

# THE ON GUARD

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## Guard shells it out in Iraq ...



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

An Arkansas Army National Guard howitzer crew, from the 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery, conducts a fire mission at Camp Cooke in Iraq in late September. They are members of the Army Guard's 39th Brigade Combat Team.

## Guard forces may reach 43 percent of OIF in 2005

**By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell**

National Guard Bureau

FORWARD OPERATIONS BASE CALDWELL, Iraq – A full moon that lit the cloudless night almost as brightly as an overcast day made the desert along the Iraq-Iran border that much easier to see for a couple of dozen Army National Guard infantry Soldiers during the early hours of the last Thursday in September.

The Citizen-Soldiers from the 39th Brigade Combat Team spent that long, humid night checking out one border village in eastern Iraq for a suspected cache of smuggled weapons and conducting a presence patrol along the quiet roads and alleys of the nearby city of Mandali.

Their presence in the stillness of that peaceful sector was best defined by the clank and the roar of three Bradley Fighting Vehicles that transported 1st Lt. Christian Smith's platoon from a remote, modern military base

called Forward Operations Base Caldwell where the brigade from North Carolina is flying its flag these days.

"These Iraqi people want us here. It's like the safety factor of having a cop driving through your neighborhood," maintained Smith, 23, of the patrols that 39th Brigade Soldiers conduct to deter smugglers and insurgents from entering the region.

Three Army Guard infantry brigades and the first Army Guard aviation brigade size task force ever deployed to a combat zone are the major Guard elements that are supporting the American-led coalition's Operation Iraqi Freedom campaign this year.

But the Guard numbers will increase significantly during the next few months, LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, repeatedly told Guard Soldiers he met in Iraq during a fast-paced tour during September's final week.

Defense officials claim that 40 percent of

the 140,000 troops now serving in Iraq belong to the reserve components. The reservists' slice of the Iraqi pie will increase to 60 percent beginning in November, Guard spokesmen said, and the National Guard will field 43 percent – nearly half of the force.

That was the word from Army Guard Col. Jeff Russell, chief of the Reserve Component Division in Iraq.

The 42nd Infantry Division's headquarters from New York is one of the Guard's major units stepping up to the plate. There are also six brigade combat teams - the 29th from Hawaii, the 56th from Texas, the 116th from Idaho, the 155th from Mississippi, the 256th from Louisiana, and the 278th from Tennessee.

"It will take all winter to complete this rotation," Russell explained.

Meanwhile, Guard Soldiers from the 30th

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## About The On Guard

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# 'Eyes of the North' steady as Air Force moves mission to Guard

**By Mike Haller**

Alaska National Guard

ELMENDORF AFB, Alaska – Defending the homeland is one of the key missions of the Air National Guard and in early October, the Alaska Air National Guard officially took over operations of the Air Force's Regional Air Operations here.

According to officials, the mission of the air control squadron is to provide ready teams to operate and maintain the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Regional Air Operations Center.

"This represents a significant move forward on the part of our Air Force and the Alaska Air National Guard," said Brig. Gen. Tim Scott, Alaska Air National Guard commander.

"We're very proud of our partnership with the 611th Air Control Squadron, and their willingness to make the transformation and transition of this mission from the active duty forces to the Air National Guard. This is key element in defending our homeland," Scott said.

"We'll witness the deactivation of the 11th Air Force's 611th ACS and celebrate the activation of the 176th Air Control Squadron as a significant mission and component of the Alaska Air National Guard," he added.

According to Col. Eugene O'Nale, 611th Air Operations Group Commander, the turnover from the active duty component to the Alaska Air National Guard is a positive step that will continue the success of the Alaskan NORAD Region mission.

The Air National Guard is a force multiplier and vital component of our Air Force," said O'Nale. "This transition to Alaska Air National Guard is crucial for ensuring continuity in the air sovereignty mission by providing experts who will continue to live and work in Alaska."

Officials stated that during the past several years, both active duty and Alaska Air National Guard members have migrated into the unit to prepare for the change to an all-Guard unit. The new 176th ACS, with support from Canadian Forces elements, will continue to conduct 24-hour ANR and 11th Air Force air sovereignty and theater air control operations.

**Pfc. Hillary Walker**

Florida National Guard

MELBOURNE, Fla. – In a scenario all too familiar to Floridians this year, cars lined up with trunks gaping open, as they waited to be stocked with ice and water at a roadside distribution point.

A well-rehearsed, rhythmic routine ensues, in which relief workers filled each car with needed provisions and then directed them back onto the road. All the while silent sentinels in camouflage uniforms stood nearby with M-16 rifles slung over their shoulders in the hot mid-morning sun.

"We're here to act as a calming presence and provide security if needed," said Spc. David Taylor, an Avenger crew member with the Guard's 1st Battalion, 265th Air Defense Artillery.

Hurricane Jeanne is Taylor's third hurricane, but most of his fellow Guardsmen from the Daytona Beach-based unit have assisted in all four hurricane-relief missions.



Photo by Staff Sergeant Ken Denny

**The Alaska Air National Guard is on the receiving end of an Air Force initiative transferring the 611th Air Control Squadron to the Air National Guard. The new unit is the 176th Air Control Squadron – part of the 176th Wing, of the Alaska Air National Guard. More than 120 Airmen and officers are assigned with full-time duties operating the Regional Air Operations Center at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. Another two dozen Guard members will serve in their traditional, or part-time roles, with the Center.**

## Guardsmen, first responders ensure peace after devastating storms

Robert Ayers, a reservist with the Brevard County Fire and Rescue, said the Guard members are good assets.

"It shows that security is in place and it deters looting," Ayers said. "They've also been quite helpful. Yesterday, I had a medical call and they assisted in getting personnel and equipment into the scene quickly."

The soldiers in fatigues were in the right place at the right time, but it wasn't by chance. The coordination for these missions began before Hurricane Jeanne actually made landfall.

In the Brevard County Emergency Operations Center, 2nd Lt. Tom Eriksen, a liaison officer from the 260th Military Intelligence Battalion from Miami, said liaison officers like himself moved into EOCs across the state to lay foundations for channeling Florida National Guard assets to areas that would need it the most.

"We work hand-in-hand with the local law enforcement," Eriksen said.

He described the process through which local agencies request assistance, which he then conveys to the National Guard Joint Emergency Operations Center in St. Augustine. [Requests are also coordinated with the State Emergency Operations Center military liaison.] The JEOC hands specific missions down to the individual units based on those requests.

At the Brevard County EOC, the requests are made by Maj. Russell Cockriel, Incident Commander from the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. Cockriel explained how local police departments assess damage, prioritize the need for assistance in their communities and then report back to him with their requests.

The Guard is called in only after all local resources have been exhausted, but in the wake of a natural disaster such as Hurricane Jeanne and her predecessors, additional help is quickly required.



# 55th CST, local police go underground to train

**Staff Sgt. Cheryl Hackley**

National Guard Bureau

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Minnesota's Civil Support Team knows what it means to be a team. They demonstrate this daily as they work together to be some of the first individuals to respond to a weapon of mass destruction incident. Each member has to trust in the skills of each other to get the mission done right, and they do.

The 22-member CST is broken down into several different components that all work together as a whole. Troops are assigned to the command, survey, administration and logistics, medical, operations or communications team. Minnesota's 55th CST is one of the 32 certified teams in the nation. CSTs are under instruction of the incident commander, who is most likely a civilian authority like the chief of police.

"We're all dependent on each other. And because we work so closely, we get to know one another pretty well," said Spc. Mike Sigerson, a member of the survey team. "We're really like a family."

