



# THE ON GUARD

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Guard members  
support youth

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## HURRICANE WARNING: National Guard Ready

By Capt. Rick Breitenfeldt

Maryland National Guard

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.— The 2006 hurricane season begins in June, and the Maryland Army National Guard's 29th Combat Aviation Brigade has not waited for the first Atlantic storm to develop before getting ready to help the citizens of Maryland and, possibly, the other 53 states, territories and the District of Columbia.

One of the brigade's units, the 1159th Medical Detachment, conducted critical rescue hoist training April 13-14 at a site near the Maryland Army National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

The air ambulance detachment, which has six UH-60 Black Hawk air ambulance helicopters equipped with hoists, is one of only four National Guard air ambulance units on the East Coast.

Col. Charles H. Schulze, Maryland's state Army aviation officer, has the unique challenge of ensuring that aviation units in Maryland can train for wartime missions as well as for state missions.

"The thing we're shooting for is to leverage capability unique to the National Guard and link that capability to highly trained swift water and flood rescue teams in Maryland,"

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Photo by Capt. Rick Breitenfeldt, Maryland National Guard

Maryland Army National Guard Sgt. Nate Bieniek prepares to lower a rescue basket from a Black Hawk helicopter as the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade trains for this year's hurricane season.

## President orders Guard troops to support southern border security

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell

National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush has called for up to 6,000 National Guard troops to be deployed along the United States' border with Mexico to help the U.S. Border Patrol stem the flow of illegal immigrants into this country and to support efforts to reform the immigration system.

The initial commitment would be for one year while the Border Patrol begins recruiting and training thousands of new agents and begins beefing up its border security with new technology, the president said during a nationally televised address on Monday night, May 15.

Bush said that the Border Patrol would be increased by 6,000 officers by the end of 2008 and that improved technological measures would include high-tech fences, motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles "to prevent illegal crossings."

Employing Guard troops would be one of "several immediate steps to strengthen border enforcement during this period of transition," Bush said. "One way to help during this transition is to use the National Guard."

As new technologies and newly trained Border Patrol agents become available, the Guard's presence along the border would be reduced.

Bush indicated the federal government would coordinate with governors to place Guard troops along the southern borders of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

"The Border Patrol will remain in the lead," Bush explained. "Guard units will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities — that duty will be done by the Border Patrol."

Guard troops would assist the Border Patrol by "operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers"

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## Leonard retiring from a stronger Guard

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — He is the first command sergeant major of the National Guard Bureau and senior enlisted advisor to the chief, LTG H Steven Blum. He is one of the nation's most senior enlisted Soldiers.

He was a Vietnam combat veteran, a Marine helicopter crew chief. He has a Purple Heart with a Gold Star. He was a battalion command sergeant major twice. He is a Desert Storm veteran and a husband, father and grandfather.

Now, Command Sgt. Major John Leonard Jr. is about to add a new title to his storied 41-year military career: Retiree.

"I'm not really looking forward to taking off the uniform, but it's time," Leonard said during two wide-ranging interviews at his National Guard Bureau office in April.

Leonard, 59, is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Sharon, his parents — who have been married 70 years

— his two daughters and their husbands and his four grandchildren. "Basically, they know me by my picture," said the man from Southwest Harbor on coastal Maine. "They don't know me as a person."

He said he'll enjoy spending more time learning about the Civil War, World War II and especially about his first war — Vietnam — after he retires on June 26.

"I'd like to know what we did during the 14 months I was there," he said, reflecting the necessarily narrow focus of combat. Leonard shipped out as a Marine private in 1966 and returned home as a corporal. The noncommissioned officers he learned from were veterans of World War II and Korea. He was twice wounded.

Each step in Leonard's career surprised him. "When I made corporal, I figured that was probably the highest rank I was going to have in the military," he said.

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# Well-Being: Caring for the total Soldier

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ARLINGTON, Va. — There were these four blind men, so the fable goes, who touched a different part of an elephant and then tried to describe the complete animal. Although all four deduced that the critter was pretty darned big, they came up with some pretty bizarre and different ideas about the nature of the beast.

It has been much the same way with the support efforts for Army National Guard Soldiers. Different people have dealt with different parts of the animal, but no one has embraced the whole.

Now there's a new team in town: Well-Being. This three-member Army Guard team on duty at the National Guard Bureau's Joint Headquarters is diligently working to account for the entire elephant. Thankfully, they all can see perfectly well.

Headed by Maj. Michael Ford, the team is concerned about the well-being of every Army Guard Soldier, civilian employee and member of their families. The other team members are civilians Greg Wrice and Nadine Moore. They work within the Army Guard's division devoted to personnel policy and readiness.

Wrice has been a civilian management analyst with the National Guard Bureau for 21 years. Moore joined the Army Guard's civilian staff in July 2001, one of the first two people in the Diversity Initiatives office.

Now before you start rolling your eyes and saying "Oh great! Another touchy-feely program for the troops," consider what these folks are up to. They are striving to make sure that all Army Guard Soldiers and their families know how to get all of the health, family and employment support that is available to them, especially during mobilizations and deployments.

Most Guard Soldiers will probably never meet the members of this team. Most have probably never heard of Well-Being. But these three people and their boss, Maj. David Haupt, are making a concerted effort to ensure that every Guard Soldier finds out about Well-Being during the next year.

The Well-Being team has what Wrice, the program's integrator, calls its three centers of

gravity: Health Services, Family Readiness, and Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve.

Those three groups deal with different aspects of a Guard Soldier's existence, Wrice



**By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell**  
Senior Correspondent

pointed out. Health Services people are concerned with healthcare issues, including mental health. Family Readiness people assist the spouses and children of Guard Soldiers who are on duty away from their homes. ESGR works with Guard Soldiers who have issues with their civilian employers and with employers to inform them of the Guard Soldiers' employment rights.

The Well-Being team is striving to make sure that these programs and services work together and that all Soldiers know what all three programs can do for them. There is no intent to replace or duplicate the efforts of Health Services directors, state Family Readiness directors, or ESGR coordinators, Moore explained.

The idea, rather, is to try to get all of these people thinking about their programs in a holistic context.

"Everyone tends to stay in his or her own lane," Wrice pointed out. "We're emphasizing the holistic approach. We're working to make sure that all of those people are talking and working together."

Well-Being is as much a philosophy as it is a program. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy tells us that a person's well-being is what is good for him or her. The Army began coming to grips with what is good for its Soldiers' well-being in 2000, thanks to

Gen. Eric Shinseki, who was the Army's chief of staff.

The Army Guard began exploring the concept of well-being in 2003. Retention is one of the objectives. "To improve and sustain the institutional strength of the Army National Guard through Well-Being initiatives, programs and resources to meet the needs of the Soldiers and family members," states the mission statement.


The idea is to take care of the total Soldier so they will want to remain in uniform. The fledgling program is rooted in the idea that virtually every National Guard leader subscribes to: that the Guard recruits individuals but retains Soldiers and their families.

Most Soldiers and their families, furthermore, consider the Guard a part-time profession. Well-Being-related programs are intended to ensure that Soldiers have the resources to balance the Guard, their families and their civilian jobs.

The team has already hit the road to explain Well-Being. They presented the concept to Guard leaders in Alabama, North Carolina and Ohio in 2005 because those states have had relatively high mobilization rates during the Global War on Terrorism, Wrice said. They expanded their presentation this past March and April to Region III Guard leaders in eight southeastern states and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The team would like to see the day when Well-Being is understood by Guard leaders throughout the country and when representatives are working in every state and territory. All of that would undoubtedly depend on funding and the support that National Guard leaders give to Well-Being.

I suppose some people might at first question the need for Well-Being, just as I did. Why, I wondered, do we need another program besides the healthcare, Family Readiness, and employee support programs that we already have?

Now, it seems to me, this is an example of even more people thinking and talking about what our Soldiers and their families need when we are a nation at war and when the National Guard is again stepping up to the plate. And you know what? It makes good sense to have more people, rather than fewer, concerned about and talking about what our Guard Soldiers and their families need. 


## Think safety this summer

ARLINGTON, Va. — Memorial Day weekend marked the beginning of the "101 Critical Days of Summer." Statistically, this period, which ends after Labor Day weekend in September, is a time of increased risk for mishaps and fatal injuries.

Each summer, Guard members throughout the world are needlessly injured, National Guard officials have pointed out. In worst-case scenarios, family members and friends are left to mourn the death of a loved one. Such losses affect the communi-

ty deeply and personally. Family members and friends are forced to face the irrevocable end of an enriching and priceless relationship.

Vehicle mishaps are the leading cause of accidental deaths during this period. Reports about these events reveal a tragic aspect. Nearly all of them could have been prevented. Controls such as the driver getting the proper rest, reducing their driving speed and refraining from alcohol are critically important.

No one is immune to mishaps or the distractions that often precede them. Everyone is susceptible whether on the job, at home or while traveling. As we enter the 101 Critical Days of Summer, Guard members are being challenged to apply appropriate operational risk management techniques to everything they do, whether on military duty, performing their civilian jobs, or enjoying summer days and nights with their families and friends. 

# Wounded warrior: Training key to combat success

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – Training.

Cpl. Braxton McCoy had several months to reflect on lessons he learned from his Iraq deployment with a field artillery unit. Critically wounded in a Jan. 4 suicide bombing near Ramadi, the Utah National Guardsman healed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center into April.

When he sifted through his vivid active duty memories, one word popped out: Training.

The 20-year-old Guard Soldier said he had sometimes been tempted to take some aspects of Basic Combat Training and other military schools less than completely seriously. But in Iraq he learned that training is the key to success.

McCoy said he saw that everything the Army teaches has a purpose behind it and that the Common Task Test, an annual reinforcement of Soldiers' skills, is rooted in battlefield lessons. "They're taking it from guys that have been there," he said.

Although training continues in the theater of operations, McCoy said it must be taken seriously from the day a Soldier enlists. "If you weren't ready three hours before you left, you aren't going to be ready the whole time you're there," he said.

