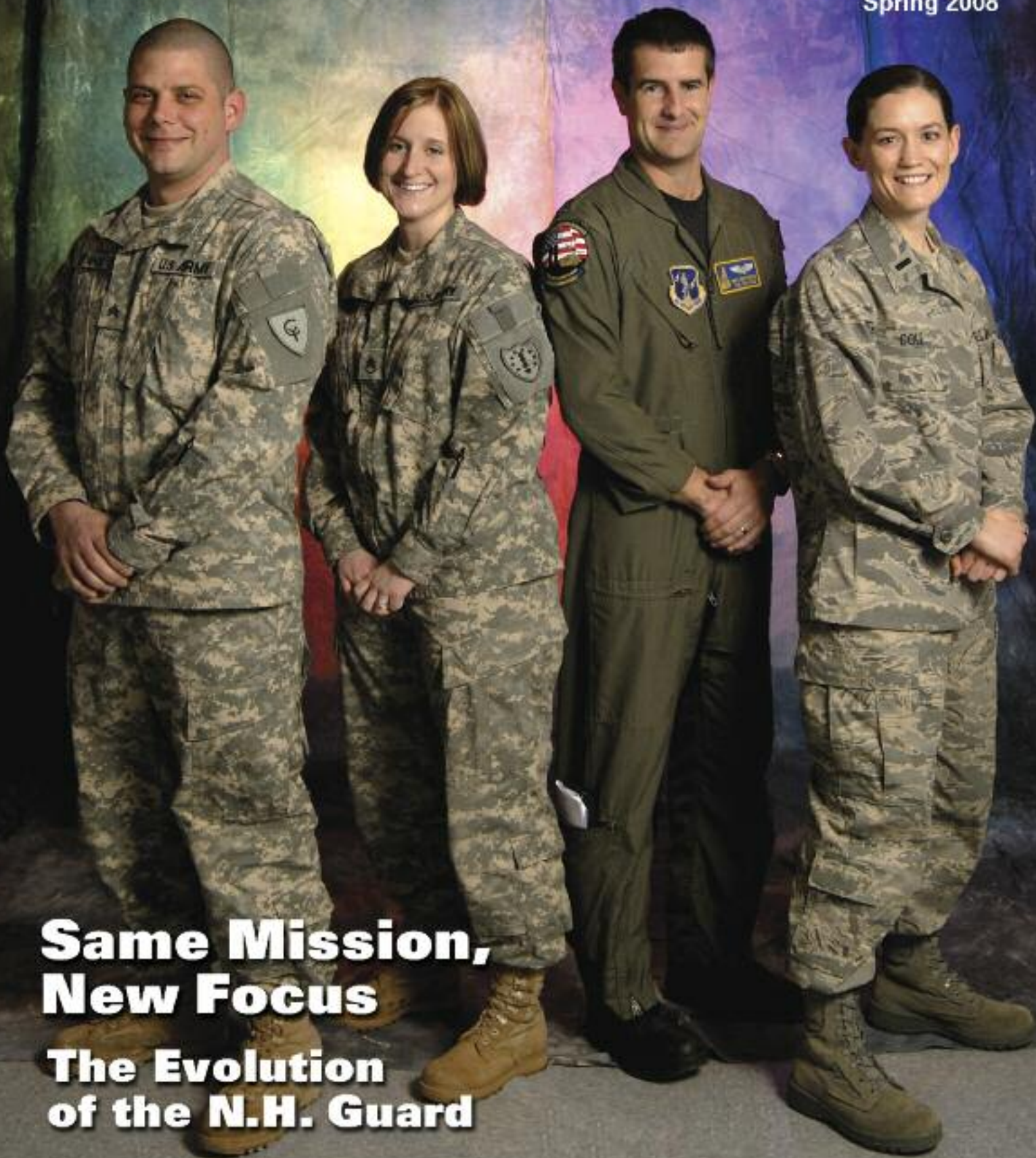


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MAGAZINE

Spring 2008



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MAGAZINE



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On the Cover: *The next generation of citizen soldiers and airmen: from left, Sgt. Russell Evans of C Co., 3/238th Aviation; Sgt. Kathryn Stansfield, 54th Troop Command; Capt. Nelson Perron, 157th Air Refueling Wing; and 1st Lt. Emily Cole, 157th Operations Support Flight.*

Photo: Tech. Sgt. Aaron Vezeau, PA Media Center Manager, 157 ARW

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Diversity in the N.H. National Guard

It's more than just a—
black-white
thing



A note from the state PAO:

After Staff Sgt. Michelle Lowes sent an e-mail to N.H. Guardsmen and employees in February inviting them to an event to celebrate diversity awareness and the start of Black History month, she received a reply from a soldier who asked when “White History month” would be held.

Lowes, a black American who works full-time in military personnel, forwarded his response to her supervisor, who dealt with it swiftly. The soldier was counseled by his chain of command and then brought to Lowes, presumably to apologize.

“He said, ‘If I had known it was you, I wouldn’t have sent (the e-mail),’” recalled Lowes, who had never met the soldier before.

The phrase “diversity awareness” seems like an oxymoron when applied to the N.H. National Guard. We mirror a state that is 96 percent white, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Of the remaining 4 percent, Latinos represent 1.7 percent, Asians 1.3 percent and black or African American .7 percent.

In our organization, the number of different ethnic groups combined represents about 2.5 percent of our total force, which is just under 2,700 soldiers and airmen.

The soldier’s reply, and his attempt at contrition, was not an isolated case of ignorance and reflects an insecurity shared by some in our organization who feel threatened by the idea that minorities, to include women, deserve equal treatment or view diversity initiatives as special treatment for minorities.

Others believe that the N.H. National Guard does not have a diversity problem simply because its membership is an accurate reflection of the state’s population.

That’s exactly why Lowes and Sgt. Luis Cepeda, a Hispanic American, volunteered to become program managers for their respective cultures. They are part of a reinvigorated effort by our senior leadership to create an organization that is not only tolerant, but proactively searching for ways to become more diverse.

For the first time, a diversity council consisting of soldiers and airmen met this year to address federally mandated requirements that protect seven designated classes to include Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, the disabled and women, who represent about 15 percent of the N.H. National Guard.

NHNG Magazine recently spoke with Lowes and Cepeda about their experiences as minorities in the N.H. National Guard and how they hope to affect lasting change in an organization striving to better itself.

A Q&A with two of the organization’s newest champions of tolerance

NHNG Magazine: Why did you volunteer to manage your respective programs?

Cepeda: It’s my culture and I enjoy doing stuff to bring out the culture and make people aware of our accomplishments. In the past, nothing was done. It was just an e-mail with some information, so I kind of took charge and said if it’s going to be done, it should be done right.

Lowes: I volunteered for the same reasons. It’s an opportunity to educate people outside of the stereotypical cultures they may have been exposed to.

NHNG Magazine: What do you mean by “stereotypical cultures?”

Lowes: To give people an understanding of African Americans and black Americans and so they can separate what they see on the news. The faces we see on television are not the best representation of our culture. They see the bad guys that get caught. That’s what they see and that’s how they frame their opinions. They don’t see us in high ranking positions – it was a dramatic change coming (to the N.H. Guard) from active duty. We have one black officer here and no Hispanic officers.

I’m in BNOC (basic non-commission officer’s course) right now and they talk about diversity and tolerance, but it’s not about who you are in the truck with. It’s about how you’re going to talk to the locals.

Cepeda: It was an experience for me when I joined here with the brigade. I was in awe that there were not a lot of different cultures represented. In Massachusetts, you get everything. That's one of the reasons why I wanted to be the manager of the Hispanic program. It's more than what you see on TV. We are educated, smart and responsible.

Lowes: People are kind of surprised that you can be smart and all of those things and be a part of our culture.

NHNG Magazine: Being black and Latino have you faced any specific challenges as both citizens of New Hampshire and soldiers in the N.H. National Guard? Have you encountered racism in either?

Cepeda: When I got out of basic training, my first drill was at Fort Drum with brigade. I ate alone at the chow hall. I had soldiers actually walk away from me. Some made comments. One that had my blood boiling was basically, "I smelled." He walked away before I could say anything. That's when another soldier sat down and asked who I was and where I was from. He said don't pay attention to them. That meant a lot to me. Some people are ignorant. It was an eye opener. I grew up in Lawrence. Until I came here, it never came up. But you pick your battles. Being in New Hampshire, people see things a certain way. The diversity program will help people look outside the box.

Lowes: In the South, you're always reminded of who you are and where your place is. Down south, you have two kinds of racism: in your face racism and quiet racism where they won't say it to your face. Here I have to check. Did they really mean it? Was it a sneak attack or were they being naive?

