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

www.dmna.state.ny.us

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FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Communication a Key Part of Our Mission Focus, Success

Shoot. Move. Communicate.

These are the fundamentals that our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen train for as part of our nation's Army and Air Force as we work harder to keep pace with our demanding optempo.

Most of our members will tell you that we have two-thirds of these bases covered. But communication in the National Guard, a part-time, geographically dispersed military force, has always been a big challenge.

Increasing those communications within our force has been a top priority for me since taking the position of your Adjutant General in 2006.

The Internet allows leaders at all levels to communicate with Soldiers who live too far away to make it into the armory or base in between drills. We can send e-mails around the world instantly, we can IM each other while we work, and we can create unit websites to help pass along information.

But we must be mindful of how we are communicating with each other on the Internet.

The use of non-Department of Defense e-mail providers like AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, and Yahoo to send Guard related information to each other exposes our computer networks, and our operational security, to risks.

E-mails from these sites contain viruses that could harm our National Guard computer systems. They are not subject to the rigorous security protocols that DOD computer networks are, and sensitive information could be compromised. Remember, most of what we do on a daily basis could be classified FOUO (For Official Use Only).

Their use violates Army Regulation 25-2. In the section on network security the regulation clearly states that: "The use of commercial ISP or e-mail accounts for official purposes is prohibited."

Any time you pass information about administrative events, upcoming drills, your Soldiers, or planned training, that's an official purpose and doesn't belong on private e-mail providers.

Members of the Army National Guard must employ Army Knowledge Online, or AKO, as their preferred webmail system when communicating over the Internet. The system is secure, constantly checked for viruses and malware, and accessible anywhere in the world. All Soldiers are required to have

an AKO address. It only makes sense to use it.

AKO also allows users to post documents that members of their unit need access to and deny access to those without a need to know that information. And AKO also allows access to financial information, personnel files, medical data, and all the other information Soldiers need to manage. The AKO web address is www.army.mil.

AKO is increasingly used for more than just transmitting e-mail messages. Soldiers are expected to sign into AKO to update their health assessments and check personnel records. If members of the Army National Guard are not checking AKO regularly and keeping their AKO log-in current, they are wrong.

AKO is also home to the New York Army National Guard's Military Personnel web page. This page—which requires using your AKO log-in to access—provides a wealth of information on personnel issues within NYARNG and will become the preferred method for updating military records.

You can access this page by going to the DMNA public website, www.dmna.state.ny.us, and going to the "For Members" tab on the left hand side of the screen and then going to Military Personnel and clicking there.

A shortcut can also be found by going to the Army National Guard at the top of the webpage, clicking on that button, and then finding the Military Personnel Office link under the heading NYARNG Services.

AKO also hosts a New York Army National Guard file sharing site on which information used by our Army Major Commands—the 42nd Infantry, 27th BCT, 53rd Troop Command and Joint Forces Headquarters-- can be stored and accessed by authorized personnel. Use of this file sharing service, which can be accessed through the "Files" button on AKO, is a great way to reduce the size of e-mail attachments and assure that information is secure and accessible to Soldiers who need it.

Members of our Air National Guard can use the Air Force's GI Mail system to communicate with each other. This web-based e-mail, like AKO, provides users with a secure, DOD-approved e-mail capability that can be accessed anywhere in the world.

GI Mail allows any service member to communicate with each other. It can be accessed at www.gimail.af.mil.

Guard leaders should also be looking at



Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto

www.nyalert.gov, the state web site for New York State All-Hazards alerts. This website contains critical emergency-related information including instructions and recommended protective actions developed in real-time by emergency service personnel. As our state military force signs up for this service, I envision emergency notifications and critical communications sent out to our members (e.g. email, cell phones, and news media) to our force nearly simultaneously.

Our public website, www.dmna.state.ny.us also provides another improvement in telling our National Guard story to our own members as well as civilians.

Visitors to the site can view current photos and stories of our force, research job vacancies, learn about Guard benefits and services or find a recruiter. Throughout their deployment, we provided an entire website devoted to the current news and operations of our 27th Brigade Combat Team from Afghanistan, keeping our families and communities in touch with our Soldiers overseas.

Communication is indeed a two-way street. Press your first-line leaders, supervisors, and platoon, company and battalion commanders for critical information. At the same time, take the responsibility to be accessible using military email (AKO or GI Mail). Use these available technologies to keep yourself informed, and most of all provide feedback to the chain of command so that as an organization, we are always improving.

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Articles, photos and letters are welcome. Please provide article submissions via email saved in Microsoft Word or rich text (rtf) format along with high resolution digital (jpg) photos. Submission deadlines are February 15 (winter issue), April 15 (spring issue), July 15 (summer issue), and November 15 (fall issue). Send your submissions to:

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Complimentary or Back Issues of the *Guard Times* are available. Contact us at the address above or visit us on the web for current news, photos or to download prior issues at www.dmna.state.ny.us.



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27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers disembark at Hancock Field in Syracuse for family reunions in upstate New York on Dec. 27, 2008 as more than 1,500 Citizen Soldiers returned home from service for Operation Enduring Freedom. The unit trained and mentored the Afghan National Army and National Police as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott.

On the cover: More New York Army National Guardsmen of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team arrive from Fort Bragg, N.C. after serving a ten month tour of duty in Afghanistan. Here, Soldiers arrive via a charter airplane at the Air National Guard base in Newburgh. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran. **Back cover:** The 106th Rescue Wing's Pararescue Jumpers helped make Veteran's Day memorable for those in attendance at the New York Islander hockey game on Nov. 11 at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y. The PJs repelled off the rafters of the coliseum carrying the U.S. flag while the National Anthem was being played by the Air Force Liberty Brass Band. Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell made an appearance and helped out by dropping the ceremonial first puck along with Islander's owner Charles Wang. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jordan A. Miles.

Military Personnel News: The MILPO CORNER

Military Personnel Directorate (MNP) Creates Army Web Portal

A new Internet web site available through the Army's web portal, Army Knowledge Online (AKO), now provides Soldiers with a single source for all personnel and administrative information needs. The site contains a main page with information headlines for any new or changed personnel information for members of the New York Army National Guard.

The page includes an overview of upcoming events and links to individual Branch pages, each containing the most current information in each subject area. The main page also contains a link to the Joint Forces HQ Electronic Library for access to all critical references.

Please utilize this web site. All Soldiers should check their AKO email frequently as it will become the predominate means of email distribution for personnel information as the National Guard moves towards DIMHRS.

You may access the MNP web portal through the following link: <https://www.us/army/mil/suite/page/553732>.

New Form for Soldiers' Record of Emergency Data, DD Form 93

The Department of Defense requires each Soldier to complete a new DD Form 93, if their form on file in IPERMS is not prepared on the January 2008 version. A recent change in law allows Soldiers to designate \$100,000 death gratuity to anyone they desire, allowing it to be shared by up to ten beneficiaries.

The goal of the Army leadership is to ensure that all Soldiers and Army families are properly advised of the new options for designating beneficiaries to properly receive the death gratuity. If you have not completed the new form you will find specific instructions and access to the form on the Army web portal: <https://www.us/army/mil/suite/page/553732>.

Reduced Premiums for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS)

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based TRICARE health plan available for purchase by New York Army National Guard members.

Effective January 1, 2009, TRICARE Reserve Select will reduce the rates for TRS.

Monthly premiums for TRS individual coverage will drop 44% from \$81.00 to \$47.51, and TRS family coverage will drop 29% from \$253.00 to \$180.17.

Soldiers interested in the health plan must be drilling members of the Reserve Component and not be eligible for enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Plan.

To check qualification and purchase insurance visit: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/trs/>.

Retirement Guidance

Long and honorable service in the New York Army National Guard as a Citizen Soldier is a challenging endeavor for you and your family. This has been particularly true in recent years with recurring mobilizations for both state and federal duty. The Adjutant General has noted that those who have achieved eligibility for retirement have made contributions and sacrifices which enhanced the readiness and effectiveness of their command.

The Adjutant General has mandated that the most comprehensive guidance possible be provided, to ensure Soldiers are properly recognized and that they and their families are able to take advantage of all benefits earned.

In order to comply with this requirement, we have prepared a Soldiers Guide for Retirement and a Commanders Guide to Soldier Retirement. These single source documents can be accessed by visiting the MNP AKO Main page.

Awards and Decorations

Two new awards and decorations references have been created. The first is the Military Awards Brief, which provides a comprehensive slide show briefing covering all areas of military awards, to include individual, service, combat, and retirement awards.

The second is the Awards and Decorations Handbook, which was designed to be a single source document for the preparation, review,



processing, and approval of all awards. Sample awards, step by step guidance, and awards charts and references are included.

Both of these awards references can also be accessed on the MNP-AKO Web Portal: <https://www.us/army/mil/suite/page/553732>.

Wounded, Ill and Injured Soldier Compensation & Benefits Handbook

A new Wounded, Ill and Injured Compensation & Benefits Handbook, designed to assist Service members and their families that care for them. The information helps members navigate the disability, compensation, and benefits program. Go to: <http://turbotap.org> or <https://www.sq2.army.mil>.

NYARNG Form 11

Along with the revised NYARNG Regulation 611-7 the NYARNG Form 11 was also changed slightly. All officers will need to complete a new form 11 to ensure the OPM database remains current and officers are considered for positions and regions they are interested in.

Officer Evaluation Reports (OER)

Use of AKO, Forms Content Management Program (FCMP), for OER submission is now required. The current version of the Officer Evaluation Report (DA Form 67-9) is 6.5.

Login Changes to Bolster AKO Security

The use of AKO Forms Management Program to complete OERs ensures that officers are always using the correct version. Army Human Resources Command sometimes changes the version with little notice.

Chaplain Student Loan Repayment Program (CLRP)

The Chaplain Student Loan Repayment Program (CLRP) has been reinstated with different implementation guidance. Under the new program, a Chaplain can commit to a three year obligation and sign for a \$20,000 CLRP.

In order for the loan to qualify, the loan must be preexisting. There will be a total of three payments. Payments are made once a year directly to the loan holder. Under the new policy, a Chaplain can receive up to \$40,000 in CLRP by doing two separate three year obligations.

For more information, please contact your Battalion Career Counselor or Retention NCO.

Education Office Graduates

The Education Office recognizes the following Soldiers for completing their civilian education degrees. Congratulations to:

James Faulkner, SUNY Stony Brook

BA in History

Corine Lombardo, Nyack

BS in Org Mgmt

Benjamin Postle, RIT

BS in Applied Networking

William Salvi, Thomas Edison

BS in Business Administration

If you've recently completed your degree, please send your transcript to the Education Office to have your records updated.

DIMHRS Implementation Delayed

The Department of Defense and Army leadership met to review DIMHRS program status and as a result of the meeting, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued the following guidance:

March 2009 is no longer the scheduled Army implementation date.

An assessment is being conducted to determine the way forward for program implementation.

Details on new DIMHRS information will be posted on the MNP AKO portal as it becomes available.

AKO ARMY KNOWLEDGE ONLINE **DKO DEFENSE KNOWLEDGE ONLINE**

Login to AKO/DKO

Username: john doe
Password: *****

Low Bandwidth **Login**

By clicking the Login button above, you agree to comply with the Terms of Use listed at the bottom of this page.

CAC Login to AKO/DKO

Low Bandwidth **CAC Login**

By clicking the Login button above, you agree to comply with the Terms of Use listed at the bottom of this page.

New User?

- Register for AKO
Eligibility: Active Army, Army Reserve, National Guard, DA Civilian, Retired Army, and Army Guests
- Register for DKO
Eligibility: Pre-authorized DoD users
- Learn more about DKO

Help

- Reset Password
- Help Desk

FAQs

- How do I install the DoD Certificate?
- How do I reset my password?
- How do I register for an AKO/DKO Account?
- How do I use my CAC to login to AKO/DKO?
- Search All FAQs

Other DoD Service Portals

- Air Force Portal
- Defense Online
- Marnettec
- Navy Enterprise Portal - Coming Soon

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YOU ARE ACCESSING A U.S. GOVERNMENT (USG) INFORMATION SYSTEM (IS) THAT IS PROVIDED FOR USG-AUTHORIZED USE ONLY. By using the IS (which includes any device attached to the IS), you consent to the following conditions: -The USG routinely intercepts and monitors communications on this IS for purposes including, but not limited to: penetration testing, COMSEC monitoring, network operations and defense, personnel monitoring (PM), law enforcement (LE), and counterintelligence (CI) investigations. -At any time, the USG may inspect and seize data stored on this IS. -Communications using, or data stored on, this IS are not private, are subject to routine monitoring, interception, and search, and may be disclosed or used for any USG authorized purpose. This IS includes security measures (e.g., authentication and access controls) to protect USG interests-not for your personal benefit or privacy. -Notwithstanding the above, using this IS does not constitute consent to PM, LE or CI investigative searching or monitoring of the content of privileged communications, or work product, related to personal representation or services by attorneys, psychotherapists, or clergy, and their assistants. Such communications and work product are private and confidential. See User Agreement for details.
Use of this system constitutes consent to restrictions for all lawful purposes.



Norris Waltemath of Fort Wayne, Ind., hugs his son Indiana National Guard Lt. Col. Ross Waltemath, the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's personnel officer who returned from Iraq Nov. 5, 2008, as Ross Waltemath's daughters, Victoria, left, and Madison, watch. The brigade's Iraq deployment marked the largest Indiana Guard deployment since World War II. (Photo by Courtesy Photo)

Early in 2009, user-focused questions will become part of AKO log in procedure. The change will improve security by making it more difficult for "key loggers" to record a user's login credentials. U.S. Army photo.

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - Operators of the Army's Web-based information portal "Army Knowledge Online" plan to implement new security procedures on the system in the New Year.

When logging into the security-improved AKO, users will be presented with three questions they must correctly answer before being allowed to continue. The questions are designed to be difficult for anyone but the users themselves to answer, said Lt. Col. Ken Fritzsche, chief of operations for AKO.

"What AKO tries to do is provide a layer of protection, so in addition to just using a password, you can supply answers to questions about yourself," he said. "Who was

your first teacher, the first person you kissed? It'll be answers known only by you. So when you log in and provide those answers, we have at AKO a very high sense of security that you are who you claim to be."

To prepare for the new security protocol, the AKO system will present each user with a list of 20 questions. The user then chooses to provide answers to 15 of those questions. In subsequent logins, AKO will present three of those questions to the user, with multiple-choice answers. Users will need to choose the correct answer in order to log in, said Fritzsche.

"Why do we offer the questions? Because the questions are one more layer of security that defeat keystroke loggers,"

Fritzsche said. "Keystroke loggers are probably one of the most popular methods used by known bad guys to capture credentials. So the new security credentials are used to help defeat keystroke logging."

