

THE ON GUARD

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Last words immortalized on aircraft

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen
New Jersey Air National Guard

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, N.J. — The New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing based in Egg Harbor Township, N.J., recently honored Sept. 11th's Flight 93 widow Lisa Beamer after Wing Commander Col. Mike Cosby unveiled a red, white and blue "Let's Roll" emblem on one of the unit's F-16 "Fighting Falcon" aircraft.

The nose art features Todd Beamer's words, "Let's Roll" with the motto "Spirit of 9-11" on a sword, an American eagle, and a U.S. flag. Todd Beamer, 32, along with 44 passengers and crew, was killed Sept. 11 when hijacked Flight 93 crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pa. The phrase, "Let's roll" were Todd Beamer's last words overheard by a telephone operator before he and other passengers rushed the cockpit to successfully thwart the terrorist's plans in attacking another target.

"Todd was brave," Cosby said. "He began the fight and I promise to you that the Department of Defense, the 177th Fighter Wing, and the men and women of the Air National Guard around the world will continue the fight that your husband began."

Beamer's widow said she was proud the Air National Guard was using her husband's last words as a rallying cry while thanking the military men and women for protecting the country.

"It is a great honor to have Todd's words remembered in this way. I know that he would be honored to have you all rally around his words," Beamer added. "Thank you for what you do every day for all the things that we, as ordinary citizens, don't always appreciate."

It was the first time that Lisa Beamer appeared in a public presentation with her two sons, David and Drew, and her daughter Morgan Kay, who was born in January. More than 200 unit members attended the ceremony.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, New Jersey National Guard

New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing Commander Col. Mike Cosby and Lisa Beamer, the widow of Todd Beamer, unveiled a red, white and blue "Let's Roll" emblem on one of the unit's F-16 "Fighting Falcon" aircraft. Todd Beamer, a National Guardsman, was killed on Sept. 11, when hijacked Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pa.

CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP

Joint Staff

Dedication, hardwork and experience key to success.

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Retiring

Female athlete goes out on top.

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Commentary

About The On Guard

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Training is a personal responsibility

Dear Editor:

Since the Army's medical corps has started combining Military Occupational Specialties, I've heard many variations as to its importance. What needs to be realized, as for the medic, is that we have "customers or patients" to look after. This transition is the best thing to happen in years to upgrade our service capabilities.

My first advice to any medic reading this letter is to view the film "Suicide Mission", a documentary put together by the History Channel. If a medic does not grow a foot taller after watching this, one may need to re-evaluate their career field. This is one show that should be included in your training.

As a medic, you've chosen a field where on a good day you may be doing vitals in a clinic, training on specific skill or training others. But as reality hits, you're being mobilized and you're off to war or a peacekeeping theater. Nonetheless you have a job you've been trained to do.

This brings to mind a real important issue. How well trained are you? How proficient are you in all the many medical diagnostic procedures we need to know? Now close your eyes, relax, and honestly go over some of various medical situations.

Well, those that continued to read are either a well-trained medic or a pretender. The problem with the pretender is that in the heat of battle or firefight the soldiers who need you will suffer due to your lack of initiative

and training. Your laziness to properly train may have just cost a soldier their life. Fellow medics, we are supposed to train for war. The consequences of doing less than your best as a medic could be devastating. Other people may suffer or even die from your lack of commitment and effort. This editorial letter is aimed at helping you excel in your training.

I mentioned earlier about the pretender. Don't be a pretender! In the classroom and in the field, pretenders aim for the minimum standard and always can be counted upon to do only what is required of them. The cost of ineffective and inefficient emergency medical care is much too high. Your commitment and effort in training will directly affect soldiers' lives every time you answer the cry for "MEDIC." The only acceptable quality in emergency-field care is excellence. It is up to you to prepare yourself to meet this challenge by doing your very best work now.

I speak to a lot of people about getting their life in order. As a fellow medic, I wish to share a simple way to remember two vital words that can change you or someone else's life. The words are "MOM" and "DAD." The are acronyms for "Motivation, Opportunity, Maturity" and "Decisions, Attitude, Desire."

If a wounded soldier lies in a battlefield needing a medic and requiring lifesaving care, which part of MOM and DAD will get you out to him? Which skill gives him aid? What training prepared you? Which part of MOM and DAD was used to get prepared?

By this time in your reading you probably think that I expect you to be a "Trauma God." Well, not in the least. It would be nice for you to take a strong look at yourself and decide where you want your training to be showing the "desire" to constantly continue that training.

In my 20 years of association in the Emergency Medical Services field, Emergency Medical Technicians at various levels have come and gone. Many have used the training basics to continue on with higher education in the medical field.

During the Persian Gulf War, a non-medic saw what important work we did for the soldiers. He decided to explore the profession and today he is a surgeon in Memphis, Tenn. Many doctors, nurses, physician's assistants have been former medics and corpsmen in the military. "Desire" depends on how one perceives the word, I guess.

As an old-country bumpkin from Arkansas, I'm not flashy or even real smart, but I do care about how we are looking toward the future as medics. To me, it means continually educating yourself.

Would you want your 60-year-old heart surgeon operating on you by using only skills they learned in medical school years ago? As medics, we need to polish up our medical skills. We need to provide our customers with the best, well-trained person that can take care of them.

Also, as experienced noncommissioned officers, your influence on the future of our profession will come out in your lifetime. How do you wish to be remembered? As a leader, will you guide and inspire the talented people on your team to achieve their full potential? The goal setting process is like the finely tuned piano in the hands of a "master". If perfectly constructed and tuned, it plays beautiful music. The training of the people you direct, will be only as good as what you, have finely tuned their skills.

Also, less-experienced medics need a mentor to guide them in their quest for excellence. Multiply yourself by investing in the development of others. It is your commitment to total personal mastery, which holds the key to success.

When you develop yourself and your combat medic skills, it is like that dusty old piano in the hands of a master. The choice is yours. How good do you need to be to save a life when it really counts?

Staff Sgt. Garry W. Odom
Arkansas National Guard

GUARDTOONS

By Kevin Kilgore



"He must be union."



In the News

Program allows commanders to communicate with family members and many others

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — After 33 years in sales and marketing, Ed Tonini knows what will play in Peoria and how to deliver the message.

The chief of staff for the Kentucky Air National Guard is the first career public affairs officer in Air Guard history to earn a brigadier general's star. He owns his own film and videotape production company in Louisville that specializes in sales and marketing. He has worked with such high-profile organizations as ESPN, the Walt Disney Studio, Chase Bank, General Electric, and IBM.

Tonini, 55, is also the founding father and driving force behind "Your Guardians of Freedom."

The program has gained the 33-year Air Guard veteran the attention of many of this country's military leaders who have committed full-time and part-time

people for a few months or a few years to the new war against terrorism.

"Your Guardians of Freedom" is a new program that enables unit commanders to quickly communicate with people affected by and interested in the mobilization and deployment of military people for the war President George W. Bush launched within days of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Commanders can contact and request the support of civilian employers, educators, families, members of Congress and local government leaders, and the local media when Guard citizen-soldiers, Reservists and active-duty troops get called up for Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom operations in this country and overseas.

"Our goal here is to make it as easy as possible for you to create a dialogue with those affected by the absence of Air National Guardsmen in your community," states Tonini in the introduction to the Your Guardians of Freedom web site on the Internet.

"The events of September 11th have changed all of our lives. As Americans we mourn and as Americans we are righteous in our outrage. When provoked by this

level of barbarism, we will bear any suffering, pay any cost, go to any length in the pursuit of justice."

That is the compelling introduction to letters that commanders can sign and send or use as examples for their own letters that explain why military people have been called to arms.

With the letters go posters featuring the Statue of Liberty in front of the U.S. flag recipients are asked to display as a show of support for the

people who have been deployed. Family members also receive Lady Liberty postcards and refrigerator magnets and "We Will Not Fail" patches for their jackets.

"Because these Air National Guardsmen are highly valued in their civilian roles, their sudden absence, which can last up to two years, will cause major inconveniences and hardships to everyone around them — their employer — their school — their family,"

Tonini explained to commanders.

"We know that communicating with these folks is yet one more responsibility for you to undertake in your already full-work schedule," he advised. "However, building a grass-roots level of support here in the homeland for our troops is an important role. So, we hope you do your part."

The program provides the groundwork for a number of different agencies, including the National Guard's state family programs and Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve. Tonini considers the program a full partner with those agencies.

"We needed a device to re-shine the light on these solid programs," said Tonini who described his program's two most important factors: No. 1, it is simple for people in the field to use and No. 2, it is an effective way to communicate with a large number of people.

"When you take the time to explain to people and organizations how an Air Guardsman's activation will affect them, you have the unique opportunity to positively influence public opinion on defense issues and create a better civilian understanding of the military service," Tonini said.

"When you take the time to explain to people and organizations how an Air Guardsman's activation will affect them, you have the unique opportunity to positively influence public opinion on defense issues and create a better civilian understanding of the military service."

— Brig. Gen. Ed Tonini



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Kentucky Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Edward Tonini explains the new "Your Guardians of Freedom" communications program to military leaders across the country.

