



THE ON GUARD

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**Rohbock
brings
home the
silver**

Page
3



"These Olympians are an inspiration to all who are serving with the National Guard at home and abroad, who have served in the Guard, and who are considering National Guard Service."

– LTG H Steven Blum

Soldiers to embed with Afghanistan National Army

By Sgt. Veronique McCorvey

Mobilization Center Shelby

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. – National Guard Soldiers from seven states are undergoing common task training and validation at Mobilization Center Shelby to ensure that they will be combat ready for their year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

The Soldiers from California, Kansas, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin are training to serve as embedded training teams with the Afghan National Army (ANA).

The Soldiers are divided into four brigade teams and five battalion teams. New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin make up the brigade teams. California, Kansas, New York, and Washington make up battalion teams. Each team has 16 Soldiers.

"For our one-year tour, we will live, eat and integrate with our Afghan counterparts," said Col. Martin Leppert, commander of the embedded training teams.

The Guard Soldiers must meet specific training requirements established by the 1st U.S. Army and Forces Command. The 45-day training cycle includes individual weapons qualification, crew served weapons qualifications, common language specification certification, training management doctrine, language and cultural training, close combat training, drivers training, Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain live fire, reflex training, convoy security operations, close air support operations, call for fire, observer controller training, and field training exercises where the Soldiers have actual contact with Afghan



Mobilization Center Shelby photo
Staff Sgt. Alan Soper (left) inserts an IV into Capt. Mark Larson's arm during combat lifesaver training at Camp Shelby. They are members of the National Guard Bureau's Afghanistan National Army Embedded Training Team that will deploy to Afghanistan for 12 months to help train Afghan national security forces.

Soldiers.

The teams' primary goal is to coach, mentor, advise and train the leaders and Soldiers in the ANA to conduct personnel training and sustainment operations.

The embedded trainers will be deployed in various regional corps commands in Afghanistan. They will work with Task Force Phoenix, currently the 53rd Brigade

Combat Team of the Florida Army National Guard, and in June 2006 will switch to the 41st BCT of the Oregon Army Guard.

The embedded teams are intended to help stabilize the country and prevent the re-emergence of terrorism.

"This is a truly critical mission to enable the Afghan National Army to stand up for the long term," Leppert said.

Ohio Army Guard recruiting exceeds first-quarter goal

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio Army National Guard continued to recruit in record numbers early in 2006, exceeding 2005 numbers for the comparable period by more than 200 as of Jan. 31.

The Ohio Army Guard exceeded recruiting goals in 10 of the last 11 months, with record months in September, November and December 2005, according to the Adjutant General's Department.

"We've heard rumblings that the National Guard is having recruiting difficulties," said Brig. Gen. Matthew L. Kambic, Ohio assistant adjutant general for Army. "Not this National Guard."

For example, Dayton Recruiter Sgt. Sonny Hernandez enlisted 25 recruits between Oct. 1 and Jan. 31, exceeding his assigned mission of 23 for the entire year.

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Coleman was named the Ohio Army Guard's top recruiter for 2005 after enlisting 40 Soldiers and achieving 143 percent of his assigned mission for the year. As a "Chief's 54 Winner," Coleman was recognized by LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, in Washington last January.

As the state with the seventh largest Army National Guard force, Ohio has a strength of approximately 10,400 Soldiers and ranks

fifth in the nation in recruiting.

"The Ohio Army National Guard is over 100 percent of its authorized strength," Kambic added. "People are signing up in record numbers."

This reflects a national trend in Army Guard recruiting. According to National Guard Bureau reports, the Army Guard had its most successful three months of recruiting and retention since 1993 during the first quarter of the 2006 fiscal year. Ohio has been on a fast recruiting track since last summer.

Recruiting: Page 2



Jacob "Jake" Smith

IDITAROD: Soldier's son gets a ride of his life

By Spc. Karima Mares

Alaska National Guard

CAMP DENALI, Alaska – While Alaska Army National Guard Sgt. Tim Smith is fighting the Global War on Terrorism, his son, 10-year-old Jacob "Jake" Smith, is fighting a battle of his own - against cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease that affects more than 30,000 children and adults in the United States. Although he has dealt with much at his young age, Jake has shown more courage than most adults and lives his life to the fullest.

When Jake was 2, he rode on a dogsled in Nome. But he didn't remember the ride.

So he made a wish to ride in the Iditarod with famed musher Ramy Brooks.

After a bidder for Brooks' basket dropped out, Cellular One purchased the basket, giving it to Wish Upon The North Star, a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with a charter to fulfill the wishes of Alaskan children with life-threatening illnesses.

"We work really closely with the Wish Upon The North Star foundation," said Craig Davis, Cellular One, public relations manager. "We're a strong supporter of their

Ride: Page 10

Arkansas aviation brigade to deploy to Middle East theater Page 15

About The On Guard

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Hold it down, will ya?

ARLINGTON, Va. - There is something about the sound of an F-16 roaring down a runway and then streaking, at full afterburner, straight up toward the wild blue yonder that sets my hair on fire. I just love it.

Not everyone in this country agrees. Nor do a lot of people appreciate the sounds of our helicopters and howitzers flying and firing in the middle of the night. They call it noise, and they don't want to hear it.

I suspect that many Americans take comfort in the fact that these weapons of war are primed to keep them safe, while making lots of noise, in faraway places like Iraq and Afghanistan. But a lot of Americans don't want to deal with the phenomenon of military noise in their backyards. They do not appreciate being told "it's the sound of freedom."

We are addressing that phenomenon here this month because it is April - when we pause to pay a little more attention to our environment than usual. April 22, after all, will be the 37th observance of Earth Day, when we focus on the importance of clean air, clean water and the wisest ways to preserve the land.

Noise is one of the National Guard's environmental concerns. It is one of the most perplexing issues that commanders and environmental officials and public affairs officers deal with because sound is an abstract entity - as music is the most abstract of the arts.

You can't see it. You can't touch it. You can't smell or taste it. Nonetheless, it is there. And people know the difference between sound and noise. Just ask someone who has just heard the National Symphony Orchestra play Mozart and then been awakened by the sirens of fire trucks at 2 a.m.

"Noise can be defined simply as unwanted sound or, more specifically, as any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech, sleep and normal day-to-day activities, or is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying," writes William A. Russell, the expert and master consultant for the Environmental Noise Program at the U.S. Army's Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM).

Furthermore, "noise is more often an emotional issue than a physical one, and more a political issue than a regulatory one, all of

Page 2



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Correspondent

which makes it very subjective," states USACHPPM's handbook Environmental Noise Management.

I take that to mean that some people, who do not support military activities, are not bothered much at all by the "sound" of a commercial 737 taking off but are really annoyed by the "noise" of an F-15. They are the ones most likely to complain to their congressmen or raise hell with public affairs officers, my environmental friends tell me.

It doesn't help that military airplanes are not regulated by the same noise restrictions that have been placed on civilian airplanes.

Still, the military people who are sworn to defend this country with loud machines and explosive devices that go boom in the night are making concerted efforts to protect U.S. civilian populations from noise pollution.

Here's why, according to Russell and my friend Peg Moffett, one of the National Guard Bureau's environmental stewards:

Noise can be unhealthy. "Over time, noise can result in fatigue, increased blood pressure, interruptions in normal communications, headaches and hearing loss," Moffett explained.

"In addition to waking us up, noise can lengthen the time needed to fall asleep or cause shifts from deeper to lighter sleep stages. A good night's sleep is essential to our general health and wellbeing," Russell elaborates.

"Sudden losses of temper, moodiness,

irritability, depression, [and] aggressive, hostile and argumentative behavior are commonly unidentified symptoms of noise-induced stress," adds Russell who also observes that noise endangers "life and limb by obscuring shouts for help and masking warning signals that prevent rescue attempts.

"Home should be a place for rest and quiet after the labor and cares of each day," Russell writes. "Excessive noise in the community deprives most people of access to such a retreat. This is an unfortunate and unnecessary byproduct of our industrialized society."

Moffett explained that the National Guard has taken steps to keep its installations from infringing on the peace and quiet of their neighboring communities, which may be growing larger because of urban sprawl.

Guard facilities have noise abatement plans - for using heavy equipment and for weapons training.

We have built "hush houses" for testing jet engines without disturbing neighborhoods.

We observe strict hours of flight operations to avoid the times when most people sleep.

We define noise sensitive areas so that pilots can select flight paths to avoid communities where residents have lodged numerous complaints or where endangered species of animals are trying to survive.

In short, the National Guard is doing all it can to train and remain ready to fight, such as flying at night with night vision devices, while respecting the lifestyles of the people who live nearby.

We are studying ways to improve. For example, researchers have found that visitors to the White Sands National Monument in New Mexico, close to the White Sands Missile Range, were less annoyed when they could see the aircraft that made the noise and were less critical when several aircraft flew in succession rather than one at a time.

That may be one of the National Guard's most important environmental messages as we close in on the 37th Earth Day this month. We're aware of the problem about noise pollution. We may not have all of the solutions, but we're still looking. Hey, we're listening.

FROM PAGE 1

Recruiting

"We've been able to sustain a tremendous amount of momentum in 2006," said Kambic. "In FY 2005 we recruited over 1,500 Soldiers. In 2006, we're nearly halfway there."

Since last Oct. 1, the Ohio Army Guard has recruited more than 660 new Soldiers. With enlistment bonuses of \$20,000 for a six-year enlistment and the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program, which pays 100 percent of tuition at a state university, the positive recruiting trend is expected to continue.

"We usually begin to hit our stride in the

spring, and we're right on schedule with over 200 more new recruits compared to this time last year," added Lt. Col. Jerry Rees, recruiting and retention commander for the Ohio Army Guard.

