

Illinois Guard supports NATO Summit

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. April Hawes
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO - As thousands of foreign diplomats travelled to Chicago for the NATO Summit May 19 to 21, the Illinois National Guard helped ensure the summit was a safe and secure event.

"This event really showed the versatility and connectedness the National Guard has in domestic matters," said Col. Chris Lawson of Springfield, Illinois National Guard Joint Chief of Staff. "That is really what made it successful."

Illinois National Guard planning began November

2011 to simply assess what the involvement in the summit could be and to start building relationships with various governmental agencies. From there, the Illinois National Guard was tasked with a handful of missions via NATO's Aide Memoire, including driving foreign diplomats, coordinating air transportation and escorting the media to various meetings and press conferences during the summit.

Along with the 1,400 Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who supported the summit, there were nearly 1,000 U.S. Army Active Duty and Reserve Soldiers who collaborated with the Illinois Guardsmen for the overall support of the weekend.

"We definitely made great strides forging and

establishing new relationships," Lawson said.

Task Force Transportation included 400 personnel from the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Chicago, 108th Sustainment Brigade in Chicago, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Urbana as well as the 126th Air Refueling Wing at Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield and 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria. The 80th and 259th Movement Control Teams with the U.S. Army Reserves were also part of this mission.

"Overall, I think it went very well," said Maj. Randolph Edwards of Mount Zion, executive officer with the 766th Engineer Battalion in Decatur, which held the mission command

See NATO page 9

Cavalry Soldier places third at Best Ranger Competition



Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Scott Boston, Army National Guard Warrior Training Center

Staff Sgt. Matthew Madiar, of Chicago, with Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Aurora, follows the poncho raft into the water as teammate Sgt. 1st Class Zach Phillips with the Oregon Army National Guard pushes off to clear the helicopter during the 29th Annual David E. Grange, Jr. Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga., April 15. For the full story see page 10.

Silver Stars awarded to Soldiers for valor

Story by Office of Governor Pat Quinn

CHICAGO - Gov. Pat Quinn joined Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Illinois National Guard Maj. Gen. William Enyart to honor

Illinois National Guardsmen Sgt. First Class Ryan Ahern of Glen Ellyn and Capt. Tom Bozzay of Wheaton with Silver



Stars for valor. Gen. Dempsey presented the awards to Ahern and Bozzay for their heroic actions in Afghanistan in December 2009 while protecting a French military unit.

"As we honor our military heroes on Armed Services Day, we must never forget their sacrifices," Quinn said. "Sergeant First Class Ahern and Captain Bozzay are genuine heroes and a shining example of Illinois' best."

Ahern and Bozzay are both assigned to See STAR page 12

Enyart resigns, Celletti acting TAG

Story by U.S. Army Maj. Brad Leighton
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - After nearly 36 years of military service and five years as the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, Maj. Gen. William Enyart of Belleville is retiring from the Illinois National Guard.

"Being the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard is the best job I've ever had," Enyart said. "The Soldiers, Airmen and families of our troops have made my job an enjoyable experience. I will greatly miss all of the people who make this the best National Guard in the country."

Enyart is the 37th Adjutant General of the state of Illinois, a position appointed by the governor. He is responsible for daily operations of the 13,000 servicemembers in the Illinois Army and Air National Guard.

"I thank Maj. Gen. Enyart for his more than 35 years of military



Maj. Gen. William Enyart

service including the last five years leading the 13,000 men and women of the Illinois National Guard," Gov. Pat Quinn said. "Illinois has the best National Guard in the United States and has had the best leader."

Enyart is also the director of Military Affairs and has made a significant impact outside of the Illinois National Guard and its communities.

"He has established an unprecedented relationship with federal and state elected officials," said James Smith of Chatham, Illinois National Guard Military Executive and a retired colonel with the Illinois National Guard who has known Enyart for more than 20 years. "He has allowed the department to grow

and meet support requirements by the National Guard. He was also instrumental in changing laws that help our servicemembers and their families."

Enyart is particularly proud of the Illinois National Guard's State Partnership See TAG page 10

Inside Look



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COMMAND FOCUS

It's been an honor every day

Abraham Lincoln recalled his time as a captain in the Illinois militia – today's Illinois National Guard – as “a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since.”

Although I spent a few more decades in the Illinois National Guard than our 16th President did 200 years ago, I understand his sentiment. Coming to work each day during the five years I served as The Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard was a privilege and honor. To serve alongside the Illinois National Guard's 13,000 Soldiers and Airmen, their families, and hundreds of state employees was both the greatest challenge and greatest satisfaction of my professional and military career.

The decision to resign was among one of the toughest decisions Annette and I have had to make.

To have led the Illinois National Guard through the largest deployment since World War II, to have served through floods, blizzards and ice storms with the finest men and women in the world has taught me a greater appreciation for the strength of this great nation, for the strength of its service members, its families, its working men and women than I could ever have gained without that experience. The resiliency of Illinoisans, whether recovering from floods, ice storms or earthquakes, is unparalleled. I am proud to have served with the Soldiers and Airmen who have helped those recoveries.

There were sad and difficult days – none more so than the days when we lost Soldiers. However, I loved my job and looked forward to coming to work every day because of the dedicated and committed people I worked with.

Thank-you for allowing me to share in your many successes.

The Illinois National Guard led the military support to the NATO Summit in Chicago, the largest national security event ever held outside Washington, D.C., and the largest NATO Summit ever held anywhere in the world. The men and women of the Illinois National Guard helped ensure the summit was a safe and secure event for our citizens as well as thousands of foreign diplomats and heads of state.

The readiness of the Illinois National Guard, both Army and Air, are at their highest. The Illinois National Guard

stands ready to respond to any call from the Governor of Illinois or the President of the United States. Lincoln's ChalleNGE Academy is the most successful such program in the U.S. The Illinois Military Family Relief Program continues to provide for military families in need and to serve as a beacon to other states.

Our programs before servicemembers deploy and our Yellow Ribbon program after they return are among the top such programs in the nation. Our Family Programs have reached out to hundreds of educators, who are now providing more assistance to thousands of military children. We've also reached out to dozens of behavioral health professionals and are finding new and better ways to help those servicemembers and their families who have suffered from the unseen scars of war. The children of Illinois servicemembers now have among the most active programs dedicated just to them, including an innovative children's psychological health program developed with the Chicago School of Psychology.

Our relationships with Illinois employers have grown exponentially through the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Program. Recently, ESGR launched the Employment Initiative Program, which assists our servicemembers in finding jobs.

We have honored our fallen service members by caring for the families they left behind through our Survivor Outreach Services program.

Our state's friendship with Poland has grown and we have seen the Illinois National Guard's partnership with Poland deepen into the premier such program in the world.

During the last five years we continued to build on past successes to create a world class team. The Department of Military Affairs and Illinois National Guard are a talented and dedicated group of civilian and military people who work tirelessly for the citizens of Illinois.

Now, as a proud veteran, I can look on my time with the Illinois National Guard with gratitude. You are truly our nation's best.

Always There, Always Ready!

Thank-you so much for allowing me and my family to be part of your lives. The last five years have been both challenging and enriching. I have learned so much from your stories and experiences. I strongly believe that together we've made the lives of military families in Illinois better.

I am blessed to have been part of that experience. God bless all of you. Sincerely,

Judge Annette A. Eckert (Ret.)

Diversity not limited to race

What does diversity mean to you? As leaders we have a commitment to our Soldiers and Airman and civilian employees to ensure diversity throughout our organization. It is important to note that diversity isn't limited to race, but encompasses many facets within our organization that impacts the total force. Diversity encompasses many different characteristics and experiences through differences of opinions, beliefs and ideals. Their must be a level of respect for each other despite what may appear to be a transparency of barriers that inhibit our ability to have an open mind. During my travels I have had the opportunity to attend various conferences and summits and

speaking with Soldiers in the field. During these sequence of events the topic of discussion has always been Soldier



CSM Howard Robinson

centric and what we must do to improve our management of diversity. As leaders we have a responsibility and commitment to not just our subordinates, but to our civilian populace as well to ensure a diverse organization based on our core Army values. These values set a foundation for a joint venture with the Army and Air

Guard displayed by the professionalism that each of you exhibit. The climate is shifting whereas we as leaders must work with a diverse population if we are to be

See **DIVERSITY** page 13

Get back to basics on retention

Thanks to the hard work of the Soldiers, Airmen and Families of the Illinois National Guard, we are stronger and more capable than we've ever been. We've had great leadership in the Illinois National Guard with Maj. Gen. William Enyart providing strategic vision and guidance as The Adjutant



Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti

General for the last five years and other key leaders such as Brig. Gen. Robert Pratt drawing on years of experience to impart wisdom to up and coming leaders.

I'd like to thank Maj. Gen. Enyart, Brig. Gen. Pratt and all the other recent retirees who have given so many years to make this organization great. I'd also like to thank Gov. Pat Quinn for putting the trust in me to lead the Illinois National Guard until a new Adjutant General is selected. It is a great honor to head an organization so critical to the defense of Illinois and the United States.

While competent and inspired leadership from general officers is vital, even more important is leadership at the unit level. These unit leaders are the ones who reach out and touch our Soldiers, Airmen and Families. They are the ones who make Illinois National Guard training challenging and exciting. They are the ones who keep our Soldiers and Airmen coming back for more.

With expected budget cuts in the Department of Defense, it is more important than ever that we keep our trained Soldiers and Airmen motivated and in uniform. Every Soldier and Airman we re-enlist, is another one we won't have to grow from scratch. It costs a lot more money to make a Soldier or Airman out of a civilian young man or woman than to just keep the trained troops we already have. More important is our continued

effort in retaining our Families. This is key to our success.

People have often heard me use the term “back to the basics.” Well, it is absolutely vital that we get back to the basics with retention. We need to start talking to our Soldiers and Airmen not just the year before their enlistments expire, but we need to continuously thank them for their service and let them know we can't do this without their services. We need to understand what motivates them and what their concerns are. Then we need to address those concerns item by item, line by line.

While there are many changes in our leadership, the success we enjoy today is based on changes we instituted in 2002 and 2003. At that time, we brought all unit leaders together in what we dubbed the “Fix Bayonets” campaign and talked about what needed to be done to fix manning, training and equipment problems. And we instituted the changes needed to fix those problems.

Some of the solutions involved tough decisions. In certain cases, we did have to relieve commanders and staff members. But most of the issues were solved by bringing the leadership team together and deciding the best path ahead using the Military Decision Making Process and the other leadership and staffing tools we've learned from our doctrine, schooling and experience. That period was our launching pad that drove the Illinois National Guard to where we are today.

There are no obstacles we cannot overcome when we work together. The Illinois National Guard is a premier military organization because of the motivation and dedication of our Soldiers, Airmen and their Families and because our first-line leaders use all their resources to accomplish the mission.

We know that future challenges are coming our way. We just need to step up and meet them with the same esprit de corps, motivation and smarts that brought us to where we are today.

Thank you for what you do for the Illinois National Guard.

Recruit, retain a quality force

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate our 37th Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Enyart on his retirement and



Brig. Gen. William Cobetto

wish him the best of luck on his future endeavors. Maj. Gen. Enyart provided superb leadership to the Illinois Guard and ensured we adhered to our core values. In addition, through his goals, principles and vision he set the Illinois National Guard on a course to lead Illinois as the premier National Guard in the nation.

His priorities for 2012 were to: 1) grow the Guard, 2) develop the next generation of leaders, 3) continually balance the demands of our citizen Soldiers and Airmen, 4) ensure we have the best trained, best led, and ready units in the Guard, and 5) gain influence and impact the environment in which we operate.

Growing the Guard and maintaining 100 percent manning is a continual goal and one in which we in the Air Guard are working hard to achieve. Currently in the Illinois Air National Guard we are 94.5 percent manned. Recruiting and retaining our force are keys to meeting our end strength. The Air National Guard Bureau in now allowing units to recruit more than 100 percent in all areas while offering incentives for hard to fill career fields.

Please assist the recruiters and retention managers in their efforts to recruit a quality force and achieve 100 percent.

Though the Air Guard is always interested in talking with potential recruits from high school and college, there is current high interest in talking with individuals with prior service experience in an effort to recruit commissioned officers. Contacting any recruiter at the air bases is the recommended course of action for those interested in joining the Air Guard.