And you never know when you'll need it – but you will. "It might be 10 minutes out of 12 months," McCoy said.

Seconds after he was blown off his feet by a suicide bomber, McCoy snapped to the attention to detail he learned during basic training at Fort Benning, Ga. "As far as I could see there was nothing but dead people and body parts," he said. "It was like something you'd see in a movie. Nobody had any shoes. Everybody got blown out of their shoes."

McCoy enlisted in 2003, feeling that the Army National Guard was a calling more than a choice. He loved being a Soldier. It went with who he was, a rural Utah kid who rehearsed for his first bronco ride on a sheep when he was 9 and who rode his first steer at 10.

When McCoy was fit enough to leave Walter Reed in April, he drove home across the country with his wife Emily in a sport utility vehicle they bought with some of the money he received for his wounds.

Back in Utah, McCoy said he plans to build a home and pursue rehabilitation. The rodeo cowboy still wants to fulfill a lifetime ambition to become qualified as a farrier, or blacksmith, but he is not certain if he will be strong enough. He hopes to go to college which he says he might not have considered if he had not been injured.

McCoy repeatedly said that even if he knew before hand that he would have to endure all he has gone through he would do it all again. "There's no doubt," he said. "For those who have fought for it, life just has a different flavor from those who haven't. It makes you appreciate all the small things in life."

## Volunteers

For McCoy, Jan. 4 began in earnest when he arrived at a recruiting center in a glass factory outside Ramadi and found 1,000 Iraqis trying to volunteer to be police officers.

"All of these people showed up early," McCoy remembered. "There were at least a thousand people lined up all the way down the road."

Intelligence suggested an insurgent attack was likely, so McCoy's unit was especially vigilant. A Marine dog handler with a red heeler trained to detect explosives worked through the crowd.

McCoy and his fellow enlisted Soldiers had a lot of respect for a newly minted lieutenant colonel who had been an enlisted Soldier himself. The Soldiers respectfully called Lt. Col. Michael McLaughlin "Colonel Mac."



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

**Utah Army National Guard Cpl. Braxton McCoy recuperated at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., after being wounded in Iraq in January. Army training, including combat lifesaving, saved his life, McCoy maintained.**

"I was speaking with Colonel Mac," McCoy recalls. He stared down and to the right, his body still at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, his mind back in Iraq. "I really can't remember the conversation."

McCoy does remember this: McLaughlin said, "Let's square this away." McCoy briefed his Soldiers on what the commander wanted.

The red heeler barked. The Marine handler stood a few feet from the dog. "The dog smelled the explosives," McCoy said. As trained, the red heeler started pulling an Iraqi to the ground about 15 meters from McCoy. "As the guy was falling down, he detonated his vest," McCoy said.

## Lifesaver

For a few seconds, McCoy decided he was just fine. "I was trying to stand up," he said. "And I couldn't move." Then he was certain he would die. "You never think about being wounded," he said. "It's always you live or you die. You never think about in between."

He heard gunfire, but he did not feel the AK-47 round shatter his left arm, and he was not aware of the new injury until much later.

It seemed to McCoy that Sgt. Johnny Humphries, the combat lifesaver running towards him, and Spc. Lyle Gardner were taking minutes to get to him.

"I was thinking, 'Why waste time [on me] when you can save these other guys' lives?'" McCoy said.

"Tell my wife I love her," he told Humphries. "You're gonna tell her yourself," Humphries said.

"Just the feeling of my buddy Johnny holding my head and holding my hand did me as much good as anything," McCoy said.

McCoy credits the training that combat lifesavers receive with saving his life. Combat lifesavers bridge the gap between the first aid all Soldiers learn at basic training and the skills of a combat medic, according to Army course materials. At least one member of each squad is a combat lifesaver trained to provide lifesaving care such as stemming

outstanding care. He particularly appreciated the Fisher House, a facility where family members could stay while he recovered and where he could have some freedom but still be close to the medical staff.

## Guilt

The explosion killed the Marine dog handler and his red heeler. It killed about 60 Iraqis. And, much later, McCoy's friends decided he was well enough to be told that it killed Colonel Mac. The bomber's vest was packed with ball bearings. About 40 entered McCoy's body. Only one hit the lieutenant colonel, but it was fatal.

"He was out there with us when he didn't have to be," McCoy said. "That should say a lot about who he was. He was a very demanding officer. He made sure to get done what needed to be done. When you'd work with him on a personal level, he treated you like a man. He never pushed his rank on anybody. His family should be very proud, the type of man that he was."

The blast injured a Marine and another Soldier besides himself, McCoy related. More than 50 Iraqis were injured.

McCoy sometimes feels guilty about what happened. "I beat myself over it," he said. Did he fail to exercise the requisite attention to detail? He lived with that and many other questions as he recovered at Walter Reed. Then he would recall the Marine dog handler standing about five feet from the suicide bomber. "It obviously wasn't obvious to anybody," McCoy said. But still, was there something he should have done differently?

"There couldn't really be too much we could've done," he says. But he doesn't listen to his own words: He lives with the questions and the physical pain and the nightmares. He was certain post traumatic stress disorder was something other people suffered until he visited a mall in his wheelchair. He felt uncomfortable in the crowds, wary of people who looked vaguely like insurgents he had seen, startled by sounds.

McCoy said he hopes time and distance will ease his discomfort.

And he reiterates he would do it again. "My answer is unwavering. I love the military. I love what it did for me. I wouldn't trade me going [to Iraq] for anything in the world.

"I'm not a hero. Heroes deserve medals," McCoy said, naming several members of his squad, including those who helped him the day he was hurt. "They're heroes," he says. "All the guys that are still over there are heroes."

When he thought he would die, McCoy said he thought about things he wished he had done. "Once it's over, you will make sure that you don't ever have that regret again," he said.

McCoy's wife, Emily, who sat beside him, held his hand and listened attentively throughout repeated interviews, broke her silence. "So," she said softly, "you'll pick flowers with me."

"Uh-huh," McCoy said, tugging at the brim of the cowboy hat he wears much of the time. It's about as emphatic a "yes" as he can give.

At Walter Reed, McCoy said he received

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### Maryland Army Guard

said Schulze, who has worked full time for the Maryland Guard in aviation since 1989.

“Linking military and civilian fire department rescue capabilities carries out the brigade commander’s intent of developing plans, capabilities and exercising skill that may be needed when the brigade responds to a domestic emergency,” Schulze said. Col. Fritz Kirklighter is the brigade commander.

National Guard officials maintain that the Guard is generally the first military organization called on to respond to natural disasters and other significant incidents in this country.

“The National Guard saved the lives of more than 17,000 people in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and airlifted more than 88,000 to other locations,” said Jack Harrison, a spokesperson for the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Va.

Schulze, who is also working to develop and strengthen relations with other state agencies such as the Maryland State Police, Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Maryland State Swiftwater and Flood Response Association, said that partnerships with those agencies are especially essential during the preparation and response phases of domestic emergencies.



Photo by Capt. Rick Breitenfeldt, Maryland National Guard  
**Chief Warrant Officer 2 Timothy Siebold monitors rescue hoist training from his front seat in a Maryland Army National Guard 29th Combat Aviation Brigade helicopter.**

“It’s imperative that we train together so that in a life-threatening situation the military and civilian rescue people can work together, resulting in an effective and favorable outcome,” said Schulze.

“It’s important to cultivate these relationships through the state government and the state emergency operations center so that we can be prepared to respond to swift water and flood emergencies here in Maryland - or elsewhere in the country,” he added.

Sgt. 1st Class Donald Claxton, Maryland’s senior enlisted aviation trainer at the Army Aviation Support Facility, agreed.

“That kind of mission is good for us,” said Claxton. “We owe the citizens of Maryland our services. We have the equipment and they deserve use of it. That’s the bottom line as far as I’m concerned.”

Other than fires, floods are the most common and widespread natural disasters. According to officials at the Maryland State Swiftwater and Flood Response Association, nearly 100 people drown in floods each year in the United States.

According to Sgt. Nate L. Bieniek, a helicopter crew chief and hoist operator, this specialized requirement requires a coordinated effort from everyone involved in the rescue mission as well as a lot of communication.

“The biggest thing for us in the back [of the helicopter] is to make sure we don’t slam someone back into the ground or snag them in the trees on the way up,” said Bieniek who must constantly scan the scene to make sure the pilots are not drifting and that the rescue cable isn’t getting caught on anything.

“The things we’re doing in the back may not be apparent to an outside observer,” said Bieniek. “I’m constantly adjusting the slack in the cable or taking slack out so there is a little bit of maneuver room.”

Each rescue helicopter hoist has 258 feet of rescue cable capable of lifting nearly 600 pounds.

“That cable is moving down at 250 feet per minute at high speed,” said Claxton, “So at the bottom you have to stop it before you want it to stop because it takes about 5 or 10 feet to decelerate.

“It doesn’t look complicated from outside the helicopter, but when you’re actually working that hoist control, there are like 40 things going on at the same time,” said Claxton. Schulze is confident that the Maryland Guard is ready for any situation.

“The biggest lesson for everyone is an old lesson,” said Schulze. “In a crisis you only rise to the level of your training.”



Photo by Capt. Rick Breitenfeldt, Maryland National Guard  
**Sgt. Nate Bieniek brings a “survivor” aboard a Maryland Army National Guard helicopter during the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade’s recent hurricane training exercise.**

A real life hoist rescue mission is high risk, according to Claxton, but the members of the 1159th Air Ambulance Detachment are ready to assist the citizens of Maryland anyone else in the country if they are called.

“We’ve got the equipment, we’ve got the people, and we’ve got the resources,” said Claxton. “Let’s use them.”

## Enlisted leaders prepare for hurricane season

By 1st Lt. Shantece Wade

Air Forces Northern

TYNDALL AFB, Fla. – Nearly 30 senior enlisted leaders from across the services have joined forces to plan and prepare for this year’s hurricane season that began June 1.

