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Homeland Defense



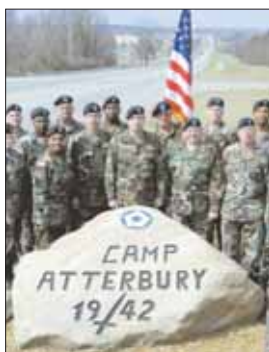
Guard doctor sets the example in CST service. Page 4.

Wounded



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Excellence



Camp Atterbury receives deployment award. Page 16.

Colorado Guard works with local responders

By Capt. J. Renee Cunningham

Colorado National Guard

DENVER, Colorado – Imagine a chemical explosion at a local factory. Hazardous chemicals have been released in the atmosphere forming a chemical cloud visible from miles away. The blast may have been caused by a major industrial accident or a possible act of terrorism. Competing emergencies in the area have depleted community resources.

As a result, the Colorado Division of Emergency Management has requested support from the Colorado National Guard Joint Operations Center (JOC). The Joint Force Headquarters-Colorado (JFHQ-CO) has mobilized a Joint Task Force to provide support for the incident.

The JTF didn't have to imagine this situation. That was the scenario they were faced with during an exercise involving civilian and military authorities held on April 23 at a local factory.

The JFHQ is responsible for leveraging the capabilities of both the Army and Air National Guard for homeland defense and response to weapons of mass destruction events here at home. The JTF consists of specialized teams, organized under the JFHQ, that are called to support an emergency response incident.

The teams that participated in the April event included the 8th Civil Support Team (CST), Colorado's National Guard CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosive) Enhanced Response Force Package and the Joint Task Force Communications Element. The Joint Operations Center, under the leadership of Brig. Gen. Emil Lassen, Director, JFHQ-CO, was also activated for the exercise.

Approximately 300 different local, state and federal emergency responders, representing 13 different agencies from across the Denver metropolitan area and over 100 casualty volunteers participated.

See CST On Page 3



Members of Colorado's CERFP team wash chemicals off a young non-ambulatory patient in a decontamination processing line. The activity was part of a simulated chemical explosion exercise with members of the Colorado National Guard and local responders.

National Guard remains focused on missions during BRAC process

Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Air National Guard leaders are urging Citizen-Airmen throughout the country to remain focused on their missions while they and others consider the organization's future during this year's Base Realignment and Closure process.

Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, the Air Guard's director, and Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith, the enlisted leader, are looking at the first BRAC round in a decade from a pragmatic perspective on behalf of the organization's more than 106,000 members.

The Department of Defense announced its recommendations for adjusting military installations in mid-May.

Some Air Guard units may have to take on different missions, James has indicated. But the force will not be reduced because "BRAC only affects infrastructure. It doesn't eliminate peo-

ple, missions and jobs," stated Smith.

"The harsh reality is that the Air Force will be buying considerably less force structure - airplanes - than we now fly. That means we may close units, combine units or share airplanes. We expect to do some of each," stated James. He said that seven states would have no Air Guard flying units if the BRAC Commission, President George W. Bush and Congress accept the Pentagon's proposals.

They are grounded in the idea that the Defense Department is still configured for the Cold War that ended about 15 years ago and that it must change to accommodate "the new demands of the war against extremism and other evolving challenges," Defense officials have stated.

The four previous BRAC rounds, in 1988, '91, '93 and '95, eliminated approximately 21 percent of excess U.S. military infrastructure and re-allocated billions of dollars to pressing military needs, officials explained. If approved, this

year's recommendations should result in a net savings of \$48.8 billion over the next 20 years, the Pentagon added.

While acknowledging that Defense Department recommendations could affect 30 Air Guard flying units with closures or realignments, James pointed out that this is only the opening round and that "if your flying mission is affected, I will do everything I can to secure a future mission that is relevant and funded."

The BRAC Commission will visit the affected facilities, conduct hearings, examine the service recommendations and make independent decisions about what to forward to the president for his approval by Sept. 8. The president has until Sept. 23 to inform the commission and Congress if he approves the commission's recommendations. Congress then has 45 days to reject the entire list, or it becomes law.

"The Air Force of the future will be flying

See BRAC On Page 13

About The On Guard

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Mandatory notice of Guard and Reserve rights now law

By Lou Gavin

Louisiana Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

NEW ORLEANS—Thomas G. Fierke, State Chair, Louisiana Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) reports that the mandatory poster explaining the rights of employees who are members of the National Guard and Reserve under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) are now available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Fierke explained that the Louisiana Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve was in the forefront of this posting requirement when in 2003 it petitioned Governor Mike Foster to sign into law the requirement that all Louisiana employers post such a notice. Now a national poster is required by all states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

Louisiana employers must continue to display the Louisiana poster.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, enacted by Congress in December 2004, mandates that employers provide notice to "all persons entitled to rights and benefits under USERRA." Employers may meet this obligation by posting the notice in a prominent place where employees normally check

for such information.

USERRA protects job rights of National Guard and Reserve members who voluntarily or involuntarily leave their employment positions to fulfill a military obligation.

The law also prohibits employers from discriminating against past or present members of the uniformed services in any phase of the employment process.

"We're pleased that Louisiana was the first state to require such posting," said Fierke "both the U.S. Department of Labor and the Louisiana poster will help ensure both employers and employees understand their rights and obligations."

He said experience has shown that the relationship between members of the National Guard and Reserve and their employers works best when they are fully aware of their responsibilities under USERRA.

LAESGR is one of 55 committees located in every state, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories as part of the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Chartered in 1972 and working under the auspices of the Department of Defense, over 4500 ESGR (over 100 in Louisiana) volunteers help educate employers and members of Guard and Reserve in their rights and obligations under USERRA.

The Louisiana LAESGR volunteers also educate Guard and Reserve members and Louisiana employers in their right and obligations under the Louisiana Military Services Relief Act.

In addition, they mediate any disputes that may arise due to calls to active duty between members of the National Guard and Reserve and their employers. Currently, there are over 175,000 National Guard and Reserve members on active duty serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world where the United States has commitments according to the Department of Defense. Approximately 6000 of these are serving with Louisiana units.

The mandated Department of Labor poster may be downloaded and is available at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/userra/poster.pdf>.

The Louisiana Poster may be ordered by calling the Louisiana Department of Labor, 225-342-3280.

You will want to make sure your employer understands this posting requirement and is complying with it.

For more information about ESGR, USERRA, ESGR Employer Outreach Program or to volunteer, contact www.esgr.mil or call 1-800-3364590.

About Face Program: Guard units involved with America's youth

Courtesy of GX Magazine

ARLINGTON, Va. – Through the About Face Program, National Guard units across the nation are becoming involved in the lives of America's youth.

Originally implemented in 1997 through the State of Florida's Department of Military Affairs, About Face has been adopted by several other states. Currently operating in Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, and Rhode Island, the National Guard Bureau in Washington is encouraging states with excess Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to consider implementing the after-school and summer youth intervention and training programs.

About Face is an after-school and summer youth program designed to provide academic remediation, job and life skills training, and work experience to "at-risk" youth ages 14-18. Through hands-on, reality based training, participants are taught how to be better students, how to compete in the job market, how to be successful on the job, and how to be independent, socially responsible citizens. Students receive both traditional and computer-assisted instruction. A maximum of a 15:1 participant/instructor ratio insures individual instruction and personal attention. Participants are encouraged to work as a team to improve social and communication skills.

Through group projects and an open, relaxed classroom discourse, participants come together to create support networks many troubled youth lack. Furthermore, the



Courtesy of GX Magazine

Sgt. Major Dan Blackman of the Florida Army National Guard greets Zettis Stallworth an About Face graduate.

work experience portion of the program pairs participants with local businesses and organizations, allowing the participants to practice learned job skills in a real-life setting. Participants are regularly evaluated on how they are applying the skills they are learning.

Participants are paid an incentive (usually minimum wage) to attend About Face which ensures good attendance and dedication to program activities.

In addition to classroom learning, About

Face participants benefit from a variety of extracurricular activities. Community service projects, field trips, and guest speakers help participants apply classroom learning to real-life situations. The About Face mentorship program pairs participants with leaders from the community who assist the students with homework, share their life experiences, and offer support and guidance.

For more information regarding About Face visit: www.ngb-youth.com

FROM PAGE 1

CST

The concept of the exercise required the participants to work together to accomplish actions that included victim search and rescue, triage, treatment and decontamination, hazard identification, site security and contamination control. Additional objectives were assessment of intra-agency communications capabilities, coordination of emergency plans, mutual aid agreements and local incident/unified command procedures.

