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



FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Our Past Contributions Guide our Future Service

Team New York, I'm profoundly honored to have the space in this quarter's publication to introduce myself.

I am Brig. Gen. Paul Bishop, a 35-year veteran of our New York Air National Guard and Chief of Staff for the New York Air National Guard at the Joint Force Headquarters.

I've also been "dual hatted" as the Air Guard Assistant to commander of 1st Air Force, Air Force North, and Air Force-Space.

I am excited for the opportunity to serve the five flying wings and the Eastern Air Defense Sector, while continuing my homeland defense service to the nation working for 1st Air Force.

I also look forward to working with New York Army National Guard, Naval Militia, and New York Guard leaders and service members in defending our state and nation.

I hail from Oriskany, while my wife of 31 years is from Whitesboro. We have two remarkable daughters: graduates of the SUNY system, one from Brockport the other from Cortland.

After graduation from Oriskany Central High School, I attended Mohawk Valley Community College before leaving to enlist in the 174th Fighter Wing as an avionics component and test station repair specialist for the F-16. In 1991 I deployed with the 174th for the Persian Gulf War.

After returning

home, I transferred to the 113th Air Control Squadron, also at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1993.

In 1994 my unit was "repurposed" to what was then the Northeast Air Defense Sector, because the Air Guard had been given the task for air defense of the United States. I am proud to have been in the initial Air National Guard cadre for that mission.

My command highlight was from May 2020 to May 2023 where I was lucky enough to command the fine patriots who watch the skies at what is now the Eastern Air Defense Sector.

My family and I are proud, lifelong Central New Yorkers and love to travel all over the state.

This connection makes me extremely proud of the storied history of New York, especially as it relates to the key campaigns

fought here during the Revolutionary War. The tenacious American militia —the ancestors of our National Guard today— routinely bested the professional armies of Great Britain.

A key battle of the Saratoga campaign took place near my home in Oriskany.

Brigadier General Nicholas Herkimer, leading a militia force of roughly 800 men, was headed to Fort Stanwix in present day Rome to help relieve a British siege.

Herkimer's Tryon County militia was intercepted and ambushed by British and Indian forces. That fight turned into one of the bloodiest battles of the Revolutionary War.

Tactically, the battle could be seen as a devastating loss to the militia. Hundreds of Americans were killed and Herkimer ultimately succumbed to his battlefield wounds.



Brig. Gen. Paul Bishop

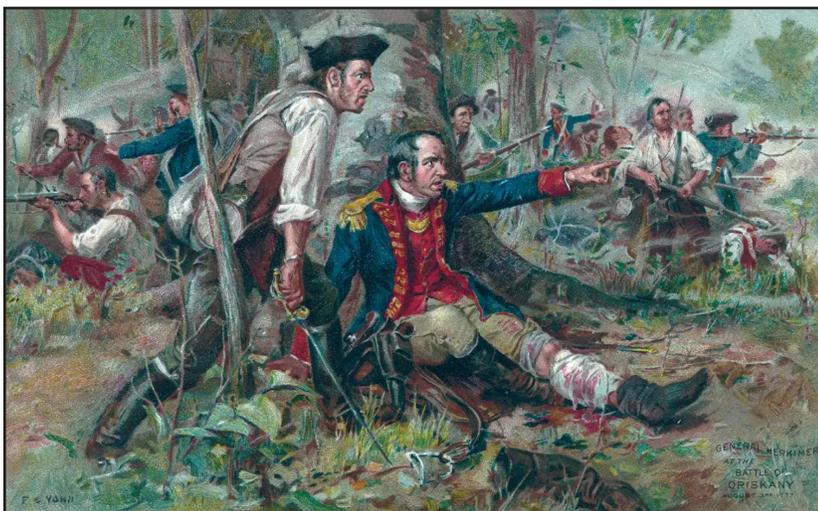
But ultimately the battle contributed greatly to the pivotal American victory at Saratoga, tying up and bogging down British forces, rendering them unable to reinforce British forces at Saratoga, leading to their surrender in October 1777.

Notable allies to the American forces were 80-100 Oneida Nation Indian warriors who fought shoulder to shoulder with the militia. Meanwhile, the Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga nations were allied with the British causing a great rift in the Iroquois Nation. This is how the Oneidas came to be informally considered our nation's "first ally."

I bring up this history of Oriskany as an important event to remember and re-tell. The spirit of those citizen Soldiers, so committed to the idea of a free America, gives me strength.

Many generations later, today's citizen Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines across the Empire State are still at it, defending both the U.S. and her partners abroad from perilous threats every single day. We are inextricably tied to our past; it helps us define our future.

I am humbled beyond words to have this amazing opportunity to continue in the service of my nation, my state, my family, and brothers and sisters in arms — all of YOU, TEAM NEW YORK.



New York Militia Brig. Gen. Nicholas Herkimer is remembered in a 1977 commemorative postage stamp released for the bicentennial of the Battle of Oriskany, N.Y. in August 1777. The stamp was a painting by Frederick Yohn depicting Herkimer, mortally wounded and with his back against a tree, directing the fighting to rally his men to resist an ambush force of Tories, Indians and British troops while en route to the relief of Fort Stanwix, in nearby Rome, N.Y. The militia had started the battle with 800 troops, but only 150 walked away, taking with them about 50 wounded. Their effort led to the successful defense of Fort Stanwix and contributed to the American success at Saratoga the following month. The painting hangs in the public library in Utica, N.Y. Courtesy image.





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New York Air National Guard Sr. Airman Vianka Nieves and Staff Sgt. Hayla Leary, assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, celebrate the holiday season during the wing family day celebration Dec. 3, 2023 at Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach, N.Y. Courtesy photo.



FRONT COVER: Army Sgt. 1st Class Travis Wood, an infantryman assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, plots a course during a land navigation exercise in Orchard Park, N.Y., Nov. 4, 2023 as part of the 27th Brigade's best warrior competition. Photo by Maj. Avery Schneider, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.
BACK COVER: Army Sgt. Maj. Rebecca Santana passes responsibility for leadership of the 369th Sustainment Brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Company to 1st. Sgt. Sonia Allen during a change of responsibility ceremony at Camp Smith, Oct 22, 2023. Photo by Sgt. Ryan Scribner, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

FACES of the FORCE

Airman awarded NY State Medal for Valor

Story and photo by Alex Rector, 174th Attack Wing

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Air Force Lt. Col. Joshua Carter, the director of the New York Air National Guard's 174th Operations Support Squadron's commanders action group, received the New York State Medal for Valor in a ceremony at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse on Nov. 8, 2023. The squadron is an element of the 174th Attack Wing.

Carter was recognized for actions last September when he and his son responded to a car accident while on vacation.

On Sep. 1, 2022, Carter witnessed a vehicle cross two lanes of traffic and crash into a bridge abutment. Carter immediately pulled over, directed his son to call 911, ran to the car, and pulled the driver out of the burning vehicle to safety. As more bystanders stopped to assist, Carter assessed the driver for head injuries and treated the victim for shock.

"It was instinctual just to pull over and help," said Carter. "Somebody needed help clearly, and it wasn't on me to figure out why."

Carter, who deployed overseas to Afghanistan in 2012, credits his military training with providing him with the skills needed to intervene.

"Prior to deploying I went to Combat Airman Skills Training (CAST), which was at Fort Dix, New Jersey," said Carter. "It was a several week course where they teach you how to treat for various injuries."

Carter remarked that he attended CAST during the height of the Iraq War, and special emphasis was placed on the treatment of Traumatic Brain Injuries and car accidents due to the current threat of roadside bombs during convoy operations.

"There was no hesitation, and it wasn't a thing I had to think about," said Carter. "I've heard those stories. Where people say their training just kicked in, and mine did. It was actually helpful."

Presenting the award on behalf of New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, was Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, the adjutant general for the State of New York and Maj. Gen. Denise Donnell, commander of the New York Air National Guard.

"What a tremendous way to celebrate what the National Guard is all about," Shields said. "I



Air Force Lt. Col. Joshua Carter, the director of the 174th Operations Support Squadron's commander's action group, is presented with the New York State Medal for Valor during an award ceremony at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, N.Y., Nov. 8, 2023. Carter received the award for his life-saving actions while responding to a car accident last year. Maj. Gen. Raymond Shields, the adjutant general, and Maj. Gen. Denise Donnell, commander of the New York Air National Guard, presented the award and delivered remarks during the ceremony.

can't thank you enough for the great work that you do."

"We talk all the time about how critical and how important our Soldiers, Airmen, and our civilian employees are to our organization, and this just further demonstrates," said Shields.

"You've got a guardsman going about their life and then actually helping someone and saving somebody's life."

Carter's son Aiden, who assisted his father in responding to the accident was presented with the New York State Liberty Medal by New York State Senator John W. Mannion in an earlier ceremony.

"I'm thankful to be part of an organization that provided me the skills and training to be able to know what to do in this situation," said Carter. It came real close as another 30 seconds to a minute and I honestly don't think he would have made it. I'm very thankful I was able to be there.

The Medal for Valor is awarded to any member of the New York State Organized Militia who displays a conspicuous act of valor, heroism, courage or gallantry either in a military or civilian capacity. **gt**

"There was no hesitation, and it wasn't a thing I had to think about. I've heard those stories. Where people say their training just kicked in, and mine did. It was actually helpful,"

-- Lt. Col. Joshua Carter, 174th Attack Wing, recipient of the New York State Medal for Valor



Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Steven Demestrio, assigned to Joint Force Headquarters New York, and Spc. Tabitha Demestrio, assigned to the 206th Military Police Company, pose with their daughter Gianna Demestrio outside Chaplain Duffy Chapel on Camp Smith, Sept. 10, 2023. Gianna's baptism ceremony was the first of its kind known to take place on post. Photo by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

Baptism on Base a First for NY National Guard

Story by Capt. Stephanie Fernandez, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. — For Steven and Tabitha Demestrio, having their daughter baptized by a military chaplain, at a military chapel, just made sense.

So, on Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023, 16-month old Gianna Demestrio, the daughter of New York Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Steven Demestrio, and Spec. Tabitha Demestrio, was baptized by Chaplain (Capt.) Joseph Marcoux at the Guard's Camp Smith Training Site near Peekskill, New York, in the Hudson Valley.

Having Marcoux perform this ceremony at the post where they serve was fitting because of the role the New York Army National Guard plays in their lives, the couple said.

"Though it's hard at times with my husband being away or I've been away. Our children have really adapted to how important it is to serve our country and how important it is to serve God at the same time," said Tabitha Demestrio, who serves in the 206th Military Police Company.

"So now, adding our youngest into that mix, it makes it feel like more of a close-knit military family," she added.

