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Daily Uploader

New York Air National Guard

Rome resident receives promotion at EADS

Rome Sentinel, March 19, 2024 ::

ROME — Dustin Bryant, of Rome, has been promoted to staff sergeant at the Eastern Air Defense Sector in recognition of his capability for additional responsibility and leadership, according to an announcement by Major Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general for New York.

Bryant is a tracking technician with the 224th Air Defense Squadron.

The 224th Air Defense Group is comprised of the 224th Air Defense Squadron, 224th Support Squadron, and the 224th Security Forces Squadron located in Rome, and Detachment 1 and Detachment 2 that serve in the Washington, D.C. area. The 224th ADG provides the forces to conduct the Eastern Air Defense Sector's mission. Part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the sector, located at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome, is responsible for the air defense of the eastern U.S.

Air National Guard promotions are based on overall performance, attitude, leadership ability and development potential, the announcement said, adding such promotions additionally recognize the best qualified airmen and attract and retain the highest caliber citizen soldiers for a career in the New York Air National Guard.

For more information about the New York Air National Guard, visit www.dmna.ny.gov. For more information on the Eastern Air Defense Sector and the 224th ADG, visit www.eads.ang.af.mil.

https://www.romesentinel.com/news/dustin-bryant-rome-ny-eastern-air-defense-sector/article_914d4abc-d4eb-11ee-b6a9-2f859c753f61.html

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New York Air Guard Supports Arctic Edge Exercise

NationalGuard.mil, By Tech. Sgt. Madison Scaringe, 109th Air Wing/Public Affairs, March 21, 2024 :

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, N.Y. – Forty-six Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing participated in Arctic Edge 24, a U.S. Northern Command homeland defense exercise demonstrating U.S. military capabilities in extreme cold.

The event demonstrated combined force readiness and the U.S. military's commitment to security interests in the Arctic region.

During AE24, more than 400 joint and allied Special Operator Forces honed their skills in extreme cold, focusing on specialties such as long-range fires and movements, special reconnaissance, rapid resupply, personnel recovery and medical care.

The 109th conducts annual missions to Greenland and Antarctica, making it a suitable partner to bring its Arctic expertise to Alaska.

Based out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, for the exercise, the 109th flew 31 sorties, transporting over 95,000 pounds of cargo and 61 passengers from Feb. 23 to March 11.

"Our Airmen displayed unmatched dedication, expertise, and resilience in the face of extreme conditions," said Col. Rob Donaldson, commander of the 109th Airlift Wing. "Their participation not only showcased the unique capabilities of the 109th Airlift Wing and our mission-ready Airmen but also underscored the critical role Air National Guard units play in enhancing joint force readiness."

The 109th transported the equipment special forces groups needed to train in Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, Kodiak and Fairbanks, Alaska.

On March 9, high in the Arctic Ocean off Alaska's north shore, the 109th air-dropped a supply package to East Coast-based Naval Special Warfare Operator (SEALs) and Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commandos as part of the first integration of SOF personnel, aircraft and snowmobiles with a submarine that surfaced so far into the Arctic Circle.

The event used special operations MH-47G Chinook helicopters to transport 15 SOF personnel to a secure zone on the ice, identified by the submarine, where four snowmobiles were unloaded.

The team then set up a command-and-control tent to coordinate the air-drop of a critical package from the 109th's C-130 Hercules. The package was retrieved and navigated to the waiting USS Hampton (SSN 767).

The Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine surfaced through the thick ice sheet just moments before.

"This historic integration of Special Operations Forces personnel, aircraft, snowmobiles and a surfaced submarine represents a remarkable milestone in Arctic operations, showcasing the extraordinary capabilities and readiness of our combined force," Donaldson said.

Notable among the airlifted equipment was an M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System operated by Marines from Fox Battery, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve.

The vehicle was transported to Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks as part of a HIMARS Rapid Infiltration (HIRAIN).

The training involved offloading the HIMARS from the 109th's C-130, along with two C130J Hercules, stopping at a resupply checkpoint and concluding with a live-fire demonstration showcasing the Marine Forces Reserve's ability to rapidly deploy and deter threats in harsh Arctic conditions.

Unforgiving Arctic weather and aircraft mechanical issues proved to be hurdles for the 109th during the exercise.

"Mother nature is always the biggest challenge and potential hazard in these types of environments," said Lt. Col. Matthew Sala, the 109th deployed commander. "Our crews regularly train and operate in these conditions and demonstrated their abilities once again during this exercise."

"We had maintenance issues with a few different types of leaks, as well as a tire change," said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Hanna, the 109th maintenance group senior enlisted leader.

"When the aircraft challenged us, this team continually worked together as multi-capable Airmen to ensure missions were not missed. Our aircraft are pushing 50 years old and there's a dwindling number of C-130 H-model aircraft in the Air Force inventory. The supply chain is our greatest challenge; it is very difficult to track down replacement parts," he said.

Despite the setbacks, the 109th Maintenance Airmen worked long hours to ensure the aircraft was mission-ready as soon as possible.

"I have been in this maintenance supervisor role for many years, and this is the greatest maintenance team I have ever worked with. It was a privilege to lead them. They worked extremely hard to ensure the aircraft was good to go with no time wasted on our part. I'm very proud of them," Hanna said.

Arctic Edge 24 involved participation from multiple nations, including special forces from the United States, Norway, Denmark and the United Kingdom. The training emphasized collective efforts to secure the Arctic region and enhance military capabilities in extreme environments.

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/Article/3714448/new-york-air-guard-supports-arctic-edge-exercise/>

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Schumer, Gillibrand call for new 'skibird' aircrafts at Stratton Air National Guard Base

Daily Gazette, March 19,2024::

ALBANY — U.S. Sens. Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are calling on the Air Force to replace a fleet of aging aircrafts at Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, some of which are the only heavy airlift vehicles in the country capable of flying north to the Arctic and south to Antarctica.

The LC-130 Hercules (LC-130H) “Skibird” aircrafts operated by the 109th Airlift Wing at the base in Schenectady County are some of the only ski-equipped heavy airlift aircraft in the U.S. capable of traveling that distance. The skis allow the aircraft to land on snow and ice.

Launching their push, Gillibrand and Schumer sent a letter to the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force Frank Kendall noting the aircrafts are nearing the end of their service life after having been in operation for more than 30 years.

“The LC-130H ‘Ski-Bird’ planes at Stratton are unique and absolutely critical to our national interest in maintaining a critical presence and reach to the Arctic and Antarctic — but they are old and need replacing,” Schumer said in a statement. “This limits our brave pilots’ and crewmembers’ ability to do their jobs and threatens our national security. That is why we are launching this push to get the Air Force to replace these aging aircraft. These planes are used in everything from polar missions to scientific research, and are essential for maintaining America’s leadership in the Arctic as we compete with countries like China and Russia. The Air Force must prioritize a new fleet of LC-130H planes for the safety of our military personnel and efficacy of this critical mission, and I promise to do everything I can to fight to land these planes right here in Schenectady County.”

The 109th Airlift Wing also supports the Summit Station in Greenland — the only high altitude, high latitude, year-round observing station in the Arctic.

The 109th Airlift Wing did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

According to a release, the Arctic is a region of growing strategic importance and competition given that China and Russia are expanding their presence in the region. The statement also notes the two countries are establishing strong footholds in the North and South poles, which could “threaten the success of military operations in the region.”

“LC-130H ‘Skibirds’ are the only U.S. military planes capable of carrying out this Arctic and Antarctic mission set. This unique capability means that the LC-130H fleet — flown by our very own New York Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing — is vital to protecting our interests in

the polar regions,” Gillibrand said in the statement. “These aircraft allow us to conduct polar rescues, assist with critical scientific research, and protect our national security interests in the Arctic and Antarctica. But these planes have reached the end of their lifespans, limiting our aircrews and risking American leadership in the Arctic.”

Below is a copy of Senators Schumer and Gillibrand’s letter to the secretary of the Air Force.

https://www.dailygazette.com/news/skibird-lc-130/article_2f3ff52a-e569-11ee-bca4-c39b8d0bbd0b.html

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New York Army National Guard

Camden soldier earns promotion

Rome Sentinel, March 18, 2024 ::

CAMDEN — Christopher Bennett, of Camden, has been promoted to sergeant in the New York Army National Guard, according to an announcement by Major Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general for New York, in recognition of his capability for additional responsibility and leadership.

Bennett is assigned to the Operations Company, 42nd Infantry Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion based at the Glenmore Road Armory in Troy, the announcement said, adding that Army National Guard promotions are based on a soldier’s overall performance, demonstrated leadership abilities, professionalism and future development potential.

For more information about the New York Army National Guard, see its website at www.dmna.ny.gov or go online to www.1800goguard.com

The New York National Guard (New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs) is the state’s executive agency responsible for managing New York’s Military Forces, which consists of nearly 20,000 members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, the New York Naval Militia and the New York Guard.

https://www.romesentinel.com/entertainment-life/notices/camden-soldier-earns-promotion/article_b52543de-dfd8-11ee-8015-a3381b101c7c.html

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New York's Fighting 69th Leads St. Patrick's Day Parade

Herald's Market, March 20, 2024 :

For the 173rd year in a row, Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, "Fighting 69th" Infantry Regiment, marched at the head of New York City's Saint Patrick's Day Parade — the largest in the world.

It marked the return of the entire battalion to the front lines of the parade, following their deployment to the Horn of Africa last year. The parade also marked the first and last Saint Patrick's Day celebrations on the streets of New York for some of the Fighting 69th Soldiers.

Master Sgt. Robert Walsh, an infantryman assigned to the 69th's Delta Company, joined the unit in the late 1990s. He estimated he's marched in 25 parades. After 38 years of military service, Walsh is retiring, making this year's parade his last.

"I'm going to miss the Soldiers," he said. "I'm going to miss having that new guy in the platoon that this is their first Saint Patrick's Day and seeing the experiences that they're seeing for the first time."

And for the 800 Soldiers of the Fighting 69th, there is a lot to experience.

The parade day begins with a 6 a.m. toast of Irish whiskey at the historic Lexington Avenue Armory.

Soldiers add sprigs of boxwood to their uniforms, emulating their Irish American predecessors who fought at the Civil War battle of Fredericksburg. The unit's officers receive blackthorn fighting sticks, imported from Ireland and considered the mark of an Irish leader and gentleman.

Before dawn, they march in formation to Saint Patrick's Cathedral, filling the streets of New York with echoing cadence calls. They attend a mass at the church to remember the regiment's fallen and to honor its heritage.

Then, it's off to the start of the parade.

Pfc. Danyel Rodriguez, a computer and detection systems repairer assigned to the 69th's logistics unit, Hotel Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, recently arrived back from boot camp. He's the kind of Soldier Walsh will miss.

Rodriguez was warned by his fellow Soldiers to prepare for a long day and a long march in dress uniform.

"But in the moment, singing, just walking with everyone ...it didn't feel long at all," said Rodriguez. "Being around so many people, just singing along with everyone, it felt really nice. You just lose track of time, having a good time."

Rodriguez, one of the battalion's most junior Soldiers, was not this year's only first-timer.

