

THE O N G U A R D

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Public Affairs



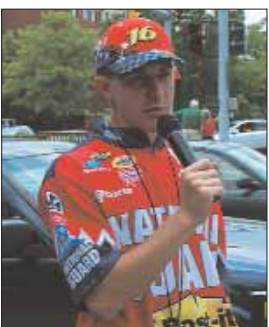
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Racing



Biffle attracting a lot of attention for the National Guard by racking up wins. Page 6.

Recruiting



National Guard Mobile Event Teams hit the road to promote the Guard. Page 16.

Soldiers retrain while in combat zone



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – Indiana is seldom short of 11 Bravos – you know, infantry Soldiers. It is the home, after all, of the Army National Guard's 38th Infantry Division and the 76th Infantry Brigade.

But the 76th did find itself in need of infantry troops – in Afghanistan – earlier this year. The brigade needed people to bolster the security force at Camp Phoenix while it was training members of the new Afghan National Army.

Two of the brigade's enlisted leaders, Command Sgt. Maj. James Gordon and Sgt. Maj. James Martin, solved the problem by making it possible for 40 cooks, mechanics, truck drivers and other Soldiers to be trained as basic infantrymen over there during the final half of May.

Gordon is the enlisted leader for Task Force Phoenix. Martin was the commandant for the course that has been conducted just the one time. It was said to be but the second infantry

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Cutler

Infantry students of the Indiana Army National Guard's 76th Infantry Brigade practice tactical urban movements during training at the Kabul Military Training Center in May.

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Guardsmen tackle Iraqi detainee operations

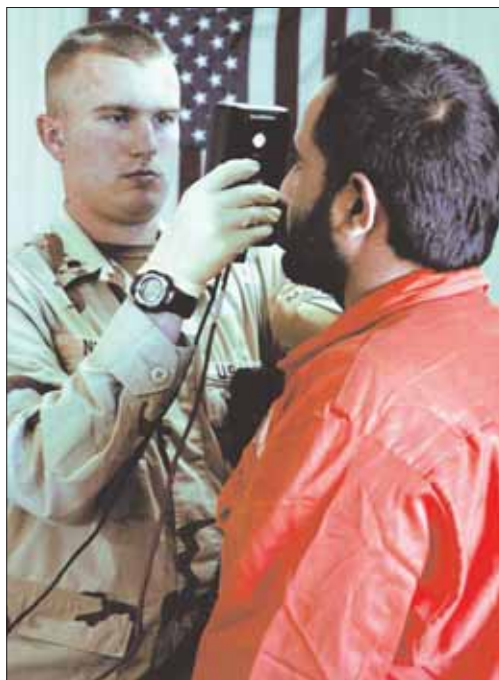
Sgt. 1st CLASS Tom Roberts
National Guard Bureau

BAGHDAD, Iraq – One of the toughest jobs in the Global War on Terror is to determine who the "Bad Guys" are and ensure they can't injure, maim or kill others.

Citizen-Soldiers are handling the day-to-day operations of running detainee detention "It's an absolutely tough mission – 24 hours-a-day; seven days a week," said Maj. Gen. William Brandenburg, deputy commanding general of Iraq Detainee Operations Task Force 134. "Each and every day these great Guardsmen and Reservists execute duties under the most difficult conditions imaginable and do it very, very well."

Task Force 134 is responsible for all detention operations in Iraq to include: interrogations at theater level, running the combined review and release board with the Iraqis, as well as preparing for detainees to appear before the Central Criminal Court of Iraq.

"The mission is being executed by the National Guard and Reserve," Brandenburg said. "The two battalions that run our two main camps do an outstanding job. These Soldiers bring not only their military skills, but also civilian skills as police officers, correctional officers, and a myriad of other



Spc. Matt Nay, of the 42nd MP Company, Massachusetts Army National Guard, 42nd Infantry Division, oversees detainee operations at Forward Operating Base Danger, Tikrit, Iraq. The 42nd Military Police Company provides security for convoy operations, detainee operations, and installation security for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tom Roberts

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About The On Guard

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Preventing terrorism through state partnerships

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

GARMISCH, Germany – Army National Guard Col. David Sheppard has a friend in the right place at the right time. The place is South Africa. The time is now – when the United States European Command is striving to make new inroads into Africa. A good part of that effort depends on the National Guard's State Partnership Program.



Sheppard

African army's war college, over the past two years. They compared notes and swapped stories about their country's military forces while attending the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa., during two weeks in 2003 and again in 2004.

New York formed a state partnership alliance with South Africa last year. The initiation ceremony took place in South Africa in August. Three other partnerships with African countries have been formed between North Dakota and Ghana, Utah and Morocco, and Wyoming and Tunisia. Furthermore, Sheppard said, New York would like to expand its horizons and form a partnership with Botswana, South Africa's neighbor to the north.

"The National Guard Bureau asked us to work with South Africa," Sheppard explained. "We're very excited about this partnership and about expanding into Botswana."

The European Command (EUCOM) is encouraging other states to do the same thing because Africa is its newest frontier. That was the message that Air Force Gen. Charles Wald, the European Command's deputy commander, delivered to National Guard leaders from 23 states during The Adjutants General State Partnership Program 2005 Conference in mid-March.

Africa seemed a long way from the snow-covered Alps that towered over the new Edelweiss Lodge and Resort for U.S. military personnel in southern Germany's Bavarian region where Air Guard Maj. Gen. Craig McKinley, director of the European Command's Reserve Affairs, hosted the conference.

Wald and other European Command staff members, however, insisted that promoting regional stability and civil-military relationships with African nations, which are among EUCOM's 91 countries, is their next major challenge.

"The European Command is looking at the new realities," Wald said. "We cannot allow

"The European Command is looking at the new realities. We cannot allow the African continent to become another Afghanistan. Those countries could become places for terrorists to rest. We don't want that to happen."

– Air Force Gen. Charles Wald

the African continent to become another Afghanistan. Those countries could become places for terrorists to rest. We don't want that to happen."

LTG H Steven Blum addressed that concern in July 2003, a few months after becoming chief of the National Guard Bureau. "I want to assure you that I remain committed to the State Partnership Program," he told Guard leaders from the 54 states and territories. "It is readily apparent with the global war on terrorism that the United States must remain fully engaged in the international community."

Western Europe, where 84 percent of the EUCOM forces are located, has been stable for a long time thanks to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Eastern Europe has grown considerably more stable and secure in the 15 years since the demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, officials pointed out. Ten of those countries have joined NATO since 1999.

So it's time to change.

"We have to transform our operations to the southern and eastern part of our area of responsibility," said Maj. Gen. Jonathan Gratton, EUCOM's director of strategy, policy and assessment. "We have to prepare contingencies for peace as well as for war. That is our main concern."

The National Guard has the people and the experience to support that effort because of its State Partnership Program. It also has the confidence of the European Command's commander. "I want to dot the map of African with SPP," stated Marine Corps Gen. James Jones, the supreme allied commander for Europe and the EUCOM commander. His message resonated throughout the conference even though he could not attend.

Why the State Partnership Program? The National Guard program has proven to be a force for international peace and goodwill since it was established in 1993 to help former Eastern Bloc countries learn about democracy.

It aligns states with nations around the world to help them develop modern military forces, learn the concept of civilian control of the military, and establish civil-military relationships that benefit the public during civil emergencies.

Now, 42 states, two territories and the District of Columbia are partnered with 48 countries in Europe, Asia and Central and South America. Colorado last year formed a partnership with Jordan, the first Middle East country to join the program.

Virtually all of NATO's 10 newest countries had state partnerships before they were admitted to that organization. Leaders of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland pointedly asked nearly half of this country's adjutants general to help them get into NATO during a landmark meeting in Belgium in

March 1996. They became NATO members in 1999.