Steven Demestrio, who now serves in Joint Force Headquarters, used to serve as the religious affairs specialist assisting Marcoux, who is the commander of the 138th Chaplain Detachment.

The two men have remained close, so he asked Marcoux to perform the baptism for their daughter, Demestrio explained.

Marcoux said he was thrilled when asked to perform the baptism and saw the perfect opportunity to conduct it at the newly renovated Duffy Chapel.

"It was very humbling and very honorable to do this for them," Marcoux said.

"The experience of doing the first baptism that's been done in Duffy Chapel...was powerful, [it] was really great. The fact that this is a military family, and they did it on a military base, really felt like family," he said.

The Demestrios were joined by Gianna's godparents, Marco Litchfield and Fior Kinne.

As far as he knows, it's the first baptism held at the training site's chapel, Marcoux said. **gt**

AROUND THE STATE



Airmen Deliver Game Puck for NY Islanders

ELMONT, N.Y. — Airmen of the 106th Rescue Wing, based at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, drop a ceremonial puck for the NHL New York Islanders Veteran's Day game at the UBS Arena in Elmont, New York, Nov. 11, 2023. The Islanders paid tribute to veterans for their game against the Washington Capitals by inviting 106th Pararescue Airmen to rappel onto the ice during the national anthem as guests of honor with New York Islanders captain Anders Lee and Washington Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin. The Capitals went to defeat the Islanders 4-1. Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin J. Donaldson, 106th Rescue Wing.

New Stripes in the Family

FARMINGDALE, N.Y. — Army National Guard Master Sgt. Alex Williams receives his new rank from his wife and daughter during a promotion ceremony held Nov. 8, 2023 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Farmingdale, N.Y. Williams serves as the section chief for the Brooklyn Recruiting Team of Alpha Company, Recruiting and Retention Battalion. Courtesy photo.



NY Guard Celebrates Families on Long Island

OLD BETHPAGE, N.Y. — New York Guard 1st Lt. Kiana Piedrahita receives lunch from Pfc. Sohail Peter during the 88th Area Command Family Day activities held Sept. 16, 2023. The event was held at the Museum of American Armor in Old Bethpage, NY. Photo by 1st Lt. Edward Shevlin, New York Guard Headquarters.

Joint Force Leaders Honor Former Presidents

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times Staff*

LATHAM, N.Y. — New York National Guard generals honored two New York presidents in October and December by placing wreaths from President Joe Biden at their gravesites.

On October 5, Maj. Gen. Denise Donnell, the assistant adjutant general, Air, placed a presidential wreath at the grave of Chester Arthur, the 21st president, in Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands.

Two months later, on December 5, Maj. Gen. Michel Natali, the assistant adjutant general, Army, commemorated President Martin Van Buren, the 8th president, at his burial place in Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery.

Since 1967, military officers have placed wreaths sent by the current occupant of the White House at the graves of previous presidents on their birthdays.

The New York National Guard headquarters is responsible for placing wreaths at the graves of Arthur and Van Buren.

The New York Air Guard's 107th Attack Wing is responsible for placing a wreath on the grave of President Millard Fillmore, the 13th president, who hailed from Buffalo on January 7.

The ceremony at the Albany Rural Cemetery was attended by 50 people.

Donnell said that these kinds of ceremonies are important.

"We learn from the past to prepare for the future," she said.

Retired New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brian Sherman, who attended the ceremony as a member of the Albany area chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans, said it is important to remember the contributions of former presidents.

Chester Arthur took office after the death of President James



Major General Denise Donnell, commander of the New York Air National Guard, and Command Chief Master Sgt. Michael Hewson, senior enlisted leader for the New York Air National Guard, place a wreath at the gravesite of President Chester Arthur, during a ceremony at Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands, New York, Oct. 5, 2023. Photo by Master Sgt. Jamie Spaulding, 109th Airlift Wing.

Garfield. He was expected to be a political hack. But he played a key role in instituting the professional civil service, balancing the budget, and reinventing the U.S. navy.

The writer Mark Twain, who usually poked fun at politicians, praised Arthur upon his death.

"I am but one in 55,000,000; still, in the opinion of this one-fifty-five-millionth of the country's population, it would be hard to better President Arthur's administration," Twain wrote.

On Dec. 5, in Kinderhook, Van Buren's birthplace, the presentation of the wreath from President Joseph Biden marked the climax of a ceremony that featured wreath presentations from local officials, volunteer groups, and the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site.

In his remarks, Natali praised Van Buren, who served from 1836-1840, for his efforts to keep the United States from going to war with Great Britain over border disputes in Maine and individual American's support for a rebellion in Canada.

A highlight of the Kinderhook

ceremony was a delegation of students from the nearby Ichabod Crane Primary School, who took turns speaking about Martin Van Buren's life and sang Happy Birthday to him.

"It was excellent to have the kids here," Natali said.

It's important to hold events like

this to tie the legacy of the past together with the present, Natali said.

Jane Miller, the president of the Friends of Lindenwald, a volunteer group which supports the National Historic Site, said she appreciates the National Guard participating in the annual tradition in Kinderhook.

"We need to remember that our nation was shaped by people like Martin Van Buren," Miller said.

Van Buren was the first president born as an American citizen rather than a subject of the King of England. He is also the only president not to have spoken English as his first language, having grown up speaking Dutch, and he was the first president from New York.

Van Buren is credited for helping to make the Democratic Party a national party. And supposedly he gave the world the term OK for the initials of his nickname "Old Kinderhook" scrawled on documents he approved. **gt**



Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Michel Natali speaks with students from Ichabod Crane Primary School who presented at the annual wreath laying ceremony marking the birthday of President Martin Van Buren in Kinderhook, New York, on Dec. 5, 2023. Natali presented a wreath from President Joseph Biden at the annual ceremony held at Van Buren's gravesite in Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times* staff.

Guard Chief Reaffirms Oaths of Service to Mark 9/11

Story and photos by Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

NEW YORK — The National Guard's top officer capped a day of 9/11 commemorations by reaffirming the service oaths for 24 new or reenlisting National Guard Soldiers and Airmen in Times Square on Sept. 11, 2023.

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, attended the 22nd annual commemoration of the attacks at the World Trade Center Memorial in lower Manhattan.

Hokanson, who graduated from West Point in 1986, thanked the Soldiers and Airmen for their commitment to serve and hoped they enjoyed their careers as he had his.

"It is an incredible experience," Hokanson said. "If I could do it all over again I would, there are so many amazing things you are going to get to see in your career, and I hope you enjoy it and I thank you."

The Airmen and Soldiers included several

who were not born before Sept. 11, 2001, and others with vivid memories and service experience from 22 years ago.

Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Cincotta, assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing with more than 37 years of service, reenlisted for one more year before his planned retirement.

"It's a special day here, especially in New York," Cincotta said, "so having an opportunity to be here, especially with these young folks for their first enlistment and my last is kind of a memorable moment, so I'm excited about it."

The ceremony was a fitting way to honor the Guard's role in the 9/11 response, said Master Sgt. Jeffrey Miller, a maintenance squadron first sergeant in the 105th Airlift Wing, who reenlisted for three more years of service to cap his current 24.

"What better place to do it?" Miller said. "I'm part

of the New York wing, and we're in New York City and this is a great venue to reenlist in."

Army National Guard Pvt. Liam Kirk, who said he had a family connection to the 9/11 attacks, agreed.

"For me, the National Guard is just something I admired since I was five years old," Kirk said.

"My grandfather was in the towers when they fell, he survived. The ability to be here, on that day, to commemorate that, to be part of the service that is committed to defending the homeland, is incredibly important," Kirk said.

Army Pvt. Carlos Lindo also said he was inspired by 9/11 to enlist.

"I'm here today because those people (first responders) that died on



Army Gen. Dan Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, thanks Air National Guard Master Sgt. Jeffrey Miller, assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing, in Times Square, New York City as part of the National Guard's 9/11 remembrance, Sept. 11, 2023.

that tragic day, they did out of selfless service and I'm here to do the same and set an example for others to do the same," Lindo said.

Airman William Barrow, a retired New York City firefighter who at age 40 required a waiver for his age to enlist in the 105th Airlift Wing, said he sought to join the Guard to serve in a

new way.

"I was here, September 11. I was part of the fire department, a first responder," Barrow said. "There's nothing stronger than the heart of the volunteer."

"I almost lost my life that day, to be here to get sworn in on 9/11, is definitely pretty cool. It's bittersweet," he said. **gt**



Army Gen. Dan Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaks with New York Army National Guard Pvt. Carlos Lindo, following his administering his oath of service in Times Square, Sept. 11, 2023.



Army Gen. Dan Hokanson, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, thanks Air National Guard Sgt. Tiffany Stewart, an air transportation specialist assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing in Newburgh, N.Y., following administering her oath of service in New York City as part of the National Guard's 9/11 remembrance service, Sept. 11, 2023.



Rescue Wing Welcomes Law Enforcement for Learning

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

Thirty law enforcement personnel and 106th Rescue Wing Airmen next to an HH-60G Pavhawk rescue helicopter, Nov. 2, 2023.

FRANCIS S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. — Thirty local, state, and federal law enforcement personnel learned firsthand about the state and federal missions conducted by the 106th Rescue Wing during a Nov. 2 visit to F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base.

The day's orientation focused on the wing's role in combat and peacetime search and rescue missions and the 106th's response capabilities for state emergencies like natural disasters.

The visit was planned by Chief Master Sgt. Harold Rowan, the 106th human resources advisor and Senior Master Sgt. Thomas D'Auria, the planning and programs superintendent for the 106th Security Forces Squadron.

The visitors toured the flightline and learned about the wing's HC-130J Combat King II and HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue aircraft.

The agencies also discussed the ways the Air Guard can aid law enforcement when called upon by the state.

"Our goal was to give local law enforcement a comprehensive understanding of the 106th's mission and capabilities, particularly how we can collaborate when the state activates us," D'Auria said.

Detective Frank Gould from the Suffolk County Police Department appreciated the detailed insight into the base's operations.

"Every visit here adds to our understanding of how we can work together more effectively," Gould said. 🇺🇸

Vice Chief Marks Guard Birthday in NYC



NEW YORK — Air Force Lt. Gen. Marc Sasseville, vice chief of the National Guard Bureau, joins National Guard Senior Enlisted Adviser Tony Whitehead and newly sworn in New York Army National Guard recruits at the Military Entrance Processing Station at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, in cutting a National Guard Birthday Cake on Dec. 13, 2023.

Sasseville and Whitehead were visiting Soldiers while on a trip to New York City. Photo by Mark Getman, Fort Hamilton Garrison.

