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Volume 15 Number 3

# guardtimes

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Serving the New York Army and Air National Guard, Naval Militia, New York Guard and Families

# FROM THE LEADERSHIP

## Selfless Service Makes our National Guard Great

A common question I hear when visiting with Airmen and Space Force Guardians is “what keeps you up at night?”

That is a great question and depending on the day of the week, week of the month, month of the year, the answers can and do vary greatly.

Recently, I was asked a follow up question, “what gets you up in the morning?”

This too can be answered in a multitude of ways – the easiest answer is my family; to care for and support them, to watch my daughters grow into amazing women, and watch my wife follow her passions and be extremely happy and successful.

So, if that gets me up, what keeps me excited to jump out of bed, put on my uniform and drive to work each morning with a smile and bated anticipation of what the day holds...?

It's quite simple – the amazing service members that we have the honor and privilege of serving alongside.

The Airmen and Guardians I have personally served with in three different air wings, totaling more than 60% of the 6,000 Airmen and Guardians comprising the New York Air National Guard.

Service is an amazing thing.

On the surface we all serve for various reasons: a family history, a calling, a desire to receive the most amazing training, education and travel opportunities, a secure paycheck, pension, etc. We want to be part of something larger than oneself. But even deeper, I believe there's something that touches the fiber of our being and it's one thing we all truly share: SELFLESSNESS.

Being a leader, no matter what position you hold, is an honor and privilege.

You have been entrusted, not because you're the smartest person, not because you're the strongest or fastest, but because you've demonstrated traits and abilities that set you apart.

We've all been exposed to great leaders, good leaders and even some not so good throughout our careers.

I would be willing to bet we've all gravitated to the ones that have been humble, approachable and credible.

In my mind, that's the baseline, along with our core values, that every Airmen, Guardian, Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Coast Guardsman must have: a great leader must also have unwavering Integrity and be someone who genuinely cares for their people.

Service members work 12-hour shifts, nights, weekends, holidays, take back-to-back trips. At times they go into harm's way with little to

no notice and often with little to no regard to the impact on their personal lives and that of their families.

They do their best to make life pretty easy for their leaders.

The challenge for leaders is to see this and not take advantage of or abuse it.

It's very easy to lose sight of the asks or demands we place on our service members. If we keep going back to the well, eventually, it'll dry up if not given the opportunity to replenish.

Modern technology has only exacerbated this with our ability to contact anyone, anytime, and anywhere. This ability can consume us, and we can lose focus of the impact our actions are having on others and their families.

Our service members are truly selfless.

They will drop everything to answer our nation's calling. They



**Brig. Gen. Gary Charlton II**

will literally take a bullet for one another, shrug it off as a minor flesh wound and show up for duty the next morning.

As leaders, we owe it to them to be better than they expect, to value and honor them, and cherish their selflessness, by having unwavering integrity and genuinely care – 24/7.

They're why we are the greatest fighting force on Earth, and we owe them nothing less.

**"Being a leader, no matter what position you hold, is an honor and a privilege."**

*-- Brig. Gen. Gary Charlton, II, 105th Airlift Wing Commander*



**Brig. Gen. Gary Charlton, commander of the 105th Airlift Wing, and other members of wing leadership, get lessons in the jobs of the 213th Engineering Installation Squadron and participate in training on the 213th's climbing tower. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Lane, 105th Airlift Wing.**

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# guardtimes

Volume 15, Number 3

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**Capt. Amanda Chen receives the guidon of her new command of the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company from Col. Jason Lefton, the aviation brigade commander, during an August 28 ceremony in Latham, New York. Photo by 1st Lt. Rhyen St. Clair, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.**



FRONT COVER: Staff Sgt. Steve Burton, a squad leader assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, relays commands to his squad during a live-fire training exercise at Fort Bliss, Tx, August 8, 2022. The unit conducted mobilization training for deployment to the Horn of Africa in September. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

BACK COVER: An HC-130J Combat King II assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing waits on the tarmac to fly back to Gabreski Air National Guard Base in New York following the conclusion of Exercise Tapio, a joint U.S.-Brazilian training exercise in Campo Grande, Brazil on August 31, 2022. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.

# FACES of the FORCE

## 109<sup>th</sup> Honor Guard Airmen Recognized

Story by Staff Sgt. Madison Daquelente, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Scotia, N.Y. – Two Airmen assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, based at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, have been named the 2021 Air National Guard Honor Guard Member of the Year and Manager of the Year.

The two were recognized for their outstanding professional performance and dedication in carrying out military funerals and ceremonies while assigned to the Base Honor Guard program.

Master Sgt. Matthew King was named the Honor Guard Member of the Year, while Master Sgt. Terra Martin is the Honor Guard Manager of the Year.

King has been a member of the 109th for over 15 years and has served in the honor guard for three years.

In 2021, King coordinated over 300 military funeral services that spanned three states and 22 counties, resulting in zero missed ceremonies.

He trained for, traveled to and performed 92 services ensuring the proper dignity, respect and honor were given to the deceased and their families.

Additionally, King trained new honor guard members on cer-

emony sequences to include a joint colors ceremony that commemorated the 20th anniversary of 9/11, preserving heritage and military tradition.

“I was extremely shocked and humbled when I heard I won the award. It’s a demanding job but it’s rewarding to be able to pay tribute to those who have served our country,” King said.

Throughout his time in the honor guard, King has completed over 500 military funerals.

Martin, who has 20 years of honor guard experience, has completed over 1,000 ceremonies in total.

During her career, Martin has served in multiple supervisory positions in the unit’s mission support group, as well as a military training instructor at Joint-Base San Antonio, Texas.

Martin recruited two members for full time honor guard positions, increasing the office’s manpower by 33%.

She also initiated a tracking system to maintain training standards and local policies in line with Air Force standards.

“It still hasn’t hit me that I was selected for this award. I’m grateful for the recognition, but also for having a job that I love and take so



Master Sgt. Terra Martin, left, and Master Sgt. Matthew King, both members of the 109th Airlift Wing Base Honor Guard, have been recognized for their efforts by the Air National Guard. Martin has been selected as Honor Guard Manager of the Year, while King as Honor Guard Member of the Year for 2021. Photo courtesy of the 109th Airlift Wing.

much pride in,” Martin said.

In 2021, Martin also arranged four military funeral flyovers for fallen service members, including a Vietnam prisoner of war.

She also saved the wing over \$2,000 by tailoring and altering eight ceremonial uniforms in-house.

“I am incredibly proud of Master Sgt. Terra Martin and Matthew King as they are recognized as the finest honor guard Airmen in the Air National Guard. These dedicated, young Airmen are exceptional performers and serve our military,

family and community with pronounced professionalism each and every day,” said Col. Christian Sander, commander of the 109th Airlift Wing.

The two Airmen will now compete against their peers from the active duty sector to determine the top honor guard members of the entire Air Force branch.

“I believe that their enduring dedication to mission and high caliber accomplishments will compete strongly at the USAF level,” Sander said. ✪



## Troop Command Welcomes New Top NCO

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. -- Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Maynard took over the responsibilities of the senior NCO in the 53rd Troop Command during a ceremony held on May 15.

Maynard began his career in 1986 at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. He is a veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq War.

“I am extremely honored and humbled by the opportunity of this position,” Maynard said. “It’s a big responsibility serving our communities and New York State, and I look forward to the challenge.”

Maynard is the former command sergeant major of the 153rd Troop Command Brigade.

# Two Firefighters to Represent New York National Guard at Brazil Jungle Warfare School

Story by Eric Durr, Guard, Times Staff

Dunn, who is a master fitness trainer, should do well in the Amazon jungle, said New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowski.

“Sergeant Dunn is a professional, fit and motivated signal Soldier. His experience during two deployments and as a civilian fire fighter will serve him well in high pressure situations during the Brazilian Jungle Warfare Course,” Piwowski said.

The classes focus on navigating in the jungle, jungle survival, jungle tactics and involve lots of swimming while learning to use rivers as travel routes in the jungle.

Those who pass the course are awarded a special knife called the “face, de Mateo” a Brazilian version of the Bowie knife with a jaguar headed handle made specifically for the jungle warfare center.

The emphasis on swimming — which involves making rafts and swimming with gear down rivers that are home to the crocodile-like black caiman — has prompted both Dunn and Miter to modify their normal workouts.

As firefighters, both men said they normally focused a lot on weight training. Getting ready for the jungle school meant changing their fitness focus, they said.

“I changed to a lot of cardio and body weights, and I have been getting into the pool more and running,” Miter said.

“I won’t say I’m a good swimmer, but I don’t think I will drown,” he said.

Dunn said he’s been borrowing his in-laws swimming pool to improve his swimming skills.

“I put my whole uniform on and I have been jumping in there. And I will do a couple of hours of swimming, working on the free-style and butterfly stroke, as much as I can,” Dunn said.

Dunn said that once he makes it past the initial swimming and physical fitness evaluation at the school, he anticipates his toughest challenge will be mastering patrolling and other tactical skills.

“I haven’t had any real experience doing it. I just like that stuff,” Dunn said.

Miter said he was able to get lots of advice on what to expect from Tech. Sgt. Paul Cange, who also serves in the 274th and who attended the school in 2021.

He’s looking forward to working with soldiers from other countries and getting to visit another continent, Miter said.

Dunn, who will be deploying once more with the 101st Signal next year, said he’s looking forward to learning skills he can pass along to other Soldiers in his unit.

“I just want to do a good job out there, that is my biggest thing, to make my unit proud,” Dunn said. **gt**



Army Sgt. William Dunn, a member of the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, left, and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Miter, assigned to the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, will be representing the New York National Guard and the U.S. military at the annual international course taught at the Brazilian military’s jungle warfare training school in Manas, Brazil. The New York National Guard has sent Soldiers and Airmen to the school since 2019 as part of a State Partnership Program agreement with Brazil’s armed forces. Courtesy photos.

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Two firefighters — an Army Guardsman from New York City, and an Air Guardsman from Syracuse — represented the New York National Guard and the United States during the Brazilian Jungle Warfare Center’s international course at the end of September.

Army Sgt. William Dunn, and Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Miter will spend six weeks in the Amazon rain forest learning how to navigate in the jungle, fight in the jungle and use rivers as travel routes through the jungle.

Dunn, a communications systems maintainer assigned to Bravo Company, 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, works at the Fire Department of New York’s Engine Company 303 in South Jamaica, Queens.

A resident of Port Jefferson on Long Island, Dunn joined the New York Army National Guard in 2009. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2012-13 and to Kuwait in 2017-18.

Miter is a joint tactical air controller assigned to the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron. The squadron is part of the 107th Attack Wing but is located at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse.

Miter, age 33, joined the Air National Guard in 2006, and served as a firefighter at the 109th Airlift Wing until becoming a JTAC in 2010.

Since then, he’s deployed to Syria in 2019 and the Horn of Africa in 2021.

In civilian life, Miter is assigned to the Syracuse Fire Department’s Engine 3 on Bellevue Avenue.

Miter said he jumped at the opportunity to apply to attend the jungle warfare course.

“It is a great opportunity,” he said. “It’s a challenge and a different experience.”

New York Air National Guard Command Chief Master Sgt. Denny Richardson said that Miter would do well in the Brazilian jungle.

“He has the mental focus and physical strength that will allow him to be successful,” Richardson said.

Dunn said he volunteered because he was also looking for a challenge.

“I just threw my hat in the ring and to my surprise I was picked,” said Dunn, who is also qualified as a wheeled vehicle mechanic.

# AROUND THE STATE

## NY Marks 247<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Army

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. -- New York Army National Guard headquarters marked the 247th birthday of the U.S. Army on June 14th, 2022, with a traditional cake-cutting ceremony held on June 15th.

The annual celebration of the Army was delayed a day, because on June 14, Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, and other senior Army leaders, were attending three deployment ceremonies for 1,100 Soldiers heading for the Horn of Africa.