Day in and day out the Illinois National Guard is meeting the challenges of the 21st century by proactively shaping our future with combat-ready, adaptable Soldiers and Airmen. It is evident by the accolades received following the NATO Summit in Chicago, supporting federal and state taskings and the endless preparations for inspections. The 217th Engineering and Installation Squadron and the 264th Combat Communications Squadron both recently achieved outstanding results during federal inspections. Passing these inspections is no easy task and demonstrates the professionalism and dedication of our Airmen. Congratulations on a job well done!

The National Guard of the future is one we must continually man, train, and equip. Doing so is not easy and requires sacrifices by families, employers, taxpayers and the individual Soldiers and Airmen. Thank you to all who continually work to make the Illinois National Guard one of the best organizations in the nation.

New breaching complex gives troops real bang

Story by U.S. Army Maj. Nathan A. Westby
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

MARSEILLES - Soldiers from Company A, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion (Co. A, 33rd BSTB) in Marseilles conducted explosive breaching operations at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles April 21 and 22.

The unit was the first to use the Illinois National Guard's new breaching complex, which will increase the readiness of units across the state.

The new complex is a key training asset to the engineers of Co. A, 33rd BSTB who specialize in breaching operations. The range will allow the unit to train on explosive door breaching, explosive wall breaching and mechanical door breaching operations in Illinois.

Prior to the range's construction, units in Illinois had to travel to other states to conduct this type of training.

The new range allows units to greatly increase its proficiency in breaching operations much closer to home without time consuming and costly travel to facilities outside the state.

1st Lt. Calvin N. Young of Naperville, the second platoon leader for Co. A, 33rd BSTB welcomed the new training opportunities.

"This provides us the environment to get out and train when in the past we'd have to transport to a facility that would allow us to accomplish this type of mission," said Young. "We now have a platform to do this easily on a drill weekend."

Young said this allows his unit to advance its level of training.

"This range allows us to easily incorporate these tactics in our overall mission," said Young. "Breaching is just one component of what an engineer does. Having this range so close to the unit makes it easier for us to integrate this task into our overall mission."

Sgt. 1st Class Harry V. Miller of Des Plaines, a platoon sergeant with Co. A, 33rd BSTB who has deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan said the range allows them to



Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Nathan A. Westby, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Soldiers from Company A, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Marseilles, conduct explosive breach training at the new breach training range at Marseilles Training Center April 21 to 22.

increase their teamwork under live fire conditions.

"It increases the realism and intensity of training the breaching task and it's cost effective for the Illinois National Guard as it saves planning time and resources," said Miller.

The younger Soldiers of the unit were just as enthused about the new range.

"This is what we do. This is what we're experts at," said Cpl. Adrian T. Avelar of Sterling with Co. A. "The fact that we now have a range right here makes it so much easier for us to train on what we do."

Warrant Officer Jonathon Deering of Midlothian, who was a member of the project team overseeing the construction of the range, said the range took several years to initiate, approve and construct and cost approximately \$300,000 to complete. He said the engineers who have used the range said it is one of the better breaching ranges they have trained on.

Deering also stated his office has received phone calls from several law enforcement agencies in the state that are interested in using the facility as well.

"The fact that we now have a range right here makes it so much easier for us to train on what we do."

- Cpl. Adrian T. Avelar, Company A, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion

Guard receives award for public service

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois National Guard was awarded the Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award from the Lutheran Social Services of Illinois April 25 at the State Capitol Building in Springfield.

The award recognizes the service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Illinois National Guard to the state and nation.

Brig. Gen. Robert Pratt of Hopedale, the director of the Joint Staff of the Illinois National Guard, received the award on behalf of the Illinois National Guard.

"It's an honor to receive this award on behalf of the 13,000 Soldiers and Airmen of the Illinois National Guard. Each Soldier and Airman, as the minutemen before us, will always stand ready to defend and serve the people of Illinois and the United States," said Pratt.

The award, created in 2004 by several Lutheran organizations, along with Patti Simon, widow of the late senator, recognizes Illinois public officials who demonstrate a commitment to just, compassionate and responsible public policy.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Robert Pratt of Hopedale, director of the Joint Staff, receives the Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award on behalf of the men and women of the Illinois National Guard from Dan Schwick with the Lutheran Social Services of Illinois April 25 at the State Capitol Building in Springfield.

183rd Airman leads Africa mission

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Miranda Summers Lowe
District of Columbia Public Affairs

DOULA, Cameroon - Lt. Col. Jeff Marks of Louisville, Ky., with the 183rd Air Operations Group at the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, was among four National Guardsmen who participated in Operation Africa Endeavor, a joint training mission sponsored by U.S. Africa Command, which focuses on communications interoperability and information sharing among African Union, U.S. and partner nations.

The mission, which included participants from 36 nations and the active duty U.S. Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force, kicked off June 18 in Douala, Cameroon.

Marks and another Air National Guard officer were serving as observer/controllers during the exercise portion of the two-week mission. One of their first tasks was to help develop the training scenario which is based on African Union, U.S. and U.N. response to a major earthquake in a fictitious country.

Marks and Lt. Col. Randy Coltrin of the 217th Air Operations Group in Battle Creek, Mich., worked with teammates from Canada, Uganda, Nigeria and Tanzania.

"Watching the African nations work together has been a great experience. They treat each other so well," said Marks. "Through this training, spending two weeks together, we've really built camaraderie with each other."

Coltrin added that coordinating so many delegations from across the world has been a challenge, but hard work made the operation successful. Two planning conferences took place before the event started.

"The planning that went into this operation has been tremendous--and it paid off. We came in and hit the ground running. We were unable to go to the planning conference, but because of the hard work that went into the planning, everyone seems to understand why they're here. The scenario planning has been thorough. There's so much background," said Coltrin.



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Miranda Summers Lowe
District of Columbia Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Jeff Marks of of Louisville, Ky. and with the 183rd Air Operations Group at the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, works with officers from The Gambia and Togo during Operation Africa Endeavor June 18-27 in Doula, Cameroon. Marks was one of the four National Guardsmen to participate in the annual communications exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command, which focuses on the interoperability of equipment and information sharing among military representatives throughout the African Union and partner nations.

"I'm very impressed by the level of participation I see from the African nations. I've really enjoyed working with so many people; so many different countries," Coltrin added.

"Watching the African nations work together has been a great experience."

- Lt. Col. Jeff Marks

183rd Air Operations Group

183rd Fighter Wing

108th Soldiers form metal band of brothers

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Music can be a pastime or outlet for servicemembers either home or abroad. Whether as hobby or passion, there are some Soldiers who make their love of music a profession outside the uniform.

The Allegiance, a band two-part Soldier, one-part Army dad, has been making its mark on the Chicagoland rock music scene over the last few years.

Sgt. 1st Class Scott Drabek of Plainfield, bass player, and Spc. Ben Latham of Woodstock, lead guitarist and front man, both with the Illinois National Guard's 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside and drummer Keith Vanoskey of Joliet, the father of an active duty Soldier, bring their unique rock sound to the stage.

Latham, who is classically trained on the guitar among other instruments, said writing, composing and performing original music to a cheering crowd is exciting every time.

"It's definitely an adrenaline rush," said Latham. "I like to be able to write my own music and play it to people who have never heard it and they are into it."

With the recent success of their music, The Allegiance was asked to open May 5 for three big national acts - Saliva, 12 Stones and Royal Bliss, who are on a U.S. tour.

"That night was a great success and the band was acknowledged by all those bands for doing a great job and having a bright future in the music business," said Drabek.

With the upcoming release of their CD, The Allegiance has been on the playlist of Joliet and Kankakee's rock station 105.5 FM, The KAT, multiple times and named best new local band of 2011 by The KAT.

"The Allegiance's chemistry is what drives all the success thus far," said Drabek.

Latham said being part of a band is like being part of any other team.

"It takes time, dedication and camaraderie," he said. "You have to have a good connection, chemistry has to be there. A lot of people think you start by finding somebody else who just plays."

Latham also said the friendships between band members make the band successful.

"It takes a lot of hours of writing, rehearsing and practicing," said Latham. "It's a lot of work, but it really pays off when you have a great show."

With years of musical experience, band members bring their own influences to The Allegiance, which lends to the



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho, 108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

The Allegiance takes the stage May 5 at Chicago Ridge. Sgt. 1st Class Scott Drabek of Plainfield, bass player, and Spc. Ben Latham of Woodstock, lead guitarist and front man, both with the Illinois National Guard's 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside and drummer Keith Vanoskey of Joliet, the father of an active duty Soldier bring their rock music to the Chicagoland area.

band's driven sound.

Latham said his experiences in the military influences his writing, as well as the style of music the band plays.

"A lot of bands go out there with a political agenda and it can be negative," said Latham. "We like to get out there and have fun and the military definitely inspires the way we play. We don't get very political, but in the way we do it's more about standing up for what is right and what you believe in."

Drabek said the band was originally formed in August 2009 after he met Latham at annual training that year when they were both assigned to Company E, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Joliet. Drabek had recently started the band with Vanoskey after Drabek had returned from his 2008 to 2009 deployment to Afghanistan with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

During their training downtime while at Fort McCoy,

Wisc., Latham told Drabek he sings and plays guitar. Following annual training, Latham auditioned for the band and was selected right on the spot. The union of this three would later define The Allegiance.

While the band still only tours in Illinois, Drabek said they do hope to one day tour with the USO playing for deployed servicemembers overseas.

"I think it would be the greatest moment for us to be able to travel overseas and play for any and all deployed troops," said Drabek. "I've served in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan and those USO shows I have seen are terrific. What better way to give the troops some musical inspiration and really pump them up to help keep the motivation up?"

Although the band is not yet signed with any label, they continue to entertain crowded venues, fellow Soldiers and all their fans. For more information on The Allegiance, visit www.facebook.com/theallegiancerock.

"It's definitely an adrenaline rush."

- Spc. Ben Latham

1244th Transportation Company

Soldier recovering from stroke now serves as advocate



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Kristi L. Goodin
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Sgt. Daniel J. Delapeña of Gurnee, Black Hawk crew chief of Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment at Chicago Midway Airport, suffered a stroke in June 2010 and now serves as an advocate for stroke awareness.

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Kristi L. Goodin
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CHICAGO - Roughly 100,800 times a day, blood flows normally and the body functions at 100 percent. Blood is pushed into the heart and lungs and then is sent to nourish the rest of the body. This complicated process all happens in a matter of seconds in the average person.

Suddenly, the body senses a problem with the blood flow. An artery has a tear in the lining and blood effuses outside the normal circuit. Arteries quickly vasodilate to compensate for the lost blood, but this cannot reverse the damage to the artery. The body goes into panic to try to give the brain oxygenated blood. Vital brain cells start dying and the body starts to malfunction. The body has suffered a stroke and it needs immediate attention before brain damage is permanent.

Many Americans would not recognize the beginning signs of a stroke, just like Sgt. Daniel J. Delapeña of Gurnee, Black Hawk crew chief of Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment at Chicago Midway Airport.

Delapeña served as the third-shift supervisor line service at the Waukegan Airport. June 14, 2010, he realized something was wrong. He kept trying to pick up a set of keys, but his fingers would not grasp and he kept dropping them. He then tried to walk outside, but he kept going left and bumping into things.

"He is a fighter; a true representation of a Soldier standing strong in spite of personal and medical obstacles."

- Capt. Oluwatoyin Hines, 108th Battalion chaplain

"It was like my GPS was off or something," said Delapeña.

The symptoms continued through the night and a co-worker decided to research Delapeña's ailments. The co-worker told Delapeña he had the symptoms of a stroke, but Delapeña was resistant to the idea and attributed his symptoms to lack of sleep. Delapeña's wife told him to go to the hospital to get checked out.

"My wife came home and took me to the hospital," said Delapeña. "They did a CT scan on my brain, and that's when I found out I had a stroke. Before I knew it, I was in an ambulance to go to Lake Forest Hospital."

To avoid permanent brain damage, Delapeña entered physical therapy to rehabilitate his body. He also changed his daily routine to contribute to stroke prevention by exercising and eating right.

"I live in Chicago, home of the deep dish pizza, and now instead of eating half of a pizza, I only have a slice," said Delapeña.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, treatable risk factors for stroke are hypertension, cigarette smoking, heart disease, warning signs or history of stroke, diabetes, cholesterol imbalance and

physical inactivity or obesity. Treating any of these will reduce the risk of stroke.

