

THE ON GUARD

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Medics get some tactical training before heading to Iraq. Page 5.

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National Guard celebrates 368 years of service this month. Page 4.

Life on the skids



Kentucky Guardsmen serve at the bottom of the world. Page 8.

Putting the freeze on the bad guys



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

(Above) This mountainous terrain in northern Vermont is similar to the ground that Army and Air National Guard aviators fly over at night, while patrolling part of the U.S.-Canadian border during Operation Winter Freeze. (Left) Vermont Army National Guardsmen Sgt. Tony Wasilewski, a crew chief, checks out a Blackhawk air ambulance helicopter at South Burlington following an orientation flight near the U.S.-Canadian border.

Guard members from five states secure the American-Canadian border during the winter

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

SWANTON, Vt. – The four "dots" depicting his rank on the shoulders of his olive drab flight suit tell you quite a lot about one of the new sheriffs in town. His rank insignia, as well as his Senior Army Aviator wings and his gray hair, tell you that Chief Warrant Officer 4 Carl Scherff is one of the Army National Guard's seasoned helicopter pilots.

This Scherff lives in Mississippi. He flies helicopters for the Tennessee Army Guard. And he has gotten to know an eastern stretch of the U.S.-Canadian border extremely well while flying patrols with night optical devices in the

dark of November and early December nights during Operation Winter Freeze.

Scherff is one of the seasoned National Guard aviators from 17 states who are helping the U.S. Border Patrol look for "special interest aliens" and weapons of mass destruction that might be smuggled from Canada into this country across a 260-mile expanse between the eastern tip of the Great Lake Ontario and the New Hampshire-Maine border.

The nightly patrols flown by Army Guard helicopters and Air Guard airplanes, as well as interstate checkpoints that active Army troops are helping to man farther inside the Border Patrol's Swanton Sector, are part of a concerted

effort to capture or keep out illegal aliens from Canada and countries known to harbor and train terrorists. And those who are anxious to do more damage to this country's people and property.

The U.S.-Canadian border may be one of the most open and friendly international borders in the world, but people like Vermont Army Guard Brig. Gen. Thomas Shailor and the Swanton Sector's Deputy Chief Mark Henry know that not everyone who wants to come across is friendly to the United States.

They are pooling their resources in an effort

See FREEZE On Page 6

Chief announces recruiting and retention bonuses

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The chief of the National Guard Bureau is bearing gifts of gold to some Citizen-Soldiers in the Army National Guard during this holiday season.

The gold is in the form of substantial increases in enlistment and reenlistment bonuses that LTG H Steven Blum announced at the Pentagon on Dec. 16. Some of the bonuses will be increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

The increased bonuses for this fiscal year are earmarked for new Guard Soldiers who have never served in uniform, for people who join the Army Guard after serving on active duty, and for Guard Soldiers who agree to reenlist

"We're not talking about one weekend a month and two weeks a year and college tuition. We're talking about service to the nation."

– LTG H Steven Blum

for six years.

Blum promised many Army Guard Soldiers he met with during recent trips to Iraq and Afghanistan that he would be announcing the increased bonuses this month and that they would be impressed.

Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers make up nearly 40 percent of the 148,000 troops in Iraq, and 42,000 Guard Soldiers are serving in Iraq and Kuwait, officials reported. Another 8,200 are serving in Afghanistan. Blum said that

approximately 120,000 Guard Soldiers have been on active duty at home or abroad at any given time since terrorists attacked this country on Sept. 11, 2001.

The increased bonuses represent one effort to improve the Army Guard's recruiting and retention efforts during the global war on terrorism and build the Army Guard back up to its authorized strength of 350,000 troops.

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From the Chief ...

(Editor's Note: The following is a 2004 holiday message from LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau.)

In this special holiday season, I'd like to offer my sincere best wishes to the Guard family -- our force of Army and Air Guardsmen and civilians -- for your remarkable commitment to protect freedom and defend the United States.

This year there will be over 120,000 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen who are away from their families during the holidays. We must all focus on the immense sacrifice, commitment and selfless service of these men and women who are all volunteers, serving in the National Guard. As we gather with our own

families this season, our thoughts and our prayers are with them.

Both at home and abroad, you give our nation priceless gifts through your service -- our cherished freedoms and the opportunity for us all to live in peace.

I'm enormously proud not only of our service members, but their families and employers who support and encourage their dedication to our nation. I'm honored to serve with this magnificent team and wish each of you a happy holiday season and blessings for a prosperous New Year.

H Steven Blum
Lieutenant General, USA
Chief, National Guard Bureau



Blum

New rules for National Guard, Reserve promotions

By Jim Tice

Army Times staff writer

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Guard and Reserve officers of the basic branches no longer will compete against each other for promotion.

Beginning Jan. 1, the Army promotion list competitive category used by mandatory reserve promotion boards will be split into three components: National Guard, Army Reserve and Army Reserve element of the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program.

In the past, these officers competed against each other despite differing selection requirements for each of the three categories.

The resulting Army promotion list for the basic branches and Judge Advocate General's Corps would then typically have too many selections in one category, and not enough in one or both of the others.

The policy change allows the annual boards that meet in St. Louis to select to the requirements of each component.

The Army Reserve part of the new system includes members of Troop Program Units, the Individual Mobilization Augmentee program, and the Individual Ready Reserve.

Full-time Army Reserve officers will compete only against other members of the Active Guard and Reserve program.

Civilian and military education remains a requirement for promotion in the reserves, according to officials in the Office of the G1.

The Officer Basic Course and a bachelor's degree is required for advancement to captain; the Officer Advanced Course for promotion to major; at least 50 percent of the Command and General Staff Officer's Course for lieutenant colonel, and all of CGSOC for colonel.

According to the 2005 schedule posted by the Reserve Selection Board Secretariat in St. Louis, the majors board will meet March 8-April 1; the colonel board July 12-Aug. 5;

the lieutenant colonel board Sept. 13-Oct. 7, and the captains board Nov. 7-18.

"There will be no change in when and where we're going to hold the boards," said an official.

A December 2003 policy change designed to streamline Reserve officer promotions, allows mobilized Army Reserve officers on recommended lists to be promoted immediately when matched against a position for the next higher grade in the Reserve force structure.

Promotable National Guard officers can be promoted immediately when appointed to a vacant higher-ranking "federally recognized" position in their state.

The policy change also lifts restrictions that linked promotions for mobilized officers to vacancies in their mobilized unit. Because of stop-loss, vacancies rarely occur during mobilization.

Chaplain offers guidance for troops and family during the holidays

Chaplain, Col. John B. Ellington, Jr.
Chief, National Guard Chaplain Service

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The holiday season can be the most wonderful time of the year. It can also be the most stressful time, especially in light of National Guard mobilizations. We are currently at our highest level of mobilization since World War II. Family separation during the holidays makes the normal stress even more intense.

Families often pass down traditions as well as develop new ones for the holidays. When there is an empty chair at the table, it is not the same as previous years. For our loved ones deployed and in harm's way, there is a deep sense of sadness because they are not sitting at the table.

My son was 18 years old when he joined the National Guard. During that Thanksgiving holiday, he was in technical school. We had the traditional family meal, but his chair was empty. When he called that day and said he had pizza at the student recreation center, the sadness became even worse. We all had a tear in our eye that day. Separation is equally difficult for those deployed as it is for those left behind. So what do we do this year?

First, we need to be realistic and realize it

will be difficult for everyone who is separated during the holidays.

Second, we need to talk openly about the separation. It is important that our families understand why we serve. We need to tell our loved ones why we wear the uniform. Children especially need to know why mom or dad is gone. My family never talked about being in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines. Instead, they always referred to someone being in "The Service". This concept of serving our country is powerful, and we must tell that story to our family.

Third, it is okay to express our sadness and our emotions with others.

Fourth, it is very important to be creative in drawing on every resource possible to help us through these stressful times. Family support groups, spiritual resources, community organizations, and friends (especially those in similar situations) can play unique roles in providing comfort and encouragement during the periods of separation.

In tapping our spiritual resources, remember we are not alone! Prayer does serve to connect us with those we love. Even when we are not with our loved ones, God is.

We in the Guard have been leaving our homes and communities since 1636 to defend our way of life. We will continue to



Ellington

do so and we will get through this year with the help of God and each other.

Whether at home or in theater, the Army and Air National Guard chaplains and chaplain assistants are there for you, praying for you, helping in any way they can. We wish everyone holiday greetings in whatever tradition you are accustomed, and we pray for the day when the world is truly at peace.

Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen Guard the holidays

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – NORAD, to the delight of kids young and old, has a terrific Christmas Eve tradition of tracking Santa Claus as he flies across the heavens, bound for the United States and the homes of those who believe they have been good enough to receive another holiday visit.

Fact is, this will be the 50th year that the North American Aerospace Defense Command has monitored St. Nick's progress, said spokesman Michael Kucharek. Call it what you will, Christmas magic or yuletide fantasy, the North American Aerospace Defense Command never fails to please.

