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Illinois

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Illinois Responds to Emergency Needs on East Coast

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Starr Ivey,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD – Approximately 95 members of the Illinois National Guard's 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment arrived in Rome, New York Aug. 28 and 29, and stayed until Sept. 2 to assist and coordinate relief efforts in Vermont in response to the wake of Hurricane Irene.

Units that provided hurricane relief in Vermont include: Headquarters and Headquarters Company; 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment in Peoria and elements of Company A, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment in Decatur; Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment in Chicago; Company D, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment in Decatur; and 2nd Battalion, 238th General Support Aviation Battalion in Peoria.

The rapid mobilization of Illinois National Guard units saw a convoy of military vehicles traversing five states and more than 850 miles of highway in just 48 hours.

Air support in the form of six UH-60 Blackhawks and two CH-47 Chinooks flew to Griffiss Airfield in Rome from Chicago, Decatur and Peoria to provide air support in relief operations.

Of the 21 states the National Guard Bureau alerted in the wake of Hurricane Irene, Illinois was one of the fastest to respond. In addition to Illinois, West Virginia and Mississippi Guard Units also arrived at Griffiss Airfield in time to assist



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

Illinois National Guard members load relief supplies into a CH-47 Chinook helicopter Sept. 1 in Vermont. Approximately 95 members of the Illinois National Guard arrived in Rome, N.Y., Aug. 28 and 29 and stayed until Sept. 2 to assist and coordinate relief efforts in Vermont in response to the wake of Hurricane Irene.

with relief efforts.

Lt. Col. Randy R. Sikowski of Decatur, state aviation officer, with 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment, addressed troops in a morning briefing at Griffiss Airfield. Sikowski praised the troops

for their quick reaction to the situation, outlined the overall goal of the mission at hand and emphasized the need to conduct operations safely.

While the unit waited for orders, maintenance checks on all vehicles were

a priority to ensure equipment and vehicles were ready as flight crews were busy performing daily aircraft maintenance inspections, conducting pre-flight checks

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France honors Illinois Special Forces



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill, National Guard Bureau

French Ambassador Francois Delattre awards the Croix de la Valeur Militaire, roughly analogous to the Silver Star, to Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Ryan Meister, of Silver Spring, Md., during a private ceremony at the French ambassador's residence in Washington, D.C., July 25. Five National Guard Soldiers and one active duty Special Forces Soldiers were given the award.

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill,
National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON – They are men used to seeing their deeds pass as unrecognized as their battlefield movements, but four Illinois National Guard Special Forces Soldiers along with one active duty Soldier and one other National Guard Soldier took the limelight to receive a French award roughly equivalent to the Silver Star.

Master Sgt. David Neumer of Kingston, Tenn., Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Ahern of Glen Ellyn, Staff Sgt. Casey Roberts of Fayetteville, N.C., and Staff Sgt. Ryan Meister of Silver Spring, Md., with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Chicago were honored along with active duty Army Maj. Richard Nessel and Army National Guard Capt. Thomas Harper with the Croix de la Valeur Militaire in a private ceremony at the French Ambassador's Residence. Senior leaders in attendance included Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Army chief of staff nominated to be the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and

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Troop saves citizen's life

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Aleah Castrejon,
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD – Soldiers not only perform acts of heroism abroad, but also at home. While driving to meet with a college guidance counselor, Spc. James Halterman of Marengo, witnessed a semi-trailer and pickup truck collision.

After returning from three consecutive deployments to Afghanistan, Halterman with Company



Spc. James Halterman

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COMMAND FOCUS

'Star' performance ends Illinois Guard era

The Illinois National Guard has come to the end of an era with the change of responsibility of State Command Sgt. Maj. John Starbody turning over responsibility to Command Sgt. Maj. Howard Robinson in November. Starbody's retirement on Nov. 30 marks a 40-year military career



Maj. Gen. William Enyart

spanning from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. Few have served our country for as long nor as well. John Starbody and I have gotten to know each other well over the last few years. From Kosovo, to Afghanistan, from welcome home ceremonies to departure programs and to too many funerals we, like all Soldiers and Airmen, have shared meals, shared less than comfortable seats in Blackhawks and C-130s, shared many laughs and a few tears. One of my favorite memories of The Sergeant Major (one always capitalizes the when referring to "The" Sergeant Major) is when I had all the Soldiers of Camp Lincoln fall out for a run one Friday morning and The Sergeant Major

ran from the rear of the formation all the way to the front, grabbing the guidon and circling the formation carrying the guidon while the formation was running a respectable pace. At twice the age of most of the Soldiers in the formation he was, and is, a great example of physical fitness and leadership by example. Whether meeting young troops in the field or briefing generals in D.C., John Starbody had the unique ability to communicate with all ranks and transmit the cares and concerns of the most junior to the most senior as well as bring the strategic message from the most senior to the most junior. A gifted man, a gifted leader, I know that continuing into retirement he will continue to serve as an outstanding

example of what the Illinois National Guard is and does. While we're losing a great senior enlisted leader to the golf course, another is stepping up to take on the title of "The" Sergeant Major. Command Sgt. Maj. Howard Robinson who has so capably served as the Land Component Command Sergeant Major has been selected to serve as the state's next command sergeant major. Like Starbody, Robinson has earned the trust, respect and admiration of all, junior and senior, who have worked with him over the years. I know that he will join the ranks with John Starbody as a great mentor, advisor and leader in coaching the team that makes Illinois such a great National Guard state. Always There. Always Ready. Illinois!

State excels as top 10

The Illinois Army National Guard has been very busy and successful in fiscal year 2011. We excelled at several goals, which made the Illinois Army National Guard one of the top 10 states in the nation. This reflects all the great work of our Soldiers. We must strive to make fiscal year 2012 even more successful.



Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti

The Illinois Army National Guard ended Sept. 30 with an end strength of two more than our goal. We have not only exceeded our end strength goal, but also have created a pure force with an outstanding negative end strength rating. The Illinois National Guard finished as the top state in the nation with a negative end strength of .27 percent. This is the best the Illinois Army National Guard has ever finished in a fiscal year. We trained and graduated a total of 3,258 Soldiers from initial skills and professional development courses during this past training year. We ranked in the top 10 nationally in this area and also ranked fourth for duty MOS qualifications at 96 percent. Next year let's strive for number one!

Our Directorate of Information

Management was ranked number one in the nation three times last year and in the top 10 five other months during the last 12 months. This means the DOIM excelled at executing new projects, network security and funds management. As we enter the new fiscal year, it is critical that we continue this positive trend. There are a lot of unknowns about budgeting, force structure, etc. The key to the future success of the Illinois Army National Guard is to continue to be one of the top states in the nation. The Illinois Army National Guard performed 61 overseas deployment training missions across the world to including: Poland, Germany, Korea, Japan, Ghana, Malawi and the Dominican Republic. We were able to broaden our relationships, while enhancing and refining our skill set. We have met or exceeded all established goals and when called upon we went above and beyond for the citizens of Illinois and the nation. We executed successful annual training periods in fiscal year 2011 that collectively trained more than 5,000 Soldiers. We answered the call in Illinois for the winter storm and southern Illinois flooding as well as Hurricane Irene on the East Coast. Next year may bring more state active duty mobilizations.

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Changes ahead for Guard

This year, Dec. 13, the National Guard will celebrate its 375th birthday. In 375 years the weapons and technology have changed drastically, but the Guard's contribution to the nation's defense has remained paramount. Every year since our inception, the National Guard has fought our nation's wars; keeping peace, protecting citizens from natural or manmade disasters and protecting our homeland. After listening to several keynote speakers at the 133rd National Guard Association General Conference in Milwaukee, it was very clear that the next major battle for the National Guard will be concerning the budget. Our nation is faced with a struggle bigger than we have ever seen: The fiscal crisis that is facing our country. The U.S. debt is threatening to do what no enemy has ever done to the U.S. and that is destroy our economy and our way of life. This time more than ever, our elected officials are under greater pressure to fix the economy and get our national debt under control.



Col. William Cobetto

After every major conflict throughout our nation's history our leaders have made huge budget reductions to the Department of Defense (DoD). Our current economic crisis will put more pressure on elected officials to reduce the DoD budget. About 20 percent of the nation's budget goes to the DoD. Therefore, drastically reducing the DoD budget will not solve this problem alone; however, military budgets will be a big part of the solution. The rumor mills are in full force and every cut imaginable has been discussed. We have no clue what the Pentagon will do, but as in the past, the National Guard has always been viewed as a bill payer and our active components have always attempted to cut the National Guard at a disproportionate rate. Whatever the outcome of the future years' defense budgets is for the National Guard, every Soldier and Airman must focus on their task at hand and prepare for future missions and work to make the National Guard stronger. Congress has fewer elected members who have served in uniform than any other time in our history. Most elected officials, our friends and neighbors have no clue that the Army National Guard provides more than 40 percent of the Army's combat formations at less than 9 percent of the budget. And the Air National Guard provides 35 percent of the Air Force's capabilities for 6 percent of the budget. Therefore, we must all get

After every major conflict throughout

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Starbody bids farewell

This will be my final Guardian article. Where has the time gone? It has been three short years since Maj. Gen. Enyart selected me as your State Senior Enlisted Leader. I cannot thank him enough for the wonderful opportunity he afforded me. I remember stating in my acceptance speech that I was here for only one reason and that was to help make the Illinois National Guard the best that it can possibly be. I truly believe the Illinois National Guard is better now than it has ever been and that has nothing to do with me but everything to do with you. The Soldiers, Airmen and Noncommissioned Officers of the Illinois National Guard have never been better trained and equipped. We have never before been so Ready, Reliable and Relevant. We have never before had so many Combat Veterans. We are continually one of the top 10 states in all established matrixes and objective goals measured at National Guard Bureau. Our Quarterly Commanders Reports continue to improve in all areas every quarter.



CSM John Starbody

Our Enlisted Promotion System and Promotion Boards continue to improve every year. I feel extremely gratified and humbled in leaving this prestigious position to the next State Senior Enlisted Leader who will continue to ride the coat tails of all of you who strive to make the Illinois National Guard all it can be. There are so many individual people that I should thank, but I won't at this time for fear of leaving someone out. I will say that these last three years of working with everyone here at the head shed have been the highlight of my 40 plus year career. A person knows that he or she made the right career choice when they can't wait to go to work every day. I have honestly always loved to get up, put my uniform on every day and go to work. November 30 will be my last day in uniform and I will truly miss everyone. Thank each and every one of you for what you do for the Illinois Guard and this great nation. Lead by Example!

Think lean, be stronger

No, I'm not talking about your fitness or diet habits. This is about our force structure and how we need to take another look at how we do business. As we enter fiscal year 12, a common message that Air Force leadership has sounded off is change is coming. August 3, Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley stated that our budget is shrinking and tough times are upon us, tremendous change is forecasted and... "nothing is off the table." According to Air Force Vice Chief of Staff General Philip Breedlove, "we are going to have five to seven years of the toughest time in our military history and budgets will shrink." This sounds like gloom and doom, but I must remind everyone that we have been through tough times before, and we've emerged leaner and stronger. Today, our Air National Guard strength is at 106,700. Right here in the Illinois Air National Guard (ANG), we have stood up new geographically separated units, forged new active and classic associations,



CCMSgt. Aaron Gatterdam

took on new mission sets, and we are still charging ahead by seeking new airframes and missions. When we look at the Air National Guard as a whole over the last 10 years, we have transitioned from a strategic reserve to an operational "first responder" force. We have participated in more than 146,000 deployments since 9/11. We have maintained the highest retention of any service. We operate 90 percent of the U.S. air defense alert sites and 30 percent of all deployed Air Force aircraft are being filled by ANG units. We did this and still shrunk our budget and cut our end strength by more than 12,000 ANG Airmen since 1992. We survived the cuts and when we look at our force today we see the best equipped, best trained, highest educated and most professional ANG our country has ever experienced. We have been told all four active services are going to be even smaller. In addition, all reserve components will be reduced.

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Detrick, Latham win NCO, SOY

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

MARSEILLES – Every year one Soldier and one Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) represents their command and competes against fellow top Soldiers and NCOs to be the year’s top Soldier and NCO of the Illinois Army National Guard.

Nine Soldiers competed in the 2011 Illinois Army National Guard Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition Sept. 15 to 18 at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles.

The competition tested their physical fitness and endurance, warrior tasks and skills, rifle proficiency and knowledge of the Army and its history.

Staff Sgt. Beau Detrick of Marion, with the Illinois Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command in Springfield took the title of Noncommissioned Officer of the Year after competing against four other NCOs from across the state.

Spc. Benjamin Latham of North Riverside, with the 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside, took the title of Soldier of the Year after competing against three other Soldiers.

“Being a Soldier is different than most full-time or part-time jobs, to say the least,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Starbody of Decatur, the State Senior Enlisted Adviser for the Illinois Army National Guard. “It requires a level of physical and mental readiness, maintaining a grasp of Army warrior tasks and knowledge and the dedication to improve all those skill sets.”

Starbody said the competition has grown and developed more every year, raising the bar and pushing Soldiers to their limits.

“Every Soldier and NCO who was out there was the best of the best,” said Starbody. “I’m impressed by the performance of each and every one of them and know this experience will help them as they continue in their military careers.”



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

Spc. Benjamin Latham of North Riverside, with the 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside, plots points on a map during a night-time land navigation event during the Soldier and NCO of the Year competition Sept. 17 at Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles.

Latham defeated his top competitor Spc. Brett Devlin of Machesney Park, with the 135th Chemical Company in Machesney Park, by five points.

“The other Soldiers were (prepared) and they had a lot of good training before they got here,” said Latham. “It came down to the wire between me and Spc. Devlin. It was extremely close.”