The partnerships generally start as affiliations between National Guard members and military people from the various countries. But they expand into the civilian sectors. Moldova, for example, is partnered with North Carolina. Last year North Carolina medical personnel vaccinated more than 10,000 Moldovan children for hepatitis.

European Command leaders believe that the State Partnership Program can make the same impact in Africa.

"It is astounding to me how important the program is to my bosses," marveled McKinley, the first National Guard general to direct EUCOM's Reserve Affairs. "This wonderful program that has developed over the last 12 years is ready to move to the next level. That's what this conference has accomplished."

There are concerns.

"The cultural climate in Africa is much different than it was in Eastern Europe in the early '90s. Please help us to know what we have to do," John Finney, Ph.D., said to EUCOM representatives. Finney is Blum's political advisor.

"The cultural differences are indeed significant," McKinley acknowledged. "We will have to study the needs and the best ways to begin the relationships." But he pointed out that what is considered a small effort by people in this country, such as drilling a well for a village, can make a huge impact in Africa.

Furthermore, bridging cultural differences is nothing new to people who have already been involved with State Partnership Programs in such places as Romania, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

New York, for example, has been associated with New Jersey in its partnership with Albania. Now, Empire State Guard officials have formed their own partnership with South Africa - enhanced by the friendship of two colonels.

"We have the opportunity," said McKinley, "to create a whole new history for the State Partnership Program that is vital for the stability of Africa."



Maj. Gen. Craig McKinley, director of U.S. European Command Reserve Affairs, is confident the National Guard's State Partnership Program can play a vital role in making Africa more stable.

Air Guard info ops unit takes up residence on Lackland

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

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Texas Air National Guard is becoming directly involved in the support of the Air Force Information Warfare Center mission with the transformation of a unit into an information operations squadron.

The new 273rd Information Operations Squadron will support the AFIWC mission, which is to "provide the world's best information operations (IO) capabilities and leaders" for the U.S. Air Force. In the words of its mission statement, the AFIWC "creates information operations capabilities to meet requirements for aerospace and joint forces."

Lt. Col. Robert Reville, 92nd Information Warfare Aggressor Squadron commander, said partnering with the 273rd IOS would continue to build upon an already-proven "Total Force approach to the information operations aggressor mission" while expanding the relationship with other sister squadrons in AFIWC.

"In the emerging mission area of IO, we are excited to have the Texas Air National Guard as a mission partner," Col. Reville stated. "Speaking from the aggressors' perspective, every year we have more requests for our services, such as vulnerability assessments and exercise support, than we can fill. With the addition of the Texas Air National Guard, hopefully we can increase our service to the Air Force."

Organizationally, the 273rd IOS will support the active-duty Air Force's 92nd Information Warfare Aggressor Squadron, 346th Test Squadron and 23rd Information Operations Squadron with corresponding Texas Air National Guard flights: a tactics development flight, a testing flight and an operations support flight.

"We will partner with each squadron, becoming the in-place subject matter experts in all three," said Lt. Col. Marie Elliott, 273rd IOS commander. "There is no other Air National Guard squadron like us. We have two active duty flights associated with us that no other Air National Guard unit has.

"We offer highly trained, dedicated personnel who provide mission continuity as the active duty personnel rotate in and out of the squadrons," Col. Elliott continued. "Our personnel bring education and hands-on experience from highly technical positions in the civilian and military world."

Col. Reville added that there was sharing of information and learning on both sides. "Col. Elliott has been able to work directly with the active duty squadrons and has become 'one of the team,' attending briefings, hosting visitors and providing insight on how and where the 273rd will positively impact mission success.

"At the same time, we in the active duty have learned more about how the Air National Guard works and what they bring to the fight," Col. Reville continued. "And I think we taught them about information operations, the mission of the AFIWC and our integration with air and space operations."

AFIWC, which is part of the Air Intelligence Agency on Lackland's Security Hill, and Headquarters Texas Air National Guard, at Camp Mabry, Austin,

Texas, coordinated the establishment of the squadron. To stand up the new unit, the 273rd Engineering Installation Squadron, located at Nederland, Texas, stood down, officially casing its colors March 6. The unit's personnel assets have been relocated to the east side of Lackland, on what was formerly Kelly AFB.

The 273rd EIS was a Geographically Separated Unit of the 147th Fighter Wing on Ellington Field, Houston. The new 273rd IOS is a GSU of the 149th Fighter Wing, located on the other side of the runway on Lackland.

The Texas ANG unit trains F-16 fighter pilots under the Air Education and Training Command.

Some of the former unit's members who possessed communications skills that blend well with the IO mission obtained positions with the new one. Some transferred to other Texas Air National Guard units while members of other Texas ANG units have joined the new unit. The unit is still in the process of filling its 52 authorized positions, which include 13 technician (full-time) positions and 39 traditional positions. In addition, according to Col. Elliott, the unit has some temporary technician positions.

"I am very excited about the new mission, training and challenges that will be offered our personnel," Col. Elliott said. "Our active-duty counterparts are anxious for us to become a vital part of their team."

Maj. Gen. Jerry Ragsdale, Texas ANG commander, said, "The Texas Air National

Guard gains an operational mission by this conversion, and the members will make significant contributions to the mission since they will work side by side with active duty members in a joint environment."

Col. Jim Keffer, 318th Information Operations Group commander, noted that AFIWC already works closely with the Vermont ANG to provide IO training; the Kansas ANG and Washington ANG to perform IO aggressor missions; and the Delaware ANG to conduct network warfare support missions. Although the 273rd IOS will partner with the 92nd IWAS on a smaller scale than both the Kansas and Washington ANG units, the 273rd will also partner with both the 346th Test Squadron and 23rd IOS.

"The IO mission area is growing rapidly as the warfare center works hard to integrate IO into air and space operations," he explained. "One of the primary means of growing this capacity for our warfighters is by teaming with the Air National Guard. Our sister ANG units bring a wealth of expertise that we leverage to advance IO integration.

"The stand up of the 273rd IOS and its association with AFIWC will be a strong addition to the Total Force information operations mission," Col. Keffer said.

The 273rd IOS will have an official flag raising on Lackland later in 2005. At the same time, however, the 273rd EIS will not be forgotten.

"While we are very excited about all the new challenges and opportunities with the new squadron, we are also very concerned about keeping our 273rd EIS history alive," Col. Elliott said. "Our new patch, which will be designed by 273rd IOS members, will reflect our honorable history and past."



National Guard marksmanship experts return from Iraq duty

By Lt. Col. Sandra Lane
Arkansas National Guard

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, Ark.—A team of six from the National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit is back from Iraq.

At the urgent request of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division, the instructor team deployed early in January for a month-long course of intense sniper instruction for active duty Soldiers already stationed in Iraq.

The trainers picked up an additional three instructors after they arrived in Iraq.

These extra three were active duty Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry and the 82nd Airborne. By the end of their tour, 49 of the 57 Soldiers who began the sniper training were fully qualified B4 Snipers — an additional skill identifier for the Army.

Getting the training accomplished was a

challenge, especially since the ranges were still under construction when the team arrived in Iraq. That's nothing new for the Guard trainers, according to Maj. Richard Lipe, operations officer for the Marksmanship Training Unit.

"Most every time we go somewhere, we end up having to modify ranges or get the ranges to a standard that we can satisfy the POI (Program of Instruction)," Lipe said.

Additional challenges included the weather and variable equipment among the students.

The team lost some instruction time because of gusting winds and rain, but their patience paid off. They waited for better weather and made optimal use of their limited ammunition. Every student got a chance to hit his target.

The instructors individualized the training to correspond to the weapon system

employed by each student.

By the end of the course, the Soldiers had expanded their marksmanship skills to include weapon maintenance, range estimation, ballistics and stalking and concealment — all very necessary components in the art and science of stalking and shooting an enemy.

The Marksmanship Training Unit is a branch of the Army and Air National Guard with a dual mission of providing small arms training and conducting marksmanship training events.