Santa, however, is known to be a friendly sort and is the only one who NORAD and the men and women of the National Guard are willing to give unfettered access to the United States. Other friends are welcome to come through ports of entry. Those who could be considered a threat to the American people are strongly encouraged to keep out.

The National Guard also has a tradition, dating back 368 years this month, of defending our homeland. Army and Air National Guard troops are on alert this season, in the name of homeland security, to help make sure that terrorists do not get into this country and deliver any devastating holiday surprises.

"Both at home and abroad, you give our nation priceless gifts through your service – our cherished freedoms and the opportunity for us all to live in peace," LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said in his holiday message.

He thanked this country's force of Army and Air Guard members and civilians "for your remarkable commitment to protect freedom and defend the United States."

In the Northeast, for example, Army Guard pilots in helicopters and Air Guard aviators in twin-engine airplanes are flying night patrols over a stretch of the U.S.-Canadian border while helping the U.S. Border Patrol detect, deter and monitor "special interest aliens" attempting to sneak across the border, perhaps with weapons of mass destruction, along eastern New York, Vermont and New Hampshire. It is called Operation Winter Freeze.

The intent is to keep illegal aliens bent on destruction from reaching such American cities as New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Washington.

In Alaska, National Guard members at Fort Greely are staffing a new missile defense system designed to knock out incoming enemy missiles aimed at virtually any part of North America.

This is the first holiday season that the Alaska National Guard's ground-based, midcourse missile defense battalion is operating, said Alaska Guard spokesman Maj. Mike Haller.

This is also the first holiday season that the Alaska Air Guard is fully engaged in defending its turf against enemy airplanes. The Guard officially took over the Air Force's Regional Air Operation Center at Elmendorf Air Force Base on Oct. 1.

The new 176th Air Control Squadron, with support from the Canadian Forces, is conducting 24-hour air sovereignty and theater air control operations with the 11th Air Force.

Air Guard pilots are either flying jet fighters or standing ready to intercept unidentified aircraft that fly into the airspace of every major population area. The Air Guard does not announce when or where it is flying these combat air

patrols for security reasons, but the planes are up there or ready to scramble up there in a hurry.

National Guard and civilian agencies it supports intend to make it very clear that this is not a good time of year for bad people to show up unannounced; nor is there any good time of year.

"We want to send a message to the special interest aliens," said Mark Henry, deputy chief of the Border Patrol's Swanton Sector that oversees the New York-New Hampshire northern border. The Border Patrol is the lead federal agency for Winter Freeze.

"We want them to think there is a strong certainty of arrest, prosecution and deportation if they try to come through the Swanton Sector," Henry added.

Meanwhile, 32 National Guard civil support teams and a dozen new Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or

High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Packages, CERFPs for short, are ready to roll out across the country in case they need to help civilian authorities and large numbers of people deal with weapons of mass destruction.

The 22-member civil support teams are primed to check out disaster sites for deadly agents that could harm other emergency responders. The CERFPs, each with approximately 100 members, have been formed during the past year to provide medical aid and decontaminate large numbers of victims. They will also be given the tools and the training to locate and extricate victims from the rubble of damaged buildings.

Guarding the homeland is serious business during what is a joyous time of year. But National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are doing, or are ready to do, whatever is required to keep America safe for the holidays.

CERFPs remain on call to defend the homeland

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – What does the United States have this holiday season in the way of homeland security that it did not have one year ago? How has the National Guard improved the security blanket over this entire country?

You can sum it up in five letters: C-E-R-F-P.

Eleven Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Packages in as many states have been organized, trained and evaluated as being ready to help the citizens of this country survive the effects of a weapon of mass destruction in the 12 months since Americans observed the 2003 Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah holidays.

"That is a remarkable achievement.

You should be proud of what you, the National Guard, have done," LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, has told National Guard leaders from across the country.

"This country is safer because of what you have done."

These 11 teams, Guard officials said, in conjunction with 32 Civil Support Teams, have given Americans an extra blanket of security that stretches coast to coast.

Blum has assured people across this country that these teams are on call, ready to support civilian authorities and agencies every day and every night.

The 32 Civil Support Teams each have 22 members who are trained to test disaster sites for deadly chemical, biological and radiological agents immediately after an incident and advise emergency responders - police, firefighters and medical personnel – on appropriate response measures.

The 11 CERFP teams each have about 100 people who assist the Civil Support Teams by locating and decontaminating victims in a relatively short time.

Teams are strategically located across this land in California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, the state of Washington and West Virginia. A year ago the National Guard's CERFPs was only an idea.

"These regional assets ... are forward deployed throughout the United States and available to the nation 24 hours a day".

– LTG H Steven Blum

They have come together in a remarkably short time. The operational planning, which began in September 2003, called for the 12 teams to be trained and ready to roll by Oct. 1.

But that timetable was moved up two months, to Aug. 1, because the threat of a possible catastrophic event - perhaps to disrupt the November general elections. Ten of the 12 teams made that new deadline.

One of the things that helped, team members explained, was while the CERFP teams may be new as a National Guard concept, they are not brand new units. They are made up from chemical, medical and security

units already existing in their states.

Those elements are being leveraged to perform a new mission. The teams were not created from scratch.

"These CERFPs provide a regional response capability comprised of existing traditional Army and Air National Guard units jointly organized to rapidly respond to a weapon of mass destruction incident by performing mass casualty and patient

decontamination, assisting with medical response and providing a security element," Blum explained late in the year.

"The power of the CERFPs is that we did not create new units," Blum said.

"These regional assets ... are forward deployed throughout the United States and available to the nation 24 hours a day. Additionally, and most importantly, they are deployable capabilities, fully available to combatant commanders."

Come 2005, the CERFPs will be bolstered with personnel equipped with sensing devices and trained to find and extract victims from the rubble of buildings at a weapons of mass destruction incident site.

"In the months ahead, additional Guard engineer personnel will receive training and equipment to be able to locate and extract victims from a contaminated environment," the Guard Bureau chief promised.

That is just one more way, Blum has said, that National Guard members in the 54 states and territories "make a difference in America every single day."

Happy Birthday: National Guard Celebrates 368 years

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Active Army Lt. Col. Greg Rist was not about to let little things like a neck brace or a damp, foggy morning along the Potomac River keep him from taking part in a celebration for the National Guard's 368th birthday on Dec. 10.

"It can be painful in weather like this, but we're all one team. That's why I came to this," said the 50-year-old Rist after enduring some discomfort to join a couple of hundred National Guard Bureau people who walked or ran a mile or two at Fort Leslie J. McNair in Washington, D.C., to observe the occasion that Friday morning.

Rist explained he underwent surgery on Oct. 1 to have three discs removed from his spine. He was one of the birthday walkers because it is still too painful to run, added the Army liaison officer assigned to the Army Guard's Readiness Center in Arlington, Va.

"Everyone in our Policy and Analysis Branch team came over here," Rist added. "That's why it was important for me to join them."

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, hosted the run and walk near his Quarters 1 home at Fort McNair as well as a cake-cutting ceremony at the Readiness Center for the second straight year.

The Guard's anniversary as this country's oldest military force actually occurred on Monday, Dec. 13, Blum reminded both of his audiences. That, he explained, is when people will be sworn in as new Minutemen, members of the Army and Air National Guard, across the country.

That is when the newest Guard men and



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Gail Braymen

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, leads a Dec. 10 fun run at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., to observe the National Guard's 368th birthday. Blum is wearing a blue cap. Command Sgt. Maj. John Leonard Jr., the Guard Bureau's senior enlisted advisor, is to the right of Blum.

women will hear how the National Guard was born in 1636 - when the Massachusetts General Court ordered that three regiments

be formed from militia units in 15 towns to protect settlers against the threat presented by the Pequot Indians. The North, South and East regiments totaled approximately 1,500 Citizen-Soldiers, according to Michael Doubler's 2001 book "I Am the Guard."

Thomas Hall, the fourth assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, joined Blum and other Army and Air Guard leaders at the Readiness Center to wish the nearly 460,000-member National Guard a happy birthday.

"The National Guard is ideally positioned for homeland defense and to fight America's wars," Hall said. "I don't agree with those who say you ought to do one or the other. You've got to be able to do both, and you are doing that in magnificent fashion."

Hall also encouraged Guard members to keep on striving to persuade Congress and the Bush Administration to continue improving the benefits for Guard people who are being mobilized for the global war on terrorism and for other missions at home and abroad.

Blum pointed out that more than 120,000 Guard members are serving in 44 countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, the Sinai, and at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba during this holiday season.

"It is my view that when a Guard member or a reservist is mobilized, the benefits for them and their families should be the very same as [for] active duty [personnel]," Hall said. "We need to continue expanding and

working on these benefits."

The time is ripe to do that, he maintained, because more than 50 changes in benefits and other things for the Guard and Reserve were made in the 2005 Defense Authorization Act. "That's probably the largest [number] in a quarter of a century," Hall said.