Detrick also took a last minute win after a neck-in-neck competition with Sgt. 1st Class Eric Stuehlmeier of Rockford with the 135th Chemical Company in Machesney Park. Detrick said the events were tough and provided a good learning experience for the NCOs and Soldiers.

“It’s amazing what you learn about

yourself,” said Detrick. “Rarely do you start off the day with an Army Physical Fitness Test, right into a day land navigation course, a confidence course, then a Modern Army Combatives competition and then a night land navigation course; it’s a physically exhausting experience. You’ve really got to dig deep when these events get hard for you.”

Both Detrick and Latham said they will continue their training for the next competition. They will compete in the regional-level competition in the spring of 2012 against Soldiers and NCOs from Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The winners of regionals advance on to the NGB level competition.

FLOOD

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and configuring flight plans.

Some of the Soldiers were eager to put their skills and training to the test.

Spc. Angelo A. Losoya of Oak Lawn, a Blackhawk crew chief, with Company B, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment, said, “Chinooks always live by ‘You call, we haul.’ We’re always ready for any missions that come our way.”

Maj. Dennis W. Huffman of Heyworth, training and operations officer, with the 106th Aviation Regiment gathered the Blackhawk flight crews on the tarmac at Griffiss for their pre-flight briefing shortly before noon Aug. 31.

The mission objective was straightforward: four Blackhawks would fly to Vermont to load and drop food and water provided by FEMA to some of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Irene.

Shortly after the briefing, the four Blackhawks were airborne, making the 120 mile trip across the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York to the Army Aviation Support Facility in Burlington, Vermont for further instructions.

After re-fueling and another briefing by Lt. Col. John M. Johnston, State Army Aviation Officer with the Vermont National Guard, the Blackhawks left the Army Aviation Support Facility in teams of two, headed toward Camp Williams.

At Camp Williams, each Blackhawk was loaded with 3,000 pounds of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) and cases of bottled water. On the ground, Soldiers and Airmen stood ready to load every aircraft as quickly as possible.

In an effort to reach the greatest number of drop zones, the Blackhawks landed at designated targets, quickly unloaded their cargo and proceeded to the next pick-up zone and re-fuel as needed.

The crew of Blackhawk 457, Chief Warrant Officer (4) Scott P. Wiley of Imperial, instructor pilot, 1st Lt. Amanda Lempke of Bloomington, pilot, Sgt. Steven Mueller of Spaulding, crew chief and Sgt. Daniel Freeman of Edinburg, crew chief, all from Company A, 1st Battalion, 106th Aviation Regiment, made successful drops in the towns of Stockbridge and Bridgewater respectively.

Mary Oldenburg, a selectman for Bridgewater, greeted the Illinois Army National Guard Blackhawk helicopters as supplies were offloaded in a grassy clearing in town.

Oldenburg said one of the most pressing concerns in Bridgewater was clearing roads washed out by the storm making them impassable.

The MREs and water were a welcome relief to residents still trapped in isolated areas until the roads were cleared.

After reaching multiple locations and dropping several tons of supplies to residents in need in southern Vermont, the Blackhawks returned to their base of operations at Griffiss in time to watch the sunset.

While maintenance crews performed post-flight inspections on the aircraft in the fading light, Freeman reflected on the importance of providing humanitarian aid when needed.

“Stateside civilian support is important,” said Freeman, a 22-year veteran, who volunteers for as many missions as he can. “That’s what the Guard is about.”

Engineer Company visits Cub Scout camp-out

Story by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Nicholas Farmer, 661st Engineer Company

MARSEILLES - Soldiers from the 661st Engineer Company in Sparta visited with Cub Scout Pack 4060 during the Cub Scout camp-out at Marseilles Training Center (MTC), July 16.

The 661st conducted its annual training at Marseilles in preparation for its upcoming deployment to Afghanistan when Soldiers were approached by the MTC staff to visit with Cub Scout Pack 4060.

First Lt. Luke Buchs of Colfax, the 661st executive officer, gathered a few Soldiers who recently returned from a deployment with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team: Sgt. Phillip Barker of Orangeville, Sgt. Jarrod Brummett of Rockford and Spc. Paul Chambers of Lovington to visit the Cubs.

The Soldiers put on all their combat gear, loaded up in an armored Humvee with a .50 caliber turret-mounted machine gun and drove to the Cub Scouts camp site.

The Cubs climbed inside the Humvee and looked through the turret. Once all the Cubs had been through the Humvee,



Photo submitted by 1st Lt. Nicholas Farmer

Sgt. Jarrod Brummett with the 661st Engineer Company in Sparta visited with Cub Scout Pack 4060 at Marseilles Training Center, July 16.

the Soldiers demonstrated basic troop movement procedures, such as how to low crawl, high crawl and the three-to-five second buddy rush.

Following the demonstration, the Cubs used the skills they learned from the Soldiers in a mock mission. Some of the Cubs’ parents were veterans and played

the role of combatants as the Cubs made their approach.

Upon completion of the mission, the Cub Scouts and Soldiers had lunch and the Soldiers handed out Army patches to the Cubs. One of the Scouts celebrated his birthday and Soldiers made sure to give him a special 101st Airborne patch.

In memoriam

Five Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers passed away in the last four months. They will be missed and we thank them and their families for their years of dedicated service.



Staff Sgt. Scott Snyder
Forward Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery Regiment



1st Sgt. John Dupont
Company C, 634th Brigade Support Battalion



Pfc. Joseph VonDeBur
233rd Military Police Company



Sgt. 1st Class Maurice Collier
Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery Regiment



Staff Sgt. Howard Freemon
710th Area Support Medical Company

Cavalry Soldiers train in the Dominican

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Cassidy Snyder,
Joint Force Headquarters Public Affairs

CONSTANZA, Dominican Republic - Approximately 30 Soldiers from the 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Pontiac, Dixon, Kewanee and Aurora, trained in Constanza, Dominican Republic, June 3 to 18.

Soldiers shared techniques with roughly 20 Cazadores from the 6th Infantry Battalion, Dominican Republic Army.

Cavalry Soldiers familiarized the Cazadores on U.S. military equipment then performed basic and advanced marksmanship. Cazadores completed weapons training with and without U.S. Soldiers on the firing line. Soldiers also conducted a joint night-fire exercise.

"We were able to further educate the Cazadores on small arms training, using their M-4 rifles," said Capt. Michael Kowalski of Chicago Heights, the overseas deployment training commander and assistant plans officer at Headquarters and Headquarters Troop in Kewanee. "They have not been fully trained on maximum capabilities in close quarter combat and marksmanship."

Soldiers continued training at the Cazadores' training site. Just to get to the site required a steep six-kilometer hike up a mountain range.

U.S. and Dominican Soldiers completed classes on climbing, advanced rappelling and ropes. U.S. safety standards were integrated and explained during the class.

"We learned a lot in the area of field craft," said Kowalski. "We had the opportunity to train in a mountainous jungle which Illinois does not have and were able to learn how to move, shoot and communicate in that environment."

"We had the opportunity to train in a mountainous jungle..."

**Capt. Michael Kowalski,
overseas deployment commander**



Photo by Kaye Richey, U.S. Army

An instructor with the Dominican Republic Army, demonstrates knot tying to Soldiers of the 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Aurora, Ill., during a platoon exchange at the 6th Battalion of "Cazadores" training area in Constanza, Dominican Republic June 8.

Soldiers completed land navigation in the Dominican's mountainous terrain after learning helpful techniques.

"It was a good experience where we trained in a mountainous environment, relevant to current overseas operations in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Patchett of Oak Park, training noncommissioned officer for 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment in Aurora.

Many of the Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 to 2009 with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, where they worked to build Afghanistan's Security Forces.

For the Soldiers who did not deploy, this annual training was a good introduction to different cultures and similar missions while deployed, said Patchett. This was the Regiment's first training trip to the Dominican Republic.

The training ended with a field exercise that incorporated patrolling, reconnaissance, squad attack and break contact. Dominican Soldiers observed U.S. techniques for possible future training.

"The camaraderie between our troops and the instructors was great and we hope it can be fostered in the future for years to come," said Kowalski.

Kids on Guard pulls families together

Story by Travis Barker, 126th Family Program Coordinator

BELLEVILLE - This past June, children of the 126th Air Refueling Wing participated in an annual event called, "Kids on Guard." It was the sixth annual Kids on Guard Day, and it continues to be a favorite every year. What originally began as a simple "bring your kids to work day" has blossomed into a full day of events and activities for children ages 5-18.

This year the Wing had 108 children participate. Children were placed into age appropriate flights and each child was issued a brightly colored shirt to identify their specific flight. Participants processed the Personnel Deployment Function (PDF) where they registered, received a Kids on Guard ID card, Operation Military Kid dog tags, and a water bottle to carry during the day.

After the PDF, kids were introduced to their troop commanders who would safely walk them from station to station within the 126 ARW compound. First stops included all participants and consisted of a group photo at the KC-135 static display and a military working dog demonstration by Security Forces personnel.

After these initial stops, flights were split and each followed their respective schedules to take them through the remainder of the day.

Activities included Medical Readiness, Civil Engineering/Fire Department, various Security Forces displays and activities, a military confidence course, and a tour of a KC-135. In addition to the regular activities, all children nine years old and older got the rare opportunity to take off and land a KC-135 in the flight simulator.

For lunch, the children were treated by a group of volunteers from the USO Mobile Operations team. The USO provided food and drinks for all participants and volunteers. The kids were also given animal patterned sunglasses that many wore throughout the day. The capstone of the day, as it has been every year, was to plant a new tree.

This year was a special year as two trees were planted in front of the new deployment processing center slated to begin operations this August.

At the end of their "deployment," the children all received bags with information about Operation Military Kid Camp opportunities and a lot of educational military information and family booklets.

Participants received age-specific books donated by Operation Homefront. The children were able to immerse themselves in the Wing to learn, meet new friends, and have fun.

Kids on Guard made it possible for each child to see what their parents do and learn about the mission of the



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Ken Stephens

Tech. Sgt. David Flesch helps his daughter, Morgan Flesch, try on the MCU-2 Protective Mask used to protect against chemical and biological warfare agents. Members of the 126th Air Refueling Wing, Scott AFB, brought their children to work for a "Kids on Guard" day that lets children experience the duties and training events that Illinois Air National Guard personnel go through on a regular basis.

126th Air Refueling Wing.

The weather was perfect, the kids had a great time, and hopefully they all learned something new – all in a day's work!

HEROISM

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D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Woodstock, did not think twice about his own well-being, as his instincts took over and he jumped into a burning vehicle to save a stranger's life.

"His act of bravery doesn't surprise me at all," said Sgt. 1st Class William Hornbeck of Kirkland, with Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Woodstock.

"He is a good, dedicated, hard working Soldier." Halterman has taken his fair share of bullets, but being at home saving a stranger was completely different, he said.

Upon seeing the accident happen right before him, Halterman threw his vehicle in park and ran to the burning vehicle.

When he noticed no movement from the man in the pick-up truck he quickly entered the vehicle and cut the unconscious man's seatbelt.

"Nobody was moving, so I decided to move. As I pulled the guy out, he came to and was disoriented and struggled with me," said Halterman. "I tried to plead with him, because after waking up he didn't know where he was or what happened. Another stranger stopped and helped me pull him out of the vehicle."

Jumping into action may have been easy to do without thinking, but after the day's events, Halterman had time to think about what had just happened.

"I thought, 'What did I just do?'" said Halterman. "I could have been killed very easily."

Halterman, an infantryman who volunteered to stay for three rotations in Afghanistan, totaling two and a half years overseas, instinctively reacted as he had been trained for similar occurrences overseas.

The Marengo Fire/Rescue District was very thankful, as they were not able to arrive until six minutes after the accident had happened, said Robert Bradbury, chief of Marengo Fire and Rescue departments.

"The driver of the pick-up truck was unable to exit the vehicle under his own power. Fortunately for him, Halterman (came) upon the accident well before emergency personnel," said Bradbury.

"Spc. Halterman, with no regards to his own life, immediately jumped into action. He entered the vehicle, even though at this time the exterior of the truck and semi were completely involved with fire, cut the driver's seatbelt off and pulled him to safety."

The outcome of this call may have ended very differently had Halterman not been there and have taken immediate action. The Marengo Fire and Rescue Districts sent their gratitude to Halterman for his heroism, courage and for going above and beyond.

One Soldier reflects about his 9/11 experience

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. Charlie Helmholt,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Editors note: Helmholt was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division's Old Guard, in Washington D.C., Sept. 11, 2001.

REFLECTION

Every generation in this country has one of those days. The day you'll always remember where you were, or what you were doing. Some of them are our nation's greatest achievements like man's first walk on the moon, and some are catastrophes like the attack on Pearl Harbor, or JFK's assassination. These days are destined for more than just pages or paragraphs in history books, they change the very fabric of what it means to be a citizen of this country.

September 11, 2001. When someone says the date we all feel it. Maybe for some that feeling is still anger, or perhaps pain or sorrow. But undoubtedly we all share the commonality of the sight of planes crashing into buildings, or seeing a charred spot in a Pennsylvanian field.

While I remember those things, for me, it really isn't any images I saw on television that I think of when someone mentions the date. When I think about that day I think mostly of the smoke, the flag and the shoe.

THE SMOKE

I was serving in the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division The Old Guard, the Army's Honor Guard, a high standard ceremonial unit used as the president's official military escort as well as various tasks in and around Arlington National Cemetery. The Honor Guard is split between Ft. McNair, in Washington D.C., and Ft. Myer, Va., both within eyesight of the Pentagon.