At the outset, as the JTF teams setup operational tents and necessary equipment requirements, it appeared that there was a line right down the middle of the site, military personnel to the left, civilians to the right. But that line quickly diminished as civilian and military personnel went about doing their jobs to get the incident under control. Although there were early bumps in civilian-military verbal crosstalk, eventually everyone began to speak the same language. "It was interesting watching the military folks trying to talk to the civilians. Eventually things just took hold," said Fairmont Fire Chief Don Angell, a member of the exercise Unified Command and one of the exercise planners.

The 8th CST established its satellite communication van which provided quick response environmental analysis and decontamination resources. Team members determined what hazardous chemicals were present and made recommendations to the Incident Commander, Mr. Scott Pocsik, Factory Safety Officer.

The CST, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Fred Hoon, is a weapon of mass destruction response team composed of 22 full-time Air and Army National Guardsmen with specialties in hazardous materials, medical response, communications and emergency operations.

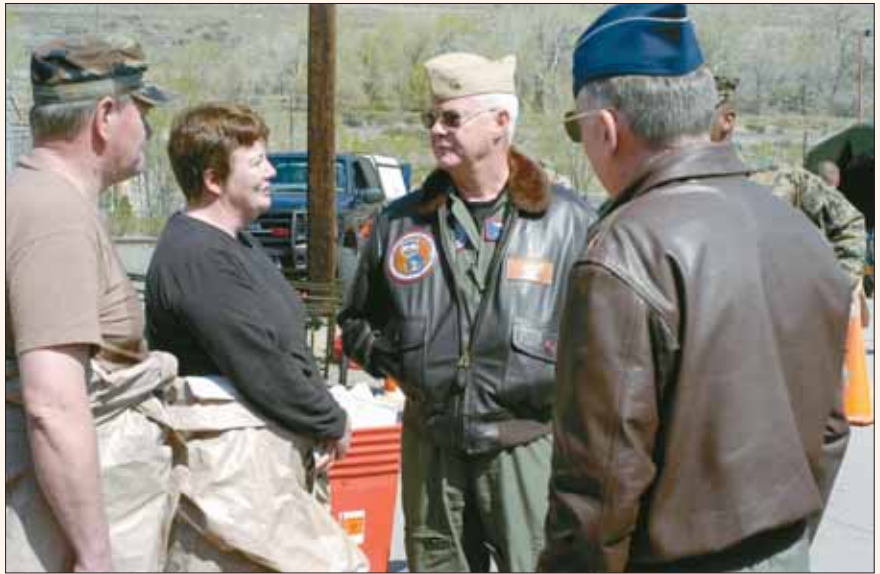
The NCGERFP provided assistance with casualty extraction from the facility, decontamination and immediate medical attention utilizing triage techniques. Commanded by Lt Col Bruce Holloman, the team handled a steady flow of victims through ambulatory and non-ambulatory decontamination tents. Victims, men, women and children, were literally cut out of their clothing and processed through the tents. No one seemed to mind the inconvenience, they were simply excited to be a part of the action.

The exercise marked the JTFCE's first full-scale implementation. Throughout the entire exercise, this element was able to establish and maintain communications interoperability to support the Incident Commander. They additionally maintained video teleconferencing connectivity with the JOC. VTC provides a direct video link to any other VTC in the world. This capability made it possible for Brig Gen. Lassen to directly view and assess the scene real-time from the JOC.

At the incident level, the JTFCE provides voice (radio) interoperability between the National Guard and other responders, as well as on-scene command post integration. Reach back from the incident site to remote civilian and military emergency management elements at both state and federal levels is an additional critical component provided by this team.

"The initial communications capability established only 35 minutes after arriving on scene was reliable, interoperable, and performed magnificently. The overall capability provides a degree of communications that most local authorities simply do not have when responding to an incident. While there are definitely some administrative actions to sort out, the team could not have performed any better," stated Capt. Bill Worrell, 140th Communications Flight commander.

The military-civilian interface was especially beneficial for the medical personnel and members of FEMA's Colorado Task Force 1 (CO-TF1) Urban Search and Rescue Team. CO-TF1 is one of 28 US&R Task Forces



Commander of United States Northern Command, Admiral Timothy Keating (center), talks with members of the Colorado National Guard's NCGERFP team. The Colorado Guard members participated in decontamination efforts at a local factory during a chemical explosion exercise involving the Guard and local responders. Maj. General Mason Whitney (right), the Colorado adjutant general looks on.

nationwide under the National Department of Homeland Security, National Urban Search & Rescue Response System. Their primary mission is Urban Search & Rescue operations for local, state, and national disasters. CO-TF1 is also equipped and trained to handle weapons of mass destruction incidents encountered during these operations. Personnel are volunteers from area fire departments, police departments, other emergency services, and the civilian sector (e.g., doctors, structural engineers, and canine search handlers).

Civilian and military triage methods are very different, this event created an opportunity for information exchange that many of the civilian medical counterparts had not previously experienced. The US&R team gained insight into how the CST operates and a better understanding of how they can bring their assets together in a complementary working relationship. "Civilian agencies are unfamiliar with military capabilities, it was phenomenal to see how the Guard operates," stated Fire Chief Angell.

"We were happy to get an opportunity to train with the great variety of first responders. The exercise allowed us to continue to cultivate effective working relationships with response agencies in the Front Range area," commented Maj. Kevin Kick, deputy commander, 8th CST.

The capstone of the event was the arrival of Admiral Timothy Keating, NORTHCOM commander, via a Colorado National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. Keating was invited by National Guard Bureau and Colorado leadership to provide him with a first-hand opportunity to see the homeland defense resources that are available in the ready, reliable, relevant and truly transformational National Guard. **See sidebar (Right) for further details.**

The exercise was an excellent opportunity for all emergency responders and law enforcement officials to practice and learn the level of detail, coordination and preparation required to carry out a successful interagency emergency response mission – from the time of initial notification to clean-up and teardown.

"These are the first steps that we've taken [together] and we'll only get better," Angell said.

Admiral Keating sets anchor at the Colorado National Guard

Adm. Timothy Keating, NORTHCOM commander, had the unique opportunity for an up close and personal look at the men and women of the Colorado National Guard Joint Task Force in action.

Keating arrived at the site via a Colorado National Guard (CONG) UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Mason Whitney, the Colorado adjutant general; Sgt. Maj. D. Scott Frye, sergeant major for NORAD and NORTHCOM and key members of his support staff.

The admiral was able to view the 8th Civil Support Team, the National Guard CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package and the Joint Task Force Communications Element. He was also able to communicate with Brig. Gen. Emil Lassen, Director, JFHQ-CO, and his staff who were miles away coordinating operations in the Joint Operations Center via the JTFCE's video teleconferencing capability.

Keating was genuinely impressed with the depth and breadth of the Colorado Guard's operational capabilities as well as the expertise and professionalism displayed by the Airmen and Soldiers who comprise this team of full-time and traditional guardsmen.

"The primary objectives [for the exercise] were to integrate our capabilities with local, state, and federal agencies and demonstrate the NCGERFP and CST for Adm. Keating to make him aware of an important homeland defense asset. This happened with resounding success," stated Maj. Robert Davis, project officer for the Colorado NCGERFP and exercise evaluator.

Major exemplifies extensive training of 6th CST

By Tech. Sgt. Gregory Rippes
Texas National Guard Public Affairs

CAMP MABRY, Texas – As a key element of the Texas Military Forces' role in homeland defense, members of the 6th Civil Support Team undergo a constant regimen of training to maintain readiness.

A few years before the 9-11 terrorist attacks, Congress authorized the establishment of weapons of mass destruction-civil support teams (WMD-CSTs) to support civil authorities in responding to incidents involving

suspected chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive agents or substances. Each CST consists of 22 full-time National Guard members specially trained and equipped not only to identify such agents, but also to assess consequences and advise on response measures.

CST members serve in Title 32 status, which means the governor can call them to duty to support civil authorities. Team members are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are required to deploy, by land or air, within two hours of notification. Camp Mabry serves as the base of operations for the 6th CST.

The 6th CST was one of the first civil support teams to "stand up," meeting its initial certification requirements in January 2000. However, all CSTs are required to re-certify at least once every 18 months.

Training is extensive and continuous. According to the National Guard Bureau Civil Support Office, WMD-CST members acquire approximately 600 hours of initial training in addition to their military occupational skill qualification or professional mil-

itary education requirements.