Tonini and the Air National Guard have certainly done their part. The program was developed and approved after Sept. 11, and material was distributed to Air Guard installations in the 54 states and territories within about four months — faster than any one who knows Washington, D.C., could imagine.

The Air Guard contributed \$285,000 to get the program off the ground, Tonini said. Doe Anderson Advertising, a Louisville advertising agency, donated \$50,000 worth of time and material to refine the original concept for presentation.

United Parcel Service distributed the program's materials across the country in late January and early February, Tonini added, including more than 1,000 packages weighing more than 11 tons, free of charge as their part in the war against terrorism.

Air Guard commanders in Kentucky have already generated 900 letters, Tonini

reported. "That's a good start," he said.

Tonini, meanwhile, is striving to expand and improve the informational program.

The U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserve have embraced the concept and are moving toward full implementation, said Tonini who has twice presented it to Army National Guard senior leaders. He recently presented it to leaders of all of the reserve components at the Pentagon.

He is designing special pins, with the letter E displayed among Air Force wings, for corporate executives who have made it possible for their employees to take part in the war.

He is, by and large, encouraged by the initial reception to Your Guardians of Freedom.

"I have presented this program to between 60 and 75 people," Tonini said. "So far I'm batting a thousand. I've been in this business for over 30 years. That is the first time that's ever happened in my professional career."

Civilian voice with military know-how

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — It was a kids and colonels kind of Monday recently for Christopher Gardner. That was a typical workday in the life of the National Guard Bureau's civilian executive who directs the Joint Staff of nearly 400 people at National Guard Bureau. It also helped define everything for which that arm of the organization is responsible.

Gardner spent a half-hour on a Monday morning meeting in his top-floor office with three colonels anxious to obtain additional funding for the National Guard's Youth Challenge Program and the Star Base program for young people.

He devoted a good part of that afternoon to a promotion and change-of-command ceremony in an airplane hangar near Fort Belvoir just outside the nation's capital Beltway. Manuel Quiterio III was promoted to full colonel in the Army National Guard and then assumed command from Col. Arthur Sosa of the U.S. Army's global Operational Support Airlift Command that is ran by the Army Guard.

All or parts of those programs are included in Gardner's diverse domain. The same is true of the National Guard's emerging missile defense missions, counter-drug operations, civil support teams, and its programs for youth.

There were other meetings that day — with members of the Army Audit Agency about an upcoming audit and with his boss, Lt. Gen. Russell Davis, chief of the National Guard Bureau. He also spent that evening, with his wife Jeanie, attending a social function at Davis' Quarters One home on Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. But that's another story.

Kids and colonels, and the money that fuels their programs are among the multitude of matters that have filled Gardner's working hours since becoming director of the Joint Staff and assistant to the chief of the National Guard Bureau in July 2000.

He is responsible for administering and managing the National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff at this pivotal time when Davis is putting increased emphasis on the staff and its divisions.

At 49, Gardner is a Senior Executive Service civilian with the status, the perks and the clout of a two-star general. Retired from the District of Columbia Air National Guard, he gained experience as an enlisted airman and officer in addition to his vast government civilian experience.

He is the Guard bureau's "purple" team leader. That team consists of 19 distinct divisions which support the "green suit" and "blue suit" Army and Air Guard directorates.

Hence the color purple that is associated with the military and civilian staff that supports this country's 450,000 citizen-soldiers and airmen as an equal partner in the corporate scheme of things.

"This is the best of both worlds," said Gardner of his dual role as a civilian executive and military manager. "I get to work with adjutants general on state issues and with people watching over our federal assets. I get to help craft policy decisions at the highest levels. You really get to see the full spectrum of the National Guard from where I work."

The Joint Staff currently consists of 390 people, 192 Army and Air Guard officers and enlisted people on tours of active duty and 198 civilians, who are assigned to the divisions supervised by 11 civilians and eight military officers. All but a handful work at Jefferson Plaza I, the Guard Bureau's home office and a 15-minute walk from the Pentagon in Arlington.

Gardner also watches over all of the nearly 800 civilians who work throughout the National Guard Bureau.

The Joint Staff civilians who frequently hold their jobs for 15 or 20 years provide stability and institutional knowledge, Gardner explained. The military people who rotate in and out every three or four years bring fresh perspectives from their states and from other divisions where they have served, he added.

"I think that mix of experience and new ideas is very important," Gardner added.

All of them form the head and the heart of the National Guard Bureau.

They form the Family Program and the Youth Program staffs that look out for folks on the home front. They make up the Inspector General, Equal Opportunity and other support divisions that look out for the workers' best interests. They form the Office of Policy and Liaison that deals with Congress. They provide legal advice and opinions to Guard leaders across the country.

They make up the Public Affairs, International Affairs and Sports Management divisions that put the National Guard's best foot forward at home and abroad. They staff the National Missile Defense, Counter-drug and Civil Support-Weapons of Mass Destruction divisions focused on keeping this country safe from enemies both foreign and domestic.

"The Joint Staff works with and supports all 54 states and territories as well as with the Army and Air Guard directorates," Gardner said.

The staff's 2002 budget exceeds \$280 million. It includes \$145 million that Congress has appropriated for counter-drug operations and another \$63 million that Congress has designated for youth programs that are intended to give at-risk teenagers a fresh

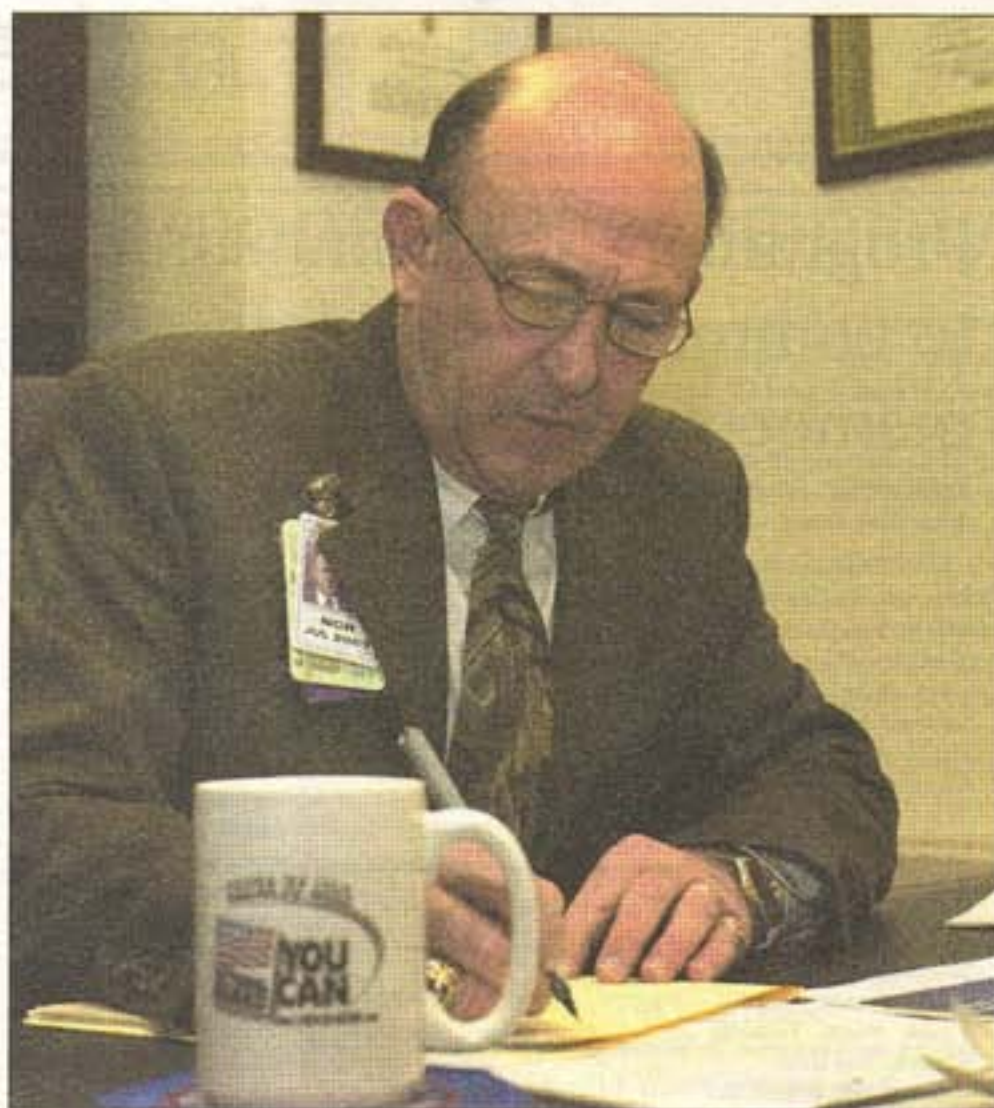


Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Christopher Gardner, director of the National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff, deals with his daily pile of paperwork in his 12th-floor office in Arlington, Va.

start.

There are 50 active youth programs across the country and 34 international State Partnership Programs, all of which the Joint Staff oversees.

The common denominator is that members of both Guard services will need the staff's help at one time or another, added Ann McIntosh, the Joint Staff's deputy director since 1996.

Although Army and Air Guard missions are more frequently in the spotlight, the Joint Staff has come into its own because of two turns of events — Lt. Gen. Russell Davis being named chief of the Guard Bureau nearly four years ago and all that has happened since Sept. 11.