Requests for weapons instruction have virtually exploded in the past year or two, and the unit provided over 400 percent more training in 2004 than in 2003.

All Marksmanship Training Unit courses are open to members of any U.S. service. The courses are offered either on site at Camp Robinson or by a mobile training team such as the one that just returned.

The Soldiers ...

Members of the Iraq mission included Lipe and Sgt. 1st Class Bret Boatright, noncommissioned officer in charge, both with the Marksmanship Training Unit; Staff Sgt. Christopher Chappell, Connecticut Army National Guard; Staff Sgt. Lawrence Davis from the Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga.; Sgt. Randy Schnell, Texas Army National Guard; and Sgt. Nathan Vail, Oklahoma National Guard.

Staff Sgt. Benjamen McKinny and Sgt. Mathew Atkison, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; and Sgt. Bryan Jaragoski, 82nd Airborne, Fort Bragg, N.C., rounded out the instructional staff during this sniper course.

Understanding separation and reunions

Col. Anthony E. Baker, Sr.

National Guard Bureau

Since the events of Sept. 11 and onset of the global war on terror, National Guard families are experiencing the stress associated with deployments. When families are separated for any length of time, they experience stress. It does not matter if the separation was planned well in advance or if it happened suddenly, stress is real and each family member will respond differently.

In addition to experiencing the effects of the initial deployment, families also need to prepare for reuniting with their service member. The emotional effects of separation and reunion are felt by everyone; children, spouses, service members, extended family members, and friends. It is often an emotional roller coaster ride that may seem unending, but there are ways families and service members can relieve some of the tension associated with separation and reunion.

Families should not be afraid to discuss their feelings concerning a particular separation and should be honest about their feelings. For example, being away from one another and not being able to communicate face to face daily, really creates anxiety for families. Possible solutions to help combat this include: planning personal time away from the children and spending that time together; planning family outings with the children; practice writing letters and sending them through the mail before the separation; making good faith efforts to call one another daily; and sharing your feelings when the plan works or does not work. Expectations are another stressor for families and should be discussed before the separation phase to lessen the worry.

Expectations can sometimes be very diffi-

cult to identify because they were a normal part of the daily life of the family. For example, one spouse serves as the budgetary manager ensuring the bills are paid in a timely manner, while the other spouse never worries about the finances. Separation enters the family norm and questions rise. Will my spouse pay the bills on time? Can I pay the bills like he or she did? These are real questions and expectations for both parties and issues that must be dealt with. Turning the finances over can create anxiety for both parties because one never had to worry about the finances and the other had a system for paying bills, and felt confident that no bill went unpaid. Now it is time to communicate and reassure one another that the transition is going to be all right. It may take a systematic approach of laying out a complete plan, talking through the concerns and processes, or a combination of both. Whatever the solution, there must be reassurance from both parties that everything will be okay with constant support and communication.

Always be realistic about feelings and expectations keeping in mind that people will change as they grow and experience different events in their lives. If the problems are such that they may seem insurmountable, then seek professional help. Success totally depends on how well the parties are willing to work together, communicate, and inform one another on true feelings and expectations.

Reunions, while often joyful, can also be quite stressful due to high emotions stemming from many unanswered questions for spouses, service members, children, extended family, and significant others. The spouse may wonder: What is my spouse like? Have I done well with the finances? Did I do a

good job with the children? Can we still get along like we use to? What will our love life be like? The service member may wonder: How will my children see me and will they know me? Did everything go as planned while I was gone? Will my family be happy to see me? Will I have purpose when I get back?

The children may wonder: Does my mom or dad still love me? How long will my mom or dad stay? What are the new rules? What will my mom or dad think about how I did in school? Remember, all these questions are normal and it will take some time to answer, so they must be worked through realistically and honestly. The reunion phase requires a plan somewhat similar to that of the separation phase with just a little more flexibility.

Couples should spend quality time together without friends and kids to allow time to learn each other all over again. During separation, they have grown in many different ways, and expectations may not be the same.

They should be patient with one another and adjust to things gradually. They need to communicate their feelings and expectations as to how they see their new worlds. This is a gradual process and does require real work on everyone's part. Here are a few suggestions: try to avoid rigid schedules; understand each other's discomfort areas, such as communication, sex, and sleeping and eating irregularities; allow time for each partner to readjust and do not expect too much too soon too fast; and expect unusual feelings such as: I'm not needed any more, are they successful without me or does he/she know how we had to change to make this work while he/she was gone. Finally, take advantage of sources of assistance in rebuilding the family network.

Resources

National Guard Family Assistance Centers (FACs) are geographically dispersed across the nation providing information, referral, and outreach services for military ID cards, TRICARE, financial and legal services, deployment support, crisis intervention, veteran service and volunteer organization support for families and service members regardless of service component. For more information visit www.guardfamily.org or call 1-888-777-7731.

National Guard State Family Program Directors provide connectivity to variety of services that exist at the national, state, local, and community levels. For more information visit www.guardfamily.org or call 1-888-777-7731.

Military One Source: An encompassing service for families and service members with 24/7 availability. The service is free to all service members and their families funded by the Department of Defense. For more information about Military One Source visit their [web site](http://www.militaryonesource.com) www.militaryonesource.com; or call them at any of the following numbers; state side 1-800-342-9647; Overseas 800-3429-6477; collect from outside the US 1-484-530-5908; and En Espanola, llama al 1-877-888-0727.

Other sources of assistance include: Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Service Organizations, Red Cross, state and local government agencies, and private agencies listed on web sites, and local telephone directories.

Florida Citizen-Soldier named DoD's print journalist of the year

On Guard Staff Report

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Florida Army National Guard Soldier currently serving in Iraq has recently been honored as the best print journalist in the Department of Defense for this year.

Sgt. Lorie Jewell has also received one of the Army's top journalism awards. She returned to this country for 10 days in late May to receive her awards.

Jewell got the Thomas Jefferson Award as the top print journalist in the Department of Defense and the Paul D. Savanuck Print Journalist of the Year Award from the Department of the Army. She was also presented the Meritorious Service Medal.

"There are so many people who deserve these awards. I'm happy they selected me," said Jewell who has extensive civilian newspaper experience. She gave credit to all of the Soldiers who willingly opened up and shared their personal stories with her.

Jewell is serving with the 107th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment which is deployed as part of Multi-National Security Transition

Command - Iraq. She covers the Iraqi security forces that are being trained to provide law enforcement in their country.

"I like the mission of giving the country back to the citizens," Jewell explained. "I like helping to show that history is being made with the rebuilding of Iraq. It gives you a sense of hope that they'll take back their country and that we'll be able to get out of there."

Jewell is a Michigan native who served as a military journalist in the active Army from 1982-86. She joined the Florida Army Guard in December 2002, and her unit was mobilized a week later. She has been a daily newspaper reporter for the Tampa Tribune since August 1990.

She acknowledged that her newspaper background has helped her perform her Army job. "I'm good on deadlines, and I know a story when I see one," she said.

Jewell's 19-year-old son, Anthony Russell, is an Army Reserve truck driver who is serving in Kuwait. Jewell also has a daughter, Jill, who has finished her junior year in high school in Florida.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Katherine Perez

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston presents Florida Army National Guard Sgt. Lorie Jewell her coin after she received the Army's Paul D. Savanuck Print Journalist of the Year Award and a Meritorious Service Medal at the Pentagon

On the road to stability

Afghan National Army learns from NCOs

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

CAMP VICTORY, Afghanistan – Imagine a Soldier getting paid and then disappearing for a month or so because he has to cross his country on his own to take the money to his family. Is he AWOL? Has he deserted? Will he be back?

Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Kelly gets to wrestle with questions like that fairly often in western Afghanistan while serving with and mentoring newly minted Soldiers in the Afghan National Army.