I belonged to A Company, which is housed at Ft. McNair, a beautiful little peninsular base of D.C. It is surrounded by the Potomac River and is preceded by the iconic tidal basin seen laden with cherry trees and blossoms in so many photos during the spring.

That morning we took a bus across the I-395 bridge over the Potomac, to Ft. Myer in Virginia, just a few miles away.

We were in a giant building nicknamed C-hall when the crash happened, and we were close enough to hear the impact. Everyone ran outside at once, around the building, and everyone froze. The Pentagon, our country's symbolic building of military strength was alive spewing gigantic plumes of black smoke into the air.

The Pentagon is such an imposing building; it employs more than 23,000 people. It was a surreal sight. I remember the confusion, fear and anger as we loaded the bus to get back across the water.

We were stopped on the bridge going back into D.C., so we got off and ran roughly a mile-and-a-half down the tidal basin along the water that led back to Ft. McNair.



Photo submitted by Sgt. Charlie Helmholt

Sgt. Charlie Helmholt responded to the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001 while serving with the 3rd Infantry Division's Old Guard, the Army's Honor Guard in Washington, D.C. Helmholt is a Bellville resident assigned to the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Springfield.

We all sprinted. Each one of us silent. All the while the Pentagon bled out dark smoke just over our shoulders at only a glance away, there across the river.

THE SHOE

After securing our fort in D.C. we were loaded onto trucks and taken to the Pentagon. We had been told that since most members of our unit had security clearances we would be needed to augment the search and rescue mission inside the building.

We were briefed by firefighters on what we could expect to see; instructions were given by military brass on what we could never discuss, and we were sworn to secrecy on any sensitive material the floors or broken cabinets inside might share with us.

We were put in suits, full white garbage bag-like suits and given a civilian 3m-type gas mask. We walked under the slab of roof that hung down in front of the hole for the first time, and when we did, I could have never been prepared for what I saw.

When I describe it, I always tell people to imagine a bomb going off in a junkyard, but that's not near enough disaster. It was sheer chaos. I think before we arrived everyone hoped to be the one to find someone alive and bring them out, but when you walked in that first time all those hopes were shattered, no one could have been alive inside.

Huge support columns had to be reinforced, and in some cases built anew to keep the weight of the damaged building from collapsing. Then the arduous task of sifting through debris, separating biological remains from a jungle of twisted metal began. Many more red biohazard

"The Pentagon bled out dark smoke just over our shoulders..."

Sgt. Charlie Helmholt, 139th MPAD

bags for body parts were filled than body bags with intact bodies.

There were moments during this time some of us would come together to weep during the days and weeks that followed. One memory in particular sticks with me. Just the thought of a friend fighting back tears, holding up the shoe of a young boy, almost certainly a passenger on the plane that tore through the building just a day or two before.

THE FLAG

If I remember correctly, we worked six-hour shifts around the clock for the first two weeks or so. We even slept there, on site in tents. Most of the work was hard labor moving bomb-proof filing cabinets that were twisted and torn to pieces or making sense of countless office décor strewn together, mixed in with all the rest.

Then a different kind of memory jumps in my mind; I remember getting to leave for something after a few weeks, and there were people on some of the overpasses holding huge American flags over the interstates during weird times of the day. Early, like Army early when people should be sleeping or getting ready for their day.

People were coming together in a way I'd never seen in my lifetime or have since. People volunteered to help, counselors gave us free sessions, masseuses gave massages and phone companies set up lines to call whomever for free.

In fact, what I feel most about that day is pride. Of course I'm not proud of what happened, but when I saw the huge flags over the interstate and the even bigger one on the Pentagon itself, it filled me with pride to see us come together to help one another.

I was proud to be a Soldier, in a team of Soldiers, firefighters, police or volunteers who went into wounded buildings with the sole intent to help someone they had never met only because those people live under a common flag. Some would never make it back out.

For all of our country's faults, it is still the greatest country in the world, not just because we say it is, but because we can face such hardship and prevail all the stronger. And that's what I mean when I say I remember the flag, not the colors or fabric, but the symbolism behind it. It is the representation of everyone who died that fate-filled day in September and all the days before. It's pride in men who, guessing their fate, charged the plane's cockpit, choosing to sacrifice themselves rather than be used. Its pride in the ones left behind who are strong enough to hold up our flag so that this land and the entire world will know that we will never forget and we will always prevail.

Detachment 36 returns

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. James Sims,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DECATUR – Friends, family and colleagues gathered at the Decatur Airport Sept. 22 to welcome home Soldiers of the Detachment 36, Operational Support Airlift from Afghanistan.

While deployed, Detachment 36 joined Company B, 306th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation), as part of Task Force ODIN (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize).

"Task Force ODIN logged over 14,000 flight hours of reconnaissance missions, which is quite an accomplishment over a one-year period," said Lt. Col. Randy R. Sikowski of Decatur, state aviation officer.

The task force was made up of 55 Soldiers from Illinois, Delaware, Mississippi, Washington and New Hampshire split between Bagram Air Force Base in central Afghanistan and Kandahar Air Force Base in southern Afghanistan, said Sikowski.

"Our unit was split into two platoons, one in the northern part of Afghanistan, one in the south but the missions were very similar," said Chief Warrant Officer (4) Mike Maroon of Springfield, a C-12 pilot with Det. 36 in Decatur, "Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance was our primary mission which enabled the units on the ground the opportunity to enhance their missions."

Load 'em up



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jason Dorsey, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Two Soldiers with the Army Reserve's 739th Engineer Company in Granite City, hook a sling to the bottom of an Illinois Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook. Soldiers with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment in Peoria assisted with sling load training Sept. 11 at the Sparta Training Area in Sparta.

Troops compete at TAG rifle, pistol match

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Jason Dorsey,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MARSEILLES - Despite temperatures reaching higher than 100 degrees, more than 100 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers competed in this year's Adjutant General's combat rifle and pistol competition July 23 and 24 at Marseilles Training Center.

The annual competition is designed to highlight and evaluate the marksmanship of Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers.

This year's match encompassed individual and team events that tested competitors' abilities to engage multiple targets from different positions including the standing, kneeling and prone.

Soldiers also participated in a fallen comrade drill. During the event, teams of four Soldiers conducted a live-fire drill engaging numerous targets 100 yards away, while two of the four Soldiers evacuated an "injured" troop.

"It was tough, but our hard work and training paid off," said Sgt. Dimar Vasquez of Chicago, a squad leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment in Joliet and recipient of the prestigious Governor's Twenty Tab.

Upon completion of the competition, Soldiers were awarded plaques, tabs and certificates by Maj. Gen. Dennis L. Celletti of Springfield, the Illinois National Guard's Assistant Adjutant General - Army.

"The more and more you guys can shoot professionally, the better your skill sets become," said Celletti.

Below are the overall winners of the competitions:

Pistol Match

1. Sgt. Jeremy Gebhardt of Springfield, with the 333rd Military Police Company (MP Co.), Freeport
2. Staff Sgt. Andrew Rotman of Lawrenceville, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 766th Engineer Battalion (Eng. Bn.), Decatur
3. Staff Sgt. Shawn Cannamore of Metropolis, with Company C, 33rd Brigade Support Battalion (BSTB), Carbondale
4. Staff Sgt. John Daniel of Chicago, Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry Regiment, Aurora
5. Staff Sgt. Tracy Mix of Marseilles, Company A, 33rd BSTB, Marseilles

Rifle Competition

1. Staff Sgt. John Jones of Robinson, 631st Eng. Co., Lawrenceville
2. Staff Sgt. Gabriel Cullers of Carrier Mills, Company



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jason Dorsey, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers run toward a stack of boxes that are simulated casualties during a medical evaluation drill at this year's Adjutant General's combat rifle and pistol competition July 23 and 24 at the Marseilles Training Center in Marseilles.

- A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, Marion
3. Sgt. Jeremy Gebhardt of Springfield, 333rd MP Co., Freeport

Rifle Novice

1. Chief Warrant Officer (2) Ryan Landon of Chandlerville, 3637th Field Support Maintenance Company, Springfield
2. Spc. Kalin Durbin of Decatur, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, Litchfield
3. Staff Sgt. Dimar Vasquez of Chicago, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, Litchfield

Pistol Open Competition

1. Staff Sgt. William Thorpe of Millstadt, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, Marion
2. Master Sgt. Jeffrey Stoudt of Sheridan, Joint Force Headquarters, Marseilles

3. Sgt. Jeremy Gebhardt of Springfield, 333rd MP Company, Freeport

Pistol Novice competition

1. Chief Warrant (2) Jeff Hughes of Quincy, 1844th Transportation Company, Quincy
2. Staff Sgt. Henry Baez of Chicago, 135th Chemical Company, Machesney Park
3. Spc. Lucas Kinkelaar of Carterville, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, Effingham

Team Rifle Competition

1. 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry
2. 766th Eng. Bn.
3. 135th Chemical Company

Overall Pistol Team

1. 333rd MP Co.
2. 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry
3. 135th Chemical Company

Soldiers help Sullivan VFW

Story by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie Stone, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 634th Brigade Support Battalion

SULLIVAN - Upon returning home from our tour in Afghanistan in September 2009, the Sullivan American Legion organized a welcome-home ceremony for the Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Sullivan. My fiancé and I were discussing how much the services performed by the Sullivan Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, and the community meant to us. We know how much preparation, thought, and time goes into these events.

The Soldiers of the company and I decided that regardless of our tour overseas, we wanted to give more to our community and to the organizations that showed us a truly heartfelt send off and return.

Les and Lori Click of Sullivan, members of the American Legion, mentioned that the Sullivan VFW was in need of some help with their newly constructed building. The Clicks said the VFW members were doing what they could in order to raise funds, but were at a standstill. They were in need of a concrete floor before they could move forward with their new facility.

They had enough money to pay for the

floor materials, but not enough to hire someone to come in and do the physical labor. The building is just shy of 12,000 square feet making the task too big for someone who is inexperienced.

Lori told me and some of my comrades that she would like to see her father, Harry, sitting and enjoying himself in the new establishment before he passes away. The tear that ran down her cheek while she spoke of her hope touched us. It was all the motivation we needed.



Photo submitted by Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie Stone

Soldiers volunteer on their time off to pour concrete at the Sullivan VFW.

I spoke to a few of my fellow Soldiers to see if they were interested in helping and they eagerly agreed to donate the labor in order to complete the Sullivan VFW, not only for Harry and the community of Sullivan, but for all veterans of foreign wars.

Our common end goal is to be able to sit in a nice establishment with veterans and Soldiers, young and old, men and women and share stories amongst one another. The Sullivan VFW Post 6410 has a long way to go before they can open the doors to the public. They aren't even able to give a projected time of completion due to their financial and personnel needs. They need the help of professional builders and volunteers to ensure a safe and efficient building for all to enjoy.

If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Janet Englund at (217)728-7988.

FRANCE

■ From page 1

Army Maj. Gen. Timothy Kadavy, deputy director of the Army Guard.

"I am deeply honored to ... pay tribute to six most outstanding American Soldiers from the United States Army and the Army National Guard who distinguished themselves while fighting the Taliban and Al Qaida elements in Afghanistan," said French Ambassador François Delattre.

"Through their outstanding bravery and engagement in combat, they fought at the risk of their own lives to assist French Soldiers, their brothers in arms, who experienced a barrage of fire from the enemy."

The Illinois National Guard Soldiers supported a French regiment executing a mission in and around the Uzbeen Valley in Afghanistan in 2009.

Created in 1956 by the French government to reward extraordinary deeds of bravery carried out as part of security and law enforcement operations, the Croix de la Valeur Militaire - or French Cross of Military Valor - is one of the most respected decorations in the French military, Delattre said.

"You demonstrated the highest military qualities and sense of duty," Delattre told them. "You distinguished yourselves. Your outstanding conduct alongside French forces, ... your remarkable bravery in the face of danger in the combat zone, and your superb combatant qualities deserve to be commended."

The recognition of the Guard members reflects the Guard's contributions to the Total Force, Dempsey said.

The National Guard has Special Forces in 18 states. While they train and deploy just as active duty Soldiers, Guard members must also balance civilian lives and careers. There are five active-duty component Special Forces Groups and

two in the National Guard.

"We're in the right place at the wrong time," quipped Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Steven Duff, deputy commander, U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne). "We're everywhere. We can do whatever is necessary, and it shows that the caliber of our Soldiers are just as good as anybody else."

"It's a great honor," said Ahern, a laser physicist in his civilian career who has spent four of the last 10 years deployed or recovering from combat-related injuries.

Ahern's parents, wife and daughter accompanied him. "They see the newspaper stories," he said. "They hear abstract descriptions of what you've done. But they don't really see it firsthand, nor do they see recognition, so this is a really good opportunity."

A full narrative of the exact events that earned the awards cannot be shared in this article.

But there is one: It tells of men surrounded, wildly outnumbered and pinned down for hours. Of men who fought on despite severe injuries. Of lifesaving buddy aid under withering, accurate fire - and of declined opportunities to be medically evacuated in order to stay in the fight until the last man was out safe.

The silent professionals stepped briefly into the light to accept honors; said almost nothing of battles fought in Afghanistan and in hospitals; shook hands with senior leaders who had come to thank them and, by extension, all they serve alongside; shared the moment with parents, wives and children who rarely get to share what they do - and slipped back into the night as modestly and quietly as they arrived.

"We had kind of a tough fight those last few days in Afghanistan," said Army National Guard Capt. Thomas Harper, an award recipient. "We were just happy to be alive. We really didn't expect this kind of honor. It's pretty overwhelming, I'll tell you."