Army Aviation Team Salutes Bus Stop Kid



LATHAM, N.Y. — Army National Guard Sgt. Angelo Rosencrans, a crew chief with the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, gives a tour of the interior of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to Brendan Toubman at the National Guard flight facility in Latham, N.Y. Nov. 4, 2023. Toubman was recognized by the Bus Stop Club and New York Army National Guard for his selfless service and care towards his older brother with autism. The Bus Stop Club provides sibling recognition through activities for those supporting family members with disabilities. Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Valenza, 42nd Infantry Division.

THE JOINT FORCE

Southern Vanguard Brings Troops to Brazil

Story by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

MACAPA, Brazil —Forty-four Soldiers from the New York National Guard, working alongside active-duty Army and Brazilian Army Soldiers, conducted three weeks of training in Northern Brazil from Nov. 1 to 16, 2023.

Exercise Southern Vanguard 24 brought Soldiers from the 258th Field Artillery Battalion, 466th Medical Company, Area Support, the 133rd Composite Support Company, the 53rd Digital Liaison Detachment and 138th Public Affairs Detachment to the cities of Belem, Macapa and Oiapoque.

The New York Soldiers learned how to survive in the Brazilian jungle and then participated in and supported tactical operations and training while providing medical support to Soldiers during the exercise.

New York Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Isabel Smith, director of joint staff for the New York National Guard, explained that this training operation helped prepare both countries for rapid deployment and improved readiness in response to crisis or contingency.

“Exercising together allows our armies to increase interoperability and demonstrates a shared commitment,” Smith said.

New York has worked alongside Brazil through the National Guard’s State Partnership Program since 2019, executing bilateral military



U.S. Army Soldiers conduct jungle movement during Southern Vanguard 24 in Belem, Brazil, Nov. 3, 2023. New York Army National Guard Soldiers joined elements of the 101st Airborne Division during the field training exercise in the Amazon Jungle. Southern Vanguard is designed to enhance interoperability between partner forces. Photo by Maj. Tifani Summers, U.S. Army South.

and civilian engagements in order to increase partner capacity and capability, Smith said.

The New York Guardsmen trained alongside Soldiers from U.S. Army South, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the 7th Special Forces Group, and the 1st Security Forces Assistance Brigade, as well as over 1,000 Brazilian soldiers of the 52nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Brigade.

Army Guard Maj. Shelly Respecki, commander of the 466th, said she believed that the opportunity to learn about the jungle from the Brazilian army was an invaluable experience from a medical perspective.

The unit provided medical support and supply throughout the exercise and treated a variety of injuries such as heat-related illnesses, environmental threats and emergency trauma, Respecki said.

“The course allows our Soldiers to understand what threats and risks are involved with training in the jungle,” said Respecki. “We’ll be better able to treat the participants knowing what they’re going through and how to survive in the jungle if needed to potentially sit on a patient.”



New York Army National Guard and Brazilian field artillery soldiers employ a Brazilian Army 105mm towed howitzer in Ferreira Gomes, Brazil, in Ferreira Gomes, Brazil, on Nov. 12, 2023. Photo by Sgt. Jordan Sutton, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

While they learned to operate in a new environment, they found a sense of familiarity in some of their missions as well, the Soldiers said.

Guardsmen from the 53rd Digital Liaison Detachment integrated with the 23rd Jungle Infantry Brigade’s staff section for the duration of the exercise to support operations.

The public affairs Soldiers from the 138th supported media relations in conjunction with Army South counterparts, according to Capt. Stephanie Fernandez, the unit commander.



Army National Guard Cpt. Kyle Davis, assigned to the 258th Field Artillery Regiment, and Brazilian Army Sergeant 3rd Class Irwing Carvalho Marques, assigned to the 2nd Jungle Infantry Battalion, examine a starting point during a night time land navigation exercise in Belém, Brazil on Nov. 3, 2023. Photo by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

The four artillerymen from the 258th Field Artillery, spent a lot of time with Brazilian gunners, according to Capt. Anthony Migliore, the assistant battalion fire support officer for the 258th's Bravo Battery.

"I spent most of my time at the gun-line yesterday and it was just like being back at A Battery or B Battery with the 258th," Migliore said.

He provided fires planning support for a scenario involving attacks on enemy objectives, during the exercise, Migliore said.

Spc. Myeonghyeon Chang, a water treatment specialist from the 133rd, said she got a lot of practice working in her specialty.

"It's been a really great experience for me, especially since this is my first time being in a Latin American country," she said.

Chang said she and others from the 133rd provided pure water for both Brazilian and American exercise participants. They also got



Staff Sgt. Olivia Mannetti (right), senior company medic with the 206th Military Police Company, and 1st Sgt. Amanda Eldred, company 1st sergeant for 466th Medical Company Area Support, provide medical care to a Soldier during the academics portion of Southern Vanguard 24 in Belem, Brazil, Nov. 3, 2023. Photo by Spc. Joshua Taeckens, U.S. Army South.



A Brazilian Army HM-4 Jaguar helicopter sling loads a howitzer into position during Southern Vanguard 24 in Ferreira Gomes, Brazil, on Nov. 12, 2023. Courtesy photo.

the change to cross-trained on the 7th Special Forces Group's water purification equipment.

Ultimately, Southern Vanguard provided Soldiers with more than just training, as they returned to New York having formed new relationships and fresh perspectives, and also got a chance to experience Brazilian culture, the Soldiers said.

"I had a lot of opportunities to learn about their culture, language and how the Brazilian Army works and operates. The food was definitely great too," Chang said. **gt**



New York Army National Guard and Brazilian field artillery soldiers pose for photo in Ferreira Gomes, Brazil, on Nov. 12, 2023. The two artillery elements trained together during exercise Southern Vanguard 24. Photo by Sgt. Jordan Sutton, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

222nd Welcomes Brazilians in NY



NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — Air National Guard Capt. Randy Cooper, assigned to the 222nd Command and Control Squadron, leads a space operator development discussion with Lt. Cdr. Vanessa Rocha Leandro Chicano, Brazilian Navy, at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, Dec. 6, 2023. The officers from the Brazilian Navy and Air Force took part in discussions in Western New York from Dec. 4-8, 2023 on recruiting, training, and retaining space operations personnel, along sidewith representatives from U.S. Space Command and the U.S. Southern Command. Photo by 1st Lt Jason Carr, 107th Attack Wing.



Denmark, NY approve Training plans Together

Story by Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff, and Jaclyn Lyons, 109th Airlift Wing

Danish Maj. Gen. Søren Andersen, commander of Denmark’s Joint Arctic Command, left, and Army Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, shake hands after signing a statement of intent to establish joint training and exchanges in Greenland between the New York National Guard and the Joint Arctic Command at the state headquarters in Latham, New York on Nov. 7, 2023. Photo by William Albrecht, Guard Times Staff.

LATHAM, N.Y. — The New York National Guard and the Danish military command responsible for patrolling Greenland plan to start conducting joint training and exchange observers in 2024 and 2025.

The immediate goal for the partnership, initialed during a meeting held at New York National Guard headquarters on Nov. 7, is to conduct a combined training exercise in 2025 focused on disaster response, according to Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general.

Greenland, the largest island in the world, is a self-governing Danish territory, and the Joint Arctic Command, headquartered in Nuuk, Greenland, commands Danish forces there.

The Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing regularly flies missions in Greenland to resupply U.S. research stations on the island’s ice cap.

It makes good sense for the New York National Guard to work with the Joint Arctic Command, Shields said.

“The opportunity to expand our training and operational relationships with Denmark and Greenland, specifically as they relate to Arctic operations is a significant step,” Shields said.

The Statement of Intent, signed by Shields and Major General Søren Andersen, commander of the Danish Joint Arctic Command, sets out a framework for cooperation.

“The Statement of Intent allows the New York National Guard to develop training and

operational relationships which advances mutual trust and interoperability with the Danish Joint Arctic Command,” Shields said.

“We really appreciate the opportunity to come here, learn some more and start this effort,” Andersen said.

“Together, with both the U.S. and Canada, there’s a lot going on,” he said. “We see you as a great partner for us.”

“We still need friends, and that is why we are here today. It is a win-win for you and for us,” Andersen said.



Danish Maj. Gen. Søren Andersen, Denmark’s Joint Arctic Command commander, listens as New York Air National Guard Col. Christian Sander, describes the skis of one of the 109th Airlift Wing’s LC-130 Hercules “Skibird” aircraft in Scotia, N.Y. on Nov. 7, 2023. Photo by Jaclyn Lyons, 109th Airlift Wing.

Prior to meeting with Shields and Maj. Gen. Denise Donnell, the commander of the New York Air National Guard, Andersen and Brig. Gen. Poul Primdahl, the Joint Arctic Command Vice Commander, toured Stratton Air National Guard Base, home of the 109th Airlift Wing.

Col. Christian Sander, the wing commander, briefed the Danish team on wing operations and walked them through one of the LC-130s.

In December of 2021 and September of this year, the 106th Rescue Wing conducted joint search and rescue training with the Joint Arctic Command in Greenland.

And, in March of this year, the 105th Airlift Wing transported American and Canadian troops to the high Arctic during a joint exercise in Canada’s Nunavut Territory.

“Denmark is going to increase our investments in the Arctic and the north Atlantic area, and we still need good partners and want to cooperate with the 109th for the coming years and I hope we can train together and support each other up there,” Andersen said.

The understanding with Denmark is the fourth foreign partnership for New York. The New York National Guard has State Partnership Program relationships with the armed forces of the Republic of South Africa and Brazil. The New York Guard also has a bilateral relationship with Israel’s Home Front Command. **gt**

NY Troops Place in South Africa Skills Competition

Story and photos Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Pietrantonio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

POTCHEFSTOOM, South Africa — Fifteen New York Soldiers and Airmen, who traveled to South Africa in September for a military skills competition, took home a team second place and some individual awards at the end of the week-long event.

The South African National Defence Force Military Skills Competition, held at a South African Army base in Potchefstroom from Sept. 9 to 16, tested competitors' skills in rifle and pistol marksmanship, land and water obstacle courses, grenade throwing, and an eight kilometer combat.

The event was started by the South African military Reserve Forces Council in 2006 and is open to teams from other nations.

The New York National Guard has competed regularly, because of the State Partnership Program relationship New York has had with South Africa since 2003.

The New York National Guard fielded a male Army Guard team, a male Air Guard team, and a female team of Soldiers and Airmen.

A joint Army and Air Guard male team finished second in the invitational category, competing against teams from South Africa, Germany, Botswana and Tanzania.

Army Capt. Nick Trentanelli and Spc. Joshua Gonzalez, both assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division headquarters; Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Guckian, assigned to the 369th Sustainment Brigade, and Senior Airman Hayden Wagner from the 274th Air Operations Support Squadron, made up the team.

Wagner also took first place in the age 30 and under category, and third place in the overall individual standings.