This personnel NCO is dealing firsthand with some of the growing pains that countries experience while forming new governments and organizing new military forces. The United States experienced similar growing pains a couple of centuries ago. The Afghan National Army is experiencing them now while striving to help take control of their country from the Taliban during the Global War on Terrorism.

"Overall, they're pretty good Soldiers. They have issues like our Soldiers have. It's just that resolving them is more complex," said Kelly, a Florida Army Guard Soldier who has spent nearly a year on Operation Enduring Freedom duty with the Army Guard's 76th Brigade Combat Team from Indiana.

"Many of them really do want to serve their country," Kelly explained. "But this also gives them a stable income for their families."

And, no, the Afghan Soldiers do not have direct deposit bank accounts. The pay has to be delivered in person. Many of them come from the Kabul area, in the eastern

part of the country, and they have to get to their homes and back on their own, Kelly said.

The Guard Soldiers from Indiana - and South Carolina, Alabama, Montana, Oregon and Texas - have gotten a lot of attention while training members of the Afghan National Army this year at Camp Phoenix and at a former Russian military training center near Kabul, the Afghan capital.

About 125 of them, including Kelly, however, are members of the 207th Regional Corps Assistance Group that is commanded by Col. Randall Smith and that has worked with more than 2,200 of the newly trained Afghan Soldiers in their country's western desert.

Their mission is to provide security and stability in the provinces of Herat, Farah, Badghis and Ghownr and to help give a new Afghan government the chance to take root.

"The warlords made money by setting up checkpoints and taxing vehicles and commerce coming through here. We're a threat to them," Smith told LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and other Washington dignitaries who recently visited Camp Victory. One of them was Mary Beth Long, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics.

There were 2,227 Afghan Soldiers in the 207th Zafar Corps commanded by Maj. Gen. Abdul Wazilladah, but 477 were listed as absent without leave on that mid-June day, the Blum party was told.

"They're not necessarily AWOL," Smith explained. "We believe they're caught up in trying to get money to their families and then getting back."



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, met officers in the Afghan National Army's 207th Zafar Corps while visiting Camp Victory in western Afghanistan in mid-June.

The American Soldiers have faced many challenges since late last summer, said Kelly, even though that region has been fairly quiet while they have been there. -- They have built Camp Victory and helped organize the Afghan force a year earlier than originally expected.

"Camp Victory was dust when we got here 10 months ago. Then it came to life," said Kelly of the modern military camp located about 40 miles from Iran.

-- They have introduced the concept of a noncommissioned officer corps to the Afghans whose military background was structured on officers and privates. That means they had little or no idea that an enlisted Soldier like Kelly could be given any significant responsibilities.

"Most of the officers are former militia

officers. They have a military background and an idea of what the military is," Kelly said. "We've helped them understand during this last year the importance of the individual Soldier and the importance of an NCO."

"Not a lot of the Soldiers have military backgrounds, but many of them are pretty sharp," he added.

-- The American Guard Soldiers have also mourned four of their own who were killed when their vehicle struck a mine in Kabul late last March.

Overall, serving in Afghanistan has been a satisfying experience, Kelly said.

"These people have a different way to do business," he said. "We're just trying to help them learn how to do their business better."

Tennessee Guardsman first to be awarded Combat Action Badge

By Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Tennessee National Guardsman was among the first to receive the Army's newest combat badge during a ceremony at the Pentagon on June 26.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston pinned Tennessee Army National Guard Sgt. Timothy Gustafson with the Combat Action Badge making him the first Guard Soldier to receive the award.

"It's an honor to accept this award on behalf of my fellow National Guard Soldiers who are in harm's way and still fighting," said Gustafson who lost his right leg beneath the knee on Jan. 24 after a road-side bomb detonated. "It's somewhat of a burden that I'm not there with them right now."

Gustafson was serving in Iraq with his unit, the

1st Battalion, 278th Field Artillery, when his convoy came under attack.

The badge presented to Gustafson and four others during the ceremony was designed to recognize all Soldiers who are in combat, not just combat arms personnel.

"The badge may be awarded to any Soldier, branch and military occupational specialty immaterial, performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement," states in Army regulations.

For more information on the Combat Action Badge, see the soon-to-be-operational CAB Web site at <http://www.army.mil/symbols/combat-badges>.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Carmen L. Burgess

(Left) Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston pins the Combat Action Badge on Sgt. Timothy Gustafson during a ceremony at the Pentagon June 29.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Larry Si

(Above) Gustafson completed the five-mile "Race For Hope and Possibility," with wife, Janice (left) and mother-in-law, Mary Davenport.

With Biffle, National Guard getting a lot of attention

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.—Greg Biffle was not one bit bashful about admitting that he likes all of the attention; that he was enjoying the limelight as the new leader of the Nextel Cup standings going into the Fourth of July weekend.

He was getting lots of personal and national media attention as - as the No. 1 driver in NASCAR's No. 1 division that millions of Americans follow as closely for 10 months every year as people follow the National Football League's Lions and Packers and Bears.

He was the only driver with five victories during the Nextel Cup season's first 16 races going into the 47th Pepsi 400 on the night of July 2 at Daytona International Speedway, the world's most famous stock car track.

Biffle had grabbed the lead in the point standings for the first time in his career after finishing 14th the previous Sunday. Jimmie Johnson, who had led the pack since March, finished 36th and fell to second, just 22 points behind the new leader.

And Biffle maintained this was the right time to be representing the National Guard. "Especially with what our country has gone through since 9-11, it's bigger to me to have that sponsor right now," he said.

The Pepsi 400 is the big mid-season race, NASCAR's equivalent to Major League Baseball's All-Star Game. A couple of hundred thousand people watched it in person. Millions more watched it on TV. Biffle, in the National Guard car, was one of the drivers getting lots of attention.

It was not a good night. After starting the rain-delayed, 400-mile race in 18th, Biffle got snarled up with Michael Waltrip on the 73rd lap. He finished 36th and dropped back to the second spot that he has held most of the year. But success breeds confidence, and Biffle was certain he would regain the lead, perhaps the following Sunday in Chicago. He was still one of the season's stars.

"The fan support has been incredible. It has quadrupled since last year," he told reporters two days before the Daytona race. "It's unbelievable how they accept and embrace a guy that's having success. I'm not like Jeff Gordon or (Dale) Earnhardt Jr. where I can't walk down street yet. But we'll see."

By then, when the public saw Greg Biffle, they saw NATIONAL GUARD.

Every time the Guard car was seen on television, every time Biffle signed an autograph or stood before a camera, every time he was photographed in a shower of champagne in victory lane, Americans saw NATIONAL GUARD - on the car's hood, on Biffle's cap and collar, and in big white letters across the front of his red, white and blue racing suit.

Biffle, his crew chief Doug Richert, and the 20 or so crew members who wear their National Guard suits for every Nextel Cup race have become a sort of cross-country promotional force. The team has won races this year in California, Texas, South Carolina, Delaware and Michigan. That's called exposure.

The public can expect to see a lot more of that name because Biffle and his team are definitely in the hunt for this year's Nextel Cup championship. Who could ask for anything more? Certainly not the National Guard during its third full season as a major sponsor for a NASCAR team. It was a marketing dream for the people who are anxious to keep the National Guard in the minds of Americans during the Global War on Terrorism.

"It's the third-largest lead generation tool [for potential recruits] that we have," said Sgt. 1st Class John Metzler, a marketing NCO for the Army National Guard's Strength Maintenance Division. "Everybody wants to interview Biffle. It definitely highlights the Guard in a scene where we've never been seen before.

"NASCAR has 75 million fans. A third of them are age 18-34, and 43 percent of them are women," Metzler pointed out, citing NASCAR statistics. "When you look at that market share, it's a great demographic for us. And the NASCAR crowd is very patriotic."

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, maintains that the Guard is stronger now than it has ever been in its 368-year history because of the combat seasoning its members have gained in Afghanistan and Iraq and because of its high retention rate.

