

2004's top enlisted, pages 5, 6



Fighting 69th fights on, page 22



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FREEDOM'S GUARD

New York reflections on Operation Iraqi Freedom's second anniversary



GUARD NOTES

Nyack College offers new military degree program to New York guardmembers

Nyack College, Nyack, N.Y., is offering assistance for Military Personnel to complete their bachelor's degree in Organizational Management through an accelerated Adult Degree Completion Program.

The program offers students the opportunity to earn their bachelor's degree in as little as 14 months by attending class only one night a week.

Students must have earned at least 60 transferable college credits from an accredited college or university.

Tuition Assistance is available through the college. Military experience may be used to earn college credit. Visit Nyack College online at www.nyackadulthood.org.

Some prepaid phone cards better than others

Loved ones who purchase prepaid phone cards may think they're sending deployed troops a big stockpile of calling minutes, but that's often not the case.

Many cards are for stateside use only, according to Judd Anstey, public affairs specialist, Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

In contrast, the Military Exchange Global Prepaid 550- and 200-unit phone cards, part of the "Help Our Troops Call Home" program, offer lower per-minute rates than other prepaid cards, including AT&T prepaid cards sold by other retailers, Anstey said. "It's the best value out there," he noted.

More information about the Military Exchange Global Prepaid Calling Card is available by calling (800) 527-2345.

DoD announces new health care benefit

A new health care plan, with coverage comparable to that enjoyed by federal employees, became available on April 25 to eligible members of the National Guard and Reserve and their families, Defense Department officials announced at the Pentagon.

The new plan, called Tricare Reserve Select, serves as a bridge for reserve component members entering or leaving active duty who are not covered by civilian employer or other health insurance plans. It applies to all reserve component personnel who have been activated since 9/11 and who agree to continued service in the Selected Reserve. The coverage will be applied retroactively, officials said.

Reserve component personnel and their family members are eligible for benefits 90 days prior to activation and for up to six months after demobilization, DoD officials said. For every 90 days of active duty service, Guard and Reserve personnel are eligible for one year of Tricare coverage for a modest fee.

This change offers a more comprehensive benefit for transition back to private life, and, importantly, the it provides opportunity for those who have served in contingency operations to obtain Tricare coverage on a longer term, at very attractive rates.

More information on Tricare Reserve Select is online at www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve/reserveselect. If you can't find your answer there, then call Sgt. 1st Class Erin Connell, N.Y. Division of Military and Naval Affairs, 518-786-4807.

Freedom Team Salute to recognize Army's extended family of supporters and veterans

In a recent Pentagon ceremony, the Army kicked off its Freedom Team Salute campaign designed to recognize those who support Soldiers' service and veterans who have served. The FTS package includes an "Army of One" lapel pin, an official Army decal, a letter of appreciation signed by the Army chief of staff and the secretary of the Army, and a letter of thanks signed by the chief of staff and the secretary.

Francis Harvey, secretary of the Army, said the goal of the campaign is to recognize those who make Soldiers' service possible.

"Our Soldiers could not answer their noble calling without the support of spouses, parents, relatives, teachers friends and employers," Harvey said.

Soldiers wishing to recognize someone can visit:

www.freedomteamsalute.army.mil.

A Soldier comes home



Commentary by Staff Sgt. Greg Moore
2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry

SARANAC LAKE—There are no longer generators running, armored vehicles rumbling or mortars exploding, and the roar of the silence is deafening to me. What I hear at night now is the gentle breaths released from the perfect lips of my sons, the same lips that I cannot kiss enough. The lips that make my eyes fill with tears every time they touch my cheeks.

My release from Fort Drum came earlier than expected, so, when I pulled into my driveway at noon, the house was empty. I dropped my bags inside and walked alone through the rooms, soaking in the images and smells that had been only a memory during 10 months in Iraq.

My oldest son's first-grade teacher had been wonderful to me while I was away. She e-mailed school updates and pictures almost weekly. So, when I popped my head into her classroom, she came running and gave me a welcome-home hug.

"Easton is practicing a song. Why don't you surprise him?"

My heart was racing. I followed the sound of the piano and the little voices singing, then stood and watched. Trickle of love and pride started involuntarily down my cheeks as I listened to my son. He had gotten so big. The anticipation built as I waited for him to see me.

The little girl next to him was the first to notice the uniformed man standing in the doorway. Her eyes grew wide and her mouth fell open.

"Easton! Easton...your daddy's here," she said in an electrified whisper.

My son's head snapped around. The excitement and disbelief on his face is something I will never forget. I motioned him to me and he ran into my open arms. There was no hiding my tears, and I didn't care to. This was the day I had waited for.

I choked out my words of love and hung on to this boy who had cried so many nights, who said he didn't care if he got any other presents for Christmas—he only wanted his Daddy to come home. This boy who had used all his wishes on me. He kept pulling his head back from my shoulder to look at my face. Cheers rose from the other kids and teachers.

Hand-in-hand, Easton and I stepped outside and drove to the other side of town. I had another little boy to catch up with. When I went inside he was napping. "Marshal, wake up. I have a surprise for you," I heard his day-care provider say.

He came out with his head on her shoulder. When he looked up his eyes grew wide and all signs of sleepiness disappeared. "Daddy," he exclaimed in pure excitement as he fell forward into my arms. My heart ached with love.

I was complete again. I had my boys. And there have never been more perfect words spoken to me than, "I love you, Dad."

It may take my wife and children a long time to realize that, while I look the same, I am not the same person who said good-bye to them many months ago. I will never be the same again—thankfully so.

Each day, I am acutely aware of what makes me happy, and what it is I do that makes other people happy. Walking "point" through the volatile streets in Iraq helped me see this much more clearly, and I will make every effort to preserve that awareness for the rest of my days.

When I look through my photo album I think about the men I served with, and learned to count on, who are no longer by my side. The men who had their bodies pierced by the hatred of terrorists, men who left their last breaths in a place far away. Great men doing a job that allows this noble country the freedoms it deserves.

I have seen the dark side of humanity and it has forever changed me. As I sit here in my house, with the sun streaming through the windows, I look out and see the boughs of the evergreens blowing in the breeze.

There are no armed guards on the roof. No sandbags. I don't call in grid coordinates of my whereabouts any more. Mission briefs have been replaced by wonderful communication between two parents. As I drive through town, I am alone; with no turret and no gunner above me. I don't have to scrutinize every pile of dirt, every plastic bag to check whether it may explode. Amazingly, I am safe. □

New York reflections on OIF second anniversary

A legacy of courage, service and sacrifice

Commentary by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham – America sent its forces to war out of concern for additional attacks on the homeland, including the possible use of weapons of mass destruction. A post Cold War Army, which was still engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom, in Afghanistan, could not accomplish the mission without reserve component combat elements. In the vanguard of the force were NYNG members—the very citizen Soldiers and Airmen who, for years, responded to emergencies at home, prior to 9/11. And who, from the very first moment, and throughout the weeks and months of our national nightmare, had gone to Ground Zero, had gone to the state’s airports and nuclear power plants and had guarded New York City’s bridges and tunnels and train stations in fulfillment of their oath and the National Guard mission. This full-circle of duty, from Ground Zero recovery support at home to combat action abroad, is without precedent or equal in our nation’s history.

The second anniversary of the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, in March 2003, went almost unnoticed by the New York National Guard this year.

OIF has brought historic challenges, accomplishments and sacrifice not experienced by the state's forces since World War II.

Instead, the focus was on units returning from theater, a plethora of Freedom Salute ceremonies and at least one more memorial service for a Soldier who had given his life for his nation.

For NYNG, Operation Iraqi Freedom has brought historic challenges, accomplishments and sacrifice not experienced by the state’s forces since World War II.

The first in a series of activations of thousands of NYNG Soldiers and Airmen for wartime service began in

January 2003, in the wake of monumental levels of state active duty following 9/11 and federal activations of hundreds of NYNG troops for Operation Noble Eagle’s homeland defense missions. Having successfully performed unprecedented recovery and security operations at home, NYNG went to war in Iraq along with active duty, Guard and Reserve forces of other states. They performed brilliantly.

From Ground Zero to the Sunni Triangle

Two military police companies, a truck company, a transportation detachment and a rear area operations center were the first units called up. Several company-level infantry platoon leaders from the 27th Brigade voluntarily transferred to the Florida Army National Guard’s 53rd Infantry Brigade to deploy as part of their initial assault teams.

By the summer of 2003, other elements were receiving their call-up warnings. The first of two NYNG infantry battalions was mobilized in the fall, and soon a steady flow of warning orders, readiness weekends and call-ups swept the state.

Two field artillery batteries were called up, augmented with armor units and converted into military police to deploy to theater. Maintenance and other support units were called up, as well as a second infantry battalion with support elements. But the biggest was yet to come.

In May 2004, for the first time since the Korean War, a National Guard division headquarters was called up, mobilized and deployed to a war zone. It was something no one expected would ever happen again. NYNG’s 42nd Infantry “Rainbow” Division was sent to the front lines in the cause of freedom.

Historic Sacrifice and Effort

At press time, 16 members of the New York Army National Guard had fallen in the line of duty. Dozens of Soldiers had been wounded. For the Guard, conducting casualty affairs operations was something no one had done in generations. Now, National Guard members were learning the difference between casualty notification and casualty assistance. Flag-draped coffins were coming home. Military honors were being rendered at emotionally charged memorial services and funerals

across the state. The pain was shared. The youngest Soldier to fall was age 20, and the oldest Soldier was 49. In their honor-roll ranks was a Ground Zero fireman and at least three immigrant Soldiers, including New York’s first Guard Muslim casualty.

At home, military family members gathered in unit support groups to assist one another and try to cope with the new realities that separation and war had brought them. The community responded in heartfelt and often kindled ways to reach out to their hometown warriors and their families. The National Guard was bringing America into the fight with them, one community at a time.



Spc. Kristen Potter, 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, New York Army National Guard, guards the bridge to the Iraqi Army and Police training base at Forward Operating Base Danger, Tikrit, Iraq. The battalion is part of Task Force Liberty, which is conducting security and stability operations in North-Central Iraq. Potter is from Lexington, N.Y. Photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta.

Thousands of Soldier care packages were mailed. Yellow magnetic ribbons decorated cars, trucks and mini-vans. Veterans and civic groups held rallies. The media focused coverage and attention to the war efforts, both at home and abroad.

Operational issues, presented to the chain of command, were monumental and included personnel, training and logistics. After years of serving and training primarily as the nation’s strategic reserve, in the words of Lt. Gen. Stephen H. Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau, the Guard had become “a full operational force,” where “homeland defense was job one and overseas deployment was homeland defense, in depth.”

Supporting deployed units, supporting units being called up, welcoming units home, ensuring that other units stood ready for possible activation was all part of the challenge. This included keeping track and taking care of each

and every Soldier for federal service or for response to the next state emergency. For Soldiers asked to bear the burden of fighting and suffering, no amount of training would ever prepare them for what they faced.

Accomplishments

The list of contributions and accomplishments of deployed NYNG personnel grows daily. From convoy escort and area security to combat action; from training Iraqi police and Iraqi National Guard to rebuilding villages, schools and hospitals, and evacuating sick or injured Iraqi children stateside for medical care, NYNG Soldiers and Airmen have earned, and

Supporting deployed units, supporting units being called up, welcoming units home, ensuring that other units stood ready...was all part of the challenge.

continue to build on merit a tremendous record of achievement.

These National Guard Soldiers and Airmen return home as a whole new generation of veterans, members of America’s all-volunteer military. They bear right-shoulder combat patches, Combat Infantryman’s Badges, Purple Heart Medals, Bronze Star Medals and combat zone stress. They are returning to families, jobs and communities that honor and thank them. Unlike previous generations of veterans, these returning warriors are treated very differently. Surely, America’s 9/11 experience and these troops’ Ground Zero service is a contributing factor. But along with that, these veterans are benefiting from what our previous veterans taught the community—to support their troops regardless of politics, to be grateful to them and honor their service, which was freely given on behalf of all.

As the Global War on Terror continues to unfold, communities are once again examining the role of the warrior in our culture, and, in the process, sorting out fact from popular fiction. For many, a Hollywood image is giving way to the icon of a citizen Soldier, a hometown figure, one who takes personal responsibility and places the safety, security and defense of the nation, state and community ahead of everything else. The ultimate history of Operation Iraqi

ultimately written, is
legacy. □

Assistance programs continue for guardmembers

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham—New York National Guard members should know about the multitude of assistance programs, benefits and funds entitled to them and their families, said Charles Phillips, DMNA special assistant here recently.

They need to be aware of relief or “help” agencies that families can contact if they need assistance, said Phillips.

In addition to Patriot Plans I, II and the recently released Patriot Plan III, which provides numerous benefits to NYNG and Reserve members, there are many public and private agencies that offer services and funds. Family Readiness and Support Offices across New York are a prime source of information. Some, including the Naval Militia Relief Society, may even help pay for car repairs, heating bills and food bills.

Some programs and funds come and go, so, regular contact with local family support offices is beneficial, said Patricia Jensen, State family program assistant here.

Family Readiness Groups & State Family Program Office

www.dmna.state.ny.us/dmna/family/family.html
1-877-715-7817 or 518-786-4774

Family Readiness Groups are officially sanctioned National Guard volunteer organizations, which provide information and education to military families. The Unit Family Readiness Group provides a support network for all families—especially during periods of separation. The State Family Program Office oversees more than 90 New York Army National Guard readiness groups and six Air National Guard readiness offices. The State Family Program Office can refer you a local group.

Patriot Plan II

www.dmna.state.ny.us/members/patriot2.htm/

There are numerous benefits and protections through the Patriot Plan. The Patriot Plan was created to provide a broad array of benefits and enhanced protections to New York’s military personnel, including military reservists and National Guard members. The Plan is designed to assist troops and their families who face potential hardships as a result of their active duty service. The majority of the provisions apply only to residents of the State of New York.