Even when Davis was vice chief of the National Guard Bureau, he believed that empowering the Joint Staff would be crucial for the National Guard to move in the same direction as its sister services. As chief, he put his visionary plan in action, Gardner said.

"General Davis energized the Joint Staff," said McIntosh. "He raised the bar. He expected the Joint Staff to perform at a higher level. Because of that we've become more in tune with the processes of running a business organization. I think it's great."

For example, after spending his first year studying what the Joint Staff does and what had to be changed, Gardner said he began encouraging the division chiefs to better explain and justify their fiscal requirements

and become more competitive with others asking for the same money.

"Getting the staff to become more fiscally inclined became a high priority," he said. "Our programs are vital, and the staff works very hard to make sure each and every program remains viable."

Davis began learning the ways of the Joint Staff as a colonel in March 1980 when he became the Guard Bureau chief's executive officer at the Pentagon. He served in that capacity for nearly two years. He worked closely with the Joint Staff again after becoming vice chief in December 1995. He knew what he wanted from that staff when he became chief in August 1998.

"He has institutionalized the presence of the Joint Staff," said John Spencer, the chief's senior strategic analyst, who holds a doctorate in education.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks solidified the staff with a new sense of purpose, Gardner added.

"That clearly changed our immediate focus," said Gardner of his biggest challenge as the Joint Staff director. "We had to detour from the path we were on and make the adjustments that were needed to support the war on terrorism by activating over 50,000 citizen-soldiers and airmen, so far, and fly 80,000 hours to support Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom operations."

Despite the tragedy of September 11th,

See GARDNER On Page 5

Georgia Guard racks up two more wins

ATLANTA — Two Georgia Air National Guard units with members currently serving on active duty for Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom were awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

The 116th Bomb Wing located at Robins Air Force Base received the distinctive award for its eleventh time. It is the only unit in the Air Force—active or reserves—ever to receive this coveted award on eleven separate occasions.

Joining the 116th Bomb Wing in winning the AFOUA was the 117th Air Control Squadron located in Savannah, Ga., which won the award on five occasions. Nineteen Air Force and Air National Guard units across the country were awarded the coveted Air Force award.

"Competition for the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award is very keen among all Air Force units and selection as an AFOUA recipient represent the unit being the best of the best," said Brig. Gen. David A. Brubaker, deputy director of the Air National Guard.

The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award recognizes a unit's overall excellence in every phase of mission accomplishment as compared to every unit in the Air Force.

The 116th Bomb Wing flies the supersonic B-1 bomber, a mission that it has performed since 1995 when the unit moved from Dobbins Air Reserve Base near Atlanta to Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Ga. In October 2002, the 1,100-member unit will be renamed the 116th Air Control Wing and will fly the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft. It is estimated to be the largest wing in the Air National Guard and the only Air Guard Wing flying the sophisticated radar mission.

Georgia's 117th Air Control Squadron recently deployed to Kuwait to oversee NATO's Southern No-Fly Zone in Iraq. Currently, the 200-members of the 117th are mobilized in support of Operation Noble Eagle, or the nation's homeland defense mission.



The 116th Bomb Wing located at Robins Air Force Base received Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its eleventh time. It is the only unit in the Air Force—active or reserves—ever to receive this coveted award on eleven separate occasions.

FROM PAGE 4

Gardner

McIntosh said the focus has solidified the Joint Staff with a sense of purpose.

"September 11 made us all aware of how important it was to come together to support the states," McIntosh recalled. "It made us remember what our real mission is—to support the citizen-soldiers and airmen."

After 14 months on the job, Christopher Gardner was in the right place at the right time during that fateful September to help make that happen without being overwhelmed by the Washington's bureaucratic whirl.

You could say he was born to the job. He

grew up in Falls Church, in northern Virginia across the Potomac from the nation's capital, where big government is the accepted way of life. To him, it was like growing up in a mill town.

"I really didn't pay that much attention, but I always knew the federal government was there. I was more interested in bicycles and baseball," Gardner recalled. "I still have my Washington Senators pennant."

Being surrounded by government officials was no cause for excitement. A congressman lived just beyond his family's backyard and came over for barbecues. Joan Mondale, wife of Vice President Walter Mondale, used to take pottery lessons at the home of a family friend when Gardner was in his 20s. The fact that Secret Service agents were always with her was no big deal, he shrugged.

Gardner began his federal service by joining the Air Force in 1971, less than a year after graduating from Falls Church High School. He served a tour in Southeast Asia before joining the D.C. Air Guard in 1974.

He spent five years as a full-time military technician before he began climbing the civil-service ladder. He served with the U.S. Army Materiel Command, and he undertook executive development assignments with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Development and the Executive Office of the President, Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

Along the way he acquired a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's of arts degree in public administration, and he and his wife had a daughter and a son.

Gardner spent seven years in Huntsville, Ala., as deputy commander of the Army Materiel Command's Logistic Support Activity at Redstone Arsenal before Davis tapped him to direct the Joint Staff at the National Guard Bureau. He has remained in government service, Gardner explained, because he feels an obligation to the Department of Defense and to the country for his education and because "I find government service very rewarding."

No, he is not surprised that his career has led him back to the Beltway and to his job as a senior civilian with the National Guard Bureau.

"When I was a kid I thought everyone had access to the Smithsonian. We used to hitchhike into the District to go sightseeing," Gardner said. "Later in life, I'm just a product of where I grew up."



(Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau)

Christopher Gardner, civilian director of the National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff, honors the flag in the company of National Guard officers during a change-of-command ceremony at Davison Army Airfield near Fort Belvoir, Va.

Did you know?

DOD civilian employees have responsibilities and authority equal to military officers. Conversions are listed below.

GS	Mil
15	06
14	No equivalent
13	05
12	04
11	03
9	02
7	01

Tacos return from war against terror

2nd Lt Bruce Hill, Jr.
New Mexico National Guard

ALBUQUERQUE, NM -- The 150th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron returned from the Middle East last week, after serving more than five months in the war against terrorism.

Members of the 150th were met with open arms and tears by loved ones in an emotional homecoming, as they came down the escalators of Albuquerque's Sunport Airport a week ago Thursday. Regaled with flags and banners waving to the tunes of patriotic music performed by the Del Norte High School band, the troops seemed pleasantly surprised, but more importantly glad to be home.

"It was a shock to see everyone when coming down the escalator," stated TSgt Ivan Herrera, a 13-year veteran of the 150th Security Forces Squadron.

According to SrA Noah Dunn, 150th Security Forces member, "I was happy to be over there, but am very happy to be home now."

TSgt Edward Martinez, 150th SFS, stated "The hardest part was leaving them (wife and two children), but returning was excellent and an indescribable feeling."

On October 9, numerous SFS personnel were notified that their talents would be required at an undisclosed location for what was believed to have been for 90 days. But the actual length of the tour was nearly doubled. The experience, however, didn't seem to deflect their spirits.

"I didn't sign up to stay home," stated Dunn, who missed the birth of his first child due to the deployment. "I signed up to do my job and my job is to go protect. Whenever they call again, I'm ready to go."

The primary responsibility of security forces is to provide security and perform law enforcement duties, from securing an area and establishing perimeters, to protecting the military community. Though mission specifics could not be discussed, the security forces stayed relatively well within their job description.



Photo by 2nd Lt Bruce Hill Jr.

The 150th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron returned from the Middle East in March, after serving more than five months in the war against terrorism.

"It's been a unique experience. Being in the guard, you'd never know anything like this would happen. But it feels good being a part of something that's good," stated Herrera.

Beyond performing natural duties toward a deployment, there is the somewhat unnatural duty of having to prepare the family with the news.

"I took my six year old on a long walk and talked with him about what had happened to our country," stated Martinez. "That helped him understand why I had to leave."

According to MSgt Lori Martinez, it was easier for her five year-old this time around. "She's used to me being gone a lot (due to deployments). I told her of the possibility of me going once 9/11 happened. So she has taken this deployment rather well."

The 150th Security Forces Squadron anticipates the possibility of having to deploy in as little as a few days. Until that day, many will be at home spending quality time with

family and friends.

The 150th Fighter Wing is currently supporting operations around the world against terrorism.



Members of the 150th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron were special guests on a local radio show after returning from the Middle East.



Family members eagerly welcomed the return of their loved ones after being deployed for more than five months.

Dousing the fires...

In fiscal year 2003, the Florida and Oregon National Guards will receive UH-60L Firehawk helicopters. The aircraft is scheduled to arrive in Florida sometime after October 2002, just in time for the busy wild-fire season that normally runs from December to June.



Oregon and Florida to get 'Firehawks'

By Senior Airman Stephen Hudson
Florida National Guard

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — When Florida's next wildfire season begins, the Florida National Guard will be armed with a new tool to combat wildfires throughout the state.

In fiscal year 2003, both the Florida and Oregon National Guards will receive UH-60L Firehawk helicopters.

"Only the Oregon National Guard has one, Florida and California will receive one concurrently," Maj. Dave Gereski, of the Florida National Guard Bureau's aviation office said.

The aircraft is scheduled to arrive in Florida sometime after October 2002, just in time for the busy wildfire season that normally runs from December to June.

