

To protect and defend

■ Afghan National Police learn essential job-oriented skills

By U.S. Army Spc. Luke S. Austin
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghan National Police (ANP) officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) gained new knowledge and skills at Police District Six headquarters during a week of job-oriented training Feb 2 to 9.

The week-long training was organized by Police Mentor Team (PMT) One, Regional Police Advisory Command-Kabul, Regional Security Integration Command-Kabul, based on insight from ANP police district chiefs in each district of Zone One, which falls under PMT One’s supervision. The police chiefs shared with PMT One mentors the training and skills they felt their ANP officers, NCOs and Soldiers needed to carry out their duties more effectively, said Capt. Lenny Williams, PMT One team chief.

“Through meetings and discussions with each of the five PD chiefs in Zone One, we all noticed similarities in the observations made concerning ANP training,” he said.

As the discussions of training with each police district in Zone One progressed, it was agreed they all were lacking in the same areas, Williams of Dyer, Ind. said.

“They needed to learn how to better protect and defend themselves, knowledge of life-saving skills, and more in-depth knowledge on how to use the weapons they carry,” he said.

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U.S. Army photo by Spc. Luke S. Austin, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

SHOW SOME FORCE: Sgt. Aaron West of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VIII, gives combatives instruction to two Afghan National Police officers. The combatives training was part of a week-long training in Kabul, Afghanistan in February.

Land of the free because of the brave

Story by Mike Chrisman
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – “I don’t want to die for you, but if dying’s asked of me, I’ll bear that cross with honor, ‘cause freedom don’t come free,” are the familiar lyrics that ring out in the hearts and minds of many Soldiers, especially as they deploy.

The lyrics to the Toby Keith song “American Soldier” became reality for eight families of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) during the months of February and March.

The 33rd IBCT has suffered 12 casualties since the brigade of nearly 3,000 Soldiers was deployed to Afghanistan late last year. Eight of those deaths occurred within five weeks of each other.

Staff Sgt. Jason Burkholder of Champaign, 27, and 1st Lt. Jared Southworth of Oakland, 26, were assigned to Headquarters Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry of Marion. Both Soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) in Helmand, Afghanistan on Feb. 8.

Amanda Burkholder of Marshall, married her husband Jason in November 2008. Two days later he boarded an airplane for Afghanistan. Amanda said Jason’s death has served as a life lesson for her and her family.

“We have to cherish every moment we have because we don’t know when it’ll be our last. There are many things I did with him or said to him that I didn’t realize would be the last,” Amanda said. “We always wait until tomorrow to say something to someone or do something, but tomorrow might not come.”

Sgt. Scott Stream of Mattoon, 39, assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry based in Effingham, and Sgt. Schuyler Patch of Galva, 25, assigned

to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Battalion, 106th Cavalry, based in Kewanee, were killed in action Feb. 24 by an IED in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Life has taken a dramatic turn since Rasa Stream of Mattoon found out her husband, Scott, was killed. Rasa, a native of Lithuania, met Scott in Germany and moved to the United States after they were married in 2005. The couple has a 6-year-

old daughter who was born on March 19, 2003, the same day the United States invaded Iraq.

“Scott was our life,” Rasa said. “He was a wonderful husband, father, and just an all around good man. Our life together had just begun and we were happy.

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Recently fallen Soldiers

- Sgt. Lukasz Saczek, 23, of Lake in the Hills and member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock, died May 10
- Spc. Norman Cain, 22, of Mount Morris and member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock, was killed in action March 15
- Sgt. Robert Weinger, 24, of Round Lake Beach and member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock, was killed in action March 15
- Sgt. Christopher Abeyta, 23, of Midlothian and member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based Woodstock, was killed in action March 15
- Sgt. Simone Robinson, 21, of University Park and member of Company E, 634th Brigade Support Battalion based in Crestwood, died March 1
- Sgt. Scott Stream, 39, of Mattoon and member of Company B, 2nd Battalion 130th Infantry based, Effingham, was killed in action Feb. 24
- Sgt. Schuyler Patch, 25, of Galva and member of Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 2nd Battalion, 106th Cavalry based in Kewanee, was killed in action Feb 24
- Staff Sgt. Jason Burkholder, 27, of Champaign and member of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry based in Marion, was killed in action Feb. 8
- 1st Lt. Jared Southworth, 26, of Oakland and member of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry based in Marion, was killed in action Feb. 8

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Maj. Troy Scott recognized a hero by American Red Cross

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BRAVE

■ From page 1

Now we are left with an empty feeling and asking ‘What next?’”

Spc. Simone Robinson of Robbins, 21, assigned to Company G, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Crestwood, died March 1 at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, from wounds sustained Jan. 17 in Afghanistan. Robinson, along with four other Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers, was wounded in an attack by a vehicle-borne IED.

Sgt. Christopher Abeyta of Midlothian, 23; Sgt. Robert Weinger of Round Lake Beach, 24 and Spc. Norman Cain III of Mount Morris, 22, were all assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock. The three Soldiers were killed in action March 15 when their vehicle encountered an IED in Kot, Afghanistan.



Sgt. Lukasz Saczek



Spc. Norman Cain

Barbara Abeyta of Midlothian, Christopher’s mother, said she was blessed with only one child and questioned his desire to join the Illinois National Guard, but supported the decision.

“This was something he wanted to do,” she said. “How can you blame a child that wants to make a difference in the world? He was a true hero.”

In letters Christopher wrote to his mom, he said he was humbled at what he saw. He said seeing people living in caves and poverty made him realize how lucky he was.

Sue Weinger of Round Lake Beach, Robert’s mother, said it is important for loved ones to know how you



Sgt. Robert Weinger



Sgt. Christopher Abeyta



Sgt. Simone Robinson

feel about them every day.

“Don’t take anything for granted,” she said. “Make sure your Soldier knows you love them and you care about them. Especially when they are deployed, they need to know that someone cares.”

The most recent casualty was Sgt. Lukasz Saczek, 23, assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock, who died as a result of a non-combat related injury May 10 in Afghanistan.

Saczek, a resident of Lake in the Hills, graduated from the Steinmetz Academic Centre, Chicago, in 2005. He enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in July 2006. This



Sgt. Scott Stream



Sgt. Schuyler Patch



Staff Sgt. Jason Burkholder

was Saczek’s first deployment.

While the Illinois National Guard has mourned the loss of its brothers and sisters, many would agree that while the National Guard will move forward, these Soldiers will never be forgotten.

“Facing the loss of these Illinois National Guard Soldiers is devastating,” said Maj. Gen. William Enyart, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. “They were all remarkable, devoted Soldiers who will always be our heroes. We will remember these Soldiers by their bravery and the sacrifice they made for us all.”



1st Lt. Jared Southworth



Year of the NCO

Command Sgt. Major John Starbody
State Senior Enlisted Leader

During this past quarter, I’ve travelled to Kosovo, Afghanistan and numerous installations throughout the United States. Throughout all of these visits at each of the numerous locations I was simply amazed at the accomplishments of our young Soldiers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs).



CSM John Starbody

While visiting Task Force Blackhorse in Camp Bondsteel, Bosnia, I talked with our young Soldiers and NCOs who were taking advantage of the NCO Education System courses being offered by U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR).

As a result, they had one honor graduate in the Warrior Leader Course and three honor graduates in the Basic NCO Course, Phase 1.

Now that they have all safely redeployed to Illinois and their statistics are posted, their accomplishments are astounding. The battalion received a superior on their initial command inspection.

They flew more than 2,300 hours on 11 UH-60 helicopters while maintaining an 86 percent operational readiness rate. They lead USAREUR for most of their deployment.

These accomplishments just don’t happen without great NCOs leading the way.

Since my return from Afghanistan, there isn’t a day I don’t read or hear something great about what our NCOs and young Soldiers from the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) accomplish.

Staff Sgt. Henry Baez Jr. of the 33rd IBCT was just recognized by Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Army

Command Sgt. Major David Ray Hudson, Senior Enlisted Leader of the Guard Bureau, for his outstanding work as a squad leader, leading his squad on patrol through the Afghan villages surrounding Camp Phoenix.

I just read an e-mail from an active-duty 06 who has 132 of our “Golden Cross” Soldiers working for him. He said they are as good as or better than any other Soldiers that he has ever served with, active, Guard or Reserve.

On a visit to Brooke Army Hospital, in Texas, I met Master Sgt. Sherry Blackwell, an Illinois Guard Soldier assigned as the medical liaison, taking care of our wounded warriors and doing an outstanding job.

On my visits to the Warrior Transition Units the spirit and tenacity of our wounded warriors amaze me, such as Sgt. Cameron Crouch and Sgt. Benjamin McDonald at Brooke Army Medical Center and Sgt. James Taliano at Walter Reed Hospital.

Talk to these Soldiers.

They will lift your spirits and remind you of the great sacrifices our Soldiers are making.

Finally, there are my visits to our fallen comrades who gave the ultimate sacrifice to this great nation.

I could not be more proud of our NCOs who volunteer as notification officers, casualty assistance officers, funeral honors teams and casket overwatch details.

These NCOs and Soldiers have a very tough job to do under extremely emotional circumstances.

They all perform their duties professionally and honorably. Grieving families have nothing but praise for these fine outstanding Soldiers.

I thank you for your selfless service and the sacrifice of your family as well.

I wholeheartedly commend each and every one of you on your dedication to duty and country and would encourage you to continue serving with the professional excellence that has allowed us to live in the land of the free and home of the brave.

PROTECT

■ From page 1

With members of the ANP manning checkpoints throughout the city night-and-day, they need to understand what actions to take in the case of an emergency or civil disruption, Williams said.

“We noticed a trend in what was needed and went to work on putting it together,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jarod Hansen, PMT One noncommissioned officer in charge.

“The PD chiefs in Zone One were all on board right away. We put together a list of classes and they helped get the event together,” he said.

But with hundreds of members in the ANP in Zone One, it was going to be a difficult task coordinating training with each PD in a timely manner. With this in mind, PMT One took on the U.S. Army’s “train the trainer” mentality, Williams said.

“We set it up just like we do business in the Army,” he said. “Leadership from each PD, and each checkpoint within each PD, were brought to a single location and given the instruction and training so they can return to their ANP Soldiers and train them.”

Noncommissioned officers from every checkpoint were required to attend the training to deliver it to their Soldiers.

Continuing on this course, the ANP skill sets and knowledge will grow, said Col. Hafizullah Alizada, chief of PD Six.

In the week of training, 110 ANP officers and NCOs completed six sets of tasks: dismounted patrol, improvised explosive device defeat, search (vehicle and personnel) and cuffing, crime scene management, self-defense and combat lifesaver training.

“Using the ‘train the trainer’ method, we effectively engaged the leadership of the ANP in Zone One, who will in turn impact the hundreds of ANP Soldiers under their command,” Williams stated.

Alizada was impressed with the level of training given to the leadership of Zone One, as well as how well it was managed and implemented, he said.

“When members of the ANP see their leadership training, it encourages them to learn and train as well,” Alizada said.

If the ANP continues on this course with the PMTs, it will make them ready for the

future of Afghanistan’s people. Alizada also said this was the training necessary for the ANP to one day take the place of American Soldiers in Afghanistan.

“There is a lot of pride to be had on the part of American Soldiers for supporting the Afghan National Police. We are getting the most professional training thanks to them,” said Alizada.

With the successful completion of the training, Williams hopes to continue this training program throughout his tour as PMT One team chief, eventually making these valuable skills “...a matter of muscle memory for members of the ANP.”



Illinois

Guardian

1301 North MacArthur Boulevard
Springfield, Illinois 62702-2399

DSN: 555-3569

Phone: (217) 761-3569

Facsimile: (217) 761-3527

The Illinois Guardian is the official newspaper of the Illinois National Guard authorized by The Adjutant General and published by the State Public Affairs Office, in accordance with AR 360-1 and AFI 35-101. It is funded and published quarterly by contracted offset process. Circulation is approximately 14,000.

DEADLINES – Submissions for 2008 are due by the last Wednesday of the following months: March, June, September and December.

Letters, articles and photographs are welcomed, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor.

Views and opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the Illinois Department of Military Affairs or the U.S. Department of Defense.