Cepeda: Don't forget the looks.

Lowes: Yeah, the looks.

Cepeda: Shopping or just walking down the street with your family. Even walking down the street with my 10-year-old daughter and a lady clutches her purse. You have to laugh. I teach my daughter that they are the ignorant ones. Everyone is equal. You treat everyone with respect because that's how you want to be treated. No matter how ignorant they are.

Lowes: Right. Don't give them a reason to continue that stereotype. I had a lady come all the way down from the other end of an aisle at the supermarket to get her purse from her carriage.

NHNG Magazine: Sgt. Lowes, in your invite to the event to kick off Black History month, you distinguished between black American and African American.

Lowes: I make it a point to do that. I did not earn my citizenship. I have a friend who is an African-American citizen and she came from there. I am a black American. I was born here. It cheapens it to say that we are all African Americans. My father ingrained that into us.

NHNG Magazine: Sgt. Cepeda, is there a distinction between Hispanic and Latino?

Cepeda: It does have its differences, but not from my point of view. A lot of people take offense if you, for example, call a Puerto Rican a Mexican. We are all Spanish. But there are differences. It's great when people deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan because you learn there is more than just white. You meet so many different people (in the military) from so many different cultures. You learn from them.

Lowes: I was in charge of someone who was Asian and I asked why this person wasn't coming to drill. I was told she had to take care of her family and my response was well, I have to take care of my family too. Well, it was a different situation. Family means different things in different cultures.

NHNG Magazine: A diversity council was created this month. That was a first for the N.H. Guard.

Lowes: Diversity is not just about blacks and Hispanics. It's also includes women and the disabled.

Cepeda: A lot of people heard about the council and want to join. We're trying to open everybody's eyes. It's a big world out there and New Hampshire is a small piece of the world.

Lowes: It's also a small piece that is getting more diversified. That's why it's important to have this. So we can recruit more women, more people from different ethnic backgrounds. So they don't look at this organization and say, "Oh, they wouldn't want me."

NHNG Magazine: Because what they see are mostly white males?

Cepeda: I felt the same way.

Lowes: We need to diversify our force so that you can go into a community and they can see themselves in you. You can say, "Look, you can be in this uniform," whether you are black, Asian, Hispanic or a woman.

NHNG Magazine: What made you get past that? That feeling we were not all inclusive?

Cepeda: It took a while for me to break the ice. You got your walls up. Your defenses up. You're in formation and you see that wow, I am the only Hispanic one here. I felt uncomfortable. It took me awhile to think, "You know what, he's my brother – she's my sister." But it took me breaking the ice. No one came to me.

Lowes: I have to say it was the same for me. It was another black American who approached me, but I also had my head shaved then. (Laughs.) I got a bad dye job and had to cut off my hair.

NHNG Magazine: An important message for the rest of us is to realize is that it's almost impossible to understand someone else's perspective until you walk a mile in their shoes. What's the message you want to get across to the organization, to your fellow soldiers and airmen, about diversity?

Lowes: It's not about black or Hispanic. There's more than that. We will have plenty of different programs that are coming down – National Disability Employment Awareness month, Holocaust Remembrance Day and Women's History month. It's more than just us. ♦



Staff Sgt. Michelle Lowes and Sgt. Luis Cepeda talk about the challenges and opportunities of creating a proactive diversity awareness program in the N.H. National Guard during an interview in February.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, State PA Office, N.H. National Guard

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She Rocks Our World

Chief Master Sgt. Jackie Page looks back on three decades of extraordinary service

Editor's Note: In February, Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard, presented Chief Master Sgt. Jackie Page with the New Hampshire State Commendation Medal during a special ceremony in the Hall of Flags at the new Joint Force Headquarters Building.

Every military award is special, but this one is especially significant because it honors Page's more than 30 years of service to the N.H. Air National Guard and the Joint Force Headquarters, N.H. National Guard.

The audience, which in addition to Clark, included retired Brig. Gen. Chick Smith and several colonels, both retired and active, was another indication of how highly Page is regarded and the extraordinary value she has added to the organization.

"She has been a rock for the N.H. National Guard," Clark said. "She is an institution of knowledge and expertise."

Typically, such superlatives are expressed at a service member's retirement, but in Page's case, they were just long overdue. We are happy to say that Page is sticking around awhile longer. She has been the consummate airman and senior enlisted officer diligently working behind the scenes to take care of the rest of us.

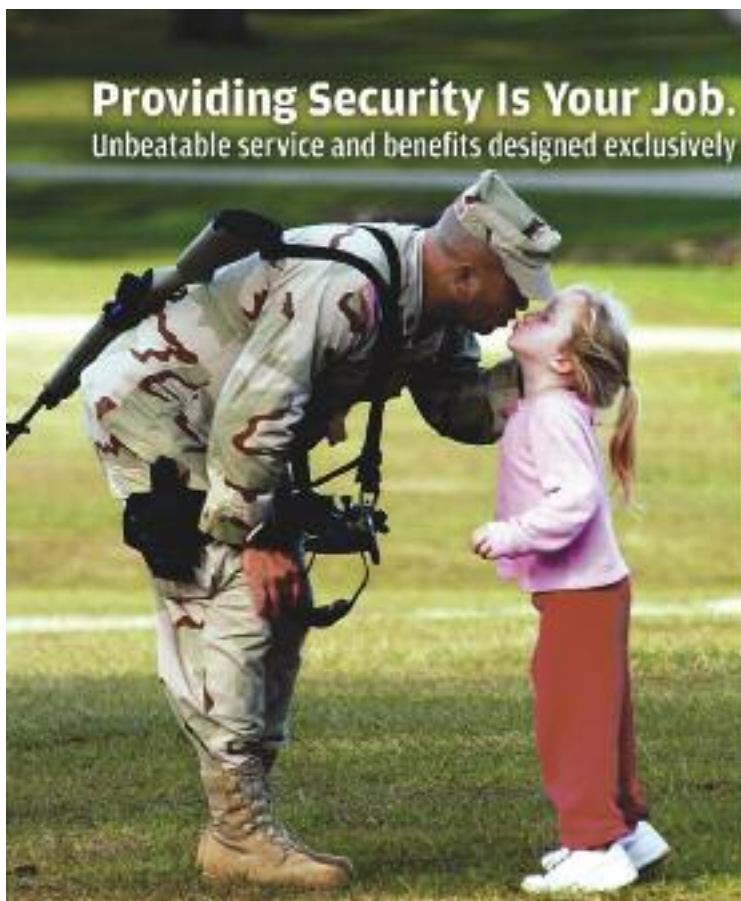
Not surprisingly, she shuns the spotlight, but with a little begging, she agreed to pen this edition's Airman Column. We are honored to feature her.

(Continued on page 19)



Chief Master Sgt. Jackie Page receives heartfelt congratulations from Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard, after he presented her the State Commendation Medal for more than 30 years of extraordinary service to the N.H. National Guard.

Photo: Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, State PA Office, N.H. National Guard



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Traveling the jagged path

From northern Afghanistan, Staff Sgt. Zack Bazzi, a soldier with the N.H. Army Guard's Embedded Training Team, gives a lesson in "armed social work." This is his third deployment. He has served in Bosnia and Iraq.

The morning comes early and cold. The members of Police Mentor Team (PMT) Jowsjan move briskly, trying to shake off the early morning chill. All tasks are accomplished with the efficiency and speed that comes with practice and repetition: skilled gunners mount and load their machine guns, experienced drivers check their vehicles, and vehicle commanders turn on a wide variety of electronics and communications equipment. Besides the routine jokes and routine complaints, little else is said – everyone understands their duty.

When everything is set, the team commander, Capt. Eric Barricklow, gives the "mission brief," answers questions, then orders our team to mount up.

Our PMT operates in Jowsjan province in northern Afghanistan. Our mission in a nutshell is to advise and mentor the Afghan national police (ANP) in our area of operations (AO) across five key organizational systems: operations, training, logistics, finance and personnel.

We depart our camp heading north. Our jagged path is covered with potholes and hugged by hamlets and irrigated fields. The sites can seem odd for outsiders: little boys herding sheep, three smiling men and a goat packed inside the trunk of a moving car, a donkey blocking our passage, an old man washing his face with dirty ditch water. Around here this is normal. It's us who are odd.

We reach the main road and turn west away from the morning sun. Our two-hour journey is jam packed with history. To our south, off in the distance, the Hindu Kush Mountains embrace the sky with powdery white peaks. The epic range is Afghanistan's ultimate paradox. It is the country's sacred gift and its dreadful curse: the gift that has humbled many would-be occupiers, and the curse that has denied the country true political unity since time immemorial.

