



THE ON GUARD

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Newspaper of the National Guard

Air Guard's best flight safety year



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Banner year for recruiting & retention



Photo by Pfc. Adam Dean

NEVER TOO LATE: Lt. Col. Edwin P. Hendricks Jr., a medical doctor, enlists in the Georgia Army National Guard in September. At 57, Hendricks is among the oldest enlistees.

Bonuses, robust recruiting, marketing, smart job placement keys

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — The National Guard recruited 19,000 more Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen in 2006 than it did during the previous year and exceeded its retention goals by record numbers, Guard officials reported in early October.

Concerted efforts to recruit new people into the Army and Air National Guard during the Global War on Terrorism and to retain those already in made it possible for both components to attain 98.9 percent of their combined authorized strength of 456,800.

The retention rate among mobilized units to places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo also surpassed expectations.

That was the good news reported by Guard officials shortly after fiscal year 2006 ended on Sept. 30.

The Army Guard's end strength was 346,288; The Air Guard's was 105,660. Those numbers were just 1.1 percent below each forces' authorized strength of 350,000 Soldiers and 106,800 Airmen.

"The National Guard continues to demonstrate its ability to recruit and retain a quality force despite the demands of simultaneous wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as unprecedented missions at home such as support for border security and response to natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires," said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National

Guard Bureau.

2006 reflects the best recruiting and retention year since Blum became the Guard Bureau's chief in April 2003, when the force had fallen short of its recruiting goals by 20 percent.

Both the Army, for the first time since May 2004, and the Air Guard are within 2 percent of their end-strength goals mandated by Congress.

The Army Guard experienced a net growth of 13,111 Soldiers during the last fiscal year. That was hailed as unprecedented for the all-volunteer force since the end of the military draft nearly 34 years ago. It surpassed its reenlistment goal of 34,875 by reenlisting 41,083.

Both branches also exceeded their attrition

BANNER YEAR continued on: Page 12

Early snow storm means state duty

A Soldier from the 204th Engineer Battalion, New York Army National Guard, clears trees Oct. 16 from a neighborhood near Buffalo following an early snow storm. Four days earlier the storm dumped two feet of snow across western New York. With hundreds of thousands without power, about 150 Guard personnel were sent to help remove trash and debris. Read what your state is doing for the country in the "Guarding America" briefs, Page 6.



New York Army National Guard photo

New defense laws show Guard road ahead for '07

By Maj. Les' Melnyk

National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — While the passage of the 2007 Defense Appropriations Act was welcome news for the Guard, the significance of the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act may be more in what it *doesn't* do than in what it *does* do.

The fiscal year 2007 Defense Appropriations bill, signed into law by President Bush on Sept. 29, funds the entire U.S. military for the year beginning on Oct. 1 and ending Sept. 30, 2007. Its partner, the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act, was signed in to law Oct. 17. That law and its explanatory report contain more than 1,400 pages of densely worded text.

Together, these two laws influence nearly everything that happens in the military - how many people are recruited, how much they are paid, what units will be organized, what weapon systems will be purchased, and what policies Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines will adhere to.

This year there were numerous proposals

APPROPRIATIONS continued on: Page 12

A season of thanks, especially for the Guard

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — It's a safe bet during this November and December holiday season that people will thank Minutemen and Minutewomen for serving America at home and abroad.

It's a safe bet because it doesn't take a holiday for people to thank the Guard for being always ready, always there. It's a safe bet because somewhere in America someone thanks a Guard member every day.

A stranger sends a dessert to a Citizen-Soldier's restaurant table. A convenience store clerk refuses an Airman's attempt to pay for her coffee. A man crosses the street to shake a warrior's hand.

In Louisiana, they thanked the Guard still serving more than a year after Hurricane Katrina. In Texas, they thanked the Guard boosting border security. In Pennsylvania, they thanked the Guard for plucking people from flash floods.

In 2006, they thanked the Guard in small

town and big city America; in state and federal bureaucracies and in private companies; with small, anonymous gifts given spontaneously by individual children and with large, well-publicized gifts from organized groups of adults.

In Minnesota, religious leaders of varied faiths and varied political views offered Guard members returning from combat counseling and comfort.

THANKS continued on: Page 6

Vice president thanks Indiana Guard members, families: Page 10

ABOUT THE ON GUARD

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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

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The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a more poignant place for Army National Guard Sgt. Maj. Mike Welsh this Veterans Day season than it has ever been before. His father's name, Thomas H. Welsh, is one of the 58,253 names etched onto the hallowed wall in Washington. You can find the father's name on Panel 7E, Line 66.

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Welsh from Kearney, N.J., was 36 when he died a Soldier's death from multiple fragmentation wounds in Vietnam on May 16, 1966. Michael Welsh, who was 5 when his father was killed in action, came incredibly close to sharing that fate in Afghanistan on Sept. 2 – 40 years, three months, two weeks and three days later.

Welsh was riding in the turret of an up-armored Humvee that Saturday morning when a car bomb detonated in an overwhelming flash of orange right beside it. Welsh was wounded in his head and hands. Two of his friends, Army Guard Lt. Col. Edwin Larkin, who is a former Marine, and Sgt. Matthew Putney, the vehicle's driver, were also burned, battered and wounded. All three, however, escaped with their lives and their limbs. Their interpreter, a young Afghani man named Ferried, was not so fortunate. He was thrown from the vehicle and died during the medevac flight to the hospital, according to reports.

The three Guard Soldiers can take their place this November among this country's military veterans who have experienced, and survived, the crucible of combat. They kept their wits and kept up the fight after the attack.



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Editor

Veterans Day is one of this country's most intriguing holidays because it honors people as well as an event. It celebrates the armistice that silenced the guns of World War I in 1918. It pays tribute to all of the men and women who have worn their country's uniforms for two or 10 or 20 or more years in war and in peace.

It honors those who devoted a slice of their lives to defending this country – with their very lives if necessary. It honors a lot of people who may have done heroic things but who do not consider themselves heroes. Among them are Sgt. Maj. Mike Welsh and the father he barely knew.

Some childhood memories, stories shared by members of his family, and the name on the Vietnam Memorial are about all that Mike Welsh knows about his father who was a Special Forces Soldier at Fort Bragg, N.C., before he was sent to Vietnam in March 1966. Thomas Welsh was a Soldier for 18 years – all of his adult life. He was a Green Beret at the time when the Special Forces were championed by President John F. Kennedy and when the Green Berets were celebrated in a hit song by Barry Sadler and in a movie starring John Wayne.

His oldest son, Thomas Jr., Mike's older brother, has more vivid memories of his father because he was about 14 when Thomas Welsh was killed while participating in a joint operation named Crazy Horse in the Binh Dinh Province of South Vietnam. The Welsh brothers were raised in the Fayetteville, N.C., area, near Fort Bragg, by their mother, Patricia, who never remarried.

"Dad was steadfast in his faith, a solid believer in a strong national defense with educational and training assistance to the underdog [and to] developing countries. He did not think he was special, but [that he was] just doing what was needed," wrote Tom Welsh who has earned a Ph.D. and is a professor of animal science and veterinary integrative biosciences at Texas A&M.

Mike Welsh insists that no one in his family encouraged him to pursue a military career; that it just seemed to be the right thing to do after growing up in the military environment defined by Fort Bragg.

You could argue that he and his father are bonded by a basic belief – that defending this country means keeping the enemy away from this country.

Thomas Welsh "believed that America does not start wars or conflicts but finishes them; that overseas efforts are needed even when we have home needs because we need to keep [the] active battle zone away from our shores," Mike's brother wrote in an e-mail.

"I'm going to support this nation's objectives and goals for as long as I can. I don't want to have to fight [the enemy] over here," was how Mike Welsh articulated his commitment to the Global War on Terrorism 40 years after his father's death.

That explains Mike Welsh's 25-year commitment to military service – four years in the active Army, one year in the Army Reserve and 20 years in the Army Guard. It explains why he has served two tours in Bosnia and why he spent a year in Iraq with the North Carolina Guard's 30th Brigade Combat Team; why he has served in Egypt and other places, including Fort Bragg after being mobilized for Operation Desert Storm.

It explains why he went to Afghanistan last March to help train soldiers in the Afghan National Army and how he came to be riding in a convoy on a highway 16 kilometers from Jalabad, attempting to find a reported weapons cache, when the car bomb went off on that Saturday morning in September.

He was serving his country while following in his father's footsteps.

He is thankful that he did not suffer the same fate; that he has returned to his wife Susan and his two sons, Michael, 13, and Joseph, 10; that he can again watch the boys play hockey and football.

Mike Welsh is no fool. He has seen the elephant. He does not relish the idea of seeing it again. But he would take his chances if he had to.

"September 2nd was my lucky day. Sure, I had some bad luck, but I lived to tell about it. It was like winning the lottery. I would not volunteer to go back. But if I were selected, I would go back without hesitation," said Welsh a few weeks before Veterans Day. "I couldn't think of anything more important right now than serving my country and being in the National Guard."

His father, you can be sure, would be proud. 🇺🇸

Deployed Soldier: Thank you, Arkansas

The following is a "letter home" from Spc. Joshua Spence of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 875th Engineer Battalion, which is currently mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 500-member battalion initially departed northeast Arkansas for initial mobilization training at Fort McCoy, Wis. The unit deployed to Kuwait for a short training period prior to moving forward into northern Iraq.

Hello everyone. The day has finally arrived, and now the long year ahead has started its countdown.

The training we received in Wisconsin was long and just the tip of the iceberg to what lies ahead. The first day waking up at Fort McCoy compared to waking up here in Kuwait is a real eye-opener. The daytime temperatures reach over 100 degrees by 9 a.m., and the sun's reflection off the sand is so bright that it nearly blinds you when you step outside. The Army has provided us with high-speed sunglasses to shield our eyes.

For the most part, I am proud to be here doing what my country has asked me and my fellow Soldiers to do. But most of all, I am proud of the support I've gotten from the community of Piggott, Ark. I'd like to thank my family, the local schools and coaching staffs who guided me through some tough years and for helping me become the man that I am.

I'll do my best while serving my country and to keep my community proud of me.

The great melting pot describes my unit – from my squad leader who's from Vermont, to my platoon leader from Indiana, and my company commander from Arkansas. I have to say that I would follow these leaders to the end of the earth without question. And that's what will make this year easier for me: to stay focused and aware of what lays ahead, so I can do my job and make the mission ahead a successful one. God bless. 🇺🇸



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

Air Guard's best flight safety year

No aviation fatalities; Materiel losses down about \$23 million

By Tech. Sgt. Mike Smith
Nation Gaurd Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air National Guard has completed the best flight safety year in its history, according to Col. Rick Dennee, the Air Guard's director of safety.

The Air Guard's Class A mishaps, which involve more than \$1 million in damages, dropped below the previous record low set in 2002 by nearly one-half last year. Air Guard officials calculated a fiscal year 2006 Class-A mishap rate of .28 per 100,000 flight hours, well below 2002's .49 Class-A mishap rate.

"All Airmen across the Air National Guard did a great job in reducing [Class A] mishaps," Dennee said. "A contributing factor was our leadership, at all levels, sending a message for safer and smarter mission accomplishment. But it is due, mainly, to our Airmen in the field, of all specialties, putting safety first. They deserve the credit and they should be extremely proud of their accomplishment."

