

NEW HAMPSHIRE

National Guard

MAGAZINE

Summer 2008



Caring for others was his mission

*Saying goodbye to
Sgt. David Stelmat*



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Photo: Courtesy of Ken Williams, *Concord Monitor*

About the cover

By Maj. Greg Heilshorn, State PAO

We broke a fundamental rule of design on the cover of this edition of the N.H. National Guard Magazine with the photo of a NHNG honor guard escorting the casket of Sgt. David Stelmat on the tarmac at Manchester's regional airport in late March.

It was taken by Ken Williams, a staff photographer for the *Concord Monitor*, who thought our idea to run his photo the full length of the page, horizontally, was, to put it nicely, naive. He gently suggested we reconsider, but thankfully did not make it a precondition to using the photo in our publication.

We have an unwritten policy that when our magazine reports on the combat death of one of our guardsmen, the cover should be dedicated to their memory.

Four years ago, we used the official military photo of Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes on the cover of the *Granite Guardian*, our Army Guard publication at the time. Holmes was the N.H. Guard's first combat loss in Iraq and the first N.H. guardsman to be killed in action since Vietnam.

It was a simple portrait with the United States flag hanging behind him. The stars were on his right and the stripes were on his left. We decided to run it as an 8 x 11, the full size of the cover, and it revealed a combination of intensity and innocence in Holmes' eyes that we hadn't noticed in the smaller version. His gaze was almost too hard to look at, but to many of us, it brought home the reality that New Hampshire and its citizen soldiers and airmen were at war.

William's image of the honor guard carrying Stelmat's casket on a cold, snowy morning, and a NHNG color guard standing at attention in the background is searing. He captured a sacred moment in our history and we are grateful for his permission to reprint the photo. We wanted to leverage as much of the cover space as we could, even if it meant that you would have to turn the magazine due east to view it.

Stelmat is the N.H. Guard's third combat loss in Operation Iraqi Freedom. We think this is a dignified way to honor his service and grieve his loss. ♦

The New York Times Magazine used to run a column called, "What They Were Thinking" in which the subjects of a photograph would describe what was happening at the time the photo was taken.

It was usually a slice of life photo and the comments often added another level of insight.

We thought the cover photo deserved a similar introspection. We spoke to Ken Williams, a 36-year veteran of the *Concord Monitor*, who found this assignment particularly difficult. And we also spoke to Sgt. Lance Emond, a member of the NHNG honor guard, who, in the photo, is holding Stelmat's casket at the center on the right side.

NHNG Magazine: This is a powerful photo. What were you thinking when you were there? Is it just another day on the job for you or something more?

Williams: It's not just another day on the job for us. We don't enjoy accidents, fires and home-comings like this. (For this assignment) it's probably because I have kids and grandkids of the same age as the soldier and I tend to reflect on my own kids and grandkids.

Two kids actually went to the casket and I was told not to shoot that. I don't know if they were family or friends. I had tears in my eyes just watching them.

I didn't know I had a powerful shot until I saw it on the computer and saw the ice in the foreground. To me it's a powerful event no matter when and where it is. It's a powerful event that I try to be respectful of.

NHNG Magazine: Have you covered these before?

Williams: I don't know how many I've covered. I've done four or five in the past couple of years. Each time the camera goes off, it sounds too loud and I feel like I am in the wrong place.

NHNG Magazine: Who told you not to take the other shot?

When the kids went to the casket? Was it one of our guys?

Williams: Yes. It was Mike (1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO). It had to do with not taking any photographs until it was in the possession of the honor guard. Until their hands were on the casket.

NHNG Magazine: A lot of photographers would have taken it.

Williams: I don't want to be impolite or pushy. I want to be in the background without disturbing the family or the military.

* * *

Emond: My biggest concern was not allowing my emotions to show. Because of the position we are in, that wouldn't be very appropriate.

We were facing the casket when the two family members were leaning over the casket and hugging it and crying. That was very hard to face. It was really hard to not concentrate on them. I was trying to think about my queues and what I am watching for next.

NHNG Magazine: Do you have a chance to talk about these kinds of feelings with the other honor guard members?

Emond: We always have an AAR (after-actions review) and sometimes an AAR can turn into a place to vent emotion.

NHNG Magazine: How many of details have you been a part of? Was this your first?

Emond: No. That was my third carrying off the plane and I have done several graveside services.

NHNG Magazine: Why do you do it?

Emond: That's like asking why you go through the rigors of Ranger School to get a Ranger Tab. You're giving honor to someone who gave up everything for you. I don't think it's too much to ask to give him a half hour of my time.

Serving those you lead

Where do you stand?

By Col. Richard Martell, Commander, 157th Air Refueling Wing

Martell has served in the New Hampshire Air National Guard for 27 years. He joined as a pilot in 1981. He has held various positions in the Operations Group and commanded the Logistics Group. Prior to his current position, Martell was the Operations Group commander.



Early in my career with the N.H. Air National Guard, I heard talk about the “Servant Leadership” method of leading. I found it intriguing and for a long time attempted to practice it knowing only that it comprised working as if I worked for the ones I led.

Over the years, different pieces of this

style of leadership were presented to me and I have attempted to embrace it fully.

Personally, I find this type of leadership very fulfilling – because the good of the group takes priority over the needs of the individual.

I have started to research the formal tenets of this style of leadership, and I

present to you a short quiz below so you can evaluate yourself or your leaders.

I urge you to consider this style of leadership regardless of what level of leadership you are currently at. It is very powerful for an organization to have many leaders that adhere to these principles.

Place an “X” next each of the following questions that you would answer yes. If you can check more than seven, you may be well on your way to becoming a servant leader.