New York Division of Veterans Affairs

1-888-VETS NYS
www.veterans.state.ny.us

The New York State Division of Veterans’ Affairs along with county and city veterans’ service agencies are ready to assist and help determine specific benefits. Some benefits include compensation for service-connected injuries or diseases, health care, education benefits and home loans.

Naval Militia Relief Society

518-786-4774 or 1-877-715-7817

For more information call the State Family Program Office.

Military One Source

www.militaryonesource.com

Military One Source is an information and referral Service. It is designed to help deal with “life’s issues.” Their consultants are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. You can call in and speak to a consultant stateside: 800-342-9647, overseas: 800-3429-6477 or overseas collect: 1-484-530-5908. Their customizable website has a variety of helpful information including:

- Online articles, worksheets and suggested reading lists
- Educational materials: booklets, CDs and audiotapes (no cost to you)
- Locators (summer camp, child care, etc.)
- Interactive tools

Their website allows you to personalize a homepage, bookmark favorite pages, articles and resources and sign up for monthly newsletters.

USA Cares

www.usacares.us
1-800-773-0387

USA Cares helps servicemembers and their families deployed across America and around the globe. They provide financial assistance to families who have a Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, Coastguardsmen or Merchant Marine on active duty or mobilized. Their assistance center has English, Spanish and German speaking operators who are available to share questions, including questions about the military. If you are requesting financial assistance, they have an application page on their website.

Veterans of Foreign Wars & American Legions

www.unmetneeds.com
1-866-789-6333

All Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts and American Legions offer assistance to all military families. Since 2003, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, through the VFW Foundation, has provided millions of dollars of support to Americans serving in harm’s way. Helping ease the financial burdens of our military families in need is the mission of their Unmet Needs Program.

The Salvation Army, Home Front Assistance

518-786-4774 or 1-877-715-7817

Please contact the State Family Program Office for current programs.

Elks Army of Hope

www.operationhomefront.org/Help/help_volunteer_hope.shtml
(866)-ELK-VETS (355-8387)

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A. assist families who have had a father or mother called to active duty with the military reserve or National Guard. The Elks alumni, comprised of carpenters, electricians, mechanics, plumbers, attorneys, doctors, accountants, teachers and professional people and tradesmen of every type are at the ready to help families of those called to serve our nation.

United Way

www.national.unitedway.org/
518-786-4774 or 1-877-715-7817

Your local United Way Offices offer assistance to military families through their Military Family Assistance Centers—please contact the State Family Program Office for the closest center to you.

Red Cross

www.redcross.org, or www.redcrossny.org
518-458-8111

The Red Cross provides emergency communications that link both active duty and community-based military with families, access to financial assistance, counseling and assistance to veterans. Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services personnel work in nearly 900 chapters in the United States, on 74 military installations around the world and with our troops in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Air Force Aid Society

(Active Duty Status Required)
www.afas.org
1-877-715-7817 or 518-786-4774

The Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) is the official charity of the U.S. Air Force. It promotes the Air Force mission by helping to relieve distress of Air Force members and their families and assisting them to finance their education. It is rooted in the original Army Air Corps and the World War II Army Air Forces, whose members wanted to “take care of their own.” Through the years, AFAS has become increasingly effective in helping individuals with personal emergencies— as well as extremely useful when used by commanders to help solve personnel problems in their units. □

NYARNG awards its top enlisted personnel for 2004

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS, Latham—Being “all that you can be” can have its challenges, especially when competing against the best Soldiers in the New York Army National Guard. For seven Soldiers here, being New York’s best meant rising one step closer to the best in the Nation.

The New York Army National Guard recently picked its top three enlisted Soldiers of 2004.

A five-member board selected the Soldiers from representatives across the state. Candidates underwent a series of tests, including an exam, a physical fitness test and an appearance board. Two Soldiers were sent on to the First Army’s Northeastern Regional competition, from there, one Soldier was selected to compete at the First Army Regional in July.

“I am proud and honored to serve with these Soldiers and applaud their achievements.”

—Command Sgt. Maj. Robert VanPelt
NYARNG Command Sergeant Major

“In every organization there are a few individuals who are truly outstanding, said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert VanPelt, who



Traditional Soldier of the Year
Spc. Anthony J. Lechanski, II
Bravo Company
152nd Engineer Battalion



Traditional NCO of the Year
Sgt. Travis C. Muhl nickel
Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion,
108th Infantry



AGR NCO of the Year
Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Conklin
Delta Company, 1st Battalion,
105th Infantry

holds NYARNG’s top enlisted position. “I am proud and honored to serve with these Soldiers and applaud their achievements.”

The Soldiers are: Traditional Soldier of the Year, Spc. Anthony J. Lechanski, 152nd Engineer Battalion; Traditional Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, Sgt. Travis C. Muhl nickel, 108th Infantry; Active Guard Reserve NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Conklin, 105th Infantry.

Muhl nickel, a human resource specialist, is from Auburn. He has six years military service, all with the 108th. He works full-time as the infantry’s career counselor.

“The written portion was very tough,” said Muhl nickel. He encouraged all Soldiers to

take on the challenge of the competition if offered the opportunity.

Conklin, a infantryman, has more than eight years military service, which includes six years active duty in Korea and Fort Bragg, N.C., and more than two years with Delta company, 1st Battalion of the 105th. His hometown is Chemung. He is a full-time training NCO for the 105th.

“It was a great experience,” said Conklin. Conklin and Lechanski moved on to compete at the First Army’s Northeast Regional in Warwick, R.I., this spring. There, Lechanski was chosen as a top Soldier in the Northeast.

Conklin said that, although he was not

chosen there, he enjoyed meeting his peers.

Lechanski, a combat engineer lives in Buffalo, and he is currently pursuing an electrical engineer degree at the University of Buffalo.

“It was challenging,” said Lechanski about the selection process. He contributes his success to the 152nd’s mentoring and training.

Lechanski will compete at the First Army Board in Fort Stewart, Ga., on August 7, which encompasses Soldiers from all states east of the Mississippi including active duty Army bases.

“The competition gets tough there,” said VanPelt. “But no matter what happens at First Army, they are all already winners.” □



Best of the best: New York Army National Guard’s 2004 Soldier of the Year candidates and board members, from right, Command Sgt. Maj. Justin Cappon, Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Tynan, Spc. Randy Greene, Sgt. William Cody, Spc. Billy Jo Bush, Staff Sgt. Kevin Conklin, Spc. Anthony Lechanski, Sgt. Travis Muhl nickel, Sgt. Neil Rhinevault, NYS Command Sgt. Maj. Robert VanPelt, Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Piwowaski. Photo courtesy of NYS Command Sgt. Maj. Robert VanPelt.

2004's best in New York Air National Guard announced

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham—The New York Air National Guard recently announced its outstanding Airmen of 2004.

"These six Airmen represent the finest of our enlisted personnel in New York," said State Command Chief Master Sergeant Hardy Pierce, Jr.

Pierce visited and thanked each Airman at their respective commands this Spring. He said that they were recognized as

outstanding Airmen through their leadership, commitment to excellence, initiative, professional competency and devotion to their missions.

"These Airmen are the best of the best in NYANG," he said. "They are inspirational, to say the least."

Additionally, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard recognized the Airmen at an annual State banquet in Saratoga Springs on April 30. There, the Airmen were invited to attend EANG's national conference at Orlando, Fla., this August. The Airmen are:



Airman of the Year
Senior Airman Rebecca A. Chamberlain
107th Air Refueling Wing, Niagara Falls



Noncommissioned Officer of the Year
Master Sgt. Danny Doucette
105th Airlift Wing, Newburgh



Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year
Master Sgt. Mark J. Mann
109th Airlift Wing, Scotia



First Sergeant of the Year
Senior Master Sgt. David W. Kolb
109th Airlift Wing, Scotia



Honor Guard Member of the Year
Senior Airman Christopher G. Nickel
106th Rescue Wing, Westhampton Beach



Honor Guard Program Manager of the Year
Tech. Sgt. Thomas L. Whiteman
Northeast Air Defense Sector, Rome

New York Naval Militia hails Militiamen of the Year

By Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham—Rear Adm. Robert A. Rosen, Commander, New York Naval Militia, recently announced the recipients of the 2004 Josephthal Awards here. The militiamen received their awards at April ceremonies.

The Josephthal Awards are presented annually to NYNM members who made exemplary contributions to the Militia and are therefore "Militiamen of the Year." The awards are presented under the provisions of the late Rear Adm. Louis M. Josephthal, NYNM. The awardees are:

A member serving, or has served with, the Navy Reserve

Chief Petty Officer Bachorz served with distinction as the newest editor of the Naval Militia News. Bachorz provided his personal time to accomplish the editing, formatting, production and delivery of the Naval Militia News, a quarterly publication. During the Republican National Convention, Bachorz additionally served as a recorder for the Joint Task Force Operational Command Center here. Bachorz makes himself available to the Joint Operations Center here and recently completed training to become a liaison officer at the State Emergency Management Office. Bachorz has been a NYNM member for 24 years.

A member serving, or has served with, the Marine Corps Reserve

Master Gunnery Sgt. Cioppa serves with USMCR Marine Air Group 49, Bravo Detachment, Newburgh. There, he serves as an instructor and advisor in weapons of mass destruction, counter terrorism and hazardous material programs, which benefit both Marine Corps and Militia training. Cioppa regularly volunteers his personal time, travel and expertise to the Militia.

A member serving, or has served with, the Coast Guard Reserve

Chief Walker has been a NYNM member for six years. Walker is assigned to the Naval Militia's Initiatives Staff, where he helps promote the image of the NYNM and the naval service. Over a span of many years, Walker has conscientiously organized, and participated in, a number of recruiting activities, military ceremonies and patriotic events. Walker is an active volunteer at the Destroyer Escort Museum, aboard the USS Slater in Albany.

A member serving with the military emergency boat service

Lt. Kalisz distinguished himself while serving as Assistant Officer-in-Charge of the Military Emergency Boat Service.



Marine Corps Militiaman of the Year
Master Gunnery Sgt. Christopher Cioppa

He has been a NYNM member for 37 years. He demonstrates personal leadership, administrative capabilities, technological expertise and devotion to duty in major projects, which heightens MEBS mission capabilities. □

NOTE: Naval Militia staff contributed to this article.

Two Fighting 69th Soldiers killed in Iraq patrol

Immigrant Soldiers' American spirit celebrated at home and abroad

By **Spc. Brian Schroeder**

Task Force Baghdad
Maj. Cathy Sweeney
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCES HEADQUARTERS, Latham—Soldiers gathered here March 8 to celebrate the life of two fallen brothers in arms. Spc. Wai Lwin and Spc. Azhar Ali, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment Headquarters Company scouts gave their lives in support of bringing democracy and peace to Iraq.

Lwin and Ali were both immigrants to the United States. Lwin, a Buddhist from Burma and Ali, a Muslim from Pakistan both loved being Soldiers and both felt that serving in the Army was the best way they could show they were Americans, said Capt. Christopher Daniels commander, 69th Headquarters Company.

"They knew what the absence of freedom was like because of the lack of freedom from their childhoods," said Daniels.

Lwin, 27, and Ali, 27, were killed by an improvised explosive device that detonated close to their Humvee while on patrol.

Other members of their platoon said the Soldiers were inseparable, always seen together, whether they were eating, relaxing or preparing for their next mission.

"These guys were best friends," said Sgt. Jason Olmo, squad leader. "You could not separate them."



Spc. Wai P. Lwin

Age 27, Queens
Headquarters Company
1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment

Killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq on March 2, 2005.

Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, commander, 69th Infantry Regiment, said Lwin and Ali's bravery and courage exemplified the tradition of the Fighting 69th. In Baghdad, on March 8, Slack read the Rouge Bouquet; a poem written by Joyce Kilmer after the 69th suffered its first, multiple combat deaths during World War I:

*Comrades true, borne anew, peace to you!
Your souls shall be where the heroes are
And your memory shine like the morning star.
Brave and dear,
Shield us here.
Farewell!*

On March 4, Governor George Pataki said in a statement: "All New Yorkers join in mourning the losses of Spc. Azhar Ali and Spc. Wai Lwin, who were killed in action while serving in Iraq. These two courageous Soldiers were immigrants who came to New York to embrace freedom and opportunity here. Ali emigrated from Pakistan to make Flushing his home, and Lwin's family emigrated from Burma to settle in Queens. Ali and Lwin not only embraced freedom, they were willing to put their lives on the line to defend it. Their bravery and selfless service to our State and our nation are in keeping with the finest traditions of the National Guard, and they will always be remembered."

"On behalf of all New Yorkers, we extend our deepest sympathy to their families, their friends and their fellow Soldiers of the Fighting 69th during this difficult time," concluded the Governor.



Spc. Azhar Ali

Age 27, Flushing
Headquarters Company
1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment

Killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his military vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq on March 2, 2005

Lwin's parents, Thein and May Lwin and his brother, Khant Phyllo, and his sister, YuYu Wai, survive him. He was buried at Long Island National Cemetery with full military honors.

"We have given our son to the military, and our son did his duty and gave his life to the military. Whatever memories we have of him, we wanted him to be near us, in our hometown," said Lwin's father, who continued his reflection saying his son died doing what he loved the most.

Lwin's medals include the Purple Heart Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Army Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, N.Y. Medal of Valor and the N.Y. Distinguished Medal of Service.

Lwin was posthumously awarded citizenship to the United States.

Ali was a resident of Flushing. He attended John Bowne high school before joining the 69th Infantry Regiment in 1998. He is buried at a Muslim cemetery in Long Island.

Ali's medals include the Purple Heart Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, N.Y. Medal of Valor, N.Y. Defense of Liberty Medal, N.Y. Distinguished Medal of Service, N.Y. Conspicuous Service Cross, Army Service Ribbon and the Army Overseas Service Ribbon. □

New York National Guard Airman earns Bronze Star Medal

By **1st Lt. Anthony Bucci and Capt. Sandi Van Wormer**
174th Fighter Wing

SYRACUSE—Staff Sgt. Celio Castiblanco drew a standing ovation on Feb. 13 after pinning on a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service while engaged in ground combat in Afghanistan.