Working well together extends beyond just the Soldiers and Airmen of the 55th Civil Support Team. They also open their training doors to local authorities such as the Minneapolis Police Department's Emergency Response Unit. These are the Special Weapons and Tactical team members assigned to the bomb squad they would work with in the event of an attack.

"We have a great relationship with the local authorities. A lot of CSTs don't train with them as much as we do," Sigerson said.

Most of their training together involves preliminary sweeps at events in Minnesota like Vikings games held at the Twin Cities Metrodome. However, the CST leaders didn't hesitate to invite the police officers to train with them Sept. 19-25 at the Center for National Response located 30 miles southeast of Charleston, West Virginia's capital.

"The Tunnel offered all of us good training," said Jesse Garcia, one of the nine police officers who spent the week

with the CST. "We got to coordinate what each of us would do through numerous training activities."

The West Virginia Memorial Tunnel is a training site used since 2000 as the Center for National Response.

"This site is the only one like it and offers venues such as mobile homes with labs, a subway station and trolley car, a rubble room and more, all inside the Tunnel," said Jerry McGhee, a CNR exercise planner. "It is completely realistic."

"It takes months to get into this facility," said Army Capt. John Wisniewski, CST operations officer. "But it was worth the wait. The site was phenomenal and we got to practice everything we wanted to train for."

All exercises were tailored as if they were in Minnesota. The role players and instructors strive to make each exercise as realistic as possible to maximize training. "Everyone is always pleased with the job we do, and most of them even come back," said McGhee proudly.

SWAT team members, who are trained for high risk entries, as well as two members of the CST, respond to the site first. "CSTs need added security so they can perform their mission," Garcia stated. "We provide that for them."

After the site is clear of any human or explosive threat, the survey team conducts air monitoring of the contaminated area.

CSTs have the skills and equipment necessary to detect and identify the presence of any chemical, biological or radiological agents or substances. Survey team members don protective gear and use chemical and biological sampling kits to gather samples at the site to bring back to their staging area for analysis.

Once they identify any agents or substances, the team must evaluate their immediate threat. From there, they report this information to civilian responders to take appropriate safety actions such as evacuating civilians from the contaminated area.

To complete the CSTs responsibilities, the team assists civilian responders with requests for assistance of additional state and military assets.



**Sgt. Dan Swenson sets up a chemical sampling kit on site. Survey team members travel with these kits to gather samples on site to sterilize or contain them before bringing them out of the hot zone.**

CSTs only have a matter of hours to deploy to the site and conduct their analysis of the situation. That is why they train so much and so often.

"Essentially what we do means life or death," said Sigerson. "That is what makes our job so important."

Working through several scenarios, the two teams became one and accomplished their missions efficiently and effectively.

One exercise the team responded to was a call from a security guard at a Minneapolis technical college. The guard reported a tampered door and unusual activity in a rarely used lab. The site was a trailer in the tunnel with a lab set up inside, chemicals and all.

The incident commander's objectives for the CST and SWAT team were securing the area, establishing a perimeter, removing patients, identifying hazards and mitigating those hazards.

As both military and civilian members utilized their training and worked through the tasks at hand, they were evaluated by instructors. All missions were completed successfully by both teams.

Timing is everything, and this CST knows that. "We're good at what we do. In one of the scenarios, we were able to complete all of the incident commander's objectives nearly five hours earlier than expected," said Wisniewski.

The Tunnel offered valuable training for everyone involved, but especially the troops in the CST. In October they will be tested by 1st U.S. Army for their required 18 month recertification.

"This will be our second evaluation since we got our original certification in 2000," said Wisniewski. "The Tunnel was good preparation for us."

"It was nice to have an outside source like this, a new facility with fresh training ideas," said Army Sgt. Rich Axelson, a member of the survey team. "You have got to practice what we do and I definitely learned some new techniques and improved my skills."

And the joint training with local officers only improved an already solid relationship between them and the CST members. "You can't do this job alone, it takes teamwork," said Sigerson.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Cheryl Hackley

**Survey team members are cleared by 1st Sgt. Tim Bebus as they prepare to make entry into the hot zone where the chemicals are located during a training mission in the Tunnel.**



# Tragedy leads 39th Brigade Combat Team to a major discovery

By 1st Lt. Chris J. Heathscott

39th Brigade Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – A recent firefight on the banks of the Tigris River transformed a small patrol through Taji, Iraq, into a huge operation to seek out the individuals responsible for the deaths of two 39th Brigade Soldiers.

The men involved in the operation overcame emotion in order to successfully execute a plan, which ultimately gave birth to the discovery of a major weapons cache and an apparent hub of terrorist activity.

"Essentially what they had set up was an improvised explosive device manufacturing facility," said Maj. Damon Cluck, Operations Officer of the 39th's 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery Regiment.

The unearthing produced 23 120-millimeter mortar rounds, a South African 155-millimeter round, and multiple detonation devices. Although representing only a small portion of the find, these are the ingredients to construct Improvised Explosive Devices, some of which were already wired and ready for placement.

"That in itself made the cache significant in addition to the rockets and direct fire stuff that was found," said Cluck, who calls Russellville, Ark., home.

The plan for the operation, which resulted in the finding of a total of three caches, was unfortunately conceived in response to an ambush, which killed two American Soldiers just hours earlier. The incident occurred during a joint patrol with Iraqi National Guard Soldiers, along with Soldiers from the 39th's 206th Field Artillery Regiment on Oct. 3.

The firefight took the lives of Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Potts, of Tiverton, R.I., and Sgt. Russell L. Collier, of Harrison, Ark. This led to the decision to reorganize and go after those responsible by sealing off that area of Taji Village and searching 23 different homes and buildings inside.

"Immediately we went into planning to go within 12 hours," said Maj. Christian Neary, commander of A Battery, 1st Battalion,



Photos by 1st Lt. Chris J. Heathscott

**Sgt. Thompson lifts a piece of sheet metal as Staff Sgt. Shawn Buffalo, of Jacksonville, Ark. shines a light from his weapon into the potential cache underneath.**

103rd Field Artillery Regiment, which is deployed with the 206th. "The brigade commander asked us to [wait] 24 more hours, so we could build combat power from the rest of the brigade task force. So, essentially, 36 hours later we moved down there and conducted a cordon and search."

Building combat power seemed somewhat of an understatement as hundreds of American Soldiers, Iraqi National

Guardsmen and Macedonian Special Forces came together to seek out the shooters. As the leadership planned the operation, the potential for strong emotions driven by the loss of their fellow Soldiers became a concern.

"I didn't want them going in for revenge, but I wanted them to go in for justice," said Neary, who is a resident of Cumberland, R.I. "We kind of pounded that into them during that 36 hours between the firefight and the mission, so that they knew we were going in there looking to find the folks that were responsible, not just looking to find anybody that was there to hold them accountable."

As the participants gathered for an operations order at the Iraqi National Guard Headquarters on the eve of the mission, Lt. Col. Keith Klemmer provided the Soldiers with a brilliant glimpse of professionalism.

"What Colonel Klemmer said was 'there are two things that will make the mission a success,' and this is just perfect, 'one...is courage,'" said Staff Sgt. Shawn Buffalo, Advisor Support Trainer for the ING. "He didn't need to explain that. Everybody knew. We were going into an area of possible contact, because it was where we lost two fellow soldiers. The response was so quiet in the room when he said that. Everybody knew what he meant."

