



HIGHGROUND COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

*Training in Iraq continues
for Colorado Guardsmen*

*Special Ops troops
return home*

*The last
resort*

*A fighter
pilot's story*

November 2009

*Buckley
youths 'deploy'*

Fight the flu!

Clearing out the enemy

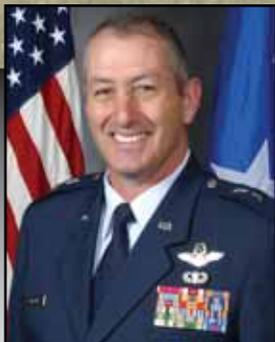
Continuing the story of the 327th's Afghan deployment
www.cong.army.mil/highground/news/default.asp

Vol. 5, No. 6

Photocopying military identification OK for medical care	3	Did you know ... Why we salute?	27
Colorado leaders visit Alamosa Armory	3	Bronco visits Guardsmen	28
How you and your Family can stay healthy during flu season	4	Training in Iraq continues for Colorado field artillery	30
Colorado Guard athlete competes for chance at 2010 Winter Olympics	6	Stay alert, stay alive!	36
The last resort A fighter pilot's story of multiple bailouts in expensive jets	8	Deployed tattoo artist builds esprit de corps	38
Egress	13	Providing overwatch across the battlefield	40
In search of a flightless Falcon Colorado aviators help in search for 'Balloon Boy'	16	Guardians of space keep watch over warfighters	41
Clearing out the enemy and training local cops, troops	18	Army Space Support Team 26 proudly displays Colorado State flag	41
Colorado Army Guard welcomes new commander Mills hands off reigns to Capozzella in massive ceremony	22	First of its kind Combined joint services course graduates its Soldiers	42
State's newest top enlisted Airman takes charge	24	Buckley youths "deploy"	44
Doing more with less	26	Infantry headquarters lines up satellite support	46
		Just say 'no'	48
		Stay on track	49
		The Family Unit Preparing for deployment and finding the grocery list	50

Cover photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli
3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery

PUBLICATION STAFF



**COLORADO
NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

6848 S. Revere Pkwy.
Centennial, CO 80112-3904

MAJ. GEN. H. MICHAEL EDWARDS
The Adjutant General
CAPT. ELENA O'BRYAN
State Public Affairs Officer
MAJ. RENEE CUNNINGHAM
*Chief of Public Affairs,
Joint Staff*
CAPT. DARIN OVERSTREET
Deputy PAO, Joint Staff
CAPT. MICHAEL ODGERS
Commander, 104th PAD

CAPT. KRISTIN HALEY
Public Affairs Officer, 140th Wing
MAJ. LAURA KENNEY
*Chief of Public Affairs,
100th MDB*
TECH. SGT. CHERESA D. THEIRAL
Editor-in-Chief
ARMY STAFF SGT. SCOTT GRIFFIN
Layout Editor
AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. NICOLE MANZANARES
Graphic Artist

The High|Ground is an authorized, official publication of the Colorado National Guard. Contents of the High|Ground are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Department of the Air Force or the National Guard Bureau. The High Ground staff reserves the right to edit all material. Comments may be sent to ngcopao@ng.army.mil, or call (720) 250-1054.

Photocopying military identification OK for medical care



By Shari Lopatin
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

When the doctor's office asks for a military ID card and makes a copy, it's OK — and usually necessary.

To receive medical care, servicemembers and their families need to show their eligibility for TRICARE. Although those who enroll in TRICARE Prime will receive a TRICARE Prime ID card, the key to showing eligibility is the valid military ID card.

Servicemembers and their families will need their military ID card for medical care, pharmacy benefits and dental care. Many times, the doctor may copy the military ID card for the patient's records and to confirm TRICARE eligibility when submitting a claim.

Federal law prohibits photographing

or making prints of military ID cards unless it is to receive medical treatment; a valid military ID card is proof of TRICARE eligibility and can be photocopied. Like everything else in a patient's record, it is protected by law.

If a patient is visiting a specialist, such as a heart doctor, he or she may have additional forms to fill out, just as at any first-time doctor's visit. The patient should tell the receptionist he or she has TRICARE; the receptionist may ask for the patient's military ID card which is acceptable just as a doctor's office might photocopy a private insurance card. Usually, a beneficiary's primary care doctor won't need to see a military ID card.

Servicemembers should be aware,

however, that copies of their military ID cards cannot be made for substitute cards, or for any other purpose than to show their TRICARE eligibility to receive medical treatment.

Patients on Prime and Prime Remote can request a TRICARE card via TRICARE's Beneficiary Web Enrollment site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe/index.jsp> or at www.triwest.com/bwe. The card will be sent to the patient's mailing address listed in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

To replace a military ID card, service members should visit their nearest military ID card office, which can be found at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl. 

Colorado leaders visit Alamosa armory

ALAMOSA, Colo. (10/9/09)— Colorado Army National Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Thomas Mills, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and Colorado Adjutant General Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards visit the Alamosa armory in Alamosa, Colo., Oct. 9. Ritter visited the numerous cities in the San Luis Valley during the day and stopped to receive a briefing from Company D, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry 'War Horse' Soldiers who work and drill at the temporary facility at the Alamosa Airport.  Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Scott Griffin



How you and your family can stay healthy during flu season

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (10/23/09) — Due to confirmed human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection throughout the U.S., the Colorado National Guard is taking the precautionary step to make prevention information available for all Soldiers, Airmen and their families to ensure the health of the force and families. Please reference the following links for detailed information regarding outbreak developments.

Resources:

Developments regarding CONG actions associated with the H1N1 outbreak will be posted on this Web page and on the CONG information line (720) 250-1018.

Governor Bill Ritter, Jr., announced Colorado's support of a new comprehensive patient flu health-assessment Web site — AMAfluhelp.org —

designed to help patients determine the severity of their flu symptoms and allow them to share their information with their physician. Coloradans are encouraged to access the site by going to www.colorado.gov/nofluforyou. The new program gives patients the ability to assess symptoms quickly, interact with their physician and receive advice on

when to return to work or school.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/h1n1.html

The CDPHE has also established a public help line: 1 (877) 462-2911.

Colorado Flu Clinic Locations: www.immunizationcolorado.com

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.flu.gov

Department of Defense: fhp.osd.mil/aiWatchboard/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Prevention Tips:

What Guard Members and Their Families Can Do to Stay Healthy

- Get vaccinated. Vaccination is the best protection we have against flu. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now and initial doses of 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will soon become available to servicemembers.

- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. To prevent the spread of the virus, if you have flu-like symptoms (e.g., fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, or upset stomach), contact your supervisor and stay home.

Take everyday actions to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. The CDC and the Governor's

Office recommend you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

Children and adolescents with a fever should not go to day care or school. Adults with a fever should not go to work until their symptoms resolve. Individuals with severe illness, such as difficulty breathing, should contact their health care provider or emergency services, as appropriate.

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and take other social distancing measures.
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

- Stay informed.
- Talk to your doctor or primary care physician if you have questions.

The CDC is the lead federal agencies for preparedness and response to this health matter. The CDPHE is the lead state agency in any flu outbreak in Colorado. Civilian authorities direct Swine

Flu response operations. In the event of a pandemic, the CONG would provide synchronized support as the first military responder during domestic emergencies.

The Soldiers and Airmen of the Colorado National Guard are always ready, always there, to assist civil authorities to save lives and mitigate human suffering.

The Governor's Office is continuing to monitor the situation and is in contact with local public health agencies in Colorado, as well as medical providers and pharmacies. 



Colorado Guard athlete competes for chance at 2010 Winter Olympics

By Sgt. 1st Class Jon Soucy
National Guard Bureau

The 2010 Winter Olympics are a few short months away, and several Army National Guard Soldiers are currently competing for slots on the bobsled and luge teams at the Olympic Sports Complex in Lake Placid, N.Y.

The Soldiers, Sergeants Mike Kohn, Shauna Rohbock, Jeremy White, Courtney Zablocki and Pfc. John Napier are all members of the National Guard's Outstanding Athlete Program, which brings Guard members on active duty to train and compete in their chosen sports.

Over the next few weeks, they will compete in 10 races on a variety of tracks to determine who will go to the Olympics. The Olympic team will be announced in January.

For the bobsled event, drivers of the sled are awarded points based on where they finish in each of the trials, which started here at the Olympic Sports Complex in October and will soon move to the track at Park City, Utah.

"It's kind of like NASCAR racing or auto racing where you accumulate points," said Kohn, an infantryman from the Virginia ARNG, who competes in both the four- and two-man bobsled events. "The points are what determine who will make the Olympic team."

For Kohn, who earned the bronze medal in the four-man bobsled event at the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City, the pressure is on to earn more points in coming races.

"We're halfway done (with the trials), and I think I'm sitting in third place right now," he said. "I've got my work cut out for me. I've done it before, though."

But for others, there isn't as much pressure. For Rohbock, a personnel specialist in the Utah ARNG and one of the top female bobsledders in the world, this recent round of races mean additional time to train and work out the kinks.

"I took second at the world championships and according to our criteria I get a bye onto the team – the national team – not the Olympic team," she said, adding that races in the coming weeks will count toward a slot on the Olympic team.



Sgt. Courtney Zablocki, a personnel specialist with the Colorado Army National Guard and member of the Guard's Outstanding Athlete Program, competed in the 2002 and 2006 Winter Olympics and will be competing for a slot on the 2010 U.S. Winter Olympic team.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class John Soucy

But for now, she said, it's nice to race without that pressure.

"During these team trials, I'm just trying to get my feel back as a driver," said Rohbock. "... These other people are feeling the pressure and they've only been down the ice like 10 runs and then they have to race and that's a little nerve-wracking when you haven't been on it all summer long."

For Zablocki, a Colorado Army National Guard personnel specialist who competes in the luge event, the races here are a prep for Park City, which will determine who will compete in the luge in the World Cup, which will then determine who goes to the Olympics.

"I'm feeling really good," said Zablocki, after her runs at Lake Placid. "I was happy with the times I had so far. I'm feeling comfortable ... I'm just going into next week really happy and giving it my all."



Sgt. Courtney Zablocki, a personnel specialist in the Colorado Army National Guard and member of the Guard's Outstanding Athlete Program, prepares for a training run in the luge at the Lake Placid Olympic Sports Complex in Lake Placid, N.Y., Oct. 15.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class John Soucy

And for Zablocki, like Rohbock, Lake Placid was a chance to get back into a groove with the equipment.

"This is just training, getting ready to race and making sure your equipment is ready to go and you're comfortable on it," said Zablocki. "For my first run today things were really different. My sled was a lot more steerable than normal, the ice is harder, I don't have as much grip because I have different (runners) on today so a lot of it was, 'OK, how does my sled work?'"

Rohbock has taken notice of some of the run times of other bobsledders.

"The start record (for the women's bobsled event) here was 54.4 (seconds) and it was set by a couple of Canadian girls that are pretty good pushers," said Rohbock, adding that the course is about a mile in length. That record was recently broken, she said, by a team that ran the course in 47 seconds and then were able to drop that down to 46 seconds.

"That's insane," said Rohbock. "That's very fast, so we have a lot of great pushers coming up. It's good to know going into the season as a driver that you have some good brakemen behind you,

especially going into an Olympic year."

And for Rohbock, traveling down the track at those speeds is one of the appeals of the sport.

