

# Granite Guardian

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*Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes*

HOLMES

1976 ~ 2004

Husband ♦ Father ♦ Soldier

ARMY

# Granite Guardian



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## Commander's Call

Mission First, Family Always

By Brig. Gen. John Weeden, AAG, NHARNG



When I think about my family, I am always rewarded by the great feeling I get. As with so many other people, my family means everything to me. They depend on me, and I on them, and this is the way it should be. Sometimes we are challenged by events we don't, or can't control, but we are always comforted by those who care for us.

Today is much different than yesterday. Tomorrow is always a new beginning, and unpredictable. So, we work, function, and perform in the areas we can exercise some control; that is, today... now. What we do today will certainly affect tomorrow.

We have loved ones who have answered the call to duty. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and other relationships are in active military service, deployed for their country, giving of themselves so others remain safe and free. They are the soldiers of the New Hampshire Army National Guard. They are out there for us, America's heroes, embracing our values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Service, Honor, Integrity, and Courage. We owe much to them.

I am privileged to have met most of our deploying soldiers. I am proud of every one of them. They come from all walks of life and different experiences. But, there is one common thread woven throughout their formations: they rely on each other, as brothers and sisters, for things that only soldiers know and need. They rely on us to ensure that things are taken care of here while they "move out" to do their duty. We will meet that expectation.

It seems so much time has elapsed since we gathered at the departure ceremonies across the state to honor our troops and to send them off in a dignified and appropriate manner. The armories and auditoriums were filled with hundreds of people, over a thousand at a couple. Those ceremonies were expressions of great caring for our troops. They were affected by the outpouring of support, and I think they know how much that support resonates beyond the now quieted walls of the buildings where the speeches were given. One thing is certain, our soldiers and their units are better prepared to complete their missions because of the strong sense of pride and caring shown by so many people, but mostly from their families.

We cannot be effective soldiers without the support of our families. There is no doubt that we have that support. We see evidence of it every day: active and creative Family Support Groups; a caring and pro-active chain-of-command, providing resources, supporting and facilitating the Family Readiness Program mission; and, friends and partners from many walks of life performing wonderful acts of kindness. Our troops deserve all this.

In the months ahead, we will continue to focus on family matters. It is our most critical mission here. With hard work and dedication, we'll get the job done. On behalf of the entire NHARNG, I want all family members and other loved ones know that we appreciate your sacrifices and are truly grateful for your support.

Cover Photo by NH Air National Guard Audio Visual Team

# Sgt. Holmes represents the best in all of us

By Capt. Greg Heilshorn  
114th MPAD

CONCORD – In April we paid our final respects to Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes, a 27-year-old truck driver with the 744th Transportation Company who was the first N.H. Guardsmen killed in the Global War on Terrorism and the first to die in combat operations since Vietnam when 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery lost six soldiers in 1969.

Through his wife, grandparents and siblings, we learned that Sgt. Holmes was more than just a promising young soldier. He was a loving husband, proud father and a man who easily befriended others.

“He had a way of making people feel comfortable,” Kim said.

They were remarkable traits considering Sgt. Holmes' childhood. He endured the breakup of his family and the tragic death of his mother before the age of 14. His two brothers were adopted by a family that moved out of state, and his two sisters went to live with a different family in the Seacoast. Sgt. Holmes lived with his grandparents.

But Sgt. Holmes seemed to have an innate sense of the importance of family. He called his grandparents “Mom” and “Dad.” He looked out for his sisters and he went to every family reunion and wedding. It was as if the breakup made him more determined to be an exemplary son and brother.

“He represented everything good about this family,” said his sister Nicole Allard.

After five years of active duty in the army, Sgt. Holmes started a family of his own. He had found his soul-mate in Kim and their 1-year-old son Kaleb was already demonstrating his father's gift for making people feel good. “He always knows when someone needs a hug or laugh,” Kim said.

Sgt. Holmes had just been hired as a regional sales representative for a home improvement supplier when the 744th was mobilized last December. He was upset at the timing of having to deploy. He was anxious to prove himself in his new job and he did not want to leave his wife and son. But he believed in serving



**Honor Guard** (Photo by Mike Ross of *Fosters Daily Democrat*, reprined with permission.)

his country.

In the military, Sgt. Holmes also saw a means of bettering himself and a way to save money for college. He excelled as a soldier and his natural charm endeared him to members of the 744th soon after he joined the unit in 1999. They called him “Jay” and “Holmesy.”

“Sgt. Holmes was one of those soldiers you were drawn to just to see his smile and get reenergized from his positive attitude and his willingness to help,” said Capt. Mary Bergner, commander of the 744th.

By the time his casket arrived home from Iraq, those of us who did not serve with Sgt. Holmes knew enough about him to feel a connection. About 600 people attended his funeral in Dover on April 7. More than 100 were soldiers and airmen from the N.H. National Guard.

“There is a Sgt. Holmes in every one of our units,” remarked a member of the N.H. Air Guard's 157th Refueling Wing. “He was like so many of us. He was a husband and he was a father. He did not want to leave his family, but he knew he had a job to do.”

On March 29, along an overpass west of Baghdad, Sgt. Holmes was doing his job when a homemade bomb exploded underneath his truck. He was part of a convoy bringing fresh supplies to a Marine unit.

*“There is a Sgt. Holmes  
in every one of our units.”*

Sgt. Holmes received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for valor, and he was promoted posthumously. At the graveside service, Maj Gen. John Blair, the State Adjutant General, presented Kim with her husband's medals and an American flag.

“I prayed this day would never happen, and when it happened that it would never happen again,” he told a group of journalists after the service.

Since last August, more than half of the N.H. Army Guard has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay. Five N.H. Air Guardsmen are in Iraq supporting Army ground missions; another airman is setting up communication infrastructure in Afghanistan and 200 others just completed a month rotation in Turkey.

The loss of Sgt. Holmes reminds us how noble and decent these young men and women are, and how understated their courage is.

