

NEW HAMPSHIRE

National Guard

Fall 2011

MAGAZINE



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On the cover: N.H. State Police Trooper and Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit member Ed Flynn suits up with the N.H. National Guard 12th CST during earlier training in Indiana.
Photo by Lori Duff

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Wing practices response to major accident



A member of the Pease Fire Department assists EMTs in loading a simulated casualty during a Mass Accident Response Exercise on July 14. The MARE, conducted at Pease Air National Guard Base, Newington, N.H., is part of the regular training for both full time military and traditional Guardsmen. Photo by Master Sgt. Timothy Psaledakis

By Capt. Sherri Pierce, JFHQ Public Affairs

It's 9 a.m. The crash phone rings. Sirens blare and the emergency crews are dispatched. Smoke rises from the wreckage on the north ramp. This was the scene of a simulated mid-air aircraft collision during the Major Accident Response Exercise held July 14 at Pease Air National Guard Base.

The exercise was designed to test the 157th Air Refueling Wing's ability to react to a large scale incident. Airmen had to quickly respond to simulated situations such as a plane crash, emergency landing, treatment of wounded, casualty recovery and exposure to hazardous materials.

The MARE was spearheaded by the Exercise Evaluation Team, a group of about 25 wing members "who evaluate their functional area and determine if each area is mission ready," said Senior Master Sgt. Keith Downs, the 157th ARW's installation emergency manager.

The nature of this type of emergency made it necessary to bring together many different groups on base such as Emergency Services, Air Traffic Control, Environmental, Medical, Public Affairs, Judge Advocate General, Senior Staff and the Command Post while convening the Emergency Operations Center and the Incident Command Center. All groups had to work closely together to ensure a successful response.



Members of the 157th Air Refueling Wing Fire and Emergency Services discuss how to approach the scene of an "accident" during the Major Accident Response Exercise July 14 at Pease Air National Guard Base.

Photo by Master Sgt. Timothy Psaledakis

The exercise went "very well" according to Downs. "There are always areas for improvement but overall this was very successful." ❖



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CST

train for worst case scenarios

By Spc. Karin Leach

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives – the things that even hazardous materials teams can't deal with – are the New Hampshire National Guard's 12th Civil Support Team's specialty.

In June, the team attended a weeklong chemical and biological warfare class to ensure their readiness. U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Jordan, CBRNE noncommissioned officer, 12th CST, said the class focused on differentiating between an inexperienced and experienced explosive maker.

"The course was a basic introduction to chemical and biological warfare. The class also included methamphetamine and explosives," said Jordan. "It is important to understand, just by looking, the differences between homemade and laboratory explosives."

The class trained the CST with demonstrations of violent chemical reaction. The components of the demonstrations could be found at any local hardware store, such as aluminum foil and drain cleaner.

"The best part of the course was the explosives part," said U.S. Army Sgt. Matthew Maguire, survey team member, 12th CST. "We, as a team, spend most of our training time focusing on chemical, biological and radiation-related weapons. The reality is that an explosive will be the likely means of dissemination. We, therefore, should have training to be able to identify the production of an explosive, what they might look like in raw form and how to respond."

New Hampshire's CST is a full-time unit staffed with 22 Army and Air National Guardsmen. The mission of the unit is to deploy by land or air to provide support for a potential or an actual CBRNE incident. CSTs are federally resourced, trained and evaluated, but fall under the control of the governor. The team has the ability to respond well before federal



Members of the CST simulate a recovery operation. Photo by Lori Duff

response assets could provide assistance and has an initial deployment time within 90 minutes of alert.

The New Hampshire CST was founded in 2005 and certified by the Secretary of Defense in 2007. Prior to certification, the unit underwent 15 months of individual and unit training. The unit is made up of six components: command, operations, communications, decontamination/logistics, medical/analytical and survey.

"The mission is to support civil authorities at domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives incident sites by identifying CBRNE agents and substances, assessing

current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with appropriate requests for additional support," said Jordan.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Edward Demers, reconnaissance noncommissioned officer, 12th CST, said he thoroughly enjoys his job and the training he receives.

"We have a mission that we train for and we execute on a daily basis," said Demers. "We get to actually do what we train for all the time."

Demers said the constant training enables the unit to think outside of the box and be prepared for anything. ♦



Top: A memorial to the United States Army was dedicated at the State Veterans Cemetery, May 30, in Boscawen. The etched glass and granite monument is a tribute to soldiers. The inscription reads, "Lest we forget, all gave some, some gave all." Photo by 1st Sgt. Michael Daigle



Right: Retired Maj. Gen. John Blair, former Adjutant General, state of New Hampshire, speaks at a ceremony dedicating a United States Army monument at this year's Memorial Day ceremony at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery, May 30, in Boscawen. At left are the current Adjutant General, William N. Reddel III, and the commander in chief of the New Hampshire National Guard, Gov. John Lynch. Photo by 1st Sgt. Michael Daigle



Chief Master Sgt. Bill Houghton, New Hampshire National Guard Counterdrug Task Force training officer in charge, along with federal Drug Enforcement Administration officials from New England, observes the loading of unwanted or unused prescription drugs turned over by citizens of New Hampshire at over 90 drop-off locations throughout the state at the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take-Back event on April 30. During the course of this semiannual event, more than 4,000 pounds of unused prescription drugs were secured by officials. Local police and substance abuse organizations helped organize the event with the intent of keeping New Hampshire residents safe from the potential abuse of these drugs. Photo by Spc. Rick Frost

Protzmann promoted to brigadier general, assumes command of the NHANG

By 2nd Lt. Aaron McCarthy
157th ARW Public Affairs

Col. Carolyn Protzmann was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and made the first female commander of the New Hampshire Air National Guard in front of more than 1,000 distinguished visitors, friends, family and National Guard members, June 4, at Pease Air National Guard Base.

