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Summer 2015

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

FROM THE LEADERSHIP

Data Security is Part of Readiness

All of us who wear a uniform understand the importance of Operations Security and protecting sensitive information. It is a regular part of what we do every day, both at home and overseas.

Department of Defense announcements this spring and summer have shown how vulnerable personally identifiable information can be, in spite of our best personal and organizational efforts to protect that data.

Announcements from the Department of Defense Office of Personnel Management and National Guard Bureau have shown that data of many of our full time employees and service members may already be at risk of compromise.

Full time federal technician employees learned of this in April and as the size of another related data breach became fully known in July, OPM acknowledged that up to 21.5 million people, dating as far back as 2000, may have had personal information stolen from their applications for security clearance background investigations.

To add to that concern, the Army National Guard also acknowledged in July that a misstep in handling data inadvertently transferred Soldier names, social security numbers, dates of birth and home addresses to a non-accredited server.

There is no indication of illegal intent in this case, but just the thought that all of our Soldiers' data going back to 2004, more than a decade, gives us pause for concern.

The bad news? It is highly likely that our members are affected by these events. Anyone who has been a victim of identity theft in the past knows the challenges of discovering the crime and the time involved to remove those actions from financial statements and bills.

The good news? We're aware of the problem and working here at the Joint Force Headquarters, with the National Guard Bureau and with

the Department of Defense to provide support to everyone potentially affected by the data breach. Better to get ahead of a potential problem now than wait for identity theft to occur unexpectedly.

For your personal data, be aware that the data breach might impact you and be vigilant in monitoring your financial and personal data.

Leaders have already stressed heightened vigilance and security awareness all summer. The events in Chattanooga remind us to always be on guard to protect ourselves and fellow Soldiers and Airmen.

Compromised data is just another form of security awareness and the Guard and DoD offer up a variety of tools to help you deal with any concerns for your personal data being misused.

The National Guard Bureau has a web page at www.nationalguard.mil/Features/IdentityTheft.aspx that helps provide steps on how you can check your credit reports, learn how to guard against identity theft and whom to call if you believe any fraudulent activity has occurred with your personal information.

A call center, available from 8-4 Mondays through Fridays at 877-276-4729, helps with information on what to do to prevent, or react to, potential identify theft.

The best way to protect yourself is to monitor your accounts closely for irregularities. Be on the lookout for regular bills that do not arrive as expected or at all. Pay extra attention to unexpected credit cards or account statements

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy

that you did not open. Make a note if you are denied credit during a loan application without any apparent reason.

If you suspect you may have an issue with identity theft or this data breach, make sure you notify your National Guard supervisor or chain of command in addition to your financial institutions and law enforcement.

Our National Guard leaders and NCOs constantly remind you about maintaining individual Soldier or Airmen readiness, and stress the importance of family readiness for missions that might take us from home, whether for disasters at home, extended training exercises or overseas deployments.

Make sure you consider your personal data as another form of personal and family readiness.

The Guard takes data protection seriously and is working harder than ever to prevent, identify or mitigate the loss of data.

Do your part to protect our data at your unit and be vigilant in protecting yourself at home. **gt**

guardtimes

Summer 2015 | Volume 8, Number 3

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GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE -- Staff Sgt. Joseph Pico trains with multiple weapons at the firing range at FS Gabreski July 17. Pico is a Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) instructor with the 106th Rescue Wing, and is responsible for training the base populace on the use of small arms. He oversees, maintains and repairs all 106th weapons. Photo by Staff Sergeant Christopher S Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

FRONT COVER: Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258th Artillery adjust an M119 howitzer July 17 prior to a fire mission. The battalion conducted gunnery in preparation for the brigade rotation to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. in 2016. Photo by Spc. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade.

BACK COVER: An infantryman from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry participates in platoon live-fire at Fort Drum July 16. The training was part of an Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise. Photo by Spc. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Labor

Networking with New York State Department of Labor

By Brian Keegan, New State Department of Labor

The WorkPlace
Your Guiding Light To Employment Opportunities

Editors Note: Guard members want jobs for themselves and their family members. Brian Keegan, public information officer for the New York State Department of Labor, sat down with Kevin Grundig, the Deputy Veterans' Program Administrator for the New State Department of Labor, to see just what type of help is available.

Q. What can the Department of Labor do for a member of the Guard?

If a member of the Guard or a veteran is looking for a job, the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) can help.

You can find us at pre-deployment Yellow Ribbon events, where our staff offers Guard members and their families an overview of our Career Center resources—which can help members plan for their return or help families find work during their deployment.

And during deployment, our services can help streamline the transition from deployment to civilian work. Guard members can receive assistance with resume preparation and critique, creating a cover letter, job search guidance and planning, job leads, job search resources, and interview preparation techniques. We can also refer them to a local NYSDOL Career Center for services when they return from deployment.

At post-deployment Yellow Ribbon events, our staff meets with Guard members individually for a one-on-one assessment of their employment assistance needs. We then connect Guard members with the local Career Center in their desired location to get the services they need.

In addition, guard members, veterans and eligible spouses may receive "Priority of Service" at all of our Career Centers. That means you are given priority for employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job-training program.

Q. If a Guard member is looking for this type of help, what is the first step they should take?

The first thing they should do is visit our website at www.labor.ny.gov/vets/ or e-mail us at ask.vets@labor.ny.gov. From there, we can help connect them with their local Career Center representative. They can also call us at 1-888-469-7365. Make sure to mention that you are a National Guard member or veteran in need of job search assistance.

Q. Does New York have any other programs available for Guard members?

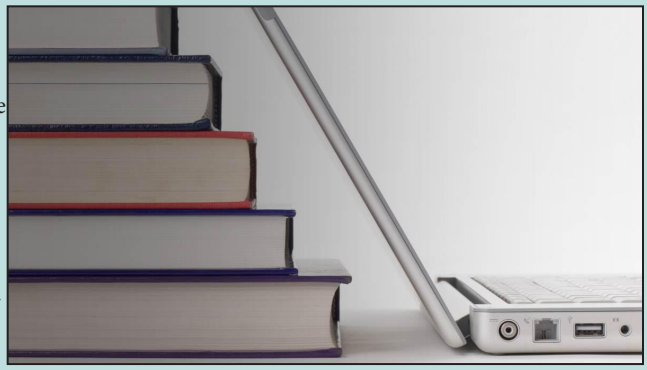
Yes. Upon separation, Governor Cuomo's Experience Counts program may grant veterans credit toward state licenses for their military experience. For example, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) fees can be waived for military members with recent experience driving trucks and heavy equipment during their service. The program also certifies veterans to become licensed armed and unarmed security guards through an on-site training program. (http://veterans.ny.gov/content/experience-counts)

Through the New York State Veterans Temporary Hiring Program, the State uses honorably discharged veterans for temporary appointments in State agencies rather than using temporary service companies. A State agency must select a veteran from the veteran temporary hiring list when making a temporary appointment as long as the veteran has the necessary skills for the job. (http://www.cs.ny.gov/vetportal/).

Q. Do you have some helpful hints for people looking for a job?

Network, network, and network! Social media websites, such as Linkedin, are now one of the most effective ways to network professionally. Our staff can help you with this. Many hiring managers are turning to social media to find their preferred candidates because researching profiles, resumes, and qualifications has never been easier. Job seekers can use social media to identify job leads, research companies, and market their skills and qualifications.

Two other on-line resources you can use are Jobs Express (http://www.labor.ny.gov/jobs/regional.shtm) and Job Zone (www.jobzone.ny.gov). Jobs Express is a listing of over 125,000 job openings in New York. Job Zone is one stop shopping for career guidance and information tailored to your interests and job needs. **gt**



Kevin Grundig, a United States Air Force veteran who served during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield, currently serves as the Deputy Veterans' Program Administrator for the New State Department of Labor. For the past 10 years, Mr. Grundig has directed programs that support veterans with finding employment.

Army Offers 'Think, Type, Post' as Social Media TTP

Story and photo by C. Todd Lopez, Army News Service

WASHINGTON - If Soldiers were still unsure of what bad behavior looks like online, the Army clarified it for them in an "All Army Activities" message - commonly called an ALARACT - that went out force-wide in early August.

Online misconduct, it says, is "the use of electronic communication to inflict harm. Examples include, but are not limited to: harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, retaliation, or any other types of misconduct that undermine dignity and respect."

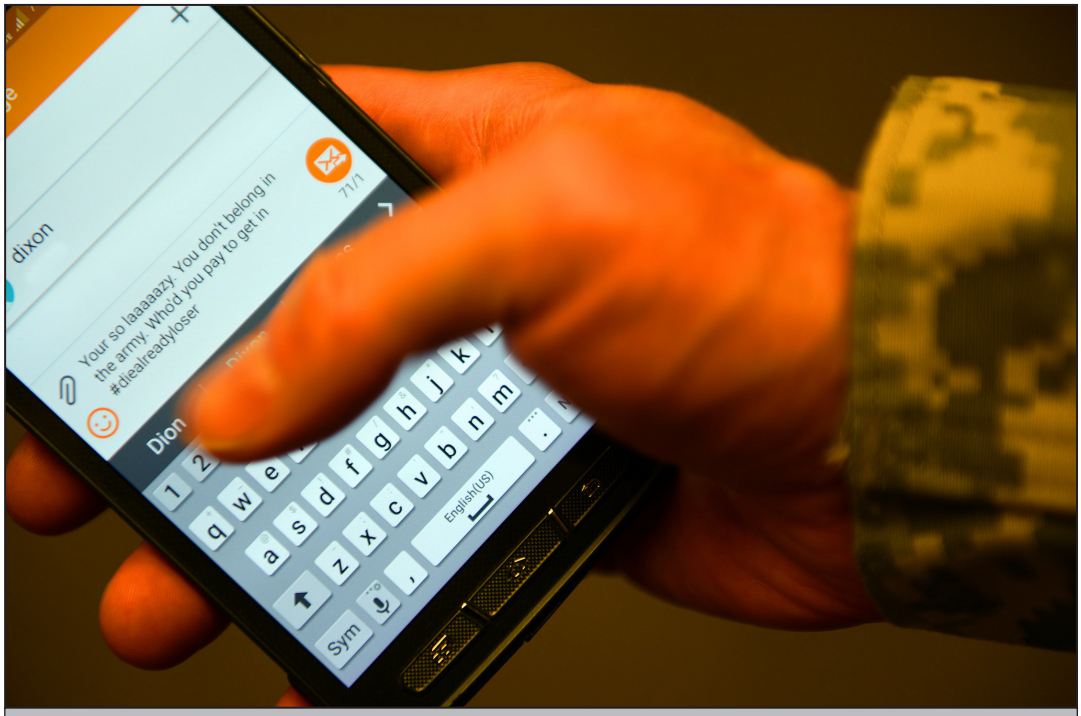
The ALARACT 122/2015, which comes as part of an effort to address Soldier use of social media and other online communication, also defines good behavior online, "electronic communication," and "online-related incident."

"The Army Values require that everyone be treated with dignity and respect," the message reads. "Harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, retaliation, and any other type of misconduct that undermines dignity and respect are not consistent with Army Values and negatively impact command climate and readiness."

The ALARACT emphasizes commanders' responsibility to "reinforce a climate where current and future members of the Army team, including Soldiers, Army civilians, contractors, and Family members, understand that online misconduct is inconsistent with Army values."

The goal is a climate where "online-related incidents are prevented, reported, and addressed at the lowest possible level."

In March, the Army's chief of staff directed the creation of a "tiger team" to address the issue of online misbehavior, including ret-



If Soldiers were still unsure of what bad behavior looks like online, the Army clarified it for them in an "All Army Activities" message that went out force-wide in August. Online misconduct, it says, is "the use of electronic communication to inflict harm."

ribution, and to find ways to prevent and respond to harm inflicted in electronic communication.

One goal of the team was to create a reporting system for "online-related incidents" and report those up to senior Army leadership.

Tiger team member Lt. Col. Kay Emerson, who also serves as director of the Army's Equal Opportunity policy office, said members of the Army staff and command representatives are working now to identify the data fields and reporting requirements for such an online reporting system.

"Once collated, senior Army leadership will have a sight picture of reported online-related incidents and actions taken by commanders," Emerson said.

The Army is expected to update AR 600-20 in the next published version to address online and social media violations. Emerson said she is currently updating paragraph 4-19 within AR 600-20 to incorporate the Department of Defense's drafted policy with the Army's online conduct efforts.

Section 4-19 of AR 600-20, called "Treatment of persons," addresses hazing and bullying, as well as command and individual responsibilities in regards to them. Both the regulation and the ALARACT direct Soldiers and Army civilians who experience or witness online misconduct to report it to their chain of command.

Additionally, section 4-19 of AR 600-20 is "punitive" in nature. It authorizes commanders to potentially punish those who are in violation of its direction, making failure to adhere to the Army's rules for online behavior a punishable offense.

"Soldiers who violate this policy may be subject to punishment under the UCMJ," the regulation reads. "Whether or not certain acts specifically violate the provisions of this paragraph, they may be inappropriate or violate relevant civilian personnel guidance."

Despite new rules and direction in regard to use of social media and other forms of electronic communication, the Army says it doesn't want to stop Solders from communicating online. Instead, said an Army official, when using electronic communication devices, Soldiers should apply "Think, Type, Post."

That maxim is summarized as "think about the message being communicated and who could potentially view it; type a communication that is consistent with Army values; and post only those messages that demonstrate dignity and respect for self and others." gt

Safety Corner

Keep Hunting Safety on Your Horizon

**Article submitted by Sgt. 1st Class Charles Austin, Safety Specialist.*

Over half a million people hunted in New York State last year, and for every incident reported, there are thousands of others who safely and responsibly took game.

New York has an extremely safety-conscious generation of hunters, thanks largely to over 60 years of dedicated efforts of more than 3,000 volunteer Sportsman Education Instructors. Hunting is safer than ever, but we cannot become complacent because every hunting related shooting is preventable.

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, 2014 had the second lowest number of hunting-related shootings on record in New York. There were 22 reported incidents, including one fatality. Further evaluation of the incidents showed that 8 (36%) were self-inflicted, and that the majority (12 or 55%) of incidents this year were due to shooter negligence and/or improper gun handling. This record low number indicates that today's hunters are demonstrating safe gun handling skills.

Here are some tips to keep you safe this hunting season:

• Never shoot at a movement, sound or what you assume to be fur or feathers. Ensure you can clearly see and identify the animal you intend to shoot, including the correct body part for a kill shot. If you're not 100 percent sure, don't shoot.

• Before pulling the trigger, take a moment to look beyond the animal to ensure your shot won't endanger others should you miss or your bullet pass through the animal.

• Use the appropriate weapon for the game you're after and the area in which you're hunting. Some areas are restricted to shotguns because their relatively short range reduces risks to others who may be hunting in the same area. Illegally using a rifle in such areas puts others at great risk.

• Always wear a sufficient amount of blaze orange when and where it's required so you'll be visible to other hunters.

• Turkey and waterfowl hunters aren't required to wear blaze orange because it would hinder their ability to lure game within range. However, it's a good idea for turkey hunters to wear a blaze orange cap when moving through the woods between setups just in case other hunters are in the area.

• Carry your decoys (or harvested game) in a bag to reduce the risk of other hunters mistaking them for live animals. Never carry an animal such as a deer over your shoulders through the woods because a hunter may fire, mistaking it for a live animal. To be safe, drag larger animals out.

• When hunting turkeys, never wear red, white or blue (such as an American flag patch/emblem) as these are the same colors as the male gobbler's head — the kill shot when taking turkeys.

• As you stalk game, be aware your stealthy movements may sound like those of an animal to another hunter. Pause every now and then to observe the area around you for other hunters in tree stands or ground blinds. If you see another hunter, show some blaze orange — especially if you're in full camouflage hunting turkeys — so he or she can see you, and then move out of the area. When wearing camouflage, avoid waving to other hunters as they could mistake your movements for something else.

• Good communication and coordination are important when hunting with others. Ensure everyone in the hunting party is aware of each other's movements at all times.

• When hunting on public lands or where there is little control over individual hunters, pay attention to the little details. Note how many other vehicles are parked near the area you intend to hunt. If there are too many other hunters in the area, find another location. This is especially important if you haven't made prior agreements with those other hunters. Since you don't know whether they're safety conscious, it's better to err on the side of caution.

• Take notice of the litter you find. Empty beer cans and whiskey bottles are a sign you may be in an area where irresponsible people are hunting. Find a safer place to hunt and report such findings to game wardens or other authorities.