With a major transformation taking place and with about 600 Soldiers currently deployed for the Global War on Terrorism, the Guard is poised to offer new and exciting opportunities to potential enlistees.

"With a six-year commitment, a new Guard member can get an enlistment bonus for up to \$20,000, a scholarship to pay for an under-

graduate degree, earn a steady monthly paycheck, and have the Guard pay for a master's degree," says Kambic.

"That is a good life plan for a young person getting ready for a career in today's job market."

The Ohio National Guard consists of approximately 15,000 Army and Air Guard personnel.

"Let there be no doubt," Kambic said, "we are fulfilling our obligations to our communities, our state and our nation to respond with ready units."

Silver medal in Winter Olympics is the Guard's top prize

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Soldier who earned a silver medal in women's bobsledding on Feb. 21 during her Olympic debut was among several National Guard athletes and coaches who participated in the XX Winter Olympics in Italy.

Utah Army National Guard Spc. Shauna Rohbock, the driver of the two-woman USA-1 sled, and brakeman Valerie Fleming earned silver medals by completing their four runs in 3 minutes, 50.69 seconds. That was .71 seconds behind the gold-medal winning German team. An Italian team took the bronze in the Torino Games that began Feb. 10 and ended Feb. 26.

"I'm ecstatic," Rohbock told the Army News Service.

Utah Guardsman Spc. Steve Holcomb, meanwhile, finished sixth in the four-man bobsled event on Feb. 25. Holcomb, of Park City, and his teammates in USA-2 finished ahead of the USA -1 sled driven by Todd Hays.

And Spc. Jeremy Teela of the Vermont National Guard was part of the team that clinched ninth place in the men's biathlon relay - a result that tied the nation's best Olympic finish in the modern era of the skiing and shooting event, according to the United States Biathlon Association.

Rohbock is in the National Guard Outstanding Athlete Program. Holcomb and Teela are members of the U.S. Army's World Class Athlete Program.

Teela finished 51st in the 20-kilometer individual competition, a drop from his 14th place finish in Salt Lake four years earlier. He was 62nd in the 10K sprint.

The head coaches of the men's and women's bobsled teams also are National Guard Soldiers - Vermont's Spc. Tuffy Latour and New York's Spc. Bill Tavares. Tavares coached Rohbock and Fleming to their silver medal finish.

Four alternates for the biathlon and bobsled teams were National Guard Soldiers. The

alternates for the men's and women's biathlon teams were Sgt. Jacob Beste from Minnesota and Sgt. Sarah Kamilewicz from Vermont. Spc. Mike Kohn from Virginia was a men's bobsled alternate, and Spc. Jill Bakken from Oregon was a women's bobsled alternate.

"These Olympians are outstanding examples of our National Guard people - Americans at their finest," said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "They are an inspiration to all who are serving with the National Guard at home and abroad, who have served in the Guard, and who are considering National Guard Service."

With her silver medal, Spc. Shauna Rohbock grabbed the attention of her home state of Utah, all the way to the governor's office.

"Shauna not only brings honor to her home state but to the thousands who wear the uniform," said Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. "We are proud of her accomplishments."

Rohbock could be establishing a National Guard tradition: She follows in the footsteps of Bakken, who drove the gold-medal winning sled when women's bobsledding was introduced as an Olympic sport during the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games.

"We congratulate Spc. Rohbock on her silver-medal performance in Torino," said Maj. Gen. Brian Tarbet, the Utah National Guard's adjutant general. "We are extremely pleased and proud of her accomplishments on the bobsled track and her willingness to serve on the battlefield. Her sense of duty, persistence and tenacity personify what is best about all of our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen in the Utah National Guard."

Rohbock and Bakken enlisted together in the Utah Army Guard in 2000. Rohbock, 28, recently re-enlisted, according to Utah Guard spokesman Maj. Hank McIntire.

"She's been very proud to say that she's part of the military," Chuck Rohbock, Shauna's father, said after she earned her medal. "She was a Soldier first. She was ready to go."



Photos by Jack Gillund, Department of the Army

Utah Army National Guard Spc. Shauna Rohbock (right) and Valerie Fleming started fast on the Cesana track and earned the silver medal in women's bobsledding on Feb. 21 during the XX Winter Olympics in Italy. Rohbock was the driver for the USA-1 sled and was competing in her first Olympic Games.

Rohbock was called up for duty in Iraq with the 115th Engineer Group in 2003. Though her duffle bags were packed and she did pre-deployment training, a torn rotator cuff prevented Rohbock from going with her unit.

Chuck Rohbock said his daughter told him that knowing her fellow Soldiers were serving in Iraq motivated her to do her best in the Olympics. "I've got to do well because everybody in my unit has volunteered to go in my place," she told her father.

"The Guard - everything about it, everybody she's been involved with - has been so supportive. They've been so wonderful," Chuck Rohbock said.

"We're just very proud of her," he said. "I felt that she would medal. I just didn't know how. Shauna's never done anything half way. She's always trained hard. She's always been a self-starter."

An administrative specialist at the Utah Guard's Joint Forces Headquarters, Rohbock is a graduate of Mountain View High School and Brigham Young University.

"Shauna has always demanded a lot of herself," said Linda Rohbock Rowland, Shauna's aunt. "We are totally full of emotion. We are thrilled and proud. Sometimes good guys do win. We have watched her pre-

pare for this day for the last eight years. It was heartbreaking when she lost her spot on the 2002 team, but she is a very focused, persistent and tenacious person. She has always paid the price in whatever she has participated in."

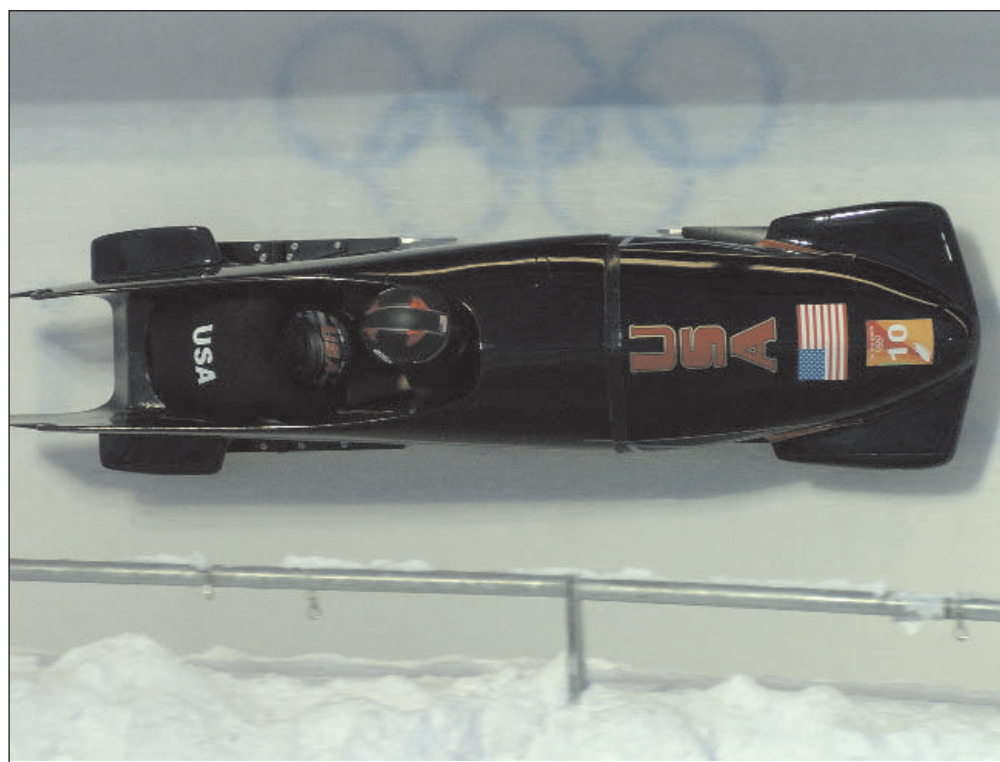
Rohbock lost her place as Bakken's brakeman to Vonetta Flowers for the 2002 games in Utah and watched from the sidelines as that U.S. team won the gold medal.

Rohbock's athletic prowess is not limited to bobsledding. She played soccer for BYU, where she was the nation's highest-scoring sophomore, and professionally for the San Diego Spirit.

"Being a coach and involved with athletics all my life, I know what Shauna has gone through to prepare," said Fred Rowland, Shauna's uncle. "There has definitely been a higher power involved in her life to help her get where she is today."

Rohbock grew up in Orem, Utah, and lives in Park City. Her parents are Chuck and Myrna Rohbock, and she has five sisters and one brother.

Master Sgt. Bob Haskell and NBCOlympics.com contributed to this report.



Spc. Shauna Rohbock drives the USA-1 sled to second place.

Biffle begins another season behind the wheel

LAS VEGAS - An eighth place finish in the March 12 UAW DaimlerChrysler 400 gave Greg Biffle and the National Guard team its first top-10 position in a Nextel Cup race during the early part of the 2006 NASCAR season.

That finish at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway overcame disappointing showings in the season's first two races and lifted Biffle and the No. 16 Ford to 25th in the standings with 269 points.

The National Guard is one of that car's primary sponsors. Biffle finished second in the Nextel Cup standings last year with a series-leading six victories.

Biffle's performance at Las Vegas was much more promising than it was at Fontana, Calif., where losing a cylinder sabotaged his efforts to repeat his 2005 Auto Club 500 victory in the National Guard car at the California Speedway in late February.

A cut tire during the Daytona 500 and the mechanical problem in California got him off to a rocky start. Biffle and the National Guard team were dominating the California Speedway race they won a year ago when the engine malfunction ended their day on lap 230 for a 42nd place finish.