The road we are speeding across used to ferry Chinese silk to the Middle East and beyond for hundreds of years. Back then it was called "The Silk Road." Now it's called Highway 5. To our north is a narrow desert that quickly gives way to the Amu Darya. The legendary river, which in antiquity was

known as the Oxus River, hugs the countries northern flank, carving its borders with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan from west to east. The former Soviet states whose horsemen used to rein terror upon the northern portions of Afghanistan are more preoccupied these days with preventing the terror and instability of Afghanistan from reining down on their territories.

Our path forward is littered with the rusting hulls of defeated Soviet tanks, salient reminders to all "outsiders" that Afghanistan is easier to invade than to occupy.

We arrive in Sheberghan, the capital of Jowsjan province and its largest city. At the police headquarters the captain and I enter the main building to meet with the Provincial police chief, General Khalil Aminzada. The aging general is a shrewd leader, a strong ally and a trusted friend. He dresses professionally, and wears a nicely trimmed beard that hugs his handsome face. His eyes are small and efficient.

They swiftly locate and lock on their target and operate with the concentration and

intensity of a man who not only knows how to decisively wield power over lesser men but relishes in it.

The meeting with the general sets the tone of the day.

We discuss logistical challenges, personnel difficulties, financial troubles, political dilemmas and tribal disputes. When the meeting with the general is over, we split up and visit with the various departments of the headquarters. My captain is usually jovial and friendly, and in his role as the commander, tends to focus on the "big picture." As for me, his second in command, I am blunt, fiery and when need be, confrontational – traits that come easily for me.

As a well indoctrinated infantry staff sergeant, details are my life: did the training officer generate a list of everyone in the province who needs to attend police basic training? Is it properly formatted? Did the logistics officer generate a request for an increase in monthly fuel allotment for the province? Is it properly formatted?

(Continued on page 8)



Staff Sgt. Zack Bazzi mingles with a group of Afghan school children. Bazzi is one of 16 New Hampshire Guard soldiers deployed to Afghanistan as part of an embedded training team.

Photo: Courtesy of the New Hampshire Embedded Training Team

Traveling the jagged path (Continued from page 7)

The catalog of mundane, yet crucial, questions is a long one. I spend my meetings flattering and wooing and pressing and bullying men senior to me in rank, age and experience. I alternate between the bipolar modes, I crack cheesy jokes, and I impress them with the little Afghan history that I have learned.

I constantly remind them of my Arab background and I insist that that actually makes us blood brothers. I hold their hands; laugh at their jokes even when they are not funny. I tease them. I joke with them, and when need be, I fall back on the easiest target of all. I ruthlessly poke fun at myself.

Noon comes and we break for lunch. It never changes: goat or lamb kabobs, rice, "naan" and Pepsi. The kabobs come on the skewer and are delicious unless you're unlucky and it's the kidney. If you're the one who got kidney, then you eat it, act like it's the best thing you have ever shoved in your mouth and wonder secretly to yourself if someone out there will ever appreciate the sacrifices you have made for your country. The rice is oily, but the raisins, thin slices of carrot and meat mixed with it, make it tasty and irresistible. The "naan" is a thick disk of bread and is very filling unless it is cold then it is better used as a self defense weapon or a hammer. The Pepsi is a Pepsi.

Lunch is my favorite time of the workday and allows me to freely partake in my favorite hobbies. While eating and talking with our hands, and without worrying about any type of table etiquette whatso-

ever, we enjoy hearty conversations with the general as we all recount partly exaggerated tales involving many women, much violence and other supposedly manly deeds.

My favorite anecdote from the general involves a statue of Lenin, Afghan police officers and women.

The story goes something like this: during the Russian occupation, the Russian-backed government sent a then-promising Lieutenant Aminzada to study police work in the motherland for a year. During one Russian evening, several young and excited Afghan men made their way downtown looking for fun and women. After hours of fruitless searching, the men where about to give up when Lieutenant

Aminzada noticed a statue of Comrade Lenin in the middle of a square.

The statue depicted a heated Lenin probably giving a fiery speech about the evils of the capitalist pigs and the goodness of the glorious proletariat. In the midst of his communist rage, Comrade Lenin raised his right arm, pointing it forward, in an effort to rally the alienated and angry masses. Young Aminzada, more interested in matters of the flesh than in alienated labor, declared to his fellow Afghans, "if we go were Lenin is pointing, we will find women." The boisterous bunch followed Comrade Lenin's directions.

Lenin never did achieve his utopian vision of a classless society, but on that particular night, a few lively Afghan cadets who followed his directions did find something that is perhaps much more pleasant than fraternal equality.

Half-true, real stories like that make my job a pleasure.

Our days are spent in smoky rooms talking endlessly, often in convoluted circles, with rugged men who have known nothing but poverty and armed conflict throughout their lives. We compliment, flatter, praise, pressure, push, pull, confront, and at times bully our Afghan counterparts into doing the "right thing." This is modern war (one-dimensional warriors need not apply); our M-4 Army issue rifles are not our preferred weapons.

Minds and money are the weapons of choice in this twilight struggle. Counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare is often referred to in military circles as the "graduate level of warfare." In essence what we do is "armed social work" which is how it's described in FM 3-24, the military's counterinsurgency field manual.

Our missions so far have involved everything from the mundane to the dramatic; from building a bathroom for an elementary school to pressuring, and angering, a provincial deputy governor into arresting a vicious warlord. We were successful with the former, but failed with the latter. Some types of waste are more difficult to flush down than others. But we are mission focused and we are determined to leave Jowjsan province a better place than we found it. And we will. No doubt about it. ♦

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UNITED CONCORDIA

Black Hawk crew faces toughest rescue of their career during string of extractions in White Mountains



In a span of nine days, Black Hawk crew members from the N.H. Army Guard's 3rd/238th General Support Aviation Battalion battled some of the fiercest mountain conditions of their careers to assist in three separate search and rescues in February. From left, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Todd Johnson, 1st Lt. Peter Cartmel, Staff Sgt. Allan Robinson, and Staff Sgt. Matt Stohrer were among the N.H. Guardsmen lauded by state authorities for their expertise and courage. Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, State Public Affairs Officer, N.H. Guard

By Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, State Public Affairs Office, N.H. National Guard

CONCORD – In a span of nine days in February, the N.H. Army Guard's 3rd/238th General Support Aviation Battalion battled fierce weather conditions to assist in three separate rescue operations in the White Mountains. The first proved to be the most challenging flying of 1st Lt. Peter Cartmell's 15-year career as an Army aviator.

"It combined some of our riskier maneuvers with night vision goggles, in poor weather, strong winds and a lot of turbulence," said Cartmell, who has flown in Bosnia and Iraq. "Control was very difficult."

Cartmell said the ever-changing conditions of the White Mountains are a greater challenge than the consistently poor visibility and threat of enemy contact he faced in Iraq.

The N.H. National Guard has been supporting New Hampshire Fish and Game rescue missions since the 1960's. On average the aviation unit flies 12 missions a year, most of which occur during the peak hiking seasons of spring and fall.

On Feb. 11, at approximately 11:30 a.m., New Hampshire State Army Aviation Officer Col. Frank Leith received a call that two hikers had gone missing on Mount Lafayette.

The flight crew, composed of Chief Warrant Officer Zachary Lane, Staff Sgt. Matthew

Stohrer, Staff Sgt. Allan Robinson, and 1st Lt. Peter Cartmell, departed the Army Aviation Support Facility that afternoon and headed north to the Fish and Game command post at the Flume Mountain parking lot.

After nearly three hours of searching, the crew returned to Concord, only to be called back into action later that evening. The hikers had been found on Little Haystack Mountain and their lives depended on an immediate extraction.

"With winds gusting up to 65 knots and freezing fog causing ice buildup on the blades limiting the aerodynamics, it was the most extreme mission for a N.H. Army Guard search and rescue crew in 20 years," said Leith, a Vietnam chopper pilot and veteran of many search and rescue missions.

When the crew arrived at the extraction site, the conditions were too turbulent to use the hoist to extract the hikers. Whether by luck, or the skill of the search party, the group was located near a clearing just large enough to land the UH-60 Black Hawk.

"Trying to land in such a narrow spot with the tail between two trees keeps you extremely focused," Lane said.

The first hiker, James Osborne, 36, of Manchester, was transported to the Littleton Hospital. The second hiker, Laurence Fredrickson, 55, from South Sutton, was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Littleton Hospital.