Delapeña not only needed help rehabilitating physically, but also mentally. He joined a stroke support group to learn about stroke prevention and help others coping with injuries from a stroke.

"He is the most resilient survivor. His family is extremely important to him and he is important to his family. I am certain this may not be the easiest time in their lives, but I am certain they are collectively supportive of one another," said Capt. Oluwatoyin O. Hines of Chicago, 108th Battalion chaplain.

Early detection of symptoms is the best way to avoid permanent damage.

According to the Mayo Clinic, if someone feels sudden trouble walking, speaking or understanding speech; paralysis or numbness on one side of the body or face; trouble seeing in one or both eyes; or sudden severe headache, he or she should seek medical attention immediately.

With the help of his support group and family, Delapeña has fully recovered and still serves in the Illinois Army Guard.

"He is a fighter; a true representation of a Soldier standing strong in spite of personal and medical obstacles," said Hines.

126th Airmen's Council gets involved in the community

Story by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Amanda Daab
126th Air Refueling Wing Airmen's Council

BELLEVILLE - The 126th Air Refueling Wing's (ARW) Airman's Council was initiated by Senior Airman Michael Raymond, Jr., from the 126th Security Forces Squadron and established in January 2012.

The council primarily focuses on volunteerism, but also encourages enhanced recognition of enlisted personnel, effective communication among members to exchange ideas, introduction of newly assigned Airmen, and social member gatherings to include family members, senior leadership and local community leaders.

Senior airmen and below from the 126 ARW are eligible for membership.

Raymond of O'Fallon said he spearheaded the council because of work with a similar organization while deployed.

"I learned to appreciate the unity of all Airmen regardless of job or rank," he said. "This group allows Airmen to bond together to better the community through volunteer projects...My plan is to build a strong foundation so that the council can continue to thrive and for us as future NCOs to stress the importance of the Airman's Council."

Staying true to the mission, the council has begun a substantial volunteer project with the Koerner House Restoration Project in downtown Belleville.

The Koerner House was home to Gustave Koerner, a German immigrant who lived in Belleville from 1833 to 1896. Koerner was a close friend of Abraham Lincoln and served in the Illinois State Legislature, the Illinois Supreme Court and as Lieutenant Governor of Illinois. Koerner is most noted for his role in organizing the Republican Party in Illinois and his support in drafting the party's anti-slavery platform before Lincoln's first successful presidential campaign.

"I believe the Koerner house project is a great project for the Airman's Council," said Senior Airman Carolina Ruiz of Fairmont City, 126th Comptroller Flight and 126 ARW Airmen's Council member. "This is a great way to build on teamwork and contribute to the restoration of a historical home and make a difference in our community."



Photo submitted by U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Amanda Daab
126th Air Refueling Wing Airmen's Council

Senior Airman Michael Raymond Jr., of O'Fallon and Senior Airman Jason Penick of New Baden, both with the 126th Air Refueling Wing's Airmen Council lay flooring in the doorway of the Koerner House in Belleville.

The Koerner house was originally built in 1850, but four years later it was destroyed by a fire. Koerner rebuilt the home that same year, but years of neglect, deterioration, water exposure, pests and vandalism have left the home in dire need of repairs.

"I'm glad to be part of a group that does volunteer work such as this," said Senior Airman Jason Soles of Belleville, 126th Civil Engineering Squadron and 126 ARW Airmen's Council member. "Construction has always been a passion of mine and I'm glad that I get to help out the folks that own the house and make it what it used to be. It will be really exciting to see as it comes to the final stages of restoration."

Once renovations are complete, Belleville plans to turn the home into a museum to honor Gustave Koerner's life and accomplishments.

Members of the 126 ARW Airmen's Council will volunteer at least one Saturday each month as funds remain available for the project.

"There is going to be a lot of work to do, but when it is finished it will be a great addition to the historic part of Belleville," said Airman 1st Class James Mason of Troy, 126th Comptroller Flight and 126 ARW Airmen's Council member.

Fellow Airmen's Council member, Airman 1st Class Ryan Cook of Belleville, 126th Logistics Readiness Squadron, expanded on Mason's thoughts.

"It's nice to know some people still care enough to restore and maintain a piece of the past such as the Koerner House," said Cook. "I think it's cool that we can get involved with such a project. You can knockdown and erase old houses, but you can't erase history."

In their brief existence, the 126 ARW Airmen's Council may be the epitome of esprit de corps. All members of the council view the Koerner House Restoration Project as rewarding because of the sense of teamwork and camaraderie being demonstrated by their fellow Airmen. But members also were quick to add that, the council has only just begun and are excited to see where the future will take them.

Board members of the council include: Raymond - President; Ruiz - Vice President; Senior Airman Brandon Borkowski - Secretary; Airman 1st Class Paul Brown - Treasurer; Airman 1st Class Amber Gonzalez - Morale Officer; and Senior Airman Martell McCoy - Sergeant at Arms.

Any eligible 126 ARW members wishing to join the council can contact president@ilangairmancouncil.com, vicepresident@ilangairmancouncil.com, or moraleofficer@ilangairmancouncil.com for more information.

"This is a great way to build on teamwork and contribute to the restoration of a historical home and make a difference in our community."

- Senior Airman Carolina Ruiz

126th Comptroller Flight and 126th Airmen's Council member

Cobetto promoted to brigadier general

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - William D. Cobetto of Hillsboro, the Assistant Adjutant General - Air, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at the Illinois Military Academy on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, March 14.

Cobetto, the Assistant Adjutant General - Air, is responsible for the command, control and operations of plans and programs affecting more than 3,000 Illinois Air National Guard personnel at Scott Air Force Base, Peoria, and Springfield.

Cobetto received his commission in 1985 from the Academy of Military Science, Knoxville, Tenn. During his career he has served in several key positions including Mission Support Group commander and comptroller at the 183rd Fighter Wing.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Shaun Kerr
183rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

(Right) Kelly Cobetto pins brigadier general rank on her husband William D. Cobetto of Hillsboro, at the Illinois Military Academy on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, March 14.

Kids on Guard at the 126th



Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Ken Stephens, 126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Tech. Sgt. Kris Randolph of Mascoutah, a crew chief with the 126th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, gets "dog piled" by members of Charlie Flight while waiting for their turn at the G.I. Challenge course at the 126th Air Refueling Wing's Kids on Guard day held June 26 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. The annual event gives Air National Guard members' children a glimpse into military life. Activities throughout the day included a military working dog demonstration, a tour of a KC-135R Stratotanker, a medical hands-on simulation, disaster response training and the G.I. Challenge.

Detrick with RRC named regional NCO of the Year

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Staff Sgt. Beau Detrick of Marion, with the Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command in Springfield was named regional Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) of the Year after competing against the top NCOs of six other states.



Staff Sgt. Beau Detrick

The Soldiers competed in the 2011 Region IV Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition May 15 to 18 at Camp Grayling, Mich. Competitors were chosen from among the thousands of Soldiers in the Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin Army Guard.

"It was an honor to be representing the state of Illinois at that level and many times throughout the competition that was a driving factor for me," said Detrick. "I beat out a lot of great NCOs to get here and I am not about to let them down."

Detrick said he was unsure of his final score and was a little overwhelmed when he was declared the competition's winner.

"I really didn't expect it," said Detrick. "The competitors at the regional level were some pretty seasoned NCOs and none of our results were posted. I knew I had done

well in some events, but I was unsure how I was lining up with the others."

The competition tested physical fitness and endurance, warrior tasks and skills, rifle proficiency and knowledge of the Army and its history over the four days. The contestants were accompanied by their sponsors, fellow Soldiers who helped mentor and prepare the competitors and who continued to aid and motivate them between events.

"This is huge, not only for Staff Sergeant Detrick, but for the Illinois National Guard," said Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Higgs of Sherman, the senior enlisted adviser for the Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command in Springfield. "This is an achievement every NCO wants to achieve along the way and has dreams of doing."

Higgs said Detrick has continued to perform at his best at every level of the competition. Accompanied by his sponsor Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Ragan, the two have trained together for every level of the competition. Together they have studied Army knowledge, weapon systems and Soldier skills to improve Detrick's mental and physical readiness as he continues to represent the Illinois National Guard.

"The competition obviously gets tougher and tougher as it goes," said Higgs. "It is phenomenal to see an individual compete against other individuals who are just as hungry and savvy on all the different skills. At the end of the day to realize you can come out better than the others, is an accomplishment and achievement that is



Photo submitted by U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Howard Robinson, Joint Force Headquarters

Staff Sgt. Beau Detrick of Marion, with Recruiting and Retention Command in Springfield finds plots on a map during a land navigation exercise at the 2011 Region IV Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition May 15 to 18 at Camp Grayling, Mich.

indescribably wonderful."

Higgs said he is confident in Detrick's performance in the national level of competition, where Detrick will go against the top NCO of every region vying for the title of National Guard NCO of the Year.

Even as he was declared the regional

NCO of the Year, Detrick said his thoughts were of the road ahead

"Needless to say I was very honored and excited, but I remember standing there and taking pictures and I was already thinking about Nationals and what I was going to do to train," said Detrick.

Halterman awarded Soldier's Medal

Story by U.S. Army Maj. Nathan A. Westby
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

WOODSTOCK - Spc. James Halterman of Marengo, a former member of Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Woodstock, was awarded the Soldier's Medal April 22 for his heroic actions that saved the life of a fellow citizen in July 2011.

Halterman came upon the scene of a vehicle accident before first responders arrived and without regard for his own personal safety, pulled an unconscious driver out of a burning truck.

For his actions Halterman was awarded the nation's highest honor a Soldier can receive for an act of heroism not involving conflict with an enemy.

Brig. Gen. Steven P. Huber of Chicago, the Land Forces Component commander for the Illinois National Guard, presented the award to Halterman.

"The Soldier's Medal is a United States military decoration awarded in the name of the president of the United States," said Huber.

Huber commended Halterman for his actions.

"On that day in July last year, James Halterman's training kicked in and, in an unselfish act, he saved a man's life. For that we're all proud of him," said Huber.

Halterman deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 with the Illinois National Guard's 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat

Team and volunteered to stay in Afghanistan for two more rotations before returning in 2011.

Maj. Nick Johnson, the commander of 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Chicago praised Halterman.

"Spc. Halterman has proven himself as a Soldier," said Johnson. "His actions on that day, show that he's proven himself as a citizen. He is the kind of person we need to be."

First Sgt. Andrew Fowles, the senior enlisted adviser for Company D, praised Halterman's military service with Company D.

"His selfless service and his dedication to duty is not like I've seen in any Soldier I've met in my career," said Fowles. "That is just the type of Soldier that he is."

"I am incredibly honored to be here today as we recognize Spc. Halterman for his service with three tours to Afghanistan and his continued commitment to serving our citizens as evidenced by this heroic act," said Brian Sager, mayor of Woodstock.

"I don't know what to say," said Halterman. "I was shocked to hear that I was being presented the award. I think I was more nervous about being in front of everybody than receiving the medal."

Huber concluded the ceremony with a statement regarding Halterman's actions.

"Spc. Halterman doesn't do these things for himself, he does them for us. And for that we all should be grateful."



Photo by U.S. Army Maj. Nathan A. Westby
33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

(Left to right) Brig. Gen. Steven P. Huber of Chicago, Land Forces Component Commander, awards Spc. James Halterman of Marengo, the Soldier's Medal April 22 at the Woodstock armory for his heroic actions that saved the life of a fellow citizen in July 2011. Halterman deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 with Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Woodstock and then volunteered to stay in Afghanistan for two more tours returning to Illinois in 2011.



Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Dustin Cammack, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class David Klaus of Chicago, assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Chicago, stands with the Chicago Cubs lineup during pregame activities celebrating the Army's 237th Birthday, June 14. Klaus was recognized by the Cubs as the Hometown Hero for his multiple overseas tours at the sold-out crowd of more than 40,000 at Wrigley Field.

**Company A, 2nd
Battalion, 20th
Special Forces Group
(Airborne)
Readiness Assessment**

**September
15 & 16 in Marseilles**

**For more information:
[http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/
army/unitweb/20sf/default.aspx](http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/army/unitweb/20sf/default.aspx)**

Illinois Guard Soldiers deploy and return

■ 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team returns

SPRINGFIELD – A homecoming ceremony was held at Camp Lincoln in Springfield April 20 for approximately 60 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers with 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team (1-14th ADT).