Castiblanco received his medal from Brig. Gen. Robert A. Knauff, Vice Commander, New York Air National Guard at a ceremony here.

In Afghanistan, Castiblanco and his team, Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, came under hostile fire during a 2003 assault on an enemy headquarters.

Castiblanco said the three-hour fight came after five months of little enemy resistance.

"I just knew something was going to happen. I can't explain it, I could just feel it," said Castiblanco.

Just prior to their attack, Castiblanco's vehicle crashed into a large ditch tossing its four members out. As bullets began to fly, they took cover, but Castiblanco realized that he had to get back to the vehicle's radio to coordinate air support. The Humvee was nose-first in the ditch, and Castiblanco noticed that the radio antenna was separated from the unit, making it unusable. Still under fire, he realized he must repair the antenna. He began to strip away the wire casing to reconnect it.

It was pitch dark, but "somehow I could see what I was doing, there was a light. I don't know where it was coming from," said Castiblanco.

He was able to repair the antenna, and called in air support.

He moved to an observation point to locate enemy positions, direct aircraft to target and call in mortar fire. He then moved to a position formerly occupied by enemy troops, receiving machine gun and sniper fire. Engaging the enemy with his assault rifle, his team flanked enemy positions. He then coordinated a medical evacuation for a wounded team member.

Continuing to coordinate air support, Castiblanco directed helicopters and A-10 Thunderbolts to enemy locations, which fired rockets, five-hundred pound bombs and thirty-millimeter strafing fire. Later that evening, he directed an AC-130 Hercules Gunship to hostile positions.

Special Operations Team Alpha confirmed more than fifty enemy troops unaccounted for and presumed killed.

"It was the first time I was in a situation like this, but I knew what I had to do and did it," said Castiblanco.

Back in Syracuse, Staff Sgt. Castiblanco is the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Weapons and Tactics for the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron here. He has deployed for two overseas combat tours—the one that earned him the Bronze Star Medal and a second tour from July-November 2004. □



Staff Sgt. Celio Castiblanco, 174th Fighter Wing, receives the Bronze Star Medal from Brig. Gen. Robert A. Knauff, Vice Commander, New York Air National Guard on Feb. 13.

Army Engineers home from Operation Iraqi Freedom

By 2nd Lt. Amy Fires
Guard Times Staff

WALTON—The community lined the streets here in a welcome home parade for about 30 Soldiers of the 204th Engineer Battalion on March 5. It was a cold, wintry Saturday, but a large crowd was on hand to welcome home their Soldiers.

A quick formation was called, excitement lingered and families looked eager to embrace loved ones. 1st Lt. Geraldo Sinscalchi, 204th Platoon Leader, called the Soldiers to attention and handed unit authority over to Rear Detachment Commander, Capt. David Humphrey, which completed the transfer from federal to state authority.

The Soldiers deployed to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. They were attached to the 133rd Engineer Battalion, Maine Army National Guard, where they were stationed in Mosul, Iraq. Their jobs involved civil engineer projects

including road and building construction.

In the town of Diyanah, the engineers built a new road for local, Iraqi citizens. Three culverts were additionally constructed to divert water for the city.

Speaking of the deployment, Sinscalchi, said the best part was, "making different friends through the various civil engineer missions."

"I am really proud of these Soldiers, they have accomplished a lot during their deployment," said Col. Randy Lambrecht, Director of Operations, N.Y. Joint Force Headquarters and former 204th Commander. "They will take a much needed break with their loved ones," said Lambrecht.

Lambrecht boasted that, true to National Guard culture, the strong loyalties of these Soldiers would bring their return to drill and begin unit reconstitution.

These Soldiers will prepare the unit for its continuing commitment to take care of America, said Lambrecht. □



A specialist with the 204th Engineer Battalion is welcomed home from Operation Iraqi Freedom II on March 5. Photo by Sgt. Matthew Johnson.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers roll on with up-armored vehicles

By Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo
42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq—Soldiers of Task Force Liberty deployed into Iraq better prepared for the mission than their predecessors, and they continue to strengthen their capabilities each day.

In addition to a full complement of individual body armor, which includes

Kevlar helmets and eye protection far greater in capability and numbers than any prior troop rotation into theater, Task Force Liberty Soldiers' greatest strength is its armor protection for its fleet of Humvees. Humvees transport the vast majority of Soldiers on the roads of Iraq.

The greater majority of all Humvees in North Central Iraq have either level-one, two or three armor protection.

Level-one armor for Humvees are those

vehicles produced at the factory with all the protective measures installed. These continue to arrive in theater and are issued to units as rapidly as they are received. Since arriving in Iraq, Task Force Liberty has added over 200 level-one Humvees, an almost 25 percent increase in capabilities over the preceding division.

Level-two armor is provided as an add-on-armor kit in the Army supply chain. Task Force Liberty logistics and maintenance Soldiers in North Central Iraq continue every day to add these kits to the balance of their vehicles.

Level-three armor, depicted so frequently as welded metal plates, is designed to protect Soldiers against improvised explosive

devices (IEDs), the most lethal weapon used against troops here. While less effective against direct fire attacks, the armor protects Soldiers against IED shrapnel and fragmentation.

Currently, Task Force Liberty holds more than 70 percent level-one or level-two Humvees for combat patrols and combat logistics patrols. As the availability of level-one and level-two armored vehicles increases fewer level-three vehicles are employed.

While staging in Kuwait, Task Force Liberty Soldiers installed much of their add-on-armor. All vehicles received necessary armor installations before moving into Iraq.

"Once they get up north, their commanders designate which vehicles will be out on the road, all the time, doing patrols," said Sgt. First Class Kenney, platoon sergeant and chief of the 699th's Service and Recovery section. He said armor levels depend on the mission.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers helped to weld level-three armor to their vehicles, Kenney said. He sees the armor installation as another example of Soldiers adapting in order to accomplish their missions.

The posture for armored vehicles is equally impressive for the fleet of heavier trucks; those used for logistics movements throughout the area of operations. Although no level-one protection is available for the Army's heavy trucks, level-two add-on-armor kits currently supplement the armor being used. These kits are now in the supply system and are being installed.

"I could not be more pleased with the performance of our logisticians in providing the men and women of Task Force Liberty the best possible force protection of the fleet," said Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, Task Force Liberty Commander, adding "even before this add-on-armor program achieves its pinnacle, 80 percent of our fleet provide level-two or level-three protection." □



Task force Liberty Soldiers on patrol in Iraq with up-armored Humvees. Photo courtesy of the 42nd Infantry Division.

Iraq mail handlers return to senders

By 2nd Lt. Amy Fires
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE

HEADQUARTERS, Latham—

Family and friends sprang from the drill floor here on Feb. 10 when 25 Soldiers of the 56th Personnel Services Battalion came home after a yearlong tour in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

One Soldier walked quickly over to his wife's side. Other members unpacked duffel bags and deployment items from their bus, which brought them from Fort Drum. Their unpacking and

demobilization work seems minuscule to the amount of work they did overseas.

The Soldiers were deployed on December 2003 and spent 2004 receiving and distributing mail throughout Iraq; they moved over 60 million pounds of mail for Soldiers and civilian contractors.

"They did it 25 percent faster than the group before them," said Lt. Col. Ed Passineau, Battalion Commander.

Additionally, the Soldiers volunteered as armed guards for the civilian trucks that kept their mail moving.

Passineau said the Battalion flew more mail than it trucked, which allowed them to increase delivery.

The 56th worked from two Iraq worksites: their main location at Baghdad International Airport and a secondary worksite in Balad.

"Everyone got along and worked very well together," said Sgt. Jeffrey O'Rourke, who worked at the Balad worksite.

All Soldiers returned home safe. And once the Soldiers arrived here, all bets were off, and their family members and friends surrounded them before a formal welcome home ceremony could be given. □



The daughter of Staff Sgt. Roland Wells awaits the arrival of her father. Photos by Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith



Spc. Theresa R. Young and Master Sgt. Joseph R. Cioffi arrive to awaiting families and friends.

Field artillery troops come marching home from Sunni Triangle, OIF II

By Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK CITY, NEWBURGH, BUFFALO—More than 300 Soldiers assigned to the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery triumphantly returned home in March following months of active duty in Iraq.

Soldiers of Bravo and Charlie batteries were called up in January 2004 and given the mission to retrain as military police and deploy to the combat zone in Iraq for nearly a year of service. Since military police companies are larger than field artillery batteries, dozens of Soldiers from the Western New York-based 1st Battalion, 127th Armor were mobilized with the New York City and Newburgh-based Soldiers to fill the teams.

These valiant Soldiers completed an odyssey of both State and Federal active duty that began, for most, on the morning of 9/11. Many of have the distinction of being among the only military personnel to have



Spc. Christopher H. Chatfield returns home in Newburgh on March 18. Photo by Spc. Dennis Gravell.

served both at Ground Zero and in the Sunni Triangle as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Family members, relatives and friends were at the armories to welcome them home from a 15-month active duty tour, including more than nine months on the ground in Iraq. The Soldiers traveled by commercial bus from Fort Dix following nearly a week of out-processing.

During their tour of duty the Soldiers helped train more than 10,000 Iraqi policemen. They provided security at the Baghdad Police Headquarters and also performed more than 250 reconnaissance and surveillance patrols there.

During the period of August through October 2004, the Soldiers received incoming rocket and mortar fire daily and, during a firefight with insurgent forces, unit Soldiers helped rescue three Iraqi student policemen who were seriously wounded. During one two-week period, the Soldiers were involved in three separate firefights, were attacked by improvised explosive devices on three occasions, captured significant weapons caches and captured and detained more than two-dozen insurgents.

One Soldier of Charlie Battery, Sgt. Joseph Behnke from Brooklyn was lost on Dec. 4, 2004 as a result of a vehicle accident. □

Myers Tells National Guard generals total-force concept working

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill.—The experiences in the war on terrorism, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, show that "the total-force (concept) is working," the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said to a meeting of state adjutants general here Apr. 1.

Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers told the gathering that the concept especially "works overseas, where the rubber meets the road."

Myers said it was important he attend the meeting, first to thank the state adjutants general for their leadership, but mostly to hear their concerns. The chairman said he

can only fight for the needs of the adjutants general in the Pentagon if he knows their concerns and is armed with facts.

An adjutant general is the top official in each state's National Guard. Representatives from 45 adjutant general offices attended the conference, sponsored by Air Force Gen. John Handy, the commander of U.S. Transportation Command. Representatives from U.S. Army Forces Command and the U.S. Coast Guard also attended.

Myers told the generals that while changes have been made, more lie ahead. He said DoD must look for more creative ways to mobilize and use the reserve components and that this year's Quadrennial Defense Review will point the way to even more

change.

And this is important, he added. "We have got to come out of this as robust as we went in," Myers said. "Innovation will become the coin of the realm."

The adjutants general appeared to be worried about recruiting. One told the chairman the numbers he is seeing are like a "fire light" in the cockpit. Another general told the chairman that the good economy is affecting recruiting in his state.

All, however, seemed pleased with the retention picture. After the meeting, one adjutant general said the retention situation in units that had deployed to Afghanistan was better than that of the units that had not deployed.

"Some of that is financial—the reenlistment bonus is tax-free if you do it in a combat zone—but most of it is because these soldiers flat enjoyed serving together," the officer said. He added that other AGs noticed the same tendency.

The generals asked Myers about mobilization notification time, medical and dental reserve readiness, and the political situation in Iraq and how that affects force levels needed in the country.

Myers thanked the generals for their observations and questions. He said the reserve components are important to America, not only for their combat power, but because with every armory and airfield, they help tie Americans to their military. □

Warrant Officer careers available

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham—It's a unique rank and tradition, which dates back to 1896, and Soldiers are increasingly looking at the perks of joining the long line of technical experts called Army chief warrant officers.

The New York Army National Guard (NYARNG) is currently calling throughout New York for applicants into its warrant officer program.

Commissioning warrant officers and retaining warrant officers is needed to meet the Army's ongoing need for highly specialized experts and trainers, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jacqueline O'Keefe, Warrant Officer Recruiter.

A recent Army News Service report says that transformation, along with retirement, creates an Army-wide need for candidates in 45 chief warrant officer specialties.

"The New York Army National Guard is always looking for quality Soldiers," said O'Keefe.

O'Keefe says that a proactive approach to appointing chief warrant officers is taken to support both operation tempos and an ageing warrant officer force.

"To earn a warrant officer appointment takes many months," said O'Keefe. Each candidate's qualifications and military occupational specialty is unique to each vacancy applied for.

Interested candidates are encouraged to visit the NYARNG chief warrant officer website, at www.dmna.state.ny.us, and read the current vacancy list under WOPM.

"If they can't find what they're looking for there, call 518-786-4889, or e-mail jacqueline.okeefe@ny.ngb.army.mil, and I can let them know if we have what they're looking for," said O'Keefe, who added, drill location depends upon the specialty and vacancy filled.

"They will know the unit they join before they begin the (appointment) process." She recommends that Soldiers discuss specific qualifications and vacancies with her before they start the process.

In some instances, an affiliation bonus of \$6000 is available to warrant officers leaving active duty and signing up with the New York National Guard. There is also an accession bonus available to newly appointed warrant officers in the same amount. □

Terror response unit airlifts, State joins in response exercise

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

STRATTON ANGB, Scotia—Soldiers and Airmen from across New York demonstrated a key response capability of the State's civil support team when they airlifted an entire response unit and its equipment from Scotia to Niagara Falls.

The 2nd Civil Support Team airlifted from Stratton Air National Guard Base on a 105th Airlift Wing C-5 Galaxy to the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve Station on March 7.

The airlift and exercise tested the CST's mobility and response to a radiological attack in Western New York.