Lt. Col. Adam Bojarski, the battalion's senior leader, took command of the 69th in October. This year was his first time leading the parade and marching with the unit.

"It's a unique opportunity that nobody else in the Army gets to do," Bojarski said.

The opportunity comes from a tradition dating back almost to the start of the 69th.

The regiment was formed in 1849 as a New York State militia of Irish immigrants. Two years later, amid anti-Irish Catholic sentiment, they were asked to lead the parade and fend off any attackers.

Today, key partners, including the New York Police Department, ensure the safety of the parade and the public. A squad of 69th Soldiers still makes a traditional "show of force" by marching in "battle rattle" — combat uniforms, body armor and helmets, with rifles and machine guns.

"Traditions like these are fading out of our society," Bojarski said. "It's so important that units like the 69th continue to be the face of the Army National Guard and the National Guard as a whole."

Bojarski said the battalion will continue leading the parade for years to come. And while they'll do it without Walsh, he's hopeful those who march in his place gain from the experience.

"I hope they take away pride and this amazing feeling you get as you're marching in the parade and listening to thousands of people cheer you," he said.

"We all joined the military for a reason. A lot of times when you're marching in the parade, that reason — whatever it may be — comes to your heart and to your mind."

<https://marketsherald.com/new-yorks-fighting-69th-leads-saint-patricks-day-parade/>

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Massachusetts, New York Guard Units Compete in Shooting Match

NationalGuard.mil, By Staff Sgt. Alexander Rector, New York National Guard,:

PEEKSKILL, N.Y. - Army National Guard Soldiers from New York's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, squared off against their Massachusetts sister unit, the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, in the annual Logan-Duffy Marksmanship Competition March 13.

The 182nd came out on top, winning the match by a single point, 280 to 279.

“I’ve been with the 69th since 2016 and I have never seen the Logan-Duffy Competition this close,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Zeller, the 69th’s senior enlisted leader.

This year’s match took six top shooters from each battalion and tested their rifle marksmanship in standing, prone and seated positions. Using only the iron sights of the U.S. Army’s M4 carbine to aim and fire at paper targets, the Soldiers tested their speed and accuracy.

Setting the teams apart was the 182nd’s top shooter, Sgt. Tristan Manchester, an infantryman and team leader from the battalion’s Alpha Company.

“The real victory here is the relationship between our two battalions,” said Lt. Col. Landon Mavrelis, 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment commander. “The most important part of this is the camaraderie and esprit de corps that we’re building.”

The competition is named for Brig. Gen. Lawrence Logan of Massachusetts and Brig. Gen. Edward Duffy of New York, who commanded the regiments during the Spanish-American War. It began to encourage competitive marksmanship with the rifle, the infantry’s principal weapon, and enhance the friendship between two units with similar backgrounds and heritage.

The 69th and 182nd are two of the U.S. Army’s oldest units. The 69th traces its lineage to the Civil War when the unit mainly comprised Irish immigrants, and the 182nd traces its lineage back to the Massachusetts Colonial Militia.

Today, the units serve in different states but under the same brigade — New York’s 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 42nd Infantry Division.

With a few exceptions, the Logan-Duffy match has been held annually since 1936. The 182nd won in the inaugural year, only for the 69th to win the next.

The units take turns hosting the competition, with the 69th hosting this year at Camp Smith in New York. The 182nd will host the 2025 competition at Camp Devens in Massachusetts.

The match’s trophy, a large, silver gilded cup, is jointly owned by the regiments, with the latest winner keeping it until the next competition.

The competition was put on hold when both units served overseas in World War II in 1940. In 1958, the match resumed and the battalions competed every year until 2023, when both were deployed overseas — the 69th to the Horn of Africa and the 182nd to the Middle East.

“It’s great to have this tradition that we carry on every year,” said Lt. Col. Adam Bojarski, commander of the 69th. “As we’ve moved into the digital age, we’ve lost some of our traditions. Keeping those traditions alive is important.”

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/Article/3710056/massachusetts-new-york-guard-units-compete-in-shooting-match/>

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New York's Fighting 69th Leads Saint Patrick's Day Parade

Army.mil, By Major Avery Schneider, New York National Guard, March 18, 2024 ::

NEW YORK - For the 173rd year in a row, Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, "Fighting 69th" Infantry Regiment, marched at the head of New York City's Saint Patrick's Day Parade — the largest in the world.

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“We all joined the military for a reason. A lot of times when you’re marching in the parade, that reason — whatever it may be — comes to your heart and to your mind.”

https://www.army.mil/article/274598/new_yorks_fighting_69th_leads_saint_patricks_day_parade

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Duty Calls : North Greenbush soldier earns Legion of Merit Medal

Times Union, March 18, 2024 ::

New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Carl Chapman of North Greenbush has received a Legion of Merit Medal during a ceremony at the New York National Guard Headquarters in Latham.

Chapman earned the medal for his exemplary performance during 24 years of service. Col. Mark Frank, New York Army National Guard personnel director, presented the medal to Chapman, a human resources technical expert.

Frank praised Chapman as “one of the very best leaders, managers, integrators and advisers who I have served with in my career.” Chapman has always taken on and succeeded at tough assignments, according to Frank. “He has always ensured that soldiers are being taken care of at every step during his career,” Frank added.

Chapman thanked his family for their support over the years, as well as the soldiers he served with along the way. He enlisted in the Army in 1999 and served as a cryptologic linguist assigned to the 511th Military Intelligence Company of the 11 Armored Cavalry Regiment. He deployed to Iraq with the 501st Military Intelligence Company in 2003 as part of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

After completing his active duty enlistment in 2004, Chapman joined the New York Army National Guard as a personnel noncommissioned officer while pursuing a career as a New York City police officer. In 2007, he went on temporary active duty for a short time. Afterward, Chapman said he found that he liked being a soldier full-time. So in 2008, he became a full-time member of the New York Army National Guard.

He has served as detachment sergeant for the New York Army National Guard’s Headquarters Detachment, and for the 42nd Infantry Division headquarters battalion, as well as a unit administrator and training noncommissioned officer in charge. Chapman eventually became a warrant officer. In the Army, warrant officers are technical experts who bridge the gap between noncommissioned officers and commissioned officers.

Also, during the ceremony, his wife, Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Lydia Chapman, was recognized for her support of his military career.

He was hired as a Department of Defense civilian employee, allowing the New York National Guard to continue to benefit from his knowledge, Frank said. Chapman has also earned a Meritorious Service Medal, an Army Commendation and an Army Achievement Medal.

Best in Air Guard

New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Sam Doolittle of Cornwall, Orange County, has been recognized by the Air National Guard for his exemplary leadership, innovation and technical accomplishments as an emergency manager with the 105th Airlift Wing’s Civil Engineer Squadron, Stewart Air National Guard Base, Newburgh.

Doolittle was selected as the Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Emergency Manager of the Year after competing with emergency managers assigned to Air Guard wings across the nation. He was chosen for a variety of achievements, including supporting multiple counter-violent extremist missions that have enhanced command and control capabilities during disasters.

Doolittle earned recognition for preparing his fellow airmen for emergencies as he instructed 32 Disaster Response Force classes and trained more than 200 personnel in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense, known as CBRN.

“It’s something I really enjoy,” Doolittle said, explaining his longtime fascination with CBRN weapons and how to defend against them.

He has also demonstrated innovation and resourcefulness in his role, partnering with environmental management and a local water facility to design new potable water procedures with a potential cost savings of up to \$10,000 in the event of a water emergency. Doolittle also has led a Diversity and Inclusion Council while deployed. He oversaw three diversity events for 500 personnel, enhancing team cohesion and morale.

“Simply put, Staff Sergeant Doolittle makes people around him better,” said Lt. Col. Benjamin Thomas, commander of the 105th Civil Engineer Squadron. “He is a team player who also leads by example. He has a passion for people, emergency management and the United States Air Force.”

Doolittle enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2018. He was introduced to the career field through an internship at New York’s Orange County Office of Emergency Management.

Church speaker

First United Methodist Church in East Greenbush presents guest speaker Dr. Gus Kapler at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 3. Kapler, a retired trauma surgeon who served in Vietnam in the 1970s, will share his experiences and speak about PTSD and suicide prevention. The event will be held at the church at 1 Gilligan Road.

He is the author of “Welcome Home From Vietnam Finally.”

News of your troops and units can be sent to Times Union, Duty Calls, Terry Brown, Box 15000, Albany, NY 12212 or brownt@timesunion.com

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/north-greenbush-soldier-earns-legion-merit-medal-19077473.php>

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Subway Mission

After Another Subway Shooting, New York Wrestles With Question of Safety

New York Times, March 16, 2024 ::

The subway crime that Jimmy Sumampow had been hearing about in recent years — as well as his own experience — had already led him to make plans to leave New York City. Then, on Friday, he saw a video online of the shooting on an A train this week.

“I’m scared,” said Mr. Sumampow, 46, after seeing the video. Mr. Sumampow lives in Elmhurst, Queens, but plans to board an Amtrak train on Monday for Florida, where he has a new job and an apartment lined up. “I feel I should move out for a while and see if New York takes action and gets better,” he said.

For Elise Anderson, however, the shooting did not raise her level of concern.

“I wouldn’t say I’m any more scared,” Ms. Anderson, a 27-year-old Brooklyn resident, said as she waited at the Port Authority Bus Terminal subway station on Friday for a No. 7 train. “I think we’re in one of the safest cities in the world.”

In interviews across the city this week, New Yorkers wrestled with a question that cut to the core of the city’s identity: Is the subway system safe? Subway crime data in recent years shows a muddled picture, and just as they have in surveys of riders and polls of residents, New Yorkers’ opinions diverge.

But barely more than a week after Gov. Kathy Hochul sent the National Guard and State Police into the subway to increase security and help ease New Yorkers’ fears, the shooting seemed to underscore the limits of law enforcement’s ability to improve safety underground.

The shooting took place seconds after the train arrived at the Hoyt-Schermerhorn station, where the Police Department maintains an outpost, Transit District 30, that is regularly staffed by officers. Moments before the shooting, two additional officers entered the station to inspect the platforms and train cars, Kaz Daughtry, the Police Department’s deputy commissioner of operations, said at a news conference on Friday.

If protections like those, plus the 1,000 National Guard soldiers and other law enforcement personnel promised by Governor Hochul, are not enough to prevent one of the subway’s most gruesome confrontations in recent memory, what is?

“They could send the Army into the subway, I think it’s still going to get worse,” Antonio Balaguacha, 56, said Friday as he waited on a subway platform in Sunnyside, Queens, for a Manhattan-bound 7 train.

Efforts by city and state officials in recent days to improve safety have drawn a wide range of opinions from New Yorkers who rely on the subway. Some riders felt comforted by the presence of the Guard soldiers.

“I haven’t seen the National Guard yet, but I don’t think I would feel safer in their presence,” Patrick Bovie, 27, said on Friday as he waited for a G train in Brooklyn.

“I feel better seeing them here,” Anna Puello, a 47-year-old resident of Upper Manhattan, said on Friday.