"Second thing he said was 'honor,'" Buffalo continued. "He said 'honor means going in there being professional Soldiers, not letting your emotions run away with you. Do your job that you were trained to do and in doing

so don't dishonor the memory of Sergeant Potts and Sergeant Collier. You'll do no honor to their memory by going in there and doing something out of hate."

As the Soldiers worked through their emotion from the initial incident, the words of Lt. Col. Klemmer further built upon the foundation of professionalism laid by the ING following the firefight.

"During that time, the ING came up, several of the officers, several of the [Non Commissioned Officers] that have kind of proven themselves to be more professional than we ever thought possible, and said 'we're sorry about your loss,'" said Buffalo, a resident of Jacksonville, Ark. "It's not acceptable. We're going to do anything we can. Let us know what we can do."

The bond built between the Iraqi and American Soldiers had apparently strengthened due to the incident, as they worked together in a near flawless execution of the plan.

"My guys strong-pointed every building while the ING did the deliberate search inside the buildings looking for weapons and illegal contraband," said Neary. "Their performance was very good. I was very pleased with their actions. They were motivated not only by the fact that they were Iraqi National Guard Soldiers, but they were also motivated because some of their guys were involved in the firefight the day before."

Along with the ING, the 206th, and the 103rd, the mission included the support of



**Sgt. Jeffery Boehm (right), of Dover, Ark. and Spc. Larry Robinson, of Magazine, Ark., reach for an item handed out to them from an underground tank, which was used to store a large cache of weapons in Taji Village.**

**See CACHE On Page 5**



# Guam National Guard prepares for unprecedented deployment

By Karen Linne

Fort Polk Guardian

FT. POLK, La. — Some 150 Guam National Guardsmen have come to Fort Polk's Joint Readiness Training Center to prepare for an historic event. Soldiers of Team A, 1/294th Infantry are participating in a JRTC mission readiness exercise (rotation 04-08) prior to their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Although nothing seems unusual in Soldiers undergoing training at JRTC prior to an overseas deployment, Guam's National Guard has never deployed in support of a combat mission.

Hailing from a small island, just over 200 square miles, in the western North Pacific Ocean, these citizen-Soldiers have readied themselves for the Global War on Terror as any Stateside or active-duty unit has.

"We knew it (deployment order) was coming," said 1st Lt. Vincent Apuron, Team A's executive officer. "We prepared for the call up. It's part of what we have to do as a National Guard unit."

Training at JRTC has included situational training exercises that replicate real-world scenarios in the OEF theater. Guam National Guard Soldiers will be sent to the Horn of Africa for their mission -- an area that Air Force Gen. Charles Wald said Wednesday was a prime spot for terrorists fleeing Afghanistan and elsewhere in Southwest

Asia.

Cpl. Ivan Castro, a 26-year-old Guamanian who has served with the National Guard for three years, said he felt good about the upcoming operation. "I'm very proud to be going. I'm excited, scared and anxious all at the same time," he said.

Castro said he wasn't surprised by the deployment news. "It's going on all over the world (War on Terror). You, as a Soldier, should expect it."

However, both Castro and Apuron said they and other Soldiers of the unit had family members shocked by the mission.

"Guam is small (population 166,090, according to a 2004 estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau)," said Apuron. "It (news of deployment) doesn't kick in until it's that particular Soldiers' family."

Castro said his wife, Barbara, was very supportive upon hearing the news.

"The one thing Soldiers need when they deploy is family support," Castro added.

Even single Soldiers such as Spc. Lance Aquino, 23, an infantryman with only two years in the Guard, need to know loved ones are behind them.

"Everyone in my family was shocked," Aquino said. "It (deploying) didn't bother me ... it's kind of like going back to basic training. I don't really know what to expect but I'm in a learning phase."

Aquino and others are learning military tactics including cordon and search and convoy operations while dealing with Afghani role players, simulated improvised explosive devices and JRTC's opposing force - members of 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry Regiment.

"Our training has been a very positive experience. There is no such thing as enough training ... there's always room for improvement," Castro said.

Soldiers have also gotten to use a new weapons system at JRTC, according to Apuron. "We've gotten the best training with the best equipment. We're ready to meet our mission requirements."

Sgt. 1st Class John Fejeran, a 14-year veteran with the Guam Guard, also said his Soldiers were ready. "My Soldiers are highly motivated. They absorb training well and they are prepared."

Although it's the first combat deployment his Soldiers have undergone, Fejeran said he believed it would be a positive experience for the unit. "We have a reputation of going above the standards. Even here at JRTC, working with the OCs (observer/controllers), they are amazed at our ability to adapt and take on missions," Fejeran added.

Team A, 1/294th will join forces with other deploying units in upcoming weeks. Guam families have said their good-byes to their citizen-Soldiers, as the Guardsmen will not return to the island prior to deploying.

FROM PAGE 4

## Cache

Soldiers from the 39th Brigade's and battalions of both the 7th Cavalry and the 162nd Infantry. Through the joint efforts of these men, along with an element of the Macedonian Special Forces, over 50 men were detained for questioning, with over 20 later determined to be involved in anti-coalition operations. Among the detainees -- the trigger man responsible for the deaths of Potts and Collier.

"I really think it turned out to be kind of a part of the healing [process], because before we went in there, we didn't really know why this had happened," said Cluck. "It was a firefight that developed out of nowhere, in an area where we'd never had a problem before. Going back in there and seeing the quantities of stuff we found really explained why the firefight had happened and why that area was so important to them that they would fight like they did two days before."

"We found a lot of items inside of the houses and on top of the roofs," said Capt. John Vanlandingham, officer in charge of the ING's Advisor Support Trainers. "We found three caches with numerous rockets, mortars, mortar tubes, rocket tubes, there was actually a 155 South African round that was set for an IED, it already had the wire coming out of it."

"It was a smooth operation, everybody knew what they were doing, we had time to rehearse and do some training with the ING before we went in and they did an outstanding job in their cordon and search," continued the New Blaine, Ark. resident.

"You bring together that diverse group...ING, Macedonians, our battalion, plus support from another infantry battal-



**Among the weapons discovered at the cache in Taji were 23 120-millimeter mortar rounds, which are often used as Improvised Explosive Devices.**

ion...and do that kind of [operation] and it go off without anybody getting hurt and finding the kind of stuff we found...I thought it was a pretty successful operation," said Cluck.

"You've got to give kudos to the battalion staff of the 206th," said Buffalo. "The battalion staff of the 206th and the 39th Brigade planned an outstanding operation."

"You can't take away from the ING's efforts, you can't take away from Rhody's

efforts on the ground, or the 206th, or 2-162 that was on the ground with us, or anybody else that was there with us," he continued. "Only when you have great leadership on the sidelines and great players on the field together will you win the Super bowl, and that's what we had on that operation all the way around, good players, good coaches."

Cluck reflected on the loss of his two Soldiers and said, "you've got small unit leaders that are out there fighting this war.

That's what those two guys were. They went out there, they saw a fight, and they went into it.

"They went into it with the ING, that they were supporting, and nobody ever backed off. Potts was moving forward when he was hit and Collier laid down his weapon to go to Potts' aide and that's when he was hit.

"That kind of devotion to duty, that's what's winning this war."



## FROM PAGE 1

## OIF

Brigade, the 39th Brigade Combat Team from Arkansas and the 81st Brigade Combat Team from the state of Washington are halfway through their year of duty in Iraq. They are performing all kinds of missions in their effort to bring peace and democracy to the country 19 months into Operation Iraqi Freedom and more than nine months after the capture of deposed President Saddam Hussein.