Air Forces Northern hosted a Senior Enlisted Leadership Conference May 3 at Tyndall Air Force Base to focus on disaster response and military operations in the wake of a natural disaster.

The senior noncommissioned officers worked together during the two-day workshop to develop a greater understanding of how the Department of Defense would best support state governors and their National Guard units during natural disasters.

“The primary reason we held the conference was to bring together the senior enlisted leaders that would most likely be involved with any type of hurricane response,” said Chief Master Sgt. Allen Usry, Air Forces Northern command chief. “Developing these joint relationships would allow us to function more efficiently and help us better prepare our troops and support our citizens.”

One of the major issues was how to coordinate a federal response with state and local officials, including the Army and Air National Guard units assigned to them.

“Duplication of command and control functions among the services initially hampered the relief effort during Hurricane Katrina,” said Army Guard Command Sgt. Maj. John Leonard, the National Guard Bureau’s senior enlisted advisor. “We’re trying to prevent that from happening again by coordinating here to improve future disaster relief processes. That’s the ultimate goal, to learn from our mistakes.”

Representatives described their agencies and roles during humanitarian relief operations. Each enlisted leader also highlighted the capabilities of their component, their command authorities and interagency coordination.

“As senior enlisted leaders, we’re light years ahead of where we were last year around hurricane season because we’re here now talking about the lessons learned and everyone’s different capabilities,” said Usry. “This creates a very good environment for us to go into the season with.” Commands and agencies represented included the U.S. Northern Command, Air Forces Northern, Army North, Marine Forces North, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic, Joint Forces Command, Joint Task Force Civil Support, Federal Aviation Administration, National Guard Bureau, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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**Leonard**



Photo by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau  
**Command Sgt. Maj. John Leonard Jr. has talked and dined with National Guard enlisted troops everywhere he has traveled around the world in his capacity as the first command sergeant major and senior enlisted advisor for the chief of the National Guard Bureau.**

“Sometimes I have to pinch myself.”

He has held numerous leadership positions, including command sergeant major of the Army National Guard and senior enlisted advisor to the assistant secretary of defense for Reserve Affairs.

Leonard tried to emulate a sergeant he respected. “He interviewed and got to know each person as they were assigned to him,” Leonard said. That sergeant encouraged honesty from each Soldier, remembered important dates in the Soldier’s life, and knew details such as whether the Soldier was accompanied or unaccompanied by a spouse and children.

“Being a noncommissioned officer means many things today,” Leonard said. NCOs now must be willing to provide guidance to Soldiers who face a variety of challenges that were less common when Leonard enlisted, such as coming from a single-parent family. NCOs must be sensitive to diversity and be equally comfortable leading women as well as men, he said. “Diversity is our strength,” Leonard said. “We are America’s Army, and we should look like America.”

When Soldiers were unhappy or performing poorly, Leonard

often found the cause had nothing to do with wearing the uniform. “It was usually some influence outside of the military,” he said. Help the Soldier fix the problem, and morale improves, he has learned.

As he prepares to leave, Leonard is proud of the National Guard’s status during the Global War on Terrorism, and he is optimistic about its future.

“The Guard has changed immensely,” he said. “It’s probably the most respected military force in our country.”

That respect is based on the Guard’s versatility, on the public’s understanding of the double duty Guard members perform as civilians and Airmen or Soldiers, on the all-volunteer force, on the sacrifice Guard members make, and on the sacrifice their families make.

When Leonard joined the Maine Army National Guard in 1972, his aviation unit had five older UH-1H helicopters, some OH-23s and a fixed-wing airplane. There were no bonuses. Military schools were extremely limited after a Soldier had completed advanced individual training.

“The Guard had old equipment,” he said. “We were not resourced until the Reagan years. We were just a manpower pool.”

Training was often OJT – On the Job.

Leonard said the dramatic change started with Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990-91 when the modern Guard proved itself as an operational force instead of a strategic reserve. The Minutemen haven’t looked back since.

“The Guard we’re in today is trained exactly like our active duty counterparts,” he said. “There’s a plan afloat to make sure we have the same equipment.”

Desert Storm, where Leonard saw Guard members integrate with regulars and other reservists, was one of the command sergeant major’s career highpoints. In his second war, Leonard was sergeant major for an Army National Guard battalion headquarters. “To do what all those years of training set you up for – that was very, very rewarding,” he said.

During Desert Storm, Leonard once more saw different military branches working together closely. “Everybody gains,” he said. “The taxpayer benefits from it. The service members benefit. We have been operating in a joint environment since Desert Storm. Now, we’re getting into it more and more.”

The Air National Guard set the example of adapting to joint operations, Leonard said. “The Air National Guard has been the model,” he said. “I see them as creating a model in the way the reserve components will probably operate with other branches in the future.”

The Global War on Terrorism has accelerated the Guard’s

transformation, he said. “This war has really helped us with modifying and becoming an operational force.”

But Leonard said the operations tempo has remained high since Desert Storm.

“It did not slow down a very great deal,” he said.

Between Desert Storm and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, an average of 53,000 reserve component troops saw active duty every year. Guard members served in Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Sinai, Central America and many other places – in addition to performing domestic missions.

“We’ve been tested,” he said. “We’ve had opportunities for our leaders to lead. There really is very little difference from the regular Army, especially now that we’re an operational force and not a strategic force.”

Here are a few of his parting thoughts:

**On being a competent noncommissioned officer:** “You definitely have to be proficient at whatever your military occupational specialty is. It’s not only about how well you do that. It’s about knowing the Army or the Air Force. If you don’t know your service, you can’t advise people. It’s about knowing your people. It’s about taking care of families. We enlist the Soldier or Airman and retain the family.”

**On noncommissioned versus commissioned service:** “Do you want to be the doer or do you want to be the leader? Would you rather be the one who twists the wrench, fires the weapon, or drives the vehicle? As a noncommissioned officer, you have done everything that you’re going to ask your troops to do. And your troops know that. That builds a bond and a trust. It doesn’t necessarily build a ‘like.’ I didn’t like a sergeant I had in Vietnam – but I respected him.”

**On serving in the armed forces:** “Putting on the uniform helped me grow up. I was a young man who didn’t really think much about the future. The military taught me that life is valuable – to make what you can out of your life instead of waiting for the golden ring to come down. You can shape a lot of how your life comes out, and you can’t do it alone.”

**On what he’ll miss:** “The people. The dedication. The caring. The military society itself is unique because you’re part of a team.”

**On the future of the Guard:** “The National Guard is going to continue to be America’s Army and Air Force. The people in this nation have seen what we’re capable of and what we’re prepared to do and the types of people who are in the Guard. The National Guard will continue to be the envy of every other nation. Nobody has been able to duplicate what we have in our National Guard.”

## Congressman Montgomery, “Mr. National Guard,” dies at 85

ARLINGTON, Va. – Former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. “Sonny” Montgomery, a retired National Guard two-star general and one of the Guard’s most important congressional advocates during the second half of the 20th century, has died.

Montgomery was 85 when he died May 12 at Jeff Anderson Regional Medical Center in his native Meridian, Miss., after a long illness.

He authored the 1984 Montgomery G.I. Bill that made it possible for many service members, including National Guard Soldiers and Airmen, to acquire post-secondary educations, and he championed the needs of veterans during his 30 years in Congress.

“Congressman ‘Sonny’ Montgomery’s contributions to the men and women of the National Guard and the other military services are beyond measure,” said LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau. “He did so many things to help define and shape our Guard force that enabled us to transform from a strategic reserve into an operational entity and equal partner with the other military services for the 21st century’s Global War on Terrorism.”

The G.I. Bill, Montgomery’s most enduring legacy, was formalized by Congress in 1987. Tens of thousands of Guard members took advantage of the program, a National Guard Bureau historian has stated, and it is credited with

boosting recruiting for the entire all-volunteer force.

President George W. Bush awarded Montgomery the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest American civil-



Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Cook, National Guard Bureau  
**Former Congressman Gillespie “Sonny” Montgomery is flanked by LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and LTG Roger Schultz, former director of the Army National Guard. Montgomery was 85 when he died May 12.**

ian honor, in November 2005.

Montgomery served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1967-97. He was chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for 13 years.

He also served in the Army and Army National Guard for 35 years. He was a lieutenant in the 12th Armored Division in Europe during World War II. He was mobilized as an Army Guard officer with the 31st Infantry Division for the Korean War and remained on active duty until 1952. He retired from the Mississippi Guard as a state major general in 1980.

Montgomery’s memory is perpetuated in many places, including within the National Guard world.

Congressman Montgomery, “Mr. National Guard,” died at 85.

A gunnery range at the Camp Shelby training facility in Mississippi was named the G.V. Montgomery Multi-Purpose Range Complex in December 2005. That, coincidentally, is the facility where many National Guard Soldiers are undergoing training before deploying for combat duty overseas.

The National Guard Association of the United States’ second highest award bears Montgomery’s name, and the largest meeting room in the association’s National Guard Memorial in Washington is named for him.

## Texas Air Guard unit trains people for demanding detainee, convoy duties

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada  
Texas National Guard

AUSTIN, Texas – If you blink, you could easily overlook a group of approximately 120 Air National Guard Airmen on duty on one of the largest U.S. Army posts in the country. However, what these passionate and dedicated men and women do every day means life or death for military personnel from every branch of the service.

The Texas Air Guard's 204th Security Forces Squadron occupies a small complex of buildings on Biggs Army Airfield at Fort Bliss, an Army post of 1.1 million acres stretching from the city of El Paso to the state of New Mexico.

One of 204th's new missions is to provide expert tactical training in conjunction with a tough detainee operations course for people preparing to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Air Guard unit's members teach others how to guard detainees and support convoys.

Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff, recently acknowledged the mission: "Presently, Airmen are meeting the challenges of filling Central Command shortfalls in several critical roles which are non-traditional for Airmen, including convoy support, detainee operations, protective service details, law and order detachments, military transition teams and provincial reconstitution teams. Detainee operations and convoy support are our most heavily supported missions," he said.