Brig. Gen. Protzmann was vice wing commander of the 157th Air Refueling Wing at Pease, a position she has held since 2001.

“She has earned the admiration and respect of not only the wing, but also of the Joint Force Headquarters,” said Maj. Gen. William N. Reddel III, the Adjutant General, state of New Hampshire.

Protzmann told the audience that she would work her heart out for them, and for the organization. She told members of the unit that she expects them to give their best when they are with the Guard and, if they cannot because of the Guard, let someone know how they can help.

“Today, you have entrusted me with command, and I proudly wear the rank of brigadier general and know in my heart, just as proudly, I cherish the stripes of each and every one of our enlisted men and women of the New Hampshire Air National Guard,” Protzmann said. “Force development is caring for one another. We are each other’s wingmen. That person to the left of you and that person to the right of you is your wingman. And, just as importantly, you are theirs.”

A native of Franklin, N.H., Protzman joined the United States Air Force in 1979, receiving her commission through Officer Training School. She served as aircraft maintenance officer for two years, working with both transport and fighter aircraft and was a wing plans officer for the largest tactical fighter wing in the Air Force at Royal Air Force Bentwaters, England, for three years.

Protzmann joined the Air National Guard in 1984 as a traditional Guardsman services officer and in 1987, became the full-time logistics plans officer for the 157th Air Refueling Group. In 1992, she became the support group commander of the 157th Air Refueling Wing where she served until 2001 when she became the vice wing commander. ❖



Brig. Gen. Carolyn Protzmann receives her one-star rank insignia from her husband retired Col. James Protzmann and from Maj. Gen. William N. Reddel III, the Adjutant General, state of New Hampshire at Pease Air National Guard Base, N.H., June 4, 2011. Photo by Staff Sgt. Curtis Lenz



Right: Brig. Gen. Carolyn Protzmann assumes command of the New Hampshire Air National Guard by accepting the Headquarters State NHANG guidon from Maj. Gen. William N. Reddel III, the Adjutant General of the state of New Hampshire, at Pease Air National Guard Base, N.H., June 4, 2011. Protzmann is the first female commander of the New Hampshire Air National Guard. N.H. State Command Chief Master Sergeant Matthew Collier acts as the proffer for the ceremony. Photo by Staff Sgt. Curtis Lenz



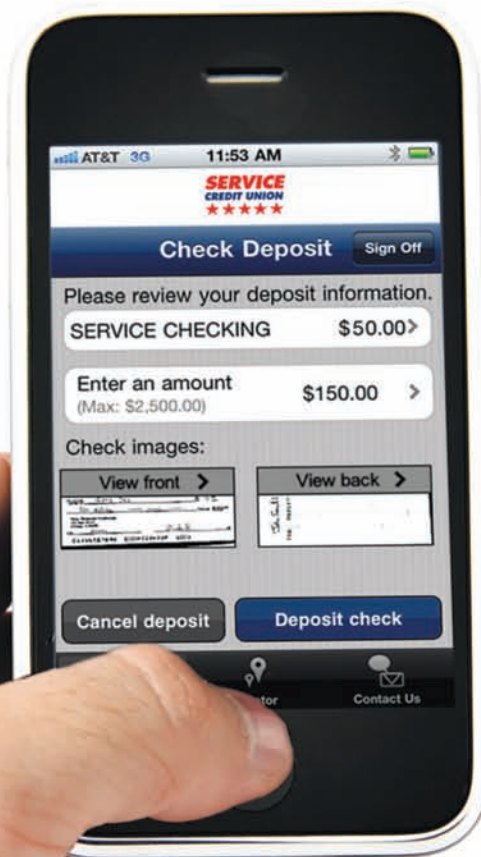
Brig. Gen. Carolyn Protzmann is sworn in as Deputy Adjutant General by the commander in chief of the New Hampshire National Guard, Gov. John Lynch, at the state house in Concord June 1. Photo by 1st Sgt. Michael Daigle

“Today, you have entrusted me with command, and I proudly wear the rank of brigadier general.”

– Brig. Gen. Protzmann

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Road to RECOVERY



Pfc. Ryan Sandlin, center, stands with his parents, Linda and Rod Sandlin, at their house in Bow, on July 22. Sandlin was diagnosed with cavernous sinus thrombosis: a clot within the sinus cavity at the base of the brain, which drains deoxygenated blood from the brain back to the heart. He and his family returned home July 14 from Fort Gordon, Ga., where he was receiving medical treatment. Now he will continue his physical rehabilitation at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Manchester. Photo by Spc. Courtney Selig

By Spc. Courtney Selig, NHNG Public Affairs Office

On March 12, 2009, Pfc. Ryan Sandlin, C Company, 3/172nd Infantry (Mountain), was at Fort Benning, Ga., attending Basic Combat Training. He went on sick call for headaches. The doctor's first diagnosis was meningitis. However, two days later he was diagnosed with cavernous sinus thrombosis – a clot within the sinus cavity at the base of the brain, which drains deoxygenated blood from the brain back to the heart. Sandlin was medically evacuated to Fort Gordon, Ga., and given a 50 percent chance of survival.