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Mike Chrisman
Staff Sgt. Stephanie McCurry
Sgt. Cassidy Snyder
Sgt. Aleah Castrejon

139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

COMMAND FOCUS

This is why we do what we do

Maj. Gen. William Enyart
The Adjutant General

It is a sunny spring day here at Camp Lincoln as I write this. Temperature mid-50s. A few puffy white clouds. Grass is green but too early for the trees to leaf out. I can see the plump, corn-fed Camp Lincoln squirrel playing in the tree outside the second-floor of the adjutant general's office. It'll be a great day for a run once I finish writing this column.

Raining, 41 degrees, 37-degree windchill at Kabul International Airport, Afghanistan. Miserable night for a run. Probably a miserable night to be standing in a tower or on gate guard or driving a mine-resistant vehicle.

As I write this, the 33rd IBCT is approaching the half-way point in its deployment.

The Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix have settled into the routines that are life in a combat zone. The routines vary on whether you're north, west, at Camp Phoenix, humping a ruck or flying a desk, but all are Soldier routines. Get up, get the job done, hit the rack. Maybe an e-mail home. Maybe a cigar in back of the hooch. Nursing the knuckle you busted bending a wrench or the knee you twisted coming out of the humvee. Bored with the mess hall.

Why do we do it? Why do we face the separation from family, friends, familiar surroundings, comforts of home? Why do we face the certainty of deployments, floods, tornados, earthquakes and hurricanes? Why do we face the possibility of disease, dismemberment, death?

Is it adventure? Bonuses? Combat



Maj. Gen. William Enyart

pay? Ribbons and patches? Why is it that 19-year-olds and 59-year-olds alike keep on doing this?

The last weekend of March was a weekend of funerals. Three. It was a weekend of loss to our family - the Illinois National Guard family.

In 10 days of March, we lost six Illinois National Guard Soldiers. Brought them home and buried them.

In two weekends of loss - of burying our troops - I found something. I found the courage and strength of families to go on.

I found the compassion of casualty assistance officers, most of them senior NCOs, who cared for the grieving as they would their own. The common refrain, from uncommon Soldiers, was "I just try

to do what I'd want done for my family."

Why we do what we do, day in and day out; drill in and drill out; deployment in and deployment out, natural disaster after natural disaster?

I found the answer on a Saturday morning, a cold gray Chicago March morning, much like the morning in Kabul, I was walking up the sidewalk to St. Christopher's Church to attend the funeral of Sgt. Chris Abeyta. A Chicago fireman in full-dress blue uniform saluted me as I approached in Class As. Not unusual. Occasionally firemen and policemen in uniform salute. They're almost invariably veterans.

The fireman, in his crisp dress blues, stopped me. He pressed in to my hand a small, light piece of rock. He choked out "Could you please give this to his mother? It's from September 11th." Maybe it was that damnable March Chicago wind, but more likely it was his words that sent the shiver over me.

For him it was personal. Chris Abeyta died for all those firemen who died. That piece of rubble was a marker for the 3,000 souls who died that brilliant September morning nearly eight years ago.

I gave that piece of rubble to Chris' mom that morning. I gave it to her with the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star and the folded flag. I gave it to her whispering, "This is from Sept. 11th."

The church was packed. No one heard what I whispered to her. No one knew what I handed to her, along with the medals, the citations, the ribbons. But in that audience there was a fireman who knew. A fireman who had carried that rock engraved with 3,000 souls until he could let go of it - pass it on to someone who

needed it more than he.

That Saturday night in a motel room in a northwest suburb, as the seven inches of snow tumbled from that gray Chicago sky, I thought about that rock. I thought about why we do what we do. I thought about it as I struggled to write the words I would deliver Sunday morning at Sgt. Robert Weinger's services.

That night I discovered the answer. The next day in yet another high school gymnasium filled with grieving family, friends, veterans, Patriot Riders and fellow Soldiers I said:

It is because of young men like Bob Weinger and Chris Abeyta and Norman Cain that we have our country.

They are the kids with the Monster energy drinks and the music always playing. And they are the kids who, when it's time to be serious, stand up. Stand up and volunteer.

Robert Weinger didn't have to go on this deployment, he'd already served in Iraq. He still had time at home before he'd be deployed again. But he wouldn't let his buddies go into danger without him. He was the best gunner. His officers knew it. His NCOs knew it. His fellow Soldiers knew it. He knew it. He wouldn't let them go into danger without him. Without their best gunner.

Weinger, Cain, Abeyta. They are our kids, they are our protectors. They are what stand between us and chaos. They don't have to be asked to serve. They don't have to be asked to go into danger. They do it, not out of hate, not out of vengeance, but out of love. Love of family, love of community, love of fellow Soldier.

That is the answer.

Our flag: symbol of strength, honor, pride

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti
Assistant Adjutant General - Army

It has been a tumultuous spring and summer has finally arrived. So much as happened since the inauguration of the new president. We have honored the anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom in



Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti

March, Armed Forces Day and celebrated Memorial Day in May. The month of July brings us Independence Day, when we celebrate the freedoms we fought for in 1776 and freedoms we continue to fight to preserve today. It is important we take time out on these days to pay tribute to our nation's history, achievements and sacrifices.

As members of the military, we know and understand all too well the significance of these holidays. One day that often passes with lesser recognition, but one we must remember, is Flag Day.

The flag of the United States is a symbol of freedom throughout the world. We carry

it to battle and we honor those who have sacrificed their life, covering their coffin with it.

The flag has been given to 28 Illinois National Guard families, 12 within the last year from the 33rd IBCT, for their sacrifice. Inspired by state and local celebrations, Flag Day, the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777, was officially established May 30, 1916 in a proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson. Congress made it official August 1949, when it established National Flag Day.

In 1914, Franklin K. Lane, then Secretary of the Interior, delivered a Flag Day address in which he repeated words he said the flag

had spoken to him that morning.

"I am what you make me; nothing more. I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself."

When I see our American flag, I see the strength, honor and pride of each of you in the Illinois Army National Guard.

It is a symbol we proudly wear on our uniform and it is a symbol of joy that will cover Illinois this summer and fall as we bring home 3,000 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers who have served our country honorably.

This summer, stay safe and fly the American flag proudly. Thank you for your dedicated service.

Mastering leadership and the art of listening

Chief Warrant Officer Jim Gaddis
State Command Chief Warrant Officer

After more than 20 years of marriage, I get accused quite regularly of not listening to my spouse and two teenage daughters. I quickly sum it up to selective hearing and drive on. Problem solved. Or is it? With the



CW5 Jim Gaddis

hectic pace of all our lives and the mass amounts of information we filter daily, listening actively when our Soldiers are communicating is imperative to effective leaders.

Listening is one piece of communication that takes practice to master. It revolves around respect, appreciation, and the desire to gain knowledge.

Think of the great teams you have been a part of where input was encouraged and good dialogue was the norm. That team was most likely run by a strong leader who knew where he or she wanted to go but wanted to get there the best way possible. Leaders aren't afraid of

constructive criticism and use it as a tool to measure customer service and company performance.

Admiral Mullen, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, has been quite upfront about all leader responsibilities to our Soldiers and families. He wants to break down the stigma for Soldiers asking for help before a problem escalates into an incident that

could have been prevented. His direction to leaders at all levels is to listen and hear your Warriors and families concerns and take action based on what you hear.

Our military has been stretched but never broken and we all need to listen, hear, and act on our Soldiers concerns and input. They are the next generation of great leaders.

"Listening is one piece of communication that takes practice to master."

Chief Warrant Officer Jim Gaddis

One step at a time, Uganda to Afghanistan

By U.S. Army Spc. Luke S. Austin
33rd Infantry Brigade Company Team

CAMP PHOENIX, Afghanistan – Afghanistan is not the first place Sgt. Paul O. Ogwal has seen people living in such difficult conditions. He remembers his own childhood, living in a similar fashion.

His journey to becoming a citizen of the United States and a noncommissioned officer in the Illinois Army National Guard spanned many years and an entire ocean. Ogwal was born in Uganda, Africa. As his country waged civil war, his family was moved to America as political refugees.

“I grew up in Uganda at a time when there were a lot of violent acts,” said Ogwal of Champaign. “I remember lots of Soldiers everywhere.”

Although he lived in Uganda until he was 6 years old, Ogwal points out he gained a perspective on life that has helped him succeed.

“I remember everyone being black when I grew up,” he said. “I’ve seen black people working in every position in society... Because of this, I’ve never thought there was anything I couldn’t accomplish.”

Ogwal has proven to himself that anything is possible as long as you stay motivated, he said.

After having moved from state to state for several years his family settled in Illinois in 1991. Ogwal eventually became a student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. (SIUC). He changed his major more than once, looking for the right fit, and completed the coursework for the Black-American Studies minor. With different sets of learned skills from SIUC under his belt, Ogwal will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts, he said.

Looking back on his time at SIUC, Ogwal recalled one particular example of his success.

“Last year at college, my friend and I decided to run for student government. We had never run before and my running mate had his doubts,” said Ogwal. “But I knew we could succeed.”

Ogwal explains that to reach your goals, you need to aim high.

“If you set your goals high, you will never fail because you will accomplish more than you thought possible. It’s like in basketball – you don’t aim at the basket, you aim higher so you can make the basket,” he said.

When he and his running mate ran for student government against all odds, said Ogwal, he told himself, “I’m going to succeed.” With that mindset, they won class president and vice president because they stayed committed and motivated, says Ogwal.

But school wasn’t enough, he said. In 2003 he began searching for something more. After researching the different possibilities the Armed Forces had to offer, Ogwal decided the Illinois Army National Guard was the right fit for him.

As a Soldier in the Illinois Army National Guard, Ogwal earned his status as a U.S. citizen. Along with his



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Luke S. Austin, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

A SNOWY DESERT DAY?: Sgt. Paul Ogwal of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VIII, leads a squad of Afghan National Police officers and noncommissioned officers during movement training at Police District Six headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan.

citizenship, he gained values and ethics from the Army he applied to his perspective on life. The Illinois Army National Guard has taught him a lot about commitment and leadership, he said.

“It’s important to honor your commitments in life, especially to yourself,” said Ogwal.

Ogwal took his views and used them to make a positive influence in others lives. He accepted a job at Jefferson Middle School in Champaign, as a teacher’s assistant in special education. He now works with children who have social disorders, he said.

“When I received the phone call about the job, Ryan Tusek, the vice principal at the school said, ‘We need you here.’” Ogwal said. “That drove the point home to me and I took the job, knowing that I could have a positive effect on the children.

“Working with kids you can see how you influence their perspective,” he said.

Working with troubled youth has helped give Ogwal the patience and selflessness needed to be successful in

his deployed work, noted Staff Sgt. Anthony Flam, a co-worker of Ogwal’s in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT).

Ogwal is deployed to Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan, as the Assistant Operations noncommissioned officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 33rd IBCT. In this position Ogwal can see how the skills he uses to lead and mentor in his job in Champaign go hand-in-hand with leading Soldiers in the Guard.

“Upon arriving in country... Sgt. Ogwal has been a great asset to his unit, and to anyone that asks for his help and assistance,” Flam said. “If there was one trait I would like to see him infect in everybody with, it’s his selflessness.”

Ogwal has a girlfriend and son at home supporting him, but when his chance to take 15 days of leave from his current work in Afghanistan comes, he plans to revisit his home country Uganda and volunteer his time to humanitarian services, said Flam.

“Ogwal is always there to help,” Flam said. “Whether he is asked or if it of his own accord.”

A night out, a life saved by Illinois Soldier

■ Cormier credits combat lifesaver training to saving a life

Story by Mike Chrisman
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – A routine night out to the movies turned into an evening that an Illinois Soldier will never forget.

Instincts took over when Master Sgt. Leon “Chip” Cormier walked out of a Springfield movie theatre Dec. 19 and saw a woman struggling to catch her breath.

“She was gone. She was turning blue,” Cormier said.

The 24-year veteran of the Illinois Army National Guard has been deployed twice and spent 14 years as a Combat Life Saver (CLS).

He said he didn’t get rattled and immediately began performing CPR.

“I have been around the block a time or two. I knew what I had to do and didn’t even really think about it,” Cormier said.

Cormier and a security guard from the movie theater, who was an off-duty Illinois State Trooper, performed CPR until paramedics arrived.

The Pawnee resident thought the 58-year-old woman had died that night. Much to his surprise, he picked up the local newspaper Jan. 10 and read a letter to the editor written by the Springfield woman thanking the two unknown men who had saved her life.

“That’s why I didn’t see her name in the obituaries,” Cormier said. “She was still alive. It was one of the

greatest feelings in the world.”