"What that tells me is that we're being handed on a golden platter the opportunity to continue changing with this Congress and this administration things that we need to," he added.

"You should be very, very proud of what we have done and of what we are doing. Because what we are doing is unprecedented," said Blum after pointing out that nine Army Guard combat brigades have been committed to the war on terrorism so far and that the Air Guard has flown 90 percent of the combat air patrols over this country since terrorists attacked America on Sept. 11, 2001.

"Your National Guard is alive," the Guard Bureau chief added. "There is no longer a question of whether we are relevant. We are absolutely essential. This nation cannot defend its borders and its citizens without the Army and Air National Guard."

Blum said that swearing in the new recruits across the country on Dec. 13 "will focus everybody's attention on recruiting and about bringing in new Minutemen and women" as the National Guard observes 368 years of defending America.



Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Cook

Many hands gripped the sword used to cut the cake on Dec. 10 as (in front, from left), Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall, LTG H Steven Blum and Sgt. Elizabeth Adesida, the youngest enlisted Soldier serving at Guard Bureau. (Back) Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, left, director of the Air National Guard, and Lt. Gen. Roger Schultz, right, director of the Army National Guard.

Let's get tactical: Medics train for future deployment to Iraq

By Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Texas Army National Guard

FORT POLK, La. – Treating a patient who has suffered a traumatic wound in a sterile environment can be very stressful. But trying to provide medical care for an injured person in the ice-cold rain, covered in thick mud and being shot at can be more than overwhelming.

For medics of the 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, this was business as usual as they conduct advanced trauma training at the Joint Readiness Training Center in preparation for their deployment to Iraq.

These Soldiers have just less than a month to refine their medical skills using training aides and simulated patients before they will have to treat real wounds inflicted on the battlefield.

Capt. James D. Clay, a medical officer of the JRTC Operations Group medical division in charge of trauma training, explained that 10 percent of combat casualties die before they get to a treatment facility and that the Army has prioritized treating wounded Soldiers on the battlefield.

"We're changing the way we do things from the past," Clay said. "We're now focused more on the frontline level of care for our Soldiers."

Clay added that the training is designed not only to evaluate the medics' proficiency on the required 12 individual medical treatment tasks, but also to provide them with more in-depth tactical training as well.

"The other area of the training taught to our medics is getting the medics used to operating with a security team when they are on their missions," Clay said. "We don't want our medics working in a dangerous situation without protection."

Staff Sgt. Jason O. Ramsey, a senior medic, is well aware for the need of this type of realistic training at the JRTC. He said is important to help prepare Soldiers properly so that they can train effectively and do the job for real.

Ramsey also stated that the training helps them identify



Army photo by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo

Sgt. Sabrina K. Pizzi (center) uses an Iraqi translator to calm down a distraught resident of a mock town during a medical training exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center located on Fort Polk, La. Pizzi is a member of the 111th Engineer Battalion, 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division.

deficiencies that they need to work on to ensure all their medics are up to speed on all of the tasks in which they need to be proficient.

"We don't have a simulated mission," Ramsey related. "Everything to us as medics is real-world, and the training that we perform is very important because it is someone's life that we're dealing with, and we take that seriously."

The crimson-red blood stains that remained on Spc. John L. Westbrook's hands after treating a "patient" with a simulated amputation under fire is made of a mixture of food dye and vinegar. However, he has seen the real thing, having treated the same type of wound in his civilian job as a firefighter. He is confident that he and the other medics

will do their jobs in Iraq.

"As medics, treating injured Soldiers is still our main priority," Westbrook said. "That is what we do, that is our calling."

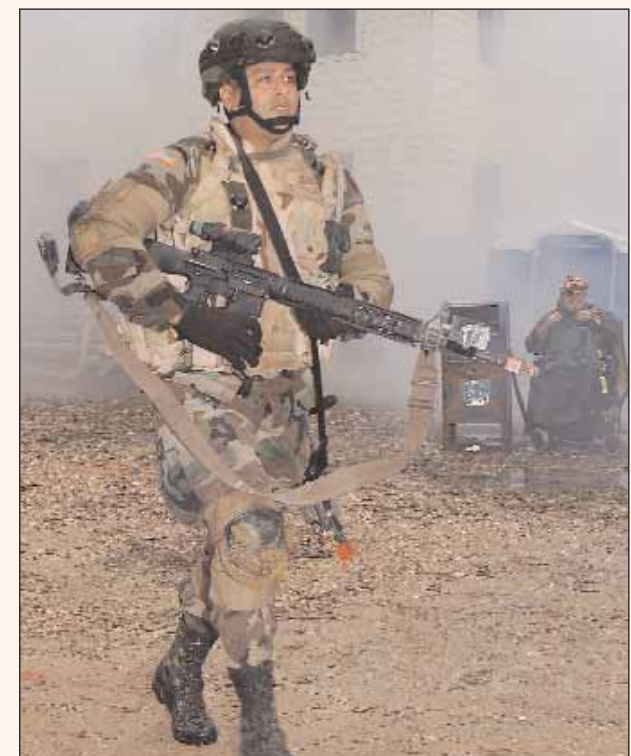
A hospital Emergency Medical Technician, Spc. Vivian E. Parker said that the training today was very realistic. She noted that the gunfire and having to interact with the civilians on the battlefield gave them an additional challenge that they all had to deal with.

Parker added that the training has given them a reality check on the mission ahead and the quality of care that they are expected to provide.

"I hope to take what we did here today and build on it and take the lessons learned and train on it and make ourselves better Soldiers," Parker said. "I want to help other Soldiers who put their life on the line, and if they fall, I want to be there to provide them the best care that I possibly can."



(Above) Soldiers of the 1st Battalion 509th Infantry (Airborne), role-playing as Special Forces operators, fight off an enemy attack alongside Soldiers of the 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division during a medical training exercise. (Right) Cpl. Gilbert D. Juarez patrols the area for enemy forces in a mock town where other medics are providing treatment for innocent civilians during a medical training exercise.



FROM PAGE 1

Freeze

to keep the bad people out and to break up sophisticated smuggling rings that are trying to get them in. The Border Patrol is overseeing the operation as the lead federal agency, and the U.S. Northern Command is participating at the Border Patrol's request.

Winter Freeze is a homeland defense operation that has been beefed up with National Guard assets for the nearly three months between the Nov. 2, 2004, presidential election and the Jan. 20, 2005, inauguration. But that is not its only purpose, officials explained.

"We started Operation Winter Freeze over a year ago," explained Henry. "It is not specifically tied to this election and inauguration season. Our primary concern is the overall security of the United States."

This is the time, however, that the National Guard is the most heavily engaged. Shailor, for example, is the military joint task force commander in charge of what is believed to be the largest concentration of Reconnaissance and Air Interdiction Detachment (RAID) OH-58 helicopters in National Guard history.

Five states have sent helicopters, pilots and ground personnel to the Vermont Army Guard's James D. Kneeland Flight Facility in South Burlington for the first rotation. Five more states are sending similar assets for the second rotation. They are coming from as far away as Georgia and Oklahoma.

Meanwhile, Air Guard crews from across the country are flying twin engine C-12 surveillance planes out of Syracuse in upstate New York.



Henry

The two types of National Guard aircraft are used for counter-drug operations. They are equipped to detect people and vehicles on the ground. They are now flying at night, it was explained, because that is when most

people try to cross the border illegally.

Their mission is to detect, deter and monitor that kind of activity, Shailor explained.

"The Guard has the right assets and the experienced people to do this mission," he said. "We have the right aircraft with the right surveillance systems on board and the radios that can communicate with personnel on the ground. It's the right mix and the right thing to do."

The helicopter pilots who are flying over the cold and sparsely populated border region are among the most experienced in the National Guard. They know what to look for.

"People act in predictable manners," said Scherff. "Deer hunters will wave at you. When people take off running, that tells you something. And people driving without their lights on is also not normal. People who don't have anything to hide don't run."

"If we see something, we may mark it and move on or we may maintain contact, whatever the Border Patrol wants us to do,"



Photo by Master SGT. Bob Haskell
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rollin Knifley from the Kentucky Army National Guard gets ready to lift off from South Burlington, Vt., in an OH-58 helicopter for an Operation Winter Freeze night patrol along the U.S.-Canadian border.

Scherff added.

So far, the early winter cold has been the biggest challenge for the pilots from the South.

"Our helicopters don't have heaters that are as efficient as the ones in the Vermont helicopters," explained Chief Warrant Officer 4 Gareth O'Bannon from Virginia. "It kind of makes you want to dress a little warmer."

Air Guard personnel are also helping Border Patrol intelligence people by recording information that officials hope will lead to arrests, convictions and deportations.

And Army Guard air ambulance personnel, members of the 86th Medical Company from South Burlington, Vt., and Westfield, Mass., are standing by with Blackhawk helicopters, ready to search for and rescue other Winter Freeze aviators or people working ground details, should misfortune come their way.

