



# THE ON GUARD

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18 Silver Stars  
for the Guard



PAGES 12-14

## Air Guard launches new era with Predator

### California becomes first of five states to fly UAV mission

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith  
National Guard Bureau

MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE, Calif. - After years of preparation and months of training, the California Air National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing in late November became the first Guard unit to operate aircraft that are flown from the ground, not in a cockpit. They are MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles,

also known as UAVs.

Predators are long endurance, medium altitude, unmanned aircraft used for surveillance and reconnaissance. Since they were first flown in 1995, UAVs have been used in combat operations in the Balkans, Southwest Asia and the Middle East.

Airmen and distinguished visitors gathered to celebrate the wing's new Predator designation during a ribbon-cutting ceremony the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

Officials said the wing will train operators and maintainers on the Predator system while conducting overseas missions from California to support the Global War on Terrorism.



MQ-1 Predator  
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

"What the Guard brings today is a gift to the active Air Force, a chance to reduce [personnel] tempo, and to allow the Air National

Guard to maximize Citizen-Airmen's experience and expertise to meet the combatant commanders' demands," said Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley, director of the Air National Guard. "California has certainly done that with great professionalism.

"The 'California conversion' has been typified by optimism, enthusiasm and excitement for this vital mission," he added. "That's what makes California uniquely qualified to be the lead National Guard unit in this most pivotal role."

*PREDATOR continued on:  
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### Chief: Relief on way for equipment shortages

By Donna Miles  
American Forces Press Service

DEMING, N.M. - The National Guard Bureau chief assured members of the Army and Air National Guard during a visit here earlier this week that relief is on the way for the Guard's chronic equipment shortages.

The Army National Guard alone will receive almost \$29 billion during the next five years to reequip its units, and the Air National Guard will receive a similar sum, LTG H Steven Blum told Guard troops serving here along the southwestern U.S. border in Operation Jump Start during his Nov. 29 visit.

That's "almost 29 billion with a 'b,'" Blum said for emphasis.

Blum has been drawing focus on Guard equipment shortfalls. He's called the issue one of his biggest challenges, particularly in light of the Guard's vital role in both combat and domestic response missions.

During the National Guard Association's general conference in September, Blum reported that Guard troops "want for nothing in combat," but return home to a "dangerously low resourcing level" for their stateside missions.

This week, Blum told troops serving here the challenges the Guard faced when Bush announced in mid-May that up to 6,000 Na-

*EQUIPMENT continued on:  
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Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott

### Shooting on the run

An Army Guard Soldier makes his way through the obstacle course at the Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Championships at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, North Little Rock, Ark., in November. The obstacle course was one of several tests of physical endurance during the competition. Over 300 Soldiers and Airmen from 35 states competed. Texas was this year's big winner. See story and more photos on page 15.

### Guantanamo: Guard's role remains vital

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill  
National Guard Bureau

U.S. NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba - As the sun rises over the Caribbean, the Muslim call to prayer sounds across Camp America.

Home to hundreds of the 1,800 members of Joint Task Force-Guantanamo (JTF-GTMO) - about 13 percent drawn from the National Guard - Camp America is so close to the quarters housing about 430 enemy combatants detained for the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) that troopers in formation for morning exercise hear the Muslim call to prayer.

"It's got a beautiful ring to it," said Capt. Bryan Hughes of the Maryland Army National Guard's 58th Brigade Combat Team. "It's like being outside at night on an active post when they play Taps. Five times a day you hear that call to prayer, and you know that the detainees are getting the opportunity to practice their chosen religion freely."

JTF-GTMO's mission includes the safe and humane care and custody of detainees, gathering intelligence, and caring for task force members who are called troopers.

"We have detainees that are the leadership of al-Qaida and the Taliban," said Brig. Gen. Edward Leacock, the Maryland Army National Guard assistant adjutant general who is serving as JTF-GTMO's deputy commander. "We have the people who are the facilitators, who

*GUANTANAMO continued on:  
Pages 8-9*

2006 Army and Air Guard Year in Review, pages 10-11

# A sergeant major goes to Washington

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*Pragmatic: Of or pertaining to the practical point of view or practical considerations; busy, active.*

Tim Walz uses that word quite a lot when he describes his approach to his roles as a high school geography teacher and football coach, as a lifer in the Army National Guard, and as a new member of the 110th Congress that will convene in Washington in January.

Walz, a retired command sergeant major, has been elected to the House of Representatives from the 1st District in Minnesota, a state that has given us such political personalities as Hubert Humphrey, a former vice president and Democratic presidential candidate, and Jesse Ventura, a former professional wrestler and Independent governor. For Walz, who is 42, the New Year highlights a series of new beginnings.

He is assuming the first office to which he has ever been elected, after running for an elective office for the first time. It is the first time that his party, the Democrats, has been the majority party in Congress in 12 years. Walz, of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, defeated six-time Republican Rep. Gil Gutknecht by a 53-47 percent margin, a respectable victory for a first-timer against a veteran incumbent.

He and his wife Gwen have a new son, Gus, who was born in October. They also have a 5-year-old daughter Hope.

He may also be the first former sergeant major from the Army National Guard, perhaps from the entire Army, to ever serve in Congress. That's the word from retired Col. Len Kondratiuk, a military historian who served for many years at the National Guard Bureau, who now works for the Massachusetts National Guard, and who has a pretty good handle on these things.

He knows of only one other reservist who rose to the pay grade of E-9, the same as a sergeant major, and who served in Congress. That was a Naval Reservist who was



By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell  
Senior Editor

elected to the Senate.

Many members of Congress have served in the military during the past couple of hundred years. Many have spent a few years in uniform and gotten on with their lives. Many have been career officers, among them the late Mississippi Rep. Sonny Montgomery who became a two-star National Guard general and who was the father of the Montgomery GI Bill. They have a special affinity for military matters which appeals to people at the Pentagon and throughout the National Guard.

Furthermore, 22 members of the 110th Congress - four in the Senate and 18 in the House - have served in the National Guard, according to the National Guard Bureau's Legislative Liaison office. Only two of them, Rep. Joe Wilson from South Carolina, and Rep. John Tanner from Tennessee, spent more years in the Guard than the 24 that Tim Walz served.

Although he is not a career politician, Walz has learned some lessons as a sergeant major that should serve him well in Congress.

"I believe my life as a teacher and Soldier has prepared me well to serve in Congress," Walz said the day before Thanksgiving, when he could finally pause to catch his breath and catch up with other members of his family. He had finished 22 months of nonstop campaigning for a seat in what, despite all of the media attention that Congress receives, is still a mysterious and intriguing American institution.

"Being a teacher and a Soldier requires high standards of accountability," Walz said. "You have to be

## The National Guard in Congress

Members of the 110th Congress who have served in the National Guard:  
**Senate:** John Isakson, R, Georgia, Air; Larry Craig, R, Idaho, Army; Lindsey Graham, R, South Carolina, Air; Michael Enzi, R, Wyoming, Air.  
**House of Representatives:** Spencer Bachus, D, Alabama, Army; John Shadegg, R, Arizona, Air; C.W. Young, R, Florida, Army; Harold Rogers, R, Kentucky, Army; Collin Peterson, D, Minnesota, Army; Peter King, R, New York, Army; Thomas Reynolds, R, New York, Air; Walter Jones, R, North Carolina, Army; Thomas Davis, R, Virginia, Army; David Hobson, R, Ohio, Air; Henry Brown, R, South Carolina, Army; Joe Wilson, R, South Carolina, Army; John Duncan, R, Tennessee, Army; Tim Walz, D, Minnesota, Army; John Tanner, D, Tennessee, Army; Charles Gonzales, D, Texas, Air; Robert Scott, D, Virginia, Army; Virgil Goode, R, Virginia, Army.

-Source: National Guard Bureau

a good listener, a good problem solver, and a good planner. You learn to listen to competing points of view and then make your decisions. You have to be very pragmatic."

It is especially so if you are a command sergeant major, one of the top-ranking enlisted people who serve as the bridge between the commissioned officers who give the orders and the noncommissioned officers and other enlisted people who have to make them happen.

Tim Walz was the command sergeant major for the Minnesota Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery for about two years before he retired as a traditional Guard Soldier in the spring of 2005. He was the enlisted leader for that battalion which served in Italy, performing force protection duties and training other Soldiers to go into Afghanistan, as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

Army sergeants major have to understand what their commanders want done and, at the same time, be an advocate for the welfare of the troops. They have to earn and maintain a lot of people's respect. They have to be pragmatic.

Tim Walz has accumulated some impressive global credentials. He has taught in Chinese high schools as well as on a Native American reservation in South Dakota. He has formed a business to make it possible for American high school students to travel to China, even if they don't have a lot of money. He was named the Outstanding Young Nebraskan by the Nebraska Junior

Chamber of Commerce in 1993 before moving to Minnesota. He is working on a doctoral degree at a Minnesota university. And he has been the command sergeant major for an Army Guard outfit that has served overseas.

Now he is representing his new constituents in southern Minnesota where the Mayo Clinic is located, where people work for IBM, where farmers grow corn and soy beans for bio fuels, and where citizens serve their country in uniform, Walz said, "without wearing their patriotism on their sleeves."

Minnesota has had the fourth highest National Guard deployment rate among all 50 states during the war on terrorism, Walz said, and he is not about to forget those who have served.

"Keeping Our Promises to Veterans" is his paper that states his positions about how those who have served should be treated after they come home. Here, for example, is his position on healthcare.

"Extending TRICARE will cost an estimated \$3.8 billion through 2010, which dwarfs in comparison to the estimated \$8 billion we're spending in Iraq each month. All too often [Guard and Reserve] Soldiers report to their mobilization stations with health issues that result in their failure to deploy."

He believes, in short, that extending TRICARE would enable traditional troops to nip health problems in the bud before they are mobilized and, therefore, make it possible for more people to deploy.

Now that's pragmatic.

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**Freedom WALK**

# Guard assumes control of capital's air defense

## South Carolina has command & control; air defense artillery now from Ohio

By Staff Sgt. W. Michael Houk  
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON - The South Carolina Army National Guard has assumed command and control of the air defense mission for the National Capital Region (NCR) from the active Army.

The South Carolina Guard's 263rd Air Missile Defense Command, or AAMDC, took over what is known as Operation Clear Skies from the active Army's 32nd AAMDC stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, during a "relief in place" ceremony at Bolling Air Force Base in late November.

The Guard has provided the air defense artillery units, the manpower, for the mission to safeguard Washington under the command of the

active Army since the terrorists attacked on Sept. 11, 2001. Now it is in charge of the entire operation.

South Carolina's 2nd Battalion, 263rd Air Defense Artillery, which has manned the missiles since November of 2005, has passed that responsibility to the Ohio Army Guard's 2nd Battalion, 174th ADA.

The Ohio battalion specializes in firing missiles from the Stinger and Avenger systems at moving aerial targets. Its wartime mission is to provide low altitude air defense protection against enemy weapons such as fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, and cruise missiles.

Operation Clear Skies was the name of a joint exercise that transformed into a tangible operation as a result of the 9/11 attacks, according to South Carolina Army Guard Maj. Marion Collins.

"Clear Skies" is the name of a series of air defense exercises and operations conducted by joint and inter-agency entities in coordination with the North American Aerospace Defense

Command (NORAD) and the armed forces," Collins said.

"Our inclusion and participation in this integrated air defense operation at the request of NORAD and the Department of Defense is indicative of the significant contribution of the air and missile defense force performing air security and defeating any future aerial threats to our nation," he added.

Brig. Gen. Frances Mahon, commander of the 32nd AAMDC, said the mission is well suited to the Guard.

"I think it's significant from the aspect that we've come full circle of where we were. You go back to the Cold War, the early era, the National Guard was integral for the defense of the homeland," he said.

Maj. Gen. Harry Burchstead Jr., commander of the 263rd AAMDC from South Carolina, explained that Operation Clear Skies is a joint mission involving inter-service coordination across a huge geographic area spanning the continen-

tal NORAD region, which is the lower 48 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico."

"The reserve component Soldiers went to the same kind of training the active component guys did in the early Mission Readiness Exercises. They've validated the skill sets and they're performing the mission." Mahon said. "You wear two hats. You spin it one way, you're a reserve component. You spin it the other way, you're an active component based on the action in front of you."

"You will take home with you skills that you could not have developed during inactive duty training or during an annual training period and use these skills repeatedly over the rest of your careers," Col. Frank Laudano of South Carolina's 2nd Battalion, 263rd ADA told his Soldiers.


"From the National Guard perspective," Burchstead added, "I think this is a very important testament to the professionalism we have in the National Guard which has stepped up to the plate since 9/11." 

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige



May we never forget


California Army Guard Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Barker pays respects to his fallen comrades from the 29th Infantry Brigade. The Hawaii Army National Guard's 29th Brigade unveiled the "Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial," Nov. 5 at the 29th's Kalaeloa, Hawaii, headquarters. The memorial honors 18 brigade Soldiers who paid the ultimate price during their OIF deployment.