Mobilized in April 2011, the ADT deployed for one year to conduct agricultural support operations in Afghanistan that revitalized and established a strong, growing and sustainable agricultural industry. The team provided basic agricultural needs and services working alongside the Afghan government agriculture agencies. They also taught and trained Afghan Extension Agents and farmers.

The team improved irrigation for more than 4,100 hectares of farmland. They also developed a functional Agricultural Extension Agent Program and hosted 34 training events. The ADT modernized Afghan farming techniques.

The ADT conducted 240 convoys, facilitated 5,145 farmer training days, trained 2,960 farmers through Agriculture Extension Agents and assisted with forestry projects resulting in more than 60,000 seedlings being planted.

The ADT received the Meritorious Unit Citation and Valorous Unit citation. Thirteen Soldiers received a Bronze Star Medal, one Soldier received a Purple Heart Medal, 45 Soldiers were recognized with Army Commendation Medals and 58 Soldiers qualified for the Combat Action Badge.

Agriculture in Afghanistan accounts for 31 percent of the Afghan Gross Domestic Product and employs 78 percent of the over 30 million people in the country. National Guard ADTs work to improve the function of Afghan governmental agencies that are needed to sustain a viable agriculture sector and to educate and train Afghan farmers in modern agricultural methods and techniques. The changes will improve the quality of life and provide economic stability in the region.

■ 1644th TC returns

SPRINGFIELD – Homecoming ceremonies were held in Springfield and Rock Falls April 5 for approximately 170 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers with the 1644th Transportation Company in Rock Falls.

Mobilized in July 2011, the 1644th deployed to Kuwait in August in support of Operation New Dawn and Enduring Freedom.

The mission of the 1644th included hauling cargo throughout Iraq and Kuwait. The unit completed approximately 175 transportation missions in Kuwait and Iraq with no casualties. The Soldiers traveled 4.1 million miles, hauled more than 35,000 tons of cargo and transported more than 7,500 pieces of equipment to help the United States in its withdrawal from Iraq. The achievements of the 1644th resulted in 185 awards, including 28 Soldiers recommended for Bronze Stars. The 1644th also received a Unit Safety Streamer for its vigilance while deployed.

The 1644th was the last long-haul transportation convoy to leave Iraq Dec. 18, 2011 as the United States concluded operations in Iraq.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Soldiers from the 1644th Transportation Company receive yellow flowers as they are welcomed home from a deployment to Kuwait, April 5 in Rock Falls.



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. April Hawes, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Friends and family gather for a homecoming ceremony for approximately 60 Soldiers with the 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team at Camp Lincoln, April 20.

■ BEST A8 returns

BLOOMINGTON – Approximately 20 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers who served in Afghanistan as part of an embedded training team have completed their mission and returned to Illinois. The homecoming ceremony for Bilateral Embedded Staff Team (BEST) A8 was May 2 at the Bloomington National Guard Armory.

Mobilized in June, the team trained at Camp Atterbury, Ind., and joined its Polish counterparts in Poland for training before deploying to Afghanistan.

BEST A8, who was part of Task Force White Eagle, was instrumental in preparing the southern half of Ghazni Province for the 82nd Airborne's arrival.

"The amount of time, coordination and physical labor put into this mission is impressive by itself, but the fact that the Army and Air Force engineers completed this mission is incredible," said 1st Lt. Ryan Bivins of Dixon with BEST A8.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

The operation consisted of more than 500 Army, Navy and Air Force engineers, expanding five existing bases and building five new bases during the harsh winter months of Afghanistan.

"A logistics operation of this significance was only possible through cooperation of the Soldiers, Airmen, transporters and aviators, Department of Defense agencies and the Polish military contingent," said Maj. Rhonda Petersen of Lindenhurst with BEST A8. "Task Force White Eagle was able to realize this objective through coordination and execution with more than nine task forces within Regional Command East and 1st Cavalry Division."

Attack helicopters were not something Task Force White Eagle had received too much of in the past until Capt. Tony Keel of Grayslake ensured Soldiers in Task Force White Eagle had support from the sky.

"Helicopter planning was extremely time consuming, but very rewarding and I really enjoyed my job," Keel said. "I especially enjoyed planning with Kiowa and Apache attack helicopter crews because all the ground units loved having that air power overhead supporting their missions and that motivated me to obtain as much air support as possible."

The Illinois National Guard has co-deployed with every Polish rotation to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003. Col. Tom Purple of Rochester said leadership and experience were evident in the success of their team.

"It is a true honor to serve with outstanding warriors during a critical time in the campaign and be part of the success and history of our great Army," Purple said.

■ 633rd Theater Gateway deploys

SPRINGFIELD – A deployment ceremony was held for approximately 10 Soldiers with the Illinois Army National Guard's 633rd Theater Gateway in Springfield June 5 at the Illinois Military Academy, Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

The Soldiers trained for a brief time at Fort Dix, N.J., before deploying to Kuwait for approximately 10 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 633rd will provide operational control over the theater gateway of a base in Kuwait. They will be responsible for the initial reception, staging and onward movement of personnel deploying to the Central Command area of responsibility.

■ Company B, 106th, Company B, 935th deploys

CHICAGO – A deployment ceremony was held for approximately 170 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers with Company B, 106th Aviation Regiment in Chicago and Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion in Chicago at Midway's Army Aviation Support Facility #2 in Chicago, June 2.

The Soldiers will train for a brief time at Fort Hood, Texas, before deploying to Kuwait for approximately 10 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 106th and 935th will provide aviation support and aviation maintenance support to the 35th Combat Aviation Brigade. Aviation support will consist of air assault and air movement of critical equipment and supplies in the area of operation.

The unit will return home in the summer 2013.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Christian Maderer of Chicago with Company B, 935th Aviation Support Battalion, kisses his daughter just before the start of his deployment ceremony at Midway Airport in Chicago, June 2.

Illinois hosts NATO Summit in C

■ Task Force Transportation drives attending delegates

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Ryan Twist
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CHICAGO – Transportation played a major role in the success and coordination for all participants at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Chicago May 20 to 21.

Illinois Army National Guard Master Sgt. Peter M. Dowding of Springfield, the battle noncommissioned officer for the Transportation Operations Center with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 766th Engineer Battalion in Decatur said his team was tasked with ensuring all attending delegates were safely transported throughout the city of Chicago.

“We are overseeing the movements of heads of state, foreign ministers, ministers of defense and chiefs of defense from different NATO countries,” he said.

Dowding said his main job was to ensure all procedures ran smoothly in the operation center. He made sure the staff received all radio transmissions, tracked any discrepancies of movement and ensured all personnel arrived on time to their destination.

Maj. Timothy J. Newman of Plainfield, the Task Force Transportation project officer for the 766th, said his battalion received the task three months before the NATO Summit to provide the coordination and synchronization necessary between the Illinois National Guard and the U.S. Department of State.

Newman said the Illinois National Guard had approximately 400 Soldiers and Airmen who were part of task force transportation. During the NATO Summit, they conducted more than 1,200 missions for 59 countries, two international organizations, five different U.S. government offices, NATO staff counsel and parliament members or assemblies and their essential staff.

Spc. Aaron D. Damery of Bluemound, a radio telephone operator with the 766th, said he was constantly busy maintaining the transmissions to and from drivers. He then transmitted the information to the rest of the staff and updated the operations board to keep an accurate record.

“We can track them through visual and digital text,” said Damery. “If something happens, like a bad accident or other hazards, we know exactly where they are and how many people are on that mission in order to prepare to make the situation better.”

Damery said the biggest challenge was communication. Most of that came from never working with other agencies.

Dowding said there was an initial learning curve while they tried to better understand the other agencies and their procedures. Despite this, however, he said Task Force Transportation was fully prepared for the mission.

“I think we were definitely prepared as Illinois National Guardsmen because of our flexibility and our ability to adjust at all times in training,” he said. “It’s probably the smoothest I have ever seen an operation go. I think it was a great experience working with multiple governments.”



President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski and Center in Marseilles May 20 to view Illinois G

■ Polish President views troops training

Story by Office of Governor Pat Quinn

CHICAGO -Gov. Pat Quinn and Maj. Gen. William Enyart, the of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski May 20 at the Marseilles Train officers in training. Quinn and Enyart, of Belleville, were presented of Poland, which is bestowed upon foreigners for distinguished co

“We welcome President Komorowski to Illinois and thank him and the Illinois Army National Guard,” Quinn said. “This visit is to the great friendship that we have with Poland. I am honored to accept the Commander’s Cross with Illinois’ outstanding servicemembers.”

In addition to maintaining a strong military partnership with Poland, Illinois exports to the country totaled nearly \$200 million in 2011, an 11 percent increase over 2010. Overall, Illinois ranks 5th among U.S. state in exports to Poland. Approximately 1 million Polish-Americans live in the Chicago-Area, the largest gathering of people of Polish Heritage outside of Warsaw.

“It was important for President Komorowski to see what training happens here in Illinois before his Soldiers deploy to a combat zone with Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers,” said Enyart. “We truly value the great relationships we have developed with Poland since 1993 and today’s visit only enhanced those relationships.”

The Soldiers honored with Polish awards included: Brig. Gen. Johnny Miller of Tamms, Col. Albert Cox of Newark, Lt. Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse, Lt. Col. Joseph Schweickert of Peoria, Maj. Eric Davis of Mount Pulaski, Capt. Andrew Adamczyk of Springfield, Capt. Douglas Coop of Jacksonville, Master Sgt. Richard Schap of Sycamore, Master Sgt. Terry Martin of Dunlap, Master Sgt. David Ray of Millstadt, Sgt. 1st Class Ryanzo Perez of Springfield, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Markham of Glenarm.

Komorowski and other Polish dignitaries witnessed various training including firearms and vehicle rollover simulations, as well as assembling and disassembling of military equipment. ILARNG Soldiers have co-deployed with every Polish rotation to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003. Prior to deployment, Polish Soldiers travel to Illinois to conduct training at MTC. Governor Quinn visited Afghanistan on a mission led by Polish troops and commander-in-chief of the ILARNG.

The Illinois National Guard State Partnership Program with Po the nation. Poland has been a state partner with the Illinois Nation military transformation and acceptance into NATO.

April 4 marked the 63rd anniversary of the formation of NATO. NATO existed for more than 40 years before its first military opera to NATO military missions over the last 20 years.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Daniel Bellamy, 982nd Combat Camera

A Turkish delegate arrives at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago, May 19 for the North Atlantic Treaty Summit and is greeted by servicemembers from Illinois.

■ Illinois Airmen, Soldier represent U.S.

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jaime L. Witt
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CHICAGO – Representing one’s nation at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Three Illinois Guardsmen received that opportunity by participating in the opening ceremony of the NATO Summit in Chicago May 20.

The Illinois Guardsmen, Army Capt. Oluwatoyin Hines of Chicago, Senior Airman Michael D. Citchens of Peoria, and Tech. Sgt. Jacob Curtis of Fairview Heights represented U. S. Armed Services in a color guard who performed for the Heads of State during the opening of the international conference. Military representatives from all 28 nations in NATO participated in the opening ceremony, which featured drill and ceremony, the playing of Taps and Reveille.

Curtis with the 126th Security Forces Squadron at Scott Air Force Base and 2011 Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, served as the primary U.S. military representative, while Citchens and Hines served as alternates.

“To be selected to be the person to represent our entire nation’s military was an honor,” he said. “I felt privileged and I couldn’t imagine all of the military men and women who gave their lives, while I was up there representing them to show NATO leaders who we are.”

Citchens, an integrated avionics specialist with the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, said he appreciated the experience. “I can’t really put it into words,” he said. “It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I’m grateful to be a part of something of that magnitude. Being in the same room as the leaders of the 28 nations of NATO was indescribable.”

Hines, a chaplain with the 108th Sustainment Brigade in Chicago works full-time as the Wounded Warrior chaplain for the Illinois Army National Guard and said she was honored to have been selected to participate.

“It was powerful to be able to connect with other servicemembers internationally,” Hines said. “It made me perceive my job as a chaplain differently. It made me more patriotic for our country.”