They represent the best in all of us.

# N.H. Guard ground and air forces perform bravely

*Editor's Note: The following updates were submitted by each unit commander via email in late April for the NH Guard's monthly press briefing. They have been slightly edited for grammar and OPSEC.*

## Status of N.H. National Guard deployed units as of May 1, 2004

Total number of NH National Guardsmen: 2,700

NH Army National Guard: 1,700. 900 mobilized.\*

NH Air National Guard: 1,000. 200 mobilized\*

Number of NH Guardsmen overseas: 1,000

Number of NH Guardsmen instate: 1,700

\*some have been mobilized to support missions  
at Pease and at other U.S. bases

Note: 3643rd Maintenance Company, based in Concord has provided more than half its  
guardsmen to augment deploying units.

## **744th Transportation Company, based in Hillsboro, with armories in Claremont and Somersworth. One hundred and fifty soldiers in Iraq conducting transportation missions.**

*Capt. Mary Bergner, of Hampton, is commander of the 744th. The unit arrived in Iraq in early March. Its mission has been to transport dry goods, water, food, petroleum products and general supplies to ground units. As of the middle of April, the unit had logged 130,000 miles and completed 24 missions.*

Our soldiers are doing exceptionally well. I will not lie to you and tell you things are great and we are always safe and sound, you know that's not the truth for a soldier serving their country. We are all growing stronger and closer as the days pass. We are continuing on with missions and there is more respect than ever being given to the mission of the transportation companies.

The ultimate sacrifice has been paid by one of our own (Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes of North Berwick, Maine) and our thoughts and prayers are with Kim (wife) and Kaleb (son) every day. There is a void in the area without Jay's laughter and smile around to brighten us up when we're having a bad day. We will never forget him and he will always hold a part in our heart for what a great person and exceptional soldier he was.

We stand proud as soldiers and truly believe that we are making a difference for fighting the war on terrorism. We all agree, we stand tall to fight the fight over here to prevent our families from having to experience it in our country.

Our days consist of receiving missions, preparing for missions and training on the hazards that exist along the way. We conduct AARs after every mission and pass the needed information on within the company and to educate all our soldiers on the latest intelligence. We receive daily briefs on what to expect along the routes that we are traveling. There are weekly meetings where we discuss what other units have experienced and what was found to be effective on how to react to certain situations. It is a continuous learning cycle to keep everyone as safe and as informed as possible on how to handle situations we may encounter.

We do a lot of internal sharing formally and informally. My favorite is stopping to have a cup of coffee in Sgt. Michael Lafont's (Claremont) coffee shop, or sitting outdoors around the bonfire where you always sit down with at least a handful of soldiers engaged in thought-provoking discussion.

# in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, Turkey

**Company C, 3rd/ 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain), based in Manchester. Eight soldiers have been in Afghanistan since last September training and patrolling with members of the Afghan National Army. Another 180 soldiers are in Iraq conducting security and patrol operations.**

*Capt. Raymond Valas, of Goffstown, is commander of Company C. Its missions have included convoy security, main supply route security, route reconnaissance, cordon and search and joint patrols with members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. The unit arrived in Iraq in late March.*

The Mountain Company has captured three enemy prisoners and numerous enemy weapons systems to include rocket propelled grenades (RPG's), AK-47 rifles, and plastic explosives.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Shangraw's (Elliott, ME) squad was in an ambush while escorting 30 vehicles. About half of the escorted tractor trailers were disabled

in the ambush. While still in contact from the rear, receiving AK-47 (fire), grenades and RPG's, they encountered an IED (improvised explosive device) to the front. In order to move the rest of the convoy out of the kill zone, Sgt. Iver Bowen (Hancock) placed his vehicle directly next to the IED, as a shield, allowing the rest of the convoy to pass on the other side, safely. He used himself as a human shield for the rest of the element to pass to safety.

Staff Sgt. Lenny Parent's (Manchester) squad was ambushed by a platoon-size element with IED, RPG, AK47 (fire), grenades and mortars. A U.S. civilian's arm was severed by an IED blast. Spec. Paul Brassard (Weare), a Manchester firefighter, applied a tourniquet and put IVs in the civilian's feet because the veins in his upper body had collapsed. Brassard was able to calm the man and keep him positive and focused as he applied the tourniquet. He even had the presence of mind to use his forceps to remove a piece of shrapnel from the casualty's chest, clean it off, and put in a container for him as a souvenir, which cheered him up and helped him survive.

Staff Sgt. Jeff Garland's (Seabrook) patrol received enemy fire while conducting

a movement to contact. They returned fire and suppressed the enemy, then conducted a cordon and search of three houses. After clearing house to house, they captured mortars, small arms, ammo and took three prisoners. The prisoners were questioned on site by a Mountain Company soldier who speaks Arabic, Sgt. Zack Bazzi (Dover). The information gathered by Sgt. Bazzi led to a raid that day by 1st Infantry Division soldiers, who captured a huge stockpile of enemy weapons in a nearby town.

While coming to the rescue of a U.S. unit that had taken casualties, 2nd Lt. Dan Newman (Merrimack) used aviation assets to assist his squad's response. An Apache helicopter was shot down. Newman's squad secured the outer cordon around the downed Apache and suppressed fire that was coming from all directions. While suppressing enemy fire from one building, they realized a civilian family was trapped inside. Staff Sgt. Sage Ladieu (Alton) used his squad to enter the building and clear the enemy out. With no regard for his own safety, Newman rushed through enemy fire and escorted the family to safety behind an armored humvee. The rest of his element continued to secure the site until a larger

element could arrive.

During a mortar attack at our base camp, a U.S. soldier from another unit was injured by shrapnel to his leg and back. Spec. Mario Raymundo (Manchester), a native of El Salvador, rushed to his aid despite the incoming enemy mortar fire. Showing no concern for personal safety, he stabilized the casualty and helped medics who later arrived on site to treat and evacuate the casualty.

