiter are entirely different.

“The paperwork aspect,” said Chillas, describing his least favorite part of the job. “There’s just so much stuff you have to do to build (an enlistment) packet.”

There is another downside for Parker.

“What’s disappointing is when you have someone who wants to join but they can’t pass the entrance exam or they’ve done too many [criminal] things that prevents them from coming into the military,” said Parker.

Despite the drawbacks, Chillas and Parker helped the Army National Guard achieve 99 percent of its recruiting goal in 2006. That, according to Guard records, was the most successful recruiting year since the implementation



Chillas speaks with students at Dover High School in Dover, Del., about the Guard while taking part in a contest at the school during an afterschool event.

of the all-volunteer force in 1973.

In the end, it comes down to taking care of Soldiers.

“You treat people right and eventually everything will come back to you,” said Chillas.

Do-it-yourself recruiting

Ohio attains its 1,000th G-RAP enlistment

By Spc. Diego James Robles
Ohio National Guard

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Two Soldiers from the 237th Personnel Services Battalion helped mark a significant milestone March 3 in the Ohio Army National Guard’s yearlong participation in the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP).

Spc. Jeremy Bennett, a Soldier with the 237th PSB, was presented with an oversized \$1,000 check for his enlistment referral of Pvt. James Hoffman, who on Feb. 15 joined Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 107th Cavalry Regiment in Greenville. The ceremony marked the 1,000th enlistment the Ohio Army National Guard has gained through G-RAP.

“Private Hoffman represents how G-RAP and the efforts of our Soldiers as recruiter assistants serve as a significant combat multiplier in our strength maintenance efforts,” said Brig. Gen. Matthew L. Kambic, Ohio assistant adjutant general for Army, who presented the check to Bennett during a ceremony at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base during the 237th’s March drill assembly.

Since December 2005, when the Ohio Guard began its participation in G-RAP, it has become the No. 1 state in total recruiter assistants with more than 5,000 Soldiers enrolled in the program, according to Docupak Inc., the company that administers G-RAP nationwide. Hoffman’s enlistment marks more than \$2 million credited to Ohio recruiter assistants during the first 15 months of the state’s involvement in the program.

“At the end of the day, we will have put



Photo by Spc. Diego James Robles

Spc. Robbie McBride and his wife Carissa are congratulated by Brig. Gen. Matthew Kambic, Ohio assistant adjutant general for Army, during a ceremonial check presentation of \$6,000 for McBride’s six successful enlistment referrals into the Ohio Army National Guard.

two million dollars in the pockets of our Soldiers while at the same time building the greatest readiness we’ve had in a decade,” Kambic said.

This voluntary program allows any Soldier to be a part-time recruiter assistant and earn up to \$2,000 for every new Soldier that joins the National Guard—\$1,000 when the new Soldier enlists and another \$1,000 when he or she ships to basic training.

The program not only boosts the overall economy of Ohio, but can improve the well-being of Ohio’s Citizen-Soldiers as well. As an alternative to the cash incentive, Guardmembers can opt for a year of individual health care for one enlistment or earn a year of family coverage for facilitating three contracts, according to Diane Farrow, Ohio Army National Guard Recruiting Command marketing director.

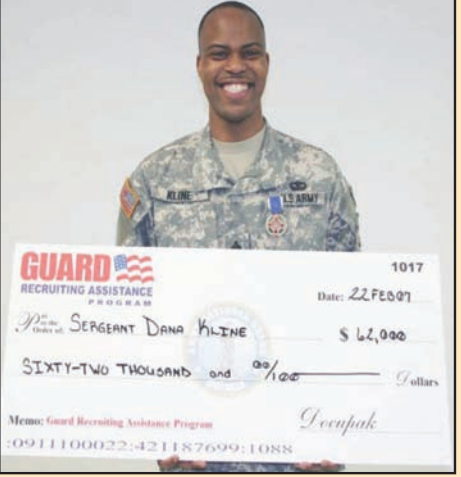
Program profitable for Georgia NCO

Former Marine recruiter has earned \$62K so far

Bringing new people into the armed services is no longer the sole dominion of the military recruiter. In 2005, the National Guard unveiled the Guard Recruiting Assistants Program, or G-RAP, an aggressive new recruiting program bringing ordinary Guardsmen into the recruiting effort. One Georgia Army Guardsman is showing the nation how G-RAP can be successful and profitable.

Georgia Army Guard Sgt. Dana Kline, an infantryman and assistant training noncommissioned officer for Headquarters Company, 48th Infantry Combat Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, has enthusiastically endorsed the program and, as a result, has pocketed more than \$62,000 through the G-RAP program. Kline ranks No. 1 in the nation as the most successful non-recruiting Guardmember.

Kline, a resident of Macon, has been in the Guard for only 16 months, but has been recruiting new Soldiers since March 2006. He has tallied up a total of 47 new prospects, 38 contracts and 26 recruits who have gone



Georgia National Guard photo

Sgt. Dana Kline displays his check for \$62,000 he earned from his aggressive recruiting through the G-RAP.

on to basic training.

“The Guard launched the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program to establish a position of strength from which the Guard can achieve its accession mission and increase the number of Military Occupational Specialty qualified Soldiers,” according to G-RAP officials.

Granite Triangle



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

A member of the Navy, center, assists New Hampshire National Guard Spc. Justin McNeff, left, and Spc. Adam Haggett, both with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain) slingload a Humvee to a Navy MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter during Exercise Granite Triangle at Fort Pickett, Va.

From page 1: GRANITE TRIANGLE

250 U.S. military personnel, including a large National Guard contingent, and Canadian troops from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Active Army, Army Reserve, Navy and Marine Corps personnel also took part.