Since then he has survived, not just one, but two strokes. Doctors said that a staph infection caused a blood clot in the brain, leading to one stroke, followed by a second. Sandlin's case is one of only about 100 cases ever recorded where this has happened.

The Sandlin family was notified immediately and were flown down to see

their son in Georgia, where they stuck by his side for approximately two years.

"We have been very fortunate because since the phone call, they (the U.S. Army) have taken great care of us," said Rod Sandlin, Ryan's father. "The Army put us up in the Fisher House, which is next to the hospital, and we've been here for the past two years watching our son recover."

The Sandlin family was able to stay at the Fisher House on Fort Gordon, which is a program whose mission is to provide temporary lodging in a kind, caring and home-away-from-home environment to members of the armed services, veterans and their families during a medical crisis.

"The people are so nice," said Linda Sandlin, Ryan's mother. "They make you feel at home when really you're a thousand miles away."

Ryan agreed. He said that living in an environment like the one at Fort Gordon helped him with his recovery.

Sandlin's therapy was at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, one of the few active duty wards still operating in the VA system. There, he was able to go through treatment with other soldiers, many of them combat veterans, and still spend time with his family.

"You wake up every day in the same room as someone who has a lot of work ahead of them, too," said Sandlin. "Having other soldiers there is like having a second backbone – they pick you up, and you pick them up when it seems a little harder than the day before."

While he was making his recovery, several members of the New Hampshire National Guard went to Fort Gordon to visit him.

"It was really awesome having soldiers, like Command Sgt. Maj. Nanof, come and visit," he said. "You feel like people back home really care, and you know they haven't forgotten about you."

Today, Sandlin is doing very well and making a remarkable recovery.

"When he got out of the hospital originally, doctors thought he would be bedridden for the rest of his life," said Rod Sandlin. "Now, he can talk, bathe, walk and dress himself."

July 14 was the Sandlin family's last day at the medical facility in Georgia. They flew in to Manchester-Boston Regional Airport at midnight July 15.

Sandlin's father said that Ryan has made quite the recovery, and he's come a long way, but he still has a long way to go.

"He's got a long road ahead, but he's been in good spirits throughout this process, and he's willing to work harder – he wants to live on his own," said Rod Sandlin. "He wants to work harder than he's ever worked for his recovery." ❖

"Having other soldiers there is like having a second backbone – they pick you up, and you pick them up when it seems a little harder than the day before."

– Pfc. Ryan Sandlin

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How one airman's selflessness saved four lives

By Capt. Sherri Pierce, NHNG Public Affairs

On May 24, four individuals from across the country woke up from surgery with a new lot on life. All thanks to Master Sgt. Marc Gagnon.

Gagnon, (pronounced Ganyon) an Air National Guard Joint Force Headquarters knowledge operations specialist, donated his kidney to an anonymous recipient, which sparked three other kidney donations in a process called a paired kidney chain exchange.

A paired kidney exchange chain transplant “creates opportunities for endless recipient-donor pairings,” according to the University of California Health System. “It starts with an altruistic donor – someone who wants to donate a kidney out of the goodness of his or her heart. That kidney is transplanted into a recipient who had a donor willing to give a kidney, but was not a match. To keep the chain going, the incompatible donor gives a kidney to a patient unknown to him or her who has been identified as a match, essentially ‘paying it forward.’”

Gagnon is also placed on the top of the transplant waiting list should he ever need a kidney in the future.

Gagnon first had the notion of donating a kidney years ago when his wife's cousin Karen needed a transplant. When Karen was five, she underwent a routine tonsillectomy but, due to undiagnosed high blood pressure and severe complications, immediately had to have one kidney removed. The other kidney was damaged but to a lesser degree. In high school, Karen started dialysis on her remaining kidney and had her first cadaver transplant in 1987. In 2004, she starting rejecting that kidney and was put back on dialysis and the waiting list. It was then that Gagnon, a universal donor with type O blood, started the process to see if he was a match. Unfortunately, Karen passed away before a transplant could take place.

In October 2010, Gagnon read that 19 people a day die waiting for organ transplants and that got him thinking,



Master Sgt. Marc Gagnon poses with his “Donate Life” baseball cap May 19, 2011, just days before he donated his kidney to an anonymous recipient. His donation sparks a series of three other kidney donations through a process called a kidney chain transplant. Photo by Capt. Sherri Pierce

“If I was going to donate back then, why not do it now?”

Gagnon did some research and got in touch with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center that does living organ donations. Over several months, Gagnon met with surgical teams and social workers and underwent a series of tests to ensure that he was healthy enough to withstand the surgery and live life with one kidney.

“I discovered I am a very healthy 52-year-old male,” he reported.

Gagnon also had many discussions with his wife, Cheryl.

“This will have a big impact on her,” he said. “She will have to care for me.” The recovery time is estimated at about four to eight weeks, according to Gagnon.

“I will be with him every step of the way,” she said.

How did Gagnon prepare for the surgery? In this day and age, he did what every tech savvy individual would do. He had a virtual going away party for his kidney on Facebook.

During this virtual event, Gagnon asked for thoughts and prayers on the day of the operation and for people to consider becoming an organ donor.

“I personally feel people shouldn't be

taking healthy organs to the grave,” he said. “There is just so much good that can come from donating them.”

The response was “overwhelming,” Gagnon said.