"Airmen attend training at Fort Lewis, Wash., or Fort Dix, N.J., where they learn the fundamentals of detainee security, handling and interaction," Moseley continued. "At the conclusion of this training, Airmen move forward to a detainee facility in theater and receive additional training. Airmen provide convoy support in the form of heavy weapons teams supporting long-haul convoy operations. These Airmen attend heavy weapons training followed by a convoy-training course. From that training platform, Airmen deploy forward to support theater operations."

The 204th SFS has been added to the list of approved faculty and training organizations for this type of training. The 204th is gearing up for its third 30-day class.

Tech. Sgt. Michael Dailey, one of the faculty members and a former Green Beret, explained that Fort Bliss was chosen for this type of training because of the vast expanse of desert topography which is similar to conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The conditions on the firing range and in the mock detention center are brutal, especially during the blistering heat of an El Paso summer. That's the way the instructors like it.

The Air Force realized it had a diamond in the rough in the 204th SFS and decided to utilize the experience its members had gained overseas.

The course is an intense 30-day classroom and hands-on experience for the men and women whose mission will be to conduct convoy support or detainee operations.

"We will give them the tools to shoot, move and communicate," Dailey said. "The Army has a corrections specialist military occupational series, meaning that personnel in that career field will receive training specifically geared to Soldiers working in a corrections facility environment. The Air Force and Air Guard do not, so they stand to gain most from this theater emergence training.

"The student body averages a ratio of 75 per-

cent active duty and 25 percent reservists," he added. The training concepts are based on lessons learned and written by subject matter experts with in-theater battle experience. They are constructed to supplement traditional Air Education and Training Center and U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command lesson plans and curricula.

"We teach confidence level and faith in yourself and other troops to conduct operations out-



Photo by Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada, Texas National Guard

**A civilian instructor who conducts detainee training shows Texas Air National Guard Col. Scott Elliott, left, 204th Security Forces commander, a piece of equipment used to control detainees.**

side the wire," Dailey said. Translation: Military members are capable of defending themselves on a protected air base and to operate outside protected zones and to engage and eliminate the enemy.

"We are instilling the warrior spirit in our Air Force and Air Guard personnel," Dailey said.

Most of the 204th SFS members are prior Army, Marine, Special Ops, Navy and Air Force personnel and bring a wealth of experience to those who are in their charge. The warrior spirit doctrine is emphasized in the Air Force Basic Training course. Members of the 204th are proud of their current Air Force affiliation, but are equally proud of their prior service.

"More and more Air Force officers like myself are in charge overseas, and our agreement with the Army to defend our air bases has expired, so it is imperative that Air Force officers and enlisted receive this training," explained Col. Scott Elliott, a former Army Ranger who commands the 204th SFS.

"Gen. Moseley has changed the mindset that Air Force personnel should not operate outside the confines of protected airbases but engage in active patrols, and eliminate the threat," added Elliott who has recently returned from Iraq.

Dailey added, "Our mission does not stop at the gate. We are capable of aggressive patrolling outside the wire," explained Master Sgt. Gerald Murray.

The Texas Air Guard unit has never strayed from that doctrine and has earned a reputation since 9-11 of being "the guys from the 204th." Such comments as "I know you guys" are

often heard during conferences.

The training center is hot and dusty, and students fire weapons until the weapons feel like part of them. Students deal with irate "detainees" who know all the tricks and will use them to their advantage.

The detainee center looks foreboding and impenetrable with its barbed wire and observation towers. Bodily fluids become flying objects to be avoided at all cost, and every nook and cranny of the compound is fair game for the "detainees" to hide weapons fashioned from smuggled objects. The students have to account for each detainee 24 hours a day and be responsible for the health and welfare of the detainees as well as their religious observances five times a day.

The training is tough. However, the instructors instill the dedication to mission they have exhibited during overseas deployments and during Hurricane Katrina when they successfully evacuated thousands of citizens from the Superdome in New Orleans during a grueling week of little sleep, few showers and raw emotions.

Besides Dailey, the faculty consists of Master Sgt. Ernest De La O; Tech. Sgts. Adrian Gomez, Victor Adkins, Louis Villanueva and Cesar Prieto; Staff Sgts. Linda Collaso and Alfredo Favela; Senior Airmen Paula Palacios and Waldemar Suarez; and Airmen 1st Class Arturo Garcia and Miguel Nevarez.

Most of them have long since given up on their civilian jobs because they have so frequently volunteered for deployments. De La O used to work as a maintenance technician for a school district. Prieto used to work in a law office.


Gomez was a Border Patrol. Favela was a police officer. Palacios was a student. Now they all serve their country in the Texas Air National Guard and almost begrudge their short respite from overseas duty.

"These guys will take rank reductions to join the 204th," Elliott said. "No squadron touches our deployment record." Then, as if on cue, he received a phone call increasing the number of Airmen required for an upcoming overseas deployment.

The 204th SFS also employs dedicated civilians. Gloria Lerma, one of the civilian employees since November 1990, is sometimes called "the voice of the 204th" because when everybody around her is deployed, she is at her post taking care of business. She organized a C-130 water and supply drop in New Orleans for her men and women and was able to stay in touch via the few cell phones still in service in Louisiana. She was never too tired to pass on information to spouses and children.

Donald Ellis, a retired Army sergeant first class, is another civilian employed in the motor pool. During Hurricane Katrina he moved generators, vehicles and equipment. Like Ms. Lerma, he worked 60 hours a week and sometimes more.

"I cannot make them do it. They volunteer," Elliott said.

"Weapons familiarization training is like giving somebody a weapon and telling him or her to pull the trigger, but not teaching the Airmen to take their weapon off safe," Elliott observed. "Our personnel need the skills to handle a weapon confidently." 

### FROM PAGE 1 President orders

ers, building patrol roads, and providing training," the president explained.

The number of Guard troops would be reduced after the initial year "as new Border Patrol agents and new technologies come online," Bush said.

The border duty would not affect the National Guard's ability to perform its other duties, the president said.

"It is important for Americans to know that we have enough Guard forces to win the war on terror, to respond to natural disasters and to help secure our border," he stated.

The National Guard Bureau reported that the Army and Air National Guard have a total of 440,000 men and women of which 71,000 are currently engaged in the Global War on Terrorism.

"The National Guard can do this mission. We have the skills, the capabilities and the available, highly-trained people," Guard officials stated. "Our Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen will perform this mission under the command and control of the governors and under the funding of the federal government, on Title 32 status," they added.

"The United States is not going to militarize the southern border," the president said. "Mexico is our neighbor, and our friend."

Guard engineer units have built fences and roads along the southern border during annual training rotations for more than 20 years. Additionally, the National Guard has been supporting counter-drug missions along the border since 1989.

This is not the first time that Bush has asked for

National Guard troops to support domestic authorities for an extended period.


In 2002, more than 1,300 Guard troops assisted the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Border Patrol, and the U.S. Customs Service in conducting inspections at 52 sites in 12 states along the northern and southern borders.

Airport security became a major Guard mission during the winter of 2001-02, early into the war against terrorism.

Nearly 9,000 Army and Air Guard members were assigned to 444 airports by December 2001 after the president requested additional personnel during that holiday season, a National Guard Bureau official reported. Less than half of that number remained on duty when the airport mission was completed at the end of May 2002.

"Your mere presence at the checkpoints no doubt averted would-be criminals and terrorists who have, presumably, chosen other paths of less resistance," praised Christopher Browne, Reagan National Airport's vice president and manager, as the troops were leaving the commercial airport closest to Washington.

That supported an observation by Guard officials that the National Guard is a vital asset to this country and has a proven track record for success in providing military support to civilian authorities.

"The National Guard's past performance is indicative of future success," maintained officials who are confident that the Guard would help the effort to deter illegal immigrants from crossing the southern border as it did to keep terrorists away from the airports. 

# ★ Guarding America ★

**COLORADO:** The National Guard Association of Colorado recently held its annual conference in Colorado Springs. Officers and enlisted members from the Army and Air National Guard attended. The association works with the state and federal governments for the betterment of the Colorado Guard. Its efforts have brought about benefits such as unlimited commissary privileges, TRICARE insurance for traditional Guard members, an increase in the Montgomery G.I. Bill, and expanded Service Member's Group Life Insurance.

**MAINE:** Two Army Guard Soldiers in B Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry, died in an attack in Iraq on May 6. Staff Sgt. Dale James Kelly Jr. of Richmond, Maine, and Staff Sgt. David Michael Veverka, a student at the University of Maine, Orono, and hometown of Jamestown, Pa., were killed. A third Maine Guard Soldier, Pvt. Christopher Fraser of Windsor from the 1136th Transportation Company and attached to Company B, was seriously injured in the attack and has been transferred to medical facilities in Landstuhl, Germany.

**MICHIGAN:** The Michigan National Guard's 51st Civil Support Team has successfully completed a recertification exercise. The 22-member team based at Fort Custer was alerted to deploy to Harrisburg,

Pa., for the 18-month requirement.

The 51st was evaluated in 15 tasks, each with additional sub-tasks. The unit was rated as "trained" in every task and received a "go" in every subtask, a rare final score. The team was also rated "trained" in all 15 tasks during its last evaluation. The team is Michigan's only full time National Guard unit trained and equipped to support local and regional response agencies during a known or suspected weapons of mass destruction incident.

**MISSISSIPPI:** The Mississippi National Guard tested its Quick Reaction Force and 47th Civil Support Team in late April by responding to a scenario in which a biological toxin was suspected at a multipurpose center near Canton, Miss. About 80 Mississippi Army Guard Soldiers were flown to the scene in Black Hawk helicopters to establish a perimeter around the area as the civil support team geared up to enter the area and identify the chemical agent. Meanwhile, in preparation for the 2006 hurricane season, Guard members also conducted an exercise on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to test new

communications systems, determine additional distribution points for ice, food and water, and identify additional staging areas to provide a faster response during hurricane support operations.