Recent surveys by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority show that a significant percentage of riders, though not a majority, do not feel safe on the subway, with many citing erratic behavior by other passengers among their top concerns.

The data on subway crime paints a more nuanced picture. Annual figures from recent years show that major crime on the subway decreased slightly in 2023 compared with the year before, even as ridership rose.

While the total number of major crimes was similar in 2023 to the years before the pandemic, the system has still regained only about 70 percent of its average daily ridership, suggesting the per-ride crime rate is higher today than it once was. And some categories of crime that cause New Yorkers particular alarm, such as felony assault, have risen far above prepandemic levels.

In 2024, overall crime in the subway is up 13.2 percent through March 10, compared with the same period in 2023, but down 6.6 percent from the same period in 2022.

Officials have stressed that the chances of any rider becoming the victim of a crime are statistically remote: The 570 felony assaults recorded last year — the highest number in decades — came over the course of more than a billion rides.

But in a recent television interview, Ms. Hochul explained that data does little to assuage people’s fears. “I can show you all the statistics in the world and say, ‘You should feel safe because the numbers are better,’ but you’re the mom on the subway with your baby in a stroller,” the governor said, adding that it was the public’s perception of subway crime, not statistics, that informed her decision to deploy the National Guard.

Some riders, however, fear the surge in officers and troops will lead to more racial discrimination; some believe the discrimination has already started. Joy Richardson, a photo producer at HBO, stood beside a Penn Station subway entrance on Wednesday as police officers searched her bag.

“As soon as I heard about this, I knew I was going to be stopped,” said Ms. Richardson, 39, who lives in Brooklyn. “I knew because I have a big bag and I’m Black.”

A protester holds a small sign saying “National Guard out of the subway” in all capital letters.

A few demonstrators responded to the National Guard mobilization with a small protest on Friday night in Union Square. Credit...Andres Kudacki for The New York Times

Speaking at a news conference on Friday, Jeffrey Maddrey, the Police Department's chief of department, said there was a need to enforce "quality of life" laws like fare evasion, which he noted could lead to more serious crimes. The man who started the fight that led to his own shooting on Thursday entered the subway without paying a fare, Mr. Maddrey added.

In February, Mayor Eric Adams ordered 1,000 additional police officers to patrol stations and trains. Ms. Hochul followed up last week by stationing 750 Guard troops at various stations, augmented by 250 personnel from the State Police and the M.T.A. A spokesman for Ms. Hochul did not respond to requests for comment.

"The presence of a uniform makes people feel better, and if the National Guards or the State Police want to add to that presence, I applaud that," Mr. Adams said during a news conference on Tuesday.

A few demonstrators responded to the governor's mobilization with a small protest on Friday night in Union Square. The demonstrators were outnumbered by police officers, journalists and curious passers-by, some of whom agreed with the organizers.

"I don't think the police keep things safe," said Tiffany Bailey, 21, a dog walker who lives in Brooklyn. "I think they just instill a sense of fear in us."

Others said the protesters did not understand the fears of riding the subway. Jesenia Ramirez, a 44-year-old entrepreneur, prefers the hassle of buses, and the expense of taxis or rental cars, to the anxiety she feels when she takes the train. Part of her concern, she explained, is that because the subway system is so sprawling there is no way for police officers or Guard members to patrol it all.

"They cannot be in every train car or in every train," said Ms. Ramirez, who lives in Manhattan.

As Mr. Sumampow rode the 7 train to Times Square on Friday morning, he said he had noticed the increased police presence at some stations, but it didn't change his plans to leave the city. About a month ago, he said, three men tried to steal his wallet as he entered a subway station near his home. He escaped because he hit one of the robbers with his elbow, he said, and a nearby pedestrian yelled for the police.

Now Mr. Sumampow removes all the cash from his wallet every morning before he leaves home. And he has bought a one-way train ticket to Florida.

"I'm going to escape for a while," he said. "But I'll keep my apartment here. If New York gets safer, then I'll come back."

Julian Roberts-Grmela, Erin Nolan and Nate Schweber contributed reporting.

Christopher Maag is an enterprise reporter covering the New York City region for The New York Times. More about Christopher Maag

A version of this article appears in print on March 18, 2024, Section A, Page 17 of the New York edition with the headline: New Yorkers Grapple With Safety on Subway After Another Shooting. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/nyregion/subway-shooting-national-guard-safety.html>

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NYPD leaders spar with NYC councilmembers over subway crime, National Guard presence

Gothamist, March 20, 2024 ::

Top NYPD officials told local lawmakers on Wednesday that New York City's subway system remains generally safe despite a string of recent high-profile crimes that have raised concerns about public safety on trains and platforms.

But several members of the City Council pushed back on police officials' accounts, questioning whether stepped-up policing and the presence of National Guard soldiers in the subway are having their intended effect of deterring violent crime and making riders feel safer.

The at-times tense back-and-forth came during a Council hearing on Mayor Eric Adams' preliminary budget proposal for the NYPD for next fiscal year. Lawmakers are reviewing Adams' latest spending plan for the city, totaling roughly \$109 billion, including about \$6 billion for the NYPD. The administration and Council must reach a deal on the city's budget before July, when the next fiscal year starts.

The hearing also came less than a week after an altercation between riders on an A train in Downtown Brooklyn escalated into a shooting and underground chaos that made national headlines — the fourth shooting in the city's transit system this year.

“Black and brown men get swept up in our criminal justice system,” said Councilmember Lincoln Restler, who represents parts of northern Brooklyn. “It is devastating our communities. We have returned fully to the era of broken windows policing.”

Police Commissioner Edward Caban testified that overall crime in the transit system declined by 3% in 2023, including an 8% drop in December. He acknowledged an uptick in subway crime in January, but said the total number of serious transit crimes that occurred that month represented less than 2% of crimes citywide.

Caban also attributed increased perceptions of subway crime to alleged “career criminals” who repeatedly commit violence, such as three people he said were arrested more than 100 times each for various crimes, including assaulting MTA employees.

But his testimony ran counter to other police data, with overall transit crime having jumped almost 7% so far this year compared to the same period in 2023, according to the NYPD's CompStat database. There were 467 transit crimes through March 17, versus 437 last year.

"No matter how traumatizing even a single act of violence can be, our transit system is not actually being overrun by crime," Caban told councilmembers. "Rather, some very real acts of violence are driving a legitimate perception of danger."

The deployment of National Guard members and more police officers in the subway, he added, "will go a long way as both a deterrent to those willing to commit a crime and a measure of comfort to innocent law-abiding straphangers."

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul earlier this month ordered the National Guard and state police to help the NYPD perform random bag checks at some of the city's busiest transit hubs. Just weeks before, the mayor — who is a former NYPD officer — had sent in an additional 1,000 police officers to patrol the subway. Civil rights advocates and progressives have criticized the moves, arguing the amplified presence of law enforcement would lead to inequitable policing based on race.

During Wednesday's Council hearing, protesters interrupted Caban's testimony, prompting lawmakers to call for order in the chambers. But some elected officials appeared to sympathize with the protesters, expressing disappointment over the NYPD's handling of public safety issues.

"Police alone can't solve this," Public Advocate Jumaane Williams said of such issues, adding that "other people here" in the room agreed with him.

As the commissioner testified, Councilmember Tiffany Cabán, a democratic socialist who represents neighborhoods in northwest Queens, said on the social media platform X that his remarks underscored how "the billions [of dollars] we throw into policing provide a poor return on investment."

"Pumping those dollars into housing, our schools and healthcare system would get far better results," she said.

Some lawmakers highlighted the fact that the NYPD's spending on officer overtime has risen markedly in recent years. That's also been the case for officers assigned to the subways: Last year, overtime pay for such officers skyrocketed to \$155 million, up from \$4 million in 2022, Gothamist previously reported.

"The continued spending and excess of the budget on overtime only intensifies concerns about the department's management of its budget and workforce," Council Speaker Adrienne Adams said.

<https://gothamist.com/news/nypd-leaders-spar-with-nyc-councilmembers-over-subway-crime-national-guard-presence>

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UH-72 Crash

National Guard Soldiers' bodies return home (photos)

Glens Falls Post Star, March 21, 2024 ::

National Guard Soldiers' bodies return home

https://poststar.com/news/state-regional/national-guard-soldiers-bodies-return-home/collection_0c4be798-e61f-11ee-b666-cbaa21a12302.html

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Remains of local National Guard members return to region on Monday

Times Union, March 18, 2024 ::

Mar 22, 2024

COLONIE — The remains of two New York Army National Guard pilots killed in a March 8 helicopter crash near the Mexican border will be returned to the Capital Region on Monday.

Gov. Kathy Hochul is expected to pay respects to Casey Frankoski, 28, of Rensselaer, and John M. Grassia III, 30, of Rotterdam, when their caskets arrive Monday afternoon at the state's National Guard headquarters at Albany International Airport.

The plane-side service is expected to begin after 3 p.m.

The guard members were assigned to a regiment that has been operating as part of Joint Task Force North, a military unit that supports U.S. Customs and Border Protection operations on the southwest border. The crash also killed a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

Jacob Pratt, an aircraft crew chief from Rensselaer who was badly injured in the crash of the UH-72 Lakota light utility helicopter remains hospitalized. Last week, his family said he was showing some signs of improvement.

The detachment specializes in flying missions in support of civilian agencies and is based at an Army Aviation Flight Facility at Albany International Airport. Grassia and Frankoski were both ranked chief warrant officer 2.

Grassia III had been with the State Police since 2022, working most of his short law enforcement career in Troop K in the Hudson Valley before being reassigned recently to Troop G in Colonie.

Frankoski, the daughter of a former Rensselaer city police chief, was a graduate of Columbia High School and Schenectady County Community College, where she received an associate degree in social science. She was appointed a warrant officer in 2019 and trained to become a UH-60 Black Hawk and UH-72 Lakota helicopter pilot.

Rensselaer Police will escort Frankoski's casket from the Division of Military and Naval Affairs to the W.J. Lyons Jr. Funeral Home.

They encouraged the public to pay respects to the Guard members and published their route to the funeral home on Washington Avenue in Rensselaer.

"We will be traveling out of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs onto Wade Road., continuing onto Wolf Road, turning left onto Albany Shaker Road, continuing to Northern Boulevard to I-90 East to I-787 South across the Dunn Memorial Bridge turning left onto Broadway and traveling the entire length of Broadway to Washington Ave., onto Farley Drive, back out onto Washington Ave. and ending at Lyon's Funeral home.

"We ask the residents of Rensselaer or anyone else wishing to pay their respects line the escort route to honor Casey for the hero that she is."

Frankoski's funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at the Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church, 54 Herrick St., Rensselaer. Calling hours will be held from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday at the church.

Funeral arrangements for Grassia were not available early Monday.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/bodies-national-guard-members-killed-helicopter-19193455.php>

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Emergency responders to escort body of NG pilot who died in helicopter crash

WRGB, March 17, 2024 ::

CAPITAL REGION, NY (WRGB) — The Rensselaer Police Department will be escorting New York National Guard pilot Casey Frankoski from the Division of Military and Naval Affairs at Albany Airport to Lyon's Funeral Home in Rensselaer on Monday.