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

(Left to right) Capt. Oluwatoyin Hines of Chicago, with the 108th Sustainment Brigade, Senior Airman Michael D. Citchens of Peoria, with the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria, and Tech. Sgt. Jacob Curtis of Fairview Heights, with the 126th Chicago Security Forces Squadron at Scott Air Force Base, represent U. S. Armed Services at the NATO opening ceremony, May 20.

“It was important for President Komorowski to

Soldiers deploy to a comb

- Maj. Gen. William Enya

Chicago, Guard provides support

■ Task Force Public Affairs escorts foreign dignitaries

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Jesse Houk
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CHICAGO – Public affairs Soldiers and Airmen from three states came together to make up Task Force Public Affairs and successfully supported the Department of State during the 2012 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Chicago May 18 to 22.

“This was a great opportunity for the Soldiers and Airmen,” said Maj. Bradford E. Leighton of Sherman, commander of the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Springfield and commander of Task Force Public Affairs. “They got to be a part of ceremonies and press briefings that the average American never gets access to. I think the Soldiers enjoyed the mission, but more importantly did an outstanding job on every task assigned to them.”

Many of the Soldiers referred to the event as historical and were thrilled to be a part of such a monumental moment in time.

“I got to see the President of the United States, the Secretary General of NATO, and all of the heads of state for the NATO and ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) countries all together in one room working to solve the world’s problems,” said Spc. Lisa A. Laughlin of Auburn, Wash., public affairs specialist with the 122nd Public Affairs Operation Center in Tacoma, Wash. “It’s huge. It’s really cool to be a part of such a large operation.”

“It’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” said Sgt. Charlie Helmholt of Belleville with the 139th.

Helmholt, a former member of the 3rd United States Infantry Regiment’s Old Guard at Arlington National Cemetery, met Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and said it was a joy to be in the same room as President Barack Obama.

Duties for the public affairs task force included media escort for the foreign dignitaries’ arrival at O’Hare International Airport, media escort for the bilateral meetings between countries, delegate escort, information desk support and flag detail. All tasks helped the U.S. Department of State facilitate NATO meetings and direct 2,000 media personnel.

The support from the Public Affairs Task Force was appreciated by those within the Department of State.

“It’s been amazing,” said Yvonne Ribeiro-Yemofio, public affairs specialist at the U.S. Department of State. “We honestly couldn’t have done it without their help. Everyone is coming back saying this has been one of the best summits they’ve been to as far as moving journalists

to different rooms, scheduling briefings, and setting up bilateral meetings.”

The Public Affairs Task Force included 14 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers, eight Illinois Air National Guard Airmen from all three of the state’s wings, six Washington Army National Guard Soldiers, three Iowa Army National Guard Soldiers, and 10 318th Public Affairs Operation Center Army Reserve Soldiers.

“They worked together right off the bat. They gelled very well,” said Leighton. “We made a lot of friends with other public affairs Soldiers and Airmen and overall it was a pleasure to get to interact with other professionals in our field.”

Cohesion among the different units could have been a concern, but the question about working with unfamiliar Soldiers was answered quickly and proved not to be an issue at all.

“We’re all Soldiers,” said Master Sgt. Duff E. McFadden of Johnston, Iowa, public affairs specialist with Iowa Joint Forces Headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa. “It’s interesting how we work. We have different ways of doing things, but the bottom line is we are there to be there to be Soldiers.”



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho, 108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Gov. Pat Quinn arrive at Marseilles Training Center to witness guard troops training and present Polish awards.

visits Marseilles, presents awards

Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, welcomed President Obama to the Marseilles Training Center, where they visited with ILARNG Soldiers and Polish dignitaries with the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

The visit was a show of solidarity and support for our troops, and a testament to the continued economic and military partnership with our state.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski and other Polish dignitaries witnessed various training including firearms and a vehicle rollover simulation, as well as assembling and disassembling of military equipment, May 20 at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles.

supported by the ILARNG in 2009. As governor, he serves as the

land is one of the oldest and largest of all the state partnerships in the National Guard since 1993. It was originally created to assist Poland with

tion. Originally designed as a mechanism to deter Soviet aggression, the Illinois National Guard has been a consistent contributor

see what training happens here in Illinois before his visit to the Marseilles Training Center with Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers.”

Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Jesse L. Houk, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pfc. Ian Withrow of Springfield, with the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Springfield provides microphone support for reporters during a press conference for NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, May 20 in Chicago.

Many months of planning for the 2012 NATO Summit paid off and the satisfaction of a job well done was felt by many.

“I was absolutely proud of my Soldiers,” said Leighton. “The 139th MPAD hasn’t done a lot of these types of missions and the Soldiers performed excellent. They adapted and the accolades we got from the Department of State were outstanding. They just couldn’t say enough about the type of support we gave them.”

NATO

■ From page 1

Battalion in Decatur, which held the mission command for Task Force Transportation. “We all worked together very well. The troops had good morale because it was an exciting, fast-paced mission. They felt a piece of ownership as it was a true mission that required some independence.”

More than 1,600 transportation movements successfully occurred, which included 340 vehicles that transported delegates from 58 countries, two international organizations, five U.S. government offices and all NATO council parliament key figures.

Edwards said the transportation mission was essential to the overall support of the summit because those Guardsmen were the face of the Illinois National Guard.

“You’re the first person the delegates see when they get off the plane. Every time they move, you are the person they see,” he said.

Along with the transportation mission, the Illinois National Guard was also responsible for missions at O’Hare and Midway Airports in Chicago. Task Force Airport received 580 delegates and 109 aircraft. The Soldiers and Airmen who supported this mission received as many as 71 aircraft in one day.

Additionally, Illinois Guardsmen escorted nearly 2,000 media personnel at the International Media Center.

“Most of the public affairs team is trained to take photos and write stories that will be marketed to civilian media,” said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Chrisman of Athens with the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Springfield. “This mission was somewhat of a role reversal. Many of our Soldiers worked as escorts for civilian media to ensure the media outlets got the story they needed.”

As a national event, the Illinois National Guard received national recognition from Lt. Gen. William Caldwell, IV, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army) Commander at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

“This teamwork is truly the model of cooperation that we should strive to replicate across our Defense Support to Civil Authority team across the nation,” said Caldwell in a letter to Maj. Gen. William Enyart, Illinois National Guard Adjutant General. “My team certainly believes this teamwork was the major factor to the summit’s success at our level.”



Cavalry Soldier places third at Best Ranger

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy Snyder
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - As the creed states, a Ranger is a more elite Soldier who arrives at the cutting edge of battle by land, sea, or air. Staff Sgt. Matthew Madiar of Chicago and Sgt. 1st Class Zach Phillips of Portland, Ore., lived the Ranger Creed while competing at the 29th Annual David E. Grange, Jr. Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga., April 13 to 15.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Madiar and
Sgt. 1st Class Zach Phillips

Madiar, with the Illinois Army National Guard's Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Aurora, Ill., and Phillips with the Oregon Army National Guard (Team 50), placed third among 50 two-man Ranger teams. This is the highest a National Guard team has ever placed. The only two National Guard teams that qualified for the competition placed in the top six with only 34 of 50 teams completing the 60-hour competition.

"I was physically and mentally exhausted after the Darby Queen obstacle course," said Phillips. "That was the one and only time I questioned if I was going to make it to the end."

Not only did the team finish, they excelled. Before the obstacle course, Rangers began the competition with a three-mile buddy run that transitioned into

a 15-mile foot march. After the obstacle course, the team was flown by helicopter to the urban assault course. Both National Guard teams were in the top five standings for the day. Only 34 teams remained after the first day of endurance events.

Day two began with timed skill events. The high-stress shoot at the Krilling Range was one of the most successful events, said Madiar. The 500-yard course consisted of moving a stretcher with a simulated casualty throughout the obstacle with periodic stops at various ranges to fire five vintage rifles at steel and six-inch targets.

The teams then moved by a Stryker fighting vehicle for eight, round-robin timed stations. The major event of the day was the Tri-Tower Challenge, where competitors climbed a 60-foot wall, 30-foot collapsible ladder and a 20-foot knotted rope, rappelling down in between each climb. Team 49, consisting of National Guardsmen Capt. Robert Killian with the Colorado Army National Guard and 1st Lt. Nicholas Plocar with the Wisconsin Army National Guard, set the course record with a time of 6 minutes, 32 seconds.

Night two finished up with a six-hour night orienteering course, which was the most challenging event, said Madiar. The long distance, time constraints and rough terrain made it the toughest event.

Day three consisted of water events. Competitors jumped from a helicopter into a pond, then swam 100-meters to shore followed by a water confidence course. Once completed, both National Guard teams were airlifted to start the timed leadership skills event where Team 50 (Madiar and Phillips) came out about two and a half minutes quicker than Team 49.

"When it came time, we did everything



Photo by U.S. Army Master Sgt. Scott Boston, Army National Guard Warrior Training Center

Staff Sgt. Matthew Madiar, of Chicago, with Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Aurora, spots as teammate Sgt. 1st Class Zach Phillips with the Oregon Army National Guard fires a round at the 29th Annual David E. Grange, Jr. Best Ranger Competition at Fort Benning, Ga., April 13. Madiar and Phillips placed third overall in the competition.

exactly the way we practiced and it worked out well for us," said Phillips.

The final event of the day, which highlighted how well the two National Guard teams compared to the Active Duty teams, was the three-mile Buddy Run where Team 49 came in first and Team 50 in sixth place.

"All I was worried about was just finishing," said Madiar. "We weren't tracking the standings because they changed so much."

The 10-week intense pre-training

program leading up to the competition paid off for the Guardsmen. Team 50 was awarded third place overall for the competition, while team 49 came in fifth.

Madiar and Phillips both said they would like to compete again next year as long as they are partners.

"If it works out, we can capitalize on our success and come back a little stronger and smarter next year," said Phillips.

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy E. Beck, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team also contributed to this story

661st Engineers assist in C-17 crash recovery



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Juan Delgado, 18th Engineer Brigade

Soldiers from the 661st Engineer Company, in Sparta, assigned to the 7th Engineer Battalion, build an earth bridge over a wadi, April 7, to recover a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III airlifter that overshot the runway on Forward Operating Base Shank in Afghanistan.

Story courtesy of 18th Engineer Brigade

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Soldiers assigned to the Illinois National Guard's 661st Engineer Company, assisted Boeing and the Air Force with the recovery of a damaged airlifter, April 16, at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan. The project to recover the plane took several steps that involved engineers, logicians and civilians from Boeing.

Jan. 23, a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III airlifter overshot the runway and the ensuing crash damaged the front landing gear and underbelly of the airlifter. The C-17 came to rest beyond the runway on the other side of a wadi.

Once the initial plan was complete, three Soldiers from the 661st from Sparta, were first to put the plan into action by clearing, grubbing, and leveling the initial crash site.

"The initial work was a little problematic due to the snow on the ground and lack of soil available to level the ground, but after six days my team of Spc. Daniel Baker, of Metropolis, and Spc. Jordan Hale, of Pinckneyville, were able to get the ground ready to move the airplane 180 degrees toward the runway," said Staff Sgt. Brandon

Mitchell from Pinckneyville, a heavy equipment operator with the 661st Engineer Company.

Once the earth bridge was formed over the wadi, AM-2 matting was placed over it to provide addition support for the airplane weight as it crossed the bridge.

At 0635 hours April 16, the airlifter made its initial move. After about six feet into the move, the plane shifted and a concern was noticed among the leadership. After re-tightening the straps and chains, the team attempted a second movement. This time the plane did not stop and continued to roll over the man made bridge and onto the runway. Once on the runway, the plane continued to move until it was stopped to readjust the straps and chains before the next turn onto the taxi-way.

"Everyone was excited to see the plan come to completion, where the plane was in its resting place, which took a little under an hour," said Sgt. 1st Class Steven Maki, the senior horizontal construction engineer with the 7th Engineer Battalion from Kenmare, N.D.

The 661st, part of the Illinois National Guard's 766th Engineer Battalion, is assigned to the 7th Engineer Battalion while in Afghanistan.

TAG

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National Guard Soldiers with their Polish counterparts. The program was established in 1993, but has grown exponentially under Enyart's direction, with Illinois National Guard Soldiers deployed with Polish Soldiers on every Polish deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

"Under the leadership of Maj. Gen. Enyart, the Illinois National Guard State Partnership Program with Poland has become a national model for partnering and theatre security cooperation," said Col. Paul Fanning of Chestnut, Joint Staff for Strategic Plans and Policies for the Illinois National Guard. "The Illinois National Guard State Partnership Program with Poland builds enduring military-to-military relationships, which enhanced long-term international security while building partnership capacity."