The Firehawk is a modified version of the Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk, currently used by the Florida National Guard. The new addition will not replace the eight other Blackhawks used by the Florida

National Guard in fire fighting.

According to Lt. Col. James F. Mulvehill, the Florida National Guard's state Army aviation officer, the Firehawk will add to Guard's capabilities in fighting fires, but will not require new personnel. Existing crews will be used.

"Additional training will be provided by Sikorsky," Mulvehill said. "The crews will have to be trained on the specifics of the Fire Hawk. We will have a core team of three or four crews. According to Florida Division of Forestry statistics, wildfires peak during the months of May and June in Florida. Lightning strikes usually cause the majority of those fires during this period."

"Last year the Blackhawk pilots in Florida flew 1,600 hours fighting fires, double their normal flying hours of 800," Mulvehill said.

The Firehawk retrieves water through a snorkel and can hold 1,000 gallons in its external tank. Foam can be mixed with the water to make it more effective in fire sup-

pression operations. In addition, the Fire Hawk can hold 220 more gallons than Blackhawks equipped with buckets and Fire Hawks can extract water from water supplies that bucket-equipped helicopters normally cannot use.

"We've been using the standard 'Bambi' bucket since 1998," said Chief Warrant Officer David Smith, a Blackhawk pilot with the Florida National Guard. "This is not going to make the 'Bambi' bucket obsolete, there's still a place for it to be used."

According to Mulvehill, the fire fighting additions can be removed and the aircraft can become a "go-to-war" helicopter.

"I think this new addition will be a benefit to not only the Guard's federal mission, but to the state disaster relief," Mulvehill said.

Maintenance crews are also planned to receive additional training. The Florida National Guard Firehawk will be housed at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Brooksville, Fla.

The right tool for the job

CAMP DENALI, Alaska — It's no secret that the Alaska National Guard is heavily involved when it comes to rescue. Both the Army and Air Guard combined fly some 300 missions a year to help their fellow Alaskans. The Air Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron is a fully equipped combat search and rescue unit, with gear designed to find and rescue people.

"That's not always been the case with Army Guard aviation," explains the Alaska Army Guard State Aviation Officer, Col. Mark Stigar, "although we've done, and will continue to do, a lot of rescues, our helicopters have been designed with troop movement as the main mission."

Stigar says that recently that has changed, and the Alaska Army Guard has received new equipment for their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. "The State has provided us with rescue hoists and infra-red gear to better effect rescues, and most recently our capability for mass rescue has increased," he says, referring to a new item known as the 'Heli-Basket.'

"The Heli-Basket is basically a large rectangular basket about 4.5-by-8.5 feet. It is built to handle very large loads, and can hold 12 people or more." Stigar says this bright orange wire box is designed for mass evacuations, where people need to be removed from an area quickly. "If we had a passenger plane go down in Cook Inlet, this would be an excellent way to take people out of the water quickly."

Although the thought of dangling from a helicopter sounds frightening, Stigar says the Heli-Basket promises to be a smooth ride.

"The manufacturer (Precision Lift, Inc.) has a patent for the cable and the harness system that's guaranteed not to sway or spin." He says this can be an important part to affecting a rescue. "When someone is in need of rescue, they're not in the best shape anyway. The last thing they need is a rough, terrifying ride."

This new equipment, along with previous additions, has given more capability to a group of aviators already known for rescue.

"The Alaska Army Guard is getting three of these baskets," says Stiga. "One will stay in Anchorage, the others will go to Juneau and Bethel. The Army Guard is already doing rescue, this gives us another tool to do that more effectively."

"We met with Anchorage leaders recently to show what we now have, and discuss how it can be used," he said.

Stiga said he hopes the Army Guard and city leaders can cooperate in the future when it comes to a rescue plan. "We've got the dialogue started. We just want them to know that we're another valuable resource that can be utilized if they need us."

The times have changed, but

By Staff Sgt. Heather Pratt

California Air National Guard

FRESNO, Calif. — The idea of providing homeland defense for West Coast is nothing new for the men and women of the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing. Since its inception, the unit has been in the business of defending California for almost 50 years now.

"Although the actual mission is the same, the intensity has drastically increased," said Col. Phil Skains, 144th commander. Prior to September 11, 2001 the 144th Fighter Wing provided about two aircraft to North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, but that number quadrupled after September 11.

"One of the major changes (the commander in chief, or CINC, for) NORAD has made is in regards to the issue of response times," said Skains. "The CINC has set more appropriate, and much shorter, response times, highlighting the value of a unit based in central California."

With Fresno at the heart of California's central valley, the unit is able to respond to any critical infrastructure or major population center, including Los Angeles and the Bay Area, in a minimal amount of time.

"That's what makes Fresno such a critical location," Skains added.

Besides the pilots, the mission hasn't changed much for the maintenance specialists who work on the aircraft. They still had to maintain aircraft, repair avionics components, work on engines and perform inspections on the aircraft, but now the demands have also dramatically increased.

The unit's use of both personnel and aircraft far exceeded that of active-duty counterparts, one 144th unit member claimed.

"We're still providing air sovereignty for the western United States and California specifically," said Lt. J.D. Lundholm, maintenance squadron commander for the 144th. "The difference is that our primary focus, and our assets, are for the (homeland defense) mission, not training."

Lundholm said the unit's demanding training regimen prior to Sept. 11 paid dividends.

"If ever you could see a direct result from training, the response of the 144th Fighter Wing was it," added Lundholm. Six months into the terrorism fight, Fresno has maintained the highest mission capable rate, in addition to providing the highest aircraft delivery rate.

One of the changes noted is that the frequency of scheduled and unscheduled maintenance has drastically increased, due largely to the increased flight durations for Operation Noble Eagle missions. Typical Noble Eagle flying missions can last up to four hours.

See AIR POWER On This Page



(Above) Capt. Kirk of the 144th Fighter Air National Guard patrol mission over the Pacific. (Left) Senior Airman technician, working on the avionics of an aircraft.

(Left) Senior Airman technician, working on the avionics of an aircraft.

FROM PAGE 8

Air Power

Due to the increased intensity of the mission, the unit has increased too. Using the unit's resources to activate almost their entire force from 65 or so, to more than 100.

"One of the best things that has been afforded the opportunity to be in a real-world setting is the squadron command that."

Despite the unusual circumstances, the area people still support the unit. "We have been very

Photo By MSgt. Chris Drudge

defending the nation goes on



Photo By: Lt. Col. J.T. Taggett

...Hawkins, an F-16C "Fighting Falcon" pilot, ... Squadron, 144th Fighter Wing, California ... Base, located in Fresno, flies a combat air ... the Golden State Park. The 194th Fighter ... providing homeland defense for Operation

... Jennifer Peters, an aerospace propul- ... oscopes an engine.

ver

ed maintenance workload, manpower has ... a rotational basis, maintenance squadrons ... entire squadrons, bringing total personnel ... re 150 for each squadron.

ings that has come of this is that we have ... opportunity to train our traditional guardsmen ... g," said Maj. Jim Mark, aircraft generation ... er, "You can't underestimate the power of

ally high operations tempo, Skains said the ... port the unit.

lucky here at the 144th," said Skains, "Our

community leaders and employers have been very supportive of our unit and our mission."

As for the pilots, the mindset is the biggest change, according to Maj. Sean Navin, an F-16 "Fighting Falcon" pilot and chief of training for the 194th Fighter Squadron.

"I was actually already at work when the first plane hit. I had come in early to prep for a training mission," Navin said, noting things changed quickly for the pilots.

"The biggest change for me is that every time I fly, there is a chance I could be asked to shoot down a civilian airliner. It's a definite change in mindset."



Photos by Master Sgt. Chris Drudge, California National Guard

(Above) Senior Airman Tim Williamson marshalls one of the unit's F-16 pilots out to perform a combat air patrol over the skies of California in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

(Right) Tech. Sgt. Robert Martin, a crew chief in the Aircraft Generation Squadron services a tire on one of the 144th Fighter Wing's aircraft tasked to NORAD in support of Operation Noble Eagle.





Sports

Female athlete goes out at the top of her game

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — Talk about going out in style.

Minnesota Army National Guard soldier Kara Salmela, who has decided to retire from the international biathlon grind after competing in the last two Winter Olympics, has been named the United States Army's top female athlete for 2001.

Salmela, 29, was the only member of the reserve forces among the 10 top men and women athletes selected by the five military services. They were honored by the U.S. Military Sports Association in Arlington, Va., on March's fourth Friday evening.

"A lot of Army athletes worked just as hard as I did. To be selected as the best woman is just amazing," said Salmela following "The Pride of the Nation" awards banquet attended by about 200 people.

Brig. Gen. Antonio Taguba, commanding general of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in nearby Alexandria, presented the Army awards to Salmela and active Army Staff Sgt. Jason Parker, the reigning world military air rifle champion and member of the Army's marksmanship unit at Fort Benning, Ga.

John Urmston, a retired Marine Corps Reserve colonel and the association's president, praised all of the 2001 winners for serving their country as military athletes who are ready at a moment's notice to join in the war against terrorism and go into harm's way.

"That is what makes them special in the world of athletics," Urmston said.