There, the CST trained with local civilian and air-base emergency response personnel through classroom training and briefings on March 8 including a March 9 scenario-based WMD exercise. Their basic mission was to support first responders during the suspected radiological event.

"We have the ability to deploy the entire unit and its capability anywhere in the nation in a matter of hours," said Capt. Richard Nunziato, CST Deputy Commander, who has been on the team since June 1999.

Nunziato explained that deploying the entire unit by air is an annual requirement for all of the nation's 32 CST teams. This was the first time since 1999 that the CST airlifted in a C-5 Galaxy.

Stewart Air National Guard Base, the



CST Commander, Maj. Matthew Cooper, speaks with civilian responders in Niagara Falls.

only Air National Guard Mobility Wing with the C-5 Galaxy, the nation's largest military aircraft, flew the mission. It's aircrew coordinated with base operations and aerial port flights of the 109th Airlift Wing and the 914th Airlift Wing to ensure proper loading of response-team equipment, which included seven vehicles and two trailers.

"Cooperation between the 105th Airlift Wing, the 109th Airlift Wing and the 914th Airlift Wing was key," said Nunziato. It was a joint training event, he said.

Their unmarked, dark-blue vehicles and trailers had to be weighed before loading. Once guided into the cavernous

cargo compartment of the C-5 Galaxy, Stewart ANGB loadmasters prepared the aircraft for flight.

"We have flown several other times, on the C-130 Hercules, for training and to pre-deploy for high profile events including the 2004 U.S. Open in Long Island," said Nunziato, who says prior coordination and pre-planning is the key to successful training and operations.

The CST is a federally funded New York National Guard unit. It was designed to augment local and regional terrorism response capabilities in events known, or suspected to involve, the hostile use of chemicals, biological or radiological agents. □



CST and their equipment responded from Stratton Air National Guard Base, Scotia, and were prepared for airlift by the 109th Airlift Wing Aerial Port Flight there. They airlifted from Scotia on a 105th Airlift Wing C-5 Galaxy, landed and off-loaded at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (above). Additionally, photo and video support was provided by the 107th Air Refueling Wing's Multimedia Flight.



Armored vehicles undergo repair and maintenance work at the recently refurbished Maneuver Area Training and Equipment Site, Fort Drum. Photos by Sgt. Dennis Gravell.

Rebuilt combat maintenance site running like a well oiled machine

By 2nd Lt. Amy Fires
Guard Times Staff

FORT DRUM—Tracked vehicles drive into work-bays, mechanics and technicians move about locating parts and searching through computerized manuals. This is the average scene at the Maneuver Area Training and Equipment Site, here.

Soldiers who work at MATES account for, maintain, repair and issue selected equipment from M1 Abrams tanks to Bradley fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers for Army National Guard units. It's the largest MATES facility in New York, and it serves a five-state region: New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Jersey and Massachusetts.

MATES maintains communication equipment, crew-served weapons and basic service-issue items using an 18 building facility. It additionally maintains more than 1,100 combat track vehicles, and its technicians have received numerous accolades and support from the major Army commands it serves.

Recently, the facility was rebuilt. State of the art equipment is now in place and its mission ready. The facilities' 130 Federal technicians had a functional say in the layout and ergonomics here.

Compared to the old facility, there is more workspace. Forklift wings have been added where hallways were previously "worked around." The Carpentry Shop is updated along with the Canvas and Repair Shop and the Machine and Body Shops. There is also an updated physical fitness room.

"This is where our future is going," said Col. Peter V. Ingalsbe, MATES Director. Ingalsbe explained that, with better facilities, new and increased missions are expected.

And they are open for business, preparing a steady stream of Soldiers and equipment for deployment and annual training. Tanks are rolled into work-bays where technicians can access computer

manuals and the Internet. Lubricants and compressed air hoses are conveniently located at each work-bay. Work-bay floors are heated, and air circulation is specialized.

"This is the first time where we've had something nice," said Sgt. 1st Class Wilfrid Ashlaw, technician.

After moving into the new facility, the Pennsylvania Army National Guard called upon MATES to support a fleet of 16 M2 Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicles, 16 M1A1 Abrams tanks and 12 Command Post Carriers, on a tight deadline for a scheduled PAARNG deployment. The equipment filled 18 out of 20 work-bays here, and the job required more than 70 percent of the site's workforce.

"It is truly the Soldiers who make this mission a success," said Chief Warrant Officer Richard Friess, Deputy Director of Logistics here.

NYARNG technicians put the rebuilt facility to the test, working extended days and weekends to complete the mission on schedule, all the while tending to local repair and maintenance work. They got the job done, still repairing equipment as it rolled away from the work-bays.

"This is another success story for the National Guard," said Ingalsbe. □



Sgt. Charles E. Hardy, MATES technician, works on an M1 A1 Abrams tank at Fort Drum.

Ceremonies applaud Soldiers, families, employers for service

Freedom Salute events held for New York Army National Guard units

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

BUFFALO, GLENS FALLS, ROME, UTICA, CAMP SMITH—More than 650 New York National Guard Soldiers, along with their families, friends and employers, were honored for their service in five separate Freedom Salutes this spring.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Soldiers were heavily deployed in either state or federal active duty for Operation Iraqi Freedom and homeland defense, including service at Ground Zero and protecting airports and nuclear power facilities.

Their sacrifices and accomplishments are monumental. Of their group, three were killed in action and nearly 30 were awarded the Purple Heart Medal. Of no lesser regard, numerous Bronze

Star Medals, Army Commendation Medals, Global War on Terror Medals and New York State Meritorious Service Medals were awarded for Iraqi service and homeland defense.

The Freedom Salute Campaign is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history. The National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., launched the campaign nationwide as a way to recognize members of the Army National Guard for service during Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom and to thank their spouses, children, and employers for the support they have shown to their Soldiers.

Each Soldier received an encased American flag, a lapel insignia, a commemorative coin and certificate of appreciation.

"This is a well deserved tribute to Soldiers who gave so much to this great nation and to their families and employers who have supported them," said the Army's second highest in command, Gen. Richard A

Cody, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Cody attended the Freedom Salute ceremony of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division in Glens Falls on May 1. He awarded medals and shook hands with all 104 Soldiers in attendance. Cody told a crowd of Soldiers, families and friends that they had reconnected America with its Army in a way not seen since World War II and that they were "shining examples of America's patriotism."

"In the face of great adversity, these Soldiers never quit and they never accepted defeat," said Cody.

Freedom Salutes were also held for Delta Company, 2-108th on April 17 in Rome, for 1st Battalion, 127th Armor Regiment on April 23 in Buffalo, for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-108th on April 24 in Utica and for Alpha Company, 2-108th on April 30 at Camp Smith.

Soldiers' spouses were presented with a National Guard honoree lapel insignia.



A HHC 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division Soldier stands on stage during a Freedom Salute ceremony on April 24 in Utica.

Political and public figures from surrounding communities and outside New York participated in the ceremonies including Thomas Hamill, a civilian contractor, taken captive in Iraq, whose rescue was aided by Charlie Company Soldiers.

Each Soldier was provided a medallion and a commemorative lapel insignia to recognize one person who provided outstanding support, to them and their family, during their mobilization. In addition, all units presented framed American flag prints to select community groups in support of their mobilizations. Another special award, a 17-inch Minuteman statuette, was

presented to each unit's "Key Center of Influence," which acknowledged their outstanding support to Soldiers and families.

Vicky Buchanan, mother of Spc. Anthony M. Buchanan, was presented the statuette as Delta Company's KCI.

"When I found out, I was shocked," said Buchanan. Buchanan supported Delta Company Soldiers during their Iraq deployment. She shipped care packages and raised funds through their family readiness group. "It means a lot to me," she said.

Additional Freedom Salute ceremonies are scheduled throughout this year for NYARG units. □



A Soldier of Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division receives the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal from Lt. Col. Mark Warnecke, Commander, 2-108th, on April 17 in Rome.



Vicky Buchanan, mother of Spc. Anthony M. Buchanan, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division, is presented a 17 inch Minuteman statuette for recognition as Charlie Company's "Key Center of Influence." Mrs. Buchanan provided outstanding support to Charlie Company Soldier's during their Operation Iraqi Freedom II deployment. Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Petibone.



1st Sgt. Michael J. Hammann receives the Bronze Star Medal at his Freedom Salute ceremony.

This is a well deserved tribute to Soldiers who gave so much...and their families and employers who supported them."

—Gen. Richard A. Cody
Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army



Families and friends of 1st Battalion, 127th Armor Regiment Soldiers applaud.



Soldiers sing the Army song at their Freedom Salute ceremony in Buffalo.

1st Battalion, 127th Armor Regiment Soldiers sit with awards received at their Freedom Salute ceremony in Buffalo on April 23. Photos by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle.



Gen. Richard A. Cody, Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, awards medals to Soldiers of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division at a Freedom Salute ceremony on May 1 in Glens Falls.



Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Division's Freedom Salute (above) on May 1 in Glens Falls. A Charlie Company Soldier (right) shakes hands with the Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr. Each Soldier received an encased American flag (below). Photos by Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith.



COLONEL

BOBECK, MICHAEL, E, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 BRESNAHAN, MICHAEL, R, HQ 53D TRP CMD
 BURKE, MARK, F, HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV
 COSTAGLIOLA, MARIO T, HHC 42 IN DIV(-)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL

BURCH, ROGER, L, HHC 3RD BDE 42ND ID (M)
 CLEAVELAND, DENNIS, S, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT HQ
 DEELEY, DENNIS, C, HHC (-) 27TH IN BDE
 GRIMSLEY, BERNARD, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 MALLIN, MICHAEL, W, HHC 1-101ST CAVALRY
 NATALI, MICHEL, A, 42 HHC HVY DIV FWD 2
 OLSEN, ERIC, W, HHC (-) 27TH IN BDE
 STEWART, MALCOLM, M, DET 1 HHB 42 DIVARTY

MAJOR

DIEHL, ROY, M, 42 HHC HVY DIV FWD 2
 FANOSCHULTZE, JOHN, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 GONYO, JAMES, C, HQ 53D TRP CMD
 HUTZ, ANDREW, G, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 SWEENEY, KATHY, M, DET 2 NYARNG ELEMENT JF HQ

CAPTAIN

ALAM, SAMSUL, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 ERAZO, JANET R, DET 1 HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 GOURLAY, WILLIAM, M, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR
 GREEN, JEFFREY, A, HHC 27TH INF BDE INF OPS AUG
 KENNIFF, THOMAS, A, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 KNOWLES, DENNIS, H, CO D 1-127TH ARMOR
 MILLER, BRYAN, E, HHC 642D MI BATTALION

FIRST LIEUTENANT

GAYNOR, HOLLIS C, CO D 1-127TH ARMOR
 KETCHUM, DARREN J, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 MASTEN, JOSEPH E, HHC 642D MI BATTALION

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4

HUMPHRIES, NEAL, L, CO B 3-142D AVIATION

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3

FIORILLI, JAMES, W, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 PARSELS, DAVID, A, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR

MASTER SERGEANT

ARBOLEDA, AMABLE, DET 1 HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 CONROY, WILLIAM, T, DET 1 105 MP CO
 GARRIS, EDWIN, L, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 HEROLD, HUGO, DET 1 HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 NIEVES, LUIS, R, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 OQUENDO, MANUEL, A, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS

CARRERAS, JULIO, JR, 258 FA BN 01 BTRY B REAR NY
 COVEY, ASA, D, HHD 342D FWD SPT BN

VID, D, TROOPE 101ST CAVALRY
 OMAS, F, HHC 42D INF DIV UNIT AUG
 HOWARD, L, 222D MILITARY POLICE CO
 G, ALFRED, E, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 RYAN, 145TH MAINTENANCE CO
 RLES, R, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 O A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 58 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 105TH MP CO
 CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 ITARY POLICE CO
 DRPS SPT BN
 01 AR BN 01 DET 1 HHC
 1ST SIGNAL BN
 HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 7TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 OPE 101ST CAVALRY
 7TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 ARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 ANFRY DIV BAND (-)

STAFF SERGEANT

BELTON, ARCHIE, B, HHC (-) 27TH IN BDE
 BROWN, CHAD, E, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 BRYANT, ALICIA, A, HHC 642D MI BATTALION
 DOLPH, JAMES, D, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 DUARTE, KRISTIN, W, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 FITZGERALD, GERALD, J, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 FLOREZ, EDWIN, A, 145TH MAINTENANCE CO
 FROHLICH, RICHARD, A, DET 1 105 MP CO
 GILLERAN, KIMBERLY, L, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 GRODNICK, WILLIAM, F, 27TH SPT CTR (CORPS RAOC)
 HEERAN, MATTHEW, J, HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 HERNANDEZ, STEVE, A, 222D MILITARY POLICE CO
 JONES, BETHANY, L, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 KING, RICHARD, W, 1108TH ORDANCE CO EOD
 LONGO, KIMBERLEY, A, 29 AG HHD PSC FWD
 LUCAS, RYAN, R, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 MESHENBERG, WALTER, N, HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV
 MONTROIS, JAMES, F, CO B(-) 642D SUPPORT BN
 PALMER, STEPHEN, F, 466TH MEDICAL CO AREA SPT
 PIZARRO, ALVIN, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 POTTS, DOMINICK, M, HHC 3RD BDE 42ND ID (M)
 ROGERS, TIMOTHY, J, CAMPSMITH TRAINING SITE
 SMITH, JAMES, E, TROOPE 101ST CAVALRY
 SWAIN, JERRY, J, HHD ENGINEER BDE 42 ID
 TAYLOR, LASHANA, M, 102D MAINTENANCE CO
 TAYLOR, ROXANNE, 105TH MP CO
 TUPPER, KEVIN, J, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 VANWIE, THOMAS, M, 105TH MP CO
 VEGA, HECTOR, 442D MILITARY POLICE CO
 VILARDO, KEVIN, D, 2ND CIVIL SUPPORT TEAM (WMD)
 WOODWORTH, ROGER, A, HHC 642D MI BATTALION