In the brief letter, Beverly Sherer told the men they have her heartfelt gratitude and appreciation. She said she had won the “Christmas life lottery” that night.

“I certainly would not have survived, especially without brain damage, without the rapid, effective actions of these two ‘angels unaware,’” the letter said in part.

Cormier returned home in May 2007 after deploying to Iraq with the Springfield-based 3637th Maintenance Company.

He recently transferred to the 232nd Combat Services Support Battalion based in Springfield. Cormier, who was part of the first Illinois Army National Guard CLS class in 1994, was recertified as a Combat Lifesaver Feb. 1.

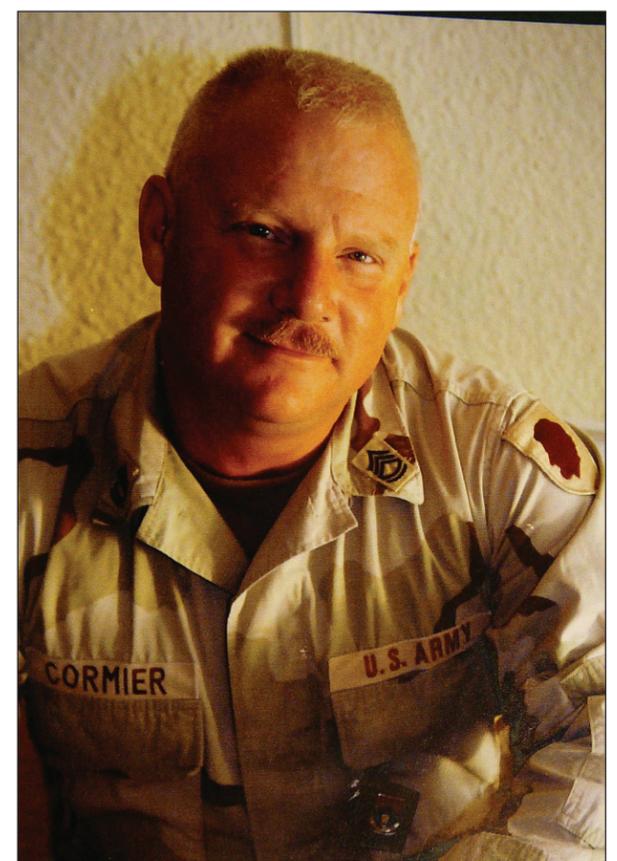
The Army Combat Lifesaver course is a class taught to Soldiers in the Illinois Army National Guard to provide medical treatment to a wounded Soldier.

While every squad in a unit is required to have a CLS, a majority of Illinois Soldiers receive the yearly training so they can save the life of a comrade.

The CLS initiates medical treatment at the scene of the accident and maintains medical treatment until the Soldier is evacuated to a healthcare facility.

Cormier said he cannot say enough about the CLS training he had received from the Illinois National Guard.

“I have given IVs to over 15 Soldiers and civilians since 1994. I have also done my share of wrapping sprains, butterfly stitching and other minor injuries over the years,” Cormier said. “I try to carry my CLS aid bag with me whenever practical because, as the events of Dec. 19 show, you never know when you will be called upon to act decisively to help someone in need.”



Master Sgt. Leon “Chip” Cormier

New Illinois Air National Guard commander

■ Hughes accepts command, promoted to brigadier general in April

By U.S. Army Spc. Brandy Oxford
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD – The former vice commander of the 126th Air Refueling Wing, Scott Air Force Base, took command of the Illinois Air National Guard as assistant adjutant general in a brief change of command ceremony April 4 at the old state capitol in Springfield.

Col. John P. Hughes, of O’Fallon, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and accepted the position as assistant adjutant general officially April 1. He succeeded Brig. Gen. John G. Sheedy, of Pawnee, who retired after more than 40 years of service.

Guests filled the seats and crowded the standing area in the representative hall, listening to Hughes as he tearfully choked out thanks to his family and fellow service members.

“To start off as a young boy on the south side of Chicago, I really had great parents who taught us hard work was the key to success,” Hughes said. “I followed my path and that path has led me here.”

Hughes has served in the Guard for more than 35 years.

Hughes enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in November of 1968. His initial assignment was to the 60th Military Airlift Wing, Travis Air Force Base, Calif., as an aircraft maintenance material control technician. Other assignments in the Pacific Air Force included the 6214th Transportation Squadron, Tinan Air Base, Taiwan and the 388th Combat Support Group, Korat Air Base, Thailand, within the vehicle maintenance and supply divisions. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force in August 1972.

Hughes joined the Illinois Air National Guard in June 1973 and has served in both enlisted and officer ranks. He achieved master sergeant prior to commissioning in 1979.

“I can remember becoming a lieutenant,” Hughes said. “You made all your mistakes



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Shaun Kerr, 183rd Fighter Wing

IN WITH THE NEW: Brig. Gen. John P. Hughes of O’Fallon, Assistant Adjutant General-Air of the Illinois Air National Guard, receives the guidon from Maj. Gen. William Enyart of Belleville, Ill., Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, and accepts command of Illinois Air National Guard troops during the change of command ceremony April 4.

when you were a lieutenant, then you became a captain and somebody said, ‘Now you’re responsible for all this stuff.’”

He was recalled to active duty December 1990 during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the 712th Air Refueling Wing (Provisional) support group commander in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Hughes was most recently deployed overseas in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Hughes’ officer assignments included chief of supply, wing executive officer, budget officer, comptroller, support group commander, deputy commander for resources, logistics group commander, chief of staff and vice commander.

Sheedy praised members of the Illinois National Guard, calling them the peoples’ best asset.

“We live in very dangerous and difficult times today,” Sheedy said to the audience. “I am proud that for the last two years I’ve been your commander. It’s been an honor and a pleasure.”

“I followed my path and that path has led me here.”

Brig. Gen. John P. Hughes
Assistant Adjutant General - Air



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Shaun Kerr, 183rd Fighter Wing

INTRODUCING BRIG. GEN. HUGHES: Maj. Gen. William Enyart of Belleville, Ill., Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard and Mrs. Hughes pin brigadier general stars on the epaulets of Col. John P. Hughes’ uniform as he is promoted to brigadier general during the change of command ceremony April 4. Hughes, of O’Fallon, was appointed the new Assistant Adjutant General-Air of the Illinois Air National Guard April 1.

Another total-force effort for 126th, Scott AFB

By U.S. Air Force Maj. Jennifer Howsare
126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

SCOTT AFB – The men and women of the 126th Air Refueling Wing and Scott Air Force Base (AFB) are no strangers to transformation, integration and future total-force. The KC-135 active association that is developing between the 126th and the 375th Airlift Wing is another step forward in Scott AFB’s total-force efforts. The association is a Total Force Initiative and will bring various units at Scott AFB together as the Air Force continues its evolution into the 21st century.

“An active association for the 126th represents the right vision for our future as total force partners at Scott AFB,” said Col. Pete Nezamis, 126th Air Refueling Wing commander. “Increased efficiencies combining the best practices of AMC and the ANG will provide greater aircraft availability and utilization, increasing the capability to support world-wide aerial refueling requirements. The benefits from these synergies are immeasurable to today’s Airmen.”

Beginning July 2009, Regular Air Force component (RegAF) Airmen will be assigned to each of the following Guard installations: Scott AFB, Birmingham Air National Guard Base, Ala., and Pease Air National Guard Base, N.H. The assigned RegAF Airmen will work side-by-side, flying and maintaining the Air Guard’s fleet of aircraft to accomplish the wing’s missions. Air Mobility Command, headquartered at Scott AFB, will maintain administrative control of the RegAF Airmen.

The associated unit will provide greater day-to-day mission capability from the three



wings through the increased full-time presence. This capability will help the Total Air Force more efficiently utilize its KC-135 force. Such associations also generate efficiencies by sharing resources and reducing duplication of effort, increasing overall air refueling capability, and preserving a corporate body of knowledge. They also help to improve aircrew and maintenance expertise and experience levels, capitalizing on the long-term experiences resident in Air National Guard units.

General Craig McKinley, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said this initiative is critical to the success of the Air Force.

“Total Force Integration builds on state and region capabilities, thereby increasing economic efficiencies and enhancing the Air Force’s ability to defend the Homeland against emerging threats and respond to natural disasters,” he said.

A site activation task force, or SATAF team, met Jan. 26 to 30 to continue the association process. The SATAF team consists of members from Air Mobility Command, National Guard Bureau, a small team from McConnell AFB and key players from the 126th and 375th.

The active association will be between the 126th and an active duty squadron, yet to be named. The active duty squadron will be attached to the 22nd Air Refueling Wing at McConnell AFB with the 375th providing base support.

“Having the active associate unit stand up at Scott is another testimony of how we enable combat power,” said Col. Gary Goldstone, 375th Airlift Wing commander. “As part of the total force integration, this transition allows better use of resources and manpower to ensure we better accomplish the mission both at home and during contingency deployments.”

During the visit, the team worked to answer questions dealing with manpower, facilities, funding, communications, medical, base support, operations and many other issues. While their hard work was met with results, many questions still remain and there is more work ahead. The same team met at Scott AFB in October for a site visit, which was a preliminary step in the SATAF process.

Show band rocks out area high schools

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Jayson A. Hoffman
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD – A band jams to tunes such as “Knock on Wood” and “Flip, Flop, Fly.” They have the crowd tapping their feet and clapping their hands in unison. After each song the crowd roars with approval. Although this could sound like a Blues Brothers clip, it was actually the scene at the Illinois Army National Guard 144th Show Band Tour at Deland-Weldon High School in Deland.

Approximately 15 to 20 Soldier-musicians of the 144th, based out of Springfield, Ill., traveled across Illinois for a five-school tour March 23 to 27.

The tour started at Allen B. Shepherd High School in Palos Heights, where the band performed a live recording. The band then traveled to Sullivan High School in Sullivan, Deland-Weldon High School in Deland, Driscoll Catholic High School in Addison, and ended at Eisenhower High School in Decatur, for the biggest show of its tour.

Staff Sgt. Rufus Wilson, show band director and Effingham native, conceived the show. Wilson performed in a similar show 20 years ago with the 229th Army Band out of Baltimore, Md. Wilson entered the Illinois unit more than two years ago and had been interested in organizing a tour from the very beginning.

Wilson, a civilian truck driver, started planning the concept of the tour eight months ago. He did a lot of the coordination for the tour by cell phone while on the road. Wilson and the rest of the band decided on a route they wanted to travel and began calling recruiters. The recruiters in those areas searched for schools to host the band, which Wilson said was the hardest part of the planning process.

Once the schools were set, the band organized rehearsals as well as assembled the members of the band who would be available to perform for the week.

Staff Sgt. Quintin Hecht, the percussion section leader from Galesburg, said it took a lot of coordination from everyone who participated in the tour, whether it was practicing during extra drill time or coordinating time with their families for the tour.

The song choices were selected by all of the band members, and a few of the arrangements were even written by them. The band opened its show with a traditional version of, “The Star Spangled Banner,” followed by “Synth Brass,” written by Wilson and Spc. Michael Kearny of Normal.

Spc. Charles Mack of Chicago had the crowds singing along to “Celebration,” by Kool and the Gang. The Show Band held the crowd’s attention with a number of well known songs.

Another song composed by band members was titled “Mambo with 7 & 10” written by Hecht, Mack, Spc. Manny Smith of Effingham and Spc. Chip Brewster of Lake Zurich. Jesse Bateman, a junior and

“I thought the show was great. The solos and especially the percussion were fantastic.”

Jesse Bateman
Deland-Weldon High School

Zach Roberts, a senior, both students from Deland-Weldon High School, said the piece was their favorite part of the show.

“I thought the show was great,” Bateman said. “The solos and especially the percussion were fantastic.”

The intent of the tour was to raise awareness about the Illinois National Guard and all it has to offer. Staff Sgt. Autumn Owens, a Paxton native and Champaign-area recruiter said this event showed the wide-range of the National Guard occupation list. Many students did not know there was a National Guard band until this event.

“The show was phenomenal,” said Sara Lidy, music teacher at Deland-Weldon High School.

Lidy, a Decatur resident, said it was great for the students because the school is so small, with approximately 53 students, that they rarely have the opportunity to see such music ensembles in action. Lidy also said she was nervous about the show because it was a traditional show and she thought it wouldn’t have the same effect as the Show Band.

Staff Sgt. Angela Ellis, a saxophonist from Champaign said she talked with many students after the show and they were all excited about seeing the show and showed interest in the Illinois National Guard.