Air Guard Master Sgt. Jonathan Corcoran, a member of the 109th

Airlift Wing took second place in the marksmanship portion.

And Guckian finished in second place in grenade throwing and third place in the water obstacle.

Air Guard Chief Master Sgt. Edward Stefik, the team captain from the 107th Attack Wing, said that being part of the event was very rewarding.

"It's a unique experience to travel to another continent and be exposed to different militaries and cultures but to then compete in a variety of military skill tasks is something special," Stefik said.

"These men and women pushed themselves not just physically, but also emotionally, and I truly feel that they will never forget these experiences," he said.

South African Army Major David Labuschagne, an intelligence officer in South Africa's 3rd Parachute Battalion, said he enjoyed competing with the New York teams.

"The current group of Soldiers and Airmen were very professional, and it was a pleasure to compete against them. They were very competitive, and we liked that," he said.

The women's team—two Airmen and two Soldiers—were very motivated, said Air Guard Maj. Tiffany Mock, their coach.

"This was a really unique opportunity to showcase our strength as females in a competition; since its inception it has been primarily for males," she said.

"I think our woman competed really well, and I hope this sets an example for more women in our formations to get out here and

push themselves," Mock added.

Army Staff Sgt. Keyonta Williams, a recruiter from Brooklyn, said the event had been "amazing".

It was a great chance to see South Africa and experience the culture, and get to know other military people, Williams said.

"Everyone has been helpful giving tips on different techniques for the different events, such as the grenade throwing, since it's not something we're typically used to training," he said.

Gonzalez, who competes in Spartan obstacle races, said he enjoyed the comradery.

"Everyone here has so much experience and it's been great to get their feedback on different

events and techniques, and I feel like everyone here is making me a better Soldier," Gonzalez said. **gt**



Fifteen New York Soldiers and Airmen compete in the South African National Defence Force Military Skills Competition in Potchefstroom, South Africa on Sept. 12, 2023. Top two photos show Airman 1st Class Vincenza Costanzo and Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Guckian running the obstacle course. Above, Staff Sgt. Quian Han, gets marksmanship advice from a South African Army senior warrant officer.

Empire Challenge Exercises Emergency Comms

Story by 1st Lt. Ed Shevlin, New York Guard Headquarters

NEW YORK — Nineteen members with specialized communications skills tested their emergency response capabilities during the New York Guard state defense force exercise Empire Challenge 2023, held across New York State October 3-5, 2023.

Empire Challenge is a communications exercise that trains radio operators and tests the equipment used during potential statewide emergencies.

Empire Challenge 2023 included multiple branches of the New York State Military Forces, including the Army National Guard, New York Guard, the New York Naval Militia as the host service, and volunteers of the Civil Air Patrol.

The exercise was a statewide event, explained the training coordinator and New York Guard signal officer, Warrant Officer Richard Martino. Members deployed to five locations, including Camp Smith in the Hudson Valley, Hancock Field in Syracuse, the Connecticut Street Armory in Buffalo, the 1st Marine Corps District Base in Garden City on Long Island and Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn.

The New York City communications team at Fort Hamilton served as the network control for the event, locating their operations center with the National Guard's homeland security element, Joint Task Force Empire Shield.

The proximity of the Empire Challenge communications team to Empire Shields operations personnel helped ensure interoperability between the two elements and rehearse actions in the event of a New York City emergency, Martino said.

“This exercise is very important to the New York Military Forces as we renew our interoperability with our civil support counterparts,” Martino said. “We are training for a worst-day scenario. We need

to be able to communicate when there is no infrastructure left.”

New York Guard volunteers worked alongside Naval Militia members to ensure the network of communications could reach all corners of the state.

“We have a longstanding relationship with the Naval Militia, we have always worked well together, and I’m sure that we will continue to do so,” said New York Guard commander Brig. Gen. Peter Riley during a visit October 4.

The New York Naval Militia deployed a communications trailer to support the exercise at Fort Hamilton. Working jointly, New York Guard Net Control team members served as radio operators and trained Naval Militia personnel in the skills to maintain a radio network.

“The New York Guard contribution to this mission was spectacular and I look forward to future missions with them,” said New York Naval Militia Capt. Donald McKnight.

As communications continued on Wednesday, October 4, the Civil Air Patrol flew an airborne repeater aboard a C172 aircraft over New York City. Ground-based radio stations then bounced their signals off the repeater to Syracuse. The airborne repeater worked perfectly and high-frequency com-



New York Naval Militia Rear Admiral Larry Weill, foreground at left, monitors live video from a drone over Great South Bay off the south shore of Long Island, Oct. 3, 2023. The drone operated from a Naval Militia patrol boat 30 miles away from the command post at Fort Hamilton. Courtesy photo.

munications between all stations were loud and clear, Martino said.

“We successfully integrated with the other components and provided meaningful support to the exercise,” said Staff Sergeant Leonardo Sciortino of the New York Guard communications team.

“The experience we gained in this exercise will be very important and useful for us in future operations,” he said. **gt**



New York Naval Militia members setup a communications antenna at Fort Hamilton, N.Y., to support Empire Challenge Oct. 3, 2023. Courtesy photo.



New York Naval Militia Electrician's Mate Glenn Malik, assigned to the Emergency Boat Service Detachment 3, raises the bow door on LC-351 after a landing on the beach at the US Coast Guard Station at Jones Beach, Long Island Oct. 3, 2023 during Empire Challenge. Courtesy photo.



Senior Airman Karlie Foster, assigned to the 2nd Civil Support Team, trains Soldiers from the Dismounted Chemical Reconnaissance Platoon, of the 10th Mountain Division on the proper use of oxygen masks during a training exercise at the Colonie Fire Training Center in Latham, N.Y., Nov. 17, 2023. During the exercise, Chemical, Nuclear, Radioactive, and Nuclear Specialists from Fort Drum went through training scenarios designed to familiarize them with certain equipment, and to build a relationship with the New York National Guard Civil Support Team, present to facilitate the training and offer support and mentorship.

Guard Trains with 10th Mountain Troops

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Joint Force Headquarters

COLONIE FIRE TRAINING CENTER, LATHAM, N.Y. — Ten Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Divisions Dismounted Chemical Reconnaissance Team refined their skills alongside 16 Airmen and Soldiers from the 2nd Civil Support Team during an exercise held in the Albany, New York suburb of Colonie from Nov. 14 to 16.

The event, held at the Colonie Fire Training Center, presented the active Army Soldiers with the challenges involving a real world chemical, biological, radioactive, or nuclear (CBRN) situation.

The climax of the training involved locating and sampling a stockpile of materials in the basement of a house located at the training center, typically used by local firefighters.

The Dismounted Chemical Reconnaissance Team, based at Fort Drum, is tasked with reconnaissance and surveillance to determine the presence and extent of CBRN contamination using the techniques of search, survey, surveillance, and sampling.

Members of the 2nd CST were present to offer guidance and support as the 10th Mountain Soldiers donned protective gear, picked up testing devices and sample gathering kits to locate and identify the materials in the house.

According to Army Guard Lt. Col. John Giroux, the 2nd CST commander, the importance of this type of event cannot be overstated.

“Exercises like this are crucial for many reasons. It allows us to identify and fill training shortfalls, expands technical skills, and builds cohesion between us at the state level and our contemporaries at the federal level, such as the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division,” Giroux said.

During the exercise, Soldiers made use of protective suits, oxygen masks with tanks, sensors for detecting a wide range of hazardous materials, and sample kits.

The Soldiers began by circling the exterior of the house, looking for spikes on their detection equipment, and eventually entering the

house to pinpoint the origin of the hazardous materials.

In this case, it was a makeshift laboratory set up by 2nd CST personnel in the basement of the house. The goal was to simulate a real world situation where someone could be making a weapon of mass destruction in their home.

Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Wallace, the reconnaissance team platoon sergeant, said training like this is vital to prepare for a real world event.

“This type of situation might be uncommon, but a lack of training when responding to one could have catastrophic consequences,” Wallace said.

“Therefore, the training must be strenuous, realistic, and objectively critiqued.”

1st Lt. Rosa Dominguez, the platoon leader for the Reconnaissance Team, said she and her Soldiers appreciated the help and mentoring of the Guardsmen.

“It was a real pleasure to work alongside the CST members and to absorb some of their expertise,” Dominguez said.

“This week we built a lot of comradery with them, and working relationships that will benefit both of our units for years to come,” she added.

After their mission inside the house, the Soldiers went through a decontamination process.

The Soldiers spent about two hours inside of the protective equipment and breathing through a respirator.

The 2nd CST is comprised of Army and Air Guardsmen trained to identify hazardous materials from either a terrorist attack or a disaster or criminal activity and inform local first responders.

New York Air Guard Senior Airmen Karlie Foster, a Hazmat Technician with the 2nd CST, and cadre member for the event, said she enjoyed the opportunity to work with members of the active duty military.

“It’s great to compare their perspective, which is a unit who will deploy internationally, with ours, which is domestic, and bridge that gap,” said Foster. 

Orion Soldiers Compete to be Best Warrior

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



Army Spc. Andrew Buck, an Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operator assigned to Delta Company, 152nd Brigade Engineer Battalion, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New York Army National Guard, extends the detonation wire of an M18 Claymore mine during a warrior tasks and battle drills evaluation in Youngstown, N.Y., Nov. 4, 2023. The evaluation was one of six challenging events in the brigade's annual best warrior competition.

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Nine Army National Guard Soldiers from across New York State spent more than 48 hours in competition to become the “Best Warrior” of the Syracuse-based 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Spc. Peter Fillion, 23, of Rochester and Sgt. 1st Class Travis Wood, 32, of Basom were named the brigade's best warriors in the Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer categories.

Fillion and Wood, both infantrymen, are assigned to Charlie Troop of the brigade's 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment. They will compete in the New York Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition in spring 2024, with hopes of extending a five-year streak of 27th IBCT Soldiers placing first and representing New York in the Army National Guard's northeast regional and national competitions.

“The best warrior competition tests a Soldier's mind, body, and

spirit,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Roeser, senior enlisted leader of the 27th IBCT.

Over two and a half days from Nov. 3 through 5, Soldiers were tested in six events:

- Formal interview board
- 12-mile ruck march
- Three-gun shoot, which combined rifle, pistol, and shotgun qualification with 10 burpees, a high crawl, and 25 air squats
- Warrior tasks and battle drills
- Land navigation
- Army Combat Fitness Test

During the warrior tasks and battle drills, Soldiers were challenged to bound with a buddy while under fire – taking cover behind barriers, crawling under obstacles, and firing back at an enemy. Once they cleared the challenge, they had to immediately provide care to a simulated wounded Soldier under stressful conditions.