A case in point is Maj. Samuel A. West III (MD). A doctor of osteopathic medicine, he is a board-certified family practice physician and has served in the military for 20 years. For the last two years he was flight surgeon for the 4th Brigade (Aviation), 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and served with the division during its recent 12-month tour in Iraq.

With his background and experience, West was a perfect fit as the 6th CST's medical team leader.

However, as a new member, he faced multiple training demands.

"There is a whole lot of training involved, beyond the civilian and military training I have received thus far in my career," West said. "Initially, I must be qualified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Advanced Trauma Life Support, and

"The CST has the potential to work with very hazardous substances. I work with our other team members to mitigate any risk they might be taking, either in training or on a real mission. Along with our medical NCO, I would perform any initial emergency medical treatment on a mission."

– Maj. Samuel A. West III (MD)

hold a current medical license and specialty board certification. This is the baseline at which all military physicians should be trained."

Now he must also complete a multitude of courses whose titles include Medical Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties, Hazmat Technician, Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation, Incident Command System, Emergency Response to Terrorism, Advanced Hazmat Life Support, Tropical Medicine, Global Medicine and Fundamentals of Occupational Medicine, and several additional radiation protection courses. Some of the courses are provided by the military, some by other government agencies.

Mastering courses of study is, of course, nothing new to the doctor. He received his



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Gregory Rippes

Maj. (Dr.) Samuel West, 6th Civil Support Team medical team leader, checks medical equipment on the CST ambulance.

bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and his DO from University of Osteopathic Medicine and Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa (now Des Moines University). He completed his residency at Brooke Army Medical Center on Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and at Darnall Army Community Hospital on Fort Hood, Texas.

"The Army sent me to medical school through the Health Professions Scholarship program," West explained. "I enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard while attending ROTC at the University of Texas. After graduation, I served on active duty as a Medical Service Corps officer (field medical administrator) for about five years before attending medical school."

While on active duty, West served as an ambulance platoon leader, battalion assistant S-3, forward support medical company executive officer with the 6th Infantry Division (Light) in Alaska, and then as an instructor at the Army Medical Department Center and School. After medical school he attended a one-year internship program at Brooke Army Medical Center. Following graduation, he served as the division support command surgeon for the 1st Cavalry Division and then

two flight surgeon tours, first as a battalion flight surgeon, then as a brigade flight surgeon.

"During each of the flight surgeon tours, I was also the officer in charge of the aviation medicine clinic at Fort Hood," West added. It was through a medical student on Fort Hood that he learned about the position with the 6th CST.

"He was a member of the Texas Army National Guard," West recalled. "He put me in contact with the CST's former commander. I maintained correspondence with the unit's former medical officer for several years.

"I happened to be separating from federal active duty at the same time that the job at the 6th CST became available," he continued. "The timing was fantastic. I managed to go from federal active duty one day to AGR [Active Guard and Reserve] the next day."

As the CST's medical team leader, West is responsible for the medical care of the team members and supervises the team's medical science section.

"My most important duties involve the occupational screening and safety of our team members," the doctor explained. "The CST has the potential to work with very haz-



West demonstrates the negative-pressure "glove box," which allows the user to handle potentially toxic materials safely with thick neoprene gloves.

See DOC On Page 5

Kentucky Soldier re-enlists from hospital bed in Iraq

By Capt. David Page

Kentucky National Guard

BAGDAD, Iraq – Election Day in Iraq is one day a Kentucky Army National Guard Soldier will never forget.

Staff Sgt. Barry S. Holt and other members of the Kentucky Army National Guard's 617th Military Police Company were conducting mounted patrols along Main Supply Route in Baghdad on January 30.

While on patrol, Holt, a squad leader, responded with his team to the discovery of an improvised explosive device. When the squad arrived on the scene, they helped secure the area until an explosive ordnance disposal team could come to detonate the device.

After device was successfully detonated, a call came over the unit's radio to return to base. At that time, six other vehicles from the 617th joined Holt as they prepared to convoy back to the base camp.

Sensing his team was tired and weary, Holt offered to drive. Holt's vehicle was placed in the lead and the convoy spun into motion.

On the vigilant journey home, Holt's team consisting of SPC William T. Hoy, SPC Rachael E. Roloson, and SPC John E. Owens, scanned the streets for any signs of potential trouble.

As Holt's up-armored HUMVEE passed over a pothole in the road, an explosion erupted from a platter charge IED placed in the hole. The explosion was so intense, the windows in the up-armored HUMVEE splintered and shrapnel breached the firewall on the driver side of the vehicle, lodging a shard of metal behind Holt's left knee and fracturing his tibia.

When the IED detonated, Hoy was in the gunner's mount. The blast shot fragments of glass into Hoy's hand and wrist, and he also was hit in the forearm by debris from the explosion.

The strike to his forearm hurt badly, recalls Hoy. "It felt like it was broke," said Hoy.

After the explosion, the convoy came under small arms fire from the three o'clock position. Owens, who was on the left side of the vehicle, and Hoy began to immediately return fire in the direction of the contact.

With the convoy in trail, Holt said he knew he had to get the vehicle out of the kill zone.

Badly wounded, Holt sped away so the vehicles behind him could move. He drove the vehicle out of kill zone and then stopped at a rally point.

Three medics came to Holt's aid. They started working on him as the rest of the convoy provided security.

"If I had not been in an up-armored HUMVEE, I would not be here today," said Holt. "Plus, the goggles that I was issued saved my eyes when the windows blew."

Holt and Hoy were air med-evacuated to a hospital in



Photo courtesy of the 617th MP Company

Staff Sgt. Barry S. Holt raises his right hand as he reenlists from his hospital bed in Iraq.

Baghdad. The doctors there said the shrapnel, the size of a golf ball, was the largest they had removed from someone Holt said. While at the hospital, Holt underwent surgery to remove the shrapnel.

"The medical crews -- from the medics on site to the doctors and nurses in the hospital -- took great care of me," said Holt. "They made sure I had everything I needed. They really take care of the Soldier."

Hoy was treated for his cuts and bruises, and was released back to the unit.

This team's story of bravery and courage is amazing, but what transpired following this attack is truly a testament to the warrior spirit of Kentuckians.

While recovering in hospital, Holt asked the company commander of the 617th, CPT Todd M. Lindner, if he could reenlist.

"He (Holt) told me he wanted to reenlist the night he was injured," said Lindner.

So, before Holt was released from the hospital in Baghdad and sent to Germany for additional treatment, he was sworn in by an officer from the hospital as he lay

in bed.

This is Holt's second tour in Iraq. He was a member of the 223rd Military Police Company from the Kentucky Army National Guard that served in the early months of the liberation of Iraq. When the 617th was called to service, Holt volunteered to go back.

His expiration term of service date was Feb. 19, 2005, but when he volunteered to go with the 617th, he was placed on stop loss. In early January 2005, Holt started talking to the unit's retention NCO about reenlisting.

"I have been in 12 years and want to make it to 20," said Holt.

Holt is back in Kentucky now at a hospital in Lexington, where he will continue physical therapy on his knee. He's expected to make a full recovery. He said he hopes to be able to return to his unit as soon as the military will let him.

"Staff Sgt. Holt is everything a commander looks for in a leader," said Lindner. "He is selfless, caring, disciplined, loyal, and can be relied upon to do the right thing."

FROM PAGE 4

Doc

ardous substances. I work with our other team members to mitigate any risk they might be taking, either in training or on a real mission. Along with our medical NCO, I would perform any initial emergency medical treatment on a mission."

West is also the medical liaison with any civilian or government agencies during a mission.

"Many of the local agencies don't deal with WMD issues full-time," he noted. "So we give advice and assistance to the civilian

incident commander on the scene." During recent training in Texarkana, Texas, for example, West advised the local fire chief and the local emergency medical services director regarding proper medical diagnosis, testing and treatment for the simulated biological agent involved in the exercise.

Neither the "plethora" of courses nor the high level of activity involved in West's new position seem to bother him. In fact, he said he enjoys being in the CST.

"This is an opportunity for me to receive

training that would be difficult for a physician to receive anywhere else," he said. "We definitely have a high operation tempo, but I like it that way. The unit is full of highly trained professionals."

The Guardsman also values the role of the 6th CST in homeland defense.

"I hope the skills we train upon everyday will never have to be used, but if they do, we will be ready," he said. "Unfortunately, our need to be prepared for a WMD event will never go away."