The Canadians commanded this year's exercise that focused on Military Operations in Urban Terrain, identifying and reacting to improvised explosive devices, sling-loading and rappelling operations, and operating in a joint-service environment.

Col. W.A. MacDonald, commander of the 36th Canadian Brigade Group, was the Granite Triangle commander.

The two-week event in February was capped off with a field training exercise that incorporated all of the training.

The Soldiers were familiar with most of the tasks, but the chance to work with members of other services was one of the most valuable parts of the exercise.

"It seems like everything is a joint operation today," said Spc. Jacob Mavrogeorge, of C Company. "The hardest thing is being able

to recognize ranks sometimes."

Others agreed.

"It's nice because you never know who you're going to pick up if you need help (if deployed). It could be the Air Force, Marines or Navy," said Spc. Justin McNeff, also with C Company.

U.S. Soldiers have worked hand-in-hand with Canadian soldiers during previous exercises, but that changed this year. Because the main contingent of Canadian troops who take part in the exercise are currently deployed, Canadians commanded the exercise, but there were no Canadian ground troops.

"Last year we did more of a coalition type thing with the Canadians," said Pfc. Andrew Cormier, of the New Hampshire Army Guard's 237th Military Police Battalion. "They're overseas right now, so we haven't gotten to do anything like that."

But the Guard Soldiers learned a lot while working with the Canadians in years past.

"It was great," said Cormier. "Those guys know their stuff. Those guys are right on it, right on every time. It was good to see what they do and what we do. It was a good time and I think it helped out knowing if we do go

overseas we can actually [work together] if attached to a coalition force."

Going overseas is in the near future for Cormier and his unit as they are slated for a rotation to Iraq. Because of that, the training had an added impact for many of the 237th's Soldiers.

"Well, it's teaching us to keep our heads down," said Cormier. "We convoy here, watching for IEDs and things like that. We don't just ride in the truck and come over and then mount up. We're mounted when we leave and mounted when we come home. We're mounted anywhere we go."

But the training also had elements that could be applied to the National Guard's state missions.

"It gives us, as a company, more mobility for any at-home emergency calls that we might do, like flooding," said McNeff, referring to the sling-load training. "If we have to move people like we did last spring and fall or if we have to move any equipment over flood areas."

Many Soldiers thought the sling-loading operations were among the best parts of the training.

"Getting under the chopper," said Spc. Adam Haggett of C Company about his favorite part of the training. "Just the adrenaline rush from having the chopper five feet over your head. I can't even explain it, just the feeling you have when you're under there is just amazing."

Cormier said that the visit by Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the adjutant general of the New Hampshire Guard, was one of the most memorable parts of the exercise.

"The general came in and saw what we were doing," Cormier said, "and, hopefully, he was impressed, because I was impressed with what we were doing."

Spc. Maria Sharp, assigned to the 744th Transportation Company, fires her weapon while training on Military Operations in Urban Terrain during Exercise Granite Triangle. The two-week event was capped off with a field training exercise which brought together elements trained on over the course of the event.



Heads up!

Tax deadline April 17

Taxpayers have until Tuesday, April 17, to file their federal income tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service. Federal tax returns are typically due April 15, but April 15 falls on a Sunday and April 16 is Emancipation Day, a legal holiday in the District of Columbia, this year. Some IRS forms may incorrectly state that April 16 is the deadline. Visit the [USA.gov](http://www.irs.gov) link to the IRS for additional information.

Free tax help

Military OneSource is again offering free tax assistance to all active duty, National Guard, and Reserve members, as well as their DEERS-enrolled spouses and children. The most notable change to the program for this year is that the software is H&R Block TaxCut Online rather than TurboTax Online. To access the free filing offer you must enter TaxCut through the link on the Military OneSource Web-site: <http://www.militaryonesource.com>. To contact a OneSource tax consultant, call toll free 1-800-730-3802.

Telephone tax refund

The Telephone Excise Tax Refund (TETR) is a one-time payment available on your 2006 federal income tax return designed to refund previously collected federal excise taxes on long distance or bundled (local and long distance combined in a single plan) service. Any individual who paid the telephone tax on their long distance or bundled service may request the refund on their 2006 federal income tax return. For further information, see: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=161506,00.html>.

IRAs for deployed Soldiers

A recent change in the law makes it possible for members of the military to count tax-free combat pay when figuring how much they can contribute to a Roth or traditional IRA. Until now, members of the military whose earnings came from tax-free combat pay were often barred from putting money into an IRA because taxpayers usually must have taxable earned income. The IRA contribution limit for 2006 is \$4,000 for those under 50, and \$5,000 for those 50 and over. For more information, visit: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=101266,00.html>.

Veterans Airlift Command

The Veterans Airlift Command is a non-profit organization that provides free air transportation for medical and other compassionate purposes to wounded service members, veterans and their families. This is a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots who donate their flying time and aircraft. Their priority is to support veterans of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. As capacity allows, their mission will expand to veterans of other wars and their families. Any Soldier or Soldier's family requiring transportation support should visit: www.veteransairlift.com, and complete a Passenger Travel Request.



Photo by Capt. Mark Lappegaard

Minnesota Sgt. Patrick Russ provides security during a meeting with Al Anbar's Emergency Response Unit in Ramadi Iraq Feb. 13. A new pickup truck, which Russ's platoon provided to the ERU, is in the background.

Minnesota platoon aids Al Anbar's new emergency response units

By Capt. Mark Lappegaard
34th Brigade Combat Team

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Since deploying here in January, a platoon of Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers has been tasked to support more than 2,000 Iraqi soldiers who make up Al Anbar province's new emergency response units, commonly called ERUs, that hunt for enemy insurgents.