“Marc, what you are doing is brave and unselfish,” one post read.

“WOW. I am speechless. What an incredible selfless thing to do. You are awesome and I am proud to be your friend!” another post read.

Not only did he discover tremendous support for the kidney donation, but also many people are already organ donors.

“What a gift! I am already an organ donor and fully believe in it.”

“I have the red heart on my license.”

“I too am an organ donor.”

The posts go on and on.

“I'm humbled by the reaction,” said Gagnon. “I don't consider myself a cynical person but I was expecting someone to say, ‘Are you out of your mind?’ And nobody has,” he said. “I have received lots of support and prayers.”

“If one person who reads this article turns to a loved one and says, ‘God forbid anything should happen to me, I want to be an organ donor.’ That would just be the coolest, wouldn't it?” Gagnon remarked. ❖

197th FIB commander assesses Kuwait SECFOR mission

Col. Peter Corey, commander of the 197th Fires Brigade, assesses the brigade's SECFOR mission in support of Operation New Dawn as the Middle East experiences a historic upheaval. Interviewed by Maj. Greg Heilshorn, 197th FIB PAO, earlier this year.

Is the deployment what you expected?

I never expected to be included in so many ancillary missions – sending two teams to Afghanistan, our role in Kuwait's 50/20 parade and driving the MaxxPro MRAPs to the war-fighter in Iraq. All of that in addition to our primary security force mission.

It's been a lot more complex and challenging, and busier than I envisioned. The dynamics of the Army Dive Team, the chemical company and explosive ordnance company have added a lot to our plates that we really didn't grasp prior to our arrival.



Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Bey, a New Bedford, Mass., resident assigned to Echo Battery, 1st Battalion, 101st FA, Massachusetts Army Guard, is coined by Col. Peter Corey, commander of the 197th Fires Brigade, for his outstanding leadership during a presentation at Balad, Iraq, July 9. Looking on is Staff Sgt. Dennis Galimberti of Laconia, N.H., who was also coined by Corey.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Neal Mitchell

I didn't realize how intricate the relationships are between the various headquarters, and the incredible dependence we have on contractors. It puts an artificial constraint on a commander who wants to get something accomplished. Things change, unforeseen events, but sometimes your hands are tied and you have to work within the confines of the contractor.



The 3rd/197th Field Artillery maintenance crew. Photo by Capt. Brian Calhoun

197th Fires Brigade completes Security Force deployment in support of Operation New Dawn

By Maj. Greg Heilshorn, 197th FIB PAO

The 197th Fires Brigade supported a theater Security Forces mission in support of Operation New Dawn from November 2010 to August 2011. It provided Quick Reaction Forces at all United States Army Forces, Central Command, bases located in Kuwait, and ran all of the camp command cells. The brigade provided security for short and long hauls into Iraq and has supported Area Reaction Force missions in the north and south of Kuwait.

Additionally, the brigade conducted host-nation training, deployed teams to Afghanistan for property accountability and container management, assisted the Pentagon with mass grave documentation and recovery of Missing in Action remains, and provided support to the Defense Reutilization Management Office.

Over the course of its deployment, the 197th Fires Brigade conducted missions in

13 different countries, setting the following benchmarks:

- drove more than 2 million miles without a serious accident
- conducted nearly 6,000 QRF missions and more than 200 ARF missions
- completed more than 30 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle escort missions
- trained more than 700 Kuwaiti service members on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear explosive operations
- destroyed more than 200,000 pounds of expired munitions
- performed more than 150 underwater missions to secure critical infrastructure
- completed more than 30,000 camp work orders
- conducted 140,000 third country national searches and 70,000 vehicle searches.

The 197th Fires Brigade is a New Hampshire Army National Guard artillery

unit commanded by Col. Peter Corey and headquartered in Manchester, N.H.

It comprises five field artillery battalions from four different states – 1/103rd FA, Rhode Island National Guard; 1/201st FA, West Virginia National Guard; 1/182nd FA, Michigan National Guard; 1/119th FA, Michigan National Guard; and 3/197th FA, New Hampshire National Guard. It also includes a support battalion, TAB and signal company.

More than 2,400 soldiers are assigned to the brigade. While in Kuwait they provided command & control for a U.S. Navy/Coast Guard contingent; the 7th Engineer Dive Team; 44th Chemical Company and the 319th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, Washington National Guard. The brigade also provided initial support to two Oklahoma Army Guard battalions that were diverted to Kuwait – 1/160th FA and 1/180th Cavalry. ♦



Spc. Andrew Bushong uses a hand-held chemical detector on a pair of leaking artillery shells during a CBRNE drill at the Seaport of Debarkation, Kuwait, June 15. Looking on are Spc. Donte Burgess and Cpl. Sylvia Troop. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Neil Mitchell

Does it surprise you that the brigade has handled so many additional missions?

I had no doubts we could perform whatever we were asked to do. Soldiers have stepped up to the plate marvelously. We have received tremendous accolades from the higher command here including an e-mail trail from Gen. Petraeus on our mission in Afghanistan. That's pretty cool. We have good leaders, good soldiers, and we're making it happen. I am a little disappointed we are here between the two surges. But as much as I would like us to be a part of the final withdrawal from Iraq, what we are doing now is meaningful and setting the conditions for that which is to follow.

Have there been many issues?