"We're able to fly day or night in any configurations we need to in order to get people out in case of trouble," said 1st Lt. Jesse Remy, the medevac leader. That unit gained a lot of experience during a full year of peacekeeping duty in Bosnia, he said. That mission ended last March.

The Border Patrol, which covers the U.S. borders between the ports of entry, can put a lot of agents on the ground, but it has limited air assets - two helicopters and a single-engine plane for the Swanton Sector, Henry explained.

"The Guard is filling in the holes," said Henry, a 30-year Border Patrol veteran who has come to respect the Guard personnel he has worked with in Vermont for many years. "Now we can have aircraft in the air every night. And we've been burning up a lot of overtime since 9-11. The Guard gives us some much-needed relief."

"We want to send a message to the special interest aliens," Henry said. "We want them to think there is a strong certainty of arrest,



Photo by Pfc. Jason Brace

Vermont Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Thomas Shailor commands the joint military task force for Operation Winter Freeze. "It's homeland defense, and that's what we do," he said.

prosecution deportation if they try to come through the Swanton Sector.

That stretch of the border is critical, it was explained, because of its proximity to Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec City, Canada's most heavily populated region, and the direct access along Interstates 87 and 91 to U.S. east coast cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia and, yes, Washington.

The idea is that Canada could be a staging ground for terrorists to enter and attack the United States, especially since Montreal has one of Canada's largest concentrations of Muslim people, about 100,000. And Montreal is easily accessible by air and sea to special interest aliens.

The fact that the border is vulnerable was hammered home on Dec. 2 when the Royal

Canadian Mounted Police reported that a bomb apparently made from 16 sticks of dynamite had damaged a support column for a Hydro Quebec major power line that serves part of Boston.

The explosion on Canadian soil, a mile and a half northeast from the border town of Norton, Vt., did minimal damage and did not disrupt the flow of electricity. But an unclassified report stated that "authorities do not believe at this time that it was an amateur job."

The military force for Operation Winter Freeze is the fourth such joint task force to be commanded by a National Guard general.

Shailor, earned his spurs flying Hueys in South Vietnam.

Border security is a hush-hush topic for a Vermont team

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

SWANTON, Vt. – Senior Airman Sheila Sternisha finally has something in common with her husband Joe when it comes to talking about her work. She can't talk about it.

The conversation might go something like this:

Sheila: "Hi, honey. What have you been doing?"

Joe: "I can't tell you. What have you been doing?"

Sheila: "I can't tell you either."

That may be simplifying things a bit, but there are some things the Sternishas can't share with each other in the quiet of the evening, even though they have been married for seven years. That's because much of what both members of the Vermont Air National Guard are doing these days is secret.

Security forces Capt. Joe Sternisha, his wife explained, has served as an antiterrorist force protection officer during his recent deployments to such places as Qatar and Iraq. He has not been able to tell Sheila anything about what he has been doing while he has been away, she added.

Sheila Sternisha is on a five-member Air Guard team from the 158th Fighter Wing in Burlington, Vt., that is helping the U.S. Border Patrol's intelligence section at the Swanton Sector's headquarters during Operation Winter Freeze.

"I think it's very exciting," said Sheila about the part she is playing in defending the American homeland after working for 25 years as a dental technician. "I didn't know there were so many bad people in the world," added the mature woman who joined the Air Guard in July 2003 after a 17-year break in service. She had originally served for more than six years in the active Army.

"I came back because of the terrorist attacks and to get a military retirement. Now I want to go to intelligence school," said Sheila who has been helping ease the Border Patrol's intelligence workload since early November as part of Joint Task Force Winter Freeze.

That is an ongoing operation that the Border Patrol is emphasizing from November through January, with lots of help from the National Guard, to more closely monitor the U.S.-Canadian border from eastern New York to the New Hampshire-Maine border and keep out or capture special interest



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

This team from the Vermont Air National Guard is supporting the U.S. Border Patrol's intelligence section in Swanton, Vt., during Operation Winter Freeze. In front, from left, are 1st Lt. Shawn Legonidec, Senior Airman Sheila Sternisha, and Tech. Sgt. Crystal Farnsworth. In back, from left, are Tech. Sgt. Mike Dickinson and Tech. Sgt. Mike McGarghan.

aliens and weapons of mass destruction.

National Guard helicopters and airplanes are flying surveillance missions along that stretch of the open, international border at night. Active Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Explosive (CBRNE) units are helping man checkpoints on interstates leading from Canada's most heavily populated region to New York City and Boston.

Meanwhile, the five-member Air Guard team led by 1st Lt. Shawn Legonidec spends its days helping the Border Patrol by recording all of the information that patrol officers, military personnel and other law enforcement agencies are gathering about people who are trying to enter this country illegally.

The Border Patrol is the lead federal agency for Operation Winter Freeze.

"The National Guard has sent us some experienced personnel who are helping us accomplish our job here," said Paul Moran, the Border Patrol agent in charge of the Swanton Sector's intelligence section. "They

have been a valuable asset in linking together some of the major smuggling operations in this area of responsibility."

The Guard team earns its keep by entering the information into computer databases so that Border Patrol's intelligence experts have more time to analyze it, explained Legonidec. She is taking time off from her civilian job as a hospital lab technician to lead the Air Guard team.

Other members are Tech. Sgt. Mike Dickinson, a former IBM industrial engineer; Tech. Sgt. Mike McGarghan, a chaplains assistant who returned from a tour in Afghanistan in October; and Tech. Sgt. Crystal Farnsworth, a fulltime intelligence specialist with the Vermont Air Guard fighter wing.

"Intelligence is like putting a puzzle together," explained Farnsworth. "You try to put bits and pieces of information together and make a big picture."

That, Border Patrol and National Guard

officials explained, may lead to arresting suspected terrorists from as many as 100 countries, who are trying to enter the U.S. through Canada, confiscating weapons that could be used against the American people, or breaking up smuggling rings intent on sneaking illegal aliens and weapons into this country.

"I had no idea that so many illegal aliens from other countries come from Canada to the U.S.," Farnsworth said. "This work gives me a sense of justice. I believe that we will eventually get the bad guys."

No one, however, talks very much about the bits and pieces of information that could become part of the big picture that could in turn lead to arrests and prosecutions and deportations. That information is best described as "close hold."

That is why Sheila and Joe Sternisha can't talk about their work when they are together these days. But, hey, they can always talk about the kids.

FROM PAGE 1

Bonuses

The bonus increases for fiscal year 2005 include:

-- An increase in enlistment bonuses from \$8,000 to \$10,000 for people without prior service who sign up for one of the Army Guard's "top 10" military occupational specialties, such as the infantry, military police and transportation.

-- An increase from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for prior service people who enlist in the Army Guard for six years.

-- An increase in reenlistment and extension

bonuses from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

Guard Soldiers will receive a lump sum for reenlisting. New Guard Soldiers joining the military for the first time and those with prior service will be given a 50-50 payment schedule.

The eligibility for receiving reenlistment bonuses has been extended by two years. Guard Soldiers previously could not receive a bonus after 14 years of service. They are now eligible through 16 years.

Blum has also promised to double the Student Load Repayment Program - from

\$10,000 to \$20,000.

Another effort is to add 1,400 recruiters to the Army Guard's national recruiting force - increasing it from 2,700 to 4,100 - over the next three months.

"We're in a more difficult recruiting environment," Blum told news reporters. "There's no question that when you have a sustained ground combat operation going that the Guard's participating in, that makes recruiting more difficult."

The Guard Bureau chief also said that the Guard will change its recruiting message to

more accurately reflect the fact that many Citizen-Soldiers are now pulling tours of duty overseas for at least a year.

"We are correcting, frankly, some of our recruiting themes and slogans to reflect the reality of today," Blum told The Washington Post. "We're not talking about one weekend a month and two weeks a year and college tuition. We're talking about service to the nation."

People interested in obtaining more information about the increased bonuses can call their local Army National Guard recruiters.

National Guardsmen serve in a winter world

By April Conway

Support Forces Antarctica

McMURDO STATION, Antarctica – From the snow-cruled peak of Mt. Erebus volcano outside his window, to the camp huts used by Antarctic explorers a hundred years ago out his door, to the wayward penguin taking a snooze near the ice flightline, his morning commute is different than any other. He's a man at the bottom of the world.

Master Sgt. Scott Wanner, a joint inspection team member from the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, says his four-week rotation to McMurdo Station, Antarctica is nothing short of spectacular. "There are mountains and valleys nearby, but no plant life, no spiders or bugs or other critters here," he said. "It's 180 degrees from any place I've ever seen."

Approximately 115 airmen from the National Guard and the United States Air Force participate in Operation Deep Freeze each year airlifting cargo and passengers into, out of and around the continent. Their mission supports the U.S. Antarctic Program, which is funded and managed by the National Science Foundation.

The most visible part of the military's contribution from McMurdo Station is intra-continental cargo and passenger transportation, taking supplies to and from outlying camps on the ice. Wanner is charged with ensuring cargo pallets are weighed and balanced safely and correctly. "We're inspecting things I've never seen on a C-130 before," Wanner said. "We're checking out snowmobiles, polar tracked vehicles, lots of hazmat stuff like compressed gasses and fuels, anything the scientists need at the South Pole or other deep field camps around Antarctica."