The Army Guard has 332,000 Soldiers, 95 percent of its authorized strength. "That's a solid A. If you were going to take a test tomorrow and you knew you would score a 95, would you take it? Of course you would," Blum has told Guard men and women in this country and overseas.

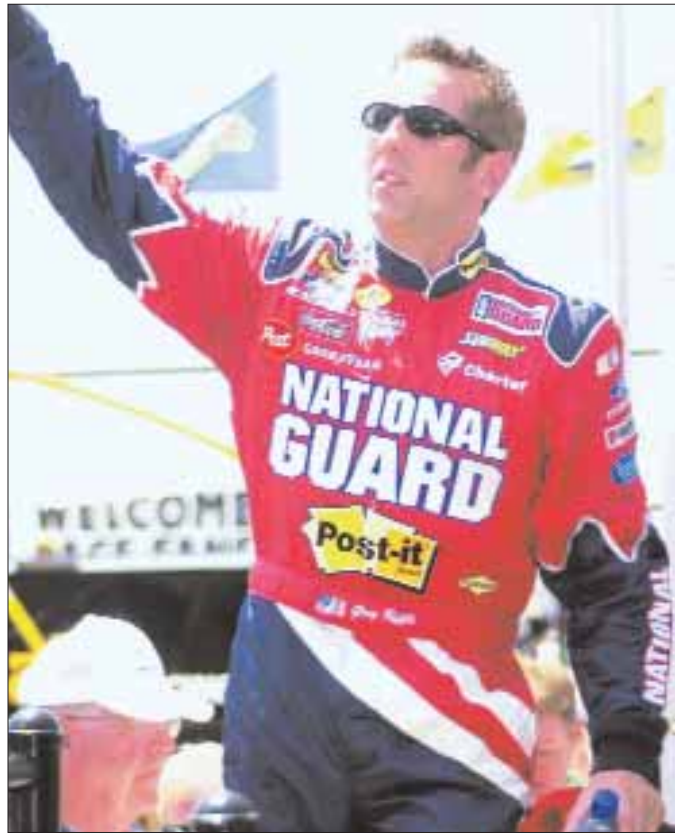
Blum is also convinced that the Army Guard will gain the 18,000 people required to get back to 100 percent strength. Greg Biffle wants to help because the National Guard has become as much a cause as it is a sponsor.

"I was excited," said Biffle about learning that the Guard would become one of his team's major sponsors before the 2004 season. "I knew a fair amount about the Guard because I have friends who are in the Guard. But I've certainly learned a lot. I'm able to talk with people about what I've learned.

Although he has never served in the military, the 35-year-old Biffle has become a larger-than-life spokesman and ambassador for the National Guard and for other men and women who are serving their country in uniform - in this country and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The Fourth of July is a huge holiday. Hopefully, everybody will be proudly displaying their American flags and supporting our country and doing all those things that we need to do to support all of our troops right now - here and everywhere around globe where they're serving."

He is a quiet, introspective man who can change from his racing face to his public race as quickly as a Soldier can fire a three-round burst. He is a star without attitude. He rarely turns down a request for an interview. He never brushes off the countless fans that thrust photographs, caps, model cars and



Photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard car driver Greg Biffle: "Especially with what our country has gone through since 9-11, it's bigger to me to have that sponsor right now."

programs at him for his autograph.

And Biffle appreciates what National Guard troops are doing for this country.

He taped a picture of Army Guard Spc. Ryan Doltz, from Mine Hill, N.J., to his car's roll bar when he raced at Dover, Del., on June 5, one year to the day after Doltz was killed in action in Iraq. Then, after winning that race, Biffle pledged to give the "Monster Mile" trophy to Tennessee Army Guard Sgt. Tim Gustafson who Biffle met before the race. Gustafson had lost the lower part of his right leg in Iraq on Jan. 24, the victim of an improvised explosive device.

"I can't wait to celebrate with him," Biffle said.

"I feel like I'm half a Guard guy," he told media people who swarmed to him in Daytona. "I haven't been through boot camp, and I haven't been on the front line or anything like that. I certainly don't want to consider myself knowledgeable and that I can do what those guys do. But I feel like I'm a little part of the program, doing what I do.

"We need to build awareness for the National Guard," Biffle added. "The percentage of our troops who are Guardsmen and who are serving right now is unbelievable. Someday, hopefully I'll get a chance to visit them overseas.

He appreciates all of the attention he is getting from Guard troops.

"There are lots of letters," Biffle said. "There are so many Soldiers who stay up all night to watch the race or do whatever they can do to catch it on the Armed Forces Network. It's overwhelming the amount of support that they give our team," he added.

At mid-season, Biffle had a solid shot to reward that support with a championship. That requires getting into and then winning the "Chase for the NASCAR Nextel Cup." That is NASCAR's World Series. It is run during the final 10 races of the season. The top 10 drivers or all of those who are within 400 points of the leader after 26 races make the Chase.

The Pepsi 400 started the 10-race countdown to the Chase. After finishing 17th last year, Biffle has been among the top five drivers since the second week of this season, when he won the Auto Club 500 in California. He knows that making the Chase and winning the championship would generate a lot more attention. He also knows it would give Guard members who are serving around the world one more thing to write home about.



A member of the National Guard car pit crew sprints back to the wall after changing a tire during a NASCAR Nextel Cup race. Precision work on pit road has helped make this one of the dominant teams during the first half of the season.

FROM PAGE 1

Soldiers

qualification course taught in a combat zone. The only other one was reportedly conducted during World War II.

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, directed that Gordon and Martin be given Army Commendation Medals for their ingenuity while he was visiting the Indiana Guard Soldiers at Camp Phoenix, near the Afghan capital of Kabul, in mid-June.

Blum personally pinned the decoration on Gordon during a midday town meeting. Martin was busy elsewhere when the Guard Bureau chief said "this is the kind of thinking we need, and it happened at the sergeants' major level. It didn't have to go to the highest levels of the Army."

Cross training has become fairly common for Army Guard Soldiers during the Global War on Terrorism. Many artillery Soldiers have been retrained as military police and sent to such places as Iraq, Germany and Hawaii because there is a much greater need for military police these days than there is for artillerymen.

Gordon and Martin took that philosophy a step further by devising a system to certify other members of the 1st

Battalion, 151st Infantry, the brigade's security forces outfit, as infantrymen. It became their secondary military occupational specialty.

The sergeants major tapped into the resources of the 138th Regional Training Institute, which is accredited to instruct infantry Soldiers, back at Camp Atterbury in Indiana to make it happen. They tasked instructors from Indiana and Texas and California who were already in Afghanistan to conduct the training.

They followed the institute's program of instruction to train the Soldiers in marksmanship with many different weapons, including AK-47s and Russian-made machineguns, to read military maps and to do land navigation, among other things, explained Gordon.

The training took place at Camp Phoenix and the Kabul Military Training Center, the former Russian training center where the Afghan troops are now being trained, during two long weeks. The duty days began at 5 in the morning and ended at 8 or 9 at night, Gordon added.

"The Soldiers needed to be certified in 11 Bravo skills to perform base security operations," Gordon said. "Forty-six people started the program. Forty graduated two days before Memorial Day."



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, pins an Army Commendation Medal on Command Sgt. Maj. James Gordon at Camp Phoenix in Afghanistan in mid-June. Gordon and Sgt. Maj. James Martin instituted a program for turning Army Guard cooks, mechanics and other Soldiers into infantry troops during their Operation Enduring Freedom deployment.

The training apparently took, according to one of Gordon's reports. "A lot of those Soldiers have enjoyed

being 11Bs while deployed," he stated, "and have decided to be 11Bs when they get back to their home units."

Combat engineers comb streets of Iraq

By Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Texas Army National Guard

TIKRIT, Iraq – The improvised explosive device, or IED, is the greatest casualty producer in Iraq, and the three-letter acronym has found its place in the military vocabulary.