SERGEANT

ADAMS, JARROD, P, CO B 152D ENGINEER BN
 ALBRIGHT, THEODORE, L, H & S CO 204 ENGR BN
 ARROYO, MIGUEL, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 BATISTA, KELVI, HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
 BERARDI, PETER, J, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 BLAKE, ANDRE, G, HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
 BORTLE, ADAM, J, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 BOURNE, ANDREW, T, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 BRADSHAW, BRIAN, S, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 BRATTEN, TROY, D, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 BRODERICK, PATRICK, L, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 CADY MORGAN, P, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 CAHOLE, ORLANDO, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 CASTLE, JENNIFER, L, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 CEVALLOS GOMEZ, ALEX, R, HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
 COLLIER, JOI, K, HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 COOK, BRENT, JEREMY, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 COTRICH, THALIA, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 CRABTREE, LINDSAY, M, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 CRYSLER, CHRISTOPHER, R, HHC 642D MI BATTALION
 DANDREA, JOHN, CO B 152D ENGINEER BN
 MILITARY POLICE CO
 CO C (-) 204TH ENGR BN
 AS, D, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 R, 719 TRANS CO (MDM TRK CGO)
 S, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 27TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 1156TH ENGR CO PORT OPENING
 MES, A, RECRUITING AND RETENTION CMD
 9TH INFANTRY (M)
 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 D, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 W, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR
 S, R, 138TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMET
 N, A, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 E, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 D, B, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 I, P, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 T, CO B 1-127TH ARMOR
 H, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 D, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 W, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR
 N, L, HHC 1-101ST CAVALRY

LASTELLA, JOHN, T, 42D INFANTRY DIV BAND (-)
 LECLAIR, PERRY, W, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 LESLIE, SCOTT, C, RECRUITING AND RETENTION CMD
 LEWIS, TRAYON, R, 1569 TC CO MED TRK FWD
 LUDWIG, ROBERT, T, CO C (-) 204TH ENGR BN
 LYONS, RICHARD, G, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR
 MACY, WILLIAM, C, 69 IN BN 01 HHC FWD
 MAIELLA, DANIEL, P, 69 IN BN 01 HHC REAR
 MAIOLO, DAVID, J, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 MARCANO, PEDRO, E, DET 1 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 MCGHIE, JASON, M, DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
 MCKIRCHY, SHAWN, P, DET 20 OPER SPT ALFT CMD
 MCMILLAN, JEFFREY, C, CO B 152D ENGINEER BN
 MCRAVIN, FABIAN, B, HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
 MELENCIANO, MIGUEL, A, 1569 TC CO MED TRK FWD
 MELLGREN, ALY, C, 466TH MEDICAL CO AREA SPT
 MITCHELL, REGINALD, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 MURRAY, FREDERICK, G, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 NELSON, DAVID, J, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 OLES, JOHN, W, 1156TH ENGR CO PORT OPENING
 ORTIZ, AMICAR, O, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 PAPP, MICHAEL, A, 442D MILITARY POLICE CO
 PARDY, ERIC, M, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 PERKINS, KRISTEN, L, 442D MILITARY POLICE CO
 PIECZYKOLAN, MARIUSZ, CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE
 POGACNIK, ANDREW, W, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 PRINCE, WESLEY, H, CO C (-) 204TH ENGR BN
 PRYOR, TROYE, A, 642 CS BN CO B REAR
 REBOY, MARK, W, HHC (-) 1-127TH ARMOR
 REPSHER, MILTON, H, CO B (-) 204 ENGR BN
 RIVERA, MARCOS, A, DET 1 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 ROBLES, EDWIN, 133 OD CO MAINT NONDIV DS
 RODRIGUEZ, JESUS, M, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 RODRIGUEZ, OSCAR, G, 249TH MED CO AIR AMBULANCE (-)
 ROGERS, JOHN, V, DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
 ROST, DAVID, W, HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 SANCHEZ, MILTON, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 SANDS, JASON, E, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 SANTIAGO, ROBERT, 133 OD CO MAINT NONDIV DS
 SANTOS, JOSE, A, 442D MILITARY POLICE CO
 SCHNEIDER, DAVID, D, HHD ENGINEER BDE 42 ID
 STABLER, SEAN, M, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 STROJIL, RICHARD, V, H & S CO 204 ENGR BN
 THEIS, KELLY, L, 1156TH ENGR CO PORT OPENING
 THOMPSON, CHRISTOPHER, J, RECRUITING AND RETENTION
 TORRES, RADAMES, HHC 642D MI BATTALION
 VASQUEZPEREZ, WILLIAM, J, 258 FA BN 01 BTRY C REAR NY
 VAZQUEZ, FRANCISCO, NYARNG ELEMENT JOINT FORCE HQ
 VEIHDEFFER, MICHAEL, S, HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV
 WAI, ELEANOR, DET 1 HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 WHITE, JAMES, J, CO B 152D ENGINEER BN
 WILSON, JACOB, T, DET 1 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO

SPECIALIST

AGUILAR, MARIA, M, HHC 42 IN DIV(-)
 AISEL, JOHNATHAN, W, HHC (-) 1-108TH INF
 ALEGRE, EMEL, L, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 ALSTON, JOSHUA, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 AUSTIN, JUSTIN, T, 29TH PERSONNEL SERVICE DET
 AVILES, TOMAS, A, HHC(-) 1-69 INF (M)
 BRAUN, MICHAEL, J, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 CHEETHAM, JARROD, L, HSC 642D SUPPORT BN
 COLEMAN, GARY, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 CONWAY, HEATHER, M, MEDICAL COMMAND
 COUNTRYMAN, DAVID, W, CO B(-) 642D SUPPORT BN
 COX, ASHLEY, M, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 CRUZ, ALEXIS, 1569TH TRANSPORTATION CO
 CRUZ, ERICK, J, CO B 1-108TH INF
 CURTISS, MICHAEL, B, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 DELOSH, JOHN, P, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 DEUTSCHMAN, STEPHEN, R, HHC (-) 27TH IN BDE
 DILLARD, STARTASHA, M, DET 1 HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 DINKINS, SHAHNAZ, C, 206 CS HHD CSB FWD
 DUDZIAK, COLIN, J, HHC (-) 1-108TH INF
 FARQUHARSON, RICARDO, F, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 FREDRIKSEN, DANIEL, E, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 GARRISI, JAMES, M, HHC 642D MI BATTALION
 GORMAN, MORGAN, J, CO B(-) 642D SUPPORT BN

HALL, JAMES, M, DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
 HUMPHREY, SCOTT, D, CO C 101ST SIGNAL BN
 HUTCHINS, MICHAEL, K, 29TH PERSONNEL SERVICE DET
 JASKOWIAK, JEREMY, J, CO B 1-108TH INF
 JOHNSON, CLINT, M, DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
 KANG, BYUNG, G, 37 FI DET REAR NY
 KIM, GEONG, U, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 KULIKOWSKI, ANDREW, L, 258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 LAFFOSE, ANNETTE, N, CO C 101ST SIGNAL BN
 LEQUE, JOHN, J, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 LOVELESS, JOSIAH, M, HSC 642D SUPPORT BN
 MAPHIRI, BAHOLO, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 MCDONALD, SEAN, R, CO B 1-108TH INF
 MCGHIE, ROHAN, A, CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE
 MENDEZ, OSCAR, E, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 MERIWETHER, JOSHUA, R, CO D 1-105 INF
 MONGERSON, RIENER, J, CO B 1-108TH INF
 MOORE, GREGORY, L, 69 IN BN 01 DET 1 HHC REAR
 PAGE, DELBERT, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 PARKS, JASON, M, 108 IN BN 02 HHC REAR NY
 PINEDA, JENNIFER, HHD 27TH FINANCE BN
 QUE, JESSA, 1427TH TRANS CO MEDIUM TRUCK
 REGOLINO, ANTHONY, R, CO C 1-105 INF
 REILLY, JOSPH, A, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 RICHARDSON, NATALYA, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 RICKARD, AMANDA, D, 145 OD CO MAINT FWD
 RIVERA, PABLO, A, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 RIVERA, PETER, G, 258 FA BN 01 BTRY C REAR NY
 ROBERTS, JAMAL, N, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 RODRIGUEZ, RAMIREZ, N, CO B 1-108TH INF
 SACCHITTELLA, DANIEL, A, 1427TH TRANS CO MEDIUM TRUCK
 SANCHEZ, BRIAN, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 SARAFIN, NICHOLAS, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 SHREVE, RICHARD, I, CO A (-) 427TH SPT BN
 SMITH, EBONY, C, DET 1 CO C 204TH EN BN
 SPENCE, NICHOLAS, G, 69 IN BN 01 CO A REAR
 SPICCI, SARAH, B, 29 AG HHD PSC FWD
 STILSON, MARK, E, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 SYKES, RONALD, R, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 TAYLOR, WILLIAM, E, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 TIRADO, ADAM, 145 OD CO MAINT DS REAR
 VALDES, ANTHONY, CO B 342D FWD SPT BN
 VENDITTOULI, MARCUS, P, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 VULTAGGIO, CARL, M, HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV
 WALKER, JONATHAN, R, 107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 WATSON, TERICA, P, CO C 101ST SIGNAL BN
 WELLS, MONICA, M, HSC 642D SUPPORT BN
 WETZEL, MICHAEL, T, 145TH MAINTENANCE CO
 WONG, YUEN, H, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 ZERVOS, DAMIEN, J, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

AIKEN, STEVEN, K, DET 1 HHC 1-69TH INF (M)
 ARACENA, GILBERTO, J, 69 IN BN 01 HHC REAR
 BAGGATTA, STEVEN, P, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 BLONCOURT, JOSEPH, L, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 BOLDEN, KEVEN, L, HHC AVN BDE 42 IN DIV
 BRISEE, JOHN, J, HHC 1-105TH INF
 BRODERICK, JERMAINE, O, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 BROWN, JOSEPH, M, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 CHAVARRIA, CHRISTIAN, J, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 DESTEVENS, JOSHUA, M, HHC (-) 1-108TH INF
 DEVOID, MICHAEL, E, CO C 101ST SIGNAL BN
 DUBOIS, JOSEPH, R, 1156TH ENGR CO PORT OPENING
 DURNEY, JESSE, D, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 EDWARDS, RYAN, T, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 ELLIOTT, JERRY, A, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 FITZGERALD, SCOTT, HHC 42 IN DIV (-)
 GARNER, CHRISTOPHER, J, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 GENTILE, THEODORE, W, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 GEORGOPOULOS, DIONYSIA, HHD 27TH FINANCE BN
 GONSALVES, KAI, A, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 GRAAP, JOSHUA, R, HHC 152D ENGINEER BN
 HASENSTAB, JOSEPH, M, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 HATLEE, SHANE, J, 42 IN CTR REAR
 HURLEY, JOSEPH, J, CO B 1-108TH INF
 JAYNE, ROBERT, E, H & S CO 204 ENGR BN
 JONES, TABITHA, L, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN



Happiness is coming home: Sgt. James C. Parks, 1st Battalion, 108th Infantry Division, is welcomed home by friends and family on March 25 at the Masten Avenue Armory, Buffalo. Nearly 60 soldiers of Detachment 1, Bravo Company completed more than 14 months of federal active duty and nearly a full year "Boots on the Ground" in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Soldiers moved into the U.S. Central Command Area of Operations thus beginning nearly a year of intense duty near Baghdad, Iraq with the Army's 1st Cavalry Division. They participated in numerous combat patrols, engaged the enemy on many occasions, captured insurgents and seized weapons caches. Five Soldiers were wounded and Sgt. David Roustum, West Seneca, was killed in action during an attack by enemy forces in November 2004. Photo by Sgt. Matthew Johnson.

KHAMURZOV, RUSLAN, M, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 KRUG, SALVATORE, C, CO C (-) 638 SPT BN
 KUMAR, AVINISH, HHC 107TH SUPPORT GROUP (-)
 LEON, JUAN, C, 69 IN BN 01 CO B REAR
 LOPEZ, DEL VALLE, M, HHC (-) 1-108TH INF
 LORA, MIGUEL, A, 1569TH TRANSPORTATION CO
 MCCANN, CHRISTOPHER, K, CO C 642ND MI BN
 MCGEEVER, AMANDA, M, 204TH ENGINEER DETACHMENT
 MCGURN, JAMES, J, DET 4 42D MP CO
 MCPHEE, JAMES, L, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 MORRIS, JOHN, W, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 MULLER, JOSEPH, L, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 NIELSEN, KRISTIN, N, CO C (-) 638 SPT BN
 PANTANO, JAMIE, L, CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
 PRATT, CODY, J, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 REYNOLDS, ASHLEY, D, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 RIOS, HERNANDO, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 RIVERA, ANTHONY, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 RIVERA, FRANK, JR, CO C 1-105 INF
 RUBINO, JOSEPH, A, AV HHC DIV AV BDE REAR
 RUSSETT, JACOB, C, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 SANDERS, FRANK, L, 1427TH TRANS CO MEDIUM TRUCK
 SCOEHEIT, MATTHEW, D, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 SENER, CHRISTOPHER, R, CO C 3-142D AVIATION
 SIDDIQUE, AMMAD, A, 29TH PERSONNEL SERVICE DET
 SINDONE, LISA, M, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 SLAYTON, SHANE, W, 1427TH TRANS CO MEDIUM TRUCK
 SUAZO, ELVIS, R, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 SWAIDNER, BRIAN, P, CO B 1-108TH INF
 TAISEY, COLIN, P, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 TAVARES, JOSHUA, P, AV HHC DIV AV BDE REAR
 TEZENO, ELIJAH, K, 427TH MAINTENANCE CO (DS)
 TORRES, ORLANDO, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 TSUTSUMISHITA, TOMOHITO, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 WILLIAMS, BAMBI, 1427TH TRANS CO MEDIUM TRUCK
 WILLIAMS, MARCUS, K, 642 CS BN HSC REAR
 ZHU, SHARON, HHD 27TH FINANCE BN