The number of flight accidents in 2006

dropped to 18 from 32 in 2005, officials said. Meanwhile, operations remained relatively constant. Although the Air Guard flew slightly less contingency operations in 2006, Dennee explained that aircrews logged the same number of flight hours.

The end result in human terms: No aviation fatalities during the last fiscal year compared to eight in 2005, Dennee said. In material costs: Savings of about \$23 million. The cost for mishaps in 2006 was estimated at \$12 million compared to 2005's mishap costs of \$35 million.

With flight safety on track, Dennee said current and future safety challenges remain in personal safety, including off-duty and off-base safety.

"It's the greatest challenge. There were 23 fatalities last fiscal year in off-duty accidents," he said.

In stressing safety outside the gates, Dennee's office bombards Airmen with safety messages through leadership training, senior leadership events, safety letters including the "101 Critical Days of Summer," and holiday safety messages. The key, Dennee said, is for safety to become second nature among all Airmen.

"At its best, safety is an unconscious thought, interwoven into the daily fabric across our culture," Dennee said. "We always want to do better."

The key is for safety to become second nature among all Airmen.
- Col. Rick Dennee, Air National Guard safety director



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Oldham

THE LITTLE STUFF: Staff Sgt. Mark Ferrin, 189th Airlift Wing, Arkansas Air National Guard, picks up debris on the Guard ramp of the Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., flight line. As of Oct. 16, the 189th had surpassed 1,000 days without a C-130 engine suffering foreign object damage.

Guard school tackles critical warrant officer shortage

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS - The first warrant officers ever taught in a National Guard school received their appointments here on Sept. 30.

The 119 new warrant officers are a step toward addressing a critical shortage in the ranks of the Army National Guard.

"You pursue a warrant officer career at a very critical time in our nation's history," Brig. Gen. James Nuttall, deputy director, Army National Guard, told the new officers during their appointment ceremony in the Indiana World War Memorial Building.

"How fitting that you commence your careers by making history as the first graduating class from the Army National Guard Warrant Officer Candidate school," Nuttall said. "This is the first year [in the past five] that we've had a positive net gain [in warrant officers]."

The turnaround in the warrant officer program is part of a dramatic improvement in the Army National Guard's overall recruiting picture. "Fifteen months ago, strength was 331,000," Nuttall said. "Today it's 345,600. An unbelievable achievement. Nearly a 14,000-member gain in a 15-month period. We should be at 350,000 by the end of the year."

The warrant officer school was forged by a partnership between the National Guard and



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Some of 119 newly minted Army National Guard and Army Reserve warrant officers recite the Soldier's Creed during their appointment ceremony in the Indiana World War Memorial Building on Sept. 30. The Citizen-Soldiers were in the first warrant officer candidate class designed specifically for the National Guard and Reserve in a program developed by the National Guard Bureau and command chief warrant officers from several states to address a critical shortage of warrant officers.

the active duty Army, including the warrant officer career center at Fort Rucker, Ala., and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

"If we did not do this and we were continuing the way we were, the warrant officer [corps] as we know it today would have disappeared in three and a half years, [when] it would be less than 20 percent filled," said Col. Guy Campion. As a national project officer for the new training initiative, Campion was one of the prime movers in bringing the new school at the Camp Atterbury Joint Forces Maneuver Training Center to fruition - a nine-year effort.

"You can't keep extending people past 60," Campion said. "Eventually, they're all 65 and 70."

The critical shortage of warrant officers

comes when the Army Guard seeks to expand the corps from 8,000 to 12,000, he said.

"This program produced 119," he said. "Within three to four years, it needs to be producing 500 to 700, and even at that rate, with retirements, it will take six to eight years to become full strength."

One measure of the importance of the appointment ceremony was the number of planes that landed in Indianapolis, carrying commanders from around the country eager to recognize badly needed additions to their state's warrant officer ranks.

Maj. Gen. Robert French, deputy adjutant general/Army of the Pennsylvania National Guard, came to congratulate his state's eight

newest warrant officers.

"We're short about 100 or so," French said. "So this is a start."

French said he envisioned the new school giving the warrant officer corps similar multiple routes of entry that are available to officer candidates who can seek commissions by attending a one-shot school, through individual training and a shorter school, or through the ROTC program.

"This is one more tool in our tool bag," French said.

Command Sgt. Major David Corkran of Maryland's joint forces headquarters came to salute his state's successful candidates. "I have two young candidates - or I should say two young warrant officers - that I've been real proud of," Corkran said. "This is an opportunity for us to try to work out the shortage that we are currently experiencing."

The Army Guard's warrant officer candidate school addresses the challenge of candidates taking time away from civilian employment to go to school.

Previously, warrant officer candidates - many of whom have already missed work for domestic missions or overseas deployments - needed to take about five weeks to attend Fort Rucker.

"It's hard for them to take off five weeks in a row," said Warrant Officer Kerri Wolf, warrant officer strength manager for the Maryland Army Guard.

The Army Guard program requires five weekend drills and two weeks of full-time school. "Which is their normal military commitment, so it doesn't affect their civilian jobs at all," Wolf pointed out.

Warrant officers differ from the enlisted and commissioned officer ranks by being the most technically proficient people in their fields, specializing instead of generalizing and providing stability to units rather than frequently moving between jobs.

BASIC WARRANT OFFICER REQUIREMENTS

- **Be 18- to 46-years-old (waiver-able)**
- **Minimum GT score of 110**
- **Chapter 2 commissioning physical**
- **High school diploma.**
- **Prior experience as a noncommissioned officer (waiver-able)**

★ Guarding America ★

ARKANSAS

Sgt. 1st Class Garry Odom was awarded the 2006 Mary Ann Talley Instructor/Coordinator of the Year Award from the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians-Paramedics Sept. 29. Odom, a readiness noncommissioned officer for the 213th Area Support Medical Company, is the first recipient of the award to come from the nation's military ranks.

DELAWARE

This state celebrated its 60th anniversary year of service with an open house and air show Oct. 14 - a once-a-decade special event last held in 1996. Aerial demonstrations included a parachute team, fly-bys of modern and vintage military and civilian aircraft plus military aerobatic acts. The all-day open house included demonstrations and exhibits by units of the Air and Army National Guard and the Air Force, showcasing their mission, people, and capabilities.

IOWA

A groundbreaking ceremony for the state's new Camp Dodge Armed Forces Readiness Center (AFRC) in Johnston was held recently. Consisting of more than 211,000 square feet and estimated at \$33.1 million, the AFRC project was authorized by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission and is a joint project between the Iowa National Guard, the United States Army Recruiting Command and the Military Entrance Processing Command. The project is unique among reserve component BRAC actions in that it brings the National Guard and two active duty entities together in a single project.

KENTUCKY

Because of significant flooding in September, the state's Emergency Operation Center activated the Kentucky Air Guard's 123rd Special Tactics Squadron with eight Zodiac boats and rescue crew/parajumpers (PJs). The Guard members conducted search and rescue operations and supported civil authorities. The 438th Military Police Company conducted a high water evacuation mission in Carlisle County.

MASSACHUSETTS

After completing weeks of mobilization training, Massachusetts Soldiers from Kosovo Force Eight Multinational Task Force - East marked another milestone in their journey to

the Balkans with a departure ceremony at Camp Atterbury, Ind., Oct. 8. MNTF-E is a brigade-sized task force that will conduct peacekeeping operations in Kosovo as part of a NATO-led force that has been in the province since 1999. Five multinational brigade-sized task forces make up the KFOR, and MNTF-E will assume authority for the eastern area of operations.

MICHIGAN

The Maintenance and Operations Groups were front and center as the 127th Wing at Selfridge Air National Guard Base was honored Sept. 23 with an award from Lockheed Martin Aeronautics for achieving the milestone of 50,000 F-16 flight hours without a Class A mishap. Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Charlie Savage presented the award on behalf of Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. Class A mishaps involve loss of life or \$1 million in damage regardless of whether the aircraft was lost.

MISSOURI

Airmen got a look at a B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber when it visited the 131st Fighter Wing at Lambert International Airport Sept. 9. Col. Greg Biscone, 509th Bomb Wing commander, piloted the B-2 from Whiteman AFB in Missouri to St. Louis to give Missouri Guard members an opportunity to see the aircraft up-close before the Missouri Air Guard and U.S. Air Force units pair up as an associate B-2 unit at Whiteman. The Department of Defense announced that the Missouri Air Guard will assume its role with the B-2 earlier this year. Planners from the two units, Air Combat Command, and the National Guard Bureau have been coordinating the details of the association which will integrate many of the Missouri Air Guard's personnel into operations at Whiteman.

NEW YORK

Gov. George Pataki called up Guard members for state active duty in western New York following record-breaking snowfall in the region in October. They were also assigned to provide Humvees and drivers to the Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo to provide emergency transportation for medical personnel and to the Buffalo Fire Department to transport emergency medical technicians and evacuate patients as needed, said Lt. Col. Paul Fan-

ning, a New York Guard spokesman.

OHIO

Senior leaders returned Sept. 30 from a weeklong visit to Serbia to meet with senior Serbian civilian and military leaders to discuss their recently formed state partnership. Maj. Gen. Gregory L. Wayt, Ohio adjutant general, and an American delegation met with Serbian President Boris Tadic and his team of advisors in Belgrade, and with Maj. Gen. Zdravko Ponos, acting chief of the Serbian Armed Forces General Staff, and his staff. They traveled throughout Serbia, meeting with air and ground force commanders and gaining a greater understanding of the Serbian military.

OKLAHOMA

The 245th Engineer Company is deploying as a security force in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 245th will deploy with approximately 180 soldiers later this year after completing 90 days of pre-mobilization training. The 245th is assigned to the Oklahoma Army Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade and is headquartered in Bristow with units in Cushing and Claremore. The company will be on active duty for no more than 18 months including their pre-mobilization training.

OREGON

Spc. Tom Hoy was presented with the Heroism Medal from the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Sept. 10 at Camp Rilea near Warrenton, Ore. Hoy received the medal for his unselfish action without regard to his personal safety on July 10 when he observed a young girl in the Deschutes River who appeared to be in distress. After directing the girl toward him, he waded into the moving water and carried her to safety. Hoy is also a reserve police officer in Prineville where he resides with his wife and two children.

RHODE ISLAND

Ninety-three members of the 43rd Military Police Brigade arrived home Oct. 1 after serving for more than a year in Baghdad. Their mission was to supervise U.S. and coalition troops guarding prisoners and other detainees in Iraq. The Rhode Island Guard still has 210 members overseas in the fight against ter-

rorism, including 155 who deployed last month.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Capitalizing on the hard work of recruiters along with a strong sense of duty, the state enjoyed tremendous success enlisting new soldiers during the last fiscal year. As the fiscal year began in October 2005, the goal was to have a strength level of 9,000 Army Guard Soldiers by Sept. 30. When it ended, a total 9,111 soldiers were enlisted in the Guard. "We had a lot of recruiters working very hard this year," said Lt. Col. Joseph Hancock, director of recruiting and retention for the South Carolina Army Guard. Hancock said a key factor for the increase was community involvement. "We did a great job this year of becoming embedded in the schools and surrounding communities," he said. "In fact, we were involved in the high schools more this year than ever before."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Capt. Greg Darlow of Rapid City accepted the Pershing Trophy on behalf of Company A, 153rd Engineer Battalion, South Dakota Army Guard, during an awards presentation Sept. 18 at the National Guard Association of the United States Conference in Albuquerque. "After serving in Iraq, the Soldiers of the unit truly understand the importance of marksmanship," said Darlow, who commanded the combat engineer unit for a year in the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. "I am truly honored to receive this trophy on behalf of the Soldiers of Alpha Company."