"We look ahead this year to one of our largest windows of overseas missions," said New York Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowski, who presided over the ceremony.

"Soldiers are ramping up for service in Kuwait, the Horn of Africa and Europe. Our Soldiers understand the importance of the Army's 24/7 commitment to serve and defend," Piwowski told the audience.

Around 2,800 New York Soldiers are due to mobilize and deploy during 2022. On June 14, members of Task Force Wolfhound were celebrated during events in Utica, New York City and on Long Island.

As is tradition, a veteran Soldier and young Soldier cut the Army birthday cake with Piwowski.

The oldest Soldier this year was Sgt. Maj. Joseph Fisher, a 59-year old veteran of the

Iraq War who joined the New York Army National Guard in 1992. Fisher, from Bloomingdale in the Adirondacks, serves as the operations sergeant major for the New York Army National Guard.

While Fisher may be the oldest Soldier present, he still scored 500 on his most recent Army Combat Fitness Test, Piwowski noted.

The youngest Soldier for 2022 was Pvt. Aiden Lugo, who turns 18 in a month.

Lugo, from Clifton Park who will graduate from Shenendehowa High School in a week, has enlisted to be a wheeled vehicle mechanic in Golf Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion. He is slated to attend Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in August.

Lugo, said he was surprised to be asked to represent the future of the Army, but added that he was excited to be part of the event. He's looking forward to reporting in for basic training, he continued.



Sgt. Major Joseph Fisher, the oldest Soldier present, joins Command Sgt. Major David Piwowski and Pvt. Aiden Lugo, a New York Army National Guard recruit and the youngest Soldier present, in cutting the Army Birthday Cake during a ceremony to mark the Army's 247th Birthday at New York National Guard Headquarters, Latham, N.Y., June 15, 2022. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times staff*.

Fisher said it was "bittersweet" to be one of the oldest Soldiers in the New York Army National Guard.

He enjoyed getting a chance to talk to Lugo and see how excited he was about being part of the Army and the National Guard, Fisher said.

"It is neat to see this once again through his eyes," Fisher added.

"While our Army is 24/7 ready to face threats overseas from adversaries and enemies, we also recognize that for our citizen Soldiers, putting boots on the ground on the home front is part of our lane of expertise too," Piwowski said. **gt**



## Korean War MIA Returns Home

ELMIRA, N.Y. -- Nine members of the honor guard ensured that a Korean War Soldier from Buffalo, who went unidentified for 70 years, was laid to rest with full military honors on May 27, 2022.

Funeral honors and firing party was provided for Cpl. Robert Agard of Buffalo as was interred at Elmira's Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

"It was a tremendous honor to provide military honors for Corporal Agard," said Sgt. Jedidiah Estrada.

Assigned as a scout with the 24th Reconnaissance Company, 24th Infantry Division, Agard's unit was trying to delay the advance of North Korean forces invading South Korea.

Agard was killed the night before his division withdrew from Taejon, a tactical defeat but strategic success in providing time for U.S. forces to establish a defensive perimeter around the port of Pusan, Korea.

Photo by 1st Lt. Lauren Warner, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion.

# Harlem Time Capsule Reveals 1920s History

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

**SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. --** The replacement of a 99-year old granite cornerstone plaque of the Harlem Armory drill floor, exposed a mystery when contractors found a sealed copper box inside the stone on Feb. 19, 2022.

The home of the 369th Sustainment Brigade was built in 1921-24 and the administrative building in the 1930s, made famous during their service in World War I as the Harlem Hell Fighters.

The mystery box's contents highlighted the pride of Black New Yorkers in their regiment, their culture and city officials' recognition of the 369th and the black community, according to Courtney Burns, the director of the New York State Military Museum.

The team at the New York State Military Museum couldn't find any mention of the time capsule left in the cornerstone in reports of the event, Burns said.

So, when construction crews took off the decaying granite with 1922 chiseled on it, they were surprised to find a hollowed-out area with the box inside, said Capt. Douglas Peters, the project manager for the Harlem Armory.

The box went to Burns, the custodian of the thousands of historical artifacts from the New York National Guard's 44 armories and the flagship museum in Saratoga Springs.

"It is a copper box. It was soldered around the top. We just took a screwdriver and cold chisel, and carefully tapped around it so we could break the seal and then pried it up enough," he said.

What Burns discovered was a trove of printed materials that he said, "represents a specific point in time."

"It represents a real sense of celebration of this achievement, this milestone in African American history; for the construction of a building for an African American unit that would have been inconceivable before," Burns said.

Many of the items carefully packed inside the box are directly related to the 369th Infantry Regiment.

These included five issues of the "New York Age," a weekly African American newspaper,

which highlighted the service of the "15th New York," as it was then known.

The story highlights the award of the Croix de Guerre to Pvt. Henry Johnson, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor in 2015, and Private Needham Roberts for their heroism in defeating a German patrol.

There is a program for the showing of a movie called "Hell Fighters" at the Lafayette Theater on May 15, 1920, during which the regiment's band played.

There is also a list of the members of the various New York City boards responsible for funding the construction of the armory, indicating their support for the project.

"I don't know if they envisioned a benefit to the city or if there was just a consensus that something needed to be provided for Harlem. Not only the 369th itself, but the community," Burns said.

This document was signed by people associated with the 369th, including Noble Sissle, who served in the 369th band and went on to write the song "I'm Just Wild About Harry."

The documents included in the box focused on more than just the 369th, they addressed broader themes of African American accomplishment, Burns said.

A program for a New York City memorial honoring the life of Col. Charles Young, which was also held on May 27, 1923, was included in the time capsule.

Young, who graduated from West Point in 1889, went on to have a distinguished career as a military leader commanding the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry Regiment in the Philippines and Mexican intervention, and served as military attache in Haiti and Liberia.

Young died in Africa in 1922 and in 1923 his remains were brought home to be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Speakers at the event included Theodore Roosevelt Jr. - the son of the former president - and Black author and activist, W.E.B. Dubois.

There was also the Dec. 25, 1922, issue of a magazine called the National Review. The magazine described itself as "A journal Devoted to the Progress and Development of the Col-

ored People."

Finally, there was a photograph labeled "Priv. Josiah A. Thomas/died Feb. 19 '22 "Co. C". On the back, in the same handwriting, is the inscription, "From Cousin Irma J. Rock."

Burns said his goal is to put together an online exhibit that will allow the public to view the documents which were deposited in that copper box 99 years ago.

"As a whole, you really get a sense of community pride and vibrancy within the African American community," Burns said. "Even though this is something that was administered by the city, it's content is very specific towards the 369th and the African American community in general," Burns said. **gt**



Courtney Burns, director of the New York State Military Museum, examines the copper box time capsule discovered inside the cornerstone of the original section of the New York National Guard's historic Harlem Armory during renovation work. The box, which was not known to be in the cornerstone, contained documents pertaining to the 369th "Harlem Hell Fighters" or World War I fame, as well as documents of importance to the Black community in 1923 New York City.

# THE JOINT FORCE

## NY Wraps Up Federal COVID-19 Mission Support

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

**LATHAM, N.Y. -- Eight hundred and forty-three days after the first Soldiers and Airmen went on duty to stem an outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the city of New Rochelle, the New York National Guard's federally supported COVID-19 mission came to an end on June 30.**

A force of 269 personnel will remain on state active duty to assist with logistics support and resolve outstanding financial accounts, but no Soldiers and Airmen will remain on federal duty.

The mission, which ran for almost two-and-a-half years, is the most extended domestic operations mission ever conducted by the New York National Guard.

They did everything from delivering 112,707 gallons of New York State Clean hand sanitizer to assisting the Medical Examiner of New York City in recovering the remains of 5,641 New Yorkers. The latter died in their homes during the pandemic.

"I have been amazed by our service members and their work for New York State and our fellow citizens since March 2020 as we responded to the most significant pandemic in more than 100 years," said Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York.

"All I can say to the 7,000 plus service members who served on the COVID mission over 28 months is thank you," he added.

While performing these missions, New York Army and Air National Guard men and women continued to meet their federal missions.

Over 600 Soldiers from the 42nd Infantry Division went to Kuwait in 2020 to command Task Force Spartan Shield. Throughout

2021 and 2022, 2,800 Soldiers prepared to deploy to the Middle East and the Horn of Africa.

The Air Guard supplied research camps in Antarctica and Greenland in 2020, 2021 and 2022, contributed Airmen to air expeditionary wings and deployed rescue assets to the Horn of Africa.

And in 2021, the New York National Guard deployed 1,723 Soldiers and Airmen in Title 32 status to assist in security missions in Washington, D.C., in the wake of Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot.

The initial COVID-19 tasking was to provide school lunches to New Rochelle school district students.

The mission extended to cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in 22 public buildings to destroy the virus.

Between March 8, 2020, and July 1, 2022, 5,420 Soldiers participated in the COVID-19 mission out of a force of 10,700. Out of 6,000 Airmen, 1,080 participated in the mission.

The New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard, contributed 392 and 182 personnel.

Guardsmen worked in call centers, distributed over 50 million meals in New York City alone, collected health care forms from travelers at airports and assembled millions of COVID-19 test sets.

Soldiers put up a field hospital in the Javits Center in New York City and helped care for 1,094 COVID-19 patients. Then they turned site into the largest vaccination clinic in the country and administered 647,973 shots.

New York was asked to provide 485 Army Guard medics and Air Guard medical technicians to work

in nursing homes to solve a staffing shortage.

The state-funded training of 400 military personnel as EMTs increases that pool of personnel. Three hundred and thirty-four of those people became EMT certified.

By the end of May 2022, the New York National Guard had provided 747 personnel at 94 nursing homes. They cared for residents 220,629 times and expended 206,944 man-hours on the mission.

The toughest mission was the support of the New York City Medical Examiner. Initially, specially trained personnel from the 107th Attack Wing were assigned to help retrieve the remains of New Yorkers who died at home during the initial pandemic surge.

The need soon outpaced that small group, and Soldiers were trained and assigned to the task.

In the winter of 2021, when the pandemic surged again, New York National Guard members helped the medical examiner. This time it was because many of the office's personnel were out sick.

During the course of the mission, the state of New York spent over \$260 million. This included \$226 million on supplies, meals and housing for members on duty.

Another \$34 million was spent on putting personnel on state active duty. This included Soldiers and Airmen before the federal government opted to provide federal funding.

Then it was to pay for 574 Naval Militia and New York Guard members who performed the duty.

Pay and allowances for Soldiers and Airmen covered by the federal

government during the mission added up to \$290 million; \$231 for members of the Army National Guard and \$58 million for Air Guardsmen.

- Drive-thru COVID tests collected: 1,675,310
- Mobile lab COVID-19 tests conducted by the 2nd and 24th Civil Support Team: 14,761
- Antibody tests collected; 14,269
- COVID-19 test kits assembled: 46,914, 665
- Access control at potential emergency hospitals: 7 sites
- Gallons of hand sanitizer delivered: 112, 707
- Pallets of supplies warehoused: 57,401
- Pallets of supplies distributed: 36,733
- Vaccinations supported by Guard personnel: 4,612,046
- Vaccinations administered by Guard personnel: 141,076
- Vaccination Locations staffed: 11
- Nursing facilities supported: 84
- Patient interactions: 220,629
- Nursing Home manhours: 206,944
- Nursing home COVID-19 tests conducted: 2,179
- Air traveler health forms collected at 12 airports: 3,074,048
- Decedent recover missions: 5,641
- Call Center inquiries fielded: 278,162
- Meals distributed statewide: 54,899,025
- Meals prepared for distribution: 586,303
- Facilities cleaned: 907,000 square feet at 22 locations





Senior Airman Alyssa Volkner, assigned to the 139th Air Medical Evacuation Squadron, prepares to administer COVID-19 tests at a drive-thru test site located at the State University of New York, Albany, on July 9, 2020. Photo by 1st Lt. Lauren Warner, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.



Spc. Ayesha Burr, an automated logistical specialist assigned to Alpha Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, moves medical supplies on March 24, 2020 as part of the New York National Guard COVID -19 mission. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade.