## Louisiana governor to extend Guardsmen in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS - After New Orleans police officials requested that Louisiana National Guardsmen remain on state active duty for another six months, Gov. Kathleen Blanco said Dec. 9 that she will order them to remain past the end of the year, the New Orleans Times-Picayune reported. The Guardsmen's tours were to end Jan. 1.

Air Guard Lt. Col. Peter Schneider said that New Orleans Police Superintendent asked Gov. Blanco to extend the tours of 300 Guardsmen through June 2007.

Guardsmen have been patrolling neighborhoods in the Hurricane Katrina-ravaged city since June, when five teenagers were killed over one weekend. Currently, Guardsmen patrol deserted areas of the city allowing New Orleans police to concentrate on high-crime areas.

The Times-Picayune also reported that Blanco stopped short of making a long-term commitment to backing up the storm-damaged city's strained police force. She served notice that the Guard and added State Police will not remain in New Orleans indefinitely. 

## Missouri unit assists with winter storm relief


By Gary Stevens  
Missouri National Guard

ST. LOUIS - Soldiers from the Missouri National Guard's 1175th Military Police Company, based in St. Clair, contributed to winter storm relief efforts in St. Louis.

The 1175th Soldiers said that they were highly-motivated to come to St. Louis to help with relief operations. Many of the Soldiers in the unit participated in relief operations after the July storms struck St. Louis.

"Once notified of the mission, the reaction was quick and the turnout was excellent," said 2nd Lt. Jason Gipson, of Bonne Terre. "Every Soldier in the unit arrived prior to the set meeting time on Saturday morning. They were

chomping at the bit to help."

Soldiers from the 1175th (as well as other Missouri National Guard units) conducted door-to-door foot patrols along with the St. Louis Fire Department in areas of the city hardest hit by the snow, ice, cold temperatures, and loss of power. The Soldiers and firemen checked more than 5,000 homes. Soldiers also handed-out lists of warming shelters, arranged for transportation to the shelters, distributed blankets, and contacted the fire department or paramedics for people who needed medical assistance. In addition to canvassing, Soldiers from the 1175th delivered meals prepared by the Salvation Army to warming shelters around St. Louis city and county. 

## Air Force Week locations selected for 2007

The Air Force has announced the six locations to host Air Force Week in 2007. Next year marks the 60th Anniversary of the Air Force and the Air National Guard.

They are: Phoenix, Mar 19 - 25; Sacramento, June 4-10; St. Louis, July 2-8; New England, Aug. 18-26; Hawaii, Sept. 10-16; and Atlanta, Oct. 8-14.

The inaugural Air Force Week took place in St. Louis in August 2006. The success of the St. Louis event prompted the Air Force


to begin partnering with other communities for 2007.

The Air Force Week program is part of the proactive approach in communicating to the public. "There is so much to tell," said Brig. Gen. Erwin Lessel, Air Force director of communication. "I can't think of a better time to emphasize the Air Force's rich heritage and limitless horizons the service has to offer."

"These weeklong events will give people the opportunity to meet the Airmen who are

selflessly defending America and to thank the public for their support of our Air Force men and women," Lessel said.

Each Air Force week will include community visits and talks by senior Air Force officials, flight demonstration team performances and displays providing an up close and personal look at the Air Force men and women serving on the front lines.

For additional information, contact the Air Force Press Desk at (703) 695-0640. 



# ★ Guarding America ★

## ARKANSAS

A contingent of Guard leaders from the Natural State traveled to the U.S.-Mexican border in Arizona in mid-November to visit their troops. Over 1,800 Guard members from around the nation are currently in Arizona supporting Operation Jump Start, including 15 Air Guard members from the 188th Fighter Wing in Fort Smith and the 189th Airlift Wing at Little Rock Air Force Base. Most of the Arkansas troops are conducting support operations so additional Border Patrol agents can get out on the line and apprehend people attempting to cross the border illegally.

## FLORIDA

Nearly 20 members of the Sunshine State's 2153rd Finance Detachment returned home in mid-November following a year-long deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit, based at the Mark Lance Armory in St. Augustine, deployed from Florida in September 2005. The Guard members provided finance support to U.S. troops in Iraq and Kuwait.

## GEORGIA

The Georgia National Guard will take possession of the Naval Air Station (NAS) Atlanta property following the facility's closure because of the Base Realignment and Closure Act. The 107-acre property is adjacent to Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Cobb County.

## HAWAII

Aloha State Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 299th Cavalry hosted the 2nd Company, 1st Infantry Regiment of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force during Rising Warrior IV, an annual joint training exercise, held Nov. 1-20.

## ILLINOIS

Prairie State troops went door-to-door in

several communities helping local officials ensure the health and welfare of area residents after a large portion of the state was hard hit by a winter storm. Decatur Guardsmen visited more than 1,000 homes Dec. 5. Central Illinois units from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 106th Aviation based in Pontiac, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry based in Salem and the Springfield-based 233rd Military Police Company have been placed on state active duty to support local officials. The more than 250 soldiers are distributing emergency information, among other duties.

## INDIANA

Hoosier State Soldiers from the 938th Military Police Detachment have been participating in Operation Jump Start, working in the Tucson Sector which spans 262 miles of the 376-mile Arizona-Mexico border. Covering more than 89,000 square miles and most of the state, the Tucson Sector sees the majority of illegal immigrant activity for the entire Southwest.

## KENTUCKY

The Bluegrass State's Air Guard is now the home of the first and only contingency response group in the Air National Guard. The 123rd Contingency Response Group - an "airbase in a box" - will continually provide everything necessary to open a runway, load and unload aircraft, provide security, housing and all the necessities to run an airfield. This response mission will be used in supporting both the war on terrorism and homeland defense.

## MASSACHUSETTS

Twenty-one Soldiers from the Bay State's 685th Finance Detachment returned to their

home Dec. 2 after being deployed to Kosovo for about a year. They served as part of Kosovo Force Seven, a NATO-led international force responsible for establishing and maintaining security in Kosovo. NATO has been rotating peacekeeping forces through Kosovo since June 1999 under a United Nations mandate. In Kosovo, the 685th conducted various pay missions and financial disbursement.

## MICHIGAN

Approximately 30 Wolverine State Airmen left Selfridge Air National Guard Base Nov. 28 for duty in Southwest Asia as the 127th Wing there rotated the last C-130 crews and aircraft from its airlift group into combat. The 127th Airlift Group has been sending troops and planes in support of Operation Enduring Freedom since August, rotating aircrew personnel and C-130 Hercules aircraft about every 45 days. This final combat deployment will end in January when the 127th Group begins to focus on converting to KC-135 aircraft and the air-to-air refueling mission.

## MISSISSIPPI

The Magnolia State Guard honored four fallen Soldiers killed in Iraq with a monument at the Lucedale National Guard Armory Dec. 9. It also honored Company B of the 150th Combat Engineer Battalion that was activated in 2004. The monument honors Master Sgt. Sean M. Cooley, 35, of Ocean Springs; Sgt. Terrance D. Lee, 25, of Moss Point; Staff Sgt. Larry Arnold, 46, of Carriere; and Sgt. Robert A. McNail, 30, of Meridian.

## NEW JERSEY

The Garden State's 108th Air Refueling Wing at McGuire Air Force Base deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, to support Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom Sept. 27 through Nov. 4. More than 100 service members from McGuire's "super tanker" unit took over the 90th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron and the 90th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron to support Air Mobility Command operations by providing aerial refuelings with the 108th's KC-135E Stratotankers.

## NORTH DAKOTA

Eight C-21 transports, which will replace the 119th Fighter Wing's F-16s, will soon arrive in Fargo. The planes, which were originally scheduled to arrive in October, will be flown by pilots from the 119th, the "Happy Hooligans." The secretary of the Air Force signed off on the transfer of the aircraft to Hector Field, North Dakota. The F-16 fighters are being phased out by the Air Force. The C-21, used to transport military personnel, is expected to bridge the gap until the Fargo unit is assigned the new Joint Cargo Aircraft that will be flown by Army and Air Force units.

## OHIO

The Buckeye State's Brig. Gen. Robin Timmons, commander of the Ohio Army National Guard's 16th Engineer Brigade, was awarded the Combat Action Badge in late October at Camp Liberty, Iraq, by his son, 1st Lt. Travis Timmons, a medical platoon leader with the 285th Area Support Medical Company, also of the Ohio Guard. Brig. Gen. Timmons was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom in September 2005.

## OKLAHOMA

Sooner State Spc. Matthew Herndon received a Purple Heart during an Oct. 11 ceremony with family, friends and other Guard Soldiers. Herndon also greeted Spc. Christon Stone, his friend who was injured in the same attack. It was the first time the two had seen each other since they were flown out of Iraq for treatment at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Herndon and Stone are members of the 1345th Transportation Company, which deployed to Iraq in June of this year. They were injured while providing security for a convoy carrying supplies to Coalition Forces.

## OREGON

Beaver State Army aviation units set records during the 2006 fire fighting season. Crews from both the 1042nd Medical Company (Army Aviation) and Detachment 1, Delta Company, 113th Aviation went above and beyond their normal mission, helping with Oregon's fire season for 48 consecutive days - the longest timeframe ever for this particular mission. They did this in addition to MEDEVAC and the Military Air Rescue Team (MART) missions, and supporting the Air Assault and Rappel Master courses.

## PENNSYLVANIA

Keystone State Staff Sgt. Mike Zimmerman of Reading received the Council on Chemical Abuse's Annual Prevention Professional of the Year Award in early November. It was presented to him for his work with youth camps at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. Zimmerman is a member of the Pennsylvania National Guard Drug Demand Reduction program. He organized and ran five camps this past summer for youths in several counties.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

The Palmetto State Guard recently donated more than three dozen M-113 armored personnel carriers to the Department of Natural Resources in October at North Myrtle Beach. The vehicles were hauled offshore and sunk within the boundaries of the Jim Caudle Memorial Reef and the Little River Offshore Reef in the Atlantic Ocean to enhance the fishing and wildlife habitats of the Palmetto Shore coastline.

## TENNESSEE

The Volunteer State's 45th Civil Support Team took part in an incident response exercise at the Opry Mills Mall in Nashville Nov. 30. The team specializes in dealing with the aftermath of events as varied as a chemical leak or a terrorist attack. The exercise included 22 members of the team along with local emergency responders.

## VIRGINIA

Nearly 180 Soldiers from the Old Dominion State have been activated for 18 months for Operation Iraqi Freedom starting Jan. 4. The Guardsmen are scheduled to travel to their mobilization station, Ft. Dix, N. J., after a short period of duty at their home armories. Units affected by this mobilization are the Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company A of the 116th Brigade Troops Battalion and Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry.

## WYOMING

Several Equality State employers from Campbell County received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's Patriot Award during a ceremony at Gillette City Council chambers Nov. 29. The Patriot Award is a national level award presented to employers by members of the National Guard and Reserve. The employer must be nominated by a National Guard or Reserve member.



Photo by Maj. Cotton Puryear

**CELEBRATING THEIR ROOTS:** Massachusetts Army Guard Spc. Eric Varela, Pfc. Randy Demand and Pfc. Joseph Levesque, from left, help to celebrate the National Guard's 370th anniversary while cutting the cake with Brig. Gen. Douglas Earhart, commander of Multi-National Task Force (East), Dec. 13 at Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo. The Soldiers belong to three Massachusetts Guard units that descend from the North, South, and East Regiments which held their first muster in Massachusetts on Dec. 13, 1636, which is considered the birth of the National Guard. The three Bay State Soldiers, who are participating in Operation Joint Guardian, belong to, in order, the 101st Engineer Battalion, the 182nd Cavalry, and the 181st Infantry.

Operation Jump Start

# Border security: One size doesn't fit all

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

SAN LUIS, Ariz. - The U.S. border with Mexico here is flat. There is no river between the two countries, and the Yuma Desert stretches to the east.

But the borderland terrain is considerably different in other communities that LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and senior federal officials visited during a late November trip along the 1,951-mile border from California to Texas.

The National Guard has provided up to 6,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen for Operation Jump Start. President George W. Bush announced the Guard's two-year commitment to helping the Border Patrol secure the border in May.

When it comes to policing this mercurial border, one size does not fit all, Blum said.

"It's a complex operation," said Craig Duehring, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs, who accompanied Blum on the trip. "I certainly came with some misconceptions that one size fits all, that what we were going to do was just put a fence across from Point A to Point B, and then it would all be done. Now I'm starting to realize that's simply not the case."

The complexities start with the varied geography of the border itself. As the geography changes, so do the challenges in controlling it. In California, San Diego's southern suburbs are separated from Tijuana, Mexico, by a trio of fences designed to "encourage" people to use the international port of entry for travel and trade.

From sea level in San Diego, the border climbs to 4,180 feet into the California mountains. Weather there can include ice and snow, though east in El Centro, Calif., agents encounter 120-degree temperatures.

In Nogales, Ariz., the population of the Mexican city of the same name dwarfs the U.S. community. Rugged ridges stretch along the border which in some places is marked by a high fence built from old aircraft landing mats and in others by a single strand of barbed wire or by nothing at all.