Home for wounded Soldier 1244th returns from Kuwait

Story by Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SILVIS – Retired Lt. Gen. Leroy Cisco announced that Sgt. Dennis “Alex” Pracht, is the latest recipient of a home from the Homes 4 Wounded Heroes program. The announcement came during a private presentation at the John Deere Classic Golf Tournament in Silvis, July 6.

“I’ve got to confess,” said Cisco as he looked toward Pracht. “I’ve been lying to you and you’re getting a new home.”

Pracht, of Centralia, who was injured by an improvised explosive device detonation while deployed in 2009 to Afghanistan with the Illinois National Guard’s Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment based in Marion, said he thought he was just going to the event to represent wounded Soldiers and had no clue about the home.

Cisco, the founder of the Military Warriors Support Foundations which he started roughly four and a half years ago, helps veterans with employment, scholarships and recreation. Ten months ago, the foundation started awarding homes, said Cisco.

Pracht said he thought it was pretty phenomenal and thanked everyone in the crowd from the Community Based Warrior in Transition Unit (CBWTU) based at the Rock Island Arsenal for all the help and support they provided him throughout his recovery.

Staff Sgt. Jay Lawson, Pracht’s platoon sergeant at the CBWTU, was the person who initially nominated Pracht for the home.

Lawson was approached by Ken Eakes, the executive director for the foundation, who was looking for potential wounded Soldiers that would benefit greatly from receiving a home. Ken was looking for Bronze Star or Purple Heart recipients that were struggling to adjust back into the community and had great potential, but due to injuries were being held back, said Lawson.

“I have the perfect person for you,” said Lawson.

Instantly, Lawson said he thought of Pracht and worked closely with Eakes to ensure that Pracht’s application for a home was sent forward.

Lawson said he knew well in advance of the presentation that Pracht was going to get the home, but did not let him in on the secret.

The foundation will assign a mentor to Pracht who will take a look at available homes on the market. Then together they will select the home that best fits his needs, said Eakes. The foundation will then refurbish the house from top to bottom, ensuring that there will be no foreseeable



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

Sgt. Dennis “Alex” Pracht of Centralia, stands with a key that symbolizes a new home that was awarded by the Homes 4 Wounded Heroes program, July 6 at the John Deere Classic Golf Tournament in Silvis. Pracht was injured by an improvised explosive device while deployed in 2009 to Afghanistan with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

problems for the next five years. They will also take into consideration physical limitations of the wounded Soldier and adjust to suit his needs.

After the home is complete, Pracht will receive three years of mentoring and formal financial training to ensure he gets off on the right foot, said Eakes.

Since deployment, Pracht is recovering from his injuries and has gone back to school to become a physician’s assistant. He said getting this home will help him out tremendously and allow him to focus on being with his 8-month-old daughter.

Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

NORTH RIVERSIDE – Homecoming ceremonies were held for approximately 170 Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers with the 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside. Ceremonies took place in North Riverside, East St. Louis, Paris and Springfield, Sept. 16.

Mobilized in September 2010, the 1244th was the first unit from Illinois to deploy as part of Operation New Dawn. This operation supports the transition from the combat operations of Operation Iraqi Freedom to the new phase supporting the responsible drawdown of U.S. and coalition military forces. The 1244th was replaced in theater by the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1644th Transportation Company from Rock Falls.

The mission of the 1244th included hauling cargo throughout Iraq and Kuwait the past 10 months. The unit completed approximately 220 convoy missions totaling more than 3.8 million miles and moved approximately 170 million pounds of cargo with no casualties. The achievements of the 1244th resulted in 11 Soldiers receiving Bronze Star Medals, 12 Meritorious Service Medals, 15 Combat Action Badges, three Purple Hearts and numerous other individual and unit awards.

The 1244th was instrumental in transporting the last remaining British Soldiers and their equipment out of Iraq in May 2011. Capt. Shawn Nokes of Springfield, the 1244th commander, said he was extremely proud of the execution by the 1244th and said the mission was a historic example of cooperation between the two nations.

Soldiers from the North Riverside unit were joined by Soldiers from the 1344th Transportation Company in East St. Louis; 1544th Transportation Company in Paris; 1844th Transportation Company in Quincy; Company A, 405th Brigade Support Battalion in Streator; 232nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Springfield; 3637th Maintenance Company in Springfield; Company F, 634th Brigade Support Battalion in Mount Vernon and the 108th Sustainment Brigade in Chicago.



U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. April Hawes, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Ricky Rocha, of Chicago, with the 1244th Transportation Company in North Riverside, kisses his girlfriend, Annallely Pillado at the 1244th’s Welcome Home Ceremony Sept. 16 in North Riverside.

Engineers mobilize

Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPARTA – A deployment ceremony was held at the World Shooting and Recreation Complex in Sparta Sept. 22 for approximately 160 Soldiers with the 661st Engineer Company of Sparta, who will deploy to Afghanistan this fall.

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

The 661st Engineer Company will be conducting horizontal engineer missions within Afghanistan to include both building and repairing roads, as well as site preparation for future buildings.

The unit is capable of building low-water crossings, ditching and culvert emplacement, grading, scraping, fill material emplacement, hauling, stockpile management and pond restoration. The 661st capabilities will increase the overall mobility of coalition forces, as well as the people of Afghanistan.

The unit will be mobilized for approximately one year, returning home in fall 2012.

EXCEL

■ From page 2

Our Soldiers are also doing hard work overseas. Last year we had Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Egypt.

As we head into the new fiscal year, we have more units heading out the door. There is still work to be done overseas and our Soldiers are leading the way.

I want to challenge each Soldier to make next year even better than the last and I also want to thank every Soldier, family member and employer for your dedication to making us one of the best states in the nation’s National Guard.

CHANGE

■ From page 2

out in our communities and tell the National Guard story to the public and to our elected officials.

The budget battles will be tough, but all of us working together and looking out for each other will enable us to get through this fiscal challenge and come out a stronger National Guard for the next 375 years!

Officer Space



U.S. Army illustration by Sgt. Michael Camacho and Spc. Zachary Zimmerman, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

1-14 Agribusiness Development Team

■ Focused on the Kunar mission

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Approximately 60 Soldiers from across Illinois, as well as two Soldiers from Michigan and South Dakota, have been deployed to Kunar Province since June with the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team.

The 1-14th ADT, which consists of a headquarters element, a security force platoon and a platoon of 12 agriculture experts, have been assisting the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in revitalizing and establishing a strong, growing and sustainable agriculture industry.

The Illinois team’s mission is part of a broad effort that involves multiple National Guard ADTs from several states, each operating within its own province. The teams typically come from mid-western states, such as Missouri, Nebraska, Indiana and Iowa, which are known for agriculture production.

U.S. Army Col. Fred Allen, of Delavan, Ill., commander of the 1-14th ADT, said it makes sense for Illinois to field such a specialized team.

“Illinois was a great choice for a few reasons,” said Allen. “We are one of the largest agriculture states in the U.S., both by population and production. This is also represented within our National Guard formations and the many citizen Soldiers who work full time in



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

Spc. Alan McFalls, of Polo, and Capt. Robert Cosgriff, of Big Timber, Mont., both forestry experts for the 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, demonstrate the use of a gasoline-powered posthole digger at the Asadabad Demonstration Farm and Orchard, Aug. 13.

the agriculture industry. Illinois also has some of the top agriculture colleges in the nation, at both community college and university levels. It was amazing how many Soldiers we found in our ranks that had, or were working toward, agriculture degrees.”

The Illinois Soldiers have educations and backgrounds in agronomy, plant and soil science, forestry, engineering, pest management, zoology and hydrology.

Allen said the addition of two Soldiers from outside Illinois, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Al Gorman, of Lansing, Mich., the agriculture platoon’s officer-in-charge, and U.S. Army Capt. Adam Wiechmann, of Summerset, S.D., the team’s veterinarian, complete the team’s diversified skill set.

All this expertise is critical for ADTs to operate in a country where the agricultural sector has suffered setbacks in the form of a Soviet military occupation, a civil war and devastating droughts over the past 30 years.

Despite these obstacles, agriculture still accounts for more than 30 percent of Afghanistan’s gross domestic product and employs more than 80 percent of the country’s citizens. These numbers add up to make agriculture a vital concern when considering the future stability of this country.

For the Illinois ADT, the push toward stability has meant diving into projects that range from mentorship at demonstration farms and tree nurseries, to coordinating training events, supporting canal improvement projects and providing micro grants to farmers and agribusiness owners.

The team keeps all this effort focused through constant coordination with Afghan governmental agencies, such as the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James Mayes, of Mt. Zion, Ill., and non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the team’s agriculture platoon.

“It’s important that all our projects are conducted to the specifications of GIROA,” said Mayes. “After all, it’s people such as the DAIL who are the most aware of what Afghanistan’s citizens need and want. Just like anyone in the U.S. would keep their managers and directors updated on projects, we are always coordinating with the DAIL and his staff.”

He said coordination with the team’s Afghan counterparts also helps highlight the contributions of the Afghan government.

“We have access to agricultural interns, cultural advisors and district extension agents that help us immensely in our work,” said Mayes. “They act as our liaisons to the DAIL and to the individual farmers. We make sure they are part of everything we do so people can see that their government is playing a huge role in what’s being accomplished.”

Members of the ADT must also consider whether Afghan agencies will be able to continue projects on their own, said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Dan Clark, of Murphysboro, Ill., the team’s plant and soil science expert.

“Our goal is to show GIROA officials they need to concentrate on projects and programs that can be sustained,” said Clark. “They need to move away from short-term victories and focus on long-term victories. If the Afghan government can’t continue a program after Coalition Forces leave – based on funding or personnel issues – then that project should not be supported.”

One way the ADT ensures sustainability is by using demonstration farms as testing and educational platforms.

“While showing Afghan farmers more efficient agricultural



Capt. Adam Wiechmann, of Summerset, S.D., of the 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team, routinely provides mentorship with Afghan veterinarians to improve their practices.

practices, these farms also provide extension services for other agricultural ideas that may be new to the area. “This is important because the extension agents are educating Afghan farmers and ensuring they can sustain the practices after we are gone.”

While training is one key element of the mission, the team also promotes sustainability by providing aid to those who wish to start or expand agribusinesses on the local economy.

“Focusing on agribusiness creates food security and therefore, increases food security,” said Joshua Lueker, of Marion, Ill., an agriculture expert for the ADT.

“We can provide technical knowledge in areas such as pest management, resource management, and cost efficiency,” said Lueker. “We can do this with ambition and a good business plan, then



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. John Hodgson, of Chicago, a security force platoon squad leader for the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, maintains a security perimeter during a leader engagement at a demonstration farm in Kunar Province, June 27.

■ Fourteen: an ag

Story by Adriana Schroeder, Historian and Spc. Zachary Zimmerman, Assistant Historian

SPRINGFIELD - Horace Capron Sr.: farmer, entrepreneur, family man, Soldier, statesman, and nation-builder, an all round renaissance man who has ties to the 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team (ADT). He is a small piece of the historical fabric that is woven into the Illinois National Guard legacy.

The 1-14th ADT, named after the 14 of Capron’s Cavalry unit in the Civil War, is currently deployed to Afghanistan.

“It is important for the team to understand how those in the past have sacrificed to serve our country and how we are now being called on to do the same,” said Col. Fred Allen, commander of the Illinois Army National Guard’s 1-14th ADT. “There is also great pride in the long history of the Illinois Army National Guard which the 14th Regiment belonged to.”

In the fall of 1862, at age 59, Horace raised the 14th Illinois Cavalry Regiment and Gov. Richard Yates appointed him colonel and commander of the unit. The war brought more tragedy and hardship to the Capron family.

Capron excelled in the leadership role, evidenced by the numerous times he

temporarily commanded larger units on the field. The 14th Cavalry participated in the pursuit and capture of Morgan’s Raiders, the battles of Knoxville and Dandridge, the East Tennessee Campaign of 1864, the March to the Sea, and the battles of Franklin and Nashville. February 6, 1864, Horace Capron, Jr., fell mortally wounded while heading a charge upon the enemy in North Carolina while serving in the 8th Illinois Cavalry.

This son had previously received the Medal of Honor for gallantry at Chickahominy. Two other sons, Albert and Osmond were never quite the same, having suffered from their time in rebel prison camps. Horace suffered a bad fall from his horse that led to his release from service in January 1865. Upon return to the farm,



Horace C

Team plants knowledge in Afghanistan



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

James McDonnough, S.D., a veterinarian with the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, inspects the teeth of a donkey used for military operations, Aug. 7. The team provides medical care for animals used in military operations, while coordinating and improving animal care and husbandry practices throughout Kunar province.

agents a training model to the region" he said. "The ones out there have the tools to succeed."

ADT mission, the team works with Afghan entrepreneurs to have a positive impact on the region.

that is more affordable, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class [Name] is a processing specialist.

in the form of agronomy, veterinary care, marketing and also identify individuals to reward those individuals

with a one-time micro grant to start or expand their businesses." He cited an oil pressing facility here as the type of agribusiness sought out by the ADT. The owner of the facility presses locally-grown seeds, such as sunflower and canola seeds, into cooking oil.

"His presence tells us many things," he said. "First was that someone had enough excess crop that he needed an outlet for it. Next, he had found a way to add value to the crop that was beneficial to him and the consumer. Finally, it shows us that technology is being transferred to even the most remote regions of Afghanistan."

Though it has not happened overnight, he said businesses like this indicate agriculture in Kunar Province is on the right track.

Increased agribusiness, improved governance, a functioning agriculture extension program, better education and more efficient farming practices all allow members of the 1-14th ADT to see the fruits of their own labor and the labor of their predecessors.

By sharing their knowledge and building relationships, they hope to make agriculture part of a more safe and stable future for Afghanistan.