- Do people believe that you are willing to sacrifice your own self interest for the good of the group?
- Do people believe that you want to hear their ideas and will value them?
- Do people believe that you will understand what is happening in their lives and how it affects them?
- Do people come to you when the chips are down or when something traumatic has happened in their lives?
- Do others believe that you have a strong awareness for what is going on?
- Do others follow your requests because they want to, as opposed to because they have to?
- Do others communicate their ideas and vision for the organization when you are around?
- Do others have confidence in your ability to anticipate the future and its consequences?
- Do others believe you are preparing the organization to make a positive difference in the world?
- Do people believe that you are committed to helping them develop and grow?
- Do people feel a strong sense of community in the organization that you lead?

Note from State PAO: This column first appeared in the February Refueler, the N.H. Air National Guard’s monthly newsletter. We invite your feedback at Gregory.heilshorn@us.army.mil

N.H. ETT finishes Afghanistan tour

Photos by Maj. Greg Heilshorn, State PAO

Maj. John LeBlanc, team leader of the N.H. Guard's Embedded Tactical Training Team, steps off the bus and into the eye of local media during a welcome home ceremony at the Manchester Armory on May 13. LeBlanc was one of 16 N.H. Guard soldiers who served a year in Afghanistan as mentors to the country's army and police force. Capt. Adam Burritt follows behind him.

Below: Holding his daughter, Lily, Maj. Bill Neville, a soldier with the N.H. Guard's Embedded Tactical Training Team, answers a reporter's question during a welcome home ceremony at the Manchester Armory on May 13.




Sgt. Kevin Shangraw brings a smile to family and friends during a welcome home ceremony for the N.H. Guard's Embedded Tactical Training team at the Manchester Armory on May 13.




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34th RAOC leaves mark in Mosul

By 2nd Lt. Amanda Ponn, 114th MPAD

The New Hampshire National Guard welcomed home 30 soldiers of the 34th Rear Area Operations Command (RAOC) with a Freedom Salute ceremony held in Concord April 19. The Guard honored the soldiers and their families for their sacrifice and service during the unit's eight-month mission in Mosul, Iraq.

It was the second time since 2004 the N.H. Army Guard deployed a RAOC team to Iraq.

"For some, there may be challenges or obstacles when trying to step back into life stateside," said guest speaker Col. Richard Duncan, chief of staff for the N.H. Army Guard, "for others, things will tend to be a bit easier."

Duncan addressed guardsmen facing the transition back to home life, sharing personal anecdotes from his deployment to Afghanistan and suggesting soldiers focus on three things: pride, patience and the understanding that some things will take time.

Sgt. 1st Class David Schroth of Belmont expressed pride in the 34th RAOC mission in Iraq, and his family's accomplishments while he was away, particularly in the birth of his first granddaughter two days after his homecoming.

"We are doing so much more there than is depicted in the everyday news," said Schroth, who worked on base defense communications while deployed. At the ceremony he was accompanied by his wife, Lora, and five of their eight children.

The 34th RAOC was mobilized July 2007 and deployed to Iraq the following September, providing security and overseeing day-to-day operations for two large forward operating bases in Mosul.

Col. Daniel Saucier, 34th RAOC commander, explained to the audience of about 200 family and friends that their soldiers "stood tall and did things that no other RAOC did in Iraq."



Staff Sgt. Doug Cheney of Pittsfield, a soldier with the 34th RAOC, and his girlfriend Nancy, head home from Manchester airport April 15 after he returned from his tour in Iraq. Photo: Spc. Rick Frost, 114th MPAD

Each soldier was presented with an encased American flag, commemorative coin and "Defender of Freedom" certificate. At the request of Lt. Col. James Moody, the master of ceremonies for the event, soldiers and their spouses or significant others stood and pinned each other with National Guard team lapel pins, also awarded to the soldiers. Children received "Future Solider Kits" that included games.

The soldiers and families were praised by speakers N.H. Gov. John Lynch; U.S. Reps. Carol Shea-Porter and Paul Hodes; Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. Guard; and Brig. Gen. Stephen Burritt, the Commander of the N.H. Army Guard.

Hodes thanked the soldiers "for serving with such courage and such distinction." ♦



Lt. Col. Jeanne Jones of Laconia reunites with her daughter Julia at the Manchester airport April 15 after returning from an eight-month mission in Iraq with the 34th RAOC. Photo: Spc. Rick Frost, 114th MPAD



1st Lt. Michael Butler of Manchester fastens a National Guard Team pin on his wife Christine at the Freedom Salute ceremony for the 34th RAOC in Concord April 19. Photo: 2nd Lt. Amanda Ponn, 114th MPAD

Soldier Column

Ladieu treks into history, participates in Bataan memorial



Sgt. 1st Class Sage Ladieu participated in the 26.2 mile memorial Bataan Death March held this spring at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

Photo: Courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Sage Ladieu

By Staff Sgt. Ginger Dempsey, 114th MPAD

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, N.M. – Sgt. 1st Class Sage Ladieu of the New Hampshire Army National Guard completed a 26.2-mile memorial Bataan Death March held this spring to summon tribute for men who endured the actual grisly ordeal during World War II after capture by the Japanese army on April 9, 1942, in the Philippines. In the forced 60-plus mile march to transfer an estimated 90,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war from the Bataan peninsula to prison camps, an estimated 10,000 American men lost their lives. Surprisingly, Ladieu said, not a lot of people today seem to know about this major event in American history.

“This was actually during my grandparent’s era. I had a grandfather in the regular Army, one in the New Hampshire Army National Guard, my father was in the Marines and I had two uncles in the Army,” said Ladieu, a member of the Recruiting and Retention Command. “So we talked a lot about the military, and I’ve always been interested in military history and did a lot of reading about it.”

The Bataan Death March and what those men endured intrigued Ladieu. During further research he learned of the Memorial March, which began in 1989 through efforts of the Army ROTC Department at New Mexico State University as a means of marking a page in history which affected so many people at that time. The partnership between the White Sands Missile Range and the New Mexico National Guard was born in 1992.