TEXAS

A departure ceremony for the 2/135th General Support Aviation Battalion "Black Jacks," of the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Mustang, was held in Killeen July 30. Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, commander of the 1st U.S. Army, presided over the event. Thousands of family members and friends attended and waited to meet with their Soldiers prior to their year-long deployment to Iraq. The 36th CAB plays a significant role in the history of the National Guard. It is the first all-Guard CAB to deploy to Iraq. The brigade has more than 2,700 Soldiers and is formed by members from 44 states.

VIRGINIA

One hundred-thirty members of the 203rd Rapid Engineers Deployable, Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE) located in Virginia Beach, Va. were called up recently for 10 months of active duty. The Airmen will deploy to air bases in Qatar, Afghanistan, and Iraq to maintain base shelters and operation facilities.



Col. Gerard Luz A. James Sr.

National Guard's first African-American adjutant general dies

By Sgt. 1st Class Karen D. Williams
Virgin Islands National Guard


ST. CROIX, Virgin Islands - The first African-American to become a National Guard adjutant general, head of Guard forces in a state or territory, died Sept. 17. Retired Col. Gerard Luz A. James Sr. (Ret.), the first adjutant general for the U.S. Virgin Islands, died at his home on St. Croix. He was 80.

James served as the Virgin Islands' adjutant general from 1973 until 1976. He was also credited with the formation of the U.S. Army Reserve in the Virgin Islands in 1952.

Arrangements were being made for his ceremonial pinning to brigadier general during the Oct. 14 celebration of the Virgin Islands National Guard's 33rd birthday.

James scored a number of firsts during his lifetime. He became the first scoutmaster and founder of Boy Scout Troop 151 under the sponsorship of Holy Cross Catholic Church in Christiansted, St. Croix, in 1953. He held that position for eight years.

He was elected the first president of the St. Croix Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1954. The governor conferred the rank of honorary policeman on him during the same year.

He graduated from Howard University School of Law in 1974 and became a member of the Virgin Islands Bar Association. He served as a senator during the 12th Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1976. 

Army Guard bands... did you know?

-Mission: to provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations to instill in forces the will to fight and win, foster the support of citizens and promote national interests at home and abroad

-The 73rd Army Guard Band, stationed in the Virgin Islands, is the only band that has a regularly performing calypso combo and steel pan ensemble

-The Colonel George S. Howard Citation of Musical Excellence for Military Concert Bands was awarded to the 43rd Army Band from Nebraska (1991, 1997, 2001); the 147th Army Band from South Dakota (2005); and the 561st Air Force National Guard Band from California (1994). This prestigious, international award administered by The John Philip Sousa Foundation recognizes the world's finest military concert bands.



Members of the 42nd Infantry Division Band, a National Guard band in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., play at a memorial ceremony in 2005 for Iraqi policemen killed by a car bomb at a police checkpoint.

For more information about where your state's band is playing on Veteran's Day and on other occasions visit <http://bands.army.mil/>.

Employing around 4,000 musicians, the United States Army is the largest employer of professional musicians in the world.

Army Guard bands — in step with transformation

By Staff Sgt. Rebecca Doucette
National Guard Bureau

We've been hearing a lot lately of the National Guard's transformation from a strategic reserve force to an operational one. Does that change apply to all types of Guard units? You bet it does, and Army National Guard bands are no exception.

The Army band program is restructuring right in step with the Army's adaptation to a modular force — from large, powerful, fixed organizations to smaller, more self-contained ones. Part of this restructuring is to employ tailored musical support teams that are agile, flexible and configured in logical ways.

What exactly does that mean? It means that bands are increasing their focus on small groups such as brass quintets, rock bands and even country bands, to name a few. But according to the Reserve Component Staff Bands Officer (RCSBO) Chief Warrant Officer 3 Frederick Ellwein, "National Guard bands are already there."

Leader of the bands

"Army Guard bands have ... employed small specialty ensembles since the beginning of World War II," said Ellwein. "From swing era dance bands, to today's Hip Hop and alternative rock, bands have been sensitive to Soldiers' musical preferences and have provided 'music of the moment' when practical." Bands try to provide entertainment that reflects local heritage and tradition, he added.

Ellwein oversees all 71 Army National Guard and Reserve bands. His challenging assignment encompasses technical evaluation, resource management, advisory responsibilities and provision of subject matter expertise for each of the bands, their commands, the National Guard Bureau and the United States Army Reserve Command.

Ellwein came to the position in 2004 and is the first RCSBO with "boots on the ground experience" in the reserves. After 22 years in the South Dakota Guard, including a stint as commander of the 147th Army Band and a brief retirement, he seized the opportunity to go active while attending the Warrant Officer Advanced Course. He and his wife left careers as educators to be stationed in the nation's capital.



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Frederick Ellwein oversees all 71 Army National Guard and Reserve bands.

The RCSBO post was created in 1998. Since then the band program has seen the addition of two sergeant major positions; Sgt. Maj. Jim Snyder of the 287th Army Band, Delaware, and Sgt. Maj. Danny Fletcher of the 106th Army Band, Arkansas, were chosen for these slots. Although they remain traditional Soldiers, their responsibilities are ever increasing and they help field many of the queries that come through Ellwein's office.

Female bandmasters are also transforming the face of Army bands. The first branch-qualified female bandmaster was Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sheila Klotz of the District of Columbia Guard. She has commanded the 257th Army Band since Sept. 14, 2000. Three other female bandmasters now work in the Army Guard.

How have all of these new faces in band leadership fared during this time of heightened operations? Bravo, according to Ellwein. Army reserve bands are well ahead of schedule in embracing new force structure plans, he said.

On the road again

Employing around 4,000 musicians, the United States Army is the largest employer of professional musicians in the world. The Guard makes up the largest portion, with approximately 2,100 Soldiers in 52 bands spread throughout 53 states and territories and the District of Columbia.

Between their 'drills' and annual training days, a band might

perform up to a dozen or more musical 'missions,' mostly within their state. They typically use a 20-piece ceremonial group, but sometimes employ as small as a four-member tuba quartet.

Musicians may be asked to perform missions with as little as 24 hour notice, which isn't always possible if their civilian employers aren't flexible.

During their 15 days of annual training, most bands perform concert tours throughout the state. For some of the smaller states, bands may be the only connection between the public and the Army. This visual representation of our armed forces instills patriotism and continues the tradition of militia bands from before the Civil War.

Music to the field

New York's 42nd Infantry Division Band returned home last year after a yearlong deployment to Iraq, where they were headquartered in Saddam's home town of Tikrit.

According to Ellwein, the 42nd was tasked with security missions at the start of their deployment until the band commander convinced his chain of command that the band is best employed as designed: to provide entertainment, a taste of home, and inspire Soldiers with music.

While in Iraq, the 42nd's musicians performed a wide variety of missions including a pep band performance for an Iraqi-United States soccer game, transfer of authority ceremonies, memorial services, commander's conferences, Iraqi army and police graduations, combat patch ceremonies and weekly religious services.

They played at a memorial ceremony held at police compound for Iraqi policemen killed by a car bomb. The Iraqis specifically requested a U.S. military band.

Keeping a high level of musical proficiency can be challenging for today's Guard performers. Ellwein states that bands must achieve a balance between administrative, soldiering and job-specific training. The last is essential if they're to perform well on stage.

Bands still follow the basic practices they have used for a century, but are adding flexibility and general musical relevance to make units capable of rapid deployment.

Guard's NASCAR driver visits wounded warriors



Sitting next to his favorite ride -- a Monte Carlo -- is Nebraska Army National Guard Sgt. Benjamin Marksmeier of Detachment 1, 189th Transportation Company based in Wayne, Neb. NASCAR drivers visited the Walter Reed Army Medical Center Sept. 21. The day was also special as it was Marksmeier's day to be discharged.

Biffle meets Guardsmen on road to recovery at Walter Reed

By Master Sgt. Greg Rudl
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — A handful of NASCAR drivers put their cars in park and their hearts into overdrive as they visited patients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington Sept. 21. Greg Biffle, who drives the No. 16 National Guard-sponsored car, was one of them.

The visit was part of “NASCAR day” at the center that included visits by drivers, race cars on display, an autograph session and a dinner with live entertainment. Retired NASCAR great Darrell Waltrip served as master of ceremonies at the banquet, which also featured tenor Daniel Rodriguez, the New York City policeman who sang “God Bless America” at Yankee

Stadium soon after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

The NASCAR drivers were in nearby Dover, Del, for that September weekend's Nextel Cup race at Dover International Speedway. Thursday, though, was all about the wounded warriors at Walter Reed.

Small groups of drivers, owners, executives and others spent the afternoon combing the wards of the center for patients to visit. A group that included Biffle crossed paths with Nebraska Army National Guard Sgt. Benjamin Marksmeier being wheeled around the hallway by his brother. It was his day to be discharged from the hospital.

Marksmeier, 20, a member of Detachment 1, 189th Transportation Company based in

Wayne, Neb., suffered serious leg wounds when his convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device near the town of An Numaniyah July 31.

His motto for his daily therapy sessions was simple: “The harder I work, the quicker I get home.”

Marksmeier had a good reason for wanting to go home. He is married with a baby on the way. Although he said he's “not a great fan” of NASCAR, he likes working on cars, and he completed an auto body repair course at a college at home before he was called up.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Terri Vasquez, an Army National Guard medical liaison at the center, about 300 Guard and Reserve personnel are being treated at Walter Reed, virtually all as outpatients. Vasquez assists them with such things as pay and family issues. During the NASCAR visit, she escorted Biffle's group, providing information about the patients.

Finding the right words

Biffle said that he's been to Walter Reed about a half dozen times. It's probably not easy finding the right words to say to someone lying in a hospital bed with serious injuries, not even for a celebrity. Biffle's questions to patients that day ranged from how and where they were injured to what they'll do when they get out. In turn he explained life as a race car driver. With NASCAR's popularity, it's easy to find fans, he said.

Although Walter Reed is the main treatment facility for the wounded of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, not all who rehabilitate there are casualties of war. Sgt. Kevin Brown from the Maryland National Guard's 32nd Weapons of Mass Destruction-Civil Support Team at Fort Meade, Md., was riding his motorcycle home on the night of Aug. 12 with a friend when he was cut off on an entrance ramp along D.C.'s beltway. Brown was thrown 150 feet down the embankment of the ramp. When rescue workers arrived, they couldn't locate him.

“A helicopter found me with a spotlight,” said Brown.

Biffle entered the occupational therapy

room where Brown sat. He asked him how he's doing.

“Excellent!” said Brown confidently, with slightly slurred speech and a tracheotomy tube protruding from his throat.

Brown's arm, shattered in the accident, was wrapped in a towel, surrounded by ice. His jaw was still swollen from reconstructive surgery. He had lost a portion of one of his legs.

Biffle asked if Brown was wearing a helmet. Yes, was the answer and that he took a motorcycle safety course at Fort Meade. He told Biffle more details about the accident, said he's not a “big fan of NASCAR,” but that he will watch a few minutes while surfing the channels; and that football is his sport; and the Washington Redskins his team.