"It takes a tremendous amount of skill, experience, teamwork, judgment and nerves of steel to maneuver a helicopter at the top of a 4,800-foot peak with blowing snow and wind gusts at 30-40 mph or higher, at night, using night vision goggles," said Leith. "This crew performed beyond the call of duty and they are heroes in my mind."

Five days later, another crew from the 3rd/238th GSAB was called. Chief Warrant Officer Todd Johnson was the pilot in command.

They flew eight Fish and Game officers to the summit of Mount Lincoln to begin the search for Benjamin Davis, a Boston law

(Continued on page 19)

When disaster strikes N.H., we mobilize

Remembering the Blizzard of '78

Thirty years ago this February, 468 N.H. National Guardsmen mobilized over a four-day period during the "Blizzard of 1978." It dumped more than 30 inches of snow and left thousands of people stranded on highways and in their homes. Across New England, 29 people died and damage was estimated to be \$1 billion.

At the time, it was the largest state activation of N.H. citizen soldiers and airmen for a weather-related emergency since the end of World War II.

"There were heroic acts performed by the police, firefighters, Department of Public Works, National Guard and Red Cross," recalled Charles Pierson of Barrington in a posting on the Portsmouth Herald's Web site.

Our predecessors were going door-to-door to assist residents, transporting stranded motorists, and evacuating Seacoast residents by boat.

Since the blizzard of '78, the N.H. National Guard has been mobilized for more than 120 state emergencies to include aerial search and rescues for lost hikers, injured hikers and escaped prisoners; riot control during Motorcycle Weekend and at Seabrook's nuclear plant; water shortages; a hospital strike; a drought; a jet crash; a hostage crisis; an ice storm and eight floods; not to mention our stellar efforts in the Gulf Coast after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In the last 60 years, more than 10,000 N.H. citizen soldiers and airmen have answered the call of the governor and state in times of need.

That's one hell of a legacy – a distinct one.



A 1980 edition of the N.H. Army Guard's newsletter featured the N.H. Guard's activation for an attempt by more than 2,500 protesters to shutdown the construction of Seabrook nuclear power plant in October of that year. About 500 citizen soldiers and airmen were activated to help local and state authorities thwart what was called an anarchic attempt to occupy the plant.

Not Your Daddy

Transformation brings new opportunities, challenges to field artillery community

By Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish,
State Public Affairs Office, N.H. National Guard

On September 8, 2007, most of the New Hampshire Army National Guard stood on a field in Manchester to mark a major turning point in the structure of our organization. Eight months later units are simultaneously working to maintain a state of readiness and cope with the effects of a transformation that created new companies and merged two field artillery battalions.

In his yearly training guidance, the 197th Fires Brigade (FiB) commander, Col. David Mercieri, said, "Our country is at war, and although our task organization and weapon systems may change, we must ensure that we are prepared to execute our fires and sustainment mission as well as maintain our warrior skills."

Along with maintaining the warrior skills, Mercieri set a goal of 85 percent military occupation skill or MOS qualified by the end of next year.

"As leaders it is our task and responsibility to train ourselves and each and every soldier to be ready when the call comes to deploy," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Stewart, the 197th FiB Command Sergeant Major.

In addition to the MOS training and warrior tasks, the brigade will explore a concept new to them, Training and Readiness Oversight

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion/197th FA load artillery ammunition during their annual training last summer in Val Cartier, Canada. 2007 was the last year the artillery units were expected to fire the howitzers. Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, NHNG-PA



Soldiers from the 1st/172nd Field Artillery conduct military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) training during annual training last summer. Transformation has called for new types of training for many N.H. Army Guard units.

Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, NHNG-PA

(TRO). The 42nd Infantry Division, based in New York, provides guidance and can assist in training for the brigade, and in turn the 197th FiB is responsible for the guidance and training of battalions in Michigan, West Virginia, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Within New Hampshire, two battalions fall under the 197th FiB – 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery and the 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 172nd Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery; the 744th Transportation Company and the 3643rd Maintenance Company were absorbed into the two battalions.

A new company, the 372nd Signal Company, was formed under the 197th FiB. The 47-man unit supplies satellite communications primarily for the 3/197th FA but trains to support any unit in the organization.

The goal for the first six months for the 3/197th FA was to re-station its batteries, consolidate with the 1/172nd FA, and ensure they closed out equipment and completed lateral transfers.

"For the most part it's been completed, but a few loose ends remain, such as vault space and locations," said Capt. Wayne Boutwell, commander of C Battery, 3/197th FA and the battalion operations officer.

For the average soldier who drills one weekend a month, the most obvious change has been the departed howitzers. No more preventive maintenance and checklist service. No more coming into drill and scraping the rust off the tubes. The guns are gone and field artillery tasks have ceased.

They have been replaced with Warrior Task Training. Soldiers have focused on common tasks, incorporating paintball guns for military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT) training and preparing for annual training at Fort Indian Town Gap, Pa.

"They will be focusing on weapons training, MOUT, combat life saver courses and drivers training," said Boutwell.

They have been fielding new equipment and communication gear, but are not scheduled to receive the high mobility rocket system or HIMARS until May 2009. Until then the battalion will focus on the new mindset for field artillery.

"We have a whole new personnel alignment. We are going from 11-man gun crews to three," explained Boutwell. "Instead of being told exactly what to do, put your gun here, set up here, you are given a whole area of operations, 3,000 meters by 3,000 meters for three

(Continued on page 12)

's Guard



The KC-135 Refueler is considered one of the Air Force's premiere workhorses and one of its oldest. The N.H. Air Guard's 157th Air Refueling Wing is being considered as a candidate to receive the tanker's replacement, the KC-X. Photo: Courtesy of 157 ARW-PA

Building a lasting case for Pease

N.H. Air Guard leaders hopeful for new aircraft, missions

By 2nd Lt. Sherri Pierce, 157th Air Refueling Wing PAO

NEWINGTON, N.H. – You raise your right hand and swear to defend your country against all enemies foreign and domestic, but with continued drawdown in military forces and funding cuts, you wonder if you will have a military career in 20 years.

Don't panic. There is a bright future for Pease Air National Guard Base.

"New Hampshire is in the right location, based on our proximity to the ocean, to continue to be a flying unit and do the type of mission we are now in, which is air refueling and moving equipment, people and cargo," said Col. Richard Martell, commander of the 157th Air Refueling Wing.

Having survived the last Base Realignment and Closure with the loss of one airplane, N.H. Air National Guard leaders are actively seeking new missions in an effort to keep Pease Air National Guard Base viable and a less-likely target for adverse BRAC action. Two major initiatives being pursued are active associate and KC-X.

Partnering with our active duty brothers and sisters

With the drawdown of forces, there will need to be a "blending of active duty, reserve and Guard forces to take advantage of limited resources," says Martell. "Active associate makes sense."

The active associate concept is one where active duty members are assigned to an Air National Guard Base, such as Pease, much like they are assigned to an active duty base. For the 157th, that means the wing is likely to get more aircraft, more pilots and boom operators to crew those aircraft, and more maintenance personnel to ensure the aircrafts operability. In addition, the active duty members would live in the area, contribute to the economy and become members of the community.

"Active duty members are used to having access to many support services found at an active Air Force base, like a commissary, Base Exchange and base housing or at least affordable housing," said Col. "Dutch" Dunkelberger, command of the 157th Support Group. "A lot of that support structure is available nearby at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard."

And since Pease Air National Guard Base does not have on-base billeting, active duty personnel would live in the local community and perhaps stimulate the currently sluggish economy, Dunkelberger added.

As far as the mission goes, "We have the reputation, experience and location that the Air Force is looking for to support global reach," Dunkelberger said.

Martell also believes Pease is a great fit for the program.

"If we are made an active associate it is because the Air Force is looking for capability out of the box," Martell said. "They are looking for folks who can get on board an airplane and go out and do the mission. And that makes sense for us because we have the force structure already in place without having to incur a huge infrastructure cost."

There are challenges associated with being an active associate; the largest being the inherent difference in the structure of the National Guard and the active duty force.

"The biggest challenge we will face will be welcoming the active duty into our culture and capturing their best practices and sharing our experience to integrate seamlessly," said Lt. Col. Paul Hutchinson,

(Continued on page 13)



Refueling aircraft would just be one of several missions the KC-X could bring to the 157th Refueling Wing at Pease Air National Guard Base in Newington. The new generation tanker would serve as a transporter for cargo and personnel, and also provide communication assets. Photo: Courtesy of 157 ARW-PA

Transformation brings new opportunities *(Continued from page 10)*

HIMARS crews. A greater individual responsibility at the E-5 and E-6 level, much the same way convoy missions on deployment push greater responsibilities on the sergeants.”