"Keystroke loggers" are pieces of software installed on computers -- possibly by those wishing to gain illegal access to DOD networks -- that record the keys pressed on a computer's keyboard.

It is easy for someone who has installed a keystroke logger to use captured information to access a person's account. The addition of random information -- such as the keystrokes needed to answer random multiple-choice questions -- makes it more difficult to record and reproduce a login sequence, Fritzsche said.

The VA Wants You - For Its Workforce

Hiring Wounded Warriors a Priority for VA in 2009

WASHINGTON (Department of Veterans Affairs) - The Department of Veterans Affairs is contacting severely injured veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan about coming to work at the VA. The VA's Veterans Employment Coordination Service has already been in touch with 2,300 such veterans, of whom 600 have expressed interest in employment at the department.

The current workforce at VA is 30 percent veterans, the second highest rate among cabinet departments after the Defense Department. Nearly 8 percent of VA employees are service-connected disabled veterans.

But VA Secretary Dr. James B. Peake wants to increase that percentage.

"I am proud of this effort," he said in a press release from the VA. "VA knows the true quality of our men and women, and we should be a leader in employing them."

The coordination service was established one year ago to recruit veterans to the VA workforce, especially those seriously injured in the current wars. It has nine regional coordinators working with local facility human resources offices across the country not only to reach out to potential job candidates, but to ensure that local managers know about special authorities available to hire veterans.

For example, qualified disabled veterans rated as having a 30 percent or more service-



connected disability can be hired noncompetitively.

"Our team is spreading the message that VA is hiring, and we want to hire disabled veterans," said Dennis O. May, director of VA's Veterans Employment Coordination Service.

VA coordinators participate in military career fairs and transition briefings and partner with veterans organizations.

"VA knows the true quality of our men and women, and we should be a leader in employing them."

- VA Secretary Dr. James B. Peake

Guard Times Editor's Corrections

The *Guard Times* constantly seeks input from Soldiers and Airmen in the field. Whether it is your commentary, stories, photos or feedback, our staff wants to hear from our readers.

Our Fall 2008 included imagery and articles from members that we inadvertently left without attribution.

Our page 24 article regarding the restoration of the HH3-E Jolly Green Giant was written by Capt. Alexander Spencer from the 106th Rescue Wing.

Our page 25 photo of the HH3-E Jolly Green Giant unloading was taken by the 106th Airlift Wing's Staff Sgt. Marcus Calliste.

Our page 36 photo from the National Guard NASCAR event at Watkins Glen was taken by 2nd Lt. Mark Getman from the 1-258th Field Artillery Battalion.

Your input tells us how we're doing at *Guard Times*. This issue marks our second year of production and we're asking our readers to provide feedback for how we're doing.

Simply visit our website at <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/gdtimes/survey.php> to give us your input. Questions should only take about 3-5 minutes of your time.

Your response will remain anonymous and we hope to make changes or improvements based on your feedback.

Disney Resorts Offer Military Discount for 2009

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (Walt Disney World Public Relations) - Disney World and Disney Land Resort ticket discounts for military personnel are offered this year for Active and Retired U.S. Military, as well as members of the U.S. Coast Guard and activated members of the National Guard or Reservists mobilized for federal service since January of 2008.

Eligible service members may obtain one complimentary 5-Day Disney's Armed Forces Salute Ticket (Base Ticket with the Park Hopper® option and Water Park Fun & More Option). The no expiration option is not available with these tickets.



In addition the military member may also purchase 5-Day Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion Tickets for up to five (5) family members and/or friends for \$99 plus tax (Park Hopper® Option and Water Park Fun & More Options may be purchased for an additional \$25 + tax for each option - the no expiration option is not available with these tickets.

These tickets are valid through December 23, 2009.

Active or Retired Military must show a valid United States Military ID card. Activated members of the National Guard or Reservists must present their orders or DD 214 Discharge Certificate in addition to a Military ID card. Military personnel must have been active for any length of time between Jan. 1, 2008 and the end of Dec. 23, 2009.

If you have any questions about this offer contact Disney World directly or check out their website at <http://www.wdwinfo.com/discounts/discounts-military.htm#Disney>.

The above offer is for Disney World in Florida. A similar discount program is offered for the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif. through June 12, 2009.

Guard Families Eligible For Child Care Subsidy

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - For National Guard members about to deploy there is help to assist spouses and family members with the costs of child care during deployment through the Guard's Child Care Subsidy Program.

The program, which has been around for about five years, grew out of a program initially designed for deploying active-duty personnel, said Mike Conner, chief of program services for the National Guard Bureau's Family Program office.

"There was an increased need for child care on the (military) installation," said Conner. "When the deployments occurred, the daycare centers on the installations were already at the peak. This made it even higher and the stress just increased."

This prompted a change to the program to allow active component families to receive a stipend to use off-post child care providers. Guard and Reserve members were later made eligible as long as they were on Title 10 status.

"If you are deployed in Title 10 status and your spouse is either working or in school fulltime, you are eligible for a child care subsidy," Conner said. Recently, those on Title 32 active orders were added to the eligibility list.

The subsidy program is coordinated through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACRA), which approves

applications and determines the amount paid as part of the subsidy, which varies based on a number of factors, not including rank.

"(There are) a number of things taken into consideration," said Dr. Kathryn Goedde, the program manager. "They look at total family income, they look at the number of children, they look at the type of child care needed."

The minimum amount paid out is \$100 per child per month, said Goedde.

There are, however, stipulations as to which child care providers are eligible to be used as part of the subsidy. One stipulation is that the child care provider must be licensed by the state.

A call center has been set up to help Guardmembers navigate the paperwork process required to receive the subsidy. Once the call center is contacted, those at the call center fill out the application and all the paperwork for the Guardmember and submit it to NACRA for approval.

"We do the application for (the Guardmember), so they're not required to figure anything out," said Goedde. "We take them through step-by-step. We then follow up with their provider and we fill out the provider application as well."

So far, more than 1,100 Guard members have taken advantage of the program. For more information, visit the Guard's Family Program Web site at www.guardfamily.org or call 1-888-642-2799.

Small Business Loans Available for Guard and Reserves

By John Narciso, New York State Program Coordinator, Veterans Business Outreach Center

FARMINGDALE - National Guard and Reserve members who own small businesses or small business firms that employ military reservists called to active duty may qualify for Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loans (MREIDL).

The filing period for small businesses to apply for economic injury loan assistance begins on the date the essential employee is ordered to active duty and ends 90 days after the employee is discharged or released from active duty.

The purpose of the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan program (MREIDL) is to provide funds to eligible small businesses to meet its ordinary and necessary operating expenses that it could have met, but is unable to meet, because an essential employee was "called-up" to active duty in their role as a military reservist. These loans are intended only to provide the amount of working capital needed by a small business to pay its necessary obligations as they mature until operations return to normal after the essential employee is released from active military duty. The purpose of these loans is not to cover lost

income or lost profits. MREIDL funds cannot be used to take the place of regular commercial debt, to refinance long-term debt or to expand the business. Other opportunities for small business veterans include the new Patriot Express Pilot Loan as the latest extension to the financial, procurement, and technical assistance programs the agency provides to the military community. Patriot Express, which began in July 2008, is a streamlined loan product based on SBA's highly successful SBA Express Program, but with enhanced guarantee and interest rate characteristics.

"With military activations and extensions having a profound impact on entrepreneurs in the military community, SBA is committed to helping America's service men and women during the continuing War on Terror," SBA Administrator Steven Preston said. "We believe that Patriot Express, supported by SBA's other services, goes directly to the needs of these American Patriots who wish to start businesses, and in the process encourages job creation and growth, an essential part of the President's economic agenda."

"SBA thanks the Presidential Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes for its guidance and hard work and Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson for his devoted leadership," Preston added.

Loans are available up to \$500,000 and qualify for SBA's maximum guaranty of up to 85 percent for loans of \$150,000 or less and up to 75 percent for loans over \$150,000 up to \$500,000. For loans above \$350,000, lenders are required to take all available collateral.

The Patriot Express Loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases.

Patriot Express Loans feature SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, generally 2.25 percent to 4.75 percent over prime depending upon the size and maturity of the loan. Local SBA district offices will have a listing of Patriot Express lenders in their areas.

For more information or a copy of the Resource Guide for Getting Veterans Back to Business, visit www.sba.gov/reservists. **gt**

New Yorkers Help Secure Obama Inauguration

Joint Task Force Deploys to DC to Support Presidential Swearing-In

Story by Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle, 369th Sustainment Brigade

WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 220 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen of the New York National Guard provided security for the inauguration of President Barack Obama, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009.

Working in eight-hour shifts the New Yorkers provided both outer and inner cordon security north of the Capitol in the Dupont Circle area of the city during the 56th presidential inauguration.

“I’m pleased that the New York National Guard is able to provide support for this historic event,” Governor Paterson said. “With one million people estimated to attend the inauguration, our Citizen Soldiers and Airmen will play a key role in ensuring that events run smoothly and are secure.”

More than 10,000 men and women across the entire National Guard supported the 56th Presidential Inauguration, the largest contribution to an inauguration in the history of the Guard.

The Soldiers and Airmen were deputized as special police to assist local law enforcement at Traffic Control Points, which gave them temporary police powers in the District of Columbia.

Dubbed Task Force 104, for the 104th Military Police Battalion which provided the leadership for the mission, the force was made up of Soldier’s from the 104th Military Police Battalion, 442 MP Company, the 727 MP Detachment, and airmen from the 174th Fighter Wing, and 105th and 107th Airlift Wings for the New York Air National Guard.

“I am very proud to be here and to be able to support our new commander in chief,” said Airman 1st Class Marcus M. Goodridge, 105th Security Forces Squadron, Stewart Air National Guard Base. “My family is very proud of me being here, due to this being an historic event.”

“I am extremely happy with the way the Airmen and Soldiers get along with each other, morale is very high,” said Air National Guard 1st Sgt. Thomas Young, from the 105th Security Forces Detachment at Stewart Air National Guard Base.

“Some of these individuals may never get another opportunity to do something as great as this, so they are making it a very memorable moment, and I can say I am very proud of everyone,” Young added.

“We assist, protect, and defend the people of the United States and our Commander in Chief is our top priority.”

-- Staff Sgt. Christopher Morrissey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 104th Military Police Battalion

Army National Guard Spc. Kevin Grabowski operates the Radio Interoperability System, part of the Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC). The JISCC communications suite supported the operations center of Task Force Dupont, composed of units from the Iowa and New York Army National Guard assisting with security missions for the 56th Presidential Inaugural on Jan. 20. Courtesy photo.





Captain Steven Perry, of Headquarters Detachment, 104th Military Police Battalion from Kingston and part of Task Force 104, checks on his Soldiers and Airmen who are providing security for the 56th Presidential Inauguration held in Washington D.C. Jan. 20. Perry is a team commander providing security and assistance to local authorities for an inaugural that expected more than one million attendees. At right, members of the New York Air National Guard security team support the mass movement of visitors arriving by bus to Washington. Photos by Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle.



The road to inauguration day started at Camp Smith, Saturday, Jan 17, for this task force, where they received a Physical Health Assessment. Once given the green light they were cleared to perform the mission.

On Sunday, the teams boarded buses and began their six hour journey to D.C. When they arrived at the National Guard Armory they received a welcome briefing and were sworn in as special police.

“Being sworn as special police gives Soldiers and Airmen the ability to make arrests in certain situations when a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officer is not present”, said Capt. Mike Gottert, commander of the department’s 1st District Civil Disturbance Unit.

“The MPD and Chief of Police Cathy Lanier would like to thank all of the Guard personnel who helped make this historic event possible”, he said. “It would have been impossible to handle this event without them.”

“Yes, it is historic and memorable,” said Sgt. Ken Falzarano, a member of the National Guard communications team during a media visit prior to deployment, “but this is what I do; it’s kind of just another day.”

The task force was based at Trinity College, a 100 year old university that started as a Catholic women’s college, and is still an undergraduate

woman’s college with co educational graduate and professional programs.

“It was quite a scene seeing the parade of buses lined up on Cuvily Driveway, and seeing the troops marching into Trinity Center with their full packs, it was incredible,” said Pat McGuire, president of the university.

“I felt very proud of Trinity to be able to host (the National Guard) and see so many wonderful women and men ready to devote their time and talent to ensuring our national security, and a smooth execution of the inauguration,” he added

For some of these Soldiers and Airmen, an historic event like this and supporting their new Commander in Chief is a once in a life time opportunity and makes them proud to be able to participate.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Morrissey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 104th Military Police Battalion, added that it is an honor to be chosen to be at an event as significant and historic as this is.

“Besides Iraq and Afghanistan this is one of the most important missions we have been tasked with,” Morrissey said. “We assist, protect, and defend the people of the United States and our Commander in Chief is our top priority.” **gt**



President Barack Obama. More than 10,000 National Guard servicemembers deployed to Washington to support the inaugural of the nation’s 44th President, including more than 200 New York National Guard Soldiers and Airmen.

Counter Drug Team Costs Dealers \$10 million

Story by 2nd Lt. Dannielle Flanigan, Counter Drug Task Force

ALBANY - New York's drug dealers and marijuana growers are out \$10 million and 12,810 "joints" thanks to the 2008 efforts of the New York National Guard's Counterdrug Task Force.

The Army and Air Guardsmen of the Task Force teamed up with federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities to find and eradicate over 4,000 marijuana plants, along with four pounds of processed marijuana in 2008. The street value of these plants and processed drugs exceeded \$10 million.

The task force was also involved in the arrest of 22 suspects and the dismantling of one growing camp.

A mature plant can yield an average of one ounce of dried marijuana. An ounce of dried marijuana can produce up to three "joints". The amount of outdoor plants eradicated by the task force prevented 12,180 "joints" from reaching communities in New York State. Outdoor plants produce 3-4 times more volume and stronger potency than indoor plants.

The task force is aggressively striving to decrease the spread of marijuana cultivation. Previous years' results and current intelligence guided the efforts of the task force this year.

The Eradication Team is comprised of OH-58 pilots and law enforcement officers. When on an eradication mission, the OH-58 crew and law enforcement officers assigned as aerial observers locate illegally cultivated marijuana plots and direct ground personnel for eradication.

"Of course, I love finding a big forest of marijuana, but finding a couple of plants is just as exciting," said New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer Two Jonathan Noble, a full-time eradication pilot. "Anything that keeps these drugs off the streets makes it rewarding."

Noble is a member of Detachment 1, Company A, 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Security and Support (S&S) in Latham.

In addition to Noble, several helicopter pilots and maintainers from the Army Aviation Support Facility support the Counterdrug mission.

The Vermont and Massachusetts National Guard provided additional crews to assist in an extremely busy eradication season.

"The service the National Guard provides is invaluable, said Lieutenant Eric Benjamin from the Ulster County Sheriff Department. "We could not afford this much flight time if we contracted it out."