“I've healed faster than they expected,” he said. “We call it a miracle,” his mom Florence said, who sat near him. His friend and former co-worker, Maryland Air Guard Staff Sgt. Kandyce O'Meally agreed, by his side as well.

“My goal is to come back 100 percent and play with my kids,” Brown said, referring to his daughter, 6, and son, 11.

Brown thanked Biffle and the others for a backpack filled with NASCAR gifts, and said his son would enjoy the toy car. After the group departed, a therapist came in and took hold of Brown's hand, helping him slowly open it, one finger at a time.

Payback

“It's very emotional — more so when the parents are there,” Biffle reflected on his visit.

How does a busy professional racecar driver feel about giving up the better part of a day to spend with the troops? It's simple payback, Biffle said. “They're protecting our freedoms. We're indebted to them.”

Later, Biffle welcomed patients and family members during the autograph session, getting out of his chair to pose for pictures whenever requested. Army Cpl. Christopher Strickland rolled up and accepted an autographed poster. But that wouldn't do. He slowly and carefully got out of his wheelchair and, with the help of crutches, *stood* next to Biffle for a photograph. 🦿

From Page 1:

SEASON OF THANKS

“I hate war, and I hate this war in particular,” one pastor told the *Christian Science Monitor*. “But I have a son there.”

In Tennessee, residents put electric candles in their windows to thank the Guard.

In Iowa, a group that sends care packages to serving Guard members had mushroomed to 200 volunteers after two years; after 5,000 packages, members were still sending.

Emma Gutberlet of Georgia thanked the Guard in death. She earmarked \$550,000 in her will for the restoration of her local Army National Guard Armory.

NASCAR drivers thanked the Guard by visiting wounded warriors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

“My appreciation for them is overwhelming,” Greg Biffle, driver of the No. 16 Guard-sponsored car, told Army News Service.

“The real heroes aren't in sports or business,” said Brian France, NASCAR's chief executive officer. “They're those who keep us safe 365 days a year.”

Librarians thanked the Guard by in North Carolina reading to the children of deployed members. Their thanks were part of an innovative Tar Heel program aimed at encouraging entire communities to support troops' families. The Citizen-Soldier Support Program started at the University of North Caro-

lina at Chapel Hill. Backers hope it spreads nationwide.

Public accountants thanked the Guard by in New Hampshire completing members' tax returns for free.

America thanked Sgt. Alex Fajardo of the Utah National Guard by conferring citizenship — one of numerous Guard members thanked with naturalization in 2006.

A California home lender pledged \$1 million to modify homes for wounded veterans. Governors went to the front to thank the Guard in person. Musicians and actors thanked the Guard in a nationally televised Memorial Day concert and with combat theater visits.

An Illinois family who stumbled across a deployed Guard member's blog paid for his family's Disney World visit after he came home.

“You just don't know how to feel when somebody you've never met is willing to do this for you,” Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Kelly told *The Clarion-Ledger*. “And every time you say ‘thank you’ or try to buy them something, they say, ‘You owe us nothing. You made the sacrifice.’”

In 2006, private citizens held clothing drives, blood drives, children's fishing days, banner signings, military appreciation days and free classes — all to thank the Guard.

In 2006, employers provided more benefits than legally required during mobilizations, made up the difference between civilian and military pay and helped absent workers' families —

all to thank the Guard.

Fifteen employers were nationally recognized by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve with an award from the Secretary of Defense. But Guard members nominated hundreds of companies for going above and beyond.

“I just can't put into words how they made me feel,” Staff Sgt. Mark Kniffen of the Nebraska National Guard said of his employer to American Forces Press Service. “They paid us for 40 hours per week while we were gone, with no questions asked. We were also allowed to keep our insurance. We got much more than we expected.”

In 2006, businesses dented their bottom lines to thank the Guard. A Tennessee hotelier gave free rooms for a weekend, reaching into his pocketbook to thank 92 Guard members. A New York financial services company thanked the Guard with a million-dollar donation to the Youth ChalleNGe program that helps at-risk teens.

In 2006, a Mississippi group set about raising \$45,000 for a monument thanking a Guard unit for Iraq service. Kansas students mailed troops birthday presents. Montana comedians gave benefit performances to buy troops phone cards.

Medals. Civic declarations. Editorials. Yellow ribbons. Bumper stickers. Hand-lettered signs. Farewell ceremonies. Welcome home ceremonies. Parades.

All done to thank the Guard. 🦿

An editor reflects on the Guard: ‘They sought no praise or reward’

By Jason West

Editor’s note: Mr. West is the editor-in-chief of “GX: The Guard Experience” magazine. It is published monthly and seeks to celebrate and support the Soldiers and families of the Army National Guard

I am deeply and sincerely grateful to everyone who serves in the National Guard. I am indebted to you all. Not just as all Americans are indebted for the sacrifices you and your families make so that we can all live free. I am indebted for the most rewarding, fulfilling work I have ever had the privilege to be a part of, for allowing me to be a witness to truly selfless service and for showing me that words like “hero” and “honor” still have a place.

Before we began our publication, Iostudio, the parent company of GX magazine, had worked with the Guard for several years maintaining the 1-800-GO-GUARD Web site and designing print work for various recruiting and retention efforts. During the course of working with the Guard, we would hear amazing stories of generosity, kindness, and sacrifice by Soldiers and their families that never seemed to make it into the mainstream media.

We heard about a sheriff who was activated and led a good many of his fellow townspeople into the north of Afghanistan. When they arrived, shortly before the harsh Afghan winter, they saw children without shoes. They sent word of what they were seeing home to their families who were struggling under the financial burdens of activation. The town pulled together and shipped hundreds of pairs of shoes around the world to people they would never know. The deployed Soldiers put themselves in harm’s way during extra patrols to distribute the shoes.

We heard stories of medics in Iraq who, in their rare moments of down time, would commandeered vehicles and supplies and drive to local villages to hold clinics.

We heard about a Soldier sprinting under heavy fire to administer aid to wounded Iraqis he didn’t know.

DoD recognizes top 15 employers

The Department of Defense honored the top 15 outstanding employers of National Guard and Reserve members Sept. 21 with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve’s (ESGR) 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award presented in Washington.

Thousands of reserve members from across the country nominated their employers for their exceptional provision of continued benefits, differential pay, family assistance and additional support to ease their transition from civilian employees to active military personnel and back. From those nominations, ESGR selected the 15 most exemplary employers from organizations large and small, public and private.

President George W. Bush met with representatives of the winning companies Sept. 22 at the White House.

The Department of Defense’s top 15 employers:

We were told of events and undertakings both great and small. All showed the incredible depth of spirit, the strength of character, and the unending loyalty and dedication of those in and out of uniform who serve our nation. In each case, when asked why they had done what they had done, the Soldiers would essentially shrug and reply, “It needed to be done.” They sought no praise or reward. They saw a need and, having the ability, filled it.

We realized that while Soldiers might know about the good works in their own unit, they were unlikely to know that in the next town another Guard unit had built a schoolhouse and stocked it with supplies. We also realized that since few Soldiers saw the extraordinary work they were doing as anything other than “their job,” friends and families at home were unlikely to ever hear the stories

we did.

We resolved to tell these stories; to celebrate and support Guard Soldiers and their families; to give back in some small way to this community of people who went quietly about the work of changing the world we live in for the better. It was, unquestionably, one of the best decisions of our lives.

Since that time, three years ago, we have had the privilege of bearing witness to and sharing the stories of Soldiers from around the world. You have seen fit to invite us into your family, and we are deeply honored.

We all tend to see our own experiences as common rather than extraordinary. Know this, however, your stories and your lives are far from common. You and your families choose every day to reach beyond, to step up and take responsibility not only for yourselves but others less willing or able. Regardless of how humble or proud a role you play in the Guard, you are remarkable people who receive not a fraction of the praise, gratitude and support you deserve from your fellow citizens.

Through our years with the Guard, we have seen firsthand that true heroes, great men and women, still walk among us, and our lives are better for it. Thank you. 🇺🇸



- AgCountry Farm Credit Services of Fargo, N.D.
- Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America
- Baptist Health of Little Rock, Ark.
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway
- Cardi’s Furniture of Swansea, Mass.
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Computer Sciences Corps (CSC)
- DuPont, headquartered in Wilmington, Del.
- The Fred Fletemeyer Company of Colorado Springs, Colo.
- MGM MIRAGE of Las Vegas, Nev.
- Skyline Membership Corporation of West Jefferson, N.C.
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) of Pierre, S.D.
- Starbucks Corporation, headquartered in Seattle, Wash.,
- The State of Vermont
- Sun Valley General Improvement District of Sun Valley, Nev. 🇺🇸

President proclaims National ESGR Week

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON –President Bush declared Sept. 24-30 as National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week to recognize Citizen Soldiers and the employers who support them.

“Members of the National Guard and Reserve put on the uniform of the United States when our country needs them most,” the proclamation read.

“...I encourage all Americans to join me in expressing our thanks to members of our National Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers for their patriotic sacrifice on behalf of our Nation.”

The proclamation asked that businesses and all military commanders observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities. 🇺🇸

Heads up!

New officer PME format

Air Reserve Component Seminar, or ARCS, is a new program designed to help Guard and Reserve officers complete their official intermediate and senior service level PME through a coordinated, predetermined timeframe of study and testing in one year. The course is hosted by Air Command and Staff College and Air War College at Maxwell AFB, Ala., and currently contains six blocks of instruction. It began in June 2005 and is conducted each June. For more details, visit: <http://acsc.maxwell.af.mil/distance-learning.asp>. The ARCS link is in the left column.

Relief on retirement payments

Military reservists called to active duty can receive payments from their individual retirement accounts, 401(k) plans and 403(b) tax-sheltered annuities, without having to pay the early-distribution tax, according to the Internal Revenue Service. The newly-enacted Pension Protection Act of 2006 eliminates the 10 percent early distribution tax that normally applies to most retirement distributions received before age 59½. The new law provides this relief to reservists called to active duty for at least 180 days or for an indefinite period. For more information, call the IRS Media Relations Office at (602)207-8624.

MyPay offers new features

Users of MyPay now have the ability to establish restricted access PINs and alternate Login IDs to access their MyPay account. These options provide greater flexibility and added security to MyPay accounts. Learn how to use these features at: <https://mypay//dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>.

Helmets to Hardhats

“Helmets to Hardhats” is a congressionally-funded national program established to connect active-duty and reserve component members who are transitioning out of military service with training and employment opportunities within the construction industry. This program enables candidates to start construction careers soon after they apply. The program also gives them credit for military training and experience. Military personnel interested in careers in the construction industry can learn more: www.helmetstohardhats.org or by calling (866) 741-6210.

Army Emergency Relief scholarships

Army Emergency Relief (AER) offers financial aid for full-time college study for dependent children of retired Soldiers. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need and on academic achievements and individual accomplishments. The only way to ensure that a child will be considered is to mail the application and all requested documents by March 1, 2007. Applications for 2007-08 academic year scholarships will be available at the Army Emergency Relief Web site at <http://www.aerhq.org> from Nov. 1, 2006, through March 1, 2007. Mailed applications or supporting documentation must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2007.

Combat injury pay

Combat Injury Pay (CIP) is \$430 per month minus Hostile Fire/ Imminent Danger Pay (HF/IDP) and is paid to service members hospitalized during rehabilitation from wounds, injuries or illness incurred in a combat operation or combat zone. CIP stops once Traumatic SGLI is paid by the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (OSGLI). Payment of CIP also stops when the member is no longer “hospitalized,” even if the service member is sent home to continue rehabilitation. To learn more about CIP, visit the Combat Injury Pay Web page at: <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,10781,9,00.html>.