The Soldiers of the 2nd Platoon, 2nd Squadron, 194th Armored Reconnaissance, also known as "the Wildcards," provide three ERUs with pay and equipment. The Guard Soldiers' mission is similar to a police training team in that they support an Iraqi security force that works for the Iraqi government, not the Coalition Forces.

"We like them because they know who the bad guys are and how to get them," said 1st Lt. Jeffery Houghlum, the platoon leader. "They like us because we pay them and provide them with goods. It's a great arrangement."

It's also a unique arrangement. The ERUs are the first of their kind, and Houghlum's platoon is the first to work with them.

"They hadn't been paid for the first two months before we showed up," said Sgt. Eric Anderson. "The first time they saw us was the first time they got paid. We showed up with duffle bags of Iraqi dinar. We were their new best friends."

The platoon has also provided the Iraqi soldiers with new Ford F350 trucks, AK-47 rifles, ammunition, fuel, body armor, zip cuffs and cell phones. Even necessities such as food, water, mattresses and blankets are given to the ERUs to ensure they spend their time doing what they do best – catching insurgents.

ERUs are the newest kind of unit designed to combat anti-Iraqi forces in the troubled province. Unlike the Iraqi army or police, the ERUs are homegrown, developed by Sunni tribal leaders who were frequent victims of al-Qaida violence in Al Anbar.

Al-Qaida in Iraq kidnapped and murdered Sheikh Khalid of the Albu Ali Jassim tribe in August 2006 and hid his body, preventing the family from burying him within 24 hours as prescribed by Muslim tradition, said Pam Hess of the United Press International. In response, the Sunni sheiks drew up a

declaration vowing to fight al-Qaida and declaring solidarity with Coalition forces and Iraqi security forces. The movement is referred to by the tribes as "the Awakening."

Sheik Ahmed Abureeshah is the brother of Sheik Sitar, the driving force behind the Awakening initiative.

"[Al-Qaida] assassinated a lot of the sheiks," said Abureeshah last week at Camp Fallujah. "They killed my father. They killed three of my brothers. They killed 14 other sheiks from different tribes."

Sustaining the Awakening is the main goal of Houghlum's platoon. As might be expected for any new unit and initiative, defining success is an ongoing process.

"The National Guard Company we deployed with is in Al Assad, 70 miles away," said Houghlum. "We've been attached and cross-attached to a variety of Army and Marine units. To make matters worse, the ERUs are new, so they are pulled many ways, too. But at the end of the day, we're all on the same team with the same goal: supporting the Iraq security forces so they can get the bad guys."

"It's challenging, but we can see the rewards immediately," added Sgt. Patrick Russ, team leader. "We have seen the ERUs bring in multiple weapons caches and many suspected insurgents."

While cautious, Houghlum is not overly concerned when he visits the ERUs.

"We're the guys with the goods, so the ERUs aren't going to let anything happen to us," said Staff Sgt. Jack Esget. "We're treated like honored guests in their compound with dozens, if not hundreds, of fighters protecting us."

Still, the Wildcards take force protection very seriously. On the same day they visited an ERU in western Ramadi, a suicide car bomber struck an Iraqi police station in the center of town, killing the police chief and seven police officers. Another suicide bomber attacked an ERU with a dump truck full of explosives, resulting in 16 killed and 55 wounded.

The town of Ramadi is located in central Al Anbar, 70 miles west of Baghdad, on the Euphrates River. The provincial capital's 400,000 citizens are mostly Sunni. The town is considered the southwest corner of the Sunni Triangle and is a suspected staging area for attacks in Baghdad. Graffiti in the town boasts that it is the "graveyard of the Americans."

Camp Ramadi was once part of a recreation complex built under Saddam Hussein's regime. The nearby palaces and large archways are partially destroyed, so the platoon lives and works out of 20-by-60-foot wooden huts.

Soldiers getting help to cope with redeployment

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Bonny Bell
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – In the year since the Army implemented the Post Deployment Health Reassessment Program, more than 45,000 Army National Guard Soldiers have participated in this comprehensive health screening.

The program is designed to help identify deployment-related health concerns and assist Soldiers in accessing the health and re-adjustment services to which they are entitled, at no personal cost. The program includes a screening with a healthcare provider and, if necessary, referral to the most convenient Veteran Affairs (VA) medical facility, military treatment facility, or TRICARE provider. All 54 states and territories have participated in this program, adapting it to the unique needs of their Citizen-Soldiers.

The Maryland Army National Guard has taken the Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) Program one step further by coordinating these events to be hosted at Maryland VA medical centers. The events include benefit experts from the VA and vet center staffs who advise the Soldiers on the services to which they are entitled and VA administrative specialists who enroll Soldiers in the VA.

"The benefit of a Post Deployment Health Reassessment event at a VA medical center is that the Soldiers have a better idea of who we are and the knowledge that the VA wants to make the transition to care as simple as possible," said John O'Brien, social work executive for the Maryland VA.

To augment available resources, medical professionals from the Maryland Defense Force, a military agency of volunteers under the adjutant general of Maryland and the Maryland Military Department, meet with Soldiers to assess their combat-related health concerns. The volunteers include primary care providers and behavioral health specialists.

"The greatest single accomplishment of these screenings is the cooperation of the VA, the Maryland Defense Force and the Maryland Army National Guard," said Lt. Col. Michael Gafney, Post Deployment Health Reassessment program manager for the Maryland Army Guard. "Providers from all agencies worked together seamlessly to get the Soldiers screened, enrolled and assigned follow-up appointments on the spot."

The success of these events has solidified the partnership between the Maryland Army Guard and the VA Medical Center in Baltimore for future PDHRA events, Gafney added.