"Sometimes when you can see ahead of you and you're in this enormous curve and you're driving this bobsled with all this weight and all these G-forces and everything that is included in that, sometimes you're just like 'This is so cool,'" said Rohbock. "You're going down the track and sometimes you're just like, 'This is an awesome feeling. I wish everybody could feel this.'"

For Kohn, traveling fast makes for an easier run. "I prefer the faster ones; there is less thinking involved then," he said. "If you just do it and don't think about it, it's a little more natural."

And for Zablocki, the speeds she travels down the ice on the luge sled are similar, though the track is a bit shorter.

"Here, we're hitting upper 60s," she said. "My fastest speed that I've been clocked at has been 86 mph, so we're pretty quick speeding down these icy shoots and it can get a little nerve-wracking."

But that is part of the challenge. "It's a blast," said Zablocki. "You just kind of have to put it in the back of your mind and just go." 



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral

The last resort

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

A fighter pilot's story of multiple bailouts in expensive jets

“You pull the handle and the first thing you see is flames come out of the canopy rail, ’cause they have explosive charges in the canopy rail that fire and they ignite; you actually see those go. It’s a pretty bright flash and then you’re engulfed in flames and smoke. Then a split-second later, you’re outta there.”

– Air National Guard Lt. Col. Julian “Juice” Clay

It's a pilot's worst nightmare.

To eject from an aircraft – egress.

Colorado Air National Guard Lt. Col. Julian “Juice” Clay has been there – twice.

An experienced F-16 pilot with more than 2,500 flight hours in the jet, Clay is the 140th Wing Air Sovereignty Alert officer in command, responsible for air defense for the Rocky Mountain region. He also commands the fighter pilots of Flight B and is responsible for scheduling and tracking all ground training for 120th Fighter Squadron pilots. In addition to numerous deployments, he has completed three combat tours with the 120th FS.

Clay's first egress occurred Nov. 9, 1993, about 15 to 20 miles northwest of Laramie, Wyo. He'd only had his pilot wings for a little over a year.

Flying a low-altitude afternoon training sortie in aircraft 86-325, then 27-year-old Capt. Clay's engine stalled, and moments later completely failed. After gliding for a short period of time while he attempted to restart the engine, he soon realized he was about to be in for a bit more than he bargained for on his flight.

Clay reached between his legs, pulled the bright yellow ejection handle and braced for the worst.

After blasting out of his F-16 a little over 600 feet above the ground, Clay's chute deployed and he swayed in mid-air for only a matter of seconds before harshly impacting into a barren field of sage brush.

“I actually thought that I wasn't hurt, because of the adrenaline I guess.” Clay recalled. “I tried to stand up – it was fairly windy – but I couldn't keep my balance. I wasn't putting weight on my left leg, then I figured

out it was broken. I actually sat down on the ground and looked at my leg and the bottom portion of it was just dangling and the bone was sticking out.”

Clay's Wingman, now retired Maj. Sean Pavlich, saw the entire incident. He called in for a search and rescue, and flew a couple of low passes to make sure Clay was safe. Clay lay shivering in a field and conducted first-aid on his shattered leg while he waited for help. A rescue helicopter from F.E. Warren Air Force Base, which contained a doctor and a combat search and rescue team, arrived on the scene an hour and 45 minutes later.

The accident left Clay with a triple compound fracture of the left tibia and fibula. He was in and out of Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center for the next 13 months, of which 84 days were spent as an inpatient. During this time, Clay received multiple surgeries to repair his leg.

A six-month investigation conducted by the Air Force surrounding Clay's crash revealed the accident was caused by an overheated engine from a ruptured seal. The Air Force concluded there was no pilot error, but the \$20 million aircraft was unsalvageable.

“Until your fellow pilots and your peers get the evidence that it wasn't pilot error, everybody is a little standoffish,” Clay said. “You're not ostracized or outcast or anything but everybody is kinda like, ‘Did that pilot make that mistake?’ Then once you're cleared and exonerated, then it's OK.”

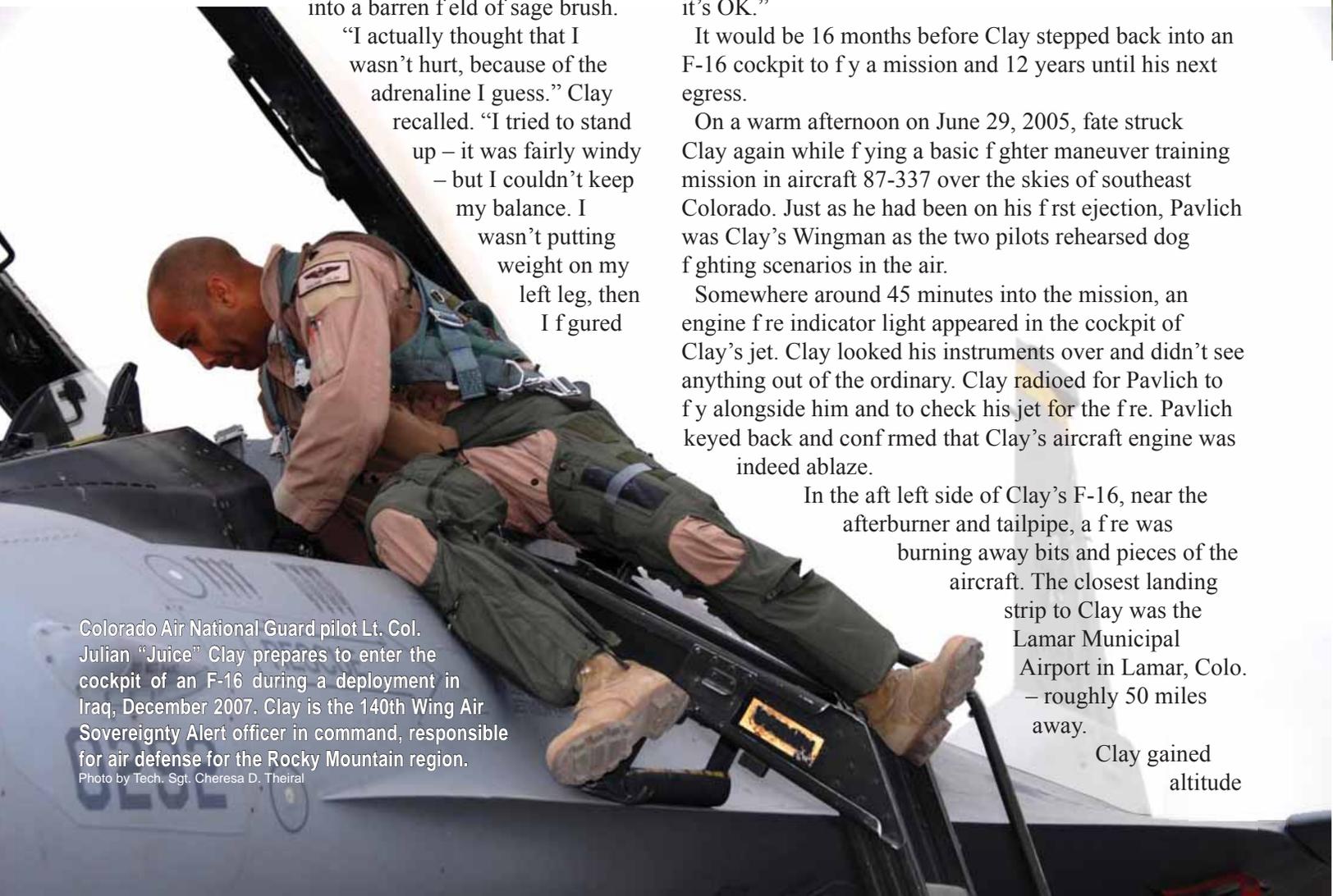
It would be 16 months before Clay stepped back into an F-16 cockpit to fly a mission and 12 years until his next egress.

On a warm afternoon on June 29, 2005, fate struck Clay again while flying a basic fighter maneuver training mission in aircraft 87-337 over the skies of southeast Colorado. Just as he had been on his first ejection, Pavlich was Clay's Wingman as the two pilots rehearsed dog fighting scenarios in the air.

Somewhere around 45 minutes into the mission, an engine fire indicator light appeared in the cockpit of Clay's jet. Clay looked his instruments over and didn't see anything out of the ordinary. Clay radioed for Pavlich to fly alongside him and to check his jet for the fire. Pavlich keyed back and confirmed that Clay's aircraft engine was indeed ablaze.

In the aft left side of Clay's F-16, near the afterburner and tailpipe, a fire was burning away bits and pieces of the aircraft. The closest landing strip to Clay was the Lamar Municipal Airport in Lamar, Colo. – roughly 50 miles away.

Clay gained altitude



Colorado Air National Guard pilot Lt. Col. Julian “Juice” Clay prepares to enter the cockpit of an F-16 during a deployment in Iraq, December 2007. Clay is the 140th Wing Air Sovereignty Alert officer in command, responsible for air defense for the Rocky Mountain region.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral



What is left of Colorado Air National Guard F-16 aircraft 87-337 lies 150 yards south of the Lamar Municipal Airport's runway in Lamar, Colo., June 29, 2005.

Photo courtesy Lamar Ledger

to reach a point where he could shut off the engine and glide to the airport. The F-16 has no fire-suppression system and shutting off the fuel supply to the engine is the only possible measure of cutting off an engine fire.

After Clay idled his jet, the fire went out and he began his approach to the 6,000-foot-long runway.

“It isn’t very much (the runway length),” Clay said. “With a successful landing, I probably would’ve burned up the brakes and used the entire length of the runway, but I was willing to take the risk.”

Clay landed the F-16 on the runway, but when he went to apply the brakes nothing happened. The jet began to veer right and Clay lost all steering control. At 165 mph and approaching the edge of the runway, Clay decided his ride was over and he ejected from his aircraft for the second time in his career.

“I got about half a swing out of the parachute because I was on the ground for this ejection,” Clay recalled. “Ejecting is a pretty violent procedure. Your body is jostled around pretty good. ... I had a slightly sprained ankle, but other than that I was fine.”

Clay’s F-16 was totaled. Immediately after his egress, it tumbled and the nose and canopy section broke off from the fuselage, which came to rest 150 yards south of the runway. The investigation concluded that the engine fire

had burned through one of the brake channels and the rudder, which left Clay with no directional control or the ability to stop on the runway. The cause of the fire was traced all the way back to an Airman in Spain who overtightened an engine afterburner augmentor a number of years prior to the crash.

Clay remembers both ejections very vividly and recounts some of the more important lessons that he took from them.

“When you eject and you’re floating to the earth under a good chute, you have a tendency to relax. You’ve just been through an intense aircraft emergency and once you make that decision to pull the handle ... You feel like it’s over, but the emergency really isn’t over until you survive the parachute landing fall and somebody comes to pick you up,” Clay said. “You don’t have time to relax. You have to stay on your game.”

Clay said the most important part of ejecting is the parachute landing fall.

“You put your feet and knees together and your eyes on the horizon and concentrate on the parachute landing fall – dispersing the force throughout your whole body – so you kinda want to roll to the points of impact on your side,” he said. “And then if it’s a windy day immediately release the parachute off so you’re not dragged along the surface. Those are the things you have to concentrate on.”



Pilot Lt. Col. Juliun “Juice” Clay of the COANG’s 120th Fighter Squadron ejected from the jet after a fire engulfed his engine and burned a brake channel and the rudder, which caused him to emergency land and veer off the runway. Clay suffered only minor injuries from the ejection.