One of the biggest changes in the state’s field artillery community has been the integration support of the 744th Forward Support Company (FSC) and the coordination and pre-planning that goes with it. Training space is still an issue for the 90 soldiers of the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3/197th FA, who are forming up in the hallways between offices in Concord during inclement weather.

“It’s a change that’s going to get better, but it’s not going to get better overnight,” said Boutwell.

The most significant change outside of losing the howitzers is how field artillery is supported.

Commanders no longer have the organic support they once had. They no longer have their own cooks, mechanics or refuelers. All the beans, bullets and maintenance support now comes from the 3643rd BSB.

The 3643rd BSB is composed of four companies: Alpha, Bravo, Headquarters and the 744th FSC. Alpha Company provides all classes of supply to the 372nd Signal Company, HHC, brigade and the forward support companies like the 744th FSC, which in turn directly support the fires unit such as the 3/197th FA.

Bravo Company provides common field maintenance support to the 197th FiB and assigned units, as well as the 744th FSC should they need heavy equipment. The headquarters is responsible for planning, preparing and coordinating sustainment support requirements for the brigade.

“It is a whole new game for us,” said the 3643rd BSB commander, Lt. Col. Daniel Wilson. “It’s about how we execute. Before transformation our 92 F’s, refuelers, would just stick a hose in a truck to refuel six vehicles. Now they have to plan and coordinate the refueling of the vehicles for an entire brigade.”



Spc. Timothy Charest, of the 237th Military Police Company, helps Pvt. 2 Lindsey Thornton load her weapon. The N.H. Guard soldiers were at Fort Pickett, Va., in February as part of Granite Triangle, a two-week joint military exercise involving N.H. Guard units from 54th Troop Command, Virginia Army Guard, U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserves, U.S. Navy and the Canadian army and air force. U.S. Army Photo: PFC Crystal D. Madriz

It forces lieutenants and company commanders to be more deliberate on their logistical planning. Even on a drill weekend they will be forced to think tactically and plan for each mission the way they would in Iraq or Afghanistan.

During the first six months the unit focused on explaining to every soldier what their job was and how they contribute getting rounds down range. Now they are on track for at least 80 percent MOS qualified and training on the new equipment.

“Annual training this year is a big deal for us, we are having a giant equipment fielding and putting the theory of being a support battalion into practice,” said Wilson.

In June the unit will conduct weapons qualification, leadership reaction course, virtual convoy trainer and drivers training on the new equipment. Scheduled to be fielded are the new radio systems, the defense advanced GPS receiver (DAGR), rough terrain forklifts, palletized load system trucks, forward repair system, welding shop equipment and the heavy expanded mobility tactical truck load handling system.

They will also be training on the Battle Command Sustainment Support System, a computer automation system that provides a logistic common operating picture of the battlefield to track convoy missions, personnel and logistic reports, and check the storage of supplies.

Having all the operational support being contained in the 3643rd is part of the modular design of transformation, allowing the unit to be effectively plugged into any brigade. This also includes training missions with the field artillery battalions in Michigan, Rhode Island and Virginia that fall under the 197th FiB TRO.

Wilson, who was enlisted into the Guard by his father, a warrant officer in the 197th FA Brigade, said, “This isn’t my daddy’s brigade.” ♦

54th Troop Command’s quiet transformation

By 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO, N.H. National Guard

The N.H. Army National Guard’s other primary battalion, 54th Troop Command, has also transformed, but with less fanfare than the state’s artillery units.

“With the new compliment of units in the 54th, we are even more relevant to our state mission,” said Maj. Raymond Valas, executive officer of Troop Command. “Our combat arms units are readily adaptable to almost any mission here in New Hampshire, and the units with specialties in air medevac, engineering and public affairs are huge assets to the state in their primary capacity.”

The transformation process has affected the way that the 54th TC battalion staff operates, as only one of the eight units has not been transformed to some degree. The battalion has acquired new expertise in supporting expanded units like the 237th Military Police, as well as providing greater support to the aviation elements.

“It has been a change not to have the logistics capabilities of the 744th Transportation and the 3643rd Service Company at our fingertips to support our training,” Valas explained, “but we quickly found that that same support is a phone call away in the newly formed

Brigade Support Battalion (which consolidated both companies).”

The military police unit was one of the first to be affected by transformation in the N.H. Army National Guard, being re-designated as the 237th MP Company in the fall of 2005.

Other changes to the battalion included the conversion of the 210th Engineer Detachment into a Vertical Construction Detachment; the conversion of the 1159th Medical Company into a General Support Aviation Company to include a medical detachment and an operational support airlift command (Detachment 2, 249th Medical Company Air Ambulance and Company C, 3rd Battalion, General Support Aviation Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment); the departure of the 744th Transportation Company and 3643 Maintenance Company to the BSB, which falls under the new 197th Fires Brigade; and the downsizing of 114th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment to an eight-soldier unit.

The career field of military police is relatively new for National Guard soldiers in the state of New Hampshire, according to the unit’s readiness NCO, Sgt. 1st Class Lore Ford. The state fielded its first unit

Building a lasting case for Pease *(Continued from page 11)*

157th Operations Group Commander. “They must be seen as equal partners in this project.”

On a positive note, “being an active associate and being at the forefront of this allows us to work with the Air Force and craft a nice program,” said Martell. “We will set the tone for how (the active associate program) is going to work for other Air National Guard units. And certainly doing it first allows us to maintain our presence here.”

There are currently two active associate units: March Air Force Base, Calif., and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

A new generation of tankers

KC-X is a proposed new refueling tanker for the Air Force to replace the aging KC-135 fleet. While today’s KC-135 is primarily a refueling aircraft, the KC-X would be a simultaneous multi-aircraft refueler, transporter of cargo and passengers, and a surveillance and advanced communication aircraft; fulfilling several capabilities in one.

The current plan, as outlined in *Air Force Times* on Feb. 4, is the Air Force “envisions active duty KC-X aircrews and maintainers assigned to Guard units at Pease Air Guard Station, N.H.”

“The KC-X is the future platform for Air Mobility Command’s global reach mission and it represents the future of not only air refueling, but also additional missions such as aero medical evacuation, passenger and cargo transportation,” said Hutchinson.

While it is only a plan, Martell believes Pease ANGB is in the right position to take on a new aircraft.

“We are a viable candidate for a KC-X type of airplane,” Martell said. “The next aircraft will be a refueler, a communicator as

well as a cargo hauler, and we are in the right location for that. We can fit all three niches. We are also very lucky that we have a wonderful infrastructure here at the base, a long runway, new facilities and a supportive public.”

If KC-X came to Pease ANGB, “I could see us traveling a lot more to different locations to take full advantage of the tanker and cargo capabilities,” Dunkelberger said. “At the same time, we will have a much more active aerial port to handle cargo and passengers. It will also require more training on different systems, but greater levels of automation should reduce the workload in the cockpit.”

Future of Flying

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or UAVs, are becoming more prevalent in the Air Force fleet; currently, the Predator and the Global Hawk are two UAVs being used. These aircraft are flown remotely by pilots and perform reconnaissance, surveillance and other missions that would otherwise put an aircrew on a normally piloted aircraft in harms way. Leaders at the 157th aren’t naive to the fact that they may have to consider alternatives to flying.

“There are a number of missions being done by unmanned aircraft,” said Martell. “At some point, we will have to look at that.”

“The senior leadership will need to develop additional future missions to ensure the N.H. Air National Guard remains a viable force for both our federal mission and our very important state mission,” said Hutchinson.

“The NHANG needs to look at non-flying missions, particularly in space or cyber

command” said Dunkelberger. “The seacoast and the NHANG have a lot of talent in the areas of computer networking that could well serve the nation in this rapidly evolving mission. Pease has the basic infrastructure to host a cyber mission with little capital investment.”

What does the move toward UAVs mean for pilots and boom operators at the 157th?

“For the pilots and boom operators, there would be, at least initially, a decrease in job satisfaction,” Dunkelberger said. “Crewmembers get a huge boost when a critical air refueling is complete or when a difficult contact is never felt by the receiver or when the pilot greases a landing in a crosswind. These are things that you won’t get immediate feedback on in an unmanned aircraft.