The Maryland program is one example of how Army Guard units and their commanders across the country are taking care of Soldiers returning from combat deployments. Officials have learned over the past few years that deployment health concerns may not be noticed immediately after returning home. Furthermore, the Army National Guard 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 Soldiers re-enter their work and family environments. After Soldiers have had time to reflect on deployment and post-deployment experiences, they may be in a better position to identify concerns and questions they wish to discuss with a healthcare provider. The Post Deployment Health Reassessment Program offers Citizen-Soldiers an opportunity to do so.

For more information about the program, visit <http://www.arng.army.mil/SoldiersResources.aspx>.



To find a Family Readiness Coordinator near you, go to www.guardfamily.org

Environmental Stewardship

Burning now prevents problems later

Photo by Joel Carlson

Like Indiana's Camp Atterbury, the Massachusetts National Guard natural resource program conducts a prescribed burn at Camp Edwards to maintain the grasslands at the base. It is home to three endangered species of migratory birds.

By Amy May

Indiana National Guard

If you see smoke rising from Camp Atterbury in the next few months, there's no reason to be alarmed. The fire was probably intentionally set.

Most of the camp's 33,000 acres is forested, but 5,700 acres of grasslands are part of the camp's prescribed burn program. These areas are used for training troops, so they must be maintained and kept safe. The best way to maintain grassland is to burn it periodically.

"It keeps the ranges from being dangerous in the summer," said Walt Anderson, environmental management supervisor.

"It minimizes the occurrence of uncontrollable fires and their intensity," added Bradley Schneck, the camp's conservation director. He said the prescribed burns have three purposes.

Burning grassland reduces the fuel loads. Since the soldiers are training with pyrotechnic devices, there is the potential to accidentally set a fire in an area where fuels have built up, especially in drought conditions.

"You can't stop training, even in a drought," Schneck said. "If a fire is accidentally ignited during training and the area is part of the prescribed burn program, it is easier to suppress since the available fuel is low. It's not as rapid moving. We can tackle it with two or three people instead of calling in assistance."

The burning prevents "woody encroachment," Schneck said. Some of the ranges need to be kept grassy so soldiers can see downrange and walk easily in the area. Trees and bushes would hinder the training.

The burning also helps maintain wildlife habitat for grassland creatures and can stall the growth of invasive species and encourages the growth of other plants and trees. After a burn, the grass and wildflowers come back within a couple of months.

The burning usually starts when the snow melts and the grass areas dry out enough to get a "clean burn," Schneck said. A clean burn leaves the area completely blackened.

Atterbury is home to the endangered Indiana bat, so no burning is done April 15 to Sept. 15, when bats' are roosting and foraging on the installation.

Schneck said he also prefers not to burn in the fall. The lack of vegetation makes the ground more vulnerable to erosion in the coming winter.

He maintains a schedule to decide which areas to burn and when. The areas are divided into 17 units with 51 subunits.

The units are divided according to firebreaks, such as creeks or roads. Approximately 2,000 acres are burned every year. Most of the grasslands are north of the impact area and south of the cantonment area.

The impact area also catches fire occasionally due to the training. These fires are monitored and allowed to burn.

When Schneck decides to burn a specific area, the first thing he does is check the perimeter of the subunit, which can be up to 242 acres. He makes sure the firebreaks are still in place and in working condition.

He must coordinate with range control to make sure no training is being conducted in the area and check the weather and predicted weather conditions. If the wind is blowing north, for example, he might decide to delay burning an area near Nineveh, so the smoke doesn't drift into town.

The day of the burn, he calls Bartholomew and Brown county fire departments and health departments, Atterbury Fish & Wildlife Area and the Department of Natural Resources. He informs the camp's public affairs office, which might answer calls from neighbors who have noticed the fire.

Schneck said citizens who are concerned about smoke rising from Camp Atterbury can call their local fire department, which will be informed of a prescribed fire.

"In the southern part of the installation, it's not as common, so it never hurts to call if you see smoke," he said. "It could be a hunter that threw a cigarette out."

After Schneck decides conditions are OK for a prescribed burn, two workers ignite the downwind side of the burn area. As it burns inward, it creates more of a firebreak. Then the upwind side is lit. Schneck said the fires then burn toward each other and finally go out.

The environmental office must maintain a plan describing how the burns are conducted. They don't just go out and set fires on a whim, Schneck said.

"It's mandated at the DoD level. We take into consideration other things at Camp Atterbury, such as threatened and endangered species and natural and cultural resources," he said.

The camp has a separate burn unit that it is not part of the camp's regular fire department, which handles emergencies and structure fires, Anderson said.

Schneck said members of the Department of Natural Resources fire crews often come to Camp Atterbury to help with the fires.

Army Guard wins two environmental awards

By Spc. Khalia Jackson

and Spc. Thaddeus Harrington

District of Columbia National Guard

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Army National Guard won two of the eight Secretary of the Army Environmental Awards for 2006.

The Army announced in January that Karstin Carmany-George from Indiana and the Camp Edwards Training Site on Cape Cod, Mass., won individual and large installation honors. The eight Army winners will next compete for Department of Defense environmental awards.

The awards program rewards excellence for the development and management of environmental programs that increase environmental quality and enhance the mission of the Army. Accomplishments by this year's award recipients include using technology to manage cultural resources and conserve natural resources while supporting the training mission. They are examples of how environmental stewardship is pertinent to completing a successful mission.

Carmany-George, the cultural resources manager for the Indiana Army National Guard, will receive the Cultural Resources Management - Individual award in recognition of demonstrating the highest commitment of preserving historical sites and buildings and promoting cultural resources conservation ethics.

She built a cultural resource management program from scratch during the past three years that entailed developing, documenting and training people in the use of proper cultural resources management protocols.

"I was very surprised to have a program so young be recognized," she said. All of the work put into this cultural resource management program has earned national attention due to its comprehensive structure and has saved the National Guard Bureau and the Indiana Guard approximately \$500,000.