Buying uniforms on-line

The Army and Air Force Exchange System (AAFES) virtual exchange’s new “Uniform Ready to Wear” Web site makes it simple to complete uniform orders on one easy-to-use Web page. Access the uniform sales Web site by logging on to <http://www.aafes.com>, and clicking “Military Uniforms Ready-to-Wear.”

Southern Afghanistan operations under Alaska command

Brigade driving out Taliban, building stability

By Sgt. Mayra Kennedy

345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — The 207th Infantry Brigade, Alaska National Guard, has not only been defeating the enemy in Afghanistan, but making the country a better place to live.

Together with other coalition forces, they've made it safer and easier for women to attend school, given local construction companies the means to rebuild their own country and cleared the way for humanitarian aid missions.

The 207th, commanded by Col. R. Stephen Williams, assumed control of Regional Command South (RCS) in Afghanistan in July and is one of the largest Guard units in Alaska.

Education for women

In an effort to support the people of Afghanistan, Williams has made a personal commitment with locals to improve safety in this region of the country.

One month after taking command, Williams gained the trust of Kandahar residents, who support the United States and their humanitarian aid, medical and village outreach programs.

In August, Williams gathered some of Task Force Grizzly Soldiers and traveled to Kandahar City, where he paid a visit to students at the Albironi Institute of Information and Technology and met with Afghan government officials.

School officials met with Williams to discuss how the United States could assist these students.

"We found that they needed transportation to drive the women around, mainly for security reasons," said Williams, from Chugiak,



Photo by Sgt. Mayra Kennedy

Canadian Brig. Gen. David Fraser, RCS commander (left), Army Col. R. Stephen Williams, 207th Infantry Brigade commander (center) and Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakly, Combined Task Force 76 commander (right) gather in Pashmul during Operation Medusa to supervise combat operations Sept. 11.

Alaska.

Many Afghan women in Kandahar City have made attempts to study and find jobs, but enemy extremists have taken this opportunity to target them. Utilizing public transportation to get to school made it difficult for some to attend, so the civil affairs team agreed to help.

For security reasons, the Albironi institute has security guards and a barrier all around the premises to protect those women currently enrolled.

Army Lt. Col. Raleigh Jones, headquarters advisor with the 405th Civil Affairs Battalion currently attached to the 207th, has approxi-

mately 30 projects that will benefit Afghans throughout RCS. Helping out the Albironi institute was one of them.

Jones, a South Carolina Guardsman, coordinated with Williams to donate two mini-vans to transport the Afghan women to the institute. Williams's second visit was a success because he was able to facilitate transportation for the women. In addition, they brought school supplies and stationary bicycles for the students to work out.

Army Pfc. Lydia Edwards, logistics clerk with the 207th, met with some of the women at the Albironi institute.

"I learned a lot from them and their culture," said Edwards, whose hometown is Kenai, Alaska. "They are driven, intelligent and strong Afghan women and I was impressed by them." Sakina Sekanadira, 21, an English teacher at the Albironi institute, is one of the brave Afghan women, who enjoys teaching and feels a great pride because she is contributing something essential to this society.

She said that the women in her class were happy to learn and interact with one another. Education to her is very important for the development of the country.

The success of this small contribution boosts the moral of the locals and U.S. Soldiers who assisted during this humanitarian aid mission, but the community affairs team didn't stop there.

Rebuilding from within

On Sept. 3, the community affairs team coordinated with local contractors a bid conference hosted by the U.S. National Command Element (NCE) in support of Operation Medusa.

According to NCE officials, Operation Medusa's main objective is to eliminate enemy insurgents in the Panjwayi and Zhari districts — two areas known to be Taliban strongholds.

Residents from these two districts need humanitarian aid, and the community affairs team developed many projects to help build roads, schools and medical clinics. In addition, food and clothes would be donated to those who suffered from the Taliban's tyranny.

Army Staff Sgt. Albert Beyer, project purchasing officer, coordinated the bid conference and gave local contractors guidance on how to prepare a proposal to get a contract with NATO/ISAF.

As a result, 12 local contractors interested in helping the Afghan community attended the bid conference with the intent to help their neighbors from Panjwayi and Zhari.

Representatives from two local construction companies, both based in Kandahar, will provide support to rebuild roads, schools and medical clinics in RCS.

Mugeed Rahaman, a contractor, said that being able to help gave him a great sense of pride because he was contributing in a small way to rebuild his country.

In the meantime, Operation Medusa had taken its course. Task Force Grizzly Soldiers had set camp in a strategic area in Panjwayi where they conducted aggressive operations to push the Taliban out of their stronghold.

To support this operation, Afghan National Army, Canadian Army and other Coalition forces, together with Task Force Grizzly, fought against the enemy.

Chaplain, (Maj.) Richard Koch, traveled to the troops to provide support and to give them guidance from the Lord.

"We ask that You bless them [Task Force Grizzly Soldiers] to do their duty and fall back upon their training to do what they need to do," prayed Koch, whose hometown is Anchorage, Alaska.

In the middle of the service, Koch paused after an explosion shook the mountain where the Soldiers were. Just miles away, Operation Medusa was going as planned, thankfully without any casualties or severe injuries. 🕊



Photo by 1st Lt. Randy Lynch

SOUTH DAKOTA TROOPS MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOO: Capt. Jason K. Piercy, 147th Field Artillery, South Dakota Army National Guard, meets local children during a health assistance visit Oct. 4, in the village of Robat, Afghanistan. Since their arrival in country June 9, the Soldiers of the 147th have been embedded within the Afghan National Army to help train and mentor these soldiers. Piercy is assigned as an intelligence officer for the 41st Brigade Combat Team, 203rd Regional Corps Advisory Group in Gardez. "In a nut shell we teach them how to build, train, staff, equip, plan and maintain a formidable army that in the future will be capable of defending its own borders with no U.S. help," said Piercy, who's serving one year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Photo by Sgt. Mayra Kennedy

Task Force Grizzly Soldiers of the 207th Infantry Brigade Alaska National Guard get some rack time in September after a long night of fighting enemy insurgents in the Panjwayi district, southern Afghanistan.

On the offensive

Idaho aviation unit employs aerial firepower in major operation against Taliban

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — The 10th Combat Aviation Brigade (Task Force Falcon) took part in major offensive against Taliban insurgents Sept. 16 by providing aerial support for Operation Mountain Fury.

The operation focused on the eastern Afghanistan provinces of Paktika, Paktya, Khost, Ghazni and Logar (P2KGL) near the Pakistan border and aimed to stop the resurgence of Taliban in those areas.

Operation Mountain Fury was the latest in a series of coalition offensives the 10th CAB has supported since deploying here in January.

Task Force Falcon Commander Lt. Col. Collier Lippel, of the 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation Regiment, said operations have gone well for his National Guard unit, which provides aviation



Photo by Sgt. Thomas Day

Staff Sgt. Joseph Sykes (left) of the Missouri National Guard and Sgt. Gregory Harell (right) of the Mississippi National Guard work on sheet metal to be used to patch up a damaged door on a 10th Mountain Division helicopter at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, in October.

support for the eastern region. His unit has flown 180 missions and compiled some 1,200 flight hours in support of Operation Mountain Fury.

“Aviation operations for Mountain Fury and the P2KGL region have gone superbly,” Lippel said. “The coordination between units and the products produced by the units, brigade aviation element and the task force have been outstanding.”

“We need to continue this same level of dedication and mission focus, and we cannot afford to take any pressure off the enemy,” he added. “Task Force Falcon is definitely making a difference in RCE (Regional Command-East), Afghanistan, and the War on Terrorism.”

With the start of deliberate operations, the 10th CAB’s fleet of CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60 Blackhawks and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters has been busy supporting approximately 7,000 coalition and Afghan National Army forces taking part in the offensive.

The sound of aircraft reverberates throughout the valley here day and night, as dozens of aircraft take off from Forward Operating Base Salerno and Bagram Airfield loaded with resupplies of food, water, and ammunition for forces fighting in dangerous regions.

The brigade’s AH-64 Apache aircraft are seeing action as well, having been called on in several instances during the early stages of operations to provide reconnaissance and close air support during fighting with insurgents.

“From the positioning of assets, be it artillery, intelligence, ground forces, or surveillance and reconnaissance, the 10th CAB has been vital to the success of Operation Mountain Fury,” said Capt. Lee Eines, Task Force Falcon assistant operations officer and battle captain. “Our Task Force has the unique ability to operate across all boundary lines, in everyone’s area



Task Force Falcon Public Affairs photo

AH-64 Apache helicopters from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, take off in Afghanistan. The unit took part in another major offensive against Taliban insurgents recently. It provided aerial support for Operation Mountain Fury.

of operation (AO). No other force within Combined Joint Task Force-76 has the ability to move as fast and as seamless across multiple AO’s. Aviation operations are the asymmetrical advantage that makes the U.S. Army the force that it is.”

Although the primary operation is set in the east, aircraft from Bagram have been called on for support as well, said Lt. Col. William Metheny, commander of 10th CAB’s 3rd Battalion, 10th General Support Aviation Battalion (Task Force Centaur). While 1-183rd was conducting deliberate operations against the enemy, he said, Centaur took over many of the unit’s missions in that region.

“We were doing a lot of their resupply throughout the area they were operating in, so they could focus on their mission of keeping the enemy in their area pinned down,” he explained. Metheny added that while the ground forces are working hard and deserve a lot of credit for what they do, “our aviators are working hard too, and logging a lot of hours, and they deserve credit as well.”

Idaho medic tends to war's most innocent victims

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO -- Seeing the sad faces of sick and hurting Afghan children waiting for care at the clinic here melts the heart of Idaho Guard Spc. Jessica Guzzetti, a Task Force Talon medic who admits a soft spot for little ones.

"I love kids, and it's hard seeing them when they are sick or hurt," Guzzetti explained, after treating a young boy whose body was heavily bandaged from head to toe. "And it's especially hard sometimes when you can't fix them up or do anything for them."

Although that is rarely the case, in the nine months she has worked at the free clinic that cares for dozens of Afghan children daily, two have died - one in the first week her unit, the 1-183rd Aviation Regiment from Boise, Idaho, arrived in January.

The child's death was a wake-up call for Guzzetti, who deployed expecting to take care of Soldiers with routine illnesses at morning sick call. She found a different call to duty.

"It's hard when things don't go right," she said. "That's always the hardest part, when things go wrong when you do your best but you can't always save them ... but it's a lesson learned. You get through it. You get up the next day and keep going."

Which is why the 20-year-old medic returns here each day: working at the clinic and caring for Afghan children is what motivates her. When she is not caring for Soldiers at the task force aid station, she can be found here, decked out in green scrubs and purple gloves helping make children well. Guzzetti is one of seven Talon medics who volunteer at the clinic.

"We have patients seven days a week," she explained. "Most of the patients we see are children, most of them have broken

bones, and we treat a lot of burns and other ailments."

Guzzetti noted that sometimes the children's injuries and ailments have progressed because of lack of access to medical care.

"They either don't know that we are here for them, or they don't feel comfortable seeing us," she explained.

Those Afghans who do have trust are extremely grateful, she added, often reflecting that gratitude any way they can.