For West, the "home" in "homeland defense" stands out.

"I was born and raised here in Austin," he said. "So for me, even more so than my combat tour in support of the Global War on Terrorism, this job seems to have a more of a direct impact on the safety of my community and family. In Iraq, I've seen up close and personal what terrorists can do to a country and its people. I hope to do my small part to prevent that type of fear from coming into Texas."

Texas Soldier awarded Purple Heart

By Master Sgt. Lek Mateo
Texas Army National Guard

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq – The wound from a sniper's high-caliber bullet has healed, but the emotional scar will be permanently affixed to the memory of one Texas Soldier who now wears the military medal created by Gen. George Washington for injuries sustained in combat.

Spc. Felix B. Silva Jr., of Austin, Texas, and a Soldier of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment, 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, was awarded the Purple Heart for a gunshot wound he received Feb. 10 while performing guard duty in a 30-foot tower at a radio-relay-point in southern Iraq.

The Travis County fireman remembers the day vividly in his mind as he looks at the inch-and-a-half scar that was made by a bullet that entered and exited the fleshy part of his left arm just above the elbow.

Silva said that he thought the guard duty that day was going to be just like any other day since they've been at the RP... quiet and mundane, not knowing that within a few short hours into his watch he would be engaging an enemy sniper – who had his sight on taking his life.

The specialist recalled that he was scanning his sector near a main supply route a few hundred yards away when he heard the first shot go off. He said he didn't really think anything of it because he saw another Soldier at another tower who didn't look like he was too alarmed. But after hearing the high-speed hiss of a bullet screaming past his tower from the second shot, he realized within a split second that it was actual gunfire aimed at him.

"As I turned towards the direction of the road, I could see a guy lying on the road," Silva said. "Then I heard a third round go off, which is when I got on my M240B machine gun and returned fire."

After the assailant managed to get into a crowd of innocent bystanders, the Guardsman stopped firing because he didn't want to hit anyone by mistake. As he tried to call his unit on the radio, he saw the blood on his shirt sleeve.

Although Silva said he felt honored to have been awarded the Purple Heart, he added that the shot that left the inch-and-a-half scar on his arm didn't affect him like Soldiers who have lost their limbs, their sight, their hearing and even their lives because of their wounds. He said his medal is one that the others earned.

"It is a day that I will never forget," Silva reflects. "The hole from the bullet that hit me is still in the wall, and every now and then I'll go up to the tower and look at it and think to myself how grateful I am to be alive."

Soldiers stood silently at attention in the still morning as Col. James K. Brown, 56th Brigade Combat Team commander, pinned the bright purple heart-shaped medal that stood out on Silva's desert tan camouflage uniform during a simple ceremony to honor the Soldier.



Photos by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Spc. Felix B. Silva (right) renders a hand salute to Col. James K. Brown, commander of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, after he was awarded the Purple Heart during a ceremony for wounds received during a fixed-site security mission Feb. 10 in southern Iraq.

Brown addressed the Soldiers in the formation afterwards saying that Silva was an example to all of them for what he did and for having the courage to go back to duty after recovering from his wounds and complete the dangerous mission that they've been asked to perform.

The colonel noted that during the last four

months several of his Soldiers had been hurt in various incidents while performing their duty in Iraq, but fortunately none of the injuries was life threatening.

"We are very blessed that some of our Soldiers received this award without sustaining great injury to them and are here with us today," Colonel Brown said.



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment, 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, stand in ranks during a ceremony for Spc. Felix B. Silva.

Weapon safety stressed during live fire-exercise

By Staff Sgt. Stephen Hudson

Florida National Guard Public Affairs

CAMP SHELBY, Miss. – Sweat runs from underneath Lt. Col. Mark Prewitt's helmet, to his camouflage shirt darkening the collar.

Prewitt is not concerned about today's oppressive Mississippi heat or the horse flies buzzing around his head. Right now Prewitt is scanning the horizon for the enemy and listening to the encouraging words of his observer controller's voice in his ear.

At a moments notice Prewitt is prepared to raise his M-16A2 and fire two rounds into the rubberized silhouette that may pop up at any second.

"Let your instincts kick in," said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Jackson. "You can feel it, you know where they are."

What Jackson calls "muscle memory." The New Orleans native and Army Reservist says with nerves and adrenaline a Soldier will mostly likely miss the first shot, but the second will hit because the body instinctually knows where to send the bullet.

In today's training Jackson is teaching Soldiers from the Florida and Nebraska Army National Guard what he experienced in Iraq last year. Jackson instructs the Guardsmen to scan the horizon to see the targets when they appear and use peripheral vision to pick up the targets at close range.

This type of training is what the military calls "reflexive fire." Carrying a weapon at

the low ready position the Soldiers must be prepared to raise their weapon, flip the safety off and determine if the target between their sites is non-threatening or an insurgent determined to kill at all costs; it's a decision the Soldier must make in a split second and has deadly consequences.

This is the primary purpose of the training. The Soldiers must be able to react quickly.

Master Sgt. David Williams also an Army Reservist served with Jackson in Iraq. Sent to train the new Iraqi Army, he and the men in his unit went out on combat patrols with the Iraqis.

"We tell them some of the things we saw,"

Williams said referring to the level of instruction given to the Guardsmen.

In the safety briefings and on the range Williams stresses the Soldiers must keep their weapons on safe to avoid an accidental firing which could kill a fellow Soldier. Keeping their thumb on the selector switch the Soldiers must react by flipping the weapon from safe to fire without looking or thinking. It must happen.

In published newspaper reports, the Army cites 16 deaths and 121 injuries from weapons fired by accident in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001.

Williams said with Soldiers walking foot patrols through rough terrain or villages they must keep their weapon on safe to avoid an accidental discharge.

To the Soldiers the information is not lost. "This training is vital to us," said Chief Warrant Officer Jonathan Hutchinson during a break in the training. "At a moments notice our mission could change."

Hutchinson, from Jacksonville, is assigned to the Training Assistance Group (TAG) - the Soldiers who will train the new Afghan Army on how to be soldiers. But as Hutchinson said violence could escalate causing a trainer to become a foot Soldier patrolling a sector or manning a guard tower.

Soldiers assault a sniper position at the Camp Shelby MOUT Site. The Soldiers are part of the more than 1,200 Florida Guardsmen training at Camp Shelby, Miss. to deploy to Afghanistan later this summer.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Stephen Hudson

Sgt. 1st Class Donovan Jones keeps a watchful eye as his squad enter a building at the MOUT Site. Jones, of Alachua, Fla., is a platoon leader with C Co., 2nd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery.

Back at the range Jackson is walking behind two Nebraska Guardsmen when the Soldier stops to fire he stops and Jackson puts his hand on the man's back nudging him forward encouraging him not to stop.

"If you stop you become a target," Williams said from his vantage point in the tower overlooking the range. He added Soldiers want to stop when firing, but they must continue moving forward.

In addition to the reflexive fire the Soldiers will receive training in stress fire - where the

Soldier has to run between targets causing added stress.

"They're doing good," said Williams. "Some of the guys have an infantry background."

Since April the more than 1,200 Florida Army National Guard Soldiers have been training at this sprawling Mississippi training site preparing with Soldiers from the Nebraska, Vermont and Tennessee National Guard for their upcoming year-long deployment to Afghanistan.



National Guard child care assessment by the National Guard Child and Youth Program

By Patrice Murphy

National Guard Child and Youth Program

ARLINGTON, Va. – The National Guard Child and Youth Program has recognized the growing demand for dependable child care and are working to help National Guard families meet their child care needs during deployments, weekend drills, and annual

training.

The National Guard Child and Youth Program is currently assessing the child care needs of Guard Families and invite all Guard Families to participate in an online survey. Whether you have been directly impacted by deployment and childcare issues, or if you anticipate these needs in the future, they

need to hear from you. Please participate in the National Guard Child and Youth Program Child Care Assessment at: <http://www.AdvancedSurvey.com/default.asp?SurveyID=21294>

For more information, contact NGChildANDYouthProgram@mpscrc.com
Respondents can request results of the

assessment by supplying their email or postal address in Question 17. Final results of the survey will be posted on www.GuardFamily.org, and with other online and news media this summer. Results will also be distributed to the State Family Programs, Youth Coordinators and Family Assistance Centers across the country.

Guard Soldiers and Marines team up

By Master Sgt. Lek Mateo
Texas Army National Guard

TALLIL, Iraq – Soldiers and Marines recently joined forces to neutralize an improvised explosive device (IED) that was discovered along a highly traveled stretch of highway in southern Iraq.