Soldiers of the 133rd Composite Supply Company assemble cots at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City March 26, 2020. The convention center was designated as an alternate care site to ease the bed shortage of New York hospitals as part of the state response to the COVID-19 outbreak . Photo by Senior Airman Sean Madden, 106th Rescue Wing.



Sgt. Maj. Nicholas Pardi, assigned to the 104th Military Police Battalion, presents an American flag during a memorial service for a veteran who died of COVID-19 while a patient at the Javits New York Medical Station in New York City, on on April 19, 2020. Photo by Maj. Patrick Cordova, 105th Airlift Wing.



Sgt. Thalia Santos carries boxed meals to a waiting vehicle at a food distribution site in The Bronx, New York on August 5, 2020. Photo by Senior Airman Sean Madden, 106th Rescue Wing.



Pvt. Joshua Morales, assigned to the 133rd Combat Support Company, directs a vaccination registrant to the State University of New York, Stony Brook vaccination site in Stony Brook, New York, March 16th, 2021. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

# DMNA Breaks Ground on \$3.7 Million Project

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*



Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, left, is joined by New York State Office of General Services Commissioner Jeannette Moy during symbolic ground breaking ceremonies for a new \$3.7 million entryway at New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters in Latham, New York, Aug. 11, 2022. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times staff*.

LATHAM, N.Y. -- The New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs conducted a symbolic groundbreaking on August 11, to mark the start of a \$3.7 million entryway project at the agency headquarters building here in Latham.

Agency employees who were among the first to occupy the 36-year-old building in August of 1986 stuck shovels into a six-foot

long box of dirt to mark the occasion,

The new entrance "will breathe new life into the building," said Army Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York.

Along with meeting military security requirements, the addition will include history displays telling the story of the New York National Guard, Shields said.

The building was dubbed "Citizen Soldier Hall" when it was finished in 1986. The adjutant general at the time, Army Maj. Gen. Lawrence Flynn, said that it would be "a living tribute to the men and women of our state militia forces who always have and are providing an important contribution to America's defense," Shields said.

Since then, the New York National Guard has sent troops to the Gulf War, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while also responding to the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, flooding on Lake Erie, Superstorm Sandy in 2012, and the COVID-19 pandemic for over two years, Shields said.

The men and women who work in the headquarters building do the important support work which helps the members of the Army and Air National Guard execute these missions, Shields emphasized.

Jeanette M. Moy, the commissioner of the Office of General Services, praised National Guard members for their service during the pandemic and said it was important for the Guard to have up

to date facilities.

"At our agency we are proud to do this work on your behalf," Moy said.

Veteran employees participating in the groundbreaking were:

Jorge Encarnacion, who oversees the state award program

Tina Lehning, a senior personnel administrator

Kathy Phillips, deputy director of the state budget office

Master Sgt. John Mustico, the agency computer network manager and

Haydee Sullivan, assistant federal human resources officer.

In Navy terms, Shields said, these people would be considered "plank-owners," the term for members of a ship's first crew.

It was an honor to be recognized for his service by being part of the ground-breaking, Encarnacion said.

Being selected to be part of the event demonstrated loyalty to the agency, Mustico said.

The 5,085 square feet addition will unify the buildings by enclosing the open space below the connector to create a new lobby. **gt**



## Rescue Wing Conducts Aerial Refueling with Brazilian Partners

CAMPO GRANDE, Brazil -- New York Air National Guard Col. Shawn Fitzgerald, center, commander of the 106th Rescue Wing, returns alongside his aircrew and their HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from an air-to-air refueling mission with the Brazilian Air Force.

The mission was conducted as part of Exercise Tapio, where 100 New York Airmen participated, led by the 106th, as part of the State Partnership Program. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing. See our story on page 28.



Master Sgt. Eric Wintersteen, a crew chief assigned to the 174th Maintenance Group, explains the airframe and engine inspection he is performing on an MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft to Brazilian Air Force officers visiting Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, in Syracuse, New York, June 6, 2022. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.

## Brazil Partners with NY for RPAs, Space & Cyber

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

ROME, N.Y. -- The New York Air National Guard hosted the commander of Brazil's Aerospace Operations Command, heading a nine-person Brazilian Air Force delegation, during a week-long engagement focused on space operations, remotely piloted aircraft and cybersecurity.

Gen. Heraldo Luiz Rodrigues and his team visited New York units which specialize these functions.

The visit, from June 6 to 10, was organized through the National Guard State Partnership Program.

"We knew what they were interested in," said Brig. Gen. Denise Donnell, commander of the New York Air National Guard, "So we made sure we married them up with what we had that they were looking for."

Rodrigues commands Brazil's Aerospace Operations Command.

The organization, created in 2017 as part of the Brazilian Air Force, is responsible for planning,

coordinating and controlling the country's air and space operations, including satellites and launch facilities, telescopes and international cooperation with NASA. The Brazilian Space Agency, army and navy are also part of the joint command.

The Brazilian team spent a day discussing space operations with the Guard Airmen of the 222nd Command and Control Squadron, which is headquartered in Rome.

They provide trained personnel to provide surge and contingency support to the National Reconnaissance Office Operations Center, according to Col. Timothy Stanley, the squadron commander.

The 80 Airmen also work with Space Force in the areas of space battle management, Stanley said.

This translates into assisting in the operations, protection, and defense of American space systems, as well as knowing where each spacecraft is in relation to others and orbiting debris, he explained.

"Being able to share operational knowledge with our Brazilian counterparts was personally rewarding for our Airmen,"

--Col. Paul Bishop, EADS commander.

His team discussed space management command and control, as well as using commercial satellites for military purposes with the Brazilians, Stanley said.

The 222nd is co-located with the Air Force Research Laboratory, which researches space technologies for the Air Force. The Brazilians spoke with lab officials about partnering in some of the research the lab is considering, he said.

The Brazilian team also visited the Eastern Air Defense Sector.

EADS is staffed by New York Air Guardsmen and is responsible for air defense of the United States east of the Mississippi. Rodrigues' command is responsible for monitoring Brazil's airspace, and they were briefed on EADS network systems and cyber defense.

"Being able to share operational knowledge with our Brazilian counterparts was personally rewarding for our Airmen," said Col. Paul Bishop, the EADS commander.

The Brazilians also visited the 174th Attack Wing, in Syracuse.

The wing incorporates an air operations unit and cyberwarfare specialists, so the Brazilians learned about those capabilities as well, Donnell said.

The Brazilian group spent time with Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general and his command team for a better understanding of National Guard domestic operations roles.

In Brazil, the active air force and army play the role in domestic operations that the National Guard perform in the United States, Rodrigues explained through a translator, so this information is

valuable.

The visit finished up with a firsthand look at the New York Naval Militia watercraft security efforts in New York harbor, highlighting the Guard's support to civil authorities.

The Brazilian team of senior officers and NCOs joined one of the patrol boats during the survey.

The trip to New York met all his expectations, Rodrigues said through a translator. They got the answers to the question they had about how the U.S. Air Force conducts unmanned air, space, and cyber operations, he said.

The Brazilian military, he said, wants to continue the relationship with the New York National Guard because it has been very valuable.

New York also benefits from the relationship, Donnell said.

New York Air Guard units took part in Operation Tapio, an annual Brazilian search and rescue exercise, which provides valuable experience in deploying people and aircraft and working with another military, and will do so again, Donnell said.

And New York Guardsmen have learned new techniques in search and rescue and chemical and biological response from Brazilian counterparts, Donnell added.

Just as importantly, the partnership program allows the New York National Guard to play a key role in developing relationships with an important South American country, she emphasized.

"We have a chance to support Department of Defense and National Guard Bureau objectives in the southern hemisphere," Donnell said. **gt**

# Army and Air Host Exhibits at NY State Fair

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Visitors to the Great New York State fair were able to get a close-up look at New York Army and Air National Guard equipment and talk to Army and Air Guard members about their military service, when the fair kicked off on Aug. 24, 2022.

The New York Army National Guard had a display set up along the fair fence line between gates 3 and 4.



Airman 1st Class Andrew Noviasky, a member of the 174th Maintenance Group, talks about the MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft to visitors at the New York State Fair and the role his element plays in maintaining the aircraft, Syracuse, New York, Aug. 25, 2021. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.



Master Sgt. James Carini, a member of the 174th Attack Wing Maintenance Group, talks about the Ground Control Station and his role in maintaining for the MQ-9 Reaper to visitors at the New York State Fair Aug. 31, 2022. Photo by Master Sgt. Barbara Olney, 174th Attack Wing.

The exhibit featured a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter, which is used to transport up to 10 troops and can lift a howitzer, as well as the M-119 howitzer the helicopter lifts.

There was also a mine resistant vehicle, known as an MRAP, on display as well as a humvee, which is used to transport Soldiers and gear.

There was also an Allied Trades Specialists Trailer on hand. This trailer is a complete workshop used to fabricate spare parts when required and specialists from the 427th Brigade Support Battalion were on hand making parts during the run of the fair.

Army National Guard recruiters were on hand to answer questions and members of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery were also staffing the exhibit.

The New York Air National Guard's 174th Attack Wing set up in the State Fair Expo Center and featured an MQ-9 Reaper remotely piloted aircraft which the wing flies from Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse.

Visitors could also find out what it is like to fly an MQ-9 by checking out the simulated ground control station which will be at the exhibit. Pilots in ground control stations take off and land the aircraft.

The exhibit included a humvee, fire fighting vehicle, a security forces vehicle, an all-terrain vehicle and a palletized field kitchen.

The kitchen, known as a SPEK for "single pallet expeditionary kitchen" is used to feed Airmen who are deployed overseas or can be used to feed people during a weather emergency hear at home.

Members of the 174th Attack Wing and Air Guard recruiters will were on hand to discuss their Air Guard jobs and answer questions. **gt**



## HQ Marks Memorial Day

LATHAM, N.Y. -- A New York Army National Guard color guard presents arms as the Star Spangled Banner is played during Memorial Day ceremonies at the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters in Latham, New York, May 26, 2022. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times staff*.



# Guard Helps Fight Hudson Valley Wild Fire

Story by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times Staff

ELLENVILLE, N.Y. -- The New York Army National Guard teamed up with the New York State Police and Department of Environmental Conservation to battle a wildfire burning through the Minnewaska State Park Reserve in the Ulster County town of Ellenville during the week of Aug. 29, 2022.

Two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters assigned to the Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, were on station at the Joseph Y Resnick Airport, located at the foot of the burning hillside. Equipped with what is called Bambi Buckets, the helicopters were able to fill them with 560 gallons of water from local ponds to dump on the fire.

"In total we flew about 16 hours to support the mission and dropped 80 buckets of water," said Col. Jason Lefton, the state aviation officer.

The Guard helicopters accounted for nearly 45,000 gallons of water being dumped on the fire in conjunction with New York State Police helicopters.

More 200 firefighters tackled the blaze from the ground, some coming from as far as Quebec,

Canada, as it grew from 15 acres to 270 acres, after a lightning strike on August 26 ignited the fire, according to DEC officials.

Five Airmen assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing, who are trained in wild-land firefighting were also part of the fire fighting effort on the ground.

The Airmen, who are based at Stratton Air National Guard base outside Schenectady, New York, reported for duty on August 31.

"I thank all of our brave first responders, partner agencies and neighbors who are working around the clock to protect our communities," said Governor Kathy Hochul.

Just recently in July, the New York aircrews had completed annual certification in the use of Bambi Buckets during an exercise held at Round Lake. The previous time the New York National Guard responded to a wildfire was in 2018 to the 500 acre forest fire in Altona.

"Our training pays off because our team was ready when called," Lefton said. "It is a testament to



At top, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter arrives in Ellenville, N.Y. to coordinate wildfire airspace management with the New York State Police and Department of Environmental Conservation August 29, 2022. Courtesy photo. Above, a Black Hawk empties a Bambi Bucket over a wildfire at Minnewaska State Park Reserve, Ellenville, New York, Aug. 30, 2022. Photo by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times staff.

our training plans, individual readiness, instructor pilots and amazing maintenance teams."