From Siple Dome to Thwaites Glacier to the South Pole, the 139th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, made up of Guard members from Scotia's 109th Airlift Wing in upstate New York, flies the only ski-equipped transport aircraft in the Department of Defense. The unit is charged with operations and aircraft maintenance in the harsh continent without the perks of a hangar or



Photos by April Conway

(Above) The LC-130 Hercules, outfitted with skis, is the workhorse of Support Forces Antarctica's intra-continental transportation fleet. (Below) An unidentified airman applies ground power to a recently-landed LC-130.

the parts availability a robust supply chain offers.

The unit deploys anywhere from six to eight aircraft to McMurdo and rotates one to Christchurch at all times for maintenance during the austral summer season. While polar duty at McMurdo isn't necessarily foremost in the public's mind when they think of military missions, Operation Deep Freeze has been a military staple since 1955.

The 139th is part of the bigger entity of Support Forces Antarctica, which is headquartered at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois under the United States Transportation Command. There's also a detachment in Christchurch, New Zealand. Support Forces

Antarctica is made up of the 139th plus support personnel in logistics, medical, chaplaincy and administrative positions. As the summer progresses U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers, Military Sealift Command supply and tanker ships, and a Navy cargo handling battalion will join the team as well.

Duty lengths for military folks range from five weeks to six months. The military community, though, makes up only a small percentage of the McMurdo residents in the summer. Hundreds of scientists, researchers, heavy equipment operators, and other contracted support personnel make up the diverse population of the station. A dining facility lunch table may host the foremost ozone depletion expert in the world, an Air Guard crew chief, a university professor working as a dormitory custodian, and a professional dive instructor from Hawaii now gathering mollusk specimens from frigid polar water for study under an NSF grant.

The research on the continent includes 50 automatic weather stations, four geophysical observatories (also unmanned) and approximately 30 field camps. Research into solar seismology, cosmic background emissions from the Big Bang, marking the beginning of the universe, sea ice mammals and microscopic organisms, Antarctic ozone and continental drift are just the proverbial tip of the iceberg of the vast amounts of scientific inquiry made below the 60th parallel.

Wanner says his duty on the ice has given him the opportunity to see how well the Guard works with the Air Force and other services for peaceful missions. "We're fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan right now, but

we're also helping facilitate new discoveries in the coldest, windiest, driest place on earth," the six-year Guard member said.

Temperatures at McMurdo during the austral summer rival winter temps in the northern United States. From October through February, the height of Operation Deep Freeze activity, highs reach into the low 40s F and nights dip close to zero. Sharp winds can easily bring the temperatures well below zero, making maintenance work on the aircraft nearly impossible. The sun stops setting in mid-October and rotates around the sky, not setting again until the end of February. The 24-hour daylight, though, means round the clock shifts. It's a good thing, too. In the five months of ODF, crews will move over 6,000 short tons of cargo, 2,100 passengers and more than 4 million pounds of fuel.

Many McMurdo residents arrive on station in C-17 Globemasters or C-141 Starlifters. Those aircraft, while owned and operated by the Air Force, are essentially contracted from the U.S. Transportation Command. Their cargo capacity makes them ideal for moving resources into McMurdo, but their lack of skis prohibits them from landing at any of the remote camps. The LC-130 Hercules is the on-continent workhorse of the SFA.

Like any C-130, the LC-130 is designed for operations in austere locations and has a much shorter runway requirement than other cargo aircraft. The ski-equipped aircraft takes off and lands not only on short, unimproved runways, but also on the slick ice and compacted snow that's nearly 2 miles thick at

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er wonderland at the bottom of the world

FROM PAGE 8

Arctic



Photo by April Conway

(Above) With Mt. Erebus in the background, Master Sgt Scott Wanner, 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky ANG, takes a break from a hike up to Castle Rock. (Below) Wanner checks cargo straps on a pallet of hazardous material set for a flight to the South Pole.

the South Pole.

Its size and configuration makes it a natural for missions to McMurdo and other extreme locations on the ice. The reliability of the New York LC-130s also makes them ideal for Antarctic operations. The Air Force's mission capable rating for C-130s is 75%. Even through extreme operating conditions and maintenance limitations at the polar site, the 139th's mission capable rating over the past three years has averaged 95%.

Antarctica quick facts

- * Population: In the austral summer, 1,100. In the austral winter, about 200.
- * No government owns Antarctica; the Antarctic Treaty signed in 1959 by 12 countries agreed to reserve the continent for peaceful and scientific activities.
- * Wildlife: No flowering plants exist at McMurdo or elsewhere in the high-latitude Antarctic.
- * Weather: In the summer, temperatures reach up into the 30s and 40s F, but in winter, strong winds can bring the wind chill down under -100 degrees F. The sun is up 24 hours a day from mid-October until the end of February.
- * Social Life: A community chapel, two bars, a 2-lane bowling alley, a ceramics room, three gymnasiums, a library, video rental, a coffee house, Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, a recreation office that hosts bingo, yoga, trivia nights and many cross country skiing and hiking opportunities are available to McMurdo residents.

According to the maintenance supervisor for the 139th, Chief Master Sergeant Dave Willoughby, that impressive rating is due directly to the people turning the wrenches, "Our unit has many years of corporate knowledge of these aircraft and what it takes to keep them running in this climate. We do lots of preventive maintenance."

Willoughby is enjoying his 14th year on the ice and his unit has performed the polar mission for many years prior to that. The 139th began with limited involvement in 1975 and eventually took over the mission from the U.S. Navy in 1996. In the northern hemisphere summer the unit can be found performing similar missions in Greenland.

The number of flights performed on the ice in a season is determined by the amount of cargo and the number of passengers needed at McMurdo and in the outlying camps. Knowing weather plays a significant role in flight operations and realizing many flights are cancelled due to those conditions, the 139th scheduled close to 500 flights in the 18 weeks of Operation Deep Freeze this year with the hopes of completing 85% of them.

In addition to the flying operations performed at the bottom of the world, dozens of Guard and active duty augmentees from across the world descend upon McMurdo Station and Christchurch to round out the mission requirements. Safety NCOs from Missouri and Mississippi Guard units, Wanner and other aerial porters from Kentucky, Ohio and California Guard units, flight surgeons from Minnesota and Virginia, and administrative staff from Nevada and other units are all part of the total force team

that make up SFA.

Commander of SFA, Col. Tye Beasley, said the Guard members assigned to him have been top notch. "People who come down truly want to be here and their enthusiasm for this mission is unmatched," he said. "Some only stay part of one season, some come year after year, but I daresay the experience stays with them forever."

Senior Master Sgt. Steve Hanneman, who has worked for SFA for the past three years, has split his time between Scott AFB in Illinois working for the U.S. Transportation Command, who oversees the polar mission, Christchurch, New Zealand, where Detachment 13 acts as a support station for aircraft and personnel supporting Operation Deep Freeze, and McMurdo Station, where he has worked as a services NCO. Hanneman believes his open mind and willing attitude has earned him the experience of a lifetime.

"What started out as a short-notice, 30-day assignment to Antarctica three years ago turned into 184 days in New Zealand and Antarctica last year. This year was supposed to be 90 days, but I've just been hired as a full time Pacific Command AGR chief master sergeant in Hawaii in support of this mission," Hanneman said.



Photo by Master Sgt Paul Hinen

Guardsmen build the road to peace – literally

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – Building the first stretch of a 76-mile road through the forbidding desert in southern Afghanistan is how a couple of hundred Army National Guard Soldiers are heavily engaged in the global war on terrorism.

The two-lane road is the new stake that United States forces are driving into the Taliban heartland three years into the fight to undermine and destroy the terrorist forces that attacked America on Sept. 11, 2001.

Army Guard combat engineers from Louisiana and New York make up most of the road-building force.

It is one way that U.S. and other coalition forces are trying to help rebuild and stabilize this ancient, war-ravaged land more than a year after the U.S. announced the end of major combat operations against the Taliban and terrorist insurgents on May 1, 2003.

The road project, which is expected to take about two years to complete, is intended to connect the ancient city of Kandahar with isolated Tarin Kowt in the neighboring Oruzgun Province, a part of Afghanistan still influenced by the Taliban.

That, National Guard officials explained, would make that region more accessible to the newly formed central government and open it up to agricultural marketing and commercial trade.

"It is transforming military victory into strategic success," said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "It will allow the Afghan government to reach its citizenry in remote rural areas. This is enabled by the National Guard engineers who are doing remarkable work on that road."

In short, the road would help diminish the effectiveness of the Taliban and the al-Qaeda terrorist forces of Osama bin Laden in the Oruzgun Province.

"Terrorists hate a road. It opens up isolated areas to new ideas and ways of doing things. A road gives local people more options and

"My fear of the unknown has subsided with experience."