PRIVATE

ACOSTA, PABLO, HHC (-) 1-69 INF (M)
 ADAMS, PATRICK, M, CO A 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 AGUAYAS, DIANA, G, 642 CS BN CO B REAR

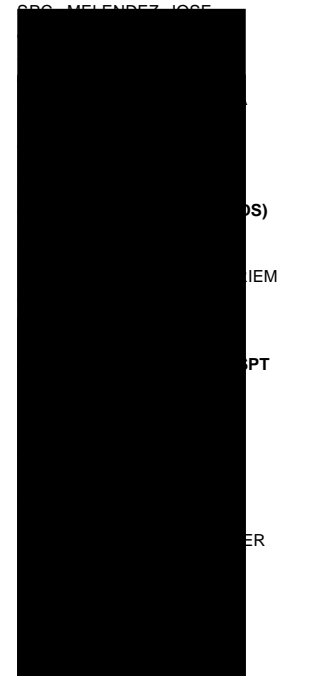
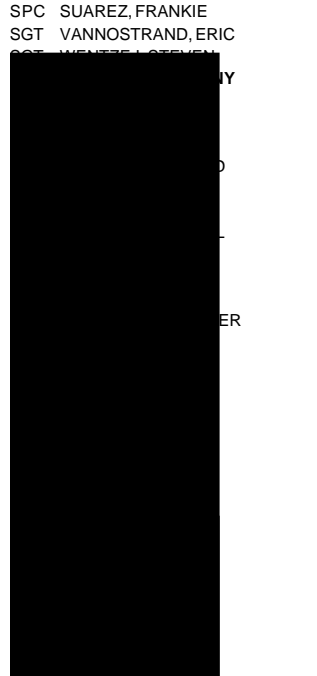
ALLEN, LANCE, R, HHC (-) 3-142D AVIATION
 BENJAMIN, THOMAS, P, CO C 1-127TH ARMOR
 BRINDOU, YOVAN, J, CO A 342D FWD SPT BN
 BRISTOL, BRENT, M, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 CARD, JOSHUA, D, DET 1 HHC 1-127TH ARMOR
 CHAPMAN, QUENTIN, T, 204TH ENGINEER DETACHMENT
 CHRISTIAN, CHRISTOPHER, DET 1 CO C 342D FWD SPT BN
 CLEMENT, JONATHAN, R, SERVICE BATTERY 1-258TH FA
 DANIELS, JASON, A, CO C 3-142D AVIATION
 DAVID, SCOTT, A, HHC (-) 1-108TH INF
 DESILVA, LEOPOLDO, A, 642 CS BN CO B REAR
 EDMONDS, BRUCE, L, AV HHC DIV AV BDE REAR
 FARMER, JOSHUA, R, 222D MILITARY POLICE CO
 FERNANDEZ, CHARLES, A, CO C 1-105 INF
 FRANZ, DIANA, C, CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
 GILLMORE, JOHN, M, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 GRUMAN, FELIX, HHB 1-258TH FIELD ARTILLERY
 HENNING, KEITH, 222D MILITARY POLICE CO
 HYLTON, GERALD, A, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 JARRELL, ANTON, L, 1569TH TRANSPORTATION CO
 JONES, MARCUS, A, CO B 101ST SIGNAL BN
 LARAWAY, CHARLES, A, HHC 1-105TH INF
 LAURENT, PATRICIA, CO C (-) 342D FWD SPT BN
 LEGGETT, DARREN, M, CO C 1-69TH INF (M)
 LLAMAS, BIENVENIDO, HHD 342D FWD SPT BN
 MEEK, MICHELLE, M, DET 1 CO C 342D FWD SPT BN
 NAVARRO, NADINE, E, AV HHC DIV AV BDE REAR
 PALANSKY, PAVOL, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 PORTERFIELD, ZACHARY, K, DET 1 HHC 1-127TH ARMOR
 RAMOS, ERIC, J, CO E 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 RANDEL, AMANDA, L, HHC 101ST SIGNAL BN
 REBMANN, CANDY, L, HHC 152D ENGINEER BN
 ROBERTUCCI, NICHOLAS, P, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 RODRIGUEZ, EDWARD, CO E 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 RODRIGUEZ, JOSE, L, CO C 1-105 INF
 RUIZ, JOSEPH, B, CO E 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 SCELIA, MICHAEL, P, CO D 1-101ST CAVALRY
 STEIN, CHARLES, E, CO A 1-127TH ARMOR
 TITKA, AARON, J, CO A 101ST SIGNAL BN
 VANDISH, PAUL, A, CO C (-) 1-108TH INF
 VELAZQUEZ, MORALES, J, CO B 1-69TH INFANTRY (M)
 WOOD, ROBERT, J, CO C 101ST SIGNAL BN

101 AR BN 01 CO D REAR
 SSG NOVOA, BERNIE
102 OD CO MAINT FWD 2
 SPC BROWN, ANIYAH
 SPC KNIGHT, HAWKINS
 SPC LLOYD, PETER
 SPC MORGAN, KEITH
 SPC SANDIFORD, REGINALDO
 SPC SCOTT, LEAH
 SGT TORO, LUIS
 SFC TUMMINGS, CHARLES
 SPC VASQUEZ, HERICK
 SSG LONDON, TOM
102D MAINTENANCE CO
 SFC MICKENS, ALLEN
105TH MP CO
 SGT FRAY, ROBERT
 SPC IMBURGIA, STEPHEN
 SPC LANGE, KEVIN
107TH MILITARY POLICE CO
 SSG BREWER, JAMES
 SSG BROADBENT GALE
 SGT HERRINGSHAW, CINDY
 SFC JANDZIO, THEODORE
 SGT MCKINNEY, JAMES
 SGT WHITTAKER, BRADLEY
107TH SUPPORT GROUP
 SGT CORDERO, LINO
108 IN BN 01 AASLT A CO
 SPC HEWITT, BRANDON
108 IN BN 01 AASLT D CO FWD
 SFC MCENROE, ERIC
 SPC WHITTINGTON, RICKY
108 IN BN 01 CO B FWD 2
 SPC BAKER, JOHN
 SPC GROMLOVITS, BRIAN
 SGT PARRIS, KEITH
 SPC WILSON, CHARLES
108 IN BN 02 AASLT CO A
 SGT ANDREWS, PATRICK
 SGT ARLEQUIN, JOSE
 SPC BELL, RICHARD,
 SPC ESTERGUARD, ZACHARY
 SFC GROSS, JEFFREY
 SPC HOOVLER, PAUL
 SPC KASTANIS, JAMES
 SPC KIRKMAN, JASON
 SGT MACHULSKI, JOSEPH
 SGT MEDINA, EDGAR
 SPC MORRISON, MICHAEL
 SPC MORSE, GEOFFREY
 SFC OBRIEN, MICHAEL
 SGT REALE, GIUSEPPE
 SPC REID, DOUGLAS
 SSG SERRANO, ANGEL
 SPC STERN, PHILLIP
 SGT WARNER, KYLE

SSG TAVERNIA, WILLIAM
 SPC WILLIAMS, BRIAN
108 IN BN 02 AASLT CO C
 SGT AMEZQUITA, ALVIN
 SGT CONYNE, PETER
 SPC GEISLER, SHADRACH
 SGT JENKINS, BILLY
 SGT LORESTO, BASIL
 SGT LYNCH, MICHAEL
 SPC MCGILLIS, TIMOTHY
 SPC MIRVIS, ALEXANDER
 CPL MITCHELL, BRAD
 SSG MOORE, GREGORY
 SPC PLERCHEE, JOHN
 SPC PRITCHARD, TIMOTHY
 SPC REID JANHOI
 SPC RODRIGUEZ, RAMON
 SPC ROOT, WILLIAM
 SSG SERAFIN, DAVID
 SGT SPRINGER, JASON
 SSG WARD, KEITH
 SPC WILSON, RORY
 SPC YEAGER, STEVEN
108 IN BN 02 AASLT CO D
 SSG BENNETT, RONALD
 SPC LAMB, AARON
 SPC PEZZULA, MICHAEL
 SPC SUITS, GORMAN
 SGT SWANCOTT, RICKY
 SSG WALKER, JOHN
108 IN BN 02 AASLT HHC
 SSG AIKEN, JOHN
 SPC ALVORD, MARC
 SGT ASCHENBRENNER, LAWRENCE
 SPC BALBEN, PHILIP
 CPL BENNETT, RICHARD
 SGT BYRNE, JOHN
 SPC CORYEA, JOHN
 SPC DANN, JESSE
 SPC DAVIS, BRYAN
 CPL DUNKLEY, JARED
 SPC FELIO MARC, JAMES
 SPC FRANKLIN, GREGORY
 SGT GUARNO, PHILIP
 SFC HARWOOD, CHARLES
 SPC HUMPHREYS, JOHN
 SGT INGERSON, FRANK
 SPC MAZAL, LAWRENCE
 SFC NEVINS, CHRISTOPHER
 SFC NICHOLS, ERIK
 SPC OLEARY, JOSHUA
 SGT PERSON, EDWARD
 SPC RENADETTE, JASON
 SPC RENADETTE, TREVOR
 SSG RICHARDSON, RICHARD
 SGT ROBERTS, WESLEY
 MSG SECOR, KENNETH
 SPC SUAREZ, FRANKIE
 SGT VANNOSTRAND, ERIC

SSG WEIMER, DANIEL
10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION DET
 SPC HASKINS, LANDON
1156TH ENGR CO PORT OPENING
 SPC FAUST, NICOLAS
 SPC HRONCICH, CHRISTOPHER
 SPC PROVONCHA, CHRISTIAN
 SSG SINCLAIR, GREGORY
 SPC WHITNEY, ARNOLD
 SSG WORKMAN, STEVEN
133 OD CO MAINT NONDIV DS
 SGT ALEXANDER, JUNIOR
 SGT BROWN, ELIZABETH
 SGT CONCEPCION, RAFAEL
 SPC CORREA, JUAN
 SGT CRUICKSHANK, URIAH
 SPC EUSEBIO, EDUARDO
 SPC GONZALEZ, ALEXANDER
 SPC HAMILTON, ASTON
 SGT HAYDAK, DOUGLAS
 SSG LUCCHESE, BENEDETTO
 SPC MCCLEAN, LEROY
 SPC MENESES JOSEPH
 SPC REYES, JOSE
 SPC TAPPER, OMAR
 SGT TRAVIS, SCOTT
 SPC UCETA, FRANKLIN
 SGT WASHINGTON, EDITH
 SGT WHITE, ADOLPHUS
138TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS DET
 SGT WHEELER, THOMAS
1427TH TRANS CO MED TRUCK
 SPC BROWN, BRIAN
 SFC MAYNARD, MARC
 SGT WHEELER, TIMOTHY
 SPC HORN, DANIEL
145 OD CO MAINT DS REAR
 MSG MACK, HENRY
 SPC RAMOS, LUIS
145 OD CO MAINT FWD
 SPC CALDERON, JUAN
 SPC COLON, CECILIO
 SPC MARTINEZ, JOSEPH
1569TH TRANSPORTATION CO
 SFC BELL, GREGORY
 SPC LIAUTAUD, LINDA
 SSG MITCHELL, DARLENE
199TH ARMY BAND (-)
 SSG CONTINI, DEBORAH
1ST BATTALION 142D AVIATION
 SSG BEARDSLEY, JOEL
 SFC BROWN, PERRY
 SFC HYATT, ROBERT
 SPC MARINACCIO, NICHOLE
 SPC SPENCER, CHRISTINE
204 EN BN CO A DET 2 FWD
 SSG BROCCOLO, MICHAEL
 SPC GOLDMAN, VINCENT

258 FA BN 01 BTRY B REAR
 SSG RAMDASS, CHETRAM
 SPC GARDNER, EARL
258 FA BN 01 BTRY C REAR
 SPC BORGELLA, LUDWIG
 SGT JOHNSON, MARK
 SSG NIBBS, GARTH
 SPC PANORAPANORA, SEGUNDO
 SPC PEREZ, ROBERTO
 CPL WRIGHT, JOHN
 SPC BARRASS, JOHN
 SPC JACKSON, FRANKLIN
 CPL SINGH, DEO
 SFC WEEKES, NIGEL
258 FA BN 1 BTRY B 155 SP
 SGT ARVELO, IVAN
 CPL BOND, FRANK
 SPC DAMATO, JOH
 SPC FERTIG, JAY,
 SGT JIMENEZ, WELLINGTON
 SGT JOHNSON, ERIC
 SSG LAIRD, DERRREL
 SPC MCGUIRE, PHILIP
 SPC MELHADO MICHAEL
 SGT OTWAY, IAN
 SGT PHILLIPS, KENTON
 CPL REEVES, STEVEN
 SPC RENTAS, MICHAEL
 SPC RICHARDS, DANIEL
 SPC RIVERA, LUIS
 SGT RODRIGUEZ, MELVIN
 SGT SCOTT, TIMOTHY
 SGT SOTO, RAYMOND
 SSG STOKES, PAUL
 1SG TIERNEY, LARRY
 SGT TORRES, WILLIAM
258 FA BN 1 BTRY C 155 SP
 SPC BENDETTI, DANIEL
 CPL BYNOE, TERENCE
 CPL DELGADO, ROBERT
 CPL DORSAINVIL, PETERSON
 SGT DOUGLAS, PATRICK
 SGT FERNANDEZ, JULIO
 SPC FERNANDEZ, RAFAEL
 SPC FORDLEY, MICHAEL
 SSG GUTIERREZ, GEORGE
 SSG MCKAY, JOSEPH
 SGT MITCHELL, REGINALD
 SSG MITHU, JAGGAN
 MSG OQUENDO, MANUEL
 SGT RICHARDS, ALLEN
 CPL ROCKE, JASON
27TH SUPPLY AND SERVICES BN
 MSG GANDINO, WILLIAM
2ND BN 106TH REG (RTB)
 SSG STEED, DAVID
37TH FINANCE DET
 SFC MELANDEZ, JOSE



Hercules gets a Nose Job in Scotia

109th Airlift Wing C-130
Hercules tattooed with unique
Polar mission nose-art

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

STRATTON ANGB, Scotia—The 109th Airlift Wing's C-130 Hercules are noted for their good looks. In fact, they win top international honors.