Hochul joined Lefton in praising the efforts of the New York National Guard to contain the fire, thanking them for the resources and capabilities they bring.

"Our aircrews performance was spectacular," Lefton said. "On short

notice, full-time and part-time aviators sprang into action, prepared, moved out, coordinated on the scene and executed with bravery in a smokey, hot environment, immediately aiding the police, DEC and firefighters efforts."

He added, "We will recover, train and be ready to aid when the call comes again." **gt**

## 1,380 Soldiers Deploy to East Africa, Kuwait

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

**NEW YORK -- Kicking off New York's largest mobilization of forces in more than a decade, 1,380 Soldiers have mobilized for deployments in East Africa and Kuwait since June 9.**

Two hundred and fifty Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation left for Fort Hood, Texas on June 9 and June 10 to prepare for a deployment to Kuwait in support of U.S. Central Command.

On June 13 and June 14, 1,130 Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, along with companies from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, and the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, which together constitute Task Force Wolfhound, held farewells marking their deployment to the Horn of Africa.

They departed for Fort Drum for two weeks to meet all of U.S. Africa Command's training requirements before going to Fort Bliss, Texas, for two more months of training before heading to Camp Lemmonier in Djibouti as a security task force.

"When we hit the ground in Africa this September, this will be the most ready battalion in the United States Army, Lt. Col. Shawn Tabankin, the commander of the 69th Infantry, told 600 Soldiers at a June 14 ceremony at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.

2022 is the largest deployment year for the New York Army National Guard since 2008-2009 when the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan, according to Army Maj. Gen. Michel Natali, the New York National Guard's assistant adjutant general, Army.

Along with the aviation battalion and the task force built around the 69th Infantry, the New York National Guard will deploy the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, the 369th Sustainment Brigade, the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion and other small support elements to Kuwait before the fall of 2022.

A training rotation to support units at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California in 2021, did a lot to prepare the Soldiers for a Middle East deployment, said Lt. Col. Matt Green, the battalion commander.

Originally, only one assault helicopter company and some supporting elements were slated to deploy.

But that changed in late 2021 to include both of the helicopter companies based in New York and the bulk of the battalion headquarters and support companies deploying, Green said.

The battalion's Charlie Company is split between the Maine and Connecticut Army National Guards.

The battalion has emphasized individual readiness during weekend training, and annual training at Fort Drum, Green said. The battalion will focus on collective training and the skills needed to conduct and coordinate air assaults while at Fort Hood, he added.

The battalion launched 11 UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters from Latham and 10 from Ronkonkoma following farewell ceremonies held on June 9. The rest of the troops deployed by chartered airplane.

Task Force Wolfhound, which takes its name from the Irish dog which is the official mascot of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, has been training for 18 months to be ready for the mission, Tabankin said.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant the battalion didn't have the normal two-year training period to get ready, Tabankin said. This meant that traditional weekend drills turned into four to five days of training to get everything done, he said.

"Sometimes utilizing a full week down at Fort Dix, was really the only way we could meet our individual, leader, and collective training goals," Tabankin said.

In Djibouti, the task force will provide security at Camp Lemmonier, a former French Foreign Legion post used by the United States since 2002. They will also be tasked with security missions at remote locations as well, Tabankin said.

The mission requirements necessitated reaching out across the New York Army National Guard for Soldiers, Tabankin said.

The 101st Cavalry and 108th Infantry, which have units across upstate New York, each contributed 130-Soldier companies.

The task force also includes combat engineers from Binghamton's 204th Engineer Battalion, a platoon from the 207th Military Police Company and joint tactical air controllers from

the New York Air National Guard.

The 69th Infantry has a strong tradition of service in the Civil War, World War I, World War II and in Iraq in 2005, Tabankin told 600 Soldiers and 1,000 family members during the farewell ceremony at the Jacob Javits Convention Center.

The 69th Infantry was manned by Irish immigrants in the days before the Civil War. Today the citizen Soldiers of the 69th Infantry include immigrants from 33 different countries who share service together, he emphasized.

"That immigrant fighting spirit, which makes true New Yorkers, and the melting pot, which makes true Americans, continues to form a foundation of strength in this battalion," Tabankin said.


Tabankin reiterated that message during a second farewell ceremony for 300 Soldiers at the Nassau County Police Academy on Long Island.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, also spoke at both farewell events.

"We know that today is a difficult day for many as it represents the start of a lengthy absence of your loved ones to faraway places in Africa," Shields said. "But it is also a day of immense pride and love of our state and nation as these citizen Soldiers deploy to protect our freedoms."

The farewell ceremony for the Soldiers for the 101st Cavalry was held on June 13 at Hobart and Smith College in Geneva, while the troops from the 108th Infantry held their goodbye ceremony at Mohawk Community College in Utica.

"It's never easy telling a loved one or a family member that you have to leave," said Sgt. Nicholas Murphy, a member of Alpha Troop, 101st Cavalry, following the Geneva event.

"Our number one priority in the Army National Guard is to keep the community safe, and then if we get called upon to deploy, to keep our nation safe," Murphy said. 



Spc. Lori Gorman and Spc. Jahaira Rodriguez, both assigned to Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, head towards buses taking them to Fort Drum for additional training following a farewell event on June 14 at Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.



Families wave to aviators assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, as they fly their UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters away from the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham, New York, June 9, 2022, heading for Fort Hood, Texas. Photo by William Albrecht, Guard Times staff.



Maj. Gen. Michel Natali, the assistant adjutant general Army, speaks to families' members of Soldiers assigned to the Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, during a farewell ceremony at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham, New York, June 9, 2022. Photo by William Albrecht, Guard Times staff.



Soldiers assigned to the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, stand at attention during a farewell ceremony held on June 14, 2022, at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York City. The unit deploys to the Horn of Africa later in September 2022. Photo by Major Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.



1st Lt. Alex Steinbronner, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, embraces his girlfriend Gabrielle Gawron, prior to heading for Fort Drum following a farewell ceremony in Massapequa Park, New York, June 14, 2022. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.



# Soldiers Compete to be Best Machine Gun Crew

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

Army National Guard machine gun crews compete in the Army Guard's week-long Winston P. Wilson machine gun competition at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas, May 16-20. Eleven teams competed across the Army National Guard. Inset photo: Sergeants 1st Class Michael Trask and Robert Lamorte II, assigned to the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, display the New York State flag during the competition. The two decided to compete at the last minute, representing the state with just hours to go in the enrollment deadline. Courtesy photos.

CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON, NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas -- Sergeants 1st Class Robert Lamorte II and Michael Trask were on day three of the Army Guard's week-long Winston P. Wilson machine gun competition when they decided their M145 machine gun optic was just, simply, broke.

The \$1,372 sight they'd borrowed from Bravo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, to go with the M-240B machinegun they'd also borrowed from the 107th Military Police Company, just would not zero to the weapon. Even with the help of a laser bore sighter from Walmart.

The two NCOs from the operations section of the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade decided they were better off shooting the old-fashioned way: "iron sights" and no nifty optics.

It was just one more challenge for an ad hoc machine gun team that volunteered - with literally two hours to spare before the registration deadline - to ensure New York was represented at the annual machine gun competition at Camp Joseph T. Robinson in North Little Rock, Arkansas, May 16-20.

Held in conjunction with the better-known Winston P. Wilson Small Arms Championship, the machine gun competition is open to two-Soldier teams from across the Army National Guard.

The teams look to be the best M-240B medium machine gun marksmen. Each Soldier also shoots their personal weapons, an M-17 pistol for the gunner and M-4 rifle for the assistant gunner.

They had some good days on the range, Trask and Lamorte said - getting a team first and an

individual second place - but the two New Yorkers finished sixth in a field of 11 teams.

Still, that wasn't a bad showing for two senior NCOs who hadn't trained on a machine gun in years, said New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski.

"With very little recent practice on the machine gun but a lot of desire, they competed superbly with teams that had been spending months training," Piwowarski said.

"Like the minutemen, they put down whatever they were doing, picked up a machine gun and went off to the competition," he added.

Their first hurdle was finding a machine gun and spare, two extra barrels, the optics and a tripod.

"I never thought it would be so hard to find a machine gun in New York State," Trask said jokingly.

But with units mobilizing to go to Kuwait and the Horn of Africa, extra machine guns were scarce.

They worked the phones and found the weapons they need.

The five-day competition made the hassles of getting there worthwhile, the two said.

The 17 engagements were challenging, the two said.

"In the Army, for conventional forces, we teach just hit the target. We teach one accurate shot. We don't teach anything about follow on shots," Lamorte said.

"But this was more than just hitting. It was precision," Trask said. "Instead of just trying to hit the target, you were trying to get the most points."

In the "blind shoot" event, Lamorte and Trask had eight minutes and 150 rounds of ammunition to record range card data - elevation



# Five Commissioned as New Army Lieutenants

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade

OLD BETHPAGE, N.Y. -- Five New York Army National Guard Soldiers took the oath of office as second lieutenants during a ceremony conducted at the Museum of American Armory in Old Bethpage on Aug. 7, 2022.

The five recently completed the Officer Candidate School, or OCS for short, run by the

106th Regional Training Institute for the New York and Connecticut Army National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Michele Natali, the assistant adjutant general, Army, administered the oath of office to the new lieutenants, as they stood surrounded by the historic collection's tanks

and armored vehicles.

"As you embark upon your careers as the newest leaders of that large force, next to the day you enlisted in the Army, this day is probably the most important day of your military career," Natali said.

Receiving their commissions were:

- 2nd Lt. Joel Samuel, a Soldier with 11 years of service in the Army Reserve, commissioned in the Signal Corps and will serve in the 42nd Infantry Division Signal Company.

- 2nd Lt. Nathan Guynup, who enlisted directly into the Officer Candidate School program. He was commissioned as a Military Intelligence officer and will be assigned to the 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion.

- 2nd Lt. Dylan Stevenson, who enlisted directly into the Officer Candidate School program. He was commissioned into Field Artillery and is assigned to the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.

- 2nd Lt. Ninad Shah, who enlisted directly into Officer Candidate School, commissioned as a Signal Corps officer assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division Signal Company.

- 2nd Lt. Juan Cordova, who previously served in the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery. He commissioned as a Military Police officer with the 107th Military Police Company.

- Staff Sgt. Andrea Faye Estacio, assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion completed the course but opted not to accept a commission immediately.

The OCS course takes 15 months of field and classroom training at both Camp Smith and Camp Niantic in Connecticut over many weekends, said Maj. Michael Sicinski, whose 2nd Battalion of the 106th RTI oversees the course.

In his remarks, Sicinski urged the lieutenants to work closely with their sergeants and to maintain their integrity above everything else.

"Always do the right thing even when no one is looking," Sicinski said. "It's the one thing that your Soldiers can not fault you for doing."

Stevenson, the top student in the class, was recognized with an Army Achievement Medal.

"For the cadre to give me that honor, I'm very proud of that and very privileged to have received it," Stevenson said. "I hope to prove, in time, worthy of their support."gt



Staff Sgt. Andrea Faye Estacio, who completed Officer Candidate School but deferred commissioning, stands with her five classmates who took the oath as new second lieutenants at Museum of American Armor, in Old Bethpage, New York, Aug. 7, 2022.

## Machine Gun Competition Continued,

and direction - to targets at 200, 300 and 400 meters.

Then a curtain - the blind - was placed in front of Trask and he had 50 rounds to engage the targets without looking at them. He had to use the traversing and elevating mechanism on the machine-gun accurately.

The New Yorkers scored 128 out of 320 points and finished 5th in that event.

In the "10-meter match" event, Lamorte and Trask had to run with the machine gun and tripod for one mile. Then they conducted engagements on a tripod, and then using the bipod at 10 meter targets.