"We had a great year last year and hoping for an even better one next year," he added. **gt**

"Anything that keeps these drugs off the streets makes it rewarding."

-- Chief Warrant Officer Two Jonathan Noble, eradication pilot, New York National Guard Counter Drug Task Force

Top photo: Army National Guard aviation and Counter Drug Task Force personnel training with federal, state, and local law enforcement, Aug. 20-21, 2008 in western New York as part of the The Domestic Cannabis Eradication and Suppression Program run by the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency. **Below:** Cannabis plants are the main effort for law enforcement. The Counter Drug Task Force supported law enforcement authorities to find and eradicate over 4,000 marijuana plants in 2008. The street value of these plants exceeded \$10 million. Courtesy Photos.



WMD Reaction Force Stands Ready Should Disaster Strike

Army Guard Transitions to New Response Force Headquarters

Story by Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle, 369th Sustainment Brigade

FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, Pa. -- It was a quiet morning October 19, 2008 at Fort Indiantown Gap, when residents were rocked by a massive explosion that was heard for miles around. Screams for help were heard from the pile of rubble.

Approximately 100 men, women and children were asleep when their lives suddenly changed. People were shocked, no one sure what to think.

Unsure if it was a terrorist attack or natural disaster, first responders called in the assistance of the New York Army National Guard and Soldiers of the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear and high yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package team, known as a CERFP.

The training exercise conducted here validated nearly a year of training, equipping and preparing Soldiers, Airman and New York Guard volunteers from the CERFP.

The New York National Guard CERFP provides immediate response capability to the governor for incident site search capability of

damaged buildings, rescuing trapped casualties, providing decontamination, and performing medical triage and initial treatment to stabilize patients for transport to medical facilities all in direct support of civilian emergency responders.

"CERFP is an enhanced response force package task force that is trained to provide search and rescue operations, decontamination and medical evaluation," Lt. Col. Martin C. Dinan, Commander, 102nd Military Police Battalion from Auburn, N.Y., said. "We are an extremely important element, in addition to terrorist attacks, we also assist with natural disasters and a lot of people don't understand that."

"We have 90 minutes to get our decon tents set up and operational," Dinan said. "We have it down to about one hour and ten minutes."

The training exercise in October validated the newest members of the team.

"We are here to certify the New York CERFP Team", said Jerry McGhee, a training analyst for the Joint International Training and Education Center. "We evaluate each element of the CERFP, including the medical group, the decontamination group, the search and extractions group, and also the command and control unit, and we have a check system of Go or No-Go."

The job of searching for survivors begins with the search and extraction teams. They enter a hot zone and begin removing the casualties to the decontamination tents.

After completing its validation training under the watchful eye of First U.S. Army evaluators, the CERFP, comprised of the 102nd Military Police Battalion, the 105nd Military Police Company, Air National Guard Medical representatives and members of the New York Guard assumed the responsibilities for the response mission on Jan. 11 during a transfer of authority ceremony in Gloversville, N.Y.

The 102nd Military Police will lead the CERFP team for the next two years. They take over the mission from the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment.

"I am very proud of our Soldiers, they are very motivated and caught onto the CERFP very quickly," Dinan said. "I explained to them

that this is what the Guard is all about. You train for federal missions such as Iraq and Afghanistan, but this is where you get to help people stateside with a disaster, whether it is a terrorist attack or natural disaster. This is what the National Guard is all about, it's both sides of the coin." **gt**



Army National Guard Lt. Col. Martin Dinan, commander of the 102nd Military Police Battalion accepts the CERFP guidon from Brig. Gen. Patrick Murphy during a Transition of Authority ceremony in Gloversville, Jan. 11. The CERFP is the unit specially trained to deal with victims of chemical, biological, radiological or high-yield explosive attacks. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott.



Members of the 102nd Military Police Battalion conduct decontamination training at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. in October, 2008 as part of the unit validation to serve as the CERFP response force. The New York National Guard unit is specially trained to deal with victims of chemical, biological, radiological, and high-yield explosive attacks. Photo by Staff Sgt. Dennis Gravelle.

"...this is what the Guard is all about.

--Lt. Col. Martin Dinan, Commander, 102nd Military Police Battalion and CERFP Commander

Governor Paterson Visits Troops in Iraq, Afghanistan

State Commander in Chief Meets with Guardsmen for the Holidays

Guard Times Staff

BALAD, Iraq - Governor David A. Paterson conducted a holiday visit with U.S. service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan in December as part of a Congressional Delegation trip with Representatives Steve Israel (D-NY) and Anthony Weiner (D-NY).

During their time in Iraq, Paterson, Weiner and Israel shared meals with Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, based at Ronkonkoma, and Albany as well as troops from the 133rd Quartermaster Company from Brooklyn and Riverhead. Paterson toured American forward operating bases and met with Iraqi and American officials, including General Raymond T. Odierno, commander of the Multi-National Force—Iraq (MNF-I), and Ryan Crocker, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

"I'm proud of the accomplishments these brave men and women have made while serving in Iraq under the toughest conditions imaginable," Paterson said. "It is due to their extraordinary efforts that progress has been made in reducing violence over the last year and now we're closer to being able to bring our troops home."

"It is a privilege for me to visit the troops during the holiday season," Paterson said. "I consider it such an honor to be able to travel to the war zone and personally thank these great Americans for their service."

"For most of us, the holiday season means taking some time off. But for our troops - these days can be especially lonely," Israel said. "As a member of Congress, one of my most critical responsibilities is ensuring our troops have the support and resources they need. I'm thrilled Governor Paterson is with us on this trip to meet with members of the New York National Guard. It's vitally important that we continue to work together, at the state and federal level, to take care of our troops and their families all year round."

After visiting Iraq, Paterson toured Afghanistan Dec. 23.

In Afghanistan, the delegation met with Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai and nearly 200 New York troops from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

Paterson assisted the 27th IBCT Commander, Col. Brian K. Balfe, present awards, including a Purple Heart, several Bronze Star Medals, Meritorious Service Medals, and Army Commendation and Achievement Medals. Paterson also presented Spc. Marcin Pawezka and Spc. Alfredo Alvarado with their United States citizenship for service to their country.

The brigade just completed its mission and was redeploying home.

"Much will be asked of our nation's service men and women and members of New York's National Guard and Reserves to put Iraq and Afghanistan on a path toward peace and stability," Paterson added. "We have come away with a better understanding of what we can do to ensure they have all they need before they deploy and are given the care and benefits they deserve when they return."

"This is where the attacks against New York originated; this is where Osama bin Laden fought and fled; and this is where our focus should be to defeat the terrorists who would do us harm again," Israel said.

Editor's Note: Spc. Luke Austin of the 33rd Brigade Combat Team contributed to this article from Kabul, Afghanistan. gt



Gov. David Paterson shakes Col. Brian K. Balfe's hand before his departure from Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan Dec. 23, 2008. Paterson came to Camp Phoenix to visit troops from the New York-based 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Some Soldiers of the 27th IBCT were presented awards by Balfe and Paterson during his visit. Photo by Spc. Luke Austin.



Specialist Dominique Massiah, a member of the ground maintenance company from Task Force Jester, gets a chance to meet Governor Paterson during the governor's visit to Iraq Dec. 21, 2008. Her company first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Dan Colello, is in the background. Photo by Maj. Fred Evans.



New York Governor David Paterson, leads New York Army National Guardsmen from the 133rd Quartermaster Company, from Brooklyn in a chant of "Go, Mets!" in front of Dining Facility 1, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 21, 2008. Paterson had lunch with the deployed Soldiers. Photo by Spc. Kiyoshi Freeman.

Orion Turns Over Task Force Phoenix Mission

New York's 27th IBCT Advance Afghan Army and Police Forces

Guard Times Staff

CAMP PHOENIX, Kabul, Afghanistan – December 19 marked the beginning of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's journey home as the headquarters for Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix passed to the next rotational force to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

In a Transfer of Authority ceremony here, the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) passed authority of CJTF Phoenix Dec. 19 to the Illinois-based 33rd IBCT. Brig. Gen. Steven P. Huber, Illinois Army National Guard, took command with confidence that the vision and efforts of the 33rd IBCT could successfully uphold the standards set by the outgoing command.

"Today we celebrate the success of one command, and the bright future of another," Huber said. "The 27th paved a way for their own success and provided a path for ours."

Col. Brian K. Balfe took command of CJTF Phoenix VII on April 26, and assumed control of the responsibility to train and mentor the Afghan National Security Forces (Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police). Despite shortages, Balfe led the 27th through 9 months of tough operations, said Maj. Gen. Richard P. Formica, Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan commander.

"While training the Afghan National Security Forces, the 27th helped deliver a better life to the Afghans through a wide array of humanitarian efforts," Formica said.

Balfe stated with pride his confidence in the transition of command to the 33rd IBCT "... in better condition than it was given to us."

Among the achievements of the 27th Brigade Soldiers and the task force were growing the Afghan National Army (ANA) by 6 Kandaks (Battalions), resulting in 7,382 additional Afghan Soldiers; validating an additional 24 ANA Kandaks for independent operations; assisting in the planning and execution of more than 100 major combat operations alongside Afghan forces; fielding modern weapons and equipment to Afghan troops, including M16A2 rifles and armored humvees; committing

more than \$115 million to nearly 400 separate construction and improvement projects across Afghanistan; obligating \$39 million from the Commander's Emergency Response Program to build roads, schools, clinics, dig wells, etc. to improve living conditions for the Afghan people; and providing more than 1,250 tons of humanitarian assistance aid delivered to women, children, schools and orphanages, an average of approximately 150 tons per month.

Many were called, few chosen and many volunteered, said Balfe, in order to improve the Afghan peoples' chances for a better life.


"An act of terrorism brought us here and all of us will never forget. Being here brought us full circle."

-- Colonel Brian K. Balfe, commander, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix

"An act of terrorism brought us here and all of us will never forget," Balfe said. "Being here brought us full circle."

And now that they begin their trek home, the leadership of CJTF Phoenix VII has full confidence in the abilities of CJTF Phoenix VIII and the 33rd IBCT.

"I have every confidence that the 33rd will build upon the great work of Task Force Phoenix VII," Balfe said.

Editor's Note: Spc. Luke Austin, 33rd IBCT and CJTF Phoenix VIII, contributed to this article. 



New York Army National Guard Capt. Hyun Sung Hwang receives the Defense Meritorious Service Medal from Col. Brian Balfe, Commander of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Nov. 28, 2008. Hundreds of other Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix Soldiers received end of tour awards for their roles in training and mentoring the developing Afghan National Army and Police. Photo by Lt. Col. Paul Fanning.

Photo, opposite page: Colonel Brian K. Balfe (right) and Command Sgt. Maj. David A. Piwowski case the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New York Army National Guard, colors to mark the end of their tour as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix command. The 27th IBCT then transferred authority of CJTF Phoenix to the 33rd IBCT, Illinois National Guard in a ceremony at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan. The past year for the 27th has been a series of challenges that they have met successfully, said Maj. Gen. Richard P. Formica, Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan commander. Photo by Spc. Luke S. Austin.



New Leadership in Army Guard Battalions

Colors Change Hands as New Commanders Take Reigns



BINGHAMTON - Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey M. Cipolla passes 204th Engineer Battalion colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Ames for safe keeping during the change of command ceremony Nov. 8, 2008. Cipolla, an Iraq War veteran of the 42nd Engineer Brigade Headquarters and Bronze Star recipient assumed leadership of the battalion from outgoing commander Lt. Col. Carlton C. Cleveland. The 204th has more than 600 Soldiers throughout Binghamton, Kingston, Peekskill, Buffalo, Horseheads and Walton. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott.



FORT PICKETT, Va. - Incoming commander, Lt. Col. John Andonie passes the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Jorge Vasquez for safe keeping at a change-of-command ceremony at the Fort Pickett movie theater on Oct. 17, 2008. Andonie is an Iraq War veteran of the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters where he received a Bronze Star for duties as operations chief for the division tactical command post. Brig. Gen. Paul Genereux, 42nd Infantry Division Commander, passed the command from Lt. Col. Charles Crosby, outgoing commander. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone..



UTICA - Brigadier General Paul C. Genereux (left) passes the colors of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry to Lt. Col. Joseph Biehler during the battalion's change of command ceremony in, Dec. 6, 2008. Biehler deployed to Iraq in 2004 as the operations officer of the battalion he will now lead. His awards include the Bronze Star, Iraq Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, the Ranger Tab Airborne Wings, Air Assault Wings and Combat Infantryman's Badge. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Peter Towse..



The CJTF-Phoenix VII plaque dedicated on Dec. 13, 2008. The plaque memorializes the contribution of more than 1,700 New York Army National Guard Soldiers deployed for the mission in 2008. Photo by Lt. Col. Tim Franklin.

Guardsmen Leave Their Own Mark in Afghanistan



KABUL, Afghanistan - New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Fiorilli, Maintenance Control Officer, and Captain Adam Richardson, Commander, Company B, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, 27th Brigade Combat Team, from Rochester, New York, presents Ghulam Ali "Zainal", president of the department of orphanages, with a certificate of appreciation Dec. 11, 2008 for allowing the National Guard unit to visit and help the country of Afghanistan and the Tahia Maskan Boys Orphanage in Kabul. The Commander's Emergency Relief Projects provided funding for much needed repairs to the facility as well as clothing and school supplies for the children. Photo by Sgt. James D. Sims.



Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski is assisted by Staff Sgt. Linda Nosbisch in unveiling the CJTF-Phoenix VII plaque in Patriot Square on the National Guard's 372nd birthday Dec. 13, 2008. Both are from Lancaster. Colonel Brian K. Balfé, the task force commander and Spc. Ray Ramirez from Saratoga Springs, who helped design it, stand next to Staff Sgt. Nosbisch. Photo by Lt. Col. Tim Franklin.

CJTF-Phoenix Marks National Guard Birthday and Afghan Service Legacy

By Lt. Col. Paul Fanning, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

CAMP PHOENIX, KABUL, Afghanistan – The New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) dedicated a marble plaque in Patriot Square at Camp Phoenix in Kabul where it has served since last April in command of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTF-Phoenix) VII.

The National Guard's 372nd birthday on Dec. 13 framed the occasion as the outgoing 27th and incoming 33rd brigades prepared to hold the transfer of authority Dec. 19.

"I can't think of a better way for us to mark the birthday of our service than for two historic commands to meet at an important crossroads while serving the nation from a combat zone," said Col. Brian K. Balfé, commander of CJTF-Phoenix VII and the National Guard's 27th IBCT during a short program inside the Camp Phoenix dining facility following the unveiling of the marble plaque.