■ SECFOR vital part of Kunar ADT mission

Story by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team's motto is "Protect, Plow, Provide." Those three words refer to the three primary missions of their security force platoon, their agriculture platoon and their headquarters element.

While the team's overall mission is agriculture, there is a reason the word "protect" comes first, said U.S. Army Sgt. Major Anthony McCormick, of Chapin Ill., the 1-14th ADT noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

McCormick said the hard work and dedication of the security force platoon give the ADT freedom to maneuver in a combat zone and conduct its agricultural mission.

The 1-14th ADT's SECFOR platoon is composed of approximately 30 military police officers from the Illinois Army National Guard's 233rd Military Police Company in Springfield, Ill. The platoon is responsible for transporting ADT members

to their mission sites and providing on-ground security for ADT Soldiers, Afghan government officials and civilians during missions.

"Protecting life is a tremendous responsibility that our Soldiers take very seriously," said U.S. Army 1st Lt. Kyle Scifert, of Elgin, Ill., the 1-14th ADT SECFOR platoon leader.

"Our squad leaders and Soldiers are tireless when it comes to training and planning for each mission we execute," said Scifert. "The security mission requires hours of air and map reconnaissance, rehearsals, nightly planning sessions, pre-combat checks and constant maintenance on weapons and vehicles."

In addition to conducting ADT missions, which average 5-6 days per week, the SECFOR platoon operates an entry control point and staffs the FOB Wright flight line.

McCormick said he feels fortunate to be serving with the Soldiers of the security force platoon.

"I can say without reservation that our SECFOR team is one of the best groups I have worked with in 31 years of military service, he said. "I am extremely proud of each Soldier on the team."



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Lester Sanchez, of Edwardsville, Ill., a security force platoon squad leader for the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, provides security during a mission at a demonstration farm Aug. 13

agricultural legacy



Capron, Sr.

Horace found his precious herd and farm nearly destroyed due to the incompetence of the hired help in his stead. At 60, Horace once again found himself starting over.

Through his political connections Horace obtained the title commissioner of the Department of Agriculture in November 1867. He severed under Presidents Johnson and Grant. In this capacity he oversaw the distribution of seeds, exports, farm tool inventions, experiments and agricultural colleges.

He held this position until 1871 when he accepted an offer to provide agricultural expertise to the country of Japan.

Son Osmond depended on his father financially after injuries, including being blinded while rescuing people from a hotel

fire. Financially drained, Horace decided to undertake the challenge proposed to him by Japan. He introduced American farming methods to inhabit the island of Hokkaido with Japanese citizens.

While serving as special advisor to the commission in Hokkaido, Japan, he introduced American farming practices and equipment. Horace introduced wheat and rye, which led to the creation of Sapporo beer, one of the first breweries in Japan that is still in existence today. Before his death, he sold his home in Washington D.C., to be the site of Japan's first embassy.

Horace spent his last days working on his memoirs. Feb. 21, 1885, he witnessed the dedication of the Washington Monument. The cold temperature was too much for his 80-year-old body to handle and he passed away of a stroke Feb. 22, 1885.

The legacy of Horace Capron Sr., lives on within the 1-14th Agricultural Development Team.

Before the deployment, Soldiers in the unit were briefed on the life of Horace Capron and the importance of the number 14. Horace overcame many obstacles, eventually found a life he loved and through his expertise improved agriculture for the United States and Japan.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Illinois Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

U.S. Army Col. Fred Allen, of Delavan, Ill., commander of the Illinois Army National Guard's 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team (right), and Bud Garrett, an advisor with the United States Department of Agriculture, inspect a placard identifying rice varieties in a research trial, Aug. 28.

405th BSB supports joint Ghana, US exercise



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jess Raasch, 116th Public Affairs Detachment

Just-promoted Staff Sgt. Jennifer Shook, a native of Lehigh, Penn., and an intelligence sergeant for the Illinois National Guard's 405th Brigade Support Battalion in North Riverside, Ill., shakes hands with Regimental Sgt. Maj. Moses Anagli of the Ghanaian Army during her promotion ceremony July 14 at Burma Camp, Accra, Ghana.

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Jess Raasch,
116th Public Affairs Detachment

ACCRA, Ghana – The 405th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) of North Riverside played an active role in MEDFLAG 11 in Accra, Ghana, by providing support to other units participating in the event.

Sponsored by U.S. Army Africa, the bilateral MEDFLAG 11 exercise strengthens the relationship between the U.S. and Ghana through 10 days of collaborative training and sharing of medical expertise, as well as joint humanitarian civic assistance in local communities.

MEDFLAG was the 405th BSB's first mission as a unit, marking it a milestone of success for the team.

The role of the 405th was to coordinate and provide logistic, transportation, operational, communication and other support to ensure a smooth mission.

"[MEDFLAG] gives us real-world experiences in an actual command and control mission, which really is our job," said Maj. Ronald Bonesz of Schaumburg and the 405th's executive officer.

The 405th started its role in MEDFLAG in January when about five members of the unit traveled to Accra to work with members of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) and U.S. Army Africa to begin the planning process.

"This exercise is a great chance to oversee my staff so I know they can do what they need to do and are qualified for the job assigned to them," said Bonesz.

During the initial planning conference, the joint team discussed possibilities for transportation and lodging. They also got to know each other and formed an early bond with each other.

"There was great cooperation and collaboration between the forces, which I hope sets a foundation for future missions of this type," said Bonesz.

"Because of our cultural differences, we had to adjust

our planning process to find a new way of completing the mission with the Ghanaians," said Capt. Ivan Ortiz of Minooka, the supply officer for the 405th BSB.

Sgt. 1st Class Tim Miller of Aurora and 405th battalion senior supply sergeant, said despite the cultural differences, they worked together to reach a common goal of a successfully planned mission.

After MEDFLAG began, the role of the 405th switched from planning support to monitoring the support, which they worked hard to establish.

"Our ultimate role is to work in partnership with the GAF and other Guard and Reserve Soldiers to have a successful mission," said Miller.

Miller and his team worked to ensure all participating units had the supplies necessary to complete the mission of working with the GAF.

"We had a great field-ordering operation yesterday and were able to obtain information about where items are available, which is crucial to our mission," said Sgt. Whitney Clever, of Island Lake, a supply sergeant with the 405th.

Through this process, Miller worked directly with Ghanaian shop workers.

"Everyone has been so nice," said Miller. "It has been great to work with them in this process."

Lance Cpl. Gordon Oppong, a Ghanaian army soldier from the 37th Military Hospital in Accra, said he enjoyed the training.

"The classes are going well, and we are learning a lot of great things," he said. "It has been an interesting experience. It is important for us to share information, learn from each other, and be partners."

Although this was the unit's first mission, the 405th delivered support to all teams involved.

"We are able to support not only ourselves, but support the GAF and we have a lot of pride in that," said Clever.

217th builds radar tower in Missouri

Story by Bill Phelan, Missouri National Guard

ST. LOUIS COUNTY, Mo. – An Illinois Air National Guard unit accomplished two missions simultaneously with the construction of a 77-foot air control radar tower at historic Jefferson Barracks in south St. Louis County.

Airmen of the 217th Engineering Installation Squadron, based in Springfield, Ill., said the project provided their counterparts in Missouri with a vital piece of equipment, while at the same time provided their unit with valuable training.

"We install permanent structures that will support aircraft and communications," explained Tech. Sgt. Eric Bell, of Corydon, Ind., the project team leader. "We usually do a lot more work with copper wire and fiber optics but it's nice to brush off the dust and work with steel for a change. So tower construction is training above and beyond what we normally get to do. It's awesome to be able to give these guys this experience."

Once completed, the tower will support a revolving radar antenna that is part of a \$30 million air traffic control unit with an effective range of 240 nautical miles. The new unit will be maintained and operated by the 121st Air Control Squadron of the Missouri Air National Guard, based at Jefferson Barracks.

"This piece of equipment will be a major asset to us," said Capt. Eric White, of Brentwood, the 121st air battle manager. "Once the radar is mounted on the top of the tower it will give us a phenomenal air picture of the entire area and it will extend our radio communications because most of our radios right now are line-of-sight. If the air traffic control radar went down at Lambert (Airport) for some reason our radar could supplement homeland security and the Federal Aviation Administration."

White said the 217th was chosen for the tower project for good reason.

"The 217th was asked by their host air wing if they could do this job because of their proximity to us," he said. "So it's a training opportunity for them and if we had hired a private contractor to do this project it would have cost the taxpayer about \$130,000. The 217th is doing a phenomenal job with essentially two, four-man teams."

"That's one of the nice things about our family of engineering and installation units," Bell said. "We can always save the taxpayer money on materials and manpower and that's a good reason to call us for another project."

Jefferson Barracks was established in 1826. Bell couldn't help but note the irony of installing a high-tech radar unit at the oldest continually operated military post.



Photo by Bill Phelan, Missouri National Guard

Airmen of the Illinois Air National Guard's 217th Engineering and Installation Squadron construct a 77-foot air control radar tower at historic Jefferson Barracks in south St. Louis County.

Officer candidates engulfed in history at State Museum

Story by Spc. Zachary Zimmerman,
Illinois National Guard Assistant Historian

SPRINGFIELD – It's 1944 and Operation Overlord is only a few days away. Lt. Gen. George Patton Jr., writes a letter with some last minute words of wisdom to his son, not knowing if he will ever see him again. The letter reads, "To be a successful Soldier you must first know history."

Patton, among other leaders in our nation's history, was discussed during a military history instruction to Illinois Army National Guard officer candidates, Sept. 17 at Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

The instruction included a four-hour class taught by Adriana Schroeder, the Illinois National Guard State historian, and two hours of a guided tour and artifact exhibit at the Illinois State Military Museum.

Two re-enactors and museum volunteers, Duane Carrell and Jim Patton portrayed Civil War Soldiers and showcased the gear that would have been carried by Illinois Soldiers during the Vicksburg Campaign.

"I hope they find knowledge of military history to be both inspiring and empowering in their role as future leaders of the Illinois National Guard," said Schroeder. "By using our military museum, the class literally held history in their hands."

The class received an up-close and personal view of Illinois National Guard history at the Illinois State Military Museum with a behind-the-scenes tour of museum



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Zachary Zimmerman,
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

An officer candidate interacts with the Illinois State Military Museum Director, retired Brig. Gen. Stewart Reeve, during a tour of the Illinois State Military, Sept. 17.

artifacts in the vault by Bill Lear, the museum curator. Candidates donned archival gloves and held Nazi daggers, Confederate knives, and other weapons used in past operations. They also received a tour of many historical artifacts on display from retired Brig. Gen. Stewart Reeve, the museum director.

"You can look back over history and see the way other military operations have been run, the way other leaders have conducted themselves, and frequently there are several lessons learned," said Reeve. "Men and women who are currently serving get a better idea of how their service today is an extension of the kind of legacy that was established before Illinois was even a state."

The course interpreted what military history is and how to apply it to current operations. Students learned the role of Army leadership during the most difficult times in our nation's history. The candidates also received a detailed approach on how to research history and the value of creating their own personal professional reading plan.

Military history is a required course for the completion of Officer Candidate School (OCS). Schroeder held a mini-seminar with the class about her role in supporting units in the Guard, the importance of annual and deployment histories and gave a tour of the museum's archives.

"This has given us a big opportunity to learn about our past and will help us in the future when we become officers," said Officer Candidate Germaine Walker of Bellwood.

Former 1644th Soldier takes command of unit

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Vorce, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

ROCK FALLS—Capt. Michael Barton with the 1644th Transportation Company has deployed and returned a decorated Soldier and now has the opportunity to deploy as the commander for the same unit.

Barton, a Greenview native, deployed as an enlisted Soldier with the 1644th in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004–2005, receiving a Purple Heart. Now as the commander of the Rock Falls unit, Barton believes he can do even more.

“With my other deployments, everything was being directed towards me,” Barton said. “Now, I’m the one providing direction.”

Barton deployed with the 1144th Transportation Battalion in 2007-2008 and received a Bronze Star for his service.

With two deployments already, Barton took command of the 1644th in 2009. Barton admits to being a little nervous upon taking command, as he would be leading some of his former comrades. However, the Soldiers accepted him immediately and the relationship has only improved.

“When I found out he was coming back, I was really excited,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kyle Hacker of Rock Falls, a truckmaster who deployed with Barton in 2004. “He was a standout guy as an enlisted Soldier, and now he’s a

standout guy as an officer.”

Now the 1644th will tackle line-haul operations. They will move equipment throughout Kuwait and Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn.

“I’m excited for this deployment and what lies ahead for the 1644th,” Barton said. “The team we have assembled is extremely professional, tactically and technically proficient.”



Capt. Michael Barton

Lt. Col. Tracey Collins of Naperville, the transportation battalion commander, served with Barton when he was a specialist and she was a lieutenant with the Rock Falls unit. She said Barton is a great fit for the 1644th.

“Captain Barton is an awesome leader,” Collins said. “You give him a mission and he runs with it. Having been in that unit for so long, he has established himself and earned the respect of his troops.”

Barton is commanding a unique unit. The 1644th has four husband and wife duos, two father and son tandems, and

three groups of siblings. Despite the familiar relations, Barton says this is the most professional team he has ever worked with.

“Being the commander of the 1644th has been the highlight of my 15-and-a-half year career,” Barton said.

The 1644th replaced the 1244th Transportation Company from North Riverside in Kuwait.

SAD tax advice

Story by Lt.Col. Martin Green, Staff Judge Advocate, Joint Force Headquarters-Air

SPRINGFIELD - With the frequent state active duty mobilizations in the Illinois National Guard, Guardsmen have asked how state active duty pay is considered taxable income for state and federal income tax purposes.



Lt.Col. Martin Green

The good news is that state active duty pay is tax-free income for state income tax purposes as is other military pay received in federal status.