**MISSOURI:** Two members of the Missouri National Guard played a role in the opening ceremony for the new Busch Stadium in St. Louis as they helped raise the American flag before the Cardinals' minor league baseball exhibition game April 4. Air Guard Senior Master Sgt. Mark Funk and Army Guard Spc. Michael Van Horn represented the state's 10,000 Guard members and all of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces when they raised an American flag that was flown over Iraq and then given to the Cardinals by members of the Missouri Army National Guard. The 131st Fighter Wing also provided the Honor Guard for the opening ceremony.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** The Pennsylvania National Guard has cleared its final environmental hurdle for fielding a Stryker brigade. Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn, director of the Army

National Guard, signed a Record of Decision April 13. This decision gives Pennsylvania the green light to begin building ranges and facilities for the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Stryker fielding involves 85 construction actions. The overall investment in the Pennsylvania National Guard will be \$1.5 billion.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** The 109th Engineer Group has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for exceptional service during its Operation Enduring Freedom tour in Afghanistan from May 2004 to May 2005. The 76-member unit set up its headquarters at Bagram Airfield with a forward tactical operations center located at Kandahar Airfield. The group's mission was to provide command, control, and engineering design management of assigned U.S. and Coalition Engineer units across the combined joint operations area in support of the Combined Joint Task Force 76 mission to establish a stable and secure Afghanistan and deter or defeat the re-emergence of terrorism.

**UTAH:** The 120 Soldiers of the 115th Maintenance Company returned from a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on April 14. The unit performed vehicle maintenance and provided security at forward operating bases and in logistical support areas in Iraq.

## Winter Olympic silver medalist extends Guard career

By Maj. Hank McIntire

Utah National Guard

DRAPER, Utah – Spc. Shauna Rohbock of the Joint Forces Headquarters, and a Winter Olympics silver medalist, reenlisted in the Utah Army National Guard in a ceremony at the Draper headquarters building on April 24.

Brig. Gen. Bruce Frandsen, the assistant

adjutant general for the Utah Army Guard, administered the oath of enlistment to Rohbock as Guard officials, reporters and her Olympic teammate and fellow silver medalist Valerie Fleming looked on.

Rohbock, the driver, and Fleming, the brakeman, finished second in the women's bobsled event during the 2006 Torino Winter Games in February.



Photo by Ray Carsey, Utah National Guard

Spc. Shauna Rohbock, left, and teammate Valerie Fleming pose with their Olympic bobsled silver medals following Rohbock's reenlistment in the Utah Army National Guard on April 24.



Photo by Georgia National Guard

## Homeland Security chief Chertoff visits Georgia Guard

Michael Chertoff, secretary of Homeland Security, visited with members of the Georgia and South Carolina National Guard during his recent tour of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's regional headquarters in Thomasville, Ga. The secretary observed the extensive capabilities of the National Guard in its ever-increasing homeland security role. Maj. Gen. Terry Nesbitt, right, commander of the Georgia Army Guard, accompanied Chertoff during the tour of the federal, state and local emergency responders at the FEMA facility. Chertoff said he is "very confident" that federal and state resources are ready for the upcoming hurricane season. The Georgia Guard's 4th Civil Support Team provided its unified command suite and communications vans, and a Georgia counter-drug helicopter crew participated in the half-day demonstration.

# Marathoners who made All-Guard team still have miles to go



Nebraska National Guard photo

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon attracts thousands of runners to Nebraska every year and is the qualifying race for the All-Guard Marathon Team.

**By Spc. Riley Huskey**

Nebraska Army National Guard

LINCOLN, Neb. — More than 200 National Guard runners from across the United States descended upon Lincoln, Neb., May 7, with one goal in mind: making the team.

Every May, Army and Air National Guard runners from across the United States come to Lincoln, Neb., to compete in the Lincoln National Guard Marathon in hopes of securing a spot on the All-Guard Marathon Team.

Leading the way for the Guard this year was Puerto Rico Air National Guard 1st Lt. William Bohlke, who crossed the finish line in 2 hours, 34 minutes, 11 seconds, good enough for third overall in the 26.2-mile race that attracted more than 4,000 competitors.

Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard and wearing a National Guard running uniform, congratulated every runner who crossed the finish line.

“Going into the marathon, I was wondering what I was able to do,” said Bohlke, an Air Guard pilot. “After training hard for six months, I was not going to let my hard work go to waste. I was not going to let my training affect my performance.”

After graduating from a rigorous and mentally challenging aircrew survival training

course just two days before the race, Bohlke said he went into this year’s National Guard Marathon team trials with big goals.

“If I do not get deployed, I plan on winning the Air Force Marathon,” Bohlke said. “I brought home the gold last year for the half-marathon, so there’s no reason I can’t win the full. My biggest goal would be to win all of the Armed Forces marathons.”

Bohlke said his survival training was his motivation for the Lincoln race.

“You can take whatever it is that you’re doing and use it as motivation,” he said. “I’m just happy. This race proves to me that I’m taking a step in the right direction. It’s easy to get burned out.”

Bohlke credited the weather in Lincoln with contributing to his winning time.

“There may have been a slight breeze today, but the overcast sky was the winning kicker,” Bolke said. “When it came to keeping my pace on the course I kept telling myself, ‘Stick to your guns. It’ll all come back.’”

Bohlke wasn’t the only top Guard runner with eyes on big goals for the upcoming season.

Staff Sgt. James Bresette, a surface mechanic with the Arkansas Army Guard’s 224th Maintenance Co., said he was happy with his time in this year’s Lincoln race

which he completed in 2:43.12. Still, he’s got bigger goals in mind.

“My overall goal for this season is to set a new personal record,” said Bresette, who won the Guard’s Masters Division for people over 40 and who finished 10th overall in Lincoln. “Because I’m in school now, taking college algebra, I’ve had to cut my mileage. After today, this season looks very promising. Even with the cutbacks, I’m still right where I want to be.”

“I’m getting old, but as long as I can keep running, I’m going to try and continue to reach that goal,” said Bresette.

Bresette said that controlled running was a key for him in Lincoln.

“By about mile 12, I thought I better maintain my motivation. I went out too fast, slowed down in the middle and knew I needed to finish strong,” he said. “Between miles 12 and 18, I slowed down, recovered and went back to my normal pace.”

While the top men runners were focused on making the All-Guard team, this year’s top Guard female runner was also excited to be in Lincoln.

Sgt. Michelle Elliott, an Apache helicopter mechanic with the Missouri Army Guard’s 135th Aviation Battalion, traveled to Lincoln

by herself as the only member of the Missouri team. She said she had learned about the team shortly before the marathon. She also had high hopes.

“I just wanted to come here and make the team,” said Elliott, who won the Guard women’s division in 3:21.47, placing ninth overall among the women. “It’s such an honor to be here and now become a member of this team. I just wish more people knew this program was here and available.”

“I love what I do, and I love being in the Guard,” Elliott said. “I don’t know where I would be right now if I wasn’t in the Guard. This has completely changed my life.”

Elliott was ecstatic with the response she saw from the crowd.

“I have not seen more excitement or motivation in the supporters that come out to cheer on the race than here in Lincoln,” Elliott said. “Out of nine, this is the best marathon I’ve ever run.”

The Lincoln National Guard Marathon serves as the annual qualifier for the All-Guard Marathon Team, which annually competes in races across the United States, representing the National Guard and helping the organization’s recruiting efforts. The team is made up 40 men and 15 women.



Nebraska National Guard photo

**Puerto Rico Air National Guard 1st Lt. William Bohlke finished the May 7 Lincoln National Guard Marathon in Nebraska third overall. He was the first National Guard runner to finish the race and make the All-Guard Marathon Team.**



Nebraska National Guard photo

**Arkansas Army Guard Staff Sgt. James Bresette won the National Guard’s Masters Division during the May 7 marathon in Lincoln, Neb., in 2:43:12. He, too, earned a spot on the All-Guard team.**



Nebraska National Guard photo

**Missouri Army Guard Sgt. Michelle Elliott led the field of female National Guard marathoners in Lincoln, Neb., on May 7. She finished in 3:21.47, ninth among all women.**

# Deployments didn’t slow dedicated marathoners

**By Sgt. Katie Loseke**

Nebraska National Guard

LINCOLN, Neb. — After months of jogging through ankle-deep sand in Iraq and Kuwait, National Guard members from across the nation returned to the states to pound the pavement in Lincoln, Neb.

More than 200 Army and Air National Guard members competed in the 2006 Lincoln National Guard Marathon May 7. For many of those Guard athletes, this year’s rigorous 26.2-mile race was a welcome reprieve after serving for months in the Middle East.

Every state that sent runners to the Lincoln Marathon experienced losses during the Global War On Terrorism and was missing team members due to deployments. Most of the teams, during the state roll call held the night before the race, pledged their run to a teammate who was serving or had been lost overseas.

“The deployments have affected us in numerous ways. We have lost friends, lost time, and lost training, but we have not lost our spirit. We will continue to run hard just like we will continue to fight hard,” said Louisiana Army Guard Capt. John Plunkett. “It’s great to get back into the program after missing a year,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Schnell, one of the newest, old members of the All-Guard Marathon Team. “Emptying the sand out of my running shoes was a small price to pay for winning a spot on the team.”

Schnell, a motor sergeant with the Arizona Army Guard’s Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 158th Corps Support Battalion, is one of many runners who returned from a deployment within the last year and still managed to qualify for the team, despite the limited training time available overseas.

According to Schnell, the 125 degree heat that he had to run in while serving at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, from August 2004 to September 2005 did not deter him from his training. He made the All-Guard team for the sixth time with a time of 2 hours, 45 minutes, 27 seconds.

“I love being a part of the team. It is one of the reasons I stay in Guard,” said Schnell. “The obstacles I faced while training were nothing next to the rewards you get as a member of the team.”