Frankoski died in a helicopter crash near the Texas-Mexico border on March 9th.

Rensselaer Mayor Mike Stammel released a statement calling her "remarkable" and a "proud native of Rensselaer".

Albany County resident and New York State Police trooper John Grassia was also killed in the crash.

When the flight arrives, there will be a plane-side ceremony, which Gov. Kathy Hochul will attend.

The escort will be traveling out of the Division of Military and Naval Affairs onto Wade Road, before heading onto Albany-Shaker Road. Then they'll be crossing the Dunn Memorial Bridge, turning left onto Broadway and heading down Washington Avenue before heading onto Farley Drive before finally arriving at Lyon's Funeral Home.

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/emergency-responders-to-escort-body-of-ng-pilot-who-died-in-helicopter-crash>

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Funeral services for Casey Frankoski set for this week

Spectrum News, March 17, 2024 ::

Funeral services for Casey Frankoski will be held this week. She was one of the two National Guard Aviators killed in a helicopter crash on the U.S.-Mexico Border last weekend.

According to Rensselaer County officials, a procession to welcome her body back home will be held Monday.

The route runs from Albany International Airport to the W-J Lyons Funeral Home in Rensselaer. The expected arrival in the city is around 4 p.m.

Calling hours are set for Thursday from noon to 5 p.m. at Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph's Church on Herrick Street in Rensselaer.

All are welcome to attend.

The funeral is set for Friday at 11 a.m. at the church.

She will then be laid to rest at Saratoga National Cemetery.

Frankoski was 28-years-old.

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2024/03/17/funeral-services-for-casey-frankoski-set-for-this-week>

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Wake held for Casey Frankoski (Video)

WTEN, March 21, 2024 :
Mar 22, 2024

Wake held for Casey Frankoski

<https://www.news10.com/video/wake-held-for-casey-frankoski/9537724/>

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Airman mourns best friend killed in National Guard helicopter crash

Times Union, March 21, 2024 ::
Mar 22, 2024

New York Air National Guard Senior Airman Liz Miller is taking things slowly.

Day by day, and at times hour by hour, she is coming to terms with the death of her best friend, New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Casey Frankoski. Frankoski, 28, from Rensselaer, was among those killed in the March 8 crash of an Army National Guard helicopter near Rio Grande Valley, Texas.

The crash also claimed the lives of fellow New York guard member Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Michael Grassia III of Rotterdam and Border Patrol agent Chris Luna of Texas, and severely injured Sgt. Jacob Pratt of Rensselaer, also a New York guard member.

“I’m hanging in there,” Miller said. “Every day is different.”

Rensselaer natives Miller and Frankoski were 8 years old when they met in fourth grade, and Miller was soon joining her on trips to the family’s camp on Alpine Lake. They graduated from Columbia High School where Frankoski was a standout tennis player and bowler. Frankoski was going to be Miller’s maid of honor at her wedding this May.

“She was the best person I know,” said Miller, 28, who lives in Schenectady.

It was almost inevitable that Frankoski would join the military. Her brother joined straight out of high school and she followed him after graduating from Schenectady County Community College.

“Being a pilot was always her goal,” Miller said.

Frankoski also encouraged Miller to enlist. She had just finished college in 2019 and was unsure of what to do next. She connected Miller with a friend in the Air National Guard. That friend is now Miller’s fiancé.

Under the best circumstances, basic training is a confusing, exhausting and at times nightmarish trial of human endurance. For Miller, that experience was compounded by the fact that her training began in March 2020, just as the pandemic was beginning.

It was hard, but letters from Frankoski were an immense source of strength. She turned 25 while in training and a few days ago came across a birthday card that Frankoski had sent her.

“You’re so strong,” she wrote. “I’m so proud of you.”

The pair also enjoyed their many nights together, both in the area and around the country. Frankoski was uncommonly welcoming and the more outgoing of the two. “She pushed me sometimes,” Miller said. “Anybody who looked at us, she would talk to them. It all flowed so naturally.

“She brought light everywhere she went.”

On a recent bachelorette trip, a friend of Miller’s who did not know Frankoski well remarked that she was “surrounded by people who love you so much.”

“So much of that was Casey,” Miller said. “She was just the most welcoming person.”

Through a combination of guile and her bubbly nature, Frankoski also had a preternatural ability to get them into the VIP sections of the many concerts they attended together.

“She saw what she wanted and she got it,” Miller said.

Ryan’s Wake in Troy was a favorite hangout and they would occasionally go to Rivers Casino in Schenectady. Once, Miller, Frankoski and Grassia went to a local indoor golf simulator together.

She said she did not know Grassia well but it was a fun and competitive evening, Miller said. One would expect nothing less when military aviators get together to whack golf balls as hard as they can.

“He was wonderful,” Miller said.

As the funerals begin in the coming days, members of Grassia and Frankoski’s unit will be returning on temporary leave to pay their respects. They have had some time off since the crash, but the unit as a whole is doing well, said Maj. Jean Kratzer, a public affairs officer with the New York Army National Guard.

Though formally a member of the 109th Airlift Wing based in Scotia, Miller works down the hall from Kratzer at National Guard headquarters in Latham and has continued to work since the crash.

She found out about the crash shortly after Frankoski's parents did. "They are doing about as well as the rest of us," she said.

Talking about her best friend helps.

"It's the only thing that's getting me through it," Miller said.

"Everyone should know her story and the lives she affected."

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/airman-mourns-best-friend-killed-national-guard-19157974.php>

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Community bids farewell to NY National Guard pilot lost in U.S.-Mexico border crash

WRGB, March 21,2024:

RENSSELAER, NY (WRGB) — Loved ones -- saying some of their final goodbyes to New York National Guard pilot Casey Frankoski Thursday. Calling hours were held in Rensselaer at John the Evangelist-Saint Joseph's Church beginning at noon, wrapping up at 5. The funeral will be at 11 a.m. Friday.

Frankoski was killed in a [helicopter crash](#) at the U.S.-Mexico border earlier this month. Instead of flowers, contributions can be made in her memory to the Casey Frankoski Memorial Scholarship fund via Venmo or PayPal. You may also stop at any Broadview branch or mail checks to 4 Winners Circle, Albany, NY 12205.

State trooper John Grassia was also killed in that crash. The Rotterdam native's funeral will be held Tuesday. Earlier this week, [both soldiers returned home](#) in flag-draped caskets for a police escort to the funeral homes.

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/gallery/community-bids-farewell-to-ny-national-guard-pilot-lost-in-us-mexico-border-crash?photo=4>

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Hundreds pay respects to Rensselaer soldier killed in helicopter crash along border

**Spectrum News, March 21, 2024 :
Mar 22, 2024**

Hundreds of people filed through The Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer on Thursday to pay their respects to Chief Warrant Officer Casey Frankoski.

Though she was only 28, Frankoski's ties to the New York Army National Guard, area law enforcement and the fire service run deep, which brought people from various agencies across the Capital Region and beyond to call.

Frankoski's father James served as the city's former police chief, and her brother is a detective with the department. Folks there have recalled brightened hallways, laughs and smiles whenever Casey Frankoski visited.

"They are holding up. It's been a long and tenuous process for them, as well as it would be for any family," said Rensselaer Mayor Mike Stammel as he left the church Thursday. "They have the support and love of the community, their friends, the police department and fire department."

Frankoski volunteered her time at the Best-Luther Fire Department, where the firefighters she served with said she was the "epitome of a patriot" who dedicated her life to serving others.

Frankoski lost her life in a helicopter crash earlier this month on the southern border in Texas. She was assigned to a regiment working with Joint Task Force North, a federal military mission that helps support U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Chief Warrant Officer John Grassia III, a Rotterdam native and New York state trooper was also killed in the crash. Services for the 30-year-old are early next week.

There will be a funeral service for Frankoski at the church beginning at 11 a.m. Friday before she is laid to rest in Saratoga National Cemetery.

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/watertown/news/2024/03/21/national-guard-fankoski-killed-helicopter->

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Massive crowd, street closures expected as mourners pay respects to Rensselaer soldier

WNYT, March 21, 2024 :

Mourners lined up outside the church to pay their respects to Chief Warrant Officer Casey Frankoski Thursday.

Frankoski, a member of the New York National Guard, died in a helicopter crash on March 8 at the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas.

Calling hours began at noon at St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph's Church on Herrick Street in Rensselaer and the line to pay respects stretched down the block until after 5:00 p.m.

Frankoski, 28, was a native of Rensselaer and the daughter of retired Police Chief James Frankoski.

The funeral service is Friday at 11 a.m. at the church.

The area from East St. at Adams Street to East Street at the entrance to the Amtrak's surface lot B will be closed to traffic. Nearby departments will provide mutual aid to the city as police attend Frankoski's funeral.

Frankoski will then be laid to rest at Saratoga National Cemetery.

Also killed in the crash was Chief Warrant Officer John Grassia III, who lived in Albany County, and was a New York State trooper. Crew Chief Jacob Pratt, also of the Capital Region, was badly injured and faces a long recovery.

NewsChannel 13's Stella Porter is at the scene and will bring you updates on air and online.

<https://wnyt.com/top-stories/mourners-paying-respects-to-fallen-rensselaer-soldier/>

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A time of hurt: Local soldiers killed in helicopter crash welcomed home

Troy Record/Saratogian::

CAPITAL REGION, N.Y. — Chief Warrant Officer 2 Casey Frankoski, of Rensselaer, and New York State Trooper and Chief Warrant Officer 2 John Grassia III, of Rotterdam, made their final journey home.

Landing at the Division of Military and Naval Affairs at the Albany International Airport on Monday afternoon, the two fallen soldiers were welcomed by family, friends, and their fellow soldiers. Immediately following, police motorcades led them and their loved ones in home-bound processions where community members waited to greet them.

Frankoski, Grassia, and Border Patrol agent Chris Luna were killed in a helicopter crash near the Texas-Mexico border on March 8. Another soldier, National Guardsman Aircraft Crew Chief Jacob Pratt, of Rensselaer, was severely injured and is receiving treatment in Texas.

“They’re valued team members who were heroes who tragically lost their (lives) during their mission,” Colonel Jason Lefton, 42d Combat Aviation Brigade Commander and State Army Aviation Officer said of Frankoski and Grassia. “We’re gonna do everything we can to find out what happened and take care of their families and the rest of our soldiers.”

Lefton said the crew was on a Title 10 mission supporting active duty and Customs and Border Patrol. There are two ongoing investigations into the crash — one for safety and one full investigation of the situation. The investigations can take anywhere from 30 to 90 days, Lefton said.

On Monday, Pratt’s family said he was aware and awake in an update through a GoFundMe to help cover his medical expenses. As of publishing, they have raised \$110,000 of their \$75,000 goal.

Frankoski joined the Army National Guard in 2016 and deployed to Kuwait in November 2018 as a Mission Planner. After schooling, she was appointed Chief Warrant Officer in 2019 and Chief Warrant Officer 2 in 2021, graduating from flight school the same year.