There are some limitations on deductions for federal military pay such as incentive pay. State active duty pay is not tax-free income for federal income tax purposes.

The Illinois Department of Revenue in Publication 102, entitled Illinois Filing Requirements for Military Personnel, outlines military pay including state active duty pay that is tax-exempt. This is a useful publication for military members who prepare their own taxes or for military members to provide to their tax preparers to help explain tax treatment of the unique state active duty status.

As an Illinois resident, taxpayers must file a Form IL-1040 (Individual Tax Return). Your military pay, including State Active Duty pay, will generally be included in your federal adjusted gross income (AGI) on Form IL-1040, Line 1. You may subtract military pay including your state active duty pay on Form IL-Schedule M (Other Additions and Subtractions for Individuals) that would accompany your state Individual Tax Return (IL-1040) filing. Qualifying military pay reflected on Schedule M would be deducted on Line 7 of the Form IL-1040.

Federal income tax treatment of military pay is not as generous as the State of Illinois. The federal tax code only exempts combat zone pay. A combat zone is any area the President designates by Executive Order as an area in which the U.S. Armed Forces are engaging or have engaged in combat. Internal Revenue Service Publication 3 (Armed Forces Tax Guide) found on the IRS website can provide more information.

Guardsmen are encouraged to use Illinois Department of Revenue and Internal Revenue Service publications that specifically address the unique characteristics and tax treatment of military pay. These resources will assist you in preparing your own state and federal income taxes, or in preparing your paperwork to discuss with your tax preparer. Even if a professional tax preparer is used to prepare state and federal income tax returns, Guardsmen should not assume they are aware of the unique state active duty status and the state tax exemption on state active duty pay.

Illinois Department of Revenue Publication 102 and other forms cited above may be found at the Department’s website at <http://www.revenue.state.il.us/Publications/Pubs/Pub-102.pdf>.

33rd IBCT honors heroes of Bataan



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

Col. Paul Hastings of St. Charles, commander of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, bows his head in prayer at the Maywood Bataan Day Annual Memorial Service.

Commander guides as minister too

Story by Sgt. Aleah Castrejon, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs Office

SPRINGFIELD –When Moses led his people from Egypt, chances are he wasn’t wearing combat boots. Recently another man of God brought his troops home from Egypt decked out proudly in a U.S. Army uniform.

Lt. Col. Maurice Rochelle, 49, of Flossmoor, is the full-time officer-in-charge of the 404th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade in Chicago. He is also an associate minister of the Salem Baptist Church in Chicago.

Rochelle also serves as the commander of the 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery (FA) and led the battalion while it was deployed to Sinai, Egypt from May 2010 to May 2011.

“From the time I was presented with the command, I knew 2nd Battalion, 123rd FA was a very special and proud unit,” said Rochelle. “Egypt was a wonderful mission for the Soldiers, especially for those who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq.”

As the battalion commander, his role was to maintain the readiness for the peace keeping mission, homeland security missions, and train on new equipment.

“Serving my country and community enhances my interpersonal skills,” said Rochelle, a 29-year veteran. “I have the natural ability to coach, counsel, mentor and also have that servant-leader mindset; the attitude of selfless service.”

He has been an associate minister for 13 years and is a licensed minister of the gospel at Salem Baptists. He also attends other churches, conferences, spiritual retreats and religious events with his wife, Marie.

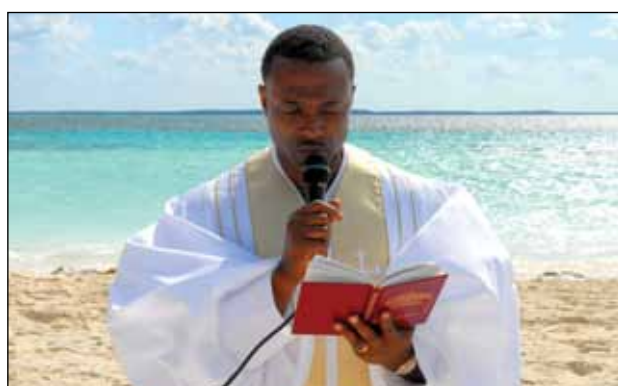


Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Maurice Rochelle

Lt. Col. Maurice Rochelle of Flossmoor performs a marriage vow renewal on an island.

At the church, the couple provides guidance as directors of the married couple’s ministry with approximately 35 couples who assist with planning and executing events for more than 3,000 married couples. The Rochelle’s provide biblical marital counseling to most of the Chicago community and also teach Sunday school classes to more than 100 adults.

Some of his pastoral care duties include: serving communion, visiting the sick, offering prayer, one-on-one spiritual counseling and the occasional opportunity to baptize new converts.

“When I went to Israel with (some) Soldiers of the 123rd FA, it was as if the Bible came alive,” said Rochelle. Rochelle hopes to serve another 10 years in the military while continuing to serve his God.

LEAN

■ From page 2

But we also should be reminded of the following:

- “When... personnel appropriations are compared, it is striking to note that Air Reserve Component members use about 14 percent of appropriated personnel funds, but perform over half of all Air Force missions.” - The Heritage Foundation

- “Our analysis found that reservists are the best buy for the taxpayer... by any metric they are a cost-effective source of trained manpower, particularly as the cost of active-duty manpower has grown exponentially in recent years.” - Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 2008.

When reading the above, it sounds like the Air National Guard may be tasked to take on even more mission sets. That’s good. We embrace that. Only this time, budgetary constraints may force us to tighten our belts and be more innovative and operate smarter with less funding. One thing is for certain: the ANG will continue to play a pivotal role in our state’s domestic responses and in the defense of our nation.

During these tough times, we must stay involved, stay engaged and take care of our Airmen first. We need to absolutely believe in deliberate development of our Airmen. One skilled Airman is better than 1,000 unskilled Airmen.

Our ANG may not look the same 10 years from now, but then again, we don’t look the same as we did 10 years ago. We must not lose focus during these tough times and remember that we still have, and will continue to have, the best Air Force and ANG the world has ever seen.

Four ILNG Guardsmen retire, say farewell

By Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - A handful of notable Soldiers and Airmen will retire or have already retired from the Illinois National Guard: Command Sgt. John Starbody of Decatur, Col. Gary Brinner of Springfield, Chief Warrant Officer (5) Ronald Archibald of Galesburg and Chief Warrant Officer (4) Darrin Anderson of Chatham.

Command Sgt. Maj. John Starbody will retire Nov. 30 as the ninth state command sergeant major and the second senior enlisted leader, a position he held the past three years with the responsibility of advising the Adjutant General on enlisted matters for more than 9,000 enlisted Soldiers.

"I wouldn't trade it for a million dollars and I wouldn't go back for a million dollars," said Command Sgt. Maj. John C. Starbody of his time spent in Vietnam from 1971 to 1972.

Starbody, who is the last Vietnam veteran assigned to the Illinois Army National Guard Headquarters, was drafted in February 1971 at age 18 while working for A.E. Staley in Decatur.

"It's probably the best thing that ever happened to me," said Starbody of being drafted.

Starbody, along with two other Soldiers, were on the unscheduled maintenance crew in Vietnam, which meant they didn't have a set schedule and were called in at all hours to fix helicopters that had broken down. They were also on the aircraft recovery team, so anytime a helicopter was shot down or laid in a rice paddy field, they would fly to the location and rig the helicopter where a Chinook could come in and lift it back to get worked on, said Starbody.

"We worked all the time, sometimes two or three days straight," said Starbody. "That is why I wanted to get out of the military once I got back to the states."

However, shortly after returning from Vietnam he left Active Duty, but enlisted into the Illinois Army National Guard within 90 days.

Starbody worked his way through the aviation ranks and served in every leadership position from squad leader to brigade command sergeant major before being selected as the state's senior enlisted leader.

Air Force **Col. Gary L. Brinner** will retire from the Illinois Air National Guard, at Camp Lincoln in Springfield Oct. 31 where he serves as the state's human resources officer. Brinner is a 39-year member of the Illinois Air National Guard and a lifelong resident of central Illinois.

Brinner enlisted in the Illinois Air National Guard in January 1972 with the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield. He was assigned to the 183rd Tactical Fighter Group as a personnel technician.

Brinner received his commission as an officer in the Air National Guard in 1981 and returned to the 183rd Tactical Fighter Group as an executive officer for several years before transferring to the Illinois Air National Guard Headquarters, which was in Chicago at the time, as the personnel programs officer in October 1987.

In June 1990, Brinner was back in Springfield as the human resource office staff officer at Headquarters, Illinois Air National Guard. He later accepted his position as the state



Col. Gary Brinner



CW5 Ronald Archibald



CW4 Darrin Anderson



Photo courtesy of Command Sgt. Maj. John Starbody

Command Sgt. Maj. John Starbody works on a Cobra helicopter in Vietnam between 1971 and 1972. Starbody will retire from the Illinois Guard in November.

human resources officer with Joint Force Headquarters in June 2002.

One of Brinner's most important accomplishments is his work with the Illinois committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), he said. He's been involved with the ESGR program for more than 20 years, which helps build employer support for troops throughout the state.

Chief Warrant Officer (5) Ronald Archibald of Galesburg was the regional maintenance manager for northern Illinois and managed 11 Illinois National Guard (ILNG) maintenance shops in the area. He stepped down as a full-time federal technician in August and will retire from the Illinois National Guard in December.

"He's been an outstanding mentor for a lot of people," said Chief Warrant Officer (2) Eileen Konopacki of Lisle, who has worked with Archibald for 16 and a half years. "I think we're all going to miss him a great deal."

She said her time with him was a great learning experience.

Archibald said his greatest achievement during his service was applying his knowledge during his two deployments and multiple training missions.

Archibald deployed to Iraq twice, first with the 1244th Transportation Company from 2003 to 2004 and again with the 108th Sustainment Brigade from 2007 to 2008.

Some of Archibald's fondest memories are watching his Soldiers board the plane to go home after a deployment and seeing them with their families when they returned, he said.

Chief Warrant Officer (4) Darrin Anderson of Chatham, a pilot with Detachment 36 in Decatur took his assigned C-12 Huron, a small twin engine plane, for one final ride over the Decatur and Springfield area Aug. 31.

Anderson said his career did not start in the air, but rather on the ground as a member of a U.S. Army Reserve's field artillery unit based in Decatur. He took his career to a new height after he completed flight school in 1987 and was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment in Camp Stanley, Korea. This was the start of his more than 20-year career as an Army aviator flying helicopters and planes.

Anderson will officially retire in November after leaving the Illinois Army National Guard and will take a position with System Studies and Safety Inc. in Huntsville, Ala.

Staff Sgt. Cassidy L. Snyder, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs; Spc. Starr A. Ivey, Spc. Brian Vorce, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment and Sgt. Michael Camacho, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs contributed to this story.

West Pointers excel in Illinois



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Adam Sawyer

Lt. Gen. David Huntoon, superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point poses with two of West Point's distinguished graduates, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Director Erica Borggren and Director of Illinois Emergency Management Agency Jon Monken, Sept. 3 before the NIU vs. Army game at DeKalb. Borggren's husband Erik and Monken are both Illinois Army National Guard captains.

Bronze Stars at 182nd, 183rd

Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Seven members of the Illinois Air National Guard's 183rd Fighter Wing, 217th Engineering Installation Squadron in Springfield were awarded Bronze Star Medals while serving in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom from September 2010 through July 2011.

Recipients include Lt. Col. James Loux of Springfield; Capt. Christopher Treff of Mascoutah; Senior Master Sgt. Kevin Keyfauber of McHenry; Senior Master Sgt. James Wynn of Chicago; Master Sgt. William Barnes of Riverton; Master Sgt. Scott Reynolds of Chatham; Master Sgt. Michael Brennecke of Fenton, Mo.

All seven members were key decision makers who had pivotal roles not only for themselves but for all 80 combined unit members who deployed.

Three Airmen with the Illinois Air National Guard's 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria were presented Bronze Star Medals Aug. 6 for distinguishing themselves through heroic and meritorious achievements while serving in Afghanistan Nov. 21, 2010 to April 13, 2011 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Recipients include Tech. Sgt. Jonathon Oliver of East Peoria; Senior Master Sgt. Curt Stevens of Trivoli and Lt. Col. Brian Filler of Sugar Grove.

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 2011 are due by the last Wednesday of the following months: March, June, September and December.

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.

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Adjutant General Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart
State PAO Maj. Brad Leighton
Editor Staff Sgt. Cassidy Snyder

SUPPORT STAFF

1st Lt. William Grove
2nd Lt. April Hawes
Sgt. Michael Camacho
Spc. Zachary Zimmerman
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139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
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126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs
183rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs
182nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

NEWS BRIEFS

Illinois Guard recognitions

■ Retired Sgt. Maj. Donnie Parker

SPRINGFIELD – Retired Sgt. Maj. Donnie Parker of Springfield, was awarded the Legion of Merit at a ceremony on Camp Lincoln in Springfield, July 22 for exceptionally meritorious service as a member of the Tennessee and Illinois Army National Guards from August 1970 to July 2010.

“I’m very humbled,” said Parker. “If somebody would have told me in 1970 that I would receive that award today, I would have laughed at them.”

■ Retired Col. Tony Libri

SPRINGFIELD – Retired Illinois Army National Guard Col. Tony Libri, of New Berlin, the Sangamon County Circuit Clerk, received the Legion of Merit for more than 20 years of service with the Illinois Army National Guard.

Maj. Gen. Dennis Celletti, of Springfield, the Illinois Army National Guard Assistant Adjutant General, presented Libri with the medal during the Patriot Guard Riders annual meeting Sept. 10 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

“I swore an oath in the military to defend and now I continue that oath by serving the people,” Libri said. “I am honored to have received such an award.”