"This is the best looking aircraft I have ever seen," remarked a competition judge in 2000, just before the Wing won its third of four "Best Kept Aircraft in Show" titles at the Royal International Air Tattoo in England, beating out more than 150 aircraft, from over 30 countries.

Now, adding style to looks, the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and the Multimedia Flight here started personalizing the Wing's aircraft with nose-art in November 2004.

They recently decorated their eighth aircraft. On aircraft #493, winner of the 2004 Concours D'Elegance, the nose-art is a duck, in flight cap and goggles with assisted takeoff rockets attached to its back, its face straining as the rockets propel it. On another aircraft, the Twin Towers rise behind an American flag and ghostly bald eagle.

"The Air Force allows commanders to personalize their aircraft in this way," said Senior Master Sgt. Fredrick Bochenek, flight chief.

Bochenek took on much of the artwork, sketching the designs in his spare time. He said that the Wing's crew chiefs, 14 in all, provided the main ideas and themes. The group reviewed a few preliminary sketches to keep the artwork simple and focused.

"You try not to get too detailed, that makes it complicated," said Bochenek.

To bring each crew chief's concept to finished nose-art, Bochenek started by penciling a light outline, which he filled and shaded with color. An average sketch

took three to four hours to finish. The sketches were then forwarded to the Wing's commanders for approval.

"Not everyone will know what each sketch means," said Bochenek. He said the collection is similar in size and style, but the individual sketches are unique to each aircraft's mission and history. The Wing's central mission is Polar airlift in Greenland and Antarctica.

"Most [sketches] have an Antarctic theme; some have titles like 'Extreme Altitude' or 'Raven Gang,'" said Bochenek, who added that six aircraft remain.

In the nose-art titled "Raven Gang," an animated raven—the historical trademark of the 139th Air Squadron here, which received the name from its early ski-bird missions to Greenland—hovers above the Antarctic ice fields with skis, ski poles, tattered cap and scarf. He has a proud yet comically anxious look to his red-eyed and gold-toothed face.

Themed nose-art has been added to the Wing's aircraft before. In 2003, a special 9/11 nose-art was added nationwide to select Air Force aircraft and removed after a limited time. But unlike the 9/11 nose-art, the project here is a permanent personalization, much like an aircraft's identification number or city name.

"It's part of [the aircraft's] heritage," said Col. Max Della Pia, wing commander. "It gives each [aircraft] a bit of uniqueness, almost like a personality."

Della Pia said that adding the nose-art allows crew chiefs,

whom are assigned personal responsibility for aircraft upkeep and maintenance, to display pride in their planes.

"Hopefully it enhances the spirit of the Wing and its mission," Della Pia said. He went on to say that he enjoys watching the imagination and creativity of the entire nose-art team. "It's fun to see those using their gifts to share with the Wing."

Once the commanders approved a finished sketch, the Multimedia Flight



Nose-art for 109th Airlift Wing, LC-130 Hercules aircraft # 491. By SMSGT Fredrick Bochenek

"Most [sketches] have an Antarctic theme; some have titles like 'Extreme Altitude' or 'Raven Gang.'"

—Senior Master Sgt. Fredrick Bochenek
Flight Chief, 109th Airlift Wing

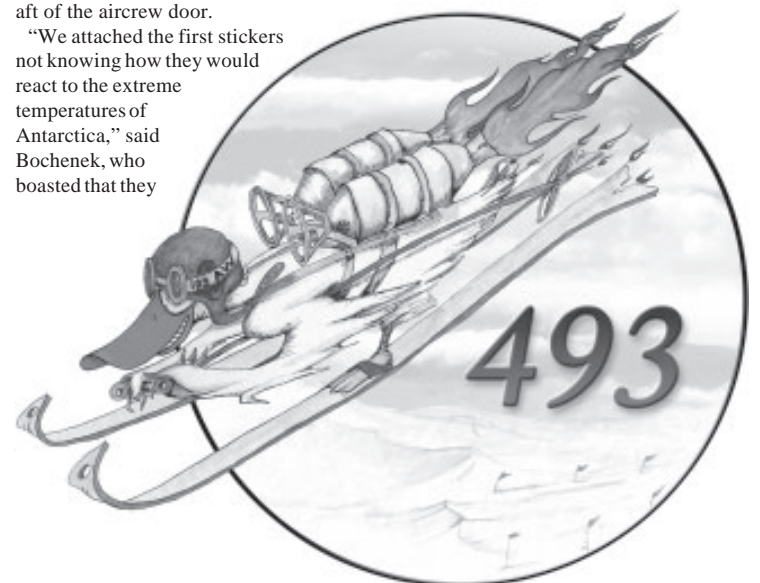
scanned it into an electronic document. Senior Airman Brett Bouchard, the Wing's graphic specialist, used desktop publishing software to add borders and backgrounds and enhance as needed. Then, the finished nose-art was printed onto a large, vinyl sticker, which was applied on each C-130 Hercules' nose, aft of the aircrew door.

"We attached the first stickers not knowing how they would react to the extreme temperatures of Antarctica," said Bochenek, who boasted that they

"held up real well," even when exposed to temperatures as low as 50 degrees below zero.

"They are part of our aircraft's history now," he said.

The nose-art team hopes to complete all aircraft this summer. □



Nose-art for 109th Airlift Wing, LC-130 Hercules aircraft # 493. By SMSGT Fredrick Bochenek



Senior Master Sgt. Fredrick Bochenek sketches aircraft nose-art from his office on Stratton Air National Guard Base. Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith.

106th Rescue Wing Airmen stay atop rescue mission

By Kathleen Fitzpatrick

Courtesy of Southampton Press

WESTHAMPTON BEACH—Two Pave Hawk helicopters from the Air National Guard at Gabreski Airport here were flying through the Appalachian Mountains in a snow squall Sunday morning. The windshield wipers were broken, and they were flying too slowly to keep ice from forming on the windshield; they had virtually no visibility. The team was forced to turn around and find another route.

"Unfortunately, I've never been involved in a rescue on a balmy July afternoon," said Director of Operations Lt. Col. Gene Sengstacken of Bethpage, who has been with the Air National Guard for 23 years. "We would have been of no use to anyone if we were forced to land because of that storm."

Lt. Col. Sengstacken, a pilot, was one of 12 airmen of the 106th Rescue Wing called in to rescue people stranded by flooding after torrential rains flooded the only road leading to Mashipacong Island and surrounding areas near the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey. As river waters continued to rise, nearly covering some of the houses in the area, the two teams airlifted out six people, two dogs, and a cat.

The 106th's mission is to provide air rescue support for civilian humanitarian rescues and combat search and rescue duties. This was the unit's 302nd save.

Governor George Pataki was among the many who congratulated the 106 Rescue Wing on a job well done.

"I want to commend members of the 106th Rescue Wing and State Police for the critical role they have played in this weekend's rescue operations," Governor Pataki said.

Congressman Timothy Bishop also expressed his gratitude. "The 106th has once again proven itself to be a tremendous asset to this nation," he said.

The guardsmen were on their last day of a four-day training program, and were flying out to Gardiners Island for drills when they were called back to base. A call had come in from the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia at about 9:30 a.m., requesting assistance. They headed back to Gabreski to refuel and gear up. With the engines still running, they loaded up the aircraft, and were briefed about the situation: A family of five was trapped at their house on a peninsula by the rapidly rising Neversink River. The 106th Rescue Wing had been specifically requested for the mission by Sussex County Sheriff E.S. Danielson.

An HC-130 Hercules was dispatched to the area to act as an airborne command and control vehicle, along with two HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters staffed with pararescue jumpers known as PJs. PJs are highly trained combat medics and can provide emergency medical care if required.



A 106th Rescue Wing HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter hovers over a flooded home. Photo courtesy of 106th Rescue Wing.

Although New Jersey State Police and Cape May Coast Guard were also requested, trouble with radio transmission prevented them from hearing the call, said Lt. Col. Sengstacken.

The helicopter crews stopped in New Jersey to pick up Sheriff Danielson and a New Jersey State Trooper, who knew exactly where the people were, and helped guide the 106th through inclement weather to the rescue sites.

Sengstacken said that communicating over the radio, while always a struggle, was particularly challenging during this rescue.

"There were so many people on the same frequency that it was difficult to hear what we needed to hear," he said.

As they travelled to the site, the weather worsened quickly, and they had to abandon their charted course and turn around.

"As we passed the city and came to the mountains, we started to run into severe weather conditions," said Sengstacken. "We tried to find a valley, but there were several snow squalls."

The pilot admitted to being a bit nervous—and losing sight

of the other helicopter was a concern as well.

"It's like driving on an expressway with the fog rolling in, except that on an expressway you don't have to worry about mountains," he said. "You don't know where there are wires or if somebody has built a tower—and you're flying in formation with another aircraft. You don't want to lose each other."

Once they turned around, they located an airport, landed, and contacted their base at Gabreski for an update on the situation. It had not improved; the water was still rising and people were still trapped.

They flew south and then west around the mountains to circumvent the storm. "We followed a road up towards Port Jervis," he said. "That allowed us to land."

Sengstacken estimates that they lost about 40 minutes attempting to get around the weather. By the time they picked up Sheriff Danielson and the State Trooper, the river was rising on both sides of the family's property, but there was enough room to land the helicopters—between corn fields and a small orchard—and have the PJs escort the family on board the two Pave Hawks, pets and all.

Although they were overwhelmed and frightened, the family of five, their two dogs and their cat, were all okay, and did not need medical attention.

"They were wet, cold and tired," said Sengstacken.

The Pave Hawks brought them to the Montague Town Hall, which was being used as the center for rescue operations. Their next stop was to answer a call from firefighters who were having difficulty reaching a man trapped on his deck by flood currents and rising waters. One of the Pave Hawks lowered a PJ for a rescue hoist. The PJ put the man in a harness, clipped the man's harness to his own, and held onto him as they were both pulled back up.

"We thought we may have to rescue the firefighters as well, but they signaled to us that they were okay," he said.

They dropped the man off at a nearby school on higher ground and returned to town hall.

After refueling, they returned to town hall and stand at alert until dusk. But after about 40 minutes of waiting around, the team decided to patrol the river, in case people were trapped who were unable to get to a phone. After searching for a few hours and not finding anyone, they returned to base at dusk in order to be ready to go at first light.

They were asked to stand down on Monday morning, and headed back to Gabreski, said Sengstacken. They were happy to return home, and very tired, he said.

"It felt good to be back," he said, but admitted he loves being part of the rescue unit.

"It's an exciting role," he said. "We're such a unique rescue unit. We work with so many different variables that you will never see in any other profession." □

Remembering Earth Day 2005

By 2nd Lt. Amy Fires
Guard Times Staff

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS, Latham—International Earth Day 2005 was celebrated on April 22.

An "earth-wide" event, Earth Day focuses concern and mobilizes support for the environment. It can showcase the U.S. Military's daily commitment towards

environmental stewardship and can serve as an annual focus on environmental issues.

The Army's message this year was "Sustaining the Environment for a Secure Future."

Earth Day "reflects our commitment to meet the current and future needs of Soldiers, their families and the Nation through the sound stewardship of environmental resources," said Chief of Staff, Gen. Peter Schoomaker and Secretary of the Army, Francis Harvey in their 2005 Earth Day message.

"The American Soldier stands at the centerpiece of this effort. All military service members deserve a healthy

environment in which they and their families can live safely," they said.

The focus of Earth Day should include education and awareness, said Schoomaker and Harvey. Every installation has something unique to offer by utilizing environmental awareness, energy conservation, natural resource conservation, pollution prevention, waste management and restoration. This is how the National Guard integrates environmental compliance into its daily missions.

We must nurture the environment, with an eye toward partnerships, so our neighbors understand and support our

mission, said Schoomaker and Harvey. Earth Day is an opportunity to rededicate the Army's partnership with the community, sustaining and securing the future environment. "Success requires that we all do our part."

The Army should lead the way in organizing and implementing environmental programs, Army Environmental Center officials say. This means programs should enhance training and operations while protecting the environment.

The Army website, at <http://aec.army.mil/usaec/>, provides household recommendations on improving the environment and its Earth Day Message. □

Citizen Soldiers bring unique skill to Iraq

National Guardmembers, Reservists, who make up 13,000 of the 23,000 Soldiers in Task Force Liberty, bring diplomatic and other real-life skills to the war

By Charlie Coon
Stars and Stripes Mideast Edition

BAQOUBA, Iraq—Most do not wear camouflage for a living. But they're not inexperienced.

"That's what makes the Guard unique," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Hawkins. "You've got a pool to draw from. We've got mechanics, engineers, plumbers, cops, construction workers."

Most of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty are not full-time soldiers, but rather members of the Army National Guard or Army Reserve. In February, the 42nd ID took responsibility for control of north-central Iraq from the 1st Infantry Division, which had served there for a year. Its commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto, has overall command of activities and of active-duty units deployed to the area.

The guardsmen and reservists say they've got what it takes to make progress in a country where 8 million people voted on Jan. 30 but attacks by insurgents continue to test the resolve of the new Iraq.

"There is irreversible momentum; this isn't going backward," Taluto said in a February interview with Stars and Stripes.

"There is a small percentage of people who make life miserable for a lot of people. The only way to stop them is to kill them. There's no other way about it. They are hard-line extremists and are not going to give up their cause."