The National Guard team had the first weekend in March off before returning to the track in Las Vegas a week later.

Just like the National Guard members they represent, Biffle and the team have refused to give up. If any team could recover from a disappointing start to a season, it's the National Guard team, said NASCAR observers after the first two races. It was clear from the time the team unloaded the National Guard/Jackson Hewitt Ford that Biffle would again be a tough competitor at California Speedway.

He turned in solid practice times leading up to the main event and qualified on the outside pole. Everything was shaping up to be a repeat performance of last season's race at the two-mile oval.

Biffle led 168 of the first 218 laps in the race that started on a sunny afternoon in southern California with Biffle and polesitter Kurt Busch leading the field into turn one.

But on lap 225, Biffle reported that he thought there was a problem with the engine. By lap 229, it was clear that the engine was failing and Biffle brought the car to the garage.

"We had a great race car today, and I have to applaud the engine department," Biffle said. "We've had great engines. We've got great horsepower. You can see it out on the racetrack how good these engines run.

"We didn't have a failure the entire season last year. They're making more and more power, and you're bound to find a limit sometime or another and we did today," Biffle added. "The National Guard/Jackson Hewitt car was good. The guys in the pits did a phenomenal job. ... It's just unfortunate. We finished 31st at Daytona and now 42nd here, so this is not the way we wanted to start the season."



Photos by Kathy Williams

Greg Biffle, who drives Roush Racing's No. 16 Ford sponsored in part by the National Guard, had the opportunity to meet National Guardsmen who also earn a living sitting in a seat – an Apache attack helicopter seat. Biffle met with members of the Utah National Guard's 1st Battalion 211th Aviation while visiting the Salt Lake City area.



Virginia pilots fly first 2-ship Air Guard F-22A sortie

By Maj. D.D. Magaldi

Virginia National Guard

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. – No fanfare or balloons. No speeches or fuss.

Feb. 16 was quiet, sunny and clear – just the way that Virginia Air National Guard fighter pilots Lt. Col. Phillip Guy and Maj. Patrick DeConcini wanted it as they climbed into two F-22As at Langley AFB for an air-to-air training sortie. On the surface, the event appeared routine. But their flight that day added a unique footnote to Langley's rich aviation history and the active Air Force's 1st Fighter Wing. It also marked a significant milestone for the 192nd Fighter Wing of the Virginia Air National Guard.

The first two-ship flight of Virginia Air Guard-piloted F-22As took to the sky in the Air Force's newest fighter and the world's premier air dominance aircraft, the F-22A Raptor.

"We celebrate this milestone," commented the 192nd's Lt. Col. James Cox, a senior Virginia Air Guard fighter pilot now at Langley working on the integration with the 1st Fighter Wing. "I congratulate these two men who have been a pivotal force in securing our proud unit's future. Well done! I look forward to the first four-ship flight."

In the early 1990s, the 192nd was among the first of all Air Guard units in the nation chosen to fly the F-16C as that aircraft was transferred from active duty to Air Guard service. With slightly less than 70 miles separating the two units, the 1st and 192nd interacted on a regular basis, conducting Dissimilar Air Combat Tactics (DACT) training with each other several times a year.

As the Air Force moved into the 21st century with an increased operations tempo and the realization that new, more capable aircraft entering the force would result in a smaller inventory and far fewer units needed to fly them, senior leaders initiated a study to integrate the two wings. The integration is called a Classic Associate construct. The goal is an enhanced war-fighting capability for the 1st Fighter Wing through the functional integration of Virginia Air Guard personnel but with separate administrative chains of command. The project is one of many objectives in the Air Force's Total Force Integration initiative (TFI).

Guy and DeConcini have flown with each other in the F-16C for nearly five years at the 192nd wing based at the Richmond International Airport. In July 2005, Guy became the first Virginia Air Guard pilot to complete the F-22A fighter transition course at Tyndall AFB, Fla. He attended the course with pilots from Langley's 27th Fighter Squadron. DeConcini followed in a subsequent class. Guy has been flying with the 27th Fighter Squadron for more than seven months, waiting for his first flight with a fel-



Virginia Air National Guard photo

Virginia Air Guard pilots Lt. Col. Phillip Guy (left) and Maj. Patrick DeConcini stand before an F-22A Raptor on the ramp at Langley Air Force Base, Va. They recently became the first two Air Guard pilots to fly a two-plane sortie in the Air Force's newest fighter.

low Air Guard pilot.

"It was great to have Maj. DeConcini going up with me," said Guy. "It took us back to when I certified him as an F-16 instructor pilot. Now we're in the upgrade process with a new jet."

The pilots are impressed with the F-22A.

"It is awesome to be flying the leading-edge fighter platform in the Air Force," Guy said. "It is a great fighter. Historically, the Air Guard flew the older ones. This is a very exciting time for the Virginia Air National Guard."

It is equally exciting for the pilots to be flying with the 27th Fighter Squadron, the oldest continually active fighter squadron in the Air Force.

"The history here and being a part of a new chapter in that history is incredible," DeConcini said. "The 192nd also brings a very rich history, going back to World War II, that we take pride in and celebrate. We are glad to be moving into a state-of-the-art fighter and a mission that will take us into future."

For the 192nd, flying the F-22 on an active duty base is another step into the Total Force and another step in making the Air Guard a more integral part of the Air Force.

The move also helps establish longevity for

the unit as it moves into a fighter that will fly for the next 20-plus years and out of the F-16C which will be retiring in the near future.

The 192nd brings a large number of seasoned, experienced pilots to Langley. Nearly every Virginia Air Guard pilot has flown in combat and has logged between 1,500 and 3,000 hours in fighter aircraft. The average is more than 1,800 hours.

"The talent here is incredible. We have already learned a great deal from each other," Guy said.

"And there is much we will continue to learn from each other. This is an opportunity to provide our nation with unparalleled mission capability.

"This [integration] is a great opportunity to capitalize on the experience and stability of the Air Guard and the talent and mobility of the active duty force. The stability of staying in one place and working with the same group of people over time has provided us with great experience. Now we are teaming that experience with the young talent in the 1st Fighter Wing," he said.

Both pilots feel the active duty and Air Guard cultures compliment each other. They believe the stability and longevity of Air Guard personnel will help provide continuity and prevent valuable information from being

lost during periods of rapid movement and turnover among active duty personnel. And, Guy added.

"The Guard will benefit and grow from the new talent and new ideas brought in by an ever-changing Langley population."

About 60 192nd Fighter Wing personnel, primarily in aircraft maintenance, are now working side-by-side with their active duty counterparts at Langley. Some are among the small full-time contingent that keeps the 192nd running during the week. Some are "traditional" Guard men and women who keep their military skills honed by training one weekend each month and during two weeks of field training each year. By the time the integration is finished sometime in 2009, it is expected that nearly 1,000 192nd personnel will have moved to Langley.

Another first for Guy and DeConcini is expected to occur in late May when the Air Guard pilots will fly the F-22A alongside 27th Fighter Squadron pilots in Alaska during Northern Edge 06. That is the Pacific Command's premier joint training exercise designed to practice combat operations and enhance interoperability among the services. It will be the first operational exercise for the F-22A.

National Guard units earn family readiness awards

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The family readiness efforts of California and Wisconsin National Guard units were recognized at a Pentagon ceremony on Feb. 17.

"Family readiness is a key component of mission readiness," said Thomas Hall, assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs. "Robust family readiness programs have greatly enhanced the deployability of Guard and Reserve units."

Established in 2000, the Reserve Family Readiness Award Program recognizes the top unit in each Reserve component that demonstrates outstanding family readiness while maintaining superior mission readiness.

"We've had over half a million people mobilized since Sept. 11, and there is stress on the families," Hall said. In the past two years, 90 provisions have been passed into law to improve the quality of life for Guard members and Reservists, he said. "That's not a story that gets out there," he added.

"This time last year we had over 181,000 Guardsmen and Reservists mobilized," Hall said. "Today we have 125,000 ... 56,000 more Guardsmen and Reservists are home."

Hall said the Department of Defense is also working to shorten mobilizations.

Guard units selected for the 2005 award and honored in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes were: The California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing and the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry.

"You've heard me talk before about the three-legged stool," said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "One of those legs is the service member. Another is the family. The third leg is the employer."

Soldiers' families are essential to mission success, Blum said.

The Wisconsin family readiness group - supporting about 620 Soldiers deployed to Iraq since last June - was cited for easing family uncertainty and concern by providing information, support, quality of life programs, assistance with personal matters, a phone tree, family care plans and an interactive Website.

Two Soldiers from the Wisconsin battalion have died, and eight have been wounded during the deployment.

The California unit was cited for the involvement of numerous volunteers, for hosting wing morale events and for its track record of getting information to family members.

"The family readiness award is one of the highest awards that can be awarded to a National Guard unit," said Col. Anthony Baker, the National Guard Bureau's chief of Family Programs. "It signifies the great work that they do in taking care of families. Families are the foundation in helping the Soldier or Airman complete their mission. If we don't do that right, then we lose the Soldier or Airman. So we sustain the family to retain the Soldier and the Airman. We have to continue that path, no matter what."

The awards are co-sponsored by Reserve Affairs and the Military Officers Association of America, the nation's largest organization for active duty, Guard and Reserve veterans and retired officers and surviving spouses.

Maj. Gen. Ronald Young represented the Joint Staff and the Army National Guard, and Brig. Gen. Charles Ickes II represented the Air National Guard among the standing room only audience.



Photos by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

(Above) Representatives of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry received a Department of Defense Family Readiness Award from Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall on Feb. 17. (Below) Representatives of the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing receive a Department of Defense Family Readiness Award.