All this had to be done within 23 minutes. They got

242 out of 600 points, finishing in sixth place.

Trask and Lamorte did score first place in the falling plates event.

The task required them to run 100 meters to the 300-meter range line carrying all their gear. They then had to hit eight metal plate targets and knock them over.

Trask and Lamorte hit the eight plates in 1:17 seconds.

Tossing away the optics made things tougher, the two recalled.

In one engagement at over 1,000 meters Trask couldn't see the targets he was shooting at and counted on Lamorte to guide him in using binoculars.

The young Soldiers who had been trained as machine gunners were amazed to see them shooting without optics, Lamorte said.

"The young guys looked at us and said, 'How does that even work?'" Lamorte remembered.

Despite the challenges, participating in the competition, and learning techniques to share with other Soldiers made the event worthwhile, the two said.

"The marksmanship community is a great community of people," Lamorte said.

"Everybody was out there to help each other, and everybody was out there to push each other along," he added.gt

# State Partnership Brings Medical Troops to South Africa

Story by Maj. Jean Krazter, Guard Times Staff

**RICHARDS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA --** Fifteen U.S. Soldiers, including five from the New York Army National Guard, provided medical care to about 3,000 South African villagers in the Richards Bay area, along the eastern coast of South Africa, during a medical readiness exercise which ran from July 18 to 26.

The Americans, including Reserve and active duty Soldiers, worked with members of the South African Military Health Services, a separate branch of the South African National Defence Force, at six locations to provide dental and veterinary services as well.

"This has been one of the best experiences in my military career. It's been eye-opening, and at the same time, it's been heartbreaking to see some of the patients here in South Africa," said Col. Martin Ortiz, a New York Army National Guard doctor who took part in the missions.

The medical exercise, was conducted as part of Shared Accord 2022. This biannual training event teams U.S. military personnel with those from an African nation to build operational partnerships between Americans and Africans.

A great deal of planning and coordination had to be done to successfully execute the medical readiness exercise, said Maj. Brian Baglin, a New York Army National Guard Medical Service Corps officer.

Working with the Military Health Services and the U.S. Embassy, U.S. personnel identified and visited several community outreach clinics during an on-the-ground reconnaissance to prepare for the Shared Accord mission.

The goal, according to Baglin, was to determine which clinics would best meet the mission goal of serving medically underserved villages and also what supplies would need to be ordered at each location.

By visiting the various clinics, talking to the medical staff, and taking note of the equipment and medical supplies on hand, the medical personnel were able to determine the best team composition and order medical supplies to replenish host nation materials that were used during the exercise, Baglin explained.

The military medical teams sent to each location consisted of dentists, ophthalmologists, veterinarians, medical doctors and nurses. These

were organized into medical multidisciplinary teams which included South African medical personnel.

Throughout the planning phase, a great deal of coordination was needed between the various units which involved U.S. Forces Command, the U.S. Southern European Task Force, Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, U.S. Africa Command and the U.S. Embassy in South Africa.

The joint American/South African medical teams operated out of six community outreach clinics and one high school.

Along with providing services to over 3,000 civilians. U.S. dental personnel dealt with 600 patients, while veterinarian teams vaccinated 5,000 animals for rabies and conducted a spay and neuter clinic for pets.

Maj. Martin Lesenyeho, a South African medical officer, said that the mission was successful and that the Americans worked well with their counterparts.

"The U.S. military has been incredibly professional and pleasant to work with. This is my first time working on this exercise with the U.S. military, but I look forward to working with them in future exercises with our partner country," Lesenyeho said.

"Overall, the mission was a huge success not only due to our ability to develop a carefully crafted plan through critical and creative thinking, but because we were also able to quickly adapt and make modifications as the situation evolved," Baglin said.

The Americans also got a chance to get to know the South Africans better as people, Ortiz said.

"The people here are very kind and loving," he said.

Since launching the training partnership with South Africa in 2003, New York Army and Air National Guard personnel have visited the country regularly. They have participated in air shows, and military competitions, and have presented at South African military schools and leadership forums. 🇺🇸



New York Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Christine Iraci, left, and Army Reserve Maj. Dwayne Bodie, look on as South African Military Health Service officer Anissa Talib-Ally checks a patient outside Richards Bay, South Africa during a medical readiness visit conducted on July 25, 2022. Courtesy photo.



U.S. Army Reserve Captains John Harvey, left, and Smith Meads, watch as South African Military Health Services Cadet officer Connie Swanepole, works on a dog during a veterinary outreach clinic held near Richards Bay, South Africa on July 25, 2022. Courtesy photo.

# NY Troops Command Joint Ukraine Training Group

Story by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- More than 140 Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team took charge of the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine during a transfer of authority ceremony Aug. 8, 2022

The New York Soldiers, collectively known as Task Force Orion, will ensure the combat effectiveness of Ukrainian military personnel training on systems and equipment issued under the United States' Presidential Drawdown Authority. This marks the second time the 27th IBCT has assumed the JMTG-U mission, making it the first and only unit in the JMTG-U's history to do so.

"It is absolutely great to have [Task Force Orion] back here," said Brig. Gen. Joseph Hilbert, commander of 7th Army Training Command. "We remember what you did on your previous rotation. You left an impact on all of us here in 7th ATC. You left an impact on the Armed Forces of Ukraine that you trained then, and you'll leave an impact on them that you train now."

Task Force Orion assumed the JMTG-U mission from Task Force Gator, a unit established from the Florida Army National Guard's 53rd IBCT, which deployed in November 2021 to Combat Training Center-Yavoriv in western Ukraine.



U.S. Army Soldiers assigned to Task Force Gator, 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Florida Army National Guard provide a color guard for the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine Transfer of Authority ceremony in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Aug. 8, 2022. Photo by Spc. Adrian Greenwood, 53rd Infantry Brigade.

Task Force Gator began its mission conducting ongoing multinational partnering and advising operations in order to further develop CTC-Yavoriv into a self-sufficient, brigade-level combat training center. The unit was ordered to leave Ukraine for Germany in February 2022, prior to Russia's invasion.

Task Force Gator integrated with its JMTG-U parent organization, 7th Army Training Command, to support ongoing training and exercise support activities, including Operation Assure, Deter and Reinforce, conducting missions across Europe in more than 18 locations and 12 different countries.

In April 2022, Task Force Gator reestablished operations in support of the JMTG-U mission, training Ukrainian military personnel in the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

"We started this mission in Ukraine, completed an unexpected and hasty move to Grafenwoehr, and worked through a lot of change. But one thing has remained constant: our commitment to Ukraine,"

said Col. Jerry Glass, Task Force Gator and 53rd IBCT commander.

Since April, more than 1,500 Ukrainian soldiers have been trained on 15 different programs of instruction at the Grafen-

woehr Training Area.

With the arrival of Task Force Orion, JMTG-U remains postured to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine wherever the mission leads.

"Our mission's success is measured by our ability to increase the proficiency of our Ukrainian partners in their lethality and their survivability, as they defend their country against Russian hostilities," said Col. William Murphy, Task Force Orion commander.

"Each one of us understands this and is prepared to take every task assigned with the utmost professionalism and proficiency. We know the urgency of this mission and gravity of what the Ukrainian people have at stake." **gt**



A U.S. Army Soldier assigned to Task Force Orion, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, wears the Combat Training Center-Yavoriv Advisor patch during the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine Transfer of Authority ceremony in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Aug. 8, 2022. Photo by Sgt. Spencer Rhodes, 107th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.



## 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Conducts Live Fire

*FORT BLISS, Tx. -- Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, participate in a live-fire training exercise at Fort Bliss, Texas, Aug. 8, 2022. Currently the unit conducted predeployment training for an overseas mission to the Horn of Africa in September 2022. Photos by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.*



# Task Force Wolfhound Deploys to Horn of Africa

Story by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa

CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti -- The Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, have a shared history. Each unit traces its lineage back to the Civil War, and both units courageously fought at the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

Now, after more than 150 years, these two storied units have come together. This time, to hand over control of an essential security mission in East Africa.

Col. Jim Tierney, the 1/116th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Red Dragon commander, cased the battalion's flag to signify the unit handing responsibility of the mission over to the 69th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Wolfhound, during a transfer-of-authority ceremony at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Sept. 19, 2022.

"Task Force Red Dragon, your accomplishments and sacrifices only add excellence to your already distinguished heritage," said Maj. Gen. Jami Shawley, commander of Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa. "There is no doubt that you have brought great credit to your unit, CJTF-HOA, and the United States Army.

"We now welcome Task Force Wolfhound," Shawley continued. "With your distinguished legacy, you now carry the burden forward."

Task Force Wolfhound now has the essential mission of providing critical security support at five different installations across three different East African countries. In addition to conventional security operations, the task force will now be responsible for manning the East African Response Force, or EARF.

Created during the wake of the 2012 attack in Benghazi, the EARF stands ready to rapidly deploy to provide crisis response operations throughout East Africa and safeguard U.S. interests. Task Force Wolfhound Soldiers will now train extensively to maintain EARF capabilities.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Shawn Tabankin, the 69th commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Zeller, the senior enlisted leader, unfurled the unit's colors, an act which represents Task Force Wolfhound assuming leadership of a security mission as part of CJTF-HOA.

As the United States' largest tactical unit on



Lt. Col. Shawn Tabankin the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Zeller, the battalion senior enlisted advisor, case the battalion's colors during a ceremony at Fort Bliss Texas, Sept. 6, 2022. The unit's colors were cased to signify that the unit has finished its training and is ready to deploy. The colors will be unfurled in Africa when the unit assumes responsibility for security missions as part of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. Photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

the continent of Africa, the security task force makes up more than two-thirds of the CJTF-HOA force and is critical to providing security and building partnerships throughout East Africa in support of U.S. Africa Command.

"Today, we assume our part of the CJTF-HOA mission," Tabankin said. "We look forward to working with our allies and African partners, to be their partner of choice."

The deployment of the 69th Infantry to Africa marks the unit's first overseas mobilization since deploying to Baghdad, Iraq, in 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Hailing from New York City to Niagara Falls, the Manhattan headquartered task force is composed of more than 1,100 Soldiers from nine different companies.

As part of CJTF-HOA, Task Force Wolf-

hound will work in close cooperation with Djiboutian, French, Japanese, Italian, Spanish and many African nation partners. A task which will be right at home with the diverse infantry battalion.

"True to our roots we remain a Battalion of immigrants from 33 different countries," Tabankin said. "It's that immigrant spirit that makes true New Yorkers, and the Melting Pot, that makes true Americans, that continues to form the foundation of strength of our very proud battalion."

"We are prepared to respond to any crisis," Tabankin added. "We will work by, with, and through our African partners to achieve our common goals." **gt**

**"We are prepared to respond to any crisis. We will work by, with and through our African partners to achieve our common goals."**

-- Lt. Col. Shawn Tabankin, commander, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment

# NY Soldiers Compete to be Top Shooters

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade

JERICHO, Vt. -- Thirteen New York Army National Guard Soldiers competed for top small arms marksmanship honors against 61 other National Guard service members from the New England states during a three-day shooting competition at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site.

The National Guard's 26th Annual Marksmanship Advisory Council Region One Combat Championships, dubbed the MAC1, was held from August 19 to 21.

Guard shooters from six states competed in 10 matches directed by the Vermont Army National Guard's Small Arms Readiness and Training Section and the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center headquartered in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

The first two days consisted of individual competitions and the third day was for team matches.

Sgt. Craig Rowell, a member of the 204th Engineer Battalion's 152nd Engineer Support Company, placed 3rd in the novice individual class for the Close Quarter Battle Match competition.

The New York National Guard "Alpha Team" of four shooters - Staff Sgt. Steven Bastardo from the 1569th Medium Truck Company; Sgt. Adam Crist, and Spc. Christian Leenhouts, from the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry and Sgt. 1st Class Robert LaMorte II, from the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade; took 3rd place in the anti-body armor match.