We've had our fair share of personnel and discipline issues, but to our credit, we dealt firmly with those issues at mobilization station and that has paid dividends



Sgt. Jared Dineen, a water management NCO with the 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion, New Hampshire Army Guard, briefs Kuwaiti officials on a system he created to locate and plot the remains of Iraqi soldiers missing since the first Gulf War at the Kuwait National Committee for Missing and POW Affairs office, Kuwait City, May 30.

Photo by Lt. Col. Kathryn Van Auken

here. We're doing better than what historical statistics for a unit this size would predict. We've made some adjustments with people and positions. To our credit as well, we've really emphasized soldier safety at mobilization station, and that too has paid dividends. The first 60 days and the last 30 days are typically when units experience serious accidents or injuries. We've had none to date and endeavor to maintain that record.

Why such a strong emphasis on safety and also equal opportunity? You have a lieutenant colonel as the safety officer and chief warrant officer 3 as the equal

opportunity advisor. Is that directed by higher headquarters or part of your personal command philosophy?

That's who I am. You never put soldiers in a position of unnecessary risk, and the second part is that I am a very strong believer in treating all with equality, dignity and respect. I was actually offended recently by a visitor's question on how the female soldiers are doing compared to the males. I don't view females any differently than males. In my mind's eye, I've never measured one against the other. On some level it troubles me that in our society the two are constantly compared.

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But you have a policy that female CET soldiers have to have a female battle buddy.

It's prudent that when there is a woman on a CET (convoy escort team) that she has a female battle buddy. Historically, women have been victimized more than males. You can't ignore the culture. Unfortunately, that is the reality on the ground. Ignoring that puts your female soldiers at unnecessary risk.

During this morning's shift change, you referred to the upheaval spreading across the Middle East as a kind of "Great Awakening." You reminded your soldiers to be aware of what's going on here.

Certainly, we happen to be in the Middle East at a historic time that I think will be labeled as some era when historians look back. And we are here in the middle of it, so to speak. We don't know the full potential of how it could impact what we are doing and what we might be asked to do. We've already accomplished some additional training as a prudent measure if we get called upon to respond to one of those events. It's a long list of Arab countries, and it causes you to remain vigilant and focused.

Looking ahead to the next six months, what will be the brigade's focus?

We'll be fully engaged in redeployment planning for the return of people and equipment. What actions need to be completed at demobilization station? Getting soldiers demobilized in time to start college. We are looking at soldiers who are not employed and what we can do to help them before they get home. We also are planning to receive the unit replacing us. There is a tremendous amount of planning, and at the same time we have to maintain current operations.

What have you learned about yourself on this deployment?

It's been an eye-opening experience in terms of the politics and dynamics that occur in multi-component, multi-echelon, strategic headquarters. It has given me tremendous professional exposure to the world of logistics and what it takes to sustain the war fight. It's just phenomenal.

You're always learning. Every experience helps you improve. It has helped me to be a better delegator. To rely upon and trust those key staff members and commanders to do their jobs. It has given me an incredible admiration for soldiers'



Spc. Jaresha Mason, a chemical specialist with the 44th Chemical Company, inspects the dip stick of a Bradley fighting vehicle held by Juan Ramirez, an American ITT contractor, during a equipment fielding exercise on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, June 24-25. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Neil Mitchell

motivation. For that young private – that guy or gal who is willing to stand in that turret behind a .50-caliber for hours on end driving through the Iraqi night and just be happy to do it is incredible. No complaints. They are proud of what they are doing, proud of their unit, proud of their profession, proud of their job. It's really fulfilling to see that.

There's been an incredible maturation of individuals, staffs, and commands and how people have grown into a professional, fully functioning organization. It's something you don't accomplish at an annual training. This incredible machine, this highly functioning brigade, will return from here a completely different organization. It has matured exponentially. ❖

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First lady brings message of support to N.H. service members

By Staff Sgt. Whitney Hughes,
114th Public Affairs Detachment

“We want you to know that this country has your back,” said first lady Michelle Obama to a group of about 160 military veterans, mostly New Hampshire National Guardsmen and their families.

Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, wife of the vice president, visited the NHNG headquarters in Concord July 24 as part of their Joining Forces Initiative to recognize and support veterans. The cookout was held for the first lady and Biden to introduce veterans to the Joining Forces Initiative and to thank them for their sacrifices during their deployments.

“The first lady and I came here today for a very simple reason – to say thank you to all of you for your service,” said Biden.

Service members were served barbecue catered by The Meat House before Obama and Biden arrived. Both visitors spoke,



First lady Michelle Obama talks with Spc. Ryan Broza, Operational Support Airlift, Detachment 18, during her visit. Broza was on leave from his deployment to Afghanistan during the first lady's visit.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle

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thanking the veterans for their service, and Obama described the Joining Forces Initiative, a program designed to bring attention to the unique needs and strength of America's military families.

Obama also announced a new program called the Community Challenge, which will recognize individuals and groups around the country who are making a difference in the lives of military families.

After their speeches, Obama and Biden circulated to each table hugging and speaking with service members and their families, such as U.S. Army Spc. Ryan Broza of the Operational Support Airlift, Detachment 18.

“I absolutely feel like it's an honor to be here,” Broza said. “They have certainly sacrificed a lot with me being gone, Erica especially,” referring to his family and girlfriend, Erica Casey. Broza, who was on leave from his current deployment in Afghanistan, said that he was deeply appreciative to be able to bring his family to the event.