Illinois medical Soldiers support Anaconda troops

BALAD, Iraq - Soldiers and civilians conduct their daily business on Logistical Support Area Anaconda with some degree of normalcy. In case there is an accident or life-threatening situation, Army National Guard men and women from Company C, 205th Area Support Medical Battalion from Illinois, are ready to react.

A small detachment of Soldiers from the 205th supports the Emergency Response Center, contributing ambulance services.

"We support medical emergencies all over LSA Anaconda," said Army Guard Staff Sgt. Chris Byford, senior medic with the ERC. "We give the highest stabilization of medical treatment that we can en route to the hospital."

Byford believes the team's actions when responding to a call are similar to a civilian emergency team's professionalism and care.

"There is nothing better when you arrive on the scene to see everybody is doing exactly what you want," Byford said. "You've earned the respect that you know what you are doing. It could be as simple as throwing a blanket on a patient or padding somebody on a spine board. Just giving them a little more comfort."

Dropping people off at the hospital isn't the extent of their work. The Guard Soldiers are often compelled to go back and

visit those they have helped.

"If you come back on the next run to check on the patient, they can't believe that you came back," Byford said. "Many times we will go to the Post Exchange and someone will come up and say 'You transported me and I want you to know that I really appreciated it. Can I buy you lunch?' That's a pretty nice feeling."

Sgt. Erica Sandoval, medic and seven-year veteran with the 205th, feels that getting to know the men and women on post is a great way for her to help those in need.

"When I get a call, I can say I know where they are at," Sandoval said. "I think it helps improve response time because I'm familiar with that company and I know that they will help me out."

The medics are here to help, but they don't do it for medals or awards.

"Thank you" is better than any award I've ever gotten," Byford said. "When somebody is in pain or they're really scared, and you use the assets that you have and take care of the patient, there is nothing better than that."

Sandoval also likes the feeling that comes from a simple thank you. She said it brings a smile to her face when someone shows their appreciation for what she has done for them.

"I can be in the PX or at the gym and someone comes up to

me and says thank you," Sandoval said.

Being able to clearly communicate with each other allows the ERC to provide the best services to their fellow Soldiers and makes their job easier.

"We have two forms of communication. We have the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System radios and the Motorola," Byford said. "Just like we do in the civilian world, on the radios we give the full report and the [estimated time of arrival]."

The hospital wasn't accustomed to incoming reports prior to the arrival of the ambulance team, but it has been a welcome change, said Byford. The 205th added the radios to improve their service. Some of the Guard Soldiers are experienced civilian emergency medical technicians and look for ways to improve their service.

"We constantly looked at process improvement," Byford said. "When we came here they had a good program. We made it better, and when we leave here we will set it up to be constantly improved."

Being a medic, however, is more than equipment and radios.

"I just like helping people," Sandoval said. "I like the satisfaction that you get when you drop off a patient. Not everyone's job involves helping other people."

California Guard members support Montana Tool Program

Sgt. Antonio Delgado and Spc. Jared Chase, 115th Area Support Group, separate tools from containers at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, preparing them for shipment to the U.S. to be redistributed through the Montana Tool and Recycling Warehousing Program.



Photo by
Sgt. Kara Greene

By Sgt. Kara Greene
California Army National Guard

KUWAIT – Conserving resources and protecting the environment isn't just a priority for environmentalists, it's also important to the California Army National Guard—even while on duty in the Middle East.

But instead of conserving water and crushing cans, the Soldiers of the 115th Area Support Group are recycling tools as part of the Army National Guard's Montana Tool and Recycling Warehousing Program.

Deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in August, the 115th ASG Soldiers provide logistical support for deploying and redeploying units. They have also taken on the added mission of sorting through excess tools to support the Montana Tool Program.

Tools come to Kuwait in containers shipped from various locations in theater, said Lt. Col. Erik Brun, 115th operations officer. Twenty to 30 cargo containers arrive in Kuwait from Iraq or Afghanistan daily and there are more than 60,000 cargo containers in theater.

"Units send the excess tools back to warehouses at Camp Arifjan for the Army's use," said Master Sgt. Christina Eggros, support operations noncommissioned officer. The 115th took on the extra chore of sorting, labeling and cataloguing the tools, she said, so they can be put to good use.

"If a unit coming into theater is short on tools vital to the mission, they can look through the warehouse containers," Eggros. "The war fighter is our top priority." However, excess tools can be used by units preparing to deploy and those conducting missions in the U.S. or elsewhere.

The 115th began coordinating the shipment of tools to warehouses in the U.S. in January which will be available for order through the National Guard's supply system as an alternative to purchasing new tools.

"All excess tools from the Middle East that we can redistribute in the states greatly benefit the program," said Staff Sgt. Steven Mansikka, Montana Tool Program supervisor.

The Montana Army National Guard started the tool distribution program in 2001 for its' units, but its benefit was quickly recognized and Guard Bureau expanded it to all states, according to Mansikka. Five years later the program is thriving. "Last year alone, we redistributed over \$3 million in free tools," he said. "Tools are available free of charge, through a website...we even provide free shipping."

"Last year we redistributed over \$3 million in free tools," he said, "with 142,609 orders placed by nearly every state and territory, to include units in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan."

And with the 115's help, tools aren't sitting in boxes waiting to be sorted, Brun said, their getting in the hands of Soldiers who can use them.

Laredo center hosts Texas Guard in homeland defense training

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada
Texas National Guard

LAREDO, Texas – Members of the Texas National Guard practiced extraction, decontamination and medical procedures at the International Fire and Law Enforcement Training Center for two days in early March.

Men and women of the Texas National Guard's 6th Civil Support Team and the Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear or High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package - CERFP for short - supported the local incident commander, Laredo Fire Chief Luis F. Ramos, during the intense two days of training.

The exercise was another example of how the Texas National Guard prepares to respond to natural and manmade catastrophes as part of its homeland defense mission.

The Laredo International Fire and Law Enforcement Training Center was opened in May 2002, and the Laredo Fire Department has since hosted trainees from around the world. In March, it was the Guard's turn to demonstrate its ability to support local, state or federal agencies in case of a catastrophe.

"We are hosting 200 people in this exercise," said Fire Chief Luis Sosa before the event got underway. "This joint effort will allow us to ensure compatibility between our local forces and military responders in the event of a disaster."

Students from local schools acted as "victims" and allowed themselves to be "rescued" from manholes and drainpipes and to be placed on stretchers and rolled along a conveyor belt while they were hosed and scrubbed down. While it was mostly fun and games for the students, the training was serious business for the Guard members and fire department personnel.

Observers witnessed an orderly process of extracting victims from the "hot zone." Subsequent decontamination and medical treatment were dictated by the condition cards the victims carried.

Maj. Gen. Charles Rodriguez, adjutant general of Texas, and Maj. Gen. Walter Zink, deputy commander for U.S. Army North, evaluated the process.

"You've got to have connectivity and knowledge of how [local authorities] work [because] no two locals work the same," Rodriguez said. "It's not just knowing who they are; it's knowing how they operate."



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada

Two Texas National Guard members prepare to transport a "victim" to a decontamination tent during a mass decontamination training exercise in Laredo, Texas, March 2-3.

Youth ChalleNGe has a capital night

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – Caressa Gibson told a spellbound crowd what the expression "at-risk" means to her during a formal dinner at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center on the evening of Feb. 28. It was not a pretty story.

A former cadet in the Maryland National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, Gibson told her audience that included senior Defense Department officials, generals, captains of industry, senators and state first ladies exactly who she was.

"I let peer pressure get to me," said Gibson who began drinking when she was in the seventh grade. Two years later, she added, "I fell off a very steep and ugly cliff."

The First Annual ChalleNGe Champions Dinner presented by the National Guard Youth Foundation was marked by the sound of constant chatter, laughter and applause.

But for about 60 seconds you could hear a pin drop as Gibson told the 550 guests that she was raped as a high school freshman. The Maryland teenager had garnered the undivided attention of some of her nation's leaders.

"I turned to anti-depressants," she said.

Her young life in freefall, Gibson heard about Maryland's Freestate ChalleNGe Academy. Sensing an opportunity and knowing that six in 10 applicants are turned away because there isn't enough money to pay for all of them, Gibson set her heart on getting accepted.

"I became obsessed with getting into the program," she said. "I had some place I needed to be and, more important, someone I needed to become."

Gibson graduated from the program which involves a 17-month voluntary commitment to help at-risk youths return to high school, earn a GED, enroll in college, start a career or join the armed forces. Youth ChalleNGe includes life skills training and academics. It also pairs the 16-18-year-old cadets who graduate from the initial program with mentors to help guide them for one year. It is the nation's second-largest mentoring program.

Since graduating, Gibson has completed basic training for the Air National Guard. She is attending a community college and is trying to get into the United States Air Force Academy.

"At-risk means so much," she said. "The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program understands every part of us."

Dr. Eddy Bayardelle, president of the Merrill Lynch Foundation, announced that the financial management and advisory company would donate \$1 million to the program for higher education scholarships for promis-

ing graduates.

The chief of the National Guard Bureau, LTG H Steven Blum, accepted the National Mentoring Partnership Award on behalf of the Youth ChalleNGe Program.

U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu from Louisiana, Nancy Murkowski, the first lady of Alaska, and Kim Henry, first lady of Oklahoma, were presented ChalleNGe Champion Awards.

Apprentice 2 winner Kelly Perdew spoke. Country music artist and American Idol finalist Josh Gracin sang, as did tenor Daniel Rodriguez.

"What is one life worth?" Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall asked attendees. "If we save one life, it is worth the entire program."