Competitors were chosen as the best-of-the-best from thousands

of 27th IBCT Soldiers across the state, after completing competitions at their home units. Fillion and Wood spent extra time preparing for the challenges at the brigade-level.

“It's a lot of studying, maintaining physical performance, and your sponsor preparing you to go out there and succeed,” said Wood.

Both say the skills and traits they used in competition translate to their civilian careers.

“A lot of my job is attention to detail. Reminding myself, you need to think about the little, tiny things. They all affect something later down the line,” said Fillion. “And just [having] a never-quit attitude.”



Army Sgt. 1st Class Travis Wood, an infantryman assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New York Army National Guard, fires the M500 shotgun during a three-gun shoot event in Youngstown, N.Y., Nov. 4, 2023.



Spc. Damien Pagano, an infantryman assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, prepares to conduct a land navigation exercise in Orchard Park, N.Y., Nov. 4, 2023. The exercise was one of six challenging events in the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's annual best warrior competition.

Command changes around the NY Army Guard



LATHAM, N.Y. — Army National Guard leaders took on new roles across the state during the fall of 2023. Clockwise from above: the formation of colors welcomes Brig. Gen. Jack James back to command the 53rd Troop Command in a ceremony held in Latham, N.Y. Dec. 3, 2023; James receives the troop command colors from Maj. Gen. Ray Shields during the change of command ceremony; Lt. Col. Gary Barney accepts the colors of the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry during his change of command in Niagara Falls, Oct. 15, 2023; Lt. Col. Eric Emmerling assumes command of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery during his ceremony at Camp Smith, Oct. 20, 2023; Lt. Col. Adam Bojarski, the new commander of 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, poses with two Irish Wolfhounds, the official regimental mascot, following his change of command at the Lexington Avenue armory in New York City, Oct. 22, 2023; Col. Patrick Clare, who took command of the 369th Sustainment Brigade Oct. 22, 2023 leads his brigade colors during the Veterans Day Parade in New York, N.Y., Nov. 11, 2023; and newly promoted Brig. Gen. Christopher Cronin unfurls his general officer colors following his promotion ceremony Nov. 4, 2023 in Rochester. Cronin will serve as the Deputy Commanding General for Operations in the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters. Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Gunther, Staff Sgt. Michael Janker, Maj. Avery Schneider, Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, and Sgt. Grace Nechanicky.



Engineers Learn about Sikh culture, Historic Battle

Story and photos by Spc. Joseph Liggio, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. — Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company got a lesson in Indian military history and a taste of traditional Indian food during their October 14, 2023 drill training at Camp Smith.

The event was the latest in a series of cultural meals held one drill weekend each quarter, according to the company first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Theodore Gentile. The goal, he explained, is to introduce members of the company, a component of the 204th Engineer Battalion, to the diverse backgrounds of its members.

The Soldier who suggested the October 14 meal and history lesson was Sgt. Talwinder Singh, a Queens resident and a plumber in the company, who is Sikh.

Sikhs follow the Indian religion of Sikhism, which has 25 million adherents worldwide. While 80 percent of Sikhs live in India, the Pew Research Center estimates there are about 280,000 Sikhs in the United States, and 11 percent of those live in New York.

Sikhs have a long tradition of military service, and during the 19th Century they were valued by the British Empire for service in what was then British India, which today are the countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In 1897, a group of 21 Sikh soldiers fought to the death against 10,000 Afghans attacking a key fortification on the British Empire's frontier. The heroic stand delayed the Afghans and prevented the fall of other forts in the area.

Singh said he got the idea for a presentation after a lecture by Dr. Gurinderpal Singh Josan, the founder of the Saragarhi Foundation, which works to commemorate the battle.

Singh pitched the idea to company leadership, and they liked it, Gentile said.

"This group, the Saragarhi Foundation, was willing to come here and give us a whole brief on the battle, and then tie it in with the food, so it's an awesome experience to have the history of their culture and their military tie in with ours," said Gentile.

"I said, 'You know, we should do this with the United States Army too' it's about the warrior, it's about the Army," Singh said. "I wanted to introduce my food and also my culture's history."

During the lunchtime lecture, the Soldiers heard about the battle from Singh Josan.

He told them how the 21 Sikh soldiers of the 36th Sikh Regiment, led by a sergeant, decided to fight it out at their outpost to help protect the rest of the unit rather than retreat.

Although the Sikh soldiers were all killed, they killed at least 180 Afghans and delayed the advance of the Afghan Army long enough to prevent other units from being destroyed.

The Sikhs were all posthumously presented the Indian Order of Merit, the highest Indian

Army award at the time and the battle was commemorated with two monuments.

Singh said he was happy to get the chance to share some of his cultural history and food with the other Soldiers of the 1156th.

"I'm starting here, and hopefully we will go forward to other battalions, and other companies, and slowly teach everybody about us," Singh said. **gt**



Sgt. Luis F. Rodriguez, Sgt. Talwinder Singh, and Sgt. Lyndsey R. Fiore, all assigned to the 1156th Engineer Company, serve traditional Indian food during a Sikh cultural event hosted on Camp Smith Training Site, New York, Oct. 14, 2023. The company held the event as part of their initiative to introduce different cultures to Soldiers at one drill weekend per quarter.



Dr. Gurinderpal Singh Josan, founder and chairman of Saragarhi Foundation Inc., delivers a lecture on the historic Battle of Saragarhi to Soldiers of the 1156th Engineer Company on Camp Smith, Oct. 14, 2023. The lecture gave insight into Indian military history, as well as Sikh culture.



Artillery Honors Exemplary Soldiers

NEW YORK — Army National Guard Lt. Col. Eric Emerling, commander of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment, presents the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara to Staff Sgt. Joseph DeShaw as the prior recipient, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Messing, looks on at the unit's annual St. Barbara's Ball Dec. 2, 2023 at the Sanctuary, Roosevelt Island in New York City.

Other battalion recipients of the Honorable Order of St. Barbara included:

- Capts. Paola Dossa, Josef Danczuk, Patrick Millerick, and Zachary Rowland,
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brandon Willit, and
- Sgts. 1st Class Geriff Polanco, Thomas Duckett, and Bruce Barclay, and Harry Lambright.

The Honorable Order of St. Barbara recognizes those who demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence, selflessness and promotion of field artillery.

Additionally, the Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher for support of the artillery was presented to Mrs. Cindy Brown and Mrs. Marley Fernandez.

The St. Barbara Ball is a tradition marked by formal celebration and presentation of awards honoring St. Barbara, the patron saint of artillery personnel. Photo by Mark Getman, New York Guard.



Signal Battalion Heads Overseas for Spartan Shield

FORT CAVAZOS, Texas — Soldiers assigned to the 101st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, with units in Yonkers, Peekskill and Orangeburg, stand in formation for their completion of training Sept. 6, 2023, at Fort Cavazos, Texas.

The battalion completed their predeployment training and deployed this past fall as part of Task Force Spartan—the Army's 10,000-person force in the Middle East.

The unit is expected back in New York in the spring of 2024.

First Female First Sergeant For 719th

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. — New York Army National Guard Capt. Eric Samson, commander of the 719th Composite Truck Company, passes the company guidon to incoming 1st Sgt. Violet Plaza, during the unit change of responsibility ceremony held at Camp Smith, Dec. 10, 2023.



The ceremony marked the change of responsibility from outgoing senior enlisted advisor 1st Sgt. William Perez to Plaza, who became the first female in the company's history to assume the role of first sergeant of the 719th Transportation Company. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

Joint Surgeon Helps NY Address Suicide Prevention



ALBANY, N.Y. — Army Maj. Gen. Jill Faris, Director of the Office of the Joint Surgeon for the National Guard Bureau, speaks with medical providers and civilian peers during the New York Army National Guard's behavioral health training workshop to improve suicide prevention and response at the Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albany, N.Y., Sept. 21, 2023.

The workshop brought together a wide range of medical professionals and learn and discuss with each other ways to improve their interactions with Soldiers, especially those in distress, said Capt. Samuel Chubb, the State Surgeon's Office operations officer and event organizer.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Valenza, 42nd Infantry Division.



Hellfighters Parade in NYC

NEW YORK — New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Edwin Garris, senior non-commissioned leader for the New York Army National Guard, greets 2nd Lt. Rivkah Weissberger, a quartermaster officer with 1501st Field Feeding Company and congratulates her on her recent commission prior to marching in the Veterans Day Parade in New York City, Nov. 11, 2023. The 369th Sustainment Brigade returned home from deployment overseas this past summer and participated in the city salute to veterans, led by the U.S. Army, this year's featured service. Photo by Staff Sgt. Sebastian Rothwyn, 369th Sustainment Brigade.

Regional Training Institute Offerings in Fiscal 2024

Courtesy of Lt. Col. Renee Ford, 106th Regional Training Institute


 106th Regiment Regional Training Institute (RTI)
Camp Smith Training Site, NY 10567
<https://dmna.ny.gov/arnq/106rti/>


TY-24 Course Listing (TRADOC Courses)

Infantryman Course (11B10) - (POC: SFC Seely)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
001	ADT	35	13 APR 2024	04 MAY 2024

Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS) Operator Course - (POC: SFC Yamakado)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
001	ADT	8	23 APR 2024	03 MAY 2024
002	ADT	8	28 MAY 2024	07 JUN 2024
003	ADT	8	13 AUG 2024	23 AUG 2024

Pre-Officer Candidate School (Pre-OCS) - (POC: SFC Speros)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901A	IDT	20	20 APR 2024	21 APR 2024
901B	IDT	20	18 MAY 2024	19 MAY 2024

Officer Candidate School (OCS), Phase 2 - (POC: SFC Speros)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
069	IDT	20	24 AUG 2024	29 JUL 2025

68W Sustainment Course - (POC: SFC Cammayo)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	ADT	20	29 NOV 2023	7 DEC 2023
902	ADT	20	19 JAN 2024	26 JAN 2024
903	ADT	20	26 JAN 2024	02 FEB 2024

Combat Lifesaver Course (CLC) - (POC: SFC Cammayo)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	IDT	20	22 APR 2024	25 APR 2024
902	IDT	20	16 MAY 2024	19 MAY 2024
903	IDT	20	20 JUN 2024	23 JUN 2024

Basic Combatives Course - Level 1 - (POC: 1SG Cooley)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	AT	24	29 MAY 2024	03 JUN 2024

Tactical Combatives Course - Level 2 - (POC: 1SG Cooley)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	AT	24	04 JUN 2024	14 JUN 2024

Common Faculty Development Instructor Course (CFD-IC) - (POC: SFC Speros)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
001	ADT	11	05 MAR 2024	14 MAR 2024

Maneuver Tactics Foundation Course (MTFC) - (POC: SFC Seely)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
001	ADT	7	01 NOV 2023	05 NOV 2023

TY-24 Course Listing (NYARNG Courses)

Company CDR / 1SG Pre-Command Course (CCFSPCC) – (POC: SFC Cornell)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	ADT	40	22 APR 2024	26 APR 24
902	ADT	40	09 SEPT 2024	13 SEPT 2024

Dense Urban Environment Leader Operations Course (DUELOC) – (POC: CPT Carr)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	ADT	30	TBD	TBD

SUAS Planner Course (11B2/3) - (POC SFC: Yamakado)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	ADT	18	01 MAY 2024	02 MAY 2024

GSA Bus Driver Training - (POC: SFC Cornell)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	IDT/AT	20	17 MAR 2024	22 MAR 2024
902	IDT/AT	20	05 MAY 2024	10 MAY 2024
903	IDT/AT	20	09 JUN 2024	14 JUN 2024

Future Leader Course (FLC) - (POC: SFC Cornell)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	IDT/AT	18	21 JAN 2024	26 JAN 2024

Holistic Health & Fitness - (POC: SFC Cammayo)				
Class	Class Type	Seats	Start Date	End Date
901	AT	12	13 NOV 2023	17 NOV 2023
902	AT	12	05 FEB 2024	09 FEB 2024
903	AT	12	06 MAY 2024	10 MAY 2024
904	AT	12	09 SEP 2024	13 SEP 2024

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. — The 106th Regional Training Institute announced its course offerings for fiscal year 2024 for Soldiers and unit leaders.