“However, for the recipients of the intel gained or the close air support provided, and the lives saved by operating that unmanned platform, crews can take great satisfaction. It’s not as glamorous as a flying mission, but essential to the viability of our Armed Forces, and would go a long way in building the case for Pease to be here for the next century.” ♦

Since 9/11, the 157th Air Refueling Wing has been operating 24-hours a day, seven days a week in support of the Global War on Terror. They have logged more than 7,500 flight hours, flown more than 2,000 sorties and offloaded 120 million pounds of fuel in support of Operation Noble Eagle, and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Every day the Wing has aircrews, maintenance and base support personnel working to execute air refueling missions, sometimes within an hour of receiving notification.

in the modern era when it stood up Detachment 2 of the 169th MP Company, a unit based out of Rhode Island.

“This transformation brought with it both hurdles and benefits,” Ford said. “The force structure grew from just over 40 soldiers led by a lieutenant to 170 soldiers with a captain, four lieutenants and three E-8 positions. It wasn’t without difficulties, as the unit was split into three different armories, challenging its ability to resource training and grow logistically.”

Another challenge for the 237th was the influx of soldiers to the unit from units that were either transforming or disappearing altogether. Many of these soldiers come with combat experience and have proven to be valuable assets to the unit. The large number of transforming soldiers coming to the unit has presented several issues as well, mainly in the areas of qualification and training. While the numbers of soldiers assigned to the unit has continued to climb steadily and is virtually at 100 percent, the percentage of those qualified as MPs or support MOSs has dropped significantly.

“Transformation has not been without hurdles, and the 237th MP Company has had its share to clear,” Ford said. “Nevertheless, the benefits to recruiting, force structure and location throughout the state ultimately benefit both the unit and the state of New Hampshire.”

Troop Command’s aviation unit was also seriously affected by

Transformation and that has influenced how it conducts its state mission as well as the federal mission. Prior to transformation the 1159th Medical Company (AA) was a self-sustaining unit, complete with an admin section, food service, supply and aircraft technical inspection.

“Today we conduct business very differently as we need to rely on higher headquarters and attached personnel for admin and food service,” said 1st Sgt. Earlon Foss. “Gone is the day when New Hampshire’s aviation unit could deploy and completely function on its own. We now have two aviation units both providing MEDEVAC but are unable to operate independently of each other.”

Foss added, “We are fortunate to have a core group of good soldiers – willing to step up and assume the additional responsibility of training new soldiers, accepting additional annual training – applying their years of experience to the challenges we face to make transformation successful.”

“Because of the wide range of units in 54th Troop Command, we have been able to function and train as a small BCT, with our platoon and squad level leaders getting experience from the blend of MP’s, infantry, aviation, public affairs, and engineers, which approximates the experience on today’s battlefield,” Valas concluded. “We are fortunate to still be able to train our soldiers in this way.” ♦

The BASE the WAR (almost) FORGOT



157th Logistics Readiness team helps keep Ali from closing

**By Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day,
157th Logistics Readiness Squadron**

At Ali Air Base (formerly named Tallil), located just southwest of An Nasiriyah, Iraq, the deployed men and women of the 407th Air Expeditionary Group commonly refer to the station as “*the base the war forgot.*”

After the last permanent aircraft stationed at Ali were reassigned to Tikrit in February 2005, there were rumors that the base would shut down entirely. However, thanks to the hard work and dedication of a handful of airmen from the New Hampshire Air National Guard, Ali will be a major player in the future of Iraq and its people.

For six months beginning in August of

2007, five members of the 157th Logistics Readiness Squadron deployed to Ali, including Master Sgt. Thomas Vasile, Tech Sgt. John Rodgers, Staff Sgt. Mike Toth, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day and Senior Airman Valerie Johnson and began playing a critical role in the revitalization of the base.

They, along with eight other personnel from Air National Guard units in Florida, Texas and Montana, made up the 407th Vehicle Operations Flight, which was instrumental in turning the Ali Air Base around and making it a relevant and critical asset to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The first task facing the airmen was assisting the Navy in a joint force, bed-down operation, which brought the first permanent

aircraft back to Ali; a squadron of P-3 Orion surveillance airplanes. The operators moved more than 25 tons of cargo and nearly 300 Navy personnel safely and efficiently,

(Above): Five New Hampshire Air National Guardsmen including Master Sgt. Thomas Vasile, Tech Sgt. John Rodgers, Staff Sgt. Mike Toth, Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day and Senior Airman Valerie Johnson, spent six months at Ali with eight other personnel from Air National Guard units from Florida, Texas and Montana as part of the 407th Vehicle Operations Flight. Photo: Courtesy of 157th LRS

(Below): Staff Sgt. Jonathan Day, driving a fork lift, positions equipment at Ali Air Base in Iraq. Photo: Courtesy of 157th LRS



Thanks to the hard work and dedication of a handful of airmen from the New Hampshire Air National Guard, Ali will be a major player in the future of Iraq and its people.

enabling the Navy to begin their mission five days earlier than anticipated.

"We were surprised to see the Navy when we arrived in the desert, but in working with them we really could see the 'total force' concept at work," Johnson said.

Later in their tour, the vehicle operators were tasked with aiding in the setup of another new mission at Ali, the deployment of the 69th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron and their unmanned MQ-1 Predator aircraft. The Predator is a multi-purpose aircraft responsible for armed reconnaissance and plays a key role in the detection and neutralization of improvised explosive devices and the insurgents responsible for placing them.

The Guardsmen were responsible for delivering each of the \$40 million aircraft by tractor trailer, along with all of the equipment and supplies to set up the squadron's base of operations. The speed, efficiency and safe manner in which the mission was accomplished enabled the Predator mission to come online a full week ahead of schedule, keeping the roads safer for convoys passing through the region.

With the increase in aircraft and flying missions at Ali, a new radar system needed to be set up to enhance flight safety and air traffic control capabilities. Once again, the call went to the vehicle operations flight who delivered more than \$5.5 million in equipment to aid in the construction of the new facility.

Despite the flight's accomplishments, the operators will tell you that their most important role was the transportation it provided to medevac patients throughout their tour. At any hour of the day or night, they would answer the call to safely and quickly transport patients from the Army combat surgical hospital to aircraft bringing them to better care.

Keeping the patients comfortable and safe was the most important mission for the operators. But they never underestimated the power of trying to make the wounded smile before heading home.

After six months, the deployed airmen returned home safely on Feb. 19, having driven 22,000 miles accident free and having transported 5,000 tons of cargo and more than 2,500 passengers. Although impressive, these statistics hide the true story of how 13 Guardsmen impacted the future of Ali Air Base, Iraq, her people and the War on Terror. ❖

'Run for Autism' personal for New Hampshire airman

By Master. Sgt. Rob Wieland, 407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

ALI AIR BASE, Iraq – As the sun rose high in the sky, more than 100 airmen, soldiers, sailors and Coalition Forces partners lined up for the first Ali Base six-kilometer Run for Autism, Jan. 21.

This event was organized by Senior Airman Valerie Johnson, a transportation specialist with the 157th Logistics Readiness Squadron. The run held a special place in her heart due to the fact that her son is affected by autism.

"My son Parker didn't talk until he was 23 months old," Johnson said before the start of the inaugural event. "He pointed at the Christmas tree while looking at its lights and said 'blue, green, orange.'"

According to the Organization for Autism Research one in 150 children is born with autism and there are approximately 1.7 million children and adults with the disease in the United States. While there are many theories about the cause of autism, the true cause is still unknown.

Before the runners started the event, special shirts were handed out to people whose family or friends had been affected by autism.

With a blowing of the air horn, the runners set their pace on the six-kilometer out-and-back course along the Ali Base runway.

"This was a great event for a great cause, I can't wait to attend another Run for Autism event at home," Johnson said. ❖



Airmen of the 407th Air Expeditionary Group start running the six-kilometer "Run for Autism" Jan. 21. The event was coordinated by Senior Airman Valerie Johnson to help foster autism awareness. Airman Johnson is deployed to the 407th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron from Pease Air National Guard Base, N.H. Photo: U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathan Snyder

EMBEDDED TRAINING TEAM

exceeds expectations at halfway mark of Afghan deployment

Editor's Note: Maj. John LeBlanc of Manchester, team leader for the New Hampshire Army National Guard's Embedded Tactical Team, wrote the following dispatch on his soldiers' progress over the past six months in Afghanistan as mentors to members of both the Afghanistan national army and the country's police force. Sixteen soldiers comprise the team and they are part of 160 New Hampshire Guardsmen (soldiers and airmen) who are currently deployed overseas in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He does an excellent job of spotlighting his soldiers through their own words.

MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan – When soldiers of the New Hampshire Army National Guard Embedded Tactical Training Team (N.H. ETT) departed the wintry weather of New Hampshire in February 2007, they had no idea their mission would make such a difference in the lives of the people of Afghanistan.