The IED – made of two 122 mm artillery rounds concealed in a burlap bag and placed alongside the shoulder of the asphalt road – was found by Soldiers of the 65th Military Police Company, 18th Airborne Corps, during their daily patrol.

The MPs quickly closed down both sides of the highway and cordoned off the area to prevent onlookers from entering the dangerous site.

They were later reinforced by Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division; combat engineers of the Kansas Army National Guard's 891st Engineer Battalion; and Marines of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, whose explosive ordnance disposal team – specially trained to handle the explosives – transported the IED to a safe location and blew it up.

U.S. Army Sgt. William J. White, of Midland, Texas, and a personal security detachment team leader for the 56th BCT command sergeant major, said his team had traveled that same stretch of road multiple times, and after three months of not seeing anything at all until today, reminded them all that the danger is still present.

"It was a firsthand experience for the entire team," White said. "We were all there when it happened, and it definitely left an impact on us that the threat is real."



Photos by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Iraqi commuters are kept at a safe distance as Soldiers and Marines work to dispose of an IED that was found along the shoulder of a busy highway in southern Iraq.

White added that the deadly encounter was their baptism under fire, and although the outcome was positive, being there and seeing the IED firsthand made it easier for him to

emphasize to his team to maintain their vigilance and stay alert.

"In a strange way the experience was more of a relief to me because we finally faced our fears," White said.

The incident also reaffirms his confidence in the IED training the unit received prior to their deployment to Iraq and gave him a newfound respect for his counterparts in the Marine Corps ... especially the EOD team.

Spc. Douglas W. Stewart, of Denton, Texas, a machine gunner on the team, has the most dangerous position on the crew.

Perched high atop an armored HMMWV in a turret made of 3/8-inch steel plates to protect him, Stewart is the eyes and ears for the crew who is responsible for spotting threats such as IEDs that could harm his team as they race down the highway at break-neck speed.

Stewart admits that, while traveling at a high rate of speed, it is tough to spot IEDs that may be hidden amongst the trash strewn alongside the road – like the one that was found and disposed of before it could do any harm.

The specialist said that, even though the IED failed to go off, he still respects them. However, he explained, it will not deter him from doing his job and that he relies in his faith in God and mental preparation before he leaves "the wire" to get him through a mission.

"I find inner strength through my strong belief in the Lord," Stewart said. "I truly believe that things happen for a reason."

Spc. Blaine A. Shellhammer, of Baytown, Texas, has driven thousands of miles since he has been in Iraq. He said this was the first time he had seen an actual IED up close and personal.

"During our missions we've seen all the damage and carnage left by an IED along the sides of the road," Shellhammer said. "But now that I've seen one found in person, it is something that I will always remember."

Shellhammer can also carry with him the honor given to him by the Marine EOD team. The team selected him to push the switch on a remote detonating device to set off a charge of explosives that blew up the IED and rendered it harmless.

"It was pretty awesome feeling to be able to destroy an IED that had been set up to kill our Soldiers," Shellhammer said.



Marine Staff Sgt. Efren Pulido of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Explosive Ordnance Team - 8, prepares to send a Talon II robot down the road to investigate the location of an IED placed along the shoulder of a busy highway in southern Iraq.



A cordless phone base used as a remote detonating device is recovered by a Marine Explosive Ordnance Team - 8 of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit who blew up the IED attached to it.

o to neutralize roadside bomb in Iraq



(Clockwise, from upper left) Marine Gunnery Sgt. Nathan L. Luther of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Explosive Ordnance Team - 8, moves down range to identify the location of an IED placed along the shoulder of a busy highway. A Marine of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit yells to civilian onlookers to stay away from a dangerous area where an IED is located as a U.S. Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopter provides cover overhead. Marine Gunnery Sgt. Nathan L. Luther (Center) shows U.S. Army Spc. Blaine A. Shellhammer, of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, fishing line used as the trip wire to an IED found earlier in the day.



(Above) Thick black smoke from the controlled detonation of an IED found along a busy highway in southern Iraq drifts behind a Marine HMMWV belonging to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit that was providing security.



New runners vie for a spot on the National Guard Marathon Team

By Spc Katie Loseke

Nebraska National Guard

LINCOLN, Neb. – Many say the body is like a machine. It can be successful only if each individual part does its job.

When those parts work together the result can be amazing.

National Guard runners from various states found this to be true as they paced each other, took turns blocking the wind for each other, and just kept each other motivated while running the 2005 Lincoln All Sport/National Guard Marathon May 2, 2005 in Lincoln, Neb.

"There was a pack of us from last year's All Guard team that ran together for the first 20 miles of the race," said 1st Lt. Sean Nixon, a runner from Oregon's Army National Guard. "We wanted to help each other make the team, but then the wind got so strong that it was everyone for themselves. There was no competition, just survival."

What is so special about this team that over 200 Guard members traveled to Nebraska to compete for a spot?

The All Guard National Guard Marathon Team is a recruiting and retention program that selects the top runners from the National Guard to compete in races throughout the United States and represent the National Guard at an expo booth. The time trials to make the team are held in Lincoln, Neb., every year during the Lincoln All Sport/National Guard Marathon.

Nixon said the only reason he traveled to Nebraska was to try and earn a spot on the team. Which is exactly what he did. This is the fifth year Nixon has made the team.

"I ran hard because I know the ability of the runners that compete on the team," said



Sgt. Jason Kirch, a construction equipment operator with the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion, finished the Lincoln All Sport/National Guard Marathon in a time of 2:49:29.

Nixon. "I really wanted to make the team. The people are great and it is fun to go on trips and run races with them."

Nixon said he ran with members of last year's team throughout most of the race.

"I've developed close relationships with some of the runners on the team and we pushed each other along the course so we could all make the team again," said Nixon.

Nixon not only made the team, but finished in the top five. His overall time was 2:39:26, which earned him fourth place. That fourth place finished also helped to catapult his state team to first place.

The Oregon team won the team titles with a time of 8:23:47. Team scores are figured by adding up the times of the top four runners from each team. Also on the team were Timothy Vandervlugt who finished second for the Guard with a time of 2:37:42, and Phil Demontigny and Max White.

"Our state coordinator works hard to build up interest in the marathon program. We always get some really good runners to come and participate," said Nixon.

Even though the Oregon team won the first place team title, only two of the team members made the All Guard team. The second place team managed to one up them in that regard, making six out of their eight runners.

Finishing in second place, only 25 seconds behind Oregon, was the Puerto Rico team with a time of 8:24:12.

Five of the runners from Puerto Rico finished the race in less than three hours. William Bolhke, who was the first member of the team to cross the finish line and third overall for the Guard, finished with a time of 2:39:21.

Another member of the team, Alcides Colon, finished eighth for the Guard with a time of 2:47:01. Victor Cuevas finished in a time of 2:57:06 and Isolina Negron was the ninth Guard female to cross the line with a time of 4:00:48.

Maj. Alberto Miranda, the sport coordinator for Puerto Rico, said his team takes the marathon very seriously. Some of his runners have been on the All Guard team for over ten years. He said the program is important in recruiting and retention of soldiers, which he believes is a primary mission.

"Right now we are bleeding and we have to stop the bleeding," said Miranda. "This is a way to do that, by showing soldiers and new recruits that we not only go to the field, but that we can do other things."

Miranda is concerned with the fact that recruiting and retention numbers keep falling. He thinks getting states involved with programs such as the All Guard Marathon Team can help retain soldiers.

Many of the runners that made the All Guard team this year are familiar, like those from Puerto Rico who keep coming back year after year to run on the team, but as word about the All Guard team spreads new runners are racing to Nebraska for a shot to make the team, which is keeping interest in the Guard alive.

One of those runners is Sgt. Jason Kirch, a construction equipment operator with



Photos by Capt. Kevin Hynes

Members of the 2004 All Guard Marathon team ran together during the 2005 Lincoln All Sport/National Guard Marathon, held May 2, in Lincoln Neb.

Wisconsin's Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion. Kirch heard about the team from Mike Zeigle who has run on the All Guard team for a number of years.

After learning about the team, Kirch signed up for the marathon and began training. When he saw the team roster he was excited to learn that an old cross country buddy from college was also running on the Wisconsin team for the first time.

Kirch said the two of them tried to pace each other throughout the race so that they might have a chance at making the team they had heard so much about.