The training ranges from infantry qualification, combat medic sustainment, combat lifesaver to combatives training. Soldiers interested in the

training should contact their unit training manager for availability, said 106th RTI Command Sgt. Maj. Morgan Cady.

“I’m trying to find new ways to get this schedule out to our Soldiers,” Cady said.

Cady said the training institute is also available to Soldiers interested in becoming instructors as well. **gt**

75 Years of Service in 105th

Story by 2nd Lt. Briana Ross, 105th Airlift Wing



Soldiers assigned to the 138th Public Affairs Detachment walk past a C-17 Globemaster III of the 105th Airlift Wing in Belem, Brazil for Exercise Southern Vanguard 24, Oct. 28, 2023. The 105th marks 75 years of service in December 2023. Photo by Spc. Joshua Taeckens, U.S. Southern Command.

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH, N.Y. — The Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing marks 75 years of operations on Dec. 8, 2023.

The 105th Airlift Wing, which flies nine C-17 Globemaster III transports from Newburgh, traces its history back to the 137th Fighter Squadron which flew F-47 propeller driven fighters in 1948.

The wing has over 1,000 Airmen assigned. "We're proud to have served this community and country for 75 years and look forward to continue doing so for 75 more," said Brig. General Gary R. Charlton II, the wing's commander.

The 137th Fighter Squadron of the N.Y. Air National Guard received federal recognition and began operations at the Westchester County Airport in White Plains, N.Y.

The unit was initially equipped with F-47 Thunderbolt aircraft, a World War II fighter bomber originally known as the P-47.

In September 1952, the unit was redesignated to the 137th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and received the F-51 Mustang fighter along with a new air defense mission.

In 1953 the unit entered the jet age when it received the F-94 Starfighter all-weather interceptor.

It retained its air defense mission until 1958 when it converted to the F-86 Saber Jet and was reorganized as the 105th Tactical Fighter Group.

In February 1961, the unit was redesignated again as the 105th Aeromedical Transport Group and received its first C-119 Flying Boxcar aircraft to transport wounded personnel.

The unit later converted to the four-engine strategic transport C-97 Stratocruiser, which allowed the 105th to participate in missions in Southeast Asia operations during the Vietnam War.

In 1970, the Air Guard switched the mission of the 105th back to a tactical one. The unit was redesignated as the 105th Tactical Air Support Group.

The Airmen flew the propeller driven O-21 Skymaster, which provided a platform for forward air controllers whose mission was to call in airstrikes on enemy positions.

In May of 1983, the unit relocated to Stewart

International Airport and in 1984 the unit was redesignated the 105th Military Airlift Group the following year.

In July of 1985, the 105th became the first Air National Guard unit to fly the C-5 Galaxy, the largest plane in the Air Force inventory.

The 105th relocated to its new home to Stewart Air National Guard Base across the runway of the airport in October 1987.

In March 1992, the name changed to the 105th Airlift Group.

Finally, three years later, in October of 1995, the unit was redesignated as the 105th Airlift Wing.

In 2011, the unit converted from C-5A Galaxy to C-17 Globemaster III.

C-17's from Stewart perform a range of missions including tactical airlift and aeromedical evacuation. They have been involved in operations all over the world.

In 2021, 105th Airlift Wing Airmen helped evacuate Afghans from Kabul as the Taliban took over the Afghan capital. One 105th aircrew was recognized with awards for heroism for their actions during those missions. **gt**

C-17s Provide Aeromed with Lifesaving Lift

Story and photos by 2nd Lt. Briana Ross, 105th Airlift Wing

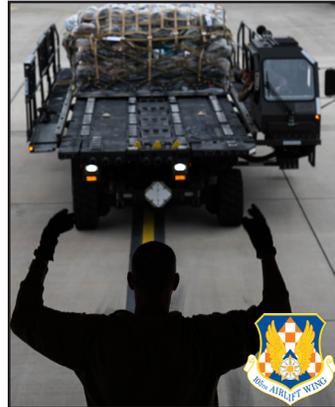
NEWBURGH, N.Y. — Airmen of the 105th Airlift Wing flew more than 750 flight hours during their four-month long support of aeromedical evacuation missions that carried 560 patients from the Middle East to Europe, a mission that wrapped up Nov. 30, 2023.

Between August and November, 28 Airmen from the wing flew 17 Aeromedical Evacuation missions, transporting an additional 2,040 passengers and 2.1 million pounds of cargo.

Aeromedical evacuation is an Air Mobility Command mission designed to provide time sensitive, mission critical care to patients traveling between medical treatment facilities. The 105th's role involved providing a fully crewed C-17 Globemaster III to team up with the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight to perform in-air medical care. They evacuated patients from Africa and the Middle East to medical facilities in Germany and the United States.

"We're proud to support a federal mission like this that really makes a difference in people's lives," said Chief Master Sgt. Vincent Fasano, a senior enlisted leader at the 105th Airlift Wing. "It is one of the most rewarding missions out there."

During the mission, 105th aircrews worked alongside Airmen of the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight to turn the C-17 into a flying hospital. The aircrew managed loading cargo



Master Sgt. Andrew Britt, a loadmaster assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing, directs a K-loader to the back of a C-17 Globemaster III at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, Nov. 23, 2023.

and supplies while the aeromedical evacuation team ensured patients were comfortable and cared for during transport.

"Every mission is different," says Airman 1st Class Dominic Kopacz, loadmaster for the 137th. "Some patients walk on the jet, and some are carried and cared for the entire flight."

Once patients are picked up, the aeromedical crew cares for and monitors them until they are brought back to hospitals in Germany and the United States for further treatment.

"I remember we evacuated someone who fell and hit their head," Kopacz recalled. "They were in critical condition, but we were able to fly them to the care they needed. It feels really good when we drop off patients and know we may have saved their lives." 🇺🇸



Airmen of the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron convert a 105th Airlift Wing C-17 Globemaster III to a flying hospital at Ramstein Air Base, Nov. 17, 2023.



Airmen assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing and 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight prepare to load patients and bags onto a C-17 Globemaster III for airlift out of the US Central Command area of operation, Nov. 18, 2023. The 105th Airlift Wing spent four months flying out of Ramstein Air Base, Germany for the missions.



Airmen of the 10th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron convert a 105th Airlift Wing C-17 Globemaster III to a flying hospital at Ramstein Air Base, Nov. 17, 2023.

"We're proud to support a federal mission like this that really makes a difference in people's lives. It is one of the most rewarding missions out there,"

-- Chief Master Sgt. Vincent Fasano, 105th Airlift Wing.

33-year career, now Senior Enlisted at 107th

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

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION, N.Y. — Command Chief Master Sergeant Camille Langenfeld, who joined the New York Air National Guard's 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing in 1990, became the 107th Attack Wing's top enlisted Airmen during an October 22, 2023 ceremony at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

She replaced Command Chief Master Sgt. Edward Stefik, who served in the position since 2017.

Langenfeld, a Tonawanda resident, said she was "very excited and honored" to have been selected for the job.



Command Chief Master Sergeant Camille Langenfeld, who joined the Air National Guard's 107th Fighter Interceptor Wing in 1990, became the 107th Attack Wing's top enlisted Airmen during an Oct. 22, 2023 ceremony at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

"I think it is very important for our wing members to pass on any professional development information to those who are striving for career progression,"

-- Command Chief Master Sgt. Camille Langenfeld, Senior Enlisted Leader, 107th Attack Wing

Col. Andrew Carlson, the wing commander, praised Langenfeld's dedication and abilities.

"We look forward to her continued leadership, mentorship, and emphasis on taking care of our Airmen," he said.

Langenfeld has served in a variety of positions during her time in the 107th, reflecting the wing's transition from the role of fighter wing, to air-to-air refueling, to airlift transportation, and now to attack wing.

She has spent most of her career in the wing's operations group and mission support group. The positions she has held include personnel specialist, KC-135 refueling book operator, flight engineer, intelligence office superinten-

dent, and senior enlisted leader for the 107th Force Support Squadron.

"It's been quite the journey, between both the Mission Support Group and Operations Group, and multiple positions throughout my career," Langenfeld said.

Langenfeld said that one of her priorities would be to grow the wing's mentoring program, which is designed to help Airmen develop professionally.

"I think it is very important for our wing members to pass on any professional development information to those who are striving for career progression," said Langenfeld. **gt**

Secretary of Air Force Visits EADS

ROME, New York — Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall and leaders from NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, Joint Staff, Royal Canadian Air Force and Office of the Secretary of Defense were in attendance at the Eastern Air Defense Sector to underscore the Air Force commitment to modernizing its air defense capabilities. The event marked a pivotal milestone in the service's modernization of tactical command and control capabilities as part of the Advanced Battle Management System portfolio of efforts.

Airmen at EADS performed the initial operating capability rollout of the Advanced Battle Management System's Cloud-Based Command and Control system, or CBC2, a platform that will enhance decision space for leaders and staffs.