Remember that the vast majority of the people who hunt have safe and enjoyable experiences. Many, if not all incidents can be prevented if we obey the primary rules of Hunter Safety.

For more information on hunting safety, visit https://safety.army.mil, and http://www.dec.ny.gov. gt

> 'Always wear a sufficient amount of blaze orange when and where it's required so you'll be visible to other hunters.'

Inspector General Corner

Make Yourself Relevant in a Flexible Force

By Col. Maureen Murphy, Inspector General

LATHAM -- Faced with complex global security challenges and a resource-constrained environment, our top military leaders are continually updating their strategic guidance to our forces on what we need to be, what we need to do, and where we need to go to meet the defense requirements of our nation and State.

Our guiding mission and vision statements cite an ever-accelerating pace of change in our security environment requiring our military forces to evolve, adapt, and respond faster than our potential adversaries to be successful in 21st century deterrence and in a plethora of battlespaces. Fiscal realities demand focused prioritization in our spending decisions to achieve maximum effect and the greatest bang for the buck.

America's Air Force: A Call to the Future, released in July of 2014, established strategic agility as the Air Force's guiding principle for coping with this uncertain future. Force 2025 and Beyond embodies the Army's strategy for future joint force success, which will require the Army to be leaner, smarter, more lethal and more agile.

Agility in this context refers to a combination of innovation, flexibility, and adaptability on the part of leadership, organizations, and individual service members. Indeed, it is a characteristic that all our members must recognize is becoming essential to their value in an organization.

Those who are able to efficiently produce, perform at a high level, and continually add value to the organization will be those that rise to the top. Conversely, those unable or unwilling to adapt and keep pace will not remain relevant, and may well find themselves not selected for developmental opportunities, reenlistment, or retention.

Over the course of this last year, I have been tremendously impressed by the skills, dedication, and professionalism of our New York National Guardsmen in the execution of their varied mission sets across the state.

On numerous occasions, however, I have been surprised by those who do not seem to recognize the changing landscape, and believe they are entitled to remain in the organization indefinitely, simply because of their past record of service or their longevity. They may contact the IG office for assistance, shocked and indignant at their commander's decision to reassign them, not reenlist them, or not retain them.

One of our highest organizational priorities is to recruit, develop, promote, and retain those with the greatest potential to help us succeed in our mission. As Soldiers and Airmen, we should always be thinking about improving our knowledge, skills, readiness, and value to the organization and should ask ourselves every day what contribution we have made toward that goal. Given the budgetary pressures, difficult decisions will have to be made by the organization to prioritize limited resources to meet priority mission requirements.

Leaders at every level need to ensure they remain appropriately manned, resilient and ready, and should ensure they have a mechanism for capturing feedback and input for improving processes and procedures. While all members of the organization need to be guided by and in compliance with the standards, leaders have the inherent responsibility to know the current standards and ensure they are upheld in their unit.

In accordance with regulations, leaders must also set the standard for what is right, and make the right decision for the right reasons. Increasingly, strategic imperatives will drive those decisions, and those who are not complying with the standards or adding value to the organization will find their options narrowed.

Think about what you can do to become more agile, relevant and valuable to your unit.

Finally, during a time of rapid change and strategic transition, our foundational values remain crucial to keeping us on track. Incorporating our values in all we do and emphasizing dignity and respect in our workplaces and communities will help us grow, adapt, evolve, and remain relevant military professionals to meet the demands of our nation. **gt**

Military Personnel News: The MILPO Corner

Administrative News

New or Revised Publications. The following new/revised publications are now posted on the APD website at www.apd.army.mil:

- AR 600-8-22, Military Awards.
- DA Pam 638-8, Procedures for the Army Casualty Program.
- DA Pam 670-1, Guide to the Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia.

The following new or revised publications are now posted on the NGB website at www.ngbpdc.ngb.army.mil:

- NGR 600-102, Officers Assigned to Selective Service System Sections at Joint Force Headquarters.
- NGR 635-102, Officers and Warrant Officers Selective Retention.

Education News

Education Incentives Update. Effective July 2015, the following changes apply to the education incentive program:

Prior Service Enlistment Bonus (PSEB) and Enlisted Affiliation Bonus (EAB) are now authorized for TDA units. The PSEB amounts are based upon Tier Level (1-6). Soldiers enlisting DMOSQ for three years may receive $7,500 (Tier 1 and 2), and $5,000 (Tier 2). Soldier enlisting for six years DMOSQ/Non-DMOSQ may receive up to $15,000.

Enlisted Affiliation Bonus applies to Servicemen transitioning from an Active Component to the National Guard either DMOSQ or Non-DMOSQ into a Critical Skill (CS) identified on the MOS List.

Officer Accession Bonus payment of $10,000 is ONLY applicable to newly commissioned officer in an authorized area of concentration, and is processed lump-sum upon completion of Basic Officer Leaders Course and verification of DMOSQ.

Officer Affiliation Bonus (OAFB) payment of $20,000 is ONLY applicable to affiliating commissioned officer in an authorized AOC. The OAFB amount is based upon Tier Level (1-6), and is processed lump-sum for three year DMOSQ, and in two installments for six year DMOSQ/Non-DMOSQ.

Warrant Officer Accession Bonus payment of $20,000 is ONLY authorized to newly appointed Warrant Officers that access in an AOC on the MOS List for six years, and is processed in two installments, 50% upon reporting to unit of assignment and fourth year anniversary.

Warrant Officer Affiliation Bonus (WOAFB) payment of $20,000 is ONLY authorized to warrant officer who affiliates in an AOC on the MOS List. The WOAFB amount is processed lump-sum for three year DMOSQ, and in 2 installments for six year DMOSQ/Non-DMOSQ.

Officer Accession Bonus must be signed no more than 90 days before the date of commission and no later than the date of commission. Warrant Officer Accession Bonus must be signed no earlier than the date of approved pre-determination and no later than the date of commission.

Soldier Support News

New NCOER rollout delayed. The Secretary of the Army has delayed the implementation of the new Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report. The new rating system is scheduled to take effect in January 2016. The goals behind the changes are to meet the Chief of Staff of the Army's strategic priority to develop adaptive Army leaders for a complex world. Training on the new NCOER will be conducted at all units before the January 2016 start date.

Security Clearance Requirements. DA PAM 611-21 is used to determine security clearance requirements. This is the baseline, however, circumstances may dictate that a Soldier obtain a security clearance, even if the MOS he holds does not require one. A Soldier's command will need to justify this circumstance should they submit the Soldier for a security clearance.

MNP-PS has assembled MOS and AOC references to easily identify baseline security clearance requirements. These are available on the MILPO Gateway at f ttps://ngnyorclweb.ng.ds.army.mil/mnp/gateway.html

Army Universal Camouflage Pattern (UCP) Transition Plan. The New York Army National Guard published a policy in July 2015 outlining the transition from UCP ACU to the new Operational Camouflage Pattern ACU. The new camouflage pattern OCP ACU is currently available for procurement, but New York Army National Guard Soldiers will not start wearing the uniform until May 1, 2016. This coincides with the formal issue of the uniform to new Soldiers at basic training and allows time for Soldiers to procure the new uniform while maintaining a standard of uniformity throughout the force. While it is authorized for Soldiers to replace unserviceable UCP ACU with the OCP ACU, every Soldier has at least four uniforms and shall continue to wear the UCP ACU until the May 2016 transition start date. AGR Soldiers receive a clothing allowance to procure new uniforms. Technician, long term ADOS, long term SAD, and traditional National Guard Soldiers (M-day) will procure their uniforms through the unit supply system. The policy and transition guide can be found at h ttps://ngnyorclweb.ng.ds.army.mil/mnp/gateway.html

FY 16 DA Promotion Board Schedule. The FY 16 DA Board Schedule has been released. Please review zone of consideration and Unit Vacancy Promotion (UVP) deadlines. Some UVP deadlines are approaching quickly. All UVPs must be boarded at the state level Federal Recognition Board (FRB) and sent to NGB NLT the dates indicated. The Board schedule and a DA Board Guide to assist officers in preparation for the board are located on the MILPO Gateway at https://ngnyorclweb.ng.ds.army.mil/mnp/gateway.html

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your GOCOM G1 Rep or OPM at (518) 272-6493. **gt**

Mastering the Machine Gun

FORT DRUM -- Two Soldiers from Headquarters Support Company of the 42nd Infantry Division, based in Troy, N.Y. send rounds down range firing a .50-caliber here June 19 as part of the unit annual training. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division.

DOD to Study Transgender Service

Implications for welcoming transgender persons to serve openly

Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON - A Defense Department working group will study the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly in the military, and its work will presume they can do so unless objective and practical impediments are identified, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced July 13.

In a statement announcing the working group, Carter said that over the last 14 years of conflict, the Defense Department has proven itself to be a learning organization.

"This is true in war, where we have adapted to counterinsurgency, unmanned systems, and new battlefield requirements," Carter said. "It is also true with respect to institutional activities, where we have learned from how we repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," from our efforts to eliminate sexual assault in the military, and from our work to open up ground combat positions to women.

"Throughout this time," he continued, "transgender men and women in uniform have been there with us, even as they often had to serve in silence alongside their fellow comrades in arms."

Outdated regulations causing uncertainty

The Defense Department's current regulations regarding transgender service members are outdated and are causing uncertainty that distracts commanders from DoD's core missions, the secretary said.

"At a time when our troops have learned from experience that the most important qualification for service members should be whether they're able and willing to do their job, our officers and enlisted personnel are faced with certain rules that tell them the opposite," he added. "Moreover, we have transgender Soldiers, sailors, Airmen, and Marines - real, patriotic Americans - who I know are being hurt by an outdated, confusing, inconsistent approach that's contrary to our value of service and individual merit."

Carter said he issued two directives in July to deal with this matter.

First, DoD will create a working group to study over the next six months the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly. Brad Carson, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, will lead the group, which will be composed of military and civilian personnel representing all the military services and the Joint Staff and will report directly to Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work.

"At my direction," Carter said, "the working group will start with the presumption that transgender persons can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness, unless and except where objective, practical impediments are identified."

Elevated decision authority for administrative discharges

Second, the secretary said, he is directing that decision authority in all administrative discharges for those diagnosed with gender dysphoria or who identify themselves as transgender must be elevated to Carson, who will make determinations on all potential separations.

"As I've said before, we must ensure that everyone who's able and willing to serve has the full and equal opportunity to do so, and we must treat all our people with the dignity and respect they deserve," Carter said. "Going forward, the Department of Defense must and will continue to improve how we do both.

Our military's future strength depends on it." gt

> "We must ensure that everyone who's able and willing to serve has the full and equal opportunity to do so, and we must treat all our people with the dignity and respect they deserve,"
>
> *-- Secretary of Defense Ash Carter*

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced July 13 the formation of a working group to study transgender issues in the Defense Department. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clydell Kinchen, DoD.

Piwowarski Named to Top NCO Spot in State

42nd Infantry Division CSM Tapped for New York's Senior NCO position

Guard Times Staff

LATHAM -- National Guard Command Sgt. Major David Piwowarski, an Afghan War veteran becomes the New York Army National Guard's highest ranking non-commissioned officer in November.

Piwowarski, a Buffalo area native who enlisted in the Army in 1981, will replace Rochester resident Louis Wilson, who retires after 33-years in the Army National Guard.

Piwowarski currently serves as the Command Sergeant Major for the Troy-based 42nd Infantry Division.

The role of the command sergeant major is to provide advice on training and enlisted Soldier matters to the commander. As the command sergeant major of the 10,500-member New York Army National Guard, Piwowarski will report to Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York and Commander of the New York Army National Guard.

Murphy announced Piwowarski's selection for the new responsibility August 10 amongst a larger selection of other senior NCO selections for command sergeants major across the force.

These included October 1 assignments for Command Sgt. Maj. Justin Lenz as the 42nd Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj.; Command Sgt. Maj. Marc Maynard as the 106th Regional Training Institute Command Sgt. Maj.; Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Landy selected as the Camp Smith Training Site Command Sgt. Maj.; and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Seifert as the Command Sgt. Maj. for the 501st Ordnance Battalion (Explosive Ordnance Disposal).

The transitions also included the summer change of responsibilities on July 31 for Command Sgt. Maj. Arnold Reyes as the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment Command Sgt. Maj. and Command Sgt. Maj. Edwin Garris as the new Command Sgt. Maj. for the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery.

"Please join me in congratulating everyone on their new assignments," Murphy said in his announcement to the force.

Piwowarski is already working full-time at the Joint Force Headquarters as a military technician in the domestic operations office.

Piwowarski is an Infantryman and has served in all Infantry enlisted and non-commissioned officer jobs from rifleman on up.

Command Sgt. Maj. David Piwowarski, seen during his 2008 deployment to Afghanistan as senior enlisted Soldier in the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Piwowarski would go on to become the 42nd Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj. and this August was selected to succeed Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson as the senior NCO in the New York National Guard. Photo by Capt. Robert Romano.

He served in the 1st Battalion 504th Airborne Infantry, of the 82nd Airborne Division after enlisting in the Army. He returned to New York and joined the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion 174th Infantry.

Piwowarski has served as a platoon sergeant, company first sergeant, and as command sergeant major of the 1st Battalion 108th Infantry, the 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, and the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

He was placed on federal active duty in 2003 and served as the command sergeant major for a battalion task force conducting homeland security operations as part of Operation Noble Eagle. The task force was built around the New York National Guard's 1st Battalion 127th Armor.

In 2008, Piwowarski deployed to Afghanistan with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team as part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, a multi-national unit training Afghan Soldiers which was overseen by the New York Army National Guard Brigade.

Piwowarski holds a dual bachelor's degree in Economics and Business from Buffalo State College. He is a 2004 graduate of the Army's Sergeants Major Academy.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the Global War on Terror Service Medal, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Expert Infantry Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. gt

What to Wear, What to Wear?

New uniforms fielded in 2016 for Army Guard Soldiers

By Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

LATHAM -- Every Army Guard unit has that Soldier who must have the latest and greatest clothing and gear. But gearheads in New York formations will have to be patient before donning the newest Operational Camouflage Pattern Army Combat Uniform (OCP ACU).

The effective wear date of the new uniform in formations across the New York Army National Guard will begin May 1, 2016, according to Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, commander of the New York Army National Guard and the Adjutant General for New York State military forces.

The Army announced that uniforms will be available in military clothing and sales this summer, but new Soldiers joining the New York Army National Guard won't see basic issue of the uniform until 2016.

The new uniform replaces the Universal Camouflage Pattern Soldiers currently wear in garrison, and the Operation Enduring Freedom Camouflage Pattern (OEF CP) used in theater in Afghanistan.

The Joint Force Headquarters established a transition period from May to September 2016 to coincide with the return of the first New York Army National Guard initial entry Soldiers with the new uniform pattern.

Murphy issued that policy to the force July 1.

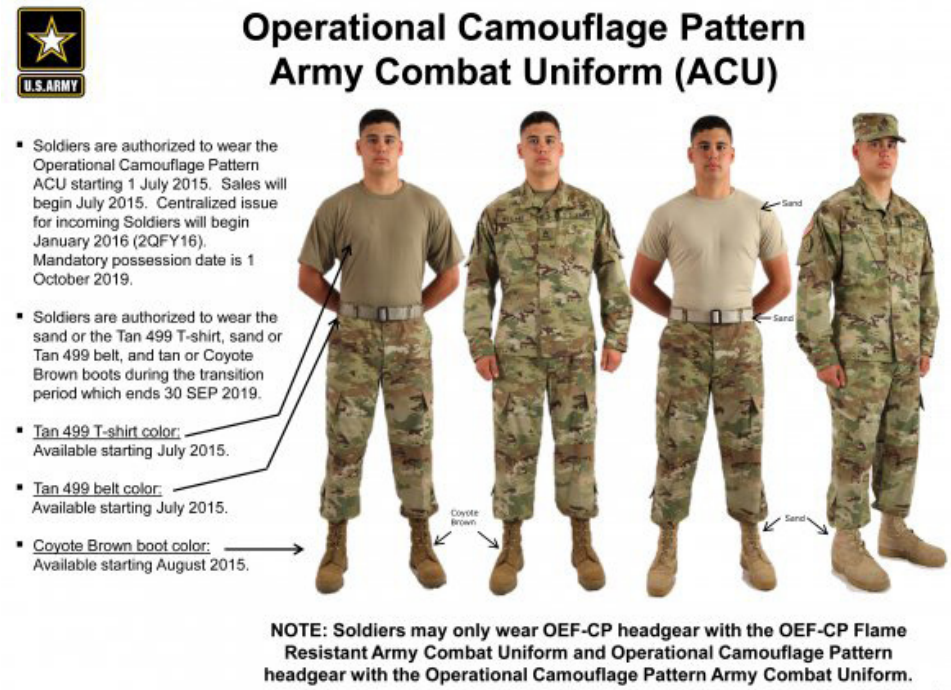
"My intent is to reduce individual Soldier expense and facilitate a uniformed transition to the OCP ACU," Murphy said in guidance to commanders.