Department of Defense statistics show that IEDs have killed almost 20 percent of service members killed in Iraq and wounded many more. The official figure does not show the numbers of innocent civilians who were killed or wounded by these crude devices.

To help combat the problem, specially trained military combat engineers and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams have joined forces to hunt and remove the IEDs that are hidden in tons of trash and debris that litter Iraq's highways and roads.

The job is very tedious and dangerous as the teams employ their high-tech equipment to scour the endless miles of roadway looking for any telltale signs that may reveal the location of the low-tech threat. Many compare the daunting tasks to looking for a needle in a haystack.

To help the Soldiers in their search, IED hunters use their keen eyesight and experience to spot an IED and then verify its exact location by using specially designed armored vehicles before calling in the EOD team to destroy it.

The Soldiers hope that their strong commitment to their work and attention to detail will ultimately help save other Soldiers and innocent civilian lives.

Pfc. Justin L. Buxbaum, of South Portland, Maine, and a combat engineer of Company B, 467th Engineer Battalion, U.S. Army



Photos by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

A rather odd-looking South African-built Meerkat belonging to the Kansas Army National Guard's 891st Engineer Battalion sweeps a road in central Iraq for IEDs during a random patrol. The vehicle is specially designed to locate the crude threats that may be hidden in the road or in trash that litters the highways.

Reserves, said he knew very little about IEDs before he was deployed to Iraq with his unit.

Now the private, who has been in the service for only six months, finds himself face to face with the deadly device as he drives a heavily armored truck called the Buffalo to a suspected IED location. He goes there to make visual identification of an IED before calling in the EOD team.

Buxbaum describes driving the Buffalo as like driving a big bus. The vehicle has an armored V-shaped hull undercarriage

designed to deflect the explosion and shrapnel from an IED outward, away from the crew.

The private said he believes in the reliability of the Buffalo after having seen first hand the amount of punishment it can take, but he still respects the IEDs.

"You are always going to be scared ... and I have been," Buxbaum said. "But I have a lot of faith in my equipment and training."

He added that the work is slow and meticulous. He and his crew never lose focus every

day they clear the routes because they have people's lives to think about and can't afford any doubts in what they are doing.

"It is very rewarding feeling knowing that the job that we perform may save someone's life so that they can go back home to their families."

Spec. Randall S. Bollinger, of Clarksville, Ind., also a combat engineer of the 467th Engineer Battalion, is on the security team that travels ahead of the lumbering Buffalo in more mobile armored HMMWVs to look for the IEDs.

Bollinger emphasized that this is a type of job in which everyone has to pay attention to detail and be very aware of the environment to know what is out of place.

The specialist said the people who are placing the IEDs are very insensitive because they endanger everyone's lives with their indiscriminate attacks. But helping to find an IED before it can do any harm gives him and his team members a sense of satisfaction.

"I think we are doing something good for our Soldiers and the public when we locate and remove the IEDs – especially for the children," Bollinger said.

No one appreciates the job that the engineers do more than Staff Sgt. Arthur M. Ruiz, of Leander, Texas, a Texas National Guardsman in the 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division. He has traveled thousands of miles on the main supply routes with his security team protecting supply convoys.

Ruiz said that it makes him feel good knowing engineers are out there trying to find IEDs and that, even if they find only one, that is one less that they will have to come into contact with during their journey.

"I respect the combat engineers and the EOD teams for the dangerous job that they do," Ruiz said. "They put their life on the line to protect ours."



Soldiers compare trying to find an IED, which may be hidden in the piles of trash that litter Iraq's roads, to looking for a needle in a haystack.

Iraq for improvised explosive devices



(Above) During a patrol in central Iraq, an IED hunting team burns a tire that could be used to hide an IED along side of a highway.



A member of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit assigned to Explosive Ordnance Team 8 prepares a Talon II remote-controlled robot to go down range and investigate a possible IED on the shoulder of a busy highway in southern Iraq.



A thunderous blast signals the destruction of an IED made of two 122 mm artillery rounds hidden in a burlap bag and placed on the shoulder of a busy highway in southern Iraq.



Black plumes of smoke billow into the sky after the explosion.

A strong force starts with support at home

By Sgt. 1st Class Tom Roberts
National Guard Bureau

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq – Guardsmen make many sacrifices when they deploy and so do their families, employers and communities during their absence.

For Guardsmen to do their jobs, they need support back home.

Newly weds Sgt. Wendy Sherrill and her husband Spc. James Sherrill of the 1035th General Support Maintenance Company currently serving here know first hand how important that support can be.

"I'm the first employee to be mobilized from the company and they send care packages and e-mails," said Wendy, who is a property manager with Equity Management in Dallas. "It's a really big deal for them to help."

Her company went beyond just sending care packages and keeping in touch. They helped her financially as well.

"They give out bonuses to employees that work through the sales process and they gave me a bonus on the property I manage that was being sold, just like I was working there," she said. "They are great to me."

James works for the TACOM Material Fielding Team in Dallas and says his employer has been supportive as well since "they are all former military, so they understand."

Other members of the 1035th also have

plenty of support from families and employers back home in Missouri and Texas. One such family is the wife and children of Sgt. 1st Class Hector Vazquez of Greenwood, Mo.

His wife's employer provides supplies for personal care and a very special memento for each soldier, a clear tube filled with Missouri soil that says "a piece of home." All the employees worked on weekends to produce one for each deployed Soldier to have a little bit of Missouri with them at all times.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has become inextricably linked to a strong national defense. The organization was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment.

Today ESGR operates through a network of more than 4,500 volunteers throughout 55 committees located in each state, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Europe.

Spc. James Sherrill, 1035th Maintenance Company, works for the TACOM material fielding team in Dallas and says they have been great because "they are all ex-military, and they understand."



FROM PAGE 1

Detainees

skills to the operations."

Some of the Soldiers working to make that mission a success are field artillery members from the Michigan and Kentucky Army National Guard.

The 119th Field Artillery from Michigan and the 623rd Field Artillery from Kentucky retrained as Military Police to handle the mission which differs greatly from the units' normal combat operations.

"This is truly a new type of operation for us ... using interpersonal and communication skills to deal with detainees has been a new process when compared to calling in fire for artillery," said 119th Field Artillery 1st Sgt. Jody Errington. "The individual soldiers have taken the mission at hand and adapted from the combat skill set used as artillerymen and have transformed into an effective MP unit."

Throughout Iraq, thousands of military police are working around the clock to conduct detainee operations missions. They are dealing with difficult issues and at the same time upholding the highest values and levels of integrity and honor while ensuring the safety of their fellow Soldiers as well as the United States.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Tom Roberts

The 119th Field Artillery started an intramural boxing program between units. They built the ring, the ropes, and the turnbuckles and have had a great response from other the units supporting the boxing program which build esprit-de-corp and helps maintain unit morale.

'Rocking for the Kids' showcases Guard, raises money

Spc. Benjamin Cossel

Ohio National Guard

CUYAHOGO FALLS, Ohio – During his travels around the world talking with Soldiers, LTG Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard, has often personally charged each and every soldier with the task of recruiting.

Answering the Chief's challenge, Soldiers of the Ohio Army National Guard worked with residents here showcasing the National Guard, helping to raise money for local schools during the "Rocking for the Kids/Troops" celebration in June.

As events promoter Bob Early explained, "This was sort of a two prong attack. We have out here many of the schools from the community with fund raising booths to help pay for sports, and other extra-curricular activities and we have Soldiers from local units with rock climbing booths, weapons displays and the National Guard Racing car – it's a pretty full event."

The two-day celebration, which featured a night of music and fun geared more towards adults followed with the children's events the next day, came about when



Photos by Spc. Benjamin Cossel

Staff Sgt. James Collins with the 19th Special Forces Group talks with a resident of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio during the "Rocking for the Kids/Troops" celebration, June 5

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Recruiting Command's, Staff Sgt. David Sollberger got in contact with Early.