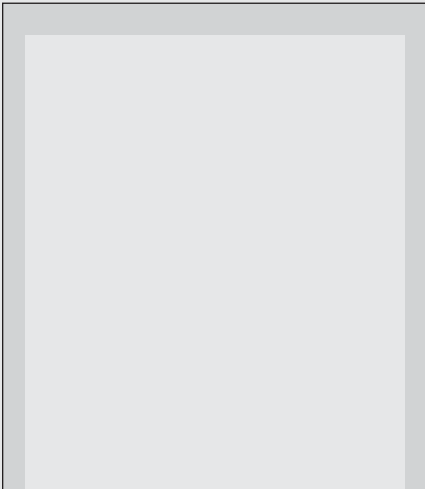
The men of this company have fought bravely for each other, and continue to do so, every day, as we bring peace and stability to the region. We have adopted a local school and regularly deliver supplies to the children. Our Mountain Company Family Support Group continues to collect supplies and get them to us so we can assist these children.

Every day as we move among them, people smile and wave. You can see genuine appreciation in their eyes for the work we do for them. The small group of enemy that seeks to undermine their peace process is not welcome in their communities, and they welcome the security and generosity we bring.

Every day this nation survives and doesn't descend into chaos is a victory for the people of Iraq.

# Professionalism, commitment to duty define

**210th Engineer Detachment, based in Peterborough. Fifty soldiers are in Afghanistan providing engineering and construction support for Operation Enduring Freedom.**



*Capt. Craig Lapiana, of Merrimack, is commander of the 210th Engineer Detachment. His unit has been in Afghanistan since early March. The unit is supporting engineer and construction projects.*

We have been directly contributing to the support of the multicoalition base we are living on, but recently we took on additional duties to help support the local humanitarian efforts. Our first project is overseeing the rebuilding of a local school. A local contractor is hired who in turn hires laborers from a local village to do the work.

We manage the overall project to ensure that the work is performed to standard. These projects are a win-win situation in that having the locals per-

form the work puts money directly into the Afghan economy, the kids get a great school and the people see first-hand that Americans care about them. They get a better understanding that we are here to help improve their standard of living. We also enjoy the interaction with a fascinating culture whose people are friendly and welcome us with smiles.

They really are very glad that we are here. Good signs are shown that trust has been developed, which shows up in little things like a child giving us a thumbs up when we do missions outside our base camp. This is not just a single child but pretty much every child you see. Simple things like this help you deal with the hardships you must endure.

Unit morale is good but it is very hard being away from our families. It is a real sacrifice. However, we are focused and determined to accomplish our mission and serve our country to the best of our abilities. It is truly a hardship, which must be endured in particular by the families back home but one worth making.

Sgt. Lance Emond (Greenville), an assistant section sergeant, has been heading up a team that is wiring existing dry storage structures on base. His section sergeant, Staff Sgt. Pros Launh (Peterborough) has been keeping the other electricians installing lights and running wires in new living areas.

Plumbers, like Sgt. Christopher Dow (Hartland, VT), have been pitching in a hand to help out electricians because of a lack of indoor plumbing on post. So his "cross training" is not only benefiting soldiers, airmen and marines on post, but he is also learning a new skill. Another plumber, Sgt. Keith Killgren (Nashua) and his crew, which includes Spec. Christopher Lucas (Dublin), Spec.

Jason Morand (Derry) and Private 1st Class Joshua Rasch (Farmington), are a team that performs physically demanding concrete work each day.

Sgt. Mark Plummer (Concord) and a crew of carpenters have been building partitions in the new "B-huts," while Spec. Glenn Griffiths (Keene), Spec. Gregory Taylor (Keene) and Spec. Krystal Brooks (Mattapan, MA) have been performing improvements to the Post Chapel. Each of these projects is being executed in sync under the close eye of their section sergeant, Sgt. Michael Dugan (Antrim).

Some of our "horizontal" section troops (Spec. William Fohy, (Templeton, MA) Spec. Joseph Cain (Franklin) and Spec. James McCabe (Farmington)) have been doing concrete work and drainage improvements. Their skills are appreciated by a fellow engineer commander who is heading up that particular project. He needed more soldiers to accomplish his mission and our horizontal section has stepped up to the plate to help out.

Behind the scenes we have a staff of soldiers who support the main effort in accomplishing the unit's overall mission of supporting the base. People like Spec. Marie McGourty (Manchester), who retrieves the unit mail each day among her other duties. Others like Sgt. Robert Johnson (Templeton, MA), Staff Sgt. John Ford (Penacook) and Staff Sgt. Paul Bisbee (Baldwinville, MA) work hard to ensure that materials and supplies are drawn each day to support the multitude of missions being executed.

The bottom line is a free Afghanistan is here, yes, in its infancy, but it has a chance directly do to a sacrifice of Americans who have dared to care.

# N.H. Guard's service in Global War on Terrorism

**Detachment 2, 169th Military Police Company, based in Concord. Six soldiers have been in Guantanamo Bay since last August performing guard and security operations at detention facilities. Scheduled to return early this summer.**

*Staff Sgt. Yvette Trapani, of Lincoln, is team leader for six-man unit supporting guard and security operations at detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.*

The six of us are all doing very well down here in Guantanamo Bay.

Sgt. Richard Diehl (East Swanzey), after working a special mission for 5 ½ months, has returned to the platoon and is working in the camp as a block NCO (noncommissioned officer) and doing an excellent job. Sgt. Stephen Dennis (Heniker), also a block NCO in the camp continues to baffle his "customers" with his "verbal judo." He is a very well respected NCO here-respected by his peers and detainees. Cpl. Anthony Wynands (Deering), also a block NCO, has proven

himself an excellent NCO and was selected by our company to attend the NCO of the month board. Spec. Michel Powers (Center Barnstead), our resident "gentle giant", works a variety of jobs in the camp to include block guard, medical escort and security at the interrogation buildings. He does an outstanding job in any position and continues to impress his leadership and peers. Spec. Audra Vigliotte (Windham) is a force of nature on the blocks. Nobody messes with "Vig." Her friendly nature outside the block has made her very well known throughout the joint task force. She is always a favorite to work with. As for me, I've been out of the camp since late December working another mission. The job I do is a very good one; I'm an inspector for a team of MP's.