"This competition provides National Guardsmen the opportunity to test their skills against their peers from around the entire region," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Cara Krauss, the MAC1 chairperson and Vermont's state marksmanship director.

This was the first time the New York Soldiers competed at the regional level, except for LaMorte II who competed in a national-level machine gun competition in July as part of a two-Soldier team.

Rowell said that he felt blessed to have the opportunity to compete with his fellow guardsmen from across New York.

It was "a phenomenal thing" to compete alongside them on a regional level, Rowell added.

Bastardo, a motor transport operator, said that he was proud of the team for coming together for the first time from different units across New York, adjusting to each other and working together well.

Soldiers representing the 53rd Troop Command were:

- Staff Sgt. Steven Bastardo, 1569th Medium Truck Company, 369th Special Troops Battalion.

- Spc. Denver DeGross, 152nd Engineer Support Company.

- Sgt. 1st Class Raphael Ramos, 152nd Engineer Support Company.

- Sgt. Craig Rowell, 152nd Engineer Support Company.

- Sgt. 1st Class William Walker, 152nd Engineer Support Company.

Representing the 42nd Infantry Division were:

- Sgt. Sean Brosnan, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.

- Pfc. Carson Hotaling, Alpha Battery, 1/258th.

- Spc. Brandon Nugent, Alpha Battery, 1/258th.

- Pfc. Eliseo Rodriguez, Alpha Battery, 1/258th.

- Sgt. Adam Crist, Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry.

- Spc. Christian Leenhouts, Charlie Troop, 2/101st.



Sgt. Adam Crist, a medical NCO with the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry, shoots targets during the 26th Annual Marksmanship Advisory Council Region One Combat Championships held at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, Vermont, Aug. 19-21, 2022.

- Spc. Seth Schoenfelder, Headquarters Troop, 2/101st.

- Sgt. 1st Class Robert LaMorte II, 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.

The regional competitors were picked during each state's Adjutant General's Combat Marksmanship Skills competition.

Region One consists of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont. Sgt. 1st Class Pierre Sume, the New York Army National Guard marksmanship coordinator said that his expectation coming to the Vermont competition was for the Soldiers to learn, train, compete and bring some knowledge back home so they could motivate others to become more lethal.

Some of the New York Soldiers will have the chance to compete at the National Guard's Winston P. Wilson shooting competition in 2023.

It's all about making this better and improving readiness, he said. 🇺🇸



Sgt. Craig Rowell, assigned to the 152nd Engineer Support Company, 204th Engineer Battalion, shoots targets from the seated position during the 26th Annual Marksmanship Advisory Council Region One Combat Championships held at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site in Jericho, Vermont, Aug. 19, 2022.

# Getting the Band Back Together

Story by Ryan Campbell, Guard Times Staff



Staff Sgt. Emily Perkins, assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division Band, sings at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, Aug. 3, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ethan Wagner, conductor of the 42nd Infantry Division Band, leads the band at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, Aug. 3, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, N.Y. -- After the COVID-19 pandemic having halted nearly all performances for two years, the 42nd Infantry Division Band hit the road once again for a tour around New York this past summer.

The band had limited performances due to the pandemic, playing just at military installations in order to meet their yearly training requirements.

This tour was the first time since 2019 that the band performed for civilian audiences at stops across down state New York.

"So much of what we do is energized by doing it for an audience," said Staff Sgt. Pamela Pfiel, who plays the flute and works in operations for the band. "Getting that audience feedback and feeling that energy and having that taken away, was hard for all of us."

Pfiel, who joined the band in 2002 as a junior in high school following the events of 9/11, said joining the band was her way of serving her country which has seen her deploy with the 42nd Infantry Division to the Middle East.

She said the rigorous audition process and all the training and proficiency required of the band, is done to lead up to being able to perform for audiences.

"All of the stuff that we do all year, we do that all so we get to go on tour," she emphasized. "It is just the pinnacle of our year, so it's been a

long few years of not traveling."

The tour kicked off with a performance that served as a dress rehearsal at the New York National Guard's Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor. This was followed by performances across the New York City area, including at the United Nations building.

"Performing is amazing," said Pfiel.

"Seeing the impact the music makes on our audience and how music takes people to so many different places and you get to see that," she said.

During the down time brought on by COVID-19, the band was still auditioning and bringing in new musicians who will be touring for the very first time.

"It's amazing, there's so much youth and talent filling this band right now," said Pfiel. "It's a very special band right now, we're up at full strength and the music really benefits from that."

Some of the band's members who joined before the pandemic have been waiting years for this opportunity to tour.

"I joined at the very end of 2019," said Staff Sgt. Emily Perkins, a vocalist and pianist with the band.

For the previous three and a half years, Perkins was on active duty performing in the Army band at Fort Bliss, Texas, with the big difference being that active duty bands mostly

perform in ceremonial capacities.

"It was absolutely a surprise," Perkins said about discovering the Army had bands.

She said she learned about the bands shortly before graduating college from others who were enlisting to join military bands.

Now, two and a half years as a musician with no audience, Perkins said she also has been highly anticipating this moment.

"So much work goes into these few days for our rehearsals and everything," she said. "We put out an advertisement, people know about this that we're going to be performing this summer."

Perkins agreed that one of the best things about performing is always the people and the connections that are formed through music.

"I know that what I'm doing is more than just for my own enjoyment," she continued.

"Music is a universal language, we could be playing for an audience of people that don't even speak English but it doesn't matter because they're there to enjoy the music," said Perkins.

Being a musician and a performer has become an identity for the members of the 42nd Infantry Division Band, but they're also proud to be Soldiers who get to act as ambassadors for the Army, Pfiel explained.

"Being in this band, being in the Army is who I am," said Pfiel. "Serving my country in my way is very important to me." **gt**



## 106<sup>th</sup> Drops Medical Supplies Over Atlantic

Story by Staff Sgt. Daniel Farrell and Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing

Loadmasters assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing prepare to toss medical supplies out of a HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft to the crew of a sailboat 1,200 miles east of Long Island in the Atlantic Ocean on May 20, 2022. Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Farrell, 106th Rescue Wing.

F.S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Westhampton Beach, N.Y. -- An aircrew from the 106th Rescue Wing flew a HC-130J 1,200 miles east into the North Atlantic on May 20, found a 32-foot-long sailboat heading toward the Azores and dropped vitally needed medical supplies to the three-person crew.

"I can't find my sprinkler heads in the summertime, till I turn on the system. So, the fact that we could fly out there, 1,200 miles, it's a needle in a haystack," said Master Sgt. Joe Sexton, one of the loadmasters for the mission.

Making things more challenging; the Colombian crew of the French-registered yacht "Namah" spoke only Spanish; there was no locator beacon on the boat and the boat's position was 12 hours old, according to Lt. Col. Sean Garell, the aircraft commander.

The 106th got the mission when a 23-year-old Colombian woman who was crewing the sailboat, scalded herself with boiling water on May 19. The boat was traveling from Panama to St. Jean de Luz, France, but the young woman suffered second and third-degree burns, and the crew needed more medical supplies sooner.

The U.S. Coast Guard received the call and, because they did not have an aircraft available, referred it to the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

The coordination center turned to the 106th Rescue Wing because of their capabilities.

"Although we are primarily concerned with conducting our rescue mission overseas, we have the ability to do it for domestic operations, or in this case here, in the Atlantic Ocean," said Col. Shawn P. Fitzgerald, the 106th commander.

The mission was to put together a package of required medical supplies, locate the Namah and drop the package into the ocean where the crew could retrieve it.

Position updates were sent from the boat, to the Coast Guard via a handheld device and then had to be relayed to the wing and then to the aircraft.

They also had to communicate with the boat once they found it.

With no Spanish-speakers on the aircrew, Garell reached out across the unit and tapped Senior Airman Jocelyn Tapia-Puma, an aviation resource manager he works with and who is Colombian-American.

"I never thought in my career I would be part of a rescue mission," said Tapia-Puma. "At any given time, anybody, any career field can be put on a rescue mission and I was ready to go."

The final packages weighed about 20 lbs. and had small parachutes attached to slow their descent and avoid damage to the contents.

Three hours into the flight, the plane de-

scended down towards the ocean and everybody on board started looking for the Namah.

Capt. William Hall, one of the pilots, had found a photo of the boat on social media to help visually identify the vessel.

Lt. Col. Kevin Lawhon, the combat systems officer, spotted the boat first on his radar scope and two minutes later the Namah came into view.

"It's like throwing a football through a tire, if you just go out and try to do it, you're not going to be very good at it. But if you go in the backyard and constantly practice, you're going to get pretty good," Conor said.

At the same time, Tapia-Puma was on the radio with the boat's crew, talking them through the procedure.

From 300 feet the Airmen could see the crew waving below.

Tapia-Puma took to the radio again, telling the sailboat to wait for the second drop before paddling out to pick up the medical package in a small boat.

They didn't want to hit anybody below.

As the HC-130J made the second pass at 300 feet, Sexton signaled loadmaster Master Sgt. Michael Torre to release the second bundle.

The entire mission was a "team effort," Fitzgerald said. **gt**



# Airman Reads for Students at her Former Elementary School

Story and photo by Senior Airman Terrence Clyburn, 105th Airlift Wing

NEWBURGH, N.Y. -- New York Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Michelle Jaramillo, a security forces specialist, along with other Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing, read for fifth grade students at Gidney Avenue Memorial School for the Read Leader Event in Newburgh, June 3, 2022.

The Read Leader Event allows the 105th to establish and foster harmonious relations with its local community through educational means.

This was the first annual Read Leader Event since COVID-19. Typically held around Memorial or Veteran's Day, Airmen from the 105th come and read books about patriotism or "leader in me" character trait books to students.

This year, Jaramillo, as well as five other Airmen, had the privilege to visit Gidney Avenue, be escorted to classrooms by 5th graders, read books and have a Q&A session with the children.

Jaramillo had attended Gidney Avenue as a child and dreamed of joining the military since being a student there. This inspired her to participate in this year's book reading.

"I wanted to join the military since around age four," she explained. "I remember I used to have


dreams when I was young about joining. I always took that as a sign that I should serve and [am] happy I was able to join the New York Air National Guard."

Jaramillo recently joined the 105th's Base Defense Squadron after finishing technical school this year.

Her daughter now attends the very same elementary school she did.

"I graduated about 13 years ago and now my daughter goes to the same school," said Jaramillo. "It is cool to walk the same halls I use to as a kid, now as an adult to try to inspire future generations."

Jaramillo was able to read at the elementary school and surprise her daughter months after graduating from basic military training and technical school.

"I remember my daughter coming to me saying that there were military people coming to the school to read books," Jaramillo recalled. "I got excited to surprise her. It was always a goal to serve and give back to the community, but to be able to go to my former school and surprise my daughter was extra special." 



Airman 1st Class Jaramillo, a security forces specialist assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing, surprised her daughter by reading books to her class at Gidney Avenue Memorial School, Newburgh, New York, June 5, 2022.

# Airmen Save Life During Conference

Story by 1st Lt. Jason Carr, 107th Attack Wing

Syracuse, N.Y. -- A dozen Airmen are credited with helping save a civilian's life on August 9 while attending a military conference at Syracuse University.


The man appeared to suffer from a grand mal seizure - a loss of consciousness and muscle contractions - and a head injury while in the middle of Waverly Avenue, said Chief Master Sgt. Donald Trzepacz, the 107th Medical Group chief.

"Without hesitation these Airmen sprinted across the street through traffic to provide lifesaving care to the patient, while others immediately took to control traffic and provide a safe zone," said Trzepacz, who took charge of treating the man.

The Airmen who aided Trzepacz were Tech. Sgts. John Robinson, 105th

Airlift Wing; Matthew Gammon, 106th Rescue Wing; Patrick Little, 107th Attack Wing; Brittany Irvin and Emily Lewis, 109th Airlift Wing; Julz Krueger and Nicholas Yurenda, 174th Attack Wing; Daniel Horning, Brett Kilborne, Adam Scott and James Whitney, Eastern Air Defense Squadron; and Senior Master Sgt. John McGhee, 106th Rescue Wing.