The Operational Camouflage Pattern ACU will not be issued in bulk, explained Col. Scott Doust, New York Army National Guard director of logistics.

The introduction of the ACU in Operational Camouflage Pattern is being phased in to reduce the cost to both Soldiers and the Army, allowing time to exhaust the residual stocks of current uniforms.

"Those Soldiers who do not receive their uniforms during Initial Entry Training will order through their supply sergeants when available," Doust said.

Soldiers will receive the new uniform under normal replacement schedules while officers continue to purchase their own uniforms over time as current ACUs become unserviceable.



The entire Army will be in the Operational Camouflage Pattern by Oct. 1, 2019.

During this four-year period, Soldiers will also be permitted to wear three uniform variations, including the current universal camouflage ACU, the new operational camo ACU or the flame resistant OEF camouflage pattern, referred to as multicam.

Soldiers who already own the OEF-CP or the new OCP ACU may wear the uniform while on temporary duty out of state, explained Murphy. The intent of the transition period is to remove any influence to force Soldiers to purchase the new uniform while training in their units in state before May 2016.

"We still have a good uniform right now," Murphy explained to senior staff. "Let's stay with it as long as we can."

Along with the new camo, the Army is introducing new coyote brown boots and a darker shade of belt and T-shirt for use with the operational camouflage pattern. During the transition, Soldiers can wear the old sand-colored boots, belts and shirts with their new camo pattern – just not in reverse. The new darker shirts, belt and boots may not be worn with the current ACU universal (digital) camouflage pattern.

Leaders were told to expect a lot of mixing and matching of camo items for the next several years, as the new uniforms are phased for new recruits and Soldiers receive their initial issue over a period of years, said Sergeant Major of the Army Daniel Dailey.

"Presenting a professional appearance is very important to Soldiers, but we will not inconvenience or burden our troops," Dailey said. "We will still be the most lethal fighting force the world has ever known, even if our belts don't match for the next few years." **gt**

Pvt P
AIRBORNE

Army Wins Back TAG Match Honors

By Sgt. Harley Jelis, 138th Public Affairs Detachment

"Remember the basics. Have a good winning attitude, try to have a good match, and trust in your equipment." *--Capt. Michael Sicinski*

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor - This year for the first time since 2009, the 107th Airlift Wing's Security Forces Squadron, did not win the annual Adjutant General's Combat Sustainment Training Exercise.

Instead, a team from the 1st Battalion 69th Infantry walked away with the honors. Capt. Michael Sicinski, commander of the Headquarters Company, earned 1st place overall for the individual shooter category, and his team, "The Fighting 69th", grabbed 1st place for the team shooter category.

"We were confident this year," said Sicinski. "We didn't cut corners; we knew that we had to exceed the standards of the match."

Along with Sicinski the winning team consisted of Staff Sgt. Michael Palopoli, Sgt. Mathew Melendez and Sgt. Zachary Keckley.

More than 90 service members from the New York Army and Air National Guard, New York State Guard and New York Naval Militia competed during the annual three-day event in both individual and team events on May 29-31.

This year's TAG Match, which was conducted by the New York Army National Guard, had four courses of fire over three days.

Each event tested the shooters' skills at long range accuracy and their ability to quickly acquire and engage targets at close range.

Competitors had the option to register as individuals and in four-member teams.

Individuals competed in the Combat Rifleman Excellence-in-Competition and Combat Pistol Excellence-in-Competition matches.

The 21 four-member teams competed for the National Guard Infantry Team Rifle Exercise and General George S. Patton Pistol match.

Sicinski said he and his team prepared over the past year for the competition. The Fighting 69th knew that to win they would need to practice often and hard. The team members fired regularly, and wore heavier body armor to increase the difficulty of the training.

Sicinski attributed the win to keeping a firm hold of the fundamentals of shooting.

"Remember the basics," Sicinksi said. "Have a good winning attitude, try to have a good match and trust in your equipment." **gt**

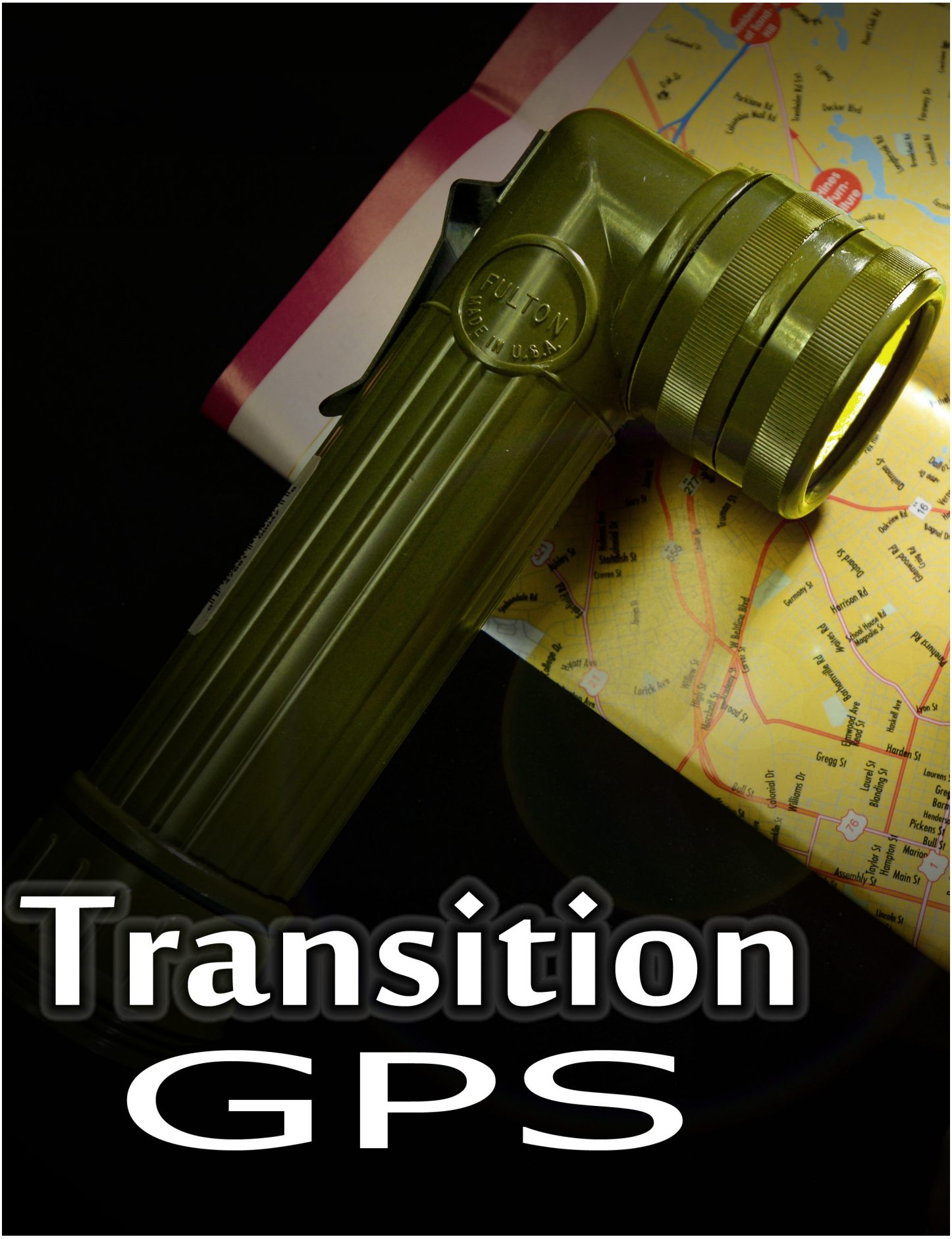
Spc. Isaac scores a target during the General George Patton Pistol Match during the 2015 TAG Combat Sustainment Training Exercise. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bratt, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

Tech. Sgt. George Liandrakis of the 106th Rescue Wing nicknamed "The Defenders," competes in the General George Patton Pistol Match during the 2015 TAG Combat Sustainment Training Exercise. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bratt, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

A team from the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, nicknamed "The Hit Men," compete in the Gen. George Patton Pistol Match during the 2015 TAG Combat Sustainment Training Exercise. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bratt, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

Joint services compete in the Combat Rifleman Excellence-in-Competition match on May 30 at Camp Smith. A Soldier fires an M4 in the prone-unsupported position as part of the 2015 TAG Combat Sustainment Training Exercise. Photo by Sgt. Michael J. Davis, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Bruce of the New York Naval Militia fires an M9 pistol during the Combat Pistol Excellence-in-Competition match during the 2015 Combat Sustainment Training Exercise. Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Bratt, 138th Public Affairs Detachment.



Transition GPS

Change Jobs, Change Uniforms, Stay in Service

Troops explore potential in new careers to stay in the Guard

By Maj. Alvin Phillips, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

SYRACUSE -- Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Presley likes being a New York Army National Guard Soldier. He likes it so much that he's changed military jobs 10 times so he can keep being one.

"At the end of the day I just want to be a Soldier in the New York National Guard. It is what I have done for over 25 years and it is just who I am," said Presley, a senior enlisted leader assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

That meant, Presley explained, changing jobs when units were reorganized or new opportunities presented themselves. He wanted to stay in more than he wanted to do the same thing throughout his career, Presley added.

The number one priority for Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General, is keeping Soldiers and Airmen in our New York National Guard, said New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major Louis Wilson.

That means he also encourages Soldiers to switch military jobs if it can help them stay in, Wilson said.

As units face reorganization, it is vital for both Soldiers and Airmen to understand the full scope of opportunities out there, he added.

If the job they are currently assigned to is being phased out, then Soldiers have to be ready to learn new skills, he emphasized.

Staff Sgt. Tarry Landrigan, started his career as a truck driver – Army Military Occupational Specialty 88M-in Company E, 427th Brigade Support Battalion. Now he is a medic; a 68W.

"I really wanted to expand myself professionally and stay competitive," said Landrigan, who is now the Medical Clinic Non-commissioned Officer in Charge at the New York Army National Guard Medical Command facility at the Watervliet Arsenal. "And when you think about it, going from driving Soldiers to fixing Soldiers is not all that far apart," he added with a smile.

For some service members the best way to move ahead is to change uniforms, taking off an Army uniform and putting on an Air Force one instead.

Jeff Hansen was once a New York Army National Guard lieutenant in the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and then a fire support officer for the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry.

But, Hansen said, he felt that his potential for professional growth as an Army fire support officer was limited.

So he joined the New York Air National Guard's 274th Air Support Operations Squadron.

The unit, a part of the 174th Attack Wing at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, provides the command and control and employment of Joint Terminal Air Controllers for the close air support mission for Army maneuver units.

Now a captain, Hansen has completed several intense and strategic courses and cannot imagine trading the blue for green again.

"The opportunities with the Air Guard and the opportunities to still work with the Army, such as I do as an Air Control officer working with the 27th Brigade and preparing for their JRTC (Joint Readiness Training Center) mission highlights the best for the organization, the New York National Guard, " Hansen said.

New York Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Olimel Sanchez, who currently serves in the 106th Rescue Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron also started her military career in the New York Army National Guard. Sanchez was an administrative specialist in the 101st Signal Battalion when she served in the Army Guard.

She made the jump from green to blue because she spent more time in the Army Guard working outside of her military skill set, Sanchez explained.

"I switched because I knew I could do and learn more," Sanchez said.

Staff Sgt. Donald Leinfielder, the training non-commissioned officer for the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation, said he's been considering trying to make the jump to the Air National Guard because he sees career potential in that service.

It's about the jobs and promotion potential, said Leinfelder, a 15-year Army veteran awarded the Purple Heart while deployed in Iraq with the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry in 2005.

"Sometimes you just need a change of environment and me being Active Guard Reserve (AGR), my options are limited," Leinfelder said. "The Air Guard has more opportunity—it may take longer for promotions but there are more positions."

Sometimes, though, Airmen become Soldiers.

Lt. Col. Sean Flynn, commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, started his military career as an Active Duty Air Force officer in 1994.

He joined the Air Force because the Army didn't have a Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of Maryland, where he went to college and he wanted to serve, Flynn said.

His goal was to join the Air Force in the Security Police. But because he had a journalism degree, the Air Force made him a public affairs officer in Alaska.

After leaving the Air Force in 1997 he moved back to New York. He watched the U.S. military intervening in Kosovo and the 1998 ice storm devastate northern New York. He saw what was going on and decided he could make a contribution by joining the New York Army National Guard.

"I knew I could be of value doing domestic operations and serving my state and country and the Lexington Avenue Armory (home of the 69th Infantry's headquarters) was right there," Flynn said.

While Wilson said he would like Soldiers to stay Soldiers, he understands that each individual has different circumstances.

The bottom line, Wilson said, is that they continue to serve.

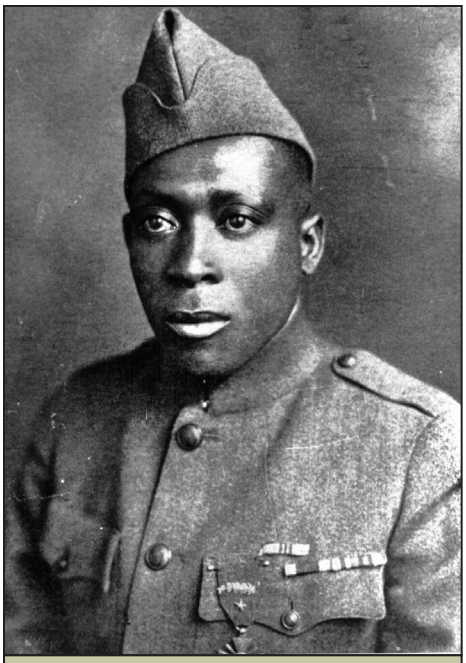
"As long as it is within the New York National Guard, be it Green or Blue, it is New York, there is no issue because we are one team who work and operate as a joint force and our capabilities are greater (together)," Wilson said.

"At the end of the day we want our Guardsmen to remain just that, our New York National Guard Guardsmen, because they as a whole fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the organization," said Col. Curtis Williamson, director of federal personnel for the Division of Military and Naval Affairs. gt

New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson accepts the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama on behalf of Sgt. Henry Johnson in a White House ceremony June 2. While on sentry duty in 1918, then-Private Johnson with another Soldier received a surprise attack from a platoon-sized enemy force. Despite receiving significant wounds, Johnson mounted a singularly brave counter-attack that saved the life of his fellow Soldier and resulted in several enemy casualties. He continued to engage in hand-to-hand combat until the defeated enemy retreated. Johnson was the first American ever to receive the Croix de Guerre. Photo by Staff Sgt. Bernardo Fuller, U.S. Army.

WWI Soldiers Inducted Into Hall of Heroes

By J.D. Leipold, Army News Service



Pvt. Henry Lincoln Johnson (1897 – July 5, 1929) was a U.S. Army Soldier from Albany, N.Y. who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart. He was also the first American soldier in World War I to receive the French Croix de guerre with star and bronze palm.
For his bravery and gallantry in combat, on June 2, 2015, America's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, was presented by President Barack Obama in a posthumous ceremony at the White House. Archive photo.

Croix de Guerre (France)-Awarded ca. 1918.	Purple Heart - Awarded June, 1996 by former Pres. Bill Clinton.	Distinguished Service Cross - Awarded Feb. 2003 by Tuskegee Airman Herman Johnson	Medal of Honor - Awarded June, 2015 by President Barack Obama.

WASHINGTON - Private Henry Johnson, an African-American, and Army Sgt. William Shemin, a Jewish-American, were each posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama at a June 2 White House ceremony, following the upgrade of their Distinguished Service Crosses to Medals of Honor.

Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work hosted the Pentagon event.

"This ceremony is a reminder that we redress the prejudices of the past and appropriately honor our nation's heroes," Work said.

"It is a feature of our republic and the American people themselves that we have the ability to correct our course, and that the nation's long arc of history does not bend toward injustice … it bends toward justice," the deputy secretary said. "In the case of Pvt. Johnson, it was racism … in the case of Sgt. Shemin, it was anti-Semitism … it is important that we acknowledge the injustices and mistakes of the past and rightfully honor those who have given so much on behalf of their country."