New Mexico Army Guard Sgt. Ronette Ray is on duty at a 72-hour internment facility, at Camp Cooke north of Baghdad, where 32 suspected insurgents were being held in late September for suspicious activities, including possessing illegal weapons. It is a different duty for Ray, who ordinarily serves as a cook.

Soldiers from Arkansas' 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery are providing counter fire with their howitzers for the 39th Brigade at Camp Cooke against incoming rockets and mortar rounds, explained Capt. David Stapp. They also conduct fire missions to show insurgents "what can happen to them" if they attack coalition forces.

81st Brigade Soldiers are guarding the three entry points into Logistical Support Area Anaconda, near Balad, and are looking for insurgents who are setting up rockets and placing improvised explosive devices to kill Americans, explained Master Sgt. Joe Menard from California.

Civil affairs personnel also meet with sheiks and attend community council meetings in an effort to make friends with the local people and find out how the Americans can help them.

"Being in the Guard used to be a lot of fun," said Menard, an 18-year veteran. "Now it's rewarding. It's wonderful to see these Soldiers learn new things and then put them



Photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

**LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, encourages members of the Iraqi National Guard to help coalition forces bring peace to their country during the last week in September.**

into practice."

The Guard also has the largest of three Army helicopter brigades in the theater, said Col. Bradley MacNealy, commander of the 185th Aviation Task Force from Mississippi, the first Army Guard aviation brigade to deploy to a combat theater.

"We fly from border to border, over every inch of this country," said MacNealy of that

outfit which includes aviators and maintenance personnel from 26 states. "We came here determined to accomplish this mission. Our motto is 'On Time, On Target.' "

The Guard has paid a heavy price while honoring its commitments against a faceless enemy that keeps its distance by attacking camps with rockets and mortars and convoys with rocket propelled grenades and explosive devices such as artillery shells.

By early October, 133 Guard Soldiers had died while serving in Iraq and during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Eighty-nine of the 103 casualties in Iraq were killed in action. Arkansas Army Guard Sgt. Russell Collier, 48, died on Oct. 3, the victim of a small arms attack.

Ironically, American medical personnel at FOB Caldwell cared for one enemy insurgent on Sept. 30, the day after he blew off part of one hand while setting up an explosive device intended to be used against the people who saved his life.

"It's a tough thing to do, but it's the right thing to do," said Blum who was visiting the medical facility where the man was being treated.

Blum covered a lot of ground during his three-day visit. He even visited Soldiers in the Iraqi National Guard who are training to serve with coalition forces and take a hand in their country's destiny.

"I've just held my first town meeting with the Iraqi National Guard," acknowledged the Guard Bureau chief after conversing with

those troops at Camp Cooke.

"I am proud of you, and the American people are solidly behind you. They have separated the war from the warriors," Blum told hundreds of American Guard troops he encountered during other town meetings and while visiting their work sites. "You're doing what's right for your country and for your families."

Blum assured them that he is working with Army leaders to shorten future overseas rotations to six or seven months and that he intends to have enough Soldiers trained in military police and other essential skills so that Army Guard units can plan on being deployed every six years.

Observing that "this is the opening round in a 15-round fight," Blum made it clear that the National Guard will remain engaged in the global war on terrorism. "We have to stop these guys here so we don't see them in downtown Little Rock or somewhere else in our country," he said.

The Guard Soldiers understand what's at stake, and they believe in the mission.

"We're doing a lot of good over here. We're building schools, meeting with village leaders and building grain storage facilities," insisted 30th Brigade Staff Sgt. Bryan Finch, 27, from Clayton, N.C., while taking part in the night presence patrol near the Iraq-Iran border.

"It's tough to be here for so long," Finch added, "but I'm going to stay in the Guard as long as I can. I still like what I do."



**1st Lt. Christian Smith, from the North Carolina Army National Guard's 30th Brigade Combat Team, questions Iraqi villagers living near the Iran border about a suspected weapons cache.**



# Starbase links students with International Space Station

## On Guard Staff Report

ALRINGTON, Va. — Students from 5 elementary and middle schools in Alaska, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia used the National Guard's Distributive Training Technology Project classrooms to take part in a nationwide space-education event on Sept. 21.

For three hours, the students interacted with each other and a NASA educator at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Then they participated in a lively 20-minute exchange with Russian Cosmonaut Gennady Padalka and American Astronaut Mike Fincke, the crew of Expedition 9 aboard the International Space Station.

- Fifth-graders from West Virginia's Kenna Elementary School talked to crewmen aboard the International Space Station from the West Virginia National Guard's Starbase Academy in Charleston.

The educational endeavor was part of NASA's "Teaching from Space" program. Starbase is a nationwide Guard program started in 1989 to educate schoolchildren in science, math, technology, personal development and drug-abuse prevention.

September's activity was the culmination of a three-part program on space exploration that began at the Martinsburg Starbase in January. Kenna students took part in phases two and three of the series, where they learned about NASA's exploration of Mars, the potential for living on the Red Planet, and life-in-space experiments taking place on the ISS.

Kenna fifth-grade teachers Kathy Graley and Deloris O'Brien have led their students in the months-long experience. "Kathy spearheaded this entire endeavor," said Kenna Principal Clara Jett. "We were hooked up to Houston and worked with six other schools from across the nation to work on a biosphere."

"Kathy and Deloris showed great dedication to the students and to education," Jett said. "They put in a lot of extra hours and working after school."

"We adopted the Apollo 13 motto: 'Failure is not an option.'"

The Kenna kids prepared questions before their uplink to the ISS.

"They had some great questions," Jett said. "They asked them about life on the space station, things like exercise, sleep, security, 'Are you ever scared?'"

The astronauts told the students about precautions, planning, engineering for safety-first, "and the importance of education -- that they train for years before they ever get that far," Jett said.

Graley, O'Brien and Jett said their students have benefited immensely from the experience.

"The kids haven't stopped talking about it," Jett said. "I receive e-mails from parents. And, to us -- we're from the generation when man first walked on the moon, so this has been really an awesome experience all the way around."

Connor Tyree was jubilant about the event. "Talking to the astronauts was a once-in-a-

## Alaska National Guard helps students reach to for the stars

CAMP DENALI, Alaska — Students from Mount Spurr and Ursa Major Elementary schools, in Anchorage and on Ft. Richardson, took part in an absolutely out-of-this-world learning experience, recently, working directly with NASA, thanks to the resources of the Alaska National Guard.

"As part of the National Guard's STARBASE program, two Alaska fifth- and sixth-grade classes video-linked with students from West Virginia, Virginia and Texas in space engineering design teams," said Kalei Brooks, public information officer for the Alaska National Guard.

They created a three-dimensional model for a Mars Surface Living Habitat that could safely house and protect a human crew from the Martian elements. After the exercise, students presented their conclusions to a panel of NASA educational facilitators via a video-conferencing link that is made possible through the National Guard's Distributive Training Technology Project.

"Then students were connected with astronauts living aboard the International Space Station for a question-and-answer session on topics ranging from filtering breathable air to future plans for life in space," Brooks said.

The DTTP is a state-of-the-art communications and learning-delivery system designed to support the National Guard's evolving missions at home and abroad. The project also provides communities with convenient local access to the best educational resources available throughout the country, such as the STARBASE program.

The STARBASE program is designed for students ages six through 18 to enhance their math and science skills. The course principally exposes at-risk children and their teachers to real world applications of math and science through experiential learning, simulations, and experiments in aviation and space related fields.

lifetime experience," said the fifth-grader. "I wish that all students across the world would have had the same experience."