**1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery, based in Manchester with armories in Rochester, Portsmouth, Milford and Nashua. One hundred and eighty 180 soldiers are in Iraq conducting security missions. Thirty soldiers of Charlie Battery, from the Portsmouth Armory, are augmenting security operations at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington.**

*Capt. Eric Fessenden, of Windham, is commander of 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery Forward. His unit arrived in Iraq in early March. The unit has been conducting security operations.*

1/172nd 'Marauders' continue to perform our security missions in southern Iraq. Unit morale remains high, despite rising temperatures and blowing sandstorms. Our 'artillerymen' are now very comfortable executing the military police mission, and we continue to receive additional training here in Iraq.

I have recommended Pvt. 2 Michael Trumble (Manchester) for an award for his actions on April 14. On that day Trumble, despite being unarmed and outnumbered, personally discovered and detained two Iraqi detainees that were attempting to escape from a local internment facility. This brave act is but one example of the outstanding work being done by our New Hampshire soldiers every day here.

The operations tempo has certainly picked up – longer days, higher temps (over 100 degrees some days) and the occasional sandstorm have definitely made our missions more difficult. But I rarely hear a complaint from our soldiers. They drive on with their missions and I truly admire them for that.

In addition to our primary security mission, we are all participating in advanced military police training conducted by a

team from the Army Military Police School. There are also firing ranges in the area that our soldiers use to practice firing the various weapon systems we have.

Yesterday morning, I had the opportunity to brief the Brigade commander on 172nd missions. He was very impressed with our unit, especially the work our Maintenance section is doing to keep our vehicles running in such a harsh environment. 1st Lt. Jared Boucher (Rochester) (my maintenance officer) and Staff Sgt. Bruce Goding (Nashua) (motor sergeant) have a great team of mechanics working for them – Staff Sgt. Daniel Schultz (Merrimack), Spec. Nathaniel Savoy (Merrimack), Spec. Jason Leach (Arundel, ME), Sgt. Michael Ricard (Nashua), Spec. Jeremy Chaisson (Rochester), Spec. Andrew Clifford (Nashua), Spec. John Cass Jr. (Milford) and Sgt. Edgardo Diaz (Manchester).

They do all the "behind scenes" work that gets little fanfare, but without them we couldn't accomplish our missions and keep our soldiers safe.

The threat level remains relatively low in most of the areas we operate. The fighting that you have seen outside of Baghdad has not involved our unit, and our area of operations remains calm. Of course the leadership constantly reminds our soldiers to remain on high alert for anything, but what you are seeing on TV is NOT what we are experiencing.

**2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, based in Berlin with armories in Lancaster, Littleton, Plymouth, Woodsville, Lebanon and Franklin. One hundred and eighty soldiers are in Iraq conducting security missions.**

*Capt. Matt Boucher, of Barrington, is commander of 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Forward. His unit is conducting multiple security missions. Like 1st Battalion, the unit is fulfilling a military police mission.*

3rd Platoon is assigned to a Stryker Battalion. The platoon has discovered several caches of weapons and ammunition. Their patrols have located rockets and RPG's before anticoalition forces (ACF) have had a chance to launch them on friendly positions. The platoon is working in conjunction with the Strykers to enforce a city wide curfew, conduct police station checks, and

patrol parts of the city. The Stryker leadership is very pleased with the performance of our platoon and their ability to locate and disrupt enemy activity.

1st Platoon works directly for the Division Provost Marshal. They are transporting enemy detainees to various detention facilities. They also provide convoy security for supply and equipment convoys.

4th Platoon is tasked with providing security and support for the Transition and Integration Program (TIP) academy. The TIP academy trains Iraqi Police (IP) to operate at the same level of proficiency and integrity as American police officers. Lessons focus on human rights, international law, crime scene investigation, police reports and weapons proficiency. The TIP academy has grown from 70 students during their first class to 225 for the May class. Overall goals for the program are to create an Iraqi Police force free of corruption and neglect that is capable of administering justice and protecting the law abiding people of Iraq. The platoon conducts searches of all personnel and vehicles

entering the compound as well as providing over watch security of the academy perimeter. They also mentor the IP's on how to improve their force protection measures for the compound.

2nd Platoon lives and works a provincial police headquarters. The mission here at the Police HQ is to assist the IP's with police station operations, oversight of local police, force protection of the facility, and running a TIP academy at the station. The academy recently graduated 45 IP's and will be starting another class of 60 next week. We conduct patrols (mounted and dismounted) in our area with the IP's, conduct cordon and search operations in our area, and provide Quick Reaction Force (QRF) support.

As you can see, the MP mission is very diversified and is a huge change from our field artillery background. The soldiers of the 2/197th MP Company are doing extraordinary things everyday to increase security for coalition troops and the Iraqi people and to help the Iraqi Police Forces improve their capabilities.

**133rd Air Refueling Squadron, based at Pease. About 200 airmen have been part of a one-month rotation in Turkey to support American and Allied air operations. The rotation began in late March and ends this week.**

*Cols. Richard Martell, the Wing Commander and Mark Sears, the Assistant Adjutant General of the NHANG, were the expeditionary group commanders throughout the successful, one-month mission.*

In addition to supporting air-refueling operations, members of the 133rd rewrote the operations plan for all Air National Guard tanker units that will rotate through Turkey. The 133rd also established a great working relationship with the Turkish military. During the April rotation, a Turkish aircraft was flown to Pease for repair.

The 133rd also facilitated the delivery of thousands of boxes of N.H. Girl Scout cookies, donated by N.H. citizens and Gov. Craig Benson. The cookies were made available in a hangar known as the "Freedom Hangar" used by U.S. service members on their way into theater and when they depart theater.