"Sometimes they bring us small gifts, like jewelry and other stuff. It's not much, but it's their way of showing they appreciate what we do," she said. "And they always want to take pictures with you, or want you to sit down with them and have tea, or they want to shake your hand ... they definitely make sure that you know they are thankful for what you do."

The appreciation of the Afghan people has made her deployment here satisfying. Guzzetti volunteered for the deployment a few months after completing advance individual training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She said she didn't know what she was getting herself into then, but her experiences here have made her not regret the decision.

"Soldiers sometimes feel miserable on a deployment because they don't feel like their job is very important," she said. "Here, not only am I gaining a lot of valuable experience that will help me in the civilian world, but I'm also helping the Afghan people, and it's good to see there are people who really appreciate us being here, and what we are doing. A lot of Soldiers don't get to see that."

But what Guzzetti wants to see most is that her efforts made a difference in the minds of Afghan children.

"Hopefully the children will remember what we've done here. Right now all of their beliefs, dislikes, and hatreds are passed down through generations, from what their parents teach them," she said. "But I think those people who realize we are here to help them will teach their children differently, and that will make a difference in the world."



Task Force Falcon Public Affairs photo

Spc. Jessica Guzzetti, a Task Force Talon medic from the 1-183rd Aviation Battalion, Boise, Idaho, takes care of local child at a free clinic in Afghanistan.

Cheney: Citizen-Soldiers vital to U.S.

By Staff Sgt. Les Newport
Indiana National Guard

CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. – Hoosier families of the Indiana Army and Air National Guard from Fort Wayne to Evansville rallied Oct. 20 to hear words of support and gratitude from Vice President Richard Cheney.

“The Citizen-Soldier is absolutely vital to protecting this nation and preserving our freedom,” Cheney said. “In this time of war we have turned to National Guard personnel for missions that are difficult and dangerous.

“We respect the sacrifices you make and we admire your skill and devotion to duty. I’m honored to be in your presence.”

Most of the Citizen-Soldiers attending the rally had deployed to the Middle East and the Balkans, as well as stateside. Many received their initial deployment training at Camp Atterbury, an Indiana National Guard mobilization center that has trained and deployed more than 30,000 service members. It’s located about 40 miles south of Indianapolis.

Describing the formula for success in the war on terror, Cheney said, “First, we have to go on the offensive and stay on the offensive until the killers are brought to justice, and the danger is removed. Second, we must defeat

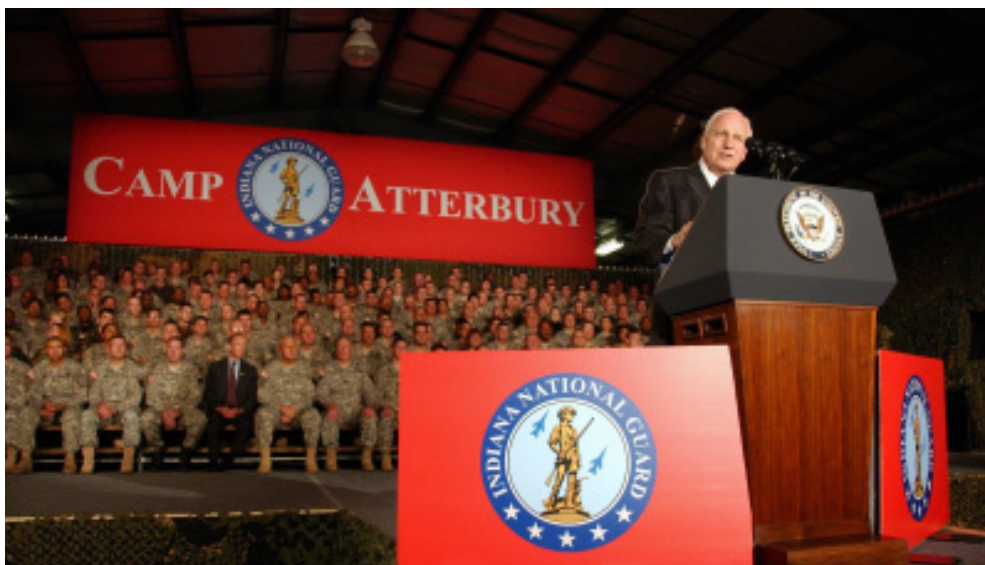


Photo by Sgt. Michael Krieg

Vice President Richard Cheney thanks Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen for their service at an Oct. 20 rally at Camp Atterbury, an Indiana National Guard training center.

the terrorist ideology and hatred, and resentment, by offering a hopeful vision of freedom, justice and human rights.”

Several Soldiers and Airmen met the vice president, including a member of the 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery’s Family Readiness Group. Kimberly Goodin’s husband, Master

Sgt. Robert Goodin, is deployed to Iraq.

Goodin said she was moved by the rally and having so many Guard members and families together, including the families of Soldiers that have been lost.

“They are still members of the Guard family,” said Goodin, “and they always will be.”

Oregon Soldiers train with Japanese

By Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett

115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

NIIGATA, Japan – As the world watches North Korea, which claims it tested a nuclear weapon Oct. 9, members of the Oregon National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry demonstrated a strong partnership between the United States and Japan recently.

Orient Shield 2007, an annual training exercise between the U.S. and Japanese armies, began Oct. 16 with opening ceremonies at the Sekiyama Maneuver Area in Honshu, Japan.

“This exercise will be an opportunity to enhance Japanese Ground Self Defense Force/U.S. Army combat readiness and demonstrate to Asia the alliance between our countries,” 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Commander Lt. Col. Edward Tanguy said. “We all will achieve enduring bilateral relationships, good will and mutual understanding ... through tough training and cultural exchange.”

Tanguy’s counterpart for the exercise, Japan’s 2nd Infantry Battalion, 1st Airborne Brigade Commander Lt. Col. Shizuo Sekine also focused on strengthening the relationship between the two countries in his speech to the approximately 240 Oregon and 350 Japanese soldiers assembled for the opening ceremony.

“At this time, we establish the occasion for both Japan and the U.S. to make groups and conduct the training with close cooperation,” Sekine said.

The soldiers from both units worked on achieving mutual understanding at a party held in nearby Joetsu. The language difference was no barrier, as the soldiers enjoyed traditional Japanese food and drink together.

“There’s a feeling of unity between the two organizations,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Glesmann. “There is a respect there. They are very disciplined and extremely organized”

The training began in earnest with helicop-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Bassett

Oregon National Guard Spc. Jose Ramirez (center) and Japanese Ground Self Defense Force Leading Pvt. Takumi Sugiura (foreground) use the “high/low” technique during close-quarters-combat training at Sekiyama Manuever Area, Japan, Oct. 18. Members of the Oregon Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry were supporting Orient Shield 2007, a bilateral exercise conducted annually with the Japanese army.

ter and traffic control point operations.

The Oregon Citizen-Soldiers are experienced conducting traffic checkpoints, a regular part of the routine in 2004 when the unit was in Baghdad for Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Several of the Japanese soldiers also brought experience from tours in Iraq. Japan deployed about 600 soldiers to Iraq in early 2004. The deployment marked a significant turning point in Japan’s history, the first time since World War II that Japan sent troops abroad except for a few minor UN peacekeeping missions.

After the first day of training in Japan, Tanguy was pleased with what he saw. “It’s

been great,” the commander said. “All the Soldiers are really engaged with their Japanese counterparts, more so than I thought at this point in the exercise.”

Up next for the Oregon Citizen Soldiers was training on individual weapons and then cordon and search procedures. They also experienced Japanese culture through tours and home visits with Japanese families.

“They’ll get a greater understanding of another culture and a greater appreciation of the diverse world we live in, which will have an impact, I think, on their home communities,” Tanguy said.

Air Force leaders to discuss new ‘cyber command’

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Air Force leaders are gathering in early November to discuss plans for creation of a new command, one chartered with flying and fighting in cyber space.

Cyberspace became an official Air Force domain, like air and space, on Dec. 7, 2005, when Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. T. Michael Moseley introduced a new mission statement.

In a letter to Airmen, they said the new mission was to “deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests — to fly and fight in air, space and cyberspace.”

Now, Air Force leaders are planning to stand up a new “cyber command,” to be responsible for fighting in that domain, said General Moseley.

“To deliver the full spectrum of effects we will evolve a coherent enterprise, with warfighting ethos, ready to execute any mission in peace, crisis and war,” the general said. “We will foster a force of 21st century warriors, capable of delivering the full spectrum of kinetic and non-kinetic, lethal and non-lethal effects across all three domains. This is why we are standing up an operational command for cyberspace, capable of functioning as a supported or supporting component of the joint force.”

Army unveils new ad campaign

WASHINGTON — The Army announced start of its communication and education efforts to assist the Army family to communicate to the Nation its new advertising campaign – Army Strong – to an audience of Soldiers, Army civilians and family members Oct. 9.

Army Secretary Dr. Francis J. Harvey unveiled the effort to tell the Army about the campaign, a key component of the Army’s recruiting efforts, during an opening ceremony for the 2006 Association of the U.S. Army Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

“This morning we will launch our internal communications and education phase lasting several weeks until we formally launch the new advertising campaign on Nov. 9,” Harvey said. “It is vitally important that the internal Army family understand and embrace this new campaign. I believe it speaks to an essential truth of being a Soldier.”

The Army is taking 30 days to educate its internal audience on the campaign’s meaning. It will go “public” Nov. 9 with television, radio and online spots, as well as an updated www.goarmy.com Web site. Print ads are scheduled to begin in January, and will be directed to media that appeals to young adults.

Disaster training in paradise

Hawaii holds improvised nuclear device exercise

By 1st Lt. Regina Berry
Hawaii National Guard

The Hawaii National Guard played a critical role in a large-scale improvised nuclear device (IND) exercise held over a three-day period in August at Hawaii's Bellows Air Force Station and Marine Corps Training Area-Bellows.

The Hawaii Guard employed a Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear, or high-yield explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P) and the 93rd Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team.

During the exercise, named 'A Kele, the Hawaii National Guard and state civil defense teamed up with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and many other federal, state, and county agencies including non-government organizations. The exercise was one of many that Hawaii conducts to ensure emergency management and first responders are trained for all types of hazards.

The exercise simulated a half-kiloton nuclear explosion at Pier 1 in Honolulu Harbor. If such an explosion were ever to occur, the crater alone would be 20 feet deep and have a radius of approximately 220 feet, said Dr. Martin Bagley of DTRA.

"We wanted to make sure that our first responders from both the military and civilian sides of the house were going to be challenged



Members of the Hawaii National Guard CERF-P team practice decontaminating individuals during a statewide improvised nuclear device exercise at Bellows Air Station, Hawaii.

Photo by Cpl. Marcus L. Miller

and able to progress over the years," said Maj. Gen. Robert G.F. Lee, Hawaii adjutant general. "That means getting a more complex, comprehensive exercise every year," added Lee.

The CERF-P team, which also included members of the Illinois National Guard, prac-

ticed more skills than normal. "We weren't just doing patient decontamination," said Capt. Aaron Blanchard, Hawaii National Guard CERF-P coordinator. "We also had a search and extraction group that was led by Capt. Ian Beltran from the 154th Civil Engineering Squad-

ron doing collapsed structure search and recovery and decontamination, as well as the 154th Medical Group handling triage," said Blanchard.


"We also had a command control, which is also made up primarily of 154th members," he added.