"Today we mark the 372nd birthday of America's National Guard from the opposite side of the world while performing the kind of duty that has always been our hallmark," he

said. "Through our efforts, our example, and our service we are helping to build a nation and the National Guard has been doing exactly that for almost four centuries, when you think about it."

"Citizen Soldiers have always defended and then helped build our nation to what it is today. During war, we have always fought from the front and when hostilities have ended we helped support the peace and contribute to reconstruction," Balfé added.

The program also featured the unveiling of a memorial inside the dining facility as a tribute to the service members who fell in during CJTF-Phoenix VII, including eight New York National Guard members.

The production and installation of both the plaque and the memorial were overseen by Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski, but the design and finishing work came from several volunteers in the brigade, including Col. Mike Leonardo, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Sirles, Staff Sgt. Anthony Lechanski, Spc. Ray Ramirez, and Staff Sgt. Linda Nosbisch. **gt**



New York Army National Guard Sgt. Daniel Ransier with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, gives his son, Noah, a kiss during the redeployment ceremony at the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team headquarters armory in Syracuse, Dec. 31, 2008. The unit was deployed to Afghanistan for 9 months as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, training and mentoring the Afghan National Army and National Police. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Peter Towse.

A Year to Remember

Orion Soldiers Home from Afghanistan

By Senior Airman Peter Dean, 174th Fighter Wing

BUFFALO - The year 2008 will live in the memories of more than 70 local Soldiers and their families for years to come. Members from the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned New Years Eve from an 11 month deployment to Afghanistan. The Soldiers were part of the largest deployment of National Guardsmen since World War II.

The redeployment here in Buffalo was similar to the homecoming of troops from the brigade all across New York State as more than 1,500 Citizen Soldiers returned home to armories and airports following the successful end of their tour for Operation Enduring Freedom. Homecomings for the troops occurred throughout the holiday season, with troops arriving home from mid-December up until early January.

Upon arrival at Buffalo International Airport the Soldiers were treated to the welcome they had earned. No waiting at baggage claim, no long walk to the parking lot, just straight off the plane and onto one of two awaiting luxury coaches. The coaches destined for two different



Specialist Bryon Hulsizer reunites with his wife Brandy and their sons Joshua and Shawn in Syracuse, Dec. 27, 2008 at the Thompson Rd. Armory. Hulsizer and approximately 150 soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team returned from Afghanistan where the unit served since April training the Afghan National Army. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Abbott.

locations; one a little more than an hour down the New York State Thruway to Rochester and the other just a few miles away to the Masten Avenue Armory. No matter what coach the Soldiers rode, the end result was the same, eagerly awaiting loved ones.

As the Soldiers entered the armories cheers and tears of joy filled the room. The Soldiers in formation, still on duty awaited the words they had been longing to hear "troops, you're released to your families."

"This is the best Christmas present ever," said Rachel Van De Mark. She was referring to the reunion with her husband Sgt. Tony Van De Mark.

"It's wonderful," said Sgt. Van De Mark, "I can't explain the feeling, it's something we've been waiting a year for," he said.

"It feels awesome, awesome, I just want to cherish this moment forever," said Capt. Scott Golden, upon reuniting with his family.

Deployed Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team spent their days and nights living and working in conditions that they were unaccustomed to. The Soldiers formed Combined Joint Task Force Pheonix, operating from a headquarters in Kabul but with Soldiers spread across the entire Afghan countryside, training the Afghan army and the National Police Force to better defend their country. They also built and remodeled hospitals, dug fresh water wells and distributed more than 1,250 tons of humanitarian aid.

"I'm feeling good, we made an impact there," said Spc. Michael Fox. "But it felt like I was gone a long time. I did my job," he said.

"We put in two surgical suites, installed electricity, put in X-rays and filled the pharmacy," said Capt. Matthew Ryan, referring to an Afghan +hospital that he and his unit got up to operating standards.

According to the captain, the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was instrumental in reducing the crime rate in the southern part of Afghanistan known as the Regional Center South by 40 percent. The Brigade also planted more than 5,500 trees, many of them fruit-

"It feels awesome, awesome, I just want to cherish this moment forever,"

-- Capt. Scott Golden, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team



Captain Scott Golden reunites with his family in Buffalo on Dec. 31, 2008 after being away for almost a year. Photo by Sr. Airman Peter Dean.

bearing.

As tough as it was for the troops to be away from home, the families left behind also had hardships to deal with.

"It's been very hard, but I've had a lot of help, family, friends," said Tracy Bousquet, wife of Maj. Stephen Bousquet. "I've had a great support system," she said.

"My wife did the lion's share of the work," said Maj. Bousquet. "My hats off to her," he said.

Back on more familiar ground, the troops can look back on what they have accomplished, and look forward to the New Year.

"It been a long year, I'll do the ball drop and try not to partake too much," said First Sgt. Gary Darnell, referring to his New Years Eve plans. **gt**

Finance Unit Completes Training, Heads Out to Kuwait

Guard Times Staff

FORT McCOY, Wis. – Members of the 27th Finance Management Company completed training here October 21 in preparation for deployment to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Since their arrival at Fort McCoy in September, Soldiers from the 27th, an Army National Guard unit with its home station in Whitestone, N.Y., participated in extensive training on equipment and procedures to learn skills they will need to be successful in their mission overseas.

“Our finance-qualified Soldiers are receiving special training in various finance operations from instructors of the Finance Management Warrior Training Center at Fort McCoy,” Maj. George Wilcha, company commander, said.

Wilcha listed some of the tasks, including personnel management, supply, maintenance, nuclear-biological-chemical operations, tactical and field operations, field sanitation, maneuvering as unit movement officers, serving as combat life savers, operating military tactical vehicles in an all-terrain environment, performing weapons qualification, conducting urban warfare operations and running convoy operations.

“The 27th has incredible Soldiers in our ranks,” Wilcha said. “I thank all of the Soldiers for the sacrifice everyone, including their families, are making in order for the 27th to conduct a successful mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

The list of required training is extensive. The 27th participated in training related to weapons qualification, Army warrior training, physical fitness, leadership, combat life saving, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mounted combat patrol operations, urban operations, entry control point operations, motor vehicle operations and maintenance, protective mask familiarity and confidence, detainee operations, hand-to-hand combat, reflexive fire, grenades, culture/customs/language, land navigation, and much more.

“(Our) Non-commissioned officers’ most important duty is not limited to train our Soldiers in peacetime, but to also prepare them for wartime,” Sgt. Major Ernesto Ramos, the unit senior enlisted Soldier, said. “I will not cease to encourage and motivate our Soldiers to pursue and achieve our main responsibility.”



Private 1st Class Hutison Louismar, foreground, Sgt. Jason Tam, center, and Spc. Jacqueline Guerro, rear, work on military pay documents while Sgt. 1st Class Robert Kemp observes. They are at a mission readiness exercise at Fort McCoy, Wis. The three seated Soldiers are members of the 27th Finance Management Company, New York Army National Guard, from Whitestone, NY, that mobilized to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kemp is an operational support team on-site instructor from the Army Finance Command at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. Photo courtesy Fort McCoy Public Affairs.

“Today we are proudly seeing the result of the dedication of Soldiers and NCO’s while our troops successfully execute all of our training tasks, meeting the standards and maintaining a high level of morale,” Ramos said. “This is certainly an indication of readiness and a guarantee to success in completing our mission.”

“We thank families, relatives and friends for their enormous support,” Ramos said. “It is a great help to stay focused in our objectives knowing that our families are doing well, are safe, and that they appreciate our commitment to serve our community, our state and our nation.”

The unit is expected to return to New York in the fall of 2009. **gt**



Specialist Jin Hui Jiang hands Richard Crogan his pay during a mission readiness exercise at Fort McCoy, Wis. Jiang is a cashier with the 27th Finance Management Company, New York Army National Guard, from Whitestone, N.Y. mobilizing to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Crogan is a “civilian on the battlefield” role-player employee at Fort McCoy. Photo courtesy Ft. McCoy Public Affairs.



Major General Joseph Taluto, the Adjutant General and Brig. Gen. Paul Genereux, Jr., commander of the 42nd Infantry Division (Center) salute as the remains of New York Army National Guard Sgt. Deon Taylor pass by during funeral observances on Thursday, Nov. 6. Taluto and Genereux joined New York Police Department dignitaries, include Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, at Manhattan's Riverside Church to honor Taylor. Taylor, a member of the New York Police Department since 2005, and the Army National Guard since 2001, was killed in action in Afghanistan on October 22. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo.

New York Mourns Fallen Bronx Soldier Alongside NYPD

Guard Times Staff

NEW YORK - Sergeant Deon Taylor, 30, died on October 22 in Bela Beluk, Farah Province, Afghanistan after his armored humvee struck an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations against enemy forces.

Taylor, who joined the New York Army National Guard in 1997, was a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, based in Syracuse. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant posthumously.

Taylor was assigned to Afghan Regional Security Integration Command South.

During a prior assignment with the 27th Brigade, Taylor was a Fire Control Systems

Specialist belonging to Battery B, 1st Battalion 258th Field Artillery, based in the Bronx. In civilian life he was a member of the New York Police Department.

A resident of the Bronx, Taylor is survived by his father and mother, who both live in the Bronx.

"We in the New York National Guard are saddened by the death of this fine Soldier," said Major General Joseph Taluto, the Adjutant General of New York and Commander of the New York National Guard.

"Sergeant Taylor died in battle against the enemies of the United States and we respect his service and sacrifice, while we mourn with his family for this loss," Taluto added.

His awards include the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, New York State Aid to Civil Authorities Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal.

He is being awarded the Bronze Star, posthumously, along with the Purple Heart, Combat Action Badge, and New York State Conspicuous Service Medal.

Taylor was the eighth New York Army National Guard Soldier serving in Afghanistan to die in that country during the 27th Brigade Combat Team's deployment. **gt**



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NGB Summer Accel OCS (Phase I-III) 12 Jun – 8 Aug 09

State OCS Phase I: 17 Jul-01 Aug 09, Phase II: 21 Aug 09 - 06 Jun 10, Phase III: 23 Jul 10- 7 Aug 10

- 60 College Credits for State OCS Enrollment
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- Must Obtain Letter of Recommendation from Commander
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Anthony Riscica, a course instructor and Domestic Operations Program Manager for IIF Data Solutions, Inc., instructs more than 50 Air and Army Guardsmen attending a week-long course tailored to Joint Operations Center practices and procedures, ranging from Homeland Security to natural disasters.

JOC 101- Leaders Learn Roles and Responsibilities

Story and photo by Spc. Melissa Eckard, 42nd Infantry Division

LATHAM - Captain Nick Suhr, commander of Headquarters Company, 42nd Infantry Division, knows how his unit operates. Now, as a result of attending a week-long course called Joint Operations Center (JOC) 101, he is more knowledgeable of the overall domestic support missions in the New York National Guard.

Suhr was one of more than 50 Army and Air National Guard members who trained on JOC practices and procedures ranging from Homeland Security to natural disasters at Joint Forces Headquarters here, Jan. 26-30.

The New York National Guard's state-of-the-art JOC is the place from which The Adjutant General can manage information and communication during an emergency or operation.

JOC 101 teaches how to maintain situational awareness of both internal and external environments, providing proven tools, techniques and procedures. It also shows how to assign and track military missions and tasks effectively.

Throughout the course, attendees became familiar with several federal agencies' roles and responsibilities, their impact on national security and defense, as well as their partnership capabilities. Attendees learned how these agencies conduct all-hazards incident response and how to link all levels of government, private-

sector, and nongovernmental organizations in a unified approach to emergency management.

Anthony Riscica, the Domestic Operations Program Manager for IIF Data Solutions, Inc. and a course instructor said that when Guardsmen have an understanding of what the JOC is and does, it increases their readiness.

"The whole course is designed to provide instruction to JOC personnel to increase the readiness of the state," said Riscica, a retired New York Army National Guard colonel. "Once completing the course, attendees are better prepared to support their operations and have the ability to do their job better."

The attending officers and staff non-commissioned officers learned that the first 72 hours of a mission, communications, security search and stability are critical.

Their new skills were put to the test as students participated in a simulated JOC exercise where they established a battle rhythm using newly taught situational awareness tools, information management sources and mission management procedures.

"This training is something that can help me better prepare our Soldiers for an emergency," Suhr said. "As I move along in my military career I'll understand what it takes to run a JOC and I'll know the roles that need to be filled." **gt**

Homecoming Dance

Dance Expressions Welcomes Home Local Guard Unit

Story and photo by Shelly Aiken, Family Readiness Program

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor - When Soldiers from the Hudson Valley's Company A, 69th Infantry returned from Iraq Dec. 13, they were met not only by family and friends, but with music and dance.

The local Dance Expressions group, with youth from all ages, offered their time and effort to perform at the homecoming celebration for the troops back home from Afghanistan.

"The girls really wanted to show their support for the troops and they were so glad to be part of the Soldiers' homecoming," said Diane Barton, billeting manager at Camp Smith and a parent for one of the participants.

Dance Expressions, based in Peekskill in Westchester, showed their patriotism with a unique military-themed performance as Soldiers and their families were entertained by the talented group of volunteers. The group is led by sisters and former Nets & Knicks dancers, Christine and Jessica Grafer. The two offer classes for preschoolers to adult in Ballet, Pointe, Contemporary, Jazz, Tap, Hip-Hop, Ballroom, Salsa and Musical Theatre. **gt**



Westchester area's Dance Expressions performs at the Camp Smith Training Site on Dec. 13 for a homecoming of 69th Infantry Soldiers.

New York's Bravest Now Serving in Baghdad

FDNY Battalion Chief doubles as private in Army Guard Aviation Battalion

Story and photo by Pfc. Jasmine N. Walthall, Task Force 449



Private 1st Class Steven Fitzgerald, and fiancée, Spc. Viviana Molina, review intelligence reports prior to a briefing in Iraq. Fitzgerald is a member of the 3-142 Assault Helicopter Battalion from Long Island.

BAGHDAD, Iraq- Private 1st Class Steven P. Fitzgerald, a resident of Floral Park, L.I., brings a unique twist to the average private in the Army. When Fitzgerald is not in Iraq serving as an intelligence analyst, he is a city-wide battalion chief for the Fire Department for the City of New York.

Fitzgerald is a member of the 3-142 Assault

Helicopter Battalion, based in Ronkonkama.

Fitzgerald had previously held off joining the military because he was unaware of the age waiver for the National Guard. When his fiancée, Spc. Viviana B. Molina, who is also in his unit, informed him of the new age waiver, he jumped at the chance to join.

At 41 years old, Fitzgerald joined the National Guard in July of 2007, an action he states was long overdue.

"There were so many people I knew personally who passed during 9/11 and all I did was pay my taxes and practice my golf swing," said Fitzgerald. "My goal was to do my part by coming to Iraq and serving my country."