The refueling operation based in Turkey represents a final link in an air bridge that begins over the Atlantic. The 157th Air Refueling Wing has played a major role in the air bridge since 9-11.





# Family Program keeps families connected

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Daigle  
114th MPAD

The New Hampshire National Guard Family Program develops a support network through which families mutually support each other. The goal is the establishment of communications networks between family members and the unit to improve awareness of the military unit, its mission, and activities.

“A successful Family Program can develop a more positive attitude in family members towards themselves, the unit, and the New Hampshire National Guard,” said 2nd Lt. Ken Leedberg, Family program coordination for the NHNG. “We want every family member to feel connected.”

The Family Program works as a resource and referral office. It points families to people and programs that can help them with any problem they may have while their soldier is away. It has become even more important now that the New Hampshire Guard is going through its largest deployment ever, according to Master Sgt. Peter Merritt, Assistant State Family Program Coordinator.

Family Support Programs are not new. They are simply an officially sanctioned version of activities that soldiers and families have been involved in since the beginning of U. S. military service. Family support groups help the families, the soldiers and the Army. They help the family by fostering a sense of belonging to the unit and developing friendships with each other. The program helps the soldier by giving him confidence that the command is supporting his family while he is away, so he can concentrate on his mission. It helps the Army because by integrating the family into the Army, the family will be more comfortable with the military lifestyle and provide support to the soldier’s career choice, Merritt explained. “What is new is the extensive online resources offered to families through web sites, Merritt said. “Our web site has grown dramatically to help meet the needs of the families.”

To meet the needs of the Family Program, four more family assistance centers



**Mrs. Speltz** (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Daigle)

have recently opened. The Littleton, Hillsboro, Manchester and Somersworth Armories now have family assistance centers.

According to Leedberg, the program is working daily with family members solving a variety of problems. The problems range from helping a spouse get childcare to getting a soldier home after the death of a loved one in their family.

Because this level of deployment is new to everyone in the New Hampshire Guard, the program is constantly evolving.

We are listening to families and taking in their feedback,” Leedberg said. “We do a good job of taking care of soldiers needs; we want to do the same thing for the families. And it is the right thing to do.”

The family program has posted a rumor control page on the web site after listening to other state family programs and some of the problems they were having concerning rumors. “We realized there are many questions and concerns and we saw this as an opportunity for families to be able to go to one source to get their questions answered”, Leedberg said. “To date the rumor line is working nicely.”

It will not be possible to answer some questions because of security reasons.

The last thing the New Hampshire National Guard and the Family Program wants to do is to put its soldiers or units in danger. Also, some answers need research and it takes time to get the appropriate response and then post it on the web.

Free tax preparation information has also been posted on the Family Program Web site for all guardsmen and families. There is a retail discount link that lists all businesses that have contacted the Guard and want to give discount to guardsmen. There are also links like the Homeland Helpers web site.

It is up to each unit to provide the Family Program with the information for their unit web page. Space for a web page has been provided and units just have to put what information they want on it. Web design classes have been provided. Also, in process is the posting of all unit newsletters on this section for the entire Guard family. This will allow a family member, a deployed soldier or a full-time member not deployed to see what is happening with the units.

“If we can help the families at home, the soldier can stay focused on his mission”, Leedberg said. “The soldiers are making a big sacrifice – we owe this to them.”

**Family Program Web Sites mentions in this article:**

[http://www.nharmyguard.com/family\\_services/index.htm](http://www.nharmyguard.com/family_services/index.htm)

[http://www.nharmyguard.com/family\\_services/rumor\\_control.htm](http://www.nharmyguard.com/family_services/rumor_control.htm)

# N.H. Military families feel the warmth of local generosity

CONCORD – Oil dealers from around the state have donated more than 14,000 gallons of home heating oil to Operation Helping Hand, a program that is providing free home heating oil to New Hampshire families of U.S. troops deployed overseas.

The program is administered through the Oil Heat Council of New Hampshire and the Chaplain's Emergency Relief Fund, overseen by Lt. Col. William Paige, the chaplain for the New Hampshire Army National Guard.

U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., and Oil Heat Council of New Hampshire officials unveiled the program last Friday.

"I want to extend my deepest thanks to the Oil Heat Council of New Hampshire and the Chaplain's Emergency Relief Fund for their overwhelming commitment to the families of our troops overseas," Gregg said. "Today it is critical that we recognize the heroic efforts of our troops and praise them for their dedication."

People eligible for the program include New Hampshire families who have mem-

bers serving overseas in any U.S. military branch, and who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of that military service.

Applications for assistance are available from the chaplain's office; Sen. Gregg's office; the Oil Heat Council of N.H.; any participating oil dealer, or any New Hampshire chapter of the American Red Cross. Applicants determined eligible will receive up to 150 gallons of free home heating oil, delivered to their home anywhere in New Hampshire.

To date, one Granite State family of a U.S. service member has benefited from the program, according to Capt. Gregory Heilshorn, the state public affairs officer for the New Hampshire National Guard.

Some 1,600 military members from New Hampshire who are now deployed have left behind numerous dependent family members, including an estimated 900 children, according to information from the Oil Heat Council.

A total of 14,200 gallons of fuel oil have been donated by 25 oil companies

for the program.

"We are very pleased to help New Hampshire families of the military, and we want to send them the message that we are here for them while their loved ones are stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, or elsewhere," said Bob Garside, president of the Oil Heat Council of New Hampshire.

"This is a very tangible way for us to get involved and provide a real helping hand, and I am grateful to our membership for their generous contribution."

The program will continue until all of the fuel is distributed to those in need.

It is anticipated the program will end on April 30, 2005. Completed applications for the program should be forwarded to Operation Helping Hand, c/o Chaplain's Emergency Relief Fund, New Hampshire National Guard, 279 Shaker Road, Concord, NH 03301. Applicants may also contact Paige at 227-1560 or [william.r.paige@us.army.mil](mailto:william.r.paige@us.army.mil).