■ Col. Mark VanUs

SPRINGFIELD – Col. Mark VanUs, of Springfield, the command Inspector General of the Illinois Army and Air National Guard was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Maj. Gen. William Enyart, of Belleville, the Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard, presented VanUs with the medal during a staff meeting Aug. 30 at Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

VanUs, a Romeoville native, is a member of the active Army assigned to the Illinois National Guard through the National Guard Bureau. He has served as the Illinois National Guard’s command inspector general for the past year following his assignment as the director of Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems at Offutt Air Base in Nebraska.

■ Master Sgt. Timothy Swearingen

PEORIA – Master Sgt. Timothy Swearingen, of East Peoria, received the 2011 Air National Guard Outstanding Medical Materiel Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year Award, June 25 at a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas.

Swearingen is a member of the 182nd Medical Group. He is assigned to the Chemical, Biological, Radiological/ Nuclear and High Yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP).

“He’s very dedicated to his job and to all the team members,” said Capt. Justin Short, Swearingen’s commander.

Among things cited in his award was that Swearingen “innovatively kept the CERFP on the cutting edge of Homeland Response mission development.”

■ Sgt. 1st Class William Ingles

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – Sgt. 1st Class William C. Ingles of Willisville graduated from the Senior Leaders Recruiting and Retention Course (formerly called the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course) at the National Guard Professional Education Center at Camp Robinson, June 24.

Ingles was selected by his platoon for a certificate of excellence and challenge coin from the Strength Maintenance Center for demonstrating exceptional leadership during the course.

■ Brandon Vinyard

SPARTA – Sgt. 1st Class Rob Hamilton, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Sparta Training Area recruiting command, presented Brandon C. Vinyard with the Illinois Army National Guard’s Citizen-Soldier award for organizing and implementing military appreciation days for football and basketball games at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

■ Parents of 766th Soldier

DECATUR – Mark and Cherie Edgcombe of Decatur, parents of Spc. Megan Edgcombe of Forsyth, with the 766th Field Support Company won the Illinois National Guard Family Program Family of the Year Award.

The Edgcombes received their award at the Family Programs state conference banquet in April. They were presented the award by Mrs. Sheila Casey, wife of Gen. (Ret.) George Casey, the 36th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

TAG receives highest Polish award

Story by Maj. Brad Leighton,
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

WARSAW, Poland – With a Polish Army band, military parade and a “dress and review,” Governor Pat Quinn’s top military officer, Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart, of Belleville, the Adjutant General of Illinois, received the Polish Army Medal on Friday during an official visit to Poland with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Thomas Lamont.

“As the commander-in-Chief of the Illinois National Guard, I know the quality of the leaders within its ranks,” said Governor Quinn. “We have the best National Guard in the United States and the best Adjutant General. This medal shows the positive impact our National Guard has not only here in Illinois and in the United States, but across the world.”

In receiving the Gold grade of the medal, Enyart joins a short list of American generals to receive the award including former Army Chief of Staff Gen. (ret.) George W. Casey, former Central Command Commander and current CIA Director Army Gen. (ret.) David Petraeus, African Command Commander Army Gen. Carter Ham, and Marine Gen. John R. Allen, the Commander of International Security Assistance Force- Afghanistan and United States Forces – Afghanistan.

The medal was signed by Polish Minister of National Defense Tomasz Siemoniak and was approved by the Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski.

“I am both humbled and honored to receive this medal from Poland,” Enyart said. “This honor belongs to the Illinois National Guard Soldiers and Airmen who have worked side-by-side with the Polish for close to 20 years.”

Enyart commands the 13,000-member Illinois National Guard, which has had a State Partnership Program with Poland since 1993. Aside from military-to-military and military-to-civilian exchanges and co-training, the Illinois National Guard also co-deploys with Polish forces, first to Iraq and now to Afghanistan. The Illinois National Guard’s Bilateral Embedded Support Team (BEST) has approximately 20 Soldiers serving with a Polish brigade in Afghanistan today.

In May, Illinois National Guard troops who specialize



Photo courtesy of the Polish Ministry of Defense

Maj. Gen. William L. Enyart, of Belleville, the Adjutant General, receives the Polish Army Medal from Polish Land Forces Commander Lieutenant General Zbigniew Glowienka Sept. 23.

in responding to domestic attacks and disasters trained with Polish troops in preparation to Eurocup 2012, which Poland is hosting. As part of the planning, Enyart met with Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces Gen. Mieczyslaw Cieniuch.

In September military attorneys from the Illinois Guard and the Polish military discussed military law and the military legal systems in the two countries. Enyart, who holds a law degree from Southern Illinois University School of Law, was instrumental in setting up the exchange.

After an April 10, 2010 airplane crash in Russia killed Polish President Lech Kaczyński and many of Poland’s top civilian and military leaders, Enyart rushed to Poland to offer his personal condolences to the Polish people.

“I knew most of these men personally and was blessed to consider them friends and colleagues. Several of my troops served under these officers in combat and will forever be grateful for their inspired leadership,” Enyart said in April 2010.

After a volcano in Iceland prevented further travel from the United States to Poland, Enyart represented the U.S. Secretary of Defense and was the senior military representative of the U.S. government to attend the Polish officials’ funerals.

Meet the JFHQ Assistant SARC

SPRINGFIELD - Kimberly Schaeffe is the new Joint Force Headquarters Assistant Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC).

Schaeffe graduated from Augustana College in May 2009 with two degrees. Her senior research and thesis was conducted on PTSD severity in rape and sexual assault victims with crisis intervention.

She is qualified in Illinois and Iowa to work as a victim advocate for those sexually assaulted and victims of domestic violence. She volunteers as a crisis-intervention advocate at the local Quad Cities hospitals, being on-call for any victims in need of advocacy in the emergency department.

In March 2010 she joined the Illinois Army National Guard and attended advanced individual training to be a Health Care Specialist.

She joined Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Feb 2011 and attended accelerated OCS from June to July.

She is an ordnance officer assigned to the 3637th Maintenance Company as a platoon leader, and resides in Springfield.

For assistance she can be reached at 217-761-3085 in the office or kim.schaeffe@us.army.mil. The 24-hour SARC cell number is 217-299-9407.



Kim Schaeffe

West Point opportunity for National Guard Soldiers

Title 10 USCS 4342 (b)(3), allows for 85 enlisted members of the Army National Guard (ARNG) or Army Reserve to be appointed to West Point annually. The deadline to submit completed packets will be Nov. 1, 2011.

The point of contact for this is Maj. Brian R. Wire at 845-938-5730 or email brian.wire@usma.edu or brian.r.wire@us.army.mil.

Illinois Guard enriched by more gold bars

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Dan LoGrasso,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SPRINGFIELD— Eighteen Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers were commissioned as second lieutenants during the Officer Candidate School (OCS) graduation ceremony at the Illinois Military Academy Aug. 21 at Camp Lincoln in Springfield.

These new officers are part of a growing trend in the Illinois Army National Guard, said Maj. Benjamin Shakman of Springfield with the 129th Regional Training Institute at Camp Lincoln. They are part of the 29 new officers who will graduate from OCS this year—that is a 155 percent increase from last year's 18 graduates. Fifty officers are expected to graduate in 2012.

The Illinois OCS program has grown to be the fourth largest of 49 states that offer the OCS program.

Three classes graduate each year from Illinois. One traditional class is held one weekend a month for 16 months with two weeks of continuous annual training. Two other classes are accelerated and are completed in 57 consecutive days out of state.

The graduation ceremony for the candidates has also changed. In the past, an entire class of candidates would stand in a line on stage, swear in, and be pinned with rank as a group. Now, candidates still swear in as a group but go onto the stage individually where they are pinned with rank and receive their first salute from the people of their choosing.

At the Aug. 21 graduation ceremony, this new formula allowed for a gallery of generational service to be seen. Veterans of World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War, Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom were all present to help salute and pin the new candidates.

Second Lt. Kimberly Schaeffe of Warrenville, was even saluted by her younger sister, a private who just enlisted



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Dan LoGrasso,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Graduates of the Illinois National Guard's Officer Candidate School are sworn in as second lieutenants at the Illinois Military Academy in Springfield Aug. 21.

and is about to leave for Basic Combat Training.

Carl Crawford of Springfield, a brand new second lieutenant and 17-year veteran of the Springfield Police Department, said he and his classmates learned a lot during the course.

"Overall, the class has been very good. I think we've been prepared as well, or better than, officers from other states we trained with," said Crawford.

He also expressed his hopes for the future.

"I hope to get into the new unit and make sure that everyone comes home safe when we deploy. I have experience training police officers and I want to carry the importance of good training over into my military career," said Crawford.

The 18 newly commissioned officers are:

- 2nd Lt. Tristian M. Allen, of Chicago, 708th Medical Company
- 2nd Lt. John A. Christel, of Chicago, Headquarters, Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion 130th Infantry
- 2nd Lt. Carl E. Crawford, of Springfield, 233rd Military Police Company
- 2nd Lt. Shtoyree S. Davison of Chicago
- 2nd Lt. Lindsey R. Heise, of Urbana, 445th Chem Co.
- 2nd Lt. Sean M. Overlot, of Bloomington, Headquarters, Headquarters Troop 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry
- 2nd Lt. Steven R. Shambaugh, of Elwood, 1744th Transportation Company
- 2nd Lt. Daniel R. Spencer, of Carbondale, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment
- 2nd Lt. Moses A. Woods, of Chicago, Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 122nd Field Artillery
- 2nd Lt. Sara B. Carr, of Champaign, with Company E, 634th Brigade Support Battalion
- 2nd Lt. Leslie D. Durbin, of Champaign, 1144th Transportation Battalion
- 2nd Lt. Travis C. Hilligoss, of Waukegan, 135th Chemical Company
- 2nd Lt. John L. McLaughlin, of Dixon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry Regiment
- 2nd Lt. Mark J. Munshaw, of Collinsville, 445th Chemical Company
- 2nd Lt. Elizabeth Oh, of Naperville, 3625th Maintenance Company
- 2nd Lt. Daniel S. Peet, of Palatine, Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry
- 2nd Lt. Alan R. Pollard, of Rockford, with Troop B, 2nd Squadron, 106th Cavalry
- 2nd Lt. Kimberly J. Schaeffe, of Warrenville, with 3637th Maintenance Company

MP to State Police: ESGR works for reciprocity

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Chasity Johnson,
Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. — Representatives from state and county police forces along with representatives from the Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) flew to Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., June 14 to observe Army military police training.

"There is a state initiative by ESGR to examine the transition from military policeman to state policeman," said Mike Holub of LaGrange, the LaGrange police chief and the public affairs officer for the Illinois Committee for ESGR. "Therefore it makes sense to look at the existing training of the military police and see if it is comparable to what state police learn in their training."

The attendees of the trip were given in-depth briefings by Mark Premont of Dixon, Mo., the director of the plans analysis and interrogation office for Ft. Leonard Wood, and Reginald Cole of Waynesville, Mo., the deputy director of training for the United States Military Police School in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., on the demographics of and the training offered at the post which includes, Army basic training; leader development training; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training; engineer training; and military police training.

Premont and Cole explained the training the military police receive and compared and contrasted it to what is learned in civilian police academies.

"We are trying to get the training cut down by four weeks so the military policemen don't have to be trained twice in the same areas," said Holub.

At the close of the briefings, the attendees were given a tour of the training facilities. They visited the Engaged Skills Trainer, a simulator that provides marksmanship training and trains Soldiers on a multitude of functional areas including weapons calibration and qualification.

They also visited Stem Village, a mock town named after Brig. Gen. David Stem used for training that includes confinement areas, a specialized housing area, a barber shop, movie theatre, bank and other facilities that most towns boast. In the town, the trainees have the opportunity to respond to exercise scenarios as they would in the field and interact with detainees as they would in an actual holding facility.

"The school has changed significantly since I was there in '75," said Coralyn Beem of Pana, the manager of mandated training for the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board and formerly a radio communications analyst in the Air Force. "Fort Leonard Wood offers a great technique. I like the mix of practical and classroom training. The Army seems to be leading edge when it comes to law enforcement training."

Beem said after viewing the military training firsthand, the next step is to coordinate with the director of the standards board.

Decatur wife recognized for dedication

Story by U.S. Army Spc. Jeffrey Granda,
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DECATUR — It is no secret that a military spouse serves alongside his/her Soldier through weekend drills, state active duty, overseas deployments and more. One Illinois National Guard spouse was recognized, not only for her dedication to her enlisted husband, but his entire unit and the Illinois Army National Guard.

Shirley Rehbein of Decatur is the family readiness group (FRG) leader for the 766th Engineer Battalion, Field Support Company (FSC) in Decatur. She was recently awarded the Elizabeth Armstrong Award.

"Mrs. Rehbein's positive attitude and dedication has been extremely instrumental for energizing family members and the overall success of the FSC FRG," said Capt. Mindi Ernst of Springfield, director of the Illinois National Guard State Family Programs Office. "She has also been very innovative in starting new programs."

The Elizabeth Armstrong Award is given once a year to an FRG volunteer who contributed above and beyond the standard.

The award is based on an early settler who helped rally other women in an effort to help servicemembers ward off an attack during the Black Hawk War.

As the FRG leader, Rehbein has organized several family and community events including monthly FRG meetings, newsletters, Adopt-a-Highway, Child Safety Seat Check, company summer picnics and holiday parties.

"The FRG wants the community to know we appreciate their support for military members and want to give just as much back," Rehbein said. "The Elizabeth Armstrong Award was a very humbling experience. I wasn't expecting any awards. I was extremely honored. It's actually given me more resolve to continue to do this kind of work."