This sudden decision to start a career in the Army, when his civilian career was nearing retirement, came as quite a shock for Fitzgerald's family and friends.

"Everyone thought I was crazy, or going through a mid-life crisis," Fitzgerald said. "I wasn't looking to prove anything or get attention, I just wanted to do my part, and it was worth it."

While Basic Combat and Advanced Individual Training came relatively easy both physically and

mentally, there were a few challenges.

"My biggest challenge was working with young adults who could be my children," said Fitzgerald. "However, I was in awe that there were Soldiers here doing more at 21 years old than I ever thought of doing," said the native of Garden City, Long Island.

"I also had to deal with being a lower enlisted and having to take orders where I was previously in a position to give orders to 400-500 firefighters," finished Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald has been in the NYC Fire Department since 1990, a decision he credits to his father, a retired fireman.

"I can't say that I would have done the same thing if I was in his position, but I am proud that he did," Major Fred J. Evans, the battalion intelligence officer said. "He is very accountable, and because of his civilian job, I tend to give him more tasks and responsibilities than the average Pfc."

"To be able to say in June 2009 that I am a veteran in the U.S. Army, is a big deal," said Fitzgerald. "I am proud to say that I am serving my country and have done my part, and would definitely do it again." **gt**

Scouting Takes Life Again in Iraq

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret, Multi-National Division - Center

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – On Saturday afternoons, a fenced-in patch of land near Camp Victory becomes a ground for children to play and participate in their community.

Girl scouts decorate arts and crafts. Boy scouts hurl dodge balls at one another, while others learn to build a fire using just twigs.

It looks like fun and games, but there is much at stake for these young Iraqis.

"You can look around and, if nothing else, you are doing something good here because you are creating a positive impact for Iraqi families and children," said Lt. Cmdr. Eric Fretz, who is helping to bring scouting back to life after almost two decades of neglect in Iraq.

The scouting movement was revitalized in 2004 by the Green Zone Council. Fretz and other passionate service members decided to

start their own Victory Base Council, which brings servicemembers together with schoolchildren from areas in southern Baghdad. The group began with just a few dedicated volunteers. Now, the council has nearly 200 members with more than 120 volunteers, including 142nd Aviation Sgt. Keith Gibson.

The service members volunteer their time to teach children scouting lessons and sport activities. The volunteers organize crafts, team-building exercises and rotate between sports, including soccer, football, ultimate Frisbee and even archery.

"They don't really have the same setup as we do," Fretz said. "We bring in the American knowledge of scouting and how we do things, and we blend that with the Iraqi ideas."

Learn more at www.victorybasecouncil.org **gt**



Sgt. Keith Gibson, of Ghent, with the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Regiment, teaches an Iraqi scout archery during a troop scout meeting in southern Baghdad, Nov. 22.



Brooklyn native Sgt. Ben Downing, a communications specialist with the 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, interacts with his audience while performing stand-up comedy at The Pavilion on FOB Delta in Iraq on Dec. 6.

Comic Performs for Full House of Fellow Soldiers

Story and photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Brigade

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELTA, Iraq – Nearly 300 Soldiers and civilians packed into the pavilion on Forward Operating Base Delta, Dec. 6, for an evening of comedy.

The comic, Sgt. Ben Downing, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, has been building his stand-up comedy career since leaving active duty in 2000 and hopes to use his skills to entertain his comrades in Iraq.

During his show, Downing made light of life on FOB Delta. The Brooklyn native and the rest of his battalion have been in country for less than a month, but his take on several facts of life earned loud

laughter and applause.

“Being able to find common ground – that’s the art of stand-up comedy,” said Downing, a communications non-commissioned officer.

His first attempt at stand-up wasn’t so successful, Downing said. While stationed in South Korea, Downing participated in a talent show.

“I got booed off the stage,” he admits. “Looking back, I was horrible.”

As he was in the process of leaving active duty, several buddies encouraged Downing to try again. His girlfriend at the time knew people in the comedy business and helped him get a

two-minute spot at a club.

“It wasn’t that bad,” said Downing. He kept going, and started getting to know other comics.

He eventually became friends with a group of comics that included D.L. Hughley, Tracey Morgan and Dave Chappell, earning opening spots on their shows and spots on *Comic View* in 2003 and 2004.

He also earned a small part in the movie “*I Am Legend*,” starring Will Smith. Downing joked about his very small part and the difference between “rich thinking” and “broke thinking” during his FOB Delta performance.

After building up to performing almost nightly, when his battalion mobilized to deploy at Fort Sill,

Okla., he put together a show – partly to keep his skills fresh and partly to give his battle buddies something to do.

“They need comedy,” said Downing.

Downing said he plans to capture one of his shows in theater and send it to networks in the U.S., so he can share his “skewed sense of humor” and life as a Soldier with a larger audience.

He noted that his command has been supportive of his comedy efforts

“There’s no other comic who’s been a Soldier in Iraq before,” said Downing. “As long as I do my job well, they let me do this.” **gt**

Guard Aircrews Train Great White North Neighbors



Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

ROCHESTER - The need for hands-on training on CH-47 "Chinook" helicopters brought Canadian Air Force air crews to the New

York National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility #2 here in late January.

Aviation Soldiers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation, who returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan in April 2008, used their Chinooks and some upstate New York snow to train the Canadians on Afghan flying conditions.

The snow was a stand in for the ubiquitous Afghan dust, explained Capt. Eric Fritz, 3-126 instructor pilot. Fritz put together a two-week training program to prepare the Canadians for an upcoming Afghan deployment.

The members of the Canadian Forces 408th and 430th Tactical Helicopter Squadrons will be operating Chinooks in theater. The Canadian aircraft are already 6000 miles away in Afghanistan and none are in Canada.

The Canadian Forces requested the CH-47 training from National Guard Bureau. National Guard Bureau, in turn, turned to the 126th Aviation Soldiers to provide the training.

"Everybody jumped at the opportunity to provide the training and transmit Company B's experience and information to the Canadians," said Col. Michael Bobeck, New York State Army Aviation Officer. "It makes everybody

operate safer and allows us to accomplish the mission."

The first week of training focused on classroom briefings and battlefield scenarios and daylight flying operations. The second week was spent perfecting their night flying skills, employing night vision devices. The training plan climaxed with a simulated air assault. All training flights took place within 100 miles of the Rochester flight facility.

The light snow fall around Rochester during their training period provided a realistic hazardous condition that all Chinook pilots must deal with in the Afghan environment, Fritz went on to explain.

"The New York National Guard has been very accommodating because it's all been last minute for us," said Canadian Capt. Martin LeFrancois, 430th Squadron, Canadian Air Force. "Now that we have six Chinooks waiting for us in Afghanistan, the training program that they prepared for us will be really beneficial."

The Canadian aviators normally operate the CH-146 Griffon helicopter which is similar to the American UH-1 helicopter which was used extensively during the Vietnam War, so the training also served as transition training. **gt**



Above, Canadian CH-47D Chinook pilot, Capt. Martin LeFrancois, 430th Squadron, Canadian Air Force, performs night time pre-flight checks at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2 on Jan. 21 aboard a New York Army National Guard aircraft. At top, Canadian CH-47 pilot Capt. Sylvie Coutoure performs pre-flight checks before a training flight with her N.Y. National Guard counterparts Jan. 21.



New York Army National Guard Sgt. Scott Stonge of the 1108th Ordnance Company moves through a training scenario at the Army's Global Anti-Terrorism and Operator Readiness (GATOR) Course at Redstone Arsenal during Explosive Ordnance unit training on Oct. 28, 2008.

Guardsmen Get After GATOR Training EOD Unit Learns Up-to-Date Tactics, Techniques

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Fiorito, 1108th Ordnance Company

Taking Care of Chinook Cargo



OLEAN - New York Army National Guard Sgt. Grant Farmer from the Rochester-based Detachment 1, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation provides cargo instruction Nov. 1, 2008 for members of Company A, 642nd Aviation Support Battalion at the Cattaraugus County Airport. The training provided instruction and hands-on skills training for guiding cargo into a CH-47 Chinook helicopter's cargo bay for logistical support missions. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone.

RED STONE ARSENAL, Ala. - Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 1108th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal, or EOD) traveled from their Soldier Readiness Center in Scotia in mid-October to attend the Global Anti-Terrorism and Operator Readiness Course, or GATOR.

The 11 day GATOR course prepares EOD operators with the most up to date intelligence and techniques to use to their advantage during EOD operations.

The 1108th Soldiers trained to detect, identify, defeat and dispose of unexploded ordnance, improvised explosive devices and other chemical, biological, radiological, explosive (CBRNE) threats. With three other similar companies serving in other states, it is part of the 501st Ordnance Battalion (EOD) based in Schenectady.

During the GATOR training program, the Soldiers sharpened their skills with a robot not only during daytime missions, but at night as well.

The Army established the course in 2003 as a way to enhance the training of EOD forces preparing for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. The Army conducts more than 30 GATOR classes per year, training more than 500 EOD technicians from all the military services.

Soldiers participated in real life EOD training scenarios, moving from one incident to the next with little time in between operations.

Every step of the training was as close to real-world events as possible, ranging from the types of EOD incidents to the various techniques used during incident response and employment of EOD vehicles by the Soldiers.

The GATOR training proved to be an outstanding challenge for the Soldiers of the 1108th, both in the classroom and field environments. The knowledge and experience gained by the 1108th's EOD technicians will be crucial to the future success of the 1108th Ordnance Company, whether in training or during overseas deployment. **gt**

Army Guardsmen Share Olympic Style Thrills with Fastest Men on Wheels

Story and photos by Lt. Col. Bob Bullock, *Guard Times* Staff

LAKE PLACID ---NASCAR and National Hot Rod Association Dragster drivers are not used to traveling with passengers but, for the past three years, some of the fastest drivers on four wheels have teamed up with combat veterans from the New York Army National Guard for the Bodine Bobsled Challenge.

“I think they’re crazy,” joked international motor racing star Boris Said, who won the past two year’s competitions. “I think it’s probably safer in Iraq than it is getting into the back of a bobsled with us. It’s unbelievable that these guys do what they do so that we can have freedom and live in the greatest country in the world. I am glad they have a fun time doing this and we love having them,” Said remarked.

The Bodine Bobsled Challenge was conceived by NASCAR legend and former Army National Guardsmen Goeff Bodine to draw attention to his efforts to build world class



Specialist Patrick Furman, an infantry Soldier from the New York Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, displays a 1st Place plaque he received as a brakeman for Todd Bodine during the 2009 Geoff Bodine Bobsled Challenge. This year’s event marks the fourth annual race, held Jan. 3 at Lake Placid.

bobsleds that would make members of the U.S. Olympic and world cup teams competitive in international competition. According to Bodine, the idea for this promotional competition came from a conversation with bobsled television broadcaster John Morgan. “John (Morgan) and I came up with the idea to have NASCAR drivers drive bobsleds and that went really well. Then we asked our friends in the NHRA to come on up. We were hoping to build a lot of awareness for the sport of bobsledding during the years between the Olympics,” Bodine said.

But it was Bodine’s renowned spirit of patriotism that led to the inclusion of recruits and combat veterans from the New York Army National Guard. “I am a patriotic guy with red, white and blue running through my veins. As a son of a WWII veteran and a former Army National Guardsman, I thought we needed some brave people to ride with these drivers and there’s no braver folks than our men and women in the U.S. military,” Bodine said.

This year’s race winner was Todd Bodine and his brakeman, Spc. Patrick Furman, a vehicle driver from the Schenectady-based Company E, 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

Three years ago, Bodine approached 26 year Army National Guard veteran and U.S. Bobsled National Team Coach Bill Tavares about bringing the Guard into the nationally televised event. “I approached the unit in nearby Saranac Lake to see if I could get them to come over,” Tavares said. From there, the request was routed through regional recruiters and the Guard was officially on board.

“The first year, we invited combat veterans just back from Iraq to come up and have a special weekend with their families,” stated Guard recruiting officer and three year organizer for the military’s participation in the event, Maj. David Palmieri, who, himself, was the winning brakeman in the first two year’s competition. “For the participants, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and the coverage the Guard receives is phenomenal...international,” he said. **gt**



An infantry Soldier from the Army National Guard’s 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, keeps his head down while participating as a brakeman during the 2009 Geoff Bodine Bobsled Challenge. The fourth annual race, held Jan. 3 in Lake Placid, N.Y., raised funds for the U.S. Olympic Bobsled Team through the participation of NASCAR and NHRA competition drivers. Combat veterans of the 108th Infantry from New York’s North Country participated as racing partners to the NASCAR drivers.

Guard Soldier TOPPS in his Field

Story and photo by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

WATERVLIET - In his 35-year National Guard career, Army dentist Col. Marc Hendler's been a detachment commander, deployed twice to Iraq, and served as a volunteer surgeon for the New York City Police Department.

Now he's a Topps NFL card, too.

The 58-year old Hendler is one of 11 Armed Forces Fans of the Game featured in a new series of cards issued by the New York City-based Topps Company Inc. Topps, which also makes Bazooka Bubble Gum, has been synonymous with baseball, football and basketball player cards since 1951.

The 11 Soldier cards are distributed at random in the 10-packs of cards Topps markets. There are a total of 440 cards in Topps' 2008 NFL set.

Topps spokesman Clay Luraschi said the company created the Armed Forces Fan cards to honor the troops. The company went to NFL teams and asked them to pick a service member to recognize.

Hendler, a rabid New York Giants fan, was picked by his favorite team.

Being on a football card is a "thrill" said Hendler.

He figures he made the list of 11 service members because of a series of funny e-mails and photos he sent to New York City friends during his two tours in Iraq. He served at Forward Operating Base Speicher with the 42nd Infantry Division in 2005, and with the 466th Area Medical Company at Camp Scania.

One photo, which wound up on the Topps card, featured Hendler standing beside a signpost in Kuwait with arrows pointing to destinations around the world, including Disneyland. Since Michael Eisner, the former head of Disney owns the company that owns Topps, he must have liked the picture, Hendler joked.

For Hendler having a sense of humor, especially in a combat zone, is vital. He can even laugh about the fact that he had to buy his own copies of the Topps card honoring him.

"I had to go on eBay and pay \$3 each for three cards," he said.

Hendler's Army National Guard Career started in 1973 when he was a clerk in the 204th Engineer Battalion. Two years later he'd gotten



Colonel Marc Hendler displays his Topps NFL card. The New York Army National Guard Dentist is featured as one of 11 Armed Forces Fans of the Game in a 2008 series of cards issued by the New York City-based Topps Company Inc. Below, the "Salute to the Fans" card displays Hendler's military service and an affinity for the New York Giants.

his dental degree and he's served as an Army dentist ever since.

He commanded the 824th Medical Detachment in New York City and then was assigned to the New York Army National Guard when the dental detachment disbanded.