“This tour has been igniting excitement everywhere we have been,” Ellis said.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jayson A. Hoffman, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

JAZZY MOMENT: The woodwind section of the Illinois Army National Guard 144th Army Show Band plays along to the opening song at Deland-Weldon High School, Deland, March 25. The Show Band played several hit songs as well as original music written by members of the band.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jayson A. Hoffman, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TOOT YOUR OWN HORN: The Illinois Army National Guard 144th Army Show Band plays “Knock on Wood,” by Wilson Pickett at Deland-Weldon High School Deland, March 25. The five-school tour took approximately eight months to coordinate.

H1N1 flu preparation

■ Illinois Soldiers help repackage Strategic National Stockpile supplies

By Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Staff

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois National Guard assisted state agencies in the organization and distribution of supplies that arrived from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) during the initial H1N1 Flu Outbreak in April.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Springfield participated during the mission and used it as a training exercise that was previously scheduled for late May.

Additionally, Soldiers from the 1344th Transportation Company of East St. Louis, the 1544th Transportation Company of Paris and the 3637th Maintenance Company of Springfield supported the repackaging mission. The 3625th Maintenance Company of North Riverside was also alerted and held on standby, but was not needed.

More than 125 Illinois National Guard Soldiers were involved in this three-day mission.

The Soldiers repackaged the SNS supplies into 252 kits, which were distributed to local health departments and hospitals throughout Illinois.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was activated for several days and staffed by multiple state agencies, including members of the Illinois National Guard’s Joint Staff, SEOC Liaison.

Soldiers talk live with President Obama

■ Illinois Soldiers support inauguration

By Mike Chrisman
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Illinois Soldiers had a once in a life-time experience during President Barack Obama's Inauguration in January.

Deployed Soldiers with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) spoke to Obama live from Afghanistan during the inaugural ball Jan. 20. Obama thanked the Illinois Soldiers for their service and asked them a crucial question: Chicago White Sox or Chicago Cubs fans?

Soldiers included were Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Bowman of Plainfield, Staff Sgt. Eric Olvera of Chicago, Sgt. Bernardo Guillen of Melrose Park, Spc. Geovanna Guerra of Chicago, Spc. Courtney Howard of Chicago, and Spc. Eunice Hernando of Aurora.

Additional Illinois Soldiers supported the historical inauguration during the parade and inaugural gala.

Tech. Sgt. Doug Mattsey, Airman with the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria and tuba player for the Air National Guard Band of the Midwest, was part of the military band marching approximately two miles in downtown Washington, D.C in front of millions of people.

"It's really neat to be part of this monumental step for our country," said Mattsey. "We are hurdling over racial divides and I think that is why this year's inauguration is such a popular event."



SOX OR CUBS?: Deployed Illinois Soldiers from the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team spoke to President Barack Obama live at the inaugural ball Jan. 20. While Obama thanked the Soldiers for their service, he also asked them a crucial question: Chicago White Sox or Chicago Cubs fans?

U.S. Army courtesy photo courtesy

Mattsey, a full-time band director for Macomb Junior High School, volunteered to play his tuba during the parade. He represented the Illinois Air National Guard performing with bands from all five branches of the armed forces. A majority of the performers were from military groups across the nation's capitol.

The Macomb resident spent a week of January in Washington, D.C., practicing with the band and returned home briefly last week to see his family and the students in

his class before the inauguration. Mattsey said his students were ecstatic about his opportunity and asked a lot of questions.

"They were really excited," Mattsey said. "Some of them have never left their hometown, let alone left the state or flown anywhere."

Along with Mattsey and the 33rd IBCT Soldiers, five Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers were selected to present the colors for the Illinois State Society Inaugural Gala Jan.19.

The Illinois State Society hosts the gala every four years in honor of the president-elect and vice president-elect. The gala is a non-partisan event to celebrate Illinois history, culture, science, technology, commerce and social traditions.

"This is a great opportunity and a chance to make my family and children proud," said Sgt. 1st Class Jason French of Virginia. "History can only be made once and I am very proud to be able to be a part of something like this."

The Illinois State Society has hosted Inaugural receptions since the 1800s. The first black tie reception was held for Ronald Reagan's second Presidential Inauguration in 1985, which was when the group began to host Inaugural Balls.

Staff Sgt. Steven Starks of Peoria, participated in the Inaugural Gala in 2005 and had a chance to meet then, U.S. Senator-elect Barack Obama during the event. Starks was part of the 2009 honor guard and said it was an honor to represent Illinois and have a chance to dine with elected officials from Illinois.

"It's almost like we are supporting one of our own," Starks said when talking about the history of another Illinoisan being sworn in as president.

French and Starks were joined by Sgt. 1st Class James Rade of Peoria, Staff Sgt. Timothy Sanders of Mount Zion, and Sgt. 1st Class William Milligan of Illiopolis. Milligan was excited to be able to participate in this monumental occasion.

"It's a very historical time in our nation's existence," Milligan said. "It's pretty awesome to be tasked out and be part of it. It's something we can all be proud of."

President Obama visits Peoria, Springfield

By U.S. Army Spc. Lalita Laksbergs
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois National Guard provided support during President Barack Obama's visit to Illinois Feb. 12, providing security, and logistical elements in Springfield and Peoria.

Soldiers and Airmen worked with White House personnel, the Secret Service and local first responders, during the president's visit.

Supporting elements included the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria; 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield; Detachment 1, Company C, 1st Battalion, 376th Aviation in Decatur; 5th Civil Support Team in Bartonville; and Army Aviation Support Facilities based in

Peoria and Midway Airport in Chicago.

In Springfield, Maj. Gen. William Enyart, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard; Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, Assistant Adjutant General – Army; and Col. Michael Meyer, Commander of the 183rd Fighter Wing, shook hands and spoke briefly with President Obama at the bottom of the stairs as he exited Air Force One.

The president passed by his awaiting motorcade and walked over to greet the media and approximately 100 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who were waiting to welcome the Commander in Chief.

"I thought it was an exciting opportunity to meet the President of the United States,"

said Master Sgt. Matthew Allen, a New Berlin resident and Production Recruiter in the Illinois Air National Guard. "This was the first, and maybe only, chance I will have to meet the most powerful man in the free world.

The president walked down the stairs and it looked like he was going to go to the motorcade, but then he deviated from that plan and walked over to greet us," Allen said. "He has a rock-star persona and an extraordinary charisma that I could not help but get caught up in."

Obama arrived in Springfield late in the day to participate in a dinner at the Crowne Plaza Hotel commemorating President Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday and left Springfield immediately after.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lalita Laksbergs, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

ONCE IN A LIFETIME: (left to right) Col. Michael Meyer, Commander of the 183rd Fighter Wing of the Illinois Air National Guard, Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, Assistant Adjutant General of the Illinois Army National Guard, and Maj. Gen. William Enyart, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, salute Air Force One as it taxied at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport on Feb. 12. The Illinois National Guard greeted President Barack Obama as he arrived in Springfield to attend a dinner commemorating the 200th Anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lalita Laksbergs
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

COMMANDER IN CHIEF: President Barack Obama descended the steps after Air Force One arrived at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield on Feb. 12. President Obama was greeted by a contingent of Illinois National Guard command on the tarmac, and took time to briefly visit and shake hands with more than 100 Illinois Soldiers and Airmen.

Illinois supports Beyond the Horizon

Engineers support with maintenance and

By U.S. Army Sgt. April Hawes
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

ARENOSO, Dominican Republic – The fourth and final Illinois rotation of Beyond the Horizon mission in the Dominican Republic kicked off April 27 when 20 Illinois Soldiers battled nearly 100 degree weather and initiated maintenance support.

“The first day of this rotation went better than the last rotation since I have been here before,” said 1st Sgt. Mike Robertson of the 766th Engineer Battalion, Field Support Company (FSC) in Decatur.

Robertson, a Petersburg native, was additionally on the second Illinois rotation, which also included Soldiers from the 766th FSC. The final rotation included Soldiers from both the 766th FSC and the 661st Engineer Support Company in Sparta.

Beyond the Horizon is a civic-action mission in which National Guard Soldiers from various states work hand-in-hand with the Dominican Republic to repair roads, schools, a medical clinic and a community center for the Dominican Army.

Illinois Soldiers from the 766th Engineer Battalion were on two-week rotations to the Dominican Republic from March to May. The first Illinois rotation of the 661st Engineer Company was responsible for road repair and site preparation for two new buildings. The following Illinois rotations, have provided logistical support to other National Guard units with maintenance, fuel, recovery, transportation and generator repair missions.

While the Soldiers were in the Dominican Republic, they experienced the surrounding culture, which most say is much different than Illinois.

“I hope Soldiers will go home with a new outlook on the world,” Robertson said. “This is a real-world opportunity. It’s not just training; it’s real life.”

During the two-week rotation, Illinois Soldiers initiated renovation of a basketball court at a local school in the Dominican Republic May 2.

The Soldiers were responsible for breaking and removing old concrete so the following rotations of Beyond the Horizon can pour new concrete and put the finishing touches on the basketball court. National Guard Soldiers from Tennessee and Connecticut also participated in this mission.

“I guarantee when the kids see this basketball court, their eyes will light up,” said Pfc. Derek Knight, Orient native and Soldier with the 661st.

Soldiers on the project “successfully destroyed” the concrete and did the “dirty prep work” for the following rotations, said 2nd Lt. Mark Wheeler, of Rochester and 766th Soldier. Like Knight, Wheeler is confident the children of the Dominican Republic school will appreciate the new basketball court.

“A new basketball court for us is like putting in an Internet café in a high school,” Wheeler said. “I think they are more sports lovers than we are.”

The final rotation of Illinois Soldiers left the Dominican Republic May 9.

Additional National Guard Soldiers supporting Beyond the Horizon were from Puerto Rico, which has a state partnership with the Dominican Republic, Tennessee, Connecticut, Missouri, Maryland, Nevada and Michigan. The duration of the Beyond the Horizon mission will be complete in late June.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
LET THE SPARKS FLY: Spc. Shawn Carpenter of Hoffman and member of the 661st Engineer Support Company are working on a welding project. The engineers were part of Beyond the Horizon, a civic action mission.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
HANDS ON DESTRUCTION: Pfc. Eric Davis of Athens and member of the 661st Engineer Support Company based in Sparta, breaks up old concrete for basketball court renovation in the Dominican Republic May 2. The renovation was part of Beyond the Horizon, a civic-action mission in the Dominican Republic.

Soldiers leave country

By U.S. Army Sgt. April Hawes
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

ARENOSO, Dominican Republic – Six months ago, he was told his first annual training in the Illinois Army National Guard would be in the Dominican Republic. Six months ago, the nerves kicked in.

“I was nervous,” said Spc. Matthew Stevens of Springfield Soldier with the 766th Engineer Battalion Forward Support Company (FSC) in Decatur. “I’ve never left the country and I’ve never flown over the ocean.”

Once he landed in the Dominican Republic April 25 for Beyond the Horizon, the nerves subsided and he said he knew why he was there to help. Within the first hour, he said he saw homes made from semi-truck trailers and people driving mopeds on run-down roads.

Beyond the Horizon is a civic-action mission in which National Guard Soldiers from various states work hand-in-hand with the Dominican Republic to repair roads, schools, a medical clinic and a community center for the Dominican Army.

Stevens, along with other Soldiers from the 766th and Soldiers from the 661st Engineer Support Company based in Sparta were responsible for maintenance support for the projects Soldiers from other states are part of. Those states included Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Connecticut, Missouri, Maryland, Nevada and Michigan.

Along with never leaving the country, Stevens had never seen the ocean before this training. Due to long working hours, free time on the ocean was limited.

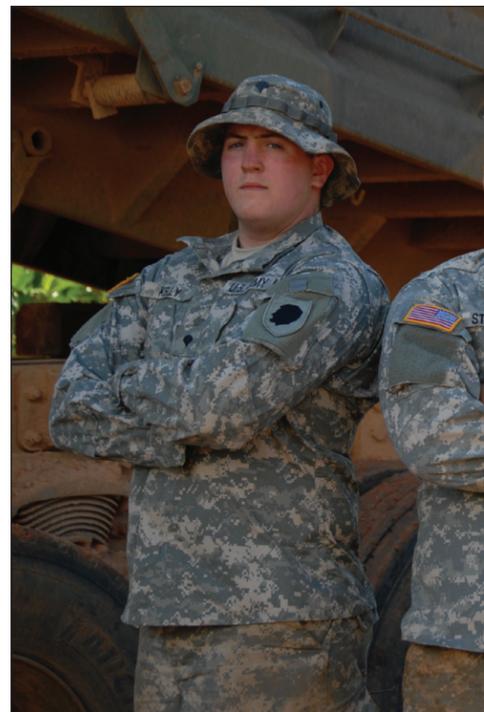
“It takes everything I’ve got to stay out of it,” he said.