Quinn has named Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti of Springfield, the Assistant Adjutant General - Army, as the acting Adjutant General until a new Adjutant General and Director of Military Affairs is selected.

Celletti said Enyart's experience and expertise will be missed, but it's his leadership that will be hard to replace.

"He was a strong supporter of our family programs and wounded warriors," Celletti said. "His leadership during two major floods, a winter storm and the recent NATO

Summit in Chicago shows how important our National Guard can be inside Illinois borders. He is a leader who will be missed and undoubtedly hard to replace."

Enyart served active duty in the U.S. Air Force when he first enlisted in 1976. He served as commander of the Illinois Army National Guard forces deployed to Kiev, Ukraine in July 2005. He was selected to brief the Polish Army and Air General Staff on mobilization policy of U.S. reserve military forces. He has also served overseas in Vincenza, Italy and Okinawa, Japan.

Enyart has a law degree from Southern Illinois University School of Law and served as an attorney in Belleville during the onset of his career.

Enyart said he is honored to have been given the opportunity to serve the state of Illinois in such a high capacity.

"It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard," Enyart said. "To have led the Illinois National Guard through the largest single deployment of Soldiers since World War II and to have served through floods, blizzards and ice storms with the finest men and women in the world has taught me a greater appreciation for the strength of this great nation, for the strength of its servicemembers, its families and its working men and women."

He is married to retired St. Clair County Judge Annette Eckert. Together they have two sons and a daughter-in-law.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti of Springfield signs the oath of office after being sworn in as the Acting Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard June 7 at Camp Lincoln in Springfield. Celletti has been the Assistant Adjutant General (ATAG)-Army and commander of the Illinois Army National Guard since Oct. 1, 2005. He was the first ATAG in Illinois history to earn the rank of major general. Celletti enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 1972.

Illinois Guard hosts First Lady, Governor for bill signing

Story by U.S. Army Capt. Dustin Cammack
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO – In grand fashion, Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn and the Illinois National Guard hosted First Lady Michelle Obama at an historic bill-signing at the Calumet armory in Chicago June 26.

The Governor – flanked by the First Lady, Acting Adjutant General of Illinois Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, bill sponsors Illinois State Senate President John Cullerton, state Rep. Bob Pritchard, and state Sen. Martin Sandoval – signed into law the “Military Family Licensing Act”.

The bill – officially named Senate Bill 275 – provides for temporary expedited professional and educational licenses for active duty members of the military and their spouses after the families relocate to Illinois for military service.

More than 300 servicemembers and their families crowded into the armory in the South Loop to witness the historic event. Illinois will become the 23rd state to adopt pro-military spouse license portability legislation when the law takes effect Jan. 1, 2013.

“Our military families make great sacrifices every day, and they shouldn’t have to put their career on hold while their loved ones are serving their country overseas,” Quinn said. “This new law will strengthen Illinois and allow these dedicated professionals to waste no time in finding work and making a difference as they settle into their new home.”

As part of her Joining Forces initiative to honor, recognize and support military families, the First Lady has advocated for the 100,000 military spouses who serve in professions that require state licenses or certification. For many, this means having to bear high financial burdens to transfer their credentials from state to state as they serve.

“Because of Governor Quinn’s efforts, more military spouses will be able to advance in their careers. More businesses, hospitals and schools will get the talented, experienced workers they rely on. And



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, flanked by the First Lady Michelle Obama, Acting Adjutant General of Illinois Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, bill sponsors and other officials, signed into law the “Military Family Licensing Act” which will make Illinois the 23rd state to adopt pro-military spouse license portability legislation, June 26 in Chicago.

more families will have the income they need and the financial security they deserve,” said Obama. “Above all, military families will know that America has their back. We are working hard every day to serve them as well as they have served this country.”

In February, the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden asked the country’s governors to improve job portability for military spouses in their states by relieving some of the financial burdens they face. At the time the first lady and Dr. Biden addressed the governors, only 11 states had such legislation. With the addition of the law in Illinois, that number has grown to 23, and an additional seven states have similar pending legislation.

“This is a monumental day for

servicemembers and their spouses here in Illinois,” said Celletti of Springfield. “The legislation signed today will no doubt ease the burden associated with professional license transfer and further strengthen communities around the state. Illinois has once again set the standard for excellence in caring for its heroes.”

The state agencies that issue occupational licenses, including the Illinois Department

of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) and the State Board of Education, will be able to grant temporary licenses to military members and spouses who hold credentials in other states in more than 50 professions, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, dentists, plumbers, paramedics, social workers, dieticians, and therapists.

“This new law is powerful for the more than 16,000 military families who call Illinois home,” said Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Director Erica Borggren. “Military spouses make tremendous sacrifices to follow their loved ones from duty station to duty station – and temporary, expedited licensure is an important way our state can support them through those sacrifices.”

In addition to temporary six-month licenses, the act allows the IDFPR to consider all relevant experience and training that a servicemember has gained through military service toward meeting certain permanent state licensing requirements.

Illinois Army National Guard member Staff Sgt. Jamie Witt of Urbana, added to the sentiment felt by the bill’s many supporters at the bill-signing.

“As a civilian nurse, I can attest to the difficulties one may encounter when acquiring the proper state licensure for his or her profession. I am honored to be here today to witness the signing of this legislation,” said Witt. “Our servicemembers and their families now have one less obstacle to overcome during their transition to Illinois. This further illustrates that Illinois truly values its servicemembers and their families - I am honored and proud to call Illinois home,” said Witt.

“Above all, military families will know that America has their back. We are working hard every day to serve them as well as they have served this country.”

- First Lady Michelle Obama

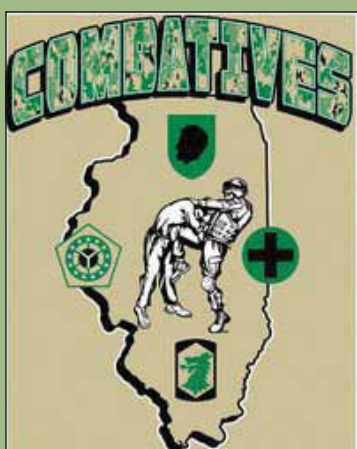
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**For questions or
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Officer candidates train in Marseilles

Story by U.S. Army Officer Candidate
Clarissa Estrada,
129th Regional Training Institute

MARSEILLES – Officer candidates from Class 56-11, as well as Class 57-12, prepared for phase III of Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Marseilles Training Center (MTC) in Marseilles May 14 to 20.

The class of 25 candidates will attend phase III July 20 to Aug 4 at Fort Lewis, Wash. MTC preparation included how to make a sand table, how to receive and develop an operations order and battle drills.

Additional highlights of the week included a Black Hawk helicopter

ride, which helped officer candidates understand how using helicopters can aid in completing the mission.

Officer candidates said they feel more prepared to meet the challenges in the upcoming months as they complete the traditional 18-month OCS program and prepare for graduation Aug. 26 at Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

Class 57-12 also trained at MTC during the same time to prepare for phase I June 1 to 15 at Camp Ripley, Minn. Class 56B trained at MTC during the same time to prepare for the accelerated OCS program June 1 to July 29 at Fort Meade, S.D. Class 56B will also graduate Aug. 26 with class 56-11.



Photo by U.S. Army Officer Candidate Robert Hawes, Illinois National Guard

Candidates of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 129th Regional Training Institute in Springfield, practice safely entering and exiting a Black Hawk before the ride at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles, May 15.

Illinois

Guardian

1301 North MacArthur Boulevard
Springfield, Illinois 62702-2399

DSN: 555-3569
Phone: (217) 761-3569
Facsimile: (217) 761-3527

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DEADLINES – Submissions for the electronic newsletter, *The Railsplitter*, will be the 1st of every month. The first edition will be October 2012.

Letters, articles and photographs are welcomed, but may be edited for clarity or brevity. Publication of any submission is at the discretion of the editor.

Views and opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the Illinois Department of Military Affairs or the U.S. Department of Defense.

Governor Pat Quinn
Acting Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Dennis L. Celletti
State PAO Maj. Brad Leighton
Editor Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder

SUPPORT STAFF

Capt. Dustin Cammack
1st Lt. William Grove
1st Lt. April Hawes
Sgt. Michael Camacho
Sgt. Robert Adams
Spc. Kristi Goodin
Mike Chrisman
Adriana Schroeder

139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
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183rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

2-130 Infantry conducts recon platoon selection

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. John A. Christel
2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment

MARION –Southern Illinois' 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment conducted the second semiannual tryout and selection process for the battalion reconnaissance platoon during March drill at the Marion National Guard Armory.

The challenge and prospect of being selected for this specialty platoon drew infantrymen from across the state. The 130th, "Black Hawks," predates the founding of the state of Illinois, and has valorously distinguished itself in almost every major American war.

"The tasks of a recon infantryman on the battlefield are always both individual and collective," said Capt. Casey Kline of Quincy, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander. "A man has to carry his own weight out here. At the same time, he has to be able and willing to contribute to the team."

Recon tryouts and selection tested infantryman's ability to shoot, move, and communicate on the modern battlefield. Tasks evaluated individual physical and mental abilities, aggressive qualities, and toughness. Closing interviews between the recon platoon leadership

and the candidates evaluated the potential to work as a team. Candidates completed an Army Physical Fitness Test, a six-mile forced march in full kit, 20-foot rope climb, weapons assembly and disassembly, and tests to measure the ability to observe and retain information on enemy activity.

"We only take the best Soldiers, infantrymen who want to be physically challenged every drill, who have the tactical know-how or a willingness to learn, and want to be surrounded by like-minded recon infantrymen," said Staff Sgt. Jason Thompson Murphysboro, a 130th recon squad leader.

Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Ron Tillotson issued the challenge for the upcoming autumn tryout and selection process.

"If you think you have what it takes, come on out and show us," he said. "If not, no hard feelings. The Black Hawks only take the best."

The next recon platoon tryouts and selection will take place at the Marion National Guard Armory Oct. 14, 2012. Infantrymen already assigned to the National Guard are encouraged to pursue the opportunity. Contact Sgt. 1st Class Collin R. Childers, recon platoon sergeant, at (618) 998-4022 for additional information.

The next tryout and selection is scheduled for October 14, 2012 at the Marion National Guard Armory

For more information call 618-998-4022



Terror to Illinois territory prairie leads to War of 1812

Story by Adriana Schroeder
Illinois National Guard Command Historian

SPRINGFIELD - Chaos, fear, and anger raged as charred remains, scattered bones, a smoldering cabin, and a missing daughter are all that remained of three shattered families. April 1812 brought terror to the prairie of the Illinois territory and gave settlers a front-row seat to the carnage that led to the War of 1812. June 18 marks the 200th anniversary of the U.S. declaration of war against Great Britain and the service of territorial militia in defending Illinois settlers.

Life in Illinois during this period was extremely precarious and scary for the average farming family. Chores and farming had to be done, but one never knew what lurked in the wilderness. Isaac Hutson (of present day Crawford County) returned home April 11 to find his farm's hired hand dead, his heart cut out and impaled on a stick. The charred remains of Mrs. Hutson and their four children were found inside the smoldering ruin of the family cabin.

April 22, the Harriman family was gunned down, stabbed, and mutilated while trying to escape across the Wabash River. Mr. and Mrs. Harriman, girls age 7 and 9, 3-year-old twin boys and a baby still in its mother's arms were all dead. Their farmhand managed to escape and run two miles to warn the other neighbors, including a pregnant woman in active labor. The murderers repeated heinous acts yet a third time on the Hinton family.

Some historians refer to the War of 1812 as the second revolution. Even though the Treaty of Paris ended the

American Revolution in 1783, Americans had not seen the last of their British enemies and their allies. The British Navy, war weary and thinned from years of fighting in the Napoleonic War and the American and French Revolutions, began to impress (kidnap and press into service) American seamen. Meanwhile, the Native Americans were not satisfied with the yearly payments and gifts received in exchange for the shady treaties signed with the American government granting rights to their land.