Rehbein is married to 1st Sgt. John Rehbein of the 766th Engineer Battalion, FSC, and endured a year with him deployed to Iraq in 2007-2008.

"My husband and I spoke about starting an FRG and agreed it would be a good idea," Rehbein said. "The thing about the FRG is that you have people to talk to while your servicemember is deployed; you're not alone."

Rehbein has future plans to assist the 766th and the Illinois National Guard family.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Luke Austin, 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

Shirley Rehbein of Decatur, leader of the 766th Engineer Battalion, Field Support Company family readiness group (FRG), accepts the Elizabeth Armstrong Award from Sheila Casey, wife of Gen. George W. Casey at the National Guard Conference in Chicago in May. The Elizabeth Armstrong Award is given once a year and is the top honor an FRG leader can receive. (From left to right) Annette Eckert, wife of Illinois National Guard Adjutant General William Enyart and Casey, Shirley Rehbein, and her husband 1st Sgt. John Rehbein.



Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Carlock



Sgt. Sara Minder



Chief Master Sgt. Mark Stevens



Senior Master Sgt. Kim Piskacek

Illinois National Guardsmen remember 9/11

By U.S. Army 2nd Lt. April Hawes, Illinois National Guard Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Before the planes hit and before the towers crumbled, it was a routine Tuesday morning for four Illinois National Guardsmen. One Soldier was teaching in his classroom while a future Illinois Soldier was listening to her teacher in biology class. Across the world, an Illinois Airman arrived in Germany for annual training. Another Airman, then with the New York National Guard, was on Long Island when disaster struck.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Carlock

When Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Carlock of Astoria joined the Illinois Army National Guard in 1993, he did it because he wanted to continue his family heritage of military service while getting his education. Soon after, he became a high school teacher in Astoria.

September 11, 2001 another teacher told Carlock what was happening on the East Coast. He immediately turned on the TV in his classroom to see it for himself.

"I stopped all of my planned lessons for the day and made all of my students watch everything on the news," he said. "I urged them to remember that day as it would be a pivotal day in American history and they are to witness it."

Carlock, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 44th Chemical Battalion in Macomb, said he was shocked and angered when he witnessed the 9/11 attacks. He then realized, as an Illinois National Guardsman, he needed to be prepared to deploy stateside or abroad because of these attacks.

Carlock deployed in 2004 to Iraq with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Field Artillery in Macomb.

Carlock said he is proud of his service in

the Illinois Army National Guard.

"I believe that we have proven ourselves as a professional organization that deserves the same respect that the active Army receives," he said. "From our efforts and professionalism, I think the National Guard is looked at in a much more positive light compared to the years prior to Sept. 11, 2001. I feel very proud that I have been able to serve at such a crucial time."

Sgt. Sara Minder

Like Carlock, Sgt. Sara Minder of Springfield with Joint Force Headquarters in Springfield, watched the events of that historic day on TV while sitting in a high-school classroom.

"All I could do was sit and stare at the TV. No one in the classroom said a word," she said. "I think we were all hoping the first plane was just an accident. Seeing the second plane hit made me realize that this was intentional."

Eighteen months later, she joined the Illinois Army National Guard.

She joined for two reasons. She said she wanted to be like her cousin and best friend, Jason, who was a Marine. She said she also wanted to do something after she felt her country's fear on 9/11.

Just two months after she enlisted, Jason was killed in a helicopter accident in Iraq.

In August 2003, she left for basic training and advanced individual training. She was pulled out of a week early for a deployment. She returned home for four days, then travelled to Iraq with the 232nd Corps Support Battalion in Springfield. She spent her 19th birthday and the first anniversary of Jason's death overseas.

While she remembers the fear she felt 10 years ago, Minder said she hopes her Illinois Army Guard service will prevent her fellow Americans from experiencing the same fear.

"I feel a stronger sense of duty to my

country," she said. "I do not want another generation to have to feel the fear that we felt on that day."

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Stevens

Chief Master Sgt. Mark Stevens of Elk Grove Village was on foreign soil 10 years ago when he heard about the terrorist attacks. He had just landed in Germany for annual training as the first sergeant with the 217th Engineering Installation Squadron attached to the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield.

A base exchange cashier was the first to tell him a plane hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center. He then watched German TV and listened to the radio to learn a second plane crashed into the tower and yet another plane crashed into the Pentagon.

"(I felt) anger and rage that someone would attack America and kill innocent civilians," said Stevens, who is now assigned to the 183rd Air Operations Group in Springfield.

While he felt anger and rage, Stevens said Airmen around him were also angry, shocked and confused by the terrorist attacks. Since he joined the Illinois Air National Guard in 1985, Stevens said he had always been proud to defend his country, but after 9/11 he saw his service in a more serious light.

"I always took my military career serious, but this made it more real and important," he said. "The level of seriousness about (what) we do struck home."

Senior Master Sgt. Kim Piskacek

Senior Master Sgt. Kim Piskacek of O'Fallon walked into chaos when she went to work at the Office of Student Affairs at Stony Brook University on Long Island, N.Y. on that Tuesday morning.

Fellow employees gathered around the TV while the phones rang off the hook

with frantic New Yorkers on the other end asking what they should do. The college president soon announced classes were cancelled and urged students not to travel toward Manhattan.

As others went back to their desks, Piskacek stayed glued to the TV.

"It fell," she told her co-workers.

"What fell?" they asked her.

"The tower," she said.

They didn't believe her. They didn't want to believe her; until they came back to the TV to witness the smoke for themselves, she said.

At the time, Piskacek was assigned to the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing, which soon became a staging area for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Red Cross. The 105th lost two Airmen that day, one of whom she knew. Piskacek also said many 105th Airmen lost family and friends.

It wasn't until 2004 when she realized how significant 9/11 was to all Americans, not just New Yorkers.

She was at an Air Force noncommissioned officer academy when the subject came up. She heard everyone else recall the day, just as she remembered, and said she was surprised to hear everyone was just as affected as she was.

"As New Yorkers, we didn't think of anything outside of New York City," she said. "It's so weird when you're that close to New York City and then you hear everyone else's account."

In 2004 she transferred to the Illinois Air National Guard. She then deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 with the 183rd Fighter Wing in Springfield, where she is now assigned.

Since her military career began with the Air Force in 1989, Piskacek said 9/11 brought a new meaning to her service.

"I've always been proud to serve, but Sept. 11 made it more personal," she said.



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



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James McDonnough, 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team Public Affairs

Soldiers with the 108th Sustainment Brigade watch as a joint civilian and military color guard present the colors during a 9/11 remembrance ceremony Sept. 11, at the Little Cubs Field in Humboldt Park, Chicago.

U.S. Army Spc. Robert Leffel, of Villa Park, a communications specialist with the 1-14th Agribusiness Development Team, raises a flag over Camp Wright, Afghanistan, Sept. 11.

183rd Security Forces participate in Patriot 2011

Story by U.S. Air Force Maj. Nancie Margetis, 183rd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

SPRINGFIELD - Thirteen members of the 183rd Security Forces Squadron participated in Patriot 2011 at Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center, Wis., July 11-22.

The integrated training exercise explored the feasibility of embedding a 13-person security forces Fixed Site

Security Element to secure the inner perimeter, known as the "cold zone" of a traditional chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) enhanced response force package (CERF-P).

The Patriot 2011 exercise included a multi-incident terrorist use of a radiological dispersal device weapons of mass destruction via a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. Collapsed concrete, steel and wood-frame structures and crushed vehicles, caused mass

casualties and radiological contamination. The exercise also evaluated fire operations, CERF-P operations, fatality search and rescue, compromised structure shoring, and complex emergency management challenges.

"The 183rd SFS envisioned, developed and subsequently deployed a force protect package that provided a secure work environment for CERF-P medics and support personnel operating within the cold zone of a CBRNE, incident," said Senior Master Sgt. Fred Ausmus.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Natalie Stanley

Members from the 183rd Security Forces Squadron pose for a group photo while at Patriot 2011 in July at Volk Field, Wis. The Airmen participated in the integrated training exercise to develop and deploy a force protection package for CERF-P medics and support personnel.

ILNG Facebook fan page

www.facebook.com/illinoisnationalguard

Calling all UPARs:

Calling all Unit Public Affairs Representatives – the Illinois Guardian needs you!

We are always on the lookout for good stories and photos or ideas for upcoming issues of the paper. If you have stories or photos to submit for consideration, see the deadline below or contact the public affairs office at (217) 761-3569 or via e-mail at ngilstaffpao@ng.army.mil for more information.

Deadline: Deadline for submission of materials for the Winter 2011 issue of the *Illinois Guardian* is the last Wednesday of December.

Address changes: If you are not receiving the Guardian due to a recent address change, please contact the Military Personnel Office to update your records.

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126th Security Forces members deploy in support of operations in Afghanistan

Story by U.S. Air Force Maj. Jennifer C. Howsare, 126th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

BELLEVILLE - Friends and family of the 126th Security Forces Squadron said goodbye to a 13-person team deploying to Afghanistan in July. Seven of the 13 members have deployed multiple times, but for six members this will be their first deployment.

Deploying Security Forces troops, along with their friends and family, were given a warm send-off by Col.

Peter Nezamis and Command Chief Karen Stevens along with numerous Wing members and a volunteer staff from the USO that provided food and deployment care packages. The team had a 15-day stop at Creech AFB, Nev. for pre-deployment training and before departing the U.S. for their 6-month tour.

The team's primary mission while deployed will be to provide air base defense to protect U.S. personnel and assets. Protection must also be provided to any Coalition forces that may be staged or are transitioning through.

Point of impact: 2-130 IN trains at Fort Knox

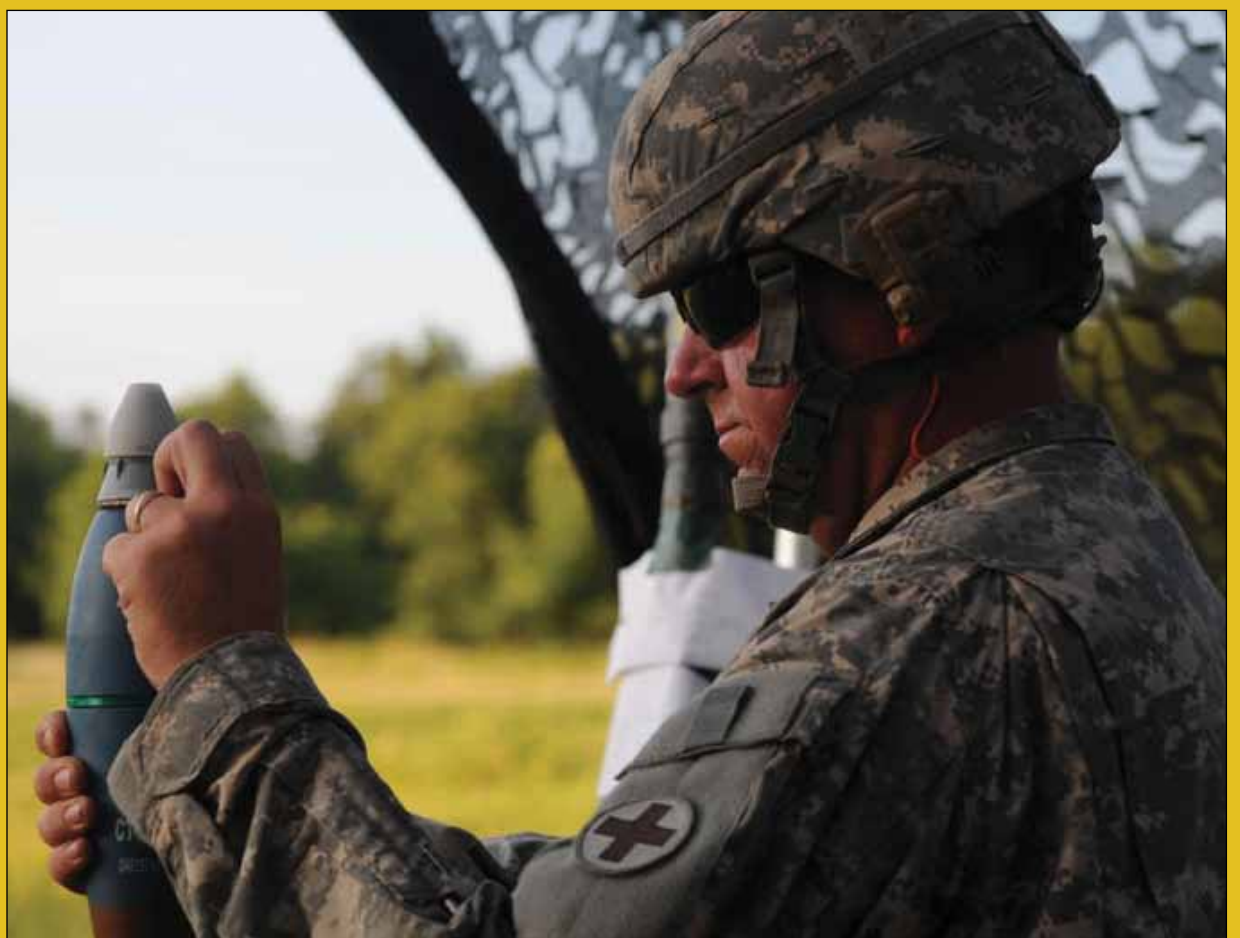


Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Jeffrey Granda, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Sgt. Christopher Doedtman of Beecher City, a member of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment in Effingham, inspects and prepares a mortar round for training June 19 at Fort Knox, Ky. The 2-130, with units based in Marion, West Frankfort, Effingham, Litchfield and Mount Vernon, spent two weeks in June training on warrior tasks.