Along with Stevens, two other Illinois Soldiers also left the country for the first time for this mission. Spc. Gerell Wynn of Decatur and 766th Soldier said he thought it was “pretty cool” when he found out his first annual training would be outside of the United States.

Like Stephens, he said he knew after he landed why he was there to help.

“I think it’s really good we’re helping them,” Wynn said. “They’re real hard workers. They work with what they have.”

Before Spc. Robert Kelly, Jr. of Decatur and 766th Soldier came to the Dominican Republic, he said he expected to see some run-down areas of the country. Once he landed in the country, he said the poverty level was nothing compared to what he has seen at home.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING: (left) Spc. Matthew Stevens of Springfield and Spc. Gerell Wynn of Decatur and 766th Soldier left the country for the first time April 27 for Beyond the Horizon mission in the Dominican Republic. This is the first annual training for all three Soldiers. They were in the Dominican Republic.

Horizon, Dominican Republic

■ Lawrenceville improves roads



Photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
631st Engineer Company in Sparta, works on mission in the Dominican Republic.

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Aaron Tvrdy
631st Engineer Support Company

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – Soldiers from the 631st Engineer Support Company based in Lawrenceville, sent two rotations to the Dominican Republic in support of Beyond the Horizon from March 28 to April 25. The objective of operation Beyond the Horizon was to assist the people and military of the Dominican Republic, Duarte Province with civic assistance and reconstruction of key infrastructure following severe flooding in 2007.

The company improved schools, hospitals, sports complexes, roads and other facilities.

The 631st Horizontal Engineering Company worked in conjunction with National Guard Soldiers from Tennessee, Nevada, Connecticut, Michigan, Utah as well as Dominican Special Forces security elements, local community leaders and government engineers to improve road conditions within the Duarte Province.

“(The Dominicans) were such good and nice people that you almost felt an obligation to do everything within your power to help them overcome their current situation,” said Sgt. Keith Brogdon of LaGrange Park and 631st Soldier.

With a long commute to and from the work site, workdays easily stretched to 15 or 16 hours.

Working out of multiple sites and constantly on the move, 631st Soldiers saw much of the countryside within the northern Dominican.

The road conditions within the Dominican were rapidly deteriorating, most roads were a combination of dirt and crushed rock with large holes and eroding ditches, few paved roads connected large cities.

According to Dominicans on the project sites, many of the roads had not seen maintenance in the 17 years since



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Matthew Drummond, 631st Engineer Support Company

NEW PLACE, NEW FRIENDS: Spc. Christopher Burbach, member of the 631st Engineer Support Company takes a photo with elementary school students at the La Raya school in the Dominican Republic. While on breaks from school, students visited with Soldiers and got a look at some of the unique roadwork equipment. The 631st Soldiers were in the Dominican in support of Beyond the Horizon from March 28 to April 25.

their conception. In addition to having a challenging base point, the 631st was faced with unorthodox obstacles such as large rice harvesting equipment, herds of livestock, crisscrossing low power lines, speeding motorcycles and curious children.

The 631st transferred dump loads of crushed rock from the mountains each day, moving it to one of three road projects. Operators of the 631st drove more than 1,800 miles in dump loads.

The 631st completed a road mission begun by previous rotations, connecting

two school projects and worked on a constricted project site to an elementary school.

Brogdon said he shared some of his pictures of the Dominican Republic with his daughters and explained to them the differences and hardships between the cultures.

“They have both shown a greater appreciation for the basic items that used to be taken for granted, not to mention a lot less complaining when it’s time to wake up for school,” he said.

for first time

“I think it’s a good thing to help countries less fortunate,” he said.

This trip was also Kelly’s first time seeing the ocean. He said it was “pretty awesome” and simply compared it to a big lake that drops off in the distance.

When these Soldiers returned home May 9, they agreed they would appreciate what they have at home.

“When I get home, it’s going to be different,” said Stevens. “We take things for granted.”



Photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
(left to right) Spc. Robert Kelly of Decatur, Spc. Gerell Wynn of Decatur, all Soldiers with Support Company (FSC) based in Decatur, 25 for Beyond the Horizon in the Dominican Republic until May 9.

Illinois support, Beyond the Horizon

- **Rotation 1:** March 14 to 28, 25 Soldiers with 661st Engineer Company based in Sparta

- **Rotation 2:** March 28 to April 11, 25 Soldiers with 661st Engineer Company in Sparta and 631st Engineer Support Company in Lawrenceville and 21 Soldiers with the 766th Engineers, Forward Support Company based in Decatur

- **Rotation 3:** April 11 to 25, 21 Soldiers with the 766th Engineers, Forward Support Company based in Decatur and 25 Soldiers with the 631st Engineer Support Company in Lawrenceville

- **Rotation 4:** April 25 to May 9, 21 Soldiers with the 766th Engineers, Forward Support Company based in Decatur and the 661st Engineer Support Company based in Sparta

Various Illinois units deploy, redeploy

By Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Staff

SPRINGFIELD – Along with the 3,000 Soldiers with 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan, additional Illinois Army National Guard units have been deployed and redeployed since January.

DEPLOYMENTS

• 106th Aviation Regiment

A mobilization ceremony was held Jan. 31 for Company A, 106th Aviation Regiment in Decatur. Soldiers from Company D, 106th Aviation Regiment in Decatur; Company E, 106th Aviation Regiment in Peoria; and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 106th Aviation Regiment in Peoria were also mobilized to assist Company A. The mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom will be about one year.

Approximately 85 Soldiers will be deployed with the 106th Aviation Regiment to transport personnel and equipment with UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. Soldiers will also perform maintenance and refueling operations on the helicopters while in theater.

• International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

In February there was a mobilization ceremony for approximately 20 members from Joint Force Headquarters, Illinois Army National Guard. Joint Force Headquarters is the state headquarters for the Illinois National Guard in Springfield with more than 250 Soldiers. The Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Illinois National Guard Soldiers are part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission and work directly with Polish Land Forces in Afghanistan. Their primary mission is to serve as mentors and liaisons for the Polish Land Forces supporting U.S. Operations in Eastern Afghanistan. Their focus is to work with the Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), NATO ISAF elements and interagency partners to conduct full spectrum operations in the province of Ghazni. Those operations will develop Afghan national capability to secure its people and develop a sustainable economy. The Soldiers will help extend GIRoA authority and influence as the legitimate government of the Afghan people.

• 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

There was a deployment ceremony honoring approximately 20 Soldiers of the Illinois Army National Guard's 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD) May 17.

The Illinois National Guard Soldiers will deploy to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The deployment is expected to last one year. The 139th MPAD's primary mission will be to produce a weekly newspaper and bi-monthly news broadcasts highlighting the accomplishments of Soldiers throughout Iraq. Additional duties will include escorting members of the civilian media and governmental visitors.

REDEPLOYMENTS

• 1844th Transportation Company

The 1844th Transportation Company based in Quincy, returned from its one-year mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January. Springfield and North Riverside Soldiers were also part of this deployment.

The 1844th assumed its mission April 9, 2008 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. As a transportation company, the Soldiers transported essential cargo throughout their assigned geographic area in theater. The unit has completed 82 Combat Logistic Patrol missions, 29 Convoy Escort Team missions, and 139 local missions throughout Kuwait and Iraq without casualties. They drove more than 662,500 miles while serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

• 106th Aviation Regiment

Approximately 150 members from Illinois Army National Guard's 106th Aviation Regiment returned from its Kosovo deployment March 7.

Soldiers from the 106th Aviation companies in Peoria, Decatur, and Chicago were mobilized in March 2008 as part of Kosovo Force 10 (KFOR 10). The Illinois Army National Guard sent Soldiers to Kosovo part of Task Force Blackhorse, which is an element of Task Force Falcon.

The task force was one of five multi-national brigade-sized elements that made up the NATO-led force providing security and stability to Kosovo. KFOR10 is a task force comprised of approximately 1,600 people who conduct peace-enforcement operations.



U.S. Army photo by Col. David Matakas, Multi-National Division Central-South
FIRST POLISH ARTILLERY FIRE IN 63 YEARS: 1st Lt. Dash Wilson, of Canton, who was deployed to Afghanistan with the International Security Assistance Force/Operation Maintenance and Liaison Team, is pictured Jan. 6 with two DANA 152mm Howitzers, which are now used in theater supporting both Polish and U.S. Soldiers. The last time the Polish Army fired howitzers in a combat zone was World War II. Wilson and approximately 15 Illinois National Guard Soldiers with Multi-National Division Central-South and International Security Assistance Force returned from deployment in

During its deployment, Task Force Blackhorse flew more than 430 accident-free missions, including 282 air movement missions, 92 reconnaissance missions and 37 MEDEVAC missions. Additionally, the Soldiers assisted the people of Kosovo by adopting five schools and two homeless shelters.

• 766th Engineer Battalion

Approximately 15 Soldiers from Illinois Army National Guard's 766th Engineer Battalion based in Decatur were welcomed home March 10 after they were called to federal active duty in March 2008 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The Engineer Battalion was deployed to Afghanistan and worked as an Explosive Hazards Coordination Cell (EHCC), tracking Improvised Explosive Device (IED) strikes, unexploded ordnances and mines. The unit provided information on explosive hazards to coalition forces, the International Security Assistance Force and nongovernmental organizations to support stability operations in Afghanistan. The EHCC was first used in Afghanistan when the 766th arrived in the spring of 2008.

• Operation Maintenance and Liaison Team (OMLT)

Sixteen Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers returned home late March from their one-year mobilization in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The Soldiers were mobilized in March 2008. Eleven Soldiers were originally sent to Iraq as part of the Multi-National Division Central-South. Their mission was to help train and mentor the Iraqi army.

Five Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Their mission was to assist the Afghan government to extend its authority across the country, conduct stability and perform security operations.

The Soldiers also mentored and supported the Afghan national army and support Afghan government programs to disarm illegally armed groups.

The two groups were combined in October 2008 and were renamed the ISAF Operation Maintenance and Liaison Team and were stationed in Afghanistan.

The group's mission was to provide the Polish Battle Group liaison support in managing areas of Commander's Emergency Response Program.

• 33rd IBCT

The first of many 33rd IBCT companies are scheduled to return this summer and fall, starting with the return of 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Soldiers from the Sycamore, Crestwood, Chicago and Effingham units in late May.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. April Hawes, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office
REUNITED: Maj. Jason Osberg of Champaign and member of the 106th Aviation Regiment, reunited with his family March 7 in Decatur. Osberg and approximately 150 Soldiers with the 106th returned in March from a year-long deployment to Kosovo.

Soldier empowered as a young female

By U.S. Army Sgt. Aleah Castrejon
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

BETHALTO – For many years, women have fought for the rights they have today. Today, many women are full-time employees, mothers, wives and Soldiers. The month of March recognized these women during Women’s History Month.

Sgt. Melissa Neitzel of Bethalto is one of those women. She juggles being a mother, spouse, student and employee. Besides wearing those hats, Melissa is also a Soldier with the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1844th Transportation Company based in Quincy.

Melissa is married to Sgt. Chase Neitzel with the Detachment 1, 1744th Transportation Company based in Delavan. They have two young girls; 3-year-old Cadence and 2-year-old Tessa.

Both Neitzels have been deployed and understand the challenges of full-time deployed Soldier and a parent with many responsibilities at home.

While Chase was deployed to Iraq from June 2006 to September 2007, Melissa had the roles of mom and dad. The roles were reversed when Melissa was deployed to Kuwait from February 2008 to January 2009.

It was a challenge for Melissa when she returned from her deployment to transition back to a mother and wife instead of a Soldier.

“The hardest thing is being away from my family,” said Melissa. “The second hardest thing was the unknown; we never knew what was going to happen day to day. While Chase was deployed, I never would have made it without the support of my family and friends.”

Even though Melissa had a good support group back home, she says it was still hard to miss so much time from her children’s lives.

“It was difficult to leave my young children at home,” Melissa said. “That was a year of missing them grow that I will never get back. They were so different when I returned, both physically and emotionally. I talked to them on Web cam and on the phone as often as I could, but it will never replace being with them in person.”