Plunkett first battled the heat and sand he encountered while serving at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, then he battled the wrath of Hurricane Katrina less than six months after he came home from the desert.

“I thought running while wearing battle rattle overseas was hard, but it was impossible to run in the 12 feet of water that filled the streets and buildings of New Orleans,” said Plunkett.

Plunkett, who was deployed from the spring of 2004 to the spring of 2005, said he had just started to get back into his training rou-

tine when the hurricane hit the Gulf Coast in late August. As a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot, Plunkett was one of the first rescuers on the scene.

Plunkett said he began flying rescue missions the day the hurricane hit and didn’t stop until October. He said they were flying 16-20 hours a day and sleeping on the Superdome helicopter pad, which left little time for training.

“We were rescuing 400-500 people a day. It took a lot of coordination, speed, and determination. It was definitely training, just not the type of training I was use to,” said Plunkett.

Plunkett returned to his home in February after his Hurricane Katrina deployment was finished.

“I got in four months of good training after I recovered from the hurricane duty,” said Plunkett. “My training was, in a way, thrown to the wind, but you do what you can to get it done.”

Still, Plunkett qualified for the All-Guard team again, finishing the race in 3:09:39.

Another athlete who managed to qualify after his deployment was Maj. David Herlihy, a lawyer with Vermont Army Guard’s 86th Brigade. Herlihy had been on

the team in 2003-04 year but was then deployed to Tikrit, Iraq, from May 2004 until November 2005.

He said he tried to train hard but that he continued to run into problems. He was only allowed to run on the base which left him running in circles for over 20 miles.

“It was difficult to train. Your mindset is on your job and not the training. Plus, there really is nowhere to do good long runs safely,” said Herlihy.

Herlihy said he was able to compete in a Jingle Bell run during the Christmas season and in a 5-kilometer race in the fall — the only times he could run against other runners.

“You can’t duplicate the running community you have here in the states,” Herlihy said. “The marathon program is great. Team members cheer you on and encourage you the whole time. I really missed that while I was overseas.”

Herlihy said he was excited to see his old friends on the team when he got to Lincoln and even happier to qualify for the All-Guard team again. He finished in 3:02:43.

“When you want something so bad, even without the best training, you can still get it sometimes,” said Herlihy.



Nebraska National Guard photo

**“We will continue to run hard just like we will continue to fight hard,” said Louisiana Army Guard Capt. John Plunkett, a helicopter pilot who qualified for the All-Guard Marathon Team in Lincoln, Neb., May 7 after a deployment to Iraq and after extended duty following Hurricane Katrina.**



By Staff Sgt. Cheryl Hackley  
National Guard Bureau

ALBANY, N.Y. – Hundreds of local young people competed for prizes and learned about the dangers of drugs in mid-April during the nation's first Combat Skate Jam competition sponsored by the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force.

More than 300 boys and girls, age 8-17, participated in the day long event at The Shelter Skate Park. Prizes were awarded to first, second and third-place finishers in the beginner and intermediate heats. Every participant had the chance to compete once. The finalists were chosen and skated once again to try to win a free skateboard deck or other accessories.

"Skateboarding is a fun, active, physically demanding and mentally challenging sport," said Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. George Brett, Drug Demand Reduction administrator. "The Skate Jam provides the youth and families of our community a creative alternative activity that recognizes and rewards the youth for their individual and unique talents."

Skateboarding is a sub-culture that was once highly associated with drug use, espe-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Cheryl Hackley,  
National Guard Bureau

**Participants had 90 seconds to perform ollies, kick flips and other skateboarding tricks for judges during the New York National Guard's Combat Skate Jam competition in April. The event promoted skateboarding as a healthy alternative for young people.**

## New York youth get it down during Guard's Combat Skate Jam



Photo by Staff Sgt. Cheryl Hackley, National Guard Bureau

**Nine-year-old Dylan Patti demonstrates board sliding during the New York National Guard's Combat Skate Jam. The young man competed as a beginner.**

cially marijuana. This is something that the participants and parents want people to know is just not true.

"A lot of them have long hair and wear baggy clothes, but they are all really awesome kids. You just don't know that unless you're in it," said Kathy Vincent, the mother of one of the skateboarder.

"I think that stereotype is dying out," agreed Scott Johnson, owner of The Shelter. "Skateboarding is becoming a lot more mainstream."

"Skateboarding may look chaotic and reckless, but it is essentially low impact and a relatively safe sport compared to most other popular sports" said Brett. "With support from the community, skateboarding can be a great activity that builds character, integrity, determination and creativity."

Their determination was apparent among the youngsters as they practiced before the competition, often falling and crashing into each other. But they got right back up to try again until they mastered their ollies and kick flips.

"I really like getting air and learning new tricks. My favorite is board sliding," said 9-year-old Dylan Patti. He eagerly demonstrated his skills to his mother, Susan Patti, who was very proud of him.

"He really just loves skateboarding," she said. "It's great for kids to have a positive event like this."

"The children are really committed to skate-

boarding once they get into it," said Vincent. "It takes a lot of practice, and it builds a wonderful camaraderie among them."

Anti-drug messages were displayed throughout the facility, and different stations were set up to teach the participants the dangers of drug use and the science of skateboarding. In order to earn a Combat Skate Jam T-shirt, participants had to take a drug awareness test. The answers were provided at each station.

"We bring science into the program, teaching the young people about Newton's Laws and how it affects them when they are skate-

**"The Skate Jam provides the youth and families of our community a creative alternative activity that recognizes and rewards the youth for their individual and unique talents."**

boarding," said Army Guard Sgt. Peter Bridge, Drug Demand Reduction coordinator and five-year veteran of the Counterdrug Task Force.

Bridge oversaw two of the science-based demonstrations. One involved a miniature half pipe structure and small skateboards to show the participants how they use centripetal forces to do their tricks.


At the end of the test, students also had a

chance to create their own individual drug-free slogan. "Skate Drug Free" and "Skaters Skate Clean" were among the slogans.

The New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force works with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to combat the scourge of drugs in the Empire State. The task force in turn receives a share of forfeited assets of the drug dealers to be used for community DDR activities. That is how they paid for this event which was free to all participants.

In the future, based on the success of the first Combat Skate Jam, Counterdrug Guardsmen hope to use more seizure money to purchase a mobile skate ramp and take the Skate Jam on the road, promoting skateboarding and anti-drug messages in communities that don't have a skate park like The Shelter.

"We received a lot of positive feedback from the participants and their parents about the anti-drug effort as well the competition," said Air Guard Tech. Sgt. Marlene Frankovic, a Counterdrug Guardsman. "It was fun for the kids to have their parents participate with them in a drug-free athletic event."

"Presenting this challenge engaged the youth and community in a healthy alternative activity while increasing drug awareness in a safe and rewarding environment," said Brett. "That is what we are all about, creating a positive environment for our children." 

# Florida Guard members teach teens to grapple with challenges

By Sgt. 1st Class Melanie Rowton  
Florida Army National Guard

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Young people today grapple with all types of challenges. Many of them did just that during a few days in March. During the Warrior Wrestling Camp held March 21-23 at Jacksonville, Fla., Indoor Sports arena, the Florida Army National Guard demonstrated how to tackle those challenges as well as the opponent.

The idea sprang from a Florida Army National Guard recruiter, Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Preston, a former trainer in ground fighting techniques. Army ROTC cadets

from the University of Florida assisted him. “By providing this type of activity to kids during spring break, it gives us an excellent opportunity to offer something not available anywhere else,” Preston said. “It also lets

“By providing this type of activity to kids during spring break, it gives us an excellent opportunity to offer something not available anywhere else.”

them interact with positive role models who already have what they want.

“We have cadets who are going to college full-time because the National Guard pays for it,” Preston said. Their drill check means extra money so they have time for wrestling and other activities instead of holding down a part-time job.

Although the camp did not cover the National Guard and lessons on its benefits, it did cover everything from takedowns, throws and escapes to something called, “the unbreakable,” a favorite for Preston.

Tim Williams, a Jacksonville police officer, brought his 13-year-old son Stetson to the camp each day.

“He wants to wrestle in college some day, and this gives him a good taste of it. I’ve enjoyed watching them all,” said Officer Williams. “It’s non-stop with very little downtime. They are steady teaching and rehearsing moves. I think it’s great because some of these kids may be interested in the military. I don’t think they could make the camp any better.

“Stetson does martial arts, and that got him interested in wrestling,” Williams added. “Unfortunately, his high school doesn’t offer it.”

After taking a break and getting up from what looked like a game of two-man twister, opponents Roland C. Pitts and Steve D.

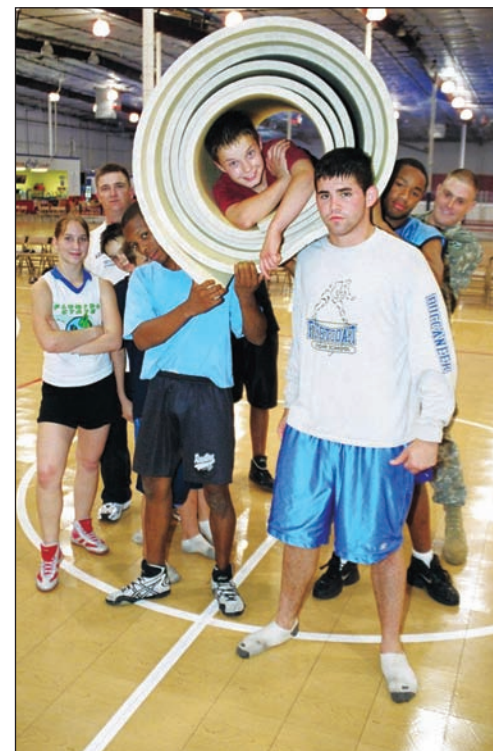


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Melanie Rowton, Florida Army National Guard

**The Florida Army National Guard’s three-day Warrior Wrestling Camp during spring break gave young people the chance to interact with positive role models and learn a thing or two about grappling with their challenges. Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Preston came up with the idea.**

Alvarez First Coast High School, said they enjoyed the camp tremendously and would come again next year. Many students at the camp expressed the wish that their high schools offered more wrestling opportunities and were extremely happy about the free event.