Photo courtesy Lamar Ledger

The F-16 is equipped with an Advanced Concept Ejection Seat II (see page 13) that Clay highly praised.

“The ACES II seat is a great seat,” Clay said. “I might go try and find a job with that company when I retire. I’d be a great spokesman for them.”

Two ejections that resulted in the loss of \$40 million worth of government property didn’t erode Clay’s sense of humor about the accidents. After all, neither crash was his fault and Clay continues to take to the skies in the F-16 to this day.

“It’s an inherently dangerous job ... and it (ejection) happens more often than we care for it to. We’re as safe as we possibly can be, y’know. It’s ... what I love to do ... and,” Clay said as he knocked on plastic, “with the grace of God hopefully I’ll be able to continue to do it until I’m ready to end on my own terms.” 

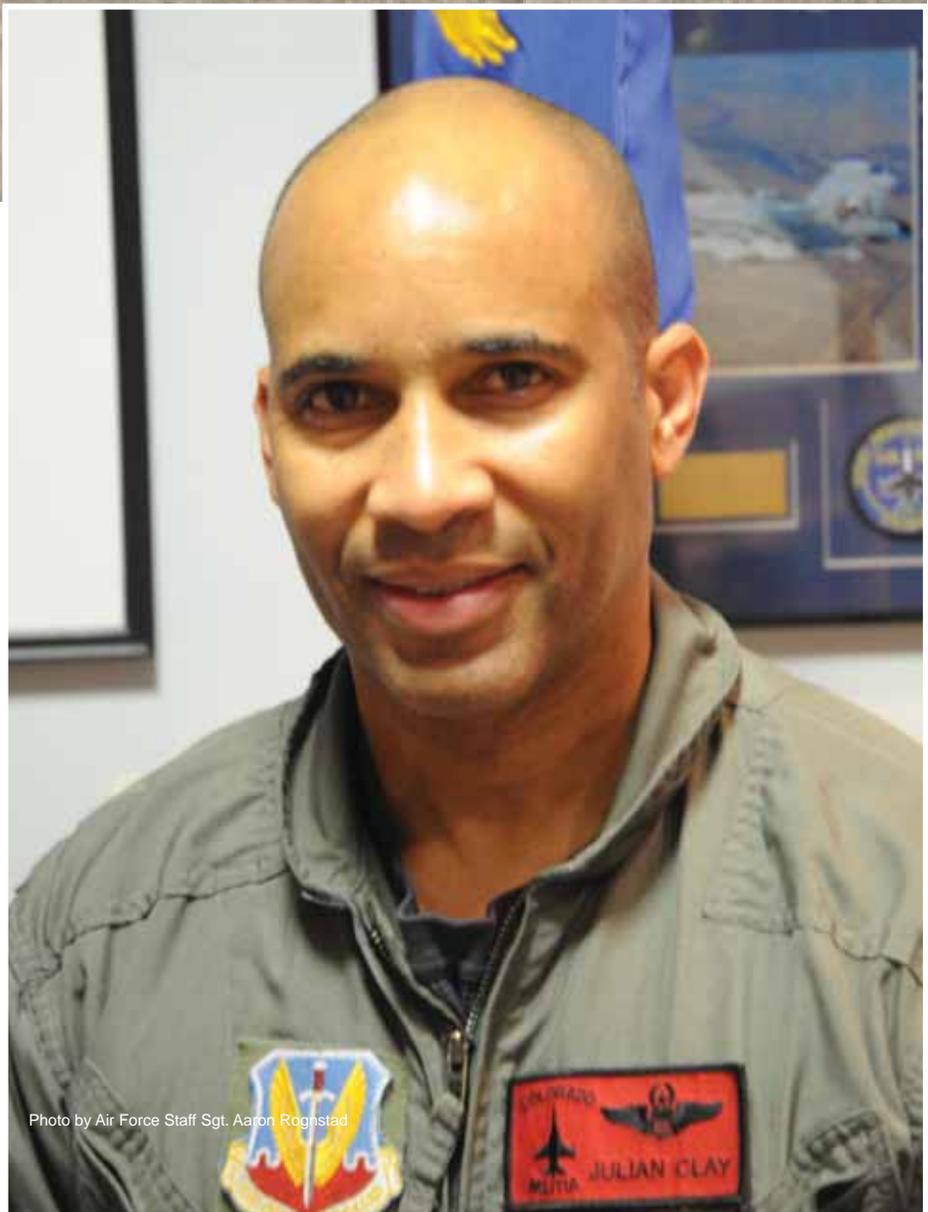


Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rogstad



EGRESS

- egress [n. ee-
gres; v.
i-gres]
-noun
1. the act or an instance of going, esp. from an enclosed place.
 2. a means or place of going out; an exit.
 3. the right or permission to go out.
 4. to go out; emerge.





The ejection handle on the inside of an F-16 cockpit is located in the middle of the seat between where the pilot's legs would rest. If pulled, the pilot will safely eject and deploy parachute in about 1.8 seconds.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

That yellow handle that sits in between an F-16 pilot's legs? That's the pilot's last chance of survival.

**By Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs**

Egress troops don't want to see their systems in action.

If an egress occurs, this means that something terribly wrong has happened and a pilot is blowing in the wind somewhere and a multi-million dollar aircraft has been lost.

By definition, to egress is to leave something. In the Air Force's case, egress is an invaluable career field that involves the quick jettison of an aircraft canopy and its ejection seat, allowing a pilot to safely eject from a malfunctioning plane.

"Egress gives the pilots a reliable system – should the opportunity present itself – to leave a disabled aircraft," said Master Sgt. Dave Bell, an 18-year egress technician and noncommissioned officer in charge of the Egress Shop with the 140th Maintenance Group.

Ten traditional Guardsmen and three full-time technicians run the Egress Shop which is literally the last lifeline for a pilot who has to bail out of his or her aircraft. In the 140th's case, it's the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Since 1991, the year the Wing converted from the A-7 Corsair to the F-16 Fighting Falcon airframe, the system has only been used real-world twice – both by the same pilot .

When a pilot feels he can no longer safely control his aircraft and fears that he will most likely perish if he tries, it's time to pull the yellow handle between his legs



Tech Sgt. Scott Haug, an egress technician with the 140th Maintenance Group, swaps out a parachute in the F-16 aircraft. Parachutes are swapped out every 12 months on the plane. Egress technicians maintain aircraft egress systems including ejection seats, canopies, hatches, and modules; explosive components; subsystems; and related support equipment.

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad

and get ready for one heck of a ride.

Pulling the ejection handle on a seat sets off an explosive cartridge in the catapult gun, launching the ejection seat into the air. As the seat rides up the guide rails, a leg-restraint system is activated. These leg restraints are designed to protect the pilot's legs from getting caught or harmed by debris during the ejection. An underseat rocket motor, propelled by five-and-a-half pounds of solid rocket fuel, provides the force that lifts the crewmember to a safe height.

Prior to the ejection system launching, the canopy is jettisoned to allow the crewmember to escape the cockpit. The seat, parachute and survival pack are also ejected from the plane along with the

crewmember. All this is done in 1.8 seconds.

"As soon as we hear that there's been an accident and we find out that the pilot is okay – yeah, that's all we need right there really," Bell said of the gratification he feels when he hears about a successful egress. "Airplanes can be replaced. The person flying the airplane cannot. It's always gratifying to know that the pilot's out and they're safe and that's good."

Initial egress training is six weeks long and is located at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas. After Airmen successfully pass their initial technical school, they move on to a two-and-a-half week field training detachment course at either Hill, Nellis, or Luke AFB to certify on the aircraft that they

will be working on at their home stations.

COANG Staff Sgt. Mike Smith, a traditional egress troop for the last six years, was formerly attached to the 110th Fighter Wing at Battlecreek Air National Guard Base in Michigan. There, he worked on the egress system on the A-10 Warthog airframe up until a year-and-a-half ago and expressed his feelings about the career field as a whole:

"I think egress is a good field if you're mechanically inclined and maybe if you don't have a lot of time to go to (technical) school it's good," Smith said. "It also gives the man up there using the plane another chance. I know one pilot in Michigan that needed it. He was very thankful for egress." 

IN SEARCH OF A FLIGHTLESS FALCON

Colorado aviators help in search for 'Balloon Boy'

**By Spc. Benjamin Crane and Deb Grigsby Smith
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs**

BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (10/15/09) – The Colorado National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility was called upon to aid in the search for a lost 6-year-old feared to be inside a homemade helium balloon.

Weld County authorities were told the young boy had crawled inside the aircraft before it was somehow released from the family's home in Fort Collins, Colo.

Around 11:30 a.m., a balloon shaped much like an alien space ship was floating over northeastern Colorado. Believing young Falcon Heene was inside, local authorities worked with the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center to request that the Colorado National Guard assist in securing the uncontrolled experimental aircraft.

That is when members of the Army Aviation Support Facility sprung into action.

Initially, an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter was called to the location to provide aerial observation. Minutes later, a UH-60 Black Hawk was dispatched with its crew of five, including a medic.

Pilot Army Col. Christopher Petty and his crew followed the cupcake-shaped saucer as it twirled and floated across the Colorado farmland.

As cold air moved in over the plains, the small craft began to lose altitude.

With one side apparently collapsing from the loss of helium, Weld County authorities and emergency responders raced across a freshly plowed field in an attempt to catch and secure the craft.

As the world watched, the small craft came closer and closer to the ground, eventually landing in the soft furrowed rows of a local farmer's field.

Rescuers quickly opened the small cardboard door of the craft, only to find the boy was not aboard.

Fears then turned to the possibility the boy slipped out of the compartment during flight.



Colorado Army National Guard aviators Staff Sgt. Bryan Scott and Sgt. Nick Cornelius search for 6-year-old Falcon Heene from inside a UH-60 Black Hawk over the skies of northeastern Colo. The boy reportedly went missing from his home in Fort Collins, Colo., aboard a homemade helium balloon Oct. 15.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane

Colorado Guard helicopters returned to their home at Buckley Air Force Base to conserve fuel and await further instructions as rescuers and incident commanders then began to plot a potential search area that was more than two miles wide and spanned two rural counties.

Petty and his crew took to the skies once again assisting local authorities in a frantic aerial search and rescue effort that lasted more than an hour.