"David [Sollberger] called me up one day, early in the planning phases, and asked me how we could make, what was initially an event to raise money for the kids, have a broader appeal. I thought to myself, what a great way to honor and support our local troops then by bringing them together and so here we are...Rocking for the Kids and Troops!" chuckled Early.

"This is how we are supposed to work," said Sollberger. "I've had 100 percent support from community leaders as well as the civilians I've worked with helping to bring this together. The synergy between the civilian side of the house and the military side of the house has just been amazing. This area really supports its troops."

In the opinion of Sollberger, events such as the "Rocking for the Kids/Troops" help both in recruiting as well as forming a solid bond between the community and the Soldiers who call it home.

"The community coming together with its local Soldiers to recognize them while we get to come out and offer support to the kids shows their appreciation of us and our dedication to the community, forging bonds that are critical in these times of deployments. It also allows us to show a different side of the Guard, a fun side, and that helps us generate recruiting leads."

Walking around the event area, Citizen-Soldiers of HHC, 1-107th Armor Regiment (Cavalry) along with members of the 1484th Transportation Company, took every opportunity to stop and talk to anyone who might have questions about the National Guard. In addition to free-form public engagement, Soldiers of both companies manned a rock climbing wall that was the delight of many in attendance.

Taking a break from manning the rock climbing booth, Columbia Station, Ohio resident Spc. Moses Bigler noted

that working the festival was a nice change of pace from a normal drill weekend.

"I've spent many drill weekends working on vehicles, so this is a good change for sure," explained Bigler.

Bigler went on to reflect, "This is a great opportunity to really show the community that we are working with them."

Past the karaoke booth adjacent to the rock climbing experience set an impressive display manned by Operators of the 19th Special Forces (SF) Group.

"And here we have a Russian variant Dragonav Sniper Rifle system," said Staff Sgt. James Collins, an SF team member to a wide-eyed group. "Often times Special Forces finds itself working with locals of an area, so it's vital we know a vast array of weapons systems."

Collins worked his way through the weapons display, answering questions as they came, explaining what each piece of equipment is for.

"Well, we're always looking to recruit people into the Special Forces community," he says, "but we're basically just out here to try and do what we can to help recruiting in general."

Standing at the entrance to the orchestra pit, "Paws and Maws" booster club member, assistant events coordinator, and Silver Lake Country Club manager Doug Koepnick is a man of many hats. The sun began to trace long shadows on the ground as the days events took on a more leisurely pace with the encroaching night.

"I've been out here since about five this morning, helping to get things ready," Koepnick said.

The tired from a long day wore on Koepnick like a suit, but his eyes lit up when he talks about the success of the day.

"I'm really impressed with the turnout. This community has so much spirit," he said. "This just couldn't have come together better."



Soldiers of both HHC, 1st of the 107th Armor Regiment (Cavalry) and the 1484th Transportation Company work a rock climbing booth during a weekend festival.

Deployed training takes civil engineers to Germany

by Master Sgt. John Morrissey

131st Civil Engineering Squadron

LAMBERT AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, ST. LOUIS – Thirty Air National Guard civil engineers deployed to Spangdahlem AB, Germany to provide critical manpower support to the over tasked 52d Civil Engineer Squadron, an active duty USAF unit, in May.

The guardsmen from the 131st Civil Engineer Squadron, Missouri Air National Guard, helped the 52nd CES complete several base improvement projects that have kept the Spangdahlem-based Civil Engineers behind schedule for several months. Although structural and heavy equipment work at Spangdahlem AB dominated the workload, The Guardsmen also provided readiness training for several units, helped in a wing contingency exercise, and responded to real-world emergencies.

"All deployed troops pitched in wherever they were needed to get the jobs accomplished," said Capt. Darrell Fraser, a civil engineer officer in the 131st CES and the project officer for the deployment.

The 131st CES team was comprised of representatives from each craft-(Structural, HVAC, Utilities, Electrical, Power Production, Heavy Equipment, Operations, and Engineering) as well as readiness and fire protection.

Fraser considered the training a career broadening success. "All craftsmen got on-the-job training in various CE career fields," he said.

The highlight of the visit was to demolish an old concrete loading dock that was used to load Army tanks and other heavy equipment onto trucks for transport elsewhere. (It took a 12-man team six days to demolish and



Photos courtesy of 131st Civil Engineers

The deputy base civil engineer at Spangdahlem Air Base was "thrilled" that the 131st Civil Engineers demolished an old concrete loading dock and completed other much needed projects.

remove the dock, backfill and grade over. Upon completion, the deputy base civil engineer, said it was one of her pet peeves and an eyesore. She's thrilled that it's gone.

131st CES troops proved that through a combination of modern machinery and "good old fashioned teamwork," the loading

dock and any project can be completed.

The Readiness shop provided much-needed Nuclear Biological Chemical & Conventional Defense training and assistance not only to troops at Spangdahlem AFB, but also to personnel assigned to Friedburg Ain, Wiesbaden and Bitburg Air Force facilities. The readiness training was so good that the "classroom came to life!" commented Capt. Chris Penningroth, the detachment commander at Friedburg Ain.

In addition to working along side the host unit firefighter, responding to real world emergencies at Spangdahlem AB, 131st CES firefighter took full advantage of the rare opportunity to get hands-on training and earn certifications for firefighting equipment and vehicles that are only available at an active duty base.

Three others worked in their respective shops assisting the host 52nd CES during a wing contingency exercise and provided valuable help and experience to make the exercise go smoother. Tech. Sgt. Cheryl Ropp a military pay technician at Lambert also contributed by using her previous experience in the carpentry career field to help complete the structural projects.

"Overall, this was a great training opportunity and a morale boost for everyone," said Fraser. "Working with the active duty was a win-win situation where we received training, they got to use our manpower and everyone learned that with the right attitude and experience, any job – no matter how large it seems – can be done."



131st CES Power Production troops, Master Sgt. David Owings (left) and Tech. Sgt. Ron Bird, drain old oil from a large diesel generator at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.



131st CE troops remove concrete pillars from a trash dumpster site in a base housing improvement project.



Three readiness troops of the 131st Civil Engineering Squadron demonstrate Self Aid and Buddy Care in a MOPP 4 environment to active duty troops.

Hurricane recovery ...

Dennis no menace for the National Guard

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — More than 5,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from four states rolled out or stood by to help when the hurricane season began earlier than usual this year.

Hurricane Dennis battered Pensacola and the surrounding Florida Panhandle on July 10, a Sunday afternoon and evening, with 120-mph winds and cut a northwest track into Alabama before quickly losing steam.

It was the first major hurricane in seven decades to hit the United States in July and one of only seven major hurricanes to occur in July during 150 years that records have been kept, The Washington Post reported.

Some 2,600 Florida National Guard troops turned out for the Category 3 blow that, according to initial estimates, caused between \$1 billion and \$2.5 billion in insured damage in this country. The Associated Press reported the storm left more than 550,000 customers in four states without power.

A couple of thousand Florida Guard troops supported law enforcement and civil relief efforts in the stricken western part of the state.

"Our troops were distributing food, water and ice to people at 31 distribution points in Florida's four western-most counties the day after the storm," said Lt. Col. Ron Tittle, a Florida National Guard spokesman. "That was cut back to 21 distribution points in three counties by Tuesday," he added.

Members of the 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group supported search and rescue operations conducted by state and local agencies. Other Guard members

helped police provide security at traffic control points and patrolled neighborhoods.

Three battalions from the 265th Air Defense Artillery formed the main Guard force in the panhandle, Tittle said. The 2nd Battalion of the 265th had returned from a 12-month tour of duty in Afghanistan in April and was pressed into state active duty to deal with one of the hurricanes that Florida Guard troops have come to know all too well.