Pictured from left, Brig. Gen. Daniel Clayton, Director, ABMS Cross-Functional Team, Brig. Gen. Luke Cropsy, DAF Integrating Program Executive Officer, C3BM, Lt. Gen. Davgin R.M. Anderson, Joint Chiefs J7, Maj. Gen. Denise Donell, Commander, New York Air National Guard, Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition; Sustainment Radha Inyengar Plumb, and Brig. Gen. Paul Bishop, Chief of Staff, New York Air National Guard, pose for a photograph during the visit of Kendall to the Eastern Air Defense Sector headquarters on Oct. 26, 2023. Photo by Patrick Young, Eastern Air Defense Sector.





Rescue Wing Trains with Danish Special Forces

Story by Staff Sgt. Sean Madden, 106th Rescue Wing

Danish Special Forces personnel jump from an HC-130 Combat King II rescue aircraft assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing over Greenland during Exercise Arctic Light, Sept. 25, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Kuhn, 106th Rescue Wing.

KASSERLUSSEQUA, Greenland — Airmen assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing joined the Danish military for a September rescue exercise in Greenland.

Exercise Arctic Light 2023 was a two week exercise conducted by Denmark’s Joint Arctic Command and served to advance the capabilities necessary to operate in the Arctic while also strengthening relationships with partner forces.

The Danish military is responsible for the defense of Greenland, which is part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

“Continued participation in exercise Arctic Light builds upon established relationships with Denmark, Greenland, and paves the way for NATO to continue to provide security in the Arctic,” said Lt. Col. Richard Bloom, an HC-130J Combat King II rescue pilot assigned to the 102nd Rescue Squadron.

The 106th Rescue Wing deployed an aircrew and HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft assigned to the 102nd Rescue Squadron. Aircraft maintenance personnel assigned to the 106th Maintenance Group and Guardian Angel personnel from the 103rd Rescue Squadron were also sent to support Danish forces in a simulated rescue of patients caught in a landslide.

Guardian Angel is the term for Combat Rescue Officers, Pararescuemen and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Specialists who are all uniquely trained personnel devoted to the Air Force function of personnel recovery.

“This was the first time we airdropped Danish Special Forces,” said Capt. Hiram Rhoads, an HC-130J Combat King II rescue pilot. “We made drops into mountainous terrain and in

the water, for them to save survivors of the simulated disaster.”

The Royal Danish Air Force and Denmark’s Joint Rescue Coordination Center, which is responsible for search and rescue in Greenland, and Danish Special Operations Command, were involved in Arctic Light 2023.

The Danish Special Forces operate similarly to U.S. Special Operations Forces like Navy SEALs and Air Force Pararescuemen.

The 106th Rescue Wing provided the plane for Danish personnel who performed high altitude-low opening (HALO) and high altitude-high opening (HAHO) jumps. They also conducted airdrops of boats, all-terrain vehicles and rescue supplies.

While these skillsets and capabilities are core aspects of the 106th Rescue Wing’s operations, the environment Greenland provides is less familiar and offers a valuable opportunity to acclimate, Rhoads said.

“The Arctic is an increasingly vital region of strategic importance to the Air Force, Space Force and Joint Forces,” Rhoads explained. “It’s

a new environment for us to start working in and training our procedures and techniques to.”

The training proved to be a valuable experience for an aircrew member with limited experience operating in Arctic conditions, according to the New York Airmen.

“This was one of the most exhilarating and challenging exercises I’ve ever been involved with, both mentally and physically,” said Tech Sgt. Curt Abdool, a loadmaster assigned to the 102nd Rescue Squadron. “That was due to the cold conditions and all the moving parts involved with the mission.”

After primarily operating in the Middle East or in the Caribbean and Southern U.S. to respond to hurricanes, going to do an Arctic mission is a completely different skillset, Abdool explained.

“The Danish were very happy with what we delivered for them in terms of capability and accuracy with our drops,” Rhoads said “We’re working toward having them come to us for training as well as going back for the next Arctic Light exercise.” **gt**



An HC-130 Combat King II rescue aircraft assigned to the 106th Rescue Wing, readies for missions supporting Exercise Arctic Light 2023 in Greenland, Sept. 25, 2023. The bilateral training with Denmark’s Joint Arctic Command advanced the capabilities necessary to operate in the Arctic while also strengthening relationships. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Kuhn, 106th Rescue Wing.

Air Guard Command Chief Speaks to 105th

Story by 2nd Lt. Briana Ross, 105th Airlift Wing



Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Maurice Williams, command chief, Air National Guard, speaks with Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard base, N.Y., Dec. 2, 2023. Photo by Staff Sgt. Terrence Clyburn, 105th Airlift Wing.

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH, N.Y. — U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Maurice Williams, the command chief of the Air National Guard, visited the 105th Airlift Wing Dec. 2 in Newburgh, N.Y.

As the voice of the Air National Guard's enlisted corps, Williams visits Air National Guard installations to ensure the voices of the enlisted force are heard. He oversees the enlisted force and serves as the principal advisor to the Director of the Air National Guard.

He met with leadership, visited the Top Three and First Six Council meetings, had lunch with select enlisted members and hosted a town hall to answer questions and inform Airmen.

The First Six Council is an organization consisting of the first six enlisted ranks, E-1 through E-6. The Top Three Council consists of the top enlisted ranks, E-7 through E-9. By speaking to these councils, Williams was able to tap directly into the challenges Airmen face everyday.

There was one message Williams consistently conveyed throughout the day, "Every Airman is important."

"We need you. The success of every Airman saves the country. Each Airman makes a difference," said Williams. "There are a lot of changes coming and we need to be able to adapt."

Williams spoke about funding to overhaul the distance learning program for professional military education, enabling Airmen to constantly grow and maximize their skills. He also

highlighted the need for additional training to sustain the Air Force's prioritization of multi-capable Airmen. These Airmen are skilled in maintaining their professional growth and personal well-being.

"If you hurt yourself, you would get that checked out. You must also do the same for your mental health," said Williams, explaining the importance of both physical and mental health.

During his visit to the council meetings,

Williams encouraged both councils to think about the importance of a mission and vision statement.

"The vision statement is what you hope to become. The mission statement is why your organization exists," said Williams. "To recruit new members, they need to know what you're about."

He reminded Airmen that they are all recruiters and play a pivotal role in representing the Air National Guard. **gt**



Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Maurice Williams, command chief, Air National Guard, shares a meal with Airmen from the 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard base, N.Y., Dec. 2, 2023. Airmen had the opportunity to discuss the future of the Wing and Air Guard as a whole. Photo by Staff Sgt. Terrence Clyburn, 105th Airlift Wing.

Culinary Services Roll up new Sleeves in 106th

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



Airman 1st Class Alma Alavez Virgill, a services chef, members of the 106th Rescue Wing, showcase their new chef's black uniforms preparing meals at Francis S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base, Westhampton Beach, Dec. 3, 2023.

FRANCIS S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. — Something is new at the dining facility of the 106th Rescue Wing but it isn't on the menu.

Airmen in the 106th Mission Support Group of the 106th Force Support Squadron, Services Flight, are some of the first members to get a taste of the latest in Air Force culinary attire - black chef coats.

The new coat is part of the services uniform, which includes the coyote brown t-shirt, the operational camouflage pattern (OCP) pants, and coyote brown boots.

The introduction of the new chef black coats aims to provide services Airmen with a uniform that is more functional, flexible, and cost-effective, while meeting mission requirements, according to the uniform wear guidance.

The coats allow for hook and loop attachments for patches and nametape, while the old uniform required the same items to be embroidered.

"They also integrate seamlessly with our OCP uniforms, ensuring practicality and a professional look during our kitchen duties," said Tech. Sgt. Pierre Best, the wing Dining Facility manager, of the apparel.

The new short-sleeved coat is lighter than the old whites, shows less food staining, looks more professional and gives more freedom of movement, Best added. "They help us perform our wide range of duties more effectively."

"We're constantly on the move... That's why these new chef coats, offering both comfort and functionality, are so valuable to our team. They help us perform our wide range of duties more effectively," said Best, and "equip our Airmen with gear they are proud to wear."

Airman 1st Class Alma Alavez Virgill, a services chef, also praised the new design.

"I love the new chef coats, the color, style, and comfort are fantastic. They complement our OCPs perfectly, enhancing the team's spirit at the 106th," Alavez Virgill said. **gt**



Fuel Cell Rescues Rehearsed in Newburgh

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, NEWBURGH, N.Y. — Air National Guard firefighters with the 105th Airlift Wing transport a mannequin across the wing of a C-17 Globemaster III at Stewart Air National Guard Base, Nov. 5, 2023. The training simulated a distressed Airman trapped in a fuel cell and included rescue protocols by 105th firefighters and maintainers. Photo by Senior Airman Rebekah Wilson, 105th Airlift Wing.



Syracuse Firefighters Tops in Guard

Story by Alexander Rector, 174th Attack Wing



Members of the Hancock Field Air National Guard Fire Department stand for a group photo Dec. 4, 2023, after receiving the Chief Master Sgt Greg Winjum award as the 2022 Air National Guard small base Fire Department of the Year. Photo by Staff Sgt. Tiffany Scofield, 174th Attack Wing.

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The Hancock Field Air National Guard Base Fire Department here has been recognized as the small fire department of the year for 2022 by the Air National Guard Fire Chief’s Association.

The department, which is comprised of a mix of uniformed Airmen assigned to the 174th Attack Wing and civilian firefighters, was recognized for their outstanding performance while providing 24/7 fire protective services for the base and Syracuse-Hancock International Airport.

The award is properly known as the Chief Greg O. Winjum Fire Department of the Year Award and honors the best Guard fire department of 50 or fewer people, according to Jeffrey Chrissley, the Hancock Field Air National Guard Base Fire Department Chief.

Winjum was an Air Guard firefighter assigned to Andrews Air Force Base who served in Iraq.

The winners are selected by an impartial panel of base fire marshals, he explained.

“We are extremely proud of our military and civilian firefighters for the incredible service they provide and the work they’ve done to be selected for this prestigious award,” said Col. John O’Connor, the 174th Attack Wing commander. “These professionals truly represent what the Air National Guard brings to our community.”

The department consists of 27 Air Guard fire protection specialists and 22 full-time civilian firefighters.

“There are two separate leadership teams,” said Chrissley, who retired from the wing after 38 years of service. “But we work together as one department. We don’t differentiate between how we train or how we work.”

During the award selection process, the department was assessed on several different categories such as department management, operations, training, fire prevention, and community relations.

“Our operations have really increased,” Chrissley said. “When we were

just on the base doing responses, we were lucky if we even did 100 calls a year when we were full-time. Now we’re approaching over 400 calls between the base and the airport.”

In addition to emergency response, the department supervises numerous fire prevention programs by conducting building inspections, issuing welding permits for construction projects and overseeing the airport’s fuel storage program.

“We’ve got 46 plus facilities on base, and we do all the reviews for civil engineering,” said Chrissley. “Any new building construction or even projects that are coming up are involved in all the planning.”