– Georgia Army National Guard Spc. Aaron Frick currently serving in Afghanistan.



expands government presence," said John Finney, Ph.D., Blum's new political advisor.

The road, which is following what is little more than a footpath across the high desert terrain, would make it possible to drive from Kandahar to Tarin Kowt in two or three hours as opposed to the 16 to 18 hours it now takes travel between the two places.

The Army Guard engineers had built an estimated 15 miles of that road by Thanksgiving week, and private contractors had paved about half of that distance with crushed rock, reported Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Thompson.

He is the senior enlisted Soldier for the Louisiana Army Guard's 528th Engineer Battalion that since July has spearheaded the road building project. It is one of the new front lines that Army Guard Soldiers like Thompson and Capt. Jonathan Dilmore and Spec. Chandra Brown and other Army Guard engineers are manning far from their American homes.

Forward Operations Base Tiger built outside of Kandahar, is the dustbowl home for the engineers and their heavy equipment during this holiday season that seems as remote as the road they are building.

"It's hard to believe that people back home are getting ready to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas. That all seems so far away," said Brown a few days before she planned to

join her parents, sister and three brothers for Thanksgiving with all of the trimmings in Monroe, La.

It would be the first significant holiday that Brown has spent with her family since New Year's Day because she has been away from her home since March 2, she said. She will be back on duty in Afghanistan by Christmas, after two weeks of leave.

Meanwhile, work continues on the Kandahar-Tarin Kowt road from dawn to dusk seven days a week in what is still a dangerous land.

Army Guard Soldiers maintain helicopters in a hanger beside another hanger which they claim is where the Taliban made its last stand before abandoning Kandahar, their last stronghold in the country, on Dec. 7, 2001.

Guard Soldiers also nonchalantly told of how a couple of rockets aimed at the Kandahar airport where they are living and working "fell short" on Nov. 19. That was the same day that an Afghani man working on the road with the Guard Soldiers was reportedly severely wounded near FBO Tiger during an apparent ambush.

Remaining on a constant combat footing is not the only challenge, said Dilmore, a general engineer who was the project officer when the Guard engineers began building the road. There is a little matter of water in the landlocked country where it rains just five or six inches a year in the southern region.

"It's not a problem cutting and filling a road through this terrain," Dilmore explained. "But water is necessary for compacting a road. That is the critical piece."

So far the engineers have gotten their water from contractors and a shallow lake that is rapidly drying up, Dilmore explained. He was confident that the project would continue even if the Louisiana and New York engineers' year of duty in Afghanistan would expire before the road is finished.

It's a logical job for the National Guard, Finney pointed out, because many of the Citizen-Soldiers are seasoned engineers and construction workers who bring their civilian skills to this military operation.

Blum further pointed out that Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers, who are older and more experienced than active Army troops, constitute 28 percent of force now serving in Afghanistan.

There is plenty of satisfaction in having started this key road project, Dilmore said,

even if those Guard members would be back at home by the time it is completed.

"We will leave a part of a road, a piece of our legacy behind us," Dilmore observed. "That's a U.S. Army legacy and a National Guard legacy."

The Experience Factor

Georgia Army National Guard Spc. Aaron Frick is a candid young man who makes no bones about the fact that he did not want to go to Afghanistan. The fact that his first duty day there, as a member of the aviation unit Task Force Diamondhead, was last April Fools' Day added to his sense of surreal about spending a year away from his wife Toni and infant son Asher.

Eight months later, however, the 24-year-old Frick had acquired a more positive perspective about taking part in Operation Enduring Freedom in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar.

"The more I got involved, the more I know it would be all right," he said a few days before Thanksgiving. "My fear of the unknown has subsided with experience."

Although he was trained to refuel the task force's helicopters, Frick has had an entirely different experience. He is the Webmaster for Company F, 131st Aviation, thanks to his background in graphic design, the fine arts and computer programming.

He moves about, takes photos of the outfit's Soldiers from Georgia, Alabama and Washington state in action, and posts them on the Web site, www.companyf131.com.

He had posted 1,300 photos on that site by Thanksgiving week, Frick explained, so families could feel connected with their far-away Soldiers. He also puts up photos of the Soldiers families, if he gets them, as well as information about the deployment and military benefits that may help the families.

"I began basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., the week after 9-11," said Frick, who originally signed up with a Michigan Army Guard engineer battalion before moving to Georgia and joining the aviation unit. "I knew I would be going someplace. It wasn't a matter of if. It was a matter of when."

Now that he has become an experienced Soldier, Frick said that he and his friends "are all proud to serve; to do the mission and to put in our time."



Photos by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

An American Soldier watches over a stretch of new road that Army National Guard engineers are building between Kandahar and Tarin Kowt, through Taliban country, in southern Afghanistan.

National Guard celebrates the end of Bosnia peacekeeping missions

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

TUZLA, Bosnia – Indiana Army National Guard Spc. Jessie Wine said he didn't know very much about Bosnia-Herzegovina when the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division rolled into that troubled, war-torn land nearly nine years ago.

"I was in junior high school. I remember bits and pieces, but it wasn't my priority then," said the 20-year-old Guard Soldier from Muncie, Ind., who took part in a chapter of Army and National Guard history at Eagle Base in Tuzla the day before Thanksgiving.

That's when U.S. troops, including members of the Indiana Army Guard's 38th Infantry Division, marked the end of nine years of NATO peacekeeping duties in Bosnia by "casing the colors," or putting away the flag, of Task Force Eagle during a morning ceremony at Peacekeepers Hall.

"It's an honor to be here to see this wrapped up," said Wine, whose priorities changed when he joined the Guard two years ago. He stood in the 38th Division's formation for the ceremony that preceded the actual transfer of the peacekeeping mission from NATO to the European Union scheduled for Dec. 2.

Wine said he would now like to serve in Iraq, where the 18-month shooting war has overshadowed the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. If he gets his wish, Wine would be among thousands of National Guard Soldiers waging the war against global terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq after cutting their teeth in Bosnia and Kosovo, observed LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"The successful commanders and Soldiers that I've seen in Afghanistan and Iraq, those who can handle the ambiguities and complexities of multiethnic and multinational operations, really learned their trade in the Balkans," Blum said. "It's been immeasurably helpful in the success that we're starting to see in Afghanistan in particular and in certain parts of Iraq."

National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were among the first to be mobilized when the peacekeeping mission began before Christmas in 1995, when Bosnia was considered one of the most dangerous places on earth. Guard troops have been taking part ever since as peace has prevailed in the Balkans.

"This ceremony officially marks mission complete and mission accomplished," said Gen. B.B. Bell, commander of U.S. Army Europe, in Tuzla on Nov. 24.

It also officially marked the end of the National Guard's leadership role in keeping the peace among the Serbs, Croats and Bosniacs who had waged a devastating civil war for nearly four years. The estimated death toll surpassed 200,000 people. Another 1.8 million became refugees.

Army Guard divisions have led six of the 17 NATO peacekeeping rotations, including the final four, in the northern part of the country since U.S. and other NATO forces moved into Bosnia beginning on Dec. 20, 1995, six days after the Dayton Peace Accord was signed to end the hostilities.

Five of the six Army Guard generals who have commanded Multinational Division (North) since March 2000 attended the ceremony.

Among them were retired Maj. Gen. Robert Halverson, whose 49th Armored Division from Texas was the first Guard outfit to command and oversee that Stabilization Force: Blum, who commanded Maryland and Virginia's 29th Infantry Division and SFOR10 and who is now into his second year as chief of the National Guard Bureau; and Brig. Gen. Timothy Wright from the 38th Division who is



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Five of the six Army National Guard generals who have commanded the Multi-National Division (North) Stabilization Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina attended the Nov. 24 disestablishment ceremony for Task Force Eagle in Tuzla on Nov. 24. From left, in the order in which they served, are retired Maj. Gen. Robert Halverson, 49th Armored Division, Texas; LTG H Steven Blum, 29th Infantry Division, Virginia, and now chief of the National Guard Bureau; Maj. Gen. James Mason, 35th Infantry Division, Kansas; Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota; and Brig. Gen. Timothy Wright, 38th Infantry Division, Indiana.

commanding the 15th and final SFOR rotation.

Maj. Gen. James Mason from the Kansas-based 35th Division and Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, from Minnesota's 34th Infantry Division, also attended after commanding SFORs 13 and 14 from March 2003 to March 2004 as brigadier generals.

Mason now commands the entire 35th Division. Nash is a National Guard special assistant to the U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado.

Brig. Gen. John von Trott from Pennsylvania's 28th Infantry Division, who commanded SFOR12 during the winter of 2002-03, did not attend the disestablishment ceremony.

The U.S. presence in Bosnia has steadily decreased over the nine years since some 20,000 heavily armed American troops were among the 60,000 NATO troops who began the peacekeeping mission.