In civilian life, Col. Hendler is Dr. Hendler, DDS who maintains a practice with three dentists working for him in the Murray Hill section of New York City. He loses money when he spends time at drill or deploys, Hendler says, but he loves the National Guard.

In fact, Hendler can't seem to keep himself from volunteering. Along with serving as a volunteer surgeon for the New York Police Department, he's also a volunteer fireman, and worked with the New York City medical examiners office identifying remains following the September 11, attacks on the World Trade Center.

He loves the sense of camaraderie he finds in the Army, and he'd volunteer for an Afghanistan tour, but his wife Sheryl, who he's been married to for 33 years, would probably divorce him, Hendler said with a grin.

His next goal is to become the Chief Dental Officer of the National Guard, but regardless

of whether or not he gets the job, he'll serve as long as he can, Hendler said.

He's also hoping that his new found sports card fame will also pay off.

"Now maybe I will go to the game and be recognized," Hendler said. **gt**



Firefighters Try to Train Themselves Out of a Job Internal Training Key to Iraqi Air Force Independence

By Master Sgt. Brian Davidson, 447th Air Expeditionary Group

AL MUTHANA AIR BASE, Iraq - As the Iraqi parliament worked out the details of the new Status of Forces Agreement that calls for American forces to withdraw from the country in 2011, Iraqi air force emergency responders from new al Muthana Air Base took the lead for the first time in a mass casualty response exercise Nov. 21, as they learn how to operate independent of their American counterparts.

The exercise was the largest and most difficult to date for the fledgling air force which brought together firefighters, medical personnel, security forces, command and control, emergency management and safety elements for the first time in order to test their response abilities, as well as to develop an independent training and exercise capability.

“The challenge and purpose of this exercise was to continue developing the Iraqi air forces’ ability to plan and to conduct their own training and exercise program,” said Capt. Sunny Holden, 321st Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (AEAS) medical advisor.

American emergency responders from the 447th Air Expeditionary Group (AEG) including Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing at Sather Air Base and training personnel from the 321st AEAS worked with Iraqi leaders to teach them how to develop exercise scenarios.

The enormity of the mass casualty exercise

was the first type of training element the Iraqis have not experienced thus far—real people playing the role of the wounded.

“The exercise scenario was to simulate an Iraqi C-130 aircraft that made a rough landing causing an in-flight emergency,” explained Master Sgt. Jim Brody, 447th AEG firefighter and non-commissioned officer in charge of exercise planning. “We had 20 American and Iraqi volunteers who played the passengers on the aircraft with simulated injuries ranging from minor to critical.”

Brody is a New York Air National Guard firefighter from the 105th Airlift Wing in Newburgh with more than 20 years of airport emergency response experience. For this exercise, he worked closely with Iraqi officers to coordinate the scenario requirements and to help them learn how to plan future exercises.

“In order to make the training as realistic as possible we used moulage, makeup and synthetic body parts to simulate injuries like broken bones, burns and cuts, even simulated spurting blood,” Brody said. “This added to the stress of the exercise and demonstrated the kinds of injuries emergency responders would encounter in a real-world situation.”

When the exercise began, the Iraqi responders took the lead, but it quickly became apparent that they still needed support and guidance, so the 447th AEG firefighters and medical

personnel stepped in to lend a hand.

“The overall exercise was a success in that our international relations continue to improve on all levels of command and control,” said Master Sgt. Rodney Metler, 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Emergency Management Flight exercise evaluation team NCO in charge. “The Iraqi aircrew handled the situation by-the-book, and the firefighters’ and medical personnel continue to demonstrate a strong desire to learn.”

The new al Muthana Air Base deputy commander, Col. Mohammed, praised both the Iraqi and American Airmen for progress they have made in the emergency response program, but said that although they have made great strides, they still have a long way to go. “This part of the [air force] mission is to save lives, and the exercise helped us see where mistakes are made,” Col. Mohammed said. “Each time we practice, we must not make the same mistakes. We must continue to train more people and we must develop our own training program and staff before we can work on our own.”

While the Iraqi emergency response program has grown as part of the air force, there has still been little progress in Iraqi-led training. “The exercise was a success, and it’s a small victory for us as advisors to the Iraqis,” said Holden. “Change is sometimes difficult and takes time, but we are headed in the right direction.” **gt**



U.S. and Iraqi Air Force firefighters train together to learn how to handle a fire in the cargo hold of an Iraqi C-130 Hercules transport aircraft at New Al Muthana Air Base, Iraq on Oct. 29, 2008. Photo by Master Sgt. Brian Davidson.



Above: Master Sergeant John Bell (center), and Staff Sgt. Dale Catlett (right) work with Iraqi firefighters on a combined training exercise aimed at developing American and Iraqi cooperation in the event of an aircraft fire Oct. 29, 2008. Sergeants Bell and Catlett are assigned to the 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron and are deployed from the 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard Base in New York.



U.S. and Iraqi firefighters approach an aircraft during an accident response exercise at Al Muthana Air Base, Iraq on Nov. 21. The training tested the abilities of a joint response of fire rescue, medical and security capabilities. **Left:** An Iraqi Air Force firefighter rescues a U.S. Airman mock casualty during the exercise. Photos by Master Sgt. Brian Davidson.

Rescue Wing Drops in on NHL Game

Islanders Visit Air Base and Welcome Air Guardsmen to Veteran's Day Game

Story by Staff Sgt. David. J. Murphy, 106th Rescue Wing



At left: Members of the New York Islanders hockey team made a visit to the 106th Rescue Wing on October 24, 2008. Jeff Tambellini, number 15, left wing, and Frans Nielsen, number 51, center, were two members of the team who learned about the different functions of the Air National Guard base. During the tour they met with the air crews of an HH-60 and HC-130 as well as meeting some of the Pararescue Jumpers (PJs). Photo by Staff Sgt. David J. Murphy.

Opposite page: PJs from the 106th Rescue Wing helped make Veteran's Day memorable for those in attendance at the New York Islanders hockey game on Veterans' Day, November 11 at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. The PJs repelled off the rafters of the coliseum carrying the United States flag while the National Anthem was being played by the Air Force Liberty Brass Band. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marcus A. Calliste.

NASSAU VETERAN'S MEMORIAL COLISEUM, Uniondale - Pararescue Jumpers (PJs) from the 103rd Rescue Squadron participated in the Military Appreciation Day events at Nassau Veteran's Memorial Coliseum on Veterans Day, November 11. The event was hosted by the New York Islanders National Hockey League team who held the event prior to their game against the Philadelphia Flyers.

For the event, the PJs repelled from the rafters of the stadium down to the ice below carrying an American flag during the playing of the National Anthem. Afterwards the ceremonial first puck was dropped on the ice by former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell.

Mr. Powell then greeted the troops and posed for a few pictures. "It

was my first time meeting General Powell," Lt. Col. Mary Ann Cline told Jason Lockhart, a reporter for the New York Islanders, "I'm a great admirer of General Powell, not only when he served as Chief of Staff for the military and Secretary of State, but his whole career in the Armed Forces.

The game marked the second season that Powell visited the Islanders. The game however, went to the Philadelphia Flyers, 3-1, ending a Flyer three-game losing streak.

Despite the loss, the presence of the Airmen and PJs from the 106th Rescue Wing made a positive impact on the participants.

"It means a great deal to service members that a sports team has recognized the contributions we make to the country," Cline added. "We have a lot of Wing members who are avid Islanders fans." **gt**



Air Guard Members Help Make Dreams Come True

Story and photos by Senior Airman Peter Dean, 174th Fighter Wing

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION - At 10 a.m. sharp on Nov. 15, Hunter Winship was present and accounted for, ready for duty, an honorary pilot for the day at the New York Air National Guard's 107th Airlift Wing, Niagara Falls.

Hunter is a six-year-old boy from Freedom N.Y., diagnosed a little more than a year ago with Burkitt's lymphoma, a rare form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Burkitt's lymphoma is highly aggressive and spreads rapidly, affecting only 1 to 300 children annually.

Hunter, as all pilots in training do, reported to his training officer Maj. Greg Miller, 107th AW, C-130 pilot, who presented him with his duty uniform, a flight jacket complete with patches and a name tag. From there, first order of business was a preflight briefing which included a flight plan that covered altitude, air speed and route.

After Hunter and his crew were clear on the mission at hand they were transported out to their aircraft, a C-130 Hercules. Hunter and his air crew then proceeded with a preflight check where they ensured that all instruments, controls and communication equipment were functioning. All systems go, clear for take-off.

It would take a few more training sessions before Hunter would be ready to pilot a C-130, explained Miller, so from the end of the runway Hunter kept a keen eye on the C-130 as it took off, observing take-off techniques such as air-speed and ascent angle.

After a morning filled with training, the 107th AW Services Squadron invited Hunter and his family to the dining hall for a traditional 107th holiday meal, which included turkey, prime rib and all the fixings.

After chow, it was back to work for Hunter for additional aircrew training. Hunter reported to hanger 850, where Lt. Col. Michael Bank, 107th AW, Operations Officer, along with Staff Sgt. Greg Sliwa, 107th AW, C-130 Maintainer, had an afternoon full of systems training in store for him.

Hunter participated in a one-on-one flight training session with Lt. Col. Bank that included hands-on-training in the cockpit. While in the cockpit, Hunter became familiar



Hunter Winship, center, observes as Maj. Greg Miller begins the preflight check with his C-130 aircrew prior to take-off. Winship, age six, visited the 107th Airlift Wing in mid-November 2008 to act as a pilot for a day. Photo below: Hunter completes his pilot familiarization training with members of the 107th Services Squadron.



with throttle controls, steering controls and the navigation systems of the C-130s.

After completion of Hunter's flight control training, Sliwa stepped in to familiarize Hunter with the rear of the craft. Hunter learned the basics of loading and unloading procedures, tie down and cargo distribution.

With the duty day complete Hunter was up for some rest and relaxation, but not before a stop at the book store, where he was able to select a few aviation books, complements of 107th

AW Family Readiness Group.

Tech. Sgt. Patrick Paolini wanted Hunter and his family to leave with more than just memories. Paolini provided Hunter and his family with Air National Guard hats of their own.

With all the basics under his belt, Hunter is well on his way to becoming a fully qualified C-130 pilot.

According to Shawn Winship, Hunter's father, Hunter's cancer is now in remission and he has a 90 percent chance of a full recovery. **gt**



Air Force Leader Visits Hancock Field

Story by Capt. Anthony L. Bucci, 174th Fighter Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Syracuse - The Deputy Chief of Staff for Air Force Strategic Plans and Programs visited Hancock Field Air National Guard base to discuss the unit's future mission.

Lt. Gen. Raymond E. Johns Jr. visited Hancock Field ANGB on December 17 to discuss the unit's future in being the first Air National Guard unit to have the MQ-9 Reaper.

The MQ-9 Reaper is a medium-to-high altitude, long endurance unmanned aircraft system. The MQ-9's primary mission is a hunter-killer against emerging targets to achieve joint force commander objectives. The MQ-9's alternate mission is to act as an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance asset, employing sensors to provide real-time data to commanders and intelligence specialists.

Lt. Gen. Johns' explained to the unit that he is committed to Total Force Integration and managing the change that comes with it.

"We have two groups of people who think about these issues. The first goes to bed at night wondering 'What is the future of the Air Force?' the second wakes up and says 'How are we going to pay for it?'" said Johns.

He spoke to the men and women of Hancock Field Air National Guard Base for about 45 minutes about their future and their important part of the Total Force Integration plan. The general said the objective of Global Vigilance is changing and the Air Force needs to adjust its focus in order to meet the challenges of the future. He praised the unit for being well posi-

tioned to take on the new mission of the MQ-9 Reaper as it heads into the 21st century.

"The 174th FW is uniquely qualified to take on this new challenge, in fact this challenge is something that I know you all accept willingly," said Johns.

General Johns develops, evaluates and analyzes the U.S. Air Force Future Years Defense Program that exceeds \$822 billion. **gt**



Lieutenant General Raymond E. Johns Jr., above and photo at top, addresses members of the 174th Fighter Wing during his visit to Hancock Field Dec. 17 to discuss the unit's future. Courtesy photo.

New Leadership in Syracuse

Story by Sr. Airman Peter Dean, 107th Airlift Wing

HANCOCK AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Syracuse - The 174th Fighter Wing Commander officiated for the assumption of command of the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron here November 2, 2008.

Colonel Kevin W. Bradley passed the reigns of command to Major Alberto J. Gaston. 274th ASOS Master Sergeant William R. Schroeder was the guidon bearer.



"I appreciate the opportunity to lead the 274th Iron Knights," said Gaston.

The 274th Air Support Operations Squadron deploys with Army combat units to provide command, control, and coordination of Close Air Support (CAS) aircraft.

The unit's proud history includes having personnel at ground zero on September 11, 2001 and the unit has deployed personnel in support of the Global War on Terrorism every year since 2003, completing nine TAC Team deployments, eight special operations deployments and one unit deployment in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

The 274th ASOS currently has a TAC Team in Afghanistan.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Ricky Best. **gt**

Flag Football Tournament Scores Touchdown for Tots

Story and photo by Senior Airman Peter Dean, 174th Fighter Wing

NIAGARA FALLS - Fourth and long, win or lose, it didn't matter much for the men and women participating in this year's Toys for Tots Flag Football Tournament held Nov. 14 at the Fort Niagara State Park. The tots were the real winners of the day. Teams from local military, Homeland Security and law enforcement agencies were invited to play for bragging rights and the opportunity to help children in need.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Daniel Teffer, U.S. Coast Guard, Buffalo Station, N.Y. and Petty Officer 3rd Class Jason Ensweiler, U.S. Coast Guard, Niagara Station, N.Y., worked together to plan, organize and run the tournament.

"We wanted to do something for the less fortunate during the holiday season," Teffer said.

After much research and discussion they decided to contact the Marines that run the Toys for Tots program.

"The Marines already had the logistics worked out," Ensweiler said, "and it's a very worthy cause," he added.

Toys for Tots was started in 1947 by Maj. Bill Hendricks, Marine Corps Reservist, when his wife crochet a doll to give to an organization that donated toys to the less fortunate during the Christmas season. Such an organization did not exist at that time. Maj. Hendricks then decided to gather all the Marines that he could to collect and distribute toys to less fortunate children. The following year Toys for Tots was officially established by the Marines. To date more than 19 million toys have been distributed to more than 9 million needy children.



Senior Airman Michael Badolato, 107th Airlift Wing Security Forces Squadron charges ahead for positive yardage. The Airman, along with other military, Homeland Security and law enforcement agencies participated in a day full of flag football Nov. 14, 2008 to benefit the Toys for Tots program.

The 107th Airlift Wing, Security Forces Squadron responded to the call with a full squad. They showed up with toys in hand and game face on. They were ready to play ball.