"A marathon is a mental race. You can only push your body so far and so long. After that you have to overcome your mind," said Kirch. "I just focused on finishing and tried to ignore the pain."

Kirch's philosophy worked and he earned himself a place on the All Guard team with a time of 2:49:29. He was just four places behind his friend Michael Western who placed 12 with a time of 2:47:30.

Kirch's and Western's time helped their team earn third place in the team standings. Not bad for two rookies. Also rounding out the team were Mike Zeigle and Jason Tobias.

Kirch said he was excited about making the All Guard team and is looking forward to getting to know other members on the team and spending some time with Western who he hasn't seen since their days at the University of Wisconsin Stout.

"It's one thing to compete in college, but to actually make an All Guard team is something special," said Kirch. "I am looking forward to being able to call myself elite."

Another new runner to the team said she feels the same way Kirch does.

"It is awesome to think I made the team. I am so excited," said Capt. Paulette Goodwin, an executive support officer for Alaska's Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing.

Goodwin, who has run 21 marathons, said making the team was her only goal in coming to Nebraska. Although her time of 3:54:53 earned her the fifth place finish among the Guard females, Goodwin said she

was still a little disappointed by her time.

Goodwin said she had been hoping to finish the marathon by 3:30:00, but that the wind really slowed her down.

"I didn't make my time, but I made the team," said Goodwin. "It's a good trade I guess."

By traveling with the team she will also be making another dream reality. Goodwin is trying to run a marathon in every state. So far she is one-fifth of the way done with 21 marathons in 11 different states under her belt.

"That's why I was really excited about making the team. This can be an expensive habit," said Goodwin.

Goodwin said she is also excited to get to know people on the All Guard team.

"At the awards ceremony runners from different states were cheering for each other and I could tell that a lot of them knew each other and had become friends," said Goodwin. "They all seemed so close, and I knew right then that the program was something that I was going to like being a part of."

The members of the 2005-2006 All Guard Marathon team are Paulette Goodwin, James Bresette, Jeffrey Froude, David Meyer, Annaliese Tremble-Baumer, Michael Bergquist, Andrew Hyde, Michael Western, Jason Kirch, Michael Zeigle, Russell Hoyer, Timothy Vandervlugt, Sean Nixon, Troy Harrison, William Bolhke, Alcides Colon, Rafael Rivas, Victor Cuevas, Luis Diaz, Isolina Negron, Paul Laymon, Raymond Hammond, Michael Streff, Michael McDaniel, Eric Petersen, Dallas Workman Jr., George Graff, Mary Louise McEwen, Kevin Guinee, Tyrell Heaton, James Zwiefel, Luke Charpentier, Alison Delaney, Clay Bird, Troy Frost, Pamela Frost, Jeff Lingwall, Sarah Harms, Penny Hytrek, Barbara Gossage, Teddy Mitchell, Whitney Miller, Curt Carey, Trent Sinnett, Eric Schumacher, Ross Shales, Holly Scott, Jeffrey Olive, Suzanne Shields, Chris Larson, Tom Jackson, and Martha Swatt-Robison.

Exercise provides 149th FW training with laser-guided bombs

By Tech. Sgt. Gregory Rippes
149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – Some 225 members and 12

F-16 aircraft of the 149th Fighter Wing recently deployed to Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., for its first exercise using laser-guided bombs (LGBs). By all accounts, it was a booming success.

While the intensive two-week exercise, named Coronet Cactus, provided vital training for F-16 basic course students under the wing's tutelage, the exercise also proved and honed the training of other members, particularly those who handled the bombs.

Besides LGBs, Coronet Cactus involved using both live and inert 500-pound bombs. Night vision goggles (NVGs) were incorporated into the students' training as well as targeting pods. The missions included working with close air support (CAS) controllers from the Louisiana Air National Guard and preplanned strike attacks flying over the unfamiliar terrain of southwest Arizona.

Maj. Mike McCoy, project officer for the exercise, described Coronet Cactus as the student-pilots' "first taste of regular Air Force forward deployment training."

While in Arizona, the unit flew 146 sorties. Of these, 137 comprised pilot formal training or "syllabus rides," McCoy said. Expended munitions totaled 40 LGBs 56 live 500-pound bombs, 156 inert 500-pound bombs, and 8,752 rounds of 20mm ammunition. Maj. Tom Duke became the first pilot in the history of the 149th Fighter Wing's history to deliver an LGB.

The primary training objective was to support the syllabus for the student pilots enrolled in the B-Course. Maj. Gordon Niebergall, the wing's weapons officer, said the goal was for each of the 11 student pilots to complete five surface attack mis-

sions: two in CAS, two with NVGs and one with surface attack tactics (SATs). Twenty of the wing's instructor-pilots participated in the exercise as well.

Niebergall was responsible for ensuring training for those who went, making sure they had the equipment they needed and analyzing the success of the exercise. He explained that training with LGBs was part of the wing's five-year plan for enriching the B-course, which added targeting pods to the syllabus in 2003 and NVGs in 2001.

"Many of our instructor pilots have experience delivering LGBs," Niebergall said, "but some of the instructors and all of the students were unfamiliar with full-scale delivery of an LGB."

Introducing students to a strange base figured into the syllabus as well. Niebergall pointed out that the student-pilots had become familiar with the bombing range in McMullen County in south-central Texas, which they use when operating from Lackland AFB.

"Coronet Cactus involved realistic scenarios we can't support locally," Niebergall said. "The Barry Goldwater Bombing Range provided a 50- by 20-mile area, with an impact area three miles wide and five to seven miles long. Yankee and Dixie ranges [in McMullen] have an impact area only 5,000 by 3,000 feet.

"There [in Arizona] the pilots had no familiarity with the target area to know exactly where their target was located," he said of the range in Arizona, noting that they had to use their training and equipment to find the targets. "They had to translate the target area from a photo into the infrared heat signature displayed through the targeting pod."

Student-pilots appreciated the difference. "The distance and the terrain were real," said 1st Lt. Will Broman, one of the students, who said they flew at low levels through mountain passes to reach their tar-



Photos by Airman 1st Class Veronica Pierce

With Arizona mountains forming a backdrop, an F-16 loaded with 500-pound bombs is readied for a training mission. The 149th Fighter Wing flew out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to drop ordnance over the Barry Goldwater Bombing Range during Exercise Coronet Cactus.

gets. "It wasn't like training from South Texas where there is not much in the way of mountains or terrain to maneuver through."

In addition to using LGBs for the first time, Broman said it was his first time to drop heavy-weight inert and live bombs, which induce "different handling characteristics on the jet." A bonus to using LGBs is that the delivery of the ordnance is recorded. "We got to see the effects of the bombs," he said.

Broman, who served as a crew chief in the 149th FW for six and a half years prior to entering the pilot training program, added that the pre-mission pilot briefings were faster paced. "We felt like F-16 pilots rather than student pilots," he said.

McCoy identified the assets that supported the 149th FW in Coronet Cactus: the 122nd Air Support Operations Squadron, Alexandria, La., which provided ground forward air controllers (FACs), and the 354th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, and the 310th Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Ariz., both of which provided airborne FACs.

"The 122nd controlled 20 close-air-support missions, and the 354th, with its A-10 aircraft, and the 310th, with its F-16s, controlled 12 CAS missions," McCoy explained. "Half of the CAS missions were flown during the day, half at night."

It was definitely a high-ops tempo. "We worked straight through the weekend," McCoy said. "Maintenance had already worked through the weekend prior to the deployment and then through the first weekend of the deployment for a total of 15 days. Tuesday and Wednesday of the second week were the first days most of us got off."

Meanwhile, 149th Security Forces Squadron personnel continued to provide round-the-clock security for the aircraft at

two locations on the base.

Capt. Eric Cox, who served as maintenance officer for part of the exercise, recounted that 12 aircraft were available to fly the required missions. "The munitions and loading guys worked their tails off," he said.

The aggressive flight line schedules left no time to go anywhere for meals. Luckily for the unit, the nine members of the 149th Services Flight could prepare lunch and supper in the nearby Snowbird Operations Building. The facility, which is provided to visiting units for training, included a complete kitchen in addition to accommodating operations and supply.

"Our services folks supplied two outstanding meals a day for 225 people," McCoy noted.

Chief Master Sgt. Ed Hobbs, the senior enlisted member of the deployment, noted that the weapons loaders worked hard to become qualified and certified before the exercise. Senior Master Sgt. Jake White led an eight-person team to Davis-Monthan ahead of the main party to build up the bombs in advance. On one occasion during the deployment, Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Jackson's weapons crews downloaded 40 live Mark-82 bombs in one hour to prevent loss of CAS missions due to wind limitations.