A total of 7,000 Army and Air Guard troops responded to the four storms that ripped into their state last August and September, Tittle said.

Some who turned out for Dennis were still recovering from the wrath of 2004.

"I hope that Dennis moves farther west and doesn't touch the state," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Sargent of Vero Beach. "I'm still working with my insurance company and contractors to complete repairs from damage to my home from last year's hurricanes."

Still, the Guard troops turned out because they knew they had the skills and the training to help their community.

"Our troops are packed and ready to go," said Lt. Col. Troy Ratliff, the 2nd Battalion's commander. "Many of these Soldiers recently returned from Afghanistan and have skills in conducting security missions over there that will be important in this state mission."

Ratliff also promised that his Soldiers will be ready to deal with the future emergencies that afflict Florida, especially since weather forecasters are concerned that this could be another active hurricane season.

"If there are more storms, we'll be ready for them," the battalion commander vowed. "These guys have been through a



Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Hudson

Soldiers from the Florida Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery, travel west on I-10 toward Tallahassee as they stage for Hurricane Dennis.

lot. We'll just [regroup] and do it again."

Meanwhile, Air National Guard people in that region flew fighter, transport and air refueling planes from bases threatened by the storm to locations out of harm's way. They also made sure remaining aircraft were safely protected in hangers.

Elsewhere, 1,100 Guard troops were immediately available for duty in Louisiana because it was a monthly training weekend; 780 were available for emergency relief operations in Alabama, and about 600 were placed on state active duty in Mississippi, according to Guard spokesmen in those states.

Guard members stood up joint operations centers. Engineer teams were pre-positioned and prepared to help with dump trucks, Humvees and road-clearing equipment. Military police patrols were primed to help local and state police.

Most of those troops did not have to swing into action because Dennis did not hit those states as hard as originally feared.

"We didn't get the bad weather we thought we were going to get," said Lt. Col. Tim Powell in Mississippi where Guard people set up a forward operations center at Camp Shelby, about 50 miles north of the state's Gulf coast. "It seemed like 1995 when we went forward four or five times but didn't

have to do anything.

"But you can't wait. You have to be ready," Powell added. "It gives the public a feeling of comfort that the Guard is ready to go."

Jon Myatt, Florida Department of Military Affairs, contributed to this report.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Stephen Hudson

Sgt. Wessels, a Florida Guardsman assigned to the Fort Pierce-based Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery, loads bags of ice into a car trunk at a point of distribution site in Baker, Florida.



Photo by Spc. Edouard Glouck

A hurricane-damaged home in Escambia County, Florida.

Contacting a Family Program Coordinator near you

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

Alaska

State Family Program Director
SENIOR MASTER SGT. Jan Myers
505 W. Northern Lights Blvd.,
Suite 108
Anchorage, AK 99503-2552

168ARW

Nola Barnes
2680 Flightline Ave., Ste. 117
Eielson AFB, AK 99702-1794
Office: 907-377-8715 DSN: 317-377-8715

176 WG

Emily Derksen
505 W. Northern Lights Blvd Suite
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Mobile Event Teams hit the road to promote the Guard

By Spc. Benjamin Cossel

Ohio National Guard

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio – For a minimum of 139 days at a time, they sign up to join one of the seven teams traveling the country, spreading the word of the National Guard. They must be physically fit, they must be able to work independently and with a team, and most importantly, they must be able to engage the public, promoting the National Guard.

Bringing with them the souped-up, No. 16, Ford Taurus that is the National Guard's representative on the tracks of NASCAR's Nextel Cup Series, Soldiers of the Mobile Event Team (MET), Team A, descended upon Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, June 5 for a day of recruiting and community awareness as part of a community event known as "Rocking for the Kids/Troops."

According to a National Guard's website promoting the Mobile Events Team, "The Mobile Event Team is the National Guard Bureau's aggressive new program to promote the Army National Guard (ARNG). Thirty-five soldiers were selected from a pool of over a hundred applicants for active duty special work tours lasting a minimum of 139 days. These soldiers go from city to city deploying a recruiting lead generation system working some of the largest events in the country."

Staff Sgt. David Sollberger is the non-commissioned officer in charge of Team Summit from the Ohio Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), Recruiting Command. Out on the front lines of the recruiting effort everyday since Sept 2004, Sollberger knows the difficulties today's recruiters face convincing quality individuals to join the National Guard. As he explains, resources such as the Mobile Event Team help him and other career counselors in their recruiting efforts as well as presenting a different side of the



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Pfc. Sean McKenna of the Mobile Events Team counts out 30 seconds as Randolph, Ohio resident Gary Bedard performs 30 push-ups. For his efforts, Bedard received a special National Guard racing T-shirt and the National Guard would receive a lead for local recruiters. The team was on hand at Cuyahoga Fall's "Rocking for the Kids/Troops" celebration June 5th, helping local-area recruiters generate leads.

Guard.

"We (the Ohio Army National Guard) have dominated this event!" he says excitedly. "Being able to have the Mobile Event Team come out with the car is a tremendous asset. The public is swarming around that booth helping us generate leads as well as showing people that there is a different side to the National Guard – a fun side."

Along with the Soldiers of the MET, members of C Company, 2nd Battalion 19th Special Forces Group set up a weapons display, showcasing the many tools in a Special Forces operators bag. Ohio guardsmen and women of HHC, 1st Battalion, 107th Armor

Regiment (Cavalry) and the 1484th Transportation Company split time manning an information booth and rigging up excited event-goers for a rock climbing wall that was second in the public's attention only to "The Car."

The "oohs" and "aaahs" were readily heard as residents of Cuyahoga Falls lined up to have their picture taken with Greg Biffle's, National Guard Car, thundering machine. Biffle has won five Nextel Cup races and is currently second in driver points on the circuit.

"We exist to help the local recruiters," noted Minneapolis, Minnesota resident, 1st Lt. Amanda Clerc as she swiped a magnetic card through the reader on her camera snapping a photo of two anxious young men.

Within 24 hours, those two young men would be able log onto a website and using the number printed on the card, retrieve the "eshot." Before they could get to the photo, the men were asked for some contact information; phone number, email address, zip code...just like that, another lead generated.

"Being one of two teams that have a car, we're usually at races and sporting events for various youth oriented events," said Officer in Charge of the team, Clerc. "But we travel all over the country to many different events; a recruiter just needs to get in contact with us and we'll do what we can to support them."

The car itself is just one of the items the team uses to assist recruiters in generating leads. Offset parallel to the car an awning

spreads out from the trailer used to move the car from city to city. Underneath the awning a push-up mat lays on the ground. With the midday sun pushing the temperatures into the high 80's, the shade the awning provides would seem enough to bring people underneath it but escaping the heat is not what's on Randolph, Ohio, resident Gary Bedard's mind.

"OK so here's the deal," explains MET Team member and Tulsa, Okla. resident Pfc. Sean McKenna, "if you can do 30 push-ups in 30 seconds, you'll win a No. 16 National Guard car t-shirt.

Think you can do it?"

Dropping down into a push-up position, Bedard looks up at McKenna, "I think I can."

Thirty seconds later, Bedard is filling out a card with his contact information. He hands the card to McKenna who passes Bedard a T-shirt, another lead generated.

"This has been an amazing experience," McKenna says. "We get to travel to different places. I've got to meet people from all over the country and I really feel like the team and I are making a difference."

Soldiers interested in joining the Mobile Event Team should contact their local career counselor for more information but McKenna offered a piece of advice before taking microphone in hand to address the crowd.

"Pack light. You've got to be ready for anything. We do lots of long days. We do lots of short days. We do it all. Above all else, don't be shy."



Pfc. Sean McKenna works the crowd as 1st Lt. Amanda Clerc snaps photos of people in front of the National Guard's NASCAR Nextel Cup Series racing car. Both are members of the Mobile Events Team.