Like Broza, U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Mills of the 157th Logistics Readiness Squadron, who returned in June from a six-month deployment to Kuwait, was flattered to be chosen to represent his unit at the ceremony. Both he and his

wife, Lisa, were extremely impressed with the NHNG Family Program, which coordinated the event.

With Mills' recent deployment, the topic of the day – supporting deployed service members and veterans – was a fresh one for them, so they were well aware of the challenges that face families during deployments.

“I didn't think I would need any help, but life happens while they're away. Being linked to these services was very helpful,” said Lisa Mills.

In addition to getting the word out about the Joining Forces Initiative and the Community Challenge, an important purpose of Obama and Biden's visit was to honor combat veterans, who make up about 85 percent of the New Hampshire National Guard force.

“It was a wonderful honor. I think her mission was to support us, and we could not feel more supported,” said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Klee Dienes with C Company of the 3/238th Aviation Company. His wife, Unity Dienes, agreed adding, “To be supported and to have Mrs. Obama come stand next to me and give me a hug and tell me I was doing a great job – that's something that's going to keep me going for a long time.” ❖



First lady Michelle Obama talks with Jen Bennett at JFHQ on July 24. Bennett is the wife of Maj. Shawn Bennett, who was deployed at the time the photo was taken. In the photo from left, Maj. Gen. William Reddel, Adjutant General, state of New Hampshire; Bonnie Rice, Family Program; first lady Obama; Bennett and Lisa Challenger, wife of Lt. Col. James Challenger, also deployed at the time. Photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle



Dr. Jill Biden poses with Airman 1st Class Christopher and Airman 1st Class Sean Wood of the 157th Air Refueling Wing during Operation Thank You! on July 24. The event was held to recognize and thank military members and their families. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Wyatt

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New Hampshire National Guard Family Program: Mission first, family always

Story and photos by Spc. Karin Leach

As a community oriented organization, one of the things the National Guard prides itself on is its commitment to not only its members, but to the families and loved ones who support each Guardsman. "Mission first: family always," is a saying often used to describe this sentiment, and in the New Hampshire National Guard, no group better exemplifies this motto than its family program.

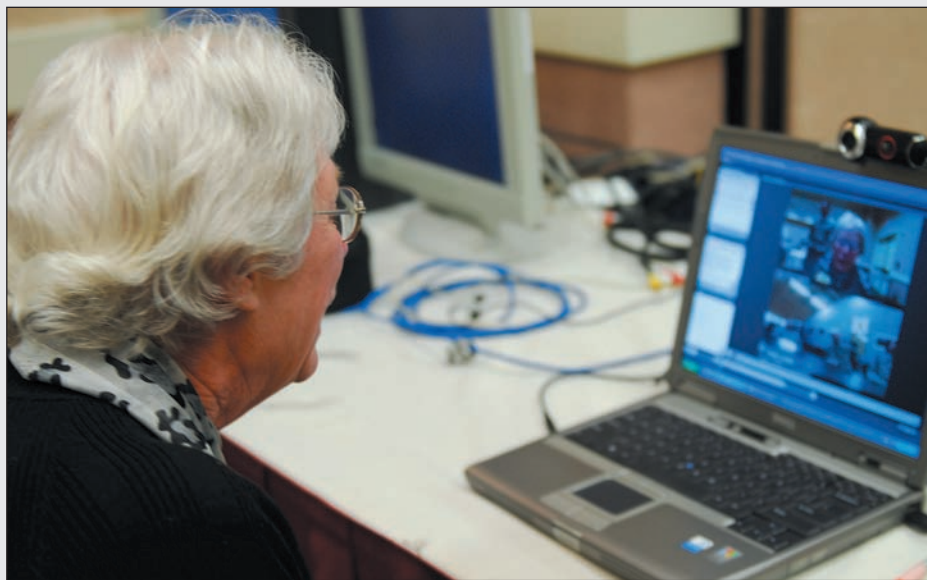
The New Hampshire National Guard Family Program is an organization of family members, volunteers, service members and civilian employees working together to provide moral support and communication. The program provides financial, emotional, household and health care support. Family Readiness Groups are set up in units to disseminate information and provide assistance to the family and friends of the deployed service members.

Deb Foss, the spouse of retired 1st Sgt. Earl Foss, said she has become very close to many people since becoming involved with the program and enjoys being a part of bringing camaraderie to those involved.

"We are there to support the families so soldiers can concentrate on their mission and not worry about things they



U.S. Air Force Col. Carolyn Protzmann and Sue Ploof, both members of the New Hampshire National Guard's Family Program, hug after being recognized for their hard work and dedication to service members, on April 10 in Nashua. The program provides financial, emotional, household and health care support. Family Readiness Groups are set up in units to disseminate information and provide assistance to the family and friends of deployed service members.



Linda Veinotte, a member of the New Hampshire National Guard Family Program, video teleconferences with N.H. Guardsmen deployed to Kuwait after a Family Readiness Program award ceremony in Nashua, April 10. Veinotte, also known as "Mutha" for her caring nature, was so ecstatic to see the service members on the VTC, that after the ceremony she rushed over to the computer to talk with them. The VTC was conducted to recognize the members of the FRP for their hard work and dedication to service members and their families. The program provides financial, emotional, household and health care support. Family Readiness Groups are set up in units to disseminate information and provide assistance to the family and friends of deployed service members.

cannot fix at home (while deployed)," said Foss. "We are there to provide families moral support or an outlet to be able to meet with others going through the same struggles as they are. We are there to help them cope to the best of their ability."