The Camp Edwards Training Site of the Massachusetts Army National Guard received the Natural Resources Conservation - Large Installation award in recognition of promoting the identification, protection, and restoration of natural resources. Camp Edwards is home to a rare pine barren ecosystem. The natural resources staff oversees approximately 22,000 acres of land and has documented 11 natural community types and thriving populations of 39 state-listed species.

"We are proud to be part of the Guard," said Mike Ciarcanca, Ph.D., the natural resources manager. Some of the Camp Edwards staff's biggest achievements were establishing lines of communication to the adjutant general, Brig. Gen. Oliver Mason Jr., state and non-government agencies and educating the community.

The environmental management program there features comprehensive methods to provide environmental support for training such as prescribed burning, species surveys, monitoring, forestry management, wetlands restoration, fire breaks, geographic information system, hydro-seeding and pest management. They are currently training the military, government agencies such as fire departments, non-government organizations, and civilians at least once a year in basic firefighting techniques.



RED HORSE logistical hub supports Airmen

By Senior Airman Erik Hofmeyer

379th Air Expeditionary Wing

SOUTHWEST ASIA – U.S. military operations worldwide have reaped the benefits from a highly mobile, self-sufficient civil engineer mobile force known as the “Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadrons Engineer,” or simply RED HORSE.

However, all of the accolades received and infrastructure laid to support contingency and special operations missions would not be possible without a central hub of logistical operations.

The 379th Air Expeditionary Wing is home to the 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group, a tenant unit serving as the logistical hub to coordinate and supply the forward deployed missions throughout the area of responsibility.

The 1st ERHG is a direct reporting unit to Central Command Air Force and a theater asset, not under the umbrella of an air expeditionary wing. RED HORSE historically operates on a “hub and spoke” concept, exercising centralized control from the hub and carrying out missions at the spoke locations. The 379th hub supports eight different locations, soon to be nine, throughout the area of responsibility, said Maj. Tim Dotson, 1st ERHG “spoke” commander.

The number of RED HORSE personnel at the 379th continually fluctuates due to changing mission requirements, but the current RED HORSE rotation in Southwest Asia is a composite of approximately 560 people representing over 50 different units. About 150 Airmen come from active duty stations and the rest from Air National Guard units including Virginia, Dotson said.

Airmen assigned to RED HORSE units execute missions, reorganize, and then go on to the next mission in theater.



Photo by Senior Airman Erik Hofmeyer

Senior Airman Nic Skirpan, a special purpose vehicle mechanic from the Virginia National Guard, inspects engine components and hydraulic fittings on a 20-ton rock dump in Southwest Asia.

One Soldier, two Purple Hearts

By Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood

1/34 Brigade Combat Team

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Sgt. Scott Stroud’s relatives fought for both sides during the Civil War. Another hit the beach at Normandy during World War II. And an uncle served three tours in Vietnam as an infantryman. So it should be no surprise that this Soldier in the Minnesota Army Guard would be in the thick of things while serving in Iraq.

As of March 1, he was the only Soldier in the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, to earn two Purple Hearts.

Stroud earned his first May 15 when the lead Humvee he was driving during a patrol hit a roadside bomb. He earned his second June 23 when he was the gunner in the lead Humvee that was returning to his camp from a patrol.

“I looked right at it as it went off. I didn’t see it,” said Stroud of his second brush with death. “I was just doing my scanning - looking back and forth - and this thing went off in my face.”

He suffered ruptured and bleeding eardrums despite wearing an ear plug in one ear and a radio headset in the other,

and 10 small pieces of shrapnel in his cheek. Shrapnel punctured two large holes in the cover for his goggles. There also is one noticeable chip in the goggles glass. Stroud still wears the goggles.

Stroud’s injuries from the first bomb included cuts on his legs and a badly sprained right foot.

He volunteered to join the Guard in 2002, when he was 39, because of the 9-11 terrorist attacks. He had been discharged from the Army Reserve in 1987. “This time I did it to help in whatever way I could do,” said Stroud, a locomotive engineer for 13 years.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood

Sgt. Scott Stroud

Columbus, Ohio, to celebrate AF Heritage Week

By Jason Yaley

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Reaffirming its commitment to the commemoration of 60 years of air and space power, the Air Force announced Feb. 23 that Columbus, Ohio, and Rickenbacker International Airport, home of the 121st Air Refueling Wing, have been selected to host the nation’s only Air Force Heritage Week in conjunction with The Gathering of Mustangs and Legends (TGML) in September.

“Air Force Heritage Week will give the citizens of the area the opportunity to pause and remember the talented, dedicated, professional Airmen serving around the world, day and night, to keep America safe,” said Lt. Gen. Terry Gabreski, the vice commander of Air Force Material Command.

Gabreski joined Lee Lauderback, president of Stallion 51 and organizer of The Gathering, and a host of other dignitaries

for the announcement.

“My charge to the citizens of Ohio and around the United States is to find your way to Columbus the last week of September ...,” Gabreski said. “You owe it to yourselves to see them fly ... hear their stories ... to listen.”

The Gathering will unite Airmen and aviation enthusiasts of the past and present, bringing together Air Force legends like retired Brig. Gen. Chuck Yeager and historic planes, including a flyover of at least 51 P-51 Mustangs. Now partnered with the Air Force, the gathering will also feature senior Air Force leaders speaking at events, flight demonstrations, ground displays, and a show by the Air Force’s elite demonstration team, the Thunderbirds.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Air Force. Throughout this historic year, the Air Force is commemorating 60 years of air and space power through events such as this.