Hundreds of Hawaii Guard members participated as well, part of the 93 WMD/CST, CERF-P and Joint Force Headquarters.

"The National Guard certainly had a large part," said Lee. "But, we could not be doing this without support from our military partners in the active duty led by United States Pacific Command because they will be determining what other active duty forces will come to the aid of Hawaii."

With numerous federal, state and city and county organizations participating in this exercise, communication was vital. We were able to connect and test all of our communications with the various state and local levels and also provide a lot of direct feed from the exercise site to the operations centers," said Lee.

The IND exercise was number one on the Department of Homeland Security's list of top 15 exercises that the nation has to be prepared for, said Lee.

Information from an article by Cpl. Sara A. Carter was used in this story. 

Conference offers unique forum for current, former officers

National Guard Association's annual event includes briefings, exhibits and Navajo code talkers

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill
National Guard Bureau

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- He enlisted in 1949 and retired in 1985 but 21 years after he hung up his uniform, he's not done serving the National Guard or savoring the company of Minutemen and Minutewomen.

So Maj. Gen. (ret.) Lewis Stephens joined 2,500 other members of the National Guard Association of the United States for the 128th General Conference here Sept. 16 through Sept. 18.

He said the imperative of educating others about the nation's oldest fighting force -- a National Guard he's found he cannot walk away from -- attracted him to the conference.

The host, NGAUS, was created in 1878 to provide unified Guard representation in Washington, D.C., with the goal of obtaining better equipment and training by petitioning Congress for more resources, the same mission it has today. Nearly 45,000 current and former officers are members.

Stephens said conference opportunities for self-development attracted him, as did the camaraderie and the ability for retirees to speak out for the National Guard.

But here's the bottom line for this former commander of the 49th Armor Division in Texas: "I'm in payback mode. Payback because of what the military has done for me and my life since 1949."

The annual event offers a smorgasbord of entertainment, ceremony, speeches, professional development sessions and social functions. Scheduled to be in New Orleans this year, it was moved to New Mexico because of the damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. The New Mexico National Guard and the state received repeated kudos for standing up a successful conference on short notice. NGAUS officials talked of a future

return to Louisiana.

George Brock came out of duty. The retired colonel whose combat was in Vietnam and whose 27-year career included five joint assignments before they were fashionable is chief of plans and policy at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

Brock was one of a large group of NGB officials who came to provide briefings, answer questions and continue professional development.

He listed the reasons he believed colleagues attend: "Camaraderie. Seeing old friends again. Pride in the home unit, home state. Wanting to show off a little bit. The exhibitors are something of an attraction. Maybe a few people come because they're attracted by keynote speakers."

Inside and outside Albuquerque's sprawling, cavernous convention center, about 500 defense-related exhibitors competed for the attention of attendees.

Guard exhibitors included the Youth ChalleNGe Program, the Army National Guard's new Decade of Health initiative and Counterdrug.

"It's important for the family to get together once a year,"
-Brig. Gen. Robert Taylor

Defense contractors showed off a full-size section of a new helicopter, a Bradley A20DS and other vehicles.

Institutions such as Bellevue University, Columbia College and Colorado Technical University boasted of the continuing education opportunities they offer Airmen and Citizen-Soldiers.

Computer products, hydration systems, knives, gun sights, challenge coins and uniforms were on display.

In short, the convention center was a one-stop shop for all things National Guard.

"It's important for the family to get together once a year," Brig. Gen. Robert Taylor, NGAUS chairman of the board, opined in a break between conference sessions. As he talked, the convention center corridors reverberated with the sound of a hun-

dred conversations between Guard leaders seizing the opportunity for tête-à-têtes with colleagues they might not see between conferences.

What in particular stood out to Taylor this year?

"I still think there's a disconnect between the credibility of the active component and the National Guard," he said. "We have to continue educating, especially the active component. We're performing to the Army standard, and we're doing the heavy lifting for the Army."


With more than a half-century of exposure to the Guard, Stephens, the retired Texas general who enlisted shortly after World War II, said he was struck by how busy the Guard is and by how vital it has become.

"How intensely engaged the Guard is as a part of the total Army," Stephens observed. "I really buy off on this business of us being an operational force. I'm optimistic about the future of the Guard. We have excellent leadership at the highest levels, and I see it scattered throughout the states."

Attendees heard an Airman and two Citizen-Soldiers talk about frontline experience deployed in Iraq. They cheered Pat Boone, a surprise guest who debuted a new ballad honoring the Guard and promised the profits to paralyzed veterans.

They watched Native Americans dance and shook hands with Navajo code talkers. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs told them his agency is an underappreciated good news story for America that's getting increasing credit in the highest academic circles for the way it delivers healthcare.

Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, commanding general, First U.S. Army, told attendees Soldiers are sheepdogs vital to the continued health of the society they protect. Gen. Duncan McNabb, commander, Air Mobility Command, talked about America's unrivaled global reach, about how an Air Force or Air National Guard asset takes off every 90 seconds to 2 minutes, depending on the operations tempo, every day of the year.

"It is, in fact, one of the nation's crown jewels," he said, in a conference littered with brags backed by cold hard facts. "No-body else in the world can do it." 

From Page 1:
APPROPRIATIONS

put before Congress that would have radically changed the National Guard.

The President’s Budget, the baseline document presented to Congress last February, proposed cutting the end strength of the Army National Guard by 17,000 Soldiers. That cut reflected the number of Soldiers the Army Guard was short of full strength at the time the budget was drawn up.

In later testimony, Department of Defense officials told Congress that they would fund the Army Guard at whatever strength it could recruit to.

Strong congressional support for the Guard, backed by historically unprecedented recruiting and retention, lifted both the Army and Air Guard to nearly 100 percent strength in late September. Congress responded by funding the Army National Guard at its previous level of 350,000.

Congress also authorized an additional 200 Airmen for the Air National Guard, increasing its size to 107,000 during the coming fiscal year.

Funding for training and support, which the President’s Budget had proposed reducing in proportion to the decrease in Army Guard personnel, was substantially restored by Congress in the final budget.

Congress also used the NDAA to question the findings in the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review. A major study undertaken by the Department of Defense and released earlier this year, the QDR found that the Army should convert six National Guard brigade combat teams to support units.

Congress “strongly urged” the Army to re-examine Guard combat brigade requirements and actively include Guard officials in the deliberations, ensuring that the Guard’s homeland defense and overseas warfighting force generation requirements are adequately accounted for before any combat bri-

gades are converted.

Congress decided to study, rather than enact, provisions of the National Guard Empowerment Act that would have increased the influence of the National Guard within the Defense Department. The proposed law was sponsored by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) and co-sponsored by many members of Congress.

The National Guard Empowerment Act would have elevated the chief of the National Guard Bureau to four-star rank, required that the deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command be a Guard officer, and ensured that Guard officials had specific lines of authority for budgeting and coordinating homeland defense and homeland security missions.

Rather than incorporating these changes into the NDAA, Congress referred the Guard Empowerment Act to the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, which is required to study the proposed changes and report its findings by next March.

Congress likewise directed the Commission on the Guard and Reserves to study whether it was advisable to expand the authority of Guard officers to serve in “dual-hat” command positions. Dual-hat commands are ones where a single officer commands both National Guard troops in Title 32 state status, as well as active duty, Guard or Reserve troops that are serving in Title 10 federal status.

The commission was tasked to examine the processes that the Defense Department uses to determine Guard equipment and funding for both its homeland defense and its warfighting missions. The concern is that the existing process does not adequately consider the views of National Guard Bureau officials or the state adjutants general.

There were, however, some significant changes for the Guard in the new defense legislation.

Pay for all members of the military will increase 2.2 percent in 2007.

The retirement age for all reserve component general offic-

ers – to include adjutants general – increases by two years.

The law expands eligibility for health care under the TRICARE Standard program to all the Selected Reserves and their families when not on active duty. Participants choosing this coverage will be required to pay a premium.

The law increases the time that the President can involuntarily mobilize a Guard or Reserve member under a Presidential Reserve Call-Up from 270 days to 365 days.

Current PRCs include the peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. The PRC differs from the Partial Mobilization authority being used for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. Guard members called under a Partial Mobilization can serve for up to two years.

Probably the most controversial section of the new legislation expands the President’s authority to mobilize the reserve components for domestic operations without the consent of the governor during a natural disaster, terrorist attack, epidemic or public health emergency.

Congress enacted the changes despite the objections of every governor in the nation to this type of increase in presidential power.

The changes were enacted as modifications of the Insurrection Act, a law originally passed right after the outbreak of the Civil War. The Insurrection Act permits a President to use either the state militia or federal military forces to enforce the law when he determines that civil authorities are unable or unwilling to maintain law and order.

It is unlikely, however, that typical natural disasters – the kinds of hurricanes, floods, and forest fires that occur every year in the U.S. – will be met with wholesale federalizations of the National Guard. The amended law still requires the President to determine that a state is unable to maintain public order, and that violence obstructs the execution of the laws of the United States, before the Guard can be federalized under this law. 🦋

From Page 1:
BANNER YEAR

rate goals of 18 percent. The Air Guard lost just under 11 percent of its force because people retired or did not reenlist. The Army Guard’s attrition was 17.6 percent.

Increased bonuses for new recruits and for people who stay in the Guard, more robust recruiting efforts and marketing campaigns, and an effort to place people in jobs they’re already experienced in have been cited as keys to success.

Bonuses have been beefed up, for example, from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for non-prior service people and from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for prior service personnel in the Army Guard since 2005. Retention bonuses have also been increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000, and \$20,000 bonuses, plus 100 percent tuition assistance, are available for college students.

The Army Guard trained an additional 2,400 noncommissioned officers for its recruiting and retention force from August 2004 to August 2006. Many of these deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan and can speak firsthand about the experiences Army Guard Soldiers face today, it was pointed out.

“They are finding their legs and beginning to pay off in big ways,” said Randy Noller, a Guard Bureau spokesman.

The Air Guard, meanwhile, has added 79 administrative positions to its recruiting force so that recruiters have more time to seek out new prospects, and it has opened 25 new storefront recruiting offices during the past year to “put the face of the Air National Guard closer to the community,” explained Noller, who formerly served in both branches. 🦋

End of FY 2006 Recruiting-Retention Numbers

Army National Guard			
	Authorized	Actual	Percent
End Strength (YTD)	350,000	346,288	98.9%
	Goal	Actual	Percent
Recruiting (FY 06)	70,000	69,042	98.6%
	Goal	Actual	Percent
Retention (YTD)	34,875	41,038	118%

Air National Guard			
	Authorized	Actual	Percent
End Strength (YTD)	106,800	105,660	98.9%
	Goal	Actual	Percent
Recruiting (FY 06)	10,480	10,305	98.3%
	Goal	Actual	Percent
Retention (YTD)	10,100	11,135	110.2%



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dan Heaton

BORDER DUTY

Spc. Therese Mesa and Pvt. Mike Raymundo, both members of the 1224th Engineering Detachment, Guam National Guard, prepare material for a fence being built along the U.S.-Mexico border, just east of San Luis, Ariz., in October. The Guard members are working in partnership with the U.S. Border Patrol as part of Operation Jump Start, in which thousands of Guard Soldiers and Airmen from around the nation are working to help secure America's southern border.

Making a difference: Operation Jump Start accomplishments as of mid-October

Operational successes supported by National Guard (skill-sets aiding in these successes are entry identification teams, camera operators, RVSS monitoring, mechanical support at checkpoints, etc.)