In 180 particularly challenging miles from



Photos by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

LTG H Steven Blum, chief, National Guard Bureau, visits some of the roughly 6,000 National Guard troops deployed to the southwest border for Operation Jump Start in late November. Below: The 1,300 mile border between the U.S. and Mexico is so geographically varied that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to border security, according to Blum. This stretch of borderland between El Paso, Texas, and Deming, N.M. is rugged terrain. Other areas are pancake flat and desolate, while still others are heavily populated.

### Operational successes supported by the Guard

Data collection started June 15

Alien Apprehensions	25,857
Vehicle Seizures	378
Marijuana Seized (lbs)	120,270
Cocaine Seized (lbs)	2,475
Aliens Rescued	74
Currency	\$27,944

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection



Columbus, N.M., to El Paso, Texas, there are no ridges, no fence and no river. A single dirt track marks the international line across the high desert. On the U.S. side, a dearth of north-south roads forces Border Patrol agents and National Guard troops to travel dozens of miles just to get to their duty stations.

"It is 180 miles of nothingness," said Robert Gilbert, chief patrol agent for the Border Patrol's El Paso sector. "180 miles of vast, wide-open land 40 miles from anything."

From El Paso to the Gulf of Mexico, the Rio Grande runs sometimes wide, sometimes strong, always a natural barrier, but not always an effective one.

"Within El Paso, the biggest issue is that we don't have the Rio Grande as an obstacle," Gilbert said. "It's nothing but a trickle up here. It doesn't give us that level of deterrence that they have downriver."

"There are nine separate Border Patrol sectors, and four states are involved," he said.

"None of the sectors are identical or even similar in many cases, so each one has to be dealt with in its own manner."

Sectors have varied demographics, geography and personalities, he said.


Along some of the 1,300 miles, engineers can pour concrete fence foundations. In other areas, such as the Arizona desert, the sand is so fine that attempting to dig a foundation trench is a lost cause, and different construction techniques must be used.

"The barriers and the tactical infrastructure you need to be effective in open desert is quite different, and your reaction time is quite different than it is in an urban area such as El Paso," Blum said. "Each sector has to adapt its techniques and its procedures and balance its forces - its Border Patrol agents and National Guard members - to deliver the best capability."

"It's important for people - especially in the policy business - to realize the difficulties," Duehring said. "I come away from this with two major changes in my attitude. That is the amount of work that has been done, which you can quantify, and the other thing is the complexity of the challenge."

"We've got a lot of different terrain across the 1,951 miles of the border," said Buzz Jacobs, director of immigration security policy for the White House Homeland Security Council. "Where some people offer simple solutions to securing the border, it's actually more complex. It's going to require a lot of time, hard work and a national effort to get this border under control."

The National Guard has been leading that national effort by providing support to the Border Patrol in their mission to gain operational control of the entire border. National Guard members provide administrative support, act as the Border Patrol's eyes and ears, and fill a wide variety of other roles, though they are not directly involved in apprehending suspected illegal aliens.

"In the San Diego Sector alone, there have been over 2,500 additional apprehensions as a result of the extra eyes and ears," said Maj. Gen. William Wade, adjutant general of the California National Guard. 

## 'Fix Forward' recovers downed aircraft in Iraq

By Master Sgt. Charles A. Wheeler

36th Combat Aviation Brigade

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq - The Army calls it DART, for Downed Aircraft Recovery Team. Soldiers of Company B, 449th Aviation Service Battalion, called it a chance to do what they have been training for.

Before the official transfer of authority had even taken place, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter belonging to the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade had made a precautionary landing in southern Iraq. A recovery team needed to prepare it for movement to a forward operating base for repair. The 449th ASB, known as "Fix Forward," sprang into action.

The problem with the aircraft was low fluid pressure, which caused a warning light to activate. To prevent possible damage to the transmission, the pilots landed, secured the aircraft and, after coalition ground forces arrived to secure the area, they flew to their destination with another flight crew. Normally the aircraft would have been moved to a repair facility via ground transportation. But in this area of the world, security concerns make it preferable to move it through the air.

Thus the decision to sling load the aircraft was made. This consists of connecting the aircraft to a CH-47 Chinook with cables and letting the larger bird carry it to the base.

This situation called for field removal of the rotor blades to better facilitate the sling load operation, so team leader Staff Sgt. John Heresz, of Fort Worth, Texas, realized immediately that he needed serious muscle for this job. He called upon Soldiers who not only had the physical size required but something even more important - mission focus.

"When you are out in the field you have to know everyone is doing their job, you don't have time to check on them [constantly]," Heresz said. "Without a doubt, [mission focus] and attitude is very important when picking a team."

They had rehearsed this drill eight times before. Their actions, therefore, were both decisive and methodical. Pre-mission planning consisted of configuring a Unit Maintenance Aircraft Kit for a UH-60 one-hook recovery procedure. Pre-mission planning also included the DART process checklist, which is everything needed to complete the mission.

"Everything from exact location of where we are going to


extra tools we might need is on the list," Heresz said.

He and two other members of his team have completed the formal training course for this type of mission. They began sharing this knowledge with other Soldiers and conducting rehearsals during pre deployment training at Fort Hood. That training paid off on their first mission in Iraq.

"We removed the [rotor] blades and set up the sling load in under an hour," said Staff Sgt. Timothy Haynes of San Antonio.

After arriving at the forward base, they unhooked the line from the Black Hawk, removed the shackle and repacked all of their tools and equipment. Having been working around the clock, the Soldiers took a well-deserved rest. "From first notification to mission complete we were moving for 26 hours" said Sgt. Johnny Orneloz, also a San Antonio native.

After having time to think about the mission, would they want to do it again? Spc. Jack Johnston, of Hazen, Ark., said it best:

"I'd do it again everyday if I had to; That is why we are here." 

## From Page 1: PREDATOR

California is one of five states where Air Guard units will operate the unmanned aerial vehicles, McKinley has explained. The other states will be Arizona, New York, North Dakota and Texas.

### New roles, challenges

California Air Guard officials think that fighting wildfires would be a potential use for the Predator. "The Predator could provide valuable information to firefighters to put those fires out," Aimar said. "We only have a federal mission, currently."

He also said that communities should be assured that the Guard has no plans to use the Predator for law enforcement or to spy on the public.

California Air National Guard officials said they have pursued UAVs since their inception. The effort may have saved them. The most recent Base Realignment and Closure Act took away the mission of one of their oldest air wings - the 163rd Air Refueling Wing.

Now the wing has transitioned from flying aerial refueling missions in KC-135 Stratotankers to operating unmanned Predator.

"We really didn't know what the future of this wing would be," said Col. Albert Aimar, wing commander. The wing got the news about its new UAV mission in December 2005, and the first Airmen began training last January, he said.

"We had fairly short notice about when we were going to attend training for the pilots, sensor operators and mission coordinators," Aimar said.

Many Airmen are still training at Nellis and Creech Air Force bases in Nevada. They will also be the first Guardsmen to train others on the Predator system when the wing stands up its training operation over the next two years.

"It's a huge conversion, a major change," said Aimar who acknowledged that it led to some significant challenges in retention because a lot of the wing's Airmen retired or found work elsewhere.

"The folks that did stay on are doing fantastic," Aimar said. **Airman in transition**

One of them is Master Sgt. Mike Loyola who is now a Predator crew chief after completing three months of maintenance training at Creech AFB.

"We did lose a lot of good people in the transition; crew chiefs who went to the Reserves or got out," Loyola said. "I

## Predator facts

**Primary Function:** Armed reconnaissance, airborne surveillance and target acquisition

**Contractor:** General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

**Power Plant:** Rotax 914 four cylinder engine producing 101 horsepower

**Length:** 27 feet (8.22 meters)

**Height:** 6.9 feet (2.1 meters)

**Weight:** 1,130 pounds (512 kilograms) empty, maximum takeoff weight 2,250 pounds (1,020 kilograms)

**Wingspan:** 48.7 feet (14.8 meters)

**Speed:** Cruise speed around 84 mph (70 knots), up to 135 mph

**Range:** up to 400 nautical miles (454 miles)

**Ceiling:** up to 25,000 feet (7,620 meters)

**Fuel Capacity:** 665 pounds (100 gallons)

**Payload:** 450 pounds (204 kilograms)

**System Cost:** \$40 million (1997 dollars)

**Initial operational capability:** March 2005

was looking forward to working with [them]. That's the only bad thing - losing people. But we have new people coming in the door every day."

As a crew chief, Loyola will be responsible for the lion's share of the maintenance needs for the Predator. "We do the assembly and the disassembly. That's what a crew chief does, takes care of his whole aircraft," Loyola said.

Loyola also pointed out that you can pack up a Predator and fly with it, not in it. "That's the difference," he said.

Loyola is no stranger to transitions. He has been with the 163rd since 1985 and was a crew chief for F-4 Phantoms. He retrained when the wing switched to tankers.

"I can see what the future is going to bring. The tankers are phasing out, and these [aircraft] are taking their places," Loyola said.

### Training to train

"The Predator is an exciting new mission that has a future," said Senior Master Sgt. John Clayton, a full-time federal technician with 20 years of specialization in computer systems and radios. "I'm excited to be a part of it."

Clayton transferred from the 222nd Combat Communications Squadron, where he was a maintenance superintendent, to the 163rd.

When the wing's schoolhouse is running, he will instruct Airmen on the Predator's mobile ground communications system that commands a Predator to land and take off. It's called a Containerized Dual Control Segment. Aimar said the schoolhouse plan is to train Guard, active duty and Reserve personnel for a total force operation within the next two years. It is also hoped that the training will relieve the Air Force's current training burden.

Training operations will more than likely occur at the nearby Southern California Logistics Airport, it was explained. 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lorin T. Smith

## Keeping 'em flying

**Texas Army Guard Spc. Brandon Buchanan from Company D, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack) puts a panel back on an Apache in Iraq. The panel protects the helicopter's communication equipment. He's part of a team that maintains the battalion's 20 or so Apaches, which have to be completely torn down, inspected and put back together at regular intervals.**

## From Page 1: EQUIPMENT


tional Guard troops would support the U.S. Border Patrol as it recruits and trains more agents. The operation, expected to last two years, uses National Guard members for support missions, freeing up more Border Patrol agents for frontline law-enforcement missions.

"Look, half the problem with this mission was getting equipment, because most of it was overseas, ... and we didn't have that much back here to move around to you," Blum told the group, made up of volunteers from throughout the country.

The good news, he reported, is that there's now "a very real recognition" among Pentagon and congressional leaders of the need to reequip the Guard's worn-out equipment. And it's being backed up with desperately needed funding.

Congress is "absolutely adamant that the Guard has to get reequipped" and is watching the issue "like a hawk," Blum said.

"They know how important you are, day to day," he told the troops, pointing to the wide range of missions the National Guard is carrying out throughout the United States and overseas.

"The Guard is busy," he said. "We have 55,000 of us in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, [the] Sinai [and] the Horn of Africa, a couple of hundred of us down at Guantanamo [Bay, Cuba], 6,000 of us on the southwest border this morning." 

## Heads up!

### After school programs available

As it did during Operation Desert Storm, Boys & Girls Clubs of America is reaching out to provide a year of after school programs and services to children of National Guardsmen and Reservists free of charge. The B&G Clubs provided free services to 17,500 Guard and Reserve kids during Desert Storm. The offer will remain open for the coming year. For more information, go to [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org).

### TRICARE coverage expands

Tier 2 and Tier 3 coverage under the new TRICARE Re-


serve Select program begins Jan. 1 for members whose request form and premium was submitted or postmarked Sept. 26 through Nov. 25. The expansion of TRS allows all qualified members of the Selected Reserve to purchase health care coverage, with three tiers of premium sharing.

### New dental benefit has 'more teeth'

TRICARE dental benefits have changed to cover anesthesia services and institutional costs for dental treatment for beneficiaries with developmental, mental or physical disabilities, and children age 5 or under. For TRICARE to reimburse claims, beneficiaries must save their bills for medical care they receive after Oct. 17, 2006. The change in statute does not include the actual dental care coverage through the TRICARE Dental Pro-

gram and the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program. TRICARE will announce when beneficiaries may submit their bills for reimbursement after program officers complete the requirements.

### Disabled veterans business program

The Defense Department's Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program helps wounded veterans start their own businesses, get certification to bid on defense contracts as a prime or subcontractor, and network with other prime and subcontractors. The DoD drafted a five-year plan based on a congressional goal to have 3 percent of DoD contracts go to service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. 

# Medic saves drowning man

By Sgt. Jordan E. Werme  
Connecticut National Guard

When Sgt. Kristi J. Artigue joined the Connecticut Army National Guard the summer before her senior year of high school, it was a chance to broaden her experiences.

"I've always been a risk taker," said Artigue, 23, now a medic with the 141st Medical Company.

On Nov. 10, Artigue called upon the skills learned during her six years of National Guard service — including a recent deployment to Iraq — to help save the life of a man who may have drowned.