Salmela earned her award after finishing second in the women's biathlon, which combines the disciplines of cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship, during the 2001 World Military Championships last March in Vermont.

Eight years of intense training and six years on the World Cup circuit, however, is enough, said Salmela who earned berths on the U.S. Olympic biathlon teams for the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, and for the recent 2002 Games in Utah.

She will not hang up her skis and rifle for good, she indicated, because her husband, Cory, coaches the U.S. junior national team for the U.S. Biathlon Association, and because she will probably still compete in military events.

"Kara has worked with the junior team for the last couple of years. She's really an inspiration to our younger biathletes," explained Cory.

"I will keep on training, but not with the intensity that I trained for the Olympics," said Kara.



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Minnesota Army National Guard Spc. Kara Salmela and her husband Cory (left) share some time with Army Brig. Gen. Antonio Taguba in Arlington, Va. recently. Taguba presented Salmela with her medal as the U.S. Army's female athlete of the year.

She is an administrative specialist in Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 94th Armor, part of the of the 34th Infantry Division, in Duluth where she and her husband live beside the western tip of Lake Superior.

Salmela is a former Army world class athlete who was the only biathlete among the elite group that visited the Washington, D.C., area during the March weekend. It was the 19th year that the association has honored this country's premier military athletes.

Other winners were: Navy Lt. j.g. Katie Sheldon, volleyball, and Ensign Eric Uptagrafft, rifle shooting; Marine 2nd Lt. Molly Jo Salness, Navy pentathlon, and Lance Cpl. Jelani Nix, basketball; Air Force 2nd Lt. Summer Deaton, volleyball, and Staff Sgt. Steven Woods, Greco-Roman wrestling; and Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Mary Springer, shotokan karate,

and Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Coleman, cycling.

Parker and Uptagrafft are also former Olympians. Sheldon, Uptagrafft, Salness and Deaton graduated from the U.S. Naval and Air Force academies. Woods is currently the fourth-ranked Greco-Roman wrestler in the country.

Army National Guard Col. Willie Davenport, a former five-time Olympian who won gold and bronze medals in the high hurdles, was also present. He is the chief of the National Guard Bureau's Sports Management Division.

"There is a Willie Davenport among these young athletes," is how that Olympic hero was introduced to the gathering.

Salmela said she learned of her selection in February while she was competing in the Salt Lake City Winter Games.

"I didn't have time to process it because I

was so busy," she related. "It didn't really sink in until I got here."

It was yet another honor for National Guard athletes during this rewarding Olympic year.

Army Guard soldier Jill Bakken from Utah won a gold medal in women's bobsledding, and citizen-soldiers Mike Kohn from Virginia and Dan Steele from Oregon earned bronze medals in men's bobsledding.

Sergeant Kristina Sabasteanski from Vermont, one of Salmela's biathlon teammates, helped carry the American flag recovered from ground zero at the World Trade Center into the Olympic Stadium during the Opening Ceremony.

They will be in the limelight at least one more time when all of the U.S. Olympians will come to Washington to meet President George W. Bush and when the Department of Defense will pay tribute to the athletes.



News Makers

Guard General takes over coalition force

On Guard staff report

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — A West Virginia Air National Guard general was recently selected to command a coalition unit dedicated to fighting the war on terrorism.

Brigadier Gen. Wayne Lloyd, commander of the West Virginia Air National Guard, was selected to command the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing at a deployment site near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

The 376th Air Expeditionary Wing is a coalition wing presently made up of more than 1,500 members from the United States, Republic of Korea, Denmark, France, Australia, Spain, Netherlands and Norway. Members of the wing reside in a tent city, which can feed and support about 2,500 people, but may be expanded to accommodate more troops as the mission expands.



Lloyd

The wing is flying fighter, tanker and airlift operations into Afghanistan using Mirage 2000s and C-135s from France, and C-130s from Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands. Future missions include the arrival of U.S. FA-18 Hornets in April to support the fight against terrorism.

Lloyd said even though the commander has changed, the mission remains the same. "I'm very excited to be here, and we are going to continue with our primary goal: contribute in a significant way to Operation Enduring Freedom," said the command pilot, who has logged more than 14,000-flight hours.

A key part of accomplishing the mission hinges on each member of the force, said Lloyd.

"We cannot win this fight without the men and women from all the coalition countries. Whether it's loading the bombs, cooking the food or flying the aircraft, everyone contributes to mission success."

"I'm very impressed by what these soldiers and airmen have accomplished in such a short amount of time during extreme winter weather. Their professionalism, dedication to the job and attitudes are inspirational. I'm going to do my best to maintain the same level of morale and dedication to accomplish our mission."

Turning things around ...

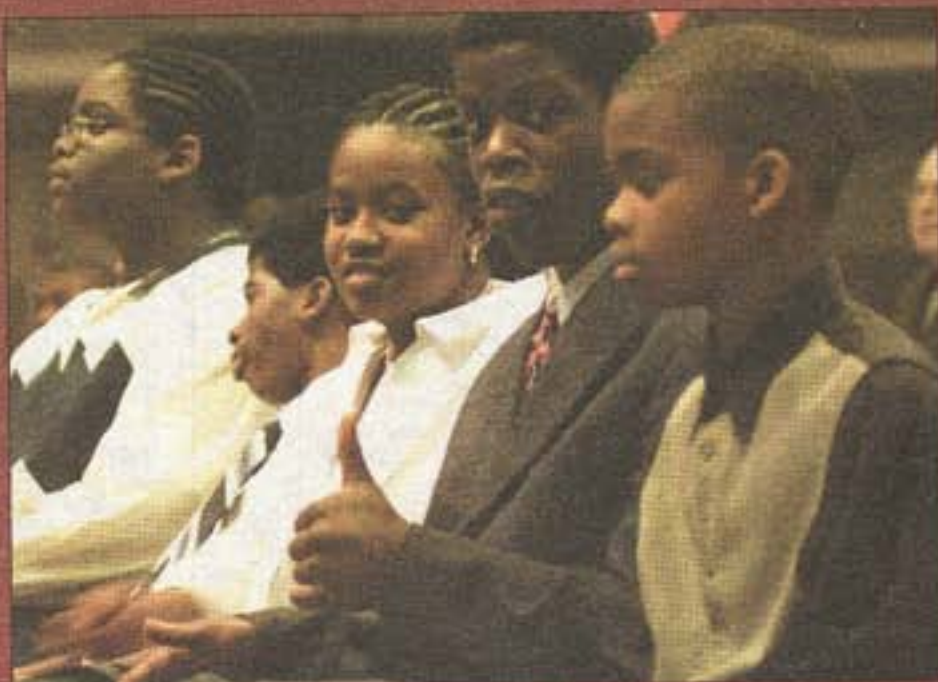


Photo by Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa, Florida National Guard

A graduate of the Florida National Guard's "Operation About Face" program gives a "thumbs up" during the program's recent graduation ceremonies at the Fort Homer Hesterly Armory in Tampa, Fla.

By Sgt. Thomas Kielbasa
Florida Army National Guard

TAMPA, Fla. — Fourteen-year-old Andrew Johnson wants to be a judge.

He says it matter-of-factly — "I want to be a judge" — and without the inflection of indecision found in some teenagers. Peering intently through his slightly thick glasses, Andrew lets you know he "will" attain his goal; there is no alternate plan for this young man.

Until last summer Andrew had the ambition needed to start on his already chosen career path, but according to his mother, Elonda, he lacked enough encouragement and life skills to truly follow his dream. Then he discovered "Operation About Face."

About Face is an after school and summer program sponsored by the Florida National Guard, which targets middle school and high school students who have been certified as eligible to receive welfare assistance. The National Guard Bureau is currently considering Florida's About Face program — the first of its kind — as a national model.

"This is outstanding," said Lt. Col. Mike Johnson, deputy chief of Army National Guard Strength Maintenance at the National Guard Bureau, during a recent visit to the Tampa About Face site. "My wish is that we get the resources and the backing to put this type of program in all of our states, because all of our youth can benefit from this."

The program is conducted year-round in five armories and during the summer in 22 armories throughout the state, aims to help students improve their academic skills, acquire basic skills for future employment and become more familiar with life-management responsibilities.

Elonda noted it is those responsibilities — specifically learning "the value of a dollar" — that will most help her son along the long and difficult road to the judiciary bench.

"Before (About Face) he felt like money was just given out to him, now he knows that 'If I want this, I have to save for it,'" Elonda said. "He's learned that he can't get everything from Momma. He's got to save for it himself. That's the most important thing he's learned in this program."

Andrew joined 28 other teenagers in a recent About Face graduation ceremony held at the Fort Homer Hesterly Armory in Tampa. As well as receiving certificates and newly acquired life skills, each student received paychecks — incentives of up to \$160 for their participation in the eight-week-long program.

A quick survey of some of the graduates showed they were taking their money management teachings to heart; they planned to save their paychecks rather than spend the money right away.

"You can see it on their faces that they've learned something," Florida About Face Program Manager Capt. Pamela Ellison said after the graduation.

The Norwegian connection

By Sgt. Clinton Wood
Minnesota Army National Guard

CAMP RIPLEY, Minn. — Minnesota Army National Guard Maj. John Sylvester of Little Falls undertook a task from Feb. 22 until March 6 which he described as one of his best in his 20 years of service.