Over the years, the event has grown from roughly 100 participants to this year’s rally, which yielded more than 4,000 military and civilian competitors.

Ladieu, an Iraqi war veteran who has previously completed three marathons and also a half marathon, said the support and enthusiasm for this event was staggering.

When he mentioned to people in the NHARNG he planned on participating, quite a few people stepped up to the plate to support him logistically. A Company, 3643rd Brigade Support Battalion out of Somersworth was the largest donor, followed by the N.H. Recruiting and Retention Command. During the march, Ladieu toted the BSBs guidon flag as a means of gratitude for their contributions. The Barnstead resident states it’s also noteworthy that without the backing and help from his wife, Tammy, and two daughters, he never would have been able to pull this off. The mental and physical training to prep for the course was all-encompassing. And at White Missile Sands, the spirit of widespread support and encouragement continued.

“This is the most patriotic and well supported event I’ve ever seen,” he said. “The ROTC and the New Mexico Guard did a remarkable job. Every two miles there were rest stops – each of them had Gatorade, water, cut bananas and oranges, and first aid tents. There were medics out there and officers and sergeants major to take care of anyone who needed it or looked like they needed help – no one had a chance to get hurt out there. The Border Patrol was out there on the course in four-wheelers to bring in anyone who needed help, and trucks took people back who couldn’t make it. Everyone was motivating and encouraging each other and helping each other, instead of being competitive and rivalrous.”

The irony of the relative safety of this commemorative event compared to the perils of the 1942 march did not escape Ladieu.

“I was really struck by the experience of some of the guys, and how they survived. They had no gear, some of them were even in sandals, they had no food or water; and had to watch thousands die along the way,” he said. “I had the chance to talk to some of the veterans while I was out there, and their stories are amazing.”

“One of the survivors stayed in for 22 more years after he was rescued, and went on to fight in the Korean War. He served 15 years before he even was stationed in the United States, and he ended up retiring as a master sergeant. He went through all that crap, and he survived, which is miraculous, and he stayed in service.”

Back then, Ladieu continued, it was a different era and a different breed. The work ethic was different, and people didn’t have as many options as there are now so they made do with less and were grateful for what they did have.

“Plus, the entire United States rallied behind the troops 150 percent,” Ladieu said. “Everyone had a single-minded purpose – and everything was about supporting the war.”

“Back then they saw the news in theaters, and all the movies, the music, everything was about supporting the troops and the war effort. Every household, every family, made sacrifices and did something to support the war. Wives were working on building the planes that the guys overseas flew. I think that’s

how the ones who did survive made it - they knew the support level back home was absolute.”

Knowing accounts of the camaraderie of people helping people during that abominable time left an imprint on Ladiou.

“People were picking up their buddies and carrying them when they couldn’t go on anymore, because if you stopped on

the walk you were dead,” he said. “Filipino civilians along the way were throwing food to the Americans, and the Americans would throw it back because they knew the Japanese would shoot them for helping.”

(continued on page 12)

Under one roof

Joint Force Headquarters officially open for business

Story and photo by 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO

CONCORD – Gov. John Lynch joined New Hampshire’s congressional delegation and N.H. National Guard senior leaders to celebrate the opening of the new Joint Force Headquarters and its strategic importance to the state April 22.

The \$15.3 million facility, which provides a 66,200 square-foot headquarters building on the State Military Reservation in Concord, will serve the day-to-day operations of the N.H. Guard’s military and civilian personnel as well as a command center during times of natural or manmade emergencies.

It houses, for the first time, the N.H. Guard’s entire headquarters under one roof to include the 12th Civil Support Team and allows the organization to focus on joint operations in support of the state of New Hampshire in any state emergency.

“The New Hampshire Army National Guard had not built a new facility since the 50s until it began a modernization program of its aviation hanger in the late 90s,” said Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. Guard. “Senator (Judd) Gregg was crucial to securing funding for this project

which made it possible to renovate and add to the old aviation facility to create a new Joint Command Readiness Center and Civil Support Facility.

“At a time when we are serving on several fronts simultaneously, to include responding to emergencies here at home and fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it’s vital that our men and women in uniform have the best possible support. Our congressional delegation understands that. They understand that a strong National Guard is good for our state and good for our nation.”

The new facility is 83,800 square feet and it uses 60 percent of the old structure, the former aviation facility. The new building is heated and cooled using geothermal heat pumps. The building houses 212 soldiers, airmen, state and federal employees. The majority of building materials used were recycled.

A large gold statue of a minuteman marks the new entrance, and address, of the headquarters at One Minuteman Way. ❖



N.H. Gov. John Lynch and the state’s congressional delegation join N.H. Guard senior leaders and members of the local community and design and construction firms to inaugurate the N.H. Guard’s new Joint Command Readiness Center on April 21. U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg was instrumental in securing the federal funding to construct the \$15.3 million facility.

Airman Column

Maj. Stephanie Riley, a nurse with the 157th Medical Group, looks back on her time in Qatar

A mother answers the call

By Maj. Stephanie Riley, 157th Medical Group

This year marks my 20th year as a registered nurse and during that time I have had many interesting experiences, one of the highlights being the deployment I spent in Qatar.

In the fall of 2004, I volunteered for a four-month deployment to Qatar to serve as a nurse at the base hospital. I was nervous about going over, especially in light of the fact that I would be leaving my toddler son and my husband behind. However, I had been active duty Air Force during the first Desert Storm and had never deployed so it was always something that I had the urge to do.

My son was born six days prior to Sept. 11, 2001, and I remember holding him while watching the Twin Towers fall. I was in a unit in the Air Force Reserves at Westover Air Force Base at the time and the emotions that I felt over that tragedy only made me want to serve my country even more. All of those thoughts and feelings finally propelled me to volunteer for the deployment to Qatar.