The current NATO force of about 7,000 included nearly 900 Army Guard Soldiers in the 38th Division who began their SFOR15 rotation last March. About 400 of those Guard Soldiers were left in Bosnia by Thanksgiving week, said a division spokesman, and about 250 of them will remain after the European Union takes charge. About 150 will remain in Tuzla. The rest will serve at a new NATO headquarters in Sarajevo.

Guard people who have served in Bosnia have their own feelings and their own war stories about this peacekeeping mission.

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Mouilleseaux, then a member of the Kentucky Army Guard's 133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, remembers April 24, 1999, as if it were yesterday.

"We visited an orphanage in Tuzla," Mouilleseaux recalled. "There was a certain amount of sadness because we knew that the kids had been orphaned by the war. But children are so resilient. They have no agendas. They just want to be kids. So it took about 10 seconds for the mood to go from somber to joyful."

"The visit lasted for only a couple of hours. But that was one of those moments when, at the end of the day, you could really be proud of what you represent as an American Soldier," said Mouilleseaux who now serves fulltime with

the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

Seeing was believing for Lt. Col. Lee Baker who arrived in Bosnia with other members of the 38th Division last March.

"I didn't agree with this mission back in 1995. I thought it was just another case of the U.S. getting involved in someone else's problem," said Baker, the SFOR15 intelligence officer. "But since being here, I have seen how absolutely ignorant I was. When you see where tens of thousands of people were murdered, you realize it was an atrocity. I didn't know what was going on."

"Now I admire President Clinton for doing what he did [by sending in U.S. troops]. It was the right thing to do," Baker added. "It's an honor to be a part of it."

Many Guard Soldiers have shared in that honor. None more than the Texans in the 49th Armored Division who became the first Guard outfit to lead the Stabilization Force beginning in March 2000 after undergoing months of training.

"To me, there was nothing to prove," recalled Halverson who commanded that division. "A reporter asked me if I was afraid our reputation would be tarnished. I told him our reputation would only be enhanced."

"And I was right. We pushed the peace process forward with each rotation," Halverson said. "Now I feel good that this mission can continue without U.S. Soldiers being here. I'm happy that this has become another place we will not have to ask our Soldiers to come to and leave their families and their communities and their employers."

"I think that Bosnia is nothing less than a magnificent military success story," said Blum who commanded the Multinational Division (North) forces from October 2001 to April 2002.

"We have enabled the Bosnian people to move towards a multiethnic society, to achieve self-governance, and to merge three warring factions into one military organization," Blum added.

"The part that the Guard has played from day one of that mission until now has been nothing less than essential. The civilian acquired skills and experience that the Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen brought into the Balkans was a catalyst for positive change," he said. "I'm not so sure it would have been nearly so successful without their involvement."

All Guard team takes first and second place in Marine Corps marathon

By Spc. Katie Loseke

Nebraska Army National Guard

WASHINGTON D.C. – They may be getting older - but they are still getting better.

As word about the National Guard marathon program spreads, young, able-bodied Army and Air Guardsmen are training hard to make the team - but it is the old-timers, the veterans of the over-40 club, who keep dominating the headlines.

For example, the All Guard National Guard Marathon Team recently earned first and second place team titles in the Masters category, along with a second place finish in the Mixed team event during the Marine Corps Marathon held in Washington, D.C. Oct. 31.

"Our team did great. Everyone worked hard and performed as best as they could," said Chief Master Sgt. Jabby Young, a runner from the Montana Air National Guard and member of the National Guard "Old Glory" Master's team, one of several teams the All-Guard Marathon Team sent to run in Washington.

Young has been a part of the Guard's marathon program since its inception in 1984. As one of the original veterans of the team, Young said he was proud that the team's Masters runners can still show the rookies how it's done.

Taking first place in Washington was the National Guard "Defenders." Final scores are based on the combined times of the top three runners of each team. The "Defenders" earned the Masters Team gold with a collective time of 9:03:56.

Running for the "Defenders" were Sgt. Curt Carey with the Indiana Army National Guard, Lt. Col. Kevin Guinee with the Massachusetts Air National Guard, Maj. Ross Shales with the Louisiana Army

National Guard, Capt. Victor Cuevas and Spc. Luis Diaz, both with the Puerto Rico Army National Guard.

All though the "Defenders" took 1st place, the second place team was only a few minutes behind. Following closely in the Masters category with a time of 9:11:12 were the members of the National Guard "Old Glory" team.

Members of the team were Sgt. Ramon Garcia and Spc. Arcides Colon, both with the Puerto Rico Army National Guard, Maj. George Graff with the Utah Army National Guard, and Young with the Montana Air National Guard.

Considering that more than 18,000 runners competed at this year's Marine Corps Marathon, Staff Sgt. Jack Murphy, All Guard Marathon Team coordinator, said he was pleased with the team's performance.

"Any time you can finish first and second when there are that many runners, you know your program is doing something right," said Murphy.

Young agreed, saying he was not only pleased with the performance, but excited, proud and a little relieved. For Young, the Marine Corps Marathon was his last with the All Guard team. After 32 years in the Guard and 20 years with the team, Young is calling it quits.

"If I could have picked my last marathon with the team it would have been the Marine Corps Marathon," said Young.

Young said there is something about running in military competitions that draws him. "The competition at military events gives you a little extra drive," said Young. "I always push a little harder because I know the military runners are doing the same thing."

Not only does Young like the competition at the Marine Corps Marathon, which he said is his favorite, he also likes the course. In fact, he ran his fastest marathon ever in Washington D.C., a 2:36.

"When you are running a marathon, a lot of it is a mental race," said Young. "Going past all the monuments in Washington D.C. helps take your mind off the race. They turn into those uplifting things that help you get past the difficult times."

Young said watching the scenery isn't the only thing he likes about coming to Washington D.C. Camaraderie between the different services as they run keeps everyone going. Young said he has especially enjoyed the bond he shares with other members of the All Guard team.

"The relationships we have built will last way beyond any military career," said Young. "I've been running with a lot of these people for 20 years."

Young said he has gotten to know a lot of people through the marathon team and had the opportunity to run with a lot of gifted runners. One of the runners Young is talking about is James Bresette, a wheel mechanic with Arkansas Army National Guard's 224th Maintenance Company and a runner on the All Guard team.

Bresette is just one of the many Masters on the All Guard team that keeps the cliché "age before beauty" close to his heart. And, while he may be over fifty, he is still going strong. Bresette finished 29th overall in the marathon with a time of 2:43:54.

Even though Bresette was not part of either of the Masters' teams, he was the first All Guard team member to cross the finish line.

"I'm really happy with my time. It was a tough finish up those hills, but I kept pushing," said Bresette, adding that other runners on the course would cheer him on as he passed.

"This is one of the biggest races I've ever been to," said Bresette. "The support was phenomenal, which helped cheer everyone on."

Bresette said that he felt his performance and the performance of the team was good. "We all trained hard for this and it showed. I'm an ex-Marine so this race means more to me than some of the others I've run; I'm just glad we made such a strong showing."

The National Guard "Striders," made up of men and women, placed 2nd in the Mixed team category with a time of 11:05:38.

Members of the team were Senior Master Sgt. Max White with the Oregon Air National Guard, Staff Sgt. Sheldon Shelltrack with the North Dakota Army National Guard, Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper with the Virginia Air National Guard, and Sgt. Penny Hytrek with the Nebraska Army National Guard.

Although the team is in the Mixed category because it had two men and two women, it was also mixed with experience. Two members of the team are Masters, while the other two were rookies - one of whom is brand new to the team while the other has only been the team for a little over one year.

Once again it is apparent that the rookies have a lot to learn from the veterans.



Photos by Spc. Katie Loseke

(Above) Montana Guardsman, Chief Master Sgt. Jabby Young helped propel his Master's team to a second place finish. (Below) Lt. Col. Colleen Chipper of the Virginia Air National Guard helped pace the "National Guard Striders" to a second place finish in the mixed team event.



Lt. Col. Kevin Guinee, Massachusetts Air National Guard and member of the National Guard's All-Guard Marathon Team pushes his way up a hill in Washington, D.C., during the annual Marine Corps Marathon, Oct. 31. Guinee helped his Master's Team win the Overall Master's Team Title.

Guard secures Presidential library

By Tech. Sgt. Bob Oldham

189th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – Rain, and lots of it, couldn't dampen the spirits of Airmen assigned here to help make the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library opening ceremonies a success on Nov. 18.

Active duty Airmen from the Air Force Band of Mid-America from Scott Air Force Base, Ill., kicked off the official grand opening, entertaining an estimated 30,000 gatherers while 200 Arkansas National Guard Airmen and Soldiers, called to state active duty by Gov. Mike Huckabee, helped the Secret Service and local law enforcement officials secure the perimeter, transport distinguished visitors and escort them to their seats.

"It's definitely not something you get to do every day," said 1st Lt. Patti Walters, a 189th Airlift Wing escort officer who seated dignitaries at center stage.

Staff Sgt. Jamar Bennett, a security forces journeyman from the 189th Security Forces Squadron agreed. He worked crowd control at the distinguished visitor entrance with Secret Service officials and city police.