She trained to become a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and was deployed to the Texas-American border in October 2023. Frankoski was awarded several honors and awards during her service including the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

“We should mourn the loss of Casey Frankoski, who was brought home today,” Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin said in a statement posted on Facebook. “We should also recognize that our county and country still produce outstanding young people like Casey who aspire to the highest standards of public service.

“We will never forget Casey and her service.”

After enlisting in the National Guard in 2012, Grassia completed his training in 2013 and was awarded the MOS 15T – UH-60 Helicopter Repairer. He was deployed to Kuwait in 2013, upon returning, he achieved a Bachelor’s in Informatics and Cyber Security and was a cybersecurity analyst for the NYS Department of Homeland Security from 2017 to 2019.

He was selected for Warrant Officer Candidate School in 2018 and went on to become a Chief Warrant Officer 2 and UH-60M Pilot. He became a State Trooper in 2022. Grassia also received several awards and accommodations including Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal and Global War Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Frankoski and Grassia were also involved in their communities. Among other groups, Frankoski was a volunteer firefighter at the Best Luther Fire Department and a member of the

Environmental Conservation Corps, and Grassia was a member of the Sacandaga Boating Club.

Their soldiers and aviators are leaders and embedded members of their neighborhoods, Lefton said. They're the best and brightest hard workers and the love and impact they have on their communities is visible.

"The outpouring of respect from our community during the procession served as a powerful reminder of the unity and gratitude we hold for our brave men and women in uniform," Albany County Executive Dan McCoy said in a statement posted on Facebook. "Today, the remains of Chief Warrant Officer Casey Frankoski and Chief Warrant Officer John Grassia III returned home."

Raised in East Greenbush, the procession for Frankoski led to W.J. Lyons, Jr. Funeral Home in Rensselaer. Winding through the Capital Region before reaching Washington Avenue, she and her family were greeted by community members on sidewalks waving American flags, fire trucks parked on the side of the road as they drove through different municipalities and a sign strung on a bridge over Interstate 90 reading "Welcome home Casey."

"Rensselaer turned out for one of our own and helped bring Casey Frankoski home," Rensselaer Mayor Michael Stammel said in a statement posted on Facebook. "Peace to her many friends and family as she is laid to rest.

"Our city showed our love and support today for a young woman who gave everything in service (to) us all," he continued. "Rensselaer will always remember!"

As the procession concluded at the funeral home, the people on sidewalks moved to congregate around the building, its parking lot full of police motorcycles and cars. Those gathered watched as Frankoski's casket draped in an American flag was carried from the hearse.

"As New York National Guard we're part of the community, we live here, we work here, we train with everybody here. We're very tight," Lefton said. "They're (a) very resilient, very resilient group... We did start flying again and we're back at it.

"All the soldiers are hurting," he continued. "Right now it's a time of hurt. We're looking after each other and doing the best we can."

Calling hours for Frankoski will be Thursday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at The Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer. Funeral services will be at 11:00 a.m. on Friday with interment at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville immediately following.

Calling hours for Grassia will be held on Monday, March 25, from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church in Schenectady. Funeral services will be on Tuesday at 11 a.m. The interment will be at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery.

<https://www.saratogian.com/2024/03/19/a-time-of-hurt-local-soldiers-killed-in-helicopter-crash-welcomed-home/>

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NY National Guard brings home bodies of 2 warrant officers killed in helicopter crash in Texas

Stars and Stripes, March 19, 2024::

The New York National Guard on Monday brought home two soldiers killed in the line of duty on March 8 in Texas.

The caskets containing the bodies of Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officers 2 Casey Frankoski and John M. Grassia III were ferried from Kelly Field, Texas, to the Army Aviation Support Facility at Albany International Airport in Latham, N.Y., on board an LC-130 Hercules assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing.

Family, friends, fellow soldiers, New York National Guard leaders, local political officials and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul were on hand.

Major Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, received approval from Army and Air Force officials to bring the remains home together on board a New York Air National Guard aircraft.

An eight-soldier detail from the New York Army National Guard Honor Guard was on board, led by Sgt. 1st Class Charles Gabriel, who leads New York's 87-soldier honor guard force.

Frankoski and Grassia were piloting a UH-72 Lakota helicopter on a border reconnaissance mission on March 8 when the aircraft crashed near Rio Grande City, Texas.

The two were assigned to Detachment 2, Company A, of the 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment.

The 21-soldier detachment was mobilized in October 2023 for federal duty supporting the Border Patrol as part of Joint Task Force North.

Border Patrol agent Chris Luna also was killed in the crash, and New York National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Pratt was critically injured.

Pratt, who suffered multiple broken bones, is "awake and aware" as he continues receiving treatment at a Texas hospital, according to a GoFundMe post.

The cause of the crash remains under investigation.

The hearses and buses containing the families were escorted by New York State Police and Rensselaer, N.Y., Police Department vehicles to funeral homes in the area towns of Glenville and Rensselaer.

Frankoski is the daughter of retired Rensselaer Police Department Chief James Frankoski, and Grassi was a member of the New York State Police.

“They are valued team members who are heroes” who tragically lost their lives doing their mission, said Col. Jason Lefton, the state Army aviation officer and commander of the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.

“We’re doing everything we can to find out what happened and take care of their families and the rest of our soldiers. ... Right now, it is a time of hurt. We’re looking after each other, and we’re doing the best that we can.”

Services for Frankoski are set for Friday, followed by military funeral honors and burial at the Gerald B. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, located near the historic battlefield.

Grassia will be interred at the same cemetery following military funeral honors on March 26.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/army/2024-03-19/ny-national-guard-soldiers-remains-home-13365256.html>

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New York National Guard Brings Fallen Warrant Officers Home

National Guard.mil, March 19, 2024 ::

LATHAM, N.Y. - The New York National Guard brought home the remains of two helicopter pilots killed March 8 in a helicopter crash in Texas.

The caskets containing the bodies of Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officers 2 Casey Frankoski, 28, and John M. Grassia III, 30, were ferried on March 18 from Kelly Field, Texas, to the Army Aviation Support Facility at Albany International Airport onboard an LC-130 Hercules assigned to the New York Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing.

About 400 family members, friends, New York National Guard military and civilian employees, local political leaders and Gov. Kathy Hochul met the aircraft.

As the crowd watched, a New York National Guard Honor Guard carried the caskets containing Grassia and Frankoski down the ramp of the LC-130 to hearses.

New York State Police and Rensselaer police escorted the hearses and buses with the families of Frankoski and Grassia to funeral homes in Glenville and Rensselaer.

Area residents lined the routes of the two processions to salute the two UH-72 Lakota pilots.

Frankoski is the daughter of retired Rensselaer Police Chief James Frankoski; Grassi was a member of the New York State Police.

“They are valued team members who are heroes” who tragically lost their lives doing their mission, said Col. Jason Lefton, the state Army aviation officer and commander of the 42nd Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade.

“We’re doing everything we can to find out what happened and take care of their families and the rest of our Soldiers,” Lefton said. “Right now, it is a time of hurt. We’re looking after each other and we’re doing the best that we can.”

Frankoski and Grassia were piloting a UH-72 assigned to the District of Columbia National Guard on a border reconnaissance mission March 8 when the helicopter crashed near Rio Grande City, Texas.

Border Patrol Agent Chris Luna was also killed in the crash and Sgt. 1st Class Jacob Pratt was severely injured.

Frankoski and Grassia were assigned to Detachment 2, Company A, of the 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment. The 21-Soldier detachment was mobilized in October for federal duty supporting the Border Patrol as part of Joint Task Force North.

The unit is based at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham adjacent to New York National Guard headquarters.

Maj. Gen. Ray Shields, the adjutant general of New York, decided to seek to bring the remains of the two Soldiers home together on a New York Air National Guard aircraft.

After discussions with Army and Air Force officials, approval was obtained to fly the mission.

On March 17, an LC-130, the Hercules version modified to land on snow and ice with skis, left Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia, New York, and flew to Texas.

An eight-Soldier detail from the New York Army National Guard Honor Guard was on board, led by Sgt. 1st Class Charles Gabriel, the noncommissioned officer in charge of New York’s 87-Soldier Honor Guard force.

On March 18, the Honor Guard team received the remains of Frankoski and Grassia from a San Antonio area undertaker and transferred them to the New York aircraft.

The aircraft took off about 9:30 a.m. Texas time, with an expected arrival time of 3 p.m. in the Albany area.

At 2 p.m., the Grassia and Frankoski families and friends arrived in charter buses. They were housed in a heated hangar at the flight facility because it was bitterly cold.

Forty Rensselaer police and New York State Police vehicles were on hand to be part of the procession.

As 3 p.m. drew closer, the families and dignitaries were moved to a helicopter hangar closer to where the plane would arrive.

Following a pass of the airfield, the LC-130 landed and backed down the taxiway to the Army flight facility. The two hearses and police escort vehicles came forward. As the aircraft engines shut down, the families and officials, including the governor, moved out to line the taxiway on either side.

The crew of the LC-130 lined up alongside the ramp and prepared to present arms.

With everybody in place, the Honor Guard carry team moved first one, and then the other, flag-covered casket down the aircraft ramp and into the hearses as military personnel saluted and civilians placed their hands over their hearts.

While the families had a chance to approach the hearses, Hochul, accompanied by Shields and New York State Police Acting Superintendent Steven James, greeted the Airmen and Soldiers who crewed the mission.

The hearses, escorted by the police vehicles and followed by the 50-passenger buses carrying family members, then drove past a line of aviation Soldiers, Troopers and police officers who saluted as they passed.

Services for Frankoski are March 22, followed by military funeral honors and burial at the Gerald B. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery near the historic battlefield.

Grassia will be interred at the same cemetery following military funeral honors March 26.

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/Article/3711491/new-york-national-guard-brings-fallen-warrant-officers-home/>

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Remains of fallen soldiers returned to New York

WPTZ, March 19, 2024::

LATHAM, N.Y. —New York Gov. Kathy Hochul joined other state and military leaders on Monday to pay respects to the two National Guard soldiers killed in Texas earlier this month.

Gov. Hochul attended a plane-side honor in Latham as the remains of the fallen soldiers were returned to New York.

Chief Warrant Officer Casey Frankoski and Chief Warrant Officer John Grassia III both died in the crash on March 8. Both were from the capital region.

Funeral processions will be held this week.

Rensselaer High School graduate Jacob Pratt was also in the helicopter and was seriously injured. He's currently recovering.

<https://www.mynbc5.com/article/fallen-soldiers-return-ny/60239175>

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Niskayuna National Guard Members Killed In Helicopter Crash Return Home; Funerals Set

Daily Voice, March 19, 2024::

Albany, Niskayuna National Guard Members Killed In Helicopter Crash Return Home; Funerals Set

Two New York National Guard members killed in a helicopter crash on the US-Mexico border received a hero's welcome to their hometowns.

The remains of John Grassia III and Casey Frankoski were returned to the Capital Region on Monday, March 18.