Concord Monitor  
May 18, 2004  
*Reprinted with permission*

PENACOOK – Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul McDonald, son of SFC Sharon Pearson, has been inducted into the Sgt. Audie L. Murphy Club, which was formed in 1986 in honor of the Army's most-decorated World War II combat soldier. A 1988 graduate of Concord High School, McDonald is a senior small group leader assigned to the Non-commissioned Officer Academy at Fort Rucker in Daleville, Ala. He has 15 years of military service.

# Veteren's Home Story

By Capt. Greg Heilshorn  
114th MPAD

TILTON – One hundred and fifty patriots live at the N.H. Veterans Home in Tilton. Each one has their own memories of serving their country in a time of war.

Dementia has robbed some of the ability to share them. Anguish has caused others to seal theirs away.

Somewhere in between those two extremes were the six veterans we met on the first Saturday of March – a trumpet player, an infantryman, a pharmacist, an aircraft mechanic, a weapons system designer and a radio operator. Collectively, they represented more than a half-century of military service from World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam.

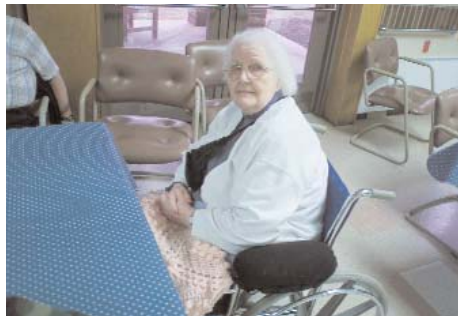
They all were delighted with the opportunity to bend our ears.

A week earlier, we asked the home's public relations director, Lisa-Marie Mulkern, if the Granite Guardian could interview a group of veterans and ask them what kind of advice they would give to a new generation of wartime soldier – our New Hampshire National Guardsmen.

The five men and one woman Mulkern assembled at a table in the home's dining hall were as good a cross section of military service as you could find short of an official census, and it was no coincidence that they were some of the home's more outspoken residents.

“Two things I held on to very closely,” said Charles Safford, the 82-year-old radio operator, who served in World War II. “One was a positive attitude and the other was to always have hope, even if you were scared.”

Safford, the president of the veteran's home resident council, was joined around the table by Raymond Michaud, 83, a musician first class in the Coast Guard during World War II; Inga Pinciak, 84, a pharmacist third mate in the Navy medical corps during World War II; David Arnold, age , an Army private who served with the 1st Division, 16th Infantry during World War II; David Whitney, 74, an aircraft mechanic in the Army during the Korean War; and Phil Walton, 59 , an Air



**Residents of the NH Veteran's Home** (Photos by Pvt. Comeau)

Force captain who served stateside designing weapons systems during the end of the Vietnam War.

They are the kind of residents who will greet you in the hall and by the time you find who you were looking for, you know more about them than one of your own grandparents. They are part of the charm of any long term health care facility.

The N. H. Veterans Home opened more than 100 years ago to care for soldiers who fought in the Civil War. It was a stately manor set on 30 acres of rolling farmland in the Highland section of Tilton, operating both as a health care facility and farm for 50 years.

Men who could not care for themselves because of wounds, disease, old age or other sicknesses were admitted. They were given the status of a corps in the Grand Army of the Republic and most stayed the remainder of their lives at what became known as “the fortress.”

Today, with renovations and the addition of a new 100-bed dementia unit, the home resembles a small hospital, a reflection of the growing elderly population as well as the medical advances in care.

The “soldiers” now include women, and represent the next century of military

service in which a unified America was forced to defend a way of life on foreign soil. The oldest residents served in World War II. The youngest served in Vietnam.

They are spending their last days here, too. From May to December of last year, 27 veterans died. Another 26 moved in during the same time.

To be eligible for a room at the home, an applicant must have served on active duty for at least 90 days during a period of war. It's that tie that brought us here on a drill Saturday.

Like good troops, our hosts came prepared with photos, newspaper clippings and plenty of fresh coffee. As the interview progressed into a discussion, it was clear the veterans had been following the global war on terrorism and were well aware of New Hampshire's role in the fight.

Walton brought a three-ring binder swelled to capacity. Since 9-11, he has cataloged every U.S. military casualty that has been posted on the Department of Defense Web site.

“So there is one place in New Hampshire that they are remembered,” said Walton, who remains active in Support the Troop rallies throughout the state.

Among the group, there was also an

enormous amount of pride in today's service members.

"I, myself, am thrilled by the willingness and patriotism young people have today that have joined the service," Safford said. "They were not drafted. They volunteered. I thought patriotism was dying, but since 9-11 and for other reasons like Iraq and Afghanistan it really thrills me to see the courage from today's young people to join the service and protect the things they believe in."

Their stories reflected a similar courage.

During World War II, Michaud carried a trumpet instead of gun. He entertained troops in England and France. But being a musician did not make him immune to the reality of war.

"It was about two o'clock in the morning and we heard this awful noise," Michaud recalled of his first night in London. "It was a buzz bomb. It was one of Hitler's buzz bombs and it knocked us out of our bunks.

"The next day we saw this hole in the ground about 50 feet deep. It just missed us by a hair."

The lesson was too simple for Michaud to keep a straight face.

"If you hear a loud noise than find a hole in the ground and jump in head first," he chuckled.

"Even if it's filled with mud and water," added Whitney.

After he returned home from the war, Michaud played professionally. A cartoonist for the now defunct Boston Post described his playing as "Hotter than Plumbers Blow Torch" when his band played at a Boston Red Sox home opener in 1944 against the NY Yankees.

"I was young and foolish then, and now I am old and foolish," said Michaud, who still plays at ceremonies.

Pinciak did her time stateside.

"I joined the Navy to see the world and I ended up in Brunswick, Maine," she said.

As part of a medical unit, Pinciak saw the soldiers when they returned stateside for treatment. She later married and her son went to Vietnam twice.