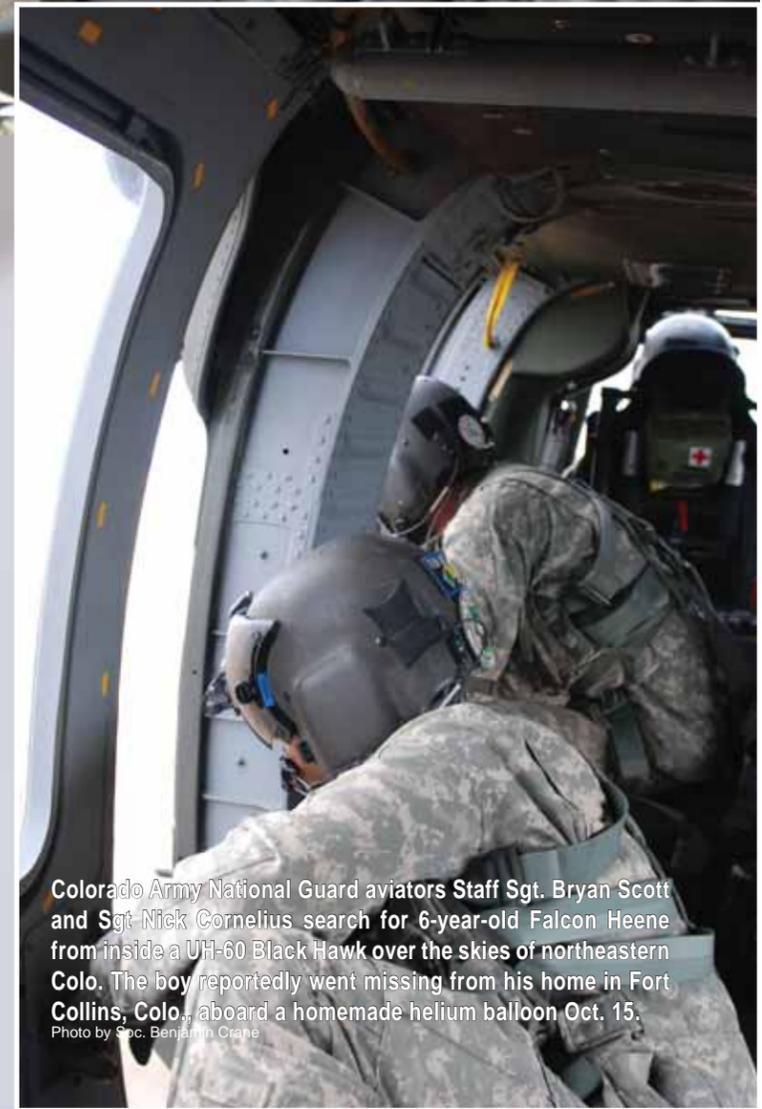
Just before ground search efforts were about to be added, local authorities reported young Falcon Heene had been found alive and well. He had reportedly been hiding in the attic of his home.

"As a National Guardsman when you see something unfold like this you want to assist in any way possible because you could potentially save a life," Petty said. "Thinking about that young boy potentially being up there and me having kids myself, we were happy to be able to respond and we were there to be ready to help." 



Colorado Army National Guard aviators Capt. Troy Brown (back) and Col. Christopher Petty (right) create a flight plan to search for 6-year-old Falcon Heene utilizing UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters over the skies of northeastern Colorado Oct. 15.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



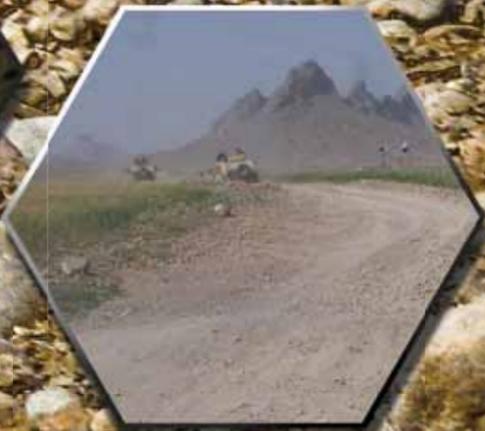
Colorado Army National Guard aviators Staff Sgt. Bryan Scott and Sgt. Nick Cornelius search for 6-year-old Falcon Heene from inside a UH-60 Black Hawk over the skies of northeastern Colo. The boy reportedly went missing from his home in Fort Collins, Colo., aboard a homemade helium balloon Oct. 15.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane

CLEARING OUT THE ENEMY

and training local
cops, troops

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs



Colorado Army National Guard Maj. Randall Schofield said the hardest part of training members of the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army was instilling a sense of national pride in the average ANP and ANA recruit. Tribal pride took precedence over any sort of national pride – if there was any at all for the young men.

Schofield was an operations planner and a counterinsurgency instructor with the 327th Embedded Training Team, Afghan Regional Security Integration Command (ARSIC) West. He spent April 2008 to January 2009 in Afghanistan with his 15-man team, whose overall mission was to provide advisory support and direct access to coalition forces to enhance the ability of ANP and ANA forces to operate independently.

“We were trying to get them (ANP and ANA) to think bigger than their individual tribe,” Schofield said. “That’s something that’s foreign to them, but is slowly beginning to seep in. We as Americans have very deep-seated national pride. They don’t have that as much. They have more of a strong foundation in what tribe they’re from, or what region they’re from, because they’ve never really been unified as one country.”

For Schofield, a planner with the 89th Troop Command and 19 years of military service, it was his first Afghan deployment and he stressed the importance of the mission.

“Police provide a very good service in giving people security overall. That’s why we’re building the police force there,” Schofield said. “In a lot of these places, the police were too corrupt and didn’t care about the local population except for what they could take from them and put in their pocket, because poverty is pretty big and incomes are pretty low.”

Schofield went on to explain that Coalition forces clear out an area of enemy insurgent forces and hold it until the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) come in to police the area. The ANCOP are a temporary police force that stand in while new ANP and ANA recruits train elsewhere at regional training centers. After a 10-week training course, recruits come back and shadow the ANCOP for two weeks. All the while, a police mentor team of around 15 American troops give guidance to both the ANCOP and the new ANP and ANA recruits.

“We have a philosophy of shape, clear, hold, build. That’s the strategy we use,” Schofield said. “We have to plan out an area that we’re going to go in and take and then plant in a police force in there after we take it.”

It all falls under a plan called Focused District Development that is occurring all over the country, Schofield explained. FDD’s aims are to train and equip the ANP district by district. The U.S.

Members of the 327th Embedded Training Team roll out for a mission in up-armored Humvees at Camp Stone, Herat, Afghanistan, October 2008.

Photo provided by Army Maj. Randall Schofield





began implementation of FDD in 2007 and relies on it to bring the ANP to a state of operational independence.

Schofield emphasized the crucial role of the ANCOP in the grand scheme of things.

“The ANCOP are highly trained in Kabul and they don’t have a vested interest in the areas we were in,” he said referring to the western sector of the country under Spanish and Italian International Security Force Command Coalition control. “So it cuts down corruption. There was police in the area before, but they would set up checkpoints on the highways and charge people a tax to use the road. The locals came to expect this shady behavior from the local cops. ANCOP would come in and show them what right looks like. They would show the people what to expect in a police force.”

One of the largest problems in the training of the ANA was teaching its officers the value of the noncommissioned officer ranks, Schofield said. A vast majority of his time was spent mentoring the ANA officers the value of the NCO.

“In the ANA, the officers wanted to march their soldiers,” Schofield said. “We had to tell them that this was the role of the NCO and they should be the backbone of the ANA, like any army. As we went along, they (ANA officers) saw the importance of this more and more.”

But at times it was the NCOs themselves who

were the problem. The average ANA officer makes \$800 a month Schofield said. The NCOs, who take in a mere fraction of this, would sometimes charge the privates in the ranks money to gain some extra bucks on the side. The average private only makes \$100 a month, Schofield said.

Schofield said it was hard at times to know who to trust and if they were there for the right intentions.

“There were guys that we weren’t sure of,” he said. “One of the guys in our kandak (the equivalent of a battalion in the Afghan Army) that was a supply sergeant had been selling gas to the enemy. When we got a hint of what he was doing, he went AWOL (absent without leave).”

Despite the shortcomings, setbacks and the overwhelming challenges presented to Schofield and his team, he said that everyone he deployed with kept up good morale, stayed busy and did their jobs to the best of their abilities. He personally wants to go back to Afghanistan and do it all over again.

“I hope to go back. The ETT – the mentor mission, the combat advisor mission – I feel is extremely valuable,” Schofield said. “You gain a lot of insight and a lot of value in working with all of the different countries and branches of services. The number one priority right now in Afghanistan is to get the ANA and ANP trained so that they can handle security in their own country.” 

Colorado Army Guard welcomes new commander

Mills hands off reigns to Capozzella in massive ceremony

By Spc. Benjamin Crane
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs



GLENDALE, Colo. (10/18/09) — Leadership for the Colorado Army National Guard changed hands as a new commander was ushered in Oct. 18.

Army Brig. Gen. Thomas Mills, who will retire after 43 years of service, handed over command of the COARNG to Army Col. Dana Capozzella during a ceremony at Infinity Park.

With Colorado National Guard Adjutant General, Air Force Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards and Colorado Governor Bill Ritter in attendance, Soldiers of the 169th Fires Brigade fired off blank rounds from the COARNG's ceremonial cannon. Capozzella and Mills then conducted the traditional pass and review of their units.

Capozzella will be leaving her position as the brigade commander of the 89th Troop Command to take the new

position. She held many command positions during her career to include commander of the 109th Area Support Medical Battalion and commander of the Centennial Training site at Fort Carson.

"I am excited and ready to accept the responsibility of leading and caring for Soldiers," said Capozzella. "I pledge to support and service you (COARNG members) as we continue to execute our federal and state missions."

With her comes 21 years of military service and experience. She served four years active duty Army at Fort Carson before she joined the Army Reserves and then the Colorado Army National Guard. Capozzella carries a

master's degree that she earned from the Army War College in strategic studies and a bachelor's degree in psychology from St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y.

Capozzella grew up in New York and moved to Pennsylvania before she moved to Colorado in 1987 after finishing the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at SLU.

Capozzella is married, has three children and works as a partner with Cascade Investment Group in her civilian career.

As for Mills, he will retire and spend more time with his wife Linda and their son Tim.

Edwards thanked Mills for his vision to grow the Colorado National Guard while in command

and for his 43 years in the military. He also thanked Mills' family for letting him serve the Guard family.

"What a day," exclaimed Mills. "Forty three years is a while. Starting out as a drummer boy and working my way up is a tough task, but I made it. Taking command of this fine organization was the best thing that could have happened to me."

Edwards also recognized the impact and meaning of the new leader of the CONG.

"This is a historic day; you are a pioneer," Edwards said addressing Capozzella. "This is what Colorado and the National Guard is about ... I know you are absolutely up to the task, there is no doubt."

As the new COARNG commander, Capozzella will be in charge of the 3,700 troops. 

State's newest top enlisted Airman takes charge

By Tech. Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (10/4/09) – The newest senior enlisted member of the Colorado Air National Guard took responsibility during a unique ceremony at the Leadership Development Center.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Bruce A. Mey relinquished the title of Colorado Air National Guard State Command Chief Master Sergeant to Command Chief Master Sgt. Annadele F. Kenderes.

The change of authority ceremony followed a Purple Heart presentation to Tech. Sgt. Richard Gibbons, an explosive ordnance technician with the 140th Civil Engineer Squadron who was recently wounded in Afghanistan.

Command chief master sergeants are responsible for advising commanders on all enlisted matters, including mission, operations, readiness, training, utilization, morale, technical and professional development, and quality of life. They are also the functional managers for all chief master sergeants and first sergeants in their entire organizations. In addition to advising leaders, they are also mentors for officers and enlisted military members of all ranks.

Mey made his mark by enhancing the state's controversial enlisted promotion process by developing program guidance for the Deserving Airman and Exceptional Performance programs. He also established a force management process using his chiefs' executive board to ensure actual manning authorizations were aligned with National Guard Bureau-funded authorizations. He also orchestrated the establishment of commanders' executive councils as venues to address enlisted concerns.

"I could not have asked for a better person on my team or a better person to fill this support role," said COANG Commander Brig. Gen. William E. Hudson. "I thank him for his honesty, I thank him for his friendship, but more importantly I thank him for arguing with me."