"The weapons crews did a brilliant job of building and loading for the deployment and had a 100 percent success rate," McCoy said. "It was a superior team effort. There were no problems with the aircraft. It was a total effort and flawless execution to crank out so many sorties with no incidents."

Hobbs summed up the exercise this way: "All loads were flawless. All LGBs were delivered as planned. No incidents, no injuries. For a deployment that big, that's something."



Lt. Col. John Kane's preflight check includes the inert 500-pound bombs his F-16 will carry during a Coronet Cactus sortie. Colonel Kane was named commander of the 182nd Fighter Squadron during the two-week exercise.

Camp Atterbury receives national award for deployment excellence

Sgt. Les Newport

Camp Atterbury Public Affairs

EDINBURGH, Ind. – Without logistics, even the best army is ineffectual.

All the training and drilling goes to waste if the Soldiers can't physically get to the battleground; the state-of-the-art equipment is useless if it's sitting at a loading dock back in the U.S.

Logistics is the art and science of procuring, maintaining and transporting materials or personnel. It involves everything from making sure a bus is ready to take Soldiers to the airport for deployment to tracking a mid-Atlantic cargo ship carrying bridge-building equipment home. At Camp Atterbury, that duty belongs to the Transportation Branch of the Directorate of Logistics. From the moment a National Guard or Reserve unit is activated for overseas duty until long after it has come home, the Transportation Branch is at work coordinating the needs of the Soldiers and keeping track of their equipment.

"These guys have to track it all the way there and then back. They work the process from Day 1 until it's back home," Lt. Col. Callahan, director of logistics, said. "Often, the equipment is not back until 90 days after (the Soldiers) are."

Although the Transportation Office deals with multiple transporters and must coordinate schedules between commercial aircraft, military aircraft, buses, trains, trucks and ships, their error rate is "almost 0 percent," Portish said.

Their accomplishments have not gone unnoticed by the Department of the Army.

Camp Atterbury received a 2005 National Deployment Excellence Award on May 19 for its efficient and expedient troop mobilization efforts as part of the Global War on Terrorism. Camp Atterbury was awarded first place in the Supporting Installation cat-



Camp Atterbury command staff and directorate of logistics staff at the Camp Atterbury Rock, west of Edinburg, Indiana. Camp Atterbury has recently been recognized by the Department of the Army with the Deployment of Excellence Award for top honors among Army National Guard Installations.

egory, placing it above all other National Guard Installations. Col. Kenneth Newlin, Camp Atterbury's former commander and Maj. Felicia Brokaw, the installation transportation officer, accepted the award during Army Logistics Week in Washington, D.C.

Newlin said the award is especially significant because the Soldiers had to start with almost nothing when the camp was activated as a mobilization site in February 2003.

"I think it is amazing what these Soldiers have accomplished in so little time," Newlin said. "They literally had to establish these transportation functions from nothing more than some rough plans, with initially only minimal and, in some areas, no supporting infrastructure."

Callahan said starting with very little was a challenge, but it also made them come up with creative solutions.

"It might have been good that we had limited knowledge (of the deployment process)," Callahan said. "Instead of throwing our hands up and saying 'I can't do it' when they were challenged, the Soldiers came up with solutions."

Unlike a regular Army unit, National Guard units generally bring their equipment with them to the mobilization stations when they are activated for duty. This was a challenge for the logistics branch because they might need to ship the equipment to the seaport of debarkation prior to the unit arriving to the mobilization station for their Pre-deployment Training. It's the responsibility of the transportation branch to ensure the troops and their equipment meet at their final destination in country at the same time, said Master Sgt. David Portish, NCOIC.

To deal with this, they make contact with the unit, to assist them in getting their brought to Atterbury in a timely manner. Then the equipment can be validated and placed on a cargo ship, which can take at least 6 weeks to cross the ocean. After the Soldiers are validated and ready, they can fly over and meet up with their equipment.

"That's our biggest challenge – having a timeline to get (the equipment) to port when it's not even in our control yet," Portish said.

"We've been very proactive in ID'ing the shortfalls prior to the unit getting here," Portish said.

"Our goal is to deploy equipment and Soldiers in a timely fashion so they meet and are prepared for their mission," Portish said.

"A timely fashion" is often defined as "on-time logistics," added Brokaw. They must ensure that the Soldiers and their equipment get to their final destination at the same time.

If the Soldiers arrive at the staging area before their equipment arrives, they have to wait before they can begin their mission. The equipment cannot arrive too early, either, because shippers and ports will not hold or store it for an extended period, she said.

A delayed flight can cause changes across the board, as the bus driver waiting at the airport to transport Soldiers must then be informed, as well as Soldiers waiting to board the plane on its return trip must be rerouted or rescheduled. An ice storm that backs up a port can cause a huge ripple effect



Sgt. Dennis Johnson of the Camp Atterbury Installation Support Unit, Transportation Branch coordinates the offloading of two Blackhawk helicopters from a C-141 at Indianapolis International Airport. The aircraft were returning from Bosnia where they were used to support the final Stabilization Force mission.

that's felt both at Camp Atterbury and overseas.

International events also affected how the Transportation Office operates. At the beginning of the Global War on Terror, U.S. officials had planned to land in Turkey. The nation decided not to allow it the chartered commercial landings, however, so planes, some of them en route, had to be rerouted, which affected timelines and schedules for everyone.

The award illustrates how well they faced and overcame these challenges.

"I think it's a great indication of how hard this team has worked in supporting these deployments for the Global War on Terror. You just can't imagine how hard they've worked. It's fitting that all their hard work is being recognized," Callahan said.

More than 2,800 Soldiers deployed for Bosnia and Kosovo. Equipment came with them on trucks, rail, crated, loose and palletized from all directions. Everything had to be properly packed and loaded with a radio-frequency tag for tracking.

For Operation Iraqi Freedom, Camp Atterbury had four engineering units deploying at once. This deployment included 2,600 Soldiers, 1,800 pieces of rolling stock and 350 - Twenty Foot Milvans of equipment. Many of the pieces were heavy and bulky. The Movement Control Team created an inspection sheet and an electronic spreadsheet to help track all the equipment. The Inventory Control Point coordinated the loading and unloading and shipping of equipment, as well as labeling items, especially hazardous items, according to international standards.

The Transportation Motor Pool made sure Soldiers were where they needed to be, as well as working with the leasing companies for trucks, trailers and vans.

"The Installation Transportation Office is the glue that holds all three sections together. With the combination of assets and information provided by each section, the ITO (Brokaw) spearheads all transportation movements," Callahan said.

When data was received from each of the other three sections, as well as FORSCOM, the various transporters and the radio fre-

quency tags, ITO validated the information and used it to plan the next move.

No matter how much pressure was placed upon them, they were able to develop a solution, and meet the mission requirements, Newlin said.

"On multiple occasions they were faced with having to move hundreds of pieces of military equipment and containers to port on very little notice. In doing so they never once missed an overseas movement. Their reputation became so well established that occasionally they were asked to accelerate a port call, because another location would not be able to make it. The Deployment Excellence Award recognizes this superior and sustained performance exhibited by these Soldiers," Brokaw said.

The award recognizes excellence in deployment operations and is administered by the Commander of the U.S. Army Transportation Center, Callahan said. It recognizes units and installations for outstanding deployment accomplishments that meet or exceed established standards and provides a way for installations to share innovative initiatives that have improved the deployment process.

"The DEA Supporting Unit Award is earned, not won," Brokaw said. "It is not like an Army Achievement Medal or Army Commendation Medal that is normally awarded to individual Soldiers. As one team, we, the CAJMTTC, earned this award through extreme sacrifice, patience, cooperation and professionalism."

Camp Atterbury's Transportation Branch of the Directorate of Logistics submitted its nomination and was evaluated for its deployment activities from December 2003 to November 2004.

During that time, the directorate helped mobilize units bound for Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sinai, Kosovo and stateside Homeland Security missions. More than 4,000 pieces of equipment and 10,526 Soldiers were transported. At one point, 43 different units were at Camp Atterbury, in various stages of training or activation, and the Directorate of Logistics kept track of each unit's equipment and transportation needs while the unit was at the camp, as it left for duty and when it was time to return.