Jett said one of the things they want to instill in the students is how quickly science and technology are changing the world they know.

"Even our text books haven't caught up," Jett said. "We were reading in them today about plans to build an international space station."

In addition to the uplink with the ISS, which PBS broadcast live, the Kenna students took part in a NASA Johnson Space Center distance-learning program about building a human habitat on Mars.

The experience had the students researching what must be done once humans get there: creating oxygen for life support, learning the



Photos by Staff Sgt Ken Denny

**(Above) Ursa Major and Mount Spurr Schools took part in a three-way video conference with NASA engineers and lower-48 schools through a National Guard program called STARBASE. This interactive program allows students to explore practical solutions for the sciences, math, aviation, and space exploration.**



**(Left) Steven Winterson, 11, of Anchorage, explains to NASA engineers and fellow students in three other states, via National Guard video conferencing, how he would solve a problem facing potential travelers to Mars.**

NASA-Distance Learning Network.

The project gave the students a chance to learn about the Mars Surface Living Habitat -- Mars ECOS-1, but the larger issue was local and longterm: testing a distance-learning plan that Starbase is experimenting with, according to Dennis Christian, the West Virginia Starbase chief.

"The objective was to do a proof of concept to discover whether we could conduct the Starbase program by distance learning in order to hit remote areas of West Virginia," Christian said.

Efforts to meet that objective are expanding, Christian said, with a plan to get many, many more young people involved. "Next year, we're hoping to get a couple of schools a week [into Starbase]," he said.



# 1,600 Alabama National Guardsmen res

By Cpl. Taylor Barbaree

Alabama Army National Guard

MOBILE, Ala. – Alabamians affected by Hurricane Ivan got a shot in the arm almost immediately after the monstrous natural disaster left town when more than a thousand citizen-soldiers responded to help.

"As a Guardsman, I just feel like it is my duty to be here to assist in any way that I can," said Master Sgt. David Swann, summing up his feelings of volunteering for state active duty to assist during the aftermath period of the Category 3 hurricane, which hit Alabama and neighboring Florida Gulf Coast communities Sept. 16.

Swann, a Birmingham resident and Soldier with the Alabama Army National Guard's Mobile-based 226th Area Support Group was part of a 1,600 Guard member contingent during a three-week period in September and October. The recently refurbished Fort Whiting Armory, home of the 226th ASG and located adjacent to Mobile Bay, served as the Joint Task Force Command Headquarters during the Guard's involvement in assisting FEMA and local emergency management agencies.

"The work that our soldiers are doing are tireless, critical and vital," noted 226th ASG commander, Col. Jeff Kinard, who along with Birmingham's 167th Theater Support Command's Col. Joe Harkey, supervised the Guard's effort in the storm's aftermath.

"This is (day number two) and we are operating 40 distribution sites in Baldwin, Clark, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington and Wilcox counties."

"At those distribution sites we are providing water, ice and MRE's to those hit hardest by the storm," Harkey added.

Foley, a municipality with an estimated population of 6,000 residents, was an example of Ivan's punch, as evident by the numerous Guardsman who worked side-by-side with city and county police at major intersections directing traffic because of power outages. Additionally, Guards members, along with other volunteers, worked fever-



Photos by Maj. Cynthia Bachus

**Staff Sgt. Ricky Franklin, a member of the 1/167th Mechanized Infantry from Cullman, Ala., checks identification at a traffic control point in Baldwin County. The 167th helped local law enforcement agencies with security in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan.**

ishly in 80-plus degrees of heat at a distribution site located at the well-known Tanger Retail Outlet Mall.

"It's a great feeling to know that you are helping out people who really need it," said Pfc. Eric Broxson, a member of Ozark's HHC, 1st Battalion of the 131st Armor, who loaded ice into motorist' vehicles. "I bet we have (disbursed) about 1,000 pounds of ice this morning to residents and that makes

being away from my normal everyday life worth being here."

Foley Volunteer Fire/Rescue member, Stacy Lay said having the Guard presence in Baldwin County is essential.

"This distribution site wouldn't function as well if the Alabama Guard were not here," Lay said. "These men and women are working hard and I just want them to know that I

appreciate their sacrifices for being here."

Lena Dade, also a Baldwin County resident, was also complimentary with the Guard's involvement as she piloted her family's SUV through the drive in distribution point in Gulf Shores.

"My family appreciates them being here. It is a comfort to know that they are here to help."



**Personnel from Co. B 1-167th (Mech) Infantry, Pelham, Ala. conduct dismounted patrols in the Gulf Shores area. These patrols were conducted 24 hours a day after Hurricane Ivan hit and would continue for the next two weeks.**



# men respond in wake of Hurricane Ivan



(Above) Lt. Col. Scott Cotney, Lt. Col. Bill Griswold, and Sgt. 1st Class Merritt Carothers, help a resident of Gulf Shores into the back of a five ton truck. The Alabama National Guard used the trucks to conduct shuttle runs for residents to review property that was damaged during Hurricane Ivan, in otherwise inaccessible areas. (Left) An Alabama National Guardsman helps open and distribute boxes of tarps to storm weary residents in Gulf Shores, Ala. Over 1,600 Alabama Guardsman were activated in the storms aftermath, helping with storm relief and providing security.



Members of Co. B 1-167th (Mech) Infantry, Pelham, Ala. erect a radio antenna at their Command Post on Hwy 59 in Gulf Shores to aid in communications after Hurricane Ivan knocked out phone and electrical service in the area.



# Utah aviators help Afghan girl to see her future

By Maj. Lorraine Januzelli

BAGRAM AIRBASE, Afghanistan – A five-year-old Afghan girl sees better and brighter due to the caring actions of Utah aviators deployed to Afghanistan. Earlier this month, a girl named Halima had a successful surgery to treat an eye condition called Strabismus. The story surrounding Halima's surgery illustrates a growing sense of trust and collaboration among an unlikely ensemble: Afghan villagers, Egyptian coalition forces, Russian-Kyrgyz hairdressers and AH-64 Apache pilots based out of West Jordan, Utah.

In April of this year, the aviators from the 1-211th Aviation Battalion of the Utah National Guard deployed to Bagram Airbase located in north central Afghanistan as part of Task Force Pirate. While the country is on the mend from the repressive Taliban government and decades of regional strife, it still faces many challenges. Pressing issues include a healthcare system that can not yet provide adequately for all its citizens and recurring shortages of basic goods.

Soon after arriving in-country, the 1-211th Soldiers took the needs of the nation to heart and put together a plan to bring badly needed humanitarian aid into the region. With the assistance of the Parwan Provisional Reconstruction Team, the 1-211th "adopted" a nearby village, Jegdalek. A girl's school is currently under construction there and the village seemed to be a good fit with the 1-211th.

Back in Utah, 1-211th family members enthusiastically supported their endeavor and started a humanitarian aid organization, Angels for Afghanistan. Throughout the summer, the Angels, which expanded to include family members from a sister unit in Hawaii, collected items not normally available in Jegdalek, including school supplies, shoes, books, toys and winter clothing. They then mailed the goods to their spouses at Bagram. By August, enough aid had arrived



**Recovering Halima sits on the lap of the Egyptian, Dr. Gobram, who was the lead doctor in her surgery**



Photos courtesy of 1-211th Aviation Battalion

**Halima is big smiles in her new dress and styled hair after surgery.**

to make a delivery.