Although Melissa worried about her family while she was deployed, she still focused on her mission. Melissa is a truck driver in the Illinois National Guard and was involved in many convoys during her year in Iraq.

The mission required men and women to be trained equally because at any given moment they could be



U.S. Army photo courtesy of the Neitzel family

FAMILY TIME: Cadence, Melissa, Chase and Tessa Neitzel at Chase’s return ceremony in Streator, in September 2007. Chase and other Soldiers of the 1744th Transportation Company returned home Sept. 15 after a 15-month deployment to Iraq.

required to do another Soldier’s job.

“If a male Soldier were to get injured in combat and the only Soldier to take his position was female, it was important for the female to know the responsibilities and duty obligations of the male,” Melissa said.

Despite physical differences, Melissa said she feels both men and women are capable of getting any job done.

“Chase is stronger than I am. When it comes down to

the strength and endurance, he could probably do more,” said Melissa, regarding military capabilities. “We may do things differently, but we both get our missions accomplished just as well as one another.”

While deployments have been difficult on the couple’s family life, Melissa and Chase plan to deploy again as they continue their military career, only next time they are hoping they will be able to deploy together.

Trash to treasures winners awarded by Enyart

By Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Staff

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Army National Guard Environmental branch held a contest, “Trash to Treasures” that challenged children and young teenagers, kindergarten through 12th grade, to create a “treasure” by using common materials from around the house.

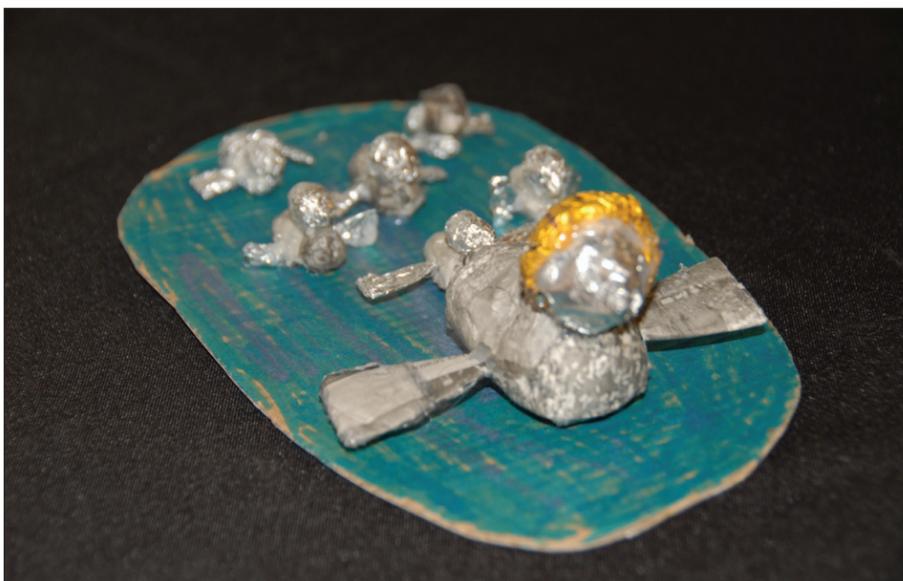
They were required to use at least three types of materials per entry. The materials included aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic bottle caps, aluminum bottle caps, cardboard, paperboard and plastic bags.

Winners by category were: Zach Drozs of Decatur, “Big Mouth Bass,” first place, kindergarten through second grade category; Piper Burton of Farmington, “A Green Santa,” runner up, kindergarten through second grade category; Samantha DuPont of Quincy, “Ducks and Family on Pond,” first place, third through fifth grade category; Laura DuPont of Quincy, “Flowers in a Vase,” first place, sixth through eighth grade category; Mariah Casebeer of Pleasant Plains, “Let Freedom Ring – by Recycling,” first place, ninth through twelfth grade category.

On May 7, Maj. Gen. William Enyart, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, presented the five winners with plaques at Camp Lincoln, Springfield, which was the same day as Camp Lincoln’s clean-up day. Winners moved on to the national level at the National Guard Bureau contest.



“Big Mouth Bass” by Zach Drozs, Decatur



“Ducks and Family on Pond” by Samantha DuPont, Quincy



“Let Freedom Ring” by Mariah Casebeer, Pleasant Plains



“Flowers in a Vase” by Laura DuPont, Quincy

Staff rides: participate and appreciate

By U.S. Army Lt. Col. Drew Dukett
232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Staff rides represent a unique and persuasive method of conveying the lessons of the past to the present-day Army leadership for current application. Properly conducted, these exercises bring life to the very terrain where historic encounters took place. These encounters are applicable today as in the past, of leadership, tactics, and strategy, communications, use of terrain, and, above all, the psychology of men and women in battle.



Lt. Col. Drew Dukett

This historical study, particularly with personal reconnaissance, offers valuable opportunities to develop professional leadership and the capacity for effective use of combined arms on the air-land battlefield.

Last fall, I travelled with senior leaders from the 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB), based in Springfield, to the Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center in Corinth, Mississippi and Shiloh National Military Park, the preserved site of the Battle of Shiloh, American Civil War, 1862.

Inside the Interpretive Center, we observed a variety of exhibits describing

the Battle of Shiloh as well as the local area and population, efforts and contributions made by the community, and life in Corinth before, during and after the battle.

Other exhibits featured artifacts including military weapons, uniforms and equipment used by Soldiers on both sides as well as recordings and films depicting first-hand accounts and a general overview of the battle. Displays throughout the museum were creatively constructed, many directly resembling earthen fortifications, weapon settings, and supply depot rail cars.

Following our visit to the Interpretive Center, we traveled about 25 miles north to Shiloh National Military Park, Tennessee.

The Soldiers found out what happened, establish why and how events occurred as they did, and decided what these cause and effect relationships mean now. It is the immediacy of this last element—the answer to the question, ‘So what?’ that makes this approach to battle analysis a peculiarly military endeavor. The effect of such analysis is synergistic in fostering not just lessons but a deeper understanding of the realities of war.

Our final stop was made to observe a monument that was erected to honor the efforts of Illinois Soldiers. The leaders found it to be particularly impressive. The massive obelisk featured words honoring the Illinois Soldiers, carved relief images from the battle, and was topped by the seated figure of Saint Barbara, traditionally considered the patroness of Field Artillery.

We found the staff ride adventure to Corinth and Shiloh National Military Park to be greatly enlightening. The

leaders were amazed to find they shared many of the same battlefield, planning, coordinating, and Soldier-care issues with their Civil War predecessors. It was evident to these present-day logisticians that the ability to obtain, move, and manage supplies continues to be both a necessity and a challenge faced by war fighters everywhere and can indeed determine the victors in battle.

A battle may even be initiated and fought specifically to secure supplies and control access to improved transportation methods, enabling leaders to make supplies available to troops. The leaders’ study of the Battle of Shiloh further stressed the importance of supporting troops on the front lines and reinforced the absolute necessity of competent logisticians to sustain the war fight.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Elaine M. Nussbaum, 1544th Transportation Company

LAST STAND: 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Soldiers participated in an officers briefing of research during a staff ride last fall. This was a typical scene when the Soldiers paused to examine the surroundings that might have presented both tactical and logistical challenges to the Soldiers at the Battle of Shiloh.

Outstanding Airmen of the Year announced

By Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Staff

SPRINGFIELD—In January, the Illinois Air National Guard recognized outstanding Airmen to represent Illinois at the national level. Candidates for Airmen of the Year for 2008 were selected from each wing’s Airmen, Noncommissioned Officers (NCO), Senior NCO, Honor Guard and First Sergeant of the Year.

“Competition was exceptionally close and all of the nominees were extraordinary,” said Brig. Gen. Jay Sheedy, the former Assistant Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. “These individuals reflect the high quality members we have in the Illinois Air National Guard.”

Winners include:

- Senior Airmen Travis SC Klopfenstein of Cedar Rapids, Iowa and member of the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron at the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, Illinois Air National Guard Airman of the Year for 2008

- Staff Sgt. Eric J. Link of Springfield and member of the 183rd Security Forces Squadron Wing at the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, Illinois Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2008

- Master Sgt. Brett M. Pier a Rochester of native and member of the 217th Engineering

Installation Squadron at the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, Illinois Air National Guard Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for 2008

- Senior Master Sgt. Anthony G. Trisilla of Galesburg and member of the 169th Air Support Operations Squadron at the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, First Sergeant of the Year for 2008

- Senior Master Sgt. Clifford A. Faber of Pekin and member of the 182nd Maintenance Squadron at the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, Outstanding Honor Guard of the Year for 2008 (not pictured)

Awards were given based on performance, mission accomplishment, team building and leadership. Criteria used include actions, initiatives and results that showed the individual’s exceptional leadership and duty performance. Consideration is given for supervision, level of responsibility, process improvements, unusual job assignments, job effectiveness, job knowledge and support to deploying or deployed operations. Additionally, consideration is given for awards and recognition, significant individual accomplishments, unique job achievements, processed or implemented suggestions, and innovative problem solving. The Airmen will compete at the national level competition later this year.



Senior Airman Travis Klopfenstein



Staff Sgt. Eric Link



Master Sgt. Brett Pier



Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Trisilla

‘Arch Madness’



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lalita Laksbergs, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DEFENSIVE TEAM OF THE YEAR: Brig. Gen. Ronald Morrow (center), a resident of Girard, and Assistant Adjutant General – Army, Illinois National Guard, stood between two players from the University of Northern Iowa Basketball team as he presented the team with the 2009 Missouri Valley Conference/Army National Guard Defensive Team of the Year award. The award was presented during the Missouri Valley Conference Rawlings Coach of the Year Luncheon in St. Louis, March 5. This was the first time the Army National Guard participated as a sponsor during the awards luncheon.

The luncheon was held during “Arch Madness,” the Missouri Valley Conference Basketball Tournament held at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis. The University of Northern Iowa defeated Illinois State University in an overtime victory, 60-57, March 8, to take first place in the conference tournament championship. This victory by the University of Northern Iowa Panthers earned them a bid in the 2009 NCAA basketball tournament.

Illinois Soldier true definition of a hero

■ Scott recognized at heroes breakfast

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stephanie McCurry
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – Who do you call a hero? Someone who is willing to place their own life in danger before yours? Someone who has personal courage, self confidence, calm assurance and combat leadership every time they are in a hostile situation?

Maj. Troy Scott, of Springfield, is the exact definition of hero. In January, while Scott was deployed with the Illinois National Guard Multi-National Defense team, he was on patrol at a site in Afghanistan that had been attacked the previous night.

He was the patrol's senior U.S. commissioned officer and mentor to the Polish forces. During the patrol, Scott saw a grenade thrown at his patrol from a neighboring rooftop. Without hesitation, Scott ran toward the grenade, picked it up and threw it away from his patrol.

He didn't stop there; Scott ran to the nearest Soldier, knocked him to the ground and covered that Soldier's body with his own, shielding him from the blast.

On April 17, American Red Cross held a heroes breakfast at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield where Scott was recognized along with nine other local Springfield residents for their extraordinary acts of courage and compassion.

"I felt honored and a little uncomfortable being singled out," Scott said. "Not everyone can be recognized for what they do, so I feel honored to represent everyone that couldn't be (recognized)."

Though Scott separated his right shoulder from the incident and had shrapnel wounds to his cheek and right arm, he did not quit. He finished the mission with his group and did not seek medical attention until all of the members of his group returned to their Forward Operating Base.

Scott has also been nominated for a several awards that show his compassion and courage.

He was nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions that equaled mission accomplishment and ensured the protection of the patrol and future operations.

Scott was also nominated for a Silver Star for his valorous actions while engaged in ground combat. During one of their patrols in armored vehicles, Scott left his secured



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Lalita Laksbergs, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

HERO IN THE FLESH: Maj. Troy Scott, a Springfield resident and member of the Illinois National Guard's Multi-National Defense team, and his wife Laura, pose with a self-portrait at the Heroes Breakfast 2009 held April 17 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. The breakfast hosted by the American Red Cross honored Scott as a military hero along with nine others in various categories. He was recognized for his courage, compassion and leadership while deployed with the Illinois National Guard Multi-National Defense team March 2008 to March 2009 in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

vehicle and led an infantry squad through enemy fire to allow his patrol to maneuver out of the danger zone.

During another mission, Scott led an Afghan National Army (ANA) force on a night foot patrol.