C-130J crew test skills in Afghanistan

By Maj. Bernadette Dozier
Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA – A C-130J crew from the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron based here put their training, experience, skills and aircraft to the test April 11 in Afghanistan.

The Air National Guard crew, deployed here from the 175th Wing at Baltimore, Md., made the first short-field, dirt airstrip landing in the U.S. Central Command AOR when their wheels touched down at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. While C-130J crews have landed on dirt strips during training, this was the first operational mission, according to aircraft commander Lt. Col. Mike Mentges.

"On a short field aircraft performance is critical," said Colonel Mentges citing time of day and temperatures as key factors they had to consider. "The powerful engines on the J-model enabled us to do this job more effectively and safely because of the increased power and performance this aircraft has."

The runway was not the only challenging aspect of their mission. The crew had to load oversized cargo - a 25,000 pound fire truck that needed to be rotated out. If that alone didn't pose difficulties, the crew did this while the engines were running and with wind and dust blowing all around them.

A J-model crew normally consists of a pilot, co-pilot and two loadmasters; because of this type of cargo, crew chief Staff Sgt. Bill Burdette, also from the 746 EAS, flew along to assist with the load.

While the crew consisted of two very experienced loadmasters - with a total of 5,200 hours in various C-130 models between them - this was not an easy task because they don't load and unload this type of cargo often, according to Tech. Sgt. Matthew Kerstetter.

"I've done this twice in 14 years and the last time was 14 years ago," said Sergeant Kerstetter. However, he and the rest of the crew reviewed the procedures for oversized cargo and worked hard to prepare for the mission.

The loadmasters had to cautiously guide



Photo by Staff Sgt. Colette Bennett

Tech. Sgt. Matthew Kerstetter and Master Sgt. Freddy Harper, 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130 loadmasters deployed from Baltimore, Md., direct a fire truck into the cargo hold area of a C-130 J April 11 in Afghanistan. This was the J-model's first operational dirt airstrip landing in the AOR.

the firetruck's driver as he backed the vehicle up the ramp and into the aircraft. Once the vehicle was straight, they could maneuver it a little to the left and right - but there was no room for error.

"(The key is to) get it straight behind the aircraft before it gets on the aircraft. You only have three or four inches on each side to get it lined up, plus once it's on the aircraft you have to watch the height," said loadmaster Master Sgt. Freddy Harper.

"It's really scary because if it's off a little bit, (the driver) could hit the rails and you don't want that because that'll ruin the rails and ground your aircraft," he added.

Besides getting the fire truck lined up, the loadmasters had to position it so the center of gravity was within aircraft limits, Sergeant Harper said.

"This was a great opportunity ... it was

exciting and a little nerve-racking because you can't sit the vehicle anywhere on the aircraft," he added.

The aircraft commander had nothing but praise for the crew.

"It was a very tight fit ... initial alignment is very important. These guys did it right the first time - with the engines running," Colonel Mentges said. "We were able to go in there, land, load it up and bring it out."

Since the J-models have been here in December, the sorties the aircrews have flown have been on runways 10,000 feet and longer. In this case, they took off from a 4,000-foot strip weighing 137,000 pounds from high elevation, according to the colonel, who has more than 1,500 flying hours in the J-model.

Co-pilot Maj. Julie Petrina cited preparation, teamwork and creativity as reasons

for this successful mission.

"Obviously, we did a lot of preparation getting ready for this," said the major, who has 1,200 hours flying the C-130J.

Unlike crews for other C-130 models, the J variant doesn't include a flight engineer or navigator.

"We've been creative in (the AOR) using the resources we have. Loadmasters are performing some pilot duties and pilots have been performing some of the loadmasters' duties. We're learning a lot of valuable info to train our crews back home," she added.

"We have great training programs for all the crew positions," Colonel Mentges said. "Doing this on the dirt and at high altitude is unusual, but it's great to be here to get the opportunity to do all the things we do back home for training."

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BRAC

fewer airplanes, but there will be significant needs for other missions - intelligence, security police, space, medics, UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), air mobility divisions, expeditionary combat support, etc.," James added.

"I will work hard with the Air Force to see that each state is covered with appropriate missions which provide for both state and federal roles and the Homeland Security aspects of each, and I will distribute a transi-

tion plan as soon as possible," he vowed.

"Overall, BRAC equals transformation. The Air National Guard is always changing. Change has been done by generations before, and now it's our turn," stated Smith in a video message aimed at enlisted men and women. He has been the command chief master sergeant of the Air Guard and James's senior enlisted advisor since last August.

Observing that any BRAC implementations would take place through 2011, Smith said

"the mission of the Air National Guard must go on. Our deployments, operational readiness inspections, and training must continue. As senior NCOs, we must have the mission first and our people always. Remember our people.

"This is not the same Air National Guard that we older members remember from 30-plus years ago. And it will not be the same Air National Guard 30 years from now," said Smith who recalled that the Air Guard was

flying F-84 fighters and that he wore a brown uniform when he enlisted in the Ohio Air Guard in 1971.

"These are difficult times. They demand clear heads and hard work," James told Air Guard members.

"Work with me. I will work with you. Together we will assure a future for the Air National Guard with new missions in a new world."

Texas Soldiers help open doors to education for Iraqi children

By Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Texas Army National Guard

AN NASARIYAH, Iraq – Soldiers of the Texas National Guard are involved with a building project here that they hope will open doors to opportunity and prosperity for the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education has partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Iraqi army and Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, to help lay the foundation for the future of the Iraqi children by constructing seven new schools in southern Iraq.

Richard W. Riley, of Plymouth, N.H., a project engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Southern District, explained that the new schools were built to replace the existing school houses in several rural villages in the area that were in very dilapidated conditions.

Riley added that, before the projects broke ground, most of the children had to go to overcrowded schoolhouses that were made of mud and straw to receive their education. He explained that, during the rainy season, the uneven dirt floor would turn into mud and cake onto the children's bare feet even as they tried to learn their lessons.

Although the Corps is involved with several major Public Works projects in Iraq as part of the Iraqi Reconstruction and Relief efforts, Riley said that helping to build schools is one of the most fulfilling things



Photos by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Maj. Brian Stevens (right) of Cedar Park, Texas, who is a civil affairs officer of the 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, discusses the status of a school built for the children living in the village of Al Sulayhat in southern Iraq with the school headmaster (left) and Mr. Adil Abdurrida (center) who served as a translator.

that he has ever been involved with.

"We're trying to make the lives of the Iraqi people a little better ... especially for the children," Riley said.

Maj. Brian Stevens, of Cedar Park, Texas, a civil affairs officer of the 56th BCT, knew he had a daunting challenge ahead of him when he took over the management of the projects that were in various stages of construction from his counterpart with the New Hampshire National Guard's 197th Field Artillery Brigade. He said that, despite the trials of having to overcome language and cultural barriers, the partnership between the USACE and the Iraqi Ministry of Education is a positive thing and the projects he is seeing to completion will have a lasting impact.

"Anytime you open up a school, you are putting the needs of the children up front because it is about them and giving them a great place and a great opportunity to learn and grow and do great things for their country," Stevens said.

Muhammed Baji, a retired Iraqi educator, has taught many lessons in life to his young pupils during his 35 years of teaching. But the one lesson that he has always tried to emphasize to the children that he meets today is that, without a proper education, a person cannot grow and prosper.

"The future is for our children, and not for us," Mr. Baji said. "We want to see them on the right path of life with education."

Adil Abdurrida, who is also a former English teacher, was overcome with emotion seeing a new school houses open its doors for class for the first time in the village

where he grew up.

"I was very happy for our children because I know now that their future will be alright," Abdurrida said.

A father of three, Abdurrida related that Iraqi parents know that education is "so important in their child's life and want their children to have the opportunity to learn the basic skills of reading and writing and arithmetic."

He added that education is needed to help improve Iraqi society and make it stronger, and that will allow their children to be exposed to the world and make Iraq more open.

"Iraq needs doctors, scientist and engineers to help the people of Iraq," Abdurrida said. "So we look to our children because they are the future."



An Iraqi girl waits patiently outside her new schoolhouse that was built in the village of Al Sulayhat in southern Iraq by the Iraqi Ministry of Education with assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region, Southern District, and Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's, 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division.



The newly constructed Al Kenanah Intermediate School, which will serve approximately 150 children from first grade through sixth grade, waits for children to fill its classrooms. The school was built in the village of Al Sulayhat in southern Iraq by the Iraqi Ministry of Education with assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region, Southern District, and Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's, 56th Brigade Combat Team.