And retired Lt. Gen. John Conaway reminded attendees that the National Guard conducts Youth ChalleNGe even as Soldiers and Airmen are deployed for foreign and domestic operations. "The National Guard continues to add value to our communities at home," said Conaway, the National Guard Youth Foundation chairman and a former National Guard Bureau chief.

Despite the military, political and entertainment firepower in the red, white and blue-lit room, the real stars of the night were the teens who joined the dinner guests during a standing ovation. The teens included Alisa Anderson, 17, who has been in the South Carolina program for seven weeks.

Anderson explained after the dinner how her choice to use drugs was taking her down the wrong path until she found Youth ChalleNGe. She recently learned that a medical condition would preclude her from joining the military when she graduates, so now she has her heart set on college.

A brigadier general interrupted Anderson's conversation. "I just wanted to shake your hand," the general said, as though Anderson were the celebrity.

"It's good to know that we're supported," Anderson said, as the general walked away.

The cadets' day included a guided tour of the Pentagon, a meeting with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the evening's dinner and program narrated by CBS News correspondent Bob Orr. "It really is an epidemic," said Orr about the fact that one in three American youths drop out of high school, up from one in five a decade ago.



Frank Taylor



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks

Cadets from five states posted the colors during the opening ceremony for a program honoring the National Guard's Youth ChalleNGe Program for at-risk youth on Feb. 28 in Washington.

Thomas Eagleman, 17, is also seven weeks into the New Mexico program. "There are people out there that want to help us," he said, peppering his sentences with "sir" and carrying himself with the self-consciousness, deliberate movements and poise of a relatively new recruit in a highly disciplined environment. "Not everyone has their back turned on us."

Eagleman said the program has taught him to look forward rather than back. "It opens many opportunities for all the cadets," he said. "I want to go to college and get a bachelor's degree in chemistry."

And Frank Taylor, a Georgia cadet who left home at 16, sold drugs and missed 140 days of his senior year, said Youth ChalleNGe took him from boy to man. "I have been taking everything negative in my life and making it positive," he said.

Half of the states and Puerto Rico offer ChalleNGe programs. Almost 63,000 former high school dropouts have graduated since Youth ChalleNGe was founded by the National Guard with a Congressional mandate in 1993.

Some 3,000 students drop out of high school each day, and 33 million 16- to 24-year-olds do not have high school diplomas, according to Youth ChalleNGe statistics.

"I'm finally comfortable in my own shoes," said Gibson, the Maryland cadet. Youth Challenge gave her "a reason to live," she said.

"There is nothing that we do ... that we are prouder of than what we do for this next greatest American generation," Blum told the audience. Youth ChalleNGe saves lives, he said. "For Guard members there is nothing more noble and honorable."

Guam Soldiers purify water in the middle of the desert

By Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MUQDADIYAH, Iraq – There is plenty of bottled water for drinking in Iraq, but water used for other things, such as showering and washing cloths, needs to be tested and treated by water purification specialists.

Spc. Craig Naputi Quinata and Spc. Arthur Relech are water purification specialists in the Guam Army National Guard's 909th Quartermaster Detachment. They are the only water purification specialists at Forward Operating Base Normandy.

Attached to the Ohio Army Guard's 644th Quartermaster Detachment, the two Soldiers arrived here in November 2005.

The team maintains the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification System (ROWPU). They purify the water in FOB Normandy to include the Iraqi army section of the base.

"We make sure all of our ROWPUs are in good condition, and we do our checks to make sure we add the necessary chemicals so people can use water we produce," said Relech.

"Where we come from, we mainly produce water from off the ocean, which means more maintenance on the ROWPU. Here, it is fresh water so there is not as much maintenance," explained Quinata.

The two Soldiers come from the village of Inarajan in Guam.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

Spc. Craig Naputi Quinata (right) operates the raw water pump while Spc. Arthur Relech (Left) primes the raw water pump used to pull water from a canal outside of Muqdadiyah, Iraq.

New program aimed at creating warrant officers within the states

By Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va.– The Army National Guard is running a pilot program designed to evaluate, train and graduate technical warrant officers in order to fill a large number of vacancies within the 54 states and territories.

The Warrant Officer Candidate School - Reserve Component, or WOCS-RC, is intended to give enlisted Soldiers holding the rank of sergeant and above the chance to complete the training necessary to become warrant officers.

It gives them another option to become a warrant officer without having to spend 33 straight days attending the reserve component Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, Ala.

"Some employers say, 'You get one week-end a month and two weeks a year and that's it,'" said Maj. Scottie Moore, an Army Guard training officer at the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) at Fort Monroe, Va. "Through this program, they get the same training to the same standards they would get at Fort Rucker, only presented in a different way."

The Army Training System Course is split into three phases:

Phase 1, distance learning, is designed to test applicants. It tests Soldiers' military

knowledge including common tasks and warrior skills. Once registered into the Army Training Requirements and Resources System through their state schools manager, candidates either log into the class from their home computer or participate at their local distributive learning (DL) center.

"During the DL phase, the applicants are being screened," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Christopher Serio, the senior warrant officer advisor for the deputy commanding general of the Army National Guard at TRADOC. "We need to make sure they have a solid foundation as a Soldier before they can proceed in the course."

After successfully completing the DL phase, candidates spend the next five monthly drills in Phase 2 which is offered at 13 regional training institutes across the country. They attend classes dealing with operations, military history and leadership.

Finally, warrant officer candidates attend Phase 3, a rigorous, field intensive two-week course where they test their warrior skills, physical, mental abilities and other advanced Soldier training using real war scenarios

within a contemporary operating environment. The phase is wrapped up with a traditional 12-mile tactical road march.

"This gives warrant candidates the chance to practice their field craft, as they are technical leaders as well as warrior leaders," said Serio. "The program prepares them for both important roles."

After completing the final phase, graduates will be appointed as warrant officers in the Army National Guard or U.S. Army Reserve. Once appointed, warrants must complete their designated Warrant Officer Basic Course within two years.

During that course, they learn advanced technical skills in their field as well as supervisory skills and techniques specific to warrant officers, setting them apart from the generalist, strategic officer.

"The necessity of this program for the Army National Guard is already evidenced by the need to double our quotas," said Command Chief Warrant Officer Roger Perry of the Delaware Army National Guard who has been burning the midnight oil

orchestrating this pilot program among the 13 states participating in the pilot program.

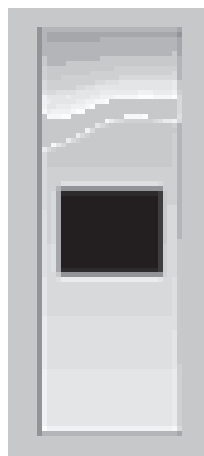
The program now underway will begin Phase 2 in April with approximately 140 National Guard candidates and 20 Army Reserve candidates enrolled. The two-week Phase 3 will take place at Camp Atterbury in Indiana.

Non-commissioned officers, sergeant E-5 and above, interested in applying for next year's WOCS-RC course should contact their state command chief warrant officer for details.

Eligibility - Army National Guard applicants must:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 46
- Score 110 or above on the General Aptitude Area Test
- Be a high school graduate or pass the General Education Development test (GED)
- Be a U.S. citizen by birth or naturalization
- Pass all events on the Army Physical Fitness Test
- Meet certain mandatory technical qualifications for their specific MOS
- Meet certain medical, security and licensing requirements depending on their specific MOS

For more details, read DA Circular 601-Series for the current requirements and information.



29th Infantry Division team takes charge at Guantanamo Bay

By Spc. Seth Myers

Joint Task Force Guantanamo

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – A Maryland Army National Guard unit took charge of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company at Joint Task Force Guantanamo from a California Army Guard unit on March 4.

After serving the task force for a year, the 40th Infantry Division Artillery from California passed the torch to the newcomers of the Maryland-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 29th Infantry Division.

Each unit's commander offered words to their Soldiers during the ceremony, ranging from compliments and thanks for a job well done to offers of good luck and expectations of things to come.

The task force's mission involves housing and caring for approximately 490 detainees in a safe and humane environment and assisting in the Global War on Terrorism by gathering intelligence.

"When you come home, there may be those who question what you did here. Most Americans' only knowledge of Gitmo comes from the news media or from a movie with the famous line, 'the truth, you can't handle the truth!'" said Col. Jane Anderholt, the 40th DIVARTY commander.

"However, I firmly believe Americans can

handle the truth. So I encourage you to hold your head up, look them straight in the eye and tell them the truth. The American people should be proud of the honorable job you have done here and they need to know that you have helped make America a safer place," Anderholt added.

"Today marks the transition from the 40th Division Artillery to the 29th Infantry Division. Although the 40th DIVARTY is leaving, they have made their mark, said Col. James Vandegrift, 3rd BCT commander.

"They have established a high standard that will be difficult to match. We must now acknowledge their service, their performance and their professional mentoring of the 29th ID soldiers, which will enable us to perform our duties," Vandegrift said.

This is the first phase of the rotation changeover. Other units will rotate in and out of JTF Guantanamo in the near future and, as always, the joint environment will be maintained. In fact, the 29th ID is replacing more than just the headquarters element. More members of the division will arrive to take on the 1st Battalion, 18th Cavalry's mission.

"To the members of the 29th Infantry, we wish you good luck as you assume your duties. It will be, without a doubt, a challenging and eventful year for you," predicted Anderholt.



Photo by Spc. Seth Myers

Col. James Vandegrift, commander of the Maryland Army National Guard's 3rd Brigade Combat Team, and Sgt. Maj. Bernard Hobbs unroll their colors to signify they have assumed command of the headquarters element at Joint Task Force Guantanamo from the California Army Guard's 40th Division Artillery.

FROM PAGE 1

Ride

mission to help children in the communities that we work with."