The remains of Casey Frankoski and John Grassia arrived at Albany County's Army aviation facility in Latham at around 3 p.m. Monday, March 18.

Gov. Kathy Hochul and other local leaders stood in silence as flag-draped caskets carrying the 28-year-old Frankoski and 30-year-old Grassia were loaded into waiting hearses.

"The service and sacrifice of Casey Frankoski and John M. Grassia III will never be forgotten," Hochul said on X. "My heart is with their families and loved ones during this difficult time."

Photos on social media showed countless law enforcement and community members lining the procession route as a police escort brought Grassia, a New York State Police trooper and Rotterdam native, to the Glenville Funeral Home.

Frankoski, who was from the city of Rensselaer and graduated from Columbia High School, was taken to Lyon's Funeral Home in Rensselaer.

Monday's emotional scene came more than a week after their UH-72 Lakota helicopter crashed while flying over the US-Mexico border near Rio Grande City, Texas on Friday, March 8.

According to the Joint Task Force North, Frankoski, Grassia, and a US Border Patrol agent all died in the crash. Jacob Pratt, of Rensselaer, was the sole survivor and remains hospitalized in critical condition.

A GoFundMe campaign to assist Pratt with medical bills had raised over \$110,000 as of Tuesday, March 19.

An investigation is underway to determine what caused the aircraft to go down.

Meanwhile, tributes continue to pour in for both fallen soldiers. State Sen. Jake Ashby, whose 43rd District covers all of Rensselaer County, shared a photo of Frankoski, Grassia, and Pratt on Facebook and said he would remember the fallen pair as "full of promise, full of life, and dedicated to the country they loved."

Frankoski, a former volunteer firefighter, enlisted in the Army National Guard in October 2016 and was appointed Chief Warrant Officer in 2019, her obituary said. She trained to become a Black Hawk helicopter pilot and spent nearly a year deployed to Kuwait as a mission planner.

Among the many honors she received were the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Armed Forces Service Medal.

"Casey was dedicated to serving the United States," reads her memorial.

Writing in his obituary, Grassia's family said they take solace in knowing that he died "doing what he loved most: flying and protecting those he loved."

A native of Niskayuna, Grassia enlisted in the Army National Guard at the age of 18 before he graduated from Schalmont High School in 2012. After training, he served in Kuwait as a helicopter repairer.

He went on to earn his bachelor of science degree in informatics and cyber security from the University at Albany, later working as a cybersecurity analyst for the New York State Department of Homeland Security.

In 2022, Grassia “proudly” became a New York State Police trooper, relatives said.

“J’s journey in this world was marked by an unwavering commitment to service and adventure,” reads his memorial. “He was a true American hero.”

Funeral services for Frankoski are set for 11 a.m. Friday, March 22, at St. John The Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer.

Grassia will be laid to rest at 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 26, at St. John the Evangelist Church in Schenectady.

<https://dailyvoice.com/new-york/capital-district/albany-niskayuna-national-guard-members-killed-in-helicopter-crash-return-home-funerals-set/>

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FEATURED Images: Capital Region soldiers killed in crash return home (video, 23 photos)

Daily Gazette, March 19, 2024::

COLONIE - Images from Monday's return home of National Guard members John Grassia and Casey Frankoski, both killed in a helicopter crash earlier this month along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Photos from our Stan Hudy, Peter R. Barber and Tyler A. McNeil

https://www.dailygazette.com/news/images-return-home/article_fe5eba4c-e5e8-11ee-95a0-ffa848ec9d8.html

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Families pay respects as bodies of fallen soldiers return to Capital Region (video)

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

COLONIE, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The Capital Region honored and remembered Chief Warrant Officers Casey Frankoski and John Grassia on Monday. A plane carrying their remains arrived at Albany International Airport around 3 p.m.

Before touching down, the C-130 carrying the bodies of two fallen heroes made one final pass over their home of the Capital Region.

Get the latest news, weather, sports and more delivered right to your inbox!

“It’s an unfortunate process that’s part of the Army,” said Colonel Jason Lefton, of the State Army Aviation Office.

Both families of John Grassia and Casey Frankoski, now connected by one tragedy, arriving by bus to receive their caskets. “They are heroes. All the soldiers here are hurting,” said Lefton.

Waiting along with the families were Governor Kathy Hochul and members of the National Guard. Once on the ground, the caskets draped with the American flag were escorted by the 8-member honor guard and placed into two separate hearses.

Every single family member took a moment to pay their respects and honor Frankoski and Grassia.

“We are going to treat them with dignity and respect and make sure we are caring for their families,” said Lefton.

Both Frankoski and Grassia were killed when their helicopter crashed on March 8 in Texas. An investigation into what caused the crash remains ongoing.

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<https://www.news10.com/community/veterans-voices/families-pay-respects-as-bodies-of-fallen-soldiers-return-to-capital-region/>

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National Guard returns fallen soldiers to Capital Region(video)

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

Note: The video is a 17 minute live report.

LATHAM, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The New York National Guard returned the remains of National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 2 Casey Frankoski and John Grassia III following a fatal helicopter crash in Texas. NEWS10 had a live stream for those looking to honor the fallen soldiers and view their arrival which can be seen above.

The plane arrived at around 3 p.m. The soldiers will be escorted from the Division of Military and Naval Affairs on Wade Road in Latham.

Frankoski's escort will end at Lyon's Funeral Home in Rensselaer. Grassia III's escort will end at the Glenville Funeral Home in Scotia.

Grassia III's escort will depart from the airport, heading on Old Niskayuna Road to Route 155 and onto Albany Shaker Road to Route 7. From there they will get off Route 7 to Exit 4C of I-890, exiting on Washington Avenue and going up Route 50 to turn onto Glenridge Road, ending at the funeral home.

Frankoski was 28 years old, living in Rensselaer, and began serving our country when she enlisted in the Army National Guard in October 2016. She received many honors while serving the United States including Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and more.

Grassia III was 30 years old, born in Niskayuna, and enlisted in the Army National Guard to serve our country before he graduated high school in 2012. His awards and decorations from serving the United States include Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal 3rd award, Army Good Conduct Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement 3rd Award, and more.

The third National Guard member who was injured in the crash, Jacob Pratt, has been reported to be "awake and aware" after surgery and being on a ventilator. The NYS Council of School Superintendents says Pratt is fighting hard every day and that the family is grateful for the community support and prayers.

<https://www.news10.com/news/watch-live-national-guard-returns-fallen-soldiers-to-capital-region/>

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2 fallen NY National Guard members get plane-side honors (video)

WBNG, March 18, 2024 ::

LATHAM, NY (WBNG) -- On March 18, Governor Kathy Hochul gathered with others to pay their respects at the plane-side honors for two National Guard members.

In Latham, the governor honored upstate natives Casey Frankoski and John Grassia who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

According to the governor's office, Grassia was also a trooper with the New York State Police. State Police said in a news release their helicopter crashed at the southern border of Texas during a federal deployment.

When it comes to the upstate natives, the governor's office said the pair have been with the National Guard since 2016 and 2013.

On their passing, Hochul said:

"I am deeply saddened at the passing of two members of the New York National Guard and a member of the New York State Police during a federal deployment along our southern border. There is no greater calling than service to and defense of your country. I join the members of our National Guard and State Police, and the entire State of New York, in mourning this tragic loss. Our deepest sympathies are with the families and friends of those killed, and I remain incredibly grateful for the many service men and women who put themselves at risk every day to ensure the security of our state and our nation."

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<https://www.wbng.com/2024/03/18/2-fallen-ny-national-guard-members-get-plane-side-honors/>

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Remains of N.Y. National Guard soldiers who died in helicopter crash are returned to Capital Region

WAMC, March 18, 2024 ::

The bodies of two fallen National Guard members from upstate New York were flown home today.

The remains of 28-year-old Casey Frankoski and 30-year-old John Grassia were escorted home by a New York Army National Guard Honor Guard, aboard New York Air National Guard aircraft. They arrived around 3 Monday at the Army flight facility in Latham, where family, friends, fellow-soldiers and Governor Kathy Hochul were waiting.

"Their valued team members who are heroes, who tragically lost their life doing their mission," said Colonel Jason Lefton, a state aviation officer for New York State Army National Guard. "And we're doing everything we can to find out what happened and take care of their families and the rest of our soldiers. Right now. It's a time of hurt, we're looking after each other, and we're doing our best that we can."

Lefton says Frankoski and Grassia were on a "Title 10" mission when their UH-72 Lakota light utility helicopter went down March 8th near the Texas-Mexico border. "So they were supporting active duty," Lefton said. "They were supporting the the Customs and Border Patrol, and they're providing capability with their aircraft. That's what they were doing."

Lefton says teams are working to determine the cause of the crash.

"There's two investigations," Lefton said. "One is a safety investigation and one is a they we call it a 15-6, but it's a full investigation. They take anywhere from 30 to 90 days, we'll find out what happens when it's complete."

Lefton says the guardsman who survived, Sergeant Jacob Pratt of Rensselaer, a GlobalFoundries employee, remains hospitalized in Texas.

"He's improving. We have soldiers and family members down there Texas looking after him. He's got a long road ahead. But we're glad that he that he's that he's, you know that he's that he's made it so far. And you know, from what I could tell that air crew did everything what they could and he's alive because of it," said Lefton.

Major Jean Marie Kratzer says the coffins were carried from the plane to waiting hearses.

"Later this week, there will be funerals and military honors for Casey on Thursday and Friday. That will be on Thursday and then Saratoga National Military ceremony for her on Friday. And then on Monday and Tuesday next week, Chief Grassia's family is holding his funeral services on Monday. And then on Tuesday, there will be military honor services for Chief Grassia at Saratoga National."

<https://www.wamc.org/news/2024-03-18/remains-of-n-y-national-guard-soldiers-who-died-in-helicopter-crash-are-returned-to-capital-region>

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Remains of National Guard members killed in helicopter crash arrive at Albany airport

Times Union, March 18, 2024 ::

COLONIE — A military plane carrying the remains of two New York Army National Guard aviators killed in a March 8 helicopter crash in Texas near the Mexican border landed Monday afternoon at Albany International Airport.

One at a time, an honor guard carried the flag-draped caskets of John M. Grassia III, 30, of Rotterdam, and Casey Frankoski, 28, of Rensselaer to waiting hearses as National Guard members, State Police and local officers stood at attention. A large group of Grassia's and Frankoski's friends and families looked on and then paid emotional respects before the hearses departed.

Local political leaders, senior members of the state National Guard and police joined Gov. Kathy Hochul on the tarmac.

The LC-130 transport plane bearing the Guard members' remains, part of the 109th Airlift Wing based in Scotia, made a low pass over the airport before touching down at 3 p.m.

Grassia and Frankoski were assigned to a regiment that has been operating as part of Joint Task Force North, a military unit that supports U.S. Customs and Border Protection operations on the southwest border. The crash also killed U.S. Border Patrol agent Chris Luna and severely injured New York Guardsman Jacob Pratt.

Col. Jason Lefton, the state aviation officer for the New York Army National Guard, expressed condolences to Grassia's and Frankoski's families and praised the work they had been doing at the border.