> "This ceremony is a reminder that we redress the prejudices of the past and appropriately honor our heroes."
>
> --*Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work*

Work added, "And, particularly as a military institution that represents literally every single member of this nation, every citizen, regardless of race, regardless of belief, regardless of preference, it is imperative that we do all we can to fix the wrongs from the past."

Pvt. Henry Johnson

Nearly a century ago, Johnson enlisted with the 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment, an all-black National Guard unit that became known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," which later became the 369th Infantry Regiment of the 93rd Infantry Division. Johnson's unit was sent to the Western Front in 1918 and attached to a French command.

Johnson, with another soldier, came under attack while standing sentry duty. Surrounded by about 12 German soldiers, he and his comrade fought the enemy with grenades and rifle fire until their ammunition was spent. Seeing the other sentry being dragged off into captivity, and disregarding a slew of wounds, the 5-foot-4-inch Johnson used his rifle as a club before it finally splintered. Then he pulled a bolo knife, stabbing and hacking the enemy until American and French troops arrived on the scene to aid in repelling the German forces. Johnson was awarded France's highest medal, the Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) with the Gold Star and Palm for exceptional valor.

Johnson stayed with his regiment until it returned home at war's end. Suffering from 21 combat wounds, Johnson was unable to work as a train porter, his profession before the war. His wife and children abandoned him and he died destitute in 1929 at age 32. Johnson had suffered grievous wounds, yet he never received disability pay upon his discharge.

It wasn't until 1996 that Johnson received a Purple Heart. In 2002, after further reviews of documented first-hand accounts of what he had done in battle, the Army awarded Johnson the Distinguished Service Cross. gt

***XCTC* 2015**

27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's XCTC Training at Fort Drum

By Maj. Al Phillips, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Almost 4,000 Soldiers took part in the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's 2015 Annual Training at Fort Drum from July 11 to 31. The Soldiers participated in the Army's Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) program which allows Soldiers and units to train much as they would at one of the Army's combat training centers.

The following six pages provide coverage of events during the July annual training period.

SYRACUSE – Four thousand members of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and supporting elements trained at Fort Drum July 11-31 for an intense three-week annual training exercise.

Key training events included air assault operations, platoon level situational exercises and tactical maneuvers, artillery firing, infantry live fire, logistics support operations and chemical, biological and radiological training.

The 27th used this annual training period to provide each unit with an experience similar to a combat training center.

This training concept is known as Exportable Combat Training Capability or XCTC for short. XCTC allows the brigade's Soldiers and leaders to hone their combat skills for what the Army defines as "decisive action".

The brigade used its XCTC experience as a template to prepare for its Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation scheduled for 2016.

JRTC is one of the Army's three combat training centers resourced to train brigade task forces, both Active Duty and National Guard, and their subordinate elements in a realistic operational environment. Located at Fort Polk, La., JRTC is considered the "Super Bowl" of Army training and is designed to test brigades which may deploy.

"This year's challenging annual training exercises made our Soldiers, leaders, and units better. The hard work they accomplished at Fort Drum will only set the conditions for success when we go to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana next year," Col. Joe Biehler, commander, 27th Infantry Brigade said.

Units included in the training were:

• The 1st Battalion 69th Infantry headquartered in New York City with companies in Farmingdale, and Camp Smith near Peekskill, which conducted infantry tactics, a live fire exercise and roving lane missions during the field training exercise;

• The 2nd Battalion 108th Infantry, headquartered in Utica, with companies in Geneseo, Ogdensburg, Saranac Lake, Glenville and Gloversville conducted infantry tactics, a live fire exercise and roving lane missions during the field training exercise;

• The 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, out of Jamestown, with companies in Niagara Falls, Geneva, Jamestown and Buffalo conducted scout and reconnaissance, in this case urban and roving lane missions;

• The 1st Battalion 258th Field Artillery from Jamaica Queens with batteries in the Bronx and New Windsor conducted maneuvers and firing drills;

• The 1st Battalion 182nd Infantry, headquartered in Melrose, Mass., with units across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts conducted infantry tactics, a live fire exercise and roving lane missions during the field training exercise;

• The 427th Brigade Support Battalion headquartered in Syracuse with companies in Rochester, Fort Drum and Buffalo conducted area security, and base defense logistics operations, commonly referred to as LOGPAC;

And the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion headquartered in Syracuse with companies in Buffalo, Lockport and Rochester conducted area security and other combat support operations to integrate both organic and non-organic assets along the brigade's warfighting functions.

The brigade deployed to Afghanistan in 2008-2009 and to Kuwait in 2012 and elements of the brigade deployed to Iraq in 2004 and 2005. gt

Brig. Gen. Gary Yaple, assistant division commander – support for the 42nd Infantry Division, talks with pilots aboard a UH-72 Lakota helicopter through the aircraft's intercom system while looking at sites through a screen connected to the aircraft's computer during a flight over Fort Drum, New York, July 15. With elements of the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade conducting annual training at Fort Drum, Yaple took a flight in the Lakota to view the ongoing activities. Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Live-Fire Drills Sharpen Skills

Story and photos by Spc. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Soldiers with Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment participate in a platoon live-fire exercise during the unit's annual training at Fort Drum on July 16. The training, part of an Exportable Combat Training Capability exercise, required the coordination of the entire platoon, and provided the unit's Soldiers with an opportunity to improve their combat techniques.

FORT DRUM - The Soldiers moved into position and opened fire on the enemy. Meanwhile, other members of Company B 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, maneuver forward, closer to the foe.

Actual rounds went downrange during this platoon live-fire drill.

"As an infantryman this is the most likely course of action that we're going to face," said Staff Sgt. Justin Gauthier, a Plattsburgh, New York, resident and one of the company's squad leaders. "This is our bread and butter. I want this to become muscle memory."

A live-fire exercise is one of many used by military forces to sharpen maneuvering skills by incorporating live ammo and giving realistic scenarios.

Bravo 2-108, based in Morrisonville, New York, is one of nearly a half-dozen infantry companies from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), making the most of its training to instruct and develop its Soldiers.

"I think we're doing everything awesome this year," said Spc. Sean Lockwood, an infantryman with Company B, 2-108. "It's great training and I've never had anything like it."

Each fire-team, consisting of between 3-4 Soldiers, is overseen by a team leader who provides hands-on guidance to the Soldiers. Infantry Soldiers are trained to engage, fight and defeat the enemy in face-to-face combat.

"A lot of the responsibility relies on the team leaders," said Gauthier. "I'm just there to give them advice and information to pass down to their guys."

As part of their training, the unit will be participating in a Warfighter exercise later this month. The exercise, designed as a series of war games, will pit 27th IBCT Soldiers against active duty Soldiers provided by Fort Drum, home of the 10th Mountain Division.

"Working with active-duty Soldiers is beneficial," Lockwood said. "It gives us a chance to work with Soldiers for critical feedback."

The 108th Infantry Regiment, along with the rest of the 27th IBCT, is carrying out its annual training period in cooperation with the 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade.

This partnership allows the Soldiers from the 27th to familiarize themselves with Army helicopters such as the UH-60 Black Hawk and the CH-47 Chinook.

"It's definitely a great experience," said Lockwood. "I've never been on a Black Hawk before, and this year I've been on one three times already."

The intensive training this year is part of an Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise designed to prepare Bravo 2-108, along with the rest of the 27th IBCT, for its upcoming rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, scheduled for next summer.

"I've been in Bravo Company for 12 years," said Gauthier. "This is definitely the best training that we've had."

Soldiers Master Sling Load Skills

Story and photo by Spc. Alexander Recter, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Two New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Company A, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, prepare to attach a sling-load to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter piloted by aviators from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation, July 19. The Soldiers are at Fort Drum participating in an Exportable Combat Training Capability exercise in preparation of the 27th Brigade's rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. scheduled for 2016.

FORT DRUM - It's like standing under a hurricane hanging just above your head. But that didn't stop the Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's Company A, 427 Brigade Support Battalion, the battalion's transportation company, from standing underneath a hovering CH-47 Chinook and hooking a load of cargo underneath the aircraft.

"It was a little bit scary, and I was nervous at first," said Spc. Karinda Colon, an automated logistical specialist. "I'm so proud of myself. I feel like I reached a goal in my military career by being able to say I've done this."

The CH-47, while hovering over the load, is capable of kicking up an abrasive cloud of sand and dirt, and producing hurricane force winds.

"It's an adrenaline booster," said Colon, a Queens, New York, resident.

"I have more confidence in myself and my battle buddies knowing that I can do it. Seeing it lift up the load that you hooked up and fly away.

It gives me the confidence to be able to do it again."

Sling-loading, a process where different materials such as food, water, or vehicles are rigged and attached to the underside of a helicopter for transport, requires the chopper to hover just above the ground to enable the Soldiers to attach the load. It requires close coordination between the Soldiers on the ground and the pilots and crew of the aircraft involved.

The exercise at annual training was the culmination of months of training at home station, said Sgt. Andres Rosado, the company's administration non-commissioned officer.

"We've been training for sling-load operations over the last year," said Rosado, a Rochester, New York-resident.

"During all this training we haven't actually seen a chopper. Everybody was happy and got a chance to go under the hook."

Company A is tasked with supporting the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team by moving supplies and assets in and around the battlefield.

"Sling-loading really unifies the unit as a whole," said Rosado. "It's kind of neat how everything comes together while sling-loading, because everybody has a role. When you have somebody request water support, third platoon prepares it, second platoon rigs it, and first platoon will transport it to the landing zone."

The chance to finally sling-load a CH-47 added a "Hooah" factor, Rosado said.

"Having a chopper there provided a lot more experience than anything I could tell them because they got to do it firsthand," said Rosado.

"Everybody can rig, but it's different when you're under the helicopter. I wanted them to realize how serious this is."

The training was facilitated by the help of a crew of a CH-47 Chinook piloted by members of Company B 3rd Battalion 126th Aviation, based in Rochester, New York.

"Having the crew there briefing us before hand added a realistic feel, especially to the new privates," Rosado explained. "The support that they provided was awesome."

"I thought it was a real nice experience for everybody," Rosado added. "It was a real morale booster, the Soldiers loved it and they're still talking about it."

"Now that they've done it under the hook, they understand the reason behind all the training," said Rosado. "If it isn't rigged the right way it's not going to fly the right way. They need to do this flawlessly every time until this becomes second nature."

"Let's try it in the dark," said Colon. "Now that would be awesome." **gt**

Combat Engineers Play Key Role in Tactical Training

Story and photo by Spc. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

FORT DRUM - Soldiers assigned to Company A, 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) from Lockport, supported the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's tactical training during annual training here.

The brigade conducted Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC)-which replicates the Army training conducted at one of the major national training centers during its annual training, July 8-31.

The company, which provides combat engineer support, was assigned a variety of missions-one required using their bulldozers and excavators to construct defensive positions.

Along with combat engineer assets, the 27th BSTB provides the signal and intelligence Soldiers who support the maneuver battalions of the 27th brigade.

"We have our equipment section that goes out and digs fighting positions and the base defenses for the brigade and all the different battalions," said 1st Lt. Tucker Brown, who serves as the company operations officer. "We also have our two combat platoons that will be supporting the infantry during their maneuvers."

Digging fighting positions is no small task, which is why the engineers and their equipment are so important.

"We use a high mobility engineer excavator (HMEE) to dig the fighting positions," said Spc. Jeffrey Gatti, a heavy equipment operator.

The HMEE, resembling a civilian backhoe, is an armored piece of equipment capable of both digging and towing heavy loads. "We can use the front bucket to build up berms around the fighting positions for extra security," Gatti said. "We can also use the backhoe to dig the actual fighting position itself."

The company will support each of the brigade's battalions as they conduct training.

Aside from digging holes and using their equipment, the Soldiers are using this training to sharpen their skills.

"We get to practice doing our engineer specific tasks; creating obstacles, mitigating obstacles and route reconnaissance," Gatti said.

This annual training period is being used to provide each unit within the brigade an experience similar to a combat training center, and will better prepare them for their upcoming rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center scheduled for 2016. gt

Spc. Andrew Paulson, a heavy equipment operator with Alpha Company 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion from Amherst, operates a High Mobility Engineer Excavator (HMEE) to construct a crew-served fighting position during a 27th IBCT Exportable Combat Training Capability (XCTC) exercise at Fort Drum, July 13. Alpha Co. 27th BSTB is tasked with creating the base defenses for the 27th Brigades's Tactical Command Post.

Mass Casualty Drill Tests Soldiers' Medical Skills

By Cadet Savana L. Clendining, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

Soldiers with Charlie Medical Company, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team participate in a Mass Casualty (MASCAL) exercise during their annual training at Fort Drum on July 15. The exercise, designed to simulate a large-scale medical emergency, involved the simultaneous evacuation, triage, and treatment of a multiple number of casualties. Photo by Spc. Alexander Rector, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

FORT DRUM - The dining facility, better known as the DFAC, went up in an explosion. Injured Soldiers, suffering from cuts, burns, chest wounds and broken limbs were everywhere.

The medics of Company C, 427th Brigade Support Battalion, known as "Charlie Med" provide medical support to the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, went into action.

It was only a notional exercise, but the medics responded as if it were the real thing during a mass casualty exercise conducted on July 15.

The drill was an important part of the company's training during the 27th Brigade's three-week-long annual training period at Fort Drum.

The mass casualty evaluation is used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the medical company so that they can sharpen their individual medical skills as well as their ability to function as a team, explained Sgt. 1st Class James Wunders, the platoon sergeant for the company's treatment platoon.

"This training instills confidence in those young Soldiers who came out of training, but haven't had the opportunity to do it under the gun - under pressure," Wunders explained.

"It put me under pressure and really pointed out some things that I need to work on, which is really good," said Pfc. Riley Jensen, who serves as a combat medic.

This evaluation was one of three conducted during the 27th's Exportable Combat Training Capability exercise that is being used to prepare the brigade for next year's rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

"We all need to grow, we can't just get stuck in one place," said Capt. Dayana Cannan, a physician assistant with the unit. "We all need to learn new things, and that's what I'm here for."

The exercise was observed and evaluated by Soldiers from the First Army's training division.

"It's always great to have a third party put on training," said Wunders. "When you put it on yourself, it's not that you're cheating, but you know kind of what to expect, because you're the organizer of the training." gt

Building a Bigger Brigade

27th Brigade Aligns with Historic Regiment

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, 42nd Infantry Division

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment prepare a sand table at Fort Drum. The 182nd is transitioning from a Massachusetts infantry unit to a New York infantry unit slowly through an 'alignment for training' process that is expected to be completed in a few years.

FORT DRUM – In a wooded clearing on the sandy ranges of Fort Drum, five or six Soldiers are busy working on a sand table. These Soldiers are no different from any other Soldiers here that are training in the hot July weather; with one exception – they are from the Massachusetts Army National Guard, but wearing the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's 'Orion' insignia.

At the onset of training in early July, the 182nd Infantry Regiment came to annual training at Fort Drum to 'align for training' with the 27th during their Exportable Combat Training Capabilities exercise (XCTC); switching their 26th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade patch, formerly known as the 26th Infantry 'Yankee' Division, for the 'Orion' patch.

Prior to the alignment at Fort Drum, both units conducted video teleconferences and initial planning site visits in order to iron out the details, said Capt. Alex Hampton, battalion executive officer, 182nd Infantry Regiment.

"It's never an easy process to get two larger units to align to work together," Hampton said. "Aligning with the 27th offers us better training opportunities and resources. We (the 182nd) have a long-standing relationship with the New York National Guard," Hampton said, referring to the Duffy-Logan Rifle Matches that have taken place since 1936 between the two states.

"This is a special year, as the 1-182 Infantry has been identified as the third battalion of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. This change is not official until 2018, but the Boston Irish are already training with the 27th IBCT," said Lt. Col. Sean Flynn, commander of the 69th Infantry Regiment.

"The Duffy-Logan match has been on hiatus for the past couple of years (cancelled for Sandy in '12 and then impacted by unit changes of command in '13 and '14). New York is the reigning champion and the trophy sits comfortably in the commander's office at Lex Ave," Flynn said.

The event is scheduled for October at Camp Smith Training Site.

The 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry Regiment, is one of the oldest regiments in the U.S. Army, tracing its formation back to the 13 colonies, served in the Continental Army during the American-Revolutionary War, with Union forces in the American Civil War and as a federalized Massachusetts National Guard regiment with the U.S. Army during World War I and World War II.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Paul Morrissette, operations noncommissioned officer, the 182nd received a letter of understanding last October from National Guard Bureau to have a training agreement with the 27th. He also stated that the 182nd was validating at the XCTC in order to attend the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. in 2016 with the 27th.