"I was passing by [Supersonic Car Wash, West Haven] after work when I saw my boyfriend's car," said Artigue. "I called him to say 'Hi', and he told me someone had had a seizure and fallen into the water."

Her first reaction: call 911. Artigue told her boyfriend that he should call for emergency services, but because of the urgent tone of his voice, she pulled out of rush-hour traffic in New Haven and rushed to the scene.

When Artigue arrived, she found a group of people hanging onto the shore and forming a "chain," trying to keep a man above the fast-moving water.

Tom, a middle-aged man, had suffered a seizure and fallen into the West River. Unable to

swim, he struggled to remain above the surface with the help of several civilians and two West Haven police officers. The chain was trying to hang on until the local fire department rescue crew could arrive and everything seemed to Artigue to be well under control.

Then the life-defining event happened. "He let loose," said Artigue, "and went under for one or two seconds. Long enough to know he wasn't going to be coming up again. And he was moving out farther from the shore toward the center of the river."

At that point, Artigue let her training take over. The nursing student and Iraq War veteran jumped into the freezing water and swam out about 10 feet to where Tom was struggling for air.

"It was too cold to talk," said Artigue, "but I grabbed his vest and tried to keep him above the water. He grabbed a hold of me and started to pull me down with him, but I was able to drag him by his vest to shore."

The human chain helped to pull both Artigue and Tom out of the water. On a cold November day, coming out of cold, moving water, communication was difficult, but Artigue was able to keep Tom talking and conscious until emergency crews arrived.

"(The man) suffered a seizure and fell from a bridge," said William E. Ciccocanti, who was the first officer at the scene of the incident.

"(Artigue) risked her own safety to save a stranger. She definitely did a good job and should be commended for that."

Tom was fishing from a bridge when he suffered the seizure, tumbled over the railing and fell more than seven feet into the water, just a few feet from the spot where the river is dammed. Had Artigue not jumped into the water when she did, there was a good chance that the victim would have been pulled under and into the dam, said Ciccocanti.

"This was the first time I've had to take it upon myself to take action," said Artigue. "In the military there's always someone there to help, but this time I wasn't sure anyone else there could have helped the way I could. Being in the military has given me the confidence to do things I wouldn't have as a civilian. It puts me a step above those without military training."

A future trauma nurse, Artigue plans to use her experiences in the Guard and in Iraq to save as many lives as possible.

"Since Iraq," she said, "I've learned to adapt and overcome. I saw what was happening and I had no option but to get involved because of not only my medical training, but also because of my personal responsibility."

"I will always appreciate my military experience. It's something I would never give up," said Artigue.



Photo by Sgt. Jordan E. Werme

Sgt. Kristi J. Artigue of the Connecticut National Guard jumped into frigid waters to pull a man to safety in November.



Photo by Master Sgt. Franklin Hayes

Master Sgt. Anthony Trenga has flown more than 10,000 hours during his 34-year career.

## Boomer hits 10,000 hours

Shows no sign of stopping after 30 years of refueling

By Maj. Ann Peru Knabe  
379th Air Expeditionary Wing

SOUTHWEST ASIA — Senior Master Sgt. Anthony Trenga will never forget what he was doing at 4:15 p.m. on Nov. 6. The in-flight refueling technician from Pittsburgh reached a significant milestone in his military career at this precise moment, hitting his 10,000 flying hours in a KC-135.

With more than 30 years flying under his belt, the deployed Guardsman's time in the military exceeds the average age of most Airmen on this base. His recent milestone stands out as a highlight in this 34-year career.

"Tony's the only person I've known who's ever flown 10,000 hours in a refueler," said Maj. Jason Luhn, a 171st Air Refueling Wing pilot. "I was just thrilled to be on the same crew with him when he hit this great accomplishment."

Trenga hit his 10,000 hour while flying with Luhn and aircraft commander Capt. Walter Ransom. All three Airmen are members of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, and fly as a cohesive crew with the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron in Southwest Asia.

"Guardsmen bring immense experience to the fight," said Lt. Col. Bryan Crutchfield, 340th EARS commander. "This flying experience benefits the squadron as a whole, and Tony's years of service and corporate knowledge demonstrate this perfectly."

## NCO awarded top equal opportunity advisor

By Tech. Sgt. Mike R. Smith  
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — South Carolina Army Guard Sgt. Maj. Swinton Hudson Jr. was cited as the Army National Guard Equal Opportunity Advisor of the Year (EOA) for his contributions in human relations and equal opportunity within the Army Guard and its communities.

Hudson is now a candidate for Army-wide EOA of the Year which was slated to be announced Dec. 14 at the Army Worldwide EOA conference in Orlando, Fla.

Hudson said there are a couple reasons why the job serves him well. "I'm dedicated to equal opportunity. I think everyone should have the opportunity to compete and succeed in life if they have the ability," he explained.

"I'm also a proactive person, not reactive," he added. "I like to nip things in the bud before they occur."

Hudson currently serves as an EOA at the South Carolina joint forces headquarters in Columbia. He started the job in August 2000 after more than 37 years in the Guard.

Hudson's equal opportunity knowledge is grounded in his previous assignments in the infantry, communications, computer programming, personnel, human resources and training. He has been a full-time Guard member since 1983.

Guard members should not have to worry about opportunity, Hudson said. Training programs keep everyone aware of rules, regulations and policies which negate a lot of discriminatory complaints.

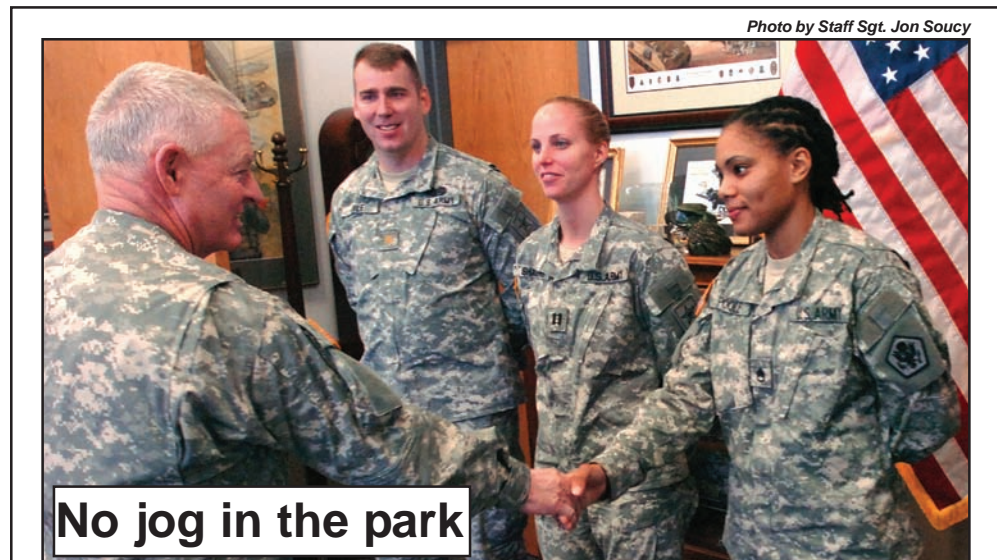


Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy

No jog in the park

Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, director, Army National Guard, left, presents a commander's coin to Staff Sgt. Erica Poole Dec. 4 as Maj. Charles Kyle and Capt. Regina Shaffer look on. The Soldiers were presented with coins in recognition of completing the 44th Annual JFK 50-mile Race in Maryland.



The setting sun lights up what was once detainee cells at Camp X-Ray, the first detention center at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay for enemy combatants captured in the Global War on Terrorism. In use for four months in 2002, Camp X-Ray was replaced by a more permanent facility better suited for the safe and humane care of detainees.



Above: A Coast Guard boat carrying LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, speeds across the waters of Guantanamo Bay during a recent visit. Right: A Soldier guards a cellblock inside Camp Five at the Joint Task Force Guantanamo detention center in November. Camp Five is one of six camps that comprise the detention center and is where the most noncompliant and hostile detainees are held.

“What we cannot forget here is that these are dangerous men, and our goal is to care for these dangerous men safely and humanely.”  
-Capt. Dan Byer, JTF-GTMO spokesman

The American flag flies on the Naval Base Guantanamo Bay side of the Northeast Gate, which is the only land-based entrance to the base.

All photos by Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy



# GUANTANAMO

## Where perception is not always reality

From Page 1:  
**GUANTANAMO**  
Guard 13 percent of joint task force

make forged documents so they can travel from country to country.”  
Other detainees are said to be money launderers, recruiters, Osama bin Laden bodyguards, bomb-makers and terrorist training camp instructors.  
“To counter those who’ve said we have the shepherds and carpet salesmen,” Leacock said, “Sorry. We’ve got the people who are supposed to be here.”  
Leacock said the National Guard has made a significant contribution to JTF-GTMO.  
“It is a phenomenal part of this operation,” he said.  
Members of all services rotate through JTF-GTMO, serving for as little as 90 days and for as long as two years. The Maryland Army National Guard currently fills most of the joint staff positions from deputy commander on down. Guard members serve as chaplains and provide external security for the detention facilities. Commanders could not recall a position inside or outside “the wire” surrounding the camps that has not at some point been filled by National Guard members since the camp was opened in 2002.  
“A lot of the Citizen-Soldiers that I came down here with are law enforcement and correctional officers [in their civilian careers],” Leacock said. “So they provide a great insight into how to do

detention operations; how to correctly escort people around the camps; how to correctly deal with the various issues. They’re doctors. They’re lawyers. They’re bankers. We have a large amount of experience and knowledge that we can bring to this operation above and beyond our normal military skills.”  
Many Guard members are veterans of previous mobilizations to Louisiana or Mississippi, Afghanistan or Iraq. “It shows the commitment and dedication of our troopers in the Guard,” Leacock said. The National Guard is serving on the border with Mexico, in the Horn of Africa, in the Sinai and in 40 other countries as well as contributing to the Guantanamo Bay mission.  
This is how JTF-GTMO commander Rear Adm. Harry Harris, Leacock, other senior task force officials and troopers of all ranks describe the detention operation.  
Although they come from 24 different countries, about 60 percent of the detainees are from Afghanistan, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. About 340 of the 770 detainees who have been held at GTMO have been released, a procedure that is unusual for any country during wartime. Officials anticipate the transfer or release of another 100 or so detainees and the long-term confinement of about 330. Some have been in custody since 2002.  
“The legal basis for detaining enemy combatants is a norm in international law that says a nation at war can [do so],” Harris said. “We did it in World War II. We did it in Korea. We did it in Vietnam. We get tied up when we are concerned about trying them or not. It’s not about trying enemy combatants. We are about trying in a court of law the relatively small percentage

of detainees that are alleged to have committed war crimes, but the rank and file detainee here is simply an enemy combatant. He has no right to trial during the conduct of an ongoing war.”  
Interrogators pursue interviews with about 125 detainees. Their snippets of information are cross-referenced against and pieced together with other intelligence from multiple sources to form a mosaic that helps field commanders abroad, homeland law enforcement authorities and allied security services fight the GWOT.  
The detainees have improved the world’s understanding of terrorist recruiting techniques, training, financing, planning, and command and control.  
“What’s available is information of a strategic quality,” said Capt. Dan Byer, a JTF-GTMO spokesman.  
Although the detainees do not have regular access to television, radio or newspapers, news

spreads quickly in the detention camps. Detainees were celebrating within minutes of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation in November, according to the detention facility’s deputy commander, who, along with some others interviewed for this report, is not being identified for security reasons.  
During recreation time, detainees play basketball or soccer or use exercise bicycles or treadmills. They read from a growing library of thousands of books in a dozen languages. They chose from meals that meet religious requirements and varied dietary needs. They are cared for by 100 medical personnel in a 20-bed facility similar to an American community or forward-deployed field hospital.  
“Quality-wise, it is exactly the same quality as troopers get,” a senior medical provider said. “Efficiency-wise, the detainees get more effective care.”  
A doctor offered one example: “I had a detainee that had a toothache at about 3 on a Sunday morning. By 8, he was seeing a dentist which is even quicker access than I’m used to back in the United States. They have 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week access to medical care.”  
Pre-existing medical conditions – often undiagnosed and un-

treated prior to detention – have been addressed. Detainees have been fitted with prostheses for battlefield injuries and given physical therapy. More than 300 operations have been performed, including hemorrhoid surgeries, hernia repairs and an appendectomy. Everyone over 50 was offered a colonoscopy to detect colon cancer. One detainee has had a cancerous tumor removed. Diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease and blood pressure issues have been addressed.  
The nature of the medical care has changed from treatment of the acute conditions many detainees arrived with to the preventive health measures familiar to many Americans. “Our average population is in the upper 30s, low 40s,” a doctor said. “They’ll sprain a knee of twist an ankle while playing soccer, or they’ll develop heartburn.”  
Life has steadily improved for both the detainees and the troopers who guard them.  
For four months in 2002, the detainees were held at austere Camp X-Ray which was originally built because of an influx of Haitian refugees in the 1990s. The camp has been closed for four years. “It’s literally overgrown with weeds and vines and grass,” Leacock said. Yet, pictures of Camp X-Ray still frequently accompany media coverage of JTF-GTMO.  
“You might want to broaden your mindset and open your eyes,” said Capt. John Henderson of the Maryland Guard’s 629th Military Intelligence Battalion who processes detainee mail, library materials and legal evidence. “Because whatever you’re hearing, which is the negative feedback about Guantanamo Bay, the joint task force and the detainees, there’s probably a 99.9 percent chance that it is false. Until you research it or until everything comes out, you really don’t know. Do not take those opinions that you hear off TV.”  
Detainees were moved across the naval sta-