Command Chief Master Sgt. Annadele F. Kenderes accepts authority as Colorado's newest state command chief master sergeant from Colorado Air National Guard Commander Brig. Gen. Bill Hudson during a ceremony at Buckley Air Force Base, Colo., Oct 4.

Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. John Nimmo, Sr.



Command Chief Master Sgt. Bruce A. Mey gives his parting words after relinquishing the title of Colorado Air National Guard state command chief master sergeant to Command Chief Master Sgt. Annadele F. Kenderes during a ceremony at Buckley Air Force Base, Colo., Oct 4.

Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. John Nimmo, Sr.

Known for his leadership by example, he also served on Colorado's CERFP (CBRNE - Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high-yield Explosive - Enhanced Response Force Package) during the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, bringing much needed senior enlisted mentorship and focus to the team, Hudson said.

For his part, Mey quietly thanked the Airmen he worked with throughout his career, and particularly those who assisted during his final years as COANG's top enlisted leader.

Mey held the position from January 2007 to November 2009.

As the new State Command Chief Master Sergeant, Kenderes pledged to lead the COANG into the future with the best interests of all COANG members in mind. She also charged all other enlisted Airmen to blaze the trail.

"Everyone plays a critical role in the success of the mission of the Colorado Air National Guard," said Kenderes. "When I started as the (140th) Wing CCM (command chief master sergeant), I pledged to take care of people, and to attend to the health of our enlisted members. Nothing will change in my new role, as I will continue focus on enlisted issues across the COANG and at the national level."

Kenderes relinquished the position of 140th Wing

Command Chief Master Sergeant to Command Chief Master Sgt. John Criswell, formerly the 140th Security Forces Squadron manager.

As she paid her regards to the 140th Wing, Kenderes started a new COANG tradition by passing on her baton of wisdom and knowledge to the Wing's newest enlisted leader. The baton, which contained thoughts of herself and other senior enlisted leaders, was passed as a symbol of teamwork in which they would lead COANG's enlisted force into the future.

Kenderes addressed Criswell directly. "Always be mindful that the position is bigger than you are; and we are here to serve, and not be served. Chief Criswell, your life now belongs to our Airmen."

In her final act as COANG's CCM, she recited the Airman's Creed with the COANG's newest basic military training graduate, Airman 1st Class Nathaniel Gilmore, and presented her first state coin to him as a symbol of her promise to all COANG members. Earlier, she presented her last 140th Wing coin to her daughter Christina, in gratitude for the teen's sacrifices throughout Kenderes' challenging career.

The position of state command chief was formerly known as senior enlisted advisor. The title change, established in November 1998, was made to reflect the more diverse function of the state's senior enlisted Airman. 

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Colorado Army National Guard hosts sustainability workshop



Jeremy Alcorn, a civilian environmental engineer with Concurrent Technologies Corporation, outlines key points during a four-day sustainability workshop conference for National Guard leaders at Glen Eyre Conference Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., Oct 16.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (10/16/09) — More than 45 Colorado Army National Guard senior officers gathered for a four-day sustainability workshop at Glen Eyre Conference Center during the week of Oct. 11 to review existing COARNG priority issues, goals and objectives.

A group assessment was made and the identification of sustainability integration needs in current strategic plan products (i.e., yearly training guidance, Gov. Bill Ritter's goals, Executive Order 13423 targets) was also covered.

Col. Debi Roberts, COARNG construction and facilities management officer, shaped the general direction of the workshop and was instrumental from start to finish in its oversight. "In a nutshell, sustainability is the ability to complete your mission as well, if not better than, you currently do — with less resources," Roberts said. "An example of a sustainable practice might be developing contracting training and execution that encourages the use of environmentally friendly products. It might be the implementation of energy conservation measures throughout the organization that allows us to use less energy and spend less money (money that we can use for other facility support for our Soldiers). It might be reducing our non-tactical vehicle fleet to use less fuel and save maintenance costs."

The workshop was the final in a series of four to address sustainability within the COARNG and focused on training, facilities and infrastructure and logistics procurement. Through the course of three previous workshops, the COARNG built on its existing strategic planning processes to improve mission effectiveness.

"It's basically about not only looking at your tactical requirements, but looking a little more strategic long-term goals and trying to balance those sustainability underpinnings so that they don't bite you in the behind," said Jeremy Alcorn, workshop facilitator and civilian environmental engineer with Concurrent Technologies Corporation. "Sustainability is a mission enabler and it sort of broadens the picture on what you do with strategic planning and how it translates down to operations. It's about really balancing your mission, your environmental and social aspects, and then also the financial benefit — or else the bean counters in D.C. won't let you do anything."

CTC works with the Department of Defense on the integration of sustainability within the military.

All four workshops intend to ultimately enhance the COARNG's organizational process coordination, build on and augment existing initiatives, improve real-world performance toward goals and to further progress toward becoming a more sustainable organization. 

Interested in flying helicopters in the Colorado National Guard?

2nd Battalion, 135th
General Support
Aviation would
like to invite all
interested Soldiers
to participate in
the AVIATION
FLIGHT SCHOOL
SELECTION
BOARD

DATE: Jan. 9, 2010

TIME: 7 a.m. Army
Physical Fitness Test
followed by the board



Packets are due to Colorado Army National Guard Aviation S-1 no later than 5 p.m., Jan. 6, 2010.

For Packet requirements, checklists, and additional information, please e-mail 1st Lt. Shane Tracey or call (720) 847-8479. This opportunity is open to all National Guard enlisted/noncommissioned officers who have been active members of the Colorado Army National Guard for at least one year. Officers and cadets are exempt from the one-year requirement. This is an extensive process, but a great opportunity, so please contact 1st Lt. Tracey as soon as possible to get started!

Did you know ...

Why we salute?

Some historians believe it began in late Roman times when assassinations were common. A citizen who wanted to see a public official had to approach with his right hand raised to show he didn't hold a weapon. Knights in armor raised visors with their right hands when meeting comrades. This practice gradually became a way of showing respect and, in early American history, sometimes involved removing the hat. By 1820, the motion was modified to touching the hat and since then it has become the hand salute used today. 

Bronco visits Guardsmen

By Spc. Benjamin Crane
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (10/23/09) — Denver Broncos offensive tackle, Tyler Polumbus, visited Colorado National Guard Soldiers at Joint Force Headquarters to sign autographs and pose for photos as part of a collaborative effort between Colorado National Guard recruiting and retention and the football organization.

The visit helps the National Football League give back to the local community and lets the National Guard say thank you to the NFL and its players for their support.

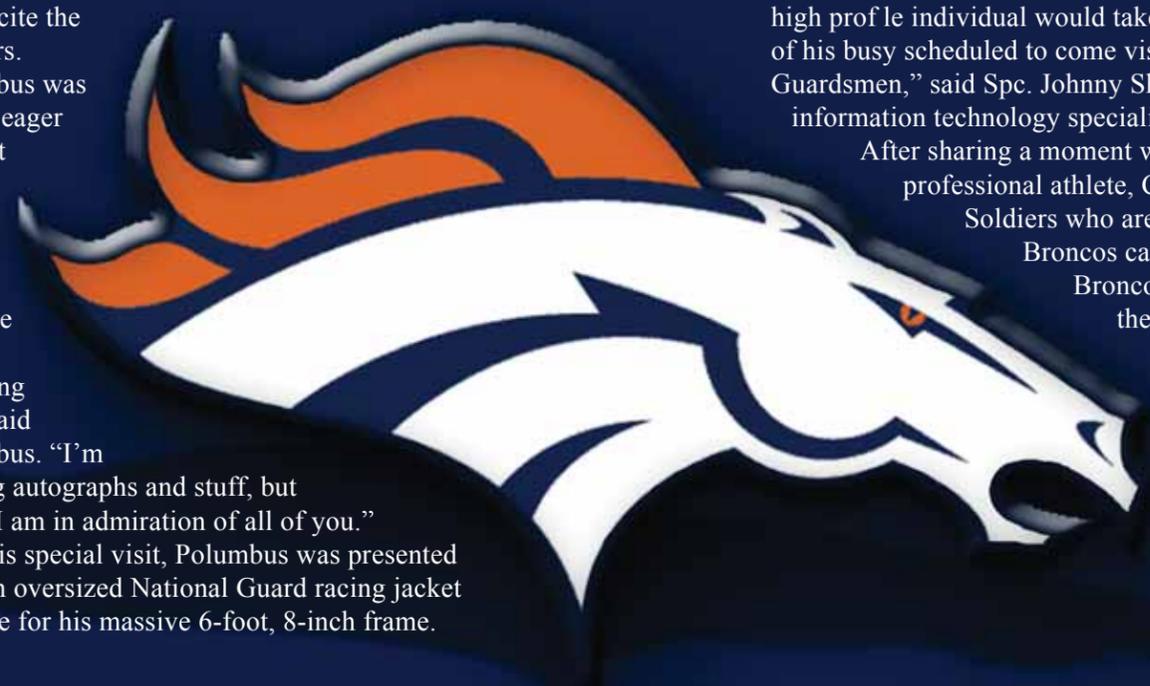
“We took Tyler and told him who we were and what our mission was and how the Colorado National Guard contributes to the state,” said Lt. Col. Berton Pennell, recruiting and retention battalion commander. “So when he goes back to his teammates and they have a game where they honor the

military, he can say, ‘I know what these guys do,’ and sharing that with them tells the Guard story.”

But a visit to the National Guard didn’t just excite the Soldiers. Polumbus was just as eager to meet them.

“It’s just a blast to come down and hang out,” said Polumbus. “I’m signing autographs and stuff, but really I am in admiration of all of you.”

For his special visit, Polumbus was presented with an oversized National Guard racing jacket suitable for his massive 6-foot, 8-inch frame.



The smiles on the Soldier’s faces told the story about the success of the event.

“I was excited and mostly impressed that a high profile individual would take the time of his busy schedule to come visit us National Guardsmen,” said Spc. Johnny Shin, an information technology specialist at JFHQ.

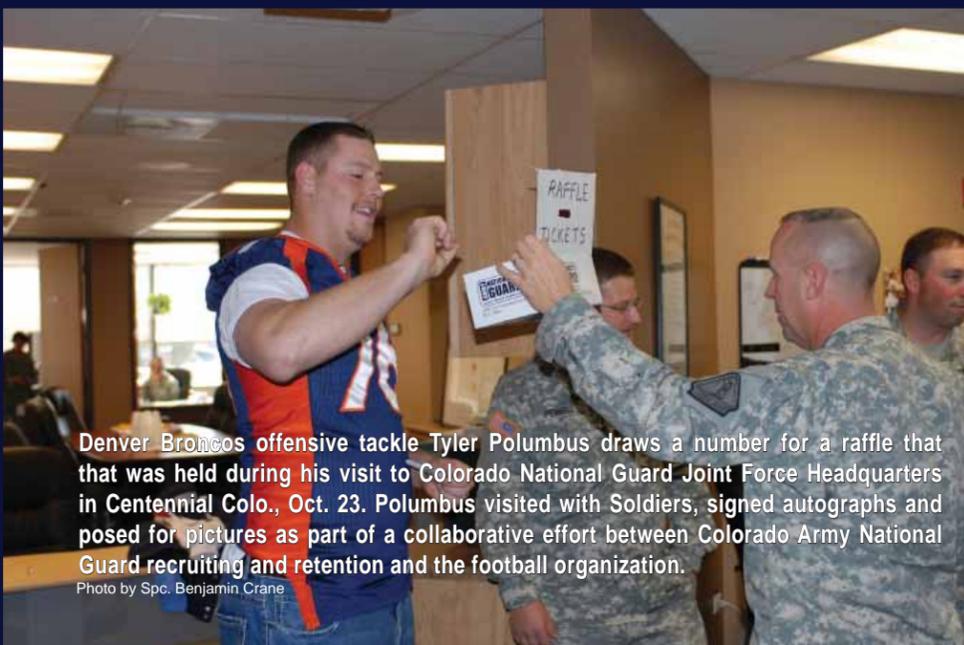
After sharing a moment with a professional athlete, CONG Soldiers who are fans of the Broncos can now say a Bronco is a fan of them. 