With the help of Cellular One, and Wish Upon The North Star, Jake's wish would come true.

"This is really awesome. My friends think that I'm lucky that I can do something like this," Jake said, "I'm really excited, I'm going to send pictures to my dad in Iraq."

"We are so proud to be investing in Ramy Brooks, the Alaska spirit and the Alaska culture," said Davis, "With Jake joining the team on race day, it is a true pairing of Alaskan spirit, as they are both an inspiration to us all."

On March 4, Jake rode the first 11 miles of the Iditarod with Brooks, from C Street to Campbell Creek Airstrip.

"I've been racing professionally for 14 years," Brooks said. "I think it's a great part of the Wish Upon The North Star program to give kids the chance to live some of the small dreams they have."

The veteran musher said he served in the U.S. Navy, and when it came time for him to decide whether or not to re-enlist, he struggled with the decision.

"One of my captains told me something that has stuck with me for a long time. We don't have to necessarily serve our country by being in the military service. You can serve by being a good citizen as well," Brooks recalled. "This is a great opportunity to do that and give people like Jacob the chance to live a dream."

Idaho National Guard Family Readiness Program an integral part of successful mobilizations and deployments

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

BOISE, Idaho – At times in 2005, Idaho had the highest percentage of deployed National Guard members in the country. And plenty was happening at home while the state's Soldiers and Airmen served on out-of-state domestic or foreign missions.

Deployed Guard members and their families sacrificed: Fathers missed the birth of children. Families left behind faced unfamiliar chores usually performed by mothers serving abroad. Children missed their parents.

Enter Bill Shouse, a retired Idaho Army Guard sergeant major who in 2004 became the civilian director of Idaho's National Guard family programs.

In a recent interview, Shouse observed that more Idaho Guard members are training for deployment and that family support is part of the formula for success for Soldiers and Airmen.

Shouse was a high school senior in 1964 when he enlisted in a military which has significantly different attitudes toward families than it has today, he said. Back then, an active duty enlisted Soldier who wanted to get married had to get his commander's permission.

Shouse said attitudes really started to change with the advent of the all-volunteer force after the Vietnam War. "The Soldiers are here because they want to be here," he said. For Soldiers to want to stay, families must be cared for, he added.

Shouse said he really noticed that the

"The Soldiers are here because they want to be here. For Soldiers to want to stay, families must be cared for."

– Retired Sgt. Maj. Bill Shouse

deployment tempo increased for the National Guard with Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91. "It was after the first Gulf War that the military really started looking at the National Guard as a viable force," he said.

Family support was provided during that conflict, but it was scaled back afterwards, he recalled. "That was a big mistake," Shouse said.

Now, ongoing family support is considered vital, he said. In Idaho, that means regularly scheduled meetings for the families of deployed Guard members, almost like the Guard's monthly drills.

Meetings include classes on such things as managing family finances. Couples often divide up chores, Shouse pointed out, and one spouse may have paid all of the bills. That may be the spouse who has deployed.

"We even had some that didn't know how to write a check," Shouse said.

Shouse said one lengthy phone conversation with the stressed-out spouse of a deployed Guard member boiled down to the fact that the Soldier was the one who knew how to start the lawnmower and the spouse didn't.

"We went out and started the lawnmower and actually mowed the lawn," he said.

Not everything is a crisis. "We have a youth program that's very, very strong," Shouse

said. The program serves hundreds of children from 1,800 families.

In the winter, 10- to 18-year-old children of deployed Guard members attend a three-day "snow bash" with snowshoeing, winter survival and snow cave classes, skiing, ice skating and luge. An annual summer camp lasts five days.

Business firms, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and other community groups have volunteered to help, Shouse said. "We've got a lot of volunteers," he said. "They just come out of the woodwork. They come from everywhere."

One day, Shouse found his office full of holiday season plants donated for families. "They had 250 poinsettias in my office," he said.

In Idaho, family programs start in earnest six months before a deployment, and they don't stop when Soldiers get home. The state provides a marriage enrichment program that gives 50 couples an opportunity to go on a weekend retreat. Daycare is provided for their children so the couples can focus on each other.

Shouse said giving back through the family support programs has been a great cap to his 36-year military career – eight years as a traditional Guard member, 28 years working full time.

Guardsmen from three states team up to keep the mission rolling

By Spc. Spencer Case

III Corps Support Command

TALLIL, Iraq – For Utah's 115th Maintenance Company, the only thing more diverse than the Army National Guard Soldiers is the smorgasbord of missions they perform in southern Iraq.

Since they arrived in Iraq last May, the National Guard unit of over 200 troops has faced the dual challenge of assimilating Soldiers from Utah, Montana and Missouri into one coherent team and performing a wide variety of critical missions. Soldiers and leaders alike agree that the unit has proven itself equal to the task.

"We've brought three together into one awesome unit," said Spc. Matthew Williams, 22, of Helena, Mont., a wheeled vehicle mechanic in the 2nd platoon, 115th Maintenance Company. "I couldn't ask for a better unit to be in over here." During their mobilization training at Fort Bliss, Texas, the Utah unit added a vehicle maintenance platoon from Missouri's 1035th Maintenance Company and two platoons from Montana's 3669th Maintenance Company. One works on wheeled vehicles. The other is a track platoon that works on tanks.

Capt. Budd Vogrinec, the 115th's commander, said he has done everything in his power to encourage unity among his Soldiers. Vogrinec and the leaders within the platoons designated each platoon numerically rather than calling them the "Missouri platoon" or the "Utah platoon." Later, they made sure the Soldiers wore the same unit patch to encourage solidarity.

"The NCOs and officers from the three states have all stepped up and brought the unit together," Vogrinec said. Once in Iraq, the 115th spent eight months at Forward Operating Base Duke, north of Najaf, supporting the 155th Brigade Combat Team from Missouri.

The 155th BCT, which had already spent three months in theater, was short on maintenance personnel as well as combat logistics patrol (CLP) security and logistics. The newly unified Soldiers found plenty to keep them busy, be it providing security for CLPs, pulling guard duty, or helping to keep insurgents away from abandoned ammo supply points while on patrol.

There was also plenty of maintenance work to do. The 115th repaired everything from air conditioning systems and gen-



Photos by Spc. Spencer Case

(Above) Pvt. Barry Wilson, a vehicle mechanic for the 115th Maintenance Co., tightens the upper patrol line brackets on a Humvee to prevent friction against the tires, Logistical Support Area Adder. (Below) Spc. Travis Buhr tightens the lug nuts of a Humvee.

erators to vehicles and weapons. One of the most interesting tasks for the armament platoon was inspecting the AK-47s of the Iraqi Border Guard, a cross between a police force and a military unit.

The Guard Soldiers also took part in 39 civil affairs and humanitarian missions, including the voluntary "Adopt a School" program. The troops delivered supplies sent from family members in the United States to two schools in the Najaf area in July and October. Soldiers with woodworking skills made desks and cabinets for the teachers.

"I think a lot of the Soldiers really liked the different humanitarian missions we got to do," said Staff Sgt. Kimberly Whitaker, a mechanic and supervisor from Potosi, Mo. "I think people really liked doing that because you got to be with the Iraqi nationals, you got to see that they really did appreciate what we were doing for them, how we were

trying to make their lives better."

All told, the unit has completed more than 1,000 work orders and over 630 missions "outside the wire," including over 380 ammo supply point patrols, 85 gun truck missions, 80 vehicle recovery missions, and 20 logistics missions.

In January, the 115th was reassigned to Logistical Support Area Adder near Tallil, to support the 485th Corps Support Battalion which provides logistics support throughout southern Iraq.

The company expects to remain there for the rest of its deployment.

Whatever else comes their way, the 115th will probably stick together.

"We're all one family that's been through the same thing," said Whitaker. "We know how to bring somebody up when they're feeling down."



Mental health screening and educational materials are available at no cost to National Guard units

Mental health screening and educational materials are available at no cost to National Guard units through the Department of Defense Office of Health Affairs. The materials are part of the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program.

This new initiative offers National Guard and other service members and their families the opportunity to take voluntary, anonymous mental health and alcohol self-assessments either through in-person events or with an anonymous, online screening that is available anytime.

National Guard units can use the in-person programs that provide educational handouts, screening forms, and promotional materials as part of their family days or in conjunction with the annual health observance events: National Alcohol Screening Day, held in April, or Mental Health Screening, also known as National Depression

Screening Day, in October.

The goals of the program are to assist families and military personnel who have been affected by mobilization or deployment to examine their own emotional states, decrease the stigma associated with seeking help for emotional problems, and connect those in need with mental health services covered by the military and Veterans Administration.

There are a limited number of in-person screening kits still available. National Guard units can register for a free kit by visiting www.mentalhealthscreening.org/military or by calling (781) 239-0071. Units can also request a free CD that contains materials to promote the online screening Web site. The online screening, available to Guard members and their families, can be accessed at www.military-mentalhealth.org.

Contacting a Family Program Coordinator near you

The National Guard Family Program office in each state joint force headquarters (JFHQ) is designed to assist family members of all service members, regardless of the military organization or status, with information and/or referrals. Following is a list of Family Program offices in the 54 states and territories followed by Wing Family Program Coordinators.