Humanitarian assistance projects, security missions and supporting Coalition Forces were in store for the team. Here is a look at how the first six months of their 12 month deployment has helped rebuild a wartorn country.

The harsh environment

When the 16 soldiers from the N.H. ETT arrived in Mazar-e-Sharif, northern Afghanistan, in May 2007, they were struck by both the vastness and beauty of their area of responsibility. Our area of responsibility covers more than 600 miles from east to west and consists of nine provinces, which is the

largest area of operation in all of Afghanistan. So far, members of our team have conducted missions throughout the entire area, often over the most brutal and treacherous terrain in the world.

Their mission

The N.H. ETT is part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VI, which has responsibility for training and mentoring the Afghan national security forces, consisting of both army (ANA) and police (ANP) units. The 16 soldier team is broken down into sub-teams, some assigned to army units and some to police units.

"It is a very demanding but rewarding job," said Maj. Bill Neville of Monroe, team chief of an army mentor team. "This is a brand new army, having been together only three years, they have a lot of growing pains,

but they are also making a lot of progress in a very short amount of time."

The police mentor mission is in its first year. Unfortunately, the ANP is full of corruption, nepotism and many other serious problems that make it a challenging mission for its mentors.

"Our days are often spent in smoky rooms talking endlessly – often in convoluted circles – with rugged men who have known nothing but poverty and armed conflict throughout their lives. We compliment, flatter, praise, pressure, push, pull, confront and at times bully our Afghan counterparts into doing the 'right thing,'" said Staff Sgt. Zack Bazzi of Waltham, Mass.

In addition to U.S. forces, the team also works with numerous other nations. The International Security Assistance Force, or ISAF, falls under NATO command. ISAF has about 32,000 soldiers from 37 different nations.

"In the north we mainly work with the Germans, Swedish and Norwegians," said team member Capt. Dan Ouellet of Rochester. "They consist of operational mentor and liaison teams (OMLT), who do the same job as we do training and mentoring the Afghan national army. They also have provincial reconstruction teams, who are responsible for the reconstruction and redevelopment of the provinces,"

Making a difference

Our team is very involved in humanitarian assistance and rebuilding projects throughout northern Afghanistan, said Capt. Eric Barricklow of Bow, team chief of a police mentor team. Over the past six months, the N.H. ETT has assisted in building new schools, digging wells, conducting humanitarian assistance drops of school supplies and clothing to schools and orphanages, as well as medical assistance missions.

A recent good news story came from Rochester, where the city adopted a newly built orphanage. Sgt. Maj. David Stevens and his wife Audrey are very involved in the community of Rochester. When the leaders of Rochester heard about the orphanage, they



A group of Afghan women and children gather during a recent patrol by members of the New Hampshire Embedded Training Team earlier this year. Photo: Courtesy of Maj. Jon LeBlanc, N.H. ETT Team Leader

started a drive to collect 1,200 backpacks filled with school supplies to be delivered during the grand opening of the orphanage.

In addition to the city of Rochester, numerous New Hampshire organizations and individuals, as well as the team's Family Readiness Group, have sent over humanitarian assistance items to the team such as clothing, hats, gloves, school supplies, shoes, socks and personal hygiene items.

"We conducted a humanitarian assistance drop to two local villages and an orphanage the day after Christmas," said Staff Sgt. Tim Burns of Nashua. "The temperature was in the low 30s and many of the children had no shoes, gloves or warm clothing."

"Seeing the joyful smiles on the children's faces when we arrive at their village, and knowing we are making a difference, makes our mission worthwhile," added Staff Sgt. Dan Beliveau of Manchester.

Operation Shaheen Sahara

Since their arrival, members of the N.H. ETT have participated in every major operation conducted by the Afghan national security force and the international security assistance force in northern Afghanistan. We arrived in Afghanistan on a Thursday afternoon and on Sunday morning we were responding to a large riot in the city of Sheberghan. It was stressful conducting a mission so soon upon arrival, but it allowed us to develop a relationship with our Afghan counterpart. Sharing hardships and danger together definitely builds strong bonds among soldiers of any nation.

The most intense operation was Shaheen Sahara, a joint coalition, ANA and ANP mission conducted during late October and early November in the northwest region. The primary purpose of the operation was to disrupt anti-government forces in the area. Team members Capt. Eric MacDonald of Gilford, 1st Lt. Matthew Paquin of Boston, Burns and Beliveau were directly involved in a raid that killed and captured more than 30 Taliban insurgents as well as the capture of four high value targets. In addition, 20 tons of humanitarian assistance was delivered to numerous villages in the area.

"All this was conducted with no friendly casualties," MacDonald said. "This made the operation even more successful than we planned."

More to follow

Six months into their year-long deployment, members of the N.H. ETT feel they have accomplished much more than they thought possible. If we left today, we would leave a lasting impression on the Afghan people, but we have much more we want to accomplish. ❖

"We compliment, flatter, praise, pressure, push, pull, confront and at times bully our Afghan counterparts into doing the 'right thing,'" said Staff Sgt. Zack Bazzi of Waltham, Mass.



New Hampshire Army Guard Sgt. Maj. David Stevens, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 5th Kandak Embedded Training Team to the Afghan National Army's 209th corps, cuts the ribbon alongside 209th Corps Commander, Maj. Gen. Murad Ali, commemorating the December 2007, grand opening of a new secondary school for children of the village Deh-i-Qazi in Afghanistan's Balkh province.

Photo: Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian P. Seymour, U.S. Navy



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More than 470 join N.H. National Guard in 2007

Ranks grow to highest mark since the mid 1990s



Private 1st Class Mandy Neveau, a soldier with 54th Troop Command, and Master Sgt. William Bates, an airman with Joint Force Headquarters, join N.H. Gov. John Lynch to cut a birthday cake in celebration of the N.H. National Guard's 37th birthday on Dec 13, 2007. It was a banner year for the N.H. Guard as more than 470 men and women joined its ranks. Photo: Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, State PA Office, N.H. National Guard

Several years ago, the N.H. Guard, as well as the military in general, was struggling to meet its recruiting goals, primarily because of the affect of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2005, the N.H. Army Guard shrank to its lowest membership in two decades to 1,635. It dropped to 1,608 the following year.

Today, the N.H. Army Guard's strength is more than 1,770 soldiers. The N.H. Air Guard's strength is more than 950 airmen. The totals reflect new recruits as well as losses – those Guardsmen who retired or left the Guard for other reasons.

Clark attributed in part hurricanes Katrina and Rita, when more than 50,000 National Guardsmen across the country responded to the Gulf Coast states, as well as several in-state activations for flooding, for the surge in National Guard recruitment.

Lt. Col. Ralph Huber, the commander of the N.H. Army Guard Recruiting and Retention team, credited a back-to-basics approach to recruiting and a renewed support of community events as helping the N.H. National Guard grow.

Part of the renewed focus was an accounting for what programs and activities were working and dropping the bake sales and static displays that were producing minimal leads.

"I remember walking past a Guard display at the Deerfield Fair that had a fat guy eating a hot dog and across the way was an active duty recruiter with a rock climbing wall," Huber said. "Which one would you wait in line for?"

The N.H. Army Guard recruiting team took a new approach with dynamic displays, such as a \$12,000 inflatable obstacle course, to market the physical fitness and team building aspects of the military.

Previously, the only service provided to local high schools was a career direction course with aptitude test, resume builders and job interview tips. Last year they utilized the obstacle course with a dodge ball arena for physical education, while continuing the instructional classes.

"We looked at the events that were working and said, 'What else can we make better?'" Huber said.

Recruitment also received a shot of adrenaline from Guard members themselves through a new recruiter assistant program that offers \$2,000 for each referral resulting in an enlistment. More than 500 N.H. Guardsmen have signed up for the two-year-old program, generating more than 150 new enlistments with another 250 in the pipeline. That equates to almost \$250,000 into their pockets. ❖

By Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, State PA Office,
New Hampshire National Guard

CONCORD – In one of its most successful recruiting years in modern history, the New Hampshire National Guard enlisted more than 470 men and women in 2007. More than 350 joined the N.H. Army Guard and about 100 entered the N.H. Air Guard.

For the N.H. Army Guard, it was the 13th highest recruitment total for Army National Guards nationwide.

"We are seeing a new generation of men and women who are joining us for the right reasons," said Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard. "They want to serve their state and nation. For some that means helping in their communities and for others that means going overseas."

"We are seeing a new generation of men and women who are joining us for the right reasons. They want to serve their state and nation. For some that means helping in their communities and for others that means going overseas."