1st Sgt. Robert Sargent

"The biggest difference in (our) training was coming to this XCTC," said 1st Sgt. Robert Sargent, first sergeant for Company B, 1st Bn., 182nd Inf. Reg.

Since the 27th has been an infantry brigade for so long, they have better digital training equipment for reporting…we feel like we're playing catch up in that regard."

Sargent said that their last brigade was a troop command, which didn't offer the type of training that he liked. gt

Simulated Detainee Facility for Annual Training

Story and photos by Maj. Al Phillips, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Soldiers from 102nd Military Police Battalion, Headquarters Detachment from Auburn, conduct detainee operations June 5, at Fort Drum.

FORT DRUM--Guarding prisons is routine and it's not glamorous. But, it's necessary and it could turn deadly.

Sixty Soldiers from the 102nd Military Police Battalion's Headquarters Detachment spent their Annual Training here at the Military Operations on Urban Terrain site honing the skills they need to do the job well.

"What we are conducting here are full scale operations in order to bring everyone into the fold for what is necessary to run a detention facility properly," said Capt. Nicholas Monuteaux, headquarters detachment commander. "It is very necessary to ensure all our military policemen and small engineer contingent develop, build or refine their duties and responsibilities," he added.

Based in Auburn, the 102nd Military Police Battalion has companies across the state. The 206th Military Police Company is based in Latham, the 105th Military Police Company is in Buffalo, the 222nd Military Police Company is in Rochester.

Fifty members of the battalion recently returned from a deployment at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base where they worked as part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, conducting real-world detainee operations.

In 2012, the headquarters detachment received a change of mission to reclassify from the standard Military Police skill set to a more defined role in internment and resettlement. This means they are specialized to process, book and maintain detainees, he explained.

"We must train as we fight, and the more realistic the training environment, the more focus our troops have," Sgt. 1st Class Richard Reed said.

He is acutely aware of all detainees and all personnel operating at the detention facility from administrative processing to intelligence gathering and analysis to eventually cell block housing and the interpreters used fulfill those requirements, Reed said.

The detention facility training area at Fort Drum is a small-scale version of the facilities built in Afghanistan and Iraq. While those would house 60 to 100 detainees the Fort Drum version holds 21 simulated detainees. While the facility is smaller than a real one, it takes the same skills to run it, Reed explained.

"You can't have more detainees than you can handle because it is not just about being a jail keeper," Reed said.

Indeed from the minute you arrive at the encampment area, there is noticeable security everywhere and by design, security not so noticeable.

The Soldiers practiced thorough pat downs, biometric checks using specialized equipment, running detainees through hygiene stations and even conducting psychological evaluations.

"Having the many parts of the operation go

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Two 102nd Military Police Soldiers simulate detainee operations and handling procedures with another 102nd Soldier role-playing a prisoner-of-war on June 5 at the Fort Drum training MOUT site.

right is critical to overall control of the detention area," said Spc. Colby Taber, a Trumansburg resident.

"We have been very pleased with the training so far here at Fort Drum," said Capt. Andrew Day the 102nd Military Police Battalion's Assistant Operations Officer.

"Our footprint is quite large, consisting of motivated and dedicated Soldiers from Buffalo to Central New York who are giving their all and at the end of training that is something to be proud of and share," he added.

In addition to detainee operations conducted by the Headquarters Detachment, the battalion's 400 Soldiers conducted training in area security operations, medical common tasks, helicopter familiarization training with the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade and marksmanship.

"Ranges, ranges and more ranges are all critical and the best part of training said Staff Sgt. Robert Hill, an Auburn resident and the 102nd MP Battalion operations section non-commissioned officer-in-charge. gt

Reenlisting -- Caribbean Style

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – Lt. Col. Todd Bookless, commander of 42nd Infantry Division-GTMO Team, congratulates Staff Sgt. Stephanie Schneider after she reenlisted underwater in Guantanamo Bay, Aug. 1.

The 42nd deployed a team of Soldiers to Cuba last fall to staff the personnel, operations, logistics, and signals sections of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, which is charged with overseeing detainee operations at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Fafoglia, GTMO Public Affairs Office.

ANG's NCO of the Year: 106th Rescue Wing Airman

Pararescueman Staff Sgt. Douglas Kechijian Receives Air Force Top NCO Honors

by Staff Sgt. John E. Hillier, Air National Guard Readiness Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. -- The drive to succeed in a job he thoroughly enjoys while being able to serve others is what fuels Staff Sgt. Douglas Kechijian, the Air National Guard's 2015 Outstanding Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, and one of the Air Force's 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

Kechijian serves as a pararescueman with the New York Air National Guard's 106th Rescue Wing, based in Westhampton Beach, New York. As a native New Yorker graduating from college shortly after 9/11, he sought a way to take his ability and skills farther and found it with the Guard.

"Initially, I didn't even know the difference really [between active, Guard and Reserve.] The more I learned about the Guard, I liked that you have the same opportunity to do things as active duty, just with a little more flexibility. Couple that with the fact that there was a Guard unit an hour away from where I grew up. I thought 'OK, this is a really easy decision.'"

The pararescue mission is to rescue, recover, and return American or Allied forces in times of danger or extreme duress, no matter what it takes. It requires being able to operate in any environment and overcome whatever obstacles may lie between the pararescue Airmen, or "PJs" and accomplishing their mission.

"Pararescue allowed me to pursue my passion for medicine in a more exciting way," he said. "You can do trauma medicine in the civilian world... but there are very few professions in the civilian world in which your way to get to work is parachuting, scuba diving, rappelling out of a helicopter, mountaineering. I found the 'adventure sport' aspects of pararescue to be just as exciting. You can do any of those for recreation, but to have a job that incorporates all of those disciplines is unique. Fortunately, I had to opportunity to do it in the Guard."

While Kechijian was chosen among thousands of Air National Guard members for this honor, he feels that any pararescue Airman could stand in his place. For him, it's not about the individual accomplishing a mission, it's the mission itself.

"I just do what I do," said Kechijian. "What I'm being recognized for, I feel you could say the same thing for any PJ, especially when it comes to the things we do downrange. We're all trained to the same level, and sometimes different guys are given different opportunities to do what they were trained to do. I was fortunate to have that opportunity, but I'm not unique. These awards are great, of course, but they're not why we do any of this."

"We have a very serious job to accomplish - especially in pararescue, where lives are at stake," said Kechijian. "We're typically responding to a situation where potentially it's the worst day of a person's life, and if we're not excellent in all we do, it could have catastrophic consequences. Sometimes I think that we can lose track that there's a finite thing that we have to accomplish... that we need to get a result. In a war, you've got to win."

Kechijian holds a doctorate in physical therapy and has integrated the physical demands of his military life with his civilian career. Applying his knowledge and skill to help his teammates improve is part of how he embodies the Wingman concept. He provides physical therapy treatment and advice to members in his unit and is also working to develop a human performance optimization program there.

"Physical fitness is a big part of my civilian career, and things like human performance, keeping people healthy and injury prevention are huge initiatives in the pararescue field. I'd like to take what I've learned in the civilian world and try to apply it into a tactical setting, to look at it from a sports medicine standpoint."

Just as Kechijian supports his wingmen, he acknowledges that he wouldn't be able to succeed without the support he receives from his family.

"I like to spend time with my family, my wife," he said. "We both like to travel - she's into outdoorsy stuff as well, so anytime we get the opportunity to get outside and leave the city, we do that. She's supportive. I couldn't do what I do without her. Between my professional obligations and Guard obligations, she's been really patient. She wishes that I was around more often, but at the same time she recognizes that it's an important part of who I am."

The pararescue field places high demands on an individual's time and energy, but Kechijian has seemingly mastered the balancing act between civilian and military life that so many Air National Guard members and their families experience. The key, he says, is to love what you do.

"Most of my hobbies involve some form of physical activity... but I don't wake up thinking 'I can't wait for the weekend,' because I've got the next 30 years of my life or more to be working, so if you don't enjoy what you do - if there isn't some overlap between what you do professionally and personally, I don't know how you can be a happy person."

"When I'm with my Guard unit, or we're on a training temporary duty, that's fun," he said. "Yeah, it's also work, but I enjoy it. If we go to Arizona to do skydiving training, or Florida for scuba dive training, train on ice climbing in Colorado, I'm working when I do that, but I'm also fulfilling a hobby... there are very few jobs where you get paid to do so many things you enjoy. So I'm pretty happy with what I'm doing now." gt

"You can do trauma medicine in the civilian world... but there are very few professions in the civilian world in which your way to get to work is parachuting, scuba diving, rappelling out of a helicopter, (or) mountaineering."

-- Staff Sgt. Douglas Kechijian, 106th Rescue Wing, Air National Guard NCO of the Year

Staff Sgt. Douglas P. Kechijian, a pararescue Airman assigned to the 103rd Rescue Squadron, New York Air National Guard is the 2015 Air National Guard Outstanding Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year. Photo by Master Sgt. Marvin R. Preston, Air National Guard.

Reporters take photos of a 109th Airlift Wing LC-130 Skibird at Summit, Greenland, on June 29. Airmen and aircraft from the 109th stage out of Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, during the summer months, supplying fuel and supplies and transporting passengers in and out of various National Science Foundation camps on the ice shelf in Greenland throughout the entire season. Photo by Staff Sgt. Benjamin German, 109th Airlift Wing.

109th Airlift Wing continues support for Greenland

By Tech. Sgt. Catharine Schmidt, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA - The 109th Airlift Wing's support for National Science Foundation research in Greenland, kicked off in March and continued through the summer.

The LC-130s are the largest planes in the world equipped to land on snow pack.

In a typical Greenland season, the 109th flies between 600 and 1,000 hours, transporting up to 2.5 million pounds of cargo.

During the U.S. winter season, the wing supports Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica, and in the summer months, the unit flies to Greenland for the National Science Foundation.

The 109th deploys at various times between March and August for Greenland. Each year, about six rotations consisting of two to four aircraft and up to 80 Airmen each, go up anywhere from six to 14 days at a time depending on the needs of the NSF.

"We supply various science camps on the Ice Shelf in Greenland," said Maj. Erik Srokowski of the Greenland shop. "We bring in fuel and supplies to these camps and bring passengers in and out the entire season.

"One of the most important science missions we have are the transportation of ice cores out of the remote camps and back to the United States," he said. "Ice cores are a vital part of the science effort in the Arctic in analyzing the composition of Earth's atmosphere thousands of years ago."

This year, national and international reporters had the chance to see the wing in action, as they boarded an LC-130 aircraft at the end of June at Stratton for the trip to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland - the hub of 109th AW activity.

While there, media had the chance to see aircrew, maintainers and other support personnel hard at work in Kangerlussuaq. They also got to visit Summit, one of the camps supporting researchers whose primary focus is global climate change.

"We wanted to learn about the experience of landing on a snow or ice-covered runway, and how the 109th prepares for this mission," said Christoph Kaestner, of the German magazine, "Der Flugleiter" and website, World of Aviation. "We had a really good opportunity to get all of this information. To be able to see the whole mission, including the preparation that went into it was really great. We had great opportunities to take pictures and film; it's been a great experience all around."

"I was really surprised to see how big Camp Summit is, and how many people are working here," said Thomas Urbild, editor in chief of World of Aviation. "It was also great to see the operations from the 109th in Kangerlussuaq and how many people it takes to get the mission done."

While the Greenland season ended in August; however, there's not much downtime for those supporting the mission. The 2016 Greenland planning conference is in October, around the same time Airmen and aircraft are on their way to Antarctica for Operation Deep Freeze. gt

ANG Senior NCO: 'Take Ownership of Conversion'

B*y Senior Master Sgt. Ray Lloyd, 107th Airlift Wing*

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- Embrace change. Don't fight it.

That was the message the Command Chief Master Sgt. of the Air National Guard, Chief Master Sgt. James Hotaling had for Airmen of the 107th Airlift Wing, June 13.

"Embrace the training. Own it! Be the best Airmen," said Hotaling. "Strive to exceed the standards. Be professional and have pride in what you're doing."

Hotaling, the top enlisted person of the Air National Guard, said he keeps his finger on the pulse of the enlisted members of every state, territory and district National Guard units.

He spent the drill weekend meeting with Airmen and listening to their concerns as the wing converts from operating the C-130 to the MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft mission.

"Chief Hotaling's speech was dead on," said Master Sgt. Venita Jackson, who works in the 107th Military Equality Office. "He helped us to understand that change is inevitable, and adapting is key. I appreciated his mantra; Be a Victor, not a Victim," she said.

Many members of the 107th are cross-training into new career fields due to the mission change. These changes are creating challenges for Airmen, including being away from their families for long periods of time, missing time from their civilian careers and having to put college on hold, Hotaling acknowledged.

Airmen have to have commitment to the profession of arms and the health of the force, he said. Airman have to accept that fact that once they complete their initial training for the new mission, they have to travel to other bases in order to stay current in their Air Force responsibilities until the 107th is fully-operational in 2017, Hotaling said.

Hotaling spoke at an enlisted all-call at the base theater. Hotaling talked about the lessons he has learned from when he was starting out as a Senior Airman all the way up to the highest enlisted person in the Air National Guard. He made examples of Niagara Falls unit members: encouraging the newly enlisted to stay strong and reminding the seasoned vets to remember what it was like as a new member. "As senior noncommissioned officers, remember where you came from," Hotaling said. "Be there for your Airmen, help built their resume' and recognize their accomplishments."

The 107th has a history of change from flying the P-47 Thunderbolt in 1948 to their last fighter aircraft the F-16 Falcon in 1994 and later converting to the KC-135 Stratotanker. In 2005, the 107th and 914th Reserve Unit became an Associated Wing.

As of April 1, 2014 a new manning document converts the 107th from the C-130 Hercules to the MQ-9 Reaper, remotely piloted aircraft. The unit has been abuzz with activity as it prepares for the new Close Air Support and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance mission.

"Since 9/11, the Air National Guard is now an operational reserve," said Hotaling. "We are asked to provide more support and we need to be ready for changes so that we can complete our mission."

Chief Master Sgt. James W. Hotaling, Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard, addresses members of the 107th Airlift Wing Security Forces after a "shoot and move" exercise in response to a Chief's Challenge at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station June 13. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Campbell, 107th Airlift Wing.

New Leadership for 107th Ops

B*y Capt. Elaine Nowak, 107th Airlift Wing*

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION, -- A change of command ceremony was held here May 18 as Lt. Col. R. Gary Charlton II became the 107th Operations Group commander.

In the ceremony, outgoing commander Col. Michael W. Bank passed the group's flag to the new commander. Bank is now the wing vice commander.

Charlton was previously the commander of the 138th Attack Squadron, 174th Attack Wing. He has over 25 years of service in the New York Air National Guard.

He is a senior pilot with more than 2,600 flying hours, including four combat deployments flying more than 100 F-16C missions in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

"Although Lt. Col. Charlton is new to us here, his reputation in the state is impeccable," said Col. Robert Kilgore, 107th Wing Commander. "I am excited and honored to have Gary as the operations group commander and I know I can count on him to lead us forward."

Charlton will lead the 107th Operations Group through conversion to the MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft.

"I could not be more excited, honored, yet humbled by this opportunity," Charlton said. "We are strong. We are ready for this conversion to what the intelligence community calls 'intelligence with a surgical knife.' I know, together, we can meet these challenges and continue to grow."

Lt. Col. R. Gary Charlton II, at right, receives the guidon of command of the 107th Operations Group from Col. Robert Kilgore May 18. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Campbell, 107th Airlift Wing.

New Commander for 224th Air Defense Group

Story and photo by Tim Jones, Eastern Air Defense Sector

ROME, N.Y. -- Col. Wendel A. Smith formally took command of the New York Air National Guard's 224th Air Defense Group (ADG) June 6 during a ceremony here at the Air Force Research Laboratory.

Smith received command before a crowd of about 100 family, friends and fellow service members. The ceremony was presided over by Maj. Gen. Verle Johnston, Jr., then-Commander of the New York Air National Guard. Smith took command from Col. Wade F. Dewey, who is retiring.

"I'm proud to become the leader of such an outstanding organization and it is a personal honor to follow Col. Dewey, who has been a great commander and better friend," Smith said. "I look forward to leading the men and women of the 224th ADG as we continue to successfully conduct our critical, around-the-clock air defense mission."