Alabama

State Family Program Director
SGM Hubert Chance
1720 Cong WL Dickerson Dr.
Montgomery, AL, 36109-0711
Office/DSN (334)-271-7283 / 363-7283 or 1-
(800) 231-2846

117ARW
Pamela Lacey
5401 East Lake Blvd.
Birmingham, AL 35217
Office/DSN 205-714-2699/ 778-2699
Toll Free: None

187FW
Sharon Hubbert
5187 Selma Hwy.
Montgomery, AL 36108-4824
Office/DSN: 334-394-7119/ 358-9119 or 1-
800-368-4481 Option 2

Alaska

State Family Program Director
SMSgt Jan Myers
49000 Army Guard Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99503-2552
907-428-6663/317-384-4663
Mailing address: P.O Box 5800
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Two biathletes double trouble during 31st Guard championships



Jill Krause of Minnesota knocks down the targets in the standing position at the Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships on Feb. 13 at Camp Ripley, Minn. Krause would go on to finish fifth in the women's 7.5-kilometer sprint with the time of 27:36.

By Master Sgt. Arthur Stegen
National Guard Sports Program

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. – The 31st Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships provided double winners in the men's and women's events at Camp Ripley in February.

Wyoming Army Guard Capt. Robert Rosser accomplished the double for the second time. He won the men's 10-kilometer sprint race and then won the 20K individual race two days later.

Rosser, who previously won both races in 1994, finished the 10K in 31 minutes 42.6 seconds, beating Montana Army Guard Sgt. Mark Matheny and Spc. Lance Clark. Matheny finished second in 32:03.5 seconds, and Clark followed in 33:25.5.

The order of finish was the same for the individual race. Rosser's winning time was 1 hour, 5 minutes, 42.5 seconds with six penalties for misses on the shooting range. Matheny finished in 1:07:53 with five misses, and Clark came home third in 1:10:23.1.

Each miss at the shooting range adds one minute of penalty to the racer's time.

In the women's 7.5K sprint race and 15K individual race, Vermont Army Guard Sgt. Erin Graham became the eighth woman in the history of the competition to become a double winner.

Graham won the sprint race in 26 minutes, 51.3 seconds. Finishing second was Minnesota Army Guard Spc Jill Krause in 27:36.8 with Montana Army Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tracy Dooley in third with a time of 33:38.2.

As with the men, the women's individual race followed the same order of finish with Graham utilizing better shooting to win by a wide margin. She finished in 56:12.7 with only three misses at the shooting range.

Krause missed nine shots and finished second in 1:02:18.1. Dooley missed five targets and finished third in 1:06:04.4.

Minnesota Army National Guard Spc. Nigel Kinney, who earlier competed at the World Junior Biathlon Championships, won both of the junior men's races for competitors under 21 years old.



Minnesota National Guard photos

(Above) 1st Lt. Jason Little Owl of the California National Guard team gets off to a flying start in the senior men's 10-kilometer sprint at the 2006 Chief of the National Guard Bureau Biathlon Championships at Camp Ripley, Minn., in February. (Below) Grant Webber of Minnesota starts the standing shooting portion during the men's 10-kilometer sprint. Webber hit three of his five targets and went on to take fifth place in the race with his time of 33:33.



New York Black Hawk crews support New Horizons

By Capt. Mike Chillstrom

New Horizons 2006

LA CEIBA, Honduras (Army News Service)— More than 2,000 miles from home, 150 men and women from the New York National Guard are playing a key role in New Horizons 2006-Honduras.

New Horizons is a joint training exercise between the United States military and Honduran government that ultimately strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Honduras. When New Horizons is completed in May, the Joint Task Force will have built a maternity clinic, four schools and provided free medical care at 14 different locations in and around the coastal city of La Ceiba.

The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation out of Albany, N.Y., is there with three UH-60L Black Hawk helicopters.

If a serious injury occurs at one of the five construction sites or anywhere U.S. troops are located, a Black Hawk will transport the patient to the nearest medical center.

"Our main mission here is casualty evacua-

tion, supporting the Soldiers at the work sites," said Maj. Mark Slusar, aviation detachment commander. "Basically, if it involves loss of eyesight, life or limb - that's where we come in."

"This is our third New Horizons rotation," he said. "We came to Honduras in 1999 after Hurricane Mitch. We were in Nicaragua in 2002. Now, here we are again."

During New Horizons 2002-Nicaragua, three people had to be airlifted from the various job sites, so the New York crews know from experience they may be called upon at a moment's notice.

The unit has flown in Central American environments before, but flying around La Ceiba has proven to be a challenging task. Poorly lit towers, old maps, a large bird population, mountainous terrain and extreme temperatures all complicate air operations in this region, they said.

"My main mission is making sure we don't hit any obstacles or birds," said crew chief Sgt. Shaun Bradley. "There are lots of obstacles around here."

Being from upstate New York, the

Honduras coastline, jungles and mountains have been both "very scenic" and "a great training environment" for the unit, Slusar said.

After the UH-60s arrived here Feb. 6 aboard a C-5 Galaxy, the maintenance crew reassembled the three aircraft and got them mission ready in about three days.

For every hour of flight, a Black Hawk requires at least an hour of maintenance, including inspections of the fluids, blades, connections and the overall aircraft, Bradley said.

"We haven't had any major [maintenance] problems," said Sgt 1st Class Todd Bouleris, a Black Hawk mechanic. "We're putting more [flight] time on them, and when you exercise the machines they have a tendency to stay together."

For the maintainers, New Horizons offers a chance to see a foreign country and be a part of a feel-good mission.

"This is great real-world training because you're actually doing a mission that affects peoples' lives," said Bouleris. "Being able to perform a wide variety of missions makes

the Black Hawk an integral part of the Armed Forces."

"The great thing about this aircraft is that it has a great state mission, homeland defense mission and federal mission. It's very versatile, which enables us to do all sorts of things," Slusar said.

"The Black Hawk is reliable, redundant and very crash-worthy. If you land flat, you'll more than likely survive," he said, adding that the seats are designed to collapse and protect the passengers upon impact.

Beyond casualty-evacuation, the Black Hawks shuttle mail to and from Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, and fly distinguished visitors around the area so they can see the job sites firsthand. But for Slusar, the most rewarding missions are the local orientation flights where military passengers get a taste of helicopter flight.

"I really enjoy being able to share what I do with the young Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors who've never flown in a helicopter before or people who don't do it every-day," he said. "It's something that they'll remember."

Guarding America

ARKANSAS: The Arkansas Army Guard has received mobilization orders for the 2nd Battalion of the state's 142nd Fires Brigade. The orders add more than 300 additional Arkansas Soldiers to the brigade's mobilized troops which now total nearly 800. The field artillery Soldiers are expected to perform a security mission for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Brigade's 1st Battalion currently has a battery of Soldiers in Kosovo and two batteries in Iraq. With this addition, Arkansas has over 1,100 Soldiers and Airmen currently mobilized. More than 7,000 of Arkansas's 10,000 Guard members have been mobilized for the Global War on Terrorism since Sep. 11, 2001. Approximately 3,000 served on active duty during last year's hurricane relief mission.

KANSAS: Kansas and the Kansas National Guard hosted the second "Vigilant Guard" training exercise on March 13-15. Approximately 250 representatives from several states took part in the civil-military, joint staff exercise at the Kansas Guard's Regional Training Center in Salina. The National Guard Bureau sponsored the exercise, one of a series of national training exercises designed to enhance the National Guard's readiness for providing homeland security and military support to civil authorities. "Cooperation between states is vital in large-scale emergency situations," said Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. "That's just one of the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina. Exercises like this help develop plans and

systems that will be necessary if a multi-state emergency would occur here in the Midwest."

MAINE: Approximately 86 members of the Maine Army Guard will deploy to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Maine-led company will consist of Soldiers from various units across the Pine Tree State and will include approximately 96 Soldiers from the Nevada Army National Guard. The company's higher headquarters will be a Wisconsin field artillery battalion. The company will conduct security force operations in Iraq, ranging from base and route security to convoy operations. Members of the unit will train and prepare for their deployment at Camp Shelby, Miss., before proceeding overseas. They will be on active duty for 18 months and expect to be overseas for one year.

MISSISSIPPI: About 300 Soldiers in the Mississippi Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 114th Field Artillery recently returned from a one-year tour of duty in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Their duties consisted of providing base security, conducting mobile patrols and security escorts for VIPs and U.S. and Coalition Forces officers. The battalion is based in Greenwood, Miss., with units in five other cities in the state.

MISSOURI: The Missouri National Guard has recently deployed two units to join the Global War on Terrorism. Company A, 1st Battalion, 135th Aviation Battalion from

Warrensburg deployed approximately 35 Soldiers to support Operation Iraqi Freedom in late February. A 16-member team that is expected to become embedded trainers for the Afghan National Army mobilized last week for deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Approximately 1,400 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen from Missouri are currently mobilized for operations around the world.

NEVADA: The Nevada Air National Guard has opened the first storefront recruiting office in the state. It is located in Reno. Nevada's Air Guard numbers remain strong with about 98 percent of all available slots full. Air Guard officials said they hope to maintain Nevada's robust numbers with the increased visibility of the Air Guard because of the storefront office combined with the fact that potential Airmen no longer have to go on base to meet with recruiters.

OHIO: The Ohio Army National Guard recently announced the state's Soldier of the Year and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2005. Spc. Clinton Sheets, the top Soldier, is assigned to Co. A, 216th Engineer Battalion, in Chillicothe. Sgt. 1st Class John McKee, the top NCO, works for the Recruiting and Retention Command in the Youngstown area.

OKLAHOMA: Elements of the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry, 45th Infantry Brigade will be deployed to Afghanistan later this year with the Oregon National Guard's 41st Infantry Brigade. The 180th will be part of a multinational task force whose mission will be to train and mentor soldiers in the new Afghan National Army. Members of the 180th Infantry will provide security for the international coalition of trainers and the Afghan trainees. The 180th Soldiers began training for the mission in early March and will deploy to Afghanistan in May or June. Most of the pre-deployment training will take place at Camp Shelby, Miss. The 180th will deploy for approximately one year with more than 400 Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldiers and nearly 300 Oregon Guard members. This deployment marks the second time since Sept. 11, 2001, that the entire battalion has deployed overseas. The first deployment was to the Sinai in Egypt in 2003 as part of the Multi-National Force and Observers peacekeeping mission.