I arrived at Al Udeid after a marathon of plane rides and was promptly made the chief nurse of the hospital, not exactly the role I was expecting. I had envisioned being more like Lt. McMurphy, the nurse on the old TV show “China Beach,” which had partly inspired me to become a military nurse. I thought I would be dealing with a lot of combat injuries but the reality was that Al Udeid was where soldiers were sent for R&R rather than for treatment of their wounds. So I decided to make the best of the experiences that I could create through the benefit of my position.



Maj. Stephanie Riley assists with the preparation of a patient at a hospital in Doha, Qatar. Photo: Courtesy of Maj. Stephanie Riley, 157th Medical Group

For anyone that has deployed, probably the biggest challenge is to try and keep a positive frame of mind when you are so far from home and family. I arrived in the AOR on my son's third birthday and throughout the deployment it was in the back of my mind that I was missing my anniversary, my son's first experience trick or treating at Halloween, and my extended family gatherings at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Knowing that everyone that I was deployed with also was experiencing similar feelings, I took on the added role as morale officer of our unit and planned many different activities.

The most popular one was a pie-in-the face contest that ended with the medical commander as well as me and a few others getting creamed in the face with a pie.

I always try to keep a good sense of humor in anything that I do and dealing with the need to provide flu shots for the entire base population was no exception. As my deployment coincided with the onset of the flu season, it was my rotation's responsibility to make sure everyone got their flu shot. We created shot teams that went out to the different units and gave shots but the most effective means involved utilizing the base theater located in a place where everyone had to walk by at one time or another. At that time back in the States there was a flu shot shortage so I decided to stand outside the theater with a sign reading “FREE FLU SHOTS” to encourage people to get theirs. I probably met just about everyone on base that way and I was certainly well known to everyone as the “crazy flu shot lady.”

I was also well known as being an avid Red Sox fan and I was deployed during the time that they were in the playoffs, which ended in the World Series win against St Louis. There happened to be a group of us from New England that was very vocal in our support of the team to the dismay of any Yankees fans. I would get up at 3 a.m. to watch the games because of the time difference. I took a lot of flak, especially after the



Yankees went up 3-0 in that playoff series but it sure was wonderful to brag about the eventual results of that season.

I actually did get to experience some unique medical situations that I had never been exposed to back in the States.

One of the soldiers came to the hospital with chest pain and needed to be aerovaced to Germany, which required a medical attendant to accompany him. I decided to go with him and we boarded an aerovac flight that was initially going to Balad.

I was able to see first hand what goes on with the transporting of the wounded and my respect for the aerovac nurses and medics definitely increased. It can be challenging enough to care for patients but to throw in the added stress of altitude changes, combat take offs and landings that really strain the body, and long flights only adds to those challenges.

I learned that one also needs to be very flexible when dealing with the aerovac system. We were supposed to land in Balad to pick up more patients but, because of a change in the mission, my patient and I had to spend the night in Balad to wait for a different flight the next day.

It did give me the opportunity to get a tour of the amazing hospital that is located in Balad and to witness some of the outstanding care that is given there. I held a three-year-old Iraqi girl that had lost her family in the attack on Fallujah and was found by soldiers in a field. She was a sweet child that would hold on to you with strong little arms and such trust in her face, it was hard to imagine what she had been through.

Once I arrived in Germany and had safely handed over my patient to the medical staff there, I was dismayed to find out that it would probably take up to a week to get back to Qatar. It probably sounds crazy but, as it was getting close to Thanksgiving, I wanted to get back to my "family" at Al Udeid to spend the holiday with them since I couldn't spend it with my real family. I did, however, take the opportunity to travel on the autobahn while in Germany and went sightseeing in Heidelberg. Because of my active duty days and my familiarity with how well flyers tend to treat nurses, when I learned of a cargo mission that was going to Qatar, I, rather boldly, called the unit that was flying the mission and asked if I could get on the flight. They agreed and I made it back to Qatar, by way of a stop off in Afghanistan, three or four days sooner than I otherwise would have.

I learned that it pays to be resourceful.

Back at the base hospital in Qatar, I didn't work scheduled shifts in the medical ward but I was always on call for the emergency room and the ICU. We tended to aerovac out anyone requiring a higher level of care or we also had a contract with a local hospital in Doha, Qatar, for more emergent

My son was born six days prior to Sept. 11, 2001, and I remember holding him while watching the Twin Towers fall. I was in a unit in the Air Force Reserves at Westover Air Force Base at the time and the emotions that I felt over that tragedy only made me want to serve my country even more.

needs. We had the capability to do some surgeries. I was able to scrub in on one surgery and help out with intubating a patient, something that I had never done stateside. I was able to tour the hospital in Doha and I also met with the director of EMS in Doha to talk about their capabilities in coordinating ambulance service to the Doha hospital for us. We were not allowed to transport patients to the civilian hospital in a military ambulance; we always used private cars, so we were trying to improve on that system.

All in all I would say that my experience in Qatar was very enriching. I had the opportunity to experience and see things that I never would have imagined doing. The only thing that lingers in the back of my mind, though, is that I didn't deploy to Iraq and make my contribution to the incredible work that the medical teams do there. I remember mentioning those feelings to Chief Ron Nadeau, shortly after I returned, and he put it all in perspective by saying that almost everyone thinks that they could have done more – the only soldiers that don't are the ones who gave their life. ❖

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Caring for others was his purpose in life

Remembering Sgt. David “Doc” Stelmat

By Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD

Sgt. David S. Stelmat, 27, “DJ” to his family and friends, will be remembered as a compassionate and gracious man, an outdoorsman who cared for others at home and abroad.

“Caring for others wasn’t a job, it was his purpose in life,” said his mother Maryanne Rennell.

Stelmat of Littleton, a N.H. Army National Guard medic who was deployed to Iraq with a platoon from 237th Military Police Company, was killed by a roadside bomb March 22 north of Baghdad. Two other soldiers from the North Carolina Guard were killed in the explosion. Stelmat’s platoon was attached to the North Carolina Army National Guard’s 1132nd Military Police Company “War Devils,” 95th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multinational Division-Baghdad.