The previous night, the band's jazz ensemble played a four-hour set at a private party in the library for the former president and invited guests.

"Ted Danson came up to us and said we were one of the best bands he's ever heard," said 1st Lt. Leslie Brown, a band spokesperson.

A light morning rain began to dry up and the clouds appeared to clear for a brief moment. As the band took its place on stage and began to warm up, the rains began to come; light at first, but as the ceremony rolled on, it eventually turning into a downpour.

The library sits on a 30-acre tract downtown along the south bank of the Arkansas River here. The center site includes the Presidential Library and Museum, the Rock Island Railroad Bridge, which will be renovated to become a pedestrian bridge that crosses the river, and the Choctaw Station, built in 1899. The station will house the Clinton School of



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Bob Oldham

Staff Sgt. Jamar Bennett, an Arkansas Air National Guard security forces journeyman, assists with crowd control at the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library grand opening.

Public Service and Clinton Foundation offices, according to the library's web site.

The 20,000-square-foot museum contains artifacts, gifts and highlights of former president Clinton's accomplishments, complete with a replica of the Oval Office.

The library contains nearly 2 million photographs and more than 75 million pages of paper documents.

For more information about the library go to <http://www.clintonpresidentialcenter.org/index.htm>.

National Guard to support Gubernatorial inaugurations

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – National Guard troops in 11 states and Puerto Rico are preparing for some post-holiday festivities in January. They will take part, in one way or another, in the inaugurations for their state commanders in chief - their governors.

It is one of those occasions when National Guard Soldiers and Airmen in Missouri, for example, get to take part in a public celebration while supporting state and local law enforcement agencies in the name of homeland security.

Gubernatorial elections were held in American Samoa, Delaware, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, Utah, Vermont, the state of Washington, and West Virginia in November.

Wherever there was a gubernatorial election, you can count on there being an inauguration early in the new year, acknowledged a spokesperson for the National Governors Association.

The inaugurations began as early as Jan. 2, if a winner is declared in Puerto Rico, and last practically until George W. Bush is inaugurated for a second term as president in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 20.

Guard troops are expected to take part in every state inauguration except in American Samoa which does not have a National Guard force.

Missouri is pulling out all of the stops for Governor-elect Matt Blunt, according to Guard officials in the Show Me State who have prepared Operation Order 05-05 with the catchy subtitle "(Show-Me Smooth Transition)" for the Jan. 10 inaugural festivities.

The order calls for the 35th Engineer Brigade to have a Quick Reaction Force ready to roll in case of an emergency. Members of Missouri's 7th Civil Support Team and the state's newly minted CERFP team of Guard people trained to help emergency responders and victims deal with weapons of mass destruction will also be on duty or on call.

Missouri's CERFP is one of 12 Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Packages that have been trained and evaluated across the country within the last year. They can be deployed to wherever they are needed, including other states, to provide medical aid and decontamination support for civil authorities during the inaugural season.

The nation's 32 Army-certified civil support teams can also serve in other states.

President George W. Bush signs National Defense Act into law

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The 54 states and territories do not have to use their allotment of National Guard appropriations to pay their National Guard troops who perform homeland defense missions considered "necessary and appropriate" by the secretary of defense.

The federal government would provide those additional funds for troops called up to protect citizens or infrastructures, such as bridges, railroad facilities and power plants, in the states and territories. Furthermore, those troops would remain under the command of their governors.

That is a significant provision for the National Guard in the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act that President George W. Bush signed into law on Oct. 28.

The law allows governors, through their adjutants general, to maintain command and control of their Guard forces performing homeland defense activities even though they are being paid with federal funds.

National Guard troops will be able to serve under this provision for up to 180 days, but

the governors may extend their tours one time for an additional 90 days "to meet extraordinary circumstances," with the defense secretary's approval.

"We needed a clear, unambiguous law so that the National Guard could legally perform operational missions at home funded by federal funds but in the command of the governors and the adjutants general. Now we have it," LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, recently told Guard Bureau staff members.

"It is not fair for the states to have to pay for their National Guard members to perform national security events," Blum added. "This is a huge arrow in the quiver of the secretary of defense."

The law makes it possible for Guard members to perform, in Title 32 status, homeland defense activities in support of the secretary of defense and the states, Guard Bureau officials pointed out.

The law states that the defense secretary can provide appropriate funds to the states where Guard members take part in approved homeland defense activities to pay for:

"We needed a clear, unambiguous law so that the National Guard could legally perform operational missions at home funded by federal funds but in the command of the governors and the adjutants general. Now we have it,"

– LTG H Steven Blum

-- Pay, allowances, clothing, subsistence, gratuities, travel and related expenses of Guard members in that state.

-- Operation and maintenance of equipment and facilities.

-- Procurement of services and equipment and the leasing of equipment.

Guard members would receive full federal pay and allowances based on their military rank and time in service and would be eligible for medical, disability and other benefits available to federal, or Title 10, service members.

"Homeland defense activity" is defined in the law as "an activity undertaken for the military protection of the territory or domestic population of the United States, or of the

infrastructure or other assets of the United States determined by the Secretary of Defense as being critical to national security, from a threat or aggression against the United States."

The law also states that homeland defense activities must not degrade the training and readiness of Guard units and personnel.

"The performance of the activities is not to affect adversely the quality of that training or otherwise interfere with the ability of a member or unit ... to perform the military functions of the member or unit," the law reads.

"The performance of the activities is not to degrade the military skills of the members of the National Guard performing those activities."

Oregon medics divert from training to life saving mission

By Sgt. Dan Purcell

122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP TAJI, Baghdad, Iraq –Amidst the noise of incoming medical evacuation helicopters, calls for stretchers could be heard as Multi-National forces single-mindedly tended to the wounded and prepared them for transport back to Camp Taji for medical treatment.

Their helpful aid came quickly after anti-Iraqi forces launched an indiscriminate mortar attack on an Iraqi National Guard patrol base in northern Baghdad that killed six Iraqi National Guard troops and wounded 38 more Oct. 19. The ING soldiers were from the 307th ING Battalion and were outside for their morning formation when the mortars first struck.

"Those people who attack Iraqis everyday don't care who they kill," lamented one Iraqi at the scene of the attack. "If they had missed us they could have hit the primary school next door. Thank God the children didn't get hurt."

During the ensuing chaos, Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division who were nearby, immediately began to assess the damage, rendering first aid and calling for assistance.

Soldiers from Charlie Medical Company, 39th Support Battalion, 39th Brigade Combat Team and 2nd Battalion, 162nd



Photos by Sgt. Dan Purcell

Troops evacuate wounded Iraqi National Guardsmen via a Blackhawk helicopter following an early morning mortar attack on a patrol base in northern Baghdad Oct. 19.

Infantry (Oregon National Guard attached) responded immediately by providing life-saving first aid and casualty evacuation.

Preempting their original mission to go to a

nearby Iraqi police station to train policemen in first aid, Capt. Demian San Miguel, commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, volunteered to assist in the casualty evacuation.

"We were getting ready to go out and do our mission, which is to train and mentor local Iraqi policemen, when I heard from battalion that the forward operating base was under attack, so I got my Soldiers ready and went up to the tactical operating center to see how we could assist," San Miguel explained.

Charged with providing convoy security for medical company, Citizen-Soldiers of the 2-162 played a pivotal role in treating the wounded and securing the casualty evacuation.

"As soon as we got there, our medic and all our combat lifesavers secured their rifles and began the process of helping with bandaging the wounded and transporting stretchers," San Miguel said. "I didn't have to say anything, they all grabbed their bags and went to work triaging and assessing and bandaging those in need. We even got our translators involved to help interpret the needs of the injured ING.

"The ING are fighting for their country, and the way I look at it, they are just like any American Soldier...fighting for a free Iraq, which is why my Soldiers took it very seriously when they heard the ING needed assistance and were there to support them 100 percent," San Miguel said.

"When I first heard what happened I thought it was a bad joke, but when we got there and I saw what had happened, I immediately started checking the bandaged wounds of ING personnel that didn't have an attendant with them, and the only thing that

goes through your head is the training," Sgt. Andrew Morey, a member of 2-162 Infantry, remembered.

"Looking back at what I saw, the first thing that came to mind was figuring out where to start and the extent of the injuries," said Spc. Ryan Miller, a medic with 2-162. "Ultimately, it all falls back on training. You don't really think about it, you just act on what you know."

San Miguel said after the casualties had been safely evacuated he went with his men to the IP station to explain why the first aid training was postponed.

"They said they understood, expressing their concern for what happened to the ING," he said. "It shows that there is a professional relationship starting to build between the two security forces."



(Left) Spc. Ryan Miller, a medic, provides life-saving first aid to a wounded Iraqi National Guardsman. (Above) Staff Sgt. Gabriel Sapp, a squad leader of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, checks on the status of his Soldiers. Sgt. Karl Kligel (center) and Spc. Ryan Miller (right) are preparing to treat a wounded Iraqi.