Smith previously served as the Commander of the 224th Air Defense Squadron, a subordinate unit of the 224th ADG. The 224th ADG is responsible for conducting the mission of the Eastern Air Defense Sector (EADS), a North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) headquarters unit located at Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome.

Staffed by the 224th ADG, a Canadian Forces detachment, liaison officers from the U.S. Army, Navy, Coast Guard and federal civilians, EADS is responsible the air defense of the eastern U.S. and directs a variety of assets to defend one million square miles of land and sea.

Maj. Gen. Verle Johnston, Commander, New York Air National Guard, hands the guidon to incoming 224th ADG Commander Col. Wendel Smith during the June 6 change of command.

Smith is a distinguished graduate of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Maryland in 1989. He served as an Electronic Combat Pilot and F-16 Instructor Pilot during operational tours in Misawa Air Base, Japan and Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

After 10 years of active-duty service, Smith joined the New York Air National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing in 1999, where he served as F-16 Instructor Pilot, Chief of Squadron Scheduling and Flight Commander. In 2003, he was assigned to the Northeast Air Defense Sector and served as Fighter Officer Instructor, Chief of Current Operations and Chief, Operations Support.

In May 2011, Smith became the Commander of EADS Detachment 1 at the Joint Air Defense Operation Center, Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling in Washington, D.C. He served there until being named EADS Deputy Commander for Operations in May 2012.

In January 2015, EADS operations directorate was converted into the 224th Air Defense Squadron and Smith became its Commander.

Smith is a command pilot with more than 2,200 hours in the F-16, including 217 combat hours in support of Operation Southern Watch, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Noble Eagle. gt

222nd Command and Control Squadron Welcomes New Leader

By Maj. Sandy Stoquert, 174th Attack Wing

HANCOCK FIELD AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SYRACUSE-- Lt. Col. Anthony A. Lujan assumed command of the New York Air National Guard's 222nd Command and Control Squadron (CACS), August 8.

The squadron is a geographically separated unit of the 174th Attack Wing and as the commander, Lujan will be responsible for 80 personnel who augment mission support for the National Reconnaissance Operations (NRO) Center in Chantilly, Virginia.

The NRO Center develops and operates unique and innovative overhead reconnaissance systems and conducts intelligence-related activities for U.S. national security.

NRO is jointly staffed by members of the armed services, the Central Intelligence Agency, and DoD civilian personnel. First established as a classified entity in 1961, the organization and its mission was declassified in 1992.

Lujan replaced Lt. Col. Richard D. Henderson, who was the first commander of the 222nd CACS. gt

Lt. Col. Anthony A. Lujan

106th Security Force Squadron members, from left, Master Sgt. Christian Cote, Technical Sgt. Eric Auletta and Staff Sgt. Brian Hammel received the Purple Heart for actions against the enemy in Afghanistan during a ceremony June 10. Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

106th Rescue Wing members receive Purple Heart

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing

EASTPORT -- Three Air National Guard Airmen from the 106th Rescue Wing Security Forces Squadron received the Purple Heart Medal during a ceremony at the American Legion Post 1545 here, June 6.

Master Sgt. Christian M. Cote, Tech. Sgt. Eric V. Auletta and Staff Sgt. Brian Hammel were awarded the medal in recognition of injuries sustained in Afghanistan in 2011.

"We were on a routine mission outside the wire going to [the forward operating base]," said Cote, who was a team leader.

"We went out there, and on the way back we passed one of the local villages where we saw several military-age males on the side, which was odd because it was Ramadan. The next thing we knew, the IED went off," Core said.

The explosion wrecked the vehicle and knocked the occupants momentarily unconscious.

"The details of it are intermittent," Cote recalled.

"I don't remember it going off; I just remember the cabin filling with smoke and dust. It took a second for everything to come back together. I remember looking around the vehicle, trying to see if everyone was OK. Then the gunner started firing the .50 cal," Cote said.

Auletta, who was the truck commander and one of the first of the injured to come to, immediately began to respond to the attack.

"When we came to, I couldn't see anything through the smoke. But when this happens, you go through your checklist; make sure the others are OK, check the status of the vehicle and radio in that we had been hit," he said.

At that point, I didn't know what hit us, just that we had been hit, Auletta added.

The vehicle was completely disabled. The other vehicles in the convoy backed up, with the third providing rear security. Even as the enemy continued firing, Cote, Hammel and Auletta began emergency towing procedures. After a few minutes, the vehicle was roped up and the crew was towed to safety.

"It's a unique warrior that assures his family that everything is fine, then goes outside the wire, gets blown up, crawls back to base, and then does it all over again the next day," said Maj. Ronnie Maloney, 106th Security Forces Squadron commander.

"And it takes a very special family to trust, support and endure it from home," Maloney said.

Hammel said that he was "humbled and honored," to receive the award.

"It was fortunate that we didn't lose anybody that day," Auletta agreed. gt

106th Rescue Airman Rescues Fellow Veteran

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Cheran Cambridge, 106th Rescue Wing

GABRESKI AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH — A routine drive to work turned into the opportunity to save a life for Tech Sgt. Matthew Davidson, a member of the 106th Rescue Wing, on March 27.

It was just after 5:45 a.m. as Davidson was driving to work on Route 27 when he thought he saw somebody by the side of the road.

"At the corner of my eye, I saw an arm go down," Davidson recalled.

"It took a second, 'Did I just see that?' And the second thought of, 'that could not have been someone on the side of the road,'" Davidson added.

Following his gut feeling, Davidson turned his car around towards the opposite direction of traffic.

There was a man lying just off the road, face down, five feet from the white line.

When Davidson realized what was in front of him, he positioned his car between the man and oncoming traffic to block the wind and to protect the man from any cars that may veer off road and hit the guy.

"As I'm doing that, I called 911 to let them know that there's somebody lying here at the side of the road and is currently not moving," Davidson said.

Davidson got out of his car to check on the man. He did not know what to expect because there was no vehicle nearby and initially Davidson thought it was a setup for a robbery.

"Are there going to be two or three guys coming out of the woods? Is this guy bait for something else?" he thought.

Davidson, an Army infantryman in the active Army and Army National Guardsman for 12 years before joining the Air Guard, went up to the man and started casualty assessment. He tried to wake the man up by nudging him. There was no response.

"Seconds feel like minutes, Minutes feel like hours when you're waiting for help, so my initial thought was just to keep him talking. Keep him calm, keep him steady until the ambulance came,"

-- Tech. Sgt. Matthew Davidson, 106th Rescue Wing

"His breathing was so shallow I thought he'd passed," Davidson said.

"He is face down, so I reach under his neck to feel for a pulse and just as I get my hand on his neck, he went into a convulsion" Davidson said.

Davidson was glad to know that the man was alive. He held him to keep him from going into the street as the seizures hit.

A New York State Trooper came on the scene and by that time the man was coming to. He then suffered a second seizure.

The Trooper provided the man with the emergency blanket and called his wife while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Davison noticed a few things about the man.

"He had the DoD green socks and when he was coming out of his second seizure, he was doing, for a lack of words, a picture perfect low crawl, I'm like, 'Something is up with this guy, this guy is military of some sort,'" Davidson recalled.

Tech. Sgt. Matthew Davidson, 106th Rescue Wing, and Army veteran Sgt. Vincent Rivera meet for the first time since Davidson saved Rivera from the side of a highway. Rivera was sleepwalking and was found on the ground March 27 by Davidson along the side of Sunrise Highway, Route 27 on Long Island.

As the man came to, he started talking. Davidson learned he was former Army sergeant Vincent Rivera. He'd served two tours in Iraq, and served in the Army from 2004 to 2012 with the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry.

Knowing that, Davidson knew that he needed to keep on talking to Rivera until the ambulance showed up.

As a former member of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, Davidson had served in Iraq in 2004/05. He knew how nerve-racking the wait for help can be, Davidson said.

"Seconds feel like minutes, Minutes feel like hours when you're waiting for help, so my initial thought was just to keep him talking. Keep him calm, keep him steady until the ambulance came," he explained.

After the ambulance picked up Rivera – who collapsed five miles away from home - Davidson visited the hospital an hour later to make sure Rivera was alright.

Rivera barely remembers anything.

"I fell asleep around twelve and I woke up on the side of Sunrise Highway with Tech Sgt. Davidson and a couple of state troopers," Rivera recalled, "He was the only one that stopped."

Teresa Rivera, Rivera's wife, credits Davidson for saving her husband's life.

"I got emotional when I saw Matthew in the hospital," she said. "If it wasn't for him, my husband could have been hit by a car; he really did save my husband's life." gt

Air Guard Promotes Senior Leadership

By Eric Durr, Guard Times Staff

LATHAM--The nation's largest Air National Guard promoted two brigadier generals to major general, and changed its commander, June 22, in a ceremony here at the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters.

"Our ceremony today is absolutely unique for us," said Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York, as he prepared to preside over the triple ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Anthony German, formerly the Chief of Staff of the New York Air National Guard and Deputy Adjutant General, became Major General German, and formally took command of the 5,900-member force from Major General Verle Johnston, who retired at the end of June.

With five flying wings and the Eastern Air Defense Sector-- along with units specializing in satellite reconnaissance, aerial operations planning, and support for ground units—the New York Air National Guard is larger than many national Air Forces as well as all other state Air National Guards.

Brig. Gen. Kevin Bradley, the National Guard Assistant to the Commander of United States Cyber Command, and New York's Assistant Adjutant General for Air, was also promoted to major general.

Both men have been outstanding officers who will continue to provide important service to their state and nation, Murphy emphasized.

Bradley, a veteran of the Iraq War and the Persian Gulf War, is an F-16 pilot, who commanded the New York Air National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing from 2008 to 2012. During that period the 174th Fighter Wing transitioned from flying manned fighters to operating the unmanned MQ-9 remotely piloted aircraft.

A resident of Manlius, N.Y., Bradley was commissioned in 1984 and has served in the New York Air National Guard since 1992.

In his remarks Bradley emphasized the key role all members of the New York Air National Guard play in producing successful state and federal missions.

"This is a team effort, it is a team sport," Bradley said.

German, a Master Navigator, was commissioned as an Air Force officer in 1983 and joined the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing. The 109th flies the largest ski-equipped aircraft in the world, the LC-130 Hercules variant, and plays a key role in supporting science research in Antarctica and Greenland, as well as being able to support military missions in polar regions.

Prior to becoming Chief of Staff of the New York Air National Guard, German commanded the 109th Airlift Wing from 2006 to 2010.

"The New York Air National Guard is in great hands with Tony German," said Johnston, the outgoing commander. "He is a man of great dedication, great values, and more importantly, great courage," Johnston said.

German has made an effort to get to know all the New York Air National Guard units, understanding their missions and the challenges they face, Johnston said.

German's four adult children – Zack, Becky, Air National Guard Staff Sgt. Benjamin and Air National Guard Captain Joshua - pinned on their father's new rank.

In his remarks, German praised the Airmen and leaders of the New York Air National Guard, as well as his family and his friends and neighbors in Oneonta, N.Y.

"There are so many people in this room who make the job look easy," German said referring to the Air Guard leaders, as well as Army National Guard leaders, who attended the command change. "We are a pretty large organization with a lot of great people," he said. **gt**

Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York (left) presents the flag of the New York Air National Guard to Major General Anthony German, as he assumes command of the 5,900-member New York Air National Guard, on June 22. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

Brig. Gen. Kevin Bradley, National Guard Assistant to the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command and New York's Assistant Adjutant General for Air, crouches to lend support as his mother Maureen (left) and wife Karen pin his second stars during his promotion to major general June 22. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Steven Petibone, Guard Times Staff.

Airmen Practice Medical Evacuation

By Maj. Anthony Bucci, 109th Airlift Wing

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE – Flight medics rushed to stabilize a patient and move the litter onto a waiting LC-130 Hercules aircraft, a life-saving training exercise where minutes and hours can mean life or death for casualties.

The event was a training exercise on July 30 at the New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing, parent unit of the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

Airmen who routinely train for overseas missions to handle combat casualties also prepare for disasters at home where their skills might save the lives of fellow Americans.

The exercise, part of a coordinated National Disaster Medical System Exercise, included several local agencies from the Capital District.

The joint agency training helps build much better familiarity with those other response agencies before a disaster occurs, noted New York Air National Guard Capt. Richard Legault, Operations Flight Commander in the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

"Understanding our state mission," Legault said, "which separates us from our active duty counterparts, we realize how important interagency cooperation is when disaster strikes that is why we along with our civilian partners participate in these field training exercises." "When disaster strikes, like a Hurricane Sandy, we are better prepared to operate effectively and seamlessly in a joint interagency environment," he said.

Agency partners included the Albany Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Homeland Security, the National Disaster Medical System, the Civil Air Patrol and the East Glenville Fire Department.

Coordinating such diverse groups under a unified effort requires practice and communication, Legault stressed.

During the training, patients were stabilized for transport, loaded onto an LC-130 Hercules and evacuated by members of the 139th, who were sharpening their skills for medical evacuation missions.

The simulated patients, volunteer cadets from the Civil Air Patrol, were moved from a staging site at the East Glenville Volunteer Fire Department to Stratton and then loaded onto an LC-130 for transport.

Members of the New York Air National Guard's 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, alongside the Tennessee Air National Guard's 118th Medical Group, and the Albany Stratton Veterans Affairs Medical Center carry "patients", made up from the New York Civil Air Patrol, from a medical staging area tent to an LC-130 Hercules aircraft during a disaster response exercise at Stratton Air National Guard Base, July 30. Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara, 109th Airlift Wing.

For the Air Guard, the shift in focus from an overseas contingency operation to disaster response is a seamless one, made even more realistic with agency partners during training.

"These types of joint training exercises demonstrate the dual-use value of the Air National Guard. We will continue to deliver homeland forces to the nation, states, territories, and district in times of need, and strengthen enduring relationships at home and abroad," said Lt. Col. Brian Backus, commander of the 139th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

The National Disaster Medical System is intended to enhance medical response during a crisis by combining federal and non-federal medical resources. It is federally coordinated, but includes medical resources at the state, county and local level when disasters strike.

The training also highlighted the important role of the Stratton Air National Guard Base in Scotia. The facility is designated as a federal coordinating center, one of only 10 National Guard bases with this responsibility.

The role of Stratton during a medical disaster is to recruit hospitals and maintain local non-federal hospital participation in the National Disaster Medical System. The leaders and staff of the 109th Airlift Wing support that role in coordinating exercises and emergency plans with participating hospitals and local authorities.

The goal is to establish patient reception, transportation, and communication plans, and during activation in a crisis, coordinate the reception and distribution of patients being evacuated to the area. gt

Adding to Summer's Sizzle

STRATTON AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, SCOTIA -- A firefighter looks over the simulated disaster scene during the 109th Airlift Wing's Major Accident Response Exercise on June 14, 2015, which simulated a tanker truck explosion on base. About 50 first responders participated in the annual training response exercise. Photo by Master Sgt. William Gizara, 109th Airlift Wing.

NY Guard Reboots Emergency Radio System

Guard Times Staff

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor – More than 75volunteers of the New York Guard completed their first full year of monthly communications exercises using the Military Emergency Radio Network (MERN) here May 2.

The communications system links military and civilian radio operators to create a sustainable emergency radio network during a disaster.

The training is part of the New York National Guard contingency plan, and tasks the New York Guard to train and operate the Army Military Auxiliary Radio System (MARS). The New York Guard personnel,

While most of the communication stations involved use fixed-site radios, this year introduces "Mobile MERN" elements, allowing New York Guard communications experts to locate closer to an incident site.

New York Guard personnel begin training this August during annual training with vehicle-portable high-power radio equipment that will give MERN operators unprecedented tactical interoperability with New York State's emergency responders. Mobile MERN will also create the ability to place low-cost, high-power communications units anywhere National Guard forces are deployed in the state.

"We're going to have over 100 boots on the ground by 2016," said New York Guard communications officer Lt. Col. Barry Greene.

New York Guard 1st Sgt. Mark Copeletti, 56th Brigade, from New Windsor, N.Y., performs an equipment check on a Military Emergency Radio Network receiver at the Joint Task Force Sandy operations center Nov. 6, 2012. The MERN provides back-up communication capabilities for the emergency response. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dave Konig, 56th Brigade, New York Guard.

Greene credited service component partners in the National Guard, as well as other supporting New York state agencies, federal military and civilian radio operators for their tremendous training and operational support.

"We will continue to make sure our soldiers are trained up, and ready to respond," Greene said. gt

New York Guard Volunteers Role Play Reporters

By Officer Candidate Donald Ferguson, New York Guard

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor -- Two members of the New York Guard's Public Affairs Office played the role of reporters in support of an emergency response exercise here, June 13.