Stelmat was the third N.H. Guardsman killed in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sgt. Jeremiah Holmes of the 744th Transportation Company



Spc. David Stelmat comforts an Iraqi baby during a medical mission with Headquarters Company, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment at the al-Alwiya Iraqi police station in Baghdad on Dec. 12, 2007.

Photo: Spc. Nicholas Hernandez, Joint Combat Camera Center



Above: An 82nd Airborne soldier's salute frames the funeral procession of Sgt. David Stelmat in Bethlehem on March 31. Stelmat, a 237th MP medic, was killed in action March 22 in Iraq. Nearly 1,000 mourners to include more than 600 N.H. National Guard soldiers and airmen attended Stelmat's memorial service.

Photo: Tech. Sgt. Tim Psaledakis, 157th ARW

Right: Sgt. David "DJ" Stelmat.

was killed March 29, 2004, and Alan Burgess of 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery, was killed Oct. 14, 2004. Both were the result of roadside bombs.

Nearly 1,000 mourners to include more than 600 N.H. Guard soldiers and airmen attended Stelmat's memorial service held under a heavy, falling snow March 31 in Bethlehem.

Stelmat was the 28th service member from New Hampshire to die in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

His work ethic and determination made an impact while serving in Iraq, said Staff Sgt. Anthony Meador, a fellow medic with the War Devils.

"Dave was not perfect by any means but worked hard educating himself and honing his craft in order to not make the same mistakes twice," said Meador during a memorial service held in Iraq for Stelmat and the two North Carolina soldiers. "It was this type of dedication to always exceed the standard that earned him the title of 'Doc.'"

In a comment posted to an online *Union Leader* story, Stelmat's translator in Iraq wrote, "David was a wonderful man. I worked with David as an interpreter here in Iraq. I will miss him greatly. Each time he was at the station with me, he would take the time to treat the Iraqi people and I would translate for him."

Stelmat planned to become a physician's assistant when he returned from his deployment. In high school, Stelmat could always be depended on as a designated driver, picking up his classmates and dropping them off after parties in his Escort Wagon, according to Maryanne.

"He was a lifesaver even then," recalled his mother.

Stelmat graduated from Profile High School, Bethlehem, in 1998. He worked building and maintaining trails in the North Country and refinishing tennis courts.

His winters were spent making snow on Canon Mountain and occasionally looking after his stepbrother, Thomas "TJ" Rennell.

"One time TJ was trying to keep up with DJ when he hit one of the hydrants near the snowmaker, breaking both his femurs," recalled Stelmat's stepfather, Jeff Rennell.

Stelmat noticed his brother was no longer right behind him. He took off his skis and hiked a half-mile uphill to find him.

"It was DJ that saved TJ by bringing in the ski patrol," said Rennell.

In his quest to make the world a better place, Stelmat refurbished a cabin in 2000, living comfortably with minimal impact to his environment.

"He was always saying he wanted to leave less of a carbon footprint on the planet," said his mother.

Stelmat completed emergency medical training as a member of the Cannon Mountain ski patrol. He enlisted into the N.H. National Guard in January 2006, and by August was a qualified combat medic.

"David was one of the best soldiers I worked with, hands down," said Spc. Richard Colcord, who served with Stelmat in the 237th.

Inspired by his older sisters, both registered nurses in California, Stelmat enrolled in a paramedic program at the New Hampshire Technical Institute.

In July 2007, Stelmat deployed to Iraq with about 40 other 237th soldiers. It was his second overseas deployment. ❖

Ladieu treks into history *(continued from page 7)*

Each year, Ladieu said, many survivors of the Bataan Death March pass away, and he fears the event fading into history and out of peoples' memories. Between last year and this year, 27 survivors died – the names of each were read at the beginning of the memorial march. Some of the survivors visited the memorial death march this year, making sure to shake the hand of each and every one of the thousands of participants at the starting line. Before the event kicked off, some gave briefings of their experiences.

“Two of the vets stayed on the course to encourage people,” Ladieu said. “They had to actually bring one of them back in because he was out there too long.”

The American heroes at the center of this infamous atrocity were from the Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Marines, who were charged with the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines. It was not just the enemy they had to contend with – the region was infested with malaria, and supplies were short. Since January they had lived on half- or quarter-rations with little or no medical help. Their equipment was outdated and there was virtually no air support. At their time of surrender, they were already sickly and impoverished.

Also at the time of surrender, the troops could not possibly have conceived of the maltreatment and abuse awaiting them at the hands of their captors. But Japan and Russia both had formerly rejected ratification of the guidelines for proper treatment of POWs as stipulated in the 1929 Geneva

Convention. And the Japanese military at that time operated under the ethos of a Samurai warrior – as harsh as it was ancient. To be killed in battle was an honor; to be captured, a disgrace. The Japanese soldiers saw no need to extend humane treatment to their captives, and the ensuing abuse and starvation were seen as their just fate.

“When I was talking with one of the Bataan survivors during breakfast, I wondered about that, if he was angry or bitter,”

Ladieu said. “But he wasn’t. The difference, the vet told me, was that we volunteered and they didn’t. We had options, and they didn’t; so no, they don’t hold what happened against anyone.”

Ladieu hopes his participation in the event brings awareness to this milestone in American history.

“Did this make me a better person? Probably, it made me do a lot of thinking about what being a soldier is all about,” Ladieu said. “And I think anyone in our generation who has an opportunity to participate in this should do it. In fact, I want to do it again – I would like to put a team together to go back again.”

Ladieu finished in 233rd place out of 540 contenders in the military heavy category. There were several other

categories for both military and civilian, and a modified course for those who did not want to embark on the entire distance.