In an effort to block westward expansion and end commercial interest in America, the British allied with some Native American tribes, including the Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Sauk, and the Fox. The British lavished gifts on the natives and talked up the injustices of the American treaties and incited them to attack against settlers. When war began, Ninian Edwards' appointment as Illinois territorial governor was ready to expire June 21, 1812. With no word from the White House on his reappointment, he continued to lead with or without authority, often paying the salaries of the militia and rangers out of his own pocket. Edwards operated out of Fort Russell with four regiments of militia and a few additional militia ranger companies.

Every white male between 18 and 45 served in a company of militia by law. They elected officers and were required to arm themselves and provide supplies. During war, they suffered financially as most of the men were farmers; plus military pay ran late if they received any at all. However, they also knew that defense against the natives met success only in numbers.

In a letter quoted from "Illinois in the War of 1812,"

by Gillum Ferguson, Edwards wrote of his desperation to Secretary of War William Eustis, "I have been extremely reluctant to send my family away, but unless I hear shortly of more assistance than a few rangers, I shall bury my papers in the ground, send my family off, and stand my ground as long as possible."

The book, which received the annual Russell P. Strange "Book of the Year" Award from the Illinois State Historical Society in 2012, explains the influence of the War of 1812 on the development of Illinois as a state. Ferguson will discuss his book at the Illinois State Military Museum, 1301 North MacArthur Blvd., Springfield, Ill. Aug. 11, 2012, from 2 to 3 p.m.

Left to his own devices for the defense of the territory, Edwards' plan entailed a string of block houses and forts no more than 20 miles from each other to serve as a safe haven for the settlements. Militiamen were ordered to scout between them daily.

Forts and blockhouse were erected across Illinois territory, including Fort Russell in Madison county, Forts Foot and La Motte in Crawford County, Fort Clark in Peoria County and Fort Dearborn in Chicago. While at least 94 forts and blockhouses blanketed the territory, the ones previously mentioned have historical markers at the sites placed by the Illinois State Historical Society. Battles were fought across Illinois, from Fort Dearborn in Chicago to Rock Island to Peoria to Metropolis. War ended with the Treaty of Ghent Dec. 24, 1814. Four years later, Illinois became the 21st state.

For more about the Illinois territorial militia during the War of 1812 visit <http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/> and click the Heritage button for history or museum information. The Illinois State Military Museum is at 1301 North MacArthur Blvd., Springfield, Ill. Military Museum exhibits show clothing, uniforms, weapons and equipment of militia and U.S. Army Soldiers and a model of Fort Dearborn illustrates daily fort activities before the Aug. 15, 1812 attack.



The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 4:30 p.m. Like the museum on Facebook at www.facebook.Illinois.State.Military.Museum

STAR

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Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group in Chicago. While deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 and while under attack from a large enemy force, Bozzay moved under fire to provide medical care to five unit members who were seriously injured. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Bozzay repeatedly used his body to shield wounded comrades from incoming fire.

Ahern was unconscious when the unit received fire, which wounded him and four others. After regaining consciousness from the blast, Ahern identified and fired at the enemy long enough to allow other members of the unit to reinforce their positions.

"The actions of Captain Bozzay and Sergeant 1st Class Ahern prove they are not only heroes, but they are true protectors of this country," said Enyart. "They were selfless and fearless without hesitating to simply do their job. They are an inspiration to me and our fellow Illinois National Guardsmen."

The Silver Star is the third-highest military decoration that can be awarded to any branch of the United States military. The ceremony on United States Armed Services Day at the Pritzker Military Library came as the Illinois National Guard was playing a key role in the historic NATO Summit in Chicago.



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Christopher A. Garibay, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

(Left to right) Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, awards Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Ahern from Glen Ellyn, with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne), a Silver Star at the Pritzker Military Library in Chicago, May 19. Dempsey also awarded Capt. Thomas Bozzay of Wheaton, with Company A, a Silver Star.

183rd Airman recognized

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD - Senior Airman Evan Stevens of Rochester was honored as the military hero at the 2012 American Red Cross Heroes Breakfast held at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, April 20.

Stevens, a member of the 183rd Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron in Springfield, was recognized as one of nine heroes at the breakfast. The breakfast highlights and reinforces the values of courage, initiative, compassion, personal responsibility and humanity that underlie heroic actions which save lives or demonstrate an extraordinary degree of unselfish character.

In 2011 Stevens deployed to Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan and was conducting a presence patrol 100 meters outside the gate when a land mine detonated and he applied tourniquets to a fellow Airman's legs. The Airman was evacuated to Germany for additional medical treatment. Doctors commended Stevens for the proper application of the tourniquet, said Stevens.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Senior Airman Evan Stevens of Rochester, a member of the 183rd Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron, was honored as the military hero at the 2012 American Red Cross Heroes Breakfast at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, April 20.

Warrant officers find your voice

Farewell to Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jim Gaddis and his family; he continually improved the Illinois Warrant Officer Corps as did his predecessors to make it a better place for all of us. Gaddis completely set me up for success, but it's not about me. It's about the position and what it represents for our warrant officers in the field, their technical and military career development and the Illinois Warrant Officer Corps as an operational force.

Upon my selection as the fifth command chief warrant officer, the Adjutant General defined his guidance and mission in a very absolute, clear and concise statement. That is; to be the advocate and conduit for the warrant officer in the field. To bring your issues to the table at the general officer level, and, in return, deliver the Adjutant General's policies, guidance, and mission requirements to you as individuals. Each person counts.

My goal is to keep our warrant officers synchronized for growth within your specific technical expertise, while at the same time allowing for assignments and tasks that will diversify your background for promotion and long-term retention.

Our warrant officers provide the Adjutant General with a significant and diversified force with enhanced capabilities who maintains a professional presence at the state and national level. We have 235 authorized warrant officers and 214 standing in our formations. We make up 19.8 percent of the total officer strength in Illinois and of that strength we carry 14 of the 17 technical branches within the Army.



CW4 David Hammon

We are holding steady at 91.8 percent strength, but 55 percent are eligible to retire. We still have 21 vacancies within our ranks that we need to mentor, select, and fill those positions with our own qualified Soldiers.

We are no longer the "silent professionals." We are a contributing, technically and tactically proficient operational force with a voice to be heard.

Let us not forget why we wear the uniform and our 31 warrant officers who are deployed. When we are sitting around with our friends and family cooking out and having a good time; take a moment to remember our deployed Soldiers, their families and the hardship they endure in support of this great nation.

Grow leaders from lowest level

A few months ago, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy sent an email message titled Leadership vs. Policy to all command chiefs and career field managers. I'd like to take this opportunity to share it directly with all of you.

The theme of the message was that too much arbitrary guidance could prove to be counterproductive. As supervisors, the more leverage we have to deal with situations on a case-by-case basis, the better.

Junior Enlisted Airmen

Young Airmen are our most precious resource. We spend millions of dollars recruiting, training, and equipping them to execute the tactical parts of the mission, and they never let us down.

We owe junior enlisted Airmen the proper training, education and experiences it takes to develop them into leaders in their field. We owe it to them to explain what is expected of them, and to follow up with how they are meeting our expectations. We owe them the mentorship and guidance they need to succeed, and they should be expected to do everything they can to meet the high standard set by the supervisor.

NCOs

What our junior enlisted Airmen learn about leadership and mentorship will shape how they eventually supervise. Therefore, first-line supervisors have an incredible responsibility. NCOs should set young Airmen up for success by outlining specifically how to earn their highest rating. Following that, mentoring and additional feedback should address specific shortfalls and how to overcome them.

We are growing leaders, not judging Airmen on their ability to get it right on their own. As a supervisor, you should do all you can to help your Airmen succeed. When used properly, the formal feedback process is a good foundation for making this happen.

Senior NCOs

Our most senior enlisted Airmen have a tremendous amount of impact on this process. SNCOs should hold their NCOs and senior Airmen accountable for conducting required feedback sessions and support their fair ratings. SNCOs should understand that a 4 is not a bad rating, and some Airmen will earn that rating in a given period. Rating an Airman fairly will not hurt their career; it should help them grow.



CCMSgt. Aaron Gatterdam

Commanders

In addition to the email message I sent to chiefs, I sent a similar message to MAJCOM commanders, asking them to pass it down to their commanders. Because most of our reports are signed by a commander, I felt it was important they understand where we're coming from. Commanders are the key and final component of this process and their support for fair and accurate ratings is critical.

Bold Leadership

Some have suggested we set some arbitrary quota for the number of 5 ratings allowed in a given shop. They claim that would make things easier.

I'm not interested in doing what's easy; I'm interested in doing what's right. Implementing a quota would strip first-line supervisors of the leverage they need to grow tomorrow's enlisted leaders.

We don't need quotas. Instead, we need bold leaders to set high standards and help Airmen achieve them. We need bold leaders to confront those Airmen who don't meet standards and document that feedback. We need those bold leaders to rate each individual fairly and accurately, and that isn't easy. They will need the support of SNCOs and commanders to make it work.

It takes bold leadership on everyone's part to develop Airmen.

Now is the time to do everything you can at your level to make this happen.

DIVERSITY

■ From page 2

successful in the future. It is my intent as the senior enlisted leader to establish through command channels a climate that involves everyone at every level within the Illinois National Guard. This can only be accomplished through your diligence, commitment and willingness to meet the demands of a changing society. We all bring something unique to the organization which means we as an organization can be successful only if we are working together.

As stated by Gen. Craig R. McKinley during the 2012 Diversity Conference "Diversity and inclusion are leadership qualities that we must use to leverage the unique qualities of our military and civilian personnel."

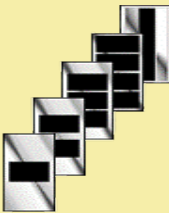
We must ensure diversity at every level and ensure we are taking care of our Soldiers and Airman and they are doing the right thing. I look forward to your support of this initiative and further ask we continue to develop and foster a climate that discourages any signs or evidence of discrimination or disparities. As always thank you for all you do and have a safe summer.

Zubik receives writing award



Photo by Melanie Rodgers Cox, Air University Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Scott Hanson, Air War College commandant, along with William J. Forshey Jr., presents Lt. Col. Thomas Zubik of Bartlett, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team executive officer, a distinguished writing award for his dissertation on Reserve component roles, missions, and contributions to the U.S. National Security Strategy at the Air War College, May 24.



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Illinois places in top 20 at marksmanship exercise

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Seven members of the Illinois Army National Guard competed in the 2012 Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise at Camp Robinson, Ark., April 23 to 27.

The team placed 16th out of 86 teams. The exercise included 395 National Guard and Reserve competitors. This is only the second time Illinois has placed in the top 20 in 41 years of the competition.

Soldiers' marksmanship was tested from five yards with an M9 pistol to 600 yards with the M16 rifle. The team received third place in the PT 300 match and seventh in the RT 309 match.

Top individual performers included Staff Sgt. Tracy Mix of Marseilles with Company A, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Marseilles with an overall individual 12th place, the Chief's 50 Marksmanship skill badge, 8th place pistol and eight Excellence in Competition pistol points. Staff Sgt. Gabe Cullers of Carrier Mills, with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in West Frankfort placed third in RI 302, rifle reflex fire.

Illinois' A team members included Staff Sgt. Tracy Mix; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Landon of Creal Springs with the 3637th Maintenance Company in Springfield; Staff Sgt. William Thorpe of Millstadt with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in Marion; Sgt. Terry Pody of Machesney Park with 135th Chemical Company in Machesney Park.

Illinois' B team members included Staff Sgt. Gabe Cullers of Carrier Mills with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in West Frankfort; Staff Sgt. Shawn Cannamore of Metropolis with Company C, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Carbondale; Sgt. Chris Maag with the Minnesota Army National Guard; Capt. Thomas Martin Jr., of Streamwood with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Chicago.

The team was coached by Sgt. 1st Class David Perdew of Astoria with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 44th Chemical Battalion in Macomb.



Photo submitted by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class David Perdew, 44th Chemical Battalion

Staff Sgt. Tracy Mix of Marseilles with Company A, 33rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion in Marseilles engages a target while wearing a protective mask at the 2012 Winston P. Wilson Marksmanship Sustainment Training Exercise at Camp Robinson, Ark., April 25. Mix placed 12th overall individually. He was also awarded the Chief's 50 Marksmanship skill badge, 8th place in pistol and eight excellence in competition pistol points.

Dukett named 108th commander

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO – Lt. Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse took command of the 108th Sustainment Brigade in a change of command ceremony May 6 at the North Kedzie Armory in Chicago.