There were no officials to keep score, time or call penalties. At one point during the game the unofficial time keeper couldn't be

found, she was off getting lunch for her children. But no matter - it was all in good fun, the teams were all playing for one common goal, the kids.

Although only five teams played in what will be an annual event, so many toys were donated that the Marines had to be called in, Teffer added.

"The 107th brought a pickup truck load of toys with them," Ensweiler said, "with the other toys, we don't have the room to transport them," he said.

"For the first year I'm happy with the turn out," said Petty Officer Teffer, "next year we'll do it again and it will be bigger and better," he said. **gt**



United States Air Force Academy Cadet Jonathan Warzeka dodges the Army's defense during the Army-Air Force football game held at Michie Stadium, West Point, on November 1, 2008. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lee C. Guagenti.

105th Airmen Support Air Force Football Air Guard Boosters Give Lift to Falcon Victory over West Point

Story by Staff Sgt. John Gassler, 105th Airlift Wing

WEST POINT - It was another classic service academy showdown Saturday, Nov. 1, at West Point's Michie Stadium as 37,400 football fans flocked to their seats to watch the Army Black Knights battle the Air Force Falcons in a grudge match that would span a full 60 minutes of solid "ground and pound" play.

The two teams first met in 1959 and have played annually since 1971 as part of their service rivalry.

Amidst the crowded stadium seating, supporting the Falcons, were roughly 350 pigskin fans from the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing and Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh.

"It was a great day for some football," said Master Sgt. Brian Turner, the 105th Mission Support Flight First Sergeant. "Having our members at the game was not only fun, it was a great way to show our support for the Air Force. It's all about esprit de corps," he said.

The majority of the game centered on the rush. When it came to getting the ball "sky bound," Air Force and Army fans alike didn't get much action. In fact, passing was a premium: only 34 combined passes were made during the entire game in comparison to 97 combined rushing attempts.

Army owned all the statistics for the game against the Air Force: 250 versus 174 total offensive yards, 17 to 10 first downs and 31:50 versus 28:10 in time of possession. For the cheering Falcons fans from the 105th Airlift Wing, however, it was the final points that decided the game, and Air Force led that effort 17-6.

"Air Force rocks," exclaimed Capt. Kristopher Geis, 105th Airlift Wing, Director of Personnel. "You just have to appreciate good football."

Air Force now leads the series against the Black Knights, 29-13-1 and extended its win streak of six straight against Army at Michie Stadium. **gt**

Guard Troops Learn to Make the Cut

Story by Staff Sgt. Paul Rosa, 14th Brigade, N.Y. Guard

SMITHTOWN - To increase readiness to respond to a natural emergency, volunteers of the New York Guard's 14th Brigade took part in specialized training at the Reliable Tree Service depot in Smithtown for classes on the proper operation of a chainsaw.

A significant part of recent domestic operations involving the New York National Guard, including flood response and the early winter blizzard in 2007 all required significant cutting and removal of tree limbs and debris.

The Nov. 16, 2008 training was coordinated by 1st Lt. Vincent Trimarco of the 13th Civil Affairs Regiment. Classes were given by the owner, Frank Prisco, a certified arborist.

The day started with classroom instruction on different aspects on how to cut down a tree, the proper use of different types of chainsaws, woodcutting terminology and the many

dangers of this line of work. Also covered was the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that would be required for all the participants.

Once class was concluded, the troops went outside and each member wore chaps, helmet, eye and ear protection and took a turn in using a chainsaw. A closing class reviewed the finer points on chainsaw maintenance.

The Guard volunteers continued their specialized training in Hicksville on Dec. 7, 2008 for the use of forklifts in warehouse operations.

Members met at the Agway warehouse in Hicksville. Trimarco again coordinated the training with Agway warehouse owner Susan Broker who donated her time, warehouse space and machinery for the training.

Training by the warehouse manager Josh Reale, emphasized safety when dealing with heavy machinery. The unit was taught the operation of the

hi-lo, operation of the forklift levers and how to manipulate the controls.

Each member of the unit then, in turn, climbed aboard and drove the hi-lo around the warehouse parking lot to become familiar with its operation. The Guard troops then received hands on experience unloading a tractor trailer.

Reale then demonstrated how to off-load a pallet of grain from a trailer. Guard members off-loaded the nearly 35 skids from the truck to a designated warehouse location.

Warehousing and logistics support for domestic operations remains a critical task for the New York Guard. From the management of 9-11 donations after the terror attacks of 2001 to the administration of relief supplies for natural disasters, the training provided Guard members with both technical skills and a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. **gt**



Members of the New York Guard's 89th Army Band perform at the Purple Heart Hall of Honor at Vail's Gate on Sept. 22, 2008. Photo by Melissa Baldanza.

Band Plays Tribute to Purple Heart Hall of Honor

By Capt. Douglas Hedwig, 89th Band, N.Y. Guard

VAIL'S GATE - Members of the New York Guard's 89th Army Band, known as the N.Y. Guard Band, performed a concert for a large crowd at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor here on Sept. 22, 2008.

The all-volunteer 89th Army Band provided a one-hour program of patriotic music covering a span of two hundred years, including the "New York Guard March," composed by Lt. Charles Clinton in 1917. Band leader Capt. Douglas Hedwig arranged the new version.

Several works were intended to honor all recipients of the Purple Heart and to reflect the special meaning and significance of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. Because George Washington was the creator of the

Purple Heart, the band performed "Hail Columbia" - composed in 1789 to honor Washington on his inauguration as the nation's first President - and "Chester," considered the "anthem" of the American Revolution.

The program also included two selections associated with New York Militia during the Civil War, particularly the 7th and 8th Regimental Bands. And well-known patriotic selections such as "God Bless America," "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "America the Beautiful" were featured.

The final work on the program was a setting of the deeply moving and reflective Civil War song, "Tenting Tonight," which ended with the sounding of "Taps" from the hillside overlooking the concert venue. **gt**



A member of the New York Guard's 14th Brigade conducts chainsaw training in Smithtown on Nov. 16 as part of the unit's domestic operations training this fall and winter. Volunteers of the Guard conducted chainsaw training and forklift familiarization to improve the brigade's capabilities to support emergency response and domestic operations for the state. Courtesy photo.

Routine Patrol Day Turns into Crash Recovery Mission

Naval Militia Patrol Boat and Right People at Right Time to Support Hudson River Rescue

By Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, *Guard Times Staff*

NEW YORK - Two members of the New York Naval Militia operating in support of the U.S. Coast Guard in New York City found themselves supporting response efforts following the ditching of a U.S. Airways commercial airliner. The Airbus A320 aircraft with 155 people on board crashed into the Hudson River on Jan. 15 only five minutes after its departure from LaGuardia Airport.

According to the Associated Press, a spokesman for the National Air Traffic Controllers Union says the pilot reported a “double bird strike” about 30 to 45 seconds after takeoff and said he needed to return to LaGuardia. The pilot was instructed to divert to an airport in nearby New Jersey for an emergency landing. Instead, the pilot was forced to ditch the plane in the Hudson.

The plane was submerged up to the windows when rescuers in Coast Guard vessels and ferry boats arrived and pulled out the passengers. Rescue efforts in the cold 35-degree winter waters of the Hudson River quickly saved the lives of all on board.

“The effort was assisted by ferries in the water, New York Waterway’s ferries, the Circle Line, also the Coast Guard got involved,” said New York Governor David Paterson. “The agencies of the City and the state also collaborated.”

Chief Machinery Technician Sean Lynch and Special Operations Boat Operator 3rd Class Joseph Keller, operating from the city’s Coast Guard station near Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, responded to requests from the Coast Guard Station for support.

Coordinating with the Joint Task Force Empire Shield headquarters, the standing response force element from New York’s Military Forces in the city, Lynch and Keller were recalled for duty within five minutes of the aircraft ditching in the Hudson.

The Naval Militia Patrol Boat 440 was underway less than an hour after the aircraft ditching with three Coast Guard marine inspectors to the aircraft site.

Coordinating with the on-scene Coast Guard Cutter CGC Ridley, the Patrol Boat and crew worked alongside other city response vessels to establish a maritime security perimeter around the plane. Vessels assisted with the search for aircraft debris for the subsequent accident investigation.

There was only one major injury during the incident when flight attendant Doreen Welsh suffered a deep leg laceration. In total, 78 people were treated for minor injuries, expo-

“We do a lot of training, along with emergency service and the fire department, but in my experience, we have never dealt with something of this size.”

-- *Detective Michael Delaney, New York City Police Department*

sure or hypothermia.

Governor Paterson described the event and rescue as a “miracle on the Hudson.”

The Naval Militia’s PB 440 continued its support to recovery operations into the evening of Jan. 15, transporting Coast Guard personnel and even news media crews, to the scene of the aircraft ditching. The crew members secured the boat and completed their unexpected mission support for the day by 10:15 p.m., nearly ten hours after what had begun as a routine mission day for the two Naval Militia sailors.

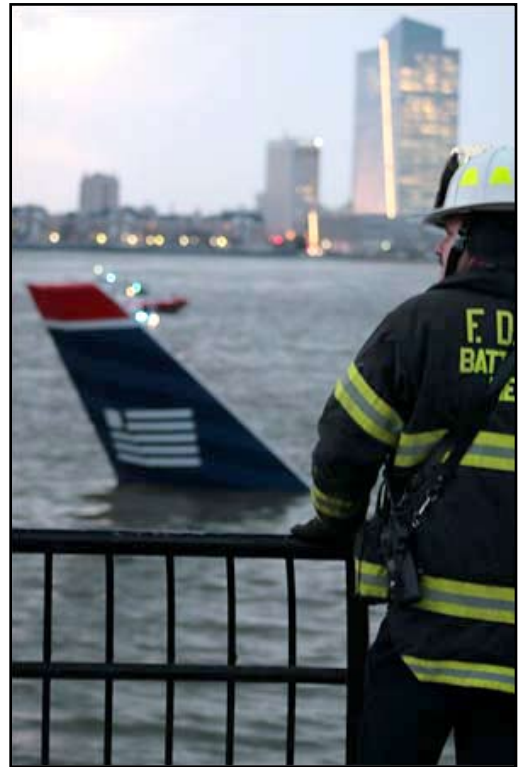
The remarkable effort of all of New York City’s first responders, like the rapid reaction of the Naval Militia Patrol Boat, is credited to the regular training for many contingencies. Some first responders admitted during a city press conference on Jan. 16 that a commercial airliner in the Hudson was not an expectation.

“We do a lot of training, along with emergency service and the fire department,” Detective Michael Delaney from the New York City Police Department said. “But in my experience, we have never dealt with something of this size.”

“In simplicity, this is really a potential tragedy that may become one of the most spectacular days in the history of New York City’s agencies, their coordination and the greatness of the people that worked to help the passengers, who will return home to their families,” Paterson said. **gt**



New York Naval Militia Patrol Boat 440 approaches the site of New York Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River along the New York City’s West Side on Jan. 17. The aircraft ditched in the Hudson following an apparent double bird strike. The Naval Militia, already tasked with mission support to the U.S. Coast Guard station in New York, provided security and transport missions for the incident commander immediately following the safe evacuation of all the aircraft passengers and crew. Courtesy photo.



Photos, clockwise from above: Responders secure a perimeter around the U.S. Airways Airbus 320 just 90 minutes after its successful ditching in the Hudson River following a reported bird strike that disabled two of the aircraft's engines. Photo by Chris Gay. At right, A New York City firefighter stands near where the plane was towed for inspection before recovery operations would hoist the aircraft from the Hudson River on Jan. 19. Photo by William Kostoff. Below, Chief Machinery Technician Sean Lynch from the Naval Militia maneuvers Patrol Boat 440 near the site of the recovered aircraft, seen in the background before its Jan. 19 recovery.. Courtesy photo.





Sergeant Douglas M. Chapman, a weapons specialist with Company D, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry greets his wife Rebecca and 8 year-old son Remington Jan. 7th at the Masten Avenue Armory in Buffalo, N.Y. after returning home from a one year tour in Afghanistan. The Chapman family benefited from support of other family members, the unit Family Readiness Group and the Western New York Family Assistance Center to better cope with their Soldier's absence during deployment and looked forward to a delayed holiday celebration early in 2009.

Support Groups Help Hold Up Families for Homecoming

Story and photo by Spc. Jimmy Bedgood, 42nd Infantry Division

BUFFALO – After nearly a year of effort helping military families, the network of Western New York family support groups welcomed home the last contingent of Citizen Soldiers from a tour in Afghanistan on Jan. 7 giving anxious families their greatest holiday gift of the season, the safe return of their Soldier.

The troops' return to the Masten Avenue Armory here in Buffalo, the last homecoming of more than 1,500 Citizen Soldiers statewide, was one of many celebrations to mark the end of the state's largest single unit deployment since World War II. Soldiers began returning to New York State in mid-December 2008 as the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team completed its tour as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix in Afghanistan.

Family members of the deployed Soldiers employed Family Readiness Groups and the Family Assistance Center programs to better cope with their loved one's absence.

"I knew nobody in the area - I had no

friends," said Rebecca Chapman, whose husband was deployed five months after they moved to Derby, N.Y. from Coudersport, Pa.

Rebecca is the wife of Sgt. Douglas M. Chapman from Troop B, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry. The couple has two sons and two daughters, 21 year-old Brian, 15 year-old Tiffany, Remington, 8, and Mayanna, 2.

"Whenever there was a need, it was always met by the Family Readiness Group," said Chapman.

While lending a hand at the family reunion, Peter M. Pilc, a family assistance center specialist, said he considers himself a social worker for the New York National Guard. Pilc served 35 years in uniform with the Army National Guard and gives insight to family members of deployed Soldiers.

"I explain the programs better, because I have a lot of experience with the Guard," Pilc said.

Health care programs and youth camps are among the services the Family Assistance

Center offered. Pilc recently launched another program that helps bridge the potential gap of communication between deployed Soldiers from Western New York and their families.

"A lot of families didn't have computers," Pilc said. "I started a program where families purchasing new computers donated their old ones."

The Chapman family waited for the safe return of their Soldier before celebrating the Holiday Season, deciding to wait for the weekend following his return home.

"[His return] is the greatest gift that we could have--it is priceless, nothing could ever compare," Chapman said.

"You take a deep breath and learn to be grateful for the small things," Christine Steward, a Family Readiness Group Liaison, said. Steward's son, Sgt. Jonathan W.E. Aisel, returned home from Afghanistan with fellow Soldiers of the Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry. "You have to be thankful for every day you have them." **gt**

Families Train, Too

Symposium Brings Together Troops and their Supporters

Story and photos by Eric Durr, *Guard Times* Staff

COLONIE, N.Y. — Smart commanders “get” family readiness programs, says Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the Adjutant General of New York.