PENNSYLVANIA: Two Pennsylvania Army National Guard units recently returned

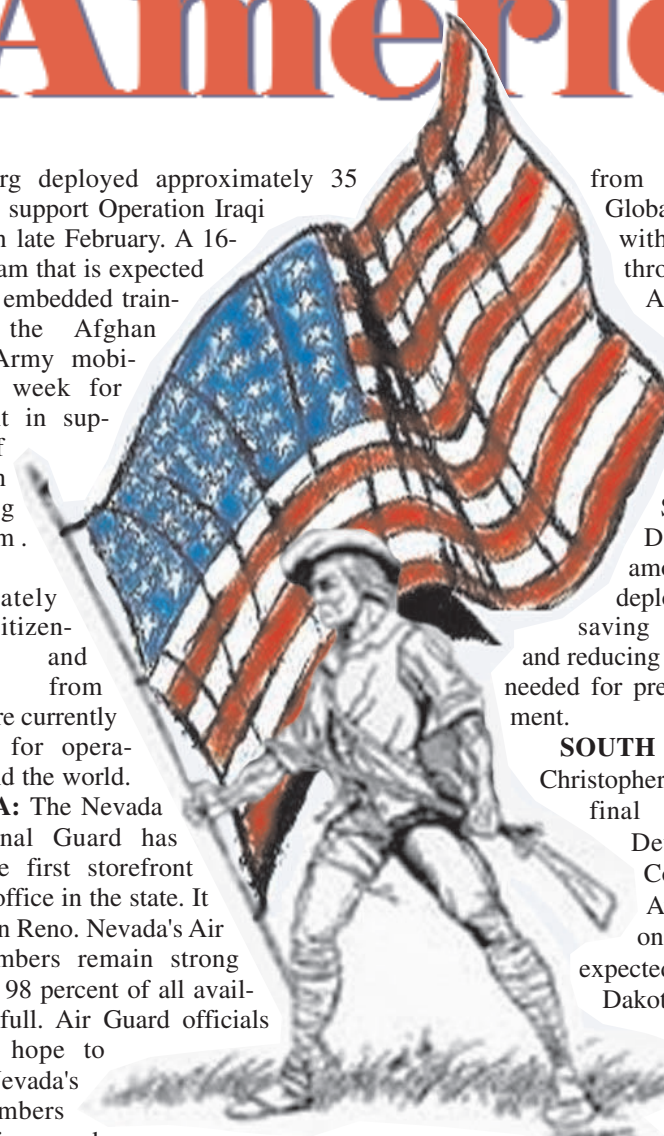
from supporting the Global War on Terrorism without processing through an active Army mobilization site. The 213th Area Support Group's 528th Finance Detachment and 282nd Personnel Services Detachment were among the first units to deploy directly to war, saving the Army money and reducing the number of days needed for pre- and post-deployment.

SOUTH DAKOTA: Sgt. Christopher Cox of Pierre, the final member of Detachment 3, Company A, 249th Aviation to remain on deployment, was expected to return to South Dakota on March 7. Cox was wounded by enemy fire last August and was returning from Fort

Bliss, Texas, where he received medical treatment for his injuries. South Dakota Guard leaders hoped to reunite Cox with the detachment for an upcoming Freedom Salute ceremony and present him with a Purple Heart for his sacrifice. Members of Cox's family and unit have stated that Cox's recovery is going very well. "If it was up to Christopher, he would have proudly completed the mission along with all his friends and colleagues," said his wife Jessica.

TEXAS: Lt. Col. Anthony Woods, commander of the Texas National Guard's Task Force 71, and Sgt. Maj. Les Smith have presented a plaque to officials in New Orleans for the support they gave to 2,100 Texas Guard members who were deployed to the city after Hurricane Katrina. The plaque was presented to Children's Hospital, the New Orleans Police Department, and the Sorrento Fire Department. "During our Katrina deployment to New Orleans, there were many people who did things for us," Woods explained. "The fire department gave our Soldiers their first hot meals. The hospital provided us with a place to stay. The police were just extremely kind to us."

UTAH: The 2nd Battalion, 222nd Field Artillery, currently deployed to Iraq, coordinated the release of seven Iraqi prisoners who have served their sentences for minor crimes. "We are returning these men to their homes and families with the hope that they will help build a safe and secure city," said Lt. Col. Richard Miller, the battalion commander. "We want to work with the local leaders to develop trust between the Iraqi people and Coalition forces."



Arkansas aviation brigade to deploy to Middle East theater

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark. - The Arkansas Army National Guard's 77th Aviation Brigade has received orders for an 18-month mobilization of 50 more Army Guard members for a year-long deployment in the Middle East theater of operations.

An additional 140 men and women with the 77th are currently on alert and anticipating orders sometime in March. That will bring the brigade's total mobilized strength to over 300 Army Guard members who are supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In mid-March, the brigade's 2nd Battalion, 114th Airfield Management Element will transition to its mobilization station at Camp Shelby, Miss., in preparation for deployment overseas. Comprised of less than a dozen Soldiers, the 114th will be responsible for managing and operating an Army airfield in Kuwait, providing command and control, operations, safety and maintenance services to aircraft operating in theater.

In early May, another 40 Soldiers with the 77th's Detachment 1, Company C, 111th Aviation Battalion will go to Fort Hood, Texas, in preparation for their

pending deployment. The medical evacuation company will provide helicopter medical airlift services throughout the area of operations.

The brigade's Company B, 1st Battalion, 185th Aviation Air Assault is anticipating a mobilization of 80 Soldiers to Fort Hood in early April. This unit provides helicopter troop airlift services.

An additional 60 Soldiers with the brigade's Company D, 114th Aviation Battalion, Air Traffic Services, is currently on alert and expected to mobilize to Camp Shelby in early May. The Soldiers will bring their air traffic control skills to Army airfields in Iraq.

On Feb. 14, approximately 80 of the 77th's Guard members with the brigade's Detachment 1, Company B, 449th Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Battalion arrived at Fort Hood as the first unit to mobilize for the brigade.

Approximately 800 Soldiers and Airmen from the Arkansas National Guard will be on federal active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Arkansas National Guard has mobilized more than 6,000 of its 10,200 members.

Up, Up and away ...



Photo by James Coburn, U.S. Air Force

Ringo Flight Leader Maj. Raul Rosario, 182nd Fighter Squadron instructor pilot, takes off from Kelly Field in a "Gunfighters" F-16 followed by his wingman, 1st Lt. Matt Eldredge, a student in the F-16 basic course at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. "We found them," Rosario said of four F-15 "bad guys" that his flight of four F-16s located on radar.

F-16 students take their best shots at Tyndall pilots

By James Coburn

37th Training Wing

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas - If San Antonio people noticed a lot of twin-engine, twin-tailed F-15 Eagles thundering out of Kelly Field Annex along with the usual F-16 Fighting Falcon traffic for two weeks, there was a training mission story behind the flights.

Instructor pilots from the 1st Fighter Squadron at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida were flying the F-15s to emulate bad guys in MiGs or other enemy aircraft as training for 10 students flying single-engine, single-tail F-16s from Lackland's 182nd Fighter Squadron, 149th Fighter Wing, Texas Air National Guard.

On one recent morning, pilots in four F-15s played the role of enemy aircraft flying beyond visual range as two flights of four F-16s tried to locate them on radar in a training area north of Laredo, Texas,

about 100 miles from Lackland. The two flights of F-16s, named "Ringo" and "Rack," were led by instructor pilots Maj. Raul Rosario and Capt. Eric Haas, respectively. F-16s students flew as the wingmen for each instructor.

"We found them," Rosario said. "We did all right." The students did OK, he said, adding: "They still have a lot to learn."

Eight active-duty Air Force students and two Air National Guard students were being trained in the F-16 basic course, said Maj. Mike Meylor, 182nd Fighter Squadron project officer for the flights involving the F-15s. He said the basic course is eight to nine months long, and it's for students who have graduated from pilot training.

More than 70 personnel from the 1st Fighter Squadron deployed to Lackland for the training mission, including 50 maintainers for the five F-15s, 10 instruc-

tor pilots, two life support personnel and a flight administrator.

The 1st Fighter Squadron is an active-duty unit whose mission is to train F-15 pilots. The 182nd Fighter Squadron is a Texas Air National Guard unit with the primary mission for training F-16 pilots. That includes recurrent training for previously qualified pilots who have been out of the cockpit for some time and training instructor pilots. The 182nd has 30 instructors. About two-thirds are full-time personnel. The others are traditional Guard members.

The two squadrons have established a trend in sending training missions to each other's base, using their dissimilar aircraft to portray enemy aircraft for students. Tyndall personnel performed an identical mission here a year ago, and 182nd personnel went to Tyndall in October.

While the training is for the students,

Rosario said the instructor pilots also receive valuable training with every flight. "It's not often that we get to fight dissimilar assets, F-15s, so it's nice to have them available," Rosario observed.

While the fighter jets do engage in dog-fights, it's not like an F-16 being pitted against an F-15, Meylor said. The F-15 pilots "emulate enemy tactics and employment," he said. "So while they're flying F-15s, they're not really employing it as they would an F-15."

Capt. Dave Skalicky, project officer for the 1st Fighter Squadron, said the training focus "isn't necessarily the dog fighting. It's learning to use the radar and other systems on the aircraft to find the bad guys and take care of them."

"So our students are actually training against a type of threat that they could expect to see if they go to war after graduating here," Meylor said.