"I wondered about him, but I tried not

to be emotional about it," Piniak said.

"For the wives and families (of NH Guardsmen), I would tell them to keep the faith and pray that everything will be alright."

Whitney arrived in Korea after most of the fighting had ceased, but he still had to keep on his toes.

"Things were quiet when I got over there with the exception of once in awhile North Korea would send over a light plane," Whitney said. "We called it 'bed check Charlie' and it would throw small bombs out like the size of hand grenades."

Another time, a member of Whitney's unit pointed a loaded rifle at his stomach after the soldier went into a drunken tirade.

The standoff ended without incident. The next morning during formation, eight rounds fell out of the soldier's rifle during arms inspection.

"That kind of gave me a start," Whitney said. His piece of advice was obvious.

"You can't even turn your back, not for a minute," he said. "Always be alert and pay attention to what's happening on the edges of what you can see."

Whitney was a newly wed when he joined the Army. He had been deferred for several years because his left leg was longer than his right. But he persevered and was finally reclassified. He got word he was being drafted on the morning of his wedding. He waited until the honeymoon to tell his new wife.

"She looked like I hit her in the face with a dead fish," he said.

The desire to serve was just as strong for Safford.

"When we heard President Franklin Roosevelt announce on the radio that we were attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, many of us went right down (to the recruiting office) to join the service,"

he recalled. "We wanted to be in. We couldn't wait to be in. We realized that between what Hitler was doing and what the Japanese had done we were in grave danger. We wanted to protect our families and we wanted to protect our country and we did everything we could to accomplish that, obviously."

Arnold was drafted into World War II. He served in Africa and spent one day as a German prisoner of war. Soon after, his unit was preparing for the invasion of Normandy.

"I landed on the beach of Omaha and I

lasted 10 minutes," Arnold said. "I hit a land mine. I was in the hospital for about two years. The best thing I liked about the service was the nurses."

Walton spent some of his time in missile silos, when Communist Russia was still considered America's greatest threat. He was an ICBM Minute-

man commander. Now he spends his days behind a camera documenting the milestones at the veterans home.

"Never share a foxhole with a guy who braver than you are," he offered.

The veterans agreed that today's war on terrorism is similar to what they faced.

"You are not only trying to offer a people freedom from a dictatorship as we did in World War II – the dictatorship of Hitler and Japanese regime – but also the very real possibility that person, Saddam, could cause a lot of damage to our country and others," Safford said.

They also acknowledged that war will continue to be a reality for future generations; a legacy they each had hoped would end with theirs.



**Phil Walton** (Photo by Pvt. Comeau)

# An Old Soldier's Story

By Staff Sgt. Thomas Graham II  
NHARNG Historian

**F**red Wood began his long career with the 197th in 1939 when he signed on with the Searchlight Battery, A/197th New Hampshire National Guard, in Concord, NH. The 197th anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) had been created from New Hampshire's old Coast Artillery units from the First World War, and the Searchlight Battery was a critical component of the AAA, providing targets by illuminating the night sky and revealing the nearly invisible enemy aircraft. Each searchlight's 800 million candlepower beam cast enough illumination to read a newspaper eight miles away!

In 1940, the activation of the National Guard units for WW II, included the 197th Coast Artillery. However, it was December 7, 1941, -- the "day of Infamy" -- that placed the 197th into service in the Pacific theater. Originally scheduled for the Philippines, the Japanese war machine had beaten them there, and forced the 197th to reroute to Australia. Yet even Australia had had a taste of Japanese bombs and the 197th was sent to defend the harbor at Fremantle, in southwestern Australia. This isolated harbor had the advantage of being beyond the range of land based Japanese bombers and was soon to be full of ships and submarines of the Asiatic fleet for repair and re-supply.

Behind Fremantle harbor lay the vast and desolate outback. There were outposts there, Wood said, that were 50 years behind the U.S. In fact, whenever he had to make a trip there, he had to bring his own gasoline, food, water, etc., never knowing if his destination would have any. Wood remembered one young woman, bred in the outback, who had fallen in love with one of his soldiers. She confided in him her concern at whether a marriage would work out at all, due to her outback upbringing. "Now, I happened to know," recalled Lieutenant Colonel Wood, "that this fellow grew up on a wheat farm in the mid west, where everywhere you look is flat, and you have to drive a half hour to the nearest town.

So I told her that I had no doubt that anyone who had lived in the outback would be right at home on a wheat farm in the mid west!"

On one occasion, the submarine USS Sailfish was in port. Built in 1939, she was originally named the USS Squalus. Though she sank during her first test dives, she was salvaged, renamed Sailfish, and thrust into service in the Pacific in 1941. During one of her stops at Fremantle Harbor, First Lieutenant Wood learned of a recent electrical fire on board. He offered to have some of his Anti-Aircraft soldiers take a look at it. The sailors scoffed with amusement but finally gave in and were introduced to the Commander of D Battery, 1/197th, Captain Ladd. Ladd was taken to a blank wall and told that the fire, "was in there." Looking at nothing but the hallway wall, Ladd then said, "I think there's a cable that comes across here and there's a junction box right about there . . . that's probably where the fire was." Returning the next day with a few men, the soldiers of the 197th got the wall panel down and completely repaired the fire damaged area. An astonished admiral hearing this story wanted these miracle workers all transferred into the US Navy! A number of the men of the 197th, it turns out, had entered the war from their civilian jobs at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The battery commander himself being one of the chief engineers of the electrical division. Together, these men had, in fact, built the original USS Squalus! Citing the array of civilian experiences that come along with National Guard soldiers, Wood exclaimed, "This just doesn't happen in the regular army."

As the allies gained ground in the Pacific, the 197th was eventually moved to New Guinea and it was at this stage that Lieutenant Colonel Wood saw the hardest fighting of the war. He recalled using the anti-aircraft guns to assist the advancing infantry. But, to keep up, there was no time to construct the usual sandbag fortification around the guns, leaving the shooter exposed. Some men were in fact shot like "sitting ducks" as this unique and fluid fighting style evolved.