Dukett takes the reins from Col. Michael Zerbonia of Chatham, who served as the brigade commander since 2009. Zerbonia's next assignment will be commander of the Bilateral Embedded Staff Team A10 scheduled to deploy this fall in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Dukett enlisted with the active duty Army in 1980, later joining the Illinois Army National Guard in 1985 and commissioning as a second lieutenant in 1990 through Officer Candidate School at Camp Lincoln. Dukett has served overseas in Germany and Korea and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and Operation Enduring Freedom in 2010.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Camacho
108th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti of Springfield, the Assistant Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard – Army hands the brigade colors to Lt. Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse, the incoming brigade commander of the 108th Sustainment Brigade in a change of command ceremony May 6 at the North Kedzie Armory in Chicago.

CPR/AED class offered to Soldiers' families

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Candace Echols
108th Sustainment Brigade

CHICAGO – The Illinois Army National Guard 108th HHD Multifunctional Medical Battalion (MMB) joined forces with the Family Readiness Group (FRG) in coordinating Heart Saver CPR training for family members of their Soldiers June 2 at the North Riverside Armory in Chicago.

The class consisted of eight enthusiastic family members viewing the instructional video of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/ Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and then proceeded to hands-on training with the guidance of certified instructors using real-life scenarios. The class is formatted to educate families in dealing with infant, child and adult emergencies.

"It was an amazing class that was easy to follow, and a great video to help! I'm happy we had good instructors to help us learn it correctly," said Ricardo Barrios, CPR participant.

The training included single rescuer CPR, responsiveness, rescue breathing, pulse checks, and cardiac rhythms.

"It saves lives and helps people who are choking or not breathing until help arrives," said Sue Hecht, FRG leader.

Hecht helped coordinate event and obtained donated funds from the FRG organization for CPR certification cards, so military families wouldn't have to pay the fee out of pocket. She said she has hopes of making this a permanent yearly program.

"I believe today was a success and very educational for our younger family members who participated," said Head CPR Instructor, 1st Sgt. Nancy Tieber-Wiles of Chillicothe, the 108th HHD MMB.

Military families earned a certificate from the American Heart Association after completion of the CPR/AED course. They will be required to recertify two years after certification by taking a refresher class.

CPR is a life saving tool used only after calling for the proper help such as 911, paramedics or firefighters. It is performed with a combination of chest compressions, in which this process helps the blood and oxygen move toward the heart and brain, when the heart has stopped. AED is a device used to jump start the heart and can increase the chances of survival by 90% if administered within first minute of person collapsing.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in Heart Saver CPR Training contact American Heart Association 1-800-AHA-USA1. Email: Review.personal.info@heart.org or visit: <http://www.heart.org/>.

634th Soldier killed in motorcycle wreck



Pfc. Joseph Eveland, 27, assigned to Company A, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Mattoon, was killed May 6 by an off-duty motorcycle accident.

Eveland deployed with Company A to Afghanistan as part of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in August 2008 to provide transportation and supply support for Task Force Phoenix VIII. He logged more than 3,000 miles as a gunner, with the majority in the lead truck.

Clements takes 404th senior enlisted position

Story by Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

CHICAGO – Command Sgt. Major Jerry Clements of Pittsfield, assumed leadership as the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's senior enlisted adviser in a change of responsibility ceremony April 14 at the Illinois Army National Guard armory on Calumet in Chicago.

Clements takes the reins from Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Nuding of Oakley, who served as the brigade's senior enlisted adviser since 2009. Nuding retired this spring from the Illinois National Guard after nearly 40 years of service.

NEWS BRIEFS

Illinois Guard retirements

■ Col. George Rakers

SPRINGFIELD – Col. George Rakers of Creal Springs was recognized June 2 for nearly three decades of service. Rakers, who enlisted in June 1984, has deployed to Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Panama. He has earned nearly two dozen awards, including the Bronze Star Medal.

“It’s a great honor and privilege to have served this great nation and lead Soldiers,” Rakers said. “I’ve enjoyed every bit of it.”

■ Maj. Brian Burton

SPRINGFIELD – Maj. Brian Burton of Farmington has served 24 years in the U.S. Army. His career spans from May 7, 1988 to May 31, 2012. Burton deployed in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

The last three years Burton has served with the 108th Sustainment Brigade and the Illinois Army National Guard Plans, Training and Operations in Springfield.

■ Maj. Kurt Merseal

SPRINGFIELD – Maj. Kurt C. Merseal of Steelville, Mo., the former Executive Officer for 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, the Blackhawk Battalion, in Marion, has retired.

Merseal, who is originally from Richwoods, Mo., spent the majority of his 23-year National Guard career with the 130th Infantry and has four deployments under his belt with his last two being combat tours to Iraq in 2005 as Commander of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Battalion and Afghanistan in 2008 as the Team Chief to the Counter-Narcotics Infantry Kandak Embedded Training Team.

Merseal is a sergeant with the Missouri State Highway Patrol and serves as the leader of the state’s Underwater Recovery Team.

■ Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Nuding

BLOOMINGTON – Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Nuding of Oakley retired from the Illinois Army National Guard April 28. Friends and family celebrated his nearly 40-year career with a retirement ceremony at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Bloomington.

He said it was a goal he had set to become a command sergeant major and he had achieved that goal.

Nuding said he plans on taking it easy for a period of time, catching up on things he hasn’t been able to do in years and plans to travel.

■ Master Sgt. Charles Tozer

SPRINGFIELD – After 40 years of service, Master Sgt. Charles H. Tozer of Springfield, with 65th Troop Command Brigade in Springfield has retired from the Illinois Army National Guard.

Tozer worked full-time as a mechanic at Camp Lincoln in addition to his status as a National Guard Soldier.

He deployed with the 2nd Brigade, 203rd Corps to Paktika Province, Afghanistan, for a year in January 2007.

Tozer said it was the experiences that kept him in the National Guard for four decades.

■ Senior Master Sgt. Anne Cardenas

BELLEVILLE – After 21 years of military service, Senior Master Sgt. Anne M. Cardenas of Warren, R.I., retired from the Illinois Air National Guard Jan. 1. She was assigned to the 126th Air Refueling Wing as a contracting superintendent at Scott Air Force Base in Belleville.

Cardenas graduated high school from Warren High School in Warren, R.I., in 1976; earned her bachelor’s degree from Park University in Parkville, Mo., in 1986; and earned her master’s degree from Webster University in St. Louis in 2006.

■ Sgt. 1st Class William Ringhofer

TINLEY PARK – Soldiers with Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Kankakee, said farewell to Sgt. 1st Class William R. Ringhofer of Tinley Park who retired after 23 years of service.

Ringhofer has completed numerous training deployments to countries such as Poland, Iceland, Southwest Asia, Germany and Panama. He served as a platoon sergeant, leading 41 Soldiers on a combat deployment to Afghanistan.

Ringhofer is a Tinley Park police officer and expects to put more “overtime” into his work after his retirement.

Pratt retires after nearly 32 years

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD – Brig. Gen. Robert J. Pratt, of Hopedale, the director of the Illinois National Guard Joint Staff retires, July 31 after 32 years of military service in the Illinois Army National Guard.

The military was familiar to Pratt when he enlisted September 1980 at age 17 as a senior in high school. His father was drafted to the active duty Army and later served in the National Guard.

“My father was honored to have me serve and encouraged me,” said Pratt. “But he also wanted me to graduate from college and he saw the National Guard as an opportunity.”

After basic training, Pratt attended Western Illinois University in Macomb, commissioned in 1983 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program after his sophomore year in college, and then transferred to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received his bachelor’s degree.

Following his commission, Pratt was assigned to 1st Battalion, 123rd Infantry Brigade in Peoria as a platoon leader.

“When you are a platoon leader and company commander that is probably the most enjoyable time spent as an officer,” said Pratt. “You are closest with the lowest level.”

Pratt has held various command and staff positions throughout his career including battalion executive officer, battalion commander and brigade commander.

“General Pratt’s quiet, but confident, leadership has inspired thousands of Soldiers and Airmen from his time as an Infantry platoon leader in Peoria, to his command of the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Chicago, to his tenure as director of the Joint Staff in Springfield,” said Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, Acting Adjutant General for the Illinois National Guard. “His legacy in the Illinois

National Guard will live far longer than his many fruitful years in uniform.”

Pratt completed and commanded multiple stateside and overseas training missions to Ukraine, Poland, Bulgaria, England, Germany, and Africa among others.

“I really enjoyed watching and learning from him, the way he interacted with leaders and Soldiers,” said Col. Thomas Weiss of Sherman, with Joint Force Headquarters in Springfield, who served in the 123rd with Pratt. “I’ve never met an officer who cares more about Soldiers than General Pratt in a very genuine, personal way.”

Pratt said he never anticipated becoming a general officer, but credits his long and successful career to his family. His wife, who was prior service Air Force, knew about military service and the dedication it takes.

“We all serve as a family together,” said Pratt. “They have been supportive and I would have not been able to do what I do without their support and that is one of the reasons I think I have come to the level I came to.”

In Pratt’s last position he served as the first dual-status commander during the NATO Summit in Chicago, commanding active duty, reserve and National Guard forces from every service.

“It was a great opportunity,” said Pratt. “We had a great joint servicemember and civilian team that relied on our subordinate units to do their job and they did. It was a great culminating event for me.”

After retirement, Pratt said he will do a little more farming on his 600-acre grain farm, spend more time with the family, volunteer, fish and hunt.

Pratt left some last words of advice.

“As a leader, you are there to serve,” he said. “Do your best, do what’s right and treat others with respect and that will guide you throughout your career.”



Photo by U.S. Air Force 1st. Lt. Stacey Rieger, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Brig. Gen. Robert J. Pratt of Hopedale speaks to Soldiers during flood duty along the Mississippi River, June 19. Pratt commanded the Illinois Guard troops who were deployed to help fight floods in 2008.

Looking for Air and Army Guard runners



Photo by Sarah McKay

How many can say you ran where Abraham Lincoln walked? Members of the Illinois Guard Running Team can make that claim as of April 7. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Half Marathon takes place every year during the first Saturday of April. Thirteen members of the Illinois Guard Running team competed in 2012. The running team was displaying their new team running shirts, blue for Air Guard and red for Army Guard. The Illinois Guard running team is always looking for additional runners Army and Air. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rachelle McKay is the director of the team. For more information about races and/or becoming a member of the Illinois Guard Running Team please contact her at rachelle.mckay@us.army.mil.

Two Chicago-area units best in Army for maintenance



Photo submitted by U.S. Army Sgt. Edith Aviles, 108th Sustainment Brigade

Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 108th Sustainment Brigade and the 1244th Transportation stand with Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, the Acting Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard with the Army Award Maintenance Excellence the two units received June 6 at the Pentagon. The 108th Sustainment Brigade in Chicago placed first in the large-unit category and the 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside took first place in the medium-unit category. Both units will go on to represent the Army in the Department of Defense Phoenix Award, competing against other services. "The 108th Sustainment Brigade continually leads the way in the state as far as readiness indicators, maintenance and personnel management," said Lt. Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse, 108th Brigade commander.

ILNG public website

www.il.ngb.army.mil

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Attention women veterans! The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs is looking to enhance its services to women veterans, but they need your help. Take the Women Veterans survey at: <http://www2.illinois.gov/veterans/women/Pages/WomenVeterans.aspx>. The confidential information in the survey will be used to better help you and women veterans like you!



August is Antiterrorism Awareness Month

To report suspicious activity please contact the Illinois National Guard Provost Marshals Office at 217-761-3320/2981/2987

For more information visit: <http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/programs/antiterror.aspx>

Last print issue of the Guardian

We will be converting to a monthly electronic newsletter titled *The Railsplitter*.

Deadline for submission of materials for the October 2012 issue of *The Railsplitter* will be October 1, 2012.

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406th Signal Company hard at work



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Melissa Carlino, 406th Signal Company

Sgt. Anthony Smith of Springfield with the 406th Signal Company in North Riverside, walks through the signal site ensuring all communication systems are running during annual training May 29 to June 15 at Marseilles Training Center. The 406th's systems were used to provide voice, video and data to the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade's tactical operations center as part of War Fighter Information Network - Tactical. The 406th Brigade Signal Company is the first signal company in Illinois to successfully pass data through the high-capacity line of sight radio system.