tion to Camp Delta, which is actually a series of four camps. Camps 1 through 3 are maximum security. Camp 4 is a communal living facility where up to 10 detainees share quarters – a reward for complying with detention facility rules and cooperating with interrogators.  
The newest facilities are Camp 5 and Camp 6, both modeled on domestic U.S. penal institutions. These air-conditioned buildings improve detainees’ living conditions and allow for improved security.  
Noncompliant detainees wear orange uniforms, graduating to tan and to white as their cooperation improves. Comfort items vary depending on behavior.  
“Everybody starts off at compliant,” said the deputy commander of the joint detention group, a National Guard lieutenant colonel. “If you break a camp rule or fail to follow the guards’ instructions, then you become a noncompliant detainee, in which case you lose what are considered comfort items, like the thicker mattress, the tan uniform, extra shoes, playing cards. Regardless of whether they’re compliant or noncompliant, they still keep their Koran.”  
Arrows painted in every cell point east toward Mecca so that detainees know which way to face when they pray.  
“Rear Adm. Harris has stated that he considers this an al-Qaeda battalion,” the National Guard lieutenant colonel said. “They have their leaders: political, religious, military. They have their messengers. They have their memorizers. There are people who try to memorize guards’ names. They have their shock troops who will throw the cocktail of feces, urine, vomit, blood, whatever, in order to get moved to a different block in order to communicate, and they have the people who are the mouthpieces who will speak for the leaders. They’re very organized. They’ve been here a long time.”

## Patrolling the perimeter at Camp Delta

By Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy  
National Guard Bureau

U.S. NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba — A spinach-colored iguana saunters across a dull gray street as several Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers move past during a perimeter patrol. The scorching sun in mid-November beats down with an intensity that for many belies the fact that snow has



Soldiers assigned to E Company, 629th Military Intelligence Battalion patrol an area near the Joint Task Force-Guantanamo detention center at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay in November. The company’s main missions as part of the task force include external perimeter security as well as acting as a quick reaction force should something happen inside the detention center.

already fallen on their faraway homes.  
The land these Soldiers patrol is mountainous and rocky with brownish vegetation that bears only the slightest hint of green. Iguanas, a protected species, scamper throughout. The Soldiers talk quietly and casually among themselves about such off-duty activities as scuba diving and fishing.  
While the setting may seem like a place in the Middle East, these Soldiers are part of Joint Task Force-Guantanamo, the multi-service entity charged with the care and safety of more than 400 individuals detained at Camp Delta in the southeast corner of Cuba as part of the Global War on Terrorism.  
Serving at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay is an ideal assignment for many – regular duty hours, a mission that does not involve combat, and a Caribbean setting that features activities which many people would pay thousands of dollars for.  
All five services are represented in the task force, and for some it’s the first time they have interacted with those in other branches. “At first I wasn’t sure about the ranks and who to salute,” said one Guard Soldier who cannot be identified for security reasons.  
The servicemembers stationed here take their mission of the safe and humane care of those at the detention center very seriously. Many of them want to impress upon those who suggest otherwise that mistreating the detainees is not tolerated.  
Another thing servicemembers want to impress upon the public involves video footage of detainees at the former Camp X-Ray still being played on nightly newscasts. Camp X-Ray was a temporary facility on the base used for four months in 2002. It’s now overgrown with weeds.  
Regardless of outside sentiment and perception, many said they feel the mission at the detention center is important, and that makes it easier to perform, even under a scorching mid-November sun.



Improvised weapons made from materials issued to detainees.





2006

JANUARY

-California troops start the New Year by responding to flooding of the Russian River near Guerneville; among the responders, Black Hawk helicopters from California's 126th Medical Company

FEBRUARY

-Utah Spc. Shauna Rohbock takes a silver medal in women's bobsledding during the XX Winter Games in Turin, Italy; four other Guard Soldiers compete for the U.S.

MARCH

-Maryland takes charge of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company at JTF-Guantanamo

APRIL

-Soldiers from nine states come to the nation's capital to support Exercise Vital Guardian, the Guard's first critical capabilities exercise, at the District of Columbia National Guard Armory

MAY

-Former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery, a retired National Guard two-star general and author of the 1984 Montgomery GI Bill, dies at 85

-Texas and Czech Republic Army participate together for the first time in Clean Valley - a chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear exercise

JUNE

-Pennsylvania's 56th Striker Brigade Combat Team shows off its new combat vehicles at Fort Indiantown Gap, transforming into only Stryker brigade in Guard.

JULY

-Over 6,000 Guardsmen, mostly Army, on duty at the U.S. border with Mexico, exceeding the goal for Operation Jump Start set by the president

AUGUST

-Guard called to airports to augment security after U.K. terrorist plot foiled

-Command Sgt. Maj. David Hudson from Alaska takes over as senior enlisted advisor

SEPTEMBER

-National Guard Bureau stands up a new crisis communications center in Smyrna, Del., which makes it more efficient for different agencies to communicate during a crisis

OCTOBER

-ARNG experiences a net growth of 13,111 Soldiers by the end of fiscal year 2006

NOVEMBER

-Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Tim Walz from Minnesota elected to House of Representatives; believed to be the first sergeant major ever elected to Congress



Army director: We've done all that's been asked

By Staff Sgt. Jon Soucy  
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Army National Guard dealt with many challenges and changes during 2006. Units came home from overseas deployments as new units were called up, trained and sent to Iraq and Afghanistan. Operations continued in the Balkans region of Europe, and up to 6,000 Army National Guard Soldiers reported to southwest border to help the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol stop illegal immigrants during Operation Jump Start. Guard Soldiers also assisted with emergencies created by snow, floods and landslides throughout the United States at the same time that the Army Guard shifted its force structure to a modular design. Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard, offered his insights into the events of the past year and what 2007 may hold for that 350,000-Soldier force that observed its 370th anniversary in December.

ON GUARD: What were the significant accomplishments for the Army National Guard in 2006?

VAUGHN: There are lots of highlights. I guess you'd have to start with the success of our strength program because everything else is derived from that. I think the revolutionary change and effort by the states really highlights the care that our Soldiers have received from the communities and leadership in the states. You can't just throw sheer money at recruiting potential Soldiers and get them to join poor units. I think we're at an all-time high in terms of pride in our units. Our recruiting efforts are about having great recruiters. The GRAP program (the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program that provides bonuses to Guard Soldiers for recruiting new members) is second to none. It has put us in great shape for the future. I think that from a National Guard Bureau perspective, the ability to give the states something they desperately need and take advantage of the synergy we have with our traditional Soldiers and give them the incentive to recruit is a huge highlight.

Once again, we've deployed a lot of Soldiers this year, many into harm's way, and they have done a phenomenal job every place they've been, and the Guard has done everything it's been asked. All of this comes on the backs of the families and employers who have sacrificed enormously. It's incumbent on all of us to remember the heroes that we've got out there and also to acknowledge those who have made every sacrifice – those who have lost their lives or who have been severely injured.

One of the other significant things is that the Army Guard has adopted more changes at one time than it has at any other time in its history. The other piece is that we're balanc-



Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn

ing force structure and end strength to produce 100 percent-manned units. That has never been done in the history of the Guard.

ON GUARD: The Army Guard had its best recruiting year in 34 years. How was this accomplished, and what is the outlook for recruiting and retention?

VAUGHN: It's probably been the best ever. You can never compare any year to this year simply because the Guard has never been under this kind of pressure to produce these numbers. These numbers were produced for the most part from a radically different method of recruiting where we recruited unparalleled numbers of non-prior service Soldiers. We were stuck in a prior-service recruiting model, and we had to revolutionize and change it. I consider it the best of all time. We need to insure a level playing field back as far as bonuses are concerned. We need to not be treated as second-class citizens when it comes to bonuses. We just need a level playing field so that Guard folks don't get the idea that their service is less valuable. I think the bonus structure is somewhere in line with the other [Army components]. But the indications are that we are going to have as successful a year this year as we had last year. We're already over where we were last year, by a significant amount, in the first couple months of the fiscal year. This year the GRAP program has produced half of all the recruits that are coming in. It's just an enormous undertaking, and it has over 100,000 recruiter assistants.

ON GUARD: Operation Jump Start took the spotlight in 2006 as a homeland security mission after the Hurricane Katrina relief operations in 2005. How has the Army Guard contributed to Operation Jump Start?

VAUGHN: The Army National Guard pulls 90 percent of Operation Jump Start. But Jump Start differs from Katrina in that Katrina was a catastrophe that required immediate response. Jump Start was a gradual buildup, mostly by volunteers or by some units in an annual training status as a kind of sledgehammer approach to supporting the border states. It has not gotten the same luster as some of the other things we've been supporting. There are great Soldiers around the globe who are doing things for this nation; and not just those in Iraq and Afghanistan. I include the border mission as a normal operational set. It's a mission. With Katrina, I viewed it as most people would – as, hopefully, a once in a lifetime situation.

ON GUARD: What is the status of the Army Guard's transformation to a modular force that is more compatible with the active Army?

VAUGHN: Modular design is good for everybody. In fact, we all have the same kinds of capabilities; where our formations can be put into active duty formations and active duty formations can be plugged into our Guard formations. It is the right thing to do at the right time. Modularity for some of our organizations will take a little longer simply because it's going to take longer to get the necessary equipment in all the right places due to the demands of the war right now. But, the fact that we will not be uniquely equipped, have a high level of modernization and a plan to make everybody look the same is really a victory for the Army.

ON GUARD: Where is the Army National Guard as the result of the Base Realignment and Closure Act? What changes will 2007 bring?

VAUGHN: The BRAC announcements for the Army Guard weren't nearly as divisive as they were for the Air Guard. Anytime that you move out of armories that have been in communities for many, many years, it's always emotional. Many of our armories were built during World War II and in the late '40s and early '50s, and the demographics have changed. So there are many places within the various states where the adjutants general have really moved their priorities, and those are hard decisions to move out of communities that have supported you for a number of years but really don't have the capacity anymore to support you like they did. Overall, BRAC was beneficial to the Army Guard. The armories and facilities are really owned by the states, and what this did was to give the opportunity to build some new facilities in places where they were required and at the same time give the states a way to reposition themselves.



## Air director: We've reestablished great credibility

By Staff Sgt. Mike R. Smith  
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air National Guard spent 2006 fighting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), protecting the homeland, planning and developing new missions, resetting its structure and more. A change in leadership also occurred as Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley succeeded Lt. Gen. Daniel James III as the 12th ANG director in June. As the year was drawing down, McKinley offered his perspective about the ANG's accomplishments of the past year and the challenges in next.

### ON GUARD: What have been the significant accomplishments for the ANG in 2006?

**McKINLEY:** 2006 was a year of transition for us. We have spent the last five and a half months transitioning between Gen. James' team and ours. That was exciting. It's gone smoothly. We've implemented some new organizational changes and constructs, which will enable us to reconnect with our field units better; and we are reconnecting with the adjutants general after kind of a rough and rocky Base Realignment and Closure process that preceded my tenure; and we've reestablished great credibility with the Air Force. That's been my focus since I came on the scene in June. And we're working Total Force Integration among other things on our plate right now.

### ON GUARD: You have said the ANG is transforming to meet its dual roles in homeland defense and fighting the GWOT. What has been the main focus of this transformation?

**McKINLEY:** We provide trained and equipped forces for the Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) model that the Air Force employs in the GWOT. We've been doing that for a long time – over a decade. We've been positioning our units to be ready to support our Air Force overseas in the "away game," and at the same time, we've been maintaining the [air] sovereignty alert sites in the U.S. – around the clock. We've been doing that since 1957, by the way. But after 9/11 we increased our presence domestically to protect critical infrastructure. So, we're providing operations and support personnel in the GWOT overseas and we're protecting Americans at home through our AEF model.

### ON GUARD: What is the ANG's progress regarding Total Force Integration? What challenges lie ahead?

**McKINLEY:** This is an evolutionary process. It began with something called "Future Total Force." Secretary of the Air Force Wynne said "It's no longer the future. It's now." So we changed the name to Total Force Initiatives.



Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley

We're into phase three. We are working closely with the adjutants general to try to make sure that we reset our ANG force structure for the 21st century. There will be other phases. It's a continuation of a process by which we reset the Guard to adapt to the future missions that will present themselves to the Air Force while we still preserve our unit culture as a community-based force. We are training upwards of 20,000 people in new mission subsets. [It's] all part of the BRAC process, the Quadrennial Defense Review and the Total Force Initiatives we set, but it's moving and moving well.