He was the officer in charge of the 29th-annual U.S. Norwegian Troop Reciprocal Exchange from Feb. 22 until March 6 at the camp. A similar number of Minnesota Guard members train at Camp Torpomen, Norway. The training involves primarily winter operations in both nations.

"(The exchange) has just been neat," Sylvester said as he stood watching and cheering on one of the three platoons as they competed in the shooting part of the biathlon on Feb. 27. "It's been an experience I'll never forget."

Sylvester began this experience by flying over to Norway on the Minnesota Air National Guard's 133rd Airlift Wing's C-130 transport planes with the Minnesota Guardmembers on Feb. 5. He flew back to the camp with the Norway contingent numbering more than 100. Most of the group were members in the Norwegian Home Guard Youth Program. These soldiers range from ages 17 to 19 and have attended their basic skills training. They must be 18 to participate in this exchange.

Sylvester said the youth asked him how much snow the camp has and how cold it was at the camp during the flight. The winter training would include a biathlon, night skiing and even staying overnight in Guard tents.

John Haugsdal, one of the youth, said it was warmer than he expected when he arrived.

He said the snowfall was a little more than he had at his home in Norway when he left.

Another youth, Lena Brendstuen, was surprised of the lack of snowfall upon arrival.

"I thought that it would be one meter or something like that," she said with a laugh as she placed her right hand up with her palm facing down to her waist.

Sylvester admitted that when he first learned he would be organizing the exchange, he wasn't that excited. He was very busy with his family especially with his two sons and daughter playing hockey.

"I'm actually not looking forward to them leaving now," he said.

Deployment provides real-world experience

Photo and story by Pfc. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait — When National Guard soldiers who are accustomed to weekend training receive the call to mobilize, preparation can be a daunting task.

This mission could have been especially difficult for Task Force 211th Aviation, the National Guard attack helicopter battalion stationed at Camp Doha; their soldiers come from three states. But according to Sgt. Maj. James Baker, Task Force 211 command sergeant major, despite the inherent hurdles, only one phrase applies to their deployment experience from start to finish: "mission accomplished."

The soldiers of the aviation task force are comprised of elements from the 1st Battalion 211th Aviation Utah Army National Guard, Company A, 1st Battalion, 147th Aviation Wisconsin Army National Guard; and Company B 1st Battalion 147th Aviation, Indiana Army National Guard.

Almost every position in the approximately 150 person task force was filled by a volunteer.

The National Guardsmen come from all walks of life. In their civilian careers, they are nurses, firemen, police officers, and businessmen. Some, like Staff Sgt. Joe Stransky, are government employees in Utah who maintain the Apache helicopters full-time. Others like Jay Anderson were full-time students. When they received the word, all put their lives on hold to answer their call to duty.

For many it was their first deployment and they welcomed the challenge.

"We wanted to get an idea of what it's like for the full-timers," said Matthew Reid. "We wanted to take the skills we've learned over the years in the National Guard and see if we could fulfill the full-time mission."

The last four aviation task forces have also been drawn from the National Guard.

This task force is composed of eight Apache and four Blackhawk helicopters.

"In time of war their primary role is to defend Kuwait by fighting as a member of the combined-arms team and defeat enemy armor vehicles with hellfire missiles, 2.75-inch rockets and 30mm cannons," said Lt. Col. Matt Clark, Task Force 211 commander. "With our eight Apaches, we're extremely lethal. They can be anywhere on the battlefield in a matter of minutes."

They can also create havoc by pressing deep into enemy territory ahead of friendly troops to attack artillery and air defense assets, according to Clark.

On the outside looking in ...



Photo by Pfc. Greg Heath

A Task Force 211 mechanic checks the inner-workings of a helicopter to ensure everything is in tip-top shape.

Operation Desert Storm helped illustrate the importance of Army air power, according to Clark. When the war kicked off, it was an Apache battalion that flew into Iraq and took out their early-warning radar systems.

Since assuming the aviation task force role, they've flown 100 percent of their allotted flight hours, the only Apache aircraft unit to do that in a six-month Kuwait deployment, Clark said.

In their current mode, they spend most of their time training and maintaining the Apaches and Blackhawks in case they are ever needed.

Many factors have attributed to their success.

For every hour flown there is intensive maintenance for the aircraft, said Baker.

On average, the National Guard soldiers are a little older than what you'll find on the active duty side, he added.

A lot of the soldiers were once active duty and switched to the National Guard.

"Our crews have quite a bit of experience," Baker said. "Some of our crew chiefs and mechanics served in Vietnam working on old Huey and Cobra helicopters."

The National Guard soldiers received notice a year ahead of time from Army Forces Command to get ready for a Kuwait deploy-

ment. Normally, a month prior to deployment, the Guard unit would mobilize to an active Army post.

This task force received an unprecedented opportunity from Forces Command (FORSCOM) to be the first National Guard aviation task force mobilizing and deploying from home station.

"Home station mobilization enabled us to provide more training," said Clark. "Normally we go through a 30-day process at the mobilization station. We were able to use that time for training instead of losing a month and a half."

The task force was also granted permission by Third U.S. Army to split the six-month rotation. That allowed soldiers to deploy for only three months, depending on their individual circumstances at home.

Despite being given an option of serving less time in the Kuwaiti desert, 75 percent of the soldiers volunteered to stay the entire six months.

In addition to the military support, the soldiers received an outpouring of support from their local communities.

"We've gotten quite a bit of fan mail," said Stransky. "I have received more than a dozen personally addressed letters from school

kids. It's really nice to know that there are people out there who care about you and care about what you're doing."

Reid also has more support, especially in the wake of the September 11th attacks.

"My brother sent me e-mails saying he didn't really realize how much we do for the country until something happens," Reid said. "My brother told me he was really proud of me."

At their activation ceremony in July, the local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter gave the soldiers phone cards. Local media also covered a lot of their training events prior to deployment.

Soon most of the soldiers will be going home with valuable experience from this overseas deployment.

"The best thing I'll take back is the stronger bond we've built as a unit," Reid said.

"When something like this comes around, the experience is invaluable," Stransky agreed. "We always hear that the people doubt the National Guard's ability to successfully complete the mission with the minimum time we put in. But it's nice to see we can come out and prove to ourselves and everyone else that we can do it as good as anybody."

Vice President Cheney visits Arkansas guardsmen in Egypt

By Sgt. 1st Class Eric Wedeking
National Guard Bureau

SINAI, Egypt – Citizen-soldiers with the Arkansas Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 153rd Infantry "Gunslingers", 39th Separate Infantry Brigade continue making history on the Sinai peninsula as the first all-Army National Guard Multinational Force Observers after they were activated less than one month following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

More than 500 infantrymen from Arkansas deployed to Egypt to participate in the 20-year-old peacekeeping mission following the Camp David Peace Accord between Israel and Egypt. Several years ago, a mixed National Guard, Army Reserve and active-duty unit performed peacekeeping duties for the first time there.

Before the Razorback troops left from their mobilization station in October from Fort Carson, Colo., for the desert bordering the Red Sea, the unit's commander said he expected his unit to create a hallmark for the entire National Guard before they were slated to return home in July.

"To be the first pure National Guard unit selected for this prestigious mission is a compliment not only to the soldiers standing before you, but to the entire Army Guard, which maintains a level of readiness consistent with the highest standards of the regular Army – prepared and ready to execute any mission, anywhere, anytime," said Lt. Col. Steve Womack, battalion commander.