"Our soldiers and aviators are leaders that are part of their community. They're citizen soldiers. They're people that are the best and the brightest and they work hard," Lefton said.

He said that the last 10 days had been difficult for the remaining Capital Region-based personnel still at the border but that they were also resilient. "I would liken it to a boxer taking a gut punch," Lefton said. "They're getting back up. They're looking after each other."

Pratt, an aircraft crew chief from Rensselaer, remains hospitalized after the crash of the UH-72 Lakota light utility helicopter. Lefton said that Pratt is strong and improving though he has a long road ahead.

The detachment specializes in flying missions in support of civilian agencies and is based at an Army Aviation Flight Facility at Albany International Airport. Grassia and Frankoski were both ranked chief warrant officer 2. Lefton said that Grassia's and Frankoski's unit, Detachment 2, Company A, 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment has resumed flying.

A safety investigation and an Army fact-finding investigation known as a 15-6 were both ongoing and that it could take months for either to be completed, Lefton said. The Division of Military and Naval Affairs previously said it could take months to determine the cause of the crash.

Grassia had been a trooper with the State Police since 2022, working most of his short law enforcement career in Troop K in the Hudson Valley before being reassigned recently to Troop G in Colonie.

Frankoski, the daughter of a former Rensselaer city police chief, was a graduate of Columbia High School and Schenectady County Community College, where she received an associate degree in social science. She was appointed a warrant officer in 2019 and trained to become a UH-60 Black Hawk and UH-72 Lakota helicopter pilot.

Rensselaer Police escorted Frankoski's casket from the Division of Military and Naval Affairs to the W.J. Lyons Jr. Funeral Home.

They encouraged the public to pay respects to the New York Army National Guard members and published their route to the funeral home on Washington Avenue in Rensselaer.

Frankoski's funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at the Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church, 54 Herrick St., Rensselaer, followed by interment at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville. Calling hours will be held from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday at the church.

Grassia's funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 26, at St. John the Evangelist Church at 806 Union St., in Schenectady, followed by his burial also at Saratoga National Cemetery. Calling hours will be 2 to 7 p.m. Monday at the church.

<https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/bodies-national-guard-members-killed-helicopter-19193455.php>

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Two Capital Region soldiers killed in Texas helicopter crash return home(video)

WRGB, March 18, 2024 ::

LATHAM, N.Y. (WRGB) — The two soldiers killed in a helicopter crash in Texas returned home Monday

More than a hundred people, a mix of families, friends, military comrades, and state police, gathered on the tarmac as the plane carrying the remains of fallen New York National Guard members 28-year old Casey Frankoski and 30-year old John Grassia III landed at the Army aviation facility in Latham.

The plane, a New York Air National Guard aircraft, touched down around 3 p.m.

Frankoski and Grassia were carried out in flag-draped caskets, saluted by service members.

Governor Kathy Hochul was also present for their arrival, paying her respects to the families.

Frankoski was from the city of Rensselaer and went to Columbia High School. Grassia was a Rotterdam native and a New York State trooper.

After landing at the Army aviation facility, a police escort brought Grassia to the Glenville Funeral Home. Frankoski was escorted to Lyon's Funeral Home in Rensselaer.

On March 8th, they were on a mission when they're helicopter crashed by the US-Mexico border in Texas. The two died in the crash.

According to Colonel Jason Lefton, State Army Aviation Officer for New York State, the mission they were on was supporting active duty members and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol.

“What we like to do is express our condolences for the families of John and Casey. They’re valued team members who are heroes who tragically lost their lives during their mission and we’re going to do everything we can to find out what happened and take care of their families and the rest of our soldiers,” said Lefton. “Right now it’s a time of hurt, and we’re looking after each other and doing the best that we can.”

Lefton says that two investigations are underway looking into the cause of the crash.

Another NY guardsman, Jacob Pratt, from Rensselaer County, was also on board and seriously injured in the crash.

Pratt remains hospitalized but he’s making progress in his recovery, according to Colonel Jason Lefton, State Army Aviation Officer for New York State.

<https://cbs6albany.com/news/local/two-capital-region-soldiers-killed-in-texas-helicopter-crash-return-home-casey-frankoski-john-grassia-national-guard-funeral>

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Military investigating what caused crash that killed 2 Capital Region soldiers and injured

Spectrum 1 News, March 18, 2024 ::

Two Army National Guard aviators who were killed in a helicopter crash while patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border will be laid to rest in the Capital Region following separate honor processions held Monday afternoon.

It was a blustery, somber homecoming at the New York Army National Guard headquarters in Latham on Monday, when a Lockheed C-130 Hercules delivered two caskets draped by American flags. One carried the body of 28-year-old Casey Frankoski of Rensselaer, the other contained 30-year-old John Grassia III of Rotterdam.

Gov. Kathy Hochul joined dozens of their family members, friends and fellow soldiers in greeting the caskets as military personnel carefully escorted them to their respected hearses.

A Rensselaer city police cruiser was situated in front of one casket, a state police vehicle in front of the other.

Frankoski and Grassia were killed in a helicopter crash earlier this month along the southern border in Texas. The pilots were assigned to a regiment working with Joint Task Force North, a federal military mission that helps support U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

“They were supporting active duty,” said New York Army National Guard Colonel Jason Lefton. “They were providing capability with their aircraft.”

Jacob Pratt of Rensselaer was also on board, and survived the crash.

“He’s strong, he’s improving,” Lefton said. “We have a soldier and some family down there in Texas looking after him. He’s got a long road ahead.”

An investigation into what caused the crash is ongoing.

“It’s a full investigation,” Lefton said. “They take anywhere from 30 to 90 days. We’ll find out what happened when its complete.”

Since the crash, there has been an outpouring of support and stories about the impact both soldiers made in their communities.

“As New York National Guard members, we are part of the community,” Lefton said. “We work here, we live here, we train here and we’re very tight.”

Frankoski’s father was Rensselaer city’s former police chief, and her brother is a detective there. According to Rensselaer County officials, a procession welcomed Frankoski's body back home, and officials led a Monday afternoon procession route running from Albany International Airport to the W.J. Lyons Funeral Home in Rensselaer.

In addition to his service with the Army National Guard, Grassia worked a state trooper.

The body of Grassia was to be escorted by state police to the Glenville Funeral Home from the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs in Latham on Monday afternoon.

Grassia was born in Niskayuna, and when he turned 18, he immediately enlisted in the Army National Guard before his graduation from Schalmont High School in 2012.

He served in Kuwait from 2013 to 2014. He received a bachelor’s degree in informatics and cyber security from the University at Albany, and worked as a cybersecurity analyst for the state Department of Homeland Security for two years.

Grassia became a New York state trooper in 2022, and was stationed at Troop K SO Livingston before transferring to Fonda.

Calling hours for Grassia will be held from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, March 25, in St. John the Evangelist Church, Schenectady. Burial will take place in Saratoga National Cemetery following an 11 a.m. church ceremony on March 26.

Frankoski was born in Albany and raised in East Greenbush. A Girl Scout for 13 years, she graduated from Columbia High School and Schenectady County Community College, and lived in Rensselaer.

She enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2016, and later served nearly a year in Kuwait as a mission planner. She trained to become a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot, and was deployed again, this time as a pilot to Texas, to patrol U.S.-Mexico border on Oct. 11, 2023.

Calling hours for Frankoski are set for noon to 5 p.m. Thursday at Saint John the Evangelist and Saint Joseph's Church on Herrick Street in Rensselaer. All are welcome to attend.

The funeral is set for Friday at 11 a.m. at the church. For more information and details on contributions, view her obituary [here](#).

<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/capital-region/news/2024/03/17/funeral-services-for-casey-frankoski-set-for-this-week>

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Capital Region soldiers killed in crash return home (Video/Photos)

Daily Gazette, March 18, 2024 ::

4:41 p.m., Monday: American flags ripped alongside Glenridge Road.

A motorcade of police vehicles, motorcycles and a hearse pulled into Glenville Funeral Home. Engines pulsed. Frigid air blew. In the moment, a roadside line of jacketed observers were nearly silent.

Transported were the remains of 30-year-old Rotterdam native John Grassia, one of two National Guard soldiers killed in a helicopter crash along the U.S.-Mexico border earlier this month.

It wasn't a typical day for the Schenectady suburb, said Glenville Supervisor Christopher Koetzle. His office is up the street from the funeral home.

"I know he wasn't a town resident, necessarily, but you're right," Koeztle said. "There's still a somberness, respectfulness and sense of loss still here."

Grassia's counterpart on the mission, Casey Frankoski, was brought to a funeral home on Washington Avenue in her native Rensselaer with the assistance of city police.

The Columbia High School and SUNY Schenectady graduate was 28 years old when she died.

“We ask the residents of Rensselaer or anyone else wishing to pay their respects line the escort route to honor Casey for the hero that she is,” Rensselaer police wrote on social media Monday.

Both bodies were escorted from the state National Guard headquarters at Albany International Airport around 3 p.m. Waiting on the tarmac to pay her respects to the fallen soldiers was Gov. Kathy Hochul, alongside members of the military and state police.

Grassia also served as an active state trooper in Columbia County and — most recently — Fonda before he was deployed to Texas. The Schalmont High School and University at Albany graduate eventually hoped to serve on the governor’s detail.

State police haven’t held an escort service for a member of the force killed on a military mission since Brooklyn Marine John McKenna died in Iraq 18 years ago, according to state police spokesperson Stephanie O’Neil.

Calling hours for Grassia will be at the St. John the Evangelist Church in Schenectady from 2 to 7 p.m. on March 26. Calling hours for Frankoski will be from noon to 5 p.m. at the Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer on Thursday.

They will both be buried the next day with full military honors at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in the town of Saratoga.

The only survivor from the crash is crew chief soldier Jacob Pratt, a Rensselaer native. He faces multiple surgeries, but has stabilized while staying in a Texas hospital alongside his family.

“He’s an excellent person, and a great soldier,” said retired Schenectady firefighter Willie Rhodes, who served as a supervising officer for Pratt, Frankoski and Grassia in 2021. “I really, really, really hope he pulls through. It was kind of heartbreaking to hear soldiers under my command that got hurt.”

The cause of the crash, according to the federal Joint Task Force North, could take months to determine.

Grassia’s aunt Val Bleser said both her nephew and Frankoski were skilled pilots.

“What happened?” Bleser said. “We are all Gold Star families and I don’t think it’s an out of the ordinary question. We would like to know and I hope that at some point in time that occurs.”

https://www.dailygazette.com/leader_herald/news/new-york-national-guard-helicopter-crash/article_3cb4cd8c-e543-11ee-829c-dff2545d740a.html

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National Guardsman recovering after TX helicopter crash

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

RIO GRANDE, Texas (NEWS10) — The Texas helicopter crash that killed two New York National Guardsman also injured a third soldier. Jacob Pratt is “awake and aware” as he continues receiving treatment at a Texas hospital, according to a GoFundMe post.

The fundraising page was set up by the New York State Council of School Superintendents. Pratt’s mother, Kelley, has worked with the council for more than a decade. More than \$110,000 has been raised to cover medical expenses and accommodations for his family.