### ON GUARD: Operation Jump Start took the spotlight in 2006 as a homeland security operation. How did the ANG contribute?

**McKINLEY:** The ANG can never forget its Title 32, homeland mission in support of the governors. In this particular case, OJS was a mission that was approved by the president. The ANG supplied up to 1,500 Airmen. They integrated well with the Army National Guard. And as we have done for the past 15 to 20 years, the ANG is joining forces in a joint way with the Army. So OJS, in my estimation, has been a great success. Chief Blum has set a proper template, which the Army and the Air play jointly, and we are very appreciative to have that role in homeland defense.

### ON GUARD: The secretary of the Air Force has announced the new Cyber Command under the 8th Air Force. What role will the ANG play?

**McKINLEY:** The ANG plays a role in all of our Air Force missions. Secretary Wynne and Gen. Mosley declared that the cyber domain is a domain that the Air Force should pay attention to. Future enemies will try to exploit us there. We are vulnerable in this area. There-

fore, it's appropriate that ANG members who work in the civilian computer industry and other fields be closely aligned with 8th Air Force and those nodes that allow it to protect American interests in the cyber domains. This is an exciting new area for all of us, and we will grow and mature in it with our Air Force leading the way. I see this as a very interesting new sunrise mission for ANG members to participate in.

### ON GUARD: What is the status of the ANG Predator mission?

**McKINLEY:** In the TFI we have four states identified for Predator operations. The first state to come on line is California, at March Air Force Base, Calif. We will have Predator units in North Dakota, Texas, Arizona and New York. I also look forward to the future when some of our units will be flying the Global Hawk, which is a new unmanned vehicle that will have longer range and more capabilities. But this is an emerging mission that we saw on the horizon five to 10 years ago. Now, the timing is right as we transition some of our Guard units from manned to unmanned platforms. From the feedback I've been getting from the field, the units are very excited to be part of this new mission, and we are already contributing in the GWOT overseas with units supporting orbits with the Predator.

### ON GUARD: So Guard members are now actually operating the Predator overseas?

**McKINLEY:** Our troops actually operate from stateside locations. But they fly the Predators that are in orbits overseas. That's the new technology. That's the way it's done. This is a good mission for the ANG in that our traditional members can stay home and still contribute to GWOT.

### ON GUARD: Where is the ANG now as the result of BRAC? What changes will 2007 bring?

**McKINLEY:** The BRAC implementations will start in 2008. Some units have already accelerated some of the movements of their aircraft. Some members have already begun their retraining. But BRAC will be implemented from 2008 to 2103. While it was a very rough and rocky start, we believe that, with our reset of the ANG force structure and our rebalancing of the force structure across weapons systems, we will be able to implement the BRAC law, to continue to provide community-based missions and support in our states and territories, and that, as we migrate into new missions, our people will find them satisfying, relevant and important to our nation.



## 2006

### JANUARY

-Air Guard Maj. Gen. Terry Scherling becomes the first woman director of the National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff

### FEBRUARY

-New York's 109th Airlift Wing announces record-breaking airlifts for Antarctica with the return of its ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules from Operation Deep Freeze  
-Two Virginia pilots become first to fly a two-plane sortie of the F-22A Raptor

### MARCH

-Alaska Airmen save a state trooper after his personal Piper Cub aircraft crashes 90 miles north of Dillingham

### APRIL

-Airmen from several states take part in Exercise Vital Guardian, the Guard's first critical capabilities exercise, held at the District of Columbia National Guard Armory

### MAY

-Director Lt. Gen. Craig McKinley confirmed by U.S. Senate  
-12 Colorado Airmen travel to Jordan for three weeks for the first-ever Falcon Air Meet, an F-16 competition

### JUNE

-Airmen from Pennsylvania respond to widespread flooding in the state

### JULY

-Medical community takes part in Readiness Frontiers in Utah, its premier training, discussion and networking event  
-Maryland Airmen help repatriate U.S. citizens fleeing the fighting in Lebanon by seeing to the needs of evacuees arriving at airport

### AUGUST

-The California's 129th Rescue Wing transports critically injured children in Mexico back to the U.S. after a car accident

-Readiness Center renamed to Conaway Hall at Andrews Air Force Base

### SEPTEMBER

-The best flight safety year in history announced with Class A mishaps below the previous record low by nearly one-half  
-KC-135 turns 50; Guard flies 251 of 530 in Air Force inventory

### OCTOBER

-Air Force begins a year-long celebration of its 60th birthday when it dedicates its memorial in Arlington

### NOVEMBER

-Washington Airmen make up a group of about 250 National Guard that support civil authorities after torrential rains caused severe flooding there



**Sgt. 1st Class  
Chad M. Stephens**

Company A, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, 30th Infantry Brigade, North Carolina

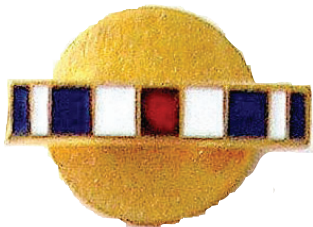
On June 24, 2004, in Baqubah, Iraq, Stephens led his platoon in heavy contact with enemy attempting to control the city. After fighting through two ambushes, he led his platoon to a casualty collection point to treat the wounded. To evacuate the gunner of his wingman, he crossed 50 meters in open terrain while small arms impacted all around him as he ran. He mounted the turret and pulled his Soldier out of the hatch, then lowered him to the waiting medic as rounds impacted the vehicle and other Soldiers drove to safety. He returned to his vehicle under continuing fire, reorganized the platoon, and led the move to a base, fighting on as his Bradley was hit by a rocket propelled grenade and his gunner was severely wounded.



**◆ Sgt. Russell L. Collier**

Battery A, 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery, Arkansas

Collier volunteered for duty in Iraq and was assigned as a medic to the 103rd Field Artillery Brigade, Rhode Island Army Guard. His citation read: "For gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States on Oct. 30, 2004, in the vicinity of Taji, Iraq. With his squad leader seriously wounded, Collier advanced under enemy fire in order to render aid. His unselfish actions under direct enemy fire led to his own mortal wounds. By his outstanding bravery and courage, he served to inspire all who observed him and upheld the highest traditions of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and the United States Army." In addition to his SSM, Collier also was awarded a posthumous Purple Heart.



**◆ Sgt. Robert S. Pugh**

Company A, 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, Mississippi

On March 2, March 2005, Pugh and another Soldier were severely wounded by an IED in Iraq. Pugh, the company medic, directed the treatment for his comrade, saving his life while Pugh died of his injuries.



**Tech. Sgt. Kevin Whalen**

Tactical Air Control Party, 116th Air Support Operations Squadron, Washington

On July 19, 2003, Whalen, while attached to the Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 344, was involved in a fire fight with Taliban and al Qaida forces in the Gayan Valley. The lead vehicle of a convoy, comprised of Afghan Military Forces, was struck by small arms fire, critically wounding one soldier and forcing the convoy to stall in the kill zone. Whalen immediately returned fire with his automatic grenade launcher. He elected to remain on the weapon system to allow his team members and the Afghan troops to secure covered positions. He continued to engage enemy positions until his weapon malfunctioned due to hits from the enemy. He received a wound to his left arm and abdomen while repairing his weapon. He recovered his radio and requested immediate close air support while attempting to stop his own bleeding. Two Marine Corps Harrier jets came to the team's defense. However, the Afghan troops had now reached the attackers and were in close proximity. Although wounded and fighting off the effects of oncoming shock, he retained the presence of mind to restrict the Harriers to "guns only" while engaging fortified enemy positions along the ridgeline. The team was able to recover the disabled vehicle and exit the kill zone.



**◆ Staff Sgt.  
Michael J. McMullen**

243rd Engineer Company, Maryland

While serving as a M915 Heavy Wheeled Vehicle Operator in Iraq Dec. 24, 2005, he responded to an IED attack and saved the life of Sgt. (Randal) Divil by moving him away from a burning vehicle, extinguishing the flames on his body and protecting him when a second IED went off. McMullen received wounds which ultimately cost him his life.

## BRAVERY HONORED 18 GUARD MEMBERS HAVE RECEIVED THE SILVER STAR IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

*By John Listman*

National Guard Bureau

Since the Revolutionary War, when General George Washington developed the Purple Heart Badge to honor combat heroism, the American military has adopted numerous decorations to recognize those who distinguish themselves in combat situations from what is considered routine or expected performance.

During the Civil War, Congress, in order to recognize the highest extent of combat heroism an individual can achieve, usually referred to as "above and beyond the call of duty," authorized the Medal of Honor (MOH). The MOH remained the only official decoration available for heroism in the American military until the United States entered World War I. To recognize heroism not reaching the level required for the MOH, the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) was created by Congress in 1918.

Soon after the first American forces entered combat in the spring of 1918, the Army leadership realized that many men performed acts of bravery under fire not rising to the standards set for the MOH or DSC. As had been done in past wars, the only way available to recognize these men was to note their gallantry as a citation published in orders, what the British often refer to as being "mentioned in dispatches". But this was found to be unsatisfactory as it left no visible way to identify the demonstrated courage of the man.

To remedy this situation, Congress authorized the Army July 9, 1918, to issue to those men qualified for a lesser decoration for valor a 3/16-inch, five-pointed, Silver Star to be affixed to the campaign ribbon. During the war, out of two million Soldiers serving in France, 94 MOHs and 482 DSCs were awarded along with more than 20,000 Silver Star pins.

In 1932 Congress revisited the military awards system and made several changes. The Silver Star Medal (SSM) was designed to replace the former pin award. The new SSM consisted of a five-pointed bronze star medal suspended on a red, white and blue ribbon. On the face it contains in its center a silver star of the same size as those available during the war. On the reverse it is inscribed "For Gallantry in Action."

Thousands of SSMs were awarded starting with World War II, through the Korean, Vietnam, and first Gulf War. Since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan in 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003, at least 18 Guard members have earned the medal.

Sixteen Army Guard and two Air Guard personnel have thus far been awarded the Silver Star, the highest decoration presented to any Guard member in OEF/OIF. These are their stories, taken from their official citations, after action reports and press accounts. The units cited with the name are the members' Guard unit at the time of mobilization or voluntary entry on active duty, not necessarily the unit they were with when they earned the medal.

We are proud to honor these Guard members for their dedicated service to their states and nation. And we are especially mindful that four of these Guardsmen died in the course of earning this award. Their names are highlighted with a diamond (◆).

# HISTORY



## Sgts. 1st Class Joshua D. Betten and Andrew Lewis

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Florida

On March 5, 2004, Lewis and Betten departed their fire base on the border of Afghanistan for a planned six-day, two man sniper/observer mission ... to provide early-warning to the base and interdict enemy infiltration. The two men prepared a night position about 1,600 meters from the base. Soon they were engaged by a large force of the enemy moving on their position. Lewis fired a claymore mine set to cover their position, eliminating one attacker and then shot a second one with his pistol.



Lewis

Simultaneously, Betten opened fire on other enemy soldiers, putting three down. The team was quickly under fire from two sides and they were forced to cover each other as one reloaded and the other one fired. At one point enemy soldiers were so close that Lewis threw three grenades, finally breaking up the direct attack, though they remained under constant rifle fire. Lewis was in constant communication with their base. They were told it would be 10 minutes before a relief force could arrive.

When the two Soldiers tried to move to a less exposed position, they came under machine gun fire from two directions. After expending all their rifle ammunition and with only their pistols, the two men slid about 500 meters down a canyon cliff where they found cover while waiting for the relief force composed of other Special Forces members and Afghan soldiers.



Betten

Once rescued, their report made it obvious that a large (at least 30-man) enemy force was massing to attack the base. But the quick and determined actions of these two Soldiers gave enough advanced warning that the base was spared an attack. Both men defended not only each other, but all of the men in the base by their quick and effective actions, and each was awarded the SSM for their bravery and quick response in the face of an overwhelming enemy assault.



## Spc. Richard A. Ghent

1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, New Hampshire

While assigned as Humvee gunner in Company B, 1st Battalion, 104th Cavalry (Pennsylvania National Guard), Ghent's came under enemy attack with several grenades killing one crewman and wounding another along with Ghent, who was thrown from the vehicle. At first stunned, he quickly regained his senses and charged the enemy across open ground, driving them back. He then held his ground, expending all his ammunition before relieved. Besides receiving the SSM, Ghent was also awarded a Purple Heart for his wounds.