Colorado Army National Guard Lt. Col. Berton Pennell presents a National Guard racing jacket to Polumbus.
Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



Polumbus poses with Army Sgt. Maj. Donnell Johns while Sgt. 1st Class James Gaudet takes their picture.
Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



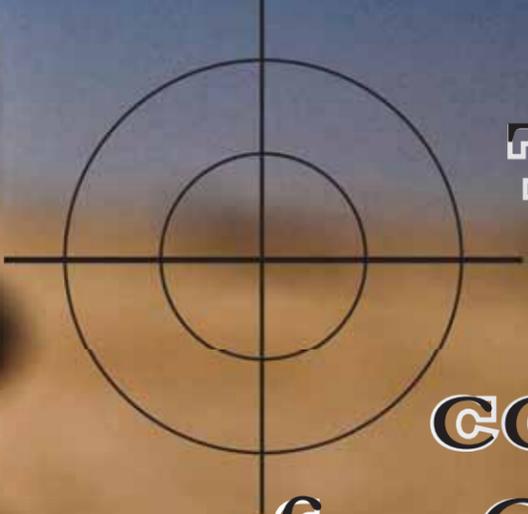
Denver Broncos offensive tackle Tyler Polumbus draws a number for a raffle that that was held during his visit to Colorado National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in Centennial Colo., Oct. 23. Polumbus visited with Soldiers, signed autographs and posed for pictures as part of a collaborative effort between Colorado Army National Guard recruiting and retention and the football organization.
Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



Polumbus autographs a Colorado Army National Guard for a Soldier during his visit.
Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



Polumbus poses for a photo with Army Staff Sgt. Korey Satterlee and Emmalyn White.
Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



Training in Iraq continues for Colorado field artillery

By Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli
3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery

A Colorado Army National Guard Soldier assigned to 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, stands among spent shell casings from his M4 Carbine rifle while conducting reflexive fire training in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 5.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

AR RAMADI, Iraq (10/6/09) – The open desert in certain regions of Iraq creates a playground for training that helps Soldiers maintain situational awareness and also hone their marksmanship skills.

Not far from Camp Ramadi lays open land where Soldiers can take their weapons, ranging from pistols to crew-served weapons, and test fire, conduct reflexive fire training or verify the optics on their weapons are properly zeroed for the utmost accuracy.

“It’s different shooting out here because there is a higher threat level around you,” said Staff Sgt. Norman Clark, a sergeant of the guard for Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

When the Colorado Guardsmen shoot at ranges back home at Fort Carson, they don’t need to have anyone pull security or scan for threats.

“Once we roll into the area (where we fire our weapons), we set up a defensive perimeter with our vehicles and shoot from inside that perimeter,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Banks, Battery A, 3-157th FA training noncommissioned officer. “We

are always at a hyper state [of alert] for any unseen threats,” he said regarding the Soldiers’ situational awareness.

“We have classes every day on our weapons and other situations (that may arise),” said Spc. Patrick Simpson, a Soldier who was originally deployed with 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery, Oklahoma Army National Guard, but stayed in Ramadi when 3-157th FA took command. Simpson, an Oklahoma City, Okla., native said he has confidence in the Soldiers on the Quick Reaction Force team he currently serves with.

“I don’t think anyone on the QRF would freeze up (if they received enemy contact) because everyone is comfortable with their positions.”

Reflexive fire training helps Soldiers, like those on the QRF, react at a moment’s notice to engage the enemy.

Clark describes the value of reflexive fire training as someone who is “able to go from a non-threatening state to engaging someone with your weapon rapidly.”

“You don’t want to be walking around with your weapon pointing up. Basically, we



Sgt. Matthew Schumacher of St. Charles, Ill., a squad leader for the Colorado Army National Guard’s 188th Forward Support Company’s Convoy Support Platoon, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, briefs troops going to the range Oct. 5 at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli



Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, standby for the command, "Ready, up" during reflexive fire training in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 5.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

practice shooting from different positions because you never know what direction the threat will be from."

Soldiers practice pivoting from their left and right, kneeling and turning around to face their six o'clock in order to practice moving to face the threat without flagging (pointing their weapons unsafely) at anyone around them. Soldiers refer to this as having proper muzzle awareness.

Another way Soldiers sustain a comfort level with their weapons is ensuring the weapon is properly cared for and maintained.

"I go to the range every chance I get in order to perfect my skills as a marksman," said Banks, a Greeley, Colo., resident, who is responsible for tracking the training conducted by Battery A Soldiers ranging from survivability skills and weapons training to first aid.

In addition to being proficient at operating their weapons, Soldiers are also adjusting to the difference in maintaining them in the Middle East.

"You should never lube your weapon

as much here," said Clark regarding the reduced amount of lubrication on the weapon to keep it operational because of the sandy environment. "It's imperative (to be proficient with your weapon) because it can save your life. If your weapon isn't zeroed, it won't help you."

A zeroed weapon is when the sights and scopes on a particular weapon are aligned for the Soldier's eyes who operate it. Although some weapon systems don't require it, zeroing means that the optics on the weapon are optimized for the Soldier's eyes. Everyone's sights require different adjustments so once the Soldier zeroes his or her weapon, someone else may not be able to pick it up and aim as well because of the differences.

"I treat this thing like gold," Clark said about his weapon. "I don't even want to bump my scope."

Clark, who teaches hunters safety courses in Colorado said, "I've had classes and taught my Soldiers that your weapon is basically your life. If you don't take care of it, it can't save yours." 



A small flame bursts after Colorado Army National Guard Cpl. Jeremiah Winters discharges rounds from his M249 squad automatic weapon while conducting reflexive fire training in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 5. Winters is assigned to the 188th Forward Support Company, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

Stay alert, stay alive

By Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli
3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery

AR RAMADI, Iraq (10/9/09) - Missions only happen to fulfill a legitimate need, said a Provincial Reconstruction Team member. The mission Oct. 8 was two-fold: introduce a new team member to an Iraqi judge and also follow up on a case to see that justice is going to be served for a Marine killed in Al Anbar previously.

According to Marine Col. Brett Barkey, a lawyer serving on the Provincial Reconstruction Team here, only necessary missions happen because the risk of life is never taken lightly.

Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, Colorado Army National Guard, 1st 15th Fires Brigade, based at Camp Ramadi, helps make the PRT's missions happen.

They not only are responsible for providing

safe transportation to the meetings for the PRT, but also providing dismounted security to ensure they stay safe while outside the wire. They serve much like bodyguards for PRT members.

During the pre-mission brief Oct. 8, Barkey spoke to the troops to remind them how much the PRT appreciates their service and also wanted to extend his gratitude and concern for a Battery A Soldier who was wounded on a previous mission.

The mission on Oct. 8 into the city of Ar Ramadi was successful and quiet for the troops and PRT members. Everyone accomplished what they needed to and returned safely to the forward operating base without receiving any enemy contact.



1. Colorado Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, along with the Camp Ramadi-based Provincial Reconstruction Team walk toward the vehicles that will bring them home at the culmination of the meeting in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 8.

2. During the mission brief at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Oct. 8, Marine Col. Brett Barkey, a Provincial Reconstruction Team member, expresses his gratitude for the security provided by Colorado Guardsmen assigned to Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

3. Colorado Army National Guard 1st Lt. Christopher Berven of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, provides dismounted security for members of the Camp Ramadi-based Provincial Reconstruction Team during a mission in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, Oct. 8.

4. Colorado Army National Guard Spc. Carlos Garcia of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, provides dismounted security for members of the Camp Ramadi-based Provincial Reconstruction Team during a mission in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, Oct. 8.  Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

Deployed tattoo artist builds esprit de corps

By Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli
3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq (10/2/09) – During his off hours, he grabs a paint brush and delves into a life he’s always loved. His full-time job while deployed is manning a tower at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, but during his off time he continues to pursue his art, a passion of his since childhood.

Army Pfc. Michael Gomez, a tattoo artist from Denver, was tasked with painting the Berserker mural for Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery.

“If you can think it, I can ink it,” is the motto Gomez lives by as a tattoo artist of seven years. In this case, it wasn’t a tattoo he was asked to do, but it might be just as permanent for 3-157 FA’s Berserkers.

It began at Fort Hood, Texas, when he was asked to design the logo for the battery, then known as the Banshees. However,



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli



Colorado Army National Guard Pfc. Michael Gomez, a tattoo artist from Denver, assigned to Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, paints in the evenings with the use of the light outside the containerized housing units at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

after a change of command ceremony, the unit became known as the Berserkers. A new logo was needed and Gomez already

put a lot of work and a lot of detail into it.”

The painting took Gomez approximately two weeks to complete, working mainly during the evening hours. His art studio was the space located outside his Containerized Housing Unit. He was able to work with the assistance of the outside light above his CHU door and also a flashlight through the night.

By Oct. 1 the painting was complete. It was only a few hours later that Gomez was medically evacuated for a non-life-threatening injury.

Capt. David Wilcox, Battery B commander said he was proud of Gomez for getting it done before leaving Ramadi.

“I volunteered for the tour,” said Gomez. “I’ve been with the National Guard for years and wanted to go on deployments, but this is my first one. I wish I could finish (the tour). I wish (my fellow Soldiers) good luck and I wish I was staying here with (them) to finish it.”

He may not be here with his battery but he leaves in his place a larger-than-life-size painting to continue motivating his fellow men and women in arms and remind them that the extra effort to increase morale [even during personal time] is worth it.

He was motivated to do the painting, and the unit plans on displaying it through the deployment, bringing it back home to Colorado and taking it again when the unit deploys again, said Pino. 

had designs in mind.