Alien Apprehensions	16,501	Cocaine Seized (lbs)	1,966.7
Vehicle Seizures	241	Aliens Rescued	63
Marijuana Seized (lbs)	45,474.1	Currency	\$16,892.00

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection



“The Highest Possible Courage” is a National Guard Heritage Painting by John D. Shaw. It depicts Kansas National Guardsman 2nd Lt. Erwin Bleckley’s heroic actions during World War I as he located and re-supplied a trapped battalion of Soldiers. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously. This painting and others like it, including the stories that surround them, can be found at www.ngb.army.mil/resources/galleries/heritage/default.aspx.

An air war hero and his selfless flights

By John Listman
National Guard Bureau

The guns fell silent at 11 a.m. just as planned by the armistice. It was Nov. 11, 1918, and the fighting of the World War was over (it would not become known as World War I until after World War II started in 1939). Of the millions who died during the four year conflict, the United States lost 115,660. One of these, 2nd Lt. Erwin R. Bleckley, gained fame by giving his life to save the lives of Soldiers he had never met.

Bleckley enlisted as a private in the newly organized Battery F, 1st Field Artillery, Kansas National Guard in June 1917. He was promoted to second lieutenant in July. Soon the 1st Field Artillery was reorganized and redesignated as the 130th Field Artillery Regiment, an element of the 35th Division. He sailed with the division to France in the spring of 1918. In France, Bleckley learned that the Army was looking for men to act as aerial observers and rear machine gunners for observation aircraft flying over enemy lines. He quickly volunteered and was assigned to the 50th Aero Squadron.

On Oct. 2, 1918, during the height of the Allied Meuse Argonne Offensive, a battalion of about 550 men from the 77th Division (non-Guard) was encircled by German forces. Cut off from American lines it soon became known as the “Lost Battalion.” The unit occupied positions in a dense forest making their location almost impossible to see by aircraft. For four days the men in the battalion endured repeated enemy attacks and artillery shelling, including mistaken “friendly fire” from Allied guns. With all telephone wires cut by artillery fire their only means of communication was by carrier pigeon.

On the afternoon of Oct. 6, with losses high and food, medical supplies and ammunition running low, the men heard the sound of an aircraft engine overhead. It was the plane in which Bleckley was an observer. The men quickly signaled their location and Bleckley plotted their position on a map. The pilot, Lt. Harold Goettler (a non-Guardsman) flew the plane at tree top level so Bleckley could drop what few items such as cigarettes and candy he could to help the men on the ground. At the same time the Germans surrounding the area opened fire with rifles, machine guns and anti-aircraft artillery against the plane, causing several holes but not seriously damaging the craft.

The plane returned to its base and Bleckley, using the map he had drawn, gave the Allied command its first clear idea of

where the battalion was located so a rescue plan could be formulated. After the briefing Bleckley and his pilot both volunteered to return to the battalion’s location to drop packages of food and medical supplies (ammunition was too heavy for the lightweight aircraft to carry enough to matter).

As the sun was setting they took off and were soon over the area where they started dropping the supplies. Due to the dense woods and compact area occupied by the remaining members of the battalion (by this time more than half were dead or captured), Goettler flew at tree top level so Bleckley could drop the packages into the American zone. Again intense enemy fire greeted the plane as it circled. Soon both the men were hit and the plane was badly shot up. The pilot tried to make it back to their base but he was forced to land at a French field where he was found dead in his cockpit. Bleckley was removed from the plane still alive but succumbed soon after.

Because of the accuracy of Bleckley’s map the battalion was rescued the next morning. For their selfless act of volunteering to return to drop supplies knowing that they might not survive, both Airmen were first awarded posthumous Distinguished Service Crosses. However, in 1922, upon review of their records, both were upgraded to the Medal of Honor. They died helping fellow Soldiers live. There is no higher act of valor.

Vintage Air Force uniforms displayed

An Air Force vintage uniform fashion show of sorts took place at the Air Force open house at the Pentagon Oct. 14 as dozens of Airmen paraded uniforms from the past to the present. The open house ran in conjunction with the official ceremony to dedicate the Air Force Memorial. Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, chief of the Air National Guard, was on the same stage an hour earlier helping to give the oath of enlistment to dozens of new recruits. Photo by Senior Airman Desiree L. Andrejczik.



It happened in November

Events that made National Guard history

The following are selected entries from the National Guard’s 365-day event calendar found at <http://www.NGB.Army.mil/>

3rd, 1741 The Augusta County Regiment was organized in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley on this date. Men from this regiment have served in every American war. During the Civil War the regiment earned the nickname “Stonewall Brigade” it still carries today. Its descendant unit, the 116th Infantry, became part of the 29th Division in 1917 and saw heavy fighting with it in both world wars, including leading the assault wave on Omaha Beach on D-Day. In the Global War on Terrorism different battalions of the 116th have served in recent deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

8th, 1942 Algeria-As part of Operation TORCH, the 168th Infantry (IA), 34th Infantry Division (Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota) makes an assault landing on the coast of this French colony but meets little resistance as it seizes both the port and the airfield.

9th, 1968 Kusan, South Korea-Two Air Guard squadrons, Kansas’ 127th and Ohio’s 166th Tactical Fighter Squadrons, both mobilized in the aftermath of the North Korean seizure of the USS *Pueblo* in January 1968, and take part in a joint South Korean-American military exercise.

11th, 1918 France-The armistice ending World War I takes effect at 11 a.m. More than 325,876 American soldiers are casualties during the war. Of this number, 115,660 died (from all causes including disease).

19th, 1942 Buna, New Guinea-Elements of the 32nd Infantry Division (Michigan, Wisconsin) enter combat in the jungles and mountains of New Guinea on a campaign that would last into January 1943. They achieved their primary goal of halting the Japanese advance across the island which would have put the enemy on the doorstep of Australia.

19th, 1969 Ocean of Storms, Moon-Apollo 12’s lunar module, “Intrepid,” touches down safely. Under the command of Charles “Pete” Conrad, Jr., the only former Guardsman to ever make it to the lunar surface, this is the second manned mission to the Moon.

29th, 1990 Colchester, Vt. -The 131st Engineer Company is mobilized for Operation Desert Shield and served in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War.

Contacting a Family Readiness coordinator near you

The National Guard Family Program office in each state’s 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. The following is a list of Family Program offices in the 54 states and territories, followed by wing Family Program coordinators.

Send changes/corrections to:
Ms. Pamela McClelland
National Guard Bureau-Family Programs
1411 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Arlington, VA 22202
703-607-5416; DSN 327-5416
Pamela.McClelland@ngb.ang.af.mil

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 (800) 231-2846

117 ARW
Pamela Lacey
5401 East Lake Blvd.
Birmingham, AL 35217
Office/DSN: (205) 714-2699 / 778-2699

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

Alaska

State Family Program Director
SMSgt Jan Myers
49000 Army Guard Rd.
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Medical care where it's needed most

U.S. forces, including North Dakota unit, deploy to Africa

By Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp
119th Communications Flight

Amena Salifu walks in the morning darkness in Ghana, Africa, to get to a clinic, enduring severe pain from an improperly healed broken hip from a past injury. She's making the journey because she's heard that the U.S. military is providing free medical care there. When she arrives, she has to wait with hundreds of others for hours to be seen.

A true story and one that illustrates the massive demand for quality medical care that exists in certain areas of Africa. Supplying that care recently were members of the 119th Fighter Wing Medical Group of Fargo, N.D. They deployed to Accra, Ghana, Sep. 3-17 to take part in a humanitarian exercise called Medflag 2006.

Medflag's purpose was threefold: refine medical field operations and gain experience in managing world health problems for U.S. theater medical response teams; share medical information and techniques with host country medical personnel; and provide humanitarian assistance to host nation populations in rural areas.

The exercise brought together personnel from all four branches of the U.S. military in the countries of Benin, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana. The 119th sent 58 members plus support personnel.

Ghana is North Dakota's partner country in the National Guard's State Partnership Program and this exercise went a long way in furthering it, said deployed 119th member Capt. Kyle Bakken.

Medical personnel worked in three locations in Accra during the 15-day deployment: 37 Military Hospital, the Nima Government Clinic, and the Mallam-Atta Market Government Clinic.

They performed medical examinations on civilians and provided medication for ailments like tapeworm. Guard physicians, dentists, optometrists and nurses provided eye and dental treatment.

They treated tropical illnesses like Malaria and lab workers gained experience in identifying sickle cell anemia and tuberculosis, illnesses rarely seen in North Dakota.

Hospital administrative help was given as well: 119th personnel showed local medical staffs how to better organize their medical records by using certain formulas in Microsoft Excel.

Maj. Robert Schulte, a 119th physical therapist, demonstrated several treatment techniques to local physicians and medical students including a foot taping method for plantar fasciitis (heel spur). He also left a medical book behind for one of the clinics that included a chapter written by him.

People in depressed areas of Accra seemed desperate for medical care. When word spread of the U.S. military offering medical assistance in the outreach clinics, people lined up outside the gates early in the morning. At times, over 1,000 waited.

In one case, an elderly woman named Sophia Accuh-Addo needed a walker because of a broken hip but couldn't use a normal walker because she also had a broken wrist. Col. Robert J. Becklund, 119th commander, and Maj. Schulte designed and modified a walker so that it removed the weight from her wrists. She was not able to leave the clinic until she could get up and out of bed on her own. The modified walker allowed her to leave the hospital much quicker. "I'm so grateful to you and God bless you. I'm so thankful for your ingenuity," Sophia said.

"Although we realize that the people will have an ongoing need for medical care long after we have gone, we were able to perform a great number of medical screening examinations and especially identify people with diabetes and high blood pressure," said Maj. Greg Haugen, a North Dakota Air National Guard flight surgeon and emergency physician. "The local clinics can now assist these individuals in treatment of their conditions."



- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency



Photo by Dave Melancon

Several states participated in Medflag 2006 including Utah. Here Sgt. 1st Class James Barlow, a translator from the Utah Army National Guard, watches Beninese Army medics carry a "wounded comrade" in Cotonou, Benin. Medflag, among other purposes, provides training and experience in the management of world health problems.



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp

North Dakota Senior Airman Katie Schneller, 119th Medical Group, helps to usher in patients and control the entrance with the assistance of Lance Cpl. Yahaya Muhadeen, Ghana military police, at the Mallam-Atta Market Government Clinic during the Medflag 2006 joint force humanitarian medical assistance exercise in Accra, Ghana.

North Dakota's MEDFLAG 2006 numbers

- 2,252 patients seen (averaged 550 daily)
- 1,900 prescriptions filled
- 2,840 medical services were provided including blood pressure testing, glucose tests, immunizations and physical therapy
- 67 patients seen by the dentist
- 578 patients seen by the optometrist
- 600 pairs of eye glasses distributed

"They introduced us to the new concepts in CPR. They donated some CPR training mannequins to help our training program and they promised to continue to share new knowledge with us and I think it was great."

-Maj. Rex Adzagba, 37 Military Hospital, Ghana, Africa



Photo by Senior Master Sgt. David Lipp

North Dakota flight surgeon Lt. Col. Bryan DeLage, 119th Medical Group, shows patient Amena Salifu the X-ray of her improperly healed hip fracture at the Mallam-Atta Market Government Clinic during Medflag 2006. Amena Salifu walked to the clinic with a severe limp to be examined.