Capt. Mark Getman and Officer Candidate Donald F. Ferguson portrayed local news media to exercise Camp Smith response procedures for handling unexpected media during emergencies.

The two helped prepare Camp Smith garrison staff leaders to better communicate with news media during a crisis.

"Informing our local residents through the press is an integral part of our emergency plan. So it makes sense to test our media plan and make changes if needed," said Lt. Col. Joseph Cetta, Camp Smith Training Site Garrison Commander.

"The New York Guard Public Affairs team played a key role by asking the kinds of questions real reporters would ask in an emergency." he added.

The exercise included the New York Army National Guard, Marine Corps Reservists, LifeNet of New York Air Two from Wallkill, the Continental Village Fire Department Rescue, Cortlandt Regional Paramedics, and Peekskill Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

The emergency simulated a vehicle crash in a remote, woodland area. Part of the response training is understanding the important role that information plays in communicating with the local community, Cetta said. gt

New York Guard Officer Candidate Donald Ferguson, far right, participates in a "media" interview with Lt. Col. Joseph Cetta, Camp Smith Training Site garrison commander, June 13. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.

Sleepy Hollow Recalls Guard Service, Sacrifice

Story by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard Headquarters
Photos by Capt. Dan Ozaruk, 56h Brigade and Sgt. Maj. Mark Copeletti, New York Guard Headquarters

SLEEPY HOLLOW – A stone monument here, at the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, commemorates some of New York's fallen heroes of World War I, but they are unlike any other Soldier killed in France during the war.

The names recall 32 members of the New York Guard's 1st Provisional Regiment who perished during the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic while serving the home front.

Members of the New York Guard and New York City Department of Environmental Police officers participated in the 97th Aqueduct Defense Memorial Service, honoring 1st Provisional Regiment volunteers here, May 7.

The ceremony, supported by the 56th Brigade and New York Guard Headquarters element, honors the World War I service of those who died protecting their home.

"The main purpose of the memorial ceremony is to render honors to the memory of the dedicated men of the 1st Provisional Regiment, New York Guard who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the New York City Reservoir System during World War One, and second to remember our comrades in arms who have passed on in the previous year," said Lt. Col. David Warager, the New York Guard commander of Recruiting, Retention and Public Affairs.

More than 8,000 New Yorkers served in the 1st Provisional Regiment, the lineage of today's New York Guard.

Following the mobilization of the New York National Guard for service in France in 1917, the regiment was formed to protect the state's aqueduct system from feared German sabotage.

Forty guardsmen perished performing this homeland defense duty.

Sleepy Hollow is the final resting place of Frank De Costa, a member of the New York Guard who died of pneumonia in December 1918. When William Rockefeller learned that the family had no means of a proper burial, the son of business tycoon John D. Rockefeller donated a burial plot at Sleepy Hollow and the site became the central location for honoring the service of the entire regiment.

A memorial boulder was removed from Bonticou Crag in Ulster County's Shawangunk Mountains, part of the vast area of aqueduct the Guardsmen defended to Sleepy Hollow to permanently honor their service and sacrifice in 1919.

Words of reflection were offered by Sleepy Hollow Mayor Ken Wray and DEP Police Chief Peter Fusco following the placement of memorial wreaths.

Following the official comments, and the reciting of the roll call of honor by Chaplain (Maj.) Sean Gardner, the New York Guard Command Chaplain, the 56th Brigade attendees then rendered honors with a 21-gun-salute and the playing of Taps by Capt. Brian Kanner.

"It is important that we remember and commemorate the dedicated efforts of our brothers in arms who answered the call to serve under difficult circumstances," Warager said. "Like today's New York Guard soldiers, they were citizens who cared for their country, its ideals and the freedom that they enjoyed due to the Service of those who served before them." gt

Members of the New York Guard's 56th Brigade Ceremonial Firing Squad fire a salute volley during the memorial ceremony, The detachment is commanded by Staff Sgt. Robert Tozzo.

"Like today's New York Guard soldiers, they were citizens who cared for their country, its ideals and the freedom that they enjoyed

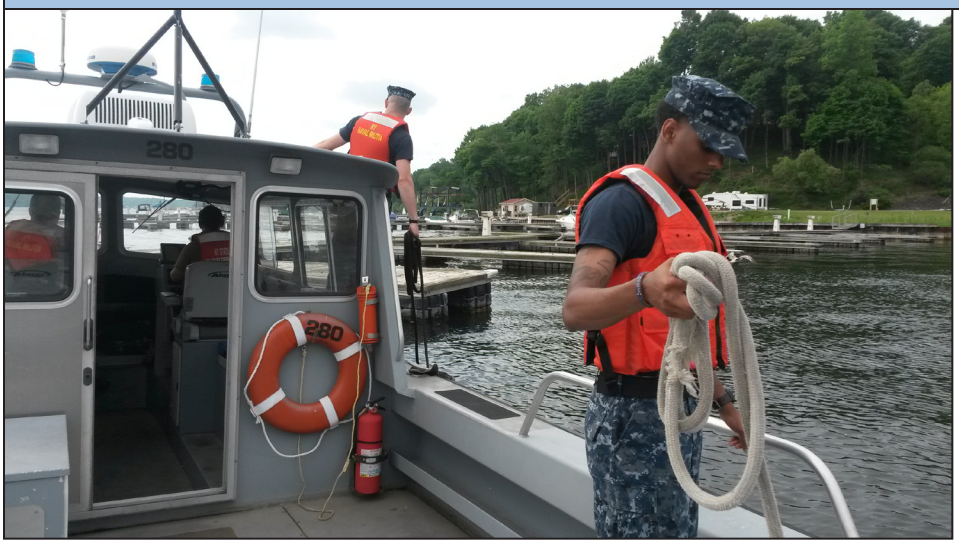
-- Lt. Col. David Warager, New York Guard

The New York Guard Memorial Stone, hewn from the aqueduct quarry in upstate New York by the members of the 1st Provisional Regiment was placed at a site purchased by William Rockefeller for the burial of those members of the Regiment that were homeless or did not otherwise have a place to be buried in 1919. New York Guard Pvt. Frank De Costa is buried there, after he died of the Spanish Flu while on duty guarding the Aqueduct in 1918.

Behind the Boat Wheel

A Day on Lake Ontario Trains new Boat Crews

ROCHESTER- Naval Militia Patrol Boat 280 maneuvers into the dock following operations on the Genesee River and Lake Ontario on May 30. Naval Militia Sailors spent the day developing boat handling skills to prepare themselves to operate with the Military Emergency Boat Service. The Naval Militia mans nine patrol boats to support law enforcement and federal agencies operating on New York's waterways. Photos by Chief Equipment Operator Rick Stacy, NY Naval Militia.



Rapid Gunwale Exercises Naval Militia Response

Story and photo by Cdr. John J. Trombetta, New York Naval Militia

CAMP SMITH TRAINING SITE, Cortlandt Manor – Some 75 members of the New York Naval Militia gathered on a clear, sunny Saturday morning on July 25 to better prepare themselves for the demands of disaster response when the weather might not be as accommodating.

Known as Rapid Gunwale, the exercise goal was to strengthen Naval Militia capabilities for maritime, logistics or medical support during a crisis or natural disaster.

Rear Admiral Ten Eyck Powell III, the commander of the Naval Militia, began the event with a reminder to the sailors of the exercise scenario, involving a severe storm slamming into New York State, and their immense importance of their training to be ready to respond.

Four New York Naval Militia patrol boats then practiced maneuvering on the Hudson River near Peekskill. The training, led by Commander Donald McKnight and additional personnel, provided skills training to provide coastal security and disaster operations.

While crews took to the waters of the Hudson, other Naval Militia members participated in the logistical operations of disaster response. Nine members qualified during the daylong training as forklift operators, able to support warehousing and distribution of relief supplies during disasters.

Petty Officer 1st Class James Miller, an instructor who brought a wealth of experience from his service in both the Army and Navy, commented that the availability of forklift operators would be essential during future disasters.

A third area of training for Naval Militia attendees highlighted the skills needed by emergency medical response teams responding to disaster victims who simulated minor to severe wounds.

Overseeing the medical triage was Naval Militia Captain Bruce Barron, a practicing civilian physician. Dr. Barron acted as supervising observer and trainer for the medical treatment provided to the notional wounded.

The medical training was perhaps one of the most dramatic of the exercise, Barron said, as it was one of the most essential and demanding. Role players pretending to be wounded victims provided the backdrop of constant cries and demands for treatment as they were brought into the medical triage area. gt

Two Naval Militia members conduct forklift training July 25, during the New York Naval Militia's "Rapid Gunwale" exercise at Camp Smith Training Site. The exercise provided an opportunity for Naval Militia members to exercise skills they would need in a state emergency.

Wearing New York Mets jerseys, New York Air National Guard Airmen played in a softball tournament at Citifield on June 11. The event, allowed members to play and meet with players and team officials. Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher S Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Mets Host Troops for Tournament

By Maj. Al Phillips, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

NEW YORK - Few people can say they're married to a major league ball player. But a few New York Air National Guard spouses can now say their Airman was a "New York Met for a day."

"There's nothing like sitting in VIP watching your husband, who is literally your All-Star, being a star on a team of stars," said Rebecca Hoag, wife of New York Air National Guard Tech Sgt. Robert Hoag, a member of the 105th Airlift Wing.

Hoag and 19 other members of the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing and 106th Rescue Wing took part in a daylong event on June 11 in which they met Mets players, played some softball with them, and stayed to watch a game.

Members of the Air Force, Army, Marines and the Navy fielded teams and played in tournament-style softball matchups in opposing corners of Citi Field, the Mets home stadium, prior to a game against the San Francisco Giants.

The New York Air Guard members represented the Air Force in the contest.

"This a continuation of what the Mets have done for the last eight years for the Armed Forces and their families.

Every year they advance their programs a notch more," said Steven Castleton, the Mets military liaison.

Continued on next page...

69th Infantry Marks Army Birthday In Times Square

NEW YORK -- In a celebration with Manhattan skyscrapers as a backdrop, the Army marked its 240th birthday in bustling, glitzy Times Square with an enlistment ceremony and cake cutting, along with musical and drill team performances.

The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Ray Odierno, led the birthday events on June 12; highlighting the service and sacrifice of the nation's Soldiers.

"Today is about the long line of people, the millions upon millions of men and women who have served the nation wearing this uniform from 1775 until today," Odierno said.

Many great celebratory events have taken place in New York City, Odierno said, including those after the end of World Wars, making the city a perfect place for the Army to mark its birthday.

"The relationship between the United States Army and New York City goes all the way back to 1775, so there is no better place to celebrate our great birthday than right here in Times Square," Odierno said.

Photo by Lisa Ferdinando, Army News.

Play Ball Continued

The Mets "Military Softball Classic" is a way for the team to show appreciation to service members, Castleton said.

The team also hosts Military Mondays in which players wear camouflage on the field during games and go to visit veterans hospitals. Team members have also visited Fort Hamilton, the Army post in Brooklyn.

"This is an awesome experience, awesome opportunity and tremendous energy to be playing out on the Mets field," said Maj. Patrick McCarry, a member of the 106th Rescue Wing.

Mets General Manager Sandy Alderson welcomed service members to the event, while Mets players acted as coaches. They also discussed baseball and its connection to service from a professional and personal perspective.

"The Mets are very proud of our Armed Forces and the service each member renders our country," Alderson said.

Alderson, who served in the Marine Corps, reminded the players to keep it clean and promised no contracts but did note he had a couple of scouts who would be observing play.

He was presented a special armed services flag memento signed by all the players.

New York Mets players who took part included Anthony Recker, Jeurys Familia, Hansel Robles, Jack Leathersich and Carlos Torres.

"We are ultimately appreciative to the Mets organization-their players, resources and time," said Maj. Matthew Lohmer, from the 106th.

The best part of the day was playing as an Air Guard/Air Force team, said 2nd Lt. Luz Garcia, a member of the 105th Airlift Wing.

"Being the only female on the team from the 105th, on this day and on the baseball field, is another reminder how we are an all-encompassing force in the squadron or here on the baseball diamond-our capabilities are inevitable," Garcia said.

In the end, the Marine Corps/Coast Guard team won the tournament. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Dustin Stevenson was named Most Valuable Player.

"It was a great game and we are all winners because our camaraderie never faded," 105th Airlift Wing Staff Sgt. Michael Fleming said.

"This was a once in a lifetime experience, being out there on the field," Senior Airman Dennis King, a 105th member, added.

Final activities included a meal for players and families and then tickets to the evening game versus the San Francisco Giants. The Mets defeated the Giants 5-4 with a game-winning run scored in the bottom of the ninth inning. gt

Heroic Airmen Lauded

By Capt. Elaine Nowak, 107th Airlift Wing

Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard, James W. Hotaling (right) had lunch at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, June 14 with Senior Airman John Guiher, Airmen 1st Class Michael Giordano, Jared Hicks, Joshua Yurchek and Staff Sgt. Christopher McKimmie to thank them for saving a man from drowning. Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Campbell, 107th Airlift Wing.

NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION -- Five Airmen from the 107th Civil Engineering Squadron Fire Department that put their training to use to help a man in distress at Babin Lake, North Carolina were thanked June 14 by the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard.

The five firefighters, Staff Sergeant Christopher McKimmie, Senior Airman John Guiher, and Airmen First Class Michael Giordano, Jared Hicks and Joshua Yurchek, were spending their day off from a two-week class relaxing at the lake. The class was held at a nearby North Carolina Regional Training Center where the civil engineers were being trained in a range of skills. Part of their training was water rescue awareness, which they had done at the very same lake four days earlier.

The Airmen noticed a swimmer having difficulties in the deep water of the lake. The man was bobbing under water, splashing and appeared to be panicking. In the man's struggle, he was pulling under a female companion that was trying to assist him. She yelled for help.

The Airmen jumped to action and swam to the man. They were able to hold him above water so that he could catch his breath and regain his composure. Then the Airmen swam him safely back to shore. The man did not require medical attention.

The victim thanked them for saving his life. The woman also expressed her gratitude.

Upon their return to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, the group met with the Command Chief Master Sergeant of the Air National Guard, Chief Master Sgt. James W. Hotaling. Hotaling visited the 107th Airlift Wing during their June drill weekend. Hotaling had lunch with the group of rescuers and thanked them for what they had done.

"Firefighters are a great example of 'train how you fight' and to always be ready because you never know when or in what capacity you'll be called upon," Hotaling said.

The Airmen say they live by what they learned at the Department of Defense Fire Academy, to 'train as if someone's life depends on it because it does.'

"It's an instinct. Once we realized he was really drowning, we all swung into action and did what we were trained to do," said Yurchek.

Hicks, Guiher and McKimmie are also volunteer firefighters. They use their Air Force training in their communities often. This is common for members of the Air Guard, to bring their military skills and experience to enhance their civilian careers and vice versa.

"These Airmen executed flawlessly and saved a life. The Air National Guard is always 'on mission,'" Hotaling said. gt

Like Father, Like Daughter

New York Army Guard pilots fly together

Story and photo by Sgt. Jonathan Monfiletto, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade

FORT DRUM --Warrant Officer Meghan Polis, a UH-60 pilot, doesn't remember it, but she logged her first three hours of helicopter flight time when she was just 3 months old.

Her father - New York Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stephen Polis - and her mother were going to a barbecue in Albany. They lived on Long Island, and they decided to make the trip north by air instead of driving.

The flight school Stephen Polis worked for at the time as an instructor pilot allowed him to borrow a two-seat helicopter for the day. His wife held Meghan Polis to her chest in a papoose and put cotton balls in the baby's ears and away the family went.

Since then, dad and daughter, both from East Patchogue, NewYork, have shared a love of flying that extends into their military careers.

On July 22, the two Army Guard aviators made their first flight together as pilots, during the 42nd Aviation Brigade's annual training here.

The two are UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilots assigned to Co. B, 3rd Battalion, 142nd Assault Helicopter Regiment, in Ronkonkoma, New York.

They flew as pilot in command - dad - and pilot - daughter - on a morale flight for the mechanics, fuelers, supply people and other support personnel who keep the pilots of the 3-142nd in the air.

The aircraft, Stephen Polis said, was the same one he flew in 2008-2009 when the unit deployed to Iraq.

Stephen Polis joined the National Guard in 1980 and started out as a mechanic and then became a crew chief. But, his intent was to become a pilot, and he did just that when he went to flight school four years later.

From there, he conducted test flights as a maintenance test pilot before moving into air assault and medical evacuation missions.