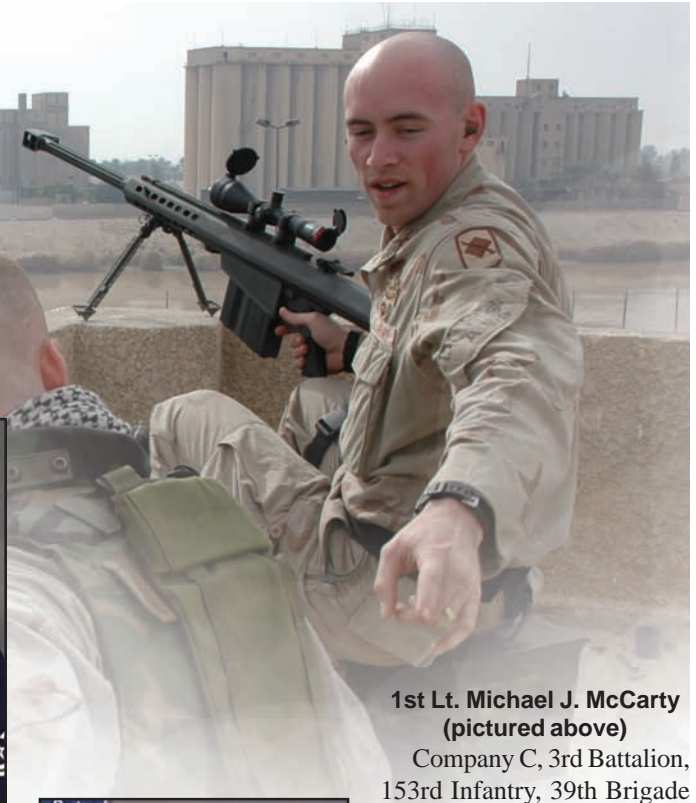


## Tech. Sgt. Keary J. Miller

123rd Special Tactics Squadron, Kentucky

On March 4, 2002, near Marzak, Afghanistan, Miller was the Air Force combat search and rescue team leader assigned to a force tasked to recover two servicemen evading capture in austere terrain occupied by al Qaida and Taliban forces. Shortly before landing, his helicopter received rocket-propelled grenade and small arms fire, severely disabling the aircraft, causing it to crash land. Miller and the remainder of the assault force formed a hasty defense and immediately suffered four fatalities and five critical casualties. Despite intense enemy fire, he moved throughout the battlefield, crossing open areas on numerous occasions, in order to assess and care for the wounded. As the battle drew on, he removed ammunition from the deceased and, through some of the day's heaviest incoming fire, distributed it among the survivors. Shortly thereafter another attack erupted, killing one pararescueman and compromising the casualty collection point. Miller braved the barrage of fire in order to move the wounded to better cover. His intrepidity and skill led to the successful delivery of 10 gravely wounded men to life-saving medical treatment and to the recovery of seven servicemen killed in action.

*Note: one of the most recent additions to the Heritage Painting Series sponsored by National Guard Bureau features Sergeant Miller in the above-cited action.*



## 1st Lt. Michael J. McCarty (pictured above)

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry, 39th Brigade Combat Team, Arkansas

On Nov. 20, 2004, McCarty led his platoon of 26 soldiers during an attack by a numerically superior force against the Adhamiyahh Iraqi Police Station. Facing rocket propelled grenades, medium machine guns and small arms fire, he continually "uncovered" himself in order to acquire targets and direct fire, at one point charging and destroying an enemy machine gun team alone. His actions are responsible for saving American lives, destroying enemy forces, and preventing the capture of an Iraqi police station.

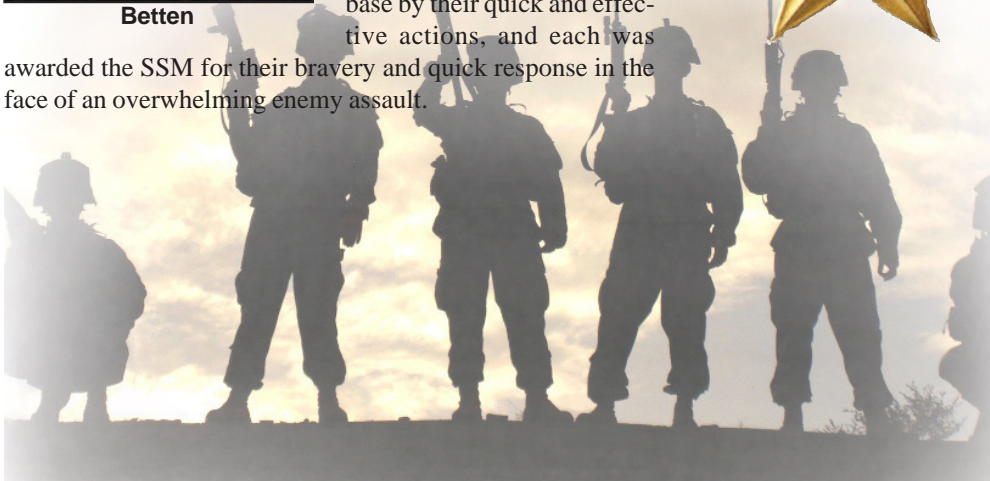
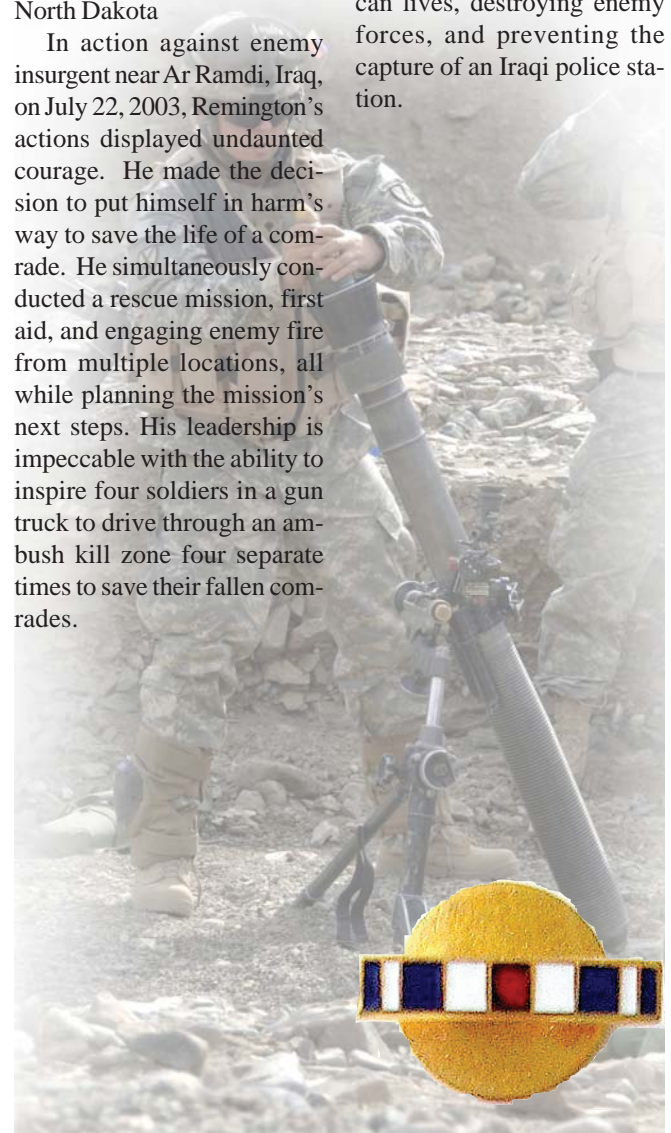


## 1st Sgt.

## Kevin K. Remington

957th Multi-Role Bridge Company, 142nd Combat Heavy Engineer Battalion, North Dakota

In action against enemy insurgent near Ar Ramdi, Iraq, on July 22, 2003, Remington's actions displayed undaunted courage. He made the decision to put himself in harm's way to save the life of a comrade. He simultaneously conducted a rescue mission, first aid, and engaging enemy fire from multiple locations, all while planning the mission's next steps. His leadership is impeccable with the ability to inspire four soldiers in a gun truck to drive through an ambush kill zone four separate times to save their fallen comrades.



## HISTORY

### Staff Sgt. Timothy F. Nein, Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester and Spc. Jason L. Mike

617th Military Police Company, Kentucky

These three were involved in the same action on March 20, 2005, while a three-vehicle, squad-sized, element of their company was escorting a convoy of 30 trucks driven by civilian contractors along Alternate Supply Route Detroit, Iraq. The convoy was attacked by 50 enemy fighters, using rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and small arms. Most of the enemy were concealed in an irrigation ditch and orchard, making them difficult to engage. The initial attack disabled the lead truck of the convoy, blocking the rest in the kill zone. Nein had members of his squad move forward to out-flank them on the right side. Hester ordered her Humvee gunner to place covering fire on the enemy positions.



Nein

Hester then moved her vehicle to a flanking position and dismounted, ordering her gunner to continue his fire into the orchard, adding hers to the battle. Using her M4 carbine with an attached grenade launcher, she fired grenades into the field. While this was happening, Nein, noting an insurgent behind a 10-foot embankment, threw a grenade, killing him. He then moved forward to the right side of the berm, followed by Hester. Nein quickly engaged and eliminated five enemy fighters. As they proceeded along the embankment, they both continued to take out insurgents, with Hester killing three. Once they reached the end of the trench, Nein called a cease fire.



Hester

Mike, squad medic, was in the third military police Humvee when the action started. When the vehicle stopped, it was caught in a heavy field of fire. Mike and his two companions quickly dismounted and began returning fire. Almost immediately both of his comrades were wounded. Mike moved to the injured and dragged them to cover under their truck. So much incoming fire was impacting the area that Mike then grabbed both an M249 light machine gun and M4 rifle. By alternating fires from each weapon he engaged enemy forces on both his right and left sides. Once the threat was eliminated, he immediately began treating the wounded Soldiers. Two had life-threatening injuries. He stabilized each and prepared them for evacuation. In total, this action resulted in 27 enemy fighters killed and seven captured (six of them wounded). While the squad suffered at least four serious casualties, none died from their wounds.



Mike

*Note: Hester is the first woman since World War II awarded the Silver Star and the first ever to receive the medal for direct actions against an enemy force. A Heritage Series painting of this action and a special poster honoring her are currently being produced by National Guard Bureau.*



### Spc. Brian M. Sheetz

Company C, 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania

On Feb. 27, 2006, Sheetz was a loader aboard an Abrams tank of the 103rd Armor patrolling Main Supply Route Michigan, nicknamed "IED Alley." During an ambush, an enemy grenade landed inside his tank. Sheetz grabbed it and threw it out of the hatch just as it detonated, sending shrapnel into his face and hand. His valorous action was instrumental in saving the lives of three fellow crewmembers. Besides the SSM, Sheetz was awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds.



### ◆Lt. Col.

### Michael E. McLaughlin

Brigade Effects Coordinator, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania

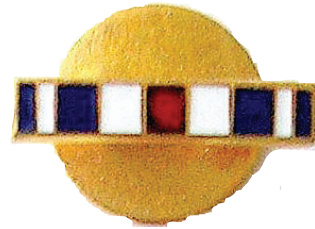
On Jan. 5, 2006, while serving in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, McLaughlin was on a mission with a team to enlist recruits for the Iraqi police force. While coordinating his team's efforts with the local people, a suicide bomber infiltrated the crowd of 300 civilians and detonated his bomb. It killed and wounded many, including McLaughlin and others from his team. When asked about his injury, McLaughlin directed treatment to his fellow Soldiers, helping to save their lives. He succumbed shortly thereafter to his wounds. He was awarded both a posthumous SSM and Purple Heart. McLaughlin is the highest-ranking Guardsman killed in Iraq.



### Spc. Gerrit Kobes

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry, Washington

Kobes, a medic serving with the 160th Infantry, California National Guard, assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division was on an escort mission to ferry Iraqi soldiers to Fallujah for an upcoming operation. On Nov. 2, 2004, their convoy was attacked by insurgents firing rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. A truck was quickly disabled, causing five Iraqi soldiers serious wounds. With the convoy blocked and enemy fire coming from several locations, Kobes, disregarding his personal safety, moved through the convoy on foot and reached the wounded men. Under covering fire from Marines trying to secure the site, Kobes began medical treatments. By the time the convoy began moving again, he had stabilized the wounded, permitting their evacuation to further medical care. One Iraqi soldier died of his wounds, but four others were saved by the dedicated actions of Kobes.



### Sgt. Matthew Zedwick

957th Multi-Role Bridge Company, 142nd Combat Heavy Engineer Battalion, North Dakota

In June 2004, Zedwick was the driver of a Humvee when an IED exploded near Taji, Iraq, which took the life of its gunner and seriously wounded his truck commander. Zedwick returned enemy fire during the ensuing firefight, after pulling his commander to safety. He returned to the vehicle to check on the condition of his gunner, Spc. Eric McKinley. Unable to save him, he then retrieved sensitive items from the vehicle and returned to his commander, where he used his body to shield him. He continued to return fire until a medivac helicopter reached the scene.



## NEW MUSEUM SHOWCASES SSM RECIPIENTS

A new exhibit on the Guard's role in OEF/OIF was opened in December in the Museum of the National Guard (part of the National Guard Association) in Washington. Among its displays include a touch screen system featuring a photograph and citation of each Guard Airman or Soldier awarded the SSM, or higher decoration, if any are awarded. The format of the exhibit allows the easy addition of any future heroes as they are identified. Any names of Guard SSM recipients from OEF/OIF not included here should be forwarded to the History Office at NGB. They will be shared with the museum to help keep its exhibit up to date.