The citizen soldiers might be the perfect fit for the current stage of the U.S. occupation. Two years after toppling Saddam Hussein's regime, the goals for Task Force Liberty are decidedly grass-roots: tamping down a stubborn insurgency while training Iraqi soldiers and police to do the job themselves; molding dysfunctional local governments into responsive and productive entities; and enabling elections scheduled for October (to ratify the new Iraqi constitution) and December (to choose a national congress).

The guardsmen and reservists, who make up 13,000 of the 23,000 soldiers in Task Force Liberty, bring diplomatic and other real-life skills to the game.

"Back in the '90s, it would have been an issue," said Maj. Teresa Wolfgang, a reservist and company commander with the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team. "The first Gulf war changed that. A lot of the reservists and guards here have prior active duty. We now have a smaller active-duty force, especially in my field — civil affairs. We have people who have been deployed two or three times.

"If you lined them up, could you really tell?" she asked, referring to active and Reserve soldiers. "We all have our combat patches. We all have to go to the same schools." □

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Global war on terror creates paradigm for Guard, Reserve

By Terri Lukach
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—The global war on terror has created a new paradigm for the nation's National Guard and Army Reserve warriors, the Defense Department's senior reserve official said here today.

No longer a strategic reserve, today's Guard and Reserve are "true operational forces" that are making a critical difference in Iraq and other places around the world, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Thomas Hall said during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

Hall recently returned from a tour of U.S. forces and facilities in Qatar and Kuwait, where he met with more than 2,000 personnel in nine locations.

Of the total 1.4 million active duty forces, Hall said, 1.2 million—or 46 percent of the total force—are Guard or Reserve personnel. Today, 178,000 are currently serving in some capacity in the global war on terror. About 400,000 have been mobilized since 9/11.

"That tells you we are using the Guard and Reserve in unprecedented ways," Hall said. But while the number is large, he said, it represents only 35 percent of the Guard and Reserve, which means 65 percent are not being used. Stress on the force, he said, is primarily a result of "low density, high-use" career fields. "We are not out of people, but out of balance," he said. "So we are rebalancing."

The Army is adding more military police and civil affairs personnel and converting other personnel, such as artillery, into more needed skill sets, he explained.

Hall said the military also must ensure that the Guard and Reserve are integrated into the overall force, with the same training, the same pay, and the same personnel system.

He also praised Congress for authorizing expanded Tricare health coverage last year for Guard and Reserve personnel. He explained that service personnel and their families now are eligible for benefits 90 days prior to activation as well as for up to six months after demobilization.

As for recent reports that the services are unable to meet their recruitment targets, Hall said it was important to get to "ground truth" on this issue. At the end of 2004, all components, with the exception of the Army Guard and Reserve, had met their end-strength goals, Hall said.

Hall said the military has put additional recruiters in the field, as well as in theater to ensure that those who want to reenlist are able to do so. Up-front incentives are also important, he said, noting that Congress has authorized a \$15,000 tax-free retention bonus.

Hall praised the pride, dedication and sense of purpose he observed in the troops during his visit to Qatar and Kuwait. There were no "sour faces," he said. "When you see men smiling and happy doing their job, it's something you can't fake. Sure, they'd rather be at home," he said, but they take pride knowing "they are doing what they were trained to do." □

Partnership with South Africa growing

By Maj. Richard Sloma
State Partnership Coordinator

SOUTH AFRICA—The Deputy Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. David Sheppard, paid a visit to New York's partnership country, South Africa, on March 17 and 18.

His visit included a meeting with the South African Ambassador, Jendayi Frazer. Sheppard additionally met with senior leaders of the South African National Defense Forces. Accompanying him were Col. Harry McDonough, Joint Staff Civil Affairs here and Maj. Richard Sloma, State Partnership Program Coordinator here. The group visited South Africa's Joint Operations Command, Defense Reserve Forces, Defense Foreign Relations and Air Transport and Maritime Systems.

Capt. Timothy Coleman, then the New York National Guard's Bilateral Affairs Officer in South Africa, coordinated the meetings. Coleman is a member of the 105th Airlift

Wing, in Newburgh. He served as BAO at the Office of Defense Cooperation, U.S. European Command, South Africa, since January 2004 and returned to New York in late March. Maj. John "Omar" Bradley replaces him. Bradley is a KC-135 pilot, assigned to Air National Guard Headquarters here. He will serve as BAO for two to three years.

This year, NYNG Soldiers and Airmen are expected to conduct four bilateral engagement activities with their South African counterparts including two C-130 Hercules familiarizations with members of the 109th Airlift Wing and the 106th Air Rescue Wing and two events in South Africa involving Aviation Safety and Environmental Operations.

New York and South Africa have been SPP partners since August 2003. The program aligns States with countries around the world. It fosters mutual interests and establishes long-term relationships across all levels of society. New York was the first state to have an SPP relationship on the African continent. □



Deputy Adjutant General, Brig. Gen. David Sheppard, presents U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Jendayi Frazer with a signed photo from Governor George Pataki.

NYC infantry regiment marches on traditions

Sgt. Dennis Gravelle
138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LEXINGTON ARMORY, Manhattan—It's an honor they have held for more than 150 years. Soldiers of the 69th Infantry Regiment lead the St. Patrick's Day Parade through Manhattan on March 17. With many of the regiment's Soldiers in Iraq, they marched in smaller ranks but those left behind led the parade, all the same.

Governor George E. Pataki visited the parade's leaders at their Lexington Avenue Armory during this 244th annual ceremony.

"I have never been prouder to march than I was today, behind the soldiers of the 69th Infantry – the veterans, new unit members and rear detachment carrying on one of New York's finest traditions on behalf of their brothers in arms, serving overseas," Pataki said.

The 69th was among the first New York Army National Guard units to respond to the 9/11 World Trade Center attack and, consequently, supported numerous homeland security operations in New York City since.

The 69th is currently on active duty, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, attached to the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) from Louisiana.

The 69th is sometimes referred to as the "Irish regiment" since it was formed largely from the Irish immigrants who called lower Manhattan home during the mid-19th century.

Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Maguire, Jr., stated, "While the

unit's ethnic and racial backgrounds have changed throughout the years to reflect New York's current and widely diverse population, the pride these Soldier's have in the unit's Irish heritage have not diminished."

The 69th was formally established in 1851 as the "Irish Volunteers." They fought with distinction in major Civil War battles, from Bull Run to Appomattox. In 1917, the Soldiers were chosen by then Col. Douglas MacArthur



Fighting 69th Soldiers on March 17. Photo by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle.

to join the 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division, the famed multi-state National Guard division.

"Today, my visit to this historic armory is an even more inspiring honor as the Soldiers of the 69th Infantry again find themselves on the front lines—fighting to ensure that the seeds of freedom and democracy are not poisoned by the forces of tyranny and terror," the Governor said. "God bless the brave soldiers of the Fighting 69th this Saint Patrick's Day and all of our troops defending freedom across the globe. And God bless their families back home, waiting anxiously for their swift and safe return." □

Fighting 69th Soldiers awarded Purple Heart Medal

By Guard Times Staff

LEXINGTON AVENUE ARMORY, Manhattan—Six Soldiers from the 69th Infantry Regiment received the Purple Heart Medal during an awards ceremony here on April 23.

The Soldiers were home on convalescent leave, undergoing medical care and elected to receive their medals before friends and family members.

Their regiment was mobilized in May 2004 and deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Serving with the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mechanized) of the Louisiana Army National Guard, under the command of the Third Infantry Division, their regiment engaged insurgent forces numerous times. Several Soldiers were killed in action and others seriously wounded since entering Iraq last fall.



Sgt. Adrian Melendez (right), 69th Infantry Regiment, was one of six Soldiers to receive the Purple Heart Medal from Brig. Gen. Michael C. Swezey, Commander, New York Army National Guard April 23. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.

Pfc. Richard Cornier, Roosevelt Island, was wounded in early December 2004 while conducting a routine mounted patrol; an improvised explosive device detonated beneath his military vehicle, causing it to flip. Two of his fellow Soldiers were killed and another seriously wounded.

Cpl. John Cushman, Farmington, sustained shrapnel wounds when an IED detonated beneath his military vehicle while on patrol.

Spc. Anthony Gilkes, Brooklyn, was wounded in January while patrolling his assigned sector in Iraq; an IED detonated beneath his military vehicle.

Sgt. Adrian Melendez, Bronx, sustained injuries while conducting patrol on Dec. 3, 2004; an IED detonated beneath his Military vehicle.

Spc. Daniel Swift, Yonkers, sustained injuries while conducting patrol on Nov. 29, 2004; an IED detonated beneath his military vehicle. He applied first aid to his fellow Soldiers before attending to his own wounds and used his own body as a shield to prevent further harm from coming to them.

Sgt. Felix Vargas sustained injuries while conducting patrol on Nov. 29, 2004; an IED detonated beneath his military vehicle.

The Purple Heart Medal is the oldest military decoration in the world in present use and the first American award made available to the common soldier. While it is unknown how many residents of New York State have received this award, more than 123,000 have been eligible since the beginning of World War II. □



Giving thanks and support to the 69th: Louisiana Army National Guard Soldiers present their State flag at the Lexington Avenue Armory on March 10 to the 69th Infantry Regiment along with the families of those who have been killed or wounded in the Global War on Terror. Senior military and elected officials, families and friends attended the St. Patrick's Day benefit, it was hosted by the Ancient Order of Hibernians and corporate sponsors. Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith.

Future leaders train diligently to become officers

By 2nd Lt. Amy Fires
Guard Times Staff

REGIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, Camp Smith—A rain-soaked day did not dampen the spirits of 22 officer candidates during the New York Army National Guard's 52nd Officer Candidate School here this spring.

Through teamwork, the current officer candidates are one month away from their commissions as second lieutenants, and they have attended three of four training phases.

"The bottom line here is, can you, do you, want to make a difference?" said Capt. Bill Hart, OCS Commander, here. He stressed that OCS needs experienced Soldiers, grades E-4 through E-6, who want an Army leadership challenge.

"OCS allows Soldiers to find their leadership style," said Hart.

Twenty-two OCS Soldiers began phase-zero here on April 2004, utilizing two drill weekends; there, Soldiers must have

"The bottom line here is, can you, do you, want to make a difference?"

—Capt. Bill Hart
OCS Commander, Camp Smith



Officer candidates conduct field training at Camp Smith. Photos by Pvt. Timothy Tamburello.

90 college credit hours, pass the Army physical fitness test, have a Secret security clearance, and complete a full physical. (OCS prerequisites are laid out in Army Regulation 140-50, Officer Candidate School, Army Reserve.)

Their next phase, phase-one, was held for two weeks at Camp Rell, Conn. There, the Soldiers learned basic combat leadership skills including land navigation, platoon and squad leadership and communications.

Phase-two, the longest phase, was conducted through one year of weekend drills. During these drills, candidates attended entry-level classes on military intelligence, supply, combat service support, fire support, counseling and many more military topics.

The training changes regularly. Sometimes Soldiers rappel on their drill weekend, sometimes they attend weapons training or visit the obstacle course at West Point, which includes the "slide for life." They also attended combat, water-survival training.

To build teamwork and camaraderie, the class negotiated an obstacle course here, which includes a variety of challenges and missions, during their "Sandhurst" event in April. Teams constructed and crossed a rope bridge, which spans a narrow stream. Then they crawled through a culvert and ran uphill to a wall obstacle. They must help each other over the wall. The team with the fastest time trained first on their following drill.

The class is scheduled for phase-three in June. It is held at Fort Benning, Ga. and it will test their leadership. For two-weeks, Soldiers are given leadership positions and direct squads and platoons.

"Each Soldier is steeped in infantry tactics and goes to Fort Benning with more confidence than any other state in our region," said Hart. "A field training exercise is conducted one month prior to arrival."

Looking toward phase-three, many Soldiers spoke about getting through OCS successfully and finishing their branch qualifications.

"In OCS there are situations where we give our all, and then some," said candidate Jerry Steckmeister. For example, Steckmeister said that he gave 100 percent on his road marches, believing he would rest at the end, but his



Officer Candidate Mike Domenic conducts field training during the New York Army National Guard's 52nd Officer Candidate School this spring. **Below:** the 52nd Officer Candidate School class.



group received another mission and had to "reach deep down inside" to drive on.

"I've learned that strength is your friend, but endurance is your best friend," said candidate Mike Domenic. "This is the type

of program that makes you grow throughout."

For further information on Officer Candidate School, please contact Maj. Brian DeReamer at (914) 788-7429. □

Aeromedics join in Federal homeland security exercise

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith
Guard Times Staff

NEWARK, N.J.— More than 20 New York Air National Guard Airmen returned home from Newark International Airport on April 7 after participating in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "Top Officials 3" exercise.

Medics from the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and an LC-130 Hercules flight crew with the 139th Air Squadron, Stratton ANGB, Scotia, provided medical staging and simulated medical airlift in one of five full-scale, Congressionally directed, weapons of mass destruction exercises that took place throughout Connecticut and New Jersey.

The medics worked with local civilian responders, law enforcement and emergency medics to process more than 70 patient volunteers from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, according to Lt. Col. Mary Brandt, 139th AES commander. The patients were prepared and evaluated for C-130 airlift from a temporary medical staging facility setup in an aircraft hangar. Additionally, the group provided training on various aeromedical systems.

The one-day exercise included a simulated biological attack with resulting injuries spreading to nearby counties.

As part of the exercise, people in New Jersey, Connecticut and Washington, D.C., conducted a planned scenario, Homeland Security officials said.

A total of 10,000 people from 27 federal agencies, and more than 200 government as well as private sector organizations participated, said Michael Chertoff, Homeland Security secretary. □



An Airman with the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron evaluates a patient for LC-130 transport at TOPOFF 3 in Newark, N.J.



The 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron in Newark, N.J. Photos by Tech. Sgt. Christine Ford.

About Guard Times

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Guard Times
DMNA-MNPA
330 Old Niskayuna Road
Latham, New York 12110-2224
(518) 786-4581 FAX (518) 786-4649
or
michael.smith@ny.ngb.army.mil

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