His group set up a vehicle checkpoint along a known infiltration route to deny insurgents the freedom of movement, and also set up another line along the most likely route the enemy would take to avoid his checkpoint.

Later that night, three vehicles approached the checkpoint and would not stop for the ANA that was manning the site. The men riding in the back of a pickup started firing at

the ANA Soldiers and took the bypass route Scott had prepared. One vehicle was destroyed, another vehicle was ditched and the men inside got out and ran away. Scott and the ANA commander captured the pickup and the men with it.

Scott then took three other Soldiers with him and pursued the men running away. Scott overtook one of the men from the vehicle, restrained him and took his weapon away until he was placed into custody.

Three men were captured that night. Scott, now assigned to Joint Force Headquarters, was deployed from March 2008 to March 2009. The 20-member team served in Iraq and Afghanistan in support of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Hero, according to Webster's dictionary, means a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities, one that shows great courage.

Scott goes above and beyond the Webster's definition of hero and, as a Soldier, lives all of the Army Values.

"Not everyone can be recognized for what they do, so I feel honored to represent everyone that couldn't be recognized."

Maj. Troy Scott, Joint Force Headquarters

No contesting this gift on Mother's Day

■ 182nd Airman's mom wins Western Union's Mother of the Year

By U.S. Air Force Maj. Nancie Margetis
182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

PEORIA – When Chief Master Sgt. Rico Gamba received an e-mail from his sister with the subjectline "Western Union Essay," he almost didn't read it because he thought it was a scholarship essay for his sons. He didn't bother reading it until two days prior to the deadline, and it wasn't for a scholarship essay—it was Western Union's annual Mother of the Year essay contest.

"I had two days to complete it. It had to be 250 words and my first draft was 900 words, so I had to do some drastic cutting," Gamba said. "When I was done I didn't think that it flowed, so I gave it zero chance of even being considered."

Gamba, a Peoria resident and full-time technician with the 182nd Airlift Wing's Maintenance Group, submitted his mother for the recognition based on the challenges and sacrifices she endured raising him, his sister and a mentally disabled brother.

"My mother's love and devotion makes her the most amazing woman and mother I know," Gamba said in an article published by Western Union. "She suffered and persevered through insurmountable obstacles to make my sister and I who we are today; a testimony to her. She insisted that her children be educated and have the opportunities not available to her."

Gamba's mother, Beatriz Gamba, 72, a native of Colombia who lives in Boston, didn't know she had won the award until two days before the award ceremony in Los Angeles.

"She didn't believe my sister and kept asking her if she was kidding," said Gamba.

Gamba received \$50,000 cash for submitting the winner of Western Union's Mother of the Year Award.

"The best part of it was being with my mom and watching her receive something she deserved," he said.



U.S. Air Force photo courtesy of Chief Master Sgt. Rico Gamba, 182nd Airlift Wing

MOTHER OF THE YEAR: Chief Master Sgt. Rico Gamba, of Peoria and Airman with the 182nd Airlift Wing's Maintenance Group, nominated his mother Beatriz Gamba (left) for Western Union's annual Mother of the Year contest. Both Gamba and his mother travelled to Los Angeles to accept the award May 6.

Falcon's landing

By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Todd Pendleton
182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

PEORIA – An F-16 lifting off the ground at the Illinois Air National Guard base in Peoria may not sound unusual, but this particular aircraft had no functioning controls. A 90-ton crane did the actual lifting; the aircraft was just along for the ride. After two years of restoration work, the F-16 acquired from Sheppard Air Force Base joined the F-84F Thunderstreak, O-2A Skymaster, and OA-37B Dragonfly on display in the air park Dec. 30.

The team responsible for bringing the plane back to an "operational" look consisted of Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Hyde, Senior Airman Jared Wagner, Master Sgt. Bret Rickords and Master Sgt. Shawn Piehl. The team traveled to Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas in November 2006, disassembled the aircraft, loaded it on a flatbed trailer, and brought it back to Peoria. At Sheppard, the F-16 was used as a maintenance trainer.

"Basically the aircraft was already demilitarized before we acquired it," said Hyde, a fabrication element supervisor in the 182nd Maintenance Squadron and the historical property custodian for all aircraft on display on base. "Once we brought it back to Peoria, we removed the ejection seats, landing gear, and many of the flight control actuators, which lightened the aircraft by about 1,000 pounds."

The team continued the restoration process along with help from a civilian contractor.

Lt. Col. Dan McDonough, 182nd Operations Group Commander, flew F-16s when they were in service in Peoria, and



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Todd Pendleton, 182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs
DANGLING FROM THE SKY: Contractors place a static display F-16 Fighting Falcon on a pedestal in the air park located at the Air National Guard base in Peoria Dec. 30. The 182nd Airlift Wing flew aircraft similar to this one before transitioning to the C-130E Hercules aircraft in 1995.

said seeing this aircraft on display brought back memories.

"The cool thing was that I was flying those in my hometown," said McDonough.

He also said he supports the idea of preserving aircraft that represent the Illinois Air National Guard in Peoria.

"We're able to show the heritage of the unit," McDonough said. "It makes me proud to see the aircraft that certainly I have flown, and I'm sure the folks coming

on base that had flown the other aircraft displayed feel the same way."

Master Sgt. Shawn Piehl had served as an F-16 crew chief and also as a quality assurance inspector.

"It shows history," Piehl said. "It shows what this unit has done."

Though the F-16s were flown there for only three years, the aircraft now on display will mark that chapter of Peoria's Air National Guard history.

A special thanks

By U.S. Army Col. Michael Haerr
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team

As the rear detachment commander, I want to thank the volunteer family readiness leadership across the brigade. The support that the family readiness group (FRG) leaders provide both the rear detachment companies and forward Soldiers is amazing. It is a national treasure that is seldom seen and speaks volumes about why we are the home of the free.

I also want to let you know about the tremendous, behind the scenes

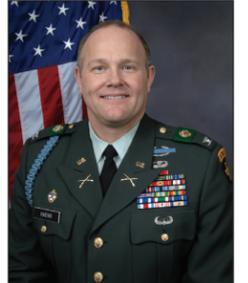
support we receive from our leadership at the State Headquarters. Our chaplain corps, headed up by Chaplains (Col.) Dan Krumrei and (Maj.) Steve Foster insure the chaplains in the field are well supported as they interact with families and wounded warriors across the country. Chaplains (Lt. Col.) Jerry Gleason and (Capt.) David Noble have done great work attending as many FRG meetings and Family Academies, interacting with spouses and parents preparing for our Soldiers return.

The second group is the combined team of the Public Affairs Office and the Military Funeral and Honors Team that have been there for us in our toughest moments. I have had the unfortunate honor to be at both Arlington National Cemetery and at cemeteries state side. The precision and dignity of the Illinois team is fitting of the sacrifice paid by our Soldiers and their loved ones.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our senior leadership in the Guard and state government who take time to visit wounded warriors and families of the fallen. In those moments, they demonstrate why they are where they are. Unless you are there, you never see how much a difference it makes. Another group of unsung heroes in the brigade is the rear detachment team. They are tasked with balancing their responsibilities to support the forward commanders, support and communicate with the FRGs, and then administer, train and prepare our non-deployed soldiers for future missions. I am extremely proud of the team. They have proven themselves ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support families as either a notification or assistance officer. It is one of the toughest duties any Soldier will ever perform. I want to thank those Soldiers from throughout the state who have served as assistance officer. You are part of the team!

I am happy to pass on we are all refining our plans to return the brigade to Illinois. By the time you read this article, we at Fort McCoy. We want to encourage families to wait in Illinois for your Soldier. The movement out home is quick and the time changes make Soldiers jet lagged. Then we begin the demobilization process as soon as they arrive to Fort McCoy which means they need to focus administrative, logistical, medical and out processing requirements.

As I have told several FRG leaders, if you go to Fort McCoy, you may see your Soldier, but you cannot be with your Soldier which is very tough on children. I want you to be able to spend real time with your Soldier as soon as possible, and that starts when they are released from active duty and begin their leave. Please wait and we will get your Soldier back to you as soon as possible.



Col. Michael Haerr

1344th rolls in competition

By U.S. Army Maj. Brad Leighton
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

EAST ST. LOUIS – Just around the time you receive this newspaper, 1344th Transportation Company Commander Capt. Bradley Roach will likely be leading a group of his Soldiers up a Washington, D.C., stage where Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey is slated to present the unit with the Army's top award for maintenance.

"I was shocked when I heard that we received first place," Roach said. "We have been working really hard the past couple of years and this year it paid off."

The East St. Louis-based company won the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence for a medium-sized unit and will receive the award in the first week of June. The 3625th Support Maintenance Co., based in North Riverside, won a third-place award in the competition as well.

The competition isn't easy. The 1344th competed with similar-sized companies across the Army, after first winning at the National Guard Bureau level.

"Winning this award challenges us to continuously perform at the highest level of readiness," said Sgt. 1st Class Cory Harbison, Soldier with the 1344th. "Leadership has played a major role in winning this award."

The unit first submitted a 20-page nomination packet, which was thoroughly reviewed by a 12-member panel. The panel looked at mission accomplishment and operational readiness, use of resources, management techniques, how well the unit took care of its Soldiers and its community relations program.

The panel is just the first level of elimination. The 1344th had to fight its way through several levels of competition before coming out on top, including a detailed on-site inspection by a team of Army evaluators.

"The team goes through every aspect



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Cassidy Snyder, Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs
TRUCK CHECK: Staff Sgt. Kelly Clark (back) and Sgt. William Davis, both of Fairview Heights and Soldiers with the 1344th Transportation Company in East St. Louis, work on a military truck at drill May 3.

of the unit's maintenance program. It is very thorough," said Lt. Col. Drew Dukett, Commander of the 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. "They are serious about finding the best maintainers in the Army."

The competition presented an opportunity to recognize troops that don't often see the limelight, said Col. Tracey Nelson, the Illinois National Guard's Director of Logistics.

"This improves overall readiness by rewarding those who make extraordinary efforts," Nelson said. "It also incites the

competitive spirit in other units, making them strive to improve."

Roach said preparing for the competition took a bit of time, but it also was a good tool to help him evaluate his maintenance program.

After winning the Army award, the 1344th will compete at the Department of Defense level.

For more information about competing in the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence program visit www.goordnance.apg.army.mil or call Capt. Shawn Nokes at 217-761-3817.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Military families united during deployment

By Mike Chrisman
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – Eighteen-year old Daphney Bell of Windsor, Ill. had a baby girl, Addilyn, in February, but something was missing- Addilyn's father.

Addilyn's father, 21-year old Spc. Dereck Bly of Shelbyville, Ill., was mobilized with the Effingham-based Company B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry in June 2008 and is part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) that deployed to Afghanistan in the fall of 2008. Dereck found out his fiancé was pregnant the same day he was mobilized and left Illinois for training.

"We were shocked," Daphney said with a smile. "He was excited, but he was also scared. There were a lot of different emotions all in one day."

Just eight days after giving birth, Daphney learned what to expect when her fiancé comes home from deployment in Afghanistan at an Illinois National Guard Family Academy in Mattoon.

"I am trying to get information to help him when he comes home and help him make the transition easier," Daphney said. "I know this won't be easy for him and I just want to be able to help him in every way I can."

Daphney and hundreds of families have taken advantage of a series of family academies throughout Illinois. The academies include booths where families can get information from different agencies and classes on what the families should expect when their loved one returns home.

The academy provides an opportunity for families to meet experts to answer their questions and give them the tools and insight to ease the challenges of reintegration. Reintegration is a process service members endure as they transition from Soldier back to citizen following



A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION: Spc. Dereck Bly, Soldier with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry based in Effingham, sees his daughter, Addilyn, for the first time at an airport in mid-March after coming home on leave from Afghanistan. Addilyn was born in February while Dereck was deployed to Afghanistan with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. His company is expected to be home in late May or early June.

Photo courtesy of Daphney Bell

mobilization.

While Soldiers receive reintegration training upon returning from deployment, families need to receive similar information prior to the service member returning home. Family academies were started in 2008

to teach families about the information the Soldier will learn when they attend reintegration training.

Col. Michael Haerr of Eureka, Deputy Commander of the 33rd IBCT, said the academies are extremely important for the

families to understand what to expect after deployment. He said it is also imperative to meet others who are experiencing similar issues.

"It's important for the families to come out and support each other," Haerr said. "Just like Soldiers have a network, families need to build a similar network and understand they are not alone. This is the first time many people are separated from their loved ones and they are all learning to cope."