# Stressful firing

## Top shooters battle it out at 'pinnacle' of Guard's marksmanship competition

### Texas year's big winner

By Capt. Curtis McElroy and 2nd Lt. Doug Woodruff

National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit  
NORTHLITTLE ROCK, Ark. — The National Guard Marksmanship Training Unit (NGMTU) hosted over 300 competitors at the 36th Annual Winston P. Wilson (WPW) Rifle and Pistol Championships at Camp Joseph T. Robinson during the November competition.

The competition is geared to bring out the most advanced marksmanship skills obtained through state and regional level training programs. If winning the WPW is a test of a state's marksmanship program, then Texas has rea-

son to boast. The Texans were this year's big winner. They placed first in the All States Trophy Championship and dominated most of the individual and team competitions.

"Our success stems from the amount of training prior to the WPW matches," said Chief Warrant Officer Rick Tanner, Texas's state marksmanship coordinator. "Our general staff provides us all of the necessary tools, funding, and training time to make us successful."

Designed to promote advanced marksmanship training and establish a competitive marksmanship venue for the National Guard, this year's competition attracted Soldiers and Airmen from 35 states and territories.

"The matches are combat-oriented, but at the same time, they include some precision slow fire shooting. So these matches are different from your standard bullseye shooting because of the combat orientation, physical intensity [shoot and move], and utilization of standard issued weapon systems," said Staff Sgt. Micah March, a double-distinguished marksman, veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and instructor for the NGMTU's Squad Designated Marksman course.

"Shooters are able to enroll in our schools to better know how to operate and maintain all types of weapon systems, and some of the



Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott

Arkansas' 77th Aviation Brigade provided the aviation assets to kick off the Combined Arms Team match at the 2006 Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Competition. Teams were given orders and navigated to a designated pickup zone. Upon dismounting the helicopter, they made their way through obstacles before engaging targets on the range, testing their marksmanship and physical skills under simulated combat conditions.

best shooters are offered a chance to try out for the All Guard team and invited back as instructors for some of our advanced marksmanship courses," said March.

These matches aren't for beginners, but experienced teams willing to practice and prepare, said Master Sgt. Martin Keller, NGMTU Operations NCO-in-charge. This is the pinnacle of National Guard marksmanship competition, he said.

"The Winston P. Wilson Matches are, for the most part, a chance for younger shooters to learn from more experienced," said March, who has been competitively shooting for over a decade and is a current member of the All Guard team. "These skills cannot be obtained

from reading a training manual or a field manual, but through realistic combative shooting events."

The WPW gives individuals an opportunity to test marksmanship skills and weapon systems in a battle-focused training environment. All-Guard team member, Staff Sgt. Nathan Watters of the Texas Air National Guard, said this type of competition "enhances Soldier's and Airmen's ability to survive on the battlefield by allowing them to have engagement skills under a high competitive stress that leaves no margin of error."

"For these disciplines, we have shoot and move matches, simulated barricades, prone and kneeling positions," said Watters.



Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott

A competitor squeezes off some rounds.

# Relatives support OIF together at Balad Air Base

By Senior Airman Josh Moshier

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Servicemembers often cite missing family as one of the main hardships of deployments.

For at least three sets of family members at Balad Air Base, missing family might not be quite as difficult for the duration of



Photo by Maj. Richard Sater

From left: Senior Airman Jill Sisson, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron weapons loader; Senior Master Sgt. Dain Sisson, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Group quality assurance inspector; and Staff Sgt. Justin Sisson, 332nd EAMXS crew chief, are deployed to Balad Air Base together from Joe Foss Field, Sioux Falls, S.D., and represent some of the family units there. Senior Master Sgt. Sisson is Staff Sergeant and Airman Sissons' father.

this Air Expeditionary Force rotation.

Staff Sgt. Coy Hixson, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group postal worker, deployed here in October from Royal Air Force Alconbury, England. That meant he would reunite with his mother, Angella Smith, a Kellogg, Brown & Root tool-room attendant, who's been deployed here since September 2004.

"I was very excited," Hixson said. "I volunteered for this assignment to be close to my mother. It had been five or six months since I'd last seen her. I got here on a Thursday, and we met up that Sunday."

Despite some initial apprehension, Smith was equally excited.

"It's been motivational for me," she said. "When he was about to come, I was scared for him. But when I saw him, I was happy he was here. Now we watch out for each other."

Having his mother close by means having someone to share the Iraq experience with, Hixson said.

"It doesn't matter if I have a bad day or a good day at work," he said. "I have a shoulder to lean on or someone to be happy with me."

According to both Hixson and Smith, the best part of each day is when they get together for lunch and talk about family. Spending Thanksgiving together was an extra special treat for the two.

"This is the first Thanksgiving we've spent together in six years," Smith said. "Not too many mommas get to have Thanksgiving with their son in a war zone. I wouldn't miss it."

Lt. Col. Russ Limke, 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron operations officer, and his son, Senior Airman Andrew Limke,

332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, are not only deployed together as Air National Guardsmen from Joe Foss Field, Sioux Falls, S.D., but they also work together. Airman Limke is responsible for the takeoff and recovery of F-16s, which means he occasionally has the privilege of getting his father off the ground or taxiing him after a completed mission.

"I can't be more proud of my son for enlisting," said Colonel Limke. "He turned out to be a damn fine F-16 crew chief. I'll take his jet into combat any day."

According to Colonel Limke, because of the busy schedules their squadrons operate under, time spent together is limited.

FINDING A  
**FAMILY READINESS COORDINATOR**  
NEAR YOU  
IS JUST A FEW CLICKS AWAY

The National Guard Family Program office in each state's joint force headquarters (JFHQ) is designed to assist family members of all service members, regardless of the military organization or status, with information and referrals. Family program offices in the 54 states and territories, wing family program coordinators and a host of other resources for families can be found at:

[www.guardfamily.org](http://www.guardfamily.org)

To get to this searchable site,  
-click the family member icon  
-then click on the green "Local Community Resource Finder" on the right

# Nevada tightens border crossing in Turkmenistan

## State Partnership effort to stem flow of narcotics

By Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka  
Nevada National Guard

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan — Mild daytime temperatures with cool nights and seasonal rains combined to create an agricultural bumper crop this autumn from the western coast of the Caspian Sea into Central Asia. There is a surplus of pomegranates in Turkmenistan, an excess of melons in Kazakhstan and a record tonnage of pears in Iran.

Another crop that will be in abundance is poppies in Afghanistan, to the vexation of counterdrug officials in the United States and Central Asia. The perfect fall weather has led to an all-time high in poppy production, with this year's total expected to top 6,100 tons. Poppies are the primary ingredient in the production of opiate drugs including heroin.

In an ongoing effort to curb the flow of opium and other narcotics in and out of its country, the government of Turkmenistan and the Nevada National Guard are working in conjunction to build seven state-of-the-art border crossing facilities. The first border crossing was completed on Nov. 11 at Altyn Asyr near Iran, with the completion of the second crossing expected within a few months at the Turkmenistan/Afghanistan border.

The Nevada National Guard and Turkmenistan are cooperating on this long-term project under the auspice of the National Guard's State Partnership Program with funding from the military's U.S. Central Command. The Nevada National Guard and Turkmenistan have been linked through the partnership program for more than 11 years.

"This border crossing station is a great example of what two countries can accomplish when working together in the fight against international narcotics trafficking," said Brig. Gen. Cindy Kirkland, Nevada's Adjutant General, who flew more than 8,000 miles across 13 time zones to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the \$2.5 million border crossing facility.

"This building stands as a testament to the close cooperation and mutual respect that exists between the Nevada National Guard and the government of Turkmenistan," she said.

"The completion of the border crossing marks another significant achievement in the partnership program that has now seen more than a decade of cooperation. The facility will allow efficient international commerce while providing a deterrent to illegal trafficking, not only in narcotics, but in weapons of mass destruction, illegal immigration and contraband," Kirkland added.

The border crossing building cost \$2.5 million and sits on a 25,000-square meter site complete with a weigh station, a radiation detector and space for drug dogs. The main 1,000-square meter building houses customs, immigration and passport control offices in addition to medical and agricultural stations. The Nevada Guard had three people working on the project who devoted nearly one thousand hours of time to see the building come to fruition. Retired Col. Jon Morrow, now a civilian analyst, was the project manager for the Altyn



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy T. Lock

Afghanis sit along a poppy field in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan. Poppies are the primary ingredient in the production of opiate drugs, which could be confiscated at a new border facility in Turkmenistan built with the help of the Nevada National Guard.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka

Turkmenistan officials from several governmental agencies man the counter at passport control at the new border crossing facility at Altyn Asyr on the Iranian border.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka

The Nevada Guard and the government of Turkmenistan worked in conjunction to open this \$2.5 million, state-of-the-art border crossing at Altyn Asyr on Nov. 11. Altyn Asyr is on the border with Iran and the modern border crossing promises to assist in counterdrug efforts to prevent illegal transportation of narcotics between the countries.

Asyr construction and spends about six months per year in Turkmenistan.

"It's really the front line over there in the war on drugs," said international affairs officer Maj. Eric Wade, one of six Nevada Guardsmen who made the 8,000-mile trek to witness the grand opening of the crossing. "The new crossing will assist both in controlling immigration as well as controlling narcotic traffic that's coming through those borders."

Autumn's ideal weather in the region hasn't been the only reason for a bumper crop of poppies. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported in September that the significant increase in the poppy production could be traced to the resurgence of Taliban rebels in southern Afghanistan who encourage and profit from the drug trade and promise protection to growers if they expand opium operations.

The United Nations estimates this year's opium production will increase by 49 percent from 2005 and easily outpace the previous



Nevada's National Guard worked under a state partnership program with the Turkmenistan government to open a border checkpoint building Nov. 10 at Altyn Asyr.

record of 4,600 metric tons set in 1999 when the Taliban governed the country. Put in perspective, 6,100 metric tons of opium would surpass the 2005 global consumption of the drug by 30 percent.

Poppy production isn't currently a problem in Turkmenistan, and the government, headed by President and Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Saparmurat Niyazov, intends to keep the status quo. The seven border crossings Turkmenistan and the Nevada National Guard are currently building are strategically placed to prevent Afghanistan's opium from entering Turkmenistan, where it could subsequently enter western or Russian markets via the country's international terminals.

"The majority of the border of Turkmenistan is fenced with armed guards and patrolled with canines," Wade said. "This forces everyone to cross through one of the bottlenecks between countries, and those locations were where we placed the state-of-the-art facilities."

## A remote partner

By Sgt. 1st Class Erick Studenicka  
Nevada National Guard

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan — Boarding their Luftansa flight in Baku, Azerbaijan, a group of globe-trotting college students was surprised to find some Americans already on board the flight that originated in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

"How did you guys get into Turkmenistan?" asked one of the smug students, suddenly realizing his trip to Baku wasn't as exotic as he'd imagined. "What are you, CIA operatives?"

In reality, the contingent was six Nevada National Guardsmen heading home after traveling more than 8,000 miles to attend the Altyn Asyr border crossing opening ceremony in conjunction with the National Guard State Partnership Program.

Ironically, traveling across the 13 time zones that separate Nevada and Turkmenistan is often the easiest part of the trip. Turkmenistan remains one of the most inaccessible countries for westerners, no matter for business or leisure.

Officially a republic, Turkmenistan is ruled by democratically-elected (for life) President Saparmurat Niyazov. Entry and visas are granted only with an official invitation from the Turkmen government. As an example of how few Americans are in the country, U.S. Embassy officials track the whereabouts of every American in Turkmenistan; there were 47 in the country on Nov. 8.

As a result of the more than 11 years close cooperation, requests for letters of invitation into Turkmenistan are usually granted for Nevada Guard officials. On average, the Nevada Guard annually organizes four trips into Turkmenistan for civilian and military authorities.

Nevada and Turkmenistan were initially paired up in 1995 due to the similarities in climate and terrain. Indeed, the landscapes are remarkably similar, and even a veteran traveler there can forget the highway he is driving is traversing Asia's Karakum Desert and not Nevada's Black Rock or Mojave deserts.

State partnership junkets usually focus on knowledge exchanges and familiarization exercises. For example, Nevada Guard rotary and fixed-wing pilots have traveled to Turkmenistan to share their knowledge about border patrol flight techniques. Conversely, the Nevada Guard helps organize trips to Nevada for Turkmen civilian and military officials to study agriculture, fire-fighting techniques and seismology.

## Turkmenistan

**Population:** 4.86 million people  
**Area:** Total 488,100 sq. km. (Slightly larger than California)  
**Border countries:** Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan  
**Climate:** Subtropical desert  
**Natural resources:** Petroleum, natural gas, coal, sulfur, salt  
**Median age:** 22 years  
**Life expectancy:** 62 years  
**Ethnic groups:** Turkmen 85%, Uzbek 5%, Russian 4%, Other 6%