The Airmen were attending the Technical Sergeants Involved in Mentoring Enlisted conference.

"We saw Chief Trzepacz running and we had no idea why at first, we just started running behind him," Irvin said. "We just trusted him so we knew it was for a good reason. That's when we saw the man having a seizure and bleeding profusely." 



Airmen and EMTs provide care to an unidentified man during a military conference, Aug. 9, 2022, Syracuse New York Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brittany Irvin, 109th Airlift Wing.

# Honors for Rescuers

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Donaldson, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. -- On April 24, 2017, seven Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing jumped into the night sky over the Atlantic, 1,700 miles from Long Island.

Their mission was to provide emergency care for two sailors on the Slovenian bulk carrier Tamar who had been badly burned in an explosion.

On June 4, 2022, the two combat rescue officers and five pararescuemen from the wing's 103rd Rescue Squadron, who jumped that night, were awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for heroism for their actions during a ceremony at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach.

The Air Force Commendation Medal recognizes Airmen who distinguish themselves through heroism, meritorious achievement and service.

Combat rescue officers Lt. Col. Edward Boughal and Maj. Marty Viera, were honored along with pararescuemen Master Sgt. Jordan St. Clair, Senior Master Sgt. Erik Blom, Master Sgt. Jedediah Smith and Staff Sgt. Michael Hartman.

Master Sgt. Bryan Dalere was also honored but was not present because he is currently assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard.

Col. Jeffrey Cannet, the commander of the 106th Operations Group, who

piloted the HC-130 search and rescue aircraft on the mission, praised those who jumped into the ocean that night.

"The amount of complexity in that mission, just can't be overstated," Cannet said.

"The fact that these guys had to do that, all out there, alone and unafraid, getting it done, was just a testament to their skill and ability," he said.

Just the facts of the mission show how incredibly demanding it was, Cannet said.

"I remember getting the call that a 625-foot vessel traveling from Baltimore to Gibraltar had an explosion 1,700 miles off the east coast of New York," Cannet said. "Four seamen were critically injured and required immediate medical care."

The Coast Guard thought the mission was too dangerous but Col. Andrew Wineberger, then the 106th Operations Group commander, maintained that the wing was capable and ready to execute the mission, Cannet said.

The 106th could not formally be tasked with the Tamar rescue since it was a civil search and rescue mission, he said. However, all of the Airmen involved volunteered to go on the flight.

Before they could take off, the team needed to gather medical and surgi-



Master Sgt. Jedediah Smith, a 103rd Rescue Squadron pararescueman, receives the Air Force Commendation Medal for heroism for actions at sea, at a ceremony at Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, New York, June 4, 2022.

cal equipment from local hospitals, Cannet remembered.

Then, aircraft maintenance issues threatened to end the mission shortly after takeoff, but the flight engineers mitigated the problem, Cannet said.

The nighttime jump into the Atlantic required dropping equipment bundles on target, along with two inflatable Zodiac boats, he explained.

Once in the water the pararescue team had to climb into the Zodiacs, retrieve the floating supplies, head to the ship, and then finally board the Tamar on a rope ladder while 15-foot waves tossed the boat up and down, Cannet said.

Every aspect of the mission presented unique challenges, said St. Clair, who was the team leader for the mission.

Along with the distance and the jump, once on board the 106th Airmen

had to conduct emergency surgery, provide medical care for three days as the ship approached the Azores and then ensure the victims were safely airlifted onto a Portuguese helicopter, St. Clair said.

"We were able to make a difference in the lives of two men," St. Clair said. "Those two men are alive and enjoying life today because of our ability to provide a capability that very few organizations can."

Boughal, said that unusual mission was a perfect example of the wisdom his pararescue instructor had passed along to him: "Someday, when somebody is having their worst day, you better have your best day."

Cannet, Boughal and St. Clair all credited Lt. Col. Stephen "Doc" Rush, the 106th Medical Group commander, and 103rd Rescue Squadron flight

surgeon, for having such a huge impact on the medical capabilities of the entire pararescue career field, preparing the team to be the elite medical professionals they proved to be on this mission.

St. Clair also credited the Airmen's families for supporting them during the long days and nights of training and deployments.

"Thanks to our loved ones that endure these missions alongside us," St. Clair said.

The Tamar rescue mission, Boughal told the audience, is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of the 106th Rescue Wing and it's legacy of commitment to the pararescue creed "...that others may live."

"Today, we honor these incredible men for putting it all on the line to save lives," Boughal said. **gt**

# Painting Tells the Story of 2017 Tamar Rescue

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. -- The 36-inch by 48-inch oil painting by New Jersey artist Todd L.W. Doney, named "Tamar Rescue Mission," has a lot going on.

Through an open aircraft rear door, the viewer sees figures with swim fins and parachutes, leaping out into the night sky towards water below. Further out, other parachutes drift down towards a ship ablaze with lights.

But the eye always goes to the left. There, a helmeted figure looks the viewer in the eye with a glowing green night vision goggle stare.

Looking at the painting always results in a flood of memories, said 1st Lt. Jamie Bustamante, the helmeted figure in the painting.

"It's kind of surreal. It gives you a look back and you go, whoa, I actually did that," he said.

Bustamante was one of two loadmasters on board a 106th Rescue Wing HC-130J rescue aircraft which dropped five pararescue Airmen and two combat rescue officers over the dark North Atlantic on April 24, 2017.

Their mission was to board the Slovenian freighter Tamar - the lighted ship in the painting - 1,700 miles out in the Atlantic, and provide emergency medical care to two critically injured crewmen.

They performed emergency surgeries which kept the men alive for 30 hours, until they could be evacuated by a Portuguese helicopter to the Azores and then to a burn center.

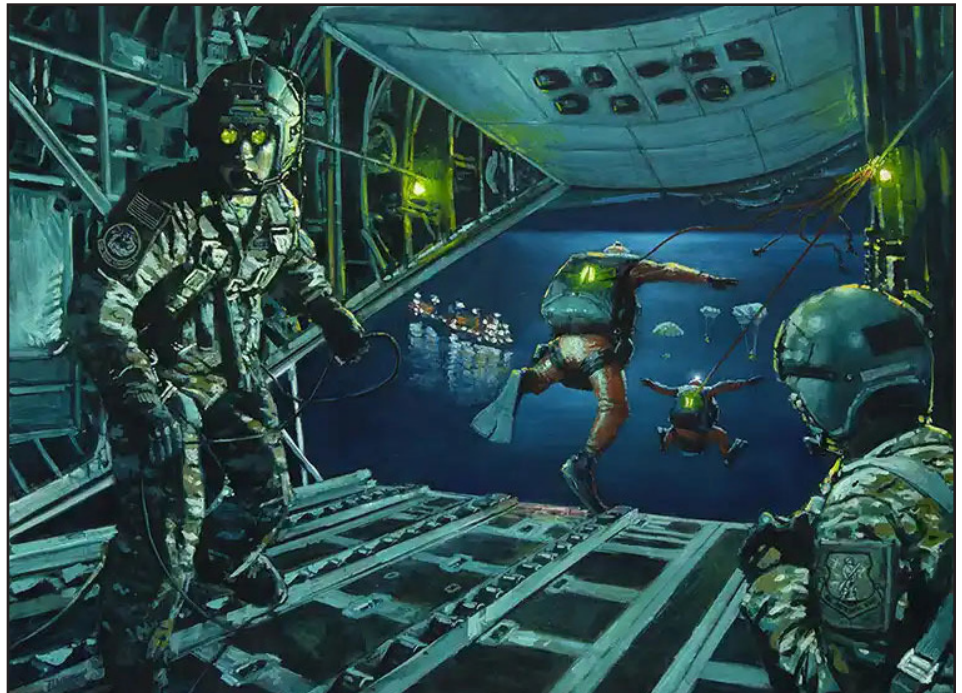
"I think what sticks out most in my mind, is you look at the ship, and you see the guys out there," Bustamante said about the picture. "I do remember seeing all that."

The idea for a painting first came to Chief Master Sgt. Brian Mosher, the 106th Operations Group superintendent, said Maj. Michael O'Hagan, the wing's public affairs officer.

O'Hagan said he thought it was a great idea. "I got excited about the prospect of capturing an image that would represent the mission," O'Hagan said. "For our unit it was such an extraordinarily complex rescue mission."

Almost every member of the 106th, based at Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach on eastern Long Island, played a role in that mission, he said.

"Whatever you do here, you had skin in the game," O'Hagan said.



The painting by New Jersey Artist Todd L.W. Doney commemorates a 2017 rescue mission in which Airmen assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing flew 1,200 miles out into the Atlantic to save the lives of two sailors on the Slovenian freighter Tamar. The painting reflects the roles played by HC-130 aircrew and pararescue Airmen during the mission. Photo courtesy of Todd L.W. Doney.

Fortunately, O'Hagan has a friend who is a painter: Doney, a former illustrator, skilled gallery painter and art professor at County College of Morris, New Jersey.

"When a friend asks me a favor, I like to be able to do it," Doney said.

His grandfather was a World War I doughboy, his uncle jumped into Holland with the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II, his father served in the Coast Guard during the Korean War and his younger brother served in Iraq with the Illinois National Guard, Doney said.

Doney, whose canvases sell for \$1,000 to \$15,000, agreed to do the work for the cost of his time and materials.

"I found the images I wanted and Frankensteined them all together in Photoshop to make it look like the image I thought would be most interesting, to kind of capture the essence of the mission," O'Hagan said.

He shared this with Doney, who refined the image.

O'Hagan shared Doney's image with Bustamante and Lt. Col. Sean Boughal, a combat

rescue officer who led the PJs onto the Tamar, to make sure the details were right.

"We started going back and forth with the sketches," Doney recalled. "Michael wanted this to be totally 100% accurate."

Boughal pointed out that the static lines on the parachutes were red and not yellow, and that the parachutes were square and steerable, and not round.

Doney added green chem lights to the back of the jumpers' parachutes because they wore red lights on the front and green on the back. This helped the Airmen orient themselves to one another in the dark night over the Atlantic.

On one of Doney's sketches, O'Hagan noticed the uniform of the loadmaster looked more like the digital camo pattern the Marines wear, instead of the OCP worn by Air Force.

"It was great to see this mission memorialized in a painting for the team," Boughal said.

"It wouldn't be a great painting unless those guys did what they did," he said. "It was really awesome to honor these guys who jumped out in the middle of the night to save lives." **gt**

# Airmen Train with Brazilian Counterparts

Story and photos by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing

CAMPO GRANDE, Brazil -- One hundred New York National Guard Airmen, including 80 from the 106th Rescue Wing, were in Brazil for exercises with their Brazilian Air Force counterparts, which run through August 31.

They operated from the Brazilian Air Force base at Campo Grande in Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul state, as part of Exercise Tapio, a Brazilian search and rescue and close air support exercise.

The training involved 1,100 Brazilian personnel and aircraft from many different Brazilian units.

"These U.S. Air Force personnel will conduct combat search and rescue and close air support operations alongside Brazilian forces to grow our collective ability to meet complex global challenges, counter threats and maintain regional security and stability," according to a statement from U.S. Southern Command.

The American component, led by Col. Jeff Canned, the 106th Operations Group commander, includes the 100 Airmen, one HC-130J Combat King II, three HH-60 Pave Hawks and two C-17 Globemaster IIIs.

The three HH-60s were flown to Campo Grande on board the two C-17s flown by 14 members of the 105th Airlift Wing.

Personnel from the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron and the 107th Attack Wing, also participated in the mission.

Two A-10 Thunderbolt pilots from the Maryland Air National Guard joined the team this

year to offer their insight into close air support.

The Oregon Air National Guard contributed a four-Airman combat controller team from the 142nd Wing, 125th Special Tactics Squadron, who specialize in operating in austere environments.