Air Guard contemplates ‘Heritage to Horizons’

By Lt. Col. Nahaku McFadden

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Charles Darwin once observed that “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” The father of the Theory of Evolution knew something about survival, and it was this concept that brought together some of the best and brightest former and current military minds to discuss the future of the Air National Guard.

Many former National Guard Bureau, Air Guard and active duty senior leaders met with Lt. Gen. Craig R. McKinley, the Air Guard’s director, to offer unblinking advice during the second of a series of meetings regarding key strategic issues affecting the Air Guard. Dubbed “Minuteman Heritage to Horizons,” or MH2H, the summit was held at Conaway Hall on Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Feb. 23.

Retired Lt. Gen. John Conaway, chief of the National Guard Bureau from 1990-93 and the building’s namesake, was among many military luminaries to offer their insights. He was joined by retired Gen. Ronald Fogelman, former Air Force chief of staff; retired Gen. Chuck Wald, the U.S. European Command’s former deputy commander; and Gen. Duncan McNabb, who runs the Air Mobility Command.

“The graybeards have seen the changes the Air National Guard and Air Force have gone through,” observed Conaway. “With this Heritage to Horizons concept, we are discussing ‘where do we go from here’ with legacy missions.

“I see evolutionary versus revolutionary changes as the Air Force reinvents itself,” he continued. “Perhaps the Air National Guard should transition from manned fighter aircraft-type missions into other missions such as reconnaissance. With new technology, we can do much more.”

With the Air Guard facing a \$13.8 billion deficit in funding, those in attendance said it was imperative the ANG secure its future by redefining its roles and missions. Conaway emphasized that the ANG needs to be relevant in its federal overseas mission as well as “essential” with its domestic roles.

Throughout the MH2H summit, the discussion focused on possible ways to ensure the ANG remains a viable service by continuing its dual state and federal missions as a reserve force for the Air Force and be essential to the governors of the 54 states and territories.

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, recognized that the ANG leadership will have to make some hard decisions. He stated that it’s a far different time now than before, and different capabilities are needed in the ANG.

“The National Guard is being asked to deliver capabilities and be on call 24/7, 365 in ways we have never before,” Blum stated. “I don’t see the world getting safer. This is the least stable time in the planet in the last 70 years, and it’s more dangerous now with weapons of mass destruction.”

McKinley understands the Air Guard has a lot at stake and has set his top three priorities. They are: develop adaptable Airmen; secure the home front while defending the nation; and transform to a capabilities-based force. The MH2H summit was one avenue to garner advocates to assist in carrying the message.



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Shane Wallenda

Multiple winner

Colorado Air Guard Master Sgt. Michael J. Wilson shows off his awards from the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command 2006 annual awards ceremony. Wilson was named the US-NORTHCOM senior enlisted member of the year and also the winner of the Outstanding Community Service Military Award for both commands. Wilson is an administrative superintendent in NORAD.

Vermont grabs NGB biathlon gold



Photo by Senior Airman Diane M. Ducat

A Vermont skier collapses at the finish line at the Chief of the NGB Biathlon Championships.

By Master Sgt. Greg Rudl
National Guard Bureau

JERICHO, Vt. – Vermont skiers dominated the 2007 Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships Feb. 18-24 at the Ethan Allen Firing Range, winning all but one of the races.

Spc. Nigel Kinney won the 20-km race. Sgt. Jesse Downs won the 10-km sprint, and Sgt. Erin Graham won the female sprint. A four-man Vermont team took the 15-km patrol and 4 x 7.5-km relay races.

Eighteen states sent teams to the championships, and about 60 skiers participated. A Valentine's Day snowstorm covered the race course with several feet of snow, making racing conditions ideal, with temperatures on the frigid side.

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

"The shooting wasn't going well," said Kinney who hit only five of his first 10 targets midway through his 20-km race. "But I kind of turned it around and shot eight of 10 on my last two stages. Then I knew I had a chance and pushed with everything I had."

The 21-year-old had a lot of speed and was clearly the fastest skier of the week. He punctuated it by finishing his 7.5-km relay leg in 23:36 – about a minute and a half faster than anyone else – even though he acknowledged that his skiing hasn't progressed this year the way he thought it would. "Every race I'm getting a little quicker, so I'm excited for the last couple races

of the year," he said, referring to the U.S. Biathlon Nationals in early March, his main goal for the year.

Downs added another gold medal to his collection with the sprint win. He has won a handful since his first championships in 2001. He finished hard, even extending his foot across the line to save a fraction of a second. As it turned out, he won by only four seconds over Kinney, despite hitting eight targets to Kinney's three.

"I had to ski off those two penalties," said Downs. "That puts you in the hole by almost a minute. You know if the other person shoots 'clean,' you have to ski that much faster." It takes about 25 seconds to ski a penalty loop.

Downs had the added pressure of starting one minute ahead of his main rival. Any racer will admit it's better to chase than to be chased. The 29-year-old has been training full-time, actually getting back into the sport after an extended layoff. Next year he hopes to be back in top form, compete in the World Championships, make it back on the U.S. national team, and possibly compete in the Olympics.

On the women's side, Graham won by more than five minutes in the sprint race. Her eight misses cost her in the 15-km race, and she finished second to Spc. Jill Krause of Minnesota.

In biathlon's long race, each miss adds a minute to a competitor's time -- . It's hard for biathletes not to think about that when they settle in at the range.

"I have a tendency to be more cautious, and sometimes being more cautious results in more penalties," said Graham, who plays clarinet in the Vermont Army Guard's band.

The week may have lacked some excitement for the 27-year-old, who competed in her first Biathlon World Championships in Italy earlier in February. There, thousands attended the event and millions more watched it on TV, including her parents on a Web-cast. She even carried the U.S. flag during the opening ceremony.

Just who are Guard biathletes?