Beate Picknell, a family assistant specialist for the Guard, believes that the groups are very helpful to family members. She said the groups allow people of like situations to bond and help one another.

"Nobody knows what you are talking about when you say, 'Oh my goodness. I woke up and I couldn't breathe, I was so scared,'" said Picknell. "People will just ask you if you went to the doctor instead of understanding what a panic attack is. You have to have been there to appreciate how stressful deployments can be."

The program originated from Army families who banded together during times of need, such as deployments, to provide support and information for service members' families. The program began to grow in 2003 and now has 130 volunteers.

Foss has been involved in the military for 39 years. Her involvement began when she was 19 and her husband was drafted to Vietnam. Foss said her experiences have taught her how to encourage military spouses and help them to realize their potential.

"I am part of a big family," said Foss. "There is a sense of fulfillment for the volunteer knowing you are able to be there for the soldiers and spouse and children when they need help, a friend, a mentor or a caregiver."

Linda Veinotte, the mother of Chaplain Steven Veinotte, decided to volunteer after her son asked her if she wanted to participate in the program. She said it was the best thing that has ever happened to her.

"I just love it," said Veinotte. "I love being a volunteer and being able to help others when and wherever there's a need. I've gotten to know a lot of people that I really respect and love. They have become very special to me. I am so thankful for this opportunity and

"I love being a volunteer and being able to help others when and wherever there's a need."

— Linda Veinotte, the mother of Chaplain Steven Veinotte

recommend it to all. There is no bigger blessing than to help others."

On April 10 in Nashua, N.H., the Family Readiness Program gathered the volunteers to congratulate them and hand out awards for their hard work.

There were about 10 different awards handed out. The awards recognized the volunteers for going above and beyond what the expectation was of them.

Some of the top awards handed out included the Distinguished Volunteer of the Year Award, Rookie of the Year Award and the Presidential Unit Award.

Kathy Rice, family readiness support assistant, 197th Fires Brigade, said even if she wasn't getting paid to do her job she would still do it.

"If I made a difference in only one life, it was worth it," said Rice. "People are in your lives for a reason; you just don't know what's behind the scenes sometimes. If anyone had the chance to volunteer, I would tell them to do it. There is everything to gain." ❖



The New Hampshire National Guard Family Program, an organization whose mission is to support members of the Guard and their families, recognizes its members each year by giving them awards for their efforts and a quilt to pin the awards on and display them. The program provides financial, emotional, household and health care support. Family Readiness Groups are set up in units to disseminate information and provide assistance to the family and friends of deployed service members.

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Barley House Wolves: Kuwait Chapter plays first desert match

Editor's Note: In early September 2010, 13 members of New Hampshire's Barley House Wolves hurling team embarked on a yearlong deployment to the Middle East with the New Hampshire National Guard's 197th Fires Brigade.

The Wolves, Northeast America's first American-born hurling team, was forged in 2005 when a group of soldiers from New Hampshire's Mountain Infantry Company, while on their way back home from combat in Iraq, witnessed a broadcast of the ancient warrior sport of hurling in Shannon International Airport.

Since 2006, members of the Wolves have deployed and redeployed to places like Iraq and Afghanistan and have returned to the pitch to share their bond as warriors and hurlers.

When hurlers with the 197th Fires Brigade deployed in support of Operation New Dawn, they set out to bring hurling with them. This month, the Barley House Wolves: Kuwait Chapter held the first-ever U.S. Forces hurling match in the Middle East. This is their story.

By Sgt. 1st Class Eddie Clements

A small contingent of the Barley House Wolves has been separated from the club in New Hampshire for almost a year now.

We are here in Kuwait supporting Operation New Dawn and the drawdown of military operations in Iraq.

Our missions have varied. Some of the members provide protection for convoys traveling throughout Iraq and to and from international military camps in Kuwait. Other members work in command cells, responsible for maintaining the security and preservation of the five operating bases in the country.

Before we set out for deployment, we decided we wanted to keep our hurling skills sharp. With our command's approval and the generous donations of supporters, we worked to get hold of equipment and facilities, and scheduled regular training sessions.

The evening training sessions were scheduled twice a week. They proved to be considerably demanding after a long day's mission, coupled with the 100-degree Fahrenheit temperatures. Practices were cancelled on more than one occasion due to sandstorms.



Soldiers of New Hampshire National Guard's 197th Fires Brigade, deployed to Kuwait, gather after an intrasquad hurling match at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 17. Back row, from left: Capt. Adam Burritt; Staff Sgt. Michael Ricard; Spc. Tim McMahon; Capt. Dave Devoy III; 1st. Lt. Eric Moore and Staff Sgt. Jeremy Chaisson. Front row, from left: Spc. James Berry; Maj. Michael Moranti; Sgt 1st Class Eddie Clements; Spc. Brandon Dodge; Sgt. Jason Burpee and Sgt Jon Demers. The soldiers are members of the Barley House Wolves; Northeastern America's first American-born hurling team. Photo by Sgt. Brian Gordon

Because genuine grass playing fields are not available in the desert of Kuwait, we settled on the use of a synthetic turf field for match play. The surface is similar to that of the indoor pitch we train on in New Hampshire when the winter months blanket the ground with heavy snow.

Along the way we have been able to recruit new members and spread awareness of the ancient Celtic game of hurling to more military members deployed overseas.