This is the second year that New York has participated in Exercise Tapio. In 2021, 80 personnel and two HH-60s took part.

The exercise that year simulated war scenarios, to include helicopter infiltration and extrication, rescues which required a rope to access the patient, separated survivor scenarios, and an urban operation with a vehicle extrication and mass casualty event.

This year's exercise has added aerial refueling of the HH-60s by the HC-130Js into the mix.

"It's great to be taking part in Exercise Tapio again with a larger team than ever before," Canned said.

"The friendships and professional development have grown behind the scenes over the

past year and seeing all that come together during this exercise has been rewarding. We look forward to growing this strong partnership for years to come," Canned added.

New York was invited to participate because of the State Partnership Program the New York National Guard shares with Brazil's military.

New York National Guard personnel take part in these joint training and exchanges with their Brazilian counterparts to further interoperability, Canned said.

Recent interactions involved a visit by members of the New York Air National Guard's 222nd Command and Control Squadron, which is a space operations unit, with their Brazilian counterparts. Brazilian leaders have also visited New York and observed security operations in New York City.

New York has a partnership arrangement with the South African National Defence Force as well as Brazil. **gt**



A pair of HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopters assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing head out for a mission in Campo Grande, Brazil while participating in Exercise Tapio on Aug. 22, 2022.



Senior Airman Matt Pluhoski, at right, a pararescue Airman assigned to the 103rd Rescue Squadron of the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Squadron, works with a Brazilian counterpart, on a simulated casualty on board one of the wing's HC-130 Combat King II search and rescue aircraft during a medical evacuation mission being conducted as part of Exercise Tapio in Campo Grande, Brazil on August 24, 2022.

# Tactical Demonstration Caps Exercise Tapio

Story by Maj. Jean Kratzer, 42nd Infantry Division



An HC-130 Combat King II search and rescue aircraft assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing arrives at Campo Grande, Brazil on Aug. 21, 2022.

CAMPO GRANDE, Brazil -- Two weeks of New York Air National Guard joint training with the Brazilian Air Force climaxed with a demonstration mission in front of Brazilian and American leaders on August 29.

The joint exercise revolved around tactical problems, including helicopter infiltration and extrication, rescues that required a rope to access the patient, separated survivor scenarios and an urban operation with a vehicle extrication and mass casualty event.

During the final event, the Brazilians and Americans proved their abilities to trust each other's aircraft and tactical practices, leaders said.

During the final exercise, the American and Brazilian Airmen conducted a rescue mission while engaging an enemy with simulated munitions.

The visitors watching the demonstration included the Brazilian Minister of Defense, Paulo Sérgio Nogueira de Oliveira.

The goal was to promote mutual understanding, trust, and interoperability among

participants and to increase the capacity of the American and Brazilian armed forces, said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Isabel Smith, the director of joint staff for the New York National Guard.

"This exercise has been a great experience for our Air Force personnel to conduct combat search and rescue and close air support operations alongside the Brazilian forces," said U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Denise Donnell, the commander of the New York Air National Guard.

"We are seeing our maintainers utilizing their different skill sets and experience and working incredibly hard to make this mission a success and to safely be able to fix our aircraft to support this exercise," she emphasized.

"They have maintained a great positive attitude and enjoyed working with their Brazilian military counterpart," she added.

Through the SPP, National Guard Soldiers and Airmen conduct military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals.

"At the distinguished visitor event today, I had the opportunity to speak with the Minister of Defense for Brazil. He indicated that together

we can continue to build a partnership between Brazil and the United States," Smith said. **gt**



Senior Airman Bailey Sullivan, a special mission aviator assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, prepares for an HH-60 Pave Hawk rescue helicopter mission in Campo Grande, Brazil on Aug. 22, 2022 while participating Exercise Tapio. Photo by Maj. Michael O'Hagan, 106th Rescue Wing.

**"...together, we can continue to build a partnership between Brazil and the United States."**

-- Brig. Gen. Isabel Smith, director of joint staff, New York National Guard

## Defense Force Trains 175 During Annual Training

Story by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, N.Y. -- One hundred and seventy-five New York Guard members spent the week of August 14-20 learning first aid, honing their staff and leadership skills, and fine tuning their communications capabilities during annual training at the Camp Smith Training site.

During the training period professional development courses for staff officers and New York Guard senior leaders were conducted, along with initial entry training for new members of the New York Guard who had no prior military service.

Approximately 50 service members were also trained by members of the National Guard and communications experts from the New York Guard in erecting and operating of radio equipment.

This included setting up the Military Emergency Network system and the Mobile Emergency Response Center used as communications hubs used in emergencies. The Guard members also trained in setting up high-frequency radio stations and erecting VHF antennas.

Maintaining communications during emergencies is an important mission for the New York Guard, said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Martino, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the communications training.

“Most of our missions are civil support operations, so we need to have the ability to assist in times of natural disasters or worse. It is imperative that we have interoperability communications between different operations and branches of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs in the event of an emergency,” Martino explained.

The course taught the volunteers the basics of the Military Emergency Radio Network, or MERN, and gave them the opportunity to operate the two mobile MERN units which were deployed at Camp Smith.

A basic Engineering field operations course trained other New York Guard volunteers on the technics used in determining road trafficability and the use of sandbags and water-filled dams.

The New York Guardsmen learned proper techniques for laying sandbags as well as the proper maintenance and use of generators to set up portable water dams to counter flooding.



New York Guard members fill sandbags during engineering field operations training conducted during the New York Guard's week long annual training at Camp Smith, New York, Aug. 16, 2022. Photo by Sgt. Richard Mayfield, New York Guard.

The training prepares Guardsmen for state emergencies.

New York Guardsmen without any military experience went through initial entry training, or IET for short. The week long class teaches them the fundamentals of being a service member in the New York Guard.

“Training was excellent and above my expectations because of the professionalism and expertise of our cadre. I was looking forward to the whole experience because it's something I'd never been through before and I loved it,” said Pvt. James Merritt, one of the 30 class members.

The new members learned military customs and courtesies, basic communication skills, drill and ceremony, first aid, CPR and common skills.

“The IET course was good. I really enjoyed the emergency medical course because it ties into my background,” said Pvt. Rashad Lyston.

The initial entry training course this year was new. The classes were developed from lessons learned when 240 volunteers were activated for New York's COVID-19 response from March 2020 to June of 2022.

Materials taught during the New York Guard Pre-Command Course for officers, in the ranks of lieutenant to major, the officers State Active Duty Preparatory Course, and a new Direct Commission Course, also reflected lessons learned from COVID-19, instructors said.

“We wanted the servicemembers to train hard, realistically and in such a way as to position the New York Guard as the 'tip of the spear' in civil support operations support and augmentation,” said Maj. Keith Tidball, the New York Guard information and operations officer.

For the first time, the weeklong training concluded with an all-course participation on the Leadership Reaction Course.

This allowed officers and enlisted service members to work together in squad unit sizes and apply the weeks' long training into actual missions.

“There was an incredible sense of focus and purpose among all the servicemembers in attendance during AT 2022. The morale was exceptionally high and bodes well for the future of the New York Guard,” Tidball said. **gt**



New York Guard members attend professional development training during the state defense force's annual training at Camp Smith, New York, Aug. 16, 2022. Photo by Sgt. Richard Mayfield, New York Guard.

# New York Naval Militia

## Naval Militia and NY Guard Combine Skills

Story by 1st Lt. Michael Rehbaum and 1st Lt. James Chin, New York Guard

OVID, N.Y. -- Two Naval Militia patrol boats and 35 Naval Militia members joined 50 members of the New York Guard State Defense Force, the Civil Air Patrol and representatives of the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services to conduct an emergency response exercise on Seneca Lake July 15 and 16.

The joint emergency response exercise, named "Empire Challenge," allowed Naval Militia and New York Guard service members to work collaboratively to practice long range radio communications with sites across the state, including Camp Smith in the Hudson Valley, Buffalo and Long Island.

The Empire Challenge exercise tested emergency response skills for the Naval Militia and New York Guard.

Naval Militia members practiced their skills as boat operators and as radio operators in a command post trailer. The New York Guard set up multiple Operation Centers to provide overall command and control of the exercise and serve as radio communications test hubs.

In addition, the various groups tested their radio communications during the exercise.

"Exercises like Empire Challenge provide our Naval Militia members with opportunities to practice skills that would be required in an actual emergency response," said Naval Militia Rear Adm. Larry Weill, the commander of the New York Naval Militia.

"The training on Seneca Lake will test three new means of radio communications, which is always one of the biggest challenges," he said.

The scenario on Seneca Lake also involved two Naval Militia



New York Naval Militia Patrol Boat-280 on Seneca Lake during Exercise Empire Challenge, a joint New York Naval Militia/New York Guard exercise, held near Ovid, New York, July 16, 2022, after picking up a man overboard and transferring the victim to a medical team. Photo by 1st Lt. James Chin, New York Guard.

boats working to retrieve a boat that had been blown out into the lake by a major windstorm. The Sailors and New York Guard members then trained to operate and deliver a water pump to a shoreline for removing water from a simulated flood zone.

The two boats included PB-281, a 28-foot patrol boat based in Buffalo, and the LC-350, a 35-foot landing craft based in Coxsackie on the Hudson River.

The Naval Militia operates a fleet of 11 boats for missions in support of New York State, the Coast Guard and other law enforcement agencies.

Another part of the joint response involved a simulated boat fire with a man overboard.

New York Guard personnel augmenting the crew of Naval Militia boat LC-350, extinguished the simulated boat fire with a water pump. At the same time, another Naval Militia team rehearsed the actions to rescue a man overboard and transported him to a joint medical response team ashore.

"One of the strongest aspects of the exercise was watching the folks

that had just been trained on the water pump to execute exercise scenarios," said New York Guard Lt. Col. Geoffrey Milligan, a safety officer for the exercise.

"It was fun training and it was good working with other entities to let people know what our boats can do," said Naval Militia Senior Chief Petty Officer Robert Wittenzellner during the training.

Members of the New York Guard echoed the sentiment for the unique training for emergency response.

"It was great having the opportunity being on a boat on beautiful Lake Seneca," said New York Guard Pfc. Jazon Kruze. "I'm extremely glad being given the opportunity [to train on the boat]."


As the National Guard elements trained on the water, the Civil Air Patrol, the civilian auxiliary of the Air Force provided air support.

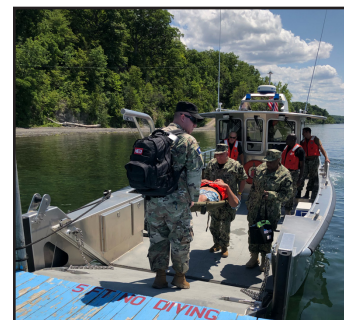
Aircraft and drones supported by the Civil Air Patrol took part in a search and rescue event, providing aerial photography and radio communications.

Receiving updates and communications from the lake were

New York Guard and Naval Militia members on Long Island and New York City, practicing communication skills with the portable Mobile Emergency Response Center. These members trained on Mobile Emergency Radio Network skills, communicating with Naval Militia and New York Guard throughout the state with reports and updates.

In the Hudson Valley, New York Guard Staff Sgt. Stanley Cohen supervised a team of 12 members from the 56th Area Command at Camp Smith, manning an operations center and training on the Mobile Emergency Radio Network, communicating with stations at the Staten Island Armory, in Eisenhower Park in Nassau County, as well with those at Seneca Lake.

"There's a sense of accomplishment in successfully working with unfamiliar equipment to accomplish a mission. It is always a motivating factor and driving force of encouragement to learn more," Cohen said. 



Naval Militia and New York Guard members move a simulated casualty on shore near Ovid, New York, during exercise Empire Challenge June 16, 2022. Two boats maneuvered on Seneca Lake, while the command post communicated with New York Guard radio stations across the state. Photo by Commander Don McKnight, New York Naval Militia.