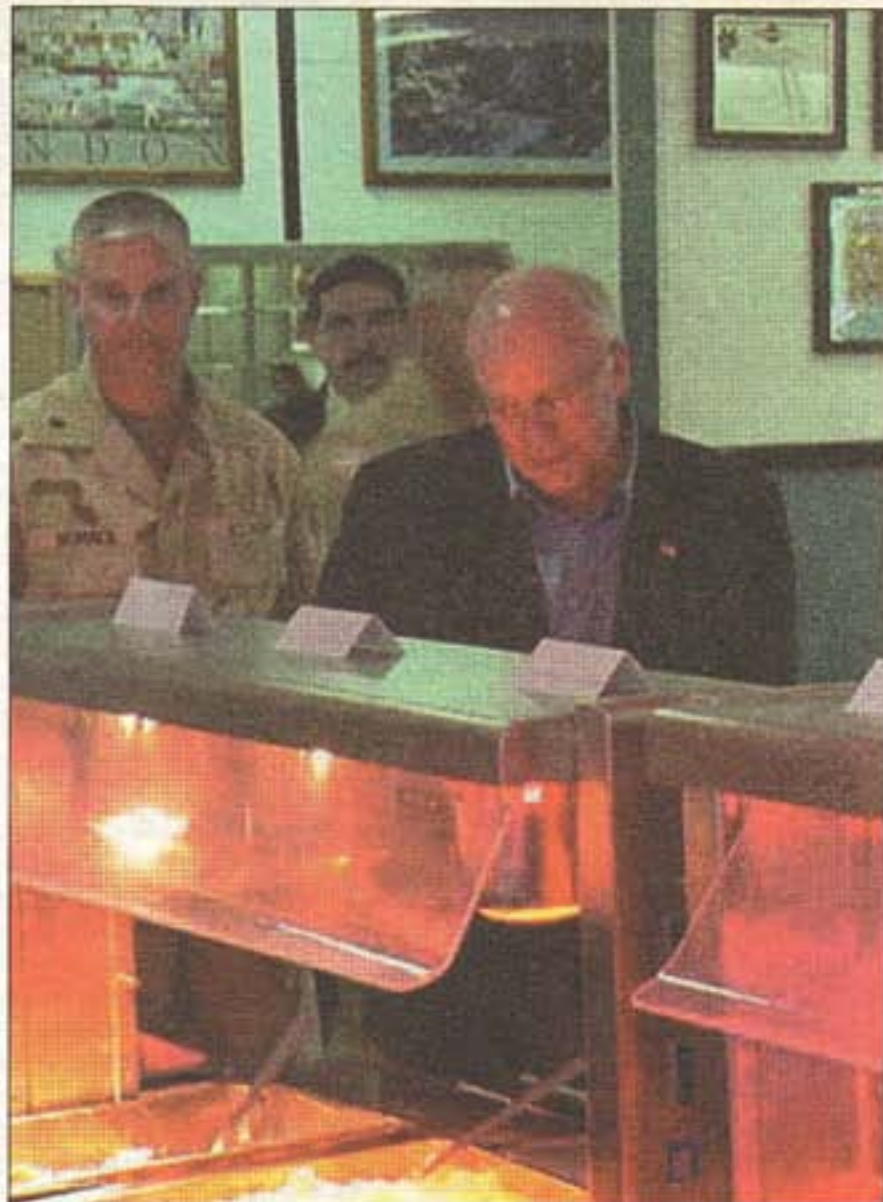
The all-Army Guard task force relieved elements of the regular Army's 10th Mountain Division, which saw action in Afghanistan, and is slated to be relieved in July by an infantry battalion from the Oregon Army National Guard.

Arkansas and the unit also posted a web site at www.gunslinger.info to keep families further informed.



Photos courtesy of www.gunslinger.info

The Gunslingers were recognized for their security contributions after visits in March by Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of the Army Thomas White. The unit posted a web site at www.gunslinger.info to keep families further informed of ongoing events and unit news.



Texans guarding freedom: Guard forces blend into active component

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
National Guard Bureau

SAN ANTONIO — Mario Cervantes knows all about ugly. It's an infant with two bullet wounds, an innocent victim of a drive-by shooting.

That is a tragic, ugly part of the world of experience as a civilian police officer that Cervantes, 35, brings to his full-time job these days as part of the beefed up security force determined to keep Lackland Air Force Base safe and secure during the war against terrorism.

Cervantes is a technical sergeant in the Texas Air National Guard's 149th Security Forces Squadron, part of the same-numbered fighter wing that is based at Lackland west of the Alamo and downtown San Antonio.

He has worked for the Bexar County Sheriff's Office for the past 13 years, about the same length of time he has been in Texas Air Guard. He was promoted from patrolman to detective in April 2001, less than six months before he reported for active duty in his camouflage uniform and distinctive dark-blue beret.

Cervantes is, in effect, a big-city policeman because Bexar County, which includes San Antonio, home to more than 1.4 million people. It is the fourth most heavily populated county in Texas and ranked 24th most heavily populated in the entire nation.

His civilian experience is serving him well as a military policeman and area supervisor because Cervantes' unit is supporting the active Air Force's 37th Security Forces Squadron. Lackland, the Air Force's sprawling basic training base, is their beat. So is former-Kelly Air Force Base, where military facilities are still located.

Cervantes is an example of what Maj. David Ptak, the 37th's commander, calls a "culture change," part of the "new normal" in this country's military forces brought on by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The 149th Squadron's 60 or so Guard members have been so completely integrated into the active duty unit that it is virtually impossible to tell who is active and who is Guard as the security force people are deployed to

Qatar and other places to patrol flight lines, perimeter fences, and guard gates.

Guard and Reserve units used to join forces with their active-duty counterparts for missions overseas, and everybody would go their separate ways when they came home, Ptak pointed out. That's how it worked in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War more than decade ago.

It is now business as usual on the home front, Ptak said, and it's likely to stay that way for a long time.

"This is not a temporary thing," predicted Ptak, who has counted on the Guard unit and individual members of the Air Force Reserve to increase his squadron by more than 100 members — to more than 500 in all.

Here's what that the 149th, whose motto is "Texans Defending Freedom," has brought to the table.

Major Scott Parker, the Air Guard squadron's commander, is a special agent with the federal Defense Criminal Investigative Service in San Antonio. He is serving as the 37th's deputy commander.

Senior Airman Linda Johnson, a former Air Force dog handler, and her drug-sniffing dog

named Gizmo have been sent to El Paso to work with U.S. Customs officials along the Texan-Mexican border for 60 days. Five other trained handlers in the 37th, meanwhile, are still waiting to get dogs, Ptak said.

And a 149th master sergeant was the squad leader for a recent deployment to Saudi Arabia that included members of the active, Guard and Reserve elements, Parker added.

"If you're qualified, you get to do the job," said Parker. "If you're not qualified, you don't. It's that simple."

Most of his people are certainly qualified, he maintained. They have years of civilian and military police and corrections experience that many more considerably younger members of the active-duty Air Force security force do not possess.

"There is no way you can know everything that people like Sgt. Cervantes know unless you have done what they have done," said one young airman, who has been in the Air Force for less than three years. "You can't help but learn from them while you work with them."

Cervantes saw an ironic humor in the situation.

"They call us 'the old guys,'" laughed Cervantes, who still looks considerably younger than his 35 years. The five stripes on his sleeves, however, make it clear he's been around for awhile.

Garrison duty is like being a police officer in a city, except that the military citizens are more inclined to respect a military police person's authority, Cervantes said. To do otherwise will not help their military careers.

Dealing with traffic violations and intoxicated drivers and responding to domestic disputes are part of the job. So are threats of suicides. Cervantes encountered one of those during his first duty day at Lackland.

A young trainee, apparently overcome by stress, made things pretty clear, Cervantes recalled. "If you don't do something right now, I'm going to take a pair of scissors to my wrists. If that doesn't work, I'm going to jump off the fire escape," the young man promised.

Cervantes knew how to keep the shaking trainee calm before medical personnel took him to the base hospital. The seasoned Air Guard sergeant knew what to do to keep that incident from becoming ugly.

Who's who...



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

Who is the Air National Guard security forces sergeant and who is the Air Force sergeant? Hard to tell, isn't it? Technical Sgt. Mario Cervantes (left) belongs to the Texas Air Guard's 149th Security Forces Squadron and Staff Sgt. Michael Phillips belongs to the active-duty Air Force's 37th Security Forces Squadron. They are serving together at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.



History

Panama: Looking back on a favorite Guard training site

By Sgt. 1st Class Eric Wedeking
National Guard Bureau

PANAMA CITY, Panama — For more than 20 years, National Guard men and women ventured to Panama from each and every U.S. state and territory to the isthmian nation where many military officials said was the National Guard's premier training site.

The National Guard's involvement in Panama ended only three short years ago with the final implementation of the Panama Canal Treaty on Dec. 31, 1999.

For many Guard troops, the U.S. military's final departure from Panama signified an emotional event after tens of thousands of National Guard men and women deployed there performing annual training in Panama.

Scores of National Guard citizen-soldiers are still closely tied to Panama because they started families in Panama. But Army National Guard Lt. Col. Clark Presnell, senior National Guard advisor at U.S. Army-South's headquarters on Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, pointed to something else that will indelibly link the National Guard with Panama — pride and professionalism.

"People could see the value of their work and their labor during exercises here," Presnell noted. "They could see the smiling kids and the happy people. It's a big deal for us not being able to get the good training that we could get here in Panama."

National Guard leaders predicted the National Guard's Panama legacy would be just one chapter in a thick book that people can mull over for years to come.

"There can be the perception out there that we're forever leaving the area, but I don't think that is true," said Puerto Rico Army National Guard Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William Navas Jr., former Army National Guard director and now a consultant for the National Guard Association of the United States in Arlington, Va. Navas, who in 1983 was serving as a colonel in the Puerto Rico Army National Guard's plans, operations and training officer, was appointed to serve as the Army National Guard's first-ever, all-Army Guard engineer task force commander in Panama and deployed to the rugged Azuero Peninsula, where they built a 15-mile-long farm-to-market road, along with other infrastructure.

Navas' exercise came during the turbulent times prior to Operation Just Cause in Panama and while the disturbances raged in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

The Guard remained forward deployed in Panama and kept deploying troops from the United States and territories to exercises and other training events throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean.

"The exercises have been diverted quite frequently over the years because there have been a lot of natural disasters in the region," Navas added.

Troop training, unit readiness, mobilization exercises, "staying engaged in the theater," basic infrastructure improvement for the host country, and host-nation cooperation were just a few measurable benefits, Navas added.

Besides the engineer and medical training in Panama and elsewhere, a laundry list of other Guard military operations National Guard troops deploying to Panama and throughout the region over the years, including: military police, infantry, logistical, aviation, supply and maintenance units, public affairs, military intelligence, signal, finance, ordnance disposal, and administrative, not to mention troops from dozens of other occupational specialties.

Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Clyde



Army National Guard Maj. Gen. (Ret.) William Navas Jr., then a colonel, conducts a press briefing in Panama during the first Blazing Trails engineer exercise in 1983.

Vaughn, who was a long-time participant in Central and South American Guard engineer exercises, now serves at the Pentagon, called Navas' first engineer exercise "innovative" because it shaped the future relationship of the National Guard with the entire Active Component for years to come.

"That first exercise and its commander, then-Col. Billy Navas, were on the cutting edge, and in my view, had a tremendous impact on all that followed," Vaughn said.

During inactivation ceremonies conducted in late 1999 for the Army National Guard's Exercise Support Command and Theater Equipment And Maintenance Site in Panama, then-U.S. Army South Maj. Gen. Philipp Kensinger praised National Guard citizen-soldiers, pointing to their hard work and Guard's immeasurable influence over the years.

"It is here that the National Guard soldiers have achieved their finest hour," Kensinger said.

The Army National Guard was represented by a command-and-control element, Exercise Support Command, headed by

Vaughn, and the Theater Equipment And Maintenance Site; where deploying Guard and other U.S. military units, both active and reserve, could count on a forward-projected equipment, logistical and supply platform to successfully complete their missions from 1993 through 1999.

Vaughn reflected on the last 15 years of Guard presence in Panama.

"Since 1984, in terms of numbers of Army National Guard soldiers deployed there have been approximately 70,000 soldiers deployed to Panama in the last 15 years. All states, territories and the District of Columbia have sent soldiers," Vaughn said. "Some truly innovative programs were developed, including New Horizons exercises,

being less about road-building and more school, medical clinic well construction.

In 1986, the National Guard turned much of their attention to Honduras where for several years a massive road-building effort took place, along with the other reserve components and active units.

In the years 1987 through 1989 prior to Operation Just Cause, most Guard activities were confined to Army Guard engineer units rehabilitating existing base facilities along the Panama Canal while Army Guard military police detachments increasingly deployed to Panama to shore up installation security.

During Operation Just Cause, a military police platoon from Missouri and a Mobile Public Affairs Detachment from Minnesota were used during combat operations. Following Just Cause, Vaughn said both the Army and Air National Guard both made enormous contributions as part of a long-running rebuilding effort called "Promote Liberty."

The 1990s witnessed a resumption of large-scale exercises throughout Panama and later the eventual withdrawal of National Guard troops with the approach of the final hand-over of all U.S. military installations in Panama.

Some of the major Panama engineer and medical exercises from 1991 through 1999, included:

- 1991 - Task Force 354 - commanded by Vaughn - near Nombre de Dios in Colon province
- 1992 - Task Force Badger based at Santiago, Panama, and led by the Wisconsin National Guard. The Theater Equipment And Maintenance Site at Fort Kobbe established
- 1993 - Task Force Rushmore led by the South Dakota National Guard deployed to Chiriqui province
- 1995 - Task Force Mule led by the Missouri National Guard deployed to Cocle Province
- 1996 - Task Force Eureka led by the California National Guard deployed to Bocas del Toro province with smaller exercises the Darien jungle and Azuero Peninsula
- 1997 through 1999 - Various Overseas Deployment for Training exercises saw numerous small-scale exercise ongoing throughout Panama

Typical of the enlisted citizen-soldiers who ventured to the isthmian nation for the first time, Master Sgt. Carl Legore spoke for many troops when he said he was repeatedly drawn to Panama by the surreal beauty of the tropics and by the promise of first-class military training.

"You just don't get the kind of training we did in Panama. We worked our butts off down there and put the whole thing together from nothing but just a lot of blood, sweat and tears," said Legore.

29th ID completes Bosnia tour

By Spc. Casandra Brewster
Ft. Belvoir Public Affairs

FT. BELVOIR, Va. — A windy, but warm day greeted soldiers returning home from their time with Task Force Eagle in Bosnia. After spending the winter away from home, it was a welcomed change of pace for the members of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Infantry Division (Light), which is headquartered here.

Approximately 45 soldiers — the 'last batch' as some dubbed themselves — returned here Tuesday, finishing up a re-deployment process that took about six weeks to complete, according to the unit's Public Affairs Officer Maj. Ed Larkin.

All 120 soldiers for the Virginia National Guard unit returned safely, a positive footnote for the end of their mission, Larkin said. "It definitely feels different to be home," he said. "After nearly seven months living in a very confined area and carrying a weapon everyday, it feels a little weird. Despite that, obviously, everyone's happy to be home."

Sgt. Sharifah Masten echoed Larkin's sentiments. She said along with the long separation from home, the hardest thing to deal with was having little privacy.

"You just always felt like you didn't have enough space," she said. "There were always other people around. I really missed my alone time." She added that one of the first things she plans to do now that she's home is take a tub bath.

"It's amazing that you could miss something so simple like a long soak in a tub," she said.

With their battle-rattle gear removed, a reverse nostalgia remained for some.

"I feel naked without carrying my M-9 around my neck all day long," Larkin added, pulling at his uniform top, as if looking for something that was lost.

Family members waited anxiously as sol-

diers off-loaded rucksacks and duffel bags and reported to final formations before being released back to their civilian lives.

"I'm just ecstatic," said Paula Golladay, wife of Master Sgt. Robert Golladay. "I cried all night. I've waited for this moment for a long time." The Golladays live in Falls Church, Va. The rest of the family was waiting with bated breath for Golladay's return, too.

"There's seven cats at home who are anxious for his return, too," Golladay said with a nervous laugh. She explained that his time in Bosnia was like a long day at work for her husband, who works as an Arlington police officer when not activated with his National Guard unit.

"Every day I wait for him to come home," she said. "When I hear the vest come off, then, I know he's safe. When he was over in Bosnia, all I did was wait for e-mail. And pray that I would never hear a knock at the door."

But Golladay did get one phone call while her husband was in Bosnia. He had only been in country two days when terrorists attacked America in September.

"He called right away," said Golladay, whose work as a sign language interpreter takes her frequently to the Pentagon. "He knew I could have been there — inside the Pentagon — that day. I did end up working the Pentagon hotline following the attack."

"Everything changed for us there after nine-eleven," said Larkin, a resident of Woodbridge, Va. "We also performed a counterterrorism mission while we were there. We were very much on the forefront of several counterterrorism actions that provided information not only to kept us safe as peacekeepers, but probably helped the U.S. locate individuals that would want to harm the United States Army."

Master Sgt. Jon Guttman explained that



Photos by Catherine Phillips, Ft. Belvoir Public Affairs

1st Lt. Phillip Griffin is reunited with his daughter, Emily, 2, and his wife Megan.

there were a few groups who were fanatical followers of Osama Bin Laden who were using Bosnia as a pit-stop.

"They were running around in a region that is synonymous with intrigue," he said. "Many of them were just en route to somewhere else." Guttman worked as the unit's historian while deployed with Task Force Eagle; however, his primary mission occupational specialty is nuclear, biochemical defense (54B).

"You have to understand, as we do now," Larkin said, "Bosnia has very porous borders."

Guttman, who's originally from New York but now lives in Leesburg, Va., said one of the first things he plans to do is visit his family in New York. He was at grenade practice at Fort Dix, N.J., when they got the word about the terrorist attacks.

"While I'm home, I'm sure I'll visit the World Trade Center site," he said. "As a former New Yorker myself, it hit me pretty hard."

Capt. Michael Peterson, the division's protocol officer, said there was a surge of patriotic feelings for the deployed soldiers following the attack on America.

"It really hit home," he said. "It made you realize that even if 'the big war' is over, there's still going to be needs for the Army. And the fact that we were on active duty and serving our country ... it made you proud to be a soldier."

Feeling "different" about being home wasn't the only thing some soldiers were experiencing. Some soldiers commented about how things in the National Capital Region

looked different, too.

"I think I'm going to have some adapting to do," Guttman said. "Things changed quite a bit here, as well. I wonder if I might've been safer out there than I'll be here. As we rolled into Belvoir's gates, I said, 'Hey, this looks familiar.' The way they have force protection measures set up here is similar to how we had things set up on Eagle Base."

Conducting their mission and perfecting their soldier skills were not the only things the soldiers came home with Tuesday. Many said they have a new understanding for the region's history and its people.

"The most interesting thing was seeing the culture of the people of Bosnia," Peterson said. "And getting to see an Eastern European country that was under the rule of communism for so long and had little contact with Americans from between World War II and IFOR (Implementation Force). It was great to see how they've developed since then and talking to the local people and realizing that they are not that much different from us."

Masten said she brought home a lesson she wishes other U.S. citizens could share.

"The local nationals [Bosnians] take a lot of pride in the progress they've made," she said. "Watching them I learned that we as Americans take a lot for granted. We don't realize all that we have. We could really learn from them — to be more grateful and appreciate what we have."

"It was extremely productive time spent there. We consolidated or closed about 30 weapons' storage sites while we were there. There was a very nice increase — even though it was the winter months — in the return of displaced persons."

"The 29th served proudly," Larkin said. "We're very happy with the results of our efforts. I really do believe we made Bosnia a little more safer and secure."



Master Sgt. Bob Golladay gives his wife a big kiss hello upon his return from Bosnia