The aviators traveled to Jegdalek to deliver the goods on August 28th. They arrived on two CH-47 Chinook helicopters loaded with seven pallets of humanitarian aid and 37 representatives from Parwan PRT, Task Force Pirate, and photojournalists from Freedom Watch, Bagram's on-base newspaper. During that trip, Chief Warrant Officer Layne Pace and 1st Lt. Jon Richardson, both Apache pilots from the Salt Lake area, noticed a little girl with some peculiar eye problems. When she looked at them, she was unable to focus with both eyes. Alternately, one eye or the other would turn away to the side. The Soldiers believed they could help.

That child, Halima, was born with a condition called Strabismus, a misalignment of the eyes which truncates depth perception and prevents accurate focusing. If left untreated, Strabismus can cause permanent sight dysfunction condemning the sufferer to an eternally blurry world.

Upon returning to Bagram, Pace and Richardson immediately took steps to arrange for surgical treatment for Halima. They started with surgeons working at the U.S. hospital on base.

"We were told they could do the surgery, but she needed to be taken through the Egyptian Hospital system," Pace explained. The Egyptian Hospital is located on base a short 15-minute walk from the 211th facilities.

"Ironically, we had already been associating with the Egyptian hospital staff and were

personal friends with most of them, specifically their Commander. This occurred through our regular visits at the hospital giving out humanitarian aid to the locals being seen by the Egyptians," said Pace. "The humanitarian aid had been coming from our families back home through the U.S. mail."

"When we asked to see the Egyptian Commander [for permission] and showed him the picture of the girl, he smiled and said 'bring her, we will do the surgery.'"

Surgeons Dr. Gobram, an Egyptian, and Dr. Gregory Bramblett, an American, agreed to do the surgery. Gobram would take the lead. Additionally, leaders from Task Force Pirate approved the requests to fly Halima and her father to and from her village to the hospital.

Arrangements for Halima's surgery took place in a matter of days. However, it was done entirely without asking Halima's father and village elders for permission since they had been unable to get back to Jegdalek. It was uncertain whether or not they would approve of the surgery especially since it would be done by foreigners at a military compound relatively far away from her home. Pace carefully worked out with an interpreter the best way to approach the subject.

On September 6, Pace and Richardson returned to Jegdalek on a CH-47 with several pallets of aid and their carefully formulated request. The situation quickly took on its own life.

Pace explained, "Within 10 minutes of the dust settling, the interpreter blurted out our request. I knew something was going on

above the normal buzz in the assembled people. I asked the interpreter what was going on. He said the elders have already agreed to sending Halima and she and her father have already left to change into clean clothes."

Within a few short hours, Halima and her father were packed and loaded onto the CH-47 for the ride back to Bagram.

Pace and Richardson were wisely but unnecessarily concerned that Halima might be afraid of the large helicopter. "We compared it to asking our children to get on a UFO that had just landed. We put some hearing protection on her and she just marched up the Chinook ramp like she was on a Disneyland ride. She would not stay seated in her seat, but stood up and looked out the window the whole flight."

The surgeons operated on Halima on September 8th. The delicate surgery required cutting a number of ocular muscles in order to restore normalcy and went exceptionally well.

Pace and a few others were allowed to observe the two-hour procedure and visited Halima soon after she returned to her hospital room. "They did not bandage her eyes. Her father woke her up when we arrived and she sat straight up with her eyes shut. When she heard our voices she squinted her eyes open and burst into a huge smile. This was our first hint she could see. Dr. Gobram came right over and did an eye exam. She did not have any blurring or double vision. He was able to get her to play a

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## Aid

game where she would mimic how many fingers he showed her, all with a smile," recalled Pace.

After one day of recovery, Halima was already seeing well, alert and ready to explore. The 211th Soldiers treated Halima and her father to lunch and dinner every day, including trips to the chow hall and the on-base Burger King. Twice, they brought Halima to a beauty salon run by Russian-Kyrgyzstanis women. Both trips, the hairdressers lavished Halima with special treatment.

"All we asked them to do was wash her hair. They not only washed, curled, styled her hair, they washed her feet, cleaned her shoes did a pedicure, painted her toe nails with flowers, manicure with fingernail polish. They would not take any money, so we dropped some tips their way. You should have seen the look on Halima's face. I think it was a non stop smile," Pace said.

The aviators returned Halima and her father to their village on September 13 together with another shipment of humanitarian aid. Halima got off the CH-47 and was immediately surrounded by several hundred village members looking at her eyes. She then ran the mile trail back to her home to show her mother. Pace and his fellow aviators were later invited to Halima's home for tea and to visit the family.

Halima's father earns \$60 Afghan dollars (approximately equivalent to \$3 U.S. dollars) per day as a construction worker at the girl's school and lost a week's worth of wages due to the surgery. To help compensate, the 1-211th took up a collection and presented him with \$9,000 Afghani dollars before they left. For all involved, Halima's surgery was mission success on multiple fronts. Not only can a young girl see now, but lasting bonds developed among very different people with a common concern for children.

Pace observed, "With the last flight bringing her back, we are now being greeted with traditional Afghan hugs and right



Photos by Bob Haskell

**The 1-211th Aviation unloads the many supplies donated by families and church groups which are meant to better the lives of the Jegdalek villagers.**

hands over their heart. I can say they totally trust us. We are excited to bring them news that we will bring a medical team on a regular basis."

Relations between the Americans and Egyptians also continue to flourish. "We are very excited to know and be friends with them; they are very energetic in this feeling. Last week, one of the Egyptian gate guards chased me down, ripped the patch off his shoulder and handed it to me. He does

not speak any English. I was touched that they feel this way toward us," reflected Pace.

Both humanitarian aid provided by 1-211th family members and visits from healthcare work continue to flow into Jegdalek. Globus Relief Fund, an international humanitarian aid organization, has stepped in and agreed to ship the goods to the region. After the girl's school is completed, construction on a boy's school is set to begin.



**1st Lt. Dante Fontenot holds Halima prior to her eye surgery.**



# Texans take F-16s to Poland for familiarization visit

By Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps

149th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LASK AIR BASE, Poland – "Whoosh" is the sound a fast-flying, high-performance aircraft such as the F-16 Fighting Falcon makes as it passes by in comic books.

"Wootsh" is pretty close to the pronunciation of the Polish city of Lodz, which cannot be precisely rendered on an American-English keyboard.

During a recent two-week period, the sound of an F-16 would become more familiar to Polish ears even as the pronunciation of Polish words would become more familiar to 93 members of the Texas Air National Guard.

The Texans arrived in Poland in early September to boost military cooperation and general goodwill between Poland and the United States. They were billeted at the Grand Hotel in Lodz, about 20 miles from Lask.

The Guardsmen belong to the 149th Fighter Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. They went to Lask Air Base, Poland, to help members of this country's air force understand U.S. Air Force procedures in operating and sustaining the F-16 Fighting Falcon.

"The key word is 'familiarize,'" emphasized Maj. Mike Mitchell, the wing's state partnership program manager.

Poland is purchasing 48 F-16s and expects to receive the first ones in late 2006. Although the National Guard has no role in the sale of the Lockheed-Martin aircraft, it has stepped to the forefront in international relations through the State Partnership



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps

**F-16C Fighting Falcons of the 149th Fighter Wing wait out a rainstorm while on the ramp of Lask Air Base, Poland.**

Program. The program matches state units with foreign nations to help them modernize their military and improve civilian-military relations.

Actually, Texas was paired with the Czech Republic, and Illinois with Poland. However, things turned out differently.

"The 149th was supposed to go to the

Czech Republic a couple of years ago, but that fell through," Mitchell explained. "And Illinois' 183rd Fighter Wing was on an Aerospace Expeditionary Forces deployment this year. So we were asked if we could go to Poland, and we said 'Yes.'"