The next Bataan Memorial Death March is March 29, 2009. ❖

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Bataan Memorial Death March can contact Sgt. 1st Class Ladieu at (603) 731-5515.

The American heroes at the center of this infamous atrocity were from the Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Marines, who were charged with the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbor defense forts of the Philippines.

Good luck to 210th Engineers

Note from State PAO: The following editorial appeared in the Monadnock Ledger on May 22. The newspaper covers the town of Peterborough, which was home to our 210th Engineer Detachment. Under transformation, the unit's armory on Elm Street was closed and the unit, consolidated into a vertical construction detachment, moved to Concord. It's a gracious tribute to a group of men and women who have left a lasting impression on their community as well as in other places around the world to include most recently, Afghanistan.

Our Town will be poorer without the 210th Engineers of the National Guard at home in the armory on Elm Street.

As we've seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, the National Guard is part of the fighting force that helps fill our country's military needs.

In addition to fighting overseas, however, the Guard has helped on the home front. We remember when guardsmen responded to Florida, briefly, during the Cuban missile crisis.

In addition, though, the local engineering unit has built schools, hospitals and other such useful things in foreign countries such as Belize and Honduras.

Locally, the Guard for many years annually conducted an engineering project that would better the local community, such as building playing fields.

The Guard, like the rest of the U.S. military, has not been without controversy. While members were in Honduras expanding a base hospital and building a recreation center in 1987, about 35 people marched from the armory to Korea-Vietnam Memorial in Jaffrey, protesting United States policy in Central America.

As we recognize that some guard members are headed overseas to Iraq or Afghanistan for the second time to fight a controversial war, we send them our good wishes and hopes for their safe return.

We also wish that on a Memorial Day sometime in the near future, we can carry out our observance with all members of our military here to share the day with us. ❖

Col. Patricia Turner Dupuis receives the Legion of Merit from Brig. Gen. Stephen Burritt, the Commander of the N.H. Army National Guard, during her retirement ceremony in May. Photo: Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD

Below: Col. Patricia Turner Dupuis consults with two of her soldiers during Annual Training at Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, Eureka, Calif., in April 2007.

Courtesy photo



N.H. Army Guard's first (and only) female colonel retires

By Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish, 114th MPAD

CONCORD – After distinguishing herself with exceptional meritorious service over her 28-year-career, Col. Patricia Turner Dupuis retired May 8. A career dedicated to soldiers began in 1978 in the New Hampshire Air National Guard.

Shortly after her enlistment as an airman, she accepted a direct commission as a first lieutenant in the Army National Guard Nurse Corps. On Sept. 27, 1980, she earned the distinction of being the N.H. Army Guard's first commissioned female officer.

Turner Dupuis progressed through the officer rank structure as the first female to attain each grade. She is the only female officer to achieve the rank of colonel in the history of the N.H. Army Guard.

"She always looked for how she could take care of soldiers to the best of her ability," said Staff Sgt. Michelle Lowes, "and if she couldn't do it personally, she would be sure to find someone who could. She carried a quiet confidence about her that can silence a room when she entered."

Lowes met Turner Dupuis in the first year of her enlistment. In the years that followed, their paths crossed from time to time and when Lowes faced personal challenges, Turner Dupuis was there for her.

"She scheduled a meeting and made herself available to me if I needed her and respected my desire to keep my affairs private and without me even realizing it until later; she stood in the gap for me significantly during that time," said Lowes.

Turner Dupuis was a key individual in the development, implementation and management of the National Occupational Health Nurses Program throughout the country.

"She took me under her wing, always giving sound advice, as well as leadership" said Maj. Richard Oberman, deputy state surgeon. "She mentored me and encouraged me to advance my military education and assignments."

Turner Dupuis' nursing contributions and medical programs benefited soldiers' medical readiness in 2004 during the largest mobilization of N.H. Guardsmen since World War II.

"She has led the way for women in the NHARNG and built the Nurse Corps into one of the strongest in the nation," said Oberman.

Turner Dupuis served in many duty assignments, which spanned from field nurse to deputy commander of clinical services in Medical Command. She led units on humanitarian missions to Honduras, El Salvador and the Hoopa Indian Reservation at Eureka, Calif. ❖

More than 200 years of leadership retires

By Maj. Greg Heilshorn, State PAO

In a span of five months, from February to June, six colonels and one command sergeant major retired from the New Hampshire National Guard.

More than 200 years of leadership and service came to a close: a nurse, a Vietnam chopper pilot, an engineer, a field artilleryman, a tanker pilot, a communications guru and a Special Forces soldier who rose to the rank of a brigade command sergeant major.

It can be argued that every citizen soldier and airman who has served a 20-year hitch has left a timeless mark on their unit and the people they served beside. But collectively, this group represents an extraordinary legacy. They were pioneers in their field. They averaged 30 or more years of service, and through example and instruction, have mentored countless guardsmen.

Col. Patricia Turner Dupuis



Col. Patricia Turner Dupuis retired as the Commander of the Medical Command after a 28-year career in the N.H. Army Guard. A nurse by trade, she was the first woman to be commissioned in the N.H. Army Guard and the first (and only) woman in the N.H. Army Guard to attain the rank of colonel. (See story on page 13.)

Col. Frank Leith



Col. Frank Leith retired as the director of the Army Aviation Support Facility after a 40-year career in U.S. Army aviation. He was a Huey pilot in Vietnam and has been a steady leader in the development and modernization of the N.H. Army Guard's aviation program to include its highly respected reputation as a search and rescue asset for the state.



Col. Michael Horne

Col. Michael Horne retired as the joint chief of staff for the N.H. National Guard after a 32-year career in the U.S. Air Force and N.H. Air Guard. An engineer by trade, Horne played a vital role in the formation of the organization's joint directorate.