But there are still some out there that need to be worked on, Taluto told more than 125 family readiness volunteers and professionals gathered for the annual New York National Guard Family Symposium, Nov. 8-9, 2008.

As the National Guard, and especially the Army National Guard, moves from being a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, families can count on separation and sacrifice, Taluto said. It’s up to the Guard’s family program to help family members and Guard members deal with those challenged, he emphasized.

Once Family Readiness Group, translated into an annual Family Day picnic, Taluto said. And he admitted being one of those leaders who never thought about family programs much.

But the increasing tempo of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, have changed that, Taluto emphasized.

“It’s not just about retention and showing that you care. It is the right thing to do,” he said.

“The New York National Guard has expanded the number of family professionals and family readiness centers,” Taluto said. “This is not just a sometimes thing, it is an always thing.”

The Family Symposium was an opportunity for both family readiness unit volunteers and the Guard’s professionals to meet, and exchange ideas.

Barbara Senus, the spouse of Capt. Rick Senus assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), said the best part of the two-day event was getting to “connect with people who get it.”

The families and Family Readiness Group members are spread out all



New York Air National Guard Master Sgt. Willie Gizara imitates a penguin while giving his “trip to Antarctica” presentation to children attending the annual New York National Guard Family Symposium, Nov. 8-9 in Colonie and Latham. Gizara, the multimedia manager for the 109th Airlift Wing, presented his slide program as part of the youth activities for the weekend. The 109th is the only unit in the U.S. military equipped to land on ice and snow.

across the state, Senus said. This is a chance to meet, face-to-face and share ideas. This is particularly important for a unit like the headquarters of the 27th BCT, which has members from around the state, Senus said.

Anne Marie Lara, a professional family assistance specialist in Syracuse, said the two-day gathering gives her a chance to share lots of time with people she normally just talks to on the phone.

“The offices are isolated from each other and its good to get together in one place at least once a year.” Lara said.

Participants in the meeting learned about new family programs, as well as the latest information from mental health professionals and others on how to help families cope with the stress of deployments.

While the adults were getting their questions answered, 85 children of the volunteers took part in a special youth program at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters armory. The kids worked with crafts and got a chance to use a NASCAR simulator and climb the New York Army National Guard Recruiting Wall.

New York Air National Guard Master Sgt. Willie Gizara, a member of the 109th Airlift Wing, which flies ski-equipped C-130s to the Antarctic, also presented a talk on the mis-



Family Readiness Group volunteer Barbara Senus valued the chance to meet with other family volunteers during the annual New York National Guard Family Symposium, Nov. 8-9, 2008 in Colonie and Latham.

“It’s not just about retention and showing that you care. It is the right thing to do.”

--Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto,
The Adjutant General



When Vehicles Become DWI Weapons

Airmen Learn Firsthand About Safety Concerns, Liabilities from Long Island DA

By Capt. Alexander Q. Spencer, 106th Rescue Wing

WESTHAMTON BEACH – Members of the Air National Guard’s 106th Rescue Wing gathered Jan. 10 in the newly painted Hangar B to learn about Long Island’s aggressive DWI prosecution policies during unit safety awareness training. Speaking to the group was Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, recently seen on the CBS television show “60 Minutes.”

Col. Michael F. Canders, 106th Rescue Wing Commander, welcomed and thanked District Attorney Rice for reducing the risk on the road for all by aggressively prosecuting vehicle operators arrested for driving while intoxicated (DWIs).

The presentation and unit awards ceremony was part of the wing’s safety stand-down during the January drill to address many safety issues for the 106th Rescue Wing and included the hazards its members face every day on the public roads in their vehicles.

“My goal is to save lives,” Rice said to the 106th. “I think too many people view DWI accidents as just another accident,” explained the District Attorney, “cars are weapons when put in control of people under the influence of alcohol.”

Rice was elected as Nassau County’s District Attorney on Nov. 8, 2005 and took office on Jan. 1, 2006 as Long Island’s first female District Attorney. Rice’s office obtained a conviction for two counts of 2nd Degree Murder for an intoxicated driver during a fatal motor vehicle accident that happened on the Meadowbrook Parkway in July, 2005.



Col. Michael F. Canders thanks Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice for her discussion about Long Island’s aggressive DWI prosecution policies during a safety stand-down at the New York Air National Guard’s 106th Rescue Wing at Westhamton Beach Jan. 10. Photo by Senior Airman Chris Muncy.

In addition to the strict DWI prosecution policies for Nassau County, Rice also seeks to keep roads safe by establishing a drivers’ safety education program that teaches high school students the inherent dangers associated with driving hazards and DWI avoidance. **gt**



Air Guard Members Take Competition Onto the Ice

ROME - Members from the New York Air National Guard’s Northeast Air Defense Sector battle it out at an organizational hockey game that pitted Americans versus Canadians Dec. 17, 2008. As a North American Aerospace Defense Command unit, NEADS is well-stocked with Canadian hockey players. Although the Canadians lost to their U.S. counterparts, 3-7, the players said they are eager for a re-match and continue to sharpen their game by practicing at local hockey rinks, when off-duty from their airspace defense mission. Photo by Staff Sgt. Manon Thibeault, Canadian Forces.

Community Remembers and Coins “Old Kinderhook”



KINDERHOOK - Brigadier General F. David Sheppard (at left), Deputy Commander of the New York Army National Guard and New York Air Guard Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Todd Luce place a wreath on Dec. 5, 2008 honoring the 226th birthday of former U.S. President Martin Van Buren, a native of Kinderhook.

The birthday remembrance was also attended by U.S. Mint Deputy Director Andy Brunhart who introduced the first issuance of the Van Buren \$1 presidential coin that was given to local school children who also attended the event. Van Buren served as the eighth President of the United States and the first President from New York. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

Honors for the Honor Guard



LATHAM - New York Army National Guard Specialist Ruben Martinez-Ortiz receives the Joint Forces Headquarters Honor Guard of the Year award Nov. 13, 2008 from Deputy Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Robert Knauff. The awards, presented to the top members of the military forces honor guard from across the state following a competition, recognizes the excellence in presentation and performance for members in ceremonial drills. Top performing teams also received awards. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

Naval Militia Commended for UN Security Support



NEW YORK - U.S. Department of State Special Agent Anthony Tortora presents a certificate of appreciation to New York Naval Militia patrol boat sailors and staff on Nov. 14, 2008 following the successful employment of Patrol Boat 440 in support

of the United Nations General Assembly security operations from late September. “The support your office provided greatly assisted Mobile Security Deployment special agents who were working for the U.S. Secretary of State’s protective detail,” said Frank Benevento, Director of the Office of Mobile Security Deployments.

The boat crew of the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs were extremely professional and their collaboration with Mobile Security Deployments can only be summed up as excellence in team work, Benevento said in a letter to Naval Militia Capt. Robert Pouch, Deputy Commander for Operations.

From left, Chief Petty Officer John Smith, Special Agent Anthony J. Tortora, U.S. Dept. of State, Mobile Security Deployments, Chief Petty Officer Rich Raynoch and Capt. Robert Pouch. Courtesy photo.

Beyond the Mission: Airman Supports Women's Shelter

Story by Brooke Davis, NEADS

ROME – Airmen serving as unit augmentees just deploy temporarily to support the mission – supporting the local community isn't something they normally expect to do, right? Wrong.

One augmentee brought her involvement with a women's shelter from her active Air Force base in Tucson, Ariz., and inspired an entire unit to organize support for the YWCA Women's Shelter Hall House, a local women's shelter in Utica.

Staff Sgt. Teresa Edloe deployed to the Northeast Air Defense Sector from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson. While at NEADS, she supported the unit's homeland defense mission as an identification technician. But like many community volunteers at NEADS, the end of her shift marked the beginning of her community support mission.

The support provided by members from NEADS and Edloe helped a mother and her 7-year-old son. The two had recently moved out of the shelter and were getting on their feet. The monetary support allowed Edloe to spend more than \$300 to assist the family for Christmas.

Additionally, Staff Sgt. Deborah Martin and the NEADS Family Readiness Group helped provide toys to every child at the shelter over the holidays. Eight bags of toys were well received at the shelter.

"On Christmas Eve when I brought the toys over the women were very happy," Edloe said. "They picked out various toys for their children and I helped them wrap a few of their gifts."

Since the holidays, she continues to spend time at the shelter and has discovered that simple gestures go a long way.

"I sometimes bring over new movies or do McDonald's runs. McDonald's is the favorite for some of the women there," she said. "It's not a big deal or costly task but it puts a smile on peoples faces."

Another NEADS member, Staff Sgt. Nino Camuglia, was able to collect five large bags and two boxes of gently used clothes and toys to take over



Staff Sergeant Teresa Edloe, left, an augmentee deployed to the Northeast Air Defense Sector, lends her time at a local woman's shelter in Rome. Edloe helped gather the support of Staff Sgt. Deborah Martin and the NEADS Family Readiness Group to help provide toys to every child at the shelter during the Christmas holiday. Courtesy photo.

to the shelter.

"Being this is not my home base and I do not know the NEADS family very well, I was prepared to go into this alone this year," Edloe said. "It was surprising the amount of support and generosity I received from the NEADS community. It was a great big help and we were able to help people that I can tell you honestly do not have much."

Although Edloe heads back to her base in Arizona this winter, she plans to keep in touch with the women at the shelter. Supporting the shelter is personally rewarding, Edloe explained.

"It gives me a chance to remember how blessed I am and to physically get out there," Edloe said. "Helping someone and making a little difference or just to bring a little joy to people that are going through unimaginable life tribulations." **gt**

174th Fighter Wing Recruiting History in Central NY

Story by Senior Airman Kevin K. Dean, 174th Fighter Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Syracuse - For the first time in the 174th Fighter Wing's history every recruiter in the office has earned a gold badge. The gold badge is national recognition and a symbol of outstanding achievement.

Four recruiters earned a gold badge, Master Sgt. Addison, Tech. Sgt. Stoquert, Tech. Sgt. Paquin, and Tech. Sgt. Lynch. Two other members of the team, Master Sgt. Call and Master Sgt. Pollock had previously earned a gold badge.

"Recruiting is a team sport and their great leadership provides the fuel that drives our

organization," Col. Kevin W. Bradley 174th Fighter Wing Commander, said.

The recruiters at the 174th Fighter Wing recruit for multiple units, to include 174th Fighter Wing, Northeast Air Defense Sector, 152nd Air Operations Group, 274th Air Support Operations Squadron, and the newly formed 222nd Command Control Squadron. By the end of fiscal year 2008, the 174th Fighter Wing here had recruited more than 100% of its goal.

Nationally, the Air Guard met its 2008 goal of recruiting over 100,000 airmen. The gold badge, awarded to recruiters who exceed the mission by 125%, is national recognition of excellence.

"I am proud to be a part of the first ever achievement for the wing and the New York Air National Guard," said Recruiting supervisor, Master Sgt. Brad Addison, "The hard work and dedication of the recruiters showed."

Unit members and retirees of the Air Guard can apply to serve as recruiting assistants and receive up to \$2,000 for each person they help enlist as part of the Air Guard recruiting effort. For more information, go to the Air National Guard Recruiting Assistance program website at www.guardrecruitingassistant.com/air. **gt**

Coming Home – Re-integration - Reconnecting (One day at a time)

Commentary by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Eric Olsen, State Chaplain-JFHQ-NY

Home! Landing! The feeling of seeing the family and friends you left more than a year ago is an awesome experience. Soldiers may fight for their country and the Soldiers on their right and left, but in their heart of hearts they do it for the ones they love; they do it for those at home.

The New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, along with other recently returned Soldiers are now in the reintegration, post mobilization phase of their deployment. The rule for returning is that it takes one day home for every day away. Finding the "New Normal," after having been away or having a loved one deployed, takes time and effort. One of the most challenging tasks for both individuals and couples is gaining understanding and appreciation of how unique and yet how isolated we truly are. Yes, the country is at war and Soldiers go fight battles, but few in our communities and even our families can relate to the deployment experience, even when they desire to do so.



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Eric Olsen, New York State Joint Forces Headquarters Chaplain.

Have you had the encounter with people who are thankful for your service? I am sure most of you have seen and felt the gratitude of our fellow citizens. Even though we experience the warm appreciation of others, there can be a disconnect between those who have and those who have not had the combat or deployment experience. This awareness is not one-upmanship of the haves and have not's, but a simple realization that the experiences we undergo create distance from others to often include our families. Sometimes disconnects can even be between ourselves and our former lives due to value changes and new life experiences.

During the last few Yellow Ribbon Re-integration Retreats, we asked both Soldiers and family members what they felt was the easiest or more positive things about returning home and what are the hardest things about coming home. Here are a few things Soldiers and their loved ones had to say. I doubt there will be many surprises.

Easy / Good- Being with family, money in the bank, feeling safe, having time with children, time with spouse, getting a job, sleeping in, having someone to talk to, intimacy, connecting with my spouse, and helping around the house and with the kids.

Hardest – Can't sleep, more aggressive, arguing, drinking to much, missing the superman feeling, trouble with crowds, lack of income, hard to find a job, trouble getting back into a routine, missing the crew, not relating well to friends, being a civilian.

Here are a few things the families had to say.

Easy –Being proud of him, having my best friend back, connecting, help around the house, someone to talk with.

Difficult –Stress, seeing him upset with the world, knowing he is having bad dreams, too much smoking and drinking, not connecting with his new child, lack of communication.

As you might assume there are other questions and concerns and this list is already long. It tells me that we have a lot of work to do over the next year to get home and be at peace. This is a process not an event and something that needs to be worked on.



Nancy Colon welcomes home her husband, Command Sgt. Maj. Bill Colon Nov. 31, 2008 in Newburgh, N.Y. The two reunite their spouse coins. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Michael O'Halloran.

Chances to re-connect


Here are opportunities over the next few months that are available for you to take time for yourself and also focus on family issues. For more information, contact the Family Programs Office at 518-786-4904.

Prepare and Enrich Marriage Seminars

What: A relaxing weekend away for couples to get a few pointers on communication and dealing with the "New Normal." When: April to Oct. Where: All over the state. Cost is free.

Single Soldiers Retreat What: A getaway to a relaxing hotel with fun opportunities with other combat veterans. This is a time of joy and reflection and a chance to reconnect and talk. When: May and Oct., specific dates to be announced. Cost is free.

Welcome Home Initiative What: A three day retreat for single Soldiers as well as families at the CTK Retreat Center. This is a non-pressure healing environment to assist Soldiers and Families after deployment. Where: Greenwich, N.Y. When: March 23-25, Aug. 3-5 and 26-28. Cost is free. Contact the Welcome Home Initiative at www.CTKcenter.org.

If you know of other helpful opportunities for our returning Soldiers, contact the Family Programs or myself directly, Chaplain Olsen at eric.w.olsen2@us.army.mil 



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