The Texas fighter wing thereby became involved in Sentry White Falcon, funded by

the European Command Joint Contact Team Program supporting the USAF-Polish air force transition initiative. This was the first trip to Poland by the Texans but only one of a number of events involving both United States and Polish air forces personnel in this country over the next couple of years.

The contingent from the 149th Fighter Wing included 14 pilots, all having at least 1,000 hours of flying under their belts and all qualified as F-16 instructor-pilots. As a fighter training unit under the Air Education and Training Command, the wing provides F-16 basic and refresher training courses to active-duty Air Force and Air Force Reserve Command as well as Air National Guard pilots in training. Although the pilots were not training other pilots while in Poland, their experience in teaching others about the F-16 came in handy during their stay there.

"We want to familiarize pilots selected earlier for schooling in the United States with the procedures for operation of its F-16s and the ones used in NATO," said Col. Adam Swierkocz, commander of the 32nd Air Base at Lask, one of the two major Polish air force units. "We want them to see the way of doing things before and after flight briefings and to get to know the rules of flight planning. It is also important for us to prepare our technical personnel."

Thirty-six Polish air force pilots converged on Lask to participate in the familiarization event. They got a close look at the F-16s and a ride in the back seat of one. The Texans flew five F-16Cs and one F-16D (two-seater) to Lask, and the Poles brought in four MiG-29s and four Su-22M4s. Two TS-11 Iskra (Spark) trainers, already assigned to Lask, also participated in the event.

In small numbers the aircraft took part in dissimilar maneuvers so that the Polish pilots



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bill Conner

**Maj. Chris Carlson of the 149th Fighter Wing situates himself in the back seat of a Polish aircraft with assistance from Lt. Grzegory Czubski at Lask Air Base, Poland.**

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FROM PAGE 12

## Training

could see what the F-16 could do, and the U.S. pilots could see what the Polish pilots could do.

According to Mitchell, familiarization covered operating procedures, communication procedures, and briefing and debriefing procedures.

"Their skills are very solid," said Col. Jack Presley, 182nd Operations Group commander. "We learned a lot from them, and they learned a lot from us."

"We both fly in a very dangerous environment," said Presley. "The key is to be very flexible to react to any changes that can occur in air combat."

The F-16 received praise from the Poles who rode in it.

"I thought it was a great airplane," said Capt. Arkadiusz Kurkiewicz, one of the MiG-21 pilots. "Now I know that it is true."

The F-16D provided familiarization flights not only to Polish pilots but also to some VIPs, such as two Polish generals and the U.S. ambassador to Poland. Some Texas pilots also received backseat rides in the Polish aircraft. In the final tally, the Texans had flown 76 sorties. These included 18 rides for the Poles. The Polish pilots provided 13 rides.

While supporting the F-16 operations, the Texas maintainers became acquainted with their counterparts on Lask. The most obvious difference they noticed was that U.S. non-commissioned officers could take initiative and make decisions that the Polish reserve for their officers.

"They make decisions at higher levels than



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Justin D. Pyle

**Polish and American pilots walk out to the parking area where F-16 Fighting Falcon of the 149th Fighter Wing, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, sit alongside Polish MIG-29 Fulcrums at Lask Air Base, Poland, Sept. 14, 2004. Texas Air National Guard members were in Poland to familiarize members of the Polish Air Force with the F-16 capabilities.**

we do," said Capt. Eric Cox, the wing's maintenance officer. "They were very inquisitive, very interested in how we do things."

Some of the specialties represented by the 149th Fighter Wing included logistics, operations, security forces, safety, avionics, elec-

trical systems, life support, egress, munitions, weapons, flightline maintenance, arresting barrier operation, aviation ground equipment, fuels, hydraulics, supply and technical support.

The Texans and the Poles worked together

not only on an organizational level but also on a personal level. Billeting at the hotel in Lodz required long bus rides but allowed to foreign visitors opportunities to enjoy Polish food, culture ... and the hospitality of the Polish people.

"People from both sides got on really well," Swierkocz said. "They all understood the purpose of the exercise and tried to use their time - work time as well as free time - in the best way."

"Poland Night" and "Texan Night" provided special opportunities for the members of the two air forces to mingle. On the first night, the Poles offered their guests some of their traditional fare; on the second night, the Texans offered their hosts a taste of Tex-Mex cuisine.

"Nothing could replace the direct contact resulting from our visit here," Col. Presley said.

"I hope two things came out of this," added Mitchell. "That we are their friends, and that we can help."

Col. John Nichols, 149th Fighter Wing commander, said the visit met or exceeded all expectations.

"We anticipate that we'll be invited back to continue this process for both the U.S. Air Force and the Polish air force," Nichols said. "They liked how we communicated, worked together and familiarized the Polish air force and the F-16 and our flying process."

"People are people everywhere, with the same concerns and needs, no matter what country we come from," Nichols continued. "It's interesting to meet a person who was once a potential adversary, and then we come to find out our similarities far outnumber our differences."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bill Conner

**Maintainers of the 149th Fighter Wing explain some of their practices to their counterparts in the Polish Air Force.**



# 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  
SMSgt 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/DSN 205-714-2699

176 WG  
Emily Derksen  
505 W. Northern Lights Blvd.  
Suite 108  
Anchorage, AK 99503-2552  
Office/DSN 907-264-5346

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

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

187FW  
Sharon Hubbert  
5187 Selma Hwy.  
Montgomery, AL 36108-4824  
Office/DSN: 334-394-7119/  
358-9119

**Arkansas**  
SFC Mary Myers  
Camp Robinson  
North Little Rock, AR 72119  
Office/DSN: (501) 212-4102 /  
962-4102 or 1-(800) 446-4645

188 FW  
Eva R. Patton, CIV/FAM  
Family Readiness Support  
Coordinator  
188FW AIR NATIONAL GUARD  
4850 Leigh Avenue  
Fort Smith, AR 72903-6096  
Office/DSN: 479-573-5167/  
778-5167

189AW  
Juanita Owens  
189th AW Family Program  
112 CMSGT Williams Drive  
Little Rock AFB, AR 72099-4802

**Arizona**  
State Family Program Director  
CW4 Jan Finney  
5636 E. McDowell Rd.  
Phoenix, AZ 85008-3495  
Office/DSN: (602) 267-2593/  
853-2593 or 1-(800) 233-7758

161 ARW  
Glen Klassen  
3200 E Old Tower Rd.  
Phoenix, AZ. 85034-7263  
Office/DSN: 602-302-9094/  
853-9094

162 FW  
Jolene Helt  
1650 E Perimeter Way  
Tucson, AZ  
Office/DSN: 520-295-6566/  
844-6566

**California**  
State Family Program Director  
Steven Read  
CAJS-FP Box 54  
9800 Goethe  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
Office/DSN: (916) 854-3252/  
466-3252 or 1-(800) 449-9662

129 RQW  
Carolann Wunderlin  
HQ 129th Rescue Wing  
Family Readiness  
Building 680 Macon Road  
California Air National Guard  
Moffett Federal Airfield, CA 94035

144FW  
Barbara Draughon  
5323 E. McKinley Ave.  
Fresno, CA 93727-2199  
Office/DSN 59-454-5383/  
839-5383

146 AW  
Jo Ann Bellen  
100 Mulcahey Dr.  
Port Hueneme, CA 93041  
Office/DSN 805-986-7468/  
893-7468

163ARW  
Debbie Hambrick  
1620 Graeber Street  
March ARB, CA 92502  
Office/DSN 909-743-8380/  
447-2165