“I heard he’s strong, he’s improving. We have some family members down there in Texas looking after him,” Colonel Jason Lefton, of the New York State Army Aviation Office, said. “He’s got a long road ahead. From what I can tell, that air crew did everything they could, and he’s alive because of it.”

The March 8 crash killed Chief Warrant Officers Casey Frankoski, of Rensselaer, and John Grassia, of Schenectady. Their remains were returned to the Capital Region on Monday.

A cause for the crash remains under investigation.

<https://www.news10.com/community/veterans-voices/national-guardsman-recovering-after-tx-helicopter-crash/>

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Bodies of fallen National Guardsmen arrive in Capital Region (video)

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

GLENVILLE/RENSSELAER, N.Y. (NEWS10) — Monday was the first of what will be many farewells for two fallen service members who died near the Southern Border last weekend. People from all across the Capital Region paid their respects as the bodies of Casey Frankoski and John Grassia returned home for the last time.

Flying in from the Lone Star State was a military plane carrying two bodies. 28-year-old Casey Frankoski and 30-year-old John Grassia. Both were Chief Warrant Officer 2’s.

Both service members had received numerous military honors before their lives were cut short when they were killed in a Helicopter crash near the Texas-Mexico border on March 8th.

First the Frankoski procession. In Rensselaer, an assembly of American flags adorned the street where the Hearse carrying her body drove to the funeral home, then Frankoski's casket was solemnly brought inside.

Her service history goes back years. The Columbia High School graduate enlisted with the National Guard in 2016. She was deployed to Kuwait from 2018-2019.

And now the Rensselaer resident will be remembered with her own hometown hero banner, aptly placed on the hero's bridge.

Simultaneously there was John Grassia's procession. In a similar fashion, his hearse arrived at the Glenville Funeral Home also to a hero's welcome. An array of stars and stripes were present in the streets of Schenectady County, along with bystanders carrying tribute posters.

The Niskayuna Native's obituary describes him as passionate. He enlisted in the Army National Guard at age 18. He then went on to work as a cyber security analyst for the New York State Department of Homeland Security. By 2022 he became a NY state trooper.

His official obituary ended in a very bittersweet way by noting that he was "reunited at the rainbow bridge with his loving dogs, Abby and Myah."

When the day was done, a sight to behold in the Schenectady County skies. The planes that carried the fallen service members to their hometowns, returned empty to Texas.

For Casey Franskowski a funeral mass will be held at The Parish of St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer at 11:00 am on Friday. Interment will be held in the Saratoga National Cemetery, immediately following the mass.

As for Officer Grassia, the funeral will be next Tuesday morning at 11 at St John the Evangelist Church. Grassia will be buried at Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville.

<https://www.news10.com/news/bodies-of-fallen-national-guardsmen-arrive-in-capital-region/>

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Mourners line tarmac as remains of fallen Capital Region soldiers come home (video)

WNYT, March 18, 2024 ::

The heartbreak that family members of Casey Frankoski & John Grassia have been feeling could easily be seen at The Division of Military and Naval Affairs Headquarters in Latham. They both died in a helicopter crash on the U.S.-Mexico border earlier this month. Their remains were brought home on Monday.

The tarmac was lined with family, friends, military personnel, and dignitaries – including Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The New York Army National Guard Honor Guard that accompanied Frankoski and Grassia on their final journey home served as pallbearers, carrying the two flag draped coffins, one by one, to awaiting hearses.

The two hearses left the base, with police escort, followed by tour buses filled with grieving family and friends.

Casey Frankoski's remains were taken to Lyons Funeral Home in Rensselaer, where viewing hours will be on Thursday, and the funeral on Friday.

John Grassia's remains were taken to the Glenville Funeral Home.

Calling hours for Grassia will be on Monday, March 25 at St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph's Church in Schenectady.

<https://wnyt.com/top-stories/mourners-line-tarmac-as-remains-of-fallen-capital-region-soldiers-come-home/>

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Remains of two fallen Capital Region soldiers arrive home (video)

WNYT, March 18, 2024 ::

The remains of two fallen Capital Region soldiers killed in a helicopter crash at the U.S.-Mexico border more than a week ago arrived back home on Monday afternoon.

Chief Warrant Officer Casey Frankoski and Chief Warrant Officer John Grassia III died in the crash on March 8. Their remains were escorted aboard a New York Air National Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft flown by the guard's 109th Airlift Wing. The plane landed at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Latham just after 3 p.m.

Their flag-draped coffins were carried across the tarmac as their families and soldiers saluted by guests such as Major Gen. Ray Shields, adjutant general of New York and Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The bodies were transported into hearses provided by W.J. Lyons Jr. Funeral Home Inc. of Rensselaer and Glenville Funeral Home.

The procession is proceeding past the Colonie Police Department and then they will head their separate ways to funeral homes in Rensselaer and Glenville.

Frankoski, 28, worked as a New York National Guard pilot and was also the daughter of retired Rensselaer Police Chief James Frankoski.

Funeral services for Frankoski will be held this week. Frankoski's procession route will run from Albany International Airport to the W.J. Lyons Jr. Funeral Home in Rensselaer.

Calling hours are set for Thursday from noon to 5 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph's Church on Herrick Street. The service is open to the public.

The funeral is set for Friday at 11 a.m. at the church. Frankoski will then be laid to rest at Saratoga National Cemetery.

Grassia, 30, of Albany County was a New York State trooper. His procession will go from Latham to Glenville Funeral Home on Glenridge Road.

Calling hours will be held on Monday, March 25 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church in Schenectady. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at St. John's at 11 a.m. He will be buried at Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery.

Rensselaer High School graduate Jacob Pratt was on the helicopter, too. He was severely hurt and is recovering.

<https://wnyt.com/top-stories/processions-to-honor-two-fallen-capital-region-soldiers/>

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Families pay respects as bodies of fallen soldiers return to Capital Region (video)

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

COLONIE, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The Capital Region honored and remembered Chief Warrant Officers Casey Frankoski and John Grassia on Monday. A plane carrying their remains arrived at Albany International Airport around 3 p.m.

Before touching down, the C-130 carrying the bodies of two fallen heroes made one final pass over their home of the Capital Region.

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"It's an unfortunate process that's part of the Army," said Colonel Jason Lefton, of the State Army Aviation Office.

Both families of John Grassia and Casey Frankoski, now connected by one tragedy, arriving by bus to receive their caskets. “They are heroes. All the soldiers here are hurting,” said Lefton.

Waiting along with the families were Governor Kathy Hochul and members of the National Guard. Once on the ground, the caskets draped with the American flag were escorted by the 8-member honor guard and placed into two separate hearses.

Every single family member took a moment to pay their respects and honor Frankoski and Grassia.

“We are going to treat them with dignity and respect and make sure we are caring for their families,” said Lefton.

Both Frankoski and Grassia were killed when their helicopter crashed on March 8 in Texas. An investigation into what caused the crash remains ongoing.

<https://www.news10.com/community/veterans-voices/families-pay-respects-as-bodies-of-fallen-soldiers-return-to-capital-region/>

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Fallen soldier Casey Frankoski brought home (video)

WTEN, March 18, 2024 ::

RENSSELAER, N.Y. (NEWS10) — The procession for 28-year-old Casey Frankoski made its way from the Albany International Airport through the streets of the Capital Region. The community in Rensselaer came out to show their support and say goodbye as the hearse and family passed by along Washington Avenue.

The parents, family and friends of Casey made the final turn of the procession off Washington Avenue onto Iowa Street to W. J. Lyons Jr. Funeral Home where Casey’s remains were then brought inside.

But first, the casket carrying Casey was driven along streets adorned with American flags. Casey’s veteran banner was being hung on Hero’s Bridge in Rensselaer just hours before the procession.

Frankoski is a Capital Region native, who was born in Albany. She graduated from Columbia High School in 2013 where she a member of the varsity bowling team. She earned her associate degree in social science from SUNY Schenectady.

Frankoski enlisted in the Army National Guard in 2016. She became a Chief Warrant officer in 2019. The same year, she was deployed to Kuwait. And then in 2021, she was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer 2.

Here at home, Casey volunteered with Best Luther Fire Department and was a member of the Environmental Conservation Corp. She was a cheerleader for East Greenbush Pop Warner, played softball for the East Greenbush Girls Softball League, and enjoyed the outdoors or traveling.

Calling hours for Casey will be on Thursday at St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church in Rensselaer from noon until 5 p.m. Her funeral will be Friday.

<https://www.news10.com/news/rensselaer-county/fallen-hero-casey-frankoski-brought-home/>

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The “Fighting 69th” leads New York City’ s St. Patrick’ s Day parade for 173rd year in a row

Stars and Stripes, March 17, 2024 ::

A New York Army National Guard regiment with deep ties to Irish-American history once again took the lead in New York City’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

For the 173rd year in a row, soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment — the “Fighting 69th” — marched at the head of Saturday’s parade, one of the world’s largest Irish heritage festivities. The holiday commemorates Ireland’s patron saint and was popularized largely by Irish Catholic immigrants.

While St. Patrick’s Day falls on March 17, some parades were moved up from Sunday, a day of worship for the Christian faithful.

Photo Caption : Soldiers with the New York National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 42nd Infantry Division, lead the annual New York City Saint Patrick’s Day Parade, Saturday, March 16, 2024. (Warren W. Wright Jr./U.S. Army)

This year marks the return of the 800-soldier battalion to the front lines of the parade, following their deployment to the Horn of Africa last year.

The regiment formed in 1849 as a New York state militia made up of Irish immigrants. Two years later, amidst anti-Irish Catholic sentiment, they were asked to lead the parade and fend off any attackers.

“Traditions like these are fading out of our society,” Lt. Col. Adam Bojarski, the battalion’s senior leader said. “It’s so important that units like the 69th continue to be the face of the Army National Guard and the National Guard as a whole.”

Photo caption: A U.S. Army color guard comprised of soldiers with the New York National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 42nd Infantry Division, carry the nation, state, Army and unit flags into Saint Patrick’s Cathedral prior to the start of the New York City St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Saturday, March 16, 2024. (Warren W. Wright Jr./U.S. Army)

The day began with an Irish whiskey toast at 6 a.m. at the historic Lexington Avenue Armory. Soldiers adorned their uniforms with sprigs of boxwood to emulate their Irish American predecessors who fought at the Battle of Fredericksburg during the Civil War, while officers of the unit received blackthorn fighting sticks, considered “the mark of an Irish leader and gentleman,” according to a New York National Guard news release.

Before dawn, they marched in formation to Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, where they attended a mass to remember the regiment’s fallen and to honor its heritage. Then the parade began in earnest. “In the moment, singing, just walking with everyone ... it didn’t feel long at all,” said Pfc. Danyel Rodriguez, a computer and detection systems repairer assigned to the 69th’s logistics unit, Hotel Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion. “Being around so many people, just singing along with everyone, it felt really nice. You just lose track of time, having a good time.”

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/army/2024-03-17/ny-national-guard-st-patricks-13349515.html>

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