A Major by War's end, Wood continued on in the New Hampshire Army National Guard rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and serving as the last commander of the 197th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment before it became the 197th Field Artillery.

After retiring from both teaching and the National Guard, Lieutenant Colonel Wood remains active in many areas of civic life despite his almost 92 years. He remains a staunch supporter of the New Hampshire Army National Guard regularly attending the unit's annual Christmas Dining In tradition. Introducing himself one year, he commented that he had been in the Guards since they used to turn the wagons in a circle when the Indians attacked! Interestingly though, when he joined in 1938, he truly was closer to those bygone days, than to today's modern army -- An old soldier indeed!

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<http://www.history.navy.mil>

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Thanks to Master Sergeant Mark Forster, senior Chaplain Assistant in the state, who assisted me with the interview

# Recruiting and Retention Command News

NHARNG Recruit Training Company

In May 2004, the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) will be fully deployed at the NHRTI. The goal of the RSP is to reduce training pipeline losses. The cornerstone of the RSP is the Recruit Training Company (RTC) at the RTI. The RTC is home to all new soldiers who have not completed their IADT. It combines the Orientation, Non-Prior Service and Split Option training and is broken down into several phases designed to prepare new recruits for BCT and to conduct an official hand-off of the newly MOSQ soldier to their assigned unit.

To facilitate this program, all new soldiers are assigned to their designated unit, but attached to the NHRTI for pay, admin and training until they complete their cycle in the RSP. The RTC manages items such as training files, advancements, and BDU issue. All NPS enlistments receive welcome packets upon enlistment from MEPS guidance counselor with training dates and detailed instructions.

Again, this is a partnership between the R&R Command and the NHRTI. Capt. August Murray is Commander, RTC and currently Sgt. Major Jim

The RTC is organized into five phases:				
<b>Red Phase</b> 2 days Orientation and more	<b>White Phase</b> 2 days Preparation for BCT	<b>Blue Phase</b> 1 day The last Sunday before they ship to BCT	<b>Green Phase</b> Split Option Soldiers	<b>Handoff Phase</b> 2 days The drill after they return from AIT

Goss is serving as the Detachment Sergeant.

We encourage anyone with questions to contact Maj. Huber (NHRTI) x4125; Capt. Murray, 227-1562 (R&R/RTI) or Sgt. Major Goss (acting Detachment SGT) 731-5513.

## APPLE-MD PLUS! RECRUITING REFERRAL

Attention Units: Maintain a local copy, send original to Recruiting for action.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SSN \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_  
 A - Age \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_  
 P.O.B. (City, County, State) \_\_\_\_\_  
 P - Physical Condition \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
 P - Prior Service? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ MOS \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 L - Law Violations? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Pending? \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 E - Education (Highest Level) \_\_\_\_\_  
 M - Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_  
 D - Dependents (#/Custody) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Referring Lead \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unit Referring Lead \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Phone or Email \_\_\_\_\_



Members of the New Hampshire Army National Guard who provide enlistment-generating referrals will be recognized by the Assistant Adjutant General and Recruiting & Retention CDR.

**1st Enlistment receives:**  
 "Certificate of Appreciation" and "You Can" Embroidered Hat

**2nd Enlistment receives:**  
 "Certificate of Appreciation" and "You Can" Embroidered Polo Shirt

**3rd Enlistment receives:**  
 "Certificate of Appreciation" and Honorary Recruiting Ribbon Plus, One (1) Retirement Point is awarded for each Referral. The respective RRNCO will complete the TAG Form 603-1.

## Top Recruiters Recognized

### 1ST QUARTER

**Oct: Sgt. 1st Class Robin Lavertu, Berlin**  
**Dec: Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Bisson, Nashua**  
**Overall: Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Bisson, Nashua**

### 2D QUARTER

**Jan: Sgt. 1st Class Martin Wyman, Keene;**  
**Staff Sgt. Class Dwayne Hixman, Franklin**  
**Feb: Sgt. 1st Class Vespa, Portsmouth**  
**Overall: TAG Referral Program**

## Community Relations Program

In partnership with PAO and ESGR, the R&R Command is continuing to deploy the NHARNG Community Relations Program to engage leaders in all units to market the NHARNG in the community in which they live. Leaders have been identified to participate and will be expected to attend and give presentations to community organizations in order to present the desired, positive message to the community and increase civilian knowledge of the Guard.

If anyone is interested in conducting some presentations in their hometown, or has a point of contact in a local organization please contact LTC Angela Maxner, R&R Cdr @ 225-1377, [angela.maxner@nh.ngb.army.mil](mailto:angela.maxner@nh.ngb.army.mil).

The NHNG Honorary Recruiting Ribbon was established in December 2001 to recognize all members of the NHNG, with the exception of production recruiters, who have secured three enlistments or appointments within the course of the member's career regardless of whether the accession was in the New Hampshire Army National Guard (NHARNG) or Air National Guard (NHANG).

The recruiting requirement is the same for subsequent awards. For each succeeding qualification for the

award, an arrow cluster or OLC will be awarded. The ribbon has a white background, and has three vertical red bars on the right and three red vertical bars on the left with four blue stars centered on the white background. These colors carry out the patriotic theme of red, white, and blue of our State and Nation. For more information contact SSG Bradley, R&R, (603) 225-1288.



**New Hampshire National Guard  
2004 Combat Marksmanship Competition  
Official Program**

Conducted by  
NH Army National Guard  
Small Arms Readiness and Training Section  
at Devens Reserve Forces Training Area (RFTA)  
Ayer, Massachusetts

**27-29 August 2004**

Contact: ROCKWELL M. RICHARDS  
Sergeant First Class  
Small Arms Readiness and Training Section NCO  
2004 Match Director  
(603) 227-1585  
[rocky.richards@nh.ngb.army.mil](mailto:rocky.richards@nh.ngb.army.mil)

Mailing Label