They can be Army or Air, officer or enlisted, male or female. They're civil support team members, admin specialists, Special Forces commanders, cooks, helicopter pilots and truck drivers, among others. They're Rollerbladers, marathoners, snowshoe racers, swimmers, adventure racers – in short, competitive endurance athletes. They're extremely fit and united in their love of biathlon and willing to put in the long hours of training necessary to improve. Interested in representing your state? Contact the National Guard Sports Office at (802) 899-7122 for more info.

No snow, no problem: Deployed Minnesotans race in spirit in Iraq

By Capt. Mark Lappegaard
34th BCT Public Affairs

AN NASIRIYAH, Iraq – Two Minnesota Soldiers took part in North America's biggest cross country ski race, the Birkebeiner, Feb. 24 in their own special way.

Maj. Paul Peterson, a top-100 Birkie veteran and Cottage Grove, Minn., science teacher, and Staff Sgt. Bill Snellman, a former Junior National Biathlon Team member and chemical engineer at Cargill, completed their own full-length Birkie 5,000 miles away on a 1.3-kilometer stretch of pavement in southern Iraq. The real Birkie was held in Wisconsin.

The two serve together as members of the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Battalion, 34th Brigade Combat Team "Red Bulls!" at Tallil Air Base outside An Nasiriyah, Iraq.

Peterson got the idea for the race as he was enduring a monotonous run on a pancake-flat base road when he came across a small, straight stretch of brand-new pavement. Why not roller-ski the Birkie right here in Iraq? he wondered.

Within days he had recruited Snellman as a race and training partner and roller-skis, boots, and poles were on their way from home. Birkebeiner officials graciously provided race bibs.



Yes, you can ski on asphalt, in Iraq.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa

Florida Sgt. Matthew Hare of the 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment swings a 22-pound hammer during the Northeast Florida Scottish Games and Festival in Green Cove Springs, Fla.

Florida Soldiers take a fling at Scottish games

By Staff Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida National Guard

GREEN COVE SPRINGS, Fla. – The Florida Army National Guard is not known for its strong Scottish traditions, but a team of Soldiers from the Daytona-based 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery Regiment are hoping to change that.

Soldiers from the unit competed in the Northeast Florida Scottish Games and Festival, Feb. 24, in Green Cove Springs, Fla., testing their mettle in seven traditional Scottish athletic events. The events included: throwing 28-pound and 56-pound weights for distance, tossing a 22-pound "Stone of Strength," and flipping an 18-foot wooden "caber" pole.

Two of them, Staff Sgt. Tim Forrester and Staff Sgt. Rich Chamberlain, recorded victories.

Although not required for competition, the Guardsmen wore military-print kilts and red National Guard shirts during these tests of strength.

"It's pretty addictive," explained Forrester,

who organized the Florida National Guard team. "Once you pick up one of the weights you just kind of go with it."

Forrester traces his roots to medieval Scotland, but this is the first year he competed in the highland games. He plans to continue competing in similar events throughout Florida with his fellow Guardsmen rather than joining an established team made up of others from "Clan Forrester."

"Even though I'm a Forrester, the Guard's my family too," he said. He finished first in his division during these most recent games.

Forrester's kilt was made from the digital camouflaged Army Combat Uniform material, while the rest of his team wore kilts fashioned from traditional Army camouflage and the Army's official tartan print.

Chamberlain won both the 56-pound weight toss and "Stone of Strength" events during his first competition, crediting the victories to his style rather than his brawn.

"Technique is more important than strength here," he noted.

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

War in watercolor

Guard artist chronicles his fellow servicemembers

By John Listman

National Guard Bureau

We are used to seeing images of the war in Iraq as photographs in newspapers and magazines or as videos on TV. However, there has been little original artwork produced thus far on the war. To help make an artistic record of the Guard's role there, the National Guard Bureau sent its own artist to the theater to produce some pencil and watercolor drawings and paintings.

The artist, Lt. Col. David Russell, was a helicopter pilot and member of the Eastern Army Aviation Training School Site of the Pennsylvania Army Guard. He is an art graduate from Kutztown State College, Pa. He served for about eight years in the Marines before transferring as a captain into the Pennsylvania Army Guard in 1989. In civilian life he is a commercial and fine artist. Some of his works are displayed in the U.S. Marine Corps and Naval Aviation museums. He recently added a painting to the National Guard's Heritage Series depicting the Guard's response to Hurricane Katrina. In 2004, Russell took his idea about deploying to Iraq to produce some Guard-related artwork to Maj. Gen. Jessica Wright, the adjutant general of Pennsylvania. She endorsed the idea and requested support from NGB.

The Guard Bureau's History Office immediately saw the value in this proposal. The Army Art Program, part of the U.S. Army's Center of Military History, has an ongoing mission of using Army artists to produce works both in-country and after returning home. But little of it focuses on Guard subjects. This was an opportunity for NGB to have its own artist capture various Army Guard units in different aspects of their service. NGB worked with Russell and Pennsylvania to get him on a 45-day tour. All the works produced became property of the NGB Historical Collection where they join the paintings of the Heritage and Presidential series.

He deployed to Iraq in March 2005 and soon attached himself to different units in and around Baghdad. He produced 30 pieces of art, about two-thirds of which are in color and the rest are pencil drawings.

Many highlight missions. Others focus on individuals. "I find it easier to work from life than from photographs; that in life I get a better feel of the three-dimensional qualities of the subject matter not expressed in a flat photo," Russell said. Due to mission requirements, however, he sometimes used digital photos that he then used to complete the works later in the day.

He covered units from Pennsylvania to Texas and Idaho. In all, 19 different states are represented in the collection. Additionally, there are a few pieces about Iraqi civilians living their everyday lives, such as a boy with a donkey cart.