The Illinois National Guard has taken a proactive approach by reaching out to the families to make sure the Soldiers are aware of what services and help are available when they come home.

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti of Springfield, Assistant Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, said he understands that Soldiers receive this information when they get back to the states, but said reintegration is not what they are thinking about.

"We give the same information to the Soldiers, but they're not listening to the briefings because they only have one thing on their mind and that's coming home to (their family)," he said.

Reintegration is not just a program for service members after a deployment, it is something the entire family must undergo as everyone readjusts to changes that have happened during the course of the service member's deployment. This is one of the many ways the Illinois National Guard is trying to help families of deployed men and women who are sometimes fighting their own battles at home while their Soldier is fighting a war overseas.

For more information on the Illinois National Guard's Family Academies and reintegration, log onto the Illinois National Guard's Web site at www.il.ngb.army.mil or call the Illinois National Guard reintegration office at 217-761-3071.

Proud to be a military spouse, despite challenges

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Stephanie McCurry
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – Recognizing the commitment and increasing sacrifices families make every day and to acknowledging the strength of Soldiers comes from the strength of their families, Spouses routinely put the welfare of their Soldiers, family and nation above their own. Today, military spouses confront multiple deployments, relocations and separations while gracefully coping with military life.

These spouses are celebrated May 8 with Military Spouse Day.

Lindsey Williams has been married to Brad Williams, both residents of Aledo, for more than three years now. Staff Sgt. Brad Williams is a Soldier with the 444th Chemical Company based in Galesburg, and has been in the Illinois Army National Guard for more than nine years. Brad proposed to Lindsey in March 2003 during a military ball and were married in December 2005.

"Being a military spouse means a lot to me," said Lindsey. "When you put military in front of spouse, it means you do all of the things necessary to be a spouse and then you do them over long distances and under a lot of stress. It's difficult being a military spouse but the reward you feel is so worth it."

Being a military spouse comes with its advantages and disadvantages just like anything else. The honor and pride of being a military spouse is "exhilarating," but there are also the daily challenges of worrying about your spouse, said Lindsey.

The Williams family spent their first year of marriage apart. Lindsey lived in Aledo, where they purchased their home, and Brad worked full-time in Machesney Park, more than 160 miles away.

Lindsey and Brad have three children, a 10 year-old daughter and two sons ages 6 and 7. Although Brad is gone a lot, their children are extremely proud of their father.

"Even though it's hard on them, they are still very proud to have a dad who is a Soldier and they try to do things to make him proud of them when he gets home," said Lindsey. "They brag about him to their friends and people at school and in the community."

None the less, there are a lot of challenges Lindsey faces being a military spouse. She tries to stay positive all of the time, especially for the kids. Also, it's complicated to plan out family activities because of changing and conflicting schedules. The simple fact of everyday life while your spouse is gone is a challenge, reiterated Lindsey.

"Sometimes I feel like a single mom," Lindsey said. "There are many things I worry about having my husband in the military, and I don't want my kids to feel my stress. I sometimes get discouraged and feel like it's not fair that my husband misses so much."

There is something that does help her through the challenges, though.

"Unlike a lot of military families, my children and I still have our Soldier and that gets me through the challenges" she said.

Not everything about being a military

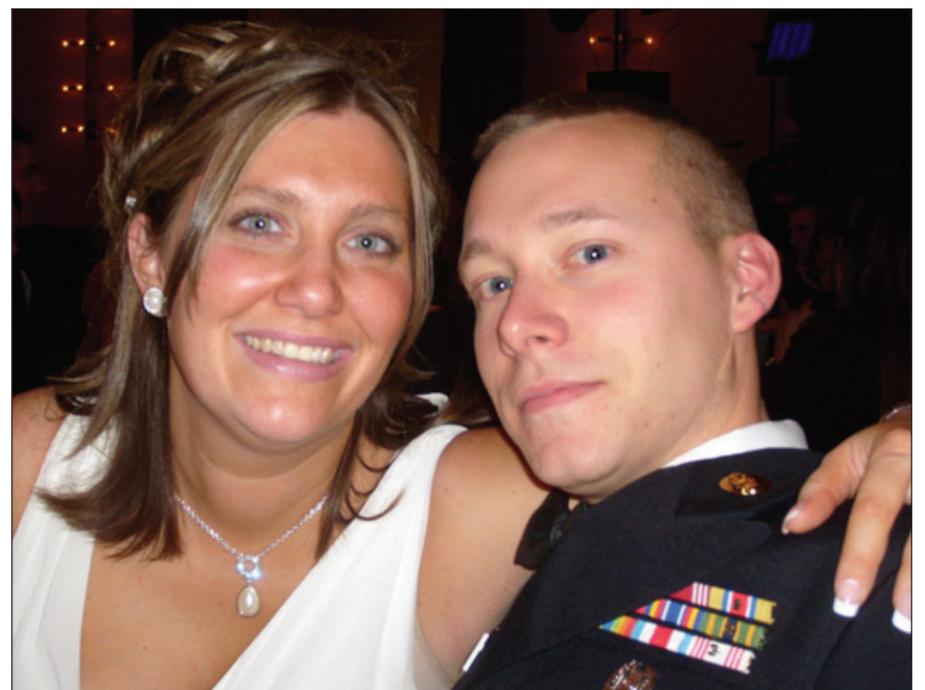


Photo courtesy of Lindsey Williams

THE HAPPY COUPLE: Lindsey and her husband Staff Sgt. Brad Williams, of Aledo, here during a military ball, have been married for more than three years and have three children. Williams is a Soldier of the 444th Chemical Company based in Galesburg.

spouse is trying; there is a lot of pride and honor being a military spouse.

"My favorite thing about being a military spouse is the pride I feel standing next to my husband," said Lindsey. "The way that people look at me when my husband is in his uniform next to me, it's remarkable. I love the way that other people look at him with respect and thank him for everything

he does. It makes me proud to be his wife."

Soldiers depend on their families for support, because, there are a lot of challenges in today's world.

"I love being a military spouse and even though sometimes it is very tough, I wouldn't trade it for anything," Lindsey said.

NEWS BRIEFS

Newman retires

SPRINGFIELD – In December 2008, Col. John Newman retired from after 33 years with the Illinois Air National Guard, 14 years which were in the position of United States Property and Fiscal Officer (USPFO) for Illinois. On March 10, he was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal at Camp Lincoln by Maj. Gen. William Enyart, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

“I feel truly honored to receive this award,” Newman said. “My successes in my career were due in part to the amazing colleagues whom I worked with and the brave men and women who serve our country every day.”



Col. John Newman

Illinois Soldiers win journalism awards

SPRINGFIELD – Two Illinois National Guard Soldiers won awards in the U.S. Army’s Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware journalism competition.

Spc. Lalita Laksbergs won the “Rising Star” outstanding new writer award and Sgt. Cassidy Snyder won third place in the military photo competition for her photo entitled “Get in There.”

Laksbergs, a Springfield resident, assigned to the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Springfield, submitted several news and feature stories.

Snyder, a resident of Rochester and native of Nokomis, is assigned to the Joint Force Headquarters in Springfield.

Army civilian journalists and Soldiers from around the world competed for a winning title in many different journalism categories, ranging from civilian photographer to print journalist of the year.



Sgt. Cassidy Snyder



Spc. Lalita Laksbergs

Calling all UPARs:

Calling all Unit Public Affairs Representatives – the Illinois Guardian needs you!

We are always on the lookout for good stories and photos or ideas for upcoming issues of the paper. If you have stories or photos to submit for consideration, see the deadline below or contact the public affairs office at (217) 761-3569 or via e-mail at ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil for more information.

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A helping hand in Afghanistan

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Lionel Gonzalez
Company C, 1st Battalion
178th Infantry Regiment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers are bringing humanitarian assistance and medical care to a former insurgent stronghold in Afghanistan. Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, based in Kankakee, are assigned to the Security Forces (SECFOR) platoon of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). Afghanistan provinces Kapisa and Parwan have teamed up with the French Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Team, based out of Forward Operating Base Morales Frazier in Kapisa. As a team, more than 500 supplies were delivered in three days followed by four days of fighting in Alasai Valley March 14 to 17.

The Afghan National Army (ANA), in coordination with its U.S. Marine Embedded Training Team (ETT) and Task Force Tiger, made its push into Alasai Valley to build two combat outposts for a stronger presence in an area that has seen a strengthening insurgency. Task Force Tiger called upon the CIMIC team and the PRT to bring humanitarian assistance supplies and medical attention in an effort to win the support of the local population.

These humanitarian assistance drops were conducted on March 17, 19 and 21, and included blankets, food, clothing, radios, toys and school supplies for the children.

“The local people agree with this operation and hope the situation changes with the presence of Afghan National Army and coalition forces,” said Capt. Werner Cerf, CIMIC team leader. “Our job here and the whole point of these humanitarian assistance drops are to gain the confidence of the population for coalition forces.”

This operation proved to be a



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Lionel Gonzalez, Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment
HELPING OUT: A French Soldier prepares to give a kite to an Afghan boy while Sgt. Michael Mangulabnan, of Plainfield and member of 3rd platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment provides security during a humanitarian assistance drop on March 19.

good test for what success will look like in the other troubled valleys in Kapisa province that have seen a strengthening insurgency.

“The Afghan National Army and my [Marines] are on day eight of this operation and right now we have the momentum,” said Lt. Col. Sean Wester, ETT commander. “We need to repeat the success here in Afghanya and Tag Ab valleys.”

While the ANA and French CIMIC Soldiers distributed the humanitarian assistance to the local population and the SECFOR platoon secured the site, the CIMIC leaders and Master Sgt. Kevin Smith, the U.S. Army Civil Affairs team leader for the PRT, conducted meetings with local leaders and village elders. These meetings were used to gauge what the people of

Alasai thought about coalition forces and what improvements they wanted to see in their district.

“An overwhelming majority of the elders mentioned they want a mosque with a caved in roof in the center of their village to be repaired from damage that was caused over time and unrelated to the recent fighting, and new roads built in their district to connect them to the rest of their province,” said Smith.

The PRT will use the dialogues started with village elders during these humanitarian assistance missions in deciding which projects to begin in the district once the area sees stable security gains.

PRT Kapisa and Parwan works with inter-governmental agencies, local engineers and contractors to build schools, health clinics, roads, government buildings and other infrastructure throughout Kapisa and Parwan provinces in Afghanistan.

The Kankakee unit is deployed part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

They will return this summer or early fall.

“The local people agree with this operation and hope the situation changes with the presence of Afghan National Army and coalition forces.”

Capt. Werner Cerf, CIMIC team leader

Lamont named assistant secretary

Retired Guardsman nominated by Obama

By U.S. Army Sgt. Aleah Castrejon
Illinois National Guard
Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois National Guard retired Col. Thomas Lamont, a native of Virginia, Ill., has been chosen to bring new insight and ideas to the table as he takes the position of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Lamont’s responsibilities include oversight of all Army personnel: active, Guard, Reserve, civilians and contractors. He will be a key player for civilian and military manpower issues.

Having been in the military for almost 26 years, Lamont will bring his military viewpoint to the position.

“I want to bring perspective to all current guard and reserve issues,” said Lamont.

Lamont, a Springfield resident, is

honored to have been selected for the position.

“I am very excited, fortunate and privileged to be selected,” said Lamont. “I hope to be a credit to the Army and the administration in a position of trust and I want to excel in the job expected of me.”

Lamont was a part of the Joint Force Headquarters based in Springfield. He retired in 2007 after serving as the Staff Judge Advocate General. Lamont earned a bachelor’s degree in Government Law and Legislative Affairs from Illinois State University in 1969 and earned a law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1972.

“I am proud of my service in the guard. I have very much enjoyed my



Thomas Lamont

time in the Illinois National Guard and appreciate all the opportunities afforded to me,” said Lamont. “I grew professionally by having guard experience and have formed friendships and relationships with many great citizen-Soldiers.”

Lamont is a long-time Springfield attorney and partner at Gordon & Glickson and Alheimer & Gray, and the Springfield firm of Brown, Hay & Stephens. He concentrated his practice in Government Law and Legislative Affairs. In the public arena, Lamont has served as executive director of the Office of the State Attorney Appellate Prosecutor, director of Civil Litigation in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and currently, as special counsel to the University of Illinois.

The U.S. Senate Armed Services committee approved Lamont’s appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs on May 14. The full Senate approved his appointment on May 18.