“The only way I think they could make it better would be to make it longer,” said Stephanie R. Hildenbrandt, 16, who attends Terry Parker High School. She attended the camp for all three days.

The motivated young woman was not the least bit intimidated by the fact that she was the only female on the mats. Nor did she care that she would have to report to her part-time job later that day. “I’m the only female on my school wrestling team, too, but this is good practice.”

She said the difference between men and women is that men “muscle it” and women “strategize.” “So even when women are small, they can be more difficult,” she said.

Another interesting aspect of the camp mentioned by Cadet Michael Mealor, from the University of Florida’s Army ROTC program, was the variety of skill levels.

“We had people who had never been on a mat before and one student who had won 2nd place overall in the state last year,” he said.

That kept everyone engaged because the stronger students then became assistant instructors for some of the lessons.

With sweaty shirts and looks of exhaustion, the motivated students, instructors, and assistants rolled up their mats, patted each other on the back or surprised someone with one last take down. The positive comments, smiles and laughter at the end of the camp made it seem likely that no one would have to wrestle with the idea of holding it again next year.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Melanie Rowton, Florida Army National Guard

**Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Preston of the Florida Army National Guard instructs Steve Alvarez and Daniel Wynn of First Coast High School during the Warrior Wrestling Camp in June.**

# History: Kentucky artillery battalion paid a heavy price in Vietnam

By John Listman

National Guard Bureau

The attack came swiftly out of the darkness and the mist, with no warning and with an intensity none of the men had ever experienced before. Before the Soldiers could react, the enemy was in among them, firing their AK-47 rifles, launching rocket propelled grenades and throwing satchel charges onto the roofs and in the doorways of bunkers.

As per their standing orders, the men in the vehicles "buttoned" themselves inside and prepared to fire their own weapons, in this case 155mm howitzers. They fired illumination flares, lighting the night sky above the base with an eerie glow, as tracer rounds from rifles and machine guns on both sides streaked across the compound. It was, as one veteran later recalled, "Hell on Earth!"

So started some of the most vicious combat experienced by any National Guard unit in the Vietnam War. This "hell" was a remote firebase named Tomahawk between the cities of Hue and Danang in South Vietnam. The men were members of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 138th Artillery, from Bardstown in Nelson County, Kentucky. That night in June 1969 would set a grim record in the history of the National Guard in Vietnam.

By the end of 1967, most Americans believed that the United States was close to victory in the Vietnam conflict. However, those opinions were changed dramatically in January 1968 by two events. First, in what appeared to be an event linked to Vietnam, the North Koreans attacked and seized a U.S. Navy spy ship, USS Pueblo. Just eight days later, at the start of Tet, or the lunar New Year in Vietnam, a traditional time of ceasefire, thousands of Viet Cong guerrillas attacked military and governmental facilities across the country.

President Lyndon Johnson, who had avoided mobilizing the reserve components until then, called up selected Air Guard units to reinforce American deployments in both nations. These units reported for active duty on Jan. 26. No Army Guard units were activated at that time.

April 1968 found tensions with North Korea remaining high. And while the Tet Offensive had been crushed, many Army units had taken a beating. So the Pentagon decided to mobilize selected Army Guard units. Thirty-five Guard units, including two infantry brigades, were told they would be mobilized in May. Only eight actually deployed to Vietnam. They consisted of one dental detachment; engineer, ranger, signal and supply companies; and one engineer and two artillery battalions, including the 2/138th.

Members of the battalion entered active duty on May 13 and soon began training at Fort Hood, Texas. The battalion had towed 155mm howitzers. At Hood, it was issued new M-109 self-propelled 155mm howitzers. They were tracked vehicles with light armor that looked like bulky tanks.

After 13 weeks of intense training, the Kentucky Guard unit deployed to Vietnam in September on a one-year tour. It was assigned to the XXIV Corps Artillery, located in the northern sector of South Vietnam. Most of its missions were in support of the



National Archives and Records Administration

**One of the six M-109s from the Kentucky Army National Guard's Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 138th Artillery dug in on Hill 88 before the June 1969 attack at Fire Base Tomahawk in South Vietnam.**

101st Airborne Division.

The three firing batteries were assigned to different locations to support various units during the battalion's first three months in Vietnam. In mid-June Battery C was moved to a low hill named Fire Base Tomahawk. Besides the approximately 70 members of the battery, the hill also had a security force of 18 men from the 101st.

"It was a bad hill" remembered Spc. 4 Ronald Hibbs. The base was overlooked by a higher hill that allowed the enemy to map out the American positions. Tomahawk had been used before, so it had bunkers, gun emplacements and a concertina wire perimeter. All were in poor condition and needed repair. Spc. 5 Donald Parrish recalled placing a third layer of sandbags on top of the two levels covering the fire direction center (FDC). That probably saved his and several other men's lives when the roof was stuck by an RPG round that did not penetrate the third layer of sandbags.

The night of June 18-19, 1969, was quiet as rain slacked off to a mist that hung heavy in the air. The battery's six M-109s were parked inside sandbagged revetments. Each six-man crew lived in a bunker just behind its gun. Other members of the unit were housed in the FDC, command post and communications bunkers. With no fire missions called for that night most of the men not on guard duty were asleep. No one saw or heard the North Vietnamese soldiers as they slipped under the wire. These men, called "sappers," were highly trained and

that only served to light the compound, making it easier for the infiltrators to find their targets. At the top of their target list were the six howitzers of Battery C.

Hibbs recalled his gun, No. 1, getting hit, probably by an RPG, and the crew bailing out through the rear door. He had no sooner exited when an enemy soldier threw a satchel charge under him. The explosion flipped him in the air. He came down still running in the right direction to get into his bunker. The back of his neck was burned and he an eardrum was burst. But his wounds were minor compared to some of the others.

Sgt. James Moore, section chief of gun No. 3, abandoned his howitzer which had exploded. He walked into the fire direction control bunker so badly burned that another Soldier remembered touching him and "...his skin just came off on my hand and that smell hit me like you wouldn't believe. And he said to me, "Donald, I'm burnt up." Moore died three days later on a hospital ship.

After several hours of fighting, much of it at close quarters, the battalion forced the enemy to break off the attack and withdraw, leaving 18 dead. The enemy destroyed four of the six M-109s along with eight other vehicles. Of the 18 infantrymen, four were dead and 13 more were wounded.

Battery C suffered a total of nine dead and 37 wounded. Of the nine men killed, five were Kentucky Guard Soldiers, four of whom were from Bardstown and one from Carrollton. During their tour in Vietnam, the 2nd Battalion, 138th Artillery lost eight men in action, more than any other deployed Guard unit. Six were from Bardstown.


Still, the battalion came home and started rebuilding. Battery C returned to Bardstown where it remains today, fully supported by a community proud of its service and honoring its sacrifice. 



Photo courtesy of Walter Bischoff

**Honoring the dead from the Kentucky Army National Guard's Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 138th Artillery at Fire Base Tomahawk in South Vietnam. Seven men died during a night attack in June 1969. Two more died from wounds several days later.**

# Texas Guard, Czech Army join forces for Clean Valley

By Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps

Texas National Guard

PRAGUE, Czech Republic – A single boom broke the spell of the snow-covered scene. Then bright-blue smoke, in stark contrast to the blackish trees and white ground around it, spewed from the point of the explosion. There was immediate human activity.

This was the showcase training event for members of the Texas National Guard and the Czech Republic Army participating in Exercise Clean Valley 2006.

A reconnaissance vehicle appeared first – the warning and reporting cell. It was the first to detect the agent used in the attack, monitor its effects, and survey and mark the area. Other vehicles arrived in rapid succession. They included a vehicle with its own nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) laboratory; another equipped and manned to provide security for the area; and a truck to evacuate the attack's casualties, who began to appear, helping one another, staggering, collapsing into the snow.

The military personnel helping the "attack victims" all wore clothing to protect them from NBC agents. Those investigating the attack agent wore special blue clothing which stood out from the olive drab or forest camouflage of the others.

Every one of these people, and the vehicles they used, underwent decontamination before departing the attack area. Those requiring medical attention were triaged and promptly decontaminated by being hosed down and scrubbed before being evacuated to a medical treatment center.

The exercise highlighted two weeks of military training for members of the Czech Republic Army and the Texas National Guard. Quick execution of the scenario demonstrated the planning, preparation and practice of the participants.

The event was unique because it was the first Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) exercise jointly executed by members of the Czech and Texas forces. Twenty-five Texans deployed to the Czech Republic to train with the 311th CBRN Defence Battalion under the State Partnership Program.

The demonstration took place April 11 at the Jince training camp, a 40-minute drive north of Prague, as part of Exercise Clean Valley 2006. Col. Cruz Medina, the Texas Guard's engineer brigade commander, and Col. Jiri Gajdos, 31st CBRN Defence Brigade commander, made a special trip to view the showcase event.

Medina cited two reasons why Czechs and Texans trained together. "The Czechs may help decontaminate our troops or allied troops in the Global War on Terrorism," he said. "Also,



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps, Texas National Guard

**A truck drives slowly through a frame spraying water to decontaminate the vehicle before leaving the contaminated area.**

we're both part of NATO, so it makes good sense to learn how they work."

The Texans included 19 members of the 436th Chemical Company from Laredo, five members of the 6th Civil Support Team from Austin, and one member of the 36th Infantry Division, also from Austin.

"Our people integrated into every part of the line," said Capt. Edgar Garcia of San Antonio, the officer in charge of the Texas contingent. "Two of our people even played 'victims.'"

The days leading up to the April 11 demonstration were busy ones, Garcia related. "The Czechs showed us their equipment and vehicles and explained how to use them," he said. "They showed us the iteration of the [decontamination processing] line. They showed us how they do each job at each point."