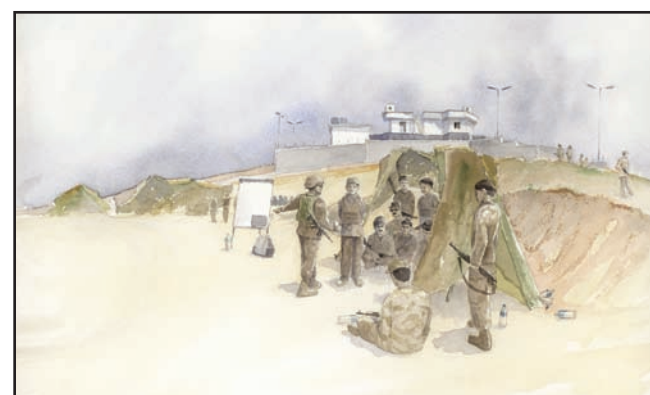
Russell retired from the Guard in October 2005, with 24 years total service. He left behind a collection of art depicting some of the dedicated Citizen-Soldiers performing often difficult tasks in far away places that most of us had never heard of before this war. It is safe to say that these works will become a valuable record about the Guard's various roles in Iraq.



"Company A, 112th Infantry Patrol": Lt. Col. David Russell accompanied this unit on a patrol in April 2005. Company A is an element of the Pennsylvania Army Guard, and was based at Camp Danger in Tikrit and attached to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry, assigned to the Guard's 42nd Infantry Division in April 2005.



"Ready": Depicts Spc. Fisher driving an armored Humvee as he prepares to conduct a "Presence Patrol" in the city of Kirkuk April 21, 2005. Fisher was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment from Idaho.



"Training the Iraqi Army, House of 'Chemical Ali'": Spc. "Monte" Montgomery, a member of 2nd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, Idaho Army National Guard, instructs Iraqi Army recruits in vehicle search techniques. The school was set up on the grounds of the house once owned by "Chemical Ali," one of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's murderous lieutenants.



Lt. Col. David Russell working in Iraq, April 2005.

It happened in April

Events that made Guard history

Selected entries from the National Guard's 365-day event calendar found at www.NGB.Army.mil/

3rd, 1918 Toul Boucq, France – The 26th Division from New England takes control of this sector of the St. Michiel salient from the U.S. 1st Division. The troops of the "Yankee" Division are engaged against the Germans within days.

10th, 1942 Bataan Peninsula, Philippines – After more than three months of determined resistance, American and Filipino forces are compelled by hunger, disease and lack of supplies to surrender to the Japanese Army. Among those units surrendering are two Guard tank battalions, comprised of companies from six states and New Mexico's 200th Coast Artillery. Many of these men died in captivity during the next three years.

13th, 1970 Space – "Houston, we've had a problem!" is the first message sent to Mission Control by the crew of Apollo

13 after their craft had a near fatal accident. Two of the three crewmembers, John Swigert and Frederick Haise, were Air National Guard pilots before joining the astronaut program. They brought their crippled ship back home safely.

19th, 1775 Lexington and Concord, Mass. – After British troops and colonial militia exchanged fire on Lexington Green, leaving eight militiamen dead, the Royal forces marched to Concord. By nightfall, the British suffered more than 200 killed and wounded at the hands of the militia. The American Revolution had begun.



Defending the homeland is a 370-year-old tradition. From the first muster at the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1636 through Hurricane Katrina and beyond, the Citizen-Soldiers and -Airmen of the National Guard have always been America's first military responders in times of domestic emergencies. Whether it's a terrorist attack, natural disaster, chemical spill or civil unrest, they're highly trained and able to react quickly to all types of threats to our communities. Like the trusted emergency kit, the National Guard is always ready, always there.

Always Ready, Always There.
THE NATIONAL GUARD
www.ngb.army.mil



Photo by Capt. Michael S. Braibish

Oregon Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Courtaintharp and Sgt. Thomas Pettit prepare to attack a structure fire at the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue Training Center in Sherwood, Ore. Mar. 10.

Soldiers train with firefighters

By Capt. Michael S. Braibish
 Oregon National Guard

SHERWOOD, Ore. — Sixty Oregon Army National Guard Soldiers have learned some fundamental firefighting and rescue techniques from the experts at the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue (TVFR) Training Center. Under the keen eyes of experienced emergency responders, the Soldiers from the 141st Brigade Support Battalion spent March 10, the first of two training days, developing skills that would be vital after a disaster.

The training was educational for the Soldiers, teaching them how they can enhance the capabilities of those who are the first on the scene.

“What I really gained is an understanding of how we’re going to work jointly in a mass casualty setting,” said Sgt. Thomas Pettit, “especially how our forces are going to cooperate and work together as a joint task force, where we’re going to fit into the division of labor and be most valuable and work as a team.”

As they learned the fundamental skills of firefighting and rescue operations, they also had the chance to gain practical experience. “I had some theories on how to do some stuff, but here you’re actually getting a little practical experience so when it comes down to it you have an idea of what you’re going to do,” said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Courtaintharp.

The training also brings familiarity to the firefighters and Soldiers, it was explained, and builds trust, an essential element for a cohesive response to a natural or manmade disaster.

“It gives us a little more understanding of the relationships between our side and the civilian side,” said Courtaintharp. “So now we have an idea of where we can cross over a little bit. We get information from both sides and we can work a little closer together, a little more smoothly.

That trust and experience is appreciated by the emergency responders as well.

“When I see these guys on a call, if we do have something major that comes down, I know they know how to do this,” said TVFR engineer Jeff Mather. “I know they have got at least a general idea and they can take care of a little car fire; they can help me with the hose if we’re on a house fire and are a little shorthanded.”