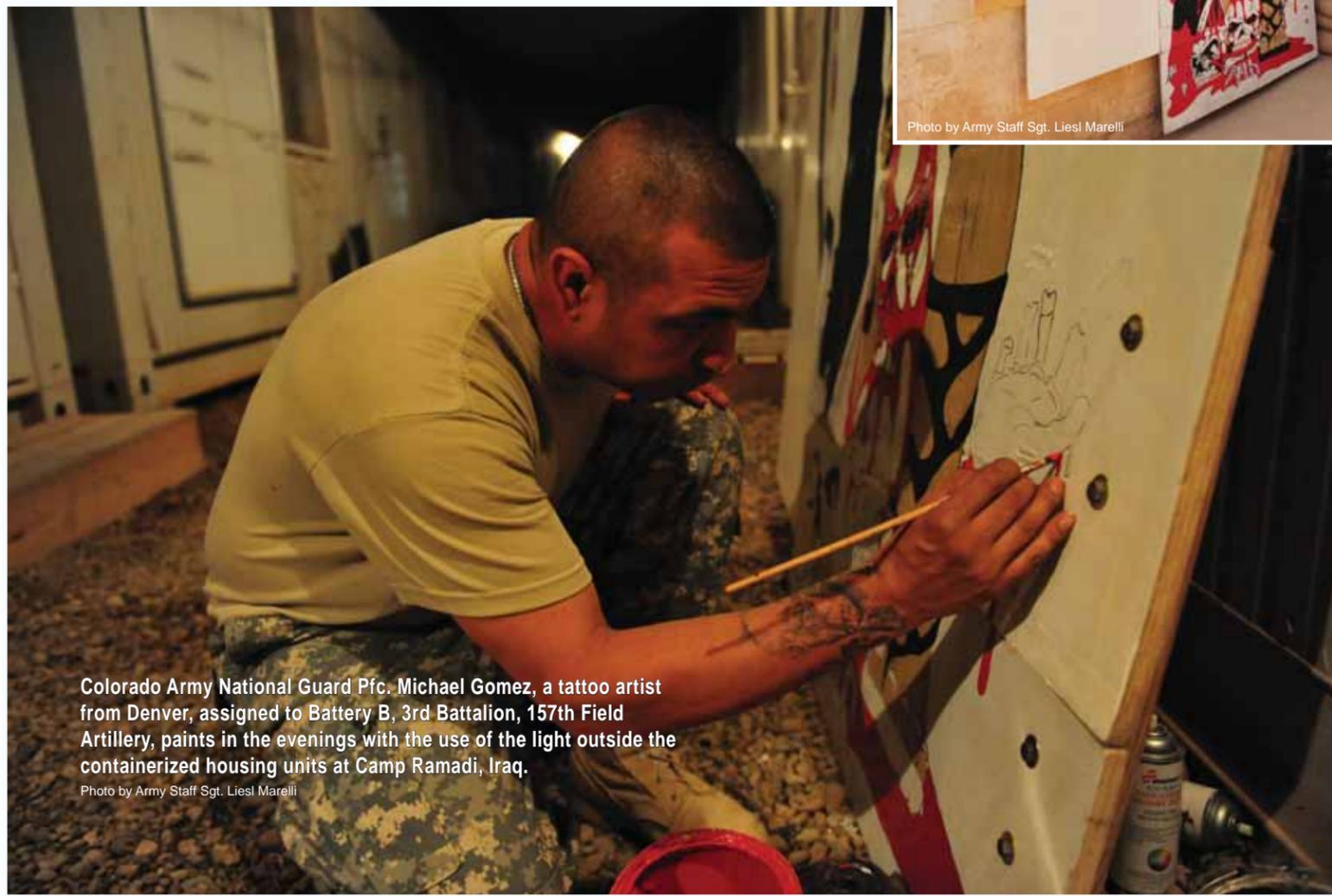
It wasn’t difficult for Gomez to design the berserker, a person he defines as a gladiator who is bred to kill. It’s dark, it’s morbid, it’s a bit extreme and it’s exactly the kind of art Gomez likes most.

“I do macabre,” said Gomez. “It’s Goth with a mix of surrealism.”

The painting is a depiction of a berserker who stands poised to kill and, although the design in itself looks menacing, the size of the painting is also intimidating. It stands at more than nine feet tall and three feet wide in an area many people frequently pass by.

“It’s one of those highly traveled paths in the battalion area so everyone walks past it and sees it,” said Staff Sgt. John Pino, the Berserker operations noncommissioned officer in charge, of Walsenburg, Colo.

I think the painting demonstrates the esprit de corps of the unit, Pino said, while adding, “You can tell he



Colorado Army National Guard Pfc. Michael Gomez, a tattoo artist from Denver, assigned to Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, paints in the evenings with the use of the light outside the containerized housing units at Camp Ramadi, Iraq.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Liesl Marelli

Providing overwatch across the battlefield

Story by Army Pfc. Kelly LeCompte
30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team

CAMP TAJI, Iraq (10/8/09) — Unmanned aerial systems operations are keeping Soldiers in the Baghdad area safe thanks to cooperation between four different brigades that have centered operations, here, north of Baghdad.

“The launch and recovery site for all of [Multi-National Division] Baghdad is at Camp Taji,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Darryl Della Rossa, the UAS officer with the 86th Military Intelligence Company B. “By consolidating, they can support four brigades in one place.”

The four U.S. brigades have pooled their UAVs at Camp Taji’s airfield, along with the maintenance personnel who launch and recover the vehicles; while the vehicle operators are located wherever their respective units work from.

“The units share the birds, hanger space, personnel; it can all be shared at one place,” said Della Rossa, from Pueblo, Colo. “It’s great because it keeps you flying all the time. It ensures all the brigades can have more coverage.”

“We service the birds, and we launch them,” said Sgt. Conrad Jahn, a maintenance shift lead with B Co. “We launch them and then we’ll hand them off to a control site that’s forward, so that the actual mission flying is done from the forward sites.”

“I think it works really well,” said Jahn. “We have a really good team here and we’re able to support each other ... and we pool a lot more experience this way. Our standard of maintenance is a lot higher and our production is a lot better because we have such a large pool of materials and

Army Sgt. Tesha Rudick, of Queens, N.Y., prepares an unmanned aerial system for launch at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, Oct 5. Rudick is with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

Photo by Army Pfc. Kelly LeCompte



talent and experience. It’s a really good team. We’re like a big family here.”

Della Rossa, who works from Forward Operating Base Falcon, where Company B’s operators are, said he agreed the system works. The MI company has been serving in Iraq since April and has logged 2,500 flight hours so far; all accident free.

“That’s more than some companies fly in a whole year deployment,” Della Rossa said.

The Soldiers in B Co., whether serving at Camp Taji or FOB Falcon, work 12 hour days, seven days a week. Della Rossa said without the system at Camp Taji, there would

be days at the time when operations would have to stop for maintenance on the vehicles or for crew rest, and it would be unlikely to fly so many hours have they have so far, especially without incident.

“It’s a great system,” Della Rossa said. “Since a bird is always in the air, we can be always ready.”

Army Sgt. David Gomez, from Brooklyn, N.Y., prepares an unmanned aerial system for launch at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, Oct 5. Gomez is with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

Photo by Army Pfc. Kelly LeCompte



Guardians of space keep watch over warfighters

By Tech. Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

When these Colorado National Guard Soldiers talk about the high ground, it's not a magazine. In fact, "ground" is another dimension altogether for the men and women charged with five distinct but interrelated missions in the gaseous envelope that surrounds our planet – and the vacuum beyond.

The 117th Space Battalion is a small, highly specialized and technically adept unit charged with ensuring inner and outer space are as predictable as possible given their unpredictable nature. Space Soldiers work top down to ensure the average rifleman on the ground is prepared for the terrain and weather that lie in his path.

"Situational awareness – what war fighters use on the ground and in the air – is driven by satellite," said 117th Battalion Sgt. Maj. Dean Parsons.

Specifically, Soldiers are charged with battle field analysis operations via satellite imagery, environmental monitoring (including space weather and terrestrial activity) and maintaining network security, among other missions. When tasked to deploy, Soldiers provide these capabilities at forward locations, providing expertise and products to support war fighters who plan and execute full-spectrum military operations.

"As military operations get more complex, almost all military operations will rely on the space segment," said Battalion Executive Officer COARNG Maj. Jesse Morehouse. "Without them, the effects could be catastrophic."

The battalion is unique in that it is the only reserve component space battalion in the U.S. – and these Soldiers are the only ones who can support both active duty and homeland defense missions that require space capabilities.

Also unique in the National Guard is that is located in immediate proximity to its active duty headquarters, the 1st Space Brigade, which is charged with conducting space



Spc. Stephen Markling and Spc. Josh Mayeux set up a satellite outside the Colorado Army National Guard's 117th Space Battalion headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo., June 6.

operations to enable delivery of decisive combat power.

"We are a battalion in constant deployment based on our relationship with the active duty," said Battalion Commander COARNG Lt. Col. Matthew Nowak. "We've had a team deployed almost all the time since 2002."

Nowak also described the diverse skill sets that keep his Soldiers on the forefront, such as hardware and software engineers who, in their civilian jobs, support the equipment they use in uniform. In contrast to their active duty counterparts, Guard Soldiers tend to bring more relevant experience, he said.

"It's good synergy. ... We bring our experience to both," said COARNG Maj. Brad Rhodes, 217th Space Company commander and contractor for Air Force Space Command.

"Just about everyone is already using space assets," said Parsons, who pointed to satellites that allow overseas phone calls, to GPS tools that guide us through traffic.

"If not for space assets, the ongoing missions in Iraq and Afghanistan would not be successful," said Rhodes.

The battalion maintains two subordinate units, the 217th Space Company and the 1158th Space Company, in Colorado Springs, Colo. 

Army Space Support Team 26 proudly displays Colorado State flag

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq – Members of the 117th Space Battalion currently deployed to Iraq, celebrate their 30 days in theater by displaying the Colorado state flag Aug. 10. The ARSST deployed from Colorado Springs July 8, 2009. From left to right) Maj. Tod Fenner, Spc. Eric Geil, Maj. Janet Schoenberg, Sgt. David Wilde, Pfc. Andrew Pyle, Staff Sgt. James Smith.  Photo courtesy 117th Space Battalion



FIRST OF ITS KIND

Combined joint services course graduates its Soldiers

By Staff Sgt. Aaron Rognstad
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

FORT CARSON, (10/16/09) – For the first time in its history, the 168th Regional Training Institute graduated a combined Army active duty and National Guard Warrior Leadership Course. Only one of 68 Soldiers who comprised Class 10-

101 was a Colorado Army National Guardsman.

Spc. Kevin Quintana, 24, an indirect fire infantryman in the COARNG's Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 157 Infantry passed the two-week course, said

it felt great to be done and looks forward to being promoted sometime early next year.

“It feels real good,” Quintana said of being the first Guardsman to have graduated with an all active duty class. “I was able to keep up with



Colorado Army National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Lousberg addresses 168th Regional Training Institute Warrior Leadership Course graduates during their graduation ceremony at Waller gymnasium on Fort Carson, Oct. 16.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



Colorado Army National Guard State Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Lousberg congratulates Spc. Kevin Quintana, an indirect fire infantryman in the COARNG's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry, after he was given his certificate of completion for the 168th Regional Training Institute Warrior Leadership Course at Waller gymnasium on Fort Carson, Oct. 16. Quintana was the first Army National Guardsman to graduate from the course with active duty Army Soldiers.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane

taking command when I had to. One guy told me, ‘When we deploy, we all end up at the same spot anyway, so it doesn’t matter to me whether you’re active or Guard.’”

State Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Lousberg was the keynote speaker at the graduation ceremony, which packed in some 200 family and friends of the WLC graduates at Waller gymnasium.

“I want to welcome you all to the ranks of the NCO (noncommissioned officer) corps,” Lousberg addressed to the graduates sitting before him. “Leadership is something that cannot be taught in a book. Leadership is a learned and acquired



skill.”

WLC combines basic soldiering skills with physical fitness and leadership techniques.

Of the 17 instructors who taught Class 10-101, eight are Guardsmen. Staff Sgt. Sarah France, 28, is one of the Guard instructors and has been teaching WLC since April.

“Any time a Soldier says, ‘You taught me something; I learned from you,’ it’s kind of like self-accomplishment,” France said. “... And it makes you feel good.”