Col. David Mercieri

Col. David Mercieri retired as the commander of the 197th Fires Brigade after a 30-year career in the U.S. Air Force and N.H. Army Guard. In his most recent assignment, he guided the state's largest Army unit through its transformation from a field artillery brigade to fires brigade. He commanded the N.H. Army Guard's first Rear Area Operations Command in Iraq.



Col. Douglas Aiken

Col. Douglas Aiken retired as the director of C4 (Command, Control, Communications and Computers) after a 40-year career in the N.H. Air National Guard. He provided oversight and guidance of the communication and computer systems resources for the N.H. National Guard, and advised the Adjutant General on local, state and national emergency response issues. He was a key player in developing and modernizing the organizations voice/data communications systems.



Col. Robert Monahan

Col. Robert Monahan retired as the commander of the 157th Air Refueling Squadron after a 29-year career in the U.S. Air Force and N.H. Air National Guard. During Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, he served as commander of the 133rd Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron in Moron, Spain, and commander of the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron in Al Udeid, Qatar.

Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Stewart

Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Stewart retired after a 36-year career in the U.S. Army and N.H. Army National Guard. In his most recent assignment, he was the command sergeant major for the 197th Fires Brigade. He began his career as a Special Forces soldier. Over the course of his career, Stewart has served in 15 different countries.



Tenacious 237th returns home from Iraq

Platoon leader receives standing ovation from soldiers



Staff Sgt. Andrew Lane of Concord, overwhelmed with joy, holds his granddaughter during a welcome home ceremony June 10 at the Concord Armory. Lane was one of 40 members of the 237th Military Police Company who returned from a year of duty in Iraq.

Photo: Spc. Rick Frost, 114th MPAD

By Staff Sgt. Ginger Dempsey,
114th MPAD

CONCORD – More than 200 family, friends and well-wishers gathered at the Concord Armory on June 10 for a brief ceremony to welcome home 40 members of the 237th Military Police Company.

The platoon completed a year of duty in Iraq, where they conducted security missions and trained Iraqi policemen. Based in Rustimihyah in eastern Baghdad, the soldiers were attached to the 1132nd MP Company, North Carolina Army National Guard.

There was a bittersweet undercurrent of elation and sorrow as Gov. John Lynch and other speakers acknowledged the unit's exceptional deployment, remembering Sgt. David

Stelmat, who was killed in March by a roadside bomb, and the loss of four North Carolina soldiers.

First Lt. Daniel McCarroll, who commanded the platoon in Iraq, received a standing ovation from his soldiers before addressing them and their families.

"As far as I'm concerned he's the best commander I've ever seen," said Sgt. John Boudreau of Keene, who is among the oldest soldiers in the platoon. "He stood up and took control of the units, even the other states', when times were bad and he got us through it and took care of us. I can't say enough good things about him."

McCarroll later talked of the pride he felt in his platoon and its successful mission.

"The way to do it is to operate as one family – to care for your soldiers and to empower them to care about each other," he said. "As a young leader, you have to keep the soldiers' best interests before your own. Then, no matter what circumstances arise, you're able to meet it."

He added, "What I will say, and what is important to know, is that to be an effective officer you have to have a good NCO right there. My NCO's helped me through this."

The 237th MPs hold the distinction of being the youngest group of N.H. Guard soldiers to deploy to Iraq. Their time there is a tale of indomitable tenacity and perseverance.

"This is the most phenomenal group of young soldiers I have ever seen," said Boudreau. "They were absolute professionals. We all had to put aside our grief when it got bad, because there were people depending on us. There wasn't time to mourn then. We had to get back out there and protect our team and protect the other soldiers."

Some of the young troops candidly expressed the knowledge that they will have to work through the sorrow of losing friends and comrades.

"It hasn't really set in yet," said Spc. Matthew Cornell of

Franklin. "I know I haven't coped yet. It doesn't quite feel right to be home when there are still people there."

Cornell said he feels no ill will towards the Iraqi people.

"Sometimes you get angry at them, but you've got to look at the big picture," he said. "They're suffering too, and I see how much they love their country. I saw children running up to the trucks asking for food and candy. They have a poor economy, and they need someone like us."

Overall, Cornell's experience served to steel his patriotic beliefs.

"When I look at my nieces and nephews, I want them to have a better future," he said. "I want them to watch everything I'm doing and try to understand that my family comes first, and I see the whole country as my family."

Many of the parents were also introspective.

"This is a good thing for them – to be exposed to this type of environment," said Audrey Nash, mother of Daniel and David Musso of Brentwood, brothers who deployed together with the 237th. "Kids who don't go through this type of experience take things for granted. My kids wanted to do this, and I support them." ❖



Sgt. Norman Ashburn III of Andover hugs NHARNG State Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Crotto as he and 39 other soldiers from the 237th Military Police Company arrive at Pease Air National Guard Base on June 10 after completing a year of duty in Iraq. The N.H. Air National Guard proudly supported their return by transporting the platoon from Mississippi on a KC-135 tanker.

Photo: Tech Sgt. Aaron Vezeau, 157th ARW

More than 500 men and women representing 61 countries took the oath of citizenship during a U.S. citizenship ceremony at Manchester Armory on May 10. It was the largest ever held in New Hampshire and first at a state armory.



N.H. Guard hosts largest naturalization ceremony in state's history

Story and photos by Maj. Greg Heilshorn, State PAO

MANCHESTER – They fled war-torn countries and oppressive regimes. Some wanted a chance at a better life for their families.

More than 500 immigrants representing 61 countries became United States citizens during a naturalization ceremony held at the Manchester Armory on May 10.

Inside the ancient brick and mortar hall where thousands of citizen soldiers have trained and deployed from since World War II, they pledged to uphold the same ideals of duty, honor and country.

It was the largest citizenship ceremony ever held in New Hampshire and the first time one was hosted by the N.H. Guard.

“I felt like I was listening to the roll call to the United Nations when the roll was read,” said Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the New Hampshire Guard and the ceremony’s guest speaker.