"It's (been) a good ride. Very good time," he said.

Meghan Polis followed in her father's footsteps - as well as those of her grandfather, who was also a warrant officer - and took the same route as her father when she enlisted in 2013 and served initially as a mechanic.

After a couple of years, she submitted her packet for flight school and completed the training at Fort Rucker, Alabama, in February.

"It's just kind of been a part of the family, and I always felt like I could be a part of it," she said. "By the time I came around to making the decision to do it myself, the little bit of aviation background I had was exactly the route I wanted to go."

When his daughter graduated from flight school this year, Stephen Polis pinned aviator wings on her on the same stage on which his father pinned his wings on him many years ago.

"A lot of family tradition is being created here," Stephen Polis said. "It was pretty prideful. Very rewarding. Extremely nice day for the family."

The July 22 flight started out slow and steady, as the pilots allowed their passengers to get a taste of aviation on the trip around the base.

Halfway through the trip, with father and daughter each taking a turn at the controls, the pilots turned the action up during some low level flight. The maneuvers displayed the capabilities of the Black Hawk for Soldiers who spend their careers ensuring those helicopters have all the support needed for missions.

Warrant Officer Meghan Polis, left, and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Stephen Polis - a daughter and dad both assigned to Company B, 3rd Battalion 142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion - pose in front of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at Fort Drum July 22 before flying together. It was the first time both National Guard members flew together as pilots.

After the flight, Stephen Polis complimented his daughter on her ability behind the controls, saying she did a good job and made him proud.

"I always thought my dad had a cool job, and now that I'm doing it, I know he had a cool job," Meghan Polis said. "It's actually more than I expected. It's so much more rewarding to be able to go out and be the one at the controls flying the aircraft and making decisions."

When she initially wanted to learn to fly an airplane, she said her father refused to fly with her as a civilian instructor pilot.

"This time he didn't really have a choice," she said. "It's really cool to actually be able to sit in the seat next to him. I've always kind of felt like I really wanted him to know how I fly, and now I guess he's got an assessment and it's not that bad."

As a civilian pilot, Stephen Polis said he has flown corporate jets around the world and logged more than 10,000 hours in jets and 10,000 hours in helicopters - in fact, he said, he stopped counting when he reached that threshold five years ago.

The love of flying is something he developed at a young age, and he was fortunate enough to turn his love into a career.

"Aviation's been very good to me, extremely good to me," he said. "I have a smile on my face every day and every time I fly. It's an itch that you try to satisfy. It's always a yearning. It's always there. It never goes away."

And after inheriting her father's love of flying and getting to turn it into a career, Meghan Polis said it is "more than I thought it would be."

"I'm constantly learning things," she said. "I'm still picking up on different things. Every time I fly with someone, they have a different technique. It's a challenge and it's a thrill." gt

Individual Quick Reaction

New York National Guard Medic Awarded States Highest Medal

By Eric Durr, Public Affairs Director

FARMINGDALE—Staff Sgt. Marlana Watson was spending a quiet night at her Syracuse home playing video games when the New York Army National Guard medic and Afghan War veteran, heard gunshots coming from the street outside.

Watson checked on her sleeping five-year old son and rushed outside.

There were two boys down on the lawn across the street. They were yelling "help me, help me," she recalled.

Not knowing whether or not the shooter had left, or whether more gunfire would occur, Watson raced across the street and began using her medical training to save lives.

On Wednesday Aug. 19, Watson was recognized for her selfless service on the night of Nov. 5, 2014, when she received the New York State Medal for Valor, New York's highest military honor from Major General Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General.

"It's an incredible honor to be able to recognize one of our Soldiers for a very selfless act," Murphy said.

"Staff Sgt. Watson acted in the best traditions of the New York National Guard when she went to the aid of those two young men, despite the risk that the assailants could open fire again. She took her military training and expertise and used it to help her neighbors and community," Murphy said.

New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo also praised Watson's actions.

"Without hesitation, Staff Sgt. Watson placed her own personal safety at risk in order to help those in need," Gov. Cuomo said. "I commend her heroic actions and am proud to see this exemplary New Yorker receive this well-deserved honor."

The New York State Medal for Valor is awarded to members of the New York National Guard who display valor, heroism, courage or gallantry either in a military or civilian capacity.

"You don't think you would get a medal this high," Watson said. "I just did what anybody else would have done."

Watson, age 28, began administering emergency aid to the two shot boys—ages 13 and 15—and took charge of the scene. She directed her sister to call 911 and enlisted the aid of other residents.

One boy was shot in his upper buttock. She had nothing to stop the bleeding so Watson pulled off his boot and sock and used the sock as a bandage.

She turned him over to check for an exit wound, and seeing none, she asked an onlooker to hold the bandage on the wound while she checked the other victim.

Staff Sgt. Marlana Watson, an Army medic and Afghanistan veteran, is presented with the New York State Medal of Valor in Farmingdale, Aug. 19. Watson received the Medal of Valor, the state's highest military award for heroism, for giving emergency medical aid to two teenage boys who were shot and bleeding near her home. Photo by Sgt. Jay Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division.

The other victim was shot in the thigh and in the calf. She told him he had to lie still and let her check his wounds because there is a major artery in the leg.

That boy said he was getting cold so Watson sent her sister inside to get a blanket.

By the time her sister returned, police and emergency medical teams arrived and Watson turned the care of the two teens over to them.

Police later determined at that passengers in a vehicle had shot at the two teenagers from behind.

> "I commend her heroic actions and am proud to see this exemplary New Yorker receive this well-deserved honor."
>
> *-- New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo*

At the time of the event Watson, a Binghamton native, was assigned to the 107th Military Police Company, which is headquartered in Brooklyn.

She is now assigned to Company A of the New York Army National Guard's Recruiting Battalion as a full-time recruiter in Farmingdale.

A Soldier since 2004, Watson served as a medic in Afghanistan in 2012 and 2013 as a member of the 427th Brigade Support Battalion.

She and other members of the 427th deployed to Afghanistan and served as part of the 3rd Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade at Bagram Air Base. gt

Sailors Cover Lake Champlain

LAKE CHAMPLAIN -- New York Naval Militia members speak to a news crew from Channel 3 in Burlington , Vt. near Peru, N.Y. during a three day training mission on Lake Champlain, July 16. Two boats and crews navigated the lake to familiarize themselves with ports and potential hazards. The New York Naval Militia has regularly supported Customs and Border Protection efforts on the waters of Lake Champlain. Courtesy photo.

Pararescue Weapons Training

WESTHAMPTON BEACH AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE -- 106th Rescue Wing Staff Sgt. Joseph Pico conducts weapons training at the firing range here, July 17. Pico is a Combat Arms Training and Maintenance instructor with the wing, responsible for training personnel on the use of small arms and oversees, maintains and repairs all 106th weapons. Photo by Staff Sergeant Christopher Muncy, 106th Rescue Wing.

Change of 'Kong' Command

ROCHESTER -- New York Army National Guard Capt. Kenneth Hilkert accepts the guidon of Det. 1, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 126th Aviation from Lt. Col. Michael Charnley, commander of the 642nd Aviation Support Battalion, during the unit change of command ceremony at Army Aviation Support Facility #3 in Rochester on June 28. Hilkert took command of the CH-47 Chinook company, nicknamed "Kong" from Capt. Brendan Flansburg.

The Soldiers of Company B, 3-126th Aviation have deployed to Afghanistan twice. During the 2007-08 deployment the company was recognized as the Army National Guard aviation unit of the year for 2008 by the Army Aviation Association of America for accomplishments in Afghanistan, including participating in the largest air assault operation in that country since 2002.

In 2012-13 the Soldiers deployed again to Afghanistan to move troops and supplies across the country.

Hilkert deployed with the unit to Afghanistan in 2012 providing support to the Regional Command-South area while attached to the 25th and 3rd Combat Aviation Brigades.

Photo by Capt. Benjamin J. Postle.

Officer Turns Lifting Hobby into Competitive Sport

By Maj. Al Phillips, 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team

WEBSTER - What started as a hobby to kill time while deployed at Guantanamo Bay in 2011 and 2012 has become a record-breaking event for New York Army National Guard Capt. Jeremy Hillyard.

Hillyard, a battle-staff officer in the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team headquarters, based in Syracuse, took five prizes in the Aug. 8-9 Revolution Power Lifting competition in Rochester.

More than 300 weight-lifters took part in the regional competition, one of the largest on the east coast.

"Nothing compares to the adrenaline when you are competing against yourself, it takes mental and physical strength when you are no longer in front of just a mirror but instead hundreds of people," Hillyard said.

"Getting your body to do something you may not have been able to do a month ago is something special," he added.

Hillyard, who is currently serving full-time, discovered weight-lifting when he was serving as part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo with the New York Army National Guard's 107th Military Police Company.

Hillyard looked for something to fill time in a productive and positive manner and followed the path of fellow Soldiers to the gym. He excelled at lifting weights.

But when he returned home to Webster, N.Y. he stopped lifting.

He was "Army strong," capable of doing pushups, situps and passing the two-mile run but not much more, Hillyard said.

Dissatisfied with his body image, physical strength and with mental fatigue creeping in, after returning from "Gitmo" and taking six months off from working out, Hillyard and his wife Katie decided to join a gym in Webster. Almost instantly, a new way of life was born, he said.

The two became "gym rats."

"I lift more for power lifting, and physical and mental strength, and she lifts for overall fitness," Hillyard said.

New York Army National Guard Capt. Jeremy Hillyard competing in the Rochester, N.Y. Revolution Power Lifting competition on August 8. Hillyard, who began weight lifting while stationed at Guantanamo Bay in 2011-2012 successfully defended weight lifting records he set in previous competitions. Courtesy photo.

At the August weightlifting competition, Hillyard was defending weightlifting records he had set at earlier events.

Representing the Gold's gym in Webster, Hillyard competed in two weight classes — the 198-pound Military Professional Open and 198 Amateur open weight class division, referred to as a "Full Power" event, consisting of three events: Bench Press, Squats, and Dead Lift. He successfully bench pressed 295 pounds, squatted 605 pounds and dead lifted 560 pounds for a total of 1,440 pounds.

The 198 refers to Hillyard's body weight in pounds.

Hillyard competes in Revolution Powerlifting Syndicate.

According to the syndicate's website, the group provides powerlifting competitors an environment in which they may compete at their highest level utilizing the best possible equipment and conditions to perform the squat, bench press and deadlift.

Competitors are judged by three qualified referees and must meet the long standing and integral criteria of the sport of powerlifting while being shown respect, embraced as a peer and heard as an individual not a commodity, the website says.

> "People must get past the mental block of being afraid to get hurt or feel tired and have pride in themselves to ultimately see great results and reach their full body potential,"
>
> *-- Capt. Jeremy Hillyard.*

Revolution Powerlifting Syndicate (RPS), is one of several large Powerlifting federations in the United States whom currently hold competitions in 17 states and Canada.

Hillyard currently hold three RPS New York state records and two RPS International records in the deadlift and squat events. He plans to defend his state records and pursue national and international records in future competitions.

All results are compiled by Powerlifting Watch, a separate organization that monitors the results from every Federation and every meet held throughout the year.

Hillyard said he is on a personal mission to set a fitness example for his fellow Soldiers.

Obese and out of shape Soldiers are an issue in our force today, Hillyard said. More can be done to change the direction of physical fitness — not only in the New York National Guard but the community as a whole, he said.

"People must get past the mental block of being afraid to get hurt or feel tired and have pride in themselves to ultimately see great results and reach their full body potential," Hillyard said. gt

Rainbow Veterans Commemorate Milestones

By Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters

WEST POINT - Veterans and descendants of the Army's historic 42nd Infantry Division commemorated their 96th annual reunion here Aug. 15 with tributes to Soldiers past and present and to award education scholarships to Rainbow Soldier legacies.

The 2015 annual reunion for the Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation recognized a number of milestones, including the current centennial of the battles of World War I that led to the creation of the "Rainbow Division," as the 42nd Infantry is known, to the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II to the 10th anniversary of the division headquarters combat service in Iraq in 2005.

"We gather again to remember the past service of our World War veterans who created the 42nd Infantry Division and established its legacy in the Army," said Foundation Chairman and former division commander retired Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto. "At the same time, we welcome the modern-era veterans who wore the Rainbow patch in peace and in war, at ground zero in New York City and in the sands of Iraq."

"We stand at a transition where our newest veterans now carry forward that tremendous history and legacy of the Rainbow," he said.

The 42nd Infantry Division was created in 1917 when National Guard units from 26 states came together at Garden City, New York, to form a new division and deploy to France.

The division was given its nickname by then-Col. Douglas McArthur, who conceived of the idea. The 42nd Division, coming from a number of different states would stretch across the country "like a Rainbow."

The Veterans Foundation traces its roots to the first veterans reunion of the 42nd Division, back in 1919, when MacArthur, the former division chief of staff, brigade commander and division commander from World War I, was elected first and enduring association chairman.

Annual reunions are held in the summer to commemorate the division's first major battle in Champagne, France, in July 1918, serving with General Henri Gouraud's French 4th Army.

The summer gathering also recalls the division's July 1943 reactivation at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, for service in World War II. The division fought in France and Germany, liberating the Dachau Concentration Camp, taking Munich, and occupying part of Austria.

Rainbow Division Veterans Foundation chairman. Joseph Taluto, a retired New York Army National Guard major general and commander of the 42nd Infantry Division during its service in Iraq, presents an RDVF scholarship for $1,000 to Andrea Gagnon at the veterans reunion Aug. 15. The foundation presented 13 scholarships this year. Photo by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Paul Fanning.

The division became part of the New York National Guard in 1947.

Taluto said that just as the World War I veterans who created the association passed the reigns to World War II veterans in the 1970s, current Rainbow veterans of the division will carry the legacy forward for future generations.

"We've had a busy year," Taluto said. "We dedicated two new memorials for the Rainbow Division, one at Fort Drum and the other at Fort Dix, commemorating the division's mobilization sites for Operation Iraqi Freedom."

The division again lived up to its Rainbow nickname in Iraq: elements from the National Guard, Army Reserve, and active component from 28 states, Puerto Rico and American Samoa came under the command of the division.

The division formed Task Force Liberty and provided command and control, logistics and operational base for four combat maneuver brigades operating in North Central Iraq.

"These memorials join the other past sites that mark our World War I and World War II heritage," he said.

The foundation today welcomes members from former peacetime or wartime service in the 42nd Infantry Division and those family members and descendants looking to honor the service of past Rainbow Soldiers.

Reunion events included a tour of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City, site of the division service as part of the state response to the attacks at the World Trade Center in 2001.

Maj. Gen. Harry Miller, the current Rainbow Division Commander, provided keynote remarks on the state of the division today.

"Last year I stood before you and told you we had a busy year coming up with many events on our plate and I'm proud to say we've done them all," Miller said.

Miller described the support of the headquarters as a higher command cell, or HICON, for subordinate brigade training of New Hampshire's 197th Fires Brigade, the 26th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Massachusetts and 27th Infantry Brigade in New York while also supporting battle simulation training exercises for the National Guard's 38th Infantry over the winter and 36th Infantry Division in June.

The division also provided a detachment for deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to serve as members of the headquarters element in Joint Task Force Gitmo.

"There are eight National Guard divisions out there in the force," Miller said, "and while I may have a slightly biased opinion, none are as ready and none are as prepared as the 42nd Infantry."

The foundation also highlighted its annual reunion presenting 13 scholarships.

"Each year on college campuses, students begin again and our foundation is proud to support them in their efforts," said committee chairman and retired Lt. Col. Michael Kelly, a Rainbow Division veteran of Iraq. "This year, we have scholarships totaling some $22,000."

"We look for an appreciation of the division's historic past in an applicant's essay, to see how the Rainbow Division has made its mark on future generations," Kelly said.

"Whether in your personal, professional or family life, you are part of a team. Never shy away from personal sacrifice for the common good," Kelly said. gt

42nd Infantry Band Performs on Tour

HICKSVILLE - The New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division Band plays a free concert at Broadway Mall here, Aug. 11. The performance was part of the unit annual training. Band members of the famed "Rainbow Division" 42nd Infantry Division Band toured throughout the state, performing music spanning and connecting generations. In addition to the expected military traditional and classical music, the band's range covered baroque to pop and jazz, to the newest "Three Day Pass" rock band featuring punk, ska and garage rock. The 42nd Infantry Division Band is under the command of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark L. Kines and 1st Sgt. Leslie G. Saroka. Photo by Capt. Mark Getman, New York Guard.