On July 17, the Kuwait Chapter of the Barley House Wolves held its very first hurling match on Kuwaiti soil.

The six-on-a-side match was played in the early morning hours at Camp Arifjan, as temperatures exceed 100 degrees F. by 8 a.m. most days in July.

The club split and formed a Green team and a Grey team for the match. With six of the members playing in their first match, the Wolves anchored both teams with veteran players. The Green team was captained by Capt. David DeVoy III, while I led the Grey team.

The Grey team struck first, sending a point over the bar to take an early lead.

Veteran hurlers controlled the first half of the match, with DeVoy scoring a

goal early to put the Green team ahead by two.

Near the end of the first half, I was able to sneak a goal behind the net minder and connected twice with points over the bar.

Sgt. Jason Burpee was all over the field making great plays to keep the slotar away from the Grey net, while Staff Sgt. Jeremy Chaisson made several great stops in net for the Green side, keeping the score close.

At the end of the first half the score was Grey 2-3 and Green 1-0.

The second half belonged to the rookies, though, with the Green team charging back to keep the score closer.

DeVoy switched with Chaisson and played goal for the second half, making great saves to keep the Grey team at bay, while rookie Sgt. Jon Demers moved up to forward from the defensive end of the field. The move paid off for Green, with Demers finding the back of the net three times.

With solid defense on both sides of the field from rookies Spc. Brandon Dodge and 1st Lt. Eric Moore, the teams continued to battle for the game.

Capt. Adam Burritt made a late save on Chaisson that would make National

Hockey League Boston Bruins goaltender Tim Thomas proud.

Staff Sgt. Mike Ricard and Maj. Mike Moranti both moved the ball well up the side of the field to the Green team forwards.

Rookie Spc. Tim McMahon had two goals for the day for the Grey team.

Chaisson added two points late in the match to go along with an earlier goal in the second half to tie the score.

The last two minutes of the match were hard fought on both sides, but the Grey team emerged victorious with a final score of Grey 4-8 (20) and Green 5-3 (18).

It was a great day for the Wolves and for hurling. This fall the 197th Fires Brigade will redeploy back to New Hampshire, and the Barley House Wolves will compete for the GAA North American County Board Jr. C Championship in San Francisco. ❖



Sgt. 1st Class Eddie Clements of Salem heads downfield during an intrasquad hurling match at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 17. Clements serves with 3/197th FA. The soldiers play on a new, artificial pitch (field). Hurling is an ancient Celtic sport similar to field hockey played with a small ball and a curved wooden stick. The soldiers play for N.H.'s Barley House Wolves, a team comprising mostly N.H. National Guardsmen. Photos by Sgt. Brian Gordon

For more information on the Barley House Wolves, watch the documentary "Two Fields, One Team" at: http://www.pentagonchannel.mil/?pid=3Pux4ygvqh8ItOr_SuXtXCuTEQVyz2nBO.

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The New Hampshire National Guard Honor Guard team carries the casket of Spc. Nicholas Bernier during his funeral on July 9. Bernier died on June 25 after sustaining combat wounds while deployed as an active duty soldier in Afghanistan. He was assigned as a combat medic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Photo by Spc. Courtney Selig

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David Obertanec, JFHQ

Master Sergeant

Cori Jordan, 157 MDG

Technical Sergeant

Melinda Fuller, 157 MXS
 Valerie Johnson, 157 LRS
 Lonnie Major, 157 LRS

Staff Sergeant

Nicholas Kornutki, 157 MXS

Senior Airman

Matthew Pongrace, 133 ARS
 Ryan O'Connor, 157 FSS
 Chamroeun Yim, 157 MDG

Airman First Class

Jeffrey Cole, 157 Student Flight
 Jacob Deangelis, 157 FSS
 Matthew Prugger, 157 Student Flight
 Spencer Schenkelberg, 157 Student Flight
 Philip Chu, 157 Student Flight



Members of the New Hampshire National Guard Cycling Team, from left, Master Sgt. Kevin McElroy, Maj. Barry Groton and Senior Airman Cara Bellerose, after their weekly 20-mile bike ride. The team gets together every Wednesday for a group ride, open to all members of the Guard, during lunch break.

Photo by Spc. Courtney Selig

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47th Annual N.H. Guard Golf Classic 2011

Current and retired members of the New Hampshire National Guard played golf at The Oaks on July 25. The winner of this year's tournament, with a score of 72, was Jim Fecteau. The Adjutant General's Trophy winner of the 47th Annual New Hampshire National Guard Golf Classic 2011 was the New Hampshire Air National Guard. The Adjutant General's Trophy is awarded for the lowest 16-person gross scores by the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard.

Throughout the tournament there were also three challenges to include who could get closest to the pin, also known as the hole, on both hole three and 13, as well as the longest drive. The winners of these challenges were

- Dick Trafton Closest to the pin on #3
- Bill Houghton Closest to the pin #13
- Jim Lee longest drive



Top: Sgt. 1st Class James Austin, a battalion supply sergeant for 54th Troop Command, putts his way back on to the green, at The Oaks, in Somersworth, N.H., as part of the New Hampshire National Guard's 47th annual golf tournament on July 25. Photo by Spc. Courtney Selig



Left: Randy Stewart, a retired member of the New Hampshire Air National Guard, plays golf at The Oaks, in Somersworth, N.H., with former and current members of the Guard, as part of the New Hampshire National Guard's 47th annual golf tournament on July 25. Photo by Spc. Courtney Selig



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