In his remarks, Clark emphasized the privilege and enormous responsibility of being a U.S. citizen, something many native-born citizens don’t appreciate. It was a tone that resonated with many in attendance.

“I was in a concentration camp under Fidel Castro when I was 5 years old,” said a Cuban-born father whose grandmother was naturalized at the ceremony. “Thank God for President Carter (who in 1977 granted Cuban exiles refugee status). So many Americans take their citizenship for granted. The other day I was at a drugstore buying medicine for my son, when I was approached by two homeless men asking for money. They were white. I told them, ‘You are Americans. You could be working. I came from Cuba; I should be asking you for money.’”

The Dominican Republic represented more than half, or 259, of the immigrants. India accounted for 32 and China had 19. At least one was a U.S. soldier, who wore his Class A uniform for the occasion.

Lt. Col. James Moody coordinated the event with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Services, which inquired about using the armory because it could not secure a venue large enough in Massachusetts. The N.H. Army Guard provided a Color Guard. A group of recruiters was also on hand, manning an information booth.

Moody, the deputy chief of staff-operations, is looking forward to the N.H. Guard hosting more naturalization ceremonies, and as the organization seeks to diversify its ranks, exposing some of the region’s newest citizens to the benefits of serving their state and nation is an added benefit. Currently, there are 42 N.H. guardsmen, 25 soldiers and 17 airmen who are naturalized citizens. ♦



Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, the Adjutant General of the N.H. National Guard, leads a group of more than 500 new citizens in a rendition of Lee Greenwood’s “Proud To Be An American” at the Manchester Armory on May 10. Clark was the guest speaker at the U.S. citizenship ceremony.

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Gordon Farrar
Shane Roosa



Contenders for N.H. Army National Guard Soldier of the Year pose at the Training Academy in Strafford last February. Spc. Donald Kilian HHB 3/197th FA Bn, (HIMARS) was selected as the Soldier of the Year. First Row, from left, Spc. Patrick J. McGuiness, C Co., 3/172nd Inf; Staff Sgt. Adam F. Adair, Battery A, 3/197th FA Bn, (HIMARS); Private 1st Class Daniel A. Dalton, B Co., 3643rd BSB; SPC Jason T. Burpee, HHB 197th Fires Bde. Second row from left, Sgt. Ian J. Short, MEDCOM; Sgt. Andrew O. Perry, C Co., 3/172nd Inf; Spc. Lincoln N. Judd, A Btry, 3/197th FA Bn, (HIMARS). Third row from left, SPC Benjamin R. Duval, B Btry, 3/197th FA Bn (HIMARS); Killian; Spc. Sean E. Bean, Det 1, Btry C, 3/197th FA Bn, (HIMARS); Sgt. William M. Martin, B Co., 3643rd BSB. Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO

Air Promotions & Awards

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Francine Swan

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Master Sergeant

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Robert Wolfram
Michelle Vatcher
Alan Dwyer

Staff Sergeant

Benjamin Bascom
Nichole McCarthy
Kevin Perro Jr
Kate Ellingwood
Jeffrey Hill
Henry Burch
Christian Swegles



Col. Francine Swan is saluted by retired Col. Bruce VanDerven, her husband, during her promotion ceremony May 21 at Joint Force Headquarters in Concord.

Photo: 1st Sgt. Mike Daigle, Deputy State PAO

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N.H. Guard soldiers train for deployment

By Spc. Amburr Reese and Staff Sgt. Ginger Dempsey, 114th MPAD

JERICHO, Vt. – More than 150 New Hampshire citizen-soldiers participated in a week of intensive pre-deployment training exercise at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site (CEATS) in May.

Guardsmen from C Company, 3rd of the 172nd Infantry (Mountain), a N.H. Embedded Training Team (ETT), and the 114th Public Affairs Detachment met at CEATS with several Vermont National Guard units to sharpen their tactical and job-specific skills.

Within 24 months, all three units are scheduled to deploy – C Company and the N.H. ETT to Afghanistan, and the 114th MPAD to Iraq.

Training consisted of basic soldier skills including driver's training, land navigation, combatives (ground fighting techniques), medical training, radio communications and weapons qualification.

"Getting realistic training here makes the deployment easier," said Capt. Dan Newman, commander of C Company, whose soldiers also acted as instructors. "It's better to make mistakes here and to do the hard stuff here, so it's easier later



Sgt. Andrew Fryburg, C Co., 3/172nd Inf. (Mtn), scrutinizes the shooting technique of Sgt. Jonathon Morales, C Co., 3/172nd Inf. (Mtn), on the reflexive fire range at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site, Jericho, Vt., during a week of deployment training in May. Photo: Sgt. 1st Class Mark Roberts, 114th MPAD

on when we get downrange."

To Newman's company, the concept of N.H. Guard soldiers training their own makes sense. The vast majority of the Mountain Company troops have previously deployed, he said, and are

enthusiastic about passing that expertise on to others.

"This is New Hampshire helping New Hampshire, and helping each other get through this," Newman said. "The soldiers at all levels realize that downrange you never know who you'll be working with, as this is a non-linear fight. Everyone is fighting together, and if we work together we'll be more successful."

To Sgt. 1st Class Scott Roberts of Barnstead, this training brings him back to his roots. Roberts, a former infantryman, has been a New Hampshire Recruiting and Retention NCO for nine years and was selected to deploy with the N.H. ETT.

"From what I've seen, I understand the training seems more real and urgent and much more relative to what we'll be doing," he said. "It keeps you focused and wanting to know as much as we can before we go."

Part of the CEATS training involved teaching the ETT about the cultural and religious differences of the Afghan people. Several classes were administered by members of Vermont's 86th Brigade Combat Team to instill the tactical use of cultural knowledge.

Of all the training administered, Newman said teaching soldiers to think on their feet is paramount.

"Using their brains and communication is the most important factor," he said.

The ability to inter-relate is just as significant, he added. ❖

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