The Czechs and Texans also built the stations for the exercise, including the triage and decontamination tents. Staff Sgt. Martin Rancak of the 311th CBRN Defence Battalion, who worked closely with the Texans, added, "We worked really hard together. It was perfect."



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps, Texas National Guard

**Two Czech Republic Soldiers take a wounded victim, played by a Texas National Guardsman, into the decontamination tents where he will be stripped and scrubbed down.**

The Texans were already well versed in responding to CBRN events, having regularly trained as part of their state's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP) for the past two years. However, the Czechs do some things differently.

"They don't rely on engineers for extraction [of victims], military police for security and medics [from another organization] for triage," Garcia explained. "They have full integration and don't have to rely on outside sources."

One reason the Texas Guard's CERFP draws from different Guard units is because most of its members don't wear a uniform every day. The exception is the 6th CST which is a full-time active duty National Guard unit available to respond to terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, as well as other disasters. The CST is responsible for decontamination in the CERFP.

First Lt. George Pearson, who has belonged to the CST since its formation more than seven years ago, is the new operations officer for the team. His specialties include reconnaissance, surveys and sampling hazardous materials and the operation of technical equipment. His duties on the deployment to the Czech Republic included observation, technical oversight and coordination among the units.

"The Czech army is motivated and educated and supported at all levels by all levels," said a member of the Texas team. "They have a civilian and a military mission with few people but with a lot of heart. They definitely know what they're



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Gregory Ripps, Texas National Guard

**Czech Republic Soldier Pavel Libich (center) checks a simulated victim with the assistance of Texas National Guard Staff Sgt. Brenda Pena (left) and Spc. Amelia Vaughn, who performed the role of medics during Exercise Clean Valley 2006. The Czech Soldier is a member of the 311th CBRN Defence Battalion. The Texans are members of the 436th Chemical Company.**

doing in the business of NBC."

Before decontamination, the possible victims of contamination go through a triage, where they are separated into two groups: those who can walk and those who can't. Sgt. 1st Class Art Phillips, 6th CST team medic and laboratory technician, said the Czech military's triage is very efficient.

"They get the injured through decon quickly for further medical treatment," he observed.

Staff Sgt. Brenda Pena of the 436th Chemical Company noted that the Texas Air Guard normally provides the medical personnel for the CERFP exercises. However, for Exercise Clean Valley, she and Spc. Amelia Vaughn, also from the Laredo unit, played the role of medics at the last station.

"We did checks and provided care after the injured people completed decontamination and before they are boarded on an ambulance," Pena said. She also complimented the Czech soldiers for their speed and efficiency.

Although things are changing in the Czech Republic military, the National Guard allows its noncommissioned officers more authority than does the Czech military or, for that matter, the military of any other eastern European country, it was explained.

"They can see the responsibility an NCO carries in the U.S. military," Garcia said. The old top-down military structure is changing to allow more decision-making at lower levels, and the Texans provided examples of how that works.


The two groups learned other things from one another. The Czech Soldiers allowed the Texans to operate some of their weapons on the firing range. The Texans, in turn, demonstrated some of their equipment such as their chemical warfare defense ensemble, protective mask, radiation detector and chemical agent detection tape.

There was also time for the Texans to see some of the Czech Republic outside the training areas and occasions for socialization, such as a Czech "barbecue" and a friendly sports competition. Texans of all ranks expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to deploy to the Czech Republic.

"It was a great experience," said Staff Sgt. Adolfo Gonzalez Jr. of Laredo. "It is helpful, especially to younger members of the unit, to experience a different culture, to see the way the Czechs live, even [to encounter] the different rank structure."

"We welcome the opportunity to show you how we can operate," said Maj. Karel Dvorc, 311th CBRN Defence Battalion commander. "The demonstration was excellent. Thank you for the good job you did. I hope this is just the beginning of cooperation between us."

Medina said he had no doubt the Texas National Guard and the Czech armed forces would learn more from each other.

"The Czech Army is a world class organization in chemical warfare," Medina said. "We want to host the Czechs next year." 





# Minnesota rewarded for environmental care

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Minnesota Army National Guard's environmental stewardship was recognized by the secretary of defense during a May 3 ceremony at the Pentagon.

The Guard's Natural Resources Conservation Team won a Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for its efforts at Camp Ripley and throughout the state.

"This is an outstanding achievement for our team," Marty Skoglund, environmental supervisor, said after the ceremony.

Based at Camp Ripley and the Arden Hills Army Training Site, the team was cited for accomplishments that include:

- Teaming up with St. Cloud University to develop a system to evaluate natural resource requirements in planning military exercises.
  - Saving 50 percent of projected costs by performing its own rehabilitation work.
  - Implementing a forestry management program.
  - Reducing the use of active pesticide ingredients by 50 percent.
  - Working with surrounding communities to create buffer zones around training areas so development won't impact training.
- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

**Representatives of the Minnesota Army National Guard Natural Resources Conservation Team accepted a Secretary of Defense Environmental Award for natural resources conservation at the Pentagon on May 3.**

said that the Defense Department is the steward of 30 million acres where forces are housed and trained and where weapons are tested. "The duty to protect the natural resources of those lands is a profound responsibility," Rumsfeld observed.

"We're also responsible for maintaining adequate resources to house and train our forces as they work to secure and defend our nation," Kenneth Krieg, under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and

logistics, told the award winners at the Pentagon. "These two responsibilities are inextricably linked."

Marcus Peacock, deputy administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, said improving the environment has become more challenging since the secretary of defense's awards were introduced in 1961 because all the obvious, easy changes have already been made. "We have picked the low-hanging fruit ... and we are now left with the hard stuff,"

Peacock said.


He said good environmental stewardship "comes naturally to people who care about their country" such as Soldiers.

Founded in 1931, Camp Ripley covers nearly 53,000 acres.

"Camp Ripley's team of natural resources personnel has been effective in using cutting-edge technology to study some very sensitive species," said Skoglund, the environmental supervisor, "as well as being second in the nation to develop an Army compatible use buffer program that is really looking [to the] future of Camp Ripley and Soldier readiness."

The 13-member team was also cited for teaming up with more than 20 partners, including government, educational, non-profit, tribal and non-governmental organizations to accomplish its environmental goals.

The team was also praised for its efforts to educate hundreds of school and community groups. Skoglund said that community outreach exceeds 200 presentations to up to 15,000 people each year.

"It brings us closer to our community," he said of the award. "It demonstrates to our community our commitment to these resources." 

# Ohio wins Army Guard's top award for community excellence

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. – Ohio was the Army National Guard's overall winner in the 2006 Army Communities of Excellence Awards.

Dozens of Ohio Soldiers let out a resounding "Hooah!" followed by sustained applause during a May 3 ceremony at Arlington Hall, the Army National Guard Readiness Center, as their state took first place.

"Each and every one of the states that are here ... is a winner," Brig. Gen. Alberto Jimenez, special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard, said before he recognized 22 Guard programs. "Thank you for taking care of your Soldiers – our Soldiers – because ultimately the whole purpose of the (ACOE) program ... is to take care of Soldiers."

The next day, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker recognized the Ohio Army National Guard in a separate ceremony at the Pentagon for the state's selection as ACOE Special Category Winner by the Department of the Army.

"We are extremely proud of this accomplishment," said Maj. Gen. Greg Wayt, Ohio's adjutant general. "It recognizes years of hard work and effort by every Soldier in the Ohio Army National Guard and our goal of maintaining an effective, quality organization."

The ACOE program encourages continuous improvement. The Army Performance



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

**A large and ebullient Ohio Army National Guard delegation celebrated the state's selection as overall winner of the 2006 Army National Guard Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) Award at a May 3 ceremony at Arlington Hall, the Army National Guard Readiness Center in Arlington, Va. Holding the award are Maj. Gen. Greg Wayt, Ohio's adjutant general, and Brig. Gen. Matthew Kambic, assistant adjutant general. Brig. Gen. Alberto Jimenez, special assistant to the director of the Army National Guard, to the left of Wayt, presented the award. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker recognized the Ohio Army Guard as the Fiscal Year 2006 ACOE Special Category Winner in a separate, May 5, ceremony at the Pentagon on May 5.**

Improvement Criteria (APIC) provides the measures for ACOE evaluation.

The APIC categories are leadership; strategic planning; customer focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; human resources; process management and business results.

Focusing on ACOE standards has transformed Ohio's readiness, Wayt said.

"Seven years ago, we were ranked 46th in

readiness," he said. "Was it embarrassing? Absolutely it was embarrassing. Today, we're ranked No. 1 in the nation. I'm not bragging about it. It's the power of what ACOE does for us."

The ACOE achievement came shortly after Ohio announced that it met its 2006 recruiting goal six months ahead of schedule, and Brig. Gen. Matthew Kambic, assistant adjutant general, suggested the

two were connected.


"It is that kind of commitment to quality by leaders at every level that has led to our success in recruiting and sustaining readiness during arguably the most challenging times in our organization's history," Kambic said.

Jimenez said readiness is essential.

"We are in a momentary lull," Jimenez said, referring to decreased numbers of deployed Guard members. "If we hold true to the words of our president, this is a long war. Now we are in a lull to reset ourselves for the next campaign, wherever that next campaign may take us."

In addition to the ACOE award, the Ohio Army Guard receives \$750,000 to enhance the quality of life of its Soldiers and employees.

Ohio's contingent dwarfed the representation of 21 other Guard winners at the ceremony. "It truly is a team effort," Wayt said, as Ohio Soldiers crammed onto the stage to accept the award. "We've institutionalized it in our organization. We've been doing this for seven years."

In those seven years, Ohio has been a frequent winner, starting with the National Guard Bureau "Rookie of the Year" award in 2002. The state has been the Guard's overall winner three other times and has twice previously won the special category created by the Department of the Army to recognize National Guard ACOE accomplishments. 

*The Ohio National Guard Public Affairs Office contributed to this report.*