Though the department now provides fire protection services for both the air base and the civilian airport, up until 2021 the Syracuse City Fire Department served as the airport’s fire service provider.

The Syracuse Regional Airport Authority reached out to the 174th Attack Wing in 2021 about the unit’s fire department providing fire protection services for the airport.

“We entered into a memorandum of agreement with the airport that we would provide our fire and EMS services to the airport authority, and we’ve been doing that for about a year and a half now,” Chrissley said.

With the increased responsibility, the task then turned to hiring personnel.

“People came from all over and we had the support of state headquarters to get the positions filled in a timely manner,” Chrissley said. “We even had a guy come from Spain. I remember picking them up at the airport.”

“Rebuilding our full-time fire department from scratch, fully integrating it with our part-time military staff, and assuming full responsibility for Fire and Emergency Services for both Hancock Field Air National Guard Base and the Syracuse-Hancock International Airport in such a short period took a herculean effort,” O’Connor said. 

NY Helps Prepare Georgia for Aircraft Conversion

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Farrell, 106th Rescue Wing

FRANCIS S. GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N.Y. — New York Airmen of the 106th Rescue Wing's maintenance squadron spent a month teaching the ins and outs of C-130J maintenance to members of the Georgia Air Guard at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base in Westhampton Beach.

The maintainers from the 165th Airlift Wing's maintenance squadron trained from October 10 to November 17, working side-by-side with the New Yorkers as they got hands-on training fixing the latest version of the version of the C-130.

The training was part of the Georgia Airmen's process of converting from the C-130H version to the latest version C-130J, which is comparable to the HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue planes like those flown by the 106th.

The lessons learned during the 106th conversion in 2019 was that the training was challenging, said Master Sgt. Derek Morrison, 106th avionics flight chief.

The goal of the 106th Maintenance Squadron was to ensure a smoother training process and to give them a chance to get hands-on and practice advanced trouble shooting, he said.

The 165th Airlift Wing started the aircraft



An Airman from the 106th Rescue Wing Maintenance Group points to a computer screen while training members of the Georgia Air National Guard's 165th Airlift Wing Maintenance Group on the HC-130J Combat King II search and rescue aircraft at F.S. Gabreski Air National Guard Base on Long Island, Nov. 14, 2023. Airmen from the 165th Airlift Wing Maintenance Group traveled to the 106th to be trained on the C-130J aircraft in preparation for their own aircraft conversion.

conversion process in July of 2023 and will be replacing their legacy C-130H models with new C-130J models in December, according to Master Sgt. Ashley Jones, the 165th avionics flight chief.

Prior to coming to the 106th, the Georgia Guardsmen completed a two-month C-130J training with the 373rd Training Squadron, Detachment 4, in Little Rock, Arkansas, Jones said.

"The hands-on training has been very beneficial," said Jones. "There are things you can't always get in a trainer at a school house."

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Thompson, a 165th avionics technician, said the training has been helpful.

"Among our group we have a lot of maintenance experience," Thompson said. "But being able to apply those basic principles that we already know, seeing how that applies to the new system has been really helpful to do firsthand."

The biggest difference between the J-model and legacy H-model is that the J-model is called a 'glass cockpit,' so everything is more modernized and electric, said Jones.

Although this training opportunity is an important part of setting up the 165th for success with their J-model conversion, it is also a great opportunity to build rapport with another unit by sharing best practices which will also help our maintenance squadron as well, said Morrison. **gt**

Airmen climbing up as leaves come down

WEST POINT, New York — Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. Joseph Lattimer and Staff Sgt. Chun Hei Tsang, cable antenna systems Airmen assigned to the 213th Engineering Installation Squadron attached to the 105th Airlift Wing, climb a communication tower during a routine training exercise at West Point, N.Y., Nov. 3, 2023. The training enhanced members' abilities in maintaining communication towers and antennas while on missions. Photo by Senior Airman Rebekah Wilson, 105th Airlift Wing.



Guard fields Pistol Team for Skills Competition

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Ed Shevlin, New York Guard Headquarters

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. — The New York Guard fielded an eight-person combat pistol team at the 2023 New York Army National Guard Combat Marksmanship Skills Competition, Sept. 6-10 at Camp Smith Training Site.

Known as the Adjutant's General Match, or just the TAG Match, the competition focuses primarily on Army and Air Guard rifle and pistol marksmanship skills.

But the New York Guard, the state volunteer defense force supporting the New York National Guard during state emergencies, maintains a pistol team that competes annually in the TAG Match.

senior officers, junior officers, senior enlisted, and junior enlisted from across the state, according to the team Officer in Charge, Col. John Mechmann.

Last year, during the 43rd Annual TAG Match, organizers introduced the "Excellence-in-Competition (EIC)" program, recognizing competitors who excel in specific individual competitions involving service rifles and pistols.

This program added intensity to this year's competition with timed target exposures and varying distances between firing points and targets, Mechmann said.



New York Guard Cpl. Joseph Baldwin takes aim before taking a target under fire during the 2023 New York Army National Guard Combat Marksmanship Skills Competition, held Sept. 6-10, 2023 at Camp Smith in Cortlandt Manor, N.Y. Baldwin, participated with seven other New York Guard members as a combat pistol team.

The New York Guard team participated in three pistol matches: the Sgt. Thomas Baker Individual Combat Pistol Match, the Combat Pistol Excellence-in-Competition Individual Match, and the Lt. Col. William Donovan Combat Team Pistol Match.

The eight participants included

Despite facing temperatures reaching 93 degrees on Thursday, September 7, the New York Guardsmen enjoyed the competition.

Cpl. Joseph Baldwin, of the 88th Area Command, performed well in both the Sgt. Thomas Baker Individual Pistol Match and the EIC

88th Area Command Welcomes New Top Sergeant



New York Guard 1st Sgt. Joseph Ronda, of the Bronx, receives the unit colors of the 88th Area Command from Capt. David Tsin during his change of responsibility ceremony in Old Bethpage, N.Y., Sept. 16, 2023. The unit bid farewell to Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Vera, also a Bronx resident, as its senior noncommissioned officer during the ceremony. Courtesy photo.

Courtesy Story

OLD BETHPAGE, N.Y. — The New York Guard's 88th Area Command welcomed 1st Sgt. Joseph Ronda as its senior noncommissioned officer during a change of responsibility ceremony September 16, 2023 at the Museum of American Armor on Long Island.

Ronda, a Bronx resident, took over responsibilities as the senior enlisted leader of the 88th Area Command from Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Vera, also of the Bronx, following unit family day activities.

"First Sergeant Joseph Ronda is an excellent and highly dedicated and loyal NCO with plenty of relevant experience, both from prior federal military service and more than twelve years of service in the 88th Area Command," said New York Guard Capt. David Tsin, the unit commander. "The 88th Area Command is fortunate to have him as its first sergeant."

The 88th Area Command has more than 130 volunteers and serves the largest population segment of New York State, with members supporting missions across New York City and Long Island.

Ronda served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1998-2004 and enlisted in the New York Guard in 2010. **gt**

Individual Pistol Match, securing 5th place in each.

Baldwin did not participate in the rifle portion of the EIC competition however, and was ineligible to place in the overall EIC match.

Still, he praised the competition and the challenges to competitors.

"I thoroughly enjoy our team practices, and competing at the TAG Match is a lot of fun," Baldwin said. "It looks like we will field

a rifle team next year, which will make the EIC aspect of the TAG Match meaningful to us."

Baldwin's positive sentiment was shared by others on the team, including the team's novice, 2nd Lt. Julien Wolfe.

"The match exceeded my expectations, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm already looking forward to next year's competition and will be better prepared," Wolfe said. **gt**

New York Naval Militia

Naval Militia's Newest Commander Steps Aboard

Story by Eric Durr, *Guard Times* staff



New York Naval Militia Rear Admiral Michael Perry, an Averill Park resident, salutes during change-of-command ceremonies held at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham, New York on Friday, Nov. 3, 2023 as he became the new commander of the 3,000-member New York Naval Militia. Photo by William Albrecht, *Guard Times* staff.

LATHAM, N.Y. — The 3,100-member New York Naval Militia switched commanders during a Friday, Nov. 3 ceremony at New York National Guard headquarters in Latham.

Naval Militia Rear Admiral Michael Perry, who previously served as the organization's chief of staff, relieved Rear Admiral Lawrence Weill, who took command of the Naval Militia in April of 2022.

Major General Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, who presided over the ceremony, thanked Weill, a resident of Walworth, for his service.

Perry, he said, was a perfect fit for the position of 24th commander of the New York Naval Militia.

"We all know you are the right person to lead this organization into the future," Shields said.

The traditional naval change-of-command ceremony featured bells being rung to signal the rank of the officer, and whistles welcoming them onboard a notional ship.

The New York Naval Militia is the largest of the six state naval forces currently in existence. It was created in 1891 as the seagoing equivalent of the New York National Guard in the days before the creation of the Navy Reserve.

Today the force is composed mostly of members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard Reserve who agree to serve in the state force while simultaneously serving in their federal reserve capacity.

Naval Militia members go on state active duty to put their military skills to work for the people of New York. They have responded to snowstorms, hurricanes, the COVID-19 pandemic, and currently more than 400 members are assisting in the response to the migrant surge in New York City.

The New York Naval Militia also operates a fleet of 11 patrol boats which work with local, state, and federal agencies to provide security along New York's 2,625 miles of coastline.

The New York Naval Militia has a history "replete with honor and tradition," Shields said.

In his remarks, Perry thanked his family for their support and Shields for trusting him with command of the Naval Militia.

He also praised the members of the Naval Militia for their service and dedication.

Fifteen percent of the force is currently supporting state active duty missions, Perry said.

His goals, Perry said, are for the naval militia to continue to serve the state and nation and to recruit more Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen into the force.

Perry received a direct commission into the Supply Corps of the Navy Reserve as an ensign in 1991 and joined the New York Naval Militia that year.

While serving in the Navy Reserve, Perry held jobs as the executive officer for a Navy cargo handling battalion, commanding officer of a supply management team; the commander of two fleet industrial supply detachments, and commander of the Navy Reserve Defense Contract Management Agency, Boston. He also led the Naval Reserve Sealift Command, Supply Chain Support unit in Norfolk.

He was promoted to New York state rear admiral, a one-star rank, by Gov. Kathy Hochul, on October 24, 2023. **gt**



On Patrol for NYC Marathon

NEW YORK — Naval Militia Petty officer first class Tracy Sandoval and Chief Petty officer Ben Flad on board LC-351 conduct security patrols in New York City waterways Nov. 5, 2023 for the New York City Marathon. The crew supports ongoing security missions as part of Joint Task Force Empire Shield. Courtesy photo.