**Colorado**  
State Family Program Director  
Frank Enos  
6848 S. Revere Parkway  
Centennial, CO 80112  
Office/DSN: 303-677-8844  
877-8844 or 1(866) 333-8844

140 WG  
Mandy Romero  
Buckley Air Force Base  
140 S Aspen St Stop 37  
Aurora, CO 60505  
Office/DSN:303-677-9116/  
877-9116

**Connecticut**  
State Family Program Director  
Kimberly Hoffman  
Connecticut National Guard  
Office of Family Programs  
360 Broad Street  
Hartford, CT 06105-3795  
Office/DSN: 860-493-2745/  
636-0745 or 1-(800)858-2677

103 FW  
Donna Rivera  
100 Nicholson Rd.E  
Granby, CT 19950  
Office/DSN: 860-292-2730/  
220-2730

**Washington DC**  
State Family Program Director  
SGM Patricia Williamson  
2001 East Capitol St.  
Washington, DC 20003  
Office/DSN: 202-685-9826/  
325-9826

113 FW  
Connie Moore  
Family Readiness and Support  
Office (FRSO)  
Room 106  
3252 E. Perimeter Road  
Andrews AFB, MD 20762-5411  
Office/DSN: 240-857-9746

**Deleware**  
State Family Program Director  
LTC Willie Barnes  
1st Regiment Rd.  
Wilmington, DE 19808-2191  
Office/DSN: 302-326-7050/  
440-7050 or 1-(877) 482-7333

166 AW  
Yolanda DiVirgilio  
2600 Spruance Drive  
New Castle, DE 19720  
Office/DSN: 302-323-3327/  
445-7327

**Florida**  
State Family Program Director  
CW4 Bobbi Hall  
DCSPER-FR, P.O. Box 1008  
St. Augustine, FL 32085-1008  
Office/DSN: 904-823-0360 /  
860-7360 or 1-(800) 226-0360

125 FW  
Beth Eifert  
FL Air National Guard 125 FW/FR  
14300 FANG Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32218  
Office/DSN: 904-741-7027/  
641-7027

**Georgia**  
State Family Program Director  
LTC LaNita (Rene) Kuhn  
935 E. Confederate Avenue  
S.E., Building 21  
Atlanta, GA 30316-0965  
Office/DSN: 404-624-6454/  
338-6454

116ACW  
Eileen Byrd  
280 First St  
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See LIST on Page 15



# Consolidated Support Maintenance Shop earns ISO Registration

**By Cpt. Randall Rogers**

Ohio National Guard

NEWARK, Ohio – On October 19th, the Ohio Army National Guard's Consolidated Support Maintenance Shop in Newark was awarded ISO 9001:2000 registration.

The International Organization of Standards establishes business practice standards accepted world-wide, and registration is limited to organizations that pass a series of detailed audits to determine compliance. From February of 2004, the CSMS passed both internal and external audits conducted by Perry Johnson Consulting, Inc., and in August passed a certification audit conducted by Perry Johnson Registrars.

Very few military or governmental organizations achieve this status, which puts the CSMS on par with manufacturing and service corporations in the civilian sector.

The Ohio CSMS employees 73 dual-status technicians and provides Direct Support level maintenance for the ground equipment of the Ohio Army National Guard.

Awarding the certification was Mr. Terry Boboige, President of Perry Johnson Registrars. Also attending were The Adjutant General of Ohio Maj.Gen. Gregory Wayt, Asst. Adjutant General for Army Brig. Gen. Ronald Young, the State Command Sgt. Maj. William Gilliam, the J-4 Col. Michael McHenry, and the Surface Maintenance Manager Col. Daniel Tack.

Certification on behalf of the CSMS was accepted by the general supervisor Lt. Col. Glenn Wirth and Asst. General Supervisor Cpt. Randel Rogers.

Wayt further recognized the accomplishment by presenting Wirth with a bronze eagle to display in the shop office.



Photo by Cpt. Randall Rogers

**Members of Ohio Army National Guard's Consolidated Support Maintenance Shop in Newark was awarded ISO 9001:2000 registration.**

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# Down and dirty: Public affairs Soldiers are 'Soldiers first'

**Spc. Matthew Wester**

Texas National Guard

CAMP BLANDING, Fla. - A photographer crouches in the sand along a line of Soldiers shooting M-16 rifles. He focuses and struggles to get just the right shot. The Soldiers are members of the Army National Guard... so is the photographer.

The 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, which includes Army National Guard photojournalists and broadcast journalists from Kentucky and Tennessee, is at Camp Blanding covering the annual training of the 48th Brigade Combat Team of the Georgia Army National Guard.

Soldiers assigned to public affairs detachments take photos, write stories, shoot and produce video packages, and act as liaisons between civilian media and the military. Their main objective is to tell the Army's story.

However, journalism is not their only mission. The 133rd is also participating in an exercise evaluation that tests common soldiering skills.

"We're out here doing common task training as well as covering our public affairs assignments," said Spc. Emily K. Slusher, journalist from the 133rd.

"It is a challenge to do both, but we are hoping to find a happy medium and learn more about each one," she said. "At Camp Blanding we're rolling around in the dirt, talking to people that do this everyday, and getting a good idea of what our job is going to be when we deploy."

Deployment is a possibility for almost any National Guard unit including public affairs detachments.

"This is very practical," said Capt. Daniel L. Graves, executive officer for the 133rd. "We all expect to be deployed."

The unit was responsible for occupying an operations site, defending the unit's area of operations, and conducting tactical road marches, Graves explained.

He said the 133rd is being graded by four observer-controllers who evaluate the unit's tactical skills.

"We've surprised the observer-controllers with our proficiency," Graves said. "We have a wealth of soldiering knowledge in our unit."

They weren't the only ones to get a big surprise during the field exercise.

"A snake slid under the front site post of my rifle," said Sgt. Jon D. Wilke, non-commissioned officer in charge of the unit's print journalism team. "I jerked for a second and then I let it slide by."

The Soldiers had more to contend with than just the local wildlife.

Four members of the 340th Training

Support Battalion, U.S. Army Reserves, based in Louisville, Kentucky, posed as enemy insurgents and tried to attack the 133rd's camp.

All members of the MPAD used electronic Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System gear which uses a system of lasers and sensors to register whether they had been hit by laser-simulated enemy fire.

The opposition forces from the 340th encountered more than they bargained for when they attacked.

"We set up a perimeter with early warning devices that would whistle or rattle to give us prior warning to a potential enemy threat," said Master Sgt. Robert F.A. Michaud, public affairs chief of the 133rd.

In addition to fancy booby traps, the MPAD Soldiers constructed two fighting positions, dug four foxholes, and camouflaged their unit's vehicles with netting,

Graves said.

They spent a total of 96 hours in the field living like grunts.



**Journalist Spc. Emily Slusher puts down her camera and focuses on finding the opposition forces.**



Photos by Staff Sgt. Ken Walker

**Spc. Charles Westmoreland, photographs Canadian Army Reserve soldiers during weapons training.**

"This is not like what we normally do," said Sgt. 1st Class John W. Kibler, the senior broadcast non-commissioned officer of the 133rd. "It reminds us we are in the United

States Army and that we are soldiers."

Capt. Graves agrees.

"We wanted MPAD Soldiers to be Soldiers again," he said. "We're all Soldiers first."



**When not defending his base camp, Spc. Bill Jones, (right) collects biographical information from soldiers for use in their hometown news releases.**