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Black Hawk crew faces toughest rescue of their career

(Continued from page 9)

student caught in whiteout conditions and 20 degree below zero temperatures.

After the helicopter returned to the staging point to refuel, a 911 cell phone call from Davis put him in an area on the east side of Mount Lafayette, a quarter-mile from the summit.

The crew was flying small search and rescue patterns when the pilot spotted Davis' headlamp.

The light snow forced the helicopter to hover at 150 feet while Staff Sgt. Alan Robinson lowered Staff Sgt. Matthew Stohrer in a forest penetrator or litter.

After signaling the helicopter to disengage the litter so they could move off station, Stohrer hollered to Davis to move toward his location.

"I landed about 30 or 40 feet from the patient in shoulder deep snow, it took me about 10 minutes to move 15 feet," recalled Stohrer.

"He started moving toward me with no gloves, no boots, and his pants rolled up, at which point I knew if I didn't get him out of there immediately he would go hypothermic."

Stohrer popped red smoke once he reached Davis and the helicopter closed in on their position for extraction.

Davis was wrapped in blankets and transported to the Littleton Hospital where he was released the next day.

"At the time, the sun was going down. The temperature was dropping. It was so cold that (helicopter) blades were starting to freeze and the helicopter was vibrating and so any search and rescue operation puts their lives at risk. It was really heroic. I'm forever grateful for their efforts," Davis told the Boston Herald.

On Feb. 19, Cartmell, Stohrer, Chief Warrant Officer Brian O'Leary and Staff Sgt. Craig Courser tracked two Virginia hikers after swelling rivers and torrential rains forced them off of Mount Eisenhower and into the Dry River Wilderness.

"En route to the command post we noticed snow shoe tracks along the ridgeline," said Stohrer.

After inserting a rescue team at the Lake in the Clouds hut and on the summit of Mount Eisenhower, the crew returned to the tracks and followed them until they located the missing hikers and conducted hoist operations.

"Their efforts saved our men hours of strenuous hiking and potentially life threatening situations," said Fish and Game officer Col. Jeffrey Gray. "Their crew exemplifies the best in professionalism and capabilities, and they are top shelf in our mind when it comes to flying and performing in adverse conditions." ♦

She rocks our world *(Continued from page 6)*

When I was asked to write this column, I just laughed. I must have the most boring career in the history of the Air National Guard. But then I figured they were desperate to fill white space before their deadline. Since I have a background in public affairs, albeit long ago, they thought I'd be the perfect patsy, uh, choice. Reluctantly, I agreed.

I have worked in this office since before I enlisted in the NHANG. At the age of 18, my plan was to stay for about a year and then move on. Thirty-three years later...

I have had many opportunities during my career. As an Airman 1st Class, I was given the chance to do a tour at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. It was a joint assignment, working with Army, Air Force and Navy personnel, preparing for a two-week joint leadership seminar. That was amazing.

After three years in personnel, I cross-trained into the public affairs field. I attended the 11-week Defense Information School, a joint school where, again, I had the opportunity to serve with members of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. There, I learned all aspects of publishing a newspaper. In addition to writing news and feature articles, I got to learn photography, to include developing my own pictures, and newspaper layout. Another amazing experience.

My public affairs career was short lived. Not long after attaining my five level, I was offered an AGR position back in the personnel field, where I've been ever since. Although I've worked in the same office for more than 30 years, I can honestly say that there's never a dull moment. I've continued to use what I learned in public affairs.

The person who made the most impact on me through my career has to be my first supervisor and mentor, Chief Master Sgt. Paul Beaudry. He taught me empathy, attention to detail, respect, job knowledge, and most importantly, to live by the Golden Rule. A request from an airman basic is just as important to that airman as the request from the adjutant general is to him. Treat both requests with the proper amount of urgency and respect.

I truly believe that Chief Beaudry is the reason I made the Air National Guard a career. If you think that mentoring is just another program that will eventually go away, think again. Mentoring has been around long before it became a formal program. I was extremely fortunate to have been mentored by an outstanding person. ♦

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Below: Soldiers from 54th Troop Command, New Hampshire Army National Guard, load into a Maryland Air National Guard C-130 at the Concord Airport, Feb. 15, on their way to annual training at Fort Pickett, Virginia. Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy PA Officer, N.H. Guard

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Sergeant 1st Class
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Patrick Sadlemire
David Shaughnessy

Linda Small
James Drew
David Burriss
John Fuller

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Ryan Nash
Wendy Ryderjones
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Joseph Doherty

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Christopher Moisan

Staff Sergeant
Jeffrey Delorey
Amanda Bates
Matt Tricomi
Nicholas Stack
Lindsay Lassonde
Michael McInnis
Christina Hall
David Palmieri
Nathaniel Sharman

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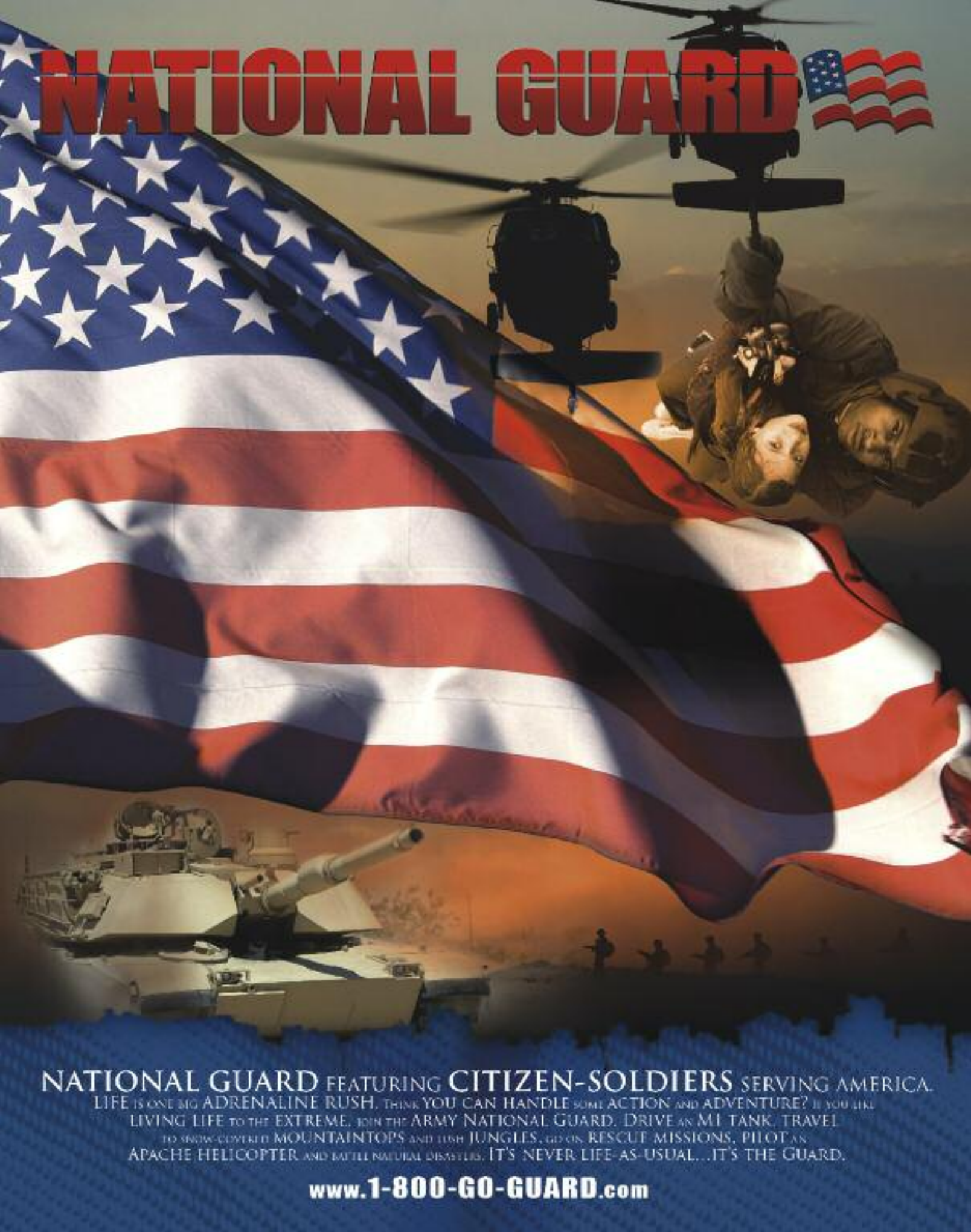
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