There will be 120 Soldiers in the upcoming WLC and significantly more Guardsmen attending said France. 

“I AM A WARRIOR AND A MEMBER OF A TEAM”

Buckley youths 'deploy'

By Tech. Sgt. J. LaVoie,
460th Space Wing Public Affairs

BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (10/14/09) — For its first “Year of the Air Force Family” event, Team Buckley “deployed” 58 children to Camp Rattlesnake here during the base’s first youth mock deployment Oct. 3.

The mock deployment was an effort by the 460th Force Support Squadron to help Buckley youths adjust to having a



parent deployed.

“With the on-going real-world deployment schedule, children have many questions about what happens when their parents are involved with a deployment or exercise,” said Thomas Cox, 460th Force Support Squadron youth programs. “This program helped them understand what their parents encounter.”

The children had the opportunity to take a tour of Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters, drive an explosive ordnance robot, learn military first aid, see an honor guard demonstration, dine on meals ready-to-eat for lunch as well as other activities.

“I couldn’t be happier. It was one of the best events in youth programs in over a year. I do believe the kids benefited,” said Cox. “Several parents e-mailed saying children feel more comfortable with (deployments).”

Air Force Maj. Beth Peters, 460th FSS, whose son, 9, attended the event, also believed the event went well.

“It was an awesome experience for him. He thoroughly enjoyed it,” she said. “For me as a parent, it was good to let my son



experience what I experienced while I was gone.”

In Peters’ case, the event spawned further conversation about deployments with her son.

Additionally, Military Family Life consultants were available throughout the day to address any concerns children had about deployments. The mock deployments went so well, the 460th FSS plans to make it an annual event. 



Infantry headquarters lines up satellite support

FORT CARSON, Colo. (10/3/09) — Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry, train on the combat service support SATCOM, a satellite communications system designed to provide worldwide data plus voice communications connectivity to deployed U.S. military forces. Very Small Aperture Terminal system operation has been greatly simplified by the incorporation of an auto-acquire antenna system. As part of the system setup and initialization, the antenna pedestal automatically finds the desired satellite and brings up the desired circuit to the distant end within minutes. The system is capable of supporting .mil, nonclassified and voiceover internet protocol communications.

1. Soldiers form teams to set-up and break down the system in the most efficient time possible. 2. Army Staff Sgt. Joe Becerra (right) instructs Soldiers on how to properly setup and operate the VSAT. 3. Army Pvt. Gary Palmer is excited about this training. "This is something new," Palmer said. "It's along lines with my work and concept of secured lines."  Photos by Army Capt. Nelson Tomas



By Spc. Benjamin Crane
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

Just say 'no'

Students benefit from Red Ribbon Week efforts

DENVER (10/16/09) – The Colorado National Guard's Joint Counterdrug Task Force, in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Colorado Civil Air Patrol's Valkyrie Cadet Squadron, held a rally at the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum in support of Red Ribbon Week.

Red Ribbon Week is an anti-drug educational program aimed at students in kindergarten through high school to inform them about the harmful effects drugs can have on their lives. Red Ribbon Week serves as a vehicle for communities and individuals to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of children through a commitment to drug prevention and education, and a personal commitment to live drug free lives with the goal of being a drug-free America. During the rally, an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter flew in guest speakers who spoke to the boisterous crowd of children about sound judgment surrounding drug use. The annual event also commemorates the ultimate sacrifice made by Drug Enforcement Administration special agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who died at the hands of drug traffickers in Mexico while



The Colorado National Guard's Joint Counterdrug Task Force, in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Colorado Civil Air Patrol's Valkyrie Cadet Squadron, landed an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter at Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum in Denver in support of Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 16.
Photo by Spc. Joseph K. VonNida

fighting the country's ongoing drug war. Camarena had worked his way through college, served in the Marines and became a police officer. He joined the DEA next, but his mother tried to talk him out of it. "I can't not do this," he told her. "I'm only one person, but I want to make a difference." And make a difference he did. Shortly after he became a DEA agent, he was assigned his most dangerous and fateful mission.

"Because he was bilingual and came from Mexico, we sent him back to Guadalajara to work," said a

fellow DEA agent who requested to remain anonymous. "He was working on a big case where there were a lot of marijuana growers and he knew ... where they were growing it. One day he went out for lunch and they kidnapped him ... but they ended up keeping him for a long time after they kidnapped him and they killed him." It was Camarena's desire to make a difference – and ultimately his sacrifice – that drives these CONG and Civil Air Patrol volunteers to inform younger generations of the dangers of illegal substances. 



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares

Stay on track

By Sgt. 1st Class Pamia C. Ames
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

NASCAR!

The word alone paints a vivid image of fast-racing cars traveling more than 100 mph, painted with numbers and sponsorship decals.

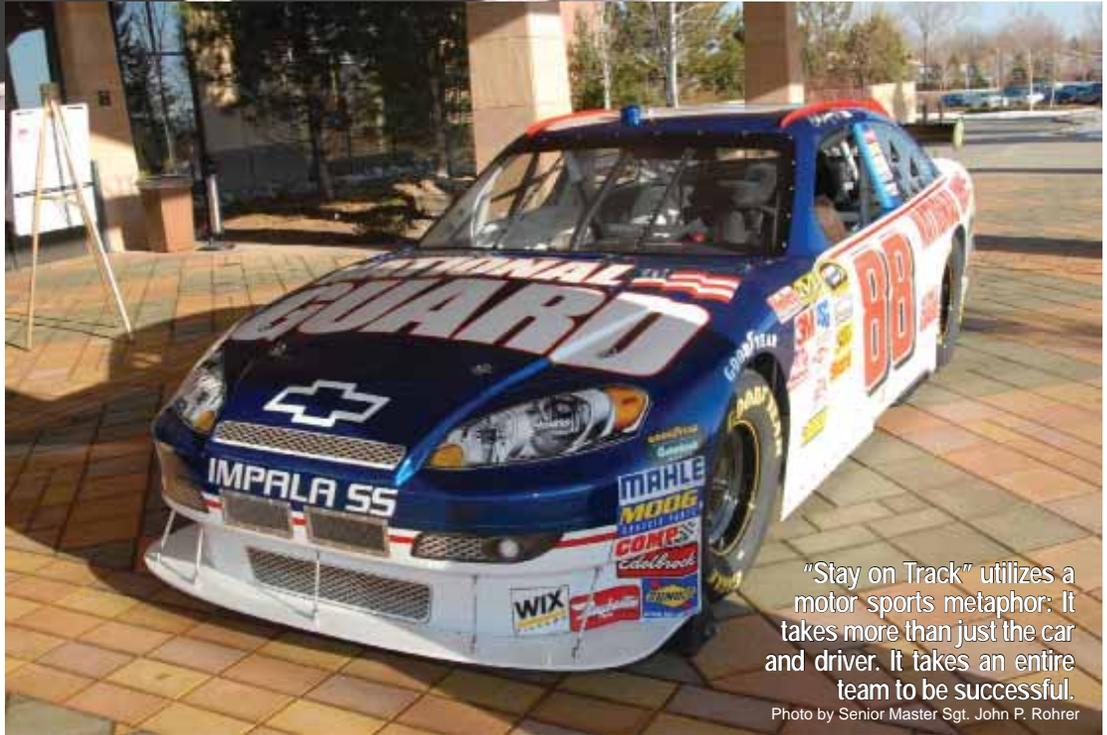
The National Guard Counterdrug Program's Stay on Track initiative is built around a NASCAR theme and serves as a vivid reminder:

"It isn't just the car or the driver. It's also the mechanics. The owner. Everyone that makes the team work," said Army Staff Sgt. Dan Jolley of the Colorado Joint Counterdrug Task Force.

Stay on Track is a highly interactive, 12-week curriculum designed for middle school aged children. This curriculum is part of the Drug Demand Reduction section of Joint Counterdrug Task Force that supports community based organizations and schools in Colorado with drug abuse prevention programs.

The curriculum for Stay on Track is more than just drug awareness or drug education. It promotes positive thinking and prepares children to make rational choices throughout life. The primary focus is to provide Colorado youth with information to help develop the skills and the will to say no to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

"Middle school kids are in the trenches," explained Jolley. "It is an age of change. This is when a lot of bad choices are made about drugs and we (CO-JCDTF) are just trying to help them make the right



"Stay on Track" utilizes a motor sports metaphor: It takes more than just the car and driver. It takes an entire team to be successful.

Photo by Senior Master Sgt. John P. Rohrer

decisions."

Drug Demand Reduction is currently teaching Stay on Track in Cotopaxi School, located west of Pueblo, Colo., and Richards Elementary School in Loveland, Colo.

Air National Guard Lt. Col. Chris Ryan, CO-JCDTF commander, said the program puts a good face on the Colorado National Guard in the community.

"Stay on Track ... is designed to be all-year-round and continuously puts the voice out that drugs are the poor choice," he said. "The community and the Colorado Guard have faith in our children and their future. We have equipped them to make the best choices life has to offer."

For more information about Stay on Track, contact Army Staff Sgt. Dan Jolley at (720) 847-8443.

If a school is interested in having Stay on Track become part of its curriculum it should address a letter to the Colorado Adjutant General, Attention Counterdrug Task Force. 

Preparing for deployment and finding the grocery list

The Family Unit

By Airman 1st Class Cheryl Montgomery
Colorado National Guard Family Programs

In a perfect world, preparing for deployment would be as simple as pulling neatly organized files from a conveniently accessible file cabinet, knowing where to go for deployment resources and actually keeping warm blankets in the back of the car in case of an emergency. When it's time to provide the marriage certificate and the baby's social security card, you can smile and easily provide the documents that are essential to updating the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System because we all know not updating DEERS can cause more havoc than an unexpected visit from the in-laws.

For the rest of us who live in a world where tracking down the grocery list you just wrote takes the help of a trained hound dog, preparing for deployment can be slightly more challenging. To ease the transition from a traditional to activated Guard family, take some of the following steps:

- **Dig out the documents!** Download a copy of a pre-deployment checklist to keep track of all essential documents that you will need on hand before, during and after the deployment. Find an online example at www.ong.ohio.gov/family/deployment/predeploytipfam.pdf.

- **Secure your space!** To include a safe place for all important documentation and security for your home in general.

- **Finances!** Talk about the spending plan during the deployment. Seek help from a Military Family Life Consultant or access help from Military OneSource to prepare a budget.

- **Take the time!** Guard families are given little time together during pre-deployment training, so take advantage of what you have together and plan small outings.

- **Patience please!** Both patience and understanding can be challenged during pre-deployment training. Keep in mind that deployment is a phase in life. Need help? Military Family Life Consultants and Military OneSource are just a phone call away.

Military Family Life Consultant: Lucille Digiamberadino, (720) 250-1194

Military Family Life Consultant: Jim Green, (720) 250-1198

Military OneSource: (800) 342-9647

- **Get involved!** Being proactive might help heal the anxiety that might accompany pre-deployment. Think about volunteering for your unit's Family Readiness Group. It's a rewarding way to spend your time while helping your fellow Guard families. Contact Family Programs to learn more.

- **Participate!** Attend Yellow Ribbon pre-deployment events. You will receive pertinent information, resources and Family Program contacts that will help you thrive during this transition in your life.

Taking these steps and using the many resources available to you as a Guard family can help ease the transition into deployment. Step-by-step, you will be closer to being prepared for deployment, and you may even be able to uncover that missing grocery list! 